Digital Natives Coming of Age: Challenges for Managers

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Abstract. *Youth unemployment is currently a stringent problem in many European countries. Most of the time, both the public opinion and the national and European institutions blame the economic crisis, the social conditioning of these youngsters, and point to the failure of the educational systems to provide them with the necessary qualifications needed on the market. There are a few initiatives, such as the Youth Guarantee launched in 2013, led by European public authorities in order to reduce this phenomenon, but these initiatives address solely the professional proficiency of the youngsters. And most authorities perceive them as citizens who need to be trained to fit with the existing working environments. The situation is, in fact, more complex, as today's youngsters are different from the previous generations in terms of the values they share and the basic way they process information. When speaking of the youth, the high unemployment rate due to system imbalance between people training and work fields' requirements are just one side of the coin. The other side speaks about the impact digital technology has upon young people, favouring the emergence of the so called digital natives, and about the fact that the working environment in itself has to incorporate changes in order to accommodate these youngsters and fully benefit from their capabilities. As Romanian digital natives come of age, minimizing the mind gap between elder managers and younger employees and candidates becomes an important issue that companies increasingly have to deal with. This article explores the digital natives' expectations from their managers and from the companies they aim to work for, based upon a survey conducted in four universities in Bucharest. We propose a series of recommendations for managers who work closely with digital natives, in order to improve the work environment and create the premises for better job performance in their teams, possibly reducing, this way, the number of NEETs in Romania.*

Keywords: *digital natives, employment, management, NEETs, personal values, Romania.*

Introduction

The Romanian youngsters born after 1990 became, during the last few years, the subject of public debates and concerns, mainly as a consequence of their poor results at the baccalaureate and of their dependence upon their parents'

income into early adulthood. The educational system has been repeatedly blamed for failing to prepare them to integrate properly into the workforce, transforming them into a "lost generation" by not providing them with the necessary skills to apply and be selected for the available jobs (***, 2013a). There are many aspects of this problem: some teens leave school before graduating from high school, some never apply for training after high school and even one in five of the faculty graduates do not find jobs in their field because they have qualifications which are not needed by employers (***, 2013b). A similar situation regarding youth unemployment can be found in many European states (Arun, 2013). A total of 14 million people in EU are NEETs, meaning they are aged between 15 and 29 and not in employment, education or training (Europa.eu, 2012). Looking at the official statistics, we see that in 2012, 32.9% of the European youngsters aged 15 to 24 were not in education or training and were unemployed. There are differences between regions and countries, and some countries face especially difficult situations, such as Greece, where over 59% of the youngsters are NEETs (***, 2013c), while other countries, such as Romania, have smaller but still alarming rates of young unemployed: 23.9% (Crăciun, 2014a).

Concerned by the increasing number of local unemployed youth, the European Commission has launched the *Youth Employment Initiative* in 2013 (Europa.eu, n.d.a.) which aims to support young people in regions where unemployment reaches more than 25%. Through *Youth Guarantee* (Europa.eu, n.d.b) schemes, also launched in 2013, the EU stimulates national joint initiatives between the public sector, business organizations, career guidance providers, training institutions, trade unions etc. for training and finding jobs for youth under 25. As a consequence of these initiatives, two pilot projects lead by the Ministry of Labour are being implemented at the moment in Romania, aiming to award professional certification to and integrate 5000 youngsters into the work field by mid-2015 (Crăciun, 2014a). Unfortunately, there are still about 90000 NEETs, according to the Romanian National Agency for Labour Forces (ANOFM, in Romanian) who remain outside these projects, having little hope in finding a job to suit their abilities and expectancies (Crăciun, 2014b).

Although a lack of correspondence between what the educational system provides in terms of degrees and what the labour market needs reveals a real cause behind this situation, it is not the single valid cause there is. Little has been written in Romania regarding the fact that the youngsters' attitude towards work reflects the dominance of a different value system than the ones the previ-

ous generations had. In itself, the prevalence of a different world view, reflected through the personal values people have, should not be a cause of concern but problems arise when, for example, the people who embrace it do not fit the expected attitudes towards work and give rise to a sort of instability within the system. In the work environment, this instability is partially created at this time by their lack of interest in working for the companies that offer jobs and is framed by the general perception that youngsters prefer to act like opinionated gamers from a cyborg generation and show little respect for authority, in the expected way (Rainie, 2006). But, as Helsper (2010) puts it, this generation just lives in an ITC environment from where life looks different.

Literature review

Today's youngsters are both players and victims of the current social, economic and cultural environments that shape their identities, needs and worldviews (Noble, Haytko & Phillips, 2009). This is not a brand new situation, as changes in the way youngsters behave, related to technology improvement and availability, have been noted since the early 90s. Barna (1995) underlined that young people live in a global society where consumerism and capitalism are the rule and that technology is their ally in sailing these waters. Young people from the 1990s are perhaps a bit different from young people in the 2010s but still there are identifiable common characteristics that could place them into the same generation, comprising of people born from 1977 to 1999.

At first, young people born within this range were refered to as the Generation Y, the Millennials, Generation Me, Net Generation, or Thumb Generation, referring to their proficiency with ITC (Huntley, 2006; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010; Hansen & Leuty, 2012). Some authors (Weiler, 2004; Cable, 2005; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010; Zandt, 2010; Dagnaud, 2011; Gansky, 2011) took a step further, describing them as dependent on technology, which becomes the organizing principle of their lives. Therefore, there are voices saying that they are permanently "wired" (Sutherland & Thompson, 2003). Prensky (2001) pointed to the fact that the rapid changes in the ITC domain have a great impact over the youngsters who use them extensively, shaping the way they process information or think. This thing leads to a need for a fundamental change in the learning environments, he says, so that the new technologies and mediums are used for creating better learning experiences (see also Pînzaru & Mitan, 2013), for a Romanian study regarding social media use in academic contexts).

The change in thinking that Prensky speaks of is reflected by the differences between what he called the *digital natives* and the *digital immigrants*. Digital natives are accustomed to use technology constantly, since they were very young, and they consider ITC devices, such as digital cameras, smartphones, video games, mp3 players, computers, tablets a part of their normal surroundings. They were digitally alphabetized, meaning they have embraced ITC devices early on in life, probably during the time they learned how to write and read. Meanwhile, digital immigrants are the elder who have learnt to use digital technologies later in life, who prefer classic pen and paper approaches but who can operate well in a digitally driven environment.

Because of their fondness with technology, digital natives not only easily embrace modernist approaches to life but also have different expectancies from life. For them, life is a game and they are gamers in the quest for the best solution. They play to win and for winning they constantly search for the shortest and most convenient route, using the entire technological arsenal they can access (Dumitrescu, 2013; Filloux, 2010). Seeing life as a game with various obstacles to be overcome makes them suspicious buyers, who give little trust to brands, politicians and classic corporations, who are considered out dated and inefficient (Filloux, 2010). This attitude towards life also makes many of them think of entrepreneurial initiatives (Mihalcea, Mitan & Viţelar, 2012; Leonte, 2014).

After conducting a research at a global level, Tapscott (2010) identified eight values or behaviours and attitudes characteristic to digital natives. Firstly, he says, they need freedom of choice, meaning they want to choose by themselves their jobs, clothing style, and media types they use. They consider customization a rule and they wish to be able to customize everything. Digital natives scrutinize everything and they believe in social justice and integrity. They are oriented towards collaborative work and dislike hierarchies. Also, they like to innovate and are interested in all that is new and innovative and are especially attracted by the latest technology. Two more things are vital to these youngsters: speed – they desire instant gratification and a fast flow of communication, and they are oriented towards fun at work more than towards gaining large amounts of money. The preference for these values is reflected mostly in relation with the working environment, as demands that these people pose upon their managers and upon the companies they choose to work for. Tapscott explains these preferences by addressing the roles that digital natives are required to play daily in their existence, as a consequence of technological development: they are actors, initiators, creators, players and team players.

As regarding the companies they choose to work for, they prefer the ones that offer them the opportunity to have a flexible programme, which would fit their lifestyle, and where they can improve personally and professionally. They value highly the truth and expect managers to give them credit and listen to their ideas, while they will choose only those responsible companies that do what they preach. These demands are similar with the ones of the *cultural creatives* (see Dobrescu, 2008)

It is important to note that one of the main characteristics of digital natives is that they erase the cultural differences, as recent GfK studies show (presented in Calei, 2013). Consequently, we do not speak of a series of American or Occidental youngsters who behave in some specific way, but of a whole generation spread worldwide that shares values, possibly with local nuances, but a rather homogenous generation which is to be found in India, Brazil, Germany and the United Stated as well as in other countries. This generation relies heavily upon technology and acts as an agent of globalization through the use of ITC technology and communication using the Internet and Social Network Sites.

In Romania, we can hardly consider the late 70s or early 80s as the first years when Romanian digital natives were born, as long as the socio-economic conditions were slightly different here than in the Occidental countries. The market was state driven until 1990, rejecting most western products, so most of the people were not in tune with the new products on the market, and even if they were, on a theoretical level, few were able to have these products for themselves. Even after the Revolution in 1989, the western innovations in technology were not immediately available for the large mass of people, due to economic imbalances, so that many young people became digitally alphabetized in the 90s through public schooling and Internet cafes where they would pay to use a computer. This makes many of today's Romanians who are about 30 years old digital immigrants and not digital natives. This fact is obvious especially if we look at the moment the first studies regarding the problematic of the digital natives started to appear in this country (see British Council & Asociația Oricum, 2006, for a brief view over the first Romanian digital natives' preferences and values). In short, we would embrace the same opinion as Coca (interviewed in Calei, 2013), who states that authentic Romanian digital natives are the people born after 1990.

As more and more of the actual digital natives come of age, meaning they become involved with the economy so knowing their characteristics becomes im-

portant to marketers and managers, further studies appear. A GfK study from 2013, *The Coming of Age of Digital Natives* (presented in Calei, 2013), confirms a series of observations made by Tapscott but also reveals certain particularities: Romanian digital natives are said to claim immediate feedback, to prefer speed over depth, to cherish the principle "first come, first served" and to become impatient if their wishes are not instantly gratified. They learn intuitively, but they are also lazy, they lack long term plans and run away from real moments of deep introspection by contacting their friends, with whom they prefer to spend their time. They tend to have a group of twenty to thirty people they feel they belong to, which confirms their existence and gives them the sensation of stability. Interestingly, their family is also very important to them and many of the youngsters aged 19 to 22 consider their parents their role models.

Western researchers (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman & Lance, 2010; Zandt, 2010; Dagnaud, 2011; Gansky, 2011) have found that digital natives are dependent on technology. In fact, states Andreea Coca, GfK Romania representative, in the cited interview (see Calei, 2013), they are dependent upon what the Internet can give them - namely the constant connection with their online friends, who happen to be also their real life friends. She continues that although their fascination with the latest gadgets and smartphones is notorious, they do not see the digital technology as a goal by itself, but as an instrument to connect with friends. Researchers from GfK Romania point to the fact that these people are very insecure and that they base their self-worth conception onto the words and actions that others say and do about them. In sharp contrast with this, they project a hyperbolical image of themselves through social media and (pretend to) act as assertive individuals. Because they base self-esteem outside themselves, they refuse to see themselves other than through the eyes of their friends, who encourage them. Posting lots of selfies and taking care of their public image by uploading on Facebook pictures taken by professional photographers is just a way to obtain validation from the others. The number of likes and the comments they receive for these photos are considered personal KPIs which ensure them they are worthy.

Although anxious and dependent upon the opinions others have about them, they have tremendous expectations from the other people, from companies and from brands. They thrive upon customized experiences, they search for customized products and they expect to be consulted by companies and involved in branding decisions. They are also not interested in copyrights and use any information and product available as their own and personalize it as they wish, says Coca, responsible for the GfK report mentioned above.

As regarding their media preferences, they are digital omnivores who use 71% of their time to consume media information, be it on digital or classic support (Marketingprofs, 2012). Their way of collecting information is particular and should be noted: they watch several screens at the same time and they think in a nonlinear way, they process information following a hyperlinked pattern. But, although they check many information sources more times a day, and they know the latest information, digital natives consider that mass media gives them subjective information, thing they deeply dislike (Coca in Calei, 2013). Romanian digital natives do not engage in creating, innovating or carrying on doing something with the information they receive. This is due to their lack of vision and desire to live here and now, without planning for the future and without saving money other than for buying products that would raise their status in their group of friends, such as an expensive smartphones. This is also why they work only as a compromise, because they need the money, and expect their managers to pay much attention to their needs and fulfil their expectancies (Coca in Calei, 2013; Leonte, 2014).

From the other side of the subject, according to Doru Dima, PhD in psychology who works with young people as career counsellor (interviewed in Leonte, 2014), 54% of the Romanian employers say that they cannot find the people they need for the jobs they have. Dima believes this is due to the fact that they search for people different than the young people who actually search for jobs. Parents tend to blame schooling for failing to prepare the young to adapt to the work field and continue to financially support their digital native children because they believe they are still naïve and that they will eventually grow up to be like themselves (hardworking, responsible, supporting the status quo). Employers blame parents for not guiding their children to choose careers that fit with their talents and are sceptical when they learn that, according to Dima, 76% of the digital natives believe that their superiors could learn much from them. Further, as 50% of the youngsters prefer to be unemployed than have a job they dislike and 66% of them want to invent their own job position at work, the balance between youngsters who work and youngsters who are unemployed and in search of the ideal job for them clearly inclines towards the second, mentions Dima.

Methodology and sample description

As seen above, during the last years Romanian researchers have revealed different aspects related to the profile of digital natives, including the expectan-

cies they have in the work field. This study aims to provide additional insight into this subject, by concentrating upon some particularities of young digital natives in relation to the ideal job they dream of. Our research questions were the following:

RQ1: What do Romanian youngsters expect from their managers?
RQ2: What are the attitudes Romanian youngsters have towards work?
RQ3: What are their attitudes regarding ITC use?

In order to find the answers to these questions, we have conducted a pen and paper survey on 457 students in May 2014. The survey comprised of 24 questions. 16 of these questions regarded youngsters' attitudes and values, while the others were used to assess their socio-demographic data. The questions used to investigate the attitudes and values of the digital natives were inspired by the description of digital natives values displayed at work, as explained by Don Tapscott (n.d.) for the U.S. Department of Defence. These items had to be rated on a scale ranging from -1 to 7, where -1 meant "opposed to my values", 0 "it is not important to me", 1 and 2 were not labelled, 3 meant "it is important to me", 4 and 5 were not labelled, 6 meant "it is highly important to me" and 7 meant "it is the most important thing in life for me". The scale we used is the one Schwartz (1992) proposed for measuring peoples values.

We have selected respondents from the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (68% of the respondents), from "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University (11%), from the University "Politehnica" of Bucharest (25%), and from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (17%). Most of our respondents were 19-20 years old (68%), while the ones aged 21-22 summed up to 26% of the sample. 351 of these students were enrolled in the first year of study, 11 in the second year and 95 in the third year, pursuing first degree programs at the universities mentioned above. 61% of our respondents were female, while 38% were male.

We have empirically identified different patterns of responses, so we decided to undergo a principal components analysis that would provide us with a typology of youngsters in our sample. The principal components analysis we used was based upon the correlations between the 16 variables. Initially, 3 components were extracted, with values surpassing 1,00. The orthogonal rotation determined the component structure presented in Table no. 1. The first component represents 41% of the variance, the second 20% of the variance and the third 7% of the variance. The first component seems to be the *Digital*

Enthusiast, the second the *Rebel Truth Seeker*, and the third the *Pessimistic Individualist*.

Results and discussion

Two of the profiles (the Digital Enthusiast and the Rebel Truth Seeker) revealed by the analysis are closer in structure to what literature states about digital natives specific values, while one (the Pessimistic Individualist) is almost opposite to the digital natives profile described by previous studies we cited above. We will discuss separately these three profiles, along with the recommendations we propose to managers working with these youngsters. We begin by presenting some general information about the sample, which could provide additional insight.

Because we speak mostly of first year students, as stated above, we expected many of them to be unemployed. Results (Fig. 1.) show that about three quarters of them did not have a job at the moment we applied the survey. This could give us a hint about their responses related to their values and expectancies at work, as probably most of our respondents have not been employed at all. These results lead us to believe that they might have formed their opinions regarding working environments from other peoples stories and possibly they have unrealistic expectations from companies and from people they might work with. However, our questions regarded the ideal company and ideal managers they would prefer to work with and not some actual work experiences they might have had.
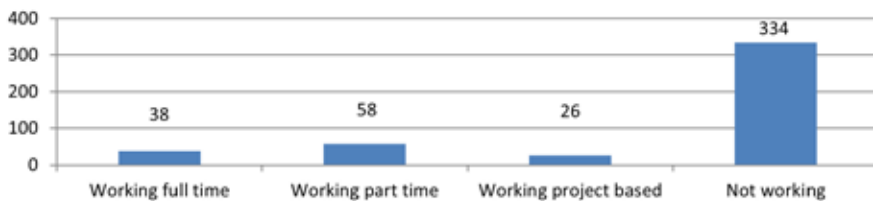

Figure 1. Sample description: Employment

Regarding their income level satisfaction (Fig. 2.), which we considered to be a potential predictor for their motivation of lowering their expectations from potential employers, we see that the vast majority of them consider they can live a decent life and even buy some expensive things from time to time with the money they have. Combining this information with the one that parents

prefer to financially support youngsters even in their late 20s, we can assume that most of our respondents do not feel a pressure to accept jobs less than their ideal job, hence their general high interest in finding jobs that suit their preferences and not opt for available jobs on the market.

The idea that parents still financially support the young is reinforced by the data regarding the youngsters living arrangements, presented in Figure 3. Many of our respondents live at home, with their parents, while others have chosen to live in a student dormitory (which is cheaper than living on rent). The 6 persons who stated they live in other arrangements have mentioned they live with other relatives (sister), at their place, or with boyfriend/ girlfriend, on rent.
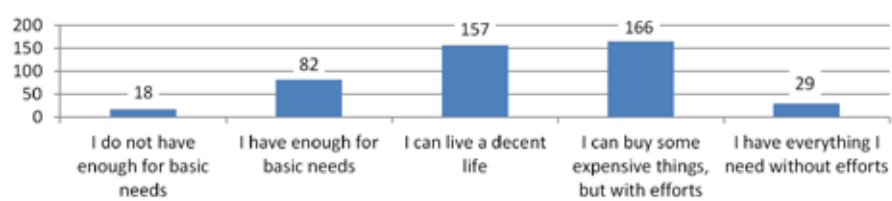

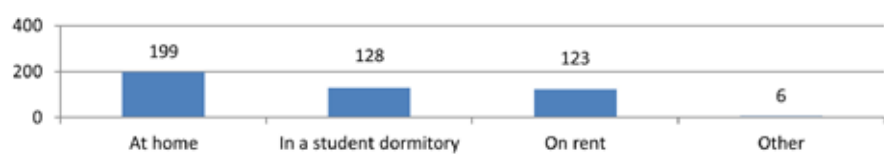*Figure 2. Sample description: Income level satisfaction*

Figure 3. Sample description: Living arrangements

Our respondents might be demanding, as we will discuss below, but they tend to perform well in school (Fig. 4.), so we assume that they are, at least at the moment, entitled to believe they can ask much from a potential employer in terms of level of trust regarding professional competencies.
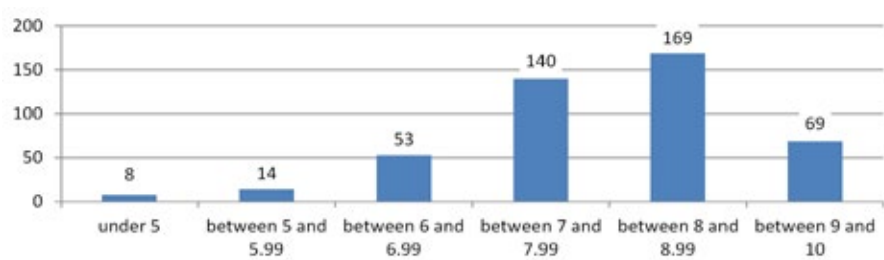

Figure 4. Sample description: Last semesters average mark

Table 1. Component structure

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
Dninovatietel	,899	,284	,028
Dnfunnet	,884	,198	,031
Dnfunjob	,883	,213	,016
Dnfunvsmunca	,818	,236	,007
Dncolabbun	,759	,224	,087
Dnintegrsuperior	,756	,200	-,026
Dnvitezamsg	,751	,210	,140
DnvitezaFB	,750	,206	,007
Dninovatieinfo	,682	,203	,003
Dncolabproj	,682	,117	-,089
Dnintegradevar	,328	,885	,006
Dnpersonalizarejob	,297	,858	,042
Dnvigincredere	,198	,792	,007
Dnvigdezvoltare	,208	,763	,028
DnpersonalizareFB	,070	-,034	,779
Dnlibertate	-,027	,069	,673

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

The Digital Enthusiasts (DE)

Most of our respondents (41% of the variance) are "Digital Enthusiasts". We named them this way because these youngsters are very interested in technology, the Internet and identify with most of the digital natives values described in the literature review. Perhaps their most important characteristic is their belief that they are outstandingly proficient with technology. Second to that, their desire to be permanently wired is strong. They even prefer to relax surfing the Internet whenever they have spare time. Third, they are gamers who would prefer a job where they can have fun and work at the same time. They use technology extensively, both for work and for having fun and mix well productive work with leisure. But they tend to have an erratic working schedule, because they prefer to work intensely for some time, concentrate deeply, and then relax for as long as it takes to refill their batteries, while being online.

They are also oriented towards speed and avoid losing time with unnecessary communication. This is why they opt for instant messaging instead of phone calls, as it is a means for them to save precious time. DEs might seem superficial in communication and constantly plugged into various digital devices that disconnect them from the reality, but they believe this way they are more efficient at work and actually more attuned to what they have to do.

They are highly innovative: they nearly always want to improve the things they work at, they aim to implement better solutions, and they desire to do things better time after time, to be more efficient as they gain experience. But they only follow leaders who have proven to them their abilities and superiority in terms of professional capacities, a thing which potentially makes them disobedient at work. When they work with a leader they respect and recognize as their leader, they would ask for immediate feedback from him or her, after finishing a task or a project, and they would take all of the advices given. They would ask questions because they want to understand how things work, what they did wrong and how they can correct their mistakes so they would not repeat them the next time they are given a similar task. Consequently, they are demanding from their superiors at work: they need to be trusted, they need their managers to believe they can do the tasks they are given. They seek mentoring from their superiors, both in their professional lives and in their self-improvement journeys.

Interestingly, they prefer teamwork when there is a problem to solve, and they are not interested in customizing their jobs, nor their devices, bank cards or social media profiles. They tend to use these as given tools to reach their goals and not as ends in themselves. To a lesser extent, but important, none the least, they seek to work for responsible companies, that do what they preach. Perhaps this can be linked to the fact they generally prefer jobs from where they gain enough money to live a decent life but do something they like and find meaning to than jobs that provide them much money but give them tasks that they dislike doing.

Managing the Digital Enthusiasts

Digital Enthusiasts need leaders who have shown their capabilities at work, who can provide professional and perhaps personal examples of success to them. They need these people to empower them by setting goals for them, by asking them to give their best, by trusting them and by giving them the possibility to choose the tools they want for achieving these goals. They need managers who would let them work following whatever working schedule

they need to in order to complete those tasks. These people are not adverse to hierarchy or to structured systems, but they perform better when they are allowed to navigate towards their destination using a web model, with routes that can be changed by them *ad libitum*.

When they finish the tasks they are given, they need to receive rapid, clear and consistent feedback from their superiors, so that they can improve their work the next time. As they are innovators, Digital Enthusiasts should be allowed and encouraged to communicate their ideas of improving the company's activity to the managers. Although it might seem that they disregard hierarchy and wish to change things that worked well until they got there, it should be noted that their approach is by no means oriented towards dissolving working hierarchies and structures because of anarchic tendencies. They only wish to improve what they perceive as being out-dated or less efficient than it could be. This way, when a Digital Enthusiast proposes something that might seem disrupting for the course of the department or even the company itself, we should remember that creating something better implies many times destroying something that worked well before. Given the occasion, this type of employee can offer solutions to problems that are not even perceived by other elder employees, simply because they have a different approach: that of the gamer searching to optimize everything, for winning the match with the highest score.

It would be highly beneficial both to the Digital Enthusiasts and to the companies they work for if managers would make the effort to talk personally to these employees and assist them in improving their detective-like and puzzle-solver skills. Digital Enthusiasts take great pride in succeeding in these areas and they expect their managers to observe that and to always ask more of them, helping them use their potential to the fullest.

The Rebel Truth Seeker (RTS)

He or she is an idealist at heart, who aims to work only for responsible companies, which do what they preach. Their motto seems to be "truth and correctness above all". They would rather work for a company where they can do what they like and receive a decent amount of money than work for a company from where they would earn much money but do tasks they do not like. They expect their employers to trust them and to be open with them in any circumstance. In addition to that, they want to be supported by the companies they work for to develop as individuals and as professionals.

Digital Enthusiasts are mainly investigators whose minds are designed to work as interconnected microchips set to find the best solutions to any given problems, using the web and the digital devices. Truth Seekers are counsels who search for, expose and wish to correct any mistakes (of the others) they can identify. They share many characteristics with the Digital Enthusiasts, but with a lesser intensity. For example, they are proficient with technology and are generally up to date with the latest devices, they like to improve the things they work at and they moderately prefer working in teams. They prefer jobs where they can have fun and work and usually prefer to work intensely for a period of time and then relax. But, unlike the DEs, they sometimes relax online and other times prefer other leisure activities, such as reading, which was mentioned by some subjects.

As regarding their communication style, they opt for texting at times but they also enjoy giving calls. At work, they expect to receive feedback from their superiors after completing a task or project, but they are more independent than the DEs and they are not upset if they don't get consistent feedback. However, RTSs respect their managers only based on their perceived level of competence. They would choose a job that fits their lifestyle but this is of minimum importance to them. Also, they do not customize devices or social media sites profiles.

Managing the Rebel Truth Seeker

The RTS is an independent individual who enjoys playing the role of the Good Fairy in his or her domain of election. RTSs are more versatile than DEs and they are averse to being pinned down to do something they do not find pleasure in. He or she believes it is vital to do what you like and what you are good at for a company that can offer you the opportunity to have a positive impact, through your work results. They need to know that they are trusted by their superiors and that they are free to work following whatever schedule and working routines they need to in order to have positive results.

They can be very determined to accomplish whatever they want as long as they know their efforts have a higher purpose. They need to commit emotionally to this purpose and this makes them potentially long term dedicated and performant employees. They are hardworking individuals who expect managers to guide their steps in becoming both better individuals and better professionals but they do not need constant guidance and supervision, like the DEs. For this type of employees it is important to work for a cause they believe in and to have the freedom at work to choose themselves the most suitable options to support this cause.

Managers need to check that their RTSs employees have the job positions that enable them to work for whatever causes are meaningful to them. Also, their managers should gently guide them as mentors. Potentially, these people would become themselves mentors for other RTSs and managers for DEs teams, as they are the people who have a vision of how things should look like, while DEs aim to find the best ways to make other peoples visions real.

The Pessimistic Individualist (PI)

The third category comprises of youngsters who, unlike DEs and RTSs, dream most of the time of customizing the world to satisfy their needs. They want to customize their devices, their looks, their antiques, and their job. To them, life is about shaping the outside world according to their visions. This is their credo and their focus but they lack both the vision and the tools to make their dream a reality.

There are weak correlations between this component and all the other values referred above as significant for DEs and RTSs. PIs tend to prefer texting and not talking over the phone, they seem to enjoy improving things they work at but they have very little interest in self-development, be it on a personal or professional level, they slightly believe that working could be paired with fun and they have little interest in staying online to relax.

More important, they respect hierarchy, not people, and they dislike working in teams, unlike DEs and RTSs. They have little proficiency with technology and little interest in learning about new devices. At work, they seldom expect their managers to trust them and rarely do they ask for feedback.

Managing the Pessimistic Individualist
PIs seem to be disenchanted by the reality they have come to experience, but they obey the existing rules nonetheless, without expecting to be heard or seen. They wish to be seen and they wish the world would be different, and this is why they long for customization in each and every aspect of their lives. But they do not have dreams, nor do they wish or know how to work for other peoples dreams to become true.

As employees, they ask very little from their managers, because they believe they are not important. It could be that these people have not found yet what they are passionate about, like the RTSs did, and that they do not know where

to find answers to their questions on life, as they also do not envision for them an existence enmeshed with technology, as DEs do. They need to be guided through career counseling to find their assets and they could be encouraged to work hard to fit in some existing job description.

They seem to reject the world outside themselves and expect it to be shaped by someone else so that they could fit in. It is unlikely they are employed, because they expect everything to be the way they desire at work. As long as from the position of an employee they expect almost nothing from their managers, it is unlikely they would accept guidance from them. This is a difficult situation, because it is improbable that without help they would find their course in life and become efficient workforce.

Conclusions

Romanian digital natives have some particularities that western previous studies did not reveal. We found that there are actually three types of youngsters at the moment waiting to enter the workforce, and their needs and expectations from the companies and managers they would like to work with vary. In sum, most of these youngsters expect to be trusted by their managers, they wish to work following their preferred timing and own working style, including having fun at work, and they are generally interested in working for companies that are responsible and guided by ingénue values: truth, correctness, transparency.

Most of these youngsters would like to work in teams. Some (the RTSs) would like to set goals for themselves and work hard to achieve professional results meaningful to them on a personal level. Others (the DEs) would enjoy being allowed to reshape working procedures and use new tools to complete tasks more efficiently. RTSs and DEs need feedback from their managers and they need to see in those managers models for themselves, both on a personal and on the professional level. They would follow the managers who know how to break possible barriers of communication or barriers rose by hierarchy. Companies that give them space to grow, listen to their ideas and support their innovative solutions are set to benefit from their skills (DEs) and visions and passion (RTSs). Digital immigrant managers could adapt their management style to welcome digital natives into the work field.

There are also people who need to be guided towards finding their place in the work force. The PIs, which count for 7% of the variation, seem to be lost

in a world they need to fit in but do not. It would be difficult for managers to guide them, as they do not expect a thing from managers. It would be unlikely that they are employed, as long as they expect the find jobs that fit with their lifestyle. These youngsters could benefit from career counselling while still in school, so that they could find what they like doing and mould their characters to fit with others, with whom they dislike to work at the moment.

In a nutshell, most of our respondents are keen with technology and are informed regarding the latest news in this area. They want to work but they do not like traditional 9 to 5 schedules, traditional working procedures and traditional work relations, established along with rigid hierarchical structures. They are people who want to give their best for the causes they find meaningful to them. They are not bohemians who dream of the impossible but real people who need to be guided to find those jobs that suit them. And in order for them to find these jobs, companies need to learn to become more flexible and allow change to happen by using their skills for profit and for making the world a better place.

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