

A physiological examination of full-trance channeling

ABSTRACT:

Background

Numerous world cultures believe channeling provides genuine information, and channeling rituals in various forms are regularly conducted in both religious and non-religious contexts. Little is known about the physiological correlates of the subjective experience of channeling.

Aim

This study's objective is to evaluate neurophysiological measures in full-trance channels when channeling and not channeling.

Method

We conducted a prospective within-subject design study with 13 healthy adult trance channels at the Institute of Noetic Sciences laboratory. Participants alternated between 5 minutes of channeling and 5 minutes of no-channeling on two separate days while EEG, ECG, galvanic skin response, and respiration were collected. They also read the same story in a channeling and no-channeling states.

Results

Participants pre-laboratory visit survey data reflected similar responses about channels characteristics, perception of source, purpose and utilization to previous reports. Most channels were aware of their experience (rather than in a full trance) and had varying levels of perceived incorporation. Four EEG channels in the theta band were different during channeling compared to no-channeling (although not significantly when corrected for multiple comparisons). While correlation across Day 1 and Day 2 was high (except for the Gamma frequency band), values were most often different on the two days. Arousal in the voice was higher when reading during the channeling state versus no-channeling. Despite subjective perceptions of distinctly different states, no substantive differences were seen in EEG frequency power, ECG measures, galvanic skin response and respiration. The voice measure of arousal was higher in the channeling state while reading. This study has moved channeling research forward by evaluating physiological measure differences between the channeling and no-channeling states using rigorous controlled methods.

Keywords

Full-trance channeling, Physiology, Anomalous information reception

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