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Ingratiation, renqing, mianzi and attraction: a guanxi perspective

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ABSTRACT

The investigation of ingratiation has been influenced by the Western perspective that views ingratiation as attraction-seeking behavior. Nevertheless, it has been questioned to what extent this perspective is applicable to Chinese contexts. Scholars recently suggest understanding ingratiation in Chinese contexts from a guanxi perspective that regards ingratiation as a guanxi management strategy. However, there is a lack of studies that test the predictive power of this perspective to Chinese ingratiation. Thus, the aim of this study is to test the guanxi perspective in explaining ingratiation in Chinese societies. Through surveying 203 undergraduate students who studied in Beijing, this study found that (1) the higher the sense of renqing, the more frequent the use of ingratiation tactics of other enhancement, self-presentation, and favor rendering; (2) the higher the sense of mianzi, the more frequent the use of the ingratiation tactics of other enhancement, conformity, and self-presentation; (3) the higher the sense of attraction, the less frequent the use of the conformity tactic; (4) the effects of the senses of mianzi and attraction on ingratiation were mediated by the sense of renqing. In general the findings suggested that the guanxi perspective is significant to explain Chinese ingratiation as a guanxi management strategy.

1. Introduction

Ingratiation is an everyday and everywhere phenomenon that affects our social lives (Ralston, 1985). This phenomenon has drawn Western social scientists' attentions since the 1960s. As a result, the investigation of ingratiation has been dominated and influenced by the Western perspective of social sciences (Tsang & Lian, 2010). According to this perspective, ingratiation is regarded as attraction-seeking behavior or an impression management strategy for social actors to enhance their attractiveness in the eyes of others (Cooper, 2005; Jones, 1964; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Ralston, 1985; Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). In other words, ingratiation is the results of the desire to enhance social attraction (Tsang & Lian, 2010). Thus, this perspective can be named as attraction-seeking perspective or impression management perspective.

On the basis of the attraction-seeking perspective, researchers have tried to understand ingratiation empirically. These studies have identified a number of ingratiation tactics which social actors may use to impress and attract their social encounters. Examples of the tactics include other enhancement (to compliment a target individual), opinion and behavioral conformity (to adopt and show the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a target individual), self-presentation (to emphasize the positive attributes of the self in front of a target), court and counsel (to beseech advice from a target), self-depreciation (to degrade the self in the eyes of a target person), name-dropping (to use the name or reference of a powerful or well know persons in the society while communicating with others), instrumental dependency (to impress people by being dependent upon them), and favor rendering (to do kind acts to other people) (Bohra & Pandey, 1984; Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973; Pandey, 1981; Strutton & Pelton, 1998; Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1995; Strutton, Pelton, & Tanner, 1996).

Nevertheless, recently some scholars have questioned whether ingratiation is simply attraction-seeking behavior in Chinese societies (Tsang, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). For example, Tsang's (2009a, 2009b) studies suggested that the ultimate goal of ingratiation among Chinese people may be to maintain social relations rather than to manage social attraction or impression. In other words, the attraction-seeking perspective may not accurately reflect the nature and pattern of ingratiation in Chinese societies. As a result, Tsang (2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) proposed to study Chinese ingratiation from guanxi perspective.

Guanxi is the Chinese concept of social connection and relationship. According to the guanxi perspective, ingratiation is a guanxi management strategy that is designed to develop, sustain and maintain guanxi (Tsang, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). Guanxi in Chinese culture implies a system of social welfare, social and emotional support, and resource allocation (K. S. Yang, 1995; Zhai, 2011), so the Chinese attempt to develop and maintain good guanxi as much as possible through a variety of means such as social eating, banquets, compliments, and gift-giving (Bian, 2001; Joy, 2001; Kipnis, 1997; Lin, Chih, Jou, & Lai, 2002; Qian, Razzaque, & Keng, 2007; C. F. Yang, 1988), which can be regarded as examples of ingratiation practices (Tsang, 2009b).

The guanxi perspective also suggests that the development and maintenance of guanxi not only depend on instrumental but also affective components between interacting individuals (Hwang, 1987; C. F. Yang, 1999; C. F. Yang & Peng, 2005). In order to enhance the two components, the Chinese need to continuously offer and exchange instrumental (e.g., goods and money) and affective (e.g., emotional support and empathy) renqing (the Chinese concept of favor) with one another (Yu, 1993). The renqing exchange is endless, because the end of renqing exchange means the end of guanxi (King, 1992; K. S. Yang, 1995; Zhai, 2005). Therefore, phenomena such as giving renqing, offering renqing and returning renqing are very common in Chinese societies. In this sense, if a Chinese person has the sense of renqing and put emphasis on offering renqing to maintain guanxi, that person is likely to engage in ingratiation, especially the tactics of favor rendering and other enhancement (Tsang, 2009a, 2009b).

Moreover, mianzi (the Chinese concept of face) is also essential for guanxi development and maintenance (Zhai, 1995). Mianzi implies one's morality, reputation, and social status (Cheng, 1986; Ho, 1974; H. C. Hu, 1944; King, 2006; Zhai, 1995). These factors are criteria the Chinese use to evaluate one's personal quality. If a person's mianzi is not recognized or respected, his or her personal quality is considered to be low (i.e., immoral, bad reputation and low social status). In Chinese societies, few people are willing to have guanxi with such a low

quality person (Zhai, 2011). Therefore, saving mianzi is an important business for the Chinese in their social lives (Ho, 1994; King, 2006; Zhai, 1995). Nevertheless, the Chinese need also to save others' mianzi in addition to their own, because saving others' mianzi implies renqing giving. In other words, Chinese people expect that the act of saving others' face will be reciprocated (Ho, 1994). In this sense, those Chinese people who regard mianzi as an important factor affecting guanxi may be more likely to ingratiate their social encounters (Tsang, 2009a, 2009b). In particular, they may use the tactics of self-presentation in order to save their own mianzi, the tactics of other enhancement to save others' mianzi, and the tactic of conformity to save mianzi for both sides.

However, the effect of the sense of mianzi on ingratiation may be mediated by the sense of renqing. For example, a study conducted by Joy (2001) showed that if Hong Kong Chinese wanted to save mianzi, they would give gifts to friends on particular days such as birthday. Nevertheless, the quality of the gifts might depend on the extent to which they thought renqing was important to the relationships. If they thought the relationships needed to be maintained by renqing, they tended to spend more times on searching for an appropriate gift that must please the friend. Otherwise, they might just buy anything. Thus, the influences of the sense of mianzi to ingratiation practices may be mediated by the sense of renqing.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Chinese social actors do not consider their social attraction during ingratiation, although the effect of the sense of attraction may be less prominent compared with the senses of renqing and mianzi (Tsang, 2007, 2009a). Moreover, giving renqing may help to increase one's social attraction. As C. F. Yang (1999) suggests, when two persons continuously exchange instrumental and affective renqing, they will mutually attract each other and in turn become more close and intimate. In other words, the Chinese may attempt to increase their attractiveness in the eyes of others by ingratiation via giving renqing. In this sense, the sense of renqing may influence the relationship between the sense of attraction and ingratiation.

However, there is little empirical research that investigates ingratiation in modern Chinese societies from this perspective. Thus, it is not known how well this perspective explains ingratiation of the modern Chinese is. As a result, the present study intends to test the predictive power of the guanxi perspective to ingratiation practices among the modern Chinese. In specific, this study tested the following hypotheses generated from the above discussion:

H1: The higher the senses of renqing, the more frequent the use of favor rendering and other enhancement.

H2: The higher the senses of mianzi, the more frequent the use of self-presentation, other enhancement and conformity.

H3: The higher the sense of attraction, the more frequent the use of favor rendering, self-presentation, other enhancement, and conformity

H4: The effects of the sense of mianzi and the sense of attraction on ingratiation are mediated by the sense of renqing.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

This research obtained data from undergraduate students who studied in Beijing universities through internet questionnaire survey. The data collection started from January 2012 to May 2012. At the end of the period of data collection, 203 undergraduate students submitted the questionnaire. Among the responses, 21 were identified as invalid. Therefore, the sample size of this study at the end was 182. Among the sample, 26.3% were male and 73.7% were female. Most of them studied year 4 (20.9%), followed by year 2 (21.4%), year 3 (16.5%) and year 1 (7.8%). The participants came from 28 different majors, such as sociology, social work, language studies, history, business administration, engineering, accounting and finance, journalism and communication, medical science, nursing, public administration, information management, design, and computer sciences. The age average of the samples was 21.33 ($SD = 1.32$).

2.2. Measurements

2.2.1. Ingratiation

The 16 items measuring Chinese ingratiation constructed by Tsang (2009a) were used. The items are rated from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). This scale contains 4 factors, including other

enhancement (4 items), conformity (4 items), self-presentation (4 items), and favor rendering (4 items). The followings are the sample items.

- You will try to praise him/her in front of him/her whenever there is a chance
- During discussion with others, you tend to agree with his/her opinion(s)
- When there is the chance, you will let him/her know your strength(s)
- You will send him/her little gifts sometimes

2.2.2. The sense of renqing

The renqing subscale of the Chinese cultural value measures developed by Qian, Razzaque, & Keng (2007) was employed. The scale consists of 3 items rating from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). The followings are the sample items.

- I do not like to own other people renqing
- It is easy enough to repay a debt, but hard to repay renqing

2.2.3. The sense of mianzi

The saving face subscale of the Chinese cultural value measures (Qian, et al., 2007) was adopted to investigate the sense of mianzi. There were 4 items rating from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). The sample items are as the follows.

- I do not mind suffering hardships in order to preserve face
- I worry about losing face in daily life

2.2.4. The sense of attraction

Tsang and Lian's (2010) scale of social attraction was used. This scale was designed to assess people's belief about the importance of social attraction for social relations. There were 4 items rating from strongly agree (score = 5) to strongly disagree (score = 1). The followings are the sample items.

- Giving others a good impression, is the foundation of building up or maintaining good guanxi
- If you want someone to treat you in better way and attitude, you try to make him/her likes you

3. Results

3.1. The ingratiation measurement model

A principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied on the items measuring Chinese ingratiation. Consistent with the hypothesized four-factor model, there were four factors with an eigenvalue > 1, accounting for about 61% of the total variance. To interpret the rotated factor solution, the criterion of factor loading > .40 was employed. The results showed that all of the 16 items loaded on only their parent factors.

Furthermore, a confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation was performed to evaluate the predicted four-factor model of Chinese ingratiation. The four latent variables were allowed to covary. All observed indicators were restricted to load only on their respective factors. The error variances of the items were constrained to be uncorrelated. A good model fit is indicated by $\chi^2/df < 3$, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < .06, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) < .08, non-normed fit index (NNFI) > .90, comparative fit index (CFI) > .90, and incremental fit index (IFI) > .90 (L. T. Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 1998). Although RMSEA showed a mediocre fit, other fit indices indicated a good fit, $\chi^2(98, N = 182) = 172.69, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 1.76, RMSEA = .065, SRMR = .066, NNFI = .95, CFI = .96, IFI = .96$. Overall, the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model of Chinese ingratiation was adequate. Factor loadings of the items ranged from .43 to .83.

Cronbach's α values of the other enhancement, conformity, self-presentation, and favor rendering scales were .77, .70, .87, and .68, respectively, indicating adequate internal consistency reliabilities. Overall, the psychometric properties of the ingratiation scales were sufficiently good to warrant their use.

3.2. The measurement model of the senses of renqing, mianzi, and attraction

Another principal component factor analysis was conducted on the items assessing the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction. As predicted, three factors yielded an eigenvalue > 1. The three factors accounted for about 54% of the total variance. All items yielded a factor loading > .40 only on the hypothesized factors.

The measurement model of the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction was further tested through another confirmatory factor analysis using maximum likelihood technique. The three factors were free to correlate. All items were constrained to load only on their parent factors, with their error variances uncorrelated. Apart from RMSEA and NNFI, other fit indices indicated a good model fit, $\chi^2(41, N = 182) = 77.21, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 1.88, RMSEA = .070, SRMR = .062, NNFI = .88, CFI = .91, IFI = .92$, reflecting a barely acceptable model fit. Indicators had factor loadings between .42 and .76.

The scales of renqing (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$), mianzi (Cronbach's $\alpha = .63$) and attraction (Cronbach's $\alpha = .65$) yielded adequate internal consistency reliabilities. In sum, these scales showed good psychometric properties.

3.3. Descriptive statistics

The means, standard deviations and correlations among the major variables utilized in the present study are displayed in Table 1. The four dimensions of ingratiation were moderately intercorrelated. The sense of mianzi was significantly correlated with all of the four ingratiation dimensions. The sense of renqing was significantly associated with other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering, but not with conformity. The sense of attraction was positively related to self-presentation, negatively related to conformity, and unrelated to other enhancement and favor rendering.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlations among major variables (N = 182).

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other enhancement	3.51	0.75	(0.77)						
Conformity	2.95	0.70	0.29***	(0.70)					
Self-presentation	3.30	0.76	0.35***	0.38***	(0.87)				
Favor rendering	3.74	0.63	0.45***	0.26***	0.40***	(0.68)			
Sense of renqing	4.01	0.52	0.28***	0.00	0.36***	0.42***	(0.70)		
Sense of mianzi	3.65	0.50	0.31***	0.36***	0.41***	0.19*	0.34***	(0.63)	
Sense of attraction	3.66	0.59	0.00	-0.22**	0.15*	-0.04	0.16*	0.03	(0.65)

Note. Values in parentheses are Cronbach's α coefficient.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to explore the potential impacts of gender and age on the major variables. Dependent variables were the four ingratiation factors, as well as the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction. Both the multivariate effects of gender and age were non-significant ($ps > .05$).

3.4. Ingratiation and the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction

It was hypothesized that the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction had differential effects on dimensions of ingratiation. Four multiple regression analyses were performed to test the hypotheses. Each ingratiation factor was regressed on the senses of renqing, mianzi and attraction simultaneously. The results were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Multiple regression analyses on ingratiation (N = 182).

	Other enhancement	Conformity	Self-presentation	Favor rendering
Sense of renqing	0.20**	-0.10	0.23**	0.42***
Sense of mianzi	0.24**	0.39***	0.33***	0.05
Sense of attraction	-0.03	-0.22*	0.11	-0.11
R^2	0.13	0.19	0.23	0.19
Adjusted R^2	0.12	0.18	0.22	0.17
$F(3, 178)$	8.89***	13.85***	17.85***	13.73***

Note. Standardized regression coefficients are reported.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As predicted, it was revealed that renqing was a significant independent predictor of favor rendering ($\beta = .42, t = 5.76, p < .001$) and other enhancement ($\beta = .20, t = 2.71, p = .007$). Besides, mianzi was significantly predictive of self-presentation ($\beta = .33, t = 4.72, p < .001$), other enhancement ($\beta = .24, t = 3.22, p = .002$) and conformity ($\beta = .39, t = 5.50, p < .001$). However, in contrast with the prediction, the sense of attraction was not significant related to favor rendering ($\beta = -.11, t = -1.61, p = .514$), self-presentation ($\beta = .11, t = 1.59, p = .114$), other enhancement ($\beta = -.03, t = -.49, p = .622$), and was negatively related to conformity ($\beta = -.22, t = -3.19, p = .002$). Therefore, the results were supportive of H1 and H2. But H3 was not supported.

3.5. Mediating effects of the sense of renqing

It was predicted that the contributions of the senses of mianzi and attraction on the ingratiation factors would be mediated by the sense of renqing. The mediating effects of the sense of renqing were examined through the approach recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). First, it is required that the independent variables affect the dependent variable. Each ingratiation dimension was regressed on mianzi and attraction. After controlling for the effect of attraction, mianzi was significantly predictive of other enhancement ($\beta = .31, t = 4.32, p < .001$), conformity ($\beta = .36, t = 5.35, p < .001$), self-presentation ($\beta = .41, t = 6.02, p < .001$), and favor rendering ($\beta = .19, t = 2.55, p = .011$). On the other hand, after adjusting for mianzi, attraction significantly predicted self-presentation ($\beta = .14, t = 2.08, p = .039$), but not other enhancement ($\beta = -.00, t = -.05, p = .958$) and favor rendering ($\beta = -.05, t = -.63, p = .532$). Unexpectedly, higher sense of attraction was related to lower conformity ($\beta = -.23, t = -3.45, p < .001$). Second, it is essential that the independent variables affect the mediator. Regressing the sense of renqing on the senses of mianzi and attraction, it was showed that both the sense of mianzi ($\beta = .34, t = 4.83, p < .001$) and attraction ($\beta = .15, t = 2.21, p = .028$) were significant predictors of the sense of renqing.

The final step of Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach requires the mediator to affect the dependent variable after the effects of the independent variables are controlled. The sense of renqing was significantly related to other enhancement ($\beta = .20, t = 2.71, p = .007$), self-presentation ($\beta = .23, t = 3.19, p = .002$), and favor rendering ($\beta = .42, t = 5.76, p < .001$), but not to conformity ($\beta = -.10, t = -1.34, p = .182$). Hence, based on these regression analyses, the effect of mianzi on other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering was mediated by renqing, and renqing also mediated the relationship between attraction and self-presentation. The mediation path models are presented in Figure 1 to 4.

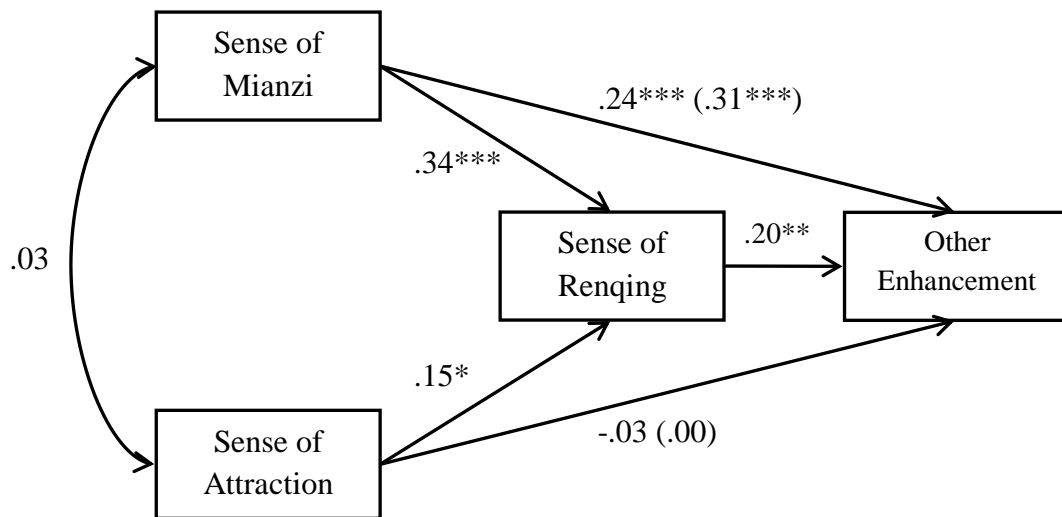


Fig. 1. The mediation path model predicting other enhancement ($N = 182$). Standardized coefficients are reported. Coefficients in parentheses represent effects before controlling for the mediator.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

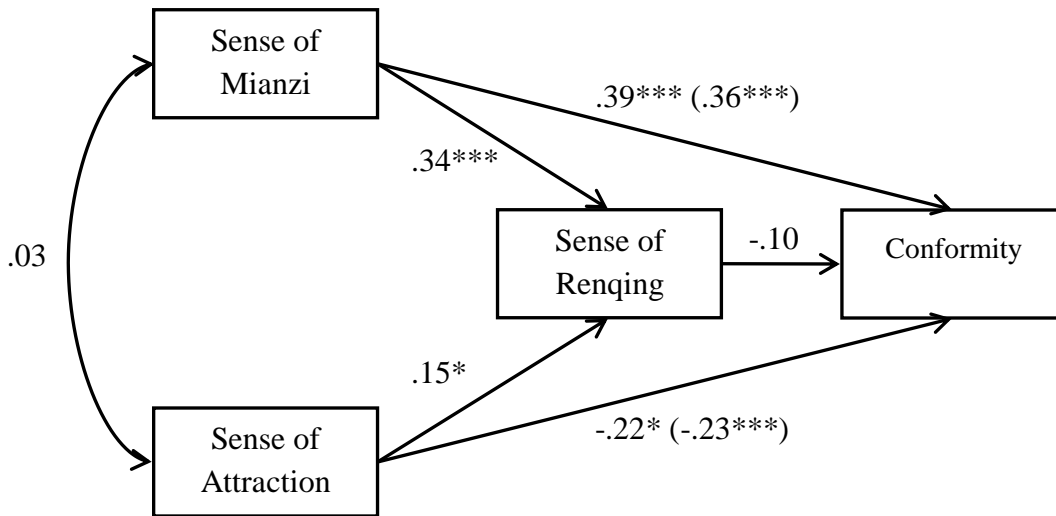


Fig. 2. The mediation path model predicting conformity ($N = 182$). Standardized coefficients are reported. Coefficients in parentheses represent effects before controlling for the mediator. * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

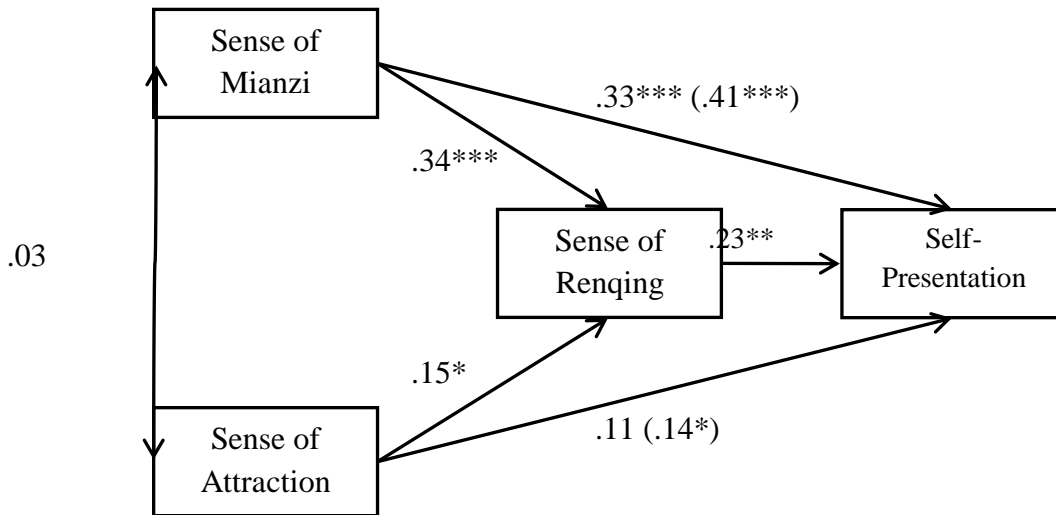


Fig. 3. Mediation path model predicting self-presentation ($N = 182$). Standardized coefficients are reported. Coefficients in parentheses represent effects before controlling for the mediator. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Additionally, bootstrapping technique was applied to examine the predicted indirect effects. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric technique that generates empirical confidence intervals by resampling repeatedly from the original sample with replacement (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This approach is considered to be superior to other alternatives because it has higher statistical power and does not assume normality of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect (Hayes, 2009). The SPSS macro composed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was used to obtain bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals (BCa 95% CIs) with 10,000 bootstrap resamples. An

indirect effect is significant if the BCa 95% CI does not contain zero. The results of bootstrapping are shown in Table 3.

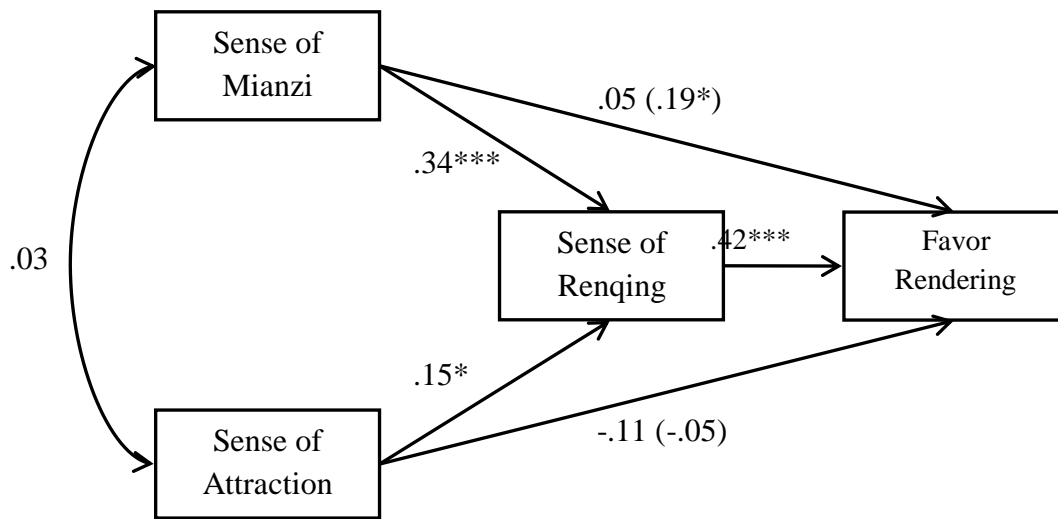


Fig. 4. Mediation path model predicting favor rendering (N = 182). Standardized coefficients are reported. Coefficients in parentheses represent effects before controlling for the mediator.
p* < .05. **p* < .001.

Table 3

Indirect effects of of mianzi and attaction on ingratiation via renqing (N = 182).

	Standardized estimate	SE	BCa 95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
Model 1				
Mianzi → Renqing → Other enhancement	.07*	.04	.01	.20
Attraction → Renqing → Other enhancement	.03*	.02	.00	.08
Model 2				
Mianzi → Renqing → Conformity	-.03	.03	-.11	.01
Attraction → Renqing → Conformity	-.01	.02	-.06	.01
Model 3				
Mianzi → Renqing → Self-presentation	.08*	.04	.03	.21
Attraction → Renqing → Self-presentation	.03*	.02	.00	.09
Model 4				
Mianzi → Renqing → Favor rendering	.14*	.07	.04	.36
Attraction → Renqing → Favor rendering	.06*	.04	.00	.15

Note. BCa CI = Bias-corrected and accelerated 95% confidence intervals.

**p* < .05.

An examination of the confidence intervals found significant indirect effects of mianzi to other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering through renqing. Furthermore, the indirect effect of attraction via renqing on other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering was showed to be significant. Renqing did not significantly mediate the effects of mianzi and attraction on conformity. These results provided partial support to H4.

4. Discussion

In this study, it was found that the Chinese might tend to ingratiate their social encounters with the tactics of other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering if they believed giving renqing was important to guanxi. Similarly, if they thought mianzi was important, they might also engage in ingratiation tactics of other enhancement, conformity, and self-presentation. On the other hand, their sense of attraction could only significantly and negatively predict the tactic of conformity. Although the sense of attraction might not have direct effects on ingratiation, both this sense as well as the sense of mianzi had indirect influences on the tactics of other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering through the sense of renqing. To some extent, these findings confirm most of the hypotheses derived from the guanxi perspective. In this sense, the guanxi perspective may be applicable to understand ingratiation in Chinese societies as a guanxi management strategy rather than attraction-seeking behavior.

Some interesting results were found in this study. First, theoretically, giving renqing means to give something (e.g., giving gifts) or to do something (e.g., offering help and emotional support) to others (Hwang, 1987; Zhai, 2005). In this sense, the sense of renqing should relate to the other-focused ingratiation tactics like favor rendering and other enhancement rather than the self-focused tactics like self-presentation (Strutton & Pelton, 1998; Varma, Toh, & Pichler, 2006). However, this study found that the sense of renqing significantly provoked self-presentation. One explanation to this finding is that in Chinese societies renqing may not only imply social exchange, but also “a set of social norms by which 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” (Hwang, 1987, p. 954). If the Chinese cannot conform to the social norms, they may be labeled as “don’t know renqing” that is an unwelcome personality (Hwang, 1987; King, 1992; Zhai, 2005). In order to avoid the label, giving renqing may become an explicit and direct way for them to show that they “know renqing”. In this case, the emphasis on giving renqing may correspond to the emphasis on conformity with the social norms of renqing. As a result, the sense of giving renqing may contribute to self-presentation.

Second, it was interesting that the sense of attraction was not a significant cause of ingratiation tactics of other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering. The findings may be explained by that ingratiation may be viewed as an illicit and immoral behavior in Chinese societies (Tsang, 2010). As influenced by Confucianism, Chinese people perceive that only “small men”, who are low quality and immoral persons, engage in ingratiation in order to obtain and maintain their own interests. In *The Analects*, for instances, Confucius expressed, “Clever talk and a pretentious manner are seldom found in the Good” (Book 1) and “Clever talk can confound the workings of moral force, just as small impatiences can confound great projects” (Book 15). As a result, a person who performs ingratiation may take a risk to be identified by others as a “small man” resulting in a decrease in his/her attractiveness. Therefore, the sense of attraction may not relate to the three ingratiation tactics.

If the explanation about the relationship between the sense of attraction and ingratiation tactics is acceptable, it is not difficult to understand the finding that the higher the sense of attraction, the less frequent the use of conformity. To some extent, this finding may imply that, compared with other tactics, conformity may be a more obvious and explicit ingratiation tactic (Jones, 1964). Therefore, people who perform conformity are more likely to be identified by others as “small men” than those who engage in other enhancement, self-presentation and favor rendering in Chinese societies. Therefore, if the Chinese think attractiveness is important, they may be less likely to perform conformity.

As predicted, the findings indicated the mediation effects of the sense of renqing on the influences of the sense of mianzi and the sense of attraction on ingratiation. This implied that both the senses of mianzi and attraction may generate the sense of renqing, which in turn affects Chinese ingratiation. As mentioned above, people who “know renqing” is generally regarded as a person with good quality and personality in Chinese societies (Hwang, 1987; King, 1992; Zhai, 2005). The mianzi of such a person normally is recognized by other people so that he or she to some extent is able to attract others and develop relationships with others (Cheng, 1986; Zhai, 2005). In this sense, if the Chinese think mianzi or attraction is important, they may attempt to enhance these two factors by ingratiation tactics through renqing in order to develop and maintain guanxi. As a result, the sense of renqing may mediate the impacts of the senses of mianzi and attraction on ingratiation. However, we need further study about the mechanism by which the senses of mianzi and attraction influence the sense of renqing and in turn affect ingratiation, since this study did not have in depth investigation about that.

One of the limitations of this study was that the sample was only composed of 182 undergraduate students who studied in Beijing. Therefore, the findings may not represent the whole Chinese population. Thus, it is

suggested that further studies should include larger and more heterogeneous samples of Chinese people. Moreover, the study did not include Chinese samples outside China. There may be some differences between Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwan Chinese, and other oversea Chinese because of the different socio-cultural backgrounds. Thus, further studies can compare the pattern of ingratiation across different Chinese contexts. Another limitation of this study was that Qian et al.'s (2007) items measuring the sense of mianzi tend to be more relevant to saving one's own mianzi than saving others' mianzi. Therefore, the results about the relationships of the sense of mianzi to other variables in this study may only represent part of the phenomenon of saving face. Further studies should test the relationships between saving others' mianzi and ingratiation.

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