INFLUENCING FACTORS IN CHOOSING A PRESCHOOL: A CASE STUDY IN IVY PRESCHOOL SURABAYA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the influencing factors that affect parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool. The influencing factors discussed are: curriculum, teaching quality, language, school facility, cleanliness, and teachers' competency. The population in this study are 106 parents (of IVY students) in Ivy Preschool Surabaya. Meanwhile, the sample used is taken from total 51 respondents with a sampling method of simple random sampling. Based on the results of the analysis using multiple linear regression method, it is known that the factors of curriculum, quality of teaching, language, cleanliness, and teachers' competency significantly influence parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool. While school facility factor does not significantly influence parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool.

Keywords: curriculum, quality of teaching, language, school facilities, cleanliness, teachers and parents' decisions in choosing a preschool.

INTRODUCTION

It is commonly known that education is important since it is one of the most important aspects for an individual and community growth. Education is also seen as an individual learning process that helps the individual to achieve the goals set by religion and society around that person. Based on this fact, many people believe in the importance of enrolling their children in the best preschool to help them grow better. Preschool (known as *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* in Bahasa Indonesia) is defined as "A way to facilitate children growth through providing various teaching, experiences and stimulation which are set to help children develop thoroughly (Solehuddin and Hatimah, 2007).

As parents start to realize the importance of enrolling their children in a preschool stage, many preschools (especially in Surabaya) are established to help children growing while also to meet service users' demand. Thus, many education providers start to create such marketing strategy to attract many parents through many ways, such as giving their brand an identity that can make it distinct from the others. Besides that, education providers are also well aware of the influencing factors that have huge impact in the decision-making, specifically in choosing a preschool. However, this influencing factors may change over time, and thus, this study focuses on this issue in order to find the relevant influencing factors that still affect parents' decision in choosing a preschool. In order to find the relevant influencing factors, IVY school is chosen as the main subject of this research.

IVY Preschool is the only preschool in Surabaya which bases its curriculum on United States education. Moreover, this school orients itself to 9 basic skills which the main priority is to

develop language and cognitive skills. Because of this distinct curriculum and priority, there is a significant growth of the number of students that can be seen as below,
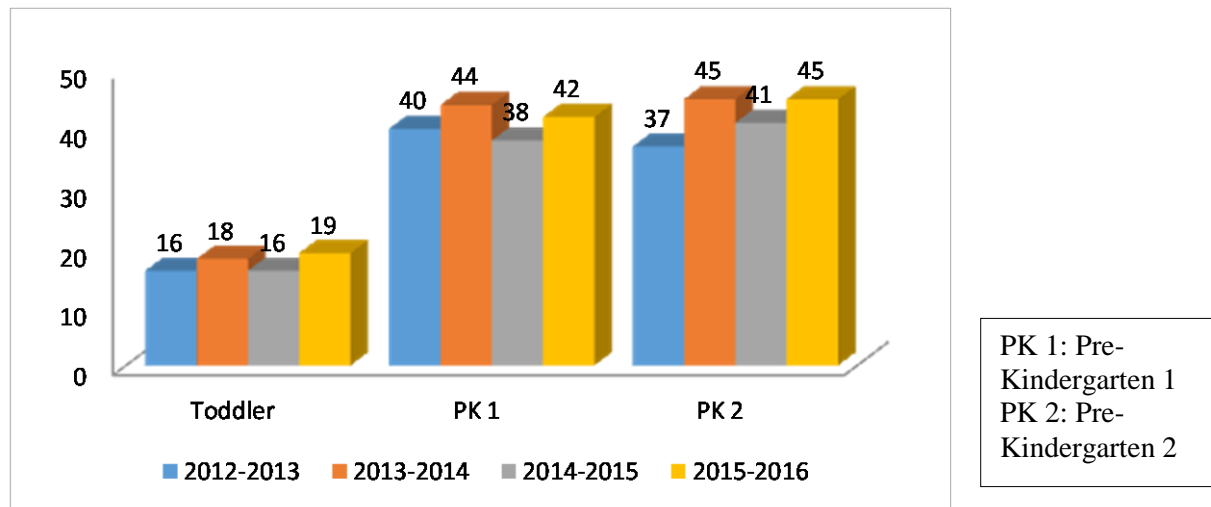

Figure 1: Students' population in 2012-2016

Despite of its increasing number, IVY preschool still has to find ways to attract more parents as the maximum quota for students is 180, and it is still far away from the recent total number. Thus, this study is conducted in order to find the relevant influencing factors that affect parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool, to help IVY School's management to manage their school better.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Previous Research
Based on a previous study done by Dahari and Sabri (2011), there are 14 important factors that affect parents' decision-making in choosing the best preschool for their own children. Those factors are: curriculum, language of instruction, teachers' competency, teaching quality, friendly staff, facility and infrastructure, hygiene and cleanliness, transportation availability, safety and security, class size, meal nutrition, location, operation hours, and costs and affordability.
These factors then applied in a pre-survey by using IVY parents as the subject. In the pre-survey itself, it is found that there are 6 main factors that are chosen by the parents which total percentages are up to 10%. Those factors are curriculum (16,8%), teaching quality (15,2%), language of instruction (15,2 %), school facility (12 %), cleanliness (11,2%) and teachers' competency (10,4 %). These factors are then examined as the main focus of this research to determine the influencing factors that affect parents' decision in choosing a preschool.

Regression Analysis
This kind of analysis has been used in numerous researches to find the influencing factors in choosing a preschool. In a research conducted by Yi Hsu and Chen Yuan Fang (2013) which used the subject of 380 parents of sixth graders in five elementary schools in Chuscahang, it is found that the influencing factors that affect decision-making are management, moral and discipline value, good reputation, supportive environment and school specialization.
In another research conducted by Chew, et al. (2010), it is found that the influencing factors that affect parents' decision-making are good service, supportive environment for students, excellent

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infrastructure and qualified lecturers. This result is gained through a research with 300 international students as respondents in Utara Malaysia University. These two previous researches are then used as the examples on how to apply regression analysis in this research in order to find out the relevant influencing factors in this study.

The Buyer Decision Process

Before buying a product or service, the consumers tend to evaluate the best choice from two or more choices. Salomon (2011) states that in the process of decision-making, there are steps that should be undergone. Moreover, these steps are affected by external factors that have huge impacts in the result itself. In the same line, Kotler and Armstrong (2012) also state that decision-making is a process when a buyer/consumer chooses the preferable product/service from many options that are offered to him/her (p. 152).

Before it comes to the final decision, there are five steps that a buyer commonly go through based Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p.152-153). Those steps are: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and postpurchase behavior. In the first step, which is 'need recognition'. The buyer recognizes a problem that should be handled and also his/her need to overcome the problem itself. Then, in the step of 'information search', a buyer tends to obtain the information about her/his 'target' product from as many sources as possible. The next one, in the 'evaluation of alternatives' process, buyer comes to the step when s/he will evaluate the brand alternatives, which are the alternatives of the same product from another brands. Then, in the process of 'purchase decision', there are two factors that can come between the purchase intention and purchase decision, which affect the decision itself. The first factor is attitude of others and the second one is unexpected situational factors. Lastly, in the last step, which is 'postpurchase behavior', the buyer will be examined by the marketer to find out whether s/he (consumer) feels satisfied with the product bought or not.

Preschool

Preschool (as known as *Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* (PAUD) in Bahasa Indonesia) is a formal education institution that has been acknowledged by the government. This institution is made to help children age 1-4 years old grow better. Wana (2010) stated that preschool is a first-experience for children to be more aware of their surroundings and be more responsible when they are away from their parents or house.

Since parents believe that this stage is important, many parents always try to obtain as many information as possible during new academic year in order to find the 'alternatives' before they come to 'making decision' process (Agus, 2013). That is why, for parents who are very careful in choosing the best preschool for their children's education, the steps described by Kotler and Armstrong take place in the decision-making process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is using quantitative research which is combined with multiple linear regression as the main approach. The hypothesis analysis itself uses F test and t test in order to find out the variables which simultaneously and partially affect parents' decision in choosing a preschool. Moreover, this research also aims to find the most dominant variable which affects the decision-making.

This study also uses simple random sampling, in which the samples are taken randomly, in order to give the fair chance for the parents to be the subject of this research. The technic used for simple random sampling is by using the draw or sweepstakes technic. Moreover, the samples used are the representatives of a population which have the same characteristics. Slovin's formula (seen in Noor, 2011) is used to determine the number of total samples. The formula is as below,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\,e^2}$$

Description:
n: total samples used
N: total population
e: the error value. The maximal error value is only 10 %

The population of this research is IVY preschool parents. By applying Slovin's formula in determining the total samples, it is decided that there are 106 mothers which become the sample of this research. That is because Indonesian mothers see education as the top priority after the moral (honesty) (Kartajaya, 2015). Therefore, when this formula is applied to find out the minimum total respondents, the result is as below,

n: 106 / (1 + 106 x 0,1^2) = 106 / (1 + 1,06) = 51 respondents

Furthermore, the data collection of this research uses the closed questioners survey which ask the respondents to choose an answer from various answers that are set before. There are two types of data resources that are used in this research. Those resources are primary and secondary data. The primary data is obtained from questioners while the second data is obtained from the library research.

To get the reliable result, there are two types of variables that are examined by using multiple linear regression. Those variables are first, dependent variable which is formed as the result from the independent variables' effect. Second, independent variables which are the variables manipulated by the researcher, and this type of variable is also highly influenced by the dependent variables.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this research are related to buyer decision process in choosing a preschool. The decision-making itself is a result that concerns to the buyer decision process which are described in the research of Kotler & Armstrong (2012). Those are: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and postpurchase behavior.

Independent Variables

The independent variables in this research are:

Table 1: Independent Variables

Operational variable	Variables	Indicators
X1	Curriculum	International-based curriculum, academic achievement, qualified teaching material and material accordance to the age.
X2	Teaching quality	Discipline teacher, caring teacher, communicative teacher and competent teacher at relationship building.
X3	Language of instruction	English as the language of instruction and Mandarin as the language of instruction.
X4	School facility	Comfortable classrooms, air-conditioning classrooms, complete

		learning media, playground availability and library availability.
X5	Cleanliness	Classroom cleanliness, toilet cleanliness and environment cleanliness.
X6	Teachers' competency	Teachers' age, teachers' appearance, teachers' friendliness, teachers' education background and teachers' teaching experiences.

Variable Measurements

This research uses Likert Scale to measure the variables. Sugiyono (2013, p. 168) states that this scale is used to measure behavior, opinion and perception of an individual or group about certain phenomenon happened in a society. The five categories provided in this scale are: Strongly agree (SA) (marked as 5), agree (A) (4), neutral (N) (3), disagree (D) (2), strongly disagree (SD) (1).

Data Analysis

This research uses multiple linear regression with the hypothesis of F test and t test. This analysis is conducted with the aim to find out the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This research seeks whether the variables of curriculum, teaching quality, language of instruction, school facility, cleanliness and teachers' competency affect positively or negatively to parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool. The formula used is as below,

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + e$$

Table 2: Formula Information

Sign	Information
Y	Dependent Variable (Decision-making in choosing a preschool.
X_1	Curriculum
X_2	Teaching quality
X_3	Language
X_4	School facility
X_5	Cleanliness
X_6	Teacher
α	Constanta (Y value if $X_1, X_2... X_5 = 0$)
β	Regression coefficient
e	Error

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result of this research shows that there are two variables that are dominant in parents' decision-making in choosing a preschool. The result can be seen as below,

Table 3: The Result of Multiple Linear Regression Test

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	Std. Coeff B	t-stastistic	Sig.	Result
Constant	0,033	0,423	0,251		0,937	
Curriculum (X1)	0,197	0,090	0,262	2,179	0,035	Accepted
Teaching Quality (X2)	0,283	0,123	0,258	2,299	0,026	Accepted
Language (X3)	0,177	0,074	0,110	2,402	0,021	Accepted
School Facility (X4)	0,075	0,071	0,208	1,044	0,302	Rejected
Cleanliness (X5)	0,175	0,085	0,272	2,061	0,045	Accepted
Teacher (X6)	0,239	0,098		2,435	0,019	Accepted
R squared	0,621					
Adjusted R squared	0,569					
F Statistic	12,020					
Prob (F Statistic)	0,000					

From table above, the regression equation result is: $Y = 0,033 + 0,197X1 + 0,283X2 + 0,177X3 + 0,075X4 + 0,175X5 + 0,239X6$. From this equation, it can be concluded that if each variable increases (in the assumption that another variable is constant), the parents' decision in choosing a preschool will increase too. Second, the result shows that the significant factors (variables) that affect parents' decision in choosing a preschool are curriculum, teaching quality, language, cleanliness and teachers' competency with total percentage of 62,1 percent. In contrary, the variable of school facility does not have significant effect in parents' decision-making. Third, it can also be concluded that the most dominant factors that affect parents' decision-making are teaching quality and the teachers' competency.

CONCLUSION

From this research, it can be concluded that the relevant factors which affect parents' decision-making are the five factors of curriculum, teaching quality, language of instruction, cleanliness and teachers' competency. However, the last factor, which is the factor of school facility, does not create major impact in parents' decision-making process. Moreover, it can also be concluded that the most dominant factors that affect parents' decision-making are teaching quality and the teachers' competency. In this research, however, the result obtained from the factor of 'school facility' does not meet researcher's expectation. Thus, for the next researcher, it is strongly suggested for him/her to revise the 'school facility' factor in order to show the real condition on the field. Moreover, there are 37,9 percent of the factors that have not been discussed on this research. Those factors concern to the cost, transportation availability and operational hours since those factors are also questioned by parents when they try to find the best preschools for their children. Therefore, it is strongly suggested for the next researcher to explore these 37,9 percent of these factors that cannot be discussed in this research.

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