

Domesticating Islamic Social Work in Sierra Leone: An Applicability of “Dua Therapy” in Problem Solving

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Abstract

The role of social workers in addressing crises and mental health issues is pivotal, particularly in Sierra Leone, where treatment gaps persist, and access to high-quality care remains a challenge. Bridging these gaps requires concerted national and international efforts. Historically, modern practice theories rooted in positivist and empirical epistemologies have restricted the inclusion of religious concepts in professional social work practice. In Sierra Leone, however, Islamic approaches, such as “Dua Therapy,” have long been utilized to address a range of social, economic, and psychological challenges. Dua Therapy holds significant potential for resolving issues such as family conflicts, alcoholism, stress, trauma, and other related problems. Despite its widespread application, there is a notable lack of scientific evidence within the Sierra Leonean context to provide an inductive rationale for its use. Social work practice in Sierra Leone continues to rely heavily on foreign methodologies, which often prove inadequate in addressing culturally specific issues. This study explores the integration of Dua Therapy into social work practice, advocating for its recognition as a culturally relevant and effective tool for addressing the unique needs of Sierra Leonean communities.

Keywords: Dua Therapy, Islamic Social Work, Spirituality, Almighty Allah, Cultural Beliefs, Faith-based Interventions, Culturally Competent Social Work

1. Introduction

In every aspect of life, challenges and trials are inevitable, yet they are intricately woven into the divine wisdom of the Almighty. For believers, understanding these trials through the lens of faith can foster resilience and clarity. This principle is particularly relevant in Sierra Leone, where approximately 77% of the population adheres to Islam (International Religious Freedom Report, 2021). The prevalence of Islamic ideology and cultural practices makes the integration of Islamic concepts, such as “Dua Therapy”, into social work a significant avenue for addressing the unique challenges faced by the population.

“Dua Therapy”, a practice rooted in Islamic spirituality, involves invoking divine intervention through supplication to address personal, social, and psychological challenges. Despite its widespread use and cultural relevance in Sierra Leone, there remains a gap in empirical evidence supporting its application within professional social work practice. Historically, social work in Sierra Leone has relied heavily on foreign models that often overlook local cultural and spiritual dimensions, resulting in interventions that may be mismatched with the needs of the community (Mansaray, G., & Stark, R. (2020).

This article seeks to explore the integration of Islamic social work principles, with a focus on “Dua Therapy”, into the practice of addressing mental health and social issues in Sierra Leone. By grounding the discussion in local cultural and religious contexts, the study aims to highlight the potential of these practices to bridge gaps in the provision of client-centered care. The findings offer insights into developing a culturally competent social work framework that harmonizes Islamic spiritual practices with contemporary therapeutic approaches to foster holistic well-being and resilience in Muslim-majority communities.

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2. Literature Review

2.0 An Islamic Perspective on Social Work in Sierra Leone Conceptual framework

The legitimacy of social work for social workers in the Muslim world implied the fusion of Islamic theological knowledge with contemporary ideas of practice. However, the latter was opposed to the incorporation of religious ideas into professional practice since it was still committed to the positivist-empiricist epistemology of the 19th century. Social work seemed like such an appealing way to bring about much-needed social change and social transformation since it was seen as a "scientific" method. The field was marketed as "social technology," using "modern science" (social and behavioral) to rapidly and efficiently address socio-economic issues (Hassan, 2015).

The concept of social work in America was regarded as the most "advanced" worldwide. The American model was eagerly adopted by an idealistic generation of social work instructors, and they joyfully strove to learn and stay current with the "latest" that American social work was producing. In Sierra Leone, there are still a lot of big gaps in social work practice (Mansour, 2017). The US National Association of Social Workers served as a model for the basic values and guiding principles employed in social work practice in Sierra Leone. Yes, there are occasions when it is beneficial to adhere to worldwide best practices, but it is also beneficial to mix them with local approaches that specifically address traditional issues. The process through which social work becomes faithful to national identity, its distinguishing qualities, and its cultural and socioeconomic reality is referred to as authenticating social work. This process enables social work to utilize what is pertinent from the combined contributions of other countries (Ahmed & Khan, 2019). The two main issues with indigenization that authentication seeks to address are (a) problems with consistency and lack of originality and (b) the absence of a systematic process (Jones & Smith, 2018). Here is how authentication aims to address these issues:

2.1 Inconsistency and lack of originality

Authentication is designed to help social work develop its professional skills and practices, "starting" from "their" national, social, and cultural realities, as opposed to building local practices from a set of values, goals, sanctions, knowledge, and methodologies of a foreign Western model embedded in a foreign socio-cultural setting. The explanation is straightforward: the imported model was created to cater to the needs of people who reside in cultural, religious, and social contexts that are very dissimilar from those in Sierra Leone. Starting from inside does not, however, mean stopping there. Utilizing any "compatible" components from the imported model, or, for that matter, the expertise of any other nation, is a crucial aspect of creating an authorized model. Therefore, it only makes sense that social workers in Sierra Leone would follow the example set by their Western counterparts and create their own well-known model from scratch. By doing this, the certified model's originality and fidelity to its inhabitants' identities will be maintained. It will continue to be relevant to the local conditions as they actually exist. Members of the profession will also continue to be open to learning from any helpful information obtained from other nations that share comparable socio-cultural situations or cultural and religious identities.

2.2 Methodology Issue

The concept of authentication proposes a methodical approach to the challenge of re-establishing local social work practice. (Ragab, 1990: 46–47). The following steps are part of this process: 1. Serious efforts will be undertaken to carefully pinpoint the fundamental moral principles essential to the proper operation of the nation's social work system. Second, coordinated efforts will be made to clarify the pertinent information regarding the social work institutions of the nation as they exist today. Finally, the major social concerns affecting people's lives will be rigorously investigated and examined in relation to how these socio-economic and social institutions are operating (or failing to operate).

3. Social work and Islam

Cultural and religious beliefs in Sierra Leone influence a client's attitudes, behavior, problems, and methods for resolving difficulties. Islam provides its followers with specific theological doctrines, but it is also, as is sometimes remarked, a comprehensive "way of life" that directs a Muslim's conduct during all phases of his life and its ups and downs. It stands for the foundation of human existence both in this world and the hereafter (Al-Nouri, 2018). For many, the apparent conclusion was that social work needed to be "rewritten" from an Islamic perspective in order to properly serve Muslim clients. But doing so did not imply "writing off" the history of Western social work. As a result, the practical theories had to be carefully examined to determine their scope in accordance with the authentication technique outlined above; any elements that proved to be consistent with the Islamic worldview will then be blended into the framework of a new "integrated worldview" model (Hassan & Tiwari, 2019). If new syntheses are to be regarded as a real component of a new conception, they must next pass through field testing. Since the product will then be prepared to join the mainstream of social work, the "authenticity" qualifier is meant to take the place of the "authenticated" designation. However, despite this clear and obvious need to incorporate

religious concepts in the effective delivery of services to Muslim clients, and although such inclusion must be carried out in a systematic and verifiable manner, many scientists found it difficult to accept this innovative approach (Farooq, 2022).

4. Social work with Muslim clients

Social work with Muslim clients demands an approach that integrates Islamic teachings, values, and cultural contexts, providing holistic care that addresses spiritual, emotional, and social well-being. The Islamic worldview emphasizes the interconnectedness of these dimensions, offering a unique perspective for addressing psychosocial challenges. Ragab (2000) underscores the importance of this non-reductionist framework, which seeks to address all aspects of human experience in a culturally and religiously sensitive manner.

4.1 General Theory of Human Behavior and Social Environment

In Islamic thought, humans are regarded as dignified beings created by Allah, possessing physical and spiritual dimensions. Effective social work practice in Muslim contexts must, therefore, address both these aspects. The Quran and Hadith offer detailed guidance on interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and societal harmony, making them invaluable resources for social workers. For example, *Tawakkul* (trust in Allah) and *Sabr* (patience) are vital concepts that social workers can use to help clients build resilience, particularly when facing life challenges such as loss or economic hardship (Al-Faruqi, 1982). In Sierra Leone, where 77% of the population identifies as Muslim (International Religious Freedom Report, 2021), these teachings resonate strongly. Social workers can draw on local cultural practices, such as community gatherings and mosque-based support networks, to reinforce these values, promoting healing and social cohesion.

4.2 Comprehensive Theory of Psycho-Social Problems

Islamic social work recognizes the interplay of spiritual, psychological, and environmental factors in the development of psycho-social issues. Unlike reductionist approaches, which isolate individual factors, Islamic perspectives emphasize the interconnectedness of these elements. Mental health challenges, for instance, are addressed not only through medical interventions but also through prayer, Quranic recitations, and spiritual counseling, reflecting the belief that healing is both a physical and divine process (Hodge & Nadir, 2008).

In Sierra Leone, where mental health resources are limited, the integration of faith-based practices into social work is particularly valuable. For instance, during the Ebola epidemic, Islamic leaders played a critical role in counseling grieving families, blending religious teachings with trauma-informed care. Such efforts highlight the importance of incorporating spirituality into psycho-social interventions in this context.

4.3 Motivational Techniques in Islamic Social Work

Islamic teachings provide powerful motivational techniques to help clients navigate challenges. “Dua Therapy”, for example, is commonly used to address issues such as anxiety, depression, and family conflicts. This approach involves invoking divine intervention through prayer, which often provides clients with a sense of solace and empowerment. Quranic recitations and affirmations further reinforce positive thinking and resilience (Zeidan, 2005).

In Sierra Leone, this approach has been employed effectively in post-disaster settings. For example, following the 2021 Susan Bay fire, social work students at Fourah Bay College collaborated with local Imams to provide spiritual counseling to affected families. The use of “Dua Therapy” in these sessions helped victims find hope and regain emotional strength, demonstrating the practical utility of Islamic social work techniques in the Sierra Leonean context.

4.4 Practical Integration in Sierra Leone

The integration of Islamic principles into social work practice in Sierra Leone involves several key steps:

- i. **Analysis of Relevant Concepts:** Social workers in Sierra Leone must have a thorough understanding of Islamic teachings and their application to social issues. This includes an appreciation of local cultural nuances, such as the role of family and community in decision-making processes (Ragab, 2000).
- ii. **Selection of Practical Models:** Intervention models such as cognitive-behavioral therapy are adapted to align with Islamic principles. For instance, trauma-focused therapy in Sierra Leone often incorporates Quranic reflections and community-based support (Hodge & Nadir, 2008).
- iii. **Field Testing and Modifications:** In Sierra Leone, integrated models are tested in real-world settings to assess their effectiveness. During the Ebola epidemic, faith-based organizations partnered with health workers to

provide holistic care, blending medical and spiritual interventions. These efforts have informed the development of culturally sensitive social work practices.

- iv. Dissemination and Education: Successful models are documented and shared through local workshops and training programs for social workers. For example, the Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers has initiated programs to train practitioners in integrating Islamic principles into their work, ensuring wider application and critical evaluation.

5. Global Perspectives on Integrating Islamic Principles into Social Work

The integration of Islamic principles into social work practice has been successfully demonstrated in diverse contexts, emphasizing the value of spirituality in addressing complex psychosocial issues. For example, in Senegal, a predominantly Muslim country, Islamic rituals such as dhikr (remembrance of God) and prayer have been incorporated into community mental health initiatives. These practices were found to promote emotional resilience among individuals dealing with trauma, particularly in conflict-affected regions (Canda, 2002). Similarly, Nigeria has explored the role of faith-based organizations in providing social welfare services, with particular emphasis on integrating Islamic values into care frameworks. Programs that combine modern therapeutic practices with spiritual counseling have reported improved client satisfaction and stronger community acceptance (Betancourt et al., 2015).

In Egypt, Zeidan (2005) highlights the application of Dua Therapy alongside cognitive-behavioral techniques in addressing familial and mental health issues. For example, structured prayer and Quranic recitations are used to complement traditional therapy, especially in cases of marital disputes and youth behavioral challenges. This integrative approach not only addresses psychological well-being but also reinforces cultural identity, which is critical in regions with deeply rooted Islamic traditions.

Similarly, in Ghana, Akyeamong et al. (2015) observed significant improvements in trauma recovery among populations affected by post-conflict stress through the use of spiritual and religiously sensitive counseling. Faith-based practices, including group prayers and scripture-based interventions, were tailored to fit the sociocultural realities of affected communities, fostering healing and social reintegration. In Ghana, spiritual and religiously sensitive counseling has contributed to trauma recovery, particularly among populations affected by post-conflict stress (Boateng, 2021).

Further afield, in Pakistan, faith-centered counseling models have been employed in disaster recovery efforts, especially following the 2005 earthquake. Religious leaders collaborated with social workers to provide psycho-social support, combining Islamic teachings on resilience and hope with practical therapeutic strategies (Shackman & Price, 2013).

These global examples underscore the efficacy of integrating Islamic principles into social work practice. They serve as benchmarks for developing frameworks that are both spiritually grounded and culturally resonant. In Sierra Leone, where a majority of the population practices Islam, adopting similar integrative approaches—such as “Dua Therapy”—has the potential to address local psychosocial challenges effectively. This alignment not only enhances cultural relevance but also improves the acceptability and impact of social work interventions in Muslim-majority contexts.

6. An Islamic Approach to Problem Solving: “Dua Therapy” in a Social Work Context in Sierra Leone.

There are many issues impacting their clients that social workers assist in resolving, but there is no one way to do it. Social workers might employ several strategies to combat the typical antisocial mood, while medical doctors may prescribe paracetamol to address headache issues. In Sierra Leone, social workers are frequently involved in problem-solving, particularly at times of loss, misery, tragedy, personal issues, family conflicts, alcoholism, trauma, and other stress-related issues. In Sierra Leone, we have applied "Dua Therapy" to address issues for far too long. The majority of Sierra Leoneans practice "Dua" and frequently ask their religious leaders for "Dua" when they are unwell, under stress, or having other difficulties. "Dua" is also used to make excellent requests, particularly by those looking for a job, a partner, a business, travel opportunities, etc. Most Islamic scholars distinguish between “dua” for various purposes, such as “dua’ for anxiety and depression, “dua” for stress, sadness, fear, grief, worry, “dua” for hardship and suffering, etc. For Muslims who believe in Allah's power, such duas are more powerful.

6.1. Solving anxiety problems with “Dua”

Any of us can have anxiety and depression attacks. Despite the fact that we are Muslims, which implies that our faith is ingrained in us, we are nevertheless susceptible to these difficulties. Depression may cause a person to lose faith, but it is not a guarantee that they do not trust in Allah and His almighty will. Despite the mental challenges he faces, a person's continued reliance on Allah demonstrates how unwavering his faith is. We

can use a holistic and all-encompassing strategy to handle anxiety and sadness. Although prayer is an integral aspect of Muslim life, it's also crucial to combine it with the right approaches and take the necessary actions to maintain your mental health, such as seeking professional help. Addressing anxiety and depression does not have to be limited to specific ritual activities. Anyone experiencing mental health problems should also seek appropriate medical intervention and support. The root of the problem must be addressed. We live in a world of cause and effect and a world of means; therefore, duas alone will not be sufficient to defeat anxiety and sadness. It may take strength and fortitude via dua and prayer to try to identify the root of issues and take action to solve them. Social workers see problem assessment as a key component of the solution, and in the case of Sierra Leone, an extensive evaluation might lead to the development of intervention techniques.

Duas can enhance family therapy sessions with Muslim patients and make them more effective. Such clients think that no one has the power to heal them without the will of God. A prime example was my intervention in Susan Bay following a fire that engulfed several houses in 2021. Some of the victims were imams and other Muslim scholars with very strong faith. Part of my psychology education that I used was “dua therapy.” Dua is one of the most useful medicines, and they believed that it is the enemy of trouble; it repels it, cures it, prevents it from occurring, and alleviates or reduces it if it occurs. Since they are Muslim clients, they have complete trust and reliance on God, and this is a concept that they all theoretically understand and also practice, especially when they are going through difficulties or thinking about the unknown future. So it was productive for me to use this type of therapy because of the social and spiritual reality of some of the victims of the Susan Bay Fire.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative research method was employed for this study to deeply explore the complexities and nuances of Dua Therapy in the context of Islamic social work in Sierra Leone. This approach is particularly effective for understanding phenomena that are deeply embedded in culture, spirituality, and individual experiences.

Contextual and Cultural Relevance

“Dua Therapy” is deeply rooted in the cultural and religious practices of Sierra Leone, particularly among the Muslim population. Qualitative research allows for a thorough examination of how “Dua Therapy” fits within local social work practices and the broader socio-religious framework. Unlike quantitative research, which often aims to generalize findings to a broader population, qualitative research prioritizes understanding the specific experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with this therapy within its unique context.

Exploring Complex, Subjective Phenomena

Social work interventions, especially those incorporating spiritual elements such as “Dua Therapy”, are inherently subjective and often cannot be easily quantified. The emotional and spiritual dimensions of healing and problem-solving in Islamic social work require a method that appreciates personal experiences and interpretations. Qualitative methods provide the depth needed to capture these emotional and psychological aspects, exploring how individuals perceive the role of spirituality in their social work interventions and the perceived effectiveness of these practices.

Flexibility in Data Collection

The qualitative approach provides flexibility in how data is collected. It allows the researcher to adjust to the needs of participants, giving space for their stories and experiences to emerge naturally. This is especially important when studying a culturally sensitive practice like “Dua Therapy”, as it enables participants to share their views without the constraints of predefined categories or questions. This approach leads to richer and more authentic data.

7.2 Data Collection Methods

In-depth Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with social workers, clients, and religious leaders. These interviews delved into personal experiences, beliefs, and insights related to “Dua Therapy”. Social workers discussed how they have incorporated “Dua Therapy” into their practice, and clients shared how it has helped them cope with personal difficulties. The interview guide was adapted to ensure flexibility, allowing for unexpected themes to emerge during the conversations.

Focus Group Discussions

Several focus group discussions were held with Muslim clients who have experienced “Dua Therapy”. These discussions provided participants the opportunity to share common experiences and collectively reflect on the effectiveness of the therapy. The group dynamic also revealed shared cultural beliefs and community perspectives on the role of spirituality in solving personal issues. The researcher facilitated these discussions in a manner that encouraged openness and mutual respect.

7.3 Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

After data collection, the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Key themes included concepts such as spiritual healing, cultural integration of therapy, and client satisfaction with “Dua Therapy”. Each theme was examined to understand how it connects to the broader research question and to explore the deeper meanings associated with the practice of “Dua Therapy” in Sierra Leone’s social work context.

Content Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze case studies and textual data from interviews or focus groups. This involved examining the frequency and context of specific words, phrases, or concepts, such as the use of specific duas for addressing issues like stress, trauma, or family conflicts. This approach helped identify which elements of Dua Therapy were considered most effective by social workers and clients, offering valuable insights into the practical applications of “Dua Therapy” in social work interventions.

8. Findings and Discussions

Finding 1: The Deep Integration of Spiritual Practices in Social Work

“Dua Therapy” is deeply integrated into the social fabric of Sierra Leone, particularly within Muslim communities. It plays a central role in resolving psychological and social issues such as trauma, family conflicts, stress, and grief. Many clients turn to Dua as both a spiritual and therapeutic tool, guided by religious leaders or social workers who incorporate it into their professional practice.

Discussions: The integration of spiritual practices like “Dua Therapy” reflects a broader global trend toward culturally relevant social work approaches. In Sierra Leone, where 77% of the population identifies as Muslim, the reliance on spiritual practices is not only a reflection of personal faith but also a manifestation of cultural identity. This deep-rooted reliance presents an opportunity to develop a unique model of social work that aligns with local traditions while addressing modern challenges.

Implications for Social Work Practice:

- **Incorporation of Spirituality:** Social workers in Sierra Leone can leverage the spiritual dimensions of “Dua Therapy” to enhance their practice. Given the prominence of religion in Sierra Leonean society, integrating spiritual healing methods alongside conventional therapeutic techniques may increase the acceptance and effectiveness of social work interventions.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Social workers must be trained to understand the local cultural and religious contexts. A culturally sensitive approach that incorporates religious practices such as “Dua Therapy” could make interventions more relevant and effective for Muslim clients, fostering better engagement and outcomes.
- **Training and Education:** The findings suggest the need for training social workers in incorporating Islamic spiritual practices, including “Dua Therapy”, into their therapeutic models. This could be included in the curriculum for social work education in Sierra Leone, promoting culturally competent social work.

Finding 2: Positive Client Perception of “Dua Therapy” as a Healing Tool

Clients who underwent interventions involving “Dua Therapy” reported high levels of satisfaction, especially when they felt that their spiritual beliefs were respected and integrated into the therapy process. They expressed that Dua Therapy helped them cope with personal struggles such as anxiety, family issues, and trauma.

Discussion: The overwhelmingly positive client feedback on “Dua Therapy” highlights the critical role of cultural competence in social work. Clients’ trust in the therapeutic process increases when their spiritual needs are acknowledged, fostering a deeper therapeutic alliance. This observation aligns with studies from similar cultural contexts, where faith-based interventions lead to improved psychological outcomes and higher client satisfaction.

Implications for Social Work Practice:

- **Client-Centered Approach:** Social workers should adopt a client-centered approach that respects the spiritual and cultural beliefs of clients. This approach fosters trust and creates a therapeutic environment where clients feel understood and supported. Incorporating “Dua Therapy” could empower clients and enhance their coping mechanisms.
- **Client Engagement:** Given the positive client feedback on “Dua Therapy”, social workers in Sierra Leone can enhance client engagement by recognizing and incorporating clients’ religious and spiritual preferences into the intervention process. This could result in improved therapeutic outcomes and higher client satisfaction.
- **Holistic Care:** The findings suggest that a holistic approach that addresses both the spiritual and psychological needs of clients can be highly effective. Social workers should consider integrating “Dua Therapy” with other therapeutic interventions, promoting overall well-being and mental health.

Finding 3: Challenges in Integrating Dua Therapy with Western Models of Social Work

While “Dua Therapy” is widely used in Sierra Leone, its integration with Western models of social work faces challenges. These include resistance from some social workers who are trained in Western, secular approaches and may view spiritual interventions as incompatible with professional social work practice.

Discussion: The resistance to integrating “Dua Therapy” stems from a broader tension between secular and spiritual paradigms in social work. Western models often prioritize evidence-based, secular approaches, which may not fully account for the sociocultural and spiritual realities of Sierra Leone. To bridge this gap, hybrid models that combine the strengths of both approaches should be developed and tested. For example, trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) could be adapted to include Islamic principles such as Tawakkul (trust in Allah) and Sabr (patience).

Implications for Social Work Practice:

- **Integration of Local and Western Practices:** Social workers in Sierra Leone should be encouraged to find ways to blend Western theories and practices with local traditions like Dua Therapy. A hybrid model that draws on the strengths of both approaches could offer more comprehensive solutions to social problems.
- **Overcoming Resistance:** Social work education programs in Sierra Leone should address potential biases against religious or spiritual practices, ensuring that future practitioners are open to integrating culturally relevant interventions. By emphasizing the compatibility of “Dua Therapy” with evidence-based practices, social workers can be trained to adopt a more inclusive approach.
- **Supervision and Support:** Social workers need supportive supervision to navigate the tension between secular social work practice and religious healing practices. Supervisors can help guide practitioners in using Dua Therapy while maintaining professional standards and ethics.

Finding 4: Importance of Religious Leaders in Facilitating “Dua Therapy”

Religious leaders play a key role in the implementation of Dua Therapy, often providing guidance and spiritual support to clients. Social workers and religious leaders collaborate to integrate Dua into the therapeutic process, which helps clients feel that their religious beliefs are being honored during interventions.

Discussion: The collaboration between social workers and religious leaders is a unique strength in the Sierra Leonean context. Religious leaders hold significant authority and trust within communities, making them indispensable allies in delivering culturally relevant interventions. This partnership can enhance the reach and effectiveness of social work, particularly in rural or underserved areas where religious institutions are often the primary source of support.

Implications for Social Work Practice:

- **Collaboration with Religious Leaders:** Social workers should establish collaborative relationships with religious leaders to enhance the effectiveness of interventions. Religious leaders can help facilitate access to spiritual support and ensure that interventions are aligned with the religious values of the community.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The findings suggest that interdisciplinary collaboration between social workers and religious leaders is essential for effective service delivery. Social workers can benefit from religious leaders’ knowledge of Islamic practices and spirituality, while religious leaders can learn from

social workers about modern therapeutic methods. This partnership can lead to more integrated and comprehensive support for clients.

- **Community-Based Support:** Social workers could use religious institutions as points of access for clients in need of “Dua Therapy”, especially in rural or underserved areas where religious leaders are highly respected figures. This community-based approach could improve access to services for a wider population.

Finding 5: The Role of “Dua Therapy” in Community Healing

Dua Therapy not only addresses individual psychological and social issues but also serves as a communal practice that fosters collective healing. Group Dua sessions often take place during times of crisis, such as after a natural disaster or community tragedy, to promote collective resilience and recovery.

Discussion: Community-based Dua sessions exemplify the collective dimension of healing in Sierra Leonean society. Such practices not only provide emotional solace but also strengthen communal bonds, fostering a sense of solidarity during crises. This aligns with sociological theories that emphasize the role of rituals in reinforcing social cohesion.

Implications for Social Work Practice:

- **Community-Based Interventions:** Social workers can explore “Dua Therapy” as a tool for community-based interventions, particularly in crisis situations. Incorporating Dua into group settings can help promote social cohesion and collective healing.
- **Crisis Management:** Social workers should consider the potential of spiritual practices in managing community-wide crises. In the aftermath of events like natural disasters, “Dua Therapy” could be a valuable tool for helping communities process trauma and build resilience together.
- **Empowering Communities:** By integrating “Dua Therapy” into community development programs, social workers can help empower communities to address their own social and psychological challenges, fostering long-term sustainability and healing.

9. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the transformative potential of integrating “Dua Therapy” into social work practice in Sierra Leone. This culturally resonant approach not only enhances client satisfaction but also promotes holistic well-being by addressing the spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions of healing. However, the successful integration of “Dua Therapy” requires a multi-faceted strategy that includes capacity building, curriculum reform, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

By fostering partnerships between social workers, religious leaders, and educational institutions, Sierra Leone can develop a uniquely authentic model of social work that bridges local traditions with global best practices. Hybrid models that align evidence-based interventions with spiritual and cultural practices offer a pathway to sustainable and impactful social work. These integrative approaches not only uphold the cultural identity of clients but also demonstrate the adaptability and inclusivity of social work as a profession.

Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of such hybrid models, ensuring their scalability and effectiveness across diverse cultural contexts. By doing so, Sierra Leone can position itself as a leader in culturally competent social work practices, inspiring similar innovations in other regions.

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