

Honesty as the Best Policy? An Examination of Online Chatters' Interpersonal Deception in Taiwan

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Abstract

With the advent of the Internet, the impact of online deception on interpersonal communication becomes intriguing. This study focuses on twenty online chatters in Taiwan with at least 2-year online chatting experience as research targets and employed qualitative interviews to solicit information about online interpersonal deception. It is found that (1) most interviewees reported that they had deceived strangers or intimate others online at least once, and vice versa; (2) their motive of deceiving intimate others was reported only for fun whereas the motives of deceiving strangers were for fun and/or preventing himself/herself from being hurt mentally; (3) interviewees indicated they could detect others' online interpersonal deception easily whereas their deceptions were seldom detected by others; (4) online interpersonal deception would not affect the relationships between people with an intimate social tie. However, the outcomes of online interpersonal deception between two strangers were associated with their attitudes about being deceived. Those who took online interpersonal deception seriously wanted to stop chatting with those who deceived and to take revenge whereas people who chatted online only for fun would ignore the online interpersonal deception.

**Keywords: deception, interpersonal deception,
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