

Hashtag Politics: How Political Framing via X Influences High School Students' Advocacy Efforts

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Abstract

With the increasing prominence of social media in shaping young people's political beliefs, understanding how framing influences students' engagement in political activities is crucial. An experimental design was employed to investigate the effects of media framing on the political activism of high school students. In this study, the control group and treatment group answered similar surveys, with the treatment group exposed to political content framed in either a positive, neutral, or negative tone. The results indicated that framing did not significantly influence students' willingness to engage in political action. The study highlights the need for further exploration of media framing and its impact on political socialization among youth, as well as strategies to foster critical thinking and media literacy.

Keywords: media framing, political activism, high school students

Introduction

In an era where adolescents have become increasingly reliant on social media as a primary source of news, it is crucial to examine how online political messaging affects the political actions of teenagers. Particularly, this study is motivated by others (Gruner et al., 1991; Fesenfeld, 2023) who have indicated the effectiveness of political framing techniques in guiding political advocacy. However, a gap remains in understanding how linguistic framing affects high school students in particular. They, as a group, most often use social media for news (Deloitte, 2025), and they also have access to more media literacy resources than ever before.

Lit Review

Overview of Framing

In 1974, sociologist Erving Goffman introduced the concept of “frames,” when a specific situation's aspects are highlighted while others are downplayed. In 1993, Robert Entman, a journalist, built on this idea by applying the concept of frames to the study of media. Entman argued that the media used frames to influence how audiences perceived events and shaped public opinion. Many methods can achieve this goal, including tonality, diction, and editing photos or videos. For this study, the focus will be on media framing through the usage of diction, specifically euphemisms and dysphemisms. Euphemisms are defined as positive phrases synonymous with a controversial word, and dysphemisms are defined as negative phrases synonymous with the controversial word (Burridge, 2017).

To justify the idea that media framing can affect political activism, it is essential to look at how effective framing in the media is in causing political activism, why framing works in garnering support or opposition for a political cause, political framing in the context of social media, and the social media literacy of students.

Effectiveness of Political Framing

Political framing is a standard tool used by politicians. However, to study the effect that political framing has on a high school student's willingness to advocate for a specific political issue, it was essential to review previous studies to see if they indicated that political framing is an effective tool in forming public opinion. In a survey conducted by Professor Gruner and his

team at the University of Georgia, college students showed a statistically significant favorability rating towards the U.S. Department of Defense, compared to its previous name, the U.S. Department of War. In particular, Gruner wrote that the Department of Defense “scored significantly higher on the ‘good/bad’ and ‘active/passive’ ” (Gruner et al., 1991, p. 155). Gruner’s study notes the effectiveness of manipulating public opinion through framing, especially when using euphemistic language to soften the blow of reality.

Another study, published in *Nature Food*, supported Gruner’s conclusion that political framing can sway public opinion by surveying a group of Swiss citizens about food waste regulation legislation. If the experimental vignette about the policy made it seem like the food industry was not doing enough to address food waste, it could trigger a response in citizens, leading them to believe that stricter government regulations were necessary (Fesenfeld, 2022). This study contended that, even if the policy is ambitious and costly, the public may be willing to support the legislation if the policy is framed in a way that increases public support.

Both studies showcase the effectiveness of framing. Not only can framing influence public sentiment toward politics, but it can also directly affect an individual’s willingness to support a specific policy. In the context that political advocacy can be defined as active, covert, or inadvertent support of a policy, framing may affect young people’s willingness to advocate for specific political issues.

Why Political Framing Works

Understanding how political framing works is crucial for recognizing its effectiveness. To this extent, Vladimir Figar (an assistant professor at the University of Nis) conducted a study on metaphors — a type of framing used in *The New York Times* to describe foreign and domestic political issues. Figar found that metaphors elicited a stronger emotional response than literal language in the context of political discussions in the media (Figar & Antovic, 2014). Figar contends that the emotional appeal of framing is a considerable reason political framing can be so compelling.

The way people’s brains categorize metaphors into emotions can be explained by research conducted by Lisa Barrett, a professor in the psychology department of Boston College, who argued that people associate how they feel in a previous experience with a specific word which causes them to relate the same word with the same emotion in the subsequent encounter (Barrett et al., 2006, p. 38). Barrett’s argument of how words become associated with emotions supports Figar’s study on the emotional appeal of words used in political framing.

Although the first two studies argue that framing works because of the emotional reaction it can draw from people, research conducted by Louri Bougher, published in *Political Psychology*, suggests that the reason why metaphors, a form of framing, are so effective when engaging in political discourse is also because they are relatable at a structural level. Bougher found that individuals connected more with metaphors in casual relationships, specifically those tied to social structures such as family, work, or community. This meant they had a higher likelihood of resonating with people when discussing political issues (Bougher, 2012, p. 150). Thus, familiarity may be the overarching reason why political framing is effective, whether through recognizable emotions or societal norms.

Political Framing in Social Media and Polarization

Social media has become a popular platform for discussing and engaging in political advocacy. Previously, framing was done by the middleman, the news media, between the government and its citizens. Now, most politicians have accounts on X (formerly known as

Twitter), which allows them to influence their constituents directly. As a result, framing is more prevalent than ever before. This makes it imperative to examine how political framing occurs through social media and its potential effects. In a study conducted by Libby Hemphill at the Illinois Institute of Technology, using 100 tweets published by politicians, it was found that the team could identify which tweets belonged to which political party with a 95% accuracy rate (Hemphill et al., 2013). Hemphill and her team asserted that political parties are taking the initiative to make their own choices in framing.

The effectiveness of social media framing is further corroborated by Himelboim and his colleagues at the University of Georgia, who found that Twitter users were unlikely to be exposed to contrasting perspectives (Himelboim et al., 2013). In Himelboim's study, he argued that people would experience a reinforcement of their current views instead of cross-ideological experiences.

A lack of cross-ideological experiences can be harmful when fostering political understanding. As Mutz explains, gaining exposure to differing viewpoints is crucial in promoting tolerance (Mutz, 2002). Without exposure, greater polarization would occur on social media platforms because users are more likely to be exposed to framing that supports their pre-existing views. In other words, if teenagers are exposed to similar viewpoints, their feelings about advocating for an issue before and after experiencing political framing on social media should become even stronger.

Youth Media Consumption and Vulnerability to Framing

Youth's consumption of news is vastly different than that of previous generations with the rise of social media platforms. A study by the financial advisory firm Deloitte revealed that 51% of Gen Z (aged 14-18) get their news from social media, higher than from other sources such as TV news and news websites (Deloitte, 2025). Despite teenagers, between the ages of 14 and 18, frequently using social media for news, the *International Journal of Communication* found that 40-57% of high school students reported having some type of media literacy education (Kahne et al., 2012). In addition, researchers found that young people were more likely to detect fake news due to their higher digital literacy compared to older age groups (Moore & Hancock, 2022). Thus, it can be assumed that high school students are less likely to fall for framing in their consumption of political framing on social media.

However, as noted in a study by *News Media and Society*, teens stated that although they knew the steps for media verification very well, putting them into practice was much more difficult. The study also found that youth, while understanding how media literacy works for news, had a less clear understanding of social media's biased algorithms (Swart, 2023). In other words, teens, despite being more media literate, couldn't transfer their knowledge to deduce biased information on social media.

Although youth are not skilled at detecting tools like framing, they would not act on biased news unless social media affects their political advocacy. However, there is substantive evidence that social media affects teens' political advocacy. A meta-analysis conducted by Boulianne and Theocharis demonstrated that teens' online activities, particularly engaging with specific content, are correlated with offline activities (e.g., volunteering and voting) (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020).

The cause of teens' political actions mirroring their social media engagement can be attributed to many reasons. A study by the University of British Columbia on the Global Climate Strike found that Canadian political organizations' tweets emphasized unity and the youth's capacity to make a difference. This helped teens feel as though their actions could make an

impact. Furthermore, teens also thought they had an active role in the movement as they could urge others to join it through reposting on X (Chia, 2021). Chia's work, coupled with the study conducted by Boulianne and Theocharis, indicates that youth not only become mobilized through social media but may even act as the organizers of a movement by encouraging others to support a political cause.

Gap

While existing research has examined instances of framing in both the news and social media and a link between online engagement and offline political action, there is a lack of research done on specific forms of framing, such as euphemisms and dysphemisms, and how they affect high school students' willingness to engage in political advocacy. As youth continue to receive their news from social media, it is crucial to conduct this study to better inform methods of media literacy and political communication. Thus, it is essential to examine the question: To what extent does framing via X affect a high school student's willingness to advocate for a specific political issue? Based on other studies, the research hypothesis is that the more extreme the political social media framing is, the more willing high school students will feel to advocate for a specific cause.

Method

The method used to answer the research question was a survey. Past studies on political framing through diction (Gruner et al., 1991, p. 155) and its effect on political advocacy (Fesenfeld et al., 2023) have suggested a potential rationale for using a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of political framing on people's perceptions of policies and their political advocacy. As such, a survey was constructed with a control group to assess high school students' willingness to engage in political advocacy without framing. In contrast, two treatment groups were created to evaluate the effect of positive or negative framing on students' desire to engage in political advocacy.

To examine the extent to which political framing via X can affect youth advocacy, the study utilized purposive sampling. In other words, students were selected from a mid-sized high school titled "Y" and had to be between the ages of 14-18, as this was the age range studied by previous literature to rely on social media for the news (Deloitte, 2025), and also had to be users of X. While not randomly selected, the study using purposive sampling was proper as the survey is interested in specifically how X's political framing affects its users rather than a generalization for the broader youth population. The survey was distributed through online communities such as group chats. Out of the 34 students asked to participate in the study, 30 completed the consent form (See Appendix F). Ten students were assigned to the positive framing group, ten to the negative framing group, and ten to the neutral framing group. Positive framing was content promoting advocacy or support for a political issue. Neutral Framing was content that was factual and unbiased. Negative framing was content that criticized or opposed the political issue. Students were told that their survey answers would remain anonymous. If students had any further questions about the survey, they were not answered unless they pertained to understanding how to complete it.

As a pre-survey, students were asked screening questions to ensure that they used X, were between 14 and 18 years old, and were in high school (See Appendix A). Furthermore, students were asked questions about their political leanings, understanding of politics, and how often they used social media as a news source (See Appendix D). These questions were asked to see if knowledge, belief system, or the use of social media for news could have a potential impact on the respondent's answers. Then, each student was asked to answer if they wanted to

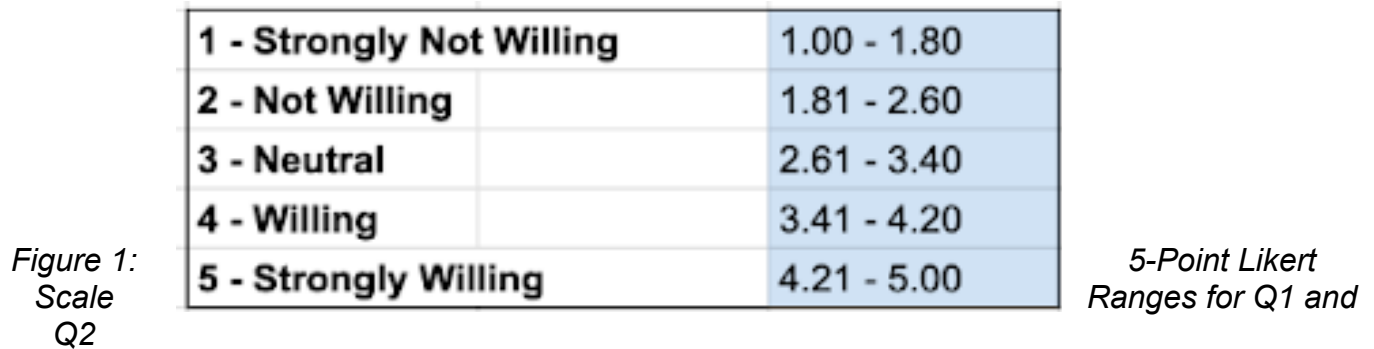
support the piece of legislation (See Appendix D). The mock legislation, titled SB101, was loosely based on the “Secure the Border Act of 2023” (See Appendix B). This act was chosen because it had many polarizing news articles that used both euphemistic and dysphemistic language, readily available online. The issue chosen was the deportation of immigrants, as it has always been a topic of discussion in political media, and many students have been or know someone who has been affected by this issue.

For the actual survey itself, students were told that the tweets were from a randomly selected individual online, as traditional media is no longer the primary source of framing, as stated in the literature review. Participants were asked to read a tweet that was either positive, neutral, or negative regarding this piece of legislation. To make the tweets as realistic as possible, they were written based on a study of hashtags used for framing purposes on X (Hemphill et al., 2013). The reason X was selected for this study is that it tends to have an even mix of Republicans and Democrats, compared to platforms like Truth Social and TikTok, which lean more towards Republican and Democratic ideas, respectively (Shearer et al., 2024). This aimed to eliminate the perception that the study was trying to convince students to adopt a specific political agenda. After reading the tweet, questions 1-2 were asked to gauge students' willingness to advocate for the issue by sharing the legislation on social media, as youth have previously done by sharing information about issues on X (Chia, 2021). This was evaluated on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly opposed, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) (See Appendix D). A Likert Scale was used to gauge how strongly a student supported or opposed advocating for the legislation. The students were also asked to express their emotions after reading the tweet, as effective framing often leads to an emotional response among individuals (Figar & Antovic, 2014). Question 3 asked if students believed they could distinguish between polarizing news and real news on X (See Appendix D). The reason this question was asked was that previous studies indicated that youth had a significant amount of media literacy, but it did not transfer to all social media algorithms. The survey wanted to see if this transfer also applied to X (Swart, 2023). Question 4 asked if students believed that news on X was trustworthy. The reason this question was asked is that many students are aware that the media can be biased (Kahne et al., 2012). However, even if students know the media could be biased, the researcher wanted to see if awareness of this influenced their likelihood of being swayed by framing.

Results and Analysis

The most crucial aspect of the survey was to examine whether people became more or less willing to advocate for the mock bill, thereby highlighting whether political framing via X truly affected youth. Although participants were also polled on their news consumption, media literacy, political leanings, and emotional responses to the tweets, these factors were not evaluated in this analysis because they were used to understand participant context better, but were not central to the study's research question.

The three most important aspects of the data collection were the control group, the positive framing group, the negative framing group, and the likelihood of these individuals to support the bill (SB101) through posting about it on X before and after being exposed to a framed tweet.



Participants answered questions about the likelihood that they would be willing to support the bill (SB101) by posting about it on X, versus the proportion of the group that would still choose to support SB101 after reading a framed or neutral tweet, using a 5-point Likert Scale. As Figure 1 indicates, selecting one indicated that the participant was strongly not willing, while selecting five indicated that they were strongly willing.

RESPONDENTS (Neutral)	Q1	Q2
A	3	2
B	1	3
C	3	3
D	1	3
E	2	1
F	1	3
G	1	3
H	3	5
I	4	4
J	2	2
AVG:	2.1	2.9

Figure 2: Likert Scale for Neutral Framing Group (Q1 and Q2)

Figure 2 showcases the Likert Scale survey results for the neutral framing group. Q1 correlates with the first question in the survey that uses a Likert Scale, and Q2 correlates with the second question in the study that uses a Likert Scale (See Appendix D). Notably, the average score for Q1 was 2.1, with only participant I indicating a number, 4, on the higher end of the scale, while the rest of the participants answered with numbers on the lower half of the scale. In Q2, the average was slightly higher at 2.9, and participant H was the only person in the group who selected a 5, or a strong willingness, to post in support of SB101 on social media.

<i>Interpretation (Neutral)</i>		
Q1	2.1	Not Willing
Q2	2.9	Neutral

*Figure 3:
Neutral*

*Evaluation of
Framing Likert*

Scale Results (Q1 and Q2)

Evaluating the neutral framing group (the control group) using the range in Figure 1, the average of Q1 fell into the not-willing category. In other words, this indicates low support for posting about SB101 on X. This was expected because the study did not pre-screen candidates based on their political activity. Therefore, the polling likely reflected that the survey included many participants with varying degrees of political involvement, leaning more towards being less politically active. This was likely the baseline engagement of the individuals in the study to begin with. After being exposed to neutral framing, participants were asked again if they were willing to post in support of SB101. Interestingly, the average score now fell under the neutral category as depicted in Figure 3. This indicates that the neutral framing led to a more neutral feeling of supporting SB101, instead of a sense of unwillingness.

RESPONDENTS (Neg.)	Q1	Q2
A	3	3
B	3	3
C	1	1
D	1	2
E	3	2
F	2	2
G	2	2
H	3	5
I	4	3
J	2	3
AVG:	2.4	2.6

Figure 4: Likert Scale for Negative Framing Group (Q1 and Q2)

When examining the negative framing group, Figure 4 showcases the Likert Scale survey results. The initial average support for SB101 was slightly higher for the negative group, at 2.4, compared to 2.1 for the neutral group. However, this difference is likely due to a margin of error caused by the small sample size. In Q2, the average was 2.6. Although the framing was negative, participant H stood out as an outlier, being the only participant who selected a number from the higher range of the scale for Q2. In contrast, the others selected numbers three and below.

Interpretation (Neg.)		
Q1	2.4	Not Willing
Q2	2.6	Not Willing

Figure 5: Evaluation of Negative Framing Likert Scale Results (Q1 and Q2)

In interpreting the negative framing results, Figure 5 shows that Q1 generally showed a reluctance to support SB101 by posting about it on X. This stayed consistent with the results of the neutral framing group. However, after being exposed to negative framing, Figure 5 indicates that participants, overall, continued to be not willing to support SB101 unlike in the negative framing group where the results showed that people began to feel neutral about posting about SB101 on X. Although, it is important to note, the average for Q2 in Figure 5 was a 2.6 which is higher than the original 2.4, which indicates a slight increase in willingness to support SB101 amongst the negative framing group. This means that negative framing had a counterintuitive effect.

RESPONDENTS (Pos.)	Q1	Q2
A	1	1
B	1	1
C	3	3
D	3	3
E	4	2
F	2	3
G	2	2
H	1	1
I	3	4
J	5	1
AVG:	2.5	2.1

Figure 6: Likert Scale for Positive Framing Group (Q1 and Q2)

Figure 6 showcases the Likert Scale survey results for the positive framing group. The average score for Q1 was 2.5, which stayed consistent with both the neutral and negative framing groups and their results. In Q2, the average was 2.1, which was the lowest of any

group. Inherently, participant J went from choosing the extreme side of support to the extreme side of not supporting SB101 as indicated by Figure 6.

Interpretation (Pos.)		
Q1	2.5	Not Willing
Q2	2.1	Not Willing

Figure 7: Evaluation of Positive Framing Likert Scale Results (Q1 and Q2)

Q1, as shown in Figure 7, indicated a general unwillingness to support SB101. In Q2, the figure shows that the average results continue to fall under the 'not willing' category. However, in Q2, support dropped, which means that positive framing did not have the intended effect of increasing support for SB101. As it has been established that negative and positive framing may not have the expected effect, it is essential to look at the potential causes of this effect by examining the role media literacy played, as previous research has indicated (Kahne et al., 2012) that teenagers have received the most amount of exposure to media literacy.

1 - Strongly Disagree	1.00 - 1.80
2 - Disagree	1.81 - 2.60
3 - Neutral	2.61 - 3.40
4 - Agree	3.41 - 4.20
5 - Strongly Agree	4.21 - 5.00

Figure 8: 5-Point Likert Scale Ranges for Q3 and Q4

The two factors to evaluate students' ability to use media literacy skills were to assess whether they found the tweet persuasive (Q4) and whether they considered it credible as well (Q3). As Figure 1 indicates, one participant strongly disagreed with the statement, while five participants strongly agreed.

RESPONDENTS (Neg.)	Q3	Q4
A	2	2
B	4	4
C	3	1
D	2	2
E	2	4
F	1	1
G	1	3
H	3	4
I	2	3
J	2	2
AVG:	2.2	2.6

Interpretation (Neg.)		
Q3	2.2	Disagree
Q4	2.6	Disagree

Figure 9: Likert Scale for Negative Framing Group (Q3 and Q4) Figure 10: Evaluation of Negative Framing Likert Scale Results (Q3 and Q4)

As indicated in Figure 10, for the negative framing group, participants, overall, found the tweet to be both uncredible and unpersuasive. This shows that participants knew how to use media literacy skills to identify an unreliable tweet. Even if they found the tweet to be persuasive or neutrally persuasive, participants G, E, and H in Figure 9 indicated that they still understood that the tweet was not credible.

RESPONDENTS (Pos.)	Q3	Q4
A	2	1
B	2	3
C	3	3
D	2	4
E	3	2
F	1	2
G	1	2
H	3	2
I	2	2
J	2	3
AVG:	2.1	2.4

Interpretation (Pos.)		
Q3	2.1	Disagree
Q4	2.4	Disagree

Figure 11: Likert Scale for Positive Framing Group (Q3 and Q4) Figure 12: Evaluation of Positive Framing Likert Scale Results (Q3 and Q4)

Similarly, in the positive framing group, respondents felt that the survey was not credible or persuasive, as indicated by Figure 12. This suggests that high school students were aware that the tweets in the negative framing and positive framing instances were not credible. By finding the tweets to be not credible, it was directly reflected in the students' willingness to support SB101, as their viewpoints did not change. The other outcome was that the exact opposite of what the framing was trying to accomplish occurred. For example, the negative framing led to slightly more support for SB101, while the positive framing led to somewhat less support for it. This differs from Swart's original hypothesis that students would not be able to transfer media literacy skills to social media.

RESPONDENTS (Neutral)	Q3	Q4
A	3	1
B	4	3
C	2	1
D	1	3
E	3	3
F	4	3
G	2	4
H	3	3
I	2	2
J	3	1
AVG:	2.7	2.4

Interpretation (Neutral)		
Q3	2.7	Neutral
Q4	2.4	Disagree

Figure 13: Likert Scale for Neutral Framing Group (Q3 and Q4)

Figure 14: Evaluation of Neutral Framing Likert Scale Results (Q3 and Q4)

In contrast, the neutral framing group had the intended effect. Participants found the neutral framing to be neutral and credible, but it did not necessarily convince them. This is reflected in the results of Figure 14, which shows that students were generally neutral about supporting SB101.

Discussion

The most unexpected finding from this study was that participants were not affected by framing. This finding counters claims by Fesenfeld and others (2022) and Gruner and others (1991) that political framing, using diction, can effectively sway people's willingness to advocate for a piece of legislation. The hypothesis was that political framing, through the use of euphemism and dysphemism, would cause an increase in support or aversion for SB101 by posting about it on X. However, the results indicate that this is not necessarily the case, as youth were not motivated into action by either negative or positive framing. However, neutral framing protracted the expected effect. This finding suggests that youth are more resistant to emotionally charged messaging than Swart (2023) has previously suggested. In this vein, research on why pushing political views may not work on teenagers notes that it is because young individuals have shown a desire to explore and develop their own political opinions independently, distancing themselves from traditional politics (Goldstein & Shem-Tov, 2017).

These paradoxical results can be further understood by examining the Psychological Reactance Theory and the Backfire Effect. The Psychological Reactance Theory posits that when freedom is threatened, people feel a need to regain that freedom (Steindl et al., 2015). In the study, some respondents whose positive tweet changed their initial stance from supporting the legislation to opposing it. In the negative framing group, participants changed their results from being against SB101 to being willing to support it. This is because the tweets may have been perceived as trying to sway the participant to think a certain way, which could have triggered a sense of resistance amongst the negative and positive framing participants by causing them to choose the exact opposite of what the tweet was trying to convince them to do as they felt their ability to create their own political opinions independently was threatened.

Another way participants responded to the answer was by reaffirming their original response, with the framing having no effect. These findings may also reflect the Backfire Effect, a phenomenon in which attempts to change a belief reinforce the original position taken by the individual (Swire-Thompson et al., 2020). If the individuals were already included or did not want to support SB101, trying to persuade them further only strengthened their opinions. Both interpretations showcase the complex aspects of political framing, as framing strategies that aim to influence public opinion may have the opposite effect if the media is perceived as ideologically extreme or manipulative.

Limitations

However, despite the conclusion drawn, it is worth noting that the experiment had its limitations. The sample size was only 30 participants, which leads to a larger margin of error. Although the researcher wanted more students to fill out the survey to reduce the margin of error, the study's time constraints made it difficult to collect more than 34 responses. Due to this margin of error, it is difficult to draw overarching conclusions about the population of high school students as a whole. Furthermore, students were selected from only the "Y" high school. While this approach was used to narrow down the survey to the study's target population, there could also be potential biases in high school "Y" due to local political culture and school norms. The opinions of individuals in that high school could also be influenced by whether or not they have taken a media literacy course in the past. In addition, students were tested on only one form of political advocacy: posting in support of a political issue on social media. This study did not test whether political framing would lead students to be more inclined to host rallies or lobby politicians, which are other forms of political advocacy. These other forms of political advocacy are also more active forms of civic engagement compared to posting on social media, which is a more passive activity; therefore, this difference was not tested either. Also, the study only focused on one political issue: immigration. The issue of immigration was chosen because of its polarizing nature, but if students were presented with another, less polarizing issue, they might react differently. The study also focused only on platform X, which may not be representative of how teenagers respond to framing on social media, as some people may use TikTok or Reddit more frequently for their news. Finally, this study examined the short-term effects of exposure to framing, which may have only captured a transient response rather than a lasting change in actions.

Future Directions

Although this study contributes to the current research available on political media framing, with a focus on X and youth advocacy, future directions are essential to continue to expand the research. First, longitudinal studies could help understand the lasting impact of political framing on changing teenagers' attitudes. As students become eligible to vote, it would be crucial to examine whether recurrent exposure to political framing can change their long-term political activism. Furthermore, platforms like X are often focused on political framing through language, similar to Reddit. However, cross-platform comparisons would be essential, as platforms like TikTok and Instagram, which focus on video and graphics, respectively, operate differently, with framing that may influence platform-specific engagement strategies and mediation mechanisms for altered content. In this regard, future works could also explore

different modes of conducting framing, such as visual versus videography, because digital communication has become increasingly visual. Third, variables related to demographics could be studied. In particular, whether factors such as race, gender identity, age, and others have an impact on framing effects. Moreover, different political issues besides immigration could also have an impact. Future research on peer pressure and social credibility could also be examined. Particularly, studies could incorporate the effects of likes, shares, comments, the author of the tweet (specifically, whether their affinity for a social media personality affects the likelihood that their political advocacy will change with a framed tweet), and reposts, which could impact the effectiveness of framed media. This would help researchers understand the effect of social proof on the political activism of young minds.

Conclusion

The findings of this study hold important implications for educators and political communicators. In the case of educators, the results support the importance of media literacy education. Since students had a relatively widespread ability to detect bias, despite emotionally compelling content, media literacy could benefit from focusing on specific framing devices, such as euphemisms and dysphemisms, to further improve their judgment. For political communicators, such as campaigners and advocates, this study suggests that emotionally charged content may not be well received by adolescent audiences. Messages that utilize polarizing framing could be viewed negatively by high school students who are becoming increasingly skeptical of these framing tactics.

This study aimed to explore the potential ways in which political framing on social media, via X, can affect high school students' willingness to engage in political advocacy. This was done through exposing participants to neutrally framed, negatively framed, and positively framed tweets about a mock immigration bill modeled after "Secure the Border Act of 2023". The results indicate that political framing, as conducted on X, does not necessarily lead to an increase in political advocacy amongst high school students. Although the study has its limitations and further research can be done to improve understandings regarding the topic, this study illuminates the current gap in understanding the role that platforms like X play in carrying out traditional media framing tactics and could be further used to explain the impact that it can have on adolescent's political actions as they age into future political decision makers in future studies conducted on political participation in teenagers.

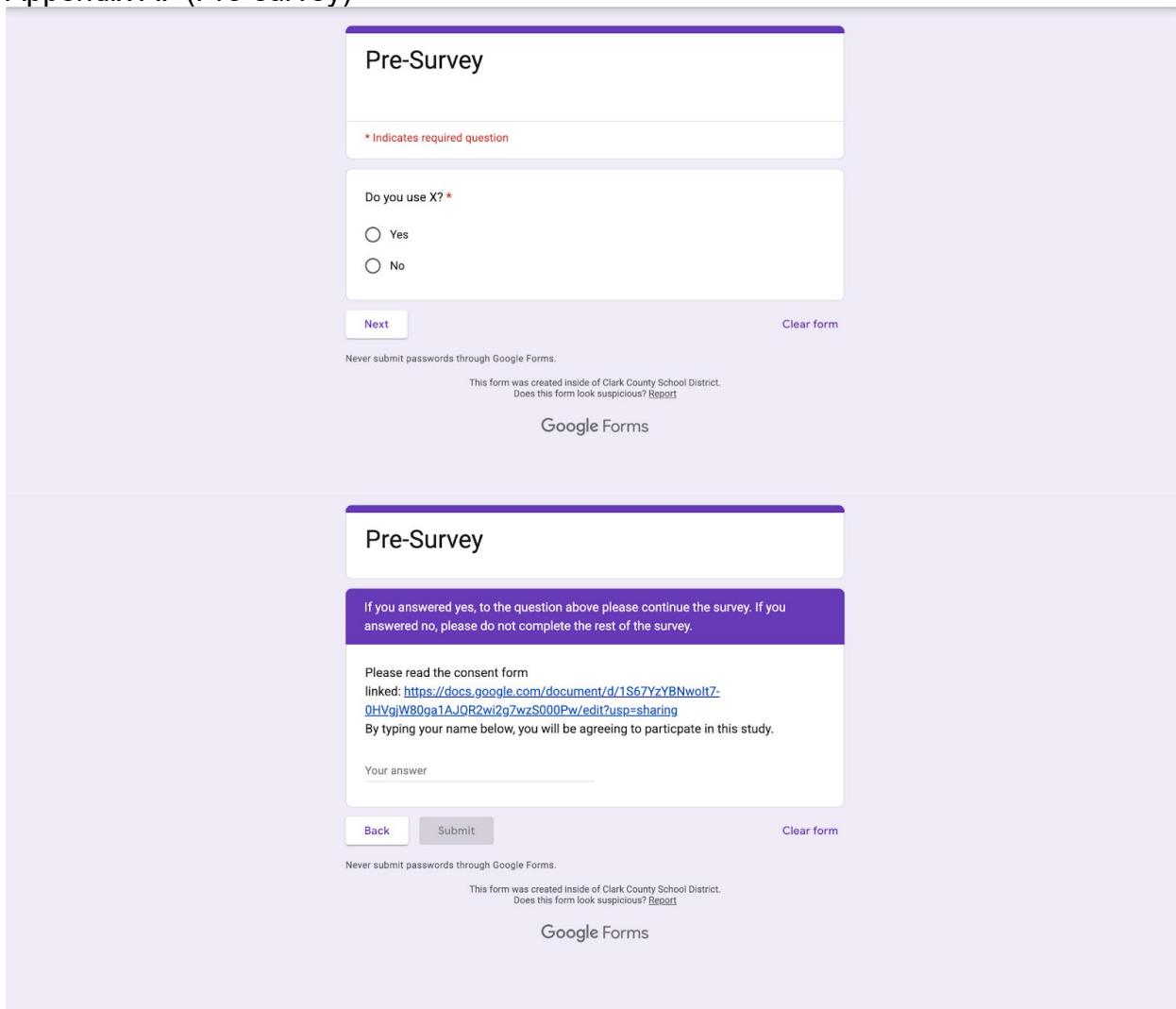
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Appendices

Appendix A. (Pre-survey)



Pre-Survey

* Indicates required question

Do you use X? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Pre-Survey

If you answered yes, to the question above please continue the survey. If you answered no, please do not complete the rest of the survey.

Please read the consent form
linked: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1S67YzYBNwoltZ-0HVgjW80ga1AJOR2wi2g7wzS000Pw/edit?usp=sharing>
By typing your name below, you will be agreeing to participate in this study.

Your answer

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Appendix B. (Mock Legislation)

SB101

A Bill to Enhance Border Security and Surveillance

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

SECTION 1. Digital surveillance infrastructure will be expanded along the U.S.-Mexico border.

SECTION 2. Digital surveillance infrastructure will include, but is not limited to:

- Unmanned aerial drones, including thermal imaging capability.
- AI powers facial recognition systems at key checkpoints.
- Motion-detection cameras and sensor arrays at high-traffic border zones.

SECTION 3. The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will oversee the implementation of this bill.

- A. DHS shall allocate \$1.2 billion to expand digital surveillance infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- B. DHS shall launch a 2-year pilot program for testing unmanned aerial drones in Texas and California.
- C. Surveillance data will be stored for no longer than 18 months.
- D. Surveillance data will only be accessible for agencies designated by the DHS and federal immigration authorities.
- E. DHS's Office of Inspector General (OIG) must submit annual audits to Congress in collaboration with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to ensure that surveillance activities comply with federal privacy laws.
- F. The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) within the DHS will create a complaint system for individuals who believe they have been wrongly targeted due to race, ethnicity, or national origin.
- G. DHS will coordinate a multi-stakeholder public oversight committee to monitor the program and review reports of civil rights abuses. Members of the multi-stakeholder public oversight committee may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Civil rights organizations
 - b. Academic experts in law, ethics, and technology
 - c. Members of the public from border communities
 - d. Representatives from states involved in this program

SECTION 5. This legislation will take effect in January 2026.

SECTION 6. All laws in conflict are hereby declared null and void.



Figure 1. Negative Framing Tweet



Figure 2. Neutral Framing Tweet



Figure 3. Positive Framing Tweet



and negative group; the only thing that changed was the tweet)

Political Survey

* Indicates required question

What is your age *

- ☐ 14
- ☐ 15
- ☐ 16
- ☐ 17
- ☐ 18

What grade are you in? *

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior



What is your political affiliation? *

- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ None
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other: _____

How often do use X for news or political content? *

- ☐ Frequently (daily or several times a week)
- ☐ Occasionally (a few times a month or during major events)
- ☐ Never (do not use X as a source of news)

Do you follow political accounts or figures on X? (this can include news sites) *

- ☐ Yes, multiple (5 and more)
- ☐ Just a few (between 1-5)
- ☐ No, I don't follow any

Please read the document below:

SB101

A Bill to Enhance Border Security and Surveillance

BE IT ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS HERE ASSEMBLED THAT:

SECTION 1. Digital surveillance infrastructure will be expanded along the U.S.-Mexico border.

SECTION 2. Digital surveillance infrastructure will include, but is not limited to:

- Unmanned aerial drones, including thermal imaging capability.
- AI powers facial recognition systems at key checkpoints.
- Motion-detection cameras and sensor arrays at high-traffic border zones.

SECTION 3. The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will oversee the implementation of this bill.

- A. DHS shall allocate \$1.2 billion to expand digital surveillance infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border.
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- C. Surveillance data will be stored for no longer than 18 months.
- D. Surveillance data will only be accessible for agencies designated by the DHS and federal immigration authorities.
- E. DHS's Office of Inspector General (OIG) must submit annual audits to Congress in collaboration with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to ensure that surveillance activities comply with federal privacy laws.
- F. The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) within the DHS will create a complaint system for individuals who believe they have been wrongly targeted due to race, ethnicity, or national origin.
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 - a. Civil rights organizations
 - b. Academic experts in law, ethics, and technology
 - c. Members of the public from border communities
 - d. Representatives from states involved in this program

SECTION 5. This legislation will take effect in January 2026.

SECTION 6. All laws in conflict are hereby declared null and void.



Would you be willing to take action to support SB101 through posting about it on X? *

1 2 3 4 5

I do not wish to post about
SB101 through X at all

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would absolutely post about
SB101 on X

Next

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Political Survey

* Indicates required question

Next Section

Please read the tweet below:



Hello Hi
@hello123

SB101 will create expanded surveillance systems that will be used along the U.S. border with the goal of reducing unauthorized crossings. This bill has led to debate over humanitarian concerns and privacy issues.

[#SB101](#) [#ImmigrationPolicy](#) [#BorderSecurityPolicy](#)

8:17 AM · May 26, 2020 ·

16.1K Retweets 58.5K Likes

How strongly would you wish to support SB101 by posting it on X? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly oppose	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Support



How would you describe your overall emotional response to the content? (select ^{*} all that apply)

- ☐ Hopeful
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Motivated
- ☐ Confused
- ☐ Indifferent
- ☐ Frustrated

How credible did you find the tweet you viewed? ^{*}

Not at all credible 1 2 3 4 5 Very credible

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How persuasive did you find the tweet you viewed? ^{*}

Not at all persuasive 1 2 3 4 5 Very persuasive

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Do you believe you can detect polarizing news from real news on X? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Do you believe news on X can be trustworthy? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

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Appendix F. (Consent Form)**Parental Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

Title of Study: Study on the Effect of Political Framing via X on High School Students

Name	Dept:	Phone:
:		
Name	Dept:	Phone:
:		
Name	Dept:	Phone:
:		
Parent/Guardian Name:		

Introduction

- Your child is being asked to be in a research study of effect of political framing via X on high school students.
- S/he was selected as a possible participant because of their usage of X.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before allowing your child to participate in this study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study is examine if political framing can sway the willingness of high school students to advocate for a particular political issue.
- Ultimately, this research may be used for an AP Research project.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, s/he will be asked to do the following things: asked to complete the presurvey and the actual survey on Google Forms.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study

- The study has the following risks. First, students will be exposed to potentially emotionally evocative language. Second, students will be exposed to politically charge language. There may be unknown risks as well.

Benefits of Being in the Study

- The benefits of participation are that students may learn more about a political issue.

Confidentiality

- This study is anonymous. We will not be collecting or retaining any information about your child's identity.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw



- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you and your child. You are welcome to observe the interview if you wish. Your child may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without losing benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your child has the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of the interview material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

- You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, using the email this document was sent from. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you.

Consent

- Your signature below indicates that you have decided to allow your child participate as a research subject for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the researcher.
- If are 18 years of age, you may sign this form and consent for yourself.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____