



**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
PERSONALITY TRANSCENDENCE TRAINING ON  
TEMPTATION RESISTANCE**

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**Abstract**

*Temptation resistance which is a kind of self-control and is known as a positive personality characteristic is vary from a person to others. The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of teaching personality transcendence methods on temptation resistance. To conduct this experimental study, using random assignment, 44 Persian Gulf University students were divided into two groups. Participants at the experimental group received a 10-session personality transcendence training (one 90-minute session per week). After the intervention, all participants in both groups were administered the temptation resistance scenario. The results revealed increasing effect of teaching personality transcendence methods on temptation resistance. In this study, the effect of sublimation of character education practices to increase student resistance against temptation (eating sweets) from two independent samples t-test was used. And to evaluate the effect of sublimation of character education practices to increase student resistance against temptation (check out details and phone numbers of other students) were used Chi-square tests. The results showed a positive and significant difference between the control and experimental groups the temptation to eat sweets and other components the temptation to look at the address were observed.*

**Keywords:** *personality transcendence, temptation, self-control*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Sometimes in our lives, we are faced with alternatives which tempted to do. Many studies have shown that some people have the ability to resist against temptation while others do not (Baumeister, 2002; Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007; Buker, 2011; Dholakia, Gopinath, Bagozzi, & Natarajan, 2006; Hofmann,

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Baumeister, Forster, & Vohs, 2012). The Temptation is also meant to be a condition of mental conflict. Simply, temptation is a situation in which a person tends to have something enjoyable on the one hand, and at the same time it should not be done for many reasons, on the other hand (Haugan & Innstrand, 2013). In many complicated and dual situations people have to make decisions, and decision making requires self-control, that is a kind of temptation resistance. There are many benefits to people's self-control. Researchers have found benefits such as: academic achievement, job progress, crime reduction, successful social interaction, and physical and mental health (Baumeister & Alquist, 2009, Baumeister, Gailliot, & Tice, 2009; De-Ridder, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauer, Stock, & Baumeister, 2012; Koltko-Rivera, 2006; Michael, Baumeister, & Dianne, 2014; Schmidt, Gerstenberg, & Imoff, 2013; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Effective self-control means resistance against impulses and troublesome desires such as smoking, drinking, stealing, etc. Some people have stronger control on themselves than others. They benefit their advantages of being able to withstand problematic desires and impulses (Hofmann, Baumeister, Forster, & Vohs, 2012). Impulses resistance capacity depends on the capacity of self-regulation. Research shows that individual's self-regulation capacity changes over the time, probably because of the limitation of mental and physical resources (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007; Havger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010). Therefore, effective self-control is more than just temptation resistance. In other words, if people rely only on the strength of their will to resist the temptation, they would probably face with periodic failures, as it may be some temptations arise when their will power is weak. By avoiding the temptation, people would save their will power against other tempting situations. There are large individual differences in self-control. As an example, impulse control in early childhood is a powerful predictor of academic success and depression overcoming in adolescence (Michael, Baumeister, & Dianne, 2014). Tangney, Baumeister, and Boone (2004) concluded that Self-control feature is associated with psychological well-being, lower levels of alcohol consumption, successful social interactions. They also suggested that, If self-control relies on limited resources, it can be expected that people with higher self-regulation ability have higher self-control resources, or have better management for these limited resources. Although it is believed that self-control is a highly important ability for temptation resistance, which is done through the use of self-regulation resources, a recent meta-analysis found that self-control trait is more closely related to the automatic behaviors than to the controlled behaviors (De-

Ridder, et al, 2012). Furthermore, research findings suggest that people with high self-control ability, compared to those with low self-control ability, have less effort in their everyday life (Martinsson, Myrseth, & Wollbrant, 2014). In other words, these findings suggest that people with high self-control ability, usually create habits that reduce consumption of their self-regulation resources when temptation resisting. Self-regulation, is a kind of increasing in individual's self-capacity, which requires an increase in their willpower. Willpower is a kind of psychological energy for temptation resistance, and its reduction causes morals weakening and an increasing in immoral behaviors (Mead, Baumeister, Gino, Schweitzer, & Ariely, 2009). Some researchers have studied the influence of religion factors such as; belief in a higher power, religious behavior, religious life orientation, and membership in religious groups, on self-control and temptation resistance (Mead et al., 2009). Some researchers suggest that spirituality, religion, self-transcendence are global issues in human experience. According to them, spirituality is characterized by concepts regarding to self, others, and nature, and it also addresses ultimate questions about life's meaning and human values which are cross-cultural concepts (Dy-Liacco, Piedmont, Murray-Swank, Rodgerson, & Sherman, 2009; Hartman & Zimberoff, 2008; McEntee, Dy-Liacco, & Haskins, 2013; Meezenbroek, Garssen, van den Berg, Tuytel, & van Dierendonck, 2012; Moreira-Almeida & Koenig, 2006; Piedmont, Ciarrochi, Dy-Liacco, & Williams, 2009; Rican & Janosova, 2010). Self-transcendence that reflects wisdom maturity, is a developmental process and has positive outcomes in individuals' life (Reed, 1991). Findings also suggest significant relationship between self-transcendence and well-being (Hoshi, 2008). According to Wright (2003) spirituality that include religion and relationship with God is the closest construct to transcendence. Although there is a disagreement regarding the definition of spirituality and its measurement, however, one of the strongest points of view has been that spirituality should be studied as one of the personality dimensions (McCarthy, & Bockweg, 2013). Pakizeh (2013) introduced the concept of personality-transcendence as a more inclusive construct than the self-transcendence concept, and defined it as a dynamic organization of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors which organized based religious, spiritual, and moral values. He also created a training package to instruct personality-transcendence methods. This package includes a 10-session training of personality-transcendence methods (described at the method section).

## **2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESES**

### **2.1. OBJECTIVE**

The main aim of the current study was to investigate the effectiveness of personality-transcendence methods training on students' temptation resistance.

### **2.2. HYPOTHESES**

\*participation in the personality transcendence methods training workshops would increase students' resistance against their temptation to look at other personal folder without getting permission.

\*participation in the personality transcendence methods training workshops would increase students' resistance against their temptation to eat chocolates.

## **3. METHOD**

### **3.1. PARTICIPANTS**

This experimental study was conducted at Persian Gulf University in Iran. Among 183 students who were Volunteer to take part in psychological workshops, 44 students were selected randomly, and then using random assignment method were divided into two experimental and control groups.

### **3.2. PROCEDURE**

The participants in the experimental group took part in a 12-session personality-transcendence methods training. In the first session after the introduction of the participants, they were asked to discuss their opinion about self-transcendence, and then the concept of personality transcendence was introduced by the researcher. In the second session, participants were instructed how to imply psychological constructs of cognition, emotion, and behavior to transcendence their personality. The third session devoted to talking about the individuals' philosophy of life and world view as the foundation of their psychological traits and mental states. Fourth session was allocated to discuss the effectiveness of thinking and concentrating on religious and spiritual beliefs on individuals' motivation, emotion, and behavior in order to transcendence their personality. In the fifth session, self-discipline was introduced as a requirement of personality-transcendence and also as a main characteristics of personality transcendent people. Sixth, seventh, and

eighth sessions were allocated to discussing and instructing individual moralities such as forgiveness vs. hatred, benevolence against envy, and honesty vs. hypocrisy. Indicators of social moralities such as respecting Justice and the rights of others, to defend the oppressed, understanding the feelings of others, understanding the others point of views, and interacting with a good mood were discussed and instructed in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh sessions. Finally the twelfth session was allocated to the review of the previous sessions, discussing how to use the instructed methods in everyday life, and also the final conclusion.

### 3.3. EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The participants, individually and based on a specific program, referred to the laboratory that was dedicated to the study. In the laboratory, there was a table, a chair, and a questionnaire to be completed by the participants. There was also a box of chocolates and a folder entitled girls (boys) profiles, on the corner of the table. The participants were welcomed by the researcher and were asked to complete the questionnaire. While the participants were completing the questionnaire about their personal interests, the researcher said to the participants that she would leave the laboratory for a quarter to do something. We expected that, in the absence of the researcher, the chocolate box and the profiles folder would stimulate the participants' temptation. After returning to the laboratory, the researcher thanked the participants and guided them to the outside of the laboratory. Then she checked whether the participants took chocolate or opened the folder.

## 4. RESULTS

To analyze the data, t-test for two independent samples was conducted to compare the number of sweets took by participants in two groups. Moreover, in order to compare the number of the participants who looked to the profiles folder, Chi-square test was conducted. Table 1 shows t-test results for comparing participants' sweet taking in experimental and control groups.

Table 1. t-test results for differences between experimental and control groups in eating sweets

sig	t	d.f	SD	Mean	n	Group
0.02	2.36	42	0.70	0.72	22	Experiment
			0.82	1.27	22	Control

As can be seen in Table 1, the difference between the experimental and control groups in taking sweets is statistically significant ( $Md=0.54$ ,  $t=2.36$ ,  $p<0.02$ ). In the other words, the participants in the control group took significantly more sweets than the participants in the experimental group. So as we expected personality transcendence training could increase students' resistance against temptation. Table 2 shows the number of students in both experimental and control group who looked at the profiles of the students of the opposite sex.

Table 2. The number of students who looked (didn't look) at the profiles of the students of the opposite sex.

Total		looked		didn't look		Group
Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency		
22	4.5	1	95.5	21	experimental	
22	36.4	8	63.6	14	Control	
44	20.5	9	79.5	35	Total	

As Table 2 shows 1 out of 22 students in the experimental group look at the profile of the opposite sex students, while 8 out of 22 students in the control group look at the profile of the opposite sex students. Table 3 shows the results of Chi-square test for differences in the experimental and control groups for looking at the profile of the opposite sex students.

Table 3. Results of Chi-square test for differences in the experimental and control groups for looking at the profile of the opposite sex students.

sig	df	Chi-square
0.001	1	6.84

As Table 3 shows the chi-square equals to 6.84 and the difference between the two (experimental and control) groups for looking at the profile of the opposite sex students, is statistically significant. Therefore as we expected personality transcendence training could increase students' resistance against their temptation to look at the others' profiles or documents without getting permission.

## 5. CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the introduction, this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of personality transcendence methods training on students' self-control and their resistance against temptation. Independent t-test results showed that personality transcendence methods training, increases students' resistance against the temptation to eat sweets. The Chi-square test results also showed that personality transcendence methods training, increases students' resistance against the temptation for looking at the others' profiles or documents without getting

permission. The current research findings are consistent with results of the previous studies. For example, the results are consistent with Chang Chiu (2014) findings suggesting that self-control practicing leads to increase positive behaviors and also to temptation resistance. The previous findings also suggest that people with high spiritual intelligence are more resistant against temptation and get high Score in personality trait of conscientiousness (Fujita, Jessica, Carneval, 2012). There is a positive significant relationship between being spiritual and respecting the rights of others, and religiousness also reduces negative emotions and impulses (Chairy, 2012; Pakizeh & Dashtinejad, 2014). Religious and spiritual people, compared with non-religious and non-spiritual people, are mentally healthier, more honest, and less likely to seek others' private information (Reed, 2008; Zafarani, 2013). So, religiousness, as a dimension of personality transcendence, can explain why personality transcendence training increases temptation resistance. Due to the effect of personality transcendence training on temptation resistance, Participation in the workshops aimed to personality transcendence training could increase individuals' resistance against temptation and increase their self-control.

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