

Social Media Doomscrolling and Anxiety: Psychological Resilience as a Moderator

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to examine the relationship between social media doomscrolling and anxiety among Egyptian adults and to test whether psychological resilience moderates this association, potentially buffering individuals against the anxiety-provoking effects of doomscrolling.

Methods and Materials: A descriptive correlational design was used with a sample of 399 adult social media users recruited from diverse Egyptian online communities. Sample size was determined based on the Morgan and Krejcie table to ensure adequate statistical power. Data were collected using validated instruments: the Social Media Disorder Scale adapted for doomscrolling, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale-7 (GAD-7) for anxiety, and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25) for psychological resilience. Analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 27 for descriptive and bivariate statistics and AMOS 21 for structural equation modeling (SEM). Model fit was evaluated using χ^2/df , GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA indices.

Findings: Results showed that doomscrolling was significantly and positively correlated with anxiety ($r = .58, p < .001$), while resilience was negatively associated with both doomscrolling ($r = -.46, p < .001$) and anxiety ($r = -.52, p < .001$). SEM demonstrated an excellent fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.10$, GFI = .93, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .053). Doomscrolling had a significant direct effect on anxiety ($\beta = 0.47, p < .001$) and a significant indirect effect via reduced resilience ($\beta = -0.11, p < .001$). Resilience strongly predicted lower anxiety ($\beta = -0.35, p < .001$) and significantly buffered the relationship between doomscrolling and anxiety.

Conclusion: Excessive exposure to negatively oriented social media content is associated with heightened anxiety, but psychological resilience serves as a protective factor, weakening this link.

Keywords: doomscrolling; social media; anxiety; psychological resilience; Egypt; structural equation modeling

1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of social networking platforms has profoundly transformed the way individuals seek information, maintain relationships, and cope with daily stressors. Yet, alongside the benefits of social connectivity, growing evidence shows that persistent engagement with negatively valenced online content—often referred to as *doomscrolling*—may contribute to elevated psychological distress, particularly anxiety. Problematic social media use (PSMU), encompassing compulsive checking, difficulty disengaging, and excessive exposure to distressing content, has been increasingly identified as a risk factor for internalizing symptoms across populations (Abbouyi et al., 2024; Mangoulia et al., 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises amplified these concerns by intensifying reliance on digital platforms for news and social interaction, reinforcing maladaptive usage patterns and exposure to threat-related narratives (Schmelzer et al., 2022; Song et al., 2024).

Recent reviews highlight a robust association between problematic engagement with social media and anxiety disorders across diverse sociocultural contexts (Shannon et al., 2024; Shannon et al., 2021, 2022). For instance, a systematic review in the MENA region underscored that individuals with problematic usage patterns consistently reported higher depression and anxiety levels (Abbouyi et al., 2024). Similar findings have emerged in Russia (Brailovskaia et al., 2022) and Saudi Arabia (Alhomaidan et al., 2023), showing social media overuse to be closely linked to heightened anxiety and suicidality risk among young adults and general populations. Research in Greece also indicated that sex and generational differences shape the vulnerability to social media-induced mental health problems (Mangoulia et al., 2025). Such global patterns suggest that doomscrolling, as an intensified form of problematic use characterized by repetitive scanning of threatening news and negative social narratives, may contribute significantly to anxiety symptomatology.

One explanatory framework for these associations lies in the mediating and moderating psychological processes triggered by online content. Scholars have shown that social comparison and self-objectification, often intensified by social networking feeds, fuel maladaptive affective responses (Çınaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2025; Özok et al., 2025; Yaqoob et al., 2025). Excessive exposure to curated lifestyles and crisis news feeds increases self-criticism, hopelessness, and worry, creating fertile ground for anxiety.

At the same time, maladaptive coping and rumination contribute to a cycle of distress, which keeps users locked in doomscrolling loops (Alzamel, 2025; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2025).

Doomscrolling has also been linked to physiological and cognitive vulnerabilities. Exposure to threatening content may dysregulate sleep, memory, and attentional control (Dagher et al., 2021). Empirical studies in Lebanon found that anxiety, stress, and insomnia mediate the impact of problematic use on cognitive performance (Dagher et al., 2021). In parallel, work in Chinese and European populations has confirmed that anxiety frequently co-occurs with problematic smartphone and social media behaviors, reinforcing emotional dysregulation (Chen et al., 2023; Cui et al., 2023; Luo, 2023). These cognitive-affective mechanisms explain why doomscrolling becomes self-perpetuating: anxious individuals are drawn toward threat-related information, while that very exposure intensifies anxiety and sleep disruption, creating a negative feedback loop.

While these risks are concerning, not all individuals exposed to high levels of negative social media content develop significant anxiety. Psychological resilience—a dynamic capacity to adapt positively to stress and adversity—appears to buffer against the harmful emotional effects of digital overexposure (Gong et al., 2022; Gul et al., 2022; Hao et al., 2021). Resilience enables reframing of online stressors, better emotion regulation, and disengagement from maladaptive browsing habits. For instance, studies conducted among university students and adolescents have shown that resilience mitigates the impact of problematic smartphone use on academic burnout and anxiety (Hao et al., 2021; Ji et al., 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience moderated the relationship between fear and death anxiety (Gul et al., 2022) and protected against distress associated with excessive mobile engagement (Gong et al., 2022).

Other protective psychological resources interact with resilience. Self-esteem and psychological capital mediate the relationship between problematic use and mental health (Jiang, 2021; Luo, 2023). Confidence in coping strategies reduces anxiety and career-related worry stemming from digital overload (Singh & Kaurav, 2022). However, resilience consistently emerges as a critical factor; individuals high in resilience report less emotional contagion from online crises and demonstrate faster recovery from negative affect induced by doomscrolling (Ji et al., 2024; Weng et al., 2024). Such findings underscore the importance

of considering resilience as a moderator rather than a mere mediator.

Doomscrolling is also shaped by environmental and individual difference variables. Chronotype and circadian preferences are linked to patterns of late-night scrolling and worsened anxiety (Wallinheimo, 2025). Social context—including communication attributes and digital literacy—affects whether intense social media use translates into clinical anxiety (Weng et al., 2024). Moreover, coping styles play a pivotal role: maladaptive strategies such as avoidance or suppression amplify distress (Alzamel, 2025; Özok et al., 2025), whereas active, problem-focused coping may limit its psychological toll. A longitudinal study among students revealed that problematic social media trajectories are predictive of sustained mental health deterioration when adaptive coping and resilience are low (Shannon et al., 2024).

Notably, cross-national studies suggest that cultural norms around digital connectivity and mental health stigma may shape how doomscrolling links to anxiety (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2025; Srivastava et al., 2024). For example, collectivistic settings with strong interpersonal obligations may intensify online social comparison and increase internalizing symptoms, while Western cultures emphasize individual autonomy, shaping patterns of engagement differently (Song et al., 2024; Srivastava et al., 2024). These cultural nuances highlight the importance of examining doomscrolling and resilience in specific regional contexts to guide mental health interventions effectively.

Recent mixed-methods and systematic reviews provide further nuance to these relationships. Studies in social media-native mothers documented associations between online anxiety triggers and health-related behaviors, suggesting that affective vulnerabilities translate beyond mental health to parenting practices (Tosun, 2025). Meanwhile, reviews of adolescents and young adults consistently report that problematic social media use exacerbates emotional dysregulation, fear of missing out (FoMO), and identity instability (Shannon et al., 2021; Yaqoob et al., 2025). These findings suggest doomscrolling is not merely passive consumption but a maladaptive self-regulatory attempt to manage uncertainty and fear.

Despite mounting evidence, there remain critical research gaps. First, while resilience is theoretically positioned as a buffer, its moderating function in the specific relationship between doomscrolling and anxiety remains underexplored, particularly in Middle Eastern and North African populations (Abbouyi et al., 2024). Most prior work either

treats resilience as an indirect mediator or measures general social media addiction without isolating doomscrolling—a concept increasingly relevant given global crises and continuous exposure to negative digital content (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2025; Weng et al., 2024). Additionally, although studies have evaluated correlates of problematic use among students (Cui et al., 2023; Jolliff et al., 2021) and health implications in different age groups (Brailovskaia et al., 2022; Mangoulia et al., 2025), fewer have integrated structural modeling to test the interplay of resilience and anxiety in this context.

Egypt offers a particularly compelling setting for such inquiry. The country has one of the highest social media penetration rates in the region, and digital platforms serve as primary sources of news and sociopolitical discourse. Socioeconomic fluctuations and exposure to global crises via digital feeds may heighten anxiety among Egyptian users, yet protective psychological traits such as resilience have not been systematically studied in this cultural landscape. Understanding these dynamics could inform culturally sensitive interventions that promote healthy digital engagement and mental well-being.

Taken together, the existing literature strongly supports the notion that problematic and negatively oriented social media use—including doomscrolling—is associated with increased anxiety across diverse populations (Abbouyi et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2023; Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2025), but resilience emerges as a promising protective factor (Gong et al., 2022; Hao et al., 2021; Ji et al., 2024). Yet, empirical testing of this moderating mechanism within MENA contexts remains scarce.

Therefore, the objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between social media doomscrolling and anxiety among Egyptian adults and to test whether psychological resilience moderates this association, potentially buffering individuals against the anxiety-provoking effects of doomscrolling.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationship between social media doomscrolling and anxiety, as well as the moderating role of psychological resilience. The study population consisted of adult social media users residing in Egypt. The required sample size was determined using the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) table, which suggested a minimum of 384

participants for a large population; to ensure adequate power and compensate for possible non-response, a total of 399 individuals were recruited through convenience sampling from online communities, universities, and public social platforms. Eligibility criteria included being at least 18 years old, having active social media accounts, and providing informed consent to participate voluntarily. Data were collected anonymously through a self-administered online questionnaire, ensuring participant privacy and compliance with ethical research principles.

2.2. Measures

Anxiety was measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale-7 (GAD-7) developed by Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, and Löwe (2006). The GAD-7 consists of 7 items assessing core symptoms of generalized anxiety (e.g., excessive worry, restlessness, tension) experienced during the previous two weeks. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 3 (nearly every day), yielding a total score from 0 to 21, with higher scores indicating greater anxiety severity. The scale can also be interpreted categorically (5 = mild, 10 = moderate, 15 = severe anxiety). Previous research has demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and test-retest reliability (intraclass correlation = .83) as well as strong construct and convergent validity across diverse populations, including young adults and social media users.

Psychological resilience was assessed with the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25) developed by Connor and Davidson (2003). The CD-RISC-25 contains 25 items evaluating an individual's capacity to cope with adversity, including dimensions such as hardiness, tenacity, personal competence, and adaptability. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (not true at all) to 4 (true nearly all the time), producing total scores between 0 and 100, where higher scores indicate greater resilience. The instrument's internal consistency is strong (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$) and it shows excellent test-retest reliability and construct validity across clinical and nonclinical populations. Shorter versions (CD-RISC-10) have also been validated, but the 25-item form remains widely used for research examining stress and mental health outcomes.

Social media use and doomscrolling behavior were measured using the Social Media Disorder Scale (SMDS; van den Eijnden, Lemmens, & Valkenburg, 2016) adapted

to capture doomscrolling patterns (compulsive, prolonged, and negatively focused browsing). The SMDS includes 9 dichotomous items (Yes/No) reflecting problematic and excessive social media engagement, such as loss of control, preoccupation, and withdrawal when unable to check updates. Higher summed scores indicate greater risk of maladaptive and compulsive social media use. The SMDS has demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80-.88$) and good criterion and construct validity across international samples. When adapted to doomscrolling contexts, prior studies confirmed its factorial stability and association with negative affect and anxiety symptoms.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 for descriptive and inferential analyses and AMOS version 21 for structural equation modeling (SEM). First, descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were calculated to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and study variables. Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to examine bivariate relationships between social media doomscrolling, psychological resilience, and anxiety. Following this, SEM was employed to test the hypothesized model and assess the moderating role of psychological resilience. Model fit was evaluated using common fit indices, including the Chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

3. Findings and Results

Of the 399 participants, 281 (70.43%) were female and 118 (29.57%) were male. The mean age of respondents was 29.84 years ($SD = 6.37$), ranging from 18 to 52. In terms of educational attainment, 211 participants (52.88%) held a bachelor's degree, 143 (35.84%) had completed a master's degree, and 45 (11.28%) reported doctoral-level education. Regarding social media usage, 176 participants (44.11%) reported spending 3–5 hours daily on social platforms, 129 (32.33%) between 1–3 hours, and 94 (23.56%) more than 5 hours daily. The sample represented diverse occupational backgrounds, including students, employed professionals, and self-employed individuals, reflecting a broad cross-section of Egyptian social media users.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 399)

Variable	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Doomscrolling	21.84	6.72	7	41
Anxiety (GAD-7)	11.36	5.18	0	21
Psychological Resilience	64.92	14.87	18	96

Participants reported moderate levels of social media doomscrolling (M = 21.84, SD = 6.72) and anxiety (M = 11.36, SD = 5.18), while resilience scores were moderately high (M = 64.92, SD = 14.87). Scores showed adequate variability, indicating a well-distributed sample for analysis.

Before conducting the main analyses, statistical assumptions were examined and met. The normality of continuous variables (anxiety, psychological resilience, and doomscrolling) was assessed using Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests ($p = .087$ for anxiety, $p = .092$ for resilience, $p = .073$ for doomscrolling), indicating no significant deviation from normal distribution. Skewness and kurtosis values for all

variables were within the acceptable range of ± 2 (e.g., anxiety skewness = 0.64, kurtosis = -0.81). Linearity between predictor and outcome variables was visually inspected via scatterplots and confirmed statistically (all linearity p -values $< .05$). Multicollinearity diagnostics showed Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 2.5 and tolerance values above 0.40, indicating no multicollinearity issues. Additionally, Mahalanobis distance analysis identified no extreme multivariate outliers beyond the critical chi-square cutoff ($\chi^2 = 16.27$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$). These findings confirmed that the data met the assumptions for correlation and SEM analyses.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables (N = 399)

Variable	1	2	3
1. Social Media Doomscrolling	—		
2. Anxiety	$r = .58^{**}$, $p < .001$	—	
3. Psychological Resilience	$r = -.46^{**}$, $p < .001$	$r = -.52^{**}$, $p < .001$	—

Social media doomscrolling was significantly and positively correlated with anxiety ($r = .58$, $p < .001$). Resilience was significantly and negatively associated with

both doomscrolling ($r = -.46$, $p < .001$) and anxiety ($r = -.52$, $p < .001$), supporting the hypothesized relationships.

Table 3

Model Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
χ^2	218.64	—
df	104	—
χ^2/df	2.10	≤ 3.00
GFI	.93	$\geq .90$
AGFI	.90	$\geq .85$
CFI	.96	$\geq .90$
TLI	.95	$\geq .90$
RMSEA	.053	$\leq .08$

The model demonstrated an excellent fit to the data, with $\chi^2/df = 2.10$, GFI = .93, AGFI = .90, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, and RMSEA = .053. These indices meet or exceed

commonly accepted thresholds, indicating that the hypothesized relationships among doomscrolling, anxiety, and resilience are well represented.

Table 4

Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects in the Structural Model

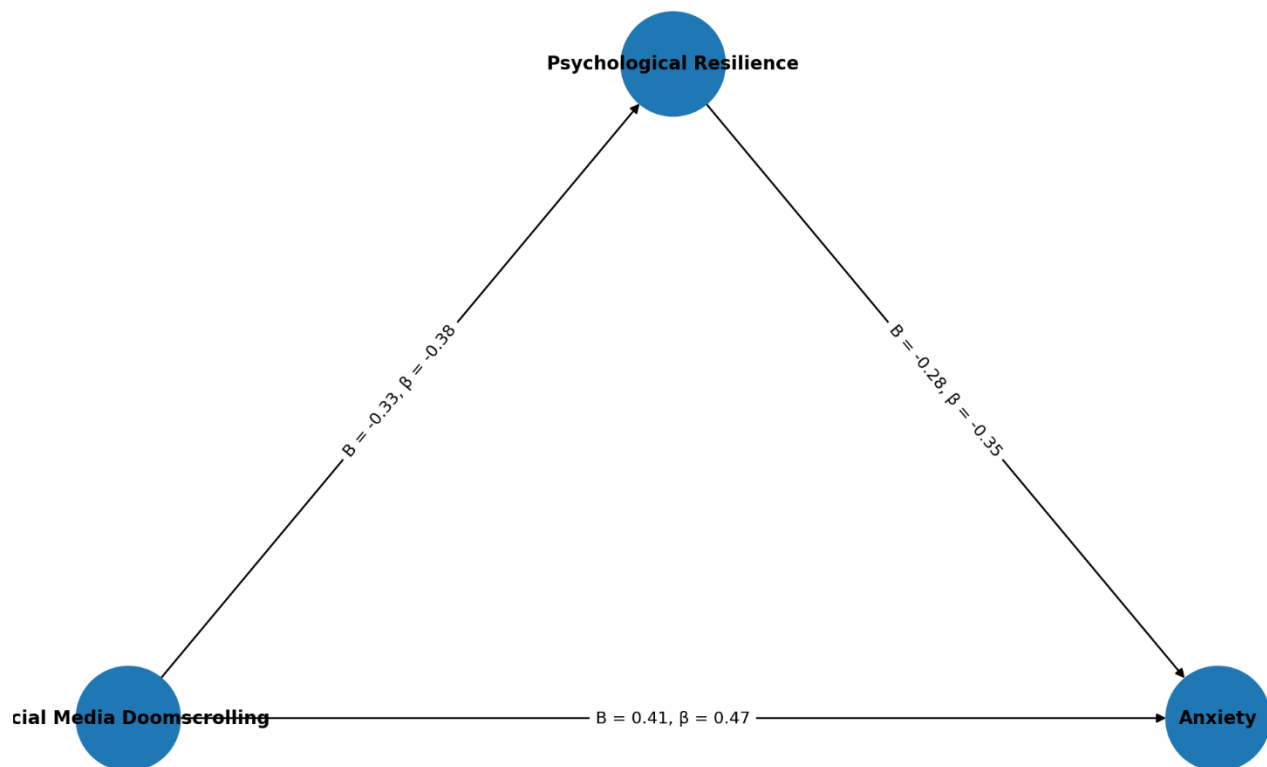
Path	b	S.E.	β	p
Social Media Doomscrolling → Anxiety	0.41	0.05	0.47	< .001
Psychological Resilience → Anxiety	-0.28	0.04	-0.35	< .001
Social Media Doomscrolling → Resilience	-0.33	0.06	-0.38	< .001
Indirect: Doomscrolling → Resilience → Anxiety	-0.09	0.02	-0.11	< .001
Total: Doomscrolling → Anxiety	0.32	0.06	0.36	< .001

The direct effect of social media doomscrolling on anxiety was significant ($b = 0.41$, $\beta = 0.47$, $p < .001$). Resilience had a direct negative effect on anxiety ($b = -0.28$, $\beta = -0.35$, $p < .001$) and was itself negatively predicted by doomscrolling ($b = -0.33$, $\beta = -0.38$, $p < .001$). An indirect effect of doomscrolling on anxiety through resilience was

also significant ($b = -0.09$, $\beta = -0.11$, $p < .001$), indicating that part of the relationship is explained by diminished resilience. The total effect of doomscrolling on anxiety ($b = 0.32$, $\beta = 0.36$) shows that even after accounting for resilience, doomscrolling remains a strong predictor of anxiety.

Figure 1

Model with Beta Coefficients



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between social media doomscrolling and anxiety and examined whether psychological resilience moderates this relationship among Egyptian adults. The results revealed three central

findings. First, doomscrolling was strongly and positively correlated with anxiety, indicating that individuals who frequently engage in prolonged, negatively oriented social media browsing report higher anxiety levels. Second, psychological resilience showed a significant negative correlation with anxiety, suggesting that resilient individuals

experience fewer anxiety symptoms despite their digital exposure. Third, structural equation modeling confirmed that psychological resilience moderates the relationship between doomscrolling and anxiety, such that the positive association between doomscrolling and anxiety weakened as resilience increased. These results align with emerging global evidence and extend the literature by confirming these dynamics in an Egyptian cultural context.

Our finding that doomscrolling is directly and positively associated with anxiety parallels several prior studies across regions. Reviews and empirical work have consistently shown that problematic social media use intensifies emotional vulnerability, including anxiety (Abbouyi et al., 2024; Shannon et al., 2024; Shannon et al., 2021, 2022). Individuals who spend excessive time scanning threatening content, political unrest, and health crises are prone to heightened fear and worry (Schmelzer et al., 2022; Song et al., 2024). In MENA populations, problematic use has been linked to depression and anxiety across multiple studies (Abbouyi et al., 2024). Our data echo these trends and add evidence from Egypt, where high social media penetration exposes users to global crises and local socioeconomic instability, potentially exacerbating anxiety. Moreover, doomscrolling appears to involve maladaptive cognitive and emotional processes such as rumination, social comparison, and identity destabilization (Çınaroğlu & Yilmazer, 2025; ÖZok et al., 2025; Yaqoob et al., 2025). Previous work showed that self-objectification and negative appearance-related comparison on social media heighten internalizing symptoms (Çınaroğlu & Yilmazer, 2025; ÖZok et al., 2025). Our participants who scored high on doomscrolling likely experienced similar maladaptive comparisons and exposure to pessimistic narratives, feeding anxiety and catastrophic thinking (Alzamel, 2025). The strong bivariate correlations we observed confirm that the cycle of threat monitoring and emotional arousal documented in other contexts is evident among Egyptian users as well. Physiological and neurocognitive mechanisms also help explain the link. Doomscrolling is associated with disrupted sleep, impaired memory, and attentional dysregulation (Dagher et al., 2021). As seen in Lebanon and China, problematic smartphone use relates to insomnia and anxiety, which in turn reduce cognitive control (Chen et al., 2023; Dagher et al., 2021). It is plausible that similar processes operate in our sample: as anxiety rises from exposure to distressing content, sleep and attentional control may deteriorate, reinforcing compulsive browsing and worry.

A key contribution of this study lies in confirming the moderating effect of psychological resilience. Participants with high resilience reported considerably lower anxiety even when doomscrolling. This is consistent with research identifying resilience as a protective factor buffering the negative psychological consequences of digital overexposure (Gong et al., 2022; Hao et al., 2021; Ji et al., 2024). For example, Gong and colleagues found that resilience, together with social support, mitigated fear of missing out and smartphone-related mental health deterioration during COVID-19 (Gong et al., 2022). Hao et al. reported that resilient students were less affected by academic burnout and anxiety despite problematic smartphone use (Hao et al., 2021). Similarly, Ji et al. observed that exercise-enhanced resilience reduced problematic phone use and associated anxiety among adolescents (Ji et al., 2024). Our results extend these findings to an adult Egyptian cohort and specifically to doomscrolling, suggesting resilience empowers individuals to disengage cognitively and emotionally from negative online spirals. Resilience likely operates through several pathways. It enhances emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility, allowing users to reframe threatening content and maintain perspective (Gul et al., 2022). During the pandemic, resilience moderated fear of COVID-19 and death anxiety (Gul et al., 2022), indicating its robust capacity to dampen threat responses. Resilient individuals also use more adaptive coping strategies and have stronger psychological capital, which mediates the impact of social media addiction on anxiety (Jiang, 2021). Furthermore, high resilience correlates with greater self-esteem, a known protective mechanism against distress from social comparison (Luo, 2023). Our findings imply that resilience training and enhancement may be crucial for populations highly exposed to digital threat content.

By situating the research in Egypt, our study responds to calls to examine problematic social media use and mental health across diverse sociocultural environments (Abbouyi et al., 2024; Srivastava et al., 2024). Cultural norms can influence the intensity and form of doomscrolling. Collectivistic cultures, where social belonging and reputation are emphasized, may intensify social comparison and internalizing responses (Srivastava et al., 2024). Simultaneously, stigmatization of mental health concerns might prevent timely help-seeking, reinforcing anxiety cycles. Findings from Greece and Saudi Arabia highlight sex and generation differences (Alhomaïdan et al., 2023; Mangoulia et al., 2025), which may also exist in Egypt and

warrant further examination. Moreover, regional socioeconomic and political instability can fuel doomscrolling as individuals monitor crises for safety and adaptation cues, inadvertently heightening distress (Martínez-Monteagudo et al., 2025; Song et al., 2024). Communication factors and digital literacy also shape vulnerability. Weng et al. found that positive communication attributes buffered anxiety risk linked to social media addiction (Weng et al., 2024). Our participants who were resilient might also possess stronger digital literacy, enabling them to filter content and avoid overexposure. This suggests that resilience interventions might be even more effective if combined with digital education programs.

Methodologically, this study advances prior work by using structural equation modeling to test resilience as a moderator, rather than relying solely on correlation or regression. Many earlier studies focused on mediation models or simple associations (Alzamel, 2025; Chen et al., 2023). Our model confirmed that resilience not only relates inversely to anxiety but specifically buffers the doomscrolling-anxiety link. This supports transactional models of stress and coping, which posit that personal resources interact with stressors to shape emotional outcomes. Theoretically, our results affirm the differential susceptibility model, which states that individuals vary in how media exposure affects them based on personal traits. Psychological resilience functions as a susceptibility factor that can transform risk into resistance. Additionally, our findings fit with emotion regulation theory: resilient users likely engage in reappraisal and disengagement strategies when confronted with negative online content, limiting anxiety escalation.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its strengths, this study has limitations that warrant caution. First, the cross-sectional design prevents establishing causal directionality; while doomscrolling predicted anxiety in our model, it is equally plausible that anxious individuals are drawn toward threat-related online content, reinforcing a bidirectional cycle. Second, our reliance on self-reported measures introduces the possibility of response biases, including underreporting of anxiety or socially desirable responding regarding social media habits. Third, the sampling strategy, although adequate in size and guided by Morgan and Krejcie, was convenience-based and drawn from Egyptian online communities; this limits generalizability to rural or offline populations and to other

cultural contexts. Fourth, while we used validated tools, the adaptation of problematic social media use measures to specifically capture doomscrolling may require further psychometric refinement to ensure precise construct measurement. Finally, unmeasured confounders such as personality traits, sleep quality, or offline social support could influence both doomscrolling and anxiety and were not included in the model.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to better establish causal relationships and clarify temporal dynamics: does doomscrolling drive anxiety over time, or do anxious individuals increase their doomscrolling as a maladaptive coping strategy? Additionally, qualitative and mixed-methods work could deepen understanding of the lived experience of doomscrolling, revealing triggers, content themes, and cultural nuances unique to Egypt and similar contexts. Cross-cultural comparative studies are also needed to examine how collectivism, mental health stigma, and digital infrastructure interact with resilience to shape outcomes. Furthermore, future studies might integrate physiological or digital trace data such as actual screen time and heart rate variability to complement self-report measures and reduce bias. Researchers could also test multi-level protective factors, combining resilience with digital literacy, media literacy interventions, and social support, to build comprehensive protective models.

The findings underscore the need for preventive mental health strategies targeting digital behaviors. Educational campaigns should increase awareness about doomscrolling and its psychological impact, helping individuals identify signs of maladaptive browsing. Mental health professionals can incorporate resilience-building interventions—such as cognitive reappraisal training, mindfulness, and stress inoculation—into therapy and psychoeducation programs for heavy social media users. Universities and workplaces could integrate digital well-being curricula, teaching adaptive coping and content filtering skills to reduce exposure to distressing feeds. At a policy level, collaborations with social media platforms to promote healthy use prompts and crisis content warnings could further safeguard vulnerable users.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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