



IMPACT OF STRUCTURED GUIDED VISUALIZATION MEDITATION SESSIONS IN REDUCING ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC PRESSURE AMONG NEET ASPIRANTS

Arpna Agarwal

Research Scholar, Education Department, Bareilly College, Bareilly

*Corresponding Author Email-adipersevere@gmail.com

Received : March 2026

Revised : April 2026

Accepted : April 2026

Published : April 2026

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Agarwal, A. (2026). Impact of structured guided visualization meditation sessions in reducing anxiety and academic pressure among NEET aspirants. *Shodh Gyanantika*, 14(2), 16-19.

Copyright © 2026 The Author(s). Published by Department of Political Science D.A.V. (P.G.) College, Arya Samaj Road, Muzaffarnagar (U.P.)-250101. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ABSTRACT

The intense competition associated with the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) in India contributes significantly to heightened anxiety and academic pressure among aspirants. This study examines the impact of a short-duration structured guided visualization meditation intervention on reducing anxiety and perceived academic stress among NEET aspirants aged 17-25 years. Guided visualization meditation, a cognitive-relaxation technique involving mental imagery, has been recognized for its immediate calming effects and potential to enhance emotional regulation. The study adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test design with a sample of 60 NEET aspirants selected through purposive sampling. Participants engaged in a two-day guided visualization meditation program, with daily sessions of 20 minutes conducted in a structured format. Standardized instruments, including the Test Anxiety Inventory and Perceived Stress Scale, were administered before and after the intervention. The findings revealed a measurable reduction in anxiety levels and perceived academic pressure, although the magnitude of change was moderate due to the short duration of the intervention. The results align with emerging research suggesting that even brief meditation practices can produce immediate psychological benefits. The study underscores the potential of short-term, easily implementable meditation interventions in high-pressure academic contexts. It also highlights the feasibility of integrating brief mental well-being practices into intensive preparation schedules. The research contributes to the growing body of literature supporting meditation as a practical tool for stress management among students.

Keywords: Guided visualization meditation, NEET aspirants, short-term intervention, academic stress, anxiety reduction

INTRODUCTION

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) represents one of the most competitive examinations in India, placing immense psychological and academic demands on aspirants. Students preparing for NEET often experience prolonged study hours, high expectations, and uncertainty regarding outcomes, which contribute to elevated levels of stress and anxiety.

The age group of 17–25 years is particularly vulnerable to academic stress, as it coincides with critical developmental transitions and career-defining decisions. Persistent anxiety during this phase can impair cognitive functioning, reduce concentration, and negatively affect academic performance.

Meditation-based interventions have gained prominence as effective tools for stress reduction and emotional regulation. Guided visualization meditation, in particular, involves the use of mental imagery to induce relaxation and promote positive cognitive states. It is especially beneficial for students, as it can be easily practiced and requires minimal resources.

Recent research indicates that even brief meditation interventions can lead to immediate reductions in anxiety and stress levels (Burgstahler & Stenson, 2019). Furthermore, guided imagery techniques have been shown to enhance coping mechanisms and reduce psychological distress across populations (Kumar et al., 2025).

Despite these findings, limited research has examined the impact of short-duration meditation interventions among NEET aspirants. Given their time constraints and intensive schedules, exploring the effectiveness of brief interventions is essential. Therefore, this study aims to assess the impact of a two-day structured guided visualization meditation program on anxiety and academic pressure among NEET aspirants.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meditation and guided imagery interventions have been widely studied for their effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety. Guided visualization meditation is particularly effective because it combines relaxation with cognitive restructuring through imagery.

Burgstahler and Stenson (2019) found that short-duration mindfulness meditation significantly reduced anxiety among students, indicating that even brief interventions can produce measurable psychological benefits. Similarly, Stefanelli (2025) reported that guided imagery techniques contributed to reductions in chronic stress and improved mental well-being.

Kumar et al. (2025) highlighted that guided imagery is an effective non-pharmacological intervention for reducing anxiety and stress across diverse populations. Their review emphasized its immediate calming effects, making it suitable for short-term applications.

Emerging studies also support the effectiveness of brief interventions. McDowell et al. (2025) demonstrated that even short meditation sessions delivered through virtual platforms significantly reduced test anxiety among students.

In the Indian context, meditation practices are culturally embedded and widely accepted, enhancing their feasibility and acceptance among students. However, there is a lack of focused research on short-term meditation interventions among high-stakes exam aspirants such as those preparing for NEET.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of anxiety among NEET aspirants before the intervention.
2. To evaluate the level of academic pressure among NEET aspirants before the intervention.
3. To implement a two-day structured guided visualization meditation program.
4. To examine the immediate impact of the intervention on anxiety levels.
5. To analyze changes in academic pressure after the intervention.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in anxiety levels before and after the intervention.
2. There is no significant difference in academic pressure before and after the intervention.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test design was used.

Sample

The study included 60 NEET aspirants aged 17–25 years, selected through purposive sampling from coaching institutes.

Tools Used

- Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI)
- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

Intervention

A 2-day structured guided visualization meditation program was conducted:

- Duration: 20 minutes per day
- Total sessions: 2
- Components:
 - Deep breathing relaxation
 - Guided imagery of peaceful environments
 - Positive visualization of exam success

Procedure

Pre-test assessments were conducted prior to the intervention. Participants then engaged in guided meditation sessions over two consecutive days. Post-test assessments were conducted immediately after the second session.

Data Analysis

Paired t-test was used to analyze differences between pre-test and post-test scores.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed a moderate but statistically significant reduction in anxiety and perceived academic pressure following the two-day intervention.

Anxiety scores showed a noticeable decline

Perceived stress levels were reduced

Participants reported improved calmness and focus

The findings suggest that even a short-duration intervention can yield immediate psychological benefits, although the magnitude of change is smaller compared to long-term programs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that structured guided visualization meditation, even when administered over a brief period of two days, can significantly reduce anxiety and academic pressure among NEET aspirants.

The moderate reduction observed in the study aligns with previous research suggesting that

short-term meditation interventions produce immediate but relatively smaller effects (Burgstahler & Stenson, 2019). Guided visualization works by activating relaxation responses and reducing cognitive overload, which is particularly beneficial in high-pressure academic contexts.

The short duration of the intervention is both a strength and a limitation. While it demonstrates the feasibility of implementing meditation in time-constrained environments, it also limits the depth and sustainability of the outcomes. Long-term practice is likely to yield more substantial benefits.

Importantly, the study highlights the practicality of incorporating brief meditation sessions into students' daily routines. Given the demanding schedules of NEET aspirants, short interventions are more likely to be adopted and sustained.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Coaching Institutes:** Can introduce short daily meditation sessions
- **Educators:** Can incorporate brief relaxation techniques before classes
- **Students:** Can use meditation as an immediate stress-relief tool
- **Policy Makers:** Can promote short-term well-being interventions

LIMITATIONS

- Very short duration of intervention
- Small sample size
- No long-term follow-up
- Absence of control group

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that a two-day structured guided visualization meditation program can effectively reduce anxiety and academic pressure among NEET aspirants aged 17–25 years. Although the effects are moderate, the findings highlight the potential of short-term interventions in providing immediate psychological relief. Integrating such practices into academic environments can contribute to improved mental well-being among students preparing for high-stakes examinations.

REFERENCES (APA 7TH EDITION)

- Burgstahler, M. S., & Stenson, M. C. (2019). Effects of guided mindfulness meditation on anxiety and stress in a pre-healthcare college student population. *Journal of American College Health*, 68(6), 666–672.
- Goyal, S., Krishna, P., Sastry, V., Paul, B., & Tiwari, M. (2025). Enhancing mental well-being through guided meditation. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 28(1), 134–147.
- Kumar, M., Kathale, K., Panday, R., & Hashmi, A. (2025). Effectiveness of guided imagery on stress and anxiety. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 7(5).
- Ma, J., Li, H., Liang, C., et al. (2025). Virtual reality mindfulness intervention and anxiety reduction. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 12, 294.
- McDowell, A., Khasawneh, A., Neeley, F., & Smith, H. (2025). VR meditation and test anxiety. *HFES Annual Meeting Proceedings*, 69(1).
- Stefanelli, K. J. (2025). Meditation and guided imagery in stress reduction. *Journal of American College Health*, 73(10), 3821–3831.
- Wang, X., Mo, X., Fan, M., et al. (2022). Metaverse-based stress reduction interventions. *IEEE Access*.
- Zhang, Y., et al. (2025). Immersive meditation interventions for anxiety. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*.