A Netnographic Study on TikTok: Exploring Anti-Corruption and Audit Themes in Prabowo's Presidential Speech

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

This study employs a netnographic approach to analyze public reactions on TikTok to President Prabowo Subianto's anti-corruption speech, focusing on the themes of audit and governance. A total of 129,000 comments were collected, with 24,193 comments (19%) deemed relevant, while 105,777 comments (81%) were classified as non-relevant. The thematic analysis revealed that the largest proportion of relevant comments (46.26%) expressed positive support for the president, with significant attention given to issues of corruption (6.55%), hope for change (6.57%), and calls for a clean government (6.15%). Although the audit theme appeared in only 1.4% of comments, it revealed a modest but meaningful interest in auditing processes within local governance. Other notable themes included village heads and the inspection of public funds. The study also highlighted a prevalence of non-relevant comments, often driven by netizens seeking engagement with the TikTok admin, reflecting a broader trend of performative interaction. Despite this, the research shows that TikTok remains an effective platform for fostering public discourse on political issues and governance. The findings suggest that social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, can play a crucial role in shaping public opinion on anti-corruption policies and can be strategically used to engage citizens in discussions about transparency and accountability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

TikTok has rapidly emerged as a prominent social media platform, fostering a diverse and dynamic community that extends beyond mere entertainment to include educational content, social opinions, and political discourse [1], [2], [3]. Its capacity to facilitate rapid content dissemination and engage broad audiences has made it a crucial space for public dialogue, particularly among younger demographics [2]. In Indonesia, TikTok plays an increasingly influential role in shaping socio-political narratives, where users engage in discussions ranging from gender and social justice to government policies and national identity [3], [4], [5]. The platform's algorithm promotes viral content, allowing political messages to reach millions,

thus creating fertile ground for public engagement and activism [4].

Within this context, the political speech of Indonesia's elected president for the 2024–2029 period, Prabowo Subianto, posted via the Gerindra party's TikTok account, has attracted significant attention. His declaration to lead a clean government and his call for collective participation against corruption resonated widely, amassing millions of views and triggering extensive commentary. Given the pivotal role of TikTok in enabling public discourse, exploring how netizens perceive and react to anti-corruption themes and audit-related aspects in such speeches is essential. Auditing and corruption have been extensively studied and are recognized as tightly interlinked, where effective audits underpin transparency and public accountability, crucial for fostering clean governance [6], [7].

Despite the recognized importance of clean governance and audit mechanisms in reducing corruption, the role of social media platforms like TikTok in shaping public perception and discourse on these issues remains underexplored in Indonesia. The substantial engagement with Prabowo Subianto's speech on TikTok highlights the platform's potential to influence public opinion on anti-corruption policies. However, there is limited understanding of how TikTok users interpret and discuss the themes of auditing and anti-corruption within such political communication. This gap restricts the ability of policymakers and scholars to leverage social media effectively as a tool for enhancing transparency and civic participation.

Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive examination of netizen responses within the TikTok environment, focusing specifically on discourse related to anti-corruption and auditing. The general solution involves employing qualitative methodologies capable of capturing the complexity of online interactions and sentiments. By analyzing user-generated content and comments, it is possible to uncover underlying attitudes, perceptions, and collective sentiments that shape the public narrative around governance and accountability [8], [9].

Netnography has emerged as a highly effective qualitative research method designed to study online communities and social media interactions in depth [10], [11]. This approach enables researchers to observe and analyze user behaviors, language, and cultural expressions within digital platforms, providing rich insights into social dynamics and public sentiment that traditional methods may overlook [10], [12]. By applying netnography, researchers can identify emergent themes, discourse patterns, and community engagement, particularly regarding politically sensitive topics such as corruption and audit (Smith et al., 2024).

Furthermore, auditing is critical in mitigating corruption by promoting transparency, accountability, and institutional integrity [6]. The literature underscores the synergy between effective auditing mechanisms and reduced corruption, where real-time monitoring and data analytics strengthen governance frameworks [13], [14]. Social media platforms have become influential venues for discussing auditing and anti-corruption, with online movements utilizing hashtags, memes, and viral content to mobilize public opinion and demand governmental accountability [8], [9]. This social media discourse shapes collective awareness and activism, making platforms like TikTok crucial for political engagement.

Finally, studies highlight how political speeches disseminated through social media can trigger substantial public interaction and discourse, influencing perceptions and political behavior [15], [16]. In Indonesia, leveraging TikTok's viral potential to communicate anti-corruption messages presents an opportunity to engage citizens in governance debates and promote transparency. Netnographic analysis of TikTok comments on President Prabowo's speech thus provides a pathway to understanding how public perceptions of auditing and anti-corruption evolve in digital spaces and how social media functions as a conduit for civic participation [17].

Previous research has extensively documented the relationship between auditing and corruption reduction, affirming that rigorous financial oversight correlates with improved governance and decreased corruption risk [18], [19]. Moreover, studies on social media activism reveal the platform's critical role in shaping political discourse and accountability, yet most focus on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook [8], [9]. The rapid growth of TikTok and its distinct format pose novel challenges and opportunities for political communication and public engagement, which remain insufficiently examined.

While netnography has been applied in diverse contexts such as tourism and brand communities [11], [20], its utilization to analyze political speeches on TikTok—especially concerning anti-corruption and audit themes—has not been thoroughly explored. There exists a research gap in understanding how netizens interpret government accountability and auditing issues via TikTok's unique multimedia environment, particularly in Indonesia's evolving digital and political landscape. This gap limits insight into how social media discourse influences perceptions of governance and whether it effectively mobilizes citizen participation in anti-corruption efforts [21].

This study aims to explore netizen perceptions on TikTok regarding President Prabowo Subianto's speech about anti-corruption with a specific focus on auditing aspects, employing a netnographic approach. The research seeks to uncover dominant themes, sentiments, and discourse patterns in TikTok comments responding to a widely viewed speech addressing clean governance. The novelty of this study lies in its application of netnography to analyze political communication on TikTok within the Indonesian context, focusing on audit and anti-corruption narratives, which remain underexplored in academic literature.

The scope is confined to analyzing comments on the specific TikTok video of Prabowo's speech, which amassed approximately 36 million views and 150,000 comments, with data collected from its publication date in early November 2024. This focused approach allows a detailed examination of public engagement and discourse related to audit and corruption themes in a significant political communication event, contributing to understanding social media's role in fostering transparency and civic involvement in Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 First Use of Social Media for Anti-Corruption Policy Communication

Convey The utilization of social media in communicating anti-corruption policies has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing public perception and the overall effectiveness of such policies. Social media platforms function as essential conduits for disseminating information, promoting dialogue, and mobilizing civic engagement around anti-corruption efforts. According to Balashov [22], effective communication via these platforms significantly enhances the visibility of anti-corruption initiatives while fostering greater public participation, which ultimately strengthens accountability mechanisms.

Beyond mere information sharing, social media facilitates the creation of supportive networks for anti-corruption movements by offering spaces where users can exchange personal experiences and report corrupt behaviors. Stevens [23] emphasize that these networks empower citizens by enabling collective action and awareness-raising, which are crucial for combating corruption. The interactive nature of social media further allows governments to receive immediate feedback from the public, enabling a more agile and responsive approach to addressing corruption concerns [24].

Transparency in communication and the strategic use of social media are also critical in building institutional trust. Mottinger [25] highlights that when authorities use these platforms effectively

to showcase anti-corruption measures, public confidence in governance structures is enhanced. Nevertheless, the dynamics of social media also present significant challenges. Onjewu [26] points out the risks associated with misinformation and manipulation of narratives, which can erode public trust and undermine anti-corruption campaigns.

Therefore, a carefully planned and strategic utilization of social media is imperative for maximizing its positive impact on anti-corruption policy communication. Colonnelli [14] advocate for deliberate strategies that mitigate risks while leveraging the platforms' strengths to promote transparency, accountability, and public engagement. Collectively, these insights underscore the dual potential and complexity of social media as a tool in anti-corruption policy discourse.

2.2 *Netnography as a social media research method*

Netnography is a qualitative research method derived from traditional ethnography, specifically adapted to study online communities and digital cultures predominantly within social media platforms. This approach immerses researchers in virtual environments, enabling detailed observation and analysis of user interactions, communication patterns, and cultural dynamics present in cyberspaces [27]. By focusing on these online contexts, netnography facilitates a deeper understanding of the complexities underlying consumer behavior, motivations, and group dynamics that emerge within digital communities [28]

The netnographic process typically involves several key stages, including participant observation, systematic data collection, and thematic analysis of digital conversations and user-generated content. Researchers meticulously examine the contextual significance of posts, comments, and interactions to extract insights that reveal the values, attitudes, and social norms of the online community under study [29], [30]. This methodology has proven particularly effective in fields such as marketing, where analyzing consumer sentiments and brand interactions on social media can inform strategic business decisions [27].

Additionally, netnography underscores the necessity of rigorous ethical considerations to preserve the authenticity and integrity of participants' voices. Respecting privacy and ensuring informed consent are paramount, contributing to the credibility and trustworthiness of research outcomes [31], [32]. As online communities continue to diversify and evolve, netnography remains an indispensable tool for investigating social phenomena, allowing scholars to engage with the nuanced interplay between users and digital technologies in contemporary society [33]. Through this method, researchers can capture the intricate textures of online culture that conventional research techniques might overlook, thereby enriching the understanding of digital social life.

2.3 *The role of audit in monitoring anti-corruption policies*

The role of auditing in overseeing anti-corruption policies is widely recognized as essential for promoting accountability and transparency in both public and private sectors. Research underscores that effective audit institutions serve as critical oversight mechanisms, capable of preventing and detecting fraudulent activities that undermine governance [34], [35]. In the Indonesian context, the Audit Board of Indonesia (BPK-RI) exemplifies this role by identifying corruption-prone areas and reinforcing institutional accountability through independent audit processes [34].

Public sector audit organizations contribute to transparency by evaluating government financial performance and compliance with regulations, thereby

minimizing opportunities for corruption [6], [36]. Empirical evidence further supports the positive impact of auditing on anti-corruption efforts, revealing that enhanced audit practices correlate with reduced levels of both perceived and actual corruption within organizations [7], [25].

Moreover, robust internal and external audit functions strengthen organizational governance frameworks, creating an environment less conducive to corrupt behavior [37], [38]. These governance improvements reflect the broader strategic importance of auditing as a preventive and detective tool within anti-corruption frameworks. Consequently, the literature emphasizes the necessity of maintaining rigorous auditing standards and practices to ensure the efficacy of anti-corruption initiatives [38], [39].

In summary, auditing emerges as a fundamental pillar in the supervision of anti-corruption policies, with effective audit institutions reinforcing transparency, accountability, and governance, thereby significantly contributing to the reduction and prevention of corruption.

3. METHODS

This study employs an interpretative netnographic approach combined with the lurking technique to explore public perceptions through TikTok comments related to President Prabowo Subianto's anti-corruption speech. The video was uploaded on the official TikTok account of the Gerindra Party on November 2, 2024, and has garnered approximately 36 million views, 1.5 million likes, and over 150,000 comments.

Data were collected using the TikTok Comment Exporter tool, resulting in approximately 129,000 comments in CSV format. Microsoft Excel was used for data processing, filtering comments with keywords related to audit, corruption, and other relevant terms. Comments were classified into relevant and non-relevant groups, with 24,193 comments identified as relevant. The relevant comments were further thematically categorized based on specific topics as presented in Table 1.

Additionally, the study classified the top relevant and top non-relevant comments based on the number of likes received. Separate classifications were also made for the top comments containing keywords "corruption" and "audit."

Thematic content analysis was conducted to identify patterns and meanings within the comments, while data visualization in Excel illustrated the distribution of themes and comment relevance quantitatively. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of public perception of President Prabowo's anti-corruption message on TikTok.

By combining interpretativ netnography with lurking, the study captures authentic, context-rich data through unobtrusive observation of natural online interactions. The use of modern data extraction tools facilitates handling large datasets, ensuring broad coverage and representativeness. This methodological framework contributes to advancing digital media research methods and offers valuable insights for academics, communication practitioners, and policymakers regarding online public discourse on audit and anti-corruption.

Table 1. Themes and Corresponding English Translations Used in TikTok Comment Analysis

Tema (Bahasa Indonesia)	Theme (English)
Adil	Justice
Audit	Audit
Bersih	Clean
Curang	Fraudulent
Dana	Funds
Desa	Village

Tema (Bahasa Indonesia)	Theme (English)
Dukungan Positif	Positive Support
Gelap	Illegal/Dark
Harapan	Hope
Kepala Daerah	Regional Head
Kepala Desa	Village Head
Korupsi	Corruption
Koruptor	Corruptor
Nepotisme	Nepotism
Oknum	Individual Officials
Pejabat	Officials
Periksa	Inspect
Pungli	Illegal Levies
Selidiki	Investigate
Sogok	Bribery
Suap	Bribery
Tikus	Slang for Corrupt Officials

Source: Author's own classification (2025)

4. RESULS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 129,000 TikTok comments in response to President Prabowo Subianto's anti-corruption speech were analyzed using a netnographic approach. From this dataset, 24,193 comments (approximately 19%) were classified as relevant, while 105,777 comments (81%) were categorized as non-relevant. This overwhelming proportion of irrelevant comments was significantly shaped by a behavioral trend among users attempting to attract the attention of the account's admin, who is known for humorous and engaging responses.

Thematic analysis of the relevant comments uncovered a wide array of public concerns. The majority, 46.26%, expressed "Positive Support", showcasing netizens' enthusiastic endorsement—e.g., *Allahuakbar, Allah bersamamu pak. sehat selalu, semoga Allah senantiasa melindungimu pak, i love you bapak presiden Prabowo Subianto _____ semoga Indonesia semakin maju amin ya robbalalamin.* ("Allahuakbar, may God be with you, sir. Stay healthy, may God always protect you, Mr. President Prabowo Subianto... may Indonesia continue to progress, amen."

Table 2. Thematic Distribution of Relevant TikTok Comments on President Prabowo Subianto's Anti-Corruption Speech

Theme	Theme (English)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Adil	Justice	238	0,98%
Audit	Audit	339	1,40%
Bersih	Clean	1.487	6,15%
Curang	Fraudulent	10	0,04%
Dana	Funds	411	1,70%
Desa	Village	2.764	11,42%
Dukungan Positif	Positive Support	11.192	46,26%
Gelap	Illegal/Dark	14	0,06%
Harapan	Hope	1.589	6,57%
Kepala Daerah	Regional Head	12	0,05%
Kepala Desa	Village Head	1.328	5,49%
Korupsi	Corruption	1.584	6,55%
Koruptor	Corruptor	963	3,98%
Nepotisme	Nepotism	4	0,02%
Oknum	Individual Officials	138	0,57%

Theme	Theme (English)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pejabat	Officials	142	0,59%
Periksa	Inspect	1.004	4,15%
Pungli	Illegal Levies	152	0,63%
Selidiki	Investigate	301	1,24%
Sogok	Bribery	28	0,12%
Suap	Bribery	69	0,29%
tikus	Slang for Corrupt Officials	424	1,75%
Total		24.193	100,00%

Source: Author's netnographic analysis, (2025)

Other key themes included "Village" (11.42%), "Hope" (6.57%), and "Corruption" (6.55%), indicating localized concerns and expectations for national integrity. The term "Clean" government appeared in 6.15% of comments.

Several users highlighted the need for financial scrutiny and local accountability, as illustrated by comments such as *"Setujukah para kades SE Indonesia di periksa , dan usut dana yg masuk ,audit kades dan perangkatnya."* ("Do you agree that village heads across Indonesia should be examined and the incoming funds audited, including village heads and their staff?

Themes such as "Village Head" (5.49%), "Inspect" (4.15%), and "Corruptor" (3.98%) further emphasized local governance concerns. Though references to "audit" constituted only 1.40%, the specificity of the comments underscores a meaningful public awareness of auditing's importance. In contrast, comments classified as non-relevant—often focused on admin engagement—dominated. A prime example: *"k sini gara_ pengen di sapa sama admin Gerindra."* ("Came here just hoping to be greeted by the Gerindra admin.") This comment alone received 29,900 likes and 413 replies

Figure 1. Relevant Comment

Figure 2. Non-Relevant Comment

The findings align with netnographic research principles, which emphasize capturing digital community dynamics and discourse [10], [11]. The broad spectrum of public engagement on TikTok demonstrates the platform's capacity to serve as a vibrant space for political and civic expression, reinforcing its role in shaping social narratives ([20], [21]. The dominant theme of "Positive Support" reflects an affective public engagement similar to prior research that identified emotional allegiance as a driver of political discourse on social media ([40].

Although auditing emerged as a relatively minor theme, it remains substantively significant. The specificity and locality of comments suggest a grassroots awareness of the role of auditing in ensuring transparency, consistent with findings by Hassan [18] on public responsiveness to accountability narratives. Comments calling for village-level audits reveal that concerns about corruption are not merely nationalistic but rooted in tangible, local experiences—paralleling Pertiwi [41], who emphasized the culturally embedded nature of anti-corruption discourse in Indonesia.

The prevalence of non-relevant comments—such as "min aku yatim" ("admin, I'm an orphan") or "gerindra g nya apa" ("what does the G in Gerindra stand

for")—underscores a common netnographic challenge: discerning substantive contributions from performative or socially driven interactions [42]. Yet, these interactions also reflect how users co-create political narratives, often diverting the conversation toward identity performance and social bonding, which are core dynamics within digital culture [12].

This study offers critical insights into how anti-corruption narratives are received and reinterpreted within digital communities. Scientifically, it expands the scope of netnographic inquiry into the political sphere on platforms like TikTok—an area still underdeveloped in the literature, particularly in Southeast Asia. The strong presence of civic concerns, even if diluted by unrelated content, supports the assertion that social media can catalyze public dialogue around institutional accountability ([22].

Practically, the analysis highlights both opportunities and challenges in using TikTok for anti-corruption communication.

The high engagement with themes such as corruption and clean governance suggests fertile ground for civic education and policy outreach. Yet, the high volume of non-relevant comments complicates message delivery. This indicates a need for strategic content design that maintains relevance while leveraging the platform's informal and participatory culture [24], [26].

Moreover, the emergence of localized audit concerns—such as scrutiny of village officials—suggests that policymakers and anti-corruption agencies can use netnographic insights to craft targeted interventions. This finding affirms that social media is not only a mirror of public sentiment but also a potential agent for democratic accountability and reform, echoing the principles established by Lin [43] and Wallace [42]. Ultimately, this study confirms that TikTok, when critically engaged, offers valuable access to the evolving public discourse on corruption, transparency, and governance.

Figure 3. Visualization of Thematic Distribution of Comments

5. CONCLUSION

This study employing a netnographic approach has illuminated the diverse and dynamic nature This study employed a netnographic approach to examine public

responses on TikTok to President Prabowo Subianto's anti-corruption speech, focusing particularly on themes of audit and governance. Out of 129,000 analyzed comments, only 19% were found to be thematically relevant, with a majority

expressing positive support, concerns about corruption, and calls for clean governance. Though audit-related discourse represented a relatively small proportion, its presence signaled meaningful public interest in transparency mechanisms at the local level.

The findings affirm the potential of TikTok as a platform for civic engagement and policy communication, while also highlighting the challenges of message dilution due to socially driven interactions. The study contributes to the understanding of how digital communities shape, amplify, and sometimes divert political narratives. It demonstrates the value of netnography in capturing public sentiment and grassroots discourses, particularly in emerging democratic contexts like Indonesia.

Future research should explore deeper engagement with specific user clusters, develop comparative analyses across social platforms, and assess how digital discourse translates into offline policy awareness or participation. The study underscores the importance of integrating digital ethnography into anti-corruption efforts to ensure policy messages resonate within complex and dynamic online ecosystems.

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