

Decoding Indonesian millennials traits as variables in assessing millennials living preferences in apartment

Laras Primasari¹ and Angela Christysonia Tampubolon²

¹Bandung, Indonesia

²Department of Architecture, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia.

E-mail: Laras.primasari@gmail.com, Angela.christysonia@gmail.com

Abstract. The Millennials' demographic boom and wealth shift are expected to hold the key in influencing the next phase of disruptive wave. As the biggest consumer class of housing market whose faced numerous urban housing issues, Millennials living decision and preferences will play significant role in changing the current and future urban space. This research tries to decode Millennials' traits generated from their characters and personalities along with their living experiences in apartment buildings and experimentally use it as variables in assessing living preferences in apartment-type housing. Data was collected primarily through survey using online questionnaires and resulting in the classification of 15 preferences categories, explaining Millennial's attribute of living/dwelling. The results show on how these traits of Millennials are fairly able to explain and/or becoming the reasoning for how they perceived their living experience in apartment and identify it as preference. The plausibility of using these cohorts and personalities (traits) as variables in assessing Millennials living preference in apartment is high.

1. Introduction

It is not an exaggeration to call the influence of Millennials towards current and future world economy as significantly massive. Millennials is the generation with most population on earth now. They are making up of nearly one-third of Southeast Asia and all age group members are already in the productive age bracket [1]. In Indonesia, they are predicted to reach the population of 83 million people by 2020, in which 35 million of them are economically classified as "middle-class" [2,3]. With such force, Millennials' way of life – in a broader term – is reckoned as one of the important driver that shaped markets and its behavior in every fields, for example education, retail, politics, and more.

Indonesia is still classified as emergent market in the world economic map, moving towards the direction of developed countries with similarly strong traditional eastern values such as China. China currently indicates that following the Millennials boom, massive shifts on wealth were happening to this young, emerging generation [4]. With numbers of "affluent" and "upper middle-class" households sharply increased ever since 2012, they will hold responsibility of more than 80% private consumption expenditure in 2022 [5]. These Chinese Millennials spending habits and openness to (technological) changes became the newest drivers in the latest disruption wave that spreads out continent-wide. Indonesia is said to be undergone similar circumstances now and even more so in the next decade.

Many researches were conducted to investigate the behaviors of Millennials in order to cater this economic powerhouse, since their living patterns, behaviors, and traits are highly influencing and

shaping the direction of the next disruption wave. Numerous fields conform their services and approach to Millennials, since to gain ultimate control of their decision in choosing something is one of Millennials’ basic traits. As a customer, Millennials are having the privilege of being exposed to abundance of choices since birth so they feel no need to conform to these certain choices in any type of market and take their time slowly in choosing products and services [6]. Such pattern extends to the point of long-life decision making, such as marriage, having children, and housing commitment [7].

Housing market is one of the fields that are highly influenced by the economic shift. As a market entirely forms as physical assets, the changes occurring in housing market are naturally slow. Latent issues hovering Indonesian urban areas such as land scarcity and sprawl for over two decades complicate things even more especially when our economy moves towards a more mature market mimicking the developed countries. The most worrying issue evident in mature market is affordability, especially for the young, first-home buyers like the Millennials. Australia has been experiencing affordability issue since mid-2000’s. Many laws have been passed and repealed to conform housing market more to Millennials, the biggest potential housing customer in the next decades to come.

Indonesia urban areas in the capital cities already had several “high-density housing” strategies to cater housing needs for middle to low class economic bracket, with programs such as “1000 apartment towers”, “Rusunami”, and more. Looking closely, such programs highlighted the “solutions” of most common issues in the urban built environment: land scarcity, housing stocks undersupply, and (economic) affordability. However, the potential of middle-class Millennials has not yet been considered as main advantage in such matter.

Existing researches suggested that to approach Millennials, conforming to their patterns, behaviors, and traits are the best options to reach out to them as customers. This has been explicitly and implicitly stated in reports and researches especially from big firms such as Deloitte [8], McKinsey [5], HILL ASEAN [9], and academics like Sweeney [6] and Reeves and Oh [14]. This paper aims to dissect the core behaviors and personalities of Millennials extracted from various researches then examine its relations to their desired living condition. Both positive and negative living experience in apartment of the Millennials participants were assessed and categorized into living attribute significant for them. The setting of this research is high-rise, high-density apartment typology that is deemed appropriate to cater the future generations whilst tackling the previously mentioned urban issues. It is also in line with the existing and upcoming government programs. Therefore, the study’s very end results (next phases) are expected to be recommendations for government in constructing future housing programs.

Table 1. Summary of Characters and Personalities (Traits) of Millennials [6,14,15,16]

| Sweeney [6] | Reeves & Oh [14] Based on Lancaster & Stillman | Reeves & Oh [14] Based on Debard | Cattell’s 10 out of 16 Personality Factors (PF) [15,16] |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Ultimate control | Realistic | Trust towards authority | More warm & outgoing |
| Flexible | Confident | Loyal/committed | Abstract-thinking |
| Highly personalized | Pragmatic | Intruding parents | More adaptive & mature |
| Impatience | Self-assured | Protected childhood | More dutiful |
| Result-oriented | Strong morals | Instant feedback | Socially bold & adventuresome |
| Efficient | Appreciate diversity | Crave community | Sensitive & sentimental |
| Tolerance for cultural differences | Collaborative | | More self-doubting |
| Very confident | Optimistic outlook | | Open to change |
| Balancing life | Achievement-focused | | Less solitary & individualistic |
| Direct/to the point/straightforward | Serving community | | More organized & discipline |
| Digital Natives | | | |
| Respect for intelligence | | | |
| Led more structured life | | | |
| More traveled | | | |

Generational cohorts and personality-based theorems in this study are used yet still considered experimental. It is a response to fill in the life-cycle weaknesses hold by “Lifestyle-based Assessment Method” in analyzing housing preference and choices suggested by Jansen [12]. Cohorts and personalities are likely to have more suitable variables that can be translated into dwelling characteristics, as cohorts and personalities are the roots of human’s decision-making and also as the embodiment of values that suggested by Schwartz [17]. It becomes the reasons, justification, or consideration in making choices.

Cohorts are possessing similar distinct characteristics that bound generations as a groups, while characters are known as learned behaviors or a subset of personality seen as someone’s persona. On the other hand, personalities are known as inborn traits which involving behaviors, emotion, and thoughts. Seeing the relations between the three, Authors conclude that cohort is comprised of the mixed between characters and personalities. Therefore, this study also summarizes characters and personalities best describing Millennials from previous researches and professional market reports as presented in table 1.

2. Method

2.1. Data collection method

Data collection was done using an online questionnaire, which was distributed by September 2017. There were a total of 90 participants of whom 31 (34.4%) were male and 59 (65.6%) were female. The distribution of questionnaires using online group chat to personal acquaintances and they also distributed questionnaires to others (snowball-random-sampling). The questionnaire is composed of open-ended question about descriptions of the participants (gender and living duration) and their opinion about positive and negative experience while living in apartment. These questions aim to identify their desired living condition based on the experience through adjective keywords.

2.2. Respondents profile

Participants or respondents are of Millennials generation, which are born between year 1983 to 2000 as similarly suggested by Howe and Strauss [9] along with Lancaster and Stillman [10]. Adjustment was made to the starting year of Millennials from 1978-1982 to 1983-1985, due to the findings that grouped people born in 1977 to 1983/1985 as micro-generation called Xennials. Micro-generation also has been called *cuspers*, as suggested by Lancaster and Stillman [10, 11], which is “people born on the edges of various generational spans and caught between two generations”. Xennials is said to have both traits and historical exposure of Generation X and Millennials.

In this study, thus, participant’s ages are ranged from 17 to 34 years old before December 2017. Past records of living in apartment building, inside and/or outside Indonesia, is a must for the participants as experience is the unit of reference in finding preferred or desirable place to live.

2.3. Data analysis method

The results of data collection are qualitative text data. Conventional content analysis was used to derive the initial codes from data [13]. This method allows labeling codes and categories of positive and negative experiences to live in apartment. The obtained codes - considered to be related and linked - are then sorted into categories. Every code will get a score if they emerge in each participants answer. The accumulation of score explains the frequency of each category. The results will interpret the characteristics of Indonesia millennial on perceived apartment-type housing.

3. Result

Here are the samples of participants’ answer about positive and negative experience to live in apartment.

Positive experience:

“Strategically located in the middle of the city, full facilities and easy (food court, minimarket, laundry, etc.), more secure with a tight security.” (Participant #17)

“Compact room arrangement, nice view, helpful neighbour.” (Participant #74)

Negative experience:

“Having to go into an elevator and waiting for it, no control over smells and noise from adjacent neighbors, no space for plants.” (Participant #12)

“Small spaces, fixed layout (unless your unit is unfurnished), Security (some people forgot to lock the gate, or accidentally burn their kitchen appliances, etc).” (Participant #43)

Table 2. Example of sorting the codes into a category

| Participant’s experience | Code | Category |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Positive experiences | Practical | Practicality |
| | Life become easy | |
| | Easy maintenance | |
| | Easy to clean | |
| | Minimal cleaning space | |
| | Maintenance is managed together | |
| | Public facilities managed by building management | |
| Negative experiences | Minimum space | Physical Design |
| | Area cannot be expanded | |
| | Setting fixed | |
| | Less fresh air | |
| | Less lighting | |
| | Unmatched architecture design | |
| | Easy to get dirty | |
| | There is no garden | |

Based on the answer, obtained several codes about positive experience, namely “strategic location”, “full facilities”, “easy access”, “more secures”, “compact”, “nice view”, and “helpful neighbor”. In a similar way, also obtained several codes about negative experience, namely “have to wait the elevator”, “no management control”, “limited space”, “small space”, “safety”, and “security”. These codes are then made into a group to construct a category.

Almost all categories are formed by both positive and negative attributes. The duality of these attributes was reflected on the naming of these categories. Most categories’ positive and negative experiences can be named similarly due to its broad coverage of such issues and its extension, take the example of the categories of “security”, “privacy”, and “estate management quality”. Others are highly opposite to each other that the naming was also mirrored such circumstances, such as the categories of “noise” versus “tranquility” and “practicality” and “impracticality”. However, some categories are only mentioned by the one of the positive or negative experience such as “ambience” and “accessibility” due to the none-contestation from other side of the experience.

The group sorting is resulted in 15 categories of positive and negative experiences that explain participant’s living preferences in apartment. See table 2 for an example of grouping the codes of participant’s experience into a categories. The categorization results were then analyzed in order to obtain frequency of each category. The calculation used the distribution analysis that can be seen in Table 3. Table 3 shows that attribute of dwelling/living preferences can be perceived in positive and negative views. In specific order, Millennials in this study tend to pay attention at the attribute of *proximity* (18.2%), *practicality* (15.9%), *facilities* (15.1%), *security* (13.6%), and *physical design* (9.5%) from positive experiences side. Meanwhile, negative experience can be perceived when the

attribute of *physical design* (22.6%), *social environment* (13.6%), *noise* (12.5%), and *estate management quality* (8.9%) do not meet the expectation of the respondents.

Table 3. The categories and each total frequency of participants experiences

| Attribute preference by positive experience | <i>f</i> | Attribute preference by negative experience | <i>f</i> |
|--|---------------------|--|---------------------|
| Security | 36 | Security | 3 |
| Tranquillity | 5 | Noise | 32 |
| Privacy | 11 | Privacy | 9 |
| Flexibility | 1 | Inflexibility | 22 |
| Expenditure | 7 | Expenditure | 18 |
| Physical design | 25 | Physical design | 58 |
| Ambience | 2 | - | |
| Estate management quality | 8 | Estate management quality | 23 |
| - | | Management and legality | 11 |
| Practicality | 42 | Impracticality | 14 |
| Social environment | 16 | Social environment | 35 |
| Facilities | 40 | Facilities | 20 |
| Accessibility | 23 | - | |
| Proximity | 48 | Proximity | 10 |
| - | | Safety | 2 |
| | <i>n</i> 264 | | <i>n</i> 257 |

4. Discussion

In this preliminary study, cohorts and personalities analysis are used to replace undefined “lifestyle” variable in a socio-economy demography cycle assessment [12] in determining dwelling preferences in Millennials. As previously mentioned, cohorts and personalities are the roots of human’s decision-making. Thus, it becomes part of the reasoning in making choices and even selecting an options, which then can be translated into the so called “preference”.

Keywords or codes extracted from the participants’ responses are selected to best describe the major living attributes of the respondents. Then it is used to find traits that best suited in meaning. For example, in describing Proximity and Accessibility attributes, the code “Near to Amenities” and “Easiness in Reaching Amenities” is the most frequent responses collected. Both codes and their related keywords have the implications to directly eased Millennials’ time usage which correspond with traits in Table 1 that describes Millennials as time-efficient human beings. They are understandably having the tendencies to prefer living in apartment for such reasons, thus creating a positive experience along the way. In this study, almost all positive major living attributes can be linked back to the traits of Efficient, Impatience, and Direct. According to Millennials’ traits summary in table 1, as they tend to be more appreciative towards time management and usage [6], efficiency increased related attributes would be the foremost reasons in looking for a desirable apartment for daily living.

In describing the attribute of Practicality, the code “Practical” and “Easy Maintenance” are the most frequent response collected. From the responses, both codes mostly related to efficiency in cleaning the respondents’ apartment without any help and also the efficiency in having an estate management taking care of the security, waste, and mechanical-electrical maintenance. This resulted in the emerging of confidence within the respondents in maintaining their living condition with minimum effort. While other answers described living in the apartment as straightforward or direct due to the minimum contact made with other human being, notably estate management and neighbors. In addition, short time usage indicating impatience in Millennials are depicted by the demand made to wait less when using shared facilities such as elevators.

Some attributes are emerged in both positive and negative sides. A significant number of respondents mentioned an attribute as both pleasant (positive) and unpleasant (negative) experiences during their stay in apartment. In the case of Physical Design attribute, dualities are expected to occur. The Millennials are more open to the shift of living in landed house to high-rise units – compare to the previous generations, as Millennials are also “Open-minded to changes”, “Practical”, “Pragmatic”, and “Realistic”. This is evidently seen in the answers of moderately high percentage of respondents.

Such traits are established well into the mind of the Millennials due to the fact that owning a house is a luxury and obtaining new property in the city is difficult for younger generations. They are forced to accept that living in a building without yards with limited standard of space is the new norms. So even though the thought of being restricted in personalizing their own space and bound by sets of rules scare them, resistance in this type of shift is in a sense minimum. Being the “Optimist” beings, Millennials will always be able to retain the positive sides of a change. In such case, the new limited space they acquired is then translated into the “Easiness in organizing” their belongings and the “Efficiency” comes with it.

Seeing from the negative side, Physical Design attribute does nudge the personal spaces of the “Overprotective” Millennials. The thought of being closely present with other people (neighbors) and share the same facilities (elevator, waste area, gym, even swimming pool) make them somewhat “Insecure” and “Easily anxious”. Such issues are then lead to the lost of “Ultimate Control”, something that Millennials significantly need and proud of. According to most respondents, the annoyance of finding the unorganized or dirty shared facilities and also the annoyance of experiencing noise from neighboring units were increasing the chance of feeling lost of control towards their surrounding environment, thus their daily life.

Table 4. Traits of Millennials in Relations to Their Living/Dwelling Preferences/Tendencies

| | Major Living/Dwelling Attributes | Influencing Traits |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| (POSITIVE) | Proximity | Efficient, balanced life, impatience, direct |
| | Practicality | Efficient, impatience, confident, direct |
| | Facilities | Efficient, pragmatic, result-oriented |
| | Security | Confident, trusting, feeling protected |
| | Physical design | Open to change, realistic, efficient, more organized, pragmatic |
| | Accessibility | Efficient, balanced life, impatience, direct |
| (NEGATIVE) | Physical design | Highly personalized, flexible, abstract-thinking, ultimate control |
| | Social environment | Less solitary, highly tolerance, high sense of community, outgoing, sociable, appreciate diversity, strong morals, direct, sensitive |
| | Noise | Ultimate control, balancing life |
| | Estate management quality | Result-oriented, loyal to institution, more dutiful, trusting |
| | Inflexibility | Highly personalized, flexible, abstract-thinking |
| | Facilities | Impatience, efficient, pragmatic, result-oriented |

On the negative living attribute, more diverse traits play role in influencing the Millennials decision-making and judgment process. One of the most complex is the Social Environment attribute, which involving variety of traits for Millennials to decide whether they favor their community in the apartment area or not. Looking at the traits presented at Table 1, Millennials are tend to highly sociable and ready to be a social being to various extents. However, the community structure in high-rise society (especially in Indonesia) and their other counter-traits of Direct, Sensitive, and Having Strong Morals do not allow a healthy interaction yet, according to the questionnaire responses. Similar case occurs in Estate Management Quality attribute. Even when the Millennials are the generation of trust and loyalty, they have strict set of expectation of a good result. So when the management who manages the communal spaces and rules failed to do so, negative views will ingrain in their judgment.

5. Conclusion

The first part of the research, a survey of online primary data collection targeting Millennials, on the positive and negative experience on living in apartment-type housing was analyzed using the distribution analysis method. The results were:

- 15 categories of living attribute preferences (by both positive and negative experience) are generated
- The major positive living attributes generated from the positive living experiences are: Proximity, Practicality, Facilities, Security, Physical Design, Accessibility
- While the major negative living attributes are: Physical Design, Social Environment, Noise, Estate Management Quality, Inflexibility, Facilities

The discussion shows a glance of how the traits of Millennials are fairly able to explain or become the reasoning for how they perceived their living experience in apartment. Authors see the plausibility of using these cohorts and personalities (traits) as variables in assessing Millennials living preference in apartment. The assessment is part of Socio-Economy Demography-based Cycle in assessing housing preferences and choices, as suggested by Jansen [12].

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