

The Impact Of The Instant Digital Era On Impulsive Behavior And Patience Waiting For The Turn Of Grade Iii Students Of Sdn 76 Bengkulu City

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ABSTRACT

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The development of the digital era that is instantaneous affects children's behavior patterns, including the ability to control themselves and patience in waiting for their turn. This study aims to describe the impact of the instant digital era on impulsive behavior and patience waiting for the turn of grade III students of SDN 76 Bengkulu City. The research uses a qualitative descriptive approach with research subjects in the form of grade III students, classroom teachers, and classroom learning situations. The data collection technique was carried out through observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and inductive conclusions. The results showed that students tended to show impulsive behavior, such as wanting to get a turn immediately, cutting off friends' conversations, showing impatience when queuing, and having difficulty waiting for learning results that took place gradually. These findings suggest that exposure to digital media that provides quick response and instant gratification contributes to decreased ability to delay desires and low tolerance for the waiting process. However, the ability to control impulses and wait for their turn can still be developed through discipline habituation, assistance in the use of gadgets by parents, and learning strategies that train self-regulation at school. Therefore, synergy between schools and families is needed in shaping children's character of patience and self control in the digital era.



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Introduction

The development of digital technology has made children more familiar with fast, practical, and instant services. This pattern forms a habit of suppressing desires to be fulfilled immediately, so that children tend to be less resistant to waiting and more easily show spontaneous reactions when their desires are not immediately fulfilled. In the context of elementary school, the habit is seen in behavior when waiting in line, taking turns answering questions, or waiting for a friend to finish speaking. The ease of access to digital entertainment, social media, and algorithm-based platforms has created a new learning environment that conditions children to get used to getting instant responses to their every action (Vedechkina & Borgons, 2021a).

This phenomenon does not stand alone, but is part of a broader cultural transformation

due to the digitalization of daily life. In Indonesia, the use of gadgets among elementary school age children has increased significantly, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic forced learning to switch to online platforms (Lutviana et al., 2021). Although the post pandemic situation has restored face to face learning, the habits of using gadgets that have been formed tend to remain and even intensify. (Ramadan & Laeli, 2024) shows that digital media significantly affects the psychological development of elementary school children, including their emotional aspects and social interactions. This condition is a serious concern because the age range of elementary school is a critical period for the formation of character, social habits, and self regulation skills.

From a neuropsychological perspective, constant exposure to digital content affects the reward system in children's brains. Every notification, like, comment, or new level in the online game triggers a release of dopamine that provides an instant sensation of pleasure (Grunewald et al., 2022) . This mechanism is similar to the reinforcement pattern studied in behavioral theory, in which repeated positive responses will reinforce the tendency to seek immediate gratification. Social media platforms and digital entertainment apps are algorithmically designed to maximize user engagement through quick and unexpected feedback, creating patterns of compulsive behavior that are difficult to stop, especially in children whose self-control capacity is still in its development. (Maturro et al., 2023).

Recent research shows that exposure to digital media is related to increased impulsivity in children and adolescents. (Wu et al., 2022) found that excessive screen use in children promotes impulsive behavior and hyperactivity. (Maria et al., 2022) It also noted that increased screen time in urban children is a risk factor for inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behavior. These findings are in line with a meta analysis conducted (Bustamante et al., 2023) that shows the negative effects of screen exposure on the development of children's executive functions. The executive function in question includes the ability to inhibit impulsive responses, plan actions, as well as distract all the skills that are urgently needed in the classroom environment and daily social interactions (Singh et al., 2022).

A study (Schulz van Endert, 2021) in children aged 10 to 13 years found that addictive use of gadgets was positively associated with delay discounting, which is the tendency to choose small gifts that are immediately available over larger but delayed gifts. Furthermore, self-control has proven to be an intermediate variable that determines the use of gadgets and academic achievement. This means that children who are weak in self control and are used to excessive use of gadgets tend to find it more difficult to delay gratification, including in the context of waiting for their turn in class. This condition is exacerbated by the fact that short video platforms such as TikTok condition children to consume content in a matter of seconds, so that the ability to wait and be patient is gradually eroded (Qin et al., 2022).

Research on delay of gratification has consistently shown that waiting ability is closely related to children's self control strategies as well as the socio cultural context in which they grew up. (Ding et al., 2021) Identify three classes of children's self control behaviors while waiting for a reward, namely passive, active, and disruptive. Children in the disruptive category showed high levels of agitation and vocalization, and were more likely to fail procrastination tasks. It is important to note that this pattern is not purely innate, but rather is strongly influenced by the environment and habits formed early on. In a sociocultural context, (Sun et al., 2022) it was found that children in environments that valued the value of waiting and patience tended to be more successful in the task of delaying gratification. This implies that an instantaneous digital environment can directly undermine such social habits.

At the elementary school level, impulsive behavior and low tolerance for waiting are not just individual discipline problems, but have far-reaching implications for classroom dynamics and learning quality. Students who are used to getting instant responses from gadgets often have difficulty following a slower learning rhythm, waiting for their turn to speak, or being patient while the teacher explains the material gradually (Limniou, 2021). The impact of gadget use in elementary school is not only on academic achievement, but also

on students' ability to interact socially in a normative way, including in terms of respecting turns and managing impatience. This phenomenon is a real challenge for classroom teachers who must balance the use of technology as a learning medium and controlling its negative impact on student behavior (Budiwati, 2022).

Within the framework of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children in grade III of elementary school (around 8-9 years old) are at a concrete operational stage characterized by the development of logical thinking skills and self control that are still in the process of maturing. At this age, self-regulation is being actively built through social interaction and daily experiences, so that the influence of the environment, including the digital environment, greatly determines the direction of its development (Uzundağ et al., 2022). Vygotsky's theory also corroborates this by emphasizing the role of proximal developmental zones (ZPDs) and social mediation in the formation of self control abilities. When children interact too much with a passive reactive digital environment, their chances of developing the ability to delay responses through meaningful social interactions become reduced (Cong-Lem, 2022).

From the perspective of Bandura's social learning theory, children learn behavior through observation and imitation. If their immediate environment, both parents and peers, shows an uncontrolled pattern of gadget use and prioritizes instant gratification, then a similar pattern has the potential to be embedded in children. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of consistent screen time restrictions in many households (Lunkenheimer et al., 2023). The role of parents in supervising the use of social media in elementary school age children is crucial, but in reality many parents do not have an adequate digital parenting strategy. This condition creates a gap between the school's demands to form students who are patient, orderly, and able to take turns, and the habits that have been formed in the home environment (Oktaviani et al., 2024).

Based on these conditions, this study aims to describe the impact of the instant digital era on impulsive behavior and patience waiting for the turn of third grade students of SDN 76 Bengkulu City. The focus of this study is important because at elementary school age, self control and the ability to delay desires are still developing and are greatly influenced by the home environment, school, and technology use habits. In addition, Bengkulu City as a city that has experienced an increase in internet penetration and the use of gadgets among children is a relevant local context to be studied. The findings of this study are expected to strengthen children's character education, classroom discipline, and social habits in elementary schools, as well as provide practical recommendations for teachers and parents in managing the impact of the digital era on children's development.

Method

This study uses a descriptive-qualitative approach with the aim of describing the phenomenon of impulsive behavior and patience waiting for their turn in third grade students of SDN 76 Bengkulu City in the context of exposure to the instant digital era. The research subjects were grade III students, classroom teachers, and classroom learning situations. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation of student behavior during learning, semi-structured interviews with classroom teachers. Data analysis is carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and inductive conclusion drawn. Conclusions were drawn based on the relationship between the results of field observation and theoretical support from the latest literature on impulsivity and delay of gratification in children.

Results and Discussion

The results of observations in grade III of SDN 76 Bengkulu City show a pattern of behavior that reflects the low ability to delay desire. This pattern can be seen in several forms of concrete behavior, including students tend to want to take a turn when playing or

answering questions, even before their turn arrives, some students interrupt a friend's conversation without waiting for the proper opportunity to speak, some students show open expressions of discomfort when required to wait, either through disturbing attitudes, verbal protests, or facial expressions that show frustration.

Impulsive behavior is also identified in daily situations at school, such as lack of patience when waiting in line to borrow stationery from teachers or friends, Showing impatience when the task division process takes a while, Difficulty waiting for simple assessment results that require a gradual process from the teacher.

Overall, these patterns lead to impulsive behavior, which is the urge to act immediately without considering the social rules, turns, or instructions that apply in the classroom. This behavior is not sporadic, but rather appears to be a recurring and consistent tendency in most of the observed students.

1. The Relationship of Impulsive Behavior with Digital Media Exposure

The phenomenon of impulsive behavior found in grade III students is in line with the results of previous research that examined the relationship between exposure to digital media and impulsivity in children. Research in the framework of the I.Family study found that one additional hour of smartphone and internet exposure was positively and significantly associated with an increase in impulsivity scores in children and adolescents (Qin et al., 2022).

In addition to the duration of use, the type of use of digital media also contributes to impulsivity. Multitasking, which is the habit of using several devices or platforms at the same time, has been shown to be positively associated with higher levels of impulsivity. This shows that not only how long children interact with digital devices, but also how they use them also form impulsive behavior patterns (Müller et al., 2021).

The findings support the hypothesis that children who are used to getting instant responses from gadgets such as instant notifications, readily available content, and interactions that do not recognize procrastination tend to have a harder time practicing restraint and waiting for their turn in a classroom environment that demands patience and order (Wartberg et al., 2021).

The findings of this study indicate that the impulsive behavior displayed by third-grade students is closely associated with their exposure to digital media in everyday life. Children who frequently interact with smartphones, tablets, and internet-based applications tend to expect immediate responses and instant gratification, which gradually shapes their behavioral patterns. These tendencies become evident during classroom activities where students often interrupt peers, respond without waiting for instructions, or show impatience when required to take turns. Such behaviors reflect difficulties in delaying gratification and regulating emotional responses in situations that require self-control. These findings are consistent with the results of the I.Family study, which reported that each additional hour of smartphone and internet use was positively associated with higher impulsivity scores among children and adolescents (Qin et al., 2022). The evidence suggests that prolonged digital media exposure may influence children's behavioral regulation by reinforcing preferences for immediate rewards rather than delayed outcomes.

Beyond the duration of digital media use, the manner in which children interact with digital technology also plays an important role in shaping impulsive behavior. Many children simultaneously engage with multiple digital platforms, such as watching online videos while playing games or communicating through messaging applications. This multitasking behavior continuously exposes children to rapid shifts of attention, immediate feedback, and constant stimulation, reducing opportunities to develop sustained concentration and patience. As a consequence, children become accustomed to fast-paced interactions and may experience difficulty adapting to classroom environments that require orderly participation and delayed responses. Previous research demonstrates that media multitasking is positively associated

with higher levels of impulsivity, indicating that behavioral outcomes are influenced not only by screen time but also by the patterns of digital media consumption (Müller et al., 2021). These findings emphasize the importance of understanding both the quantity and quality of children's digital experiences when examining their behavioral development.

The classroom observations further reveal that children who regularly experience instant responses from digital devices often struggle to adjust to learning situations that require waiting, listening, and respecting others' opportunities to participate. Educational settings demand self-regulation, emotional control, and the ability to delay personal desires for the benefit of collaborative learning. However, the immediate rewards commonly provided by smartphones, online games, and social media applications may gradually reduce children's tolerance for delayed gratification. Wartberg et al. (2021) argue that continuous exposure to digital environments characterized by rapid responses and uninterrupted access to content can weaken children's capacity for self-control and increase impulsive behavioral tendencies. These findings reinforce the present study by demonstrating that impulsive behavior observed in elementary school students is closely linked to the characteristics of the contemporary digital environment. Consequently, schools and families should work collaboratively to promote healthy digital habits while providing learning experiences that intentionally strengthen patience, self-regulation, and responsible social interaction.

2. Self Control and Self Regulation as Determining Factors for Waiting Ability

The ability to wait for their turn cannot be separated from the broader aspects, namely self control and self regulation strategies. Studies of 5 year olds show that certain self control strategies such as fidgeting, vocalization (talking to yourself), and anticipatory focus (focusing on the expected outcome) are significantly associated with children's success in delaying gratification.

Furthermore, other research confirms that the ability to delay gratification is not solely determined by innate factors, but is strongly influenced by cultural habits and contexts. This has important implications: waiting skills can be formed, trained, and improved through consistent habituation and the support of the right social environment.

In the context of grade III students, these findings mean that the impatient behaviors identified are not solely a problem of discipline or innate character of the child. More than that, this behavior is a reflection of the development stage of self regulation that is still ongoing and requires targeted and continuous guidance and training from teachers and parents.

The ability to wait for one's turn is closely related to the broader concepts of self-control and self-regulation, both of which play a fundamental role in children's social and emotional development. Waiting patiently requires children to manage their impulses, regulate their emotions, and suppress the desire for immediate gratification in order to comply with social expectations. These competencies are particularly important in classroom settings, where students are expected to respect rules, listen to others, and participate in learning activities in an orderly manner. Research involving five-year-old children has demonstrated that specific self-control strategies, including fidgeting, self-directed vocalization, and anticipatory focus on future outcomes, are positively associated with children's ability to delay gratification. Such strategies help children redirect their attention away from immediate desires while maintaining focus on longer-term rewards. These findings suggest that self-regulation is not merely an internal psychological process but also a set of learnable behaviors that can be strengthened through appropriate educational experiences.

The development of self-control is also influenced by environmental and sociocultural factors rather than being determined solely by innate characteristics. Children's daily interactions with parents, teachers, and peers provide continuous opportunities to learn behavioral regulation through observation, guidance, and repeated practice. Supportive educational environments that consistently reinforce patience, responsibility, and emotional

regulation enable children to gradually develop stronger self-control abilities. Likewise, family environments that establish clear routines, reasonable expectations, and positive discipline contribute significantly to children's capacity to delay gratification. Previous studies have emphasized that cultural values and habitual experiences shape children's responses to situations requiring patience and self-restraint. Consequently, the ability to wait for one's turn should be viewed as a developmental competency that can be nurtured systematically through continuous guidance and positive social interaction.

Within the context of third-grade elementary students, the impatient behaviors observed in this study should not be interpreted merely as indicators of poor discipline or undesirable personal characteristics. Instead, these behaviors reflect an ongoing developmental process in which children are still acquiring the capacity to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and actions appropriately. Individual differences in self-regulation are expected during middle childhood because executive functioning and emotional control continue to mature throughout this period. Teachers therefore play an essential role in providing structured learning experiences that intentionally cultivate patience, turn-taking, and emotional regulation through classroom routines and collaborative activities. Parents likewise contribute by reinforcing similar expectations and behavioral practices within the home environment, ensuring consistency across children's daily experiences. Continuous collaboration between schools and families is therefore essential for strengthening children's self-control and enabling them to develop the patience required for successful academic participation and healthy social relationships.

3. The Impact of the Digital Era on Children's Expectations and Learning Patterns

From an educational perspective, the instant digital era is slowly shaping children's expectations of speed of response and results. Children who are exposed to instant entertainment (such as autoplay videos, always on digital games), quick answers from search engines, as well as immediate attention from device notifications, have the potential to bring the same expectations into the context of classroom learning (Vedechkina & The Borgons, 2021).

When expectations of quick outcomes meet the rhythm of classroom learning that is gradual and structured, inconsistencies arise that then appear as impatience, attention deficits, and impulsive behavior. This is most likely the basis for the behavior patterns found in third-grade students of SDN 76 Bengkulu City. (Tutkun, 2022).

Therefore, teachers play a strategic role in bridging this gap by implementing instructional strategies that systematically develop children's turn-taking and waiting skills during classroom interactions. Structured games can be designed to explicitly introduce and reinforce the concepts of taking turns and following queue rules in an engaging learning environment. Group discussions should also incorporate alternating speaking opportunities to encourage children to practice listening patiently while respecting the contributions of their peers. In addition, the consistent use of a talking stick or similar classroom mechanism can establish clear routines that regulate speaking turns and promote orderly communication. Positive reinforcement should be provided regularly to acknowledge and encourage students who demonstrate patience, wait for their turn, and show respect for others during learning activities. The consistent application of these strategies is expected to strengthen children's social competence while fostering respectful and cooperative classroom interactions.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the instant digital era has significantly influenced the impulsive behavior and turn-taking patience of third-grade students at SDN 76 Bengkulu City. Frequent exposure to smartphones, internet-based platforms, and rapidly accessible digital content has contributed to children's tendency to

seek immediate gratification, resulting in reduced self-control, impatience in waiting for their turn, and increased impulsive responses during classroom interactions. These behaviors are further reinforced by limited parental supervision and inadequate digital parenting practices, which reduce opportunities for children to develop patience and emotional regulation. Nevertheless, the study demonstrates that self-regulation and the ability to delay gratification remain developable competencies that can be strengthened through consistent educational interventions. Structured classroom activities, including rule-based games, collaborative discussions with turn-taking procedures, and positive reinforcement, effectively promote patience and responsible social behavior. Active collaboration between teachers and parents is equally essential to ensure that positive behavioral habits established at school are consistently reinforced within the home environment. Therefore, strengthening digital parenting, implementing child-centered learning strategies, and fostering school-family partnerships are fundamental to minimizing the negative impacts of the instant digital era while supporting children's social, emotional, and academic development.

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