

Doomscrolling as a Form of Over-Communication in the Construction of Collective Anxiety in Indonesia's Digital Public Sphere

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze doomscrolling as a digital communication practice that emerges in conditions of over-communication and to explain its role in shaping collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere. This study employs a qualitative approach using netnography to examine conversations on the X platform during a period of heightened economic discourse marked by a decline in the IHSG, a rise in gold prices, and fluctuations in cryptocurrency assets. Data were collected through keyword-based searches and analyzed using thematic analysis of 96 key posts and their interactive responses. The results indicate that doomscrolling operates through the repetition of messages, the amplification of fear, and crisis narratives without resolution, thereby shaping public anxiety as a communicative effect of an information overload rather than as an individual clinical condition. These findings underscore the importance of communication strategies that are timely, contextual, and solution-oriented in mitigating the spiral of digital anxiety. This study is limited to a single platform and a specific observation period. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the platform context and employ a mixed-methods approach. The novelty of this research lies in its focus, which does not address hoaxes or individual trauma, but rather positions anxiety as a product of excessive communication within the digital public sphere.

Keywords: Collective anxiety; Digital communication; Doomscrolling; Over-communication



INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital communication technology have transformed the way people obtain information, interact, and form opinions in the public sphere. Social media is no longer merely a means of interpersonal communication, but has evolved into a digital public sphere where various social, political, economic, and cultural issues are continuously produced, exchanged, and interpreted (Sari & Veri, 2025). The real-time nature of digital communication allows information to spread very quickly across various platforms, but at the same time, it also increases the intensity of information exposure users are subjected to (Eliyana et al., 2020). As a result, the public faces not only the ease of accessing information but also new challenges in the form of a relentless, nonstop flow of communication.

In this digital communication environment, the main issue is no longer limited access to information, but rather the abundance of information that must be processed simultaneously. In the Indonesian digital context, the rapid circulation of information through social media has also created challenges related to the ability of users to evaluate and process information critically, particularly under conditions of information abundance and accelerated information sharing (Fitriarti, 2019). This condition is known as information overload, a state in which the amount of information received exceeds an individual's capacity to process and interpret it effectively (Arnold et al., 2023). Previous research has shown that information overload can reduce the quality of attention, slow down decision-making, and increase cognitive fatigue among digital media users (Batista & Marques, 2017; Koroleva et al., 2010). On social media, this condition is further exacerbated by algorithms, notifications, and a continuous flow of information, keeping users constantly exposed to high levels of information.

This development indicates that the issue of digital communication is not only related to the sheer volume of information but also to the intensity of communication that occurs nonstop. In this study, this condition is understood as “over-communication”, a situation in which the flow of communication is excessive, repetitive, and difficult to stop, thereby reducing users' ability to

understand and critically evaluate information (Eliyana et al., 2020). Thus, over-communication is positioned as a form of communication that arises from a state of information overload, where information is not only abundant but is also continuously produced, distributed, and amplified in the digital public sphere.

One communication practice that has emerged under these conditions is “doomscrolling”, the tendency for users to continuously follow and consume negative information even though they realize that doing so causes feelings of fatigue, anxiety, or discomfort (Güme, 2024). In practice, users not only read information about the crisis but also participate in spreading these narratives through comments, reposts, and quote tweets. As a result, the flow of negative information continues to circulate and amplifies the visibility of certain issues in the digital public sphere.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between information overload, doomscrolling, and social media user behavior. Gunaratne et al. (2020) demonstrated that users’ responses to information diminish when the amount of information received exceeds their cognitive capacity. This finding contradicts the assumption of the theory of information diffusion, which states that the more frequently a person is exposed to information, the greater the likelihood that the information will be accepted and disseminated (Bakshy et al., 2012). Feng et al. (2015) also explain that under conditions of information overload, users’ attention becomes increasingly limited, so not all information receives the same response. Thus, increased exposure to information does not always result in greater communication engagement.

On the other hand, research on doomscrolling is still dominated by psychological perspectives that view the phenomenon as a form of information consumption or an individual’s habit of accessing negative news (Güme, 2024). Research on information overload also tends to focus more on its impact on cognitive fatigue, stress, or a decline in the ability to process information (Arnold et al., 2023; Shahrzadi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, communication studies have focused more on the diffusion of information, user attention, and the dynamics of message spread on social media (Bakshy et al., 2012; Feng et al., 2015). In the Indonesian context, Fitriarti (2019) examined information abundance on social media primarily through the lens of digital literacy,

emphasizing users' ability to critically evaluate and filter information amid the rapid circulation of information and the spread of misleading content. This perspective highlights the importance of users' capacity to manage information, but does not address how excessive and repetitive communication may itself become a communicative process that sustains users' engagement with negative information.

Nevertheless, the relationships among these concepts have not yet been fully elucidated. Specifically, there has not been much research explaining how information overload evolves into a state of over-communication, which in turn drives the practice of doomscrolling and ultimately generates collective anxiety through digital communication mechanisms. In other words, previous research has tended to address these concepts separately, while the communication processes linking information overload to the emergence of collective anxiety in the digital public sphere have yet to receive adequate attention.

Specifically, there has not been much research explaining how information overload evolves into a state of over-communication, which in turn drives the practice of doomscrolling and ultimately generates collective anxiety through digital communication mechanisms. In other words, previous research has tended to address these concepts separately, while the communication processes linking information overload to the emergence of collective anxiety in the digital public sphere have yet to receive adequate attention.

In this study, collective anxiety is understood not as an individual psychological condition, but as a social construct shaped through digital communication practices. As information about threats, crises, or uncertainties is continuously produced and reproduced in the digital public sphere, users become not only recipients of information but also actively reinforce the circulation of these narratives. The repetition of messages, the intensity of exposure, and interactions among users create a communicative atmosphere that collectively sustains a sense of worry (Sa'idah & Aryani, 2025). Therefore, doomscrolling is positioned not merely as a form of media consumption, but as a communicative practice that contributes to the formation of collective anxiety.

Based on the above discussion, this study seeks to answer the following questions: How does doomscrolling function as a digital communication practice in a context of over-communication, and how does this practice shape collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere? This study aims to analyze the communication mechanisms linking information overload, over-communication, doomscrolling, and the formation of collective anxiety through an analysis of public conversations on the X platform.

The novelty of this study lies in the perspective used to understand doomscrolling. Unlike previous studies, which have largely framed doomscrolling as a form of information consumption or an individual psychological effect, this study positions it as a digital communication practice that reproduces crisis narratives through the repetition of messages, the amplification of information, and user interactions. Thus, this study offers an explanation of the communication mechanisms linking over-communication to the formation of collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm that views social reality as the result of the construction of meaning through symbolic interaction. In the context of this study, collective anxiety is not understood solely as an individual psychological condition, but rather as the result of intensive digital communication practices taking place in online public spaces. This study specifically analyzes doomscrolling as a communication practice that emerges in conditions of over-communication, that is situations where a flood of negative information circulates simultaneously, repetitively, and in abundance, thereby creating a specific emotional atmosphere among the digital public.

The method used was netnography, which is an adaptation of ethnography for the online context. Netnography allows researchers to observe interactions, language, and emotional dynamics that develop naturally on digital platforms without direct intervention. The platform

chosen was X due to its characteristics as a space for real-time public discourse that is open to both economic and political issues. The research focuses not only on the content of messages but also on communication practices, specifically how users respond to, repeat, reinforce, and redistribute narratives of crisis within the digital public sphere.

Data was collected during a period of heightened economic discourse on X, marked by increased conversations about the decline in the IHSG, rising gold prices, and fluctuations in cryptocurrency prices. The observation period was set from January 22 to February 11, 2026, covering the moment the IHSG plummeted (January 28), gold prices reached their peak (January 29), and the crypto crash (February 4). The period was determined based on a 14-day observation window starting from the peak of the discourse surge (H-7 to H+7), thereby covering the phases before, during, and after the peak of the conversation.

Data collection was conducted through non-participatory observation using the X search feature with the keywords “IHSG falls,” “gold rises,” “crypto plummets,” “rupiah weakens,” “economic crisis,” and “recession.” Searches were conducted in the Top and Latest categories to identify posts with high engagement while capturing the chronological dynamics of the conversation. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) posts relevant to economic issues currently of public concern; (2) containing expressions of concern, predictions, or narratives of crisis; and (3) originating from various types of accounts, including personal, anonymous, opinion, and public comment accounts. The focus of the study was on public communication practices; therefore, the data was not limited to mainstream media accounts.

In total, approximately 200 data units were collected, consisting of main posts, comments, and quote tweets. After data reduction based on relevance and alignment with the research focus, 96 main posts were identified that represent the dominant communication patterns. The units of analysis include the text of the posts along with their amplification through reposts and quote tweets.

The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method developed by Braun and Clarke

(2006), as this approach allows researchers to identify recurring patterns of meaning in digital conversations and explain how the practice of doomscrolling shapes the construction of collective anxiety. The analysis began with repeated readings of the entire dataset (familiarization) to understand the context of the conversations. Next, the researcher identified units of meaning relevant to the research focus, then grouped them based on common patterns to form main themes. The resulting themes were reviewed iteratively by comparing them against the entire dataset until a consistent interpretation was obtained that could explain the phenomenon under study. The entire analysis process was conducted by the researcher as the primary instrument through repeated reading and interpretation of the data.

To enhance the credibility of the analysis, the study employed peer debriefing through discussions with peers who are experts in the field of digital communication to review the consistency of theme interpretations. Additionally, the researchers compiled an audit trail documenting the processes of data collection, data reduction, analysis, and theme formation so that each stage of the research could be traced. The analysis was also conducted iteratively by comparing the results of the interpretation with the data as a whole to ensure the alignment between the resulting themes and the context of the analyzed conversations.

With this design, this study can be replicated by defining the study period based on spikes in trending topics, using similar keywords, applying purposive sampling, and employing systematic thematic analysis procedures. This approach allows the study to explain how doomscrolling functions as a communication practice in a context of over-communication and how this practice contributes to the construction of collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aims to analyze doomscrolling as a digital communication practice that emerges in conditions of overcommunication, as well as its role in shaping collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere. Based on 96 posts and comments on Twitter/X discussing the IHSG, the rupiah, cryptocurrency, gold prices, and recessionrelated issues, it was found that digital public conversations do more than simply disseminate economic information. These conversations exhibit repetitive, emotional, and mutually reinforcing communication patterns that collectively shape shared anxiety.

The data indicates that “doomscrolling” is not merely the passive act of reading negative news but has become an active form of digital communication, in which the public produces, shares, comments on, and repeats crisis narratives. In this process, “over-communication”—the excessive, rapid, and continuous dissemination of information—occurs. This reinforces the perception that the economic situation is indeed heading toward collapse.

From the analysis of all the data, in general, the data reveals four consistent main patterns: 1. Crisis Narratives and Escalation of Threats 2. Over-Communication & Dramatization 3. Predictions and Signs of a Recession 4. Expressions of Personal & Collective Anxiety. These four patterns indicate that doomscrolling is not merely the act of reading negative news, but a communication practice involving the collective production and reproduction of anxiety. Based on the content clustering process of 96 posts and comments, thematic patterns were identified that can be summarized as follows:

Table 1 Distribution of Main Themes

Main Themes	Number of Data Points	Percentage
Crisis Narratives and Escalating Threats	34	35%
Over-Communication & Dramatization	22	23%
Recession Predictions and Signs	18	19%

Expressions of Personal and Collective Anxiety	22	23%
Total	96	100%

Source: Primary Data (2026)

This table shows that the most dominant theme is crisis narratives and the escalation of threats (35%), followed by expressions of personal anxiety and over-communication (23% each). The theme of signal-based predictions (19%) is also significant because it serves to prolong anxiety. This distribution also demonstrates that doomscrolling in this context operates on two levels simultaneously: the discursive level (crisis narratives and predictions) and the affective level (personal anxiety)

1. Crisis Narratives and Threat Escalation

The first and most dominant theme is the construction of crisis narratives, the tendency of social media users to interpret various economic indicators as signs that Indonesia is currently in or is about to enter a crisis. The decline in the IHSG, the weakening of the rupiah, the crash of the crypto market, and the rise in gold prices are not framed as isolated economic events but are woven into a single narrative pointing toward the collapse of the national economy. Thus, the discourse unfolding in the digital space not only conveys economic information but also builds a collective perception that a threat is underway and difficult to avoid. Some examples of posts:

“WASPADA, RESESI EKONOMI INDONESIA SUDAH DEKAT...” (BEWARE, INDONESIA’S ECONOMIC RECESSION IS NEAR...) (Data 40)

“Negara di ambang *crash*... IHSG bakal crash anjlok, investor kabur, ekonomi resesi, PHK dan pengangguran meroket...” (The country is on the brink of a crash... the IHSG will crash and plummet, investors will flee, the economy will enter a recession, and layoffs and unemployment will skyrocket...) (Data 87)

The use of terms like “crash,” “brink,” and “recession” does not merely describe economic conditions but serves as crisis signifiers that reinforce the perception of threat. The language used makes economic predictions sound like an inevitable reality, rather than a possibility that could

still change. As a result, users are no longer confronted with various possible economic scenarios but rather with the narrative that a crisis is something that will inevitably happen. In digital communication, alarmist language is more effective at capturing users' attention while triggering emotional responses such as fear and anxiety.

This narrative is then reinforced through a cause-and-effect pattern that is continuously reproduced across various posts: a decline in the IHSG, which is framed as triggering investor panic, followed by concerns about layoffs, recession, and a broader social crisis. Although this sequence appears logical, it oversimplifies the complexity of economic issues into a linear causal relationship. In this way, public communication creates the impression that every negative economic indicator automatically leads to a national crisis. As a result, users are more likely to view a crisis as something that is bound to happen, even though economic conditions could still change.

What reinforces this narrative is not only the content of the messages but also the repetition of the narrative in the digital space. Terms such as "recession," "crash," and "crisis" keep appearing in various posts, even when there has been no official statement declaring that Indonesia is in such a condition. In the practice of doomscrolling, this repetition makes users feel that the situation is becoming increasingly urgent and alarming. When the same message appears repeatedly from various accounts, users tend to accept it as fact, even though the information may not necessarily be true or supported by official data.

These findings suggest that collective anxiety is not solely produced by economic conditions themselves, but rather by the way threats are repeatedly communicated through digital public spaces. Thus, doomscrolling not only prolongs exposure to negative information but also reproduces crisis narratives that make the threat feel closer, more real, and harder to avoid. In the context of over-communication, repetition becomes the primary mechanism that transforms economic information into a collectively constructed atmosphere of crisis.

2. Over-Communication Through the Dramatization of Information

The second theme shows that over-communication is characterized not only by the sheer volume of circulating information but also by the way that information is packaged in a dramatic manner to capture attention and encourage users to keep following developments on the issue. In conversations about economic conditions, various pieces of information are rapidly disseminated through posts, threads, comments, reposts, and quote tweets. Every change in economic indicators, whether a drop in the IHSG or a rise in gold prices, is often presented as a signal that a major crisis is approaching

“SETELAH ITU RESESI EKONOMI (mirip spt 2008)” (AFTER THAT, AN ECONOMIC RECESSION (similar to 2008)) (Data 38)

“Emas naik ada yang ga beres sama dunia kayak tahun 1979.” (Gold is rising—something’s wrong with the world, just like in 1979) (Data 61)

The use of capital letters, comparisons to the global crises of 2008 or 1979, and terms like “crash,” “collapse,” and “plunge” indicate that users are not merely sharing information but are also striving to emphasize that the situation requires immediate attention. This style of communication makes economic information feel more serious and more alarming than the actual conditions on the ground. As a result, users are more easily driven to open the next post to find the latest developments.

In the practice of doomscrolling, what influences users is not only the content of the information but also the intensity of its appearance. Information with a similar tone keeps appearing from various accounts in quick succession, creating the impression that an economic threat is unfolding everywhere. This situation is reflected in one of the following posts.

“Bangun tidur bukannya seger, malah disuguhin berita yang bikin sesak...” (Instead of waking up feeling refreshed, I’m greeted with news that makes me feel suffocated...) (Data 67)

This post indicates that users not only receive negative information but also experience fatigue from being constantly exposed to the same narrative. When there is no break from the flow of information, the digital space transforms into a space that perpetually maintains a crisis atmosphere. Under such conditions, users are more compelled to keep scrolling through information, not because there are always new developments, but because they feel the need to confirm whether the situation is getting worse. This finding is also supported by recurring communication patterns in the research data. Table 2 shows that the use of dramatic language is not an isolated case but appears consistently across various posts.

Table 2 Indications of Over-Communication in the Data

Indicator	Frequency of Occurrence
Use of all-caps	12
Analogies to global crises (2008/1979)	10
Use of the words “crash/plunge/collapse”	28
Expressions of urgency: “be on guard/imminent”	18
Total	68

Source: Primary Data (2026)

These frequencies indicate that dramatization is a recurring communication pattern in conversations about economic conditions. The more frequently users encounter words that emphasize danger, the stronger the impression that the situation is in a state of emergency. Thus, over-communication not only increases the amount of information users receive but also sustains a sense of anxiety through the repeated delivery of urgent-sounding messages. In the context of doomscrolling, this pattern encourages users to continuously consume and spread information that reinforces collective anxiety.

3. Recession Predictions and Signs

The third theme shows that conversations on social media not only focus on current economic conditions but are also filled with various predictions regarding the possibility of a future recession. In many posts, rising gold prices, a weakening exchange rate, and a stock market decline are treated as early signs that an economic crisis is imminent. Thus, economic indicators are

understood not only as market information but also as a basis for building expectations about the future

“Emas udah naik duluan. Habis itu 6–18 bulan kemudian sering muncul resesi.” (Gold has already gone up. Then, 6–18 months later, a recession often follows.) (No. 30)

“Katanya klo harga emas naik tidak wajar tandanya 6–24 bulan ke depan bakal resesi.” (They say that if gold prices rise abnormally, it’s a sign that a recession will hit in the next 6–24 months.) (No. 82)

These findings indicate that users not only share information but also link various economic indicators to the likelihood of a crisis. Interestingly, these predictions are often presented with specific time frames, such as six to eighteen months or six to twenty-four months. The clear mention of a timeframe makes the predictions feel more convincing, even though they are not yet supported by data or official statements. As a result, the possibility of a recession is more readily accepted as something that will actually happen.

In the context of doomscrolling, this pattern causes users to constantly seek out new information to confirm whether these predictions are beginning to come true. Anxiety no longer stems from current economic conditions but from users’ constant speculation about what might happen in the future. In other words, doomscrolling prolongs anxiety through a process of anticipation that is constantly renewed every time new information emerges.

These findings also demonstrate how over-communication accelerates the spread of assumptions into shared beliefs. When the same narrative appears repeatedly across various accounts, users tend to regard it as reliable knowledge, even though most of it consists merely of

interpretations of economic indicators. Under these conditions, what spreads is not only market information but also a collective expectation that a crisis is approaching.

These findings show that doomscrolling not only keeps users' attention focused on negative information but also fosters anticipatory anxiety. Anticipatory anxiety is a sense of anxiety that arises as users continually imagine the possibility of a future crisis (Liu et al., 2024). Thus, digital communication plays a role in prolonging this sense of worry, not because a crisis has actually occurred, but because the various predictions circulating make the threat feel ever closer and more likely to happen.

4. The Construction of Personal and Collective Anxiety

The fourth theme reveals that constant exposure to information about economic issues not only shapes a narrative of crisis but also influences how users view their daily lives. Anxiety that initially arose from discussions about the IHSG, gold prices, or the crypto market has evolved into concerns about personal circumstances, such as financial security, employment, and the future. This indicates that economic issues are no longer understood as macro-level problems but have become part of social media users' daily experiences.

“Ga sanggup rasanya liat tiktok pada floating loss puluhan juta.” (I just can't bear to see TikTok users facing floating losses in the tens of millions) (No. 26)

“Bagaimana caranya agar tetap waras...” (How do I stay sane...) (No. 72)

“Aku pesimis bisa menghadapi resesi” (I'm pessimistic about facing a recession) (No. 93)

These statements show that users are not only expressing opinions about economic conditions but also revealing emotional responses to the information they continuously consume.

Repeated exposure makes it increasingly difficult for users to separate information about the crisis from their own personal circumstances. As a result, their worries no longer stop at economic events but have evolved into anxiety about the future and their own ability to cope with a potential crisis. This influence is also evident in everyday decision-making. One user stated:

“Kenapa di saat aku ud yakin mau resign tanpa backup selalu ada konten isu2 ekonomi bakal resesi...” (Why is it that just when I’m sure I want to resign without a backup plan, there’s always content about economic issues and a potential recession...) (No. 42)

This post shows that doomscrolling not only affects emotions but also how users assess risks before making decisions. The constant repetition of information makes users more cautious and even more likely to postpone important decisions, because they feel the economic situation is unstable. Thus, digital communication not only shapes perceptions of the crisis but also influences the actions taken in daily life. In addition to anxiety about economic conditions, the data also shows a growing distrust of the government as the entity deemed responsible for maintaining economic stability

“Kerjanya gak becus...” (They’re not doing their job right...) (No.39)

This expression indicates that anxiety is directed not only at economic conditions but also at the ability of institutions to handle the situation. When the government is perceived as unable to control the situation, users’ sense of security diminishes, making crisis narratives easier to believe and share. Under these conditions, negative information is reinforced not only by frequent exposure but also by low trust in the very institutions that are supposed to provide certainty.

Overall, these findings suggest that collective anxiety is formed through two mutually reinforcing processes. First, overcommunication keeps users constantly exposed to crisis narratives, thereby sustaining their sense of worry. Second, declining trust in institutions leaves users feeling they have no one capable of reducing that uncertainty. The combination of these two

processes transforms anxiety from an individual experience into a shared one, that is shaped and sustained through digital communication practices.

Discussion

Doomscrolling as a Communication Practice in Over-Communication Conditions

The results of this study indicate that doomscrolling in Indonesia's digital public sphere is not merely an individual habit of consuming negative information, but has evolved into a communication practice that occurs in a context of over-communication. The findings reveal that social media users are constantly exposed to information regarding the decline in the IHSG, the weakening of the rupiah exchange rate, rising gold prices, and fluctuations in the cryptocurrency market through posts, comments, quote tweets, and reposts that appear repeatedly in quick succession. This uninterrupted flow of communication transforms information that was initially about economic developments into a crisis narrative that is continuously produced and reinforced by social media users.

These findings answer the research question that doomscrolling does not function as a passive activity of reading negative news, but rather as a communication practice involving both the consumption and reproduction of information. Users do not stop at simply reading; they also comment, repost, add their own interpretations, and connect one piece of information to another. This process prolongs the cycle of crisis narrative dissemination, ensuring that economic issues remain the focus of attention in the digital public sphere. Thus, doomscrolling functions as a communication mechanism that sustains the circulation of negative information through user participation itself.

These findings align with the concept of information overload, which explains that individuals have limitations in processing information when the volume of messages they receive exceeds their cognitive capacity (Batista & Marques, 2017). However, this study shows that the issues arising in Indonesia's digital public sphere go beyond the sheer volume of information users receive. What is more decisive is how this information is continuously produced, repeated by

various accounts, and conveyed using language that emphasizes threats, such as “crash,” “recession,” “collapse,” and “crisis.” In other words, the condition of information overload evolves into over-communication, a situation in which communication occurs to such an excessive degree that users find it difficult to distance themselves from the ever-moving flow of information.

The results of this study also show that message repetition plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of threat. Information about economic conditions does not appear just once, but is constantly repeated in various forms and from various sources. As a result, users are more likely to assume that the situation is truly an emergency, even though some of the information is still in the form of predictions or interpretations. These findings suggest that in the digital communication ecosystem, repetition does not merely increase the volume of information but also reinforces the meaning attached to that information.

These findings support the research by Rodriguez et al. (2014), which shows that user engagement begins to decline when the amount of information received exceeds cognitive processing capacity. However, this study found slightly different dynamics. In the context of economic conversations on the X platform, users are indeed exposed to a very high volume of information, but they do not completely stop interacting. Instead, they continued to respond through comments, reposts, or quote tweets, even though these responses largely consisted of repeating narratives that had already been circulating. In other words, over-communication did not eliminate user participation but transformed it into the reproduction of narratives that further reinforced perceptions of a crisis.

The present analysis further expand upon the model of conversation dynamics proposed by Gunaratne et al. (2020). Previous research has shown that excessive information exposure can reduce user engagement in online conversations. Conversely, this study shows that during an economic crisis, user engagement remains high because users are motivated to keep up with developments they consider important. However, this engagement is manifested more in the form of reposting the same narratives than in generating new information. Consequently, the

communication activities taking place no longer enrich public discourse but instead reinforce the circulation of narratives that have already dominated the digital space.

The findings of this study also indicate that the nature of over-communication in Indonesia is highly affective. Economic information is not merely presented as a report on market conditions, but is framed using language designed to evoke an emotional response. The use of terms such as “crash,” “abyss,” or “recession is imminent” makes economic predictions sound like an imminent reality. This style of presentation captures users’ attention while encouraging them to keep seeking out the next piece of information. As a result, users’ attention is no longer focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the economic situation, but rather on constantly trying to confirm whether the predicted threats are actually unfolding.

This situation demonstrates that social media algorithms and users’ communication practices reinforce one another in maintaining the visibility of an issue. As explained by Paskarina and Saifullizam (2025), the visibility of an issue in digital media is influenced not only by mainstream media but also by algorithmic mechanisms that drive the dissemination of content with high levels of engagement. The results of this study show that as crisis narratives continue to garner attention through comments, reposts, and quote tweets, algorithms further boost the visibility of these narratives, causing users to encounter them more frequently in their timelines. This process creates a communication cycle that perpetuates the perception of economic issues as an urgent threat.

Based on these findings, this study argues that doomscrolling cannot be understood solely as media consumption behavior at the individual level. In the context of Indonesia’s digital public sphere, doomscrolling is a communication practice that enables crisis narratives to be continuously produced, reinforced, and disseminated through user-to-user interactions. Therefore, the main contribution of this study is to demonstrate that the relationship between information overload and collective anxiety is not direct. Between the two lies a mechanism of over-communication that drives users to continuously consume and reproduce negative information. It is through this

mechanism that doomscrolling functions as a communication process that shapes and sustains collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze doomscrolling as a digital communication practice that emerges in conditions of over-communication and to explain its role in shaping collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere. Based on an analysis of conversations on the X platform during a period of heightened economic discourse, this study demonstrates that doomscrolling is not merely an individual habit of consuming negative news, but rather a collective communication practice characterized by the repetition of messages, the amplification of fear, and the circulation of crisis narratives without a clear direction or resolution.

Research findings show that intense and simultaneous exposure to economic information regarding the IHSG, gold prices, the rupiah, and the threat of a recession drives the public to continuously read, share, and respond to information in a repetitive pattern. In this process, anxiety does not emerge solely as an individual psychological response but is shaped through mutually reinforcing communication interactions in the digital space. Thus, collective anxiety is produced and reproduced through the very practice of communication itself.

Theoretically, this study expands the discourse on doomscrolling, which has largely been situated within a psychological framework. The novelty of this research lies in its emphasis that it does not focus on hoaxes, nor does it frame anxiety as trauma or an individual disorder; rather, it understands anxiety as a product of over-communication in the digital public sphere. In other words, even factual information, when circulated intensely and repetitively without a context of resolution, can create an atmosphere of collective crisis. This perspective enriches the study of digital communication by framing public emotions as social-communicative constructs.

In practical terms, these findings are relevant to governments, regulators, the media, and communication professionals. Communication strategies that are slow, out of context, or lack a solution-oriented approach have the potential to prolong the cycle of doomscrolling. This finding highlights the importance of timely, accessible, and solution-oriented communication in preventing the continued amplification of crisis-related information and reducing the communicative conditions that sustain collective anxiety. Conversely, communication that is swift, clear, and provides direction can help mitigate the amplification of anxiety. This study also provides a conceptual foundation for the development of crisis communication strategies that are more sensitive to the dynamics of public emotions on social media.

This study is limited to a single platform and a single period of heightened economic discourse; therefore, it does not yet represent the full dynamics of Indonesia's digital space. Future studies could expand to other platforms, employ a mixed-methods approach, or examine the role of algorithms in amplifying the circulation of negative information. Overall, this study confirms that doomscrolling is a digital communication practice that arises from over-communication and plays a role in shaping collective anxiety in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

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