

Review of: "“Healing is having faith in Allah, the healer, and the medicine”: An exploratory qualitative study of Islamic-based healing practices in Northern Ghana"

Ovidiu Dorin Bardac¹

¹ University Lucian Blaga of Sibiu

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper provides a detailed insight into Islamic healing practices among the Dagomba people in Northern Ghana, delving into the cultural, religious, and traditional aspects influencing their approach to health and healing. It seems to approach the subject with a respectful and observant lens, aiming to understand the intricate rituals and beliefs surrounding Islamic-based healing within the context of Dagbon culture. The text also touches on the broader socio-religious landscape in Ghana, discussing the coexistence of Islamic, Christian, and traditional healing practices. The philosophical beliefs of Dagbon traditional medical practitioners are also emphasized.

The study design appears well-suited to the research objectives outlined. The use of a descriptive exploratory qualitative design seems appropriate given the aim to explore the experiences of Islamic-based healers within the context of Dagbon culture and Northern Ghana.

Purposive sampling was used to select six Islamic-based practitioners in Yendi and its surrounding areas. The researchers received suggestions for potential participants from individuals familiar with the study, and from those suggestions, they contacted six healers who met specific criteria: being Dagomba, utilizing only Islamic healing methods, expressing willingness and availability to participate, and providing informed consent. The criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of participants are clearly outlined, aligning with the study's focus on exclusively Islamic-based healing approaches.

The data collection methods, primarily in-depth individual interviews and ethnographic observations, provide a rich understanding of the healers' perspectives and practices. The authors demonstrate cultural sensitivity by conducting interviews in the native language and adhering to ethical guidelines. The results are systematized in seven paragraphs. Among them, issues like healers' medical philosophies, ritual practices, and medical therapy are outlined as being of the greatest importance. Regarding the basis of healing in Islam, two aspects were studied: believing and having faith in Allah and healing is trust. Concerning the first theme, the healers revealed that the Quran is a source of healing for humanity. For the second, the healers stated that having trust in the Supreme Being (Allah) is crucial for Islamic-based healing and many faith-based healing systems. Overall, the article appears to offer valuable insights into Islamic-based healing practices among the Dagomba, contributing to the broader discourse on faith-based healing and the intersection of culture, religion, and health in Ghana. The methodology, detailed findings, and cultural context presented contribute to

the depth and credibility of the study. The study's findings align with Islamic ontological perspectives, emphasizing the significance of trust in Allah, medicine, and the healer for successful healing. This tripartite trust reflects the synthesized worldview from Islamic and Dagbon traditional religious beliefs.

Study limitations include a small sample size and the inclusion of only male Muslim healers. Another study limitation, in my opinion, is that the study focuses only on Yendi and its surroundings. While Yendi plays a crucial role in understanding Dagomba culture and practices, it might not be fully representative of all aspects of Dagbon. Dagbon encompasses a broader geographical and cultural area within Northern Ghana, with various districts, communities, and traditions. Each region might exhibit variations in cultural practices, belief systems, and healing modalities, influenced by local customs, historical factors, and individual interpretations of Islamic healing within Dagbon. Therefore, while Yendi provides valuable insights into Islamic healing practices among the Dagomba, it's essential to acknowledge the potential diversity within Dagbon and to conduct broader research across multiple regions to capture a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic healing practices within the entire Dagbon cultural context. Another aspect is that excluding healers who used a combination of Islamic and Dagbon traditional healing might have restricted the exploration of contrasting perspectives, which could potentially enrich the findings.

In summary, this study provides a nuanced exploration of Islamic healing practices within the Dagomba community, shedding light on its cultural relevance, diverse therapeutic modalities, and potential implications for healthcare service provision in Ghana.

The paper exhibits a high level of thoroughness in examining Islamic healing practices, drawing connections to cultural beliefs and medical perspectives. The language is generally clear, though in some parts, the complex terminology and dense information might pose challenges for readers not familiar with the subject matter. The paper follows a structured format, starting with an introduction, presenting the study background, methods used, findings, and a discussion of those findings.

The content is highly relevant to understanding the cultural nuances and complexities of Islamic healing within the Dagbon context.

Overall, the paper is a comprehensive and academically rigorous study shedding light on Islamic healing practices among the Dagomba, although minor improvements in accessibility and visual representation could further enhance its impact.

Heartiest congratulations on your insightful study exploring Islamic healing practices among the Dagomba in Northern Ghana.

Ass. Professor of Surgery

Dr. Ovidiu D. Bardac