

The Role of Parents in Shaping the Character of the Alpha Generation of Elementary School Age in the Digital Era

Fitri Indriani

Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

Email: fitri.indriani@pgsd.uad.ac.id

Correspondence: fitri.indriani@pgsd.uad.ac.id*

KEYWORDS

The Role of Parents; Alpha Generation Characters; Primary Age; Digital Era

ABSTRACT

This research theoretically analyzes parents' role in shaping Generation Alpha's character at primary school age in the digital era. This research method uses qualitative methods of literature study. Research data sources are obtained from literature relevant to the research theme, such as books, scientific articles, or journals accessed from Google Scholar. Data analysis techniques use content analysis techniques. Furthermore, the results of the content analysis are concluded in accordance with the research objectives. The results showed that the role of parents in shaping the character of the alpha generation with the following details: (1) teach children to access various information through the internet correctly and be able to communicate civilly; (2) control or supervise the impressions accessed by the child; (3) limit the duration of time children play mobile phones; (4) invite children to play in open spaces to develop socially; (5) invite children to exercise or play that can develop children's physical motor. In addition to the five roles performed above, parents also need to fortify children with strong aqidah and ahklak and bring children closer to the Quran so that children's character is quickly developed and formed.

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1. Introduction

Experts often call the digital era the multiscreen era, which offers various conveniences in accessing information, causing people to experience culture shock and find it difficult to extract meaning from every scattered information (Budiantoro, 2017). The impact of this digital era has led to a change in mindset toward individual, social, and community views (Apaydin & Kaya, 2020). The digital era is characterized by dynamics that are fast-paced and changing (vitality), full of uncertainty, complicated (complexity), and confusing (Prasanti, 2016). Generation Alpha is very familiar with digital technology called digital native. According to Bennett (Manuel & Sutanto, 2021), Digital natives have advanced knowledge and skills in technology that set them apart from previous generations, so

the difference is felt in education, experience, and expectations. Alpha generation is the most innovative and multitasking generation, which can apply all activities simultaneously (Assingkily et al., 2020).

Generation Alpha is the generation born after 2010, 2011-2025 (Danil, 2020; dos Reis, 2018; Purnama, 2018) from millennial parents. The millennial generation, known as the millennial generation, is often referred to as Generation Y, also familiarly referred to as the me generation or eco boomers. According to some experts, it is said, that generation Y was born in 1980-1890 or early 2000, and so on (Widodo & Rofiqoh, 2020). Based on data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association in 2018 shows that 91% of Indonesian millennials have dominated the Internet and spend much time accessing the Internet around 4-6 hours a day via desktop and mobile phones (Widodo & Rofiqoh, 2020).

Along with the rapid development of increasingly sophisticated technology, the Alpha generation depends on technology. Dependence on this technology impacts Generation Alpha, both positively and negatively. The positive impact is that the Alpha generation quickly understands lessons through computers or in class, has much information from the outside world, and is more critical and informative. As for the negative impacts such as lack of socialization, lack of creativity, being individualist, happy instant and less appreciative of the process, bossy, dominant, and like to manage; dislike sharing, unwilling to follow the rules; technology becomes part of their lives, and will not know the world without social networks; and passive in the real world but active in cyberspace (Purnama, 2018; Ramadlani & Wibisono, 2017). Some phenomena occur due to the negative influence of other technologies as the KPAI report on Kompas.com said that most children have been exposed to pornography through online games; 22% of Indonesian children watch porn; The phenomenon of market by injuring their own hands among elementary school-age children due to being affected by TikTok content. Similarly (Kurnia & Edwar, 2021) conveyed that the negative impacts in the technological era include individuals becoming too lazy to socialize physically, increased fraud as cybercrime Cyber Bullying, rapidly growing harmful content, slander as well as widespread defamation keep the close away neglect of duties as well as work; wasting time on useless things; decreased learning achievement and also one's ability to work.

Facing the negative impacts of the digital era on Generation Alpha, the role of parents is very important. Parents, as the first and foremost educators in the family, are responsible for educating children by providing correct and appropriate care so that Generation Alpha can successfully live their lives in the future. The purpose of this study is to theoretically analyze how the role of parents in shaping the character of Generation Alpha of elementary school age in this digital era so that it is used as information material and one of the reference sources for parents in shaping the character of children in this digital era.

2. Materials and Methods

This research uses qualitative methods of literature review. It is said to be a literature review because literature data is fixed and ready to use in collecting data by studying, reading, recording, and processing research materials that are directly related to texts or manuscripts. According to (Zed, 2008), Library data is not original primary data but is categorized as secondary data. This is because

the data researchers obtain is not directly from the field (primary) but from second hand. In addition, the condition of this library data is not limited by space and time (Zed, 2008).

The data collection technique carried out in this study is a documentation study from various literature, such as books and journals related to the theme of the study. Data analysis techniques use content analysis techniques from several theories in books and scientific journals regarding the role of parents in shaping the character of the Alpha generation of elementary school age in the digital era. As Weber (Dewi et al., 2020) explains, content analysis is a study that uses a set of procedures to obtain valid conclusions from a book or document. Furthermore, the results of the content analysis were concluded in accordance with the research objectives.

3. Result and Discussion

Duties and roles of parents

Children are trusts and treasures entrusted by God to parents to be cared for and guarded so they can grow into human beings and develop entirely in life. Parents in the family are schools and teachers first and foremost in laying the foundation of character for children. As the primary foundation, the roles and duties of parents are very important. The success and failure of the formation of children's character depends on the roles and duties of parents. Psychologists and education experts believe that the family, in this case, parents are the main factor that influences the formation of children's character from birth to adulthood (Kurnia & Edwar, 2021). This shows how much influence the role of parents is. This is in line with a hadith which means "no human child is born except in a state of fitrah. It is his parents who will make the child a Jew, a Christian or a Magi" (HN. Bukhori Muslim). This hadith can be understood that parents are a significant factor in forming a child's character.

The basic foundation of parents' role in shaping children's character is found in the words of God, "O believers! Preserve yourselves and your families from the fires of hell whose fuel is man and stone (Q.S.at-Tahrim verse 6). This verse commands the believer (parent) to take care of himself and his family, consisting of children, wives, and anyone in the family, to obey Allah and avoid all acts of disobedience to save the world and the Hereafter(A'yuni et al., 2023).

Nasution, (2019) explained the main functions of the family, including: (1). Maintaining the nature of the child. The child is born in a state of nature that has potential and has been installed by God before birth. This potential is like a sprout that is ready to grow and develop, the task of parents is to care for and maintain the potential to grow and develop in accordance with their nature (Indriani, 2021); (2) straighten their nature and awaken and develop their positive potential by not making children victims of parental obsession in the sense that parents do not force children to follow the wishes of parents. The task of parents is to accompany, motivate, and facilitate so that the potential of children develops Fitrah; (3). Create a safe and quiet environment and nurture them in an affectionate, gentle, and loving environment. Maslow (Abdurrahman, 2020; Sada, 2017; Trivedi & Mehta, 2019) explains that every child needs the fulfillment of basic human needs, namely psychological needs, including the needs of security, love, and compassion, appreciation, a sense of freedom, and self-actualization; (4). Provide information about the education and culture of the community around the house, such as language, customs, and social norms, so that they can prepare themselves for community life later.

Character Education

The formation of character has been the primary mission of the Prophet when sent by Allah Almighty. As in the hadith, it is said, "Verily I was sent to perfect good morals" (HN. Bukhari). This shows that character building in children was the main thing before science because the character is the gate to success. A Muslim figure who has long been involved in character is Imam al-Ghazali through his famous book, "Ihya 'Ulumiddin, " poured into several volumes. The Western figure who is in the field of character is Thomas Lickona through the books he wrote. Books critical to his ideas about character include; 'The Return of Character Education' and the second book titled 'Educating for Character: How Our School Can Teach Respect and Responsibility'.

Imam Al-Ghazali defines character as closer to *ahklak*, namely human spontaneity in acting or doing actions that have been integrated into humans so that when they appear, there is no need to think about it anymore (Tohidi, 2017; Wardanik et al., 2021). Lickona defines character as a profound disposition that can be relied upon to respond to situations in a morally good way (Hikmasari et al., 2021). Munir defines character as a pattern, be it thoughts, attitudes, or actions inherent in a person, very strongly and difficult to eliminate (Majid, 2011). Almost is also expressed by Berkowitz, who interprets character as a characteristic inherent in a person (Zubaedi, 2015). Heterion et al. (2020) define character as a distinctive value imprinted in oneself and manifested in behavior.

Based on the meaning of character, according to the experts above, it can be understood that character is a typical attitude of a person who is firmly embedded and deeply imprinted in oneself and manifested in behavior, where the behavior that arises is spontaneous without thinking about it first. The formation of character is a relatively long process, but it can be started in the womb, even far from it, since looking for a life partner by looking at the elements of seeds, weights, and weights of prospective parents. If the selection of prospective parents is done well, then these parents will give birth to good children as well. The primary advice in Islam for the selection of prospective parents is religion. A good religion will give birth to a good character narrative; at most, minor children born are easily directed and quickly formed in character. This is in line with an opinion (Saman & Hidayati, 2023) that in Islamic parenting, choosing a partner is the first step in the parenting process. Parents should be able to educate their children, especially in terms of the use of electronic media. Parents play an essential role in the education of their children.

Al-Gazali, as quoted by Hanani (2016), conveys that character values that need to be developed in the process of children's education include purification of the soul and worship, awake, Nicklas, solidarity, love of helpful knowledge, honesty, simplicity, patience, gratitude, gentleness. The character formation of Imam Al-Ghazali, as quoted by Sullyadi (2017), can be done through several methods, including exemplary methods, habituation, advice, reward, and punishment.

Primary School Age Children

The Alpha generation, born after 2010, is composed of elementary school-age children. This generation has unique characteristics in terms of developmental stage, which can be seen from several aspects: cognitive, social and emotional, moral, physical, motor, and language.

According to Piaget, in terms of cognitive development, elementary school children are at a concrete operational stage. Psychosocially, according to Erikson, elementary school children are at the industry versus inferiority stage. According to Piaget, children aged 7 to 10 are transitional

between heteronomous and orthonomous morality. Physically, elementary school children use basic motor skills to balance the body, run, jump, and throw. Metacognitive development encourages children to realize their cognitive abilities to determine appropriate methods for learning and solving problems (Trianingsih, 2016).

Regarding language, experts explain that elementary school-age children have mastered about 50,000 to 80,000 words. These words are obtained by children from their environment, both at home, school, and surrounding environments. Language acquisition at elementary school takes place quickly because, at this time, the development of children's brain function has developed rapidly so that children are more able to acquire language. In general, elementary school children have been able to be good listeners, listen to the stories they hear, and express them again in a logical order and arrangement (Dewi et al., 2020).

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Character formation begins from the family environment as the main model in realizing humans as individual, social, intelligent, and religious beings. Parents or surrounding adults should set a good example in child development (Wahyuni & Putra, 2020).

Along with the rapid development of technology today, the role of parents is needed. Certainly, it demands creativity in educating children and adapting both methods and approaches that are in accordance with the demands of the times. (Purnama, 2018) Conveying educating children in digital ERAH, parents need to pay attention to the following things; : (1) follow the development of technology, information, and communication, so that parents have provisions and can guide children to interact with the internet intelligently and healthily; (2) teach children to socialize, so that their social-emotional development can be well developed; (3) participate in training and developing the physical-motor aspects of children; (4) also equip children with religious and moral values; (5) educating children not to be dependent on technology; and (6) play a maximum role as a discussion partner, a place to ask questions and a place to pour out affection for children.

Results of research conducted by the British Internet Matters organization (dos Reis, 2018) The Reseach of 1,500 families found that 48% of 6-year-olds currently use technology, and 41% access the internet without parental supervision. The survey also showed that 44% of these children use the internet inside their bedrooms and 72% online outside the home. This study showed that children were closer to mobile phones than to parents. Third, participate in training and developing the physical-motor aspects of children. The physical motor development of children affects their further development. Children who play on phones for too long will have an impact on health, such as eye health, sleep quality, difficulty concentrating, decreased learning achievement, physical development, social development, brain development, and delayed language development in children (Citta, 2023). Another impact of technology is that children experience dependence and addiction which results in laziness of children in activities, disruption of physical health, and increasingly reduced learning concentration (Jalilah, 2022).

Based on the various negative impacts of technology development on the development of children's character, the role of parents at home includes; (1) the need to teach children to access various information through the internet correctly and be able to communicate civilly (Widhiyanto &

Hasanah, 2023); (2) control or supervise the impressions accessed by the child'; (3) limit the duration of time children play mobile phones; (4) invite children to play in open spaces to develop children's social; (5) invite children to exercise or play that can develop children's physical motor.

From an Islamic perspective, the role of parents in shaping children's character in the digital era for the alpha generation is to fortify children's faith by instilling strong aqidah and charity. Aqidah and morals are the foundation of living life. Having a strong aqidah and morals will make forming and developing children's character easier. The strengthening of aqidah and morals in children has been exemplified by Luqman as stated in the Qur'an Surah Luqman verse 13, which means;

"And (remember) when Luqman said to his son when he taught him a lesson: 'O my son, do not fellowship with Allah.' Indeed, fellowshiping (Allah) is truly a great tyranny." (QS. Luqman:13).

Based on the above verse, it can be understood that one of the reinforcements of aqidah is to teach children not to fellowship with Allah because it is a very big sin. In addition to directing children not to shirk to Allah, it also brings children closer to the Quran. Where the Quran is a guide to human life in living life. As a guideline, children should always follow the instructions in the Quran so as not to get lost and not be easily exposed to the negative influence of technology.

Parents need to realize that the current generation reflects the results of the previous formation, while the future generation is the result of today's formation. Children's good and bad behavior in the future depends on how character development is today. Therefore, parents must educate children to prioritize strong aqidah values, not weaken their faith. As in Surah An-Nisa, verse 9 explains what it means: "And fear God, those who, if they leave behind them, weak children, whom they fear for their (welfare). Therefore, let them speak the right words"

Based on the above verse, it can be understood that parents need to prepare their children as the next generation as well as possible, both from their aqidah and akhlak, to face an era that is much more complex than the previous or current era.

4. Conclusion

Generation Alpha is a millennial generation who is currently in elementary school. They were born between 2010 and above. Generation Alpha is known as the generation most familiar with the internet and digital technology, and the generation claimed to be the smartest compared to previous generations. However, this generation has a decline in characteristics such as being bossy, likes to manage, lack of sharing unwillingness to follow the rules, dependence on technology, lack of social skills, weak motor physique, easy complain, and fragile spirit. On the other hand, digital media offers vast opportunities and provides positive benefits in addition to digital risks. This is where the role of parents is needed. Parents have an important role in shaping the alpha generation of elementary school age in the digital age. The roles performed are; (1) teach children to access various information through the internet correctly and be able to communicate civilly; (2) control or supervise the impressions accessed by the child; (3) limit the duration of time children play mobile phones; (4) invite children to play in open spaces to develop socially; (5) invite children to exercise or play that can develop children's physical motor. In addition to the role limal performed above, parents also need to fortify children with strong aqidah and akhlak and bring children closer to the Quran so that children's characters are easily developed and formed.

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