**Orginal Article**

# Netizenship and Networked Child: An Educational Reflection on the Concept of Childhood in Generation Z and Alpha

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## Introduction

The concept of childhood has been the subject of much debate and discussion throughout history. There is no single definition of childhood that is universally accepted, as the concept has evolved over time and varies across cultures. However, some common themes emerge in discussions of childhood, such as the idea that childhood is a time of innocence, play, and learning. In recent years, there has been growing interest in the study of the characteristics of Generation Z and Generation Alpha. These two generations are the first to grow up in the digital age, and their experiences and perspectives are significantly different from those of previous generations. The people of this generation are connected through digital devices and social media. They are the first generation to have known the world with the possibility of having infinite information and the opportunity for infinite connection in the digital age. Technology is deeply intertwined in the lives of this generation. They take for granted the internet, networks, and related digital tools, and have incorporated technology and online activities into everything. As Generation Z and Alpha become the main audiences for current and future education, it is crucial to understand their unique characteristics to organize education, especially in childhood. Considering this necessity, this research aims to reflect on the concept of childhood in light of the characteristics of these two generations.

## Method

The method in this research is Conceptual Analysis, which emphasizes on

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providing a correct and clear explanation of the meaning of concepts through a detailed explanation of its relationships with other concepts.

## Results

Using the Conceptual Analysis, we identified ten key characteristics such as "Real Life in the Virtual World", "Acceptance of New Virtual Behavioral Codes", "Fluid and Multifaceted Identities", "Continuous and Lifelong Learning" and "Individualism and Social Isolation versus the Extent of Virtual Interactions". Based on these traits, we called the concept of childhood as "Netizen" or "Networked Child" which includes conceptual components; "Virtual-Real Dual Life", "Experience of Living in a Pluralistic World", "Self-Learning and Self-Articulating" and "Social Isolation within Group Activity and Cooperation" are four conceptual components.

## Discussion

Finally, we conclude that "Recognition of the Virtual World in Childhood Education" is essential in educational interaction, ignoring it can create a fundamental gap in the education process and even more importantly lead to the disappearance of childhood.