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PREDICTORS OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS AND ADULTS IN BANDUNG

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to measure the contribution of traits and productive parenting pattern as predictors of character strengths. Traits were assumed as a nature or an innate factor in individuals, while productive parenting pattern were assumed as a nurture or an external factor in individuals. In this study, the concept of trait is studied using the theory of Five-Factor Personality from Costa and McRae ; the productive parenting pattern is studied using Baumrind's theory and the concept of character strengths is studied using the theory proposed by Peterson and Seligman. The validity and reliability of all questionnaires are examined by construct validity and internal consistency. Respondents were 247 individuals with young adult to adult developmental range. The result of regression analysis shows that traits and productive parenting pattern made a significant contribution to the establishment of all character strengths with the value of R2 from 0.226 to 0.562. This finding's conclude that character strengths will be well developed in individuals, if the innate factor (traits) are optimized with the provision of productive parenting (with acceptance and warmth as well as clear and consistent rules from the parents).*

Keywords: *Character Strengths, Five-Factor Trait, Productive Parenting Pattern, Positive Psychology.*

Abstrak: Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengukur kontribusi dari karakteristik dan pola pengasuhan produktif sebagai prediktor kekuatan karakter. Karakteristik diasumsikan sebagai faktor alamiah atau bawaan pada individu, sedangkan pola pengasuhan produktif diasumsikan sebagai faktor eksternal atau pengaruh dari lingkungan pada individu. Dalam penelitian ini, konsep karakteristik dipelajari menggunakan teori Five-Factor Personality dari Costa dan McRae; pola pengasuhan produktif dipelajari menggunakan teori Baumrind; dan konsep kekuatan karakter dipelajari menggunakan teori yang diusulkan oleh Peterson dan Seligman. Validitas dan reliabilitas semua kuesioner diperiksa melalui validitas konstruk dan konsistensi internal. Responden dalam penelitian ini adalah 247 individu dengan rentang perkembangan dari dewasa muda hingga dewasa. Hasil analisis regresi menunjukkan bahwa karakteristik dan pola pengasuhan produktif memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pengembangan semua kekuatan karakter dengan nilai R2 antara 0,226 hingga 0,562. Temuan ini menyimpulkan bahwa kekuatan karakter akan berkembang dengan baik pada individu jika faktor bawaan (karakteristik) dioptimalkan dengan adanya pola pengasuhan yang produktif (dengan penerimaan dan kehangatan serta aturan yang jelas dan konsisten dari orangtua).

Kata-kata Kunci: *Kekuatan Karakter, Pola Pengasuhan Produktif, Psikologi Positif, Trait Five-Factor.*

INTRODUCTION

Character Strengths are one of the basic concepts in the perspective of Positive Psychology. It tries to explain the positive characteristics in every human being, which affect human's behavior according to the contexts in their lives like education. Character Strengths are defined as "habitual actions that are stable yet malleable, capable of being acquired, can be contextualized, and are measurable" [1]. Park and Peterson also stated that Character Strengths are "habits, evident in thoughts, feelings, and actions" [2]. Peterson and Seligman defined Character Strengths are someone's qualities obtained and seen through individual behavior (individual thoughts) and feelings [3]. The research published by Noronha and Campos [5] found that some Character Strengths are connected to the concept of personality traits. The traits included in the Big-Five Personality or Theory of Five-Factor Models (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness).

One main characteristic of Character Strengths is identifying how individuals solve difficult times throughout life [4]. Kirkcaldy et al and Wolfgang explained that in the work context, Character Strengths are related to coping behaviors and protect individuals from stressful effects [3]. Next, Peterson stated that individual strengths overcome various weaknesses and incompetence [4]. Peterson explained that Character Strengths are individuals' original determinants that influence satisfaction, happiness, and success in life (the good life) [3]. Brdar & Kashdan also found that several Character Strengths are related to well-being qualities, such as life satisfaction, subjective vitality, relatedness, meaning, and engagement [1]. Based on expert statements regarding Character Strengths and some research findings, the final assumptions are 1) Character Strengths are individual qualities that are formed by the environment/context in which the individual is living; 2) Character Strengths and Traits are possibly related ; 3) Character Strengths can be manifested in behavior, thoughts, and feelings; 4) Character Strengths are determinant qualities that lead individuals to some characteristics of well-being in life. Based on some of these assumptions, this research aims to identify

the roles of Traits as a biological (nature) and internal human quality, and Productive Parenting Pattern as an external simulation of the environment (nurture) in building Character Strengths.

1.1. Character Strengths

According to Peterson and Seligman [4], each individual may have more than one Character Strength. Character Strengths are categorized into 24 types. They are grouped into six virtues. The twenty-four strengths are Creativity, Curiosity, Open-Mindedness, Love of Learning, Perspective, Bravery, Persistence, Integrity, Vitality, Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence, Citizenship (Membership in Groups), Fairness (Justice and Equality), Leadership (Leadership), Forgiveness (Forgiveness), Humility and Modesty, Prudence, Self Regulation, Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, Gratitude, Hope, Humor, Spirituality. The Five Character Strengths more dominant in directing individuals are called Signature Strengths.

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1.2. Trait

The research published by Noronha and Campos [5] found that some Character Strengths are connected to the concept of personality traits. The traits included in the Big-Five Personality or Theory of Five-Factor Models (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness). The research conducted

by Noronha and Campos is connected to the theoretical assumptions of Park and Peterson. They said that Character Strengths are individual characteristics that exist and are stable in specific situations. They also explained a possible link between the two concepts, where traits are determinants (predictors) of Character Strengths. [5]

This is because it refers to the statement of McRae and Costa that the traits have a very strong biological basis so that the tendency of basic dispositions is not directly influenced by the environment [6]. Therefore, the traits are predictors of Character Strengths originally categorized as individual qualities built by their environment (contextual).

1.3. Productive Parenting Pattern

Productive Parenting Pattern is the development of the Parenting concept according to Diana Baumrind. Her results found that parents should have a positive approach to their children such as acceptance and warmth are proportional, firm, and consistent in controlling their children's behavior. Productive Parenting includes (1) High Parental Acceptance and Warmth, (2) Moderate to High Restrictiveness, (3) Insistence on Mature Behavior, (4) High Responsiveness, and (5) High Positive Involvement [7]. Good parenting patterns can shape the children's personalities in positive ways (Smith, 2002). This underlies the parents to inculcate important values in each culture as a way of self-identity characters. This kind of parenting is based on the cultivation of cultural values as a form of environmental conditioning toward the formation of individual Character Strengths. Character Strengths are one of the basic concepts in the perspective of Positive Psychology. It tries to explain the positive characteristics in every human being, which affect human's behavior according to the contexts in their lives like education. Character Strengths are defined as "habitual actions that are stable yet malleable, capable of being acquired, can be contextualized, and are measurable" [1]. Park and Peterson also stated that Character Strengths are "habits, evident in thoughts, feelings, and actions" [2]. Peterson and Seligman defined Character Strengths are someone's qualities obtained and seen through individual behavior (individual thoughts) and feelings [3]. The

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RESEARCH METHODS

This is a quantitative research with two variables as predictors (trait and productive parenting pattern) and one variable as the criteria (character strengths). There are 247 respondents that classified as the young adults and adults. Traits and productive parenting pattern are measured by questionnaires that being prepared by the research team and for character strengths, this study was using VIA 72 (Indonesian Ver). This version of questionnaire are used

with permission from the research applications coordinator of VIA Institute on Character [12] In this study, all data are collected using online questionnaires (g-form) and processed using multivariate analysis (Regression Analysis).

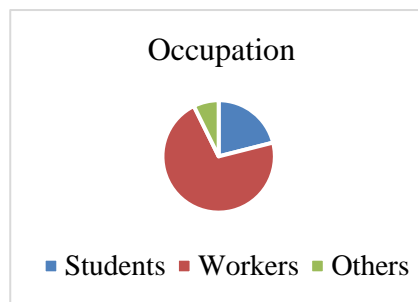
The traits questionnaire consists of 30 items based on the Five-Factor Theory concept of McRae and Costa (2003). The Productive Parenting Pattern questionnaire consists of 45 items based on the productive parenting pattern concept by Baumrind (in Alvy, 2008). Meanwhile, the character strengths questionnaire consists of 72 items based on the concept of Character Strengths by Peterson and Seligman (2004). All questionnaires validity and reliability were examined using construct validity and internal consistency.

The coefficients validity of the traits questionnaire starts from 0.369 to 0.744 and the reliability coefficients starts from 0.463 to 0.753. As for productive parenting pattern questionnaire, the coefficients validity starts from 0.320 to 0.792 and the reliability coefficient is 0.945. Lastly, the validity and reliability of the character strengths questionnaire were assessed using CFA in PLS (Partial Least Squares). The construct validity for all items were identified by convergent validity, refers to loading factor value result of > 0.5, the value of average variance extracted (AVE) of > 0.5. The results show that of all 72 items, there were 2 items which value < 0.5 (measuring the strengths of curiosity and humility). The reliability of character strengths questionnaire, were identified by internal consistency reliability, refers to composite reliability and cronbach's alpha result of > 0,6 [13]. The result show that all items have met the criteria of the internal consistency reliability.

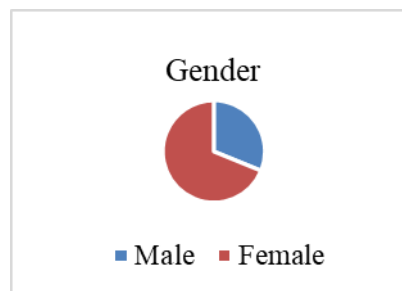
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

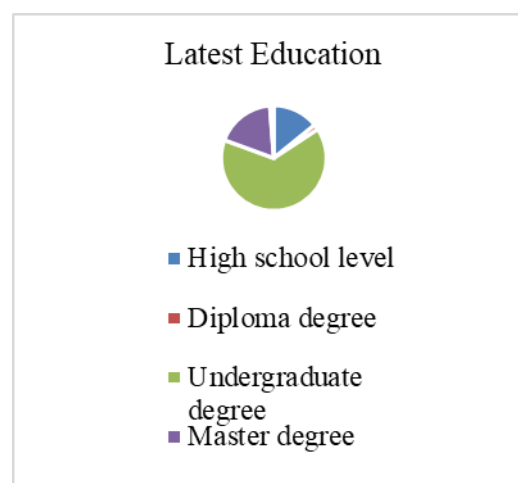
Besides the regression data between Trait and Productive Parenting Patterns on Character Strengths, the descriptions of demographic data regarding respondents, including Gender, Last Education, and Occupation Demographic data will also be presented in the following graphics



Graph 1: Respondents' Gender



Graph 2: Respondents' Latest Education



Graph 3: Respondents' Occupations

Based on graphs 1 to 3, most respondents are women with the last educational background of an undergraduate degree or equivalent and are currently working in formal fields.

Table 1 Results of Trait and Productive Parenting Pattern Regression Analysis on Character Strengths

Character Strengths	R ²
<i>Perseverance</i>	0.562
<i>Prudence</i>	0.543

<i>Judgment</i>	0.541
<i>Zest</i>	0.519
<i>Social Intelligence</i>	0.510
<i>Teamwork</i>	0.496
<i>Kindness</i>	0.488
<i>Hope</i>	0.481
<i>Humor</i>	0.473
<i>Creativity</i>	0.467
<i>Love</i>	0.464
<i>Honesty</i>	0.426
<i>Fairness</i>	0.415
<i>Leadership</i>	0.409
<i>Bravery</i>	0.406
<i>Appreciation of Beauty</i>	0.405
<i>Perspective</i>	0.393
<i>Curiosity</i>	0.392
<i>Spirituality</i>	0.381
<i>Humility</i>	0.380
<i>Love of Learning</i>	0.368
<i>Gratitude</i>	0.357
<i>Forgiveness</i>	0.254
<i>Self Regulation</i>	0.226

Table 1 shows that trait is a biological (nature) and internal factor. Besides, a productive parenting pattern (nurture) is an external factor to the habituation to the environment. It has an important role in the formation of each character's strengths. Of the twenty-four types of Character Strengths, the highest contribution value is Perseverance, Prudence, Judgment (Open-mindedness), Zest, and Social Intelligence. Meanwhile, the smallest one is Self-Regulation. The results of the data analysis are in line with the research objectives stated in the introduction section.

Park and Peterson found that Character Strengths are positive qualities to deal with various complex and stressful situations [2]. In general, individuals spend their life quite a lot at the formal educational institution, starting from early childhood education to the university level. During their education, they face many difficult and complex situations. Avoiding them is not the best solution. Vela, Sparrow, Whittenberg & Rodriguez studied Mexican-American students,

and they showed that Character Strengths, Perseverance, and Curiosity are significant predictors of students' self-efficacy and career decisions [9]

Research on the students in the Philippines also shows that character strengths, fairness, gratitude, and hope are predictors of academic self-efficacy; love of learning is a predictor of happiness; and gratitude is a predictor of positive emotions [10]. Villacis, de la Fuente, & Naval also studied undergraduate students and found that character strengths can influence academic performance and engagement in the academic field [11]. Through those findings, the student's character strengths can be the factors that support them to live a better academic life. It is not only related to the results/achievement of values but also undergoing an unavoidable process.

The research findings show that character strengths are formed through nature and nurture factors. Nature is an innate factor having a biological load, so it is relatively difficult to change (trait), while nurture is an environmental factor that changes through specific and gradual intervention (productive parenting pattern). In other words, to build better students' character strengths at school, their dynamics of the traits should be recognized by the teachers and the application of parenting patterns that emphasizes acceptance and warmth. There must be clear and consistent rules upheld by the parents. The development of character strengths to face the educational world can make the students not only focus on academic achievement but can also experience the academic process effectively. A concrete effort is providing information to the teachers and parents regarding the concept of traits, productive parenting patterns, and character strengths through psycho-educational activities

CONCLUSION

The results are in line with the research objectives, namely to determine the role of the traits and productive parenting patterns on character strengths. A practical benefit from the research findings is information to the teachers and parents regarding the concept of traits, parenting patterns, and character strengths. However, there are still some limitations as less information about

the traits most closely related to the formation of character strengths. There must also be further data analysis to find and explore more relevant information. Therefore, the teachers and the parents can better understand the concept

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