RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIGITAL NATIVES- SELLING TO A NEW GENERATION EMERGING IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

There are a number of labels to describe the young people currently studying at school, college and university. They include the digital natives, the net generation, the Google generation or the millenials. All of these terms are being used to highlight the significance and importance of new technologies within the lives of young people (Gibbons, 2007). The development of technology is the denominator which determines the growth of this generation. The revolutionary growth in technology happened in India after the 1980's. But the actual strength of the technology was noticed only after 1990's with adoption liberal and global economic conditions. The generation born at that time is privileged with various mass communication and technology gadgets and methods. The study aims to recognize a new generation emerging in the country with access to the world wide network from the beginning of their lives. It is necessary for the marketer to adapt to the changing market. There is a community which is connected to the world through internet and spends every woken time staying connected. This group is not online only for professional or educational purposes; they have a separate life through the networking communities. Every routine activity of daily life is affected by the digital world. The aim of the study is to identify the special characteristics of a digital native as a customer. The factors that influence the decision making of a person to select or not to select a product or service vary from person to person. The paper here is an effort to highlight the significant changes in the importance given by a person to factors influencing purchase decision if he is a digital native.

INTRODUCTION

(Brooks-Young, 2005) provides definitions of the digital native dig-i-tal na-tive, *n*. A technology user under the age of 30, who was born into the digital world" Digital Natives had "spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (Prenksy, 2001). There are changes in the social and professional lifestyle of people with the introduction of technology. But the term defines a group which is born to this change. There is no other way of doing things for them. For example, the way of distance communication used to be letters or telephones now they are e-mail, instant messaging, chat, social networks, etc. Education, health, job, family, every area of life is affected by internet and network sourcing technology. The population in India at the end of the year 2013 was 1.252 billion. The number of internet users in the country is 1.89 million during the period. According to data provided by facebook website the number of facebook account users in India is 92 million which is only second to USA. According to a report by market research firm eMarketer, Japan will boast of the largest Twitter population in Asia Pacific at 26 million followed by India at 22.2 million users in the year 2014. A survey was conducted by India's largest IT solutions provider Tata Consultancy Services. It is among the largest youth surveys in India, and was conducted across 14,000 high school children between the ages of 12-18 in 12 cities across India during 2008-09.

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The highlights of the survey are:-

- 63% of urban students spend over an hour online daily
- 93% are aware of social networking
- Orkut and Facebook are most popular online destinations
- 46% use online sources to access news; TV, Newspaper users at 25%
- 62% have a personal computer at home
- 1 in 4 students own lap-tops in metros; 2 of 3 own music players
- IT and engineering remain overwhelming popular career choices
- Media & Entertainment, Travel and Tourism are emerging careers
- USA, UK top list of international destinations for higher studies

Literature Review

(VanSlyke, 2003) stated, "The native/immigrant analogy can help us understand the differences between those who are comfortable with technology and those who are not" The earlier researches mainly focus on the social, creative and learning areas of the digital natives (e.g. Prensky, 2001a; Gibbons, 2007; Rainie, 2006 and Underwood, 2007). There are many supporters who believe that being born after a particular time period automatically makes a person digital native and the person born after a particular period has to make adjustments to fit in the changing times (Prenksy, 2001). There are researches which show that that breadth of use, experience, self-efficacy

and education are just as, if not more, important than age in explaining how people become digital natives (Helsper, 2009).

For digital natives, the internet, mobility, and related technologies have always been available. Networked media and communication make up the foundation of their lives. They are used to the immediacy of hypertext, downloaded music, phones in their pockets – which are on 24/7; a library on their laptops/ computers, and connectivity anytime, anywhere. They've been networked most or all of their lives. Being always connected is something natural to them, and they have conversations constantly going with their social networks via text messaging and instant messaging. These experienced multimedia users are now entering the career phase of their lives. Not only do they expect to have communication and consumption tools available constantly during their free time, as consumers, but they expect these tools to support them in work (Medman, 2008). (Krause, 2007) reports on a study of first year students in Australian universities, finding that their experiences and understandings of technology vary significantly according to socio-economic background, age and gender – the 'assumption of homogeneity is misleading and dangerous', she concludes. (Bennett, 2008) highlights the way in which categorization of the 'digital native' works to homogenize diverse and varied groups of individuals, using generational categorization to over-determine student characteristics and relations to technology Selwyn (2009) argues that "the notion of the digital native should be seen more more a discursive than a descriptive device, employed by those seeking to exert some form of power and control over the shaping of the digital (near) future". However, Selwyn, critique the discourse principally on the grounds of its inaccuracy and not the ways in which it affects how teachers and learners understand and experience their relationships with technology and each other.

Research Problem

The rapid growth f technology and its acceptance by Indians is leading to a time where market space will be dominated by the tech savvy digital natives. It is necessary for a marketer to identify the changes in needs of the customers. The paper aims to highlight the changes in the factors considered while making a purchase which gained and lost relevance from the point of view of customers.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature. The data is collected using a questionnaire from 60 people. 30 of them are considered to be digital natives and 30 are not coming under the definition of the term. There are different definitions to the term digital native. It is a growing phenomenon and difficult to list out or generalize the features and activities of people. But the author is taking liberty to define the boundaries of the definition for the practical execution of the study. All these requirements are considered compulsory for the purpose of this study only.

The parameters used to define a digital native are:-

1. Continuous and easy access to personal source of internet
2. Use of internet as a part of life not only for professional use
3. Accounts in more than one social media site

4. Subscription of atleast one instant messenger application.

The collected data is analysed using quantitative tools and observations are derived.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

There is significant change in the decision making time and process among people who are digital natives and who are not coming under the definition of the term. It is note that certain factors which were very important to a person earlier while making a selection of a product or service are not that relevant now, where as some features which were not part of the decision making process become important now. The environment or situation significantly affects the time taken to make a decision. The emergencies require speedy decision making, while luxuries are long planned and executed with detail. But it is found that the time taken by digital natives to make a decision is comparatively very less. This can be understood by is because the digital natives are more rely more on facts and statistics. The moment a need arises they browse the available options, ask known and unknown people to give the opinion about the options available, search for any news or article about faulty service by the most popular brand , give the order for trial and make payment only if they are satisfied. The factors that have lost importance while making a decision to purchase any product are:-

• Location of the supplier
• Location of the suppliers of complementary goods
• Gender orientation of the marketing pitch

The factors which increased in importance are:-

• Online presence of the marketer
• Updation according to changing fashion, trend, season etc.
• Offers or discounts compared to the competing seller
• Instant action on feedbacks.

Conclusion

The technology is the area which is attracting a huge investment and the interest is only growing. It is easily foreseeable that the generation born with the convenience of technology will definitely display change in behavioral pattern. So it is advisable that marketers take keen interest in the purchase preferences of this generation and act in a manner that satisfies the customers.

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