DIGITALIZATION OF MEDIA CREATE PRECOCIOUS ALPHA GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

Alpha generation is born after 2010. Generation Alpha was born after 2010. They grow and live with advanced digital technology. They are accustomed to operating modern technology in their daily activities. This technology is called a smartphone that provides a variety of conveniences with unlimited information services and benefits. This causes the alpha generation to enjoy the virtual world more and ignore their activities in the real world more. The lack of censorship of content uploaded in cyberspace makes the mindset and behavior of the alpha generation that is still unstable forced to become adults and adults before their age. So that the digitization of this media can trigger premature alpha generation. The theory used in this study is a cultivation theory to explain the cumulative effect of media by looking at the beliefs and attitudes of the audience about the surrounding world in the context of the real world and the world they believe in. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with non-participant observations and in-depth interviews with 5 parents who had children aged 3-10 years. The result of the study is that generation Alpha has a high dependence on smartphones. Social media content that is not worth watching such as adult content, violence, intolerance issues and others need to be anticipated through parental guidance and censorship applications. This is because the young alpha generation has not been able to control themselves and manage themselves. Content without censorship or parental guidance makes the alpha generation grow into a precocious generation. The role of parents is very important to overcome this problem. Children spend more of their free time at home. Full support and concern from government, society, academia and media will complement various efforts to make generation alpha free from digital fantasy addiction.

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Keywords
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1. Introduction

Mc Luhan's global theory has been broken with the invention of information and communication technology called smartphones. Mc Luhan envisions an era where human intelligence and creativity will be automated and translated into information functions performed by machines (Nugroho, 2020). Smartphones that are integrated with the internet and use artificial intelligence technology make the world in the palm of your hand, no longer a global village. Smartphones are equipped with advanced features that facilitate human life. Smartphones are an innovative development of mobile phones. Mobile phones were created as a mobile communication aid for them to mobilize their high activity. With the invention of transportation technology that allows a person to move a place far away, a connecting device is needed to facilitate more efficient communication. Wherever we are, we can still talk to family, talk to work with colleagues in the office and even meet together through virtual meeting applications, and others.

Indonesia is one of the countries with the longest internet usage population in the world. According to a data.ai report titled "State of Mobile 2023," Indonesians will access the internet for 5.7 hours per day in 2023. (Fajar, 2023) Based on a survey by the Central Statistics Agency, the percentage of households that have accessed the internet in 2019 was 73.75%, in 2020 it was 78.18%, in 2021 it was 82.07% and in 2022 it was 86.54%. This data illustrates an increase every year where the internet is currently the main need for Indonesian families. In addition, judging from the percentage of people aged 5 years and over who own a phone, there is also an increase in the number of users, namely in 2020 by 53.73%, in 2021 by 62.10% and in 2022 by 66.48%. For internet use, the following is the percentage of people aged 5 years and over who have accessed the internet in 2020 at 62.84%, in 2021 at 65.87%, and in 2022 at 67.88%. (BPS, 2023)

A smartphone is a tool or media that can connect its owner to anyone and anything on the internet network. Simple how to use it and adequate signal access, making smartphones the prima donna of users of various ages. Judging from the varied demographic factors of smartphone users, it inspires programmers and content creators to answer market demands. Even today, this artificial intelligence provides what the conventional market never thought of and did not provide. This is because Digital transformation is about regulating today's customers as the center of the universe (Charlesworth, 2018). Before digital reform took place, the concept of business was producer-centric. This means that consumers buy what the manufacturer sells. Today, it is the consumer who is at the center. Manufacturers must be observant in search of what is the need of modern society. Selling specialty products according to consumer demand is also one way to answer consumer needs. Digital transformation has an impact on changing people's behavior patterns.

Human civilization is entering an era of all-round, fast-paced and instantaneous (Indriyana et al., 2018), (Hale, 2022). Smartphones are devices that have the ability to use and function like a computer (Eka Syafrina & Nurfajri, 2021). Like the media, smartphones also aim to provide information, educate, entertain and influence the public. As a medium integrated with the communication system has a complex communication function. All aspects of life ranging from family, business, association, social and even education. Smartphones that are integrated with the internet are able to answer the questions we need quickly. By using cloud storage, the internet is a big data system that has a very large shelf life. Whenever it is called through a search engine, it will appear on a smartphone screen in whichever language you want. So, the thought arises, if you need any information, look for it on google. Google is a teacher for modern humans.

Smartphone technology is developing very fast and keep evolving (Simin, 2021). There are always innovations that are different from the previous type. Psychologically, consumers want to have the latest and most advanced technology. Modern society is of the view that the technology we use today shows its social status. Although this is not true, confidence will increase with the equipment he carries. For example, the owner of a 2G mobile phone has two
possibilities, firstly stuttering technology and not being able to adapt to technology, secondly in purchasing power, they are only enough to buy that kind.

Referring to people’s purchasing power and social demands, smartphones are produced in large quantities to meet the needs of technology-hungry consumers. Lifestyle is also often used as motivation and guidance in the process of making purchasing decisions for a product (Harnoto, 2018). By being mass-produced, the price of smartphones becomes more affordable. In the past, mobile phones were expensive items that could not be owned by random people. But nowadays, having a smartphone is a necessity and that is able to sub-establish the previous technology, for example print media is replaced with online media, radio and television are replaced with Youtube, ATM machines replaced with m-Banking, photocopiers replaced with scanner applications on mobile phones and online shops have become a new lifestyle of shopping without moving away from where we are today. Smartphones are the lifestyle of digital society.

The existence of smartphones has changed the lifestyle of humans in meeting their needs. In the family, it feels incomplete if all family members do not have it. Millennial families enter a productive family period to meet the needs of their families. To maintain household stability, smartphones keep communication in the family harmonious (Harison & McTavish, 2018), (Swandina & Maulana, 2022). Dependence on smartphones is getting higher and higher entering the covid 19 pandemic. The limited mobilization of the family is greatly helped by smartphones. Smartphones become friends, family and teachers for the whole family. The information presented in the virtual world, helps smartphone users not lose contact with the outside world.

Many people use smartphones as the most effective and inexpensive communication medium (Putra, 2015). They do it as an effort to maintain prestige (Pertiwi, 2020) and self-existence by actively using social media (Yuniati et al., 2015) such as Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp. For children, especially those who still enjoy the play period, they prefer to be active in online games. This has an impact on increasing family spending in the form of data credit. Data pulses that were previously for emergency needs shifted to basic needs. The worry of missing information from social media, makes credit shopping a priority. Not only pulses, another demand that comes with it is the support of more advanced technology in order to balance the virtual communities they participate in. Need a smartphone with a clearer camera, memory with a larger capacity and a faster processor to make it easy to download and upload.

Strong exposure to social media in alpha generation has a deep impact on children’s psychological and psychomotor. The habit of fast-paced, instant-paced makes they not go through a mature process. The longer they used of smartphones, the higher the dependence on social media so that it raises the impact of whatever is done must be together with smartphones from eating, studying, sleeping and even bathing always with smartphones. We often found the children hold smartphone at the right side and the other hand do something at the same time. Even the impact of nomophobia, which is a feeling of fear and not being able to do anything without a smartphone, is increasingly felt by the alpha generation. Therefore, this study uses the theory of social media cultivation where the alpha generation believes more in the reality in the media than the real reality. Although the beginning of Gerbner’s cultivation theory was due to very strong exposure to mass media (especially television), it is still relevant to the phenomenon of strong exposure to YouTube and other social media (Hale, 2022). Etymologically, cultivation is the processing of agricultural land; agricultural land work; identical to fertilization (Vardiansyah, 2018), (Junaidi, 2018). The planting in question is that messages received repeatedly will form reality as in the media instead of real reality. If excessive use of social media (Nurrokim, 2018) and continuously without parental guidance, the addiction will arise and do as they seen in the media. Generation alpha is at an age that is vulnerable to social media exposure.

Generation alpha is the children of the millennial generation living side by side with technology (Simin, 2021). Since childhood they have been introduced to smartphones. Even smartphones as a substitute for parents who are busy at work. They are used to seeing audio-

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visual displays of high quality with a variety of spectacles. For the alpha generation, the perfect look of a smartphone is much more pleasant than real conditions. The alpha generation has its own world, namely the world of social media from Youtube, tik tok, Instagram, and the world of online fantasy games with various genres. The habit of watching the virtual world from smartphones makes children develop their brain functions with unlimited thinking and imagination. The young age of the alpha generation, has not been able to think right and wrong, realistic, let alone constructive. As a result, the spectacle becomes a dangerous opium for the child. The impact of digital media exposure on the alpha generation makes them prematurely mature. Spectacles that do not correspond to the psychology of child development (e.g. about violence, porn media, cyberbullying), create precocious alpha generation.

2. Method
This article uses qualitative descriptive research methods with observational data collection techniques on alpha generation behavior. This study took samples from lecturers and teaching staff of the University of Muhammadiyah Jember who have 5 children of the same generation Alpha age. This observation for 3 years was also accompanied by in-depth interviews with his parents regarding daily habits related to the use of communication technology they use and the behavior of generation Alpha. It is hoped that this interview can explore the widest possible information related to changes in the lifestyle of the current alpha generation and the impacts that accompany it. Data analysis techniques are carried out in stages, namely data collection through non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, comparing theories and data then discussed descriptively and concluded.

3. Results and Discussion
Generation Alpha
The alpha generation are those born in 2010 until now. The term alpha generation was introduced by Mark McCrindle in a Business Insider magazine (Fadlurrohim et al., 2019). In his view, generation alpha is very familiar with digital technology and is smarter compared to previous generations. This is because the parents of the alpha generation, namely the millennial generation, have sufficient information and are actively seeking information from various media about child health care. Food intake is also nutritious and meets the nutritional needs of the child’s brain making the alpha generation much smarter than the previous generation. In addition, the development of digital technology that is increasingly sophisticated and unstoppable has an impact on contemporary parenting that is more friendly to technology.

The sophistication of technology that touches the alpha generation has changed the perspective and lifestyle of people who were originally conventional to unconventional. Society is required to inevitably have to adapt and evolve with the digitization of all aspects of life. The COVID 19 pandemic has further accelerated the evolutionary process. The world of education is transforming with digital learning by utilizing online learning applications such as teacher rooms and building learning management systems independently. In addition, the economic sector moves quickly by conducting electronic transactions and facilitating business exchanges. Online shopping sites are increasingly prevalent and provide various needs of the community. The banking world has switched to using technology by utilizing m-banking services to facilitate financial transactions. Simultaneously, digitalization touches all aspects of life. For the alpha generation, this is commonplace. This is the era of super smart society 5.0 aims to create humans centered on technology to enjoy a high quality of life, active and comfortable (Dewi, 2021), (Prismanata & Sari, 2022).

The alpha generation is in the golden age where this period of child development occurs very rapidly and will not be repeated in the next period. The aspects of cognitive,
language, moral and religious, physical, motor and social-emotional development that occur at this age will be the basis that influences and determines the development of children in adolescence and adulthood. Given the importance of these golden years, it would be very good if all the stimulation given to children has a positive impact on their development. (Novianti et al., 2019)

Generation alpha is between 0-12 years old. At this age, the child’s sense of curiosity is very high. They want to learn anything so that they can be like their father and mother who their children think are great parents. First, they learn to imitate what they see and what they hear. The alpha generation was born in the era of artificial intelligence technology is increasingly prevalent, having a distinguishing feature from the previous generation, namely learning through IoT (internet or Toys). They are accustomed to watching the spectacle of cartoons and children's games that can distract themselves. The problem is, what are they copying from the internet? If they often access Instagram and Tik Tok, they learn languages that are often used on tik tok for example "Embah kena mental ya? (grand mother got mental illness)". Their language vocabulary is growing rapidly with slang on social media, not formal Indonesian. If we ask again if they know the meaning, they explain according to the child's understanding, "Like I saw in social media, they said mentally hit. In slang, mental illness is defined as a disturbed mental state, meaning that the mental disorder is as a psychological impact of a problem that faced him. A child concludes her grandmother is mentally disturbed due to behaving excessively, uncharacteristically, not even doing anything and remains mentally ill. Which means, the child knows the meaning but does not understand the meaning. It is a simple example that the child matures prematurely, they speak without understanding the meaning and the consequences.

The continuous exposure of social media can shape the social interaction patterns of the alpha generation to be diverse. For example, imitation is the style of language used to imitate the style of YouTubers, celebrities, influencers and others. Other things that can be imitated by children are hair styles, fashion to certain movements that are often done by their idols. In addition, suggestions can form in the alpha generation. The knowledge and experience that is still lacking makes the alpha generation simply believe in the information on social media. For example, they believe that superman can fly. Armed only with a superman shirt, the child confidently jumped from a higher place so as to injure him. Media social makes children learn to be empathetic because there is a sense of the content on social media. They also cried, also felt the bad mood, also felt the anger and anger of the packaged content seemed real. Identification is to imitate the whole and be identical to the person he wants to be. With his fantasies, the alpha generation seeks to emulate the excitement of what is seen and listened to. For example, they engage in warfare, they equip themselves with toy weapons, clothes and attributes like soldiers and even behave like commanders.

The alpha generation thinking enters a transition period from the realm of imagination to the real world. Therefore, they have a high sense of curiosity so they learn by asking a lot, imitating, playing and developing imagination to realize their thoughts. Sometimes hallucinations are stronger than reality. Like the example above, a child plays the role of a soldier who is on the battlefield, in his conscious mind the enemy is in sight and the crime must be eradicated for peace. In their perception, all seemed real even if consciously as if the enemy existed.

**Digitalization of Media and Precocious Generation**

Era 4.0 is an industrial revolution that has entered the fourth generation with marked artificial intelligence intervention in every industrial activity. Although initially for the benefit of the industry, this latest technological achievement has also become a mass product that can be enjoyed by the wider community. The most spectacular diffusion of artificial intelligence innovations that people can reach in various circles is smartphones. A smartphone is a mobile phone that has advanced features that are connected to the internet. Human activity is helped
a lot by the presence of these findings. Everything becomes easier and faster paced. Without realizing it, the lazy movement (mager) became a new culture as a result of the application of the industrial era 4.0 (Susanti, 2020). Fast-paced, easy-paced and instantaneous causes the process of working on things not to be done gradually and real. For example, in graphic design there are applications that are easy to use for designing because there are templates that are easy to edit. Graphic designers do not need to go through the process of creating designs manually such as drawing sketches.

The impact of a strong smartphone accompanied by a high dependence on its users can partially and even radically change the order of society. To carry out activities that are difficult and require a lot of time, everything is facilitated by digitization in every activity of human life. The speed and convenience offered by this digital technology brings changes in people’s behavior from conventional society (doing everything diligently and patiently) to society fast-paced, easy-to-do and instantaneous digital. A serious challenge for alpha generation is vulnerability to psychosocial and developmental problems due to the overarching and decisive influence of technology in every aspect of their lives (Hidayat, 2021).

Smartphones are a medium that makes all things easier. In terms of shape, smartphones have the advantage of being simple and easy to carry at affordable prices. Smartphones are a medium that has a high level of addiction, being directly connected to the internet increasingly pampers its users with unlimited content. Anything is available on the internet. The internet is a new media that is able to provide information, educate, entertain and influence its audience massively. Therefore, smartphones are a powerful medium today. Content that is not worthy of their age, should not glue a look that is packaged in porno cartoon for example. They are introduced to the anatomy of the human body and how it works vulgarly and uncensored. When asked if they understand what they see, they can explain the meaning and impact if they imitate what they see. Imitating without thinking about the consequences. This is one of the impacts of technology on humans, creating precocious generation.

The alpha generation world is a digital media world that is prone to nomophobia. Nomophobia is described as an irrational fear when the individual is away from his smartphone (Fajri & Karyani, 2021). They fret if they don’t bring a smartphone. Already carrying a smartphone, if you don’t have credit, are not connected to the internet and lost signal they become confused. The alpha generation must be connected to the internet. If they are not on the internet, they are confused and confused about what to do. Open, persistent and almost uncensored exposure to digital media becomes a dangerous opium. Let alone children, even adults do not want to be disturbed if they are engrossed or in a comfortable position to get things done. Content in digital media is deliberately made into volumes to increase the level of dependence of the alpha generation on the internet.

Therefore, the alpha generation is the digital native generation that has been accustomed to technology since birth. The technology becomes part of their inseparable lifestyle. Fundamental changes in the alpha generation include the use of difficult vocabulary that is not appropriate for their age. Basically, alpha generations tend to imitate what they read and hear from social media. Content that contains gossip, bullying, hate speech, blasphemous trash talk (in games) they often listen to. The adult content is now starting to penetrate children’s movies and cartoons. Online games created with various genres, levels and features that make players happy are accompanied by online shopping top-ups that often drain money. The condition of the alpha generation is very poor which at the younger age was already introduced to technology and the spectacle of adults.

The Impact of Social Media Exposure on Generation Alpha

Internet users integrated with smartphones consist of various ages, genders, levels of education and occupations. These demographic differences in internet users can lead to differences in responses to both opinions, attitudes and behaviors. The age difference between parents (millenials) and children (alpha generation) about the duration of internet users is addressed in different ways. Millennials tend to be able to exercise restraint and just enough
because there are so many other things that can be done. Meanwhile, the alpha generation has not been able to control desires and has not been able to manage self-management. A simple example, when children are engrossed in playing games, they do not heed the call of parents. Other commandments such as eating, bathing and studying are also answered with silence, or rhetorical words, "just a minute". Parents' patience also has its limits. Parents became angry. On the other hand, the internet as an open access medium can shape the character of its use to be more open. They have become accustomed to giving judgments in a straightforward manner and freely argue, shaping them into independent individuals capable of making their own decisions. The alpha generation is able to argue boldly as a result of learning through the internet and freely expressing their opinions. These intergenerational opinions and perceptions are prone to conflict between parents and children.

Another intergenerational cultural conflict is that the ways of learning of parents and children are very different. Millennials learn by seeking information and references by reading many books conventionally. Although there are computers and counting tools, they still learn manually. There are not as many references in cyberspace as there are today. Even if it already exists, it is not open access as it is now. The alpha generation can access any information from the internet easily. Copy-paste is a contemporary culture even from the generation Z era. The easy learning process causes the learning outcomes they obtain to be less inherent in memory. In the perception of the alpha generation, all information is already stored in big data. If we need certain information, just type in the search engine with the required keywords. These differences in learning transformations can also cause conflicts.

Online games are one of the favorite activities of the alpha generation. Indirectly, the alpha generation cultivates a competitive spirit through online games. Games that require speed of thinking and making the right decisions are carried out openly. There is no engineering element. Winners are those who are experts in the game and strategizing. In addition, online games teach children about cooperation to complete missions together. They are able to establish good cooperation with their partners. Uniquely, winning and losing in online games is not elevated to the real realm. They continue to do their usual activities with their enemies in online games without any resentment.

Solutions offered

Busy parents, pampering their children with smartphones has an impact on building the alpha generation's character. Parents should periodically monitor their children in a way that warns that the internet is an unreal world. In online games, building a house is very easy. By choosing the features provided in the game, a house already stands beautifully, and its residents are satisfied with the existing interior. But in the real world, moving the table, lifting the chair is not easy. It needs the right energy and calculations so as not to harm us. In addition, clarify the correct use of language. The majority of the languages used on social media are slang or non-formal languages. Providing children with an understanding of the function of each language is very important. For example, don't call teachers and elders "guys" because it's rude. The term "guys" can be used to refer to peers. Keep on controlling the children so that what they see in cyberspace is not necessarily imitated casually in the real world. For example, online games that smell of violence are imitated by children. In online games, the martial arts scene does not hurt and kill the opponent instantly. But in the real world, the activities of hitting, punching, kicking, slamming directly injured the opponent instantly.

Therefore, there are two parenting styles that can be applied to the alpha generation according to the characteristics of children, namely authoritarian and democratic (Saman & Hidayati, 2023). Based on research by Saman and Hidayati (2023), authoritative parenting patterns carried out on children who have hard characters (where the research was conducted in Maluku) will be effective while democratic parenting patterns are applied to families with mixed ethnic backgrounds with balanced characters. Alternative parenting styles, seen from the characteristics of children. But it needs to be reviewed again the level of dependence of children on smartphones. The more dependent it is, getting firmer the parenting style given.
The solutions offered to prevent alpha generation are under-supervised through two ways, namely preventive and curative prevention. Prevention that is preventive is prevention that is carried out before the problem occurs. Anticipating and minimizing risks is the main focus of preventive measures. The following solutions are offered in preventing alpha generation from becoming carbide generation, including:

1. **The controlling application for children** is available on play store such as Google Family Link. Parents can use the application to monitor and control their children's daily activities when using their cellphones. In principle, these applications can select websites that are content-friendly and safe for children to visit, block websites that are inappropriate for children (smelly content pornography), limit the duration of internet use, and prevent online purchases of virtual games.

2. **Data quota restrictions** can be set directly on each cellphone. Each mobile phone has different features. Some provide data saving mode features, limit data usage, and alert settings when data usage approaches a predetermined limit. In principle, these features regulate and restrict their users from overusing data quotas.

3. **Family cohesiveness in giving warnings** is important. In the family, usually a mother tends to be chatty and protective of the child so that the mother shows worry and anxiety by limiting the child to using a cellphone. Instead, fathers provide freedom and facilitate children on demand in lieu of time when rarely with family for work reasons. The illustration draws two differences in parenting to children. Although there are differences in parenting, each family should be compact and agree on the use of cellphones in children.

4. **Advice on the negative impacts of excessive internet use** should be conveyed to the child. Small discussions and presentations of facts from around will open up children's awareness about the adverse effects of the internet, such as:
   - **Lazy to study.** Learning is synonymous with thinking. While using a cellphone is not thinking at all. They just watch any content that exists in the virtual world. Entertainment content also varies, from movies and music (various genres), online games, variety shows, small talk to podcasts, and many others. Children are spoiled with content that does not invite critical thinking. The irony is that these contents make children curious and deliberately serialized. In addition, staring at the phone screen for too long makes our eyes tired. Because of this, children are too lazy to learn. In addition, the appearance of the internet that relies on visual power is much more attractive than school books. Therefore, guiding children to learn through the internet according to the subject can be a solution to this lazy learning.
   - **Forgot schoolwork and homework.** The preoccupation of surfing in the virtual world, makes the child forget the time. This indicates that they have not been able to multiply themselves and manage their time. After they finished playing, they just remembered that there was an assignment from school. But they are already tired of playing, and delaying tasks and even coming to school without completing tasks. Worst of all, to fulfill the task, they cheated on the task that their friends had already done.
   - **Underestimating the existence of parents.** When children are too focused on playing in cyberspace, they ignore the people around them. The parents' calls are not heard, nor is talk answered, especially the tasks ordered by the parents are not immediately carried out. For their own activities, they are neglected such as eating and bathing. The existence of parents as people who are aged and always await for advice and admonitions is no longer anticipated. This behavior of underestimating parents as a result of rapid technological developments makes it difficult to anticipate the accompanying impact.
   - **Refuting the words of an old man.** The alpha generation age in the range of 0-12 years has the strong characteristic to imitate whatever they see and hear. Children aged 12 years and under have a high curiosity. They easily imitate what they hear without understanding the meaning more deeply. They also easily imitate what is seen without understanding the consequences of their deeds. Content that is not age-appropriate

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such as dramas or stories about conflict and verbal violence circulates on the internet. As a result, the child learns to refute and conflict with those around him, especially parents.

Another solution that is no less important is curative prevention that is prevention after the problem has occurred. There are several things that can be done, including:

1. **The contract for the use of smartphones is based on a family agreement.** This system is built to teach children to learn to commit and apply self-management to personal activities. This commitment is accompanied by rewards and punishments to be more motivated. So that the child learns discipline to obey his commitments. Self-management in dividing time will naturally follow when commitments have been established.

2. **The cohesiveness of the family in imposing strict sanctions on the child.** Parents and those who supervise children should be strict in sanctioning. Sometimes mothers restrict children from using smartphones, while fathers give freedom and even invite them to play together. Or vice versa. This difference in treatment results in the child becoming confused and choosing the better one according to the child's version.

3. **Deprivation of the smartphone and suspension within a predetermined period of time.** Deprivation is the most extreme action. This is because the child has experienced serious problems. For example, making online purchases for the benefit of the game.

4. **Conclusion**

The alpha generation that coexists with technology has formed behaviors that adapt the culture of technological development and the impacts that come with it. In the alpha generation, dependence on smartphones has become high. The content on social media that is made of many episodes makes them even more curious. The young alpha generation has not been able to control themselves and manage themselves. Content without censorship or parental guidance makes the alpha generation grow into a precocious generation. The alternative solution offered is to remind again that family is the main pillar in maintaining originality of the alpha generation personality from the influence of the development of smartphone technology.

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