

Factors of Political Participation among Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS

Syaaibah Zulkipli, Mohd Nuri Al-Amin Endut

Department of Management and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, Malaysia

Wan Asna Wan Mohd Nor

School of Distance Education, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyse the factors that affect participation and political behaviour of Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak. This study utilised mix method of data collection. A survey to gain descriptive data of the respondents and an in depth interview with informants were combined for this study. In overall, the analysis on research of the women's political participation towards Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak indicated that there is no significant difference in the political participation between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS. The study also showed that in some political involvement activities, Wanita UMNO's participation was more active as compared to Muslimat PAS. However, political party's structure and a woman's personal interest were the stronger factors that impacted political participation of Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh.

Keywords: Political Participation, Political Party, Politics, Women

Introduction

In the early 1940s, prior to Malaysia's independence, men are more significant in leading a rally and establishment in all sectors. Although women were not directly involved, their dedication and enthusiasm did not disappoint, and their involvement are seen as successful in areas previously dominated by men and their services have always been appreciated (Manderson, 1981). However, the nature and behavior of the policy were developed by both groups and also showed improvement in various areas. Women's participation in politics is a landmark in the development of a country and their role is an important step in all areas such as economy, social, politics, education, etc. The women's movement in a political party is considered as the organization capability of completing and empowering a party.

According to the National Women's Policy (DWN) 2012, of the Women's Action Plan, depending on the political sector, one of them is legislative and administrative in order to determine the full involvement of women in national politics (National Women Policy, 2012). The Women's Action Plan also indicated that the government should determine women's

support at the legislative and executive levels in Parliament, the state legislature, local government and other bodies. Women's participation and involvement in politics is seen as a positive approach to empower women as well as increasing their numbers at the bottom of the decision-making process. In addition, women's roles are expanding and embracing diverse areas, and women are perceived as more competitive, empowered and able to flourish (Yusoff & Aziz, 2012).

This study focused on Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in political participation in Ipoh, Perak. Their involvement in the political party was due to their interest in politics. The political participation scenario for Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak makes it clear that although there are differences in the goals and policies of the struggle between the two sides, the struggle to strengthen the credibility of women is manifesto in a similar way. The purpose of this study is to address the lack of women's participation in decision-making in the political structure, particularly between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak. The movement of women's participation in political activities and daily life forces these groups to communicate more effectively, while being able to make decisions and be more responsible as leaders and followers in party. The main objective of this study is to analyze the factors influencing political participation and behavior between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS and to examine the level of participation between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in politics.

Based on the conceptual framework of political participation and gender perspectives, this study draws on theory of model party identification approaches to examine the structures that influence the political behavior of a political party (Ball, Hussein, Loh & Wong, 1993). Manderson (1981) has published various studies on women's political participation in politics in the book entitled "Women, Politics and Change: The UMNO Women's Movement of Malaysia from 1945 to 1975". Her research focuses on the change and development of post-independence women's influence and activities, the role of women and the party's governing body, which has been the backbone of women's political activities. In addition, Manas (2008) also addressed the subject of women in politics through "What Islam says about politics". The study about women's rights and boundaries in politics and also explained prominent Muslim political figures. While Kausar (2006) in her study "Women in Politics: The Peninsular Malaysia Case" also discussed the history of political party formation and women's involvement in all political parties in peninsular Malaysia. There is also an article on "Malaysian Politics in Malaysia: an UMNO and PAS Study" by Funston (1980).

Political Participation

Activities of political activities can be divided into direct or indirect participation. The definitions of politics through political involvement are voting, holding election campaigns, attending and attending political talks and so on. According to Sukarno (2012), political participation is an essential underpinning the democratic system of a country, then those who engage in politics are those who know about what is best for themselves and their country. This is because, every decision made and implemented by the government are affecting and relating to citizen so that they have the right to know and care for the country's political development.

Bisala (2002) defined as the level of women's political participation and equality of participation freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and the value

that society places on the role of women. In this study, participation refers to the involvement of citizens in the political parties, which include various activities such as voting, campaigning during the election, participation in community activities, contacting elected representatives about the problem and so on, either directly or indirectly. The concept of political participation leads to the question of rights, opportunities for the participation of minorities, especially women in the political process. In addition, political participation also allows the people to express their interest by voting in the democracy system. The approach of the party identification model by Rush (1993) constitute the core of this study is based on an attitude of loyalty to a political party that is an individual's obedience and loyalty to a political party for a long time.

Methodology

150 respondents among Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS from Ipoh, Perak who held positions in the party and those who get involved in politics actively were selected to be the research participants. This study has collected quantitative research methods through the distribution of questionnaires and qualitative research methods by in-depth interview results. Interview method was utilized in order to support quantitative research findings. In order to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study is a survey conducted before the actual study done (Piaw, 2008). The data collected from the pilot study then were analyzed through Cronbach's alpha based on all components available in the questionnaire.

Findings

Factors of Political Participation

The study of political participation between Wanita UMNO and the Muslimat PAS in Ipoh is based on factors that motivate respondents to participate in politics, political activities and respondent relationships with political leaders and others.

Table 1

Factors of Political Participation among Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS

Factors	Respondents	Likert Scale (%)		
		SDA and Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree and Strongly agree
Engaging in politics because of the leadership of the party members	Wanita UMNO	8.0	9.3	82.7
	Muslimat PAS	20.0	14.7	65.3
Engaging in politics because of the party's goal	Wanita UMNO	2.0	5.3	92.7
	Muslimat PAS	2.0	9.3	88.7
Getting involved in politics because of self-interest	Wanita UMNO	3.4	7.3	89.3
	Muslimat PAS	6.0	7.3	86.7
Getting involved in politics because of family pressure	Wanita UMNO	20.7	17.3	62.0
	Muslimat PAS	34.0	21.3	44.7

The findings show that the most important factor influencing Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in the political participation is the party's leadership and goal of the party. It is followed by self-interest, and the last factor contribute to political participation is members of the family.

92.7% of respondents from Wanita UMNO, compared to 88.7% of Muslimat PAS strongly agree and agree that their political participation is strongly related to the goal of a party. While 89.3% of respondents from Wanita UMNO against 86.7% Muslimat PAS strongly agree and agreed that the factors involved in politics because of their self-interest. Besides that, another factor of their involvement in politics because of the leadership of party which is 82.7% of Wanita UMNO compared to 65.3% of Muslimat PAS respondents who agreed and strongly agreed with this factor.

Lastly, 62.0% of Wanita UMNO compared to 44.7% of respondents in Muslimat PAS agreed that their political participation was influenced by the political commitment due to the encouragement and support from the spouse and family. Meanwhile, results of the in-depth interviews with Muslimat PAS's respondents, Ms. Zuhairah Mohd Ghazali, revealed that her involvement in politics was due to her personal interest. Furthermore, her family's background also played an important role in her political participation. On the other hand, an interview with Wanita UMNO, Puan Hajah Maisarah, found that she involve in politics was since teenager, by attending a lot of political activities and programs.

Activities of Political Participation

Table 2

Activities of political participation between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS

Activities of political participation	Respondents	Likert Scale (%)		
		SDA and Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree and Strongly agree
Vote in every election	Wanita UMNO	6.0	13.3	80.7
	Muslimat PAS	2.0	10.0	88.0
Get involved in a political activity	Wanita UMNO	6.7	15.3	78.0
	Muslimat PAS	2.0	16.0	82.0
Get involved in election campaigns	Wanita UMNO	10.7	8.0	81.3
	Muslimat PAS	1.3	6.0	92.7
Contribute money to political parties	Wanita UMNO	26.0	22.7	51.3
	Muslimat PAS	8.0	22.0	70.0
Follow with Current Political Situation	Wanita UMNO	1.3	10.0	88.7
	Muslimat PAS	2.6	4.7	92.7

The results of the data analysis for the activities of political participation showed that 92.7% of Muslimat PAS compared to 88.7% of the Wanita UMNO strongly agree and agree to followed the political development. The activities involved in the election campaign showed that Muslimat PAS respondents indicate the percentage of respondents 92.7% compared to 81.3% of Wanita UMNO. Meanwhile, the activities vote in each election shows that strongly agree and agree based on the percentages of Muslimat PAS (88.0%) in which higher than Wanita UMNO (80.7%). In total, 82.0% of Muslimat PAS compared to 78.0% of respondents Wanita UMNO strongly agree and agree, to engage in political group activities. While financial donations to political parties showed that the percentage of Muslimat PAS respondents (70.0%) contributed significantly to the party compared to Wanita UMNO respondents (51.3%). Based on the interview with the Muslimat PAS respondents, Ms. Robi'atun Mohd Abas mentioned that "We will use our own finances for all the activities we want to do. I am sure that if you are sincere in the exercise of your responsibilities, you will surely be rewarded".

Table 3

The percentage level political engagement with Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS

Level of involvement in politics	Respondents	Likert Scale (%)		
		SDA and Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree and Strongly agree
Actively Involved in Politics	Wanita UMNO	4.0	12.7	83.3
	Muslimat PAS	7.3	16.0	76.7
Responsible for Engaging in Politics	Wanita UMNO	2.0	4.7	93.3
	Muslimat PAS	4.7	8.6	86.7

Table 3 shows that 93.3% of respondents Wanita UMNO, are strongly agree and agree to be responsible for engaging in the politics, while 83.3% of respondents Wanita UMNO strongly agree and agree on their active involvement in politics. The roles and responsibilities of everyone to ensure that they as a politician are active in political parties.

The analysis showed that the level of satisfaction among Wanita UMNO is higher than that Muslimat PAS. This is because Wanita UMNO are effectively perceived to be active alongside political parties in various activities. However, Muslimat PAS also actively participated in politics, although their involvement is underlined by the party.

The overall analysis of the study revealed that the participation of Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS, Ipoh, Perak had started indirectly and directly through participation in various political activities, including participation in meetings with the political parties. The results of the study suggested that there are similarities and differences in the political participation of Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak.

Table 4

Similarities of Political Participation between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS

Similarities of Political Participation	Wanita UMNO	Muslimat PAS
Leadership	Party leadership	Party leadership
Objectives Party	Objectives of the UMNO's party	Objectives of the PAS itself
Political Interest	Own-self	Own-self
Other Support	Support from husband and family	Support from husband and family
Political Participation	Self-interest and political awareness	Self-interest and political awareness
Level of Participation	Actively in political party	Actively in political party

The results showed that there were no significant differences in the factors affecting the involvement of Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh. Table 4 presents the analysis of the similarities of political participation between Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS. The main factors of similarities are the leadership from political leader. Next is the objectives of party brings the similarities of political participation in politics. Besides that, other support from the spouse and family also important to involved in politics. Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS also showed that they are actively participating in politics.

Shirlin (2013), states that the important elements are evaluated in the political participation of the Wanita UMNO is the contribution of energy and ideas of the party. According to her, the political position for women is less important than the opportunity offered by leaders to continue to be a bridge to make the voice of public opinion heard in the country and to be heard and taken into account in hearing in both the state and the national level.

Conclusion

In overall, the present study had discovered that Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS in Ipoh, Perak, tend to be more loyal to their own political party. The objectives and goals of the struggles of both parties are considered in relation to their goals of political participation. The analysis of the study also revealed that Wanita UMNO and Muslimat PAS were to further strengthen various social activities involving women, particularly to ensure that the public is exposed to current political developments or problems that arise in their respective regions.

Corresponding Author

Syaaibah Zulkifli

Department of Management and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, Malaysia

Email: syaaibah@gmail.com

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