Empathy in the Prophetic Corpus: A Psychological and Narrative Examination of *Shahih* Hadith

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Abstract. This study examined the concept of empathy *(taʿāṭuf)* within Islamic ethical teachings through a thematic–narrative analysis of authenticated prophetic traditions. The research aimed to clarify how empathy is constructed in the Prophet's teachings and how these constructions intersect with contemporary psychological theories of empathetic behavior. A qualitative, library-based design was employed, drawing upon primary sources from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, supported by Qur'anic exegesis, classical commentaries, and modern psychological literature. The results indicated that empathy in Islamic tradition is conceptualized through a multilayered framework encompassing emotional resonance, compassion, justice, solidarity, and collective responsibility. The well-known "one body" metaphor illustrated the believers' interconnectedness and emphasized empathy as a moral obligation rather than a merely emotional response. The study concludes that prophetic teachings provide a holistic model of empathy that is both spiritually grounded and behaviorally actionable. This contribution enriches the broader discourse on religion and moral psychology by showing how classical Islamic ethics may inform contemporary discussions on empathy's role in fostering compassionate and cohesive societies. Future research will benefit from comparing Islamic models of empathy with those of other religious traditions or examining how digital environments shape empathetic practices within Muslim communities.

Introduction

Empathy occupies a central position in both psychological theory and Islamic ethical discourse, functioning as a foundational element that sustains interpersonal harmony, prosocial behavior, and communal well-being. Defined as the capacity to understand and resonate with the emotional experiences of others, empathy serves as a core mechanism that shapes human social interaction. Eisenberg & Miller (1987) demonstrate that empathy is positively associated with prosocial and cooperative behaviors, indicating that individuals who display stronger perspective-taking skills and emotional resonance are more inclined to assist others, collaborate, and support communal life. This psychological understanding aligns closely with the Islamic worldview, which places strong emphasis on moral character, compassion, and social responsibility as integral components of religious identity. Because human beings are

inherently social creatures continuously shaped by interpersonal interactions and embedded within relational contexts, empathy naturally emerges through social contact, emotional communication, and moral development. These experiences cultivate sensitivity, altruism, and cooperation, although they also show dynamic variations influenced by individual mood, situational context, sociocultural norms, and interpersonal relationships.

Within the Indonesian sociocultural context, empathy is further elevated as a civic virtue and a national moral aspiration. The values of Pancasila, particularly the second principle, "just and civilized humanity," emphasize moral awareness, respect for human dignity, and the cultivation of compassionate behavior as the ethical foundation of societal life. This principle highlights empathy, tolerance, kindness, and fairness as essential expressions of moral consciousness. These cultural values resonate with Islamic teachings, reinforcing the expectation that Indonesian society embodies religious piety, humanism, justice, and democratic participation. In this regard, Pancasila and Islamic ethics converge in constructing a moral framework in which empathy functions as a bridge between individual conscience and collective social responsibility. The cultural dimension of empathy in Indonesia therefore becomes a manifestation of both religious instruction and national ideology, underscoring its significance in nurturing social cohesion within a diverse and multicultural society.

Empathy also represents a crucial point of intersection across religious traditions. Major world religions including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism ground their moral teachings in compassion, love, and benevolence, as reflected in their respective sacred texts: The Qur'an and Hadith, the Bible, the Tripitaka, and the Vedas. These shared moral themes indicate that empathy holds universal significance in shaping human ethical behavior across cultures and religions. In an era marked by increasing religious pluralism, empathy becomes more than an interpersonal skill; it functions as an essential element for interfaith understanding, social integration, and peaceful coexistence. The attention given to empathy across religious traditions opens pathways for comparative studies, enabling scholars to explore common ethical foundations that support interreligious dialogue and mutual respect. In this way, empathy contributes not only to interpersonal relationships but also to broader efforts aimed at cultivating inclusive and harmonious societies.

In the Islamic tradition specifically, empathy is embedded within theological, ethical, and educational principles. Yarigoli & Bahadorikhosroshahi (2018) affirm that good deeds, cooperation, collaboration, justice, as fairness as core values in Islam closely parallel the psychological concept of empathy. These moral commitments nurture positive social interactions and reinforce compassion as a central feature of Islamic social ethics. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2024) explain that Islamic education promotes character development, community engagement, and the cultivation of a compassionate and just society. These educational aims situate empathy as both a moral obligation and a desirable character trait that must be cultivated from an early age. The emphasis on empathy within Islamic teachings therefore reflects the religion's broader commitment to nurturing moral sensitivity, mutual care, and strong social bonds.

Recent literature further supports the integration of Islamic teachings with contemporary psychological models. Studies show that combining spiritual principles with psychological frameworks enhances emotional development, strengthens moral reasoning, and aligns spiritual practices with observable human behavior Abdulllah et al., (2025). This interdisciplinary approach enriches the understanding of empathy by situating it within a holistic framework that encompasses spiritual, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. In educational contexts, empathy is shown to promote prosocial and altruistic behavior among university students, contributing to a more supportive and inclusive academic climate. Hamid & Ayub (2025) find that students with higher levels of empathy demonstrate greater prosocial tendencies, thereby fostering a campus environment that encourages collaborative learning and positive social interaction. Additionally, compassion-based learning models grounded in Qur'anic values are shown to enhance interpersonal relationships and contribute to more supportive educational settings (Sidik & Sari, 2025). These findings further underscore the relevance of empathy within Islamic education and highlight its pedagogical potential.

Despite growing interdisciplinary interest, scholarly engagement with empathy in the Islamic tradition remains limited, particularly regarding systematic analyses of prophetic traditions (hadith) that explicitly address empathy. Previous studies, such as those by (Djahapar (2016) and Naufal, (2020), primarily focus on social concern *(kepedulian sosial)* as a moral behavior influenced by empathy but do not distinguish empathy as a distinct psychological and theological construct. Their analyses examine various forms of social responsibility, including care for orphans, widows, and the poor, as well as mutual support within families and communities. Although these themes relate to empathy, they do not fully explore how Hadith conceptualize empathic awareness, emotional resonance, or prosocial responsiveness. By contrast, empathy possesses its own psychological dimensions such as affective, cognitive, and behavioral that shape human moral experience and interpersonal dynamics. Moreover, the nuances of empathy in Hadith require contextual interpretation through both classical Islamic scholarship and modern psychological theory, an approach that remains largely absent in previous literature.

This research addresses this gap by conducting a psychological and textual analysis of prophetic traditions related to empathy. The study identifies key Hadith from authoritative collections primarily Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim and examines their ethical implications through both Islamic and psychological lenses. By integrating commentaries from classical scholars with contemporary psychological theories, this research aims to clarify how empathy is framed within Islamic tradition and how these teachings align with modern understandings of emotional and moral development. This interdisciplinary approach seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive conceptualization of empathy by bridging theological discourse, psychological science, and cultural interpretation.

In doing so, the study responds to the growing scholarly need to articulate the moral foundations of empathy within Islamic sources, clarify its psychological relevance, and explore its broader implications for education, interfaith relations, and social cohesion. By situating empathy at the intersection of religion, psychology, and

culture, the present research provides critical insights into how moral virtues rooted in Islamic teachings can contribute to the development of compassionate individuals and harmonious communities.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative library-based research design to examine prophetic traditions on empathy through a structured textual and interdisciplinary approach. Qualitative library research has been widely used in Islamic studies because it emphasized close reading, contextual interpretation, and analytical engagement with scriptural and scholarly sources (Ansori, 2019). This approach was appropriate because the data consisted primarily of classical Islamic texts namely the Qur'an, Hadith, and authoritative commentaries which required hermeneutic analysis rather than empirical experimentation.

Current methodological developments in Islamic scholarship have highlighted the importance of systematic textual identification, the use of classical validation tools, and interdisciplinary interpretation. These practices were consistent with contemporary frameworks for thematic Hadith studies that emphasized rigorous extraction, contextual alignment, and triangulation across narrations to ensure analytical robustness. In addition, recent interdisciplinary research supported integrating Islamic teachings with psychological models to enhance conceptual clarity and strengthen theoretical contributions. Therefore, the qualitative library framework allowed for both textual depth and interdisciplinary engagement, making it suitable for analyzing empathy as a moral and psychological construct.

The primary data consisted of Qur'anic verses and Hadith narrations that explicitly addressed empathy, compassion, and prosociality. The Hadith corpus was drawn from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, the two collections regarded as the most authoritative for ethical and moral teachings. Three narrations, Bukhari no. 5552 and Muslim nos. 4685 and 4944 were selected as the central units of analysis based on their high authenticity, clear thematic relevance, and recurrence in classical scholarly discussions. Secondary sources included classical *syarah* (commentaries), biographical dictionaries *(kutub al-rijāl)*, and works of major Sunni jurists that provided linguistic clarification, contextual explanation, and evaluative insights into moral terminology such as *tarāhum* (mutual mercy), *tawaddud* (affection), and *ta'āṭuf* (empathic responsiveness). These materials supported interpretive accuracy and helped illuminate the ethical implications embedded in the narrations.

To integrate Islamic textual insights with contemporary psychological perspectives, the study also utilized foundational and modern literature on empathy research. Key references included classic empirical findings linking empathy to prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987), comparative analyses of Islamic moral values and psychological constructs (Yarigoli & Bahadorikhosroshahi, 2018), and studies documenting the role of empathy in character development within Islamic education (Ibrahim et al., 2024). Additional recent works on empathy among university students (Hamid & Ayub, 2025) and compassion-based learning (Sidik & Sari, 2025) further contextualized the behavioral significance of empathy in contemporary educational settings.

Data collection was carried out through a multistage process that involved textual identification, authentication, and thematic screening. First, the study identified relevant Hadith by using thematic keywords such as *rahmah, tarāhum, ta'āṭuf*, and *muslimūn ka al-jasad al-wāḥid* ("believers as one body") to search classical collections and digital Hadith databases. Eleven narrations referencing empathy-related concepts were initially identified across the canonical collections.

A strict set of inclusion criteria was then applied to determine the suitability of the narrations for detailed analysis. These criteria included: (1) authenticity based on classical assessments of *isnād* reliability, (2) clear thematic relevance to emotional or prosocial elements associated with empathy, and (3) availability of classical and contemporary commentaries that supported comprehensive interpretation.

Authentication of the Hadith was conducted using *takhrīj*, which involved tracing each narration across sources, documenting transmission routes, identifying narrator variations, and examining corroborating narrations (*shawāhid* and *mutāba'āt*). This step ensured textual integrity and verified that each narration originated from reliable collections. The study also conducted *isnād* analysis, drawing on classical biographical works to evaluate narrator credibility, assess continuity in the transmission chain *(ittisāl)*, and identify potential weaknesses. This method aligned with standard procedures in Hadith sciences for ensuring authenticity and scholarly reliability.

Table 1. Classification of Primary Hadith Sources and Rationale for Selection

Source	Number	Theme	Authenticity	Rationale
Bukhari	5552	Believers as one body	*Sahih*	Central metaphor for empathy
Muslim	4685	Mutual compassion	*Sahih*	Supports thematic triangulation
Muslim	4944	Divine mercy	*Sahih*	Connects empathy to theological foundations

Data were analyzed through three interconnected procedures: thematic analysis, comparative analysis, and interdisciplinary conceptual synthesis.

Results and Discussion
Results

Through a systematic textual search using Hadith Soft, the study identified eleven narrations containing the keyword *ta'āṭuf* (تعاطف) or conceptual equivalents related to empathy. These narrations were distributed across several canonical collections: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī no. 5552, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim nos. 4685 and 4944, Sunan Ibn Mājah no. 4283, Musnad Aḥmad (six narrations: nos. 9236, 14067, 17639, 17648, 17654, 18046), al-Mustadrak no. 187

To achieve the analytical depth required in this study, the present paper focuses on three primary narrations from Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, as these

fulfill the criteria of their *isnād*, thematic relevance, and frequency of citation in classical and modern scholarship.
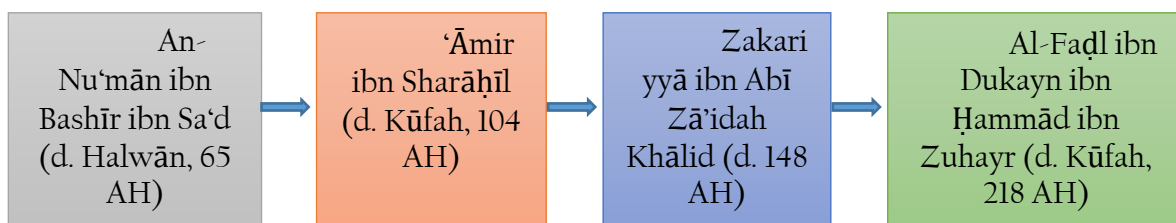
Narrative Presentation of the Core Hadiths

Hadith 1: Empathy as Collective Sensitivity Among Believers

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو نُعَيْمٍ حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّاءُ عَنْ عَامِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ يَقُولُ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى عُضْوًا تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ جَسَدِهِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى

"Narrated by Abu Nu'aim, who narrated from Zakariya`, from 'Amir, who said: I heard him say, I heard An-Nu'man bin Bashir say: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "You will see the believers in their mutual mercy, love, and empathy as one body. If one limb complains of pain, the rest of the body responds with sleeplessness and fever (Hadits Shahih Riwayat Bukhari 5552)."

Schema of Narration *(Sanad)*

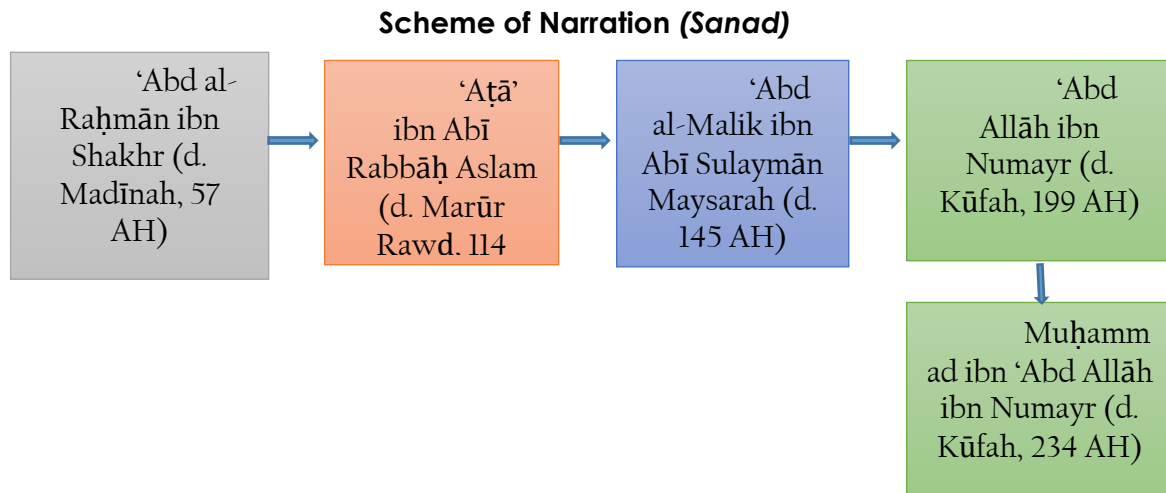| An-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr ibn Sa'd (d. Halwān, 65 AH) | → | 'Āmir ibn Sharāḥīl (d. Kūfah, 104 AH) | → | Zakariyyā ibn Abī Zā'idah Khālid (d. 148 AH) | → | Al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn ibn Ḥammād ibn Zuhayr (d. Kūfah, 218 AH) |

The first hadith, narrated by al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr (Bukhari 5552), depicts the community of believers as a single body, a corporeal metaphor that provides the strongest narrative illustration of empathy as communal interconnectedness. The metaphor of a body collectively experiencing pain directs the understanding that empathy extends beyond merely comprehending another's emotions to actively feeling the suffering of others, thereby influencing the collective psyche. The analysis of the *sanad* revealed a robust chain of transmission, while the analysis of the *matan* uncovered the hadith's orientation toward fostering moral responses at the community level. The primary theme that emerges is that empathy is understood as an emotional and moral bond inseparable from one's faith identity *("tarā al-mu'minīn…")*, which not only involves compassion or sympathy but also demands concrete actions in the form of support, care, and solidarity.

Hadith 2: Empathy as Derivative of Divine Mercy

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْمَلِكِ عَنْ عَطَاءٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ لِلهِ مِائَةَ رَحْمَةٍ أَنْزَلَ مِنْهَا رَحْمَةً وَاحِدَةً بَيْنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالْبَهَائِمِ وَالْهَوَامِّ فَبِهَا يَتَعَاطَفُونَ وَبِهَا يَتَرَاحَمُونَ وَبِهَا تَعْطِفُ الْوَحْشُ عَلَى وَلَدِهَا وَأَخَّرَ اللهُ تِسْعًا وَتِسْعِينَ رَحْمَةً يَرْحَمُ بِهَا عِبَادَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

"Narrated by Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Numayr, who narrated from his father, who narrated from 'Abd al-Malik, from 'Aṭā', from Abū Hurayrah, from the Prophet (peace be upon him), who said: "Indeed, Allah has one hundred mercies. He sent down one mercy

among the jinn, humans, animals, and creatures. Through it, they show empathy to one another, through it they show mercy to one another, and through it the wild beast shows compassion to its offspring. Allah has withheld ninety-nine mercies; with which He will show mercy to His servants on the Day of Resurrection (Shahih Muslim: 4944)."
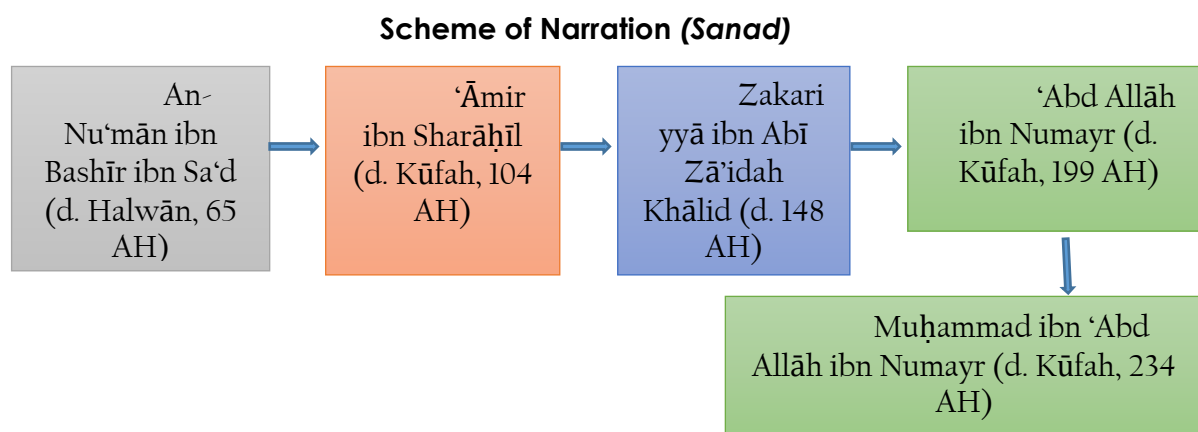
Scheme of Narration *(Sanad)*

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Shakhr (d. Madīnah, 57 AH)	→	'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabbāḥ Aslam (d. Marūr Rawd. 114	→	'Abd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān Maysarah (d. 145 AH)	→	'Abd Allāh ibn Numayr (d. Kūfah, 199 AH)

	Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Numayr (d. Kūfah, 234 AH)

The second hadith (Muslim 4944) elaborates on empathy through the concept of divine mercy *(rahmah)*. This hadith states that Allah sent down one portion of His one hundred mercies to the world, and this single mercy serves as the source of all forms of compassion and empathy among humans, animals, and other creatures. Thematically, the hadith presents a direct link between human empathetic experiences and a transcendent spiritual source. The *matan* of the hadith provides a novel framework: empathy is not merely a social response but also a cosmic manifestation of God's mercy. Thus, empathy in the Islamic perspective possesses a metaphysical and spiritual foundation that binds all creatures within a universal network of compassion

Hadith 3: Empathy as Social Cohesion and Moral Integrity

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ نُمَيْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّاءُ عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِّهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَّى حَدَّثَنَا اِسْحَقُ الْحَنْظَلِيُّ اَخْبَرَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ مُطَرِّفٍ عَنِ الشَّعْبِيِّ عَنِ النُّعْمَانِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم بِنَحْوِهِ

"Narrated by Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh ibn Numayr, who narrated from his father, who narrated from Zakariyā', from al-Sha'bī, from al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The example of the believers in their mutual love, mercy, and empathy is that of a body: if one part of it complains, the rest of the body responds with sleeplessness and fever." Narrated by Isḥāq al-Ḥanẓalī, who informed from Jarīr, from Muṭarrif, from al-Sha'bī, from al-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr, from the Prophet (peace be upon him), with a similar narration (Shahih Muslim: 4685)"
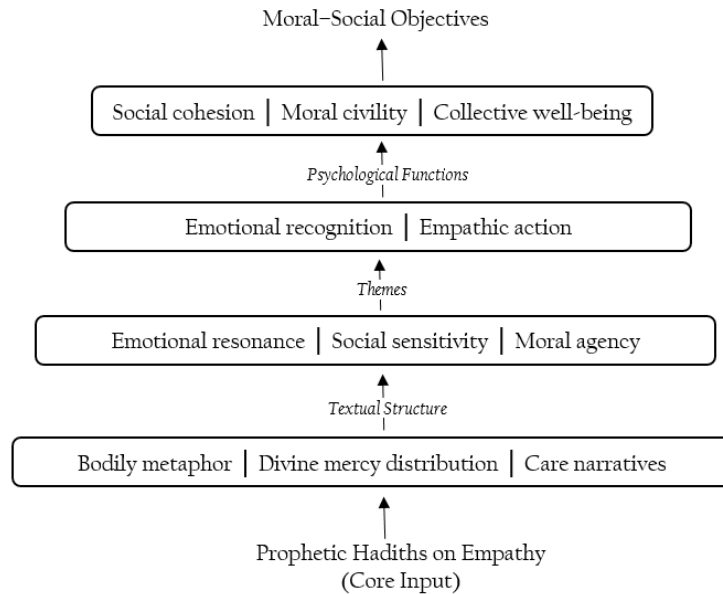
Scheme of Narration (Sanad)

An-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr ibn Saʿd (d. Halwān, 65 AH)	→	ʿĀmir ibn Sharāḥīl (d. Kūfah, 104 AH)	→	Zakariyyā ibn Abī Zāʾidah Khālid (d. 148 AH)	→	ʿAbd Allāh ibn Numayr (d. Kūfah, 199 AH)

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Numayr (d. Kūfah, 234 AH)

The third hadith (Muslim 4685), also transmitted through al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr, reinforced the message of the first hadith via an alternative chain of narration, demonstrating consistency in the meaning of empathy as emotional and social unity. The repetition of the narrative structure across different transmissions highlighted the thematic urgency emphasized by the prophetic tradition. In this hadith, the body metaphor is employed again to explain the interconnectedness of believers in dimensions of love, mercy, and care. The thematic layers derived from this hadith indicated that empathy extends beyond an emotional response to encompass a moral norm inherited and constructed through social relations. The narrative of bodily unity also provides a robust interpretive foundation that Islam views empathy as a mechanism driving prosocial actions, a finding that aligns with psychological research demonstrating the link between empathy and altruistic, cooperative behaviors (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Sun et al., 2025).

Multi-Layered Narrative Model of Empathy

A deep analysis of the three ḥadīth yields a multi-layered narrative model that elucidates the structural meaning of empathy within the Islamic tradition. The first layer is the textual layer, which encompasses the body metaphor (in the first two ḥadīth) and the distribution of mercy (in the second ḥadīth). The second layer is the thematic layer, from which three core themes emerge: emotional resonance, social sensitivity, and moral participation. The third layer is the psychological layer, which highlights the empathic mechanisms involving the recognition of another's emotional state and the inclination to respond to their suffering. The fourth layer is the social–spiritual layer, which situates empathy within the broader context of social cohesion, moral civility, and the ethical objectives of Islam.

This model is represented in Figure 2. Multi-Layered Narrative Model of Prophetic Empathy, which visualizes the hierarchical relationship between the textual elements, thematic structures, psychological functions, and moral aims of the ḥadīth. The model demonstrates that empathy in the Prophetic tradition does not stand independently; rather, it is embedded within a broader normative framework aimed at shaping a community characterized by mutual care, moral agency, and a collective orientation toward the common good.

Moral–Social Objectives

Social cohesion | Moral civility | Collective well-being

Psychological Functions

Emotional recognition | Empathic action

Themes

Emotional resonance | Social sensitivity | Moral agency

Textual Structure

Bodily metaphor | Divine mercy distribution | Care narratives

Prophetic Hadiths on Empathy
(Core Input)

Figure 2. Multi-Layered Narrative Model for Empathy in Prophetic Traditions
Discussion

The findings derived from the aforementioned hadith indicated that empathy in Islam possesses a conceptual depth that surpasses modern psychological interpretations. The metaphor of "a single body" in the first two hadith emphasized the concept of interconnected moral agency, namely the idea that an individual cannot be separated from the social network to which they belong. This notion aligns with contemporary literature on the mechanisms of empathy, which states that affective responses toward the conditions of others emerge from affective resonance (Hoffman, 2000) *"Empathy defined as an affective response more appropriate to another's situation than one's own,"* and shared emotional representation (Decety & Jackson, 2010) *"Empathy accounts for the naturally occurring subjective experience of similarity between the feelings expressed by self and others without losing sight of whose feelings belong to whom. Empathy involves not only the affective experience of the other person's actual or inferred emotional state but also some minimal recognition and understanding of another's emotional state."* Thus, the hadith provided a religious foundation for the psychological phenomenon that modern scholarship refers to as affective empathy.

The concept of *rahmah* in the second hadith expanded the discussion by positioning empathy as part of a divinely ordained ethical system. This perspective offered a theological depth absent in modern psychological theories, which generally conceptualize empathy as a neuro-affective construct. In Islam, empathy is not merely understood as a psychological capacity; rather, it constitutes a manifestation of God's mercy that flows through His creation. This perspective strengthened the argument that empathy serves as a universal moral foundation that transcends religious, species-based, and cultural boundaries.

Furthermore, Islam strongly encourages empathy, as stated by Allah SWT in QS. An-Nisā' verse 8;

وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينُ فَارْزُقُوهُم مِّنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا

"And when at the time of division [of inheritance] relatives, orphans, and the needy are present, provide for them from it [a portion], and speak to them with words of kindness."

The exegesis of QS. An-Nisā' verse 8, which emphasizes *qaulan ma'rūfā*, demonstrated that empathy is not limited to emotional states but is also embedded within ethical communication. Wahbah al-Zuḥaylī's explanation that *qaulan ma'rūfā* encompasses gentleness, respect, and the avoidance of hurtful speech illustrated that empathy forms an integral component of ethical discourse that should be practiced in social life. These findings intersect with theories of empathic communication in social psychology, which assert that empathy manifests through regulated expression, recognition of others' emotional needs, and the delivery of supportive verbal responses (Garton & Gringart, 2005). Moreover, Mukhtar (2021) noted that no individual can live without the assistance of others; therefore, one must also strive to assist fellow human beings. A person who never helps or shows compassion toward others will not receive God's mercy.

Furthermore, the Islamic perspective on empathy was closely related to the ethics of communal unity. Prophetic traditions concerning brotherhood and social cohesion such as the statement that "one's faith is not complete until one loves for his brother what he loves for himself" indicated that empathy functioned as a foundational element of social morality. This idea was reinforced by the Prophet's assessment that a believer's faith remains incomplete until they love for their fellow Muslims what they love for themselves and refrain from harming or disturbing them (Saleh, 2024) . Such teachings strengthened the argument that empathy in Islam serves as an instrument for cultivating a stable and harmonious society. This moral literacy complemented theories of cognitive empathy that emphasize the ability to adopt another person's perspective (Chaplin, 2008), allowing for a comparative analysis between the cognitive construction of empathy and its spiritual construction in Islam.

The integration of hadith and modern theoretical frameworks also demonstrated that empathy encompasses two primary dimensions: affective and cognitive. Affective empathy was reflected in the metaphor of a body that feels pain collectively, whereas cognitive empathy was manifested through Islamic guidance encouraging individuals to understand the emotional conditions of others through ethical communication. These two components align with Hoffman's (2000) understanding that empathy constitutes a blend of emotional awareness regarding others' internal states and the capacity to interpret their intentions and perspectives. Moreover, Davis (1990) asserted that empathy represents a unique and distinctive component of intersubjective relational processes, consisting of layered stages that give rise to post-event realizations such as sympathy, compassion, identification, and self-transformation.

This discussion also positioned empathy as an integral element in shaping social character within Muslim communities. The hadith were not merely moral instructions but normative frameworks for cultivating cohesion, solidarity, and social cooperation. These findings had significant implications for character education, emotional literacy, and value-based curriculum development in contemporary contexts. Even

within digital societies, the principles of empathy articulated in the hadith may serve as an ethical foundation for online interactions, particularly in addressing issues of polarization, hate speech, and misinformation

Overall, this discussion showed that the Islamic conception of empathy was not only compatible with contemporary psychological theories but also enriched the global discourse on morality, prosocial behavior, and the construction of empathetic societies. Consequently, the results of this study contributed to interdisciplinary dialogues linking hadith studies, moral psychology, and contemporary social ethics.

The findings of this study provided important theoretical contributions to the scholarship on empathy within the Islamic perspective and modern psychological studies. First, the multilayered narrative model generated from the hadith analysis demonstrated that empathy in Islam possesses a theological dimension that remains largely unaddressed within contemporary psychological frameworks. The hadith concerning divine mercy indicated that empathy was not merely an affective or cognitive process but a component of a spiritual ecology that shapes moral human behavior. This insight enriched the literature on moral psychology, which has predominantly focused on neural, cognitive, and emotional mechanisms. Second, the body metaphor found in the hadith added analytical depth to the understanding of collective moral consciousness. This concept offered a theoretical foundation suggesting that empathy in Islam is embedded within communal structures rather than being purely individual. Such a model may serve as a new conceptual basis for cross-cultural prosociality research, particularly in societies that emphasize solidarity and moral cohesion. Third, the integration of hadith texts with modern theories of empathy opened space for a comparative model between Islamic epistemology (revelation–text) and psychological epistemology (experience–observation). This approach may become an interdisciplinary theoretical framework for understanding empathy as a multidimensional phenomenon involving ethics, emotion, social relations, and spirituality.

The practical implications of this study may be applied across educational, social, and religious contexts. The values of empathy embedded in the hadith may serve as foundational principles for the development of character-education curricula in schools and madrasahs. The emphasis on emotional resonance and social solidarity aligns with efforts to cultivate emotional literacy and social sensitivity among students. In the context of community relations, these findings may strengthen programs aimed at enhancing social cohesion, conflict resolution, and the promotion of tolerance. The prophetic narratives on compassion and collective care may also serve as the basis for social campaigns, humanitarian volunteer training, and the development of value-based community initiatives. In religious guidance and community development, a nuanced understanding of empathy allows religious leaders to provide more relevant counsel focused on moral formation. It may also reinforce Islamic counseling approaches, particularly in cultivating individuals' capacity to understand and respond constructively to others' emotions.

The principal strength of this study lay in its thematic-narrative approach, which integrated the textual validity of authoritative hadith with contemporary psychological analysis. The selection of hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

offered a strong epistemic foundation, while their integration with psychological literature enriched the interpretation and enhanced the interdisciplinary relevance of the findings. Nevertheless, this study possessed several limitations. First, the focus on three principal hadith, although representative, still restricted the spectrum of empathetic meanings that might emerge from the broader hadith corpus. Second, the psychological analysis employed relied on general theories of empathy; therefore, further research is needed to situate the findings within the cultural context of Muslim societies more empirically. Third, this study did not incorporate quantitative or neuropsychological approaches to confirm the theoretical hypotheses regarding empathy mechanisms in Islam.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that empathy, from the perspective of the hadith, is not merely an emotional–cognitive phenomenon but an integral component of Islam's moral and spiritual structure. The thematic-narrative analysis of three authoritative hadith revealed that empathy was portrayed as a form of collective emotional resonance, a manifestation of divine mercy, and a foundational element of communal cohesion within the Muslim community. The integration of these findings with modern psychological theories showed conceptual alignment between the Islamic construction of empathy and contemporary understandings of affectivity, cognitive perspective-taking, and prosocial behavior. The multilayered narrative model developed through this research provided a new theoretical framework for interdisciplinary studies of empathy, combining spiritual, moral, and psychological dimensions. These findings carry broad implications for character education, Islamic counseling, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the development of ethical frameworks for interaction in modern societies. Thus, this study not only expanded theoretical insights into empathy within Islam but also offered practical contributions for fostering more compassionate, harmonious, and welfare-oriented communities

Future research will benefit from exploring additional hadith related to empathy, compassion, and social cohesion to generate a broader thematic mapping. Empirical investigations—particularly those employing social-psychological and neuroscientific approaches—will be necessary to examine the compatibility of Islamic models of empathy with contemporary mechanisms. Future studies may also develop measurement instruments for empathy grounded in Islamic values, which will be relevant for educational settings and social interventions. Cross-cultural comparative studies will further enrich the understanding of how Islamic empathy values operate within diverse Muslim societies. In addition, integrating hadith with theories of empathic communication will provide a promising direction for explaining the role of empathy in building healthy and ethical digital communities.

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