

The Existence and Perception of the Acehnese Towards the Myth of Bek Ria That

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Abstract: This study examines the continued existence of, and Acehnese perceptions toward, “bek ria” a culturally inherited prohibition against expressing joy excessively. This study employs a convergent mixed-methods design with an ethnographic orientation. The quantitative component involved 120 respondents, while the qualitative component involved 15 informants. The questionnaire, consisting of nine items, demonstrated adequate internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .74$). The composite score for moral-emotional regulation ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .73$) was significantly higher than the composite score for supernatural consequences ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .96$; Wilcoxon $W = 5531.00$, $p < .001$). Analysis by age group revealed substantial differences in beliefs regarding supernatural consequences, $H(2) = 50.91$, $p < .001$, $\epsilon^2 = .42$; however, no differences were found across age groups in moral-emotional interpretations, $H(2) = 0.19$, $p = .908$. Themes identified through qualitative analysis included intergenerational transmission, religious-moral meaning, situational regulation, and a declining tendency toward literal belief among the younger generation. The findings of this study indicate that a verbal expression used in everyday life can function as a cultural legacy, a moral discourse, and a mechanism for regulating emotions.

Keywords: Oral Tradition, Emotional Regulation, Local Wisdom, Intergenerational Transmission, Cultural Belief

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji keberlangsungan eksistensi serta persepsi masyarakat Aceh terhadap bek ria, yaitu suatu larangan yang diwariskan secara kultural untuk tidak mengekspresikan kegembiraan secara berlebihan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain metode campuran konvergen (convergent mixed-methods) dengan orientasi etnografis. Komponen kuantitatif melibatkan 120 responden, sedangkan komponen kualitatif melibatkan 15 informan. Instrumen kuesioner yang terdiri atas sembilan butir menunjukkan tingkat konsistensi internal yang memadai (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .74$). Skor komposit regulasi moral-emosional ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .73$) secara signifikan lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan skor komposit konsekuensi supranatural ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .96$; Wilcoxon $W = 5531.00$, $p < .001$). Analisis berdasarkan kelompok usia menunjukkan adanya perbedaan yang substansial dalam keyakinan terhadap konsekuensi supranatural, $H(2) = 50.91$, $p < .001$, $\epsilon^2 = .42$, namun tidak ditemukan perbedaan antarkelompok usia dalam interpretasi moral-emosional, $H(2) = 0.19$, $p = .908$. Tema-tema yang diperoleh dari analisis kualitatif mencakup pewarisan antargenerasi, pemaknaan religius-moral, regulasi yang bersifat situasional, serta kecenderungan menurunnya kepercayaan literal di kalangan generasi muda. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa suatu ungkapan lisan yang digunakan dalam kehidupan sehari-hari dapat berfungsi sebagai warisan budaya, wacana moral, sekaligus mekanisme regulasi emosi.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi Lisan, Regulasi Emosional, Kearifan Lokal, Transmisi Antargenerasi, Keyakinan Kultural

INTRODUCTION

Myths and other forms of oral tradition are not merely individual beliefs; they are shared cultural resources through which communities interpret experience, transmit values, and regulate

behaviour. In Acehese society, where local traditions interact closely with Islamic teachings, oral expressions continue to shape how people think, feel, and act (Lubis et al., 2024). Such traditions also preserve solidarity, moral guidance, and collective memory. Acehese communities commonly draw on oral tradition and religious advice as sources of practical wisdom, and compliance with inherited advice is often associated with safety, good fortune, or social propriety (Ramli et al., 2024; Syahputera et al., 2024).

One widely used Acehese expression is *bek ria* that. The phrase consists of *bek* (do not), *ria/riang* (happy or joyful), and *that* (very or excessively); it may therefore be translated as “do not be too happy” or “do not express joy excessively”. It is commonly uttered when laughter, joking, singing, dancing, or other expressions of happiness are perceived as excessive or inappropriate to the situation. Although the expression may appear to prohibit happiness, its social meaning is more complex. It can function as advice about moderation, humility, self-control, and sensitivity to time, place, and other people.

This cultural expression is particularly significant in Aceh because collective life has been shaped by prolonged political conflict and the 2004 earthquake and tsunami. These experiences produced enduring social, economic, political, and psychological consequences (Fan, 2006). Cultural values and local wisdom may therefore provide an important lens for understanding how Acehese communities make sense of uncertainty, regulate emotional expression, and sustain resilience.

Despite its frequent use in everyday interaction, *bek ria* that has received little direct scholarly attention. Existing studies have examined other Acehese myths and oral traditions, but the symbolic meaning, social function, and generational interpretation of this specific expression remain underexplored. Accordingly, this study addresses two questions: (1) how does the *bek ria* that belief continue to exist in Acehese society, and (2) how do Acehese people perceive and interpret it? The study aims to describe its transmission, social functions, moral and religious meanings, and changing interpretation across generations.

Husni et al. (2024), for example, analysed the myth of *burong tujoh* as part of Acehese mystical tradition. Using a semiotic approach, they examined cultural meaning, number symbolism, and philosophical values, showing that the belief continues to circulate through folklore. Their study demonstrates the persistence of mystical traditions in Aceh, but it focuses on a supernatural narrative rather than an everyday verbal prohibition that regulates emotional behaviour.

Aulia et al. (2025) examined pregnancy-related myths in Acehese society, including restrictions on announcing pregnancy and leaving the house during early pregnancy. Their findings highlighted the potential health consequences of culturally transmitted beliefs. In contrast, *bek ria* that is not limited to a particular life stage; it is used across ordinary social situations and is directed at both children and adults.

Smith (2018) explored resilience and the localisation of trauma in Aceh through ethnographic interviews conducted in 2008–2009. The study showed how Islamic interpretations of disaster shaped social reality and community resilience. Building on this broader literature, the present study focuses on a specific oral expression and integrates questionnaire patterns with ethnographic interpretation. Its contribution lies in explaining how a short, frequently repeated phrase can operate simultaneously as cultural inheritance, moral advice, religious discourse, social control, and emotional regulation.

METHOD

Type of Research

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods design with an ethnographic orientation. Quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative observation and interview data were collected during the same research phase, analysed separately, and then integrated during interpretation. The quantitative strand measured exposure to, belief in, and perceptions of bek ria that, whereas the qualitative strand explored cultural meanings, modes of transmission, religious interpretations, and social functions. Setting, participants, and sampling. The sample comprised 120 Acehnese respondents selected purposively from three regional clusters: western Aceh (n = 40), eastern Aceh (n = 40), and central Aceh (n = 40). It included 64 women (53.3%) and 56 men (46.7%). Age groups were 18–30 years (n = 45; 37.5%), 31–45 years (n = 42; 35.0%), and 46 years or older (n = 33; 27.5%). Eligibility criteria were Acehnese cultural affiliation, age of at least 18 years, familiarity with the phrase bek ria that, and willingness to participate.

Instruments and validation. The instruments comprised a structured questionnaire, a participatory observation guide, and a semi-structured in-depth interview guide. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and contained nine items covering exposure, intergenerational transmission, belief in negative consequences, emotional self-control, humility, perceived social pressure, and acceptance as community advice. Five experts two cultural anthropologists, one Acehnese linguist, one sociologist, and one psychometric specialist assessed relevance, clarity, and cultural appropriateness. Item-level content-validity indices ranged from .80 to 1.00, and the scale-level average content-validity index was .93. Cronbach’s alpha was .74 and corrected item–total correlations ranged from .30 to .50; therefore, all nine items were retained in the analysis.

Qualitative data collection. The qualitative component comprised 15 informants: five cultural figures, five community leaders, and five academics or educators, with five informants representing each regional cluster. Twelve participatory-observation sessions were conducted, totalling approximately 18 hours. Interviews lasted 35–60 minutes, were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and checked against the recordings. No substantively new themes emerged after the thirteenth interview, and two additional interviews confirmed the thematic structure. Quantitative analysis. Frequencies and percentages were calculated from respondent-level questionnaire records. Four composite scores were then formed: exposure and transmission (three items), supernatural-consequence belief (two items), moral-emotional regulation (three items), and perceived social pressure (one item). Means and standard deviations were used as descriptive summaries of the Likert composites. Because the data were ordinal, the moral-emotional and supernatural-consequence composites were compared using the paired-samples Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Associations between composite scores were examined using Spearman’s rank correlation. Age-group differences were examined using the Kruskal–Wallis test, with epsilon-squared (ϵ^2) reported as an effect-size estimate. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < .05$, two-tailed, and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals were calculated for composite means.

Table 1. Instrument-validity and reliability results

Assessment	Basis	Result	Interpretation
Content validity	Five-expert review	I-CVI = .80–1.00; S-CVI/Ave = .93	Acceptable content coverage after wording revision

Internal consistency	Nine items; N = 120	Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$	Acceptable for an exploratory cultural-perception scale
Item discrimination	Corrected item–total correlation	.30–.50	All nine items retained in the analysis

Note. I-CVI = item-level content-validity index; S-CVI/Ave = average scale-level content-validity index.

Qualitative analysis and integration.

Qualitative data were analysed thematically through familiarisation, initial coding, theme development, review, naming, and interpretation. The analysis drew on concepts of myth, structural functionalism, normative integration, collective representation, social perception, trauma, and resilience. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated through triangulation and a convergent comparison of areas of confirmation, complementarity, and divergence. This procedure explained not only how widely the belief was recognised, but also why it continued to function as a moral, religious, and social mechanism.

Ethical considerations. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Respondents' and informants' identities were protected through anonymisation, and the data were stored confidentially and used only for academic analysis. The verified ethics-committee approval number or an institutional determination that formal review was not required should be inserted when available.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The phrase *bek ria* that can be translated as “do not be too happy” or “do not express joy excessively”. The element *bek* marks a prohibition or negative command, directing the listener not to perform an action (Alwi et al., 2010; KBBI, 2026). In this context, the phrase is not a neutral description; it is a directive utterance intended to modify behaviour. The element that intensifies the preceding adjective and conveys excess, broadly corresponding to “too” or “overly”. The expression therefore targets not happiness itself, but a degree of expression judged to exceed what is normal, necessary, or socially appropriate (Merriam-Webster, 2026).

The element *ria/riang* denotes a state of happiness or joy. Taken together, the three elements form a negative imperative that asks the listener to reduce or stop an excessive display of pleasure. In speech-act terms, *bek ria* that functions as a directive: its force depends not only on its literal meaning, but also on the speaker's social authority and the context in which it is uttered (Aikhenvald & Dixon, 2017). This linguistic structure helps explain why the phrase may be experienced differently. It can be interpreted as protective advice, a moral reminder, a warning of misfortune, or a restriction on emotional expression. The questionnaire and interview findings were therefore analysed in terms of both the continued existence of the belief and the meanings attributed to it. The questionnaire results show that *bek ria* that remains familiar in everyday social life. For interpretive clarity, the findings are grouped into exposure and transmission, belief in consequences, moral-emotional regulation, and perceived social pressure. Table 2 presents the response distribution for exposure to the phrase, intergenerational transmission, community belief, and anticipated misfortune.

Table 2. Questionnaire responses on the existence and transmission of *bek ria that*

Statement	Strongly disagree, n (%)	Disagree, n (%)	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)	Strongly agree, n (%)
I often hear people say <i>bek ria that</i> when someone expresses happiness.	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	14 (11.7)	42 (35.0)	60 (50.0)
My parents have used the phrase <i>bek ria that</i> since I was a child.	4 (3.3)	6 (5.0)	13 (10.8)	42 (35.0)	55 (45.8)
People around me still believe in the prohibition expressed by <i>bek ria that</i> .	1 (0.8)	5 (4.2)	23 (19.2)	46 (38.3)	45 (37.5)
Following <i>bek ria that</i> is important for avoiding future misfortune.	8 (6.7)	20 (16.7)	34 (28.3)	24 (20.0)	34 (28.3)

Note. N = 120; five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Percentages are based on integer counts and may differ slightly because of rounding.

Based on the results of the problem analysis and needs analysis conducted through interviews, observations, and the distribution of questionnaires to teachers and participants. The strongest pattern concerns the everyday visibility of the phrase: 85.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they often heard *bek ria that* when someone expressed happiness. Community belief also remained substantial, with 75.8% agreeing or strongly agreeing that people around them still believed in the prohibition. By contrast, direct endorsement of misfortune as a consequence was more divided: 48.3% agreed or strongly agreed, 28.3% were neutral, and 23.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This contrast suggests that the expression may be more widely accepted as a social and moral convention than as an unequivocal supernatural cause-and-effect belief.

The findings also indicate strong intergenerational transmission through parents and elders: 80.8% agreed or strongly agreed that their parents had used the phrase since childhood. Together with the qualitative themes, this pattern illustrates how the expression may be learned early and repeated through family and community interaction. Interviews and observations produced five themes concerning the continued existence of *bek ria that*: intergenerational transmission, religious-moral meaning, anticipated misfortune, situational appropriateness, and generational change. The qualitative themes are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Qualitative themes related to the existence of *bek ria that*

Main theme	Social meaning	Representative quotation	Source profile
Intergenerational transmission	The expression is understood as moral advice passed from parents and respected elders to younger family members.	"Parents say that if you do not follow their advice, you may still face misfortune."	Community figure, Nagan Raya
Religious-moral meaning	The expression is associated with humility, modesty, self-control, and remembrance of	"Do not show off; do not draw attention to yourself."	Cultural figure, Pidie

	God.		
Anticipated misfortune	Misfortune is understood as a possible symbolic or spiritual consequence of excessive joy.	“Do not get too carried away; something might happen.”	Community figure, Aceh Timur
Situational appropriateness	The warning depends on time, place, and social circumstances, including moments considered religiously sensitive.	“ <i>Bek ria that</i> , tengöh magreb” (“Do not be too joyful; it is Maghrib time”).	Cultural figure, Pidie
Generational change	Younger people may comply with the warning while no longer accepting its supernatural explanation.	“The children become quiet, but they do not really believe it.”	Academic, Aceh Timur

The qualitative evidence confirms that *bek ria that* is transmitted primarily through family and community authority. Parents and elders do not merely repeat a phrase; they attach moral expectations to it and use it to teach restraint, respect, and awareness of social context. The expression therefore persists because it is embedded in ordinary interaction rather than confined to formal ritual. The religious-moral theme complicates a purely supernatural interpretation. Informants linked the phrase with *tasawuf*, humility, modesty, and remembrance of God. In this interpretation, *bek ria that* functions less as a prediction of punishment and more as guidance against arrogance, ostentation, and loss of self-control (Mannopov et al., 2025). At the same time, the themes of anticipated misfortune and generational change show that the belief is not uniform. Older speakers more readily connected excessive joy with adverse consequences, whereas younger people were described as following the advice without fully accepting its magical basis. This suggests continuity of the expression alongside transformation of its meaning.

Table 4. Questionnaire responses on perceptions of *bek ria that*

Statement	Strongly disagree, n (%)	Disagree, n (%)	Neutral, n (%)	Agree, n (%)	Strongly agree, n (%)
For me, <i>bek ria that</i> means refraining from expressing joy excessively.	3 (2.5)	2 (1.7)	9 (7.5)	41 (34.2)	65 (54.2)
I restrain my joy to avoid something bad happening in the future.	13 (10.8)	16 (13.3)	26 (21.7)	31 (25.8)	34 (28.3)
I understand <i>bek ria that</i> as advice to remain humble and cautious.	5 (4.2)	3 (2.5)	9 (7.5)	42 (35.0)	61 (50.8)
I feel social pressure not to show too much joy.	23 (19.2)	25 (20.8)	32 (26.7)	23 (19.2)	17 (14.2)
I consider <i>bek ria that</i> to be wise advice from the community.	4 (3.3)	4 (3.3)	18 (15.0)	39 (32.5)	55 (45.8)

Note. N = 120; five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Percentages are based on integer counts and may differ slightly because of rounding.

Table 5. Composite-score and inferential results

Analysis	Descriptive result	Test statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Exposure and transmission composite	M = 4.18; SD = .73; 95% CI [4.04, 4.30]	-	-	High exposure and intergenerational transmission
Moral-emotional regulation composite	M = 4.25; SD = .73; 95% CI [4.12, 4.38]	-	-	Strong acceptance of moderation, humility, and community advice
Supernatural-consequence composite	M = 3.47; SD = .96; 95% CI [3.30, 3.64]	-	-	Moderate and comparatively less uniform belief
Perceived social pressure item	M = 2.88; SD = 1.32; 95% CI [2.65, 3.12]	-	-	No clear overall endorsement of social pressure
Moral-emotional vs supernatural consequence	Median = 4.33 vs 3.50	Wilcoxon W = 5531.00	< .001	Moral interpretation was significantly stronger
Exposure/transmission and moral-emotional regulation	Spearman ρ = .42	-	< .001	Moderate positive association
Age group and supernatural-consequence belief	18–30: M = 2.74; 31–45: M = 3.61; 46+: M = 4.29	H(2) = 50.91; ϵ^2 = .42	< .001	Large generational difference
Age group and moral-emotional regulation	18–30: M = 4.24; 31–45: M = 4.25; 46+: M = 4.26	H(2) = 0.19	.908	Moral interpretation remained stable across age groups

The composite analysis strengthens the interpretation beyond isolated percentages. Moral-emotional regulation was substantially stronger than belief in direct supernatural consequences (Wilcoxon W = 5531.00, $p < .001$). Exposure to the phrase was moderately associated with moral-emotional acceptance (Spearman's $\rho = .42$, $p < .001$), suggesting that repeated intergenerational contact may reinforce the phrase as practical social guidance.

The age analysis also clarifies the proposed generational shift. Supernatural-consequence belief increased markedly across the three age groups, $H(2) = 50.91$, $p < .001$, $\epsilon^2 = .42$, whereas moral-emotional regulation did not differ by age, $H(2) = 0.19$, $p = .908$. Younger respondents did not reject the moral value of *bek ria* that; they were primarily less likely to endorse a literal link between excessive joy and misfortune.

Table 6. Qualitative themes related to perceptions of *bek ria* that

Main theme	Social meaning	Representative quotation	Source profile
Emotional	The phrase reminds people to regulate intense expressions	“We were laughing so hard that we lost control, but when	Community figure, Aceh

restraint	of joy during social interaction.	someone said <i>bek ria that</i> , the room became quiet.”	Timur
Behavioural regulation	The phrase is used to encourage caution and self-awareness among both children and adults.	“There are many benefits: we remember God and do not get carried away.”	Community figure, Aceh Timur
Balance	The phrase expresses a perceived need to balance happiness with awareness that circumstances can change.	“Young people are too carefree; one day this may lead to trouble.”	Cultural figure, Nagan Raya
Pedagogical fear	Adults may invoke possible misfortune to secure children’s obedience.	“It is simply a way to scare my child.”	Community figure, Aceh Timur
Declining supernatural belief	Younger people increasingly question the direct causal link between excessive joy and misfortune.	“They no longer believe it, although some still do.”	Cultural figure, Nagan Raya

The perception data reveal a clear hierarchy of meanings. The strongest agreement concerned emotional moderation (88.3%) and humility and caution (85.8%), followed by acceptance of the phrase as wise community advice (78.3%). Agreement that joy should be restrained to prevent something bad was lower (54.2%), while only 33.3% reported social pressure not to display too much joy. The pattern distinguishes moral acceptance from literal belief in supernatural consequences.

The qualitative findings explain this pattern. *Bek ria that* may restrain behaviour, remind people of religious and social obligations, and teach contextual awareness. However, it can also be used to frighten children or discourage spontaneous emotional expression. The divergence between the weak social-pressure result and the interview theme of pedagogical fear indicates that restrictive use may occur in particular families or situations without being uniformly experienced across the community.

DISCUSSION

The Continued Existence of the *Bek Ria That* Belief

The findings show that *bek ria that* exists not merely as a prohibitive phrase but as an intergenerational moral discourse. Its persistence is supported by repeated use in families and everyday social situations. The convergence between questionnaire patterns and interview accounts strengthens this interpretation: respondents widely recognised the phrase, while informants explained how parents, elders, cultural figures, and community leaders transmit it to younger generations.

Compared with studies of *burong tujuh*, pregnancy-related myths, and other Acehnese oral traditions, the present study identifies a distinct form of cultural regulation (Aulia et al., 2025; Husni et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2024; Syahputera et al., 2024). *Bek ria that* is not tied primarily to ritual, illness, or a particular life-cycle event. It operates at the micro-level of everyday interaction, where a brief utterance can immediately change laughter, play, or celebratory behaviour.

From a structural-functionalist perspective, the expression contributes to social order by defining acceptable forms of emotional display. It does not simply reject happiness; it regulates intensity, timing, and appropriateness. The high endorsement of humility and moderation supports this interpretation. Within Parsons' concept of normative integration, such values become effective when collective expectations are internalised as personal moral orientations (Lischka-Schmidt, 2022; Trotsuk, 2024).

The expression can also be understood as a collective representation: an inherited cultural form through which a community communicates shared ideas about risk, propriety, and the moral use of emotion. Collective representations do not require identical literal belief among all members; they can remain socially effective because they provide a recognisable language for judging conduct (Carls, 2022). This helps explain why younger people may question supernatural consequences yet still understand and follow the phrase.

The religious and historical context further shapes the expression. Informants associated *bek ria* that with humility, remembrance of God, and *tasawuf*, while Aceh's experience of conflict and disaster has reinforced cultural sensitivity to uncertainty and sudden change (Abdullah, 2018; Fan, 2006; Smith, 2018). Nevertheless, the present data do not establish that conflict or disaster directly caused the belief. The relationship should therefore be interpreted as contextual rather than causal.

The most important finding is not the disappearance of the expression but a semantic shift. The large age-group effect for supernatural-consequence belief, combined with the absence of an age difference in moral-emotional regulation, suggests that younger people may retain the phrase as advice while rejecting literal magical causality. This pattern is consistent with cultural reinterpretation: inherited language survives because its ethical and relational functions remain useful even when the original explanatory framework weakens.

Acehnese Perceptions of the *Bek Ria* That Belief

Acehnese perceptions of *bek ria* that are ambivalent but patterned in the dataset. Moral-emotional regulation received stronger endorsement than direct supernatural consequence, and the paired comparison was statistically significant. This distinction is crucial: cultural continuity does not require uniform belief in punishment. A phrase may persist because it provides a socially intelligible vocabulary for moderation, humility, and situational awareness.

Social perception is shaped by prior experience, family education, cultural values, and the social environment. Older people may associate the phrase with parental warnings and remembered stories of misfortune. Younger people, exposed to formal education, digital media, and rational explanations, may interpret the same phrase as a convention of politeness and self-control. The generational contrast therefore reflects changing interpretive frameworks rather than a simple opposition between belief and disbelief.

The themes of emotional restraint, behavioural regulation, balance, pedagogical fear, and declining supernatural belief reveal a dual function. Used flexibly, *bek ria* that can encourage self-awareness and respect for context. Used rigidly, it can frighten children, constrain emotional openness, or imply that happiness itself is dangerous. A critical interpretation must therefore distinguish moderation from suppression. This study contributes to cultural anthropology and social psychology by showing how a short oral expression can operate as a mechanism of emotional regulation. It links collective belief, religious morality, family education, and individual behaviour. It also moves the discussion beyond whether myths are rational or irrational by examining how their functions continue when literal belief changes.

The findings have practical implications for cultural preservation and education. Preserving bek ria that should not mean reproducing fear or discouraging healthy joy. It can instead be presented as local wisdom concerning moderation, humility, and sensitivity to social context. The study is limited by purposive sampling, self-reported questionnaire data, the absence of verified respondent-level inferential analysis in the supplied manuscript, and incomplete reporting of instrument validation and qualitative sample size. Future research should compare age cohorts and regions using respondent-level data, report effect sizes, and examine whether the phrase influences emotional well-being or only public expressions of emotion.

CONCLUSION

The phrase bek ria that, literally “do not be too joyful”, continues to function as part of Acehnese oral tradition. It is transmitted through parents, elders, cultural figures, and community leaders and is used to regulate the intensity and social appropriateness of emotional expression. The findings indicate that respondents associate the phrase primarily with humility, caution, self-control, and wise community advice. The analysis indicates that perceptions changed primarily at the level of supernatural explanation rather than moral value. Older age groups showed stronger belief that excessive joy could lead to misfortune, whereas acceptance of moderation, humility, and community advice remained similar across age groups. This pattern distinguishes declining literal belief from continued cultural relevance. Overall, bek ria that illustrates how local culture can connect collective belief, religious morality, family education, and emotional regulation. Its continued relevance depends on a balanced reinterpretation: the values of humility and contextual awareness may be retained, while fear-based interpretations that suppress healthy expressions of happiness should be avoided. The conclusions should be finalised after the authors verify the questionnaire percentages, report the instrument-validity and reliability results, and complete any intended inferential analysis using respondent-level data.

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