

# EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING ON ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JALINGO METROPOLIS, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT**--This study investigated the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested. The population of the study was 160, students from which 15 students were purposely selected. This study employed a quasi-experimental design which took the form of pre-test and post-test. The participants were exposed to treatment (cognitive restructuring technique). The instrument used for data collection was the Academic Procrastination Assessment Scale Revised (APS-R) designed by Abu-Ghazal. Data were analysed using paired sample t-test to test the null hypotheses. The findings revealed that cognitive restructuring techniques was effective in reducing academic procrastination cramming ( $P=0.001$ ), distraction of attention ( $P=0.0003$ ) and laziness ( $P=0.001$ ) among secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recommended that psychologists and counsellors should be encouraged to use cognitive restructuring in handling students with academic procrastination problems.

**Keywords**-- Cognitive Restructuring Technique, Academic Procrastination.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as one of the fundamental human rights of every child, according to International Human Rights bodies, and also one of the most important aspects of human resources development in any country that is supposed to have an effective national development but most of the secondary school learners are adolescents and are facing a lot of behaviour problems ranging from examination malpractice, lateness to school, truancy and procrastination. Procrastination, as a behaviour is the unnecessary emotion such as anxiety, depression, shame and blame, and it is a common problem among secondary school students. Procrastination is a self-handicapping behaviour that occurs when people delay completing tasks they intend to complete, potentially

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leading to lost productivity, poor performance and increase stress (Steel, 2012). Procrastination affects millions of people and is a detrimental problem which frequently affects individual productivity and well-being (Sirois, Melia-Gordon & Pyschyi, 2013; Steel, 2012; Stead, Shanahan & Neufeld, 2010). Academic procrastination is defined as postponing the academic task due to the contradiction between intention and action which lead to negative consequences to the procrastinator (Gneezy & Shuu, 2016).

Academic procrastination, largely regarded as bad habit, is an important issue that has been of interest to researchers in recent years (Chase, 2013) and is seen as behavioural problem that even some adults experience in their work especially in tasks that must be done in a certain period. Procrastination on academic tasks is a common problem among middle school students and college students, and it is the leading cause of students' failure to learn and to achieve academic success (Balkis, Duru & Duru 2014).

Academic procrastination can influence various aspects of life and has objectively important outcomes such as poor academic performance (Hussain & Sultan, 2013; Michinov, Brunot, Bohec, Juhel & Delaval, 2012). Lower scores and lack of participation or inactive participation in classes and class discussions, insufficient effort for success, anxiety, dependence, fear of failure, low self-esteem, inferiority complex, low levels of action, anger, helplessness and avoidance of goal orientation (Ferrari, Callaghan & Newbegin 2015). The most prominent effect of procrastination is weak individual performance that interferes with organizational performance (Dewitte & Schouwenbum 2012). The procrastination construct certainly has an impact on academic performance and academic achievement (Troia 2013). Various studies have recorded that academic procrastination occurs in all types and categories of schools which make learners to develop symptom such as task delay, lack of conscientiousness, self-regulatory failures impulsiveness, distractibility, disorganization, low achievement motivation and intention action gap (Steel, 2012 & Jull, 2015).

Cognitive reframing is a process we go through to create a cognitive shift. When we're confronted with a situation, it may look grim and impossible to deal with. However, after we examine our thinking to look for cognitive distortions, we can come to a more positive and realistic view (Buckley, 2019). Cognitive reframing is a psychological technique that attempts to help people stop thinking negative or stressful thoughts. Basically, the major idea here is that our thoughts about a situation are almost more important than the situation itself. Put another way, when something difficult or stressful happens to us the way we react to the situation and the thoughts we have about it are extremely important (Cummins, 2019).

Cognitive Restructuring Technique (CRT) has been found to be very effective on children, especially on problems like academic procrastination (CRT) as widely accepted for many disorders because it is effective for treating depression, generalized anxiety, phobia, panic, paranoid, conversive disorder, poor attention, truancy, frustration, mood disorder and drug abuse (Rodriguez, 2014; Zandi & Moradi 2016). Rodriguez (2014) and Boyes (2013) state that CRT gives the learner self-treatment whenever he or she has faulty cognition and also implores many humanistic qualities in the philosophy of life which include constructivism, self-actualization which is very important and effective in tackling problems like academic procrastination. This study intends to find out the effects of cognitive structuring technique on academic procrastination among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Under normal circumstance, secondary school students are expected to be punctual in school, attending lessons in the classroom, gathering information, writing and submitting assignment and home work on time, reading for test and examination at the right time, but most of the students at this level are in the habit of academic procrastination. That is, by not completing a task given to them by the teacher in the classroom, delaying in completing a test or examination due to lack of time management and postponement of academic task (assignment) unnecessarily, due to task difficulty, poor motivation by the teachers, lack of good time management, lack of concentration, lack of self-regulation, poor reading habit, poor health of the learner, distraction, poor finance and inadequate learning materials. This may lead to mass failure in WAEC, NECO and SSCE, poor performance in learning activities, disorganization, avoidance of goal-orientation, inactive participation in the classroom, lack of assertion, difficulty in making decision, irrational thought and will also lead to anxiety, stress and depression. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the effects of cognitive restructuring on academic procrastination among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis in Taraba State.

### **1.2 Objectives**

The study tends to focus on the following objectives

1. To measure the difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (cramming) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques.
2. To examine whether there is significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (distraction of attention) score exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques.

To assess whether there is significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (laziness) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques Paragraph text/

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. Is there significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (cramming) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques?
2. What is the difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (distraction of attention) score exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques?
3. Is there significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (laziness) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring technique

### **1.4 Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (cramming) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques.
2. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (distraction of attention) score exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques.
3. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test of academic-procrastination (laziness) score among secondary school students exposed to cognitive restructuring techniques

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW (ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION)**

Academic procrastination can influence various aspects of life and has objectively important outcomes such as poor academic performance (Hussain & Sultan, 2013; Michinov, Brunot, Bohec, Juhel & Delaval, 2012). Lower scores and lack of participation or inactive participation in classes and class discussions, insufficient effort for success, anxiety, dependence, fear of failure, low self-esteem, inferiority complex, low levels of action, anger, helplessness and avoidance of goal orientation (Ferrari, Callaghan & Newbegin 2015). The most prominent effect of procrastination is weak individual performance that interferes with organizational performance (Dewitte & Schouwenbum 2012). The procrastination construct certainly has an impact on academic performance and academic achievement (Troia 2013). Various studies have recorded that academic procrastination occurs in all types and categories of schools which make learners to develop symptom such as task delay, lack of conscientiousness, self-regulatory failures impulsiveness, distractibility, disorganization, low achievement motivation and intention action gap (Steel, 2012 & Jull, 2015).

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## **III. METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS**

3.1 The research design adopted for this study was quasi-experimental research design that takes the form of pre-test, post-test group. This design involved a pre-test of the subjects before the introduction of treatment followed by a post-test of the subjects after the treatment. This design is widely used in behavioural research specifically for the purpose of comparing groups for experimental treatment (Gray, 2009). For using this type of design was because it ensures participants are measured on an outcome variable both before and after the intervention of interest hoping that if the intervention is effective, outcome scores will should improve compared

to control or base line outcome while score will hold steady if the intervention has no effect (Mark and Gamble, 2009).

Quasi-experimental design can be illustrated below as follows:

### *Pre-test-Post-test Design*

**O1**                    **X1**                    **O2**  
**O3**                                            **O4**

**Where:**

**O1** and **O3** refer to the observation before treatment (pre-test).

**O2** and **O4** refer to the observation after treatment (post-test).

**X1** refer to the treatment group.

### *3.2 Population of the Study*

The population of this study consisted of all the senior secondary school class two (SS II) students in public secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis with the total number of 8,070 during the 2016/2017 academic session (Taraba State Ministry of Education, Jalingo Education Office). A target population of 160 students from two public senior secondary schools constituted the population of the study. Senior secondary school SS II was chosen because they are within the age range of adolescent group whose image is seen as a time of stress and storm, intense moodiness and preoccupied with self. These systems are seen as part of prevalent characteristic nature in the growing process of the adolescents. And also, the SS II students understand spoken and written English and could express themselves freely for effective communication and interaction during the treatment session.

### *3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique*

Out of one hundred and sixty students' (160) sample, the research used only thirty (15) sample in senior secondary students for the study. Sampling is necessary in order to reflect the general sentiment of the population on the study (Anikweze, 2009) and also this procedure will enable the researcher to bring out a smaller sample size to represent the population. Government Commercial College, Jalingo and Government Secondary School, Jalingo, Kofan Kibo were purposively selected because of their social factors (Both the school is homogeneous, having different people from all over Nigeria), and population of the schools which comprise (co-education), and geographical location (The schools are located at the centre which makes it accessible to the learners around the community). To compose this sample, the researcher purposely sampled 15 students from the two sampled schools in SSII.

**Table 1:** Sample for the Study

S/N	Treatment	M	F	T
1	Experimental group: Cognitive Restructuring (CRT)	5	10	15
Total		5	10	15

**Table 2:** Sample for the Study based on School

S/N	School	M	F	T
1	Magami Gov't Day Secondary School, Jalingo (MGDSS)	5	-	5
2	Government College, Jalingo (GC Jalingo)	5	5	10
Total		10	5	15

### ***Control of Extraneous Variable***

The term extraneous variables are used to refer to any other factors that might compound the treatment effect on the dependent variable in the study and most importantly, how these variables can be controlled to maximize internal validity. There is always the need for the researcher to identify confounding or intervening variables. The control of extraneous variables is necessary because the researcher can attribute changes observed in the dependent variable as being a function of the independent variable thereby ruling out the possibility of alternative explanations. The present study utilized the following ways to control the extraneous variables:

1. Hawthorne Effect: The researcher will give attention to the subjects during treatment.
2. Novelty and Disruption Effect: The researcher tried to spend more time to familiarize with the host teacher and the learners before embarking on the experiment.
3. Lack of Attention and Interest on the part of the students: The researcher will try to establish good relationship with the students, so that the students would be highly motivated in order to participate fully during the sessions.
4. Absenteeism: The researcher tries and inform the students to participate in all the treatment sessions and also to be attending the sessions.
5. Training of Research Assistant: The researcher seeks the help of trained research assistant from two of the teachers in the school to help in administering the instrument to the respondents. The purpose of using research assistant is to reduce difficulties normally experienced by the researchers during administering of instrument and data collection. The research assistant will be given short period of orientation before embarking or commencing the experiment by the researcher.
6. Instrumentation: The researcher asked the research assistant and class teacher to strictly administer the same instrument at the same time.

### ***Instrumentation***

The instrument used for the collection of required data for this study was the Academic Procrastination Scale Revised (APS-R) developed by Abu-Ghazal (2012) and was adapted. The language was modified in order to suit the level of the participant. The scale consists of two sections. Section A was on personal data comprising five (5) items Section B consists of twenty-one (21) items on general questions about academic procrastination. Responses on the items are measured in a five-point scale ranging from: Apply to me very high (5), Apply to me high (4), Apply to me moderately (3), Apply to me low (2), Apply to me very low (1). The minimum score is  $1 \times 21 = 21$ , while maximum score is  $5 \times 21 = 105$ .

### ***Validation of the Instrument***

The validity of the instrument according to Kazdin (2013) is the logical consensus of experts whose criticism and suggestion are bound to improve the quality of the questionnaire in doing what it is designed to do. In agreement with Kazdin (2013), three experts in the field of educational psychology and counselling in Taraba State University, Jalingo gave a satisfactory comment on the face validity which shows that they are satisfied with the instrument.

## **IV. RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

The reliability of the instrument was established by conducting a pilot study using twenty (20) students. Ten (10) students were drawn from schools that were not part of the study. The instrument was found to be reliable with Cronbach alpha of 0.742. Schnitzer (2006) confirm the reliability of test in which he states that an instrument is considered reliable if its reliability coefficient lies between 0 and 1, and that the closer the calculated reliability coefficient is to zero, the less reliable is the instrument and the closer the calculated reliability coefficient is to 1, the more reliable the instrument. Therefore, the instrument is fit to be used for this research because it was found to be reliable for its high scores.

### ***Pre-treatment***

Academic procrastination scale was used for the pre-test to ascertain those who could benefit from the therapy. It was also use as pre-test to test the effectiveness of the modification technique (Cognitive restructuring technique) before making inferences from the analysis of the data received, official permission was first sought by the researcher from Taraba State Ministry of Education (Zonal Office Jalingo) for the use of public school in the area. Purposive sampling technique was use to select sample for the study and the samples were the beneficiary of the treatment in the study.

i. Distribution of letters: - First visit; the researcher first visited the schools for the purpose of meeting the two principals. Request was made to the school for permission to see all the SSII students and their forms teachers. Approval letter from ministry of education Taraba State zonal office and introduction letter from the faculty of education, department of educational psychology and counselling was presented to the two principals and they accepted the request.

ii. Administration of pre-test: Academic procrastination scale comprising 21 items was administered to the participants in the study with a total number of 15 academic procrastinators. Apart from the advantage of the pre-test (by using it in selection of subject, academic procrastination scale was used for validity and reliability of the instrument).

iii. Scoring of test and selection of samples: - After the administration of the pre-test, the researcher scored the test in preparation for the treatment (post-test) activity. The scoring procedures are as follows;

5	4	3	2	1
Apply to me very high	Apply to me high	Apply to me moderately	Apply to me low	Apply to me very low

From the example above, students who score high (5) have the highest score and high in procrastination, followed by 4,3,2 and 1. The student with high score in 4 and 5 are picked as high academic procrastinators) for the treatment procedure of Cognitive restructuring technique. It was mainly the outcome of the scoring that determined who participated in the study.

iv. Post-treatment session: This is the final section of the treatment procedure. At the end of the treatment, academic procrastination scale was administered to the two experimental groups (CTR) with the view to determine the effectiveness of the technique on academic procrastinated behaviour among secondary school students.

v. Treatment Procedure

### ***Cognitive Restructuring (CRT)***

#### **WEEK 1:**

**SESSION 1:** Establishing relationship with the learners

Session 2: Nature, purpose and process

Session 3: Cognitive rehearsals: The Client recalls a problem from the past, the researcher and the client work together, to develop strategies, to the problem so that if it occurs in future, the client as a plan.

#### **WEEK 2**

Session 4: Validity Testing: The researcher tests the validity of the client's believe or thought, giving the client time to defend his or her view point.

Session 5: Write in a journal. Thoughts and situation that occur daily will be recorded. The researcher and the client then review the journal to figure out any maladaptive patterns that could affect the client behaviour.

#### **WEEK 3**

Session 6: Guided Discovery: The researcher guides the client though a scenario, enabling the client to understand and cognitive distortion.

Session 7: Modelling: This involves role-playing exercises by the researcher so that the client may learn new ways of responding to certain situation.

#### **WEEKS 5-6**

Session 8: Homework: The researcher commonly gives assignments to clients to help them learn new ways of dealing with current dilemmas.

Sessions 9-10: Systematic positive reinforcement: This technique involves the client performing of desirable behaviour and then being provided with a pleasant reinforcement or reward.

#### **WEEK 6**

Session 11: Revision of cognitive restructuring treatment.

Session 12: The re-administration of APS-R to the student.

## **V. RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The study was basically intended to find out the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination of (cramming, distractions of attention and laziness) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. Three hypotheses were tested. A total of 15 students were used for this research. The Statistical

package of SPSS version 23 was used to carry out the analysis. Paired sample t test was used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

**Data Presentation**

Frequency counts and simple percentages were used in presenting data collected from the field

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
<b>Cognitive restructuring technique</b>		
Cramming	5	33.3
Distraction of attention	5	33.3
Laziness	5	33.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

The result of data analysis in table 1 above showed that the experimental group that was exposed to Cognitive restructuring technique has 15 participants (5 each) representing 33.3% on each of the dependent variables academic procrastination (Cramming distraction of the attention and laziness).

**Testing of Hypotheses**

Test of hypotheses answer the null hypothesis using paired sample t-test and analysis of covariance at 0.05 level of significance, the analysis was tested by comparing pre-test and post-test of academic procrastination (cramming, distraction of attention and laziness) among secondary school student in Jalingo metropolis.

**Hypothesis one:**

The null hypothesis state that there is no significant difference of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination (Cramming) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis

**Table 2:** Paired sample t-test on the academic procrastination (Cramming,) using Cognitive Restructuring Techniques among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis

Variable	Period	N	Mean	Std.dev	Std.ERR	Mean Diff.	Df	t	p
Academic Procrastination (Cramming)	Pretest	5	32.55	3.21	0.86	4.33`	4	4.01	0.001
	Posttest	5	28.22	1.99	0.45				

*P calculated < 0.05, t computed > 1.96 at df 4*

The results of the paired sample t test statistics on table 2 revealed that there is a significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (cramming). [ $t = 4.01, p = 0.001$ ]. Their calculated mean score of academic procrastination were 32.55 pre-test and 28.22 post-test at df of 4. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (Cramming) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis **two**: The null hypothesis state that there is no significant difference of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination (distraction of attention) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis

**Table 3:** Paired sample t-test on the academic procrastination (distraction of attention) using Cognitive Restructuring Techniques among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis;

Variable	Period	N	Mean	Std.dev	Std.ERR	Mean Diff.	Df	T	P
Academic Procrastination (distraction attention)	Pretest	5	20.54	4.51	0.87				
	Posttest	5	13.54	3.02	0.48	7.00	4	5.57	0.003

*P calculated < 0.05, t computed > 1.96 at df 4*

The results of paired sample t test statistics on table 3 above revealed that there is a significant effect of cognitive restructuring techniques on academic procrastination (distraction of attention), [ $t = 5.57, p = 0.003$ ]. Their calculated mean score academic procrastination were pre-test 20.54 and post-test 13.54 at df of 4. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination (distraction of attention) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis **three**: The null hypothesis state that there is no significant difference of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination (laziness) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis

**Table 4:** Paired sample t-test on the academic procrastination (laziness) using Cognitive Restructuring Techniques among Secondary School Students in Jalingo Metropolis;

Variable	Period	N	Mean	Std.dev	Std.ERR	Mean Diff.	Df	T	P
Academic Procrastination (laziness)	Pretest	5	25.99	3.24	0.66				
	Posttest	5	23.11	3.00	0.96	2.88	4	5.01	0.001

*P calculated > 0.05, t computed > 1.96 at df 4*

The results of paired sample t test statistics on table 4 revealed that there is a significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (laziness) [ $t = 5.0, p = 0.001$ ]. There calculated mean score of

academic procrastination were pre-test 25.99 and post-test 23.11 at df of 4. Therefore, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference of cognitive restructuring technique on the academic procrastination (laziness) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis is hereby rejected.

## VI. DISCUSSIONS

It was found that significant difference existed on the effect of cognitive restructuring techniques on the academic procrastination (cramming) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. This finding is in line with Zandi and Moradi (2016) in which they found cognitive behaviour group therapy effective in reducing procrastination on academic achievement. It also in line with the study of Addison Antwi and Avonokadzi, (2014) in which they found cognitive restructuring technique effective in enhancing self-esteem on academic achievement. Studies conducted on academic procrastination (cramming) have also tend to rationalize their tendencies to put thing off and their ability to work under pressure (cramming) according to Psychi and Flett (2012) the further emphasis that one, aspect of academic procrastination involves psychological beliefs about ability to work under pressure which makes student to “cram” before test and exam. Cramming for test or exam is when students procrastinate or wait until the night or hours before examination or test.

Finding on the effect of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (distraction of attention) revealed that academic procrastination has greatly reduced implying significant effect of cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (distraction of attention) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. This finding is in line with Olububayo, (2014) by using CRT to reduce mathematics anxiety among secondary school students. Also, studies conducted by Steel, (2012) on academic procrastination (distraction of attention) revealed that those who procrastinate can have their attention distracted by more interesting full activities. He further explained that, those individuals who procrastinate take part in self-handicapping and also intentionally place more pleasing activities a head in doing assignment. Steel, (2012) also states that procrastinating individual on academic activities in the school tend to sleep, watch television or play instead of working on more important things in order to distract or distance themselves from responsibilities.

It was also found that significant effect existed by using cognitive restructuring technique on academic procrastination (laziness) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis. This is agreement with Umar, Abdullahi, Oliagba, Sambo and Abdulwahid, (2014) in which the used cognitive restructuring intervention to reduce Tobacco smoking among adolescents in Jalingo educational zone. It is also line with (Toker & Ava 2015) in which the used cognitive behavioural therapy to reduce academic procrastination behaviours, studies on academic procrastination and have found a variety of three factors of academic procrastination. These factors include “fear of failure” task evasiveness and laziness” (Schraw et al, 2013). Laziness is a tendency to avoid work even when physically able (Mish, 2014).

## VII. CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that cognitive restructuring techniques was significant in improving academic procrastination (cramming, distraction of attention and laziness) among secondary school students in Jalingo metropolis.

n and laziness).

### **5.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made: -

1. CRT should be used in re-addressing students with academic procrastination (cramming, distraction of attention and laziness).

3. School principals, psychologists, counsellors and form teachers should be exposed to training in CRT in re-addressing students with academic procrastination (cramming, distraction of attention and laziness).

4. Seminar, workshops and conferences should be organized for teachers, psychologist counsellors on how to use CRT in reducing academic procrastination (cramming, distraction of attention).

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