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## **Alpha Generation and Digital Literacy for the Future of the Nation**

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### **Abstract**

*Digital skills are a basic need that must be owned by everyone in today's digital world. Digital skills are the ability to operate digital devices and to be able to use them intelligently and wisely. To grow digital skills, a digital literacy movement is needed. The alpha generation is the generation born between 2010 and 2025. Because we live in the digital era, the Alpha generation needs digital skills. This of course can be obtained from the digital literacy movement. This research was conducted to examine more deeply the role of digital literacy in growing digital skills for the Alpha generation as the nation's next generation. The research method used is Library Research, namely by collecting literature related to the theme to be studied.*

**Keywords:** *Alpha Generation; Digital Literacy.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Advances in communication and information technology certainly support the expanding reach of the internet. Events of media convergence also make it easier for users to access various information through various online media.(Tapsell, 2015) However, this convenience provides many negative impacts for the community due to some information that is not filtered properly. Therefore, digital skills are a basic need that must be possessed by everyone in today's digital world. It is undeniable that nowadays almost all components of people's lives have switched functions from the manual era to the digital era. In today's digital era, the development and advancement of information communication technology, makes the development of the Internet increasingly accelerated. (Kusuma, D. F., & Sugandi, 2018)Digital technology brings various impacts on people's lives, like two sides of a coin. Digital technology makes it easier for humans to carry out various daily activities. for example, the use of E-Money application can be used to pay for various household needs from anywhere and anytime. However, on the other hand, the development of digital technology also leaves a prolonged polemic that has not been able to be resolved.

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in various formats and from various sources of information presented through computers and internet networks.

Meanwhile, Vanwynsberghe defines digital literacy as a technical and cognitive concept needed by social media users effectively and efficiently to interact socially and communicate through websites..(Daneels, R., & Vanwynsberghe, 2017)

Generation Alpha are children born between 2010 and 2025. Graeme Codrington & Sue Grant-Marshall In Generation Theory classify generations based on the year of birth. Namely, the Millennial Generation or also known as Y Generation , was born between 1980-1995. (Marshall, 1997)Generasi Z atau Gen Z lahir antara tahun 1995- 2010. Generasi Alpha lahir antara tahun 2010- 2025. (Ginanjar, 2021) The term Generation Alpha first appeared in 2005. (Markmccrindle, 2018) This name was determined from the results of a survey conducted by Mark McCrindle, a social and demographic analyst. Alpha generation children born from 2010 to 2025 will come. Currently, their oldest age is 11 years old. According to the Australian social research institute McCrindle, the birth rate of the Alpha generation has reached a rate of 2.5 million births per week. (Markmccrindle, 2018)

In general, Generation Alpha characters are considered to have a more open and more advanced mindset compared to the previous generation. Children from Generation Alpha are the first generation to be born and live side by side with technological sophistication. For this reason, they are often also called the "digital generation". For this generation, technology is very closely related to their lives. Generation Alpha is so easy to connect with technology and then use it as a medium to obtain information or communicate instantly. (Indonesia, 2019)

Being born and growing up in the digital age, of course, is a challenge for Generation Alpha children. They are required to be able to operate all digital devices, especially in the field of communication and information technology. Seeing the flow of information that is increasingly uncontrollable, becomes a big homework for parents and educators for Generation Alpha. Parents, as children's first madrasa, are of course also required to be technologically literate and try to teach children to be wise in their use. Teachers as second parents for children at school are required to be proficient in using learning technology which is currently being used for distance learning. In the next twenty years, the children of the Alpha generation will become humans of productive age who will certainly continue the relay of life for the current generation. Therefore, digital literacy is needed to provide supplies to the Alpha generation so they don't get lost in today's digital world. as early as possible they must be equipped with digital skills to be able to keep up with increasingly advanced technological developments. Departing from the problems above, the author is interested in researching with the title Generation Alpha and Digital Literacy for the future of the nation.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research was conducted by using the literature study method. This method is done by collecting literature related to the research theme, then analyzing it according to the needs of the research theme. According to Nazir, a literature study is an important step taken after the researcher has determined the topic or research theme. (M. nazir, 2003) After that, it was continued by conducting a theoretical study related to the research topic. In the process of determining the theory, the researcher collects some library information related to the research theme. The library sources can be obtained through journals, magazines, books, research results, the internet, social media, etc. If the relevant literature theory has been found, the next step is to arrange it regularly to facilitate the research process. The general process that can be carried out in a literature study is the identification of theories in a structured manner, the identification of theories systematically, the discovery of literature, and analyzing documents containing information related to the research topic.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to Novi Kurnia and Santi Indra Astuti, the concept of media literacy began to emerge along with the development of the media which began to dominate in human life, where the media transferred information and data used by humans in carrying out their daily activities.(Astuti, 2017) According to Paul Gilster in Rullie Nasrullah, et al. Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use information in various forms from a very wide variety of sources and can be accessed through computer devices.(Nasrullah, 2017)

UNESCO defines digital literacy as a life skill. Where this skill does not only involve the ability to use communication and information technology devices, but also involves skills in socializing, learning skills, attitudes, critical and creative thinking, and being able to inspire in the field of digital competence. digital literacy is closely related to ICT skills, civic skills, learning to learn skills, participation of adults in lifelong learning.(UNESCO, 2011)

### **Profile of Alpha Generation in Indonesia**

The profile of Generation Alpha in Indonesia can be viewed from two points of view, namely a positive point of view and a negative point of view. First, from a positive point of view.

1. This generation is a generation that is very familiar with technology and the digital world and is considered the smartest generation compared to previous generations.
2. Generation Alpha's expertise is more specialized, this is due to their freedom to choose digital content that suits their talents and desires. For example, a child who is happy with the world of music, then he can be directed to look for more references related to music. Whether it's in the form of reading or video content.
3. Faster exposure to information. It is undeniable that the flow of information in the digital era is so fast in a matter of seconds. So it is not surprising that children from Generation Alpha can easily access information about everything from various parts of the world so quickly.
4. Have the opportunity to grow to be critical and informative. because of the variety of information, they get from digital devices, making them more critical and of course having a lot of information.
5. They will influence the environment. If guided properly, then Generation Alpha children can play their roles and have a great influence on the surrounding environment.
6. Much more flexible. The sophistication of digital technology that provides convenience in all activities of human life makes the Alpha generation more flexible in carrying out their daily roles. They are no longer limited by space and time in doing useful things.

In addition to the positive side above, Mc.Crindler predicts some negative things that can happen among the Alpha generation as follows: (Markmccrindle, 2018)

1. Alpha generation cannot be separated from gadgets,
2. less sociable,
3. lack of creativity
4. be individualistic.
5. The alpha generation wants instant things and does not appreciate the process.
6. Their preoccupation with gadgets makes them socially alienated

One of the characteristics of the Alpha generation is the high intensity in using technology and accessing the internet. Technological devices and internet connections are integral parts that have become the main needs of the current generation. From some of the negative impacts that may occur above, it is necessary to have a digital literacy movement for all circles, especially for the Alpha generation. According to Devri Suherdi, digital literacy is the knowledge and skills of users in utilizing digital media, such as communication tools, internet networks, and so on. User skills in digital literacy include the

ability to find, work on, evaluate, use, create and utilize them wisely, intelligently, carefully, and precisely according to their use.(Suhherdi, 2021)

Of course, it is not uncommon nowadays when the news media is filled with news about electronic crimes involving children and teenagers from the Alpha generation. According to data from the Indonesian National Police, from April 2020 to July 2021, at least 937 cases were reported. Of the 937 cases, there were three cases with the highest number, namely provocative cases, hate content, and hate speech which were reported the most, around 473 cases. Then followed by online fraud with 259 cases and pornographic content with 82 cases.(POLRI, 2021)

Based on the negative impact of the lives of the Alpha generation in the digital era, according to Mc.Crindle, the role of digital literacy in growing digital skills, especially for the Alpha generation, is considered important to do. This is certainly useful to avoid the possibility of digital crime or Cyber Crime among the Alpha generation.

### **Digital Literacy Competence**

According to Yudha Pradana, there are four basic principles of digital literacy, namely: (Pradana, 2018)

1. Understanding

This means that the public is considered capable of providing an understanding of the information received through the media, either implicitly or explicitly. The rapid circulation of information currently provides its homework, especially for parents of the Alpha generation.

2. Interdependence

This means that each media has a dependency between one and the other. All media must go hand in hand and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Interdependence is also defined as how one form of media relates to another potentially, metaphorically, ideally, and literally. With a large number of media today, it should further increase the quality of information shared with the public. The media can work together to correct each other's shortcomings in positive news to increase the quality of news that reaches the public.

3. Social factors

This means that the media provide and receive information and messages to the public. The sustainability of the media is largely determined by the giver and recipient of the information in society. It is undeniable that between society and the media today, a symbiotic relationship of mutualism or interdependence is created. The media can produce news because of events that occur in a society. On the other hand, society

accepts and needs information provided by the media. Therefore, the media should provide accurate, educational, actual, and quality information to the public as a source of information from the media.

#### 4. Curation

This means that the media provides a flexible space for the public to be able to access, provide understanding, and store information to be read on other occasions. Curation can also be interpreted as an ability to work together to find, collect, and organize information that is considered useful. Talking about information storage, media presents a save to read later method as a medium for storing content. save to read later is a type of literacy that connects the ability to understand the value of information, then save it for easy access in the future and provide long-term benefits.

Furthermore, according to Gilster, there are four media literacy competencies, namely: (Gilster, 1997)

1. *internet searching*. Internet search refers to the individual's ability to use the internet and be able to search for information using the search feature and be accompanied by the ability to think critically. The alpha generation with elementary school-age has been able to use internet search sites. Of course, they can use this skill in using the internet for their daily life. for example, a search site can help them in finding references for school assignments.
2. *hypertext navigation*. This is the skill and ability to read and understand hypertext dynamically because the text on the internet is certainly different from the text in the book. This hypertext navigation competence includes several components including knowledge of hypertext and hyperlinks and how they work. hypertext navigation can be used by Alpha generations to direct them to other additional references on the search site.
3. *content evaluation*, which includes the ability to think critically which is needed to identify the validity and completeness of information, provide an assessment of various information obtained through online media, the ability to analyze background information obtained from the internet, and know the source and author of the information, the ability to evaluate website addresses using understand the various kinds of domains used. In terms of content evaluation capabilities, Gilster explained the importance of a critical attitude in discussing digital literacy. The character of the internet that allows everyone to produce information has an impact on the overflow of information that is not necessarily proven true. This is certainly something that parents need to pay attention to so that they always accompany their

children when accessing the information on the internet. Considering the current oldest age of the Alpha generation, which is 11 years old, they are not yet mature physically, physically, and psychologically.

4. *Knowledge assembly*, This ability refers to the ability to compile knowledge from several collections of information obtained from many digital sources, both in the form of facts and opinions, filter, process, and then build information into knowledge that is useful for various aspects of life. This competency is also needed to re-examine the information obtained to prove its veracity so that it can be used in life. The final stage of the digital literacy process will certainly determine the quality of the information received by the Alpha generation. the information is of course not only stored but will be distributed to others. Therefore, the accuracy of the information is needed.

Meanwhile, the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) which focuses on the competence of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, provides a larger framework by offering four competency areas consisting of Digital Skills, Digital Culture, Digital Ethics, and Digital Safety. (Monggilo, 2021)

1. *Digital Skills* or digital ability is an individual's ability to know, understand, and use digital hardware and software and their operation. Digital Skills can be acquired self-taught or professionally. The habit of using digital devices in daily life will indirectly improve digital skills for users, especially children of the Alpha generation.
2. *Digital Culture* or digital culture is the individual's ability to read, provide descriptions, familiarize, examine, and build national insight, Pancasila values, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in everyday life. as we all know about the definition of culture is habits that are created through patterns of everyday behavior. People's habits in using digital devices are termed digital culture. Getting used to reading and understanding first the information that comes in through digital devices, is one of the good digital cultures and deserves to be preserved and passed on to the children of the Alpha generation.
3. *Digital Ethics* is the individual's ability to realize, model, adapt, rationalize, consider, and develop digital ethical governance (netiquette) in everyday life. Today's social media platforms have replaced social roles in people's real lives. If in real life we are always taught to prioritize ethics in every action, then in cyberspace every individual should understand and apply digital ethics. Each individual is

required to be able to adapt, paying attention to every word that will be written into a series of information, before being disseminated to others. if every digital media user upholds digital ethics, then the possibility of parties who feel aggrieved is minimal.

4. *Digital Safety* is an individual's ability to recognize, create patterns, apply, analyze, and raise awareness for digital security in everyday life. Digital security is indispensable in today's digital era. Where all aspects of life use digital devices, the application of digital safety also needs to be continuously improved. Digital safety can start from the individual as the user of the digital device itself. For example, it is not easy to share digital security passwords for digital accounts with others. digital platform service providers must also be able to protect consumer users so that their data is not misused by irresponsible parties.

When the Alpha generation has been able to have the four digital literacy competencies above, of course, it will shape their digital skills. Where they will be able to use and utilize digital media wisely in their daily lives.

Of the various phenomena regarding digital literacy in order to grow digital skills for the Alpha generation, of course experiencing many challenges. From the research conducted by Yudha Pradana, some of the challenges that often arise are the dissemination of information that is not filtered so that people must be wiser in sorting and choosing the available information. Another challenge that then arises is the lack of public perspective, especially parents, about the media education movement. Lessons on media in schools are only interpreted as developing students' technical abilities in using technology/media as a learning tool, not yet touching on the understanding of media literacy that is currently familiar among students.(Pradana, 2018)

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Digital literacy is the ability to understand the characteristics of online media and be able to use digital media to carry out daily activities, especially in finding information. As a generation born in the digital era, the Alpha generation is certainly required to be able to use digital devices. However, this ability must also be supported by active parental guidance. The amount of information that is not necessarily true and the source is unclear, becomes a formidable challenge for parents in guiding alpha generation children in this digital era. Not an easy thing, but not impossible to do. Generation Alpha is the next generation that will carry the baton for the next 20 years, their success in using digital devices wisely is largely determined by the role of parents and society today.

### **Suggestion**

For further research, the research focus can be developed, for example by comparing digital skills of different generations, or by education level and economic status. Another interesting thing related to the topic of digital literacy is connecting it to an issue or phenomenon that is currently happening.

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