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Digital Immersion of Generation Alpha: The Role of Social Media and Technology in Communication and Lifestyle

Farzana Majeed
M.Phil Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kotli AJ&K
Email: farzanamajeedfm99@gmail.com

Maria Mehmood
M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kotli AJ&K
Email: mariamehmood620@gmail.com

Saima Kayani (Corresponding Author)
Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Kotli AJ&K
Email: saima.nazakat@uokajk.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

As the first generation completely immersed in a digital environment from birth, Generation Alpha, the first cohort born entirely within the 21st century (2010–2025), marks a historical turning point. In order to investigate how social media and contemporary technology affect participants' communication, learning, and lifestyle patterns, this study employs a quantitative research design and surveys 300 participants. The results show a high level of digital dependency, marked by a strong preference for online communication over in-person interaction and considerable emotional discomfort when internet access is unavailable (Mean = 4.22). There is a "double-edged sword" associated with this immersion, even though digital tools are being incorporated more and more into everyday education and are thought to make learning more engaging (Mean = 3.66). It presents risks like screen addiction, short attention spans, and delays in socioemotional development, but it also offers previously unheard-of educational resources and worldwide connectivity. The study also emphasizes how important millennial parents are in creating these digital footprints and how social media influencers are now the main forces behind lifestyle decisions (mean = 3.70). The study suggests a "balanced digital diet," stressing parental co-engagement and the development of Trait Emotional Intelligence (TEI) to assist kids in navigating idealized online environments, in order to reduce potential negative effects.

Key words: Social Media, Technological, Generation Alpha

Introduction:

Online platforms known as social networking sites allow users to establish a public or semi-public profile within a particular system. In addition to viewing and navigating

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through their list of connections as well as those made by other users within the system, users can create a list of other users with whom they are connected (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are places where people meticulously create their online persons, frequently presenting an idealized version of themselves (S. S. Chen, 2023). Italian preadolescent frequently participate in a variety of online activities, such as using social media, sending and receiving emails, and playing online interactive games, according to a report published by the Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT). Notably, among this generation often referred to as "digital natives" social media has become a primary means of communication and social interaction. They are the first generation to have grown up completely surrounded by the Internet and social media (Turner, 2015). People who were born in the twenty-first century and have grown up surrounded by technology are referred to as Generation Alpha. Their millennial parents, who regularly share family life on social media, have greatly influenced their constant access to digital devices and information, unlike previous generations. They become fully immersed in the "online" dimension as a result of this exposure, where regular experiences coexist peacefully with the constant presence of digital technologies (Floridi, 2014). They can access information at any time and from any location, and they can readily communicate with peers across the globe.

Because they react more easily to visual stimuli, their preference for visual content over text further characterizes them. The core of Generation Alpha's identity is comprised of these distinguishing traits: digital, social, global, mobile, and visual (McCrindle et al., 2021). According to a recent study by Jukic and Skojo (2021), there are two different perspectives of Generation Alpha: positive ones, like their proficiency with media and technology, and negative ones, like their dependence on technology, lack of socialization, propensity for "selfishness" and narcissism, and lack of independence. Nevertheless, a variety of factors, including social interactions, information sharing, leisure, and escape, impact the younger generation's use of social media. In this context, there are notable behavioral differences between males and females. In particular, women use Snapchat more when they are motivated by social interaction, social capital, and information sharing, whereas men typically use it more for leisure viewing and liking and less when they want feedback on their appearance (Jarman et al., 2024).

In the rapidly evolving digital world of the twenty-first century, the emergence of Generation Alpha marks a watershed in human history. Those born after 2010 are known as Generation Alpha, and they are the first generation to have grown up in a world where digital technologies permeate every part of daily life, making them the first cohort to be completely immersed in the digital age from birth. They are growing up in a time when social media, tablets, smartphones, and interactive digital content are more accessible than ever. Their interactions, experiences, and perceptions are all significantly impacted by this. To truly understand the complexity of contemporary childhood and adolescence, it is essential to understand how Generation Alpha interacts with digital media and technology. Generation Alpha is used to using screens, algorithms, and virtual connections from the moment they are born, unlike previous generations whose digital experiences evolved gradually over time. From watching cartoons on tablets to playing multiplayer online games, their digital

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footprint begins at birth and continues to expand as they mature.

There are significant worries about how Generation Alpha's socialization, cognitive development, and academic performance will be impacted by the pervasiveness of digital technology in their lives. While digital media offers previously unheard-of opportunities for learning, education, and connection, it also carries new risks and difficulties, such as screen addiction, online bullying, information overload, and short attention spans. The digital experiences of Generation Alpha are also strongly associated with the attitudes, actions, and practices of their parents. Parents of Generation Alpha, who are also digital natives, navigate a complex web of screen time rules, content restrictions, and digital citizenship while trying to find a balance between the benefits of technology and the need for offline experiences and human connection. The next generation needed to be given a different name after the English alphabet ended with Z for generations like X, Y, and Z. Australian demographer Mark McCrindle and his team resolved the confusion and concerns regarding a new title by designating those born between 2010 and 2025 as Generation Alpha after conducting a survey in 2005 (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2014; Nagy & Kolcsey, 2017). Another name for this generation is "digital babies" (Friedrich, 2021).Since m alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and signifies the start of a new generation cycle, it was chosen (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2014; Reis et al., 2018; Tootell et al., 2014). Because they are "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, the Internet, and video games, some claim that this generation is a Digital Native. According to Bonnet, Digital Natives are different from previous generations because they are more accustomed to contemporary knowledge and information technology (IT) skills (Tootell et al., 2014). Because they have access to and learn from online resources, this generation has the highest level of education. According to Holroyd (2011) and Ramadan et al. (2017), the members are more materialistic. Gen Alpha will soon transition into young adults and adolescents. Since their early years, this generation's frequent attachment to digital technology has affected their identity construction and cognitive processes. This generation will be very different from the previous one due to the rapid advancement of technology, which demands certain abilities and features and results in incredible teaching, learning, working, and consuming outcomes. (Reis et al., 2018; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2014; Tootell, Freeman, & Freeman, 2014; Carvalho, Monteiro, & Martins, 2022).

Objectives:

To examine how social media platforms influence communication patterns and interaction styles among Generation Alpha.

To explore the role of modern technology in shaping learning methods and daily activities of Generation Alpha.

To compare the contribution of social media and overall technology in defining the lifestyle and behavior trends of Generation Alpha.

Statement of Problem:

Technology provides various educational opportunities and easy access to information, excessive use of social media and digital devices raises serious concerns regarding children's cognitive development, attention span, mental health, and social

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skills. Many children are increasingly dependent on digital platforms for entertainment and communication, potentially reducing face-to-face interactions and physical activities. Moreover, there is limited awareness among parents and educators about how to effectively manage and regulate children's use of technology. The lack of proper guidelines and monitoring may lead to issues such as screen addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and decreased academic performance.

Literature Review:

Social media use, appearance, and emotional intelligence, as well as by determining possible links between emotional intelligence and attitudes regarding appearance. Alpha generation and social media: Within a particular system, social networking sites allow users to create a public or semi-public profile file. In addition to viewing and navigating through their list of connections as well as those made by other users within the system, users can create a list of other users with whom they are connected (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are places where people meticulously create their online persons, frequently presenting an idealized version of themselves (S. S. Chen, 2023).

Ships sensibly and sympathetically (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This includes the capacity to recognize and distinguish between one's own emotions and those of others, as well as to use this emotional knowledge to direct one's thoughts and actions. Building on this fundamental idea, the theory's subsequent development introduced the idea of trait emotional intelligence (TEI). According to Sider and colleagues, TEI is a collection of emotional self-perceptions and dispositions that influence an individual's ability to identify, process, and control emotions (Petrides et al., 2004). This method offers a sophisticated understanding of how people use emotional cues in their interactions with others and within themselves. Trait optimism, trait happiness, self-emotion management, engagement, assertiveness, social awareness, empathy, emotion perception and expression, relationships, relationships, emotion regulation, impulsiveness (low), stress management, self, and adaptability are among the fifteen different components of TEI, according to Furnham (sider & Furnham, 2001).

Technology and Digital Media:

For Generation Alpha, or those born after 2010, digital media and technology have become commonplace. According to research, members of Generation Alpha are exposed to digital media from an early age. (Rideout, 2019; Radesky, 2015). According to studies, children between the ages of 8 and 12 spend an average of 4 to 6 hours a day using screens for entertainment, which helps to shape their media consumption habits (www.ijcrt.org). © 2024 IJCRT | ISSN: 2320-2882 IJCRT2406392 | Volume 12, Issue 6, June 2024 IJCRT (International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts) www.ijcrt.org d622 Digital media provides chances for interactive learning and skill development, but its possible effects on Generation Z's cognitive development have drawn criticism (Media, 2016; Nathanson, 2014). Reduced attention spans, worse academic performance, and delays in language and socioemotional development have all been linked to excessive screen time (Strasburger, 2017). Furthermore, children's capacity for imaginative play and experiential learning—both of which are essential for cognitive development—may

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be hampered by passive digital content consumption, such as watching videos or playing games (Pediatrics, 2016). Developing strategies to encourage Generation Alpha to engage with digital media in a healthy and productive way is becoming more and more important in order to address these issues (Nathanson, 2014). In order to shape children's digital experiences and reduce potential risks, parental involvement and guidance are essential (Lenhart, 2015).It has been demonstrated that co-viewing and co-engaging with digital media, in which parents and children engage together, improves learning outcomes and fosters significant parent-child interactions (Kirkorian, 2016).

Parental participation:

Compared to earlier generations, Gen Alpha is becoming more accustomed to technology and computer-based devices in today's increasingly technologically advanced world (Wood, 2016). According to several studies (Ariz et al., 2020; Couse & Chen, 2010; Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Mayer, 2020), these resources are being acknowledged as crucial learning aids for the alpha generation. In order to help this generation, a number of mobile applications have been created (Cerezoa et al., 2019; LopezFaican & Jae, 2020). According to Carson et al. (2013), children between the ages of two and four spent an average of 8.40 minutes a day on screens. In a similar vein,kb ila et al. (2015) found that 60% of parents give their kids mobile phones while operating businesses. Furthermore, 73% of parents permit their kids to use cell phones while performing household tasks. Additionally, according to 65% of parents, their kids could use mobile media on their own (Holloway et al., 2013). Children between the ages of three and four interact with computers at an early age, which is a global phenomenon (Holloway et al., 2013; Wood, 2016).

Methodology:

The study utilizes a quantitative research design to examine the digital behaviors of Generation Alpha. Data was collected from a sample of up to 300 participants using structured survey instruments. Those born between 2010 and 2025 are referred to as "Generation Alpha," and they are the subject of this study. The methodology focused on three primary areas:

Digital Engagement Patterns: Measuring time spent on devices, platform preferences, and emotional responses to internet access. Educational Integration: Assessing how digital tools, apps, and online resources are used for academic purposes. Research Design: To assess how digital platforms affect communication and to compare the impact of social media versus general technology on lifestyle, a mixed-methods approach is employed. Statistical analysis includes the calculation of Mean and Standard Deviation for various behavioral statements to determine the prevalence of specific digital habits.

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Results:

Table 1: Digital Habits, Online Behavior Patterns, and Social Media Usage of Generation Alpha

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I spend a significant amount of time daily using digital devices such as smartphones.	160	3.73	1.044
2. I prefer watching videos online rather than traditional TV.	160	3.56	1.026
3. I actively use social media platforms to communicate with friends and family.	160	3.61	1.116
4. I often switch between multiple apps while using digital media.	213	3.95	1.041
5. I use the internet mainly for entertainment purposes such as gaming.	240	3.83	1.023
6. I engage with online content by liking regularly.	300	3.78	1.094
7. I feel comfortable using new apps .	300	3.87	.969
8. I prefer online communication .	300	3.96	.935
9. I follow trends, influencers on social media platforms.	300	3.90	1.101
10. .I feel bored or uncomfortable when I am not able to access the internet.	300	4.22	.696
Overall mean		**38.41**	

The highest mean score was recorded for feeling bored or uncomfortable without internet access (Mean = 4.22). This indicates a high level of digital dependency among respondents. Additionally, there is a strong preference for online communication (Mean = 3.96) and frequent multitasking between apps (Mean = 3.95).

Table 2: Integration of Modern Technology in Learning and Entertainment Activities of Generation Alpha

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
11. I use digital devices such as tablet for my learning activities.	300	3.73	.734
12. I rely on educational apps to help me understand my lessons.	300	3.52	.976
13. I use the internet to search for information related to my studies.	300	3.65	.651
14. I prefer digital learning (videos, apps, online classes) over traditional learning methods.	300	3.43	.800

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15. I watch educational videos along with entertainment content online	300	3.45	.830
16. I use technology for both studying on a daily basis.	300	3.52	.824
17. I play online games that also help me learn new skills.	300	3.42	.939
18. I use digital tools to complete my assignments.	300	3.61	.698
19. I switch between studying activities on the same device.	300	3.54	.671
20. I feel that technology makes learning more interesting.	300	3.66	.677
Overall mean		**35.53**	

Respondents show a clear trend toward digital learning, with a high mean for the belief that technology makes learning more interesting (Mean = 3.66). The use of the internet for research (Mean = 3.65) and digital tools for assignments (Mean = 3.61) suggests that traditional educational methods are being supplemented or replaced by digital resources.

Table 3: Role of Social Media and Technology in Shaping Communication and Life Style Generation Alpha

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
21. I use social media platforms to communicate with my friends.	300	3.50	.672
22. I prefer chatting instead of face-to-face communication.	300	3.67	.719
23. Social media influences the way I talk, behave.	300	3.55	.718
24. I follow trends on social media that affect my daily lifestyle choices.	300	3.59	.629
25. I use technology to stay connected with others throughout the day.	300	3.55	.629
26. My communication style is shaped by the apps .	300	3.50	.913
27. I share my daily activities on social media.	300	3.34	.784
28. I feel influenced by influencers in my lifestyle decisions.	300	3.70	.825
29. I use digital platforms to make new friends .	300	3.62	.746
30. Technology and social media play an important role in shaping my daily routine.	300	3.72	.743

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28. I feel influenced by influencers in my lifestyle decisions.	300	3.70	.825
29. I use digital platforms to make new friends .	300	3.62	.746
30. Technology and social media play an important role in shaping my daily routine.	300	3.72	.743
Overall mean		35.74	

Technology and social media play a significant role in shaping daily routines (Mean = 3.72). The data also highlights the influence of social media influencers on lifestyle decisions (Mean = 3.70) and a preference for chatting over face-to-face interaction (Mean = 3.67). According to the data as a whole, Generation Alpha is distinguished by: High Digital Dependency: A strong emotional bond with access to the internet. Digital tools and videos are preferred over traditional textbooks in visual and interactive learning. Social Transformation: A change in communication methods where social behavior and lifestyle decisions are largely determined by digital platforms and influencers

Conclusion:

As the first generation to be fully immersed in digital technology from birth, Generation Alpha marks a "watershed" in human history. Digital, social, global, mobile, and visual characteristics define their identity. The results imply that although technology offers "unheard-of opportunities" for education and international connectivity, it also poses serious difficulties. These include the possibility of diminished attention spans, a reliance on technology, and a possible lack of socialization in real-world settings. In the end, their digital footprint starts at birth, and their millennial parents play a major role in providing them with continuous access to information. Advice should take into consideration behavioral variations, such as the propensity of women to look for social capital on sites like Snapchat, while men

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might concentrate more on recreational viewing. To help kids deal with the "idealized" and frequently narcissistic nature of social media platforms, schools and parents should place a high priority on the development of "Trait Emotional Intelligence" (TEI). In order to promote healthy cognitive development, it is imperative that digital consumption be balanced with physical activity and imaginative play.

Recommendations:

Balanced Digital Diet: To reduce risks like screen addiction; promote a balance between the advantages of technology and the need for offline experiences and human connection.

Parental Guidance: To enhance learning outcomes and promote better parent-child interactions, parents should co-view and co-engage with digital media.

Educational Regulation: To prevent exposure to inappropriate content and guarantee that digital tools improve rather than impair academic performance, educators and parents must set clear guidelines and keep an eye on things.

Support for Cognitive Development: Techniques should be created to promote experiential learning and imaginative play, which are crucial for cognitive development but may be impeded by passive digital consumption.

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