

Affirmative Action and Gender Empowerment: Chinese Women in Malaysia's Socio-Political and Economic Context

Nurul Asmaa binti Ramli¹, Farah Aishah Kamaruddin², Kartini Binti Aboo Talib³, Syumi Rafida Abdul Rahman¹

¹Faculty of Liberal Sciences, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

²UKM-Graduate School of Business, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

³Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author E-mail: nurulasmaaramli@ukm.edu.my

HOW TO CITE:

Nurul Asmaa binti Ramli, Farah Aishah Kamaruddin, Kartini Binti Aboo Talib, Syumi Rafida Abdul Rahman (2026). Affirmative Action and Gender Empowerment: Chinese Women in Malaysia's Socio-Political and Economic Context. International Journal of Special Education, 41(24s), 565-575

ABSTRACT:

This study examines how political parties in Peninsular Malaysia implement affirmative action initiatives to empower Chinese women across political, economic, and social domains. Although the Chinese community represents the second-largest ethnic group in Malaysia and contributes significantly to national economic development, Chinese women continue to experience limited political representation and restricted participation in leadership structures. Existing studies on women's empowerment in Malaysia have primarily focused on broader gender issues and ethnic politics, with limited attention given specifically to the experiences of Chinese women within party-based institutional frameworks. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by exploring how political parties function as institutional actors in shaping empowerment opportunities for Chinese women. A qualitative research approach was employed through semi-structured interviews with seven purposively selected Chinese women political representatives from the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the Democratic Action Party (DAP), and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR). The interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns relating to affirmative action, leadership participation, economic initiatives, and institutional support mechanisms. The findings reveal that MCA adopts a more structured and targeted approach towards empowering Chinese women through leadership development, quota systems, entrepreneurship programmes, welfare initiatives, and legal support mechanisms. These efforts are strengthened by the party's organisational structure, financial resources, and historical position within the Barisan Nasional coalition. In contrast, DAP and PKR emphasise broader, multi-ethnic and inclusive approaches that prioritise women's participation in

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.
Open access publication under the
terms and conditions
of the Creative Commons Attribution
(CC BY)
license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

general but are less specifically focused on Chinese women as a distinct group. The study demonstrates that the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives is closely linked to institutional commitment, party orientation, and organisational capacity. It further underscores the need for stronger collaboration among political parties, government agencies, and civil society organisations to develop more sustainable and inclusive frameworks for women's leadership and participation in Malaysia.

Keywords: political empowerment, political parties, ethnic representation, qualitative study.

1. Introduction

Women's political empowerment has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary democratic societies, particularly regarding equal participation, representation in leadership, and access to decision-making structures. Across many countries, women continue to face structural barriers that limit their involvement in politics despite the expansion of affirmative action policies and gender equality frameworks. Existing scholarship demonstrates that political institutions, party systems, and socio-cultural norms significantly influence women's access to leadership opportunities and political participation (Mujtaba, 2023; Draboo & Naaz, 2021; UN Women, 2024). Although affirmative action mechanisms have improved women's representation in several contexts, gender inequality persists due to institutional resistance, patriarchal values, and unequal access to political resources (Paxton et al., 2021). Consequently, women's empowerment should not be understood solely as numerical representation, but also as the ability to influence decision-making processes and to participate meaningfully within political institutions.

In multicultural and ethnically diverse societies, the challenges experienced by women are often shaped by the intersection between gender, ethnicity, and socio-political identity. Minority women frequently experience multiple layers of marginalisation that differ from the experiences of majority women or minority men. Existing studies on affirmative action have largely focused on broader gender equality issues, while paying

limited attention to how minority women navigate institutional and political structures within ethnically oriented political systems (Gichuki, 2023; Minasyan & Klasen, 2017). Recent scholarship further argues that intersectionality remains central in understanding the unequal political experiences of minority women because gender discrimination is often compounded by ethnicity, class, and cultural exclusion (Crenshaw, 1991; Celis & Erzeel, 2015). In many developing societies, political participation among minority women remains constrained by cultural expectations, unequal political access, and institutional limitations. This demonstrates that empowerment initiatives cannot be separated from the broader political and ethnic context in which women operate.

Malaysia offers a key context for examining the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and political representation, given its plural social structure and ethnicity-based politics. British colonial policies shaped the country's landscape, leading to ethnically organised political representation. In this system, Chinese women are both gender and ethnic minorities. Though the Chinese community is Malaysia's second-largest and contributes to economic development, Chinese women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making (Kausar, 2006). Despite greater awareness of gender equality and inclusive governance, women's political representation remains low by global standards (World Economic Forum, 2024). Chinese women's participation depends on support from political parties, women's wings, and civil society

groups. While the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Democratic Action Party (DAP), and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) have launched women's empowerment initiatives, these differ in nature, focus, and effectiveness.

Despite growing discussions on women's political participation in Malaysia, limited research has specifically examined how political parties function as institutional actors in empowering Chinese women through affirmative action mechanisms. Most previous studies focus either on broader women's issues or general ethnic politics, without critically analysing how party structures, organisational capacity, and institutional orientation shape empowerment opportunities for Chinese women specifically (Kausar, 2006; Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015). Existing literature also tends to prioritise descriptive accounts of women's representation without sufficiently exploring how institutional mechanisms within political parties shape empowerment outcomes for minority women (Celis & Lovenduski, 2018). This gap is significant because political parties play a central role in determining access to leadership positions, political training, economic opportunities, and institutional support. Therefore, this study examines how MCA, DAP, and PKR implement affirmative action initiatives to empower Chinese women across political, economic, and social dimensions in Peninsular Malaysia. By focusing on party-based institutional mechanisms, this study contributes to existing literature on gender empowerment, minority women's political participation, and affirmative action within multicultural political systems.

2. Literature Review

Although affirmative action has been widely implemented to reduce gender disparities across political, economic, and social domains, its effectiveness varies considerably depending on institutional capacity, socio-political conditions, and public acceptance. Existing studies demonstrate that affirmative action can expand women's participation in governance and employment, yet structural inequalities and

discriminatory norms often continue to constrain its long-term impact. In India, affirmative action has increased women's representation in local governance structures, although persistent gender discrimination and inconsistent judicial interpretations continue to limit substantive empowerment (Draboo & Naaz, 2021; Rani, 2023). Similarly, Kenya has introduced legal and policy frameworks aimed at reducing workplace discrimination and promoting women's inclusion, but implementation weaknesses and enduring societal biases have undermined policy effectiveness (Gichuki, 2023; Nzavi et al., 2018).

In the economic sphere, South Africa's Employment Equity Act initially improved the representation of Black women in senior positions; however, the sustainability of this progress remains questionable, indicating that legislative intervention alone is insufficient without continuous institutional support (Minasyan & Klasen, 2017). Likewise, affirmative action initiatives in Brazil have contributed to strengthening women's labour market participation and autonomy, particularly when supported by broader empowerment mechanisms and state intervention (Ferreira & Guerios, 2017). Beyond institutional implementation, societal perceptions also significantly shape the success of affirmative action policies. While affirmative action is widely regarded in Kenya as an important mechanism for addressing historical inequalities, patriarchal attitudes and gender biases continue to obstruct equitable treatment for women (Magero et al., 2012). In the United States, debates surrounding affirmative action further illustrate the ongoing tension between equality, meritocracy, and social justice in policy formulation (Mujtaba, 2023).

Collectively, these studies suggest that affirmative action should not be understood merely as a formal policy mechanism, but as a dynamic process shaped by political structures, institutional commitment, and socio-cultural acceptance. Although affirmative action has created opportunities for women's participation and leadership across different contexts, its effectiveness is frequently constrained by weak

enforcement, patriarchal resistance, and structural inequalities. Consequently, sustainable women's empowerment requires not only policy implementation but also broader social transformation and continuous institutional adaptation. Against this backdrop, the present study examines how the Democratic Action Party (DAP), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) implement affirmative action mechanisms to empower Chinese women in Peninsular Malaysia, as illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Political Affirmative Action for Chinese Women's Empowerment

Source: Author's illustration

3. Methodology

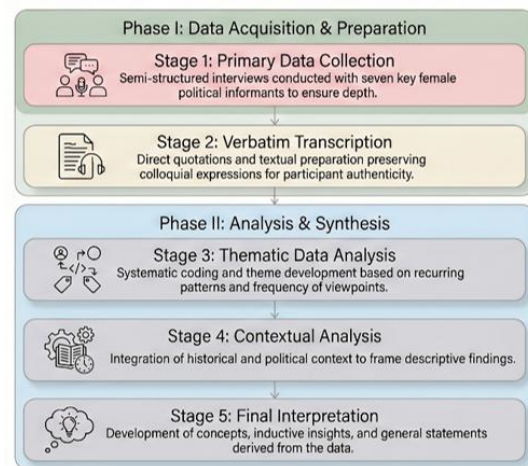


Figure 2: Research Design and Analytical Process

Source: Author's illustration

This study used a qualitative approach, collecting primary data through in-depth interviews and secondary data from official documents, archives, reports, and published sources. The research process is shown in Figure 2. Othman (2006) notes that qualitative research emphasizes understanding respondents' meanings and interpretations through descriptive, contextual analysis. To achieve this, semi-structured interviews ensured consistent information and targeted the research questions. The informants' identities were kept anonymous to uphold anonymity and protect safety, allowing them to share experiences and opinions freely, even on sensitive issues.

Seven key informants were interviewed: Chinese female political representatives in Peninsular Malaysia who are actively involved in politics, either holding significant party positions, serving as Members of Parliament, or as members of the State Legislative Assembly. Their direct engagement enabled a deeper understanding of actual circumstances. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), researchers strive to interview informants with extensive relevant knowledge and experience.

The determination of the number of informants was guided by Charmaz's (1990) principle that qualitative research generally employs smaller samples than quantitative studies, as it emphasizes depth of understanding rather than

numerical representation. Qualitative inquiry aims to examine specific phenomena, processes, conditions, or social interactions in depth. Furthermore, intensive interviews can yield analytically meaningful generalisations for a broader context through an inductive approach, without relying heavily on hypothesis testing (Charmaz, 1990). The interview process was terminated once data saturation was reached, indicating that no new information was obtained. Mason (2010) stated that saturation is an essential consideration in determining sample size in qualitative research, as data collection is discontinued when additional interviews no longer yield new findings.

The data obtained from the interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently analysed. Research themes were developed based on recurring patterns and the frequency with which informants expressed

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Women's Empowerment Initiatives

viewpoints. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998), a critical stage in qualitative discovery involves identifying themes, developing concepts, and producing general statements. Coding was conducted to systematically interpret the data. Informants' statements were presented as direct quotations or storylines to illustrate their experiences and perspectives. Because the transcripts were produced verbatim, instances of colloquial or mixed Malay-English expressions were retained to preserve the authenticity of their voices.

Each informant was assigned a specific identification number, and direct quotations were accompanied by page (P) and line (L) references for ease of verification. For example: Informant 5: "When I studied abroad, I served as the president of the Malaysian Students' Association" (P:108, L:3174–3175).

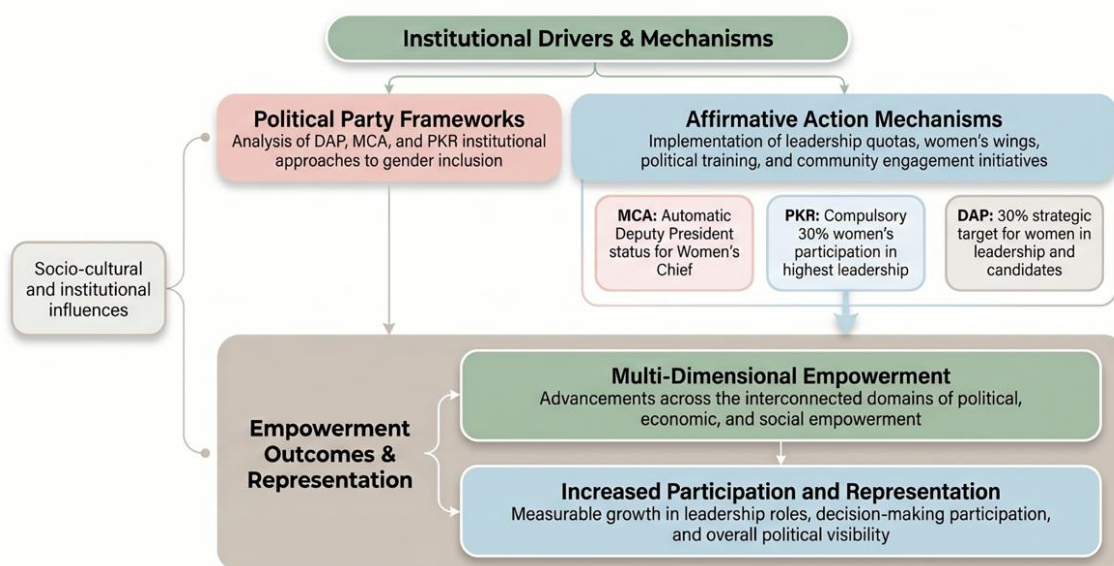


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of Political Affirmative Action and Chinese Women's Empowerment in Malaysia

Source: Author's illustration

As illustrated in Figure 3, women's empowerment initiatives implemented by political parties in Malaysia can be broadly categorised into three domains: economic, political and social empowerment. In the economic domain, empowerment is reflected

through the organisation of courses, seminars, and workshops to improve women's skills and financial independence. In the political domain, empowerment is demonstrated through the appointment of women to leadership positions, the establishment of women's wings and young

women's wings, the implementation of a 30 per cent quota system, and the organisation of training programmes to enhance political awareness and participation. In the social domain, empowerment initiatives include legislative amendments, legal assistance, community programmes, and the establishment of non-governmental organisations.

Within this context, the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) appears to be the most consistent party in implementing initiatives to empower Chinese women in Malaysia compared with the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR). This reflects MCA's long-established focus on advancing the interests of the Chinese community, whereas DAP and PKR adopt broader strategies that extend to women from all ethnic backgrounds.

Importantly, this distinction suggests that the orientation of political parties, whether ethnically focused or multi-ethnic, plays a critical role in shaping the design and delivery of empowerment initiatives. This finding aligns with broader literature that emphasises that institutional priorities and party identity significantly influence the scope and targeting of affirmative action strategies.

4.2 Political Empowerment of Chinese Women

Findings from the interviews indicate that political empowerment is primarily achieved through institutional mechanisms within political parties. One key mechanism involves leadership structures that enable women's participation in decision-making. For example, an amendment to the Constitution of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) stipulates that the elected MCA Women's Chief is automatically appointed as one of the Deputy Presidents. This reform enabled Ng Yen Yen to become the first woman to hold the position and was viewed by informants as a significant milestone in advancing women's leadership within party structures. According to one informant, MCA had successfully achieved a major breakthrough by appointing "one vice president in MCA" from among women leaders within the party structure

(Informant 1, P:6, L:163–166). This development reflects the gradual expansion of women's representation within senior political leadership positions.

Historical evidence also shows that women's political participation has earlier precedents. The Province Wellesley Labour Party, active during the pre-independence period, was led by a Chinese woman, B. H. Oon (Nik Safiah & Rokiah, 2016). At the party level, PKR introduced a 30 per cent quota for women in senior leadership positions and candidate selection for parliamentary and state seats. Informants highlighted that this initiative received support from both men and women within the party, indicating a relatively inclusive internal political culture. One informant further explained that the party had amended its constitution to make "30% women's participation in the highest party leadership" compulsory (Informant 6, P:126, L:3732–3734). This demonstrates that gender representation is increasingly institutionalised through formal constitutional mechanisms within party structures. Similarly, DAP adopted a 30 per cent quota as a strategic target, although its implementation remains constrained by the limited number of women who meet leadership criteria.

The establishment of women's wings has also played an important role in strengthening political participation. PKR established its women's wing in 2001, while DAP formed its women's wing in 1972 to address issues affecting women. The DAP Women's Tanjong Declaration further outlined key concerns regarding women's rights, including protection against discrimination and recognition of women's contributions to national development (Kausar, 2006). Despite these initiatives, women's early participation in DAP remained limited, as they were largely confined to branch-level positions with minimal representation at the central administrative level (Kausar, 2006). Opportunities for women to contest in elections were also restricted, reflecting structural barriers within party systems (Kausar, 2006).

Over time, women's representation within DAP leadership gradually increased. By 2001, women constituted approximately 15 per cent of party membership, with several women holding positions within the Central Executive Committee (Kausar, 2006). This trend continued in subsequent years, with more women occupying senior leadership roles.

In comparison, MCA demonstrated a more structured approach to political empowerment. The establishment of MCA Women began at the branch level in 1953 before being formalised at the national level in 1967 under the leadership of Sait Sai Mooi (Kausar, 2006). Subsequent developments, including leadership initiatives introduced by Rosmery Chong, strengthened women's participation within the party. Further institutional reforms were introduced through quota systems. In 1996, MCA amended its constitution to require women to occupy 30 per cent of positions within the Central Committee. Additional measures, such as reserving delegate positions for women and encouraging participation among younger women, were later implemented (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015).

These findings indicate that political empowerment is not solely dependent on the presence of women-oriented policies, but rather on the degree of institutionalisation within party structures. Parties that embed gender representation within formal rules and leadership pathways appear more capable of sustaining women's participation. This observation reinforces existing arguments that quota systems and institutional reforms are more effective when supported by organisational commitment and internal political support.

4.3 Economic Empowerment Initiatives

Economic empowerment represents another key dimension of women's empowerment across political parties. The findings indicate that MCA has implemented a wide range of programmes to strengthen women's economic participation and financial independence. Among these initiatives is the Women as the Catalyst for Economic Revitalisation seminar, introduced in 2001,

which encouraged women to participate more actively in economic activities and provided guidance on accessing financial assistance. The Women Entrepreneur Award, introduced in 2007, further recognised successful women entrepreneurs and encouraged wider involvement in entrepreneurial activities (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015).

Skills-based training programmes also play a significant role. The Postnatal Confinement Services Training, conducted in 2015, was designed to enable women to generate income through specialised services. Participants who completed the programme received certification, and financial assistance was provided through Koperasi Jaya Diri Malaysia Berhad (KOJADI) (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015). Additional initiatives included entrepreneurship conventions, taxation dialogues, and e-commerce seminars, which aimed to equip women with relevant knowledge and skills in a changing economic environment (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015, pp. 110–160).

Informants also noted that digital marketing courses were introduced to enhance women's competitiveness in contemporary economic settings. As noted by one informant, women were encouraged to participate in "digital marketing" initiatives and entrepreneurial expos to improve their economic competitiveness and business visibility (Informant 2, P:38, L:1085–1087). Another informant explained that programmes under the Pusat Wanita Berdaya (PWB) were designed to help women and single mothers "generate additional income" while improving their technological knowledge and skills (Informant 4, P:90, L:2606–2609). These findings suggest that economic empowerment initiatives increasingly incorporate digital adaptation, technological skills, and entrepreneurship development as important strategies for strengthening women's economic resilience in contemporary society.

In contrast, economic empowerment initiatives implemented by DAP and PKR tend to be broader in scope and are not specifically targeted at Chinese women. Programmes such as those

under the Pusat Wanita Berdaya (PWB) focus on supporting women, particularly single mothers, across different ethnic groups. This demonstrates that broader empowerment initiatives are increasingly linked to economic resilience, skills development, and technological adaptation among women.

This contrast suggests that targeted economic programmes may offer more direct and immediate benefits to specific groups, whereas broader initiatives prioritise inclusivity but may dilute group-specific outcomes. This finding reflects wider debates in affirmative action literature regarding the trade-off between targeted intervention and universal inclusion in achieving equitable socio-economic outcomes.

4.4 Social and Legal Empowerment

Social and legal empowerment is reflected in efforts to strengthen women's rights, improve access to legal support, and enhance social well-being. The findings indicate that MCA has been particularly active in this domain. One notable initiative involves legal reform efforts led by MCA Women. Amendments proposed to the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976 aimed to protect the rights of non-Muslim women by restricting multiple marriages among non-Muslim men (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015, p. 149). This reform represents a significant milestone in strengthening legal protection for women in Malaysia. One informant highlighted that Rosemary Chong's effort to amend the Marriage and Divorce Act represented a major turning point for non-Muslim women in Malaysia. According to the informant, the reform "changed the fate of all non-Muslim women in this country" despite strong resistance from male parliamentarians (Informant 1, P:24, L:733–751). This demonstrates that women's empowerment within political institutions is not limited to symbolic representation, but can also contribute to substantive legal and social transformation.

In addition, MCA established the Legal Advisory and Women's Aid Centre (LAWA), which provides legal consultation and assistance to women across Malaysia (Malaysian Chinese

Association, 2015). This initiative demonstrates a structured and institutional approach to addressing women's legal needs. As explained by one informant, LAWA provides "free legal consultation" for women facing issues related to domestic violence, sexual abuse, and financial problems (Informant 1, P:14–15, L:422–426). Efforts to challenge discriminatory laws were also undertaken, resulting in amendments to legislation such as the Women and Girls Protection Act 1973, the Guardianship of Infants Act 1961, and the Dangerous Drugs Act 1985 (Malaysian Chinese Association, 2015). The findings also reflect the importance of women-led institutional solidarity in advancing women's rights. As one informant stated, "only women will take care of women" (Informant 1, P:24, L:733–751), underscoring the importance of women leaders' cooperation in supporting reforms related to women's welfare and protection.

Beyond party-based initiatives, social empowerment is also reflected through community-level efforts. For example, the establishment of the Sisterhood organisation in Balakong provides support to women facing issues such as domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual harassment. One informant explained that the organisation was established to "tackle isu-isu wanita dan kanak-kanak" and to provide women with opportunities to develop leadership capacity and community support networks (Informant 9, P:168, L:5022–5038). This initiative highlights the importance of safe spaces where women can seek assistance and develop leadership capacity.

At the state level, programmes such as the Pusat Wanita Berdaya (PWB) and the Selangor Women's Empowerment Institute (IWB) further contribute to women's empowerment by focusing on education, economic development, and leadership training. These findings demonstrate that legal and social empowerment requires a combination of formal institutional reforms and grassroots-level interventions. While legislative changes provide structural protection, community-based initiatives play a complementary role in ensuring accessibility and practical support. This dual approach reflects a

broader understanding that empowerment is not achieved solely through policy but also through sustained community-level engagement.

4.5 Differences in Party Approaches to Women's Empowerment

Overall, the findings reveal clear differences in how political parties approach women's empowerment. MCA adopts a more targeted and structured approach that focuses specifically on Chinese women. This approach is supported by the party's organisational capacity, financial resources, and its historical position within the Barisan Nasional coalition. One informant from DAP acknowledged that the party lacked the same level of financial resources and institutional support as MCA, which limited the implementation of more structured women-focused initiatives (Informant 3, P:71–72, L:2073–2092). This suggests that organisational capacity and access to resources significantly influence the scale and sustainability of women's empowerment programmes across political parties.

In contrast, DAP and PKR adopt broader, multi-ethnic approaches that emphasise inclusivity across different communities. While these approaches contribute to wider gender equality efforts, they are less specifically focused on Chinese women as a distinct group. One informant emphasised that women's empowerment should not be viewed solely as a women's issue, but as a broader collective struggle involving both men and women in national development (Informant 10, P:175–176, L:5219–5228). This reflects the broader multi-ethnic and inclusive orientation adopted by parties such as PKR and DAP in promoting gender equality.

This distinction highlights the influence of party ideology and organisational structure in shaping the implementation of affirmative action. Ethnically oriented parties may be more effective in addressing group-specific needs, whereas multi-ethnic parties prioritise broader inclusivity. However, this inclusivity may come at the cost of reduced focus on specific minority groups.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of empowerment initiatives depends not only on policy design but also on the alignment between party objectives, institutional capacity, and target groups. This has important implications for developing more balanced and sustainable approaches to women's empowerment in plural societies such as Malaysia.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, despite the range of initiatives introduced, the empowerment of Chinese women in Malaysia remains uneven and requires sustained attention. The findings show that the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) has played a more prominent role than the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) in advancing participation across political, economic, and social domains. MCA's access to financial resources and its historical position within the Barisan Nasional coalition have enabled the party to implement more targeted initiatives that directly address community-specific needs. In contrast, DAP and PKR adopt broader, multi-ethnic approaches that emphasise inclusivity but are less directly focused on Chinese women. This distinction highlights how party orientation, whether ethnically based or multi-ethnic, shapes both the direction and effectiveness of empowerment strategies.

These findings indicate that strengthening participation in Malaysia requires more coordinated efforts beyond individual party initiatives. Cross-party collaboration should be strengthened to expand the reach and impact of empowerment programmes at the national level. Greater attention should also be given to developing young women's leadership capacity to ensure continuity in political participation. In addition, systematic monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure that affirmative action initiatives produce substantive outcomes rather than symbolic representation. Expanding access to technology may further support participation by improving access to training, professional networks, and economic opportunities. Future

research should adopt mixed-methods approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of empowerment. Comparative studies involving different ethnic groups, including Malay, Indian, and other minority women, would also contribute to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of gender empowerment in Malaysia.

6. Acknowledgements (Optional)

The authors gratefully acknowledge Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) for the support provided through the Geran Galakan

Penyelidikan Muda (GGPM-565-575). The authors also sincerely thank all informants who participated in this study and generously shared their experiences and perspectives.

7. Author Declaration

The authors declare that this manuscript is an original work, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript. The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this study.

References

- Celis, K., & Erzeel, S. (2015). Beyond the usual suspects: Non-left, male and non-feminist MPs and the substantive representation of women. *Government and Opposition*, 50(1), 45–64.
- Celis, K., & Lovenduski, J. (2018). Power struggles: Gender equality in political representation. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 1(1–2), 149–166.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- Draboo, S., & Naaz, F. (2021). A commentary on affirmative action policies for women in India in the backdrop of international commitments. *MIER Journal of Educational Studies, Trends and Practices*, 10(1), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.52634/10.52634/MIER/2020/V10/I1/1357>
- Ferreira, D., & Guérios, F. A. O. (2017). A discriminação da mulher paranaense no mercado de trabalho e as ações afirmativas em prol da igualdade. *Revista XXX*, 1(46), 334–354.
- Gichuki, N. (2023). Affirmative action in Kenya: Setting standards or missing the mark? *Perspectives on Gender Equality in Kenya*. KAS African Law Study Library, 10(4), 525–534. <https://doi.org/10.5771/565-575-565-575-525>
- Kausar, Z. (2006). Women in politics: *The case of Peninsular Malaysia*. International Islamic University Malaysia.
- Magero, J., Boit, J., & Wangare, T. (2012). *Affirmative action: A Kenyan case*. <https://www.amazon.com/Affirmative-Action-Kenyan-Tabitha-Wangare/dp/3656095116>
- Malaysian Chinese Association. (2015). Malaysian Chinese Association.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3).
- Minasyan, A., & Klasen, S. (2017). The impact of affirmative action on the gendered occupational segregation in South Africa. *Research Papers in Economics*, 236. <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/176555>
- Mujtaba, B. G. (2023). Affirmative action initiatives in education and employment: Its necessity then, now and in the future. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 24(1), 46–54. <https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2023.a897700>
- Nik Safiah, & Rokiah. (2016). *Pergerakan wanita dalam memperjuangkan hak*. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Nzavi, M. M., Nthigah, P., & Iravo, M. (2018). Effect of affirmative action on the employment of women in the national government: Case of Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs in Kenya. *Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 5(3). <http://www.strategicjournals.com/index.php/journal/article/view/823/823>
- Othman Lebar. (2006). *Penyelidikan kualitatif: Pengenalan kepada teori dan metod*. Tanjung Malim: Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris.

-
- Paxton, P., Hughes, M. M., & Barnes, T. D. (2021). *Women, politics, and power: A global perspective* (4th ed.). CQ Press.
- Rani, P., & Sinshupa. (2023). Gender equality and women's empowerment in law in India. *Multidisciplinary Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.57067/kr.v2i1.197>
- Social Psychology, 21(15), 1265–1276. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.565-575.1991.tb00469.x>
- T Charmaz, K. (1990). Discovering chronic illness: Using grounded theory. *Social Science and Medicine*, 30, 1161–1172.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- UN Women. (2024). *Women's political participation and leadership*. United Nations Women.
- World Economic Forum. (2024). *Global Gender Gap Report 2024*. World Economic Forum