

11-14-2025

## Effects of Experiences of Widowhood Practice on Young Widows' Well-Being in Southeastern Nigeria

Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh  
*Walden University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu](mailto:ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu).

# Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Nicole Hamilton, Committee Chairperson, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Ronnie Boseman, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2025

Abstract

Effects of Experiences of Widowhood Practice on Young Widows' Well-Being in  
Southeastern Nigeria

by

Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh

MA, Walden University, 2019

BS, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

November 2025

## Abstract

In Nigeria long-standing sociocultural norms dictate widowhood practice, which widows are expected to undergo when they lose their husbands. The impact of this ancient culture, which has continuously been encouraged from generation to generation to date, has been devastating for widows. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to investigate the effects of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. Feminist theory was the conceptual framework. Through semistructured, audio-recorded interviews conducted via Zoom, data were collected from 10 young widows between age 18 to 45 in the southeastern Nigeria. After the data were collected, Braun and Clarke's six-step framework for thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. Six main themes emerged: (a) life of trauma, (b) trying to survive, (c) inconducive living conditions, (d) painful period, (e) acts of coping, and (f) improved quality of life. Fourteen subthemes were identified: (a) losing my husband, (b) husband's burial, (c) financial constraints, (d) struggling, (e) in-laws, (f) blame and accusation, (g) infringement of rights, (h) belief, (i) encouragement, (j) support, (k) confidence, (l) children's welfare, (m) moving forward, and (n) God. This study has potential implications for promoting positive social change by raising awareness among individuals, the community, and nongovernmental agencies, as well as advocating for government policies that will help eradicate inhumane widowhood practices affecting the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria.

Effects of Experiences of Widowhood Practice on Young Widows' Well-Being in

Southeastern Nigeria

by

Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh

MA, Walden University, 2019

BS, University of Nigeria Nsukka, 2002

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services

Walden University

November 2025

## Acknowledgments

I give all glory to God, Almighty. If not by his grace, I would not have reached this significant milestone. My lord and personal savior, I greet you especially. I thank you God for your favor and the opportunity to through this process. I am grateful to my lord and savior. I extend my deepest gratitude to my dissertation committee, notably Dr. Nicole Hamilton, for accepting the position of Chairperson for my research study. I cannot thank you enough for your patience, encouragement, excellent feedback, insight, and for believing in me throughout my dissertation journey. This has been very helpful. Thank you, and God bless you. I also want to thank Dr. Boseman Ronnie for being an integral part of my educational journey. Thank you for your support and for believing in my work. I am grateful. God bless you. To my lovely daughter, thank you for your smiles and for always being there for me. Mummy loves you.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement .....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Research Question .....	6
Theoretical and/or Conceptual Framework for the Study.....	6
Nature of the Study .....	8
Definitions.....	8
Assumptions.....	9
Scope and Delimitations .....	10
Limitations .....	11
Significance.....	12
Summary .....	13
Introduction.....	15
Literature Search Strategy.....	15
Theoretical Framework.....	16
Feminist Theory .....	16
Waves of Feminism .....	17
Types of Feminism .....	19

Previous Studies of Feminist Theory and the Current Study.....	21
Rationale for Choice of Theory .....	23
Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts.....	25
Widowhood Practice.....	25
Widowhood Practice in Nigeria.....	30
Well-Being of Widows .....	35
Summary and Conclusions .....	40
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	42
Introduction.....	42
Research Design and Rationale .....	42
Role of the Researcher .....	45
Methodology .....	46
Participant Selection Logic .....	46
Instrumentation .....	48
Procedure for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection .....	49
Data Analysis Plan.....	51
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	54
Credibility .....	54
Transferability.....	55
Dependability .....	55
Confirmability.....	56
Ethical Procedures .....	56

Summary .....	58
Chapter 4: Results .....	60
Introduction.....	60
Setting .....	61
Demographics .....	61
Participant 1 .....	62
Participant 2 .....	62
Participant 3 .....	62
Participant 4 .....	62
Participant 5 .....	63
Participant 6 .....	63
Participant 7 .....	63
Participant 8 .....	63
Participant 9 .....	63
Participant 10 .....	64
Data Collection .....	64
Data Analysis .....	65
Theme 1: Life of Trauma.....	67
Theme 2: Trying to Survive.....	68
Theme 3: Inconducive Living Condition.....	69
Theme 4: Painful Period .....	70
Theme 5: Art of Coping.....	72

Theme 6: Improve Quality of Life.....	74
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	75
Credibility .....	75
Transferability.....	76
Dependability .....	76
Confirmability.....	77
Results.....	77
Theme 1: Life of Trauma.....	78
Theme 2: Trying to Survive.....	79
Theme 3: Inconducive Living Condition.....	81
Theme 4: Painful Period .....	83
Theme 5: Art of Coping.....	84
Theme 6: Improve Quality of Life.....	86
Summary .....	88
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	90
Introduction.....	90
Interpretation of the Findings.....	91
Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to the Literature Review.....	91
Interpretation of Findings in Theory.....	99
Limitations of the Study.....	102
Recommendations.....	103
Implications.....	104

Conclusion .....	105
References.....	108
Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer.....	136
Appendix B: Interview Guide.....	137

## List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Participants' Demographics .....	64
Table 2. Life of Trauma .....	67
Table 3. Trying to Survive .....	68
Table 4. Inconducive Living Condition .....	69
Table 5. Painful Period .....	70
Table 6. Art of Coping .....	72
Table 7. Improve Quality of Life .....	74

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Globally, widowhood is an experience that happens to either a man or a woman, irrespective of the person's cultural or religious background (Aderibigbe et al., 2019). The rise in widowhood has been on the increase due to incidents caused by war and epidemics, affecting more women than men (Dube, 2022). The death of a spouse is one of the most devastating experiences one can encounter. It changes the woman's status and brings about a new phase in life that the woman is not ready to embrace (Andersen & Brunner, 2020).

In Nigeria, widowhood is a period of sadness that comes with much burden (Obiakor, 2022). When a woman becomes widowed, she is marginalized, disinherited, and left financially unstable because of her condition as a widow. Sometimes, they are not receptive to discussing the matter but rather cover up the grief (Ude & Njoku, 2017). Concerns about discrimination against widowed women led to the United Nations adopting conventions like "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Ajayi et al., 2019) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Izzi & Fab-Eme, 2020). These conventions focused on ending discrimination against women and empowering them to support themselves and their families (Adedara, 2023). There is also a request from the African Women Lawyers' Association in Nigeria to implement an agency for widows, which will help protect widows' rights (Etomi, 2021).

In this study, I examined the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. There have been a few studies on the widowhood experiences of young widows, but there have been more studies on widowhood practices for older widows (Aziz & Shafi, 2022). The lack of adequate research on widowhood experiences and young widows' well-being ignited the need to explore the gap in the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. Further research shows that women who get married through customary law are not protected from harmful widowhood practices but rather left to their fate, which is determined by their in-laws based on traditional rites (Iloka, 2022). In this study, I revealed the recent experiences of young widows in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Background**

In the southeastern part of Nigeria, widowhood practice is one of the expectations of a widow when the husband dies (Nwaoga et al., 2021). The death of a husband is one of the most devastating experiences a Nigerian woman can encounter (Oghiagbephan, 2019). Widowhood practices have caused different issues in Nigeria (Suraiya, 2022). Specifically, widows in Southeast Nigeria face many challenges, ranging from injustices, discrimination, abuse, and denial of the widows' right to inherit their late husbands' property because of widowhood practices (Nwaogu, 2015). Despite the painful experience of losing one's husband, widows are stripped of their husbands' inheritance and made to undergo painful practices to prove their innocence concerning their husbands' deaths (Ehumadu, 2022). The most pressing challenge that widows face is financial hardship, which results from the loss of their husbands. Widows encounter

financial constraints after the burial expenses leave individuals vulnerable (George & Onyekachi, 2013). Also, widows face much marginalization, especially regarding inheritance. They are sidelined from inheriting their late husbands' property when no male child exists (Ezejiofor, 2011). Widows are also discriminated against and denied access to inheritance from their late husbands by greedy in-laws who will stop at nothing to ensure they deprive the widow of her entitlement (Ndisika, 2022).

Furthermore, widows who lose their spouses at a young age encounter many difficulties. The widows encounter depression, stigmatization, and accusations by in-laws (Olukayode, 2015). They also suffer from anxiety and low self-esteem and often disconnect themselves from social activities, thereby living a lonely life (Mezieobi et al., 2021). Young widows need support to overcome the struggle of losing their spouse early on. This challenge exposes the widow to sexual harassment in the process of reaching out for survival (Jalil & Gauala, 2023). Introducing an intervention that may help widows take back their lives will help improve their well-being (Moses, 2019).

In conclusion, researchers have attempted to understand the grieving process and young widows' challenges. However, there has been a limitation of the investigation because of the smaller population to select from (Taylor & Robinson, 2016). This gap has stirred the need for in-depth research on the experiences and well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. In this study, I investigated the issue of disinheritance and how it affects the young widow's well-being.

### **Problem Statement**

In all societies, widows are marginalized, in one way or another, because of their condition as widows (Haase & Johnston, 2012). Death is inevitable and can affect young widows with so much expectation for the future of their marriage (Jones et al., 2019). This loss affects the life of the widow mentally, financially, and emotionally, and the widow encounters a new phase of life where she bears the grief and responsibility alone (Dave, 2020). The issue of widowhood is not limited to any tribe or region because it is a mishap affecting different groups of people, a social problem to be addressed (Durojaye, 2013). However, these widowhood practices cause the widow to suffer from psychological trauma, which affects her emotionally and can lead to hypertension, denial, withdrawal, anxiety, loneliness, and low self-value (Akinyi, 2023). Widowhood practices discriminate against and violate the rights of the widow. It deprives the widow of her legal rights and opportunities, especially in a patriarchal Nigerian society (Agboola & Alahirah, 2020). More specifically, the Igbo society in the southeastern region of Nigeria is predominantly patriarchal. Due to this, the widow is marginalized and denied the right to inherit her late husband's property by her in-laws (Nwogu, 2015).

Eradicating the dehumanizing widowhood practice in southeastern Nigeria has been challenging because of the patriarchal practice where a woman is under male dominance (Ekwutosi et al., 2021). Some men use the patriarchal practice to discriminate against widows by denying them access to their late husband's property, which affects them mentally and financially (Ajayi et al., 2019). However, in the event of a statutory marriage, the widow has the right to contend with her greedy in-laws in court. However,

this does not apply to women who got married through customary law and encounter harmful widowhood practices, which are determined by their in-laws based on traditional rites (Iloka, 2022).

Each year, on June 23rd, International Widows Day is observed internationally to draw attention to the predicament of widows and proffer actionable plans on how to eradicate harmful widowhood practices to achieve the widows' full right to their inheritance, social protection, education, and training opportunities (United Nations, 2022). The impact of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria is a concern that needs intervention from the human services field. The widows are marginalized, oppressed, and made to do dehumanizing things while performing the burial rites of their late husbands (Shahin, 2022). For example, widows undergo unhygienic practices like being confined in a corner, defacement, drinking the water used in washing their late husbands' corpses, and abstaining from taking baths while mourning their late husbands (Dube, 2022). The human services field is about helping the needy, advocating for the voiceless, supporting mentally unstable people, and providing financial security through training (National Organization of Human Service, n.d.). The social problem is linked to human services because it aims to improve the well-being of the oppressed population. Human services are about strengthening and improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable in our society.

Although the aforementioned research regarding the experiences of widowhood practice on young widows in southeastern Nigeria illuminates its important findings, I have found no research that has examined the experiences of widowhood practice on the

well-being of widows in Nigeria. Given such, further research was warranted that examined the experience of widowhood practice among young widows in an effort to address the documented problem of the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria (Ekpenyong et al., 2020).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to examine the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. The findings provided human service professionals insight into using their expertise to assist young widows by establishing programs to improve their well-being throughout their grieving period, thereby bringing about social change.

### **Research Question**

What are the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria?

### **Theoretical and/or Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The theory that grounds this study is feminist theory. The term feminist theory began in 1792 and can be associated with the publication "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1791 (Monroe, 1987). Mary Wollstonecraft's (2017) theory focuses on inequalities between men and women as it concerns women's right to vote, property rights, employment, equal rights in marriage, political power, authority positions, and their legal rights, which, if denied, could cause social demotion, exclusion, and suffering for women. Feminist theory seeks women's freedom from sexuality, reproduction, and the social consequences of living in a patriarchal culture. The theory

addresses women's liberation from anything that dominates them and works towards creating a society that pays attention to their needs as women (Radtke, 2017).

The logical connection between the framework presented and the nature of the study is to gain insight into the social problem of the victimization of young widows in Nigeria. The feminist theory addresses the issues of oppression and inequality by seeking to liberate women from all forms of slavery and works to avert and critique social barriers among women (Fiasorgbor, 2018). The research is about the ordeal young widows encounter because of widowhood practices in southeastern Nigeria. Widowhood practices in Nigeria have been a challenging experience as widows are humiliated, disinherited, financially incapacitated, and subjected to degrading rituals that infringe on their fundamental human rights (Ude & Njoku, 2017). This research problem is a societal challenge that requires social change. The theory is relevant to the research problem and purpose because it advocates for social change on the issue of gender inequality, which violates women's fundamental rights (Finn & Brown, 2022). The theorist explained oppression and unethical practices, which will help address the research problem and purpose.

Using feminist theory helped to understand the effect of oppression on a vulnerable community. I investigated some of the imposed norms and ideologies that scare ignorant people from facing the truth due to fear of the unknown and to find a way to address the issues by advocating for social change. The theory acted as a foundation for this study to understand the nature of gender inequality for young widows in East Nigeria. As a human services professional, it is essential to empower people facing

challenges and oppression, like widows, through interventions that will improve their lives for the better.

### **Nature of the Study**

The specific research design included a generic qualitative design to address the research questions in this qualitative study. The experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria was the focus of this qualitative study. Qualitative research is a type of research that inquire into and provides a deeper understanding of a problem (Busetto et al., 2020). Qualitative research gathers participants' experiences and behaviors to help answer the how and why of a study. It provides insights into a study through interviews with open-ended questions, detailed observations, and literature reviews that explore concepts and theories (Tenny et al., 2022). A generic qualitative design was selected to understand the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. The design allows researchers to study participants' perspectives about an issue rather than just focusing on participants' feelings (Kahlke, 2014). The generic qualitative design was suitable for the research because it allows researchers to have prior knowledge or understanding of the topic before fully engaging the participants in their viewpoint (Percy et al., 2015).

### **Definitions**

*Southeastern Nigeria:* southeastern Nigeria is one of the country's six geo-political zones and comprises the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The region is inhabited mostly by Christians and Igbo speaking people (Ekwe, 2021).

*Well-being:* It is the state of having good mental health, being comfortable, and having a sense of purpose (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

*Widowhood:* Widowhood is the state of a widow or widower following the death of a spouse (Iloka, 2022).

*Widowhood practices:* It is a cultural rite a widow undergoes when she loses her husband (Adedara, 2023).

*Young widow:* A young widow is a woman who has lost her husband at an early stage of her life, like under the age of 45 (Dunn, 2015).

### **Assumptions**

A researcher's assumptions include basic ideas and beliefs about the subject of the study based on previous knowledge (Simon & Goes, 2013). In this study, several assumptions were made regarding this qualitative research study. I assumed that participants are all young widows who are aware of the phenomenon and willing to speak honestly about their widowhood experience while answering the interview questions to address the purpose of the study. I also assumed that the interview questions accurately reflect the phenomenon, ensuring a comprehensive data collection to address the research question.

Another assumption is that generic design was the best-suited approach. Using a generic qualitative design for research allows for flexibility, as it enables engagement with participants through detailed study descriptions and gathering information from their perspectives (Ellis & Hart, 2023).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In this study, I had set to understand the experiences of widowhood practices and their impact on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. Although there have been several studies on widowhood practices, this study was meticulously limited in scope to young widows in southeastern Nigeria. The reason is that there have been few studies on the experiences of widowhood among young widows (Aziz & Shafi, 2022). The participants, a carefully selected group of 10–12 young widows, were chosen to ensure data saturation. The rationale for using a sample size of 10-12 participants is that they met the interview criteria for my study. The study’s potential limitations due to the number of participants chosen are acknowledged, and various perspectives on sample size in a research study are considered (Subedi, 2021). After a thorough review of relevant literature, the study identified 12 participants in the literature titled “Revealing the Story of an Individual through Narrative Inquiry: A Methodological Review” (Adhikari, 2021). Kaimathiri (2021) adopted a sample size of 10 in her study titled “A Narrative Inquiry into the Daily Challenges to the Business Growth of Women’s Microenterprises in Rural Kenya”. Additionally, Subedi (2021), in his study “Determining the Sample in Qualitative Research,” noted that a sample size of 10 to 50 or more can be sufficient for a generic qualitative research design, depending on the nature of the study.

The southeastern region of Nigeria comprises the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. However, the study will be conducted in Ebonyi and Enugu States, focusing on Igbo-speaking widows. Restricting the study population to two

locations in southeastern Nigeria helped reduce the financial burden of traveling to five states. Furthermore, data collection was planned to occur through Zoom interviews. During the interview, participants decided how it would be conducted based on the availability of the internet and their location. The interviews were planned to utilize open-ended questions and would last approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

### **Limitations**

Limitations in a study are possible weaknesses that are primarily outside the researcher's control and restrict the study (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). One limitation that can occur is personal bias. As a researcher, there is a possibility that personal experiences may lead to a contrary or biased view, which can affect the data collected. In this study, the limitation was addressed by the researcher by paying attention to the problem statement and being attentive when collecting participants' information to avoid bias. There is also a sample size limitation. This limitation was the concern there might be a need to increase the sample size to determine if the feedback is accurate, making it difficult to ascertain if the information received is a factual study finding. The study mitigated the limitation by using a sample size that will reach saturation. Another limitation for improvement is the possibility that the widow may be uneasy about discussing the topic. This study mitigated the limitation by maintaining confidentiality and providing free resources they can contact for clarification. There was also a limitation on conducting interviews. Analyzing data collected through interviews can be overwhelming and time-consuming due to the volume of information generated. The

coding system proposed by Braun and Clark (2006) for generating design mitigated this limitation. Meaningful data can be generated and classified to reduce the collected data.

### **Significance**

In this study, I provided evidence on the impact of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. The information found could inform policies from government and nongovernmental agencies that will protect the dignity of widows. One of the organizations that will hopefully benefit from this research is the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, a Nigerian government agency responsible for advocating for the development of women and children to protect their rights and privileges in the national development process (International Disability Alliance, n.d.). This study may be beneficial to the organization because it will provide updated information on widowhood practices in Nigeria, which will aid the Ministry in identifying ways to protect the human rights of widows and bring about social change in Nigerian society.

Another organization that may benefit from the research is the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, whose responsibility is to give voice to the voiceless through legal services (Namatic, n.d.). Nongovernmental organizations that empower widows can also benefit from my research. The result of this study may help them understand how to address the economic and humanitarian crisis that affects widows. Human services organizations can bring about social change by intervening in addressing the painful experiences of widows and introducing skills focused on improving the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. Other organizations, like the church, human rights organizations,

and the Nigerian government, can collaborate with human services organizations to liberate widows from dehumanizing widowhood practices. Furthermore, communities, through their kingmakers, should work with the government to bring about social change in the community by modifying the cultural practices of widowhood rites to respect the rights and dignity of widows and avert gender discrimination and gender inequality.

The adverse effect of widowhood practices on young widows in southeastern Nigeria results in social determinants of health. Social determinants of health encompass cultural factors, unemployment, and socioeconomic status, which can significantly impact people's health and well-being (Braveman et al., 2011). To mitigate these social determinants of health for young widows and foster social change, the federal and state governments should implement initiatives to address the social determinants of health and promote overall well-being.

### **Summary**

For decades, the practice of widowhood has existed with its dehumanizing and degrading activities, without a firm attempt to eradicate it. In the present study, I sought to understand the experiences of widowhood practices and their impact on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. I used a generic qualitative approach to address the research question, exploring the personal experiences of young widows in a real-life setting. Feminist theory was used as the theoretical framework in this study to address the issues of oppression and inequality by seeking to liberate widows from all forms of discrimination encountered during the widowhood rituals. The assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations were reviewed to identify and understand the research's

shortcomings. Furthermore, the significance was assessed to understand its importance and identify how others will benefit from it.

In the next chapter, an overview of the conceptual framework will be provided, along with a brief introduction to the problem and purpose of the study, and the strategies employed in the literature search will be discussed. I will summarize the current literature that establishes the problem's relevance and how other researchers have approached it, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Widowhood is a challenging period that causes emotional and psychological stress (Okoro et al., 2021). Sometimes, family members' expectations of providing comfort and support to the widow during the process are lacking (Lee et al., 2022). The widow is left to contend with the distribution of her late husband's property. She can suffer dehumanizing widowhood practices that lack concern for her well-being (Ehumadu, 2022). This study aims to identify the gap in the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria and answer the research question: What are the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria? Understanding the experiences of young widows due to widowhood practices could provide insight into how widowhood rites affect their well-being. In this chapter, I discussed the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, literature review, and summary.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

To gather relevant information and literature articles that highlight the experiences of widowhood practice on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria, Walden University Library was the primary search engine used to access the following databases: EBSCO, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, EBSCO, ProQuest Central, PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and the Web of Science, Dissertation and Theses Library. Other database search engines used are Google Scholar and Sage Journals, which relate to Nigerian widowhood practices. The keywords and terms used to

search for valuable articles included widows, widowhood, widowhood practices in Nigeria, young widows, the well-being of widows, feminism, widows, inheritance, psychological health of widows, feminist theory, and the experiences of widows in Nigeria. The resources used for this study spanned the period from 2011 to 2023, encompassing peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and books relevant to the study. The study utilized resources dating back to 2011 and older sources, as there is a significant lack of recent research, including updated studies on this topic.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is a crucial component of the research process, serving as a blueprint for the dissertation. It guides and supports the study's rationale, including the problem statement, purpose, significance, and research questions, providing the foundation for the literature review (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). The theoretical framework is a theory that strengthens the rationale for understanding and planning to research the topic. The theoretical framework relevant to this study is feminist theory.

### **Feminist Theory**

Feminist theory is a branch of sociology that reveals some of the social issues women face in society (Moore & Ollenburger, 1989). The researchers of the theory addressed the need to support women's rights and stop the victimization, oppression, and domination women go through because of the notion that they are inferior to men (Lay & Daley, 2007). The history of feminism is in Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792. In her book, Wollstonecraft (1792) discussed the inequalities between men and women as it concerns women's right to vote, property

rights, employment, equal rights in marriage, political power, authority positions, and their legal rights, which, if denied, could cause social demotion, exclusion, and suffering for women.

Feminist theory is a movement that advocates for women's rights and eradicates the notion that women are inferior to men (Wollstonecraft, 1972). The theorist tackles inequality between men and women based on power and status, as well as patriarchy, which allows men to dominate and oppress women. The goal of feminism is to advocate for equal rights for everyone, regardless of their sex, and to raise awareness about women's rights. Its goal is to put an end to women's exploitation and oppression in all areas of life.

### **Waves of Feminism**

Feminism is a movement dedicated to achieving equal rights and legal protections for women (Radtke, 2017). The theorist addressed the issue of gender difference and advocates for gender equality, seeking to improve women's rights and interests by enhancing their status (Singh, 2018). The goal of feminism is to end men's supremacy over women. Feminism has undergone three distinct waves of movement, each aimed at achieving overall equality for women (Malinowska, 2020). The pioneers of the three waves of feminism proposed various strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, while challenging the dominant view of men that perceives women as inferior (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023).

### ***First Wave***

The first wave of feminism can be credited to Mary Wollstonecraft's 1791 publication "Vindication of the Rights of Women" before it was elaborated through women's suffrage in the late 19th century and ended in the early 20th century in Western countries with the demand for women's legal and political equality (Jaysawal & Saha, 2023). The goal of the first wave of feminists was to secure women's right to vote and bring about social change by granting them access to education, property, employment, and freedom in all other areas. It aims for social reformation from the patriarchy and liberation from the oppression of racial bias (Caughie, 2010). Although the first wave of feminism was primarily active in the United States and Western Europe, it led to significant changes in international law regarding women's voting rights. However, in the first wave, primarily White women from privileged backgrounds were permitted to vote in some countries, with Black and minority ethnic individuals being granted this right later on (Gonzalez-Rivera, 2014).

### ***Second Wave***

The second wave of feminism spans the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, aiming to dismantle cultural inequalities and gender norms and establish the democratic role of women in society (Yahya et al., 2021). The goal of the second wave of feminism was to improve the self-consciousness of minority groups (Rahila et al., 2021). It focused on how women are more socially disadvantaged than men by analyzing the sexual oppression women suffer and by proposing interpersonal, as well as political and legal solutions (Heger & Hoffmann, 2021). Legal rights were still at the center of this wave,

with a focus on workplace discrimination, abortion rights, and political representation (Peter, 2017). This wave demanded representation of Black people, people of all genders, and people of all classes (Mohajan, 2022). Feminism during this period focused on the social roles of women, particularly in relation to their roles in the workplace and family. It broadened the debate to include sexuality, family, reproductive rights, legal inequalities, and divorce law. The second wave of feminism was more productive and diverse in its goals, producing the foundation of many feminist theories used today (Schuster, 2017).

### ***Third Wave***

The third wave of feminism emerged from the 1990s to the 2000s (Mohajan, 2022). This wave continued the second wave's campaign while raising concerns about some of the second wave's ideologies. The second wave of feminism addressed more of the experiences of upper-middle-class White women rather than exposing the discriminatory experiences women encounter (Bisong & Ekanem, 2014). The third wave of feminism emerged in response to the diverse range of exploitation and oppression in various societies and cultures. The three waves proposed that the feminist movement should address global issues, specifically cultural issues that infringe on women's rights, to promote a sense of gender equality in society (Bronstein, 2005).

### **Types of Feminism**

Feminism is an ideology that advocates for equal rights for men and women in terms of politics, decision-making, and careers, thereby providing women with the opportunity to achieve the same dignity as men in society (Mohajan, 2022). Feminists

support a gender-based view that focuses on the creation of a gender-neutral society.

There are several variants of feminism, but this study will focus on three feminist theories. They are liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Black feminism. Each ideology attempts to describe women's oppression, explain its causes and consequences, and suggest strategies for women's liberation.

### ***Liberal Feminism***

Liberal feminists emphasize women's rights to access education, the right to vote, financial independence, and other social challenges affecting equality (Becker, 1999). It maintains that women have the same capacity to contribute to society and participate in public life as men but are denied the opportunity because of patriarchy (Brown & Ismail, 2019). Liberal feminists primarily focus on protecting equal opportunities for women through legislation, and they have achieved most of their legislative and judicial victories, including equal pay, benefits, access to employment, education, and the right to serve on juries (Turnier, 1996).

### ***Radical Feminism***

Radical feminists stated that men do not acknowledge women in patriarchal societies but instead oppress women in society (Robinson, 2003). The ideology of radical feminism ensures that women are recognized as productive members of society and should be empowered to pursue gender equality through gender separation (Haradhan, 2022). Another goal of radical feminism is to dismantle patriarchy through unity and trust among women, as well as cultivating self-reliance in society. Radical feminists seek the eradication of male supremacy in all social and economic settings in society while

recognizing the discrimination that women experience, such as in race, class, and sexual orientation (Ward, 1995).

### ***Black Feminism***

The focus of Black feminism is not only on women but specifically on the struggles of Black women who go through oppression through a lack of empowerment, which is racism (Hague, 2016). Black women face social practices within a historical setting that focus on the multidimensional aspects of the oppression of Black women (Afridi et al., 2022). Black feminists insist on understanding what it means to be a Black woman in a racist patriarchy (Johnson, 2012). Differences due to race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion are of distinct importance in many cultures and are visible and tangible for Black women (Mill, 2015).

### **Previous Studies of Feminist Theory and the Current Study**

Feminist theory serves as a theoretical framework for different studies examining gender-related inequalities. For instance, Eboiyehi et al. (2016) examined the role of feminist theory in the context of women assuming the role of breadwinners in their husbands' households. In most societies, men are the breadwinners in their homes. Nevertheless, since the mid-1980s, the number of women breadwinners in many Nigerian homes has risen. The study aims to understand the phenomenon of widowhood for Nigerian women through feminist theory. Feminist theory exposes women's liberation from the suppression of women by men who see women as inferior to men (Fiasorgbor, 2018). According to the study of previous literature, there has been an increase in the number of women who are breadwinners, mainly due to their husbands' uncaring

attitudes towards their household responsibilities. This attitude has led women to work more to ensure their children are well cared for (Eboiyehi et al., 2016). In Nigeria, the issue of women being breadwinners is a social challenge caused by patriarchy, and there is a need for the government to introduce an intervention that would encourage men to be more responsive to the well-being of their families. In the study, the theorist revealed how women are often left to bear the burden of the home, while men often sit and enjoy it.

Secondly, Cowart (2024) examined the experience of the stigma of divorce for Christian women in violent marriages through the lens of feminist theory. Violence in relationships has become a challenge in marriage, causing divorce among secular and religious groups. There has not been in-depth research on how Christian women cope with violent marriages and divorce. Cowart explored the stigma that Christian women encounter when they opt for divorce from an abusive marriage. The feminist theory aims to criticize the ill treatment of women as inferior and oppressed, victimized, dominated, and silenced by men because of a patriarchal society (Caughie, 2010). Six divorced Christian women from abusive husbands participated in the interview. The data collection was conducted through semistructured interviews and transcriptions, facilitating thematic analysis. Findings from the study revealed that women suffer abuse in their marriages without adequate support. This study can achieve a positive social change by creating awareness of the abuse that widows encounter, eradicating the stigmatization of Christian women who got divorced to save themselves from violent partners, and involving Christian leaders on behalf of Christian women victimized by intimate partner violence.

### **Rationale for Choice of Theory**

The use of feminist theory is essential to the current study because it addressed violence against women and acts as a helpful starting point to reveal how men control women through oppression. The theorists of feminist theory addressed the issue of equality and justice between men and women, providing women with more opportunities (Shaw, 2017). The theorist emphasized the importance of women's liberation, and this connects to the demand by widows for the eradication of the violations of their human rights as a result of the dehumanizing widowhood practices they encounter. Without feminism, the need for women's rights would have received less attention. With the emphasis on feminism, more women have the right to vote, work, receive equal pay, access healthcare, enjoy reproductive rights, and protection from violence (Allen, 2023).

The quick wave of feminism within the UN system and the conferences between 1975 and 1985 globally exposed the situation of women, leading to calls for the elimination of customs that practically violate women's and children's human rights (Dubel, 2023). The abolition of these cultures subsequently became a means of advancing women's human rights, promoting democracy, implementing effective international development policies, and establishing a standard for good governance.

Feminist theory applies to the study of the effects of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. The theorists addressed the depth of injustice women encounter in society. Men victimized women through sexual assault, denied them their inheritance because of the widowhood practice, and blamed them for their predicament instead of providing support to them. Many times, women do not report

the sexual abuse they encounter during their mourning period for fear of not being believed or taken seriously in a system that favors men (Iloka, 2022).

Feminist theory was used in the study to address the uneven amount of violence and crime against women, and the reason may be due to the inequalities and oppression that women face due to the patriarchal system practiced, which suggests that men are more powerful in society (Lay & Daley, 2007). In that case, they can abuse this power over women, resulting in harassment, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as the murder of women. The practice affects the widowhood rite, where widows are humiliated due to their widowhood status. Therefore, feminists in Nigerian society will strive to expose these ordeals so that men who commit these crimes will face justice for women who experience violence from men (Dibia, 2020).

In this study, I aimed to gain insight into the research question, which seeks to understand the effects of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. This research question connects to feminist theory because it uses the feminist lens to discover how widowhood practices and experiences affect young widows' well-being and possibly offer solutions to confront and eradicate oppressive systems and structures used to oppress widows. Feminist theory is suitable for these studies because it considers the lived experiences of individuals, not just women, with an emphasis on oppression (Loftsdottir, 2011).

Widowhood practices have attracted significant global deliberations on protecting women's rights, fortified by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). However, widows still undergo various forms of

harmful cultural practices (Ajayi et al., 2019). Feminist theory reveals the factors contributing to women's discrimination and victimization, providing a foundation for action on social justice and human rights (Nelson, 2007). Using feminist theory will increase awareness of the issues widows face.

### **Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts**

#### **Widowhood Practice**

The term *widowhood* is a period in a person's life where one loses a husband by death and has not remarried (Anzaa & Udu, 2018). When a widow loses her husband, certain widowhood practices are expected of her to perform following the death of her husband (Adeyemo, 2013). African widowhood has deep historical and cultural roots and is practiced differently in different cultures. Different societies associate widowhood with various customs and values, which impact the widow's experience. These practices are continuous because they are rooted in cultural beliefs, social norms, and religious practices (Dorgbetor, 2021). In African culture, performing various rituals is highly sensitive and regarded as a source of pride among the African people (Khosa-Nkatini et al., 2020). Even though widows may be aware that the widowhood rites violate their human rights, society expects them to consciously follow them to appease their ancestors (Owoh & Utoh-Ezeajugh, 2019). The widow is required to complete the widowhood rites successfully, irrespective of how dehumanizing the process appears. People view it as a gesture of affection towards their deceased husband and a method to absolve themselves of any accountability for his demise (Fiasorgbor, 2018). The widow undergoes some degrading practices, such as having to sit and sleep on the bare floor for a set period and

being made to eat in an unhealthy condition. This dehumanizing widowhood practice is to signify the widow's dethronement back to her previous deprived status (Iloka, 2022).

Widows adhered to widowhood practices out of fear of potential consequences, even if it infringed on their privacy. They also follow the widowhood rites to gain their in-laws' favor and respect the cultural beliefs and health implications (Agboola & Alahirah, 2022). Some of the widowhood rituals and the long period of mourning often have wide-ranging implications for the widow and could endanger her life (Durojaye, 2013). Most of the time, the denial of their basic physical needs results in neglect of their hygiene, leading to skin rashes, respiratory infections, vaginal infections, ulcers, and the contraction of diseases such as those affecting the skin, mouth odor, and vaginal infections (Ajayi et al., 2019).

Widowhood practices are rooted in cultural, social, and economic settings and often challenge existing power dynamics (Olanisebe, 2015). Patriarchy in African society is one of the cultural contexts that can contribute to the plight of widows. As described by Nwaoga (2021), the colonial era granted men power, which led to a sense of superiority and contributed to several unjust cultural practices that disadvantaged women, ultimately giving them less power in governance dominated by men. Many African societies practice patriarchy, where men hold the primary positions of power. Men play a dominant role as the head of the home and the breadwinner, while women are considered inferior and good at home management and childbearing. Unfortunately, a male child is more celebrated at childbirth than a female child (Ezejiolor, 2011).

Widowhood rites, which are rooted in tradition, often support gender inequalities through the inhuman widowhood rituals enforced on widows. At the same time, the widower rarely experiences the dehumanizing ordeals that widows go through at the demise of their wives, and this reflects perpetuated patriarchal standards (Adeyemo, 2016). Unlike widows, widowers have the liberty of free movement and can eat and sleep wherever they want (Mohammed, 2018). On the other hand, cultural and religious beliefs support traditional gender roles and dictate how widows should behave, dress, and participate in community life (Mabunda & Ross, 2023).

The death of a spouse is one of the most traumatic experiences that brings a significant change in a person's life (Anzaa & Udu, 2018). In Africa, widows undergo certain cultural rites associated with mourning rituals (Dube, 2023). Upon the death of the spouse, who is the breadwinner, the widows experience financial, social, physical, sexual, and emotional challenges, which cause setbacks in the healing process of the widow (Azumah & Nachinaab, 2018). When a woman loses her husband, she demonstrates her grief by showing prolonged sobbing and wailing, shaving her hair, and bathing, which could affect her hygiene and so many other things (Idoniboyeobu & Georgy, 2018). Widows often encounter problems and face various forms of discrimination due to ancient cultural customs (Nkyi et al., 2021). Communities can stigmatize and expose individuals to harmful traditional practices, such as requiring them to wear specific clothing or use accessories (Ude & Njoku, 2017).

Some African countries view marriage as a legal right that grants women access to financial privileges (Chukwuma-Offor, 2023). Some of these privileges could be

withheld from the widow following the husband's death. Unfortunately, the widow's inability to speak out about the impact of the widowhood tradition on her well-being can deprive her of the opportunity to be empowered (Chukwuma-Offor, 2023). Different African cultures expect widows to grieve for their deceased spouse during their unique mourning process. During the mourning period, the widow may be isolated from the community to allow her to grieve for her husband. In certain situations, a widow's social class, age, ethnicity, and location can determine whether her condition will evoke pity or accusation (Ukwuije & Echebe).

Widowhood practices seem to be one of the leading causes of widows' mental health issues, psychological depression, and lasting poverty (Adeyemo, 2013). Widowhood practice is a process that every widow is expected to undergo, whether the marriage was under a marriage act or a customary marriage. The widow will have to undergo all the rites of widowhood, regardless of whether the marriage resulted in children or not (Eze et al., 2024). The process of widowhood for the widow is not a period of comfort but rather an awful period for any woman because, upon the death of her husband, she is immediately stripped of her marital status (Eze et al., 2024).

It is essential to acknowledge that widowhood practices can impact a widow's physical and mental health (Nwanozie, 2023). Therefore, the person grieving the death of her husband should be empathized with compassion and shown love, understanding, support, and counseling. Unfortunately, the widow is immediately subjected to strict widowhood customs, which exacerbate her grief (Sasson & Umberson, 2014). When a widow experiences extreme anxiety, it could result in severe emotional trauma that, if not

appropriately managed, could cause people to start avoiding widows, and this might lead to loneliness and depression (Sasson & Umberson, 2014).

The inability of a widow to adjust to life without her husband, especially as a soulmate and a breadwinner, may lead to a psychological breakdown (Ude & Njoku, 2017). Social identities, including age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, can influence the experiences of widows. The expectations of a young or older widow may differ because of various forces that affect and shape individual experiences (Ugochukwu, 2014). Understanding how gender intersects with other social power relations in the context of widowhood rituals is crucial for developing interventions that promote gender equality and address the specific challenges faced by widows in diverse cultural settings. It requires a holistic approach considering the interplay of cultural, economic, legal, and social factors (Okoro et al., 2021).

In some cultures, widowhood can change a woman's social status (Suraiya, 2022). The widows may be encouraged and empowered by their caregivers to care for themselves and their children. At the same time, some may not be respectful of empowering widows, fearing that it will increase their decision-making power and autonomy (Suraiya, 2022). By empowering the widows, they can benefit from community networks and nongovernmental organizations that provide social support and opportunities for collaboration with different organizations. These opportunities can improve their personal and professional growth and well-being (Tayo & Chukwuedozie, 2013).

Widowhood practices in many African societies are social obligations and unjust cultural practices that women undergo while mourning their husbands (Manala, 2015). In different cultures, widowhood practices can be viewed as a social problem because the widows face various forms of discrimination, from the denial of asset inheritance to suffering from awful abuse and exploitation by in-laws (Chuku-Okoronkwo, 2015). These practices are barbaric and an abuse of the widow's fundamental human right (Iloka, 2022). The unjust widowhood practices against women have remained until this date because of cultural principles laid down by the ancestors and continued for generations (Tshaka, 2023).

### **Widowhood Practice in Nigeria**

Widowhood practices in Nigeria are an ancient tradition that should have been discontinued but continue to persist in all parts of the country due to greed (Idoniboyeobu & Georgy, 2018). Almost all ethnic groups practice it, but in different forms, which can be harmful to the widow (Nelson, 2007). Most of these widowhood practices are in the southeastern, south-south, southwest, and north-central parts of Nigeria, where widows face accusations of having caused their husbands' deaths (Ugochukwu, 2014). In Nigerian society, like every other African society, greed is a determining factor in maltreating a widow. Unfortunately, the death of a male member of the family provides an opportunity for other male members of the family to start struggling for landed properties to lay hold of at the expense of the widow and her children (Manala, 2015). The implication of this is that the in-laws could falsely accuse the widow of killing her

husband and then throw her and her children out of the house in order to possess the late man's properties (Manala, 2015).

In Nigeria, widows undergo several struggles immediately after they lose their husbands (Iruloh & Elsie, 2018). They are exposed to more devastating pain than the hurt of the loss of the husband and made to go through various traditional rites, most of them very wicked and dehumanizing, while trying to fulfill the burial rites (Izzi & Fab-Eme, 2020). The widow goes into seclusion, during which she shaves her hair, sits on a bare floor or mat, and refrains from taking a bath or changing her clothes, as a sign of severing the bonds between her and her late husband (Fasoranti & Arunah, 2007). Nigerian widows suffer from dehumanizing widowhood practices, which degrade them, subject them to immense hardship and maltreatment, and leave them impoverished and uncared for by those who should provide them with relief (Ehumadu, 2022). A lot of the time, their children are isolated, often in unhealthy conditions, physically abused, and at times without inheriting any property (Asiimwe & Crankshaw, 2011).

In southeastern Nigeria, the mourning period exposes widows to several hardships in an attempt to prove their innocence about their husband's death. Scarcely can a woman be absolved from being the cause of her husband's death (Eze, 2024). Usually, the immediate conclusion is that the wife has killed him. She undergoes certain rituals to appease her dead husband (Obielosi & Ochuko, 2023). During the mourning period, a widow is dispossessed of her husband's property by her in-laws, and her dignity is trampled upon because she is seen as worthless by her husband (Suraiya, 2022). In Nigeria, widowhood practice is so common that virtually every family, in some way,

knows someone bereaved and experiencing unjust treatment. Widowhood practice in Nigeria has become such a recurring situation that it is no longer surprising to the widow, her children, and sympathizers (Abdul Azeez et al., 2023).

In some cases, at the end of the mourning period, the widow is inherited by a male relative of her dead husband, just like the rest of the man's property (Jones et al., 2019). However, this practice has been curtailed because of modernization, education, Christianity, and the high level of exposure of women, because widows who fall under the above category will refuse to be inherited like property by their late husband's relatives (Ikenyei, 2014). Additionally, some educated and working-class widows refuse to comply with the demand to wear Black or White as mourning clothes and to sit at home for 1 year, as this contradicts the dictates of their work organization. This insubordination causes conflict between the widow and her in-laws, who consider it disrespectful to her late husband (Dinneya & Dokubo, 2020).

In some parts of Igbo land, after the widow goes through all the dehumanizing widowhood practices of the community, the 'Umuada' (the first daughters of the man's ancestors) will come to inflict pain further. The Umuada surrounds the widow and shaves her hair, confronts her with questions about how her husband died and her effort to save his life, sarcastically, then bathes her in an open compound as a way of shaming her (Agboola & Alahirah, 2020). Unfortunately, for the widow, there is no timeline to ascertain the end to the maltreatment of widows under the cover of native laws and customs (Suraiya, 2022). The widow is humiliated in various ways by her in-laws and mandated to provide all the late husband's documents relating to his landed properties,

investments, and bank account, and then swear that she has not hidden any information from them (Ihekwaaba & Amasiatu, 2016). Afterward, the widows appease the female members of their husband's family, who will make decisions concerning her during the mourning period by obeying their instructions for purification purposes (Amaechi & Muoh, 2018). During the widowhood rituals, if the woman dies during the 1-year mourning period of her husband, the widows' fate will be attributed to the fact that she is responsible for her husband's death and, therefore, commits an abomination (Olukayode, 2015).

In the southwestern part of Nigeria, the essence of widowhood practices is to prove that the widow did not kill her husband and also to avert any attack from her late husband's spirit (Nwalutu, 2012). In addition, the widowhood ritual enables the in-laws to lay claim to the widow's unborn child when the widow is found pregnant (Fasoranti & Aruna, 2015). During the burial process, the widow swears through traditional means to prove her innocence that she is not the cause of her husband's death (Ayodele, 2014). Widows go through several humiliations because of the practice of widowhood. The widow goes through a period of confinement except within the family compound to honor and respect her late husband (Ndisika & Abiola, 2022). During the confinement period, the widow mourns, and refusal to adhere to the instructions has repercussions that might lead to her death (Mobolaji & Akinyemi, 2022). Furthermore, the widow will be treated as an outcast and accused of killing her husband if she refuses to mourn him by performing the widowhood rites. To avoid further humiliation and stigmatization in the

community, the widow has to go through the customs and traditions of the community in the process of mourning her husband (Obiakor, 2022).

Widowhood practice in Nigeria can cause undue financial pressure on the widow because of the harsh traditional rituals, which can lead to disinheritance of the widow and the long period of mourning of the late husband, which limits the widow from providing for they are believed to be mentally unfit to handle any political office because of their state of mind and might not command respect in society. Nevertheless, some widows are aware of their rights and refuse to be relegated solely because of their status as widows in society, instead striving to effect positive change (Ikenyei, 2014). This marginalization of widows is one of the most stressful situations the widow has to undergo, and this could cause her psychological trauma.

Widowhood practices are devastating traditional rites that cause widows pain, unhappiness, frustration, boredom, anger, and mental torture (Jones et al., 2019). The dehumanizing widowhood practices affect the physical, psychological, and mental well-being of the widow. The state of widowhood can make a widow emotionally and psychologically deranged, and this can lead to shock, loss of memory, and hypertension (Nwalutu, 2012). The widow might become insane as a result of the widowhood ordeals she passed through, which could lead to financial and emotional impoverishment of the widow (Collins, 2014). The impacts of widowhood rituals can put a strain on the widow socially, as people might start avoiding them in the communities, thereby causing them to be loners, and this is an attribute that can make a widow want to commit suicide to end their pain (Oluwatusin, 2014). Further discrimination associated with widowhood

practices is associated with heart attacks, shock, sleeplessness, and depression overall (Ihekwaaba & Amasiatu, 2016).

### **Well-Being of Widows**

Widowhood is an unexpected experience that may cause complex and prolonged grief, mourning, and adjustment for the widow (Ezeh, 2021). The death of a spouse is a stressful experience that has significant social and psychological issues and could cause grief, leading to social isolation because of the absence of significant support (Hasse & Johnson, 2012). Although every age group can experience the death of a spouse, it has a strong effect on the psychological well-being and quality of life of the widow, and this can cause a drastic lifestyle change. The impact of widowhood practice can affect spouses who may already have a chronic physical illness that decreases their ability to adjust to grief and may likely cause physical illness after the death of the spouse (Nkyi & Djankpa, 2023). A widow's health and overall well-being are often affected because of the stressful and traumatic widowhood rituals the widow experiences while coping with the loss of her spouse (Adena et al., 2021).

Widowhood is an irreversible condition that can happen at any time in life and can affect the well-being of the widow, especially in the early years (Mohindra et al., 2012). The loss of a spouse is a challenging experience that comes with financial consequences and social loss because of the limited rights and respect received by widows, which left them with no choice but to endure maltreatment to feel somewhat protected (Ihekwaaba & Amasiatu, 2016). The change in the economic status of the

widow causes a reduction in income and support available from society, which can lead to psychological breakdown (Adeyanju & Ogungbamila, 2013).

Widows are exposed to exploitation and at risk of being taken advantage of because they are financially vulnerable and socially isolated (Agbim, 2022). The widow's condition might force her to work in unfair conditions and receive less than she deserves (Iruloh & Elsie, 2018). This situation can cause the widow to develop drinking habits, take sedatives for stress, and feel isolated. As a result, widows experience a quick decline in their physical and mental health, resulting in cancer, respiratory diseases, depression, and others (Khawar, 2022). The act of widowhood practice dehumanizes the widow as she is being treated inhumanely and left to go through physical and emotional stress (Abdul Azeez et al., 2023).

Children are also not exempt from the widowhood rites as they are left unprotected and share their mother's pain, especially the young children (Ikenyei, 2014). In families with greedy in-laws, the widow and her children are abused, humiliated, and chased out of the house. In some cases, the children are placed in the care of some family members to serve as their maids. This issue causes a severe societal problem as these children may not be able to continue with their education due to a lack of funds, and this, if not handled well, might lead the children to crime to survive (Durojaye, 2013).

It is common in Africa for widows to be treated poorly in the communities after the death of their husbands, and this is partly responsible for the isolation of widows (Oluwatusin, 2014). Some family members immediately disassociate themselves from the widow, especially the ones they never got along with while the husband was still alive.

The family members mistreat the widow and accuse her of killing her husband in order to victimize her (Ayodele, 2014). This action causes the widow pain and depression with little concern for the widow's needs, which leads to an emotional breakdown. By maltreating and isolating the widow, she loses her self-esteem, which leads to stress-related sickness (Milazzo & Van De Walle, 2021).

Upon the death of a woman's husband, the community treats the widow as someone who is contaminated and forced to strictly follow the mourning process, which can affect her health (Ude & Njoku, 2017). It becomes even worse if the widow has no son because family members will be hostile to her (Nwanozie, 2023). This inhuman treatment causes the widow to socially disconnect, which might lead to a life of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and sometimes thoughts of suicide (Bennett & Soulsby, 2012). Socially disconnecting a widow from the community can result in emotional instability. This action makes the widow helpless, especially among widows with young children who do not know how to provide for them due to a lack of finances (Moses, 2019).

In Nigeria, widows encounter much discrimination. The death of their husband causes much crisis, especially for widows who depend primarily on their husband's income for survival (Sasson & Umberson, 2014). Women's empowerment through education is essential as it helps the country handle social, economic, and political issues (Asadu & Egbuche, 2020). Education is an instrument that widows need to adopt in order to empower and make them resourceful as women (Obiakor, 2022). The well-being of any nation rests on its citizens' socioeconomic level and the quality of education. Quality

education for widows leads to self-reliance, empowerment, and improved well-being (Tayo & Chukwuedozie, 2013). Through education, widows can grow above marginalization, be empowered to sustain their children and families, and contribute to the country's socioeconomic activities (Adeyemo, 2014).

In Nigeria, widowhood practices and the denial of inheritance rights have significant economic consequences on widows (Umeh & Ndiukwu, 2015). The docile position of women in claiming their late husband's property because of fear of being victimized further has led to a high level of discrimination against widows (Ehumadu, 2022). The absence of a will before the death of the man has led to the abuse of the man's wealth by his siblings, who feel entitled to his property rather than his wife and children (Eboiyehi & Akinyemi, 2016). This mentality of inheriting the man's property and stripping the widow of her late husband's wealth is a societal problem. It can lead to economic exposure for the widow (Soluade et al., 2022). The widow's inability to inherit their late husband's assets often leads to financial hardship, which will hinder providing for their children (Richardson, 2004). Some of these insensitive widowhood practices that lead to denying the widow and her children the right to their inheritance can result in loss of livelihood for the widow and her children, leaving the family without the means to support themselves (Mattia et al., 2020). This situation can cause extreme poverty for so many widows, as their source of livelihood has been diverted (Lyna, 2022).

In Nigeria, women are displeased with the harmful experiences of widowhood practices (Mohammed, 2018). The atrocities committed during the practices of widowhood result in discrimination against widows by the community (Nwankwor &

Ekenedilichukwu, 2021). The widows endure the widowhood practices with a lack of empathy from the community, when the community had previously been part of their lives before their husband's death (Nelson, 2007). However, the widows strictly adhere to the widowhood rituals in the community, which are still unwritten traditional rituals for several reasons (Anugwom, 2011). These are some of the reasons that have caused the abolishment of widowhood practices, in addition to greedy in-laws and fear of disrespecting a tradition believed to have been handed over by their ancestors (Umoh, 2018).

Widowhood practices subject widows to abuse, oppression, and defilement, which turns into a nightmare (Iboroma, 2024). The widows go through physical and psychological pain while performing the widowhood rituals, and this leads to health implications (Mezieobi et al., 2021). The harmful widowhood practices have inflicted several health complications on the widow, which affect her well-being (Lee et al., 2022). Some of the health issues, like infection, mental health, depression, and ulcers, are caused by the rituals, like sleeping on the bare ground, lack of bathing, and having to walk barefoot (Ali & Shanif, 2017). The widows also go through physical and psychological pain while performing the widowhood rituals, and this leads to health implications (Mezieobi et al., 2021). Because of the circumstances associated with the widowhood rituals, the widows merely exist and can hardly recognize themselves, especially during the early stages of widowhood (Piate & Duke-Natrebo, 2020).

The continuous patronage of the widowhood practice is because of the patriarchy in Nigerian society, a prejudice that constantly encourages gender inequality between

men and women in Nigeria (Ezejiolor, 2011). Unfortunately, this gender inequality and discrimination have continued to affect the vulnerable widow, causing different forms of discomfort like financial instability and mental health issues, which is a threat to the widow's well-being (Jones et al., 2019). The suppression of widows in the communities is a straightforward way of male supremacy over women (Offiong et al., 2021).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The problem of widowhood practices in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, especially with its continuous harm to widows despite several Nigerian laws and conventions to protect the human rights of widows. Regrettably, these laws and conventions have not been very effective in eradicating the dehumanizing widowhood practice (Amlor & Owusu, 2016). In this chapter, I investigated the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. I reviewed the theoretical framework of feminist theory to understand how the theory relates to the study of widowhood practice. The three waves of feminism addressed the need to empower women and stop the inequality between men and women. In the literature, I elaborated on the significance of feminist theory in shaping women's lives by giving them a voice. I also provided a comprehensive review of some literature related to the problem statement under investigation. The review of the related literature expands upon the introduction and background information presented in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 3, I will detail the research methodology employed to examine the experiences of widowhood practice on young widow's well-being in southeastern Nigeria, along with the data analysis. I will discuss the instruments connected to the

chosen research methods, the designs used, the analysis, and the study's validity and trustworthiness issues. In Chapter 3, I will examine the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the choice of the research method, providing a clear understanding of the research design and how it aligns with Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

In Nigeria, the population of widows is about 8 million, of which some are living in poverty, which exposes their children to crime, hunger, and diseases (Garrison, 2021). The experiences widows encounter lead to poverty, and in order to liberate themselves, they engage in informal business and trading for survival (Mbachaga & Inedu, 2013). Widows go through various experiences when they lose their husbands, so there is a need for them to mentally, financially, and socially adjust within the socioeconomic structure. For widows to achieve stability in life, their family, friends, and the community should show them love, care, moral support, and financial assistance (Bankola et al., 2018).

In this generic qualitative study, I examined the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. I justified the use of a qualitative generic approach to gain insight into the participants' experiences and report on how widowhood affects their well-being. I also outlined the participant recruitment and data collection process, as well as the analysis of the findings. Lastly, I also discussed all ethical procedures related to the qualitative researcher's role, including the protection of participants' rights, as well as the principles of anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The purpose of this study is to answer the research question: What are the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria? Qualitative research will help to understand the experiences of 10-12

participants who will discuss their experiences of widowhood while mourning the loss of their husbands. Qualitative research is a type of research that inquires and provides a deeper understanding of a problem (Busetto et al., 2020). A quantitative method is not appropriate for this study because, in a quantitative approach, the participants cannot express their perspectives, personal feelings, experiences, or thoughts. A quantitative approach employs a numeric and objective method to answer a series of closed-ended survey questions that may hinder participants from expressing themselves fully about their experiences (Brassil & Couch, 2019). The findings of this study will not only contribute to the academic field but also have significant implications for the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria.

The deliberate choice of a qualitative research design for this study is driven by its ability to provide a profound and nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences. This approach, which focuses on gathering participants' experiences and behaviors to answer the research questions 'how' and 'why,' is particularly appropriate for the study. Qualitative research, which involves interviews with open-ended questions, observational descriptions in words, and literature reviews, provides in-depth insights into a study, ensuring that the audience feels informed and knowledgeable about the research (Tenny et al., 2022).

The research tradition that will answer the research question is a generic qualitative design. According to Caelli et al. (2003), generic qualitative research lacks an explicit or established set of philosophical assumptions, unlike some of the established qualitative methodologies. Generic qualitative studies show the features of qualitative

activities. The approach, rather than focusing the study through the lens of a known methodology, seeks to either combine several methodologies or adopt no particular methodological viewpoint. A generic design is suited for the study because it will capture the attitudes and beliefs of the target population on the particular experience (Kahlke, 2014).

Initially, a narrative design was considered suitable for this study, but it was changed because it proved unsuitable. Narrative research design helps the researcher to study an individual's life and be able to tell the person's life story and then combine the person's stories with his or her life experience and retell the views from the participant's life with those of his or her life in a collaborative narrative (Nasheeda et al., 2019). A narrative approach did not apply to this study because the focus was not be on the stories of the participants' lives but rather on their widowhood experiences after the death of their husbands and their effect on their well-being. A generic qualitative design was the best choice because it helped to understand the participants' actual opinions, life experiences, and reflections as they discussed their experiences authentically in their own words, emphasizing the realness and significance of the study. In addition, a generic qualitative approach emphasized participants' perspectives on their experiences of widowhood and how they have affected their well-being, allowing for a free discussion of context and process rather than measuring intensity, frequency, and quantity (Cooper & Endacott, 2007).

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this qualitative study, the researcher's role was that of interviewer and observer. The researcher served as the primary data collector, attempting to understand the participants' views and feelings and ensuring the integrity of the research study (Collins & Stockton, 2022). As a researcher, it was essential to design the study and participate fully in the research by engaging with participants to understand their experiences related to the study. The researcher was responsible for developing the interview guide using open-ended questions, recruiting participants using the purposive snowball sampling method, observing the participants during the Zoom interview, collecting data, and analyzing the collected data. As the interviewer, it was essential to safeguard participants and their data by ensuring that ethical approval, informed consent, and participant protection are in place. During the interview, I maintained a connection with the participants to make the interview process comfortable for them to express their feelings and thoughts freely.

During the Zoom interview, participants were encouraged to provide in-depth knowledge of widowhood practices as I explore the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. In this role, I was primarily a listener, respecting the participants' knowledge and experiences. I do not have any personal, professional, supervisory, or instructor relationships with any of the participants who participated in this study.

In this study, I did not have any professional or instructor relationships with the participants to avoid any influence. As an interviewer and observer, I listened to the

participants and review the data, ensuring that personal biases do not influence the research. I was aware of how personal biases can impact the validity of the findings, if not managed, and this can negatively affect the interpretation and results of the study (Råheim et al., 2016).

### **Methodology**

In this section, I provided detailed information on the approach used in identifying and recruiting participants. I also provided information on the materials used in data collection and the procedures employed. For this study, I employ a generic qualitative approach to examine the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. A generic qualitative approach was preferred when researchers aim to explore, explain, or understand the experiences of individuals affected by a phenomenon (Kennedy, 2016). The study was comprised of in-depth interviews and observation of a small number of participants to get their lived experiences and capture core experiences.

#### **Participant Selection Logic**

##### ***Population***

To understand the young widowhood experience, the sample for this study consisted of young widows from the southeastern part of Nigeria. The participants selected for this study were suitable for investigating the experiences of widowhood practices and their impact on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. This population was suitable because it is relevant to addressing the research question.

Additionally, the young widows were able to express how widowhood affects their well-being as a vulnerable group.

### ***Sampling Strategy***

The sampling strategy for this study included purposeful and snowball sampling. Purposeful sampling was used in qualitative research to identify and select a sample size that is knowledgeable or experienced about the topic and can articulate experiences or opinions of the study (Palinkas et al., 2016). To recruit participants, flyers (see Appendix A) were posted on the information boards of community centers, allowing interested participants to indicate their willingness by responding to the contact address on the flyer. In purposeful sampling, the identified individuals or groups should be willing participants. After the individuals was identified based on the recruitment criteria, a snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants who are willing to refer or introduce others to participate in the study. Snowball sampling was a nonprobability sampling where participants assist in identifying potential participants for the study (Dragan & Isaic-Maniu, 2013).

### ***Inclusion Criteria of Participants***

The inclusion criteria for participating in the interview was that the young widow must be from the Southeastern part of Nigeria and have experienced widowhood between the age of 18 to 45. Participants must have spoken and understood English fluently to complete the interview and share their experiences. Participants expressed their interest in participating by phone or email. Afterward, a consent letter was sent to them, and interested participants confirmed their eligibility and consent by responding “I consent”

via email to the IRB-approved informed consent form. Once they send an email stating “I consent,” a schedule for the interview was sent to the participants, stating the day and time for the interview. A 30–45-minute Zoom interview was held with the participant, and the interview was audio recorded. It was anticipated that 10-12 widows will be interested in participating in the study. A research study typically requires 10-12 participants to achieve data saturation (Subedi, 2021).

Subedi (2021), in his study “Determining the Sample in Qualitative Research,” used a large sample size of 10-50 or more for a generic qualitative research design, depending on the nature of the study. In generic qualitative research, a sample size of 8-15 participants was appropriate when collecting data during an interview with an individual participant (Kostere & Kostere, 2021). The number of interviews needed to reach saturation depends on the nature and purpose of the research. Saturation occurs when participants have exhausted the available information and no additional value-added information is received to answer the interview questions (Gentles et al., 2017). Based on the findings, a sample size of 10 to 12 participants were deemed appropriate for this study.

### **Instrumentation**

In this study, I aimed to explore the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. To answer the study’s research question, semistructured interviews were used to collect data for this study. An interview guide was used to provide the structure for a semistructured interview to collect data for this study (see Appendix B). Interview guides facilitate semistructured interviews by

organizing open-ended questions and subquestions into specific topic areas (Busetto et al., 2020).

For an interview to be effective, the interview questions should be structured, precise, concise, ethically sensitive, and relevant to the phenomenon being studied (Percy et al., 2015). The interviewing process began with demographic questions (Appendix B). The demographic questions aimed to gather background information on each participant in this study, and to help the participant relax, allowing them to feel freer and provide information relevant to the study. To facilitate the execution of interviews, open-ended questions were used to engage with the participants. The existing literature on widowhood practices and feminist theory guided the formulation of questions to ensure they are relevant to the research study's objectives. Questions were developed to address aspects related to the experiences of widowhood practices and their impact on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Procedure for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

After receiving IRB approval, the flyers were posted at the community information board (see Appendix A). The flyer included participant eligibility criteria and contact information. Participants could call, text, or email to express their interest in participating in the study. Emails were sent to participants who expressed interest in participating in the interview. The email contained the informed consent, in which the participants will review and reply with "I consent." Then the participants contacted to schedule the interview

Young widows interested in the study were communicated with the date and time of the interview, which was conducted via Zoom. The consent form for the Zoom interview was sent via email to the interested participants. The consent form provided participants with an informed choice about the study and whether to participate, while explaining their right to withdraw at any time (Manti & Licari, 2018). The consent form consisted of the title of the research, name, email address, and phone number, the purpose of the study, declaration of consent, a description of the risks and benefits of participating in the study, time and commitment asked of the participant, phone number and email address to Walden University's IRB Office for any questions or concerns regarding their rights as a participant in the research study. Other participants were welcome to refer interested widows.

### ***Data Collection***

The data for this study was collected using semistructured interviews conducted via Zoom audio meeting. This approach, based on the literature review, was chosen for its efficiency, convenience, and practicability. The choice of Zoom, an online platform, was to achieve efficiency, convenience, and practicability while reducing the resources required for research, such as travel costs. It enables users to record interviews and store the recordings without requiring third-party software (Archibald et al., 2019). Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing platform that allows collaboration and group meetings. It allows for user-specific authentication, meaning only the invited participants can participate in the interviews, enhancing privacy (Archibald et al., 2019).

The semistructured interview guide (see Appendix B) was used to ensure the interviews are relevant and focused on the research study. The interviews were held via Zoom at a location convenient to the participants. Each participant was asked the same set of questions and will have the opportunity to respond based on their understanding and experiences. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and the interview process was conducted over a period of 2 weeks. At the end of the interview, participants were allowed to ask any questions they may have. Afterward, they were thanked for their participation, and the interview ended. The interview was recorded via Zoom, with audio transcription enabled. This feature automatically transcribes the interview audio and saves it in a Video Text Track (VTT) file. Participants were sent the transcripts to ensure accuracy. The recorded interviews were encrypted in a file and stored on a laptop with a password. The notebook used for jotting was locked in a safe away from any unauthorized persons.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

After the interviews, the recorded interviews were processed. The processing steps included verifying the accuracy of the transcriptions from Zoom. An excel sheet was used to compile all the transcripts for data analysis. Any discrepant cases that arise during data collection was not be used. The generic qualitative data collected were analyzed using a thematic content analysis (Braun & Clark, 2016). Thematic content analysis is a process of identifying, exploring, and interpreting critical patterns in qualitative data by generating codes and themes. Thematic content analysis changes throughout the research, with frequent movement between the stages. Codes are the

process of assigning labels in the form of short phrases to data as building blocks for themes in thematic content analysis (Lester et al., 2020). This thematic analysis was a phase guide proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) as presented below:

***Step 1: Become Familiar with the Data***

The first phase of the thematic analysis process involves conducting data analysis by familiarizing each participant with their transcribed interview, generating soft copies of participants' transcripts from the Zoom conferencing software (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, notes were taken, and I examined the data content to identify initial themes. Then, quotes will be selected that bring the data to life and accurately represent different perspectives and patterns relevant to the research purpose.

***Step 2: Generate Initial Codes***

To begin coding, I organized the data in a meaningful and orderly way to reduce large amounts of data into smaller, more manageable groups of words (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Participants' responses were reviewed line by line in an MS Excel spreadsheet to highlight keywords and document the initial set of codes for each participant. Additional worksheets for each interview question were created, and these worksheets were formatted with columns for participants, responses, first-cycle codes, and second-cycle codes or subthemes. Participants' answers to each question on the respective worksheet were reviewed. Then, I reviewed the initial codes, looked for patterns, and combined codes where necessary based on commonalities in the data.

***Step 3: Search for Themes***

Once the codes are appropriately refined, themes were created (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To develop themes, another worksheet was created to group the codes into subthemes based on their shared attributes. After all codes have been grouped, the codes were analyzed and developed to identify the connections between them and align them with the theoretical framework and research question.

***Step 4: Review Themes***

This phase begins once a set of themes has been created and requires modification (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The coded data extracts for each theme were reviewed to determine whether they appear to form a logical pattern. The codes were reviewed in the context of the raw data to validate the meaning. It is essential to determine whether each theme's validity accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set. I also confirmed that the chosen themes addressed the study's research question and theoretical framework.

***Step 5: Define Themes***

After confirming that the themes aligned with the raw data and addressed the research question, the proposed themes and codes were emailed to the study participants for feedback (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theme analysis is used to observe research participants' views, highlight similarities and differences, and identify unforeseen perceptions. It is used to identify, analyze, organize, describe, and report themes found within the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes were developed based on responses from study participants.

***Step 6: Writing Up***

After the themes are finalized, tables in Excel were created for each theme, with columns for subtheme, description, frequency of codes, and codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The respective subthemes and codes developed were assigned in the MS Excel coding workbook. Next, each identified theme was described in the data related to the research question. Finally, Microsoft Word tables were used to visually display the study's results.

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research because it ensures that the study's results appear accurate and valid (Nowell et al., 2017). Trustworthiness enables researchers to establish the truth and accuracy of the research process and findings (Cope, 2014). There are four critical components for addressing the trustworthiness of qualitative research. They are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which enhance trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017).

**Credibility**

Credibility refers to the consistency between the findings of a qualitative study and reality (Shenton, 2004). In the research, member checking will be the primary strategy implemented to solicit feedback from study participants. Member checking has become widely accepted as a validity check that is now a requirement for qualitative research (American Psychological Association, 2021). This approach helped enhance the credibility of the collected data.

**Transferability**

Transferability is defined as the degree to which findings from a given study can be applied to other contexts or settings. It is the extent to which a research result can be generalized to other situations or populations (Anney, 2014). The transferability of the result from this study can be enhanced by using purposeful sampling. Using purposive sampling techniques to select participants who are representative of the target population can enhance transferability. Purposeful sampling enabled me to access young widows in southeastern Nigeria who have undergone widowhood practices, allowing me to discuss the impact of these practices on their well-being. Only participants who had a connection to the research question were able to provide meaningful information about it.

**Dependability**

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of the research findings over time. Researchers document their methodologies, data-gathering techniques, and analysis procedures to ensure reliability, allowing a reader to follow and audit the study process (Ahmad, 2024). An audit trail improved the dependability of the results from a study. Maintaining an audit trail with a comprehensive record and documenting the study's outcomes enables other researchers to reproduce the study, thereby guaranteeing the dependability of the results.

To enhance dependability, I reviewed the activities as recorded in the audit trail. The audit trail included the notes, recordings, and reports used to enhance dependability and accountability. The second technique that enhanced dependability throughout the research process will be transcript review (Ahmed, 2024). Transcript review helps

improve dependability by transcribing the interview and asking the participants to affirm accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). It is a necessary quality control process for the study. The participants validated whether the transcribed information accurately captures the information they provided.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the final criterion of trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). Confirmability refers to the inclusion of triangulation and reflexivity (Ahmad, 2024). There are different approaches researchers use to improve the confirmability of their findings. They include triangulation, and reflexivity. Triangulation is employing multiple data sources, methods, or researchers to corroborate findings and enhance the credibility and objectivity of the research. By utilizing diverse perspectives and approaches, triangulation helps to validate and confirm the findings.

This process enables participants to examine and validate the accuracy of the findings, thereby helping to verify the level of confirmability. The use of reflexivity provides transparency by acknowledging and critically examining the researcher's own biases, values, and preconceptions throughout the research process. By being aware of their own perspectives, researchers can minimize subjectivity and increase the confirmability of the research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

### **Ethical Procedures**

To ensure ethics during the research process, the University's IRB approval was obtained, and the IRB procedures were followed. This study has been approved by the IRB: 10-25-24-097057. Ethical clearance from the IRB involved presenting a

comprehensive informed consent document, a completed application, and other necessary data collection materials. This research adhered to ethical procedures at every stage, from protecting participants' details during data collection to the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the findings. These ethical practices and procedures have been carefully designed to protect participants from any potential harm resulting from their participation in this research study (Pollock, 2012).

I adhered to various ethical considerations. One of the key considerations related to participant protection is confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to the protection of participants' identities (Surmiak, 2018). Confidentiality was maintained in this study because it will not include any information that could have revealed the participant's identity. The questions asked of participants during the interviews did not require them to provide identifiable information. Additionally, each participant was assigned a pseudonym, which was used in the data and in the published results.

Another important ethical consideration was the protection of participants' data. All data provided by the participants will be stored using a secure personal laptop and restricted from unauthorized persons. The interview recording was stored in an encrypted file on a password-protected laptop, while the printed transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet that is out of reach of unauthorized persons. Data analysis was conducted on a secure laptop, to which only I, as the researcher, will have access.

It is essential to note that scientific research must ensure the voluntary participation of participants, based on adequate knowledge of the study and the obtaining of informed consent (Sil & Das, 2017). The informed consent documents described the

study's objective and purpose, the benefits associated with the study, and the risks associated with the study, if any. Participants must read and understand the informed consent form and provide their affirmation by indicating that they agree before participating in the study. Informed consent was obtained before including participants in the study, and participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study or skip any of the questions before commencing the interviews. Participants were informed that data collection will be carried out using Zoom audio recording and transcription, allowing them to withdraw if they are uncomfortable with voice recording. The data analysis also adheres to ethical considerations to ensure that the findings are derived from the obtained data.

Findings from the study will be disseminated to interested parties using accessible platforms. Finally, all information received was used only for the intended purpose and will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study. The data are securely stored for 5 years in a password-protected laptop and a locked cabinet for paper documents, as required by Walden University procedures and the principles of the American Psychological Association's ethics code (American Psychological Association, 2017).

### **Summary**

I discussed in detail the research design and rationale of the study, including the role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection logic, instrumentation, data collection plan, and data analysis plan. It also addresses issues of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) and ethical procedures relevant to this study. In this study, I examined the experiences of widowhood practices

on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. I employed a generic qualitative research method to investigate the impact of widowhood practices on young widows. A qualitative study helped gather data from participants to better understand their plight. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit 10–12 widows who show interest in participating in the research. The recruitment process will be conducted by posting flyers at the community center. The criteria for eligibility to participate in the study include being a young widow at the time of the death of the spouse from southeastern Nigeria. The interviews were via Zoom meeting, lasting 30–45 minutes. Ultimately, the data analysis results provided insight into the experience of widowhood among young widows and its impact on their well-being in southeastern Nigeria.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The aim of my study was to explore the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. The findings will give human service professionals and the Nigerian government insight into assisting young widows. This can be achieved by establishing programs to enhance well-being during the grieving period, thereby fostering social change. The research question aligns with the study's focus and provides a clear direction for data collection and analysis. The research question is: What are the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria?

Chapter 4 is organized into seven sections for clarity and ease of understanding. The first is an overview of the research setting, outlining the geographical and temporal aspects relevant to participants' experiences. Second, the demographics section describes characteristics of the study participants, including age, gender, and other relevant information that may influence posttraumatic growth. Third, the data collection methods and procedures are described. This includes the research instruments, recruitment process, and consideration of ethical issues. Fourth, the data analysis process is explained, detailing the coding process and thematic patterns that emerged. Fifth, evidence of trustworthiness is demonstrated by clearly defining the strategies employed to ensure the study's credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Sixth, results are presented and supported by direct quotations from participants. Finally, a

summary section concisely reviews key findings, highlighting the main themes and significant insights from the study.

### **Setting**

The study involved young widows who experienced widowhood in southeastern Nigeria and examined the effect on their well-being. The participants were 10 young widows, between age 18 to 45, who spoke and understood English fluently. This was necessary to take part in an interview and share their experiences. I recruited participants by posting a flyer on a foundation organization's webpage. Purposeful and snowball sampling methods were used. Respondents expressed interest in the study, and I initiated an informed consent process to confirm their agreement to participate in the interview. The research used Zoom for semistructured interviews. All Zoom interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to capture participants' narratives. I conducted every interview from my home. I asked each participant to join from a comfortable and private location. At the time of this study, no known organizational conditions existed that could impact the interpretation of the results.

### **Demographics**

I collected data through the Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix B) and participant interviews. A brief demographic profile was given for each participant. All participants met the inclusion criteria: young widows from southeastern Nigeria, between age 18 to 45, and fluent in English. I used purposeful sampling to select these specific young widows. Data were collected from 10 participants, aged 26 to 38. Each participant

was assigned an alphanumeric identifier (P1 to P10) for confidentiality. All lived in southeastern Nigeria before their husbands' deaths.

### **Participant 1**

Participant 1 (P1) is a 29-year-old widow who lives in Ebonyi State in southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 26 and has been a widow for the past 3 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She owns a hairdressing salon.

### **Participant 2**

Participant 2 (P2) is a 30-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 25 and has been a widow for the past 5 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a petty trader and has three children.

### **Participant 3**

Participant 3 (P3) is a 29-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 25 and has been a widow for the past 4 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She has a mini supermarket and has four children.

### **Participant 4**

Participant 4 (P4) is a 28-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 25 and has been a widow for the past 3 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She has three children.

**Participant 5**

Participant 5 (P5) is a 35-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 29 and has been a widow for the past 7 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a petty trader and has two children.

**Participant 6**

Participant 6 (P6) is a 39-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 34 and has been a widow for the past 4 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She has three children.

**Participant 7**

Participant 7 (P7) is a 29-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 23 and has been a widow for the past 6 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a petty trader and has five children.

**Participant 8**

Participant 8 (P8) is a 25-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 21 and has been a widow for the past 4 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a petty trader and has two children.

**Participant 9**

Participant 9 (P9) is a 30-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 28 and has been a widow for the past 2

years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a businesswoman and has four children.

### **Participant 10**

Participant 10 (P10) is a 25-year-old widow living in Ebonyi State, southeastern Nigeria (see Table 1). She lost her husband at age 21 and has been a widow for the past 4 years. She is fluent in English, although it is her second language. She works as a teacher and has two children.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Participants' Demographics*

	Age	Language	Present location	Time as widow (years)
P1	29	English	Ebonyi State	3
P2	30	English	Ebonyi State	5
P3	29	English	Ebonyi State	4
P4	28	English	Ebonyi State	3
P5	35	English	Ebonyi State	7
P6	39	English	Ebonyi State	4
P7	29	English	Ebonyi State	6
P8	25	English	Ebonyi State	4
P9	30	English	Ebonyi State	2
P10	25	English	Ebonyi State	4

### **Data Collection**

During the data collection phase of the study, a well-structured approach was employed to ensure the recruitment of eligible participants and the conduct of systematic interviews. Data were collected using Zoom video interviews from 10 young widows in southeastern Nigeria. After receiving IRB approval (10-25-24-0970575), participants were recruited through a flyer or invitation posted on the organization's web page. A 2-

week response period lets interested individuals contact me by Walden University email or by phone, as listed in the flyer. The flyer outlined the study's purpose and the criteria for participation.

Eligible participants who expressed interest and met the criteria were sent the informed consent form by email. They were instructed to reply "I consent" before any interviews were scheduled. After I received consent, I scheduled individual Zoom meetings with each participant. Interviews took place in October 2024 and lasted 30 to 45 minutes. Before starting, I reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and they could stop the interview at any time. I also advised each participant that their data would remain confidential, accessible only to my Walden University research committee and me. After addressing any participant questions, I recorded the audio and transcript of each interview using Zoom. At the interview's end, I reminded each participant that I would provide their transcribed interview, along with instructions for feedback, within 5 business days. I thanked participants for their contribution. None had corrections to their transcriptions.

### **Data Analysis**

For this study, a generic qualitative approach and inductive analysis were suitable for interpreting the collected data and emerging themes. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step TCA process. Phase one involved familiarizing myself with the data: I reviewed audio recordings of each interview, used my analytic memo journal to capture key ideas, and transcribed each recording using Zoom. After transcribing, I read each interview, edited for clarity, and noted key phrases. Each transcript received a code name

and was stored in a password-protected file. In phase two, I generated initial codes by revisiting my journal and transcripts, using MS Excel to highlight keywords and document relevant codes in a separate column.

In phase three, I refined the first-cycle codes and created subthemes by categorizing the data. I created an MS Excel worksheet for each interview question, entered participant responses, first-cycle codes, and categories, and color-coded similar codes. I then grouped codes by color, developed subthemes, and clustered those into overarching themes aligned with the research question and theoretical framework. Phase four confirmed themes. I checked alignment between codes and themes, compared themes to raw transcript data, and ensured they addressed the research question and fit Bronfenbrenner's (1979b) EST theoretical framework.

In phase five, I finalized themes by reviewing for alignment, consulting my reflexive journal to minimize bias, and ensuring that the themes accurately reflected participant experiences and the theoretical framework. Themes were refined as needed. Phase six involved reporting results. I created MS Excel tables to visualize each theme, subtheme, and associated codes, and described each subtheme with corresponding quotations and examples. The coding system produced six themes, 14 subthemes, and 275 codes; 13 codes that did not align with the subthemes, themes, and framework were excluded. The six themes are: (a) life of trauma, (b) trying to survive, (c) inductive living condition, (d) painful period, (e) art of coping, and (f) improve quality of life. The system is outlined in tables.

## Theme 1: Life of Trauma

**Table 2**

*Life of Trauma*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
Losing my husband	Represents the participants' reality of husband's death and the burial process.	12	I lost my husband (5), my husband died (3), husband's death (1), my late husband (3).
Husband's burial		4	My late husband's burial (2), entrance to my husband's burial (2)

There are two subthemes within Theme 1, life of trauma. The first subtheme is *losing my husband*, and the second is subtheme is *husband's burial*. These two subthemes represent the participants' reality of husband's death and the burial process. The first subtheme *losing my husband* includes initial codes such as I lost my husband (5), my husband died (3), husband's death (1), my late husband (3). The subtheme has a total of 12 codes, while the second subtheme, *husband's burial*, includes initial code such as my late husband's burial (2), entrance to my husband's burial (2). The subtheme has a total of four codes.

## Theme 2: Trying to Survive

**Table 3**

*Trying to Survive*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
Financial constrain	Represent the need for financial intervention in order to survive.	14	I have not been financially stable (3), business and investments (2), change my financial status for the better (2), I need financial assistance (6), I had to raise money to start up petty trading (1).
Struggling	Correspond to the impact of the widowhood practice on the well-being of the widow	20	what to do at each attack (1), grief was really difficult (3), struggling (7), not having my breadwinner around (4), could not handle (5).

There are two subthemes under Theme 2, trying to survive. The first subtheme is *financial constrain*, and the second subtheme is *struggling*. These two subthemes correspond to the impact of the widowhood practice on the well-being of the widow. The first subtheme *financial constrain*, includes initial codes such as I have not been financially stable (3), business and investments (2), change my financial status for the better (1), who financially support me and my children (1), I need financial assistance (6), I had to raise money to start up petty trading (1). The subtheme has a total of 14 codes. The second subtheme *struggling* includes initial codes such as what to do at each attack (1), grief was really difficult (3), struggling (7), not having my breadwinner around (4), could not handle (5), not easy to cope (1). The subtheme has a total of 20 codes.

### Theme 3: Inconducive Living Condition

**Table 4**

*Inconducive Living Condition*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
In-laws	Reveal the marginalization and inhuman actions young widows encounter during their mourning period	16	my late husband's family (3), my in-laws (3), my husband's brothers (3), husband's family (5), my experience with my in-laws (2),
Blame and accusation		18	blame (2), baseless accusation (4), false accusation (3), swear an oath (3), accusing me of killing my husband (3), his siblings accused me of killing him (1), someone who diabolically killed him (1), accused me (1).

There are three subthemes under Theme 3, inconducive living condition. The first subtheme is *in-laws*, and the second subtheme is *blame and accusation*. These subthemes reveal the marginalization and inhuman actions young widows encounter during their mourning period. The first subtheme *in-laws* includes initial codes such as my late husband's family (3), my in-laws (3), my husband's brothers (3), husband's family (5), my experience with my in-laws (2). The subtheme has a total of 16 codes. The second subtheme *blame and accusation* includes initial codes such as blame (2), baseless accusation (4), false accusation (3), swear an oath (3), accused me (1), accusing me of killing my husband (3), his siblings accused me of killing him (1), someone who diabolically killed him (1). The subtheme has a total of 18 codes.

#### Theme 4: Painful Period

**Table 5**

*Painful Period*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
Infringement of right	Reveal the barbaric cultural belief which has continue to violate the rights and dignity of widows	28	infringed on my right (2), infringing on their rights (1), infringes on people's rights (1), seized my late husband's properties (5), depriving me of my inheritance (3), Stealing of a widow's inheritance (3), my late husband's property (2), emotionally blackmailing me (4), made me vulnerable (1), I was kicked out of my husband's house (1), I was over shadowed (1), spell was cast on me (2), my grieving period was stressful (2).
Belief		31	refused to give in to their pressure (1), I fought to maintain my dignity (3), I have to be accommodating (1), widowhood tradition (6), pain tradition (6), I cannot rely on people (1), tradition that victimizes women (3), My husband spoilt me (1), widowhood experiences (2), tradition should be eliminated (1), this culture is not good (1), I believe that my late husband's brother is responsible because of the threat to deal with me (1), widowhood tradition is terrible (3), tradition is not receptive (1).

There are two subthemes under Theme 4, painful period. The first subtheme is *infringement of rights*, and the second subtheme is *belief*. These subthemes reveal the barbaric cultural belief which has continue to violate the rights and dignity of widows.

The first subtheme *infringement of rights* includes initial codes such as infringed on my right (2), infringing on their rights (1), infringes on people's rights (1), seized my late husband's properties (5), depriving me of my inheritance (3), stealing of a widow's inheritance (3), my late husband's property (2), emotionally blackmailing me (4), made me vulnerable (1), I was kicked out of my husband's house (1), I was over shadowed (1), spell was cast on me (2), my grieving period was stressful (2). The subtheme has a total of 28 codes. The second subtheme *belief* includes initial codes such as refused to give in to their pressure (1), I fought to maintain my dignity (3), I have to be accommodating (1), widowhood tradition (6), pain tradition (6), widowhood practice (1), I cannot rely on people (1), tradition that victimizes women (3), widowhood experiences (2), tradition should be eliminated (1), this culture is not good (1), I believe that my late husband's brother is responsible because of the threat to deal with me (1), widowhood tradition is terrible (3), tradition is not receptive (1). The subtheme has a total of 31 codes.

## Theme 5: Art of Coping

**Table 6**

*Art of Coping*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
Encouragement	Represents the desire and readiness to move forward	30	refuse to be kicked out (4), enjoyed my marriage for 2 years (2), harsh experience (1), I am broken for now (1), love taking a walk (2), My experience made me quickly face reality (2), indifferent about it (1), It's a lesson period (2), learning each day (1), not to leave me alone (2), made me very humble (3), made me stronger (2), mercies upon my life (2), possibilities each day (1), this experience has woken me up (1), make enough income (3).
Support		28	always there to support (3), supported (3), my brother (1), my family (3), I had the support of my mother (9), comforted me (2), who has supported me (2), supportive (2), I got support from my friends and neighbors (2), been there for me (1)".
Confidence		17	initial code such as "be independent-minded (2), defending myself (1), I was getting bolder (3), strength (3), determined to succeed (1), strong now (4), succeed (2), overcome (1)

There are three subthemes within Theme 5, art of coping. The first subtheme is *encouragement*, the second subtheme is *support*, and the third subtheme is *confidence*.

These three subtheme represents the desire and readiness to move forward. The first subtheme *encouragement* includes initial codes such as seen reality now (1), refuse to be kicked out (1), enjoyed my marriage for 2 years (1), harsh experience (1), patient with me

(1), I am broken for now (1), fine (1), still obvious to me (1), a lot of time (1), homemaker (1), experience (1), caution (1), indifferent about it (1), my experience made me quickly face reality (1), love taking a walk (1), It's a lesson period (1), learning each day (1), first daughter (1), not to leave me alone (1), close to my husband (1), do things together (1), made me very humble (1), made me stronger (1), source of livelihood (1), to rest (1), mercies upon my life (1), possibilities each day (1), this experience has woken me up (1), make enough income (1), rights can be restored (1). The subtheme has a total of 30 codes. The second subtheme *support* includes initial codes such as always there to support (3), supported (3), my brother (1), my family (3), I had the support of my mother (9), comforted me (2), who has supported me (2), supportive (2), I got support from my friends and neighbors (2), been there for me (1). The subtheme has a total of 28 codes. The third subtheme *confidence* includes initial code such as be independent-minded (2), defending myself (1), I was getting bolder (3), strength (3), determined to succeed (1), strong now (4), succeed (2), overcome (1). The subtheme has a total of 17 codes.

## Theme 6: Improve Quality of Life

**Table 7**

### *Improve Quality of Life*

Subtheme	Subtheme description	No. of codes	Codes (coded reference)
Children's welfare	represents the hope in God to be able to provide for the family.	16	Children's upkeep (2), channeled my energy to my child (2), myself and my children (1), living for my children (3), children to be in touch with their father's village (1), taking care of the children (3), keeping the properties for the children till they grow up (2), Concentrate on my child (2).
Moving forward		30	Survive (3), focus on my teaching (3), I learnt from experience (2), moving forward (5), not depend on anyone for help (1), not to leave in guilt (1), I am focusing on getting better (1), not to be bitter (1), leaving everything in God's hands (2), I own a hairdressing salon (1), you have to stand for yourself (1), see life as a second chance (3), starting all over again (1), be stronger (1). support I received and continue to receive (3), the government should look into this issue (1).
God		11	closer to God (3), thank God (3), cried to God (1), leaned on God (1), never to leave God (1), grace of God (2).

There are three subthemes within Theme 6, improve quality of life. The first subtheme is *child's welfare*, the second subtheme is *moving forward*, and the third subtheme is *God*. These three subtheme represents the hope in God to be able to provide for the family. The first subtheme *child's welfare* includes initial codes such as children's upkeep (2), channeled my energy to my child (2), myself and my child (1), children to be in touch with their father's village (1), living for my children (3), taking care of the

children (3), keeping the properties for the children till they grow up (2), concentrating on my child (2). The subtheme has a total of 16 codes.

The second subtheme *moving forward* includes initial codes such as survive (3), focus on my teaching (3), I learnt from experience (2), moving forward (5), not depend on anyone for help (1), not to leave in guilt (1), I am focusing on getting better (1), not to be bitter (1), leaving everything in God's hands (2), I own a hairdressing salon (1), you have to stand up for yourself (1), see life as a second chance (3), starting all over again (1), be stronger (1), support I received and continue to receive (3), the government should look into this issue (1). The subtheme has a total of 30 codes. The third subtheme *God* includes initial code such as closer to God (3), thank God (3), cried to God (1), leaned on God (1), never to leave God (1), grace of God (2). The subtheme has a total of 11 codes.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

For a researcher's study to be considered trustworthy, details of the study should include the ethical conduct of the researcher toward the study participants (Rallis et al., 2007). The findings of this study are based on the truthful responses expressed by the study participants. To establish trustworthiness, four key components of data trustworthiness which are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were evaluated in the study.

### **Credibility**

In this study, credibility was established through the use of member checking. The participants were encouraged to be candid as they shared their experiences and responses to the interview questions. This approach helped enhance the credibility of the collected

data. The participants were provided with the transcribed interview narratives and initial codes. This process provided participants with the opportunity to review and confirm that their responses were accurately captured (Candela, 2019). The participants were able to proofread their responses and correct any misinterpretations identified. Their feedback was integrated into the final analysis to strengthen the study's credibility.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be applied to other contexts or settings. It reflects the relevance of research results to different situations or populations (Anney, 2014). Purposeful sampling enhances transferability by selecting participant's representative of the target population. Transferability in this study was promoted by including participants with diverse perspectives. This variety enables readers and researchers to assess the applicability of the findings to other contexts (James, 2025). Purposeful sampling provided me with access to young widows in southeastern Nigeria who had experienced widowhood practices and were willing to discuss their impact on their well-being. Only participants relevant to the research question provided meaningful insights.

### **Dependability**

Dependability relates to the stability and firmness of the research findings over time. Results are dependable when study findings are consistent and repeatable (Amankwaa, 2016). My goal was to verify that the findings align with the raw data collected during the interviews. To enhance dependability, I maintained a systematic audit trail documenting research activities, decisions, and modifications (Ames et al.,

2019). The audit trail included the informed consent form, interview protocol, audio recordings, transcribed interviews, notes, and other relevant materials, all of which were stored securely with access limited to me.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the final condition of trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). It refers to the objectivity of the findings, demonstrating that the information is not influenced by researcher bias (Ahmad, 2024). Researchers use several methods to improve confirmability. In this study, I followed a standardized interview protocol, asking the same questions in each interview, and accurately recorded participants' answers without any personal bias. I used participants' direct quotes as data sources for this chapter. I identified myself as a researcher on the consent form and did not know any participants before the study.

### **Results**

This segment presents key themes identified from interviews with young widows in Southeastern Nigeria. The findings directly address the central research question: How do widowhood practices affect the well-being of young widows in this region? Using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis, the study organizes findings into initial codes, subthemes, and overarching themes. The results are presented in ten sections, each focused on a major theme. Quotations from participants illustrate each theme, highlighting their experiences and insights. These quotations help faithfully represent the widows' perspectives. This section evaluates the effectiveness of the themes and

participant accounts in addressing the research question. Through analysis, participants' experiences of widowhood and well-being are illuminated.

### **Theme 1: Life of Trauma**

This theme examines participants' shock at losing their husbands discussing the impact and cause of death (see Table 2). Participants' geographical history and demographic data are included using quotes from their stories. All had their primary residence in Ebonyi State, located in the southeastern part of Nigeria. While some participants spoke about their reactions as widows, others were less expressive, but all acknowledged the significance of their loss.

#### ***Subtheme 1: Losing My Husband***

All participants stated they live in Ebonyi State and described different years of widowhood, all expressing how challenging it has been to cope with the death of their husbands. Six out of ten participants (60%) specifically described difficulties with their in-laws. For example, Participant 1 focused on emotional struggles, stating, "It isn't easy to survive as my in-laws don't care about our well-being." Participant 2 detailed her exclusion from her husband's home: "I was not allowed to enter my husband's house again," and recalled, "I was calm and watching." She further recounted being told, "The family will discuss and ask me some questions to clarify how their brother died." Participant 4 spoke about the burden created by her in-laws, describing her experience as "Sometimes it was challenging," and felt that "the weight behind me is endless." She added, "I feel very lonely," emphasizing her pain. Participant 5 echoed the shock and emptiness after losing her husband, sharing, "When I lost my husband, I was in shock,"

and, “It was a heavy burden for me.” Most participants described their widowhood as a traumatic experience that brought ongoing challenges to their lives.

### ***Subtheme 2: Husband Burial***

Half of the participants said their in-laws neglected them and showed no empathy. A smaller group, making up 40%, shared that their late husband’s business was taken over by his brothers. The brothers claimed they were just taking inventory of assets. Two participants spoke about their current or past situations. Participant 2 said, “Since I own a hairdressing salon, I had to focus on my business, which generated little income to survive.” This showed her need to survive. Participant 6 talked about losing her married life and becoming a widow: “They did not care about his children and seized my late husband’s properties.” These responses show that when there is no support for widows, they must become strong and stand up for themselves.

### **Theme 2: Trying to Survive**

The fear of survival and regular traumatic outbursts from in-laws and the community planted disbelief in the minds of the participants (see Table 3). They lacked a trusted support system to rely on. As a result, they experienced mental health challenges, masked their pain, and gradually became emotionally detached from family and society. Most participants disclosed that the traumatic experiences during their widowhood process made it difficult for them and their children to survive. The participants also discussed perceptions that widows do not have the right to defend themselves after losing their husbands. They are kept at the mercy of their in-law. This makes survival difficult because they are often left with the late husband’s assets.

***Subtheme 1: Financial Constrain***

All the participants described facing significant financial pressure that has restricted what they can do for themselves and their children. For example, Participant 1 said, “I wish I could get financial assistance to add to my business.” Participant 2 explained, “I need financial support to survive with my children.” Participant 3 added, “Since I lost my late husband, I have not been financially stable because I am the only one now working to provide for the family.” The participants also expressed feeling accountable and responsible for their children’s well-being. Participant 4 described widowhood as painful and shared, “It has not been easy coping with not having money, and this has added to my psychological and physical breakdown.” Similarly, Participant 6 stated, “I have been going through a lot of difficulties in order to survive,” and emphasized the importance of becoming financially empowered and building self-esteem.

Participant 7 stated, “These are my children, and my focus is on my children.” She emphasized that her core responsibility is ensuring her children’s mental well-being, explaining, “My attention is centered around my children since the death of their father. He was the one who provided for us, but now I have to provide for my children.” Participant 9 added, “Of course, not having my breadwinner around has affected my well-being.” The participants highlighted that parents are responsible for making their children feel wanted and active in the community.

***Subtheme 2: Struggling***

All the participants acknowledged experiencing both physical and mental breakdowns following the death of their husbands. They reported being emotionally

brutalized by individuals expected to show empathy, which led some to require routine medication. Two participants described their efforts to recover: one noted, “I am striving to be both mentally and physically well.” Another shared, “Since my husband’s death, I have faced many difficulties just to survive.” Participant 5 explained,

It affected my health, but thank God, I am gradually becoming independent. It has not been easy coping without money, and this has added to my psychological and physical breakdown. I hope to overcome my struggle. I am trying to see possibilities each day.

Additionally, participants called for action, stating, “The government should look into this issue of marginalizing widows and put a stop to it.”

### **Theme 3: Inconducive Living Condition**

The third theme focuses on the diverse experiences of the widows during the widowhood period (see Table 4). Most participants mentioned limited support and opportunities to experience themselves with fear of victimization as part of their experience. The widows’ living conditions were made inconducive because of the In-laws, community, and Umuada women. They revealed that they were constantly marginalized and made to go through inhuman treatment as young widows during their mourning period.

#### ***Subtheme 1: In Laws***

Seventy percent of the participants discussed feeling personally responsible for preparing themselves and their children for the future. These participants felt left to address their situation on their own and were solely responsible for their own well-being.

Fifty percent mentioned needing to remain focused and responsible, often by engaging in trading as a means of livelihood. Additionally, all participants expressed a determination to be self-driven and achieve their life goals. They view their experiences as lessons for every woman, which has fostered a positive mindset toward social change.

### ***Subtheme 2: Blame and Accusation***

Eighty percent of the participants mentioned that they were accused and blamed for the death of their husbands. Participant 1 described, “One of the things that hurt me most was when I was accused of killing my husband,” and explained, “After my husband’s death, my in-laws accused me of killing him and seized his properties from me.” She further recounted that she was held responsible for her husband’s death, lost access to his property, and was accused by her in-laws of neglecting his children. Participant 4 shared, “I was forced to swear an oath to prove I did not kill my husband,” and said, “I was told by the family to either marry one of my husband’s brothers and have more children, or leave the family altogether.”

Discussing the impact of the situation on the children’s mental health was emotional. Participant 6 stated, “They accused me and threw me out of my late husband’s house, leaving the children crying for help.” She detailed how she and her children were asked to leave the home. Participant 10 recalled, “After my husband’s death, his siblings accused me of killing him,” and further explained, “The baseless accusation from my in-laws was painful, and they all ganged up against me to force my two children and me out of my husband’s house.” She observed that these actions and accusations deeply affected her children, causing them ongoing grief and emotional pain.

**Theme 4: Painful Period**

The fourth theme, 'Painful Period,' was represented by two subthemes: infringement of rights and belief (see Table 5). The perceptions of the widow reveal barbaric widowhood practices that violate their rights and dignity. Widowhood practices have been challenging for widows and have served as an eye-opener for other women. Some widows lament the strict rules and regulations imposed on them. They endure inhuman practices that threaten their health and make them vulnerable in society. It is essential that these practices come to the public's attention to advocate against the painful experiences of widowhood.

***Subtheme 1: Infringement of Right***

All the participants report being disrespected due to harmful widowhood practices. They argue these practices are driven by greed, with widows targeted and tradition used to justify selfish motives. Participant 2 shared: "They planned to intimidate me by emotionally blackmailing me that I was the cause of my husband's death," and "I fought to maintain my dignity when I noticed what they were doing." This reveals that understanding the deception behind these traditions can encourage widows to resist mistreatment, though doing so is very challenging.

Participant 3 stated, "They humiliate me by not involving me and my child in the burial," and "I was not involved in the burial arrangements, which infringed on my right to bury my husband." Similarly, Participant 6 noted, "The humiliation, shaving of my hair, abuse, and accusation that I killed my husband infringed on my right as a woman." She had expected support from the Umuada but was instead sidelined. "As women, I

expected them to speak out for me, but instead, they were part of those who supervised the humiliation I went through.” These testimonies highlight the humiliation widows experience and their expectations of empathy from other women, which were unmet.

***Subtheme 2: Brief***

Eight out of the ten participants (80%) believe that tradition is a process that a widow must undergo, though not necessarily a source of victimization. For clarity, Participant 5 explained, “I won’t blame tradition for the way I was treated,” adding, “It’s those involved that I will blame.” Participant 7 clarified, “Well, I don’t have a problem with tradition, but I have a problem with evil people who twist the interpretation of tradition to suit their wickedness.” This contrasts with concerns from other participants: Participant 8 believes that “The widowhood tradition I went through is the reason I have not been able to heal, because of the trauma I had to go through,” emphasizing, “I am not an advocate of tradition that infringes on people’s rights.” One participant also directly stated, “Widowhood practice in southeastern Nigeria infringes on widows’ rights and dignity.”

**Theme 5: Art of Coping**

The fifth theme, ‘Art of Coping,’ describes participants’ reflections on their lives. It covers their reevaluation of life’s value, experiences of loss, appreciation for life, and priority assessment (see Table 6). Participants noted changes in life goals and perspectives. Most mentioned limited resources and support, alongside opportunities for improvement, as challenges. All expressed a desire to put their past behind them and

move forward. They agreed to take responsibility for preparing for the future and achieving a positive outcome.

### ***Subtheme 1: Encouragement***

All the participants expressed discouragement due to their new status as widows. This status brought them pain and fear of the unknown. However, when they looked for support, help was not forthcoming as expected. As a result, they had to encourage themselves, recognizing the responsibilities around them. For example, Participant 7 resolved, “Not to be bitter and angry with myself,” “My situation is not a permanent situation,” and “I will be fine.” Similarly, Participant 9 stated, “Life is a teacher, so I learn from experience,” and “The widowhood experience I encountered has opened my eyes to know that you should not depend on trusting anyone for help.” These responses show that being a widow is not a death sentence, but a phase in life that can break you or give you the strength to overcome tests and trials. Further reinforcing this resilience, Participant 10 believes that “My grieving period made me bold and persistent in defending myself,” and “It has taught me that I can be independent-minded.” At least I am focusing on my teaching profession to ensure my survival.

### ***Subtheme 2: Support***

Five out of the 10 participants (50%) expressed the need for support during a trying period. During such times, drawing strength from loved ones becomes essential, and self-care is possible only if the environment allows it. However, the practice of widowhood rituals does not encourage resilience. For example, Participant 4 lamented, “My mother-in-law, who has been staying with me, has comforted me because she went

through the same experience at a young age as I did.” In contrast, Participant 5 shared, “I was not treated well, so I decided to rather cling to my parent and stay away from my in-laws and the community,” and added, “My parent supported me as much as they could.” Furthermore, 20% of the participants expressed that they were accused and made to swear an oath that they did not kill their husbands. Without the support of their immediate family, survival would have been very difficult.

### ***Subtheme 3: Confidence***

Six out of ten participants (60%) overcame all forms of humiliation by building confidence through replacing negative self-perceptions with positive affirmations. They focused on positivity, set achievable goals, and stepped out of their comfort zones to take on challenges, proving their ability to succeed. Participant 3 explained, “The disappointment I encountered from my husband’s people, whom I trusted, changed my perception of life and allowed me to become determined to succeed. The situation I went through made me more focused.” Participant 6 stated, “I am challenging myself to do new things that will increase and change my financial status for the better,” and added, “I am managing my business and investments.”

### **Theme 6: Improve Quality of Life**

This final theme explains the various ways the participants were trying to survive. Narrative quotes from the participants reveal how their experiences have strengthened them and made them more willing to fight for their survival. Furthermore, some participants provide specific examples of their future plans for survival, while others seek support to move ahead with their lives. However, all participants acknowledge the

importance of their new role in their children's lives and are willing to prioritize their children's welfare.

### ***Subtheme 1: Children's Welfare***

All participants concentrated on providing for their families. Witnessing their children being disinherited and excluded from their father's entitlements was distressing. Participants emphasized the importance of safeguarding their mental health. Therefore, children's well-being took precedence, and we were resolute about ensuring our children's survival. Participant 1 shared, "It's from the rent I will get from the houses that I will use to train the children," and added, "Focusing on my young child helped me cope with grief." Participant 5 stated, "I became bolder in confronting every issue without fear." Furthermore, all participants insisted that prioritizing children's welfare involves investing in their future, underscoring their commitment to protecting and providing for their children's growth.

### ***Subtheme 2: Moving Forward***

Sixty percent of participants expressed determination to move forward, refusing to let prior experiences dictate their future. They showed a willingness to progress despite their challenging situations, rather than remaining focused on their suffering. This mindset reflects a conscious decision to pursue personal growth and seek better opportunities for themselves and their children. Participant 8 highlighted the value of inner peace, stating, "Always strive to be at peace with people, or you might not have the opportunity to reconcile with the person," "Striving not to live in guilt," and "I wish the women could speak in one voice against the widowhood tradition and refuse to join and

entertain the victimization of fellow women.” Advancement was universally viewed by participants as crucial for avoiding life’s setbacks. Participant 10 affirmed, “My experience with my in-laws will not stop me from engaging with the community,” and “My children come from that area, so I have to be accommodating.” Their collective focus on progress fostered increased resilience and self-assurance.

### ***Subtheme 3: God***

Seven out of the ten participants (70%) mentioned that they look to God as their source and protector, believing He will deliver and support them during their challenges. They see God as capable of changing their situation and influencing the outcome. Participant 6 expressed gratitude, saying, “I am grateful to my God for standing with me, even when I don’t deserve it,” and “Witness the protection of God in my life because my in-laws were wishing for my death.” Participant 7 stated, “My strength is in God,” and “Well, it’s a process I am praying for God to help me. It’s been a challenge.” Participant 8 added, “I always cried to God for comfort and help,” and “I thank God for sparing my life. I am very grateful to God.” God remains a constant source of comfort and support for them.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4, I described the data collection processes used to address the research question: What are the experiences of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria? I outlined the data collection setting, participant demographics, methods used for data collection and analysis, and an overview of the

results. Additionally, I provided strategies for establishing trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

I discussed the results in detail, providing participant quotes to support the findings. All participants described their experiences as widows, which were central to the study. Six main themes emerged: life of trauma, trying to survive, inconducive living conditions, painful period, acts of coping, and improved quality of life. Fourteen subthemes were identified: losing my husband, husband's burial, financial constraints, struggling, in-laws, blame and accusation, infringement of rights, belief, encouragement, support, confidence, children's welfare, moving forward, and God.

In Chapter 5, which is the final chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the study's purpose, nature, and key findings. In this chapter, I will offer insight into widowhood practices in southeastern Nigeria. I will also interpret the findings and discuss their implications. I will outline the study's limitations, provide recommendations for future studies on widowhood practices in southeastern Nigeria, discuss the implications for social change, and offer a conclusion.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to examine the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. Although previous researchers have addressed widowhood practices in Nigeria, there has been limited investigation into how these experiences specifically affect the well-being of young widows. This study was conducted based on the premise that a gap exists in the literature regarding the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria, as identified in Chapter 1.

I recruited participants of this study using the purposeful sampling strategy in conjunction with snowballing sampling. Through in-depth qualitative interviews, I discovered how young widows in the southeastern Nigeria coped with the trauma of widowhood practice, which is a new condition they found themselves in, and established a way to improve their well-being and that of their children. In addition, some participants discovered their ability to cope with the psychological, emotional, and social challenges, and whether their experience would have a lifelong impact on their self-perception and quality of life, was also explored through the interviews.

In this research study, I employed the generic qualitative approach incorporating Braun and Clark's (2006) six-step thematic analysis process after interviewing the young widows. This study was based on one research question, using open-ended questions understand the participant's perception on how widowhood practices affect young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria. In this chapter, I provided my interpretations

of the findings, discuss the limitations of the study, and the benefits of participation. In this chapter, I concluded with recommendations regarding how the research will expand the field of human services, implications for positive social change, and the conclusion.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Through the findings of this study, I highlighted the impact of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. The participants provided insight into their perspectives on the effect of widowhood practices on their well-being. The six major themes discovered in this study are life of trauma, trying to survive, inductive living conditions, painful period, art of coping, and improving quality of life. The following interpretation provides insights into the findings, which will confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline by comparing them with the peer-reviewed literature described in Chapter 2. The details of the findings were discussed in the following sections.

### **Interpretation of the Findings in Relation to the Literature Review**

#### ***Theme 1: Life of Trauma***

According to previous researchers, widowhood practice continues to be a serious societal concern that affects widows. The death of a spouse is one of the most traumatic experiences that brings a significant change in a person's life (Anzaa & Udu, 2018).

Therefore, to better understand the inhuman experiences of widows, the impact on their lives and their children, the participants' narratives were examined in this study. From the findings, widowhood practice is a common form of abuse of widows, mainly where the practice is rooted in cultural settings. This study supported the findings reported by

Nwaoga (2021), patriarchy in African society is one of the cultural contexts that can contribute to the plight of widows. As described by Nwaoga, the colonial era gave men power, which made men feel superior to women and led to several unjust cultural practices against women that gave women less power in governance dominated by men.

From the interviews with the participants, half of the participants complained about the attitude of their in-laws. They said that the in-laws neglected them and showed no empathy. They further lamented how their late husband's brothers shared their late husband's assets. They showed no concern for their children, instead seizing their father's property. One of the participants further revealed that she was not allowed into her husband's house until she had clarification on how their brother died. These responses exposed the widow to struggle to survive and stay strong. Because of the findings, I confirmed and extended knowledge in the discipline, particularly concerning the traumatic experience of widows and the existing literature on widowhood practice, as stated by Iloka (2022), the widow undergoes some degrading practices, such as having to sit and sleep on the bare floor for a set period and being made to eat in an unhealthy condition. This dehumanizing widowhood practice is to signify the widow's dethronement back to her previous deprived status.

### ***Theme 2: Trying to Survive***

Discoveries made from this study revealed that there are obstacles that hinder widows from speaking out freely without fear of being attacked. All the participants discussed the hindrances they encountered while seeking intervention on their predicament of widowhood. The participants elaborated on their fear of exposing the

widowhood practice, which infringes on their rights, and the inhuman practice they experience due to a lack of trust in the reporting process, and fear of speaking to the wrong person. All participants explained how they have been traumatized because of the widowhood practice with minimal support. Participants specified that various factors influenced the lack of intervention of the widows seeking help.

The factors influencing the decision to seek help and resources in this study included awareness of available support, fear of community and in-law discrimination. This was supported by Azumah and Nachinaab (2018), upon the death of the spouse, who is the breadwinner, the widows experience financial, social, physical, sexual, and emotional challenges, which cause setbacks in the healing process of the widow. Widows often encounter problems and face various forms of discrimination due to ancient cultural customs (Nkyi et al., 2021). Communities can stigmatize and expose them to harmful traditional practices, having them wear specific clothing or use particular accessories (Ude & Njoku, 2017).

Furthermore, Nigerian widows suffer from dehumanizing widowhood practices, which degrade them, subject them to immense hardship and maltreatment, and leave them impoverished and uncared for by those who should provide them with relief (Ehumadu (2023)). Participants complained that it has been difficult to survive since the death of their husband. Therefore, the reflection of the different participants shows a lack of empathy and discrimination from the community has continued to influence seeking help and financial support among widows. This has been one of the challenges, acting as a barrier to seeking help and healthy recovery.

### ***Theme 3: Inconducive Living Condition***

From the findings in this study, I revealed the obstacles the participants encountered while grieving, and this process affected their living conditions as they were made to undergo a lot of dehumanizing experiences while mourning their husbands. All the participants discussed their experience with pain and disgust towards the widowhood culture. One participant explained bitterly that “The widowhood practice infringed on my rights because my in-laws took advantage of my situation, and seized my late husband’s property,” and “They did not care about his children, and seized my late husband’s properties.” Another participant explained how she was treated when her husband died, “I was made to swear an oath that I was not the one who killed my husband”, and “What pains me most is that their mother supported them, not considering her grandchildren”. All participants described their experience as a traumatic ordeal.

I confirmed, through the findings, that the knowledge from previous literature, like Ayodele (2014), that some family members immediately disassociate themselves from the widow, especially the ones they never got along with while the husband was still alive. The family members mistreat the widow and accuse her of killing her husband in order to victimize her. Agbim (2022) explained further that widows are exposed to exploitation and at risk of being taken advantage of because they are financially vulnerable and socially isolated. This situation can cause the widow to develop drinking habits, take sedatives for stress, and feel isolated. As a result, widows experience a quick decline in their physical and mental health, resulting in cancer, respiratory diseases, depression, and others (Khawar, 2022).

I also discussed, from the literature Ezejiofor (2011), that the victimization the participants went through, lack of trust in anyone, and limited resources to survive made them stranded and wonder how to survive with their children. Most participants in the study were not willing to escalate their predicament for fear of further humiliation and isolation, so they instead remained silent and emotionally tortured in the belief that nobody would do anything even if they reported. However, those who did experience negative feedback, felt betrayed by the institutions and their leadership. This study aligns with previous research by Oluwatusinm (2014), that the impacts of widowhood rituals can put a strain on the widow socially as people might start avoiding them in the communities, thereby causing them to be loners, and this is an attribute that can make a widow want to commit suicide to end their pain. Unfortunately, the participant remained silent in order to be attacked by the community.

#### ***Theme 4: Painful Period***

During the interview sessions, all the participants expressed how shocking it was when they heard of the loss of their husband. One of the participants stated that “When I lost my husband, I was devastated,” and “It was shocking and unbelievable”. Another participant lamented on how she was treated when her husband died: “I was not allowed to be part of my late husband’s burial because I was accused of poisoning him,” and “Unfortunately, I quarreled with my husband before his death, so his people took advantage of that to accuse me of killing him.” The data revealed that it was not an easy experience, as the participants found it challenging to cope with the death of their husbands.

Several participants shared their pain. One of the participants lamented that “The accident was so bad that his corpse was not shown to visitors because he was crushed during the accident”. Findings from this study supported previous research findings, which reveal the inhuman conditions that widows go through during the burial rites. Previous studies, such as those by Jones et al. (2019) and Adeyemo (2013) studies, have shown that widowhood practices are devastating traditional rites that cause widows pain, unhappiness, frustration, boredom, anger, and mental torture. The loss of a spouse is a challenging experience that comes with financial consequences and social loss because of the limited rights and respect received by widows, which left them with no choice but to endure maltreatment to feel somewhat protected (Ihekwaaba & Amasiatu, 2016). Further existing literature, Adena et al. (2021) revealed, a widow’s health and overall well-being are often affected because of the stressful and traumatic widowhood rituals the widow experiences while coping with the loss of her spouse.

Other findings from the study revealed that the widows went through neglect, which discriminated against them in the community. Some of the participants feared for their lives because they were accused of killing their husbands and made to swear to their innocence. Nine out of the ten participants reported being deprived of their husband’s property. One of them said that “They humiliate me by not involving me and my child in the burial,” and “I was not involved in the burial arrangements, which infringed on my right to bury my husband”.

These findings are consistent with previous researchers, Abdul Azeez et al. (2023), the act of widowhood practice dehumanizes the widow as she is being treated

inhumanely and left to go through physical and emotional stress. Upon the death of a woman's husband, the community treats the widow as someone who is contaminated and forced to strictly follow the mourning process, which can affect her health (Ude & Njoku, 2017).

### ***Theme 5: Art of Coping***

All participants in the study discussed the specific ways and strategies they used to cope. One participant stated that "My grieving period made me bold and persistent in defending myself," and "It has taught me that I can be independent-minded" (P 2). A few participants mentioned that the families were there to comfort them during their difficult times. Some also isolated themselves from people as an act of grieving. This enables them to think and determine the next move. One participant said, "The widowhood experience I encountered has opened my eyes to know that you should not depend on trusting anyone for help". As a result, the participant chose to concentrate on her teaching profession to avert distractions and also as a means of survival.

This is supported by Asadu and Egbuche (2020), who stated that women's empowerment through education is essential as it helps the country handle social, economic, and political issues. Obiakor (2022) suggested that education is an important tool that widows must adopt to empower and make them resourceful as women. The well-being of any nation rests on its citizens' socioeconomic level and the quality of education. Quality education for widows leads to self-reliance, empowerment, and improved well-being (Tayo & Chukwuedozie, 2013). Through education, widows can

grow above marginalization, be empowered to sustain their children and families, and contribute to the country's socioeconomic activities (Adeyemo, 2014).

Another participant stated that after the death of her husband, she was displaced by her in-laws and left alone to care for herself and her children. She sought financial help for years and medical attention because she was mentally and physically deteriorating. This situation left her unsettled for years until she got the support of her family members, who were also struggling to survive. As stated by Lee et al. (2022), the harmful widowhood practices have inflicted several health complications on the widow, which affect her well-being. Because of the findings, I can confirm and extend my knowledge in the discipline.

#### ***Theme 6: Improve Quality of Life***

From the previous research, widowhood is an irreversible condition that can happen at any time in life and can affect the well-being of the widow, especially in the early years (Mohindra et al., 2012). The impacts of widowhood rituals can put a strain on the widow socially, as people might start avoiding them in the communities, thereby causing them to be loners, and this is an attribute that can make a widow want to commit suicide to end their pain (Oluwatusin, 2014). Nevertheless, some widows know their rights and refuse to be relegated because of their status as widows in society but strive to make a positive change (Ikenyei, 2014). Findings from this study concurred. One of the ten participants identified "It is from the rent I will get from the houses that I will use to train the children" as one of her plans for improving the quality of life.

All participants expressed their desire to excel and be productive in society, which is why they are striving to achieve financial empowerment through various business ventures. They all stated that improving their well-being and their children was their focus. One participant said, “I became bolder in confronting every issue without fear,” and will not give up because of the assault and victimization that was inflicted on her by her in-laws and the community. Because of the findings, I can confirm and extend my knowledge in the discipline.

Furthermore, most of the participants have now understood the importance of healing by seeking treatment instead of being angry with the conditions they were made to go through. Some of the participants who have undergone therapy reported feeling relieved and ready to move forward in life. The participant further stated that “I wish the women could speak in one voice against the widowhood tradition and refuse to join and entertain the victimization of fellow women,” “Always strive to be at peace with people, or you might not have the opportunity to reconcile with the person,” and “Striving not to live in guilt”. The participants’ desire for an improved quality of life is closely tied to their aspiration to provide their children with a better life and achieve their goal of greatness in society.

### **Interpretation of Findings in Theory**

After gathering the various components to conduct this research and providing insight into the experiences of widowhood practice on young widows’ well-being in southeastern, employed a theoretical framework to further illuminate and support the research study. A study’s theoretical framework helped me navigate the research without

allowing one's biases to intrude on the study (Luft et al., 2022). The theoretical framework used to understand the results of this study was feminist theory. Feminism is an ideology that demands equal rights for men and women in terms of politics, decision-making, and careers to give women the opportunity to achieve the same dignity as men have in society (Mohajan, 2022). In this study, I employed three feminist variants to affirm the results of the study. The feminist variants are Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, and Black Feminism.

### ***Liberal Feminism***

Liberal feminists focus on gender equality, where women's rights are respected and freed from all forms of discrimination (Ansari, 2023). The perception of liberal feminism is to advocate against any form of discrimination against women, including widows, in a society that is free from the oppression of women under any guise. All the participants encountered different forms of discrimination but are determined to survive and not remain in self-pity and be at the mercy of their in-laws.

In this study, two remarks from the participants' interviews were used, specifically P1 and P7: "My attention is centered around my children since the death of their father," and "He was the one who provided for us, but now I have to provide for my children." As evidenced by some of the participants, there is a determination to move on with their lives. Based on the findings of this study, there is a determination to prevent further discrimination, which aligns with the principles of feminist theory.

### ***Radical Feminism***

Radical feminists recognize the point of view that highlights the patriarchal roots of inequality, where men are seen as superior to women, and as such, advocate for the eradication of this ideology (Ansari, 2023). Another goal of radical feminism is to dismantle patriarchy through unity and trust among women, as well as cultivating self-reliance in society. Radical feminists seek the eradication of male supremacy in all social and economic settings in society while recognizing the discrimination that women experience, such as in race, class, and sexual orientation (Ward, 1995). Radical feminism encourages the abolishing of the belief of male supremacy, where men feel they have the power to victimize women, including widows. The radical feminist perception aligns with widows in the southeastern Nigeria who struggle for freedom from the suppression of their brothers-in-law.

Some of the participants complained bitterly of how their husbands' families stripped them of their late husbands' entitlements, and they could not confront it because of patriarchal society. Participant 1 recounted her experience that "after my husband's death, my in-laws accused me of killing him and seized his properties from me". Participant 4 lamented how she was disrespected and said, "The family told me to either marry one of my husband's brothers and have more children or leave the family altogether".

It is the courage of the widows that has kept them from losing hope and enabled them to overcome difficult situations. Findings from this study support the need to reject intimidation from male in-laws who are determined to disinherit widows of their

husband's property, and this aligns with the view of feminist theory that advocates for women's liberation from male dominance in society.

### ***Black Feminism***

The focus of Black feminism is not only on women but specifically on the struggles of Black women who go through oppression through a lack of empowerment, which is racism (Hague, 2016). Black feminist emphasizes the need to stop the violation of women's rights and dignity in society, for their self-esteem, and widows are included. Unfortunately, widows go through a widowhood practice that totally violates their fundamental human rights and exposes them to inhuman treatment.

The participants cried over their victimization, which they were made to go through because of the loss of their husbands. There was hardly any support to encourage them, but rather, they lived in fear of being killed or banished from the community because of false accusations. Some of the participants at various stages of their widowhood rites followed the instruction from their in-laws to swear that they did not kill their husbands, and some of the participants complained of not being allowed to participate in their husbands' funeral. It was a painful period for them and their children. Findings from this were that participants fought to maintain their dignity, aligning with the view of feminist theory that advocates against the violation of women's rights and dignity.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In this genetic qualitative study, I provided further insights into widowhood practices and their effects on young widows' well-being in southeastern Nigeria.

However, this study had several limitations that could affect its trustworthiness and validity. One limitation was the small sample size. The study's limitation was that it was confined to a specific location in Nigeria (southeastern Nigeria) and focused on the well-being of young widows, particularly their experiences of widowhood. There were efforts to ensure that recruited participants could provide an accurate account of their experience of widowhood; however, the small sample size in this study may not have fully represented the broader group of young widows in southeastern Nigeria. Using a small purposive sample is limited in terms of generalizability and can lead to sample error (Campbell et al., 2020).

Another limitation of the study was recall bias, as participants mainly relied on their memories of past experiences related to their widowhood during the interview. The willingness to share their experience could have been a challenge, despite efforts to ensure participants understood the required information for the study. This could be because the experience of widowhood, particularly among young widows, is considered a private and sensitive issue that is often associated with much stigma and pain. Therefore, this can also affect how they respond to the questions administered during the interviews. However, participants were assured that their conversation and personal information would remain confidential.

### **Recommendations**

Due to the limitations identified in this research study, recommendations are made for future research. First, because the age of all participants is limited between age 18- 45 years, it is necessary to remove the age limit to gain in-depth knowledge of widows' well-

being, irrespective of age, thereby creating awareness in society about the impact of widowhood practices on widows' well-being. Secondly, recruiting a larger sample may yield more robust findings that are beneficial for this population. Restricting recruitment to a small sample group can limit generalizability, as findings on widowhood practices may not apply to a broader population. Using a small sample size in a research study can lead to the researcher's dependence, as they may be tempted to rely on their own knowledge, potentially introducing bias.

Continued research in this field may help reduce the gap in the literature on this population. Additionally, it may enhance cultural competence regarding widowhood practices across Nigeria. Ongoing research on widowhood practices will enhance our understanding of their impact on families, friends, and the community. It will serve as a call to action for the government to advocate for the eradication of the harmful practices affecting widows and their children. Further studies on widowhood practices may provide key data for future research, helping the younger generation view such practices as barbaric and strive to abolish them rather than perpetuate them under the guise of tradition. Findings from this study support that family, friends, church, religion, and nongovernmental organizations should speak out against the victimization of widows due to the widowhood tradition.

### **Implications**

The implications of this study could affect individuals, society, and the institutions that provide human services. This study can achieve positive social change by improving the understanding of widowhood practices and their effects on young widows'

well-being in the southeastern Nigeria. Nongovernmental agencies in the helping profession, including human service professionals and institutions, can benefit from the study. Therefore, human services professionals can use these findings to implement support services for young widows whose well-being is affected by the harmful widowhood practices. The institutions, particularly government agencies, could also use these findings to develop policies and programs that help improve the well-being of young widows who are affected by evil widowhood practices that deprive widows of the means of livelihood by wicked in-laws and the community.

The implications for positive social change also relate to the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and their impact on health care access, social, and community contexts. This is because the development of better interventions and improved delivery of services for young widows could significantly improve their chances of recovery from trauma and improve their well-being. The study's findings will help understand the challenges young widows face in accessing professional help and resources due to widowhood rituals and will guide efforts to improve their well-being. Findings from this study could benefit government agencies dealing with Women and Children issues, human services agencies, and human service professionals. This study aims to enhance the mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being of young widows by improving access to high-quality care, thereby contributing to positive social change.

### **Conclusion**

In this genetic qualitative study, the experiences of widowhood practices and their effects on the well-being of young widows in southeastern Nigeria were explored. The

research question created a clear path for the research to focus on the experiences of young widows seeking to improve their well-being because of the experiences they encounter due to inhuman widowhood practices. The essence of the study allowed for an in-depth view from the affected widows and to understand the long-term effects of the trauma experience while going through the widowhood rituals. Ten widows, between age 18 to 45, met the criteria to participate in this study. Through semistructured Zoom interviews, participants shared their thoughts, feelings, lack of trust, fears, barriers to seeking help, and attempts to overcome the situation.

Additionally, they shared words of encouragement to other survivors, thus exemplifying an unselfish and caring attitude. Each participant discussed their experiences and how they affected their well-being. To better understand why there is not much research and reporting about young widows compared to older widows, researchers should conduct further research on young widows' experiences of widowhood must be further explored. Using thematic analysis, the study identified six themes from interviews with 10 participants. They are a life of trauma, trying to survive, an inductive living condition, a painful period, the art of coping, and improving the quality of life. From the themes, the study provided a deeper understanding of young widows' experience of widowhood practices. Findings revealed their state of mind, fears, barriers to moving forward, situations preventing them from openly seeking help, and how they have been coping.

Just like other studies, this study had limitations. The criterion was that participants were young widows between age 18-45 years who lived in southeastern

Nigeria. While limitations existed, this study can be beneficial in several ways. Findings from this study can serve as a basis for government policy making, public awareness, and culturally competent programs. Nongovernmental agencies and churches may also use the findings to introduce conversations on interventions for young widows. This study also provided recommendations for future studies, focusing on using a broader participant sample to improve generalizability and reduce gaps in the literature, and on extending resources to achieve cultural competence. Additionally, further research is recommended, particularly on the societal and cultural influences on seeking help and professional resources. The aim is to provide additional insights and resources to improve the well-being of young widows and the support available to them during their recovery.

## References

- Abdula Azeez, E. P., Negi, D. P., Mishra, N., Sharma, J., Nair, A. S., & Mathew, M. (2023). "Life after him was just hell": Young rural women's lived experiences of widowhood in Rajasthan, India. *Death Studies*, 47(10), 1146–1157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2023.2171160>
- Adedara, A. J. (2023). Persistency of the reprehensible cultural practices against widows of the widowhood classes in Nigeria: Legal analysis. *African Journal Online*, 14(1), 24–33. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/naujilj/article/view/246994>
- Aderibigbe, S. A., Lawal, M. O., Olubiyi, S. A., & Akande, O. W. (2019). Practice and correlates of widowhood rites in a city in north central Nigeria. *Texila International Journal of Public Health*, 7(3), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.21522/TIJPH.2013.07.03.Art019>
- Adeyemo, C. W. (2013). Widowhood and its harmful practices: Causes, effects and the possible way out for widows and women folk. *World Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), 380. <https://doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v3n2p380>
- Adeyemo, C. W. (2014). Assessing the effects of widowhood on children education in southwestern, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(11), 48–52. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234635624.pdf>
- Adhikari1, A., & Saha, B. (2022). The feminist responses to Mary Wollstonecraft: A reading. *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development*, 7(9) 32–38. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra11181>
- Adhikari, S. P. (2021). Revealing the story of an individual through narrative inquiry: A

methodological review. *Napel Journal Online*, 6(1), 1–80.

<https://doi.org/10.3126/ire.v6i1.43425>

Afridi, S. H., Khan, A., & Iqbal, S. (2022). Waves of feminism in global world (1830-2008): A Case Study of Pakistan (1958-2008). *Journal of Peace, Development and Communication*, 6(02), pp. 359–372. <https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V06-I02-25>.

Agboola, C. A., & Alahirah, A. (2020). The challenges of widowhood practices in Nigeria: A study of the Igbo cultural group in Nigeria. *Journal of Philosophy*, 12(1), 159–167.

<https://journals.ezenwaohaetorc.org/index.php/NAJP/article/download/12-1-202\0-015/1690>

Ahmed, S. K. (2004). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 2, 1–4.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>

Ajayi, L. A., Olanrewaju, F. O., Olanrewaju, A., & Nwannebuife, O. (2019). Gendered violence and human rights: An evaluation of widowhood rites in Nigeria. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 6(1). Article 1676596.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2019.1676569G>

Akinyi, M. P. (2023). Relationship between widowhood and psychological health of widows in Kisumu east sub county, Kisumu county, Kenya. *Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 2(4), 1–6.

<https://www.pioneerpublisher.com/jrss/article/view/221/194>

- Allen, K. R. (2023). Feminist theory, method, and praxis: Toward a critical consciousness for family and close relationship scholars. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 40(3), 899–936. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211065779>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>
- Amlor, M. Q., & Owusu, X. A. (2016). Widowhood practices of the Gbi northern ewe of Ghana: A curse or blessing for African womanhood? *African Research Review*, 10(5), 64–83. <https://doi.org/10.4314/afrrrev.v10i5.5>
- Amoo, E. O., Adekola, P. O., Adesina, E., Adekeye, O. A., Onayemi, O. O., & Gbervbi, M. A. (2022) Young single widow, dynamics of in-laws interference and coping mechanisms: simplicity–parsimony approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(16). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610117>
- Andersen, S. S., & Brunner, R. N. (2020). New roads to commensality in widowhood. *ScienceDirect*, (155), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2020.104827>
- Anugwom, N. K. (2011). The socio-psychological impact of widowhood on elderly women in Nigeria. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(6), 89–96. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1857708>
- Anzaa, J. T., & Udu, T. T. (2018). Widows’ perception of widowhood hardships in patriarchal society of Benue State, Nigeria. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, 2(101), 133–139. <https://www.ajhssr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/P18210133139.pdf>

- Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596>
- Arinze-Umobi, C., & Anyogu, F. (2014). The widow in south-east of Nigeria in legal and customary turbulence: Need for mandatory paradigm shift. *International Journal of Research Development*, 8(1), 1–14. <https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/approaches/The%20Widow%20in%20South.pdf>
- Asadu, N., & Egbuche, M. (2020). Influence of education on widowhood practices: A study of Amugoro Nru community in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State, south east, Nigeria. *Renaissance University Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 6(2), 37–46. <https://rujmass.com/Journals/2020/005.pdf>
- Ayodele, J. O. (2014). Gender Victimization: A Study of Widowhood Practices Among Ogu People of Lagos. *SAGE Open*, 4(3), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014544290>
- Aziz, F. K., & Shafi, H. (2022). Experience of spousal bereavement: A qualitative study from Kashmir. *EPRA International Journal of Research and Development*, 7(12), 85–91. <https://eprajournals.com/IJSR/article/9852/abstract>
- Azumah, F. D., & Nachinaab, J. O. (2018). Outmoded cultural practices and its effects on victims: The case of widowhood rituals amongst the people of Balungu community, Ghana. *The International Journal of Science & Technoledge*, 6(2),

44–55.

<https://internationaljournalcorner.com/index.php/theijst/article/view/130198>

Bankola, T. O., Yinusa, R. A., & Oyeboode, A. (2018). Widow's health status in Nigeria:

A nexus of household environmental risk factors and healthcare services accessibility. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8(13), 74–82.

<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/RHSS/article/view/43566/44881>

Becker, M. (1999). Patriarchy and inequality: Towards a substantive feminism.

*University of Chicago Legal Forum*, (1), 21–88.

<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=uclf>

Bennett, K. M., & Soulsby, L. K. (2012). Wellbeing in bereavement and widowhood. *The*

*University of Liverpool*. 20(4) 321–337.

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/~kmb/MyPublishedPapers/BennettSoulsby2012.pdf>

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking.

*Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802–1811.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>

Bisong, B. P., & Ekanem, S. A. (2014). A critique of feminism. *American Journal of*

*Social and Management Sciences*, 5(2), 33–38.

<https://doi.org/10.5251/ajsms.2014.5.2.33.38>

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative*

*Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.

<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Braveman, P., Egerter, S., & Williams, D. R. (2011). The social determinants of health: coming of age. *Public Health*, (32), 381–398. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031210-101218>
- Bronstein, C. (2005). Representing the third wave: Mainstream print media framing of a new feminist movement. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(4), 783–803. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769900508200403>
- Brown, A. M., & Ismail, K. J. (2019). Feminist theorizing of men and masculinity: Applying feminist perspectives to advance college men and masculinities praxis. *Thresholds in Education*, 42(1), 17–35.  
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED600540.pdf>
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2(14).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walker, K., Young, S., Bywater, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Caughie, P. L. (2010). Theorizing the ‘first wave’ globally. *Sage Journal*, 95(1), 5–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2009.63>
- Chuku-Okoronkwo, S. O. (2015). Culture of widowhood practices in Africa: De-institutionalizing the plights of women and communicating development through theatre. *American Journal of Social Science Research*, 1(2) 71–76.

<http://www.publicscienceframework.org/journal/ajssr>

Chukwuma-Offor, A. M. (2023). Widowhood in some Igbo cultural societies: A neo leprosy. *Nigerian Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(1), 1-10.

<https://www.nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/NJAH/article/view/3628/3534>

Collins, C. S., & Stockton, C. (2022). The theater of qualitative research: The role of the researcher/actor. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221103109>

Collins, T. (2014). Managing widowhood in later life: The challenges encountered.

*International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 21(2), 69-76.

<https://doi.org/10.12968/ijtr.2014.21.2.69>

Cooper, S., & Endacott, R. (2007). Generic qualitative research: a design for qualitative research in emergency care? *National Library of Medicine*, 24(12),816-819. doi: 10.1136/emj.2007.050641

Cowart, S.L. (2024). *The experience of the stigma of divorce for Christian women in violent marriages.*

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=16565&context=dissertations>

Dave, R. (2020). Widowhood: The problems and challenges face by widows in India.

*International Journal of Advanced Research in Commerce, Management & Social Science*, 3(4), 34-36.

<https://www.inspirajournals.com/uploads/Issues/1307881203.pdf>

Dimitrios, T., & Antigoni, F. (2019). Limitations and delimitations in the research

- process. *Perioperative Nursing*, 7(3), 155–162. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.2552022
- Dorgbetor, A. (2021). Widowhood rituals among some ethnic groups Africa. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 2(12), 1367 – 1373. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.02.12.08>
- Dube, M. (2022). When the challenges of widowhood extend to childcare: Essential considerations for social work practice. *Social Sciences*, 11(5), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11050225>
- Dube, M. (2023). The challenges facing widows in African contexts: A literature review. *International Journal of Research In Business And Social Science*, 12(17), 452-459. <https://ssbfnet.com/ojs/index.php/ijrbs/article/view/2775/2016>
- Dubel, I. (2023). 1975-1985: a catalyst for global south-oriented advocacy by Dutch feminists. *Women's History Review*, 1.20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2023.2277488>
- Dunn, C. R. (2015). *Young widows' grief: A descriptive study of personal and contextual factors associated with conjugal loss*. <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5571&context=etd>
- Durojaye, E. (2013). 'Woman, but not human': widowhood practices and human rights violations in Nigeria. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 27(2), 176 – 196. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebt001>
- Eboiyehi, F.A., Muoghalu, C.O., & Bankole, A.O. (2016). In their husbands' shoes: feminism and political economy of women breadwinners in Ile-Ife, southwestern Nigeria. *The Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(4), 102-121.

<https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1888&context=jiws>

Eboiyehi, F. A., & Akinyemi, A. I. (2016). We are strangers in our Homes: Older widows and property inheritance among the Esan of South-South Nigeria. *International Journal on Ageing in Developing Countries*, 1 (2), 90-112.

<https://www.inia.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/1.2-4-Nigeria-90-to-112-Final.pdf>

Ehumadu, R. I. C. (2022). Depriving widows inheritance rights by husbands' relatives in Nigeria. *Bichi Journal of Education*, 16(1), 60-70.

<https://bijejournal.com/BIJE/article/download/648/397>

Ekpenyong, E.E., Kay, G.M., Kori, E.C., & Oboqua, E.D. (2020). Effects of widowhood practices on the physiological well-being and socio-economic stability of women in Nigeria. *Journal of The Social Science*, 48(3), 567-578.

Ekwe, M. (2021). Security unrest in south east Nigeria: Implications for 2023 general elections and national unity. *Aphria Journal*, 6(2), 103-118.

<https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/TMP/article/view/1400/1343>

Ekwutosi, E.O., Eyo I, E., & Asibong, E.O. (2021). Patriarchy, culture and the social development of women in Nigeria. *Pinisi Journal of Art Humanity and Social Studied*, 1(4), 79-86. <https://ojs.unm.ac.id/PJAHSS/article/view/26708/13541>

Ellis, J.L., & Hart, D. L. (2023). Strengthening the Choice for a Generic Qualitative research design. *The Qualitative Report*, 28(6), 1759-1768.

<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.5474>

Etomi, E. (2021). *The rights and protection of widows in Nigeria*.

<https://awla.org.ng/2021/06/22/the-rights-and-protection-of-widows-in-nigeria-by-e-fe-etomi/>

- Eze, O. B., Egwuagu, U. B., & Namani, D. O. (2024). Widowhood and harmful traditional Practices against women in south east Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 15(1), 159-174.  
doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v15i1.11
- Ezeh V. C. (2021). Post-traumatic stress disorder among rural widows in Nsukka: Risk factors and wellbeing domains. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 52(2), 202-213. doi:[10.1177/00812463211040378](https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463211040378)
- Ezejiofor, A. O. (2011). Patriarchy, marriage and the rights of widows in Nigeria. *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 12(1), 139-159. doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v12i1.9
- Fasoranti, O.O., & Aruna, J.O. (2015). A cross-cultural comparison of practices relating to widowhood and widow inheritance among the Igbo and Yoruba in Nigeria. *Journal of World Anthropology*, 3(1), 53-73.  
<https://thejournalofworldanthropology.wordpress.com/2015/04/17/a-cross-cultural-comparison-of-practices-relating-to-widowhood-and-widowinheritance-among-the-igbo-and-yoruba-in-nigeria-by-dr-o-o-fasoranti-and-miss-j-o-aruna/>
- Ferguson, K.H. (2017). Feminist theory today. *Annual Review of Political Science*, (20), 269-289. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052715-111648>
- Fiasorgbor A. Doris. (2018). Widowhood rite: An infringement on the rights of widows In bongo. *International Journal of Developing Societies*, 7(2), 1-8. doi: 10.11634/216817831504951

- Finn, G.M., & Brown, M.E.L. (2022). Ova-looking feminist theory: A call for consideration within health professions education and research. *National Library of Medicine*, 27(3), 893-913. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10459-022-10108-8>
- Garrison, M. A. (2021). *Understanding struggles and triumphs of widows in central Nigeria: A path to communication and economic empowerment*. [https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=comm\\_etds](https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=comm_etds)
- Genyi, G.A. (2013). Widowhood and Nigerian womanhood: Another context of gendered poverty in Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(7), 68-73. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234673507.pdf>
- George, T. O., & Onyekachi, C. (2013). Education for sustainable widows' empowerment: Evidence from southwest Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(10), 1-20. <https://www.ijern.com/journal/October-2013/24.pdf>
- Grant, C., & Osanloo, D.A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research creating the blueprint for your "house". *Administrative Issues Journal*, 4(2), 12-26. <https://dc.swosu.edu/aij/vol4/iss2/4>
- Gonzalez-Rivera, V. (2014). Undemocratic legacies: First-wave feminism and the Somocista women's movement in Nicaragua, 1920s–1979. *Journal of the Society for Latin American Studies*, 33(3), 259–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.12102>
- Haase, T. J., & Johnston, U. (2012). Making meaning out of loss: A story and study of

young widowhood. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, (7), 204–221.

doi:10.1080/15401383.2012.710170

Hague, R. (2016). Between the waves: Currents in contemporary feminist thought. *Sage Journal*, 14(2), 199-209. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1111/1478-9302.12047>

Haradhan, M. (2022). An overview on the feminism and its categories. *Research and advances in education*, 1(3), 11-26. <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/114625/>

Heger, K., & Hoffmann, C. P. (2021). Feminism! What is it good for? The role of feminism and political self-efficacy in women's online political participation. *Sage Journal*, 39(2), 226-244.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/0894439319865909>

Iboroma, I. E. (2024). Widowhood practices in Cameroon: A study of Charles soh tatcha's les veuves de mokala. *International Journal of Development Strategies in Humanities, Management and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 359-373. doi: 10.48028/iiprds/ijdshmss.v14.i1.27

Idoniboyeobu, F.O., & Georgy, O. (2018). Widowhood practices implication and rights of women in Nigeria: Need for intervention. *Journal of Education in Developing Areas*, 26(2), 676-683.

<https://journals.journalsplace.org/index.php/JEDA/article/view/103/80>

Ikenyei, N. S. (2014). Health implications of widow inheritance practices among the Oshmili north of Delta state Nigeria. *International Journal of Health and Social Inquiry*, 2(1), 5-20.

<https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/IJHSI/article/view/302/289>

Ikpeme, N. J. (2020). Widowhood rites and social stigma: Examining the process of re-integration and attitude of community members. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews*, 10(3), 274 – 296.

<https://www.ijsshr.com/journal/index.php/IJSSHR/article/view/658/pdf>

Iloka, P.C. (2022). Review of the obnoxious widowhood practices in Nigeria: Anambra state in perspective. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence*, 13(1), 48-57.

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/naujilj/article/view/225871>

International Disable Alliance. (n.d.). *Nigeria federal ministry of women affairs and social development*.

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/stakeholder/nigerian-federal-ministry-women-affairs-and-social-development>

Iruloh, B. N., & Elsie, W. (2018). Adjustment strategies of widows to widowhood stress based on their age: The case of rivers state, Nigeria. *British Journal of Education*,

6(1), 76-91. [https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Adjustment-](https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Adjustment-Strategies-of-Widows-to-Widowhood-Stress-Based-on-Their-Age-The-Case-of-Rivers-State-Nigeria.pdf)

[Strategies-of-Widows-to-Widowhood-Stress-Based-on-Their-Age-The-Case-of-Rivers-State-Nigeria.pdf](https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Adjustment-Strategies-of-Widows-to-Widowhood-Stress-Based-on-Their-Age-The-Case-of-Rivers-State-Nigeria.pdf)

Izzi, M.O., & Fab-Eme. (2020). Widows and inheritance rights in Nigeria: Beyond the letters of the law. *International Journal of Innovative Legal & Political Studies*, 8(3),1-12. <https://seahipaj.org/journals-ci/sept-2020/IJILPS/full/IJILPS-S-1-2020.pdf>

- Jalil, M.A., & Gauala, A. (2023). The struggle of young widows in the tea estates of Bangladesh: A qualitative inquiry. *Labor History*, 1-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2023.2293132>
- James W. D. (2025). Transferability and Generalization in Qualitative Research. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 35(1),102-110.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/10497315241256560>
- Jaysawal, N., & Saha, S. (2023). Feminism, education and gender equality-a review. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 9(2), 241-246.  
<http://www.eprajournals.net/index.php/IJMR/article/view/1541/1552>
- Johnson, J. M. (2012). Mattering, marginality, and black feminism: Moving to empower black women. *The Vermont Connection*, 33(1), 77-85.  
<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/tvc/vol33/iss1/10>
- Jones, E., Oka, M., Clark, J., Gardner, H., Hunt, R., & Dutson, S. (2019). Lived experience of young widowed individuals: A qualitative study. *Taylor & Francis Online*, 43(3), 183–192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1445137>
- Kahlke, R. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: Pitfalls and benefits of methodological mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13(1), 37- 52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691401300119>
- Kaimathiri, P. Y. (2021). *A narrative inquiry into the daily challenges to the business growth of women’s microenterprises in rural Kenya*.  
<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11781&context=dissertations>

- Kennedy, D. (2016). Is it any clearer? Generic qualitative inquiry and the VSAIEEDC model of data analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(8), 1369–1379.  
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2444>
- Kolawole, S.A., & Mallum, Y. A. (2017). Causes, effect and counselling strategies for ameliorating widows' affliction in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Education Philosophy*, 28(2), 13-18.  
<https://irepos.unijos.edu.ng/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1946/1/Causes%2C%20Effects%20and%20Couselling0001.pdf>
- Kristiansen, C. B., Kjær, J. N., Hjorth, P., Andersen, K., & Prina, A. M. (2019a). Prevalence of common mental disorders in widowhood: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, (245), 1016– 1023.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2018.11.088>
- Khawar, R., Chaudhary, A. N., & Hussain, S. (2022). Role of social support and psychological capital in relation to subjective well-being and perceived stress among widows. *Pakistan Journal of Psychology*, 53(1), 25-44.  
<https://www.pjpku.com/index.php/pjp/article/view/183/173>
- Khosa-Nkatini, H.P., Wepener, C.J., & Meyer, E.E. (2020). Tsonga widow's mourning rituals practices in the evangelical presbyterian church in South Africa: A ritual-liturgical exploration. *Theologia Viatorum*, 44(1), 1-8.  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2263/82730>
- Lay, K., & Daley, J. G. (2007). A critique of feminist theory. *Advances in Social Work*, 8(1) & 5(2), 49-61. <https://doi.org/10.18060/131>

- Lee, H. J., Han, S.H., & Boerner, K. (2022). Psychological and physical health in widowhood: Does marital quality make a difference? *Sage Journal*, 44(1), 54-64.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0164027521989083>
- Liberal Feminism Mohammad, A. A. (2023). Liberal Feminism. *International Journal of Engineering, Management and Humanities (IJEMH)*. 4(1),126-128.  
[https://ijemh.com/issue\\_dcp/Liberal%20Feminism.pdf](https://ijemh.com/issue_dcp/Liberal%20Feminism.pdf)
- Loftsdottir, K. (2011). Feminist theory and that critical edge. *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 19(3), 198-204.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/08038740.2011.593556?>
- Lyna, D. (2022). Restrained freedom? Widows, blended families and inheritance in eighteenth-century urban Sri Lanka. *Taylor & Francis Online*, 27(3) ,596–617  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1081602X.2022.2067209>
- Mabunda, Y.P., & Ross. (2023). Experiences of black South African widows regarding mourning rituals following the death of their spouses: Upholding cultural practices or violating human rights? *Taylor & Francis Online*, 47(3), 328-338.  
 doi: 10.1080/07481187.2022.2065708
- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 8(3), 3351-33513. <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>
- Malinowska, A. (2020). *Waves of feminism. The International Encyclopedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342800730\\_Waves\\_of\\_Feminism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342800730_Waves_of_Feminism)

- Manala, M.J. (2015). African traditional widowhood rites and their benefits and/or detrimental effects on widows in a context of African Christianity. *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 71(3), 1-9.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2913>
- Manti, S., & Licari, A. (2018). How to obtain informed consent for research. *Breathe*, 14(2), 145–152. doi:10.1183/20734735.001918
- Mathiasa, B. A. (2015). Widowhood practice in eastern Nigeria: A comparative study of Imo and Anambra states. *Bentina Sociology Study*, 5(3), 223-231. doi: 10.17265/2159-5526/2015.03.006
- Mattia, L., Kwak, E. J., Grable, J. E., West, C. L., Leitz, L. Y., & Rehl, K. M. (2020). Self-empowerment among widows: A financial planning perspective. *Journal of Financial Planning*, 33(10), 52-60.  
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2449503568?sourcetype=Trade%20Journals>
- Mbachaga, D. J., & Inedu, E. (2013). Society, culture and widow maltreatment in Nigeria: An examination of Rose Mary Asen's the woman in black. *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, 7(1), 163-176.  
<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtmms/article/view/91768>
- Mburugu, B. M. (2020). Loss and grief counseling as a coping mechanism of widowhood: A comparative study of widowers and widows in Meru County Kenya. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 12(4), 109-114.  
<https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJPC/article-full-text-pdf/76723E964900>
- Menig, L. (2018). Mary wollstonecraft- First philosopher of feminism. *Skhid*, 5(157), 17-

24. <http://skhid.kubg.edu.ua/article/view/148353/148285>

Mezieobi, D. I., Onyeanusu, O.C., Nnaji, T.C., Eze, A.U., & Adache G.A (2021). Health implications of widowhood practices among Igbo widows of south eastern Nigeria: Social studies education concern. *International Journal of Mechanical and Production Engineering Research and Development*, 11(2), 487- 494.

<http://www.tjprc.org/publishpapers/2-67-1617001823IJMPERDAPR202136.pdf>

Milazzo, A., & Van De Walle, D. (2021). Nutrition, religion, and widowhood in Nigeria. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 69(3), 951-1001.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/386641534166582375/pdf/WPS8549.pdf>

Mill, J. (2015). Conferencing as a site for the mobilization of black feminist identities in the congress of black women of Canada, 1973-1983. *Journal of Black Studies*, 46(4), 415-441.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/0021934714568456>

Mobolaji, J.W., & Akinyemi, A.I. (2022). Complementary support in later life:

Investigating the gender disparities in patterns and determinants among older adults in south-western Nigeria. *BMC Geriatr*, 22(704), 1-12.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-022-03393-w>

Mohajan, H. K. (2022). An overview on the feminism and its categories. *Research and Advance in Education*, 1(3), 11-26. doi: 10.56397/RAE.2022.09.02.

Mohammed, E. (2018). *Resilience of Nigerian widows in the face of harmful widowhood practices in southwest Nigeria: An interdisciplinary analysis*.

<https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4972&context=etd>

Monroe, J. A. (1987). "A feminist vindication of Mary Wollstonecraft", *Iowa Journal of Literary Studies* 8(1), 143-152. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0743-2747.1247>

Moore, H.A., & Ollenburger, J.C. (1989). A theory of the sociology of women. *International Social Science Review*, 64(3), 123-131.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1109&context=sociologyfacpub>

Moses, V. (2019). Social disconnectedness among widows in Nigeria: Probing the effects of self-monitoring intervention. *The European Research Journal*, 5(5), 894-904. doi: 10.18621/eurj.430761

Namatic. (n.d.). *Legal aid council of Nigeria*.

<https://namati.org/network/organization/legal-aid-council-of-nigeria/>

Nasheeda, A., Abdullah, H. B., Krauss, S. E., & Ahmed, N. B. (2019). Transforming transcripts into stories: A multimethod approach to narrative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919856797>

National Organization of Human Service. (n.d.). *What is human services?*

<https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services/>

Ndisika, M., & Abiola, M. (2022). Widow's perception of widow inheritance in Benin city, Edo state, Nigeria. *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies*, 4(1), 151-161.

<https://www.sfjesgs.com/index.php/SFJESGS/article/view/264>

- Nelson, E. E. (2007). Widowhood and the woman question in Nigeria: issues for policy and action. *The constitution*, 7(4), 65-75.  
[https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/AJA15955753\\_219](https://journals.co.za/doi/epdf/10.10520/AJA15955753_219)
- Nkyi, A.K., Djankpa, G.b., Osaе, S. (2021). Psychological distress and life satisfaction of Konkomba widows in the Saboba district, Ghana. *Journal of Advanced Psychology*, 3(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.47941/japsy.526>
- Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E., & Moules, N.J. ( 2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods Volume*, 16, 1–13. doi: 10.1177/1609406917733847.
- Nwalutu, M. O. (2012). Healing bereavement through rituals: A review of the Weppawanno widowhood purification practices. *Sociology Mind*, 2(3), 313-324.  
[https://www.scirp.org/pdf/SM20120300010\\_24367765.pdf](https://www.scirp.org/pdf/SM20120300010_24367765.pdf)
- Nwankwor, J. C., & Ekenedilichukwu., A. O. (2021). An application of acts of apostles chapter 6: 1-5 to the plight and negligence of widows in the contemporary church. *Oracle of Wisdom Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs*. 5(2).  
<https://acjol.org/index.php/owijoppa/article/download/1853/1831>
- Nwanozie, D.S. (2023). Impact of widowhood on psychological wellbeing and quality of life of spouses in Onitsha, Anambra state. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Disciplines*, 3(1), 1-16.  
[https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/JPBD\\_COOU/article/download/3394/3306](https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/JPBD_COOU/article/download/3394/3306)
- Nwaoga, C.T., Uroko, F.C., Okoli, A. b., & Okwuosa, L. (2021). Widowhood practices

and the church in south-east Nigeria. *African Journal Online*, 17(1), 1-6.

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/hts/article/view/232956>

Nwogu, I. O. (2015). The legal anatomy of cultural widowhood practice in south eastern Nigeria: The need for a panacea. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 3(1), 79-90. <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Legal-Anatomy-of-Cultural-Widowhood-Practices-in-South-Eastern-Nigeria-The-Need-for-a-Panacea.pdf>

Obiakor, D, C. (2022). Gender and widowhood: The effect of education and family socio-economic status on widowhood practices in south eastern Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, 3(6). 77-83. [https://www.allmultidisciplinaryjournal.com/uploads/archives/20221107110914\\_E-22-127.1.pdf](https://www.allmultidisciplinaryjournal.com/uploads/archives/20221107110914_E-22-127.1.pdf)

Offiong, E. E., Eyo, E. T., & Offiong, A. E. (2021) Patriarchy, culture and the social development of women in Nigeria. *Pinisi Journal of Art, Humanity, and Social Studies*, 1(4), 79-86. <https://ojs.unm.ac.id/PJAHSS/article/view/26708>

Oghiagbephan, A. D. (2019). Negative impact of widowhood rite as it affects marital happiness amongst married women in south – south, Nigeria. *East African Scholars Journal of Education, Humanities and Literature*, 2(10), 583-591. [https://www.easpublisher.com/media/features\\_articles/EASJEHL\\_210\\_583-592\\_c.pdf](https://www.easpublisher.com/media/features_articles/EASJEHL_210_583-592_c.pdf)

Okoro, C.A., Ojabor, C.S., Nzenweaku, J.U., Kekeocha-Christopher, I.C., & Ishiwu,

V.C. (2021). Length of widowhood and stress on life satisfaction of older Nigerian widows. *Journal of Professional Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 3(3), 472-491.

<https://journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/JPCPR/article/view/1448>

Olanisebe, S.O. (2015). The plight of widow and widowhood in Nigeria: Reflection on 2 kings 4:1-7. *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, 5(1), 1-16.

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijrs/article/view/119592>

Olukayode, J. A. (2015). Widowhood practices in some Nigerian societies: A retrospective examination. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(4), 67-74.

<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=a76f200bbfa980c38a78310244547785e5f89fb5>

Oluwatusin, A. O. (2014). Widowhood rites and women's fundamental human rights in Ekiti state, Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 2(8), 1-10. <https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol2-issue8/A280110.pdf>

Owoh, I. P., & Utoh-Ezeajugh, T. C. (2019). Portrayal of widowhood practices and female genital cutting in Nigerian video films: A critical reading of select films. *A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, 13(2), 1-21.

<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtm/article/view/214873/202649>

Percy, W. H., Kostere, K., & Kostere, S. (2015). Generic qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 76.

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2097&context=tqr>

- Peters, M. (2017). Early Feminism and intersectionality. *Foot Notes*, 10(2017), 1-28.  
<https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/footnotes/article/view/5234>
- Piate, R.C., & Duke-Natrebo N. C. (2020). Evil widowhood practices and health status of widows in uyo local government area. *Universal Academic Journal of Edu., Sc. & Tech*, 3(2), 1-12. <https://www.globalacademicstar.com/download/article/evil-widowhood-practices-and-health-status-of-widows-in-uyo-local-government-area.pdf>
- Radtke, H.L. (2017). Feminist theory in feminism & psychology [part I]: Dealing with differences and negotiating the biological. *Sage Journal*, 27(3), 357-377.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0959353517714594>
- Råheim, M., Magnussen, L.H., Sekse, R.J.T., Lunde, A., Jacobsen, T. & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher-researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, 11(1), 1–2.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/qhw.v11.30996?scroll=top&needAccess=true>
- Rahila, U.Y., Anwar, H., & Zaki, S. (2021). Third wave feminism and women’s invisibility in the discourse of politics. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 21(2), 113-132. <https://www.socialsciencejournals.pjgs-ws.com/index.php/PJGS/article/view/560/494>
- Richardson, A. M. (2004). Women ‘s inheritance rights in Africa: The need to integrate cultural understanding and legal reform. *Human Rights Brief*, 11(2), 1-4.

<https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r38906.pdf>

- Robinson, V. (2003). Radical revisionings?: The theorizing of masculinity and (radical) feminist theory. *Women's studies international forum*, 26(2), 129-137. doi 10.1016/S0277-5395(03)00016-5
- Sasson, I., & Umberson, D.J. (2014). Widowhood and depression: new light on gender differences, selection, and psychological adjustment. *Journals of Gerontology*, 69(1), 135–145.  
<https://academic.oup.com/psychsocgerontology/article/69B/1/135/542138?login=false>
- Schuster, J. (2017). Why the personal remained political: Comparing second and third wave perspectives on everyday feminism. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(6), 647-659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2017.1285223>
- Shahin, S. (2022). Human rights of widows: A study of widowhood practices in a Nigerian. *International Journal of General Studies*, 2(1), 39-55.  
<https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/IJGS/article/download/2489/2419>
- Shaw, J. (2017). *Gender and violence: Feminist theories, deadly economies and damaging discourse*. <https://www.e-ir.info/pdf/71346>
- Sil, A., & Das, N. K. (2017). Informed consent process: Foundation of the researcher participant bond. *Indian Journal of Dermatology*, 62(4), 380.  
[https://doi.org/10.4103/ijd.ijd\\_272\\_17](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijd.ijd_272_17)
- Simon, M.K., & Goes, J. (2013). *Scope, limitation, and delimitation*.

<https://www.ders.es/limitationscopedelimitation1.pdf>

Singh, P. (2018). A study on waves of feminism. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 5(12), 363-365.

<https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1812954.pdf>

Soluade, Z. O., Sofadekan, A. O., & Agboola, R. O. (2022). Gender discrimination on property and widow inheritance rights among rural dwellers of Ipokia local government of Ogun State. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 6(2), 69-79. <https://journals.unza.zm/index.php/jlt/article/view/860>

Subedi, K. R. (2021). *Determining the sample in qualitative research*. *Scholars' Journal*, 4, 1-13. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED618228.pdf>

Sue, L.M. (2021). Is Member Checking the Gold Standard of Quality in Qualitative Research? *American Psychological Association*. 8(3), 389–406.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000215>

Suraiya, S (2022). Human rights of widows: A study of widowhood practices in a Nigerian society. *International Journal of General Studies*, 2(1), 39-55.  
<https://www.nigerianjournalonline.com/index.php/IJGS/article/download/2489/2419>

Taylor, N.C., & Robinson, W.D. (2016). The lived experience of young widows and widowers. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 44(2), 67–79.  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01926187.2016.1145081?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Tayo. O. G., & Chukwuedozie, O. N. (2013). Education for sustainable widows'

empowerment: Evidence from southwest Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(10). <https://www.ijern.com/journal/October-2013/24.pdf>

Tenny, S., Brannan, J. M., & Brannan, G. D. (2022). *Qualitative study*.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>

Turnier, W., Conover, P.J., & Lowery, D. (1996). Redistributive justice and cultural feminism. *The American University Law Review*, (45), 1275-1322.

<https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1446&context=aulr>

Tshaka, A., Tanga, P., & Ntshongwana, Z. (2023). “Socio-economic challenges experienced by widows and support provided by social workers in Raymond Mhlaba local municipality in eastern cape, South Africa”. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, 35(3), 21.

<https://doi.org/10.25159/2708-9355/11179>.

Ude, P. U., & Njoku, O. C. (2017). Widowhood practices and impacts on women in Sub-Saharan Africa: An empowerment perspective. *International Social Work*, 60(6), 1512–1522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872817695384>

Umeh, A. S., & Ndiukwu, J. (2015). The influence of disinheritance of widows rights and their children’s upbringing in Orsu local government of Imo State, Nigeria.

*International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review*, 3(6), 301-315.

[http://www.ijcrar.com/vol-3-](http://www.ijcrar.com/vol-3-6/Adaku,%20S.Umeh%20and%20Ndiukwu%20Jane-Frances.pdf)

[6/Adaku,%20S.Umeh%20and%20Ndiukwu%20Jane-Frances.pdf](http://www.ijcrar.com/vol-3-6/Adaku,%20S.Umeh%20and%20Ndiukwu%20Jane-Frances.pdf)

- Ugochukwu, F. (2014). Nigerian widows on screen: Reflections on a changing landscape. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa*, 3(1-2), 7–33  
<https://oro.open.ac.uk/53694/1/Nigerian%20widows%20on%20screen%20Reflect%20ions%20on%20a%20changing%20landscape.pdf>
- Ukwuije, C. K., & Echebe, P. I. (2021). Psycho-demographic determinants of widow-maltreatment in Mbaitolu local government area of Imo state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Education and Research*, 6(2), 09-13.  
<https://www.multidisciplinaryjournals.in/assets/archives/2021/vol6issue2/6-2-14-106.pdf>
- Umoh, D. (2018). Violence against women: Widowhood practices and the church. Towards the construction of a new culture of African Womanhood. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(7), 123-135. doi:10.14738/assrj.57.4768
- United Nation. (2022). *Invisible women, invisible problem*.  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/widows-day>
- United Nation Women. (2021). *Explainer: What you should know about widowhood*.  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/6/explainer-what-you-should-know-about-widowhood>
- Ward, C.V. (1995). The radical feminist defense of individualism. Faculty Publications, 89(3), 871-899.  
<https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1102&context=facpubs>
- Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A vindication of the rights of woman with strictures on*

*political and moral subjects.*

<https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/wollstonecraft1792.pdf>

Yahya, U., Anwar, R.H., & Zaki, S. (2021). Third wave feminism and women's invisibility in the discourse of politics. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 21(2), 133-152. doi: <https://doi.org/10.46568/pjgs.v21i2.560>

## Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer



**INTERVIEW  
STUDY  
SEEKING WIDOWS**

**WITH EXPERIENCES OF  
WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES.**

There is a new study about the experiences of widowhood practice on young widow's well-being. For this study, you are invited to describe your widowhood experiences and how it affects your well being.

#### ABOUT THE STUDY

- One **30-40 minute** zoom interview that will be audio recorded.
- There will not be any video recording.
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you.

#### VOLUNTEERS MUST MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS

- 18 years old or older.
- Experienced widowhood at age 45 or younger.
- Has experienced the effect of widowhood practices in South-Eastern Nigeria.

To confidentially volunteer contact the Researcher:

**Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh**

**Via SMS or CALL...**



Email:

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Ijeoma Josephine Edinoh, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. The interviews will take place in July 2024.

## Appendix B: Interview Guide

**Introduction:** My name is Ijeoma Uche, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I thank you for volunteering your time to be part of this study and to share your experiences. I am conducting a research study on the experiences of widowhood practices on young widows in South-Eastern Nigeria. The purpose of this research is to understand the effect of widowhood practices on the well-being of young widows.

**Instructions:** Kindly note that your participation in this interview is voluntary and you are under no pressure to complete it. An email containing a consent form was sent previous to the interview to read and sign, thereby indicating your voluntary *participation* in this interview. Thank you very much for meeting with me today. I appreciate your willingness to share your story. There is no right or wrong answer to any of the questions. What matters is that it's your story and I am interested in hearing about your experiences. You are free if you chose to discontinue the interview, pause for a break, or reschedule at any time. This interview will be voice recorded and the information will be kept anonymous and under my care. The interview will last between 30 and 45 minutes. I will also be taking minor notes during the interview and the recorded transcript will be sent to you for your verification. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to begin? Thank you! I will now begin recording.

### **Begin the Recording**

#### **Demographic Questions**

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Are you fluent (speak, read, write) in English? \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Which part of the south eastern state do you live?

---

4. How long have you been a widow?

---

### **Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about your widowhood experience.
  - Describe some things from your widowhood experience that was a challenge during your grieving period.
  - How did you handle some of those challenges if any.
2. Tell me how the widowhood cultural practices infringed on your right as a widow
  - Describe the effect on your wellbeing as a young widow
  - How were you able to handle the challenges
3. Tell me about your widowhood encounters that helped you go through your grieving moments.
  - What was your experience in dealing with your grief?
  - Explain more about the grieving experience.
4. Describe the support system you had that helped you cope as a young widow.
  - Explain more about the impact of the support system on your recovery.
5. Tell me how your experiences have changed your view about life?
  - Tell me more about how you value life now vs. before the death of your husband.
6. How did your experiences change your relationships with the community and in-laws?
  - If not, why do you think it did not change?
  - If yes, tell me more about what specifically contributed to the change.
7. How did your experiences change your sense of personal strength as a young widow?
  - Tell me more about what type of personal strength occurred.

8. Tell me how your experiences change your life in the area of tradition?
  - If not, why do you think it did not change?
  - If yes, tell me more about what specifically contributed to the change.
  - In the area of tradition, how are you different because of the experience of being a widow?
9. Describe the process for transiting back to your normal life.
  - Tell me how your widowhood experience has affected your well-being.
  - Explain more about the financial, physical and emotional experience.
  - How did your widowhood experiences change the way you think about new possibilities.
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me before we close the interview?

**Closing**

Thank you for sharing your story. I sincerely appreciate the depth of your story and for sharing your experience. Telling your story could help others realize growth through their experiences as well. I will be sending you a copy of the transcript for verification of accuracy via encrypted to your email. You will receive instructions on how to view the full research project once it is published. Thank you.