The Impact of Youth Political Participation on Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Bangkok, Thailand

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
youth political participation, sustainable development, SDGs, Bangkok, regression analysis	Youth political participation is increasingly recognized as a critical driver of sustainable governance and social transformation. This study aimed to examine the impact of youth political participation on sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok, Thailand, with a particular focus on SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). A quantitative explanatory design was employed, using multi-stage sampling to collect 372 valid responses from youth aged 18–30 years. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regresssion analysis using Jamovi 2.3.28. The results revealed that all five dimensions, political awareness, civic engagement, digital political participation, institutional trust, and perceived political efficacy, significantly predicted sustainable development outcomes, explaining 52% of the variance. Perceived political efficacy was the strongest predictor. The findings highlight the importance of empowering youth, promoting political literacy, and leveraging digital participation to advance the Sustainable Development Goals..

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth are increasingly recognized as central actors in political transformation and sustainable development across the globe (OECD, 2020). Their demographic significance and digital connectivity have positioned them as agents of political innovation, civic activism, and sustainable practices (Borojević, 2023; Favero et al., 2025). In Thailand, youth political participation has become particularly visible in the past decade. The student-led demonstrations of 2020–2021 revealed the growing role of young people in demanding political reform, democratic accountability, and social justice (Anamwathana & Thanapornsangsuth, 2023; Thanapornsangsuth, 2025). These developments highlighted that youth are not passive recipients of policy but increasingly shape national discourses on governance, equity, and sustainability (Edelman, 2022).

At the same time, sustainable development has emerged as a global priority through the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. Among its 17 goals, SDG 16 emphasizes inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making as a cornerstone of sustainable governance (UN DESA, 2017; Li et al., 2025). For Thailand, integrating youth voices into governance is critical to bridging the gap between political participation and sustainable outcomes. Studies suggest that how youth engage politically, whether through civic engagement, digital activism, or institutional trust, can influence broader sustainability agendas (Thoma et al., 2023)

Although international and regional studies underscore the importance of youth inclusion in sustainable governance, empirical research connecting youth political participation and sustainable development remains limited in the Thai context. In particular, Bangkok provides a unique case study, as it is both the political hub of Thailand and the center of youth-led mobilization. Prior research has examined the determinants of political participation among Bangkok's university students (Lertchoosakul, 2021) and the role of community participation in supporting sustainable development initiatives. However,

few studies have explicitly analyzed how youth political participation in Bangkok contributes to the achievement of sustainable development (Sinpeng, 2021).

This study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of youth political participation on sustainable development in Bangkok. By conceptualizing youth participation across multiple dimensions, such as political awareness, civic engagement, digital activism, trust in institutions, and political efficacy, this research seeks to identify which aspects most significantly foster sustainable development outcomes. The findings will not only contribute to political science scholarship but also provide actionable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to advance youth-inclusive governance and accelerate progress toward the SDGs in Thailand.

Research Objectives

To assess the level of youth political participation factors in Bangkok.

To examine the relationship between youth political participation and sustainable development.

To predict sustainable development outcomes based on youth political participation factors.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Political awareness of youth significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.

H2: Civic engagement of youth significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.

H3: Digital political participation of youth significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.

H4: Trust in political institutions significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.

H5: Perceived political efficacy of youth significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations

Political Participation and Democratic Engagement

Political participation is broadly defined as activities undertaken by citizens that influence government decision-making, ranging from voting to protest and digital activism (Verba et al., 1995). Classic frameworks such as the Civic Voluntarism Model emphasize political resources, motivation, and recruitment as key determinants of participation (Verba et al., 1995). Norris (2002) further argues in Democratic Phoenix that modern activism is increasingly diverse, encompassing both conventional and nonconventional modes, including online mobilization. These frameworks are especially relevant to youth, who often substitute traditional political participation with digital and issue-based activism.

Youth as Agents of Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights inclusive decision-making as essential for achieving long-term development outcomes (United Nations, 2020). SDG 16 in particular underscores participatory governance and accountability as central to peace and sustainability. Youth, due to their demographic weight and innovative capacities, are increasingly recognized as pivotal actors in translating sustainability principles into civic and political practices (Borojević, 2023). Theories of global citizenship education also stress the role of young people in fostering awareness and agency in sustainability and governance (Chobphon, 2024).

Empirical Studies

Youth Political Participation in Thailand

Recent research has documented the surge of youth activism in Thailand. Lertchoosakul (2021) highlights the "White Ribbon Movement," where high school students emerged as central actors in the 2020 protest wave. Sinpeng (2021) analyzes the role of digital platforms, demonstrating how hashtags such as #FreeYouth enabled decentralized mobilization and collective identity formation. Teeratanabodee (2025) situates the protests within broader pro-democracy struggles, underscoring their diversity and endurance.

At the urban scale, Kanchanawongpaisan et al. (2024) examined university students in Bangkok and found that political knowledge, efficacy, and digital engagement significantly shaped participation levels. These findings suggest that Bangkok's youth represent both a politically active and digitally literate group, aligning with global trends of youth-driven activism.

Youth Participation and Sustainable Development

At the global level, youth engagement has been linked to sustainability outcomes through civic responsibility, digital activism, and policy innovation (Borojević, 2023). In Thailand, Phuangsuwan (2025) examined community-based participation in Bangkok and found strong associations between youth involvement and local sustainable learning development. These findings point to the potential of youth political engagement to advance SDG-related objectives at the municipal level.

Although existing scholarship has richly documented youth activism in Thailand, particularly during the 2020–2021 protests (Lertchoosakul, 2021; Sinpeng, 2021), limited research explicitly connects youth political participation to sustainable development outcomes in the Bangkok context. Prior studies either focus on youth mobilization (Teeratanabodee, 2025) or

determinants of participation, but rarely analyze how such participation contributes to achieving the SDGs. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge that gap by empirically examining the extent to which youth participation factors, political awareness, civic engagement, digital activism, institutional trust, and efficacy predict sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok.
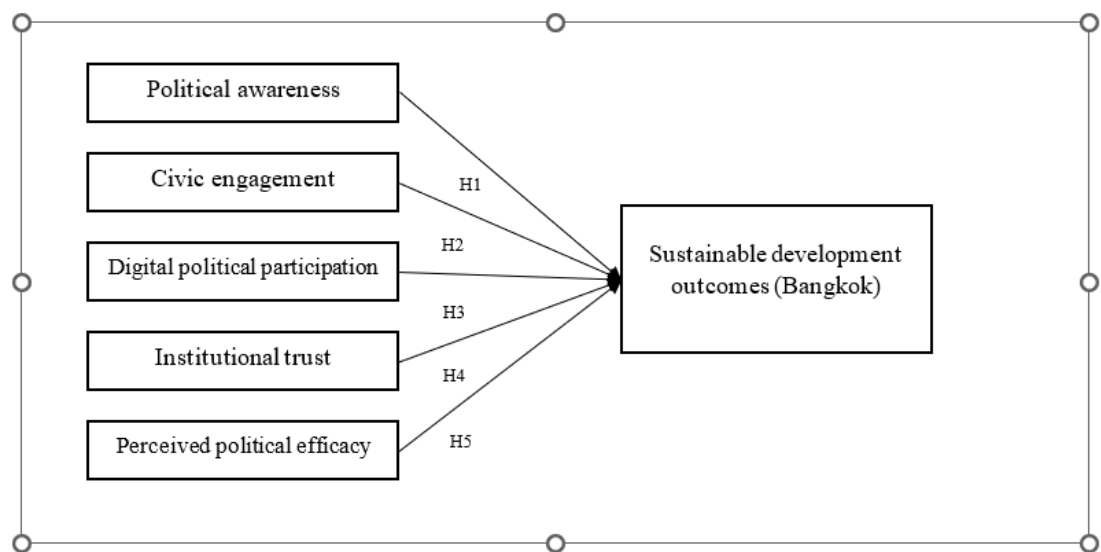

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design to examine the impact of youth political participation on sustainable development in Bangkok. The design was appropriate because it enabled the testing of predictive hypotheses and the identification of causal inferences between multiple independent variables and a dependent outcome. Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was selected as the primary analytical technique, as it allowed for the estimation of the predictive power of several independent variables simultaneously.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The population of this study consisted of youth aged 18–30 years residing in Bangkok. This age group was selected because it represented the most politically active cohort in Thailand and was central to recent social and political movements.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to enhance representativeness while addressing practical constraints in reaching a large urban population. The process unfolded in four stages:

Stage 1: Stratification by Zone. Bangkok was first divided into five administrative zones: North, South, East, West, and Central. This stratification ensured that the study reflected the geographic and socio-economic diversity of the capital city.

Stage 2: Selection of Districts. From each zone, two districts were randomly selected through a simple random technique. This provided balanced coverage of both inner-city and peripheral districts.

Stage 3: Identification of Clusters. Within each district, clusters were identified in the form of universities, community centers, and youth organizations. These served as the primary sampling units, allowing the study to include both student and non-student populations.

Stage 4: Selection of Respondents. From each cluster, individual respondents were chosen through simple random sampling. Lists of eligible participants were obtained through collaboration with local administrative offices, universities, and youth organizations. Random numbers were generated to ensure unbiased selection.

The sample size was determined using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007). For five predictors, with a medium effect size ($f^2=0.15$), $\alpha = 0.05$, and power $(1-\beta) = 0.95$, the minimum required sample was 138. To strengthen generalizability, 400 questionnaires were distributed, and after data cleaning and screening for completeness, 372 valid responses were retained for analysis.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into three sections:

Demographics: gender, age, education, occupation, and district of residence.

Independent variables (IVs): political awareness, civic engagement, digital political participation, institutional trust, and perceived political efficacy.

Dependent variable (DV): sustainable development outcomes, conceptualized as youth contributions to SDG-related goals in the Bangkok context.

All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Items were adapted from established scales in political participation and governance literature (Verba et al., 1995; Norris, 2002) and contextualized for sustainable development (United Nations, 2020).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by three academics specializing in political science and sustainable development. A pilot test with 30 respondents was conducted to refine item clarity and questionnaire structure. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha, calculated in Jamovi version 2.3.28, and all constructs exceeded the 0.70 threshold, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019).

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection was conducted between January and April 2025. Surveys were administered both online, via a secure Google Form, and in person at community centers and university campuses across the selected districts. Trained research assistants facilitated the in-person distribution. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was strictly maintained. Of the 400 distributed questionnaires, 372 were deemed usable for analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Jamovi version 2.3.28, an open-source statistical software suitable for advanced social science research (Navarro & Foxcroft, 2025).

Step 1: Data Screening: Missing values, outliers, and normality of data were checked. Z-scores above ± 3.29 were flagged as outliers.

Step 2: Descriptive Statistics: Mean, standard deviation, and frequency were used to assess the level of political participation factors.

Step 3: Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha was computed for all constructs to confirm internal consistency.

Step 4: Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficients were generated to identify initial associations between independent and dependent variables.

Step 5: Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA): Sustainable development outcomes were regressed on the five predictors. Regression coefficients (β), R^2, adjusted R^2, F-tests, and significance values were reported.

Step 6: Assumption Checks – Linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality of residuals were verified through plots and statistical tests. Multicollinearity was checked using VIF (<5).

Model (simultaneous entry, no composite):

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards for social science research. Ethical approval was obtained from the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Shinawatra University. Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection (Approval No. SE 089/2025). Participants were fully informed about the objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Respondents were assured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained, and no personally identifiable information was collected. Data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki and the American Political Science Association's Ethical Guidelines.

4. RESULT

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 372)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	187	50.3
	Female	185	49.7
Age Group	18–20 years	121	32.5
	21–25 years	168	45.2
	26–30 years	83	22.3
Education	High school or equivalent	49	13.2

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Undergraduate degree	253	68.0
	Postgraduate degree	70	18.8
Occupation	Student	205	55.1
	Private sector employee	91	24.5
	Public sector employee	38	10.2
	Self-employed	25	6.7
	Other	13	3.5
Residential Zone	Central Bangkok	85	22.8
	North Bangkok	76	20.4
	East Bangkok	71	19.1
	West Bangkok	69	18.5
	South Bangkok	71	19.2

Note. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Table 1 shows that the respondents were relatively balanced in terms of gender, with 187 males (50.3%) and 185 females (49.7%). The majority of participants were aged 21–25 years (45.2%), followed by 18–20 years (32.5%) and 26–30 years (22.3%). Most respondents reported holding or pursuing an undergraduate degree (68.0%), while 18.8% had a postgraduate degree and 13.2% had completed high school. In terms of occupation, students represented the largest group (55.1%), followed by private sector employees (24.5%), public sector employees (10.2%), self-employed youth (6.7%), and others (3.5%). Respondents were distributed across Bangkok's five zones in accordance with the sampling design, with Central Bangkok accounting for 22.8%, North Bangkok 20.4%, East Bangkok 19.1%, West Bangkok 18.5%, and South Bangkok 19.2%.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 372)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	CV (%)	Level
Political Awareness	3.78	0.62	16.4	High
Civic Engagement	3.55	0.71	20.0	Moderate
Digital Political Participation	3.92	0.65	16.6	High
Institutional Trust	3.21	0.74	23.1	Moderate
Perceived Political Efficacy	3.68	0.69	18.8	High
Sustainable Development Outcomes	3.84	0.66	17.2	High

Note. Scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Level was interpreted using the following cutoffs: 1.00–2.49 = low, 2.50–3.49 = moderate, 3.50–5.00 = high. CV = Coefficient of Variation, calculated as (SD ÷ Mean) × 100.

Table 2 presents that respondents demonstrated high levels of political awareness (M = 3.78, SD = 0.62, CV = 16.4%), digital political participation (M = 3.92, SD = 0.65, CV = 16.6%), and perceived political efficacy (M = 3.68, SD = 0.69, CV = 18.8%). Civic engagement was reported at a moderate level (M = 3.55, SD = 0.71, CV = 20.0%), while institutional trust was the lowest among the variables, also at a moderate level (M = 3.21, SD = 0.74, CV = 23.1%). The dependent variable, sustainable development outcomes, was assessed at a high level (M = 3.84, SD = 0.66, CV = 17.2%), reflecting youth

perceptions of their contributions to sustainability in Bangkok.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Matrix for Observed Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Political Awareness	3.78	0.62	1					
2. Civic Engagement	3.55	0.71	.42**	1				
3. Digital Political Participation	3.92	0.65	.48**	.39**	1			
4. Institutional Trust	3.21	0.74	.36**	.31**	.28**	1		
5. Perceived Political Efficacy	3.68	0.69	.51**	.44**	.47**	.33**	1	
6. Sustainable Development Outcomes	3.84	0.66	.55**	.49**	.53**	.41**	.58**	1

Note *p<.05, ** p<.01 (two-tailed)

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis, which revealed that all five independent variables were positively and significantly correlated with sustainable development outcomes. The strongest correlation was found between perceived political efficacy and sustainable development outcomes (r = .58, p < .01), followed by political awareness (r = .55, p < .01), and digital political participation (r = .53, p < .01). Civic engagement (r = .49, p < .01) and institutional trust (r = .41, p < .01) also demonstrated significant positive associations. These findings suggested that youth who reported higher political awareness, efficacy, and digital activism tended to perceive themselves as contributing more strongly to sustainable development in Bangkok.

Table 4: Assumption Diagnostics for Multiple Regression (N = 372)

Assumption	Test/Indicator	Criterion	Result	Interpretation
Linearity	Scatterplot of residuals vs. predicted	Random distribution, no clear curve	Met	Relationship linear
Normality of residuals	Shapiro–Wilk test	p > .05 (n > 300, visual inspection emphasized)	W = 0.987, p = .074	Met (approx. normal)
Homoscedasticity	Residual scatterplot	Constant variance of residuals	Met	Equal variance assumed
Independence of errors	Durbin–Watson statistic	Value between 1.5–2.5	1.92	Met (no autocorrelation)
Multicollinearity	VIF (Variance Inflation Factor)	VIF < 5, Tolerance > 0.20	1.23–1.87	Met (no multicollinearity)
Outliers/Influence	Cook's Distance	< 1.0	Max = 0.21	Met (no influential outliers)

Note. Diagnostics based on Jamovi regression output and residual analysis.

Table 4 presents the diagnostic results, which indicated that all regression assumptions were satisfied. The residuals were approximately normally distributed, as confirmed by the Shapiro–Wilk test (W = 0.987, p = .074) and inspection of Q–Q plots. Linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions were met, as residuals were evenly distributed in scatterplots. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.92) indicated independence of errors. Multicollinearity was not a concern, as all VIF values ranged between 1.23 and 1.87, well below the threshold of 5. Cook's Distance values (maximum = 0.21) indicated no influential outliers.

These findings confirmed that the dataset satisfied the key assumptions of multiple regression analysis, allowing valid interpretation of the regression results.

Table 5: Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Variables in the SEM Model

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
Political Awareness	0.28	0.06	.24	4.67	<.001	0.72	1.39
Civic Engagement	0.21	0.05	.19	4.20	<.001	0.74	1.35
Digital Political Participation	0.25	0.06	.22	4.41	<.001	0.68	1.47
Institutional Trust	0.15	0.05	.13	3.00	.003	0.79	1.27
Perceived Political Efficacy	0.32	0.06	.28	5.33	<.001	0.70	1.43
Model Summary: R = .72, R² = .52, Adjusted R² = .51, F (5, 366) = 78.41, p < .001							

Note. Dependent variable: Sustainable development outcomes. SE = Standard Error, β = Standardized Coefficient.

The regression results indicated that all five predictors significantly predicted sustainable development outcomes. Perceived political efficacy ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$) emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by political awareness ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$), digital political participation ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$), civic engagement ($\beta = .19$, $p < .001$), and institutional trust ($\beta = .13$, $p = .003$).

The overall model was statistically significant, $F(5, 366) = 78.41$, $p < .001$, explaining 52% of the variance ($R^2 = .52$) in sustainable development outcomes among youth in Bangkok. Tolerance values ranged from 0.68 to 0.79, and VIF values ranged from 1.27 to 1.47, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

Model Specification

The predictive model for sustainable development outcomes (Y) based on youth political participation factors was specified as follows:

Unstandardized Regression Model

$Y=\beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\varepsilon$

Where:

Y= Sustainable development outcomes

β_0 = Constant (intercept)

X_1 = Political awareness

X_2 = Civic engagement

X_3 = Digital political participation

X_4 = Institutional trust

X_5 = Perceived political efficacy

ε = Error term

Based on the unstandardized coefficients (Table 5), the estimated model was:

$Y=0.84+0.28X_1+0.21X_2+0.25X_3+0.15X_4+0.32X_5+\varepsilon$

Standardized Regression Model

For interpretation in standardized form, the model was expressed as:

$Z_Y=0.24Z_{X1}+0.19Z_{X2}+0.22Z_{X3}+0.13Z_{X4}+0.28Z_{X5}+\varepsilon$

Where:

Z_Y = Standardized value of sustainable development outcomes

Z_{X1} = Standardized value of political awareness

Z_{X2} = Standardized value of civic engagement

Z_{X3} = Standardized value of digital political participation

Z_{X4} = Standardized value of institutional trust

Z_{X5} = Standardized value of perceived political efficacy

This standardized model showed that perceived political efficacy (β=.28) was the strongest predictor of sustainable development outcomes, followed by political awareness (β=.24), digital political participation (β=.22), civic engagement (β=.19), and institutional trust (β=.13).

Interpretation of Predictive Effects

Perceived political efficacy (B = 0.32, β = .28): When perceived efficacy increased by one unit on the five-point scale, sustainable development outcomes increased by 0.32 units, holding other variables constant. This demonstrates that youth who feel more capable of influencing politics also report significantly greater contributions to sustainable development.

Political awareness (B = 0.28, β = .24): For each one-unit increase in political awareness, sustainable development outcomes rose by 0.28 units. This indicates that better-informed youth are more likely to act in ways that promote sustainability, aligning with the role of political knowledge in shaping democratic behavior.

Digital political participation (B = 0.25, β = .22): A one-unit rise in digital activism (e.g., online campaigns, social media engagement) was associated with a 0.25 increase in sustainability outcomes. This reflects the growing role of online platforms in translating political activity into social and environmental awareness.

Civic engagement (B = 0.21, β = .19): Each one-unit increase in civic engagement corresponded to a 0.21 increase in sustainable development outcomes. This suggests that traditional community involvement—volunteering, attending forums, or local organizing—remains a meaningful predictor of youth contributions to sustainability.

Institutional trust (B = 0.15, β = .13): Although the weakest predictor, each one-unit increase in institutional trust was associated with a 0.15 increase in sustainable development outcomes. This highlights that even in a context of skepticism toward institutions, some degree of trust facilitates youth alignment with long-term sustainability agendas.

Overall Implication

Taken together, the predictive model shows that when all five dimensions of political participation increase simultaneously, youth sustainable development outcomes also rise substantially. Among the predictors, enhancing political efficacy and awareness yields the most significant gains, while digital activism plays a crucial mediating role in modern participation. Even comparatively modest gains in civic engagement and institutional trust contribute meaningfully to the sustainability agenda.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of youth political participation on sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok. Using multiple regression analysis, the model explained 52% of the variance in sustainable development outcomes, indicating that political participation factors exert a substantial influence on youth perceptions and contributions to sustainability. All five independent variables significantly predicted sustainable development outcomes, although their relative strength varied.

Perceived Political Efficacy as the Strongest Predictor

Among the predictors, perceived political efficacy (β=.28) emerged as the strongest determinant of sustainable development outcomes. This finding is consistent with the Civic Voluntarism Model (Verba et al., 1995), which posits that individuals who believe their actions matter are more likely to participate effectively in politics and civic life. In the Thai context, this aligns with Lertchoosakul's (2021) observations that young people mobilized during the 2020 protests largely because they felt capable of influencing the political system. This study extends such insights by linking efficacy directly to sustainability outcomes, suggesting that youth who feel empowered politically also perceive themselves as agents of sustainable change.

Political Awareness and Digital Political Participation

The second and third strongest predictors were political awareness (β=.24) and digital political participation (β=.22). High political awareness equips youth with the knowledge needed to assess policy decisions critically, align their activities with SDG objectives, and advocate for accountability (Norris, 2002). Digital political participation, including the use of hashtags, online campaigns, and virtual mobilization, has been documented as a central feature of Thailand's #FreeYouth protests (Sinpeng, 2021). The present findings demonstrate that digital activism is not merely symbolic but significantly linked to sustainable development engagement.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement (β=.19) also showed a significant positive effect, indicating that traditional forms of participation—such as volunteering, community meetings, and youth organization activities, remain important in predicting sustainability-related outcomes. This corroborates Phuangsuwan's (2025) study on community participation in Bangkok, which found strong associations between grassroots involvement and sustainable learning development. Thus, even in a digital era, offline engagement continues to serve as a bridge between political participation and sustainability.

Institutional Trust

Finally, institutional trust (β=.13) was the weakest but still significant predictor. This suggests that while Thai youth remain skeptical of formal institutions, as reported by Teeratanabodee (2025), trust still plays a role in linking participation to sustainability outcomes. The result highlights an important paradox: distrust in institutions may fuel activism, but some degree of trust is necessary for youth to channel their actions into sustainable policy reforms.

Implications of the Model

The regression model demonstrates that political efficacy, awareness, and digital activism are the most influential drivers of youth contributions to sustainable development in Bangkok. This reinforces the argument that sustainability cannot be achieved without youth inclusion in governance processes (United Nations, 2020). The findings also suggest that youth engagement strategies should emphasize both empowerment (building efficacy) and access to information (raising awareness), while leveraging digital tools for mobilization. At the same time, efforts to rebuild institutional trust are crucial to ensure that youth engagement translates into systemic change rather than episodic protest.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provided empirical evidence that youth political participation significantly predicts sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok. All five participation dimensions, political awareness, civic engagement, digital participation, institutional trust, and perceived political efficacy, were found to be significant predictors, explaining 52% of the variance in sustainability outcomes.

Theoretically, the findings extend the Civic Voluntarism Model and participation theory by situating them within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Practically, the study highlights the need for policymakers, educators, and civil society actors in Thailand to foster youth empowerment, enhance political literacy, and support digital activism as pathways toward sustainability.

In conclusion, the results underscore that youth are not passive stakeholders but active agents of change whose political participation is instrumental to achieving sustainable development. Strengthening youth efficacy, awareness, and engagement, both online and offline, will be essential for aligning Thailand's governance processes with the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to strengthen the role of youth political participation in advancing sustainable development outcomes in Bangkok and beyond.

Practical and Policy Recommendations

Enhancing Political Efficacy: Since perceived political efficacy was the strongest predictor, educational institutions and civil society organizations should develop programs that empower youth to believe in their political agency. This may include leadership workshops, simulation exercises such as model parliaments, and youth forums that highlight real-world impacts of political engagement.

Promoting Political Awareness: Policymakers and educators should prioritize political literacy by integrating civic and sustainability education into school and university curricula. Information campaigns that link everyday political decisions with sustainable development goals (SDGs) could foster a more profound understanding among youth.

Leveraging Digital Participation: As digital activism strongly predicted sustainability outcomes, government agencies, NGOs, and youth networks should expand digital platforms for consultation, e-participation, and issue advocacy. Ensuring safe online spaces where youth can voice opinions will further harness the potential of digital political participation.

Strengthening Civic Engagement: Local governments should encourage community service and youth participation in local development projects. Initiatives that link volunteering with environmental and social programs can translate civic engagement into tangible contributions to sustainability.

Rebuilding Institutional Trust: Although institutional trust was the weakest predictor, its significance suggests that transparent governance and inclusive decision-making processes are essential. Policymakers should involve youth in advisory councils and participatory budgeting to demonstrate institutional responsiveness and rebuild confidence.

Directions for Future Research

Expanding Geographic Scope: Future studies could extend beyond Bangkok to include provincial cities and rural areas, enabling comparative insights into how context shapes youth participation and sustainability.

Incorporating Longitudinal Data: Long-term research designs would help capture how youth participation influences sustainability outcomes over time, rather than relying solely on cross-sectional perceptions.

Integrating Qualitative Perspectives: Mixed-methods research, including interviews and focus groups, could provide richer insights into the motivations, barriers, and lived experiences of youth political participation.

Exploring Mediators and Moderators: Future research should test whether digital activism mediates the relationship between awareness and sustainability, or whether institutional trust moderates the strength of participation effects.

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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