BUILDING A BRIGHT FUTURE : INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR GEN ALPHA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Nurul Fajjriyah[1], Labib Sajawandi[2]
Pendidikan Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia
email: nurulfajriyah641@gmail.com , sajawandilabib@gmail.com

Abstract: This study focuses on Generation Alpha who grew up in the digital era, facing challenges in education such as access gaps, lack of digital literacy, and the need for an inclusive learning approach. This article also discusses the role of technology in addressing educational inequality. Literature analysis and case studies show that technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and online learning platforms, can improve access and quality of education, especially for marginalized groups. However, the implementation of technology must be balanced with adequate teacher training and community involvement. This study recommends collaboration between the government, private sector, and communities in designing education policies that are responsive to the needs of Gen Alpha to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. The research method used is qualitative with library research techniques. The results show that technology strengthens access to inclusive education, although there is still a digital divide in rural areas and among low-income families. Gen Alpha is familiar with technology, but lacks critical digital literacy. Inclusive education has a positive impact on Gen Alpha engagement and learning achievement, with schools that implement inclusive principles showing better academic results. Teacher training is key to the success of digital inclusive education.

Keywords: Digital Era, Generation Alpha, Inclusive Education

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about a major transformation in various aspects of life, including in the world of education. Information technology has now become an inseparable element of various aspects of life, including in the field of education. In today's digital era, the use of technology not only expands learning references, but also becomes the main means of conveying broad and in-depth knowledge. For Generation Alpha who were born and raised in a digital environment,

technology becomes a natural part of their learning process, enabling a more interactive, adaptive, and appropriate educational approach to the characteristics of this generation. Generation Alpha grew up in an era heavily influenced by digital technology, where access to information is so easy and fast. This generation has unique characteristics: they tend to be technologically literate, think critically, are more open to diversity, and have high expectations for an education system that is adaptive and relevant to the realities of the times. Therefore, the current education system is required to adapt to the needs and challenges faced by this digital generation.

One approach that is increasingly important in this context is inclusive education. Inclusive education not only includes students with special needs, but also emphasizes equality of access, active participation, and recognition of the diversity of social, cultural, and ability backgrounds of learners. In the digital era, inclusive education must be able to utilize technology as an empowering tool to create a fair, adaptive, and collaborative learning environment for all.

Generation Alpha (born after 2013) is a digital native generation that has been accustomed to technology, social media, and online learning since early childhood. Meanwhile, the challenge in the conventional education system often lies in its inability to adapt to social and technological changes. In addition, there are still many schools and educational institutions that have not fully implemented the principle of inclusivity, both in terms of infrastructure, curriculum, and teaching approaches.

The development of children from Generation Alpha in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era has brought significant changes in people's perspectives and lifestyles. From what was originally conventional, it has now shifted to being more modern and digital. Rapid technological advances require people to adapt and evolve in various aspects of life (Ishak Fadlurrohim et al., 2019).

Generation Alpha, namely those born between 2010 and 2025, is known to have a tendency towards everything that is instant and less appreciative of the process. Their dependence on digital devices or gadgets also has an impact on social relationships, where they tend to feel isolated in social interactions (Ishak Fadlurrohim et al., 2019).

Inclusive education is present as a strategic solution in creating an education system that is not only fair and equitable, but also responsive to the development of the times. In the digital context, inclusive education has a great opportunity to empower every student, regardless of economic background, physical or mental abilities, and geographic location. By utilizing digital technology, schools and teachers can provide a more flexible, personal, and participatory learning approach.

This article aims to examine how inclusive education can be built and implemented effectively for Alpha in the digital era. By understanding the characteristics of these two generations and utilizing the potential of technology optimally, we can create a bright and equitable future through a more humane and relevant education system.

METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research, which is an approach that aims to describe a situation or phenomenon without intending to draw general conclusions. This research focuses more on an in-depth understanding of a particular object or event. This article is compiled using the literature review method, where the author collects data from various scientific journals and platforms such as Google Scholar to find journal articles that are relevant to the topic discussed.

The main objective of this study is to integrate theories related to ongoing issues or problems, or previously unidentified ones, as analytical materials in the study. The data and references collected are then systematically reviewed using methods that allow researchers to identify, translate, and interpret the results of the research findings. This approach aims to diagnose the problem being studied by presenting research findings comprehensively, thus providing a clearer and more detailed picture of the issues raised in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Steps to Building Generation Alpha with Inclusive Education

In this era of globalization, education not only functions as a conduit of knowledge, but also as a vehicle for forming values, attitudes, and insights that will shape students' personalities throughout their lives. Especially at the elementary school level, character formation is an important key in the education process (Haryani, 2020). On the other hand, we also face complex challenges in an increasingly diverse and multicultural society. In the school environment, students often come from various cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it is important to promote a tolerant and moderate understanding of these differences, and ensure that students have a strong foundation of valuesto live together harmoniously in a diverse society. Through tolerant understanding, students can appreciate differences positively and build relationships of mutual respect with others (Anwar et al, 2022)

The relationship between Education and Multiculturalism is a solution to the unification of diverse cultures as something that bridges the diversity of culture, ethnicity, tribe and stream or religion into a form of education (Irawati & Winario, 2020). An inclusive society is a concept that refers to a society that values diversity in all aspects, including culture, ethnic background, beliefs, gender, age, and abilities. Elementary school is the first level of formal education that has an important role in shaping the next generation of the nation. Elementary schools not only focus on the cognitive development of students, but must also form attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with the ideals of the nation (Sudargini, Y, 2020). How to realize the ideals of the nation also depends on the educational process received by students at each level of school, especially elementary school (Bahri, M. S, 2023).

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceeding
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training – Universitas Terbuka
UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May 15th 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 283 – 292
ISSN: 3046-594X

The principle of equality in inclusive education means that all children, regardless of differences in ability or background, have the right to equal opportunities to learn and grow in a school environment that is fair, respects diversity, and supports the development of each individual to the fullest. Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection Article 9 paragraph 1 emphasizes that every child has the right to receive education and teaching to support their personal development and intellectual potential, which is adjusted to their respective interests and talents. Inclusion is not just a formal policy, but is reflected in daily interaction patterns, decision-making processes, and the provision of fair opportunities for all, including groups that have been marginalized. This concept is in line with UNESCO's Education for All vision, which emphasizes the importance of equal access to education for all children, regardless of their social background, physical condition, or mental condition (Herawati, 2016; Irawati & Winario, 2020).
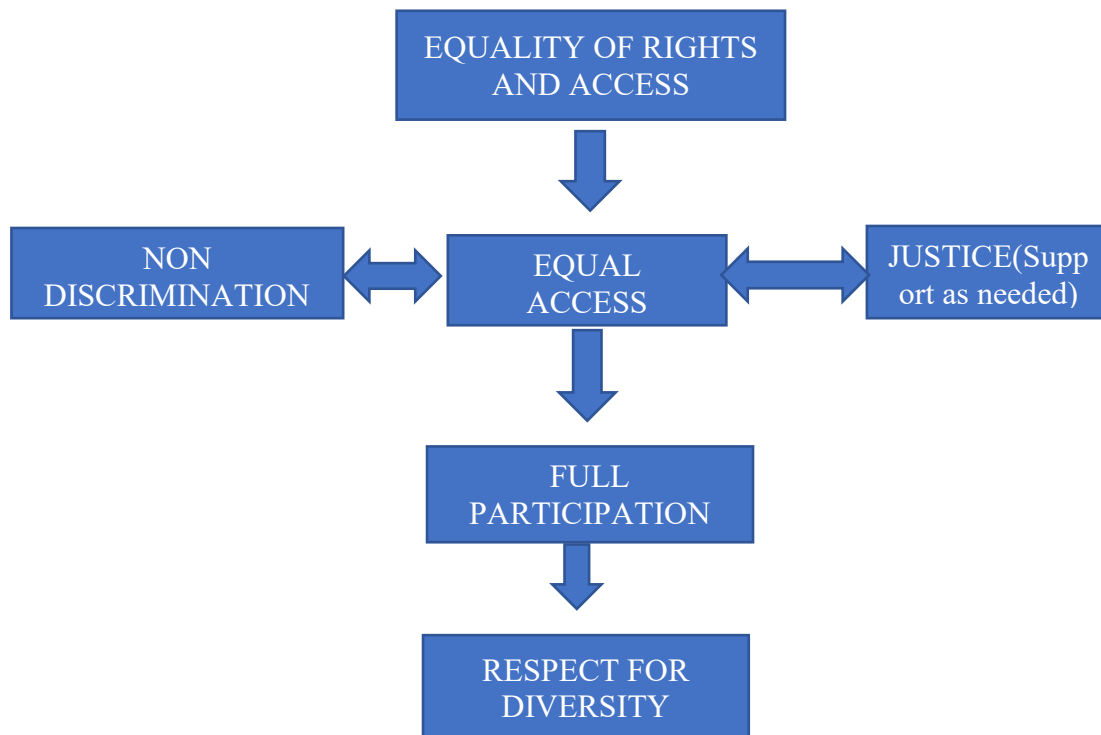
This diagram represents the basic structure and development of the principles of inclusion, especially in the realm of education and social life. At the top is Equality of Rights and Access, which is the main foundation of the inclusive approach. This principle emphasizes that every individual has the right to receive equal treatment and access in various aspects of life. From this principle, three main components emerge: Non-Discrimination, which is a commitment not to treat individuals differently based on their background, physical condition, social status, or personal identity. Equal Access, which ensures that everyone has the same opportunity to access public services, information, and facilities. And Justice, which is defined as providing support according to the needs

International Conference on Teaching and Learning Proceeding
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training – Universitas Terbuka
UTCC, South Tangerang, Banten, May 15ᵗʰ 2025
Vol. 1, No. 1, pg. 283 – 292
ISSN: 3046-594X

of each individual—not uniform treatment, but rather fair and proportional.

Furthermore, the principle of equal access paves the way for full participation, where everyone is not only present symbolically, but is also given space to play an active role in social and learning processes. Finally, inclusive participation leads to the formation of respect for diversity—a condition where differences are valued, celebrated, and seen as a source of strength, not an obstacle.

Overall, this diagram emphasizes that inclusion is a multi-layered and interconnected process, starting from granting equal rights to growing a culture that respects and accommodates diversity.

Young people educated in a multicultural educational environment will have a deep knowledge of cultural diversity and its influence on the outlook on life and values of society. They will understand that differences are a source of wealth, not a threat, and that all individuals have the same right to be respected and recognized. In addition, multicultural education also involves the development of intercultural skills which are very important in this era of globalization (Auliawati et al., 2023)

The term "Generation Alpha" was first put forward by Mark McCrindle, an Australian social researcher, he said that the alpha generation is a continuation of the previous generation, namely Gen Z. The alpha generation is used to describe children born from the millennial generation (Diah Ayu Puspitasari & Muhammad Rizky Ramadhan, 2024).

The alpha generation grew up in an environment that is very familiar with digital devices. Recent research shows that this generation has a high potential for intelligence compared to previous generations. Children who grow up in this era have very easy access to various types of digital information and entertainment. On the other hand, this condition certainly has a significant impact on the way they learn and develop. In the midst of this technological advancement, there is an urgent need to ensure that they. (Nurpratiwi et al., 2025).

Generation Alpha, namely the group born from 2010 to around 2025, is the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital era and hyper-connectivity. Their characteristics are greatly influenced by technological advances, easy access to information, and an increasingly diverse environment both culturally, socially, and in terms of individual abilities. In this context, inclusive education becomes a strategic approach that not only guarantees the right of every child to receive a decent education, but also forms a solid foundation for the growth and development of Generation Alpha as adaptive, empathetic, and collaborative individuals.

Inclusive education is basically an education system that provides space for all students, regardless of physical, mental, social, economic, and cultural conditions, to learn together in the same environment. Inclusion is not just physical integration, but also full acceptance of diversity, as well as adjustments to the curriculum and learning methods that allow all children to reach their full potential. Therefore, building

Generation Alpha through an inclusive approach requires systematic, participatory, and transformative steps.

The most fundamental first step is to strengthen the paradigm of educators and policy makers regarding the importance of inclusive education. So far, one of the main obstacles in implementing inclusive education is the exclusive perception of 'normality' that stigmatizes students with special needs as a burden or obstacle in the teaching and learning process. In fact, in the context of Generation Alpha, diversity is an asset that must be celebrated. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out continuous training and mentoring for teachers, principals, and education managers so that they have pedagogical and emotional competence in dealing with students with diverse backgrounds.

The second step is to adapt the curriculum and learning strategies that are responsive to individual needs. Generation Alpha is very close to visual, interactive, and technology-based learning styles. Therefore, a learning approach that is differentiated, personalized, and utilizes digital technology needs to be integrated into the inclusive education system. For example, the use of interactive learning applications can help children with attention deficit disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorders to be more focused and comfortable in absorbing the material. On the other hand, the provision of teaching materials in various formats (text, audio, visual) allows equal access for students with visual or hearing impairments.

The third step is providing a supportive physical and social environment. Schools as learning spaces should be welcoming places for all students. This includes not only accessible facilities such as ramps, elevators, or special toilets, but also an inclusive and discrimination-free school culture. Character education should be included in the curriculum as an effort to form an attitude of empathy and tolerance among students. In the context of Generation Alpha who are very sensitive to the values of social justice and diversity, it is important for schools to create learning communities that value differences as part of a shared strength.

The fourth step is collaboration between schools, families, and communities. Inclusive education cannot run optimally without the active involvement of various parties. Families must be empowered as primary partners in the education process, especially in providing emotional support and a conducive learning environment at home. On the other hand, communities and the private sector also have an important role in providing resources, technology, and supporting programs that facilitate inclusive education more broadly and sustainably.

The final step is evaluation and development of data-based policies. Efforts to build Generation Alpha through inclusive education must be based on accurate and measurable data. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation system needs to be designed to assess the effectiveness of inclusive programs, student engagement, and long-term impacts on students' cognitive and social development. The government needs to encourage inclusive education research that focuses on the local context so that the resulting policies are truly

in accordance with field needs.

Overall, building Generation Alpha with inclusive education is not just a technical matter of providing facilities or modifying the curriculum. More than that, it is an effort to form an educational ecosystem that humanizes students and values diversity as a strength. Generation Alpha is the hope of the future that will live in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. Therefore, they need education that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also socially and emotionally empowered. Inclusive education is a bridge to realize this, and the strategic steps that have been outlined must be carried out consistently, adaptively, and based on human values.

The Urgency of Inclusive Education for Generation Alpha

Generation Alpha lives in an increasingly complex and diverse world. They grew up amidst rapid social change, increasing awareness of identity diversity, and a paradigm shift in education from a one-way model to collaborative and student-centered learning. They are not only required to master academic skills, but also digital literacy, social-emotional skills, and critical thinking skills. Inclusive education is here as an answer to create a learning space that values differences, empowers the unique potential of each child, and forms individuals who are tolerant, adaptive, and collaborative.

Furthermore, Generation Alpha also has a need for an individual and flexible learning approach. This makes inclusive education a relevant approach because it not only accommodates learners with special needs, but also recognizes that each child has a different learning style and background. In other words, inclusive education for Generation Alpha is not just about integrating children with special needs, but about building an education system that is responsive to diversity in the broadest sense.

Although normatively many countries have adopted the principle of inclusivity in education policies, the reality on the ground shows that its implementation still faces various challenges. In Indonesia, for example, the limited number of educators trained in the inclusive approach, the lack of supporting facilities, and the social stigma against students with differences are still major obstacles. If these challenges are not addressed, there will be inequality in access and quality of education, which directly hinders the development of the potential of Generation Alpha as a whole.

Therefore, the urgency of inclusive education lies in the need for systemic transformation, starting from teacher training, adaptive curriculum, to the active role of the community in creating a friendly and supportive learning environment. Inclusive education cannot be seen as an additional program, but rather as a basic philosophy in formulating equitable educational policies and practices.

Inclusive education also plays an important role in shaping the character of Generation Alpha. By getting used to living and learning in an environment that values differences, children will grow into individuals who are more open, empathetic, and have high social awareness. These are important qualities in facing the era of globalization that

is increasingly connected and full of dynamics. Inclusive education encourages the participation of all children in the learning process, develops self-confidence, and creates a positive school climate.

Inclusive learning, when implemented effectively, also benefits all learners, not just those with special needs. A learning environment that values diversity encourages collaboration, tolerance, and collaborative problem-solving. This is especially relevant for Generation Alpha, who will face complex future challenges that require the ability to work together with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

As we enter a dynamic digital era, Generation Alpha faces very different educational challenges and opportunities than previous generations. In this context, inclusive education is a key foundation for building a bright and sustainable future. Inclusive education is not just about providing equal access, but also about embracing diversity—in abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles so that every individual can reach their full potential. Digital transformation has fundamentally changed the face of education in the modern era. Information technology not only affects the way students learn, but also changes teaching methods and interaction patterns in the classroom. These changes reflect a comprehensive transformation in the education system, including curriculum updates, technology integration, and shifting roles of teachers and students. To answer the challenges of the times, education must continue to adapt to the needs of digital generations such as Generation Alpha.

As digital natives, Gen Alpha requires an adaptive, interactive, and collaborative learning approach. Therefore, education must strategically integrate technology to create an inclusive, relevant, and responsive learning environment to individual needs. Curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments must be redesigned to support the active participation of all students, including those with special needs. Furthermore, building inclusive education in the digital era means instilling values such as empathy, tolerance, and collaboration among diverse individuals. The next generation must be equipped not only with academic and digital skills, but also with strong social awareness. Inclusive education will shape a generation that is successful individually and contributes to a just, equal, and humane society. Collaboration between government, educators, families, and communities is key to realizing a fair and sustainable education system. Through shared commitment, inclusive education will be the foundation for a brighter future a future led by a generation that is not only digitally savvy, but also socially and emotionally wise.

REFERENCES

Books

Pratiwi, D., Putra, S., Darwiyanti, A., Nansi, W. S., Saptadi, N. T. S., Perang, B., ... & Alwi, M. (2024). *Kebijakan Pendidikan*. Sada Kurnia Pustaka.

Journal Article

Rahardi, R. K. (2022). Persepsi Urgensi Inklusi Aspek-Aspek Multimodalitas Dalam Desain Model Pembelajaran Pragmatik Edukasional. *Loa: Jurnal Ketatabahasaan Dan Kesusastraan*, *17*(2).

Andriani, O., Pangestu, P. E., Noviyanti, D. F., & Julianti, S. (2024). Landasan Filosofis Dalam Optimalisasi Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Inklusi. *Jurnal Pendidikan & Pengajaran (Jupe2)*, *2*(1), 185-201.

Nurkholifah, S., Zakiah, L., Adiesty, J., Aziz, A., & Jaya, I. (2024). Membangun Keberagaman Di Sekolah Inklusi Melalui Pendidikan Multikultural. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, *9*(2), 1525-1539.

Putri, D. D., Zakiah, L., Azzahra, F., Ningsih, L. A., & Jaya, I. (2024). Analisis Hubungan Pendidikan Multikultural Dan Pendidikan Inklusi. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, *9*(2), 2765-2780.

Hidayat, A. D. W., Akbar, M. A., Azib, M., Zakiyah, H. Q., Ramadhani, R. S., & Asitah, N. (2025). Kompetensi Guru Dalam Pendidikan Inklusi Di Sekolah Dasar: Kajian Literatur Sistematis. *Nusantara Educational Review*, *3*(1), 69-77.

Ramadhani, A. V., Ambarita, T., Sella, F. A., Lazuarni, D. N., Margolang, R. U. U., Sidabalok, D. N., ... & Barus, F. L. (2024). Urgensi Minat Membaca Gen Alpha Di Tengah Maraknya Penggunaan Smartphone. *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, *1*(4), 9-9.

Salwa, I., Putri, N. L. E., & Ladako, M. F. (2025). The Effectiveness Of The Islamic Education Curriculum In Shaping The Morals Of Students In Generation Alpha. *Tofedu: The Future Of Education Journal*, *4*(3), 812-820.

Irawati, I., & Winario, M. (2020). Urgensi pendidikan multikultural, pendidikan segregasi, dan pendidikan inklusi di Indonesia. Instructional Development Journal, 3(3), 177

Siswanto, D. (2023). *Optimalisasi layanan pendidikan inklusi melalui program "Sapta Pesoona" di SMP Negeri 15 Yogyakarta*. SMP Negeri 15 Yogyakarta.

Pertiwi, E. P., Ali, A. Z., Budiyanto, & Sartinah, E. P. (2025). Filosofi dan prinsip dasar pendidikan inklusi: Implikasi terhadap masalah sosial masyarakat. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, *14*(1), 329–344.

Ariyati, T. (2013). Peningkatan kemampuan membaca permulaan melalui penggunaan media gambar berbasis permainan (Penelitian tindakan di Taman Kanak-kanak 'Aisyiyah 5 Rawalo Kecamatan Rawalo Kabupaten Banyumas, Jawa Tengah, Kelompok B, 2013) [Tesis, Universitas Negeri Jakarta]. Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

Unggul, A., & Sajawandi, L. (2023). Analisis perubahan perilaku pada anak usia dini yang kecanduan gawai. Jurnal Psikologi Anak dan Pendidikan, 5(2), 123–134

Pujiati, D., & Yulianto, D. (2021). Analisis media pembelajaran anak usia dini berbasis teknologi masa pandemi Covid-19. Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 10(2), 145–155