

Supporting the Mental Health of Gen Z and Gen Alpha Adolescents through Life Skills Education

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ABSTRACT

Generations Z (born 1997-2012) and Alpha (born 2013-2024) face unique challenges in the digital age. Gen Z, raised online, struggles with cyber bullying, social pressure, and information overload, contributing to high anxiety levels (61% diagnosed with anxiety conditions). Gen Alpha, growing up entirely in the 21st century, is shaped by the pandemic, school shootings, and climate change, leading to increased anxiety and depression. Life skills education is crucial for both generations to navigate these challenges. The World Health Organization identifies 10 essential life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, and stress management, critical for mental health and personal development. By teaching adolescents these skills, they can control their emotions, form lasting relationships, and ask for help when needed. Critical skills like effective communication, problem-solving, and decision-making enable teens to flourish in the modern world. Life skills education equips teenagers to face obstacles with courage and tenacity, promoting mental health and wellness. By providing these abilities can help Gen Z and Gen Alpha succeed in a rapidly changing world, addressing their unique challenges and promoting their overall well-being. Teaching adolescents life skills is vital for their general growth, mental health, and future success. The study aim is describe the mental health status of Gen Z and Gen Alpha adolescents and need of life skills education for teenagers.

Keywords: Mental Health; Gen Z; Gen Alpha; Adolescents; Life Skills Education

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, technology shapes two generations: Generation Z and Generation Alpha. Despite their similar ages, the cultural, technological, and societal changes they've witnessed have resulted in striking differences (Walsh, 2025). The terms "Generation Z" and "Generation Alpha" were both developed by Mark McCrindle, the founder of the Australian consultancy firm McCrindle Research. Generation Z refers to people born between 1996 and 2010. They're the second-youngest generation, between millennials and Generation Alpha. Gen Z identity has been shaped by the digital age, climate anxiety, a shifting financial landscape, and COVID-19. They're known as 'digital natives', the first generation to grow up with the internet (McKinsey and Company, 2024).

Generation Alpha is first generation born entirely in 21st century, between 2010 and 2024. It comprises the largest cohort in human history, totaling over two billion people. "Generation Alpha" is sometimes shortened to "Generation A". Generation Alpha members have been immersed in technology since birth, spending more time online and in front of computer screens, smart phones, and tablets than any prior group. Due to longer life expectancy trends, many members of this generation will live to see the 22nd century (Farrell, 2025).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Park et al.,(2024)investigated ondigital approaches for addressing Generation Z's (born 1995–2012) mental and spiritual well-being. Compared to other generations, Gen Z is more likely to report mental health issues like anxiety and depression. According to a 2022 survey, anxiety and depression were the two most common mental health conditions among Gen Z people, with 42% having a diagnosis. Systematic studies of digital approaches to these problems are lacking, nevertheless. One in four Gen Z adults surveyed in 2022 said they had more terrible days than good ones in a one-month period. Over two out of five people (42%) had a mental health diagnosis, and over a quarter of those were diagnosed in March 2020, during the COVID-19 epidemic, or later. Nine out of ten people with a mental health diagnosis have anxiety, and eight out of ten have depression, making these two conditions the most prevalent mental health problems among Generation Z.

Piepiora (2024)reported that each generation has attitudes, expectations, behaviors and experiences that are unique to it. The Alpha generation is characterised by widespread access to technology from an early age. Technological proficiency is both their strength and weakness in functioning in society. The overload on the nervous system of the Alpha generation refers to the over-processing of information, which affects their verification of valuable content. Developmental risks for the Alpha generation were identified as referring to their behavior, mental and somatic health. Behavioural problems refer to their attention problems and their imitation of violent acts available online and on TV channels. Then, mental problems refer to internet addiction syndrome and anxiety-related disorders. Finally, somatic problems refer to low physical fitness, obesity and postural defects (Piepiora, 2024).

Farooq & Alyana (2025) investigated the effectiveness of UNICEF's Basic Life Skills Training Program in improving self-esteem, empathy, and resilience among 66 Pakistani adolescent pupils aged 12 to 19. The experimental group underwent 16 training sessions and shown significant improvements in self-esteem, empathy, and resilience compared to the control group. The findings point to the program's potential for non-clinical interventions, with implications for future research and application in boosting adolescent development in Pakistan.

The globe has begun a new demographic period. Generation Alpha has overtaken all preceding generations, accounting for 24.4% of the world population. Born after 2013, these young digital natives are already changing the future with their distinct consumer habits, technological savvy, and shifting aspirations. This transition reflects a shifting demographic dynamic and a growing influence that will shape economies, enterprises, and society in the coming decades. Businesses and policymakers must navigate a multigenerational environment, as Millennials and Generation Z continue to account for major percentages of the global population (21.2% and 22.9%, respectively). However, Generation Alpha's domination is unavoidable, and knowing their future requirements will be critical for companies, educational institutions, and governments(Intel Point, 2025).

Aim: The study examines the role of life skills education in promoting the mental health of Gen Z and Gen Alpha adolescents.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the status of mental health of adolescents in Generation Z and Alpha.
2. To examines the importance of life skills education for adolescents in Generation Z and Alpha.
3. To suggest sustainable future through life skills education for Generation Z and Alpha.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the research researcher used descriptive type research design. Descriptive research establishes a basis for comprehending a phenomena or population by delineating its traits and patterns with clarity.

Data collection sources

The researchers utilized secondary data collection sources, including books, websites, articles, and reports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classification of Generation

Generational classification is a way of grouping individuals based on their birth year, usually within roughly 20-30 year periods, to understand shared historical and cultural experiences that construct their values and behaviors. This classification helps us understand trends in demographics, work environments, and social interactions(Enel Green Power, 2024).

Age Ranges of Generations (Coming Home, 2025)

1. Greatest Generation: 1901-1927
2. Silent Generation: 1928-1945
3. Baby Boomers: 1946-1964
4. Generation X: 1965-1980
5. Millennials (Gen Y): 1981-1996
6. Generation Z (Zoomers): 1997-2012
7. Generation Alpha: 2013-2025
8. Generation Beta: 2025-2039 (projected)

GENERATION Z

Gen Z, the second-youngest generation, is shaped by their upbringing, particularly during the pandemic and climate change. They were born during the era of extensive internet use, making them digital natives. The generation varies in age, with the oldest having jobs and mortgages, and is expected to make up a quarter of the Asia-Pacific region’s population by 2025 (McKinsey and Company, 2024 a).

Currently Adolescents Range in Generation Z and Generation Alpha

As Per WHO, adolescents are generally defined as individuals aged between 10 and 19 years old age. This period encompasses the transformation from childhood to adulthood, a time of significant physical, emotional, and social development (Joon, 2023). Currently, teenagers (typically ages 13-17) born between 2006 and 2011, are consider in Generation Z. There are younger portion of Gen Z, a generation generally considered to span from 1997-2012, and are currently in middle school and high school. Gen Alpha, born from 2010 to 2024, are still relate to young, with the oldest members likely to be in their early teens. Therefore, adolescents are primarily Gen Z, while the younger members of Generation Alpha are also reaching adolescence.

Table 1: Adolescents Age in Gen Z and Gen Alpha Generation

Generations	Birth Years	Adolescents Age
Gen Z	1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011	2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 (14-19 Year age) Middle and Late Adolescent Age
Gen Alpha	2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024	2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (10-13 Year age) Early Adolescent age

(Source: Yardi, 2025;Gen Z Statistics 2025 By Natives, Age, Population)

CHARACTERISTICS OF GEN Z ADOLESCENTS (Jackson, 2025)

- **Largest age group:** Gen Z makes up 27% of the US population, surpassing other generations.
- **Tech-savvy:** Growing up with smart phones and the internet has made them highly comfortable with technology.
- **Exposure to pornography:** Easy access to pornography has influenced their views on relationships and sexuality.
- **Shifting sexual mores:** Gen Z is more accepting of diverse sexual orientations and identities.
- **Racial diversity:** With 22% having at least one immigrant parent, Gen Z is the most racially diverse generation yet.
- **Independent thinkers:** Hands-off parenting has led to confidence, but sometimes lacking wisdom and boundaries.
- **Anxious and troubled:** Growing up in a world with global challenges has contributed to anxiety and depression.
- **Justice-minded:** Gen Z is passionate about making a difference and volunteering for causes they care about.
- **Open to faith:** Despite being post-Christian, many Gen Z individuals believe in God and are hungry for spiritual experiences.

CHALLENGES OF GEN Z (Al Masud, 2025)

- **Communication Gap:** There can be a communication gap between older generations and Gen Z due to differences in preferred communication channels and styles. Bridging this gap is essential to tap into their skills and ideas effectively.
- **Problem of Work-Life Balance:** Gen Z often prioritizes work-life balance and flexible work arrangements. Companies need to adapt to these expectations to retain and engage Gen Z talent.
- **Mentorship and Guidance:** This generation may require specific mentorship and guidance to channel their entrepreneurial spirit effectively. Companies can play an important role in nurturing their development.
- **Adaptation to Traditional Workplaces:** While Gen Z has a penchant for entrepreneurship and freelancing, many will still enter traditional workplaces. Companies need to create environments that cater to their diverse needs and preferences.

GENERATION ALPHA

The Alpha generation is considered to be people born between 2011 and 2025 and the Overwhelming majority of them are the children of people from generation Y. A characteristic of the Alpha generation is that they grow up alongside smart Technology. They have widespread access to it from an early age. Therefore, Technological proficiency is both a strength and a weakness of the Alpha generation's functioning in society (Howarth, 2025).

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENERATION ALPHA (Iberdrola, 2025)

- **Hyper connected:** Alpha children are always connected. Their interest in new technologies has become second nature.
- **Independents:** They like to make their own decisions and manage their digital identities, and they expect their own needs and preferences to be considered.
- **Visuals:** Video will be the preferable format. Furthermore, video games increase their visual skills, such as eye-hand coordination and task switching.
- **Technological:** Because they are hyper-connected, they become specialists in the usage of new technologies, which aids in their digital learning and opens up a world of opportunities.
- **Diverse:** In this context, diversity encompasses not only demographics like ethnicity and gender, but also tastes, lifestyles, and points of view.

CHALLENGES OF GENERATION ALPHA ADOLESCENTS (Iberdrola, 2025a)

- **Limited attention span and concentration:** Because people are accustomed to using multiple screens at once and swiftly scanning information, their attention span and concentration are compromised.
- **Less time for socializing:** Spending so much of the day online, both inside and outside the home, leaves less time for traditional learning, playing, and socializing. In reality, social networks have become the primary means of socialization.

- **Limited development of creativity and imagination:** Without criticizing the abilities that the Alpha generation will gain new technologies, it is the usage of physical toys is reduced, the improve of imagination and creativity will suffer.
- **Decreased capacity for happiness:** According to psychologist Jean M. Twenge's book iGen, there is a "connection between the proliferation of social media and smart phones and the rise in depression, anxiety, and loneliness in today's youth."

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF GENERATION Z AND GENERATION ALPHA

Gen Z and Gen Alpha, although being digital natives, have particular difficulties understanding the intricacies of the contemporary world. Dynamic in family, social media, and academic expectations can lead to psychological stress and mental health issues, particularly in children and teenagers, affecting their overall wellbeing. (Shrivastav, 2024)

LIFE SKILLS FOR PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH FOR GEN Z AND GEN ALPHA ADOLESCENTS

According to World Health Organization Life skills are the positive and adaptive behavior abilities assist to people manage with the stresses and difficulties of daily life. UNICEF expands on this description by stating that life skills encompass a behavior modification or development strategy intended to balance knowledge, attitude, and skills. Simply stated, life skills are those aptitudes that support young people's mental health and competency as they deal with life's challenges (Africa Community Leadership and Development, 2020).

Life skills Components

This is the list of the ten most important life skills, as per the WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO (Vij, 2016).

- **Self-awareness:** Understanding one's own thoughts, feelings, and motivations.
- **Empathy:** Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
- **Critical thinking:** Analyzing information objectively and making sound judgments.
- **Creative thinking:** Generating new ideas and solutions.
- **Decision-making:** Create appropriate choices for a situation.
- **Problem-solving:** Identifying and resolving issues effectively.
- **Effective communication:** Expressing oneself clearly and listening actively.
- **Interpersonal relationships:** Building and maintaining healthy relationships with others.
- **Coping with stress:** Managing stress in a healthy way.
- **Coping with emotions:** Understanding and managing a range of emotions in a healthy way.

Life Skills Education Teaching Strategies for Gen Z and Gen Alpha Adolescents (Digital Class, 2024)

- Brainstorming
- Classroom discussions.
- Role-plays
- Quizzes
- Demonstrations
- Teamwork activities
- Cooperative learning
- Educational games and simulations
- Case studies
- Skits

Tools and techniques for Promoting Mental health

Mental health encompasses our social, psychological, and emotional well-being. As we move through life, it affects our feelings, ideas, and actions. It also affects how we manage stress, make decisions, and interact with others. Every stage of life, from childhood and youth to adulthood and aging, depends on mental wellness (Medline Plus, 2024). Strategies that support mental wellness include maintaining a good outlook, cultivating gratitude, exercising, getting enough sleep, eating healthily, forming friendships, learning coping methods, practicing meditation, relaxation techniques, etc.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Offer individual and group counseling services to teenagers to improve their mental health and well-being.
2. Educate adolescents on good stress management and emotional regulation skills.
3. Provide life skills training and education to teenagers to provide them with the necessary skills for success.
4. Provide moral and ethical education to assist teenagers establish strong values and principles.
5. Promote adolescents' psychological well-being with personalized treatments and resources.
6. Provide practical teaching to adolescents on how to form and maintain healthy interpersonal connections.

CONCLUSION

Generation Z and Alpha love for technology and digital immersion demands a comprehensive tech-based learning approach. This includes diverse and adaptable learning experiences that incorporate both practical and soft skills, catering to their digital-native mindset. They are encouraged to view skill acquisition as leveling up in a video game, leading to a progressive career path. Furthermore, because Gen Alpha is a creative and tech-savvy age, its schooling emphasizes the development of digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking. Their innate adaptability and creativity empower them to build a new future using the tools and resources at their disposal. Both Generation Z and Gen Alpha face psychological problems including high level rates of anxiety and depression, fueled by factors like social media pressure, academic expectations, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, concerns about the future, financial instability, and climate change contribute to a sense of hopelessness and low morale. Life skills education helps in promoting mental health of Gen Z and Gen Alpha adolescents. Life skills training helps develop coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy, ultimately improving their overall mental well-being.

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