

Indonesian Netizen Responses to Energy Inflation Threats after the Strait of Hormuz Crisis

Tanggapan Netizen Indonesia terhadap Ancaman Inflasi Energi setelah Krisis Selat Hormuz

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Abstrak

Eskalasi konflik Amerika Serikat–Iran melalui Operation Epic Fury pada Februari 2026 melumpuhkan Selat Hormuz, mendorong lonjakan harga minyak dunia dan penguatan USD terhadap Rupiah. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi spektrum respons emosional netizen Indonesia di platform X terhadap ancaman inflasi energi tersebut serta menjelaskan bagaimana krisis geopolitik makro dikonstruksi dan dimaknai secara kolektif di ruang digital. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada penggunaan pendekatan interpretif berbasis netnografi dengan kerangka cyber constructivism dan teori sensemaking, di tengah dominasi studi klasifikasi sentimen komputasional pada topik serupa. Penelitian kualitatif ini menganalisis sebelas unggahan representatif yang dipilih secara purposif dari korpus unggahan publik berkata kunci “Selat Hormuz + Dolar”, “Hormuz + Rupiah”, dan “Minyak + USD” pada 18–30 April 2026, dengan anonimisasi identitas pengguna. Analisis netnografis menemukan empat tema utama: (1) kekhawatiran dan kecemasan atas kenaikan harga BBM dan kebutuhan pokok; (2) frustrasi dan ketidakpercayaan terhadap komunikasi pemerintah yang dinilai kurang transparan; (3) sarkasme dan kepasrahan sebagai mekanisme koping; serta (4) optimisme rasional berbasis tren historis harga minyak. Pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa media sosial berfungsi sebagai arena konstruksi makna kolektif yang menjadikan krisis geopolitik yang jauh terasa dekat secara personal, sekaligus ruang artikulasi tuntutan akuntabilitas publik. Penelitian ini menjembatani studi komunikasi digital dan Hubungan Internasional pada level keseharian, serta memberikan implikasi praktis bagi strategi komunikasi publik pemerintah dalam menghadapi guncangan ekonomi eksternal.

Kata Kunci: Inflasi Energi; Konstruktivisme Siber; Netnografi; Selat Hormuz; Sensemaking.

Abstract

The escalation of the United States–Iran conflict through Operation Epic Fury in February 2026 paralysed the Strait of Hormuz, pushing world oil prices up and strengthening the USD against the Rupiah. This study aims to identify the spectrum of emotional responses of Indonesian netizens on platform X toward the resulting threat of energy inflation, and to explain how a macro

geopolitical crisis is collectively constructed and given meaning in digital space. The novelty of the study lies in its interpretive, netnography-based approach using cyber constructivism and sensemaking theory, amid the dominance of computational sentiment classification studies on similar topics. This qualitative research analyses eleven representative posts purposively selected from a corpus of public posts containing the keywords “Selat Hormuz + Dolar”, “Hormuz + Rupiah”, and “Minyak + USD” published between 18 and 30 April 2026, with user identities anonymised. The netnographic analysis found four main themes: (1) worry and anxiety over rising fuel and basic commodity prices; (2) frustration and distrust toward government communication perceived as lacking transparency; (3) sarcasm and resignation as coping expression; and (4) rational optimism based on historical oil price trends. The discussion shows that social media functions as an arena of collective meaning construction that makes a distant geopolitical crisis feel personally close, as well as a space for articulating demands for public accountability. The study bridges digital communication studies and International Relations at the everyday level and offers practical implications for government public communication strategies in facing external economic shocks.

Keywords: *Cyber Constructivism; Energy Inflation; Netnography; Sensemaking; Strait of Hormuz*

1. Introduction

The United States and Iran have historically maintained a relationship full of tension. For almost five decades, both countries have launched various military and economic operations targeting each other's assets or those of their allies. This long-standing hostility reached its peak at the end of February 2026, when the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury, a large-scale military operation with several objectives. Besides ensuring that Iran no longer possessed the capability to produce nuclear weapons, one of the main objectives of the operation was to secure the opening of the Strait of Hormuz, in line with the American principle of Freedom of Navigation. Ironically, this attempt to “clear the way” instead paralysed the crucial trade route itself: since early March 2026, Iran has declared the strait closed and has threatened and attacked vessels attempting to transit it (Congressional Research Service, 2026). The Strait of Hormuz is the world's most important oil chokepoint, through which around 20

million barrels of oil flow every day, or roughly one-fifth of global petroleum liquids consumption, with very few practical alternatives available when it is disrupted (U.S. Energy Information Administration [EIA], 2023, 2025). The paralysis of this route therefore threatens global energy stability and, directly, the economies of almost every region in the world, including Southeast Asia.

Most ASEAN countries, with the exception of Brunei Darussalam, are net oil importers, so the disruption of such a crucial oil route immediately destabilises their energy prices. The literature on the oil–currency nexus has long confirmed this transmission channel: shocks to oil prices are closely interrelated with movements of the US dollar and interest rates (Kilian & Zhou, 2022a), rising energy costs feed into inflation expectations (Kilian & Zhou, 2022b), and the currencies of oil-importing countries tend to depreciate when oil prices and oil price volatility increase (Korley & Giouvris, 2022). Heightened geopolitical risk itself is a well-documented driver of oil prices and macroeconomic uncertainty

(Caldara & Iacoviello, 2022), and the Russia–Ukraine war has recently demonstrated how a regional armed conflict can transmit energy price shocks into worldwide inflation (Ha et al., 2023; Liadze et al., 2023). In the Indonesian case, the mechanism operated through two main factors: first, the increasing need of importing countries for US dollars to finance ever more expensive energy imports; and second, the tendency of global markets to shift their assets into the USD as a safe haven currency amid geopolitical uncertainty. As a result, the Rupiah weakened significantly. From the launch of Operation Epic Fury on 28 February 2026 until the ceasefire on 8 April 2026, the price of one US dollar rose from Rp16,790.6 to Rp17,055.02, and it did not return to its previous level after the ceasefire. On 8 June 2026, the day the ceasefire agreement was violated by the shooting down of a United States Apache helicopter, the USD jumped again from Rp18,043.9 on the previous day to Rp18,184.

Certainly, the Hormuz issue is not the only factor behind the continuing rise of the USD in Indonesia; domestic factors such as the fiscal burden of the free nutritious meal programme and Indonesia's external debt also play their part. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the development of the US–Iran situation around the Strait of Hormuz can bring a significant impact on the exchange rate. Considering that many daily needs of Indonesian society are still imported besides crude oil - such as soybeans, rice, sugar, wheat, and garlic - the strengthening of the USD directly raises the price of basic necessities, and it is understandable that the public feels restless about this phenomenon.

This public restlessness is increasingly articulated in digital space. X (formerly known as Twitter) is a text-based social media platform that has become one of the main arenas where local and global publics discuss ongoing phenomena (Aichner et al., 2021). With more than 221 million internet users in Indonesia (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia [APJII], 2024) and a very large base of active social media users (Kemp, 2025), conversations on X often function as a real-time barometer of public perception. Scholars have shown that social media plays a considerable role in shaping public opinion and even economic decisions (Ausat, 2023), that Twitter data can be used to track inflation expectations in close-to-real time (Angelico et al., 2022), and that social media dynamics can amplify collective anxiety and panic behaviour during crises (Naeem, 2021; Steinert, 2021). At a more structural level, digitalisation has transformed the political public sphere itself, turning every user into a potential author and fragmenting public discourse into competing arenas of meaning (Habermas, 2022; Seeliger & Sevigani, 2022; Staab & Thiel, 2022).

Previous Indonesian studies on public responses to fuel price issues on social media have generally taken a computational route. Hutagalung et al. (2023), for example, classified tweets about the fuel price increase with a Naïve Bayes algorithm and found 78.13% of them negative, while Nurhaliza et al. (2023) applied a Support Vector Machine to classify public sentiment on the same issue. Within this journal, platform-based studies have similarly relied on machine classification of Twitter data (Saraswati, 2025) or examined how social media spreads political awareness among young users during demonstrations (Adilah et

al., 2026). These studies confirm that social media is a rich source of public attitudes; however, three gaps remain. First, existing research is dominated by quantitative sentiment classification, which measures the polarity of opinion but says little about how meaning is actually produced. Second, prior studies mostly examine domestic policy triggers, such as government decisions to adjust subsidised fuel prices, rather than transnational geopolitical triggers whose economic consequences arrive in Indonesia indirectly. Third, such studies are rarely connected to communication or International Relations theory that can explain how ordinary publics construct the meaning of a distant crisis. To the best of our knowledge, no study has yet examined Indonesian netizen responses to the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis, a rare case in which an ongoing armed conflict thousands of kilometres away translates almost immediately into domestic price anxiety.

Departing from this gap, the present study is limited to public posts on X containing the keywords “Selat Hormuz + Dolar”, “Hormuz + Rupiah”, and “Minyak + USD” published between 18 and 30 April 2026. The purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to identify the spectrum of emotional responses of Indonesian netizens toward the threat of energy inflation caused by the appreciation of the USD after the Strait of Hormuz issue; and (2) to explain, using cyber constructivism and sensemaking theory, how a macro geopolitical crisis is collectively reconstructed and given meaning in Indonesian digital space. Theoretically, the study contributes to bridging digital communication studies and constructivist International Relations at the level of everyday online interaction;

practically, the findings offer input for government public communication strategies when facing external economic shocks

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Cyber Constructivism

Constructivism departs from the premise that social reality is not given, but produced and maintained through human interaction and shared meaning (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). In International Relations, constructivist scholarship argues that ideas, identities, and norms - rather than material capabilities alone - shape how actors define their interests and respond to events (Wendt, 1999). What counts as a “threat” or a “crisis” is therefore never purely objective; it is the outcome of intersubjective processes in which actors interpret the world together. Cyber constructivism extends this logic into digital space. Cyberspace is understood not merely as technical infrastructure, but as a social arena in which states, institutions, and ordinary users construct meanings, norms, and identities through online interaction (Finnemore & Hollis, 2016). Recent works have applied constructivist perspectives to explain how state identities and international issues are framed and contested through digital discourse (Badea, 2021), and how social media conversation participates in shaping public opinion on economic matters (Ausat, 2023).

In cyber constructivist terms, an event such as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz becomes “real” for the Indonesian public not through direct experience, but through the circulation of narratives, numbers, screenshots, jokes, and criticism on platforms like X. This process takes place in a digital public sphere that has undergone a structural

transformation: every participant is now a potential author (Habermas, 2022), platforms mediate and fragment discourse (Staab & Thiel, 2022), and competing interpretations of the same event can coexist within separated conversational spaces (Seeliger & Seignani, 2022). Cyber constructivism thus directs this study's attention to what collective reality is being built by netizens: the crisis as a domestic economic threat, and the government as an actor whose accountability is being negotiated.

2.2 Sensemaking Theory

If cyber constructivism explains what shared reality emerges, sensemaking theory explains how individuals and groups arrive at it. Weick (1995) defines sensemaking as the process through which people give meaning to ambiguous and uncertain experiences. Sensemaking has several well-known properties: it is grounded in identity, retrospective, social, ongoing, focused on extracted cues, and driven by plausibility rather than accuracy (Weick, 1995). People do not wait for complete information; they grab salient cues, connect them to past experience, and settle on the most plausible story that allows them to act.

Crises are classic triggers of intensified sensemaking, because they interrupt routines and open gaps between expectation and experience (Christianson & Barton, 2021). In the digital era, this collective sensemaking increasingly takes place on social media, where users bridge information gaps by sharing, replying, and debating cues, and where certain communication roles guide which interpretation spreads (Mirbabaie et al., 2020; Stieglitz et al., 2018). Sensemaking is also a site of

power: actors compete to impose their "sense" of the situation, and official sensegiving can be accepted, negotiated, or resisted by publics (Vaara & Whittle, 2022). Crisis communication research accordingly emphasises that the way authorities communicate strongly conditions public interpretation during uncertain events (Upadhyay & Upadhyay, 2023).

In this study the two frameworks are used in a complementary way: sensemaking theory operates as the micro-engine of cyber construction. Netizens extract cues (daily exchange rate figures, official statements about fuel prices), interpret them retrospectively against previous oil shock experiences, and negotiate plausible narratives socially through replies and quote posts; the aggregate of these micro-processes is the collectively constructed reality that cyber constructivism describes.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a netnographic design. Netnography is a family of qualitative research methods that adapts ethnographic techniques to study the cultures, behaviours, and communication patterns of communities whose interactions are mediated by digital technology (Kozinets, 2020; Kozinets & Gambetti, 2021). A qualitative-netnographic design was chosen for two reasons. *First*, the phenomenon under study-public emotional responses to the Hormuz and United States issue-lives natively in digital traces, so unobtrusive observation of naturally occurring conversation is more appropriate than elicited data such as surveys. *Second*, the research objective is to understand meanings and emotions, not to measure their frequency or to test

relationships between variables; interpretive analysis is therefore more suitable than statistical procedures. The continuing methodological development of netnography, including for immersive digital environments, confirms its relevance for contemporary platform research (Kozinets, 2023).

3.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the individual public post published by Indonesian-language accounts on X concerning the linkage between the Strait of Hormuz situation, the USD exchange rate, and domestic prices, including the visible reply threads attached to each post. The unit of observation is the textual and visual content of those posts. Accounts or individuals are deliberately not treated as units of analysis; the study does not profile users, and personal attributes are not collected beyond what is necessary to establish that a post is relevant to the Indonesian context.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through netnographic investigative and immersive operations (Kozinets, 2020). In the investigative operation, searches were performed on X using the keyword combinations “Selat Hormuz + Dolar”, “Hormuz + Rupiah”, and “Minyak + USD” for posts published between 18 and 30 April 2026. This period was selected because it represents a phase of heightened public attention: the ceasefire of 8 April 2026 had not brought the exchange rate down, so public conversation about its economic consequences was intensifying. Posts were included when they (1) were written in Indonesian, (2) were publicly accessible, (3) substantively discussed

the connection between the Hormuz situation and the exchange rate, oil, or domestic prices, and (4) were original posts rather than spam or automated content. In the immersive operation, the researchers followed the resulting conversations during the observation window and recorded observations, contextual notes, and reflections in an immersion journal (Kozinets, 2020). From the corpus obtained, eleven posts were purposively selected as data records that represent the variation of stances found; selection stopped when additional posts no longer displayed new themes.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analysed netnographically, following the interpretive movements of collating, coding, combining, and theorising (Kozinets, 2020). Each selected post was first coded openly for the emotional expressions and claims it contained; the codes were then grouped into candidate themes; the themes were refined by moving back and forth between the posts, the immersion journal, and the theoretical framework; finally, the themes were interpreted through the lenses of cyber constructivism and sensemaking theory. The reading of emotion in this study is interpretive and contextual rather than computational; it thus differs from, and complements, machine-based sentiment and emotion analysis approaches that have been widely applied to social media data (Molenaar et al., 2024; Tiwari et al., 2023).

3.5 Trustworthiness

To maintain the rigour of the study, the four pillars of qualitative trustworthiness were pursued (Ahmed, 2024; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was pursued through prolonged immersion during the

observation window and through triangulation of sources across the three keyword combinations and across posts and their reply threads. Transferability is supported by thick description of the posts and their situational context, so readers can judge the applicability of the findings to other cases. Dependability is maintained through an audit trail consisting of the immersion journal, the coding records, and documentation of selection decisions. Confirmability was pursued through peer debriefing among the five authors and reflexive discussion of possible researcher bias during interpretation.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

The netnographic analysis of the eleven selected posts identified four main themes in the responses of Indonesian netizens toward the Hormuz–USD issue: (1) worry and anxiety over rising fuel and basic commodity prices; (2) frustration and distrust toward government communication; (3) sarcasm and resignation as coping expression; and (4) rational calm and conditional optimism. The distribution of the themes is not balanced: the negative register — worry, anxiety, frustration, and resignation — clearly dominates the corpus, while rational-optimistic voices form a small minority. Representative posts and their interpretation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Representative Netizen Posts and Their Emotional Interpretation

No	Post	Emotional Expression and Interpretation
1	Anonymised screenshot of Post 1	The poster argues that the Rupiah is very likely to weaken further. The poster also observes that the government tries to lower the sense of urgency by stating that fuel prices have “not yet” (belum) risen instead of “will not” (tidak) rise, and considers that the government prefers trivial activities over clarifying an issue that burdens society. The post conveys frustration toward the government’s conduct and resignation about the public’s fate regarding fuel prices.
2	Anonymised screenshot of Post 2	A public figure greets Indonesian society in a sarcastic tone regarding the rise of the USD. Another user replies with equal sarcasm, remarking that the USD price could soon match the date of Indonesian independence. The exchange implies that there is nothing society can do except watch the USD continue to rise.
3	Anonymised screenshot of Post 3	The poster shows worry toward the escalation of the Iran–United States conflict, which is considered potentially raising oil prices and affecting economic stability. There is also a pessimistic tone about the Rupiah and the composite stock index (IHSG), which are expected to weaken further due to negative market sentiment.
4	Anonymised screenshot of Post 4	The poster expresses anxiety about the impact of the escalation in the Strait of Hormuz, which is considered able to push oil prices up and weaken the Rupiah. There is also concern about Indonesia’s fiscal condition, which is regarded as increasingly pressured by the situation.
5	Anonymised screenshot of Post 5	The poster displays a fairly calm and rational stance in assessing the potential increase of fuel prices by linking it to previous world oil price trends. There is also optimism that the government is still

		able to maintain fuel price stability although the geopolitical situation is heating up. At the end, the poster expresses appreciation and support for the government's performance, particularly if fuel prices can remain controlled until the conflict subsides.
6	Anonymised screenshot of Post 6	The poster shows worry about the impact of the Strait of Hormuz closure, which is considered able to disturb global energy supply. Furthermore, there is anxiety about the potential increase of fuel prices and the economic consequences that Indonesia may face.

Source: processed by the researchers from X (2026). Post numbering follows the order of the full corpus of eleven posts; anonymised screenshots are inserted at the numbered rows. For publication purposes, the posts serving as the subject of the study are presented anonymously to avoid ethical issues

The first and largest theme is worry and anxiety over rising fuel and basic commodity prices, represented among others by Posts 5, 6, and 10. These posts share a common narrative chain: escalation in the Strait of Hormuz raises world oil prices, oil prices weaken the Rupiah and the stock market, and the weakening Rupiah pushes up fuel and staple prices while pressuring the state budget. What is striking is the fluency of this vernacular macroeconomics: ordinary users reproduce, in compressed form, the transmission channel that the economic literature describes in technical terms (Kilian & Zhou, 2022a; Korley & Giouvris, 2022). The anxiety is anchored on concrete numbers, and the daily exchange rate quotation functions as the cue most frequently extracted and circulated.

The second theme centres on government communication. In Post 1, the choice of the word “belum” (not yet) instead of “tidak” (will not) in official statements about fuel prices is read by the poster as a deliberate softening that avoids acknowledging what may come. Combined with a perception that the government spends energy on trivial activities instead of clarifying an issue that burdens society, this reading produces frustration and distrust. The demand embedded in such posts is

essentially a demand for transparency: the public asks not for good news, but for honest information.

The third theme, sarcasm and resignation, is visible in Post 2, in which a public figure sarcastically greets Indonesians about the rising USD and a replying user jokes that the exchange rate may soon “*match the independence date*”. The humour here is double-coded: it works as a compressed critique of the situation and, at the same time, as a statement of powerlessness - laughing becomes a way of coping when meaningful action feels unavailable.

The fourth theme is a minority voice of rational calm and conditional optimism, represented by Post 8. The poster reasons from previous world oil price cycles that the current pressure may still be manageable, expresses belief that the government can hold fuel prices stable, and offers appreciation on the condition that stability is indeed maintained until the conflict subsides. This shows that public trust has not disappeared entirely; rather, it has become conditional and performance-based.

4.2 Discussion

The findings above indicate that social media is not a passive mirror of economic conditions but a productive

arena in which the meaning of a crisis is actively made. The discussion below moves from the general constructivist reading to the specific sensemaking mechanics, and then situates the findings against previous research.

From a cyber constructivist perspective, the most fundamental finding is the construction of proximity. Geographically, the Strait of Hormuz lies thousands of kilometres from Indonesia and no Indonesian territory is involved in the conflict; yet in netizen discourse the strait appears as something intimately close, because its meaning has been reconstructed in terms of fuel prices, cooking needs, and monthly household budgets. The material event is transformed into an intersubjective object - "*the threat of energy inflation*" - through the repeated circulation of cues on X. This is precisely the constructivist claim that threats are made rather than simply found (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Wendt, 1999), here operating in digital space where meanings are produced through online interaction (Badea, 2021; Finnemore & Hollis, 2016).

Exchange rate figures play a special role in this construction. Values such as Rp17,055 or Rp18,184 are quoted and requoted like scores in an ongoing match; the numbers become symbolic condensates of the crisis, so that each daily quotation is experienced as a new "event" even when nothing else has changed. The transformed digital public sphere makes this possible: because every participant is a potential author (Habermas, 2022), vernacular economic commentary competes directly with official framing, and because platform discourse is fragmented (Seeliger & Seignani, 2022; Staab & Thiel, 2022), pessimistic and optimistic constructions

of the same situation can coexist in separated threads without ever confronting each other.

The second object being constructed is the government itself. In Posts 1 and 2, the government is positioned as an actor that owes society honest information; sarcasm functions here as norm contestation, implicitly asserting a norm of transparency and marking its violation. Through such interactions, the image of the "accountable state" is being built from below, and social media becomes an arena for articulating accountability demands. This is consistent with the argument that social media conversation participates in shaping public opinion on economic policy (Ausat, 2023), and it extends the constructivist point that identities - including the identity of the state before its own citizens - are negotiated discursively.

Sensemaking theory then explains the mechanics behind these constructions. The extracted cues are clear: daily USD quotations and the official phrase "belum naik". The retrospective property is equally visible: Post 8 explicitly reasons from previous oil price episodes, and the 2022 domestic fuel price adjustment - which generated massive negative sentiment online (Hutagalung et al., 2023; Nurhaliza et al., 2023) - plausibly serves as the memory template against which the present situation is read. The plausibility principle also operates strongly: netizens do not verify pass-through elasticities or fiscal projections; they adopt the most plausible narrative available - the Rupiah will weaken, prices will rise, and the government is holding information back - because such a narrative organises uncertainty and enables stance-taking (Weick, 1995).

The social, identity, and enactive properties of sensemaking complete the picture. Meaning is negotiated socially in replies and quote posts, as in the sarcastic exchange of Post 2, and the participation of a public figure matters: certain communication roles guide which interpretation spreads during crises (Mirbabaie et al., 2020; Stieglitz et al., 2018). Identity colours the cues that users notice: speaking from the position of ordinary consumers facing the state, they attend to fuel and staple prices rather than, for instance, export competitiveness. Finally, the expressed anxiety is not inert. Collective pessimism articulated online can shape expectations and behaviour in the offline economy, since aggregate Twitter discourse has been shown to track and even anticipate inflation expectations (Angelico et al., 2022), and social media dynamics can amplify panic consumption and emotional contagion during crises (Naeem, 2021; Steinert, 2021). The sensemaking of the crowd may thus feed back into the very economic environment that is being made sense of.

The findings also display the politics of sensemaking (Vaara & Whittle, 2022). The government's "belum naik" statement is an act of sensegiving that seeks to stabilise public interpretation; its rejection by netizens shows a failed sensegiving that instead deepens distrust. Crisis communication research consistently warns that ambiguous or evasive official communication enlarges the interpretive gaps that publics then fill by themselves (Upadhyay & Upadhyay, 2023). In this case, the gap was filled with sarcasm and suspicion.

Compared with previous studies, the polarity distribution found here is

consistent: the dominance of the negative register mirrors computational findings on the 2022 fuel price discourse, in which negative tweets reached 78.13% (Hutagalung et al., 2023) and negative classes dominated machine classifications (Nurhaliza et al., 2023). However, the qualitative lens adds texture that polarity scores cannot show: the objection is often not to price increases as such, but to the manner of communicating them; humour operates as a coping mechanism rather than mere negativity; and there exists a conditional trust that is ready to reward the government if stability is maintained. The study also extends platform research published in this journal - which has classified Twitter opinion computationally (Saraswati, 2025) and traced political awareness on Instagram (Adilah et al., 2026) - into the economic-geopolitical domain with an interpretive design.

Taken together, the two theoretical lenses converge on one claim, which is also the main novelty of this article: sensemaking micro-processes - cue extraction, retrospection, and social negotiation - are the mechanism by which the macro construction is produced and stabilised, namely the crisis as a domestic threat and the state as an accountable actor. For Indonesian netizens, the Strait of Hormuz "exists" primarily as a socially constructed economic object, and social media is where this construction work is done.

5. Conclusion

This study set out to identify the spectrum of Indonesian netizens' emotional responses on X toward the threat of energy inflation following the 2026 Strait of Hormuz crisis, and to explain how that distant geopolitical

crisis is collectively given meaning in digital space. The netnographic analysis of eleven representative posts found four themes - worry and anxiety over fuel and staple prices, frustration and distrust toward government communication, sarcasm and resignation, and a minority of rational conditional optimism - with the negative register clearly dominant. Read through cyber constructivism and sensemaking theory, these responses show that a conflict occurring thousands of kilometres away is made personally close through the collective construction of economic meaning: netizens extract cues such as daily exchange rate figures and official statements, interpret them retrospectively against previous oil shocks, and negotiate plausible narratives socially, producing a shared reality in which the crisis is a domestic threat and the government is an actor whose transparency is demanded.

The novelty of this research lies in bringing an interpretive, theory-driven netnography to a topic dominated by computational sentiment classification, and in bridging communication studies and constructivist International Relations at the level of everyday digital interaction. For communication practice, the findings suggest that during external economic shocks, evasive official wording invites counter-construction; candid and anticipatory public communication is a more effective form of sensegiving. The study is limited by its short observation window (18–30 April 2026), its small number of posts, and its single-platform focus, so generalisation must be made carefully; future research is suggested to extend the observation period, compare platforms, and combine interpretive analysis with computational sentiment approaches to strengthen the findings.

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