Smart phones usage among the millennial generation in Malaysia

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Abstract: This study sheds the light by identifying the millennial generation which consists of 2 billion new customers worldwide, and make up over 40 per cent of the population in Malaysia, which makes them potential leaders, consumers, and users with great purchasing power that shape the country's social, economic and political landscape in the future . A questionnaire was distributed to 450 smartphone users belonging to the millennial generation. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents have been using their Smartphone between 1 to 4 years. In addition the study showed that the millennial have been using their Smartphone for messaging, web browsing, social networking, gaming, downloading, using camera, and listening to music were examined. The results of the study indicate that the majority of the millennial Smartphone users in Malaysia are highly utilizing their gadgets to stay connected, engaged, and informed. Therefore, the current findings presented provide core information regarding the trends in the Smartphone market and usage behaviors in Malaysia. Such information is useful for academics for the development of future works in this field, and this information enables Smartphone manufacturers, application developers and other stakeholders to plan their direction in the Malaysian Smartphone market.

Key words: *Millennial generation; Smart phones; Usage; Connectivity*

1. Introduction

*Generation Y is referred to in many other terms such as; Millennial, Echo Boomers, Why Generation, Net Generation, Gen Wired, We Generation, Dot Net, Ne(x)t Generation, Nexter, First Global, iPod Generation, and iYGeneration (Williams and Page, 2010). Generation Y or the Millennial generation was born during 1977-2000 (Kotler and Armstong, 2012) Born between 1977-2000 these children of the baby boomers people born Between (1946-1964). The Millennial are considered marketers' latest nightmare because this age group grew up with the worldwide web, the latest technology, and numerous communication channels, ranging from cell phones to Facebook and Twitter, leaving Generation X (persons born between 1965-1976) and the more elderly far behind (Nguyen, 2010). However, the Millennial have been targeted with extravagant advertising and commercials since a very young age; as a result, this generation is quite suspicious towards all marketing campaigns.

The lifestyles and attitudes of the Millennial indicate that they are self-absorbed and self-reliant with a strong sense of independence. They want results and are not as concerned with the why of it (Himmel, 2008). They are image-driven and use the image to make personal statements (Himmel, 2008). They have a greater need to be accepted, constantly connected with their peers, fitting in, and social networking (Dickey and Sullivan, 2007; Donnelly, 2008).

In terms of the Millennial perceptions, according to (Williams and Page, 2010) the Millennial individuals are highly motivated toward their perceptions of success; they are open-minded, optimistic, goal oriented. Eight key values describe the Millennial generation; choice, customization (custom-made), scrutiny (critical observation), integrity (quality of being honest and having strong moral principles), collaboration (working together), speed, entertainment, and innovation. Therefore, traditional mass marketing approaches do not work well with younger consumers. The Millennial reacts strongly to real life examples, they favor the truth and what is real. In essence, all the Millennial generation care about is the experience itself (Williams and Page, 2010).

Furthermore, Lassere (2012) claimed that the purchasing power of the Millennial is estimated to be at $170 billion. This type of spending is coveted among sellers of products and services. Hence, one can clearly see the importance of this group. This is the largest group since the baby boomers, and the 48 million of Generation - X. This segment is primed to out-spend other segments. Anytime you have a segment with scale, you are naturally going to have purchasing power. Moreover, this generation grew up in a time of immense and fast-paced change including virtually full employment opportunities for women, dual-income households as the standard,

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wide array of family types seen as normal, significant respect for ethnic and cultural diversity including a heightened social awareness, and computers in the home and schools (Williams and Page, 2010).

In addition, this generation has grown up with technology. They have known computers, internet and cell phones all their lives. The Millennial individuals are well grounded and wise for their age. They were born into a technological, electronic, and wireless society with global boundaries becoming more transparent. They are accustomed to a diverse universe where anything seems possible (Dietz, 2003; Li, 2010). Consequently, after shedding the light on the characteristics of the Millennial generation, (Williams and Page, 2010) claim that the Millennial want to experience the world firsthand and pass their own judgment, and they like to do so with their peers, they also value "experience" and the internet alone is not sufficient enough to capture their attention. Informing them what they should like or what to do is an ineffective way to break through to them. Therefore, marketers must become involved with the experiences of the Millennial in order to be accepted, engaged, and respected enough for them to buy the product or service. According to (Schmitt, 1999) traditional marketing views consumers as rational decision-makers who are more concerned with the product's functional features and benefits. On the contrary, experiential marketing views consumers as rational and emotional human beings who are concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences. Therefore, (Schmitt, 1999) distinguished five different types of experiences, that enables marketers to create for customers, these types of experiences are: (SENSE) sensory experiences; (FEEL) affective experiences; (THINK) creative cognitive experiences; (ACT) physical experiences, behaviors and lifestyles; and (RELATE).

This paradigm shifts toward experiential marketing has occurred as a result of three simultaneous developments in the broader business environment. Firstly, the fast and rapid development of technology; secondly, the dominance of the brand; thirdly, the ubiquity of communications and entertainment which means as everything is becoming branded, everything becomes a form of communication and entertainment. These three phenomena according to Pine and Gilmore, (1999) illustrate the early signs of an entirely new approach to marketing, and to business as a whole, which is so called the experience economy. Therefore, from the above mentioned reasons this study intends to zoom on the millennial generation as the population of the study.

2. The Millennial generation in Malaysia and use of technology

In Malaysia a Malaysian survey was launched on participant demographic by Price water house Coopers (PwC) an advanced research center, to examine the thoughts and expectations of a new generation of workers, known as the Millennial. The Millennial make up approximately 62% of the Malaysian workforce (Price water house Coopers, 2009). In January 2009, a survey was carried out on 346 of the Millennial taking into account their views of the world of work in 2020, how they expect their environment to evolve, and the current economic crisis. From the total of 346 respondents: 61% were predominantly under the age of 25; while 67% were females; and 73% have been in the workforce for 2-5 years**. Malaysian Millennial use technology effectively to network, with almost all respondents (96%) indicating that they are members of a social networking site such as Facebook. This is much higher than the 85% of global respondents who belong to such sites. This connectivity provides employers with the opportunity to leverage these networking sites to reach out to large groups of Millennial for recruitment and company profiling purposes. Not surprisingly, all of these respondents own mobile phones and 62% own an iPod or an MP3 player (Price water house Coopers, 2009).

In addition, the Millennial are currently the focus of the government, employers, head-hunters, advertisers, product developers and many others. The Millennial make up over 40 per cent of the country's population in Malaysia. The Millennial are the potential leaders, consumers, and users with great purchasing power that shape the country's social, economic and political landscape in the future. In Asia alone, there are about 660 million people in Gen Y category, which is also known as the millennial generation. Worldwide, the Gen Y population is estimated at 2 billion. The sheer size of the Gen Y population and their spending power require companies, producers, marketers and advertisers to reconsider their business and marketing models. The distinct characteristics of this generation call for social and political entities to revisit their existing approach (Price water house Coopers, 2009).

3. Methodology

In the current study, the data was gathered through quantitative means. Questionnaires were personally administered and collected from 382 undergraduate students from the four public universities located in the Northern region of Malaysia. According to Sekaran (2006), there are several advantages of using this technique. The first advantage, the researcher can collect all completed responses within a short period of time. The second advantage, the researcher is afforded the opportunity to introduce the research topic. The final advantage, is administering questionnaires to a large number of respondents at the same time is less expensive and requires less time. The current study refers to (Sekaran, 2006) suggested sample size table by (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) that provides a generalized scientific guideline for sample size decisions. Since, the number of postgraduate students from the four selected universities (UPSI,

USM, UMP, and UUM) all combined equals 55,248 this means that the target number of questionnaires need to be collected is 382 from all four Universities.

3.1. Sampling Method

A sample is defined by Sekaran (2003) as subgroup or subset of the population. This study utilizes a non-probability sampling method namely the quota and convenience sampling. Quota sampling is viewed by (Malhotra, 2008) as two stage restricted judgmental sampling. The first stage consists of developing control categories, or quotas, of population elements. To develop theses quotas, the researcher lists relevant control characteristics and determines the distribution of these characteristics in the target population. The relevant control characteristics, which may include age, sex, and ethnicity, are identified on the basis of judgment. Hence, the quotas ensure that the composition of the sample is the same as the composition of the population with respect to the characteristics of interest. In the second stage, sample elements are selected based on convenience or judgment. Once the quotas have been assigned there is considerable freedom in selecting the elements to be included in the sample. The only requirement is that the elements selected fit the control characteristics.

4. Results and findings

A total of four hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed, target number of questionnaires (sample size) needed to be collected was 382, however, 400 were returned, and 50 were not returned, while 41 questionnaires were rejected due to incompleteness and were unusable. Hence 359 complete sets will be used for the data analysis in this study thereby giving a total response rate of 80%. Based on Hair et al., (2006) a sample size of 100 is considered sufficient to carry out the analysis. Table 1 below shows the response rate description and result.

Table 1: Response rate

Description	Result
Questionnaires distribue	450
Target amont of questionnaires	382
Questionnaires return	400
Questionnaires un return	50
Un usable Questionnaires	41
Usable Questionnaires return	359
Response rate	80%

In terms of respondents' number of years using a Smartphone, the results of the study show that 4.2% of respondents have been using a Smartphone for less than one year. While 85.2% of respondents have been using smart phones between one to four years, and 10.6% have been using Smartphone for over five years. Therefore, the results of the study indicate that the majority of the millennial generation has

been using a Smart phone between 1 to 4 years. Table 2 illustrates the findings.

Table 2: Number of years using a Smartphone

Number of years	Frequency	Percent
Less than one year	15	4.2
1-2 Years	158	44.0
3-4 years	148	41.2
5 years and above	38	10.6
Total	359	100.0

In addition, the results also show that 98.1% of respondent used Smartphone for messaging and 89.7% used smart phones for visiting websites; while, 91.6% used Smart phone for social networking, and 84.1% used a Smart phone to play games. In addition, 74.4% used a Smartphone for downloading, and 80.5% used it for taking photos, while 80.8% used a Smartphone to listen to music. The results of the study indicate that the majority of the millennial Smartphone users are highly utilizing their gadgets to stay connected, engaged, and informed.

Table 3: Purpose of usage

Purpose of usage	Frequency (359)	Percent (100)
Messaging	352	98.1
Visit Website	322	89.7
Social Networking	329	91.6
Play games	302	84.1
Downloading	267	74.4
Use Camera	289	80.5
Listen to Music	290	80.8

5. Discussion

The findings of the study are in line with previous researchers such as (Dietz, 2003; Li, 2010) who claim that the millennial generations have grown up with technology, and they surrounded by computers, internet and cell phones all their lives. The Millennial individuals are well grounded and wise for their age. They were born into a technological, electronic, and wireless society with global boundaries becoming more transparent. They are accustomed to a diverse universe where anything seems possible.

Furthermore, the lifestyles and attitudes of the Millennial indicate that they are self-absorbed and self-reliant with a strong sense of independence. Hence, they have a greater need to be accepted, constantly connected with their peers, fitting in, and social networking (Dickey and Sullivan, 2007; Donnelly, 2008). In addition, the findings of the study are in line with (Wilska, 2003) who found that majority of the teenagers and younger adults are heavy users of Smartphones. In addition, In Malaysia it is reported that 85 percent of Malaysians own mobile phones that are nowadays addressed as Smartphone, as they offer more advanced computing power and connectivity than a contemporary mobile phone (Featuring the Handphone Users Survey M.C.a.M. Commission, 2007,). The findings of the

study are in line with (Williams and Page, 2010) who also claimed that The Millennial want products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds which in turn deliver an experience.

6. Conclusion

The main importance of this paper comes into view through identifying and zooming into the millennial generation which consists of 2 billion new customers worldwide, and make up over 40 per cent of the population in Malaysia. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents have been using their Smartphone between 1 to 4 years. In addition, the findings indicated that the millennial have been using their Smartphone for messaging, web browsing, social networking, gaming, downloading, using camera, and listening to music were examined.

The results of the study indicate that the majority of the millennial Smartphone users in Malaysia are highly utilizing their gadgets to stay connected, engaged, and informed. As a result, the use of smartphone among the millennial appeals to their experience with a brand in terms of appealing to their senses, emotions, intellectuality and behavior. This can be shown through the utilizing of the various applications such as (Social networking, Web browsing, playing games, taking photos, listening to music).

The practical importance of the study in to view through providing core information regarding the trends in the Smartphone market and usages among the Millennial generation in Malaysia. Such information is useful for academics for the development of future works in this field, and this information enables Smartphone manufacturers, application developers and other stakeholders to plan their direction in the Malaysian Smartphone market.

Acknowledgment

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