

## Face and Relation in Different Domains of Life: A Comparison Between Senior Citizens and University Students

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Differences between senior citizens and university students in the experience of various face-related emotions in contemporary Taiwanese society are explored. Based on our theoretical analyses of the Chinese concept of face, three hypotheses are proposed: (1) Senior citizens are more sensitive to face episodes related to their ascribed status in intimate society (i.e., their seniority as parents to their children within the family), while university students are more sensitive to face episodes related to their achieved status in operative society (i.e., their academic performance as students in the university). (2) Compared with university students, senior citizens are more sensitive to face episodes caused by significant others. (3) Both senior citizens and university students are concerned about maintenance of their moral face. Three empirical studies were conducted to test these

hypotheses. Qualitative data about face episodes collected in Study 1 supported all three hypotheses. Paired comparison tasks in Study 2 showed that senior citizens experience face through morality and achievement of their children, while university students are more sensitive to face episodes related to personal achievement and morality. Both groups felt loss of face for negative episodes of personal morality. In Study 3 participants evaluated their feelings toward a scenario of being publicly blamed by different social targets. Blame by one's own children was most likely to make senior citizens lose face, while blame by a professor had a greater effect for university students.

**Keywords:** domains of life, face-related emotions, interpersonal relations, significant other

