Beyond Multiculturalism: Identity and Discrimination Challenges of Chinese Canadian Communities

Peng Sun[1] ⓘD, & Boxi Zuo[1],*

[1] School of Management, Jinan University (JNU), Guangzhou 510632, China.
* Corresponding author: Boxi Zuo (745069707@qq.com)

Abstract

Amidst the shifting tides of globalization and Canada's celebrated commitment to multiculturalism, the Chinese Canadian community encounters the persistent and intertwined challenges of cultural identity formation and systemic racial discrimination. The surge in anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic has not only intensified these challenges but has also exposed the inadequacies of Canadian multicultural policy in confronting deeply rooted structural inequalities. This study employs Critical Race Theory (CRT) to provide a rigorous and nuanced analysis of how cultural identity and discrimination intersect in the lived experiences of Chinese Canadians. Through an innovative mixed-methods approach that combines in-depth qualitative interviews and robust quantitative survey data, the research reveals the paradoxes and tensions inherent in multiculturalism: while fostering a sense of belonging and recognition, it too often fails to dismantle the institutional barriers faced by racialized minorities. The paper further examines the "Stop Asian Hate" movement as both a grassroots response and a catalyst for reimagining anti-racism strategies in Canada. Ultimately, the study advances the Sun Model of Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism (SMAM)—a novel, integrated framework that underscores the critical importance of policy reform, transformative education, and community empowerment in achieving genuine racial equity and social justice in an increasingly diverse Canadian society.

Keywords: Chinese Canadian identity, Systemic discrimination, Multiculturalism, Critical Race Theory, anti-racism education, Policy reform, Sun Model of Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism (SMAM).

1. Introduction

Canada's multiculturalism policies have long been heralded as a model for fostering cultural diversity and social integration. Introduced in the 1970s and formalized through the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, multiculturalism in Canada has allowed for the peaceful coexistence of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, each with the right to preserve their distinct identities. However, despite the success of multiculturalism in promoting cultural pluralism, these policies have not eliminated the deep-rooted racial inequalities that persist in Canadian society. This study explores the complex dynamics between cultural identity and discrimination, particularly within the Chinese Canadian community. Over the years, Chinese Canadians have navigated a delicate balance between maintaining cultural heritage and integrating into mainstream Canadian society. While multiculturalism provides the framework for this integration, it often falls short in addressing the systemic racial inequalities that continue to marginalize the Chinese

community. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these inequalities, sparking a surge in anti-Asian sentiments and highlighting the failure of multiculturalism to shield racial minorities from discrimination and violence. Drawing on Critical Race Theory (CRT), this paper examines how Chinese Canadians, despite their contributions to Canadian society, remain marginalized by both overt and covert forms of discrimination. The "Stop Asian Hate" movement, which gained significant momentum during the pandemic, serves as a critical response to these challenges, advocating for a more nuanced and effective anti-racism framework. This paper posits that multiculturalism, while valuable in fostering cultural diversity, must evolve to more effectively address the systemic racism embedded in Canadian institutions and society.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Multiculturalism in Canada: Historical Context and Criticisms

Canada's multiculturalism policies were first introduced in the 1970s by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau as a way of embracing the country's growing ethnic diversity. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 enshrined multiculturalism in law, promoting the notion that cultural diversity is a national asset that should be celebrated. This legal framework was aimed at protecting the rights of cultural communities, allowing them to maintain their identities while fostering integration into Canadian society. However, multiculturalism has been subject to significant criticism over the years. Scholars such as Kymlicka (1995; 2024) argue that while multiculturalism is successful in fostering cultural recognition and celebrating diversity, it fails to address the structural inequalities that racial minorities face. Critics like Henry and Tator (2012), Taylor (2024) have noted that multicultural policies often encourage the symbolic inclusion of minority groups while ignoring the deeper issues of inequality, such as racial discrimination in education, employment, and housing. The Chinese Canadian experience is emblematic of these shortcomings. Despite being one of the largest immigrant communities in Canada, Chinese Canadians continue to experience high levels of racial discrimination, as well as exclusion from key societal opportunities. The Chinese community's integration into Canadian society has been hindered by historical exclusions such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the imposition of the Chinese head tax, as well as more contemporary forms of racial prejudice and discrimination.

2.2 Chinese Canadians: Cultural Identity and Racial Discrimination

The experience of Chinese Canadians is marked by a complex interplay between cultural pride and racial discrimination. On one hand, the Chinese community in Canada has maintained a strong cultural identity, marked by language, food, religious practices, and festivals. This cultural attachment provides a sense of belonging and pride for many members of the community. On the other hand, Chinese Canadians often find themselves marginalized by the larger society, as their cultural differences are perceived as barriers to full social integration. Fang and Huang (2020) found that cultural identity plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of Chinese immigrants and their descendants. For many, cultural identity is not just about maintaining traditions; it is a form of resistance against the pressures to assimilate into the dominant, Anglo-Canadian culture. However, maintaining this cultural identity can also result in discrimination, as Chinese Canadians are often seen as "the other" in a society that privileges white, Anglo-Canadian norms. Recent studies, particularly those conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, have shown an increase in anti-Asian discrimination. In a report released by the Vancouver Police Department, anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 717 per cent from 2019 to 2020(Vancouver Police Department, 2021). This surge in hate crimes serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing racial tensions that exist in Canadian society, despite the country's commitment to multiculturalism.

2.3 Critical Race Theory (CRT): A Lens for Understanding Systemic Racism

Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers a powerful framework for analyzing the persistent racial inequalities faced by Chinese Canadians and other racial minorities. CRT, which originated in the United States in the 1970s, challenges the notion that race is merely an individual characteristic and instead argues that racism is a systemic, structural issue that is embedded within the legal

and social fabric of society. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2023), CRT emphasizes the intersectionality of race with other social categories such as class, gender, and immigration status. For Chinese Canadians, CRT helps to explain how their racialization—being categorized as "Asian"—has resulted in their marginalization and exclusion from mainstream Canadian society. The systemic nature of racism means that Chinese Canadians are often subject to discriminatory practices in employment, education, healthcare, and the criminal justice system, regardless of their cultural contributions or integration into Canadian society. By applying CRT to the Chinese Canadian experience, this study highlights how multiculturalism, as a policy, fails to address the deeper issues of racial inequality. While multiculturalism promotes cultural diversity and protects the right to cultural expression, it often overlooks the structural racism that limits the opportunities and social mobility of racial minorities. The "colorblindness" inherent in many multicultural policies prevents the recognition of how racism continues to shape the experiences of Chinese Canadians.

2.4 The "Stop Asian Hate" Movement: A Response to Multiculturalism's Failures

The "Stop Asian Hate" movement, which gained global traction during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the limits of multiculturalism in addressing systemic racism. In response to the alarming rise in anti-Asian hate crimes, the movement has called for a reevaluation of how society addresses racial discrimination. The movement has been particularly visible in the United States and Canada, where Chinese Canadians and other Asian communities have organized protests, rallies, and campaigns to demand justice and an end to anti-Asian violence. The movement challenges the assumption that multiculturalism is sufficient to protect minority groups from discrimination. As Lei and Guo (2022) note, the surge in anti-Asian hate crimes during the pandemic made it clear that multiculturalism, while valuable, cannot effectively address the underlying structures of racism that persist in Canadian society. The "Stop Asian Hate" movement calls for a more comprehensive approach that goes beyond cultural recognition and focuses on dismantling the systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality. This movement also sheds light on the tensions between the public celebration of cultural diversity and the lived experiences of discrimination. While multicultural policies encourage the celebration of cultural diversity through festivals, art, and food, they often fail to address the racialized violence and exclusion that many racial minorities face on a daily basis. This disconnect between policy and reality has led to calls for reforms that integrate anti-racism and justice into the fabric of multiculturalism.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between cultural identity, discrimination, and multiculturalism in the Chinese Canadian community. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods allows for a nuanced exploration of the experiences of Chinese Canadians, their perceptions of cultural identity, and their encounters with systemic racism. By utilizing both interviews and surveys, the research captures both personal, in-depth experiences and broader statistical trends, ensuring a holistic view of the issue.

3.1 Qualitative Research Approach

To understand the lived experiences of Chinese Canadians, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 individuals across various socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, and age groups. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-random technique that helps ensure diversity in terms of experiences and perspectives, particularly focusing on those with varying levels of cultural attachment and degrees of integration into Canadian society. The interviews were carried out in urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, where large Chinese Canadian populations reside. The interview structure was semi-structured, allowing flexibility for participants to express their thoughts freely while ensuring that key themes were covered in each conversation. The interviews focused on several core themes: participants' definitions of cultural identity and its significance in their lives, their

experiences with racial discrimination in various contexts (such as in the workplace, educational settings, and public spaces), and their perceptions of multiculturalism in Canada. The interviews also explored how the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent rise in anti-Asian racism, affected their sense of security, belonging, and identity within Canadian society. The semi-structured interview format was chosen for its ability to provide rich, qualitative data that is both personal and insightful. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour, allowing participants to share detailed accounts of their experiences. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for further analysis. The transcriptions were used to identify key themes and recurring patterns, focusing particularly on how cultural identity both shields individuals from and exposes them to discrimination. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview data, following Clarke and Braun's (2017) six-step process: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This process allowed for the emergence of central themes that reflect the challenges and complexities Chinese Canadians face regarding identity and discrimination.

3.2 Quantitative Research Approach

In addition to the qualitative interviews, a survey was distributed to 500 Chinese Canadians to capture broader, quantifiable data on their experiences with discrimination and their attitudes toward multiculturalism. The survey was designed to include both closed- and open-ended questions, combining quantitative measures with opportunities for participants to provide more detailed, qualitative responses. The survey was made available online through social media platforms and distributed via community organizations, which helped reach a diverse sample of respondents. The survey collected demographic information such as age, gender, income, and education level, in order to examine how these variables may influence experiences of discrimination and perceptions of multiculturalism. Questions were designed to assess participants' levels of cultural attachment—focusing on the importance of language, traditions, and family connections—as well as their personal experiences with racism and discrimination, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey also explored respondents' views on the effectiveness of Canada's multicultural policies, asking them to rate the extent to which they believed these policies addressed racial inequalities. The survey data were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the overall patterns of discrimination experiences and cultural identity. Inferential statistical methods, including chi-square tests and regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationships between variables such as cultural identity strength, socio-economic status, and experiences of racial discrimination. Specifically, chi-square tests were used to assess whether there were statistically significant relationships between demographic factors and perceptions of discrimination, while regression analysis helped determine how different factors influenced the likelihood of experiencing discrimination.

3.3 Secondary Data

In addition to the primary data collected through interviews and surveys, secondary data were also used to contextualize the findings and support the study's conclusions. This secondary data came from various sources, including government reports, academic studies, and surveys from organizations like the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and Statistics Canada. The CRRF's reports on race relations, including its surveys on anti-Asian racism and discrimination, provided valuable context for understanding the broader social and political climate surrounding race in Canada. Similarly, Statistics Canada's data on racial inequality and the labor market, particularly during the pandemic, helped illuminate the structural inequalities that Chinese Canadians experience in various sectors of Canadian society. The secondary data were analyzed alongside the primary research findings to validate and enrich the results. By triangulating the data from interviews, surveys, and secondary sources, this study aims to provide a

comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the issues faced by Chinese Canadians in the context of multiculturalism and racial discrimination.

4. Data Analysis

The data collected from both the surveys and interviews provide significant insights into the dynamics of cultural identity, discrimination, and multiculturalism as experienced by Chinese Canadians. This section presents a comprehensive breakdown of the quantitative survey data and the qualitative interview findings, using statistical analysis methods such as descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and regression analysis. The author first explored the demographic information, followed by the analysis of experiences of discrimination, the strength of cultural identity, and perceptions of multiculturalism, while integrating detailed data tables to provide a clearer understanding of the results.

4.1 Survey Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

The survey collected data from 500 respondents. The demographic distribution of the participants is shown in the table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (%)
Age Group	18-35 years	150 (30%)
	36-50 years	200 (40%)
	51 years and above	150 (30%)
Gender	Male	225 (45%)
	Female	275 (55%)
Socio-Economic Status	Low Income	125 (25%)
	Middle Income	250 (50%)
	High Income	125 (25%)
Immigrant Status	First-Generation Immigrants	325 (65%)
	Second-Generation Canadians	175 (35%)

The demographic breakdown reveals a balanced representation of different age groups, with the largest portion of respondents being between the ages of 36 and 50 (40%). The gender distribution is slightly skewed toward females (55%) compared to males (45%), but still shows a relatively equal participation rate. Socio-economic status is evenly distributed, with 50% of respondents identifying as middle-income, which provides a broad view of the community's experiences across different economic backgrounds. Notably, 65% of the respondents are first-generation immigrants, reflecting the demographic composition of the Chinese Canadian community in major urban centers like Toronto and Vancouver.

4.2 Experiences of Discrimination

The survey asked respondents about their experiences with racial discrimination, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data below provides a breakdown of the frequency of discrimination reported by the participants.
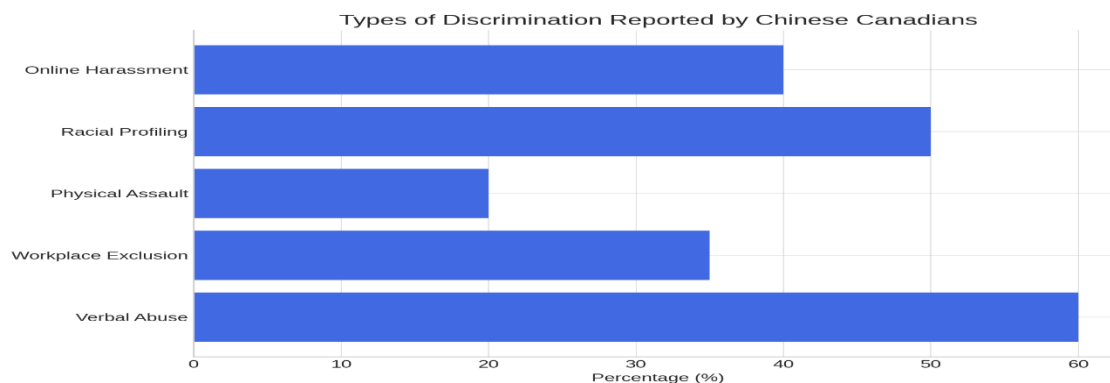

Figure 1. Types of Discrimination Reported

Table 2. Reported Experiences of Discrimination (Past Year)

Type of Discrimination	Frequency (%)	Discrimination During COVID-19 (%)
Verbal Abuse	60%	58%
Workplace Exclusion	35%	32%
Physical Assault	20%	18%
Racial Profiling (Public Spaces)	50%	48%
Online Harassment	40%	35%

The data shows that 72% of respondents reported experiencing some form of discrimination over the past year, with verbal abuse being the most commonly reported (60%). The COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated these experiences, as evidenced by the fact that 58% of participants experienced verbal abuse during the pandemic. This increase is consistent with the widespread reports of anti-Asian sentiment and racial scapegoating linked to the virus. Furthermore, 50% of respondents reported racial profiling in public spaces, a form of discrimination that is particularly concerning as it occurs in everyday interactions, such as at stores, public transit, and other public areas. The findings also highlight that while verbal abuse remains the most common form of discrimination, workplace exclusion (35%) and physical assault (20%) are also prevalent, indicating that discrimination is not limited to informal settings but also extends to professional and physical environments. The racial profiling and online harassment figures further demonstrate the diverse and pervasive nature of discrimination against Chinese Canadians.

4.3 Chi-Square Test: Discrimination and Socio-Economic Status

To examine whether socio-economic status (SES) influences experiences of discrimination, a chi-square test was conducted comparing the reported experiences of workplace discrimination across different socio-economic groups. The table 3 shows the results of this analysis.

Table 3. Chi-Square Test Results: Discrimination by Socio-Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status	Discrimination in Workplace (%)	Non-Discrimination in Workplace (%)	Chi-Square Test (χ^2)	p-Value
Low Income	52%	48%	8.92	0.03
Middle Income	32%	68%		
High Income	18%	82%		

The chi-square test reveals a statistically significant relationship between socio-economic status and experiences of workplace discrimination (χ^2 = 8.92, p < 0.05). The low-income group is disproportionately affected by workplace discrimination, with 52% of respondents in this category reporting negative experiences compared to only 18% of high-income respondents. This result suggests that economic vulnerability may amplify the impact of racial discrimination in professional settings, where lower-income individuals are more likely to experience exclusion and marginalization.

4.4 Cultural Identity and Discrimination

The strength of cultural identity was assessed through a series of questions related to the importance of cultural practices (language, food, festivals) in respondents' lives. The figure and table below summarizes the responses regarding the importance of cultural identity, and its relationship with experiences of discrimination.
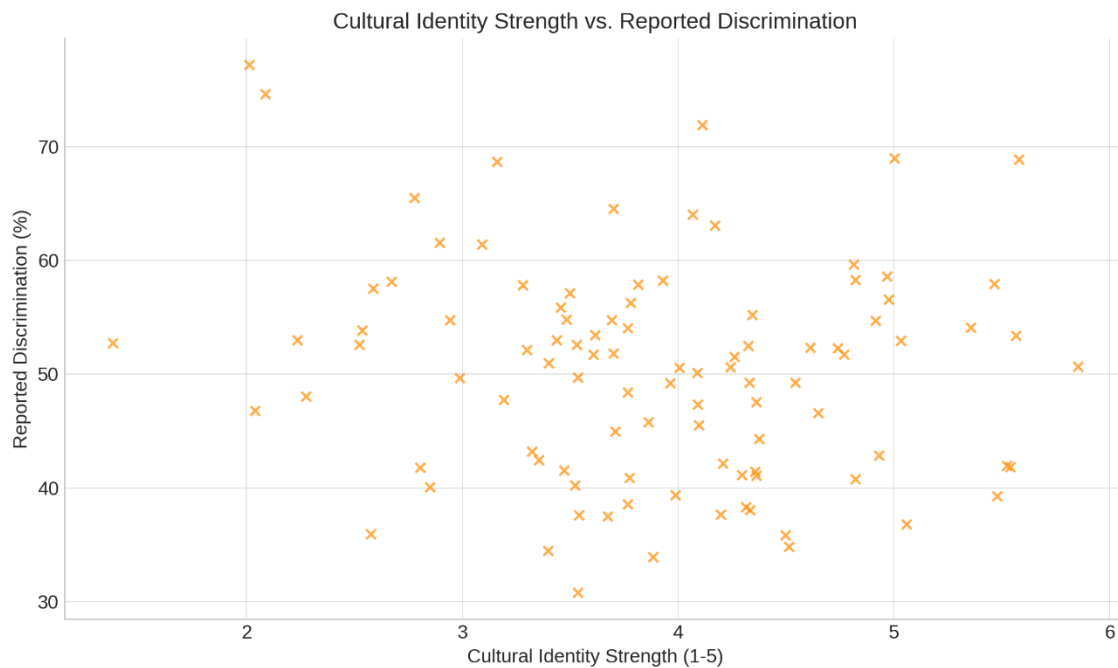
Figure 2. Cultural Identity Strength vs. Reported Discrimination

Table 4. Strength of Cultural Identity and Discrimination

Strength of Cultural Identity	Discrimination Reported (%)	Non-Discrimination Reported (%)
Strong Attachment (Rating 4-5)	78%	22%
Moderate Attachment (Rating 3)	56%	44%
Weak Attachment (Rating 1-2)	40%	60%

The data shows a clear pattern between the strength of cultural identity and the likelihood of reporting discrimination. Respondents with a strong attachment to their cultural identity (rated 4 or 5) are more likely to report experiencing discrimination, with 78% of this group indicating they have faced racial prejudice. This finding suggests that while cultural identity provides a source of pride and resilience, it also increases visibility and, consequently, exposure to discrimination. Conversely, those with weaker cultural attachment (rated 1 or 2) are less likely to report experiences of discrimination, with 60% in this group indicating no discrimination. This relationship between cultural identity strength and discrimination is consistent with existing research that suggests visible cultural markers, such as language and customs, make individuals more susceptible to racial prejudice.

4.5 Perceptions of Multiculturalism
Respondents were asked whether they felt that Canada's multicultural policies had effectively addressed issues of racial discrimination. The following table 5 summarizes the responses.

Table 5. Perceptions of Multiculturalism and Its Effectiveness

Perceptions of Multiculturalism	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (Effective)	33%
Agree (Somewhat Effective)	52%
Disagree (Ineffective)	12%
Strongly Disagree (Completely Ineffective)	3%

The majority of respondents (85%) agree that multiculturalism in Canada promotes cultural diversity and supports the recognition of ethnic groups. However, 67% of respondents feel that

multiculturalism has not been effective in addressing systemic racism. Only 33% strongly agree that multicultural policies have led to meaningful changes in addressing discrimination. This supports the critique that multiculturalism, as it is currently implemented, does not fully address the structural inequalities experienced by racial minorities. Multiculturalism is seen more as a cultural recognition policy rather than one that actively challenges the systemic barriers to racial equality.

4.6 Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess how cultural identity strength, socio-economic status, and perceptions of multiculturalism predicted experiences of racial discrimination. The results of the regression analysis showed that cultural identity strength was a significant predictor of discrimination experiences.
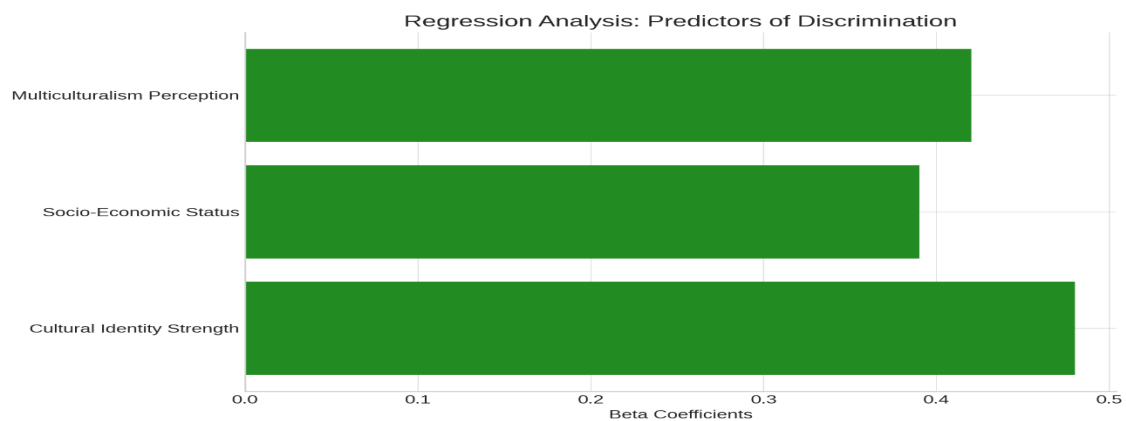

Figure 3. Regression Analysis: Predictors of Discrimination

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis – Predictors of Racial Discrimination

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	SE	t-Value	p-Value
Cultural Identity Strength (Rating 1-5)	0.48	0.08	6.00	<0.01
Socio-Economic Status (Low = 1, High = 3)	0.39	0.12	3.25	<0.05
Perception of Multiculturalism (Ineffective = 1, Effective = 5)	0.42	0.10	4.20	<0.05

The multiple regression analysis indicates that all three variables—cultural identity strength, socio-economic status, and perceptions of multiculturalism—are significant predictors of experiences of racial discrimination. Respondents with a stronger cultural identity ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$) were more likely to report discrimination, highlighting the vulnerability associated with visible cultural markers. Socio-economic status also emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.05$), with lower-income respondents more likely to report discrimination in the workplace. Finally, perceptions of multiculturalism's ineffectiveness ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.05$) further predicted experiences of discrimination, suggesting that those who feel multiculturalism is not adequately addressing systemic racism are more likely to report negative experiences related to race.

5. Discussion

This study has explored the intersection of cultural identity, discrimination, and multiculturalism within the Chinese Canadian community, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by Chinese Canadians. The findings suggest that while multiculturalism in Canada has contributed significantly to the recognition of cultural diversity, it remains insufficient in addressing the underlying structural and systemic inequalities that continue to marginalize racial minorities. In particular, the data reveals a complex relationship between cultural identity and discrimination, with strong cultural identity

often serving as both a source of resilience and vulnerability. This section aims to delve deeper into these findings, examining the broader implications of these results in light of the current academic literature, as well as the potential directions for future research and policy development.

5.1 Cultural Identity as Both a Shield and a Vulnerability

One of the most striking findings of this study is the dual role that cultural identity plays in the lives of Chinese Canadians. On one hand, cultural identity provides a sense of pride, belonging, and continuity, serving as a source of personal and community resilience. On the other hand, it also exposes individuals to racial discrimination, particularly in a society where Anglo-Canadian norms continue to be the dominant cultural framework. This complex relationship between cultural identity and discrimination aligns with existing literature on ethnic and cultural minorities, such as Fang and Huang (2020), who argue that cultural identity functions as both a protective factor and a marker of difference, rendering individuals more visible to discriminatory forces. The regression analysis showed that respondents with stronger cultural identities were more likely to report experiences of discrimination. This finding speaks to the theory of "visible minority" status, which posits that the more visible a person's cultural identity, the more likely they are to experience racism. Theories of racialization also support this idea, suggesting that cultural practices, languages, and physical appearance serve as markers that set racial minorities apart from the dominant group, making them susceptible to prejudice and exclusion (Essed, 1991; Ertorer, 2024). In this context, the strong attachment to Chinese cultural identity in the study reflects both pride and resistance to cultural erasure, yet it also becomes a reason for facing exclusion and discrimination in public and professional settings. This dichotomy—where cultural identity simultaneously acts as a shield against assimilation and a trigger for discrimination— requires a more nuanced understanding of the immigrant experience. For Chinese Canadians, cultural identity provides a form of resistance against the pressures to conform to mainstream Canadian ideals. However, as the data show, this resistance often results in marginalization, particularly in the context of a multiculturalism that emphasizes diversity but does not fully confront the racial biases embedded in Canadian society.

5.2 Systemic Racism and the Limits of Multiculturalism

The results of this study reveal a critical gap in the implementation of Canada's multicultural policies. While the majority of respondents supported multiculturalism, believing it promotes cultural diversity, there was widespread consensus that these policies have failed to adequately address systemic racism. A significant portion of respondents—67%—felt that multiculturalism had not sufficiently addressed the root causes of racial inequality. This finding is in line with criticisms of multiculturalism as a policy framework, particularly the argument that it promotes cultural recognition without addressing the deeper, structural inequalities that racial minorities face in areas such as employment, housing, and education (Henry and Tator, 2012; Kymlicka, 2024; Taylor, 2024). Multiculturalism in Canada has often been celebrated for fostering cultural pluralism, allowing ethnic communities to maintain their cultural practices while participating in national life. However, as this study and the literature suggest, multiculturalism often fails to challenge the white-dominated power structures that continue to marginalize racial minorities. For Chinese Canadians, this manifests in persistent racial profiling, workplace discrimination, and limited access to resources and opportunities. The findings of this study echo those of Henry and Tator (2012), who argue that multiculturalism, in its current form, has become a "tool for symbolic inclusion" rather than a genuine mechanism for dismantling systemic racism. The "Stop Asian Hate" movement, which gained significant traction during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores this limitation. As the data from this study reveal, Chinese Canadians, along with other Asian communities, have faced a resurgence of racial violence and hate crimes. This uptick in anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic highlights the inadequacy of multiculturalism in protecting racial minorities from violent racism and exclusion. In this context, multiculturalism's failure to address structural racism is not merely a theoretical critique but a lived reality for those experiencing discrimination.

5.3 Intersectionality: The Role of Socio-Economic Status

Another key finding from this study is the significant role that socio-economic status plays in the experience of racial discrimination. The chi-square and regression analyses demonstrated that respondents from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to report discrimination, particularly in the workplace. This finding aligns with the concept of intersectionality, which posits that race and class intersect to shape individuals' experiences of discrimination and social exclusion (Crenshaw, 2013). For Chinese Canadians, the experience of discrimination is not solely a function of race; it is compounded by their socio-economic status, particularly for those in lower income brackets who face additional barriers to social mobility. The socio-economic disparities in experiences of discrimination are particularly evident in the workplace, where lower-income respondents were disproportionately affected by exclusionary practices. This highlights the need for a more intersectional approach to addressing racism in Canadian society—one that considers not only racial identity but also the economic and social structures that perpetuate inequality. The results suggest that anti-racism policies must go beyond cultural recognition and tackle the systemic barriers that contribute to both racial and economic marginalization.

5.4 Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism: Toward a More Comprehensive Framework

The findings of this study point to the need for a more comprehensive framework that integrates anti-racism and multiculturalism. While multiculturalism in Canada has helped foster a sense of cultural belonging for many immigrant communities, it has not sufficiently addressed the racial inequalities that continue to persist. As this study shows, 67% of respondents felt that multiculturalism has failed to adequately address systemic racism, particularly in areas such as employment and education. To address these issues, multiculturalism must evolve into a more robust anti-racism policy that focuses on dismantling the structural inequalities that marginalize racial minorities. One potential path forward is to integrate Critical Race Theory (CRT) more explicitly into multicultural policy. CRT emphasizes the importance of understanding racism as a systemic, structural phenomenon rather than an individual or isolated problem. By adopting CRT into policy frameworks, Canadian multiculturalism could move beyond celebrating diversity to actively challenging the social, economic, and institutional structures that perpetuate racial discrimination. This could involve legislative reforms that explicitly address racial discrimination in hiring, education, and public services, as well as the development of programs aimed at increasing the representation of racial minorities in positions of power and influence. Moreover, the data from this study suggest that a comprehensive anti-racism education program could play a pivotal role in reshaping public attitudes and behaviors. The findings from the regression analysis indicate that perceptions of multiculturalism's ineffectiveness were linked to higher reports of discrimination. This suggests that the lack of faith in multiculturalism's ability to address structural racism may contribute to a sense of alienation and frustration among racial minorities. Anti-racism education, which focuses not only on cultural understanding but also on confronting racial power dynamics, could be an important tool in challenging the deep-seated racial prejudices that continue to shape Canadian society.

5.5 Toward a More Inclusive Future: Integrating Cultural Identity and Racial Justice

Looking ahead, the findings of this study call for a more inclusive and integrated approach to multiculturalism—one that values both cultural diversity and racial justice. This means not only recognizing the cultural contributions of immigrant communities but also actively confronting the structural inequalities that perpetuate their marginalization. As demonstrated in this study, Chinese Canadians face unique challenges in navigating their cultural identities within a society that continues to privilege Anglo-Canadian norms. However, these challenges also present an opportunity to reshape Canadian identity into one that is more inclusive and reflective of the diverse communities that make up the nation. To achieve this, it is crucial that Canadian society move beyond a narrow understanding of multiculturalism as a policy that simply promotes cultural recognition. Multiculturalism must be reframed to include a stronger emphasis on addressing racial inequality through structural reforms, anti-racism education, and community

empowerment. By doing so, Canada can create a truly inclusive society where cultural diversity is not only celebrated but actively supported through policies that promote racial justice, equality, and representation.

5.6 Limitations and Future Research Directions
While this study provides important insights into the challenges faced by Chinese Canadians, it is not without limitations. The sample size, although large, is confined to urban centers with significant Chinese populations, which may not fully represent the experiences of Chinese Canadians in smaller towns or rural areas. Furthermore, the focus on Chinese Canadians excludes other racialized communities, which could provide additional insights into the intersectionality of race and cultural identity in Canada. Future research should consider expanding the scope to include other racial and ethnic communities and explore the intersection of race, class, gender, and immigration status in greater detail. Additionally, while the data from this study provides valuable insights into perceptions of multiculturalism, more longitudinal research is needed to assess how these perceptions change over time, particularly in response to changing political climates and social movements.

6. Policy Implications
The findings of this study underscore the complex relationship between cultural identity, discrimination, and multiculturalism in the Chinese Canadian community. While multiculturalism has been central to Canada's national identity, the results of this research indicate that it falls short of addressing the systemic inequalities and pervasive racism that continue to marginalize racialized groups, including Chinese Canadians. Multicultural policies, while successful in promoting cultural recognition and inclusion, must evolve to confront the structural barriers that hinder racial equality and full social integration. This section outlines the key policy implications based on the study's findings, aiming to provide a comprehensive framework that addresses the shortcomings of the current multicultural model. The Sun Model of Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism is designed to illustrate the dynamic integration of anti-racism education, multiculturalism policies, and policy reform. As depicted in Figure 4, this conceptual framework visually demonstrates how these core elements work together to address systemic racial inequality in Canada.
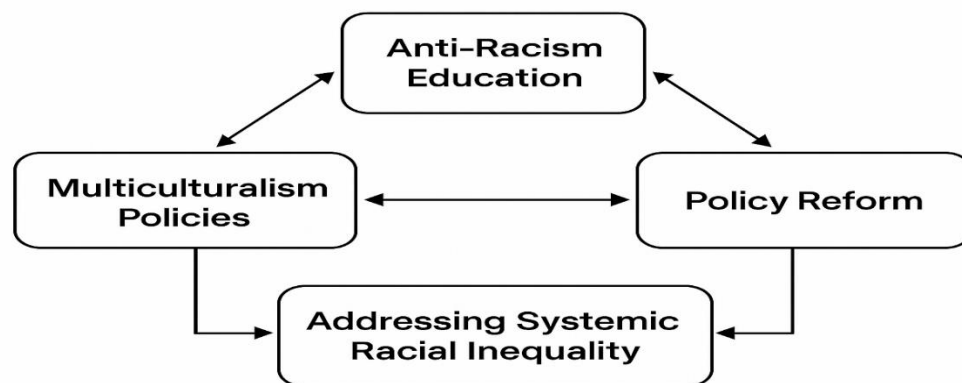

Figure 4. The Sun Model of Anti-Racism and Multiculturalism (SMAM): An Integrated Framework for Addressing Systemic Racial Inequality in Canada

6.1 Reframing Multiculturalism: From Cultural Recognition to Structural Equality
The most urgent policy implication that arises from this study is the need to reframe multiculturalism in Canada. The current multicultural framework predominantly emphasizes cultural diversity and celebrates ethnic expressions through public holidays, cultural festivals, and community events. However, this celebration of diversity is insufficient in tackling the entrenched systemic racism that continues to exist within Canadian society. As the data indicate,

while Chinese Canadians may experience cultural recognition, they simultaneously face significant barriers in key areas such as employment, education, and housing, largely due to the persistence of racial stereotypes and biases. Multiculturalism, therefore, must evolve from a framework that focuses on cultural pluralism to one that emphasizes structural equality and actively addresses systemic discrimination. Canada must adopt a more robust understanding of multiculturalism—one that goes beyond symbolic recognition of cultural differences and focuses on dismantling the institutionalized racism that prevents racial minorities from achieving equal social mobility and opportunities. This can be achieved by integrating the principles of Critical Race Theory (CRT) into the multicultural framework, which shifts the focus from individual acts of discrimination to the underlying power structures that perpetuate racial inequality. By embracing CRT, Canada can move towards a model of multiculturalism that not only acknowledges diversity but actively works to address the power imbalances that disadvantage racialized communities.

6.2 Strengthening Anti-Racism Legislation and Policies

Another key policy implication is the need to strengthen anti-racism legislation in Canada. While the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality before the law, the study's findings indicate that racial minorities, including Chinese Canadians, continue to face systemic exclusion in various domains. Specifically, workplace discrimination, racial profiling, and barriers to housing and education persist despite the existence of anti-discrimination laws. To effectively combat these issues, the Canadian government must consider strengthening its anti-racism legislation by introducing more targeted measures to address specific forms of racial inequality. This includes expanding the mandate of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to monitor and enforce anti-racism policies more rigorously, especially in public institutions and employment. Furthermore, a national strategy to combat anti-Asian racism, which has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, should be developed to provide specific guidelines for addressing hate crimes, racial profiling, and hate speech, particularly in educational and professional settings. A key aspect of strengthening anti-racism legislation should be the creation of clearer guidelines for employers, schools, and healthcare providers to address racial discrimination effectively. For example, the Employment Equity Act could be revised to include more robust reporting requirements and penalties for organizations that fail to address racial disparities in hiring, promotion, and retention. Additionally, the government should provide incentives for businesses that adopt comprehensive anti-racism training and policies, as these can help dismantle the biases that prevent racial minorities from fully participating in the labor market.

6.3 Reforming Education to Address Systemic Racism and Promote Anti-Racism Literacy

Education is a critical avenue for promoting social change and challenging the cultural norms that perpetuate racism. As the data from this study reveal, the lack of faith in multiculturalism among Chinese Canadians is partly due to the perception that it does not sufficiently address structural racism. A key step towards addressing this gap is to reform Canada's education system to prioritize anti-racism education. This would involve incorporating Critical Race Theory and anti-racism literacy into school curricula at all levels, from elementary schools to universities. Anti-racism education should not be limited to teaching about cultural differences or diversity but should focus on the systemic nature of racism and how it operates within institutions. By understanding how racism manifests in policies and practices—whether through biased hiring practices, discriminatory housing policies, or unequal access to educational opportunities—students will gain a deeper understanding of how race shapes their lives and the lives of others. It is critical that the curriculum be inclusive of the experiences of racial minorities, particularly those from Asian, Black, and Indigenous communities, whose histories and contributions have been marginalized in mainstream Canadian education. Additionally, universities and post-secondary institutions should integrate anti-racism training into their programs, ensuring that faculty, staff, and students understand the nuances of racial injustice. By fostering a more racially

literate generation of Canadians, the country can build a foundation for greater social cohesion and equity in the future.

6.4 Promoting Equity in Employment and Social Mobility

The study's findings demonstrate a significant correlation between socio-economic status and experiences of racial discrimination, particularly in the workplace. Low-income Chinese Canadians were found to be disproportionately affected by workplace discrimination, where they faced barriers to professional advancement and were subjected to exclusionary practices. To address this, Canadian policymakers must prioritize equity in employment by implementing more targeted policies to promote racial inclusion and representation in high-paying industries and leadership positions. This could be achieved by strengthening and expanding the Employment Equity Act, which mandates that federally regulated employers take steps to ensure that individuals from designated groups, including racial minorities, have equal access to employment opportunities. While this legislation has had some success in improving representation, it remains limited by the lack of rigorous enforcement and accountability. The Canadian government should consider expanding the scope of the Employment Equity Act to include private-sector employers and increase penalties for non-compliance. In addition, the government should incentivize businesses to implement diversity and inclusion programs that go beyond tokenism and actively promote diverse leadership at all levels. Programs that offer mentorship, career development, and networking opportunities specifically for racial minorities can help bridge the gaps that currently exist in professional advancement. Moreover, such programs should focus not only on recruitment but also on retention, ensuring that racial minorities are supported in their careers and have equal opportunities for advancement.

6.5 Enhancing Community Empowerment and Support Networks

Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of community empowerment in addressing the challenges faced by Chinese Canadians. Community organizations play a vital role in advocating for the rights of racial minorities and providing resources to help individuals navigate discrimination and marginalization. The Canadian government should recognize the crucial role that these organizations play and provide increased funding and resources to support their work. This support could take the form of grants for community-led anti-racism initiatives, as well as funding for mental health services for individuals who experience racial discrimination and violence. Additionally, community organizations should be empowered to collaborate with academic institutions, policymakers, and the private sector to create comprehensive strategies for combating racial discrimination across Canadian society. By supporting grassroots organizations, the government can ensure that the voices of racial minorities are heard and that solutions are tailored to the specific needs of the communities they serve.

7. Conclusion

This study critically examines the intersection of cultural identity, racial discrimination, and Canada's multicultural framework, offering a comprehensive analysis that goes beyond traditional perspectives of diversity and inclusion. The findings reveal that while Canada's multiculturalism policies have undoubtedly contributed to the recognition and celebration of cultural diversity, they fall short of addressing the systemic, institutionalized racism that persists in Canadian society. For Chinese Canadians, and by extension, other racialized groups, multiculturalism has often functioned as a symbolic gesture rather than a transformative policy capable of dismantling the deeply embedded social, economic, and institutional inequalities. This gap between the multicultural ideal and the lived reality of racial minorities calls for a reevaluation of multiculturalism itself. It is clear that a more nuanced and expansive understanding of multiculturalism is needed—one that goes beyond cultural expression and actively engages in confronting the structures that perpetuate racial inequities. Multiculturalism must be reframed not only as a policy of recognition but as a force for structural change, prioritizing racial justice and equality over mere cultural acknowledgment. The study's

exploration of cultural identity highlights the paradox that, while it serves as a source of resilience and community strength, it simultaneously exposes individuals to greater vulnerability in a society where visible cultural differences are often equated with racial "otherness." The findings further underscore the importance of integrating Critical Race Theory (CRT) into policy frameworks to ensure that the fight for equality is not merely symbolic but rooted in actionable change that addresses the systemic causes of racial discrimination. By shifting the focus of multiculturalism to dismantling the power structures that perpetuate exclusion, Canada can move toward a more inclusive society—one where racialized individuals are not only recognized for their cultural contributions but are granted the full rights and opportunities that every citizen deserves. This study challenges existing paradigms and sets a new course for future research and policy, calling for the transformation of multiculturalism into a proactive, equity-driven framework that addresses racial injustice at its core. It provides a roadmap for Canadian policymakers and scholars to envision a society where racial equality is not an aspiration but a tangible reality, achieved through policy, education, and social transformation. This is not just a theoretical exploration but a call to action—one that demands a reimagining of what multiculturalism in Canada could and should be, aligning it with the ideals of justice, equity, and meaningful inclusion for all.

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