

## **Impacts of Instant Gratification on the Academic Achievement of EFL Learners: A Survey among Saudi University Students**

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**Abstract:** Learners are frequently challenged by distractors that undermine their self-control and affect their academic achievement. The purpose of this study was to examine how Saudi EFL learners' achievement is affected by instant gratification and explore the strategies learners employ to resist immediate pleasure. The scale of self-control developed by Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004) was distributed to 98 students in the English department to identify those with low self-control, of which 36 students were selected. The findings revealed that low self-control affected students' ability to control their emotions and regulate their thoughts; affecting their academic performance. This study demonstrated that learners employed strategies to resist temptation, such as thinking critically about their future goals, planning, and goal-setting. The participants failed to resist temptations many times because of the habits they developed in responding to immediate pleasure. Our findings have significant implications for educators and policymakers when considering implementing training activities and developing curricula to foster learners' self-control. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all students in other universities, whose conditions and environments might be different, as self-control is affected by other factors such as culture, mood, and individual differences.

**Keywords:** academic achievement, distractors, EFL learners, instant gratification, self-control

### **1. Introduction**

Academic excellence is paramount in the field of education. However, achieving this may collide with challenges and restrictions. Among these challenges to academic excellence is instant gratification, which significantly affects the academic journey of English learners. The inclination to immediate gratification undermines EFL learners' perseverance in learning a new language, and limits their ability to resist distractors, resulting in poor academic performance. Oliveira (2019) defines instant gratification as the temptation, and resulting tendency, to forego a future benefit to obtain a less rewarding but more immediate pleasure. Research has shown that academic excellence is associated with self-control and the ability of learners to regulate their behavior and thoughts and resist temptation, whereas seeking instant gratification has been identified as a potential deterrent to successful academic performance. Previous studies have explored the relationship between self-control and academic performance, and revealed the influence of self-control on learning outcomes, indicating a positive correlation between self-control and self-regulation on academic performance (Jensen 1998; Zimmerman and Kitsantas 2014; Komarraju, Ramsey, and Rinella 2013; Beland and Murphy 2016; Al-Yami,

Abdulwahed, Azhar, Binsaddik and Bafaraj 2021). Nevertheless, previous research has not precisely investigated the connection between instant gratification and the performance of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Saudi Arabia. Instead, the focus has been on the overall correlation between immediate gratification and academic accomplishments. Consequently, the present study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of immediate gratification on the academic achievement of EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and exploring the methods they employ to resist short-term temptations.

Self-control is central in daily life; it helps people avoid impulses and gratification and regulates their behavior to attain long-term goals. Tangney, Baumeister and Boone (2004) defined self-control as “the ability to override or change one’s inner responses, as well as to interrupt behavioral tendencies (such as impulses), and refrain from acting on them”. Baumeister, Vohs, and Tice (2007) define self-control as “the capacity to alter one’s own responses, especially to bring them into line with standards such as ideals, morals, and social expectations, and to support the pursuit of long-term goals”. In the field of education, self-control may affect student performance, either positively or negatively. Students with higher self-control can focus on their goals and perform better academically, whereas students who lack self-control and unclear goals encounter difficulties in their academic achievement. Research on academic achievement shows that cognitive ability plays a major role in academic achievement. Jensen (1998) demonstrates a strong link between intelligence and achievement. However, recent research has emphasized the important role of non-cognitive factors, such as self-control, academic discipline, and self-regulation, in academic performance. Judistira and Wijaya (2017) cited Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2014), who indicated that self-discipline and self-regulation could predict student achievement. Komarraju et al. (2013) claimed that academic discipline was good at predicting student performance. Mische, Shoda, and Rodriguez (1989) found that children who were able to delay gratification for a longer period achieved higher scholastic performance and coped better with frustration and stress. However, participants with lower levels of self-control encountered difficulties in their lives. Oriol et al. (2017) investigated the roles of self-control and grit in school success. Their study concluded that grit and self-control have a strong association in primary and secondary students, although primary students scored better than secondary students. Kuhnle, Hofer, and Kilian (2011) believed that self-control is a resource associated with positive outcomes in people’s lives. The results of their regression analyses showed that self-control was a significant predictor for school grades and life balance. Most recent studies have focused on examining the role of self-control in long-term goals and concluded that delaying gratification predicts academic achievement (Mischel 2014; Duckworth and Gross 2014; Duckworth and Carlson 2013). De Ridder et al. (2012) stated that self-control is associated with positive life outcomes such as ego strength, effortful control, and the Big Five conscientiousness. Job, Friese, and Bernecker (2015) cited Duckworth and Seligman (2005) indicating that some studies suggest that self-control is more

important than intelligence in determining how well a student will perform in their studies.

However, low levels of self-control should not be underestimated. Learners' academic achievement may be affected if they do not receive proper guidance or protection from distractors. It is important for educational institutions, educators, and parents to establish clear guidelines and rules to minimize the use of technology and other potential distractors that affect learner performance. Beland and Murphy (2016) conducted a study investigating the influence of restricting mobile phone use in schools on learner productivity. Their findings showed an improvement in students' test scores and achievements in schools where mobile phone use was restricted. These results indicate that low-achieving students are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones in class.

Buker (2011) provided an overview of Freud's explanation of self-control (1911; 1959) saying that he established a foundation for the concept of self-control with his "pleasure-principle" and "reality-principle." "Pleasure-principle" refers to the desire for immediate gratification and "reality-principle" refers to the delay of gratification. The pleasure principle drives individuals to look for pleasure and avoid pain. However, during the process of growing up, individuals learn the necessity of bearing pain and resisting gratification due to problems created by life's realities.

Previous studies have shown an association between self-control and student performance, but there is still limited research on the nature of the effects of instant gratification on academic achievement and on the possible strategies that can be used by learners to avoid immediate pleasure. Thus, this study aims to bridge this gap, explore the nature of the effects of immediate gratification on student achievement, and illustrate the strategies employed by learners to delay gratification. The findings of this study will significantly enhance our understanding of the impact that instant gratification has on Saudi students learning English as a foreign language. This knowledge is essential for developing effective interventions or educational strategies to improve these learners' academic performance. Furthermore, the study will offer recommendations that contribute to the development of self-control and more effective tactics to help learners resist distractions.

Various studies have been conducted on the strategies learners use to resist temptations and focus on their long-term goals. Wenzel et al. (2022) investigated the self-regulatory strategies people use to resist three types of self-control conflicts— initiating, persisting in boring activities, and inhibiting impulses to act. Their findings showed a list of 26 strategies to avoid these three types of self-control conflict. Among them were "seeking social support," "adopting a process focus," "distracting oneself from the activity or temptation," "focusing on positive consequences," "anticipating self-reward," "focusing on negative consequences," "goal setting," "monitoring one's goal progress," "planning/scheduling," etc. Cosentino, McCarroll and Michaelian (2022) studied the role of mental time travel in overcoming time discounting and explained the effects of mental time travel on

temporal discounting. They developed a framework that assigns central roles to emotion, which consists of three central elements (properly understood as multidimensional constructs involving feelings, action readiness, and other components), the temporally extended self, and metacognition. Their framework provides a logical explanation of how mental time travel assists in resisting temptation and procrastination. Cayubit et al. (2016) conducted research on the relationship between delay in gratification (e.g., missing out on a social party to stay at home and study) and the need for affiliation (e.g., establishing close interpersonal relationships with others), to predict academic achievement among Filipino high school students. The results showed that academic achievement was positively predicted by the delay of gratification but negatively predicted by the need for affiliation, an indication of the ability of high school students to prioritize goals.

Previous research has shown that time management, setting goals, and pre-planning are important factors that help in resisting low self-control and tools to improve performance. McMillan (2019) conducted a study on the effects of goal setting on motivation and student achievement. The findings revealed that setting weekly goals helped students focus on their studies and enhanced their motivation. As a result, they obtained high scores in their final assessments in all subjects. Al-Yami et al. (2021) examined the impact of time management on the academic performance of students, among the diagnostic radiology technology students at KAU, and the effectiveness of pre-planning and instantaneous planning on academic performance. The results showed that pre-planning their studies was beneficial to academic performance. Students with positive attitudes who claimed to manage their time and meet deadlines obtained high academic grades.

Despite the studies conducted on the effects of self-control, there is still a scarcity of studies focusing on the influence of low self-control in the context of education. Limited research has been conducted on the effects of immediate gratification on EFL learners' academic performance, or the strategies employed by learners to resist temptation. This study attempts to address this research gap by examining the impact of instant gratification on Saudi EFL learners' academic achievement. It also explores the tactics learners utilize to resist temptations, foster their self-control, and ensure the maintenance of long-term goals.

The topic of this study was selected because it was observed that Saudi EFL learners at the university level are attracted to small instantaneous rewards and exciting activities, at the expense of their long-term goals. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the negative effects of seeking immediate pleasure on learners' academic achievement and provides valuable insights and practical implications for policymakers and educators that could help in developing methods and plans to enhance students' self-control.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Participants**

This study aimed at examining the influence of instant gratification on Saudi EFL learners' achievement, and the strategies used by them to delay gratification.

Therefore, the participants were selected from students who lack self-control and are inclined to instant gratification. To ensure representativeness in selecting participants, and identifying students who have difficulties in self-control, the Self-Control Scale developed by Tangney et al. (2004) was used. Tangney's Self-Control Scale (SCS) is a measurement tool used to assess individual differences in traits of self-control. It has gained popularity in social and psychological research. It was distributed to 98 male students aged 19- 24 years from various academic levels in the English Department at Jazan University, to assess students' traits of self-control and identify those who lack self-control. Of the 98 students, only 36 with the lowest grades were selected for the interview as part of the purposive sampling to fit the aim of the study and collect reliable data. The 36 participants were selected based on the result of the scale, low academic results and attendance, and readiness and availability to participate. The participants were confined to male students due to cultural barriers that hinder interviewing female students easily.

## **2.2 Data collection**

This study followed a qualitative approach to explore human behavior. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow predetermined and follow-up questions to obtain details and reliable information, and even assist the interviewees in expressing themselves and crystallizing their thoughts. Before conducting the interviews, the concept of instant gratification was explained clearly to the participants. The interviews were recorded to preserve the data and were transcribed to facilitate the analysis. They were aimed at investigating the influence of instant gratification on Saudi EFL learners' academic achievement, and to explore the strategies used by students to resist temptations. The interviews consisted of two sections. The first section included key questions and follow-up questions examining the influence of immediate gratification on Saudi EFL learners' achievements. Participants were asked questions such as, "Did your desire for instant gratification undermine your academic performance?" and "How does seeking instant pleasure affect your performance?" Follow-up questions included "Can you give examples?" and "Do you submit assignments on time?", among others. The second section also consisted of key questions and follow-up questions to explore the strategies learners employed to resist short-term temptations that divert them from English language learning. Key questions were, "Did you try to resist temptations?" and "What strategies did you use to resist temptations?" This was followed by questions such as, "Did you succeed in resisting temptations?" and "What was the most effective strategy that worked with you to resist temptations?"

## **2.3 Data analysis**

A qualitative thematic analysis was used to draw conclusions from the recorded data. The researcher listened to the recordings twice, to familiarize themselves with the contents of the recorded responses. After gaining a general understanding of the recordings, they were transcribed into a written text. The transcribed data were carefully analyzed to identify core data. Data were analyzed, labeled, and

categorized into sections identifying relationships, patterns, and connections between themes, according to the research questions. The researcher wrote short explanations of what the participants stated when necessary. Essential data were rechecked and refined to ensure reliability. Based on this analysis, the findings of the study were presented in the form of a report to answer the research questions.

#### **2.4 Ethical considerations**

The participants were given a clear idea about the intent, procedures, and potential benefits of this study, to ensure that they understood the context and made decisions that agreed with their interests. The researchers also asked for their consent to be interviewed and recorded. They were assured that the data collected during the study, including audio, would be treated with strict confidentiality and remain secure. Participants were offered the right to reject, accept, or withdraw their participation at any time. Based on the information provided, they agreed to participate voluntarily, without coercion or manipulation. This study followed the ethical guidelines in the code of conduct of the university, and the research design was endorsed by the institutional review board.

### **3. Results**

The purpose of the study was to address two research questions: The extent to which Saudi EFL learners' performance is affected by instant gratification, and the strategies they employ to resist short-term temptations and improve their academic achievement. The recorded data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically to answer the research questions.

The first research question examined how Saudi EFL learners' academic achievement was affected by immediate gratification. The data analysis demonstrated that students' academic achievement was influenced by instant gratification in various ways. Most participants stated that seeking instant gratification was a source of poor performance, as it led to postponement and inconsistent self-study, missed deadlines, and incomplete assignments. They stated that due to a lack of self-control, they usually resort to procrastinate language learning practices, face difficulties in allocating adequate time for language learning, and consequently delay assignments. They indicated that instant gratification led to a lack of self-discipline and motivation, resulting in sporadic attendance in classes, and insufficient time devoted to studying at home. Instead, their time was consumed by gratifying activities. Thus, their performance was negatively affected by both, their exam results and language proficiency. Moreover, participants indicated that seeking immediate gratification affected their persistence, and they became easily attracted to distractors at the expense of effectively learning the language. This negatively affected their academic performance.

When participants were asked about the causes of their tendency to instant gratification, the majority of them attributed the problem of instant gratification to the proliferation of technology which has provided new chances for instant pleasure and facilitated the accessibility to activities such as online games, YouTube videos,

smartphones, and social media which undermined their self-control and diverted their focus from their academic accountability. Some others ascribed their desire to immediate gratification to the poor learning outcomes of teaching English at schools. They mentioned that their deficiency in English caused frustration and weakened their willpower to challenge the difficulties they faced in English language.

Participants also reported that the inclination to instant gratification influenced their decisions and behaviors. In many situations, they take impetuous actions and decisions that divert their concentration from language learning and direct them to activities that bring immediate gratification. They claimed that spending excessive time on social media and engaging in such distracting activities prevented them from focusing on their language learning goals.

Participants believed that instant gratification impacted their self-discipline and ability to adhere to effective goals and plans as well. They stated that when they created plans to follow, as a guideline to achieve their English language learning goals, they did not adhere to them and violated them very quickly under the influence of lack of self-control and their response to distractions. They added that, during their learning practice, they did not work according to clear policies and plans. Thus, they showed a lack of clear direction, poor participation in class activities, insufficient self-study, and slow and unsatisfactory progress in language skills. In addition, the respondents claimed that instant gratification had a negative impact on their time management. They claimed that they prioritized spending more time on short-term activities that produced immediate satisfaction, rather than long-term goals. The time they devoted to focusing on language learning and practice was inadequate, and they usually studied only before exams. Thus, devoting insufficient time to English language learning resulted in poor performance and more challenges to achieving language-learning outcomes.

The second research question in this study explored the strategies Saudi EFL learners employ to delay their gratification. The results illustrate that resisting distractions was challenging to refrain from. Almost all the participants claimed that they did not depend on one strategy, indicating that while they had attempted different strategies they succeeded only in a few of them. Some participants justified their failure, saying that their repeated engagement in activities that produced immediate gratification created a strong willingness to continue pleasurable activities. Others justified their failure to resist distractions because of the pleasure they obtained, which was absent from pursuing long-term learning goals. Nevertheless, they emphasized that they continued their attempts to resist pleasurable short-term goals using various techniques. One effective strategy used by the majority of participants was practicing self-awareness and mindfulness. Participants stated that they think critically about their desired future outcomes (future-oriented thinking) and make self-evaluations that play an important role in helping them forgo short-term distractions and find solutions to resist distractions. They claimed that imagining positive outcomes for their desired future goals and visualizing negative consequences helps them reduce impulsivity, assists them in

making valid decisions, improves self-control, and strengthens their motivation to resist gratification. Only a few participants did not mention using future-oriented thinking, instead choosing other techniques as presented in the following paragraphs.

Another technique used by participants was engaging themselves with fruitful activities. Participants indicated that they tried to engage in remunerative and meaningful activities that assisted them in reducing distractions and enhancing their long-term goals, emphasizing that activities such as reading, watching movies in English, and chatting with native speakers kept them on track and helped them remain less susceptible to impulsive behavior and short-term gratification. However, they pointed out that they did not adhere to these activities continuously attributing their inconsistencies to habits that they had already developed for immediate rewards and became ingrained as habits.

Participants stated that goal setting is a helpful strategy to resist temptation and increase motivation. They illustrated that setting goals determines learners' paths, motivates them to focus on their learning goals, and helps them avoid distractions. They added that goal-setting makes them more accountable for improving their academic performance pointing out that accountability to self not only assists them in accomplishing their progress in English as a foreign language but also helps them resist distractions.

Another helpful technique used by the majority of participants was making the environment free of distractions. They affirmed that switching off mobile phones, disabling unnecessary notifications, and reducing the number of nuisances assisted them in maintaining focus on their studies. This result agrees with the findings of a study conducted by Attia et al. (2017) on how distractions interfere with learners' concentration and their ability to learn. The result revealed that laptops and cell phones do cause distraction and affect students' concentration in the classroom to learn

The participants' answers differed when asked what strategy they felt was most effective in resisting distractions. However, the majority believed that practicing self-awareness and future-oriented thinking was helpful, as it made them think logically and encouraged them to reconsider their decisions for immediate gratification. Nevertheless, this does not imply that the problem was resolved. Future-oriented thinking and other strategies only mitigate their impulsiveness, but they still need to exert considerable effort to search for other strategies to improve their self-control.

The reported results only included male students, as cultural barriers prevented the researcher from conducting interviews with female students. The absence of female participants limits the generalizability of the findings. If female language learners had been included, the results may have shown less influence of instant gratification on their performance compared to male students, who tend to spend significant time on video games and social media. This is because female students may be better able to resist temptations, due to the societal expectation of the 'ideal Muslim woman' as a good mother and responsible wife focused on caring for children and family.

Women's education has historically been influenced by conservative religious scholars who view a woman's proper role as being at home, as the primary teacher of traditions to the next generation. This has limited professional opportunities for women, restricting them largely to teaching and nursing (Rajkhan 2014; Alyami 2016; Alsweel 2007). Despite recent social changes and increased openness in Saudi Arabia, deep-rooted traditions and a strong commitment to Islamic principles that define gender roles have continued to play a significant role in limiting the influence of immediate pleasure and gratification on Saudi women to a considerable extent.

#### **4. Discussion**

This study aimed to explore the influence of instant gratification on Saudi EFL learners and examine the strategies they employed to resist temptations. This study provides substantial findings on the influence of instant gratification on Saudi EFL learners' academic achievement. Most respondents felt that gratifying activities caused a number of dilemmas, such as procrastination, inconsistency, and delays in submitting assignments. They reported that immediate gratification dampened their resistance and exposed them to distractors and pointless activities that contradicted their learning goals. This led to irregular attendance, poor self-study, late assignment submissions, and poor participation. These findings suggest that failing to maintain focus, resist impulses, and adhere to study schedules leads to inadequate practice of language skills and poor academic achievement. This echoes the results of Mischel et al. (1989), who found that children who were able to delay gratification longer achieved higher scholastic performance and were able to cope better with frustration and stress, whereas participants with a lower level of self-control encountered problems in their lives and academic performance.

The results demonstrated that the proliferation of technology has introduced opportunities for distractions and immediate pleasure and was a major factor that undermined students' self-control and affected their academic performance negatively. This agrees with the results of Kulesza, DeHondt II, and Nezelek (2016) who found that technology increased distractions, decreased students' participation in classrooms, decreased interest in learning materials, and increased complexity of learning and teaching.

The results showed that the desire for instant gratification affected their decisions and led them to make unwise choices and prioritize short-term goals that diverted them from their language learning objectives. Hasty decisions, such as spending excessive time on technology, mobile phones, social media, and computer games, affected their academic productivity. This result is consistent with the findings of Beland and Murphy (2016) who examined the influence of restricting mobile phone use in schools on learner productivity. Their results showed remarkable improvements in students' performance and test scores at schools where mobile phone use was restricted. These results indicate that low-achieving students are more likely to be distracted by the presence of mobile phones in class. Through the misuse of technology and impetuous actions and decisions, EFL learners may

lose their concentration and fail to retain what they have studied, ultimately impeding their overall performance. Moreover, participants indicated that instant gratification impacted their self-regulation in creating plans that aided them in focusing on their language learning, and even though they had prepared plans they broke them easily due to their response to distractors. The impact of low self-regulation was also reported by Gitome, Katola, and Nyabwari (2013) who indicated that the intended goals of education in some schools in Kenya were not attained because of indiscipline, emphasizing the important role of time management, self-regulation, and determination in achieving educational goals.

The study identified that seeking immediate gratification led to confusion and randomness in time management among learners, to the extent that they devoted most of their time to activities that offered distraction and entertainment, which resulted in poor performance and failure to attain targeted learning outcomes. This suggests that time management is an important factor in success, which is consistent with the findings of Razali et al. (2018). Razali et al. also found that good time management behaviors are positively related to the academic achievement of students, and the most significantly correlated predictor with effective decisions is time planning.

The second research question explored the strategies used by Saudi EFL learners to resist temptation. The study showed that learners realized the negative consequences of responding to distractions easily and illustrated that they have attempted various strategies to avoid immediate pleasure, although they found it challenging. They pointed out that they failed to avoid gratification many times because the habits they had developed prioritized immediate enjoyment. The results showed that learners resorted to mitigating the impact of impulsivity by critically thinking about their desired future goals, and evaluating whether the consequences of their impulsive actions aligned with their long-term goals. This promising result affirms that future-oriented thinking allows learners to assess their actions, visualize negative consequences that undermine their long-term goals, and reconsider their decisions to avoid distractors. This result is similar to that reported by Wargo (2011) who found that Sigmund Freud believed that children develop the ability to defer gratification by forming mental images of the desired stimuli. Mischel used his marshmallow to test Freud's theory and found that Freud was only partly correct, pointing out that keeping a reward in mind and thereby maintaining an expectation of it did seem to be important. However, some mental marshmallows worked considerably better than others.

The results demonstrated that learners' engagement in pre-planned meaningful activities can be a helpful strategy for delaying gratification if they abide by these planned activities. Such activities assisted learners in deferring distractions and kept them less vulnerable to impulsive behavior. This result allies with previous literature, and confirms Al-Yami et al.'s (2021) research findings, which explored the impact of time management on academic performance and the effectiveness of pre-planning and instantaneous planning on academic performance. Their research findings demonstrated that pre-planning is beneficial

for academic performance, and students with positive attitudes and the ability to manage time and meet deadlines obtained high academic grades.

This study found that setting clear goals is a valuable technique to bolster self-control and encourage learners to develop implementation solutions and techniques to delay gratification in favor of attaining their long-term goals. This implies that establishing effective goals helps learners improve their self-regulation and focus on attaining targeted goals in language learning, instead of succumbing to useless temptations. This result corroborates the findings of previous studies (Sides and Cuevas 2020; Travers, Morisano, and Locke 2015; Dotson 2016) which revealed that learners' goal-setting positively affects academic achievement.

Since this study is limited to male participants, it is imperative to indicate that incorporating female participants into this study would significantly enhance the representativeness and validity of the findings. Analysing the responses of both male and female subjects would allow for a more comprehensive examination of how gender influences attitudes and decision-making related to instant gratification. Including female perspectives is crucial, as it would provide important insights that may be missed by solely examining a male-only sample. Gender can play a significant role in shaping reactions to and the perceived impacts of instant gratification. Incorporating diverse viewpoints would lead to a more nuanced and generalizable understanding of the negative consequences of prioritizing immediate rewards over long-term outcomes.

In general, expanding the study sample to be gender-balanced is essential for producing findings that accurately reflect the broader population. This would strengthen the conclusions of the study and increase confidence in the applicability of the results beyond the initially examined male student cohort.

Hence, conducting additional research on gender diversity behaviour and its connection to instant gratification is strongly advised. These studies will effectively unveil the cultural and underlying factors, as well as the disparities in how males and females respond to immediate pleasure.

## **5. Conclusion**

Considering these findings, it is apparent that the inclination to instant gratification poses a serious threat to academic performance. This affected learners' abilities to maintain self-discipline, control their emotions, prioritize their actions, and regulate their thoughts. As a result, learners' willingness to avoid distractors was diminished; instead, they were more prone to distractions, unwillingness, procrastination, and haphazardness. The spread of technology has caused challenges to self-control and made access to entertainment easy. Subsequently, all these factors collectively and significantly affected learners' academic achievement in language learning. Therefore, more efforts should be exerted, and effective remedial programs should be implemented to promote students' self-control to properly invest their time and help them resist distractions.

Learners employ valuable techniques to delay gratification. Critical thinking about their future goals was an effective strategy that allowed them to reappraise

their decisions and actions, visualize the negative consequences of responding to temptations, and help them create awareness, leading to self-persuasion. They also utilized other strategies, such as goal setting and action plans, to keep them engaged in fruitful tasks pertinent to language learning. Nevertheless, they often failed to apply these strategies to resist temptation. There is a need for more effort to find solutions to mitigate the effects of the desire for instant gratification, and to provide learners with strategies that protect them from succumbing to temptations. Further research could lead to more effective mechanisms and methods that enhance learners' self-control and culminate in more successful strategies to assist them in resisting immediate pleasure.

The prevalence of technology in modern life often presents a double-edged sword for students. While technological tools can enhance learning, they can also serve as pervasive distractions that undermine students' self-discipline and academic progress. To address this challenge, it is recommended that policymakers should dedicate concerted efforts to develop and implement corrective initiatives. They can incorporate activities and presentations into the curriculum that cultivate students' time management skills, self-control, and a sense of responsibility toward using technology usefully. Moreover, training workshops that provide tangible strategies for setting objectives, managing gratification, and developing effective study habits can equip learners with the necessary mechanisms to improve their academic achievement in the age of technology.

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