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# Muslim Consumerism in the West - Getting it Right With Muslim Gen Alpha

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## ***Abstract:***

*In today's globalized world, the intersection of culture and commerce has led to a burgeoning interest in catering to diverse consumer preferences. Within this landscape, the rising demand for halal and Muslim-friendly products and services in Western markets presents a unique challenge. This paper delves into the pressing issue of Muslim consumerism in the West, emphasizing the disparity between the increasing demand for such offerings and the limited supply available.*

*Drawing attention to the shifting consumer demographics, it's evident that the Muslim millennial and Gen Z cohorts have already established themselves as influential consumers with specific preferences. However, the industry may have missed opportunities to engage with these generations fully. Hence, this work redirects attention towards the emerging demographic of Muslim Gen Alpha consumers, aiming to provide insights for brands to address their preferences and requirements proactively.*

*This study is part of the ongoing efforts by MAN, an organization committed to understanding and enhancing the experiences of Muslim consumers from an advertising perspective. The study, in particular, involves interviews with young Muslims born after 2010 (with parents' consent). The primary objective is twofold: first, to elucidate effective strategies that can bridge the gap between supply and demand for halal and Muslim-friendly products and services; and second, to*



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*gain a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes, perceptions, and aspirations of Gen Alpha Muslims concerning branding and advertising in this context.*

*As consumer behavior continues to evolve, it is crucial for brands and marketers to anticipate the preferences of Gen Alpha Muslims, who are growing up in a digital age with unique perspectives. By learning from the shortcomings in catering to earlier generations and capitalizing on the insights from the ongoing study, brands can position themselves advantageously to resonate with and serve the emerging Muslim consumer base. With a strategic approach that marries cultural sensitivity, innovation, and inclusivity, businesses can pave the way for a future of harmonious and mutually beneficial Muslim-Western consumer interactions.*

## Introduction

*“I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me.” - Quran 51:56*

The Quranic verse 51:56 posits a profound theological concept within Islamic belief. It expresses that the creation of two distinct sentient beings, jinn, and humans, serves a primary purpose – engagement in worship. From a mainstream biological standpoint, humans are categorized as homo sapiens, while jinn are regarded as supernatural entities in Islamic theology, having originated from a smokeless, scorching fire.

The verse underscores that the primary objective behind the creation of both jinn and humans is their devotion to worship. In scientific terminology, "worship" can be interpreted as the cognitive and emotional process of recognizing a higher, non-empirically observable power or source. This recognition leads to expressions of reverence, submission, and devotion. Worship, in this context, encompasses various dimensions of human life, including moral conduct, prayer, meditation, and acts of kindness.



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The verse implies that the existence of jinn and humans transcends their biological functions. Instead, it suggests a deeper existential purpose intertwined with spirituality and the pursuit of a meaningful connection with a divine entity, as outlined in Islamic theology.

This Quranic verse highlights that human and jinn existence isn't merely a product of chance or evolution but carries a profound spiritual significance. It underscores that scientific exploration and the recognition of a higher spiritual purpose can coexist harmoniously, encouraging believers to integrate both aspects into their lives."

To maximize our capacity for devout worship, certain prerequisites must be firmly established. Among these prerequisites, the observance of permissible consumption stands as a central tenet of this sacred dedication. This very practice is inherently regarded as an act of worship. Thus, there arises a compelling need to produce and promote high-quality halal products and services, ensuring that Muslim consumers are not only well-informed but also genuinely enthused about their acquisition.

For those raised in the West, a feeling of discernible deficit becomes evident, wherein Millennials and Gen Z generations are confronted with a scarcity of halal offerings that parallel mainstream products sometimes in terms of quality. Additionally, their confidence in the availability of such products and services remains notably fragile.

Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize the multifaceted factors at play in this context. It is in this intricate landscape that the art of high-caliber advertising emerges as a potent instrument. Through effective advertising, the perceptions of Muslim consumers, particularly those of the succeeding generation, toward Muslim-friendly and halal products and services can be positively influenced.

In our past oversight as a Muslim community, we failed to recognize the opportunity to address the needs of Muslim Millennials and Gen Z consumers. However, the imperative now is to

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rectify this and proactively shape a different narrative for Gen Alpha. This proactive approach will ensure that the Muslim youth of the upcoming generation can engage in their worship with a tranquil mind, secure in the knowledge that they are not, either knowingly or unknowingly, partaking in consuming what is impermissible.

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.” Quran 2:168.

## Gen Alpha

The best way to introduce Gen Alpha into this research paper is by summarizing the article, published on Muslimadnetwork.com in February 2023 titled, “Is Your Halal Advertising Ready for Gen Alpha?”.

### Who Is Gen Alpha?

Gen Alpha comprises individuals born between 2010 and 2024, with the eldest members currently at least 11 years old.

In a 2008 report, the consulting firm McCrindle coined the term "Gen Alpha" and estimated that this generation would become the largest in history by 2025, exceeding two billion in population.

Despite being the youngest generation, Gen Alpha wields significant influence in brand preferences and purchasing power, shaping social media trends, influencing popular culture, and emerging as consumers. Moreover, it is projected that they will transition into adulthood, enter the workforce, and form their households by the latter part of the 2020s.



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With Millennials raising their children and Generation Z entering the workforce, Gen Alpha has come to the forefront. Muslim advertisers must be mindful of the nuanced differences that set today's children apart from their older Gen Z counterparts.

**Table 1**

<b>Generational Definitions</b>			
Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z	Gen Alpha	Generation Beta
Born 1980 to 1994	Born 1995 to 2009	Born 2010 to 2024	Born 2025 to 2039

## Characteristics of Gen Alpha

Gen Alpha is projected to be more ethnically diverse than the broader U.S. population, constituting 13% of the U.S. population, with over 73% (Insider Intelligence February 7, 2023) of U.S. children under 12 using the internet.

McCrindle states that globally, over 2.5 million babies are born each week. Gen Alpha, born to Generation Y, comprises the siblings of Generation Z. Remarkably, this generation is poised to make history by becoming the largest one ever, with a projected total of nearly two billion individuals worldwide by 2025. This burgeoning demographic has significant implications for various industries.

Notably, Muslim households are experiencing significant population growth in the United States and the United Kingdom (Quartz - February 20, 2015). Targeting Muslim Gen Alpha can lead to substantial revenue growth for organizations serving this demographic.

McCrindle's report, "Understanding Gen Alpha" highlights that Gen Alpha:

- Is the most affluent generation
- Possesses advanced technological literacy
- Is expected to have longer life spans than any previous generation
- Is likely to spend more time in higher education
- May start earning income later
- May remain at home until their late twenties

Gen Alpha's values and behaviors are influenced by technology, current global events (e.g., COVID-19, geopolitical conflicts), and a polarized world.

Ashley Fell, the co-author of "Gen Alpha", suggests that this generation will be significantly impacted by the economic, social, educational, and psychological effects of COVID-19. They are expected to hold family values in high regard, look up to everyday heroes, embrace remote work opportunities, showcase creativity, and exhibit resilience as they navigate the challenges of their era.

Gen Alpha is likely to mature in an environment marked by heightened global awareness, thanks to their exposure to technology. However, their heavy reliance on technology may have a dual impact - it could accelerate their maturation by broadening their horizons, but it may also lead to a potential drawback by isolating them from essential face-to-face social interactions, diminishing the significance of personal connections.

## The Difference Between GenZ and Gen Alpha

Beyond the evident disparity in their birth years, it is crucial that we establish a clear demarcation between Generation Z and Gen Alpha. This distinction is vital if we aim to effectively shape their preferences for Muslim products and services through strategic advertising efforts.

In the realm of generational cohorts, Gen Z and Gen Alpha may appear superficially similar, yet research conducted by various agencies has unveiled subtle differentiations in their media consumption habits, engagement with gaming, and interactions with brands. A recent comprehensive Gen Alpha study was undertaken by Razorfish in collaboration with GWI and The Pineapple Lounge, encompassing a sizable sample of over 900 respondents representing both generations in the United States.

Several research agencies, including Omnicom and WPP's Wunderman Thompson, have embarked on exploratory endeavors to unravel the unique characteristics of Gen Alpha, with a particular focus on their remarkable proficiency in digital technologies. This pronounced digital acumen exhibited by Gen Alpha has compelled companies to reconfigure their marketing strategies to align more closely with the distinct preferences and behaviors of this emerging generation.

Noteworthy insights gleaned from these research endeavors include:

### Platforms, Devices, and Gaming

Gen Alpha's initiation into the world of devices and technology commences at an exceptionally tender age, with a significant proportion having access to tablets between the ages of 3 and 5. Progressively, they gravitate towards more advanced tech gadgets, including video game consoles, earbuds, and smart TVs, typically during the ages of 6 to 7. The incorporation of laptops into their daily lives typically transpires between the ages of 8 to 9, while smartphones become a ubiquitous presence by the age of 10.

Unlike their Gen Z counterparts, Gen Alpha perceives gaming as an avenue for the expression of their creative impulses, rather than a means of escapism. Particularly, YouTube emerges as the preeminent platform for Gen Alpha, with a notable 51% of them discovering brands through this



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platform, contrasting with the 47% of Gen Z individuals who rely more heavily on conventional social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok.

## Brand Relationships

The early immersion of Gen Alpha into online platforms and digital devices has expedited their brand sophistication. Brands that were historically geared toward adult audiences are now attracting Gen Alpha consumers, as they move away from more child-centric brands.

Among the favored brands of Gen Alpha are prominent names such as Netflix, Disney, Nintendo, Amazon, Nike, and Apple. Gen Alpha exercises a considerable influence over family decision-making processes, playing a pivotal role in shaping the retail experiences of their households.

Notably, brands are increasingly cultivating connections with Gen Alpha through influencer marketing and collaborations with content creators, leveraging these relationships to gather valuable data.

## Identity and Passions

Gen Alpha manifests a heightened inclination toward fostering a sense of purpose in comparison to Gen Z. A significant cohort (30%) of Gen Alpha envisions their future career trajectories revolving around endeavors that involve helping people or aiding animals in need. This contrasts with the 15% of Gen Z individuals who share such aspirations.

Gen Alpha demonstrates a distinct proclivity for values such as sustainability, inclusivity, and receptiveness to diverse perspectives, outstripping their Gen Z counterparts in these domains.





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Mental health occupies a prominent position in the priorities of Gen Alpha, with a notable 75% of 8 to 10-year-olds pondering this aspect and seeking outlets such as physical exercise, outdoor activities, and conversations with family and friends to address it.

While Gen Alpha readily embraces technology, they concurrently harbor a desire for balance between their online and offline pursuits, with mental health support emerging as a pivotal determinant of brand affinity.

In summary, the empirical findings shed light on the distinctive attributes, digital fluency, strong sense of purpose, and values that characterize Gen Alpha. These revelations introduce both challenges and opportunities for brands aiming to establish meaningful connections with this burgeoning generation. Strategies involving influencer marketing and addressing the nuanced aspects of mental health constitute essential considerations for enterprises seeking to effectively engage with Gen Alpha in their marketing endeavors.

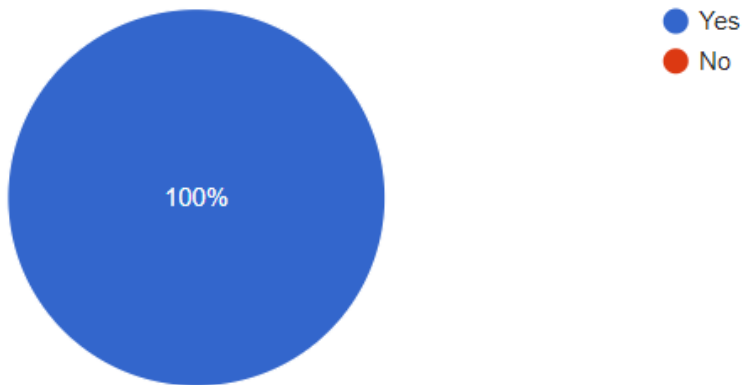
## Attracting and Engaging Muslim Gen Alpha

### Consumer Survey Report on Muslim Gen Alpha Consumerism

We posed inquiries to Muslim children between the ages of 7 and 11. The questions were designed to assess the awareness and sentiments of this particular age group concerning Halal products and their shopping practices. These questions yield valuable insights into the manner in which Muslim Gen Alpha consumers perceive the significance of abiding by Halal standards when determining their purchasing choices.

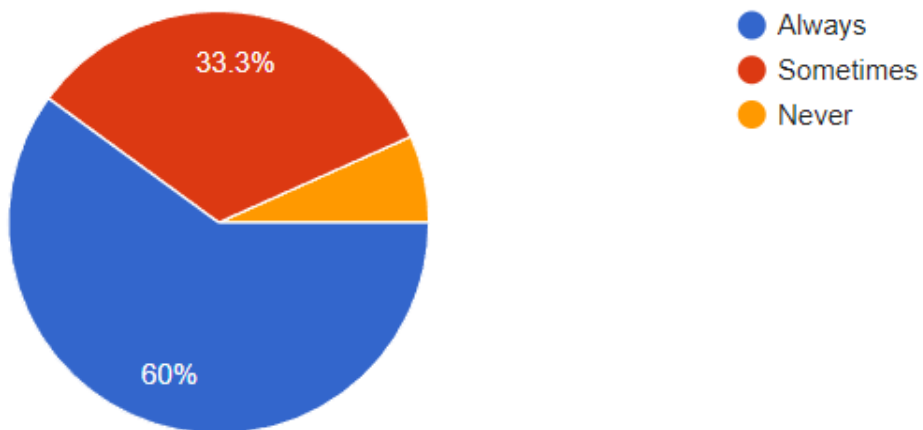
Do you know what the term "Halal" means when it comes to food and products you buy?

#### **Figure 1**



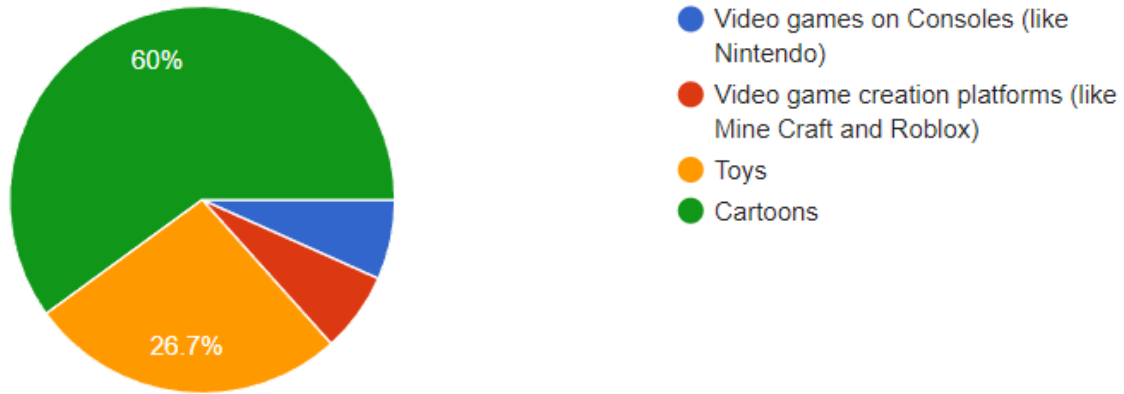
When you go shopping with your family, do you pay attention to whether the products you buy are Halal or not?

**Figure 2**



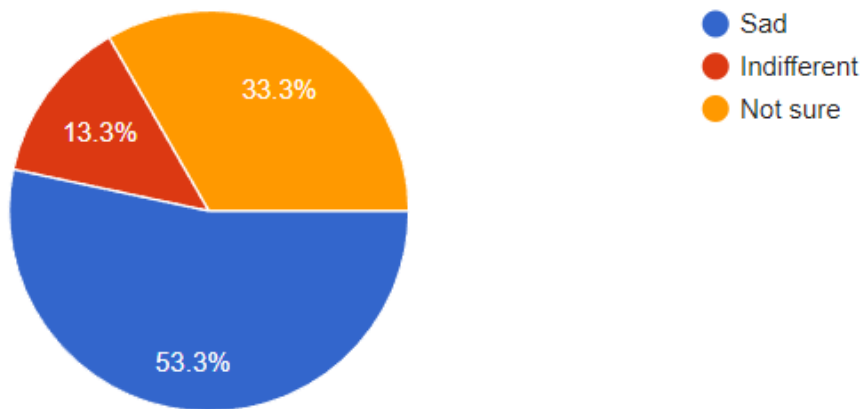
What types of products do you think should have more Muslim representation?

**Figure 3**



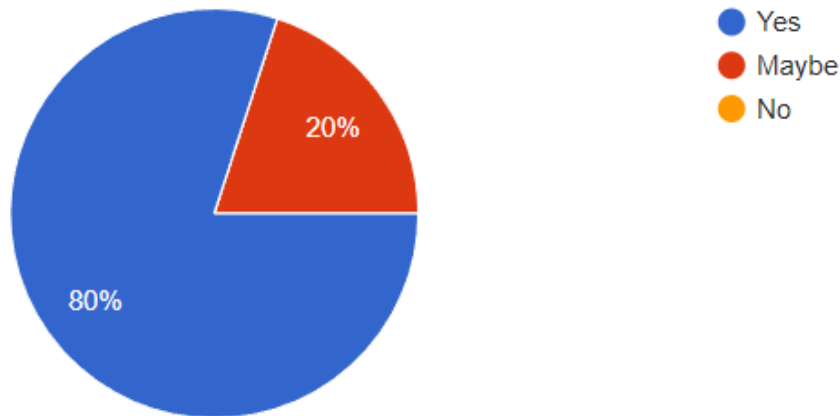
How do you feel when you find out that something you like or want to buy is not Halal?

**Figure 4**



Would you prefer to buy products that are certified as Halal even if they sometimes cost a little more?

**Figure 5**



In summary, our findings indicate that the Muslim Gen Alpha possesses a keen awareness of the halal status of consumer products, deeming the term "halal" as a crucial determinant in their choices. Even among this youngest of cohorts of the Muslim population, aged no more than twelve, there is a noticeable attention to the selection of halal products during shopping, showcasing an early understanding of adhering to permissible dietary and lifestyle.

Additionally, this generation expresses a desire for increased representation in cartoons, highlighting the importance of inclusivity in media. Notably, over half of the respondents express disappointment when a preferred product lacks a halal alternative, emphasizing their conscientious approach to consumption.

The commitment to Halal extends beyond preferences, as demonstrated by the willingness of Muslim Gen Alpha to pay extra for products with halal certification, with none of the respondents opposing this notion. This underscores their dedication to adhering to halal standards and the significance they place on the availability of certified options.



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## Ethical Issues of Advertising to Under-age Audiences

In the article, “Is Your Halal Advertising Ready for Gen Alpha?”, we discussed approaching this consumer demographic under strict ethical guidance.

In the context of targeting the Gen Alpha demographic, which primarily consumes online content without supervision, the responsibility associated with marketing products and services to this younger audience is of paramount importance. Muslim advertisers must exercise diligence in their ethical and legal considerations before embarking on advertising campaigns.

To ensure the enrichment of young audiences' experiences while safeguarding their well-being, it is imperative for Muslim businesses to uphold rigorous ethical standards and adhere to Islamic advertising principles. The Association of National Advertisers underscores the significance of responsible marketing, particularly when it comes to protecting children, a stance widely acknowledged in our society.

The Association of National Advertisers articulates:

"Our society has long recognized the need to protect children and responsible marketing is an essential component. In addition to industry self-regulatory guidelines and practices, federal and state laws offer a complex set of protections for children and their parents and caretakers."

Here, we present some valuable resources to aid in maintaining the integrity of Halal marketing and advertising. It is important to note that this list may not be exhaustive, and the appropriateness of specific guidelines may depend on the location of your business. Rigorous due diligence is strongly advised.

1. The Federal Trade Commission's recent Disclosures 101 guidelines.
2. The Federal Trade Commission's Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.



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3. The Better Business Bureau's Children's Advertising Review Unit.
  4. The Association of National Advertisers' guidelines for ethical marketing practices (particularly referring to pages 11 and 27).

To enhance the ethical standards of advertising practices targeting children, consider the following measures among others:

- Adhering to national and international policies, rules, and regulations.
- Integrating Islamic advertising principles into your advertising campaigns aimed at children.
- Procuring parental consent and ensuring transparency in terms and conditions.
- Scrutinizing and avoiding content that may pose risks or foster addictive behavior in children.
- Rejecting unattainable stereotypes that may induce anxiety.
- Acquiring advanced parental consent for data collection and storage.
- Safeguarding collected information and refraining from disclosing it to third parties without parental consent.

It is worth noting that President Joe Biden has called for legislative action to "ban targeted advertising on children" (Politico - February 7, 2023) in his State of the Union address. While a complete ban may be unlikely, the prospect of imposing stricter privacy policies concerning children's data remains feasible. Advertisers should remain vigilant and adaptable to evolving regulatory landscapes in this regard.

## Capturing and Sustaining Gen Alpha's Attention for Your Halal Brand

“In 2021, Muslims around the world spent a total of two trillion U.S. dollars across the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, fashion, travel, and media/recreation sectors. The global Muslim



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market has the potential to grow to about 2.8 trillion dollars by 2025. The largest market for Muslim consumers is the halal food and beverage sector.” ( Statista - March 3, 2023)

Given the burgeoning expansion of the halal industry and the proliferation of diverse offerings, it is incumbent upon us to anticipate a corresponding surge in the availability of superior products and services. In light of this, it becomes imperative to establish a meticulously tailored marketing and advertising strategy to effectively cater to this discerning market.

Drawing from the research previously discussed in this paper, it is evident that a set of strategies must be implemented to effectively engage and retain the interest of Muslim Gen Alpha. These strategies are poised to bring about a transformation in their outlook and interactions with halal product offerings.

### **Gaming**

Gen Alpha, born into the age of smartphones and gaming, regards these technologies as indispensable elements of their daily existence, akin to water and electricity for previous generations. To strike a chord with this tech-savvy demographic, integrating a halal gaming dimension into your Muslim brand can prove to be a potent strategy for capturing their interest and securing a prominent position in their awareness.

### **Cartoons**

In the 1980s and early 1990s, a multitude of cartoons were primarily designed to promote existing or upcoming toy lines, exemplified by franchises such as Hello Kitty, GI Joe, My Little Pony, Transformers, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Considering that a significant percentage (60%) of our Gen Alpha survey participants expressed the desire for increased Muslim character representation in cartoons, it may be prudent to create educative, ethical cartoons that align with Islamic guidelines on image portrayal. Depending on



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the relevance of the products, this approach could be a highly effective means of capturing the attention of Gen Alpha and fostering an affinity for your brand.

### **Interactivity**

Interactivity holds a pivotal role in engaging Gen Alpha beyond the realm of gaming. As true digital natives, Gen Alpha can swiftly discern poorly-placed paid promotional content. Employing interactive tools such as polls and promotions can effectively prevent them from casually scrolling past your brand's content.

### **Gen Z influencers**

Harnessing the influence of Gen Z influencers proves highly effective in capturing the attention of this younger generation and shaping their perspectives. Collaborating with these content creators can be a fruitful endeavor. Exploring partnerships with smaller influencers who align with your budgetary constraints is a viable approach. For insights on identifying the right influencers, refer to "How to Find the Right Influencers for Your Halal Brand" and "Marketing to Muslim Consumers With Meta-influencers" on [muslimadnetwork.com](http://muslimadnetwork.com).

### **Global commerce**

The fact that Gen Alpha represents the most diverse and globally oriented generation offers a remarkable opportunity for your Muslim brand to reach a global audience. Gen Alpha exhibits a willingness to engage in global commerce, making it an ideal target audience for your brand's international campaigns.

### **Active engagement**

Gen Alpha's familiarity with technology has instilled a desire for active engagement rather than passive consumption. TikTok, despite its age-restricted content for those below thirteen, is an important social media platform among Gen Alpha due to its dynamic nature where consumers also serve as content creators.



## **Transparency**

The Institute for Family Studies emphasizes the importance of age-appropriate social media usage, particularly for children under 13. As a responsible Muslim brand adhering to ethical principles, it is incumbent upon you to ensure it is clear that your social media content is not tailored for very young audiences if that is the case, aligning with these guidelines.

## **Connect with millennials**

Notably, children often form brand associations early in life, shaped by their parents' choices. Gen Alpha is no exception, and their preferences are influenced by millennial parents. Ashley Fell, Co-Author of Gen Alpha, underscores that this generation is characterized by its constant connectivity and access to information, leading to unique consumer behaviors and evolving attitudes.

## **Share your values**

Moreover, Gen Alpha's exposure to conversations about food ingredients and participation in activities such as sorting compost from recycling imparts a keen awareness of product life cycles. As consumers, Gen Alpha actively seeks information and values brands that align with their concerns. This underscores the imperative for your halal or Muslim brand to craft a compelling narrative. It must possess a clear purpose and champion solutions to societal challenges that resonate with this generation's values and priorities. Gen Alpha's receptivity to socially conscious brands means your story must be authentic, addressing issues that matter deeply to them.

## **Conclusion**

## **References**



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1. [McCrindle- Understanding Generation Alpha](#)
  2. [Insider Intelligence - Gen Alpha will be more diverse than the rest of the US population](#)
  3. [Quartz - There's a Muslim baby boom in the UK and it's going to hit the ballot box](#)
  4. [Mark McCrindle, Ashley Fell, Sam Buckerfield - Generation Alpha: Understanding Our Children and Helping Them Thrive](#)
  5. [Razorfish - Exploring Generation Alpha- A look into the future](#)
  6. [Politico - State of the Union - Biden calls for ban of online ads targeting children](#)
  7. [Statista - Existing and potential value of Muslim market worldwide in 2021 and 2025](#)