



The Performance of the Shofar: Musical Liturgical Practice in Contemporary Christian Worship

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Abstract: : This study addresses the need to enhance theological and musical literacy in contemporary Christian worship, where the Shofar is often used without a clear understanding of its sacred sound structure. The Shofar, rooted in Torah and Talmudic traditions, embodies symbolic and acoustic meanings that have been reinterpreted in Christian liturgical contexts. By examining this conceptual gap, the research positions the Shofar as a symbol of resurgent church music whose theological and musical depth has frequently been overlooked. Using a liturgical studies framework that integrates theology and musicology, this qualitative case study was conducted among pastors, worship leaders, musicians, and Shofar players across five charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Java, Indonesia. Data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, and analyzed using content analysis and the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana interactive model. Findings indicate that most practitioners emphasize the Shofar's symbolic and emotional appeal while neglecting its tonal codes: Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of restoring interpretive depth and theological discernment through structured liturgical understanding, ensuring that sacred sound continues to serve as a coherent medium of worship, theology, and musical formation.

Keywords: Shofar; liturgical music; performance practice; Christian worship; ethnomusicology



1. Introduction

The Shofar, an ancient wind instrument rooted in Jewish ritual life, embodies profound theological and aesthetic meaning that bridges the sonic, symbolic, and spiritual dimensions of worship. It occupies a central place in Israel's sacred history, functioning as both proclamation and covenantal emblem. Traditionally sounded under rabbinic authority during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it announces repentance, divine kingship, and communal renewal (Javier, 2022; Rukmini, 2017). As Erikson et al. (2024, p. 55) note, rabbis acted as interpreters of the Torah and custodians of ritual performance recorded in the Talmud, ensuring continuity across generations. Within these festivals, gestures such as lighting candles, refraining from work, and tasting sweetness frame the Shofar as an auditory hierophany interrupting ordinary time with the sacred. Although deeply embedded in Jewish liturgy, its symbolic resonance extends beyond Judaism, shaping early Christian imagination. In modern Pentecostal and charismatic contexts, it reappears as a sign of revival and spiritual warfare, yet often detached from its theological depth.

Historically, Jewish identity as Hebrews, Children of Israel, and Jews intertwines musical, ritual, and communal dimensions (Mubarak, 2019). As Barus and Gondowijoyo (2022) describe, music in ancient Israel permeated work, festivals, and worship, forming a layered system of spiritual communication. Freedman (2000) classifies the Shofar among biblical aerophones, valued for its raw timbre and antiquity. From an ethnomusicological perspective, it reflects Merriam's (1964) triad of sound, behavior, and concept, in which sonic quality, ritual action, and meaning are inseparable. Hood's (1960, p. 56) notion of "bi-musicality" underscores that understanding sacred instruments requires empathetic immersion in the performer's worldview. These insights form the theoretical background for connecting theology and sound within cross-faith worship and contemporary liturgical performance.

Titon's (2009) "worlds of music" framework clarifies how sound, meaning, and society co-construct one another. The Shofar thus appears as a living symbol whose endurance mirrors Jewish theological resilience, the root system of both Christianity and Islam (Halim, 2017). Munawar-Rachman (2001) emphasizes the Abrahamic unity of religious symbols such as the Shofar, which resonate across doctrinal and cultural boundaries. Christianity inherits this matrix, integrating Jewish imagery into early liturgical structures and soundscapes. However, few studies have examined how the Shofar has been musically and ritually reinterpreted within contemporary Christian worship, particularly in non-Western contexts such as Indonesia. This gap highlights a significant need for liturgical inquiry into how sacred sound operates within cross-cultural Christian expressions. This study is important because it addresses the limited

liturgical scholarship that integrates theology and musicology in examining how sacred sound is recontextualized within contemporary Christian worship practices.

Eliade (1959) distinguishes sacred from profane time, defining the Shofar as a hierophanic bridge between divine presence and human response. Smith (1982) contends that sacredness emerges through discourse and ritual authority, while Asad (1993) views traditions as historically dynamic and continuously reinterpreted. Alongside ethnomusicological models from Merriam (1964) and Hood (1960) these perspectives shape this study's theoretical foundation, interpreting sacred sound as a nexus of theology, culture, and liturgy. Within this nexus, liturgical studies provide the principal analytical framework, examining how ritual performance and musical practice construct meaning, continuity, and theological expression.

Enculturation and acculturation offer complementary interpretive anchors. Enculturation refers to the internalization of ritual and sonic practice through participation, whereas acculturation, following Redfield et al. (1936), denotes transformation when traditions encounter new cultural settings. In modern churches, the Shofar illustrates this process vividly: a Jewish ritual object repositioned within Christian worship, reshaping its musical and symbolic logic. Hobsbawm & Ranger's (1983) concept of "invented traditions" explains how borrowed rituals are reframed as heritage, revealing cultural negotiation rather than imitation. Within this study, liturgical practice becomes the site where these processes converge, where inherited sacred sound acquires new meanings through communal performance.

The rise of Shofar use in Indonesian charismatic and Pentecostal churches reflects these dynamics. The instrument has become both an audible and visual emblem of prophetic action and revival. Many congregants acquire Shofarot during pilgrimages to Israel, reinforcing emotional and spiritual ties to biblical narratives (Cahyono, Widodo, et al., 2023). This corresponds with Wijayanto et al. (2015), who describe charismatic worship as an aesthetic-spiritual expression that fuses sound, atmosphere, and movement. Yet Nugroho et al. (2021) observe that the Shofar is often employed for dramatic effect rather than theological intent, revealing a gap between ritual participation and doctrinal understanding. This study therefore investigates how the Shofar is performed, contextualized, and interpreted within contemporary worship, emphasizing its theological and liturgical dimensions.

Physically, the Shofar's timbre arises from breath control, lip tension, and acoustic resonance (Putri et al., 2022), producing tones that penetrate worship spaces with distinctive intensity. Biblically, it signified gathering, warning, warfare, celebration, and covenant renewal (Zaluchu, 2015). Both (2021) and Genzor (2021) note that horn instruments historically conveyed both political and ritual authority. In Indonesian

worship, combining the Shofar with modern instruments demonstrates both continuity and innovation. However, without theological grounding, such integration risks reducing sacred sound to aesthetic expression. This study thus articulates a liturgical framework for understanding the Shofar's integration into worship music, ensuring that performance remains theologically coherent and musically meaningful.

Indonesia provides fertile ground for exploring these dynamics. As the world's largest Muslim-majority nation with vibrant Christian minorities, it represents a crossroads where global religious symbols circulate and acquire renewed significance. Charismatic and Pentecostal congregations, known for expressive worship and transnational influences, offer an ideal context for investigating the Shofar's recontextualization. Their emphasis on prophecy and revival shapes how the instrument is sounded, interpreted, and embodied. Consequently, Indonesia functions not as a peripheral case but as a vital node in the global evolution of sacred sound and liturgical creativity.

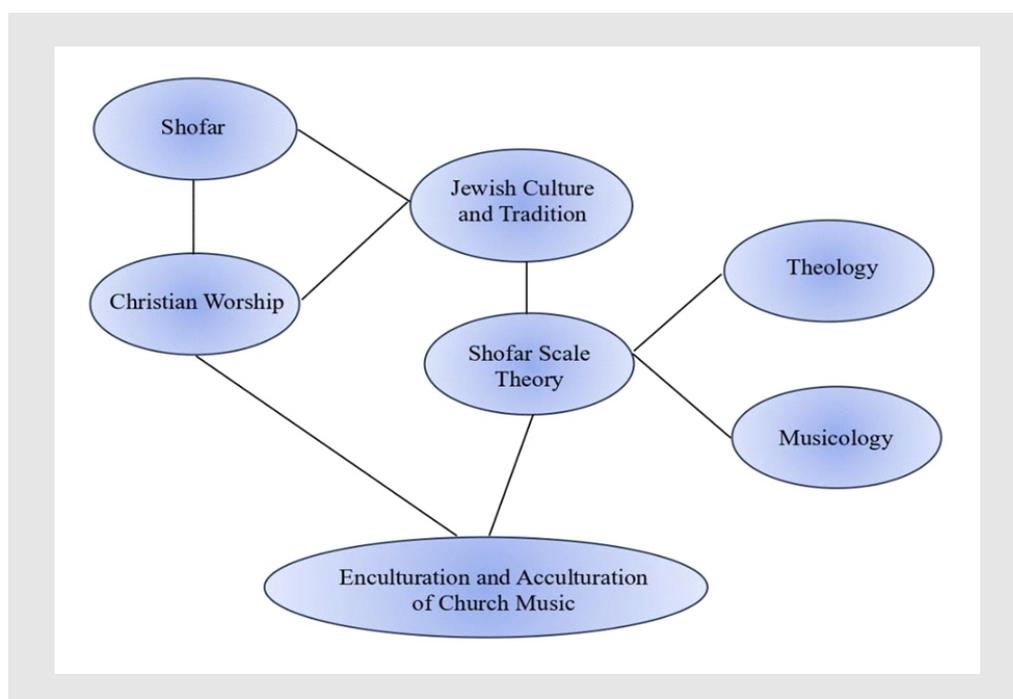
Methodologically, this research treats enculturation and acculturation as observable processes within worship performance. Through participant observation, interviews, and documentation, it traces the Shofar's normalization in worship, its placement within liturgical order, pastoral interpretation, congregational understanding, and deviations from Jewish tonal codes. These serve as qualitative indicators for analyzing ritual adaptation and theological meaning in musical practice. The methodological design follows Yin (2018), Stake (1995), and Creswell & Poth (2018), ensuring interpretive rigor typical of qualitative studies in theology and the arts.

The study's novelty lies in synthesizing theology, musicology, ethnomusicology, and liturgical studies to formulate a framework for understanding sacred-sound performance in contemporary worship. Conceptually, it draws from Merriam (1964), Hood (1960), Titon (2009), Eliade (1959), Smith (1982), Asad (1993), and Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983) to frame the Shofar as a theological and cultural artifact shaped by both continuity and reinterpretation. Empirically, it contributes one of the first systematic documentations of Shofar practice in Indonesian charismatic worship. Ultimately, this research positions the Shofar not merely as a ritual instrument but as a liturgical act, where sound becomes theology, and worship performance embodies living memory, devotion, and divine encounter.

2. Literature Review

Visualisation of the conceptual linkages of the theoretical framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Shofar Integration in Contemporary Christian Worship (Source: Nugroho, 2025)



Theological and musicological perspectives on the Shofar reveal how sacred sound mediates between divine presence, ritual authority, and communal identity. The theological discourse on the Shofar in Christian worship is rooted in continuity between the Old and New Testaments. Strauss (2021) argues that Christian worship derives legitimacy from *sola scriptura*, requiring that liturgical adaptation, including the Shofar, remain grounded in biblical authority. Elmohsen (2022) traces Mesopotamian horn symbolism to ancient concepts of divine power and ritual legitimacy, while —Taylor (2023) observes that sacred music communicates theology beyond aesthetics. Together, these works affirm that the Shofar functions not merely as a ritual artifact but as a scripturally anchored medium where sound and theology converge. Within this framework, theology forms the first conceptual axis, linking Jewish ritual tradition and Christian reinterpretation through the Shofar Scale Theory illustrated in Figure 1.

From this trajectory, the Shofar embodies meanings of proclamation, repentance, divine encounter, and spiritual warfare. Its Christian use extends biblical symbolism while maintaining theological coherence. Religious-studies theorists support this continuity: Eliade (1959) identifies sacred sound as *hierophany*; Smith (1982) explains

sacredness as a product of ritual discourse; and Asad (1993) defines liturgy as a historically negotiated practice. Together, they reveal how the Shofar's transformation within Christian worship represents reinterpretation rather than rupture. Figure 1 therefore situates theology and Jewish culture as intersecting domains where liturgical meaning travels across traditions.

Musicological and organological research deepens this understanding by focusing on tonal structure and ritual function. Shaked (2022) notes that ancient Shofarot were adorned with precious metals to mark sanctity. Javier (2022) identifies Shofar tones as markers of sacred time during *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, while Zaluchu (2015) interprets Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah as distinct theological gestures. In Christian contexts, these tonal forms are reinterpreted into prophetic and revival motifs, revealing both adaptation and continuity. Merriam's (1964) triad of "music as sound, behavior, and concept," Hood's (1960) *bi-musicality*, and Tilton's (2009) "music as experience" collectively explain how sacred sound fuses acoustics, ritual, and belief. In Figure 1, these theories establish the second analytical axis: musicology, connecting tonal logic with embodied worship performance.

The Shofar's reemergence in global Christian worship exemplifies processes of contextualization and negotiation. Järvenpää (2022) demonstrates how musical contextualization translates theology across cultures. Redfield et al. (1936) define acculturation as transformation through cultural contact, while Berry (1997) highlights creative integration. Within Indonesian charismatic churches, the Shofar manifests both: congregants import Shofarot from Israel (acculturation) and reinterpret them through spontaneous praise and Javanese expression (enculturation) (Cahyono, Widodo, et al., 2023). Stokes (1994) and Becker (2004) argue that music shapes identity and communal affect, supporting interpretation of the Shofar as both sonic emblem and social symbol. Accordingly, Figure 1 locates "Enculturation and Acculturation of Church Music" as the culmination of theology, Jewish ritual culture, and musicology within liturgical performance.

Acoustic and symbolic studies reinforce these intersections. Putri et al. (2022) describe tonal variation in the Shofar as a function of breath pressure and resonance, shaping both timbre and spiritual intensity. Both (2021) and Genzor (2021) identify horn instruments as conveyors of civic and ritual authority, linking ancient theology to modern worship soundscapes. In Indonesian services, the Shofar's combination with modern instruments represents both continuity and innovation, an aural dialogue between inherited sacred form and contemporary music. Nugroho et al. (2021) caution that without theological grounding, adaptation risks reducing sacred sound to spectacle. Hence, theological literacy becomes essential for preserving the depth of

musical-liturgical meaning.

Studies on performance and worship further emphasize this connection. Wijayanto et al. (2015) describe charismatic worship as performative theology where sound, gesture, and atmosphere form lived expressions of faith. Raharjo et al. (2021) interpret enculturation as internalization of communal values through ritual participation, positioning worship as both theological and cultural embodiment. These insights affirm that the Shofar's reinterpretation occurs within liturgical formation, transforming faith into performance. Thus, the instrument functions not as mere ornamentation but as a theological language sounded through ritual performance.

Existing scholarship explores theology, symbolism, and ritual use of the Shofar (Elmohsen, 2022; Shaked, 2022; Zaluchu, 2015), yet interdisciplinary synthesis remains scarce. Few studies integrate theology, musicology, and ethnomusicology to analyze the Shofar in Christian liturgy, especially within non-Western contexts such as Indonesia. Empirical understanding of performance, perception, and liturgical governance is still limited. Addressing this gap, the present study adopts the conceptual framework visualized in Figure 1 to interpret how theology, musicology, and Jewish heritage intersect within contemporary worship performance.

Synthesizing Merriam (1964), Hood (1960), Tilton (2009), Eliade (1959), Smith (1982), Asad (1993), Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983), and Redfield et al. (1936), the literature positions the Shofar as theological symbol, musicological artifact, and intercultural medium of sacred sound. Through this synthesis, Figure 1 shows that theology and musicology converge through Jewish tradition and Christian worship, unified by the Shofar Scale Theory and realized through enculturation and acculturation. Ultimately, this framework underscores the study's central contribution: identifying sacred sound as a liturgical expression of theological continuity and cultural transformation within global Christian worship.

3. Methods

Based on the theoretical synthesis and the framework of enculturation and acculturation, this study operationalizes how Jewish ritual instruments, particularly the Shofar, are reinterpreted and localized within Javanese charismatic church practices. The methodological design connects theology and sound within lived community contexts, ensuring that analysis reflects sacred continuity and cultural adaptation. Positioned within liturgical studies, this approach integrates theology and musicology, interpreting the Shofar not merely as a musical artifact but as a ritual medium where faith, sound, and embodied worship converge.

This qualitative case study follows Yin (2018) and Stake (1995), combining ethnographic participation and textual interpretation to examine how the Shofar is performed and understood in charismatic and Pentecostal worship. Its interdisciplinary character required flexibility to capture sacred sound as both textual symbol and embodied liturgical action. An embedded multi-site design treated each congregation as a subcase contributing to the broader phenomenon of Shofar integration, strengthening analytical coherence while maintaining theological–musical sensitivity.

Five congregations: JKI Injil Kerajaan, Higher Than Ever Church (HTE), Bethany Church, Bethel Tabernacle Church (GBT), and Bethel Indonesia Church (GBI), were purposively selected using four criteria: (1) consistent Shofar use during worship services; (2) affiliation with the main charismatic–Pentecostal synod in Central Java; (3) congregational size exceeding 1,000 members with active digital engagement; and (4) leadership consent for research participation. This selection ensured contextual diversity while maintaining thematic alignment with charismatic worship practice. Comparative observation across churches revealed variations in ritual order, sonic intensity, and congregational response, forming the interpretive basis for liturgical analysis.

Informants were recruited purposively through recommendations from church leadership. Informants consisted of pastors responsible for worship, worship leaders, musicians, and Shofar players directly involved in liturgical music practice. The number of informants differed across churches due to varying levels of institutional openness. In total, ten informants participated in the study. All interviews were conducted individually to ensure focused articulation of personal experience and interpretation. Semi-structured interviews centered on the use of the Shofar and its placement within worship music arrangements.

Following Creswell and Poth (2018), the study emphasized interpretive depth and contextual immersion. Data collection integrated textual, observational, and interview sources to examine interactions between theology and musical performance. Fieldwork was conducted between January 2024 to April 2025, encompassing twelve worship services across five churches, each visited at least twice. The researcher participated as both congregant and observer, documenting sonic gestures, bodily expression, and theological cues associated with the Shofar.

The unit of observation was defined as each instance of Shofar performance during worship. Observation focused on the timing of the Shofar within the liturgical sequence, its sonic characteristics, and congregational response. Shofar performances were documented through detailed field notes and supported by

repeated review of publicly available church livestream recordings. These recordings enabled careful listening and comparison across services.

Textual materials, including liturgical documents, biblical references, and theological writings, were analyzed using Content Analysis guided by Holsti's principles of objectivity and systematic categorization. Sunarwan and Surlia's (2021) six-step model ensured transparency and procedural governance, linking textual sources with empirical observation.

Table : Procedural Framework of the Content Analysis Method in Examining the Use of the Shofar within Christian Worship Music Services

| Step | Description | Expected Output |
|------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Formulate research questions on the use of the Shofar | Research focus |
| 2 | Reduce and select relevant data sources | Refined dataset |
| 3 | Develop analytical categories | Thematic framework |
| 4 | Collect and code data | Systematic data structure |
| 5 | Construct interpretive criteria | Analytical matrix |
| 6 | Interpret and synthesize findings | Thematic conclusions |

Empirical data from interviews and observations were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's Interactive Model (Miles et al., 2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. Interview sessions lasted 45–90 minutes and were complemented by approximately 28 hours of cumulative participant observation. Analytical focus emphasized theological meaning, sonic function, and ritual placement rather than technical musical notation.

Integrating Content Analysis with the Interactive Model ensured methodological coherence by linking textual interpretation with empirical validation. Following Spradley (1980), the researcher acted as participant-observer to perceive ritual flow, emotional atmosphere, and congregational response. Reflexive memos were recorded after each service to document interpretive assumptions and analytical boundaries. Ethical procedures were rigorously maintained. Participants provided informed consent, and pseudonyms ensured confidentiality. Triangulation across interviews, observation, and documentation enhanced credibility, while audit trails and reflexive oversight preserved transparency (Rohidi, 2011; Wadiyo et al., 2021).

The four canonical tones: Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah (Zaluchu, 2015), served as analytical anchors linking theology and musicology. Each tone was coded as a liturgical motif corresponding to covenant, repentance, warfare, and redemption. Sonic elements were analyzed through descriptive narrative and analytical coding. Tonal variation and rhythmic improvisation were interpreted as enculturative adaptation, revealing how theology becomes embodied through sound. This methodological synthesis reflects the orientation of liturgical studies, treating

sound as enacted theology. Through triangulation and reflexive governance, the study achieved empirical rigor and theological depth, demonstrating how Shofar performance functions as a living liturgical practice within Indonesian charismatic worship.

4. Results

Fieldwork was conducted between January 2024 to April 2025 across five charismatic and Pentecostal congregations in Central Java: JKI Injil Kerajaan, Higher Than Ever Church (HTE), Bethany Church, Gereja Bethel Tabernakel (GBT), and Gereja Bethel Indonesia (GBI). Twelve worship services were observed, with each congregation visited twice to ensure consistency in observation and documentation. The researcher participated as both observer and worshipper, allowing close documentation of sonic practices, bodily movement, and ritual atmosphere. Data consisted of ten semi-structured interviews and twenty audiovisual recordings, which were cross-checked to ensure consistency between observed practice and participant explanation.

Across all observed congregations, the Shofar was audibly present during praise and worship segments, although its placement, timing, and manner of use varied. In JKI Injil Kerajaan, Higher Than Ever Church, Bethany Church, and GBT, the Shofar was generally sounded spontaneously during moments of heightened musical intensity, pastoral exhortation, or collective prayer. In contrast, GBI demonstrated a more deliberate approach, with partial awareness of tonal differentiation and intentional placement within the worship sequence. These variations reveal differing levels of intentionality and understanding regarding Shofar use among congregations.

In most congregations, practitioners described the Shofar primarily as a symbol of divine power, revival, or spiritual calling. The instrument was not introduced with verbal explanation regarding its ritual origins or tonal structure. Instead, its meaning was conveyed through sound, gesture, and congregational response. The Shofar functioned as a sonic marker that intensified the worship atmosphere rather than as a structured liturgical signal tied to specific tonal codes.

Table 2. Summary of Field Data on Shofar Use Across Five Churches (Jan 2024–Apr 2025)

| Church | Observations | Shofar Presence | Understanding of Shofar Typology (Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, Tekiah Gedolah) | Primary Use | Data Sources |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| JKI Injil Kerajaan | 2 | Yes | None; sounded randomly during praise | Symbolic of revival | Observation, Interview |
| Higher Than Ever Church | 2 | Yes | None; perceived as sound of spiritual excitement | Atmosphere building | Observation, Interview |
| Bethany Church | 2 | Yes | None; used as aesthetic addition | Performance enhancement | Observation |
| GBT | 2 | Yes | None; unstructured use | Celebration | Observation, Interview |
| GBI | 2 | Yes | Partial; unaware of specific tone names | Call to worship | Observation, Interview |

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of Shofar use across the five congregations, including frequency of observation, presence during worship, level of typological understanding, and primary function within services.

As shown in Table 2, all congregations employed the Shofar audibly within worship services, yet awareness of its traditional tonal typology remained limited. At JKI Injil Kerajaan and HTE, the Shofar was typically sounded during emotional climaxes. Bethany Church used it as an element of sonic enhancement within musical arrangements, while GBT incorporated it during celebratory praise. GBI displayed partial awareness of tonal differentiation, distinguishing between longer and shorter blasts, though without reference to specific tonal names. This partial awareness was reflected in more consistent placement and preparation by the Shofar player.

Across all churches, Shofar performance followed spontaneous cues rather than a predetermined liturgical sequence. Triggers for sounding the instrument included musical crescendos, pastoral shouts, transitions between songs, or moments of collective prayer. None of the observed congregations followed the traditional fourfold sequence of Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah in a fixed order. Instead, players relied on intuitive adaptation, responding to the flow of worship.

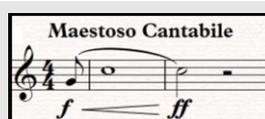
Performance techniques varied among players. Horns were frequently rotated or repositioned during sounding, producing changes in timbre. Pitch instability, uneven airflow, and variable breath length were common characteristics. These technical variations were not perceived by participants as errors. Rather, the act of blowing itself was regarded as a valid form of worship, regardless of tonal precision.

Congregational responses to the Shofar were immediate and collective. Initial blasts frequently prompted raised hands, vocal expressions, movement, or silence. Interview data indicated that congregants commonly associated the sound with concepts such as revival, spiritual battle, or divine calling. References to specific scriptural sound codes or textual explanations were absent in participant accounts, suggesting that meaning was primarily constructed through experience rather than formal instruction.

Analysis of tonal patterns identified the presence of four recurring sound types corresponding to Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah, though these were not labeled as such by practitioners.

1) Tekiah: The Sound of Covenant and Praise

Notation 1: Tekiah (Source: Septian Cipto Nugroho Analysis, February 2025)



four to ten seconds, with variable stability. The tone was commonly followed by collective stillness, raised hands, or quiet attentiveness. Its repeated use at the opening of services functioned as an audible marker signaling the transition into worship.

2) Shevarim: The Sound of Repentance and Brokenness

Notation 2: Shevarim (Source: Septian Cipto Nugroho Analysis, February 2025)



Shevarim, consisting of three broken tones, appeared during transitions from energetic praise to reflective worship. Performances were fragmented and uneven in rhythm. Congregational responses included kneeling, closed eyes, and emotional expression. The sound coincided with moments of prayer and reflection within the service.

3) Teru'ah: The Sound of Warfare and Victory

Notation 3: Teru'ah (Source: Septian Cipto Nugroho Analysis, February 2025)



Teru'ah, composed of rapid short blasts, was the most dynamic and communal Shofar expression. It typically occurred during musical climaxes and was accompanied by clapping, dancing, and vocal expressions. Pulse and tempo varied across performances, yet the sound consistently generated heightened collective movement.

4) Tekiah Gedolah: The Sound of Salvation and Divine Presence

Notation 4: Tekiah Gedolah (Source: Septian Cipto Nugroho Analysis, February 2025).



Tekiah Gedolah functioned as a concluding tone in observed services. Duration varied between three and twelve seconds and often required significant breath control. The sound commonly closed worship segments, producing silence or reverent posture among congregants. In GBI, one player demonstrated intentional preparation for this tone, including breath practice and tonal control informed by external learning resources.

Across congregations, repeated use of these tonal forms, despite technical variation, contributed to the emergence of recognizable patterns within worship practice. While performances remained largely spontaneous, repetition established customary expectations regarding when and how the Shofar would be sounded.

Overall, findings indicate that the Shofar operates as a central sonic element within contemporary charismatic worship, functioning through embodied performance, collective response, and experiential meaning. Its use is shaped by repetition, intuition, and congregational participation, producing a shared ritual language grounded in sound rather than formal liturgical instruction.

5. Discussions

This discussion situates the empirical findings of the study within existing theological, liturgical, and ethnomusicological scholarship on sacred sound. By comparing observed Shofar practices in Indonesian charismatic worship with established Jewish liturgical frameworks and previous studies on worship music, acculturation, and sacred sound, this section evaluates the extent to which contemporary practices align with, extend, or diverge from earlier understandings. Such comparison allows the findings to be interpreted not merely as local phenomena but as part of broader patterns in the reinterpretation of sacred sound within cross-cultural Christian worship.

The Shofar, a sacred wind instrument of ancient Israel, represents one of the earliest forms of theological sound communication within Judeo-Christian history. Within Jewish liturgical tradition, its tones function as a structured sonic language associated with repentance, covenant, and divine encounter. The Talmud records three canonical tonal patterns: Tashrat, Tashat, and Tarat, which integrate sequences of Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah to convey ritual meaning (Zaluchu, 2015, p. 56). These tonal combinations reflect an ordered system rather than spontaneous expression, situating the Shofar within a disciplined liturgical framework. In this liturgical grammar, each sequence encodes theological intent, transforming sound into sacred text and performance into lived theology. Within this interpretive space, art education operates not as a methodological core but as a supportive interpretive lens, illuminating how structured sound functions to teach, discipline, and sustain theological memory in ritual practice.

Tashrat

Tekiah – Shevarim – Teru'ah - Tekiah
Tekiah – Shevarim – Teru'ah - Tekiah
Tekiah – Shevarim – Teru'ah - Tekiah

Tashat

Tekiah – Shevarim - Tekiah
Tekiah – Shevarim - Tekiah
Tekiah – Shevarim - Tekiah

Tarat

Tekiah - Teru'ah – Tekiah
Tekiah - Teru'ah - Tekiah
Tekiah - Teru'ah - Tekiah

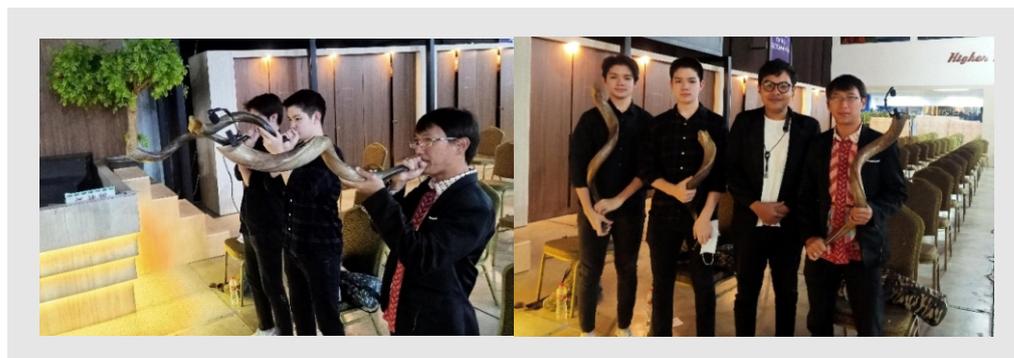
10 Tekiot

4 Tekiah – Shevarim – Teru'ah Tekiah
3 Tekiah – Shevarim – Tekiah
3 Tekiah – Teru'ah – Tekiah

The Jewish Encyclopedia affirms that these tonal structures are not arbitrary but serve as a liturgical grammar guiding the *tokea* in preserving ritual coherence and theological continuity. When translated into musical notation, the Shofar adheres to a fixed sequential logic that safeguards its symbolic integrity. This conceptualization resonates with Aquinas' (1947) understanding of harmony as a reflection of divine order expressed through sound. From this perspective, theology and sound are inseparable: ordered sonic structure embodies doctrinal meaning. However, when read alongside the present findings, this ordered framework contrasts sharply with contemporary charismatic practices, indicating a divergence between canonical liturgical discipline and affective worship expression in transposed contexts.

1) The Sound of the Shofar in the Arrangement of Worship Music Services in the Church

Figure 2: Worship Music Services Players in the Church



Empirical findings from fieldwork conducted between January 2024 to April 2025 across JKI Injil Kerajaan, Higher Than Ever Church, Bethany Church, GBT, and GBI demonstrate strong enthusiasm for integrating the Shofar into worship. However, this enthusiasm is largely unaccompanied by structured theological or musical understanding. Most congregations showed limited awareness of Tekiah, Shevarim, Teru'ah, and Tekiah Gedolah, or of the Jewish liturgical framework from which these tones originate. As summarized in Table 2, four of the five churches demonstrated no typological literacy, revealing a significant gap between performance and theological comprehension. This pattern aligns with previous studies indicating that the adoption of sacred musical forms without sustained interpretive transmission often results in symbolic generalization rather than doctrinal articulation (F. S. S. Sinaga & Sinaga, 2021; Zaluchu, 2015).

When canonical tonal structures are ignored, what is lost is not merely musical sequence but theological coherence. In the Talmudic schema, Tekiah signifies covenant, Shevarim repentance, and Teru'ah renewal. In Javanese charismatic worship, these distinctions tend to collapse into a generalized notion of “revival sound.” The Shofar thus shifts from a medium of theological communication to an affective atmospheric device. Similar tendencies have been observed in studies of charismatic worship, where experiential intensity frequently precedes theological literacy and structured ritual understanding (Supiarza & Sarbeni, 2021; Wijayanto et al., 2015).

In practice, the Shofar is sounded as an expression of prophetic intensity rather than as a theologically articulated cue. This pattern reflects what liturgical scholarship identifies as affective worship, wherein ritual form is preserved while interpretive depth diminishes. Such spontaneity illustrates enculturation without structure: sound remains spiritually sincere yet theologically underdeveloped. The present findings therefore extend existing discussions on worship music by demonstrating how sacred sound can retain emotional power while gradually detaching from its original theological grammar.

The case of GBI, which demonstrated partial typological awareness, offers an important counterpoint. Worship leaders referred informally to tonal distinctions such as “the first sound” and “the long sound,” indicating emergent awareness of tonal differentiation. Although lacking formal instruction, this partial literacy reflects an initial stage of liturgical consciousness. This finding extends previous studies on acculturation by showing that even minimal reflective engagement may function as an entry point toward deeper theological formation rather than mere symbolic borrowing.

From an interpretive standpoint, sacred sound itself functions pedagogically. S. S. Sinaga (2022) argues that artistic expression fosters moral and theological awareness when accompanied by reflective understanding. Applied to worship music, sound becomes a theological discourse when recognized as meaningful structure rather than pure affect. F. S. S. Sinaga and Sinaga (2021) and Raharjo et al. (2021) similarly emphasize that enculturation binds communal values to institutional practice. In alignment with these perspectives, the Shofar's inclusion in worship reflects not only artistic adaptation but an ongoing process of liturgical learning embodied through sound.

When the canonical grammar of the Shofar is abandoned, theological order is diminished: covenant, repentance, renewal, and redemption are absorbed into undifferentiated emotional response. Yet, the partial literacy observed at GBI demonstrates how even limited reflection can restore symbolic intentionality. This nuance complements earlier studies by illustrating that acculturation does not inevitably lead to theological loss but may also open pathways toward renewed liturgical awareness.

Cahyono, Sunarto, et al. (2023) argue that sacred sound bridges aesthetics and spirituality. When the Shofar's tones are performed with intentional awareness, they serve both liturgical and didactic functions. Supiarza and Sarbeni (2021) similarly note that adaptation requires critical engagement with tradition to sustain authenticity. The present findings align with these arguments by showing that disciplined sound-making fosters what may be described as auditory theology, faith articulated through resonance, rhythm, and breath.

Christianity's historical continuity with Jewish soundscapes further supports this interpretation. Early Christian worship inherited and reinterpreted Jewish acoustic symbols within new theological horizons. Wadiyo et al. (2018) emphasize that artistic innovation attains theological legitimacy when it honors its sources while nurturing communal formation. Viewed in this light, the Shofar's use in Javanese worship should be understood not as borrowed spectacle but as a negotiated continuation of sacred sound within a new cultural matrix.

Analytically, three insights emerge. First, a structural gap persists between Shofar performance and theological literacy within charismatic worship. Second, liturgical structure itself functions pedagogically, with patterned sound operating as theology-in-practice. Third, the interaction between theology, musicology, and art education confirms that sacred sound remains a dynamic medium of revelation, formation, and remembrance. These insights both corroborate and extend previous scholarship by grounding theoretical claims in sustained empirical observation.

In conclusion, this study situates the Shofar within a living tradition of sacred sound. Its revival in Indonesian charismatic worship reveals both continuity with biblical heritage and reinterpretation through cultural embodiment. When guided by theological literacy, the Shofar becomes theology-in-sound; when reduced to affect, it risks symbolic dilution. By placing empirical findings in dialogue with existing studies, this discussion affirms that sustainable worship depends on the integration of performance, understanding, and reverence, allowing sacred sound to function as a medium through which faith is learned, remembered, and renewed across generations.

6. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the performance of the Shofar in contemporary Christian worship reveals an evolving dialogue between theology, musicology, and ritual embodiment. As an ancient Jewish instrument rooted in Torah and Talmudic tradition, the Shofar functions not merely as a historical artifact but as a living theology of sound, where revelation, repentance, and redemption are made audible. Within the Indonesian charismatic and Pentecostal context, its performance signifies both continuity with biblical heritage and creative reinterpretation within modern liturgical life. Through its four canonical tones: *Tekiah*, *Shevarim*, *Teru'ah*, and *Tekiah Gedolah*, the Shofar articulates a cyclical theology of covenant, brokenness, warfare, and divine presence, forming a musical liturgical structure that embodies faith through sound.

Empirical findings confirm that enthusiasm for the Shofar is widespread, yet understanding of its tonal and theological logic remains limited. Across the five churches observed, the instrument was often used as a symbol of revival or emotional intensity rather than a disciplined liturgical cue. However, this spontaneity also reveals the vitality of lived faith: worshippers engage theology through performance, translating sacred history into immediate sonic experience. Within the framework of liturgical studies, such practice reflects an ongoing negotiation between form and freedom, where repetition and communal participation gradually establish an implicit liturgical order, a developing “aural grammar” of worship.

In this process, art education serves as a supportive interpretive lens that clarifies how the discipline of sacred performance nurtures theological awareness. Through attentive practice and reflective participation, worshippers internalize meaning, transforming emotional engagement into spiritual understanding. The Shofar's fixed sequential logic thus educates the *Tokea* and the congregation alike, preserving ritual coherence while inviting renewal. This educational dimension, though secondary, reveals how liturgical sound formation can sustain doctrinal depth within expressive

worship cultures.

Ultimately, the study concludes that the Shofar's re-emergence in Christian worship signifies more than symbolic revival, it represents the restoration of sacred sound as theological communication. When performed with liturgical consciousness, the Shofar bridges Scripture and sound, emotion and doctrine, history and revelation. It exemplifies how musical liturgical practice continues to renew the Church's faith life, ensuring that worship remains both spiritually vibrant and theologically grounded, a sound theology that is, in every sense, theology made sound.

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