

Research Paper

A Holistic Approach to Human Consciousness Integrating *Manovigyan* (Modern Psychology) and *Shatchakra*

Dr. Devanshi Sharma^{1*}, Dr. Neha Upadhyaya¹, Dr. Bhupendra Singh¹,
Prof. Sarvesh Kumar Agrawal¹

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the relationship between *Manovigyan* (the science of psychology) and *Shatchakra* (the six energy centres or chakras) with a view to understand human consciousness through the entire study. Contemporary psychology, mainly treats the cognitive and emotional functions of the mind but tends to disregard the connections between the mind, body, and the subtle energies as being emphasized from ancient yogic traditions conversely. The *Shatchakra* system, which is very much embedded in yogic philosophy, provides a vast understanding with connections to the flow of energy within the human body. This study takes an integrative research approach, in which the literature review and comparison are used to optically demonstrate psychological processes in relation to chakras. The parallels between modern psychological concepts—such as consciousness, emotion, and self-identity and the spiritual and energetic dimensions of the *Shatchakra* system are analysed. Sources from both contemporary psychology and traditional yogic texts are utilized to identify potential areas of synergy. It was therefore found that a lot of the modern psychological constructs have parallels with the *Shatchakra* systems. The emotions, consciousness, and selfhood are firmly embedded with the cognitive functions and the imbalance or balance of energy embedded within the chakras. Psychological perspectives complement *chakra*-based techniques that can promote mental and emotional health. Bridging the *Manovigyan* and *Shatchakra*, this study proposes a new model of consciousness that is aligned with both scientific and spiritual perspectives.

Keywords: *Shatchakra, Manovigyan, Human Consciousness, Mental Health, Holistic Model, Well-being*

The understanding of human consciousness and wellbeing has been the area of interest across many fields, right from the ancient yogic philosophy to the modern rigor of psychology.

While modern psychology has progressed far with the introduction of advancements in decoding cognitive and emotional dimensions of the mind, it has largely ignored the connectedness between the mind, the body, and the subtle energies influencing holistic well-

¹National Institute of Ayurveda Jaipur, Deemed to Be University

*Corresponding Author

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being. In contrast, ancient yogic philosophy, in particular the *Shatchakra* or six energy centres system, delves deeper into the understanding of those subtle connections with respect to the flow of energy throughout the human body and its influences on mental state and good health.

The statement “Psychology is probably the only science that lacks a definition” denotes the depth and range of the field. Nevertheless, the formal definition of the American Psychological Association would define psychology as a scientific entity: “the study of the mind and behaviour” ^[(1)] attempting to encompass the core of the subject.

On the other hand, there are various perspectives on the concept of the *Shatchakra*, ranging from interpretations within the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and ancient yogic framework to contemporary attempts at understanding it. As we progress further into the topic, “Circle” or “Wheel” corresponds to the literal meaning of the word *chakra*. ^[(2)] and the implication behind the derivation of *chakra* as "wheel" comes from the reference to the chariot wheels of rulers, called *Chakravartis*. Exploration of *Veda* and *Upanishad* mentions of *Shat Chakra* are found in *Surya Upanishad*, *Yogakundalyupanishad* and *Hamsashodopanishad* ^[(3)] But a more diverse understanding of the concept of *chakra* emerged as part of Hindu and Buddhist tantric yoga traditions. ^{[(4)],[(5)]} In yogic traditions a better translation of Sanskrit word *CHAKRA* is vertex. And thus, *Chakras* are vortices of psychic energy and they are visualized and experienced as circular movement of energy at particular rates of vibration. ^[(6)] The idea of chakras was formerly thought to be intended for spiritual activity such as *kundalini* (latent energy) *sadhana* (prayer). Within Kundalini yoga, the techniques of breathing exercises, visualizations, *mudras*(hand gestures), *bandhas*(energy locks) *kriyas*(cleansing techniques) and *mantras* are focused on manipulating the flow of subtle energy through *chakras*. ^{[(7)],[(8)]} The belief held that human life simultaneously exists in two parallel dimensions, one physical or *sthula sarira* (physical body) and other non- physical called subtle body or *sukhma sarira*. ^[(9)] The subtle body consists of *nadi* (energy channels) connected by nodes of psychic energy called *chakra*. ^[(10)] The body's energy centres, or *chakras*, are where the flow of cosmic energy enters the body. The six primary *Chakras* mentioned in ancient yogic texts are: *Muladhara* (root chakra), *Swadhisthana* (sacral chakra), *Manipura* (solar plexus chakra), *Anahata* (heart chakra), *Vishuddha* (throat chakra), and *Ajna* (third eye chakra). The seventh, often considered a higher or crown Chakra, is *Sahasrara*. [Table:1]

They were mainly explained in the following aspects : Location ,Colour, Lotus flower petals, The *Yantra*(geometrical shape) ,The *Bija mantra* (primordial sound of chanting),The animal symbol ,*Pradhan devta* (divine being) ,*Mahabhuta* (five great elements), *Kosha* (layer covering the soul)Cosmic sphere, *Shakti tatva*(principle of divine energy). In the Western system, *chakras* provide a psychological map for self-development and a path of healing for self and others ^[(11)] Currently, *chakras* are a popular topic in New Age spirituality and healing, and biofield therapies given by Gerber, ^[(12)]; Dale, ^[(13)]

Various scientific studies on the *chakra* have tackled issues intensely connected to anatomy, physiology, and psychology. Anatomically, it connects to one of the main nerve plexuses in the body and, medically, is linked to the endocrine glands. [Table:2]

Leadbeter in his study concluded that *chakras* are located close to major neurological plexuses, suggesting an association between the *chakras* and the nervous system. ^[(14)] Shang

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described *Chakra* as remnants of embryological organizing centres within the CNS, possessing a similarly high concentration of gap junction connections.^[(15)]

Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama established a connection of *chakras* to the endocrine system, each *Chakra* corresponding to specified endocrine glands^[(16)] This connection points out that Chakras influence and are influenced by hormonal modulation in the body. Furthermore, Dr. Valerie V. Hunt identified two primary electrical systems in the body: the alternating current of the brain and the nervous system and the continuous electromagnetic radiation, which assures the energy exchange with the environment.^[(17)] This indicates that *Chakras* might produce electromagnetic radiation. New radiological technologies such as functional near-infra-red spectrometry (fNIRS), Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), together with more refined electrophysiology could potentially yield signs of this underlying physiology. Also, other researches are being made establishing *chakra* healing as bioenergetic medicine and its potential role in gene expression. This paper explores the junction of "*Manovigyan*" (psychology) with the *Shatchakra* system in order to re-establish the uniformity of modern scientific knowledge and ancient spiritual wisdom and offer new ideas on the role of chakra balancing energy in psychological health.

Aims:

1. To provide a collaborative understanding of the concepts of consciousness in Modern psychology and the *Shatchakra* yogic philosophy.
2. To develop a holistic notion of consciousness that entails within the cognitive and subtle energy dimensions.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

- Literature Review: Contemporary psychological literature on mind-body connection, emotional states, and self-identity. Much like the literature on Yogic Philosophy exploring energy dimensions was explored.
- Secondary Data Collection: Gathering of data through academic journals, books, and any relevant source found online for this study was conducted.
- Comparative Analysis: Orientation of both theories side by side to distinguish any overlaps in these theories and understand the unmapped coordination was done.
- Integration: Synthesizing psychological views with yogic philosophy was done to propose an integrative model of consciousness and energy balance.

RESULTS

The studies in psychology and yogic philosophy of human consciousness are interlinked with emotions and self-identity as well.

1. Psychological Theories on Consciousness, Emotion, and Self-Identity

Consciousness Reflected in Modern Psychology

The study of consciousness is a topic of interest that refers to different topical issues in psychology, such as cognitive, neurobiological, and psychoanalytical theories. According to cognitive psychology, consciousness consists of mental processes that allow people to be aware of themselves and their environment. An example for this one would be what Baars^[(18)] contends in his Global Workspace Theory regarding consciousness: that it results from information integrated across the brain that allows one singular conscious experience.

Neuroscientific approaches, particularly those by Damasio^[(19)], have asserted a role of the brain's neural networks in producing consciousness and established a close association between consciousness, emotions, and self-identity.

Whereas psychoanalytical theories characterized by Freud^[(20)] and Jung^[(21)] observe the various portions of consciousness, i.e., conscious, subconscious, and unconscious, Jung's notion of the collective unconscious transcends these three and describes a deeper unconscious level, which constitutes connection among all human beings, resonating well with the spiritual philosophies in yogic traditions.

Emotions and Their Regulation

The emotions are widely viewed as quite complex psychological and physiological states that emerge as part of a response to stimuli. Theories such as Ekman's Basic Emotion Theory^[(22)] postulate universality of emotions as an evolutionary product. However, modern ideas like Barrett's Conceptual Act Theory^[(23)] argue that emotions are specifically constructed in the brain based on environmental interactions and personal experiences and describe the role cognitions play in formulating an emotional response. Emotion regulation refers to how individuals attempt to become aware of their emotions, when to allow them or inhibit them, and how to express them. The process model of emotion regulation proposed by Gross^[(24)], amongst others, delineates strategies like reappraisal and suppression that maintain good emotional health.

Self-Identity and Its Development

- The self-identity is the understanding one has of oneself-a multi-dimensional concept that changes during one's lifetime.
- Erikson^[(25)] proposed the theory of psychosocial development among various stages of life with the most frequent question wondered during adolescence to be "Who am I?" The development of self-identity is further reinforced by social interactions, cultural morals, and individual experiences.
- Modern theorists such as Markus and Nurius^[(26)] postulated the possible self, which they refer to be as the cognitive representation of one's future goals, fears, or aspirations that shape self-identity.

2. Yogic Texts on Consciousness, Emotion, and Self-Identity

The *Shatchakra* System and Consciousness

The System of Consciousness and *Shatchakra*, In yogic philosophy, consciousness is frequently described as one of the multi-layered phenomena along which different types of awareness flow. The overarching goal of yoga mentioned in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*^[(27)], is to ascend beyond the layers of awareness and reach *Samadhi*: total consciousness. The *Shatchakra* system, textually elaborated in the *Shat-Chakra-Nirupana*^[(28)], describes consciousness as a process through six energy centers or *chakras*, which correspond to particular aspects of the human experience. These chakras govern not solely physical functions, but the mental states and consciousness itself. The awakening and balancing of these chakras is believed to be essential to attaining the higher states of consciousness. *The Shiv Samhita*^[(29)] describes these psychological aspects as survival instincts (*Muladhara*), emotional regulation (*Svadhithana*), and self-esteem (*Manipura*), reminiscent of categories in modern psychology. The correlation of these themes suggests that balancing these chakras could improve mental health and consciousness since they touch either side of

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cognition and subtle energy. The *Shat Chakra* system in *Shiv Samhita* becomes the road to a higher consciousness going from the basic survival instincts to higher spiritual awareness.

Chakras and Emotional Balance

Chakras have been linked with emotions and various psychological states. For instance, *Manipura chakra* associated to self-esteem, anger and personal power while *Anahata chakra* associated to feelings of love, grief and compassion.

An imbalance in the *chakra* relates to emotional problems, which may be balanced through helping oneself with *pranayama* (breathing exercises), meditation, and mantra chanting. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*^[(30)], *Gheranda Samhita*^[(31)], describe various techniques for cleansing and balancing *chakras* and many other texts give importance to achieving emotional balance. Another major one, Bhagavad Gita, mentions the necessity of emotional detachment, cultivated through devotion, selfless service, and meditation and with mental equanimity.

Self-Identity in Yogic Philosophy

Identity Self-identity in yogic philosophy is definitely intricate with the concept of *Atman*, which is the true self, and *Maya*, an illusion.

Self-realization process is also strongly influenced by *Shatchakra* system. *Sahasrara Chakra* represents the highest state of human awareness and the realization of true nature above the field of the physical and mental as the last step towards one total realization. As balancing and opening up of the other higher *chakras*, this leads to intellect development.

DISCUSSION

The result findings suggest certain similarities and dissimilarities between yogic philosophy and the modern psychological perspectives regarding human consciousness, emotion and self-identity being so different in approach as disciplines. On the one hand psychology integrates these on a cognitive level grossly, whereas the yogic philosophy addresses the intricate energy dimensions. However, these may be compared for instance, emotion regulation strategies within psychology and *chakra* balancing techniques within yogic practices.

In discussing consciousness, modern theories address the cognitive layers, while the yogic texts talk about transcending such layers and attaining a higher awareness. Also, emotions are viewed from the standpoints of biology and cognition in psychology, while yogic practices relate them to the energy centre and provide spiritual techniques for balance. As for self-identity, the focus of psychology tends to be on its development through social and cognitive influence, while that of yogic philosophy is directed toward transcending the ego to gain the realization of a deeper eternal self. But both these disciplines have the ultimate aim that is to understand the complexities of human consciousness and well-being aspects often associated with emotion and self-identity. Certain comparisons may be made in this aspect as:

- *Muladhar Chakra* relating to basic instincts corresponds to Maslow's hierarchy of needs^[(33)] which puts the psychological need to stability and security in its regard.
- *Svadishtana Chakra* regulating the emotional levels and human desires with the emotion regulation processes exerting pressure on balancing emotions as stated by modern psychological perspective.

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- *Manipura Chakra* offering focus on personal power and self-confidence corresponding to concepts of self-esteem and self-efficacy grossly.
- *Anahata Chakra* compassing love and compassion and correlating to concepts of higher bonding and empathy.
- *Vishuddh Chakra* relating to vocal self-expression of thoughts and ideas establishing a pavement to effective communication.
- *Ajna Chakra* regulating insight and intuition draws parallels with higher cognitive functions, thought processing and memory formation.

This creative approach also acknowledges the importance of both cognitive processes and energy flow in shaping mental health. This correspondence of disciplines often provides an empirical foundation for psychological well-being and also results in exploration of a new realm where traditional techniques like chakra meditation accompanied with breathwork can complement modern psychological practices and successfully propose a rather holistic understanding of human consciousness.

CONCLUSION

It is through the study of consciousness, emotion, and self-identity that there emerge salient points of convergence between modern psychological theories and the philosophy of yoga. Both paradigms offer insights into the essence of the experience of being human, although they take two rather different attitudes towards it. Modern psychology helps one to elaborate on the scientific picture of how such concepts interweaves into mental and neural processes; yogic philosophy, on the other hand, suggests the spiritual and holistic path to balance and self-realization. Integrating both views could conceivably provide extending the understanding and management of consciousness, emotion, and self-identification and span between scientific approaches and spiritual approaches towards human well-being.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX

Table:1 Chakras and Its Details as Per Yogic Philosophy

Name of Chakra	Location	Petals	Mahabhuta	Beeja Mantra	Kosha	Pradhan Devata	Shakti Tatva	Color	Yantra	Animal
Sahasrara	At the crown	1000	Mahattva (Pure potentiality)	-	-	Paramshiva	-	Violet or White	Thousand-petaled lotus	No specific
Ajnacakra	Between Eyebrows	2	Manas	Om	-	Shambhu	Hakini	Indigo	White circle (or none)	No specific
Visuddha	Throat	16	Aakash	Harh	Anandamaya	Sadashiva	Sakini	Blue	Silver crescent within a white circle	Svetagaja
Anahata	Heart	12	Vayu	Yam	Vijnamaya	Isha	Kakini	Green	Hexagram (two intersecting triangles)	Mrigaja
Manipura	Near Navel	10	Agni	Ram	Manomaya	Rudra	Lakini	Yellow	Inverted red triangle	Mesha
Svadhistana	1''-1.5'' above Muladhara	6	Aap	Vam	Pranamaya	Vishnu	Rakini	Orange	White crescent moon	Makara
Muladhara	Approx. 1'' inside between Anus & Genitals	4	Prithvi	Lam	Annamaya	Brahma	Dakini	Red	Yellow square	Gaja

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Table: 2 Western Views of Chakras

Name of <i>Chakra</i>	Anatomical Nerve Plexus	Endocrine Gland
<i>Sahasrara</i>	No specific plexus; Entire brain and nervous system	Pineal gland
<i>Ajnacakra</i>	Medullary Plexus	Pituitary gland
<i>Visuddha</i>	Carotid Plexus	Thyroid, Parathyroid glands
<i>Anahata</i>	Cardiac Plexus	Thymus
<i>Manipura</i>	Epigastric Plexus	Pancreas
<i>Svadhista</i>	Hypogastric Plexus	Ovary / Testes
<i>Muladhara</i>	Pelvic Plexus	Adrenal gland