

Abstract

The recent high-profile cases of corporate corruption have been amplifying the risk of deception, especially in terms of its severity and pervasiveness (Fleming & Zyglidopoulos, 2007). The assumption of many studies on deception is that people are motivated to cheat or deceive because they are motivated by their own self-interest. This research provides new insights into why individuals may cheat or deceive in the absence of external incentives. In particular, it suggests that deception may actually facilitate cognitive sophistication and enhance problem solving ability in tasks that require similar cognitive skills. As a result, the active and sophisticated thinking involved in cheating might make people better decision makers and problem solvers than people who tell the truth. We propose a set of studies to investigate this prediction.