Review

A Theoretical Analysis of Chinese Ingratiation

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Abstract: Literature about ingratiation has mainly focused on non-Chinese societies with a Western viewpoint, which regards ingratiation as an attraction-seeking behavior. However, the viewpoint may not reflect accurately the meanings of ingratiation in Chinese societies, because ingratiation is a culture-specific behavior. Therefore, there is a limited understanding about the natures, motives, consequences and patterns of Chinese ingratiation. Since Chinese ingratiation is an everyday and everywhere occurrence affecting every social actor in Chinese societies, it is necessary to pay much attention to Chinese ingratiation. Therefore, this article attempts to theoretically analyze Chinese ingratiation from the *guanxi* perspective and then propose a theoretical framework of Chinese ingratiation for further studies. According to the *guanxi* perspective, Chinese ingratiation is regarded as a *guanxi* management strategy and defined as a set of social behaviors designed to establish, maintain and promote *guanxi* through the exercises of *renqing*, *mianzi* and attraction. Moreover, this article proposes Chinese ingratiation has three dimensions: *renqing* orientation, *mianzi* orientation and attraction orientation. Finally, the pattern of Chinese ingratiation is identified as the follows: (1) The ingratiatory intention decreases progressively along the direction from familiar persons to family and then to strangers in normal situations and (2) *renqing* and *mianzi* orientations would be more likely to occur than attraction orientation within familiar persons; attraction and *mianzi* orientations would be more likely to occur than *renqing* orientation within family; attraction orientation would be more likely to occur than *renqing* and *mianzi* orientations within strangers.

Keywords: Ingratiation, *Guanxi*, *Renqing*, *Mianzi*, Attraction

Introduction

Ingratiation is a significant social behavior that influences our social lives. For example, in his famous book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Carnegie (1936) details how different ingratiatory strategies help people make friends with others, build good interpersonal relationships and manage good social impression. Although the positive effects of ingratiation to interpersonal relationships have been realized, systemic and scientific investigations on ingratiation have been limited until 1960s (Rosenfeld *et al.*, 1995). Jones (1964) published the first scientific research on ingratiation from a social psychological perspective. Since then, the phenomenon of ingratiation has drawn social scientists' attentions. Nevertheless, the scientific investigations on ingratiation in Chinese societies (Chinese ingratiation) has been scarce (Tsang, 2014). The lack of investigations does not mean Chinese ingratiation is not common. On the contrary, it should be a kind of usual social behaviors among Chinese actors (Aryee *et al.*, 1993; Tsang *et al.*, 2013). This observation is reflected by the idea of social orientation used by K.S. Yang to describe the Chinese characteristic. He writes:

> "a predisposition toward such behavior patterns as social conformity, non offensive strategy, submission to social expectations and worry about external opinions in an attempt to achieve one or more of the purposes of reward social acceptance and avoidance of punishment, embarrassment conflict, rejection, ridicule and retaliation in social situation" (Yang, 1981, p. 159).

From the description, it is identified that the behavioral pattern of social orientation to some extent is ingratiatory. For example, the behaviors like flattering,

compliment, conformity, banquet and gift-giving have been very recognized as ingratiatory practices in the literature (Tsang, 2014). Moreover, Zhai (2011) notes that Chinese ingratiation may lead to many social problems such as corruption. Thus, it is necessary for social scientists to take much effort to study the phenomenon of Chinese ingratiation.

As a result, this article intends to theoretically analyze Chinese ingratiation, because the theoretical analysis can generate a theoretical and hypothetic framework for further studies. Such a framework is important for researchers on Chinese ingratiation because it can provide theoretical ideas, hypotheses and directions for them to study the phenomenon as a starting point. In the following, the article will first discuss how scholars commonly understand ingratiation in the literature and the limitations of the understanding. Then, the article will analyze Chinese ingratiation from the *guanxi* perspective. The analysis here is based on the *guanxi* perspective because this perspective provides indigenous concepts as conceptual and analytical tools to understand Chinese social and behavioral phenomena (Tsang, 2011).

Ingratiation: The General Understandings in the Literature

If everyone reads Social Psychology textbooks (e.g., Myers, 2013), he or she will get a general definition of ingratiation: Ingratiation is an attempt to make oneself become more likeable and attractive. However, this definition may be too general and even simplify the meanings of ingratiation, because ingratiation is a multidimensional construct, which lead to a number of debates in the literature.

The first debate is about the nature of ingratiation, which is whether ingratiation is an immoral, manipulative and deceitful behavior. According to Jones, ingratiation can be defined "a class of strategic behavior illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities" (1964, p. 11). This definition implies that ingratiation can also be viewed as manipulative and deceitful (Bohra and Pandey, 1984). Similarly, Tedeschi and Melburg (1984) define ingratiation as a set of assertive tactics that organizational members used to gain the approbation of their superiors. However, some people dissatisfy that ingratiation is immoral, manipulative and deceitful. They claim ingratiation is only an attempt for people to increase their attractiveness in the eyes of others (Liden and Mitchell, 1988). Therefore, engaging in ingratiation can be purely due to the desire for becoming attractive (Strutton et al., 1996; Varma et al., 2006).

In addition, another debate to bring out is about the ingratiatory tactics. Ingratiatory tactics refer to the behaviors people actually perform to ingratiate target persons. Different scholars have discovered different tactics. Jones and Wortman (1973) present four common tactics. They are other-enhancement, opinion conformity, rendering favor and self-presentation. Moreover, Pandey (1981; Bohra and Pandey, 1984) discover another four in India, including name-dropping, situation-specific behavior, instrumental dependency and self-depreciation. In addition, Strutton and his colleagues find that the salespeople tend to use the tactics like that in court and counsel, attitudinal conformity, behavioral conformity and self-promotion to their customers (Strutton and Pelton, 1998; Strutton et al., 1995; 1996). In his theoretical discussion, Cooper (2005) suggests joking and humor should be considered as ingratiatory tactics. Moreover, Tsang (2015) show modesty may also be an ingratiatory tactics for Hong Kong youths.

In contrast with the nature and the tactics of ingratiation, there are a few debates about how to classify the ingratiatory tactics. Some scholars classify the ingratiatory tactics by defensive and offensive tactics (Strutton et al., 1996). The defensive tactics are the ingratiatory efforts intended to make it difficult for a person to respond negatively; on the contrary, the offensive tactics are the attempts for people to proactively manipulate a target's attributions in order to get more positive responds (Strutton et al., 1996). On the other hand, some other scholars use the classification of self-focused/inwardly-focused and other-focused/target-focused tactics (Strutton et al., 1996; Varma et al., 2006). If the tactics aim at giving the target person a good impression, they are self-focused/inwardly-focused (Varma et al., 2006). On the other hand, the other-focused/target-focused tactics aim to make the target person feel good (Varma et al., 2006).

From this discussion, it is noted that although there are unsettled arguments towards ingratiation, there are still some consensuses existing among the literature. First, ingratiation has been generally viewed as a set of attraction-seeking behaviors (Tsang, 2015). Moreover, ingratiatory behaviors can be classified in terms of the means (e.g., different ingratiatory tactics) or the intentions (e.g., defensive and offensive). To some extent, the literature is insightful to interpret what Chinese ingratiation should be like. For example, we may conceptualize Chinese ingratiation as attraction-orientated behaviors. However, it is noted that the conceptualization is derived from the Western perspective of social psychology (Tsang, 2014). Pandey (1981) already reminds us that ingratiation is culture-specific, so the consideration of cultural factors is required in the investigation on ingratiation. Moreover, many scholars have called for studying Chinese social and behavioral phenomena with Chinese indigenous concepts, such as *guanxi* (relation), *renqing* (favor) and

mianzi (face), because these concepts are the important resources to understand the Chinese (Bian, 1994; Cheng, 1986; Cheung *et al.*, 2008; Chow anad Ng, 2004; Ho, 1994; Hu, 1944; Hwang, 2011; King, 1992; Kipnis, 1997; Lin, 2001; Peng, 1998; Yang, 1995; Zhai, 2011). More important, if we unconditionally study social and behavioral phenomena in non-Western contexts with the Western perspective, we may distort the meanings of the phenomena (Yang, 1997). In order to overcome the limitations, this article is going to analyze Chinese ingratiation and then propose a theoretical framework from the *guanxi* perspective.

Chinese Ingratiation: A *Guanxi* Perspective

Guanxi is important and prominent in everyday life of Chinese social actors. In a broad sense, *guanxi* is a system of personal connections or a form of interpersonal relationship that carries long-term social obligations (Millington *et al.*, 2005). It is formed by a specific norm rather than by all general principles among people (Hwang, 2011). In Chinese societies, *guanxi* is a major criterion to distinguish insider and outsider. Typically, having *guanxi* implies insider while no *guanxi* stands for outsider. According to Fei (1992), the main characteristic of *guanxi* is the differential mode of association. He describes Chinese social relationships is "like the ripples formed from a stone thrown into a lake, each circle spreading out from the center become more distant and at the same time more insignificant" (Fei, 1992, p. 65). In other words, individuals interact with different people with different principles and multiple standards of behaviors. People treat those who have better and closer *guanxi* (insider) with them much better. Therefore, Yang (1995) states that the most dynamic aspect of Chinese social interaction is relational determinism, which means "one's relationship with another person determines how one will treat or respond to that person" (Yang, 1995, p. 28).

Accordingly, a better *guanxi* can lead to desirable consequences-both qualitative and quantitative-to people. For example, many studies have been conducted to investigate the relationship between Chinese managerial behaviors and Chinese business leaders' employee categorization based on three criteria: *Guanxi*, loyalty and competence. All these studies suggest that Chinese leaders tend to allocate more valuable rewards and resources to those employees who have *guanxi* with them (Cheng, 1995; Cheng *et al.*, 2002; Hu *et al.*, 2004; Yu, 1993).

As *guanxi* can bring desirable consequences to Chinese people, they may attempt to establish, produce, maintain and/or improve *guanxi* through the strategies of *guanxi* management (Kipnis, 1997; Peng, 1998). There are many strategies of *guanxi*

management, such as: Inheriting, adopting, pulling, digging into, connecting, expanding, exchanging gift, banqueting, doing favor, visiting and helping out (Bian, 2001; Kipnis, 1997; Sun, 2012; Yang, 1994). Therefore, the question here is whether ingratiation is a *guanxi* management strategy.

Ingratiation and Guanxi Management

To answer this question, we may need to consider the components of *guanxi*. According to Hwang (1987; 2012), *guanxi* is composed of affective and instrumental components. When affective component is dominant, it is a close *guanxi*, such as kinship (Hwang, 1987; 2012). On the other hand, when *guanxi* is dominated by instrumental component, *guanxi* will be distant and insignificant, such as the case of strangers (Hwang, 1987; 2012). According to Peng's (1998) study, enhancing affective component is more important than instrumental component in *guanxi* management in a Chinese daily life. As a result, answering whether Chinese is a *guanxi* management strategy requires the analysis of the relationships between ingratiation and affective component or the quality of *guanxi*.

Strutton *et al.* (1996) find that defensive ingratiation tactics (other enhancement and court and counsel) are positively related to the buyer-seller trust. They also point out that self-presentation and rendering favors can increase the affinity between humans. Moreover, the Strutton and Pelton's (1998) observation identifies ingratiation can contribute to team solidarity and strengthen team relationships, because ingratiation bolsters interpersonal attachment. Furthermore, Cooper (2005) directly points out ingratiatory humor is an affective stimulus. Moreover, the studies conducted by Tsang (2009; 2015) indicate that ingratiation is a significant predictor of the quality of interpersonal relationship among Hong Kong youth. A similar result is also reported by Tsang *et al.* (2013) who study the impacts of ingratiation on the interpersonal relationship of youth in Beijing. All these studies imply that the relationship between ingratiation and affective component or the quality of interpersonal relationship should be positive. Because of this reason, ingratiation should be able to facilitate *guanxi* in Chinese societies so that's why it should be regarded as a *guanxi* management strategy.

Renqing and *mianzi* are the Chinese indigenous concepts closely related to *guanxi*. Almost all *guanxi* management strategies involve the use of them. Therefore, Tsang (2014) suggests that the Chinese may not only ingratiate through the uses of *renqing*, *mianzi* and attraction. As a result, Chinese ingratiation is defined as a class of behaviors that is designed to maintain, improve or promote *guanxi* with others through the exercises of *renqing*, *mianzi* and attraction.

Three Dimensions of Ingratiation

According to the above definition, this article proposes that Chinese ingratiation has three dimensions-*renqing* orientation, *mianzi* orientation and attraction orientation. These three dimensions are inter-correlated, but their meanings differ from one another. Before going into the discussion of each dimension, it is necessary to highlight that that the three dimensions of ingratiation are an ideal type. It means it may not be found any ingratiatory behaviors that totally fit to one of them. However, it is meaningful to construct the ideal type, since it is helpful to interpret or predict the nature, motive, consequence of Chinese ingratiation in different situations.

The first dimension is *renqing* orientation. *Renqing*, the Chinese concept of favor, is significant to *guanxi*. If a person who does not know *renqing*, it is difficult for him or her to get along well with others in Chinese societies. In his empirical study in Taiwan, Yu (1993) indicates two forms of *renqing*: Instrumental *renqing* and affective *renqing*. According to his observation, instrumental *renqing* refers to an instrumental use for building *guanxi*. In contrast, affective *renqing* implies affective component that facilitates *guanxi*. Both forms of *renqing* can help to develop and maintain *guanxi*, but instrumental *renqing* tends to be more utilitarian than affective one. Zhang (1998, p. 72) notes, affective *renqing* implies considering other's feeling, caring for other's welfare and helping others etc. Instrumental *renqing* refers to one's doing favors for those with whom one has good relationships or someone's going through the back door to obtain desirable resources.

In addition, Hwang (1987) also indicates three different meanings of *renqing*. First, "*renqing* indicates the emotional response of an individual confronting the various situations of daily life…In psychological terminology, a person who is versed in *renqing* is well equipped with empathy" (Hwang, 1987, p. 953). In addition, *renqing* implies "a set of social norms by which one has to abide in order to get along well with other people in Chinese society" (Hwang, 1987, p. 954). Hwang (1987, p. 954) notes the norms of *renqing* arise two basic kinds of social behaviors:

> Ordinarily, one should keep in touch with the acquaintances in one's social network, exchange gifts, greetings, or visitations with them from time to time and when a member of one's reticulum gets into trouble or faces a difficult situation, one should sympathize, offer help and 'do a *renqing*' for that person.

Therefore, if one cannot sympathize or do not help other people who are in need, this person will be labeled as not knowing *renqing* (Hwang, 2011). Finally, *renqing*

also means the rule of social exchange (Hwang, 1987; King, 1988). According to Yang (2005), *renqing*, like money, can cash different resources, be quantified and be accumulated. Therefore, there are specific phenomena like 'giving *renqing*', 'producing *renqing*' and 'offering *renqing*' in Chinese societies. Giving *renqing* will provoke *renqing* debts, which unbalance the equilibrium of relationships, for the *renqing* recipients (Yang, 1995). Moreover, *renqing* is based on the norm of reciprocity (Sun, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary for the *renqing* recipients to seek opportunities to reciprocate the *renqing* givers. The reciprocation may be more valuable than what they received, because it can ensure all debts are repaid and the debtor can even become the creditor (King, 1988). As a result, the relationship of *renqing* exchange is created (Zhai, 2005). This relationship would not only help the maintenance of *guanxi*, but also give unexpected describable rewards to the *renqing* givers (Zhai, 2011).

Accordingly, it is possible for the Chinese to ingratiate by utilizing *renqing* (instrumental *renqing*). In turn, it may enhance the affective *renqing* in order to facilitate *guanxi*. Two forms of practice of *renqing*-oriented ingratiation are identified here. First, ingratiatiors may try hard to convince target persons that they are versed in *renqing*, because it will let the target persons perceive them favorably. Second, ingratiatiors may also find opportunities to give *renqing* (e.g., doing favor, helping out and giving gift) to the target persons, because it can create a *renqing* debt to the targets. This does not only help the *guanxi* management, but also offer unpredictable but describable consequences to them.

The second dimension of Chinese ingratiation is *mianzi* (the Chinese concept of face) orientation. According to Hu (1944) and King (2006), *mianzi* is composed of social face (*mianzi*) and moral face (*lian*). Social face represents one's reputation and status and moral face represents human's morality. Moreover, Cheng (1986) notes social face implies the maximum of individual's dignity, social recognition and social esteem, while moral face is the minimum. In other words, having social face ensures having moral face, but having moral face does not guarantee of having social face (Zhai, 2005). Therefore, Chang and Holt (1994, p. 99) claim social face "reflects one's reputation achieved and maintained through the scrutiny of others, with the standard of acknowledgment reflecting not only social values, but moral values as well." As a result, social face is more emphasized than moral face in Chinese societies (Zhai, 2005). Because of this reason, Chinese ingratiation may be social-oriented rather than moral-oriented.

In fact, *mianzi* very important to the Chinese. Lin (1939) analogizes *mianzi* is the most powerful Muse ruling over China. This is because having *mianzi* can

increase one's "purchasing power" (King, 2006). Moreover, *mianzi* can ensure smooth social interaction (Chang and Holt, 1994). The research conducted by Chow and Ng (2004) shows that those who have *mianzi* easily develop *guanxi* with others. One possible way for people to gain *mianzi* is through ingratiation (Chu, 2006). They can increase and promote their *mianzi* through self-presentation, self-promotion or name-dropping. In addition to the self-focused approach, the Chinese may ingratiate through giving and saving the target persons' *mianzi* (e.g. other-enhancement, self-depreciation, instrumental dependency, court and counsel and conformity). When a person gives or saves another person's *mianzi*, *renqing* exchange will also be created (Zhai, 2011). Furthermore, if a person does not save others' *mianzi* appropriately, this person will be regarded as churl and, more seriously, lose his or her own *mianzi* (Ho, 1994). As a result, if people want to have better *guanxi* with others, they have to consider other's *mianzi* (Tsang, 2014).

The last dimension of Chinese ingratiation is attraction orientation. Actually, the existing literature has emphasized this dimension of ingratiation. This can be reflected by the literature, which is based on the Western perspective, discussed in the previous section. The literature also tends to support that successful ingratiation can really make oneself becomes more attractive (Tsang, 2015). Thus, some people may call ingratiation as an attraction-seeking behavior (Jones, 1964).

According to the literature, four reasons why successful ingratiation can turn someone to be more attractive can be summarized as the follows. First, ingratiation can let the target know the actor's positive characteristics. When an ingratiatior self-presents or self-promotes, he or she is trying to convey that he or she has positive characteristics and no negative or undesirable traits (Jones and Wortman, 1973). Therefore, the target may view him or her more favorably, because of the artificial image (Liden and Mitchell, 1988). Second, ingratiatory tactics, such as conformity, can increase the similarities between two persons. According to the similarity-attraction paradigm, mutual attractiveness can be enhanced by similarities among people (Byrne, 1971). In fact, "people like those whose values and beliefs appear to be similar to their own" (Jones and Wortman, 1973, p. 16). Therefore, it is possible that targets like the ingratiatiors because the ingratiatiors present similar opinions, attitudes and behaviors to theirs (Strutton *et al*., 1995). The third reason is the self-esteem of target persons may be fostered. According to Tedeschi and Melburg (1984), other enhancement leads ingratiatiors to become more likeable, because it does not only give positive evaluations to the targets but also bolster their self-esteem. Finally, ingratiation can make the target persons perceive that the ingratiatiors like or

respect them. For example, when a target is flattered, praised and complimented by someone, he or she may believe this person likes him or her (Jones and Wortman, 1973). According to the balance theory, liking will be reciprocated (Strutton and Pelton, 1998). Therefore, the target will be motivated to begin liking this person. When the ingratiatior successfully attracts to the target person, the relationship between them will be enhanced. Liden and Mitchell (1988) indicate that successful ingratiation can increase the quality of interaction and exchange relationship between the ingratiatior and the target person.

It has to be noted that although each dimension of Chinese ingratiation has its own characteristics, they are inter-correlated and difficult to be distinguished in a real life. For example, when person A gives a gift to person B, it is possible that A's attractiveness is increasing in the eyes of B. At the same time, B does receive A's *renqing*. In addition, the gift may also imply that A is giving *mianzi* to B. Therefore, we can interpret every ingratiatory behavior as attraction-oriented, *renqing*-oriented, *mianzi*-oriented or both of them. However, we must remember that the ultimate intention of Chinese ingratiation is to manage *guanxi*. The characteristics of the three dimensions are summarized in the Table 1.

The Patterns of Chinese Ingratiation

The major features of *guanxi* are self-centered and the boundary of *guanxi* is ambiguous and flexible (Fei, 1992). Therefore, everyone has to carefully consider the following questions before the social interaction with others: Which kind of *guanxi* is between him or her and others? How strong is their *guanxi*? (Hwang, 1987). In general, people classify *guanxi* with others into family, familiar persons (e.g., neighbors, colleagues or classmates) and strangers (Yang, 1995). The importance and intimacy of each *guanxi* is different (Sun, 2012). Family is a permanent and stable *guanxi*; familiar persons are unstable but necessary between people; and strangers are unstable and not necessary (Hwang, 1987). Theoretically speaking, as a result, ingratiation may be more likely to target to familiar persons and less within strangers in a normal situation (Fig. 1). This pattern may change in special contexts. For example, if a person wants to create a new social tie with a stranger for any purpose, his or her ingratiatory intention toward that stranger may become stronger than the ingratiatory intention toward the familiar persons.

Furthermore, each type of ingratiation would occur differently in different types of *guanxi* (Fig. 2). Individual seeks to influence familiar persons by the uses of *renqing* and *mianzi* (Hwang, 1987; 2012; Yang, 1995). As a result, *renqing* and *mianzi* orientations should be more likely to occur than attraction orientation

in this type of *guanxi*. In family, everyone has to do their best for supporting to each other (Hwang, 1987; 2012; Yang, 1995). Therefore, *renqing* practice may not be highly emphasized in this type of *guanxi* compared with familiar persons. On the other hand, *mianzi* is functional within inside and outside family (Yang, 1995). In addition, attraction would also be significant to family. For example, a mother has two sons, C and D. C always conforms and gives gifts to her mother, but E never does. Therefore, this mother likes and treats C better than D,

because she thinks C is more dutiful. Because of these kinds of reasons, attraction and *mianzi* orientations should be more likely to occur in family instead of *renqing* orientation. *Renqing* and *mianzi* orientations should be less likely to occur in strangers than attraction orientation. It is because people do not need to concern about *renqing* and *mianzi* while interacting with strangers (Hwang, 1987; Yang, 1995). On the contrary, everyone should want to be attractive to other people no matter what *guanxi* they are.

Table 1. The characteristics of the three types of ingratiation

|	Dimensions		
	Renqing orientation	*Mianzi* orientation	Attraction orientation
Nature	Convince the target person that the ingratiatior is versed in *renqing* Giving *renqing* to the target person	Increase the ingratiatior's own *mianz* Giving and saving the target person's *mianzi*	Let the target knows the ingratiatior's own positive side Increase the similarities between the target and the ingratiatior Foster the self-esteem of the target person Convince the target person that the ingratiatior likes or/and respect him or her
Motive	*Renqing* practice	Saving and enhancing one's (ingratiatior or target or both) *mianzi*	Increase the one's attractiveness in the eyes of the target person
Consequence	*Guanxi* will be kept or improved through *renqing* exchange	The quality of *guanxi* will be better because everyone considers others' *mianzi*	*Guanxi* will be improved or maintained because the interaction and exchange relationship are improved
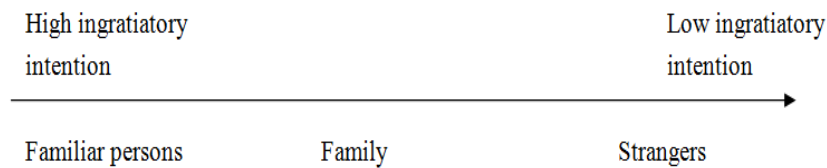
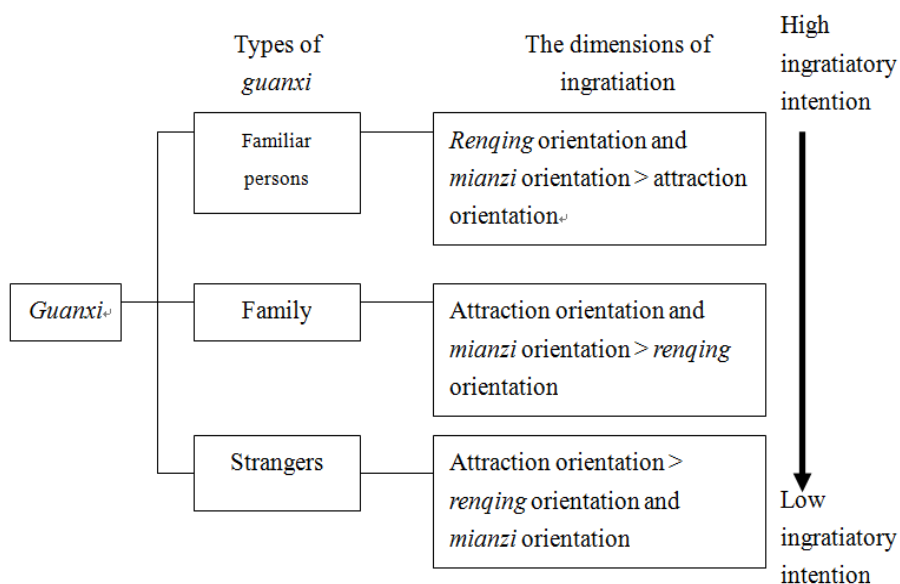Fig. 1. Ingratiatory intention in a normal situation

Fig. 2. The patterns of Chinese ingratiation

Conclusion

There are a lot of researchers who have studied ingratiation since 1960s. Nevertheless, everyone seems to lack interest to study Chinese ingratiation. Although some people have studied related topics, they only adopt the Western viewpoints. However, Chinese ingratiation should differ from the West. This is because ingratiation is viewed as an attraction-seeking behavior in the Western societies, while it is viewed as a *guanxi* management strategy in Chinese societies (Tsang, 2014). Therefore, this article tries to provide a theoretical framework based on the *guanxi* perspective to further studies.

First, Chinese ingratiation is defined as a set of social behaviors designed to maintain, improve or promote *guanxi* with others through the uses of *renqing*, *mianzi* and attraction. In this sense, Chinese ingratiation includes three orientations, including *renqing*, *mianzi* and attraction orientations. Therefore, Chinese ingratiation is different from the Western ingratiation, which only emphasizes the attraction orientation rather than the other two dimensions. Although attraction orientation exists in both Western and Chinese contexts, the ultimate goals are different. Attraction orientation of Western ingratiation may not aim to produce and maintain *guanxi*. It may only be attraction-seeking. On the other hand, attraction orientation of Chinese ingratiation tends to focus on *guanxi* management.

Furthermore, Chinese ingratiation has two features: (1) The ingratiatory intention would decrease progressively along the direction from familiar persons to family and, in turn, to strangers (2) *renqing* and *mianzi* orientations would be more likely to occur than attraction orientation within familiar persons; attraction and *mianzi* orientations would be more likely to occur than *renqing* ingratiation within family; attraction orientation would be more likely to occur than *renqing* and *mianzi* orientations within strangers.

Nevertheless, it is only a theoretical analysis. Currently, we are still missing empirical evidences to support it. Therefore, empirical studies are required to test this framework in the future. To achieve this goal, quantitative and qualitative studies are necessary. For quantitative research, we should first develop reliable and valid instruments to measure and assess Chinese ingratiation. After that, we should study Chinese ingratiation with different populations in every Chinese society (e.g., China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore) as much as possible. Finally, we can know how well this Chinese ingratiation framework is through statistically modeling. Moreover, by using qualitative methods, such as interview and participant observation, it is possible for us to understand how Chinese interprets and practices ingratiation in real setting. Through examining their interpretation and practices, we may then conclude whether there are three orientations of ingratiation exists, how Chinese ingratiation operates, what the causes and consequences of Chinese ingratiation in real social setting, how Chinese people perceive ingratiation and the like.

Ethics

This article is original and contains unpublished material. The corresponding author confirms that all of the other authors have read and approved the manuscript and no ethical issues involved.

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