

# The effect of patience training on university students' patience and life satisfaction levels

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of the "patience training program" on the patience and life satisfaction levels of university students. The study was organized as a pre-test, post-test experiment and control group design. For a total of 30 students from which were 17 in the control group and 17 in the experimental group, patience training was given for 5 weeks. The "Patient Scale" developed by Schnitker (2010) and adapted to Turkish by Eliüşük and Arslan (2016) and the "Life Satisfaction Scale" developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal (2016) were used as a data collection tool in the study. The "Wilcoxon" test was used for the comparison of in-group differences in the analysis of obtained data and the "Mann-Whitney U" test was used in examining the differences between the two groups. As a result of the study, it was observed that the patience and life satisfaction average scores of students in the experimental group receiving "patience training" increased significantly, while there was no significant difference in the patience and life satisfaction averages scores of the control group students.

**Keywords:** Patience, education, life satisfaction.

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## INTRODUCTION

Patience is a quite new concept in psychology. The most known basic meaning of patience is the tendency of a person to wait calmly in face of frustration, distress and pain (Schnitker, 2012). Patience is defined by Curry et al. (2008) as the power of a person to wait and by Mehrabian (1999) as a limited determined and planned tendency, as well as a personality trait (persons with patience tendency can cope with difficulties and try until they reach the goal). It is also a matter of debate among ethic philosophers whether patience is a value or not. What Kierkegaard says about patience reflects himself. When we think in terms of time, he gives patience an important role. He presents patience as a character trait in situations such as complexity and stress. With this aspect, he challenges the analytical of dominant assumptions of the new and contemporary philosophy and the continental traditions (Rudd, 2008). In Norling's (2009) study, both patience and impatience are pointed out as a value. According to McCullough et al. (2004), patience is seen as a typical tendency and situation. For

Schnitker (2012) is patience the combination of the effect of a negative stimulation, such as getting bored while waiting for a person on an object and being restricted against a compelling situation. For example, we show patience in face of long-standing discomforts or ordinary temporal delays such as traffic congestion. Patience has both an emotional and a behavioral characteristic. It includes waiting as behaviorally and being calm as emotionally. Patience is often regarded as a temporal component, but can not be explained by focusing only on time (like expecting someone to feel good after a disease). It is also considered as a situation of struggling with challenging persons and conditions. In addition, patience has also cognitive and affective properties. This shows that patience is not congenital but a later acquired condition (Blount and Janicik, 2000). The attitude towards a delay or a compelling experience shows individual differences. In this context, it will be appropriate to evaluate any person's patience by interpreting his/her own attitude and values. Patience is also evaluated

temporally.

Mehriban (1999) mentions three types of patience. Short-term patience: often referred to as waiting situations in everyday life. For example, traffic congestion, waiting for the bus or plane or waiting in line at a restaurant. Long-term patience: is defined as a person's ability to cope with any compelling experience. For example, long-term diseases, financial problems, the attitude of mothers against their newborn babies. Interpersonal patience is defined as a person's tolerance against other individuals in their social relations. For example, the patience showed against tough bosses, parents, adolescents or students. Schnitker (2012) introduced a definition similar to Mehriban's definition and describes patience in three groups. Mehriban's short-term patience description is the same as Schnitker's definition of patience in everyday life (eg. traffic congestion, waiting in line, etc.). Similarly, Mehriban's long-term patience is the same as Schnitker's definition for patience in life challenges. The definition of interpersonal patience is the same for both researchers. Schnitker (2010) revealed the relationship of patience with many other concepts in his work. He has shown that patience is related to physical health, well-being, subjective well-being, positive coping, values and the development of values; variables like personality and social processes that underlie personality and that patience is an important predictor of these variables (Schnitker, 2010). It has also been found that patience increases the quality of life. Patience plays an important role in coping with negative emotions and it has a place based on human life (Schnitker, 2012). In our study, we will examine the relationship between patience and life satisfaction.

It will be useful to define life satisfaction before explaining the relationship between patience and life satisfaction. In psychology, the concept of life satisfaction is used in many other concepts such as life pleasure, psychological well-being, quality of life and happiness. Eryilmaz and Ercan (2011) defines life satisfaction as a person's satisfaction of his/her life and this concept is considered as a component of subjective well-being, which is generally used to describe happy people in psychological research. According to Diener et al. (1985), subjective well-being consists of three different components: Positive emotions, negative emotions and life satisfaction. Positive and negative emotions create the affective/emotional dimension of subjective well-being (Shin and Johnson, 1978; Diener et al., 2002). According to Diener (2000), positive affectivity includes emotions like interest, trust, excitement, hope, joy, etc., while negative affectivity includes unpleasant feelings like sadness, anger, guilt, etc., subjective stress and dissatisfaction. Life satisfaction is the cognitive component of subjective well-being. It is the cognitive/judicial dimension of the subjective well-being structure. If the definition of life satisfaction is to be made: according to Diener and Lucas (1999), it includes the views on life, the desire to change it, the past

experiences, and the satisfaction that will be experienced in the future. According to another view, life satisfaction is the whole of the perception and criteria of an individual towards a good life (Christopher, 1999). A person's evaluation of his/her whole life according to his/her own criteria (Shin and Johnson, 1978; Diener et al., 1985; Rice et al., 1992). That is to say, as the person evaluates his/her own life satisfaction, the positive or negative perception of himself is an important factor that will determine the quality of life. The higher the positive perception is, the greater the is the satisfaction of life (Myers and Diener, 1995). It is suggested that many factors affect life satisfaction, such as the individuals who are in the social environment of the person and the relationships with them (Schnitker, 2010; Chappell, 1991; Diener and Diener McGavran, 2008; Diener et al., 2000), working life (Campbell et.al., 1976), education (Campbell, 1981), feeling that the control of their own life is in their own hands, and being physically and spiritually strong (Dockery, 2004).

Two studies show the relation between patience and life satisfaction. In the experimental study performed by Schnitker (2010), the participants' relationship between life satisfaction and depression was examined. It was thought that the patience training would increase all the scores from the well-being outcomes equally, but it turned out that this training just mitigates depression and did not significantly change life satisfaction or happiness. Although there is no direct relationship, it is seen that as the level of patience increases, the target satisfaction increases, and therefore the life satisfaction also increases. Schnitker (2012) found in his study conducted with the screening method that interpersonal patience and patience in everyday life is an important predictor of life satisfaction. Finally, he found that the main predictor of depression is patience in everyday life. Studies about patience in Turkey and the world have been carried out in accordance with the screening model until today. However, no experimental research on patience training was found. As we have mentioned before, the person's level of patience is closely related to their level of life satisfaction. On the other hand, there are no studies available in Turkey regarding the application of this topic. It is considered that our study in this respect will contribute to both the literature of the field and the level of patience and life satisfaction of the students.

## METHOD

This study was conducted as experimental research to investigate the effect of patience training on the patience and well-being levels of university students. Pre-test, post-test and control group trial models were used to demonstrate the difference between the students' patience and well-being levels who are participating in the Patience Training Program and the ones who are not participating in these sessions. The independent variable

of the study is the patience training program to be given to university students and the independent variable are the patience and well-being levels of these students. The patience training program was applied only to the experimental group. For the control group, no program was applied.

### Studies on the selection of the groups on which the applications are performed

The students in this study are from Konya Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Education. For a total of 60 students from which were 34 of the experimental group and 30 of the control group, patience and life satisfaction scales were applied as pre-tests. However, due to various excuses of the students, the study could only be applied to a total of 34 students, 17 of whom were in the control group and 17 of whom were in the experimental group. In the study, the patience and life satisfaction of the students in the experimental and control groups were matched in terms of age and gender characteristics.

### Descriptive statistics of experimental and control groups

As seen in Table 1, each experiment and control group consists of 17 students. The necessary balance is provided between age, gender and class characteristics of the students.

The results of the patience and life satisfaction scores from the university students who show a low patience

tendency and joined the training and from those who did not join were evaluated with the Mann-Whitney U test and the results are shown in Table 2. Accordingly, there was no significant difference between the pre-test results of patience and life satisfaction scores in the control and experimental groups. When the mean rank of Patience in everyday life ( $U = 107,000$ ,  $p > .05$ ), interpersonal patience ( $U = 79,000$ ,  $p > .05$ ), patience in life challenges ( $U = 107,500$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and life satisfaction ( $U = 72,000$ ,  $p > .05$ ) scores are taken into account; it can be seen that the difference between the average of patience and life satisfaction scores of experimental and control groups is not significant. This result suggests that the two groups have similar characteristics.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of control and experimental groups.

Control group			Experimental group		
	N	%		N	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Gender</b>		
Female	10	59	Female	12	71
Male	7	41	Male	5	29
Total	17	100	Total	17	100
<b>Age</b>			<b>Age</b>		
18	5	29	18	6	35
19	3	18	19	3	18
20	5	29	20	4	23
21	1	6	21	1	6
22	2	12	22	2	12
23	1	6	23	1	6
Total	17	100	Total	17	100

**Table 2.** Pre-test comparison of average scores of Patience and Life Satisfaction of control and experimental groups.

		N	Mean rank	Rank sum	U	p	
Patience in Everyday Life	Control group	17	17.47	297.00	144.000	.986	
	Experimental group	17	17.53	298.00			
Patience scores	Interpersonal Patience	Control group	17	17.91	304.50	137.500	.809
	Experimental group	17	17.09	290.50			
Patience in life challenges	Control group	17	17.29	294.00	141.000	.903	
	Experimental group	17	17.71	301.00			
Life Satisfaction scores	Control group	17	16.68	283.50	130.500	.626	
	Experimental group	17	18.32	311.50			

### Training process

In this study, the patience training program and training process used for the experimental group is summarized

as follows:

- At the beginning of the study, literature research on the subject was made and then the "Patience Training

Program" was prepared in accordance with the related literature.

- There are two general goals and sixteen gains based on these goals in the patience training program (1-Being able to comprehend the place and importance of the patience value in human life; 2-To be able to show patience in social relations and difficult situations in the flow of daily life).
- The information obtained from the research of the relevant literature in the design of the contents which can accomplish these purposes and achievements has been utilized.
- Teaching-learning activities are planned after deciding on appropriate teaching methods for the achievements and content of the program.

The "Patience Training Program" was held at the school for 5 weeks and weekly one day (50 + 50 minutes) with a total of 10 course hours and during the off-hours. The patience training program was applied by researchers. During this period, no studies were conducted on the control group.

## Data collection tools

### Patience scale

The patience scale was developed by Schnitker (2012) to determine the patience levels of individuals. There are three sub-dimensions on the scale: interpersonal, long-term (patience in life challenges) and short-term (patience in daily life). There are a total of 11 items on the scale. It is a Seven Likert type scale with an internal consistency coefficient of .82. An adaptation study for the patience scale was carried out on a group of university students. For the language validity of the scale, bilateral translations (English-Turkish, Turkish-English) were applied to students of the English language teacher's department and there was a significant positive correlation ( $r = .95, p < .01$ ;  $r = .95, p < .01$ ) between the scores obtained from the English and Turkish forms. The 11-item, three-dimensional measuring instrument tested with DFA appears to have an adequate goodness of fit index ( $\chi^2/sd = 100.96/41, p = .00, RMSEA = .076, CFI = .96, GFI = .93, NNFI = .94$ ). As a result of the correlation analyzes made for the criterion validity of the patience scale; the students' scores on the patience scale were found to be positively correlated with self-recovery, social self-efficacy and the tenacious approach as a sub-dimension of inter-personal problem-solving. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale is  $\alpha = .82$  and the test-retest correlation was calculated as .81. As a result, the 11-item and three-dimensional measuring instruments have been made ready for use by researchers.

### Satisfaction with life scale

The validity and reliability studies of the " Satisfaction with life scale" (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. (1985) were conducted for the Turkish conditions. The original scale is English and consists of a total of 5 items under a one-factor structure. For the adaptation study, the original scale was first translated into Turkish and then presented to experts in the fields of language, content, measurement and evaluation. After making some changes to the scale in line with the recommendations of the experts, the scale was applied to a group of teachers every two weeks in order to determine in practice whether the English form and the Turkish form had the same meaning. The Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Coefficient was calculated to test the consistency across the scores from both scales and was found as 0.92. According to this, it was determined that there is a positive and significant relationship at a high level between English and Turkish scales. The scale that provided linguistic equivalence was applied to 200 teachers in official primary schools in Diyarbakir city center. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was 0.88 and test-retest reliability was determined as 0.97. The results of the factor analysis revealed that the Life Satisfaction Scale is a one-factor structure as it is in the original scale and that it is composed of 5 items like the original scale. As a result of the validity and reliability analyzes, it has been determined that the scale is a valid and reliable tool that can be used in determining the perceptions of life satisfaction in teachers who work in schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education in Turkey.

### Data analysis

The obtained data were analyzed and the number of samples was found  $n < 30$  (SPSS 18.0); the Wilcoxon test for comparison of intra-group differences and the Mann-Whitney U test were used to examine the differences between the two groups.

## RESULTS

In this study is aimed to determine whether there is a relation between patience and well-being levels among university students participating in the patience training program and those who do not participate in this program. Statistical analyzes of the collected data were made and the findings of these processes are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that there was no significant differences between the pre-test-post-test average scores of the control group for Patience in everyday life ( $Z = -1.334, p > .05$ ), Interpersonal patience ( $Z = -.940, p < .001$ ), Patience

**Table 3.** Examination of the pre-test and post-test data obtained from the control group's patience and life satisfaction scale by Wilcoxon Matched Pairs marked rank test.

		Control group	N	Mean rank	Rank sum	Z	p
Patience in everyday life	Negative rank		4	6.63	26.50	-1.334	.182
	Positive rank		9	7.17	64.50		
	Equal		4				
Patience scores	Interpersonal patience					-0.940	.347
	Negative rank		5	8.70	43.50		
	Positive rank		10	7.65	76.50		
Patience in life challenges	Negative rank		7	6.71	47.00	-1.091	.275
	Positive rank		9	9.89	89.00		
	Equal		1				
Life Satisfaction Scores	Negative rank		6	7.00	42.00	-0.277	.782
	Positive rank		7	7.00	49.00		
	Equal		4				

in life challenges ( $Z = -1.091$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and Life satisfaction ( $Z = -.277$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Table 4 shows that there are significant differences between the pre-test-post-test average scores of the experimental group for Patience in everyday life ( $Z = -3.671$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Interpersonal patience ( $Z = -3.276$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Patience in life challenges ( $Z = -2.954$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Life satisfaction ( $Z = -3.316$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When the Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience and Patience in life challenges dimensions and the life satisfaction average scores are examined, it is seen that the average post-test scores of the students are higher than the average pre-test scores.

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the pre-test

of Patience in everyday life ( $U = 67.000$ ,  $p < .005$ ), Interpersonal patience ( $U = 63.000$ ,  $p < .005$ ), Patience in life challenges ( $U = 51.000$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the Life Satisfaction Average Scores ( $U = 58.000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the control and experimental groups have a significant difference between the Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience, Patience in life challenges sub-dimensions and the Life Satisfaction levels. When average scores are examined; it can be seen that the Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience and Patience in life challenges dimensions, and the life satisfaction average scores of the students from the experimental group are higher than the average scores of the students from the control group.

**Table 4.** Examination of the pre-test and post-test data obtained from the experimental group's patience and life satisfaction scale by Wilcoxon Matched Pairs marked rank test.

		Control group	N	Mean rank	Rank sum	Z	p
Patience in everyday life	Negative rank		0	.00	.00	-3.671	.000
	Positive rank		17	9.00	153.00		
	Equal		0				
Patience scores	Interpersonal patience					-3.276	.001
	Negative rank		1	2.50	2.50		
	Positive rank		14	8.39	117.50		
Patience in life challenges	Negative rank		1	4.00	4.00	-2.954	.003
	Positive rank		12	7.25	87.00		
	Equal		4				
Life satisfaction scores	Negative rank		0	.00	.00	-3.316	.001
	Positive rank		14	7.50	105.00		
	Equal		3				

**Table 5.** Examination of the data obtained from the post-test of Patience and Life Satisfaction Scale of control and experimental groups with the Mann-Whitney U test.

			n	Sıra Ort.	Sıra top.	U	p
	Patience in everyday life	Control group	17	22.06	375.00	67.000	.003
		Experimental group	17	12.94	220.00		
Patience scores	Interpersonal patience	Control group	17	22.29	379.00	63.000	.004
		Experimental group	17	12.71	216.00		
	Patience in life challenges	Control group	17	23.00	391.00	51.000	.001
		Experimental group	17	12.00	204.00		
Life satisfaction scores		Control group	17	22.59	384.00	58.000	.003
		Experimental group	17	12.41	211.00		

**Table 6.** Examination of the data obtained from the persistency test of the Patience and Life Satisfaction Scale of control and experimental groups with the Mann-Whitney U test.

			n	Mean rank	Rank sum	U	p
	Patience in everyday life	Control group	17	21.97	373.50	68.500	.008
		Experimental group	17	13.03	221.50		
Patience scores	Interpersonal patience	Control group	17	22.12	376.00	66.000	.006
		Experimental group	17	12.88	219.00		
	Patience in life challenges	Control group	17	23.24	395.00	47.000	.001
		Experimental group	17	11.76	200.00		
Life Satisfaction Scores		Control group	17	22.91	389.50	52.500	.001
		Experimental group	17	12.09	205.50		

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the persistency test of Patience in everyday life ( $U = 68.500$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Interpersonal patience ( $U = 66.000$ ,  $p < .05$ ), Patience in life challenges ( $U = 47.000$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and the Life Satisfaction Average Scores ( $U = 52.500$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the control and experimental groups have a significant difference between the Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience, Patience in life challenges sub-dimensions and the Life Satisfaction levels. When average scores are examined, it can be seen that the Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience and Patience in life challenges dimensions, and the life satisfaction average scores of the students from the experimental group are higher than the average scores of the students from the control group.

## DISCUSSION

As a result of the research, no significant difference was seen in the pre-test of patience and life satisfaction scores result between control and experimental groups. This result suggests that the two groups have similar characteristics. Another result is related to the control

group, which received no application. The control group did not change in terms of life satisfaction and patience levels during application time. As a result of the patience training, in the experimental group was observed that there was a significant difference in Patience in everyday life, Interpersonal patience and Patience in life challenges, and finally in the life satisfaction scores. Therefore, the patience training affected life satisfaction and patience levels positively. Finally, when the average scores of the post-test and persistency test of the experimental and control groups were examined, it was observed that the average scores in terms of patience and life satisfaction of the students in the experimental group were higher than the average scores of the students in the control group. These results show that the applied training affects patience and life satisfaction positively.

A study about the effect of patience training on life satisfaction is available in the literature. In an experimental study performed by Schnitker (2010), the relationship between life satisfaction and depression was examined. It was expected that the patience training would increase all well-being outcomes equally, but it was observed that this training only alleviated depression

but did not significantly change life satisfaction or happiness. Although there is no direct relationship, it was seen that as the level of patience increases, the target satisfaction increases, and therefore the life satisfaction also increases. Similarly, Palys and Little (1983) argue that pleasure to reach the goal, challenge, social support and temporal importance is related to life satisfaction. Sheldon et al. (2004) have also shown that target content and causes affect the quality of life. Brandtstadter and Renner (1990) found that the higher the goal-seeking in individuals is, the higher the life satisfaction and the related inversely proportional with depression. Another result that Schnitker (2010) found was that when personality traits are controlled; patience could affect depression, life satisfaction and happiness. In a screening study conducted by Schnitker (2010), it was seen that interpersonal patience and patience in everyday life were important predictors for life satisfaction. Finally, he found that the main predictor of depression was patience in everyday life.

The findings of this study and the information from the literature are such as to support the hypothesis of the research. According to the findings of this study, the implemented patience training program is effective in increasing the level of patience and life satisfaction of individuals. It can be suggested that the "patience training program" prepared by the researchers and applied in this study can be examined on different age groups and similar patience education activities could be also designed.

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