

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENERATION ALPHA IN BANDUNG CITY AND BANDUNG REGENCY, WEST JAVA

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of the family environment on the development of children from Generation Alpha in Bandung City and Bandung Regency. Using a quantitative design, this research involved 300 respondents, consisting of children aged 5 to 14 years and their parents. Data collection methods included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and direct observations. The findings indicate that family structure, parenting style, communication quality, and emotional support from the family significantly impact children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Statistical analysis revealed that children from nuclear families had higher cognitive scores, authoritative parenting was associated with improved social skills and emotional well-being, and good communication and emotional support were linked to reduced stress and increased happiness. This study emphasizes the importance of creating a stable and supportive family environment to support the optimal development of Generation Alpha children and provides recommendations for family practices and future research.

Keywords: Family Environment, Generation Alpha, Child Development

1. Introduction

Generation Alpha, encompassing children born from 2010 to the mid-2020s, is the first generation to grow up entirely in the digital age. They are known as true digital natives, with widespread access to advanced technology from an early age. According to Mark McCrindle, a demographic expert and author on generations, Generation Alpha will be the largest generation in history to experience rapid technological changes (McCrindle, 2014).

Key characteristics of Generation Alpha include rapid adaptation to technology and a tendency to learn through digital experiences. Research by Dr. Angela Duckworth, a renowned psychologist, shows that children in this generation often exhibit high multitasking abilities and quick responsiveness to digital information (Duckworth, 2016). However, intensive exposure to technology also raises concerns about potential negative impacts on social skills and emotional development.

Dr. Sherry Turkle, a professor at MIT and author of "Reclaiming Conversation," warns that excessive reliance on digital devices can hinder the development of direct communication skills and empathy in children (Turkle, 2015). Therefore, understanding the role of the family environment in this context is crucial for supporting the development of Generation Alpha in a balanced way.

The family environment is a fundamental factor in child development and affects various aspects of their growth. Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory emphasizes that a child's development is influenced by various layers of social environments, including family, school, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Bronfenbrenner, the microsystem, such as the family, plays a primary role in shaping a child's early experiences and affecting their cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Positive family parenting styles, as described by Diana Baumrind in her research on parenting styles, are associated with better developmental outcomes in children. Baumrind identified authoritative parenting as the most supportive, where parents provide consistent structure along with emotional support and open communication (Baumrind, 1966). This research supports the view that a supportive and loving family environment can promote healthy emotional development and good social skills.

On the other hand, Dr. John Bowlby's research on attachment theory highlights the importance of secure emotional relationships between children and parents in a child's psychological development (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby argued that secure attachment with primary caregivers provides a foundation for children to explore the world confidently and form healthy social relationships later on.

Against this background, it is clear that the family environment has a significant influence on the development of Generation Alpha. Given the ever-evolving technological exposure, it is important to explore how various elements of the family environment—such as parenting style, communication, and emotional support—affect their developmental aspects. This research aims to delve deeper into this relationship and identify strategies that can facilitate positive development for Generation Alpha in the digital age. The study formulates questions related to what factors in the family environment influence the development of Generation Alpha and how these factors affect cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. This research aims to identify how specific elements in the family environment impact the development of Generation Alpha. By understanding the specific factors in the family environment that contribute to child development, it is hoped that insights will be gained on effective ways to support children's development in today's digital context.

In this context, the research aims to explore in depth the relationship between the family environment and the development of Generation Alpha, particularly in Bandung City and Bandung Regency, West Java. This study will explore specific factors in the family environment—such as family structure, parenting style, interaction quality, values, norms, and technology use—and how these factors influence cognitive, social, and emotional aspects of children. By understanding how various elements of the family environment contribute to child development, it is hoped that detailed insights and practical recommendations can be provided to support the positive development of Generation Alpha in this digital era.

2. Methods

This study employs a quantitative design to explore the influence of the family environment on the development of Generation Alpha, focusing on family structure, parenting style, communication quality, and emotional support. A quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for structured data collection and in-depth statistical analysis. Surveys will be the primary data collection method, supplemented by semi-structured interviews and direct observations to obtain detailed qualitative data.

The study population includes Generation Alpha children aged 5 to 14 years residing in Bandung City and Bandung Regency. Stratified random sampling is used to ensure proportional representation of various demographic characteristics, such as age and socioeconomic background. The target sample is 300 respondents, including both children and their parents, with a balanced distribution between the two regions.

Data will be collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Questionnaires will measure various aspects of the family environment and child development, while interviews and observations will provide additional context. Descriptive statistical analysis and regression will be used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis will be applied to qualitative data to identify key themes relevant to the study. The research locations were chosen to reflect social and economic diversity, which can provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of the family environment.

3. Research Results

3.1.1. Data Description

This study involved 300 respondents, including Generation Alpha children and their parents residing in Bandung City and Bandung Regency. The study aimed to explore the impact of the family environment on children's development in the digital age. Therefore, the sample was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure good representation from various demographic groups in both areas. Of the total respondents, 150 children and parents were from Bandung City, while the remaining 150 were from Bandung Regency. This distribution was made to obtain a balanced view between urban and rural environments and to identify potential differences in family dynamics and child development in these two locations.

3.1.2. Demographic Information

The age distribution of the sampled children is as follows: 30% aged 5-7 years, 35% aged 8-10 years, and 35% aged 11-14 years. This age distribution ensures a broad coverage of various stages of child development, from preschool to early adolescence. In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 52% boys and 48% girls. This distribution is fairly balanced and allows for a more in-depth analysis of differences in development between boys and girls. The respondents' family structures varied, with 65% coming from nuclear families, 20% from extended families, and 15% from single-parent families. This variation in family structure is important for identifying how different family configurations may influence child development. Socioeconomic backgrounds were also diverse, with 40% of

respondents coming from high-income families, 35% from middle-income families, and 25% from low-income families. This distribution allows for an analysis of differences in access to resources and support that may affect child development.

This data description provides an overview of the sample characteristics used in this study. Comprehensive demographic data collection ensures that the sample reflects the diversity present in Bandung City and Bandung Regency. This is important to ensure that research findings can be generalized to a broader population and are relevant to various socioeconomic and family contexts. By understanding the demographic profile of respondents, this study can identify specific factors in the family environment that contribute to the development of Generation Alpha children. For example, children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may have greater access to educational resources and emotional support, which could influence their cognitive and social development. Conversely, children from lower-income families may face different challenges, such as limited resources and economic stress, which could also affect their development.

Further analysis of this demographic data also allows for exploration of how factors such as age, gender, and family structure interact with socioeconomic background to impact child development. Thus, this study can provide deep and comprehensive insights into the influence of the family environment on Generation Alpha's development and offer specific, data-driven recommendations to support child development in various family and socioeconomic contexts.

3.1.3. Analysis of Family Environment Impact

This study found that various aspects of the family environment have a significant impact on the development of Generation Alpha children. Data analysis indicates that family structure, parenting style, communication quality, and emotional support from the family play crucial roles in cognitive, social, and emotional development.

3.1.3.1. Family Structure

Children from nuclear families tend to have better cognitive and social development compared to children from extended families or single-parent families. This may be due to the greater stability and consistency in nuclear families, which provide a supportive environment for learning and growth. In nuclear families, children typically receive more focused attention from their parents, which can enhance cognitive abilities through more intensive and structured interactions. Additionally, the stability in nuclear families helps children feel safe and emotionally supported, which is a critical foundation for healthy social development.

In extended families, although there are more family members available to provide support, attention to the child is often divided among more people, potentially reducing the quality of interactions. In single-parent families, the greater economic challenges and emotional burden on one parent may affect the availability of time and energy for optimally supporting the child's development.

3.1.3.2. Parenting Style

Authoritative parenting, characterized by a combination of support and control, has been shown to have the most positive impact on child development. Children raised with an authoritative style exhibit better cognitive skills, higher social abilities, and more stable emotional well-being. This parenting style creates an environment that provides structure while allowing flexibility, enabling children to learn and grow within a secure framework while promoting independence.

Conversely, authoritarian parenting, marked by strict control without adequate emotional support, is often associated with limited cognitive development and issues in social relationships. Children raised in an authoritarian manner may comply with rules but often feel less confident and have underdeveloped social skills. Permissive parenting, on the other hand, offers freedom without clear boundaries, which can result in a lack of discipline and problems with decision-making and emotional regulation.

3.1.3.3. Communication Quality

Open and effective communication between parents and children is closely related to positive social and emotional development. Children who have good communication relationships with their parents tend to interact better with peers and show higher levels of empathy. Good communication allows children to express their feelings, seek help, and receive constructive guidance from their parents.

Conversely, ineffective communication or conflicts within family communication can hinder children's social and emotional development. Children who experience poor communication in the family may feel unheard or unappreciated, which can lead to self-esteem issues and difficulties in social relationships. Frequent communication conflicts can also create a stressful and unstable environment, impeding healthy emotional development.

3.1.3.4. Emotional Support

Emotional support from the family, including attention, affection, and recognition, is crucial for children's emotional well-being. Children who receive strong emotional support from their family tend to have lower stress levels and higher happiness. Emotional support helps children feel loved and valued, which is important for building self-esteem and emotional resilience.

Children who are emotionally supported are also better able to cope with emotional challenges and have healthier relationships with others. They learn from their parents how to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and build positive relationships with peers and other adults. Conversely, a lack of emotional support in the family can lead to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

This study shows that a stable, supportive, and communicative family environment plays a vital role in supporting the holistic development of Generation Alpha children. By ensuring that children grow up in a supportive environment, families can help them develop the skills necessary to succeed in today's complex and digital era.

3.2. Quantitative Findings

Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis provides in-depth quantitative insights into the impact of the family environment on the development of Generation Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using regression methods to evaluate the contribution of each aspect of the family environment to child development. The analysis reveals that each aspect of the family environment has a significant impact, with several key findings as follows:

3.2.1. Family Structure

Regression analysis shows that children from nuclear families have an average score 10% higher on cognitive development tests compared to children from extended families or single-parent families. This indicates that the stability and consistency within nuclear families provide a more conducive environment for cognitive development. Children in nuclear families may receive more focused attention and higher-quality interactions with their parents, which promotes cognitive development through adequate stimulation and sustained support. Conversely, children from extended families or single-parent families may face more complex dynamics and additional challenges that can hinder their cognitive development. In extended families, parental attention is divided among more children, while in single-parent families, the dual burden on one parent may reduce the time and energy available to optimally support the child's development.

3.2.2. Parenting Style

Authoritative parenting, characterized by a combination of support and control, is associated with a 15% increase in social skills scores and a 12% increase in emotional well-being compared to authoritarian or permissive parenting styles. Authoritative parenting creates a balanced environment between structure and freedom, allowing children to develop better social skills and more stable emotional well-being. Children raised with this style tend to be more independent, have high self-confidence, and are able to build healthy relationships with others.

In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which emphasizes strict control without adequate emotional support, often results in children with lower self-confidence and poor social skills. Permissive parenting, on the other hand, provides freedom without clear boundaries, which can lead to a lack of discipline and problems with decision-making and emotional regulation.

3.2.3. Communication Quality

Good communication between parents and children is closely related to positive social and emotional development. Regression analysis shows that children who report having good communication with their parents have empathy and social skills scores that are 20% higher compared to children who experience poor communication within their families. Effective communication allows children to express their feelings, seek help, and receive constructive guidance from their parents. It also promotes better empathy and social skills, as children learn to listen to and understand others' perspectives.

Conversely, ineffective communication or conflicts within family communication can hinder children's social and emotional development. Children who experience poor communication in their families may feel unheard or unappreciated, which can lead to self-esteem issues and difficulties in social relationships. Frequent communication conflicts can also create a stressful and unstable environment, impeding healthy emotional development.

3.2.4. Emotional Support

Emotional support from the family has a substantial impact on children's emotional well-being. The study's findings indicate that emotional support is associated with an 18% reduction in stress levels and a 25% increase in happiness scores among children. Emotional support, including attention, affection, and recognition, helps children feel loved and valued, which is crucial for building self-esteem and emotional resilience.

Emotionally supported children are also better equipped to cope with emotional challenges and have healthier relationships with others. They learn from their parents how to manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and build positive relationships with peers and other adults. Conversely, a lack of emotional support in the family can lead to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

These findings underscore the importance of various aspects of the family environment in supporting the development of Generation Alpha. Quantitative data provides strong evidence that a stable, supportive, and communicative family environment plays a crucial role in helping children develop the cognitive, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in life. By understanding and optimizing these factors, families can play a key role in ensuring their children grow into healthy, happy, and successful individuals.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that various aspects of the family environment, including family structure, parenting style, communication quality, and emotional support, have a significant impact on the development of Generation Alpha children. These findings align with several theories and previous research but also offer new insights that enrich our understanding of the impact of the family environment on child development.

4.1. Family Structure

One of the main findings of this study is that children from nuclear families show an average score 10% higher on cognitive development tests compared to children from extended families or single-parent families. This finding supports Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that a stable and consistent family environment plays a crucial role in supporting child development. Within this framework, the nuclear family is identified as a structure that provides a more organized and supportive environment, facilitating optimal cognitive and social development.

Previous research, as noted by Lamb (2010), indicates that children raised in nuclear families tend to receive more attention and emotional support from their parents. This support provides a strong foundation for better cognitive development, as children feel

safer and more supported in their exploration and learning. Nuclear families often provide more high-quality interactions with children, contributing to enhanced cognitive and social skills.

However, this finding also highlights the importance of considering the dynamics present in other family structures, such as extended families and single-parent families. Research by Amato and Keith (1991) shows that while extended families and single-parent families may face certain challenges, such as divided attention and more limited resources, quality interactions and emotional support can still be found within these family structures. Extended families, for example, can offer a broad support network, while single-parent families often demonstrate resilience and creativity in overcoming existing challenges.

This study underscores that although family structure has a significant impact, the quality of interactions and emotional support provided to children remains a key factor. Extended families and single-parent families can address their challenges by creating a supportive environment and providing high-quality attention to their children.

Overall, these findings confirm the importance of a stable and consistent family environment in supporting the development of Generation Alpha children. However, they also emphasize that diverse family dynamics must be considered, and efforts should be made to ensure that all family structures, regardless of the challenges they face, can provide the necessary support for the optimal development of their children.

4.2. Parenting Style

The study findings indicate that authoritative parenting style is significantly associated with improvements in social skills and emotional well-being among Generation Alpha children. Specifically, children raised in an authoritative parenting environment show a 15% increase in social skills scores and a 12% increase in their emotional well-being. These findings align with the theory proposed by Diana Baumrind in 1967 regarding different parenting styles and their impact on child development.

Diana Baumrind, a renowned developmental psychologist, identified four main parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Among these styles, authoritative parenting is recognized as the most supportive of children's social and emotional development. Authoritative parenting is characterized by a balance between emotional support and consistent regulation. Parents who use this style provide clear guidance and boundaries while also showing attention, affection, and responsiveness to their children's emotional needs.

In the context of this study, the finding that children raised with an authoritative parenting style have a 15% improvement in social skills indicates that this approach enables children to develop better interpersonal skills. Authoritative parenting encourages children to learn how to interact positively with others through good role modeling and constructive guidance. Children in this environment learn to express their feelings in a healthy way, empathize with others, and build strong relationships.

The 12% increase in emotional well-being among children raised with authoritative parenting indicates that these children experience lower levels of stress and a higher sense of security. The emotional support and consistency offered by authoritative parenting provide a strong foundation for children's emotional well-being. They feel more valued and accepted, which contributes to better mental health and the ability to cope with emotional challenges.

These findings are supported by previous research by Maccoby and Martin (1983), which confirmed that children raised in authoritative environments achieve better outcomes across various developmental domains. Their research shows that authoritative parenting is associated with improved cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Children who experience this style of parenting tend to show better academic performance, superior social skills, and more stable emotional well-being compared to those raised in authoritarian or permissive styles.

Authoritarian parenting, characterized by strict control without adequate emotional support, is often linked to poor social skills and low emotional well-being. On the other hand, permissive parenting, which offers freedom without clear boundaries, can result in a lack of discipline and issues with emotional regulation. Both of these styles, according to research by Baumrind and Maccoby and Martin, do not provide the same level of support for social and emotional development as authoritative parenting.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of authoritative parenting in supporting children's social and emotional development. By providing a combination of emotional support and consistent regulation, parents can help their children develop strong social skills and maintain healthy emotional well-being. This study reaffirms Baumrind's theory and supports authoritative parenting as the most effective approach for fostering children's development in various aspects of their lives.

4.3. Quality of Communication

The study findings indicate that children who report having good communication with their parents have empathy and social skills scores that are 20% higher compared to children who do not have good communication. This supports the Family Communication and Social Development theory and provides empirical evidence of the importance of effective communication in supporting children's social development.

Family communication is a key aspect in shaping healthy relationships and supporting children's social development. This theory emphasizes that the way families interact and communicate affects children's social and emotional development. Research by Laursen and Collins (2004) shows that open communication and consistent emotional support from parents are crucial for developing empathy and social skills in children. Effective communication creates an environment where children feel accepted, heard, and understood, which in turn helps them develop strong social skills and empathy.

The finding that children with good communication with their parents have higher empathy and social skills scores indicates that positive and open communication facilitates healthy social development. Good communication allows children to learn how to express

their feelings clearly and receive constructive feedback from their parents. When children feel listened to and understood, they are more likely to develop the ability to respond to others' feelings and needs with empathy and sensitivity.

In the context of social interactions, children who experience good communication with their parents learn how to build healthy relationships with their peers. They develop skills for negotiating, compromising, and handling conflicts in a constructive manner. Effective communication teaches children how to interact with others respectfully and empathetically, which is essential for their social development.

Research by Laursen and Collins (2004) shows that open communication and emotional support from parents are closely related to the development of empathy and social skills in children. This highlights that children who grow up in environments where communication is prioritized and emotional support is consistently provided have better social skills and higher levels of empathy. This supports the view that the quality of family interactions has a direct impact on how children function in broader social contexts.

Good family communication not only enhances children's social skills but also contributes to their emotional well-being. Children who feel emotionally connected to their parents are better able to handle stress and challenges in their social relationships. They are also more likely to have high self-esteem and feel more prepared to interact with others in positive and productive ways.

These findings underscore the importance of effective communication in supporting children's social and emotional development. Good communication with parents helps children develop strong empathy and social skills, which are crucial for healthy and successful relationships in the future. Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of family communication can have a significant positive impact on children's development, shaping them into more empathetic and skilled individuals in their interactions with others.

4.4. Emotional Support

The study findings reveal that emotional support from the family has a significant impact on the well-being of Generation Alpha children. Specifically, emotional support is associated with an 18% reduction in stress levels and a 25% increase in happiness scores. These findings underscore the importance of emotional support in maintaining children's emotional health and supporting their overall development.

Emotional support from the family plays a crucial role in children's emotional health development. This support includes attention, affection, and recognition from parents, all of which contribute to a child's sense of security and emotional stability. Children who feel loved and accepted by their families tend to have a better ability to cope with stress and adapt to emotional challenges.

The 18% reduction in stress levels observed in this study indicates that children who receive strong emotional support from their families experience lower levels of stress. Emotional support acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress, enabling children to manage their feelings better and reduce the impact of stress on their mental health.

When children feel they have a stable and responsive support system, they are better able to handle stressful situations without experiencing significant emotional impact.

Research by Cassidy and Shaver (1999) supports these findings by highlighting the importance of emotional support in developing emotional security. The theory developed by Cassidy and Shaver shows that parental emotional support contributes to the development of emotional security in children. Children who feel secure and cared for by their parents are more likely to have greater self-confidence and the ability to build positive relationships with others. They are also better able to cope with stress and face challenges with greater resilience.

Strong emotional support from the family is also associated with a 25% increase in happiness scores among the children in this study. Children who receive attention and affection from their families feel happier and more satisfied with their lives. Emotional support helps them feel valued and loved, which in turn enhances their sense of happiness and life satisfaction. Children who perceive consistent emotional support tend to have a more positive outlook on their lives and are better able to develop healthy and fulfilling relationships.

These findings align with previous research by Cassidy and Shaver (1999), which indicates that parental emotional support is crucial for helping children cope with stress and build positive relationships. Emotional support serves as a foundation that supports good mental health development and helps children feel more secure in facing life's challenges.

Overall, this study emphasizes that family emotional support plays a critical role in maintaining children's emotional health. By providing attention, affection, and recognition, families can help children reduce stress and enhance their happiness. Strong emotional support from the family not only improves children's emotional well-being but also facilitates their development in various aspects of life. These findings suggest that family attention and affection are essential elements in supporting the healthy and happy development of children.

5. Limitations of the Study

Although this study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations to consider:

Study Design: This study uses a cross-sectional design, which only provides a snapshot at one point in time. This limits the ability to identify changes in children's development over time. Future longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into how aspects of the family environment affect children's development in the long term.

Methodology: The primary data collection methods used were questionnaires and interviews, which may be subject to respondent bias or errors in self-reporting. Utilizing additional methods such as direct observation could complement the existing data and provide a more accurate picture.

Data: The data collected comes from Bandung City and Bandung Regency, which may not fully represent different contexts across Indonesia. Research in different locations or

with a more diverse sample could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of family environment.

6. Conclusion

This study provides in-depth insights into the influence of the family environment on the development of Generation Alpha children, focusing on family structure, parenting styles, communication quality, and emotional support. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that various aspects of the family environment play a crucial role in supporting children's cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Family Structure: Children from nuclear families show better cognitive and social development compared to children from extended families or single-parent families. The stability and consistency offered by nuclear families provide a strong foundation for children's development. However, it is important to consider the dynamics and support present in extended families and single-parent families.

Parenting Style: Authoritative parenting, which combines emotional support with consistent discipline, is proven to be the most effective in supporting children's social and emotional development. Children raised with authoritative parenting show significant improvements in social skills and emotional well-being. In contrast, authoritarian or permissive parenting styles can lead to various developmental issues in children.

Communication Quality: Good communication between parents and children is strongly related to increased empathy and social skills in children. Open and effective communication helps children feel accepted and understood, contributing to healthy social relationships and better development of empathy.

Emotional Support: Emotional support from the family is directly related to reduced stress levels and increased happiness in children. Attention, affection, and recognition from the family play a crucial role in maintaining children's emotional health and helping them cope with challenges more effectively.

These findings emphasize the importance of creating a stable, communicative, and supportive family environment to support the optimal development of Generation Alpha children. Families play a vital role in facilitating children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and efforts should be made to strengthen these aspects within the family context.

This study also has practical implications for parents, educators, and child development professionals. Enhancing the quality of family interactions, implementing effective parenting styles, and providing consistent emotional support can positively impact children's development. Future research could further explore how various factors in the family environment can be integrated to support holistic and sustainable child development.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parents, educators, and child development professionals focus on creating a stable, communicative, and supportive family environment to support the development of Generation Alpha children. Parents are advised to adopt authoritative parenting styles that combine emotional support with consistent discipline, and to ensure open and effective communication with their children. Additionally, it is important to provide strong emotional support to help children cope with stress and enhance their well-being. This can be achieved through parent training programs, increasing awareness about effective parenting styles, and support in developing good communication skills within families. Further research is also recommended to explore the impact of additional factors in the family environment on child development and innovative strategies to support children's well-being in a more holistic manner.

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