

Post-Traumatic Growth and Couple Resilience: Exploring the Mediating Role of Relational Meaning Making

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to examine whether relational meaning making mediates the relationship between post-traumatic growth and couple resilience among Brazilian couples who have experienced significant adversity or loss.

Methods and Materials: A descriptive correlational design was applied with a sample of 404 adult participants from Brazil, recruited using the Morgan and Krejcie sample size guidelines to ensure adequate statistical power. Participants completed standardized instruments: the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, the Dyadic Meaning-Making Scale, and the Couple Resilience Inventory. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 to compute descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients and AMOS version 21 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized mediation model. Model fit was evaluated with multiple indices, including χ^2/df , CFI, TLI, GFI, AGFI, and RMSEA.

Findings: Post-traumatic growth showed a significant positive correlation with relational meaning making ($r = .62, p < .001$) and couple resilience ($r = .54, p < .001$). Relational meaning making was strongly associated with couple resilience ($r = .68, p < .001$). SEM results indicated good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.78$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .044). Post-traumatic growth had a direct effect on couple resilience ($\beta = .27, p < .001$) and on relational meaning making ($\beta = .62, p < .001$). Relational meaning making had a strong direct effect on couple resilience ($\beta = .63, p < .001$). The indirect effect of post-traumatic growth on couple resilience through relational meaning making was significant ($\beta = .39, p < .001$), increasing the total effect of post-traumatic growth on couple resilience ($\beta = .66, p < .001$).

Conclusion: Findings suggest that while post-traumatic growth contributes to couple resilience, its impact is amplified when partners engage in shared sense-making about adversity. Strengthening relational meaning making may be a key therapeutic mechanism for enhancing resilience in couples coping with trauma.

Keywords: Post-traumatic growth; couple resilience; relational meaning making; trauma;

1. Introduction

Experiencing profound loss or trauma often destabilizes individuals and couples, challenging the fundamental narratives they hold about themselves, their relationships, and the future (Kim, 2025; Yang et al., 2025). Yet, alongside grief and suffering, many couples report psychological and relational strengthening, described as post-traumatic growth (PTG) — a positive transformation following adversity (Hill, 2025; Knowles et al., 2024). PTG represents not merely recovery but a process of reconstruction in which meaning, identity, and relational bonds are reorganized after destabilizing events (Daniel, 2023; Keisari et al., 2023). As research increasingly shifts from an exclusively individual perspective to a dyadic one, there is growing recognition that couples navigate trauma through co-constructed meaning and relational processes that can foster resilience (Hall & Ungureanu, 2021; Reitz et al., 2021).

Bereavement and other life disruptions frequently trigger existential crises and identity disorientation (Wehrman, 2022; Wetangterah, 2022). The disintegration of previously coherent life stories forces survivors to reconstruct meaning, integrate the loss, and develop new ways of relating to self and others (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2021; Romero, 2018). Couples, in particular, encounter the challenge of shared loss narratives: while partners may grieve differently, their relationship itself becomes an arena where meaning can be renegotiated (Hall & Ungureanu, 2021; Hooghe et al., 2021). This relational dimension is vital, as maladaptive meaning processes—such as persistent rumination or divergent grief trajectories—can disrupt intimacy and lead to long-term relational distress (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2022; Wehrman, 2022).

Recent studies underscore that relational meaning making is not merely supportive talk but an active co-creation of understanding, in which couples weave shared interpretations of the traumatic experience (Tey & Lee, 2022; Yang et al., 2025). Through dialogue, symbolism, and joint rituals, partners attempt to regain a sense of coherence (Campling et al., 2023; Keisari et al., 2023). This process aligns with meaning reconstruction models, which emphasize that trauma disrupts core assumptions and that adaptive grieving requires rebuilding life narratives at both personal and interpersonal levels (Daniel, 2023; Hill, 2025).

PTG is defined by Tedeschi and Calhoun as positive psychological changes experienced due to struggling with highly challenging circumstances, including enhanced relationships, deeper appreciation of life, and increased

personal strength (Hill, 2025; Knowles et al., 2024). Although PTG research has largely focused on individuals, emerging evidence shows its relevance for intimate partnerships. Dyadic studies reveal that one partner's growth can catalyze relational adaptation, but congruence in growth trajectories is especially predictive of relationship satisfaction and resilience (Reitz et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Couples who can jointly integrate trauma often report greater trust, openness, and mutual empathy (Hall & Ungureanu, 2021; Hooghe et al., 2021).

Couple resilience describes the dynamic capacity of romantic partners to withstand and adapt to adversity by leveraging mutual support, flexible role negotiations, and collaborative coping (Campling et al., 2024; Wehrman, 2022). Resilience is not a fixed trait but an interactive system influenced by shared belief systems, communication quality, and resource mobilization (Kennedy et al., 2019; Sawyer, 2020). Positive reframing of loss, meaning-based rituals, and shared spirituality have been linked to greater couple resilience in bereaved and chronically stressed partners (Afshani et al., 2019; Cadell et al., 2019). The interplay of PTG and couple resilience is particularly promising, as growth may provide new strengths and relational pathways that buffer couples from ongoing stressors (Kim, 2025; Knowles et al., 2024).

Although PTG and resilience are conceptually distinct, they appear interconnected through the process of relational meaning making (Tey & Lee, 2022; Yang et al., 2025). When couples make sense of adversity together—by co-narrating their experience, validating each other's grief, and linking the event to shared values—they create conditions for mutual growth (Campling et al., 2023; Keisari et al., 2023). Such meaning making may act as a mediating pathway, transforming individual struggle into collective strength and resilience (Hill, 2025; Romero, 2018). Evidence from bereaved parents, widowed individuals, and partners facing illness indicates that dyads who actively reconstruct meaning experience less identity disruption and greater relationship satisfaction (Hooghe et al., 2021; Wehrman, 2022).

For example, Yang et al. highlighted how narrative photo-elicitation enabled dementia caregivers to articulate shared meaning, fostering post-loss growth (Yang et al., 2025). Similarly, Campling et al. found that co-producing bereavement interventions with families promoted a sense of communal adaptation and strengthened relational bonds (Campling et al., 2023, 2024). Other interventions, such as drama therapy and group storytelling, have been shown to

facilitate long-term meaning reconstruction and resilience among older adults and bereaved individuals (Keisari et al., 2023; Pala, 2021).

Cultural frameworks strongly shape how couples process trauma and construct meaning (Moriconi et al., 2022; Wetangterah, 2022). For instance, communal mourning rituals in East Nusa Tenggara embed loss within a collective narrative, sustaining social and relational resilience (Wetangterah, 2022). In South Korea and Brazil, spirituality and communal identity play critical roles in PTG and relational coping (Kim, 2025; Lee et al., 2022). Cultural narratives influence the symbols couples use and the extent to which emotional expression or stoicism is valued (Afshani et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2019). Understanding these nuances is vital when studying diverse populations, as resilience and growth may manifest differently across cultural contexts (Moriconi et al., 2022; Santarpia et al., 2022).

The Brazilian context, where family cohesion and spirituality are often central to coping with adversity, provides a unique cultural backdrop for exploring dyadic resilience and meaning making (Knowles et al., 2024; Ramano et al., 2022). Bereaved Brazilian couples frequently integrate religious meaning, communal storytelling, and mutual caregiving to reestablish relational continuity (Afshani et al., 2019; Cadell et al., 2019). Such contextually embedded practices may facilitate PTG and buffer against prolonged relational distress (Kennedy et al., 2019; Sawyer, 2020).

Despite the conceptual overlap among PTG, couple resilience, and meaning reconstruction, empirical studies that integrate these constructs within a single model remain scarce (Reitz et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Existing research often treats PTG as an individual outcome, overlooking how partners' shared narratives shape dyadic adaptation (Daniel, 2023; Hill, 2025). Moreover, while couple resilience frameworks emphasize mutual coping and shared identity, the mediating role of relational meaning making has not been systematically tested (Campling et al., 2024; Keisari et al., 2023). Recent qualitative works suggest that meaning co-construction is a core resilience mechanism (Patterson et al., 2021; Tey & Lee, 2022), but quantitative models verifying this pathway are limited.

In addition, cultural diversity is insufficiently represented in dyadic bereavement and trauma studies (Ramano et al., 2022; Wetangterah, 2022). Western-centric frameworks may not fully capture relational dynamics in collectivist and relationally oriented cultures such as Brazil (Lee & Mi-Ha,

2024; Moriconi et al., 2022). Studying Brazilian couples offers an opportunity to enrich global understanding of resilience processes and inform culturally sensitive interventions (Cadell et al., 2019; Knowles et al., 2024).

Guided by these gaps, the present study aims to investigate the interrelationships between post-traumatic growth, couple resilience, and relational meaning making among Brazilian couples who have faced significant adversity or loss.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationships among post-traumatic growth, couple resilience, and relational meaning making in romantic partners. The target population included adult individuals in long-term intimate relationships residing in Brazil. Using the Morgan and Krejcie sample size determination table, a minimum sample of 384 was suggested for large populations; to enhance statistical power and account for possible data loss, 404 participants were ultimately recruited through stratified convenience sampling from community and social networks across multiple Brazilian states. Eligibility criteria required participants to be at least 18 years old and in a committed relationship for a minimum of one year. All participants completed an online survey containing standardized instruments after providing informed consent.

2.2. Measures

Couple resilience was assessed using the Couple Resilience Inventory (CRI) developed by Sixbey and colleagues in 2015. The CRI is a 30-item self-report scale designed to evaluate the protective processes that help couples adapt and thrive following stress or adversity. It consists of five subscales: Belief Systems (shared meaning, positive outlook), Organizational Patterns (flexibility, connectedness), Communication/Problem Solving (clear communication, collaborative problem solving), Social and Economic Resources, and Spirituality and Shared Values. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), with higher scores indicating greater resilience within the dyad. Previous research has confirmed the instrument's strong internal consistency (Cronbach's α coefficients reported between .82 and .93 across subscales) and good construct and convergent

validity, including correlations with marital satisfaction and coping resources.

Post-traumatic growth was measured using the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) created by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996). The PTGI comprises 21 items grouped into five domains: Relating to Others, New Possibilities, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life. Participants respond on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 (“I did not experience this change”) to 5 (“I experienced this change to a very great degree”). Higher total scores indicate greater perceived positive psychological change after trauma. The PTGI has demonstrated excellent psychometric properties across cultures and samples, with Cronbach’s α coefficients typically exceeding .85 and test–retest reliability reported over .70. Its validity is supported through associations with coping, meaning making, and subjective well-being.

Relational meaning making was evaluated using the Dyadic Meaning-Making Scale (DMMS) originally developed by Fiese and colleagues (2002) and adapted for couple contexts by Skerrett (2013). This 20-item scale captures how partners jointly construct and integrate challenging life events into their relational narrative. It includes two subscales: Shared Narrative Construction (joint storytelling, shared understanding of adversity) and Collaborative Appraisal (perceiving stressors as “ours” rather than “mine” or “yours”). Responses are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”), with higher scores indicating more adaptive relational meaning making. The DMMS has shown robust psychometric qualities, including Cronbach’s α values ranging from .80 to .90, evidence of construct validity, and significant correlations with marital adjustment and coping efficacy in prior studies.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for study variables (N = 404)

Variable	M	SD
Post-Traumatic Growth	72.48	14.32
Relational Meaning Making	63.25	12.17
Couple Resilience	76.93	13.08

As shown in Table 1, participants reported moderately high levels of post-traumatic growth ($M = 72.48$, $SD = 14.32$) and couple resilience ($M = 76.93$, $SD = 13.08$). Relational meaning making scores were also relatively elevated ($M = 63.25$, $SD = 12.17$), suggesting that most

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 and AMOS version 21. Initially, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage) were calculated to summarize demographic variables and study measures. Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine the bivariate relationships between the dependent variable (couple resilience) and each independent variable (post-traumatic growth and relational meaning making). Prior to inferential analyses, assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were checked. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then conducted in AMOS to test the hypothesized relationships and mediational pathways, using maximum likelihood estimation. Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices, including the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

3. Findings and Results

Of the 404 participants, 212 (52.48%) self-identified as female and 192 (47.52%) as male. The mean age of respondents was 32.78 years ($SD = 7.46$), ranging from 19 to 54 years. Regarding relationship duration, 138 individuals (34.16%) reported being together for 1–3 years, 156 (38.61%) for 4–7 years, and 110 (27.23%) for more than 7 years. In terms of education, 167 participants (41.34%) held a bachelor’s degree, 121 (29.95%) had completed graduate-level studies, and 116 (28.71%) had finished secondary education. Approximately 298 respondents (73.76%) reported cohabiting with their partner, while 106 (26.24%) were in non-cohabiting committed relationships.

couples engaged in shared sense-making and adaptation following adversity.

Preliminary analyses indicated that the assumptions for Pearson correlation and SEM were met. Univariate normality was supported with skewness values ranging from

−0.56 to 0.84 and kurtosis values between −0.71 and 1.02 across main study variables. The Shapiro–Wilk tests were non-significant for couple resilience ($W = 0.98$, $p = .072$), post-traumatic growth ($W = 0.99$, $p = .164$), and relational meaning making ($W = 0.99$, $p = .117$), indicating approximate normal distribution. Scatterplots confirmed

linearity between independent variables and couple resilience. Homoscedasticity was verified by inspecting residual plots. Multicollinearity diagnostics showed acceptable tolerance values (0.71–0.83) and variance inflation factors ($VIF = 1.21$ – 1.40), suggesting no collinearity concerns.

Table 2

Pearson correlations between post-traumatic growth, relational meaning making, and couple resilience ($N = 404$)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Post-Traumatic Growth	—		
2. Relational Meaning Making	.62*** ($p < .001$)	—	
3. Couple Resilience	.54*** ($p < .001$)	.68*** ($p < .001$)	—

Table 2 indicates significant positive correlations among all study variables. Post-traumatic growth was moderately and positively associated with relational meaning making ($r = .62$, $p < .001$) and with couple resilience ($r = .54$, $p < .001$).

The strongest association emerged between relational meaning making and couple resilience ($r = .68$, $p < .001$), indicating that shared sense-making processes are strongly tied to couples' adaptive capacity.

Table 3

Fit indices for the structural equation model ($N = 404$)

χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
164.27	92	1.78	.93	.90	.96	.95	.044

The hypothesized structural model demonstrated good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 164.27$, $df = 92$, $\chi^2/df = 1.78$). Fit indices were within accepted thresholds: $GFI = .93$, $AGFI = .90$, $CFI = .96$, $TLI = .95$, and $RMSEA = .044$. These values

collectively indicate that the specified model adequately represents the observed relationships among post-traumatic growth, relational meaning making, and couple resilience.

Table 4

Standardized direct, indirect, and total effects among study variables ($N = 404$)

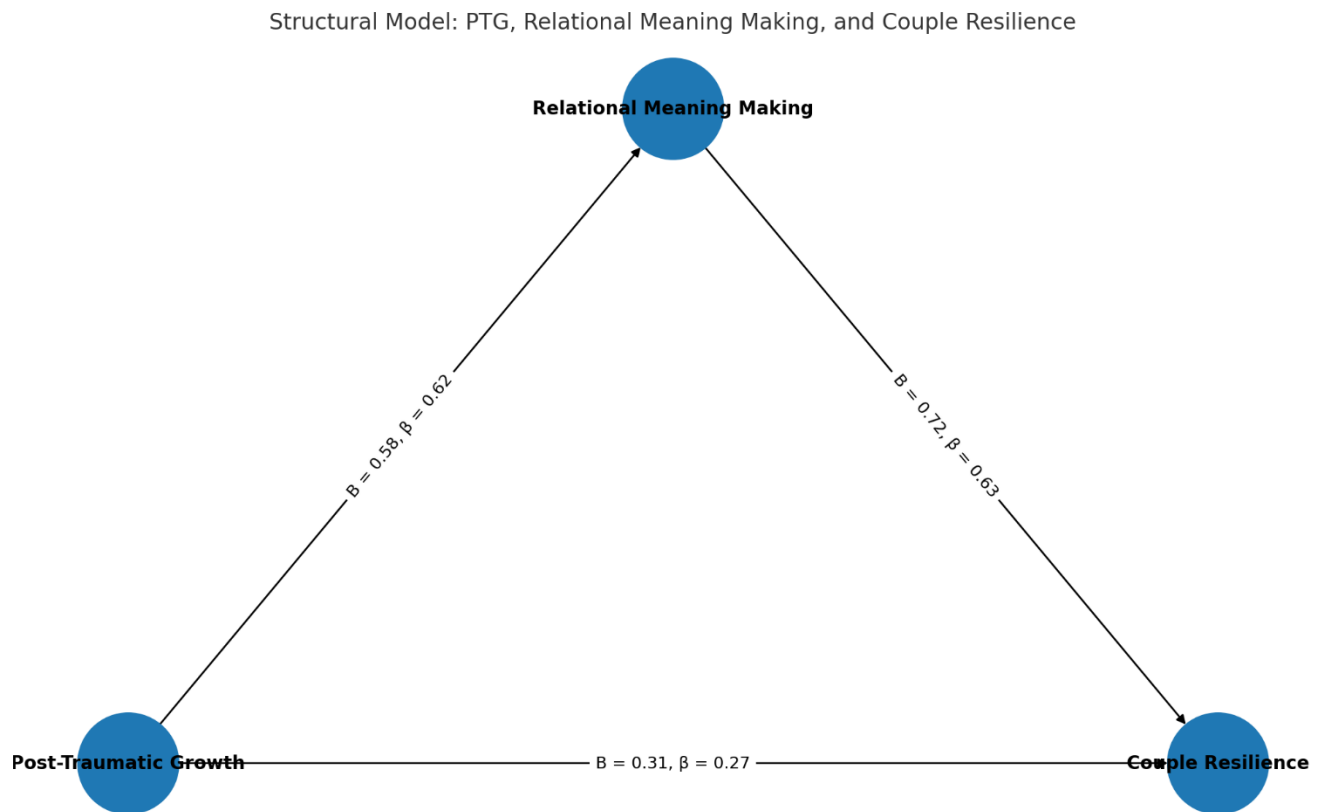
Path	b	S.E.	β	p
Direct effects				
Post-Traumatic Growth → Relational Meaning Making	0.58	0.06	.62	< .001
Relational Meaning Making → Couple Resilience	0.72	0.07	.63	< .001
Post-Traumatic Growth → Couple Resilience	0.31	0.07	.27	< .001
Indirect effects				
Post-Traumatic Growth → Couple Resilience (via Relational Meaning Making)	0.42	0.05	.39	< .001
Total effects				
Post-Traumatic Growth → Couple Resilience	0.73	0.08	.66	< .001

As displayed in Table 4, post-traumatic growth had a significant direct effect on relational meaning making ($b = 0.58$, $\beta = .62$, $p < .001$) and on couple resilience ($b = 0.31$, $\beta = .27$, $p < .001$). Relational meaning making strongly predicted couple resilience ($b = 0.72$, $\beta = .63$, $p < .001$). The indirect path from PTG to couple resilience through

relational meaning making was also significant ($b = 0.42$, $\beta = .39$, $p < .001$), and the total effect of PTG on couple resilience increased substantially when the mediator was included ($b = 0.73$, $\beta = .66$, $p < .001$). These results confirm that relational meaning making is a meaningful pathway through which PTG strengthens couples' adaptive capacity.

Figure 1

Model with Beta Coefficients



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined how post-traumatic growth (PTG) and relational meaning making contribute to couple resilience among Brazilian partners who have faced significant adversity or loss. Structural modeling indicated that higher PTG was significantly associated with greater couple resilience and that relational meaning making played a partial mediating role in this association. These findings deepen our understanding of dyadic adaptation following trauma by confirming that growth experienced at the individual level can extend to strengthen relational systems, especially when partners engage in shared sense-making processes (Kim, 2025; Yang et al., 2025).

The direct positive link between PTG and couple resilience aligns with prior research demonstrating that individuals who develop new perspectives, appreciation for life, and strengthened self-concepts after trauma often bring these resources into their intimate partnerships (Hill, 2025; Zhang et al., 2021). Our findings echo Reitz et al., who found

that positive adaptation to bereavement in one partner could have a buffering and stabilizing effect on the dyad over time (Reitz et al., 2021). Similarly, studies on widowed and bereaved couples show that growth following loss fosters deeper emotional sharing, increased empathy, and enhanced collective efficacy (Hall & Ungureanu, 2021; Hooghe et al., 2021).

The Brazilian context may further explain the strong PTG–resilience connection. In cultural systems where relational interconnectedness and spirituality are central coping anchors, individual transformation after trauma tends to be expressed relationally, shaping the shared narrative of the couple (Afshani et al., 2019; Ramano et al., 2022). Religious and communal frameworks common in Brazilian families likely offer symbolic language and shared practices that allow PTG to be integrated into the couple’s life story (Cadell et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2019). This socio-cultural scaffolding may have amplified the translation of personal growth into dyadic resilience.

A key contribution of this study is empirically confirming relational meaning making as a mediating mechanism

between PTG and couple resilience. The findings are consistent with theoretical frameworks of meaning reconstruction (Daniel, 2023; Hill, 2025) and support earlier qualitative evidence that couples who co-construct narratives about trauma and integrate the loss into their shared identity experience better adaptation (Keisari et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2025). This extends work by Campling et al., who found that family-centered co-production of bereavement interventions can serve as a “relational glue,” helping partners feel connected and resourceful despite loss (Campling et al., 2023, 2024).

The mediating role suggests that PTG alone does not automatically translate into relational strength; it must be shared and contextualized within the couple’s narrative. Individuals who experience growth but fail to express it collaboratively might not foster joint resilience. This interpretation aligns with research showing that unaligned grief trajectories or “silent coping” may hinder dyadic adaptation (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2022; Wehrman, 2022). Conversely, relational meaning processes—such as joint reflection, storytelling, and symbol creation—appear to bridge the gap between personal change and collective thriving (Hooghe et al., 2021; Tey & Lee, 2022).

Our results also resonate with intervention studies using narrative and expressive modalities. For example, Keisari et al. demonstrated that drama therapy can help couples and groups process unfinished grief and integrate it into their identities (Keisari et al., 2023). Narrative photo-elicitation with caregivers of persons with dementia has similarly been shown to facilitate shared sense-making and increase resilience (Yang et al., 2025). These parallels suggest that meaning-centered couple work may be an effective route to translate PTG into relational adaptation.

The cultural salience of family cohesion and spirituality in Brazil likely shaped how relational meaning making functions. Traditional mourning rituals and shared religious frameworks provide a “language” for couples to narrate loss, which may explain the strong mediating effect (Afshani et al., 2019; Ramano et al., 2022). In contrast, Western-based studies sometimes highlight individualism as a barrier to co-narration, with partners grieving in parallel but not jointly (Patterson et al., 2021; Sawyer, 2020). By including a Brazilian sample, this research adds to calls for more culturally grounded grief and resilience models (Moriconi et al., 2022; Santarpia et al., 2022).

Our results also contribute to global grief scholarship by showing that couples’ shared spirituality and values are embedded within meaning making (Cadell et al., 2019;

Kennedy et al., 2019). This observation dovetails with the theory that spirituality can function as an interpretive system enabling redefinition of suffering and strengthening of bonds (Knowles et al., 2024). Studies of ferry disaster survivors and civic activists in Korea similarly indicate that collective identity and purpose can emerge from loss when embedded in cultural meaning systems (Lee et al., 2022; Lee & Mi-Ha, 2024).

This study helps unify diverse theoretical traditions. The meaning reconstruction model (Daniel, 2023; Hill, 2025) and the family resilience framework (Campling et al., 2024; Hall & Ungureanu, 2021) converge here: PTG can enrich personal resources, but these must be jointly processed to strengthen the couple as a system. Our SEM findings illustrate how meaning making functions as the relational “engine” converting individual change into collective resilience.

Moreover, our data extend continuing bonds theory, which posits that sustaining an adaptive connection to loss can promote healthy adjustment (Keser & Işikli, 2021). When partners together renegotiate their bond with what has been lost—be it a loved one, a life dream, or a sense of safety—they generate shared coherence and protect the couple’s identity (Pitcho-Prelorentzos et al., 2021; Wehrman, 2022). This reinforces the notion that resilience is not only behavioral but narrative and symbolic (Keisari et al., 2023; Pala, 2021).

5. Clinical and Theoretical Implications

By demonstrating the mediating role of relational meaning making, this study underscores the therapeutic potential of interventions that promote shared narrative development. Approaches such as collaborative grief storytelling, digital memory-sharing platforms (Campling et al., 2023), and culturally tailored rituals (Afshani et al., 2019; Wetangterah, 2022) could be integrated into couple therapy after trauma. Additionally, our findings support moving beyond a purely symptom-reduction focus to models that cultivate growth and resilience capacities at the dyadic level (Hall & Ungureanu, 2021; Knowles et al., 2024).

These results also encourage practitioners to attend to gender and role dynamics in meaning making. Prior research shows gender differences in how widowed or bereaved individuals narrate loss and express growth (Hooghe et al., 2021; Kim, 2025). Clinicians can help couples negotiate these differences and create inclusive narratives that respect each partner’s coping style while fostering shared meaning.

6. Suggestions and Limitations

Although this study advances understanding of the interplay between PTG, relational meaning making, and couple resilience, some limitations must be acknowledged. First, the use of a cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. While our SEM analysis suggests mediation, temporal ordering cannot be confirmed; longitudinal research is needed to verify whether meaning making indeed precedes and strengthens resilience. Second, all data were based on self-report measures, which may introduce response biases such as social desirability or shared method variance. Incorporating multi-informant perspectives or observational data on couple interaction could enhance validity. Third, the sample, while culturally rich, was drawn from Brazilian participants recruited online, potentially limiting generalizability beyond educated, urban populations. Rural or lower-literacy groups might experience and narrate trauma differently. Finally, although we included validated instruments, some scales were adapted culturally; further psychometric validation across diverse Brazilian regions would strengthen interpretability.

Future studies should employ longitudinal and dyadic designs to track how couples' meaning-making processes evolve over time and predict resilience trajectories. Examining actor-partner interdependence models could clarify how one partner's PTG influences the other's adaptation through shared meaning pathways. Cross-cultural comparisons would illuminate how cultural scripts and rituals moderate these relationships, deepening theoretical models of dyadic resilience. Additionally, exploring the role of technology and digital storytelling—such as photo-elicitation interventions and virtual memorialization—could reveal novel avenues for fostering meaning making in modern bereavement contexts. Including clinical samples (e.g., couples facing chronic illness, war-related trauma, or perinatal loss) may also refine the applicability of the model to diverse adversities. Mixed-method approaches integrating narrative analysis with quantitative SEM could enrich understanding of the subtleties of couple-based meaning reconstruction.

Clinicians working with bereaved or trauma-exposed couples should deliberately facilitate joint meaning-making conversations. Structured interventions can encourage partners to share personal growth experiences, identify themes of resilience, and weave them into a coherent dyadic narrative. Therapists might integrate culturally resonant rituals, spirituality, or community involvement when appropriate to support the couple's shared identity. Training programs for counselors and family therapists should

emphasize the relational dimension of PTG, helping practitioners move beyond an individual trauma lens. Furthermore, digital and narrative-based tools—such as co-created memory archives, online storytelling modules, or therapeutic photo projects—can supplement therapy and offer accessible, culturally sensitive avenues for couples to process and grow together.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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