

The Relationship between Cognitive Restructuring and Optimistic Attitude of Selected CAS Students at Arellano University - Jose Abad Santos Campus

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between cognitive restructuring and optimistic attitude among CAS students. For this purpose, 180 CAS students were randomly selected from College of Arts and Sciences of Arellano University – Jose Abad Santos Campus. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Skill Questionnaire of Christopher, Jacob & Neuhaus and Learned Optimism Test of Seligman were administered upon research sample and data were collected. The collected data were analyzed with Pearson R method. The findings reveals that: (i) Cognitive Restructuring of CAS students were challenged in recognizing distortions and applying coping strategies but moderately challenged in utilizing techniques and improving psychological well-being. (ii) In terms of optimism, respondents were optimistic in positive self-talk and emotional regulation but moderately optimistic in perception of control and resilience. (iii) A moderate positive correlation .620 was found, suggesting that as students improve cognitive restructuring skills, their optimism also increases, with a statistically significant p-value 0.001.

Keywords: Cognitive Restructuring, Optimistic Attitude, CAS students

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive restructuring involves recognizing and challenging negative thoughts to develop healthier thought patterns, often used to treat anxiety, depression, and phobias. An optimistic attitude, on the other hand, focuses on positive outcomes and is linked to better psychological and physical health, success, and strong relationships. These two constructs are closely related, as cognitive restructuring can foster optimism, and an optimistic mindset encourages restructuring of negative thoughts.

Despite studies on each individually, there is a need for research examining their combined effects, particularly among students as this interaction may enhance mental well-being. Future research is needed to better understand the influences of psychopathology, such as chronic stress, burnout, and competitive anxiety, as these factors are closely linked to maladaptive thought patterns. This study explores the role of cognitive restructuring and an optimistic attitude in addressing these challenges. Cognitive restructuring theory, in the context of trauma, highlights the balance between Freud's concepts of Eros and Thanatos for psychological health, with eros aiding healing and thanatos linked to avoidance (Bodo, 2023). Ellis emphasizes rational thinking to counter cognitive distortions (Heick, 2022), while Beck's cognitive restructuring in CBT helps replace negative thoughts (Beck & Fleming, 2021). Complementing these ideas, Seligman's Positive Psychology and Fredrickson's "Broaden-and-Build" theory focus on fostering positive emotions, personal growth, and resilience to enhance well-being and reduce distress (Millacci, 2023; Johnson, 2021).

This study aimed to assess the levels of cognitive restructuring and optimistic attitude among the participants. Specifically, the study sought answers the following questions: 1. How do Selected CAS Students determine Cognitive Restructuring in terms of: (1.1) recognition of cognitive distortions; (1.2) utilization of techniques; (1.3) application of coping strategies; and (1.4) improvement in psychological well-being? 2. What is the Level of Optimistic Attitude among respondents in terms of: (2.1) frequency of positive self-talk; (2.2) perception of

control; (2.3) resilience; and (2.4) emotional regulation? 3. Is there a significant relationship between Cognitive Restructuring and Optimistic Attitude?

Filipino resilience, shaped by values like "amor propio" and optimism, is reinforced by therapeutic interventions that foster well-being.

CBT, particularly cognitive restructuring, addresses negative thoughts to promote balanced perspectives and adaptive coping (Masana, 2020; Sengupta, 2022; Violet, 2020; Sawadjaan, 2020; Lynlyn, 2022).

Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy emphasizes building positive beliefs and empowerment (Beck, 2023), while optimism supports hope and proactive responses to challenges (Boykin, 2021; Forseth, 2023).

Studies by Ynares (2023) and Kuriala (2020) highlight CBT's role in enhancing optimism among Filipino youth, while foreign research stresses the value of correcting biased thoughts to improve resilience (Shidara et al., 2022; Hintz, 2023; Dattilo, 2019). Findings supported cognitive restructuring and optimism in enhancing mental health across cultures.

Objective of the Study:

The main objective of the study was to assess cognitive restructuring and optimistic attitude among selected CAS students.

Hypotheses of the Study:

The study tested the hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between cognitive restructuring and optimistic attitude.

METHODOLOGY

Research Sample:

Total 180 CAS students (average age range of 21 years) were randomly selected from College of Arts and Sciences of Arellano University – Jose Abad Santos Campus. The research sample were in normal condition for giving responses on research scales.

Research Scale:

The following research scales were administered upon research sample:

1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Skill Questionnaire of Christopher et al., (Li, 2022) has an overall reliability of 0.84 and content and criterion-related validity after testing on a diverse set of people aged 18-38 years old.
2. Learned Optimism Test of Seligman (Baum et al., 2022) has an overall reliability of 0.84 and content and criterion-related validity after testing on a diverse set of people aged 18-40 years old.

Data Collection

For data collection work, the study had made well plan. According to decided plan, the researchers sought authorization from authors to utilize their standardized questionnaires. Standardized questionnaires were adapted and made into Google and Printed forms for administration. Permission from school authorities was obtained before administering the study instruments virtually. Consent of respondents was obtained, and their participation in answering the study instruments was voluntary. The respondents of the study were assured that their responses would be used exclusively for the advancement of the study and would not cause them any harm. The study analyzed responses from the surveyed questionnaires to formulate conclusions and potential solutions

to the identified issues. Thus, data collection work was finished and the researchers were grateful to the people who made it possible.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was analyzed with pearson r which was closely related to simple linear regression and prepared result in current IBM SPSS Statistics.

RESULT

The following results were found after the analysis of data was made:

Table 1 Respondent as to Course

Course	Population	Slovin's Formula	%
AB English	4	4	2.22%
AB History	8	8	4.44%
AB Political Science	96	58	32.22%
AB Psychology	149	110	61.11%
Total	257	180	100%

Table 2 Respondents as to Year Level

Year Level	f	%
1 st Year	77	42.8%
2 nd Year	45	25.0%
3 rd Year	24	13.3%
4 th Year	34	18.9%
Total	180	100%

Table 3 Respondents as to Gender

Gender	f	%
Male	61	33.9%
Female	119	66.1%
Total	180	100%

Table 4 Assessment as to Recognition of Cognitive Distortions

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. Catch myself when I jump to conclusions.	3.8	C	3

2. Challenge my thoughts.	4.1	C	1
3. Catch my negative thought patterns at the time that I have them.	3.7	C	4
4. Find evidence to support my thoughts before buying into them.	4	C	2
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.9	C	

Legend: 5 – 4.20 – 5.00 HC Highly Challenged

4 – 3.40 – 4.19 C Challenged

3 – 2.60 – 3.39 MC Moderately Challenged

2 – 1.80 – 2.59 LC Less Challenged

1 – 1.00 – 1.79 LTC Least Challenged

Table 5 Assessment as to Utilization of Techniques

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. Plan activities for the weekends.	3.7	C	1.5
2. Engage in an activity instead of a harmful behavior. (R)	1.92	C	4
3. Plan my time during the week.	3.7	C	1.5
4. Keep track of the signs and symptoms of my condition.	3.6	C	3
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.2	MC	

Table 6 Assessment as to Application of Coping Strategies

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
Purposefully do fun things that I like when I am feeling badly.	4.1	C	2
Motivate myself by doing things.	4.2	HC	1
Socialize even though I don't feel like it. (R)	2.82	MC	4
Communicate my needs effectively.	3.6	C	3
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.6	C	

Table 7 Assessment as to Improvement in Psychological Well-Being

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. Identify situations that make my symptoms worse. (R)	2.22	C	4
2. Identify risk factors for relapse. (R)	2.26	C	3
3. Notice when I start to feel more distressed.	4	C	1

4. Identify stressors that led me into treatment.	3.6	C	2
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.02	MC	

Table 8 Summary Table of Cognitive Restructuring

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
Recognition of Cognitive Distortions	3.9	C	
Utilization of Techniques	3.2	MC	
Application of Coping Strategies	3.6	C	
Improvement in Psychological Well-Being	3.02	MC	
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.4	MC	

Table 9 Assessment as to Frequency of Positive Self-Talk

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. You get a flower from a secret admirer, I am a popular person.	2.7	MO	12
2. You run for a community office position and you win, I work very hard at everything I do.	3.6	O	5.5
3. You host a successful dinner, I am a good host.	3.6	O	5.5
4. You were extremely healthy all year, I made sure I ate well and got enough rest.	3.6	O	5.5
5. You win an athletic contest, I train hard.	3.6	O	5.5
6. A game-show host picks you out of the audience to participate in the show, I looked the most enthusiastic.	3.2	MO	10
7. You are frequently asked to dance at a party, I am outgoing at parties.	3	MO	11
8. You do exceptionally well in a job interview, I interview well.	3.7	O	2.5
9. Your boss gives you too little time in which to finish a project, but you get it finished anyway, I am good at my job.	3.7	O	2.5
10. A friend thanks you for helping him/her get through a bad time, I care about people.	4.2	HO	1
11. Your doctor tells you that you are in good physical shape, I make sure I exercise frequently.	3.6	O	5.5
12. You are asked to head an important project, I just successfully completed a similar project.	3.7	O	2.5
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.5	O	

Legend: 5 – 4.20 – 5.00 HO Highly Optimistic

4 – 3.40 – 4.19 O Optimistic

3 – 2.60 – 3.39 MO Moderately Optimistic

2 – 1.80 – 2.59 LO Less Optimistic

1 – 1.00 – 1.79 LTO Least Optimistic

Table 10 Assessment as to Perception of Control

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. You get lost driving to a friend's house, I missed a turn. (R)	2.62	MO	12
2. You forget your boyfriend's/ girlfriend's birthday, I was preoccupied with other things. (R)	3.03	MO	9
3. You miss an important engagement, I sometimes forget to check my appointment book. (R)	2.71	MO	11
4. You run for a community office position, and you lose, the person who won knew more people.	3.2	MO	6.5
5. You stop a crime by calling the police, I was alert that day.	3.6	O	1.5
6. You owe the library \$10 for an overdue book, I was so involved in writing the report I forgot to return the book.	3.4	O	4
7. Your stocks make you a lot of money, my broker is a top-notch investor.	3.2	MO	6.5
8. You fail an important examination, I didn't prepare for it well.	3.6	O	1.5
9. You prepared a special meal for a friend, and he/she barely touched the food, I made the meal in a rush.	3.1	MO	8
10. Your car runs out of gas on a dark street late at night, I didn't check to see how much gas was in the tank.	3.3	MO	5
11. You are penalized for not returning your income-tax forms on time, I always put off doing my taxes. (R)	2.94	MO	10
12. You save a person from choking to death, I know what to do in a crisis situation.	3.6	O	1.5
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.1	MO	

Table 11 Assessment as to Resilience

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. You've been feeling run-down lately, I was exceptionally busy this week.	3.9	O	1
2. Your employer comes to you for advice, I am an expert in the area about which I was asked.	3.6	O	3

3. Your romantic partner wants to cool things off for a while, I don't spend enough time with him/her.	3.2	MO	6.5
4. A friend says something that hurts your feelings, my friend was in a bad mood and took it out on me.	3.4	O	5
5. You win a prestigious award, I solved an important problem.	3.5	O	4
6. Your stocks are at an all-time low, I made a poor choice of stocks. (R)	2.63	MO	11
7. You win the lottery, it was a pure chance.	3.7	O	2
8. You gain weight over the holidays and you can't lose it, the diet I tried didn't work.	3.2	MO	6.5
9. You are in the hospital, and few people come to visit, my friends are negligent about things like that. (R)	2.91	MO	10
10. They won't honor your credit card at a store, I sometimes forget to pay my credit card bill. (R)	2.98	MO	9
11. You fall down a great deal while skiing, the trails were icy.	3.2	MO	6.5
12. You and your boyfriend/girlfriend have been fighting a great deal, I have been feeling cranky and pressured lately. (R)	2.57	MO	12
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	2.75	MO	

Table 12 Assessment as to Emotional Regulation

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
1. You and your boyfriend/girlfriend make up after a fight, I'm usually forgiving.	3.9	O	1.5
2. Your boyfriend/girlfriend surprises you with a gift, he/she just got a raise at work.	3.6	O	5.5
3. You lose your temper with a friend, he/she was in a hostile mood.	3.1	MO	11.5
4. You ask a person out on a date, and he/she says no, I was a wreck that day.	2.7	MO	7.5
5. You buy your boyfriend/girlfriend a gift, and he/she doesn't like it, he/she has very picky tastes.	2.7	MO	7.5
6. You tell a joke, and everyone laughs, the joke was funny.	3.9	O	1.5
7. Your boyfriend/girlfriend takes you away for a romantic weekend, he/she likes to explore new areas.	3.9	O	1.5
8. Your doctor tells you that you eat too much sugar, you can't avoid sugar: it's in everything.	3.2	MO	10
9. You have a wonderful time at a party, I was friendly.	3.6	O	5.5

10. You've been feeling run-down lately, I was exceptionally busy this week.	3.8	O	4
11. A friend says something that hurts your feelings, my friend was in a bad mood and took it out on me.	3.3	MO	9
12. You are in the hospital, and few people come to visit, my friends are negligent about things like that.	3.1	MO	11.5
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.4	O	

Table 13 Summary Table of Optimistic Attitude

INDICATOR	WM	VI	R
Frequency of Positive Self-Talk	3.8	O	1
Perception of Control	3.1	MO	3
Resilience	2.75	MO	4
Emotional Regulation	3.4	O	2
GENERAL WEIGHTED MEAN	3.2	MO	

Table 14 Relationship between Cognitive Restructuring and Optimistic Attitude

Variable	P-value	Computed R	Decision	VI
Cognitive Restructuring	<.0001	.620	Reject H ₀	Significant
Optimistic Attitude				

DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the population and sample distribution by course among 257 individuals, of whom 180 (70.04%) participated. The respondents showed AB English (4 respondents, 2.22%), AB History (8 respondents, 4.44%), AB Political Science (58 respondents, 32.22%), and AB Psychology (110 respondents, 61.11%).

Table 2 shows the respondents' demographic profile by year level. There were 77 1st Years (42.8%), 45 2nd Year (25.0%), 24 3rd Year (13.3%), and 34 4th Year (18.9%), totaling 180 respondents (100%). These resulted for a representation per year level of the respondents.

Table 3 presents the demographic profile by gender. Among the 180 respondents, 61 (33.9%) are male, and 119 (66.1%) are female, reflecting a higher female participation rate.

Table 4 assesses cognitive restructuring in terms of recognition of cognitive distortions, with a general weighted mean of 3.9, interpreted as "Challenged." Respondents demonstrated progress in challenging distorted thoughts, although achieving full mastery remained a challenge. This aligns with Johnson's (2023) study, which highlights the importance of cognitive therapy in addressing distorted thinking and the difficulties individuals face when applying cognitive restructuring during emotional distress.

Table 5 evaluates the utilization of cognitive restructuring techniques with a general weighted mean of 3.2, interpreted as "Moderately Challenged." This indicates struggles with planning and self-regulation techniques among respondents. The finding is consistent with Gibson's (2022) study which underscores the role of consistent coping strategies in overcoming self-regulation challenges and achieving behavior change.

Table 6 examines the application of coping strategies within cognitive restructuring with an obtained mean of 3.6, interpreted as "Challenged." Respondents experienced difficulties in applying coping mechanisms, hence, underscoring the importance of cognitive restructuring in fostering resilience. This result is supported by Singh's (2023) study which emphasizes the role of effective coping strategies in stress management and maintaining social connections during emotional distress.

Table 7 assesses improvement in psychological well-being through cognitive restructuring with a general weighted mean of 3.02, interpreted as "Moderately Challenged." This finding highlights respondents' difficulties in identifying stressors and mitigating risk factors for relapse. It aligns with Wang's (2022) study which emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and recognizing risk factors in psychological health maintenance.

Table 8 summarizes cognitive restructuring assessment with an overall score of 3.4 interpreted as Moderately Challenged. Subcategory scores included recognition (3.9), techniques (3.2), coping (3.6), and well-being (3.02). These findings suggest ongoing efforts with room for improvement in managing cognitive processes of the respondent. This is aligned with Sharma et al. (2023) which emphasizes the role of cognitive reframing in fostering resilience and optimism, particularly through the use of modern tools.

Table 9 evaluates optimistic attitudes in terms of the frequency of positive self-talk with 3.5, interpreted as "Optimistic." This reflects respondents' frequent engagement in affirming thoughts, demonstrating a resilient and hopeful outlook. This manifests that the present study is in support of the findings of Gustafson (2023) on the importance of positive self-talk in sustaining high self-esteem and resilience.

Table 10 assesses optimistic attitudes concerning the perception of control with 3.1 interpreted as "Moderately Optimistic." Respondents attributed successes and failures to their actions, fostering adaptive optimism. This result supports Nazneen's (2023) study which highlights the importance of attributing outcomes to personal effort in developing optimism.

Table 11 evaluates resilience within optimistic attitudes with 2.75, interpreted as "Moderately Optimistic." This highlights respondents' struggles with adapting to challenges while reflecting potential for growth through cognitive restructuring. These findings are consistent with Shen's (2024) study which notes that resilient individuals view negative events as temporary and specific, rather than pervasive.

Table 12 examines emotional regulation within optimistic attitudes with 3.4 interpreted as "Optimistic." This indicated respondents' ability to manage emotions adaptively. This finding is aligned with Oliveira's (2024) study which highlights the benefits of reframing emotional responses for better psychological well-being.

Table 13 summarizes the optimistic attitude assessments with an overall score of 3.2 Moderately Optimistic; Strengths include positive self-talk (3.8) and emotional regulation (3.4), while perception of control (3.1) and resilience (2.75) verbally interpreted as Moderate. Shkel, et al. (2023) emphasizes the role of digital platforms in enhancing emotional regulation and mental well-being offering a pathway for improvement.

Table 14 explores the relationship between cognitive restructuring and optimistic attitude, revealing a significant moderate positive correlation ($r = .620, p < .0001$). This demonstrated that improving cognitive restructuring enhances optimism. These finding is supported with the findings of Eldeleklioglu, et al. (2023) where it postulated that transforming dysfunctional thoughts into adaptive ones supports resilience and fosters a positive outlook, thereby, reducing the impact of psychological disorders.

CONCLUSION

The following are the conclusions of the study:

1. Cognitive Restructuring among students at Arellano University – Jose Abad Santos Campus is observably posited that recognizing cognitive distortions enables respondents to identify negative thought patterns, serving as a foundation for applying effective coping strategies. By employing cognitive restructuring techniques, respondents challenge and modify distorted thoughts, leading to healthier

thought processes. This progression ultimately results in significant improvements in psychological well-being as respondents develop a more positive outlook in life.

2. An Optimistic Attitude deems significant as positive self-talk enhances emotional regulation by fostering a more optimistic mindset which increases respondents' perception of control over circumstances. This empowers them to effectively manage challenges, contributing to greater resilience in the face of adversity. The interplay creates a robust framework for coping with difficulties, ultimately reinforcing respondents' ability to thrive despite setbacks.
3. Finally, cognitive restructuring and an optimistic attitude influence each other, as techniques aimed at identifying and challenging negative thought patterns foster balanced and positive thinking, promoting emotional resilience, alleviating anxiety, depression, and phobias, and encouraging proactive behavior that enhances overall life outlook.

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