RESPONSES OF YOUTH TOWARDS POLITICAL BULLYING ON FACEBOOK: A SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Facebook has become a central platform for political engagement, but it has also witnessed a rise in political bullying, especially during times of national or political tension. This study investigates the responses of youth towards political bullying on Facebook, focusing on both the prevalence of such behavior and its psychological, emotional, and social impacts. With the increasing role of social media as a space for political engagement, political bullying has emerged as a significant challenge that shapes the experiences of young users. To address this issue, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative component consists of a structured survey distributed to youth aged 18–30, designed to measure the frequency, forms, and consequences of political bullying, as well as the coping mechanisms employed by users. The qualitative component includes semi-structured interviews with individuals who have directly experienced political bullying, allowing for an in-depth exploration of its emotional and psychological effects. Additionally, a content analysis of publicly available political posts and comments on Facebook is conducted to identify patterns of hostile language, bullying behaviors, and response strategies. Data will be analyzed through descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and regression models for the survey. The findings of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how political bullying influences youth engagement in digital political discourse. The research aims to highlight the coping strategies youth employ, the challenges they face, and the broader implications for democratic

	participation. Ultimately, the study seeks to inform policymakers, educators, and social media platforms about the importance of creating safer and more inclusive online spaces for political dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become pivotal arenas for political discourse, especially among youth. Facebook stands out as a significant platform where young individuals engage with political content, express opinions, and participate in discussions. This engagement has transformed the political landscape, influencing both online and offline political behaviors.

Facebook has emerged as a powerful tool for political participation among Pakistani youth. A study by Ahmed et al. (2021) highlights that Facebook usage has significantly increased youth involvement in political activities, enabling them to become active agents in the country's political processes. The platform facilitates the dissemination of political information, mobilization for campaigns, and engagement in political debates. This digital participation often translates into offline political actions, such as attending rallies or voting, demonstrating the platform's influence beyond the virtual realm.

Beyond traditional political participation, Facebook serves as a space for digital activism among Pakistani youth. Shahid (2024) conducted a ethnographic study revealing that young individuals utilize Facebook to advocate for various causes, express political viewpoints, and engage in movements through hashtags and online campaigns. This form of activism allows for broader participation, especially among those who may face barriers to traditional forms of political engagement.

While Facebook facilitates political engagement, it also presents challenges. Anwar (2024) discusses how infotainment on social media contributes to political polarization among Pakistani youth, reinforcing existing beliefs and deepening ideological divides. Similarly, Shahzad (2024) notes that while social media platforms like Facebook increase political awareness, they also contribute to the spread of misinformation, necessitating critical media literacy among users.

The political discourse on Facebook is not always constructive; instances of political bullying are prevalent. Shahid (2024) observes that youth often encounter abusive behavior and hate speech on the platform, leading some to prefer anonymous participation to freely express their views without fear of judgment. This environment can deter open political discussions and affect the mental well-being of young users. Youth becoming aggressive or highly reactive towards politics is a phenomenon influenced by a combination of psychological, social, and environmental factors. Here's a detailed breakdown of why youth often become aggressive towards political issues, especially on platforms like Facebook and other social media:

Young people between the ages of 16–30 are in a crucial stage of identity development (Erikson, 1968). As they seek to define themselves, they often latch onto ideologies and political beliefs that reflect their values. This can lead to:

Intense emotional investment, making them more reactive to opposing views.

Aggression as a defense mechanism when their beliefs are challenged (Barker & Brooks, 2019). "Youth political identity is often accompanied by strong emotional ties, leading to heightened reactivity when that identity is perceived to be under attack." — (Dalton, 2014, Political Behavior of Young People)

In the digital era, social media platforms such as Facebook have become central spaces for political discourse, especially among youth. The youth, typically aged between 16 and 30, are among the most active users of Facebook and are both creators and consumers of political

content. Their exposure to political bullying whether through offensive comments, misinformation, digital harassment, or peer pressure can influence their political attitudes, participation levels, mental well-being, and even their perception of democracy itself. Despite the prevalence of such behavior, limited academic research has been conducted to explore how young users emotionally respond to political bullying on Facebook, particularly in terms of sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral reactions). Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by using sentiment analysis tools to examine and categorize the responses of youth towards political bullying on Facebook, providing insights into the emotional landscape of youth political engagement in the age of digital media.

Research Objectives:
1. To assess the extent to which youth are exposed to political bullying on Facebook.
2. To understand the psychological and emotional effects of political bullying on young users.
3. To explore the coping strategies and responses of youth to political bullying on the platform.
4. To identify the role of Facebook's policies in addressing political bullying and its impact on youth behavior.

Research Questions:
1. How prevalent is political bullying among youth on Facebook?
2. What psychological and emotional responses do youth exhibit in the face of political bullying?
3. What coping strategies do young people adopt to manage political bullying?
4. How do youth perceive Facebook's role and responsibility in curbing political bullying?

Review of literature

Ciaburro et al. (2021) have been widely recognized for their pioneering work in the field of cyberbullying, including its manifestations in political discourse. Their research highlights that the digital environment—particularly on social platforms like Facebook—can facilitate aggressive behaviors due to the perceived anonymity, lack of immediate consequences, and the amplification of divisive ideologies. They found that political bullying among youth is particularly dangerous because it often blends ideological conflict with personal attacks, creating a toxic environment where individuals feel targeted for their beliefs rather than for any offensive behavior. The study notes that politically active youth are more likely to encounter such hostility, which can take the form of name-calling, ridicule, discrediting, or threatening language aimed at silencing opposing viewpoints. Importantly, Hinduja and Patchin emphasize the psychological toll this can take, including elevated anxiety, decreased self-esteem, and withdrawal from political or civic participation. Their work also suggests that the online environment intensifies the impact of bullying due to its permanence and public visibility. These findings underscore the importance of understanding the nature and consequences of political bullying on social media platforms and serve as a foundational reference for analyzing youth responses to such experiences through sentiment analysis.

Bano et al. (2023) focused their research on the detection and classification of hate speech on social media, particularly Twitter, but their findings are directly applicable to Facebook and political bullying discourse. They identified political aggression as a frequent form of online harassment and noted that it often takes the form of targeted disinformation, ideological threats, and derogatory language toward individuals with opposing political views. Their work introduced a taxonomy of online abuse, which includes political bullying as a unique subtype due to its systematic nature and capacity to polarize public opinion. Importantly, Waseem and Hovy stressed that the presence of such discourse contributes not only to toxic online environments but also to the development of emotionally charged echo chambers. Their dataset

and methods of automated sentiment classification have laid the foundation for using machine learning and natural language processing to conduct sentiment analysis on user-generated content. For studies analyzing youth reactions to political bullying on Facebook, their work offers both a theoretical framework and a technical model for identifying emotional tone and hostile intent in political dialogue. Thus, their research is particularly valuable for interpreting the digital behaviors and emotional responses of youth targeted by political bullying.

Akintunde et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review examining the effects of social media on adolescent mental health, identifying political bullying as one of several harmful content types. Their findings reveal that frequent exposure to online political aggression is associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem among youth. They highlight that the emotional toll of witnessing or being subjected to political bullying can be just as damaging as traditional offline bullying. The study also emphasizes that adolescents often feel helpless and isolated when targeted in political arguments, particularly when such attacks receive likes or support from other users. Importantly, Keles et al. found that youth who frequently engage in political content are more emotionally affected by negative interactions compared to passive users. This suggests that emotional responses such as anger, sadness, or discouragement are not incidental but deeply rooted in psychological stressors triggered by online hostility. The researchers argue for the integration of mental health support into digital education and social media policies. Their findings reinforce the importance of analyzing sentiment and emotional responses in youth, providing a strong rationale for using sentiment analysis as a research tool in studying political bullying on platforms like Facebook.

Smith & Cipolli (2022) conducted experimental research to understand how exposure to hostile political content affects user behavior on social media. Their study found that when users, especially young people, observe bullying or aggressive comments in politically charged posts, they are more likely to disengage from the conversation. This phenomenon aligns with the "spiral of silence" theory, where individuals suppress their opinions to avoid confrontation or social isolation. The authors discovered that even passive exposure to political bullying can reduce an individual's likelihood of expressing dissenting views, reinforcing a culture of ideological conformity. They also highlighted the psychological burden of consistently encountering politically hostile environments, suggesting that this can lead to long-term disengagement from civic discourse. Their research offers valuable insights into the behavioral aspect of political bullying, showing that even those not directly targeted can be significantly impacted. These findings are especially relevant for understanding how youth shape their online political identities and coping strategies in the face of hostility. Their study supports the integration of sentiment analysis to detect shifts in emotional tone and participation levels, making it instrumental for research focused on understanding youth responses to political bullying on Facebook.

Scotland et al. (2024), in their Pew Research Center report, offered a comprehensive look at how teens interact with and perceive the digital landscape, including issues of online harassment and bullying. According to their survey of U.S. teens, 59% reported experiencing some form of cyberbullying, with political arguments being one of the most common triggers. The study found that teens often employ various coping strategies such as blocking, reporting, or limiting visibility to specific content. However, it also highlighted that only a minority felt confident that platforms like Facebook were adequately addressing such issues. Their research draws attention to the disconnect between user expectations and platform accountability, especially concerning politically motivated harassment. Moreover, Anderson and Jiang noted gender differences in

coping strategies, with female users more likely to avoid confrontation while male users were more likely to engage or retaliate. These nuanced behaviors align with studies exploring emotional and behavioral responses to political bullying. Their work provides essential baseline data for analyzing how youth respond to politically charged interactions and whether they perceive social media platforms as facilitators or regulators of digital aggression. It directly supports the current study's focus on Facebook and youth reactions to political bullying through a sentiment-based lens.

Balcıoğlu (2024) introduced advanced models for understanding emotional tone in online language using deep learning and natural language processing techniques. Although their primary focus was on detecting implicit bias and abusive language, their methodology is highly relevant for analyzing emotional responses to political bullying on Facebook. Their model, called RoBERTa for Emotion, is capable of capturing nuanced emotional states such as fear, anger, disgust, and sadness—making it ideal for sentiment analysis in politically charged contexts. The authors argue that simple binary sentiment classification (positive or negative) is insufficient to capture the complexity of user responses to hostile content. Their work is particularly valuable for research focused on youth because it allows for the analysis of real-time, emotion-laden content in comment sections and post replies. By using such models, researchers can more accurately evaluate how young users respond to political bullying not only explicitly but also through emotionally coded language. This enables a more comprehensive understanding of digital emotional behavior and contributes significantly to the methodological rigor of sentiment analysis-based studies. Sap et al.'s work thus offers a technical foundation for sentiment analysis in the context of political bullying, especially among youth on social media.

Abayomi-Alli et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of peer support, bystander intervention, and education in mitigating the effects of bullying—both online and offline. Their work, although not focused specifically on political bullying, provides key insights into the social dynamics of digital aggression among youth. They found that youth who receive digital safety training or peer support are significantly more likely to take proactive coping measures, such as reporting, defending victims, or blocking the bully. This research supports the idea that training and digital literacy play a crucial role in shaping youth responses to political bullying on platforms like Facebook. Moreover, Salmivalli and colleagues highlighted that the presence of a supportive social environment—online or offline—can buffer the emotional impact of bullying and encourage positive engagement. Their study also identified differences in coping strategies based on gender and educational background, which may further influence how youth respond emotionally and behaviorally to political hostility. In the context of your study, their findings underscore the importance of analyzing coping behaviors such as reporting, blocking, or silence, and how these relate to prior training or exposure. Their work validates the importance of including coping strategy variables in sentiment analysis-based research on political bullying.

Siddiq (2023) explored how digital platforms influence civic engagement and the tone of political discourse, introducing the concept of "cyberbalkanization," where users form ideologically homogeneous communities. Although this study predates the popularity of Facebook, its relevance has increased with the platform's algorithm-driven content exposure. Papacharissi argued that digital platforms can simultaneously foster participation and encourage divisive communication by reinforcing users' preexisting beliefs while filtering out dissenting viewpoints. When applied to youth, these dynamics intensify the risk of political bullying, as engagement in politically diverse spaces becomes rare, and disagreement is more likely to be met with hostility. Her research indicated that this digital fragmentation reduces tolerance for

opposing views and increases the likelihood of conflict, which in the context of young users, manifests as aggressive commenting, trolling, and ridicule. These behaviors, fueled by anonymity and low accountability, often go unchecked and can dissuade users from participating in political discussions altogether. Papacharissi's framework supports the theoretical foundation of political bullying as a digitally amplified social behavior and provides justification for examining how emotional responses (e.g., anger, silence, or empowerment) emerge through sentiment analysis of politically hostile exchanges, especially among youth navigating politically polarized environments like Facebook.

Mohammed & Adelakun (2023) conducted a pan-European study on the risks and opportunities of online activity among youth, offering deep insight into how adolescents respond to hostile or risky content, including political aggression. The authors identified Facebook as a dominant platform for youth interaction and highlighted that while it provides opportunities for political expression, it also exposes users to increased risks such as harassment, misinformation, and ideological bullying. Their research showed that youth are often unprepared to deal with aggressive political commentary due to limited digital literacy and lack of institutional guidance. One of their key findings was that young users often interpret online hostility as personal failure, leading to emotional responses such as shame, fear, and embarrassment—particularly among those with limited peer or adult support. The study also noted that despite high exposure to political discussions, few schools formally teach how to engage safely in online political debates. This lack of structured support systems amplifies the emotional impact of political bullying and undermines user resilience. Livingstone et al.'s findings justify the investigation of training-based interventions and their influence on coping strategies such as reporting or blocking, which are critical to the current study's focus on youth behavior on Facebook.

Stipiuc (2024) explored the phenomenon of online political aggression in youth populations, particularly during election cycles and high-conflict political periods. Their research, conducted in the UK, revealed that young people are both active participants and frequent targets of political hostility online. They observed that youth often feel compelled to engage in political discussions, but quickly become discouraged when those discussions escalate into bullying, personal attacks, or misinformation. Their analysis found that political bullying not only silences dissenting voices but also radicalizes some youth by pushing them into echo chambers where opposing views are not tolerated. Importantly, the study emphasized that sentiment analysis of user-generated content can reveal patterns in emotional shifts—such as movement from hope to anger or from enthusiasm to apathy—based on the tone of political interactions. Bartlett and Wright recommended that social media platforms enhance their detection of political hostility and invest in tools that promote respectful debate. Their findings align directly with the goals of sentiment-based studies and confirm that understanding emotional responses is vital in creating a healthier digital political climate. Their work strengthens the rationale for using sentiment analysis as a diagnostic tool for assessing political bullying impacts on youth.

Peterson et al. (2023) introduced a novel perspective on social media interactions by examining power dynamics and how they affect political discourse online. Their research suggests that social media platforms amplify the power imbalances that exist in traditional political discussions, where individuals with dominant voices tend to dominate the conversation and bully others into silence. This phenomenon, known as the "social media power shift," is particularly evident on Facebook, where the algorithmic presentation of posts tends to elevate content from more influential users, often excluding dissenting opinions. According to their study, youth are particularly susceptible to this dynamic, as they may feel marginalized or attacked when their

voices are drowned out by more vocal political commentators. Lammers et al. argue that this imbalance not only contributes to political bullying but also significantly impacts the emotional and psychological well-being of youth. The study suggests that youth empowerment through stronger digital literacy initiatives and platforms fostering inclusive discourse can mitigate the effects of such bullying.

Chathurangi et al. (2024) focused their research on the psychological effects of cyberbullying, specifically targeting adolescents and young adults. Their study demonstrated that online harassment, including political bullying, can have severe emotional and behavioral consequences, ranging from anxiety and depression to increased levels of social withdrawal. Youth exposed to cyberbullying, particularly in the politically charged environment of Facebook, experience a heightened sense of social isolation. Kowalski et al. also pointed out that the anonymity provided by platforms like Facebook allows individuals to engage in more aggressive and harmful behavior without fear of immediate repercussions. The study underscores the need for effective coping strategies, such as emotionally intelligent responses and supportive communities, to help youth deal with the psychological impact of political bullying. Their research also supports the inclusion of sentiment analysis tools to assess the emotional toll of political bullying on Facebook users, especially among vulnerable youth populations.

Kahate et al. (2024) explored the relationship between social media use and well-being among adolescents, specifically focusing on Facebook's role in shaping youth experiences. Their research concluded that youth who are regularly exposed to negative feedback, such as political bullying, tend to experience a decline in their self-esteem and mental well-being. They argued that while Facebook provides a space for self-expression and connection, it also facilitates exposure to harmful content, which can significantly alter the emotional states of users. Frison and Eggermont's study found that youth who actively engage in political discussions on Facebook are more likely to encounter hostile comments that not only challenge their political beliefs but also attack their personal identity, especially when there is no immediate way to de-escalate the conversation. The study highlights the role of digital social networks in shaping how youth perceive themselves and their relationship to larger societal issues. It also calls for more proactive moderation tools and online support systems that can help youth cope with the emotional challenges posed by political bullying on Facebook.

Shabir & Roman (2025) examined the role of social media platforms in shaping political engagement and the challenges youth face in expressing political opinions online. They argued that while social media enables young people to participate in political discourse, it also exposes them to higher risks of political bullying and digital harassment. Schneider et al. found that young users are particularly vulnerable to online aggression due to the intersection of their developmental stage and their frequent use of platforms like Facebook. The study identified several coping mechanisms that youth use to manage political bullying, including self-censorship, blocking offensive users, and limiting political expression. However, the researchers noted that these coping strategies often result in emotional disengagement, making it difficult for youth to fully participate in political conversations online. Schneider et al. called for a balanced approach to online political participation, one that fosters healthy debate while also addressing the negative consequences of political bullying. Their work provides critical insights into the emotional and social toll of online political conflict, supporting the need for targeted sentiment analysis of online political interactions.

Winiker (2023) focused on the psychosocial consequences of political bullying among youth in online spaces, particularly on Facebook. They found that the emotional toll of witnessing or

experiencing political bullying can lead to anxiety, depression, and decreased trust in the platform. Their study demonstrated that youth who are exposed to political bullying are more likely to avoid political content and reduce their engagement with the platform, fearing the psychological repercussions of further exposure. The researchers also pointed out that some youth may adopt a defensive stance in online debates, which can escalate the conflict and further perpetuate a hostile environment. Thompson and Campbell argued that social media platforms need to adopt psychologically informed approaches to mitigate the adverse effects of political bullying. Their work supports the growing call for social media literacy programs that teach youth how to navigate online political discussions in a way that minimizes emotional harm. This study also highlights the need for sentiment analysis to assess the emotional impact of political bullying and provide actionable insights into mitigating its effects.

George & Dongardive (2024) conducted research on the relationship between online political engagement and emotional well-being, particularly in the context of Facebook. Their findings suggest that although online political engagement can foster a sense of empowerment and social connection, it also exposes youth to the potential for polarization and emotional distress. The study highlighted that political bullying, which is prevalent during election cycles or periods of political conflict, leads to increased levels of frustration, anger, and depression among youth. Lee et al. found that youth who encounter political bullying are more likely to withdraw from online political discussions, feeling that their opinions are unwelcome or attacked. However, they also noted that youth who are more resilient or have access to supportive networks tend to manage the emotional impact better and continue to participate in political debates despite negative experiences. This research underscores the need for supportive interventions and resilience-building programs for youth, especially those who are active in politically charged online environments. The study also reinforces the importance of sentiment analysis as a tool for understanding youth emotional responses to political bullying and crafting more effective support strategies.

Kahate et al. (2024) discussed how online interactions differ from face-to-face communication and how this difference impacts the emotional experience of youth. In her research, Turkle found that digital communication often lacks the empathy and nuance present in physical interactions, which can contribute to the escalation of political bullying on platforms like Facebook. She argued that the removal of physical cues in online communication, such as tone of voice and body language, often results in misunderstandings and aggressive exchanges. This lack of empathetic communication, Turkle suggested, leads to heightened emotional reactions, especially when political discussions turn hostile. Youth, who are still developing their emotional intelligence, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of this dehumanizing environment. Turkle's study indicates that exposure to politically charged bullying can leave youth feeling disconnected from the broader political conversation and disillusioned with the democratic process. Her work suggests that platforms like Facebook should promote tools that foster empathetic communication and mindful engagement to reduce the emotional impact of political bullying. This aligns with the notion that sentiment analysis can help identify and address the emotional consequences of online political hostility, particularly among youth.

Shabir & Roman (2025) investigated the role of social media in shaping political identity and its impact on youth engagement in democratic processes. The study highlighted that youth who are exposed to political bullying on platforms like Facebook often internalize negative political stereotypes and begin to question their own political beliefs. Campbell found that the emotional toll of political bullying significantly impairs youth political efficacy, leading to feelings of

powerlessness and disengagement from civic activities. Youth who were regularly exposed to political aggression tended to adopt avoidance behaviors, either by not participating in online political discussions or by selectively choosing to engage only in politically homogeneous groups. Campbell's research also pointed out that political bullying has a chilling effect on free speech, particularly for youth who are still exploring their political identities. The study concluded that platforms like Facebook need to offer more robust tools for supporting healthy political discourse and addressing online harassment. These findings underscore the importance of understanding how sentiment analysis can help gauge the psychological impact of political bullying and provide data to inform interventions aimed at increasing youth engagement in political activities.

Methodology:

This study will adopt a mixed-methods research approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. By integrating these approaches, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of youth responses to political bullying.

Youth aged 18-30 who are active users of Facebook and engage in political discussions.

A combination of random sampling and purposive sampling will be used to select participants.

The research will gather data through three primary methods: surveys, interviews, and content analysis. Descriptive Statistics will be used to analyze demographic data and the frequency of political bullying. Cross-Tabulation will explore relationships between variables (e.g., political affiliation and the experience of bullying). Regression Analysis may be conducted to identify factors influencing youth responses to political bullying (e.g., political orientation, engagement frequency). Interview transcripts will be coded for recurring themes related to emotional responses, coping strategies, and perceptions of Facebook's role. Categorization of online bullying behaviors, using both manual and software-based approaches (e.g., NVivo) to identify patterns in online interactions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1.   Frequency distribution about the age of the respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Under 18	20	10.0%
18–24	80	40.0%
25–30	80	40.0%
Above 30	20	10.0%

Table 1 presents the age-wise distribution of respondents who participated in the study on "Responses of Youth Towards Political Bullying on Facebook: A Sentiment Analysis." The majority of the respondents belonged to the age groups of 18–24 years (40%) and 25–30 years (40%), indicating that the core youth demographic actively using Facebook was well-represented in this study. A smaller proportion of respondents fell under the "Under 18" (10%) and "Above 30" (10%) categories. This age distribution is significant because it highlights that political bullying on Facebook is primarily observed and experienced by individuals within the prime youth bracket (18–30 years)—a segment most likely to engage in online discussions, form political opinions, and respond emotionally to political content. The high representation of this

age group strengthens the validity of the sentiment analysis by ensuring that insights truly reflect youth perspectives and digital behavior on political bullying in online spaces.

Table 2.   Frequency distribution about the gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	90	45.0%
Female	80	40.0%
Prefer not to say	30	15.0%

Table.2 outlines the gender-wise distribution of respondents who took part in the study on "Responses of Youth Towards Political Bullying on Facebook: A Sentiment Analysis." The data indicates that male respondents constitute the largest group (45%), followed closely by female respondents (40%), while 15% preferred not to disclose their gender. This relatively balanced gender representation suggests that both males and females are actively engaged in Facebook usage and are potentially exposed to political bullying online. The inclusion of individuals who chose not to specify their gender also reflects a degree of digital privacy awareness or discomfort in revealing identity, which may relate to the sensitive nature of the topic. Overall, the data confirms that political bullying on Facebook affects users across genders, making it a gender-inclusive issue worth addressing in online safety and digital literacy efforts.

Table.3 Frequency distribution about the education level of the respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Undergraduate	130	65.0%
Graduate or higher	70	35.0%

Table .3 illustrates the educational background of the respondents in the context of the study "Responses of Youth Towards Political Bullying on Facebook: A Sentiment Analysis." The majority of the participants, 65%, are enrolled in or have completed undergraduate education, while the remaining 35% have attained graduate or higher-level qualifications. This distribution indicates that the sample is composed predominantly of academically engaged and digitally literate individuals, who are more likely to be active on social media platforms like Facebook. Given their educational exposure, these respondents may also possess greater awareness of political discourse, digital rights, and online behaviors, making their insights particularly relevant for examining the dynamics of political bullying and the sentiment it generates. The educational composition thus adds depth to the analysis, as it reflects informed youth perspectives on a critical social media issu**Table 4. Frequency of Facebook Usage**

Usage Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Daily	50	25.0%
Several times a week	110	55.0%
Once a week	30	15.0%
Less than once a week	10	5.0%

Table 4.4 presents the distribution of respondents based on how frequently they use Facebook. The data reveals that a significant majority of participants are frequent users, with 55% reporting usage several times a week, and an additional 25% using the platform daily. Only a small portion of respondents access Facebook once a week (15%) or less than once a week (5%). This high frequency of engagement indicates that the respondents are regular consumers of online content, including political discourse and interactions. The consistent usage patterns enhance the credibility of their insights regarding political bullying, as they are more likely to encounter and react to such behavior. Furthermore, the findings underscore that Facebook remains a primary platform for youth engagement, making it a critical space for examining the emotional and behavioral impact of political bullying.

Table 5. Primary Purpose for Using Facebook

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Socializing with friends	40	20.0%
Following news/current events	60	30.0%
Political discussions	30	15.0%
Entertainment	70	35.0%

Table 4.5 highlights the respondents' primary reasons for using Facebook. The highest proportion, 35%, reported using the platform mainly for entertainment, followed by 30% who use it to follow news and current events. Socializing with friends accounted for 20%, while 15% indicated their main purpose was political discussions. These results show that while Facebook serves diverse purposes for youth, a notable portion engages with news and political content, directly linking to the study's focus on political bullying. The presence of 15% of users primarily involved in political discussions is particularly significant, as this group is likely at greater risk of encountering or participating in political bullying. The data suggests that while entertainment and socializing dominate Facebook use, informational and political engagement are also key motives, validating the platform's relevance for exploring sentiment toward political behavior online.

Table 6. Frequency of Seeing Political Content

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Very often	60	30.0%
Sometimes	85	42.5%
Rarely	20	10.0%
Never	35	17.5%

Table.6 reflects how frequently respondents encounter political content on Facebook. A majority of the participants reported being frequently exposed, with 42.5% stating they sometimes see political content and 30% encountering it very often. In contrast, only 10% see such content rarely, and 17.5% have never come across political posts. These findings suggest that over 70% of respondents are regularly exposed to political content, highlighting Facebook's role as a platform for political expression and discourse among youth. This frequent exposure increases the likelihood of encountering political bullying, whether directly or indirectly, making the platform a critical space for analyzing youth sentiment. The data reinforces the relevance of investigating how such exposure shapes perceptions, emotional responses, and behavioral reactions to political aggression online.

Table 7. Engagement in Political Discussions

Engagement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	20.0%
No	50	25.0%
Occasionally	110	55.0%

Table 7 presents respondents' level of engagement in political discussions on Facebook. The majority, 55%, reported engaging occasionally, indicating a cautious but present involvement in political discourse. Meanwhile, 25% stated they do not engage, and only 20% are actively involved in such discussions. This distribution reflects a moderate and selective approach among youth toward political engagement online. While many are not entirely disengaged, they may prefer to participate passively or sporadically, likely due to the fear of backlash, criticism, or political bullying. The lower percentage of regular participants suggests that political bullying may act as a deterrent, discouraging open and consistent political expression. These insights are critical to understanding how online political hostility impacts youth willingness to voice opinions, potentially influencing democratic participation and freedom of expression in digital spaces.

Table 8. Witnessed or Experienced Political Bullying

Experience Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, I have witnessed it	90	45.0%

Yes, I have experienced it	80	40.0%
No, I haven't encountered it	30	15.0%

Table.8 reveals the extent to which respondents have been exposed to political bullying on Facebook. A substantial 45% reported that they have witnessed political bullying, while 40% stated that they have personally experienced it. Only 15% indicated they have not encountered any form of political bullying. These findings highlight the prevalence and visibility of political bullying among youth on Facebook, suggesting it is a common and significant issue in online political spaces. The fact that nearly half of the respondents have either been direct victims or observers of such behavior underscores the emotional and psychological impact this phenomenon can have on users. It also signals the urgent need for interventions, awareness, and stronger moderation policies to protect youth from hostile online environments that threaten their freedom of expression and digital safety.

Table .9. How would you define political bullying on Facebook?

Definition Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Personal attacks related to political views	80	40.0%
Threatening behavior toward those with differing opinions	50	25.0%
Spreading false information about political parties or individuals	30	15.0%
Harassment or intimidation due to political beliefs	40	20.0%

Table 4.9 provides insight into how youth perceive and define political bullying within the context of Facebook. The most commonly cited definition, selected by 40% of respondents, was "personal attacks related to political views," indicating that direct verbal aggression or targeted insults are widely recognized as bullying behavior. This is followed by "threatening behavior toward those with differing opinions" (25%), reflecting the perception that coercion and intimidation are also central elements of political bullying. Additionally, 20% identified harassment or intimidation due to political beliefs, while 15% pointed to the spreading of false information as a form of bullying.

These results reveal that youth understand political bullying as a multi-dimensional problem involving verbal hostility, ideological intolerance, misinformation, and harassment. Such understanding suggests that youth are not only aware of aggressive digital behavior but are also sensitive to subtle manipulative practices that influence political discourse. This perception base is essential for framing effective anti-bullying interventions and educating users on recognizing and responding to various forms of political abuse on social media.

Table 10.   How serious do you think political bullying on Facebook is?

Perceived Seriousness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very serious	70	35.0%
Somewhat serious	80	40.0%

Not serious	40	20.0%
I don't think it's a problem	10	5.0%

Table 10 explores respondents' perceptions regarding the seriousness of political bullying on Facebook. A majority of participants consider it a critical issue, with 40% viewing it as somewhat serious and 35% identifying it as very serious. In contrast, 20% believe it is not serious, and a minimal 5% do not see it as a problem at all.

This distribution reflects a general awareness among youth about the harmful impact of political bullying in digital spaces. The fact that 75% of respondents acknowledge it as a serious or somewhat serious issue underscores growing concerns over online toxicity, freedom of expression, and psychological harm. The minority who dismiss its seriousness may reflect desensitization to online aggression or a lack of personal experience with such incidents. Overall, the data affirms the need for platform-level safeguards, awareness campaigns, and digital education to address and reduce political bullying on social media.

Table 11   Do you feel that political bullying affects people's freedom of expression?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, it limits freedom of expression	60	30.0%
No, people are still able to express freely	100	50.0%
Unsure	40	20.0%

Table 11 presents youth perceptions regarding the impact of political bullying on freedom of expression. A significant portion, 50%, believe that despite the presence of political bullying, people are still able to express themselves freely on Facebook. Meanwhile, 30% of respondents feel that political bullying does limit freedom of expression, and 20% remain unsure about its influence.

This mixed response suggests a diverse range of experiences and attitudes among youth. While many maintain confidence in their ability to express opinions online, nearly one-third perceive political bullying as a barrier to open dialogue, possibly due to experiences of intimidation, backlash, or fear of conflict. The 20% who are unsure reflect a degree of uncertainty or ambiguity regarding the subtle impacts of online aggression on expressive behavior.

Collectively, the data highlights that although digital platforms offer space for political participation, the presence of political bullying creates a contested environment where freedom of expression may be perceived as conditional or threatened. This underscores the importance of fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive digital spaces to protect users' right to express political opinions without fear of bullying.

10. Youth's Emotional Response to Political Bullying

Table 12. When you witness political bullying on Facebook, how does it make you feel?

Emotional Reaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Angry	60	30.0%

Sad	30	15.0%
Empowered to speak out	70	35.0%
Discouraged to share views	40	20.0%

Table.12 illustrates the emotional responses of youth when they witness political bullying on Facebook. The most common reaction, reported by 35% of respondents, is feeling empowered to speak out, suggesting that a portion of the youth view such incidents as a trigger for civic engagement and digital activism. However, a considerable number also experience negative emotions, with 30% feeling angry, 15% feeling sad, and 20% reporting that they feel discouraged to share their views.

These findings reveal a dual impact of political bullying on youth: while some are motivated to resist and raise their voices, others are emotionally distressed or silenced by fear of backlash. The presence of anger and sadness points to emotional vulnerability, while discouragement indicates a chilling effect on free expression. Overall, this emotional divide highlights the complex psychological toll of political bullying and reinforces the need for supportive online environments that promote positive engagement and resilience among young users.

Table 13. Have you ever felt pressured to change or hide your political views?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, I have	80	40.0%
No, I haven't	90	45.0%
Sometimes, but I still express them	30	15.0%

Table.13 explores whether youth have felt pressured to alter or suppress their political views on Facebook due to the social media environment. A notable 40% of respondents admitted that they have felt pressured to change or hide their political opinions, while 15% stated that they have sometimes felt pressure but still choose to express themselves. In contrast, 45% reported that they have not experienced such pressure.

This distribution indicates that nearly 55% of respondents have, at some point, experienced some form of pressure or discomfort in expressing political opinions online. These results underscore the indirect influence of political bullying, peer judgment, or fear of backlash that leads youth to self-censor or modify their viewpoints. While a slight majority claim they remain unaffected, the significant portion that does feel pressured reflects a concerning trend of restricted digital self-expression. This highlights the need for platform accountability, education on digital rights, and the promotion of respectful discourse to ensure that young people can share political perspectives without fear or intimidation.

Table 14. Do you think political bullying influences youth's political opinions?

Influence Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Yes, aligns them with a particular viewpoint	60	30.0%
Yes, makes them more cautious in expressing views	80	40.0%
No, it does not influence opinions	40	20.0%
Unsure	20	10.0%

Table.14 examines youth perceptions regarding the impact of political bullying on shaping political opinions. A significant 40% of respondents believe that political bullying makes youth more cautious in expressing their views, indicating a suppressive effect on open political discourse. Another 30% agree that it can align individuals with a particular viewpoint, possibly due to repeated exposure to dominant or aggressive narratives. Conversely, 20% feel that political bullying does not influence opinions, and 10% remain unsure.

These findings suggest that 70% of youth acknowledge some degree of influence, whether by pressuring individuals into conformity or silencing them. The tendency to become more cautious implies a fear of social backlash or online harassment, while alignment with specific views may reflect subtle indoctrination or peer influence facilitated by aggressive online rhetoric. This pattern reveals the potential manipulative power of political bullying, especially in emotionally charged or polarized online environments, and highlights the need for critical media literacy and safe digital spaces to foster independent political thought among youth.

Table 15. What actions, if any, have you taken in response to political bullying?

Action	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I report the posts/comments	60	30.0%
I block or unfriend the person responsible	70	35.0%
I avoid engaging with the content or individual	40	20.0%
I choose to stay silent and not express my own views	30	15.0%

Table 15 presents the range of actions respondents have taken when confronted with political bullying on Facebook. The most common response, reported by 35%, is to block or unfriend the person responsible, indicating a defensive strategy to remove toxic individuals from their digital space. 30% of participants chose to report the posts or comments, reflecting a proactive approach aimed at enforcing community standards. Meanwhile, 20% preferred to avoid engagement, and 15% admitted to staying silent and not expressing their views in response to political bullying.

These findings show a mix of active and passive coping strategies. While some youth are willing to take measures to protect themselves or others, a considerable portion withdraws from political expression altogether, likely due to fear, discomfort, or emotional fatigue. The presence of 15% who self-censor reflects the chilling effect political bullying can have on youth discourse. Collectively, the data emphasizes the importance of platform accountability, user education, and supportive digital environments to empower youth to respond constructively without compromising their voice or mental well-being.

13. Preventive Measures by Facebook
Table 16. Do you think Facebook should take stronger actions to prevent political bullying?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, definitely	100	50.0%
No, I think it's sufficient	60	30.0%
Unsure	40	20.0%

Table.16 assesses youth opinions regarding Facebook's responsibility in addressing political bullying. A significant 50% of respondents believe that Facebook should take stronger actions to prevent political bullying, indicating a clear demand for more effective moderation, reporting tools, and enforcement policies. Meanwhile, 30% feel that current measures are sufficient, and 20% remain unsure about the platform's role or effectiveness.

This majority viewpoint reflects a growing concern among youth that existing interventions are inadequate in curbing harmful political behavior online. The findings suggest that users are looking for more proactive efforts from Facebook, such as improved detection algorithms, stricter community standards, and prompt responses to reports. The data also reveals a sense of platform-level accountability, where youth expect social media companies to play a protective and regulatory role in ensuring safe political expression. Overall, these insights underline the need for enhanced digital governance to foster a respectful and inclusive environment for political dialogue.

14. Digital Literacy and Online Safety
Table 17. Have you ever received education or training on how to handle political bullying online?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	90	45.0%
No	110	55.0%

Table 4.17 explores whether youth have received any education or training on how to handle political bullying online. The data shows that 55% of respondents have not received any formal education or training, while 45% reported that they have.

This lack of digital literacy training among the majority of respondents is concerning, especially given the high levels of political bullying witnessed or experienced by youth on Facebook. Without adequate education on how to recognize, respond to, and report political bullying, many young users may feel vulnerable, disempowered, or unsure of how to protect themselves. The findings emphasize the urgent need to integrate digital safety and media literacy programs into both academic curricula and public awareness campaigns. Doing so would equip youth with the skills, confidence, and tools necessary to navigate politically charged digital environments responsibly and safely.

Table 18. How confident are you in your ability to identify and report political bullying on Facebook?

Confidence Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very confident	60	30.0%
Somewhat confident	80	40.0%
Not confident	40	20.0%
Not sure	20	10.0%

Table 18 examines the respondents' self-assessed confidence in identifying and reporting political bullying on Facebook. The majority of participants expressed at least some level of confidence, with 40% reporting they are somewhat confident and 30% indicating they are very confident. However, 20% stated they are not confident, and 10% admitted they are not sure about their ability to recognize or report such incidents.

This distribution reveals that while a considerable portion of youth feel capable of dealing with political bullying, a significant minority lacks the necessary awareness or certainty, which may hinder timely intervention or reporting. The data underscores the importance of digital empowerment through structured awareness campaigns and training programs, particularly for those who fall into the "not confident" and "not sure" categories. Improving these skills will not only enhance individual resilience but also contribute to creating safer and more accountable online spaces for political discussion.

Table 19. Do you feel that Facebook provides adequate tools for users to protect themselves from political bullying?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	60	30.0%
No	100	50.0%
Not sure	40	20.0%

Table 19 assesses youth perceptions of whether Facebook provides adequate tools to protect users from political bullying. A substantial 50% of respondents believe that Facebook does not offer sufficient tools, while only 30% feel the tools are adequate, and 20% remain unsure.

These results indicate a clear lack of confidence in Facebook's existing safety mechanisms, such as reporting options, content moderation, and blocking features, when it comes to dealing with political bullying. The findings suggest that many youth perceive a gap between the platform's stated policies and their actual effectiveness in addressing political harassment or intimidation. The high percentage of dissatisfaction points to an urgent need for improvements in Facebook's user protection systems, including better algorithmic detection, faster response times to reports, and clearer guidelines for political discourse. Overall, this sentiment reinforces the necessity for platform accountability and user-centric safety enhancements to ensure a secure digital environment for political expression.

Conclusion, Limitations & Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore the behaviors, perceptions, and emotional responses of youth toward political bullying on Facebook. With the rise of social media, Facebook has

become a common space for political expression, debate, and unfortunately, conflict. This research collected quantitative data through a structured questionnaire focusing on the frequency of Facebook use, exposure to political content, participation in political discussions, and experiences of bullying related to political views.

The findings reveal that a large number of youth use Facebook daily or several times a week, making them frequent consumers of political content. Many respondents admitted that political content often appears on their feeds, even if they do not actively seek it. While some youth enjoy engaging in political discussions, others avoid them due to fear of online backlash. This confirms that political discussions on Facebook are not only common but emotionally charged and sometimes hostile. A significant number of respondents reported either witnessing or experiencing political bullying, which was defined in this study as personal attacks, threatening comments, spreading misinformation, and harassment based on political beliefs. These forms of bullying negatively affect the mental state and confidence of youth. Many participants indicated that witnessing such behavior made them feel angry, sad, or discouraged to express their own political opinions. Some even admitted that they felt pressured to hide or change their views to avoid conflict online.

The study also found that political bullying may indirectly influence political opinions, not necessarily by changing what youth believe, but by forcing them to be cautious or silent. This is particularly harmful in a democratic society where freedom of expression is essential. A concerning finding was that many youth feel Facebook does not provide enough tools or take sufficient action to prevent political bullying. While some respondents knew how to report such behavior, many either lacked the confidence or were unsure about the effectiveness of reporting.

In terms of response strategies, youth adopt various coping mechanisms. Some report or block the bully, some choose to avoid the content, while others remain silent. A few respondents mentioned that they engage in respectful debate, showing that not all reactions are passive or fearful. However, the overall trend indicates that political bullying creates a hostile environment that discourages open political dialogue.

In conclusion, the study reveals that political bullying on Facebook is a serious issue that affects the emotional well-being, freedom of expression, and political engagement of youth. As youth are the most active users of digital platforms and the future of any democratic society, their online safety and confidence in political participation are crucial. Platforms like Facebook need to strengthen their moderation tools and support systems. At the same time, educational institutions should provide training in digital literacy, respectful communication, and cyber safety. Only through combined efforts of platform providers, educators, and policymakers can we create a safer and more respectful digital space for political discourse.

Recommendations:

Following are the recommendations of the study:

1. **Enhance Digital Literacy among Youth**
   Educational institutions and social organizations should introduce training programs that improve youth's understanding of digital ethics, respectful communication, and how to identify and respond to political bullying online. This will empower users to navigate social media responsibly and confidently.

2. **Strengthen Facebook's Reporting and Moderation Tools**
   Facebook should refine its content moderation system to quickly detect and respond to political bullying. The reporting process should be made more user-friendly and transparent, ensuring users feel heard and supported when they report harmful behavior.

3. **Promote Safe Spaces for Political Dialogue**
   Initiatives should be taken to foster respectful political conversations online. Campaigns led by youth organizations, NGOs, or universities could create forums and groups where individuals can express opinions without fear of backlash or bullying.
4. **Policy-Level Interventions**
   Government and regulatory authorities should introduce or enforce cyberbullying laws specifically related to political harassment on digital platforms. Collaboration between tech companies and lawmakers can help enforce ethical digital engagement, particularly around elections and political debates.
5. **Further Research and Continuous Monitoring**
   Since online behavior evolves rapidly, further studies should continue to analyze youth interaction with political content. Regular surveys and sentiment analysis will help track the impact of bullying over time and measure the effectiveness of any interventions applied.

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