



The Prophet's Emotional Intelligence with Children: An Analysis Based on Bradberry and Greaves Theory and Its Implications for Character Education

Irfan Hanif¹, Muhid²

¹Hadith Studies Program, UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

²Hadith Studies Program, UIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received April 05, 2026

Revised May 15, 2026

Accepted June 25, 2026

Available online June 30, 2026

Keywords:

Emotional Intelligence, Character Education, Prophet Muhammad, Bradberry and Greaves.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Copyright © 2026 by Author.
Published by Universitas Al Hikmah Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a fundamental competence that plays an important role in the formation of individual character; however, the development of this aspect has not received sufficient attention in contemporary education systems. This study aims to examine the emotional intelligence of the Prophet Muhammad in his interactions with children as depicted in the hadiths, and to analyze its implications for early childhood character education. This study employs a qualitative method through library research with an interdisciplinary approach that integrates hadith studies and psychological perspectives, particularly the emotional intelligence theory of Bradberry and Greaves. Primary data consisting of hadiths from authoritative hadith collections were analyzed using content analysis based on four dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The findings reveal that the Prophet's interactions with children clearly reflect all four dimensions. His behaviors of kissing his grandchild, carrying a child during prayer, prolonging prostration for a grandchild's safety, comforting a grieving child, reprimanding with gentleness, and teaching etiquette communicatively are manifestations of high emotional intelligence. The Prophet's exemplary conduct implies that early childhood character education must be built upon a foundation of affection, empathy, self-control, and positive communication. This study contributes to integrating hadith scholarship with modern psychology as an alternative framework for developing character education based on the Prophet's exemplary conduct.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is one of the fundamental aspects of human personality development. In modern psychology, the concept of intelligence is no longer interpreted solely as intellectual ability or Intelligence Quotient (IQ), but also encompasses an individual's ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions—both their own and those of others. This concept is known as emotional intelligence (Emotional Quotient). Daniel Goleman explains that emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to recognize

one's own and others' feelings, to motivate oneself, and to manage emotions effectively in social relationships (Goleman, 1995). Thus, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of social interactions and an individual's ability to navigate various life situations.

In the context of education, emotional intelligence plays a very significant role, especially during childhood. This period is a crucial early phase in the formation of a person's character and personality. Therefore, the educational process should not be focused solely on cognitive aspects but must also take into account children's emotional development. Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer state that emotional intelligence encompasses the ability to understand emotions, manage emotions, and utilize emotions constructively in the process of thinking and acting (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). These abilities are crucial in helping children build healthy social relationships and develop positive behaviors.

However, the current state of education still shows a greater emphasis on cognitive aspects than on emotional ones. Many educational systems place greater emphasis on academic achievement, while the development of emotional intelligence has not received adequate attention (Al-Idrus, Damayanti, & Ermayani, 2020). In fact, various studies indicate that emotional intelligence makes a significant contribution to an individual's success in both social and professional life. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves argue that emotional intelligence accounts for approximately 58% of the factors influencing a person's performance across various aspects of life (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). This indicates that emotional intelligence is a crucial competency that needs to be developed from an early age.

From an Islamic perspective, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) set a clear example of attention to the emotional aspects of education. He was known for his gentleness, empathy, and deep compassion in interacting with people from all walks of life, including children. A number of hadiths describe how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) treated children with great compassion and attention to their emotional well-being. This pattern of interaction was not only educational but also rich in profound emotional values.

A number of previous studies have examined emotional intelligence from the perspective of hadith and Islamic educational practices. The study titled "*Emotional Intelligence in the Perspective of Hadith: An Analysis of Emotion Regulation and Its Implications for Character Education*" (Sholahuddin, La Ode Ismail Ahmad, & Abdul Rahman Sakka, 2025) focuses on the concept of emotion regulation in hadith and its implications for character education. The study "*Emotional Intelligence in the Perspective of Maudhu'i Hadith*" (Makbul, Ferianto, Ahmad, & Saputri S., 2022) focuses on the conceptual mapping of emotional intelligence through a thematic approach to hadith. Meanwhile, the study "*Application Of Rasulullah's Technique In Shaping Emotional Intelligence*" (Abdul Rahman & Muhamad, 2022) focuses more on the practical aspects of the Prophet's approach to developing emotional intelligence and identifies its impact on psychological well-being. In addition, there are also studies linking emotional intelligence to Daniel Goleman's theory, as well as research on the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with children from a character education perspective. However, most of these studies remain descriptive-conceptual in nature and have not yet employed an operational theoretical approach to analyze specific interactive behaviors.

Although various studies have been conducted, the reality of contemporary education in Indonesia still raises deep concerns regarding the crisis in character development among children. Data from the National Criminal Information Center (Pusiknas) of the Indonesian National Police's Criminal Investigation Agency (Bareskrim) indicates that throughout 2024, more than a thousand children were designated as suspects in criminal cases each month, peaking in May 2024 at 1,481 children (Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, 2024). Meanwhile, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) notes that in 2021, there were 126 cases of children facing legal proceedings as perpetrators, and the number of juvenile delinquency cases leading to legal proceedings continues to show an alarming trend year after year (KPAI, 2022). This phenomenon is likely closely linked to the tendency of the education system to remain more focused on cognitive achievement rather than the emotional and moral development of children. As revealed in various studies, an educational orientation that pays insufficient attention to aspects of emotional intelligence has the potential to create gaps in the character development of students (Al-Idrus et al., 2020). This situation suggests that a character education approach that integrates emotional dimensions still appears to require more serious attention in educational practice in Indonesia.

In this study, the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence proposed by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves was selected as the basis for analysis. This theory divides emotional intelligence into four main dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). This theory was chosen based on the comprehensive and operational nature of its model in analyzing interpersonal behavior. Compared to several other models of emotional intelligence that tend to be more conceptual, this approach offers a more practical categorization, thereby facilitating the analysis of concrete forms of social interaction. Thus, this framework is considered relevant for examining the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with children as depicted in the hadiths.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that research on the Prophet Muhammad's emotional intelligence in his interactions with children still has room for development, particularly through a more practical theoretical approach. Therefore, this study is important to conduct in order to integrate hadith studies with modern psychological perspectives. This study aims to examine the emotional intelligence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his interactions with children as depicted in the Prophet's hadiths, and to analyze them through the theoretical framework of Bradberry and Greaves. Additionally, this study aims to identify the implications of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) exemplary conduct for the development of character education in early childhood.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative study in the form of library research, which aims to examine the emotional intelligence of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in his interactions with children based on relevant literature. The approach used is an interdisciplinary one, integrating the study of hadith with psychological perspectives, particularly the theory of emotional intelligence.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data consists of the Prophet's hadiths related to the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with children, drawn from authoritative hadith collections such as Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Tirmidhi, and Sunan al-Nasa'i. In addition, Bradberry and Greaves' book titled Emotional Intelligence 2.0 and several other books on emotional intelligence also serve as primary data. Meanwhile, secondary data includes books, journal articles, and other scholarly works related to the theme, particularly regarding character education.

Data collection was conducted through documentation, specifically by searching for, identifying, and classifying hadiths relevant to the theme of emotional intelligence, particularly those concerning the Prophet Muhammad's interactions with children. These hadiths were then analyzed using content analysis to identify the meanings and values of emotional intelligence contained within them.

In the analysis process, the theoretical framework of emotional intelligence proposed by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves was selected as the analytical tool. All data collected was analyzed based on the four main dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Through this approach, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad's emotional intelligence in his interactions with children can be obtained.

RESULT

1.1. Historical Overview and the Importance of the Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is a key concept in modern psychology that emphasizes an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express emotions appropriately, both toward oneself and others. This concept emerged as a critique of classical thinking patterns that tend to view intelligence as solely related to cognitive abilities, commonly known as intellectual intelligence or IQ (Intelligence Quotient). In fact, intellectual intelligence alone is considered insufficient to fully explain an individual's success in both social and professional life. Findings from several studies indicate that IQ is not the sole factor determining a person's success. In many cases, individuals with high intellectual intelligence but lacking other factors—such as emotional intelligence—struggle to achieve success, whether in social or professional contexts (Goleman, 1995).

Historically, the emergence of the concept of emotional intelligence can be traced back to the work of a figure named Edward Thorndike, who introduced the theory of Social Intelligence in 1920. He defined social intelligence as a person's ability to understand and manage social interactions in order to act wisely within human relationships (Thorndike, 1920). This idea served as the foundational basis for the development of research on the non-cognitive aspects of human intelligence. Subsequently, in 1983, Howard Gardner, an American psychologist, introduced the theory of multiple intelligences. This theory categorizes human intelligence into seven distinct intelligences, including intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. Intrapersonal intelligence refers to an individual's ability to deeply understand their own

emotions or feelings. Meanwhile, interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others, which leads to effective social interactions such as the development of empathy and concern (Gardner, 1983). This concept reflects the evolving understanding that acknowledges non-cognitive aspects of human intelligence.

In 1990, the term “emotional intelligence” was formally introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in a scientific article they wrote titled “Emotional Intelligence.” In their article, they defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings, distinguish between various emotions, and use that information to guide thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In subsequent developments, they refined this concept into several branches of ability, such as emotional perception, the use of emotions to support thinking processes, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

The concept of emotional intelligence subsequently gained widespread recognition after being popularized by Daniel Goleman in his book “Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ” (Goleman, 1995). Goleman asserts that emotional intelligence makes a significant contribution to a person’s success in life. He even states that IQ accounts for only about 20% of life success, while the remaining 80% is influenced by non-cognitive factors, including emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). This suggests that, in many contexts, emotional intelligence plays a more dominant role than intellectual intelligence.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is crucial because it is directly linked to an individual’s ability to manage stress, control impulses, build social relationships, and make wise decisions. Daniel Goleman states that individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to have better self-control, a high level of empathy, and effective social skills in forming interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1995). Additionally, John D. Mayer, Peter Salovey, and David R. Caruso emphasize that emotional intelligence plays a role in enhancing an individual’s adaptive capacity when facing various life situations (Mayer et al., 2004). In an educational context, emotional intelligence even serves as the foundation for character development, as it contributes to the development of prosocial behaviors, such as empathy, cooperation, and responsibility (Goleman, 1995).

Thus, emotional intelligence not only serves as a complement to intellectual intelligence but also plays a key role in determining an individual’s quality of life. Daniel Goleman even states that intellectual intelligence contributes only a small portion to life success, while emotional and social factors play a more dominant role (Goleman, 1995). This indicates that human success is not solely determined by the ability to think rationally, but also by the ability to manage emotions appropriately and constructively. Therefore, mastering emotional intelligence has become a critical necessity; in many aspects of life, it can even be said to be more decisive than intellectual intelligence itself.

1.2. The Theory of Emotional Intelligence According to Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves

The theory of emotional intelligence proposed by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves is outlined in their book titled *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. In the book, they define emotional intelligence as an individual’s ability to recognize and understand emotions

in themselves and others, and then use that awareness to effectively manage behavior and relationships. They emphasize that emotional intelligence influences how a person manages their behavior, navigates social complexities, and makes personal decisions that can lead to positive outcomes (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

According to Bradberry and Greaves, emotional intelligence is a flexible skill that can be learned. While it is undeniable that some people are naturally more emotionally intelligent than others, emotional intelligence can still be learned and developed by anyone, even if they were not born with it. This is in contrast to intellectual intelligence (IQ), which tends to be innate; not everyone possesses it, and it is generally difficult to learn.

Furthermore, they posited that there are three complementary dimensions within a person, namely: (1) personality, (2) intellectual intelligence, and (3) emotional intelligence. Personality is a stable pattern that defines or represents an individual's character. It is the result of a person's internal preferences, such as a tendency toward introversion or extroversion. Like IQ, personality is stable and does not change easily; it is an innate trait within a person. Furthermore, neither personality nor IQ can be used to predict a person's level of emotional intelligence. A person with high intellectual intelligence does not necessarily possess high emotional intelligence as well. Emotional intelligence is also not determined by a person's personality. Some people may assume that individuals with certain personality types, such as extroverts, will have better emotional intelligence than others. However, this is not the case; both extroverts and introverts have the same potential to possess emotional intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

Furthermore, the characteristic that most distinguishes Bradberry and Greaves' theory from others is that they classify the emotional intelligence model into four interrelated core skills: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. They explain that the first two dimensions relate to personal competencies, while the last two relate to social competencies (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). This division indicates that emotional intelligence encompasses both internal abilities to manage oneself and external abilities to interact effectively with others (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

1.2.1. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is defined by Bradberry and Greaves as an individual's ability to accurately recognize and understand their own emotions as they arise, while also understanding how those emotions influence their thought patterns, behavior, and interactions with others. Within their theoretical framework, self-awareness serves as the primary foundation of emotional intelligence, because without an honest and accurate understanding of one's emotional state, a person will be unable to manage or respond to their emotions constructively. Individuals with a high level of self-awareness tend to be able to identify their emotional triggers, assess their mood more objectively, and recognize the impact of their feelings on the quality of the decisions they make. Furthermore, Bradberry and Greaves emphasize that self-awareness is not merely a passive process of

introspection, but rather a practice that must be actively and continuously cultivated through reflective habits, such as keeping an emotional journal, being open to feedback from others, and reflecting on one's reaction patterns in various situations. Thus, the development of self-awareness not only contributes to authenticity in social relationships but also enables individuals to make choices that are more aligned with their values and life goals.

1.2.2. Self-Management

Once an individual is able to recognize their emotional state, the next step in Bradberry and Greaves' theoretical framework is self-management—that is, the ability to use self-awareness to direct behavior and emotions productively, particularly in challenging or high-pressure situations. Unlike simply suppressing or ignoring emotions, self-management in Bradberry and Greaves' perspective refers to the ability to choose an appropriate response to emerging emotional impulses, ensuring that actions taken remain aligned with one's goals and values. Individuals with strong self-management skills can control negative impulses, maintain consistency in their attitudes across various conditions, and demonstrate flexibility in dealing with change and uncertainty. Bradberry and Greaves also emphasize that self-management includes the ability to sustain internal motivation, act proactively, and not allow momentary emotions to dominate the decision-making process. In other words, self-management positions the individual as an active agent in determining the direction of their own behavior, rather than as a party that merely reacts to external pressures.

1.2.3. Social Awareness

While self-awareness and self-management focus on managing an individual's internal dimensions, social awareness takes a broader perspective—namely, the ability to recognize and understand the emotions, needs, and perspectives of others in social interactions. Bradberry and Greaves define social awareness as an individual's sensitivity to the emotional dynamics occurring around them, whether in the context of interpersonal relationships or within more complex organizational environments. The core of social awareness lies in the ability to empathize—that is, the capacity to put oneself in another person's shoes and understand a situation from their perspective without becoming overwhelmed by those emotions. Individuals with high social awareness tend to be more attuned to nonverbal cues, able to accurately read group dynamics, and understand how a person's emotional state can be influenced by the surrounding social and cultural context. Bradberry and Greaves emphasize that social awareness is not merely a passive ability to observe others, but an active competency that serves as a prerequisite for building meaningful interpersonal relationships and effective communication.

1.2.4. Relationship Management

As the culmination of Bradberry and Greaves' theoretical framework of emotional intelligence, relationship management is an individual's ability to

integrate the three preceding dimensions—self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness—to build, maintain, and develop productive and meaningful interpersonal relationships. Bradberry and Greaves view relationship management not merely as a communication skill, but as a complex competency that encompasses the ability to influence, inspire, and guide others constructively. Individuals who excel in relationship management are able to manage conflicts wisely, consistently build trust, and foster effective collaboration even in situations marked by differing opinions or emotional tension. Furthermore, Bradberry and Greaves emphasize that effective relationship management requires honesty, openness, and the ability to respond empathetically to others' needs without compromising one's own integrity. Thus, relationship management serves as the culmination of the entire process of emotional intelligence development, where an individual's emotional maturity ultimately manifests tangibly in the quality of the relationships they build with those around them.

1.3. The Prophet Muhammad's Interactions with Children

The Prophet Muhammad is the foremost role model in various aspects of life. His conduct in social interactions serves as an ideal example for his followers. Therefore, it is important to understand how he behaved toward others so that we may apply these principles in our daily lives. From the perspective of Islamic education, this exemplary conduct serves as the foundation for character development. This is because Islamic education is not only oriented toward intellectual development but also emphasizes the holistic formation of character, morality, and personality (Azra, 2012).

One form of social interaction that warrants urgent examination is how he behaves when interacting with children. Childhood is a critical phase in the formation of a person's character and personality. At this stage, a child's development is greatly influenced by their social environment and the patterns of interaction they experience (Berk, 2013; Durlak et al., 2011; Santrock, 2011). If the interaction patterns provided are inappropriate, they have the potential to shape a less-than-optimal character. Conversely, appropriate interactions that are emotionally mindful will make a significant contribution to a child's personality development. Research in the field of Social Emotional Learning also indicates that appropriate interactions significantly contribute to the development of empathy, self-control, and social skills in children (Durlak et al., 2011).

In this context, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) set many examples of exemplary behaviors that should be adopted when interacting with children. These behaviors are recorded in several hadiths, which can be classified as follows:

1.3.1. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) kissed his grandson, Hasan ibn Ali

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَبَّلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْحَسَنَ بْنَ عَلِيٍّ، وَعِنْدَهُ الْأَقْرَعُ بْنُ حَابِسٍ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ لِي عَشْرَةً مِنَ الْوَلَدِ مَا قَبَّلْتُ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا، فَتَنَظَّرَ إِلَيْهِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ ثُمَّ قَالَ: مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمَ لَا يُرْحَمَ

It is narrated from Abu Hurairah, (may Allah be pleased with him), that he said: The Messenger of Allah, (peace be upon him), once kissed Hasan ibn Ali while Al-Aqra' ibn Habis was sitting beside him. Al-Aqra' then said, "I have ten children, but I have never kissed any of them." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) then said, "Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy" (Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

In another narration by Al-Bukhari, there is a hadith similar to the one above. This hadith was transmitted through Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), who explained that once a Bedouin came to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and said, "Do you kiss your children? We never do that." The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "What can I do if Allah has removed compassion from your hearts?"

These two hadiths illustrate the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) tenderness toward children; he demonstrated to his companions the proper attitude one should adopt toward children. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) behavior seems to convey the message that kissing a child is not a disgrace and does not contradict the masculine character associated with strength. These hadiths implicitly explain that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarded kissing children as an expression of affection, for he said, "Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy," in response to a companion who refused to kiss his children. Ibn Bathal, in his commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari, notes that this hadith indicates kissing a child is one of the acts that can bring Allah's mercy; he adds that it reflects the Prophet's (peace be upon him) compassion and tenderness—qualities worthy of emulation and practice (Bathal, 2003). According to psychological studies, physical touch such as kissing, hugging, stroking, and carrying can stimulate several aspects of a child's development, including: social-emotional development, cognitive development, physical-motor development, emotional regulation, and the formation of family bonds (Kholifatun, 2025).

1.3.2. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) carried Umamah while performing prayer

عن أَبِي قَتَادَةَ، قَالَ: «خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَأُمَامَةُ بِنْتُ أَبِي الْعَاصِ عَلَى عَاتِقِهِ، فَصَلَّى، فَإِذَا رَكَعَ وَضَعَهَا، وَإِذَا رَفَعَ رَفَعَهَا

It is narrated from Abu Qatadah that he said: "Once the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came out to us, and Umamah bint Abu al-'Ash was on his shoulders. Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, performed the prayer. When he went into ruku', he set Umamah down, and when he stood up, he lifted her back up." (Al-Bukhari).

Umamah was the Prophet's granddaughter through his daughter Zainab. The story of the Prophet and Umamah offers a profound lesson on the importance of loving children. This is reflected in how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon

him) carried his granddaughter, even while he was praying. Prayer, which is considered a sacred act of worship, did not prevent the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from keeping his granddaughter with him. This demonstrates that showing love to a child is a noble act. Imam Ibn Hajar states in Fath Al-Bari that one manifestation of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) tenderness and affection toward Umamah was when, during ruku' or sujud, he feared she might fall, so he placed her on the floor. It seems that because Umamah was so attached to the Prophet, she refused to be put down and became restless when separated from him. This necessitated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) pick her up again when he stood. Ibn Hajar added that from this story, some scholars drew a conclusion regarding the greatness of compassion toward a child. How could it be otherwise, when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did so while in prayer? Yet there are many hadiths that emphasize the command to maintain *khusyu'* (devotion) during prayer. Although it is possible that this did not disturb the Prophet's *khusyu'* at all. As explained by Ibn Bathal, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) act of carrying Umamah during prayer does not contradict the command to be devout in prayer (Al-Asqallani, 1960; Bathal, 2003).

1.3.3. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) prolonged his prostration for his grandson

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ شَدَّادٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: خَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي إِحْدَى صَلَاتِي الْعِشَاءِ، وَهُوَ حَامِلٌ حَسَنًا أَوْ حُسَيْنًا، فَتَقَدَّمَ فَوَضَعَهُ، ثُمَّ كَبَّرَ لِلصَّلَاةِ، فَسَجَدَ بَيْنَ ظَهْرَانِي صَلَاتِهِ سَجْدَةً أَطَالَهَا، قَالَ: فَرَفَعْتُ رَأْسِي، فَإِذَا الصَّبِيُّ عَلَى ظَهْرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى سُجُودِي، فَلَمَّا قَضَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الصَّلَاةَ قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّكَ سَجَدْتَ بَيْنَ ظَهْرَانِي صَلَاتِكَ سَجْدَةً أَطَلْتَهَا، حَتَّى ظَنَنَّا أَنَّهُ قَدْ حَدَثَ أَمْرٌ، قَالَ: كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يَكُنْ، وَلَكِنْ ابْنِي ارْتَحَلَنِي فَكَرِهْتُ أَنْ أُعْجِلَهُ حَتَّى يَقْضِيَ حَاجَتَهُ

It is narrated from From Abdullah ibn Shaddad, from his father, who said, "Once the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came out to us to lead either the Maghrib or Isha prayer; at that time, he was carrying Hasan or Husayn. Then he stepped forward (to lead the prayer) while placing his grandson down. He then began the prayer, and when he reached the position of prostration, he remained there for quite some time. So I raised my head, and I saw a small child climbing onto the back of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who was still in prostration. So I returned to the position of prostration. When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, finished his prayer, the Companions asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, you remained in one of the prostrations of your prayer for quite a long time, to the point that we thought something had happened to you.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "Nothing happened; it was just that my child (my grandchild) climbed onto me, so I did not want to disturb him until he finished playing" (Al-Nasa'i).

1.3.4. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) comforted a sad child

عن أنس بن مالك قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يدخل علينا ولي أخ صغير يكنى أبا عمير وكان له نعر يلعب به فمات فدخل عليه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم فراه حزينا فقال ما شأنه قالوا مات نعره فقال يا أبا عمير ما فعل النعير

Anas ibn Malik said that once the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered the gathering of his companions. Anas had a younger brother nicknamed Abu Umair, who had a bird he used to play with. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) entered, he saw that Abu Umair looked sad. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) then asked his companions, "What's wrong with him?" The companions replied that his bird had died. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then comforted him and asked, "O Abu Umair, what did that little bird do?" (Abu Dawud)

1.3.5. The Prophet Muhammad's Gentle Treatment of Children Who Made Mistakes

عن أنس قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من أحسن الناس خلقا فأرسلني يوما لحاجة فقلت والله لا أذهب وفي نفسي أن أذهب لما أمرني به نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال فخرجت حتى أمر على صبيان وهم يلعبون في السوق فإذا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قابض بقفاي من ورائي فنظرت إليه وهو يضحك فقال يا أنيس اذهب حيث أمرتك قلت نعم أنا أذهب يا رسول الله قال أنس والله لقد خدمته سبع سنين أو تسع سنين ما علمت قال لشيء صنعت لم فعلت كذا وكذا ولا لشيء تركت هلا فعلت كذا وكذا

Anas said that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the person with the best character. Anas recounted that once he was instructed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to do something, so he said, "Truly, I will not go," even though in his heart he wanted to go. Then Anas set out to do what the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had instructed him to do. On the way, he passed a group of children playing in the market. Then suddenly, from behind, the Prophet (peace be upon him) grabbed Anas by the collar of his shirt, laughing, and said, "O Unais (little Anas), go on, do what I commanded." Anas replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), I will go." Anas added that he had served the Prophet (peace be upon him) for seven or nine years, and not once did he hear the Prophet (peace be upon him) scold him for something he had done, saying, "Why did you do this?" or scold him for something he had not done, saying, "Why didn't you do this?" (Abu Dawud).

1.3.6. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Reprimanded a Child and Taught Him Good Manners

عن وَهْبِ بْنِ كَيْسَانَ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عُمَرَ بْنَ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، يَقُولُ: كُنْتُ غُلَامًا فِي حَجْرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَكَانَتْ يَدَيَّ تَطِيشُ فِي الصَّحْفَةِ، فَقَالَ لِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «يَا غُلَامُ، سَمِّ اللَّهَ، وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ، وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلَيْكَ» فَمَا زِلْتُ تِلْكَ طِعْمَتِي بَعْدُ

It is narrated from Wahb ibn Kaisan that he heard Umar ibn Abu Salamah say, "When I was a child and under the care of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, my hands would wander all over the tray while I was eating. Then the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'O boy, say Bismillah, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is in front of you.' And that is how I have eaten ever since" (Al-Bukhari).

DISCUSSION

2.1. An Analysis of the Prophet Muhammad's Behavior Using the Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence According to Bradberry and Greaves

The Prophet Muhammad's interactions with children, as depicted in the hadiths above, demonstrate very strong characteristics of emotional intelligence. When analyzed using the theory of Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, the Prophet's behavior aligns with the four dimensions of emotional intelligence outlined in their theory: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Among the collected hadiths, a single hadith may represent one or more of the four dimensions.

The *first hadith* describing the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) act of kissing Hasan ibn Ali exemplifies social awareness. This is because the Prophet (peace be upon him) understood a child's emotional need for affection, which in this context was expressed through physical touch in the form of a kiss. The Prophet (peace be upon him) recognized how vital affection is for a child's growth and development. This is reflected in how the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered a pointed rebuke to a companion who never kissed his child. He judged that a person who refuses to kiss his child does not reflect affection—or even that Allah has removed the sense of affection from within him—and then emphasized that a person who refuses to show affection will not be loved in return. This attitude demonstrates that affection is an urgent and fundamental aspect of a child's growth and development. In addition to social awareness, the first hadith also reflects the dimension of relationship management, as illustrated by how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) built an emotional bond with Hasan. The kiss the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) gave to Hasan helped create a warm connection and strengthened the interpersonal relationship between the two. This behavior demonstrates the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) high level of relationship management skills.

In the *second hadith*, the prominent aspect is social awareness, based on the explanation by Ibn Hajar mentioned earlier (p. 13) that when the Prophet was about to bow or prostrate, he was concerned that Umamah might fall, so he placed her on the floor, and it seems that because Umamah was so attached to the Prophet, she did not

want to be put down and felt anxious when separated from him. This necessitated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) pick her up again when he stood. This demonstrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) possessed the sensitivity to perceive Umamah's emotions and feelings. Understanding and awareness of others' emotions are indicators of social awareness.

The *third hadith* highlights the dimensions of social awareness and self-management. The dimension of social awareness is based on the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) attitude, which reflects his understanding and acceptance of the world of children—a world synonymous with play. This is what led the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to prolong his prostration until Hasan and Husain had finished playing. The Prophet's (peace be upon him) act of prolonging his prostration is a reflection of the dimension of self-management, which refers to the ability to control oneself. It seems the Prophet (peace be upon him) understood that if he had hurried his prostration and risen before Hasan and Husain finished playing on his back, it would have endangered them—and this is an extraordinary display of self-control.

In the *fourth hadith*, the dimension of social awareness is prominently evident; this dimension is demonstrated through the Prophet Muhammad's behavior when he tried to comfort Abu Umair, who appeared to be sad. This attitude shows that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) understood and was aware of Abu Umair's emotions. From this arose a sense of empathy within the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which then prompted him to comfort Abu Umair. The Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) ability to comfort and build an emotional connection with Abu Umair can also be categorized as a relationship management skill.

The *fifth hadith* is a perfect example of mastery in the realm of self-management. When Anas made a mistake by forgetting the Prophet's command, the Prophet had every reason to be angry. But instead of getting angry, he gently reprimanded Anas with a gentle tone and a smiling face. This attitude demonstrates the Prophet's ability to control his impulses and maintain emotional stability in a situation that could easily provoke anger.

As for the *sixth hadith*, which contains the Prophet Muhammad's admonition to Umar ibn Abi Salamah regarding table manners, it exemplifies the dimension of relationship management. This is evident in how the Prophet Muhammad taught Umar proper etiquette through a communicative, gentle, and non-intimidating approach. He began his counsel with a polite greeting, then provided guidance in a simple and easy-to-understand manner. This communication style demonstrates the Prophet's ability to build positive interpersonal relationships and to guide children persuasively.

2.2. The Implications of the Prophet Muhammad's Emotional Intelligence in His Interactions with Children for Character Education

According to Kurniawaty and Aries (2011), character education is an effort to instill character in children, encompassing behavior, knowledge, and the desire to consistently practice kindness and virtue toward God, oneself, society, and the environment, thereby becoming individuals of good moral character (Kurniawaty and

Aries, 2011, in Rakhmawati et al., 2019). The goal of character education is to instill positive attitudes through habit formation so that from an early age, children can grow into good individuals (Directorate of PAUD, 2011, in Rakhmawati et al., 2019).

Ideally, character education for children should begin at an early age. Early childhood, often referred to as the “golden age,” is considered a fundamental period that lays the foundation for a person’s future life. During this time, children are more receptive to and able to absorb information, particularly between the ages of 0 and 6. During this period, a child’s brain develops very rapidly and extensively, reaching up to 80% of its capacity, and it is during this time that a child’s physical, mental, and spiritual development takes shape (Harahap, 2021; Ma’rifah & Muthmainnah, 2015, in Rakhmawati et al., 2019). Therefore, character education becomes critically important to implement in children from an early age. Character instilled from an early age takes deeper root within a person. If children are raised well from a young age, given good examples, and accustomed to living by good values and character, they are more likely to grow into good people (Loka & Sari, 2024).

In the Prophet Muhammad’s interactions with children, we can see how he shaped their character by teaching them manners and instilling good values in them from an early age. He did this not only through verbal communication, as he did with Umar ibn Abi Salamah, but also by setting a personal example. In the fifth hadith, Anas relates that the Prophet Muhammad was the person of the best character. During his time as the Prophet’s servant, Anas never once heard the Prophet utter words that seemed judgmental, whether regarding what Anas did or what he did not do. Anas’s account underscores that the Prophet educated and instilled character in children not only through words but also through setting a personal example.

The Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) interactions with children, which demonstrate characteristics of emotional intelligence, imply that character education must be conducted through an emotional approach characterized by compassion, empathy, and setting a good example. The first hadith explains how the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) built relationships with children on a foundation of compassion. The Prophet’s (peace be upon him) gesture of kissing Hasan ibn Ali and his saying, “Whoever does not show affection will not be loved,” demonstrate that affection is a key element in fostering a healthy emotional bond between educators and children. A positive emotional bond makes children feel safe, valued, and loved, thereby making it easier for them to embrace the moral values being taught.

From a modern educational perspective, a safe emotional environment has also been shown to influence children’s development of empathy, self-control, and prosocial behavior. Joseph A. Durlak et al., in their study on social-emotional learning, found that participants in the program demonstrated significant improvements in social-emotional skills, prosocial behavior, and even academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011). Furthermore, Clancy Blair and C. Cybele Raver emphasize that a supportive and emotionally positive caregiving environment plays a crucial role in the development of children’s self-regulation (Blair & Raver, 2014).

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) behavior in understanding children's emotional states highlights the importance of empathy in the character education process. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) comforted Abu 'Umair, who was saddened by the death of his pet bird, he demonstrated that children's feelings need to be valued and acknowledged. This approach implies that educators and parents should not dismiss children's emotions but rather build warm and supportive communication. Attention to a child's emotional state will aid the development of social awareness as well as the child's ability to understand the feelings of others.

In addition, the Prophet Muhammad's ability to control his emotions when dealing with children's behavior also serves as an important example in character education. The Prophet Muhammad did not respond to children's mistakes or impulsive behavior with anger or violence, but with gentleness and patience. In the hadith of Anas ibn Malik, the Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to smile and speak gently even though Anas had delayed carrying out the task he was ordered to do. This attitude demonstrates that character education is more effectively achieved through emotional control and a persuasive approach rather than harsh punishment. Such exemplary behavior is important because children tend to imitate the emotional behaviors they observe in the adults around them.

Another implication can be seen in the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) educational methods, which were communicative and respectful toward children. In the hadith of Umar ibn Abi Salamah, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) offered advice using polite, simple, and easy-to-understand language. This demonstrates that character education should be conducted through positive communication, not through intimidation or pressure. A dialogic and respectful approach will help foster an emotional bond between the educator and the child, thereby allowing the process of internalizing values to occur more effectively.

Thus, the Prophet Muhammad's emotional intelligence makes a significant contribution to the concept of character education in early childhood. His exemplary conduct demonstrates that the success of character education is greatly influenced by the quality of the emotional bond between educators and children. Therefore, values such as compassion, empathy, kindness, self-control, and positive communication must be central principles in early childhood education practices, both within the family and in educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) demonstrated high emotional intelligence in his interactions with children, as depicted in the hadiths of the Prophet. The four dimensions of emotional intelligence according to Bradberry and Greaves—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—are clearly manifested in his patterns of interaction. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was able to understand children's emotional needs, exercise self-control in situations that could potentially provoke anger, and build warm and meaningful interpersonal relationships. These

interaction patterns imply that character education for young children cannot rely solely on cognitive and instructional approaches but must be grounded in love, empathy, emotional regulation, and setting a good example. The success of instilling character values is largely determined by the quality of the emotional bond between the educator and the child, as children are more likely to internalize values of goodness when they feel safe, valued, and loved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdul Rahman, H., & Muhamad, S. N. (2022). Aplikasi Teknik Rasulullah Dalam Membentuk Kecerdasan Emosi (Application Of Rasulullah's Technique In Shaping Emotional Intelligence). *UMRAN - Journal of Islamic and Civilizational Studies*, 9(1 SE-Articles), 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.11113/umran2022.9n1.473>
- Abu Dawud, S. (2009). *Sunan Abi Dawud*. Dar Al-Risalah Al-Alamiyyah.
- Al-Asqallani, I. H. (1960). *Fath Al-Bari Syarh Shahih Al-Bukhari*. Beirut: Dar Al-Ma'rifah.
- Al-Bukhari, M. bin I. (n.d.). *Shahih Al-Bukhari* (1st ed.; D. T. Al-Najah, Ed.).
- Al-Idrus, S. F. I., Damayanti, P. S., & Ermayani. (2020). Pengembangan Kecerdasan Emosional Peserta Didik Di Sekolah Dasar Melalui Pendidikan Karakter. *PENDASI: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, 4(1), 137–146. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23887/jpdi.v4i1.3120>
- Al-Nasa'i. (1986). *Sunan Al-Nasa'i* (2nd ed.). Halb: Maktab Al-Mathbu'at Al-Islamiyyah.
- Azra, A. (2012). *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan Modernisasi di Tengah Tantangan Milenium III*. Jakarta: Kencana.
- Bathal, I. (2003). *Syarah Shahih Al-Bukhari* (2nd ed.). Riyadh: Maktabah Al-Rusyd.
- Berk, L. (2013). *Child Development* (9th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Blair, C., & Raver, C. (2014). School Readiness and Self-Regulation: A Developmental Psychobiological Approach. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 66. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010814-015221>
- Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. (2009). *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. San Diego: Talent Smart.
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Harahap, A. Z. (2021). Pentingnya Pendidikan Karakter Bagi Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Usia Dini*, 7(2), 49–57. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24114/jud.v7i2.30585>
- Ibn Al-Hajjaj, M. (n.d.). *Shahih Muslim*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' Al-Turats Al-'Arabi.
- Kholifatun, U. (2025). Bentuk Physical Thouch Nabi Muhammad Saw. Terhadap Aspek Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini. *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10, 123–136.
- KPAI. (2022). Catatan Pelanggaran Hak Anak Tahun 2021 dan Proyeksi Pengawasan Penyelenggaraan Perlindungan Anak Tahun 2022. Retrieved from

- <https://www.kpai.go.id/publikasi/catatan-pelanggaran-hak-anak-tahun-2021-dan-proyeksi-pengawasan-penyelenggaraan-perlindungan-anak-tahun-2022>
- Loka, N., & Sari, N. (2024). Internalization of Early Childhood Responsibility Character Values Through Physical Education. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 4(2), 77–87. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24260/albanna.v4i2.1959>
- Makbul, M., Ferianto, Ahmad, L. O. I., & Saputri S., D. (2022). KECERDASAN EMOSIONAL DALAM PERSPEKTIF HADIS MAUDHU'I. *El-Sunnah: Jurnal Kajian Hadis Dan Integrasi Ilmu*, 3(1), 147–157. <https://doi.org/10.19109/elsunnah.v3i1.13375>
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional Intelligence: Theory, Findings, and Implications Work-Life Strategies. *Psychological Inquiry Copyright*, 15(3), 197–215.
- Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri. (2024). Data Gabungan: Jumlah Kasus Perundungan Naik Dua Kali Lipat. Retrieved from Pusat Informasi Kriminal Nasional Bareskrim Polri website: https://pusiknas.polri.go.id/detail_artikel/data_gabungan:_jumlah_kasus_perundungan_naik_dua_kali_lipat
- Rakhmawati, E., Maulia, D., Suyati, T., & Suharno, A. (2019). Penerapan Pendidikan Karakter pada Anak Usia Dini di TK Negeri Pembina Semarang. *Jurnal Psikologi Integratif*, 7(1 SE-Articles), 42–50. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpsi.v7i1.1670>
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.
- Santrock, J. (2011). *Child Development* (13th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sholahuddin, La Ode Ismail Ahmad, & Abdul Rahman Sakka. (2025). Emotional Intelligence in the Perspective of Hadith: An Analysis of Emotion Regulation and Its Implementation in Character Education. *At-Takwin: Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 1(1 SE-Articles). <https://doi.org/10.65097/at-takwin.v1i1.34>
- Thorndike, E. L. (1920). Intelligence and its uses. *Harper's Magazine*, 140. Retrieved from <https://harpers.org/archive/1920/01/intelligence-and-its-uses/>