

## **DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH AMONG MA AL-BAROKAH STUDENTS EXPERIENCING GRIEF SYMPTOMS**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe the general profile of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) among twelfth-grade students at MA Al-Barokah who experience grief symptoms. The research employed a quantitative descriptive design using the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) administered to 98 respondents. The results indicated that 20% of students were in the low category, 47% in the moderate category, and 33% in the high category, suggesting most students experienced a moderate level of PTG. The highest PTG aspect was spiritual change ( $M = 3.49$ ; 69.8%), followed by personal strength and new possibilities, while the lowest aspect was appreciation of life ( $M = 2.79$ ; 55.8%). Gender analysis showed no significant difference in PTG levels between male and female students. These findings suggest that experiences of grief do not always have negative impacts; instead, they may foster positive growth, new meaning, and strengthened resilience after loss.

**Keywords:** Adolescents; Post-Traumatic Growth; Grief.

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## INTRODUCTION

The loss of a loved one is one of the most profound emotional experiences in human life. Death, as an inevitable part of the life cycle, often results in psychological, cognitive, and social consequences that deeply affect those left behind. For many individuals, such loss can trigger intense sadness, feelings of guilt, and even despair. According to Prigerson et al. (2009), significant loss may lead to Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD), a condition characterized by persistent and intense grief that interferes with daily functioning. Williams (2019) explains that grief responses involve not only emotional aspects but may also disrupt social stability and cognitive functioning, potentially leading to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Among adolescents, experiences of grief present particularly complex challenges. Adolescence is a critical developmental period marked by identity formation, emotional regulation, and social development (Fortuna & Vallejo, 2015). The death of a parent, sibling, or other significant figure during this stage can disrupt emotional growth and create difficulties in expressing and managing emotions. Thieleman and Cacciatore (2014) found that grieving adolescents often exhibit hidden signs of emotional distress, such as social withdrawal, loss of motivation, or engagement in risky behaviors. Furthermore, Taheri (2022) reported that adolescents experiencing grief tend to be more vulnerable to social isolation and academic decline compared to those who have not experienced emotional trauma. Recent studies emphasize that adolescents are capable of positive psychological transformation following trauma, particularly in spiritual and emotional domains (Sarikoç & Uğur, 2025; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2020). Similarly, research by Joseph and Linley (2018) highlights that adolescence is a crucial stage for meaning-making and self-reflection, which fosters post-traumatic growth.

Grief experiences in adolescence constitute complex emotional events that may result in severe psychological distress, particularly because adolescents are in a developmentally vulnerable phase in terms of emotional regulation and identity formation. The loss of a significant figure can affect emotional regulation, social relationships, and adolescents' perceptions of themselves and their lives. Nevertheless, the recovery process allows individuals to rise, strengthen themselves, and use the experience of loss as a foundation for building a more meaningful life (Sugara et al., 2025). Psychological and social

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support play a crucial role in helping adolescents adjust after loss, including the presence of secure attachment, which is associated with individuals' abilities to cope with and manage grief more adaptively (Asih et al., 2022). When approached appropriately, grief experiences do not always result in negative outcomes; rather, they can become opportunities for deep reflection, emotional growth, and spiritual transformation (Neimeyer, 2001). This meaning-making process following loss plays a vital role in the emergence of post-traumatic growth, defined as positive psychological development resulting from individuals' struggles with significant traumatic events (Fadlillah et al., 2025).

Positive transformation following traumatic experiences is known as Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). PTG is defined as a positive psychological change resulting from the struggle with major life crises (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2020). It typically manifests across five dimensions: personal strength, relationships with others, appreciation of life, new possibilities, and spiritual change (Joseph & Linley, 2018). Individuals who experience PTG not only recover from trauma but also develop greater strength, resilience, and a deeper sense of meaning in life (Tedeschi, 2018).

Research indicates that adolescents have significant potential to experience Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) due to their developmental stage, which is characterized by self-reflection and the search for life meaning (Joseph & Linley, 2018). Higher levels of PTG are associated with lower emotional distress and better psychological well-being (Frazier et al., 2018). Various factors contribute to the facilitation of PTG in adolescents, including social support, spirituality, optimism, and adaptive coping strategies (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Tazkiyah, 2019). Social support, in particular, helps individuals reinterpret traumatic experiences through empathy, acceptance, and meaningful interpersonal relationships, thereby fostering recovery and psychological growth.

However, it is important to recognize that traumatic experiences such as loss do not always result in long-term psychological vulnerability. In many cases, grief can serve as a catalyst for personal growth and spiritual renewal. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) describe Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) as a process that develops through several stages, including deep reflection (rumination), seeking support (disclosure and support), managing distressing emotions, cognitive restructuring (cognitive processing), and the reconstruction of a new life

narrative. Within this framework, individuals who are able to process grief constructively are more likely to experience positive transformations in how they perceive themselves, others, and life as a whole.

Despite its significance, research on Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) among grieving adolescents in Indonesia remains very limited. Most existing studies tend to focus on the pathological aspects of grief, such as stress, depression, and anxiety, while the potential for positive psychological growth has received relatively little attention (Hidayati & Novianty, 2020; Utami & Fitriani, 2022). Understanding PTG within this population is essential for developing culturally relevant psychological interventions. The role of spirituality in fostering PTG among Indonesian adolescents has also been supported by Yosep et al. (2023) in the *Psikoeduko Journal*, emphasizing the importance of religious meaning-making in coping with loss. In Indonesian society, spirituality and collectivistic values often function as primary coping mechanisms that help individuals find meaning in suffering and build resilience (Hidayati & Novianty, 2020). Therefore, exploring PTG within the Indonesian cultural context not only enriches academic knowledge but also offers practical contributions to school counseling services and adolescent mental health programs.

This study aims to describe the level of Post-Traumatic Growth among adolescents experiencing grief symptoms at MA Al-Barokah. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the levels of PTG experienced by students and to determine the most dominant PTG dimensions following experiences of loss. Using a quantitative descriptive approach and the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), this study is expected to provide an empirical overview of positive psychological changes and adolescents' adaptive processes in coping with grief.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of positive psychology and practically to the design of counseling strategies that emphasize students, strengths and potentials rather than their weaknesses. In addition, this research aims to offer valuable insights for school counselors and educators in recognizing and supporting grieving adolescents by fostering self awareness, emotional balance, and spiritual growth following loss. Ultimately, this study affirms that although grief is a painful experience, it can also be transformative promoting growth, resilience, and renewed meaning in life. Therefore, this research employs a quantitative descriptive approach to

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provide an empirical depiction of the levels and dimensions of Post-Traumatic Growth among adolescents experiencing grief symptoms.

### **METHOD**

#### **Participants**

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design, involving a population of 98 twelfth-grade students at MA Al-Barokah during the 2025–2026 academic year. The research site was selected purposively based on the consideration that several students at the school had experienced the loss of close family members, making it relevant to the study's focus on grief and Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG).

The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique, which involves selecting participants based on specific criteria that best align with the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). The selected participants were students who had lost a parent or a close family member within the past two years and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The sample size was determined to obtain a representative overview of post-traumatic growth levels among students while maintaining research efficiency and focus (Creswell, 2014).

#### **Research Instrument**

The measurement instrument used in this study was the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) developed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996). This instrument is designed to assess five core dimensions of post-traumatic growth: (1) personal strength, (2) relationships with others, (3) appreciation of life, (4) new possibilities, and (5) spiritual change. The PTGI consists of a set of statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), reflecting respondents' levels of agreement with each statement.

Prior to its use in the main study, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing through a preliminary study. Item validity was assessed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation by correlating each item score with the total score. The results indicated that all items had item total correlation

coefficients ( $r$ -calculated)  $\geq 0.30$ , confirming that all items were valid and suitable for measuring the construct of post-traumatic growth.

Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The PTGI showed a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient  $\geq 0.70$ , indicating good internal consistency, indicating good internal consistency. Therefore, the PTGI was deemed reliable, as it was capable of producing stable and consistent measurements. Based on the validity and reliability results, it can be concluded that the PTGI demonstrates adequate psychometric properties and is appropriate for use with adolescent participants in the Indonesian school context.

### **Research Procedure**

The research procedure was conducted through several stages. The first stage involved a preliminary study and initial observations to identify students experiencing grief symptoms and to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria of the study. After obtaining permission from the school authorities and ethical approval, participants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives and an informed consent form to ensure voluntary participation.

Subsequently, the questionnaires were distributed directly to eligible students in the classroom, accompanied by clear instructions on how to complete the instrument. Each respondent completed the questionnaire independently to maintain objectivity and minimize social desirability bias.

After all questionnaires were collected, data screening was conducted to ensure the completeness and consistency of responses. The cleaned data were then analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including the calculation of means, percentages, and frequency distributions for each PTG dimension. The results were subsequently categorized into three levels high, moderate, and low to provide a comprehensive overview of post-traumatic growth levels among grieving students.

All stages of the research were carried out in accordance with ethical research standards, emphasizing confidentiality and voluntary participation. Participants were assured that their personal identities would remain confidential and that all data collected would be used solely for academic purposes.

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**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Findings**

**1. General Overview of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) Among Twelfth-Grade Students With Grief Symptoms at MA Al-Barokah**

Data on the general overview of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) among twelfth-grade students experiencing grief symptoms at MA Al-Barokah were obtained through the administration of the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI). The data were categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. The general overview of PTG scores is presented in Table 1. below.

**Table 1. General Overview of PTG Aspects Among Twelfth-Grade Students at MA Al-Barokah**

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	21 – 49	20	20 %
Moderate	50 – 77	46	47 %
High	78 – 105	32	33 %
Total		98	100 %

Based on the PTGI analysis of 98 respondents, 20 % of the students were in the low category, 47 % were in the moderate category, and 33% were in the high category. This indicates that, overall, the majority of students at MA Al-Barokah experienced PTG at a moderate level. This means that most adolescents have shown signs of positive meaning-making following grief, such as improved self-understanding, better relationships with others, and a broader perspective on life. However, a portion of students in the low category still require additional guidance to help them optimize their PTG development.

**2. General Overview of PTG Aspects Among Twelfth-Grade Students at MA Al-Barokah**

The general overview of PTG aspects among twelfth-grade students at MA Al-Barokah is supported by the descriptive data presented in Table 2. which illustrates the achievement scores of each PTG dimension.

**Table 2. General Overview of PTG Aspect Achievement Scores Among Twelfth-Grade Students at MA Al-Barokah**

No	PTG Aspect	Mean	SD	Percentage
1	Relating to Others	3.02	1.63	60.4 %
2	New Possibilities	3.29	1.49	65.8 %
3	Personal Strength	3.34	1.47	66.8 %
4	Spiritual Change	3.49	1.41	69.8 %
5	Appreciation of Life	2.79	1.57	55.8 %

Based on the descriptive analysis of PTGI, the Spiritual Change aspect obtained the highest mean score of 3.49 (69.8 %), followed by Personal Strength (mean 3.34; 66.8 %) and New Possibilities (mean 3.29; 65.8 %). This indicates that students were relatively able to discover new meaning, recognize personal strengths, and identify new opportunities after experiencing traumatic events. Meanwhile, the Relating to Others aspect achieved a moderate score with a mean of 3.02 (60.4 %), indicating an improvement in interpersonal relationships, although not significantly prominent. The lowest score was found in the Appreciation of Life aspect, with a mean of 2.79 (55.8 %), suggesting that although students experienced positive growth, appreciation of life remains the least developed dimension compared to the others.

### 3. General Overview of Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) Based on Gender

A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the general overview of PTGI scores based on gender. This analysis includes frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation for each gender group. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. General Overview of PTGI Based on Gender**

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Mean PTGI Score	Standard Deviation (SD)
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Male (1)	46	46.94 %	21.04	7.01
Female (2)	52	53.06 %	21.17	6.69
Total	98	100 %	21.11	6.83

The descriptive analysis in Table 4.3 shows that the respondents consisted of 46 male students (46.94 %) and 52 female students (53.06 %), totaling 98 students. The mean PTGI score for male students was 21.04 with a standard deviation of 7.01, while female students had a mean score of 21.17 with a standard deviation of 6.69.

Overall, the mean PTGI scores between male and female students do not show a significant difference. This indicates that the level of post-traumatic growth is relatively balanced between the two genders. In other words, both male and female students have similar abilities in finding positive meaning, experiencing personal change, and developing inner strength after facing stressful or traumatic events.

**4. General Overview of Grief Levels Among Twelfth-Grade Students at MA Al-Barokah**

A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the level of grief experienced by twelfth-grade students at MA Al-Barokah. The analysis aims to describe the distribution of respondents based on the categories of grief levels: low, moderate, and high. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. General Overview of Grief Levels Among Twelfth-Grade Students at MA Al-Barokah**

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	0 – 21	13	13 %
Moderate	22 – 43	75	77 %
High	44 – 65	10	10 %
Total		98	100 %

Based on the frequency distribution, out of 98 respondents, the majority were in the moderate category, totaling 75 students (77 %). Students in the low category were 13 (13 %), while only 10 students (10 %) were in the high category. This shows that most respondents experienced a moderate level of grief, with only a small proportion in the low or high categories.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the study indicate that experiences of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) among twelfth-grade students at MA Al-Barokah vary, with the majority of respondents falling within the moderate category. This finding suggests that most adolescents who experience grief possess the capacity to adapt and derive positive meaning from experiences of loss, although the intensity of growth is not uniform. This finding reinforces that loss can act as a catalyst for positive psychological change, a process known as Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).

Data analysis further revealed that the dimension of spiritual change obtained the highest score compared to other PTG dimensions. This indicates that experiences of loss among adolescents often stimulate a deeper search for meaning in life and a strengthened connection with a higher power, whether within religious frameworks or personal value systems. These findings are consistent with the results of Sarikoç and Uğur (2025) who found that high school students experiencing disaster related trauma demonstrated strong spiritual growth and new life perspectives. Similarly, Taku et al. (2015) observed that individuals who experienced trauma and successfully restructured their core beliefs achieved greater emotional resilience. According to Calhoun and Tedeschi (2006), spirituality plays a crucial role in the meaning-making process following trauma, as it provides a comforting interpretive framework that facilitates acceptance. Thus, the heightened spiritual growth identified in this study represents a form of psychological adaptation that helps adolescents achieve emotional stability after loss.

In contrast, the dimension of appreciation of life yielded the lowest score. This finding may reflect that some students are still in the early stages of recovery, where their emotional focus remains centered on the loss itself rather than on broader life appreciation. Joseph and Linley (2005) note that appreciation of life often emerges later in the PTG trajectory, as it requires time,

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reflection, and emotional stability to fully develop. Therefore, although students in this study have demonstrated signs of positive growth, the process of life reappraisal may still require additional time and supportive intervention to mature.

Regarding gender differences, the findings indicate that PTG levels among male and female students were relatively balanced. This result aligns with the study by Dekel et al. (2012) which suggests that although emotional responses to loss may differ culturally and socially between males and females, the potential for post-traumatic growth remains comparable. In other words, both male and female adolescents possess the capacity to develop personal strength and new meaning from traumatic experiences, depending on their social context and the support they receive.

Within the context of secondary education, these findings carry important implications. Adolescence is a developmental phase characterized by identity formation and the search for meaning in life. Experiencing loss during this stage may accelerate psychological maturity when individuals are able to reflect on suffering and extract life lessons from it (Park, 2010). Consequently, although grief is a painful experience, it can also function as a context for character development, emotional resilience, and personal wisdom.

From an educational perspective, the results underscore the importance of schools as supportive ecosystems for students' psychological adaptation. Social support from teachers, peers, and school counselors has been shown to play a vital role in facilitating post-traumatic growth (Taku et al., 2015). Schools should serve as safe spaces where students can express emotions and reconstruct life meaning without stigma or social pressure. Guidance and counseling approaches oriented toward positive adjustment and self-reflection may assist students in integrating grief experiences into a healthy process of personal development.

Methodologically, this study demonstrates that a descriptive quantitative approach is effective in providing an empirical overview of variations in PTG levels and dimensions among adolescents. The use of the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) enables the identification of psychological domains that most prominently develop following loss, such as personal strength, new possibilities, and spiritual change. These findings may serve as a foundation for

future research exploring protective and risk factors influencing post-traumatic growth, including social support, coping strategies, and religious or spiritual values.

Overall, the findings affirm that adolescents experiencing grief possess an inherent capacity to recover and grow through experiences of loss. Although not all individuals achieve high levels of PTG, a general tendency toward positive growth remains evident. In educational and counseling contexts, this highlights the importance of approaches that not only focus on recovery from grief but also on facilitating constructive psychological development, enabling adolescents to navigate life with renewed meaning and stronger emotional resilience.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

This study presents an overview of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) among twelfth-grade students experiencing grief symptoms. The findings indicate that most students demonstrate a moderate level of PTG, reflecting their ability to adapt psychologically and derive positive meaning from experiences of loss. In line with recent theoretical advances (Pradhan & Kumar, 2021) this study reaffirms that emotional regulation and resilience are integral to post-traumatic growth, especially during adolescence. Although grief involves emotional pain and distress, students are still able to carry out daily activities while engaging in processes of reflection and internal adjustment.

The results further show that PTG is primarily characterized by spiritual change, appreciation of life, and personal strength, suggesting that experiences of loss can foster self-awareness, resilience, and more positive life perspectives. No significant gender differences were found in PTG levels, reinforcing the notion that post-traumatic growth is influenced more by personal and contextual factors than by gender. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of psychosocial support and school-based counseling interventions in facilitating meaning-making processes and emotional growth among students experiencing grief.

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## Recommendation

Future research should expand to different school contexts and employ qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to gain a deeper understanding of adolescents subjective experiences and the psychological–spiritual dynamics involved in the process of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). Such approaches are expected to enrich counseling practices that emphasize resilience, spirituality, and positive meaning-making.

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