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Guanxi in Academia: A Study of Guanxi's Influence between Undergraduates and their  
Professors

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research paper outlines guanxi in several respects: its definition, implementation, guanxi bases, and its influences in academia. This paper will primarily focus on exchange and reciprocity guanxi's influence among undergraduate students and their professors. Two surveys were carried out to measure guanxi's statistical significance among undergraduate business students. Interviews were conducted at the Pennsylvania State University. One survey was carried out in Beijing Foreign Studies University and the other at the Pennsylvania State University main campus. The BFSU results were used as the control group to measure the differences from international Chinese PSU students. The results suggest both perceived differences and similarities between the two sample groups regarding guanxi's influence.

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## Chapter 1

### What is Guanxi?

What is 关系 (guanxi, pronounced gwan-shee)? Guanxi is a Chinese word which conveys multiple meanings in English. Phrases such as relationships, connections, particularistic ties, and social capital only express aspects of guanxi but fail to holistically define it. The characters for the word guanxi should be analyzed to further understand its history and meaning. It can also take on different meanings when used as a noun, verb, or in a sentence with various contexts. Ying Fan's *Questioning Guanxi* includes a short passage which concisely defines these two characters:

The first character guan as a noun literally means 'a pass' or 'barrier' and as a verb means 'to close'. The second character xi as a noun means a 'system' and as a verb to 'tie up' or 'link'.

*Guanxixue* is the study of guanxi, 'xue' being the study of or 'ology' (Yang, 1994). This can be used to depict people who have studied guanxi or are experts in forging, using, and manipulating guanxi. The action of utilizing guanxi is called *la guanxi*, (pulling guanxi) (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). Most Chinese are at least familiar with *guanxixue* and its practice, with various results utilizing it. However, few will publicly admit utilizing guanxi because of its unestablished gray area between proper behavior and potentially unlawful usage (Yang, 2002). Guanxi can turn sour with instances of nepotism, corruption, and political-business relationships. Having established what the word guanxi means, I must now address what guanxi is, why it is used, how it's used, who has guanxi with whom, its origins, and its outcomes.

There have been many articles and academic inquiries about this topic yet confusion and misinformation is still evident in Western academia. In recent history, after the economic reforms in China, there was a massive economic-driven research inquiry about how to engage in commerce with China, such as key factors in doing business (Amramson and Ai, 1999), a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Fock and Woo, 1998), future direction for Western business practices (Lovett, Simmons, Kali 1996), or relationship marketing (Simmons and Munch, 1996). From these reports and publications, the phrase ‘guanxi’ kept arising. Its prominence led to a rise in cultural misunderstanding, criticism of the practice, and ‘the only way’ to enter Chinese business circles. Most of these ideas hold negative connotations, portraying Chinese business practices as backward and targets of corruption, nepotism abuse, and disrupting China’s ability to become a modern society based on law (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002).

One such misunderstanding is guanxi’s function in business. Foreign commentators associate guanxi as an instrumental means to achieve their goals, but the Chinese frequently emphasize that true guanxi also possess an affective component (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). There are articles which portray the positive aspects of guanxi, such as Jacobs or Kipnis, who describe guanxi’s role in Chinese society, attribute it with an element of humanity to otherwise strictly cold transactions and favors exchanges (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002).

There is also speculation regarding guanxi’s future in China. Some argue its fate will expand as the Chinese economy becomes more market oriented while others predict its decline as policy reforms and laws will replace or further penalize the use of guanxi (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). Its tenacity as a practice often evolves in-step with polices against it. For example, guanxi practices may decline in certain domains but will flourish in others, and will display new social forms and expressions (Yang, 2002). Guanxi’s dynamic adaptation and continued existence in



Chinese culture means the final word on guanxi can never be concluded (Yang, 2002). Therefore, guanxi will continue to adapt to new stresses and developments in its respective field.

As stated earlier, Guanxi is a Chinese word which conveys multiple meaning in English. There are several phrases which attempt to impose an English word on this social practice but fall short of effectively translating every aspect. Seeing that guanxi is most fitting if left untranslated, in the following pages I will continue to use the Chinese word guanxi (关系) to express this practice.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Western Perceptions of Guanxi**

Guanxi is similar to Pierre Bourdieu's social capital concept, where it is the "aggregate of actual or potential resources linked in a network of relationships" (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, Bourdieu 1986). However, as Andrew Kipnis points out, we should not fall into "the trap of making guanxi an orientalist gloss for networking" (Kipnis, 2002); but to address it as its own cultural practice. Guanxi is based implicitly on mutual interest and benefits (Yang, 1994). It is a social relationship where the motive is to find a solution for one's problem. This network is typically broadened by the introduction of a mutual contact (Yang, 1994). The intermediary often introduces the two interested parties and vouches for one's virtue and trustworthiness. Once the connection between two parties is acknowledged, each can ask another a favor or request, knowing that the debt will be repaid later on. There is also no time limit for the return favor and it could be passed on to another family member if the original member becomes deceased.

It is more favorable to be on the receiving end of gift giving; it demonstrates more power and prestige than giving gifts (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). Furthermore, it is often more favorable to request favors from a more powerful partner in a guanxi relationship because they often have access to resources beyond one's means. This aspect of gift giving ideology seemingly contradicts Western theories. The explanation lies in Chinese history. For thousands of years, the Chinese empire received tributes from various countries and kingdoms in return for not annexing them. In turn, this influenced their norms and ideology regarding gift giving. For example, a new employee at a company often sends a gift to his or her boss; this is especially true around Chinese New Years. This often is not to obligate a material favor in return but in hopes of eliminating the random chance of being fired by improving one's guanxi. Furthermore, if said boss returns a gift,

this can be a positive sign of good guanxi. This situation is not limited to entry jobs but can also be observed in academia. For example, when I interviewed a Taiwanese professor on the matter:

“Even though I am a professor of 25 years, when I switched to another university, I still sent the dean and the president a handwritten card on [Chinese] New Years out of respect. Not doing so would be very rude” (Yu).

Although it is highly unlikely that failing to give a gift, or a card in this example, would have resulted in job termination, it does demonstrate good faith and one’s willingness to cultivate good guanxi in the work environment.

Western ideology such as Levi-Strauss’s focuses more on the power dynamics between two individuals in the gift exchange. This ideology argues that the gift giver is superior to the receiver because of initiating the gift exchange and putting the receiver into a position of obligatory reciprocation. He also argues that such exchanges are ‘not always calculated but strategy is fundamental to the exchange logic’ (Metcalfé and Game, 2008). However, this does not seem applicable in certain situations; for example, what if the recipient does not accept the gift or simply does not reciprocate? A guanxi exchange may evoke feelings of reciprocation but the recipient may choose not to act on such feelings. The second party could also perceive the gift as truly genuine, as argued by Derrida’s *The Gift is Impossible*, meaning no reciprocity or debt is attached (Metcalfé and Game, 2008). In regards to guanxi between two individuals with unequal social standings, one such possibility could be the receiver, who is in a higher position, has access to resources the gift giver desires. In turn, the gift giver hopes to win the receiver’s favor and force an obligatory reciprocation, but there is a possibility of the receiver not reciprocating. Adler and Kwon also note guanxi’s two-way street occurrence, where guanxi investments could

possibly pose as a liability (Lin and Si, 2010). In short, it's a form of social investment, activated when one party needs assistance, favors, or information.

## Networking Models

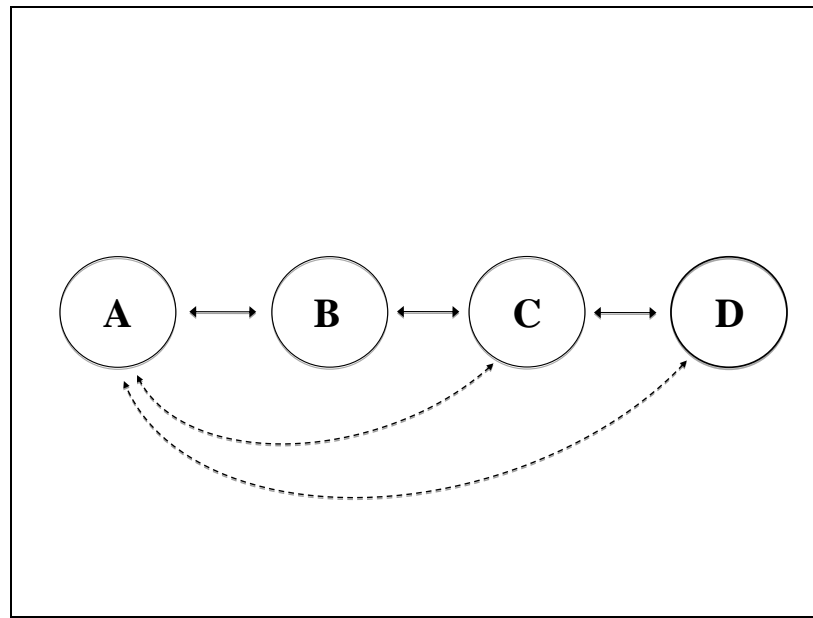


Figure 1. Yin Fan Guanxi Model

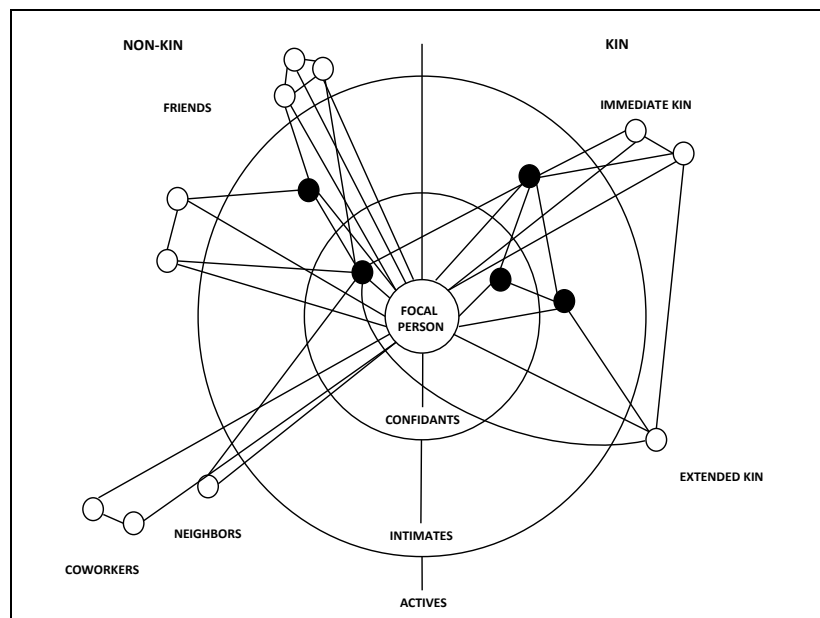


Figure 2. Wellman Typical American Network Model

## Chapter 3

### Guanxi Models and Transactions

Each guanxi transaction either adds or subtracts from the balance between the two parties (Fan, 2002). It's a very dynamic process which can easily involve up to several parties. Ying Fan's guanxi process (figure 1) model depicts the common occurrences of guanxi between two parties. Person A needs assistance with an issue and seeks out another person. "Most cases, one person (B) may not have the solution at hand but is willing to grant the favor. B then has to search further connections for a solution such as person C who in turn could contact person D. This chain effect of contacting various individuals for assistance is the crux of guanxi. B's role is a facilitator, intermediary, rather than a solution provider" (Fan, 2002). After a guanxi transaction has been carried out, A C and D have a shared guanxi base (B) and a past history of helping one another. C and D now have the option of circumventing B and directly contacting A, should they choose to.

I should also emphasize that these guanxi transactions are not limited to high level business and political favors, as it is notoriously known in corruption cases. Guanxi can be employed in very low level, minor exchanges such as person A is planning on traveling to Manhattan for the weekend and asks person B for restaurant recommendations. Person B is actually from Brooklyn and is not very familiar with many Manhattan restaurants, thereby asking another person (C) for recommendations. As explained in Fan's model, B is the facilitator and conveys C's recommendations back to person A thus ending the current guanxi transaction. This situation can be described as information exchange among three parties. Furthermore, there is a

distinct difference between guanxi and corruption/bribery as noted in Mayfield Yang's book, *Gifts, Favors, and Banquets: The Art of Social Relationships in China*, on guanxi practices:

Guanxi places more emphasis on *renqing* (social relationships) and long term obligations and bond of the relationship than the material interests exchanged, whereas bribery and corruption, the social relationship is the means, not an end, of the exchange (Yang, 1994).

There are no fixed rules or predetermined values in these guanxi exchanges, and it is certainly informal and not transparent (Fan, 2002). It is a multi-path process that begins with two parties and often involves more. But how does one begin a guanxi transaction or develop one's guanxi with another? Typically the process involves a series of preplanned activities such as sharing a meal, giving a gift, or conducting a favor (Fan, 2002). The bid to getting the targeted individual to carry out a request is not guaranteed, a predictable process, or even something that will be completed in a timely manner. Having 'good' guanxi with another individual increases one's chances for a successful guanxi transaction, such as asking a close friend, trusted colleague or a family member, but even these strong ties sometimes cannot carry out the favor. However, these strong ties are often more willing to try harder and reach out to members in their guanxi circles than people with weaker ties. A guanxi transaction comes to an end either when a solution is provided or the task is abandoned after unsuccessful sub-transactions among the other party members.

How does guanxi distinguish itself from other types of relationships? The term guanxi often falls under one of three categories as outlined by Yanjie Bian: the existence of a relationship between people who share a group status or who are related to a common person, actual connections with and frequent contact between people, and a contact person with little direct interaction (Bian, 1994). To expand on Bian's guanxi categories, guanxi is also based on either

ascribed or achieved characteristics. Kinship, native place, and ethnicity describe guanxi's ascribed traits and identical alma mater, workplace, and shared experiences describe guanxi's achieved characteristics (Gold, Guthrie, Wank 2002). These shared traits where guanxi has potential to prosper can be called guanxi bases (Fan, 2002, Tsang, 1998). In short, the guanxi relationships are determined by kin, work, or friends. However, having a relationship with another person does not necessarily produce guanxi. Moreover, sharing a guanxi base does not automatically lead into reciprocal guanxi exchanges, but it can be strengthened once established for a purpose (Fan, 2002). Developing good guanxi requires maintenance, cultivation, *ganqing*, and mutual trust without which, the relationship will weaken. However, that view is the most idealistic version of guanxi. Often times, producing guanxi relies on strategic attempts to generate *ganqing* (emotional feelings) and manipulating obligations (Kipnis, 2002). One can also fake *ganqing* by simply being insincere and superficial. Often times, an individual can only develop a handful of strong, active guanxi connections because each of them costs time, energy, and possibly money. But that is not to say these relationships are by any means less useful than multiple guanxi ties. Even with one guanxi connection, one potentially has access to a wide network of contacts. With several connections, this number is multiplied seven-fold. In short, the more strong guanxi contacts one has, the more resources will be potentially accessible (Fan, 2002); these contacts act as gatekeepers willing to connect the two parties together.

Using Ying Fan's guanxi process model, we must also address the weaker guanxi ties between individuals as emphasized by Wellman, Chen, and Weizhen. Returning to my example regarding Manhattan restaurants, although not a strong connection, person A now has guanxi with person C because of their mutual contact (person B) and a previous guanxi transaction history. Person A now has access to C's guanxi network and vice-versa. This simple transaction has created a massive list of individuals only based on two individual's guanxi base. However, it is important to note A and C's guanxi is unlikely very strong but has the potential to develop should



they choose to further their relationship. Furthermore, because of their weak tie, A or C's personal weak guanxi ties are particularly feeble and are unlikely or not enthusiastic to carry out any requests from the opposite party. An interesting exception to this might arise should A and C discover they have more guanxi bases or common interests than what was initially assumed. Prior to their exchange, A and C only knew B as common knowledge, but their relationship can greatly improve. For example, they find out they are both alumni from the same school. As stated earlier by Ying Fan, sharing a guanxi base does not necessarily produce guanxi, but it aids in developing guanxi with another party. These weak ties typically involve infrequent contact, little sense of reciprocity, and neutral feelings (Lin and Si 2010, Granovetter, 1973). Cultivating a strong guanxi relationship takes time and builds the trust between the two parties. Furthermore, guanxi adds to the network capital which circulates in a community and is rarely a zero sum game (Wellman, Chen, Weizhen, 2002).

It is also possible to create a guanxi relationship with an individual whom one initially has no common guanxi base with. However, this relationship will likely fall under Bian's third category of guanxi relationships, a contact with little interaction. One such example could be a fellow commuter on a public bus who only converses with you for the duration of your commute. Perhaps after several positive exchanges, and a habitual schedule, this individual may begin to save a seat to facilitate your conversations. Although this hardly appears to be a preplanned guanxi exchange, the other individual probably expects you to save a seat, should the occasion arise. That said, guanxi is often more effective when both parties share a common acquaintance than a self initiated introduction (Yang, 1994). Therefore, there is more emphasis on strong ties than weak ties in social and business affairs (Lin and Si, 2010).

There have been several models and theories trying to depict a guanxi network. A colleague of mine once described the guanxi network as a spider web. The analogy was not perfect but certainly sufficed as an easy model to introduce the topic. It draws parallels to

Wellman and Wortley's *Typical North American network* diagram (figure 2). The spider web is an egocentric model, meaning the focal point begins from the central person. This is not the best model to describe the Chinese society because they are a collective culture, in which one may not describe oneself as the center of a guanxi network as opposed to being involved in a more collaborative network. This view as an interdependent role is a sharp contrast to Western ethic of independence (Tsui and Farh, 1997); and has been thoroughly studied in various fields of psychology. The central person, say person X, will have several strong guanxi ties such as immediate and extended family members, good friends, work colleagues, and trusted acquaintances, represented with the dark circles in figure 2. Person X will also have a multitude of weak guanxi ties based off of shared guanxi bases from work, school, shared experiences, or casual friends, represented by the white circles in figure 2. But that is only the center of the spider web network for each of X's contacts will also have their own personal networks of strong and weak ties. Furthermore, it is very likely that some of X's contacts have direct guanxi with each other, with X acting as the intermediary and introducing the two parties. There are however, disadvantages for focusing on guanxi's personal networks as outlined by Wellman, Chen, and Dong: heavy concentration on strong ties, neglecting weaker ties, and an impractical method to holistically survey a guanxi network because of the sheer number of required interviews (Wellman, Chen, Dong, 2002).

## Chapter 4

### History of Guanxi

There is discernable disagreement over the extent to which guanxi plays a role in Chinese culture, whether it serves as a unique cultural practice or not. For example, its practice is similar to the Russia's *blat*, a gift economy system, as thoroughly flushed out by Ledenva's 1998 article and her subsequent editions (Ledenva, 1998; Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). Scholars, who view guanxi as fundamentally Chinese, believe its roots may lay in its history and philosophy. Certainly one could draw parallels with Rujia (Confucianism) for *ganqing* (emotional feelings), for it is central to his philosophy on ethics. Many aspects of Confucianism revolve around *ganqing*. These entail how to treat others, drawing our focus on guanxi, a relation-based social system as argued by Liang Shuming (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002). Confucius also defined the five cardinal role relations (*wu-lun*): emperor-subject, father-son, husband-wife, elder-younger, and friend-friend (Tsui and Farh, 1997). Furthermore, unlike purely economic transactions, guanxi evokes *ganqing* (emotional feelings), thereby attaching an emotional connection along with the material debt involved (Kipnis, 2002). There is also a stark difference between *renqing* and *ganqing*. In Mayfair Yang's field notes, she recalls an informant explaining the difference to her:

“*Renqing* is when you [Yang] go to a country town for social research and you bring some gifts for the local officials. This is not *ganqing* because your relationship with them is not deep” (Yang, pg 122).

From my own experiences I recall being told to bring gifts when visiting my ‘uncles’ who were in fact just family friends or my parent’s acquaintances. This may be viewed as a form of proper social behavior or Chinese etiquette norms, thereby furthering a good relationship between two parties. It is important to note that *guanxi* is not a static process but a dynamic one. Therefore, we can surmise that *guanxi*’s focus is not between individuals or gifts exchanges, but rather on the relationship within the two parties. In Mayfair Yang’s book *Gift, favors, and banquets*, she thoroughly outlines *guanxi*’s history. It describes the philosophical conflict aroused between *rujia* (Confucian) and *Fajia* (Legalist). The legalists whereas supporters for reform, loyalty to the state, and a progressive China where as Confucians supported tradition, ethics, and strong family bonds.

### **Guanxi’s Notoriety in Politics**

As previous scholars have established, *guanxi* is both a prevalent and resilient practice in China (Yang, 2002). *Guanxi* however, can be abused in certain contexts. It may purport roles in which unfavorable consequences to overall societal functioning and economic efficiency (Lin, Si, 2010). However, in China, it has been met with increasing resentment by its citizens and several purging campaigns by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party). This is because the manipulation of *guanxi*, *guanxixue*, is often conflated with corruption, kickbacks, and unfair deals. *Guanxixue* is often associated with the Chinese upper class, politicians, and corporations. Previous Chinese leaders have openly denounced the use of *guanxi* in politics such as Deng Xiaoping or more recently the current president Xi Jinping. Deng Xiaoping’s 1980 address criticized shortcomings of the Chinese bureaucracy’ such as patriarchal methods, life tenure in government, and various privileges (Gold, Guthrie, Wank 2002; Deng, 1984). Xi Jinping’s ‘Flies and Tigers’ campaign against corruption in government has already seen the resignation of 10,000 officials and

disciplinary action against another 40,000 (Hatton, BBC). His corruption campaign was to root out guanxi bureaucracy among low ranking officials, the flies, and the powerful high ranking ones, tigers. The most notable 'tiger' to be punished was 2012's Bo Xilai incident, a once-favored contender as a member of the Politburo Standing Committee in China, the committee whom advises the Chinese president.

Additionally, when Chinese research subjects are approached by Western researchers, they will often want to present the modern side of China. This occurs because historically, Western researchers have evaluated societies based on backwardness and modernity. In turn, their research subjects may attempt to hide or mislead what they believe are embarrassing aspects of feudal Chinese culture (Yang, 2002). This manipulation of guanxi can allow an individual to access resources beyond his or her own ability. The negative aspects of guanxi can typically be observed in several respects such as job offers, insider trading, promotions, and privileges. One such example is when authoritative figures practice nepotism and choose their own kin and fulfill guanxi requests while disregarding a better candidate (Lin and Si, 2010).

## Chapter 5

### Guanxi in Academia

Insofar I have mainly discussed the background of guanxi, its definition, and implications in society but have yet to attribute guanxi into any field. Previous research sought to define guanxi, understand it, and its implementation. Guanxi has already been heavily covered in business and political fields (Gold, Guthrie, Wank, 2002), so in the following pages I hope to contribute to a smaller, but growing field, of guanxi's influences in academia.

In academia, we can utilize Confucian cardinal relations to analyze the relationship between individuals, president-dean, dean-professor, and professor-student. This chain of power and influence is the typical foundation in academia. In the following pages, I will focus on guanxi's influences in these three fields. Additionally, most of the sources focused on guanxi as a means to achieve something, while at the very least, withholding *ganqing*, and at the most demonstrating insincere *ganqing*.

Auditing higher education's quality in China has misfired in several aspects. What started as an education policy to ensure high quality publications, has actually furthered guanxi's influence in academia. Auditing higher education has led to several negative aspects such as facilitating fraud, mismanagement, and wasting of money (Lin Yi, 2011). In the 1990s, the Chinese state initiated two key programs, "211" and "985", in order to facilitate world class universities (Lin Yi, 2011). This had led to the gilded rise of a handful of elite Chinese schools, which in turn have been rewarded with increased resources and financial backing from the government. It also allowed higher education institutions greater autonomy and freedom to enroll self-financing students (Tam, Chen, 2010). Historically, Chinese institutes had a reputation of the

‘iron bowl’ (faculty tenure), but with the recent auditing processes and performance assessments, these positions have come under scrutiny. Their performance results in cash rewards, promotions, or titles issued by their institutions (Lin Yi, 2010). Chinese academia also has its own ranking system for scholarly journals, such as the SCI (Science Citation Index) or the CSSCI (Chinese Social Science Citation Index), which is generally a copy of the ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) system used by Nature or Science (Lin Yi, 2010). This system was only recently initiated in 1997 at Nanjing University and their committee formed in 2001 (Tam, Chen, 2010). Additionally, if a professor has their article published in one of these prestigious Chinese journals it will lead to cash rewards, prestige, and improved guanxi with their institution.

Negative responses from overseas returnee Chinese academics have led to inquiries within Chinese higher education. The importance of guanxi, restrictions on research, and rampant misconduct in the education community has led to the frustrations and criticism from returnee scholars (Cao, 2008). Lin Yi’s article in auditing higher education in China includes several interviews which details the current situation. Yi’s interviewees shared several complaints in their respective institutions which I will highlight here: unrealistic timelines for their projects and publication dates, lack of judgment from higher authority figures, immediate results deriving from research, and most prominently, the focus of quantity over quality in research papers (Lin Yi, 2010). One of his interviewees also noted the defensive and sometimes hostile attitude of domestic researchers regarding their work. This attitude may allude to their worries over resources and funding in their departments. Also, the mindset of domestic scholars view sharing his or her work as a risk for it could be stolen or invites negative criticism of their research (Lin Yi, 2010).

Guanxi plays a role in securing benefits in higher education. In 2009, the Yangzi Daily reported that ninety percent of the National Awards for Famous Teachers in Higher Education went to senior faculty whom held some degree of administrative power (Lin Yi, 2010;

Changjiang Ribao, 2009). This reflects guanxi's potential to abuse power for the list of reviewers of the award is short, and as seen in this case, vulnerable to corruption. Evidently, these senior faculty are disregarding the peer review processes in hopes of furthering their own careers. Strong guanxi connections also improve one's chances to secure a position at a university, without which, one is unlikely to be selected. Universities in China also require their faculty to publish in CSSCI journals, which is an important criterion for promotion (Tam, Chen, 2010). Even university deans had to invest time to foster guanxi with administrators (Lin Yi, 2010). Having good guanxi with the administration could secure more funding for one's department or being able to publish more articles. It is hard to see the effectiveness of this policy in Chinese higher education when misplaced value has been placed on the quantity of articles and the journal submissions.

Guanxi is also fundamental in the publishing process. Ideally, the peer review process in research committees are intended to provide constructive criticism for submitted articles. There have been debates regarding whether these peer review processes are truly 'blind', in which neither the author nor the reviewer can be identified (Kumashiro, 2005). This concern for academic professionalism has been observed in both Western and Eastern literature. One such example of unethical academic behavior is plagiarism. From my own personal experiences, plagiarism is not taught efficiently in China. One of my colleagues even regarded plagiarism as a form of showing respect to the original author/creator because of one's imitation or use of the work. This perspective contradicts many copyright and academic integrity policies in Western nations. Excessive plagiarism committed by prominent scholars in China can tarnish the quality and reputation of higher education institutions (Yang, 2005). The irony lies in how these plagiarizing faculty kept their positions, despite being caught. One explanation for this could lie within guanxi culture as Lin Yi explains:



This tendency to avoid disagreements or diversity was also ingrained in guanxi culture, which, at least, can maintain people in a harmonious and uniform relationship (Lin Yi, pg 6).

I am unsure if this analogy constitutes as guanxi, as opposed to aspects of Confucian ideology particularly the ethics, compassion, and its relationship guidelines. Perhaps in Lin Yi's explanation, guanxi and Confucianism are inseparable. Another perspective could be the possibility of a guanxi collapse, when both parties break their connection. This aspect was not explicitly stated in Lin Yi's explanation regarding the continued employment of faculty accused of plagiarism, but could be the underlying rationale. The reason why breaking off a guanxi connection is unconventional is because it can lead to unfavorable repercussions, particularly within the guanxi network. It is probable that the damage done will influence any future guanxi requests because one's reputation is tainted with the connection of being perceived as untrustworthy or selfish.

Guanxi has also been observed in the publication process in China. Ju and Wang have noted that one can get his or her article published in a professional journal if one is willing to pay a publication fee (Tam, Chen, 2010; Ju and Wang, 2008). The fees involved reflect the word count and the journal's prestige. Publication fees for provincial journals range from \$88-132 US dollars within 2,200-2,500 word count, national journals range from \$132-200 within a 2,300-2,800 word count, and elite journals cost \$658-2,633 for a 6,000 word article (Ju, Wang, 2008). This may reflect academic corruption; however, the guanxi aspect is reflected within the necessity social connections with the journal editors, particularly the top tier. Without these connections, solely bribing the editors is insufficient to have articles published in these elite journals (Tam, Chen, 2010). These connections are often a two way street. Editors of these elite journals must sustain their reputation and maintain a competitive status among other journals. One methodology

editors use to increase their subscribers and citation numbers is to seek out prominent scholars and solicit their articles with monetary rewards (Ju, Wang, 2008). Senior university management may also partake in this guanxi relationship between faculty and journal editors. Some officials are known to have paid substantial amounts of money to these elite journals for publication space for its faculty (Tam, Chen, 2010). It reminds me of an experience when I was told that my chances to apply to a particular university to study Chinese were high, because of ‘good relations’ and they had reserved several slots for students. I hope this is because of some form of relationship such as sister-schools as opposed to bribery, but I digress. Currently, there is no evidence establishing that all articles published in these elite journals are the result of guanxi; however it appears that guanxi is key to secure a peer review and within the final editorial decision process (Tam, Chen, 2010). To paraphrase segments from Lai and Lo’s interviews (Tam, Chen, 2010 pg. 73) with Chinese faculty members regarding publishing papers in elite journals:

“The Dean was well known and had strong social connections with editors of the elite journals, able to aid colleagues’ papers being published by merely recommending them. Not all the papers published demonstrated the high quality required from the journals, which were easy to spot; these were published by either personal connections with the editor or personally paying the publication fees” (pg. 160-162).

In regards to the blind peer selection process, members of these committees have also felt guanxi’s influence. Typically, this process is structured to evaluate submitted articles without revealing one’s identity. However, it is apparently easy to identify members of these committees due to the narrow scope of particular Chinese academic fields (Tam, Chen 2010). This short list of individuals may result in unwanted guanxi solicitation, which in this aspect is not true guanxi because it lacks *ganqing*. It suggests an ideological shift in the concept of guanxi, moving away

from *ganqing* and is more focused on soliciting favors by means of bribery. It is important to state this may not hold true for every example; it is entirely possible that the editor and author become friends and further their relationship, but further investigation into this aspect of *guanxi* development is needed.

The articles published are also of an alarming nature. In Yang's analysis of publications on education policy during 2003-2004 China Renda Social Science Information Center Education journal, his findings were unsettling. Ninety-three of the 114 articles were commentaries or personal assertions, "lacking theoretical conceptualizations" (Tam, Chen 2010). Furthermore, on average these articles contained 7.1 references, 15 of which had zero references (Tam, Chen 2010). Generally, these articles lacked empirical data and statistical analysis, which greatly diminishes their impact on current research.

Another example analyzing Chinese journal article's content is Zhao et al.'s comparison between the American Education Research Journal and the Chinese Jiaoyu Yanjiu (Education Research) journal. One major difference between the two journals was their methodology. A majority of the American journals used empirical methods such as ethnographies, experimental and quasi-experimental studies to research education issues (Tam, Chen 2010). The Chinese journals 70% were the author's personal reflections or commentaries on education policies, unsupported by empirical data (Tam, Chen 2010). Citations used in these journals were also vastly different, with a majority of American articles listing 58 citations and slightly over 60% of Chinese articles having 6-20 references (Tam, Chen 2010). It would be unwise to quickly dismiss these Chinese journals solely because of their lack of empirical data, although the low citation numbers is rather concerning. It is entirely possible these articles can be useful in other settings, for example, generating opinions from Chinese faculty on education policies.

These stark differences reflect the standards and policies set by their respective academic institutions. As mentioned earlier, the 2000s Chinese education auditing policy shifted toward

mass article producing, while sacrificing empirical studies. In Tam and Chen's cross cultural study of American and Chinese journals, the extent of senior faculty article contributions in Chinese journals was significantly higher than American ones (Tam, Chen 2010). Furthermore, the editorial members in the study came from the same universities where their respective journals are published. This shared workplace background can be used as a guanxi base, allowing easy access to the journal's editors. Drawing parallels to business guanxi's nepotism, one possibility explaining the poor quality entries could be favoritism within these universities for publishing their own faculty's articles and setting higher standards for other academics.

## Chapter 6

### Guanyi in Undergraduate Academia

Having outlined guanxi's influence and practices in academia, the following pages will focus on a subcategory of academia, undergraduate students' perceptions on guanxi. At the time of this writing, I was hard-pressed to find any articles in this subfield and subsequently carried out a survey to gather some empirical data about the topic.

In the previous chapter, I have already alluded to graduate students and post doctorate's frustrations while researching in China. I also summarized several examples of academic misconduct between faculty and journal editors, but where does guanxi influence the undergraduate student population? Does the undergraduate student population utilize guanxi in their interactions among colleagues or their professors? Are there attempts at soliciting favors from faculty? Is the practice of guanxi carried over outside of China? My research, at the very least, attempts to introduce this topic while at the most, to address these questions given my limited time and available resources. Hopefully, this research will spur discussions regarding guanxi's influence among younger populations and can serve as a basis for future research in this field, to further analyze the topic.

Guanyi can be observed in several respects: employment, interviews, and connections. Guanyi's role in urban employment is in decline but is still used, particularly for first jobs (Hanser 2002). Amy Hanser describes guanxi's employment in the urban job search as part of a 'tool kit', meaning guanxi is only one angle one could utilize and is not used if deemed inappropriate for the situation. Regarding interviews, guanxi could be the barrier between securing an interview and even having a résumé reviewed (Tam, Chen 2010). Furthermore, unless it is nepotism, guanxi cannot guarantee a job post if the individual in question is without merit or

does not have the job skills required. Guanxi in this case typically just circumvents the application process and awards these individuals a chance of proving themselves, even if deemed unfair by their colleagues without guanxi. One of my interviewees recalled a story passed along by a friend:

“I’ve heard some stories, how that person can be promoted that quickly without even spending years in the company? It’s all about guanxi. How can that person who is not as good as me get that position? It happens here probably but not as common as China. But even if you have guanxi, you have to know how to do these things” (Yu).

Individuals confident in their job marketability are more likely to market themselves based off their formal job qualifications (Hanser 2002). These individuals are likely trained professionals who do not need the use of guanxi to secure an interview and are marketable within their specific fields. Positions that are less technical and do not require higher education, characteristic of high school students, rely on guanxi, value salary, and work environment over job specialization (Hanser 2002).

The guanxi these young individuals employ is likely through their family’s and friend’s networks. Furthermore, they are probably utilizing guanxi for information exchanges rather than manipulating it for monetary rewards as mentioned in the previous chapter. These information exchanges are likely along the lines of job openings or putting in a good word to a manager, should one of their contacts work at the desired workplace; however, this is merely speculation and further analysis should be conducted to confirm the nature of these informational guanxi exchanges. Additionally, it is unlikely that these information guanxi exchanges have reciprocal ties attached, meaning a favor is expected in return. One possibility is that this form of information exchange guanxi is merely informing a colleague of an opening, not necessarily

guaranteeing a job post. The informant is hopeful that their guanxi network will likewise pass along similar information, should an opportunity arise. This casual exchange implies a basic level of trust between the two parties, that relevant information that is sought will be distributed.

The source of guanxi may also be frowned upon among the younger population. Guanxi originating from one's parents seems to attribute a sense of inability to succeed without their aid; using one's parent's connections was "a sign of weakness or incompetence" (Hanser 2002). One of my interviewees had an interesting remark regarding the use of one's parent's connections:

"I feel uncomfortable to use my parent's guanxi. If I use my guanxi, it's my capabilities, I can justify that. If I get a job, it's from my efforts. But in truth, if you have the chance and resources to get this job and can do it well, why not?" (Yu).

These young professionals however, seemed to happily accept advice or information from their peers. This could be because one would rather rely and utilize one's personal guanxi network. There could also be a sense of pride for rejecting one's parent's guanxi network because it was not one's personally cultivated guanxi relationship. It could also be a young person's plight of trying to prove their self worth by forming their own connections and network. However, if deemed necessary, these young professionals will use their parent's guanxi to secure their first job.

## **Chapter 7**

### **The Study**

Previous studies of guanxi have been predominately in the economic and political domains, defining it, and understanding its methodology as a practice. Studies regarding the student populations are only a recent trend in the guanxi literature, with a minor representation. For my study I utilized two student body populations to conduct a cross-cultural comparison. The nature of my study was twofold: 1), to evaluate the current perception of guanxi in academia within the undergraduate student body and 2), to cross-examine the respondent's answers between the two sample groups to demonstrate or refute the principal variable between them, studying at an American university. My research questions revolved around these themes:

- Is guanxi important in college?
- Is guanxi with your professor important?
- Is guanxi important to be successful?

I wanted to expand upon previous research regarding guanxi in an academic setting. The two sample groups were from the following locations: undergraduate students at Beijing Foreign Studies University in Beijing, China (BFSU) and The Pennsylvania State University at University Park, Pennsylvania (PSU). Ninety five percent of the sample group at PSU were business majors and 84% at BFSU. For the survey sample at PSU, I specifically sought out international Chinese students for the study; this was in hopes of minimizing the possible variance and to have two sample groups with similar backgrounds and cultural upbringings. The second question was with regards to their current academic education, studying business at BFSU or PSU as undergraduate students. The participants' backgrounds were varied, originating from various provinces.



Generally speaking, most of their parents were well educated with bachelor and master degrees being the most common.

Biases may arise from the sampling pool because of the nature of the respondent's background and education. For example, BFSU's most reputable departments are their language programs. Most of the students are double majors; my respondents were generally business and English students. International PSU students likely have a different upbringing than BFSU students. Their education and economic situations before college were major factors influencing their ability to study abroad. Their economic responses may also have biases because of grey economics, which I will explain in the following pages. Both of these sample groups have biases relating to their life choices, which are reflected by their college choices. At the time of this writing, there is no nationwide survey which has conducted a similar survey in China which could be used to compare my data for further analysis.

### **Methodology**

Aside from my research questions, I was also curious if the two student populations would have significantly different answers because of their locations and experiences. I will be using the BFSU sample as the control group to measure any differences or similarities between the two samples. To carry out my observations, I designed a survey to collect various questions from my two sample groups. The first half of the survey was demographic questions; the second half consisted of questions regarding guanxi, all of which were in Chinese. The questions related to guanxi were mostly on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. I transcribed the results from Chinese into numbers when analyzing in Excel, with 1 being the lowest (strongly disagree) and 5, the highest (strongly agree). Prior to conducting the survey in Beijing, I submitted my survey and the nature of my study to Penn State's Institutional Review

Board (IRB) for approval. After obtaining their approval, I used an online survey website as a means to collect the responses. I also interviewed three individuals to gain further insight into this topic: two international Chinese students at Penn State and one Taiwanese professor.

### Analysis and Discussion

In total, there were 45 respondents for my survey, 19 from PSU and 26 from BFSU. The sample included 18 males and 27 females. I had attempted to use the Student's T-Test, however the small sample size skewed the results, rendering them statistically unable to reject the null hypothesis. Interestingly, even though the sample size was very small and there was no population sample to compare with, such as a national survey, the T-Test results were, generally speaking, promising given its population flaw. For instance, the difference between the homoscedastic and heteroscedastic figures were very small, the largest difference was less than 0.03. The standard deviation was pretty low as well. It would be interesting to try this survey a second time, with enhanced questions and a larger population sample.

(Table 1 你觉得师生关系意义重大么)

你觉得师生关系意义重大么 [单选题]			
	Response PSU		Response BFSU
	5		4
	5		5
	5		5
	3		5
	4		4
	5		4
	4		4
	4		5
	3		5
	5		5
	5		5
	5		5

	4		5
	5		4
	4		3
	4		3
	5		4
	5		3
	5		5
Mean	4.473684		5
St Dev	0.696692		5
			4
			4
			5
			4
			4
		Mean	4.384615
		St Dev	0.697247

There are several parallels or stark differences between the two sample groups evident without using the Student T-Test. By simply filtering the results and drawing comparisons using the mean from their responses, several suggestions can be made with the given data. For example, the question *你觉得师生关系意义重大么?* (Do you feel guanxi between professors and students is significant?), as represented in table 1, PSU students replied with an average of 4.47, standard deviation 0.696, and BFSU 4.38, standard deviation 0.697, on a 5 point scale. This suggests that students who studied at PSU believe guanxi holds a higher value than their domestic colleagues, in regards to this question. I can also state this suggestion with a 75% confidence in accuracy after calculating the confidence interval for the figures. Furthermore, if filtered for responses regarding where the respondents aspire to live in the future, the figures continue to expand. Respondents who aspire to live in the United States in the future have an average of 4.5; respondents who aspire to live in China hold an average of 4.23. This suggests that students who want to live in the United States in the future believe guanxi holds a higher value than students who will live in China, in regards to professor-student guanxi.

The results can be analyzed from two perspectives. First, perhaps the students who are studying at PSU believe that professor-student guanxi is more important to further enhance their careers in the United States. For instance, one needs an appropriate level of guanxi to successfully request a letter of recommendation. Without having good relations with said faculty member, the chances of fulfillment are lower. My interviewee believes that the goal of developing guanxi with one's professor is no different than the rationale within other circles:

“These relationships [guanxi] are developed with money. But here [US], you have to go to the office hours, be active in class. It is the same purpose, to bribe your professor but I think it's a better way than in China” (Yu).

In this statement, my interviewee is referencing the cultural differences in developing guanxi. Good guanxi with one's professors could also be essential for their ability to enroll in graduate school in the United States. This implies that students studying at PSU could be investing in professors-students guanxi for long term benefits. Chinese students at BFSU likely have similar if not identical post-college concerns, thereby investing in guanxi as part of their 'toolbox' as explained by Amy Hanser.

Secondly, developing guanxi in the US is more important for the PSU respondents because their limited guanxi network in the US. Prior to studying at PSU, most of the international students likely had no contacts or very few. My interviewee's response reflects this notion:

“At PSU, I have to build all the relationship... I just felt insecure because I had no guanxi here, none of my parent's or family's friends. So I'm trying very hard to meet people, but it's not entirely networking, networking doesn't build you friendship” (Yu).

Unlike American students studying at PSU, most of the international students had no contacts prior to their arrival. My interviewee said that this situation is typical because of him traveling to a foreign country to study. Therefore, this suggests that the PSU opinions are inflated because of the respondent's limited *guanxi* networks in the US. Their smaller network, which was entirely the product of their socializing efforts, is their only *guanxi* network in the US and is the only one they can utilize. It is also important to note the *ganqing* reference my interviewee said; it reflects the variation between the different aspects of *guanxi*.

(Table 2 师生关系对你找工作重要么)

	师生关系对你找工作重要么? [单选题]	
	Response PSU	Response BFSU
	3	4
	5	4
	5	5
	4	3
	4	4
	5	4
	3	3
	4	3
	5	4
	2	4
	5	3
	4	4
	4	3
	4	3
	4	4
	5	4
	5	4
	5	3
Mean	4.222222	4
St Dev	0.878204	3
		4
		4
		4
		5
		4

		Mean	3.76
		St Dev	0.597216

The results from the question, *师生关系对你找工作重要么* (Having professor-student guanxi is important for finding a job), as shown in table 2, had striking differences between the two sample groups. The PSU sample group responded with an average of 4.22, standard deviation of 0.87, and the BFSU sample group responded with a mean of 3.76, standard deviation of 0.59. This result can also be verified with 75% confidence interval. This question builds off from the previous question. It suggests that having good guanxi with one's professor is reasonably important for finding a job after graduating. It draws parallels with the previous question by relating to post-graduation job security, by investing in guanxi and drawing upon it if deemed favorable. A strong guanxi relationship could aid in various situations such as letters of recommendations, research positions, internships, connections to other academics at different universities, or connections to working professionals in their field of interest.

The mean when filtered by where they aspire to live in the future resulted in 3.8 for China, and 4.08 for the United States. This suggests that international Chinese students that plan to live/work in the US believe guanxi is more important than their colleagues for securing a job post in China. When I asked one of my interviewees, he said:

“Here [The US] if you're good enough, you have lots of opportunities. There is some corruption here but not as much as in my country [China]. Even if you get a letter of recommendation from your professor in the US, it's not a guarantee of a job offer here” (Yu).

The value of letters of recommendations also varies between the US and China. In China, having a letter of recommendation from a professor whom one has strong guanxi with will greatly improve their standing. However, sometimes these letters of recommendation from China are not as useful as Western ones because of the nature it was obtained. In China, one could obtain a letter of recommendation by utilizing guanxi.

“If you want a reference letter, it’s pretty easy. Just ask someone that you know, who your parents know, give them your résumé or something and they’ll write it for you. It’s not persuasive. But here [in the US], you have to impress them and do well in class” (Yu).

When asked in regards to the US, my second interviewee said:

“Even if you get a letter of recommendation from your professor in the US, it’s not a guarantee of a job offer here” (Yu).

This belief confirms the notion that securing a job position in the US values merit over guanxi. Regardless, there are several possibilities that might explain why guanxi is perceived as more important by these students. Given their status as international students, securing a position in the US is already difficult because of their noncitizen status. Several colleagues of mine have expressed frustration over this hurdle they must try to overcome, because quite blatantly, many companies are unwilling to process the green card paperwork for foreign nationals unless they are an exemplary candidate. Therefore, a strong guanxi connection could improve their prospects in the job market. Additionally, they may value these professor-student connections more strongly because it is one of the few guanxi connections they have formed while studying overseas. In

short, their isolation from their homeland guanxi networks may make them more dependent on their overseas connections.

(Table 3 师生关系只在大学学习时期有较大价值)

师生关系只在大学学习时期有较大价值 [单选题]			
	Response PSU		Response BFSU
	2		2
	4		2
	3		5
	3		3
	2		2
	2		1
	2		1
	3		2
	4		2
	4		3
	1		4
	2		2
	4		4
	2		2
	4		2
	4		4
	3		4
	2		2
	2		3
Mean	2.789474		2
St Dev	0.976328		4
			3
			4
			2
			4
		Mean	2.76
		St Dev	1.090871

For the question, 师生关系只在大学学习时期有较大价值 (Do you think Professor-Student guanxi is only significant during the college years?), as shown in table 3, the responses were generally lukewarm however nearly identical with both sample populations. PSU students



responded with a mean of 2.78 with a standard deviation of 0.97, and BFSU students responded with a mean of 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.09; both results can be stated with a 75% confidence interval as well. Although the Student T-Test statistic is inappropriate and cannot be used as conclusive evidence for this project, both the homoscedastic and heteroscedastic figures were nearly identical, 0.926 and 0.925 respectively. Even with only using the mean to support this claim, this data suggests that both the PSU and BFSU samples believe that professor-student guanxi is 'somewhat important' leaning toward 'indifferent' even after graduating from college.

Tying in with the previous questions, this could suggest that these respondents believe their relationship with their professor does not necessarily end after graduating. Rationale for this answer could possibly be derived from two relationship types, professional or personal. Professional relationships could vary from work references to guanxi information exchanges, whereas personal relations might be the result after cultivating a mutually positive relationship. My interviewee believed that developing guanxi during college was important but its benefits would not materialize until after graduating:

"It's more important after college, establishing this guanxi can potentially improve your opportunities of success. In the US it's completely different than in China. In China, if they have good relationships with their professor, you might get opportunities you can't achieve yourself" (Yu).

He also said that these professional relationships were different in nature compared to personal relationships. "If I build up this relationship, it's because I want to achieve something. The intention is different than from your peers" (Yu). As stated earlier, guanxi is only utilized when one party wants to achieve a goal. Strong personal relationships fostered *ganqing* and the feeling to reciprocate is not emphasized:

“Among my friends, we have emotion. We will help each other, but we don’t expect each other to payback like the business guanxi” (Yu).

On the contrary, the indifferent responses for this question may suggest that professor-student guanxi is only important during the college years. My interviewee had several opinions on this matter:

“A lot of people just come to PSU and get a degree then leave, it’s a lot easier for me to return and get a good job back home with my parents help. It’s a lot harder if I wanted to stay here; it [securing a job] will based on my guanxi, the guanxi I developed here” (Yu).

(Table 4 当你居住在美国的时候，你适应这里对关系的运用)

	当你居住在美国的时候，你适应这里对关系的运用吗？
	Response PSU
	3
	2
	3
	1
	2
	3
	2
	1
	2
	2
	2
	2
	2
	2
	2
	3
	2
	3
	2
	2
Mean	2.157895
St Dev	0.60214

The question *当你居住在美国的时候，你适应这里对关系的运用* (During your stay here in the US, did you change your practice of guanxi to suit American culture?), as shown in table 4, resulted in an interesting response. First, I only asked this question to PSU students because it was not relevant to my BFSU respondents. The PSU students responded with a mean of 2.15, standard deviation of 0.6. This suggests that they did not change their habits for facilitating guanxi in the US. I believe that the students would not have changed their habits to facilitate guanxi among other international Chinese for the mindset between the two parties would have been similar. However, this survey response seems to contradict both of my interviewee's opinions, as well as my own. Their responses informed me of how guanxi is both facilitated and utilized differently in the US, particularly between professor-student guanxi. Additionally, this question may have been perceived differently among the respondents. For example, they might have believed this question was asking about their utilization of guanxi, when in fact they may not have utilized Chinese-style guanxi in the US such as manipulating contacts into obligating a favor.

The economic breakdown from the respondent's reported data failed to demonstrate conclusive evidence. I had tried to draw conclusions between respondent answers and reported income however the small sample size and difficulty in gathering an accurate average family income foiled these attempts. It would be interesting to draw evidence that shows either positive or negative correlation for the two variables.

The most frequent response from PSU participants was a family income of 10-20 thousand Ren Ming Bi (RMB) a month (16,000-32,000 USD), and the most frequent response from BFSU participants was a family income of 5-10 thousand RMB a month (8,000-16,000 USD). The mean for these responses fell within these frameworks as well. This suggests that the

PSU respondents on average have a higher family income than BFSU respondents. However, income's affect on respondent's answers are hard to conclude due to the small sample size.

Due to its undisclosed nature this figure is extremely difficult to calculate, however it would be naïve to state that the figures given are entirely truthful. Another possibility to explain the economic data could be as simple as the respondent's perceived opinions regarding their family's income. It is entirely possible that the respondents are unsure what their family's average reported income is.

Furthermore, one must also take into account respondent bias in regards to reporting one's family income. For instance, the rate of grey economics is much higher in China than in the US. Grey economics refers to undeclared wages or monetary gifts, often without income taxes or similarly based tax policies deducted. "Here [US] the income is higher but in my country [China] you must also calculate the grey income, no taxes and similar things. But if you add them up, it's hard to say which is still higher" (Yu).

Lastly, there are several aspects which I hope future research will address based off this paper. The survey needs to be conducted once again and with a larger sample population. The questions themselves could also be reworded to elicit better responses. The responses from the surveys while using a Student T-Test were promising however inconclusive because of failing to both reject the null hypothesis and being too small of a sample size. My hopes are that if another survey can be conducted with similar research questions and a larger sample size, more conclusive evidence can be stated. Furthermore, it would be interesting to have a third sample group to compare results with, for example American students regarding guanxi. The wording will be different but I imagine American students have similar post-graduation concerns and may use similar methods and networking routes to achieve one's goals.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

So what is guanxi? In the course of this paper, I hope that the reader has now garnered at least a basic understanding of this social practice. Guanxi can be observed in all aspects of Chinese culture. In recent history, the literature regarding this topic has focused on guanxi's practices in business and politics, and with this article, I hoped to have flushed out several aspects of guanxi's influence, practices, and nature in academia. Guanxi does not necessarily result in nepotism, backdoor access, or economic kickbacks. As repeated several times within the literature and my interviews, good guanxi requires a sense of *ganqing* (emotional connections). Without *ganqing*, these guanxi ties focus on manipulating reciprocal obligations and insincerely investing in guanxi connections with gift exchanges. This translucent property of guanxi makes it difficult to differentiate between guanxi with or without *ganqing*.

Guanxi's influence in academia has risen within the past decade. Its influence has grown in response to external pressures such as higher education auditing policies and increased pressure to publish articles within a short timeframe. The auditing policies aimed to ensure higher quality education but have actually facilitated fraudulent behavior and bribery between the higher standing professors and the blind peer review boards. The members of these blind peer review boards for selecting which articles to publish in their respective journals have caved under the pressure of guanxi to publish lower quality articles. This trend has been reviewed and studied by the likes of Tam and Chen, who demonstrate their findings by reviewing the articles published.

Undergraduate students also understand guanxi's influence and have observed its practice. Both of my survey sample groups from Beijing Foreign Studies University and The Pennsylvania State University have suggested that guanxi plays a significant role in their decision

making. The respondents at PSU believe that professor-student guanxi is important but its advantages may not materialize until one has graduated from college. They also value their guanxi networks higher than BFSU students if they choose to live in the US. This is due to the notion that their American guanxi network is solely based on the connections they have developed while in the US; whereas students that return to China may fall back upon their parent's or friend's guanxi networks.

The undergraduate students at PSU have also confirmed guanxi's practice in the workforce. Both of my interviewees have heard of stories where an individual is quickly promoted or successfully obtains a position he or she is unsuited for via guanxi. While it appears that they are condemning such behavior, my impressions tell me that they would take a position using guanxi if they are capable of performing well. This brings about the paradox of guanxi's acceptance in China's current society. On one hand, politicians and citizens alike denounce and condemn the use of guanxi. However, they also seem willing to use guanxi to their advantage if they believe they are well suited for the position but could not have acquired the post without utilizing guanxi. The survey respondents believe that American job markets are more meritoriously based than Chinese ones because of the guanxi's influence. Guanxi is seemingly a double-edged social practice; it withholds opportunities to those without a connection and provides to those with one. Guanxi never stays in a static state. It is a dynamic process which evolves in response to external pressures and its future in both Chinese society and academia is yet to be determined.

**Appendix A**  
**Penn State Survey Responses**

女	1 8 - 2 4	大学	研究生	湖南	结婚	高中	大学	>20,000	商业	中国
女	1 8 - 2 4	大学	研究生	广东	结婚	高中	初中	<2,000	商业	中国
女	1 8 - 2 4	研究生	博士	湖南	结婚	大学	大学	10,000-20,000	商业	美国
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	黑龙江	结婚	硕士	硕士	>20,000	工科	中国
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	博士	福建省	结婚	大学	硕士	10,000-20,000	商业	中国
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	北京	结婚	大学	博士	10,000-20,000	商业	美国
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	大学	广东	结婚	大学	高中	5,000-10,000	商业	美国
女	1 8 - 2 4	大学	大学	shenyang	结婚	大学	大学	>20,000	商业	中国
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	ShanDong	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商业	美国
女	1 8 - 2 4	大学	研究生	天津	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商业	中国
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	台北市	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商业	其它
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	湖南	离婚	大学	高中	>20,000		美国
女	1 8 - 2 4	高中	大学	浙江	结婚	高中	高中	>20,000	商业	欧洲
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	大学	Shandong	结婚	硕士	大学	>20,000	商业	美国
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	大学	辽宁	结婚	大学	大学	10,000-20,000	商业	美国
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	大学	FUJIAN	结婚	初中	初中	10,000-20,000	商业	美国
男	1 8 - 2 4	大学	大学	广东	结婚	大学	大学	10,000-20,000	商业	美国
女	2 4 - 3 0	大学	研究生	吉林省	离婚	大学	大学	>20,000	商业	中国
男	1 8 - 2 4	高中	研究生	广东	结婚	大学	高中	5,000-10,000	商业	美国

## Appendix A Continued

>30,000		5	5	5	1	3	10	2	3	4	5
<3,000		5	5	3	1	5	8	4	4	4	2
>30,000		5	5		0	5	8	3	2	5	2
>30,000		3	5	3	1	4	6	3	2	3	4
7,000-15,000		4	4	3	1	4	7	2	5	4	5
15,000-30,000		5	5	5	1	5	9	2	3	3	4
>30,000		4	4	4	1	3		2	4	3	3
7,000-15,000		4	4	3	1	4	6	3	3	3	3
7,000-15,000		3	5	3	1	5	8	4	4	4	3
>30,000		5	5	3	0	2	5	4	2	3	3
>30,000		5	5	1	1	5	10	1	5	5	2
7,000-15,000		5	5	5	0		9.5	2	3	4	4
15,000-30,000		4	4	5	1	4	7	4	2	4	3
>30,000		5	5	3	0	4	7	2	2	4	3
>30,000		4	2	4	0	4	9	4	5	5	4
15,000-30,000		4	5	4	1	4	8	4	4		4
15,000-30,000		5	5	5	1	5	9	3	3	3	3
>30,000		5	5	2	1	5	10	2	4	4	3
15,000-30,000		5	4	4	1	5	8	2	3	4	3
	Mean	4.473684	4.578947	3.611111	0.736842	4.222222	8.027778	2.789474	3.315789	3.833333	3.315789
	Std Dev	0.696692	0.768533	1.144752	0.452414	0.878204	1.479986	0.976328	1.056863	0.707107	0.885226



## Appendix B

## Beijing Foreign Studies University Survey Responses

女	18-24	高中	研究生	河北省	结婚	硕士	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	浙江	结婚	大学	其它【中专】	>20,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	高中	博士	广东	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	美国
女	18-24	大学	研究生	天津	结婚	博士	硕士	10,000-20,000	语言	其它
男	18-24	高中	大学	浙江	结婚	高中	高中	10,000-20,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	贵州	结婚	其它【大专】	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	欧洲
男	18-24	高中	大学	湖南	结婚	初中	高中	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	山东	结婚	大学	大学	(空)	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	博士	湖南省	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	大学	辽宁	结婚	初中	初中	2,000-5,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	高中	研究生	山东	结婚	初中	高中	<2,000	工科	中国
女	18-24	高中	博士	Jiangsu	结婚	硕士	博士	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	山西	结婚	大学	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	北京	结婚	硕士	高中	>20,000	语言	其它
男	18-24	大学	研究生	辽宁省	结婚	大学	大学	10,000-20,000	工科	中国
男	18-24	大学	研究生	辽宁省	结婚	大学	大学	10,000-20,000	工科	中国
女	18-24	大学	大学	浙江	结婚	高中	大学	10,000-20,000	商学	其它
女	18-24	大学	研究生	广东	结婚	硕士	大学	>20,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	高中	大学	安徽	结婚	大学	高中	2,000-5,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	高中	研究生	广东	结婚	大学	初中	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	湖南	结婚	硕士	大学	>20,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	大学	研究生	(空)	结婚	高中	高中	2,000-5,000	商学	美国
女	18-24	大学	研究生	浙江省	结婚	硕士	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	高中	研究生	湖北	结婚	大学	高中	10,000-20,000	商学	中国
女	18-24	高中	研究生	河南	结婚	博士	大学	5,000-10,000	商学	中国
男	18-24	大学	研究生	北京	结婚	大学	大学	>20,000	商学	欧洲

## Appendix B Continued

7,000-15,000		4	4	3	1	4	8	2	2	4	2
>30,000		5	5	3	1	4	9	2	2	4	3
>30,000		5	5	5	1	5	9	5	3	5	3
15,000-30,000		5	4	2	1	3	9	3	3	4	5
7,000-15,000		4	4	2	1	4	9	2	4	4	2
7,000-15,000		4	4	2	0	4	7	1	4	4	2
7,000-15,000		4	4	3	0	3	5				2
7,000-15,000		5		3	1	3	8	1	3	4	3
>30,000		5	5	4	0	4	6	2	2	4	3
7,000-15,000		5	5	3	1	4	8	2	2	4	3
7,000-15,000		5	5	4	0	3	4	3	3	3	2
7,000-15,000		5	4	1	1	4	10	4	4	5	2
7,000-15,000		5	4	3	0	3	6	2	4	3	3
15,000-30,000		4	4	3	0	3	6	4	4	4	4
3,000-7,000		3	4	3	0	4	5	2	4	4	1
3,000-7,000		3	4	2	1	4	5	2	4	4	2
>30,000		4	4	4	0	4	7	4	3	4	4
7,000-15,000		3	4	2	1	3	5	4	2	4	2
7,000-15,000		5	5	2	1	4	7	2	2	4	2
7,000-15,000		5	5	3	1	3	7	3	2	4	3
15,000-30,000		5	3	4	0	4	8	2	5	4	2
3,000-7,000		4	4	4	0	4	8	4	3	4	4
3,000-7,000		4	3	4	1		6	3	3	3	2
>30,000		5	4	4	1	4	9	4	4	4	4
7,000-15,000		4	4	4	1	5	8	2	3	5	3
>30,000		4	4	4	1	4	7	4	3	4	4
	Mean	4.384615	4.2	3.115385	0.615385	3.76	7.153846	2.76	3.12	4	2.769231
	Std Dev	0.697247	0.57735	0.951921	0.496139	0.597216	1.592289	1.090871	0.881287	0.5	0.951113

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- Beijing Foreign Studies University 2013, Beijing, China Jan-June 2013
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## Honors and Awards

- Schreyer's Honors College 2012-2014
- Paterno Fellows Program 2010-2014
- Benjamin A. Gillman Scholarship Recipient 2013
- Chinese HSK Level 5 proficiency 2014

## Association Memberships/Activities

- Taiwanese American Student Association Member 2010-Present
- TASA Activity Coordinator 2011-2012
- IES Abroad Ambassador 2013-Present
- Spend a Summer Day Liberal Arts and PFP Student Panelist 2014

## Professional Experience

- Tel Akko Archaeological Field School 2012
- Xie's English Marital Arts Instructional School Intern 2013