People from Different Backgrounds Behave Differently in Online Deception

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Abstract. Online deception is a relatively new phenomenon that plays an increasingly important role in people's daily lives. This essay mainly focuses on the comparison of similarities and differences of this phenomenon in different countries and their citizens' attitudes. By deeply comparing people in different countries, this essay finds out that Americans prefer deception in different social media than the Chinese do. Americans prefer more realistic platforms but Chinese people prefer virtual platforms. The cultural tradition significantly impacts people's attitudes and acceptance toward online deception, Americans show more open-mindedness and tend to believe others due to their social atmosphere, but Chinese people are more introverted and prefer to keep a mental distance from others via the internet. To deal with different cultural and societal statuses, people will show different characters in online deception. This review brings a new perspective to existing studies and inspires further studies to be deeply engaged in that field. Future research should broaden the scope of research to cover more people and groups and pay more attention to developing countries as they are rapidly changing the role that social media plays in their social structures.

Keywords: Online deception, cultural difference, social media.

1. Introduction

Deception has existed in people's lives since human beings developed the ability to communicate and exchange their information with others. The reasons leading to deception may be varied, but the very basic purpose is to gain more resources and reach their intended goals which are hard to achieve without the aid of deception. Obviously, the occurrence of deception is an inevitable outcome as human society develops.

Online deception has occurred in the past few decades as the Internet and social media grow rapidly. However, due to the different availability of advanced networks and the Internet, as well as the differences in culture, religions, and traditions, people tend to behave slightly differently if they have to deception online or face online deception when using social media. Also, personal characteristics caused by cultural identity will enlarge the differences which enable researchers to identify and investigate them. Once human beings can deeply understand and handle the function and mechanisms of online deception, people can better take advantage of the Internet and make it a brilliant tool to aid future development.

The research problem of this essay is to determine how people from different backgrounds behave differently in online deception. The following paragraphs vividly introduce and illustrate the characters of online deception, the impact of online deception, and different attitudes toward online deception in countries. By stressfully comparing those questions and phenomena in America and China, this essay will be an insightful supplement to current research and offer some new perspectives to inspire future research, which will make this field well-recognized by human beings to boost technology growth.

2. A Detailed Description of Online Deception

2.1. The Developing Process of Online Deception

In modern society, the way of deception has expanded to the online environment with more sophisticated situations, which makes it difficult for people to distinguish them from other accurate information online. Because of these problems, combined with the accessibility of the Internet, online deception grew and developed rapidly and seems more harmful to society compared with traditional deception. Also, by combining social problems, the potential risks of online deception have enlarged in the past few decades, thanks to the framework of anonymity and asynchronism of online social media as they provide the possibility to make online deception more appealing and harder to verify for ordinary people. In fact, most users of social media are normal people, who lack some technological methods to make sure whether the information they touch is accurate or not. The intimate and immediate nature of the communication medium can also affect social presence, whereas media richness refers to the volume of information that can be broadcast at any one moment [1]. Text communications, which allow for visual anonymity, are the foundation of much computer-mediated communication. In this way, online deception is able to exist and spread to more people, getting their trust to reach the intended goals.

2.2. The Common Expression and General Impact of Online Deception

Online deception is a way for people to help people embellish themselves and reach their intended goals. Deception is a strategy for people to connect their benign or hostile intent. Therefore, compared to non-mediated, speech-based communication, lying to others could be simple [2]. The expressions of online deception vary from case to case, ranging from making friends to selling products or fake officials. However, Bargh's research indicates that visual anonymity promotes self-reporting and honesty [3]. Different countries have diverse developing statuses, which leads to different expressions of online deception with various channels and ways. In addition, the different economic statuses will create various levels of deception skills---more advanced skills coexist with the high economic growth rate in wealthy countries. Since the development of deception detection in the online environment is quite impressive and growing rapidly, the cues that help people recognize deception across different cultures and communication media will play a vital role in the future, as they will enable people to get rid of online deceptions and use social media more properly and easily.

3. The Impact of Online Deception Caused by Cultural Differences

People from different cultures have different values, and culture and the medium that individuals use for communication directly affects how people behave when being deceitful. In this way, the differences will create completely different scenarios, and the deception will adept different identities when entering various countries. A more open-cultural society usually faces more evanescent deception operations, whereas in a reserved country, the deception to also quite chary and introverted. As online deceptions are relatively hard to detect and recognize, the cues that were left in the process of deception are the crucial keys to helping people identify online deception at a very low cost of spirit or money. It's expected that people will deeply analyze the characters of those cues and methods to identify them. However, despite the fact that the existing research still cannot produce a coherent guide to eliminate the possibilities of deception online, until recently, the majority of the research has been conducted with Western people, especially Americans. That is, particular research on Eastern people is still absent in the academic field that provides enough opportunities for people like the Chinese to get rid of online troubles.

3.1. America

America is one of the most advanced countries in online technologies, as the experience of the past few decades enabled it to build up a well-developed system of security. However, with the advanced

internet infrastructure in America, people are more easily addicted to online communication and affected by online deception as it occupies a large role in their daily lives and is an important economic component of the whole country. In order to better understand computer security and crime---the serious and extreme online deception---the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Computer Security Institute undertook an annual study and according to the findings, one of the two most important computer security problems in the next years will be social engineering [4]. On the other hand, according to data gathered in North America and American Samoa, Samoan participants who were more collectivistic said they would be more inclined to try to deceive someone else if the lie was connected to a group or family issue [5]. Samoans were also far more inclined to try deceit due to fears about authority. The research above from Anue and Waters shows that people from different districts of a nation and those of different races will also behave differently and have unique preferences when it comes to deception [5]. The contributed factors may vary, from being affected by surrounding people to religious restrictions, which also cause troubles when researchers want to make a direct and accurate conclusion to predict these behaviors. American citizens claimed they would be more inclined to lie in order to maintain their privacy or spare the sentiments of the intended recipient [6]. This claim can also bring a new perspective when studying the reason for deception, as the reason may not always be evil. Some people prefer deception to protect themselves and make themselves feel a sense of security. Additionally, people realize that deception frequently occurs via a wide range of communication mediums in the US, despite the fact that public knowledge of computer-mediated deception is still quite limited due to the short time but rapid speed of development [7]. There are further cultural variations that haven't been detected by the existing studies. Future research issues were raised and considered in this way, and are expected to make more useful conclusions.

3.2. China

The limited number of studies that focus on Chinese people mainly find that with the rapidly growing of online media in China, people are more and more easily affected by fake advertisements, news, and details on mainstream media like TikTok and Weibo [8]. According to the authority data from CNNIC, with a total of 137 million users, China maintained its position as the second-largest Internet market in the world in 2006 [9]. In this way, the ability to recognize the similarities and differences in online deception between China and Western countries is becoming increasingly crucial, which requires improvements in deception detection skills and a more effects to detailed analysis of the deception techniques and methods. With the development of technology, the opportunities for people to engage in different cultural message exchanges are further increased [10]. In a setting of mediated communication, it's reasonable to anticipate that the deception behaviors of Chinese and Americans may differ significantly in media preference, deception aspects, and deception scope, due to the apparent differences in the development process and time between these two countries. Also, there is a higher level of diversity of deceivers than truth-tellers in China, which makes the deception situation more complex, compared with the traditional Western countries. Besides, the Chinese language is quite different from the composition of English. Compared to English words, Chinese words are generally shorter and have less diversity in word length. As a result, it's possible that the lexical complexity measurement isn't correct or acceptable in different countries. Chinese language complexity should be predicted more accurately by syntactic complexity than by lexical complexity. Compared to truth-tellers, liars often use fewer words and phrases, have simpler grammatical structures, and use more non-immediate third-person pronouns, which also significantly impact the success and procedure of online deception.

4. The Different Attitudes Toward Online Deception

Due to differing presumptions about the proper communication practices that are intrinsic to a particular culture, intercultural communication may be difficult [11]. It is both philosophically and practically significant to examine culture and deceit in today's global society since it can better guide us to take advantage of this important tool of communication. In this way, the social value of research in this field is stressed and highlighted, giving enough real values and possibilities to be deeply engaged in this field and come up with more reliable outcomes or conclusions. What's more, by examining the different attitudes in different countries on online deception and analyzing the cause and effect that brings them into existence, researchers can gain benefits by easily offering practical and simple suggestions to prevent people from being hurt by this risky behavior and make the online environment safer and clearer to satisfy the basic need for attracting more users and gain more credibility.

4.1. China

From the perspective of oriental culture, Chinese tend to behave more introverted and refuse to express themselves too much in online communication. To verify these conventional ideas and make them qualified for academic conclusions, existing research tends to use technologies to trace non-verbal cues such as pauses or punctuation, gestures, and facial expressions to determine whether the deception exists or not, which is considered one of the most well-accept and recognized methods in real lives applications. However, those technologies are not easily applied to ordinary people in their real lives as online communication is anonymous and asynchronicity, which prevents people from figuring out and examining the potential deception on time without the aid of others' methods or technologies [12]. From the view of a general understanding of nationality characters, compared to Western culture, it can be inferred that Chinese people tend to express characteristics of high context and high collectivism, which makes it hard to find a common regulation that helps people easily find a solution to distinguish deceptions from other texts due to this diversity and variance. Also, based on the family bond and cultural tradition, people may prefer to connect to their family members via social media rather than strangers, this stops online deception from occurring at the very first step. Furthermore, people who live in high-context cultures like China favor covert and implicit communication as well as nonverbal cues and tend to react more internally, which offers a serious challenge to the deception since it is much harder to achieve than the Western countries. This feature most profoundly distinguishes their reactions to online deception from those of Western people and reinforces the diversity of online deception caused by cultural differences. To sum up, the differences between Western culture and Oriental Culture for online deception are made up of the relationship between collectivism and individualism, freedom, language diversity, and government regulation.

4.2. America

Generally speaking, the atmosphere of freedom significantly forms the characters of online deceptions in America, which distinguishes it from other countries and regions. Specifically, the differences between male and female in online deception is also quite different in America, as male tend to focus on their family background, salaries, and height, whereas female tend to concentrate on body weight, appearance, and accessories. The diversity caused by gender is quite obvious in America compared to that of other countries [13]. As an important identity to study the social status of online deceptions in America, gender differences should be especially detected. Also, due to the open and free atmosphere in American society, Americans prefer to show more detail and personal information online. In this situation, privacy concerns are always a supplement to online deceptions that lower the credibility of social media in development, which stops more people from using those media. In addition, Americans always show more willingness to communicate with strangers compared with people from other societies like Chinese. This phenomenon may have both sides influence. On the one hand, people will choose to be honest with each other as their easygoing nature and show their

sincerity and gratitude to each other. On the other hand, this inheritance will make them relatively vulnerable to potential deceptions as they will easily believe the information they get when exposed to social media, which seems risky and harmful to their well-being and spiritual health [14]. In summary, the problem caused by social media is still risky in America, as the special social structure and human preference will profoundly impact the possibilities of citizens facing online deception and determine whether they will be harmed by these online behaviors.

5. Summary

The existing research is still limited when involving intercultural comparison of online deceptions. However, there's no doubt that people will show a distinguishable difference in online deceptions based on their social relationships, past experiences, genders, and cultural backgrounds. This paper mainly figures out that people from different backgrounds will show differences in social platform preferences, characters, social atmosphere, methods, and channels in online deception, which is also caused by people's cultural identity and tradition. People in China and America show palpable differences in their attitudes and social atmosphere in using online media, causing the diversity of online deception. As a result, future studies should be able to broaden the scope of research to involve more countries and pay attention to developing countries as they are rapidly changing the role that social media plays in their social structures. When completing the whole picture, the conclusion of this field can be worked as useful guidance that contains practical advice and navigation for people in different counties and regions to avoid online deception.

Also, by combining online deceptions with other related aspects of people's lives, the whole picture of cyber human behavior can be further detected and understood, which will aid research of other subjects like phycology, philosophy, and media study, determining and examining the accuracy and usefulness of their principles in real lives applications. This essay offers a new view for people to deeply research how the differences occurred and the mechanisms behind them, how they affect human lives by showing different characteristics, and some potential ways to help social media facilitate their self-regulation and provide better personal services to users, as well as improve the social overall well-being.

As more and more individuals are concerned about whether they can believe online information or not, the research output of this field can give them reliable sources of guidance to face similar problems in the future. By further researching this topic, people may be able to use social media more properly and beneficially and make it a reliable supplement to real live social activities that eliminate the inconvenience caused by physical distance. The future of computer-mediated communication will be more and more regulated and healthy by eliminating those risky components and helping users get rid of worrying about the accuracy of messages when exchanging information online.

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