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Running head: INFLUENCE GOALS, LMX, AND INGRATIATION

**Goals of Influence Attempt and Ingratious Behavior in Organizations:
The Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange**

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Abstract

We examined the moderating effect of leader-member exchange on the influence goals-ingratiatory behavior relationship ($N = 448$ Malaysian business students). Out-Group subordinates were found to dramatically increase the frequency of self enhancement tactic from organizational to personal goal condition. IN- and OUT-Group subordinates differed in the use of other enhancement ingratiation tactic in the organizational goal condition, but not in the personal goal condition.

**Goals of Influence Attempt and Ingratiatory Behavior in Organizations:
The Moderating Effect of Leader-Member Exchange**

Ingratiation has received some attention from social psychologists in the context of upward influence and organizational politics. Based on the work of Liden and Mitchell (1988), in this research, we examined the use of self-focused (self enhancement) and target-focused (other enhancement) as the two tactics of ingratiation. In general, there has been little empirical research in this area. Part of the problem may lie in the difficulty associated with studying ingratiation in a field setting. To overcome it, alternative mechanisms need to be used to understand the antecedents, correlates, and outcome factors of ingratiation. The present study, therefore, uses an experimental design to explore some of the antecedents that lead to the use of the two types of ingratiatory behavior in organizations. Understanding *why* (the objective or goal of the influence attempt) and *who* (the target of ingratiatory behavior) would significantly advance our understanding of the processes involved in the use of ingratiation. Consequently, in this study, we focus on two issues—the influence attempt goals (personal or organizational) and the leader-member exchange quality (good or poor)—as predictors of ingratiation as an upward influence strategy.

With regard to the role of influence goals, the few studies that have explored the issue have focused (either explicitly or implicitly) only on personal goal. In this study, we explore the differential use of ingratiatory tactics for personal and organizational goals. The role of the target in understanding the use of influence attempt has received considerable attention and researchers (e.g., Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Liden & Mitchell, 1988) have focused on upward, downward, and lateral influence strategies. Ingratiation as an influence strategy has been conceptualized and studied mostly as an upward influence tactic used to

influence the leader. Researchers (e.g., Liden & Mitchell, 1988) have identified the importance of target characteristics in understanding the use of ingratiation tactics. While identifying target characteristics, some researchers (e.g., Shankar, Ansari, & Saxena, 1994) have focused on the leader's style and characteristics. Since Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) leads to a work-group of subordinates differentiated in terms of power and influence over the leader, the nature of interaction between a leader and a member is likely to serve as an immediate predictor of the use of ingratiation. Though some researchers (e.g., Colella & Varma, 2001) have explored the impact of ingratiation on LMX, we are aware of no research that has treated LMX as a potential determinant of ingratiation. Given the developmental nature of LMX, we argue that though, in the initial stages of role development, ingratiation might impact LMX, but once the relationship is routinized and stable, the quality of interaction might predict the use of ingratiation behavior in organizations. Because leaders have power and influence over their subordinates in providing rewards and helping them achieve their goals, we also believe that LMX will moderate the relationship between influence goals and the use of ingratiation strategy. This paper, therefore, focuses on (a) the goals of influence attempts and the quality of LMX as predictors of ingratiation and on (b) the moderating role of LMX on the influence goals-ingratiation tactics relationship in an interactional framework.

Taken together, our study makes four key contributions to the existing leadership literature. First, despite the indication of multidimensional nature of ingratiation in the social-psychological literature (Jones, 1964), most previous studies, with a few exceptions (e.g., Appelbaum & Hughes, 1998; Deluga, 2003; Kumar & Beyerlein, 1991; Pandey & Bohra, 1984; Shankar, Ansari, & Saxena, 1994), have treated ingratiation as a unidimensional construct. Given the fact that past research (e.g., Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Shankar et al., 1994) has indicated the

multidimensional nature of ingratiation, we too conceptualize it as a two-dimensional construct: self-focused and target-focused. Second, we integrate two important leadership constructs— LMX and social influence—in the present study, by treating LMX as a predictor of ingratiation tactic. Third, we assess the moderating role of LMX on the goals of influence-ingratiation tactic relationship. Fourth, we are aware of no research that has been conducted on ingratiation in the Malaysian context. This study adds to the literature by testing the developed hypotheses in the Malaysian context, thus providing some empirical cross-cultural validity to the proposed relationships. It should, however, be noted that we are not advocating that the proposed relationships hold true for the Malaysian context only and are not likely to be replicated in other countries. Using Malaysian sample is an attempt to provide generalizability to the proposed relationships. Nonetheless, besides discussing the results in general, we will also discuss them in the context of Malaysian culture.

Theoretical Bases and Hypotheses Development

In its earliest conceptualizations, ingratiation was defined as “behaviors employed by a person to make himself [herself] more attractive to another” (Wortman & Linsenmier, 1977, p. 134). The concept has been operationalized and measured in many different ways. Initially, it was treated as a unidimensional construct and was considered one of the many influence tactics (Ansari, 1990; Kipnis et al., 1980; Yukl & Falbe, 1990). Subsequently, however, ingratiation has come to be viewed as a multidimensional construct consisting of different tactics (Jones, 1964; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Pandey & Bohra, 1984; Wortman & Linsenmier, 1977).

Ingratiation as an influence tactic is a two-step process. At the first step an attempt is made to create the right environment by making the target more amenable to the request, before making the request at the next step. Ingratiation becomes effective because it can either create a

positive image of the ingratiation or gets the target in a good mood (Yukl & Falbe, 1990; Yukl & Tracey, 1992). Liden and Mitchell (1988), based on a review of the past literature, classified ingratiation tactics into different categories, two of them being self presentation and target directed or other enhancement (e.g., Jones, 1964; Wortman & Linsenmeier's, 1977). In self-presentation strategies, the individual tries to create a positive image of the self in the mind of the target—a mechanism or an opportunity for the actor to make a favorable impression and be liked by the target (Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Self presentation can be seen as a tactic of ingratiation towards this end. On the other hand, target-focused strategies aim at other enhancement. Other enhancement is the communication of enhancing statements to the target through flattery, praise, and the like. Since people like to maintain and enhance self-esteem and attractiveness in others' eyes (Greenwald, 1980) by praising the leader, subordinates enhance the self-esteem and attractiveness of their bosses.

Based on the works of the early researchers dealing with the multidimensionality of ingratiation, Shankar, Ansari, and Saxena (1998) improvised these measures and proposed a seven-dimensional scale consisting of other enhancement, self enhancement, opinion conformity, self degradation, instrumental dependency, name dropping, and third-party directed. These tactics are very similar to those proposed and developed by earlier researchers. Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, and Goodman (1997) classified the first set of tactics as “exchange-based” and the second set as “soft” tactics. Given the difference in the underlying dynamics of these two types of ingratiation tactics, they are likely to be used differently in different situations. We next conceptualize the use of these tactics for LMX and goals of influence attempt.

LMX and Ingratiation

The LMX theory proposes that leaders form differential relationships with different subordinates in a workgroup (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980), which results in a differentiated workgroup. This differentiated workgroup comprises subordinates with high and low quality of LMX. High LMX relationships are characterized by support, trust (Liden & Graen, 1980), mutual liking, loyalty, professional respect, contributory behaviors (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998) and mutual influence (Yukl, 1989), whereas low LMX dyads have more contractual and formal relationships (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). The workgroup hence is differentiated in terms of the power and relationship of different members in the workgroup. Subordinates, consequently, are likely to use different mechanisms to exert influence over the leader.

Influence and power have been considered important in advancing our understanding of LMX. However, almost all the previous studies (e.g., Colella & Varma, 2001; Dockery & Steiner, 1990) have treated ingratiation as an antecedent of the quality of exchange, wherein ingratiation is seen as a mechanism for developing high and low quality of exchanges. LMX theory acknowledges the developmental nature of the quality of exchange (Graen & Scandura, 1987). However, there is a possibility that the relationship between LMX and ingratiation is time-dependent. The role development process, through which LMX gets stabilized, emphasizes that it is during the initial stages of role development that active exchanges between a leader and a member take place; at this stage, the leader assesses the capabilities and motivation of the subordinate for establishing the quality of exchange. At this stage of role development, it is quite likely that ingratiation is used by the member to develop a good quality of relationship with the leader. At this stage, ingratiation could be a likely candidate to impact the quality of exchange. However, the use of ingratiation as an upward influence strategy does not stop with time. Once

the relationship is established the IN- and OUT-Group members still need to influence the supervisor and at this stage too ingratiation becomes a mechanism of upward influence.

However, the tactics will be used differently depending upon the status of the subordinates: IN- or OUT-Group (high and low quality exchanges) status. At this stage, hence, the choice of an ingratiation tactic may be a function of the quality of exchange (LMX) of the subordinate with the leader.

Deluga and Perry (1991) studied the impact of LMX quality on the use of upward influence strategies. They hypothesized certain strategies like bargaining, reason, and friendliness to be positively associated with LMX, and coalition, assertiveness, and appeal to higher authority to be negatively associated with LMX quality. Their results showed that though high quality subordinates did not use coalition, assertiveness, and appeal to higher authority, the study did not find support for the use of friendliness, reason, and bargaining. In essence, they were able to demonstrate what the high quality subordinates do not do, but were not able to demonstrate what they do. They did not include ingratiation as an influence strategy in their study.

Ingratiation, being soft and political in nature, is likely to be used based on the relationship between the actor and the target, as it has been identified as an important predictor both of use and success of an ingratiation attempt (Wright & Ingraham, 1986). In the case of upward influence attempt, though the leader's style may be important, the use of ingratiation by a subordinate is more likely to be influenced by the nature (quality) of the interaction that the subordinate has with the leader. LMX that has been conceptualized as the quality of exchange relationship between the supervisor and each of his or her subordinates (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) provides such a framework. The theory contends that leaders develop different quality of

work relationships with different subordinates (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Graen, 1980). The development of varying quality of interaction in a leader-member dyad has been understood in terms of role development of the subordinates under a leader (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen, Cashman, Ginsburg, & Schiemann, 1977; Graen & Scandura, 1987). The leader assesses the competencies and motivation of the subordinates through role-making episodes and offers different inducements to high quality subordinates for collaborating on unstructured tasks. As a consequence of exchanges in the early stages of role development, the leader tends to develop higher quality relationships with the members who are perceived to be more competent and useful to the leader. In such dyads, the subordinates do not need to focus on self enhancement tactics as the supervisor is likely to be aware of them. The high quality leader-member dyads (IN-Group subordinates) are characterized by more power and influence (Yukl, 1989), and have less power differential in the superior-subordinate relationship. In other words, the perceived power difference between the leader and the member is less for IN-Group subordinates as compared to OUT-Group ones. In such a situation, to influence the leader, the subordinates would like to enhance the power of the leader by highlighting the leader's competencies to get a desired result. Consequently, the subordinates with high quality of LMX (IN-Group) are likely to focus on the enhancement of the target. Hence, we offer the following hypothesis:

H1: IN-Group subordinates will show a greater use of target-enhancement ingratiation tactics as compared to the OUT-Group subordinates.

Influence Goals and Ingratiation Tactics

As to the goals of influence attempt, past research (e.g., Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Kipnis et al., 1980) has shown that goals may be classified as personal or organizational in the use of both upward and downward influence attempts (Schmidt & Kipnis, 1984). Thus, managers do seek to influence their superiors for a variety of individual and organizational goals (Madison, Allen, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1980; Mowday, 1979; Schein, 1977) and the use of influence tactics vary with the goals of the influence attempt (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Kipnis et al., 1980). All these studies have looked at the use of upward and downward influence tactics in general.

So far as the use of ingratiation is concerned, most researchers (e.g., Jones, 1964; Jones & Wortman, 1973; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984) have treated ingratiation as something deceitful which is used to achieve personal goals. There are others, however, who believe that ingratiation may not always be political in nature (Liden & Mitchell, 1988). Liden and Mitchell (1988) are of the opinion that ingratiation might be done subconsciously and might not always require deceit and manipulation. One way of distinguishing the political aspect of ingratiation may be to see the ends for which it is being used. Thus, distinguishing between personal and organizational goals provides a useful dichotomy to investigate the use of ingratiation tactics.

As regards personal goals within the organizational context, they usually relate to some rewards or benefits (like pay, promotion, salary increase, and performance appraisal) for the self. Since most of these organizational decisions are based on the individual's capabilities and skills to deliver the work (Lawler, 1989), it is likely that to achieve these personal goals subordinate try to project themselves through impression management (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984) as worthy of reward that they are seeking. Consequently, we hypothesize:

H2: Subordinates will show a greater use of self enhancement ingratiation tactic for personal goals.

On the other hand, those in the pursuit of organizational goals do not need to promote themselves as their objective is to get something done for the organization. In such a situation, the goal is not dependent on subordinates' performance and capabilities. Subordinates often take the route of showing dependence on the leader to gain influence (Pandey, 1981) and show that the leaders (their resources and capabilities) would be instrumental in achieving the goals (Pandey & Bohra, 1984). If the organizational situation requires extra resources or help, it is likely that the subordinate will show his or her helplessness and would appeal to the greater power and capability of the target to provide those resources and support. Consequently, our next hypothesis reads as follows:

H3: Subordinates will show a greater use of target-focused (other enhancement) ingratiation tactic for organizational goals.

Influence Goals and Ingratiation Tactic: The Moderating Role of LMX

Past research has shown LMX to be positively related to personal goals like promotions, salary raises (Wakabayashi, Graen, Graen, & Graen, 1988; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999), and performance evaluations (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). In addition, LMX has been positively associated with intrinsic personal rewards such as autonomy (Liden & Maslyn, 1998), empowerment (Liden, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2000), and support (Scott & Bruce, 1994). This implies that the personal goals are more easily achieved by IN-Group members as compared to OUT-Group members. Ingratiation has also been classified as an impression management tactic (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984) and OUT-Group subordinates use it as that (self promotion) for achieving personal goals. Graen and Scandura (1987) have proposed that the OUT-Group members are left out of the IN-Group in the initial stages of role taking and role making when the leader assesses the competencies and motivations of the subordinate and does not find the

subordinates good enough to take the relationship beyond the contractual agreement. In view of the poor quality of exchange, communication between the leader and the member is limited (Mueller & Lee, 2002) and not very supportive (Lee, 2001), it deprives the subordinates of the opportunities to highlight their achievements to the leader. If personal goals of pay, promotion, and transfer are involved, subordinates would like to promote themselves whenever possible. Thus we state our next hypothesis as follows:

H4: LMX will moderate the influence goal-ingratiating tactics relationship in such a way that OUT-Group subordinates will show a greater use of self enhancement ingratiation tactic for personal goals as compared to IN-Group subordinates.

Employees in high-quality LMX relationships (IN-Group) are considered more likely to behave in ways that improves the environment and helps in task performance. In essence, they are more likely to be concerned about organization and task-related goals (Organ, 1998). As the personal goals are easily achieved by IN-Group subordinates, they are likely to use their proximity with the leader to achieve organizational goals. As mentioned earlier, the high quality subordinates do not need to establish their worth, they use enhancement of the target to achieve these goals. Thus we offer the following hypothesis:

H5: LMX will moderate the influence goal-ingratiating tactic in such a way that IN-Group subordinates will show greater use of target focused tactics for organizational goals as compared to OUT-Group members.

Method

Participants

Four hundred forty-eight BBA ($n = 193$ or 43.1%) and MBA ($n = 255$ or 56.9%) business students voluntarily participated in the study. These students came from two public universities

located in Eastern-Malaysia ($n = 99$) and Northern-Malaysia ($n = 349$). They were mostly in the age range of 20 to 30 years ($M = 28.24$; $SD = 6.72$). There were 239 female participants (about 54%). In terms of ethnicity, 219 participants were Chinese (about 50%), followed by 139 Malay (about 30%), and 86 Indian and others (about 20%). Graduate students (MBAs) were mostly full-time (85.3%) and almost evenly distributed across service (53.4%) and manufacturing (46.7%) sectors. The majority of them (about 68%) came from the private sector. The average job tenure and organizational tenure for MBA students, respectively, were 4.92 ($SD = 4.83$) and 7.28 ($SD = 5.62$) years.

Experimental Design and Procedure

The overall design of the experiment was a 2 (LMX: IN-Group; OUT-Group) X 2 (goals of influence attempt: personal; organizational) between-participants factorial. Thus, we employed four versions of the vignette, each representing a particular experimental treatment. That is, we crossed two levels of LMX by two levels of influence goals. We asked the subjects to read a one-page vignette and then to indicate the frequency with which they would take each action (see Dependent Measures) in order to get their way. Data were collected in the spring and fall of 2005. The experimental materials were administered to the students in classroom-like situations.

Experimental Manipulations

The manipulation of experimental variables was done through a one-page vignette consisting of three paragraphs. Vignettes may not reflect the dynamism of supervisor-subordinate relationships as accurate as videotapes or live enactments do. However, vignettes do allow researchers to remove potential confound and extraneous sources of variance that other methods may introduce (Aguinis, Simonsen, & Pierce, 1998). Thus, through vignettes, we can

manipulate supervisor-subordinate relationships with greater precision and a high degree of experimental control. In addition, previous researchers have successfully manipulated supervisor-subordinate relationships through vignettes (e.g., Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Ansari, Tandon, & Lakhtakia, 1987; Fu & Yukl, 2000). In our research, the use of vignettes had several benefits such as the standardization of the stimulus materials and the capability to manipulate and compare specific experimental conditions.

The leader-member exchange (LMX: IN/OUT-Group) vignettes employed four interrelated LMX currencies based on the recent literature (Bhal & Ansari, 2000; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). They were: perceived contribution, affect, loyalty (public support), and professional respect. We created the IN-Group scenario by describing the quality of leader-member relationship as positive on all the four dimensions, whereas we created the OUT-Group scenario by depicting the relationship as negative on these dimensions. The scenario for the IN-Group status read as follows (phrases in parentheses indicated OUT-Group status):

You work for a reputed company as a manager. You've been working under your present boss for about two years. You like your boss and enjoy working with him/her (You do not like your boss, nor do you enjoy working with him/her). You've a high respect for him/her and you admire his/her professional competence (You've no respect for him/her; and you've no admiration for his/her professional competence). On your making honest mistakes, your boss defends you if you are attacked by others (Even if you make honest mistakes, your boss does not defend you if others attack you). In return, you work for your boss that goes beyond what is specified in your job description (In return, you work for your boss only to the extent that is specified in your job descriptions).

Following the description of LMX status—IN-Group or OUT-Group--the second paragraph of the scenario described the goal (personal or organizational) of the influence attempt that was adapted from the past research (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987, pp. 42-43; Cheng, 1983, p. 343). We were aware of the potential problem in differentiating between the personal and organizational goals, where all goals can be perceived as self-serving (Mayes & Allen, 1977). Thus, the scenarios concerning personal and organizational goals were developed based on pilot discussions with the working executives. These executives were asked to provide incidents of personal and organizational goal conditions that they frequently confronted in their work setting. After collecting their responses, and based on the frequency of their use, one condition each for personal and organizational goal conditions was identified consistent with previous research (Ansari & Kapoor, 1987; Kipnis et al., 1980). In view of this qualitative information, the subjects were told:

You've obtained information that there exists a vacancy for the post of Senior Manager in your department, for which you consider yourself suitable. But you're also aware that there're some other managers in your department who also consider themselves equally competent and qualified. Because competition is intense, every manager is trying to impress the boss in order to be promoted. Listed below are various ways of influencing one's boss. Read each of them carefully, and indicate by circling the number of your choice how *frequently* you'll take each of the following actions in influencing your boss, so that he/she recommends you for promotion [Personal Goal].

Assume that, due to the *Hari Raya* festival (the most important festival in Malaysia) rush, your group's workload has increased considerably. It has reached the point where you find it difficult to meet company objectives. You have decided to ask

your boss (the one described above) to hire additional personnel for your group. Listed below are various ways of influencing one's boss. Read each of them carefully, and indicate by circling the number of your choice how *frequently* you'll take each of the following actions in response to the circumstances [Organizational Goal].

Dependent Measures

We derived 10 single-statement items (Shankar et al., 1994, 1998) to tap the respondents' use of self enhancement and other enhancement ingratiation as tactics of upward influence (from the original 35-item scale). The original scale consisted of seven dimensions: opinion conformity, other enhancement, self enhancement, self degradation, name dropping, instrumental dependency, and using third-party. Of these, we employed self enhancement (5 items) and other enhancement (5 items) tactics of ingratiation in this research. We asked the subjects to indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = *never*; 7 = *always*) the *frequency* with which they would engage in the behaviors indicated by the scale items to influence their immediate boss (supervisor). The ingratiation measure and its each item have been reported to be free from social desirability effect (Shankar et al., 1994, 1998).

Since this ingratiation scale (to the best of our knowledge) was being used for the first time in the Malaysian context, we thought appropriate to examine the construct validity of the scale by means of a varimax rotated principal components analysis. Table 1 reports the scale characteristics and factor loadings obtained. The analysis disclosed 2-factor solutions as expected, consisting of 10 significant items that explained a total of 56.9% of the variance (eigenvalue > 1.00; factor loadings ranging between .58 and .82; Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .86, $p < .001$). It is also evident that, for the most part, the items loaded neatly on the expected factors. The two factors--consistent with original scale--were named as

Self Enhancement (5 items) and Other Enhancement (5 items). The two factors were correlated ($r = .50, p < .01$) and the reliabilities of both the scales were acceptable: .80 and .81 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Results

Check on Experimental Manipulations

Our study's internal validity depends upon how precisely the participants played the role of a subordinate with a particular relationship with the immediate supervisor. As mentioned earlier, the personal and organizational goal conditions were identified after a discussion with the working executives. We had built into the vignettes the three manipulation check items describing the quality of leader-member relationships. Respondents rated each item on a 7-point semantic-differential scale their relationship with the immediate boss as depicted in the scenario. We examined the internal validity by means of a two-way ANOVA. In each analysis, the two experimental variables were treated as independent variables and manipulation check item as a dependent variable. The analysis readily indicated that regardless of goals of the influence attempt, the strong main effect of LMX condition was apparent ($p < .001$) for the three manipulation check items: unpleasant-pleasant [$F(1,414) = 577.80$]; relaxed-tense [$F(1,408) = 63.64$]; and unfriendly-friendly [$F(1,410) = 586.58$]. Participants in the IN-Group condition reported their relationship with the immediate supervisor more pleasant ($M = 5.73; SD = 1.33$), less tense ($M = 3.45; SD = 1.62$), and more friendly ($M = 5.85; SD = 1.09$) than those in the OUT-Group condition (means and standard deviations, respectively, were 2.43 and 1.46; 4.81 and 1.85; 2.68 and 1.55). However, neither the main effect of influence goals nor its interaction with LMX reached its significance level ($p > .05$). This result indicates that the experimental

manipulation of LMX was successful thereby providing strong support for the internal validity of this experiment.

Hypothesis Testing¹

We tested our hypotheses by implementing a two-factor multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) including influence goals and LMX as the independent variables and the two ingratiation tactics as the dependent variables. When appropriate, this MANOVA was followed up by univariate ANOVAs. Results from the MANOVA indicated an effect for LMX (Wilks's Lambda = .98, $F(2, 443) = 4.60, p < .01$), an effect for influence goals (Wilks's Lambda = .96, $F(2, 443) = 10.35, p < .01$), and an effect for goals X LMX interaction (Wilks's Lambda = .98, $F(2, 443) = 3.67, p < .02$).

Given the statistically significant results from the MANOVA, we proceeded to test our hypotheses by conducting follow-up univariate ANOVAs including influence goals and LMX as independent variables and self enhancement and other enhancement tactics of ingratiation as dependent variables. Table 2 presents means and standard deviations for each ingratiation tactic as a function of LMX and influence goals. It can be seen in Table 2 that the main effect for LMX was significant for other enhancement [$F(1,444) = 8.59, p < .001$]. Regardless of the goals of influence attempt, LMX made a significant difference in the use of this tactic. The IN-Group subordinates were likely to use this tactic more often to influence their immediate supervisors than those who played the role of OUT-Group subordinates. Thus, our H1 that stated that IN-Group subordinates would show a greater use of target-enhancement ingratiation tactic finds support from the data.

The main effect of the goals of influence attempt was significant for self enhancement tactic of ingratiation [$F(1,444) = 19.07, p < .001$]. Regardless of their LMX status, subordinates

were likely to use this ingratiation tactic more often to pursue personal goal than to pursue organizational goal. A significantly greater use of self-focused ingratiation tactics (like enhancement of self) for attaining personal goals supports our hypothesis 2. Our third hypothesis (H 3) predicted a higher use of other enhancement for organizational goals but did not find support from the data.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 predicted the moderating effect of LMX on the goals of influence-ingratiation tactic relationship. The results show two significant interactions between LMX and goals of the influence attempt on the use of two ingratiation tactics: enhancement of self [$F(1,444) = 6.49, p < .01$] and other enhancement [$F(1,444) = 4.35, p < .05$]. These interactions are portrayed on Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 suggests that OUT-Group subordinates were more likely to increase the frequency of the enhancement of self tactic from organizational to personal goal condition, whereas goals made no difference for IN-Group subordinates. This result supports hypothesis 4 as the use of self enhancement by the out group subordinates is very high for personal goals, whereas the nature of goals did not make any difference to the IN-Group subordinates. Similarly, in organizational goal condition, IN- and OUT-Group subordinates differed significantly in terms of other enhancement, but they did not in the personal goal condition (see Figure 2). Stated differently, IN-Group subordinates were more likely to use other enhancement tactic in response to organizational goal than to personal goal. This result fully supports Hypothesis 5.

Discussion

Results of the study throw up some significant issues that we discuss in the subsequent sections. To begin with, distinguishing between self- and target-enhancement ingratiation tactics is a viable and useful classification, as our study reveals that the two are not only two distinct

factors but are also used differently in different situations. In this conceptualization, ingratiation becomes operational in terms of two processes: impression enhancement of self (with a view to be seen as attractive and useful by the target) and ego gratification (enhancement of the target) of the target. The two become operational in different conditions. Our results highlight some situations when they are likely to be used.

The results highlight that, in general, IN-Group subordinates show a greater use of target enhancement tactic as compared to OUT-Group subordinates. This can be understood in the framework of risk and perceived likelihood of success of an influence attempt, which is an important factor in using ingratiation for upward influence. Liden and Mitchell (1988) propose that the type of tactic used by the ingratiation is a function of the risk perceived in using the tactic. Given the quality of interaction that the OUT-Group subordinates have with the leader, in general, they are likely to perceive more risk in an upward influence attempt. In such a situation, flattery or praise (other enhancement) of the leader by the subordinate is likely to be viewed by the leader (target) as having ulterior motives (Liden & Mitchell, 1988). On the other hand, IN-Group subordinates perceive less risk and by the same logic are more likely to use target-focused ingratiation tactics.

Another result that requires our attention is the use of ingratiation for organizational as well as personal goals. This helps in distinguishing between the two types of political aspects of ingratiation. Mayes and Allen (1977, p. 675) described organizational politics as “using influence to obtain ends not sanctioned by the organization”. In their classification, they identify potentially functional political behavior and organizationally dysfunctional political behavior. Political activity, in this sense predominantly looks at the goals of influence attempt—if they are towards the organization’s benefit, they are not dysfunctional. Understanding the use of

ingratiation in terms of the purpose for which it is used throws light on the functionality or dysfunctionality of ingratiation. Looking at the use of ingratiation for organizational and personal goals also helps in understanding the legitimacy of the tactic. Farrell and Patterson (1982) and Liden and Mitchell (1988) proposed that ingratiation is considered to be a political activity because it is perceived as a mechanism of upward influence. This classification provides insight into the positive political aspect of ingratiation.

Our next result which is related to this aspect is the fact that overall, OUT-Group members do not show much use of any type of ingratiation for organizational purposes. It is the IN-Group subordinates who use ingratiation (other enhancement) for organizational goals. IN-Group subordinates have been shown to have more positive attitudes towards their organization in terms of commitment (Ang, Ansari, & Jantan, 2005; Ansari, Lee, & Aafaqi, 2007; Bhal & Ansari, 2007; Gerstner & Day, 1997; Hackett & Lapierre, 2004) and citizenship behavior (e.g., Ang et al., 2005; Ansari et al., 2007; Bhal, 2006; Deluga, 1994; Hackett, & Lapierre, 2004). Those who are more committed to the organization are more likely to use legitimate goals (Farrell & Patterson, 1982). Given their attitude towards the organization, IN-Group subordinates are more likely to have more concern for organizational goals and they use ingratiation towards this end.

Yet another significant result that deserves a mention relates to the use of self enhancement tactics by OUT-Group subordinates for personal goals. Besides having less opportunities for career growth (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001), the OUT-Group subordinates are more likely to be given mundane assignments to work on and they receive less supervisory support (Bolino, 2007); in such a situation, they are likely to be preoccupied and concerned with achieving their personal goals of career advancement and better

job assignments. Since low quality relationship is characterized by less frequent interactions, such subordinates use any occasion to enhance their image in the eyes of their leaders.

We had proposed our hypotheses on theoretical considerations assuming that the nature of relationship would be universal and the fact that they find support from the data confirm our assumption. The results are much in line with some studies conducted on Malaysian samples. In a review of the work on LMX in Malaysia, Ansari, Ahmad, and Aafaqi (2004) discovered that much like their western counterparts, LMX was found to be a strong negative predictor of turnover intentions and a strong positive predictor of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior for Malaysian samples as well.

At the same time, it is important that the results are examined in the backdrop of the cultural context of Malaysian society. To begin with, our results show that IN-Group subordinates show a higher use of other enhancement. This result becomes particularly significant in a society that respects hierarchy and power (Ansari et al., 2004; Abdullah, 1994, 1996; Kennedy & Mansor, 2000). The preference for hierarchy manifests itself in a strong status orientation. Relationships are hierarchically arranged into superiors and subordinates (Abdullah, 1994). Seniors (superiors or elders) are respected and obeyed. Thus anger and hostility against a superior are suppressed and displaced, and the tendency is to appease the superior. In such a situation the IN-Group subordinates, who enjoy more power and privilege, need to establish the superiority of the leader time and again, especially when they expect some favor from the leader. Thus the use of other enhancement gets justified in such a situation. Second, collectivism has been identified as a salient value of Malaysians (Abdullah, 1994; Lim, 1998). Erdogan and Liden (2006), based on a sample from Turkey, demonstrate that in-people in collectivist cultures are more likely to use soft tactics like ingratiation. The use of different dimensions of ingratiation by

the student sample supports this finding. Our study sample shows that ingratiation is not only used but its finer distinctions (self- and other-enhancement) are also understood and used differently.

A limitation of this study is our use of vignettes to manipulate LMX and goals of the influence attempt. However, as we mentioned in the method section, we do not consider the use of vignettes a severe threat to present conclusions. As part of our manipulation check, the participants indicated that they understood the leader-member relations exactly as described in the vignette. Nevertheless, future researchers should investigate the replication of the present results via other methodologies such as videotapes (Streeck, 1993), photographs (Fernandez-Dols, Wallbot, & Sanches, 1991), or virtual reality package (Pierce & Aguinis, 1997). However, videotapes and live enactments carry their own limitations because those methodologies can result in the researchers' inability to remove potential systematic confounds and extraneous sources of variance. Because of their limitations, videotape and other more realistic methodologies have been criticized (Burgoon, 1991). Nevertheless, we believe that researchers need multiple methodologies to ascertain more confidently the effects of LMX and influence goals on ingratiation as an upward influence strategy. In the present study, we used one of several available methods, and we encourage future researchers to use additional procedures.

All data limitations aside, the present research has some obvious theoretical and practical implications. Ingratious behaviors are inevitable in work organizations (Gandz & Murray, 1980) and they cannot be eliminated or ignored (Wayne, Kacmar, & Ferris, 1995). First, taken as a whole, our data suggest that Malaysian business students are most likely to use enhancement of the self and other enhancement tactics of ingratiation in getting their way.

Second, the present data suggest that effectiveness of each tactic of ingratiation varies with the context in which it is used. Overall, LMX is an important determinant of ingratiation: individuals vary their use of ingratiation behavior as a function of their standing with the leader, IN-Group or OUT-Group. The use of ingratiation also varies with the goals of the influence attempt. Third, our research suggests that simply counting on LMX and the influence goals is not enough, but the interaction of the two explains a significant amount of variance in the use of ingratiation tactics. In other words, managers must consider both their relationships with the supervisor and their objective of the influence attempt before using a particular ingratiation tactic.

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Author Notes

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Footnote

¹Previous research has found the role of supervisor gender (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986; Green, Anderson, & Shivers, 1996) and LMX tenure (i.e., duration of the dyad working together) as possible antecedents of leader-member exchange (Ang, Ansari, & Jantan, 2005; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Thus we controlled the effects of these two relational demography in our vignettes—see experimental manipulations subsection. However, we could not control for the other salient demographic variables. Thus, to strengthen the internal validity of the present findings, it was essential to examine if those demographics which were not controlled in the vignette have any impact on the dependent measures. Using inferential statistics (such as one-way ANOVA and independent *t*-test), we compared the present sample on a number of salient demographics in terms of each of the six ingratiation behavior. Demographic variables under examination were: subordinate gender (male; female), ethnicity (Chinese; Malay; Indian); student status (BBA; MBA), location (eastern Malaysia; western Malaysia), type of industry (service; manufacturing), organizational ownership (private; state-owned), and type of work (full-time; part-time). None of the analysis on two ingratiation tactics reached its significance level ($p > .05$) for any demographic variables. In addition, zero-order correlations suggested that the six tactics of ingratiation were unrelated to age, job tenure, and organizational tenure of the graduate students ($p > .05$). Thus we pooled the data ($N = 448$) in our main analysis.

Table 1

Factor Loadings Obtained—Ingratiation Measures

<i>Items</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>OE</i>
make him/her believe that I am a trustworthy person	.82	.13
make him/her believe that I am a very responsible person	.81	.11
Make him/her believe that I am a very competent person	.79	.18
make him/her believe that I have a lot of experience	.65	.23
highlight my achievements to him/her	.58	.32
Tell him/her that he/she is very competent	.09	.76
show him/her that I am impressed by his/her contributions to the organization	.31	.72
Make him/her feel important	.29	.71
Use superlatives to praise him/her	.05	.69
show him/her that I have high opinion and regards for him/her	.25	.67
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	4.22	1.47
<i>Percentage of Variance</i>	42.19	14.71
<i>M</i>	5.10	4.30
<i>SD</i>	1.04	1.00
<i>Alpha</i>	.80	.81

Note. KMO = .86; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (45) = 1555.33, $p < .001$. Items are grouped for presentation purposes; they appeared in random order in the experimental material; SE = Self Enhancement; OE = Other Enhancement.

Table 2

Mean Scores on Ingratiatory Behavior as a Function of LMX and Goals of Influence

<i>Ingratiatory Behavior</i>	<i>LMX</i>	<i>Goals of Influence</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Self Enhancement	OUT-Group	Personal Goal	5.39	0.99	114
		Organizational Goal	4.73	0.99	98
		Total	5.08	1.04	212
	IN-Group	Personal Goal	5.22	1.08	112
		Organizational Goal	5.04	0.99	124
		Total	5.13	1.04	236
	Total	Personal Goal	5.30	1.04	226
		Organizational Goal	4.90	1.01	222
		Total	5.10	1.04	448
Other Enhancement	OUT-Group	Personal Goal	4.29	0.95	114
		Organizational Goal	4.01	0.97	98
		Total	4.61	0.96	212
	IN-Group	Personal Goal	4.37	1.05	112
		Organizational Goal	4.48	0.98	124
		Total	4.43	1.01	236
	Total	Personal Goal	4.33	1.00	226
		Organizational Goal	4.27	1.00	222
		Total	4.30	1.00	448

Figure Captions

Figure 1. *Effect of LMX and goals of influence interaction on enhancement of self tactic of ingratiation.*

Figure 2. *Effect of LMX and goals of influence interaction on target enhancement tactic of ingratiation.*



Figure 1. *Effect of LMX and goals of influence interaction on enhancement of self tactic of ingratiation.*

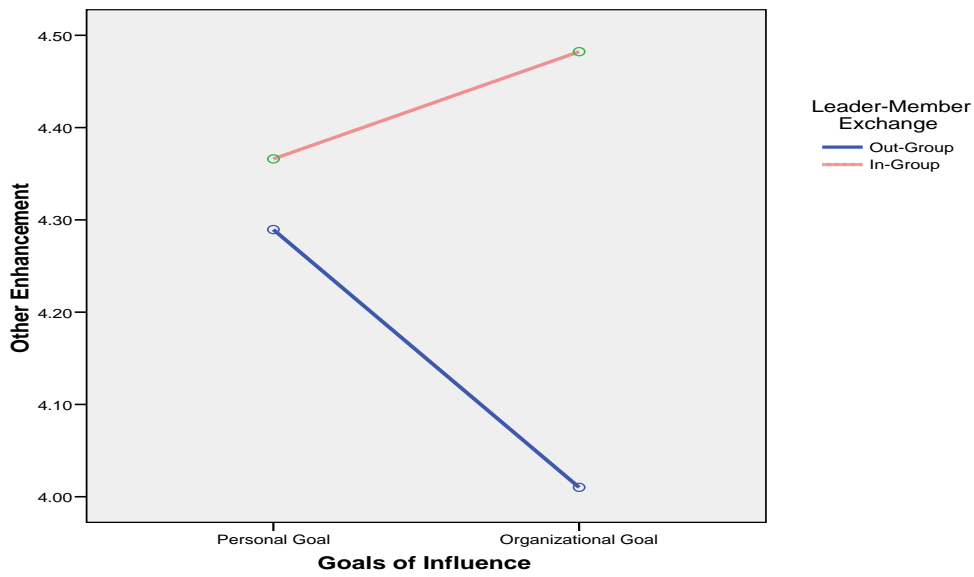


Figure 2. *Effect of LMX and goals of influence interaction on target enhancement tactic of ingratiation.*