

Examining Anti-Corruption Discourse: Discursive Resistance of Generation Z in Nepal on X

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Abstract

This study investigates anti-corruption discourse generated by Generation Z members in social media comments on platform X in reaction to anti-corruption protest announcements in Nepal. Whereas prior work on digital political engagement has tended to take a more macro-centric view of mobilization and organizational participation, there has been less focus on how mundane resistance is expressed in daily online exchanges. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and a qualitative netnographic approach, the study analyzes public digital comments to examine the linguistic construction of anti-corruption demands at the micro level. The analysis shows that Generation Z uses a variety of discursive techniques such as supportive alignment, imperative expressions, moral condemnation, generational positioning, and affective intensification to articulate resistance. These strategies function as low-risk symbolic forms of everyday resistance that challenge political legitimacy and communicate collective dissatisfaction without formal organization. The findings indicate that social media comments operate as a major locus of digital political participation where anti-corruption criticism is normalized, circulated, and sustained through interactive communication practices. The study advances studies on critical discourse analysis by expanding the concept of everyday (or grassroots) resistance into digitally mediated environments and emphasizing the political implications of comment-level expression in contemporary networked publics.

Keywords: Anti-corruption discourse, generation Z, everyday resistance, social media comments

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1. Introduction

Anti-corruption demonstrations and popular anger amongst young people in Nepal have been an intensely visible public phenomenon in recent years, culminating in massive online and offline mobilizations around supposed corruption incidents and restrictions on social media. Comments on X (formerly Twitter) related to protest announcements and news updates, in particular, depict intensely ethical reflection, collective mobilizing language and demands for accountability all things that make the platform a central platform for political, everyday conversations. The empirical evidence for the present study is made from publicly available X comments addressing anti-corruption protest posts.

Social media has gained a prominent role in political talk in politics and social media has now received a fair amount of scholarly attention. As digital platforms permit instantaneous social exchange, exposure, and circulation of political messages, individuals can engage beyond official institutional frameworks. Research on digital activism demonstrates how affect, emotion, and moral positioning drive action online, turning individual grievances into collective expressions of dissent. These dynamics are especially salient among Generation Z, a generation widely characterized as digital natives who rely on social media as their primary space for political expression and participation.

Recent studies focusing on Generation Z in digitally mediated political movements and activism have explored the role of Gen Z as part of digitally mediated political activism and movements. Islam et al. (2025), for example, highlight the role of platform affordances in shaping political engagement, with respect to building collective narratives through the use of social media platforms to engage in a political action context that Gen Z activists used in Bangladesh as a strategy to amplify collective narratives in large-scale protests to generate political pressure, specifically. Likewise, Jude and Padmavathi (2025) investigate Generation Z's experience of social media activism and highlight that younger users actively define political positions and demands through participation in daily online exchanges rather than in traditional political engagement-specific activities. Further, other studies have also shown that social media engagement plays a vital role in the political participation and civic involvement of young people through engaging in evaluative discourse, visibility, and collective alignment (Venus et al, 2025; Alodat et al., 2023).

There are implications for examining digitally mediated political participation as a structured and platform-shaped phenomenon. Recent theorization of resistance proposes that symbolic, routine and low-intensity practices are meaningful forms of political opposition embedded in everyday life rather than exceptional acts of confrontation (Lilja, 2022). Studies on platform affordances suggest that it is the unique structural characteristics of social media platforms that mediate the expression of political engagement, framing the mode of participation as mobilization, identity construction, and dispersed commentary (Theocharis et al., 2023). Recent scholarship conceptualizes political expression in social media feeds as an essential part of continuous participation in digital social environments. Users' intentions and

perceptions of imagined audiences and networked interaction patterns also shape the forms of expressive acts in online environments (Su, Suk, & Rojas, 2022). In this way, comments, reactions, and narrative framing in social media feeds are forms of “expressive data” that further the circulation of political meanings in digital spaces and shape wider political orientations (Butkowski, 2025). Furthermore, evidence from online political literature highlights the fact that citizens increasingly communicate their political assessments and challenges to authority via everyday digital communication rather than via formal institutional channels alone (Vaccari & Valeriani, 2022). Taken together, these studies suggest a new focus for further studies on comment-level discourse as a relevant locus for digitally mediated forms of political engagement and resistance.

Recent discourse-based studies have started to investigate how political meanings are negotiated through everyday language use in social media environments. Research using critical discourse analysis in the context of online political communication has shown that linguistic features like evaluation, modality, metaphor, and pronoun use are important in constructing ideological positions and moral judgments in digital texts. Yet many of them concentrate on news discourse, political speeches, or campaign communication disseminated through social media platforms, rather than on user-generated comment threads. However, few studies have investigated micro-level linguistic strategies that ordinary users use to express political dissatisfaction and position themselves against authority.

Taking comment-level discourse into account is particularly critical as comments are spontaneous, dialogic types of political expression that differ from curated posts or campaign messages. Participants are directly interacting over events, other participants, and institutional actors, co-constructing meanings through concise, affective, evaluative language. A study of such interactions provides a more nuanced perception of resistance as a practice in discursive process, rather than a single act of mobilization. Besides making significant contributions in political discourse research, this approach gives very important implications for applied linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT). Social media comments give genuine examples of how language users use evaluative utterance, stance-taking, imperatives, identity building, and affective language in everyday social conversation. Such linguistic features can be useful for the development of learners' pragmatic competence, critical discourse awareness and digital literacy. Comment-based discourse can help students critically evaluate how language constructs social identities, ideological positions, and power relations in online environments in language classrooms. Not only do we see that digital language is important from a political consciousness and group identity standpoint from this angle of Generation Z, but also how it fosters a critical approach to language which involves using authentic digital texts in contemporary ELT contexts to engage meaningfully with language.

Previous studies on resistance have centered around large-scale mobilization, campaign-level communication, or measurable forms of participation, usually framing resistance more as an outcome of political action than as a discursive practice. However, relatively little attention has been paid to the linguistic construction of resistance at the level of everyday comment-level interactions produced by non-elite users. For example, there has been little discourse-oriented research into how Generation Z articulates anti-corruption demands through routine

language use in social media comment spaces, particularly in South Asian contexts such as Nepal.

To address this gap, the current study uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) framework, based on Fairclough's (1995, 2010) three-dimensional model of discourse as social practice and Scott's concept of everyday resistance. As such, CDA enables a systematic analysis of the ways in which linguistic activities form part of and influence wider discourses and social structures, so is particularly relevant to the study of political speech constructed by non-elites, in digital environments. With the focus on public comments on X related to anti-corruption protests in Nepal, this paper investigates how Generation Z has articulated anti-corruption discourse and how these expressions act as symbolic forms of discursive resistance.

1.1. Research questions

Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) *How is anti-corruption resistance discursively constructed in Generation Z's social media comments on X?* and (2) *How do these discursive constructions position Generation Z as moral and political agents in digital public spaces?*

1.2. Theoretical framework

1.2.1. Digital political participation and Generation Z

Digital political participation serves as a valuable underpinning to comprehend how Generation Z interacts with political matters via social media. Modern scholars have found that political participation increasingly occurs through everyday digital practices rather than solely through formal institutional channels (Theocharis et al., 2023; Vaccari & Valeriani, 2022). Admittedly, generation Z members of the generation are also known to use the internet for social media in terms of shaping attitudes, shaping views, negotiating identity, and participating in discussion on public affairs (Jude & Padmavathi, 2026). As Islam et al. (2025) demonstrate, social media platforms enable young users to build collective narratives and activate political participation through networked communication. In relation to your study, this theoretical perspective gives the importance of analyzing social media comments as political participation. Rather than treating comments as incidental reactions, the study sees them instead as places in which Generation Z makes public political positions, assesses social issues, and builds collective identities. Therefore, the theory guides not only the selection of those comments among Generation Z as the primary data source, but also how interpretations of comments can be used to understand digital political engagement.

1.2.2. Everyday resistance in digital contexts

Scott (1985) contends that everyday resistance is "ordinary weapons" used in routine and sometimes covert acts (p. xvi). Furthermore, Lilja (2022) stresses that resistance can be symbolic, low-intensity and non-institutional in nature, and that this includes challenging the dominant power relations in ways that do not seek immediate political change. In digital space, such forms of resistance might take the form of comments, evaluations, criticism and symbolically expressing a contest against political legitimacy. As Theocharis et al. (2023) have argued, social media platforms open the door to dispersed, and routine means of political expression. As a result, this perspective lends direct reference to the analytical framework upon

which the present study focuses, as it is the theoretical lens by which supportive alignment, moral condemnation, imperative utterances and affective evaluations are read as everyday forms of resistance. Rather than treating resistance only as a collective mobilization project, the study delves into how resistance is performatively played out linguistically through routine online interactions.

1.2.3. Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

CDA is the principal analytical methodology of this paper. Discourse should be understood simultaneously as text, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 1995, p. 87). This view allows researchers to investigate not only linguistic features or syntax but also broader social and ideological processes at work in discourse. Due to how language frames anti-corruption resistance, Fairclough's (1995, 2010) three-dimensional model was adopted in this study as part of an analysis of anti-corruption resistance. Thus, at the textual level, we focus our analysis on some linguistic features including evaluative expressions, imperative constructions, pronoun use, and affective language. It explores how discursively such meanings are created, negotiated and maintained as users interact in forums and comment threads on the level of discursive practice. At the social level, the findings are understood within a broader socio-political framework of corruption, youth political participation and digital activism in Nepal. CDA is no longer simply an abstract model of data collection but influences the research design, analysis methods and findings interpretation.

1.2.4. Comment-level discourse as a site of political meaning-making

Comment sections are a useful site to study political communication as they are immediate, interactive, and influenced by everyday language. Contrary to formal political documents, comment spaces display how users express opinions, negotiate meaning, and build collective positions in response to political events (Kubin et al., 2024). From a discourse perspective, comment sections enable researchers to observe how political meanings, attitudes, and ideologies are constructed through interaction. Discourse is not only a reflection, but it also contributes to making social reality (Fairclough, 2010). Indeed, discourse at comment level in this research is sufficient to justify the use of social media comments as the central unit of analysis. With the research aiming to understand how anti-corruption resistance is constructed, comment threads give direct material on support, criticism, moral judgment, identity, and political stance in everyday digital interaction.

1.2.5. Conceptual framework

This study synthesizes digital political participation, everyday resistance, and CDA to analyze how Generation Z uses anti-corruption discourse on social media to articulate their discourse via social media comments. It assumes that social media is a medium of political expression, that everyday online action can embody forms of resistance, and that the resistance expressed is embedded in linguistic aspects such as evaluation, imperative language, moral condemnation, or generational positioning. One theory of digital political participation explains Generation Z comments on X as significant forms of political engagement. The lens of everyday resistance theory (Scott, 1985, 1990; Lilja, 2022) offers an interpretative lens through which to make sense of anti-corruption critique as routine and symbolic resistance. CDA, specifically Fairclough's (1995, 2010) three-dimensional framework, informs analysis of

linguistic features, interactional practices, and their broader socio-political meanings. These orientations (as a whole) collectively inform the study design, data selection, analytical approach, and interpretation of the findings by explaining how anti-corruption resistance is constructed through everyday digital discourse.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a CDA approach to examine how anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed in Generation Z-related comments on X (formerly Twitter). Qualitative design is considered appropriate because the study focuses on interpreting linguistic meaning, ideological positioning, and social function of discourse rather than measuring variables statistically (Creswell, 2018). The analysis is grounded in Fairclough's (1995, 2010) three-dimensional CDA model, which conceptualizes discourse as text, discursive practice, and social practice. This framework allows the study to examine how linguistic features in online comments reflect broader socio-political meanings related to corruption, youth activism, and digital participation. In addition, Scott's (1985, 1990) theory of everyday resistance is used to interpret resistance as symbolic, routine, and low-intensity practices embedded in everyday communication.

2.2. Data source and data selection

The data were collected from the official X (Twitter) account of Routine of Nepal Banda (@RONBupdates), link access <https://x.com/RONBupdates/status/1964233208511549549> which posted a protest announcement related to a Generation Z-led anti-corruption movement in Nepal. The post included public engagement in the form of likes, retweets, and views, and generated user-generated comment discourse that served as the primary dataset for this study. The dataset consists of 29 English-language comments posted in response to the protest announcement. The comment section was selected purposively because it represents a highly interactive and politically charged digital space where users express opinions, evaluations, and ideological positions.

The inclusion criteria for data selection include the following:

- (1) comments must be written in English,
- (2) comments must respond to the selected protest-related post,
- (3) comments must contain explicit or implicit anti-corruption stance, evaluative meaning, or political positioning,
- (4) comments must be linguistically intelligible for discourse analysis.

2.3. Data collection procedure

Comments consisting only of emojis, hyperlinks without textual content, or duplicate entries were excluded from the dataset. Data were collected through non-participant digital observation of the chosen X comment thread. The researcher did not have contact with users, rather the researcher passively observed naturally occurring discourse. All relevant comments were manually collected through transcription and documentation to preserve original

linguistic features such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, emojis, and stylistic variation. A code (C01–C29) was assigned to the responses to maintain anonymity and consistency of analysis. The data were subsequently organized into a structured corpus to enable systematic identification of discursive patterns relevant to anti-corruption resistance and Generation Z identity construction.

2.4. Analytical framework

This study employs Fairclough's (1995, 2010) CDA as the primary analytical framework. CDA is selected because it enables examination of how language constructs ideology, power relations, and social meaning. The analysis follows three levels: First, textual level: examination of linguistic features such as evaluative language, modality, imperative structures, pronoun usage, and affective expressions. Second, discursive practice: analysis of interactional patterns such as alignment, repetition, stance-taking, and response relations among users. Third, social practice: interpretation of discourse within broader socio-political contexts such as corruption, youth activism, and digital political participation in Nepal. Additionally, Scott's (1985, 1990) concept of everyday resistance is employed to interpret how resistance is expressed through routine, symbolic, and low-risk communicative acts in digital environments. Netnography (Kozinets, 2020) is used as a complementary approach to understand comment sections as interactive online social spaces where meaning, identity, and political stance are continuously negotiated.

2.5. Data analysis procedure

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative discourse analysis procedures grounded in CDA and netnographic interpretation. The analysis followed four stages:

First, the dataset was read repeatedly to identify preliminary patterns of resistance-related discourse and Generation Z positioning. Second, comments were coded based on emergent discursive strategies, including supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, moral condemnation, generational positioning, and affective intensification. Third, each coded comment was analyzed linguistically to identify markers such as evaluative terms, imperative verbs, pronouns, emotional intensifiers, and legitimizing expressions. Fourth, the coded data were interpreted in relation to the research questions, focusing on: How is anti-corruption resistance discursively constructed in Generation Z's social media comments on X? (Research Question 1). How do these discursive constructions position Generation Z as moral and political agents in digital public spaces? (Research Question 2).

The analysis prioritizes interpretive depth over frequency counting. Each comment is treated as a discursive event embedded in interactional and socio-political context.

Table 1. Representative coding data for research question 1

User	Comment excerpt	Primary code	Linguistic markers	Explanation	Context
C01	"can someone share where can I support with some funds"	Supportive alignment	support, funds, physically present	The user constructs resistance through material solidarity despite being	Response to the protest announcement

User	Comment excerpt	Primary code	Linguistic markers	Explanation	Context
				unable to attend the protest physically.	
C02	<i>“let’s unite and rise against corruption”</i>	Mobilizing imperative	let’s unite, rise, against corruption	The comment constructs anti-corruption resistance as a collective responsibility.	Response to the protest announcement
C03	<i>“No one can stop gen z enough is enough now it’s over”</i>	Affective intensification	no one can stop, enough is enough, now it’s over	The comment constructs resistance through emotional urgency and collective refusal.	Response to the protest announcement

Table 1 illustrates how discursive strategies are systematically coded to capture the linguistic construction of anti-corruption resistance. Each marker is grounded in lexical or grammatical evidence to ensure analytical traceability. The explanations demonstrate how meaning is produced through stance-taking rather than isolated lexical interpretation. Overall, the table shows that resistance is constructed through a combination of solidarity, mobilization, moral evaluation, and emotional intensification.

Table 2. Representative coding data for research question 2

Code	Comment excerpt	Positioning code	Agency type	Linguistic markers	Explanation
C04	“It is time to show the power of GEN-Z. Everybody please be there for our freedom of speech”	Rights defender	Moral and political agency	power of GEN-Z, freedom of speech	Generation Z is positioned as a collective force defending democratic rights.
C05	“Finally Nepal and Nepali Youths are awake now”	Awakened generation	Moral and political agency	finally, youths, awake	Youth are positioned as politically conscious actors who have moved from passivity to awareness.
C06	“Gen-Z are the future of Nepal”	Future bearer	Moral agency	Gen-Z, future of Nepal	Generation Z is positioned as the moral hope and future of the nation.

Table 2 demonstrates how Generation Z is discursively constructed as a moral and political subject rather than a fixed demographic category. The positioning types reflect how users assign agency, legitimacy, and responsibility to youth through evaluative and identity-based language. This supports the second research question by showing that Generation Z is actively produced as a political actor through everyday digital discourse.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Findings

This section presents the findings and discussion by examining how anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed in English-language X comments responding to a Generation Z-framed protest announcement in Nepal. The analysis is based on 29 public comments posted in response to a protest announcement shared by Routine of Nepal Banda (@RONBupdates) on 8 September 2025. The findings show that the comment section functions as a space of everyday digital resistance, where users express support, mobilize action, condemn corruption, and construct Generation Z as a political subject through brief and affective comments. These patterns demonstrate how anti-corruption resistance is linguistically constructed and how Generation Z is positioned as a moral and political agent in digital public space.

3.1.1. Discursive construction of anti-corruption resistance in Generation-Z-related X comments (Research Question 1)

This section pertaining to Research Question 1, asking how anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed through Generation Z-related comments on X. The findings indicate that anti-corruption resistance is built on three key elements of discursive strategies: supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, and affective intensification. These strategies are low threshold modalities of participation allowing users to state political position, emotional judgment, and collective orientation without institutional mediation. The next subsections present each strategy as an analytical unit along with representative extracts from the dataset.

3.1.1.1. Supportive alignment

Resistance through public support and solidarity



Capture 1. Example Data of Supportive Alignment

Supportive alignment is shown in user C01: “*can someone share where can I support with some funds*”. This comment represents resistance through public support and solidarity. The lexical item “support” works as a direct stance marker. It shows that the user agrees with the protest and wants to participate in the movement. The user shows that the comment section functions as a space where political participation can be negotiated. The user asks how to support the movement, which means the comment does not only express opinion. It also opens a possibility for further collective action. This form of supportive alignment strengthens anti-corruption resistance by making public support visible.

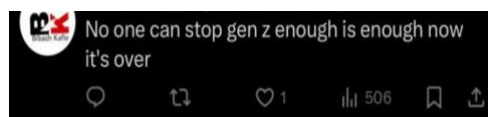
3.1.1.2. Mobilizing imperative



Capture 2. Example Data of Mobilizing Imperative

Mobilizing imperative appears clearly in C02: *“let’s unite and rise against corruption”*. This comment functions as a performative utterance. It does not only describe resistance. It attempts to produce resistance by calling people into collective alignment. The comment also frames anti-corruption action as a shared moral duty. This is important because the comment section becomes more than a place for reaction. It becomes a site where users build collective energy and normalize political opposition to corruption.

3.1.1.3. Affective intensification



Capture 3. Example Data of Affective Intensification

Affective intensification appears in C03: *“No one can stop gen z enough is enough now it’s over”*. This comment constructs resistance through emotional force. The user presents the political moment as a turning point. The comment does not provide detailed argumentation, but it performs strong affective work. It transforms frustration into a public statement of resistance. From a CDA perspective, affective language is not merely emotional excess. It is a discursive resource. It helps users express moral exhaustion, political anger, and collective determination. In this data, affective intensification strengthens anti-corruption discourse by making dissatisfaction visible, memorable, and shareable in the digital public space.

The findings for Research Question 1 show that anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed through supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, moral condemnation, and affective intensification. These strategies allow users to express support, call for collective action, criticize corruption, and intensify public dissatisfaction. The comments are often short, but they carry clear political meaning. They show that everyday comments on X can function as symbolic forms of resistance.

3.1.2. Positioning Generation Z as moral and political agents (Research Question 2)

In relation to Research Question 2, the analysis shows that Generation Z is positioned as a moral and political agent through four dominant forms of discursive positioning: rights defender, awakened generation, future bearer, and collective political force. These forms of positioning show that Generation Z is not represented as passive youth. Instead, it is

constructed as a generation with moral responsibility, political awareness, and national significance.

3.1.2.1. Generation Z as rights defender



Capture 4. Example Data of Generation Z as Rights Defender

User 04 comment: *“It is time to show the power of GEN-Z. Everybody please be there for our freedom of speech”*. Generation Z is positioned as a rights defender in C05 Linguistic Markers: “power of GEN-Z” and “freedom of speech”. The phrase “power of GEN-Z” constructs Generation Z as a collective political force. The word “power” is important because it gives the group agency. Generation Z is not represented as a passive audience. It is represented as a group that can act, gather, and influence public life. The phrase “freedom of speech” gives the comment a rights-based dimension. The protest is not framed only as an anti-corruption event. It is also linked to democratic expression. This positions Generation Z as a defender of civic rights, especially the right to speak and participate in public debate. At the discursive level, C04 links generational identity with political responsibility. The user suggests that Generation Z has a duty to appear publicly and defend freedom of speech. This makes Generation Z a moral and political agent in the digital public space.

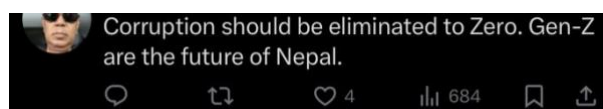
3.1.2.2. Generation Z as an awakened generation



Capture 5. Example Data of Generation Z as an Awakened Generation

The positioning of Generation Z as an awakened generation appears in C05: *“Finally Nepal and Nepali Youths are awake now”*. The word “finally” suggests that youth political awareness has been expected for a long time. It implies that previous silence or passivity has ended. The phrase “are awake” works as a metaphor for political consciousness. It presents youth as actors who have become aware of corruption and political injustice. This metaphor is central to the construction of moral agencies. To be “awake” means to understand the problem and respond to it. The comment therefore positions Nepali youth as morally conscious citizens who can no longer ignore corruption. From a CDA perspective, the comment constructs a transition from passivity to action. Generation Z is not only described as young people. They are represented as a generation entering political awareness. This strengthens the idea that anti-corruption resistance is tied to generational responsibility.

3.1.2.3. Generation Z as the future bearer of Nepal



Capture 6. Example Data of Generation Z as the Future Bearer of Nepal

Future-oriented positioning is shown in C06: “Gen-Z are the future of Nepal” This comment gives Generation Z symbolic national importance. The comment does not only praise young people. It assigns them a moral role in shaping national change. The linguistic structure is direct and declarative. There is no hesitation or qualification. This gives the statement a strong evaluative force. Generation Z is presented as central to Nepal’s future political and social direction.

The findings for Research Question 2 show that Generation Z is positioned as a moral and political agent through rights-based, generational, future-oriented, and honorific discourse. Comments describe Generation Z as a defender of freedom of speech, an awakened generation, the future of Nepal, and a youth actor worthy of respect. These constructions show that Generation Z is not framed merely as a demographic category. It is discursively built as a collective political subject with moral responsibility and public legitimacy. Overall, the findings demonstrate that X comments operate as a space where anti-corruption resistance is constructed and Generation Z identity is politically legitimized. Through short but meaningful comments, users express support, mobilize collective action, condemn corruption, intensify emotion, and position Generation Z as a central actor in Nepal’s digital public sphere.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that anti-corruption resistance in Generation Z-related comments on X is constructed through a set of interrelated discursive strategies, namely supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, moral condemnation, and affective intensification. These strategies operate as micro-level linguistic resources that collectively produce a form of everyday digital resistance. Rather than functioning as isolated expressions, these strategies systematically interact to construct a coherent resistance discourse in response to the protest announcement.

The first research question concerns how anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed in Generation Z-related X comments. The results indicate that supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, and affective intensification are the dominant mechanisms through which resistance is expressed. Supportive alignment, as shown in comments such as “can someone share where can I support with some funds,” demonstrates that resistance is not limited to ideological agreement but extends into material and participatory intentions. This confirms that political participation in digital spaces is not always argumentative but can take the form of low-intensity, symbolic, and resource-oriented engagement. This supports Fairclough’s (2010) view that discourse is a form of social action rather than merely representation.

Mobilizing imperatives such as “let’s unite and rise against corruption” further illustrate how resistance is constructed as collective action. The repeated use of inclusive pronouns such as “let’s” constructs a shared political subject, which reduces distance between speaker and audience. This aligns with Culpeper’s (2011) notion that directive forms in interaction can function as pragmatic acts of alignment and pressure, even when not institutionally coordinated. In this dataset, imperatives do not function as operational commands but as symbolic calls for unity and moral obligation.

Affective intensification, particularly in expressions such as “No one can stop Gen Z enough is enough now it’s over,” shows that emotional force plays a central role in constructing resistance. Emotion here does not function as noise but as discourse. The repetition of urgency markers such as “enough is enough” indicates saturation of political tolerance. This supports Chan and Yi (2024), who argues that affect in digital environments functions as a mechanism of political mobilization and group alignment rather than individual expression.

Moral condemnation also emerges as a key discursive strategy through which corruption is framed as systemic and ethically unacceptable. Comments that describe corruption as “on peak in every sector” demonstrate a shift from individual blame to structural critique. This reinforces Scott’s (1985, 1990) theory of everyday resistance, where opposition is not always overt or organized but expressed through symbolic withdrawal of moral legitimacy.

Overall, the answers to research question one suggests that anti-corruption resistance in X comments is not a formal political articulation. It is a discursively constructed practice embedded in everyday interaction. Resistance emerges through repetition, emotional intensity, moral evaluation, and collective alignment, all of which are shaped by the affordances of digital communication platforms.

The second research question examines how these discursive constructions position Generation Z as moral and political agents in digital public spaces. The findings indicate that Generation Z is not treated as a demographic category but as a discursively constructed political subject. This positioning is achieved through four main identity frames: rights defender, awakened generation, future bearer, and honored youth actor.

The “rights defender” positioning, as seen in “It is time to show the power of GEN-Z... freedom of speech,” constructs Generation Z as a collective actor responsible for defending democratic rights. This reflects Theocharis et al. (2023), who argue that digital participation increasingly produces networked political identities rather than institutional roles. The “awakened generation” frame, expressed in “Finally Nepal and Nepali Youths are awake now,” constructs political awareness as a process of awakening. This metaphor is important because it frames political consciousness as a transition from passivity to agency. Within CDA, such metaphors function as ideological tools that shape how groups are understood socially (Fairclough, 2010). The “future bearer” positioning in “Gen-Z are the future of Nepal” assigns Generation Z a long-term national responsibility. This shifts their role from immediate protesters to symbolic carriers of national continuity and reform. Meanwhile, the “honored youth actor” frame (“A huge salute to Gen-Z youth”) reinforces legitimacy through public recognition and approval. Collectively, these positioning strategies demonstrate that Generation Z is discursively produced as a moral and political agent through evaluative

language and identity labeling. This supports Jude and Padmavathi's (2025) findings, which show that Generation Z political identity is actively constructed through everyday digital interaction rather than formal political structures.

Taken together, the findings from both research questions demonstrate that X comment sections function as sites of everyday digital resistance and identity construction. Resistance is not only expressed but normalized through repetitive interaction. At the same time, Generation Z is not only represented but actively constructed as a legitimate political actor. This dual process shows that discourse in digital spaces operates both as resistance practice and identity formation mechanism.

4. Conclusion

This study examined how anti-corruption resistance is discursively constructed in Generation Z-related X comments and how these constructions position Generation Z as moral and political agents. Using CDA and netnographic interpretation, the study analyzed 29 English-language comments responding to a protest announcement by Routine of Nepal Banda. The findings show that resistance is constructed through four main discursive strategies: supportive alignment, mobilizing imperatives, moral condemnation, and affective intensification. These strategies function as everyday communicative practices that allow users to express political stance, emotional judgment, and collective orientation in a condensed and accessible form. Rather than formal political discourse, resistance appears as routine interaction embedded in digital communication practices.

In relation to identity construction, the study finds that Generation Z is discursively positioned as a rights defender, awakened generation, future bearer, and honored youth actor. These positioning patterns demonstrate that Generation Z is not merely described as a demographic group but is actively constructed as a collective political subject with moral responsibility and symbolic legitimacy. The study contributes to critical discourse analysis by demonstrating how micro-level linguistic choices in social media comments function as mechanisms for political resistance and identity construction. It also extends everyday resistance theory by showing how symbolic opposition is sustained through digital interaction in platform-based environments.

However, the study is limited to a single dataset of 29 English-language comments from one X post in Nepal. Future research should expand the dataset across multiple platforms, languages, and political contexts to strengthen comparative validity. Further studies could also incorporate multimodal analysis, including emojis, images, and video-based interaction, to capture a more comprehensive picture of digital resistance practices. Overall, the study concludes that digital comment sections are not peripheral spaces of reaction. They are active discursive venues where resistance is produced, circulated, and normalized, and where Generation Z is constructed as a legitimate political actor in contemporary digital public discourse.

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