

Emotional Expression in Igbo Poetry as a Response to trauma and its Effect on the Human Psyche

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Abstract

Trauma has a profound impact on individuals and societies, often leaving lasting emotional scars. In the context of the Igbo community, which has faced various forms of historical and contemporary periods, the expression of emotions becomes a complex and nuanced process. This study delves into the realm of Igbo poetry, investigating how emotional expression within this literary form serves as a response to trauma and its subsequent effects on the human psyche. Drawing on the rich tradition of Igbo poetry and its significance, this research seeks to unravel the ways in which emotional expression operates within the context of trauma. By employing a qualitative approach, the study conducts an in-depth analysis of selected Igbo poems from these poetry texts: *Echiche*, *Akọ Bu Ndu* and *Ije Uwa* that explore themes of trauma, loss, and resilience. The research adopts the posttraumatic growth theory of Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun, which posits that individuals can experience positive psychological changes and personal growth following traumatic experiences through emotional expression. The findings portray that through poetic writing and expression, silenced emotions arising from traumatic experiences find their voice through poetry and uncovers the multifaceted nature of emotional expression in Igbo poetry and its transformative power. Also the study revealed the impact of emotional expression on individual and collective healing, resilience, and empowerment. The findings also shed light on the role of Igbo poetry as a cathartic outlet for emotional release and a means of processing trauma. The researcher suggests for individuals to inculcate the art of poetic writing using a thematic expression as a way to release feelings of loss, fear, betrayal, disappointments which could lead to a point of depression if not disclose and for therapist to imbibe into their practice the poetic emotional expression as a methodology and mechanism.

Introduction

Traumatic experiences leave lasting emotional scars, often leaving individuals struggling to express and articulate their pain. Within the Igbo community, which has endured historical and contemporary trauma, the exploration of emotional expression becomes critical for understanding the complexities of their lived experiences. Igbo poetry, with its cultural significance and artistic depth, offers a unique lens through which to examine responses to trauma and their effects on the human psyche. As Nwadike (2003:14) remarked, "Poetry is not only a form of expression, but a means of giving voice to the silenced." This notion resonates strongly within the Igbo community, where historical and personal traumas have been stifled and marginalized. Through their poetry, Igbo writers and poets have sought to illuminate the depths of these suppressed emotions and provide a cathartic outlet for the expression of pain, resilience, and collective memory.

According to Chukuezi (1999:10), "Poetry becomes the language of the unspeakable." This sentiment encapsulates the power of Igbo poetry in confronting the unutterable anguish of trauma. In their works, Igbo poets navigate the boundaries of silence, masterfully weaving words to articulate the ineffable, rendering trauma visible and allowing for a collective reckoning with its impact on individual and communal psyches. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of Trauma Studies, which investigates the psychological and emotional responses to traumatic events, this study aims to delve into the intricate relationship between emotional expression, trauma, and its consequences on the human psyche within the Igbo community. From the teaching concept, Nwokoye (2019) asserts that "Artistic expression becomes a means of cultural preservation and reclamation." Within the context of Igbo poetry, emotional expression serves as both a healing mechanism and a means of reclaiming cultural identity in the face of historical and contemporary trauma.

Through a qualitative analysis of selected Igbo poems, this research seeks to unravel the layers of emotional expression embedded within the verses. Emenanjo (1980:32) emphasizes that "Poetry becomes a means of resistance and resilience in the face of adversity." This goes to show that poets navigate the terrains of trauma and give voice to silenced emotions, which in turn leave profound impact of emotional expression on individual. Through the role of emotional expression in Igbo, individuals gain insight into the psychological well-being within the Igbo community and broader African Diaspora. This research considers the wider field of Trauma Studies by highlighting the transformative potential of artistic expression in addressing and processing traumatic experiences. In the words of Ifejika (2001), through Igbo poetry, we find solace, strength, and the power to heal." This assertion goes on to suggest that by exploring the profound connections between emotional expression, trauma, and the human psyche within Igbo poetry follows a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics of trauma and the ways in which emotional expression can serve as a catalyst for growth, empowerment, and the reclamation of silenced narratives within the Igbo community and beyond.

Emotional Expressions in Igbo Poetry

Emotional expression plays a significant role in Igbo poetry, particularly as a response to trauma. This literature review aims to explore the multifaceted nature of emotional expression in Igbo poetry and its effects on the human psyche. It delves into the perspectives of scholars and their definitions of emotional expression within the context of Igbo culture. Nwadike (2006) emphasizes the importance of emotional expression in his works, including "Ije Uwa" and "Ogbanje" He portrays characters who convey their emotions through artistic writing, symbolism, and language, reflecting the cultural significance of emotional expression in Igbo society. Azuonye (2008), in his article "Emotional Expression in Igbo Poetry: A Cultural Perspective," explores the cultural dimensions of emotional expression in Igbo poetry. He defines emotional expression as the artistic use of language, imagery, and other literary devices to evoke and convey emotions, experiences, and psychological states. Also highlights the role of emotional expression in conveying the lived experiences of individuals and communities. Nwakanma (2010) delves into the intricate relationship between emotion and expression in Igbo poetry. He argues that emotional expression in Igbo poetry serves as a vehicle for catharsis, healing, and social commentary. Nwakanma's thought emphasizes that emotional expression involves the articulation of personal and collective emotions through poetic language, metaphors, and images. Ohaeto (1990) discusses the cultural elements of emotional expression in Igbo poetry. She argues that emotional expression is manifested through the effective use of rhythm, sound patterns, and metaphorical language. He went further to say that emotional expression in Igbo poetry is closely tied to the performative aspect, where the poet engages the audience's emotions through the delivery of the poem. Emotional expression in Igbo poetry is a rich and integral aspect of the cultural heritage of the Igbo people. Scholars have recognized its significance as a means of conveying personal and collective experiences, providing catharsis, and commenting on personal and social issues. Through various perspectives, emotional expression can be said to be the artistic use of language and other literary devices to evoke and communicate emotions and psychological states which in turn serve as an escape route from pain and trauma and paves way for significant growth of mind and soul.

Trauma and the Interplay on Human Psyche

Traumatic experiences have a loud able impact on the human psyche, influencing emotions, cognition, and behavior. The interplay between trauma and the human psyche, is significant to establish as it concerns this study because of its catastrophically features which poses as a disruption in executing human activities. According to van der Kolk (2014:27), trauma involves an overwhelming event that exceeds an individual's capacity to cope, leading to lasting scars and physiological effects. He went further to say that traumatic experiences often disrupt emotional regulation mechanisms, resulting in heightened arousal, intrusive memories, and emotional numbness which can lead to emotional deregulation, with individuals experiencing intense and unpredictable emotional responses. On the other hand, Janoff-Bulman (1992:40) argues that trauma shatters an individual's fundamental assumptions about the world, self, and others. He posits that trauma shatters individuals' core beliefs, leading to a profound reevaluation of previously held assumptions about safety, trust, and the self. This

goes on to mean that alteration of core beliefs can significantly impact the individual's perception of the world, others, and themselves, potentially leading to self-blame or a loss of meaning.

Going further, Herman (1992:24) highlights the emotional and psychological result of trauma, emphasizing the disruption of personal narratives and the need for healing through emotional expression and narrative reconstruction. Herman emphasizes the disruption of personal narratives due to trauma. He said that traumatic events may challenge individuals' sense of coherence and disrupt their ability to construct a coherent life story. The process of healing involves reconstructing the narrative, finding meaning, and integrating the traumatic experiences into one's personal history. One can say that in the face of trauma the human psyche doesn't stay dormant as it becomes the receiver of the emotional status of the individual. The effects of trauma on the human psyche manifest in various psychological symptoms, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints and Trauma can also lead to a range of maladaptive coping strategies, including avoidance, substance abuse, and self-destructive behaviors. (Van der Kolk, 2014).

Through the selected few scholars review, it can be seen that trauma profoundly affects the human psyche, disrupting emotional regulation, altering core beliefs, disrupting personal narratives, and resulting in various psychological symptoms and understanding the interplay between trauma and the human psyche is essential for developing effective interventions, support systems, and therapeutic approaches that address the complex needs of trauma survivors.

Theoretical Framework

The Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) theory, proposed by Richard G. Tedeschi and Lawrence G. Calhoun, was adopted for this research for it provides a valuable ground for understanding the positive psychological changes that can occur in individuals following trauma. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) Posttraumatic Growth theory refers to the transformative and positive psychological changes experienced by individuals following trauma which involves a reconceptualization of life, personal strengths, relationships, and overall sense of meaning and purpose. Furthermore, they posit that it is multidimensional process that encompasses five domains: relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life.

Using this theory as a lens into this study, explains that emotional expression in Igbo poetry can facilitate narrative reconstruction and meaning-making processes. Traumatic experiences disrupt individuals' sense of coherence and can leave them searching for meaning. Engaging in poetry writing allows individuals to express and explore their emotions, enabling the creation of a narrative that integrates their trauma into their life story and fosters posttraumatic growth. Also it provides a channel for catharsis and emotional release. Through the creative process of poetry writing, individuals can externalize their emotions, transforming their pain into artistic expression. This cathartic release allows for emotional healing and paves the way for posttraumatic growth by facilitating the resolution of unresolved emotions and psychological integration. The selected poems show that emotional expression holds cultural significance and provides a platform for collective healing. Igbo poetry reflects the collective experiences, values, and cultural traditions of the Igbo community. Through poetry, individuals connect with their cultural heritage, receive validation for their emotions, and find communal support, leading to a sense of belonging and the potential for posttraumatic growth.

Posttraumatic Growth Theory, as proposed by Tedeschi and Calhoun, offers valuable insights into the positive psychological changes that can occur following trauma. Emotional expression in Igbo poetry provides a medium through which individuals can engage in narrative reconstruction, emotional catharsis and collective healing, thereby fostering posttraumatic growth. Understanding the interplay between emotional expression, Igbo poetry, and its effects contributes to the exploration of effective interventions and support systems for trauma survivors within the Igbo cultural context.

Findings

Emotional expression holds immense significance in the realm of Igbo poetry, serving as a powerful vehicle for communication and artistic representation. Within the context of trauma, and through the analysis of the selected Igbo poem, Igbo poets skillfully employ emotional expression to navigate and respond to deeply impactful experiences. The research here aims to explore the profound role of emotional expression in Igbo poetry as a response to trauma, and its subsequent effects on the human psyche.

Emotional Expression as a Response to Trauma

In examining the poem by Okediadi titled *Apa Onya* in *Ije Uwa*, it becomes evident that emotional expression acts as a cathartic response to trauma. The poet utilizes the intricacies of language, imagery, and symbolism to convey the emotional weight and nuances of scars gotten from traumatic experiences and through this, the poet provides a means for individuals to process and communicate their trauma, fostering a sense of understanding and connection, thus in this extract:

Apa onya ahusiela anya,
Onya lasia,
Apa ya anoro na-aza ajuju.
A gwa mmadu ajo okwu,
O ghoo apa onya nye onye a gwara ya,

Apa onya ahusiela anya,
E mejoo mmadu
O ghoo apa onya nye onye e mejoro,
Apa onya erielariri. (Pg, 34)

Scar has seen a lot,
When the wound is gone,
The scar remains to answer the question.
When bad words is said unto someone
It turns into a scar to the person.

Scars has seen a lot,
When ill act is melted unto someone
It turns into a scar to the person,
Scars have gone through pain and agony. (Pg, 34)

Through this extract, scar could be said to be the aftermath of trauma while pain, constant ill actions or words towards an individual were seen to be the features of trauma and the poet also emphasized artistically the traumatic and agonizing nature of pain people go through in silent yet fight through survival by expression. The ill attitude and bad words to a great extent is a source of pain that causes traumatic issues which in turn play a significant caution on human psyche and makes a case of mental imbalance on people. Thus in this extract from the Igbo poem titled *Onwu Nne* in *Echiche*:

Nne ibe m m lo ahia
Onwu nne m alo m n'obi,
Okeibiri mee m adighi eme,
Akwa ariri eju m obi
M dowa akpa akwukwo,
Obi eko m n'elu,
Keresimeesi na ura arusi na-eru,
Obi ana-emeruwe m.
Ndi a ka m ji mara,
Na onwu nne nwata.
Bu onya mkpuru aka. (Pg, 13)

Each time my mates' mother comes back from the market
The death of my mother comes to my mind
Each time I receive ill attitude from humans
My agonizing heart bleeds yet again
Each time I drop my schoolbag
My heart pounds and hangs
When Christmas and ural arusi festival approaches
My heart gets bitter and tilted.
From all these I know
That the loss of a child's mother,
Is a scar on the hand. (Pg, 13)

The death of a mother is a traumatic experience for a child, and it can have an untold impact on the child's psyche. The poet illustrates the emotional pain and trauma that a child can experience after the death of their mother. This suggests that the pain of their mother's death is a physical and emotional wound that may never fully heal. The speaker's heart is also "pounding" and "hanging." This suggests explicitly that undergoing this means being in a state of constant anxiety and distress. Furthermore, the poet illustrates the pain and trauma that children can experience after the death of their mother. This trauma can have a great effect on the child's development and well-being. It is important to be aware of the signs of trauma in children, and to provide them with support and resources that give rise to a healthy posttraumatic growth. This extract also tells the following; The death of a mother can lead to feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and grief, Children who lose their mothers may have difficulty trusting others and forming relationships, They may also experience behavioral problems, such as aggression, withdrawal, or substance abuse and It is important to provide children who have lost their mothers with emotional support and counseling.

Cultural Significance and Collective Experience

Within Igbo society, emotional expression in a poem by Mgbemena titled *Onwu Nne* in *Echiche* holds significant cultural value. It serves as a mechanism for individuals to share their personal experiences of trauma, thereby engendering a collective sense of resilience and solidarity. The death of a mother can be so painful that it makes one reach a point of no return expressing bleeding heart of loss, however through the communal sharing of emotions, the individuals navigate the aftermath of trauma within a supportive cultural framework. Thus in this extract:

Keresimeesi na-eru
Ibe m ana-enwe anuri,
Maka uwe oheru nne ha ga-azutara ha.
Karesimeesi na-eru,
M bulie ekete kpawa aki
Maka uwe nna m ga-azutaram,
Anaghi enye m anuri.
Ka nke nne na-azuru nnwa,
Ufodu ndi ikwunne m di obioma.
Obi nna nne m na-ehu ka Uchu,
Mana etu nne nne m anoghi,
Ikwunne nne adighi abu onu eze uforo. (Pg, 12)

When the Christmas approach
My mates will be happy
Because of the new cloth their mother will buy for them
When Christmas approaches
I rise with basket in search of palm kernel
Because the cloth my father get for me
Do not give me joy
Like the one a mother gets for her child.
Some of my mother's family is kind

Always my mother's father looks out for me
But because my mother's mother is no longer alive
My mother's family is not my run in shelter. (Pg, 12)

This extract sheds light on the importance of maternal love and its influence on emotional expression in Igbo poetry as a response to trauma. Through the poet narration, we can observe a stark contrast between the joy experienced by the children with their mother during Christmas due to new clothes provided by their mothers, and the lack of joy personally experienced by those without mother due to the clothes given by their father. This contrast serves as a powerful portrayal of the effect of maternal love and the absence thereof on an individual's emotional well-being and overall psyche. The poet's longing for the type of joy that stems from a mother's love reveals a deep yearning for emotional support and nurturing. It highlights the pivotal role played by a mother in shaping an individual's emotional experiences, particularly during times of celebration and festivities. The comparison drawn between the speaker's experience and that of their peers underscores the significance of maternal love in providing a sense of security, comfort, and happiness.

Furthermore, the absence of the maternal grandmother adds another layer to the exploration of emotional expression, it tells that the loss in the absence of communal aid widens the vacuum. The assertion that the mother's family is not a refuge for them suggests that in as much as an individual in this state reaches out for support and emotional shelter, that it cannot be adequately provided by extended family members alone. This emphasizes the unique and irreplaceable role of a mother in an individual's life, as she embodies the connection to one's lineage and offers a profound sense of belonging. The extract reflects the broader cultural significance of communal life and collective experience within the Igbo community. It reveals a universal human need for emotional connection, particularly with one's mother, community or route that offers lasting solution, in response to trauma. This emotional yearning finds expression in Igbo poetry, as it serves as a medium for individuals to explore and convey their experiences, desires, and longing for emotional fulfillment. By highlighting the absence of this maternal love and the subsequent emotional void, the extract emphasizes the need for emotional connective support, which finds its expression through the medium of poetry.

Catharsis, Healing, and Resilience

The exploration of emotional expression in *Akwa ariri* by Chukuezi in *Ako Bu Ndu* reveals its capacity to facilitate catharsis and contribute to the healing process. By engaging in the creative and expressive act of writing and sharing poetry, individuals find solace, release, and empowerment. Emotional expression becomes a transformative tool for healing, enabling survivors to regain agency and cultivate resilience in the face of trauma. Thus in these lines of poem;

Ndi new m, o nwere ebe a m jere
Bu ebe o bu m tugharia aka nri, mmiri amaa m;
M tugharia aka ekpe, anwu amaa m.
Nku uwa anyi
Bu maka naani ndi obi kara;
O bu ihe mere o bughị mmadu niile na-akpa ya.
O nweghi onye uwa diiri mma,
Nke danyere onye, ya nwee ndidi
Maka lee, ndi ije naha aloa
Ugwọ juru ha ahụ niile. (Pg,1)

My people, there is this place I went to
Which is a place where I turn my hand and it would rain on me
Each time I turn my left hand, the scorching sun will be on me
The firewood hunt journey
Is only for the strong-hearted;
This is the reason why not everyone goes on the hunt.
Life is not easy for anyone
Whichever one receive, patience should be uphold

Because see the sojourn are returning
Debts are all over them. (Pg, 1)

The extract describes a difficult journey that has taken. The poet uses this to describes how humans are constantly exposed to both rain and sun, which represents the hardships of life. The poet also says that the journey is only for the strong-hearted, which suggests that it is a journey that requires great resilience. Expressing emotions can help people to heal from trauma and build resilience. The poem suggests that humans often time finds some catharsis in expressing their experiences through poetry. The poet advice to "endure with patience" suggests that they have found some resilience in the face of hardship. Furthermore, poem provides evidence that catharsis can be a powerful tool for healing and resilience. The journey described here is a difficult one, but they have found some ways to cope with the hardships. The poem suggests that expressing emotions can help people to heal from trauma and build resilience. The following is also noteworthy for this extract;

- **Expressing emotions helps to understand experiences.** The poet describes their experiences in vivid detail. This suggests that they are trying to understand what they have been through. Expressing emotions can help people to make sense of their experiences and to develop a more accurate understanding of themselves and the world around them.
- **Expressing emotions also helps to release negative emotions.** The poem describes the hardships of their journey in a matter-of-fact way which suggests that they are trying to release the negative emotions that they are feeling. Expressing emotions can help to release negative emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear. This can help people to feel better physically and emotionally.
- **Expressing emotions helps to connect with others.** The poem narrates the experiences with their "people" suggesting that they are trying to connect with others who have had similar experiences. Expressing emotions can help people to connect with others who have shared similar experiences. This can provide people with a sense of support and community.

Psychological Impact on the Human Psyche

Engaging in emotional expression through the work of Okediadi titled *Ọnwu Di in Ije Uwa* show sustains a toll on the human psyche. It allows individuals to delve into their deepest emotions, promoting self-reflection, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. The act of expressing trauma through poetry provides a means of externalizing internal struggles, offering a therapeutic outlet for individuals to process and make sense of their experiences. Thus in this extract;

Chi ewerela ehie jie
Onye ga-eledo nwunye na ụmụaka anya?
Anyanwe onye ọzọ ezughi ezu.
Onye ga-eme ihe ị na-eme?
Di bi n'ụlọ ebulala akwukwọ
Ụla akwadoghi akwado
Nwaanyị na ụmụ nnadi ehurula.

Ọnwu di njo.
Ọ jọkariri udele ma sikaria nkakwu n'isi
Utọ ya di oke ilu
N'ihina ọ bughị ka akụ ilu si ada ka
O si atọ n'onye. (Pg, 48)

The night has come in the afternoon
Who will look after the wife and children?
Another person's eyes are not enough
Who will do what you do?
The man of the house has kicked the bucket
A journey not prepared
The wife are now faced with the external critics

Death is bad,
It is more ugly than a vulture and smells more bad than dead rat
The taste is bitter
Because the bitter kola doesn't sound as
It tastes in the mouth. (Pg, 48)

The extract describes the death of a husband and the impact it has on the wife and children. The poem uses thematic expressions to describe the darkness and despair that the wife feels. The poem also describes the outsiders who will choose the part of tormenting the wife. The death of a loved one can have a profound impact on the human psyche. This extract shows that people who experience the death of a loved one are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder; also people who experience the death of a loved one are more likely to have difficulty coping with everyday tasks. The poem provides evidence that the death of a loved one can have a devastating impact on the human psyche. The poet describes the wife's feelings of darkness, despair, and attacks. The poem also point to the fact that the wife is struggling to cope with everyday tasks. From the extract, these arguments could be helpful to understand the psychological effect and response to trauma;

- **The death of a loved one can cause psychological trauma.** The poet describes the wife's feelings of darkness, despair, and external attacks. These feelings are consistent with the symptoms of psychological trauma.
- **The death of a loved one can make it difficult to cope with everyday tasks.** The poet hints on wife's struggle to cope with everyday tasks. This is a common symptom of psychological trauma.
- **The death of a loved one can lead to social isolation.** The poem describes the external attackers who pick on the wife as she is now a widow. This can lead to social isolation, self-destruction as the wife may feel like she cannot talk to anyone about her grief which may put her in the condition of fighting alone. These feelings are consistent with the symptoms of psychological trauma.

By giving voice to their traumatic experiences, individuals reclaim their narrative, assert their existence and gives room for posttraumatic growth to occur beyond the confines of their trauma. This process not only aids in the individual's psychological healing but also contributes to a broader narrative of resilience and survival within the Igbo community. It highlights the role of poetry in providing a safe space for individuals to explore, articulate, and transcend their emotional pain. Shedding light on the relationship between emotional expression, trauma, and the human psyche, this research contributes to our understanding of the intricate interplay between art, culture, and psychological well-being. It emphasizes the significance of providing platforms for emotional expression as a means of promoting healing, resilience, and ultimately, the survival of individuals and communities impacted by trauma.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following call to action are noteworthy:

- **Promote and Support Artistic Expression:** Recognize the profound therapeutic value of emotional expression through artistic forms, such as Igbo poetry, in response to trauma. Encourage individuals who have experienced trauma to engage in creative outlets that allow them to express their emotions and share their stories. By embracing and supporting artistic expression, we can provide a powerful avenue for healing and personal growth.
- **Cultivate Cultural Understanding:** Emphasize the significance of cultural context in comprehending and responding to trauma. Acknowledge and appreciate the unique perspectives and artistic traditions of different cultures, including the rich heritage of Igbo poetry. By valuing cultural diversity, we can create inclusive environments that honor and support the diverse ways in which individuals cope with and heal from trauma.
- **Enhance Mental Health Support:** Incorporate the findings of this research into mental health practices and interventions. Recognize the potential of expressive arts therapies, such as poetry, in facilitating emotional healing and resilience in individuals who have experienced trauma. Integrate these approaches into existing mental health services, ensuring that individuals have

access to a range of therapeutic options that align with their cultural backgrounds and personal preferences.

- **Foster Community Engagement:** Create safe spaces and platforms where individuals can share their emotional experiences through poetry and connect with others who have undergone similar traumas. Promote community engagement and establish support networks that validate and empower survivors' voices. By fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity, we can strengthen individuals' resilience and provide a supportive community that understands and values their emotional journeys.
- **Educate and Raise Awareness:** Disseminate the findings of this research to various stakeholders, including mental health professionals, educators, and community leaders. Increase awareness about the potential benefits of emotional expression in Igbo poetry and similar artistic forms as a response to trauma. Advocate for the integration of these practices into trauma-informed approaches, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive and culturally sensitive support.

By implementing these recommendations, we can create an environment that fosters emotional expression, cultural understanding, and healing for individuals impacted by trauma. Let us embrace the power of artistic expression and support systems that honor diverse perspectives, ultimately contributing to the resilience and well-being of survivors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings underscore the profound impact of emotional expression through Igbo poetry in the context of trauma. Through the careful use of language, vivid imagery, and powerful symbolism, Igbo poets provide a cathartic outlet for individuals to navigate, process, and communicate their traumatic experiences. The research highlights the cultural significance of emotional expression in Igbo society. Igbo poetry serves as a vital platform for individuals to share their personal narratives, transcending the boundaries of individual suffering and fostering a collective sense of resilience and solidarity. By giving voice to their experiences, survivors find validation, understanding, and connection within their cultural community. Furthermore, the exploration of emotional expression in Igbo poetry reveals its transformative power in the healing process thereby making the posttraumatic growth an easy fit. Engaging in the creative act of crafting and sharing poetry allows individuals to experience catharsis, releasing pent-up emotions associated with trauma. This catharsis, in turn, facilitates the healing journey by providing a sense of relief, enabling emotional integration, and paving the way for psychological, sociological and mental growth.

Emotional expression in Igbo poetry contributes to the restoration of the human psyche. By delving into the depths of emotions, individuals gain self-awareness, understanding, and acceptance of their internal world. Through the process of artistic expression, individuals develop enhanced emotional regulation skills, gaining the ability to navigate their emotions in a healthier and more adaptive manner. The research emphasizes the importance of recognizing and supporting artistic forms of emotional expression in posttraumatic journey. By embracing the therapeutic value of Igbo poetry and similar cultural practices, mental health support can be enhanced. Interventions and treatment approaches should consider incorporating expressive arts therapies, such as poetry, to facilitate emotional healing, empower survivors, and promote resilience. The findings of this research have broader implications for understanding the human psyche in the context of trauma. They highlight the significance of embracing artistic forms of expression and cultural contexts in our approach to trauma recovery. By honoring and nurturing emotional expression, we can contribute to the resilience, healing, and survival of individuals impacted by trauma, fostering a more compassionate and inclusive society that recognizes the transformative power of art in the human experience.

In conclusion, the exploration of emotional expression in Igbo poetry reveals that through artistic form of emotional release individuals and communities affected by trauma and through the creative process of crafting and sharing poetry; survivors find solace, validation, and a sense of belonging. Emotional expression becomes a transformative tool that enables healing, restoration, and the fostering of resilience in the face of adversity. By recognizing the cultural significance of emotional expression in

Igbo society and embracing the therapeutic potential of art and communal life, we can create an environment that promotes healing, empowers survivors, and cultivates a greater understanding of the human psyche in the aftermath of trauma.

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