

Karen Armstrong's perspective of compassion and its implications as a primary competency of teachers in Islamic education

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Abstract:

Compassion plays a crucial role in human life, particularly in education, where it helps shape positive character traits in children and enhances their altruistic behavior. This study aims to analyze Karen Armstrong's perspective on compassion as a core competency for educators in Islamic education. A qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach was employed. The data sources include the primary source, Karen Armstrong's book *Compassion: 12 Steps to a More Compassionate Life*, and secondary sources such as relevant documents, scholarly articles, and other data. The research procedure was carried out in three steps: reviewing relevant references, collecting necessary references, and analyzing them according to the research objectives. The findings reveal that compassion, according to Armstrong, is the ability to place oneself in another person's position, to feel their suffering as if it were one's own, and to voluntarily engage in alleviating that suffering. In the context of Islamic education, compassion is a competency that every educator should possess. Educators who embody and implement compassion in their teaching activities can create a positive educational environment and foster constructive communication, thereby supporting the optimal development of children's character.

Keywords: constructive communication; competency of teacher; educational environment; Islamic Education.

INTRODUCTION

Affection is one of the most important aspects of human life. Its role is vital in controlling the natural instincts of humans inherited from their ancestors, known as the 4Fs, namely feeding, fighting, fleeing, and fornicating (Fernández et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2023). This instinct is also often referred to as the "old brain." The old brain, which is part of the more primitive reptilian brain, is located in the hypothalamus. Its main function is to regulate the basic behavior of living things, including humans (Saptama et al., 2024). In research, the old brain plays an important role in controlling behavior and impulses, especially in children (Saptama et al., 2024). This brain system has a major role in allowing *Homo sapiens* to survive and evolve throughout its history (Armstrong, 2010).

However, over time, the human brain has evolved. The Homo sapiens brain developed a more sophisticated system, which allows humans to reflect and consider decisions in their lives. This new system is known as the "new brain" (Andayani, 2023). This new brain functions to protect humans from the instinctive nature inherited from the old brain, providing the ability to make more rational and controlled decisions (Asrini & Suyadi, 2023).

The development of the human brain was proven in a study in 1878 conducted by Paul Broca, a French anatomist. He found that all mammals have a part of the brain that is older than the neocortex, which is not owned by the reptile brain. This part of the brain is known as *le grand lobe lombique* (Komaitis et al., 2022; Sánchez, 2021; Tandon, 2024) (Komaitis et al., 2022; Sánchez, 2021; Tandon, 2024). These findings open up new insights into brain development in mammals. Furthermore, in the 1950s, this research was continued by Paul MacLean, he stated that positive emotions such as compassion, joy, calm, and maternal affection do not originate from the hypothalamus, but from the limbic system located under the cortex (Kaushal et al., 2024; Maclean, 2021; Unnithan, 2024). This limbic system is the center of the regulation of deeper human emotions, which are more related to social bonds and affection. Then, in 1969, further research was conducted by Roger Sperry, who explained the differences in function between the right and left brain. The human right brain, according to Sperry, functions to feel, cry, respond to symbolism, and is a place for art, music, and softer and more flexible emotions. Meanwhile, the left brain is responsible for analysis, paying attention to words, differences, precision, and cause-and-effect logic (Sandrone, 2022; Thiebaut de Schotten & Beckmann, 2022). Sperry's explanation opens up new insights into the role of each hemisphere of the brain in processing emotional and rational information.

This development in the mammalian brain plays an important role in the survival and development of its offspring to this day. Initially, mammals' attention to their offspring was not done consciously, but rather automatically, such as keeping warm through the fur on their bodies. Over time, awareness slowly appears in mammals, such as building nests that aim to maintain the warmth, health, safety, and development of their offspring. At this stage, they begin to learn to protect, nurture, and care for other creatures besides themselves (Gilbert, 2009, 2022; Gilbert & Choden, 2013). This strategy has proven effective in maintaining lineage continuity, which ultimately drives the evolution of more complex and sophisticated brains (Gilbert, 2009, 2022; Gilbert & Choden, 2013). This process shows how mammalian brains adapt to their social environment and enhance their ability to maintain family and group bonds.

Based on this, many scientists have paid attention to the importance of compassion in the continuation of human life, one of whom is Karen Armstrong. Armstrong's concern about compassion in life was conveyed to the world when Armstrong received the TED award (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) in February 2008. On that occasion, she was given the opportunity to create, launch and distribute Charter for Compassion (Charter of Compassion), where this charter aims to counter the voices of extremism, intolerance, hatred, and restore compassion as the core of religious and moral life (Armstrong, 2010). In the end, with the help of all religious figures and scientists, Charter for Compassion was successfully drafted at a gathering held in Switzerland in February 2009 and then on November 12, 2009, the charter was distributed to sixty locations around the world (Armstrong, 2010).

Karen Armstrong defines compassion as not an attitude of pitying others, but rather "bearing (something) with others," or can also be understood as a person's attitude of putting themselves in the position of others, to feel the suffering experienced by others as if the suffering were their own suffering, and voluntarily stepping in to resolve their suffering (Armstrong, 2010). This is in line with what Paul Gilbert said, where Gilbert stated that compassion is a deep emotional response to the suffering of others, accompanied by a strong desire to help reduce that suffering (Gilbert, 1989, 2005, 2009, 2015). Based on this understanding, Karen Armstrong then formulated a rule related to compassion, which is then referred to as the golden rule (Armstrong, 2010), which reads: *"The Golden Rule asks us to look into our own hearts, find what is hurting us, and then refuse under any circumstances to inflict that pain on others."*

Furthermore, Armstrong stated that compassion is the most natural trait in humans, which is also the basis of the teachings of all beliefs in the world (Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, to achieve a harmonious social life, all humans must instill the principle of compassion contained in the golden rule in every movement. One of the most important aspects to instill love in each individual is through education. In Islamic Education, love is one of the basic values that should be instilled in children from an early age through education (Izzan & Jalil, 2022; Supriadi et al., 2021). Education as a means to instill compassion in every individual has been widely studied. Several previous studies have examined the implementation of compassion in the context of education.

Afriansyah (2024) in his research stated that compassion, honesty, and patience must be developed through early education. Wea and Wolomasi (2022) stated that education must take place based on compassion. Where

through educational interactions full of compassion, children not only learn about love but also how to show compassion to others which will also shape their altruistic behavior. In line with that, Ulfadhilah and Ulfah (2022) stated that affection implemented in education is useful for fulfilling children's emotional needs, where they liken these emotional needs to a "love tank" that needs to be filled with affection. Regarding its purpose, Rifa'i, et al. (2021) stated that affection implemented in every educational activity can internalize this feeling which will then shape the child's characteristics. This is in line with Fitriati, et al (2020) who stated that an environment that prioritizes affection will shape children's positive behavior and be able to establish good social relationships.

Based on previous studies that have been described, it can be concluded that compassion is very important to be implemented in Islamic education activities. However, there is a gap that has never been analyzed in previous studies, namely what kind of compassion should be implemented in Islamic education activities. Therefore, this study aims to analyze compassion in Karen Armstrong's perspective and its implications for educator competence in Islamic education. Novelty in this study is to analyze compassion from the perspective of Karen Armstrong as the main component of educators in Islamic education.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method to examine Karen Armstrong's thoughts on Compassion. This method was chosen because it is appropriate for exploring and describing deep philosophical thoughts, as well as analyzing their application in the context of modern education (Adawiyah et al., 2024; Rahardja et al., 2023, 2024). The data sources in this study are divided into two categories, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The primary source in this study is Karen Armstrong's work entitled *Compassion: 12 Steps to a Life of Compassion*, and the secondary sources in this study are relevant data that support this study, such as scientific articles, documents, and others. The working procedure in this research follows Danandjaja's opinion (2014), namely, first, reviewing references related to the research focus, namely related to compassion, mercy, educator competence, and Islamic education, second, collecting references that have been reviewed in accordance with the sub-focus of the research, third, analyzing these references in accordance with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Karen Armstrong: Travels, work, and international awards

In her teenage years, Armstrong felt called to live as a nun. This desire arose from a deep spiritual search for God and a drive to understand more about the meaning of life and the relationship between humans and the Almighty. In 1962, after receiving the blessing of both her parents, Armstrong decided to enter the religious world and joined the Order of Nuns. She was accepted at the Provincial House in Tripton, a center of the Order in the area, and underwent training as a Postulant. The Postulant period lasted nine months, which was intended to introduce and familiarize her with the life of the monastery, including the strict rules that must be followed (Armstrong, 2014).

After completing her Postulancy, Armstrong proceeded to the Novitiate, which lasted two years. During this time, she began wearing the formal habit of a nun and underwent more in-depth theological and spiritual training. Armstrong adopted the name Sister Martha, given to her by a bishop, and became part of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, a very conservative religious community known for its strict rules that its members had to follow (Armstrong, 2003). However, despite spending many years in a strict religious life, Armstrong felt that she had not found the God she was looking for. She felt that the nun's life did not bring the spiritual peace she had hoped for. On January 27, 1969, after much deliberation, Armstrong decided to leave the nun's life and resign from the Order. This decision was made even though she still had great respect for the traditions and values taught by the Order. Leaving the nun's life was not easy, but Armstrong felt that she needed to find a spiritual path that was more in line with her personal quest (Armstrong, 2003). After leaving the monastery, Armstrong continued her academic education. He went on to study English literature at the University of Oxford, which opened the door for him to delve deeper into a variety of fields, including theology, apologetics, scripture, and church history. During her studies, Armstrong earned a diploma in these fields, which enriched her understanding of religion and spirituality (Erasiah, 2021; Firdausiyah, 2020).

Although her doctoral program at Oxford was not completed because her final project was rejected, Armstrong did not stop pursuing knowledge. She switched to teaching at Bedford College, University of London, where she taught 19th and 20th century literature. However, in 1982, Armstrong was forced to resign from

academia after being diagnosed with epilepsy, which affected her performance (Firdausiyah, 2021). After leaving academia, Armstrong discovered a deeper interest in the study of world religions. In 1984, he was invited by Channel Four, a British television channel, to make a documentary about the life and work of Saint Paul. In order to make this documentary, Armstrong conducted extensive research in Jerusalem, which exposed him to three of the world's major religions: Judaism, Orthodox Christianity, and Islam. This experience opened up new perspectives for Armstrong and sparked her interest in understanding more about the monotheistic religions (Armstrong, 2003). Armstrong began to study these religions with a more inclusive approach, seeking to see all three as legitimate paths to God. This view later formed her framework for thinking about monotheistic religion, which became a major focus in much of her work (Armstrong, 2003).

Karen Armstrong has written more than 20 books, most of which deal with comparative religion, spirituality, and understanding God. These works are important references in the study of religion and are considered major contributions to interfaith understanding. Some of her best-known works include:

1. *A History of God* (1993) – This book discusses humanity's search for God over 4,000 years through three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This book was translated into Indonesian under the title *The History of God: The Story of the Search for God by Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (2014).
2. *The Battle for God* (2000) – This book discusses the rise of fundamentalism in major religions and its impact on the modern world.
3. *The Case for God* (2009) – Armstrong reaffirms the importance of deep spiritual understanding in a world increasingly alienated from religious values.
4. *Muhammad: Prophet for Our Time* (1991) – This book provides a more humane view of the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, correcting the negative views that had developed in the West about Islam.
5. *The Spiral Staircase* (2004) – This memoir chronicles Armstrong's personal journey, from nunhood to a broader spiritual quest.
6. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* (2010) – This book provides guidance for developing a more compassionate life, based on the teachings of the great religions.

Several of Karen Armstrong's books have also been translated into Indonesian, including *Islam: A Short History* (2000), which translated into *Islamic History: A Brief Review of the Development of Islam Throughout the Ages* (2002), and *The Battle for God* (2000), which translated into *Fighting for God: Fundamentalism in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism* (2001).

A leading writer and commentator on religion, Karen Armstrong has received numerous awards for her contributions to promoting interfaith understanding and interfaith dialogue. Some of Armstrong's awards include:

1. Violet Vaughan Morgan Award – This award is given for contributions to literature.
2. Muslim Public Affairs Council Media Award – Given by The Islamic Center of Southern California in 1999 in recognition of her contributions to promoting a deeper understanding of Islam.
3. Medal of the Egyptian Government – Awarded by Al-Azhar Madrassah in 2007 in recognition of her dedication to the understanding of religions.
4. TED Prize – Awarded for her vision of the Charter for Compassion in 2008, which promotes the values of compassion in everyday life.
5. Four Freedoms Medal for Freedom of Worship – Awarded by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute in 2008 in recognition of her work in support of religious freedom.
6. Dr. Leopold Lucas Prize – Awarded by Tübingen University in 2009 for her contributions to the study of religion.
7. British Academy Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Transcultural Understanding – Awarded in 2013 for her efforts to promote cross-cultural and religious understanding.

Armstrong is known as a "free monotheist" who is more concerned with the spiritual aspect than simply following a particular religious dogma. As an orientalist, he rejects the view that Islam is a violent and dangerous religion. He considers this view to be the result of a major misunderstanding. Armstrong emphasizes the importance of viewing religions in a more inclusive and respectful way and understanding the contribution of each religion to humanity's spiritual quest (Erasiah, 2021; Firdausiyah, 2021).

Through the theory of *Historically Effected Consciousness*, we can see that Armstrong's spiritual journey, from her teenage years to her decision to leave the monastery, has shaped her awareness of God and

monotheistic religions. Her life experiences, both inside and outside the monastery, have shaped her broader and more open views of various religious traditions, especially Islam. This understanding later became the foundation for her in-depth writings on major religions (Erasiah, 2021; Firdausiyah, 2021).

Compassion according to Karen Armstrong: Definition and urgency in social life

Compassion is often associated and equated with the term "pity" which means "painful" or "pitiable", which means "sad" (Armstrong, 2010). This understanding is something that is wrong, according to Armstrong, this understanding of compassion comes from Latin (father) and Greek (*pathein*), which means "to suffer, undergo, or experience". Therefore, according to Armstrong compassion is not an attitude of pitying others, but rather "bearing (something) with others" or can also be understood as a person's attitude of putting themselves in the position of others, to feel the suffering experienced by others as if the suffering were our own suffering and voluntarily stepping in to resolve their suffering (Armstrong, 2010). This is in line with what Paul Gilbert said, where Gilbert stated that compassion is a deep emotional response to the suffering of others, accompanied by a strong desire to help reduce that suffering (Gilbert, 1989, 2005, 2009, 2015). Based on this understanding, Karen Armstrong then formulated a rule related to compassion, which is then referred to as the golden rule (Armstrong, 2010), which reads: "*The Golden Rule asks us to look into our own hearts, find what is hurting us, and then refuse under any circumstances to inflict that pain on others.*" The golden rule formulated by Armstrong was inspired by the statement of a wise Chinese teacher, Confucius (551-479 BC), who, when asked by her students what teachings could be applied in everyday life, replied, "Perhaps the teachings about it (tolerance). That is, never do to others what you would not have them do to you" (Waley, 2012). In other words, someone should connect their own experiences with the experiences of others (all day and every day) (Graham, 2015). This is what Confucius calls the ideal condition of a human being (*ren*), where people who have been able to live that's it every day and all day long will be a junzi (mature human) (Wei-Ming, 1985).

Basically, compassion is the most important aspect contained in every religious teaching, be it Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Christianity. Armstrong (Armstrong, 2010) stated that compassion is the core teaching of every religion, where compassion is a tester of true human spirituality, which will then bring humans into a relationship with the almighty being (God). Furthermore, Armstrong said that every religious adherent cannot only limit compassion to their own group, but they must also give compassion to everyone, even though they are not in the same group as them (Armstrong, 2010). In Buddhist teachings, to attain Nirvana one must undergo deep practice and meditation, one of which is meditation on the "four immeasurable thoughts", namely *maitri* (loving-kindness) which is the desire to bring happiness to all beings, *karuna* (compassion) which is the determination to free all beings from their suffering, *mudita* (sympathetic joy) which is the attitude of joy at the happiness of others, and *upeksha* (fair mind) which is the statement that allows humans to love all beings equally and impartially (Astuti & Surya, 2024; Sakawana & Nyanasuryanadi, 2024). In Islamic teachings, compassion is known as mercy, which means "compassion." Furthermore, compassion in the Qur'an is divided into 4 terms, namely mercy, *rahman*, *rahim*, and *ra'ūf* (Al-Ashfahani, 2020).

According to Armstrong, compassion is the most natural human trait and is the thing most admired by mankind. (Armstrong, 2010). This can be seen from how humanity greatly emulates and respects figures and leaders who are principled and compassionate, such as Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968), Nelson Mandela, and the Dalai Lama (Armstrong, 2010). On a further level, the tributes to Princess Diana and the outpouring of grief at her death showed that her personality (warm and loving), which was different from other figures of the time, was very much liked by the public (Armstrong, 2010).

But not all scientists consider compassion and altruism to be natural human traits. Proponents of the theory of evolution, since the time of Thomas H. Huxley (1825-1895), have argued that compassion and altruism are problematic (Armstrong, 2010). Furthermore, E.O. Wilson argues that altruism is an attitude of hypocrisy. Wilson said, "good behavior in altruism is very calculated, often consciously arranged to provide a long-term benefit for an individual/group" (Armstrong, 2010).

Scientists who support the theory of evolution believe that the natural human nature is not compassion or altruism, but egoism. Egoism is a human nature that prioritizes one's own interests over the interests of others. (Rothstein, 2022; Stout, 2022; Susilo, 2022). They argue that this egoistic attitude is a trait inherited from the reptiles that fought off the primal slime some 500 million years ago (Armstrong, 2010). This trait is motivated by a mechanism that neuroscientists call the 4Fs, namely feeding, fighting, fleeing, and reproduction (Fernández et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2023). This mechanism was passed down by previous animals to homo sapiens in their neurological system, which is located in the hypothalamus at the base of the brain. This system is often referred

to by scientists as the "old brain". The old brain, also known as the reptilian brain, is part of the central nervous system that functions to regulate basic and instinctive behavior (Saptama et al., 2024). In one study, the old brain served as a context for behavior and impulse control, especially in children (Saptama et al., 2024). These instincts given by the old brain are what then played an important role for homo sapiens, which enabled them to survive (Armstrong, 2010). But today, the human brain has evolved into a brain known as the "new brain", where the neocortex becomes the center of reasoning power that allows humans to reflect on the world and ourselves, and also functions as a shield that protects humans from the primitive instinctive desires of the "old brain" (Andayani, 2023; Asrini & Suyadi, 2023). The development of research related to the old brain evolving into a new brain is what underlies E.O. Wilson and supporters of the theory of evolution to reject the statement of altruism.

In response to this, Auguste Comte (the Creator of Altruism) rejected Wilson's statement by stating that he did not see any incompatibility between compassion and human life in the scientific era. Furthermore, he stated that the emotions of compassion are an aesthetic that has a beautiful quality and has its own power (Armstrong, 2010).

This is also supported by other research. French anatomist, Paul Broca, in 1878, discovered that all mammals basically have an older part of the brain than the neocortex which is not owned by the reptile brain called *le grand lobe lombique* (Komaitis et al., 2022; Sánchez, 2021; Tandon, 2024). In the 1950s, this research was continued by Paul MacLean, who stated that positive emotions (such as compassion, joy, calmness, and maternal affection) do not originate from the hypothalamus, but rather from the limbic system located under the cortex (Kaushal et al., 2024; Maclean, 2021; Unnithan, 2024).

Previous research was then refined by Roger Sperry in the 1960s, where he explained the differences in tasks between the right and left brains of humans, where the right brain of humans functions to feel, cry, respond to symbolism, and is the anchor of art, music, and emotions that are "softer" and "more flexible", while the left brain of humans functions to analyze, pay attention to words, differences, precision, and cause and effect (Sandrone, 2022; Thiebaut de Schotten & Beckmann, 2022). This development of the mammalian brain is what later became an important part in the development and survival of its offspring, where at first the concern was still basic and automatic (such as warm fur), which then the mammals began to build nests to ensure the health, safety, and development of their offspring. At that time, mammals first learned to protect, nurture, and care for creatures other than themselves. The strategy used by mammals proved effective in maintaining their lineage, which eventually caused the brain to evolve to become even more complex (Gilbert, 2009, 2022; Gilbert & Choden, 2013).

Based on that, Karen Armstrong views compassion as a very important thing in human life. Therefore, she tries to spread the importance of building and training compassion in every individual. This is done with the aim that every human being can live together by respecting and caring for each other.

With this ideal in mind, Karen Armstrong, in February 2008, when she received a TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) award, asked TED to help her create, launch, and disseminate a Charter for Compassion that would be written by leading thinkers from various groups. This charter aims to counter the voices of extremism, intolerance, and hatred and restore compassion to the core of religious and moral life. The Charter for Compassion was finally drafted in a gathering held in Switzerland in February 2009 and distributed on November 12, 2009, in sixty locations around the world (Armstrong, 2010).

Compassion as a core competency of educators in Islamic education

Love is the most important aspect in education and learning activities. Armstrong (Armstrong, 2010) formulated a rule related to affection, which she called the Golden Rule, which states, "The Golden Rule asks us to look into our own hearts, find what is hurting us, and then refuse under any circumstances to inflict that pain on others." Armstrong put forward this principle with the aim of appealing to every individual to never do to others what they would not want others to do to them (Armstrong, 2010). In general, Armstrong defines compassion as an emotional attitude in which a person tries to put themselves in the position of another person, to feel the suffering experienced by another person as if it were their own suffering, and voluntarily step in to resolve their suffering (Armstrong, 2010). This is in line with what Paul Gilbert defined regarding compassion. Gilbert stated that compassion is a deep emotional response to the suffering of others, accompanied by a strong desire to help reduce that suffering (Gilbert, 1989, 2005, 2009, 2015).

In Islamic education and learning activities, compassion holds an aspect that is no less important. Compassion in Islam is also known as rahmat (Al-Ashfahani, 2020). In the Qur'an, affection can be defined using

3 terms, namely *rahmān*, *rahīm*, and *ra'ūf*. Where *rahmān* is God's love given to all of His creation (both believers and non-believers) and is temporary, *rahīm* is God's love given only to His servants who believe in Him and is eternal, and *ra'ūf* is God's love given to His servants who do righteous deeds (Amrullah, 1982; Shihab, 2002a, 2002b). However, to understand the urgency and implications of love in Islamic education, we must first understand the concept of Islamic education and learning in the Qur'an. The Al-Qur'an is a book that contains education and guidance given by Allah SWT to His servant (Abdussalam, 2017; Abdussalam & Surahman, 2022). Therefore, in the Qur'an, Allah SWT always has the position of *mu'allim* (educator) and humans have the position of *mu'allam* (students) (Abdussalam, 2017).

In the Qur'an, Allah SWT is often mentioned not directly using His name, but by using other terms, such as *rabb*. *Rabb* in meaning is "an effort to guide gradually to achieve perfect development". Aam Abdussalam (Abdussalam, 2017) adding that the most dominant meaning of the word *rabb* is compassion. From the understanding of the position of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, Allah, who is referred to as *rabb*, explains how important compassion is in educational and learning activities. Compassion is the most important competency that every educator must have. This can be seen from how the word *rabb* in the Qur'an, which indicates *tarbiyyah* (education), often shows that compassion is very important in this education. In Qs. Al-Isrā'/ 15: 24, when Allah commands humans to pray *rabbī irḥamhumā kamā rabbayānī sagīrā*, the word *irḥamhumā* indicates the education that Allah provides to all of His servants as the education of both parents to their children, which is full of attention, patience and affection (Abdussalam, 2017; Amrullah, 1982; Shihab, 2002b).

In QS. Al-Fātiḥah/ 1: 2-3, when it is explained that Allah is *rabb al-'ālamīn* and then in the next verse the word *rabb* is characterized by *al-rahmān* and *al-rahīm*, it shows that Allah not only created the entire universe, but also ensured that all of His creations could run as they should under the guidance, attention, and love of Allah. (Shihab, 2002a). It is important to underline why in this verse Allah does not call himself the Creator, this is because if Allah called himself the Creator then the meaning would only show that Allah only created the universe and does not guarantee its continuation after that. (Shihab, 2002a). In Qs. Al-Rahmān/ 55: 1-5, the arrangement of this group of verses really shows God's love for humans, where in the first verse God emphasizes himself as *al-Rahmān* (God who is full of love for all his creations), first creating and formulating life guidance, life guidance, and infrastructure before creating humans. Imagine what it would be like if humans were created first before their life guidance was created. Of course, it is certain that humans would live in chaos.

From the various explanations, it can be concluded that affection is the most important component in every educational and learning activity. When an educator has fostered, grown, and has a loving nature, then it is impossible for him to educate his students very carefully and attentively as if the students were his own children. This is because he does not want his children to be taught badly and carelessly. This is also explained by Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi, who states that when it comes to educating, an educator must position himself as if he were a father in front of his child; that is, he must give full love and attention to his students as if they were his own child (Abdussalam, 2017). This was later reinforced by al-Ghazali, who stated that an educator must treat his students as he loves and treats his own children (Abdussalam, 2017).

In learning activities, affection plays an important role in forming a strong relationship between educators and their students. The affection given by educators to their students will then form a positive relationship or also known as educational communication. The affection given by educators to their students will foster a sense of trust in students towards their educators, which will cause students to love them back. Therefore, educators should strive to continue to provide affection in every learning activity that is appreciated through the best words, attitudes, and actions. Recent research suggests that educators who base their education on compassion, gentleness, and avoidance of judgment tend to be closer to their students (Arifin & Anshori, 2021; Hasanah & Munif, 2023). When the relationship between educators and students has been built positively, the success of learning activities will increase, and students can easily achieve their goals (Asfia, 2021; Ridho, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Compassion is the most important thing that every human being must have. Compassion that is processed by the limbic under the cortex functions to suppress human instincts that always prioritize themselves compared to others. Karen Armstrong defines compassion as a person's attitude to put themselves in the position of others, to feel the suffering experienced by others as if the suffering were their own suffering, and voluntarily enter to resolve their suffering. According to Armstrong, compassion can be realized by looking into our own hearts, finding what hurts us, and then refusing under any circumstances to cause that pain to others or which is also

called the golden rule. In Islamic education, compassion plays a very important role. This is reflected in how Allah as mu'allim represents Himself as *al-rahmān* and *al-rahīm*, who always gives compassion to all his creatures (*mu'allam*). Therefore, an educator should always try to show compassion and always try to do the best for their students as if their students were their own children. The compassion given by educators to students will then give students a sense of trust in the educator, which will then establish an educative communication. Educative communication will cause the learning process and activities to be successful, and therefore, the learning objectives will be achieved.

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