



Original Research Article

A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISES ON TEST ANXIETY AMONG 1ST YEAR ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN SELECTED COLLEGE AT COIMBATORE.

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Abstract: **Background:** Test anxiety is a common psychological problem among college students and has a negative impact on academic performance, concentration, memory, and emotional well-being. Increasing academic demands and competitive examination environments have contributed to higher anxiety levels among first-year college students. Guided imagery is a non-pharmacological relaxation technique that promotes mental calmness and emotional regulation by using positive mental visualization. **Aim:** To assess the effectiveness of guided imagery exercises on test anxiety among first-year arts and science college students in a selected college at Coimbatore. **Methods:** A quantitative research approach with a quasi-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design was adopted. Forty first-year arts and science college students were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Test anxiety was assessed using the standardized Westside Test Anxiety Scale. Guided imagery exercises were administered for six consecutive days. Pre-test and post-test anxiety levels were compared using descriptive and inferential statistics, including paired t-test and chi-square test. **Results:** The pre-test findings revealed that the majority of students (75%) experienced high to extremely high levels of test anxiety. After the guided imagery intervention, a significant reduction in anxiety levels was observed, with 47.5% of students reporting low anxiety and 37.5% reporting normal anxiety. The mean test anxiety score decreased from 37.5 ± 3.9 in the pre-test to 20.1 ± 4.3 in the post-test. The paired t-test value ($t = 19.3$, $p < 0.05$) indicated a statistically significant reduction in test anxiety. No significant association was found between post-test anxiety levels and selected demographic variables. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that guided imagery exercises are an effective, simple, and non-invasive intervention for reducing test anxiety among first-year college students. Incorporating guided imagery into college mental health and academic support programs may enhance students' psychological well-being and academic performance.

Keywords: Test Anxiety; Guided Imagery; College Students; Academic Stress; Relaxation Technique; Mental Well-being

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Anxiety is a complex psychological condition that involves a combination of physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses. It commonly arises in situations perceived as threatening or demanding and can interfere with an individual's

ability to function effectively. Test anxiety is a specific form of anxiety related to academic evaluation and performance. It negatively influences students' attention, recall ability, and confidence, often leading to unsatisfactory examination performance even when adequate preparation has been undertaken. Due to its adverse effect on

learning and achievement, test anxiety is recognized as an important educational and mental health concern.

Studies conducted worldwide indicate that examination anxiety affects a considerable proportion of students, with prevalence rates varying across populations. In India, increasing academic competition and high expectations associated with examinations have contributed to a rising incidence of test anxiety, particularly among students appearing for major academic assessments. Severe levels of test anxiety can impair learning efficiency and academic outcomes and may also manifest as psychosomatic complaints such as headaches, stomach discomfort, dizziness, and fainting episodes. Research evidence consistently reports that female students tend to experience higher levels of test anxiety than male students, highlighting the importance of identifying effective and student-friendly interventions.

Several non-pharmacological methods have been used to manage test anxiety, including relaxation techniques, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and stress management strategies. Among these, guided imagery has gained attention for its effectiveness in reducing emotional distress, anxiety, and stress. Guided imagery is a mind-body technique in which individuals are guided to form positive and calming mental images, enabling relaxation and emotional balance.

The effectiveness of guided imagery is explained by its capacity to stimulate multiple sensory pathways and positive cognitive processes, thereby eliciting physiological relaxation responses similar to real-life calming experiences. Through repeated practice, guided imagery supports adaptive emotional regulation and coping through neuroplastic changes. Because of its simplicity, safety, and evidence-based benefits, guided imagery appears to be a promising intervention for reducing test anxiety and improving students' emotional well-being and academic performance.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

Test anxiety is a common concern among college students and has a significant impact on academic performance, cognitive efficiency, and psychological well-being. Elevated anxiety levels interfere with concentration, memory retention, and self-confidence, resulting in reduced academic achievement. When left unaddressed during the formative college years, test anxiety may contribute to long-term emotional distress and negatively influence future educational and career prospects.

Although test anxiety is widespread, many students do not have access to effective, non-invasive strategies to manage it. Guided imagery is an economical, easy-to-administer relaxation technique that helps individuals attain mental calmness, regulate emotions, and reinforce positive cognitive patterns. By activating the relaxation response, guided imagery may help alleviate anxiety symptoms and enhance academic focus.

Hence, the present study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of guided imagery exercises in reducing test anxiety among college students, with the goal of improving academic outcomes and promoting psychological well-being.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

A Study to Assess the Effectiveness of Guided Imagery exercises on Test Anxiety Among 1st year arts and science college Students in Selected College at Coimbatore.

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the pre-test and post-test level of test anxiety among college students.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of guided imagery technique on test anxiety among college students.
- To find out association between the pre-test level of test anxiety with their selected demographic variables (age, gender, family monthly income, type of family, reside with, parent educational status) among college students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

ASSESS: - It is the organized systematic & continuous process of collecting information about pre-test & post-test level of test anxiety among college students.

EFFECTIVENESS: - It measures how well a process or system meets its objectives or produces the desired results of guided imagery on test anxiety.

GUIDED IMAGERY TECHNIQUE: - A relaxation technique where a person, guided by a facilitator uses their imagination to create or recreate vivid mental images to induce a state of relaxation, reduce stress, and promote wellbeing.

TEST ANXIETY: - Test anxiety is a performance related anxiety that can occur before, during or after a test. It is a combination of physical and emotional symptoms that can make it hard to concentrate or perform well.

HYPOTHESES:

H₁ - There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test of level of test anxiety among college students.

H₂ - There will be a significant association between

pre-test level of test anxiety with their selected demographic variables.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- The college students experience significant level of test anxiety.
- The college students can learn and improve their emotional awareness and regulation skills through technique like guided imagery.
- College students can readily engage with and practice guided imagery exercises.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Guided Imagery and Examination/Test Anxiety in Student Populations:

Several experimental studies have documented the effectiveness of guided imagery in reducing examination and test anxiety among students. In a study conducted by Panneerselvam and Govindharaj (2016), secondary school students exposed to guided imagery techniques showed a significant reduction in examination anxiety compared to control group peers; the experimental group's mean anxiety score (17.83) was significantly lower than the control group's score (34.93) post-intervention ($P < 0.000$), indicating that guided imagery was effective in alleviating anxiety related to exams. [LIJIP](#) Similarly, an experimental study among nursing students revealed that guided imagery significantly reduced test anxiety; mean post-intervention scores were significantly lower than pre-intervention scores ($P = 0.001$), demonstrating the potential of guided imagery to improve emotional well-being and academic readiness in college settings.

2. Guided Imagery's Effects on Test Anxiety in Higher Education Settings

Evidence from randomized and controlled studies further supports the use of guided imagery to manage academic anxiety. A randomized controlled trial involving first-year nursing students found that listening to a 30-minute guided imagery audio daily for one week prior to exams significantly reduced test anxiety in the intervention group compared to controls ($P < 0.05$). [Lippincott Journals](#) Additionally, long-term guided imagery practice has been shown to improve self-esteem and decrease examination anxiety among first-year college students when compared with alternative mentorship programs, further suggesting that structured guided imagery can positively influence students' psychological adjustment and academic confidence.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMWORK

The present study focuses on the effectiveness of guided imagery technique on test anxiety among college students. This research refers on modified Kubler ross anxiety adaptation model for conceptual framework.

Kubler ross anxiety adaptation model concept consists of input, throughout, output. Input refers to information, which are repeatedly processed through the system and released as output. In these study concepts have been modified as follows.

INPUT:

According to Kubler ross input includes information. In the present study, the input refers to assessment of the level of test anxiety among college students through guided imagery exercises.

THROUGHOUT:

Throughout was the implementation of guided imagery exercises regarding test anxiety among college students.

OUTPUT:

The expected outcome was obtained by assessing the level of test anxiety among college students through guided imagery exercises. The output was considered in terms of change in Post test level of test anxiety among students through guided imagery exercises.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPORACH

The research approach used for this study is Quantitative approach. The effectiveness of guided imagery exercises on test anxiety among selected colleges at Coimbatore.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Quasi experimental design:

01 - Pre-test level of test anxiety

X - Guided Imagery exercises &

02 – Post-test level of test anxiety

RESEARCH VARIABLES:

Independent Variables: Guided Imagery exercises.

Dependent Variables: Test Anxiety

RESEARCH SETTINGS:

The criterion for selection of this setting is feasibility of conducting study in the setting and investigators familiarity with the setting and the people. The study is to be conducted in selected college, Coimbatore. There are totally 134 students in the art and Science College, out of these 40 students was selected for the study.

TARGET POPULATION:

College students those are studying 1st year in art and Science College. College students are the target population for the study.

SAMPLES:

The sample selected for this study is College students who present in selected college at

Coimbatore

SAMPLE SIZE:

The sample size is 40 students those are studying in 1st year in art and Science College.

SAMPLE TECHNIQUE:

In the presence study 40 college students at selected college at Coimbatore. In this Stratified random sampling technique was used as sampling technique.

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

- Present during the time of data collection.
- People who are willing to Participate.
- People who have the age in between 18-24 years.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

- People who are not willing to participate in the study.
- People who are not present during the time of data collection.
- People who do not read and write the language of Tamil and English.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL: -

The instrument used for data collection was west side anxiety scale for assessing test anxiety among the college students. This study consists of 2 tools.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

This demographic variable containing age, gender, education standard, family monthly income, types of family, reside with, parent educational status.

WESTSIDE TEST ANXIETY SCALE:

The west side anxiety scale is a standardized instrument used to assess anxiety symptoms and severity among college students. The anxiety was assessed by using modified structured questionnaire scale; it includes 10 questions focused on exam anxiety. This tool consists of (numbers) items that measure various aspects of anxiety, including cognitive, emotional and physiological symptoms. The west side anxiety scale yields by a total score that reflects the participant's level of anxiety. The scores range from (minimum score) to (maximum score) with higher scores indicating more severe anxiety symptoms. The scoring system allows for the categorization of anxiety level, such as:

RESULTS

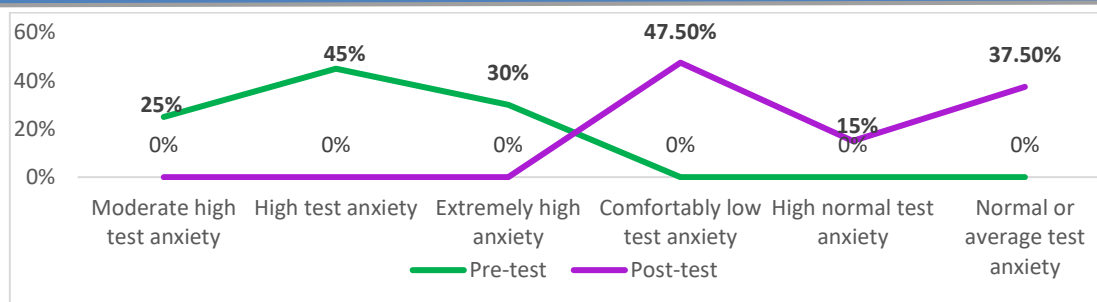
SCORING INSTRUCTIONS: Sum the scores of the 10 questions and divide the sum by 10 to get the Test Anxiety score.

SI.NO	CATEGORY	SCORE
1.	Comfortably Low Test Anxiety	1.0 – 1.9
2.	Normal or Average test anxiety	2.0 – 2.5
3.	High normal test anxiety	2.6 – 2.9
4.	Moderately high	3.0 – 3.4
5.	High test anxiety	3.5 – 3.9
6.	Extremely high anxiety	4.0 – 5.0

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

The study was conducted in selected college art and science for the 1st year students at Coimbatore. Official permission was obtained from the college Principal. On 1st day, we introduce self and said the purpose of the study. The next day, obtained consent form and collected the demographic data. On 3rd day, the Pre-test was conducted through Self administration structured questionnaires. On 4th to 9th day, Guided imagery exercises intervention was delivered. Finally, conducted the post-test to students after the intervention program. Data was analysed by comparing pre-test and post-test level of test anxiety among college students.

Graphical representation of Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test level of test anxiety score among college students.



CONCLUSION

The study was done to assess the effectiveness of guided imagery technique on test anxiety among students in selected college at Coimbatore. The research approach and design used for this study was Quasi Experimental research design-one group pre-post-test design. The conceptual frame work was based on the Modified Kubler Ross Anxiety Adaptation Model. The data was collected 12 days in selected college at Coimbatore. The sample size was 40 students. The sample were selected by stratified sampling technique and were assessed the effectiveness of guided imagery technique on test anxiety among students in selected college at Coimbatore. The collected data was analysed by using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The study findings were discussed based on the objectives. Most participants were aged 18–20 years (90%), with females constituting 65%. Pre-test results showed high levels of test anxiety, with 75% of students experiencing high to extremely high anxiety. Following the guided imagery intervention, anxiety levels significantly decreased, with 47.5% reporting low anxiety and 37.5% normal anxiety. The mean test anxiety score reduced from 37.5 ± 3.9 to 20.1 ± 4.3 . The paired t-test value ($t = 19.3$, $p < 0.05$) confirmed a statistically significant reduction, supporting the effectiveness of guided imagery and acceptance of H_1 . Chi-square analysis revealed no significant association between post-test anxiety and demographic variables, leading to rejection of H_2 . The findings conclude that guided imagery is an effective, non-invasive intervention for reducing test anxiety among college students.

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