

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**RELATIONSHIP AMONG GRIEVING, SPIRITUALITY, RELIGIOUS
COMMITMENT, AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN WIDOWHOOD**



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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Alfred Dorgbetor** declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I / We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

..... (Principal Supervisor)

Signature :.....

Date :.....

..... (Co-Supervisor)

Signature :.....

Date:.....

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DEDICATION

To my family



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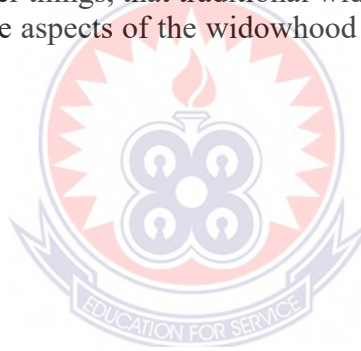
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between grief and post-traumatic growth (PTG), as well as the moderating effects of spirituality, religious commitment, and trauma on this relationship. The PTG domains of life appreciation, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual development, and interpersonal relationships, as well as the PTG total score, were evaluated. 450 widows were selected from the North, Central, and South Tongu Districts of the Volta Region of Ghana. Data was collected using the PTGI Inventory, the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10), the Brief Grief Questionnaire, and the Posttraumatic Checklist (PCL-5). A Correlation Matrix and descriptive statistics were used for inter-construct correlation among latent variables. A Structural Equation Model was performed for each hypothesis based on independent and dependent variables. A path analysis was conducted for the effects of the variables. Grief and PTG were positively related. Positively, spirituality moderated the relationship between grief and PTG. However, religious commitment and trauma moderated the relationship between grief and PTG in a negative manner. This study contributes to the understanding of how spiritual and religious factors influence the grieving process and subsequent growth in widowed individuals. The findings can inform interventions and support strategies for this vulnerable population. It was suggested, among other things, that traditional widowhood administrators should also be schooled on the positive aspects of the widowhood practise that bring about a positive development in women



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Death is a naturally occurring and unavoidable event. A spouse's death is one of the most traumatic events a person can go through. When one loses a spouse, they lose a partner, lover, best friend, confidant, and your child's parent. A surviving spouse frequently faces significant life changes that can be stressful in addition to grieving the loss, emotionally. Coping with a spouse's death entails processing emotional grief while adjusting to new circumstances (Imafidon 2018). Losing a spouse causes great pain and suffering to relatives and loved ones, especially those who were very close to the deceased.

Death is thought to have a spiritual cause in Africa (Edewor et al., 2012). Therefore, an investigation into the cause of death is mostly through spiritual explanations (Kaushik and Walsh 2019). This is rooted in most cultural practices. Recovering from the grief and pain of losing a loved one may take a long time.

Death stands between the worlds of humans and spirits, the visible and the invisible, necessitating elaborate rituals (Pemunta and Alubafi 2016). When, for instance, an Ewe man dies, his wife or wives are subjected to a test of innocence as part of the widowhood rite. Almost every death is, in the first instance, at all events, attributed to or associated with accursed magic or witchcraft. Through the machinations of some enemy, and in any case, whether deserved or not, the deceased's family attempt to exact revenge on those who are deemed instrumental in causing death.

The Darwinian perception of death proposes that immortality is a myth, and that a human is only an animal destined to die, whose self-awareness is simply a brain function

(Testoni, Ancona, and Ronconi 2015). However, the metaphysical and theological perspectives hold that awareness is not defined as a brain secretion but as a human identity that survives death (soul, spirit, and mania) (Sköld 2021). The clarification of this contradiction between science and religion is the fundamental understanding of death. Both perspectives share many similarities with Western mythology that is based on ontological and logical reasoning about death.

The distance between illogical and logical reasoning about what is being said about death is the difference between mythological conviction and rational demonstration about the representation of death as a passage or end (Testoni et al. 2015). Following Logical Positivism, the scientific point of view is considered strongly logical and "realistic" because it uses formal logical tools to justify every empiricist account of knowledge and is antithetical to all metaphysics, which is viewed not as wrong but as meaningless.

For a lot of women around the world, the loss of a partner is made worse by the fact that they have to fight for their basic rights and dignity for a long time (Sossou, 2002). After the demise of a spouse, widows may not only have to deal with their own grief, loss, or trauma, but also with economic insecurity, discrimination, stigmatisation, and harmful traditional practices because of their marital status.

In many countries, widows do not have the same rights to an inheritance, and they may lose their land, be kicked out of their homes, or even be taken away from their children (Sulumba-kapuma 2018). They might not be granted access to inheritance, bank accounts, or credit cards, which can affect not only them, but their children, and future generations financially.

In some situations, widows may be seen as disease carriers and be kicked out of the society or may be forced to take part in cleansing rituals that involve forced sex or scarring that can be dangerous to their health and even kill them (Panagiotopoulos 2009). Sometimes, widows are given to or inherited by a new partner, like the brother or other relative of the deceased. This takes away her right to safety, bodily autonomy, justice, and dignity in life after the death of her husband (Erick et al. 2016). When a woman's worth depends on having a husband, widowhood can force her out of her family and social networks, making her more likely to be poor, alone, or a victim of violence (Korang-Okrah 2013).

Most families try to avoid tragedies like being a widow. But most married women have to deal with it. It is something that can happen to anyone, even those who seem to be safe. Ghanaian widows are often blamed for their husbands' deaths or even accused of killing them. In many cases, widowhood rituals include ways for a woman to prove she is innocent (Widows and Ophans Movement 2010). A person's death is marked by ritual performance in the traditional Ghanaian community. The form and style of the ritual are usually linked to the spiritual explanation for death and the individual's social status. There are various methods for different genders and age groups (Erick et al., 2016).

For example, when a man dies, he leaves behind a partner who must undergo many cleansing rituals (Sulumba-kapuma 2018). Mourning the loss of a loved one involves traumatic experiences that involve physical, spiritual, and emotional pain (Nwalutu, 2012). The psychological suffering one experiences is different regardless of the reason of death. According to Nwalutu (2012), the period of widowhood and grief is marked by ritualistic mourning and grieving. In Ghana, widowhood is regarded as a period during which a

woman who has lost her husband undergoes spiritual purification to separate the dead from the living (Korang-Okrah 2013). Traditionally, rituals are used to end the marriage between the deceased and the surviving spouse. This is important because in the past, the widowhood rites were thought to separate the dead and the living.

Imafidon (2018) observed that the traditional African perspective on reality or nature is a continuous and harmonious composite of many components. Human beings are a harmonic component of the whole in this composite world, ultimately a collection of mobile life forces. Natural objects and the details of reality are intertwined and interdependent. Reality is constantly striving to preserve a state of equilibrium among the interconnected network of components and living forces. Because reality or nature is a continuum, there is no gap between the physical person, the community, the dead, spiritual or metaphysical entities, and the phenomenal world. They all interact with each other, and in a way, one is an extension of the other in terms of the conceptual or interactive gap.

According to Atindanbila et al., (2014), widowhood rites are cultural ceremonies in which any surviving spouse participates in a tribute to their deceased spouse. While it is prescribed for both widows and widowers, the latter is subjected to less stringent rituals than the former. Widowhood rites exist in every community in Africa, and the difficulties widows face are from society, the husband's family, and tradition (Razzack & Imam, 2015). In every African society, widows face emotional, psychological, and spiritual violence regardless of whether they are Christians or non-Christians, literate or illiterate, young or old. Widowhood rites present a slew of economic, social, and psychological difficulties, particularly in the first year following their spouse's death (Atindanbila et al. 2014). These rituals have a spiritual connotation.

Widowhood rituals were used to punish people and exact vengeance following a spouse's death. Traditional society held a strong belief in the ghost's or dead's, ability to influence the living. It was a communal belief that if a widow died during the widowhood ritual, that was evidentiary of the guilt of being responsible for the spouse's death (Tati 2018). According to Tati, rituals invoke the deceased to avenge their deaths. Typically, the wife is held accountable for her husband's death, even in cases of proven illness.

In the African society, it was a widespread tradition that wives killed their male partners to inherit the estate or escape an unhappy marriage (Loomba Foundation 2010). Widows were expected to undertake ritual purification and adhere to all ritual norms (Atindanbila et al., 2014). This ritual was deemed the only way to establish their innocence, and if they were found to be guilty, they would incur the wrath of their ancestors and spirits. The deceased's spirit tormented and haunted the perpetrator (Tati, 2018).

The spirituality associated with death borne from widowhood practices more orthodox and deep-seated beliefs, rules, or discipline. Plumb (2011) explains spirituality as the human experience of discovering meaning, purpose, and values, which may or may not include the concept of a God or transcendent being. Spirituality is simply a search for meaning in one's life, (Lloyd 1997). In times of crisis and trauma, people generally find comfort in their spiritual beliefs (Plumb, 2011). It is believed that the spirit of the dead still lives among the living and can only join the ancestors through the performance of these rituals. "Spirituality is a way of life as important for humans and their well-being as healing" (Opoku & Manu, 2018)

Nwannennaya and Nkama (2018) argued that widowhood rituals are performed to raise the status of the deceased man but are not an avenue for the widow to pour out her

grief. This observation by Nwannennaya and Nkama could be valid to the extent of cultural dynamism. Still, generally, within the Ghanaian cultural context, the rites and spirituality break the marital vow between the dead man and the living woman, as noted by (Amlor and Owusu 2016).

Bolton and Camp (1995) concluded in their research that the prevalence of rituals in widowhood provides valuable insight for people facilitating the grief work of the bereaved. Pang et al. (2002) suggest that it is necessary to consider the death rituals of different religions to help provide healing assistance. This, according to a study by Thompson and Walsh (2010). Spirituality or religious practices, such as wakes, sitting, and funerals or memorial services, are woven into the fabric of culture to help families and communities deal with death and loss. These practices constitute the bereaved person's experiences. The experience of going through pain and grief, characterised by a vibrant mix during the loss of one's loved one, varies from culture to culture.

These encounters may result in **trauma**. A traumatic experience can leave a person devastated or come out of it stronger than before it arose. Tedeschi & Calhoun (1995) describes this as post-traumatic growth (PTG). PTG is the impactful role that trauma can play in fostering development. Not only has the individual survived, but they may have undergone significant changes that go beyond what they were previously.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004a) PTG is a term that refers to the capacity to function at a higher level than previously possible. It is the capacity to withstand the negative psychological consequences of adversity and experience a greater degree of positive adaptation and transformation. It is a positive psychological transformation that occurs due to overcoming challenging life circumstances, such as the death of a partner.

Often, these cases involve trauma or significant losses that put a lot of strain on an individual's adaptive resources and ways of seeing the world (Danahauer et al., 2016).

Most people think of widowhood as a problem for women. Women are more likely than men to outlive their spouses in all developed countries and almost all developing countries (Carr and Bodnar-Deren 2009). Men die younger than women, and women usually marry men who are a few years older than them. Again, women are more likely, than men, to stay single after their spouse dies. This is because there are a lot more women than men among older adults, and men are more likely to want to remarry after losing a spouse.

Also, widowhood is becoming more of a problem for older women. Because life expectancy has steadily gone up in almost every country over the past century, most people who lose their spouses are older adults. Because of this, widowhood has important effects on how older people live and on their physical, financial, and mental health (López, Camilli, and Noriega 2015).

Trauma-inducing widowhood practices are shared among the Ewe-speaking people of the Volta Region of Ghana (Amlor & Owusu, 2016); for instance, it is believed that family ties extend to the spirit world. So, marriage is viewed not just as a physical contract, but also a spiritual one. That is to say: the living has ties with their deceased family members. So, immediately after a family member dies, steps are taken quickly to ensure that the departed soul does not go astray from the ancestors.

Amlor and Owusu (2016) believe that death marks the beginning of another life, whilst (Opoku et al., 2017) states that the ancestral spirits can protect the living against evil and misfortune. This belief system determines how to mourn and how long the mourning

must take. In the case of the woman who loses her husband, there are three primary stages of the rituals that the widow must go through. The stages are pre-burial rites, courtship rites (gboloworwor), and post-burial rites.

1.0.1 Pre-burial Rites

Explaining how these three stages occur, Torgbe Kwamitukui, the elder in-charge of widowhood rite and the Dumega of Mafi-Dekpoe said death among the Ewe-speaking people of the Volta region of Ghana, no matter the form it takes, has a spiritual explanation. So, whenever someone dies, there are a series of rituals to be performed that relate to the spiritual understanding of the cause of death. Torgbe Kwamitukui emphasised that the oracles would be consulted on the day a husband died to find out why he had died. This ritual is important because it tells the woman what she can do and what she cannot do at the funeral of her husband. It tells what kinds of rituals and mourning the dead person wanted.

He emphasised that a team made up of men (both maternal and paternal), an experienced woman and a man, a close relative or child of the deceased, and, in some cultures, a representative of the woman's family, goes to this consultation. Libation is poured with alcoholic drinks and water to say goodbye to the spiritual family for them to compel the deceased person to appear and to speak the truth about the circumstances surrounding their departure from the physical world (Dorgbetor, 2021). The team is not supposed to tell anybody where they will be going for the consultation.

This particular ritual is important because it is believed that someone with a powerful charm could charm the deceased person, so he will not say the actual cause of death. The consultation results will then determine the rest of the rituals for the dead person.

The next stage of the widowhood rites indicates what their love life was like before the man's death. So, the woman will now show how much she loved her late husband.

The pre – burial widowhood rites are not common to only the Ewe ethnic group in Ghana. Several reports from earlier researchers gave accounts of practices among other ethnic groups in the Northern and Southern parts of the country.

In southern Ghana, widows of the matrilineal Akan people are forced to stay with the body of their dead husband until the burial (Sossou, 2002). Some Northern Ghanaian ethnic groups say that when a man dies, his widow or widows must all stay inside, sit alone, and put leaves on their private parts (Atindanbila, Bamford, Adatar, & Kwakye-Nuako, 2015). They cannot leave the house without carrying a calabash, which represents the dead. They are taken outside naked with an old lady so they can drink a special drink. During this time of seclusion and before the burial of the dead husband, an Igbo widow sits on the ground and doesn't wash herself. Her food is cooked separately, and another widow gives it to her on a broken or old plate

Erick et al. (2016) report that when a husband dies, the widow will appear in front of the house where the public is gathered to perform a rite by climbing a sheep half naked to the ground. The sheep will be slaughtered by an elderly person, and a portion of the skin will be used to cover the husband's private parts for burial. To avoid polluting others, widows are not permitted to cook and must eat and drink from a single bowl or calabash. The body of the deceased man is then moved to another part of the hut, where the widow can only visit it with the assistance of an elderly lady.

The Lo Dagaa (the undertaker) prepares and disposes off the corpse, and among Frafra, the widow is escorted outside to see her husband's body before it is carried to the

family cemetery for burial (Ba-an et al., 2022). She is given a reed mat and made to sleep on it in the kitchen. as Additionally, a millet drink in a calabash is given her, where he is buried (Widows and Orphans Movement, 2010). Her water is kept in a small pot in the room's corner. She spends her nights in the kitchen receiving water from a widow in the kitchen's back corner until her husband is buried, (Ba-an, Segbefia, and Ofori 2022).

In the Dagomba culture, a widow will get down on both knees and cry over the loss of her husband. Usually, this is done three times. When this is done, she will be led out of the house through the ‘gambee gooni’, which is a gate that a faithful wife of a dead man passes through. Usually, the wall of the women's bathroom is pushed down to make this gate. It is against the law for a widow to be at the burial of her husband, so she goes to a different house and comes back afterward. People think that if a widow sees her husband's funeral, she will have a heart attack and may die (Pazzack & Imam, 2015).

1.0.2 Courtship Rite (Gboloworwor)

Gboloworwor is the word for traditional dating (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). It was a recreation of when the man and woman were first getting to know each other. Torgbe Kwamitukui added that for this ritual, the widow must bring a piece of cloth, pomade, powder, and a cake of soap, among other things (these are a list of things a lady would provide to be used for bathing by the husband when he was alive). The items will be given to the man's family and some of them will be put in the coffin.

Even in death, the ritual is a sign of love. Before the man is buried, these things are done. However, suppose the results from the consultation with the oracle say something otherwise, there is an amendment to rite. In that case, the woman’s family has to meet the man’s family to determine if any difficulties may prevent the woman from performing this

rite. If any woman did not achieve this ritual, it is believed the late husband could still be visiting her in a sleeping state and could harm her spiritually (Dorgbetor, 2021). In addition, she may be mocked by other people in the community for not mourning her late husband the right way.

1.0.3 Post-burial Rites (the mourning period)

Torgbe stated that rituals after the burial are as crucial as any other rituals. After the dead man's burial, the oracle is again consulted to determine whether all the rites demanded and performed were successful. If there are no issues, the widow begins another set of rituals. This then takes the woman into a mourning state. After the funeral, this is a period of loneliness, as all the friends and sympathisers have come and left. To mark the start of the mourning period, a ritual of wearing black clothes is performed.

The next thing to do is to put on a black cloth (avordede nuti). It is one of the most important things a widow must do, and not doing it is thought to have a number of bad consequences. One of the consequences is that the woman cannot remarry or have sexual relations with any other man. And if she does, she or the man she sleeps with may die or experience several unending misfortunes (Dorgbetor, 2021). The husband's family has to give the widow a black piece of cloth that she has to wear for at least six months (this, however, is dependent on the type of relationship between the couple before their death). How long someone wears a black cloth after their husband has died shows how much they loved him. People think that if a woman wears these clothes, no man will be able to ask her out on a date. During this ceremony, the widow will decide what to eat or not eat while she is in mourning. The woman cannot eat the food that wasn't mentioned during the ceremony for as many months or years as she wants to mourn her husband.

The black-clad widow cannot sleep in the same bed she and her husband used when he was alive. People think that her dead husband will still visit her during this time, so she cannot sleep in the same bed until the mourning period is over. No matter who it is, she also cannot talk to anyone at night. She cannot talk to anyone at night unless she has a child. She does this because she believes that the ghost of her dead husband still visits her. Because she cannot talk to anyone until after her morning bath, she has to take her bath very early in the morning. Before she can eat, she has to put a piece of what she is going to eat on the floor for her husband, or he will have to eat from the same plate as her.

In some of the societies in Africa, widowhood rites end with some kind of cleansing ritual (Panagiotopoulos 2009). For example, shaving the widow's hair and washing her with herbs is thought to wash away the spirit of the dead man and the bad luck that comes with losing a husband. Even though there are differences in how long and how the rituals are done, most people agree on why they are done. Just the fact that widows have outlived their husbands may be enough to make them nervous. Widows are always on the edge of life and death because they have looked death in the face. They are usually linked to the power, fear, or awe of the dead (Sossou, 2002).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Widowhood is fraught with physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual anguish. Getting through the trauma of losing a loved one and readjusting to social life requires a lot of effort from the bereaved person. However, in traditional Ewe ethnic society, a woman must observe certain rituals depending on the cultural dictates of both her own and her husband's background. During mourning, the woman suffers from

psychological and emotional trauma. When her husband dies, she will have to deal with the pain of losing a close friend and a family member simultaneously (Pearlman et al. 2014)

Ghana has a population of 31 million people, of this population, 1,050,388 people have been widowed, a heart-breaking circumstance that profoundly affects their lives. Notably, a significant 96.5% of those who have lost their spouses are women, amounting to 909,531 widowed women in the country (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). These figures illuminate the disproportionate burden that women bear in the face of spousal loss, often grappling with various challenges such as economic hardship and social isolation.

Delving further into regional disparities, the Volta region is home to 88,346 widowed individuals, with women constituting a majority at 75,954, while 12,392 are men. From 2010 to 2021, the Volta Region experienced an average of 1,400 widows per year (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). And if this trend should continue, what it means is that in ten years from now, the Volta region alone will be adding 14,00 widows to the existing figures. Majority of these widow had undergone some sort of widowhood rite. This data underscores the need for a targeted research into the consequences of these rites on their socio-economic lives after going through a spiritually-induced traumatic mourning rituals.

According to Ewe tradition, these widows must go through the widowhood rites as a spiritual purification and break the marriage bond between them and their deceased partners. Most African countries believe that the living is connected to the dead. And to a large extent, this philosophy plays a significant role in widowhood rites and practices. In these cultural practices, the widow is subjected to many stressful things, starting with the spiritual and ritual performance of the husband's death and going on through the mourning period, when the widow is alone.

Widows often endure negative social and psychological consequences resulting from spiritual rituals associated with widowhood, as highlighted by Atindanbila et al. (2014). These rituals, ingrained in some cultures, impose a heavy toll on widows, contributing to psychological distress and social challenges. The impact extends beyond the spiritual realm, manifesting in discriminatory practices and isolation experienced by widows (Nkyi et al., 2021). These women also suffer the fear of the future and depression as well as financial, sexual and social exploitations (Boahen & Boahen, 2022). The discriminatory treatment meted out to widows exacerbates their vulnerability, subjecting them to societal stigmatization and exclusion. Consequently, the intersection of spiritual rituals, discrimination, and isolation creates a web of adverse effects that widows grapple with, affecting their overall well-being.

Much research has been conducted throughout Africa and beyond on widowhood rites and practices. For example, Amlor and Owusu (2016) embarked on a qualitative investigation into some unpleasant widowhood practices among the Gbiland of Ghana's Northern Ewe. They wanted to learn about traditional African widowhood practises and rites that help widows deal with their grief and pain. They concluded that spirituality and the widowhood ritual of separation help a woman to prepare to take on male roles following the death of her husband. The ceremony officially dissolves the woman's marriage to her deceased husband, making her life as a single parent.

Atindanbila et al. (2014) investigated the psychosocial well-being of widows in the Nadowli District of Ghana's Upper West Region, through a qualitative procedure. They found that widows had psychological effects, but Pemunta and Alubafi (2016) thought

widows in Cameroon were treated as less-than-human in widowhood rites and practices when he carried out a qualitative research.

The majority of these research findings were qualitative and longitudinal. Only a few of the research work cited addresses how spirituality and rites contributed to these widows' post-traumatic growth (PTG). Most posttraumatic growth theories assume that people change their personalities through meaningful changes in their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). However, most of the evidence on this topic comes from qualitative studies that use retrospective measures of self-reported growth, which do not let meaningful hypotheses be tested. In some cases, people are coerced into performing these rituals against their will to meet daily demands.

The existing body of literature has extensively explored the intricate relationship between grieving, spirituality, and religious commitment in the context of widowhood. While qualitative studies have shed light on the subjective experiences of widows and the role of spirituality and religious commitment in coping with grief, there is a notable research gap when it comes to quantitative research that can provide empirical evidence and statistical rigour to these relationships. A quantitative research gap exists in terms of large-scale surveys or longitudinal studies that systematically examine how levels of religious commitment and spirituality evolve over time among widows, and how these changes are correlated with the severity and duration of grief (Wyllie, 2019). Quantitative research in this domain could help provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play and the potential moderating or mediating factors that influence the relationship between grieving, spirituality, and religious commitment among widows.

Furthermore, while some quantitative studies have explored the general relationship between spirituality/religiosity and mental health outcomes, such as depression and anxiety, among widows, there is a need for more focused and nuanced research that specifically investigates how different dimensions of spirituality (e.g., religious practices, beliefs, social support from religious communities) relate to grief outcomes, such as complicated grief or post-bereavement growth. A research gap exists in terms of quantitative studies that delve into the specific aspects of spirituality and religious commitment that have the most significant impact on grieving processes among widows. Such research could provide valuable insights for both counselling professionals and practitioners of widowhood rites in tailoring interventions and support systems to better assist widows in their grief journey and spiritual growth. As a result, this study uses a quantitative method to look into the different spiritual and ritual practices that widows in Ghana's Volta region perform, and how these practices help the widow's post-traumatic growth (PTG) after the death of a spouse.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is essential in research because it consists of concepts used for specific research, reflects an understanding of theories and principles applied to the subject of the study, and contributes to the larger fields of knowledge that are being considered. A theoretical framework limits the reach of relevant data by focusing on a specific variable and specifying the particular point of view that a researcher would take in evaluating and interpreting the data to be obtained. It also simplifies understanding concepts and variables by providing definitions for such variables (Sharon and Riggan, 2017).

To reclaim their lives, widows must navigate bereavement. The path to reclamation differs from one community to the next. Furthermore, traumatic experiences are influenced by the community where individuals find themselves. In some communities, the widowhood practice and process are defined by spirituality and individual suffering rituals. Furthermore, surviving these traumatic experiences and emerging stronger is dependent on one's ability to make choices and accept responsibility for the decisions and actions one takes. These processes are designed to help a widow survive after a loss.

Different theorists have thought of PTG in different ways. People have thought that the phenomenon was caused by or a way to deal with a traumatic event (Schaefer & Moos, 1992; 1998; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995; 2004). Posttraumatic growth is a big change for the better in how you think and feel because of a traumatic event. It might be the "opposite" of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). To make this line of thought clearer, it is important to note that PTG and PTSD are separate, independent ideas that describe different but, in both cases, continuous dimensions.

Both ideas are not seen as two ends of the same continuum, like how a person adjusts to a traumatic event. People think that PTG and traditional measures of psychological adjustment are separate because the domains of growth and general emotional adjustment are different in how they work. PTG is not the same thing as feeling better or having less stress (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). So, for some people, growth and emotional pain may go hand in hand.

In this direction, the Existential, Social Cognitive and the Planned Behaviour theories' viewpoints are reviewed to examine how a person adjusts to a traumatic event and develop new meaning of their psychological and emotional world view.

1.2.1 Existential Theory

Existentialism provides a theoretical framework for effectively dealing with the challenging aspects of human existence, such as death, loss, trauma, pain, and suffering. On the other hand, the theoretical framework within which reflective experience occurs, does not imply pre-conceptual purity, as this would exclude critical variables such as culture and history. Our perceptions and interpretations of reality are inextricably linked to perceived reality. They can only be correct if they are founded on external, objective laws or truths that have been universally ascertained and agreed upon by a specific culture's meaning system. People tend to think about the meaning of their lives more through their values and cultural state of mind than through their own identity or values, which are not clear (Kesebir and Pyszczynski 2012).

Culture is thought to contribute to the definition of how emotions are communicated and the underlying tendencies of how the general population expresses feelings. Socially learned norms may influence and process the emotional expression and antecedent of each emotion experienced by a person (Marnezou, 2021). According to Marnezou, socially learned examples influence grief reactions within a culture, while family and social systems contribute to forming social expressions of grief. Considering the cultural dimension of masculinity and femininity makes it possible to understand the differences in emotional reaction responses and predict cultural tendencies in emotional communication.

The influence of culture on how loss is perceived and experienced and how grief expression varies across cultures is compelling. As a result, the widow's growth and meaning in the world following the trauma is linked to cultural terms of grief. The

fundamental concept of existentialism is “being-towards-others”, which explains the rejection of atomic theory - the belief that everyone’s existence can be understood independently of social context and contextualization (Steffen, 2019). This emphasis on existentialism's social dimension is associated with the concept of connectedness as a spiritual dimension (Kesebir & Pyszczynski, 2012). This refers to being connected not only to those with whom we have a relationship, but also to those with whom we have no meaningful relationship and those in the larger community with whom we have no significant association.

Existentially, our experience is constructed by constructing meaning frameworks through personal insight, culture, and social interactions. However, when we face abyss and loss, our basic ideas and presuppositions are often shattered or changed (Steffen, 2019), leaving us completely confused, especially the widow or the bereaved.

When a loss, such as a partner’s death, occurs, personal insight is often swallowed by the culture within the Ewe traditional setting. According to Madison (2005), bereavement exemplifies a connected encounter with two essential truths about life: the reality of death and the importance of being close to others. He ponders how we can give ourselves to others, form friendships with them, and crave their company while preparing for the day when we meet them. The reality is that the couple was first together before becoming a couple. The coming together started with a friendship, followed by living together. The couple's relationship grew over time. A man and a woman's relationship could be described as a natural development. This bond can be defined by tradition at times.

In contrast to other parts of the world where people talk about love before marriage, the Ewe believes love can be nurtured, and grows out of a social bond. In Ghana, social

responsibility has traditionally been defined by individuals' ability to provide for their immediate family. As a child, you are taught the roles of your gender by your family and then by the entire community from which you come.

This training you will receive is not based on a fantasy, but rather on the people's traditions. As a result, there is a strong expectation that you will marry when you reach a certain age. Marriage is regarded as a significant event in one's life. The type of marriage, we enter is a decision that creates a bond between two people, and in Ghana, between a man and a woman. During a period of separation, the same choice must be made: to move on with life or live-in despair.

In the history of Western philosophy, most ideas and stories about death have been about how pointless it is to try to make sense of the idea of death itself. This idea is at the heart of the existentialist way of talking about death. People often do not talk about how they have dealt with the death of a loved one, which I think is an important part of the philosophical discussion of death. I think this is a mistake (Imafidon, 2018).

The existential approach assumes that each individual has free will and is responsible for their decisions and actions. We are the authors and designers of our lives and follow the pathways (Corey, 2009). According to the theory, an individual is a person who can make meaning in situations such as pain, guilt, and the occurrence of death (Trujillo 2016). When confronted with adversity such as the death of a loved spouse, people have many questions.

The loss of a loved one is accompanied by pain, grief, and psychological trauma caused by bereavement. Though painful, death is simply considered in Ghana as a transition from physical family members to spiritual family members. Finding meaning

after the end of a loved one necessitates negotiation, preserving a continuing bond with the deceased, and maintaining relationships with living family members and friends (Madison 2005).

According to Korang-Okrah (2013), meaning is a multifaceted concept in and of itself, and the meanings that individuals derive from experiences such as bereavement are likely to differ significantly. Understanding death in the context of one's beliefs is concerned with comprehending the end of one's worldview. In contrast, benefit finding is discussed concerning construing positive outcomes from the experience. In a study, Michael, Crowther, Schmid, and Allen (2003) discovered that making sense of the death of a loved one was associated with positive adjustment. The authors posited that it was fair to believe that the belief system capable of assimilating the incidence of death within their frameworks will be less disrupted and allow for a more straightforward sense-making process. That spiritual belief may be an example of such a system of thought.

Exploring the concepts of **meaning** in life, existence, the universe, and life mysteries such as what happens after death and what the purpose of life is, as well as discussing various philosophies or beliefs, is part of human nature, and we are all involved in contemplating these existential questions. Allan and Shearer (2012) define existential thinking as the tendency to think about the most important things in life and the ability to make sense of these things by putting yourself in relation to them.

The most important problems in life have to do with how people relate to the well-organized universe, like the nature of reality, as well as the most basic, unavoidable parts of being human, like the meaning of life and the fact that everyone dies (Sahana et al., 2018). So, existential thought is focused on goals outside of the self (Hartelius et al., 2007).

Coping is based on the central tenet of meaning-making (Sahana, Inder, and Kaur 2018). Recognising meaning amid trauma and its aftermath may provide emotional relief and lead to a new philosophy of life that alters an individual's assumption about people and the world, as well as contemplating the meaning it may have (Berg 2011)

In widowhood practice, the deceased's spouse, as an individual, undergoes a slew of rituals and spiritual practices aimed at cleansing her and allowing her to find new meaning in her life (Ştefan 2018). People who believe in the existential theory say that death is just another part of life that pushes people to make sense of their lives through meaning-making, making them aware of their reality or self-awareness.

When a partner loses a spouse, rejection and self-denial result in a cascade of negative emotions and thoughts, and these feelings eventually culminate in the form of psychological trauma. At this point, the individual is more likely to lose their sense of self and the meaning of life, impeding the healing process. At the heart of existential philosophy (Teflon, 2018), is finding the strength to move beyond oneself and create something more surprising in life.

When confronted with life's challenges, there are times when people fail or refuse to make a decision. This is what (Corey and Corey 2011) refer to as "existential guilt." This guilt stems from our sense of inadequacy. So, suppose our cultural upbringing teaches us that death is an irreversible loss and that its occurrence leaves a person in a hopeless situation with a sense of self-denial and worthlessness, we will likely develop this type of feeling in that case. Existentialists believe that humanity and freedom are two sides of the same coin, and that people are psychologically distressed due to their spouse's death.

In his logotherapy, Viktor Frankl stated that the impact of spirituality and meaning found in existence is the driving force that propels a person faced with trauma and death to continue living (Berg 2011). It emphasised the importance of having a sense of meaning and coherence to maintain physical and mental health. The ability of an individual to rise above all life circumstances to define their attitudes, actions, and beliefs about such events is referred to as "freedom of will" by Frankl (Berg, 2011, p. 43).

A significant component of the positive change that individuals experience after trauma is a shift in their perception of themselves, their life's priorities, and their place in the universe. These are areas that some consider religious and, in a broader sense, existential (Tedeschi, Park, and Calhoun 1998). The challenging circumstances of widowhood can interfere with an individual's ability to think clearly and define their life's purpose. Widowhood practises and rituals are characterised by pain, suffering, and grief, which leave the widow with little or no chance of free will. This lack of free will is further compounded by the suffering woman's cultural demands and pressures from the husband's family members. As a result of these complicated and confusing situations widows find themselves in, they don't feel like they have a sense of purpose. This is what existential philosophy says.

Frankl described the lack of a sense of purpose as an existential frustration. Widows, like everyone else, are human beings with the same rights and responsibilities. They cannot make choices or make sense of their world because of their specific situation of grief and the accompanying myriad of rituals. Incapable not because they lack the ability to think for themselves, but because of the spiritually laden processes they must follow, leaving them helpless at times.

The seeming aimlessness that may result from widowhood practices could emanate from the belief that they cannot control their own lives since traditional dictation takes over with several spiritual interpretations. The same can be said about collective cultural decisions. In this way, the collective's cultural demands prevail, thus leaving the bereaved individual helpless. In most cases, family members will disparage the widow, accusing her of being responsible for the death if she attempts to advocate for her human rights. In a situation like this, the widow may lose her sense of self-identity.

The existential theory maintains that creating a personal identity is not an automatic process, but rather demands bravery on the part of the individual. Human beings are social creatures and need to be connected to others of relevance to enable us to avoid alienation. Corey (2013) says that building a relationship is crucial if the widow wants to enjoy a smooth growth path in bereavement. Widowhood can be lonely in some Ghanaian communities if a strong relationship with family and friends is not established. Therefore, this shows society's impact on the individual's cognitive process in unpleasant situations.

Irvin Yalom wrote in his 1980 book "Existential Psychotherapy" that the existential approach is different because it does not assume that people have repressed their instincts or internalised their parents' problems (Madison, 2005). Instead, it tries to understand the conflict that flows from the individual's confrontation with the givens of existence (Waugh, Kiemle, and Slade 2018). Yalom thinks that loss and grief can tear a hole in the world we think we know, letting us see some uncomfortable existential truths.

In Madison's words, death could be an existential change, even if it is painful or even overwhelming. In the face of death, the things we build around our "self," like our reputations, self-esteem, relationships, values, and possessions, can be shown to be foolish.

At the very least, it shows how death can happen when we least expect it and messes up all our plans. Victor Frankl said in (Kesebir & Pyszczynski, 2012) that as a finite being, man never finishes his life task perfectly. When he is willing and able to carry the weight of this incompleteness, he is admitting that there are limits to what he can do. As was said above, the tension of bereavement can show how people are fundamentally intersubjective but still have the powerful "mine" of existence, which is their own death.

In the face of loss, existentialism's core tenets, such as the idea of individual freedom and the search for meaning, become profoundly significant. When individuals grapple with bereavement, they confront the reality of mortality, prompting them to ponder the meaning of life and death (Berg 2011). Existentialism encourages individuals to accept their anguish and existential dread as natural responses to loss and trauma. It emphasizes the importance of choice and personal responsibility, enabling those affected to make decisions about how they will find meaning and purpose amidst the turmoil (Teflon, 2018). It is therefore hypothesised that one's search for meaning (spirituality and religious commitment) will predict posttraumatic growth.

Furthermore, existentialism's notion of authenticity underscores the significance of confronting one's emotions and experiences honestly, fostering a path to posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi et al. 1998). By confronting the abyss of suffering head-on and ultimately discovering personal meaning and renewed purpose, existentialism offers a valuable framework for individuals navigating the complex journey of bereavement and trauma, ultimately guiding them towards posttraumatic growth and a more profound understanding of their existence.

1.2.2 Social Cognitive Theory

Human behaviour theories differ in their perceptions of human nature and the fundamental determinants and mechanisms that govern self-development, adaptation, and change. According to Bandura's view, a person suffering from psychological distress can learn to cope by observing how a healthy person handles the same problem (Benight & Bandura, 2004). Widowhood is a stressful time when the grieving person goes through social and psychological trauma.

Bandura's agentic socio-cognitive theory says that people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflective, and self-regulating, not reactive organisms that are shaped and guided by outside events (Benight & Bandura, 2004). People have the power and ability to direct their actions to get certain results. Mechanisms help people be able to control their thoughts, feelings, actions, and motivations. Kesebir and Pyszczynski (2012) think that people's lives are more shaped by their values and cultural state of consciousness than by their identity or values that are hard to define.

This means that the widow's recovery relies heavily on being self-reflective and self-organised during the grieving process. Individual values and cultural consciousness also define the meaning we give to living in a traumatic state. The agentic viewpoint is central to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2006). Being an agent entails controlling one's functioning and the events in one's life. Individuals are viewed as active respondents in their life circumstances rather than passive recipients.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, an individual's behaviour is a component of an inseparable triadic structure in which behaviour, personal factors, and environmental

factors constantly influence and determine one another (Middleton et al., 2019). The widow's environment, particularly her cultural system, impacts her grieving personality.

These environmental factors, such as social pressure or situational characteristics, are defined as those that exist physically outside of an individual and provide opportunities and social support (Compeau et al., 2014). Personal factors include anything about a person's mind, personality, or background. In other words, as people change, they choose and change their environment. As an individual, the widow can only shape the environment where she finds herself if she self-regulates in daunting social and cultural demands.

The theory says that how people see how their performances turned out changes their environment and self-belief, which in turn changes and informs their next performances (Benight & Bandura, 2004). Also, in a specific learning situation, the environment (or cultural system) and cognitive/personal factors affect and are affected by how a person acts. The Social Cognitive Theory explains how people learn and keep certain patterns of behaviour and lays the groundwork for how to help them change. The social environment is made up of family, friends, and people you work with. Behaviour analysis is done in the context of the environment and the situation. Cognitive or mental representations of the domain can affect how a person acts in the domain (Middleton et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy is the most important idea in Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura defines it as a person's opinion of how well they can plan and carry out the steps needed to achieve a certain type of performance (Compeau et al., 2014). It doesn't have anything to do with skills, but with opinions about what those skills can do (Middleton et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Bandura emphasises the importance of a second individual factor that is inextricably linked to self-efficacy. This refers to the extent to which a person will engage in a particular behaviour only if they believe it will result in some desired outcomes or, at the very least, favourable consequences (Bandura & Benight, 2004). The Social Cognitive theory's social concept can be compared to Existentialism's concept of connecting not only with those with whom we have a meaningful relationship in the larger community but also with those with whom we have no meaningful relationship (Kesebir & Pyszczynski, 2012), which is the belief that each individual's existence can be understood independently of social context contextualization (Steffen, 2019).

According to social-cognitive theorists, self-efficacy positively impacts performance because it allows for the effective regulation of human behaviour through various cognitive, motivational, and practical decision-making processes. People's personality influence how they control and solve problems, and people's beliefs are fundamental in their lives. They form the foundation of people's psychological lives, allowing them to make different decisions in various situations (Yeo & Neal, 2006). Self-efficacy is a critical component of a person's competence. People's performances (weak, moderate, and strong) with similar skills in different situations, or even individual performance in other circumstances, are affected by changes in their self-efficacy beliefs. As a result, self-efficacy enables people to perform extraordinary tasks by utilizing their skills (Benight and Bandura 2004)

It could be argued that the difference in life satisfaction stems from people's ability to cope with various stressors (Locklear, 2015). Thus, self-efficacy is one of the factors influencing life satisfaction because it determines how much time people spend on tasks,

how well they resist problems, and how reflexive they are in various situations. Self-efficacy is a critical factor in determining whether a person will succeed or fail in life.

People with low self-efficacy believe they have no control over their lives and feel helpless and incapable when confronted with problems. If their primary solutions fail to solve the issues, they quickly lose hope (Solano & Cosentino, 2016). Bandura (1981) believes that a sense of self-efficacy can influence a person's perspective on goals, tasks, and challenges (Yeo and Neal 2006).

Compeau et al. (2014) did a study on the social cognitive predictors of literary adaptation and life satisfaction in students. They found that academic transformation, goal setting, and life satisfaction can be predicted by students' sense of efficacy and concern for the environment. Bigdeloo and Bozorgi (2016) found a link between self-efficacy and happiness in life. In other words, people who think they are more efficient do better in life and are happier (Compeau et al., 2014).

Middleton et al. (2019) found a statistically significant positive and negative relationship between life satisfaction, self-efficacy, and academic burnout. Middleton et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between school climate perceptions and self-efficacy and life satisfaction. The results show that how people feel about their school and how well they think they are doing are significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Self-efficacy beliefs influence human functioning in cognitive, motivational, affective, and behavioural ways and decision-making procedures (Benight & Bandura, 2004). They control whether people think in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways, i.e., how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of adversity, as well as the quality of their emotional life and their vulnerability to stress and depression; resiliency to

trouble; and the choices they make at critical life decision points (Benight & Bandura, 2004). Believing that you have some control over difficult stressors can help you deal with them in several ways.

The way people think they can handle intense stressors affects not only how they see threats, but also how well they deal with them. As was already said, people are the ones who make life. They see them as more than just builders and power plants. People with a strong sense of coping efficacy use plans and strategies to make dangerous situations less dangerous (Byrne et al., 2016).

Benight and Bandura (2004) looked into how self-efficacy affects recovery from different types of traumas. PTSD that does not go away; it is caused by a lot of different things that interact in complicated ways. Multivariate analyses of causal structures are needed to help figure out what self-efficacy has to do with the psychological and social effects of traumatic events.

Post-traumatic reactions are very common and can happen in many ways and places in life. Flashbacks, recurring nightmares, and intrusive memories of the traumatic event, hypervigilant arousal, poor concentration, depression, sleep disturbances, self-devaluation, avoiding reminders of the traumatic event, emotional distance from others, and withdrawing from parts of life that give meaning and self-fulfilments are all examples. In functional assessments, these repeated reactions have a big effect on how well people get along with each other and do their jobs.

The death of a spouse is another major source of stress that affects almost every part of life. The spouse who has lost a partner has to deal with both the emotional pain of the loss and the stress of taking care of a lot of financial, social, and other everyday needs

(Benight and Bandura 2004). Different spouses deal with loss in different ways. Benight et al. (2001) investigated how widows' ability to cope with the stress caused by their husbands' deaths affected the severity and duration of their distress. Its impact was evaluated after several potential contributing factors were considered. Age, education, financial status, time since the spouse's death, current life stressors, level of social support, quality of relationship with the spouse, and anticipatory grief during the final stage of the illness were among the factors considered (Benight & Bandura, 2004).

The self-efficacy scale is based on how well a person thinks they can control intrusive and negative thoughts, deal with feelings of grief, loneliness, and hopelessness about the meaning and significance of life, find a sense of purpose, and keep a positive outlook (Khursheed and Shahnawaz 2020a). The effect of the death of a spouse can be measured by how much it caused unpleasant, intrusive thoughts and avoidant behaviour, as well as by how well the person was able to function physically and socially and how well they felt mentally and spiritually.

Keeping in touch with people is an important part of adapting well as you age. People's social lives change dramatically when they retire, move, or die. Those who have a high perceived efficacy seek out and cultivate supportive relationships that can provide them with happiness and meaning in their lives (Benight & Bandura, 2004). This could explain why widows who have a high sense of self-efficacy have a higher level of spiritual well-being.

This theory, which emphasizes the interplay between personal, behavioural, and environmental factors, is highly relevant in helping us comprehend how individuals cope with grief after the loss of a loved one. It highlights the importance of self-efficacy and the

belief in one's ability to adapt to this new reality. Research indicates that individuals who perceive themselves as capable of managing their grief are more likely to experience posttraumatic growth, such as finding new meaning in life and personal growth (Byrne et al., 2016)..

Also, understanding how individuals respond to traumatic events is crucial for their recovery. Social cognitive theory sheds light on the role of perceived coping self-efficacy in overcoming various types of trauma. It underscores the importance of individuals believing in their capacity to manage and recover from the aftermath of such events, contributing to their resilience and recovery.

The theory is instrumental in explaining posttraumatic growth, where individuals experience positive changes following adversity. It addresses the cognitive processes that lead to this growth, such as adjusting one's perception of the world and self to align with new realities. This transformation is particularly relevant in the context of grief and trauma, as it highlights the potential for personal development after challenging experiences. From the review of the theory, it can be hypothesised that there will be a relationship between and among, grieving, trauma, and posttraumatic growth after experiencing a loss of a loved one. To put into perspective how the individual's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control affect the world view, I reviewed the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

1.2.3 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was developed by Icek Ajzen as an attempt to predict human behaviour (Ajzen 1991) . The TPB is a well-established psychological model that aims to predict and understand human behaviour. TPB posits that behavioural intentions are influenced by three key constructs: attitudes, subjective norms,

and perceived behavioural control. Attitudes represent an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a behaviour; subjective norms capture the social pressure and normative beliefs related to the behaviour; and perceived behavioural control reflects the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. These three factors collectively shape an individual's intention to engage in a specific behaviour, ultimately influencing their actual behaviour. Subsequent paragraphs looked at the relationship between these constructs and grieving, spirituality, trauma, religious commitment, and PTG.

Understanding the interplay between subjective norms and cultural demands is crucial in predicting and explaining behaviours within different cultural contexts. Research suggests that cultural norms, both personal and cultural, can act as mediators in this relationship (Mohammed 2018). Cultural values, such as uncertainty avoidance, may moderate the relationship between attitudes and behaviours, shaping subjective norms in sustainable consumption practices. Additionally, subjective norms play a significant role in engagement in certain behaviours, like sharing cultural participation, and can be influenced by an individual's self-construal, whether independent or interdependent (Wang et al. 2023).

The TPB suggests that attitudes towards grieving and trauma, influenced by cultural and personal beliefs, can impact a widow's intention to cope effectively. Subjective norms, reflecting societal expectations and support systems, may play a crucial role in shaping their grieving process. Perceived behavioural control, encompassing their perceived ability to navigate through grief and trauma, could further influence coping strategies, which could potentially contribute to PTG [3]. It is therefore hypothesized that grieving would have a significant effect on PTG in widowhood.

In the context of spirituality and religious commitment, the TPB can help elucidate how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence widows' intentions to engage in religious or spiritual practices as coping mechanisms. The theory suggests that these factors may impact the degree to which widows incorporate spiritual and religious aspects into their lives, potentially providing comfort and support during challenging times like the loss of a husband. The TPB's emphasis on perceived behavioural control becomes particularly relevant when considering post-traumatic growth. Widows, guided by their attitudes and subjective norms, may actively engage in behaviours that foster growth after trauma. In an application of the theory of planned behaviours to self-care individuals, (Pourmand et al. 2020) found that an individual's intention and behaviour as well as perceived behavioural control over other self-care behaviours, have effects on the decision the individual made. The theory helps us understand the intentional processes widows may undertake to find meaning, resilience, and personal development following the loss of a spouse. It was again hypothesized that spirituality and religious commitment would also have a significant effect on PTG in widowhood.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

A study's conceptual framework indicates a mental picture of how the research intends to achieve its objective. It shows the progression of the research and the researcher's belief about the issue under investigation (Adom & Hussain, and Agyem, 2018).

Kivunja (2018) says a conceptual framework is how a research project is thought of in a logical way. A conceptual framework shows that there is a relationship but does not explain the type of relationship (Kitchel and Ball 2014). It helps the researcher decide what

variables to include in a study and how to measure them. A conceptual framework explains why research is important and how the results might add to what is already known (Koroshetz et al. 2020). It is very important to have a conceptual framework because it tells that the way data is collected and interpreted depends on how the researcher thinks about ideas (Kivunja, 2018).

This research examines the concept grieving and its direct or indirect effects on PTG. The variable of interest are grieving, trauma, spirituality, and religious commitment. In view of the three theories reviewed, the following conceptual framework was developed.

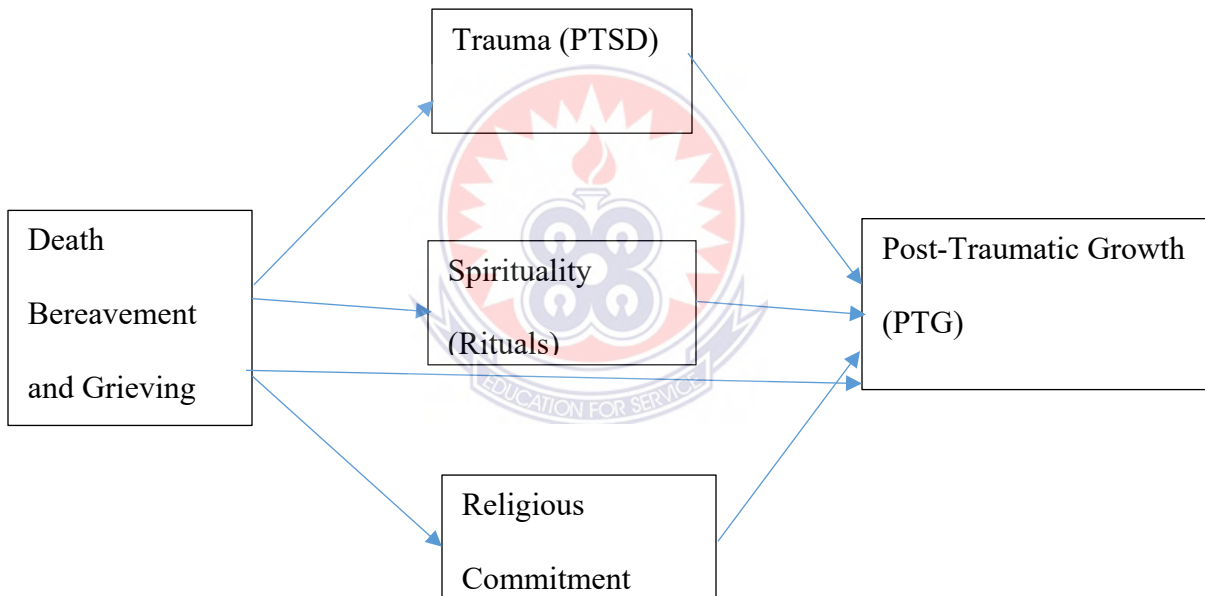


Fig. 1: Grieving, Spirituality, Trauma, and Religious commitment in widowhood

According to the model, grieving directly impacts the suffering individual's traumatic situation, spiritual practices, and religious commitment. Grief has an immediate impact on spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment. Grieving also has indirect effect on PTG because of the traumatic situation, spiritual practices, and accompanying religious commitment, all of which act as moderators for the impact of grief on PTG. The widow's

struggle with the presenting trauma will lead her to develop a PTG that will outlast the initial crises (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

One of the main goals of social science research is to explain how things happen in order to figure out how social systems work (Lleras, 2004). But because social life is so complicated, it can be hard to figure out how different factors are linked. Path analysis is a way for researchers to use quantitative (correlational) data to figure out the different steps (causes) that lead to a certain result (Lepp et al., 2014). Multiple regression analysis is built on to make the path analytical method. It works out how big and strong the effects are in a system of possible causes.

Path analysis can also be used to see how well two or more causal models that the researcher thinks fit the data match up. Since path analysis compares the effects of different factors on a result, the researcher's hypotheses are shown as correlations between the variables in the path model (Walker et al., 2014). So, you cannot use statistics to test which way the relationships or pathways go, and the models themselves cannot show that one thing caused another. But path models do show theories about what causes what, and they can tell the researcher which hypothesis causal model fits the pattern of correlations found in the data set best (Grapentine, 2000). Path analysis is helpful because it forces researchers to say exactly how the variables are linked (Lepp et al., 2014). This helps them come up with theories that are clear and make sense about the steps that lead to a certain result.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The research study aims to investigate the intricate interplay between grieving, spirituality, religious commitment, and posttraumatic growth in widowed individuals residing in the South, Central, and North Tongu Municipalities of the Volta Region in

Ghana. By surveying a diverse group of widows, the study seeks to understand how the grieving process is influenced by spiritual beliefs and religious commitments. Additionally, it aims to explore the potential for posttraumatic growth, assessing the positive psychological changes that may occur in the aftermath of widowhood

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This research is carried out to investigate the impact of spirituality and rituals practiced in the healing process of widows. It is also to examine the extent to which widowhood practices and rituals impact the psychological growth of the widow in bereavement. The study:

1. Assess the effects of grieving on PTG of widowhood
2. Investigate the effects of spirituality and trauma on PTG of widowhood
3. Investigate the impacts of religious commitment on PTG of widowhood
4. Examine the relationship between spirituality, religious commitment, and trauma during widowhood
5. Investigate the mediating roles of spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment between grieving and PTG of widowhood

1.6 Research Hypotheses

H01: Grieving has a statistical significant effect on PTG in widowhood

H02: Spirituality and trauma have a statistical significant effect on PTG in widowhood

H03: Religious commitment has a statistical significant effect on PTG in widowhood.

H04: There is a statistical significant relationship between spirituality, religious commitment, and trauma on PTG in widowhood.

H05: Spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment statistically significantly mediate the grieving effect on PTG in widowhood

1.7 Significance of the Study

Several traditional widowhood practices in Ghana have been reduced to myth, with little or no information on the reasons for some of the practices. The findings of this study will shed more light on the relevance or otherwise of these widowhood practices. Knowledge of widowhood practices, rituals, and spirituality will help to improve the course and make it relevant to modern society.

Knowledge of the role of spirituality in bereavement will help religionists make decisions about widowhood. The study's findings will also help to improve relationships between the husband and wife's families during loss. Understanding the post-traumatic growth process will aid in bereavement resilience.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

Death and widowhood practices vary greatly from country to country and community to community, and Ghana is no exception. This study looked specifically at the role of spirituality and rituals in the PTG experience of widows. It looked at what widowhood means in different cultures. The Volta region of Ghana's North, Central, and South Tongu districts were chosen for this study.

Therefore, this research was delimited to concentrate specifically on the interplay between spirituality, religious commitment, trauma, and post-traumatic growth among widows in these three municipalities. This means that the study did not delve extensively

into wider socio-economic factors or cultural influences unless they directly pertain to the spiritual, religious, or post-traumatic growth dimensions of widowhood. By clearly delineating the scope, the research aimed to provide a focused and comprehensive understanding of how spirituality, religious commitment, trauma, and post-traumatic growth intersect within the unique context of widowhood in these areas of Ghana, contributing valuable insights for academic understanding of experiences of widows in the Municipalities.

Geographically, the study was delimited to three specific municipalities within the Volta Region, ensuring that the research remains focused on the unique socio-cultural and environmental contexts of these areas. These municipalities possess distinct characteristics, including varying religious practices, traditions, and access to support networks, which can significantly impact widows' experiences. By limiting the research to this geographical region, it allows for a deeper investigation of how these specific contextual factors influence widowhood experiences, spirituality, religious commitment, trauma, and post-traumatic growth among the widows living in the North, South, and Central Municipalities.

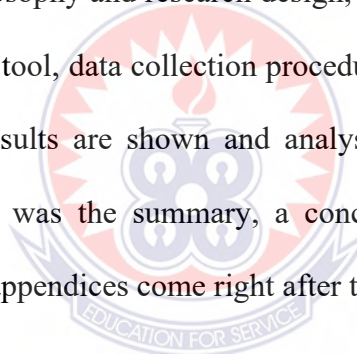
The population was delimited to all widows residing within these municipalities, regardless of age, socio-economic background, or cultural affiliation, who have experienced the loss of their husbands due to death. This ensured that the research concentrated exclusively on the experiences and coping mechanisms of widows in this region, emphasizing the spiritual, religious, traumatic, and post-traumatic aspects of their lives. By narrowing the focus to this particular population, the research aimed to provide a detailed and context-specific investigation of how these factors influence the well-being and growth of widows in the North, South, and Central Municipalities of the Volta Region,

thereby offering valuable insights for both academic understanding and local support initiatives.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The present study is organised under five chapters. The chapter one gave a background to the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose as well as the study's hypotheses. Also, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, significance, and delimitations were discussed under the chapter.

In Chapter 2, the related literature has been discussed, with a focus on the study's main concepts and real-world evidence. The third chapter is about the methodology which is made up of the philosophy and research design, population and sampling, sampling procedure, data collection tool, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure. In the fourth chapter, the results are shown and analysed, and the research findings are discussed. The chapter 5 was the summary, a conclusion, and suggestions for more research. References and appendices come right after this chapter.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Literature review is an academic writing that demonstrates a researcher's knowledge and comprehension of the academic literature on a particular subject (Nakano & Muniz, 2018). Literature review examines books, scholarly articles, and other sources pertinent to a specific issue, field of study, or theory. It provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works about the research problem under investigation (Jasti & Kodali, 2014).

The goal of a literature review is to summarise the sources you used to learn about a certain topic and show how your research fits into a larger field of study. Even though a literature review can just be a summary of important sources, it usually follows a certain format in the social sciences. It incorporates summary and synthesis, frequently within specific conceptual categories (Jasti & Kodali, 2014). This section reviewed literature related to the topic under investigation. This was done under the following headings:

1. Widowhood
2. Bereavement
3. Spirituality
4. Rituals
5. Spirituality and rituals
6. Rituals in widowhood practices
7. Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG)
8. Trauma and PTG

9. Bereavement and Grief
10. Bereavement in widowhood and PTG
11. Spirituality and PTG
12. Religious commitment and PTG
13. Summary

2.1 Widowhood

When an African man dies, it is expected that his wife will have to deal with a lot of stress (Eboh and Boye 2005). African women have a lot of emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual problems because of how hard their lives are. Because of the pressure to follow widowhood practises, African widows do not have the best health. Society has a lot of rules about what widows can and cannot do, which makes it hard for women to talk about widowhood (Atindanbila et. al., 2014).

Some of the things widows are expected to do when their husbands die are: shaving their heads, drinking the bath water used to wash the husband's body, mourning for three to twelve months, depending on their ethnicity, not being able to bathe or clean their surroundings during the mourning period, and not being able to inherit land or property (Eboh and Boye 2005).

In any way, being a widow is a painful thing to go through. Widowhood is characterized by loss (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). In Africa, when a woman dies, she has to go through a series of ceremonies (Sulumba-kapuma, 2018). What being a widow means to an African depends on whether or not they believe there is life after death.

Widowhood is the status of a married man or woman whose partner has died (Keister & Destro, 2008). A woman whose husband has died is a widow, and a man whose

wife has also died is a widower (Perkins et al., 2016). It is important to know the difference between being a widow and being sad. Bereavement is the feeling of having lost someone important in your life, in this case a spouse (Endris, 2008). People usually think of grief as a short feeling that focuses on personal events and what they mean. Research on grief often looks at what happens up to two years after someone dies. Widowhood, on the other hand, is a long-term state that has both social and personal meanings (Eboh & Boye, 2005). Even though it's helpful, a lot of research on widowhood doesn't tell the difference between grief and widowhood.

Gunga (2009) says that widowhood practises are linked to cultural and traditional ideas about death, ghosts, inheritance, women's roles, the structure of the family, and relationships. Africa's old widowhood practises are still going on because a lot of people believe that a dead person's ghost can come back, fight, and haunt different things and people. Widows have to go through cruel and humiliating customs because some people believe that death makes people bad and that the dead keep in touch with the living, especially with their closest life partners. So, people think that doing these ceremonies, rituals, and practises will help to restore the balance and security that death tried to take away (Recksiedler et al., 2018). People who believe in superstitions say that these things are done to protect widows from their powerful dead husbands.

Atindanbila et al. (2014) also found that are more common among women than men in most African societies. This helps explain some of what's going on. Men die younger than women, and women tend to marry men who are a few years older than them. In 2005, 18% of men and 52% of women in the United States between the ages of 75 and 84 were widowed, while 32% of men and 75% of women 85 and older were widowed (Ghana

statistical service, 2010). Patterns like these have also been found in other places. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS 2005; 2006), 16% of men and 45% of women in the UK who were 65 or older in 2004 had lost their spouses. In 2003, 27% of men and 63% of women 75 and older had lost a spouse.

2.2 Bereavement

Seiler et al. (2020) estimated that up to a third of the people most directly affected by a major loss, like the death of a spouse, will experience negative effects on their physical or mental health, or both. Even when death is expected, many people feel differently. Many people say that they feel numb when they first hear about a death, but there is no real order to the stages of grief. Some of the feelings you might experience include doubt, confusion, shock, and sadness. When someone dies, it is normal and common to have these emotions. You might not be ready for how strong and long-lasting your feelings are or how quickly they can change. You might even start to worry about how stable your mind is. But you can be sure that these emotions are normal and healthy, and that they will help you deal with your loss.

Many physical and mental disorders, like heart disease and suicide, can be caused or made worse by loss (Hagman 2016). They can also make you more likely to die of heart disease or by killing yourself. During the first year after a death, about a quarter of widows and widowers will experience depression and anxiety. By the end of the first year, that number drops to about 17 percent, and it keeps going down after that (Seiler et al. 2020).

Bereavement is an important part of the lives of those who have lost loved ones (Park & Halifax, 2008). Bereavement is a state of grief that happens when someone close to you dies. It is different because people are sad. Because of this, a woman whose husband

has died is called a widow. Grief is the feeling that comes from losing a loved one through death. Bereavement is the experience of losing a loved one through death. Bereavement is a broad term that includes everything that family and friends go through after the death of a loved one, as well as how they adjust to life after the death. Zinov and Sole (2004) did a study that supported the idea that a person who has lost a loved one may become more religious, grow personally, and become more spiritual as a result.

Bereavement refers to the entire experience of family members and friends during and after the death of a loved one, and widowhood refers to the process of mourning the loss of the loved one. The rituals performed for the dead to either sail safely from the physical world to the spiritual world or for the wife he left behind to be protected from the spirit of the dead man are so ingrained in the African culture that a widowhood rite is performed in most traditional cultures, regardless of religion.

2.3 Spirituality

According to Amlor and Owusu (2016), the people of Gbi follow their religion; that is, they follow Mawu, their Supreme Being, and place their trust in him for their own and the community's well-being. The culture, thinking, social life, political organisations, and economic activities of these people have been strongly influenced by their religious ideas. Furthermore, the people's spiritual principles help them coexist peacefully and end disagreements to achieve mutual harmony. People's attitude defines spirituality.

According to Paal (2013), spirituality is exemplified by an inherent connection to the divine. The first step toward understanding spirituality is to recognise that it includes all beliefs about forces and powers beyond human comprehension and is not limited to any particular religion, doctrine, or theology. He also stated that there is a surge of interest in

the intersection of social support and health. Spirituality is the sum of a person's existential aspirations and realisations. Similarly, many ethnic groups in Ghana believe that the union of a man and a woman, as husband and wife, has a divine connection. Any attempt to separate the league requires the same divine intervention.

Religion has traditionally been viewed as a spiritual link between the living and the dead worlds. According to Park & Halifax, (2008), there is a religious belief in eternal life and reuniting with lost loved ones after death. The traditional belief system defines every ritual performed. Religion is defined as an organised system of beliefs, practices, and ways that shape people's lives (Michael et al., 2003). Spirituality determines the meaning we give to our existence and our social identities. As a result, spirituality defines the religion for the Ewes, and there is no clear distinction between the two concepts. According to Michael et al. (2003), spirituality is a personal quest to answer life's big questions.

It is not for nothing that most authors associate religion with spirituality (Cotton et al. 2006). Spirituality is profound and transcends religious boundaries, particularly among Ghana's Ewe-speaking people (Opoku & Manu, 2018). The belief is that "Mawu" (the supreme God) can only be conceived but not fully comprehended. Anything beyond the human mind is a spirit, and religion is considered spiritual because it is based on belief in something beyond reasoning (Amlor and Owusu 2016).

Bereavement and spirituality are so intertwined in Eweland that one cannot speak of grief without thinking of its spiritual implications (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). For the Ewes, everything related to death has a spiritual explanation. Death and bereavement are spiritually linked from the time of death to all ritualistic practises preceding and following

the burial of the deceased. The overall outlook of life and understanding of the world is spiritual (Halifax & Park, 2008), and they derive meaning from it.

Bereavement is the perfect example of how two of life's most basic facts—death and being connected to others clash with each other. How can we stay open to others, make connections with them, want to be with them, and fall in love with them when we know the day will come when one will die? The person who died has lost both a piece of their world and a piece of themselves. The body of the person who has lost a loved one will continue to "imply" the person who has died to fill in the interaction and relationship they had. Some widows talk about how sad it is to suddenly think that their dead husband is about to come home, ready to share the day's events with them as usual, his place at the table set, a whole world remade before the unfulfilled interaction reveals his absence and the "mourned-for" again falls out of the assumed environment.

Such times can cause heartfelt grief, and again, even years after his death, the world would not make sense without him. For some, a "filling in" of this meaning can be found in relationships with the dead that are still supported by society. For others, the need for the lost relationship may be met when a new relationship makes it possible for the implied interaction to happen again in some way. Still, others will choose to stay away from relationships and carry on as they were before. Each choice shows something about the person's personality, and this can be talked about and explored in counselling without making any assumptions about which choice is better.

2.4 Rituals

Thompson (2014) says that the word "ritual" comes from the Latin word "ritus," which means "of a ritual." "Ritus" refers to certain temple services in ancient Rome and

Catholic Church worship in mediaeval Europe. Ceremonies are probably Etruscan words for priestly services like weddings and funerals.

Rituals are symbolic actions or movements that a group of people in a community plan ahead of time and do together (Thompson, 2014). Ritual is a word that talks about language. It doesn't say that something is a ritual or that it has the quality of being a ritual. Instead, it is a tool for analysing a wide range of events or situations (Bell, 2009). Ritual, rite, ceremony, liturgy, and performance are all words that are often used interchangeably. A tradition is a group of things that people do, and most of them are rituals.

Ritual or ritual activity is the most common word for actions that have a lot of meaning and follow strict rules. Rituals are also done over and over again with little or no change (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). Ritual and related words were often used to describe the actions of "others," who were often seen as inferior, primitive, or old-fashioned. People still judge each other in this way. Ritualistic actions are social processes that connect an individual to society through symbolic actions that believers do to honour their gods or deities. It's a type of social activity that shows how people are organised in their groups.

African widowhood rites are seen by most people as necessary for any widow or widower who has lost their partner. Even though the practise is not biased against men or women, women are more likely to be affected by it. In the rare case that a man is forced to go through, the situation is usually different. Doris says (2018) that almost every ethnic group in Ghana does the same thing. Even so, there might be some differences in how it's done (Tei-Ahontu, 2008). Some traditional societies believe that when a man dies, it's because his wife was an unlucky woman whose bad luck caused his death (source). Some Ghanaian communities treat widows in certain ways because they believe this (Doris,

2018). People think this kind of woman will bury her second and third husbands in these towns because she thinks she can find one there (Doris, 2018). A widow needs to get rid of her bad luck so that this doesn't happen. It takes different societies different amounts of time to do this.

2.5 Spirituality and Rituals

Tradition, in general, is a set of unwritten doctrines by which various human societies around the world adopt multiple forms. Whereas rituals serve as an unwritten set of rules or laws relating to people's religious practices, spirituality and traditions are two very different words, not only in their meanings but also in their implications. Rituals are ingrained in 'the spiritual belief systems of many cultures. According to Srivastava and Barmola (2013), rituals lead to spirituality. Traditions are significant in spirituality because the repetition of performing each way provides a focal point of distraction and a level of comfort and familiarity. Rituals may simply imply adhering to a code of conduct during a formal ceremony that is not necessarily religious. Patterns satisfy the practitioners' spiritual or emotional needs, which aids in the strengthening of social bonds (Srivastava and Barmola 2013).

A ritual can be any type of routine that one follows. On the other hand, spiritually related rituals are integral to community life and are jealously guarded and protected. The rituals are associated with the type of worship, belief, or religion practised. Religious rituals can be both a form of discipline and a manifestation of fervent belief in something (Kaushik, 2017). Rituals are typically performed in the form of rites. Several rituals are performed during the widowhood mourning period, including religious-related traditions.

Across cultures, funeral rituals and symbols of death and mourning are every day. These are just a couple of examples:

Colour's importance: When viewed from a cross-cultural perspective, colour has almost universally been used to symbolise the grief and trauma associated with death and the concepts of 'eternal life' and 'vitality.' Common colours include red and black.

Hair's meanings: Another common feature of funeral and mourning customs is the mourners' hair, closely linked to clothing and endowment styles. A stylish hairdo signifies the lack of concern about the dead in some communities. In Ghana, women are not allowed even to comb their hair.

Emotional reactions to death: Death elicits a wide range of emotions, but the permissible scope of emotions and the extent to which mourners' grief and sorrow are allowed to be expressed freely are related to each society's distinctive institutions and values. You do not sit by your spouse's corpse and put on a smiling face (Crowther & Schmid, 2003).

According to Bui (2018), spirituality plays a significant role in responding to death and grief. Religious affiliation has been defined as a form of coping. It is frequently favourable when it includes spiritual connectedness, a sense of purpose in life, and a shared narrative about death and the afterlife. Spirituality provides a framework for altering one's relationship with death and loss. Many religions, for example, regard life and death as an ongoing process of transmitting one's spirit. Srivastava and Barmola (2013) emphasised some of the forms these rites have taken throughout history and in contemporary cultures, such as specific gestures, specific language, fixed texts, music, songs, and dances,

processions, the use of particular objects, unique clothes, exceptional food and drinks, and much more.

Because of the spiritual requirements for observing these rituals, they are essential in practising funeral rites. If these rites are not followed correctly, the deceased person's spirit will wander or become trapped between this life and the next and will not be able to rest (Srivastava & Barmola, 2013). In the case of the widowhood rite, the rituals that mark the observance are given the same weight. A widow is not declared free to do her regular duties as any other woman until all traditions from her husband's death to the last day are observed, but she is still considered the late man's wife. This is because Africans' perceptions of death differ from those of the rest. Imafidon (2018) for example, summarised the African concept of death in a six-point narrative. Death is not a random event that happens to anyone. It only appears appropriately and can affect anyone, young or old. Even in the absence of an important event, it can reveal a fraction of the truth. It can also be predicted, explained, or even avoided by knowledgeable people.

The deceased, particularly those who have died recently, are still considered part of the living. They exert influence over as well as place demands on the living (Amlor and Owusu 2016). Regardless of whether they are to blame, they must always be serviced. They will not be able to rest unless they do so. The dead can reappear among us. The name of a child is frequently used to commemorate such a rebirth.

Matter has been pushed aside by energy. It comes before, rules over, and outlives everything else. The energy or force of a person who has died does not end with them. Instead, it shows up in new ways all over the world. Death feeds life and makes it possible for it to come back to life. But when someone dies, it brings shock, grief, and a sense of

loss to everyone who is affected. Many funeral rituals, especially those for a "second burial," are meant to help people show and get rid of their sadness. As the ceremony goes on, the loss becomes more clear and more acceptable to society. Lastly, as the party comes to an end, there is still a feeling of happiness in the air.

While this loss experience remains, it frequently manifests itself as a kind of ambiguity about whether the deceased is truly gone. Interestingly, this ambivalence, which is commonly seen in funeral songs, also serves to help modify the sadness that death brings to the living by delaying the moment when the finality of one's mortality must be acknowledged.

According to Mishra (n.d.), those rituals are age-old traditions and unscientific customs that exacerbate widows' grief in times of bereavement. These rituals are typically performed to commemorate a spiritual occasion. According to Mishra, what he refers to as an "age-old tradition" and "unscientific" can be found in various settings.

Nobody seems to know what the survival secret of this tradition has been. Does it contribute to the healing of a grieving woman? According to Srivastava and Barmola (2013), if funeral rituals are not followed correctly, the deceased person's spirit will not rest. This means that the husband's restless spirit will still maintain a connection with the wife. Society will hold the woman responsible for her husband's death when this occurs, exacerbating the widow's predicament, which is already wrought with psychological trauma. This is the thought that strengthens bereavement's spirituality.

The belief system of the Ewes is similar to what has been described. According to tradition, humans are born from the spirit world, and each of us has spiritual parents who care for and protect us in this physical world (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). These spiritual

parents are the ones who brought us into this world. That is why Ewes have different terms for the various types of behaviour we exhibit in society. It has a lot to do with every aspect of the lives of Ewes. For example, when you are born, it takes seven days to give you a name because it is believed that you are still with your spiritual parents during this time, and when death occurs during this time, the child is said to have returned home and not dead. In the same vein, when an adult dies, they are considered to have been born to spiritual parents, and as such, certain rites must be performed to ensure a smooth journey (Edwards et al., 2007). In traditional cultural vocabulary, these rites have spiritual interpretations.

2.6 Spirituality and Religion

It can be hard to tell the difference between spirituality and religion. Some people might think that they are the same thing (Brady 2020). Some of the articles in this issue use them interchangeably. In some situations, they might be. Religion is usually used to describe an organisation with a set of **organised** practises and a structured set of beliefs that all its members share. Their often-transcendental beliefs are passed on from members to converts and are based on a written creed or long-standing cultural practises. Spirituality is about the soul and the deepest part of a person (Scott 2019).

Being spiritual means that you have your own beliefs and practices and are looking for the meaning of life (Brady 2020). Spirituality can mean different things to different people at different times in their lives. Through personal study and self-reflection, people can change what spirituality means to them as they go through life. Spirituality is about realising that you already have the power to deal with all of life's problems and to connect with something bigger than yourself (Newman 2004).

It is the part of humanity that has to do with how people look for and express meaning and purpose, as well as how they feel connected to the moment, to themselves, to others, to nature, and to what is important or sacred. Religion is where a lot of people learn their first lessons about spiritual things and things that exist outside of the physical world (Van Niekerk 2018). Religions, on the other hand, tend to be very sectarian. One of the most important ideas in spirituality, though, is that there are as many ways to God as there are people.

2.7 Widowhood Rituals among Some Ethnic Groups in Ghana

Widowhood rites are ceremonies that are done for a person after their spouse dies. They help the spirit of the person who died move on. Funeral rites are just set customs and rituals that are done for and by the widow or widower after the death of their partner. Erick et al. (2016) say that widowhood rites are part of the funeral rites for many different ethnic groups in Ghana. Rituals are required for both widows and widowers, but widows' rituals are much more complicated and take much longer than widowers. Widowers usually don't have to give up as much as widows do as part of their widowhood rituals.

2.7.1 The Ga Ethnic Group

Tei-Ahontu (2008) says that one of the Ga ethnic group's widowhood rituals is to wear black clothes during the mourning period and then a white dress at the end of the mourning period. The mourning period for the dead is one year. During this time, the widow stays in her house and cries loudly to show how sad she is. She also drinks the water used to bathe the body and sleeps with it overnight. He did say, though, that some of these widowhood rituals and rites are no longer done because foreign religions have come to the country.

2.7.2 The Dagaaba Ethnic Group

Erick et al. (2016) looked at how widowhood is handled by the Dagaaba people of Ghana's Upper West Region. They said that the Dagaaba believe that the spirit of a dead person stays in limbo for a while, and that during that time, it can curse or hurt the living. Eric et al. (2016) say that the Dagaaba ethnic group's widowhood rites include smearing the widow with ash or clay (yagra), making her wear a rope (Gana), shaving her, going around the stand where the corpse is displayed three times to show her loyalty to her dead husband, sleeping outside for three days and being fed and given water only through the ground, and going around the stand where the corpse is displayed three times to show her loyalty to her dead husband (i.e., food items are put on the basis for her to pick).

2.7.3 The Akan Ethnic Group

After her husband dies, an Akan widow has to leave the house she shared with her husband and look for a place to stay. She needs to move quickly so that her husband can be buried. She can't eat anything too heavy before they are put in jail. After her boyfriend died, she shouldn't let anyone else use the cup and plate she used with him.

She has to sleep on a mat and can't lie on her stomach or back. Instead, she has to sleep on her side until the burial and entombment ceremonies are over. No matter what the weather is like, widows should bathe in cold water (Korang-Okrah 2013, p.4). She will keep cleaning behind the house for the Fanti until her husband is buried, but the Akwapims will ask her to clean by the river (Erick et al., 2016). Antwi, in a related study from 2015, saw the following widowhood rituals among the Akwapims:

Widows' Confinement

Widows' confinement to perform widowhood rites lasted three days.

Mouth-touching of Widows (Anoka)

An older woman was in charge of the ceremony. She touched the widow's mouth with different kinds of food while whispering some words.

Taunting of Widows

In a fake confrontation, they falsely accused a widow of being rude to them when the husband was still alive. The widow was fined, and the money was used to make a special dish for the widow.

Sexual taboo (Restrictions) for Widows

Widows aren't allowed to sleep with any man until the first anniversary of the death of their husband. During this time, the husband who died will have his last funeral. In some Akan communities, when a man dies, his wife has to wrap a small stone or key with a strong smell in a piece of cloth and tie it around her waist (Erick et al., 2016). This keeps her husband from having sexual relations with her after he has died. Most people in Ghana think that the ghost of the dead spouse has to wait until all of the ceremonies are over before moving on to the spirit world. On the day of the burial, the widow brings a cleanser, wipes, a towel, powder, perfume, pants, a singlet, and a piece of material to wrap the body after it has been washed. She cannot wear sandals, jewellery, or any other accessories she wants (Erick et al., 2016).

Also, the widow shouldn't go see other people because that would mean she's happy. Instead, she should cry every day and ask for help when she is sad (Korang-Okrah, 2013). She is always supposed to wear dark clothes (Erick et al., 2016). After the period of mourning, a close relative will ask the widow to marry him or her (Korang-Okrah 2013). Before the wedding rituals, a ceremony is done to ask the dead spouse's permission.

2.7.4 The Frafra Ethnic Group

The Frafra believed that the widowhood ceremony kept the widow's spirit away. When a husband dies and his body is dressed and put on display in the customs room, the widow is put in a separate room with other widows who have been through the same thing as friends and comforters. She is also in charge of an older woman who makes sure she has everything she needs. A calabash has been made for her. She stays in that room until she is arrested, and if she needs to go to the bathroom, she should have a couple of other women with her. The widow can spend some time with her neighbours after the funeral. The calabash is then taken from her and kept safe until the final funeral rites, when it will be used to finish the widowhood rituals.

2.7.5 The Ewe Ethnic Group

When a husband dies, the oracles are called to find out what happened. This ceremony is important because it tells the woman what she can and can't do at her husband's funeral. If the widow is allowed to do rituals, she will first do a "courtship rite" (gbolowowo). In this ceremony, the widow gives the husband a piece of cloth, pomade, powder, and a bar of soap, all of which can be used to bathe him while he is still alive (Erick et al., 2016). Some of the items will be put in the man's coffin, and others will be given to his family. The ritual shows love even when someone dies. Before the man is laid to rest, these things are done.

The black cloth (avordede nuti) is the next rite (Amlor and Owusu 2016). It is one of the most important things a widow must do, and not doing it is thought to cause a number of bad things. As part of the ritual, the widow must wear a piece of black cloth from the husband's family for at least six months. How long someone wears the black cloth shows

how they feel about their dead husband. People think that if a woman wears these clothes, no man will be able to ask her out on a date. During this ceremony, the widow will decide what she will do during her time of grief. As she mourns her late husband, the things that aren't said at this ceremony become taboo for many months or years.

A widow who wears black cannot sleep in the same bed that she and her husband used when he was alive. People think that her dead husband still visits her and stays away from her during this time of mourning. She can't sleep with him in the same bed until she's over her grief.

Also, she cannot talk to anyone late at night, no matter who it is. But if she has a child, she does not have to pay (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). People think that the ghost of the dead husband still visits. She cannot talk to anyone until she takes her morning bath, so she has to take her bath very early in the morning. Unless it is an emergency, she has to take a bath before the sun goes down, and she cannot wash in hot water (Korang-Okrah 2013). The widow cannot ask a traveler if they're back; she has to say "you're welcome" instead.

After the period of mourning, the widow must go through one more "black cloth" ritual before she can take off the black cloth for good. When this black cloth is taken off, the time of grief is over. The woman must buy white clothes for the day of the ceremony (this time all by herself or assisted by the children or family members). She has to bring a lot of different things to cook with.

This will be the first time since her husband died that the widow dances in public. After the black cloth is taken off, someone from the husband's family has to pay for "her dirt," or "Ahogotutu." This shows that she is no longer haunted by her dead husband's spirit and can move on with her life (Amlor & Owusu, 2016).

2.8 Widowhood Rites among some Ethnic Groups in Nigeria

Nwannennaya and Nkama (2018) found that the Igbo in Nigeria have rituals for widows that serve other purposes, like protecting the community and widows and making sure that society is stable. They said that this is necessary because both living and dead spirits could come after these women for the rituals. And that the dead husband still thinks of the woman as his wife until all the rituals for the dead to break up the couple have been done. So, the widow must do the following rituals: "dress in pure black, walk barefoot, wear a pad like a woman who is menstruating, and wear her hair tattered and uncombed" (Nwannennaya & Nkama, 2018, p. 51). The widow's hair must be cut (Atindanbil, et al. 2015). Sossou (2002) saw that some traditional Igbo societies in Nigeria had rituals like locking the widow in the same room as the body and making her sleep on the grave of her husband.

In states like Enugu, Edo, and Oyo, widows have to drink the water used to wash the body and take an oath with a kola nut on the forehead of their dead husband. When someone swears, they get hit in the head with two broomsticks. Women's Rights Watch-Nigeria (2013) says that if a widow doesn't take part in the funeral rituals, her family will beat her up, reject her, and take away her inheritance, which includes her children.

In Yoruba culture, it is thought that a widow should not wash or dress for seven days after her husband dies. After a year of crying for their dead husband, widows must sit on the floor or a mat, let their hair grow out, cook and eat from broken pots, and bathe at night. This is their last widowhood ritual (Olukayode, 2015). In the next section, we will talk about widowhood rites in Kenya.

2.9 Widowhood Rites among some Ethnic Groups in Kenya

Before women can go back into society, they have to go through a cleansing ritual that includes their sexual parts. A widow was seen as culturally impure and a threat to the community, so she had to stay on her homestead for a whole year. During this time, a widow had a dream where she had sex with the person who had died. Her sex dream told her that the widow was now ready to be cleansed.

After the last ceremony for the dead, widowhood was no longer a taboo. Then, men in the community were given widows to care for and meet their physical and emotional needs. Because of this ritual, widows and their new sexual partners may get HIV/AIDS. If the family thinks that HIV/AIDS caused the death, they should hire a professional cleaner and give him alcohol. Then, he is taken to the widow's house and forced to take part in a sex ritual. Family members sometimes make sure that sexual contact actually happens, which completes the cultural cleansing. Sex is a big deal.

This is because the main purpose of cleansing is to free the widow from "okola" (bondage) and let her have children to carry on the lineage of the person who died. "Jakowiny" are cleaners who help the guardian take charge of the widow. They do everything they can to make sure the guardian can take care of the widow.

2.10 Spirituality and Widowhood Practice

In the sense that you all share the same belief system, spirituality can be described as an act of social belonging. This social setting is sometimes referred to as a community, an ethnic group, a village, a clan, or another type of human grouping. These social practices and beliefs make up what is known as "culture." Spirituality is the individual's search for answers to fundamental questions about life, meaning, and one's relationship to the sacred

or transcendent, which may or may not result in the development of religious rituals and the formation of communities (Michael, Crowther & Schmid, 2003). A widow is a member of a community and one of these cultural groups. These communities have their definitions of wrong and right, which govern how they do things. As a result, whatever practices, rituals, and spiritual processes a widow must go through are defined by these belief systems, as Amlor and Owusu (2016) discovered that these beliefs were the best way to express their faith in life after death. This gives the widow a cultural identity, and breaking the rules of these beliefs is seen as a bad thing that can have dire consequences.

These communities' or cultural groups' spiritual belief systems aid in their response to difficult situations (Michael, et al., 2003). The available literature has not yet fully established the psychological impact of these spiritual beliefs. According to Pemunta and Alubafi (2016), this spiritual belief violates the widow's rights and affects their security, physical well-being, and psychological health.

Pemunta and his colleague were unable to explain how it affects widows psychologically. They were also unable to determine whether these beliefs positively impacted these widows' social security. The mention of security conjures up images of the physical pain these widows may endure due to the spiritual rituals they follow. Pemunta and Alubafi (2016) say that spiritual traditions make many good things happen in people's emotional, spiritual, psychological, and social lives, but it is not clear how many.

Michael, et. al. (2003) say that spirituality is often overlooked as a way for women to deal with the death of their spouse. This is despite the fact that there are many factors that contribute to widows' ability to adapt to their new roles. Spirituality, according to the

authors, is a person's search for answers about life, its meaning, and his or her connection to the sacred or transcendent. Both spirituality and religion can help each other grow.

2.11 Trauma and Grief

It comes from the Greek word trauma, which means "wound" (Denniston & Murray, 2009). This can be true for both physical and mental wounds. Because becoming a widow is a mental journey, that's what we'll talk about. The loss of a loved one was included in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR; APA, 2000) definition of trauma (Altmaier, 2019). Trauma is caused by a painful event, either physical or mental, that causes immediate damage to the body or shock to the mind. Psychological traumas are emotional shocks that have a long-term effect on a person's personality, like being rejected, getting a divorce, or losing a loved one (Denniston & Murray, 2009).

A traumatic event is the death of one's husband. According to Briere and Scott (2006), a traumatic event is hugely upsetting and temporarily exhausts an individual's internal resources. People's cultural beliefs, social support (like a supportive family or community structure), and the developmental stage at which they understand and experience an event can all play a role in how an event is seen and thought of (Samhsa, 2014).

Grief from a traumatic event is more likely to be hard to deal with. Also, the emotions that come with traumatic grief are much stronger. (Id et al. 2018) say, the shock and unexpected nature of the loss can be traumatic and lead to intrusive, preoccupying thoughts or body responses that are, in essence, distorted survival mechanism. This is in addition to mourning whatever was lost unexpectedly.

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is also related to prolonged grief disorder, says Djelantik et al. (2018). People sometimes use one word for the other. People with prolonged grief disorder miss the person who died very much and think about them all the time, which can get in the way of their daily lives. There is evidence that people are more likely to develop complicated grief disorders if the loss was caused by something traumatic, like an accident or a natural disaster. For many people, losing a loved one may be the most painful way to lose a family member.

However not all sudden or terrible losses cause traumatising grief. Some people's grief is not hard to deal with. But some people may show both signs of trauma and grief. They might not want to talk about the person they lost at all, or they might obsess over how that person died. It can be hard to tell the difference between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), grief, and traumatic grief because of the trauma that is part of each (Roberts, Thomas, and Morgan 2016). PTSD is based on fear, while grief is based on loss. Grief from a traumatic event will cause both of these things, as well as a feeling of helplessness (Almeida 2018).

2.12 Post-traumatic Growth (PTG)

Tedeschi and Calhoun coined "posttraumatic growth" in the early 1990s (Tedeschi & Calhoun 1996). The authors defined it broadly as a profound personality transformation due to challenging life events that a person goes through. According to this geological analogy, for someone to grow after trauma, their core beliefs and reasons for being must have been shaken.

PTG is a tendency for some people to report significant changes in their self-perception, life philosophy, and social relationships after stressful or traumatic life events

(Tedeschi, 1999). The person whose development has progressed far beyond the traumatic event preceding a crisis or stress or a shift in people's ability to withstand and recover from highly stressful situations. (Tedeschi, Calhoun, & Charlotte 2014). According to Tedeschi and Calhoun, the individual survives and undergoes significant changes beyond the previous state of affairs. Posttraumatic growth is more than just a return to normalcy; it is a profound improvement experience for some people. According to Jayawickreme and Blackie (2014), it is a positive shift in perceptions and attitudes.

It is the positive psychological transformation that occurs due to a person's struggle with traumatic events in their life. A PTG is a subjective evaluation and evaluation of a specific traumatic event. Traumatic events can assist people in learning new skills and abilities that they did not previously possess.

One of the life's crises that can cause PTG, according to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2014), is grief. A significant component of the positive change that people experience in the aftermath of trauma is a shift in their perception of themselves, their priorities in life, and their place in the universe. These are areas that some consider religious and, more broadly, "existential" (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1996).

According to Hill and Pargament (2003), religion is a process of searching for meaning and significance. The ultimate questions about the importance of life and the transcendent usually, but not always, arise from religious traditions. When confronted with a difficult situation, people have a variety of experiences. Depending on the person at the centre of the case, these experiences could be positive or negative. The DSM-IV/TR has classified the kind of exposure that qualifies as traumatic.

Pai et al.(2017) say the exposures are indirect exposures from a family member's or other close associate's trauma experience and repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of a traumatic event. Widowhood rituals are recurring events or activities that a widow must go through from the day her husband dies until the rituals and rites are traditionally completed. Every stage of the event presents a new challenge that must be overcome. Some of these ritual events are traumatic for the widow (Wuraola, 2016), but she must go through them. For example, sleeping with a dead husband's corpse (Sulumbakapuma 2018) is a requirement to prove one's innocence of a husband's death, as is sleeping on the husband's grave (Sossou, 2002) for the same purpose.

According to Samhsa (2014), the consequences of traumatic events impose a significant burden on individuals, families, and traditional societies and challenges for public institutions and service systems. While many people who experience a traumatic event can move on with their lives with no long-term negative consequences, others struggle and experience traumatic stress reactions. Though traumatic events place a heavy burden on people, they do not always result in adverse outcomes. There are times when good things happen after a bad thing occurs (Jayawickreme and Blackie 2014).

PTG is the experience of positive change as a result of dealing with significant life stressors, and it has been reported that many people dealing with a wide range of essential life stressors, including bereavement, say a positive change in their situation (Calhoun et al. 2010). PTG stands for positive changes experienced due to coping with major life crises. Calhoun et al. (2010) emphasised that the importance of PTG typically occurs in the context of major life-challenging events, with the attendant conditions of psychological distress and incredible anguish.

Posttraumatic experiences can also catalyse critical self-awareness and change (Tedeschi et al. 2018b). It is a universal phenomenon, and people who have grown due to trauma have a better chance of bringing cultural change to their community (Tedeschi et al. 2018c). PTG is simply a positive change after a bereavement (Calhoun et al., 2010). Even though negative thoughts and emotions usually accompany grief, Calhoun and his colleagues believe individuals can develop positive emotions after grieving. However, their work does not mention the factor responsible for this positive emotional development.

PTG is influenced by a variety of factors: the severity of stressors, social support, coping through in-depth contemplation to make sense of events dealing through acceptance, and spiritual/religious management through beliefs (Subandi et al., 2014). When a survivor notices that, following the adversity, they are a person with increased abilities and strengths compared to their self-perception before the trauma, a greater sense of personal power develops (Lindstrom et al., 2013). If the encounter with the event catalyses spiritual growth, trauma can result in positive spiritual change and development. Following a stressful event, a person's faith in a higher being may strengthen and act as a coping mechanism in the cognitive processes associated with the search for meaning (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001). Increased self-disclosure about negative personal experiences leads to a warmer and healthier relationship with others. As a result, the individual may feel a stronger emotional connection to others (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004a). Following that, the survivor begins to accept assistance from others, improve their use of existing social networks, or create new ones (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001).

It is important to know the difference between PTG and the words optimism, resilience, hope, and hardiness. All of these things have been talked about as personal traits

that might help people deal with things that are very stressful. The main difference between the two ideas is that PTG, also called "learning through the struggle process," is a way to deal with stress (Carr & Bodnar-Deren, 2009). Growth is not the only thing that has caused change, which includes adapting to a circular economy, situations, and a simple return to the beginning, but also for a new person to show up from the rebuilding of his or her life with new meanings based on strength (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a)

After something bad happens in their lives, like the death of a loved one, people get to try new things, become interested in different things, and move toward seeing life from a different angle, trying to find a balance, and getting stronger (Dědová and Baník 2021). This also affects the relationships between people. Relationships are changing for the better. The sense of closeness and closeness is enhanced throughout the person's illness and death. There is always a shift in how people think about life and existence. There are distinct aspects of life that change, such as priorities, evaluations, spirituality, and the scale of values and tastes (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006). Eleven African-American widows were interviewed as part of a qualitative study that looked at what it is like to be a widow (López et al. 2015). The results showed that the people who took part were able to have good things happen to them after the death of their spouse. For example, they talked about how they felt more independent and freer after their spouse died. They also said that they needed to change their goals, their outlook on life, stay busy, and do things with other people. But the people who took part said that they had to go through painful bereavement feelings before they could feel the benefits and PTG.

Studies show that many people who have been through trauma also go through positive changes in their minds (Zoellner and Maercker 2006). Posttraumatic growth is the

subjective experience of positive psychological change that a person says happened after they went through a traumatic event. Some examples of positive psychological change are appreciating life more, setting new priorities in life, feeling stronger, seeing new possibilities, getting closer to friends and family, and having a better spiritual life (Tedeschi, Calhoun, and Charlotte 2014).

People say that these good things happened after very stressful events, either because of the event itself or because of what they learned while trying to deal with the event (Khursheed and Shahnawaz 2020b). Posttraumatic growth is what happens to people who not only recover from trauma, which means they get back to how they were functioning before the trauma, but also use it as an opportunity to grow as people. Those people get over trauma by having better psychological functioning in certain areas.

Different words are used to talk about growth after a traumatic event. PTG has also been called finding benefits (Ramos and Leal 2013), stress-related growth (Khursheed & Shahnawaz, 2020), thriving (Tedeschi et al. 2014), positive psychological changes (Sahana et al. 2018), and adversity growth (Linley and Joseph 2004).

2.13 Intimate relationships with others

Everyone has different life experiences and backgrounds so everyone will react differently to a traumatic event. What is traumatic to one person may not be such distressing to another. Everyone processes and recovers from trauma in their unique way, and it can have varying effects on relationships, confidence, and overall safety.

Relationships with other people are critical to our mental and emotional well-being and survival as humans. We have an innate desire to be near other people. Social support is an essential aspect of being human. As a result, when social relationships fail or are

negatively affected, they can significantly impact our mental health and well-being. One of the most important aspects of relationships in society is that they help you to be strong and stable in life. Problems and complications are unavoidable in life. You never give up on your relationships, no matter how complicated the situations are, which makes you internally strong enough to deal with any problem in life. We always need someone to encourage and support us when we are down, and no one can do that better than our family and friends. It is an important relationship in a society to have someone always willing to help and support you when you need it. The most significant benefit of community involvement is that it provides life's lessons.

When people go through traumatic events, they often feel the need to talk about what happened and how it affected them. This can make them more open about themselves than they were before. Even though people's reactions in the support network vary (Dakf & Taylor, 1990), self-disclosure may give you a chance to try out new behaviours, which can then be aimed at the best people in the support network. Realizing how vulnerable you are can make you more open with your feelings, more willing to accept help, and more likely to use social supports you had been ignoring before. Getting along well with other people is helped by being more aware of them and trying to get along better with them (Collins et al., 1990). Because of the trauma, people may become closer to each other, more sensitive and compassionate toward others, and more open with them.

A renewed sense of belonging to a group or community, even at the national level, is a big part of the meaning-making process because it is so important for the healthy processing of trauma and its effects on social interactions, like more self-disclosure and trust in social relationships (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2012).

People's social connections can change how they treat others and how much they trust them. What is missing is a better understanding of how social identities and PTG affect how people deal with crises in the social sphere. Notably, the PTG has been studied as a separate dimension in the literature despite the fact that it has both individual and social aspects. So, it is possible that the importance of each size wasn't given enough attention.

Those dimensions involving social changes, such as the relating to others dimension, may play a role in the relationship between social identities and responses of trust toward others, whereas those involving individual changes, such as personal strength, may not. (Ellena et al., 2021). PTG has been linked to the positive strategies of seeking social support and reappraisal (Amundson, 2014). According to research, social support mediates the relationship between adaptive use of spiritual resources in coping and PTG; however, positive reappraisal coping is more strongly related to PTG.

Trauma survivors often look for social support and talk about their feelings with others. These are important psychosocial functions (Vazquez 2011). Because social sharing of emotions is often accompanied by social support, empathy, and pro-social behaviour, it is possible that they can predict PTG when combined with a higher sense of social integration (Benight and Bandura 2004). In fact, Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2004) model of things that make PTG easier includes emotional disclosure.

They say that trauma and survival stories are always important in PTG because they force survivors to deal with questions of meaning and the reconstruction of meaning (Jacobs, 2018). Informal social communication that focuses on helping others and doing the right thing can help people who have been through a traumatic event believe in the goodness and controllability of the social world again. (Access, 2018) says that benefit-

finding is improved when people talk about their feelings with others and look for social support as a way to deal with stress. Rituals and other group-based ways of dealing with stress also help. This is because it helps people get along with each other and feel good about themselves.

After a traumatic event, a person may not be able to move on in a healthy way if they cannot meet these needs. People who tend to block or repress negative thoughts tend to deal with stress by praying and avoiding avoidant behaviours. On the other hand, more positive ways of coping, like taking part in social or public activities to talk about what happened, are said to be linked to a tendency to keep negative thoughts hidden. This seems to mean that different ways of thinking may be linked to different ways of dealing with and expressing emotions, which can help or hurt a person's ability to recover from trauma (Compeau et al., 2014).

After the crisis is over, the person will have to figure out what happened and deal with stress and loss. So, he might turn to his family and friends for help and support (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). When a person talks more about bad things that have happened to them, they may feel a stronger emotional connection with other people and a sense of closeness and intimacy in their relationships (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004a). After that, the person starts to better accept help from others and make better use of social networks they already have or start new ones (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001). In fact, it might make people think repeatedly about their relationships. Because of this, some relationships may become more important, while others may become less important or even be terminated (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a).

2.14 New Possibilities

Post-traumatic growth can also be seen when a person realises that their life has new options or that they could take a different path (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a). When a person realises that some goals are no longer possible, they can make new plans and change important parts of their assumed world to reflect their new life situation. This is an important step in the healing process. When a person is in a socially supportive environment, telling others about this internal process may help them think about and process the trauma. At some point, trauma survivors may be able to do meta-cognition or reflect on how they've dealt with events in their lives. They may realise that they've spent a lot of time changing how they think about themselves and their lives. This becomes a part of the person's life story, and they learn to appreciate new, more sophisticated ways to deal with things that happen in their lives.

While dealing with adversity, the survivor learns about new options for his life in several areas (Fortin 2020). Getting on a new path in life has to do with having a new philosophy of life that changes your old assumptions and core beliefs. This opens up new possibilities and chances that did not exist before the trauma (Tedeschi et al. 1998)

2.15 A greater sense of personal strength

Another area of posttraumatic growth is a general sense of increased personal strength or the realisation that you already have personal strength. People often feel more vulnerable when they see themselves as strong (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004a). This is almost a contradiction. People grow in this area when they realise that bad things can and do happen. When they realise they can handle the situation, then, they develop the feeling that they can handle just about anything.

Personal resilience strengths are the unique attributes associated with healthy development and life success, also known as internal assets or emotional competencies. They do not cause resilience; instead, positive developmental outcomes show that this innate capacity is used. (Carr, 2019) identifies four categories of often overlapping personal strengths or manifestations of resilience:

- I. Led to social competence: "Social competence is a handy indicator of children's overall positive adaptation or health" (Luthar & Burak, 2000, p. 30). Social competence is a part of the traits, skills, and attitudes that are needed to connect with and care about other people. It can be anything from having a "easy" personality to being kind to others. Goleman says that social competence is one of the five parts of emotional intelligence (1995). Problem solving: This category includes many abilities, including planning and flexibility, resourcefulness, critical thinking, and insight. The quality of figuring things out is the glue that holds them together as a category. In resilience research, this is often referred to as good intellectual functioning (Carr, 2019).
- II. Autonomy: The autonomy category is made up of many interconnected and overlapping subcategories of traits that have to do with how a person feels about themselves, their identity, and their power. Autonomy is the ability to act on your own and take charge of your environment. In motivational psychology, it is the most important personal strength that makes other strengths and intrinsic motivation work.
- III. Being independent is also linked to good health and feeling good about yourself. Being autonomous means acting in a way that makes you feel free and in control

of your actions. When people are on their own, they are happy to do what they are doing, and they do it with a sense of interest and commitment. Their actions are based on who they really are (Solano and Cosentino 2016).

- IV. A sense of purpose: This group of interconnected strengths includes goal-setting, optimism, creativity, and a deep belief that one's life has meaning and a place in the universe. Based on a focus on a bright and interesting future, these assets are likely the most powerful in getting young people to have healthy lives despite problems (Bentum et al. 2012). A strong focus on the future has been linked to academic success, a positive sense of self, and less health-risky behaviour (Carr, 2019).

When a person thinks they are stronger, they see that they have more abilities to deal with challenges and problems in the future and even to change things that need to be changed (Ramos and Leal 2013). The main character makes it clear that the event changed him and gave him more skills and strengths than he had before. But along with a stronger sense of one's own strength comes an awareness of one's own weakness and a clear understanding of how traumatic events in one's life can hurt them (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a).

2.16 Spiritual Change/ Development

Some people change for the better when they deal with stress and loss by growing in their spiritual and existential understanding. People who are not religious or who actively do not believe in God can also grow in this area. There can be more interest in basic existential questions, and that interest may feel like growth in and of itself (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004a).

There are existential parts to a posttraumatic growth area, and for many people, depending on their culture and situation, there are also spiritual and religious parts. When someone close to them dies, it can change how they see themselves, how they feel about being mortal, and, for some, how they feel about their connection to something beyond themselves. Rogers et al. (2008) say that religion/spirituality can be a framework for growth by giving people a stronger sense of meaning and purpose. It can also be a way to grow by deepening one's faith and conviction.

A study by Khursheed and Shahnawaz (2020c) supports the serial mediation model of trauma and PTG through spirituality. This model says that trauma would lead to spirituality, which would lead to self-compassion, which would lead to PTG. They found that religion and spirituality can help people deal with the effects of trauma, and that trauma can help people understand religion and spirituality better. Posttraumatic growth is usually linked to positive religious coping, openness, readiness to face existential questions, religious participation, and an innate religiousness (Khursheed & Shahnawaz, 2020). According to a study by Askay and Magyar-Russell (2009), people who rely on spiritual or religious beliefs to help them deal with trauma may have a better ability to deal with PTG.

Middle-aged or older people who have been through traumas and used spirituality to deal with them often have post-traumatic growth (PTG). Young university students, whose sense of meaning in life is strongly linked to both spirituality and coping, didn't change much, according to Amundson (2014). (Chan & Rhodes, 2013). Spiritual ideas may make PTG easier and improve quality of life by creating a network of people who can help.

Cognitive engagement with spiritual beliefs and active spiritual practises can be an important part of processing a traumatic event, leading to more stable and adaptable ideas (Amundson, 2014). Spiritual coping is strongly linked to PTG when spiritual resources are used in ways that are helpful. When spiritual resources are used in ways that are not helpful, the link to PTG is weaker, less consistent, and sometimes harmful. Positive effect and PTG have been linked to people who use spiritual resources to deal with problems in healthy ways. Overall, spiritual coping has been linked to low levels of stress and a lot of growth after a traumatic event. When spiritual coping is used early on in ways that lead to a spiritual struggle, it can still show a way to grow (Gall et al., 2011). The spiritual battle makes people rethink what they believed before.

Belief structure disruption is at the heart of existential areas like sense of self and spirituality, which are two areas of PTG that are always linked to simultaneous distress (Amundson, 2014). A recent study found that cognitive processing is the most important link between adaptive spirituality-based coping and PTG (Bosson et al., 2012). People have said that spirituality may not be necessary for coping and that PTG can be achieved only by consciously processing the event.

Because trauma survivors are strong enough to deal with the stressful situation, in some ways, they are more open to religious questions or have a sense of growth in religious or spiritual matters (Büssing 2019). As a result, faith in a higher religious power may grow after a traumatic event, and it may also help people find meaning in their lives (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001). But even people who are not religious can grow spiritually. This is not just true for people who already have a strong religious or spiritual connection (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004a). Pargament et al. (2006) say that how trauma survivors grow

spiritually depends on how close they were to religion and spirituality before the trauma and how they see the event as the cause of the trauma (i.e., if they feel safe or if they feel angry and wronged by a higher religious power, there are new chances)

2.17 Appreciation of Life

People who have gone through hard times often gain a new appreciation for life in general, and for many of its smaller parts. They also change their ideas about what is most important. When someone appreciates what they still have more, their priorities may change in a big way. A change in priorities that is out of the ordinary is when "little things" like a child's smile and spending time with a toddler become more important, and when things that were once taken for granted become more important (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004a).

Many people who have been through traumatic events begin to appreciate small, everyday things while dismissing major life issues. Family, friends, and small, simple pleasures may be perceived as more critical than previously prioritised items (Ogińska-Bulik 2014). As a result of the acute event, individuals may exhibit an increased sense of strength, effectiveness, confidence in themselves and their abilities, and faith in future events. Such people recognise their improved survival skills in difficult situations, recognise their abilities, and set new goals. Trauma can also cause changes in existential (religious) beliefs. Those who have been through a traumatic experience are more likely to appreciate and live life consciously, and their life philosophy becomes more mature, meaningful, and satisfying.

People who do event-related deliberate rumination are thought to think about the event and its effects on purpose after a traumatic event. People who have event-related

intrusive reflection, on the other hand, have thoughts and images about the possibility that it happens on its own (Triplett et al., 2012a). For example, people who have been through a traumatic event may first try to understand what happened. They say things like, "My husband did die," to try to deal with their new reality. At this stage of rumination, thoughts and images may keep coming back to you. This is probably a natural response to a big event in your life (Cann et al. 2010)

On the other hand, intrusive thoughts that keep coming back and become obsessive may be a sign of unresolved issues or a failure to deal with worries. They may also be a sign of psychological distress (Taku et al., 2009). So, people who have a lot of "intrusive rumination" will also have a lot of "post-traumatic stress symptoms" (Taku et al., 2008). It is important for dealing with the emotional pain caused by the event so that they can deal with it more consciously instead of meditating in a way that doesn't help. But some pain may be what keeps people paying attention to the event in a way that is good (Taku et al., 2009).

Many trauma survivors may start to actively process information in a way that helps them deal with the reality of what happened and is more reflective and deliberate than automatic and intrusive once they learn to deal with their emotions better and understand what happened (Ifeagwazi & Chukwuorji, 2014). Conscious thinking is about understanding the experience, finding meaning, and making a new story about your life (Calhoun et al., 2010).

2.18 Stress from Trauma and Growth after Trauma

Trauma often leads to a number of unhealthy reactions, with posttraumatic stress disorder being the most common (Tuck & Patlamazoglou, 2019). Ortega-Williams et al.

(2021), on the other hand, found that breast cancer survivors with high levels of PTG had lower levels of posttraumatic stress and a better quality of life. This could be because PTG is linked to using good ways to deal with traumatic events (Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2014).

Increases in well-being measures like those found in the PTGI are linked to a faster return to baseline cortisol levels after stressful events (Tedeschi et al., 2014), a slower CD4 T-cell decline and lower mortality rates in HIV-positive men (Bower, Kemeny, Taylor, & Fahey, 1998), and lower mortality rates in heart attack survivors (Bower, Kemeny, Taylor, & Fahey, 1998). (Affleck, Tennen, Croog, & Levine, 1987). Studies that looked at the link between traumatic stress and PTG came up with mixed results (Cordova, Cunningham, Carlson, & Andrykowski, 2001; Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2003).

Barskova and Oesterreich's (2009) systematic review of 68 real-world studies cleared up this confusion by showing that the relationship between posttraumatic stress and growth is not straight. This showed that lower levels of PTG are linked to both very low and very high levels of distress after a traumatic event. Kleim and Ehlers' (2009) prospective study of 180 adults who had survived an assault found that very low levels of distress do not lead to the cognitive rumination that is necessary for growth.

Very high levels of distress, on the other hand, were linked to lower PTG than intermediate levels because they make it harder for people to deal with traumatic events in a healthy way (Amundson, 2014). Tuck and Patlamazoglou (2019) say that traumatic stress disorder-related intrusive thoughts could be seen as proof that a person is processing a stressful event, which leads to PTG. Tuck and Patlamazoglou say that people with a higher level of cognitive complexity are more likely to report PTG after a traumatic event (2019).

Barskova and Oesterreich's (2009) review of PTG in people living with serious traumatic events found that there is a positive link between reappraisal coping before the traumatic event and PTG afterward. In both studies, coping interventions made PTG go up, which suggests that cognitive reappraisal coping may be needed to make PTG go up (Barskova & Oesterreich, 2009). All of the studies' results suggest that there is a link between cognitive ability, being able to deal with a traumatic event well, and PTG (Westphal & Bonanno, 2007).

2.19 Bereavement in Widowhood and PTG

Bereavement is an unquestionably hard thing to go through (source), and for decades, research on bereavement has focused on negative effects like mental and physical pain (Bank, 2021). Still, a recent shift in thinking suggests that traumatic events like bereavement can also help people grow after a traumatic event (Company, 2020). Not only do these people survive or do well because of the grief process, but they also say that they have grown in different ways because of the loss.

Rzeszutek (2017) says that 30–70% of people who have been through traumatic events, like grief, end up changing for the better. PTG is when a person's response to adversity changes in a meaningful way (Rzeszutek, 2017). This is a process of growth in which a person outperforms their pre-crisis level of adaptation, psychological functioning, or life awareness, either because they overcame the adversity (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) or because they learned how to cope with it (Pals & McAdams, 2004).

Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) define PTG as a change in a person that goes beyond their ability to resist and avoid being hurt by highly stressful situations. It is a change that goes beyond the level of adaptation that a person had before the trauma. It changes the way

things are or makes a change in quality. This review will use the words "trauma" and "traumatic event" interchangeably to talk about the death of a loved one, which can be a very traumatic event. Again, in this work, the word "bereavement" refers to the experience itself, as well as the ways that grief is shown and the ways that family members' minds and bodies change as a result.

Research on grief shows that losing a loved one can make a person question the truth of their core beliefs. From a constructivist point of view (Michael & Cooper, 2013a), bereavement is the process of rebuilding a world of meaning after a loss (Burke, Neimeyer, and Elacqua 2014). Michael & Cooper (2013a) say that violent, sudden, or seemingly meaningless deaths can make the world seem unpredictable, dangerous, or unfair, while non-violent deaths can also make a person question the truth of their core beliefs. People can make sense of their feelings after the death of a loved one by engaging in meaning-making activities.

There is evidence that people who are grieving do better than those who struggle to make sense of what happened. Studies have shown that people who grieve in a normal way are able to make sense of the loss and move on with their lives. On the other hand, complicated grief reactions are linked to not being able to find meaning (Hagman 2016). Few studies have looked directly at the link between PTG and bereavement. Over the last ten years, a growing number of empirical studies (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999; Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2001) have shown that there is a reasonable link between the two (Triplett et al. 2012). But not much is known about PTG and how it affects people who have lost a loved one (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004b).

2.20 Religious Rituals and Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

Srivastava & Barmola (2013) observed that rituals are essential for spirituality. They constitute a group of activities mainly symbolic in their observance and performance and could be dictated by a community or religious belief. A ritual is a concept that explains one or more actions and represents the social structure in society (Lan, 2018) by which people in a community are symbolically identified. They could be called the "essence" that helps keep and organise human activities (Novikov & Novikov, 2012). Rituals take different forms and shapes depending on where and the purpose of their observance.

Widowhood rituals are observed as part of the rite of passage for the dead. Amlor and Owusu (2016) observed that research scholars in Africa categorised widowhood rituals into three categories. The first category considers widowhood rites and rituals as damaging to women and only aims to highlight the suffering of widows. The second describes the practice as dehumanising and striving because of the patriarchal nature of African communities (Amlor and Owusu, 2016). The third group of scholars believes that most African cultural societies' widowhood rituals and practices were harmful rather than modern and archaic.

Atindanbila et al., (2014) posit that most widowhood rituals are intended to rid the widow of the perceived befoulment identified with the passing of her loved one and reduce the impact of customary threats associated with widowhood. This is a view held by most Ewe traditional societies because they believe that life is all about spirituality in that we continue to live, even after death. On the contrary, some traditional communities in Africa think the widowhood rituals signify respect for the dead. They are social ceremonies that a widow goes through as a form of care for the deceased partner (Atindanbila et al. 2014)

Imafidon (2018) believes that the deceased individual is not pure on earth and needs to be cleansed of the earthly dirt through the rituals to join the spirit world successfully. He stated that the dead could only find their place as ancestors, rather than vengeful ghosts, if their loss had been properly registered, not only by the individuals closest to them but by the social groups of which they were members. The Ewe believe that the physical world is contaminated with evil and ruled by greedy and self-seeking individuals. So, to get into the ancestral world, all funeral rituals and rites must be done thoroughly. This will make the journey to the spirit world free of any problems.

Widowhood rituals were described as avoidance, seclusion, and forbearance. Tati (2018) used the terms "spiritual purification," "chanting, and "forfeits" to describe rituals in African traditional societies. So, the widowhood rituals have some significance in traditional African cultures, and not necessarily for the gratification of the dead man.

These widowhood practices, which emanate from the culture of the people and the family belief systems, are not detrimental to the soundness of the widows but could only be described as harsh in some cases (Edewor & George, 2012). Widowhood rites are indications of the customary purification endorsed by tradition for all individuals in a traditional society following the demise of any community member. Widowhood rituals cut across ethnic groups, nations, and continents. The difference may be culturally observed as well as their spiritual significance to the people.

Fraser and Nwadinobi (2018) outlined several widowhood rituals and practices identified as detrimental to widows in various countries. These are referred to as widow inheritances. This Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWR) research is sponsored by the Department for International Development in Britain (DFID). Table 1 indicates the type

of widowhood practices regarded as constituting violence against widows in the identified developing countries. Though the specified practices reflect some widowhood rituals, the research failed to indicate the cultural definition of widowhood violence. As long as there is proof that these practices did not improve the widows' quality of life after they went through them, they could be violent. This is what Calhoun and Tedeschi (1998) say.

Imafidon (2018) noted that women who have lost their spouses face apparent misogyny, dehumanisation, and gender bias within African traditions compared to men who have the same traumatic experience. This is evident in the demands imposed on women for mourning the death of a partner in African traditions. The author alluded to the social structures for coping with the traumatic loss of loved ones that are more appealing to men than women. Indeed, the systems do not just make the woman look bad, they may make her more traumatised and more challenging to deal with and recover from the loss. Table 1 indicates the type of widowhood practice held in the identified countries.

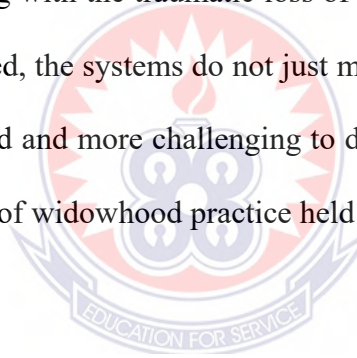


Table 1: Some Widowhood Rituals in Selected Countries

Countries where there is evidence that harmful cultural practices against widows are most pronounced/significant

	Widow inheritance	Widow cleansing	Theft of widow properties	Community rejection	Widow witchcraft accusations
Afghanistan			✓	✓	
Bangladesh			✓		
DRC		✓	✓		✓
Ghana		✓		✓	✓
Kenya	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Malawi					
Nepal			✓	✓	✓
Nigeria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rwanda			✓		
Sierra Leone			✓		
South Sudan	✓		✓		
Tanzania	✓	✓	✓		
Turkey					
Uganda	✓	✓	✓		
Zambia	✓	✓	✓		
Zimbabwe	✓	✓	✓		✓

Source: (Fraser and Nwadinobi 2018)

2.21 Grief and Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

According to Brand et al. (2008), grief refers to intense mental distress or suffering, particularly after the death of a beloved partner, while Johnsen and Afgun (2021) said grief is a response to the loss of a cherished person and it is an emotional process that is typically not ordered or predictable. Loss is expressed in various ways, including grief and mourning. The loss is outward and sometimes a ritualised expression. Mourning is how people adapt to a loss and is heavily impacted by cultural beliefs, customs, and rituals. Grief is a personal, internalised psychological process unique to each individual and can occur after a death or loss (Casarett, Kutner, & Abrahm, 2001). Sadness, heartache, loneliness, and anger are all feelings that can accompany grief. Depression, anxiety, eating or feeding disorders, sleep disturbances, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are mental health symptoms or diseases that can ensue.

Grief is a feeling of sadness and sorrow. Grief can also be thought of as a series of reactions, such as depression, anger, and a lack of interest in things (C. Michael & Cooper, 2013b). These reactions affect both cognitions and physical states, such as loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, and physical complaints. Johnsen and Afgun (2021) say that grief studies go back to the early 1700s, when Burton noticed a cluster of symptoms that he called "melancholy." Id et al. (2018) say that people who have lost a loved one need to do "grief work" to deal with their sadness and get back to normal life.

Most people who have lost a loved one feel pain all the time, such as when they think about the person they lost or feel sad. However, these feelings eventually go away. Some people who are hurting feel grief for a long time or even forever. This kind of long-

term grief is different from normal grief in that the person going through it has a lot of trouble working, making friends, and doing other things in life (Brand et al., 2008).

Grief conceptualization is based on the idea that bereavement only leads to bad feelings in the grief response. Posttraumatic growth, on the other hand, is a concept from positive psychology that shows how bad things, from everyday problems to traumatic events, can lead to long-term personal growth (Brand et al., 2008). After a loss or trauma like the death of a loved one, a cancer diagnosis and treatment, a natural disaster, or a national disaster, there is evidence that people grow as people and as people as people (Roberts et al., 2016). Several words have been used to describe these positive changes, such as "benefit findings" (Johnsen & Afgun, 2021), "stress-related growth" (Ngesa et al., 2020), and "negative growth" (Shear et al., 2006). In this review, the term "posttraumatic growth" is used to describe a positive, long-lasting psychological change that comes from a difficult or traumatic life event (Calhoun et al., 2010)

Grief is one area of life where people can show that they have grown after a traumatic event. People who have lost someone have felt sad, but they have also talked about themes of growth, making meaning, and making sense (Calhoun et al., 2010). Post-traumatic growth includes the emergence of new life possibilities, such as a career change; improvements in interpersonal relationships, such as more empathy for others; shifts in perception of personal strengths and life philosophy; and spiritual or existential transitions (Pearlman et al., 2014).

According to Calhoun et al. (2010), finding benefits and making sense of loss are essential aspects of bereavement adjustment. For example, Fortin (2020) demonstrated that reports of personal growth among parents who had lost a child was associated with better

adjustment. Khursheed and Shahnawaz (2020c) studied meaning-making and benefit finding in people who had lost a loved one and found that both activities predicted adjustment.

Mourning is a manifestation of a widower's grief, love, and respect for the deceased, and it is performed publicly (Imafidon 2018). Imafidon stated that the process could be painful and cruel. To cope with the loss of a spouse, the individual must first work through the emotional grief while also adjusting to the changing situation. When a partner passes away, despair undoubtedly creeps in. However, how this grief manifests itself may differ from one individual to another. Shock, anger, fear, denial, suffering, and resentment are all common emotions experienced by certain people (South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust, 2010). These emotions will fluctuate in intensity and severity over time, and they may overlap or come and go rather than being experienced linearly or predictably. Some people will have had previous experiences with death and loss, making it easier to cope with the present.

Grief is a severe mental distress or suffering, particularly following the death of a loved one. As such, grief is associated with the loss of a significant person and is an emotional response to this loss that is typically chaotic and unpredictable. Grief is the dynamic and life adjustment process following a loss (Brand et al. 2008). It is a universal human experience and highly subjective and individual (Roberts et al. 2016). This means that, while the emotions such as sadness and yearning, associated with grief maybe universal, how we manage and make sense of these emotions is both personal and situational. Robert and his colleagues state that the way we cope with loss is determined by various factors, including our unique psychology, age and stage of development, gender,

and the nature of the relationship with the deceased. Our beliefs about the world associated with our culture account for how we cope with grief.

Bereavement is another term for grieving after the death of a loved one. Bereavement encompasses grief and mourning, the outward and occasionally ritualised expression of loss. According to Bui (2018), it is the emotional response to bereavement, which is the loss of a close relative. Bui posits that bereavement is a source of stress that can exacerbate or precipitate mental disorders (e.g., unipolar major depression). Additionally, complications such as maladaptive thoughts, feelings, or behaviours may occur, intensifying and debilitating acute grief.

Ito et al. (2012) discussed complicated grief. They defined it as a form of suffering in which acute grief is unusually prolonged due to difficulties with the natural healing process. According to a study, the prevalence of complicated grief was 25% among older adults who were actively grieving. Individuals who have experienced complicated grief are at risk for co-occurring mental and physical health problems, including increased mortality, cancer, heart trouble, hypertension, suicidal ideation, and changes in eating habits.

Grief is a process, but feelings of helplessness or distress do not solely characterise it. During the phases' journey, working through changes and learning to rebuild life begins. As the emotions settle and the initial mental strain subsides, it becomes easier to work through feelings and seek solutions for managing emotions and energy. A bereaved person may begin setting future goals through the stage. According to Lim (2013), it was Elisabeth Kübler-Ross who, in her book, "On Death and Dying as the five stages of grief", published in 1969, first highlighted these stages. The steps indicate that grief is a process that takes

time and it is a journey that is unique to each individual. Brand et al. (2008) described the five stages as:

2.21.1 Denial Stage

Denial is a deliberate or unconscious refusal to accept facts, information, reality, or other situations. It is a natural defence mechanism. Denial is frequently used as a temporary defence mechanism by the individual. This sensation is generally replaced by increased awareness of the situations and the people left behind after the death. Specific individuals may become trapped in this stage when confronted with a traumatic change that cannot be ignored. Of course, death cannot be avoided or evaded indefinitely.

2.21.2 Anger Stage

When individuals reach the second stage, they recognise that denial cannot continue. Due to anger, misplaced feelings of rage and envy, the individual is tough to care for. Anyone who represents life or energy is susceptible to projected resentment and jealousy. Individuals experiencing emotional distress may become enraged at themselves and others, particularly those close to them. Knowing this enables one to remain detached and non-judgmental when confronted with someone furious.

2.21.3 Bargaining Stage

The third stage involves the individual's hope to avoid somehow or delay death. Typically, an extended life is negotiated with a higher power for a changed lifestyle. Naturally, those facing death have attempted to bargain with whatever higher power they believe in. Individuals who have suffered less severe trauma can deal with or compromise. For instance, "Can we still be friends?" after a break-up. Bargaining rarely results in a long-term solution, even when it is a matter of life or death.

2.21.4 Depression

Also referred to as preparatory grieving. The dying person begins to comprehend the certainty of death during the fourth stage. As a result, the individual may withdraw into silence, refuse visitors, and spend most of their time crying and grieving. This procedure enables the dying person to detach from objects of love and affection. It is not advised to cheer up someone going through this stage. This is a critical time for grieving to be processed. It is a form of acceptance laced with emotion. It is natural to experience sadness, regret, fear, insecurity, etc. It demonstrates that the individual has, at least, begun to accept reality. This stage focuses on the bereaved person regaining control over their life. Life becomes less chaotic, and focusing on one's physical and mental well-being becomes less difficult.

2.21.5 Acceptance

In this final stage, the individual accepts their own or a loved one's mortality. Again, this stage is highly variable depending on the individual's circumstances, but it generally indicates a degree of emotional detachment and objectivity. Accepting a loss does not imply that you cannot acknowledge its occurrence. However, it is acceptable to seize an opportunity to confront the reality of the event that triggered these emotions, develop strategies for coping with the associated feelings, and move forward. Acceptance and hope do not imply that every day will be happy. However, it does hold out the hope of better days ahead.

Various circumstances influence how well-bereaved spouses fare in phase four of the mourning process. A supporting social system, religious beliefs, family members and friends who are encouraging, and a change in environment are all possible. Many

people appear to cope with bereavement-related emotional pain effectively, and a good number of them do not experience troubling grief or adverse health effects associated with bereavement (Brand et al., 2008).

What is considered normal or uncomplicated grief involves the bereaved individual progressing through a dynamic process comprising overlapping stages that include shock, painful emotions, somatic symptoms, and eventual resolution, as identified by (Imafidon 2018). The death of a spouse can lead to prolonged grief, which can have serious health consequences such as sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, impaired quality of life, and poor physical health (Muhammed, 2020).

Muhammed (2020) postulated that widowhood experience is a significant risk factor that can increase the surviving spouse's mortality rate. Following the loss of a partner, the bereaved spouse may be required to meet needs, such as making critical decisions and handling duties that were previously shared between the two spouses. This assertion implies that for a bereaved spouse to manage daily decisions and responsibilities previously shared by two individuals, it will be tough to meet the varying psychological needs necessary for survival and adjustment to the partner's loss.

2.22 Spirituality and Posttraumatic Growth (PTG)

According to Gall, Kristjansson, Charbonneau and Florack (2009), spirituality can be a vital resource and source of consolation for certain people, but spiritual problems can increase distress and growth. However, they argued that reliance on spiritual or religious coping depended on the broader socio-cultural context of a people. In some societies, mainly secular organisations, where atheistic beliefs are increasing (Calhoun et al., 2010), they stressed that religion and spirituality may not be implicated in PTG for some people.

In contrast, Sinclair et al. (2016) found that spirituality, in particular, its meaning and peace dimensions, acts as a buffer against end-of-life distress and is one of the most significant and most often used coping resources.

Subandi, Achmad, Kurniati and Febri (2014) argued that religious and spiritual beliefs are highly beneficial for individuals seeking to make significant changes in their own lives. Spirituality can serve as the foundation for an individual's life philosophy and provide them with the strength necessary to cope and deal with environmental pressures and provide guidance and assistance in their efforts to comprehend every painful and traumatic event. Thus, spirituality can assist an individual in surviving and progressing through life. The longitudinal study that Gall et al. (2009) conducted concluded that spirituality and religiosity provided individual guidance on behaving and assessing a situation and determining the appropriate course of action and coping strategy.

Sinclair et al., (2016) also found that spirituality, in conjunction with practical and relational factors, influenced certain aspects of PTG, quality of life, and spiritual and physical well-being. They concluded that spirituality is critical and an integral part of an individual's PTG, quality of life, and spiritual well-being. A study examining posttraumatic growth and its relationship to the importance of spirituality and religious practice (Dědová & Baník, 2021) concluded that the importance and practice of spirituality have a beneficial effect on PTG.

According to research, women's advocate for a higher level of personal spirituality are more likely to integrate spirituality into their worldview, and are more likely to rely on spiritual resources to cope (Michael & Cooper, 2013). Spirituality may be one of the most readily accessible resources for dealing with trauma among these populations, particularly

women, who face significant vulnerabilities in contemporary society. Those who have been through a traumatic event are more likely to turn to spiritual resources for assistance in coping (Bray 2013). Those who are actively involved in a spiritual life may more likely use spiritual resources in the aftermath of a traumatic event; however, even those who are not actively engaged in a spiritual life may find themselves using spiritual resources to cope following a traumatic event (Jayawickreme and Blackie 2014).

According to Bray (2013), coping through spirituality appears beneficial for women's mental health outcomes. When people have a secure connection to a 'Higher Power', a sense of spiritual connectedness with others, and benevolent worldviews, their attempts to engage spiritual resources for coping result in less distress and more positive outcomes (Sophia and Cox 2017). According to Sophia & Cox (2017), individuals who have experienced a traumatic event frequently turn to spiritual resources to manage distress during the early stages of trauma recovery.

The authors emphasised that distress may lead an individual to seek resources to assist in coping following a trauma, resulting in the activation of spiritual help. Thus, when spiritual resources are effectively utilised, a trajectory of initial distress, activation of spiritual resources, and pain alleviation are possible.

Spirituality is a multidimensional theoretical construct that refers to an area of human activity that is not specific. Dědová and Baník (2021) say that the essence of spirituality is the transcendence of actually experienced ego, and that spirituality can increase the level of posttraumatic growth (Shahnawaz, & Ghazi, 2020). After some years of trauma, spirituality is a good indicator of positive changes.

Spirituality seems to be able to help people recover from traumatic events because it gives a community a sense of purpose or strengthens the community and faith, which help the process of finding meaning (Czyżowska et al. 2021). Even though the situation and personality play a big role, it has been pointed out how important faith maturity and posttraumatic growth are for the development of subjective well-being in people who have been through trauma. Spirituality, according to Czyowska and colleagues, is a very important buffer in difficult times. There are two ways to look at the link between post-traumatic growth and spirituality. On the one hand, traumatic events can help a person grow spiritually. On the other hand, a person's spirituality can be seen as a resource that helps them deal with hard times (Czyżowska et al. 2021)

2.23 Personal Strength and Posttraumatic Growth PTG

According to Tedeschi et al. (2018), it acknowledges new avenues of exploration in life and the constructive changes in belief and attitude (Jayawickreme and Blackie 2014). Personal strength is an individual's ability to appreciate life and exhibit respect for oneself and what life has to give no matter the hardships faced (Acquaye 2016). This fits into the existential belief that we are the authors of our own life. The ability to appreciate one's self will require personal strength to create a unique identity (Corey 2009).

Peterson et al., (2008) hypothesised that as people experience and cope with loss due to death, they are more likely to learn life lessons that shape their character and increase their strength, resulting in PTG. They defined interpersonal relationships as humour, kindness, leadership, love, social intelligence, and teamwork. Fortitude encompasses courage, honesty, judgement, perseverance, perspective, and self-regulation. Cognition is characterised by beauty, creativity, curiosity, and learning capacity; transcendence entails

demonstrating gratitude, hope, religiosity, and vitality. Fairness is a component of temperance, forbearance, modesty, and prudential behaviour

2.24 New possibilities and Posttraumatic Growth PTG

One might see posttraumatic development in the individual's recognition of new options for their life or an ability to consider new alternative directions in life (Tedeschi et al. 2014). During a challenging life crisis, people may feel they have been put to the test, and they come to see themselves as people who have survived the worst. Some people who have experienced the loss of a loved one experience new possibilities in life (Jayawickreme and Blackie 2014). The new options may include a new life partner, a new job, and new approaches to life challenges. Emotional control gives those who have grown through hardship several alternatives they can employ in the future. When people utilise these tools, they can evolve into even stronger individuals beyond their previous level of capability (Acquaye, 2016).

2.25 Relating to Others and Posttraumatic Growth PTG

Social support is the feeling that someone cares about you and that you have access to help from others and are part of a group of people who care about you (Ajoudani, Jafarizadeh, and Kazamzadeh 2019). It is a multifaceted idea that includes love, acceptance, and respect for a person in many different ways, both emotional and practical. People know that social support is an important part of the environment for understanding how bad things can lead to good things. They think that social support is a part of how people change over time. It changes how people deal with stress and makes it easier for them to adapt to life.

In a longitudinal study to evaluate the impact of social support on PTG, Rzeszutek (2017) established that following trauma, social support appears to have a favourable effect on those with PTG. The tremendous impact is fully mediated between social support measures and physical therapy. Social support stimulates cognitive processes supporting PTG (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1996, 2004). A positive impact of social support on PTG was observed, especially after catastrophic traumatic events. Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006) propose three proximal social world components that are especially essential to the development of PTG. These include significant others' reactions to disclosures about trauma and unity between the survivor's ruminations and the thinking of significant others. According to research (Cadell, Regehr, & Hemsworth, 2003) conducted to determine the factors that contribute to PTG, people who feel associated with others and make an effort to renew their relationships are more prone to growth. They discovered that supporting others is a necessary component of Calhoun and Tedeschi's (1998) posttraumatic growth model.

2.26 Religious Commitment and Post-traumatic Growth

The relationship between religious devotion and PTG was examined by Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji (2014), and it was discovered that there is a significant association between new possibilities, personal strength, relationships with others, and total PTG. Additionally, they found a substantial correlation between religious devotion and PTG. According to their findings, both interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships may be beneficial in aiding an individual's assumptive world reconstruction.

Religious organisations assist individuals in developing a meaningful narrative to make sense of a terrible situation. Davis et al. (2021) also suggested that individuals search

for the sacred to recover from their traumatic experiences. When the researchers examined the moderating influence of religious devotion on the connection between trauma and recovery, they identified a curvilinear effect. The study established that individuals' PTG levels were related to their level of religious devotion (Davis et al. 2021).

An investigation into the change in religiousness and spirituality following disasters found that survivors had true Religious and Spiritual PTG following a tragedy, which helped to improve their post-disaster well-being after the event (Davis et al. 2021). It was also found that there was a significant association between religious devotion and PTG (Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji 2014a). In the study by Acquaye (2016), a spiritual commitment was associated with a positive PTG.

Religion is often defined as a person's or group's adherence to beliefs, doctrines, ethics, rituals, texts, and practises associated with a higher power, or as a person's or group's inner experiences and feelings through which they seek meaning and purpose, as well as their relationships with themselves, their family, others, society, nature, and the significant or sacred (Büssing, 2019). Even though some of the definitions overlap, studies of public opinion show that both religious leaders and ordinary people see religion as a set of rules-based beliefs.

Spirituality, on the other hand, is more private, internal, and self-contained. Religion and spirituality have been found to be important ways for people with long-term or terminal illnesses to deal with their pain. People often think about their lives, what they mean, and the things that have happened to them when they are in stressful situations. This is especially true when they are anxious, in pain, alone, or lacking something (Austin. et al., 2017). People who think a lot about their own deaths and have strong religious beliefs

tend to be more anxious than those with strong spiritual beliefs, who worry much less about their own deaths (MacLeod et al., 2017).

2.27 Relationship among Grieving, Religious Commitment, and PTG in Widowhood

Cornish et al. (2017) defined religious commitment as the adherence to and application of one's religious values, beliefs, and practices in daily life. Positive religious coping is thought to benefit highly religious people the most. Religion, according to Currier et al. (2013), provides a framework for coping with the potential challenges of bereavement. Religious commitment accounts for a significant amount of adjustment and, in various forms, predicts grievers' psychological well-being (Allan & Branton Shearer, 2012).

Religion accounts for most of the dimensions of the grieving process during bereavement. The provision of social support, the strengthening of one's spirituality, the development of the act of forgiveness, and the spending of time praying and meditating are all dimensions that contribute to adjustment during bereavement (Pearlman et al., 2014). Though grieving causes pain and psychological difficulties, the process promotes positive change in an individual's life (Cacciatore & DeFrain, 2015).

People think of religious commitment as including both religious and spiritual practices, behaviours, and experiences that show up in all kinds of institutional and personal settings (Zacchaeus 2021). Religion is seen as the foundation of life in African societies, and the idea of a Supreme Being seems to be engraved in the minds of the people as they face the challenges of daily life. Given how important religion is in traditional African societies, it is likely that a lot of Ghanaians who have gone through very traumatic existential challenges will have PTG (Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji 2014a).

Given that religion is important to many people (Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji 2014a), meaning systems that are organised along religious or spiritual lines might also need to be reorganised and play a key role in coming to terms with the loss of a valued attachment relationship (Wortmann and Park 2009).

2.28 Relationship among Spirituality, Grieving, and PTG

PTG has been studied in relation to bereavement and spirituality, as well as other traumatic experiences such as widowhood (Hillaire, 2020). Depending on which perspective is used and the circumstances of the event, it can be viewed as an empowering strength and advantage or as a source of strain. This is because people analyse and question their sufferings far more frequently than they do their joys (Galea, 2018). People arrive at this point in their lives in various ways because they want to find meaning. As a result, spirituality and PTG are critical for promoting holistic well-being in trauma survivors (Galea, 2018). Spirituality is viewed as a protective force in this context because it brings family members together, in facing reality.

Galea (2018) defined complicated spiritual grief as a spiritual crisis following the death of a loved one. According to Galea, absorbing the harsh reality of the truth is taxing on the living spouse, and secondly, going through the ensuing grieving can lead to a positive adjustment to life (Tedeschi et al., 2014). Spirituality pushes people to move forward in life while remaining in tune with their circumstances. When disaster strikes, people's entire life perspectives are shattered, altering their existing worldviews, including spiritual and religious beliefs, resulting in a struggle to make sense of the traumatic experience within the current spiritual framework (Hillaire 2020).

Some people who have been through trauma become more spiritual as a result. This may help them find meaning in the traumatic event and in their lives as a whole (Walker et al. 2009). Meaning making is thought to be an important part of getting better and growing after a stressful event or experience (Khursheed and Shahnawaz 2020a). Meaning making gives people a more balanced view of the things that happen in their lives. This helps them be less hard on themselves when they fail, and they can use these failures as a chance to grow instead of dwelling on them.

2.29 The Relationship between Trauma, Grief, and PTG

Trauma frequently causes a wide range of psychological stress. Individuals engage in cognitive work to reconstruct their perception of the world after experiencing distress due to a traumatic event. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996; 2004), this acclimation process to trauma aids PTG.

The type of growth an individual experiences in the aftermath of a traumatic event is determined by the stress level (Tuck and Patlamazoglou 2019). Researchers in the field have come to conflicting conclusions about the relationship between traumatic stress and PTG. According to Tuck and Patlamazoglou (2019), intrusive thoughts associated with traumatic stress disorders can be interpreted as evidence that a person is processing a stressful event, which leads to PTG.

Niemeyer (2006) asserted that one grieves not only for the death of a loved one but also for the changes in the lives of those left behind. The surviving spouse attempts to rebuild a new life appropriate for the unique circumstances—the difficulty in navigating the landscape of grief after the death of a beloved husband. Even though people often have

to relearn themselves and the world after a significant loss, Carnelley et al. (2006) discovered that bereavement frequently leads to personal growth.

Grief is the result of a traumatic event. The widow's struggle with the death of a spouse frequently results in a richer existential and spiritual perspective, more meaningful relationships, an increased sense of personal strength, changed priorities, and a richer existential and spiritual view (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The struggle has the potential to produce a new realisation of who they are and what they can do with their lives after the trauma.

2.30 Summary

The literature review focused on the study's key concepts, such as the definition of widowhood, grief, spirituality, PTG, and rituals related to traditional African widowhood practices. It also looked into the connections between spirituality and traditions, rituals and widowhood practice, bereavement and grief, bereavement and PTG, spirituality and PTG, and religious commitment and PTG.

The literature revealed that there are similarities among these concepts. Again, it discovered some commonalities among ethnic groups in Africa in relation to their traditional widowhood practices.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section considers the research philosophy/paradigm. The ontological and epistemological perspectives of research paradigm as well as the research methods are discussed.

3.1 Research Philosophy/Paradigm

A research paradigm is a cluster of world views about scientific inquiry. It dictates which study in a particular discipline influences how research should be done and dictates the interpretation of the results (Bryman 2012). A paradigm is a way of looking at the world, a set of ideas that are used to understand or explain something, usually about a certain subject (Hussain, Elyas, and Nasseef 2013). It is a way to organise what we know, what we can know, and how we can know it. In social science, there are a few main paradigms, and each one has its own unique view of what is known and how we know it. This section looked at some of the most common social science paradigms.

In the context of social research paradigms, Constructivism, Positivism, and Interpretivism represent distinct philosophical approaches. Constructivism posits that reality is actively constructed through interactions between researchers and subjects, emphasizing the subjective nature of knowledge. Positivism, on the other hand, asserts that genuine knowledge is derived from observable, empirical facts and emphasizes quantitative methods, aiming for objectivity and scientific rigour. Interpretivism focuses on understanding social phenomena through exploration of individual perspectives and contextual factors, acknowledging the subjectivity of human experience and rejecting a

singular, objective reality. While Constructivism and Interpretivism share an emphasis on subjectivity, Constructivism emphasizes co-construction of reality, whereas Interpretivism aims to understand the world. In contrast, Positivism stands out for its commitment to empirical, quantitative methods and the pursuit of objective, universal knowledge (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016;; Sköld, 2021) . In the subsequent paragraphs, each of the paradigms will be explained in detail

An interpretive paradigm says that researchers need to know what makes each person different as a social actor (Rehman and Alharthi 2016). Its focus is on doing research with people instead of with things. Interpretivism was propounded as a result of the over usage of positivism (Bonache and Festing 2020). It is the idea that there is not a single, verifiable reality outside of what we can see and feel. It further expresses that there are multiple realities that are made by society. Interpretivism holds the believe that truth and reality are not found, but rather, they are made. Reality is always filtered through our senses, so we can never know it as it **really is**. Interpretive epistemology is based on one's own ideas. Observers cannot get a clear picture of reality without their own worldviews, ideas, and backgrounds getting in the way. On the other hand, foundationalism is the opposite of interpretive ontology. It will not agree to any permanent, unchanging, or foundational standards that everyone can use to know the truth (Hussain et al. 2013).

Researchers are a part of the social reality they are studying; they are not separate from what they are looking into. They think that there are no facts, only interpretations, so the goal is to find out how people see things, find out what they mean, and learn more about the observed case. Interpretive researchers use methods that produce qualitative data. While numerical data could be used, it is not the main focus (Tubey et al., 2015). The goal

of interpretive research is not to figure out what free knowledge and the truth mean and how valuable they are to everyone, instead, it is to try to figure out how different people see the social things they interact with. This idea of what it means to know is a natural result of interpretive ontology.

In contrast to the constructivism research paradigm, which believes in either a single reality or multiple realities and is usually committed to certain research strategies, the pragmatism research paradigm believes in both single and multiple accounts of truth (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016) which may have a subjective, objective, scientific, or humanistic orientation, and which puts utility, practicality, and outcomes at the centre of the research process, rather than the research itself (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). From this point of view, the pragmatic research paradigm shows that positivism and constructivism have similar understanding of how we know what is true and what is real. Also, they have common ways of conducting research (Maarouf, 2019).

Positivism is a branch of philosophy that became popular because of the writings of the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the early 1800s (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020b). Positivism is based on the idea that reality exists apart from people. It is not filtered through our senses and is ruled by laws that do not change. Positivists take the position of realism when it comes to what things are. Positivists try to understand both the natural and social worlds (Sönmez 2013). In nature, there is a cause-and-effect link between things, and once that link is found, those things can be predicted with certainty (Alharahsheh and Pius 2020b). Positivists think that the same is true of the social world. Because reality is independent of time and place, different researchers who look into the same thing will come to the same conclusions (Kaushik and Walsh 2019). Objectivism is the way

positivists think about how we know what we know. Researchers come in as unbiased observers to study things that happen on their own, and they do not change or disturb what they are looking at. They will use language and symbols to describe things as they really are, without changing them in any way. Hussain et al. (2013) posit that positivists think that the world is "out there" and can be studied in a more or less static way. Positivists think that there are laws that govern how things happen in society. They think that by using scientific methods, these laws can be figured out and presented as facts.

3.2 Ontology

Alharahsheh and Pius (2020a) opine that ontology is a philosophical aspect of research that looks at the nature of social entities, specifically whether they are or can be objective entities that exist independently of social actors or whether they are social constructions made up of the perceptions, actions, and interpretations of people in society. Ontology is about what we think about the nature and qualities of reality and the social world (what exists). Ontology helps the researcher to make good decisions about which methods to use. Thus, ontology is mostly about the nature of a thing that can be seen.

Leavy (2017) avers that, in African ontology, the ideas of life and death are the same thing. Al-Saadi (2014) also asserts that the Africans do not think of a person's body and soul in the same way that people in the West do. Al-Saadi (2014) and Leavy's (2017) assertions are true, considering the beliefs of the Ewes in Ghana. For instance, the Ewe people believe that a man is made up of three parts: the body, the shadow, and the breath. Here, the breath is seen as the outward sign of the alter-ego, which is the essence of life. Even though breath is temporary, it does not match the idea of the soul in Euro-Christian theology (Nwannennaya and Nkama 2018).

In the Ewes' view of the world, a husband's wife is the person who is closest to him. So, the close relationship ties people together morally, spiritually, and physically. If the ritual of separation is not done right, the relationship will often continue on the other side of the grave. So, when the man or woman dies, he or she still cares about his or her husband or wife with jealousy and often tries to keep the same relationship they had when they were both still alive. We become a part of each other as we live our lives together, and losing someone changes our identity, narrative self-understanding, or discursive positioning, except who we are (Al-Saadi 2014). Understanding what it means to lose assumes a sense of what it means to have and how that person or thing played a role in one's life. There is no way to account for who we are without reference to the lives we live, and because these lives will be shared with others to varying degrees and in various ways, losing a loved one will inevitably include a partial loss of self. In this way, a social ontology of grief provides a non-essentialist notion of belonging, rooted in the various endeavours that comprise our lives. It demonstrates how the partial loss of self that bereaves people's experience can be understood in terms of losing possibilities for living a particular energy (Sköld, 2021).

Widowhood rituals and practices serve as boundary markers between a dead husband and the living widow. Additionally, it symbolises purity for the latter and an exoneration from suspected guilt for or chest rating the former's death through suspected feminine witchcraft powers. Pemunta and Alubafi (2016) pointed out that spiritual purity and impurity create unity in experience and are employed in claims and counter claims about status. Widows in Eweland are no different from these narratives. It is therefore important to investigate the PTG benefits or otherwise of the spiritual path they are always

subjected to. This research is interested in collecting objective data from these widows in order to describe their situation.

This research project takes a positivist philosophical stance. Positivism is regarded as a development of empiricism, a foundationalist philosophy that believes knowledge should be objective and devoid of bias based on the researcher's principles and opinions (Ryan 2018). It is a position that asserts that the primary purpose of knowledge is to describe the phenomena that we observe. According to positivists, the purpose of science should be to unearth the truth (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Jackson (2013) asserts that human behaviour can be understood objectively and that an immutable natural cause-effect principle governs the actual reality.

Positivists believe that reality is objectively given and can be measured using properties that have nothing to do with the researcher or their tools. In other words, knowledge is objective and can be measured (Meng et al., 2020). It says that scientific knowledge is made up of facts, but its ontology says that reality is complete on its own. If the research study is based on a stable and unchanging truth, the researcher can take an objective approach. That is, a realist ontology based on a belief in an objective, real world and a detached epistemological position based on the idea that people's perceptions and statements are either true or false, correct or wrong, and also a belief based on a view of knowledge as hard, accurate, and able to be gained (Aliyu et al. 2015).

This research aims to determine the influence of widowhood spirituality and rituals on PTG in bereavement. Therefore, a quantitative approach is needed to gather systematic information about the phenomenon and explain how these variables contribute to the widow's growth after losing a husband. Grief directly affects the traumatic situation of the

widow (Tedeschi et al., 2014), which is connected to the spirituality and rituals whenever death strikes. To find how these produce PTG, a research questionnaire was designed to collect data from these widows. So, ontologically, the relationships among the variables can be studied objectively.

Opoku and Manu (2018) explained spirituality as a way of life necessary for humans and their well-being and healing. Therefore, the focus of the research will not be spirituality or ritual as a concept but their contribution to PTG in bereavement. This will require quantitative data analysis to explain the influence spirituality and tradition have on PTG in grief. This is based on the quantitative assumption that the research goal is to develop generalisations that can be incorporated into a theory to aid the researcher in predicting, explaining, and comprehending phenomena (Jackson 2013). In a study like this, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) avows that the researcher should maintain a healthy distance from the subject under investigation to ensure that the conclusions are based on the characteristics of the data rather than on your personal preferences, views, and values.

3.3 Epistemology

According to Jackson (2013), epistemology is the study of knowledge from a philosophical perspective and on the premise that we believe something to be true. Epistemology is a science that seeks to comprehend and explain how we know what we know (Aliyu, Singhry & Abubakar, 2008). Epistemology also aims to provide a philosophical foundation for determining what types of knowledge are possible and how to ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate. On the other hand, ontological and epistemological issues concern what is commonly referred to as a person's worldview, which significantly impacts how aspects of reality are perceived to be of relative

importance. Two worldviews are possible: objectivist and constructivist (Mack 2010). According to Mack (2010), these divergent perspectives on the world have ramifications in most academic fields; however, none of these perspectives is considered superior to the other. Both may be adequate for some purposes and excessively complex for others.

Interpretive researchers think that reality is made up of people's subjective experiences of the outside world. Because of this, they may agree with an intersubjective epistemology and the ontological idea that reality is socially produced (Aliyu et al., 2015). From these points of view, there are more ways to learn about the universe and how we see and understand the world around us. People use their thoughts to figure out what their senses are telling them (Al-Saadi, 2014). Our knowledge of the world is based on what we know about events, not on our work experiences. However, the positivist position asserts that scientific knowledge comprises facts, while its ontology regards reality as self-contained (Mack 2010). Jackson (2013) also posits that if the research study is based on a stable and unchanging truth, the researcher can adopt an objectivist's perspective, a realist ontology.

The epistemological perspective taken in this study is positivism. According to the positivism research philosophy, the researcher assumes the role of an objective analyst who must be free of personal bias to operate objectively (Leong 2014). Within a positivist framework, the researcher can elicit respondents' perspectives through open-and closed-ended questionnaires and infer through statistical tools (Rubin and Rubin 2012) using instruments that are standardised and, unlike in the constructionist paradigm, respondents share a common understanding of the meaning of their questions (Leong, 2014). It is founded on the premise that reality is stable, observable, and quantifiable and that

knowledge is gained through careful observation and quantification of objective reality that exists out there in the world (Leong, 2014; Cobbold, 2015)

According to positivists, diverse researchers should arrive at identical conclusions using identical instruments. The positivist belief is that a research's success can be assessed by comparing its findings to other researchers (Taylor and Medina 2013). While positivists recognize that no data collection instrument is perfect, they strive to develop validated tools that they believe perfectly capture a single reality. They aspire to follow in the footsteps of the sciences, which have established quantitative methods for quantifying physical, biological, and social phenomena (Rubin and Rubin 2012). Positivist researchers employ scientific methods and systematize the knowledge generation process through quantification to increase the precision with which parameters and their relationships are described. Positivism is concerned with establishing truth and communicating it empirically.

Positivism is a suitable research philosophy for conducting quantitative research with a correlational design involving widows. This approach aligns with the positivist paradigm, which emphasizes the objective identification of explanatory associations or causal relationships through quantitative methods [2]. In studying the resilience of widows facing trauma and stress, positivism allows for the systematic analysis of quantitative data to identify patterns and relationships that contribute to a deeper understanding of their experiences [1]. By utilizing existing theories to form hypotheses and employing rigorous quantitative methods, positivism provides a robust framework for exploring the factors influencing widows' PTG.

3.4 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative methodology and a descriptive correlational research design (Scholars 2013). Quantitative research is typically a systematic and empirical examination of phenomena through statistics and mathematics and the manipulation of numerical data (Yannis and Nikolaos 2018). The authors posited that in quantitative research, the process of estimation serves as a vital link between empirical observation and the mathematical expression of quantitative relations. Typically, in quantitative research, data are selected and analysed numerically. It investigates the existence or occurrence of a fact or situation, mainly when the cause or explanation is in doubt. Quantitative research entails correlating data from experiments and testing hypotheses about the observed phenomena. It utilises sophisticated statistical tools and questionnaires (Yannis and Nikolaos 2018).

In this study, the descriptive correlational research design is more desired. According to Kothari (2004), a research design is an overall framework for conducting research; it acts as a guideline for data collection, measurement, and analysis. The plan contains a timeline outlining the researcher's activities, from developing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final data analysis. The descriptive correlational research design was chosen because the goal of the study was to find a direction between widowhood rituals/spirituality and posttraumatic growth in a natural setting that had not been changed (Fraenke & Wallen, 2011). In descriptive correlational studies, the variables and their real relationships with each other are described. Variables in the survey are classified as either independent (predictor) or dependent, just like in an experiment (outcome). Fraenkel (2008) avows that descriptive correlational study is a type of study in

which the researcher is more interested in finding links between variables than in finding a cause and effect.

A quantitative research strategy with a descriptive correlation is appropriate for any relationship between widowhood rituals/spirituality and PTG. It aims to ascertain the scope and distribution of certain social qualities in a given population to ascertain whether they are associated with particular behaviour patterns or attitudes (Cowles and Nelson 2019). It employs questionnaires to elicit information about various subjects (Saris, Gallhofer & Irmtraud, 2014) to ascertain how different conditions can be obtained among these subjects. The quantitative design technique is most frequently employed in the social sciences (Leavy 2017).

3.5 Population

As defined by Creswell (2018), a population is a group of individuals who share specific characteristics. A research population is an extensive collection of humans or items subject to a scientific inquiry. The population is an amorphous term because, it is impossible to freeze a population to quantify it truly. The people polled were solely widows in the South, Central and North Tongu Districts in the Volta Region of Ghana, who ranged in age, religious affiliation, educational background, employment, and years of widowhood experience. With a provisional report from Ghana Statistical Service for the Population and Housing Census, 2021, the three Districts have a widow population of 3,815 (South Tongu, 1,205; Central Tongu, 1,312; and North Tongu, 1,298).

The selection of the South, Central, and North Tongu Municipalities for this study was deliberate, aiming to ensure both representativeness and the generalizability of the research findings to a wider context. The decision to focus on these specific municipalities

was driven by the desire to capture a diverse range of experiences within the Tongu people, who collectively inhabit the three municipalities. By concentrating on the Tongu people as the targeted population, the study sought to explore nuances and variations in grief, spirituality, and religious commitment among widowed individuals across different geographic and cultural settings within the broader Tongu community. This strategic approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of widowhood within the Tongu people, facilitating the extrapolation of insights to similar cultural groups and contributing valuable knowledge to the broader field of research on the intersection of grief, spirituality, and religious commitment.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique

A target population (or sampling frame) is a group of individuals who share some defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study in a quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Researchers select the sample using probability or non-probability sampling techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The probability sampling technique was used in this study to ensure repetitiveness because of the number of Municipalities involved. The researcher chose probability sampling so that respondents can have an equal chance of being selected from the population.

Determining the appropriate sample size is crucial for a study, as it entails balancing confidence level; indicating the certainty that sample data reflects the population (Kaur, 2017). To determine the appropriate sample size of 458 for a population of 3,815 with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 4.5%, statistical considerations came into play. The sample size was calculated to strike a balance between precision and practicality (Lakens, 2022). A sample size of 458 provided a sufficiently accurate representation of the

larger population, allowing for reliable generalizations. The confidence level of 95% indicates the degree of certainty that the sample results will fall within the margin of error of 4.5% (Lingard & Rowlinson, 2006). This combination ensured a robust and reliable study outcome while considering resource constraints. The chosen sample size aligns with statistical principles, facilitating meaningful insights without unnecessary data collection.

Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling was used to the samples from each cluster (Skinner, 2014). PPS sampling is an unequal probability sampling technique where the likelihood of selecting a unit is directly proportional to its size within the population. This method involves dividing the population into clusters and selecting units based on their size, ensuring a representative sample. PPS sampling addresses the challenge of achieving a proportional representation in multi-stage sampling scenarios, making it a valuable approach in complex research designs (Skinner, 2014). So to arrive at the 458 sample, a 12% proportion of each cluster was taken..

A multiple cluster sampling technique put each section into clusters (Bhandari, 2021). Multi-stage cluster sampling is a complex probability sampling technique used in survey research and data collection (Galway et al. 2012). It is particularly useful when it is difficult or impractical to create a complete list (sampling frame) of the entire population being studied (Bhandari, 2021). Instead, the population was divided into a series of stages or clusters, and samples were taken from each stage in a multi-step process.

The procedure was to gather responses from the 458 respondents across three municipalities - North, Central, and South Tongu with varying widow populations of 1,298, 1,312, and 1,205, respectively, required a systematic approach. The utilization of a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure provided a robust method for achieving this task. In the

first stage of this process, each municipality was treated as a stratum, which allowed for stratified sampling. Within each stratum, clusters were defined, representing the communities, such as the villages. The number of clusters selected from each stratum was proportionate to the size of the widow population in that Municipality. For instance, the total sample size was 458 and the widow populations were 1,298, 1,312, and 1,205 in North, Central, and South Tongu respectively, the number of clusters selected from each stratum was determined using a proportionate allocation method of 12%. This ensures that each stratum contributes to the sample in accordance with its widow population, which enhances the representativeness of the sample.

In the second stage, random sampling was employed within each of the selected clusters. For example, within a chosen village in a stratum, simple random sampling was used to select the number of widows based on the size of the cluster and the total sample size of the stratum. The multi-stage cluster sampling approach took into account the varying population sizes within the municipalities, ensuring that the survey is representative of the entire population.

Table 2: Sampling plan

District	Total No. of widows	Total sample selected	%
South Tongu	1205	144	12
Central Tongu	1,312	158	12
North Tongu	1, 298.	156	12
Total	3,815	458	12

3.7 Instrument

The study investigates the relationship between widowhood spirituality and ritual practices on posttraumatic growth (PGT) in grief. Since the spirituality and rituals are loss-related, the widows' level of suffering and spirituality has become a subject of interest. As a result, the data collection instruments used in the study were designed to elicit information about these constructs.

For the purpose of this study, all the data collection instruments were adapted and underwent modification to align with an African perspective. This crucial adaptation involved refining statements originally framed in a European context to resonate with the cultural nuances and contexts of Ghana. The modifications aimed at ensuring relevance and cultural sensitivity in data collection within the region. My supervisors played a pivotal role in guiding and supporting this transformative process. Their expertise not only facilitated a nuanced understanding of Ghanaian cultural intricacies but also ensured the ethical and methodological integrity of the adapted instrument. The outcome is data collection tools that respect the diversity and uniqueness of the African context, enhancing the reliability and validity of the research findings. These included;

3.7.1 Grief Questionnaire (BGQ)

The Brief Grief Questionnaire (BGQ, Shear et al. 2006)) is a five-item measure that may be given quickly and easily. The scale was created to study people seeking help after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in New York City ((Shear et al. 2006) and was adapted for this study. The BGQ correlates moderately with anxiety or depressive symptoms, but it should distinguish complicated grieving from these symptoms. The transcultural usefulness of clinical tools is an essential factor to consider while screening

for complicated grieving ((Shear et al. 2006). While different cultures have different social conventions for expressing sadness, the symptoms of complicated grief tend to be the same.

The scale has five questions about how hard it is to accept the death, how much grief gets in the way of daily life, how unpleasant thoughts about the dead are, how to avoid reminders of the loss, and how lonely you feel. On a scale from 0 to 2, 0 means not at all, 1 means a little, and 2 means a lot. The internal consistency of the BGQ (Cronbach's alpha =.75) shows that it is reliable enough (Ito et al., 2012).

3.7.2 Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)

Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI, Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) was used to measure the psychological growth of widows after their grief-related traumatic experiences.

In this study, an adapted version of the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1996) was used. The original PTGI contains five distinct PTG domains ('relating to others,' 'new possibilities,' 'personal strength, "spiritual change,' 'appreciation of life,' and 'Spiritual-Existential Change'). The version's psychometric properties have been tested using a variety of traumata, including grief. Cronbach's reliability coefficient of.83 was found in the majority of studies (Johnsen & Afgun, 2021).

The PTGI is a 21-item self-report Likert-type scale with a six-point scale ranging from 0 (I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis) to 5 (I experienced this change as a result of my problem) (I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis). Among the scale's items are "I have a greater sense of self-reliance" and "I know better than I can handle issues."

The PTGI is a five-domain growth index. The first, relating to others, is concerned with the respondent's interpersonal interactions following a traumatic event. The second, new possibilities, focuses on the ability of respondents to see post-traumatic options that they would not have otherwise seen. The third, personal strength, acknowledges one's ability to persevere in adversity. The fourth factor, spiritual change, reflects whether a person's spirituality has increased or decreased due to the traumatic experience. The fifth element, gratitude for life, is concerned with life.

There is a high level of internal consistency in the psychometric qualities of the PTGI (.90; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Each of the five criteria—new possibilities (= .84), relating to others (= .85), personal strength (= .72), spiritual change (= .85), and appreciating life (= .67)—had a high level of internal consistency. The corrected item-total correlations were also not very strong (.35 to .63). Over the course of two months ($n = 28$), the test-retest reliability was good ($r = .71$). Test-retest reliability ranged from .65 to .74, except for personal strength ($r = .37$) and appreciation of life ($r = .47$).

Most of the PTGI items were based on interviews with adults who had lost a spouse or had become disabled later in life. They were put to the test on a large group of college students who had experienced a wide range of traumatic events. This work produced 21 items with a 5-factor structure made up of the domains of Personal Strength, New Possibilities, and Relating to Others, Life Appreciation, and Spiritual Change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Related measures include a short form (PTGI-SF; Cann, Calhoun, Tedeschi, Taku, et al., 2010), arrangements for children (PTGI, Calhoun, & Tedeschi, 2006), and a version that lets researchers look at both positive and negative changes on the same five dimensions (PTGI-42; Growth and Depreciation; The 5-factor structure of the

PTGI has been seen in many samples, though there are some differences between cultures (Taku, Cann, Calhoun, & Tedeschi, 2008; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).

Some people are worried about the Spiritual Change (SC) factor because it is short and doesn't say much. It has two parts: "I have a stronger religious faith" and "I have a better understanding of spiritual things." This factor could be a problem in two ways. Psychometrically, a factor with only two items isn't very good (Jaarsma, Pool, Sanderman, & Ranchor, 2006).

In an earlier study, Morris, Shakespeare-Finch, Rieck, and Newbery (2005) added three more items with religious and spiritual content to address this. Some studies have shown that SC acts differently than the other four factors (Fedele, Molzon, Mayes, & Mullins, 2014). In terms of what they say, these two things talk about nature's spiritual or religious growth, but they don't deal with the more existential changes in character.

People who don't say that their religious beliefs have become stronger or that they have a better understanding of spiritual matters may be dealing with existential problems that have nothing to do with their religious beliefs. In some studies, the SC and Appreciation of Life factors were combined into a single construct, which may show their existential links. This was seen in Japanese samples (Taku et al., 2007; Taku, Tedeschi, & Cann, 2015). So, if looking at the changes people go through after major life stressors includes existential concerns, the current items in the PTGI may not cover those changes.

A big reason why people change for the better after a traumatic event is that their ideas about themselves, their priorities in life, and their place in the universe change. Some people think of these things as religious, and others think of them as "existential issues"

(Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998, p. 219). Others have seen the connection between religious, spiritual, and existential concerns (Paraphrase, 1999)

3.7.3 Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10)

Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) (Worthington et al., 2003) is used to measure spirituality and commitment to one's religion. The Cronbach's alphas for the RCI-10 and subscales were .96 for the full scale, .94 for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment.

The RCI-10 is a ten-item Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (not true of me) to 5 (totally true of me). "I frequently read books and publications concerning my faith" and "Religious views influence all of my dealings in life" are two examples. Intrapersonal religious commitment (Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8) and interpersonal religious commitment (Items 2, 6, 9, and 10) are the two subscales of the scale (Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8). The normative mean was 23.1 (SD = 10.2) in earlier investigations, including university students (n = 710).

According to the instrument makers, the scales are significantly inter-correlated; hence, a whole scale rather than subscales should be utilised in clinics and research. Each of the ten items adds up to a total score. The full-scale means for secular samples range from 21 to 26 (SD between 10 and 12). People who score more than one SD above the standard should be considered religious; alternatively, if their overall full-scale score is 38 or higher, they should be regarded as highly sacred (Worthington, 1988).

3.7.4 Posttraumatic Checklist (PCL-5)

The PCL-5 is a 20-item self-report Likert-type measure that assesses how much posttraumatic stress symptoms connected to a person's most recent upsetting incident have disturbed them in the past months (Weathers et al., 2013). The DSM-5's criteria for PTSD's

four symptom clusters or components have four counterparts in the PCL-5. Recurring, unwanted, and intrusive upsetting memories of the traumatic incident provide as evidence for the first component, "intrusion," in this case. The second aspect, "avoidance," is demonstrated by efforts to avoid upsetting recollections, ideas, or emotions regarding the incident. The third factor, "negative alterations in cognition and mood," is characterized by feelings of detachment, persistent and distorted thought patterns, and dissociative amnesia, or the inability to recall significant details of the incident.

Items are given a severity score by being graded from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very). The scale's components were changed to make them more applicable to the experience of loss of a loved-one. The scale included several instances, such as "avoid memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the widowhood experience" and "suddenly acting or feeling as if the death was actually happening again. With psychometric parameters demonstrating strong Cronbach alpha ($=.85$; test-retest reliability, $=.95$; Wortmann et al., 2016), the PCL-5 has a score range of 0 to 80 ($M = 42.41$, $SD = 15.06$).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through several procedures. An introductory letter was collected from the Department of Counselling Psychology to formalize and enable me to properly introduce myself to the subjects. The data were collected through the manual distribution of questionnaires to the respondents. This was accomplished by first visiting the community and meeting with the elders. The elder in charge then introduced me to the person in charge of the widowhood rite to assist in identifying and sampling people to respond to the questionnaires.

The survey instrument employed in this study was presented in a booklet comprising five pages. Instances arose where respondents sought additional clarification on specific aspects of the survey instruments. Furthermore, there were occasions when respondents requested that the booklets be left with them for subsequent collection. Given the expansive geographical coverage, the entire distribution and retrieval process spanned a duration of five weeks

3.9 Data Analysis

The demographic data of respondents was described using a descriptive statistical overview. The structural relationships were examined using SPSS AMOS's Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM (structural equation modelling) is a versatile and powerful multivariate technique. It employs a conceptual model, path diagram, and system of linked regression-style equations to capture complex and dynamic relationships within observed and unobserved variables (Gunzler et al., 2013). Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a method for analyzing structural relationships. It combines factor analysis and regression analysis. These techniques are used to investigate the relationship between structural and latent variables (Gelfand et al., 2009). This method is preferred by researchers because it allows them to perform multiple operations in a single analysis.

SEM is used to build complex models with latent variables. To observe and obtain variables, a graphical or programming interface, such as SPSS AMOS software, is required. SEM employs confirmatory path analysis, which comes to the rescue by avoiding potential errors (MacKinnon, Fairchild, and Fritz 2007). Factors are specified precisely in terms of numbers and loading patterns. Because SEM employs multiple analysis techniques, it allows for the examination of more than one at a time (Gunzler et al. 2013).

3.10 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter described the research process, including the technique used in the study. It revealed insights into data collection and analysis, explaining the researcher's strategy. Furthermore, it thoroughly explained the process of identifying both the target population and the sample, as well as the sampling technique and procedure. The instruments used to collect the data were clearly identified and described.



CHAPTER FOUR

LIMITATIONS, RESULTS, AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter addressed the findings from questionnaires used to collect data on respondents' spirituality, religious commitment, trauma, and PTG of bereaved widows. It also explores the demographic data of respondents. The demographic data included age, period of being widow, educational level, and the religion of respondents. The research hypotheses were tested and the findings discussed based on the data analysed.

The following hypotheses guided the research;

H01: Grieving has a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

H02: Spirituality and trauma have a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

H03: Religious commitment has a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

H04: There is a significant relationship between spirituality, religious commitment, and trauma

H05: Spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment significantly mediate the grieving effect on PTG of widowhood

4.1 Response Rate

Response rate refer to the percentage of survey questionnaire that returned from the sample. It serves as a guide to the representativeness of the sample respondents (Draugalis, Coons, and Plaza 2008). It is calculated by dividing the total number of respondents who answered the questionnaires and return by the total number of sample for the study multiply by hundred (total answered and returned/ total sample size X 100). According to Draugalis et al., (2008), a higher response rate indicates that there is less probability of significant

response bias but a lower rate signals a danger of in your study implying a likelihood of response bias.

The total sample size for the study was 458 widows, the total number of respondents who responded to the questionnaires were 450 widows. Eight questionnaires did not return and five of the returned questionnaires were not properly completed; that is, certain portions of such questionnaires were not filled. The incomplete questionnaires were not included in the data analyses. Though there were 5 different questionnaires used in this study, each collected information from the same Respondent. So, each set of questionnaires included the 5 different questionnaires.

The response rate for the study therefore, was the sample size of 458 less the 8 questionnaires that did not returned and the 5 questionnaires that were incomplete. The remaining 445 questionnaire were used representing a response rate of 97% ($445/458 \times 100$). A response rate of 60% was acceptable (Jagannath et al. 2005).

Researchers who do surveys have thought for a long time that the best way to get unbiased estimates is to get a lot of people to answer (Fincham 2008). People who fill out the survey and people who do not won't have very different answers. Because of all of these things, (Fosnacht, Howe, and Peck 2013) say that if a lot of people do not respond to a survey, it makes it more likely that estimates, but it does not mean that an estimate is biased. (Luo 2020) argues that it is not a good idea to use the response rate as the only way to determine how representative a survey is. It is nonresponse bias that is feared, not nonresponse itself, says the argument, which is wrong. Because of these ideas, survey researchers have been looking at the effects of survey results but not the response itself (Fosnacht et al. 2013).

We look at nonresponse bias by comparing the results of people who responded early, late, or not at all. There is a small difference (less than 1 standard deviation) between how they think things will turn out (Luo 2020). Comparing estimates of the population based on samples of only early responders (30 percent response) and the whole thing (70 percent response rate) (Fosnacht et al. 2013). The authors came to the conclusion that nonresponse bias still exists, more people filling out surveys has only a small impact on the results of the study.

4.2 Analysis of Demographic Data

The age range of Respondent was from 18 to 80. Out the total of 445 respondents, 69 were between the ages of 18 – 34 representing (15.5%). 211 were between 35 – 54 (47.4%), between the ages of 55 – 74, there were 134 widows representing (30.1%), thirty-one (31) widows who were above 75 years participated in the research which represents (7%). These figures are indicated in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-34	69	15.5	15.5	15.5
valid 35-54	211	47.4	47.4	62.9
55-74	134	30.1	30.1	93.0
75 and above	31	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	445	100.0	100.0	

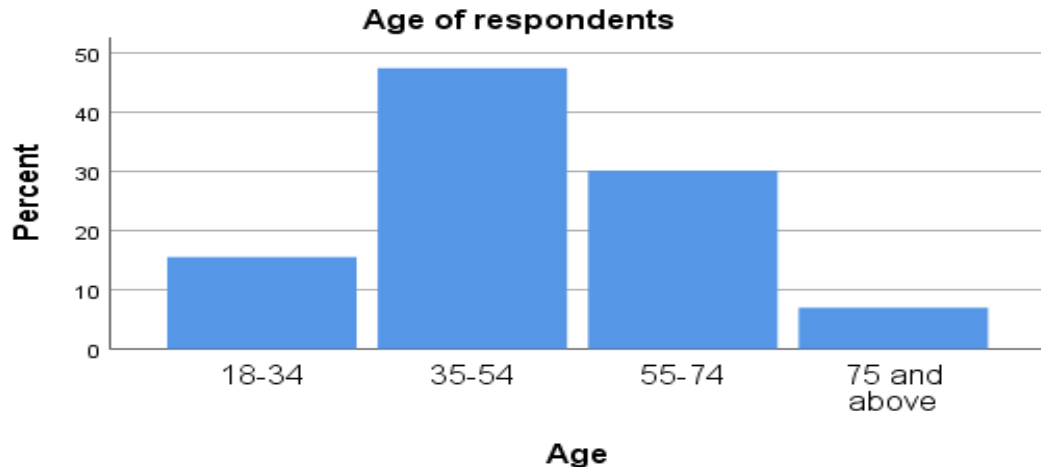


Figure 2: Graphical representation of age of respondents

Table 3 and Figure 2 provide insights into the distribution of years lived as a widow, categorizing the percentages based on different time frames. These figures illustrate the varying durations of widowhood and the corresponding proportions within each time frame. These figures illustrate the age diversity within the respondent group. Notably, the majority falls within the 35-54 age range, comprising 47.4% of the total with 75 years and above representing only 7% of the distribution. The data offers valuable insights into the experiences of individuals during different phases of widowhood, contributing to a nuanced understanding of this demographic aspect

Table 4: Period of Being Widow

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than one year	46	10.3	10.3	10.3
1-5 years	153	34.4	34.4	44.7
6-10 years	129	29.0	29.0	73.7
10 or more years	117	26.3	26.3	100.0
Total	445	100.0	100.0	

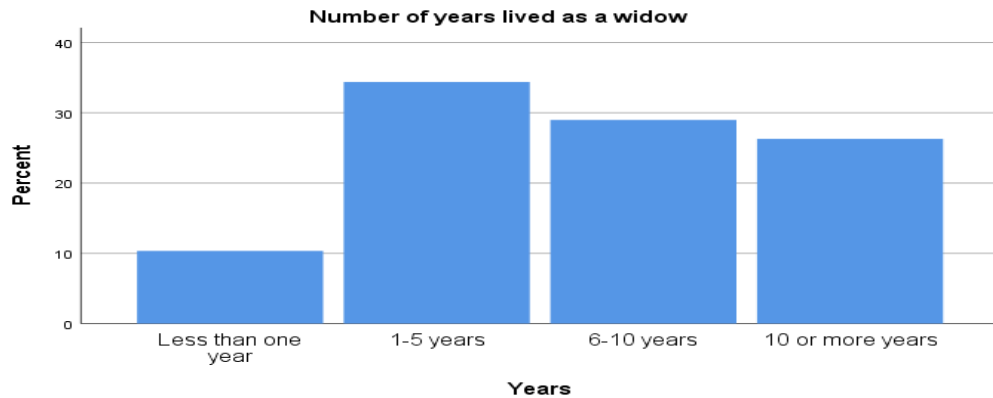


Figure 3: Number of years lived as a widow

Table 4 and Figure 3 provide valuable insights into the duration of widowhood among the surveyed individuals. The data is segmented into four categories based on the number of years lived as a widow: Less than one year: 46 respondents, constituting 10.3% of the total, have experienced the challenges of widowhood for less than one year. This group represents those in the early stages of adapting to their new life circumstances. 1-5 years: The majority, with 153 respondents (34.4%), falls into the 1–5 year category. This significant portion highlights a substantial portion of the sample navigating through the initial years of widowhood. 6–10 years: A notable 29.0% of the surveyed individuals, totaling 129 respondents, have been widowed for 6–10 years. This suggests a sizeable portion of the population coping with the more extended phase of widowhood. 10 or more years: 117 respondents (26.3%) have endured widowhood for a decade or more. This group represents individuals who have faced the challenges and adjustments associated with widowhood for a significant period. These findings shed light on the diverse experiences within the widowed population, emphasizing the varying durations of adjustment and coping strategies adopted by individuals over time.

Respondents were also asked to state their level of educational attainment. It was revealed that their education level ranged from never attended school (illiterate) to a Master degree as indicated in Table 5 and Figure 4.

Table 5: Educational Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Illiterate	242	54.4	54.4	54.4
JHS	149	33.5	33.5	87.9
SHS	48	10.8	10.8	98.7
FIRST DEGREE	4	.9	.9	99.6
MASTERS DEGREE	2	.4	.4	100.0
Total	445	100.0	100.0	

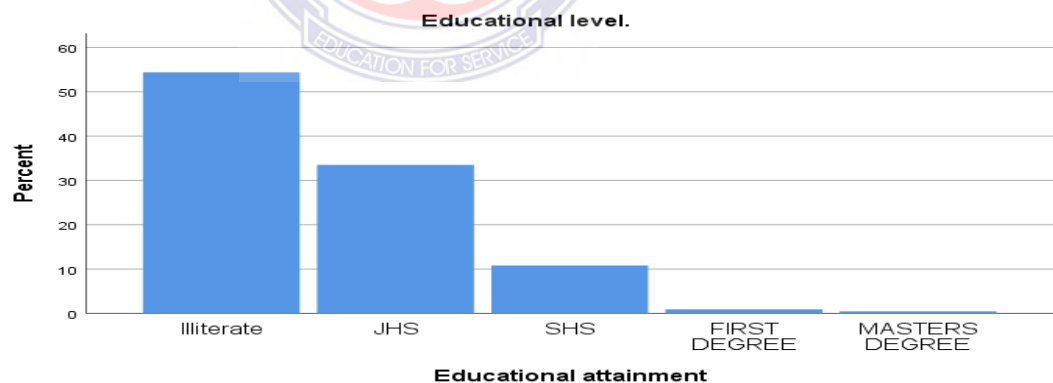


Figure 4: Educational level

Table 5 and Figure 4 provide a comprehensive overview of the educational levels of the surveyed respondents. The data is categorized into different educational levels: Illiterate: A significant portion of the respondents, comprising 242 individuals (54.4% of the total), falls under the category of being illiterate. This indicates a substantial

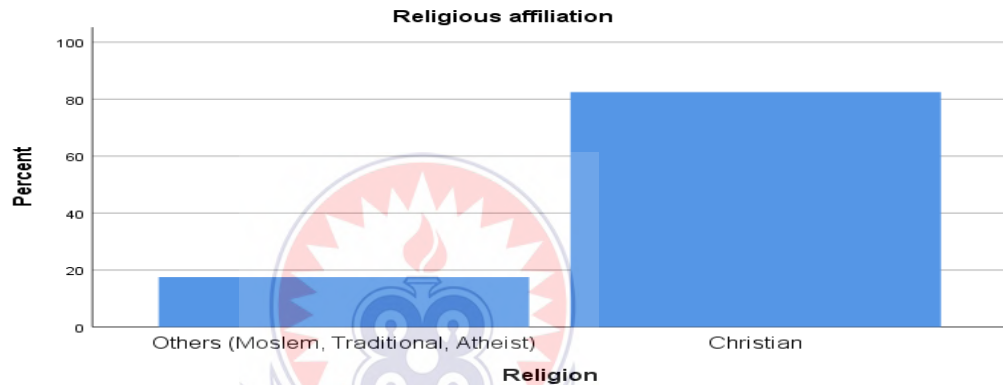
representation of individuals without formal education. Junior High School (JHS): The next prominent group consists of 149 respondents (33.5%), indicating completion of Junior High School. This group represents individuals with a foundational level of formal education. Senior High School (SHS): 48 respondents (10.8%) have attained education up to the Senior High School level, indicating a further progression in their educational journey. First Degree: A smaller segment, consisting of 4 individuals (.9%), holds a First Degree. This suggests a limited but notable presence of respondents with tertiary education. Master's Degree: The highest educational attainment category, Master's Degree, is represented by 2 individuals (.4%). This reflects a smaller yet distinct group with advanced educational qualifications. The cumulative percentages highlight the progression of educational levels within the sample, providing insights into the diversity of educational backgrounds among the respondents.

The final demographic information indicated in Table 6 and Figure 5, required from respondents was for them to indicate their religious affiliation. It was found that majority of the respondents were Christians. Table 6 and Figure 5 offer insights into the religious composition of the respondents. The data is also categorized into two main religions: Moslem and Tradition: This category comprises 78 respondents, accounting for 17.5% of the total. The inclusion of both Muslim and traditional beliefs indicates a diverse religious background within the surveyed population. Christianity: The majority of respondents, totalling 367 individuals (82.5%), identify with Christianity. This indicates a predominant presence of Christian respondents in the sample.

Table 6: Religion of Respondents

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(Moslem, and Tradition,	78	17.5	17.5	17.5
Christianity	367	82.5	82.5	100.0
Total	445	100.0	100.0	

Field data 2022

**Figure 5: Religious affiliation**

In testing the research objectives and hypothesis, the effect of the independent variable, grieving, mediating variables, spirituality, trauma and religious commitment on the dependent variable, post-traumatic growth was tested. The latent variables (these are variables that cannot be seen), that is grieving, spirituality, trauma and religious commitment, were measured using a Likert scale questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess item loading (λ); this is a type of indices that show the relative importance of a group of items, characteristics or features that make up a whole scale or questionnaire, with respect to the latent construct they seek to measure.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis enables the researcher to test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct(s). It enables the evaluation of the fit between observed data and a previously conceptualized, theoretically grounded model that specifies the observed indicator variables. Item reliability, convergent and divergent validity (discriminant validity) were tested to ascertain the item's reliability and validity. Continuous average values of the latent constructs were computed using the transform command.

4.3 Reliability and Convergent Validity of Scale Items

Reliability is the consistency of a set of items (variables) and to what extent they measure the same thing. Reliability was tested to determine the level of consistency of the instruments that were used to determine the latent variables/constructs in this study. The Cronbach's Alpha value is the indicator used to understand the reliability coefficient for the independent and dependent latent variables from their respective items [$\alpha > 0.6$]. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the latent variables from their respective items in this study shown in Table 7 were 0.950 to 0.987 and are all above the minimum requirement of 0.6.

Convergent validity shows that measured items that should be related are in reality related and it is achieved if Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 and Composite Reliability (CR) $> AVE$ [$AVE > 0.5$ and $CR > AVE$]. The convergent validity of this study was determined by computing average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) using an Excel spreadsheet. The Composite Reliability (CR) is a measure of internal consistency in scale items and is equal to the total amount of true score variance relative to the total scale score variance. A value of $CR > 0.7$ is required to achieve items' internal consistency. As indicated in Table 7 all-composite reliability (CR) for all constructs were

high, ranging from 0.7355 to 0.9776. Average variance extracted (AVE) is a measure of the amount of variance that is captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. A value of $AVE > 0.5$ is required to achieve average variance extracted for a construct. As indicated in Table 7 all average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs were high ranging from 0.5089 to 0.8792 while all CR of constructs $> AVE$ of all constructs.

Table 7: Reliability and Convergent Validity of Scale Items

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha (α)	CR	AVE
Spirituality [SP]	0.950	0.949	0.760
Grieving [BGQ]	0.960	0.957	0.817
Trauma [PCL]	0.987	0.983	0.657
Religious Commitment [RC]	0.966	0.966	0.745
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]	0.977	0.975	0.627

4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the underlying loadings of all items used in measuring spirituality [SP], grieving [BGQ], trauma [PCL], post-traumatic growth [PTG] and religious commitment [RC]. Six items were used to measure spirituality and all items loading used in the measure were greater than 0.5 [$\lambda > 0.5$]. Nineteen items were used to measure post traumatic growth (PTG) and all items loading used in the measure were greater than 0.5 [$\lambda > 0.5$]. Twenty items were used to measure trauma and all items loading used in the measure were greater than 0.5 [$\lambda > 0.5$]. Five items were used to measure grieving and all items loading used in the measure were greater than 0.5 [$\lambda >$

0.5] while ten items were used to measure religious commitment and all items loading used in the measure were greater than 0.5 [$\lambda > 0.5$].

4.5 Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics [Inter-correlation Coefficient]

A correlation analysis was conducted to assess the inter-construct correlation among the latent variables to examine relation among the constructs. Construct values was computed by using SPSS transform command to estimate the average responses from Likert scale questionnaires. Table 8 shows correlation coefficients and descriptive statistics of all inter- construct correlation are between [$-0.080 \leq R_{coefficient} \leq 0.488$] indicating poor relationship between constructs on each other. Accordingly, the constructs were suitable to be use for analysis since constructs are not highly correlated, hence no issues of multicollinearity. Table 8 also indicated that mean of Post Traumatic Growth is 3.262 a little above the midway rating with standard deviation of 1.057, spirituality of the respondents also recorded mean value of 2.823 and standard deviation of 1.129 revealing low spiritual and heterogeneous responses, Grieving recorded a low mean value of 1.027 and a homogenous response with a standard deviation of 0.885, Trauma recorded a mean value of 3.250 with a standard deviation of 0.981 indicating a homogenous response, Religious commitment recorded a higher mean value of 3.738 with 0.810 standard deviation..

It was observed that the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) as shown in the correlation matrix table are all greater than their inter-correlation values, establishing divergent (discriminant) validity among the constructs. Suggesting that the test items used in assessing the constructs, spirituality, grieving, post traumatic growth, trauma and religious commitment are not too similar in the sense that they are not correlated to each

other. The divergent (discriminant) validity of each construct is shown with a yellowish mark in the correlation matrix table

Table 8: Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Post Traumatic Growth	3.262	1.057	0.791				
Spirituality	2.823	1.129	0.488	0.871			
Grieving	1.027	0.885	0.117	0.097	0.904		
Trauma	3.250	0.981	-0.059	-0.022	-0.015	0.810	
Religious commitment	3.738	0.810	-0.080	-0.055	0.054	0.016	0.863

4.6 Structural Equation Model and Hypothesis Testing

Following the entire test of items reliability, convergent validity and divergent validity satisfying the assumptions of multivariate analysis. Structural models were mounted for each hypothesis based on independent variables and dependent variable and model modification indices were checked and those with higher covariance [that is, if two items or variables are highly related to one another] were constraint to enhance model adequacy.

4.7 Model 1: Effect of Grieving on Post Traumatic Growth of Widowhood

To assess the effect of grieving on the post-traumatic growth of widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct and proceeded to link the construct to each other in a path diagram. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90 . Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constrained and not removed from the model. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Model Fit Indices of Grieving (BGQ) and Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.557	GFI	0.988
NFI	0.777	NFI	0.933
RFI	0.755	RFI	0.904
IFI	0.790	IFI	0.946
TLI	0.769	TL	0.919
RMSEA	0.167	RMSEA	0.079

Table 9 shows the modification indices of the model that seeks to assess the effect of grieving (BGQ) on post-traumatic growth (PTG) in widowhood. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model (that is high relation between items in the model, the model fit indices were inadequate showing values < 0.90 and $RMSEA >$ values between 0.05 and 0.08 (DiStefano and Morgan 2014). The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 1 due to high relation among them, $BGQ3 < \text{-----} BGQ4$, $BGQ4 < \text{---} BGQ5$, $PTG4 < \text{---} PTG11$, $PTG19 < \text{---} PTG8$, $PTG19 < \text{---} PTG9$, $PTG14 < \text{---} PTG16$, $PTG14 < \text{---} PTG9$, $PTG17 < \text{---} PTG6$, $PTG 9 < \text{---} PTG19$, $PTG16 < \text{---} PTG20$ and $PTG8 < \text{---} PTG9$. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 9.

Table 10: Structural Equation Model 1 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	p-Value
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < ---- Grieving [BGQ]	0.22	0.188	0.057	3.921	0.000

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

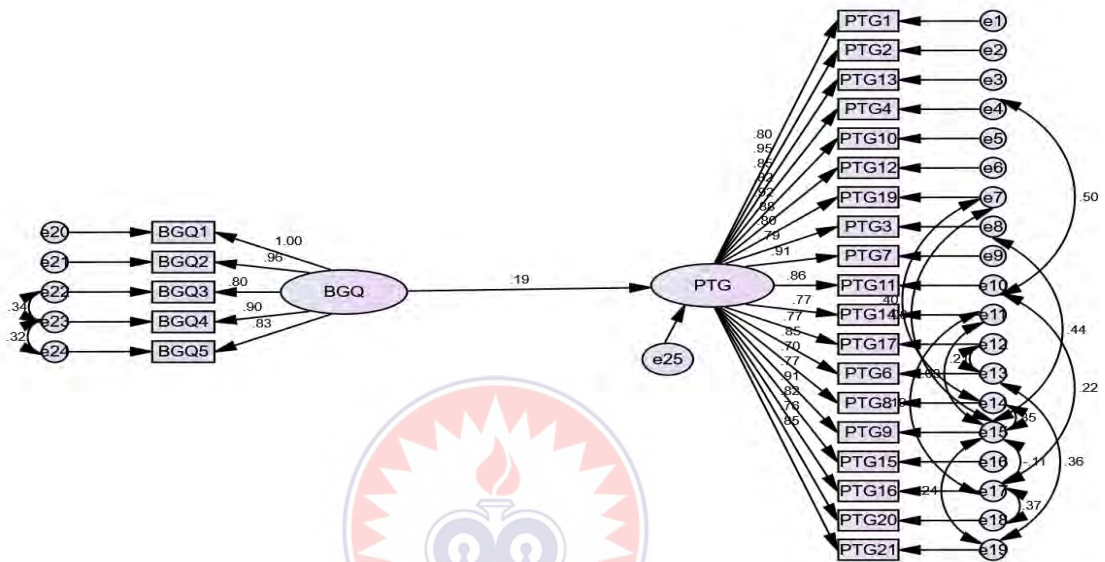


Figure 6: Structural Equation Model of Grieving (BGQ) and Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)

Hypothesis 1: Grieving has significant effects on post-traumatic growth [PTG] of widowhood

Results in table 10 and figure 6 shows that grieving has a positive effect on post-traumatic growth of widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = 0.224$; $\beta_s = 0.19$, SE = 0.057, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) and is statistically significance at 5% level 2- tailed test. This shows that holding other factors constant a unit increase in grieving increases post-traumatic growth of widowhood by a standardized coefficient of 0.19.

4.8 Model 2: Effect of Spirituality and Trauma on Post Traumatic Growth of Widowhood

To investigate the effect of spirituality and trauma on the post-traumatic growth in widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct and proceeded finally to link the construct to each other in a path diagram form. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90 . Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constrained and not removed from the model. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 10

Table 11: Model Fit Indices of Spirituality and Trauma and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.490	GFI	0.971
NFI	0.734	NFI	0.989
RFI	0.717	RFI	0.972
IFI	0.754	IFI	0.810
TLI	0.737	TL	0.994
RMSEA	0.143	RMSEA	0.068

Table 11 shows the modification indices of the model that investigated the effect of spirituality [SP] and trauma [PCL] on post traumatic growth [PTG] in widowhood. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model [that is high

relation between items in the model], the model fit indices were inadequate showing values < 0.90 and $RMSEA > 0.08$ (DiStefano & Morgan, 2014). The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 2 due to high relation among them, $SP2 < \dots SP3$, $SP4 < \dots SP5$, $SP1 < \dots e25$, $SP3 < \dots PTG20$, $PCL2 < \dots PCL3$, $PCL3 < \dots PCL4$, $PCL2 < \dots PCL4$, $PCL6 < \dots PCL9$, $PCL10 < \dots PCL11$, $PTG4 < \dots PTG11$, $PTG19 < \dots PTG8$, $PTG19 < \dots PTG9$, $PTG14 < \dots PTG16$, $PTG14 < \dots PTG9$, $PTG17 < \dots PTG6$, $PTG9 < \dots PTG19$, $PTG16 < \dots PTG20$ and $PTG8 < \dots PTG9$. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 11.

With the use of modification indices, the researcher can explore hypothetical scenarios in which adding pathways or deleting parameter constraints might enhance our models (Cangur and Ercan 2015). There are limitations on the total number of estimable parameters in almost all confirmatory factor analyses and structural equation models (Stone 2021). It is helpful for determining the causes of model misfit (Cangur and Ercan 2015).

Table 12: Structural Equation Model 2 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	p-Value
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] <----Spirituality [SP]	0.949	0.973	0.050	19.108	0.000
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] <----Trauma [PCL]	-0.007	-0.008	0.011	-0.686	0.493

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

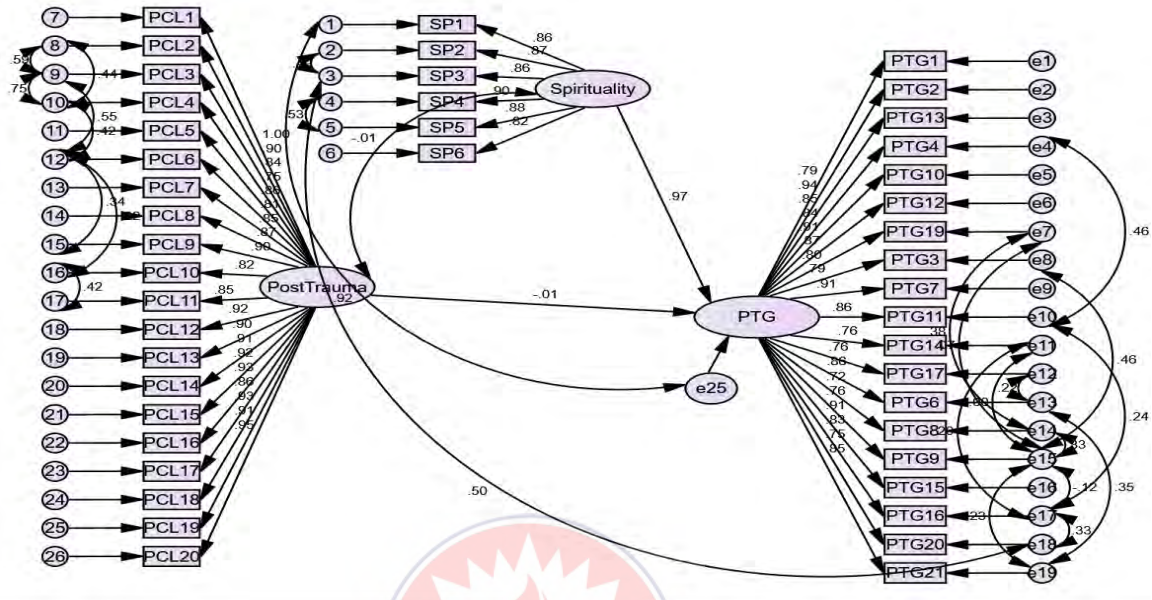


Figure 7: Structural Equation Model of Spirituality [SP], Trauma [PCL] and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

Hypothesis 2: Spirituality and Trauma have significant effects on post-traumatic growth [PTG]

Results in table 12 and figure 7 shows that spirituality has a positive effect on post-traumatic growth of widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = 0.949$; $\beta_s = 0.973$, SE = 0.050, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) and is statistically significance at 5% level 2- tailed test. This shows that holding other factors constant a unit increase in widow spirituality increases post-traumatic growth of widowhood by a standardized coefficient of 0.97. We therefore reject the null hypothesis.

Also, trauma has negative effect on post-traumatic growth in widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = -0.007$; $\beta_s = -0.008$, SE = 0.011, p-value = 0.493 > 0.05) and is statistically not significance

at 5% level 2- tailed test. Thus, holding all other factors constant, again, a unit increase in trauma did not lead to an increase or decrease in posttraumatic growth by a standardized coefficient of 0.01. We therefore failed to reject the null hypothesis.

4.9 Model 3: Impact of Religious Commitment [RC] on Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] of Widowhood

To investigate the effect of religious commitment on post-traumatic growth of widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct and proceeded to link the construct to each other in a path diagram form. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90. Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constrained and not removed from the model. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 13

Table 13: Model Fit Indices of Religious Commitment and Post Traumatic Growth

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.536	GFI	0.913
NFI	0.742	NFI	0.860
RFI	0.721	RFI	0.942
IFI	0.757	IFI	0.877
TLI	0.787	TL	0.961
RMSEA	0.163	RMSEA	0.072

Table 13 shows the modification indices of the model that investigated the impact of religious commitment [RC] on post traumatic growth [PTG] of widowhood. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model [that is high relation between items in the model], the model fit indices were inadequate showing values < 0.90 and RMSEA value outside the range 0.05 and 0.08 (DiStefano & Morgan, 2014). The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 13 due to high relation among them, RC2 $< \text{-----}$ RC5, RC34 $< \text{---}$ RC6, RC5 $< \text{-----}$ RC8, RC6 $< \text{-----}$ RC9, RC7 $< \text{-----}$ RC10, PTG4 $< \text{---}$ PTG11, PTG19 $< \text{---}$ PTG8, PTG19 $< \text{---}$ PTG9, PTG14 $< \text{---}$ PTG16, PTG14 $< \text{---}$ PTG9, PTG17 $< \text{---}$ PTG6, PTG 9 $< \text{---}$ PTG19, PTG16 $< \text{---}$ PTG20, PTG1 $< \text{---}$ PTG21, PTG7 $< \text{---}$ PTG8 and PTG8 $< \text{---}$ PTG9. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 13.

Table 14: Structural Equation Model 3 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	p-
Value					
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] $< \text{---}$ RC	-0.056	-0.040	0.068	-0.821	0.411

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

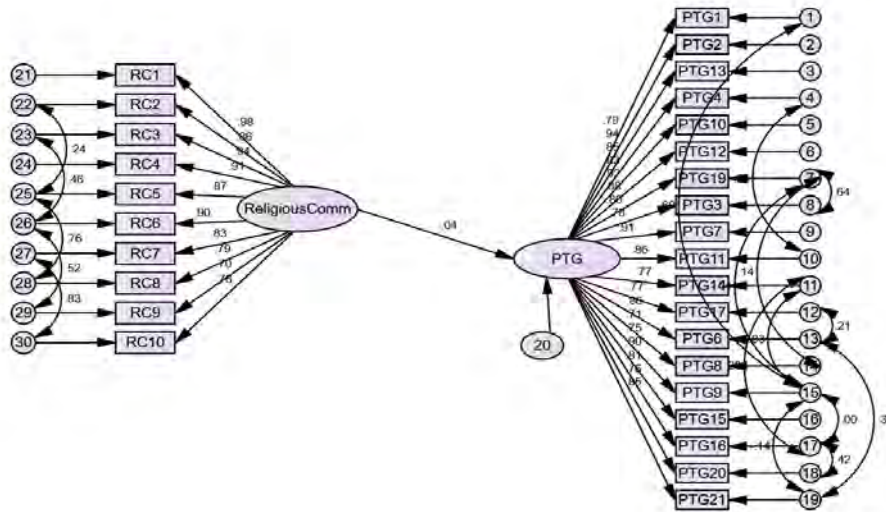


Figure 8: Structural Equation Model of Religious Commitment [RC] and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

Hypothesis 3: Religious Commitment has a Significant impact on post-traumatic growth [PTG]

Results in table 14 and figure 8 shows that religious commitment has a negative impact on post-traumatic growth of widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = -0.056$; $\beta_s = -0.040$, SE = 0.068, p-value = 0.411 > 0.05) and is not statistically significance at 5% level 2- tailed test. This shows that holding other factors constant a unit increase in widow religious commitment does not generally drop post traumatic growth of widowhood by a standardized coefficient of 0.040. Hypothesis not supported.

4.10 Relationship between Spirituality, Religious Commitment and Trauma [PCL]

In order to achieve the relationship between spirituality, religious commitment and trauma during widowhood. Correlation analysis was conducted in a structural equation form to test construct relationships. Construct values were computed by using SPSS transform command to estimate the average responses from Likert scale questionnaires.

Table 15 and Figure 9 shows the substandard and standard correlation coefficient and structural form of the correlation coefficients of all inter-construct correlation depicting the relationship between spirituality, religious commitment and trauma during widowhood.

Table 15: Relationship between Spirituality, Religious Commitment and Trauma

Constructs	Correlation Coefficient
Spirituality <-----> Religious Commitment	-0.055
Trauma <-----> Religious Commitment	-0.016
Spirituality <-----> Trauma	-0.022

5% significance test (2-tail test)

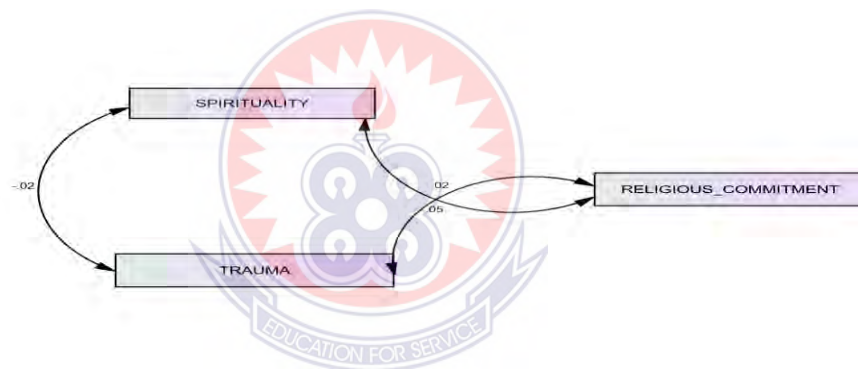


Figure 9: Relationship between Spirituality, Religious Commitment and Trauma

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between spirituality, religious commitment and trauma

Correlation results in Table 15 show a weak inverse relationship between spirituality, religious commitment and trauma during widowhood [$-0.055 \leq R_{coefficient} \leq -0.022$] indicating poor negative relationship between constructs on each other. This shows

that each construct has tendency to drop as one of them increases but not statistically significant. Hence Hypothesis is not supported

4.11 Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis allows us to evaluate the effect of one variable on another via a third, which is commonly referred to as the ladder, mediating variable, or intervening variable (MacKinnon et al. 2007). It is presumed to measure a causal relationship between three different variables, one of which is radically proposed to influence another, and the other of which is proposed to influence the elements of the other. It is used to reduce the likelihood that one or more variables transmit the predictor's effects to an outcome variable. The structural equation model (path analysis) is used to perform mediation analysis, which provides a more efficient single-step process (Gunzler, Morris, and Tu 2016).

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a broad and powerful multivariate technique. It captures complex and dynamic relationships within a web of observed and unobserved variables using a conceptual model, path diagram, and system of linked regression-style equations. Despite its appearance, SEM is fundamentally different from regression. A regression model clearly distinguishes between dependent and independent variables (Gunzler et al., 2013).

Path diagrams are the most effective way of representing SEM models. A path diagram is made up of nodes that represent variables and arrows that show the relationships between these variables. In a path diagram, latent variables (for example, depression) is represented by a circle or ellipse, and observed variables (for example, a rating scale score) is represented by a rectangle or square (Gelfand et al., 2009). Arrows are commonly used to represent relationships between variables. A single straight arrow indicates a causal

relationship from the arrow's base to the arrow's head. A reciprocal causal relationship is indicated by two straight single-headed arrows in opposite directions connecting two variables. A curved two-headed arrow indicates that the two variables may be related. Error terms for a variable are added to the path diagram by drawing an arrow from the error term's value to the variable with which it is associated (MacKinnon et al., 2007).

We can evaluate the effect of one variable on another using mediation analysis, which is commonly referred to as the ladder, mediating variable, or intervening variable. It is assumed to measure a causal relationship between three different variables, one of which is radically proposed to influence another, and the other proposed to influence the elements of the other. It is used to reduce the possibility of one or more variables transmitting the predictor's effects to an outcome variable. To perform mediation analysis, the structural equation model (path analysis) is used, which provides a more efficient one-step process (Gunzler et al., 2016)

In social science, indirect or mediated effects are a common relationship between constructs. When a variable has an effect because another variable mediates it, a heavy reliance on direct relationships affects the results. As a result, the Mediation model is almost unavoidable if there is no direct effect.

The fundamental assumption of mediation analysis is that it assumes a series of relationships in which an antecedent variable affects a Mediating variable, which then affects the dependent variable. Mediation is one method by which a researcher can best explain how one variable affects another (MacKinnon et al., 2007). The current project seeks to investigate how Spirituality and traumatic experiences mediate grief in order to improve PTG.

4.12 Model 4: Structural Model Linking Grieving to Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] via spirituality.

To investigate the mediating role of spirituality between grieving and post traumatic growth in widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct via spirituality in a path diagram form. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90 . Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constraint. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Model Fit Indices linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth via Spirituality

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.541	GFI	0.911
NFI	0.743	NFI	0.864
RFI	0.712	RFI	0.922
IFI	0.756	IFI	0.887
TLI	0.727	TL	0.951
RMSEA	0.172	RMSEA	0.052

Table 16 shows the modification indices of the model that investigated the link between grieving and post traumatic growth in widowhood via spirituality. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model [that is high relation

between items in the model], the model fit indices were inadequate showing values < 0.90 and RMSEA value outside the range 0.05 and 0.08. The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 10 due to high relation among them, SP2 < ----- SP3, SP4 < --- SP5, SP2 < ----- PTG20, BGQ3 < ----- BGQ4, BGQ4 < ----- BGQ5, PTG1 < --- PTG15, PTG4 < --- PTG11, PTG19 < --- PTG8, PTG19 < --- PTG9, PTG14 < --- PTG16, PTG14 < --- PTG9, PTG17 < --- PTG6, PTG 9 < --- PTG19, PTG16 < --- PTG20, PTG1 < --- PTG21, PTG7 < --- PTG8 and PTG8 < --- PTG9. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 17.

Table 17 Structural Equation Model 4 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	Sig
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < ----Spirituality [SP]	0.898	1.02	0.038	23.494	0.000
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < ----Grieving [BGQ]	0.045	0.039	0.013	3.497	0.000
Spirituality [SP] < ----Grieving [BGQ]	0.171	0.130	0.064	2.647	0.008

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

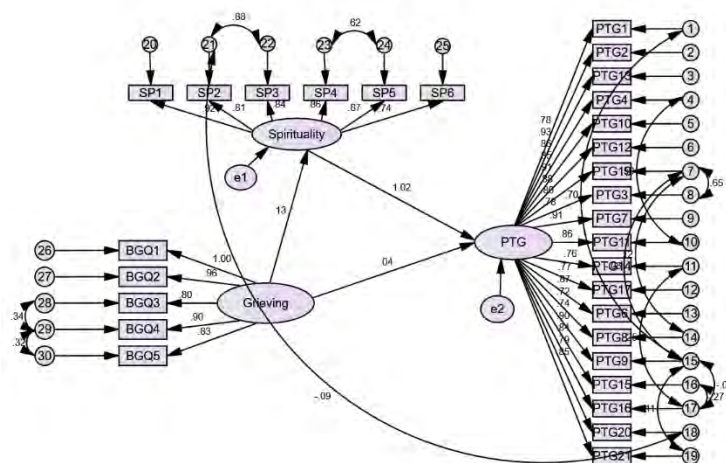


Figure 10: Structural Equation Model Linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] via Spirituality

Hypothesis 4: Spirituality Mediate Grieving to predict Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

Results in Table 17 and Figure 10 show that spirituality positively mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth, grieving on post traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = 0.045$, $\beta_s = 0.039$, SE = 0.013, sig = 0.000 < 0.05, Direct effect) significant. The standardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.039 while unstandardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.045 (significant), grieving on spirituality (mediator) ($\beta_{uns} = 0.171$, $\beta_s = 0.130$, SE = 0.064, sig = 0.008 < 0.05) and spirituality on post-traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = 0.898$, $\beta_s = 1.02$, SE = 0.038, sig = 0.000 < 0.05) with indirect effect of [0.130 × 1.02 = 0.1326]. The standardized indirect (mediated by spirituality) effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.1326. That is, due to the indirect effect of grieving via spirituality to predict post-traumatic growth of widowhood, it indicates that as grieving increases by I standard deviation via spirituality, post traumatic growth of widowhood increase by 0.1326 standard deviation when other factors were held constant.

Sobel test was performed using grieving on spirituality (mediator) ($\beta_s = 0.130$, SE = 0.064) and spirituality (mediator) on post traumatic growth ($\beta_s = 1.02$, SE = 0.038) to check the significance of the mediation. The test statistic value of the coefficients is 2.0254 with p-value = 0.02141 < 0.05 (one tailed probability) and p-value = 0.0428 < 0.05 (two-tailed probability). The test statistics revealed significant effect of grieving predicting post traumatic growth of widowhood via spirituality. This indicates that spirituality does mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth of widowhood in the study area partially since the initial prediction of grieving on post traumatic growth is significant. Hypothesis Supported.

4.13 Model 5: Structural Model Linking Grieving to Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] via Trauma [PCL].

To investigate the mediating role of trauma [PCL] between grieving and post traumatic growth in widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct via trauma [PCL] in a path diagram form. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90 . Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constraint. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 18.

Table 18 Model Fit Indices linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth via Trauma [PCL]

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.649	GFI	0.924
NFI	0.833	NFI	0.894
RFI	0.822	RFI	0.902
IFI	0.857	IFI	0.897
TLI	0.847	TL	0.911
RMSEA	0.106	RMSEA	0.059

Table 18 shows the modification indices of the model that investigated the link between grieving and post traumatic growth of widowhood via trauma [PCL]. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model [that is high relation between items in the model], the model fit indices were inadequate showing values < 0.90

and RMSEA value outside the range 0.05 and 0.08. The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 11 and Table 18 due to high relation among them, PC2 < - - - - PC3, PC3 < - - - PC4, PC2 < - - - - PC4, PC4 < - - - - PC6, PC3 < - - - - PC6, PC10 < - - - - PC11, BGQ3 < - - - - BGQ4, BGQ4 < - - - - BGQ5, PTG1 < - - - PTG15, PTG4 < - - - PTG11, PTG19 < - - - PTG8, PTG19 < - - - PTG9, PTG14 < - - - PTG16, PTG14 < - - - PTG9, PTG17 < - - - PTG6, PTG 9 < - - - PTG19, PTG16 < - - - PTG20, PTG1 < - - - PTG21, PTG7 < - - - PTG8 and PTG8 < - - - PTG9. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 19.

Table 19 Structural Equation Model 5 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	Sig
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < - - - - Trauma [PCL]	-0.018	-0.019	0.045	-0.405	0.685
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < - - - - Grieving [BGQ]	0.191	0.174	0.052	3.638	0.000
Trauma [PCL] < - - - - Grieving [BGQ]	-0.052	-0.045	0.055	-0.945	0.345

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

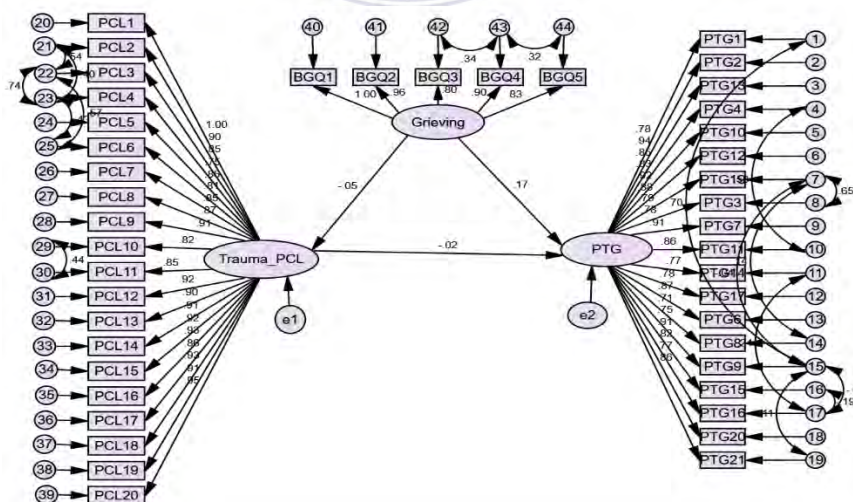


Figure 11: Structural Equation Model Linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] via Trauma [PCL]

Hypothesis 5: Trauma [PCL] Mediate Grieving to predict Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

Results in Table 19 and Figure 11 show that trauma [PCL] negatively mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth, grieving on post traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = 0.191$, $\beta_s = 0.174$, $SE = 0.052$, $sig = 0.000 < 0.05$, Direct effect) significant. The standardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.174 while unstandardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.191 (significant), grieving on trauma [PCL] (mediator) ($\beta_{uns} = -0.052$, $\beta_s = -0.045$, $SE = 0.055$, $sig = 0.345 > 0.05$) and trauma [PCL] on post traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = -0.018$, $\beta_s = -0.019$, $SE = 0.045$, $sig = 0.685 > 0.05$) with indirect effect of $[-0.045 \times -0.019 = 0.000855]$. The standardized indirect (mediated by trauma [PCL]) effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.000855. That is, due to the indirect effect of grieving via trauma [PCL] to predict post traumatic growth of widowhood, it indicates that as grieving increases by I standard deviation via trauma [PCL], post traumatic growth of widowhood increase by 0.000855 standard deviation when other factors were held constant.

Sobel test was again performed using grieving on trauma [PCL] (mediator) ($\beta_s = -0.045$, $SE = 0.055$) and trauma [PCL] (mediator) on post traumatic growth ($\beta_s = -0.019$, $SE = 0.045$) to check the significance of the mediation. The test statistic value of the coefficients is 0.3752 with p-value = $0.3537 > 0.05$ (one tailed probability) and p-value = $0.7075 > 0.05$ (two-tailed probability). The test statistics revealed no significant effect of grieving predicting post traumatic growth of widowhood via trauma [PCL]. This indicates that trauma [PCL] does not mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth of widowhood in the study area.

4.14 Model 6: Structural Model Linking Grieving to PTG via Religious Commitment [RC].

To investigate the mediating role of religious commitment between grieving and post traumatic growth of widowhood, the study mounted a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct via religious commitment in a path diagram form. Model indices were verified and found to be inadequate due to model indices values < 0.90 . Scale items in the model revealing similarity due to high covariance were constraint. Results of indices adequacy are shown in Table 20.

Table 20 Model Fit Indices linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth via Trauma [PCL]

Fit Indices before Modification		Fit Indices after Modification	
Indices	Values	Indices	Values
GFI	0.611	GFI	0.907
NFI	0.787	NFI	0.912
RFI	0.768	RFI	0.873
IFI	0.806	IFI	0.913
TLI	0.788	TL	0.962
RMSEA	0.136	RMSEA	0.074

Table 20 shows the modification indices of the model that investigated the link between grieving and post traumatic growth of widowhood via religious commitment [RC]. As a result of maximum covariance between variables or scale items in the model [that is high relation between items in the model], the model fit indices were inadequate

showing values < 0.90 and RMSEA value outside the range 0.05 and 0.08. The following indices were modified [constraint] as shown in figure 7 due to high relation among them, RC2 < ----- RC5, RC3 < --- RC6, RC4 < ----- RC7, RC5 < ----- RC6, RC7 < ----- PC10, BGQ3 < ----- BGQ4, BGQ4 < ----- BGQ5, PTG1 < --- PTG15, PTG4 < --- PTG11, PTG19 < --- PTG8, PTG19 < --- PTG9, PTG14 < --- PTG16, PTG14 < --- PTG9, PTG17 < --- PTG6, PTG 9 < --- PTG19, PTG16 < --- PTG20, PTG1 < --- PTG21, PTG7 < --- PTG8 and PTG8 < --- PTG9. These were modified and the model fitting indices enhanced shown in table 21.

Table 21 Structural Equation Model 5 Coefficients

Constructs	$\beta_{Uns.}$	β_S	SE	CR	Sig
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < -----RelComit [RC]	-0.076	-0.05	0.067	-1.139	0.255
Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] < -----Grieving [BGQ]	0.196	0.179	0.052	3.734	0.000
Religious Commitment [RC] < -----Grieving [BGQ]	0.059	0.075	0.038	1.564	0.118

Dependent Variable: Post Traumatic Growth [PTG], 5% significance test (2-tail test)

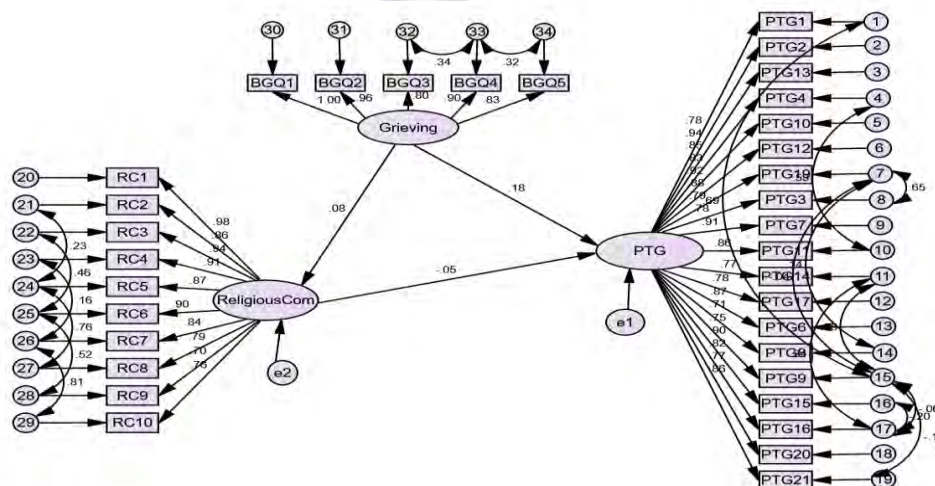


Figure 12: Structural Equation Model Linking Grieving and Post Traumatic Growth [PTG] via Religious Commitment [RC]

Religious Commitment [RC] Mediate Grieving to Predict PTG

Results in Table 21 and Figure 12 show that religious commitment [RC] negatively mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth, grieving on post traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = 0.196$, $\beta_s = 0.179$, $SE = 0.052$, $sig = 0.000 < 0.05$, Direct effect) significant. The standardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.196 while unstandardized direct effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is 0.179 (significant), grieving on religious commitment[RC] (mediator) ($\beta_{uns} = 0.059$, $\beta_s = 0.075$, $SE = 0.038$, $sig = 0.118 > 0.05$) and religious commitment[RC] on post traumatic growth ($\beta_{uns} = -0.076$, $\beta_s = -0.055$, $SE = 0.067$, $sig = 0.255 > 0.05$) with indirect effect of $[0.075 \times -0.055 = -0.00412]$. The standardized indirect (mediated by religious commitment [RC]) effect of grieving on post traumatic growth is -0.00412. That is, due to the indirect effect of grieving via religious commitment [RC] to predict post traumatic growth of widowhood, it indicates that as grieving increases by I standard deviation via religious commitment [RC], post traumatic growth of widowhood drops by 0.00412 standard deviation when other factors were held constant.

Sobel test was performed using grieving on religious commitment [RC] (mediator) ($\beta_s = -0.075$, $SE = 0.038$) and religious commitment [RC] (mediator) on post traumatic growth ($\beta_s = -0.055$, $SE = 0.067$) to check the significance of the mediation. The test statistic value of the coefficients is -0.7579 with p-value = 0.2242 > 0.05 (one tailed probability) and p-value = 0.4484 > 0.05 (two-tailed probability). The test statistics revealed no significant effect of grieving predicting post traumatic growth of widowhood via religious commitment [RC]. This indicates that religious commitment [RC] does not mediate grieving to predict post traumatic growth of widowhood in the study area.

4.15 Discussion

Previous research in psychology has concentrated on psychological disorders, weaknesses, and the negative consequences of stressors (López et al. 2015). Positive psychology, on the other hand, has described the human being as active, strong, and capable of withstanding, recovering, and growing in the face of adversity.

While pain and distress are natural reactions to loss, Tedeschi et al. (1998) contend that the bereaved can also experience positive changes, or post-traumatic growth (PTG). Part of the process of coping with grief can be to try to assimilate the loss into existing worldviews, or to change those worldviews to reflect the new reality. This can lead to a loss of faith and meaning, but it can also provide an opportunity for growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006).

4.15.1 Discussion of Research Hypothesis One: Grieving has a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

The hypothesis that grieving will significantly affect post-traumatic growth [PTG] of widowhood was tested through a structural model linking all the scale items to their respective construct. This hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance. And was statistical significance at 5% level 2- tailed test. The results show that holding other factors constant, a unit increase in grieving increases the post-traumatic growth of widowhood by a standardized coefficient of 0.19. Individuals experienced and demonstrated personal growth following bereavement and traumas such as the death of a loved one, according to the growth indicator (Roberts et al., 2016). Traditionally, grieving is seen as an essential component of the widowhood process. The emotional display of the widow attracts either a positive or negative judgment by community members. So, going through widowhood

with the right mood and emotion as prescribed by society is viewed as positive, notwithstanding the pain associated with the loss. Socially learned examples influence grief reactions within a culture, while family and social systems contribute to forming social expressions of grief (Marnezou, 2021).

According to Marnezou (2021), the impact of culture on how loss is perceived and experienced, as well as how grief expression differs between cultures, is compelling on the widow. As a result, the widow's growth and meaning - making after the trauma was linked to the Ewe cultural grief terms. The Ewe culture, from the current study is viewed as helping the widow understand and accept the self. After all, it is a held cultural belief the grieving process cleanses the widow of any evil intentions of the dead husband. This knowledge alone is capable of helping the widow to see the widowhood process as supportive instead of punitive as other authors will make us believe.

The current finding is consistent with (Roberts et al. 2016) that emotions related to grief, such as sadness and yearning, may be universal; how we manage and make sense of these emotions is both personal and societal specific. It is also consistent with the Social cognitivist thinking that the individuals have the ability and capacity to direct their actions to achieve particular outcomes of given events (Benight and Bandura 2004)

Calhoun et al. (2010) noted that grief causes distress, and suffering people can develop, construct meaning, and make sense of a given traumatic event. No one doubts the stress that comes with grieving. Still, if the social network is positive and supportive of the widow's show of commitment to what the community acknowledged, the stress level may be less if the opposite should occur. Improvements in interpersonal relationships, such as

increased empathy for others; shifts in perception of personal strengths and life philosophy; and spiritual or existential transitions (Pearlman et al. 2014), will lead to growth.

Contrary to the assessment by (Muhammed 2020), bereaved spouses may have difficulty managing the daily decisions and responsibilities previously shared by two individuals, which may cause the survival and adjustment to the partner's loss and thus prevent growth. The finding showed that notwithstanding the loss experience, they were resilient in managing and adjusting to the traumatic situation, which promoted the change.

Regarding death, the social support system in Ghana have contributed immensely to the positive growth experienced by the widows. Among the Ewe, for instance, the death of a person is seen as a form of a message from the ancestral world not only to the immediate brief family but to the entire community. So, most of the time, the support given is to please their spiritual relations. The system creates a sort of comfort for the grieving widow, thus reducing their stress levels.

This finding is a clear indication of the premium the Ewe attached to the insistence on the observance of the traditionally laid down customs for individuals to follow in times of bereavement and mourning. The mourning rituals and rites relieve the widow of loneliness, which could sometimes lead to depression.

4.15.2 Discussion of Research Hypothesis two: Spirituality and trauma have a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

This hypothesis investigated the effect of spirituality and trauma on the post-traumatic growth of widowhood. It was with the assumption that widowhood practices of the Ewe of the Volta region of Ghana were spiritually laden and should affect any person who goes through it. At $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) and is statistically significance at 5% level

2- tailed test, this hypothesis was supported in part. The path analysis showed that spirituality has a positive effect on PTG whereas trauma has a negative effect on PTG. This is an indication that spiritual matters mean a lot to the Ewe widowhood rites.

The reasons for this development can be seen in cultural and belief systems of the Ewe. In the Ewe culture, spirituality shapes the meaning assign to our lives and our social identities (Michael, Crowther, Schmid, et al., 2003). So, any traumatic situation is viewed as a handiwork of a supernatural force.

Human beings are guided by some core assumptions concerning self-worth, and the general benevolence of people. There is a chance that certain universal core assumptions will guide an individual's life (Kashyap and Hussain 2018). However, different cultures may hold different beliefs about life in general and specific events (Khursheed and Shahnawaz 2020c).

Widows are taken through several spiritual processes during widowhood to protect them against any harmful intentions of the spirit of the dead. This is a long-held cultural belief that regulates the traditional system of rite of passage for the dead. This supports the view of Amlor and Owusu (2016) that belief systems define whatever practices, rituals, and spiritual processes a widow must go through. For example, a statement like “I have a better understanding of spiritual matters”(Tedeschi et al. 2018a). If a widow in the community understands that the rituals performed for her are meant to keep her safe and not to harm her, then she will get committed to the process which at the end takes the stress associated with the trauma away and make way for growth to occur.

Despite being a western model, the current findings are consistent with (Bray 2013) psycho-spiritual model, which explains the relationship between trauma and PTG,

particularly in a context where spirituality is so pervasive that it influences every aspect of people's lives, including trauma and the death of a loved one. In Bray's model, trauma presents many challenges, such as spiritual emergencies, and if dealt with well, it leads to heightened awareness and meaning-making, which leads to spiritual growth, or PTG.

The current study supports the findings by (Khursheed and Shahnawaz 2020c) that Trauma leads to spirituality, which leads to self-compassion, which leads to PTG. As noted, the belief any traumatic event is dictated by a supernatural force beyond the command of man, trauma is seen as such, thus making accepting such situations easy for the widow. Also, trauma survivors who rely on spiritual or religious beliefs for coping may be more capable of managing PTG (Askay and Magyar-Russell 2009). This indicates that the spiritual component of the Ewe widowhood rite has a positive effect on the PTG of widows.

Spirituality will provide an effective and easily accessible framework of support for many people. The significance of personal spiritual belief systems and how they assisted individuals in dealing with trauma is critical for post-traumatic growth. The individual's belief system works well with an effective cognitive processing of the event within the specific framework of spirituality. The finding of a moderating relationship between cognitive processes and spirituality lends support to the theory that having some kind of belief system can provide individuals with a framework that facilitates understanding and meaning-making in the aftermath of distressing life events (Connor 2017)

Trauma on the other hand has negative effect on post-traumatic growth of widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = -0.007$; $\beta_s = -0.008$, SE = 0.011, p-value = 0.493 > 0.05) and is statistically not significance at 5% level 2- tailed test. This is because trauma is the event

causing stress among the widows and the event by itself cannot lead to any positive growth. It's the strategy for coping with a traumatic event, in this study, spirituality, that can lead to PTG.

The view is consistent with (Tuck and Patlamazoglou 2019) that coping interventions increased PTG. They suggested that cognitive reappraisal coping may be required to stimulate PTG which agrees with the cognitivist thinking that individuals gradually attribute meaning to their traumatic experience as a result of this rumination (Westphal and Bonanno 2007). Previous research has shown that traumatic stress reactions cause cognitive rumination, which is responsible for the negative affect associated with PTG (Tuck and Patlamazoglou 2019).

Again, the finding strengthens the Ewe position that, irrespective of one's religious affiliation, the spiritual component of widowhood should be properly observed. In line with the existentialist position, the spiritual interpretation given to the cause of death gives a different perspective to one's worldview. Contrary to the perception of some people that the spirituality attached to the traditional widowhood rites was fetish and had no positive consequences for modern ways of doing things, this could not be supported.

The adherence to the widowhood practice is borne from motivation of the fear of the unforeseeable consequences for those who refuse to participate in widowhood rituals that they believe satisfy the community's cultural demand. The process is also significant because it is thought to be a way of honouring the deceased husband.

4.15.3 Discussion of Research Hypothesis three: Religious commitment has a significant effect on PTG of widowhood

This hypothesis was formulated to test whether or not the spiritually laden widowhood ritual affects an individual's level of commitment to their religion. This hypothesis was not supported and shows that religious commitment has a negative impact on post-traumatic growth of widowhood ($\beta = -0.056$; $\beta = -0.040$, $SE = 0.068$, $p\text{-value} = 0.411 > 0.05$) and is not statistically significant at 5% level in a 2-tailed test.

Path analysis and SEM were used to look at how the variables were related to each other. The overall values of our mediation model showed that religious commitment did not influence the PTG outcome enough to be considered significant. In sample, there was no link between being PTG and having a religious way to grow, according to the analysis. So, religious commitment did not change the relationship between grieving and PTG in a big way.

The current findings show that, contrary to many previous research findings that religious commitment or devotion promotes PTG ((Davis et al. 2021; Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji 2014b). Religion is often defined as a person's or group's adherence to the beliefs, doctrines, ethics, rituals, texts, and practises associated with a higher power, or as a person's or group's inner experiences and feelings through which they seek meaning and purpose, as well as their relationships with themselves, their family, others, society, nature, and the significant or sacred (Büssing 2019)

The Ewe are highly religious (Amlor & Owusu, 2016) even before they become bereaved, and the widowhood rituals are intrinsically linked to their religious belief pattern. During widowhood, they feel the need for a recommitment to their religion. This nature of

being committed to their religion far before the passing of the loved one is what gives an identity as a member of society. In this way, the widow has a cultural identity and is considered a horrible person if she breaks the rules of these beliefs.

As noted by Aman et al., (2021), a person's commitment to his or her religion involves attending services, spending time together with people of the same religious belief, among others, can lead to PTG. The Ewe culture in relation to widowhood has certain limitations as observed by Bank. For example, widows are not permitted to freely interact with society since this gives a negative emotional interpretation of their role in the husband's death. Widows are not allowed to talk in the night and interact with anybody at dawn unless they take a bath. A Christian widow whose interaction with her church members at morning devotions and all-night prayer sessions would have been limited. The demographic Table 6 clearly showed that Christians were the majority of respondents in this study and if these limitations should apply to them, then Bank's accession is confirmed.

To the Ewe, there is a thin line between spirituality and religion. Answering spirituality questions for the Ewe widow is sufficient for religious commitment. Most of the people who answered (Table 17) were not educated, so some of these terms sound strange to them. Though spirituality positively predicted PTG, respondents could not separate spirituality from religious commitment.

4.15.4 Discussion of Research Hypothesis four: Spirituality Mediate Grieving to predict Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

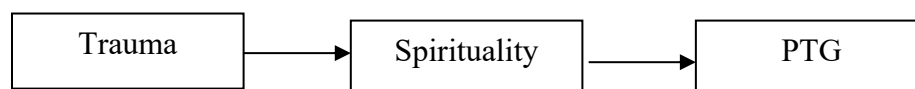
From the structural model 4, Table 11, the impact of grieving on PTG through spirituality has an indirect effect of 0.171 ($p = 0.008$). Also, grieving has a positive direct effect of 0.039 ($P = 0.000$). Again, the direct effect of Spiritual on PTC was also a direct

positive at 0.898 ($P = 0.000$). From Table 17, both the direct and indirect effects of spiritual mediating grieving and PTG are positive and significant ($P = 0.008$).

While pain and distress are natural reactions to loss, Tedeschi et al. (1998) contend that the bereaved can also experience positive changes, or PTG. Part of coping with grief can be to try to assimilate the loss into existing worldviews or change those worldviews to reflect the new reality. This can lead to a loss of faith and meaning, but it can also provide an opportunity for growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2006). When confronted with significant life challenges, such as bereavement and great suffering, people experience post-traumatic growth (Calhoun et al., 2010). Active, purposeful processing of thoughts and feelings related to loss can be painful for the bereaved, but it can also lead to gains as meaning is found in the event and a sense of growth emerges from the experience (Johnsen and Afgun 2021)

The Ewe's cultural setup may partly contribute to the positive growth in grieving. The culture prescribes accepted procedure and mood as well as a dress code for grieving. Compliance with these provisions by society reduces the psychological stress widows experience. Again, the culture gives explanations for the cause of the death of the spouse and how the deceased spouse will journey in the spiritual realm. Furthermore, updates from spiritual consultations as to how the deceased husband feels and what has been done or not done well give the widow some sort of comfort.

The impact of spirituality on PTG explained about 80% of the total standardized indirect effect of the fourth mediation model of the variance in PTG and has a large effect size.



As mentioned earlier, every process in the Ewe widowhood rite has a spiritual explanation (Amlor and Owusu 2016). The growth can therefore may result from widows have a better chance of finding benefits after the loss because of how they deal with grief and how their culture tells them to deal with emotions.

The current study agrees with the literature which suggests that survivors who are spiritual, frequently turn to their spiritual frameworks and worldviews for answers. The significant relationship between the direct effects of distress on PTG and spiritual coping on PTG was confirmed in this analysis. Spiritual coping had a direct impact on PTG, as did distress. This supports previous research that suggests both spiritual coping and distress can increase PTG (Chopko 2010)

4.15.5 Discussion of Research Hypothesis five: Trauma Mediate Grieving to predict Post Traumatic Growth [PTG]

From Table 19, consistent with the earlier hypothesis, grieving has a positive direct effect on PTG ($0.191, = 0.174, SE = 0.052, sig = 0.000$). On the other hand, trauma has a negative mediating effect on PTG ($=-0.052, =-0.045, SE = 0.055, sig = 0.345 > 0.05$). From Table 13, it can be deduced that the indirect effect of trauma on PTG was not significant. This hypothesis was not supported.

Again, path analysis and SEM were used to examine how the variables were related to each other. The overall values of our mediation model showed that trauma did not influence the PTG outcome enough to be considered significant. The current sample show that there was no link between being PTG and having a traumatic situation like the loss of a husband, according to the analysis. So, trauma did not change the relationship between grieving and PTG in a big way.

Grief is regarded as a normal, albeit distressing, process by which nearly all humans can be expected to experience significant loss at some point in their lives. High levels of emotion are felt, but they are viewed as having a clear goal, which is to assist the bereaved in abandoning their commitment to the deceased's relationship (Chopko, 2010). Grieving results from the loss of a loved one, or in this case, a husband. Grief in itself is an emotion that can cause trauma depending on the feelings underlying the expressed emotion.

According to the dualistic model of bereavement, grief is a dynamic process that reflects both the realization of the loss and the ongoing struggle against the reality of the loss. People engage in both loss orientations, which focus on dealing with specific aspects of the loss (Regehr and Sussman 2004). Because these women miss and cry over the deaths of their loved ones, it is possible that dealing with social isolation could lead to trauma. However, the Ewe social network when it comes to matters of the dead is so supportive that it limits the effect of loneliness in grieving.

The current result agrees with Regehr and Sussman's (2004) finding that there are differences between trauma and grief. For example, while both have intrusive thoughts or memories, they note that traumatic memories focus on specific negative or horrifying aspects of the event, whereas grief memories focus on the lost person and can be either positive or negative in nature.

As intimated by Regehr and Sussman (2004), individuals may experience a high level of grief but that comes with an intended objective. In the Ewe culture, grieving is important that it has become more or less a rehearsed activity for the public and the family of the dead husband to acknowledge the pain of the widow. If, for example, this is the

intention of the widow, grief could not have generated a trauma. the current study, therefore, does not find any relationship between widowhood grieving and trauma.

The study however established a high positive relationship between grieving and PGT. The development could be due partly to the fact society view the grieving situation of the widow and approve of her sincerity and innocence in the death of the husband. This may lead to meaning-making and a change in a (Johnsen and Afgun 2021) worldview congruence with the new reality. The new reality will develop personal strength and resilience. PTG may occur as a result (Almeida 2018).

The present findings is consistent with (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004a) the most people who have been through trauma will feel both growth and distress afterward. And that the growth comes from the struggle to deal with the trauma, not from the trauma itself. Again, that an individual does not need trauma to grow. People can grow and change in important ways without going through tragedy or trauma.

4.15.6 Religious Commitment [RC] Mediate Grieving to predict PTG

This hypothesis was formulated to test the mediation impact of a widow's religious commitment in grieving to PTG. Table 21 and Figure 12 indicate that religious commitment has a negative mediating effect on PTG. On the other hand, grieving has a positive direct effect on PTG ($\beta_{uns} = 0.196$, $\beta_s = 0.179$, $SE = 0.052$, $sig = 0.000 < 0.05$, Direct effect). However, religious commitment to PTG was not statistically significant ($\beta_{uns} = -0.076$, $\beta_s = -0.055$, $SE = 0.067$, $sig = 0.255 > 0.05$) because the relationship between religious commitment and PTG was significant, it has a negative indirect effect on PTG [$0.075 \times -0.055 = -0.00412$].

Notwithstanding the fact that religious commitment significantly predicted PTG (Zacchaeus & Government, 2021), it is demonstrated in the current study that it does not play a significant role in predicting PTG in widowhood. The current study's findings contradict most of the previous studies that found religious commitment to be a predictor of PTG.

The current study could be interpreted as grieving behaviours and practices among Ewe widows providing suitable conditions for cognitive processing such as meaning-making and rumination, but these actions are not seen to be mediated by their religious behaviours (Calhoun et al., 2010). This is consistent with Cornish et al., (2017), that, the use of positive religious coping is not always beneficial in moderating growth following a traumatic event such as the death of a spouse. However, the current findings contradict those of (Acquaye et al., 2018), who found that religious commitment assisted war victims to seek the sacred in order to recover from the traumas of war.

According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004), spirituality and religion are the most important elements related to PTG. Consistent with this statement, the results of the total sample of this study indicate a positive relationship between the social support that the religious or spiritual community offers and the psychological growth developed in people who have experienced at least one major life event.

4.16 Limitations

Certain limitations must be considered to comprehend the current study's findings fully. One potential limitation arises when opting for cross-sectional studies rather than longitudinal studies to investigate the causal relationship between posttraumatic growth (PTG) in widows and spirituality. Cross-sectional studies capture data at a single point in

time, providing a snapshot of the variables under consideration. However, this design may hinder the establishment of a clear cause-and-effect relationship due to the inability to track changes over time. In the context of widows' posttraumatic growth and grieving with spirituality, relying solely on cross-sectional data may overlook dynamic shifts in these variables, making it challenging to discern whether spirituality influences PTG or vice versa. Longitudinal studies, with their ability to track changes over time, offer a more robust approach for establishing causation. Therefore, choosing cross-sectional designs may limit the depth of understanding and potentially lead to an incomplete interpretation of the causal link between posttraumatic growth and spirituality in widows.

An inherent limitation in the utilization of psychometric instruments such as RCI-10, BGQ, PCL-5, and PTGI lies in the process of translating these tools into a common language with culturally appropriate nuances. These instruments are designed to measure complex psychological constructs and experiences, and the accurate translation is crucial for valid and reliable results. However, the translation process introduces the challenge of preserving the instruments' intended meaning, context, and cultural sensitivity. Each culture possesses unique linguistic and cultural nuances that may not align perfectly with the source language, potentially altering the instruments' psychometric properties. The use of a common language might overlook subtle cultural distinctions, impacting respondents' interpretations and, consequently, the outcomes measured by the instruments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

There is ample evidence to show that a traumatic event can have many negative physical and psychological consequences. A body of literature suggests, however, that people exposed to even the most gruesome experiences may report psychological growth beyond their pre-trauma experiences (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Acquaye, 2016; Sophia & Cox, 2017). Some of these experiences may include death of a loved one, war-related trauma, the report of terminal illnesses, and natural disasters

Death has always been an essential aspect of the Ewe culture, and rituals are observed to ensure community sustainability. Exclusion, isolation, and self-denial are hallmarks of widowhood spirituality. Spiritual purification, prayers, magic, and sacrifices are part of African rituals. The belief in widowhood spirituality was absolute in the pre-colonial period, but it evolved due to external influences in the colonial and post-colonial periods (Tati 2018).

Years of customary widowhood rites among the Ewes and other ethnic groups in Ghana have perplexed most practitioners in counselling, social work, and the health sector (Acquaye 2016). The contributions of these practices to victim psychology are a source of contention. This prompted an investigation into widowhood grief, spirituality, and religious commitment to PTG.

The study was conducted in three Tongu municipalities in Ghana's Volta Region: North, South, and Central Tongu. The study included widows of various ages as well as

widowhood duration. Religious commitment and spirituality transcend all of the widows involved in the study's religious affiliations.

A total of 445 widows participated in the research. Widows of all religious background available at the study area participated. There were widows from one to over 10 years of the observance of widowhood. Data collection instruments included Post Traumatic Growth Inventory, Brief Grief Questionnaire, Posttraumatic Checklist (PCL-5), and Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10).

These instruments, designed as Likert-type scale questionnaire, were used to measure the latent variables of grief, spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment. For item loading, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was done. To find out how consistent the instruments are, a level of reliability and convergent validity was also done. A correlation analysis was done to find out how the latent variables were related to each other between the different constructs. The research hypothesis was tested with a Structural Equation Model, and a path diagram was made to show how the variables affected each other.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The current study found that widowhood practices among the people of the three municipalities, North, South, and Central Tongu, can be traced to their belief that death is just a journey from the physical to the spiritual world. The death of one's husband is just a temporal separation of the two. Therefore, there was an urgent need to honour the late loved ones with all the customary demands of their communities.

Widowhood is just one way of saying goodbye to a loved one who has passed away. According to the findings of the study, people believe that widowhood is a spiritual path

to the ancestral world. They were generally of the opinion that spirituality is required in widowhood to help them understand their existence after the trauma of losing a husband.

The study also looked at how the independent variable, grief, and the mediating variables, spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment, affected the dependent variable, growth after a traumatic event. With the help of Likert scale questionnaires, the latent variables of grief, spirituality, trauma, and religious commitment were measured. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to determine each item's importance. To test the items' reliability and validity, convergent and divergent validity (also called "discriminant validity") were examined.

Grief was discovered to be inextricably linked to people's cultures. The widows' insistence on adhering to cultural dictates about what society considers to be an important disposition of mourning correlated positively with their PTG, giving new meaning to their lives. It was also clear that the people were unable to distinguish between their spiritual and religious commitments. As a result, the study was unable to establish a mediating effect of grief on PTG.

A correlational analysis was done to measure the inter-construct correlation between the latent variables to look at the relationships between the constructs. Structural models were made for each hypothesis based on independent and dependent variables. Model modification indices were checked, and those with higher covariance, which means that two items or variables are closely related, were limited to make the models more accurate. A path diagram was created to show how the variables were linked.

For the purposes of directing this investigation, five hypotheses were developed. Each hypothesis provided its own unique set of results. The mediating effect that some

critical variables have on PTG was investigated in three of these hypotheses. The following are some of the specific findings associated with each hypothesis:

Hypothesis one: This investigated the impact of grief on posttraumatic growth (PTG) of widows. This hypothesis was supported by the findings that grief has a positive effect on the PTG of widowhood ($\beta_{uns} = 0.224$; $\beta_s = 0.19$, $SE = 0.057$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) and was statistically significant at the 5% level 2-tailed test. This finding provides support for the hypothesis that the Ewe grieving processes that widows are expected to go through have some beneficial effect on them. This invariably enables them to develop a new understanding of both themselves and the world around them. Existentialism and Social Cognitive Theories (Skold, 2021; Middleton et al., 2019; Trujillo, 2016; Benight & Bandura, 2004) and the existing body of research lend credence to the findings of this study (Tedeschi et al., 2018; Peters et al., 2017; Steffen & Coyle, 2010; Hill & Pargament, 2003).

Hypothesis two: This tested the effects of spirituality and trauma on PTG. This hypothesis was also supported, showing that spirituality has a positive effect on post-traumatic growth after widowhood, ($\beta_{uns} = 0.949$; $\beta_s = 0.973$, $SE = 0.050$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$) and was statistically significant at 5% level 2-tailed test. The Ewe's belief that life is a series of changes, and that death is just the other side of the same coin is confirmed (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). The tradition's requirement that widows go through spiritually-arranged widowhood rites positively affect widows' PTG.

Hypothesis three: This looked at how the widows' religious commitment affected their PTG. It was found that a person's religious beliefs do not make a big difference in PTG after a spouse dies. The hypothesis was not supported at ($\beta_{uns} = -0.056$; $\beta_s = -0.040$, $SE = 0.068$, $p\text{-value} = 0.411 > 0.05$) and is not statistically significant at 5% level 2-tailed

test. It was found that religious commitment negatively affected the growth of widowhood after a traumatic event. This could have been because people could not tell the difference between religious commitment and spirituality.

The results of this hypothesis provide further evidence that it can be challenging to articulately differentiate between spirituality and religion. Similar findings can be found in the aforementioned body of research. On the other hand, it proved the point that most of the religions investigated in this study contain some elements of spirituality in their beliefs and practices.

Hypothesis four: This tested how spirituality affects grief and how grief, in turn affects PTG. The result shows that spirituality is a good predictor of post-traumatic growth (PTG) after grief. This means that a widow's commitment to spiritual rules after her husband dies helps her find new meanings for her life. It also shows that a widow's spiritual life is more important to her than her religion, no matter the religion she belongs to.

Hypothesis five: This looked at how trauma affects grief and how that, in turn, affects PTG. The result showed that trauma affects how grieving works to predict PTG. Even though losing a husband was a traumatic event that caused grief, the widows did not think it helped their grief in any way. Even though grief is good for PTG, it was the trauma that made that happen. The findings show that the people did not see any difference between their state of mourning and the trauma they were facing. The two seem to be referring to the same thing.

The religious commitment to PTG in widowhood was another factor that was looked at. The result supported the idea that religious commitment has no positive effect

on PTG, which was the original hypothesis. So, religious commitment hurt PTG when the woman was a widow.

5.2 Conclusions

In this study, widowhood spirituality in the North, South, and Central Tongu municipalities of Ghana's Volta region was looked at. It has brought out the reasons why they were spiritual, which were based on what they believed. This study concludes that in the traditional Ewe community, widowhood rituals were shared and strict. From the analysis of the data, it was realised that western civilization has influenced the spirituality of widows in Ghana, as it has in many other parts of Africa.

Widowhood is part of the social and cultural practices of the inhabitants of the North, South and Central municipalities of the Volta region of Ghana. It is a practice that comes from the people's traditional religious beliefs and is an essential part of their culture. It is important to remember that the Ewe's beliefs and practices are a big part of their spiritual and religious life and are what keep them alive. In every aspect of their lives, everything they do has a spiritual meaning. Because of this, they see it as the start and end of their lives. They are sure that the Supreme Being, their ancestors, and other gods gave them their culture. As with any other religion, rituals are based on the beliefs of the people who perform them and are also considered sacred.

In this study, spirituality was found to predict PTG and moderated the relationship between the two variables. But a person's religious beliefs did not change the link between grief and PTG. This suggests that religious commitment is not linked to bad outcomes after trauma but having spiritual beliefs may help people get some good out of their experiences. Spiritually minded people who have been hurt by being a widow may find hope in the

results. For those who do not, it may be encouraged by practitioners who work with widows to suggest spiritually integrated therapies (e.g., Acceptance and Commitment Therapies; Mindfulness-Based CBT) to help them get involved and grow as people.

It was again found that some of these women who converted to other modern religions were more devoted to their new religion than to the spiritual protection they got from the traditional rituals, even though they still underwent widowhood rituals. Even with this problem, the study found that there have been persistent efforts to get rid of widowhood. The study concludes also that widowhood is still an important part of the Ewe culture because most women, no matter the religion they follow, still see it as the only right way to mourn a deceased spouse.

In this study, it is also found that all the spirituality and rites of mourning or widowhood are meant to protect and preserve the community and keep spiritual harmony between the physical and spiritual worlds. Surprisingly, the spirituality and rites of widowhood in the Ewe culture are not meant to make women less human. This is because women are seen as an essential part of men because they both play important but different roles in keeping the ontological harmony that nature needs to run freely and smoothly to reach its own selfhood.

The study found that a person's religious beliefs and traumatic events do not predict any improvement in a widow's grief on their own.

Another finding shows that some widowhood practices, like shaving hair, wearing tattered clothes, and eating from broken bowls, are old-fashioned and should be stopped. However, they insist that parts of 'ahowɔwɔ' that meet their needs and goals should be kept, improved, and saved for future generations.

5.3 Implications

The study can help to learn more about how PTG works in widowhood. It tells therapists that adjusting to adversity is neither all good nor all bad, and that spirituality is another thing to think about when dealing with a widow.

When widows talk about spirituality, it could help their post-traumatic growth. Therapists could talk to widows about spirituality in the Ewe widowhood practices without worrying about breaking any cultural rules.

Also, since the religious commitment variable was not a predictor of PTG, therapists can talk about spirituality because it helped widows of all faiths deal with their traumatic experiences. Therapists should pay attention to how much someone is thinking about something.

Therapists may also be aware of increased PTG after bad things happen, which may be a sign of attempts to deal with a traumatic event, at least in the short term, even if the trauma does not go away.

5.4 Counselling Implication

The spiritual implications for counselling are profound and multifaceted. At its core, counselling often delves into the realm of the human spirit, addressing questions of meaning, purpose, and existential concerns. It acknowledges that individuals are not merely physical or psychological beings but also possess a spiritual dimension that plays a vital role in their overall well-being. Through counselling, individuals can explore their beliefs, values, and inner spiritual resources, seeking answers to questions about the meaning of life, suffering, and personal growth. Moreover, spiritual implications in counselling emphasize the interconnectedness of all aspects of human experience, fostering

a sense of wholeness and integration. By addressing the spiritual dimension, counsellors can help clients find solace, direction, and a deeper understanding of themselves, ultimately contributing to their emotional, mental, and spiritual growth and well-being.

The importance of spirituality in counselling is profound, as it recognizes the holistic nature of human beings. Spirituality provides individuals with a sense of purpose, meaning, and connection to something greater than themselves. In counselling, it can serve as a vital resource for individuals dealing with a wide range of issues, including anxiety, depression, grief, and existential crises. By integrating spirituality into therapy, counsellors can help clients explore their beliefs, values, and inner resources, allowing them to tap into their spiritual resilience and find solace in times of distress. Furthermore, spirituality can promote personal growth and a sense of empowerment, enabling clients to develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their life's journey.

The process of spiritual counselling with trauma clients should be a delicate and transformative journey. Trauma often shatters one's sense of self and safety, leading individuals to question their spirituality and core beliefs. Spiritual counselling in trauma therapy involves creating a safe and non-judgmental space for clients to explore their spiritual experiences and wounds. It entails helping clients reconnect with their spirituality, whether through faith-based practices, mindfulness, or introspection, as a means of healing and restoring a sense of wholeness. This process requires counsellors to be sensitive to the client's spiritual framework and values, adapting interventions accordingly. It can aid clients in finding strength, resilience, and a renewed sense of purpose in their spiritual beliefs, fostering a holistic approach to healing from trauma

5.5 Recommendations

The most important thing about PTG, according to the current research, is the spirituality found in traditional widowhood practices, which is different from what some other researchers have thought of. Spiritual rituals for widows are not meant to make them less human, but to give them a sense of security and strength, which helps them find new meanings for their lives. The following specific recommendations are made based on the results of this study:

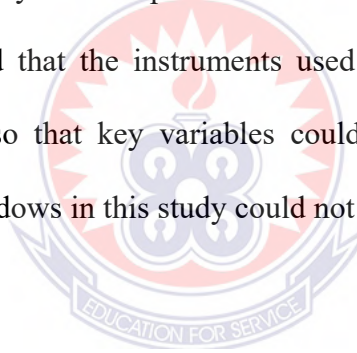
1. The research highlighting the positive impact of spirituality on post-traumatic growth in widowhood underscores the importance of incorporating spiritual practices during the mourning period. It is strongly recommended that religious leaders play a pivotal role in emphasizing the significance of spirituality to individuals navigating the challenges of widowhood. This emphasis should extend beyond places of worship and into the communities, fostering a culture of support and understanding. By actively promoting spiritual engagement, religious leaders can contribute to creating a positive and hopeful perspective for those experiencing the loss of a loved one. This approach aligns with the notion that religion and spirituality aid individuals in making sense of the end-of-life journey and coping with terminal circumstances. By integrating spiritual practices into both religious settings and broader community spaces, leaders can provide a meaningful framework for individuals going through widowhood, facilitating a more positive outlook on life after such a profound loss.

2. Also, the findings that the Ewe widowhood rites encompass a complex and meaningful set of customs that guide widows through the mourning process provides valuable support for the efficacy of these spiritual rituals. In light of this understanding, it is strongly recommended that Traditional leaders and chiefs in Ewe communities consider revising certain aspects of traditional widowhood practices. The recognition of the stages widows go through during these rites, as identified in the research, implies a need for adjustments to outdated traditions. By modifying these customs, leaders can facilitate a smoother and more adaptive process for individuals experiencing widowhood, enabling them to cope and adjust to life more effectively. This recommendation aligns with the evolving societal norms and aims to enhance the well-being of those undergoing the mourning period
3. The research reveals a crucial insight that emphasizes the inadequacy of relying solely on religious commitment to foster posttraumatic growth. Counsellors, recognizing the limitations of an exclusive focus on religious commitment, should adopt a more holistic approach in supporting individuals dealing with trauma. It is recommended that counsellors integrate a diverse set of coping strategies and interventions, considering factors beyond religious commitment alone. By broadening the scope of support to encompass various coping mechanisms, including psychological and social aspects, counsellors can better address the complex needs of individuals facing posttraumatic stress. This holistic approach is crucial in reducing death-induced stress, ensuring a more comprehensive and effective counselling process for those navigating trauma and seeking avenues for growth.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Some of the people who filled out the questionnaires could not understand them well enough to answer the questions. Because of this, qualitative research on the same topic with the same people is suggested.

1. Only three (3) local government administrative districts in the Volta Region of Ghana were looked at in this study. So, it is suggested that more research be done that covers the whole Region.
2. There should be a study of widowhood rites among both widowers and widows to find out the different practices for each gender.
3. Also suggested is a study that compares the different ethnic groups in the country.
4. Lastly, it is suggested that the instruments used could be translated into different Ghanaian languages so that key variables could be understood correctly. This is because a lot of the widows in this study could not read or write.



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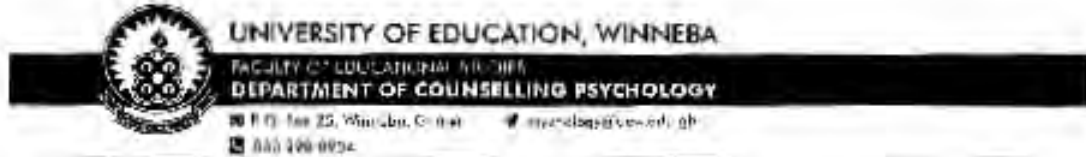
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APPENDICES

Appendix A



15th February, 2022.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Esai Sa/Madun,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you, ALFRED DOUGHEFOR, the bearer of this letter who is a student in the Department of Counselling Psychology of the University of Education, Winneba. He is reading Master of Education in Counselling Psychology with index number 200020542.

He is conducting a research on the topic: TRAJECTORIES OF BEREAVEMENT, SPIRITUALITY, RITUALS AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN WIDOWHOOD IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA: A PATH ANALYSIS. This is a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the above mentioned degree.

He is required to administer questionnaire to help him gather data for the said research and he has chosen to do so in your school.

I will be grateful if he is given permission to carry out this exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. PATRICIA MAWUSI AMOS, PhD
AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Appendix B

Informed Consent

From: Rich Tedeschi <rich.tedeschi@bouldercrest.org>

To: ALFRED DORGBETOR <dorgbetora@ymail.com>

Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022, 02:35:08 PM GMT

Subject: Re: Fw: Permission to PTGI

Dear Alfred-- **You have my permission to use the PTGI.**

Richard G. Tedeschi, Ph.D.

Distinguished Chair

Boulder Crest Institute for Posttraumatic Growth

Bluemont, VA

www.bouldercrest.org



Appendix C:

Permission to use Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10)

Everett L Worthington <eworth@vcu.edu>

To: ALFRED DORGBETOR

Tue, Jan 25 at 2:23 PM

Feel free to use the RCI 10. There is no new version. Peter Hill is a measurement expert at biola University, and he is compiling an authoritative handbook on religious and spiritual measures. He says that the rci-10 is probably one of the most used instruments.

I will send you some additional information on the instrument when I get up to the library and I'm able to upload some of my documents and attach them. At home I have only access to my phone and cannot attach documents.



Appendix D

Informed Consent

University of Education, Winneba

Faculty of Educational Studies

Department of Counselling Psychology

Trajectories of bereavement, spirituality, rituals, and post-traumatic growth in widowhood in the Volta Region of Ghana: a path analysis

Informed Consent

You are being invited to participate in a research study. The study is voluntary so you can choose to take part or not.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the spirituality, rituals and PTG of bereaved widows.

What you will be asked to do in the study: When you take part in this study, you will be asked to

complete 4 sets of questionnaires. Please note that the information obtained in this research may be used in future research. You will be asked to complete a set of demographic questions, two sets of questionnaires about your thinking and feeling in everyday life, and a questionnaire about how you feel about your salvation. There should be no discomfort with any of these questions. However, if the questions trigger some unpleasant feelings; you will be directed to your pastor to help you process these feelings.

You will not be given any incentive in taking part in this study.

Time required: I expect that you will do the questionnaire in no more than 30 minutes if it is the paper-and-pencil version, and no more than 15 minutes if it is the digital version.

Age requirement: You must be 18 years and above and be able to read and understand English at least at the class 6 level to take part in this study.

Study contacts for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has impacted you negatively in any way, talk to Alfred Dorgbetor or his supervisor, Dr Bonsi at eebonsi@yahoo.com



Appendix E

Post Traumatic Growth Inventory

Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of the **loss of your husband**, using the following scale:

0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my husband's death.

1 = I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my husband's death.

2 = I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my husband's death.

3 = I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my husband's death.

4 = I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my husband's death.

5 = I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my husband's death.

I changed my priorities about what is important in life	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I developed new interests	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a greater feeling of self-reliance	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a better understanding of spiritual matters.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I established a new path for my life.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a greater sense of closeness with others.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am more willing to express my emotions	0	1	2	3	4	5
I know better that I can handle difficulties.	0	1	2	3	4	5

I am able to do better things with my life	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am better able to accept the way things work out.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I can better appreciate each day.	0	1	2	3	4	5
New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have more compassion for others.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I put more effort into my relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am more likely to try to change things which need changing.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have stronger religious faith.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I better accept needing others	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have greater clarity about life's meaning	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel better able to face questions about life and death	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel more connected with all of existence	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a greater sense of harmony with the world	0	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix F

Brief Grief Questionnaire

S/N	STATEMENT	Not at all	Some what	A lot
1	How much do you have trouble accepting the death of your husband	0	1	2
2	How much does your grief still interfere with your life?	0	1	2
3	How much did having images or thoughts of your husband when he died or other thoughts about the death that really bothers you?	0	1	2
4	Are there things you used to do when your husband was alive that you don't feel comfortable doing any more, that you avoid doing? Like going somewhere, you went with him or doing things you used to enjoy together? Or avoiding looking at pictures or talking about them? How much are you avoiding these things?	0	1	2
5	How much are you feeling cut off or distant from other people since he died, even people you used to be close to like family or friends?	0	1	2

Appendix G

Posttraumatic Checklist (PCL-5)

Instructions: Below is a list of problems that people sometimes have in response to a very stressful experience. Please read each problem carefully and then circle one of the numbers to the right to indicate how much you have been bothered by that problem in the past month.

S/N	In the past month, how much were you bothered by:	Not at All	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1	Repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience?	1	2	3	4	5
2	Repeated, disturbing dreams of the stressful experience?	1	2	3	4	5
3	Suddenly feeling or acting as if the stressful experience were actually happening again (as if you were actually back there reliving it)?	1	2	3	4	5
4	Feeling very upset when something reminded you of the stressful experience?	1	2	3	4	5
5	Having strong physical reactions when something reminded you of	1	2	3	4	5

	the stressful experience (for example, heart pounding, trouble breathing, sweating)?					
6	Avoiding memories, thoughts, or feelings related to the stressful experience?	1	2	3	4	5
7	Avoiding external reminders of the stressful experience (for example, people, places, conversations, activities, objects, or situations)?	1	2	3	4	5
8	Trouble remembering important parts of the stressful experience?	1	2	3	4	5
9	Having strong negative beliefs about yourself, other people, or the world (for example, having thoughts such as: I am bad, there is something seriously wrong with me, no one can be trusted, the world is completely dangerous)?	1	2	3	4	5
10	Blaming yourself or someone else for the stressful experience or what happened after it?	1	2	3	4	5

11	Having strong negative feelings such as fear, horror, anger, guilt, or shame?	1	2	3	4	5
12	Loss of interest in activities that you used to enjoy?	1	2	3	4	5
13	Feeling distant or cut off from other people?	1	2	3	4	5
14	Trouble experiencing positive feelings (for example, being unable to feel happiness or have loving feelings for people close to you)?	1	2	3	4	5
15	Irritable behaviour, angry outbursts, or acting aggressively?	1	2	3	4	5
16	Taking too many risks or doing things that could cause you harm?	1	2	3	4	5
17	Being “super alert” or watchful or on guard?	1	2	3	4	5
18	Feeling jumpy or easily startled?	1	2	3	4	5
19	Having difficulty concentrating?	1	2	3	4	5
20	Trouble falling or staying asleep?	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix H

Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10)

S/N	Statement	not at all true of me 1	some what true of me 2	moder ately true of me 3	mostly true of me 4	totally true of me 5
1	I often read books and magazines about my faith.					
2	I make financial contributions to my religious organization.					
3	I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.					
4	Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life					
5	My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.					
6	I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation					
7	Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.					

8	It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.					
9	I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization.					
10	I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.					

