



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGGRESSION TRAIT AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT ON SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERISITY

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STUDENTS

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Final Year Project submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree



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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

SECTION A: Student's Declaration

I, NUR ILINA BINTI ISHAK, Student ID D20202097575 of Faculty of Human Development, hereby declare that the work entitled The Relationship Between Aggression Trait and Social Media Content Towards Social Problem Solving Among Undergraduates Students is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.



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Assalamualaikum wrt. wbt.

In the name of Allah, the Almighty, the Most Gracious, and the Most Merciful.

All praises to Allah for granting me the strengths physically and mentally to complete this research. Without His guidance, wisdom and perseverance, I would never have reached this level to contribute to the society through my research study.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGGRESSION TRAIT AND SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT TOWARDS SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

The study aims to study on the relationship between the aggression trait and social media content on social problem solving among undergraduates students. This study used a cross-sectional quantitative survey design. The instruments used were Short Form Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaires (BPAQ-SF), Content-based Media Exposure Scale (C-ME) and Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised Short-Form (SPSI-R:SF). It used a purposive method which included 140 UPSI undergraduates students aged from 18 to 25 years old to participate (n=110 females, n=30 males) in this study. Based on the result, it showed that the level of aggression trait was relatively high meanwhile the level of social problem solving among undergraduates was low. Thus, there is a positive significant relationship between aggression trait and social problem solving, $r(140) = .18$, $p < .05$. Meanwhile, there is also a positive significant relationship between social media content and social problem solving, $r(140) = .21$, $p < .01$. This study provided insights for further investigation on the complexity and direction between social media content, aggression and social problem solving.

Keywords: aggression trait, social media content, social problem solving, undergraduates students, UPSI



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LIST OF ABBBREVIATION

UPSI	Univerisiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
SPS	Social problem solving
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPSI-R	Social Problem-Solving Inventory-Revised
BFAQ	Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaires
C-ME	Content-based Media Exposure Scale
BFAQ-SF	Short Form Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaires
SPSI-R:SF	Social Problem Solving Inventory-Revised Short-Form
PPO	Positive Problem Orientation
NPO	Negative Problem Orientation
AS	Avoidance Style
RPS	Rational Problem Solving
ICS	Impulsive/Carelessness Style
AS	Avoidance Style
p	P-value
α	Alpha value
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
<	Less
>	More

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduced about the study. There are eleven sections in total included in this chapter. The first section introduced the background of the study. The second section stated the problem of statement. Research questions and purpose of the study is included in the third and fourth section. Next, the significance of the study is in the fifth section. The definitions for both conceptual and operational for each variable are in the sixth and seventh section respectively. The theoretical approach and conceptual framework are included in the eighth and ninth. Lastly, the tenth section is the summarization of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

Humans are social beings that live collectively in a community and interacting with one another. However, this social environment leads human to face social problems in daily routine. Social problems also known as social issues are common issues that affect individuals, communities, and societies around the world in which it challenges our collective well-being and requiring thoughtful consideration and behaviour (Ruzita Mohd. Amin, Selamah Abdullah Yusof, & Mohamed Aslam Mohamed Haneef, 2006). These common issues encompass wide range issues from the minor ones to complicated social issues that results from the interactions within society and often have impactful consequences. For example, having disagreements with friends, workplace disputes, marital conflicts and so on (Noreen & Dritschel, 2022). However, it can be divided into positive social problem such as community works, family life, marriage, and so on or negative social problem such as delinquency, discrimination, drug abuse and so on (Kulik, 2024).

Marital status and mental health are among the most prominent social problems among the youth in Malaysia. Young marriage among youth is a social issue in Malaysia and this phenomenon can have both positive and negative implications in which can impact youth's mental health. Based on the data collected by Ministry of Economics, Department of Statistics, the general marriage rate for grooms increases from 42.8 to 45.8 per thousand unmarried males aged 18 and over which a comparable trend is observed for brides, whose marriage rate increases from 44.6 to 47.4 per thousand unmarried females aged 16 and over alongside the rise in the number of marriages (Marriage and Divorce Statistics, Malaysia, 2022). This increased population growth will help to improve economic growth. In addition, being single or divorced/widowed



is consistently associated with poorer mental well-being throughout life compared to being married, especially for men (Grundstrom, Konttinen, & Kiviruusu, 2021).

However, diving into recent arising social issue of childfree marriage among the young adults aged from 18 to 25 years old, marriage has become a negative social problem as young married couple choose not to have children and continue life as before marriage. This leads to an unhealthy direction among society which can disrupt family institution as the couples refuse to acknowledge the importance of family and responsibilities of becoming parents (Mohd Farhaan Shah, 2024). Regardless the social issue is either positive or negative, humans' cognitions are designed to be able solve social problems faced depending on its capabilities. This is because human are complex and evolving beings. Problem solving refers to The process by which individuals strive to overcome challenges, achieve objectives that transition them from an initial situation to a desired goal, or arrive at conclusions using advanced mental functions such as trial error, insights, inductive, deductive, creative or critical thinking (Problem Solving, 2018).

Whereas social problem solving (SPS) is a specific type of problem-solving process of identifying, analysing, and resolving interpersonal or social issues through the application of cognitive and behavioural strategies. SPS involves multiples process that such as identifying, analysing, and resolving social dilemmas, plays a vital role in enhancing interpersonal communication, conflict resolution skills, and collective well-being (Sorsdahl, Stein, & Myers, 2015). Furthermore, mastering the ability to effectively solve social problems is essential for fostering positive relationships, promoting cooperation, and building thriving communities in small scale context and in larger scale it is crucial for psychological well-being and mental health as it aims to





enhance social functioning and improve relationships by fostering positive and constructive interactions.

In conclusion, in order to ensure that the wellness of the psychological well-being and mental health, the social problem solving must be enforced since the early young adult phase especially during the tertiary studies. This is because they will encounter much social challenges problems after they have graduated from university later on. Having a strong social problem solving can facilitate them to find resolutions when encountering social problems in real world setting such as financial difficulties and unemployment and so on. In opposite, the undergraduate students may face failures and will deteriorate their mental health if they do not have good social problem solving. In conclusion, when the undergraduate university students have a strong skill set of social problem solving, this will reduce the number of suicidal cases and improve the psychological well-being among them as they step into the adulthood.

1.3 Problem Statement

In this study, young adults who are currently pursuing their tertiary undergraduate study are focused on. This is because undergraduate university students' social problem-solving ability can be heavily influenced by the internal and external factors. For instance, students with high levels of adaptability and emotional regulation may find it easier to navigate social situations and resolve conflicts effectively. Meanwhile external environmental factor among undergraduate students such as online social support networks, the educational environment, and peer interactions. A supportive social environment, characterized by encouraging relationships and positive feedback, can





enhance students' social problem-solving skills by providing them with opportunities to practice and refine these abilities (Almulla & Al-Rahmi, 2023). Majority of the undergraduate university students are aged between 18 to 25 years old. These ages are the crucial phase as they are in the transition state from teenager to adulthood. According to Gál, Kasik, Jámboři, Fejes, and Nagy (2021), this will lead them to encounter quite a few social problems when they transfer into new school level such as time management, leaving social support and balancing diverse commitments such as academic, clubs, family and financial as an undergraduate student.

Due to prefrontal cortex is not fully developed until 25 years old, it will indirectly affect their emotional, intellectually, physically, hormonally, and socially and thus, hinder their social problem solving (Mercurio, et al., 2020). These changes will cause them to have emotion dysregulation. As a consequence, undergraduate university students with high aggression are less incline to utilise positive problem-solving approaches when confronting with challenges and the solutions are often ineffective and involve more aggression compared to preferred solutions (Almulla & Al-Rahmi, 2023). Thus, this will affect their psychological well-being during adulthood if they do not manage to master social problem-solving skill (Mercurio, et al., 2020).

With the usage of social media such usage as Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Instagram and so on are widely spread across the globe, these social networking sites can be used in positive and negative way depending on the individual's purposes. As such, undergraduate students tend to consume social media as a self-discovery platform for them to learn about their own values, insights and tastes by engaging in an online group participation (Syed Ali Raza, Wasim Qazi, Bushra Umer, & Komal Akram Khan, 2020). Furthermore, social media serves as an entertainment platform for the





undergraduate students within online environment. It has been claimed that students find delight in utilizing social networking sites, which contributes to the younger generation's embrace of these platforms globally. As a result, it will provide motivation for the students as they can find comfort within their social support (Syed Ali Raza, Wasim Qazi, Bushra Umer, & Komal Akram Khan, 2020).

Nevertheless, social media can also be used into negative direction among the undergraduate students. Due to an interest growth in how online content affects undergraduates' behaviour and aggression as social media serves as multipurpose tools to communicate, learning and accommodations and so on. Due to limitless and accessible contents, past researchers have shown that the researchers have looked into how exposure to violent media impacts aggression and behaviour such as cyberbullying, cyber-grooming, cyber-aggression and so on (Mladenović, Ošmjanski, & Stanković, 2020). However, one area of concerns is the possible influence of seeing antisocial content on social media platforms, especially when combined with a person's natural tendency toward aggression, on their ability to solve social problems.

This is still a gap in understanding how the depth of interaction between the social media content and an individual's aggression trait affects the way people solve social problems (Sobkin & Fedotova, 2021). This quantitative study that aims to study the relationship between social media content and aggression trait on social problem-solving among undergraduate university students in Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI). It is hypothesized that aggression trait has a significant relationship with SPS while social media content has significant relationship with SPS among the undergraduate students.



1.4 Objectives of the Study

This objectives of the study are as follows;-

- I: to measure the level of social problem solving among the undergraduate students.
- II: to study the type of problem-solving style used among the undergraduate students.
- III: to measure the level of aggression among the undergraduate students.
- IV: to study the significant relationship between the aggression trait and social problem solving among undergraduate students.
- V: to study the significant relationship between the social media content and the social problem solving among undergraduate students.

1.5 Research Questions

This research objectives in the study are as follows;-

- I: what is the level of social problem solving among the undergraduate students?
- II: what is the type of problem-solving style used among the undergraduate students?
- III: what is the level of aggression among the undergraduate students?
- IV: is there any significant relationship between the aggression trait and social problem solving among undergraduate students?
- V: is there any significant relationship between the social media content and social problem solving among undergraduate students?



1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is focusing on the relationship between aggression trait and social media content on social problem solving among undergraduate students in UPSI and it directly provides insights to overcome social problem solving in terms social and emotional well-being among the undergraduate students from UPSI.

Firstly, social medias act as one of the vital communication tools in human daily lives. undergraduate students will need to have good social skills in as they will use social medias to find resources and resolutions. As this research bring the gap closer on the relationship between social media content on social problem solving among undergraduate students, it can improve the social communication skills among the participants. By providing deeper understanding of the content and messages conveyed in social medias, it can show how much the social media contents affect the social problem solving. Thus, a multipurpose social platform can be provided for the undergraduate for the UPSI students in which provides them to communicate with older alumni in certain sectors to gain insights and thus, providing job guidelines. This is to ensure the connections and alumni's data can be maintained to see the pattern and the relevance of the course in the university. According to Cherrier, Courtois, Rusch, and Potard, (2023), social problem-solving helps in improving social life as it offers advantages such as enhancing interpersonal connections, self-restraint, and fostering solutions that benefit both oneself and others within social circles. These benefits are primarily shaped by two overarching mechanisms: problem orientation, involving cognitive and emotional aspects, and problem-solving style, encompassing the capacity to grasp issues and devise effective remedies.





Next, this research helps to understand the relationship between aggression trait on the social problem solving among the undergraduate students. By having deeper understanding of aggression, it will help the participants have better emotional regulation. It will help to improve social problem solving as it can enhance us to find proper resolution. This can be implemented to create an intervention programme between students and lecturers on aggression and emotional stability to manage their aggression and rightful coping mechanisms to express the emotions (Jahani & Bayrami, 2024). In addition, this will strengthen the bond outside the class and help the lecturers to understand better and thus, provide social support for the undergraduates. This suggests effective emotional regulation helps in social problem-solving as it alleviates distress when working in a new workplace environment for the lecturers, minimizing conflicts in romantic relationships between spouses and partners, and fostering healthy physical, fulfilling, and enduring connections with new people. Indirectly, having a good problem-solving ability can enhance mental and physical health. Furthermore, social problem solving can effectively improve the coping mechanisms for managing their challenges in daily life (Cherrier, Courtois, Rusch, & Potard, 2023).

In conclusion, these programmes and social platforms with the essence that focus on aggression trait and communication on social media content can be implemented to help the students after they have graduated from UPSI in order to empower their social problem solving. As a consequence, the undergraduate students will experience less cultural shock once they are in the real-world setting.



1.7 Conceptual Definitions

1.7.1 Social Problem Solving

Social problem solving is first defined as process of problem solving as it occurs in the natural setting and environment (D'Zurilla, Nezu, & Olivares, Social Problem Solving: Theory and Assessment, 2004). It is a process method of grasping and tackling complex scenarios within social contexts and relationships. It encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioural efforts directed toward devising positive resolutions to interpersonal disputes, challenges, and hurdles and minimizing the negative effect towards an issue. This procedure entails recognizing the issue, exploring different remedies, and implementing actions to address it (Fidan & Serin, 2021).

1.7.2 Aggressions

Aggression is defined as behaviour that is intended to harm individual who do not want to be harmed (Baron & Richardson, 1994). It can be in the form of physical harm, psychological injury and discomfort to another person. However, aggression is not only limited to the actions aimed at hurting or harming someone, but it can be directed towards animals and objects. Such actions can take various shapes, like physical aggression (such as hitting or pushing), verbal aggression (like threats or insults), relational aggression (such as excluding someone socially or spreading rumors), and other unfriendly behaviors (Diamond & Magaletta, 2015). Aggression shows up in different ways and often comes from feelings of anger. (Fidan & Serin, 2021).

1.7.3 Social Media Contents

Social media content encompasses the information, media, or material generated and are spread widely on social media platforms by both individuals and society. It comes in diverse formats, such as text, images, videos, links, infographics, polls, and other forms to capture the audience, conveying messages, disseminating information, and fostering interactions within the social media sphere (Ader, Hassane, & Vermeulen, 2023). Nevertheless, these formats are to explain to cover a wide range of topics, such as personal updates, news articles, promotional messages, educational resources, entertainment, memes, and more in details to reach the users (Hamer, et al., 2017)

1.8 Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Social Problem Solving

Social problem solving involves intricate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes through which individuals address various daily challenges, such as personal issues, conflicts in relationships, financial struggles, and work-related obstacles, encountered in their everyday lives (D'Zurilla, Nezu, & Olivares, Social Problem-Solving Inventory - Revised, 2002). Past researches into social problem solving, as assessed by the Social Problem-Solving Inventory-Revised (SPSI-R), have identified two distinct dimensions related to problem orientation. These dimensions are based on individuals' perceptions of problems encountered in daily life, either in a negative or positive light (D'Zurilla, Nezu, & Olivares, 2004). Additionally, three distinct dimensions of problem-solving style have been identified, based on how individuals respond to everyday problems. Alternatively, according to D'Zurilla, Nezu, and

Olivares (2002) social problem-solving model, two dimensions are considered functional which are positive problem orientation and rational problem solving. The other three dimensions are negative problem orientation, impulsivity/carelessness, and avoidance are considered dysfunctional.

1.8.2 Aggression

Aggression is defined as a multifaceted concept, including elements like physical aggression such as actions that entail physical harm or aggression directed towards others, verbal aggression such as aggressive behaviours involving verbal attacks or hostile communication (Buss & Perry, 1992). Meanwhile, anger and hostility are to gauge the frequency and intensity of feelings of anger or irritability, and evaluates overall sentiments of resentment, cynicism, and negative attitudes towards others respectively (Bernstein & Gesn, 1997). The Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaires (BFAQ) was first developed by Bryant and Smith in 1992 and it was created to gauge these varied aspects of aggression through participant responses to a series of items. Overall, these scales aim to offer a thorough assessment of different aspects of aggression within individuals.

1.8.3 Social Media Content

Media content defined as material or information that is presented through various forms of media, such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, websites, social media, and other digital platforms (Hamer, et al., 2017). Media content can encompass a wide range of formats, including text written articles, images illustrations, videos, audio, interactive elements and others. It can cover diverse topics and genres, including news, entertainment, education, advertising, opinion pieces, reviews, and more (Hamer,



et al., 2017). In the context of the Content-based Media Exposure Scale (C-ME), the focus is on assessing exposure to specific types of content, particularly antisocial such as aggression, violence, substance abuse, reckless driving, sexual content, and behaviours that defy social norms and neutral media content to ensure a balanced assessment of exposure to various content types (Chabbouh, et al., 2023).

1.9 Theoretical Approach

Social problem solving is a theory proposed by D’Zurilla and Nezu in 1982 where it highlights the individual of one’s adaptive functioning in the real-life social environment. The model proposes three major concepts. First, problem concept refers to a problem is a tough situation in life that needs resolution but the ambiguity of the obstacle hinders the process. These obstacles can be unclear or conflicting, or we might lack the skills or resources we need. Next, solution is a specific way of dealing with a problem, either through thoughts or actions. It comes from the problem-solving process and a good solution is one that achieves the goal by making the situation better or reducing the emotional distress it causes. Lastly, problem solving in its natural setting involves individuals, couples, or groups engaging in a self-directed cognitive-behavioral process to find effective solutions for specific challenges encountered in everyday life. (D’Zurilla, Nezu, & Olivares, Social Problem Solving: Theory and Assessment, 2004).

However, in 1990, the revised and expanded model was divided into two interrelated domains which are problem orientation and problem-solving skills. Problem orientation refers to the motivational aspect of the problem-solving process. It





involves a collection of cognitive patterns, both positive and negative. It represents an individual's overall understanding and views regarding everyday problems, as well as their own ability to solve them. These thought patterns might involve how people see challenges, their confidence in solving problems, and what they expect from trying to solve them. Along with the feelings and actions that come with these thoughts, they can either make problem-solving easier or harder in different situations. Nevertheless, they do not encompass the specific techniques individuals use to maximize their effectiveness in solving problem (D'Zurilla & Olivares , 1996).

Next, problem solving proper later known as problem solving styles, involves logically searching for a solution by using specific skills and techniques meant to increase the chance of finding the best solution for a particular problem. According to D'Zurilla and Nezu's model (1990), there are four main problem-solving skills: defining and understanding the problem, coming up with different solutions, making a decision, and putting the solution into action while checking if it works. Each of these skills plays a unique role in finding effective solutions or better ways to deal with specific problems (D'Zurilla & Olivares , 1996).

Therefore, aggression trait and social media content are relevant to social problem solving as these factors can influence individuals' perceptions, reactions, and decision-making processes when addressing societal issues during the social problem-solving processes. The engagement of an individuals with social media content, can potentially provoke or reinforce their aggressive behaviour. This can impact their approach to understanding and resolving social problems. Additionally, individuals with higher levels of aggression may be more prone to impulsive or confrontational



responses, which can affect collaborative problem-solving efforts and hinder effective solutions (Ozdemir, Kuzucu, & Koruklu, 2013).

1.10 Conceptual Framework

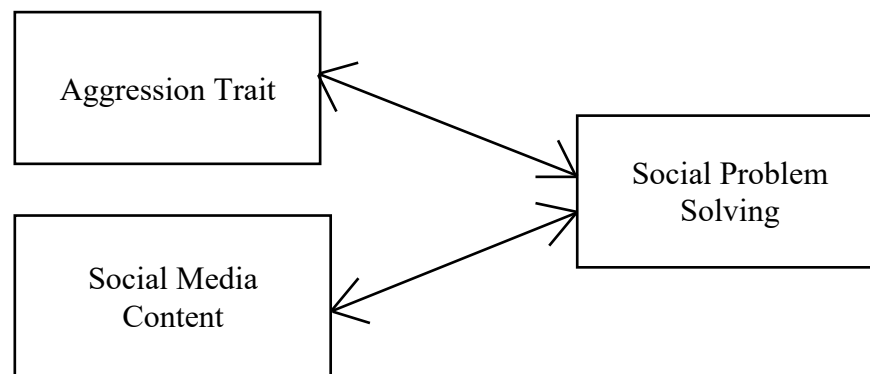


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the influence of aggression in individual's social problem solving is highlighted. Being an undergraduate student, social problems such as financial planning, academic performance, family life, drug abuse, disagreement and so on exist in regular basis which requires critical social problem solving. Thus, this study is to focus on the amount of aggression that can affect human's social problem-solving styles. Nowadays, human's social problems solving can be influenced by social media content because most human interaction are currently via online interaction within online digital world compared to early 2000s which mainly focused on physical interaction (Syed Ali Raza, Wasim Qazi, Bushra Umer, & Komal Akram Khan, 2020). As mentioned, social media contents are very broad and can be negative or positive which can influence the human's cognition and approach when encountering a social problem depending on their social problem solving. Thus, it has raised various social



problems on different levels which requires different humans' social problem-solving approach.

1.11 Research Hypothesis

This research hypothesis in the study are as follows;-

- I: H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between aggression trait and social problem solving among undergraduate university students.
- II: H₀₂: There is a significant relationship between aggression trait and social problem solving among undergraduate university students.
- III: H₁₁: There is no significant no relationship between social media content and social problem solving among undergraduate university students.
- IV: H₁₂: There is a significant relationship between social media content and social problem solving among undergraduate university student.

1.12 Conclusions

In conclusion, this research suggests that the relationship between social media content and aggression trait with social solving problems. It can significantly help to improve the social problem solving among the undergraduate students in UPSI as it can help them to enhance their communication skills and emotional dysregulation. This is because undergraduate students will face many social challenges and obstacles once they have graduated from UPSI. Thus, it is important to nurture and enforce their social problem solving to ensure they meet the demand of the industry later.

