

## The Effectiveness Of Cognitive Behavior Therapy Group Counseling With Cognitive Restructuring And Self-Talk Techniques To Reduce Students' Academic Procrastination

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### Abstract

Procrastination is commonly practiced by students who fear failure or have unrealistic expectations to perfectly accomplish tasks. This study attempted to examine the effectiveness of cognitive behavior therapy group counselling with cognitive restructuring and self-talk techniques to reduce the academic procrastination of students at MTs Nurul Huda Demak. It used an experimental method and pretest-posttest control group design by involving 17 students with high tendency of academic procrastination as the subjects. Based on the Wilcoxon test, the intervention previously mentioned could reduce the academic procrastination of the students at MTs Nurul Huda Demak. It is recommended to expand the scope of research subjects by having a control group for conducting the experiment.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Burka and Yuen (2008) procrastination can happen to any individual regardless of gender, age, student or worker or other status. In addition, Ellis & Knaus (in Tuckman, 2002) ; Hartman & Zimberoff (2003) define procrastination as the habit of unnecessary delay carried out by individuals because of the fear of failure and the view that everything must be done and completed perfectly. In this way, someone will feel safer not doing something immediately, because he is afraid of not optimal results, related to an individual's fear of experiencing failure, not liking work, not being able to stand alone, going against rules, and having difficulty making decisions according.

Procrastination impacts various areas of life, including the academic field. Ferrari, et al (in Saman, 2017; Rahmatia & Rahman, 2015) completing assignments, being late in submitting assignments, existence of time gaps between intentions and implementation, and doing other more interesting activities and It can also happen due to the tendency of the doers who prefer to do less stressful things to important tasks. There known six areas of academic tasks which often get procrastinated, namely postponing paper assignments, examinations, administrative tasks, general academic assignments, exam preparation, and cases mainly deal with anger, hating tasks, loss, control distortion, and helplessness in decision making (Abdillah & Fitriana, 2021; Ilyas & Suryadi, 2017).

Suppose school counselors are optimized, the above issue can be countered. The school counselors are responsible for increasing students motivation to obtain achievement through their professional counseling services. Using counseling approaches, students can be facilitated to reduce their academic procrastination. Counseling is a process of psychological assistance from counselors to understand oneself and to find various solutions to the problems faced. Practically, this can be done with group counseling services.

Corey (2012) states group counseling has preventive and corrective goals. This service

focuses on meetings and goals to achieve. Each meeting of counseling session must have clear goals, for example reducing anxiety or increasing self-esteem. In its implementation, group counseling services are often delivered through counseling approaches.

The Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) group counseling approach is considered good for coping with students' problems. Marwing and Broto (2020) found that manual cognitive behavioral group counseling intervention can reduce adolescent career instability.

In reducing academic procrastination, specific signals antecedents to the doers must be reduced, rearranged, or changed in time and place of occurrence. It was expected that restructuring and self-talk techniques could help students to independently avoid the reappearance of academic procrastination.

Self-talk was chosen to be the intervention in this study because theoretically it enables people to deny illogical beliefs and develop healthy thoughts which later will results in more positive self-talk to overcome any contradictive ideas shared by others (such as parenst, teachers, and peers) about oneself (Erford, 2016).

The current study strived for improving the belief about abilities to complete tasks so that students can develop more adaptive self-confidence and be able to think realistically. It was hoped that the counseling at MTs Nurul Huda Demak can overcome the cognitive distortions experienced by students so later it can reduce the academic procrastination by the students. Once it is reduced, students are expected to be able to develop optimally, meet the standards set by the school and become healthy and happy people.

## METHODS

17 reserch subjects involved in this study were chosen from the population of 60 students who had the high level of academic procrastination based on the scale trial. In details, those included in this study must fulfill the following characteristics, namely registered

students at school, having medium to high level of academic procrastination (noticed from the score of the pretest), and willing to participate in this study.

Students' data were collected using a procrastination scale. It has 27 items from 4 indicators. The Likert scale guidelines using 4 alternative suitability answers were employed to assess each item chosen by respondents, namely strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. In terms of reliability test, all items obtained a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.792.

In carrying out this study, several steps were done. First, a pretest was given using the procrastination scale. Second, intervention was provided in the form of cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with restructuring and self-talk techniques. Self-monitoring, self-reward, self-contracting, and self-control were strategies in the intervention process using self-talk technique carried out in six sessions lasting  $2 \times 45$  minutes. Third, the posttest was carried out to examine any change or reduction in students' procrastination. Fourth, follow-up was done through a posttest. All these stages were conducted in form of experimental research with a randomized pretest–posttest control group design. It was held at MTs Nurul Huda Demak on students who had high levels of academic

procrastination. All students were grouped as experimental and received different techniques, namely the CBT group counseling treatment with cognitive restructuring technique and the CBT group counseling treatment with self-talk technique.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from pretest, posttest, and follow-up were tabulated prior to the analysis. Initially, the students' procrastination level was high. After the intervention was given, both groups got reduction in their procrastination level to low. Then, Wilcoxon test was carried out to get detailed results of the reduction in each group which was treated using the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with cognitive restructuring technique, the cognitive behavior therapy group counseling with self-talk technique, and the combination of them. It can be seen in table 1.

The Wilcoxon test done in this study was a non-parametric, aiming at comparing two independent samples. It is also known as Sign Test, a test used to compare two samples that come from one group or pair that are measured twice.

**Table 1.** Wilcoxon Test Results

| Kelompok                       | Pre test |       | Posttest |      | Z    | P  |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------|----------|------|------|----|
|                                | M        | SD    | M        | SD   |      |    |
| <i>Cognitive restructuring</i> | 122.6    | 6.593 | 58.0     | 2.82 | -    | 02 |
| <i>Selftalk</i>                | 125.1    | 11.82 | 52.3     | 2.73 | -    | 02 |
| <i>Combinatio</i>              | 128.8    | 5.215 | 57.2     | 2.28 | -    | 04 |
| <i>n</i>                       | 0        |       | 0        | 0    | 2.23 | 3  |
| <i>H</i>                       | 2.94     |       | 7.7      |      |      |    |
| <i>P</i>                       | > 0.05   |       | < 0.05   |      |      |    |

Table 1 shows a decline in academic procrastination among students after receiving the treatment in the three groups. In addition, the reduction of each group, namely the CBT counseling with cognitive restructuring technique, CBT counseling with self-talk

technique, and CBT counseling with the combination of both techniques were ( $z = -2.27$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), ( $z = -2.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and ( $z = -2.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) respectively.

Prior to the intervention, there was no different between all three groups. In the pretest,

all groups obtained ( $h = 2.94$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), while in the posttest the scores was ( $h = 7.7$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), so it was accepted.

**Tabel 2.** Mann Whitney Test Results

| Comparison group                           | Z      | P      |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| <i>Cognitive restructuring – Self talk</i> | -2.423 | < 0.05 |
| <i>Cognitive restructuring-Combination</i> | -0.471 | > 0.05 |
| <i>Combination -Self talk</i>              | -2.216 | < 0.05 |

Table 2 shows that the comparison between the CBT group counseling with cognitive restructuring tehcnique and the one with self-talk technique was ( $z = -2.423$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), the CBT group counseling with the cognitive restructuring technique and the one with the combination of both techniques was ( $z = -0.471$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and the CBT group counseling with the combination of both techniques and the one with self-talk technique was ( $z = -2.216$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Here, there found no difference between the cognitive restructuring group and the combination techniques group. Of this comparison, it was known that the self-talk technique was the most effective intervention in reducing student's procrastination.

The findings above have proved that the cognitive behavioral therapy group counselling with self-talk technique was effective to reduce students' procrastination. It is in line with a study by (Kross et al., 2014) which examined the influence of self-talk in dealing with feelings of low self-esteem, behavior and social stress. It concludes applying self-talk can increase a person's self-confidence, change behavior for the better, and reduce social stress.

Regarding the effectiveness of the counseling techniques on students, the effect of this intervention will enable the students to achieve personal happiness and provide benefits to the social environment. The counseling approach commonly has several elements, namely (1) the process of helping individuals to make choices and the willingness to act on the

basis of these choices, (2) a learning process, and (3) personality development. The implementation of counseling functions to assist individuals in becoming the ones who are beneficial to themselves and their environment, have views, judgments and choices, and have the right adjustment skills according to their circumstances and the surrounding environment. Individuals are also expected to have an attitude of independence. can understand and accept themselves and their environment objectively, realistically and positively, and be able to make decisions (Putri & Prihwanto, 2021).

Based on the results of data analysis, maximum effort is needed to reduce students' procrastination. Through self-talk, students can deny unreasonable beliefs and develop healthier thinking. Thus, the output can produce more positive students' self-talk. It is similar to a study by (Antika, 2020) which concludes that mind-skills can help to manage feelings and thoughts so that individuals can control their actions. Mind skills activities encourage people to be persistent, strong and resilient.

Self-talk is a technique from the CBT approach in a form of an exercise to increase self-control by using self-verbalization as stimulation and reinforcement during treatment. This technique makes use of positive verbal expressions to reduce negative thoughts in order to increase a counselee's control over himself through his thoughts. The most important step in the self-talk technique is that the counselee slowly begins to speak softly in his heart. Self-talk training focuses more on helping clients become self-aware to be able to talk to themselves (Corey, 2015).

Through self-talk, a person's negative view of himself can be directed to a more positive one (Martin & Pear, 2015). Help through this technique can be made for students with negative and unrealistic thoughts by identifying negative patterns and developing a more realistic and adaptive perspective. This method can also be used to help students plan their careers. It is in line with (Huang, 2014) who states that internal work abilities partially mediate the relationship

between resilience and career decision self-efficacy.

Self-talk is a simple strategy to help students reduce procrastination. This technique teaches students to manage and tolerate unpleasant situations which can be done through self-talk (talking to themselves). It is said successful if someone gains some increase in the ability to engage, having goals, and finding meaning in activities and environments. Similarly, a study by (Puspatirini, 2017) mentions a significant change in stress levels due to the implementation of self-talk, enabling individuals to have the ability to control themselves over the problems they face so as to achieve a healthy self-identity.

Self-talk is effective in reducing the academic anxiety of students with broken homes. It is based on self-talk ability to restructure and revisit mindset (attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs), as well as decide things beneficial and unbeneficial for individuals. This method is easy to do, efficient, and can be done at any time and involves complete independence and participation so that it can provide the desired hope (Putri, 2021). It has been proved that the application of the group counseling with the self-instruction technique can improve children positive attitudes (Habiba, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

With regard to the findings, it can be concluded that the cognitive behavioral therapy counseling with the self-talk technique is effective to reduce the procrastination done by the students at MTs Nurul Huda Demak. Further, it is suggested that school counselors can use this intervention to solve students' problems related to procrastination. Then, the future researchers can expand the scope of research subjects.

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