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The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange: A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions --Manuscript Draft--

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Full Title:	The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange: A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions
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The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange:

A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions

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Abstract

Although ingratiation is a tactic widely adopted by subordinates to influence supervisors, findings on its effectiveness are mixed at best. Drawing upon advancements in attribution theory, we propose a dual-pathway model to explicate the supervisor attributional processes triggered by newcomer ingratiation. On the one hand, supervisors engage in surface-level correspondent inference, taking newcomer ingratiation at face value and associating more ingratiation with greater relationship-building motives, rendering a positive linear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and relationship-building motive attribution. On the other hand, as newcomer ingratiation becomes more blatant, it prompts supervisors to engage in deep-level ulterior inference to more closely scrutinize hidden motives, rendering an increasing curvilinear relationship (i.e., a positive effect that gradually emerges) between newcomer ingratiation and self-serving motive attribution. These two attributions, in turn, have opposite effects on leader-member exchange (LMX). Taken together, we proposed an overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. We tested our hypotheses with three field studies. Study 1 revealed an inverted-U-shaped relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Study 2 and Study 3 further substantiated the mediation effects of the two attributions linking newcomer ingratiation to LMX. Additionally, Study 3 showed that via the sequential mediation of attributions and LMX, newcomer ingratiation had indirect effects on newcomer task performance and intention to quit.

Keywords: Ingratiation, leader-member exchange, newcomers, attributions, motives

**The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange:
A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions**

Newcomer socialization success largely depends on the development of strong social relationships in new work environments (Louis et al., 1983), especially the relationship quality with the supervisor, namely, leader-member exchange (LMX; Liden et al., 1993). To gain social acceptance and improve LMX, newcomers inevitably engage in upward influence tactics, such as ingratiation, defined as behaviors “intended to gain or regain acceptance” (Liden & Mitchell, 1989; Romero-Canyas et al., 2010, p. 802). As suggested by Jones and Pittman (1982), social cues that highlight dependency (e.g., newcomer context) naturally elicit ingratiation behaviors (see also Wayne & Liden, 1995). In this regard, ingratiation has been conceptualized as an effort to form and maintain a good relationship with the supervisor (Kim et al., 2022; Wayne & Ferris, 1990) and minimize uncertainties in achieving career objectives (Sibunruang et al., 2016). Although subordinate ingratiation is prevalent in workplaces, empirical findings on its effectiveness are mixed at best. Whereas some studies have shown that ingratiation has a positive influence on LMX (Koopman et al., 2015; Wayne & Ferris, 1990), performance (Gross et al., 2021; Zhao & Liden, 2011), and promotability (Gross et al., 2021; Sibunruang et al., 2016), others have found that it negatively affects LMX (Kim et al., 2018), performance (Wu et al., 2013), and promotability (Thacker & Wayne, 1995; Wu et al., 2013).

To reconcile inconsistent findings, researchers argue that the effectiveness of subordinate ingratiation depends on how supervisors interpret related behaviors (Bolino et al., 2016; Fein et al., 1990; Ham & Vonk, 2011; Schoderbek & Deshpande, 1996). In particular, ingratiation can be more effective when supervisors attribute ingratiation behaviors to subordinates’ proactive efforts in building relationships, but less effective when supervisors attribute such behaviors to

self-serving motives (e.g., Chen et al., 2021; Long, 2021). This research stream typically assumes that different supervisor attributions are mutually exclusive (e.g., a supervisor may attribute subordinate ingratiation to *either* a relationship-building *or* self-serving motive; Long, 2021).

Despite the insights, advancements in social cognition literature, especially attribution theory (Ham & Vonk, 2011; Reeder et al., 2004; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2015), suggest that prior ingratiation studies likely have oversimplified the role played by supervisor attributions. Specifically, the attribution literature reveals that multiple inferences can be simultaneously drawn in the attributional process (e.g., correspondent and ulterior inferences; Leung et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2024; Reeder et al., 2004; Vonk, 1998). In the case of subordinate ingratiation, supervisors may, on the one hand, engage in correspondent inference, taking ingratiation at face value and associating more ingratiation with greater relationship-building motives; and, on the other hand, engage in ulterior inference to more closely scrutinize hidden (e.g., self-serving) motives. In addition, it is well documented in the attribution literature that the characteristics of observed behaviors can directly shape the attributional process (Boseovski et al., 2013; Boseovski & Lee, 2006; Sanbonmatsu et al., 2015), suggesting the non-independence of subordinate ingratiation and supervisor attributions (i.e., the level of newcomer ingratiation may directly affect supervisor attributions). Echoing this point, Liden and Mitchell (1988) theorized that subtle (vs. blatant) ingratiation behaviors are more likely considered sincere and thus elicit positive reactions from the targets.

Integrating attribution theory and ingratiation research, we propose a dual-pathway model to explicate the complex supervisor attributional process linking subordinate ingratiation to LMX, a critical indicator of ingratiation effectiveness. Our focus on LMX aligns with the

conceptualization of ingratiation, defined as an upward influence tactic with the aim of attaining acceptance from powerful others who control valuable resources (Bolino et al., 2008, 2016; Gordon, 1996; Kipnis et al., 1980; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Wayne et al., 1997; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Diverging from the existing ingratiation studies, we propose that (1) the levels of ingratiation can directly impact supervisor attributions (i.e., relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions) and thereby LMX, (2) these two attributions likely co-exist and they have opposite effects on LMX (i.e., dual-pathways), and (3) as levels of ingratiation increase, the non-synchronized changes in these two attributions may render an overall curvilinear relationship between ingratiation and LMX (Busse et al., 2016).

To test our hypotheses, we conducted three quantitative field studies in the newcomer context, where ingratiation tends to be abundant and critical (Bolino et al., 2016; Gross et al., 2021; Zhao & Liden, 2011). This empirical setting provides a “clean slate” to study how subordinate ingratiation shapes supervisor attributions and thereby the effectiveness of ingratiation indicated by LMX, as the supervisor has not yet formed an established impression of the newcomer. Study 1 tested the overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Study 2 further examined supervisor attributions as mediating mechanisms linking newcomer ingratiation to LMX. Study 3 was conducted to replicate findings from Study 2 and examine the downstream consequences of LMX (i.e., task performance and intention to quit). We summarize the research model in Figure 1. Complementing the quantitative field studies, we conducted a proof-of-concept qualitative study to understand how different levels or magnitudes of newcomer ingratiation manifest in reality and to assess the viability of our core premise that different levels of newcomer ingratiation likely trigger different motive attributions.

The current research contributes to the literature in several ways. First, although

researchers have long argued that human behaviors can trigger multiple attributions (Fein et al., 1990; Ferris et al., 1995) and have corroborated the co-existence of correspondent and ulterior inferences in experimental settings (e.g., Fein et al., 1990; Ham & Vonk, 2011; Reeder et al., 2004), this “both-and” notion has not been fully explored in organizational settings. Thus, our research provides a meaningful test for the multi-layered attributional process in real workplaces. Moving beyond, we reveal how newcomer ingratiation differently impacts the two supervisor attributions, further contributing to ingratiation and attribution research. Second, by jointly considering the mediating roles of relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions, we offer a holistic theoretical framework to understand the complex, curvilinear relationship between subordinate ingratiation and LMX. Such an investigation helps reconcile mixed findings regarding the effectiveness of subordinate ingratiation. Third, adding to the newcomer literature, we address recent research calls for taking a supervisor-centric perspective to understand newcomer adjustment by revealing how supervisor attributions of newcomer behaviors impact the relationship quality between newcomers and supervisors (Ellis et al., 2017; Nasr et al., 2019).

Theory and Hypothesis Development

People interpret social encounters they experience in organizational life and imbue these encounters with meaning (Weick, 1995). Interpersonal interactions are subject to interpretations, especially relational attributions—attempts by a focal individual to identify the cause of an event within an interpersonal relationship (Eberly et al., 2011). For example, when a newcomer engages in ingratiation behaviors (e.g., complimenting the supervisor’s hairstyle), the supervisor might wonder why it happened. Such attributions, in turn, impact the supervisor’s reactions and attitudes toward the newcomer (Harvey & Weary, 1984). Importantly, advancements in attribution theory suggest the possible co-existence of multiple inferences—correspondent

inference where people interpret a behavior at its face value and ulterior inference where people engage in deliberate attributional process to identify hidden motives (Ham & Vonk, 2011; Reeder et al., 2004).

On the one hand, according to the social cognition literature (Fein, 1996; Ham & Vonk, 2011), the term correspondence refers to the extent to which the behavior and the attributed motive are “similarly described by the inference” (Jones & Davis, 1965, p. 223). Simply put, a correspondent inference takes the behavior at face value, usually without any effortful thought. For example, as ingratiation is defined as behaviors intended to obtain social acceptance, relationship building is an inherent part of ingratiation (Koopman et al., 2015; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). As such, supervisors should correspondingly attribute newcomers’ ingratiation behaviors to the directly linked, at-face-value motive of building relationships (Fein et al., 1990; Ham & Vonk, 2011; Jones & Harris, 1967; Vonk, 1998).

On the other hand, individuals may also conduct ulterior inference to dig beneath the surface and infer the actor’s hidden motives (Ham & Vonk, 2011). This is especially the case when the actor’s behaviors trigger suspicion and evoke sophisticated attributional analysis (Fein, 1996). In the case of newcomer ingratiation, the most common hidden motive discussed in the literature is self-serving. By its nature, newcomer ingratiation is a soft upward influence tactic to “win over” the supervisor (Wayne & Ferris, 1990). Like many other influence tactics, its ultimate goal is to serve one’s own purposes (e.g., improving social standing within the workplace, gaining more rewards, and showing the importance of one’s work; Kacmar et al., 2004; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne et al., 1997). As such, an ulterior inference of newcomer ingratiation likely reveals the underlying self-serving motive. Although it is also possible for supervisors to identify alternative hidden motives, the current research focuses on self-serving motive

attribution, given its clear emphasis in the ingratiation research (Liden & Mitchell, 1988). Below, we articulate how newcomer ingratiation may differentially impact supervisors' correspondent inference (probed by relationship-building motive attribution) and ulterior inference (probed by self-serving motive attribution), respectively.

Newcomer Ingratiation and Supervisor Attributions

Once newcomers enter an organization, besides actively seeking information on task-related issues, it is important for them to develop social connections with relevant others (Bauer et al., 2007; 2025). In particular, when newcomers form good relationships with their direct supervisors, they enjoy better socialization outcomes and even future career success (Delobbe et al., 2016; Raghuram et al., 2017; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Sluss & Thompson, 2012). Newcomers are therefore motivated to engage in ingratiation behaviors toward the supervisor to increase liking, gain acceptance, and build relationships (Bolino et al., 2008; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Typical ingratiation behaviors include acting humbly and friendly, speaking highly about others, and making others feel good about themselves (see the Appendix for more specific examples of newcomer ingratiation) (Bolino et al., 2008; Bolino et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 1996; Ralston, 1985). As a global construct, such ingratiation behaviors reflect newcomers' proactive attempts to facilitate interpersonal relationships with supervisors (Gross et al., 2021; Jones, 1990; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Westphal & Stern, 2006).

When studying ingratiation, prior studies have differentiated subordinate-rated and supervisor-rated ingratiation and found low correlations between the two (e.g., Treadway et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2013). The current research focuses on supervisor-rated newcomer ingratiation because we are interested in examining how newcomer ingratiation triggers supervisor attributions, which are only relevant when supervisors perceive or sense ingratiation from

newcomers (Jones, 1990; Wu et al., 2013). In accordance with the mental process of correspondent inference, whenever supervisors perceive newcomer ingratiation, this superficial, direct association between ingratiation and relationship-building motive can sculpt their attributions. In other words, as long as ingratiatory behaviors are recognized by supervisors, it will be naturally interpreted as newcomers' relationship-building efforts without too much thinking. In accordance with attribution theory (the mental process of correspondent inference in particular), we propose a positive linear relationship between supervisor-rated newcomer ingratiation and relationship-building motive attribution. That is, as the level of newcomer ingratiation increases, supervisor relationship-building motive attribution (i.e., the extent to which a supervisor attributes a subordinate's ingratiatory behaviors to proactively seeking out interaction opportunities; Ashford & Black, 1996) should also increase accordingly.¹

***Hypothesis 1.** Newcomer ingratiation has a positive linear association with supervisors' relationship-building motive attribution.*

Although not necessarily deceptive (Liden & Mitchell, 1988), ingratiation clearly represents an attempt to shape how one is perceived by others (Jones, 1990; Long, 2021). In particular, to gain or regain acceptance, ingratiation involves benign, accommodating, or even obsequious behavior to increase attractiveness in the eyes of others (Cooper, 2005; Liden & Mitchell, 1988). Such attempts to control how others feel or think can be viewed as egoistic because they serve the actor's own needs or personal interests (Chen et al., 2021; Eastman,

¹ In accordance with attribution theory (the mental process of correspondent inference in particular), we hypothesize a positive linear association between newcomer ingratiation and relationship-building motive attribution. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the possibility of other relationship patterns between the two variables. Specifically, it is plausible that supervisors become less sensitive to newcomer ingratiation when it reaches a threshold (i.e., the marginal increase of relationship-building motive attribution is smaller after newcomer ingratiation reaches a certain level), suggesting an attenuated positive relationship. Although such arguments are sensible, they cannot be derived based on attribution theory directly. In addition, an attenuated positive relationship between these two variables would not change our prediction of the overall curvilinear relationship between ingratiation and LMX.

1994). Indeed, it has been pointed out that individuals engaging in ingratiation may be perceived as unlikeable, immoral (Parker & Parker, 2017), or Machiavellian (Ralston, 1985; Wenderoth, 2016). Similarly, ingratiation scholars have reported that “the situations where people are most inclined to use ingratiation are the same situations where targets are most likely to be suspicious of the ingratiator’s motives” (Bolino et al., 2016, p. 383). Simply put, ingratiation likely triggers deliberate attributional analysis, which often reveals one’s hidden self-serving motives.

In accordance with the mental process of ulterior inference, we propose an increasing curvilinear relationship (i.e., a positive effect that gradually emerges; Li et al., 2024) between newcomer ingratiation and supervisor self-serving motive attribution (broadly defined as the extent to which a supervisor attributes a subordinate’s ingratiatory behaviors as serving the subordinate’s own purposes). According to the social cognition literature, people do not always engage in deliberate attributional analysis, and such a sense-making process is more likely to happen when individuals deal with situations that violate their expectations (Buss, 1980; Feldman, 1981; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Specifically, cues—often in the form of violated expectations—trigger deep-level attributional analysis to resolve ambiguity and uncertainty (Maitlis, 2005). In the context of newcomer-supervisor interactions, not all levels of ingratiation trigger cautions, and low-to-moderate levels of ingratiation are generally acceptable and welcomed in upward communications (Bolino et al., 2016; Gross et al., 2021; Koopman et al., 2015; Wayne & Liden, 1995; Zhao & Liden, 2011). This is because supervisors often expect newcomers to engage in mild ingratiation, viewing such behaviors as proactive socialization attempts to build relationships and fit into new environments (Gross et al., 2021; Turnley & Bolino, 2001). Moreover, given the high dependency of newcomers on supervisors, it is quite common for newcomers to engage in mild ingratiation to facilitate interactions (Jones & Pittman,

1982). The frequency with which a behavior occurs in a social setting affects how noticeable and significant that behavior appears (Johns, 2006; Kim et al., 2022). Because of this, a newcomer's low-to-moderate attempts at ingratiation are not likely to raise suspicion from their supervisor. In addition, people might personally appreciate relatively mild ingratiation because it puts them in a positive frame of mind (Bless et al., 1992; Vonk, 2002) and panders to their positive self-image (Vonc, 2002). After all, "people find it hard not to like those who think highly of them" (Jones, 1964, p. 25). Taken together, when experiencing mild ingratiation, supervisors likely take it at face value without scrutinizing hidden motives. Accordingly, when ingratiation increases from low to moderate levels, we expect a relatively flat relationship between newcomer ingratiation and supervisor self-serving motive attribution.

However, as newcomer ingratiation becomes more blatant, it likely deviates from supervisors' expectations and compels them to scrutinize such behaviors for hidden motives. For example, if a newcomer offers subtle compliments to the supervisor, the supervisor may take it at face value without caution. However, if a newcomer showers the supervisor with excessive praise, the supervisor may find it inappropriate and engage in deliberate attributional analysis to identify hidden motives. Simply put, salient and obvious ingratiation would make supervisors suspicious and trigger their ulterior inference (Buss, 1980; Marchand & Vonk, 2005). Indeed, although people enjoy being flattered, an overstated compliment can make them doubtful and distrust the actor (Long, 2021; Wu et al., 2013). In addition, overly positive feedback may also mismatch supervisors' self-concepts, making them feel uncomfortable (Higgins et al., 1985). Blatant ingratiation can even be embarrassing when it is considered socially unacceptable (Kim et al., 2022; Liden & Mitchell, 1988). Taken together, when newcomer ingratiation continues to increase and becomes blatant, it likely triggers deliberate attributional analysis that reveals

newcomers' self-serving motives. Therefore, we propose that the positive effect of newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution gradually emerges as newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher (i.e., an increasing curvilinear effect).²

***Hypothesis 2.** Newcomer ingratiation has an increasing curvilinear relationship with supervisors' self-serving motive attribution, such that the positive relationship between newcomer ingratiation and self-serving motive attribution gradually emerges as newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher.*

Newcomer Ingratiation and LMX: The Mediating Roles of Supervisor Attributions

Given the central role that supervisors play in newcomer socialization and adjustment (Louis et al., 1983), LMX, defined as the quality of the relationship between a subordinate and a supervisor (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden et al., 1993), has emerged as a key construct for newcomer research (Bauer & Green, 1996; Creon & Schermuly, 2021; Delobbe et al., 2016; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Jokisaari, 2013; Liden et al., 1993; Liu et al., 2024; Major et al., 1995; Sluss & Thompson, 2012; Zheng et al., 2016; Zhou & Wang, 2016). High-quality LMX is characterized by mutual trust, respect, and obligations, while low-quality LMX is characterized by a lack of support and the scope of the exchange is restricted and limited to meeting basic work responsibilities (Zhou & Wang, 2016). Given that newcomer ingratiation is often directed toward the immediate supervisor to build relationships and facilitate interactions, LMX is a proximal indicator of ingratiation effectiveness (Bolino et al., 2008, 2016; Gordon, 1996; Wayne et al.,

² For transparency, we would like to disclose that we initially proposed a U-shape relationship between newcomer ingratiation and self-serving motive attribution in Hypothesis 2. Our primary rationale is that extremely low levels of ingratiation likely violate supervisors' expectations about how newcomers should behave and make supervisors feel the newcomers are impolite and self-centered. As such, we hypothesized that the level of self-serving motive attribution would be the lowest when newcomer ingratiation was at a moderate level, suggesting a U-shape relationship. During the review process, the review team pointed out that the arguments regarding the left side of the relationship invoke unmeasured mechanisms (e.g., rudeness) beyond our *a priori* theoretical framework (i.e., the co-occurring inferences of correspondent and ulterior motives). To achieve theoretical coherence, we thus revised our hypothesis and removed theoretical arguments that are irrelevant to our central framework.

1997; Wayne & Ferris, 1990).

It is well established in newcomer research that newcomers' proactive relationship building efforts are positively related to LMX (Bauer et al., 2007, 2019; Ellis et al., 2017; Saks et al., 2011). Forming a high LMX relationship is typically newcomers' prominent relationship goal during their early onboarding period (Bauer et al., 2007; Ellis et al., 2017). The LMX literature suggests that followers' willingness and efforts to present themselves in ways that can induce leaders' favorable impressions and evaluations (e.g., ingratiation) facilitate the emergence of high-quality LMX (Bauer & Erdogan, 2015). When supervisors attribute newcomer ingratiation to relationship-building motives, they are more likely to accept newcomers and provide valuable opportunities and resources in return, which fosters the formation of high-quality LMX. This positive effect has generally been categorized as the benefit of newcomer ingratiation (e.g., Bolino et al., 2014; Dockery & Steiner, 1990; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Koopman et al., 2015; Sibunruang et al., 2016; Wayne & Ferris, 1990; Wayne & Liden, 1995; Zhao & Liden, 2011). Therefore, we expect a positive association between relationship-building motive attribution and LMX. Jointly considering Hypothesis 1 and the arguments above, we hypothesize that newcomer ingratiation has a positive indirect effect on LMX via relationship-building motive attribution.

Hypothesis 3. *Newcomer ingratiation has a positive indirect effect on LMX through supervisors' relationship-building motive attribution.*

To contrast, we argue that self-serving motive attribution has a negative effect on LMX. Prior ingratiation research has suggested that when targets make a self-serving motive attribution, ingratiation backfires (Bolino et al., 2016; Liden & Mitchell, 1988; Long, 2021). That is because a self-serving motive attribution damages the trust between newcomers and supervisors, which is an important antecedent of LMX (Brower et al., 2000; Dienesch & Liden,

1986; Long, 2021). Furthermore, people feel uncomfortable about being targeted and dislike being manipulated (Pandey & Singh, 1986). As supervisors have inferred that newcomer ingratiation is self-serving, they are likely to distance themselves from the newcomer to limit future interactions (Treadway et al., 2007), which is detrimental to the development of high-quality LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). In addition, people generally harbor negative impressions about self-serving individuals and question their competence and integrity (Long, 2021). Self-serving motive attribution can, therefore, stain newcomers' reputations and hurt the formation of high-quality LMX (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Wu et al., 2013). Therefore, we expect a negative association between self-serving motive attribution and LMX, which reflects the cost of newcomer ingratiation (Bolino et al., 2016). Jointly considering Hypothesis 2 (i.e., an increasing curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and self-serving motive attribution) and the arguments above (i.e., a negative relationship between self-serving motive attribution and LMX), we thus hypothesize a curvilinear indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX via self-serving motive attribution, such that a negative indirect effect gradually emerges as newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher.

***Hypothesis 4.** Newcomer ingratiation has a curvilinear indirect relationship with LMX through supervisors' self-serving motive attribution, such that the negative indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through self-serving motive attribution gradually emerges as newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher.*

Jointly considering Hypotheses 3 and 4, we propose an overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Generally speaking, when an antecedent imposes both benefit and cost, it increases the possibility of a curvilinear effect on the outcome variable (Busse et al., 2016; Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). The key to such an occurrence, as argued by Busse and

colleagues (2016), is non-synchronized changes in the benefit and cost along with the increase of an antecedent. In our case, as the level of newcomer ingratiation increases, the positive indirect effect via relationship-building motive attribution stays the same, while the negative indirect effect via self-serving motive attribution gradually emerges and accelerates. Thus, we reason that when combining these two pathways, the resulting effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX is curvilinear: when newcomer ingratiation is at lower levels, the negative pathway is not salient and thus the positive pathway should outweigh the negative pathway; when newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher, the negative pathway becomes more salient while the positive pathway stays the same, shifting the effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX to a less positive (or even negative) direction. In other words, as the level of newcomer ingratiation increases, the positive effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX gradually dissipates.

***Hypothesis 5.** Newcomer ingratiation has an overall curvilinear relationship with LMX, such that the positive relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX gradually dissipates as newcomer ingratiation levels get increasingly higher.*

Task Performance and Intention to Quit as Downstream Consequences

To capture the downstream consequences of newcomer ingratiation through the relational mechanism of LMX, we focus on newcomer task performance and intention to quit as two distal socialization outcomes that reflect the behavioral and attitudinal aspects of newcomer socialization, respectively (Bauer et al., 2007, 2019; Ellis et al., 2017; Saks et al., 2007). As a key behavioral indicator of successful adjustment during newcomer socialization, task performance captures the extent to which a newcomer is clear about role expectations and can adequately accomplish relevant tasks (Bauer et al., 2007). We expect LMX to positively relate to newcomer task performance for two reasons. First, a higher level of LMX may motivate newcomers to

work harder as a way of reciprocating the benefits obtained from a high-quality relationship, such as support and trust (Park et al., 2015; Wayne & Ferris, 1990). With enhanced work motivation, newcomers can better learn and adjust to new work environments, thereby achieving higher levels of task performance (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Hsiung & Tsai, 2009; Martin et al., 2016). Second, LMX can increase the quantity and quality of work-related resources that supervisors provide to newcomers. Typical resources include work opportunities, performance feedback, and task-related information, which help newcomers grasp their task roles and master their jobs (Bauer et al., 2007; Zhou & Wang, 2016). Combining these arguments with our earlier hypotheses, we thus propose:

***Hypothesis 6.** Newcomer ingratiation has indirect effects on newcomer task performance through (a) supervisors' relationship-building motive attribution and subsequently LMX, and (b) supervisors' self-serving motive attribution and subsequently LMX.*

In addition, we expect LMX to negatively associate with newcomers' intention to quit, which reflects an attitudinal aspect of newcomer socialization success (Bauer et al., 2007). Experiencing a lower level of LMX makes newcomers suffer during the socialization period and even in the future progression of their careers (Raghuram et al., 2017; Wayne et al., 1999). Such an unsuccessful start in organizational socialization may make newcomers consider switching to other organizations (Sluss & Thompson, 2012). In contrast, because a higher level of LMX indicates relationships with their supervisors characterized by mutual trust, liking, and commitment (Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Schiemann, 1978; Liden et al., 1993; Martin et al., 2016), newcomers are more likely to feel valued by their supervisors (Ilies et al., 2007). This in turn lowers their intention to quit their jobs (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2013; Rubenstein et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2016). Combining these arguments with our earlier hypotheses, we propose:

***Hypothesis 7.** Newcomer ingratiation has indirect effects on newcomer intention to quit through (a) supervisors' relationship-building motive attribution and subsequently LMX, and (b) supervisors' self-serving motive attribution and subsequently LMX.*

Overview of Studies

We tested our hypotheses with multiple studies in the newcomer context. Specifically, we conducted a proof-of-concept qualitative study with 54 supervisor responses via Prolific to understand how different levels of newcomer ingratiation manifest in workplace settings and to assess the viability of our central premise regarding how newcomer ingratiation levels are associated with supervisor motive attributions. In addition, we conducted three quantitative field studies to test our hypotheses. Study 1, as a preliminary test, focused on the focal relationship based on our research question—the overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX (i.e., Hypothesis 5). This study was conducted at six Chinese companies with a time-lagged two-source design during the first three months of newcomer entry. We obtained responses from 151 newcomer-supervisor dyads. Study 2 tested the mediating roles of supervisor motive attributions underlying this focal relationship (i.e., Hypotheses 1-5). Part-time MBA students at two Chinese universities participated along with their recently hired subordinates. Using a critical incident method, we obtained two-wave data from a total of 155 newcomer-supervisor dyads. Study 3 was then conducted to test the full research model by incorporating the downstream consequences of LMX (i.e., Hypotheses 1-7). We obtained three-wave responses of 206 newcomer-supervisor dyads from a large information technology (IT) service company during the first four months of newcomer entry.³

³ The data presented in Study 1 were part of a broader data collection. The dataset has been presented in Liu et al. 2024. The research questions investigated in the two publications are completely different and no variables overlapped between these two publications. Thanks to the guidance and feedback from the review team, the proof-

Transparency and Openness

In the following sections, we describe our sampling plan, data inclusion criteria, and measures for all studies in accordance with the *Journal of Applied Psychology*'s methodological checklist. Data analyses were conducted with SPSS (Version 28; IBM Corp, 2021) and Mplus (Version 8.3; Muthén & Muthén, 2017). This research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Hong Kong Baptist University (Protocol Number REC/22-23/0295 and REC/22-23/0297; study title: An Attributional Dilemma of Newcomer Ingratiation) and the Institutional Review Board of the Guanghua School of Management, Peking University (Protocol Number 2024-13; study title: How Supervisors Make Attributions on Newcomer Ingratiation Behaviors)⁴. Our data for Study 1 and Study 3 are unavailable due to confidentiality agreements between the author team and our partner organizations. The syntax, supplementary analyses, and Study 2's data can be found in our additional online materials at <https://osf.io/ysjdf/>. The designs and analyses of our studies were not preregistered.

Proof of Concept Study

We recruited participants from the United States and the United Kingdom who had supervised newcomers in the past six months to complete an online, open-ended questionnaire through the Prolific platform. Those who agreed to participate provided their responses in a questionnaire divided into three sections. Sections 1 and 2 asked participants to recall a scenario in which a newcomer(s) engaged in mild (blatant) ingratiation behaviors toward them and to interpret the motives behind those behaviors. Section 3 asked participants to provide their

of-concept study, Study 2, and Study 3 were conducted during the review process to comprehensively test our theorizing.

⁴ The last author gathered the data of Study 1 in China, where IRB approval was generally not mandated or customary at the time of data collection. Nonetheless, the research team ensured that the data collection process adhered to ethical principles comparable to U.S. IRB standards and APA guidelines for research involving human participants.

demographic information. We obtained 54 valid supervisor responses and documented the details of this study in the Appendix. For the mild newcomer ingratiation recall, most participants (78%) attributed newcomers' ingratiation behaviors to either a relationship-building motive or a combination of both relationship-building and self-serving motives. For the blatant newcomer ingratiation recall, most participants (90%) attributed newcomers' ingratiation behaviors to either a self-serving motive or a combination of both self-serving and relationship-building motives (for details, please see Table A1 for concrete examples of mild ingratiation behaviors and the corresponding motive attributions and Table A2 for concrete examples of blatant ingratiation behaviors and the corresponding motive attributions in the Appendix). Through this study, we obtained initial evidence suggesting that these two attributions are dominant in newcomer-supervisor scenarios. More importantly, the findings indicate that the levels of newcomer ingratiation behaviors may influence how supervisors make these two attributions.

Study 1

Sample and Procedure

We conducted a two-wave and two-source convenience-based data collection from six companies in northern China across the financial, construction, and pharmaceutical industries. Upon obtaining permission from the top management team of each organization, the human resource (HR) departments provided us with a list of onboarding newcomers in entry-level positions and their direct supervisors. When newcomers entered the companies, we contacted the newcomers and their supervisors via email to explain the purpose of our research. The voluntary nature of participation in the study and the confidentiality of responses were strictly enforced throughout the study. Overall, 265 newcomers and their immediate supervisors were contacted, and 252 newcomer-supervisor pairs consented to participate in our research. Out of the 252

dyads, we retained dyads where a supervisor only supervised one newcomer during the survey period (80.4%). For supervisors who had more than one newcomer reporting to them during the period (19.6%), we randomly chose one of their supervised newcomers as a participant. As such, all newcomer-supervisor dyads were independent of each other. There were no significant differences between the randomly included and omitted newcomers in terms of demographic information based on HR records.

The distribution of web-based surveys began about one month after newcomers entered the organization (Time 1; e.g., Chen et al., 2021). At Time 1, newcomers' immediate supervisors reported their perceptions of newcomer ingratiation in the prior interactions. In addition, newcomers rated their LMX. In the third month after newcomer entry (at the end of newcomer probation), we distributed the Time 2 survey to newcomers to obtain their ratings on LMX. The timeframe for this data collection was chosen based on a combination of theoretical reasons and research context. In particular, prior studies suggest that the first three to four months are most critical for newcomers to develop relationships with their immediate supervisors and to master job requirements (Boswell et al., 2009; Chen & Klimoski, 2003; Liden et al., 1993; Zhu et al., 2017). In addition, such a timeframe aligned with the probation policy across surveyed companies, suggesting the importance of newcomer adjustment during this period. Across the two-wave data collection, we had a final sample of 151 matched newcomer-supervisor dyads (response rate = 57%). The average age of supervisors was 33.01 ($SD = 5.89$), 83% were male, and 87% held a bachelor's degree or above. The average age of newcomers was 24.78 ($SD = 3.18$), 78% were male, and 90% held a bachelor's degree or above.

Measures

Because the data were collected in China, we used an existing Chinese version of the LMX measure. For the other variables, we followed the translation and back-translation procedures outlined by Brislin (1980) to translate the scales from English to Chinese. First, two authors who are bilingual in English and Chinese translated the original English scales into Chinese. Then, a third author, also bilingual in English and Chinese, back-translated all the scales into English. These back-translated scales were compared with the original English scales by the first two authors to identify and resolve any discrepancies, ensuring consistency and accuracy. We used Treadway et al.'s (2007) modification of Kipnis et al.'s (1980) three items selected by Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) to measure *newcomer ingratiation* at Time 1 ($\alpha = .88$). Because the original Kipnis et al.'s items were designed to be completed by subordinates, Treadway and colleagues (2007) used a referent shift to measure subordinate ingratiation from the supervisor perspective. We directly adopted their items to measure supervisors' perceptions of the level of newcomer ingratiation. A sample item is "This newcomer attempted to make me feel good before making his/her request (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)." We assessed LMX using Wang and colleagues' (2005) Chinese version of Liden and Maslyn's (1998) 12-item scale (LMX- multidimensional measure; LMX-MDM) at both Time 1 ($\alpha = .95$) and at Time 2 ($\alpha = .96$). We chose this measure for two reasons. First, this measure has a reliable Chinese translation that has appeared in earlier publications (e.g., Wang et al., 2005). Second, the LMX-MDM is grounded in theory identifying the dimensions that cover the full domain of LMX (Dienesch & Liden, 1986) and underwent rigorous psychometric assessments including a higher-order CFA that confirmed that the four dimensions are independent yet all load onto the global/overall factor, providing support for combining all items to form a comprehensive measure of global LMX (Liden et al., 1998; Schriesheim et al., 1999). Following prior studies (e.g., Bauer et al.,

2006; Erdogan & Enders, 2007; Kraimer et al., 2011; Liden et al., 2006; Seo et al., 2018; Ward et al., 2016), we combined all items into a composite to measure global LMX. LMX at Time 1 was used as a *baseline control* to account for initial LMX for research rigor (our results patterns remained the same when excluding this control variable). A sample item is “I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is expected of me in my job (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).”

Analytic Strategy

Because the data were collected from six organizations, we followed Muthén and Muthén’s (1998-2017) suggestion and used a sandwich estimator to account for non-independence at the organizational level and to correct the potential bias resulting from cluster sampling (by including the syntax TYPE = COMPLEX)⁵. To test the curvilinear effect, we mean-centered our independent variable before calculating the quadratic term (Aiken & West, 1991).

Results

To ensure that variables measured in the current study captured distinct constructs, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs). We fit a two-factor model including newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Because the ratio of our sample size to the number of free parameters (i.e., 151:46) did not meet the recommended ratio of 10:1 (Chou & Bentler, 1990; Benter & Chou, 1987), we built parcels in accordance with Little et al. (2002). Referring to the three-item parceling strategy in previous studies (Little et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2009), we formed four parcels for LMX based on its sub-dimensions. The two-factor model not only fit the data well (SRMR = .04, CFI = .98, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .09), but also was superior to the one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 [\Delta df = 1] = 411.15, p < .001$).

⁵ The sandwich estimator is normally adopted to control non-independence when the number of clusters is not sufficient for estimating a multilevel model (Liu et al., 2024).

The descriptive statistics and correlations are presented in Table 1. We examined whether newcomer ingratiation had an overall curvilinear effect on LMX (Hypothesis 5). As shown in Table 2, the linear term of newcomer ingratiation on LMX was non-significant ($\gamma = .07$, $se = .06$, $p = .281$), suggesting that the linear association between newcomer ingratiation and LMX was not significant. Beyond the linear component, the results revealed a negative effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on LMX ($\gamma = -.12$, $se = .04$, $p = .005$), which indicated a curvilinear relationship (illustrated in Figure 2). We further ran a hierarchical test comparing the amount of variance explained by the curvilinear model over the linear model, which suggested that the curvilinear model explained an additional 4.84% of the variance in LMX. As summarized in Table 3, the simple slope of newcomer ingratiation on LMX was .47 (95% CI = [.11, .71]) when newcomer ingratiation was at its minimum observed value (1 on a 7-point scale). The simple slope plateaued and then turned negative as newcomer ingratiation increased and when newcomer ingratiation reached its maximum observed value (6 on a 7-point scale), the simple slope was -.70 (95% CI = [-1.17, -.16]). In terms of the inflection point, we found that LMX reached its highest level when the value of newcomer ingratiation was at a low-to-moderate level (3.02 on a 7-point scale, close to somewhat disagree; the sample mean of ingratiation was 2.73 with an observed range of 1 to 6). This result revealed that the positive relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX gradually dissipated and then turned downward when newcomer ingratiation got increasingly higher. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Discussion

In this study, we found a curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX (specifically, an inverted U-shape relationship). Although this finding provided some preliminary evidence for our theorizing, we were unable to test supervisor motive attributions as

mediating mechanisms with this dataset. We thus conducted the following two studies to examine the two motive attributions hypothesized in our research model.

Study 2

Sample and Procedure

We collected two-wave and two-source data through part-time MBA students in two universities located in the northwestern and central regions of China. The majority of the MBA students were middle-level managers with supervisory responsibilities in their organizations. With the help of teaching assistants from the MBA programs, we invited 237 MBA students who had newcomers joining their teams during the preceding two months (before newcomers finished their probation) to participate in the study. After emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation as well as ensuring confidentiality in handling data, we obtained the contact information of the supervisors and their newcomers. After having a full list of newcomer-supervisor dyads and knowing when each newcomer started working, we sent questionnaires to the supervisors (Time 1) when the newcomer's tenure reached the third month. At the beginning of the questionnaire, supervisors were asked to think about the period since the newcomer joined the organization and refer to the prior interactions they had with the newcomer. The supervisors then answered questions about their perceptions of newcomer ingratiation during that period and were asked to rate their attributions of newcomer ingratiation, along with a demographic inventory. This critical incident method (Flanagan, 1954) was used to provide an overall examination of supervisors' impressions and attributions of prior incidents (e.g., Isaakyan et al., 2021; Korsgaard et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2015), capitalizing on the richness of experience data. This approach enabled us to prompt participants to revisit the causes and roots of their interactions with newcomers (Mitchell et al., 2015). Similar methods have been used in

managerial studies to examine individuals' retrospective understanding and evaluations of specific events (e.g., Isaakyan et al., 2021; Korsgaard et al., 2002; Mitchell et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2021). Given that newcomer entry is a special event for both newcomers and their direct supervisors, this critical incident method seems appropriate in our research context and can complement the research designs used in the other two studies. Two weeks later (Time 2), newcomers received a survey assessing their LMX and demographic information.

In total, we obtained 155 newcomer-supervisor dyads after matching the data (a response rate of 65%). For supervisors, 59% were male, with an average age of 34.59 ($SD = 6.24$) and average years of working experience of 10.84 ($SD = 6.17$), and 85% of them had a bachelor's degree or above. For newcomers, 45% were male, with an average age of 26.88 ($SD = 10.51$) and average years of working experience of 6.59 ($SD = 4.73$), and 86% of them had a bachelor's degree or above.

Measures

The same scales for *newcomer ingratiation* (supervisor-report at Time 1, $\alpha = .80$) and *LMX* (newcomer-report at Time 2, $\alpha = .84$) as Study 1 were used. For supervisors' *relationship-building motive attribution* (Time 1), we adapted Ashford and Black's (1996) 3-item scale of proactivity in relationship building with supervisors. We slightly modified the scale by using a referent shift to address supervisors' attribution of newcomer ingratiation. Supervisors were asked "To what extent do you agree with the following motives for your newcomer to engage in those behaviors listed above in Question X." ($\alpha = .82$). Sample items included "This newcomer conducted those above behaviors, because he/she tried to form a good relationship with me" and "This newcomer conducted those above behaviors, because he/she tried hard to get along with me (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)." To measure supervisors' *self-serving motive*

attribution (Time 1), supervisors were asked to complete a modified version of Rioux and Penner's (2001) 10-item scale ($\alpha = .88$). We modified the items to focus on the supervisors' perspective regarding the self-serving nature of newcomer ingratiation. Sample items are "This newcomer conducted those above behaviors, because he/she tried to impress me in order to serve himself/herself" and "This newcomer conducted those above behaviors, because he/she tried to avoid appearing deviant in order to serve himself/herself (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree)."

Results

We performed a series of CFAs to examine the measurement model before testing our hypotheses. As in Study 1, the ratio of our sample size to the number of free parameters (i.e., 155:90) did not meet the recommended ratio of 10:1 or even the minimum acceptable ratio of 5:1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987). We thus followed the three-item parcelling strategy and formed parcels for self-serving motive attribution and LMX (Little et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2009). We formed four parcels for LMX based on its sub-dimensions and three parcels for self-serving motive attribution. The results showed that the four-factor model, including newcomer ingratiation, relationship-building motive attribution, self-serving motive attribution, and LMX, yielded a good fit (SRMR = .06, CFI = .94, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .08) and was better than all alternative models.⁶

Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the variables. The model results are presented in Table 5. We mean-centered the independent variable before calculating the quadratic term (Aiken & West, 1991). In Hypothesis 1, we proposed a positive linear association between newcomer ingratiation and supervisors' relationship-building motive

⁶ The detail of alternative models was presented in the online OSF repository.

attribution. The linear effect of newcomer ingratiation on relationship-building motive attribution was significant ($\gamma = .35, se = .07, p < .001$) and the effect of the quadratic term of newcomer ingratiation was non-significant ($\gamma = .06, se = .04, p = .211$), supporting Hypothesis 1.⁷ We graphed this linear pattern in Figure 3 based on the observed range of newcomer ingratiation. Hypothesis 2 predicted an increasing curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and supervisors' self-serving motive attribution (i.e., a positive effect that gradually emerges). Our results showed a positive linear effect of newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution ($\gamma = .45, se = .07, p < .001$). Beyond the linear component, the effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution was positive and significant ($\gamma = .12, se = .04, p = .004$), explaining an additional 4.15% of the variance in self-serving motive attribution over the linear model. We graphed the pattern of this curvilinearity in Figure 3 based on the observed range of newcomer ingratiation. As shown in Figure 3 and summarized in Table 6, the simple slope of newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution was nonsignificant when newcomer ingratiation was at its minimum observed value (1.33 on a 7-point scale; $estimate = -.36, 95\% CI = [-.86, .19]$) and became more positive in magnitude as newcomer ingratiation increased. When newcomer ingratiation reached its maximum observed value (6.33 on a 7-point scale), the simple slope was .87 (95% CI = [.49, 1.25]). The results indicated an increasing curvilinear effect (i.e., a positive effect that gradually emerges), supporting Hypothesis 2.

We then conducted bias-corrected bootstrapping with 20,000 repetitions at 95% confidence intervals to test the indirect effects (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Hypothesis 3

⁷ As a robustness check, we regressed the linear term of relationship-building motive attribution on newcomer ingratiation without modeling the quadratic term, our result pattern for the linear term stayed the same ($\gamma = .29, se = .06, p < .001$).

predicts a positive indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through relationship-building motive attribution. As summarized in the lower section of Table 5, the indirect positive linear effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through relationship-building motive attribution is significant (*effect size* = .05, 95% CI = [.01, .10]), supporting Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 proposed a curvilinear indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through self-serving motive attribution. As shown in Table 5, the indirect curvilinear effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX via self-serving motive attribution was negative (*effect size* = -.01, 95% CI = [-.04, -.003]). Table 6 further presented the simple slopes of the indirect curvilinear effect at different values of newcomer ingratiation. The indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through self-serving motive attribution was nonsignificant when newcomer ingratiation was at its minimum value (1.33 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = .04, 95% CI = [-.01, .14]) but became more negative in magnitude as newcomer ingratiation increased (Max, 6.33 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = -.10, 95% CI = [-.21, -.03]). Taken together, we found that the negative indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through self-serving motive attribution gradually emerged as newcomer ingratiation levels got increasingly higher, supporting Hypothesis 4.

Finally, we examined whether there was an overall curvilinear effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX (Hypothesis 5). To test this hypothesis, we specified a main effect model, the results of which are presented in Table 5. Newcomer ingratiation was negatively related to LMX ($\gamma = -.15$, $se = .05$, $p = .002$). Further, the effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on LMX was negative ($\gamma = -.07$, $se = .03$, $p = .015$), which explained an additional 3.62% of the variance in LMX over the linear model. We graphed the pattern of this curvilinearity in Figure 3 and summarized the simple slopes of newcomer ingratiation in predicting LMX at different values of newcomer ingratiation in Table 6. Newcomer ingratiation initially had a non-significant effect on

LMX (Min, 1.33 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = .31, 95% CI = [-.06, .62]). As newcomer ingratiation increased, a negative effect emerged (Max, 6.33 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = -.39, 95% CI = [-.64, -.12]). The inflection point for LMX occurred when newcomer ingratiation was at a low-to-moderate level (i.e., 3.56 on a 7-point scale, between somewhat disagree and neutral; the sample mean of ingratiation was 4.63 with an observed range of 1.33 to 6.33). Therefore, we found support for Hypothesis 5.

Discussion

Study 2 provided empirical support for the two supervisor motive attributions that mediated the effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX. Specifically, newcomer ingratiation had an indirect positive effect on LMX via relationship-building motive attribution and an indirect curvilinear effect on LMX via self-serving motive attribution. Despite the general support of Hypotheses 1 to 5 in this study, the overall effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX was non-significant when ingratiation was at low levels, despite the positive mediating effect via relationship-building motive attribution. This was likely due to our inability to capture the attributions along the relationship-building process, as the supervisors recalled both ingratiation and attributions at a later stage. It might also be that we could not control the initial LMX to rule out its potential influence on LMX at a later stage due to the research design. Because we employed a critical incident method, this research design was cross-sectional in nature and relied on retrospective accounts of newcomers' early entry. To address these limitations and develop an integrative model testing all hypotheses (1 to 7), we conducted Study 3.

Study 3

Sample and Procedure

The data were collected from a large IT service company in southern China that provides

technological support and assistance to their customers. We contacted the head of the HR department and obtained contact information for onboarding newcomers and their direct supervisors. We invited 414 newcomers and their supervisors to participate in a four-month study. All participants were informed about the voluntary nature of their participation before participating in the study. We adopted a similar timeframe for our data collection following the procedure of Study 1, because the company also had a three-month probation policy. About one month after the newcomers' entry (Time 1), we asked their supervisors to report their perceptions of newcomer ingratiation and to rate their relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions. Supervisors also rated newcomer task performance. Meanwhile, we asked newcomers to report their LMX and intention to quit. At the third month after newcomer entry (Time 2), the newcomers were asked to report on their LMX with the supervisor. One month later (at the fourth month after newcomer entry and immediately after the probation period, Time 3), the supervisors rated the newcomers' task performance while the newcomers answered questions about their intention to quit.⁸ To enhance the final response rate, participants who completed all three rounds of online surveys were provided with a monetary incentive of 60 yuan (equal to about 8 US dollars for each participant). The time lags we adopted are consistent with prior newcomer literature (e.g., Boswell et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2017; Zhu et al., 2017), which typically has chosen two or three months as important milestones for assessing newcomer adjustment.

⁸ Meta-analytic reviews of newcomer socialization indicate that newcomers' intention to quit, as a distal adjustment outcome, can be influenced by various factors, such as organizational socialization tactics, organizational insiders (e.g., supervisor/coworker support and undermining), newcomers' characteristics, and proximal adjustment outcomes (e.g., social acceptance, role clarity, task mastery, and perceived fit) (Bauer et al., 2007, 2025; Zhao et al., 2023). While the probation period serves as an important milestone for newcomers, its impact on newcomers' intention to quit has not been documented in the newcomer literature. Nevertheless, we are less concerned about obtaining newcomers' intention to quit ratings right after the probation period, as all the newcomers were surveyed at a similar time and should be equally impacted by this policy.

Through these three rounds of data collection, we obtained 206 dyads (a final response rate of 50%). For supervisors, 52% were male with an average age of 34.47 ($SD = 6.14$) and average years of working experience of 10.14 ($SD = 6.10$), and 92% of them held a bachelor's degree or above. For newcomers, 49% were male with an average age of 30.35 ($SD = 5.24$) and average years of working experience of 6.27 ($SD = 4.63$), and 78% of them had a bachelor's degree or above.

Measures

We used the same scales as in Study 1 and/or Study 2 for *newcomer ingratiation* ($\alpha = .81$), *relationship-building motive attribution* ($\alpha = .84$), *self-serving motive attribution* ($\alpha = .86$), and *LMX* ($\alpha = .92$ and $.88$, for Time 1 and Time 2 respectively). At Time 1 and Time 3, supervisors evaluated *newcomer task performance* using Farh and Cheng's (1997) 4 items ($\alpha = .83$ and $.84$, respectively; A sample item is "This newcomer makes significant contributions to the overall performance of our team"; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree), and newcomers reported their *intention to quit* with 3 items that were modified from Colarelli (1984), which were also used by Broschak and Davis-Blake (2006; $\alpha = .82$ and $.85$, respectively; A sample item is "I frequently think of quitting my job"; 1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). Similar to Study 1, we *controlled* newcomers' initial LMX, task performance, and intention to quit at Time 1 for research rigor (the patterns of the results stayed the same when excluding these control variables).⁹

Results

⁹ As a robustness check, we regressed the linear term of relationship-building motive attribution on newcomer ingratiation without modeling the quadratic term, our result pattern for the linear term stayed the same ($\gamma = .31$, $se = .04$, $p < .001$).

We first conducted a series of CFAs to examine the measurement model for our main studied variables, which included newcomer ingratiation, relationship-building motive attribution, self-serving motive attribution, LMX, task performance, and intention to quit. Same as in Studies 1 and 2, the ratio of our sample size to the number of free parameters (i.e., 206:120) did not meet the recommended ratio of 10:1 or even the minimum acceptable ratio of 5:1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987). We formed four parcels for LMX and three parcels for self-serving motive attribution. Results suggested that the six-factor model fit the data well (SRMR = .06, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .07) and was better than all alternative models.¹⁰

Table 7 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the variables. The model results are summarized in Table 8. We mean-centered the independent variable before calculating the quadratic term (Aiken & West, 1991). Referring to the mediation effect model of Table 8, consistent with Study 2, we found evidence for a linear positive relationship between ingratiation and relationship-building motive attribution ($\gamma = .25, se = .05, p < .001$), and the effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on relationship-building motive attribution was nonsignificant ($\gamma = -.05, se = .03, p = .08$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported. In addition, beyond the linear component, the results revealed the effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution was positive ($\gamma = .11, se = .04, p = .002$), explaining an additional 3.32% of the variance in self-serving motive attribution over the linear model. As shown in Figure 4 and presented in Table 9, the simple slope of newcomer ingratiation on self-serving motive attribution was nonsignificant when newcomer ingratiation was at its minimum observed value (1.67 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = -.20, 95% CI = [-.71, .41]) and became more positive in magnitude as newcomer ingratiation increased (Max, 7 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = .96, 95%

¹⁰ The detail of alternative models was presented in the online OSF repository.

CI = [.52, 1.39]). Thus, we found an increasing curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and self-serving motive attribution, supporting Hypothesis 2.

Following the same procedure of Study 2, we further tested the indirect effects of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through attributions (Hypotheses 3 and 4). The results are presented in the lower section of Table 8. Bias-corrected bootstrapping with 20,000 repetitions revealed an indirect positive linear effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through relationship-building motive attribution (*effect size* = .04, 95% CI = [.01, .09]) and an indirect curvilinear effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX via self-serving motive attribution (*effect size* = -.02, 95% CI = [-.05, -.004]). Consistent with Study 2, the indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX through self-serving motive attribution was nonsignificant when newcomer ingratiation was at its minimum value (1.67 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = .04, 95% CI = [-.07, .15]) and became more negative in magnitude as newcomer ingratiation increased (e.g., Max, 7 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = -.18, 95% CI = [-.34, -.07]). Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported.

For Hypothesis 5, according to the main effect model of Table 8, newcomer ingratiation was negatively related to LMX ($\gamma = -.20$, $se = .05$, $p < .001$). Further, the effect of squared newcomer ingratiation on LMX was negative ($\gamma = -.07$, $se = .03$, $p = .012$), explaining an additional 2.76% of the variance over the linear model. As shown in Figure 4 and Table 9, newcomer ingratiation initially had a positive effect on LMX (Min, 1.67 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = .29, 95% CI = [.01, .69]). This effect was attenuated and then turned negative as newcomer ingratiation increased (e.g., Max, 7 on a 7-point scale; *estimate* = -.49, 95% CI = [-.79, -.22]). The inflection point of LMX occurred when newcomer ingratiation was at a low-to-moderate level (i.e., 3.63 on a 7-point scale, between somewhat disagree and neutral; the sample

mean of ingratiation was 5.06 with an observed range of 1.67 to 7). Similar to Study 1, we found an overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX (an inverted-U shape in particular), supporting Hypothesis 5.

Lastly, we tested Hypotheses 6 and 7 regarding the downstream consequences of LMX. As shown in Table 8, we found that the linear indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation via relationship-building motive attribution and LMX on newcomer task performance was positive and significant (*effect size* = .02, 95% CI= [.004, .05]), supporting Hypothesis 6a. The indirect curvilinear effect of newcomer ingratiation via self-serving motive attribution and LMX on newcomer task performance was negative (*effect size* = -.01, 95% CI= [-.02, -.001]), supporting Hypothesis 6b. Similarly, there was a significant linear indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation via relationship-building motive attribution and LMX on newcomer intention to quit (*effect size* = -.01, 95% CI= [-.04, -.002]) and a significant curvilinear indirect effect of newcomer ingratiation via self-serving motive attribution and LMX on newcomer intention to quit (*effect size* = .01, 95% CI= [.001, .02]), which supported Hypotheses 7a and 7b.

Discussion

In Study 3, we replicated the findings from the prior two studies. Moreover, we found significant indirect effects of newcomer ingratiation through relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions and LMX on newcomers' task performance and intention to quit. These results support our key proposition that newcomer ingratiation perceived by supervisors influences how supervisors make motive attributions of such behaviors, which further shapes the relationship quality between newcomers and their supervisors and eventually affects newcomers' socialization outcomes indicated by task performance and intention to quit.

General Discussion

In the current investigation, we tested our theorizing regarding the non-synchronized effects of newcomer ingratiation on relationship-building motive attribution (as a linear positive attributional pathway) and self-serving motive attribution (as a negative attributional pathway that gradually emerges), which render an overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Across the three quantitative field studies, we found support for a curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. Furthermore, in Studies 2 and 3, we found a positive linear relation between newcomer ingratiation and supervisors' relationship-building motive attribution and an increasing curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and supervisors' self-serving motive attribution, which simultaneously and oppositely mediated the effect of newcomer ingratiation on LMX. Study 3 further showed that LMX had downstream consequences on newcomers' task performance and intention to quit. The veridicality of our central premise that leaders may attribute newcomer ingratiation to relationship building, satisfying self-serving motives, or a combination of both motives was supported in a qualitative study. The external validity of our central proposition was enhanced through support from both the qualitative study and the quantitative field studies, reflecting the strength of multi-method investigations (Gibson, 2017).

Theoretical Implications

Our research offers important theoretical implications. First, we provide a new lens to reconcile the inconsistent findings on the effectiveness of subordinate ingratiation. According to a meta-analysis conducted by Higgins and colleagues (2003), the correlation between ingratiation and overall work outcomes (e.g., performance and promotions) differed across 50 studies, with a 95% credibility interval of $-.28$ to $.74$, which challenged the effectiveness of ingratiation. The traditional way to reconcile inconsistent findings is to explore potential

moderators that may strengthen or weaken the effectiveness of ingratiation (e.g., Gross et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2018; Klotz et al., 2018; Koopman et al., 2015; Sibunruang et al., 2016; Treadway et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2013). This approach has typically focused on individual differences in social skills that make ingratiation happen more covertly or pleasantly. For instance, political skill has been suggested as a key boundary factor that enhances the effectiveness of ingratiation behaviors (Harris et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2018; Treadway et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2013). By contrast, integrating literature on ingratiation and attribution, we propose a dual-pathway model to delineate the co-occurrence of benefit and cost associated with different levels of newcomer ingratiation. Such an approach allows us to reveal the non-synchronized developments of the two attributional pathways, offering a new way to reconcile the inconsistent findings on the effectiveness of ingratiation.

Specifically, for both Study 1 and Study 3, we identified an inverted U-shaped relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX; while for Study 2, we found a gradually emerging negative relationship (i.e., an inverted J-shaped pattern). Taken together, our findings suggest that ingratiation might not be as beneficial as one may assume, and the negative pathway can outweigh the positive one when ingratiation is at a certain level (according to the inflection point tests). Our findings are in line with the negativity bias principle documented in the social cognition literature (Feldman, 1966). According to this research stream, there is a general human bias to give greater weight to negative information, events, or stimuli, and combinations of negative and positive information usually yield evaluations that are more negative than the algebraic sum of individual subjective valences would predict (Hilbig, 2009; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Supporting this notion, researchers have found that during evaluation, the negative motivational system responds more intensively than the positive one in response to comparable

amounts of activation (Cacioppo & Berntson, 1994; Cacioppo et al., 1997). This may be because negative instances are often more diagnostic and thus demand greater attention (Hilbig, 2009). More specifically, when it comes to impression formation, people tend to assign greater weight to negative information and bad impressions tend to be more resistant to disconfirmation than good ones (Anderson, 1965; Baumeister et al., 2001; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972; Unkelbach et al., 2020). In our research context, it appeared that when newcomer ingratiation became more blatant, supervisors attributed it to a combination of relationship-building and self-serving motives but gave more weight to the self-serving motive. That is, once supervisors engage in deliberate attributional analysis and identify newcomers' self-serving motives, such self-serving motives tend to be more influential than relationship-building motives for supervisors to determine how to interact and develop relationships with newcomers in the future.

Our research adds to the theoretical nuances of the ingratiation construct by highlighting the importance of considering the intensity of ingratiation. As illustrated in our proof-of-concept study, supervisors make different attributions for mild vs. blatant ingratiation. Specifically, mild and appropriate ingratiation behaviors are more likely to trigger relationship-building motive attribution (e.g., "being nice and friendly," "attempting to build a positive relationship," "an expression of friendship," "a desire to establish rapport"). In contrast, blatant and excessive ingratiation behaviors are more likely to trigger self-serving motive attribution (e.g., "improve their social standing," "an attempt at currying favor," "save himself with excessive flattery," "impress people with her dedication"). This echoes the research of Wu et al. (in-press), who found that excessive ingratiation and seamless ingratiation stimulate distinct emotional responses from the supervisor (i.e., embarrassment vs. pride). Extending Wu et al. (in-press), we identified

the cognitive, attributional pathways that differentiated supervisor responses to mild vs. blatant ingratiation.

Moreover, our research extends the literature on relational attribution (Eberly et al., 2011), by demonstrating that the nature of existing relationships not only affect attributions made by parties of the relationship as shown by Eberly et al. (2017), but are also made concerning attempts by another party to influence the development of the relationship. Organizational studies tend to portray supervisors' relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions as two important but mutually exclusive reactions to subordinate ingratiation. However, our research, along with advancements in attribution theory (Bolino, 1999; Eastman, 1994; Ham & Vonk, 2011; Long, 2021; Todd et al., 2011), points in another direction: these two attributions likely co-exist with opposing effects on LMX. In fact, people's cognitions are never simply black or white as they see the world as complicated. Individuals may ingratiate others because they desire to promote self-interest but at the same time desire to fit in or be liked by others. These two motives are integrative and so should be others' motive attributions. Taken together, our research provides consistent empirical evidence for the dual-pathway model of supervisor attributions. Moving forward, we encourage future studies to build on our findings to develop more refined categorizations of supervisor attributions in organizational settings. Studying the triggering of multiple attributions can not only reveal the complexity of human minds but also shed light on the cognitive benefits and costs underlying studied relationships.

Lastly, our research highlights the importance of considering supervisor attributions of newcomer behaviors during newcomer socialization. As pointed out by Ellis and colleagues (2017), the majority of research on newcomer socialization focuses on the newcomer side, which underestimates the interdependent nature of socialization. In particular, supervisors' reactions to

newcomers' behaviors largely contribute to the consequences of those behaviors (e.g., Lam et al., 2007). Specifically, our findings indicated that supervisors' attributions of newcomer ingratiation rendered a complicated pattern of LMX development, task performance, and intention to quit. As such, it would be worthwhile to incorporate supervisor attributions of newcomer behaviors into the ecological network of newcomer socialization research.

Practical Implications

The initial months in an organization are critical for determining whether newcomers will remain in the organization and if so, their success in achieving career goals. The relationship that forms between newcomers and their immediate supervisors (i.e., LMX) is especially important for newcomer socialization success (Bauer & Green, 1996; Louis et al., 1983; Rubenstein et al., 2020). Because building high-quality relationships with supervisors is so critical, newcomers should endeavor to accomplish this goal using effective influence tactics (e.g., mild ingratiation) when interacting with supervisors. Based on our findings, newcomers should avoid being blatant in ingratiation or abuse flattery, because the overuse of ingratiation could generate opposite effects due to the triggering of self-serving motive attribution (Liden & Mitchell, 1989). Instead, newcomers are encouraged to engage in low-to-moderate levels of ingratiation in alignment with group norms and expectations to be viewed in a positive light by the supervisor (e.g., appraising or validating the supervisor's ideas when appropriate, being available when the supervisor needs, and regularly assessing what needs to be done, etc.; see more examples in the Appendix).

From a mentoring perspective, our findings suggest the importance for mentors to offer newcomers guidance regarding how to fit into new work environments by developing a high-quality relationship with the supervisor. Recognizing the relationship-building function of ingratiation, mentors may encourage newcomers to be socially mindful, develop personal

relationships, and show diligence. For example, mentors may work with supervisors to develop a checklist of appropriate behaviors for newcomers to build rapport with the supervisor and fit into new environments (e.g., seeking feedback from the supervisor on a regular basis). Furthermore, mentors should also warn newcomers against the overuse of ingratiation. For example, overstepping supervisors' personal lives or excessive compliments could make supervisors feel uncomfortable and unprofessional, which can be detrimental to the development of LMX.

From an organizational perspective, supervisors should be advised to provide guidance on newcomers' relationship-building efforts, including ingratiation. Oftentimes, newcomers lack guidance regarding how to behave to fit into the new work environments. For example, as documented in the proof-of-concept study, when newcomers underperform or experience difficulties in mastering new roles, they may consider shifting their attention to ingratiation to save their jobs, which likely backfires. In this regard, supervisors should encourage newcomers to focus on task mastery and provide resources and support to facilitate their learning and adjustment. Supervisors should also guide newcomers on how to communicate properly during interactions, such as encouraging newcomers to seek feedback when necessary but discouraging them from repetitively asking for feedback for the mere purpose of relationship-building; and encouraging hard work and delivering work on time but discouraging working outside office hours just to make a good impression. Such debriefing can alleviate newcomers' relationship-building concerns (e.g., knowing they do not have to continuously engage in ingratiation to flatter the supervisor) and facilitate the development of higher-quality relationships with supervisors in the long run.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Strong features of our investigation include conducting a qualitative study along with three field studies with multi-source and multi-wave designs. The time-lagged design allowed for more rigorous mediation tests, and the multiple-source data collection reduced the possibility of same-source common method variance explanations for our results. Despite these strengths, there are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, in both Studies 2 and 3, we measured ingratiation and attributions at the same time which raises the concern of common method variance (CMV). However, from a theoretical standpoint, it seems reasonable to measure these variables at the same time, because supervisors' motive attributions should be assessed based on reported newcomer ingratiation behaviors. In addition, concerns regarding common method bias are reduced for the following reasons. First, as recommended by Siemsen et al. (2010, p. 456), CMV only inflates linear relationships, and "quadratic and interaction effects cannot be artifacts of CMV; on the contrary, both quadratic and interaction terms can be severely deflated through CMV, making them more difficult to detect." So, CMV offers an unlikely reason for our curvilinear findings and would only make it harder for us to detect the hypothesized curvilinear relationships. Second, it seems unlikely for CMV to render differential relationship patterns for the two supervisor attributions. Third, as a post-hoc CMV test, we applied Harman's one-factor method to examine the extent to which our results were likely driven by common method bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The results of Study 2 and Study 3 revealed that the first factor accounted for 23.04% and 20.86% variance (< 50% threshold), indicating that a single factor did not account for the majority of the variance. Moving forward, we recommend that future studies replicate our findings with experimental methods (i.e., manipulating the level of ingratiation) or with longitudinal field designs to facilitate causal inferences.

Second, although our findings across the three quantitative field studies supported the curvilinear effects of ingratiation, the current research design cannot comprehensively capture the intricate mechanisms underlying this effect. According to our results, we consistently found a negative relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX at higher levels of ingratiation, which indicates that the negative pathway via self-serving motive attribution likely outweighs the positive pathway via relationship-building motive attribution when supervisors find newcomer ingratiation blatant and manipulative. We encourage future studies to explore the possible psychological mechanisms regarding why the negative pathway may dominate the positive one (e.g., the activation of negativity bias in the attributional process). Furthermore, we did not explore contingency factors that could shape supervisors' attributional process. For example, differences in supervisor gullibility may lead to variations in their susceptibility to ingratiation. It is possible that the more socially astute (vs. gullible) the target of ingratiation is, the earlier (vs. later) the deliberate attributional analysis occurs, leading to an earlier appearance of the inflection point between ingratiation and LMX. As such, we encourage future studies to build upon the current theoretical framework to explore the contingencies of newcomer ingratiation.

Third, our study examines ingratiation as a global construct and future studies may focus on different types of ingratiation behaviors. For instance, Kumar and Beyerlein (1991) revealed that helping behavior can be used as an ingratiation tactic and future studies may examine whether our findings can be generalized to study helping behavior. We speculate that the answer may be yes because experimental attribution studies have found that participants simultaneously attribute helping behavior to both prosocial and self-serving motives (Ham & Vonk, 2011; Vonk, 1998). However, whether such a conclusion holds in field settings largely remains an empirical question, prompting us to recommend this as a future research topic.

Lastly, even though our study focuses on newcomer ingratiation, newcomers may also engage in other influence tactics (e.g., self-promotion and upward appeal; Kipnis et al., 1980) during socialization. It is worth taking an attribution perspective to examine the effect of other influence tactics in the context of newcomer-supervisor interactions. For instance, self-promotion and ingratiation share similarities. Supervisors can attribute self-promotion to both relationship-building and self-serving motives. However, because self-promotion has less to do with the welfare of the supervisors, supervisors may respond less favorably to it (Wayne & Liden, 1995), or at least, the inflection point will be reached earlier on the self-promotion continuum.

Conclusion

Whether newcomer ingratiation blesses or curses the development of LMX is affected by the levels of newcomer ingratiation. Across all the three field studies, our research revealed a curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and LMX. The mechanisms behind this curvilinearity are the two supervisor motive attributions triggered by newcomer ingratiation: relationship-building and self-serving motive attributions. We found empirical support (in Studies 2 and 3) that newcomer ingratiation has a positive linear relationship with relationship-building motive attribution and an increasing curvilinear relation (i.e., a positive effect that gradually emerges) with self-serving motive attribution, which acted as countervailing mechanisms that affected LMX. Furthermore, via attributions and LMX, the curvilinear effects of newcomer ingratiation indirectly influence newcomers' socialization outcomes in terms of task performance and intention to quit. We hope that our study inspires further research to adopt a dual-pathway attributional perspective to examine the effectiveness of influence tactics (e.g., ingratiation) as well as the potentially complex nature of subordinate-supervisor interactions in organizational contexts.

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Appendix: Proof of Concept Study

Sample and Procedure

We recruited 95 participants from the United States and the United Kingdom to complete an online, open-ended questionnaire through the Prolific Platform. To be eligible for the study, participants needed to (1) work full-time, (2) hold managerial positions, and (3) have supervised newcomers within the past six months. At the beginning of the survey, we reminded the participants that they would be presented with several open-ended questions and instructed them to provide answers based on their interactional experiences with newcomers. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time as they wished. Participants who completed the survey received £3 (\$3.9) as compensation.

The survey contained three sections. In Section I, participants were provided with the following instruction: “Ingratiation is a type of behavior intended to gain or regain acceptance, which has been commonly observed during newcomer socialization. Based on the recent interactions you have had with newcomers (who have worked for the organization for fewer than six months), please recall a scenario where a newcomer(s) engaged in mild ingratiation behaviors toward you.” Participants were then instructed to infer the motives behind newcomer ingratiation with the following prompts: “Individuals engage in ingratiation for different purposes. Based on the example you described earlier, how would you interpret the motives behind such ingratiation behaviors?” In Section II, participants went through similar instructions but were asked to recall more obvious and salient newcomer ingratiation behaviors and infer the

underlying motives. In Section III, participants reported their demographic information. We obtained 54 valid observations (compliance rate = 57%)¹¹. Among those participants, 44% were male and 67% were Caucasian, with an average age of 35.93 ($SD = 9.38$) and an average organizational tenure of 7.75 years ($SD = 6.17$), and 82% of them had a bachelor's degree or above.

Analytic Strategy

Two authors of the research team independently read all the survey answers. Following prior studies, we conducted a thematic analysis to discern recurring themes that described newcomer ingratiation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Two co-authors performed thematic coding of the responses, engaging in multiple rounds of discussion to ensure accurate representation and minimal redundancy in categorization (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Following prior research (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2015; Li et al., 2018), we retained themes that appeared at least three times in the responses. We summarized the findings for mild ingratiation behaviors and the corresponding motive attributions in Table A1 and blatant ingratiation behaviors and the corresponding motive attributions in Table A2.

Results

For mild newcomer ingratiation, we identified seven major themes, including showing interest in personal life (e.g., asking the supervisor personal questions), complimenting (e.g.,

¹¹ Given that our study focuses on ingratiation as an upward influence tactic for attaining acceptance from supervisors, the described newcomer ingratiation behaviors should be targeted at the supervisor per our instructions. However, some participants described newcomer ingratiation toward the group or colleagues and thus were excluded from the final analysis.

complimenting supervisor's ideas), adapting interests (e.g., talking about supervisor's hobbies), validating opinions (e.g., agreeing with supervisor's viewpoints), being attentive to work (e.g., being there whenever the supervisor needs), offering help at work (e.g., volunteering to help without being asked), and doing personal favor (e.g., offering to make drinks for the supervisor). When inferring the motives behind these ingratiation behaviors, 49% of the participants attributed them to relationship-building motives, 22% of the participants attributed them to self-serving motives, and 29% of the participants attributed them to both motives.

For blatant newcomer ingratiation, we similarly identified seven major themes, including showing interest in personal life (e.g., inviting the supervisor for dinner), complimenting (e.g., complimenting the supervisor's clothes), validating opinions (e.g., always agreeing with the supervisor), being attentive to work (e.g., sending messages over the weekend to show hard-working), seeking feedback (e.g., excessively asking for advice), offering help at work (e.g., offering to stay late to help without any incentives), and doing personal favor (e.g., offering to look after the supervisor's pet). When inferring the motives behind these ingratiation behaviors, 56% of the participants attributed them to self-serving motives, 10% of the participants attributed them to relationship-building motives, and 34% of the participants attributed them to both motives.

Table A1.**Section I: Summary of Mild Ingratiation Behaviors and Motive Attributions**

Ingratiation Categories	Sample Quotes	Motive Attribution Categories	Sample Quotes
Showing interest in personal life	Asking me personal questions in an attempt to get to know me/build a rapport.	Relationship-building	I interpret them as the newcomer going out of their way to get to know me even if they don't care about my answers.
	The employee talked to me about my interests.	Relationship-building	I interpret this as the newcomer being nice and friendly, looking to build a friendly relationship. They wanted to have a good conversation and get to know me.
Complimenting	[The newcomer] often complimented my idea.	Relationship-building	Her behavior was probably to put herself as a supportive and agreeable team member. She was attempting to build a positive relationship with me without being manipulative or overbearing.
	They implied that I was going to be a wonderful manager and that they were so excited to start producing results.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I think the purpose was to get off to a good start and to make a positive first impression on the job. Although I believe the good manager part was an attempt at other enhancement.
Adapting interests	We had new hires who initially said that they aren't a big sports fan. However, they soon realized that me and most of the team love football and talk about it frequently.	Relationship-building	I could tell that they weren't a big sports fan but tried to act knowledgeable anyways, and it definitely seemed like they were just trying to fit in.
	I had a newcomer who noticed I was a football fan and made light and positive jokes about football. We always had a good laugh with it which made us grow closer.	Relationship-building	The motive was really to be close to me. We were such a close group at work so making those football jokes were an opportunity to get into the group.
Validating opinions	Saying yes, and agreeing with every opinion of mine and the teams.	Relationship-building	I'd say they could be potentially actually agreed with the opinions, however the way it was interpreted was that they wanted to be included and accepted and not feel different from the team.
	[The newcomer] agreed with me and explained that in his previous job his team have the same feeling about it and they took some decisions that revealed to be the right ones.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	Need of integration and acceptance, need of showing his knowledge that can be used as an example to justify the methods to adopt the use of certain AI strategies that can

			benefit the team.
Being attentive to work	The newcomer accepted my request that they present their work to the team in a team meeting. They made a slide presentation and discussed their project in detail. This showed that they were hard working and contributing members of the team.	Relationship-building	The newcomer had a positive purpose and motive of wanting to present their work and prove to others that they were capable of doing good work and contributing to the team. They wanted to show that they were open and transparent, and happy to discuss about themselves.
	[The newcomer] often volunteers for jobs and follows up with too much detail as if to posture with how beneficial they are.	Self-serving	I believe this newcomer uses ingratiation to gain favor for promotion and for a more favorable position at work
Offering help at work	The new employee approached me in the office and asked if there was anything I would like them to do, such as any work projects or errands I had. They said they had finished their particular induction training and wondered if I needed anything doing?	Relationship-building	I interpreted the motive and purpose of the new employee as kind and thoughtful and showing initiative. I think they were genuine and came across as hard working and productive.
	The newcomer offered to help as they had a bit of free time.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I feel the newcomer is trying to integrate with me but I don't feel that is the sole motive for their help. I believe they are helpful and conscientious.
Doing personal favor	The newcomer offered to pick up some lunch for me. This was a thoughtful gesture, above and beyond the job requirements. I politely declined but appreciated the gesture.	Relationship-building	I deemed the action as an expression of friendship, a desire to establish rapport. I felt the action was sincere and showed an eagerness to achieve a sense of belonging.
	The newcomer often tried to give me free rides even when I did not ask to and from work.	Self-serving	I think the motives and purposes of those behaviors were strictly selfish and that they did not generally care for me overall.

Table A2.

Section II: Summary of Blatant Ingratiatory Behaviors and Motive Attributions

Ingratiation Categories	Sample Quotes	Motive Attribution Categories	Sample Quotes
Showing interest in personal life	They overstepped a few times and did not seem to be aware that some of their actions such as trying to friend a manager on social media was really inappropriate.	Self-serving	I think [the newcomer] believed that this was the way to improve their social standing within the workplace and that unfortunately this is often the way of some people to behave.
	They had invited myself and my partner out to dinner very early on in the working relationship with theirs. I did feel this was a little soon and out of place.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I felt this was an attempt at currying favor and gaining a closeness that I feel otherwise would take a little longer. They are outgoing so it may have been a simple attempt at getting to know me a little outside working hours but felt otherwise.
Complimenting	In every single meeting, [the newcomer] would always say something like, “This company would be lost without you!” “Your leadership is the only reason we can all survive here.”... It was always loud, interruptive, and just not professional.	Self-serving	I think [the newcomer] was doing all of this to get ahead in the company. He wasn’t doing well at that moment, usually not paying attention to important training, so I think he thought he could save himself with excessive flattery.
	This newcomer will compliment me every time I speak with him. Sometimes it's about the clothes I wear, or it could be my choice of makeup.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I think this behaviour is because he wants me to like him. He thinks that complimenting me and making me feel good will on turn make me associate good things with him.
Validating opinions	The newcomer knew that I didn’t get along with another colleague, so the newcomer started to disagree with everything my colleague said such as opinions and strategies if I didn’t agree with them either. Also stating to me afterwards that my opinion was the better one.	Relationship building	I think the motive was to get me to feel like they’re on my side and loyal to me by having a mutual dislike and disagreement with someone I have conflict with.
	They would hang onto my every word and always agree with me.	Self-serving	I think they were trying their hardest to flatter me. Obviously to try and get on my good side which started to have the opposite effect.
Being attentive to work	The newcomer offered to stay late and do extra work after she was due to finish work.	Self-serving	I think she was trying to impress people with her dedication and work ethic. Trying to demonstrate how hard she is

			prepared to work.
	Sending frequent WhatsApp and texts over the weekend to show that they are still working or thinking about work outside of office hours.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	To show that they are well informed, good at communication, and more dedicated than other people. In a roundabout way it could also be attempting to build a closer relationship with people on the team.
Seeking feedback	After the first week the newcomer took me aside and asked if there were any ways or hints and tips how he should improve.	Self-serving	On a basic level it's good to seek feedback but there isn't a lot that anyone can improve as they're just learning the ropes. Therefore you have to wonder if there was an ulterior reason.
	The newcomer would excessively ask for feedback and advice even after almost immediately asking for some previously to that. I understand that the employee is new and definitely needs feedback to do a good job at the company but enough is enough already.	Self-serving	I interpreted the motions and purposes of the behaviors as the newcomer trying to make it seem like they were more important than the rest of the team.
Offering help at work	The newcomer offered to take over the boss' 'boring' duty - they received no payment for this and did it in their own time.	Self-serving	I think this was done to show they are prepared to go above and beyond for the company and do anything that the boss requires.
	Offering to stay later to help me catch up on my notes even though I was leaving early. I felt this was quite extreme as they are not expected to stay late and the notes were my responsibility.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I feel this behaviour was to integrate with myself and look good to higher level management. I feel this was extreme as it really wasn't necessary and they sacrificed their break.
Doing personal favor	When I struggled with finding a dog sitter, she offered to look after my dog for 2 weeks.	Self-serving	Over the top and too soon when we hadn't built up that type of relationship. She wanted to make herself indispensable.
	She constantly offered to do personal favors for me, which was uncomfortable. She offered to pick my nieces and nephews up from practice, she offered to drive me to work every day, she even offered to run my errands for me. It was over the top.	Both relationship-building and self-serving	I think [the newcomer] thought that we could be friends and have a more non-professional type of relationship. It was unprofessional and inappropriate, which is why I had to have a conversation with her about it later on. I think she thought by doing these errands and favors, that I would "owe her" later down the line.

Table 1*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables (Study 1)*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. LMX (T1, N)	5.76	.87	(.95)		
2. Newcomer ingratiation (T1, S)	2.73	1.27	-.26**	(.88)	
3. LMX (T2, N)	5.52	.96	.46***	-.17*	(.96)

Note. $N = 151$ newcomer-supervisor dyads. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Cronbach's alphas are reported on the diagonal.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 2*Unstandardized Coefficients of the Estimated Model (Study 1)*

	LMX (T2, N)
<i>Baseline control</i>	
LMX (T1, N)	.52***
<i>Predictors</i>	
Newcomer ingratiation (NI; T1, S)	.07
NI ²	-.12**
R ²	.26**

Note. $N = 151$ newcomer-supervisor dyads. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 3*Simple Slopes for the Curvilinear Relationship between Newcomer Ingratiation and LMX (Study 1)*

Model	Newcomer ingratiation → LMX: Simple slope [95% CI]						
Main effect	Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max
	.47	<i>Nil.</i>	.36	.07	-.23	-.53	-.70
	[.11, .71]		[.06, .54]	[-.10, .15]	[-.50, -.05]	[-.93, -.13]	[-1.17, -.16]

Note. Min, -2 SD, -1 SD, 0, +1 SD, +2 SD, and Max refer to the values of the mean-centered independent variable (newcomer ingratiation). The simple slopes for a curvilinear relationship $Y = b_0 + b_1 \times X + b_2 \times X^2$ are calculated as $\partial Y / \partial X = b_1 + 2 \times b_2 \times X$, where b_1 and b_2 are unstandardized regression coefficients. *Nil.* refers to the value of the mean-centered independent variable that exceeds the threshold of the actual data range.

Table 4*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables (Study 2)*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1.Newcomer ingratiation (T1, S)	4.63	1.17	(.80)			
2.Relationship-building motive attribution (T1, S)	5.34	.91	.37***	(.82)		
3.Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)	4.58	.92	.41***	.39***	(.88)	
4.LMX (T2, N)	5.77	.56	-.16*	.09	-.20*	(.84)

Note. $N = 155$ newcomer-supervisor dyads. * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$. Cronbach's alphas are reported on the diagonal.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 5*Unstandardized Coefficients of the Estimated Models (Study 2)*

	Main Effect Model	Mediation Effect Model		
	LMX (T2, N)	Relationship -building motive attribution (T1, S)	Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)	LMX (T2, N)
<i>Predictors</i>				
Newcomer ingratiation (NI; T1, S)	-.15**	.35***	.45***	-.15**
NI ²	-.07*	.06	.12**	-.06*
<i>Mediators</i>				
Relationship-building motive attribution (T1, S)				.15*
Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)				-.12*
<i>R</i> ²	.06 ⁺	.14**	.21***	.15*
		Estimate	95% CI	
NI → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX		.05	[.01, .10]	
NI ² → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX		-.01	[-.04, -.003]	

Note. *N* = 155 newcomer-supervisor dyads. ⁺ *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 6*Simple Slopes and Instantaneous Indirect Effects (Study 2)*

Effect							
Mediation Effects	<i>Newcomer ingratiation → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX</i>						
	Path <i>a</i> [95% CI]		Path <i>b</i> [95% CI]			Indirect effect [95% CI]	
	.35 [.24, .47]		.15 [.03, .25]			.05 [.01, .10]	
	<i>Newcomer ingratiation → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX</i>						
	Path <i>a</i> simple slope [95% CI]						Path <i>b</i> [95% CI]
Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max	
-.36	-.12	.17	.45	.74	<i>Nil.</i>	.87	-.12
[-.86, .19]	[-.46, .26]	[-.01, .36]	[.32, .59]	[.45, 1.03]		[.49, 1.25]	[-.21, -.02]
Instantaneous indirect effect [95% CI]							
Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max	
.04	.01	-.02	-.05	-.09	<i>Nil.</i>	-.10	
[-.01, .14]	[-.02, .07]	[-.06, -.001]	[-.10, -.01]	[-.18, -.02]		[-.21, -.03]	
Main effect	Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max
	.31	.17	.01	-.15	-.31	<i>Nil.</i>	-.39
	[-.06, .62]	[-.08, .39]	[-.11, .11]	[-.24, -.06]	[-.51, -.11]		[-.64, -.12]

Note. Min, -2 SD, -1 SD, 0, +1 SD, +2 SD, and Max refer to the values of the mean-centered independent variable (newcomer ingratiation). The simple slopes for a curvilinear relationship $Y = b_0 + b_1 \times X + b_2 \times X^2$ are calculated as $\partial Y / \partial X = b_1 + 2 \times b_2 \times X$, where b_1 and b_2 are unstandardized regression coefficients. The main effect and mediation effect models correspond to Table 5, respectively. *Nil.* refers to the value of the mean-centered independent variable that exceeds the threshold of the actual data range.

Table 7*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables (Study 3)*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. LMX (T1, N)	5.55	.85	(.92)								
2. Newcomer task performance (T1, S)	5.38	.96	.03	(.83)							
3. Newcomer intention to quit (T1, N)	1.88	1.00	-.04	-.23***	(.82)						
4. Newcomer ingratiation (T1, S)	5.06	1.08	-.16*	.11	.04	(.81)					
5. Relationship-building motive attribution (T1, S)	5.43	.86	-.02	.50***	-.03	.44***	(.84)				
6. Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)	4.64	.93	-.01	.05	.04	.48***	.37***	(.86)			
7. LMX (T2, N)	5.63	.69	.05	.12	-.20**	-.19**	.06	-.27***	(.88)		
8. Newcomer task performance (T3, S)	5.69	.85	.08	.14*	.06	.00	.12	-.10	.31***	(.84)	
9. Newcomer intention to quit (T3, N)	1.92	1.10	-.08	-.08	.24***	.07	.02	.10	-.23***	-.04	(.85)

Note. $N = 206$ newcomer-supervisor dyads. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Cronbach's alphas are reported on the diagonal.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; T3 = Time 3; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 8*Unstandardized Coefficients of the Estimated Models (Study 3)*

	Main Effect Model			Mediation Effect Model		
	LMX (T2, N)	Relationship- building motive attribution (T1, S)	Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)	LMX (T2, N)	Newcomer task performance (T3, S)	Newcomer intention to quit (T3, N)
<i>Baseline controls</i>						
LMX (T1, N)	.01	.04	.07	.02	.08	-.08
Newcomer task performance (T1, S)	.08	.43***	-.01	.01	.10	-.02
Newcomer intention to quit (T1, N)	-.12*	.05	.03	-.12**	.13*	.22**
<i>Predictors</i>						
Newcomer ingratiation (NI; T1, S)	-.20***	.25***	.54***	-.14*	.02	-.07
NI ²	-.07*	-.05	.11**	-.04	-.03	-.04
<i>Mediators</i>						
Relationship-building motive attribution (T1, S)				.16*	.04	.05
Self-serving motive attribution (T1, S)				-.19**	-.06	.06
LMX (T2, N)					.38***	-.30**
<i>R</i> ²	.11**	.41***	.27***	.18**	.15**	.10*
<i>Indirect effects</i>						
				Estimate	95% CI	
NI → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX				.04	[.01, .09]	
NI ² → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX				-.02	[-.05, -.004]	
NI → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX → Newcomer task performance				.02	[.004, .05]	
NI ² → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX → Newcomer task performance				-.01	[-.02, -.001]	
NI → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX → Newcomer intention to quit				-.01	[-.04, -.002]	
NI ² → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX → Newcomer intention to quit				.01	[.001, .02]	

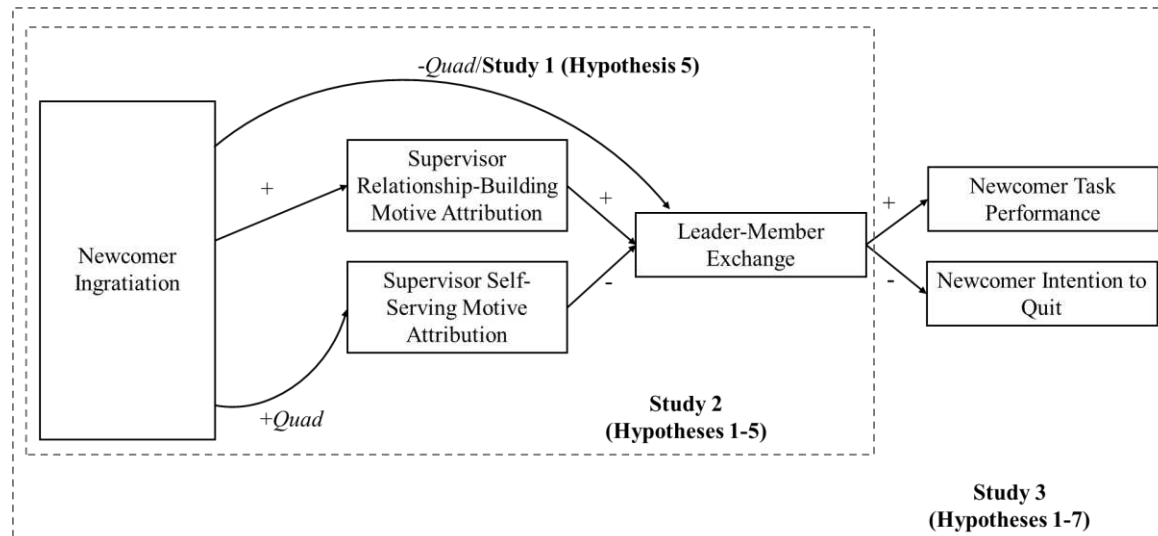
Note. *N* = 206 newcomer-supervisor dyads. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; T3 = Time 3; N = Newcomer-reported; S = Supervisor-reported.

Table 9*Simple Slopes and Instantaneous Indirect Effects (Study 3)*

Effect							
Mediation Effects	<i>Newcomer ingratiation → Relationship-building motive attribution → LMX</i>						
	Path <i>a</i> [95% CI]		Path <i>b</i> [95% CI]		Indirect effect [95% CI]		
	.25 [.14, .37]		.16 [.04, .29]		.04 [.01, .09]		
	<i>Newcomer ingratiation → Self-serving motive attribution → LMX</i>						
	Path <i>a</i> simple slope [95% CI]						Path <i>b</i> [95% CI]
	Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max
	-.20	.07	.31	.54	.77	<i>Nil.</i>	.96
	[-.71, .41]	[-.24, .45]	[.15, .50]	[.40, .67]	[.49, 1.06]		[.52, 1.39]
	Instantaneous indirect effect [95% CI]						
	Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max
	.04	-.01	-.06	-.10	-.14	<i>Nil.</i>	-.18
	[-.07, .15]	[-.10, .04]	[-.13, -.02]	[-.17, -.04]	[-.26, -.06]		[-.34, -.07]
Main effect	Min	-2 SD	-1 SD	0	+1 SD	+2 SD	Max
	.29	.11	-.05	-.20	-.36	<i>Nil.</i>	-.49
	[.01, .69]	[-.06, .36]	[-.14, .09]	[-.31, -.09]	[-.57, -.17]		[-.79, -.22]

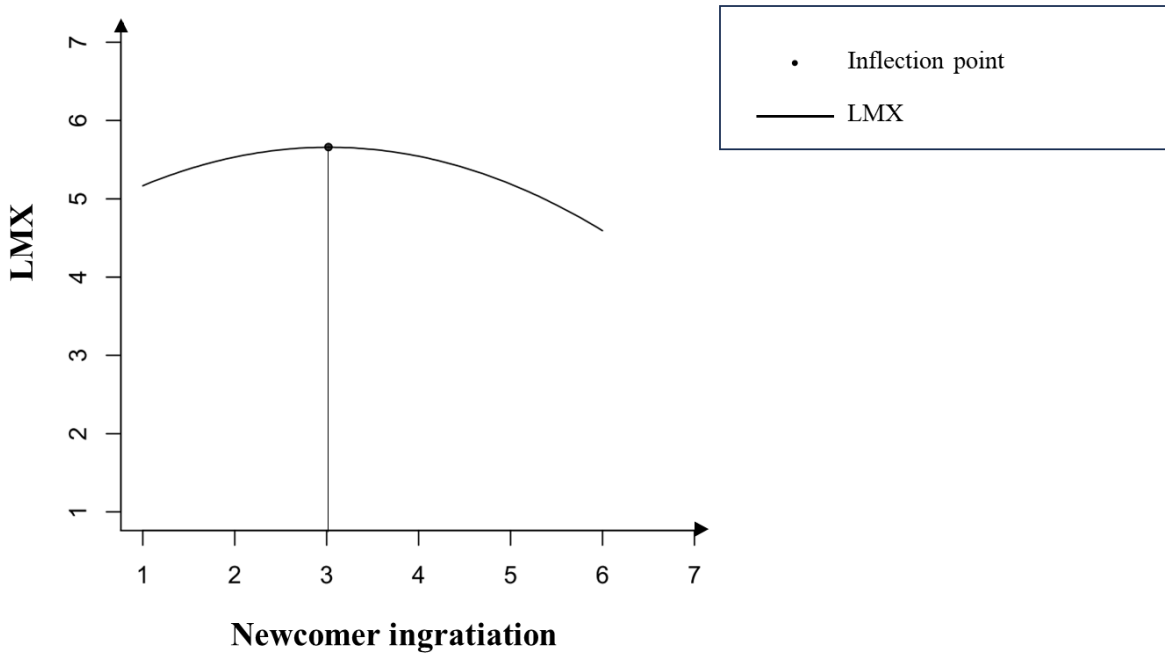
Note. Min, -2 SD, -1 SD, 0, +1 SD, +2 SD, and Max refer to the values of the mean-centered independent variable (newcomer ingratiation). The simple slopes for a curvilinear relationship $Y = b_0 + b_1 \times X + b_2 \times X^2$ are calculated as $\partial Y / \partial X = b_1 + 2 \times b_2 \times X$, where b_1 and b_2 are unstandardized regression coefficients. Main effect and mediation effect models correspond to Table 8, respectively. *Nil.* refers to the value of the mean-centered predictor variable that exceeds the threshold of the actual data range.

Figure 1.**Research Model Summary**

Notes. *Quad* represents the quadratic term. The upward curvilinear line represents the increasing curvilinear relationship (gradually emerging positive relationship) between newcomer ingratiation and supervisor self-serving motive attribution; the downward curvilinear line represents the overall curvilinear relationship between newcomer ingratiation and leader-member exchange (LMX).

Figure 2

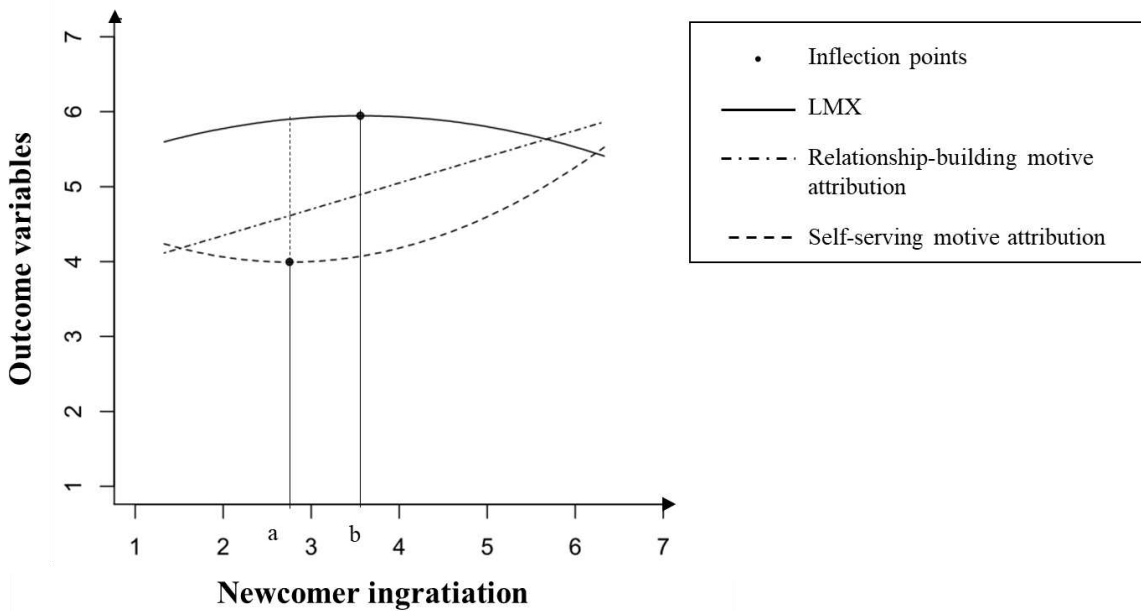
The Curvilinear Relationship between Newcomer Ingratiation and LMX (Study 1)



Note. The inflection point for LMX is 3.02. The sample mean of ingratiation was 2.73 with an observed range of 1 to 6

Figure 3

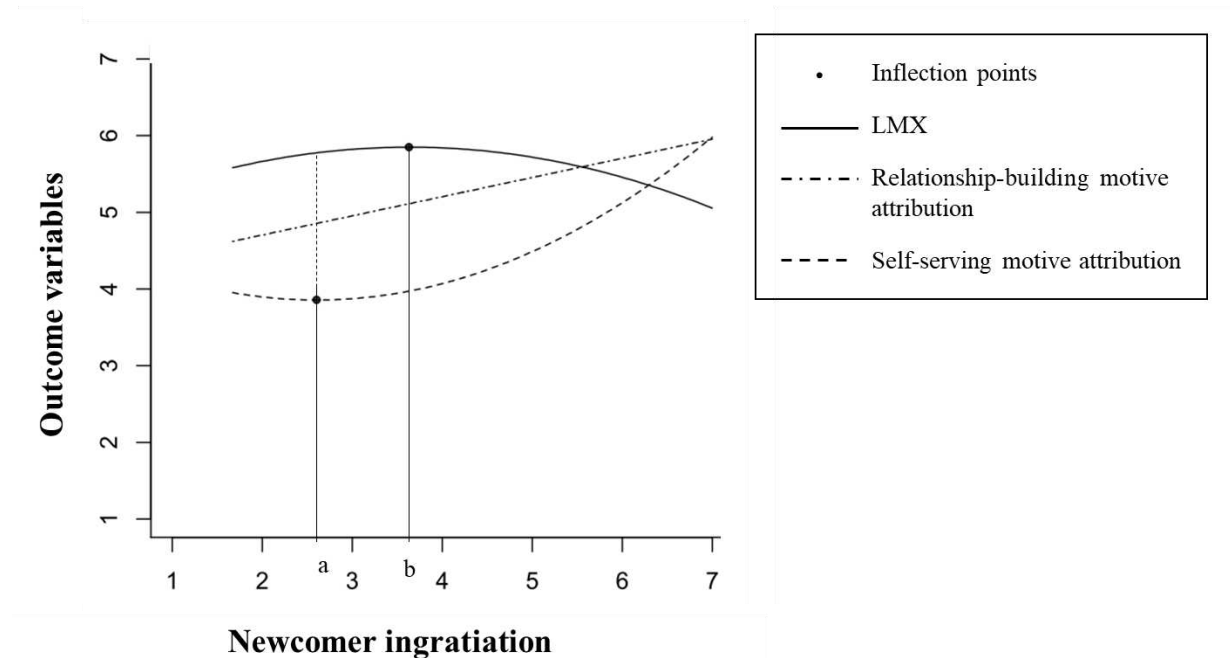
The Effects of Newcomer Ingratiation on Relationship-Building Motive Attribution, Self-Serving Motive Attribution, and LMX (Study 2)



Note. “a” refers to the inflection point for self-serving motive attribution (= 2.76), “b” refers to the inflection point for LMX (= 3.56). The sample mean of ingratiation was 4.63 with an observed range of 1.33 to 6.33

Figure 4

The Effects of Newcomer Ingratiation on Relationship-Building Motive Attribution, Self-Serving Motive Attribution, and LMX (Study 3)



Note. “a” refers to the inflection point for self-serving motive attribution (= 2.61), “b” refers to the inflection point for LMX (= 3.63). The sample mean of ingratiation was 5.06 with an observed range of 1.67 to 7

Response Letter

APL-2021-2941.R4

The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange: A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions

Dear Dr. Yeo,

We are resubmitting a revised version of our manuscript (#APL-2021-2941.R4), entitled “*The Curvilinear Effect of Newcomer Ingratiation on Leader-Member Exchange: A Dual-Pathway Model of Supervisor Attributions*” to the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

We are very grateful for all of the guidance that you and the Review Team have offered throughout this review process. We are ecstatic to hear that the manuscript is conditionally accepted as a feature article. We have taken great care to address the administrative issues and ensure that our manuscript meets all the requirements. Below, we indicate how we made revisions based on each of your comments (reproduced in **bold** for your ease). We look forward to seeing this manuscript in press at the *Journal of Applied Psychology*!

Response to the Editor

As you are aware, the Journal has adopted Level 1 or Level 2 TOP Guidelines. Please ensure that your manuscript includes information that complies with these guidelines as outlined on the Journal website (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/apl/?tab=1>). On the Journal website, scroll down to the section “transparency and openness,” where you will see the required TOP Level for each domain, along with a description and (where relevant) an example of what to include in your manuscript. For design and analysis transparency, we require that you adhere to the JAP methods checklist (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/apl-manuscript-checklist.pdf>), so please review that carefully before resubmitting. All articles submitted to the Journal must include a statement regarding transparency and openness. Submissions that do not include (1) qualitative, quantitative, or simulated data, (2) a systematic narrative or meta-analytic review of the literature, or (3) re-analysis of existing data must include a statement that TOP guidelines related to data sharing, code sharing, hypotheses pre-registration, analysis pre-registration and materials sharing are not applicable and why. If applicable, authors must comply with the TOP guideline of citing any materials not original to the submitted work.

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reproduced in published articles. You can find information on fair use of previously published material, as well as APA's fair use criteria at <https://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/permissions-alert.pdf>.

We have double-checked and ensured the accuracy of the information in the Transparency and Openness section on Page 17.

APA requires that any IRB (Institutional Review Board) information be included in the Method section of your manuscript. If you answered this information on the author questionnaire, please add the answer you provided (if yes, list granting body, protocol number, and title of study; if no, please state reason; if exempt, provide reason or IRB information if requested.) Should you have any questions, please contact Jennifer.

We added the IRB information and included Footnote 4 (p. 17) in the Transparency and Openness section.

If your manuscript uses data from either prior publications or from a larger dataset, this must be acknowledged in your Method section. Specifically, please acknowledge and cite any previously published articles from the dataset and add them to your reference list. In the event that you have other current or potential future papers using part of these data, which are not yet published, please note in the Methods section that the data presented in this article were part of a broader data collection effort and this is the first publication from this dataset. Note further that the data transparency appendix table is only for editorial review purpose, to help maintain the blind review process, and must be removed from the final version of your manuscript and replaced with abovementioned citations to the work(s).

The data presented in Study 1 were part of a broader data collection. The dataset has been presented in Liu et al. (2024). The research questions investigated in the two publications are completely different, and no variables overlapped between these two publications. We have revealed this information in the cover letter of our initial submission to JAP. We have also acknowledged this information in Footnote 3 on Page 16.

If some or all of the data and ideas in the manuscript have been disseminated informally prior to this publication (i.e., presented at a conference or meeting, posted on a listserv, shared on a website, used in a thesis/dissertation, etc.) please provide these details (2-4 sentences) as part of your Author Note on the title page. If you have funding information or acknowledgements to add, these should also be done in an Author Note on the title page. Additionally, please check the author order and names and make sure these appear correctly.

Since some of the ideas in the manuscript were presented at the 80th Academy of Management Annual Meeting, we have included this information and funding information in the Author Note on the title page.

Please note that if you have materials on OSF or another external repository, please refer to this as “additional online material” in the manuscript. (Our preference is for you to post materials on OSF.) If you are not placing materials on OSF or another external repository and instead want the material hosted on the APA website, please refer to the material as “supplementary materials” in the manuscript. In addition, please ensure that there is no duplicative material if using both types of repositories.

We have posted the relevant materials on OSF and included this information in the Transparency and Openness section. We decided to remove the file containing the full scales from our OSF due to concerns about copyright infringement. Instead, we provided a more detailed description of any modifications made to the original measures. Please refer to Pages 24-25 for further details.

Thank you again for your continued feedback and help during the review process! We are excited about this opportunity to contribute to the *Journal of Applied Psychology*!