

## Literature Review

# Exploring Empathy in The Human Development Perspective and Its Practical Implications Based on The Islamic Foundations

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## Abstract

This study aims to figure out the concept of empathy based on human development perspective and find its practical implication in the Islamic teaching, stated in its fundamental foundations, the Quran and hadiths. The exploration of the issue is based on the purpose to analyze the nature of empathy in human development and to provide a source regarding its implication based on Islamic view. Since the values are presumably derived from humanistic psychology (general knowledge), this study also explores the concept that is linked to the value in Islamic traditions. Descriptive qualitative research using a library study is employed to explore both concepts together with a content analysis for its data representation. The finding shows empathy is primed since infancy and continuously develops following the maturity of each stage of life. They develop similar emotion and process of it but different ways in showing their empathetic behaviors. Connecting to the implication in the Islamic teaching, there are 16 points elaborating the concept of empathy; five from the Quran and 11 from hadiths. Most of them are described in various ways of teaching but still closely relate to human social interaction. The result of this study reveals that both psychology and Islam are similar in defining empathy as a universal value in human life which drives people to the ability of understanding others' feeling and being compassionate on it.

## Keywords

Empathy; human development; Islamic foundations; Islamic teaching; empathetic behaviors

## Introduction

Empathy is an extraordinary skill that cannot be separated from human life. Most of daily life activities involve that skill which according to Howe (2013) it humanizes people and their relationship (p. 3). He also explains the absence of empathy will cause the world feels harsh, indifferent, less caring, even

brutal. This is because the existence of empathy as an emotional ability concern on foundational to many moral systems and facilitate social interactions (Cameron, et all, 2019). It strongly correlates to the basis of humanistic values because it responds to human psychological needs manifested in human positive behaviors such as kindness, helping, benevolence, and so on (Mohammadi, et al., 2020). Therefore, empathy contains humanistic value in which basically remains to everyone's self.

There are many psychologists and philosophers discussing about empathy. They concern on various minds in defining the concept of empathy. One thought out by prominent figure in humanistic theory, Rogers (1995), who portrays the state of empathy, or being empathic, is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the "as if" condition (p. 140). Another comes from Bloom (2017) who says that empathy is the act of coming to experience the world as you think someone else does (p. 24). Meanwhile, Dereli, E., & Aypay, A. (2012) defines empathy as an emotional dimension which is generally described as an effective characteristic that facilitates feeling any other person's feelings (p. 1263). Although certain definitions of empathy are argued differently, they coincide and complete each other which reflects on a process of mental activity involving the feeling of people's understanding and taking a part to address own self and thought to be in that condition.

According to Keen (2007), empathy is a vicarious and spontaneous sharing of affect provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading (p. 4). Meanwhile, Segal (2018) describes empathy as putting ourselves in the place of others, the proverbial 'walk in another's shoes' that requires us to try to understand what another person is thinking or feeling (p. 24). Both portray empathy as an understanding of other's emotions and try to put our feeling into that condition. Sometimes, empathy looks similar with sympathy, compassion, pity, or concern, however, these emotions are not same. They might involve empathy but are different in the practice (Segal, 2018).

Empathy perceives kindness, respect, compassion, concern, and consideration for others (Azarchi, 2020). This can be nurtured, stanced, developed, and extended through the imagination (Bloom, 2017). Continued with the notion, empathy can be used to motivate others to do goodness during their social interaction. Furthermore, Goleman (2020), who is one of the contemporary authors and teachers contributed greatly to the understanding of empathy, regards empathy as a tool to build on self-awareness that in detail he said 'the more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we will be in reading feelings' (p. 172). Those bring a comprehensive view of empathy that is a value driving people to do goodness and act valuably into others' life.

Empathy had been a topic discussed over a century ago. It was proposed by Charles Darwin that empathy as the prelude to compassionate action has been a powerful aid to survival in nature's toolkit (Goleman, 2006). In other words, it is a means of lubricating sociability which becomes the primary survival strategy for human or other primate species, because they cannot live alone in this life. In the case, empathy takes its role to human to build the sense of humanity in provoking social connection into good perception. Moreover, Dale (2014) mentions that it represents many levels of rich and heartfelt experiences while it connects to other words having great meaning such as love or caring (p. 11). She also delineates the experience in the case of empathy, here, is meant as one of connection both human emotional and social ability. It is analogous with the poetry which can provoke a compassionate connection into the soul. Therefore, empathy values encourage the qualities of connection and bonding into human relationship which allow them to provoke their intimacy with new bunch of love.

McLaren (2013) declares that, nowadays, empathy becomes the major topic of multidisciplinary and international interest. It reveals that it is an ideal that has the power both to transform our own lives and to bring about fundamental social change (Krzmaric, 2014). Although empathy is more about individual emotion, it consists of a force for good in social interaction, because more empathetic people will be kinder and more caring and more moral. Otherwise, people who lack empathy are psychopaths, and



those are the worst people in the world (Bloom, 2017). Based on those statements, it seems that empathy takes an important role in the human lives to inculcate good strong emotions while interacting to others.

Furthermore, Dale (2014), with her concept of the spiritual power of empathy, views empathy as a gift instilled in human being that promotes the ultimate of spiritual purposes on learning about love (Dale, 2014). In this way, empathy is continually deemed to ask human moving beyond individual self to experience greater closeness to others with all of life. It consists of spiritual energy to gradually intend human emotion in expressing the sense into physical energy. In short, empathy inevitably seems as a value in human social interaction because it remains into their existence.

Therefore, according to preceding notions, empathy can be fully understood as a dependent material into human life, both spiritually, emotionally, and physically. While people can engage in a condition empathically, it means they also fully engage to the physical aspects as well. For instance, empathy encourages people to feel others' condition and it simultaneously provokes them to respond it in accordance with appropriate actions. Simply speaking, all forms of empathy invite people to restrain from egoism and promote them to endure high consciousness in the expansion of humanizing others and it closely relates to the main discussion of this study, human development.

In psychology, human development is an interesting topic which mainly discusses what happens in every stage of human life (Santrock, 2016). Its key element is to know the universal features, the individual variations, and the nature of human development because each stage has a distinct and it allows us to find the rhythm and meaning of people's lives to understand human life better. Generally, its theories are about some aspects in human development such as cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, but in specific, it also discusses a topic of spirituality because it becomes a part of important things in determining individuals' health and personality (Santrock, 2016). According to Santrock (2016), human development also explores human life and its connection to religion because many research reveal this aspect positively relates to human in facing challenges in their lives (Santrock, 2016). According to this instance, it seems that human develops with spirituality and it has been appointed as their nature in their life.

The importance of empathy has also attracted many people to spur on this field. Some of them concern on research regarding its development, whilst some of them focus on its campaign to the world. This movement has allowed them to spread the values into the global word because the use of digital media gives an impact into its implementation right now. For instance, research conducted by Pinasti and Kustanti (2018) reveals 1.4% children in Indonesia who experience gadget addicted show low score in empathetic responses (Pinasti & Kustanti, 2018). This is a correlational study between gadget addiction having another interesting result. The data shows the level of empathy score are strongly influenced by the intensity of gadget use; higher score in empathy scale happened to people who have low use of their smartphone, and vice versa. Meanwhile, research from Parasumaran et al (2017) elaborates the statistics that 84% share of global population could not go a single day without their mobile phones. Another data from Septiani, et al (2020) portrays 84% children in Indonesia get violence such as bullying, beating, and murder. The phenomena indicate that empathy impacts to human live and can change along their experiences. Nevertheless, empathy becomes a predictor of peace, goodness, and other valuable things into human life. This is a universal value in that everyone is supposed to instill it into own self.

However, regarding spiritual aspect, there is research that reveals it brings great influence in human development and becomes the fundamental aspect in proceeding this life, which is religious beliefs (Alghamidi, 2006). Other research also explores the relationship between empathy and religion which are mentioned they lead to goodness in human life and must be interconnected (Yarigholi & Bahadorikhosroshashi, 2018; Clabough, 2019). This finding is emphasized by research from Lowicki & Zajenkowski (2017) which said that both empathy and general religiosity were negatively associated with psychopathy and Machiavellianism, and that religious beliefs were positively associated with



empathy (Lowicki & Zajenkowski, 2017). Another research comes from Bauck (2022) reporting similar result in which he observed the role of religion in clinical ethics consultations. Therefore, empathy as a universal value is a part of religious beliefs and both are contributed into human existence in this life.

Meanwhile, this study merely focuses on Islamic religion as its main discussion. In some research, it appeals that between empathy and Islamic teaching meet its interest. One of them is research conducted by Alghamdi (2006) in his dissertation entitled ‘Roles of Islamic Educational Values in Developing Emotional Skills’. It elaborates some concepts of empathy perceived in *hadiths*. He reports one of examples regarding the value stated in a *hadith* from a statement of the Prophet Muhammad who said ‘none of you truly believers until he wishes for his brothers what he wishes for himself’ (Alghamdi, 2006). He also states some other *hadiths* showing empathetic behaviors in his writing, however, the focus is not only to explore it since another focus of the writing is to describe an integration of emotional intelligence skills (one of them is empathy) in a curriculum within an Islamic philosophical framework.

Another research exploring empathy in Islamic values is from Khasanah (2013) with the title ‘*Kecerdasan Emosional Pendidik dalam al-Qur’an*’ (Teacher’s emotional intelligences in al-Quran). It elaborates some empathetic behaviours stated in the Quran but limited to the discussion for teachers’ positionality. However, some findings in empathy shows inappropriate to the meaning of empathy itself, but they consider to altruism which is the further step after showing empathy.

The other interesting research is from Yarigholi and Bahadorikhosroshahi (2018) who conducted a comparative study between the concept of empathy from the perspective of psychology and Islamic foundation. It reveals that the emphasized Islamic values (good deeds, cooperation, collaboration, justice, and fairness) shows the closest meaning to the concept of empathy from the psychological point of view. The development of empathy between the perspective of psychology and Islamic foundations is encountered. It is described that there are common components and otherwise in different areas. As a conclusion, the researchers delineated that in the light of Islamic teaching, Muslim can achieve more growth and flourishing in this field. Unfortunately, this study was written in Arabic language that the readers, who do not master the language, cannot understand the detail information except in the section of abstract and conclusion, which are stated in English.

The latest research comes from Hanggara (2019) who discussed regarding “*Kepemimpinan Empati Menurut al-Quran*” (Empathetic Leadership according to al-Quran). This research is prominent to this study because it elaborates the values of empathy stated in the Quran which the focus on leadership themes. This finding reveals there are 16 verses talking about empathetic leadership which some of them are also stated in this study.

Research in connecting empathy to Islamic teaching is tempting, as well as it is still limited. The author gets an impediment in finding other recent research which combines both discussions, empathy and Islamic values. Therefore, this study runs deeply into the discussion of elaborating empathy more comprehensively from human development perspective and connect it to its implication in the Islamic teaching, which presents the issue in different ways to meet its novelty due to the familiarity of the theme.

Nevertheless, a discussion regarding both concepts, human development and religion, become interesting since they encounter into human life. They also spur to the themes of human issues, including empathy. However, the focus of this study is not only to find their connections towards the issue, but also to concern on its development according to human development theories and its implications based on a religious belief, Islam. In more detail, it explores empathy based on the aspects of human development in psychological term and find some sources towards its implication in Islamic teaching stated in the Islamic foundations, the Quran and *hadiths*. The author formulates two research questions, ‘how does empathy develop based on human development perspectives and how does Islam elaborate it in its teaching’, that are answered by employing a descriptive qualitative method.



This study has some significances in some ways: emphasizing the presence of empathy in human development and Islamic teaching and being a reference in planning teaching materials of humanistic values for Islamic education curriculum. Therefore, another objective of this study is also appealed to elaborate empathy from both psychology and Islamic term by encounter.

## Method

This current research employed constructivism paradigm using descriptively qualitative approach through library research. In this instance, the author used text documentation technique to collect the data. It gathered the sources of data from books, the Quran and hadiths, journal articles, and other supported materials to produce descriptive data related to the discussion. Data consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary is from the Quran and hadiths and some references of psychology books. The secondary data is taken from Islamic scholars' texts to give comprehensive understanding regarding its interpretations.

In finding the result from al-Quran and hadiths, the author used the method of "*tafseer maudhu'i*" or thematic interpretation. It means the data was first collected by selecting the similar theme to the discussion based on chronological order of the verses. In specific, first was searching through the keywords related to the topic using the software of *myislam.org* and *quran.kemenag.go.id*. Second was checking the relevant topic in the Quran index. Third was discovering them from the previous studies discussing regarding empathy.

Meanwhile, data collection from hadiths was also used in the same way as the method employed for the Quran verses. The authors searched the data through selecting related discussion in the main references; *Hadith Arbain*, *Sahih Bukhori*, and *Sahih Muslim*. Then, collecting some scholars' texts was to find its interpretation from the side of Islamic teaching. Last, the data was also gathered from previous studies related to the relevant topic.

The keywords used in locating the relevant topic were good behaviors, neighborhood, and brotherhood. After finding the data, it was analyzed using content analysis with further process of specific categorization and deselection. For the interpretation of the Quran verses, it was emphasized using *Tafseer Ibnu Katsir*, *al-Misbah*, *Fi Zhilalil Quran*, *al-Azhar*, and *tafsir Kementrian Agama RI*. To ensure the validity of data, triangulation was performed.

The limitation of this research is merely an exploration to the concepts of empathy in textual versions of the Quran and hadiths without analyzing deeply to its contextual meaning from its *asbaabun nuzul* and *asbaabul wurudh*. This is because the limited ability of the researcher in the Qur'anic interpretation and in reaching many sources in other languages than English and Bahasa, especially Arabic language.

## Results and Discussion

### Empathy and Its Development

Based on Clabough's writing (2019), the concept of empathy invented about 150 years ago which was derived from a theory of art appreciation (Clabough, 2019). Linguistically, the word of empathy comes from the Greek *empathia*, literally *en*, meaning "in," and *pathos*, meaning "feeling or passion" (Clabough, 2019a; Stevens & Woodruff, 2018). In the beginning, the idea was used to fully appreciate a work of art. It was Robert Vischer, the first philosopher who use in print the German expression *Einfühlun*, meaning 'feeling into' as an expression for analyzing works of art in 1909 (Stevens & Woodruff, 2018a). It urges people to project own self into the art and get in touch into its meaning. The artists believe that the art could make a feeling. Therefore, Edward Bradford Titchener, as one of the founding fathers of the psychology and of the school of structural psychology, translated German



expression into the English term which is empathy and applied it to the experience of analyzing human behavior (Azarchi, 2020). Through the historical perspective, it seems that psychology used the word empathy by copying from the art world and turned it into a thinking verb, in which to empathize means to understand someone else's point of view and put own self into that person's world, through imagining other people's feeling and predicting what might make them feel better.

Empathy is a value in which people were born with this (Goleman, 1989; Borba, 2016). There is research to support this theory by doing some treatment to newborn babies. An experiment is conducted by giving audio recording of a crying baby to a new-born and it found amazing discoveries that the newborn baby turned to cry as well. This was firstly conducted by Marvin L. Simner (1971) who also portrayed that crying was not simply a response to disturbing stimulus because, according to his finding, the infants did not cry as much as when exposed to equally loud and intense nonhuman sound (Borba, 2016). According to other research from Martin Hoffman and Goleman as cited in Borba (2016), the crying baby responded to another crying baby seems to be 'the earliest precursor of empathy'. Goleman (2020) in his book also mentions that the roots of empathy can be traced to infancy from the day they are born (Goleman, 2020).

Empathy continuously develops following human development in each period of life (Ries, 2018). Hoffman in Goleman (2020) featured empathy as a natural progression from infancy onward (Goleman, 2020). He also clearly explained that each stage of life has different types of showing these behaviours. For example, infants express their empathy by crying to see other infants cry, whilst in the older ages they become more aware to soothe another crying child by offering them toys or other things. By late childhood, the level of empathy emerges to be advanced through their ability to understand other people's distress and see this as something to effect on life. In the further life span, it can develop to the buttress of moral convictions such as alleviating misfortune and injustice.

McLaren (2013) in her book 'The Art of Empathy' divides empathy into two; affective empathy (viscerally feeling) and cognitive empathy (objectively understanding) (McLaren, 2013). In another source, cognitive empathy is also called as 'social cognition' or 'theory of mind' whilst affective empathy as 'emotional empathy' or 'social empathy' (Bloom, 2017; Clabough, 2019). To the connection of human development perspective, in psychological term, its development closely relates to the three aspects. They are cognitive, emotional, and spiritual (Goleman, 1989; Borba, 2016; McLaren, 2013; Dale, 2014; Krznaric, 2014; Bloom, 2017; Riess, 2018; Segal, 2018; Clabough, 2019; Azarchi, 2020). Those aspects are prominent in revealing the development of empathy towards the human life.

### *Cognitive domain*

Neuroscientists had discovered the anatomy and chemistry of brain in the existence of empathy in the past years ago (Borba, 2016). It reveals that there is an organ has specific features that allow people to develop empathetic responses, or, in other words, human beings are primed for empathy. McLaren (2013) describes the central development of empathy closely relates to neurological structures called mirror neurons and the hormone oxytocin (McLaren, 2013). Those mirror neurons provoke human to duplicate the emotional or sensory state of another's mind and body, therefore, people can easily feel what is happening to others' condition (Dale, 2014).

Research conducted to this development find the process of both, mirror neurons and hormone oxytocin, is sometimes called parallel circuitry, meaning that the reactions in expressing empathy run parallel to what someone else is experiencing, doing, or feeling (Dale, 2014). It is said that the circuitry act also likes a sort of neural Wi-Fi that monitors what is going on in others and people can assess others' feelings, movements, and intentions instantaneously and unconsciously. Mirror neurons are located in amygdala which is the part of the brain involved with experiencing emotions (Azarchi, 2020). They continue to work following human development since the first stage of life, infancy.



Clabough (2019) also portrays that brain areas which are responsible for empathy are spread throughout the brain (Clabough, 2019). However, there is no empathy centre due to its development, but the neuronal connections happened in mirror neurons work in many diverse brain areas. As an impact, it generates or prevents someone's empathetic behaviors. Furthermore, Goleman in Dale (2014) mentions that the process of it is highly intense to the active actions rather than the passive ones. It means people might be most emphatic in the condition of trying to be empathic (Dale, 2014). This finding tends to show that although empathy is something nature to human life, it needs a conscious mind to mature into empathic beings and actively involves to others' emotions with love and compassion.

Cognitive empathy, which is proceeded in this cognitive aspect, develops naturally in early childhood, starting from age four or five. In this stage, empathy is expressed at the time when children find the emerging of distinction from other children. In the older ages, this typical empathy becomes the ability to appreciate on a basic level that emotions are vary and other people can think and feeling in different ways separated from own self. It is also called 'theory of mind' allowing people to the next step for 'perspective taking' that provokes them to see the world through the eyes of another person (Riess, 2018).

#### *Emotional domain*

Krznaric (2014) defines empathy as an involvement of stepping into someone's shoes, gaining an understanding of their feelings (the affective aspect) and perspectives (the cognitive aspect). The definitions also means that it is an emotion to express own feeling based on other people's condition. In psychological term, the response that people give in showing empathy refers to affective empathy or also called emotional empathy (Riess, 2018). The majority of people commonly have this typical empathy, especially for children. It also provokes people to get easily sad while reading a sad story or watching painful scenes.

This typical empathy develops in the aspect of emotion, which is predominantly processed in affective domains. Ries (2018) mentions evidence that empathy is partially hardwired into brain and splits into three different aspects: emotional, cognitive, and motivation for an empathetic response (Ries, 2018). Emotional domain is in the first because it predates the development of cognitive empathy (Clabough, 2019). It is because the thought processes behind it is much simpler. It is also portrayed the ability to express empathy emotionally develops early and rapidly in children (Clabough, 2019). Babies have been primed with empathetic behaviors through crying whilst toddlers will show interest to others' distress through asking, such as what happened. By 2 years old and above, nearly all children will engage to the expression through giving hugs and connecting to the emotions. McLaren (2013) mentions this aspect as a key aspect of building empathy (McLaren, 2019). It is because emotional awareness will accurately identify and work with the emotions, thoughts, and intentions of others.

#### *Spiritual domain*

Dale (2014) in her book 'The Spiritual Power of Empathy' discusses spiritual aspect in the development of empathy. She clearly stated that human are spiritual beings that travel the universe through their souls (Dale, 2014). Focusing to the concern on spiritual gifts, she also mentions it becomes the source of energy in human being to gain intuitive insight from the Divine, which is in a nutshell, it can do instant messaging whilst the physical needs to operate manually.

There are three main forms of spiritual gifts involved in empathy (Dale, 2014). The first category is the bodily empathic gifts. This category employs empathy as something registered in human physically. It closely relates to the five senses of human development, namely clear sensing, clear tasting, clear smelling, clear touching, and clear knowing. The second category is clear seeing and the third is clear hearing. The two last are considered as a set or 'family' because each can perceive the multiple forms.



Regarding this domain, Dale (2014) also states that nearly every religion and culture emphasizes our spiritual nature (Dale, 2014). She also believed that all people are able to connect with spiritual or psychic information, however, most of them do not realize it. One of the descriptions to explain it is about empathy. In a spiritual circle, empathetic ability is a spiritual gift, in which people can make someone to feel or to fully access and develop others' empathy.

Furthermore, spiritual empaths will provoke people to have a sense of the heart of the Divine and also are able to determine what 'God wants or does not' for themselves or others (Dale, 2014). They also can indicate the ones who experience with honesty and dishonesty which is a part of spiritual gifts. This also allows people to engage with others' spirits and to the Greater Spirit's intentions and dreams. However, there is no specific ages for people developing this spiritual empathy, but Dale (2014) in some parts of her book told stories describing adults are hardly experiencing this kind of empathy because the focus of a spiritual empath is to read the purity of another's soul and the way how people present in the world (p. 255). In other words, this domain develops in the older stages of people whom they reach ages of their wisdom.

### **The Islamic Foundations**

There are two fundamental sources in Islamic traditions, namely the *Quran* and *al-hadiths*. They become the main normative guideline for Muslim which consist of Islamic educational thought (Sahin, 2013). The *Quran* is the Word of God documented in a book which is called itself as guidance for mankind (*hudan lil-nas*, 2:185) (Rahman, 2009; Ali, 2006; Sahin, 2013). It means that the *Quran* is aimed to man and his behaviors, and it also offers a relation to various problems of life (Rahman, 2009; Ali, 2006). Furthermore, Sahin (2013) mentions that in actualizing its role the *Quran* uses a humanist approach because it places psychosocial characteristics of human beings and the process of human self-growth as the major theme for its discourse (Sahin, 2013). Goitein (1966), one of the most influential Western scholars of Islamic culture, reports that the *Quran* is 'the most human of the books of the revelation' (p.22). According to the brief descriptions, it indicates that Islam has strong humanistic tendency toward its teaching and the *Quran* fully deals with the nature of human beings.

Besides that, the *Quran* is also called as a book of ethics (Nasr, et al., 2019). It reports the discernment of criteria good human living, such as between truth and falsehood, beauty, and ugliness, or good and evil. Its ethical teachings concern on individual ethics, virtues that pertain specifically to individuals and social ethics such as justice and generosity. They are the basic values for any society which could be called by properly Islamic. Therefore, it seems there is no doubt that the *Quran* is established in a purpose of displaying a viable social order on earth that will be just and ethically based. (Ali, 2006).

Although the *Quran* is destined to the source of Islamic foundation, its values are for humanity as the major themes of its discourse (Sahin, 2013). Along with its psychosocial characteristics of human being, it turns into an educational discourse that aim to guide people and facilitate among them an emergence of a humanity that is balanced, grateful and faithful (Ali, 2006; Sahin, 2013; Nasr, et al., 2019; Rahman, 2019). Its messages are primarily concerned on changing human characters and inviting them to come to the righteous path (Rahman, 2019). In sum, it can be seen that the *Quran* is not a theological book but rather a profound reflection upon human life to become a constant companion for Muslim in the journey of this life (Sahin, 2013; Nasr, et al., 2019).

Sahin (2013), in his further report, portrays the *Quran* as God's curriculum to educate humanity in His knowledge and wisdom (3:48; 12:3-7; 96:4-5) (Sahin, 2013). It also aims to assist people to realize their humanity in all aspects of life because it comes from the Divine source. The humanistic approach stated in the *Quran* is clearly in line with the universal concepts of human life described in its pedagogical values. As an impact, it becomes the central document in the Muslim consciousness and in so many



respects it obviously provides a satisfactory solution for the various problems in any characters of human life (Ali, 2006; Rosenthal, 2007).

Nevertheless, it is obvious why the *Quran* claims itself to be capable of guiding all mankind. This is for the reason that all matters in human life are stated in the *Quran*, which comprehensively lead people to assign such importance aspects in their life. Connecting to the main discussion of this study, the concept of empathy, which is presumably derived from humanistic psychology, reveals a link toward the Qur'anic values. It encounters since the *Quran* is entirely human focused in its interpretation such as what have been discussed in the earlier paragraphs. Sahin (2013) also delineates that the *Quran* appeals to the human faculties of understanding and thinking that will bring about a genuine response to its Divine call (p. 197).

Besides the *Quran*, *hadiths* become an ample resource of the Islamic foundations. Its role is to complete the function of *Quran* in guiding human life into good perceptions. In this sense, *hadiths* is aimed to convey lessons from the teaching of Prophet Muhammad which based on the Quranic curriculum (Abu Ghuddah, 2017). According to Abu Ghuddah (2017) *hadiths* is from Arabic word, literally a "saying" which report a tradition about the Prophet Muhammad or one of his Companions, either the whole corpus or the genre of such traditions (p. 165). Another definition comes from Goitein (2010) who delineates *hadiths* as the report containing the prophetic Sunnah emerged as a new epistemic genre that came to be equated with 'ilm or knowledge in general (Goitein, 2010, p. 193). In addition to *sunnah*, it regards to the way of life, for example the prophet's behaviors and the experience of his community (Goitein, 2010, p. 25). Through those definitions, it can arise a simple understanding that *hadith* is a report of prophetic life describing his or companion's traditions during the prophetic period.

For Muslims, studying the history of the Prophet Muhammad's life is a duty because it will give them an insight toward how Islam to be implemented into practice (Salahi, 2010). As a God's messenger, he portrays a perfection which is described as a blessing for human in the universe. It is stated in the *Quran* with the sound, "We have not sent you (Prophet Muhammad) except to the whole of mankind as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; but most people do not know" (21:107) (Abu Ghuddah, 2017). This Qur'anic expression refers to the role of the Prophet Muhammad as the best model in the life who spreads universal values. Moreover, he is called as 'People of the Book' because he has been given access to Divine knowledge and wisdom which is stated in the Quran (Salahi, 2010; Sahin, 2013; Abu Ghuddah, 2017). It provokes *hadiths* to take an important role in the Islamic foundations after the *Quran* because it records the Islamic values from prophetic teaching to be implemented in the life of his followers.

As can be seen, both the *Quran* and *hadiths*, as the Islamic foundations, contain humanistic values which teach people the way how to socially treat others in good ways. Their presence is inseparable toward Muslim daily life; however, they preserve universal values regarding human relationship in the world. The values put people in the same level of humanity, which is described in this study as 'empathy'.

In general, religious beliefs and practice in Islam are in line with the value of empathy in psychological term. It contributes substantially to the use and the development of empathy in human daily life. Both psychology field and the Islamic foundations have appealed empathy as a value which is important in building good social relationship among people. They also focus on the capacity of people to be sensitive to others and express emotions wisely. However, this part of the research will merely elaborate the common ground theories between Islamic values and empathy. As the Islamic foundations, the Quran and the hadiths consists of many teaching that obviously indicate and promote the values of empathy in the practical life activities. In this instance, selected the Quran verses and hadiths that support them will be presented together with their respected interpretations.

### *The Quran verses*



As the first foundation, Rahman (2009) said that ‘there was no doubt a central aim of the Quran was to establish a viable social order on earth that will be just ethically based’ (p. 25). This means the Quran also manages how people interact and build good relationship each other. It allows Muslim to perceive and be aware of other people’s condition which is a part of implementing empathy. The first verse related to this instance comes from surah *An-Nisa* (4) verse 4, “*and when kinsfolk and orphans and the needy are present at the division (of the heritage), bestow on them therefrom and speak kindly unto them*”.

The verse is about a division of heritage which contains a command to share it if there are other family, orphans, or poor present during the process of it. It implicitly shows an empathetic action through the ability to feel what they are thinking and feeling so that they are supposed to share together. Although the context in this verse is heritage, but it can be widely interpreted to other materials such as food (while cooking or eating) or others.

Another verse showing empathetic action is in surah *at-Tawba* (9) verse 128 which sounds “*there has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; (he is) concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.*” According to Quraish Shihab (2002), this ayah explicitly states empathy meaning in the Prophet’s character, concerning over us as his believers (Shihab, 2002). It indicates that the Prophet had a deep feeling to his believers and wanted goodness for them. this ayah also shows that he is a role model in showing the value of empathy and teaches his believers to do it in daily life.

There is another ayah in the Quran explaining empathy in people’s interaction, namely surah *an-Nisa* (4) ayah 86, “*and when you are greeted with a greeting, greet (in return) with one better than it or (at least) return it (in a like manner). Indeed, Allah is ever, over all things, an Accountant.*” Quraish Shihab (2002) and Ibnu Katsir (2002) explain this ayah shows empathy by respecting each other (Shihab, 2002; ad-Dimasyqi, 2002). In a further explanation, he mentioned when people are treated respectably, they are supposed to respond it with the same or preferably more. This also drives people to behave positively, such as caring, to others in daily interaction and it urges people to feel before act. This meaning is emphasized by *al-maududi* who also said that good manners and courtesy are to be matched by the Muslims to pay at least as much as respect and consideration to others as is paid to them or more.

This relates to another ayah describing how people can show their empathy through behaviors. It is stated in surah *al-Isra* ayah 23, “*and your Lord has decreed that you nor worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both reach old age (while) with you, say not to them (so much as), “uff” and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word*”. This ayah mentions a good behaviors to other people, moreover to the elderly ones. According to Quraish Shihab (2002), this ayah explains a command to show positive attitudes towards parents by saying soft and good word (Shihab, 2002, p. 443). It shows empathy because it indicates our respect to other people, feeling other people while responding to their act.

The similar meaning contains in another surah, which is *al-Hujurat* (14) verse 11, “*O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule (another) people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule (other) women; perhaps they may be better than them. and do not insult one another and do not call each other by (offensive) nickname. Wretched is the name of disobedience after (one’s) faith. And whoever does not repent-then it is those who are the wrongdoers.*” This long verse clearly states to keep understanding to other people’s condition by not giving a negative justification or saying bad names. It shows empathetic value in which people try to feel as if they are in the same position. They also have to consider to any words or behaviour to respond.

The last but not at least, surah *al-Maidah* (5) verse 32 explains how a killed Muslim will affect on others Muslim’s feeling and whatsoever. It sounds “*because of that, We decreed upon the children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption (done) in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, (even) after that, throughout*

*the land, were transgressors.*” According to *tafseer* from Religious Ministry Affairs (2011), this verse has a story for Qabil who murdered his brother that affected on human life. Therefore, this verse is about to command human to not easily kill people unreasonably. If it happens, it seems as if he murders all people in the world entirely. Otherwise, if he can save one person’s life, it seems he has saved all people as a whole. This meaning shows empathy to others by understanding the feeling of a lost or happiness while it happens to one person.

The preceding paragraphs mention some verses in the Quran which state the values of empathy. From them, it seems that empathy becomes one of main topic discussed in the Quran and it has a position as the value which is important towards human interactions. It also mentions that the Prophet as the role model had showed his empathetic actions to his believers. Related to the instance, it will be elaborated further in the next part.

### *Al-Hadiths*

Hadiths are the ample resources that support people to have empathy. One of hadiths regarding the value can be seen in a statement from the Prophet who stated in hadith arbain no. 236 that *“none of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself”* (An-Nawawi, 2001, p. 6). The hadith comprehensively deals with the concept of empathy and explicitly command Muslims to have the value towards other Muslims in their life. Simply saying, when a Muslim likes the same thing for other Muslims which he does for himself, then he will be obviously entertaining goodwill for other fellow Muslims. Therefore, it considers Muslim to adopt good positive attitudes at the community which will allow them to create a peaceful life. In other words, this hadith encourages Muslim to have the feeling of empathy towards their attitudes in daily life.

Another hadith focuses on empathy is a hadith from sahih Bukhari no. 6011, *“Narrated An-Nu’man bin Bashir, Allah’s Messenger said, ‘You see the believers as regards their being merciful among themselves, showing love among themselves, and being kind among themselves, resembling one body, so that, if any part of the body is not well then the whole body shares the sleeplessness (insomnia) and fever with it’”* (al-Bukhari, 1997). This hadith says that Muslims are akin to a living person. When a person get sickness to a part of his body, such as suffering from a toothache, it will effect on other parts of body which provoke him to unable doing regular activities. Therefore, this hadith indicates Muslims need to take care of others and keep empathy between themselves. When a Muslim get a difficulty or a sickness, so others will also feel its pain.

There is one long hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari which indicates the value of empathy. It is stated in hadith no. 1311, *“narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah, a funeral procession passed in front of us and the Prophet stood up and we too stood up. We said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger, this is the funeral procession of a Jew.’ He said, ‘whenever you see a funeral procession, you should stand up.’”* (al-Bukhari, 1997). This hadith means a command to respect other from whatever religions. It also indicates the Prophet’s teaching to his companions in showing empathy to others although they belong to another race, religion, or faith.

According to Alghamdi (2006), this hadith has also a message to deliver a logical question, “if one is required to show empathy for the dead, how about to the living one” (p. 17). It contains a clear message that people need to build good relationship which respect the common bonds among each other’s. Therefore, empathetic value taught by the Prophet is destined to all kinds of human characteristics, not only for Muslims in specific.

Hadith 481 from Bukhari states another text regarding empathy, *“Narrated Abu Musa, the Prophet said, ‘a faithful believer is like the bricks of a wall, reinforcing each other.’ While (saying that) the Prophet clasped his hand by interlocking his fingers”* (al-Bukhari, 1997). This hadith states an analogy as ‘the bricks of a wall’ -strengthening each other, which indicates if one part seems shaky, other parts will strengthen as one building. It shows a value of empathy because it means people need to feel and think to other’s condition to help each other.



Empathy will provoke people to understand others and treat them in such good behaviours. This value can be seen from a sahih Muslim no. 161, "*Abdullah bin 'Amr bin ash said, 'a man asked the Messenger of Allah, 'which of the Muslim is best?' he said, 'the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslim are safe'*" (Sahih Muslim, 2007). It indicates that Muslims need to feel other's condition and keep them safe from their presence.

Imam Malik in his kitab of al-Mawatha (1980) mentions the Prophet's command to have empathy as Muslim's lifestyle. He said, "*not among my group of people who do not care about the affairs of their fellow Muslims*" (Malik, 1980). This hadith clearly states empathy becomes a value that is supposed to integrate into Muslim life. It urges people to care to others and it needs an ability to feel and understand, which is a part of empathy. This hadith also shows that empathy become a prioritized value in Islamic teaching. Moreover, it is an indicator of good Muslims as mentioned in the preceding hadiths.

Other hadiths showing empathy happened during the Prophet's regarding being an imam of salah. It is described in Sahih Bukhari no. 671, which sounds "*Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, 'if anyone of you leads the people in the prayer, he should shorten it for amongst them are the weak, the sick and the old; and if anyone among your prays alone then he may prolong (the prayer) as much as he wishes.'*" The Prophet also gave a model into this hadith implication, it can be seen from another hadith in Sahih Bukhari no. 675 which sounds, "*Narrated Abdullah bin Abi Qatada: My father said, 'the Prophet said, 'when I stand for prayer, I intend to prolong it but on hearing the cries of a child, I cut it short, as I dislike to trouble the child's mother'*" (Al-Bukhari, 1997, p. 171). Both hadiths reveal the Prophet's empathetic action in one of his daily lives. He observed other people's condition and gave his empathy on it.

another empathetic action is also taught by the Prophet regarding the relationship to neighbour. Narrated by Bukhari in kitab *al-Adab al-Mufrud* hadith no. 112, it sounds, "*Ibn 'Abbas told Ibn az-Zubayr, 'I heard the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, say, 'a man is not a believer who fills his stomach while his neighbour is hungry.'*" This hadith explicitly teaches Muslims to care of neighbour, as the closest people in the living, by paying attention to their condition. The empathy value stated in this hadith also asks them to share happiness to others and connect to other people suffer.

The last but not at least, empathy is described by the Prophet in a long hadith in the text from Ahmad no. 256 and Tabarani no. 7679 (Abu Ghuddah, 2017, p. 70). It says, "*reported on the authority of Abu Umamah al-Bahili, 'that young man came to the Prophet and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Permit me to commit fornication.'* Those present turned to him, rebuked him and they told him to 'stop stop!'. The Prophet said, 'come to me', so he went and sat down near the Prophet. He asked him, 'would you like it to happen to your mother?' 'By God, no! O Messenger of Allah may Allah makes me your ransom,' the young man replied. He said, 'and people also loath it for their mothers.' The Prophet asked, 'would you like it to happen to your daughter?' 'By God, no! O Messenger of Allah may Allah make me your ransom,' the young man replied. He said, 'and people also loath it for their daughters.' The Prophet asked, 'would you like it to happen to your sister?' 'By God, no! O Messenger of Allah may Allah make me your ransom,' the young man replied. He said, 'and people also loath it for their sisters.' The Prophet asked, 'would you like it to happen to young paternal aunt?' 'By God, no! O Messenger of Allah may Allah make me your ransom,' the young man replied. He said, 'and people also loath it for their paternal aunts.' The Prophet asked would you like to happen to your maternal aunt?' 'By God, no! O Messenger of Allah may Allah make me your ransom,' the young man replied. He said, 'and people also loath it for their maternal aunts.' Then the Prophet placed his hand on (the chest of) the young man and prayed, 'O Allah! Forgive his sin, purify his heart and reinforce his chastity.'"

The hadith contains a story in which the Prophet teaches the value of empathy. While there was a young man came to ask a sensitive question (fornication), he would not verily get angry and tried to understand his condition. In responding to his question, the Prophet gave an analogy by asking him (the young man) to think for putting himself to that position. Therefore, this hadith includes the meaning of empathy,



putting own self in others' condition, from the Prophet's command to the young man. Through this hadith, it seems that the Prophet emphasizes empathy to his believers for any acts to do towards this life.

From the mentioned verses and hadiths, it can be seen that the Islamic foundations have the elaboration of empathy in its teaching. Both Quranic and prophetic teaching emphasize it as the value which the Prophet himself was the doer. Moreover, in one of the verses he is described as the best role model of it because he concerned over his believers. This also shows that empathy as a universal value from humanistic psychology is appropriately linked to the concept in Islam as a humanistic religion. This research reveals some practical implications of empathy stated in the Islamic fundamental foundations, the Quran and the hadiths.

## Conclusion

This research which explores empathy based on human development perspective and its implications stated in the Islamic teaching appeals that there are three aspects of human development in perceiving empathy. They are cognitive domain, emotional domain, and spiritual domain. This value is developed since human were born and it means it starts from the infancy period. In the growth of human, people express their empathetic behaviors differently. For instance, children tend to offer their toys while seeing other children cry or adults tend to proceed it towards behavioral acts, such as hug.

In psychology, empathy is seen as human nature that human was born with it. There is no specific domain in the brain called empathy, but it has neuron mirrors which manage the circuitry act to monitor this kind of emotion, empathetic behaviors. This system is like a wiring process that link to another aspect, called affective or emotion empathy, which has been primed since the early stages and rapidly in children. Meanwhile, spiritual is mentioned as a domain which needs an awareness and high consciousness for its development, which seems merely happened in adulthood.

The term of empathy in psychology is explored to the concept in the Islamic teaching, Qur'anic and prophetic, derived from the Qur'an and hadiths. This is to find some interconnection between psychology and Islamic term in discussing the values of empathy and to elaborate the practical implications of it based on spirituality. The finding shows there are 16 points elaborating the concept of empathy in the Islamic teaching; five from the Quran and 11 from hadiths. Those indicate that empathy also become a thematic topic discussed in some parts of its contents. It mostly relates to human social interaction, which also means empathy is a value or a factor that ultimately effects on the success of building a good harmonious relationship among people in this life. This indicates that between psychology and Islam are similar in defining empathy as a universal value in human life which derives people to the ability of understanding others' feeling and being compassionate on it.

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