Self-Construal, Self and Other Benefit, and the Generation of Deceptive Messages

Timothy R. Levine, Maria Knight Lapinski, John Banas, Norman C. H. Wong, Allison D. S. Hu, Keriane Endo, Karie Leigh Baum, and Lori N. Anders

Abstract

This study investigates how self-construals, locus of benefit, and importance affect the generation of deceptive messages from the perspectives of McCornack's (1992) Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) and Kim, Kam, Singelis, and Aune's (1999) Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation. An ethnically diverse group of participants (N = 186) generated messages in response to hypothetical situations that varied in potential threats to own or other's positive face. The messages were coded for deceit along IMT's four information manipulation dimensions. The results indicated that deception by omission was substantially more common than outright lies, equivocation, or evasion. Participants were more likely to lie, omit, and evade to save their own face than to protect others' face. Violations along all four dimensions were observed in the self-benefit conditions, but deception for other's benefit was accomplished though violations of quantity and manner. Self-construal was related to self-reported deceptiveness, but not to the actual messages generated. Therefore, the data were inconsistent with the Kim et al. Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation.

Deception is part of everyday conversation (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer & Epstein, 1996; Turner, Edgley & Olmstead, 1975), but deception researchers have largely ignored everyday, garden variety, deception. Although much research on deception exists, most investigations have studied lies in laboratory settings in Western countries to the exclusion of more subtle forms of deceptive messages, deception in everyday situations, and deception among people with diverse cultural identities. Presenting false information, however, represents only one of many ways to deceive others (Bowers, Elliott & Desmond, 1977; Ekman, 1985; Hopper & Bell, 1984; Turner et al., 1975).

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Deception involving equivocation (Bavelas, Black, Chovil & Mullett, 1990) or evasion (Galasinski, 1994; Turner et al. 1975), for example, is understudied. Similarly, most studies of deceptive message design focus on questions of classification (e.g., Hopper & Bell, 1984; Turner et al., 1975) or instructing participants to enact specific types of deception in a research lab (e.g., Burgoon, Buller, Guerrero, Affifi, & Feldman, 1996). Consequently, little is known about the prevalence and antecedents of specific forms of deception. Simply put, deception as most often studied may not represent actual deception in everyday conversation, about which, and despite claims about its prevalence, little is known. Less still is known about deceptive behavior in non-Western cultures.

The current study uses Kim, Kam, Singelis, and Aune’s (1999) Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation and Information Manipulation Theory (IMT; McCornack, 1992) to examine situational and individual differences in deceptive message generation. This study departs from previous intercultural deception research in that it focuses on what people would say rather than on judgements of preexisting, researcher controlled messages. Self-construal and self and other benefit are expected to affect deceptive message generation, and recent propositions advanced by Kim et al.’s (1999) Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation are tested. This investigation begins with a review of relevant theory and research.

Deception and Cultural Orientation

Self-Construal

Markus and Kitayama (1991) discussed independent and interdependent construal of self as an individual level explanation for culturally-based differences in perception, motivation, and behavior. Theory and research suggest that these different construals of the self should affect deceptive message production and processing (Kim et al. 1999; Lapinski, 1995).

The independent self-construal is typified by a view of self as unique and distinct from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) and is conceptually similar to Triandis’ (1989) discussion of idiocentrism. The individual is seen as an autonomous, independent person, whose behavior stems from one’s own affect and cognition. These individuals are concerned with achieving their own goals, and with clarity, directness, and efficiency in communication (Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994; Singelis, 1994).
People with interdependent self-construals see the self as defined by one's reference groups (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989) and focus on the interconnectedness of people. Interdependents emphasize status, roles, relationships, and belongingness in their understanding of the self. Those with an interdependent self-construal tend to be less direct, and are concerned with engaging in appropriate behaviors. The concept of face is especially salient when considering individuals with a strong interdependent construal of self (Kim et al., 1994).

These contrasting views of self co-exist in varying degrees within individuals (Gudykunst et al., 1996). The independent self, however, is argued to predominate in individuals from the United States and Western Europe, while interdependent self-construal is thought to be dominant in collectivist non-Western cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Although data have most often failed to support the hypothesized links between culture and self-construal (Park & Levine, 1999), self-construal has proven useful in predicting a variety of communication outcomes including: preferred conversational styles (e.g., Kim et al., 1996), conflict strategies (Oetzel, 1998), motivation to comply with others (Park & Levine, 1999; Park, Levine & Sharkey, 1998), embarrassment (Sharkey & Singelis, 1995; Singelis & Sharkey, 1995), requesting styles (Kim, Shin, & Cai, 1998), and the use of self and other promoting statements (Ellis & Wittenbaum, 2000). Kim et al. (1999) propose that self-construals should predict the conditions under which people are likely to deceive others. Kim et al.'s predictions, however, specify locus of benefit as a crucial moderator.

Self and Other Benefit

Because honesty is generally preferred over deception, people typically deceive others for a reason (Bok, 1978). That is, people usually don't deceive others just for the sake of deceiving them. Rather, deception is usually a means to some other desired end state. Deception is therefore most often enacted in pursuit of some goal or goals. Two common motivations for deception include deception for self-gain and deception for other's benefit (DePaulo et al., 1996; Kim et al., 1999). Self-motivated lies include lies told for self-protection and to gain personal advantage, whereas other-oriented lies are told to protect other or for some other person's advantage (DePaulo et al., 1996). DePaulo et al. (1996) found that lies are told more often for self gain than for other bene-
fit. Based on these results, it is reasonable to anticipate that the motivation for the lie will affect the frequency and type of deceptive message produced.

**Information Manipulation Theory**

IMT offers a multidimensional approach to deceptive message design integrating Grice’s (1989) theory of conversational implicature with research on deception as information control (e.g., Bavelas, 1990; Bowers et al., 1977; Metts, 1989; Turner et al., 1975). Specifically IMT uses Grice’s (1989) Cooperative Principle (CP) and its maxims as a framework for describing a variety of deceptive message forms. IMT views deception as arising from covert violations of one or more of Grice’s four maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner). Covert violations of quality involve the falsification of information. Covert violations of quantity can result in "lies of omission." Deception by evasion involves covert violations of relevance, and deception by equivocation results from the covert violation of manner.

IMT also offers a pragmatic explanation for why deceptive messages deceive. As McCornack (1992) wrote:

It is the principal claim of Information Manipulation Theory that messages that are commonly thought of as deceptive derive from covert violations of the conversational maxims. ...Because the violation is not made apparent to the listener, the listener is misled by her/his assumption that the speaker is adhering to the CP and its maxims (p. 5-6).

Thus, covert violations of one or more of Grice’s conversational maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner) are believed to result in messages that are functionally deceptive.

Several tests of IMT have been conducted including McCornack, Levine, Solowczuk, Torres, & Campbell’s (1992) original study, and subsequent studies by Jacobs, Dawson, and Brashers (1996), Lapinski (1995), Levine (1998), Levine (2001), Murai (1998), and Yeung, Levine, and Nishyama (1999). These studies provided subjects with a hypothetical situation, and a message exemplifying a violation of one of the information dimensions. Subjects evaluated the messages in terms of honesty. Across studies, the data have been generally been supportive of IMT. Messages violating one of Grice’s maxims (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner) are rated as significantly more deceptive than baseline messages designed to be honest (i.e., accurate, informative,
clear, and relevant). These data, however, tell us little about the content of actual deceptive messages, only that covert violations of Grice’s (1989) maxims are perceived as deceptive. It is unclear, for example, which type of violation is used most frequently under differing conditions by different kinds of people. Researchers have speculated, however, that self and other benefit and self-construal should predict information manipulation (Kim et al., 1999; Lapinski, 1995).

**IMT, Culture and Self-Construal**

Recently, IMT has been investigated from an intercultural perspective. Lapinski (1995), for example, examined self-construal and self and other benefit on ratings of message honesty. The results of this study replicated previous IMT findings. The results also indicated that independents tend to see lies as less deceptive, while interdependents tend to see relevance violations as more honest. Violations of quantity and manner were seen as more deceptive when self-serving than when for another’s benefit.

Murai (1998) tested some of IMT’s predictions in Japan. Consistent with IMT, he found that violations of manner were rated as more deceptive than control messages. Also consistent with IMT, he did not find differences between messages violating multiple maxims and messages involving a single violation in terms of ratings of message deceptiveness.

Finally, Yeung et al. (1999) attempted to replicate IMT findings in Hong Kong. They found that messages violating quality and relevance were rated as deceptive while violations of manner and quantity were not. However, ratings of all four violations were correlated with ratings of honesty leading Yeung et al. to conclude that messages that were seen as violations were rated as deceptive. Taken together, these three studies suggest that IMT may offer a useful framework for considering cross-cultural differences and similarities in deception.

**Predictions and Research Goals**

The current study was designed to test the effects of type of motivation to deceive and self-construal on the frequency and type of deceptive message generated. First, we believe that there will be substantial variability in the prevalence of the different violation types. Because people often behave as cognitive misers (Fiske & Taylor, 1991),
it is reasonable to expect people to prefer less, rather than more, effortful forms of deception. Of the four violations types specified by IMT, quantity stands out as, by far, the easiest to covertly violate. Omission (i.e., simply not saying something) is much easier than more active forms of violations which all require omitting the hidden information plus generating additional deceptive content. Similarly, lies of omission allow for the least face-threatening recovery if caught deceiving (e.g., "Sorry, I forgot that part of the story..."). Further, the remaining three violations types seem more constrained by the context and may require greater effort to keep the violation covert. Therefore, we predict that violations of quantity will be more prevalent than violations of quality, manner and relevance (H1).

Recall that DePaulo et al. (1986) found that people reported lying more frequently for self-benefit than for other's sake. Since we anticipate replicating these results with a different research design and sample, we hypothesize a main effect for benefit on quality violations such that people will more frequently violate the maxim of quality in a self-benefiting situation than in a situation where deception would benefit another person (H2). Because it is unclear how type and amount of motivation might affect other forms of violations, we question whether violations of quantity, relevance, and manner will differ as a function of self or other benefit and the degree of motivation (RQ1).

A Cultural Model of Deception

In a recent article that borrowed heavily from the earlier work of Lapinski (1995), Kim et al. (1999) proposed a Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation. Kim et al. argue that cultural self-concept "may exert a considerable amount of influence on one's motive for deception" and that "independent and interdependent construals of the self are one of the most important self-schemata for distinguishing culture" (1999, p. 62). Kim et al. reasoned cultural differences are reflected in different self-construals, and different construals of the self result in systematic difference in the social motives that guide communication. People who have a highly independent self-construal are more motivated by self-gain, while those who are highly interdependent are more motivated by a concern for others. To the extent that these premises are accurate, differences in self-construals should be associated the different motivations for deception, and these differences should stem from systematic cultural differences in self-concept.
Specifically, Kim et al.'s (1999) model advances two propositions linking self-construal, locus of benefit, and the use of deception. Based on independents' focus on self and interdependents' focus on others, Kim et al. (p. 70) specified that:

Proposition 1: Individuals with highly interdependent self-construals will be willing to engage in deception for other-oriented motivation rather than for self-oriented motivation.

Proposition 2: Individuals with highly independent self-construals will be willing to engage in deception for self-oriented motivation rather than for other-oriented motivation.

Kim et al. (1999), however, did not provide an empirical test of their model. A primary goal of the current study, therefore, is to test the extent to Kim et al.'s propositions are consistent with the data. The method used to examine these predictions is described in the following section.

Method

Participants

The participants were 186 undergraduate students from an ethnically diverse Western University. The sample was 52% female and 48% male, with a mean age of 21.2 years. The ethnic makeup of the sample was 65.6% Asian, 10.8% Caucasian, 9.7% mixed, 9.1% Pacific Islander, 1% Black or Hispanic, and 3.8% other. All participants received extra credit in exchange for their participation.

Design

This experiment used a 2 (self-other benefit) by 2 (high-low importance) independent groups design. Independent and interdependent self-construals were included as measured independent variables. Quantitative coding of written messages in terms of the 4 information manipulation dimensions (quality, quantity, relevance, and manner) specified by IMT served as the dependent measures.

Procedure, Scenarios and Manipulations

Participants were each provided with a questionnaire. The first page of the questionnaire contained a hypothetical situation adapted from
Lapinski (1995). Lapinski pre-tested the situations to ensure that they provoked deception and reported successful manipulation checks. Participants were instructed to read the situation carefully and to imagine that they were in that situation. The situation began:

Imagine you are taking a class this semester which requires that students work in groups and to give a major group presentation in front of class. Each member must give part of the presentation, and all group members get the same grade. The presentation is worth 50% (5%) of the final grade in the class.

For those randomly assigned to the other benefit condition, a second paragraph read:

Imagine that you and three of your classmates are members of the same group. You need a good grade, and have really worked hard on your part. The night before the presentation, you heard that one of your group members went out partying late. On the day of the presentation, everyone does well but the group member who went out partying the night before. This person was not prepared, and made several obvious mistakes. You know their presentation was poorly done, and you think the group will get a poor grade because of them. After class, what would you say to your group member who did poorly? (Please write exactly what you would say, or describe how you would respond)

Those randomly assigned to the self benefit condition read the following:

Imagine that you and three of your classmates are members of the same group. Your group needs a good grade, and the group has really worked hard. The night before the presentation, you went out partying late. On the day of the presentation, everyone does well but you. You were not prepared, and you made several obvious mistakes. You know your part of the presentation was poorly done, and you think the group will get a poor grade because of you. After class, one of your group members asks you "What happened?" What would you say to your group member? (Please write exactly what you would say, or describe how you would respond).

The purpose of generating a deceptive message in the other benefit condition would be to protect the offending group member’s face because truthful messages would likely threaten that person’s face.
Alternatively, in the self-benefit condition, deception would function to protect one's own face and the truth would threaten one's positive face.

In addition, we attempted to manipulate the importance of the situation by varying the extent to which the assignment affected the participants' and others' grades. In the low importance condition, the presentation was worth 5% of the total class grade, while in the high importance condition, it was worth 50% of the final grade in the class. The importance manipulation was crossed with the benefit manipulation, and participants were randomly assigned to conditions.

In all conditions, after reading the hypothetical condition, participants were asked to write out exactly what they would say if they were in that situation. Participants were not told that the focus of the study was on deception, nor were they given any further instructions on how to respond. These written messages were coded for violations along four dimensions (see below).

After completing the message generation task, participants completed a number of scales containing Likert-type items. These included the self-construal scales, perceptions of honesty items, and manipulation checks. The questionnaire concluded with demographic questions.

**Self-Report Measurement**

Self-construals were assessed with Kim and Leung's (1997) revised self-construal scale. Fourteen items assessed interdependent self-construal ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.86$, $\alpha = .82$) and 15 items measured independent self-construal ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 0.70$, $\alpha = .84$). In addition, a seven-item importance manipulation check scale ($\alpha = .78$), 3-item self-benefit manipulation check scale ($\alpha = .88$), a 3-item other benefit manipulation check scale ($\alpha = .41$), a 2-item realism scale ($\alpha = .52$), and a 2-item self-perceived honesty scale ($\alpha = .53$) were included. All scales used Likert-type items with 7-point response formats and reflected items. The scales with low reliabilities were not primary independent or dependent variables. Further, because the manipulations checks seemed to work in spite of low reliabilities (see below), we do not view these estimates as constituting a serious threat to the substantive conclusions drawn from these data.
Message Coding

Each message was coded by 6 trained coders working in two groups of three coders. Each group of coders read each message and quantitatively coded the message along the 4 information dimensions specified by IMT. Coding was accomplished with 5 point scales where 1 was no violation whatsoever, 3 was a moderate violation, and 5 was an extreme violation. Once each group formed a consensus for each rating, that value was recorded. The 4 dependent measures were calculated by averaging the scores given by the two groups of coders.

Intercoder reliabilities were calculated with intergroup correlations. The resulting reliabilities were .88 for quantity, .79 for quality, .55 for manner, and .17 for relevance. The low uncorrected reliabilities for relevance and manner were anticipated because of restriction in range. Recall that we predicted that relevance and manner violations would be infrequent.

Examining the actual intercoder agreement for manner, the coders were in exact agreement on 56% of the cases, and the coders differed by only a single scale point on 27% of the cases. In no case were the coders off by 4 scale points, and they were off by 3 scales points only 4% of the time. For relevance, although the reliability was only .17, the exact intercoder agreement was 87% and in another 8% of the cases, the coders were off by a mere scale point.

Thus, the low intercoder correlations were apparently artifacts of a lack of variance (see below), and do not reflect serious disagreements among coders or problems with the coding scheme. This can be clearly seen in a $r = .88$ correlation between the variances in coded scores and the intercoder reliabilities. When correcting for restriction in range (where the obtained standard deviation for quantity was used as the estimate of the unrestricted standard deviation), the corrected reliabilities for relevance and manner were .65 and .82 respectively.

Results

Manipulation and Validity Checks

The manipulations were assessed with a series of 2 x 2 ANOVAs. Participants in the self-benefit condition ($M = 6.3$) rated the
situation as more potentially damaging to their own face than did the participants in the other-benefit condition ($M = 4.2$), $F(1, 183) = 97.52$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .35$. No other effects were significant for threats to own face. Participants in the other-benefit condition ($M = 5.7$) rated the situation as more potentially damaging to the other person’s face than did the participants in the self-benefit condition ($M = 4.6$), $F(1, 183) = 47.92$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .21$. No other effects involving other’s face were significant. Participants in the high importance condition ($M = 6.3$) rated the situation as more important than did the participants in low importance condition ($M = 5.6$), $F(1, 183) = 32.77$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .15$. No other effects involving importance ratings were significant. Thus, all three manipulations were successful, and no evidence of confounded or bleeding manipulations was observed. Because the other-benefit condition had questionable face validity, further validity checks are reported in the primary results.

Ratings of situational realism were also examined. Participants rated the situations as generally realistic ($M = 5.6$ on a 7-point scale). However, in a truly self-serving fashion, participants saw the situation where the other person was responsible for the poor grade as very realistic ($M = 6.2$) while rating the situation where they were responsible for the failure as only moderately realistic ($M = 5.1$), $F(1, 183) = 34.02$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .16$.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Information Manipulations as a Function of Locus of Benefit and Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Self Benefit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation Type</td>
<td>Trivial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Higher scores indicate greater violations.*
Primary results

Hypothesis one predicted that violations of quantity would be more prevalent than other forms of information manipulation. This hypothesis was initially examined with an one-way repeated measures ANOVA with the ratings of the four violation types as the dependent measure. The results indicated substantial variation among the information dimensions, $F(3, 179) = 132.87$, $p < .01$, $h^2 = .40$. As predicted, violations of quantity ($M = 2.93$) were most prevalent, followed by manner ($M = 1.85$), quality (1.48) and relevance (1.11). Subsequent planned comparisons indicated that all 4 means differed significantly from one another at $p < .001$. If scores of 3 or greater on each dimension were considered to constitute clear violations, then 56.7% of participants engaged in deceptive omission (i.e., quantity violation), 10% equivocated (i.e., manner violation), 8.9% outright lied (quality violation), and 1% evaded (relevance violation).

Table 2
Correlations between Self-Construals and Information Manipulation Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Interdependence</th>
<th>Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Across Benefit Conditions: (N = 179)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Benefit (N = 98)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Benefit (N = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 2 predicted that participants would more frequently violate the maxim of quality in a self-benefitting situation than in a situation where deception would benefit another person. The data were consistent with this hypothesis. Quality violations were more frequent (\(M = 1.8\)) in the self-benefit condition than in the other benefit condition (\(M = 1.1\)), \(F(1, 176) = 24.70, p < .01, \eta^2 = .12\). No effects for importance were observed.

The research question examined whether locus of benefit and importance would affect the other information dimensions. Significant main effects for benefit and importance and a benefit by importance interaction emerged for quantity violations. Participants violated quantity more for self benefit (\(M = 3.2\)) than for other benefit (\(M = 2.7\)); \(F(1, 176) = 4.30, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02\), but less for important (\(M = 2.66\)) than unimportant (\(M = 3.17\)) situations; \(F(1, 176) = 4.03, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02\). These effects, however, were qualified by an interaction with importance, \(F(1, 176) = 6.07, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03\). The lower quantity scores were confined to the other-benefit, high importance cell.

Relevance also produced main effects for benefit, \(F(1, 176) = 6.57, p < .05, \eta^2 = .04\), and importance, \(F(1, 176) = 5.22, p < .05, h^2 = .03\). Relevance violations were confined to the self-benefit, high importance cell (\(M = 1.24\), other means ranged from 1.01 to 1.09). No effects were evident for manner. Means of all four violation types broken down by benefit and importance are presented in Table 1.

Kim et al.'s (1999) two propositions were tested by examining separate correlations between self-construals and each information dimension in the two benefit conditions. Kim et al.'s proposition 1 predicted that "individuals with highly interdependent self-construals will be willing to engage in deception for other-oriented motivation rather than for self-oriented motivation" (p. 70). The data were not consistent with this proposition. Scores on interdependent self-construal were not correlated with violations along any information dimension in the other-benefit condition.

The data were also inconsistent with Kim et al.'s proposition 2, which suggests that individuals with highly independent self-construal will be willing to engage in deception for self-oriented motivation rather than for other-oriented motivation. Scores on independent self-construal were not correlated with violations of any information dimension in the self-benefit condition.

Alternative statistical analyses also failed to find interactions between self-construals and locus of benefit. The analyses involved
hierarchical regression analyses where the main effects for benefit, independent self-construal, and interdependent self-construal were loaded on the first step and interactions (product terms) were added on a second step. These analyses found the effects for locus reported above, but no main effects or interactions involving self-construal were significant at \( p < .05 \).

Further exploratory analyses failed to find any link between either independent or interdependent self-construal and any coded message feature. However, scores on independent self-construal did predict self-reported honesty in the other \( r = .31, p < .05 \) but not the self \( r = .14, p = ns \) benefit condition. That is, people scoring highly in independent self-construal tended to see themselves as more honest in the other benefit condition, even though an objective analysis of behavior failed to reveal greater honesty. Statistical power for the tests of the two propositions was \(.63\) for correlations for \( r > .20 \) and \(.91\) for \( r > .30 \). The power for the tests of self-construal on violations across conditions was \(.86\) for correlations of \( r > .20 \) and \(.99\) for \( r > .30 \). Because Kim et al.'s (1999) model predicted "considerable" effects sizes, several correlations were calculated, and because all were nonsignificant, statistical power is not a plausible explanation for the failure of the Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation. The correlations are presented in Table 2.

A final set of analyses was conducted as an additional validity check of the locus of benefit manipulation. Even though the manipulation checks suggested that all manipulations functioned as intended, some might question the face validity of the manipulation and argue that the results were attributable to an undetected confound. In order to rule out this possibility, regression analyses were conducted with the self and other benefit manipulation check scales as the independent variables. If the ratings of self and other benefit produced results parallel to results reported above, then we can have additional confidence in the validity of the results.

Ratings of self-benefit were positively associated with violations of quality (\( \beta = .204, p < .01 \)) and relevance (\( \beta = 1.61, p = .05 \)). Ratings of other-benefit predicted quantity violations (\( \beta = -.17, p < .03 \)). Because these results replicated the results reported above, they indicate that the benefit manipulation functioned as intended. They further suggest that the quality and relevance effects were a result of self-benefit while differences in quantity stemmed from perceptions of other-benefit.
Discussion

This study investigated the extent to which self-construal and locus of benefit affect the generation of deceptive messages. Participants generated messages that were coded based on McCornack's (1992) Information Manipulation Theory (IMT). Three main issues were investigated.

First, this study examined variation in the prevalence of the violations types. It was predicted that violations of quantity would be most common because those should be the easiest way to deceive. The data were consistent with this prediction. Quantity was, by far, the most frequently violated information manipulation dimension in the current study. Violations of quality, manner, and relevance were much less common.

Second, this study examined main effects for locus of benefit on information manipulation. The data indicated that benefit condition was an important situational determinant of three of the four information dimensions. Consistent with DePaulo et al. (1996), people falsified (i.e., violated quality) more for self rather than other benefit. This effect was also observed for violations of quantity and relevance. People omitted and evaded more for self than other benefit.

The effects of benefit, however, were moderated by importance. For quantity violations, differences were only observed in the low importance condition suggesting that participants did withhold face-threatening information when the target person's offense was relatively minor. The pattern of means for relevance, however, was different. Relevance violations were most often observed for self-benefit when importance was high. Taken together, these findings suggestion that degree of benefit, in addition to type, affects deceptive message generation.

When examining the means in an absolute sense, it appears that participants lied (quality violation) only for self-benefit. Deception in the other benefit condition was almost exclusively accomplished though manner (i.e., equivocation) and quantity (omission) violations. Evasion was used only in the important, self-benefit condition.

Third, this study provided the first formal test of Kim et al.'s (1999) Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation. Kim et al.'s model predicted that scores on interdependent self-construal would predict other-oriented deception, while an independent self-construal would lead to deception for self-oriented motivation.

The data were not consistent with Kim et al.'s model. In spite
of reasonable statistical power, none of the predicted correlations were observed. This leads us to reject the propositions of the Cultural Model of Deceptive Communication Motivation.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that Kim et al.'s model failed. The argument that interdependent self-construals will lead to other-motivated deception, while an independent self-construal will lead to self-motivated deception is obviously too simplistic. For example, to the extent that those with more independent self-construals are relatively more concerned with face, one might argue that they should be highly motivated to deceive in order to save their own face as well as another's. Similarly, the extent to which people with highly independent self-construal tend to be raised in Western cultures influenced by Christianity, those with high independent self-construal may have more moral prohibitions against deception, or at least the telling of outright lies. Although neither of these other explanations was evident in our results, our point is that the relationship between deception and culture is likely to be considerably more intricate than suggested by the Kim et al. model. Finally, recent evidence suggests that the self-construal constructs, or at least the scales used to measure the two self-construals, are problematic (Levine et al., 2002).

Several limitations in the current study deserve attention. However, we believe that three limitations are of little real consequence. The first is that the alpha reliabilities for several scales were low. Because these scales were not central to the hypotheses, the low reliabilities have little impact on our conclusions. These low reliabilities did lower the power of the manipulation checks, but the manipulation checks were successful anyway. Because unreliability attenuates effects, the implication is that our manipulations were almost certainly stronger than they appeared.

Second, some intercoder reliabilities were low as well. These low reliabilities stemmed more from anticipated restriction in range in the actual message behavior than from disagreement among coders. Because restriction in range lowers statistical power, yet we found significant effects anyway, these concerns do little to change our substantive conclusions. Again, we expect that the findings may be stronger than they appear.

Third, the face validity of the other-benefit situation might be questioned. It might be argued that the other benefit condition was confrontational, and that other unknown variables might be operating. However, the situations were successfully used in previous research, and pre-testing showed the situations to be lie-
provoking. Further, manipulation checks were consistent with the
manipulation functioning as intended and that the results using the
self and other benefit manipulation checks as the predictor variables
provided additional validation.

One limitation that is of real concern was the use of only one
situation per benefit condition. This is especially true in the other
benefit condition where the other who stood to benefit from the
deception had hypothetically done harm to the participant. This may
have made other-severing deception less likely than in a situation
where the other was more apt to be viewed sympathetically. Hence,
firm conclusions would require replication with different situations.

In conclusion, this study examined the effects of self-construal
and motivation to deceive on the four information manipulation
dimensions specified by IMT. Violations of quantity predominated.
Further, locus of benefit was more predictive of information
manipulation than self-construal. We hope that these issues will
provide the basis for future study.

Footnotes

1. Although the Lapiniski (1995) thesis is not cited in Kim et al. (1999), the
similarity between the two works is striking, and reason exists to believe that the
former work influenced the latter.

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