Understanding Political Participation: A Theory of Planned Behavior Approach

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Abstract. This paper reviews some literature using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain political participation. Related articles published in the past ten years were systematically reviewed. The findings revealed that the TPB is suitable for explaining political participation in various countries. Attitudes toward political participation, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can predict the intention of political participation, which directly affects an individual's behavior (political participation). Furthermore, some variables, such as political interest, social problems, and economic problems, are influential factors affecting the intention of political participation. Finally, political participation can result in the life satisfaction of people. Hence, the theoretical framework was proposed for future research.

Keywords: political participation · theory of planned behavior · Thai politics

1 Introduction

The word "politics" is the core of the political field. Both wise men and scholars have given a lot of meaning. For example, Plato defined politics as what Polis has done and may have done, while Dahl defined politics as power, forcing compliance with rule and regulation, which is legitimate authority. Lasswell explained that politics is about influence, who is influential, and who gets what [1]. In addition, it has been defined as "the process of exercising authority, allocating valuable things within society, and activities that fall within the boundaries of the political system are activities related to the allocation of valuable things for society with the power to enforce the implementation of that allocation [2].

In Thailand's politics, at a certain time, we will find that the most important political things that affect the country's state cannot be freed from development. The old conceptual framework without emerging things has not been as advanced as it should have been, like stopping development in a bygone era. That is like the weakness of the public sector, which lacks awareness of the importance of political participation. These let politics be about politicians and civil servants who have the power to set policy and govern

the country. When the result of reforming the political system is democratic, the people have absolute sovereignty in principle, and the rights of citizenship have spread among people who have a greater understanding of this principle. The realization of equality of fundamental rights, particularly efforts to make political and social civil rights a reality and internationalize civil rights as a mechanism to drive the ongoing political process, has become a source of "People's Politics" [3]. The politics of a complete democracy have generally accepted that the political participation of the people is an extremely important element in the regime because politics, as defined by Abraham Lincoln, the former president of the United States, means the government of the people, by the people, and for the People [4]. The growth of such a public sector has formed complex social structures. Diversity has become an important factor in economic inequality and inequalities. The political sector, especially access to the center of power within the state, will fall only to specific groups of people with political, economic, and social opportunities.

According to the Thai social class classification, it can be said that it is a condition that the state has defined and designed in the past for a long time and has permeated the Thai social structure [5]. Hence, people's political participation is a political phenomenon. In modern times, the need to participate in politics has increased. This is especially true in societies where the people are in the process of state governance. This is because this form of government is based on the ideology that sovereignty belongs to the people. The people have the right and authority to govern themselves through political participation. This method also gives the people the right to select their leaders and results in part in determining the policies. These policies and administrative policies will influence the public. Hence, this study would like to understand people's political participation using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to formulate the theoretical framework for future study.

2   Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior was initiated by Ajzen [6]. It indicates that behavior is directly determined by the individual's intentions and behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control, also known as self-efficacy, covers the extent to which a person believes that he or she can control the expression of that behavior. On the other hand, intentions are directly predicted by (1) a person's attitude towards behavior, (2) personal norms, and (3) perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control is often evaluated with attitude questionnaires. However, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioral control do not always contribute to predicting intentions. Sometimes, subjective norms may largely determine an individual's intentions, and attitudes can have little or no influence. For example, students' willingness to meditate may be driven by their attitude that daily meditation is good, helpful, and essential; whether others think they should meditate or not may not influence their intentions much. The only way to determine the relative importance of (or weighting) attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control is to measure these variables from a group of study participants and perform statistical analysis.

3   Theory of Planned Behavior and Political Participation

According to the literature review during the past ten years, some research used the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain people's political participation, as illustrated in Table 1.

Based on the review of the literature, the theoretical framework is proposed in Fig. 1.

Table 1. The Results of the Literature Review

Author (s)	Title	Country of study	Sample size	Results
Eckstein, Noack, & Gniewosz (2013) [7]	Predictors of intentions to participate in politics and actual political behaviors in young adulthood	Germany	n/a	1. Attitudes toward political behaviors and internal political efficacy beliefs explained changes in students' intentions to participate in politics. 2. Students' intentions to participate in politics and their internal political efficacy beliefs predicted changes in their actual behaviors.
Pavlova & Silbereisen (2015) [8]	Supportive social contexts and intentions for civic and political participation: An application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour	East Germany	695	1. Supportive family predicted intentions for civic participation, 2. Supportive community services predicted both types of intentions, 3. Supportive friends and acquaintances had no significant effects. 4. The mediating variables were subjective norms and perceived behavioral control, but not attitudes.

(continued)

Table 1. (*continued*)

Author (s)	Title	Country of study	Sample size	Results
Al-Mohammad (2017) [9]	The impact of social websites over Jordanian students' intentions of active political participation: An application of theory of planned behavior.	Jordan	461	1. Exposure to online political content had a direct impact over respondents' both "attitudes towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control". 2. Subjective norms had a strong significant impact over respondents' "attitudes towards active political participation" and "perceived behavioral control". 3. Both attitude and behavioral control had a direct impact over respondents' "intentions of active political participation.
Baber (2020) [10]	Intentions to participate in political crowdfunding- from the perspective of civic voluntarism model and theory of planned behavior	374	A democratic country	1. Resources - financial, time, and technological - are essential for participating in political crowdfunding. 2. Political engagement, political interest, and political awareness are significantly associated with the intention to participate in crowdfunding. 3. Online community engagement shows a positive relationship with the intention. 4. Among the three factors of TPB, attitude and subjective norms are significantly influencing the intention towards participation.

Table 1. (*continued*)

Author (s)	Title	Country of study	Sample size	Results
Bosnjak (2020) [11]	Determinants of online political participation in Croatia - An extended planned behavior model	Croatia	n/a	Attitudes, internalized social pressure, and moral obligation – contributed almost equally to the predictive power of the model.
La Barbera & Ajzen (2020) [12]	Understanding support for European integration across generations: A study guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior.	Italy	441	1. Perceived behavioral control had a significant effect on intentions to vote in favor of EU integration across age groups. 2. Older people's intentions were also affected by their attitude towards EU integration
Sihombing & Pramono (2021) [13]	The integration of social media to the theory of planned behavior: A case study in Indonesia.	Indonesia	165	1. Attitude and perceived behavioral control had a positive influence on intention. 2. Subjective norm has no relationship with voters' decisions. 3. Information from social media has a positive relationship with attitude.
Pavlova et al. (2022) [14]	Applying the volunteer process model to predict future intentions for civic and political participation: same antecedents, different experiences?	Russia	3,231	Perceived behavioral control was the strongest mediator between experience and intention.

4   Conclusion

People's political participation is considered to be of great importance in the political development of Thailand's democracy. The new generation's awareness begins to focus on being more politically involved because they see politics as affecting their future. Understanding the factors or variables that affect the decision to participate in politics of the younger generation is, therefore, an exciting issue because the findings obtained from the study may be helpful to political parties and interest groups in applying the findings to plan and formulate policies to meet the needs of these people. At the same time, people who participate in politics can demand or offer their own needs through political participation activities. According to the review of theory and articles, some factors
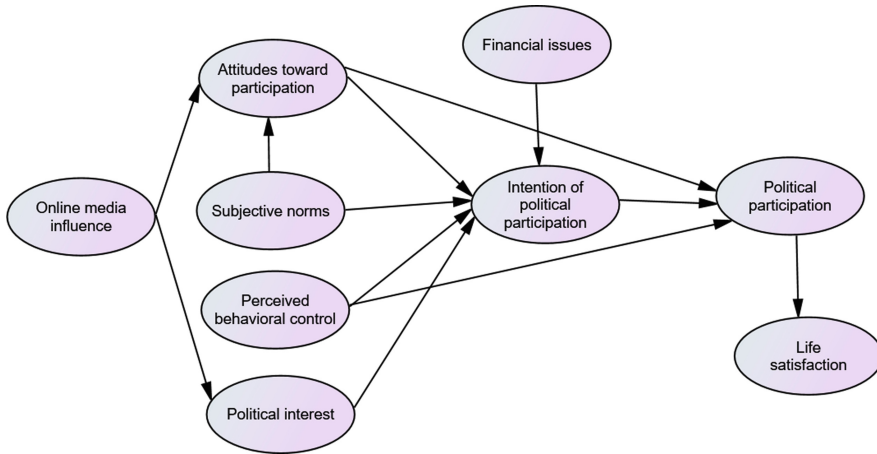
Fig. 1. Theoretical framework

influence people's political participation, such as online media influence, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intention, political interest, financial issues, and intention. Moreover, political participation also has a positive relationship with life satisfaction. Then, the theoretical model is suggested for future research.

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