

*Avila et al., 2018*

*Volume 4 Issue 2, pp. 402-415*

*Date of Publication: 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018*

*DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.42.402415>*

*This paper can be cited as: Avila, R. P., Fuentes, J. M., Borbon, J. G., Garcia, G. S., & Ramos, C. A.*

*(2018). Onomatopoeia: Life Experiences of Poets on Expressing Aggression. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(2), 402-415.*

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## **ONOMATOPOEIA: LIFE EXPERIENCES OF POETS ON EXPRESSING AGGRESSION**

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### **Abstract**

*People engaged in writing and performing poetry as a way of expressing their emotions is a rising phenomenon. The study aimed to know the life experiences of poets in coping with aggression through poetry writing. As well as to know if there is a significant data that will*

*prove the existence of the aggression that motivates poets to write. The study utilized the qualitative design it's an inquiry process of understanding based on particular distinct methodological traditions on request that investigate a social or human problem, under the Qualitative design the researchers used the Case Study method The respondents of the study were two female and two male poetry writers, 18 years old and above and who writes poetry for at least 3 years, and has an average deviation / average score from the Buss-Perry Aggression test. The researchers conducted the study on different cities in the National Capital Region. The researchers were able to come up with the following themes; (1) Personal experiences (2) Social experiences (3) Coping mechanisms. These themes shows the lived experiences of the poets in dealing with aggression by using poetry as a mechanism in coping up with the different aspects of life that significantly contributes to their aggression. We recommend for future researchers to utilize different approaches and expand the scope of this research.*

**Keywords**

Aggression, Frustrations, Phenomena, Poetry, Pressure

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**1. Introduction**

Human beings have unique ways of express feelings and emotion. People can express gratitude by doing good deeds, express loneliness by composing music, expressing disappointment through art and others use poetry to express their aggression. In this research, the researchers aim to study about human feelings and how these individuals express their feelings through poetry. According to Flanagan (2016), *“Poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response”*, this implies that individuals write poetry as a way of releasing their tension, anxiety and hostility. Slam poetry, as a new form of spoken word poetry, is a rising phenomenon and has taken the city by storm; people from all over the world seem to be charmed by the magic of this growing poetic revolution in the form of poetry competitions (Thomas, 2016). According to Thomas, numerous individuals are stunned of this new pattern in poetry since it is undoubtedly a proficient method of releasing intense feelings and that this sort of poetry likewise enhances an individual certainty and self-esteem by method for performing it. Slam is a poetry competition where poets perform their work, in front of an audience that serves as a judge.

Despite the facts that poetry really helps in releasing hidden emotions, “*Poetry suffers from an image problem. It seems a tricky form, seductive in its rhythms and lyrical language, but teasing and withholding*” (Regis, 2013). Some individuals might misunderstand the content of a poem because of its extravagant usage of the words and misinterpret the content of the poem, but other than that, poetry seems to continue to be popular and many people still engage in reading and writing poems for it's entertaining and fun to do.

The aim of the study is to know the life experiences of poets in coping with aggression through poetry, and, to know if there is a significant data that will prove the existence of aggression that drives poets to write. The study also would like help future poets as well and promote the efficiency of poetry as a tool in releasing aggression. The findings of this study will contribute to the benefit of the society to see or to know if poetry is still alive and relevant in today's generation. This research can effectively scaffold in the discovery of methods for communicating their voices while being restricted in their vocabulary because poetry is universal. Future researchers will learn more about poetry's usefulness in developing their social skills and ability to vent their emotions in a more creative manner; Regardless of the way that the new era is saving no endeavors to wipe out vowels from the English dialect and the new forms of words today is quite pathetic, poetry is still something that has been, is, and will always be appreciated.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The researchers adopted the Frustration-Aggression Theory of Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears. F-A theory states that aggression feeling exist when a person's effort to attain goals will be blocked or frustrated. The theorists' states that aggression is always based on frustration and frustrating scenarios which will lead to aggressiveness of a person. Although, the latter part of the theory which entails that all frustrating scenarios always lead to aggression was retracted by Miller. According to him frustration produces or causes different types of response, and one of which is instigation and others are some form of aggression (Dennen, 2016).

- The theory supports that aggressive feeling does exist.

The F-A Theory was used by the researchers because this explains where the poet's aggression came from. The core of the study focuses on the different factors that might

contribute or cause people to be aggressive and how do they utilize poetry writing in coping with frustrations.

## **2.2 Variable Discussion**

### **2.2.1 Poetry**

Poetry helps poet to escape and clear heads when they are stressed or through poetry they express the things that betwixt their minds. It can easily help express feelings because it takes nothing more, just a pen and a paper. Being able to get whatever is on their mind onto paper will help you stop thinking about whatever situation you're going through (Black, 2016). The National Association for Poetry Therapy came into existence with the aim of using literature and language arts to help people release tensions, grow in self-expression, and as well as to gain a better understanding of oneself and others. Most people became trained poetry therapists and have dedicated to their lives in helping others through loving language and literature (Gilson, 2015). Ironically, some students fear poetry because seemingly its form is tricky, seductive in its rhythms and lyrical dialect, but sometimes withholding and can be mocking. Writing, by contrast, can appear straightforward, honest even, when conveying its sense or meaning (Regis, 2013).

### **2.2.2 The Life of Poet**

To a poetry writer, there is a lot of definition what poetry is. Poets use poetry to clear their heads or to escape from the reality. According to Hirshfield, poems is a genuinely an art form that also allows poets to release something that is previously unknown to the visible (Haupt, 2014). The Young Chicago Authors, a literary arts organization; helps cultivate the voices of diverse teen writers through workshops. The YCA facilitates the relationships between the youth from different cultural and socio- economic background by providing the artists a venue to showcase their meaningful arts. The year round programming was celebrating the culmination of month long festival of poetry which is the "Louder than a bomb". It was the largest teen poetry slam in the world (McArthur Foundation, 2016).

All of us can be a poetry writer; it requires no license nor education or experiences. Many of the young poets especially nowadays think that their work will be publish or be a popular poet easily without developing their skills in poetry writing. But not all of us know the big difference between poetry and a good poetry (Donovan, 2013).

### **2.2.3 Aggression**

Aggression is a harmful behavior that people manifest. It refers to a behavior that intends to harm another individual. There are two forms of aggression, physical or non-physical. Aggression can be identified when people harm or yell at each other, saying offensive words to others, or even when they smash things due to frustration (Lardbucket.Org, 2012). Catharsis is a purification, purgation, and cleansing of the tragic or any negative feeling. It is a sudden release of the emotional tension that is built up. It acts as a resolution after so much feels. An individual will feel a "cleansing" when extremely release of emotion persists (Ignacio, Liao, Liu, & Nourbakhsh, 2014). However, research indicates that ruminating over remarks that made an individual angry will just make the person angrier and more forceful. Physical displacement will just make things worse (Schreiber, 2016).

### **2.3 Problem Statements**

Research Question 1: What are the lived experiences of poets that contribute to their poems?

Research Question 2: How do poets cope with their aggression?

## **3. Research Method**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used the qualitative design in which the researchers aimed to assemble a complex, analyses words, holistic picture, reports points of interest of sources, and organize the study in a natural setting. Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on particular distinct methodological traditions on request that investigate a social or human problem (Khan, 2014). Under the Qualitative design the researchers used the Case Study method, where a method is a showing case that is a rich narrative in which people must solve a problem. The analytical work of clarifying the relationships among occasions in a situation identifying options, assessing decisions and predicting the effects of an activity (Velenchik, 2015).

### **3.2 Research Locale**

The researchers conducted the study on different cities in the National Capital Region because it is known as the most populous city and the potential respondents can be residing at the said area.

### **3.3 Key Informant Selection**

The respondent of the study were (1) two female and two male poetry writers; (2) must be 18 and above range of age; (3) must be writing poetry for at least 3 years; (4) must present

published or unpublished original poems; and (5) must fall to an average deviation / average score of the Buss-Perry Aggression test to check if the said respondent really have the tendencies or background of having the aggression feeling.

### **3.4 Research Ethics**

The following APA ethical guidelines were observed during the study (1) privacy and confidentiality, because the researchers have the obligation to take precautions and protect confidential information about the research participants (2) no harm, researchers take responsible steps to avoid harming their clients, patients, research participants and other whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable (3) dispensing informed consent, when conducting a research, researchers acquire the informed consent of the individual(s) through written or oral consent (4) record keeping, researchers maintain confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of records.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

The researchers used researcher made questions for the interview. In this study, the researchers were able to use the Buss Perry Questionnaire. This Questionnaire is a 29-item scale for aggressive behaviors among male and female adults. It is a standardized test to measure aggression which served as the tool for screening respondents (Buss & Perry, 2016).

### **3.6 Data Collection**

The researchers gathered data within the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines. The researchers searched for and attend Open Mic Nights Poetry it is an event where the poets performed the slam poetry as they called it. In different events researcher's watched how the poets perform and after the poet perform researchers were able to gather all the possible respondents and validated the respondents by means of Buss-Perry Aggression Test. After validating the possible respondents and checking the results of the examination. All the possible respondents that passed the said examination proceeded to the next step and if not they will undergo to debriefing to explain why they are not qualified to be an official respondent to the study. After gathering of respondents of the study the researchers conducted a series of interview in order to determine the respondents' life experiences in writing poems as well as how they viewed poetry as a mechanism in dealing with situations that causes their aggressive behavior. The interviews conducted on certain café's around their vicinity for the convenience of the respondents, café's that is peaceful quiet and has good ambiance to perform the interview. The researchers used the Researcher made questions to gather more information and data that might

be useful in the study. The researchers were able to look at the respondents poems and by that the researchers conducted an interview again regarding to the phenomena or the reasons behind their poems.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The method that the researchers used in the study is the Thematic Analysis. This method is historically a conventional practice in qualitative research which involves searching through data to identify any recurrent patterns. Theme is a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerges through the inductive analytic process which characterizes the qualitative paradigm. The exploratory power of this popular technique can be enhanced by the analyst lacking previous knowledge of the research topic as they are not guided by any preconceptions. Thus, the analyst does not have to be an expert in the research topic. However, in order to begin analysis a researcher must have at least some conceptual understanding to guide the insight processes (Martyn, 2010).

## **4. Results**

These are the results and findings that the researchers were able to gather on the 4 respondents (2) Female, (2) who were able to passed the Buss Perry Aggression Test. The poet's life experiences contributed so much in writing poems. Most of the poems that the participants have wrote are about the traumatic events that they had experienced. According to the participants, they wrote poems because of the intense emotions or aggressive feeling/behavior. It usually comes from the surroundings of the poet's life and the traumatic experiences they have encountered. Poets cope up with aggressive feeling or behavior by means of writing and also they used other methods to cope with what they are feeling. It is because that's the time when the poets are self-justifying and especially in releasing the intense emotions. It decreases poet's aggression because it'll help in preventing what's troubling in poet's mind.

### **4.1 Personal Experiences**

#### **4.1.1. Painful Experiences**

Encountering traumatic events can affect psychological, emotional and physical harm to an individual. The individual encountering the troubling occasion may feel threatened, restless, or startled accordingly. Sometimes, they may not know how to react, or might be trying to claim ignorance about the impact such occasion. The individual will require support and time to recuperate from the traumatic event and recover mental health (Cafasso, 2016). The three of the

participants had experienced bullying before college, and based from them it is also the reason why they turn to writing poems because they are always alone and nobody wants to talk to them, they will just write and there they will express the entire thing they can't say. Three out of four participants answered to have experienced traumatic events in their childhood in a form of bullying; they also said that it is one of the reasons why their anger can be easily triggered. According to the 4 respondent they had suicidal tendencies, many times they tried to kill their selves because of the emotions they have.

#### **4.1.2 Family Background**

Our families are the place we encounter our greatest triumphs and our most profound vulnerabilities—and they are the place we have the best potential to do great (Mormon.Org, 2016). The participants have expressed different circumstances of their relationship with their family. And four of them, expressed that they're not close to their siblings in term of their relationship with each other. They described that their parents lacks of responsiveness when it comes to them. There are four noteworthy perceived child rearing styles: legitimate, careless, tolerant, and dictator. Every one conveys diverse qualities and achieves distinctive responses in their kids which they are utilized on. It is imperative to remember that each parent child relationship is distinctive, so there is no one beyond any doubt fire approach to child rearing (Hughes, 2013). One out of the four participants answered to have guardians whose child rearing style falls under dictator child rearing; he described his father as a disciplinarian and has high expectations on him.

Siblings are an installation in the family lives of kids and young people, and a collection of work records their part in each other's regular encounters as sidekicks, friends, soldiers, and as the concentration of social examinations. We also know that siblings can have direct effects on one another's development when they serve as social partners, role models, and foils and that siblings can influence one another indirectly by virtue of their impact on larger family dynamics—such as by serving as building blocks of the family structure, holding a favored family niche, or diluting family resources (Fam, 2012). One out of four stated that, she's not closely attached with her sister. One of the participants described her sister as a smart and a high self-esteemed person and because of that her sister always degrades her.

#### **4.1.3 Past Romantic Relationship**

All of the participants reported that they experienced heartbreaks and because of the feeling they get from love, happiness or even sadness they would write poems. One of the



participants started to write poems when he met a girl and have a crush on her, who happens to be his classmate because of his admiration, he would write poems about this girl but in the end it didn't work. The other three participants have a certain poem that they dedicated to someone in their past because of their hatred or bitterness they feel when their ex's hurt their feelings. All the relationship that they had encountered, it all failed and didn't work. Because of the strong emotion they get from loving and building relationship to their partner they came up to writing and dedicate it to their boyfriend/girlfriend.

#### **4.1.4 Aggression/ Aggressive Behavior**

Aggressive behavior can be seen in physical, verbal, mental and emotional behavior. Aggressive behavior is a practice that can bring about both physical and mental injury to oneself, and other as well or in one's surroundings. This sort of social collaboration fixates on threatening someone else, either physically or emotionally. Aggression exists due to an individual who expresses annoyance, displeasure and especially anger. It is also a reaction to an individual's pain that had felt (Cherry, 2016). All of the four participants passed on the Buss Perry aggression test, and during the interview the researcher noticed that they are always cursing/ swearing in a form of expression. Four of the participants admitted that they are really aggressive in a way because even in small things they get mad easily also they admitted that they have suicidal tendency and three of the four participants tried to go to psychiatrist to undergo treatments because of their anxiety, depression and anger management.

## **4.2 Social Experiences**

### **4.2.1 Social Reaction**

The time when an individual is confronted with an unpleasant circumstance, the body's response will become anxious. In other cases, that response is extreme, making people get to be distinctly not able to move past the dread and uneasiness they feel for drawn out stretches of time. Regularly, this is characteristic of an anxiety disorder. There are various distinctive sorts of tension issues. The most widely recognized of these scatters general anxiety disorder, clinical anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, social anxiety disorder, individual phobias, and agoraphobia (Taryn, 2013). According to one participant his aggression triggers when he was a child because he is the only child he can get everything he wants and because he grew up without a father according to him his dad just left them without reason. But now that his an adult his dad explain everything about what happened and why'd he leave. The time when he found out what happened that's also the time he consult a psychiatrist and the psychiatrist recommend him to do

yoga and now he knows how to manage his anger and also he can prevent venting to things. The other participant said that when her sister starts degrading her she starts being war freak and start hanging out with guys but still she know how or when to start a fight she knows how to handle things. It only implies that no matter what happened things will always have a reason behind it and that will explain why thing come up to this and that.

### **4.3 Coping Mechanism**

#### **4.3.1 Arts**

The spots of possibilities within the poets are hidden; Poets have survived and had grown strong because of darkness. Inside of the deep feelings, every poet holds an extraordinary reserve of artistry and power, of unrecorded feeling and emotion. When it comes of viewing living just a problem to be solved, poets depend entirely upon of thoughts to make them free, and it is something very valuable. However, as poets turn out to be more in contact with own particular dark, hidden perspective of living as a circumstance to be experienced and associated with, poets take in more and more to value one's sentiments, and also to respect those hidden history of poet's creativity and power in where from true knowledge and in this way enduring activity comes. The revelation or refining of experience, the word poetry means to overlay their desperate desire for imagination without insight (Lorde, 2015). All of the participant don't stick with one topic they explore and they write poems about everything in this world even if it's out of nowhere either they're just thinking about something or they experienced something or even about objects they will write about it even if it's weird. Two of the four respondents stated that their hobbies were drawing and composing songs. It is one of their ways to release their intense emotions or the so called aggression. One out of the four respondents says that she had a blog for 6 years. In there she says everything she wants to say, she also used her blog to release all the emotion that she has.

#### **4.3.2 Vices**

According to Susan Folkman and Richard Lazarus, they define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing" (Sincero, 2012). Three out of four respondents are smokers and according to them it's they're way of coping with stress and aggression. According to Altunay, Doner, Mercan, & Demirci (2013), they conducted a research and they found out the connection between emotional stress and smoking has already been investigated and results have recommended that smoking is utilized as a method for managing stress. According to one of the

participant, she smoke rather than to vent her anger to someone, after she smoked she feel okay and relieved like nothing happened she usually forget what happened or forget that she is mad to someone. It only implies that the four of them has many ways to cope up to their problem not just the poems they wrote four of them are coffee lover and one of the participants likes to drive or to swim if he feel angry or sad. It's the poems where they can express their feelings but it's not their main method to release their aggression or other intense emotions. Also all the four respondent are drinking alcohol, they enjoyed drinking together with their friend. According to them, it is also their way to forget the feelings or emotion they can get from every situation they experienced.

**Table 1:** *Life Experiences of Poets: Emerging Themes and Categories*

Emerging Themes	Emerging Category•
1. Personal Experiences	
A. Painful Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Family Problem</li> <li>• Suicidal Tendencies</li> </ul>
B. Family Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles</li> <li>• Personalities</li> <li>• Lifestyles</li> <li>• Parenting Styles</li> </ul>
C. Past Romantic Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Depth &amp; quality</li> <li>• Duration</li> </ul>
D. Aggression/ Aggressive Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Aggression</li> <li>• Verbal Aggression</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Hostility</li> </ul>
.2. Social Experiences	
A. Social Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Co-workers</li> <li>• Neighbors</li> </ul>
3. Coping mechanism	
A. Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poems</li> <li>• Composing</li> <li>• Diaries/Journals</li> <li>• Drawing</li> </ul>
B. Vices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking Alcohol</li> <li>• Smoking</li> </ul>

## **5. Discussion**

The study proved that aggression feeling or behavior does exist to some poets. The study clearly showed that there are benefits that they can get by writing poems. This study helped the researchers to fully understand where or what fuels the aggression to poets and on how they come up to writing. The researchers were able to come up with the following themes; (1) Personal experiences (2) Social experiences (3) Coping mechanisms. These themes answered the lived experiences of the poets in dealing with aggression by using poetry as a mechanism in coping up with the different aspects of life that significantly contributed to their aggression. The researchers were able to find out also the different kinds of coping mechanism of the poets like smoking to release tensions, other forms of arts like composing songs, drawing and even writing journals and diaries. This study helped the researchers to fully understand where or what fueled the aggression of poets or how they can come up to writing and composing the content of their poems compared to the previous researches were able to see the results and findings significantly proved the existence of the aggression within the poets by their own life experiences. On the other hand, the previous researches only proved the therapeutic benefit of poetry and only focus on poetry as a method that helps patients to overcome their maladjustments.

## **6. Conclusions**

The study clearly showed that aggression exists in poets, and by means of writing it helped them release aggression but not all the time for they were able to use other methods that helped them release and overcome their aggression. The following were observed during the gathering of information and considered as factors that contributed to the poets' aggression. (1) Family conflicts (2) Pressure (3) Frustrations (4) Relationships with other people. All these factors directly affect the life experiences of poets and greatly contributed to their aggression that influences their poems. The limitation of the study is still at hand and the gathered data or the produced results for this study may not be enough to support other claims. It is recommended for the future researchers to expand the scope of this research; promote the efficiency of the poetry as a tool to release person aggression; and also to give knowledge about what poetry and if it's still relevant in today's generation. The researchers would also like to recommend future researchers to consider other factors that can contribute to their poems or aggressive behavior. Other seminal works may also related to this study may utilize other methods and designs.

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