



# Pre-school Choice Decision Making Among Millennial Moms a Pilot Marketing Strategy Model

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**Abstract.** Like mothers in other generations, millennial mothers also face several challenges when making decisions within the family, including choosing the best preschool for their children. Preschools must compete to meet the needs of millennial mothers who have children under six years old at their current age so that these mothers will become potential users of preschool services themselves. This study aims to build a construct of consumer behaviour among millennial moms in Indonesia. Exploratory analysis using qualitative methods was used in this study. The result of this study is an indicator of the formation of a pilot marketing strategy model for preschool in Indonesia to compete as a reference preschool for millennial mothers.

**Keywords:** Decision making · millennial mothers · pilot marketing strategy model

## 1 Introduction

The number of millennial mothers has increased in the last decade. According to the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection data, the millennial population in Indonesia reached 33.75% in 2017 and has increased until now with a balanced number of men and women [1]. Millennial moms are mothers born between 1980 and 2002 [2, 3]. The millennial generation is known for traits and characteristics such as high self-esteem and idealism, important levels of education, and the ability to work on various tasks at one time [4–6]. This group is called millennial because of their proximity to digital media and technology [7]. Millennial are also more flexible with the times [8].

Millennial mothers have different characters from mothers in previous generations. Most millennial go to university compared to other young adult generations. Therefore, the number of mothers with higher education is rising. Millennial mothers are also in a generation born and raised with technology. They also grow up with changing social and economic networks that change how they care for and raise their children.

Technology makes decision-making more complex and diverse. The existence of other external factors, such as the enactment of the free market, also affects education

development. Many schools with central foundations located outside Indonesia are scattered in metropolitan cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Denpasar. The free-market approach to education assumes that competition in school choices will increase as high-quality education is offered [9, 10]. Parents will seek information about schools to make the best decisions according to family preferences and children's needs [11].

Early childhood education or preschool is the first formal educational experience for children. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 84 of 2014, concerning the establishment of Preschools, preschools refer to a coaching effort for children from birth to the age of 6 (six) years. Preschools are carried out by providing educational stimuli to assist physical, mental growth, and spiritual development.

Thus, children would be ready to enter further education. This phase is extraordinary and essential in their lives because the preschool stage is considered easier to teach, shape, and instill moral values and discipline in children as early as possible. Several studies indicate that communities can save nine times as much in future costs [12]. Preschools units in Indonesia are kindergarten, kindergarten with a particular order, playgroup, day-care park, and other similar units.

There are many factors to consider in selecting preschools for their children. Cost-benefit or costs and benefits are factors of consideration in making school selection decisions [13]. One interesting case occurred in neighboring Indonesia, Malaysia. The Malaysian Ministry of Education in 2013 implemented regulations for learning mathematics in English. Along with this policy, the popularity of preschools in Malaysia is increasing. Parents started to take the initiative to send their children to early childhood in preschool, which provides English language learning. The existence of private schools with the latest education programs makes preschool a quality education service provider even though the school's image got a high-cost label. Consumers often believe that the higher the price, the better the quality of a product or service. Some parents also want their children to socialize in the same group with their social status [14]. Some preschools even invest in advertising to attract the attention of potential parents as potential users of their services.

Preschools must compete to meet the needs of millennial moms who have children under six years old; thereby, these mothers will become potential users of preschool services themselves. Customer satisfaction could bring benefits in the long term [15], so the preschool business should meet the needs of both parents and children. Unfortunately, research on the impact of consumer behavior on preschool marketing strategies is still rarely found. Research related to preschools is usually within the scope of the education system, analysis of children's nutritional needs, and other matters related to teaching activities. This study builds a novelty about the relationship between features of preschool institutions and consumer behavior of millennial mothers in Indonesia. The result of this research is a pilot indicator of a marketing strategy model for preschools to remain competitive as a reference school for millennial moms.

## 2 Research Methods

This research is exploratory research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected using the in-depth interview method with ten millennial mothers in exploratory research.

To control the validity and reliability of the research, the type of in-depth interview questions was semi-structured. Informants were given directions to ask questions in the form of probing questions then were free to develop as long as they were within the limits of the research topic. These probing questions include:

1. What factors make millennial mothers interested in a preschool?
2. What are the critical reasons that millennial mothers consider when choosing a preschool?
3. What are the sources of information used by millennial mothers when choosing early childhood education?

The results of in-depth interviews were analyzed using a qualitative approach using the method of content analysis or content analysis. The researcher conducted verbatim to code the interview results. Codes containing similar themes were collected to form a unique theme that became the basis for making indicators.

### **3 Results and Discussion**

A total of 10 informants were willing to conduct in-depth interviews for 30–45 min in this study. The distribution of the informant's data is shown in Table 1. All of the informants were millennial mothers born from 1980 to 2002, so their current age is 19 to 41 years. All interviewees also had at least one child under the age of 4. A total of 8 informants were working mothers, while the other two informants were housewives. All informants took a minimum education at the undergraduate level. This educational background proves that many millennial mothers have taken higher education. All decisions made by them may be different with mothers from the previous generation.

Multiple Factors Involved in Millennial Mother's Decision Making in Choosing a Preschool. The results of in-depth interviews show several factors considered in choosing a preschool and some of the activities they did before deciding. Searching for sources of information is the first step taken by most of the informants. After that, the informant evaluated the information obtained regarding service attributes, prices, and school type. After observing and evaluating, millennial mothers then decided their preschool choice.

#### **3.1 Source of Information**

##### *Online*

As the millennial generation in general, millennial mothers are also very close to technology. When searching for information about preschool, most informants relied on search engines on the internet or social media. By searching information through the internet, millennial mothers can narrow their choices before conducting a survey directly to the school they are going to.

**Table 1.** Result for Model 1

Initial Name	Age	Age of Children (year-old)	Working/not	Level of Education	Code of Informants
PM	31	3, 4	Working	Master	I1
AP	36	4, 2	Working	Master	I2
AR	30	1	Working	Master	I3
IZ	30	4, <1	Working	Master	I4
IN	29	1	Working	Master	I5
AN	30	3	Working	Master	I6
BE	35	2	Working	Bachelor	I7
DS	34	7, 3	Working	Master	I8
MT	28	1	Not Working	Bachelor	I9
YE	32	2	Not Working	Master	I10

*“I try to search by browsing Google or Instagram with the hashtag of preschool” -i3-*

*“We initially searched on Google and then we surveyed the school from the search results on Google earlier” -i8-*

*“So I usually see from the website” -i9-*

#### *Direct Survey*

Although the internet provides quite a lot of information for some millennial moms, most of them will still survey the schools. The informants said that it is important to see how the preschool conditions that would be chosen for their child. They need to ensure that the school lives up to their expectations. Several informants also said that they are happy if the school provides a trial class that they can attend to convince them more about the quality of the school. Searching for information by conducting this direct survey may not be carried out by millennial mothers to higher-level schools because they are more likely to entrust their choices to their children. Unlike the case at the preschool level, millennial moms need to properly ensure the comfort and safety of their children, who are still toddlers and preschoolers.

*“I surveyed several schools located near my house” -i4-*

*“I think that children are different, right, so we can try it first and try to be introduced first, it should not be direct in my opinion” -i5-*

*“I have tried to go to school X, had time to ask questions there. It is also good that I can know the class division and so on” -i10-*

*Reference Group*

Reference groups still play an essential role in helping millennial moms find information when deciding a preschool. Informants seek information by asking co-workers, neighbors, friends, or family who previously chose the preschool. However, the answers from people they trust are just additional references.

Millennial moms continue to search for detailed information via the internet or visit locations directly. This reference group sometimes makes one millennial mother decide not to send her child to the same. Based on their evaluation and observations obtained from asking questions, they judge that their child might not be suitable if sent to the same school with their referees.

Thus, this reference group provides a list of desired schools and eliminates some schools deemed less suitable for personal preferences.

*“I usually get information from my friends and then I look for more info on the internet” -i9-*

*“ask my neighbor that has a child who previously went to school there” -i3-*

*“From the opinion of neighbors who have their children studied there. Usually, my neighbors understand what school X or Y looks like” -i4-*

*“When my friends make stories on WhatsApp, I ask them” -i6-*

*“I like to share with my friends because I think we have the same taste. Not interested in going to school X because my friend’s child failed at that school” -i10-*

## 3.2 Service Attribute

### 3.2.1 Distance

Although most millennial mothers can drive their vehicles, distance is still an important consideration when choosing a preschool. Some informants more or less knew that certain preschool is suitable for their children, but they are willing to eliminate those options because of the distance to the school. For millennial mothers who are housewives, the close distance will ease them in the pick-up process—as for working mothers, being close here can mean two things: close to home or work. The reason is similar, concerning the pick-up process. For working mothers, the preschool location close to home will ease them to pick the children up. A preschool close to the workplace is the same. Usually, these mothers do not have a babysitter, so they pick up their children. Therefore, a location close to the workplace, will ease the pick-up and delivery process.

*“I look for one near the house, so that it is easy to pick up and the child does not get tired either” -i4-*

*“What is important to me is that it is not far away. I consider picking my child up” -i6-*

*“The concept is exciting, and I find it fun. When I surveyed, my daughter was happy, and coincidentally there was a cooking practice. Wow, she is so happy. However, the school location is far” -i8-*

*“I will just look for a school near the office because none can pick my child up if the location is near my house” -i5-*

### **3.2.2 Class Capacity**

Class capacity here discusses how many students are in the class. In addition, the informants ensured that the number of teachers should oversee certain number of students. They do not want the number of teachers to be too few, which can cause their child to be in danger because there are not enough supervising teachers.

*“In my opinion, class capacity is important compared to the ratio. I do not know the ideal capacity though. Only if one teacher can oversee children who are capable of being supervised” -i5-*

*“The teacher should be divided like one teacher oversees 3-5 children; it’s better than just having a lot of them” -i6-*

### **3.2.3 Curriculum**

For curriculum, millennial moms in Indonesia do not want a curriculum that gives too much pressure on their children. The most important thing for them is a fun curriculum. Most informants said they wanted their children to play while learning. Some mothers did not want their children to be put under excessive academic pressure at the preschool level. However, the informants also hoped for a clear daily schedule to ensure that their children received detailed and regular activities.

*“most importantly, they can learn while playing” -i3-*

*“so my child goes to a school with many playing activities” -i5-*

*“If it is for pre-school, I do not want a strict academic one” -i9-*

*“There has to be a schedule. When the school is asked, they can answer what Monday, what Tuesday, like that” -i6-*

Interestingly, the informants also wanted a religious-based curriculum. For them, instilling religious values from an early age is an essential step for forming their children’s character.

*“like at school x, where I once knew the students were invited to pray every morning” -i6-*

*“ my husband and I want an Islamic school” -i7-*

*“I want an excellent religion so the activities can be adjusted” -i9-*

### **3.2.4 Facility**

Regarding facilities, millennial mothers seem to still have the same mindset as mothers in the previous generation. Millennial mothers consider facilities, especially a playground

with its equipment for their children. One of the reasons they send their children to preschool is the presence of a playground that they may not have at home. So, these millennial moms will see available playground equipment in preschool before making a decision.

*“There must be a playground and safety. So I will survey first whether the swing or slide is worth it or not. Moreover, this is my first child, so I am still excited to find out about it” -i7-*

*“One of my considerations is whether there is a playground or not. Some schools do not have it. I mean here playground equipment like a slide, and we will see if the slide is old or still worth” -i8-*

*“The kids and I are looking for a school that has a slide. It is a pity that he plays indoors, especially boys, his energy must be channeled so that it runs out quickly and his mother can take a break too hahaha” -i10-*

### 3.2.5 Safety

Millennial mothers are overly concerned about the safety factor when choosing a preschool. As they will release their child outside the home, then security is a factor that cannot be ruled out. Even though they wanted a security guard outside the school, the informants could still accept it if the school has no security guard, as long as the pick-up procedure is straightforward. There should be strict security procedure outside the classroom, especially if the school is crowded with vehicles.

*“For example, the location is on the highway; the fence is low, there is no security to supervise it, then it is dangerous” -i6-*

*“Security is a crucial consideration. Both the playground and the environment, if possible, all schools should have security guards” -i7-*

*“It has to be safe, including the surroundings. There is a school that has a pool or is near a sewer, and it is hazardous for small children” -i9-*

### 3.2.6 Cleanliness

As with security, cleanliness is another consideration for millennial mothers when choosing a preschool. Moreover, this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. The informants hope there will be strict hygiene and health procedures because there is no vaccine for children under five. Even during a non-pandemic condition, mothers are worried that their children will be infected with the virus from their classmates. For them, preschool children are very vulnerable to the virus. Therefore, cleanliness in preschool is an important factor for millennial mothers.

*“The first one has to be clean, especially during this pandemic, right?” -i3-*

*“The influence of whether the place is clean or not, especially in this era of covid-19” -i4-*

*“It is scary if I see a school letting a student who has the flu symptoms” -i10-*

### 3.2.7 Operating Hours

According to informants as millennial mothers, school duration is one important factor when choosing a preschool. Several informants stated that children should not be at the school the entire day. These mothers worried that if the duration of school is too long, then their children will be under high pressure and cause long-term effects such as stress or school trauma. However, some informants, especially working mothers, also prefer full-day schools by combining school and daycare.

*“I do not prefer a full day. We talked about preschool. Just playing around is enough” -i9-*

*“I do not prefer it if it is until the afternoon, the problem is, how about when you are always at school and continue to live” -i6-*

*“If I am still preschool, I do not agree with full day; I prefer to go home in the afternoon or just 2 hours, which is okay” -i3-*

*“I am looking for a full day but in the sense that I can leave it all like daycare” -i4-*

### 3.3 Price Consideration

In making decisions, millennial mothers also consider the price factor they will spend when enrolling their children in a preschool. In Indonesia, millennial moms determine several school fees limits at the preschool level. Several informants also explained that preschool should not be too expensive. They do not mind if the fee components are divided into monthly and building fees. Monthly fees are expenses paid every month while building fees, or in some schools referred to as entrance fees, are paid annually or only once when the child enters school for the first time. The informants stated that the preschool level should not exceed 1 million rupiahs per month for the monthly fee. Likewise, with the building fee, although they realize that there is a price for excellent quality, the tuition fee is expected not to exceed 5 million rupiahs for preschool. The informants also considered the factor worth every penny, where every rupiah they spend on preschool fees must be proportional to the facilities they will get.

*“maybe a maximum of 4 to 5 million for the annual fee, but for a monthly fee, it is a maximum of 400,000 rupiahs” -i3-*

*“if possible, the building fee is not more than 5 million” -i5-*

*“In my opinion, the maximum monthly fee is 200,000 and the building fee, if possible, is a maximum of 2 million” -i4-*

*“If the cost is high, it is worth it or not. It does not cost that much, sometimes I compare it with my family’s budget plan and compare it to the neighbor’s children, it should be about the same and it does not cost that much” -i6-*

*“I wondered first, and then I compared each other, oh this school charges certain price but we can get this facility. So yes, I will have a look first” -i9-*

### 3.4 Type of School

Before making a decision, millennial mothers usually also evaluate the types of preschools that exist. Following the results of interviews, millennial mothers in Indonesia tend to group preschools based on the following types:

1. Religious-based
2. Bilingual (or more)
3. Institutions (public or private schools)

Interestingly, many informants wanted their children to attend religious-based preschools. For them, instilling religious values since an early age is an essential step in developing children's character. In addition to schools that emphasize religious teachings, some informants also expect a school that uses dual or more languages. Interestingly, not only foreign languages such as English or Mandarin, but these mothers also want their children to learn local language so that their children do not lose their identity. The next is whether the school is private or public. However, based on the results of in-depth interviews, these millennial mothers preferred private school. According to them, private schools guarantee better quality because their good reputation must be maintained. It is because private schools do not receive funding from the government, so they feel that the effort spent to maintain quality is higher than public schools.

*"I want to send my children to a religious-based education since preschool so that they have stronger religious aspect" -i4-*

*"Because my family is Muslim, so I prefer a religious-based school" -i7-*

*"I want religious activities so that all activities can be adjusted" -i9-*

*"In private schools, they usually promote the name of the institution so they will be more diligent in updating their activities" -i6-*

*"Because now, in my opinion, most of private schools are better than the public ones" -i8-*

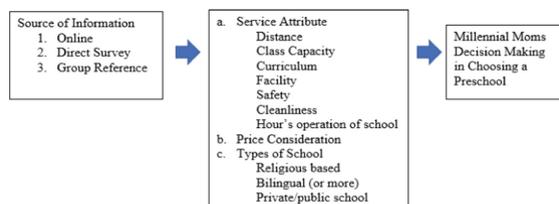
*"I am more into the private sector; I am hesitant with the public school. I am sorry, it does not suit the environment, and I am afraid the teacher will not supervise my child" -i10-*

*"I look for the school which the teacher can speak fluent Javanese then teach it to the students" -i5-*

*"If possible, the additional language of instruction can be English or Javanese, because these children grow and live in cities, so they do not know how to speak the local language properly" -i6-*

*"I am looking for a bilingual one, so a religious-based school that uses foreign language" -i7-*

From managing verbatim results with informants, this study developed a pilot marketing strategy model for preschools in Indonesia. As the number of preschools continues to grow, these schools must understand their potential customers to ensure they get the desired number of students every year. Figure 1 shows a pilot model that can also be



**Fig. 1.** Pilot Model Marketing Strategy for Millennial Moms in Choosing a Preschool

used to measure the decision-making of millennial mothers in choosing a preschool. In addition, through this map, preschools in Indonesia can begin to develop appropriate marketing strategies to attract millennial mothers and their children as potential customers in the future, by offering trial class services and developing the school's official website that exhibits the school's learning methods and facilities.

## 4 Conclusion

Research on the millennial generation in Indonesia is fascinating because this generation dominates the demographics in the country. It has become one of the big target customers for a market, including the education industry. The decision-making process for choosing a preschool goes through a complex process for most parents, especially mothers. These millennial moms have stronger personalities than mothers in previous generations due to higher opportunities for higher education and easy access to technology. This study shows that millennial mothers go through a very selective process in making preschool choices for their children. As preschool is the first stage of a child's formal education, millennial mothers want to ensure that the school they choose is the best choice for them. This study produces a pilot marketing strategy model that can be used to measure the decision-making of millennial mothers when choosing a preschool. The model also has implications for preschools to better understand their target users' consumer behavior to minimize problems such as the difficulty of finding students every year due to intense competition between preschools in every region in Indonesia.

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