

Faith to Strength: How Parental Religiosity Enhances the Character Strength of Adolescents with Down Syndrome through Strength-Based Parenting

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Abstract

Understanding character strengths in adolescents with Down Syndrome (DS) can help identify positive aspects and develop intervention programs so that they have a better quality of life. This study aims to examine the influence of parental religiosity on the character strength of adolescents with DS which is mediated by strength-based parenting (SBP). The participants in this research consisted of 70 parents of teenagers with Down syndrome in Jakarta and the surrounding area, who were obtained through purposive sampling. Research variables were measured by adapting and modifying the Values in Action Inventory of Strength (VIA-IS), Brief Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMR/S), and Strength-based Parenting (SBP) scale. Data analysis was carried out using regression-based mediation analysis via the HAYES PROCESS syntax in IBM SPSS. The results showed that SBP could significantly mediate the influence of parental religiosity on the character strength of adolescents with DS (indirect effect = .4916; 95% CI = (.265; .8042)). The implication is that parents of adolescents with Down syndrome are advised to apply religious values in daily parenting by identifying positive character traits in their children, and actively encouraging their children to use these traits in daily interactions and activities.

Keywords: Character Strength, Down Syndrome; Parental Religiosity, Strength-Based Parenting

Keimanan menuju kekuatan: Bagaimana Parental Religiosity Meningkatkan Kekuatan Karakter Remaja dengan Sindroma Down Melalui Strength-Based Parenting

Abstrak

Pemahaman tentang kekuatan karakter pada remaja dengan sindroma Down (DS) dapat membantu mengidentifikasi aspek positif dan menyusun program intervensi agar mereka memiliki kualitas hidup yang lebih baik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh religiusitas orangtua terhadap kekuatan karakter remaja dengan DS yang dimediasi strength-based parenting (SBP). Partisipan penelitian ini terdiri dari 70 orang tua remaja dengan sindroma down di Jakarta dan sekitarnya, yang diperoleh melalui purposive sampling. Variabel-variabel penelitian diukur dengan mengadaptasi dan memodifikasi Values in Action Inventory of Strength (VIA-IS), Brief Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMR/S), dan strength-based parenting scale (SBP). Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan regression-based mediation analysis melalui the PROCESS HAYES syntax pada software SPSS. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SBP signifikan dapat memediasi secara penuh pengaruh parental religiosity terhadap kekuatan karakter remaja dengan DS (indirect effect = .4916; 95% CI = (.265; .8042)). Implikasinya adalah orang tua dari remaja dengan Down syndrome disarankan untuk menerapkan nilai-nilai religius dalam pengasuhan sehari-hari dengan mengidentifikasi karakter positif anak, dan secara aktif mendorong anak untuk menggunakan karakter ini dalam interaksi dan kegiatan sehari-hari.

Kata kunci: Kekuatan karakter, Sindroma Down, Parental Religiosity, Strength-Based Parenting

Introduction

Having a child with a disability, including Down Syndrome (DS), often brings significant

challenges to families, especially in terms of caregiving. DS represents the most prevalent chromosomal anomaly resulting in intellectual

disability (Antonarakis et al., 2020). The presence of an extra copy of chromosome 21 leads to developmental delay and distinctive physical features (Rao, 2023). It's a challenge, but it should not define the potential or worth of an individual with DS.

Previous research has shown that the development of cognitive and behavioral functions in individuals with Down syndrome is challenged throughout their lives. In childhood, they face obstacles in the development of motor skills and language. As they enter school age, difficulties in processing complex information become more apparent, while in adolescence, these individuals tend to experience greater behavioral and emotional changes. In adulthood, the risk for health problems increases, but at every stage of life they show significant strengths in social and empathy aspects (Grieco et al., 2015).

In line with the mentioned research, Thompson et al. (2020) found that individuals with Down Syndrome have character strengths similar to non-disabled individuals, especially in aspects such as transcendence and zest for life. Positive character in adolescents with Down Syndrome can play a major role in preparing them to face life challenges, improving their quality of life, and preventing social and psychological problems later in life (Javed et al., 2020; Ruch et al., 2014). Without positive character development, they may be more vulnerable to social and psychological problems in adulthood.

Most previous studies tend to focus on the limitations faced by individuals with Down Syndrome, such as motor delays and cognitive limitations (Kim et al., 2017). Furthermore, interventions provided often focus on improving these limitations. In fact, an approach that focuses on positive strengths and potentials can help individuals develop more optimally and contribute to their lives.

Environmental factors, especially parenting patterns, play an important role in the formation of character strengths in adolescents with Down Syndrome. Parenting patterns have an influence on the formation of children's character strengths (Vivekanada, 2020). Research shows that positive interactions between parents and children, such as emotional support and strong bonds, have a positive impact on children's character development (Liu & Wang, 2021; Ngai, 2015; Noronha et al., 2019). Conversely, an environment that emphasizes limitations too much tends to suppress the development of positive strengths in children with disabilities (Umucu et al., 2022). This is in line with research results showing that parental involvement is very important in child development, especially children with disabilities (Giesbers et al., 2020).

The role and involvement of parents are greatly influenced by the personal conditions of parents (Vafaeenejad et al., 2018), including their psychological well-being. Meanwhile, parents of children with disabilities require greater effort in caring for and raising them compared to caring for and raising non-disabled children. In addition, parents of children with disabilities, including Down Syndrome, often experience negative stigma and exclusion from society (Chrisnita Vani et al., 2014). This condition makes parents of individuals with disabilities, including Down syndrome, vulnerable to stress and psychological disorders (Aldosari & Pufpaff, 2014; Singh et al., 2016). One of the coping mechanisms that is considered effective in reducing stress levels of parents of individuals with special needs is the level of parental religiosity. The results of the study showed that the level of parental religiosity is a coping strategy that can help families, especially parents, adapt to the presence of children with special needs (El-Khani et al., 2023; El-Khani & Calam, 2018; McWhirter & McIntyre, 2021). Without coping mechanisms such as religiosity, parents are at risk of experiencing

excessive stress, which not only affects their own psychological well-being but also their relationships and the quality of parenting for their children.

Parental religiosity encompasses the various dimensions of religious attitudes, beliefs, and rituals that parents adhere to and practice in their daily lives. It refers to the degree to which parents incorporate their religious beliefs and behaviors into their interactions with their children (Afriani et al., 2018; Brooks et al., 2022). Previous studies have shown that parents with high levels of religiosity tend to show greater acceptance of their child's disability. They view disability as part of God's plan, which can strengthen emotional and spiritual resilience. In addition, children's active involvement in various religious activities, such as praying together or participating in religious ceremonies, helps instill spiritual values. This strengthens family relationships and fosters positive character traits in children, such as gratitude, love, and empathy (Zielińska-Król, 2024). These findings are in line with previous research which reflects that there is a relationship between the level of parental religiosity and children's positive character (see Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2017; Liu and Wang, 2021).

Parents with strong religious beliefs tend to adopt emotionally responsive parenting styles, actively participating in children's activities, and use a democratic approach to parenting (Purnama et al., 2022). This supports the finding that religiosity can contribute to positive parenting. However, other studies have found that high levels of religiosity can also be associated with more rigid and authoritarian parenting styles (Petro et al., 2018). Petro et al. (2018) emphasized that religiosity plays an important role in encouraging parents to adopt positive parenting methods, but its impact is highly dependent on how religious values are applied in family life. Religiosity provides a moral foundation and motivation

for parents. However, without a systematic approach such as that offered in the positive parenting framework, these values may be difficult to translate into effective actions that can support the development of positive character in children. This description reflects that parental religiosity can influence children's positive character through positive parenting.

One effective parenting approach in this context is strengths-based parenting (SBP), which emphasizes the development of positive traits in children through two dimensions: (1) use of strengths, namely the ability of parents to support the development of children's strengths, and (2) knowledge of strengths, namely the ability of parents to recognize and categorize children's strengths (Waters, 2017). Through this approach, parenting does not only focus on limitations but also on children's potential, so that it can improve their quality of life. Strengths-Based Parenting offers a more flexible and adaptive approach, allowing parents to apply religious values constructively in supporting their children's positive character. With SBP, parents can overcome authoritarian parenting tendencies and create a more conducive environment for the development of children's character strengths.

This study aims to explore the role of parental religiosity in supporting the character strengths of adolescents with Down Syndrome through the Strengths-Based Parenting approach. The hypotheses proposed are:

1. Parental religiosity has a direct effect on the character strengths of adolescents with Down Syndrome.
2. Parental religiosity has an indirect effect on the character strengths of adolescents with Down Syndrome through the mediation of Strengths-Based Parenting Patterns.

Methods

Design

This study uses a quantitative, non-experimental, causal relationship design.

Participants

Participants in this study were parents of adolescents with Down Syndrome. The sampling technique was carried out using nonprobability sampling of the purposive sampling type, with the following criteria:

1. Parents of adolescents with Down Syndrome
2. Adolescents mean individuals aged 12–20
3. Willing to be research subjects

Research participants came from the Association of Parents of Children with Down Syndrome (POTADS) and Special Schools (SLB) in Jakarta. Research participants filled out the research questionnaire via Google Form, which was distributed through the community and SLB in Jakarta, from September to October 2021. There were 70 parents with Down syndrome teenagers who participated in this study.

Instruments

This study has three variables that will be tested for their relationship: Character Strength, Parental Religiosity, and strength-based parenting. These variables are measured by adapting the Values in Action Inventory of Strength (VIA-IS) for Youth, which has been adapted and modified according to the research theme and sample; Strength-Based Parenting Scale, which has been adapted by Sumargi and Giovanni (2021) and an adaptation of the Brief Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMR/S). The following is a detailed description:

The Values in Action Inventory of Strength (VIA-IS) for Youth (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

Character strengths were measured using the Values in Action Inventory of Strength for Youth scale, adapted and modified to suit the research theme and participants.

The questions were adapted and modified to suit the conditions of adolescents with intellectual disabilities, and a parent version was created. The instrument was administered to parents with Down syndrome teenagers. This instrument has 82 questions. There are four possible responses with the Likert scale model; highly appropriate (4), appropriate (3), inappropriate (2), and highly inappropriate (1). Sample question includes “Setiap ada temannya yang bersedih, anak saya berusaha menghiburnya/ Every time a friend is sad, my son tries to cheer him up.” The results of the validity test showed that all items were valid ($r_{it} > .300$) with high reliability ($\alpha = .976$).

The Strength-Based Parenting Scale

The Strength-Based Parenting Scale was used to measure parents' perceptions of their strength-based parenting practices. The instrument has been translated into the Indonesian language by Sumargi and Giovanni (2021) from its original version developed by Jach et al. (2018). It consists of two dimensions; strength knowledge and strength use. There are 14 items in total. There are four possible responses with the Likert scale model; strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). All items are valid ($r_{it} > .300$) with excellent reliability ($\alpha = .941$)

The Brief Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality

The Brief Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality (BMMR/S) constructed by Fetzer (2003) was used to measure parental religiosity. It consists of 12 dimensions, but only seven of them were used in this study concerning the research context. The scale has reliability scores of .91 (daily spiritual experience), .64 (values and beliefs), .66 (forgiveness), .72 (private religious practice), and .81 (religious/ spiritual coping). The seven dimensions are daily spiritual experience, meaning, values, belief, forgiveness, private religious practice, and religious/spiritual coping. The BMMR/S

conducted the translation process by asking two translators with linguistics (English) backgrounds. The translation process was from English to Bahasa and then back-translated to ensure the translation was correct.

There are several possible responses with the Likert scale model: many times a day (6), every day (5), most days (4), some days (3), once in a while (2), never or almost never (1); strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1); always or almost always (4), often (3), seldom (2), never (1); several times a day (8), once in a day (7), a few times a week (6), once a week (5), a few times a month (4), once a month (3), less than once a month (2), never (1); every meal (5), once a day (4), less than once a week, on special occasions (2), never (1). The second-order CFA analysis demonstrates that all dimensions are unidimensional ($\chi^2=1108,886$; $df=370$; $RMSEA = .082$ [95% = .076 - .087]; $CFI=.971$; $TLI=.968$) and all items are valid ($t>1.96$; positive factor loading).

Procedure

After obtaining ethical clearance from the Indonesian Scientific Psychology

Consortium (KPIN) with reference number 032/2021 Etik/KPIN, data collection was carried out. Research participants were invited via social media (Whatsapp), and in collaboration with POTADS and SLB in Jakarta and its surroundings. The research instrument was prepared in the form of a Google form questionnaire that must be filled out by parents. Filling out the questionnaire takes about 10 minutes. The collection process was carried out from September to October 2021.

Statistical Analysis

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were tested using Cronbach's alpha with SPSS software version 25.0. The research hypothesis was tested using mediation regression analysis conducted with PROCESS HAYES macros within SPSS software version 25.0.

Results

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the research participants from 70 parents with Down syndrome teenagers.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics of participants

Subject Descriptions	Total	Percentage
Data of Children		
Gender		
Male	42	60
Female	28	40
Age		
12	11	15.7
13	9	12.9
14	14	20.0
15	11	15.7
16	2	2.9
17	6	8.6
18	5	7.1
19	6	8.6
20	6	8.6

Subject Descriptions	Total	Percentage
Data of Parent		
Father's Education		
Primary School	9	12,9
Secondary School	9	12,9
High School	21	30
3-years Diploma	8	11,4
Bachelor	14	20
Master	8	11,4
Doctor	1	1,4
Father's Occupation		
Civil Servants	4	5.7
Employees	15	21.4
Entrepreneurs	22	31.4
Laborers	22	31.4
Retirees	2	2.9
Unemployed	2	2.9
Deceased	3	4.3
Father's income		
Less than 5.000.000	53	75.7
Between 5.000.000 and 10.000.000	11	15.7
More than 10.000.000	6	8.6
Mother's Education		
Primary School	10	14,3
Secondary School	7	10
High School	28	28
3-years Diploma	7	10
Bachelor	15	21,4
Master	3	4,3
Mother's Occupation		
Housewife	57	81.4
Working	13	18.6

Based on Table 1, the research participants are dominated by parents of male Down syndrome teenagers and most of them are 14 years old. Most of the parents, both fathers and mothers, have a high school education. Most of the fathers work as entrepreneurs and laborers. Most of the mothers do not work, only as housewives. Most of them have an income of less than 5,000,000 rupiah. This reflects that most of the research participants have a relatively low socioeconomic status.

This study converted all raw data from research variables into T-scores. Standardizing data to T-scores allows comparisons across different variables, even if they have different scales. By converting these scores to T-scores, we approximate interval-level data, making it appropriate to apply parametric statistical analyses that assume equal spacing between data points. Table 2 displays the descriptive data of this study.

Table 2.
Descriptive Analysis

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Deviation
Strength-Based Parenting	70	29,00	67,00	49,6286	8,88766
Character Strengths	70	15,00	75,00	50,0286	10,03613
Creativity	70	29,00	68,00	49,6429	7,66327
Curiosity	70	29,00	68,00	49,4286	7,27029
OpenMinded	70	47,00	53,00	49,9857	1,09667
Love of Learning	70	28,00	68,00	49,7286	7,25702
Perspective	70	42,00	59,00	50,3143	3,16476
Courage	70	23,00	73,00	48,4286	9,12009
Preserverance	70	24,00	70,00	48,5571	7,81050
Honesty	70	23,00	69,00	48,7000	8,85855
Spirit	70	21,00	71,00	49,2571	8,53583
Independence	70	38,00	60,00	49,2143	4,12800
Self-Confidence	70	20,00	73,00	48,8857	9,69019
Kindness	70	21,00	64,00	48,9571	10,04113
Love	70	22,00	64,00	50,5571	9,02434
Social	70	29,00	66,00	49,9143	7,58668
Citizenship	70	21,00	74,00	47,8714	9,84359
Fairness	70	26,00	70,00	48,3571	7,71792
Leadership	70	24,00	75,00	48,3571	9,94337
Forgiveness and Mercy	70	19,00	71,00	49,4571	8,74715
Humility	70	18,00	74,00	49,2714	9,20762
Prudence	70	22,00	72,00	48,9857	8,02441
Self-Regulation	70	21,00	73,00	49,5143	8,49338
Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence	70	21,00	69,00	50,6429	9,01534
Gratitude	70	21,00	71,00	49,8143	9,99898
Hope	70	24,00	70,00	48,9857	9,30092
Humor	70	23,00	70,00	50,8429	9,78706
Spirituality	70	20,00	71,00	49,5286	9,96330

Table 2 shows that adolescents with Down syndrome’s top character strengths (signature strengths) are humor, love, appreciation of beauty and excellence, perspective, and open-mindedness. The lowest character strengths

are citizenship, fairness, leadership, courage, and perseverance (see Table 2). Furthermore, table 3 shows the results of the correlational hypothesis test between variables.

Table 3.
Correlation Between Variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Character strength	1		
2. Parental Religiosity	r=.260 (p=.030)	1	
3. Strength-Based Parenting	r=.624 (p=.000)	r=.470 (p=.000)	1

Table 3 shows that all variables have significant positive relationships. Parental religiosity is significantly related to character strength ($r=.260, p=.030$). Parental religiosity is also related to SBP ($r=.470, p=.000$). SBP is also positively related to character strength ($r=.624, p=.000$).

Table 4 shows that the R^2 value for strength-based parenting is .22, indicating that 22% of the variance in strength-based parenting can be explained by parental religiosity, while the R^2 value for character strength is .39, meaning

that 39% of the variance in character strength can be explained by parental religiosity and strength-based parenting. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of the impact of Parental Religiosity on Character Strength ($b = 0.4916, p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, the direct effect of Parental religiosity on Character Strength in the presence of the mediator was found not significant ($b = -0.0687, p > 0.05$). Hence, Strength-Based Parenting fully mediates the relationship between Parental religiosity on Character Strength

Tabel 4.
Mediation analysis

	Antesedent			Consequence		
	Coeff	SE	P	Coeff	SE	P
Constanta	15.3391	7.8689	.0554	17.4357	8.1345	.0357
Parental Religiosity	0.6763	0.1541	.0000	-0.0687	0.1756	.6969
Strength-Based Parenting	-	-	-	0.7269	0.1220	.0000
$R^2 = .2208$				$R^2 = .3906$		
$F(1, 68) = 19.2665, p < 0.05$				$F(2,67) = 21.4735, p < 0.05$		
Total effect = 0.4229, LLCI = 0.0432, ULCI = 0.8027						
Direct effect = -0.0687, LLCI = -0.4192, ULCI = 0.2818						
Indirect effect = 0.4916, LLCI = 0.2650, ULCI = 0.8042						

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between parental religiosity, strength-based parenting (SBP), and character strength in adolescents with Down syndrome. The direct effect of parental religiosity on character strength is not significant. Meanwhile, the indirect effect of parental religiosity on character strength through SBP is significant. SBP fully mediates the relationship between parental religiosity and character strength in adolescents with Down syndrome. In other words, parental religiosity indirectly influences character strength through SBP. These findings indicate that SBP plays an important role in mediating between parental religiosity and character strength in adolescents with Down syndrome. These findings support the theory that parental religiosity can influence their parenting patterns

and contribute to the development of their children’s character through a more positive approach (El-Khani et al., 2023; El-Khani & Calam, 2018; McWhirter & McIntyre, 2021; Petro et al., 2018).

The results of the study showed a positive relationship between parental religiosity and the strength of character of adolescents with Down syndrome. This shows that parents with high levels of religiosity tend to have adolescents with stronger positive characters. Parental religiosity is one of the parental coping strategies that is beneficial for their psychological well-being as well as the quality of interactions with their children which can encourage the development of positive character in children (El-Khani et al., 2023; El-Khani & Calam, 2018; McWhirter & McIntyre, 2021). The religious values held by parents can be internalized as part of the child’s identity

and character. The internalization process can occur through modeling (children imitate the behavior of their parents); reinforcement, where parents reinforce the positive character or behavior displayed by the child; and communication between parents and children that can facilitate children's understanding and acceptance of religious values that will become part of their identity and character. This finding is in line with research showing that parents who have high levels of religiosity tend to have children with positive character traits such as empathy and caring (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2017), or children who have a higher sense of respect and independence (Liu and Wang, 2021).

The results of the study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between parental religiosity and SBP. The higher the level of parental religiosity, the greater the chance of parents implementing SBP. A high level of religiosity can encourage parents to implement positive parenting patterns (Petro et al., 2018). Parents who have a high level of religiosity are encouraged to implement emotionally responsive parenting patterns, are more involved in activities, and are more democratic in raising their children (Purnama et al., 2022). This finding is in line with previous studies showing that parental religiosity is positively correlated with positive parenting patterns implemented by parents (Goeke-Morey & Cummings, 2017). This study shows that the variation in the use of SBP is determined by the level of parental religiosity by 22%, meaning that parental religiosity is an important factor influencing SBP, although not the only factor.

This study also found that SBP was significantly positively related to the character strengths of adolescents with Down Syndrome. In theory, when parents implement SBP, parents do not only focus on their child's limitations, but also pay attention to their child's strengths, including character strengths

(Walters, 2017). Parents identify and categorize their child's character strengths and foster their child's strengths, potentials, and positive qualities, so that children are supported in developing their potential optimally. Parents integrate strength knowledge and strength use into parenting techniques that support the optimization of children's strengths and positive qualities. Therefore, the higher the parents implement SBP, the stronger the child's character strengths. The findings of this study are in line with previous research on non-disabled adolescent participants, which showed that parenting strategies can influence the formation of character strengths (Jach et al., 2018; Liu & Wang, 2021; Ngai, 2015; Noronha et al., 2019; Ratnasari, 2023; Shubert et al., 2022; Vivekanada, 2020; Waters, 2015).

This study found that the level of variation in the strength of character of adolescents with Down syndrome was 39% influenced by parental religiosity and SBP. This means that parental religiosity and SBP have an important role in forming character strength. The research analysis shows that parental religiosity has a positive relationship with the strength of character of adolescents with Down syndrome, but the direct effect of parental religiosity on character strength is not statistically significant. However, the level of parental religiosity affects character strength indirectly through SBP. This finding indicates that the influence of parental religiosity on character strength is through a mediator mechanism, where SBP acts as a connecting path. In other words, an increase in the level of parental religiosity will have an impact on the strength of character of adolescents with Down syndrome only through an increase in the application of SBP. In theory, parental religiosity has an important role in encouraging parents to use positive parenting patterns, but in practice a systematic approach is needed that can translate religious values into concrete activities that can be applied in parenting that can foster positive character in children (Petro

et al., 2018). Positive parenting patterns that include effective communication, warmth in parent-child interactions, and positive support from parents can facilitate the development of positive character in children. SBP is an approach to educating children by identifying and strengthening strengths and talents rather than emphasizing children's limitations. This parenting approach allows Down Syndrome adolescents to develop and feel valued according to their potential and abilities. When they feel recognized for their achievements, it will motivate them to try new things and explore their potential. This is because by implementing SBP, children's positive emotions can develop well and children are encouraged to apply their character strengths (Waters, 2015). This finding is in line with the results of Walter and Sun's (2017) study which showed that SBP can be a variable that connects parental characteristics and the development of positive aspects in children, including character strengths.

Another finding in this study is the profile of character strengths of adolescents with Down syndrome. Descriptive data shows that the top character strengths (signature strengths) of adolescents with Down syndrome are humor, love, appreciation of beauty and excellence, perspective, and open-minded. [insert discussion here first] before proceed to this sentence → This finding is in line with the findings of Thompson et al. (2020) which shows that the character strengths that develop in adolescents with Down syndrome are transcendence. Transcendence is a collection of character strengths consisting of appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor and spirituality. Individuals with Down syndrome are often described as friendly and sociable, these qualities can make them form character strengths such as love and a broader perspective on life and the world. Individuals with Down syndrome also often show a sense of awe at things that others might think are ordinary. They can find beauty and

excellence in simple things. Individuals with Down syndrome have high empathy and social sensitivity (Grieco et al., 2015), this makes it easier for them to understand the feelings and perspectives of others better so that they can improve character qualities such as love, appreciation of beauty, and open-mindedness.

The lowest character strengths were citizenship, fairness, leadership, courage and perseverance (see table 2). Some possible explanations for this are that in the DSM-5, Down syndrome is classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder (American Psychiatric Association., 2013). They have limitations in cognitive abilities (American Psychiatric Association., 2013; Grieco et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2017). This condition makes them limited in understanding social complexities such as citizenship or justice. They have difficulty understanding social norms in citizenship. They also have difficulty understanding the concept of justice. Another limitation in individuals with Down syndrome is their ability to speak (expressive language), this prevents them from communicating effectively. This condition affects their ability to take on leadership roles or express themselves boldly. Stigmatization or stereotypes about their condition prevent them from developing positive self-perceptions. Low self-perceptions will prevent them from having the courage and perseverance to face challenges.

This study was conducted on a special population with special criteria, namely parents of adolescents with Down syndrome. Participants who met the criteria and were willing to participate were limited. While this study involved 70 parents of adolescents with Down syndrome in the Jakarta area and its surroundings, it could limit the generalization of the research results, because cultural characteristics, religion, or socioeconomic factors in other areas may influence parental religiosity and the application of strength-based parenting differently. However, despite

the limited context, this study is expected to increase understanding in the local context of parental religiosity, SBP and character strengths of adolescents with Down syndrome, where data and research on this matter are still limited.

Another thing to note is regarding the research instrument, although the measurement scale used has been validated, instruments such as the "Strength-Based Parenting Scale" and the "Values in Action Inventory of Strength" may not be fully appropriate for the unique conditions of adolescents with Down syndrome. Instruments that are more specific to populations with special needs may provide more accurate results. In addition, the measurement of research variables was carried out through questionnaires filled out by the participants themselves (self-report). There is a possibility of bias from participants in reporting their religiosity, parenting patterns, or strengths of character of their children, especially if they feel they have to provide answers that are considered more in accordance with social norms or personal beliefs.

One reason for this study is the limited previous research on character strengths in adolescents with Down syndrome, especially those involving aspects of parental religiosity and strength-based parenting (SBP) approaches. Therefore, despite its limitations, this study contributes to an under-explored area and can serve as a basis for further research. Another reason is practical for both parents and service providers. This study provides practical insights for parents of children with Down syndrome about the importance of SBP and the influence of religiosity on children's character development. These findings could encourage the development of relevant SBP-based intervention programs, although the results are only applicable to a limited sample context. Despite its limitations, this study provides a basis for further studies that could use more robust designs, such as longitudinal

studies or the use of mixed methods. It also provides insights for the development of more structured religious values-based interventions and SBP for families with children with special needs. For these reasons, research is still being conducted because it provides valuable contributions to understanding the dynamics of strengths-based parenting in religious families with children with special needs, and can be a starting point for further research and the development of support programs that are more appropriate to the needs of families in the future.

Conclusion

This study aims to prove whether SBP can mediate the influence of parental religiosity on the character strength of adolescents with Down syndrome. This study shows that strength-based parenting fully mediates the effect of parental religiosity on character strengths in adolescents with Down syndrome. Parental religiosity does not have a direct effect on character strengths, but through the implementation of strength-based parenting. This study supports the importance of a strength-focused approach in parenting to develop positive character in adolescents with Down syndrome. The implication of this study is the importance of support for parents in increasing religiosity and the implementation of SBP to support character strengths in their children.

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