

BA (Hons) Creative Music Production
Creative Practice Project

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Sound Healing: The therapeutic application of sound frequencies

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Abstract

The aim of this study was two-fold: First, to report on whether or not the utility of sound can positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being? Second, to determine if frequency-specific sounds used in isolation are enough to balance chakras effectively? The current study gathered anecdotal evidence from several sources to address the questions outlined above. This research includes; interviews with practitioners and a web-based survey conducted with well-being enthusiasts concerned with their combined perspectives and personal experiences of sound healing and the chakra system. Also, the current study conducted an interview with David Gibson regarding the future direction of sound healing. Lastly, a participant shared a broad overview of the chakra system in a journal written in response to an intensive three-day chakra course they attended. The results of the above methodology and the thorough analysis that followed showed interesting results; First, out of a sample size of 70 respondents; 64 alluded to a positive sound healing experience on all aspects of a human being, addressed in the primary research question; 3 stated the experience was negative, and three were non-applicable. Thus, the data supports the hypothesis that the utility of sound can positively affect a human beings' physical, mental, and emotional health and spiritual well-being. However, as no clinical trials have been done to support this finding, the result is not absolute. Second, although the findings strongly support the notion that sound alone does not theoretically impact the chakras in a manner that will balance them. The study found that due to the vast complexity of the chakra system, it is difficult to arrive at any conclusions from anecdotal evidence alone. The study concludes that the potential of sound healing as a medical modality warrants further attention that is far beyond the scope of this investigation.

Keywords

Chakras, emotional, experience, mental, physical, sound healing, spiritual.

Content

Introduction.....	03
Literature Review.....	06
Methodology.....	15
Analysis.....	23
Discussion.....	51
Conclusion.....	57
Bibliography.....	61
Appendix.....	71

Introduction

Sound healing therapy is a holistic health practice that uses specific frequencies, vibrations, and aspects of music to balance the body's energy system theoretically, which, in turn, supports the body's natural healing processes. In indigenous cultures, the use of music, singing and sound in healing rituals is an intrinsic feature that has been well-documented by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists (Besmer, 1983; de Rosny, 1985; Eliade, 1964; Halifax, 1982; Rouget, 1985). Therefore, it is clear that sound healing is nothing new but rather handed down (Wangyal, 2006) from ancient practices for thousands of years. In the 1960s, a re-discovery of these practices began to occur as part of the cultural and historic movement known as the "New Age". An offshoot of the Holistic health movement, known as complementary alternative medicine (Snow, 2011), emerged in more recent times. These two movements are intertwined and continue to evolve as an ongoing cultural phenomenon. One of the major topics to be investigated in this field is how sound affects a human being physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The main problem confronting the current study is that three of these levels seem intangible and ephemeral, even though they theoretically have a physical presence (Willard). This factor may explain why the subject of sound healing is shrouded in scepticism. The notion that sound healing modalities such as sound baths, root frequency entrainment and chakra balancing meditation can yield a beneficial therapeutic outcome is frequently met with an immediate ideological rejection from mainstream-minded individuals. In light of this, the present study is interested in participating in the effort to bridge the divide between the spiritualist and the sceptic.

With that in mind, it is important not to equate healing with curing. Healing is not necessarily about making somebody well. The data in this work consists of many anecdotal examples of a person being healed on many levels, with minimal examples of curing. Furthermore, it is equally important not to limit the concept of healing with physical cure because they are not synonymous. As quoted by Michael Lerner, PhD, "Cure refers to complete biological resolution of a disease state, while healing refers to a revitalising and regenerative process that can occur on emotional, spiritual, or physical levels - and sometimes on all three levels in concert" (Gaynor, p 124).

The literature review chapter begins with a short review of the literature regarding the chakra system. This review includes; a brief history of the system and an introduction to the theory that chakras correlate to physiological structures, such as major nerve areas and the endocrine glands. This theory is expanded on with the three principles of sound healing; resonance, entrainment, and intent. Several scientific findings on the therapeutic benefits of sound healing, and the current status and future directions of sound healing therapy are discussed in the literature. The current study will also set out recommendations for any subsequent experiment concerned with testing the effectiveness of online sound healing; therefore, the present study discusses the rationale behind choosing instruments appropriate for meditative music compositions in the literature chapter. Also examined as part of these recommendations is the profile of mood states rating scale (POMS) that the current study feels would be appropriate for testing the Total Mood Disturbance (TMD) of experiment participants.

This project's methodology followed a mixed-methods design. A common strategy used to study sound healing is to use interviews and surveys to gather anecdotal evidence. Therefore, qualitative research interviews were conducted with sound healing practitioners worldwide who utilise healing mantras, gongs, and singing bowls during their sessions. David Gibson, the Medical Sound Association founder and author of "*The Complete Guide to Sound Healing*", was interviewed in connection with the future direction of sound healing. In addition to this, an online survey was used to generate qualitative and quantitative data from well-being enthusiasts. This design enabled the current project to examine various aspects of sound healing modalities from participants' perspective. Subsequently, the present study enlisted the help of a participant that documented their experience of a course based on the chakra system. The participant provided a journal that was then used to elicit further data that was closely scrutinised in the analysis. This examination focuses on the theory that the chakra system plays a part in the human experience. The primary research question is concerned with how sound affects a human being on four levels; physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Therefore, the current study analysed respondents' experiences and investigated what aspect of their being was affected during and/or after a sound healing session. The present study cross-examined the evidence from interviews with practitioners and discussed the results thoroughly in later chapters.

The current study aims to answer the following primary and subsidiary research questions.

Can sound healing be used effectively to positively improve a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health?

Are frequency-specific sounds enough to effectively balance chakras?

Literature Review

This chapter will introduce the theory behind the chakra systems' functionalities and interactivities in line with the systems' correlation to the subtle and physical body¹. The current study focused on the connection between the chakra system and the organ systems found throughout the human body². This examination was done to underpin this research with scientific evidence. Three principles of sound healing will be identified and discussed in line with their mind-body system connection. As the study aims to stitch together alternative and conventional medicine perspectives, the current study needed to give these areas adequate attention. With that in mind, sound healing modalities of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) such as Energy Medicine (EM) and its connection to Western medicine are also discussed. To develop interview questions concerned with the future direction of sound healing, a Medical Sound Association presentation given by David Gibson was closely examined. An overview of this presentation will be discussed in this chapter, with excerpts from Gibsons' interview to follow in later chapters. The current study researched specific sound healing instruments and the tuning system that is most relevant to exposing research participants to particular sound frequencies. The study did this research to set out recommendations for further research into the effectiveness of online sound healing. Lastly, the study examined a rating scale used to test mood states. This tool should aid any subsequent investigation into the effectiveness of online sound healing.

The subject of chakras was investigated from the perspective of Anodea Judith. The author has an M.A in clinical psychology and has written numerous books on the subject of mindfulness³. As a result, she is viewed as a governing authority on the therapeutic benefits of balancing the chakra system.

¹ Chakras are energy centres of the subtle body that hold patterns of information. It is believed that when chakras are blocked, they can affect the physical and emotional body. The chakra system comprises seven main chakras associated with the nerve plexus vertically arranged along the spine, much like a spiritual nervous system.

² The endocrine system refers to a system of internal glands in the human body, such as the thyroid and pituitary, that makes hormones.

³ Mindfulness is best described as a type of meditation where the participant focuses on what they feel in the present moment.

'Wheels of Life: A User's Guide to the Chakra System' (Judith, 2002) provides a straightforward and in-depth guide to the underlying metaphysical theory behind the chakra system. This resource supplies a thorough examination of each chakra's functions, how they interact as a group, and how they correspond with both the physical body and subtle body. From a historical point of view, Judith suggests that according to the oral tradition which predates the ancient yoga texts (Vedas), the chakra system the western world is familiar with dates further back than 500BC. The system was combined with solfeggio frequencies much later when a seventh frequency was added to the six original solfeggio tones⁴. Judith shares a broad perspective that draws from psychology, biology, religion and scientific principles to explain the chakra belief system. However, it is essential to note that the author does not correlate chakras with specific frequencies, as this is debatable between cultures. Nonetheless, this text informed the current study by providing an overview of the historical context and background of the chakra system.

Leonard Wisneski, MD and Lucy Anderson are pioneering practitioners. Although many medical textbooks that document Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) principles have been written, 'The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine' (Wisneski and Anderson, 2009) is viewed as one of the most authoritative and scientifically based in the field⁵. Numerous systems such as the somatic, autonomic, peripheral, central nervous and enteric endocrine systems are given detailed attention⁶. The latter relates to the connections made between chakras, the physical body and the evolving field of subtle energy medicine discussed in the previous resource⁷. Furthermore, Anderson and Wisneski (2009) state that chakras are conduits for subtle energies, and chakras convert these energies into a resonance that can be used by the body, subsequently impacting both mental and physical functioning.

⁴ Solfeggio frequencies refer to the ancient 6-tone scale. It is suggested that sacred music used solfeggio tones.

⁵ Complementary and Alternative Medicine is the term used to describe medical practices such as tai chi and acupuncture and products such as green tea that are not considered part of standard medical care.

⁶ These systems are components of the human nervous system, inclusive of the peripheral nervous system.

⁷ Subtle energy medicine refers to acupuncture, reiki or any method that transmits healing signals to the human body.

Another interesting point related to the current project is that the heart chakra is the most susceptible to subtle energy. This data informed the current projects' decision on what recommendation to outline concerning future experiments conducted by subsequent studies on online meditation effectiveness. The connection between chakras and their correlations to physiological structures, such as major nerve areas and the endocrine glands, gave the project vital scientific grounding.

In *"The Healing Power of Sound: Recovery from Life-Threatening Illness Using Sound, Voice, and Music"* (Gaynor, 2002), Mitchell L. Gaynor MD hypothesises about the mind-body connection and the importance of maintaining harmony among all systems of the human body. Gaynor quotes the work of French physiologist Claude Bernard to explore this point of view further. Bernard believed that balance among all human body systems is vital for our organs, hormones, cells, and other biochemical factors to maintain a healthy defence against disease. Likewise, the regular functioning of human beings' broader biological systems - endocrine, lymphatic, and the immune system is suggested to be affected by this automated system of balance (Dreher, p. 19). Furthermore, the work of Harvard physiologist Walter B. Cannon, which expanded on Bernard's theory, is also discussed. Cannon concluded that balancing the human ecosystem stabilised our blood pressure, blood sugar levels, body temperature, and heart rate (Dreher, p. 20). Cannon also reported that stress directly affects the nervous system's sympathetic branch, leading to disease (Locke et al., p. 15). This study led to the discovery of psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)⁸. Gaynor uses the work of neuroscientist Candace Pert, PhD, to make a connection between PNI and neuropathies (specific brain chemicals). Pert determined that these "chemicals of emotion" act as couriers between the mind and body, specifically the immune system. In stating that neuropeptide receptors line our intestines, Pert established that the idea of "gut feelings" is an actual biological reality instead of just a metaphor (Gaynor, p. 55). Gaynor's conclusion that "sound waves are a form of energy that conceivably influence neuropeptides and their cellular receptors" links this resource to the current study (Gaynor, p. 55).

⁸Psychoneuroimmunology is an area of research dedicated to finding the connections among the mind, nervous system, and the immune system. Researchers have developed a growing body of scientific data to support the theory that all of our various biological systems are connected in a complex, interlocking network (Dreher, p. 14).

Shelly Snow expands on the mind-body concept in *“Healing through sound: An exploration of a vocal sound healing method in Great Britain”* (Snow, 2011). Snow states that “it is believed that applying sound vibrations to a human mind-body system, can favourably impact the vibrational state of that system” (Snow, p. 4). According to Snow, two principles account for this theory, resonance and entrainment⁹. The connection between resonance and mind-body harmony is endorsed by Johnathon Goldman M.A., “In terms of healing and the human body, a state of ‘resonance’ is considered to be a state of balance and health. This means that each aspect of our bodies, which has its own specific resonant frequency, is resonating in harmony with every other aspect when it is in this balanced state” (Goldman, 2008). Concerning the second principle, Gaynor states, “In terms of sound and healing, sound waves may entrain the human organism - causing us to vibrate in resonance with those waves - in a variety of interconnected ways. On one level, so-called sonic entrainment may alter our energetic states, leading to physiologic transformations, often very subtle. On another level, sonic entrainment can affect us emotionally, which can thus influence us on a cellular level” (Gaynor, p. 61). This evidence has helped the current study better understand the theory behind how sound healing works on various levels of the human organism. Snow discusses these levels further when she describes the analysis technique used to analyse the anecdotal and statistical evidence generated from the web-based survey. This technique will be discussed in later chapters.

Simon Heather is an author and College of Sound Healing founder. In *“What is Sound Healing”*, Heather (2007) expands on the principles of sound healing: entrainment, resonance and intent. This evidence further informs the study on how sound healing works. Previous research showed every aspect of the human body has a fundamental note. However, it is not that simple. For example, Gibson (2021) states that size, shape, and matter influence the frequency of human organs. Therefore, the exact frequency differs between humans.

⁹ Resonance is a fantastic phenomenon that occurs throughout nature - from the smallest subatomic particles to giant galaxies at the edge of the observable universe. Anything that vibrates has a natural resonant frequency and will spontaneously begin to vibrate in response to external vibrations that share the same or a similar resonant frequency. This sympathetic vibration is called resonance, which means to re-sound, to echo (Wielder, 2006).

To explain how sound is used to target specific organs or cells, Heather shared an analogy “When an opera singer vibrates a glass with her voice, the singer has matched her voice to the resonant frequency of the glass and set it into vibration. As the singer increases the volume of her sound, the resonance may become too great for the forces that hold the glass together, and it shatters (Heather, p. 1-2). Additional research carried out by Anthony Holland, Royal Raymond Rife and Fabien Maman has indicated that this method has proved successful at exploding specific cancer cells (Gibson, 2021) (Unsoeld, 2007). The third principle of sound healing is Intent. Peruvian anthropologist Carlos Castaneda (2004) describes it as an immeasurable, indescribable force that creates everything into the universe. Lydon shares a more straightforward explanation “Intent means you are focused on one certain thing, so if your intention is to heal... a stomach ache, that’s where the energy is going to go. Your intention is pointing the energy in a certain direction”. Simpler yet is Goldman’s (2002) sonic formula: Frequency + Intention = Healing.

In the journal article “Energy Medicine: Current Status and Future Perspectives”, Christina L Ross, PhD (2019) argues that to understand and thoroughly treat a service user, proven Eastern medical practices and current Western medicine must be expanded, or they will continue to fall short on the vital element of science that crossover applications such as device-based Energy Medicine (EM) treatments and human touch have to offer¹⁰. The latter includes but is not limited to chakra balancing¹¹. Following the information regarding the endocrine/chakra systems gathered from a previous resource, Ross further investigates these systems’ scientific underpinnings. In doing so, the author confirms there are a total of seven major chakras which act as energy hubs in the human body, and they are theoretically situated along the spine allowing them to speculatively overlap and richly interconnect with the endocrine system.

¹⁰ Energy medicine has been defined as a branch of integrative medicine that studies the science of therapeutic applications of subtle energies.

¹¹ Chakra Balancing is one of many forms of energy healing. It is based around the ancient Indian belief that there are seven main chakras situated along the spine that can heal by channelling energy into them.

The data gained from this resource about what major gland in the human body each chakra correlates to and the connections made between stress levels, the immune system and the lymphatic system mentioned in a previous resource supplied additional scientific grounding to the study¹². The author has further hypothesised that maintaining homeostasis within the chakra system is essential to spiritual, mental and physical comfort. In conclusion, the information gathered here allowed the current project to further bridge the gap between alternative and conventional medicine.

David Gibson is an author, researcher in sound therapy and healing, and the Medical Sound Association, founder. The association (2020) consists of sound therapists, sound healers and doctors¹³. It aims to expand on the integrative therapy side of sound healing by incorporating it into the medical side of hospital healthcare. Many major hospitals worldwide have adopted integrative therapy treatment plans, suggesting that the combination of medical and holistic approaches has proved to be beneficial¹⁴. Gibson does not try to disguise the reality that mainstream recognition of sound healing modalities is unlikely anytime soon. Instead, he details the essential steps that need to be taken before full integration into the hospital system is considered. These steps include; gathering strong evidence that proves what sound healing techniques work, how they work, and the ailments treated successfully with sound. This resource introduces the 'hierarchy of vibration' concept - a multileveled perspective of how sound affects us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. These levels include; frequency, timbre, musical intervals, music, and energy and intention. The latter is stated to be "the most powerful level in the hierarchy of sound vibration", as it combines all the other levels. Be this as it may, the current study suspects that due to the esoteric connotations associated with energy and intention, the association will leave this level out of any evidence-based presentation made to a health department.

¹² The lymphatic system is an organ system that is part of the circulatory system in the human body.

¹³ An association whose primary goal is to create safety guidelines and treatment protocols for using music and sound for medical issues.

¹⁴ A form of therapy tailored to suit an individual's needs by integrating a current treatment plan with a patient-specific one. Although this more encompassing, individualised treatment plan sometimes involves bringing together contradicting schools of thought, its growth in popularity suggests that this approach works.

However, considering intent is the third principle of sound healing, this exclusion may hamper their efforts. The data generated by this resource informed the current study on the future direction of sound healing and aided the development of specific interview questions.

'Sound Healing using Solfeggio Frequencies' (Joseph, 2019) is a research paper written by Sonya Joseph, BA. It aims to inform people on how music therapy, solfeggio sound and electromagnetic sound frequencies are used to heal and how solfege tones affect subconscious emotions. Joseph has established that "negative feelings, sounds and emotions correlate with ancient solfege tones". These findings illustrate that the tones can be utilised as "effective tools for universal healing modalities". Building on these findings, the author further examines why solfege tones and music are some of the most effective sound healing modalities used to assist patient recovery progress. This research concluded that "music and sound are useful in enhancing therapies to transform the brain and relieve mental, emotional, and physical suffering". As such, this data adds weight to the theory that the integration of eastern practices and western medicine would be mutually beneficial to alternative and conventional medicine practitioners alike. Furthermore, the author states that by measuring the influence 528 Hz has on the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system, it was determined that music with a frequency of 528 Hz has a direct effect on stress reduction. This influence was confirmed by an observed change in test participants' cortisol and oxytocin levels. Cortisol and oxytocin are hormones secreted by the adrenal glands and pituitary gland, respectively. As 528Hz is the frequency that correlates to the solar plexus chakra, the current study has established a scientific connection between solfeggio frequencies, the chakras system and the human body.

'The Basic Elements of Music' (Schmidt-Jones, 2019) is the fourth music textbook written by Catherine Schmidt-Jones, PhD. It is aimed at teaching music theory fundamentals to children at the primary school level and upwards. In chapter 2: Pitch Elements, the author states, "A drone is a note that changes rarely or not at all". This data suggests a drone produces a stable, consistent vibration which, according to David Gibson (2021), is a vital factor when it comes to sound healing "Stable, consistent vibrations create peace. And that's what sound healing is all about, stable, consistent vibration".

Seeking to discover what instrument would adequately provide this, the current study found a resource that discussed the effectiveness of a didgeridoo in meditative music. In this study, Philips et al. state, "It's a distinctive and continuous low-pitched drone" (Philips et al. 3). The same study concluded, "Didgeridoo sound meditation is as effective as silent meditation for decreasing self-perceived negative arousal, tiredness, and energy and more effective than silent meditation for relaxation and acute stress" (Philips et al. 8). Utilising this combined information, the researcher determined a didgeridoo is an ideal instrument to provide a drone for use in meditative music. Furthermore, Schmidt-Jones argues that Native American flute music's melodic elements do not imply harmony, nor do they need to be played with harmony to make it legitimate music. Building on this hypothesis, it has been established that both instruments would work well together in meditative music compositions.

'Full-scale and short-form of the Profile of Mood States: A factor analytic comparison' (Bourgeois, et al, 2010) is a highly cited Journal article written by Anthony Bourgeois, Arnold Leunes and Michael C. Meyers, PhD. The purpose of the paper is to report on the reliability and validity of numerous forms of The Profile of Mood States (POMS) rating scale. POMS is an amply documented self-report questionnaire that contains six subscales: Depression or Dejection, Confusion or Bewilderment, Tension or Anxiety, Anger or Hostility, Vigor or Activity and Fatigue or Inertia that are designed to help researchers measure mood states and mood changes. As the researcher intends to make recommendations for any subsequent study concerned with online sound healing effectiveness. The current study suggests that individual listening sessions are bookend by questionnaires to measure the Total Mood Disturbance (TMD) of research participants. With that in mind, the information provided in this article has established that the shortened version of the POMS psychological rating scale would be the most suitable data collection instrument to use during any subsequent experiment into online sound healing effectiveness. That said, as the above mentioned POMS subscales are only partially applicable to the study of online sound healing effectiveness and how specific frequencies can be used to alter a participants mood state, scale refinement may need to be applied by any subsequent research to tailor the questionnaire to generate more accurate results.

In conclusion, this chapter detailed the resources used to add historical context and scientific grounding to the project. As the underlying metaphysical theory behind the chakra system alone is not sufficient enough to ground the current study, it has been determined that the inclusion of multiple scientific findings from different sources is a vital component in bridging the gap between sound healing adherents and non-believers. Furthermore, by collating and analysing the empirical evidence found in the resources 'The Scientific Basis of Integrative Medicine' and 'Energy Medicine: Current Status and Future Perspectives' regarding the relationship between the lymphatic system and stress levels, the study has come to the following conclusion: Lymphocyte immune cells are white blood cells that help fight off infection. However, an increase in stress decreases lymphocytes. Thus, if a human being's lymphocytes are low, their immune system is weaker. Therefore, when considering the logic that sound healing is a form of meditation and meditation is a way of lowering stress levels, it has been suggested that sound healing helps raise lymphocyte levels, subsequently strengthening the immune system in the process. This chapter identified the principles of sound healing and established a connection between them and the human body systems.

Furthermore, several theories on how sound healing works were proposed; some focusing on resonance, entrainment, and intent, and others on bodily systems such as the organ system and the sympathetic nervous system. It has been determined that each example has one thing in common, the mind-body connection. In terms of how this chapter has further influenced the direction of the project, it was established that the information gathered will both add to the discussion and aid the development of interview questions that will be aimed at gathering qualitative data from a range of sound healing practitioners and both qualitative and quantitative data from sound healing participants and wellbeing enthusiasts. Moreover, the analysis technique introduced by Snow will be used to analyse the anecdotal and statistical evidence generated from the web-based survey. Lastly, the recommended compositional and data collection tools that any subsequent further studies could utilise into sound healing online effectiveness were also discussed. Overall, the resources reviewed informed the research of the steps that need to be taken to successfully execute the methods proposed in the next chapter.

Methodology

Although sound healing is historically rooted in cultures worldwide¹⁵, research on sound healing modalities is still in the early stages of development, and the results of said research tend to be subjective. Despite that, the historical context and empirical data gained from the literary resources have laid the groundwork for this research and given the researcher a better understanding of the subject matter. As a result, the study has developed a specific set of questions aimed at sound healing practitioners of various disciplines. Part of this methodology involved a participants' engagement in an online 7 Chakra Challenge¹⁶. This experience was documented in a journal and made available to the current study. Data was generated using a mixed-method approach consisting of semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with David Gibson and sound therapy practitioners that teach meditation and sound healing classes, both virtually and in person. Two questionnaires were developed. One was aimed at generating qualitative and quantitative data from participants of the 7 Chakra Challenge course and the other was aimed at sound healing participants that avail of sound healing services. The chapter will discuss the thematic analysis performed on the data collected during the interview stages.

In addition to this, the current study employed the analysis technique introduced in the literature. Unfortunately, the resource did not give this technique a name; therefore, purely for the sake of clarity, the method will be referred to as the "four bodies" technique going forward. The current study will discuss the rationale behind this name and how the study performed the analysis later in the chapter. Lastly, as a result of the COVID restrictions, the current study cannot conduct the previously planned experiment concerned with testing online meditation effectiveness. Therefore, the researcher has set out the recommended steps to be taken if another researcher would like to conduct the listening test experiments.

¹⁵ Judith, Anodea. *Wheels Of Life: A User's Guide To The Chakra System*. 2nd ed., Llewellyn Publications, 2002

¹⁶ Seriph, James. "7 Chakra Challenge." *Thechakrachallenge.com*. N.p., 2020. Web. 21 Apr. 2021.

These steps include; meditative music compositional techniques; appropriate instrument choice; chakra toning scale and tuning options; and the recommended psychological rating scale that should be used to measure the total mood disturbance (TMD) of research participants before and after the experiment. (The step by step guide on how to perform the experiment can be found in Appendix L)

The above methods were selected by the current project to help answer the following research questions:

Can the utility of sound positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being?

Can frequency-specific sounds be used in isolation to balance chakras?

7 Chakra Challenge

An online sound healing course titled: 7 Chakra Challenge was advertised on the "ChakraSchool : Unlock Your Spiritual Powers" Facebook group page. To illuminate this uncharted area, the current study enlisted the help of a participant who agreed to undertake the course and act as a primary source. To preserve anonymity, this participant will be referred to as Participant A going forward. The 3-day course, which consisted of several sessions, began on December 1st, 2020. It was hosted by a sound healing practitioner named Alexander Fairmen/James Seriph, the Chakra School founder¹⁷. Participant A explored and experienced the 7 chakra challenge from a different perspective than the current study would have. Incorporating this personal experience into the study has allowed practice to be combined with theory. Due to the participants' active engagement in the chakra challenge, the participant viewed replays from different perspectives. Therefore, to remain objective and share the same experience as other participants, the live stream was first viewed with a participant's hat on. Conversely, the participant picked the replays apart from an analyst's perspective, enabling attention to be directed to the task of actively observing. Participant A kept a journal throughout the course that documented their experience of the 7 Chakra Challenge. The journal that was made available to the study on completion detailed a thorough analysis of the content as well as a deep insight into the participants' perception, understanding and experience of the chakra belief system. The psychological aspects associated with the development of chakras were also highlighted. In addition to this, the journal details how personality traits, value systems and lifestyle choices theoretically influence chakra development. The journal presented significant information that detailed various components of the chakra belief system. This evidence acted as a reference point for further research into this vast, esoteric subject. The current study utilised the journal provided by Participant A to aid in developing interview and survey questions. The latter informed two individual web-based surveys - one for other chakra challenge participants, titled Chakra & Meditation Questionnaire. One for sound healing participants, titled Meditation & Sound Healing Questionnaire.

¹⁷ Seriph, James. "Chakraschool." *ChakraSchool*. Web. 16 Apr. 2021 .
<<https://chakraschool.thinkific.com/>>.

Both surveys were geared towards generating qualitative and quantitative data on demographics, levels of meditation and sound healing experience, preferred types of meditation and sound healing modalities, personal experiences of the therapeutic benefits of sound healing modalities and definitions of the chakra belief system. (Complete questionnaire available in Appendix G) The Chakra & Meditation Questionnaire also contained specific questions appropriate to the 7 Chakra Challenge course intended to generate data on participant's reflections of the course itself and the various online meditations featured during the course. The researcher sent an email to James Seriph and requested permission to post the survey on the ChakraSchool Facebook group page. Seriph obliged and allowed the survey to be published. However, the survey only received 5 responses, each of which quit the survey before completion. Therefore, the survey was a failure in as far as gathering evidence. However, it encouraged the current study to apply a different method to the second survey.

Interviews

The researcher interviewed six sound healing practitioners from around the world. The interviewees were a Berlin-based gong bath practitioner named Ciara Cunnane, a frequency healer from South Africa named Kim Carr, two sound healers from Melbourne who work under the Twin Souls Sounds guise, and two Reiki masters called Maureen Murphy Lydon and Evelyn Castillo from Massachusetts and New York, respectively¹⁸. The latter completed the interview as a questionnaire. Also interviewed was David Gibson, the author of "*The Complete Guide to Sound Healing*" and the Medical Sound Association founder.¹⁹ The current study used a videotelephony proprietary software program called Zoom to interview six of the practitioners. The interviews conducted via Zoom generated more productive data as the interviewee's offered a more nuanced perspective. Each practitioner practised individual sound healing modalities that utilised Bija mantra chanting, gong baths, quartz crystal singing bowls and a frequency generator to generate healing frequencies.

¹⁸ The word Reiki comes from two Japanese characters: rei, meaning universal, source of life, air, or spirit; and ki, meaning life force or vital energy. The patient's energy is said to be attuned or realigned from the session. Studies support the claim that Reiki may support the immune system (Wisneski, and Anderson, 2010)

¹⁹ Gibson, David. *The Complete Guide To Sound Healing*. 2014. Print.

Therefore, the current study tailored the interview template to suit each interview. The interview template consisted of an average of 43 questions that covered various areas of meditation, sound healing and the chakra system. These include background and qualifications, the therapeutic benefits of modalities; what a typical sound healing session involves; the online effectiveness of their specific modality, the tools or technologies they utilised during a regular session, and what particular tuning system their healing instruments employed. Also discussed were client experiences from a practitioner's perspective, the chakra system; sound healing modalities in modern medicine; their view of sceptics, and the future of sound healing. In addition to the themes mentioned, the discussions also generated valuable qualitative data that filled some of the gaps found in the published literature. (Refer to Appendix A - F for each complete individual interview)

The interview with David Gibson explored a range of subjects such as integrative therapy, the hierarchy of vibration concept, the heartmath institute, shattering cancer cells with electronic signals, treating PTSD, the overall goal of the Medical Sound Association and the future of sound healing. Preparation for this interview involved additional research and the development of a specific set of questions, different to the original interview template. The researcher contacted David Gibson through his Sound Healing Center website. The other six practitioners were found on various sound healing and wellbeing Facebook groups and targeted via a Facebook Messenger campaign. On completion, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and thematically analysed. One practical advantage of the method is that it enabled the current study to highlight hidden information in the text. Sometimes a practitioner would share information unrelated to the question at hand but relevant to a previous or forthcoming question. (Refer to Appendix N for a full list of themes and sub-themes)

However, as expected, the data collected during this stage was biased and favourable towards the interviewees. In anticipation of this, a web-based survey intended for sound healing participants and well-being enthusiasts was developed.

Meditation & Sound Healing Questionnaire

The current study created a questionnaire intended for sound healing participants and wellbeing enthusiasts. The researcher developed the questions through qualitative research and literary resources. This web-based survey was similar to the “Chakra & Meditation Questionnaire” in that it consisted of many questions spread across several themes. The first questionnaire received an insufficient amount of completed responses, which resulted in a pattern that suggested if respondents were not familiar with the theme of a question, they were inclined to close the survey before they finished it. Therefore, the researcher added skip logic to specific questions in this survey²⁰. This function enabled respondents to skip to a particular set of questions based on their answer to a close-ended question. As a result, if a specific set of questions did not apply to the respondent, they were bypassed, ensuring more completed responses. The current study targeted a total of 35 meditation, chakra healing and sound healing Facebook group pages. (See Appendix H for Facebook post description)

The survey used a quantitative and qualitative design that consists of open-ended and closed-ended questions geared towards measuring respondents attitudes towards different forms of meditation, sound healing modalities and the chakra system²¹. The researcher used open-ended questions to encourage respondents to offer detailed personal insights relating to their experience of the survey themes. The evidence generated by the open-ended questions was anecdotal, yet insightful. The researcher used closed-ended questions to collect socioeconomic data relating to gender, age and levels of meditation experience. The responses to these questions revealed trends. Most questions were multiple-choice; however, to not bias people into giving a suggested answer, additional answer choices such as: *prefer not to say*, and *other, please specify* were included as options. The current study used the first page of the survey to inform the respondents they would be taking the survey anonymously, and by clicking “okay,” they were agreeing to take part in the study and would be brought to the first question.

²⁰ SurveyMonkey. *Using Skip Logic With SurveyMonkey*. 2018. Web. 21 Apr. 2021.

²¹ Dossetto, Fio. "Open-Ended Questions [Vs Close-Ended] + 7 Examples." *Hotjar*. N.p., 2020. Web. 21 Apr. 2021.

In the literature review chapter, the current study introduced the technique used by Snow to analyse anecdotal evidence generated from interviews with respondents. Like the current study's methodology, the interviews were aimed at developing evidence based on what kinds of experiences people have when receiving sound healing. This technique involved Snow dividing respondent's experiences into five categories; physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and insight. Except for insight, these categories align with the interconnected theoretical aspects of a human being, recognised by sound healing. One of the research questions the current study aims to answer is directly concerned with each category except insight. Therefore, the current research omitted the insight category. As mentioned, this refined analysis technique will be referred to as the "four bodies" technique, as that is the number of aspects of the human being that the current study is concerned with. Performing the four bodies analysis technique involved identifying keywords within the range of respondent experiences. Two factors influenced this process; firstly, whenever a respondent mentioned a keyword such as "physical" or "mental", the respondent's description of their experience was placed in the appropriate category. Secondly, a respondent's language to describe their experience also determined what category their experience was put in. For example, if a respondent stated energy in their back shifted, the current study placed their response under the category of "Physical".

It is essential to highlight that an apparent limitation of this method is that this approach results in problems concerned with what aspect of a human being the respondent is referring to when they use the words relax or trauma to describe their experience. For example, a human being can relax both their body and mind. Similarly, trauma can be physical, mental or emotional. Therefore, as suggested by Snow, instead of definitively associating these words with a specific aspect of a human being, the study allowed the language used by the respondent to dictate what aspect of a human being they were referring to. It is important to note; the current study used literature to identify what range of emotions, mental states, and spiritual connotations should be associated with each aspect of the human being (Gawain et al., 1997).

The procedures of handling the data involved performing the four bodies analysis in SurveyMonkey. This process generated statistical evidence that can be viewed in the next chapter. (Appendix O lists the keywords and the theoretical aspects of the human body they are associated with)

As the subject of sound healing modalities is still in the very early stages of research, this study will not definitively prove or disprove whether or not sound healing therapy is effective in healing physical, mental or emotional ailments. But instead, provide a better understanding of the subject matter in the hope of helping to bridge the gap between ancient Eastern practices and conventional Western medicine. As stated in this chapter, the current study detailed the processes involved in bringing conventional medicine and traditional sound healing modalities together through literary research and qualitative interviews with sound therapy practitioners who practice individual sound healing modalities. Additionally, questionnaires with well-being enthusiasts helped produce a more thorough overview of the subject matter due to the personal reflections shared. All interviews were conducted remotely with interviewees from different parts of the world. This factor caused several issues. Firstly, there was always a time zone difference, resulting in the current study conducting interviews at awkward times.

Secondly, the researcher could not perform the discussions in a venue that was free of background noise. This issue presented additional problems when the interviews needed transcribing as the transcription software struggled to detect voices. Thirdly, as Zoom relies heavily on bandwidth to function correctly, audio/video dropouts make parts of the interviews inaudible. Due to COVID, the listening test that was planned from the outset had to be abandoned. In light of this problem, the current study has set out recommendations for any subsequent research that may wish to pursue research concerned with online sound healing effectiveness. (For interested readers, the recommendations and the rationale behind them are demonstrated in Appendix L)

Analysis

Meditation and sound healing have an ancient kinship. This interwoven relationship dates back thousands of years. One example of this would be the use of Himalayan or Tibetan singing bowl spiritual ceremonies. A more recent example would be a sound bath, which uses various healing instruments such as singing bowls or gongs to guide the listener.

The first research question the study aims to answer is: *Can the utility of sound positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being?* To adequately address this question, the current study developed a web-based survey aimed at sound healing participants. The web-based survey provided quantitative and qualitative evidence based on respondents' socio-demographics, their meditation experience, various sound healing modalities, and their motivation to practice sound healing. The survey also provided evidence of the therapeutic benefits of sound healing experienced by respondents; and whether these experiences were positive or negative. Qualitative anecdotal evidence gathered from interviews with sound healing practitioners based on their experience as practitioners and feedback from their clients was divided into several primary themes using thematic analysis. The primary themes were then divided into sub-themes. The current study will analyse the themes in this chapter. The present study will also conduct a comparative analysis of the interview and survey data sets of data.

In addition to this, the current study will employ the "four bodies" analysis technique discussed in the methodology chapter. This analysis technique addresses the above research question. It enables the current study to analyse data relating to respondents' experience in line with the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of a human detailed in the above question. The current study used the skip logic in function in SurveyMonkey for any question that introduced a new subject; this ensured participants did not have to answer any questions on a topic that was not familiar to them.

The second research question the study aims to answer is *Can frequency-specific sounds be used in isolation to balance chakras?*

To help answer this question, the following analysis will present important information from a journal that details aspects of the chakra system relating to how personality traits, lifestyle choices, and behaviour and value systems hypothetically influence chakra development. Furthermore, the current study will also discuss the three levels that theoretically influence the development of chakras from an early age. Moreover, the present study will also analyse the three suggestively essential steps that impact the development and balancing of chakras throughout a human being's lifetime. The current study will also examine the data generated from the interviews and web-based survey concerning the chakra system. This analysis will provide information on the complexity of the chakra system and the various aspects of the human experience that play a part in chakra development.

One hundred and seventy-two respondents started the Meditation & Sound Healing survey, 113 completed it, and 59 were excluded. The survey was aimed at sound healing participants only; therefore, the 28 respondents identified as practitioners were excluded. It should be noted; the current study cannot deny the presence of some sample selection biases because although all respondents that identified as practitioners were excluded from the survey, some may have remained undetected. A sample size of 85 respondents remained after meeting the above criteria. The remaining respondents consisted of 75 female, 9 male, 1 non-binary, and 2 preferred not to say.

Participants' Demographics

Age Range	Percentage	Number
Under 18	(0.00%)	0
18-24	(1.88%)	1
25-34	(9.41%)	8
35-44	(24.71%)	21
45-54	(22.35%)	19

55-64	(32.94%)	28
65+	(9.41%)	8

Table 3. Age ranges

Level of Meditation Experience

The current study introduced the idea that sound healing is closely associated with meditation in the literature. Concentration and receptiveness help a participant to benefit from both practices. Carr stated the following concerning the factors that aid the effectiveness of sound healing “A lot of the key is to have an open mind and to be receptive”. Research has shown that several factors play a part in the receptiveness of a participant, one aspect is trusting the process, and another is the ability to concentrate. According to Anderson et al., the latter takes time to practice and learn, but it is beneficial. “Long-term meditators... enter a state of deep concentration with little effort” (Anderson et al., p. 398).

With these points in mind, the current study was interested in the respondents' level of meditation experience because this factor could influence the effectiveness of a sound healing session and a respondents' experience of sound healing as a result. The below chart illustrates that most respondents have an adequate level of meditation experience. This finding is a positive result for the study. It indicates that the respondents are likely to successfully place themselves in a receptive, focused place during a sound healing session.

Q3 What is your level of experience with meditation?

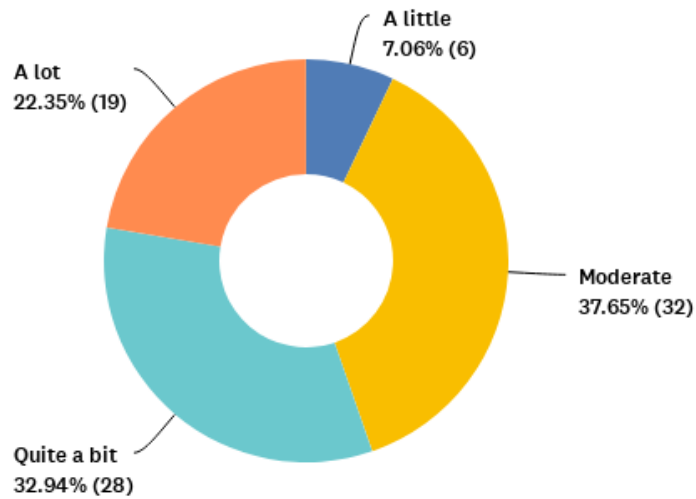


Figure 1. Level of meditation experience

The following five questions will enable the current research to examine the respondents level of meditation experience more closely. A pie chart, a graph and a table will be used to illustrate the findings. A short description will accompany each illustration that details the significance of the evidence.

The findings in the below chart suggest that the respondents have adequate meditation experience to help them concentrate during a sound healing session.

Q4 How long have you been practising meditation?

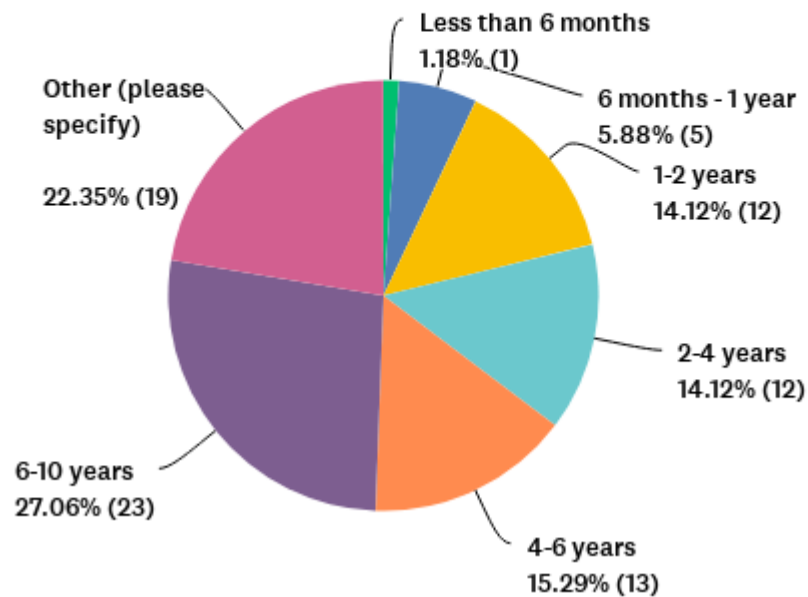


Figure 2. The time period of meditation

It is interesting to note the evidence provided in the above chart combined with the evidence of daily practice supplied in the below graph firmly suggests that the respondents are in a position that enables them to be more open to the potential benefits of sound healing.

Q5 Do you practice the art of meditation on a regular basis?

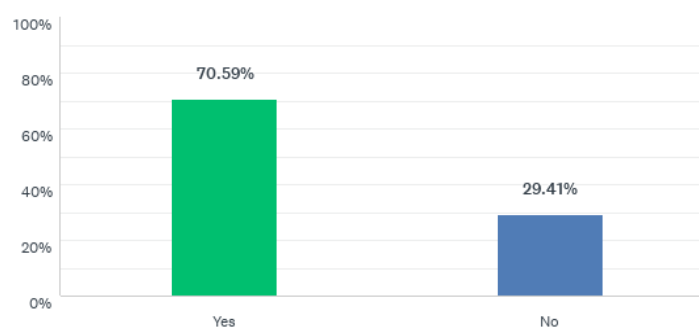


Figure 3. The regularity of meditation

Table 4 shows that the most popular type of meditation amongst respondents is spiritual meditation, followed closely by mindfulness meditation. According to Cunnane, these meditations require a certain amount of dedication to learn. Therefore, this data illustrates the respondent's commitment to their art.

Answer Choices	Percentage	Number
I do not practice meditation	(2.35%)	2
Mindfulness Meditation	(25.53%)	20
Movement Meditation	(2.35%)	2
Spiritual Meditation	(34.12%)	29
Focused Meditation	(5.88%)	5
Mantra Meditation	(3.53%)	3
Transcendental Meditation	(2.35%)	2
Visualisation Meditation	(7.06%)	6
Other, please specify	(18.82%)	16

Table 4: Meditation types

The third highest answer choice (other, please specify) enabled the current study to generate anecdotal evidence from respondents. Eight of the sixteen respondents that shared specific answers to this question linked meditation to sound healing. The below word cloud image illustrates this trend.

Q7 What primary type of formal meditation do you usually practice?

As suggested by the above word cloud image, the word 'guided' was mentioned by several respondents when asked *What primary type of formal meditation do you usually practice?*. They are referring to a guided meditation, which is a form of sound healing. It involves a participant meditating to voiced instructions (Santos-Longhurst, 2020). Guided meditation can be practised on its own or as part of a sound bath.

As explained by Cunnane when defining what a gong bath session is, "It's a form of meditation... I do the guided mediation at the start, which I know brings benefits. I feel like the whole experience would therefore bring the benefits because it's a meditation experience". With a firm connection between meditation and sound healing now established and the rationale behind the current studies decision to include meditation as a justified theme, the research will move on to the next theme.

Sound Healing

The next set of questions aim to learn of respondents' experiences of sound healing. The study will seek to discover; the primary motivation behind respondents practising sound healing and what aspect appeals to them. Furthermore, the current study will also seek to determine; the therapeutic benefits, if any, experienced by respondents'; if a respondents experience of sound healing was either positive or negative, and on what level the respondents felt this experience, be it physical, mental, emotional or spiritual.

The question "*If you have practised any form of sound healing in the past, could you please specify what type?*" had logic added in SurveyMonkey. This action guaranteed that respondents that answered "I have not practised sound healing" would be brought to the next set of questions. Thereby, respondents did not have to answer questions that did not apply to them. As a result, the following responses were possibly not diluted by respondents unfamiliar with the subject. Consequently, there are eight fewer responses to the following questions regarding sound healing. Therefore, the sample size is now 77.

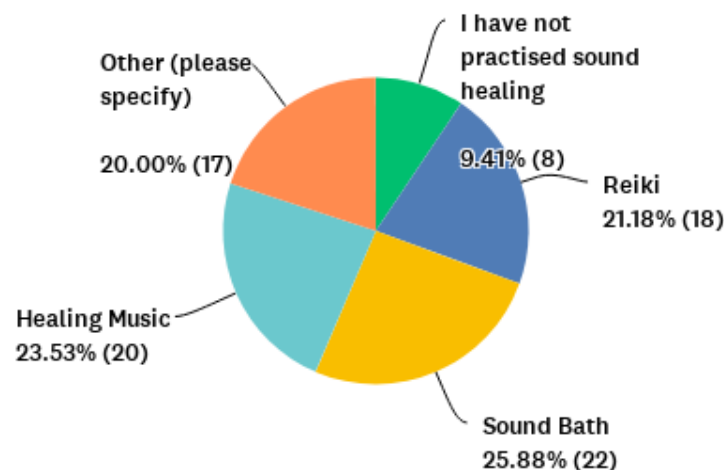


Figure 4. Sound Healing Modality Type

The above chart illustrates that respondents identified a sound bath as the most popular form of sound healing they have practised²². Healing music, which refers to pre-recorded audio such as a CD or a YouTube video, is the second most popular. This choice is followed by Reiki, which is not a sound healing modality as such; instead, it incorporates elements of sound healing to enhance it²³. Interestingly, several of the respondents that left a comment instead of selecting one of the suggested options mentioned alpha, beta, theta waves²⁴, and binaural beats²⁵. These comments indicate that they may like to practice sound healing at home and possibly via an online platform. Nonetheless, what is the primary motivation behind people practising sound healing?

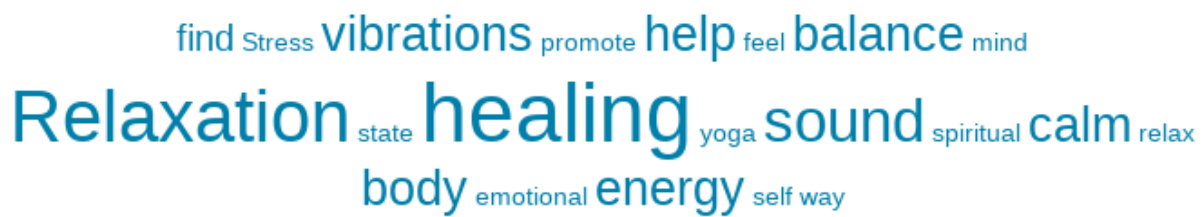
²² The term "sound bath" or "soundbath" is a generic term that describes a multitude of sound experiences which can include various instruments such as gongs, singing bowls, chimes, drums, voice and even recorded tones (MEINL Sonic-Energy, 2018).

²³ When we use Reiki and sound together we are recognising more rapid and/or deeper healing with our clients. Tibetan singing bowls, crystal bowls, buffalo drums, ting-sha cymbals, chimes, tongue drums, tuning forks and mantra can be incorporated into a session. (Gaia, and Arthur-Baird, 2018).

²⁴ Your brain produces five different kinds of brain waves, each of which operates at a different speed. From fastest to slowest, the five different types of brain waves include: gamma beta alpha theta delta (Biggers, 2020)

²⁵ Binaural beats are created when two tones are detuned from each other by a small amount. The resulting third oscillation, which is the difference between the two frequencies, will automatically entrain the brain into different brainwave frequencies (McKusick, p. 33).

The below word cloud image suggests that respondents were motivated by several factors.



Seventy of the remaining 77 respondents specified their primary motivation; therefore, the above word cloud does not adequately convey their responses. Furthermore, as the current study is concerned with the effects of sound healing on four aspects of the human being, the 70 responses will be divided into physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects. This categorisation aligns with the “four bodies” analysis technique discussed in the methodology chapter.

Aspect	Number	Keywords
Physical	4	Migraines, Back Pain
Mental	30	C-PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Mental Health Stability
Emotional	15	Calm, Heal Emotional Issues, Grounding, Grief
Spiritual	17	Spiritual Ideas, Connect to Higher Self, Lift my Spirit

Table 5. The primary motivation for practising sound healing

The above table suggests that difficulties felt on a mental level far outweigh the remaining motivations. The remaining respondents did not specify or allude to any of the four aspects. However, several did state chakra balancing.

To elicit further data, the current study posed a similar question to the practitioners. Although the responses were not as specific or as statistically rich as the above table, they did provide broader, albeit different, points of view.

Cunnane states why people attend her gong bath sessions “Generally, the overall consensus is that it is relaxation, and it’s a way of helping them to feel happier, helping them to relieve the stresses and strains of modern life”(2021). This evidence suggests that Cunnanes’ client’s use her sessions as a space to rejuvenate themselves. Lydon, on the other hand, detailed a different reason “People come, and they will do Reiki as a last resort, they tried this, they tried that, they are either in pain or they are stuck with something... [and] they are like, I’ll try anything”. At first glance, this presents as an unlikely scenario; however, Twin Soul Sounds shared a similar example “We have had a couple of clients come to us because they have had certain physical conditions and doctors can’t seem to diagnose them”. So it appears that sound healing does offer benefits that conventional medicine can not. According to Lydon, doctors also share this opinion “I’m in Boston. They all have alternative clinics. And if you are ill or very ill, they all will refer you to either acupuncture, reiki or meditation. They see the value in that; again, it’s the mind-body connection. In terms of the future direction of sound healing, this is very positive evidence. Lydon elaborated on this development further “We kind of have a saying “if Bluecross pays for it, it’s real” ... that’s medical insurance that we have here... if your health insurance pays for it, there is something to it”.

Another example of medical institutions recognising the effectiveness of sound healing modalities as an alternative form of therapy is the healing work Edward Rupert, MA, PhD, is doing in Colorado. Gibson attests, “He’s working with first responders. He has contracts with 75% of the police and fire stations in Colorado. He has got a whole team of doctors and therapists, and if they have a crisis which means [someone] about to commit suicide, they call Ed. He has saved over 150 lives in the last year by taking out the Sound Lounge with my music and putting them on it. And it’s so effective that many ER centres are now wanting to have Sound Lounges for all of their doctors and nurses. Although not very well documented, Rupert has been treating PTSD and trauma with sound for several years now. From what Gibson is saying, his modality continues to yield positive results.

The current study sought to uncover whether or not frequencies could heal a human being; for that reason, the following question was asked: *What therapeutic benefits, if any, have you experienced during and/or after a sound healing session?* Three respondents stated I have never experienced any therapeutic benefits during or after a sound healing session. However, 72 respondents shared a wide range of benefits. Table 6 suggests the benefits the respondents received are different from what originally motivated them to attend a sound healing session. For example, table 5 illustrates 30 respondents were motivated by a mental difficulty, and 15 respondents were motivated by an emotional issue. Yet, table 6 shows that 36 respondents experienced a therapeutic benefit on a mental level, and 44 respondents benefited on an emotional level. This is a significant, positive increase. According to Lydon, this is a regular occurrence “Sometimes somebody might come in with a backache, but they sleep better that night. Or, they might come in with one intention in mind, but two days later, they are like “, wow my stomach doesn’t hurt anymore”. So even though your intention is one thing, the effects aren't always predictable.”.

Aspect	Number	Keywords
Physical	24	Pain, Body, Injuries, Endocrine, Migraine, Blood Pressure, Heart Rate, Sciatica, Neck and Shoulders
Mental	36	Stress, Mind, Focus, Anxiety, Thoughts, Motivation, Clarity, Relaxed, Inspired, Optimistic, Sleep, Mental
Emotional	44	Calm, Harmony, Peace, Sorrow, Mood, Patience, Vitality, Creativity, Joy, Love, Happy
Spiritual	10	Connection, Universe, Soul,

		Source, Visions, Energy
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Table 6. The therapeutic benefits experienced by respondents

The above anecdotal evidence suggests that sound healing can heal various aspects of a human being. It also displays that they can experience effects on multiple levels during a session. To enhance the above data, the current study will share some interview excerpts and one more statistical table that is specific to the research question. A short description will accompany each example, detailing the significance of the evidence.

Cunnane shares how a client was affected on an emotional level “I remember one lady who started crying. Not everyone cries, but some people do cry at certain times, and it’s just normal. And I just try and normalise it for them, because it is normal. It’s normal that people release emotion through tears. It is the healthiest way that we can do it, and we are just conditioned not to do that. And that’s actually what causes so many of our diseases and depression because we can’t allow the emotions to come out. According to Twin Soul Sounds, this is a normal occurrence “So we have had some clients cry during the session. Sometimes you just see tears streaming down their face. To us, that’s an energetic release of pent up emotions”. Twin Soul Sounds shared a similar example regarding a client simultaneously having a physical and spiritual experience “We notice that when they let go... and just relax, they get a lot more out of the session and... they will report experiencing... seeing these beautiful coloured lights, and they will feel sensations in their body, they will feel warm sensations, or sometimes cold sensations, or... I guess you could say spiritual experiences as well. The general consensus is relaxed, feeling good and wanting to go to sleep. This example reinforces the above evidence that suggests clients are affected on multiple levels during a session.

A further indication of this trend was discovered when Cunnane shared another instance detailing how a client was affected on a mental and emotional level “Normally they are like beaming, smiling. Even if they are not smiling, their eyes are completely shining. And they just look so relaxed. Generally, look very, very blissed out; that’s kind of how I’d describe it”.

When the current study posed the question *Could you please describe your experience of sound healing, either positive or negative, both mentally or physically?* Seven respondents selected the *Prefer not to say* option, and 70 described their experience. Although the above question describes two aspects of a human being (physical and mental), the respondents described experiences on all four levels. Therefore, table 7 will detail the results in a similar fashion as table 6, but with the addition of whether or not the respondent's deemed the experience to be positive or negative.

Aspect	Number	Keywords	Positive	Negative
Physical	17	Breathing, Physical, Body, Energised, Warmth, Tense, Physical Restoration	16	1
Mental	31	Mindful, Anxiety, Nerves, Aggravated, Relaxation, Thoughts, Disorientated, Focus, Empowered, Chatter, Depression, Walking straighter and taller	29	2
Emotional	15	Calm,	15	0

		Emotionally, Peace,		
Spiritual	17	Meditation, Oneness, Trance, Bliss, Soul, Consciousness, Vibration, Light, Energy, Outworldliness, Different plane, Magic connection, Outside myself, State of awareness	17	0

Table 7. Respondent experience: positive or negative

Out of the original sample size of 70 respondents, 64 alluded to a positive experience, 3 stated the experience was negative, and 3 were non-applicable. Table 7 illustrates that the majority of respondents described feeling the experience on a mental level. This data is much in keeping with the previous evidence. It has also determined that sound healing has had a positive effect on the vast amount of respondents.

The Chakra System

The data in the below analysis will be used to attempt to answer a subsidiary research question concerning whether frequency-specific sounds can be used in isolation to effectively balance chakras. The study used three data collection methods to gather the below evidence: interviews, a web-based survey and a journal provided by Participant A.

During the interview and web-based survey stages of the research, the current study posed the following question “*What is your definition of the chakra system?*”. The answers given to this question were quite varied. However, when combined, they offer a broad overview of the complexity of the chakra system. This overview includes: how the system works in line with the various physical, mental, emotional and spiritual systems that chakras theoretically correlate with. A survey respondent offered the following description “Chakras are energy points. We have many, and they vibrate at different frequencies. There are 7 that most would relate to if they are aware of them, and these are energetically connected to our organs and, in turn, our emotions and colours. If these chakras, which are said to be vortexes, are not flowing freely, then our bodily energy or life force is affected”. A similar description pertaining to the correlation between chakras and organs of the human body is expanded on by a Reiki practitioner interviewed by the current study “Chakras are the energy centres throughout the body responsible for the condition of your mind, body and spirit. There are seven basics in the physical body, and they operate like valves that channel the electrical current of the Universal Life Force into the body. Their positions coincide approximately with the positions of the glands in the endocrine system”.

As the correlation between the chakra system and the endocrine system discussed previously in the literature review chapter of the study has been made again, the current study feels that this a strong indication that there is a clear association between both systems, albeit an intangible one (Wisneski and Anderson, 2009). This link is strengthened further by another respondent “The chakras are associated with the Endocrine system, each pertaining to organs and bodily functions (mental, emotional and physical). When they become affected by negativity, it can alter the chakra’s health and performance”. The addition of the mental and emotional body systems discussed by the respondent suggests that the connection between the chakra system and the human body does not exist merely on the physical level of a human being but rather interwoven on all levels of the human being. This aligns with the four aspects of a human being discussed throughout the study.

The scope of the interconnectivity between the chakra system and a human being's bodily systems was expanded on during an interview with two practitioners (Twin Soul Sounds) who have degrees in biomedicine. "The chakras are energy points in the body, and there are 7 major chakras in the human body, and there (are) also minor chakras, but each of these minor chakras can be traced back to a major chakra. We have got 7 major chakras, and each of these chakras has significance, and they all have a role in the human experience. So for example, the base chakra, which is located at the base of the spine where the coccyx bone is, that chakra is our centre of stability, our centre of security, our centre of groundedness, and we will often see that a lot of the physical conditions that someone has can be traced back to an imbalance in any one of these chakras. Most of our clients, based on the physical symptoms they present with, have traced this back to an imbalance in especially the lower 3 chakras. So, the root chakra, the sacral chakra and the solar plexus".

This data suggests that the chakra system itself is a very complex network of energy channels that individually correlate to mental states of mind, which can manifest as physical conditions. This manifestation is a phenomenon known as psychosomatic illness²⁶. Twin Soul Sounds further explores the idea of the human body's emotional and mental bodies manifesting on a physical level "Instead of looking at how each of our bodies is separate, we were able to connect them. So we were able to look at their physical and make a connection to the emotional and the mental through the chakras because if you know what the chakras... each of them do... you automatically know what physical conditions they can manifest if they are imbalanced and that will tell you which emotions you may need to release or work on".

The above point made about knowing your chakras is referring to what each chakra correlates to. The complete list of correlations is long and debatable because it differs between cultures, especially regarding the frequency of the root chakra (Gibson, 2021). Nonetheless, the list includes but is not limited to colours, herbs, crystals, emotions, mental states, and physical ailments. (Further description is available in Appendix J)

²⁶ Psychosomatic means mind (psyche) and body (soma). A psychosomatic disorder is a disease which involves both mind and body" (Willacy, 2020)

The latter is what Twin Soul Sounds referred to when they stated how they use chakras to make connections between the chakra system and mental, emotional, and physical states. Twin Soul Sounds expanded further with the following example: “The hands are an extension of the heart chakra; they are known as minor heart chakras. So if you have issues in your hands, your joints are related to that chakra, and you can draw it through an emotional understanding. It has an emotional trigger, so let’s say back in childhood you were neglected or something like that, and you start to match up all of these points. For me at least, and I think for Sach as well, it got us to view it more holistically and to understand what I’m feeling, my past, what I’m holding on to, or how I’m thinking, has a direct impact on my body and my body is storing these emotions and thoughts in these areas and that we need to work on them to release whatever it is, we have been holding on to”. As illustrated, Twin Soul Sounds claim they could diagnose an emotional problem that developed from childhood trauma by working back from a diagnosis of physical pain felt by a client in their hands. Therefore, it appears that using the chakra system to diagnose a problem works both ways. Furthermore, the point highlighting the relationship between trauma and chakra energies is one of interest to the study as it coincides with evidence found in the 7 Chakra Challenge journal.

As mentioned earlier, the journal explored various chakra states (strong/weak, blocked/open and underdeveloped/overactive) in addition to the levels of reality (physical and spiritual) chakras are hypothetically associated with. Also examined were the values systems, behaviours systems and personality traits each chakra suggestively correlates to and the positive and negative impacts they have on the chakra system.

Furthermore, participant A also analysed the connections between the theoretical development of this complex energy system and culture, parenting, and past lives. Moreover, the journal linked all of the above with the effect they supposedly have on a human being’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. According to the journal, three levels of influence in a human’s life affect chakras’ development. The three levels are past life, culture and parenting. The analysis given in the journal is too extensive for this section of the study. Therefore, the current study will merely summarise the findings in the research.

Level One: Past Life

The current study is not knowledgeable enough on the chakra system or reincarnation to draw any definitive conclusions relating to this intangible evidence and its mystical connotations. Instead, the current study will discuss the subject to present a rudimentary overview of what suggestively impacts the early development of chakras. According to the research generated by Participant A, problems, trauma and insightful guidance is carried over from a past life. Theoretically, the latter describes messages of guidance that we unconsciously receive throughout our current life. These messages are said to both play a part in the success we find in our lives and indicate that our chakras are strong. Conversely, if we carry over problems from our past life, our chakras are said to be weak from the moment we are born.

Level Two: Culture

The evidence suggests that the influences you have in your life as you grow are determined by the culture you grow up in. Taking the chakra system out of the equation, this evidence describes a person being a product of their environment²⁷. Therefore level two appears to be more plausible than level one. Participant A shared an interesting but purely hypothetical example of this. Mexican family values are closely connected to family, hard work and love. All of these are elements related to the heart chakra. Therefore, if you grow up surrounded by these influences, your heart chakra is said to be stronger. Conversely, if your upbringing lacks this, your heart chakra will be underdeveloped (Seriph, 2020). The evidence provided by participant A suggests that the culture/environment that a human being is surrounded by as they grow up theoretically influences the development of the specific chakra that is associated with that particular value system.

²⁷ Environmental psychology is the study of transactions between individuals and their physical settings. In these transactions, individuals change the environment, and their behaviour and experiences are changed by the environment ("What Is Environmental Psychology? | APS").

Level Three: Parenting

The third and final influence on chakra development discussed is from our parents. The evidence suggests that the strength and weaknesses of your parent's chakras will influence the strength and weakness of your chakras. For example, if your father is a hard worker, his root chakra will be strong, and this energy will influence you and strengthen your root chakra. The root chakra is associated with hard work. Another example given is if our mother is a creative type, we, as her child, would be influenced by that energy (Seriph, 2020). As creativity is associated with the throat chakra, this is the chakra that will theoretically strengthen due to this influence.

The study found these three levels of influence quite hard to relate to the chakra system. Therefore, it was decided that including this concept in the interview questions would be beneficial to the research. When questioned on this subject, Lydon offered the following explanation "What affects us more than our parents, and their behaviours and their perceptions and their treatment or non-treatment? These are the things that go through our filters. And these are the things that we process through our chakra. And this is what gives us the mindset that we have. And from there that dictates our behaviour, and from there that dictates our lifestyle, and from there that dictates what comes back, the effects of that. So, yeah, everything affects the chakras which affect you, which affects what then is drawn to you". This statement suggests that Lydon agrees with level three of this concept.

However, when questioned further on level one, Lydon had a different, almost dismissive opinion "The past life thing... Like I said, I have limitations on that". This statement indicates that the subject of past lives is questionable, even amongst the other esoteric data encountered so far. Therefore, the current study asked the other practitioners what their opinion on this level of influence was on the chakra system. The responses were both varied and interesting. Carr states, "there may be a connection, but there are no influences".

By contrast, when the current study addressed the subject with Twin Soul Sounds, they shared the following “I don’t just do sound healing. I also do this technique called quantum hypnosis healing technique²⁸. This was pioneered by Dolores Cannon from the US. So this technique, what we do is we put the client under a hypnotic state, so we are able to access their past lives, and what I normally see is these amazing trends from their past lives and these patterns from past lives that they seem to be still living now in this life and that shows me that whatever that person has gone through in a past life can be carried on into this life and that would be exhibited by their chakras”.

Twin Soul Sounds expanded on the association between the first level of influence and the chakra system “As in a physical manifestation of a disease or a pain or a reason why they keep encountering emotional trauma”. The notion that past life karma influences a human being's life as a manifestation of physical pain or emotional distress is as equally controversial as it is daunting. However, according to Twin Soul Sounds, they encounter this phenomenon regularly in their line of work “We see those trends, but the good news is that these things can be healed so after the sessions when the client becomes aware of these patterns that they have carried on unconsciously, they are able to now work on those patterns and dissolve those patterns, and they can do it through sound healing or other modalities, and once those patterns are dissolved, the chakras will be brought back to a state of balance, and those physical conditions that they were having before will just disappear”. Considering that one of the study’s research questions is concerned with determining if sound can balance chakras, this evidence is of great interest. On further analysis of the chakra system, the study generated the following data from the web-based survey.

The current study used skip logic for the next subject. Therefore, when asked the question, *Are you familiar with the chakra system?* 82 (96.47%) of the 85 respondents answered Yes, and the other 3 (3.53%) were skipped past all questions concerned with the chakra system. This logic was added because the subject of the chakra system is so vast the current study did not expect the respondents to know all the areas covered by the survey.

²⁸ Quantum Healing Hypnosis Technique, involves inducing an individual into the Somnambulistic state of trance through visualization (Cannon, 2020)

Q19 Are you familiar with the chakra system?

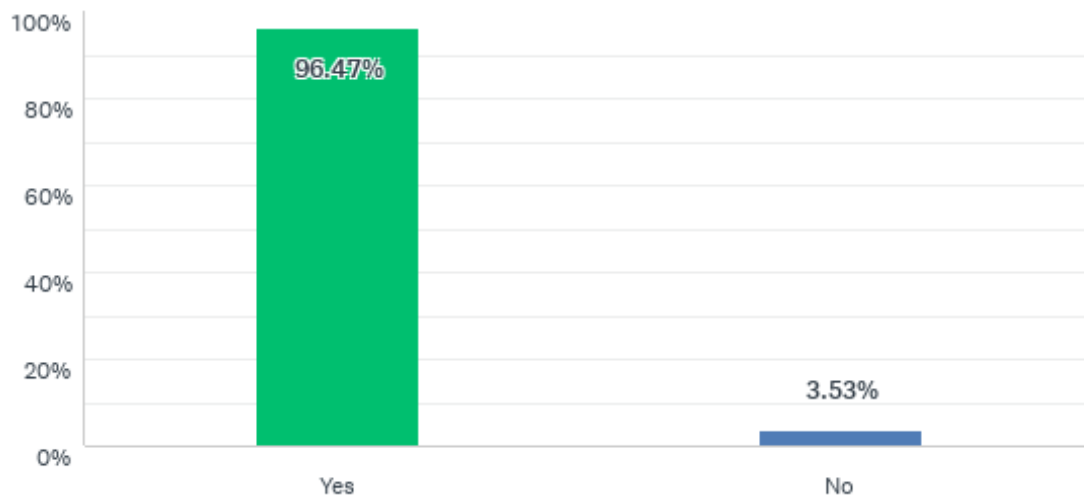
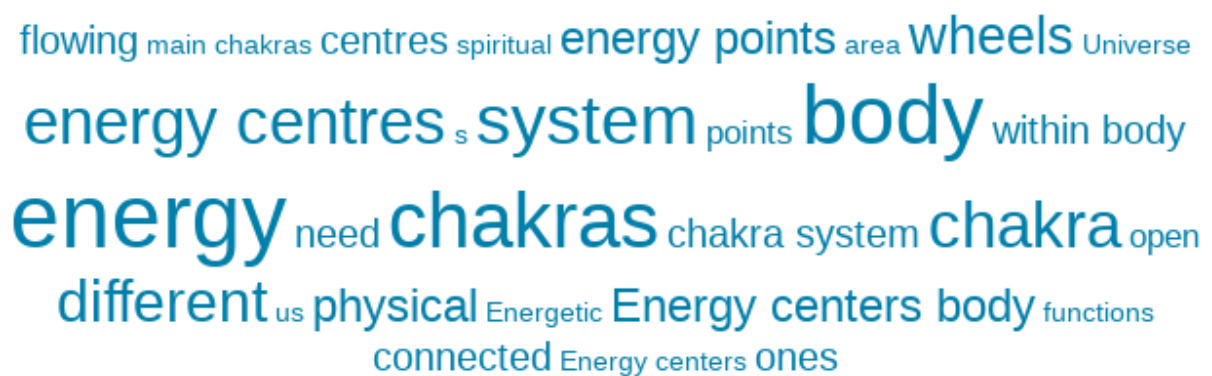


Figure 5. Chakra system familiarity

Consequently, when asked the question, *What is your definition of the chakra system?* Only 76 out of 85 offered a description of the system. Although the responses were quite varied, 54 (71.05%) respondents related chakras to energy. This trend can be identified in the word cloud image below.



The next question posed by the study was, *Do you use any type of sound healing modality to help you balance your chakras?*

As the below graph illustrates, 80 out of the remaining 82 respondents answered this question, with 56 (70%) answering Yes, and 24 (30%) answering No. Again, the respondents who answered No were skipped past the next question.

Q21 Do you use any type of sound healing modality to help you balance your chakras?

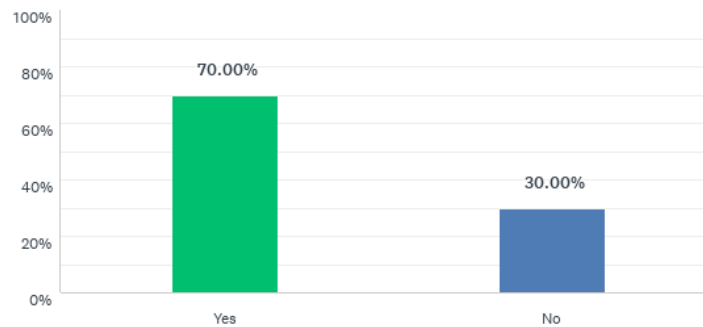


Figure 6. The modality used to balance chakras

The next question was open-ended as the current study sought to determine what type of sound healing modality participants used to balance their chakras. Out of the 56 respondents that answered this question, 28 (50%) mentioned Healing Instruments as opposed to 4 (7.14%) referring to a modality (Reiki). Of the healing instruments mentioned, 14 (25%) answered Crystal Singing Bowls, while 7 (12.50%) answered Singing Bowls. This answer could be referring to either Quartz Crystal Singing Bowls or Tibetan Singing Bowls. However, only 1 (1.79%) stated Tibetan Singing Bowls.

healing Sound baths Tuning forks listen Reiki drum
 crystal bowls chakras sounds Gong
 singing bowls meditations music YouTube use
 frequencies chakra bowls

As illustrated by the above word cloud image, the remaining answers were more varied, with 6 (10.71%) mentioning Frequency, 5 (8.93%) said Tuning Forks, 5 (8.93%) stated Voice/Mantra, 4 (7.14%) cited a Gong, and 2 (3.57%) respondents stated drumming. 5 (8.93%) respondents mentioned online, and 3 (5.36%) described using YouTube as a way of balancing their chakras. 8 (14.29%) respondents stated that they used Healing Music, which is quite interesting in light of the following question. When asked, *Have you ever used healing music to help balance your chakras?* 79 respondents answered, and the remaining 3 skipped. 66 (83.54%) answered Yes, and 13 (16.46%) answered No. Interestingly, only 8 (14.29%) of the 56 respondents on the previous question stated they used Healing Music to balance their chakras, yet 66 (83.54%) out of 79 respondents are expressing that they use Healing Music in this question.

Q23 Have you ever used healing music to help balance your chakras?

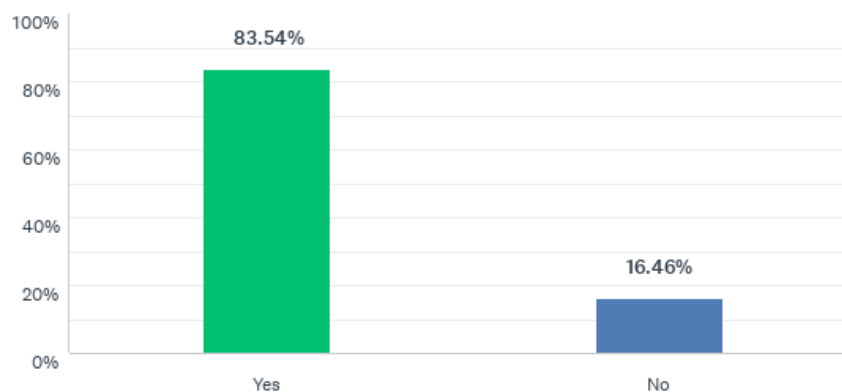


Figure 7. The percentage of respondents who use healing music to balance chakras

Out of the 66 respondents who answered the following question: Do you find healing music an effective way of balancing chakras? 63 (95.45%) answered Yes, and 3 (4.55%) answered No.

Q24 Do you find healing music to be an effective way of balancing chakras?

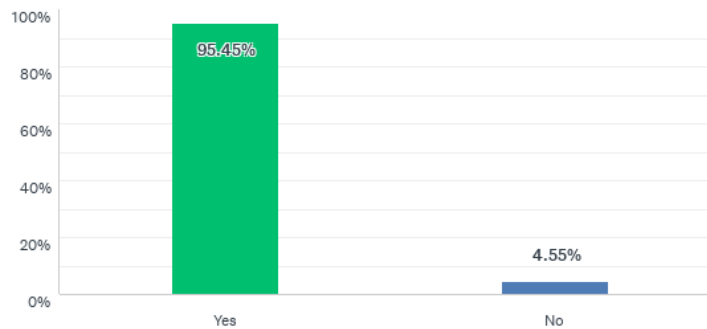


Figure 8. Healing music effectiveness

The current study considered the evidence generated from the web-based survey related to the effective use of sound healing music and sound healing modalities to balance chakras. The study then determined that this particular evidence suggested that sound healing music and sound healing modalities could effectively balance chakras. However, further research generated by the journal questioned this result. The current study has already discussed the three levels of influence that theoretically impact the development of chakras. In addition to this, there is evidence of three steps that theoretically affect the positive development of a human beings chakra system. The three steps to development are as follows.

Step One: Learn The Wisdom Teachings of the Chakras

According to Seriph, “Each chakra represents its own body of wisdom and teachings that allow you to unlock its powers. Learning the principles behind that chakra’s healthy operation is the mandatory first step” (2020). This step appears to be a lot harder than it reads because, as discussed above, the chakra system is very complex. Part of this complexity is that each chakra corresponds to various areas of the human experience, such as culture and its interwoven lifestyle choices, behaviour system, personality traits and the influence of the people around us. All of which theoretically impact the chakra system.

Step Two: Believe In The Wisdom Teachings of the Chakras

This step involves both changing our perception and adopting the chakra belief systems. From what Seriph is stating, this step appears to be similar to worship “It’s one thing to know, and another thing to believe. Once you have studied the wisdom principles, then you need to embrace them through daily affirmation and reflection exercises, to reprogram your subconscious mind to create a new experience” (Seriph, 2020). The current study has found that belief plays a big part in the world of sound healing. Twin Soul Sounds went as far as saying that belief has a placebo effect.

Step Three: Apply the Wisdom Teachings of the Chakra System

The third step describes a person engaging in the specific habits of the particular chakra they are developing. Participant A offers an interesting example of this concerning the throat chakra “If a person were working on their throat chakra, they would need to start picking up for themselves and speaking out about what is bothering them, as opposed to just accepting that this is the way things are. After all, a bad situation will remain the same unless we take control, make positive changes, and continue to move forward”. This point is strengthened further by Seriph “As we make daily changes to the way we live, we will experience an incredible shift in our life”.

Similar to the three levels of influence discussed earlier in the analysis, the current study decided to seek additional data referring to this chakra developing concept. In doing so, the current study included a question relating to this concept in the interview template used to interview sound healing practitioners. As expected, the question generated significant evidence. When the current study posed the question, Would you agree with these steps or have you a different opinion on chakra development? Twin Soul Sounds shared the following information “Yes. But what you mentioned before, in terms of embodying the chakras, is definitely a very powerful step. We also do share this with our clients. If they ask us how they can balance a root chakra, we tell them there are many, many ways you can do it, and one is by using the colour associated with the root chakra or practising grounding. But it all boils down to whether the client wants to do it or not.

If you actually look at the root cause of it. It is the client has to come to terms with why that chakra is imbalanced. So the client is engaging in a particular emotion that is not particularly healthy for the root chakra, and fear is the biggest one. If a person finds themselves in a state of fear 24/7, you can almost guarantee that the root chakra is going to become imbalanced. So, the client has to first decide that “I’m no longer going to live in fear”, and that will enable the root chakra to be more receptive to healing”.

The current study is seeking to determine if specific frequencies can be used to balance chakras. Therefore, when Twin Soul Sounds shared the above evidence, the current study felt that it warranted a detour from the interview template. Thereby, the current study put the following question to Twin Soul Sounds. *So basically, what you are saying is it cannot be done with frequencies alone?* In reply to this question, Twin Soul Sounds argued, “It can be done, but it can be accelerated if the client is on that same path”. Contents of the journal suggested that there were reasons to doubt this explanation, therefore, the current study pressed the issue by pointing out that there was a vast divide between embracing the three steps to development and watching a YouTube video aimed at balancing chakras.

After taking a break from the interview for a couple of minutes, Twin Soul Sounds made the following statement “I think that’s actually a good point you mention because phrasing it in that way, I see what you mean. It’s like ... so the frequencies can trigger this healing in certain chakras, but I do believe as well it is through the upkeep. Because let’s pretend that person had an issue with their liver that was related to anger, and they heal it on the emotional level, but they continue to treat their body like a bit of a garbage bin. Then, of course, we would see the physical manifestation arise again because obviously, you can’t treat your body like a garbage bin. So I think yes, there is some upkeep. But I think a pathway for people to be exposed to chakras, upkeep of chakras and strengthening them is more easily facilitated through sound frequency. I think that’s just the beginning point because from that point onwards it is, as you say, the upkeep”.

This evidence indicates that frequencies are used to initiate a healing process as opposed to completing it and theoretically balancing the affected chakra as a result.

Furthermore, it appears that healing is not possible without the client being proactive and changing certain aspects of their life. This point was reemphasised by another practitioner when asked what effect lifestyle changes have on the chakra system “I use the chakra system as a guide, to identify that imbalance and then if you can be honest with yourself and identify the imbalance and where it came from, and your behaviours around it. And then you can change that; you know that’s where you are going to see the different results. I mean, of course, we do use sound, crystals, colours, foods, all the things that are related to that chakra to raise the vibration of that healing. And they are all just to make you aware of what you are doing and what you are doing is, you are trying to make changes to get different results... [and], but you have to believe it though”.

The survey served several notable functions: a large number of people responded allowing for a greater number of variables, and subsequent variations of interesting variables were observed, and data was collected in a format that was already organised. The survey consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions that were geared towards measuring respondents' attitudes towards different forms of meditation, sound healing modalities and the chakra system. Open-ended questions resulted in some respondents offering detailed personal reflections relating to their experience of the sound healing that the current study hadn't anticipated. Closed-ended questions enabled the current study to collect socioeconomic data relating to age, sex, meditation and sound healing experience. This data revealed trends, both individually and when it was cross-referenced with the interview evidence. The narrative evidence generated by the interviews enriched the analysis. Likewise, the decision to include additional answer options such as 'other, please specify' was favourable to the survey model as it encouraged open-ended feedback that resulted in the production of more detailed data. Furthermore, this additional option lessened the chance of the respondent giving a biased answer.

The data generated from the journal provided valuable insight into the personal experience of participant A, the effectiveness of the various online meditations and a thorough overview of the chakra belief system.

In response to the data gained from the journal regarding the chakra belief system and the various factors that theoretically aid and restrict their development, a comparative analysis between several interviewees perspectives was made possible. Furthermore, the hypothesis that chakras can be healed, strengthened and unblocked by frequencies alone was questioned due to what was learned during this stage of the study. Research has shown that the subject of the chakra system is so vast and complex; it is far beyond the scope of the current study's complete understanding.

A word of caution, in light of the fact that Participant A attempted to analyse the psychology behind the chakra system with no background in psychology to speak of, some potentially open questions about the validity of the analysis could be raised. Nonetheless, the levels and steps that formed the basis of the counterargument regarding whether or not specific frequencies can be used in isolation to balance chakras remain firm, as this evidence is based solely on the chakra teachings, not an uneducated opinion.

Discussion

Primary research question: Can the utility of sound positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being?

Sound healing is a practice that dates back thousands of years. It reemerged during the '60s along with the New Age historical and cultural movement. Recently sound healing has gained momentum in CAM and integrative therapy (Snow, 2011). During an interview with Medical Sound Association founder David Gibson, the study of what Gibson believes to be the future direction of sound healing. At present, Gibson is working with 300 doctors and sound therapists, helping to create treatment plans for psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, grief, autism, dementia, and trauma. Other treatment plans include exploding cancer cells and entraining cells to their healthy harmonic state. According to Gibson, the association's overall goal is to build up a database of sound healing treatments proven successful. He plans to achieve this through the 'intake form' available on the Medical Sound Association website. The intake form, which can be filled out by sound healing practitioners worldwide, has five individual sections; Health Concern; Instrument or Technology used; Severity Before Treatment; Severity After Treatment; Percentage, and number of Samples. The objective of the form is to collate evidence of successful sound healing treatments. The procedures involved in the most promising therapies will be later tested under controlled conditions and documented. When the association generates enough evidence, Gibson plans to present the results to the medical professionals hoping that sound healing will become fully integrated into the medical system.

As of 16/05/2021, there are 80 entries that detail treatment plans for a range of physical and psychological difficulties. The latter includes; ADD/ADHD, anger, anxiety, depression, fear, grief, insomnia, panic attacks, and PTSD. The physical ailments include; cancer, chronic fatigue, circulatory issues, eating disorders, endocrine glands, fibromyalgia, and respiratory problems. Also detailed are the healing instruments and machine-driven technologies used to perform the treatments.

These include; bowls (crystal and Tibetan), chanting/mantra, guided meditation, hardwood drums, tuning forks, vibroacoustic device (bass pod, sound belt), and many more. ("Average Of All Treatments Submitted For Issues And Instruments/Technologies | Medical Sound Association") The difficulties detailed above and some of the instruments align with what the current research has discovered. It is interesting to note that the majority of ailments mentioned above detail psychological issues. This evidence, coupled with the results from the current studies research, has revealed a trend in the data.

Research results demonstrate that mental health difficulties were the primary motivation behind respondents attending a sound healing session, followed by spiritual and emotional, respectively. Only four stated physical challenges. This data is consistent with the evidence gained from the practitioner interviews, which identified mental and emotional issues as the primary motivation behind clients attending their sessions. In contrast, clients also attend sessions as a last resort due to their doctor failing to give them an adequate diagnosis. Moreover, doctors are advising their patients, and medical insurance has begun to pay for the sessions. This data implies that sound healing offers benefits that conventional medicine cannot. This revelation may be considered a promising aspect concerning traditional medicine potentially being merged with conventional medicine. Three respondents claimed they did not experience any therapeutic benefits from a session. It is essential to highlight the fact that sound healing is not for everybody.

Conversely, the fact remains that 72 of 77 respondents stated they did experience a therapeutic benefit from sound healing. In light of the research question, this result is very positive. Furthermore, the therapeutic benefits the respondents alluded to revealed a significant difference from the data relating to their motivation for practising sound healing. For example, 30 respondents claimed they began practising sound healing because of a mental health difficulty, yet the statistics revealed 6 additional respondents experienced a therapeutic benefit on that level. Furthermore, 15 respondents were motivated by an emotional dilemma, but 44 reported they benefited on an emotional level. Moreover, 24 respondents felt the effect on a physical level, even though only 4 were motivated by a physical ailment.

In contrast, 17 were inspired by a search for spiritual well-being, yet, only 10 experienced the session on a spiritual level. This evidence is consistent with the interview excerpts shared in the previous chapter about how clients often experience unexpected therapeutic benefits on multiple levels during a single session. The further analysis concerned with respondents experiences of sound healing revealed a very favourable result in terms of the research question. Out of a sample base of 77 respondents, 70 respondents shared different experiences of sound healing, with the addition of whether or not they deemed their experience to be positive or negative. 31 respondents experienced the benefits on a mental level, 17 on a physical level, 17 on a spiritual level, and 15 on an emotional level. 64 alluded to a positive experience, 3 stated the experience was negative, and 3 were non-applicable. Again, in light of the research question, this evidence is favourable. It is interesting to note that the trends in the data suggest that respondents felt most experiences on a non-tangible level.

Through additional literary research, the current study has found the following examples of sound being used to heal human beings. This extra data is used to enhance the quality of the above evidence. Research Scholar Tarun Routhan and Dr Saryu Ruhela of the University of Delhi concluded chanting therapies, both with music and without music, have a significant therapeutic effect on reducing competitive sports anxiety (Routhan and Ruhela, p. 5). Also, Tohid Babayi and Gholam Hossein Riazi from the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics observed that using 528 Hz sound wave with 80 dB intensity reduces side effects of ethanol consumption in astrocyte primary cell culture, and it can be good...for reducing damage effects of alcohol in alcohol-addicted people (Babayi, and Riazi, p. 4). Another study by Kaho Akimoto, Ailing Hu, Takuji Yamaguchi and Hiroyuki Kobayashi from the Graduate School of Medicine, Juntendo University, Tokyo, found that music of different frequencies had different effects on the endocrine system, especially oxytocin and cortisol. Their findings suggest that 528 Hz music reduces stress even if participants listen to the music for only a short time (Akimoto et al., p. 1159-70).

Tamara L. Goldsby, PhD, Michael E. Goldsby, PhD, Mary McWalters, BA, and Paul J. Mills, PhD from the University of California, determined that if a human being practised sound meditation for 60 minutes, it helped them reduce anger, fatigue, tension, anxiety, and depression while simultaneously increasing their sense of spiritual well-being (Goldsby et al., 401-06). A different study by Lili Naghdi, MD, Heidi Ahonen PhD, and Lee Bartel, PhD of the Music and Health Research Collaboratory, University of Toronto, Toronto and Pasqualino Macario, DC of the Conrad Institute for Music Therapy Research, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo noted that ten treatments (twice per week over five weeks) of low-frequency sound stimulation decreased pain and improved sleep of people with fibromyalgia, allowing nearly three-quarters of the participants to reduce their pain medication (Naghdi et al., 2017). In light of the above evidence, the current study feels the primary research question concerned with whether or not the utility of sound can positively affect a human being's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being is close to being answered.

Subsidiary research question: Are frequency-specific sounds enough to balance chakras effectively?

Sound healing has gained momentum over the last 20 years, and the subject of the chakra system has been increasingly discussed and referenced in sound healing books and on relevant websites. A Google search of the term 'Chakra Balancing' reveals an average of 28,000,000 results is a testament to this growth in popularity. If you include the word YouTube, a staggering 1,070,000 results are displayed. The results include but are not limited to explanations on the chakra system, guided meditations and healing music that theoretically helps to align your chakras. Since the current study is interested in the effectiveness of using specific frequencies to heal a human being, the subject of balancing, strengthening, and developing chakras with specific frequencies alone is of great interest. The previous chapter provided a deep exploration of the concepts of the chakra belief system; in doing so, it revealed that the chakra system is a philosophy that is aligned with the psychological aspects of the human psyche. Research has described the system as seven primary chakras that interconnect and correspond with major nerve plexus associated with the human endocrine system and correlated to human behavioural systems. Consequently, playing a hypothetical role in the human experience.

Theoretically speaking, the chakras themselves are said to be wheels of energy vortexes that correspond to specific frequencies. Furthermore, research suggests that if a chakra is exposed to its resonant frequency, it can be unblocked/balanced and brought into harmony.

The previous chapter detailed psychological development stages that theoretically influence the development of the chakra system, both positively and negatively. Such as; culture and parenting. Past life was also stated as being an influence on the chakra system. Like many aspects of the chakra system, the latter is far beyond the current studies understanding; therefore, whether or not a human being has a past life shall not be questioned. Instead, the present study will allow logic to dictate the answer to that question. However, when considering the additional aspects of the chakra system discussed in this study, reason does not appear to play a big part in the story. The previous chapter also detailed the three theoretical steps towards a more robust, balanced chakra system; learning the wisdom teachings of the chakras; believe in the wisdom teachings of the chakras, and apply the wisdom teachings of the chakra system. This evidence suggests that if a person were to follow these steps to balance their chakra system adequately, it would take a significant amount of dedication, effort and willpower.

And here lies the problem. There are healing music videos available online with such titles as; “chakra balancing frequencies”, “balance all your chakras in 60 minutes”, and “full chakra alignment”. Furthermore, as mentioned, it is common for videos of this nature to accompany descriptions that claim the contents of the video will balance individual chakras or, as the above examples indicate, balance a person’s entire chakra system. Based on the assumption that the ancient processes and influences discussed in the previous chapter affect the chakra system positively and negatively, it raises the question, “*can it be done with frequencies alone?*” The results of the analysis alone suggest that it can.

From a sample size of 80, 56 (70%) stated that they had used a sound healing modality to balance their chakras. However, when asked what type of sound healing modality participants used to balance their chakras? Most respondents (50%) alluded to healing instruments, as opposed to a modality. Only 4 (7.14%) referred to a modality (Reiki).

The healing instruments that proved to be most popular were bowls, with 21 (37.50%) mentioning them. From a sample size of 79, 66 (83.54%) stated they had used healing music to balance their chakras. From a sample size of 66, 63 (95.45%) claimed that listening to healing music effectively balances chakras. Although this evidence strongly suggests that a human being can use sound to balance chakras, the data detailed above concerning the three levels of influence and three steps to development demonstrates otherwise. Moreover, the evidence generated from the interviews also suggests that this is not necessarily true. Twin Soul Sounds claimed that frequencies could balance chakras and that they, as practitioners, can use sound to accelerate the healing. However, when presented with the journal evidence, Twin Soul Sounds stated that they use frequencies to diagnose a problem and trigger healing. But balancing the chakra has to be done by the client. In other words, the client has to be proactive, address the issue themselves and apply and adhere to any subsequent lifestyle changes.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was two-fold: First, to report on whether or not the utility of sound can positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being? Second, to determine if frequency-specific sounds used in isolation are enough to balance chakras effectively? To address the questions outlined above, the current study gathered anecdotal evidence from several sources; interviews with practitioners and a web-based survey conducted with well-being enthusiasts concerned with their combined perspectives and experiences of both sound healing and the chakra system. Also, the current study conducted an interview with David Gibson regarding the future direction of sound healing. Lastly, a participant shared a broad overview of the chakra system in a journal written in response to an intensive three-day chakra course they attended. It is essential to highlight that the reviewed literature did not prepare the current study for the range and depth of experiences shared by the practitioners, respondents on the subjects of sound healing and the chakra system. Nor was the present study prepared for the exploration of the human psyche provided by participant A. However, such evidence was needed to address the research questions.

The evidence generated may be anecdotal, but after careful analysis, it still revealed patterns of meaning, some of which was unexpected. For example, the current study expected to find that most experiences shared would be tangible. The thought process behind this was the fact that vibrations affect us at a cellular level. Therefore, considering the principles of sound healing and the physics concerned with the speed of sound and its propensity to travel through water faster than air²⁹. For the most part, The current study expected respondents to report physical effects, if any, at all³⁰.

²⁹ "Since the human body is over seventy per cent water and since sound travels five times more efficiently through water than through air, sound frequency stimulation directly into the body is a highly efficient means for total body stimulation, especially at the cellular level." (Gaynor, p 116).

³⁰ "The physical effect of sound has a great influence upon the human body. The whole mechanism, the muscles, the blood circulation, the nerves are all moved by the power of vibration. As there is resonance for every sound, so the human body is a living resonator for sound" (Gaynor, p 112).

However, as the results show, the respondents mainly reported experiencing the effects on the non-tangible, mental and emotional levels. Furthermore, as respondents also alluded to having spiritual experiences, the data determined that respondents felt the experiences on all levels and varying degrees. Moreover, out of a sample size of 70 respondents, 64 alluded to a positive experience, 3 stated the experience was negative, and 3 were non-applicable. Thus, the data supports the hypothesis that the utility of sound can positively affect a human's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. However, as no clinical trials have been done to support this finding, the result is not absolute. The result does, however, provide evidence for further research into the effectiveness of sound healing modalities.

Despite decades of research concerning the chakra system, its mere existence continues to be debated among scholars. In light of this, the evidence shared by the current study is purely theoretical. The present study relied heavily on evidence generated by the above-mentioned methods. To answer the subsidiary research question concerning whether a person can use frequency-specific sounds in isolation to balance chakras effectively, the current study cross-examined the complexities of the chakra system. This intricate web includes; the effects the chakra system theoretically has on the human experience, the three levels of influence, and the three steps to development. All of which date back thousands of years. According to ancient wisdom teaching, this investigation has shown that it takes a considerable amount of personal effort, dedication, and willpower to align unbalanced chakras. Therefore, the notion that a person can do it with specific frequencies that no two cultures agree on does not appear plausible.

The previous chapter highlighted that the interweb is awash with videos accompanied by descriptions that claim a person can “balance their chakras” by simply listening to the contents of a video. However, the results of the current study suggest that this is not necessarily true. It is clear that there is a vast divide between a person applying the wisdom teachings of the chakra system to their life or simply listening to a piece of audio. The following is an example of this vast divide and what research has suggested about the role sound plays concerning an unbalanced/blocked chakra. From a theoretical point of view, a healing instrument that is tuned to the throat chakra will indicate if a chakra is blocked because the sound will cause a degree of physical/metaphysical discomfort.

Conversely, if no blockage exists, the sound is said to invoke feelings of euphoria and ecstasy. According to the analysis, if a blockage results from a person not telling someone the truth about something meaningful in their life, any sound, no matter how perfectly tuned it is to the throat chakra, will not unlock that truth. Therefore, it simply indicates that something important in a person's life related to the function of the throat chakra must be investigated. Thereby, as the sound doesn't know the answer, it cannot balance the chakra or promote healing. On this basis, the current study suggests that frequency-specific sounds used in isolation cannot effectively balance the chakra system. That being said, the respondents overwhelmingly claim to have successfully balanced their chakras by listening to healing music. This conflicting evidence demonstrates that this study cannot be considered significant enough to answer any question regarding the chakra system definitively. Furthermore, although the research made several links between the chakra system and the endocrine system, no actual proof has been presented in this investigation, as the current study has failed to locate any peer-reviewed evidence of this link.

One primary problem with sound healing is that there is not enough peer-reviewed evidence available to support it. Therefore, sound healing concepts need further academic rigour before they gain any notable recognition from healthcare professionals. However, due to the data collecting approach outlined by Gibson regarding the intake form, it appears that this field is maturing, with a wealth of methods being documented. This indicates that sound healing is positively moving towards full integration into mainstream healthcare. Furthermore, the research has shown that medicine is at the stage now where it could benefit from taking a closer look at some of the notable results which have come from the unorthodox sound healing methods that are applied today. At present, there are many instances of anecdotal evidence available that suggests sound healing can, in fact, effectively heal the body on many different levels. However, without clinical trials, sceptics will continue to dismiss this anecdotal evidence as a placebo effect. It is the current studies wish that such evidence, current research included, should lend support to any future scientific research of sound healing.

Recommendations For a Subsequent Experiment

While this project has moved away from the compositional process in response to Covid restrictions and research findings, it is still a potential outcome of the research question (*Can the utility of sound be adequately used to heal via an online platform?*), if another researcher should wish to test the effectiveness of online sound healing. Research has determined that the heart chakra is the most susceptible to subtle energy; therefore, it is recommended that a composition be written to target the heart chakra. This compositional process identified a specific frequency theoretically correlated to the heart chakra and selected what appropriate instruments synonymous with sound healing should be used to target it. The composition will be aimed at toning a specific chakra; therefore, it was essential to establish an appropriate scale for the piece that a researcher can use to achieve this. Furthermore, a guided visualisation meditation script that should be used to guide participants into the listening session has been made available for any subsequent study, should they wish to use it. The guided mediation, which was adapted from the chakra course is aimed at affecting the heart chakra. (Refer to Appendix M for full script)

As a final point in this area of research, a tuning system that is suggested to have a more positive effect on the listener was determined. The current research collated additional instrument choices commonly used in meditative music compositions. The list supplied was generated from evidence gathered through interviews with sound healing practitioners. Evidence generated from a web-based survey determined how well-being enthusiasts prepared from sound healing sessions. Additional recommendations include; how to set up the listening sessions, the exclusion criteria, and the data collection a researcher should use for the pre and post-listening test. (Please refer to Appendix L for full details of the recommendations and the rationale behind the current studies choices)

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Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire (Ciara Cunnane)

- Q 1.** In a few words, what was the life experience that led you to this healing path?
- Q 2.** What sound bath system did you study?
- Q 3.** What level of formal training in Gong Sound Bath meditation have you reached?
- Q 4.** How would you define a Gong Sound Bath session?
- Q 5.** Could you please describe what type of sound healing techniques you perform and the process involved in a Gong Sound Bath session?
- Q 6.** How would you define the therapeutic effects of a Gong Sound Bath on physical health, psychological health and spiritual wellness?
- Q 7.** How is a Gong Bath different from psychotherapy, psychiatry, life coaching or any other tool which uses different approaches to enabling the mind to function properly?
- Q 8.** What happens during a Gong Sound Bath session that promotes this healing?
- Q 9.** What are some potential therapeutic benefits of a Gong Sound Bath session?
- Q 10.** When you're preparing to do a session, how important is it to go visit the space ahead of time and find out what the acoustic space is like?
- Q 11.** What does a virtual Gong Sound Bath session involve

Q 12. What's the defining difference between me attending a virtual Gong Sound Bath session and attending one of your sessions in person?

Q 13. If I was to attend one of your online sessions, what can I do to get the most out of my experience?

Q 13. If a participant is not physically attending a Gong Sound Bath session and their whole body is not actually exposed to the vibrations, how can they still benefit from it?

Q 14. Can the sound healing techniques associated with a Gong Sound Bath session be effectively applied through an online platform?

Q 15. On average, how many Gongs do you use per session?

Q 16. What range of frequencies are produced?

Q 17. Are your Gongs tuned to the ancient solfeggio scale or frequencies that correlate to chakras? If not, what frequencies are they tuned to and why those particular frequencies?

Q 18. What are clients generally coming to you for?

Q 19. What are the most frequent reactions and feedback from people that attend your sessions?

Q 20. Can you relate the most memorable moments you experienced as a result of your client's experiences during or after one of your Gong Sound Bath sessions? Maybe pick one or two?

Q 21. Sometimes people who have had spiritual experiences during sessions display strong emotional reactions. Has this ever happened during or after one of your sound healing sessions? Could you please describe what happened?

Q 22. Have any of your clients ever reported distress or nightmares following a Gong Sound Bath session? Could you please describe what happened?

Q 23. There are many different groups that practice sound healing such as Hindu Swamis, Shaman and Tibetan Monks, among others. Do you think that any particular group actually has a handle on sound healing

Q 24. Earlier in the interview, you described the therapeutic effects of a Gong Sound Bath. Is there any peer-reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of the sound healing techniques employed by a Gong practitioner to back this up? If so, could you please share an example with me?

Q 25. Is a Gong Sound Bath session considered a medical treatment? -

Q 26. Considering the practice of sound healing is still very much in the research stage, is there any medical evidence available yet to support it?

Q 27. In your professional opinion, should Gong practitioners collaborate more with health professionals not only in research but also in practice to make the modality more evidence-based?

Q 28. What is your response to sceptics who say Gong Sound Baths are simply a crazy hippie ritual?

Q 29. Why are sceptics dismissive of any suggestion that the mind might influence health?

Q 30. Is there any area that was left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of a Gong Sound Bath session?

Appendix B: Interview (David Gibson)

Q1. Could you share with me how we should view the application of sound in integrative therapy?

Q1(a). In past interviews, you have stressed that it is important that *stable consistent vibrations* are used in sound therapy, can you briefly expand on the importance of this?

Q2. Can you briefly describe your hierarchy of vibration concept?

Q3. Could you tell me about the Medical Sound Association and what it has the potential to achieve?

Q3(a). During research for this interview, I noticed that you keep coming back to the Holy Grail. Can you briefly explain what this means in terms of the Medical Sound Associations' overall goal?

Q4. Can you briefly describe the work Ed Rupert does with your Sound Loungers?

Q5. Considering that our body's energies are regularly in flux, is it safe to say that chakra frequencies vary from person to person, as opposed to each chakra correlating to specific musical frequencies?

Q6. Tell me a little bit about the GeneOM Project?

Q7. Where do you see sound healing in 10 or 20 years?

Q8. Is there any area that was left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of sound healing?

Appendix C: Interview (Kim Carr)

Q1. Hey Kim, thanks for taking the time to talk to me. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Q2. in a few words, could you share with me what the life experience was that led you to sound healing?

Q3. Do you pursue other professions besides sound healing?

Q4. Has the sound healing modality you use got a name?

Q5. Could you please describe for me, what type of healing practice you perform? And the process of the treatment you give?

Q6. Let us imagine you have a middle-aged client who has an earache. How would you determine which treatment is best for her?

Q7. What kinds of sounds/frequencies are used? Are they tuned to chakra/solfeggio frequencies?

Q8. How do you determine what frequencies to use for what ailment?

Q9. You use a number of individual frequencies to heal. Which are selected from a pool of 144 frequencies. A recent study has found that 144 is the number of Chakras present in the human body. Is there a direct connection here between these two numbers?

Q10. Furthermore, you use a tone generator to create a sine wave that produces a number of short bursts of sound that are set at a user-defined pitch that corresponds to the particular ailment that you are healing. Have I got this right so far? Can you elaborate on this a little bit more for me, please?

Q11. You also asked for birth details and place of birth. Is this connected to the frequency that you use, or merely for your records?

Q12. Can a person be healed from frequencies alone? Or does it also take dedication and a belief in the system?

Q13. In your own words, please describe how the healing activity takes place?

Q14. How often should sound therapy sessions take place if a patient is to benefit fully?

Q15. Is the form of sound healing you use completely safe?

Q16. Are there any age restrictions for the form of sound healing you use?

Q17. What should a patient do to prepare for the sound healing session? Or Is there anything they need to prepare for before or after the session?

Q18. What can a client expect from a sound healing session?

Q19. Could you describe one way in which you have personally witnessed sound healing improve a patient's physical, emotional or spiritual well-being?

Q20. You state that your healing modality works on both a physical and spiritual level. Could you describe the type of ailments you offer healing for?

Q21. You have stated that you worked with Donald, an 81-year-old man that was in a car accident. And after a month of using the modality, he was fully cognisant. Can you elaborate on this for me, please?

Q22. Can you share one of two of your most memorable moments as a sound healer with me, please?

Q23. What makes your sound healing different from others that can be offered online?

Q24. You say there are twelve chakras. So, that's the seven main ones from root to crown, and an additional five. Can you elaborate on this for me, please?

Q25. What is your definition of chakras?

Q26. When you discovered how chakras work, what changed in your life? Did everything you had been experiencing during your life begin to click in place and make sense to you?

Q26. So, sound healing is still very much in the research stage and as a result, research evidence of its effectiveness is quite hard to pin down. Why do you think this Eastern practice is not given more attention by conventional Western medicine?

Q28. What is your personal philosophy of sound healing?

Appendix D: Interview (Maureen Murphy Lydon)

Q1. In a few words, what was the life experience that led you to this healing path?

Q2. What level of Reiki attunements have you completed?

Q3. What is your definition of Reiki?

Q4. Could you please describe what type of sound healing techniques you perform and the process of the treatment?

Q5. How would you define the therapeutic effects of Reiki on physical health, psychological health and spiritual wellness?

Q6. How is Reiki different from psychotherapy, psychiatry, life coaching or any other tool which uses different approaches to enabling the mind to function properly?

Q7. Let us imagine you have a middle-aged client who has an earache. How would you determine which treatment is best for her?

Q8. What are some potential therapeutic benefits of applying sound healing techniques in Reiki?

Q9. What about online distance healing? What does virtual Reiki involve?

Q10. What's the defining difference between a client receiving distance healing and attending one of your in-person Reiki sessions?

Q11. If a participant is not physically attending a Reiki session and their whole body is not actually exposed to the vibrations, how can they still be healed?

Q12. Can the sound healing techniques associated with Reiki be effectively applied through an online platform?

Q13. On average, how many tuning forks and/or crystal bowls do you use per session?

Q14. What kinds of sounds/frequencies are used?

Q15. Are your forks/bowls tuned to the ancient solfeggio scale or frequencies that correlate to chakras? If not, what frequencies are they tuned to and why those particular frequencies?

Q16. I know a practitioner who uses numerous Gongs in her practice. What do you think of a Gongs sonic influence in healing?

Q17. I have read that tuning forks/crystal bowls are used in sound baths also. What is the defining differences between the sound healing techniques applied in Reiki and those of a Sound Bath?

Q18. What are clients generally coming to you for?

Q19. What are the most frequent reactions and feedback from people that attend your sessions?

Q20. Can you relate your most memorable moment of applying a sound healing technique during a Reiki session?

Q21. Sometimes people who have had spiritual experiences during sessions display strong emotional reactions. Has this ever happened during or after one of your sound healing sessions? Could you please describe what happened?

Q22. Have any of your clients ever reported distress or nightmares following a Reiki session? Could you please describe what happened?

Q23. In your professional opinion, could you share with me how we should view sound from the point of view of traditional healing / alternative medicine?

Q24. What is your definition of the chakra system?

Q 25. How long did it take before you learned how to associate psychophysical symptoms with energy blockage in specific chakra centres.

Q25. When you discovered how chakras work, what changed in your life? Did everything you had been experiencing during your life begin to click in place and make sense to you?

Q26. Research has suggested that chakra strengths and weaknesses are connected to our past lives, the culture we live in and the personality traits, behaviours and value systems of our parents. In your professional opinion, do all, if any, of these elements influence chakra development?

Q27. It has also been suggested that in order to develop chakras one must research the chakra wisdom teachings, adopt the belief system and lastly engage in the specific habits of the chakra you are developing. Would you agree with these steps? Or have you a different opinion on chakra development?

Q28. Research on the chakra system has repeatedly brought up the subject of energy, what is this energy? And where does it come from?

Q29. Considering that our body's energies are regularly in flux, is it safe to say that chakra frequencies vary with each person?

Q30. If chakra frequencies vary from person to person, how does a practitioner know what frequencies to use?

Q31. During my research, I came across the sonic formula... Frequency + Intent = Healing. Can you explain to me what Frequency + Intent refers to in this instance?

Q32. I have read that when one person physically interacts with another person a vibrational shift occurs. For example, when two people hug one another the vibrational shift that occurs in their heart chakra is what lifts their mood. Is this the case?

Q33. There are many different groups that practice sound healing such as Hindu Swamis, Shaman and Tibetan Monks, among others. Do you think that any one group actually has a handle on sound healing?

Q34. Earlier in the interview, you described the therapeutic effects of Reiki. Is there any peer-reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of the sound healing techniques employed by a Reiki practitioner to back this up? If so, could you please share one example with me?

Q35. Is a Reiki session that employs sound healing techniques considered a medical treatment?

Q36. Considering the practice of Reiki is still very much in the research stage, is there any medical evidence available yet to support it?

Q37. In your professional opinion, should Reiki practitioners collaborate more with health professionals not only in research but also in practice to make the modality more evidence-based?

Q38. Research has shown that people are quick to dismiss the theory of the chakra belief system because of its mystical connotations. So much so, there is one practitioner that only refers to chakras as energy centres because of the scientific connotations invoked by this label. Have you encountered this dismissive attitude towards the belief system? And if so, how do you feel about it?

Q39. What is your response to sceptics who say Reiki is a crazy hippie ritual?

Q40. Why are sceptics dismissive of any suggestion that the mind might influence health?

Q41. Where do you see the profession of Reiki in 10 or 20 years?

Q42. Is there any area that was left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of a Reiki session that employs sound healing techniques?

Appendix E: Interview (Twin Soul Sounds)

- Q 1.** In a few words, what was the life experience that led you to this healing path?
- Q 2.** What sound healing system did you study?
- Q 3.** What level of formal training in sound healing have you reached?
- Q 4.** How would you define one of your sound healing sessions?
- Q 5.** Could you please describe what type of sound healing techniques you perform and the process involved in one of your sound healing sessions?
- Q 6.** How would you define the therapeutic effects of sound healing on physical health, psychological health and spiritual wellness?
- Q 7.** How is sound healing different from psychotherapy, psychiatry, life coaching or any other tool which uses different approaches to enabling the mind to function properly?
- Q 8.** What happens during a sound healing session that promotes healing?
- Q 9.** What are some potential therapeutic benefits of a sound healing session?
- Q 10.** What does a virtual sound healing session involve?
- Q 11.** What's the defining difference between a client attending a virtual sound healing session and attending one of your sessions in person?
- Q 12.** If a client was to attend one of your online sessions, what can they do to get the most out of my experience?
- Q 13.** If a participant is not physically attending a sound healing session and their whole body is not actually exposed to the vibrations, how do they still benefit from it?

Q 14. Can the sound healing techniques associated with a sound healing session be effectively applied through an online platform?

Q 15. On average, how many singing bowls do you use per session?

Q 16. What range of frequencies are produced from the singing bowls?

Q 17. Are your singing bowls tuned to the ancient solfeggio scale or frequencies that correlate to chakras? If neither suggestion applies, what frequencies are they tuned to and why those particular frequencies?

Q 18. I know a practitioner who uses numerous tuning forks in her practice. What do you think about the sonic influence of tuning forks in healing?

Q 19. Tuning forks are synonymous with Reiki. However, tuning forks are also used in sound baths. What are the defining differences, if any, between a sound healing session that uses singing bowls and a Reiki session that involves tuning forks?

Q 20. What are clients generally coming to you for?

Q 21. What are the most frequent reactions and feedback from people that attend your sessions?

Q 22. Can you relate the most memorable moments you experienced as a result of your client's experiences during or after one of your sound healing sessions? Maybe pick one or two?

Q 23. Sometimes people who have had spiritual experiences during sessions display strong emotional reactions. Has this ever happened during or after one of your sound healing sessions? Could you please describe what happened?

Q 24. Have any of your clients ever reported distress following a sound healing session? If yes, could you please describe what happened?

Q 25. Could you share with me how we should view sound from the point of view of traditional healing / alternative medicine?

Q 26. What is your definition of the chakra system?

Q 27. When you discovered how chakras work, what changed in your life? Did everything you had been experiencing during your life begin to click in place and make sense to you?

Q 28. Research has suggested that chakra strengths and weaknesses are connected to our past lives, the culture we live in and the personality traits, behaviours and value systems of our parents. In your professional opinion, do all, if any, of these elements influence chakra development?

Q 29. It has also been suggested that in order to develop chakras one must research the chakra wisdom teachings, adopt the belief system and lastly engage in the specific habits of the chakra you are developing. Would you agree with these steps? Or have you a different opinion on chakra development?

Q 30. Research on the chakra system has repeatedly brought up the subject of energy, what is this energy? And where does it come from?

Q 31. Considering that our body's energies are regularly in flux, is it safe to say that chakra frequencies vary from person to person?

Q 32. If so, how does a practitioner know what frequencies to use in order to target specific chakras?

Q 33. During my research, I came across the sonic formula... Frequency + Intent = Healing. Can you explain to me what Frequency + Intent refers to in this instance?

Q 34. There are many different groups that practice sound healing such as Hindu Swamis, Shaman and Tibetan Monks, among others. Do you think that any particular group actually has a firm handle on sound healing?

Q 35. Earlier in the interview, you described the therapeutic effects of a sound healing session. Is there any peer-reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of the sound healing techniques employed by a sound healing practitioner to back this up? If so, could you please share one example with me?

Q 36. Is a sound healing session considered a medical treatment?

Q 37. Considering the practice of sound healing is still very much in the research stage, is there any medical evidence available yet to support it?

Q 38. In your professional opinion, should sound healing practitioners collaborate more with health professionals not only in research but also in practice to make the modality more evidence-based?

Q 39. Research has shown that people are quick to dismiss the theory of the chakra belief system because of its mystical connotations. So much so, there is one practitioner that only refers to chakras as energy centres because of the scientific connotations invoked by this label. Have you encountered this dismissive attitude towards the belief system? And if so, how do you feel about it?

Q 40. What is your response to sceptics who say sound healing is simply a crazy hippie ritual?

Q 41. Why are sceptics dismissive of any suggestion that the mind might influence health?

Q 42. Is there any area that was left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of sound healing?

Appendix F: Questionnaire (Evelyn Castillo)

- Q 1.** In a few words, what was the life experience that led you to this healing path?
- Q 2.** What level of Reiki attunements have you completed?
- Q 3.** What is Reiki?
- Q 4.** Could you please describe what type of sound healing techniques you perform and the process of the treatment?
- Q 5.** How would you define the therapeutic effects of Reiki on physical health, psychological health and spiritual wellness?
- Q 6.** How is Reiki different from psychotherapy, psychiatry, life coaching or any other tool which uses different approaches to enabling the mind to function properly?
- Q 7.** Let us imagine you have a middle-aged client who has an earache. How would you determine which treatment is best for her?
- Q 8.** What are some potential therapeutic benefits of applying sound healing techniques in Reiki?
- Q 9.** What about online distance healing? What does virtual Reiki involve?
- Q 10.** What's the defining difference between me receiving distance healing and attending one of your in-person Reiki sessions?
- Q 11.** If a participant is not physically attending a Reiki session and their whole body is not actually exposed to the vibrations, how can they still be healed?

Q 12. Can the sound healing techniques associated with Reiki be effectively applied through an online platform? - **If already answered above, please ignore**

Q 13. On average, how many tuning forks do you use per session?

Q 14. What kinds of sounds/frequencies are used?

Q 15. Are your forks tuned to the ancient solfeggio scale or frequencies that correlate to chakras? If not, what frequencies are they tuned to and why those particular frequencies?

Q 17. I know a practitioner who uses numerous Gongs in her practice. What do you think of a Gongs sonic influence in healing?

Q 18. I have read that tuning forks are used in sound baths. What are the defining differences between the sound healing techniques applied in Reiki and those of a Sound Bath?

Q 19. What are clients generally coming to you for?

Q 20. What are the most frequent reactions and feedback from people that attend your sessions?

Q 21. Can you relate your most memorable moments of applying a sound healing technique during a Reiki session? Maybe pick one or two?

Q 21. Sometimes people who have had spiritual experiences during sessions display strong emotional reactions. Has this ever happened during or after one of your sound healing sessions? Could you please describe what happened?

Q 23. Have any of your clients ever reported distress or nightmares following a Reiki session? Could you please describe what happened?

Q 24. Could you share with me how we should view sound from the point of view of traditional healing / alternative medicine?

Q 25. What is your definition of the chakra system?

Q 26. How long did it take before you learned how to associate psychophysical symptoms with energy blockage in specific chakra centers.

Q 27. When you discovered how chakras work, what changed in your life? Did everything you had been experiencing during your life begin to click in place and make sense to you?

Q 28. Research has suggested that chakra strengths and weaknesses are connected to our past lives, the culture we live in and the personality traits, behaviours and value systems of our parents. Do all, or any, of these elements influence chakra development?

Q 29. It has also been suggested that in order to develop chakras one must research the chakra wisdom teachings, adopt the belief system and lastly engage in the specific habits of the chakra you are developing. Would you agree with these steps? Or have you a different opinion on chakra development?

Q 30. Research on the chakra system has repeatedly brought up the subject of energy, what is this energy? And where does it come from?

Q 31. Considering that our body's energies are regularly in flux, is it safe to say that chakra frequencies vary with each person?

Q 32. So how does a practitioner know what frequencies to use?

Q 33. During my research, I came across the sonic formula... Frequency + Intent = Healing. Can you explain to me what Frequency + Intent refers to in this instance?

Q 34. I have read that when one person physically interacts with another person a vibrational shift occurs. For example, when two people hug one another the vibrational shift that occurs in their heart chakra is what lifts their mood. Is this actually the case?

Q 35. There are many different groups that practice sound healing such as Hindu Swamis, Shaman and Tibetan Monks, among others. Do you think that any particular group actually has a firm handle on sound healing?

Q 36. Earlier in the interview, you described the therapeutic effects of Reiki. Is there any peer-reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of the sound healing techniques employed by a Reiki practitioner to back this up? If so, could you please share an example with me?

Q 37. Is a Reiki session that employs sound healing techniques considered a medical treatment?

Q 38. Considering the practice of Reiki is still very much in the research stage, is there any medical evidence available yet to support it?

Q 39. In your professional opinion, should Reiki practitioners collaborate more with health professionals not only in research but also in practice to make the modality more evidence-based?

Q 40. Research has shown that people are quick to dismiss the theory of the chakra belief system because of its mystical connotations. So much so, there is one practitioner that only refers to chakras as energy centres because of the scientific connotations invoked by this name. Have you encountered this dismissive attitude towards the belief system? And if so, how do you feel about it?

Q 41. What is your response to sceptics who say Reiki is a crazy hippie ritual?

Q 42. Why are sceptics dismissive of any suggestion that the mind might influence health?

Q 43. Where do you see the profession of Reiki in 10 or 20 years?

Q 44. Is there any area that was left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of a Reiki session that employs sound healing techniques?

Appendix G: (Meditation & Sound Healing Questionnaire)

Guarantee of Confidentiality and Anonymity

The information that you provide in this study will be recorded anonymously. It will then be analysed and combined with or compared to other participants' data to determine overall themes. As you will remain anonymous at all times, data analysis results will never be traceable to you. By pressing OK below you are agreeing to take part in this study.

Q1. What gender and you?

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Q2. How old are you?

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

Q3. What is your level of experience with meditation?

None

A little

Moderate

Quite a bit

A lot

Q4. How long have you been practising meditation?

Less than 6 months

6 months - 1 year

1-2 years

2-4 years

4-6 years

6-10 years

Other (please specify)

Q5. Do you practice the art of meditation on a regular basis?

Yes

No

Q6. On average, how much time would you spend meditating on a typical day?

None of the above

1-3min

4-10min

10-20 minutes

20-30 minutes

30-45 minutes

45-60 minutes

More than an hour

Q7. What primary type of formal meditation do you usually practice?

I do not practice meditation

Mindfulness Meditation

Spiritual Meditation

Focused Meditation

Movement Meditation

Mantra Meditation

Transcendental Meditation

Visualization Meditation

Other, please specify

Q8. If you have practised any form of sound healing in the past, could you please specify what type?

I have not practised sound healing

Reiki

Sound Bath

Healing Music

Other, please specify

Q9. What was your primary motivation for practising sound healing?

Prefer not to say

Please specify

Q10. What aspects of sound healing appeal to you?

Prefer not to say

Please specify

Q11. Have you practised sound healing online, in-person or both methods?

Online

In-Person

Both Methods

Q12. Which method of delivery do you find to be the most effective?

I don't have a preference

Online

In-Person

Q13. How do you prepare yourself for an online sound healing session?

Prefer not to say

Please specify

Q14. What therapeutic benefits, if any, have you experienced during and/or after a sound healing session?

I have never experienced any therapeutic benefits during or after a sound healing session

Please describe the therapeutic benefits you have experienced

Q15. Could you please describe your experience of sound healing, either positive or negative, both mentally or physically?

Prefer not to say

I have experienced none of the above

Please describe your experience

Q16. Can you please relate your most memorable experience of a sound healing session?

No relatable experience to describe

Please relate your most memorable experience

Q17. Would you recommend any form of sound healing?

Yes

No

Q18. Could you please specify what type of sound healing modality and/or what form of sound healing you would recommend and why?

Please specify

Q19. Are you familiar with the chakra system?

Yes

No

Q20. What is your definition of the chakra system?

Please specify

Q21. Do you use any type of sound healing modality to help you balance your chakras?

Yes

No

Q22. Could you please share what type of sound healing modality you use to balance your chakras?

Please specify

Q23. Have you ever used healing music to help balance your chakras?

Yes

No

Q24. Do you find healing music to be an effective way of balancing chakras?

Yes

No

Q25. Could you please share an example of your experience, if any, with healing music?

No experience of healing music to share

Please specify

Q26. Is there any area left out that you would like to discuss in relation to the therapeutic benefits of sound healing?

Please specify

Thank you for your interest in wanting to participate in this important study

Appendix H: Facebook Post: Meditation & Sound Healing Questionnaire

Facebook Post

My name is Craig Gray. I am a student from Dublin, Ireland. I was wondering if you could please take 5 minutes to complete this survey.

Currently, I am pursuing an honours degree in Creative Music Production at IADT. For my thesis project, I am conducting a research study about sound healing modalities with special attention given to the chakra system.

GOAL OF STUDY

In highlighting the therapeutic benefits of sound healing modalities and providing a detailed and accessible overview of the chakra system, this study aims to bridge the divide between the spiritualist and the sceptic.

HOW CAN I TAKE PART AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Participation in the study will include you following the below link and anonymously filling out an online questionnaire. Your participation is estimated to take a total time commitment of up to 5 minutes.

Thank you in advance for taking part in this critical study.

Namaste.

Appendix I: (Kim Carr: Through Self Sound Healing Modality Description)

Modality Name: Through Self Sound Healing

Technology Used: Frequency Generator.

Kim Carr, the inventor of the modality, provided the modality description.

Hereby is a description of the modality.

We are beings of energy, each with our own vibrational frequency. Our vibrational frequency is pure/unaffected at birth. From the birth details, i.e. date, time, and place of birth, I calculate what that vibrational frequency is, as well as the polarity frequency. I will now refer to it as the 'primal resonance frequency' PRF.

From the PRF, I derive 12 levels of 12 frequencies each. Each Level corresponds to the resonant frequencies to the various 'components'/organs, systems of the body. When an ailment is targeted, the corresponding level of frequencies are selected, a recording of the 144 frequencies is then made. The client then listens to the frequencies on headphones.

You are more than likely aware of the following; however, there is a method.

Fundamental principles of sound healing

The most important principle of sound healing may be considered Resonance, a word with several implications. In the context of human healing, resonance can be described as the frequency of vibration that is natural to a specific organ or body system (such as the heart or the respiratory system). This innate frequency is known as the prime resonance.

At the cellular level, all cells emit sound frequencies as a consequence of their metabolic processes.

Further, there is an interaction between the cell's own sounds and those imposed by the environment. When these natural frequency signals become scrambled, so does our body's ability to self-regulate and maintain healthy function. This disruption can occur because of the introduction of things like certain viruses, toxins, heavy metals, radiation, harmful electromagnetic fields, and mechanical trauma. The resonance principle implies cellular absorption of the healing sounds that are introduced and/or their harmonics.

In sound healing, resonance principles are engaged to re-harmonize cells that have been imprinted with disruptive frequencies. Everything has a positive and negative; the principle applies here.

As I was developing the modality, I noticed that in some instances that instead of relieving the effects of the 'ailment', the frequencies actually induced it. From this, I then (as you noticed when I referred to calculating the PRF the polarity was included) found that including the polarity frequency (for want of a better description) brought it into balance. Furthermore, by playing the resonant frequency on the one channel and the polarity on the opposite channel, a true binaural effect is realised, and the desired 'healing' effect was achieved.

Appendix J: Chakra Correlations

Chakra Correlations

Excerpt from: Anodea Judith "*Wheels of Life : User's Guide to the Chakra System*" (Judith, p. 55-359).

Chakra One: Earth (Root)

Sanskrit Name: Muladhara

Meaning: Root support

Location: Perineum, Base of spine, and Coccygeal plexus

Psychological Function: Survival

Resulting in: Grounding

Demon: Fear

Inner State: Stillness and Security,

Glands (Endocrine System): Adrenals

Outer Body Parts: Legs, Feet, Bones, Large intestine, and Teeth

Malfunction: Obesity, Hemorrhoids, Constipation, Sciatica, Degenerative arthritis, Knee troubles, and Anorexia

Sense: Smell

Seed Sound: Lam

Vowel Sound: O (as in rope)

Chakra Two: Water (Sacral)

Sanskrit Name: Svadhisthana

Meaning: Sweetness

Location: Lower abdomen, Genitals, and Womb

Psychological Function: Desires, Pleasure

Resulting in: Sexuality, Procreation

Demon: Guilt

Function: Desire, Pleasure, Sexuality, and Procreation

Inner State: Feelings

Glands (Endocrine System): Gonads, Ovaries, and Testicles

Outer Body Parts: Womb, Genitals, Kidney, Bladder, and Circulatory system

Malfunction - Impotence, Frigidity, Uterine, Bladder or kidney trouble, and Stiff lower back

Sense: Taste

Seed Sound: Vam

Vowel Sound: Oo (as in "due")

Chakra Three: Fire (Solar Plexus)

Sanskrit Name: Manipura

Meaning: Lustrous gem

Location: Navel to solar plexus

Psychological Function: Will

Resulting in: Power, Assertiveness

Demon: Shame

Inner State: Laughter, Joy, and Anger

Glands (Endocrine System): Pancreas and Adrenals

Outer Body Parts: Digestive system, Liver, Gallbladder, abd Muscles

Malfunction: Ulcers, Diabetes, Hypoglycaemia, Digestive disorders, Chronic fatigue, and Hypertension

Sense: Sight

Seed Sound: Ram

Vowel Sound: Ah (as in "father")

Chakra Four: Love (Heart Plexus)

Sanskrit Name: Anahata

Meaning: Unstuck

Location: Heart

Psychological Function: Love

Resulting in: Peace and Compassion

Demon: Grief

Inner State: Compassion and Love

Glands (Endocrine System): Thymus

Outer Body Parts: Lungs, Heart, Circulatory system, Pericardium, Arms, and Hands

Malfunction: Asthma, High Blood Pressure, Heart disease, and Lung disease

Sense: Touch

Seed Sound: Lam

Vowel Sound: Ay (as in "play")

Chakra Five: Sound (Throat)

Sanskrit Name: Visuddha

Meaning: Purification

Location: Throat

Psychological Function: Communication

Resulting in: Creative Identity

Demon: Lies

Inner State: Synthesis of ideas into symbols

Glands (Endocrine System): Thyroid and Parathyroid

Outer Body Parts: Throat, Ears, Mouth, Shoulders, Arms, and Hands

Malfunction: Sore throat, Stiff neck, Shoulder pain, Colds, Thyroid problems, and Hearing problems

Sense: Hearing

Seed Sound: Ham

Vowel Sound: Eee (as in sleep)

Chakra Six: Light (Third Eye)

Sanskrit Name: Anja

Meaning: To Perceive, and to command

Location - Centre of the head slightly above eye level

Psychological Function: Seeing and Intuition

Resulting in: Imagination

Demon: Illusion

Inner State: N/A

Glands (Endocrine System): Pineal

Outer Body Parts: Eyes, Base of skull, and Brow

Malfunction: Blindness, Headaches, Nightmares, Eyestrain, and Blurred vision

Sense: N/A

Seed Sound: Om

Vowel Sound: Mmmm (not really a vowel)

Chakra Seven: Thought (Crown / Cerebral Cortex Pineal)

Sanskrit Name: Sahasrara

Meaning: Thousandfold

Location: Top of Head

Psychological Function: Understanding

Resulting in: Bliss

Demon: Attachment

Inner State: N/A

Glands (Endocrine System): Pituitary

Outer Body Parts: Cerebral cortex and Central nervous system

Malfunction - Depression, Alienation, Confusion, Boredom, Apathy, and Inability to learn

Sense: N/A

Seed Sound: None

Vowel Sound: Ngngng, as in sing (not really a vowel)

Appendix K: 7 Chakra Challenge: Journal

Introductory Note

James Seriph is a smart, clean-cut and charismatic individual. He self proclaims that he is a mystic and an indigo child that is well versed in the chakra belief system, different systems of personality and psychology. All apart from the indigo child and mystic claims were substantiated over the course of the 7 chakra challenge. He is also the founder of the Chakra School which he runs alongside Edward Anthony Moore, a guy who claims to have experienced a kundalini awakening that changed his life. The 7 chakra challenge began at 20:00 GMT on December 8th, 2020 and was streamed live over a three day period from a retreat in Mexico. According to Seriph the retreat is owned and run by a businessman named Don Roberto, who he describes as being a spiritually switched on Pleiadian Starseed master. Seriph also claims to be a Pleiadian Starseed from Sirius A. He goes on to say that when he experienced a “calling” for him to follow “the path” he spent three months travelling the world in search of the retreat. And when he finally found it, Don Roberto said to him “You are one of the people I was looking for because you have the next stage of the plan” (Seriph, 2020). He further adds that Don Roberto claimed that he built the retreat for a group of people that were going to change the world and that Seriph was one of those people.

As the challenge began to unfold Seriph revealed that Don Roberto and the residents of his retreat believed “there are 4.8 million volunteer souls who came to the planet from other places to help in Earth's ascension. And when coming to earth, it was known we would be incarnating among family lines that had all kinds of difficulty and trauma, we would have to come in as human beings, forget who we are and enter the human world. But ultimately, we all inside knew we had a mission” (Seriph, 2020). Seriph also adds that “It was known that 97% were gonna get lost in the human world, and were not going to recover their original mission, were not going to actually do it. It was known that the success rate was only 3%”

When taking into account that 144,000 (3%) people are not residing at the retreat in Mexico, it is fair to say that Seriph is of the opinion that the rest of the “volunteer souls” are scattered around the world and that some were quite possibly watching the live stream, hence the following statement “And I bet if you're watching this right now, you might be one of those souls. And you might know deep down, you have a special purpose on Earth, that you came here to shine a particular type of energy for the planet, you came here to do something here” (Seriph, 2020). The above statements relating to the 4.8 million volunteers were made on day 3 of the challenge. And due to them being accompanied by slides, it is quite obvious that as bold as these statements are, including them was always part of the plan. At that stage of the challenge, any “committed” participants still in attendance since day 1 were now fully aware the entire point of the challenge was to convince people to join the 2-day virtual retreat at a cost of \$891 for the complete package. This package is inclusive of undergoing a Sun Sigil Activation with Moore, a guy who Seriph claims to be his past life destiny partner. Similarly, Seriph claims to have made a special connection with a girl he met in high school who he believes to have been his mother in a past life.

As the challenge neared conclusion Seriph circled back to the story of the volunteer souls when he reiterated “It was also known that when we would come in, we would all get lost. And that we would have to help each other remember who we are, we would have to help each other remember what our gifts are and how to use them. It would be a team effort, and it would be hard” (Seriph, 2020). In what appears to be a last-ditch attempt to convince participants to join the retreat Seriph implies that both himself and his team will help them remember if they are a volunteer, what their specific gift is and how to use said gift. Seriph concluded this section of the challenge with the following claim, aimed at reassuring anyone that may still doubt his ability to deliver what he was promising “I'm like Professor X, my job is to find the mutants and help them understand their gifts and train them” (Seriph, 2020).

Day One

First Guided Meditation

The first meditation turned out to be a voice-guided meditation as opposed to a frequency healing meditation which I was hoping for. This particular meditation was directed at the heart chakra. During the course of the meditation, Seriph asked participants to perform breathing exercises while being mindful of one thing they are grateful for at that present moment. As the meditation progressed Seriph asked participants to think of someone they are grateful for, someone that has helped them on their path when they were going through a dark time in their lives. Seriph also encouraged participants to appreciate themselves and to take pride that they are still here despite the challenges they have overcome. This exercise in gratitude and self-appreciation combined with breath work and visualisation is a way to theoretically open our heart chakra energy. On a number of occasions, Seriph asked the participants if they were feeling a tingling sensation in their chest area. Again, it is said that this sensation is a sign that the meditation is working with the energy fields of a participant's body.

When the meditation was over Seriph posed the question “How many of you felt a slight change in your consciousness?” (Seriph. 2020) and the comment box got pretty busy with participants stating they had fallen into a deep meditation. With some feeling peaceful, emotional and teary-eyed, feeling blissful and feeling goosebumps all over and tingling in their toes. While one said they went into space and another claimed it gave them a headache. From a psychological point of view, one even stated that they felt their heart was ready to forgive themselves. Considering these reactions it is clear that the effect of this guided meditation was varied but mostly positive.

My experience was different. Due to finding it hard to clear my mind and completely focusing on the moment, I found it very hard to benefit fully from the meditation. As a result of this, I practised this meditation two more times.

On the third attempt, I felt really relaxed and a slight tingling sensation in my chest radiated outward towards my armpits. I suspect this was a result of the breathwork involved.

The Chakra System

Seriph went on to explain that we are not just flesh and blood humans, “We are a vibratory field of energy, a spirit that is interfacing with our physical body and the interface for our spiritual body is our energy field” (Seriph, 2020). He further adds that “Our energy field, which has many points, has 7 major points called Chakras. These 7 major energy centres are home for part of our spiritual superpower”. It was at this point that I realised my participation in this study could be somewhat flawed as I had minimal experience of what Seriph was talking about. Moreover, as much as I was trying to remain objective, the inexperience fueled my scepticism.

Yes, I have heard about chakras theoretically being vortices of energy, but I have never read anything relating chakras to spiritual superpowers. I have already mentioned that the chakra challenge is far from what I expected, however, it had now become clear that in order to write this journal from a place of limited understanding, each stream would have to be viewed multiple times. Furthermore, as this is completely new information that I am struggling to relate to prior knowledge, I have realised that writing this journal will be quite a challenge also.

Chakra States

This section that focuses on nurturing and developing chakras was preceded by a fitting quote from Seriph “The quality of the experience of your life is determined by the quality of your energetic body” (Seriph, 2020). During the live stream, this quote didn’t initially jump out at me. However, his take on the “practical magic” of the chakra system and how it correlates to numerous areas of your life proved to be very revealing. For example, in relating individual chakras to specific personality traits, Seriph states the following when describing the root chakra “Some people have a commanding presence that garners respect and that is accredited to the root chakra (Seriph, 2020).

He goes on to say that “They have a downward energy about them, an authority that draws people to them”. Working on that logic, it can be said that if a person has a strong root chakra they are grounded and confident in themselves to make decisions and take action.

Another example given was the personality trait that correlates with a strong sacral chakra “Some people are the life of the party and are fun to be around. These people have an energy field. They tap into a part of themselves that everyone wants to tap into but, most people can’t” (Seriph, 2020). As your sacral chakra is associated with social connection, it makes sense that popularity would be linked to a strong sacral. Conversely, when discussing indications of a blocked root chakra Seriph states the following “If someone violates your boundaries and your root chakra doesn’t activate then that chakra is blocked. If you can't feel anger in an appropriate situation then your root chakra is blocked. This will stop you from trying to claim your intuitive gift and tapping into your higher abilities because it stops you from grounding. If you can't hold your boundaries, feel safe and secure in your own body and can't have access to the ability to get angry now and again when something isn't right, your root chakra is blocked” (Seriph, 2020). Research has indicated that the root chakra is one of the most common energy centres to be blocked. It is associated with strength, vitality and survival needs (Judith, 2002).

Seriph is also of the opinion that as well as strong and blocked chakras, we have underdeveloped and overactive chakras. He offers the following example when describing an underdeveloped solar plexus chakra “Some people just can't get organised or set a plan and stick to it. Therefore, they are constantly energetically collapsing in on themselves. This has a direct effect on their confidence because they are never able to achieve what they set out to achieve. So when it is time to take charge, make a plan and get going, it always collapses in some way. This is not because the world is unfair or rigged against her, it is because it is an area of their own being that they are still learning about and training in. And this is not something that comes naturally” (Seriph, 2020). The solar plexus chakra is associated with a sense of self and productivity. Therefore, by highlighting inefficiency and a negative attitude, Seriph provided the perfect antithesis. However, I remain to be convinced that the act of developing your solar plexus chakra enables you to overcome such issues or vice versa.

By contrast, Seriph offers a good example of an overactive chakra in stating “Someone that always has to share their opinion. Someone who is always trying to talk even though they are in a situation where they should just listen” (Seriph, 2020).

What I find interesting about the above examples is that we can all relate these personality traits and external problems to someone we know or even to ourselves. To that end, the description Seriph offers in relation to a blocked heart chakra is what resonates with me the most “When someone feels so focused on performance they can’t relax and feel happy and loved. This is a heart chakra block” (Seriph, 2020). Taking the element of relatability into account, it is fair to say that this factor makes the mystical subject of the chakra system more approachable to the sceptics among us.

Taking all of the above into consideration, I expected that I would learn a great deal in relation to the chakra system as well as suggestions on how to implement change through practice.

Second Guided ‘active’ Meditation

Similar to the first guided meditation, this one involved breath work and visualisation with the addition of self-reflection. Unlike the first meditation, particular focus was now given to specific areas of the body that chakra positions are theoretically associated with. Beginning at your tailbone where the root chakra is positioned and finishing above your head where the crown chakra is positioned. Seriph began by asking participants to reflect upon their finances, physical health and ability to deal with conflict. These are all elements of your life that are associated with the root chakra and the aim was for participants to sense whether or not they were having an issue with this particular chakra.

Similarly, participants were asked to reflect on many other aspects of their life during the course of the meditation so they could determine what chakras might need extra support based on which emotions come up for them. Such as their ability or inability to feel pleasure (sacral chakra), love and happiness (heart chakra), hesitance (throat chakra), curiosity (third eye chakra) and/or inspiration.

Additionally, personality traits such as strong willpower, insightfulness, spiritualness, creativeness and ability or inability to have fun and/or project love and affection were highlighted. Lastly, questions on external life elements were asked such as do you work hard instead of smart? (third eye chakra). Whether or not you felt like you are in control of your life? (solar plexus), have you an outlet for creative expression? (throat chakra) and/or Do you often find yourself in the right place at the right time? (crown chakra) (Seriph, 2020).

As the above examples illustrate the meditation was very probing and thorough with many different emotions, personality traits and lifestyles brought to attention. Again, this process was very relatable and so varied that it was likely to have connected with many participants of different cultures and belief systems. I found this to be quite interesting as it shows that no matter who we are or where we are from, we all feel similar emotions, face similar struggles and make similar lifestyle choices in line with the value system we grow in and out of.

On completion of the meditation, Seriph prompted the participants to let him know how they felt so far, what followed were comments of appreciation such as “You're doing superb! Grateful for experiencing your wisdom and efforts. Blessings to you.”, “Loved the guided and thoughtful insights!”, “I actually felt connected to something and haven't in such a long time” and “Thank you, James! Feeling very connected & enlightened”. In addition to this, self-diagnosed issues such as “Need a lot of work on my root chakra”, “My crown chakra is buzzing right now, feeling connected.”, “Definitely need to work on my root and crown chakras. Thank you for the guidance” and “My root and third eye definitely need healing.. I was emotional.. thank you” were revealed. Lastly, comments relating to peoples current state of mind and mental well-being were shared “I'm not proud of who I am but I should be as I've come so far. But I'm afraid somehow I'm going to mess things up” and “Thank you, I need to feel myself overcome these worries and anxieties that consume me. I look forward to growing and healing” (7 Chakra Challenge, 2020). All of the above comments indicate an openness to working on themselves. However, the latter two display low self-esteem and an actual need for support and encouragement, which is worrying because I am not convinced they will get it here.

My experience with this meditation was interesting. As a result of the strange occurrence of fireworks going off intermittently outside the building the stream was broadcast from I found it hard to concentrate and give the meditation process undivided attention. Furthermore, due to the probing nature of this meditation, it felt more like an intense counselling session than a meditative process. That being said, upon analysis of the replay the information suggests that I have trouble with my heart, throat and third eye chakras. I also began to realise at this point, that theoretically developing, balancing and unblocking chakras is not quickly or easily achievable.

Day Two

Moving on to day two it is assumed that on day one participant's identified the chakras that are underdeveloped, overactive, unbalanced and/or blocked. Day two promises to offer participants a deeper understanding of "how chakras work, and how they are the result of your society, your parents actions, beliefs and value system, and your own souls' history. And that these three things all combined to create the experience that you have of human life. And how we can actually change and heal and transform patterns that may have been stuck in our family line or in our personal soul history for a long time" (Seriph, 2020). Apart from the hint towards there being an afterlife and reincarnation in this statement, it is being suggested that a person is the product of their environment. Although I agree that a person can be a product of their environment, my limited knowledge of the chakra system doesn't afford me the opportunity to definitively conclude as to whether or not a person's environment shapes their chakras. Similarly, I am not in a position to state with any authority if a person's problems are carried over from their past life. Instead, we shall allow logic to dictate these answers and I will merely share Seriph's explanations of such matters and my subjective opinion on any comparisons being made.

Past Life

Seriph commences a very short breathing and visualisation exercise aimed at removing stress and anxiety from your mind while simultaneously bringing you into a more receptive place. He then poses the hypothetical question “Who were you before you were born?” (Seriph, 2020). The reasoning behind this question was to introduce the idea that people experience life in the way they do because of their past life. He expands on this idea by offering the following example “If throughout your lifetimes, you have been involved in magical traditions, then in this life, you're going to have a propensity to have some level of intuitive, magical development automatically. You may not even realise it.” This idea suggests that people are successful in life and their chosen career because they unconsciously receive insight through spiritual means from their past life. It came as no surprise that this idea caused a stir in the comments section, prompting a participant to ask the question “How do we know who we were?” To which Seriph replied, “By doing ‘past life’ recall work through the Akashic Records” (Seriph, 2020).

Sticking with this subject, Seriph claimed that when he met his mother from a past life a door of his perception to a deeper level of reality was opened and he was set on a journey of figuring out who his soul was. At first, I was thinking why is Seriph sharing such a questionable story with us? Then it was made clear that Seriph is of the opinion that from the day we are born, we are all on this journey. And through our lives, we will find clues and meet destiny partners who will guide and help us to understand why we have specific chakras that are strong and others that are weak.

Personality Traits, Levels of Reality & Nadis

On day one it was suggested that our chakras are connected to our personality and our behaviour determines which chakra is the strongest. In discussing childhood propensities Seriph elaborates on this idea further by stating “I met a little kid yesterday, my buddy's little kid, and he's a little root chakra warrior. He doesn't want to talk about abstract concepts. He doesn't want to talk about his feelings. He wants to run around swinging swords, throwing rocks and wrestling.

He wants to be on the physical level of reality” (Seriph, 2020). In terms of the relationship between chakras and levels of reality, it is said that a strong connection to the physical level of reality means that one or more of the three chakras below the heart chakra is stronger. Conversely, if one or more of the chakras above the heart chakra is stronger, this indicates a better connection to the spiritual level of reality. This hypothesis suggests that the heart chakra connects both levels of reality.

A good example of a child being better connected to the spiritual level would be of someone that is more emotional and more “concerned with interesting ideas and imaginary scenarios and make beliefs” (Seriph, 2020). Working from a theoretical point of view that the chakra system is more than just hocus pocus, the above examples strongly suggest a correlation between chakra development and personality development. Furthermore, in making a connection between the above examples and the central nervous system Seriph adds “All of these propensities of childhood will reveal more about who you are. And as we grow older, we build this pattern in our nervous system. And we build this habit and it forms our adult personality. And this forms what we will call the pathways” (Seriph, 2020). According to the Indian mystics who pioneered inner science, the pathways that Seriph is referring to are called Nadis (energy channels). By connecting the information gathered so far it appears that Nadis are means by which energy runs through our bodies and they are theoretically built by our past life, environment and childhood experiences (Judith, 2002). Furthermore, they are said to be constantly building as our environment is a constant influence as is our life experiences. Thus, by adopting the chakra belief system and changing our lifestyles and path through life, we can change the energy in our bodies. Which, if Seriph is correct, results in a notable improvement in our life.

Culture

Seriph states that the second influence on our chakras is culture. As he puts it “Your early influences on your life come from your culture, which culture you're born into and which country. Because culture has a whole mode of perception” (Seriph, 2020).

This strengthens the connection Seriph made previously regarding the development/underdevelopment of chakras being shaped by your environment. As your environment and culture are undeniably interwoven. In his quest to connect culture with chakra development, Seriph identifies certain emotions, behaviours and beliefs that are associated with certain value systems. Regarding the influence of Mexican culture on the root and heart chakras, he shared the following example “If you're born in Mexico, what's important in the culture of Mexico? Is it making a million dollars? Is that what Mexican culture tells you to mean to live a successful life? No. It's about family, it's about hard work, it's about love. That's where the value system is. So you're naturally going to develop a stronger heart chakra and root chakra if you're growing up in Mexico” (Seriph, 2020). Although this example of Mexican family values (hard work, family and love) appears to be stereotypical, it is a good example of how your culture can influence your behaviour and beliefs. Seriph further explores this idea by giving a stereotypical example of American family values “If you're born in the US, you're going to have a stronger solar plexus chakra, because you're probably going to be told from a young age... Hey, you know, what really matters in life is for you to go out and achieve something, for you to live the American dream, for you to achieve success” (Seriph, 2020).

As Seriph is American I will take his word for it that American people gauge success by ambition, achievements and their standing in the world of business, but his claim that these elements are core American family values is debatable. In spite of that, when taking into account the theoretical correlations between the root, heart and solar plexus chakras to grounding, vitality, love, relationships, productivity and leadership, the suggestive connections made between value systems, culture and chakra development are presented more clearly and made more relatable to everyday life as a result of the above examples.

Parenting

According to Seriph, the third and final influence on chakra development is from our parents. He argues that the strength and weaknesses of our parent's chakras will influence the strength and weakness of our chakras. He claims the reason for this is because their level of reality is passed directly down to their children.

For example, if our father was a hard worker, his root chakra would be strong and this energy would influence us and strengthen our root chakra in the process. Another example would be if our mother is a creative type, we, as her child, would be influenced by that energy (throat chakra) (Seriph, 2020). Conversely, Seriph adds that if we were abandoned by either or both of our parents, we would grow up lacking that influence and as a consequence, there would be a void in our life that needs to be filled. Seriph further adds that underdeveloped chakras could also be accredited to something that was missing in our parents' life, as a result of something that was absent during their childhood. Placing them in a position where they couldn't give us what we needed because they simply never learned how to. For example, if our parents didn't know how to share love with us, that propensity to share love would be missing from our life and as a consequence, our heart chakra would be underdeveloped, just like our parents' heart chakra was (Seriph, 2020).

As the above examples illustrate, it appears that Seriph is leaning heavily on his psychology background to analyse and connect various life events with the development and/or underdevelopment of chakras. Below he offers a number of other specific examples that allow for a more complete overview of these connections to be made. In talking about an underdeveloped root chakra he states the following "If you don't get accustomed to physical contact/engagement as a child, you're going to be less grounded as an adult, your root chakra will be a little more underdeveloped" (Seriph, 2020). This observation is pretty deep because it suggests that this negative influence begins at a very early age. An example would be the confusion felt by a child that is fussed over all day and placed in a cot alone at night. This could be why it is suggested in Indian culture to allow a baby to sleep between their parents. The last example given of undeveloped chakras relates to the third eye and throat chakras, both of which theoretically correspond with the spiritual level of reality. "If your imagination isn't encouraged or engaged with and you don't have parents that have helped you tap into your creativity or read to you at night when you went to bed, you're gonna have a less developed third eye or throat than you would otherwise have" (Seriph, 2020).

In this section, we have learned that the cause and effect of underdeveloped chakras according to the chakra belief system reach as far back as our early childhood and the childhood of our parents. And as far back as a past life in a previous section. But the question remains as to what steps need to be taken in order to theoretically develop and heal our chakras.

Steps to Chakra Development

According to Seriph, there are three important steps that need to be taken in order to balance and develop our chakras. And these steps will involve us researching the chakra system, believing in the chakra system and making major changes in our lifestyles and belief systems.

Step One: Learn The Wisdom Teachings

Seriph states that “Each chakra represents its own body of wisdom and teachings that allow you to unlock its powers. Learning the principles behind that chakra’s healthy operation is the mandatory first step” (Seriph, 2020). This step involves us learning the wisdom teachings of each specific chakra and what areas of our life they are associated with because as discussed above, culture and its interwoven lifestyle choices are all direct influences in the chakra world. Seriph offers the following example when connecting the world of the solar plexus chakra with specific factors and behaviours associated with being a successful business person “In the world of the solar plexus chakra, it's not just about you doing hard work all the time, it's about... Can you lead and organise people to create results and value? And that's how you build a business. Do you know how to actually lead and build systems, and instil confidence, and create other leaders?” (Seriph, 2020).

Step Two: Believe in the Wisdom Teachings

This step looks to be the hardest as it involves us changing our perception and adopting the belief systems of the chakra.

Seriph states “It’s one thing to know, and another thing to believe. Once you have studied the wisdom principles, then you need to embrace them through daily affirmation and reflection exercises, to reprogram your subconscious mind to create a new experience” (Seriph, 2020). Building on step one, it appears that this step requires you to not only learn the wisdom teachings of the chakras but to also believe that they work, regardless of whether or not we are sceptical about them and our cynical voice is telling us otherwise.

Step Three: Apply the Wisdom Teachings

The final step involves putting what we learned from the wisdom teachings into practice by “engaging in the specific habits of the chakra we are developing” (Seriph, 2020). An example of this would be, if a person was working on their throat chakra they would need to start picking up for themselves and speaking out about what is bothering them, as opposed to just accepting that this is the way things are. After all, a bad situation will remain the same unless we take control, make positive changes, and continue to move forward. Seriph strengthens this point by adding “As we make daily changes to the way we live, we will experience an incredible shift in our life” (Seriph, 2020).

Considering these three steps and the previous examples given by Seriph regarding the behaviours and ways of life that correlate with each specific chakra, it is speculated that in order to develop or balance individual chakras, learning the principles behind that chakra’s healthy operation is simply not enough. In addition to this, it is suggested that we must be proactive, work on that aspect of our life and believe that the changes we make and the system itself is working in our favour. And in doing so, we will theoretically strengthen and balance the particular chakra we are working on and our life experience in the process.

Microcosmic Orbit Meditation - Introduction & Preparation

As he introduced this section of the challenge, Seriph states that he is going to share with us his interpretation of a ‘Daoist’ breathing technique that is supposed to be the quickest way to open up an energy centre that has been blocked. This meditation, which is called ‘microcosmic orbit meditation’ is said to catalyse the healing process.

What this meditation is supposed to do is to circulate energy from our perineum up our back to our crown via our tailbone, kidneys (opposite naval), opposite solar plexus, opposite heart, opposite throat and base of the skull. When the energy reaches our crown it is then theoretically sent back to our naval via our eyebrow centre, throat, heart, solar plexus, navel and back down to our perineum from the front. The modification/interpretation of this from the Daoist technique is focusing on and placing our hand upon the energy centre we want to open and work with. Before the meditation commenced, Seriph asked participants to focus on the chakra they found needed the most healing. So whatever chakra you self-diagnosed during the active meditation on day one was the one that was most difficult to connect to. Furthermore, Seriph asked participants to comment in the chat about what chakra they were working on. After collating the comments shared by participants, it was decided that the root, heart, sacral and crown chakras were mentioned most, therefore, general guidance was given.

Meditation

Before the meditation began, James asked participants to place their hands over the chakra they wanted to heal/develop. For the purpose of clarity, a brief overview of the advised hand positions and meditation is provided below.

Root Chakra: Place your hands on your legs

Sacral Chakra: Place your hands right below your navel

Solar Plexus Chakra: Place it over your stomach

Heart Chakra: Place your hands on your heart

Throat Chakra: place your hands on the back of your throat

Crown Chakra / Third Eye Chakra: Have your palms facing up with your thumb and first finger after making a circle. And your hands resting on your lap.

These hand gestures are known as Hand/Yoga Mudras. This specific gesture is known as the Gyan Mudra and it is said to represent supreme knowledge. It is used to direct energy to the body (Ashish, 2019). At this point, we were invited to close our eyes, breathe in and imagine our breath as energy circulating our body. Up our back (along our governing channel) and down our front (along our functional channel). During this time we were asked to focus on the chakra we wanted to open and pay attention to any changes we may be feeling in our nerve endings. Which could be tingling or even discomfort (Seriph, 2020). Apparently, this sensation is normal as it indicates that the meditation is working. Seriph further states that this sensitivity, although subtle will guide participants through the rest of the day. The guidance Seriph is referring to hints at developing a new attitude/state of mind. In a direct reference to this, Seriph encouraged participants to pay particular attention to the thoughts they may have during the day as he believed the thoughts (ideas and/or inspiration resulting from a state of consciousness) would be different from what they normally are. He advised people to follow any specific ideas or inspiration they may get.

My experience of the Microcosmic Orbit Meditation

I like the way Seriph encourages people to have new ideas and to seek inspiration. And if a participant did adopt a new positive state of mind that they embraced for the remainder of the day as a result of the meditation or the encouragement given, then that can only be a good thing. However, apart from a feeling of deep relaxation brought on from the breathwork, I did not feel any different. I certainly did not feel any flow of energy. Therefore, I am not entirely convinced as yet. That being said, as I am new to this, I can not discount the possibility that I may need to learn how to position myself in a more receptive place if I am to benefit fully from the practice of meditation.

If the comments that were shared by participants are to be believed this may well be the case as it appears that some of their experiences were quite different to mine. Some participants claimed to have had very positive physical experiences with comments stating "Hands are literally pulsating", "Awesome!! Huge amount of heat!" And "My entire body is pulsing". Some claimed to be feeling both physical and emotional changes "Tingling and felt I needed to cry" and "Lightheaded, tingly, bliss".

Others made direct references to their chakras with such comments as “Amazing feeling of healing in my solar plexus” and “I really felt such a deep pulse in my solar plexus chakra, after the meditation!”. And one participant who was not so sure of what was happening with their chakras commented “What does it mean if you're experiencing strong sensations in a chakra other than the one you were focusing on?”. This participant was not the only one that was confused about what they were feeling as one commented “I felt the pain from a past relationship, is that normal?”. As can be expected some had negative experiences also, both physical and emotional in nature, they claimed to have had “Aching pain in my lumbar and very cold feeling below my navel under my hands” and “I felt a heaviness in my chest my heart felt pain and sadness”. Lastly, some had a similar experience to me “Thank you James for this wonderful experience of breathing” and “What if you don't have any sensations? I'm not sure if I did it right” (7 Chakra Challenge, 2020).

So as can be seen, this meditation brought about mixed physical, mental and emotional reactions from participants. And not all were positive. In relation to the references made to the solar plexus chakra, although it is normal to feel a sensation around the area of your body when doing breathwork that involves breathing deeply and slowly down into your stomach, it can not be confirmed that that is what caused participants to experience what was claimed.

On day two we have learned that the three main influences responsible for developing, balancing and strengthening chakras from an early age are past life, culture and our parents. Additionally, we have learned that three important steps need to be taken if we are to develop and strengthen our chakras. These steps are to learn the wisdom teachings of each chakra, believe and have faith in the wisdom teachings and apply the wisdom teaching to our lives. On day three Seriph promises to “Reveal the superpowers and alternate modes of perception of each chakra” (Seriph, 2020). He further adds that by changing your mode of perception, you can take yourself into altered states of consciousness. Again, he claims that he will explain how this is done.

Day 3

Modes of Perception

James begins day three by relating each chakra to a mode of perception. He uses sunglasses as an analogy. For example, consider the familiar phrase “You look at the world through rose coloured glasses”. This phrase suggests a person has an optimistic, cheerful outlook on life. Which is great, but not in every situation. For example, Seriph makes the point that if you are planning your finances you need to look at the world differently because you need to bring objectivity and analysis into the equation. Therefore, in relating the connection between chakras and perception he states the following “Each chakra gives you a way of seeing the world. And the more time and energy you put into that the more the world is going to show up in that way” (Seriph, 2020). In other words, how you view the world is dependent on which of your chakras is strongest. Seriph further adds that ideally, all of your chakras should be strong. And when this is the case, the world is your oyster because you will be capable of excelling in any given situation.

Building on what has been learned so far regarding personality traits this suggests you have multiple sides to your personality that you could switch between depending on the situation. Seriph makes the following point about having multiple sides to your personality “You have multiple sides to who you are. Science and neuroscience is showing that you have more than one side of you and not all these sides connect, but they always talk to each other. When we talk about inner child versus the manager, those are two different aspects of who you are. They don't always integrate” (Seriph, 2020). Apart from the connection being made between different aspects of our personalities and science, and neuroscience this information is nothing new. A more relatable example of having to illustrate different sides of who you are would be the different, situation-dependent hats you need to wear as a parent. For example, in order to be a friend to your child that they can trust you need to have an emotional side to you that projects love and empathy. However, in order to be a parent that can also offer guidance, a part of you will have to be resilient and firm at a time when your child needs to be steered in the right direction.

Furthermore, it is important for your child to have experienced both of these aspects of your personality because it will help them to trust your advice and decisions. The above example is an illustration of having a strong heart and root chakra and how this affects our modes of perception. It also explains the importance of being able to switch between these different modes of perception in an appropriate situation. The same idea applies to all personality traits and behaviours that correlate to each individual chakra.

Below are two more examples of these correlations and the modes of perception related to them.

Root Chakra: “When we look through that lens of the root chakra, we're not looking at people's feelings. We're looking at “Can I get the job done? Can I get my workout in? Is my family safe?” (Seriph, 2020).

Sacral Chakra: “Can I have fun? What was fun for me? What emotionally feels good to me? What do I want? Desire... the lens of desire?” (Seriph, 2020).

The above examples are quite similar to what we have already learned in relation to the chakra wisdom teachings and the psychology behind understanding different systems of personality and behaviours. Each of which determines how people act based on their underlying chakra strengths, weaknesses and chakra based perceptions. Seriph offers the following example to expand on why having the ability to adapt to different situations is an important aspect of our life and personal growth. And he does so by connecting self-development with chakra development. “So learning how to see through these different perceptual modes is part of developing your chakras. This is part of developing as a complete and total human being. That can dwell in all the worlds, that can go through all the levels. So every single one of these has a place, has a time. Can you bust it out when you need it?” (Seriph, 2020). The idea being explored here by Seriph is pretty simple. He is suggesting that in order to get on in life we must be able to quickly adapt to situations as they arise. And in doing so we will get on with everyone we meet because they will be able to relate to our ways of thinking and behaviours.

For example, if you are a strong heart chakra type person you are going to get on with someone else who has similar views and behaves in a fashion similar to you. On the other hand, if you are constantly stuck in this mode of perception and unable to project different personality traits and different sides to who you are, then you will struggle to fully connect with someone who sees the world and behaves differently to you and the value system you live by.

Chakra Superpowers

With an onus now firmly placed on the importance of being able to switch between different modes of perception in accordance with a given situation, Seriph introduces what he calls the “Chakra Superpowers”. These theoretical chakra superpowers correlate to the modes of perception, personality traits and behaviours associated with the 7 principle chakras that have been detailed throughout the journal. According to Seriph, these so-called superpowers enable us to assess a given situation and steer it towards an outcome that is favourable to us. As detailed by Seriph “Every chakra gives you these energetic powers to distort or manipulate or control or influence reality in some way that is good for you, and if applied correctly, is actually good for others as well” (Seriph, 2020). This appears to be a rather bold and questionable statement. However, if we take chakras out of the equation and look at this idea from a place of logic it can be determined that some people simply adapt better. Furthermore, this ability to adapt more easily can be due to a number of factors such as their individual personality traits, past experiences, and/or areas of expertise that would better position them to navigate a particular situation more comfortably than others.

In order to provide an overview of the suggestive superpowers, their corresponding traits and the specific chakras they theoretically correlate to, I have included some examples below for your consideration. All examples are taken from the 7 chakra challenge using direct quotes from Seriph. Instead of analysing each example individually, here is a general explanation of the main points Seriph is about to make. Seriph relates each chakra to a mode of perception. He suggests that our perception is situation-dependent, and we should navigate each situation accordingly.

He further argues that our perception of a given situation depends on the underlying strength and weakness of the chakra that correlates to that particular situation, and the corresponding personality traits discussed earlier in the journal. This opinion suggests that specific personality traits and behaviour systems can influence the outcome of a given situation by either drawing people towards you or, conversely, pushing people away. He also stresses the importance of adapting to a situation quickly if we are to navigate our way through life successfully. Building on this opinion, Seriph introduced the hypothesis that each chakra has a superpower that correlates to the modes of perception, personality traits and behaviour systems - further arguing that we can manipulate reality by simply applying them appropriately inside of each situation. Also discussed is how you can improve in certain situations and what you can achieve by doing so.

- **Root Chakra Powers**

“The **root chakra** grounds you into your physical body, in your individual life experience, it separates you from everybody else, it reminds you what to come back to so you don't get pulled off-centre into somebody else's reality. This is such an important balance. And usually, when I work with healers, who have trouble with this. If they learned grounding, and they learned some powerful root chakra practices all their empath problems would go away. They don't take on other people's energy anymore” (Seriph, 2020).

Physical Presence

“So the **root chakra** is pretty cool because it gives you physical presence. When you have a strongly developed **root chakra**; when you walk into a room people can feel you, people will notice you” (Seriph, 2020).

Animal Magnetism

“There's a thing called animal magnetism; which is this unconscious assignment of who is an alpha, who is a being, who is moving purposefully, who has a strong walk. And it's not even conscious, it's an unconscious thing” (Seriph, 2020).

Long Stay Energy

“The **root chakra** when it is developed gives you what is called, the long-stay energy. Which is the ability to work, and work and work. To move your body, to do those long hours” (Seriph, 2020).

Conversely,

“People with a weak Root Chakra, they get tired, they always need to take breaks. But when you develop this root energy, this is the foundation, this is the support for everything in your life” (Seriph, 2020).

Instant Persuasion

“Do you ever have this where you feel like you're in the presence of someone powerful and you catch yourself nodding and before you know it like you're agreeing? Having instant persuasion is going to be pretty useful because people are going to fall into rapport with your energy, and naturally, follow you” (Seriph, 2020).

- **Sacral Chakra Powers**

Joyful Energy

“I have a buddy named ‘joyous presence’ who is actually a person... He's awesome! He's a Pleiadian Starseed. He's super joyful and he's so fun to party with. He's so fun to hang out with. He always connects you to the goodness of life and the fun of life. People love this energy when someone is connected to their joy. And if you stay connected to your joy and pleasure, you uplift everybody around you” (Seriph, 2020).

Life of the Party

“These people become like the life of the party because they're always attuned to their own pleasure, to their own joy and that's one of these amazing things that just unfolds” (Seriph, 2020).

Opening Doors

“So the sacral chakra is magnetic, it's attractive. People will decide that they like you, and then decide to hook you up with various things. This is like the rock star power” (Seriph, 2020.)

Rapid Attract

“When it comes to attracting partners when it comes to attracting love, this makes it a lot easier, because you have this magnetic, attractive energy that people are just drawn to. And that magnetism comes from being in touch with your own feelings and your own vulnerability, from feeling the world” (Seriph, 2020).

- **Solar Plexus Chakra Powers**

“These are the powers of the solar plexus, and this is all about leadership. If you want to be a leader if you want to lead people if you want to build a business all these things are gonna come in handy” (Seriph, 2020).

Aura of Command

“When you have a strong solar plexus chakra, you have a strong will, you are literally creating reality” (Seriph, 2020).

Penetrating Will

“One of my business partners has the gift of the penetrating will. So in a negotiation, he will get people like he can convince anybody of just about anything when he's negotiating. He's had to learn that to use it wisely and to wield it with his heart because even for me, he would use that in a way where I would even find myself agreeing to something and then later being like... Wait for a second, how did that happen?” (Seriph, 2020).

Reality Distortion

“People with a strong will like Steve Jobs, or even Donald Trump have been described as having what's called a reality distortion field. Which means that they're able to bend reality to their will, to some degree because they exist inside of a different frame than everybody else” (Seriph, 2020).

- **Heart Chakra Powers**

Heart for Nature

“And you'll find the bigger your heart is, the more animals of all kinds will respond to you. And the same goes for humans, people will just trust you, they will just be drawn to you, people with a strong heart chakra will cause others to start just sharing their life story, like sharing their secrets, they don't even know why. But it's because they know they can trust you intuitively because they can feel the energetic field of your heart” (Seriph, 2020).

Dissolving Conflicts

“So, **heart chakra** people can also mediate and dissolve conflict because they exist at the level of reality at which we are not separate. Heart chakra people exist in the level of reality in which there is harmony. It's not that that has to be created, it's that it's already here.

We just have to bring our awareness to the fact of how connected we are and how we probably should just stop fighting over whatever it is, and work it out. So the heart power helps you meditate.” (Seriph, 2020).

Healing Hands

“Also, a heart power is needed if you want to be a healer because if you can connect to your genuine desire to help someone and love someone, and then move that energy through your hands, that is the energy that produces miracles. And it's like can you be a channel for God's love or goddesses love for somebody else?” (Seriph, 2020).

- **Throat Chakra Powers**

Group Hypnotism

“So, there are some people when they open their mouth, their voice has a certain resonance to it. And if you have that voice, people just listen. You can train the voice... Which is a tonality that gets to people's subconscious minds. And when you can use the voice, you can influence people. And as you go around, just notice the tone of voice you use and other people use and start to notice what are the tones of voice that are more potent, versus tones of voice that you could ignore if you want it to.” (Seriph, 2020).

“You don't get the ability to group hypnotism unless you learn about the voice. So each one of these is its own little school. That's why this whole thing is the Chakra school. Each one of these is its own journey” (Seriph, 2020).

Voice of Command

“The more you articulate your honest truth, and the more your truth comes from a place that's real for you. That's the more you're going to have access to this power” (Seriph, 2020).

Magickal Casting

“So in the practice of magic, if you can speak reality into existence, and you have that gift of believing in your words fully, the power of magic you have is increased.” (Seriph, 2020).

- **Third Eye Chakra Powers**

Unphased

“The third eye makes you immune to what's going on. It gives you detachment. Buddhist path cultivates a lot of third eye powers. So it gives you this detachment from what's happening. So all hell could be breaking loose and you're just chilling, and that's what I call unphased. I have a buddy who's a really powerful third eye, and his thing is... He just observes what's happening. He's not phased by any of it. He doesn't emotionally respond, he just sees it as it is, and tells it as it is, and by doing that he helps people to get out of their own way and just be more straight up about what's happening instead of so emotionally attached” (Seriph, 2020).

Crucial Insight

“This power also gives you something called the crucial insight. So like, if you want to tap into your genius that relies on you having what are called insights, which is like a novel connection in your brain that provides some clarity. And the more you cultivate meditation, and the more you read, the more you learn, the more you're going to see that all the universe is like a giant map of interconnecting systems. And as you develop that awareness, you'll be able to see what's the insight that you need, inside of each situation” (Seriph, 2020).

The Logos

“And this leads you to the understanding of the logos, which is the connection between all things. The logos is the cause and the effect.

And when you master this power, you understand why everything is happening. You know why your aunt got upset at the dinner table at Christmas and stormed off, you know why your dad went to go and have a second shot of alcohol during this thing, and you know why your cousin has been kind of feeling this sort of way and fidgeting. Like you can see the connection between everything like the beautiful mind. This is the gift of the third eye". (Seriph, 2020)

"Nobody gets to unphased crucial insight... The logos. This is like Albert Einstein level thinking. You don't get that unless you go through a process of learning and opening your mind and understanding how knowledge works" (Seriph, 2020).

- **Crown Chakra Powers**

"So the crown chakra gives you powers related to the spiritual worlds. And these are powers that function without your conscious participation, which makes them so tricky. You cannot force these powers, you can only allow them. And that's why meditation prayer is so important, that's why surrender is so important, that's why you have to learn how these things want to work with you. You can't control them" (Seriph, 2020).

Divine Guidance

"Don Roberto here in Mexico who we just met is a master of this power. And he frequently is told by his guides where he's supposed to go, people he's supposed to meet, missions he has. But he has no control. He has to trust completely in the divine and each day as they open up" (Seriph, 2020).

Channelling

"If you want to be a channeler who can open up to a different consciousness and channel it through the voice, you first have to get out of the way because you are not going to be the one to do the channelling, you have to move out of the way so that another energy can move through you. All of these powers rely on surrender" (Seriph, 2020).

Day 3 Conclusion

On day 3 we have learned that modes of perception are theoretically connected to chakra superpowers. In addition to this, Seriph has related each superpower to specific states of mind, other people's perceptions of you, and the influence your positive, and conversely, negative personality traits and behaviours have on people and situations. He further argues that by addressing the weak, negative aspects of your life you can strengthen/develop your chakras and directly improve your life experience.

Journal Conclusion

I had expected the course to be based around frequencies that suggestively influence the chakra system theoretically positioned along a human beings spine. However, the course proved to be a completely different experience. Instead, the course detailed an exploration of chakra states (strong, blocked, underdeveloped and overactive) and the levels of reality (physical and spiritual) they are suggestively associated with. Also discussed in detail was the psychology behind the behaviour systems and personality traits that theoretically correlate to each chakra individually and their effects on the chakra system. The course also examined the suggestive connections between the chakra system, culture, belief systems, emotions, lifestyles, and value systems associated with chakra development. The data presented also suggests that specific chakras are strong or weak due to trauma that has been carried over from our past lives. With that point in mind, it needs to be stated that a lot of the evidence presented here is questionable, and my scepticism and limited understanding have left me unconvinced. Nevertheless, the theoretical evidence found in this course strongly suggests that developing, balancing and unblocking chakras changes the energy in our bodies. All considered, the research strongly indicates that this is not quickly or easily achievable. Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that if the above information is correct, the journey towards balancing chakras is a participatory one that takes a long time as a transformation of habits and beliefs is not something that can be addressed over three days. The evidence also indicates that chakras can not be developed, balanced or strengthened by simply listening to frequency-specific healing music.

Appendix L: Listening Session Recommendations

Research has found that when 432Hz equal-tempered tuning is applied, C3 = 128.43Hz. This frequency resides in the most potent frequency range of a didgeridoo, 50Hz - 200Hz (Didgeridoo Sound Healing, 2016). Furthermore, as this instrument has proven to be effective in stress management (Philips et al., p. 7), the current study is confident that its inclusion in the composition will benefit the outcome of a future listening test experiment. In a study concerned with chakras and the specific frequencies they theoretically correlate to, James D'Angelo concluded that the five-tone pentatonic scale is an appropriate scale for toning chakras. He further adds that when using the F Major pentatonic scale, F correlates to the root chakra and "As there are just four tones between the F and C in the pentatonic, the C will correspond to the heart" (D'Angelo, 2009). Although there is no conclusive evidence supporting a definitive chakra toning scale, D'Angelo's breadth of overview and his reasoning behind correlating the heart chakra to the tone C presents as logical. D'Angelo points out that centrality is one of the factors behind correlating C to the heart chakra. He states that "Western musicians have used it as a tone of centrality. And what is the point of centrality within us? The heart, naturally and so that is where the C was placed" (D'Angelo, 2009). This rationale also corresponds to the positioning of the heart chakra, as it is believed to be the central point of the seven principal chakras. According to Joerg Mueller, "It is linked to our astral body, where it functions as the connector of the three lower chakras (Muladhara, Sadhistana and Manipura) which connect us to the earth and the three upper chakras which connect us to our heaven" (Mueller, 2020).

All considered, it is recommended that to target the heart chakra, a didgeridoo should be used to play a stable, consistent drone at 128Hz. In theory, this will enable another researcher to expose a participant to a specific, isolated frequency that theoretically correlates to the heart chakra. Furthermore, research has also proved that a sonorous foundation provided by a drone will suffice as a sound bed for a native American flute; therefore, it is recommended that this instrument is used to supply the melody on the test compositions. The future researcher should write the composition in the F Major pentatonic scale.

The complete instrument choice has not been determined. However, during the current research, Practitioners recommended the following instruments; Tibetan Singing Bowls, Quartz Crystal Singing Bowls, Ting-Sha Bells, Koshi Chimes, Paiste 32" Symphonic Gong, 24" Paiste Synodic Moon Gong, Kalimba, and Conch Horn. The composition should be tuned to 432Hz equal temperament as this is said to have a more positive effect on the listener than standard 440Hz reference tuning. Moreover, it has been stated that 432Hz tuning also helps to slightly decrease heart rate (HR) and blood pressure (BP) (Calamassi and Pomponi, p. 1). Therefore, this tuning should positively affect the outcome of the experiment. This tuning can be applied in FL Studio by directly adjusting the master pitch. This method that simply involves selecting the master pitch and typing in 432Hz will ensure that every element of the composition will not have to be adjusted individually (Firewalk, 2021). To not interfere with the frequencies in any way, the composition must be listened to in an uncompressed form; therefore, a Wave Audio File Format should be utilised for both sessions.

The current study posed the question. How do you prepare yourself for an online sound healing session? From a sample size of 77 respondents, 17 (26.56%) stated they need to be comfortable, 12 (18.75%) mentioned a blanket, 9 (14.06%) stated they like to lie down, and 7 (10.94%) said they centre themselves in preparation. The latter aligns with evidence shared by a practitioner who stated they lead their clients into a session with a guided meditation. In light of this, it is advised to guide participants into meditation. With this in mind, the current study has included a script for a guided visualisation meditation aimed at balancing the heart chakra. (please refer to appendix *) The researcher adapted the guided meditation from a virtual chakra course titled: chakra challenge. (Seriph, 2020)

This listening session should involve the proposed composition or one chosen by another researcher presented to specific meditation participants one week apart. The sessions should be conducted both in-person and virtually. The in-person session should involve playing the composition through a speaker system that is adequate to be heard clearly in all parts of the test room. The virtual session should be presented using the SurveyMonkey online survey platform and involve the participants using good quality headphones to listen to the composition.

As stated in the literature review chapter, the shortened version of the POMS psychological rating scale is the data collection instrument another researcher should use to generate test result data. This data collection tool will provide a basis for a researcher to effectively measure the Total Mood Disturbance (TMD) of participants before and after each listening session. A comparative analysis between each session's pre and post results should be performed when the data is collected. The results of the listening sessions should enable another researcher to determine whether or not virtual sound healing is as effective as in-person sound healing. Self-reported hearing deficits or tinnitus will be exclusion criteria, as would anybody who has taken stimulants such as alcohol and caffeine in the hours preceding the test. Furthermore, research has suggested that if a person has schizophrenia, they should not participate in the experiment. Lastly, a pregnant woman should not take part during her first trimester.

Appendix M: Heart Chakra 'Guided Visualisation' Meditation

Adapted from: (ChakraSchool: Unlock Your Spiritual Powers, 2020)

Close your eyes, place your feet flat on the floor, wiggle your toes and take a deep breath in through your nose. Imagine you are breathing in light that is going right into your heart.

Slowly exhale and imagine that roots are drawing their way from your feet down into the centre of the earth. As you breathe in again, imagine light coming in from the crown of your head and working its way to your heart. As you exhale, imagine the roots are connecting you to the earth. You are feeling the effect of gravity pulling you onto the chair.

Breathe in again, all the way down to your belly, expanding your stomach... and breathe out. Breathe in through your nose, bring your awareness to your heart centre and just let it rest there without expectation. Imagine you can feel it in the centre of your chest and breathe out.

As you breathe in again, try to connect to the one thing you are grateful for right now, something simple, something right here in the present moment. Try and use that awareness to expand your heart field slightly.

On your next inhale, think of someone you are grateful for... Someone who has helped you on your path... Someone who was there during a dark time. And as you exhale, see if you can feel a warm tingling sensation in the centre of your chest growing a little bit stronger.

Drawing another deep breath in through your nose, letting yourself relax even more... As you slowly exhale, allow yourself just to appreciate yourself and the journey you have been on.

As you breathe in again, take pride that you are still here despite the challenges you have had to overcome. Slowly exhale.

Deeply breath in again through your nose and continue to let your awareness rest in the centre of your chest. There is nowhere you need to go; there is nothing you need to do right now.

As you breathe out, rest deeper into this peace and this happiness... and be aware the path will take care of itself. Allow yourself to surrender to the peace you feel and as you inhale, see if you can expand this energy to your fingertips and the tips of your toes.

Now, as you exhale, try and use this energy to draw out any negativity, tension or stress in your being... allowing the rose of your heart to open. Visualise a flower opening; the petals are opening. It is so beautiful... And the energy being stimulated is running through to your fingertips and your toes.

Now, when you are ready. I invite you to open your eyes.

Appendix N: Table 1 - themes and subsequent sub-themes found during thematic analysis

Level One	Level Two	Level Three	Level Four	Level Five
Chakra System				
	Definition			
	Development	Personality traits, Behaviours, Value systems		
	Influence	Wisdom teachings, Adopting belief system, Engaging in the specific habits		
	Energy	Source		
		In Flux		
	Frequencies	Specific correlations		
	Modality type best for balancing the chakra system	Reiki	Healing instrument	Tuning forks, Voice / Mantra

	Healing music	Effectiveness		
Sound Healing				
	Modality	Level of Experience, Accreditation, Attunement		
		Type		
		Definition		
		Process / Technique		
	Healing instruments	Frequency Range	Tuning	Chakra, Solfeggio
	Meditation	Type	Guided, Visualisation	
Clients				
	Motivation (cause)	Physical, Mental, Emotional, Spiritual		
	Personal Experience (effect)	Physical, Mental, Emotional, Spiritual	Positive Negative	

Table 1. Thematic Analysis (interviews)

Appendix O: Table 2 - four bodies analysis correlation

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual
Migraines	C-TPSD	Calm	Spiritual ideas
Back Pain	Depression	Grounding	Lift my spirit
Body	Anxiety	Grief	Outworldliness
Injuries	Stress	Emotionally	Consciousness
Neck and shoulders	Mental health stability	Heal emotional issues	Connect to the higher self
Tense	Mind	Mood	Energy
Blood pressure	Sleep	Harmony	Connection
Heart Rate	Optimistic	Peace	Universe
Sciatica	Inspired	Patience	Soul
Endocrine	Clarity	Joy	Source
Relaxed	Relaxation	Happy	Visions
Breathing	Motivation	Love	Vibration
Energised	Thoughts	Vitality	Meditation
Physical restoration	Focus	Creativity	Outside myself
Warmth	Disorientated	Sorrow	Oneness
	Mindful		Trance
	Chatter		Bliss

	Nerves		Soul
	Empowered		Light
	Aggravated		Different plane
	Walking straighter and taller		Magic connection
			State of awareness

Table 2. Four bodies analysis correlations (web-based survey)