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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION ON THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS OF GENERATION ALPHA

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the impact of social media consumption on the social interactions of Generation Alpha and the research methodology used. Generation Alpha, born in the era of rampant social media, raises concerns about the quality of their social interactions. The research methods include online surveys, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys explore behaviors and perceptions related to social media and social interactions, while interviews provide a deeper understanding. Data analysis is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of social media on the quality of social interactions of this generation. This finding is important for developing a wise approach to using social media and the values upheld to maintain their social and mental health. This study also provides valuable insights for parents, educators, and researchers interested in the dynamics of social interaction in a digital context.

Keywords: *Generation Alpha, Social Media, Social Interaction*

A. INTRODUCTION

Generation Alpha, which encompasses a cohort of individuals who have come into existence beginning in the early part of the 2010s, has been nurtured in a unique environment characterized by the pervasive influence of information technology, with a particular emphasis on the ubiquitous presence of social media platforms that have become deeply ingrained in the fabric of contemporary daily existence. Social media has evolved into an essential component of routine life, offering a multifaceted medium through which individuals can engage in interpersonal interactions, disseminate information, and cultivate expansive social networks that transcend geographical boundaries.

In light of this scenario, the patterns of social media consumption exhibited by Generation Alpha have emerged as a matter of significant scholarly concern that warrants careful examination and analysis. Research conducted by Sukamto et al. (2020) reveals that the engagement with social media among this generation is notably varied, encompassing a wide array of content formats, including but not limited to video-sharing platforms and applications dedicated to the sharing of photographic images. While it is undeniable that social media presents a plethora of benefits, such as facilitating seamless communication and enabling the sharing of diverse content, a growing body of empirical studies indicates that an excessive amount of time devoted to social media interactions can detrimentally impact the quality of social interactions, particularly among the younger demographic cohorts.

Furthermore, as articulated by Wibowo and Sari (2019), the overutilization of social media platforms can precipitate issues such as social isolation, challenges in establishing profound emotional connections, and a decline in verbal communication competencies. This situation poses a considerable challenge for Generation Alpha, as they navigate the complexities of social development, potentially jeopardizing their acquisition of fundamental social skills that are critical for their overall interpersonal effectiveness.

Moreover, Setiawan and Pranoto (2021) underscore the pivotal role that parents and educators play in the oversight and management of social media usage among the Alpha generation. These influential figures are tasked with the responsibility of imparting a well-rounded comprehension of the implications associated with social media usage, instituting limitations on screen time, and promoting genuine social interactions in face-to-face contexts. It is important to acknowledge that there exists a counter-narrative which posits that social media can indeed enhance the quality of social interactions by providing broader access to information, creating opportunities for learning novel concepts, and facilitating the expansion of social networks on a global scale. Nevertheless, the imperative for a judicious and reflective approach to the regulation of social media consumption remains a critical focus in the overarching efforts aimed at safeguarding a healthy and sustainable quality of social interactions for the members of Generation Alpha.

Based on an extensive examination and analysis of national academic journals spanning the previous five years, it becomes abundantly clear that the topic of social media consumption and its multifaceted effects on young individuals remains a highly dynamic and vigorously researched area within the field of social sciences, with a particular focus on various demographic cohorts, including the emergent Generation Alpha. In light of contemporary events, the alarming phenomenon of suicides occurring among members of Generation Z has escalated into a significantly grave and pressing concern that necessitates urgent attention and intervention within the educational sector and beyond.

Generation Z, which encompasses individuals born roughly from the mid-1990s through to the early 2010s, is currently navigating an intricate landscape filled with distinctive pressures and challenges that are symptomatic of our increasingly globalized world. In an environment characterized by an ever-growing interconnectivity facilitated by technological advancements and pervasive social media platforms, this generation is subjected to an overwhelming array of expectations, fierce competition, and unparalleled social pressures that can adversely affect their mental well-being. Consequently, this troubling trend has manifested itself in a notable increase in the incidence of suicide among young people in this demographic, an issue that unequivocally warrants the serious consideration and proactive engagement of both policymakers and educators alike.

Furthermore, the tragic reality of suicide within the Generation Z cohort is not confined to any singular age demographic but instead permeates various strata of society, impacting a wide range of individuals, including high school students, university attendees, and young professionals entering the workforce. Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that several interrelated factors, such as the intense academic pressures faced by students, the prevalence of mental health challenges, the insidious effects of bullying, and the pervasive influence of social media, significantly contribute to the alarmingly high rates of

suicidal ideation and attempts among this generation. It is imperative that we undertake a comprehensive examination of these contributing factors to develop effective strategies for mitigation and support. In doing so, we can foster a more supportive environment that prioritizes mental health and emotional resilience among young individuals. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with society as a whole to address these pressing issues and ensure that future generations are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to navigate the complexities of modern life without succumbing to despair.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The methodological framework that will be employed to meticulously examine the impact of social media usage on the nature and quality of social interactions among members of Generation Alpha will encompass a variety of approaches, specifically incorporating comprehensive surveys, in-depth interviews, and a rigorous analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Each distinct phase of this elaborate research methodology will be elucidated in a detailed manner, ensuring that all aspects are thoroughly explored and understood as follows:

1. Survey

   Surveys represent a highly effective and widely employed method for the collection of data, which facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the various behaviors and perceptions exhibited by respondents, particularly in relation to their consumption of social media and the overall quality of their social interactions within digital environments. In this particular research initiative, the survey will be meticulously administered online through a sophisticated survey platform that is readily accessible to the Alpha generation, a demographic cohort that constitutes the primary research sample in this study.

2. Survey Details:

   a) The initial step involves the careful creation of a comprehensive questionnaire that is grounded in the previously established conceptual framework, ensuring that all pertinent topics are addressed with precision.

   b) The questionnaire will encompass a diverse range of questions that pertain to the frequency with which respondents utilize social media, their preferences regarding the types of content they engage with, their online social interactions, as well as other relevant aspects that may influence their experiences.

   c) Moreover, the distribution of the questionnaire to respondents from the Alpha generation will be strategically executed through popular social media platforms and online networks that are frequented by this particular demographic, thereby maximizing participation and engagement.

   d) The collection of survey data will occur over a predetermined period, which will be established based on the desired target number of respondents, ensuring that the data gathered is both robust and representative of the population under study.

3. Quantitative Data Analysis will be rigorously conducted in order to process the survey data, which will be presented in numerical form and subject to thorough analytical scrutiny.

a) Details of Quantitative Data Analysis:
   i. The processing of survey data will be accomplished using advanced statistical software, such as SPSS or Excel, which are essential tools for handling large datasets efficiently.
   ii. A descriptive analysis will be employed to elucidate the characteristics of the respondents, detailing the frequency of their social media usage, as well as various attributes related to the quality of their social interactions.
   iii. Furthermore, inferential statistical analyses, including correlation or regression tests, will be utilized to uncover and identify any significant statistical relationships that may exist between the variables under investigation, thereby enriching the overall findings of the study.

4. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis component of this research will concentrate on achieving a profound understanding of the contextual, meaningful, and deeply personal experiences that individuals associate with their consumption of social media and the nature of their social interactions.

a) Details of Qualitative Data Analysis:
   i. A meticulous transcription process will be implemented for any interviews conducted, aimed at highlighting the main themes and patterns that emerge from the respondents' narratives.
   ii. Additionally, a content analysis approach will be employed to systematically categorize and interpret the qualitative data, drawing insights based on the themes that become apparent throughout the analysis process.
   iii. The utilization of specialized software tools, such as NVivo or Atlas.ti, will be integral in facilitating the qualitative data analysis, thereby enhancing the rigor and depth of the findings derived from the respondents' experiences and perspectives.

The methodological approach that encompasses a diverse array of research instruments, including but not limited to surveys, structured interviews, and both quantitative as well as qualitative data analysis techniques, is poised to furnish a thorough and nuanced depiction of the influence that social media consumption exerts on the quality of social interactions among members of Generation Alpha. By integrating this multifaceted array of research methodologies, it is anticipated that the study will yield robust and pertinent findings that will significantly enhance our comprehension of the intricate dynamics of social interactions within the digital landscape as experienced by Generation Alpha, thereby addressing a critical gap in existing literature. Ultimately, such an in-depth investigation is expected to contribute valuable insights into the evolving nature of social

connectivity in an era increasingly characterized by digital engagement, with implications that extend far beyond immediate observations.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
1. Increase in Virtual Interaction

The escalation of virtual interactions represents a noteworthy phenomenon that is progressively evolving in tandem with the rapid advancements in the realms of information and communication technology, which have become pivotal in shaping contemporary social dynamics. A multitude of digital platforms and applications has emerged, facilitating interactions among individuals in a virtual space with an ever-increasing level of accuracy and speed, thereby transforming the nature of human communication. This remarkable enhancement has far-reaching implications across a diverse array of life domains, encompassing social relationships, economic transactions, educational pursuits, and numerous other facets of day-to-day existence.

As elucidated in a comprehensive study conducted by Wibowo (2021), the advent of virtual interactions empowers individuals to forge connections with people situated in various geographical locations across the globe, thereby effectively eradicating the limitations imposed by physical distance. This unprecedented capability engenders novel opportunities within the business sector, as it enables collaborative ventures between companies hailing from different nations without necessitating the frequency of in-person meetings that were once deemed essential for effective partnership. In the educational sphere, the facilitation of virtual interactions further enhances the effectiveness and inclusivity of distance learning initiatives, allowing for broader access to educational resources and diverse knowledge bases.

On the other hand, the research conducted by Suryanto (2020) underscores the critical importance of implementing robust regulatory frameworks and security measures to bolster the efficacy of virtual interactions. As the prevalence of such interactions continues to rise, the establishment of clear policies and the enforcement of stringent data protection protocols become imperative in order to mitigate the risks associated with the misuse of personal information and the potential for cyberattacks that could undermine users' trust and safety.

Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the proliferation of virtual interactions also brings forth a myriad of challenges that require careful consideration and strategic management. In a pertinent study conducted by Susanto (2019), it was revealed that an over-reliance on virtual interactions can lead to a significant decline in direct social engagements and the deterioration of offline interpersonal communication skills, thus igniting a robust debate concerning the long-term health implications of such a shift in interaction paradigms.

In the realm of mental health, the research presented by Kartika (2023) indicates that an excessive engagement with social media platforms and virtual interactions can exacerbate feelings of stress and anxiety, particularly among members of the younger generation who are often more vulnerable to these adverse effects. Consequently, it becomes increasingly evident that a balanced and conscientious approach to the utilization

of virtual interactions is essential in order to safeguard the psychological well-being of individuals and promote healthier engagement patterns.

In summation, the rise of virtual interactions undoubtedly yields a plethora of benefits that can enhance various aspects of human life; however, it concurrently presents a series of challenges that necessitate prudent management and intervention. The formulation of sound regulatory practices, an elevated awareness of the mental health ramifications associated with excessive digital engagement, and the promotion of productive technological usage emerge as fundamental components in the endeavor to maximize the positive potential inherent in virtual interactions.

2. **Disruption in Physical Interaction**

Disruption in physical interaction represents a complex condition that significantly interferes with an individual's innate capability to engage in meaningful physical interactions with both their immediate environment and other individuals they may encounter. This multifaceted condition can manifest through a variety of motor, sensory, or cognitive disorders that detrimentally affect a person's ability to execute movements, perceive tactile sensations, or accurately interpret and process physical information from the surrounding world. A pertinent example of a disorder that severely impacts physical interaction is cerebral palsy, which is characterized as a motor disorder that arises as a result of brain damage sustained during the critical developmental phase of infancy. According to meticulously conducted Evidence-Based Research (RamirezCastillo, M. A., et al., 2020), individuals suffering from this disorder frequently encounter pronounced difficulties related to movement coordination, muscle control, and overall physical engagement with their external environment.

Moreover, sensory disturbances are also recognized as significant contributing factors that can impede physical interaction. For instance, various visual impairments, such as myopia or astigmatism, may hinder an individual's capacity to effectively and appropriately interact with objects or other people situated within their immediate vicinity (Sartawi, A., et al., 2019). Such sensory limitations can have profound implications on an individual's capability to carry out essential daily activities, which may include, but are not limited to, reading text, participating in physical sports, or navigating through complex environments safely and efficiently.

In addition to motor and sensory challenges, cognitive disorders such as autism spectrum disorder or forms of dementia also considerably influence a person's ability to engage in physical interactions with others. Research conducted by Smith, J. M., et al. (2022) indicates that individuals diagnosed with autism frequently experience substantial difficulties in comprehending emotional expressions and maintaining appropriate physical proximity when engaging in social interactions with their peers. This inability to effectively interpret social cues can lead to misunderstandings and hinder meaningful interpersonal exchanges.

To effectively address the various disturbances that can occur in physical interactions, it becomes imperative to adopt a holistic therapeutic approach that encompasses a wide range of interventions. Such an approach should include physical rehabilitation strategies,

such as physical therapy or occupational therapy, alongside sensory interventions that may involve specialized vision or auditory therapy, as well as cognitive interventions that could include speech therapy or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) designed to enhance cognitive functioning (Faisal, R., et al., 2021). Overall, it is crucial to acknowledge that disruptions in physical interactions can have a profound and detrimental impact on an individual's overall quality of life and functional independence. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to thoroughly understand the multifarious factors that contribute to this disorder and to actively work towards the development of effective and tailored therapeutic approaches aimed at assisting individuals who are adversely affected by such challenges.

3. **The Influence of Behavioral Models and Values**
The extensive influence exerted by behavioral models and the underlying values encompasses a multitude of dimensions that significantly impact the manner in which individuals conduct themselves and the values they choose to uphold. This intricate concept frequently becomes a central theme of inquiry within the diverse fields of psychology, sociology, and management, where researchers endeavor to unravel its complexities. In the span of the last five years, numerous national journals have delved deeply into this theme, illuminating the critical importance of comprehending behavioral models and values within a variety of professional and academic contexts. A notable example of such scholarly discourse is presented in the work of Hidayatullah and Wibowo (2020), which elucidates the pivotal role that behavioral models play in forecasting consumer behavior with remarkable accuracy. Their research revealed that adopting more holistic and comprehensive behavioral models can significantly enhance our understanding of the myriad factors that influence consumer decision-making processes, including but not limited to attitudes, subjective norms, and the various behavioral constraints that individuals may encounter.

Moreover, the scholarly journal article authored by Susanto et al. (2019) explores the profound influence of values within the organizational milieu. These researchers emphasize how the values that individuals embrace can profoundly shape the culture of organizations, influence managerial decision-making, and ultimately impact the overall performance and efficacy of companies operating in today's competitive environments. In the realm of education, an influential study conducted by Siregar (2021) demonstrates that both behavioral and value models play a critical role in shaping students' motivation to learn and succeed academically. Factors such as individual perceptions regarding the value of education, personal self-expectations, and the values imparted by their surrounding environments all contribute significantly to enhancing or diminishing students' motivation to engage in the learning process. From the vantage point of social psychology, the research conducted by Utami (2023) underscores the essential importance of behavioral models in facilitating a deeper understanding of social interactions and the dynamics of group behavior. Their findings elucidate how the perception of prevailing social values and norms is instrumental in shaping individual behaviors within specific social contexts, thereby affecting interpersonal relations and societal cohesion.

Additionally, the research conducted by Pranowo et al. (2022) establishes a crucial link between the influence of behavioral models and values and the overarching theme of environmental sustainability. Their findings indicate that the values espoused by individuals and groups possess the potential to substantially impact attitudes and actions toward environmental issues, influencing behaviors at both individual and organizational levels. The vast and multifaceted influence of behavioral models and values permeates a wide array of aspects related to human life, extending from consumer decision-making processes to the nuances of organizational culture, the intricacies of learning motivation, the dynamics of social interactions, and ultimately, the pressing issue of environmental sustainability. Collectively, these studies yield invaluable insights that enhance our understanding of the intricate web of factors that shape human behaviors and the values that individuals choose to live by in an increasingly complex world.

D. KESIMPULAN

The culmination of this discourse brings to light the critical significance of comprehending two fundamental elements that are paramount in contemporary society: the substantial rise in virtual interactions and the profound impact exerted by various behavioral models and intrinsic values on the multifaceted dimensions of human existence. To begin with, the notable increase in virtual interactions has engendered a plethora of substantial advantages, which include the facilitation of global collaboration across diverse geographical boundaries, the enhancement of remote learning methodologies that can cater to a wider audience, and the expansion of global connectivity that allows individuals from disparate cultures to engage meaningfully. Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize that this surge in virtual engagement also presents a series of formidable challenges, such as the pressing necessity for the implementation of stringent regulations that can effectively safeguard both data privacy and security, in addition to fostering an acute awareness of the potential mental health repercussions that may arise from the excessive consumption of digital interactions.

Furthermore, the pervasive influence of behavioral models and the underlying values that inform them plays a pivotal role in shaping various critical aspects of human life, which encompass consumer decision-making processes, the formation of organizational culture, the dynamics of learning motivation, the nature of social interactions, and the overarching principles of environmental sustainability. The extensive body of research dedicated to these themes yields invaluable insights that contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay of factors that significantly influence human behavior and the values that individuals uphold. Thus, it becomes increasingly evident that striking a harmonious balance and adopting a judicious approach are essential in order to harness the positive potential inherent in virtual interactions while simultaneously respecting and promoting the values that are vital for a flourishing society. In summary, a comprehensive examination of these interconnected areas is not only beneficial but also necessary for navigating the complexities of modern life in a manner that is both equitable and sustainable.

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