



Differences in Doomscrolling Among University Students Raised by Single Parent and Dual Parents

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Abstract: This study aims to 1) determine the differences in doomscrolling between students raised by single parent and students raised by dual parents; 2) determine the level of doomscrolling in students raised by single parents; and 3) determine the level of doomscrolling in students raised by dual parents. The subjects of this study are early adult students aged 18 to 29 years who are raised by single parent and dual parents. The number of respondents in this study is 228 students single parent and dual parent. The scale used is the doomscrolling behavior scale. The number of items in the doomscrolling behavior scale is 27 valid items with reliability test results using cronbach's Alpha of 0.886, which means the reliability of this scale is good. Doomscrolling scale items have been tested through assumption test, namely normality and reliability. From the assumption test results, it was found that the normality and homogeneity test were met, so an independent t-test was use. The results showed that 1) there is a significant difference in doomscrolling between students raised by single parents and dual parents with a p-value $p = 0,003$. Doomscrolling behavior in single parent is higher than in dual parents (mean value dual parent 66.915) and (mean value single parent 73.535); 2) most doomscrolling in single parent student is in the very low category (63%); 3) most doomscrolling behavior in dual parent is in the very low category (45%).

KEYWORDS: doomscrolling, single parent, dual parent, student, parenting

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INTRODUCTION

Technological developments especially in social media, can be felt collectively. Everyone can easily access anything, such as entertainment, the latest news, the latest trends, and so on, through social media. This ease of access can make users even more eager to find more information they desire. This leads many to unknowingly waste their time on social media, including accessing negative news. This leads to increased curiosity and continued scrolling.

This insatiable desire to continuously watch and access negative news content is known as doomscrolling. Doomscrolling is the behavior of someone spending excessive time online browsing bad, unpleasant, and depressing news that can be detrimental to morale (Gume, 2024). Doomscrolling can also be interpreted as a condition of social media users who continuously scroll with a focus on sad and disappointing news or negative news (Sharma, 2022). Satici et al., (2023) explains doomscrolling as an individual's habit of listening and watching continuously for long periods of time via the internet which can trigger feelings of anxiety, worry, sadness and anger. Therefore, someone who enjoys negative news too often will become a habit or addicted to it, so

that they don't realize that they have spent their time accessing or enjoying negative news content (Rodriguez et al., 2025). Prodjo (2025), someone who enjoys constantly seeing bad news circulating on social media can have a psychological impact. When someone begins to feel helpless, they experience a state of learned helplessness, or a state of feeling unable to change a situation even when opportunities arise. This means that when doomscrolling behavior is high, an individual will experience psychological disorders that will affect them, such as apathy, depression, and frustration, leading to a state of learned helplessness.

The findings of empirical research phenomena were discovered by Safitri & Prabowo, (2025) in their interview with the Minister of Communication and Digital (Menkomdigi) Meutya Hafid who stated that the production of negative content is faster than the takedown process and recorded more than three million negative content on social media. This can be interpreted as meaning that every day negative content continues to be produced to be disseminated on social media, so that the rate of content like this affects the takedown process carried out by the government. Factors that can influence doomscrolling behavior Pandya et al., (2024). There is influence from their social environment to keep up-to-date or it could also be said that Fomo is when they don't know the latest news (Sharma, 2022). The factors that contribute to doomscrolling are usually motivated by the negative news content they see, such as wariness, uncertainty, and anxiety. This is also supported by individual factors such as loss of self-control, algorithmic recommendations resulting from endless scrolling, and social contexts such as political dynamics or natural disasters.

Doomscrolling behavior is more common among students raised by single parents because doomscrolling is a negative condition that is more likely to occur in students raised by single parents. A single parent in a family will meet their children's needs by working, which limits the time they spend with their children. Rodriguez et al., (2025) Doomscrolling is a compulsive habit of continuously consuming negative news, even though this activity can increase anxiety and stress in individuals. Natalia et al., (2026) doomscrolling is the habit of continuously accessing and scrolling through negative news content on social media or other digital platforms, even though it can cause emotional discomfort such as anxiety, stress, and mental exhaustion. Fitria et al., (2025) conveying doomscrolling is a digital behavior phenomenon that arises due to the individual's need to stay connected with social information and global developments that are constantly changing.

Santrock, (2019) early adulthood is a developmental period that begins between the ages of 18 and 29. The early adult developmental phase is characterized by a transition to independence, the formation of an adult identity, the development of intimate relationships, career preparation, and greater social responsibility. Nasution et al., (2024) early adulthood is the transition period from adolescence to adulthood or young adulthood. This stage of development is dynamic because each individual experiences changes physically, cognitively, and psychologically and emotionally (Nasution et al., 2024).

Single parent refers to a family condition where the child-rearing process is carried out by one parent without the presence of a partner in the household. Hutasoit & Brahmana, (2021) A single parent family is a family structure in which only one parent is solely responsible for raising the children without the assistance of a partner due to divorce, separation, or death. This situation requires parents to simultaneously fulfill multiple roles, such as providing for and caring for the children. Kumalasari et al., (2023) Two-parent families have the potential to provide a more stable developmental environment for children due to the involvement of both parents in the parenting process. The involvement of both the father and mother allows for more optimal emotional support, supervision, and guidance for child development. Another opinion, Pratiwi et al., (2025) dual parent families provide a great opportunity for children to receive emotional support, supervision, and behavioral models from both parental figures.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a comparative quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. This design was chosen because it aimed to compare the levels of doomscrolling behavior between two groups of students based on their parenting background: students raised by a single parent and students raised by two parents. Data were collected at a single measurement point through a questionnaire administered to respondents without any variable manipulation by the researcher. The cross-sectional design allows researchers to obtain an overview of differences in doomscrolling behavior between groups efficiently and appropriately to address the research objectives, which focus on identifying naturally occurring differences in characteristics between groups.

Participants

Participants were undergraduate students aged 18-29 years who were actively enrolled at universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Eligibility criteria included: (a) being raised by a single parent (mother only or father only due to divorce or the death of one parent for at least one year) or by dual parent, (b) being an active university student, and (c) providing informed consent to participate. Individuals who did not meet these criteria or submitted incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study.

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling through online dissemination of a questionnaire via social media platforms, including WhatsApp and Instagram. This sampling strategy was chosen to ensure that respondents met the specific family background characteristics required for group comparison. A total of 70 participants were included in the final analysis, consisting of students raised by single parent and student raised by dual parents. Demographic information collected included age, gender, university status, and parenting background. Participants were within the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, with ages ranging from 18 to 29 years.

Prior to participation, all respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained electronically with ethical principles for research involving human participants and received approval from the relevant institutional ethics committee before data collection.

Instruments

Doomscrolling behavior was measured using the Doomscrolling Behavior Scale, developed based on the forms of doomscrolling behavior proposed by Sharma (2022). This instrument is used to assess an individual's tendency to repeatedly access, search for, and consume negative information or news through social media and digital platforms. The constructs measured include the urge to search for and read negative news, prolonged scrolling activity, the habit of repeatedly checking for information updates, and the inability to stop consuming negative news.

The instrument consists of 29 items with a five-point Likert scale response format, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The higher the score, the higher the level of doomscrolling behavior the respondent exhibits. The scale includes both favorable and unfavorable items to minimize the possibility of response bias.

The instrument was written in Indonesian based on relevant theoretical foundations and adapted to the characteristics of the student population in the study. Prior to use, the instrument underwent a content validity assessment by experts to ensure the items aligned with the constructs being measured. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted on a group of students with similar characteristics to the study participants to evaluate item quality and the instrument's internal consistency. The test results indicated that the instrument had an adequate level of reliability, making it suitable for measuring doomscrolling behavior in students.

Procedure

Participants were recruited online using purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Invitations to participate were disseminated through various social media platforms and student networks. Before completing the questionnaire, potential participants were provided with information about the study's purpose, participation criteria, benefits and risks, and their rights as respondents. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically before data collection began.

After providing consent, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of demographic questions and a doomscrolling behavior scale. Demographic information collected included age, gender, student status, and parenting background (single or dual parent). All data was collected through an online survey that participants could access independently.

Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not collecting any personally identifiable information that could be used to identify respondents. The data obtained were used solely for research purposes and were analyzed. This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research principles, including respect for participant autonomy, data confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using JASP software. Prior to hypothesis testing, descriptive analysis was conducted to describe participant characteristics and the distribution of doomscrolling behavior scores. Next, statistical assumptions were checked using normality and homogeneity of variance tests to determine the appropriateness of parametric analysis.

Differences in doomscrolling behavior between students raised by a single parent and students raised by dual parents were analyzed using an independent samples t-test if the parametric assumptions were met. If the assumptions of normality or homogeneity were not met, the Mann–Whitney U test was used as a nonparametric alternative. The choice of analysis technique was based on the characteristics of the data and the research objectives, which focused on comparing two independent groups.

Incomplete responses or responses that did not meet the study criteria were excluded from the analysis, so only complete data were used in statistical testing. All analyses were conducted to evaluate differences in doomscrolling behavior based on parenting background without involving any manipulation of the study variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This research hypothesis test used an independent samples t-test to determine the difference in doomscrolling levels between students raised by a single parent and students raised by two parents. To test the assumptions of this study, a student t-test was used. The results of the hypothesis test obtained a p-value of 0.003, thus the hypothesis is accepted or significant because the p-value is ≤ 0.05 .

Table 1. T-test Results

	t	df	p
<i>Doomscrolling</i>	-2,766	140	0.003

The mean for the dual parent group was 66.915 and the mean for the single parent group was 73.535. These results indicate that doomscrolling in students with single parenting is higher than in

students with dual parents. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in doomscrolling behavior between students raised by a single parent and students raised by dual parents. Doomscrolling behavior in students with single parenting is higher than in students with dual parents.

Table 2. Descriptive Table

Group	N	Mean	Elementary School
<i>Doomscrolling</i>	<i>Dual parent</i>	71	66,915
	<i>Single parent</i>	71	73,535

The categorization in this study was used to determine the level of doomscrolling behavior in students raised by single parents and students raised by dual parents.

Table 3. Results of Categorization of Single Parent Subjects

Interval	Response Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Categorization
108 < X	0	0%	Very strong
90 < X ≤ 108	0	0%	Strong
72 < X ≤ 90	3	4%	Currently
54 < X ≤ 72	23	32%	Weak
54 < X	45	63%	Very weak
Amount	71	100%	

Table 4. Dual Parent Subject Categorization Results

Interval	Response Frequency	Frequency Percentage	Categorization
108 < X	1	1%	Very strong
90 < X ≤ 108	0	0%	Strong
72 < X ≤ 90	8	11%	Currently
54 < X ≤ 72	30	42%	Weak
54 < X	32	45%	Very weak
Amount	71	100%	

There is 1 student with dual parent upbringing who has a Very Strong doomscrolling level with a percentage of (1%). There are 0 students with single parent upbringing who have a Very Strong doomscrolling level with a percentage of 0%. There are 0 students with single parent and dual parent upbringing who have a Strong doomscrolling level with a percentage of 0%. There are 8 students with dual parent upbringing who have a Moderate doomscrolling level with a percentage of 11%. There are 3 students with single parent upbringing who have a Moderate doomscrolling level with a percentage of 4%. There are 30 students with dual parent upbringing who have a Weak doomscrolling level with a percentage of 42%. There are 23 students with single parent upbringing who have a Weak doomscrolling level with a percentage of 32%. There are 32 students with single parent upbringing who have a Very Weak doomscrolling level with a percentage of 45%. There are 45 students with dual parent upbringing who have a Very Weak doomscrolling level with a percentage of 63%.

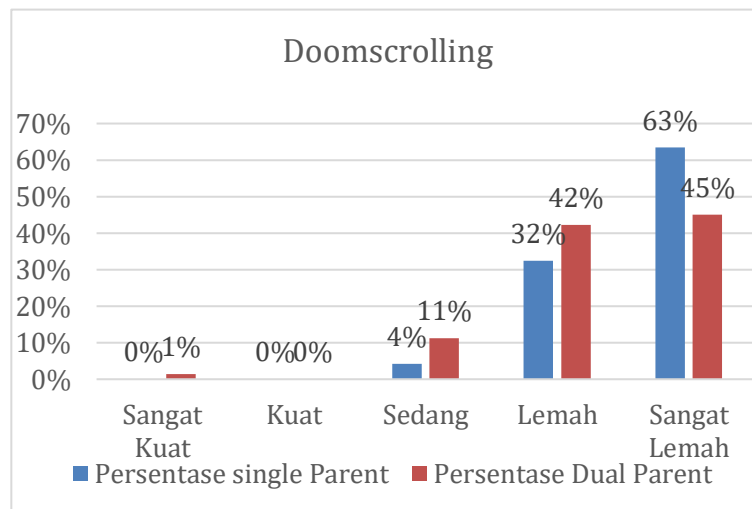


Figure 1. Doomscrolling Achievement Diagram

Discussion

Based on the research results, there is a significant difference in the level of doomscrolling behavior between students raised by a single parent and students raised by dual parents. The doomscrolling in students raised by a single parent has a mean value (73.535) higher than the mean value of dual parents (66.915). The results of this study can be interpreted as meaning that doomscrolling behavior is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by family conditions. In addition, Sharma, (2022) doomscrolling is a compulsive behavior driven by curiosity, a form of self-response to uncertain conditions, and an individual's tendency to constantly consume negative news. Individuals from single-parent families tend to experience high levels of anxiety and stress (Fajri & Indrawati, 2024). This condition has the potential to push individuals to seek escape or coping, one of which is doomscrolling. Wu et al., (2016) life pressures, such as parents prioritizing their children's financial needs and academic demands, can lead to a lack of warmth and attention, potentially leading to stress and loneliness. Furthermore, students from single-parent families are prone to feelings of low self-esteem and loneliness, which can increase psychological stress (Van Dijk et al., 2020).

Conversely, students raised by dual parents tend to experience lower levels of doomscrolling. This is because dual-parent families provide more optimal emotional support and parenting roles. A good relationship between parents and children, along with communication, can create a more stable psychological state in individuals (Yoanita, 2022). This situation allows students to have better self-control in their digital media use, thus reducing the tendency to doomscrolling. Therefore, the relationship between the variables in this study indicates that parenting patterns, or single-parent and dual-parent parenting status, are related to the level of doomscrolling behavior in students. This suggests that the greater the limitations in parenting, the higher the doomscrolling behavior.

In general, the frequency of doomscrolling behavior in students raised by single and dual parents ranges from weak to very weak. Therefore, although there are differences in the levels of doomscrolling between students raised by single and dual parents, students can suppress their doomscrolling tendencies. Mulyono & Purnomo, (2025) students with good self-regulation tend to be able to control excessive digital behavior and are better able to manage their daily activities. Furthermore, students in early adulthood generally begin to develop more mature thinking skills, enabling them to choose which information to consume and which to limit (Mulyono & Purnomo, 2025). Therefore, although students raised by single parents tend to have high levels of doomscrolling behavior, most students are able to adapt and have self-control.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data and research results and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between students raised by a single parent and students raised by dual parents. This can be proven in the descriptive t-test, the results of the dual parent group are lower than the single parent group, so from these results it shows that doomscrolling in students with single parent care is higher and doomscrolling in students with dual parent care is lower. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is that there is a significant difference in doomscrolling between students raised by a single parent and dual parents, doomscrolling in students raised by a single parent is higher than dual parents. The frequency of doomscrolling behavior in students raised by a single parent and dual parents is at Very Weak.

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