

Multifaceted Potentials Of Social Media: Digital Immigrants in Focus

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Abstract :Communication has been faster, easier, and better than ever, thanks to the technological advancements in the twenty-first century. Online Media has gotten a go-to stage for various purposes, including information seeking, communication, entertainment, and socializing. This phenomenological qualitative research sought to know the experiences, struggles, coping, and insights of 12 digital immigrants of Tagum City in using social media; the participants were purposefully selected using snowball sampling. While this is a common thing for digital natives, digital immigrants who belong to the generation where these things are not yet developed find it hard to understand how these things work, and the younger generation doesn't understand why their parents or grandparents are slow in learning these technologies. The results of this study show the reasons why they use social media, how they learn to cope up with this innovation in communication, as well as their insights. It also showed that even if it is hard in the beginning, they also have the urge to learn because they know the advantages of social media.

Index Terms: Digital Immigrants, Social Media, and Easy Communication

1 INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has enabled the development of a digital form of communication and socialization, which is commonly called Social Media. This new way of communicating and socializing has piqued the interest of researchers on how people perceive this new way of person to person or person to audience interaction. International studies and dissertations have been made to tackle this topic to get the idea of how older adults perceive social media and how it affects them. A prior study in Turkey by Yilmaz and Ozkocak in 2010 shows that Baby Boomers (a term used in the west that also refers to Digital Immigrants) have different perceptions about social media. Some of the respondents say that it is not essential to them, while others say that Social Media is a definite need; it (e. g. Facebook) helps them communicate. There is also the general opinion of the digital immigrants that young people socialize using the Internet more often [14]. In San Diego, California, a similar study by Barker in 2009 focuses on adolescents found out that older adolescents who feel isolated and exhibit negative collective self-esteem seem to turn to their SNS for companionship. They may desire to identify with others by using their SNS because they do not have positive relationships with in-group members in their everyday lives. The most interesting finding is that males were more likely to seek social compensation and social identification as well as to learn about the "social" world via SNS. That said, males at this point in their lives may be looking to "move on," and so these findings may not be signs of dysfunction but perhaps of maturing [2]. There are studies here in the Philippines, as the study of Maranan in 2011, which also tackles the perceptions on social media but almost all of those studies focus on students and adolescents. A study that took place here in the country, particularly in Manila, takes on the perceptions about social media, but it focuses on the youth and how they perceive social media (particularly Facebook) as a platform for advocacy communication. The insights of the youth in the study reveal that their perceived usefulness of social

media (e.g., Facebook) as a platform for advocacy communication leans toward the positive end [8]. Social Media has become a part of the lives of millions around the world, but little is known about the intersection of social media and the digital immigrants here in the Philippines, particularly in the locale of Davao del Norte. How do they perceive social media? What are their experiences using this digital form of communicating and socializing? Motivated by the fact that there are few studies about this topic, particularly in Davao del Norte and the questions that arise from it, we, the researchers, conducted this study about the multifaceted potentials of social media, which focuses on digital immigrants.

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The intent of this phenomenological research endeavor was to describe the experiences of the older adults or the generation of digital immigrants who regularly use social media. We aim to know how they deal and cope up with their children who "eat social media for breakfast." Furthermore, this study aims to inform the readers that each generation has different thoughts and insights about the utilization of social media and its effect on them.

Moreover, important questions were asked to guide data collection and analysis. Each of which was subdivided into more specific questions.

1. What are the experiences of digital immigrants in using social media?
2. How do they cope up with the innovations and fast development of social media platforms?
3. What are their insights on using Social Media as a form of socialization and communication?

3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on knowing the perceptions and insights of those who belong to the generation of digital immigrants. This study will acquire the information needed to know and understand how these groups of people see online Media as an apparatus for correspondence and socialization, what are their primary reasons for using these technologies, and how it affects their daily life as users of social media.

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This study will be significant because research about this topic is limited, and due to the fact that this research study focuses on the perceptions of Digital Immigrants about social media, the urgency of this study is quite high because the population of Digital Immigrants is decreasing due to aging and fatality. It can be valuable for those who don't understand why their parents or grandparents are slow in learning new technologies and why they can't or don't want to use new technologies. This study will be the most interesting for the next generation, where digital immigrants don't exist anymore. It will tell them the things that go in the minds of their great-grandparents when dealing with the technologies that will be common to the future generation of students and parents are. The future generation will also have a glimpse of the way digital immigrants use social media in their daily lives and why they use it the way they do. The researchers also hope that the findings of these studies will spark the interest of the readers to do further studies about this topic. All tables and figures will be processed as images. You need to embed the images in the paper itself. Please don't send the images as separate files.

4 METHODOLOGY

The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it is most appropriate for small samples, while its outcomes are not measurable and quantifiable. Its basic advantage, which also constitutes its basic difference with quantitative research, is that it offers a complete description and analysis of a research subject without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participant's responses [5] A phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon [6]. This study is qualitative phenomenological because the focus of this research is to know the lived experiences of digital immigrants and their personal insights being users of social media.

FIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participants for this study include residents from Tagum City, Davao del Norte, and are selected using random sampling. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain enough data to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. The goal of qualitative researchers should be the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information. For this study, the sample size consists of 6 individuals [9] who passed the inclusion criteria of the study. The focus group discussion also consisted of 6 individuals. The saturation was reached after the researchers interviewed 10 participants. The inclusion criteria include the following: they are Tagum City residents, they belong to the digital immigrants according to the classification by G. Hechanova, with ages between 55-70 years old, who uses social media daily or occasionally. Having met the required criteria, the first 10 participants were included in the study.

6 DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting and organizing data, it was then presented to experts or authorities for the data evaluation for the purpose of having data accuracy and validity, whether it is real, which is

coming from the source, or coming from anyone which is unknown and imagine [10]. Content analysis will be used to analyze the data which is gathered from personal interviews. This is the type of research whereby data gathered is categorized in themes and sub-themes so as to be able to be comparable. Moreover, the content analysis gives the ability to researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives. However, human error is highly involved in the content analysis since there is the risk for researchers to misinterpret the data gathered, thereby generating false and unreliable conclusions [7]. Describing the phenomenon in some or greater detail is the target of this study. The experiences of the specific participants might be subjective with regards to the phenomenon, which will be a part of this study. This study will also be comparing the cases of each participant and what differences or commonalities they have. Another target of this study is to identify the conditions on which the difference of the participants is based. Lastly, through the analysis of the empirical material from the survey, we may be able to make a theory about the phenomenon under study.

SEVEN ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Deductive disclosure, also known as internal confidentiality, occurs when the traits of individuals or groups make them identifiable in research reports [11]. Given that qualitative research studies contain detailed descriptions of study participants often, confidentiality breaches via deductive disclosure are of particular concern to qualitative researchers. This research will be conducted using the following ethical guidelines; No public data sharing of undisclosed data will be done. The data for this research will be gathered in a way that no person will face any inconvenience with respect to the disclosure of his/her private information like name or address. Special measures will be taken in order to avoid any errors and maintain the integrity of the collected data. There will be no discrimination with respect to caste, creed, nationality, or religion. The governmental and institutional policies will be followed carefully.

8 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion, several questions were asked in order to generate a wide-ranging discussion for the above research problem. Their answers served as the basis in the formulation of the significant themes. There were four major themes that emerged from the data collected on the experiences of the study participants as presented in table 2, such as getting information, entertaining oneself, contacting family and friends, and sharing positive posts. These emerging themes were supported and justified by the statement given by the participants during the in-depth interview and focus group discussion. This defined the experiences of the participants.

8.1 EXPERIENCES OF DIGITAL IMMIGRANTS IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

8.1.1 Source of Information

Social Media is becoming a one-stop for individuals across the world; this part of cyberspace allows everything to be shared. Because of these opportunities, news companies and agencies are now expanding from the traditional media. These expansions made way for those digital immigrants who are social media users to get information everywhere. News

websites and news blogs were just the starts of these news companies targeting those active users of the Internet. Because of smartphone technology, news applications are also now developed, and pages are created on various social media platforms to cater to all people who use cyberspace all in all. Virtually all of the world's knowledge and experiences are available at any time with just a click of the mouse. Information is easily accessible and free to anyone with a computer, and communication across continents is as easy as e-mailing someone next door [12].

Here are some of the participants' say about social media as a source of information:

"It's good, and I can use it to communicate, to entertain myself, and to get information, especially in politics." – Stone (IDI_001, line 2-3, p. a)

"To know more information, that's what I thought." – Snow (IDI_002, line 40, p. b)

"I can also get information from Facebook because of those shared by people." – Night (FGD_003, line 6-7, p. h)

8.1.2 Means of Entertainment

Entertainment has also evolved from traditional entertainment sources such as television, radio, and newspaper. In the cyber universe, entertainment websites are common places for your daily dose of entertainment news. Social media, because of its nature, has also become an avenue for some individuals who want to entertain themselves. There are many social media networking sites that allow users to create content for entertainment purposes. These include personal blogs, video blogs or vlogs, video streaming, and photo-sharing sites and applications. Media sharing sites such as YouTube are one of the main sources of content that entertain online users. Social media websites are indeed competing to provide the most engaging conversation and quality entertainment to their users. And what's exciting is that no one knows what would be the next thing in line. One thing is certain, though, and social media will continue to change in every aspect as time goes by and the technology keeps on getting more advanced. It will continue to influence and change how people see communication and entertainment [3]. These are what the participants' have shared about entertaining themselves through social media:

"It's good, and I can use it to communicate, to entertain myself and to get information, especially in politics." – Stone (IDI_001, line 2-3, p. a)

"My main purpose in using social media is to communicate, to be informed, to entertain myself, and to multitask." – Snow (IDI_002, line 42-43, p. b)

"If I am here in the house, and I don't have any entertainment, I usually use social media to entertain myself." – Ice (IDI_003, line 73-74, p. c)

8.1.3 Strengthen ties with family and peers

Since the main concept of social media networking sites is to interact with users online, it automatically is also a way to communicate with persons who you personally know. Contacting or communicating with family members, relatives

and friends are some of the main reasons why people are into social media. Due to its digital nature, you can even call and see the person at the same time via video calls. This ability has greatly made communication more synchronized and faster. This also was the reason why digital immigrants chose to be into social media and use this to their advantage. Also, online communities are identified as places where people can get together and engage in social contact, and receive up-to-date information on family members and acquaintances.

Night and Sun, who use social Media for this purpose, said:

"I use Facebook because I want to contact my family and friends from the past that also use Facebook." – Night (FGD_004, line 14-15, p. h)

"My main purpose is to communicate. For example, my son is far, we can use video call." – Sun (IDI_004, line 108-109, p. d)

"It's mainly to contact, and to see posts from my friends from the past and also my friends now." – Dusk (FGD_002, line 18-19, p. i)

8.2 How digital immigrants cope with the innovations of social media platforms

8.2.1 Sought for assistance

The development and innovation of social media networking platforms happened in the mid to late 2000s. That is the reason why older adults began to learn social media in their late 40s. Since technology is new to them, they are not accustomed to using it, unlike the younger generations. Those digital immigrants who belong to the reluctant or enthusiastic adopters get help from the younger others who know more about social media. They might ask from their co-workers. Younger generations, especially those who are born when technology has exploded, easily learn how to use social media and like the idea above, older adults learn from their children how to navigate through social media. They were closing the communication gap and respecting and welcoming in their expertise. Their interest in games and the Internet is not a bad thing. To learn how to use social media networking sites, older adults must accept that the younger generation, like their kids, can help them and that older adults can learn from them [15].

Here are some of the participants' say about asking for assistance on learning how to use social media:

"To cope up with the innovations, I get help from others, and I learn from others." – Stone (IDI_001, line 14-15, p. a)

"I get help from the people who know more about using social media." – Wind (IDI_006, line 183-184, p. g)

"When I started, I ask my son to teach me." – Morn (MCFGD_006)

"We're the same, and my child is the one who even made my Facebook account." – Eve (FGD_005, line 41-42, p. i)

"Our children might be the ones who commonly teach us elders, and they are experts in that field" – Dusk (FGD_002, line 43-44, p. i)

8.2.2 Convenient platform

Convenience is a factor why people use social media overall. Interacting and communicating in an easy way makes users want to join social media. If you are in the business sector, it is a convenient way to be updated with the company you are in. It has also become a place for buying and selling products and services. Organizations also made social media a way to reach out to people, and news sites use sites such as Facebook to share news and information. Emergencies are taken care of faster because government offices also use social media in order for the people to connect to them when an emergency comes. Social media has made it possible and convenient to connect with each other [13]

The following are participants' response to the topic of social media convenience:

"It is really convenient, I think. Because social media, if you use it wisely and correctly, it can really help you, especially if you are a businessman". – Stone (IDI_001, line 23-24, p. a)

"Really convenient, really. Just press here and there, really easy". – Ice (IDI_003, line 89-90, p. d)

"It is just really easy to use, unlike the past where if there is an emergency, the response is slow. Now, it's convenient because it's fast". – Sun (IDI_004, line 121-123, p. e)

"It's very convenient. Almost all people not only in the Philippines but also the world use social media because the communication is very easy". – Wind (IDI_006, line 187-189, p. g)

8.3 The insights of digital immigrants about Social Media as a medium of communication and socialization.

8.3.1 Advantageous technology

The way technology is growing, and it is obvious that more and more people are going to grasp its benefits. It has brought a lot of advantages for society. From progressed nations to under-developed countries, every nation is utilizing the power of social media to enhance life and use it for the bitterness of the people. Some of the advantage of social media in the society includes connectivity. You can connect with anyone to learn and share your thoughts. It is also advantageous in terms of education; it has a lot of benefits for the students and teachers. Regardless of your location and educational background, you can educate yourself without paying for it [1]. Here are some of the participants' insights on social media being advantageous.

"It's really advantageous, you can easily contact especially during emergency situations." – Ice (IDI_003, line 93-94, p. d)

"Even if you are far apart, you can chat them; that is the advantage of social media." – Eve (FGD_005, line 60-61, p. j)

"Communication is easy; it is advantageous, right"? – Dawn (FGD_001, line 58, p. j)

8.3.2 Future advances

As the years' pass and new technologies and innovations have been discovered, cyberspace has become much bigger and versatile when it comes to sharing information, communicating, and broadcasting yourself. Digital immigrants agree with the fact that social media platforms will prosper, will advance, and will become better than ever. Over the next two decades, we will increase access to the Internet not via desktop or laptop computers, but rather we will access and integrate social media tools via the Internet of Things, further blurring the lines between online and offline location [4].

These are the participants' insights on social media platforms becoming better in the future:

"Also, these smartphones, in the future, this will change, it will be a higher-tech." – Night (FGD_003, line 63-64, p. j)

"It will prosper because it has no rivals." – Ice (IDI_003, line 95, p. d)

"I think social media will upgrade because it is also innovating." – Leaf (IDI_005, line 160, p. f)

8.3.3 Preference to personal interaction

Considering all the factors that make social media a very good platform for communication and socialization, older adults still prefer having personal interaction to interacting online. Digital immigrants prefer to talk on the phone or in person. They prefer having face-to-face conversations [15].

These are the participants' insights on having personal interactions rather than online interaction.

"I rather choose personal interaction. When you interact personally, you can feel the real person talking to you." – Wind (IDI_006, line 204-205, p. h)

"It's better to have face to face meeting because you can feel what he says, you can hear his voice." – Day (FGD_004, line 78-79, p. k)

"If you are interacting personal with somebody, you can prove to them, you can express. So, I prefer personal interaction". – Leaf (IDI_005, line 165-166, p. f)

9 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Implication for Practice

The main aim of this study is to provide insights into social media through the eyes of digital immigrants. This qualitative study deals with the different experiences, their coping mechanisms, and insights on social Media as a medium of communication and socialization. The different functions and reasons of use affect how digital immigrants use and perceive social media. There is also an opportunity to help digital

immigrants with their social media use, and it is through the development of a more user-friendly environment in social media sites. Also, the development of social networking apps that are easy to understand can help them to be more active in social media. Developers can also develop social media network whose target users will be digital immigrants. It may be true that the population of digital immigrants is diminishing. We wish that it is not the reason to stop catering to them. In our analysis, the content and the function of a particular social media platform are related to the reason why digital immigrants start to use it. While this is the case, it is to consider that digital immigrants use social media platforms because it is easier to communicate through these platforms. We must also consider the other things that they can get in social media, such as information and entertainment. The question here is that if there is indeed the development of social media that caters solely to digital immigrants, are we sure that all of them will enter social cyberspace? Who knows.

10 IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study focused only on the experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of the six participants of the In-depth-interview and six participants of the focus group discussion, which could also apply to all digital immigrants. Moreover, this research was done in the locality of Tagum City participants to find out the different statements based on their experiences. It also helps other generations to understand how older adults perceive social Media as a medium of communication and socialization. Our study gives the opportunity to refine and validate the concepts and constructs that emerged from our data analysis. Further research may be done, re-interviewing the respondents in the study can also be made in order to know whether their feelings, perceptions, and experiences have changed over a period of time.

11 CONCLUSIONS

Before we have done this research, we were quite taken aback and were unsure whether we could complete this qualitative study or not due to various reasons and considerations. With the help of our adviser, mentor, family, and close friends, we realized that this study was worth the time, effort, and money. We also managed to finish this study. Near the end of this study, we realized that accomplishing this study is worth the efforts. It also gave us meaningful insight and learnings outside the scope of our comfort zone. It is now more rewarding to fulfill individual tasks that are hard-earned and rarely taken by many. Furthermore, the experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of digital immigrants on Social Media as a medium for socialization and communication and also their decreasing population brought out the need to conduct this study. This phenomenon might be quite hard for the key informants, but this just indicates that this endeavor would be worthwhile. This would also let the younger generations know how older adults view social media. This kind of study is challenging because it also trains us to utilize the time and manage it in order for us to make this study. Social media has become an avenue for various things, and it allows its users to connect with each other with ease. It is because of this innovation why people are getting into this platform of communication and socialization. Users can utilize this part of cyberspace to suit their needs, and they perceive this as a good thing. This might be the case for those users born in the digital era or what we call "millennials." How about

the ones born before the era of digitalization? How do they see this technological advancement? After doing the study, we now have the idea of how digital immigrants experience and perceive social media. For them, it might be hard to learn everything about social media, unlike the digital natives, but digital immigrants who want to learn how social media works have enough people and tools at their disposal to become proficient users, but it still depends if they want to embrace this kind of technology or not, it's still up to them.

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