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# Examination of Patience Tendency Levels of University Students: An Intercultural Comparison

Yavuz Ercan Gul<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Educational Sciences, Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Correspondence: Yavuz Ercan Gul Educational Sciences, Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Tel: +996550234242 - E-mail: yavuz.gul@manas.edu.kg

## Abstract

In this research, it was aimed to interculturally research the value of patience with the data obtained from the students who participated in the study from two different countries. The research was designed as a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. Accordingly, the Traditional Screening Technique based on quantitative data and the Phenomenological Technique based on qualitative data were used together in the research. In this study, the patience levels of university students were generally calculated high. The patience levels of Turkish students were discovered to be lower than those of Kyrgyz students. According to the results of the interviews, there are differences in Turkish and Kyrgyz students' understanding of patience. It is seen that Turkish students attribute the value of patience to religion, believing that patience is transferred to Turks from religion, while Kyrgyz students associate patience with their cultural traditions. It is thought that this study will contribute to values and character education, especially to the literature on patience. The relationship and differences between the patience levels of university students and different variables and their effects on each other can be researched. Programs can be developed to increase the patience levels of university students.

**Keywords:** Patience, University Students, Comparison, Culture

## 1. Introduction

*A moment of patience can prevent a big disaster.*

*A moment of impatience can ruin a whole life.*

(Chinese Proverb)

Following the Second World War, the discipline of Psychology focused more on pathological conditions such as the treatment of damages on human functions, causing the negligence of positive psychology. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Positive Psychology aims at not only treating pathological conditions, but also creating positive qualities and virtues. In other words, positive psychology, which is a complement of traditional psychology concentrating on what is wrong in life in its own history, tries to make people's lives more livable by focusing on the examination of positive personality traits and positive emotions such as happiness, tolerance and patience (Seligman, 2010; Seligman, et al., 2005). There is a limited number of studies in the

literature with respect to the virtue of patience, which is especially one of the research areas of Positive Psychology and also the subject of this research (Schnitker, et al., 2017). The value of patience is a virtue which enables societies to live happier and with higher self-control and teaches people to allow everything to happen in their own time (Shapiro, et al., 2002).

People always have to make a preference in their work lives, family lives or every situation, in brief, in every aspect of the social life. Sometimes, they hurry up in conditions when they can have positive gains or in favorable options that appear, and sometimes, they want to wait and make a choice at a better time. In such cases, patience is defined as the ability of people to control themselves and wait (Stevens & Stephens, 2008). It sometimes seems more logical for people in a dilemma to choose the earliest alternative whereas the next option may produce greater and better results. This situation, which can be defined as delayed satisfaction, is about people's control over their emotions and desires (Read, et al., 2013).

People have to wait when there is traffic jam, they are connecting to the operator on phone calls or waiting at the cashier while doing shopping, briefly, in every aspect of life. For this reason, living means waiting on the one hand. Living means being in relation and interaction with people, being in continuous interaction with family, colleagues and social environment. Since each person is different and behaves differently, annoying situations that require patience emerge (Carolyn, 2016). Life does not always mean positive and beautiful moments for anybody. Sometimes, patience of people is tested with upsetting, annoying and patience-testing circumstances or due to an inconsiderate boss, insensitive friend, problematic partner and problematic roommate. For this reason, patience also refers to the presence of negative, unpleasant situations for people (Johnson, 2016).

Patience is intertwined with different values like other virtues and also requires hope, belief, love, humility and fortitude. Specifically, there is a special relationship between patience and hope. The reason is that patience bears the hope that, in case of a problem, that problem will be overcome. Patience is only possible for those who have hope, and if there is no hope, then patience also disappears (Hughes, 2016). For instance, university students accept failure if they think that the exam week is permanent and will never come to an end. Belief in impermanence of bad times and hope help people be patient. Thus, it is realized that the power underlying patience is hope and patience will continue as long as hope exists (Copeland, 1992).

Adam Smith (1759) says that, in this world, people should control themselves by avoiding pleasure and bearing the current problems for the time being in order to obtain greater gains and pleasure in the future. According to this viewpoint, the source of happiness in the world is the control of people over themselves and being patient. This is also related to the neurological structure of humans. Recently, the results of brain imaging technology have demonstrated that the control of people over themselves and being patient depend on the frontal cortex of the brain. The frontal cortex develops with age and very young children also have it. Hence, patience is also correlated with the biological and hereditary structure of humans. In other words, whereas the children of the patient parents become patient, the children of the impatient parents also become impatient (Haldane, 2010). In another study (McClure, et al., 2004), it was discovered that patient behaviors were associated with the activity in the frontal cortex, and impatient behavior was related to the Limbic (midbrain or Dopamine) system, which is a separate section of the brain. Psychopathology containing patience generally emerges with endless waiting and chronic hastiness (Akhtar, 2015). In such a case, impatience goes beyond normal conditions and becomes a disorder.

Patience is also related to people's ages and thus experiences throughout their lives. The fact that young children immediately start to cry when something they want does not come true shows that children are more impatient than adults. In some studies, conducted on patience (Gül, 2018; Bettinger, 2007; Harbaugh, et al., 2002; Levin, et al., 2007; Brockhoff, et al., 2015), it was revealed that patience changed in line with age, and that patience increased as the age increased. In this respect, it is understood that patience does not remain constant throughout the life of people and changes in parallel with the negative situations experienced continuously.

Sometimes, a person who can be patient in a very difficult situation may not be patient in a less troublesome situation at a different time. This indicates that the mood of people can also affect patience. There is also a

correlation between behavior and patience; patience affects behavior. Impatient students are more likely to spend money on alcohol and cigarettes and violate school rules of conduct compared to patient students, and impatient students have lower success in education (Sutter, et al., 2013).

While Peterson and Seligman (2004) consider patience as the mixture of different virtues such as tolerance, open-mindedness and self-control/adjustment, Schnitker and Emmons (2007) have revealed that patience is a different value with its own characteristics. Schnitker (2012) defines patience as *A person's tendency to calmly wait in case of disappointment, distress or pain.*

In this study, it was aimed to test the patience levels of the university students in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan and to compare them in terms of some variables. In this context, the question "What is the comparison of patience levels of the university students in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan?" was considered as the main problem of the research. Additionally, interviews were conducted with a specific study group to obtain more in-depth information about the items to which Turkish and Kyrgyz students gave the highest and lowest scores among the scale items. In these interviews, it was aimed to discover whether the items discussed had a correspondence in cultural, religious and political fields in Turkish and Kyrgyz societies.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Group

There are two different study groups in the research. The data of the first study were acquired from two different countries. A total of 1086 students participated in the research: 543 people studying in Karamanoğlu Mehmet Bey University in Turkey and 543 people studying in Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University in Kyrgyzstan. Since the assessment instrument was in Turkish, the study group in Kyrgyzstan consisted of students from Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, which provides education in Turkish and where students speak Turkish at an advanced level. Simple Random Sampling technique, in which all the sampling units have equal participation probability, was used for the determination of the sample (Taherdoost, 2016; Büyükşener, et al., 2016; Cochran, 1977).

Table 1: Data of the First Study Participants

Country	N	Female	Male
<b>Turkey</b>	543	414	129
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	543	327	216
<b>Total</b>	1086	741	345

The data of the second study were collected from a total of 30 students; 15 were citizens of Turkey and 15 were citizens of Kyrgyzstan. For the determination of the sample, purposeful sampling technique, which was used to conduct in-depth research and where the researcher consciously selected the data source, was used (Palys, 2008; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006; Tongco, 2007; Bernard, 2002).

Table 2: Data of the Second Study Participants

Country	N	Female	Male
<b>Turkey</b>	15	9	6
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	15	10	5
<b>Total</b>	30	19	11

## 2.2 Research Model

This research is a descriptive study based on screening method, which was prepared as a mixed pattern within the framework of quantitative and qualitative paradigm. The screening method is a method used to quantitatively identify the specific aspects of a certain population (Glasow, 2005; Fowler, 1988; Groves, 2004). Accordingly, the patience tendencies of the students were identified according to the gender, age and year of study variables in the study. In the second study of the research, the phenomenological pattern, which is among the qualitative research techniques, was used. The phenomenological pattern is a technique used to obtain more in-depth information about something which is already known about (Groenewald, 2004). From an epistemological point of view, the phenomenological approach is built on the paradigm of subjectivity and stresses the importance of personal perspective and interpretation (Laster, 1999; Polkinghorne, 1989).

## 2.3 Assessment Instrument

In the first part of the research, "University Students Patience Scale" developed by Çeliköz and Gül (2018) was used. During the development process, the assessment instrument was applied to 375 university students. The scale consists of 21 items in total, including three sub-dimensions: Patience for Intolerance, Patience for Hastiness and Patience for Anger. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale, the items of which are totally composed of positive expressions, was calculated as .86 for the overall.

## 2.4 Data Collection

In the first section of the study, students from both countries and universities were given the *University Students Patience Scale* and were asked to answer. For the data collection, the assessment instrument prepared in the electronic environment and, in some parts, the printed assessment tool was used.

In the second part of the research, the items of the *University Students Patience Scale* given the highest and lowest scores by the students who participated in the research from Turkey and Kyrgyzstan were identified. It was attempted to determine through interviews with the students why the students gave the highest and the lowest scores to the items.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Findings Related to the First Sub-Problem of the Research

Findings regarding the items given the highest and the lowest scores among the items of the USPS by the University students are presented in tables.

Table 3: The items given the highest and the lowest scores among the items of the USPS by Turkish and Kyrgyz students

Country	Item No	Statements	$\bar{X}$	Total Score
Turkey	I 4	People should withstand problems	4.65	2.524
	I 18	It does not make me angry if someone jumps the queue in the cafeteria	1.99	1.082
Kyrgyzstan	I 5	I consider patience as a very necessary value	4.22	2.294
	I 19	It does not make me angry if students make noise while I am studying in the library	3.16	1.284

As seen in Table 2, the item given the highest score by Turkish students was ( $\bar{X}=4.65$ ) the 4th item. According to this item, Turkish students argue that people should withstand problems and have patience for these problems.

This item was agreed on by almost every Turkish student. On the other hand, the item given the lowest score by Turkish students was ( $\bar{X}=1.99$ ) the 18th item; Turkish students are not patient if someone jumps the queue in the cafeteria. Kyrgyz students think that the value of "Patience" is very necessary. Among the Kyrgyz students' patience levels, this item had the highest mean score ( $\bar{X}= 4.22$ ). Additionally, the item given the lowest score by Kyrgyz students among the scale items was ( $\bar{X}= 3.16$ ). the 19th item; Kyrgyz students feel disturbed if there is noise in the library.

### 3.2 Findings Related to the Second Sub-Problem of the Research

Descriptive data of USPS regarding Turkish and Kyrgyz University students are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive data of USPS regarding Turkish and Kyrgyz University Students

	Min.	Max.	N	$\bar{X}$	ss
<b>Turkey</b>	1.10	5.00	543	3.62	.56
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	2.00	5.00	543	3.73	.50

Descriptive statistics about the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz students are given in the table above. Accordingly, while the lowest mean score of Turkish students was 1.10, the highest mean score was determined as 5.00. Regarding the patience levels of Kyrgyz students, the lowest mean score was recorded as 2.00, while the highest mean score was calculated as 5.00. When the patience level rates of university students are reviewed, it is seen that Kyrgyz students are more patient than Turkish students ( $\bar{X}=3.73 > \bar{X}=3.62$ ).

### 3.3. Findings Related to the Third Sub-Problem of the Research

Table 5: Results of t-test for comparison of patience levels of university students in terms of countries

Country	N	$\bar{X}$	s	sd	t	P	d
<b>Turkey</b>	543	3.62	.56	1084	-3.34	.00	.68
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	543	3.73	.50				

According to the data in Table 5, the patience levels of the university students differ significantly as per the country variable ( $t_{1084}=-7.54, p<0.5$ ). It is understood that the patience levels of Kyrgyz university students ( $\bar{X}=3.73$ ) are higher than those of Turkish university students ( $\bar{X}=3.62$ ). These data obtained through the independent samples t-test show whether there is a significant difference between the patience levels; however, they do not give information about the magnitude of the effect level belonging to this difference. Cohen's d (Cohen, 1988; Kotrlík & Williams, 2003) formula was employed to understand the magnitude of the effect level of the difference. According to this formula,.20 signifies a low-level effect,.50 indicates a moderate effect and.80 point at a high-level effect. The effect size obtained as a result of t-test ( $d =.68$ ) shows that this difference between the means has a moderate effect size.

Table 6: T-test results related to the comparison of the mean scores received by the university students in the sub-dimensions of the USPS

Sub-Dimensions	Country	N	$\bar{X}$	s	sd	t	p	d
<b>Intolerance</b>	Turkish	543	3.94	.02	.56	.88	.38	.10
	Kyrgyz	543	3.90	.02	.58			
<b>Hastiness</b>	Turkish	543	3.50	.03	.75	-4.63	.00	.25
	Kyrgyz	543	3.69	.02	.63			
<b>Anger</b>	Turkish	543	3.14	.03	.76	-5.87	.00	.24
	Kyrgyz	543	3.42	.03	.82			

In the table above, independent samples t-test data regarding whether there is a significant difference between the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz University students in the sub-dimensions of the USPS are stated. According to these data, no significant difference is observed in the sub-dimension "Patience for Intolerance" of the USPS ( $p>0.05$ ); however, a significant difference stands out in favor of Kyrgyz students in the sub-dimensions *Patience for Hastiness* and *Patience for Anger* of the USPS ( $p<0.05$ ).

### 3.4 Findings Related to the Fourth Sub-Problem of the Research

Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA analysis were conducted to determine the differentiation status of the patience levels of the university students according to the year of study, age, gender and country variables.

Table 7: T-Test Results related to the Comparison of the Patience Levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz Male Students as per the Gender Variable

Country	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Turkey	Female	414	3.60	.54	-1.54	.12
	Male	129	3.69	.61		
Kyrgyzstan	Female	327	3.70	.50	-1.53	.13
	Male	216	3.77	.51		

As seen in Table 7, independent samples t-test was executed to determine whether the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz students differed significantly according to the gender variable. It was first checked whether the variances were equal, and the variances were found to be equal ( $t = -1.54, -1.53, p \geq 0.05$ ). As a result of the test, no significant difference was found between the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz university students as per gender variable ( $p > .05$ ).

Table 8: T-Test results related to the comparison of the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz students according to the gender variable

Country	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Turkey	Male	129	3.69	.61	-1.30	.18
Kyrgyzstan	Male	216	3.77	.51		
Turkey	Female	414	3.60	.54	-2.65	.00
Kyrgyzstan	Female	327	3.70	.50		

When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz male students do not differ significantly as per gender variable ( $t = -1.30, p > .05$ ). While the mean score of Turkish university students was found as 3.69, the mean score of Kyrgyz university students was calculated as 3.77. The t-test results related to the comparison of the patience values of Turkish and Kyrgyz female students according to gender variable are presented in Table 10. Accordingly, it was determined that the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz female students differed significantly in favor of Kyrgyz female students as per gender variable ( $t = -2.65, p \leq .05$ ).

Table 9: T-Test results related to the comparison of the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz students according to the age variable

	Age	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Turkey	17-19	210	3.46	.56	-4.56	.00
Kyrgyzstan	17-19	112	3.74	.47		
Turkey	20-21	256	3.67	.54	-1.24	.21
Kyrgyzstan	20-21	282	3.73	.50		
Turkey	22+	77	3.87	.51	2.22	.02
Kyrgyzstan	22+	149	3.71	.53		

In the table above, it is observed that the patience levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz students in the first age group differed significantly in favor of Kyrgyz students ( $t = -4.56, p < 0.05$ ). Whereas the mean score of the patience levels of Turkish students was calculated as 3.46, the mean score of the patience levels of Kyrgyz students was found as 3.74.

Table 10: T-Test results related to the comparison of the patience levels of the first-year Turkish and Kyrgyz students according to the year of study variable

Country	Year of Study	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t	p
Turkey	1	222	3.45	.54	-5.76	.00
Kyrgyzstan	1	168	3.77	.52		
Turkey	2	92	3.71	.53	-.21	.98
Kyrgyzstan	2	167	3.71	.48		
Turkey	3	109	3.64	.53	-1.14	.25
Kyrgyzstan	3	116	3.73	.46		
Turkey	4	120	3.86	.53	1.85	.06
Kyrgyzstan	4	92	3.72	.56		

In Table 10, it is seen that the patience levels of the first-year university students differ significantly ( $t = -5.76, p \leq 0.05$ ). According to the results of the independent samples t-test, it is understood that the significant difference is in favor of Kyrgyz students. In other words, the first-year Kyrgyz students are more patient than Turkish students.

Table 11: Results of ANOVA Analysis related to the Comparison of the Patience Levels of Turkish and Kyrgyz Students as per the Year of Study Variable

Country	Year of Study	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	F	p	Levene
<b>Turkey</b>	1	222	3.45	0.54	16.08	.00	.64
	2	92	3.71	0.53			
	3	109	3.64	0.53			
	4	120	3.86	0.52			
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	1	168	3.77	0.56	.44	.72	.32
	2	167	3.71	0.51			
	3	116	3.73	0.46			
	4	92	3.72	0.60			

As a prerequisite of the analysis of variance, Levene's test statistics were reviewed to understand whether the scores of Turkish and Kyrgyz students were distributed homogeneously, and the data were observed to meet the condition of homogeneity. When the information stated in the table above is considered, it is understood that the highest mean score of the patience levels of Turkish students belongs to the fourth-year students with 3.86 and the lowest mean score belongs to the first-year students with 3.45. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the years of study ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 12: Table title (this is an example of table 1)

Condition	<i>M(SD)</i>	95%CI	
		LL	UL
Letters	14.5(28.6)	5.4	23.6
Digits	31.8(33.2)	21.2	42.4

*Note.* Place table caption in front of table body and description below the table body. Avoid vertical rules. Be sparing in the use of tables and ensure that the data presented in tables do not duplicate results described elsewhere in the article. You may resize the tables to fit the page size.

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, the patience levels of university students were generally calculated high. Some studies in the literature (Gül & Çeliköz, 2018; Doğan, 2017; Eliüşük, 2014) also reached similar results to this study. In the study, the patience levels of Turkish students were discovered to be lower than those of Kyrgyz students. The data obtained from the students in the second study of the research coincide with the data of this study. Kyrgyz students mentioned that they were more patient than Turkish students, and Turkish students said that they were more impatient than Kyrgyz students. When the sub-dimensions of the scale were reviewed, it was seen that Turkish students received higher scores compared to Kyrgyz students in the Intolerance Sub-Dimension. However, it was determined that Kyrgyz students had higher scores in the sub-dimensions of Patience for Hastiness and Anger. In the second study of the research, students also expressed similar opinions to these results. It was inferred that Kyrgyz student did not define themselves as hasty and angry.

Another result of the research is that the gender variable affects the patience levels of the students. It was concluded that male participants from both countries were more patient than the women at the patience levels as per the gender variable of the students. There are studies in the literature that tally with the results of this research, concluding that male students are more patient than female students (Eliüşük, 2014; Bettinger & Slonim 2007). On the other hand, there is also a study belonging to Bauer and Chytilova, (2013), which has concluded that women are more patient than men. Socio-cultural structures of the research samples are assumed to be effective in the emergence of this difference. It can be said that male students have more patience because of the different social status of men in Eastern societies and they are in communication with more people due to their work (Ağçoban, 2016; Bilgin, 2016).

One of the results of the research is that the age variable has an effect on the patience tendencies of the students. In respect of the age variable, the patience levels of the Turkish university students were found to be higher than Kyrgyz students in the group aged 22 and above, which is the third group of the three groups regarding the patience levels of the university students. Among the students, Kyrgyz students below the age of 22 were found to be more patient than Turkish students. When the age groups were examined within the countries, it was observed that the patience levels of Turkish students increased in parallel with their age, whereas there was a very low level of difference in Kyrgyz students' mean scores of patience. There are studies in the literature indicating that patience levels increase with the increasing age of students (Khormaci, et al., 2017; Bartling et al., 2010; Bettinger & Slonim, 2007). In terms of the year of study variable, it was concluded that the patience levels of the students differed significantly in favor of Kyrgyz students in the first-year students. It was revealed that there was a difference in other year of study groups, but this difference was not significant. Another remarkable result related to the year of study variable is that Turkish students at the fourth year are more patient than Kyrgyz students. This is assumed to be related to the level of development of the societies of the two countries (Cafri, 2018).

According to the results of the interviews, there are differences in Turkish and Kyrgyz students' understanding of patience. It is seen that Turkish students attribute the value of patience to religion, believing that patience is transferred to Turks from Islam, while Kyrgyz students associate patience with their cultural traditions. In the research, it was determined that there is a difference between the opinions and actions of Turkish students regarding patience. While Turkish students thought that it is necessary to be patient in every situation, they stated that they could not be very patient. With this study, it was understood that Turkish people were impatient to wait

in the queue anywhere. All the Turkish students expressed their opinions in this direction. On the basis of the findings of this research, it can be said that Kyrgyz people are more dependent on traditions and customs than Turkish people. It was determined that Kyrgyz students performed their actions according to their family and social environments. Especially in respect of patience, Kyrgyz students expressed that they were affected by the opinions of the people around them, and therefore, they had to be patient and referred to the effect of the environment on Kyrgyz people. In most of the sources in the Kyrgyz literature (Анаркулов, 1993; Эшимбекова, 2014; Осмонова, 2015), they drew attention to this situation and explained that they are very dependent on Kyrgyz traditions and customs and they brought up their children on the basis of these traditions and customs. The opinions coincide with the statements obtained in the research, in which the Kyrgyz people correlate patience with traditions and customs.

Another noteworthy finding of the research was the high value given to the book by Kyrgyz students. Most of the students reported that the book was a very valuable thing and their parents suggested that they should not even put it down on the ground but respect it. It is believed that this respect shown to the book is not limited to Kyrgyzstan and this is experienced in all the societies of the USSR, because the most important propaganda tool of the USSR has been education and thus books. They aimed at continuing the system by making the people from every profession and age read ideological books (Zhuk, 2009; Шпаковская, 2009; Самсонов, 1957; Ноллендорфс, 2010). Therefore, it is assumed that the reading culture left from the USSR was the reason why students stated that making noise in the library was the situation which they had the highest level of impatience for and could not withstand.

In the research, the students were asked what they understood from the value of patience. Accordingly, the students said patience meant ability to wait, withstand and not getting angry. Besides, they stated that the value of patience was a virtue itself, but it carried different values in it according to the events encountered. For example, they expressed that the ability to wait was patience, but patience was not only the ability to wait. In this aspect, patience was understood as an evident virtue by itself. Although Peterson and Seligman (2004) consider patience as a mixture of endurance, open-mindedness and self-regulation virtues, the finding that the strength of 24 characters in the Schnitker and Emmons' (2007) Inventory of Action Resilience (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) constitutes only 26% of patience coincides with the results obtained.

According to another finding obtained in the research, all the students think that there is a limit for patience, and when this limit is violated, the overreaction of people does not refer to impatience. When the literature (Parry, 2009; Izgar & Eliüşük Bülbül, 2017) is reviewed, it is seen that there is a limit for patience and the impatience arising from exceeding this limit is a virtue.

It is thought that this study will contribute to values and character education, especially to the literature on patience. It is believed that revealing the results regarding whether the value of patience carries different characteristics in terms of culture and what the level of the university students' patience is will contribute to the development of future programs for increasing the patience levels of university students. For this purpose, the following recommendations can be made for the researchers based on the data obtained from the study:

- The relationship and differences between the patience levels of university students and different variables and their effects on each other can be researched.
- Programs can be developed to increase the patience levels of university students.
- Patience levels among the populations from different countries can be studied.

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