The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review

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Mini-dissertation accepted for the degree Master of Health Sciences in Counselling Psychology at the North-West University

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Examination: June 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study would not have been possible without the help and support of these individuals who have helped and motivated me throughout the process. To them, I'd like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation.

First, to my supervisor, **Professor Karel Botha**. I am extremely thankful for the support and guidance you provided throughout the research process.

Second, to the **North-West University**. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to expand my knowledge and skills.

Third, to my partner, **Megan**. Thank you for your continuous love and support throughout the programme.

Fourth, to my mother, **Lynn**. Thank you for supporting me through these many years. I could not have done it without your support. The process has not been easy; however, you have made it worthwhile, and I am eternally grateful for your love and support.

PERMISSION LETTER FROM SUPERVISOR

I, Prof Karel Botha, grant permission to Darian Bonner to submit the following mini dissertation for examination purposes towards the obtainment of a Master of Health Sciences in Counselling Psychology: *The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review*. The article may also be submitted to the *South African Journal of Psychology* for publication purposes.

Prof. KFH Botha
Supervisor
Date: July 22, 2025

DECLARATION BY AUTHOR

I, Darian James Bonner, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation study titled *The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review* is entirely my own work. The referencing and editorial guidelines provided by the publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA 7th edition) were followed to the best of my ability to ensure accuracy in citing information and giving acknowledgement. This work has not been previously submitted for examination and therefore serves as fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining a Master of Health Sciences in Counselling Psychology from the North-West University.

SIGNATURE

Darian Bonner

SIGNATURE

Karel Botha

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

ABBREVIATIONS

APA	American Psychological Association
COMPRES	Community Psychosocial Research
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HREC	Health Research Ethics Committee
IDT	Interpersonal Deception Theory
IMT	Information Manipulation Theory
PCC	Population Concept Context
SR	Self-Regulation

SUMMARY

Lying is a common yet complex behaviour that involves deliberate and effortful inter- and intrapersonal strategies, through which individuals seek to achieve specific outcomes while simultaneously managing the risks associated with deception. It thus requires effective self-regulation—the capacity to modify one's emotions, cognition, and behaviour in response to contextual demands—whether to refrain from or to persist in telling a lie. Previous research on lying and self-regulation is however fragmented and often yields contradictory findings. In addition, as no studies could be found that systematically synthesize research on lying from a self-regulation perspective, important questions about the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood remains.

The aim of this study was therefore to systematically identify and map the existing scientific literature on the relationship between lying and self-regulation in adults. A scoping review, based on the framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005), was conducted to identify 21 studies for inclusion, which were then subjected to inductive content analysis. Scientific approval was obtained from the research entity and research committee for Community Psychosocial research (COMPRES), and ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the North-West University (NWU-00158-24-S1).

Despite limited available empirical studies, two major themes emerged from the study, namely lying and the strength of self-regulation, and lying and the process of self-regulation. *Strength* refers to the degree of proficiency in, and the extent to which an individual has access to self-regulation as a resource. This was evident in four subthemes, namely self-regulation as a personality trait, self-regulation as a moral characteristic, depleted self-control, and locus of control. *Process* in contrast, refers to the application and process of

control in the context of telling a lie, as evident in three sub-themes, namely, cognitive-, non-verbal-, and emotional control processes.

Most studies focused on self-control as both a strength and a process in lying behaviour but lack information on other self-regulation mechanisms like goal intention, motivation, self-monitoring, goal discrepancy, and change implementation. Evidence further suggests a complex relationship between lying and self-regulation, as indicated by (i) the paradoxical role self-control plays in lying; (ii) the role context plays; and (iii) the dynamic, process-nature of lying and how it is regulated over time. Therefore, while the review identified key themes that suggest a link between lying and self-regulation, there is no clear evidence detailing how this relationship unfolds in practice. Furthermore, many studies did not consider cultural, developmental, and situational factors, while inconsistent findings reduce the conclusions that can be drawn from the literature, possibly highlighting the need for more standardised and replicable research methods.

Based on the findings, further research is recommended to adopt a more comprehensive approach that fully explores how lying and self-regulation interact over time and across various contexts, while also considering other key self-regulation mechanisms.

PREFACE

This mini-dissertation complies with the specified guidelines established by the North-West University's A-Rules for using the article format. The American Psychological Association's (APA) seventh edition standards are followed in Sections 1 and 3 of this mini-dissertation. Section 2, on the other hand, follows the instructions for authors provided by the *South African Journal of Psychology,* which also adheres to the APA 7th edition. All areas of psychology are represented in the peer-reviewed articles published in English by the *South African Journal of Psychology*. The journal gives preference to articles that are pertinent to Africa and that discuss the psychological aspects of societal development and change. The entire mini dissertation has been organised according to chronological page numbers, as shown in the table of contents; Section 1 begins on page 1 and follows this format until the addenda (A to E), which are appended.

STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH MINI-DISSERTATION

This mini-dissertation comprises three sections. The aim of Section 1 is to provide a literature review, to define and explain key concepts in detail, and to provide a comprehensive methodology. The manuscript, prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the *South African Journal of Psychology* is presented in Section 2. It includes a brief integrated background, problem statement, aim, methodology, results, and a comprehensive discussion. Section 3 provides a critical and personal reflection on the researcher's areas of growth and challenges throughout the research process.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION (ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND)

Introduction

Background and Orientation

Lying is a significant everyday moral occurrence that individuals are faced with (Reins & Wiegmann, 2021) within politics, intimate partner relationships, families, and the workplace (Easterling et al., 2019; Eenkhoorn & Graafland, 2011; Garbinsky et al., 2020; Reinhardt & Reinhard, 2023). Lying, viewed through a philosophical lens, has been understood as saying something one believes or knows to be false with the intent to deceive the listener (Stokke, 2013). From a psychological perspective, lying has been conceptualised as the act of delivering what the speaker knows to be false information to manipulate the beliefs or behaviour of the receiver (Lee & Imuta, 2021). The American Psychological Association (APA, 2023) defines lying as a false statement or a false presentation, known to be untrue, that is made with the intention to deceive.

According to Celse and Chang. (2017), lying may also be a social skill that facilitates polite conversation and can be essential in competitive environments for self-preservation. This notion aligns well with how individuals engage with deception in different ways, particularly in the use of strategic gain to weigh the potential benefits or concerns (Chance et al., 2011). These benefits of lying may therefore contribute to lying as intentional behaviour—according to Derksen. (2012), lying is intentionally conveying a falsehood; therefore, it is deliberate. This is further evident in the classic definition of Isenberg (1973, p. 466), who stated that "lying or a lie is a statement made by one who does not believe it with the intention that someone else shall be led to believe it", clearly implying that the liar is aware of the act of lying and has an underlying intention behind their action (Mahon, 2015). Chang et al. (2021), found that self-awareness can influence the inclination to lie, suggesting that individuals who are more connected to their thoughts and feelings may engage in less deceptive behaviour. However, this relationship between lying and self-regulation is not

straightforward, as there are other aspects of an individual that can affect how their self-awareness impacts their lying behaviour (Chang et al., 2021). Aspects such as emotional intelligence, emotional states, and personality traits can impact self-awareness and the likelihood of lying or being deceitful (Chang et al., 2021; Demedardi et al., 2021; Reinhard & Schwarz, 2012). Another example of the liar's awareness is that a more significant lie gives the liar more control, and as a result, the more at stake, the more plausible their lies become (Derksen, 2012).

From these definitions, lying is related to concepts such as dishonesty, deception, fibbing, and feigning, and needs some further clarification. Deception or deceit refers to any intentional distortion or withholding of facts to mislead others (APA, 2018), and in the process of doing so, some breach of trust occurs (Bellucci & Park, 2020; Chisholm & Feehan, 1977; Tai, 2012). Dishonesty, in turn, is described as an act without honesty (Barber, 2020; Miller, 2020; Tawiah et al., 2022), fibbing as the act of telling a lie or making up a false statement (Green, 2015), and feigning as the act of pretending or exaggerating something often to deceive others or to achieve a specific goal (Bošković & Akca, 2024; Jelicic et al., 2017) The overlap between these concepts is therefore clear and differentiating between them involves an understanding of the nuanced differences regarding impact, intent, and context (Bryant, 2008; Cole, 2001; Kaplar & Gordon, 2004).

A lie, specifically with the intention to exert control, is more calculated and deliberate, where the individual seeks to manipulate or control others or influence them (DePaulo et al., 2003; Derksen, 2012; Kabha & Berger, 2023). In contrast, a statement meant to deceive generally aims to mislead or protect oneself from immediate consequences, often involving "white lies" or "half-truths" to avoid embarrassment or create a favourable impression in a specific situation (DePaulo et al., 2003; Tovmasyan, 2020). While a lie to

exert control is often associated with harming others for personal gain in high-stakes environments like politics or business, potentially impacting many people or having long-term repercussions (Celse & Chang, 2017; DePaulo et al., 2003), a statement meant to deceive generally leads to minor consequences if discovered, such as a loss of trust in specific relationships, which can be rectified without severe repercussions (DePaulo et al., 2003; Iñiguez et al., 2014). As a lie to exert control can have severe and widespread consequences, potentially resulting in legal action, loss of position, or widespread mistrust if uncovered, it is viewed as a serious moral and ethical violation, indicating deeper issues of character and integrity (DePaulo et al., 2003; Gneezy, 2005). A statement meant to deceive, in contrast, is considered less morally egregious, seen as a lapse in judgment rather than a fundamentally corrupt action (DePaulo et al., 2003). In this study, due to the overlap and interrelatedness between these concepts, a broad perspective will be taken, in other words, there will be no differentiation between lying, dishonesty, or deception.

Development and Theories of Lying

Lying behaviour in children typically begins to emerge around 2-3 years of age, coinciding with the development of their ability to deliberately make factually untrue statements (Talwar & Lee, 2008). As children grow older, their cognitive abilities become more developed, and by five years of age, they possess the basic ability to lie, with their decision to lie being less influenced by theory of mind and executive function compared to younger children (Sai et al., 2021). Lying could therefore be seen as a normative developmental behaviour in almost all children, with the frequency of lying increasing throughout the preschool period and continuing into late childhood and adolescence (Ding et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2022).

From a psychoanalytical perspective, lying can be viewed as the result of conflict that emerges from the interplay between the id, ego, and superego (Cessario, 2004; Farisha & Sakkeel, 2015). Lying seems to be one tool the individual may resort to when the ego is not able to cope with distressing demands put on it by both the id (trying to focus the individual away from the reality of a stressful situation) and the superego (trying to remind us to be moral and perfect). Lying then becomes a means of justifying one's failures through false statements or actions, or put differently, to save one from being perceived as imperfect by others (Cessario, 2004; Farisha & Sakkeel, 2015).

From a behaviourist perspective, lying is viewed as a learned pattern of behaviour and reactions which are reinforced through positive outcomes and then conditioned to be repeated for a specific desired outcome (Farisha & Sakkeel, 2015; Fryling, 2016). According to the Four-Factor theory of Deception, lying involves (i) generalised arousal, (ii) behaviour control, (iii) emotions, (iv) and cognition (Zuckerman et al., 1981) through which individuals attempt to control their verbal and non-verbal cues to appear honest, to avoid negative consequences, and to gain advantage over others (Suchotzki et al., 2017). From a cognitive-behavioural perspective, Lane and Wegner (1995) suggest that people often use thought suppression as a common strategy to conceal secrets, like infidelity from a partner. Continued suppression, however, often leads to the secret resurfacing, followed by further efforts to repress thoughts. This cycle might escalate, causing fixation on the memory even after the secret is out.

From an interpersonal perspective, honesty is essential to human communication because it contributes to trust and interpersonal happiness (Torka, 2019). According to the Truth Default Theory, people tend to operate on a default assumption that what the other person says is honest (Levine, 2014). Therefore, not only is it easy to lie to others, but it

would potentially contribute to interpersonal conflict, isolation, and a significant loss of trust (Dykstra et al., 2020; Sindermann et al., 2018). Individuals are therefore strategic and careful in how they use lies: for example, according to the Interpersonal Deception Theory (IDT) (Buller & Burgoon, 1996) deceivers use cognitive effort to tell convincing lies; at the same time, it may cause cognitive overload and increase signs of lying through providing inconsistent details (Walczyk et al., 2013). The Information Manipulation Theory (IMT) states that lying consists of individuals misleading others by manipulating information in different ways (McCornack, 2015). This is done with specific goals in mind, such as gaining social advantage, influencing others, or protecting oneself (McCornack, 2008; Ramsey et al., 2022).

Finally, from a clinical or diagnostic perspective, lying is a recognised symptom in several DSM-5 TR disorders, including antisocial, borderline, and narcissistic personality disorders, conduct disorder, factitious disorder, and malingering (APA, 2013). Within each of these disorders, lying has a different function. It is, however, important to realise that lying in itself is not necessarily an indication of a mental disorder.

Lying from a Self-Regulation Perspective

Based on the nature and motives of lying, it is no surprise that lying has been found to have a profound negative impact on interpersonal relationships (Dykstra et al., 2020; Smetana et al., 2019), self-identity (Preuter et al., 2024), and psychological well-being (Mun & Kim, 2021; Smetana et al., 2019), and often results in significant ethical, legal, and criminal consequences (Glenn et al., 2017; Gotlib & Converse, 2010; O'Sullivan et al., 2009). Lying is, therefore, a complex behaviour involving different inter- and intrapersonal strategies through which the individual aims to achieve certain outcomes, but also to manage the risks associated with lying. It may therefore be an effortful and even taxing process to lie, which

needs to be managed by the individual, to either (i) not give in to the temptation of lying; or (ii) lie in such a way that benefits are increased, risks are decreased, and others are deceived (Suchotzki et al., 2017; Vrij, Fisher et al., 2008). As such, it appears that self-regulation is an important mechanism involved in lying behaviour, whether refraining from or maintaining and persisting in a lie.

Self-regulation is the ability to alter one's emotions, cognition, and behaviour to adapt to the contextual demands or to achieve optimal mental health outcomes (Bell & Deater-Deckard, 2007). This multifaceted construct encompasses processes that enable individuals to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviour to achieve specific desired outcomes (Billen et al., 2022). Therefore, self-regulation is the "regulation of the self by the self" (Forgas et al., 2009). This involves shifting the self in a manner that brings the individual or self into line with a certain idea, value, or concept, also known as a standard, reference point, or goal (Carver & Scheier, 1982; MacKenzie et al., 2012). It implies a certain level of adaptability within the self, making self-regulation crucial in managing and maintaining cognition, emotion, and motivation (Zachariou & Whitebread, 2022), relationships (Forgas et al., 2009), and psychological well-being (Gächter & Schulz, 2016; Van der Schuur et al., 2019; Wright et al., 2017). Knowledge of self-regulation contributes to an understanding of human behaviour in general—it explains how and why people are effective or ineffective in goal achievement, decision-making, and conflict resolution (Billore et al., 2023; Korucu et al., 2022; Vohs & Schmeichel, 2011).

Problem Statement

Previous studies on self-regulation and lying are fragmented and often focused on specific contexts or self-regulation mechanisms (Kabha & Berger, 2023; Strauman et al., 2013). A quick review yields some interesting and even contradicting findings, most notably

regarding the role self-control plays. Research indicates that individuals with weaker self-control are more likely to deceive (Fan et al., 2016). Therefore, rather than being motivated purely by malice, deception may be associated with a lack of emotional and impulse control (Stroud, 2021). The relationship between control and lying, however, is perhaps not a straightforward one, as research on ego-depletion and lie detection has shown that people are also worse at lie detection when their self-control resources are limited (Baumeister et al., 1998; Reinhard et al., 2012). This complex nature is further supported by Cantarero and Van Tilburg (2014), who found that ego-depleted individuals are less willing to act dishonestly in order to spare another person from an unpleasant truth. Finally, some studies suggest that lying is associated with good self-control—both Derksen. (2012) and Vrij, Fisher, et al. (2008), indicate that lying is effortful and requires conscious management by the individual.

To be effective in telling a lie, therefore, requires cognitive and emotional control to construct, perform, and maintain the lie. Once the lie is told, further actions must be coherent with it, or at least make it appear that way to the person or people lied to. It requires considerable skill, as the liar needs to be aware of their actions through internal regulation and how to instruct themselves (Derksen, 2012).

As self-regulation is mainly associated with effective, adaptive, goal-directed behaviour, lying as self-regulated behaviour therefore creates some contradictions and conceptual challenges. For example, does it mean that lying is an adaptive form of behaviour? What does effective self-regulation in terms of lying mean? Is lying the result of poor self-control, or does lying require good self-control to be deceptive and maintained? Does effective self-regulation create more effective lying, or does it prevent one from lying when the urge appears? When thinking about lying and self-regulation, at least two factors are therefore immediately of concern:

1. Regulating oneself not to give in to the urge to tell a lie.
2. Once deciding to proceed with the lie, regulating oneself to deceive others effectively.

In the first case, self-regulation is employed as a means of preventing lie-telling. In contrast, in the second instance, self-regulation is used, paradoxically, to tell the lie more effectively. In this study, these questions will be asked about the adult population (aged between 18 and 60) specifically, as self-regulation is not yet fully developed or available during childhood or adolescence (Berger, 2011), while during old age, self-regulation may decrease as a result of cognitive decline (Harada et al., 2019).

Currently, we lack sufficient knowledge about the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood to answer these questions, primarily because information on how lying relates to self-regulation is scattered within research. Therefore, it appears that a gap exists in the knowledge and literature from a self-regulation perspective. This gap is currently mainly a theoretical one; however, it is also important on a practical level, as psychologists, counsellors, and practitioners need to understand the theory to enable them to address lying in the clinical context (Cirasola et al., 2024). A scoping review has not been done to explore the extent and the typical focus of research on lying from a self-regulation perspective. In other words, it is still not clear what previous research has revealed about the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood.

The review question was formulated according to the PCC (population, concept, and context) framework (Pollock et al., 2021), with *population* represented by adulthood, *concept* by (the relationship between) lying and self-regulation, and *context* by any situation in which lying-related behaviour could have significant consequences. The question, therefore, is

"What evidence is available on the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood?"

Aim

This study aimed to identify and map the current available evidence and literature on the relationship between lying and self-regulation amongst adults. The findings of this scoping review study can then be utilised in guiding future research in specific areas of lying and/or self-regulation. Furthermore, this study could inform practitioners with summarised findings and synthesised evidence available on lying and self-regulation to make informed decisions within these realms regarding practice and assessment. Lastly, this review provided a multifaceted understanding of the psychological, philosophical, and clinical dimensions associated with lying and self-regulation, especially with regard to self-control, personality, emotional intelligence, and strategies or motivations to regulate dishonesty and lying.

Research Methodology

The research method of this scoping review made use of the five-stage approach to a scoping review according to Arksey and O'Malley (2005).

Steps in Conducting Scoping Review Studies

Since the research study utilised a scoping review, the five steps or stages, according to Arksey and O'Malley (2005), used to structure the research process will be discussed.

Step 1: Identify the Research Question. The first step in the research process was to identify the research question. The research question was formulated in accordance with the PCC (population, concept, and context) framework (Pollock et al., 2021). The population for the study was chosen as adulthood. The concept is (the relationship between) lying and self-regulation. Finally, context was broadly applied to any situation in which lying, dishonesty, or deception could have significant consequences. Based on these, the research question was

identified as “What evidence is available on the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood?”

Step 2: Searching and Identifying Relevant Studies. The search was conducted through the EBSCOhost search engine via the WorldCat Discovery Search portal linked to the North-West University Database. The database contains, but is not limited to, JSTOR Journals, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar.

Additionally, Table 1 (see below) indicates the keywords utilised for the initial phase. A Boolean search was utilised to combine search phrases and keywords.

Table 1

Keywords and Boolean Terms for Literature Search

	KEYWORDS	**FIELD**	**JUSTIFICATION**
LEVEL ONE	‘self-regulation’ OR ‘self-control’ OR ‘self-management’ OR ‘control’ OR ‘impression management’	Title; Abstract	To ensure self-regulation is central to the study itself
	AND		
LEVEL TWO	‘Lying’ OR ‘lie’ OR ‘deception’ OR ‘deceit’	Title; Abstract	To ensure concepts related to lying are central to the study itself

	OR ‘dishonesty’ OR ‘fib’ OR ‘fibbing’ OR ‘feign’ OR ‘feigning’.		
		AND	
LEVEL THREE	‘adult’ OR ‘adulthood’	Title; Abstract	To ensure that adulthood is the focus of the study

Additionally, to the keywords and searches used to identify relevant studies, this review covered existing information from both theoretical and empirical literature. This included full-text journal articles, peer-reviewed studies, books, quantitative and qualitative studies, mixed-method studies, PhD theses, and Master’s dissertations. Non-peer-reviewed studies, grey literature, review studies, as well as other documentation, conference proceedings, or studies published in languages other than English or Afrikaans were excluded from the search (see Table 2).

Table 2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Literature

Criteria	**Include/Exclude**
Full-text journal studies	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Peer-reviewed studies	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study

Non-peer-reviewed studies	Exclude as it will lessen the scientific rigour of the study
Grey literature	Exclude as it will lessen the scientific rigour of the study
Books	Only book chapters that contain peer-reviewed chapters will be considered.
Quantitative studies	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Qualitative studies	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Mixed-method studies	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Review studies	Exclude from the study to avoid duplication
PhD theses	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Master's dissertations/mini-dissertations	Include as it will increase the scientific rigour of the study
Conference proceedings	Exclude to avoid duplication
Studies published in languages other than English and/or Afrikaans	Exclude as it will increase the cost and time of the study. Any potential language bias will be identified as a limitation of the study and accounted for in the discussion and conclusion.

Step 3: Selecting the Appropriate Studies. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework for selecting appropriate studies was followed. The research question served as a guideline to assess the relevance of the study, considering its potential to contribute to answering the

research question. Both the researcher and study leader examined titles to exclude studies that are not relevant to the research question. The abstracts of the remaining studies were then examined to exclude irrelevant ones, rather than just focusing on the titles alone, and then the final group of potential studies were read in more depth if there was any uncertainty regarding their relevance. Both reviewers made the final decision.

Step 4: Extracting and charting Data. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) fourth step in the review process involves data extraction from various sources that are relevant to the research question. Table 3 shows the data to be extracted.

Table 3

Data to be Extracted from Literature

Data Extracted.	**Motivation**
Author, year of publication, title and study geographical location	Identifying the authors and publication year enables proper citation and acknowledgement of the original source. The location helps with the context regarding international geographic findings, and the title will help ascertain relevance to this study.
Aim of the study	Identification of the aims of the study will help provide clarity on the specific knowledge gained. It will also help to understand the breadth of knowledge gained within the specific research topic.
Study Population	Identifying the specific adult populations under the studies will help understand possible variations in the relationship between lying and self-regulation in adulthood and can help identify gaps in knowledge.

Research Methods	This can assist in how information was gathered and captured, and to ascertain whether the results are reliable and valid. This will further enhance understanding of how certain concepts were measured, adding to the validity and reliability.
Outcomes and conclusions	To answer the research question of this study, as well as to provide an overview of the literature on lying and self-regulation in order to help identify any research gaps or suggestions for future research.
Results	Summarising the results highlights the findings and implications, and where possible, research can further facilitate the process of synthesising the evidence and make further recommendations at the end of the study.

Step 5: Collating, Summarising, and Reporting the Results. The final stage of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework involves collating, summarising, and reporting the results. Within this stage of the review, Pollock et al. (2023) recommend that scoping reviews should not use advanced analysis techniques. As such, inductive content analyses as described in Kyngäs et al. (2020) were conducted manually by utilising data reduction phases, grouping, and concept formation to address the research question. Inductive content analysis is valuable in qualitative research for exploring new or under-researched areas where the existing knowledge is limited or fragmented. The approach involves starting with the data and deriving themes or categories without being guided by preconceived notions or theories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Additionally, it allows the researcher to have flexibility to adapt to emergent themes and patterns within the data (Gale et al., 2013).

According to Kyngäs et al. (2020), the researchers should familiarise themselves with the substance of the data in the articles and have reviewed it multiple times before commencing the analysis stage. Additionally, it is emphasised that any data relevant to addressing the research question should be assigned a code (Kyngäs et al., 2020). The process of data abstraction then relied on comparing the similarities and differences in the content of open codes to construct sub-categories (Kyngäs et al., 2020). These sub-categories are then amalgamated to form initial categories and finally organised into main categories, which should provide answers to the primary research question.

Two reviewers were involved in the analysis. The primary reviewer is Mr. Darian Bonner, a registered master's student in Counselling Psychology at North-West University. He was responsible for reviewing and analysing the literature. The second reviewer was Prof. Karel Botha, who was responsible for monitoring and guiding the process and acted as co-coder for analysis.

Method of Quality Appraisal

Within a scoping review, a quality appraisal is not usually included due to the nature and purpose of the review, as it aims to provide an overview of the literature or knowledge available rather than producing a critically appraised and synthesised answer to the research question. Despite this, it was decided to conduct a brief quality appraisal to ensure rigour by adding transparency into the review process, which provided valuable insight into the quality of the studies included in the review.

A combination of NICE, ADA, and PRISMA guidelines was utilised to conduct the quality appraisal. The following criteria were applied:

1. The article should not have been published in a predatory journal provided by either Beall's List of Potential Predatory Journals and Publishers (Aromataris et al., 2024; Beall, 2014, 2022), or the Think. Check. Submit platform (Cortegiani & Shafer, 2018; Nicholson, 2017).
2. The articles included must have a clear problem statement and aim.
3. The articles included must have a valid and empirical methodology.
4. The results, discussion of the results, and the conclusion must be clear and convincing.
5. The study must be ethically approved.

Both of the researchers reviewed the articles according to the criteria stated above. Their revisions were discussed and compared. In order for an article to be included, each article had to comply with at least four out of five of the criteria above. If there was a difference regarding the agreement of the appraisal, a discussion took place regarding a final decision whether to include or exclude the article.

Ethics

This scoping review was considered a no-risk study as it did not involve human participants or implement an intervention. This scoping review only made use of the current data from the available studies identified through the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria specific to the study. To ensure that this study adhered to the scientific requirements, approval was obtained from the committee for Community Psychosocial Research (COMPRES). After scientific approval was obtained, ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the North-West University (NWU - 00158-24-S1).

Rigour

Ethical rigour in research entails an adherence to ethical principles throughout the research process. This consists of ensuring the study is conducted with integrity and transparency throughout the process. The criteria for transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Johnson et al., 2020; Krefting, 1991; Shenton, 2004). These requirements ensured thoroughness and accuracy in reporting the data and literature from the included studies.

Transferability

Transferability in research is a crucial concept that refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied to other contexts or settings (Anney, 2014; Shenton, 2004). The researchers therefore used their best judgment to adhere to the procedures of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) to ensure that the correct methodology for the study was utilised in terms of scoping reviews, in addition to this, so that the findings of the study can be applied to similar studies.

Additionally, to follow the correct methodology for a scoping review, another method that was utilised to ensure credibility was to make use of both a primary and secondary researcher or reviewer to select and appraise the studies for inclusion and to develop themes (Krefting, 1991) on the relationship between lying and self-regulation.

Credibility

Research credibility refers to the trustworthiness and reliability of qualitative research findings. This is essential for establishing the validity of the research process and outcomes of the study (Ahmed, 2024; Anney, 2014; Lincoln et al., 1985). In order for this to be achieved, the researchers engaged in the research literature extensively and given that quality appraisals are not generally done for scoping reviews, a brief appraisal of the literature was

done. The literature was assessed on the above-mentioned criteria and needed to score 4/5 to be included in the study.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of results and findings of the study (Anney, 2014; Riazi et al., 2023). In this scoping review, dependability was maintained through a systematic and transparent approach to data collection and analysis. This scoping review adhered to the established framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) as well as the requirements regarding information on data collection, analysis, and conclusions (Krefting, 1991).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings of the study can be confirmed or supported by other researchers or studies (Anney, 2014). This ensures that the research is not just a reflection of the researchers' opinions or perspectives. One effective approach for confirmability is the use of an audit trail, which documents the research process, decisions made regarding research, as well as why specific articles were included and excluded, as well as the reasoning behind the decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). This process was conducted through both the primary and secondary reviewers, with clear notes and discussions throughout the process. This enhances transparency and allows for external validation by other researchers (Carcary, 2020).

Conclusion

This section put forward the importance of understanding lying from a self-regulation perspective but also indicated how the fragmented nature and contradictory findings of previous research make it difficult to provide a generally accepted theoretical framework. Based on this, the research question was formulated as "What evidence is available on the

relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood?", with the aim of identifying and mapping the current available evidence and literature on the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood.

The methodological process was explained, and it was explained why the study would meet the criteria for research rigour. The following section will report on the results and findings in the form of a manuscript prepared for submission to the South African Journal of Psychology.

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SECTION 2: ARTICLE

The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review

Author Guidelines: *South African Journal of Psychology*

The article will be submitted to the *South African Journal of Psychology* for possible publication.

Guidelines to Authors

Description

While the *South African Journal of Psychology* publishes from all fields of psychology in English, their emphasis is mainly empirical research. However, they also accept theoretical and methodological papers, review articles, short communications, book reviews, and letters commenting on articles published within the journal.

Manuscript Format

Submitting a manuscript to the *South African Journal of Psychology* must be in the Microsoft Word format. The font must be double-spaced with a 12-point font. All text must be left aligned. All new submissions, including references, tables, figures, et cetera, should not exceed 5,500 words. All manuscripts must be written in English and of a high grammatical standard and follow technical guidelines as stipulated. The manuscript submission must also include an abstract that does not exceed 250 words. Lastly, there should be a minimum of four to five keywords listed after the abstract.

The journal states that one does not have to follow a template when submitting a manuscript; however, it is important to ensure that the different level headings are clear, and the sections are clearly defined.

Journal Style

The format to be followed for research manuscripts that are to be published is as follows:

Only electronic files that adhere to the stipulated guidelines will be accepted. The format of the manuscript may be either in Microsoft Word or LaTeX files.

The *South African Journal of Psychology* follows the SAGE house guidelines. The following format should be used for research-based manuscripts:

- The introduction and literature review sections do not require headings.
- The following headings are to be used instead:
    - Method (participants; instruments; procedure; ethical considerations; data analysis)
    - Results
    - Discussion
    - Conclusion
    - References

Within the ethical consideration's sections, the name of the institution that granted ethical clearance must be stipulated.

Referencing Style

The journal requires that all manuscripts make use of the American Psychological Association 7th edition (APA 7th). Every in-text citation must have a corresponding citation in the reference list and vice versa. Furthermore, the formatting style dictates that Times New

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The authors need to disclose any funding received or state that none was provided. They are also required to declare any conflicts of interest, such as financial ties or affiliations that may influence the research.

MANUSCRIPT

The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review

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Abstract

Lying is an everyday, but complex behaviour involving intentional and effortful inter- and intrapersonal strategies and self-regulation. Previous research on lying and self-regulation is fragmented and often yields contradictory findings. Therefore, the aim of this study was to systematically identify and map the existing scientific literature on the relationship between lying and self-regulation in adults. A scoping review was conducted to identify 21 studies for inclusion, which were then subjected to inductive content analysis. Results show limited availability of empirical studies on the relation between lying and self-regulation, suggesting a limited scope of understanding. Self-control emerged as the major mechanism involved in lying, but a lack in research on other self-regulation mechanisms and processes, as well as the complex nature of lying as a dynamic and even paradoxical process, contribute to a lack of comprehensive understanding. Based on this, recommendations for future research are provided.

Keywords: *Self-regulation, lying, dishonesty, self-control, adults*

Background and Orientation

Lying is a behaviour that individuals face daily within everyday interactions, politics, intimate partner relationships, and the workplace (Easterling et al., 2019; Eenkhoorn & Graafland, 2011; Garbinsky et al., 2020; Reinhardt & Reinhard, 2023; Reins & Wiegmann, 2021). It is defined as a false statement or a false presentation, known to be untrue, that is made with the intention to deceive (American Psychiatric Association, 2014) or the act of delivering what the speaker knows to be false information with the intention of manipulating the beliefs or behaviour of the receiver (Lee & Imuta, 2021). It is therefore clear that lying is associated with intention, suggesting that the liar is not only aware of telling the lie but is deliberately conveying a falsehood (Derksen, 2012; Fan et al., 2020) to achieve a specific outcome (Mahon, 2015).

In this regard, lying is closely related to and includes acts of deception, dishonesty, fibbing, and feigning (Barber, 2020; Bellucci & Park, 2020; Boskovic & Akca, 2024; Green, 2015; Jelicic et al., 2017; Miller, 2020, Tawiah et al., 2022) with the only real difference perhaps in terms of the nature of intent. Compared to telling a lie, which seems to be more controlling, calculated, deliberate, and manipulative (Derksen, 2012; Kabha & Berger, 2023; Meibauer, 2018), deception seems to be more aimed at protecting oneself from immediate consequences, often involving “white lies” or “half-truths” to avoid embarrassment or create a favourable impression in a specific situation (Lavoie & Talwar, 2022; Tovmasyan, 2020).

As a lie is more associated with harming others for personal gain, potentially impacting many people or having long-term repercussions (DePaulo et al., 2003; Preuter et al., 2024); it may potentially result in legal action; loss of position; or widespread mistrust if uncovered; and it is viewed as a serious moral and ethical violation, indicating deeper issues of character and integrity (Baker & Niederman, 2023; Jensen et al., 2022; Levine &

Schweitzer, 2014). Deception, in contrast, generally leading to consequences such as a loss of trust in specific relationships (Iñiguez et al., 2014; Vrij et al., 2019), is often considered morally less egregious and instead seen as a lapse in judgment than a fundamentally moral action (DePaulo et al., 2003; Rahwan et al., 2022).

On one level, therefore, deception may be regarded as a different type of lying; on another, however, it seems like a different level of lying. Despite these differences, important similarities remain—one view is that deception and dishonesty are important mechanisms of lying, while another, albeit not necessarily exclusive, is that dishonesty and deception are different expressions of lying behaviour. As such, in this study, there will be no differentiation between lying, deception, and dishonesty or closely related concepts like fibbing and feigning—the emphasis will instead be on understanding these concepts, unified under the concept of lying, from a self-regulatory perspective.

Understanding lying from a self-regulation perspective makes sense, as most theoretical approaches to lying involve behaviours associated with self-regulatory challenges. These include the psychoanalytic view of lying as a response to internal conflict (Farisha & Sakkeel, 2015; Ornstein, 2018; Segal, 2018) and the behaviourist view of lying as a learned, reinforced behaviour (Farisha & Sakkeel, 2015; Fryling, 2016). More importantly, though, many approaches associate lying with the control of different behaviours and responses related to lying, like arousal, verbal, and non-verbal cues (Sredić & Janjetović, 2025; Suchotzki et al., 2017), cognitive effort and overload (Gawrylowicz et al., 2016; Verschuere et al., 2018), as well as the selective altering or omitting of information (Jack, 2017; Ramsey et al., 2022).

Self-regulation is the ability to alter or modulate one's emotions, cognition, and behaviours to adapt to the context and to achieve personally relevant goals (Billen et al.,

2022; McClelland et al., 2018). According to Forgas et al. (2009), self-regulation is therefore the "regulation of the self by the self" (p. 4), through shifting the self in a manner to bring the individual or self in line with a standard, reference, or goal (Carver & Scheier, 1982; MacKenzie et al., 2012). Self-regulation involves mechanisms such as goal planning, goal implementation, self-monitoring, self-control and change detection, to name a few. This collectively helps facilitate effective behaviour management and goal attainment by enabling individuals to set clear goals and put them into action, monitor their progress, resist temptations, and adapt their strategies to changing circumstances (Ferguson et al., 2023; Hladík et al., 2022; Reed et al., 2020; Teixeira et al., 2015). Self-control refers to the capacity to alter or align one's responses with ideals, values, and social expectations in the pursuit of long-term goals (Baumeister, 2018; Baumeister et al., 2007). Effective self-regulation requires adaptability to manage and maintain appropriate cognition, emotion, and motivation (Zachariou & Whitebread, 2022), which in turn enables effectiveness in achieving goals, making decisions, and resolving conflicts (Billore et al., 2023; Vohs & Schmeichel, 2011).

Given the potential profound negative impact of lying on interpersonal relationships (Dykstra et al., 2020; Smetana et al., 2019), self-identity (Preuter et al., 2024), and psychological well-being (Mun & Kim, 2021; Smetana et al., 2019), as well as the potential ethical, legal, and criminal consequences (Elaad, 2019; Glenn et al., 2017; O'Sullivan et al., 2009), it is clear that lying is a complex behaviour involving effortful inter- and intrapersonal strategies to achieve certain outcomes and at the same time, avoid certain risks. The implication is that lying needs to be managed by the individual, to either (i) suppress the need or urge to lie; or (ii) to lie in such a way that (from that individual's perspective) benefits are increased, risks are decreased, and others are effectively deceived (Suchotzki et al., 2017; Verschuère et al., 2018). Either way, self-regulation seems to be an important mechanism involved in lying behaviour, whether refraining from or maintaining and persisting in a lie.

Previous studies on self-regulation and lying are fragmented and often focused on specific contexts or self-regulation mechanisms, specifically self-control (Kabha & Berger, 2023; Strauman et al., 2013). Findings also seem to be contradictory—while some studies suggest that lying is associated with good self-control (Derksen, 2012; Vrij, Fisher et al., 2008,Vrij., et al 2019), others show that those with weaker self-control have a higher propensity to deceive (Cantarero et al., 2018; Fan et al., 2016), suggesting that rather than being intentionally motivated by malice, deception may be associated with a lack of emotional and impulsive control (Stroud, 2021). The complexity of the relationship between lying and self-control is further emphasized by research showing that people are also worse at lie detection when their self-control resources are limited (Baumeister et al., 1998; Lian et al., 2017; Reinhard et al., 2012), and that ego-depleted individuals are less willing to be dishonest in order to avoid another individual from an unpleasant truth (Cantarero & Van Tilburg, 2014).

As self-regulation is mostly associated with effective, adaptive, goal-directed behaviour, lying as a goal creates some contradictions and conceptual challenges. For example, what does effective self-regulation in terms of lying mean? Is lying the result of poor self-regulation, or does lying require good self-regulation to be effective and maintained? Does effective self-regulation create more effective lying, or does it prevent one from lying when the urge appears? Currently, we lack sufficient knowledge about the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood to answer these questions, primarily because information on how lying relates to self-regulation is scattered within research. Therefore, it appears that a gap exists in the knowledge and literature from a self-regulation perspective. This gap is currently mainly a theoretical one; however, it is also important on a practical level, as psychologists, counsellors, and practitioners need to understand the theory to enable them to address lying in the clinical context (Cirasola et al.,

2024). A scoping review has not been done to explore the extent and the typical focus of research on lying from a self-regulation perspective. In other words, it is still not clear what previous research has revealed about the relationship between lying and self-regulation in adulthood.

The review question for this study, therefore, is: "What evidence is available on the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood?"

Method

A scoping review, useful in summarising information and identifying gaps within existing research, was implemented. The framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) was followed to (1) identify the research question; (2) identify relevant studies; (3) select appropriate studies; (4) extract and chart the data; and (5) collate, summarise, and report the results. The review question ("What evidence is available on the relationship between lying and self-regulation during adulthood?") was formulated according to the PCC (population, concept, and context) framework (Aromataris et al., 2024), with *population* represented by adulthood, *concept* by the relationship between lying and self-regulation, and *context* to any situation in which lying-related behaviour could have significant consequences. Potential studies were searched through EBSCOhost with the following Boolean search query: 'self-regulation' OR self-control' OR 'self-management' OR 'control' OR 'impression management' AND 'Lying' or 'lie' OR 'Deception' OR 'Deceit' OR 'dishonesty' OR 'fib' OR 'fibbing' OR 'feign' OR 'feigning' AND 'adult' OR 'adulthood'. The search was further specified by including full-text journal articles, peer-reviewed studies, PhD theses, master's dissertations, textbooks, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Review studies and studies published in languages other than English or Afrikaans were excluded.

Figure 1

PRISMA Flow Diagram

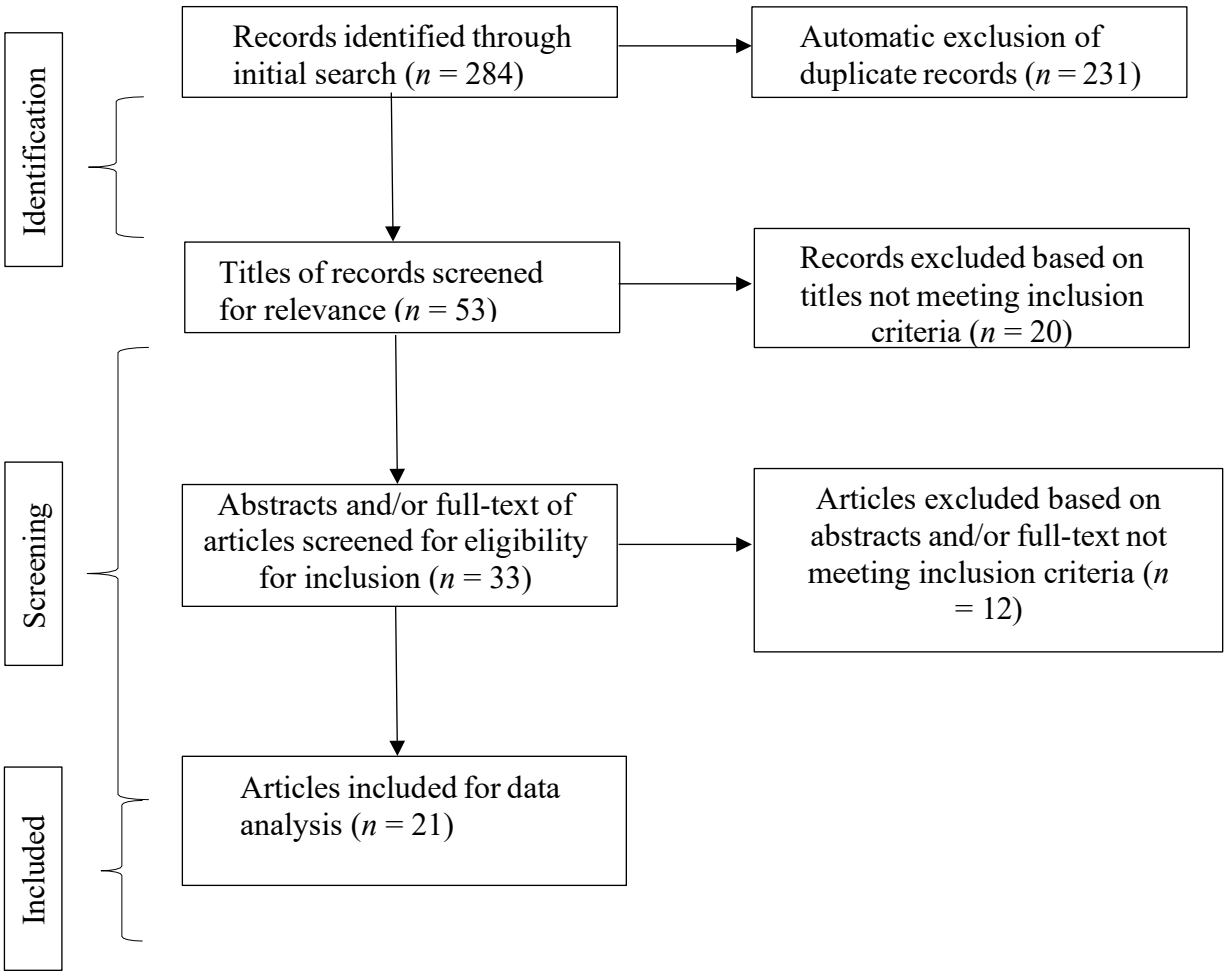

Figure 1 shows a PRISMA flow diagram. A total of 284 studies were identified during the initial search, of which 231 articles were automatically excluded as duplicates. A total of 53 articles were then screened based on title and abstract, 20 studies were excluded based on title, and a further 12 based on abstract and full text not meeting the inclusion criteria. The final 21 studies were then appraised according to the following NICE, ADA, and PRISMA guidelines and criteria: the included articles must not have been published in a predatory journal listed on either Beall's list of potential predatory journals and publishers or the think check submit platform (Beall, 2012; Nicholson, 2017). Additionally, the articles must clearly state a problem statement and aim (Moher et al., 2015). They should also have

employed a valid and empirical methodology and their results discussion and conclusion must be reported (Cook et al., 2016; Munn et al., 2018; Núñez-Núñez et al., 2023; Peters et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Lastly, the study must have received ethical approval (Gloy et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2020). Articles needed to score 4/5 on the guidelines to be included. Subsequently, 21 studies were included for the final scoping review.

The fourth step of the review process involved data extraction (see Table 1). The researchers extracted the following data as recommended by Arksey and O'Malley (2005): author, year of publication, title, study location, aim of the study, sample, research methodology, and key findings from the study.

Table 1

Included studies for analysis.

Study No	Author/s	Year	Country of origin	Title	Sample	Methodology	Quantitative/Qualitative	Key Findings
1	Baur et al.	2020	Germany	Unable to resist the temptation to tell the truth or to lie for the organization? Identification makes the difference	Study 1 – 1269 Employees Study 2 – 71 University Students	Cross-sectional Survey Experimental Design	Quantitative	Depleted self-regulation resources increase pro-organisational dishonesty in employees with strong organisational identification.
2	Eshun et al.	2023	Ghana	Personality traits and levels of self-efficacy as predictors of academic dishonesty among higher education students in Ghana	453 undergraduate students (300 Male, 153 Female)	Cross-Sectional Survey	Quantitative	Self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of academic dishonesty, followed by openness and conscientiousness.

3	Foerester & Dignath	2017	Germany	Focused cognitive control in dishonesty: Evidence for predominantly transient conflict adaptation	Study 1 – 32 participants Study 2 – 32 participants	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Cognitive control in dishonest behaviour is mainly influenced by transient adaptation to recent dishonesty, while sustained control is absent in frequent dishonesty.
4	Hamlin et al.	2020	United Kingdom	A psychometric investigation into the structure of deception strategy use	209 Undergraduate students (71 males)	Exploratory Design	Quantitative	Three deception strategies were identified, namely non-verbal control, cognitive load and detail. Deceivers focus more on managing impressions, rehearsing and making eye contact.
5	Henning et al.	2011	New Zealand	Can engagement in academic dishonesty be described as planned	433 Pharmacy and Medical Students	Cross-Sectional Survey	Quantitative	The theory of planned behaviour only partially explained academic dishonesty,

				behaviour or lack of self-control?				suggesting diverse ethical reasoning and post-hoc justifications, along with attitude and opportunity influence dishonest behaviour.
6	Hines et al.	2010	United States of America	Impression management strategies of deceivers and honest reporters in an investigative interview	66 Undergraduate students aged 19-36	Experimental Design	Quantitative	While both honest and dishonest participants employed similar strategies to appear convincing, deceivers focused more on managing their presentation.
7	Li et al.	2024	China	Cognitive control in honesty and dishonesty under different conflict scenarios: insights from reaction time	Study 1 – 67 (39 females & 28 Males) Study 2 – 95 Undergraduate students (75 females and 20 Males)	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Honest individuals required greater cognitive control to resolve moral dilemmas, suggesting that honesty requires more deliberate

								effort to suppress self-serving impulses compared to dishonesty.
8	Liu et al.	2019	China	The effect of negative feedback on positive beliefs in self-deception	Study 1 – 47 College students (19 male, 28 female) Study 2 – 93 college students (40 male 53 female)	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Negative feedback reduces self-deception by lowering positive beliefs and increasing self-awareness, while no feedback conditions increased the likelihood of self-deception.
9	Mead et al.	2009	United States of America	Too tired to tell the truth, self-control resource depletion and dishonesty	Study 1 – 84 undergraduates (40 female) Study 2 – 778 undergraduates (50 female)	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Individuals with depleted self-control were more likely to cheat for personal gain within an academic context.
10	Nelson et al.	2024	United Kingdom	Maintaining professional face: Deceptive impression management in	102 Participants	Online interviews and survey	Qualitative	Sports coaches make use of 7 types of deception with concealing fatigue — to display capability

				community sports coaching.				and composure — being the most frequent.
11	Pittarello et al.	2018	Netherlands/ Switzerland/ Italy	Emotional intelligence buffers the effect of physiological arousal on dishonesty	67 university students	Experimental Design	Quantitative	While higher emotional arousal measured via skin conductance generally reduced cheating, individuals with high emotional intelligence were more likely to cheat.
12	Ren et al.	2018	China	The influence of self-control and social status on self-deception	Study 1 – Sixty non-psychology majors (35 Males, 25 females). Study 2 – 146 college students (134 surveys recovered)	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Lower self-control leads to increased self-deception, while high self-control individuals were better able to avoid the negative impacts of self-deception.
13	Rinn et al.	2014	United States of America	Locus of control, academic self-concept and academic	357 high-ability college students	Cross-sectional Survey	Quantitative	Although a correlation between LOC, academic self-concept and

				dishonesty among high-ability college students.				academic dishonesty exists, no moderations emerged.
14	Speer et al.	2021	Netherlands	Cognitive control promotes either honesty or dishonesty. Depending on one's moral default	35 Participants	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Cognitive control is influenced by one's moral default. EEG data showed increased theta activity linked to increased cheating in honest individuals, suggesting cognitive control.
15	Stephens	2018	New Zealand and the United States	Bridging the divide: the role of motivation and self-regulation in explaining the judgement-action gap related to academic dishonesty	380 high school students	Cross-Sectional Survey	Quantitative	Selective moral disengagement mediates the link between moral judgement and academic dishonesty, highlighting the role of self-regulation in moral functioning.

16	Uula & Sulikah	2023	Indonesia	Academic dishonesty in college students. Do religiosity and self-control matter?	96 Students	Explanatory Research Design	Quantitative	Higher religiosity and self-control were strongly associated with lower academic dishonesty.
17	Uziel & Schmidt-Barad	2023	Israel	Impression management in daily life: an experience sampling test for the expression of impression management as interpersonally orientated self-control	154 students (125 Females and 29 males)	Longitudinal Design	Quantitative	Impression management predicts self-control in social situations, suggesting that high-IM individuals adjust their behaviour for social harmony rather than engage in deceitful self-presentation.
18	Van Veen et al.	2022	Germany	Feigning symptoms to obtain prescription stimulants: A vignette-based study on its conditions	3,435 Participants	Experimental Design	Quantitative	Willingness to feign symptoms for stimulants was influenced more by personal morality and social context than by self-control.

19	Volz et al.	2022	Germany	Does ego depletion elicit stronger cues of deception?	165 participants	Experimental Design	Quantitative	No evidence found that ego depletion affects behavioural differences between liars and truth-tellers.
20	Williams & Williams	2012	New Zealand	Academic dishonesty, self-control and general criminality: a Prospective and retrospective study of academic dishonesty in a New Zealand university.	264 University students	Mixed Method Design	Quantitative	Past dishonesty strongly predicts future misconduct, suggesting that the general theory of crime only partially explains academic dishonesty.
21	Williams et al.	2019	Nigeria	Some correlates of academic dishonesty among undergraduates in Ogun State, Nigeria	250 Undergraduate	Correlational Research Design	Quantitative	A higher internal LOC is linked to lower academic dishonesty, with LOC, self-efficacy and motivation accounting for 61.5% of the variance.

The findings of the study were synthesised utilising inductive content analysis (Kyngäs et al., 2020), an approach involving deriving themes or categories without being guided by preconceived notions or theories, requiring researchers to familiarise themselves with the data thoroughly before analysis. Relevant data is coded and compared to identify similarities and differences to form subcategories. These were then merged into categories that address the research question.

Ethics

This was considered a no-risk study as it did not involve human participants or implement an intervention. Scientific approval was obtained from the research entity and research committee for Community Psychosocial research (COMPRES), and ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the North-West University (NWU-00158-24-S1).

Furthermore, ethical rigour was maintained in this scoping review through integrity and transparency throughout the research process. Trustworthiness was ensured through transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability (Johnson et al., 2020; Krefting, 1991; Shenton, 2004). This allowed for thoroughness and correctness when reporting the data. Transferability was addressed by utilising and adhering to the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework. This was done through explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, search terms and strategies utilised, as well as being clear what data would be extracted during the data charting process. Furthermore, transferability was enhanced by the role of multiple reviewers in executing the selection of inclusion and exclusion criteria (Krefting, 1991). Credibility was ensured through the utilisation of two reviewers regarding the review of literature for inclusion into the study, while dependability was maintained through following a systematic and transparent approach (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) as well as following

information on data collection and analysis by Krefting (1991). Lastly, confirmability was ensured through making use of an audit trail where all the decisions made by both the primary and secondary reviewers were documented, which further allowed for the enhancement of transparency and for external validation (Carcary, 2020).

Results

The 21 reviewed articles comprised one article published between 2005 and 2009, four articles between 2010 and 2015, eight articles between 2016 and 2020, and eight articles between 2021 and 2025. This consisted of 20 quantitative studies and one qualitative study. A total of four studies were conducted in Germany, three studies in China and the USA respectively, two studies in New Zealand and the United Kingdom respectively, and one study each in Ghana, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Israel and Nigeria. Finally, two studies were conducted across international boundaries, one between the Netherlands and Switzerland, and the other between New Zealand and the USA.

Identified Themes and Subthemes

Table 1 shows a summary of themes and subthemes identified from the review. Two major themes emerged from the study, namely lying and the strength of self-regulation, and lying and the process of self-regulation.

Table 2

Summary of themes and sub-themes

THEME	**SUB-THEME**	**STUDIES** (*Some studies may fall into more than one theme/subtheme)

Lying and self-regulation strength	Self-regulation as a personality trait	Eshun et al. (2023)
		Liu et al. (2019)
		Williams and Williams (2012)
		Ren et al. (2018)
		Van Veen et al. (2022)
	Self-regulation as a moral characteristic	Henning et al. (2011)
		Li et al. (2024)
		Stephens (2018)
		Uula & Sulikah (2023)
	Locus of control	Rinn et al. (2014)
		Williams and Aremu (2019)
	Depleted control	Baur et al. (2020)
		Mead et al. (2009)
		Volz et al. (2022)
Lying and the process of self-regulation	Cognitive control	Foerster et al. (2018)
		Speer et al. (2021)
		Hines et al. (2010)
	Non-verbal control	Hamlin et al. (2020)
		Uziel & Schmidt-Barad (2023)
	Emotional control	Pittarello et al. (2018)
		Nelson et al. (2024)

Theme 1: Lying and self-regulation strength

Self-regulation strength refers to the degree of proficiency in a specific self-regulatory skill, as well as the extent to which an individual has access to self-regulation as a resource. Four sub-themes were identified, namely self-regulation as a personality trait, self-regulation as a moral characteristic, depleted self-control, and locus of control.

Self-regulation as a personality trait

Individuals possess distinct personality traits that account for differences based on the intensity and configuration of these traits. They are measured according to three criteria, namely, stability, consistency and variability from individual to individual (Eshun et al., 2023). The presence, application, and experience of the traits directly influence self-regulation—control, for example, is a personality trait that enables one to resist immediate temptations or impulsive behaviour that may lead to neglect of long-term goals (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Eshun et al. (2023) surveyed 453 higher education students to determine the the extent to which personality traits and self-efficacy predict academic dishonesty among students. They found that two dimensions of personality traits were significant positive predictors, namely, openness (the depth and complexity of one's mental life and experiences) and conscientiousness (the ability to control desires to focus on goals). Self-efficacy, however, was the best predictor, explaining 11.2% of the variation in academic dishonesty.

Second, Liu et al. (2019) aimed, in an experimental study, to examine the role positive beliefs play in self-deception and to determine the influence of negative feedback in this relationship. They found that negative feedback reduced self-deception by diminishing individuals' positive beliefs about their abilities, leading to improved self-awareness and a decrease in self-deceptive behaviour. The study demonstrated that negative feedback reduces

self-deception by diminishing individuals' positive beliefs and enhancing self-awareness, aligning with belief adjustment theory to mitigate the adverse effects of self-deception. Last, the study found that no-feedback conditions created more ambiguity, making self-deception more likely compared to negative feedback conditions. Thus, the forward-looking paradigm serves as an effective experimental method for examining self-deception by inducing cheating, while negative feedback can reduce its occurrence.

Van Veen et al. (2022) explored the willingness of individuals to feign medical symptoms in order to obtain prescription stimulants. Results showed that self-control, among factors like personal morality, high self-efficacy, and social disapproval of prescription drug use, was negatively associated with willingness to obtain prescription stimulants. Interestingly though, individuals low in self-control were not more tempted to feign symptoms. The results emphasise the importance of context — feigning was lower in situations of social disapproval and higher personal morality, despite self-control.

Ren et al. (2018) aimed to investigate how self-control and social status influence self-deception. They found a complex relationship between self-control, self-deception and social status in two experimental conditions with student participants. They hypothesised that individuals receiving answer hints in a basic social knowledge test would be affected by the answers in showing more self-deception compared to those not receiving answer hints. Results show that students with lower self-control traits produced more self-deception compared to those with higher self-control traits. Although higher self-control individuals also showed a trend towards self-deception, they were better equipped to avoid the negative effects of self-deception. In addition, self-control was moderated by social status—higher social status restrained the influence of low self-control on self-deception.

Finally, Williams and Williams (2012) aimed to explore Gottfredson and Hirschi's control theory as an explanation of academic dishonesty, as well as the link between academic dishonesty and general criminality, in a sample of 264 students. In terms of self-control, the study found limited evidence, with only self-centeredness showing a significant correlation. Notably, the risk-seeking subscale was a significant negative predictor, suggesting that academic dishonesty may be a risk-averse behaviour in some cases. However, the general predictive ability of self-control for academic dishonesty is small, suggesting that much remains unaccounted for by self-control theory.

Self-regulation as a moral characteristic

Stephens (2018) aimed to explore, in a sample of 380 students, the role moral judgment plays in academic dishonesty. They specifically explored students' judgments related to academic dishonesty, the relation between domain judgments and academic dishonesty, and different theories of moral functioning. Results indicate that self-regulation through selective moral disengagement significantly mediates the relationship between moral judgment and academic dishonesty. The study therefore offers support for the important link between self-regulation and moral functioning, specifically in the sense that moral functioning is effortful and not only a function of moral judgment.

Next, Li et al. (2024) aimed to explore how predisposed individuals, who are honest and dishonest, respond to situations that present a conflict between personal financial gain and the integrity of honesty. The study found that honest individuals require more time to resolve ambiguous conflicts and display fewer self-interested responses compared to dishonest individuals. This suggests that honesty involves greater cognitive deliberation and control in navigating moral dilemmas, while less cognitive control was required for self-

interest and cheating responses. These results align with the idea that honesty necessitates conscious cognitive effort to suppress self-serving impulses.

Furthermore, Uula and Sulikah (2023) aimed to investigate the impact of religiosity and self-control, as components of the perceived behavioural control component of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, on academic dishonesty in a sample of students. According to this theory, a specific behaviour is dependent on the individual's intention, which in turn is influenced by perceived behavioural control, attitude, and subjective norm. A strong negative correlation suggested that as religiosity and self-control increased, the likelihood of academic dishonesty decreased. The regression model demonstrated that religiosity and self-control contributed to lowering students' inclination to commit academic dishonesty and may be used to predict academic dishonesty.

Finally, Henning et al. (2011) aimed to understand the extent to which academic dishonesty in a sample of 432 pharmacy and medical students can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The study employed a hierarchical, linear regression approach to test whether the model predicts academic dishonesty, but was unable to convincingly do this, as different paths were able to predict the actual disclosure of academic dishonesty. The authors concluded that students, given their diverse responses, were probably either using different ethical frames of reference or perhaps engaged in dishonesty and then, afterwards, looked for justifications in terms of their acceptability. In both cases, the findings may support the argument that students engage in academic dishonesty due to a lack of self-control linked to opportunity, which is then moderated by their attitude.

Depleted self-control

Self-control can become depleted; in other words, a diminished capacity to exert self-control following utilisation of one's self-control. This suggests that self-control functions like a

limited resource which becomes fatigued and less effective over time and with extended use (Cranwell et al., 2014; Hagger et al., 2010). Depleted control is different from 'lack of control' (see self-regulation as a personality trait)—while semantically there is an overlap, psychologically, depleted refers to resources currently not available due to fatigue, in contrast to lack of control, which implies an inability altogether.

Baur et al. (2020) aimed to investigate the interaction of organisational identification and self-regulation as a resource in predicting pro-organisational dishonesty. They found that pro-organisational dishonesty occurs when employees feel stuck due to conflict between personal and organisational interests. Employees may engage in unethical behaviour if they belief it will benefit the organisation, especially if they identify highly with the organisation and if their self-regulatory resources are depleted. Depletion of self-regulatory resources increased the chances of pro-organisational dishonesty for those who identified strongly with the organisation; however, it decreased for those who identified less. Therefore, organisational identification moderates the relationship between lying behaviour and self-regulation.

Volz et al. (2022) aimed to investigate whether ego depletion would enhance and change any behavioural differences among liars and truth-tellers within a job interview. They hypothesised that self-regulation resources utilised for an initial task would deplete the subsequent self-control required to tell a convincing lie. This was expected to magnify the behavioural differences between liars and truth-tellers. Participants were required to perform a task that required inhibiting a dominant response, after which they were videotaped in a simulated job interview. Both ego depletion and veracity were manipulated. The study, however, found no evidence to support the hypothesis.

Mead et al. (2009) aimed to investigate whether self-control depletion leads to an increase in dishonest behaviour when individuals are allowed to cheat or gain money. They found that when the individuals' resources were depleted, they were more likely to engage in cheating behaviour. In one experiment, individuals with depleted self-control falsely claimed more correct answers and took more money than non-depleted participants. In a second experiment, depleted self-control individuals were more likely to expose themselves to the temptation to cheat and more likely to succumb to that temptation and cheat. Depleted individuals cheated three times more than the non-depleted individuals.

Locus of control

Based on social learning and attribution theory, locus of control (LOC) can be described as a general belief about the causes of reward and punishment (Hill, 2016) or failure and success (Rinn et al., 2014). More specifically, LOC refers to the extent to which an individual believes he or she influences the actions or events in his or her life. Individuals with an internal LOC believe that life outcomes are within their personal control and dependent on their own efforts and choices, in contrast to those with an external LOC who believe that life outcomes are instead being dependent on fate, luck, or other factors.

Rinn et al. (2014) aimed to determine the effect of LOC on academic dishonesty, as moderated by academic self-concept, in a sample of 357 high-ability students at two different universities. The study found a small but significant correlation between LOC and academic dishonesty, as well as between academic self-concept and academic dishonesty. However, LOC did not, as expected, significantly contribute to the regression model. Also, while academic self-concept remains an important variable in the prediction of academic dishonesty, it did not moderate the relationship between LOC and academic dishonesty.

Williams and Aremu (2019) aimed to examine the association between academic dishonesty and LOC, academic self-efficacy, motivation, and gender. They reported a significant negative association between LOC and academic dishonesty; in other words, higher LOC implies lower academic dishonesty. They also found that 61.5% of the total variance in academic dishonesty of the students is accounted for by the combination of LOC, academic self-efficacy, and motivation.

Theme 2: Lying and the process of self-regulation

This theme focuses on the process rather than the strength of self-regulation—it specifically refers to the role the application and process of control in the context of telling a lie. Three sub-themes emerged, namely, cognitive control processes, non-verbal control processes, and emotional control processes.

Cognitive control processes

Foerster et al. (2018) aimed to examine the scope of conflict adaptation in dishonesty, focusing on whether short- or long-term control processes operate independently or together when responding to dishonesty. They investigated in, three experiments, how dishonest responses change in different conflicting contexts. In their study, 'control adaptation' refers to when lying becomes easier when an individual has lied very recently or frequently—an increase, therefore, in lying performance. The process of lying requires an initial truth response which must be inhibited (controlled), and which is crucial for creating an effective dishonest response. The findings show that cognitive control in dishonest behaviour is influenced mainly by transient adaptation in response to recent experiences of dishonesty, while sustained control was absent in cases of frequent dishonesty. Regarding task switching and role conflict adaptation, participants displayed slower and less accurate reactions when engaging in dishonest tasks. The authors concluded that (i) control adaptation does not

transfer between dishonest responding and other conflicts, and (ii) transient adaptation seems to be a default control response to dishonesty in different contexts, while sustained adaptation only emerges when transient adaptation is not possible.

Speer et al. (2021) replicated previous studies on cognitive control in dishonest decision-making, indicating that its influence depends on the individual's moral default. EEG data combined with a Stroop task identified cognitive control activity within the theta brain wave band of 4-8Hz. The higher theta power in these regions during the initial 500ms of decision-making was associated with exposure to cheating opportunities. Higher theta power increased cheating in honest individuals but promoted honesty in habitual cheaters. Additionally, they found a direct link between neural markers of cognitive control within the Stroop task and dishonesty, showing that trial-level similarity between cognitive control and cheating behaviour influenced the likelihood of cheating. In conclusion, the study found that individuals who tend to cheat need cognitive control to act honestly, while those who are generally honest need cognitive control to engage in cheating.

Next, Hines et al. (2010) aimed to investigate the cognitive and behavioural strategies used by deceivers and honest reporters during investigative interviews, particularly focusing on how these strategies impact their responses. The study found that both honest and deceptive participants employed similar strategies to appear convincing during an interview. After a reality interview, the participants were asked what was important in convincing the interviewer of deception or honesty through open-ended questions and Likert-type questions. While deceivers were more concerned about avoiding mistakes, controlling their presentation, and managing sensitive information, honest participants were more concerned about generally reporting details. Deceivers tend to prepare and rehearse their stories to avoid contradictions or revealing sensitive information, which aligns with the concept of superficial

encoding, as opposed to honest respondents who rely on a planned script rather than their genuine memory.

Non-verbal control processes

Hamlin et al. (2020) investigated deception strategies among 209 undergraduate students and identified three key factors through a bottom-up approach: non-verbal behavioural control, cognitive difficulty, and detail. These factors highlight the multidimensional nature of deception, with individuals employing strategic attempts to suppress non-verbal cues, manage cognitive load, and enhance the detail, emotion, and fluency of their deceptive statements. A notable correlation was found between non-verbal behaviour control and detail, suggesting that those who actively managed their non-verbal expressions also tended to provide more detailed lies. Additionally, anxiety emerged as a fourth factor, not as a strategic component of deception but as a psychological consequence, closely linked to cognitive difficulty. The identified factors accounted for 38.9% of the variance in the data, reflecting the complexity of deception strategy research and the potential for further investigation into the role of detail, emotion, and humour in deceptive communication.

Next, Uziel and Schmidt-Barad (2023) examined the relationship between impression management and self-control in social contexts using a longitudinal design. Impression management is one dimension of the two-dimensional social desirability construct, referring to the habitual and conscious tendency to portray oneself in an overly positive manner. The second dimension of social desirability is self-deception enhancement, which refers to an unconscious self-serving bias. They found that impression management predicted an increase in self-control in social situations, which supports the idea that high-impression management individuals adjust their behaviour to maintain social harmony rather than engage in deceitful

self-presentation. According to the authors, the finding has important implications for how impression management is used and measured in social desirability scales.

Finally, Hamlin et al. (2020) found deceivers to be more focused on impression management, such as making good eye contact and presenting a confident demeanour, compared to honest participants who were less concerned with managing their appearance. Additionally, the study found that current credibility assessment techniques, such as ACID (Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception) were able to effectively differentiate between honest and deceptive individuals. Overall, the study found that both honest and deceptive participants focused on providing precise and careful stories without contradictions. Deceivers placed more importance on preparation, controlling information, and maintaining eye contact, while honest respondents emphasised providing correct peripheral details. Despite these differences, both groups reported more similarities than differences in their strategies, which are unlikely to succeed against verbal content analysis.

Emotional control processes

This theme focuses on lying and the individual's ability to perceive, understand, use, express, and manage the emotions in oneself and others. This ability can be roughly equated to emotional intelligence (EQ)—the capacity and ability to understand and regulate emotions (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019).

Pittarello et al. (2018) aimed to explore, in a sample of 67 university students, the emotional processes involved in the conflict between benefitting from dishonesty and keeping a positive self-image. More specifically, they tested the hypothesis that EQ would moderate the effect of physiological activation on dishonesty. Physiological responses were measured through skin conductance level (SCL) and heart rate (HR) to assess emotional arousal. They found that higher SCL corresponded with a lower likelihood of cheating. This

was further moderated by EQ; as SCL increased, participants with higher EQ were surprisingly more likely to cheat than those with lower EQ.

Finally, Nelson et al. (2024) aimed to critically examine the understanding of, and engagement in, deceptive workplace actions among a sample of 102 community sports coaches. The researchers identified seven types of deception, namely: concealing fatigue, disguising disdain, faltering insincerely, hiding a lack of expected knowledge, reporting favourable metrics, camouflaging alternative approaches, and cover up mistakes. Of these seven types, concealing fatigue was the most frequently cited form of deception, indicating the presentation of an artificially positive and energetic exterior. The findings suggest that as the coaches display emotions, they may not feel compelled to present themselves as capable and composed. This emotional dissonance causes a mismatch between internal feelings and external expressions, creating an additional layer of stress.

Discussion

From the review, it appears that lying is generally related to both strength and process of self-regulation. *Strength* in this regard refers to self-control as a personality trait, a moral characteristic, depleted self-control, and locus of control, while *process* refers to the application and process of self-regulation over time, within cognitive, non-verbal, and emotional domains.

The relation between lying and the personality traits of self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and openness (Eshun et al., 2023); self-control (Ren et al., 2018; Van Veen et al., 2022; Williams & Williams, 2012); and positive beliefs (Liu et al., 2019) is not surprising, as personality traits are important in deciding intent and execution of behaviour (Laguna & Purc, 2016; Matha et al., 2022; Schunk, 2023). Trait self-control is linked to more stable mental processing, characterized by fewer but longer-lasting cognitive steps and

reduced interruptions from distracting impulses (Kleinert et al., 2022). The results further underline how personality, self-regulation, and deception are linked, for example, Liu et al. (2019) who have shown that although higher self-control individuals may engage in self-deception, they better knew how to avoid the negative effects thereof, clearly showing how self-regulation underpins the ability to manage internal drives and align long-term goals (Cavadel et al., 2016; Derryberry & Tucker, 2015; Greene et al., 2023).

The findings are, however, not conclusive—Williams and Williams (2012), for example, found limited evidence for a relationship between lying and self-control, while Van Veen et al. (2022), showing feigning to be lower in contexts of social disapproval and stronger morality, despite self-control, suggesting that other social and personal factors may play a role. According to Henning et al. (2011), academic dishonesty may be the result of poor self-control but linked with opportunity and moderated by attitude. The findings that honesty requires conscious cognitive efforts to suppress self-serving impulses (Li et al., 2024), that moral disengagement (a form of self-regulation) moderates between moral judgment and academic dishonesty (Stephens, 2018), and that academic dishonesty decreases as both religiosity and self-control increase (Uula & Sulikah, 2023), is therefore important as it provides evidence that moral processes are interlinked with self-regulation in contexts where the individual may consider lying or deception.

The suggested importance of morality in the relationship between lying and self-regulation is no surprise. Several studies provide evidence on how moral values and religiosity influence self-regulation. Higher religiosity and self-control could enforce greater moral standards and reduce temptation (Roberts et al., 2017). In contrast, dishonest actions may be justified through moral disengagement, that is, shifting responsibility or minimising emotional response such as guilt or shame (Shu et al., 2011). The lack of self-control and

opportunity likely creates a situation where the dishonesty or cheating behaviour feels easier and less risky (Espejo-Siles et al., 2023). This could suggest that individuals adjust their ethical boundaries based on situational cues that minimise the possible consequences (Clark et al., 2023).

Next, while there is evidence that lack of self-control through both depleted self-control (Baur et al., 2020; Mead et al., 2009) and external locus of control (Rinn et al., 2014; Williams & Aremu, 2019) is associated with the tendency to lie, Volz et al. (2022), in contrast, did not find any association. Lying as a result of control depletion would make sense according to the original depletion model proposed by Baumeister et al. (2018), which implies that self-control acts like a muscle—after exerting self-control in one area, subsequent acts of self-control would be impaired. Not finding an association in their study, Volz et al. (2022), however, indicate that the depletion effect either does not exist as postulated or does not reduce lie performance, because it does not strain those specific self-regulation resources that would impair subsequent performance. In this regard, Baumeister et al. (2018) postulates that just as muscles become stronger with exercise, self-control can also be improved through frequent exertion. The question here is, therefore, to what extent this may play a role in lying behaviour.

Found associations between lying and depleted and external locus of control were, in addition, also moderated by organisational commitment (Baur et al., 2020), motivation, gender, academic self-efficacy (Williams & Aremu, 2019), and self-concept (Rinn et al., 2014). Another question, not addressed in any of the review studies, is the extent to which depleted and external locus of control overlap with control as a personality trait in lying behaviour, for example, would control depletion make a difference in someone who uses lying as a way to control others or a specific situation?

These findings do not necessarily show a lack of agreement among researchers, but again emphasise the importance of context. This supports the idea that self-regulation is context-dependent—according to De la Fuente et al. (2022), people can operate with mixed motivational systems. They can change back and forth from external to internal regulation according to the context, and by implication, the context of lying. Perhaps the question should not merely be "what is the relationship between lying and self-regulation?", but rather "which contextual factors influence the relationship between lying and self-regulation?" Answering this question in future research may contribute to current gaps in knowledge.

The findings regarding lying and self-regulation processes further emphasise the complexity of lying behaviour. This complexity seems to be based on two aspects: first, the multidimensional nature of lying, and second, the dynamic nature of lying as an unfolding process. The multidimensional nature of lying first seems to be more than just merely the case of deception involving more cognitive control than truth-telling (Sai et al., 2023) but instead linked to the fact that deception not only requires cognitive, non-verbal, and emotional control (Zheng et al., 2025) but also requires the implementation of different strategies within each of these domains. For example, individuals often employ a wide variety of strategic, non-verbal attempts to successfully carry their deceptive statements, requiring sustained energy and focus (Hamlin et al., 2020; Uziel & Schmidt-Barad, 2023). According to Bogaard and Meijer (2017), creating and maintaining deception requires significant control as well as managing both verbal and non-verbal cues to avoid detection, especially when creating a convincing narrative or appearance. In addition to this, the findings of Speer et al. (2021) that cognitive control makes cheaters to be honest and honest participants to cheat, emphasise the importance, again, of morality as moderating influence but also hint at the paradoxical nature of control as a further dimension of lying. This links to the question raised by Goschke and Job (2023) regarding how it is possible for a to want to

control the same behaviour they desire to perform. According to these authors, the question necessitates a re-evaluation of self-control theory's assumptions about self-control (and perhaps self-regulation in general).

Another aspect of this multidimensional nature links back to context—the finding by Hines et al. (2010) that cheaters, who engage more in superficial encoding, differ from honest individuals in their self-regulatory strategies, emphasises the importance of feedback within interpersonal contexts. According to Van Veen et al. (2022), others' disapproval serves as a filter for perceiving norm violations, and acting against others' morality may cause social sanctions. This is supported by recent research that explains how individuals interpret social norms while engaging in dishonest behaviour, often to justify their actions and to maintain a positive self-image and beliefs (Huang & Luo, 2020; Keller et al., 2023).

The dynamic nature of lying as an unfolding process is evident in several studies. The study by Foerster et al. (2018) on control adaptation shows how adaptation tends to be transient, and that lying performance itself may change according to history and context, while the studies by Pittarello et al. (2018) and Nelson et al. (2024) show how emotion is regulated over time to allow continuation of deception, respectively through disengagement from physiological reactions and through intentionally concealing fatigue.

Taken together, the results of this review imply at least three significant aspects that may need to be explored in future research:

1. Limited empirical studies are available on the relation between lying and self-regulation, suggesting a limited scope of understanding.
2. The majority of these studies focused on self-control as a specific mechanism of self-regulation, which makes sense given the importance of control in managing the conflict between dishonesty and personal and moral values, but there is a lack in

research on other self-regulation mechanisms and processes like goal intention, motivation, self-monitoring, goal discrepancy, and change implementation.

3. A relation between lying and self-regulation seems to exist, but this relationship is complex in at least three different ways. First, self-regulation, specifically self-control, seems to be required for both lying and being honest. This creates a paradox that needs to be better understood, as indicated by Goschke and Job (2023). Second, context appears to influence the relationship between lying and self-regulation. Several contextual factors emerged, but it seems that the role morality plays needs to be further explored. Third, the complexity is evident in the dynamic and process-nature of both lying as a behaviour and self-regulation as a tool to successfully prevent or implement lying as it unfolds over time.

Therefore, although the review provided core themes within this field, none of these are available as comprehensive, complete, or overwhelming evidence. This is further complicated by the complex nature of both lying and self-regulation as process-related behaviours.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify and map the current available evidence on the relationship between lying and self-regulation among adults. Before a conclusion can be made, some limitations are evident that need to be considered. First, by excluding studies in languages other than English, some important studies may have been overlooked. Second, the majority of the studies focused on self-control, which is only one facet of self-regulation. This limited scope within the research may obscure the contributions of other self-regulatory processes or mechanisms such as motivation, self-monitoring, and emotional regulation. Furthermore, many of the studies reviewed did not seem to consider the cultural,

developmental, and situational factors, as these were underexplored. This could limit the generalisability of the findings. Last, the limitation of inconsistent findings among the studies reduces the confidence of the overall studies and the conclusions that can be drawn from the literature, possibly highlighting the need for more standardised and replicable research methods.

In conclusion, this review highlights the critical gaps and complexities in understanding the relationship between lying and self-regulation. While there seems to be evidence supporting a relationship between lying and self-regulation, especially regarding self-control, this is only a single aspect of self-regulation; thus current research remains limited in both its scope and depth of evidence. Other self-regulation mechanisms such as goal setting, self-monitoring, and motivation are under-researched. Given the dynamic context-dependent nature of both lying and self-regulation, this adds additional complexity.

Therefore, future research must adopt a more comprehensive approach to fully understand how these processes and mechanisms interact over time and within different contexts. One way to achieve this could be to modify methodologies to better understand self-regulation and deception through the use of longitudinal or neurocognitive methods. Last, another recommendation could be to explore the differences between trait-based and state-based self-control or self-regulation regarding deception: traits such as personality-based and states such as emotional arousal or resource depletion, and how they influence lying differently.

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SECTION 3: CRITICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

Chapter 3 of this mini-dissertation will be a critical reflection on the researcher's experience of the research process. This section will delve into the process of the research topic formulation, the overall research process, the data collection process, the data interpretation process, as well as the findings and results.

Research Topic Formulation

Initially, the research topic formulation was a challenge. I wanted to explore the emotional regulation components of DBT in a virtual setting to look at the efficacy of the intervention. However, a few months prior, a similar review was conducted, which led me to change my topic.

This led me to the topic of lying. I have always been interested in the components of honesty, and I value it highly. Thus, this made me question what the motivations are for lying within specific contexts and how one regulates oneself when they are lying, and ultimately, to the research question for this dissertation: "What is the relationship between lying and self-regulation among adults?".

This can easily be linked to struggling to formulate and develop a clear and concise research topic. As seen in Tamgha-e-Imtiaz et al. (2018) they highlight how novice researchers often struggle with critical thinking and skills to articulate their research question, which can lead to broad and unclear topics. I think this is something I experienced in the beginning, especially with coming up and formulating a new topic that was in line with my supervisor's speciality and interest, which was challenging.

Additionally, there were initial challenges regarding the research approach; I was adamant about doing a review. Initially, this was a rapid review; however, I learnt throughout

the process that your research question and your aims guide the type of methodology you will use and the type of review that will be utilised for the specific research question.

I think, given my lack of experience in research topic formulation, I was aided well by my supervisor in the research question and topic formulation stages. Which ultimately led to a topic we were both interested in.

Research Process

The research process for this dissertation was both challenging and rewarding. One of the frustrating aspects was managing time effectively with long class times and workdays, and then having to dedicate time to the research at a later stage. This was particularly difficult during the screening of the articles and extracting the data. However, it really gave me a deeper understanding of the literature, which I believe has helped me comprehend this research to a greater extent.

However, despite these challenges, the primary factor that drove us to the end was our continued commitment to the research process. Especially when the process was slow and at times stuck, I motivated myself towards the end goal of becoming a counselling psychologist and that being consistent as much as one could was more important than perfection. As this was initially a difficult concept for me to grasp, as I felt my supervisor wanted perfection, however, he was just taking me through the process. Reflecting on it now, gives me a great deal of gratitude and understanding of the process.

Once we got to the results and discussion stages, the collaborative aspect of this review process, along with engaging with the data, provided motivation and support to the process.

Now, as we approach the end of the process, correcting minor language errors and ensuring the information is accurate, relevant, and that the references are up to date is tedious; however, it is necessary for the process.

Research Data Collection

The data collection phase was a collaborative effort, which greatly helped identify the information currently available. This process was mostly linear and structured, which searching the available databases as well as accurately extracting the appropriate information needed for our current study. We chose what was suggested by research regarding what data to extract, such as the study aims, methodology, sample or population, key findings, as well as the author's name, title, and whether there was any mention of ethical clearance or approval for the study. This was mostly a tedious process as it was a lot of reading as well, and looking for specific information. What made it difficult was that the studies included referenced other studies, which at times blurred certain information, such as population, results, and key findings. However, this provided me with further insight into how certain studies are written and interpreted, as well as the differences among academic writers.

Another crucial aspect of the research process was the inclusion and exclusion criteria regarding the studies included in the scoping review. Although at times applying these criteria was challenging, as certain studies were borderline or not specific enough. These criteria provided an essential framework for the decision-making process regarding which studies to include and which studies not to include. This stage reinforced the importance of transparency in research for me, especially with regard to highlighting and documenting the decisions made during the research process, as well as being as accurate as possible during a review.

Research Findings or Results

When we got to the research findings or results section of the research process, this part of the research was where I feel I engaged with the literature the most. It was an engaging part of the research process as it was both an enriching and challenging experience. It required me to systematically review the literature in order to get the most accurate representation of the literature, which not only helped me develop a deeper understanding of the literature available but to reflect on the research question at hand consistently.

When it came to inductive analysis, this allowed myself and my supervisor to approach the findings with more freedom, thereby enabling the themes to emerge more naturally based on our understanding of the literature as well as our understanding of the overarching topic of self-regulation. Which I believe has also allowed us to give guidance on where the research can go.

Throughout this process, I was constantly reminded that research is not a straightforward and linear process. It is repetitive. With rereading of articles as well as rewriting of sentences, coming to terms with the fact that things were going to change or be removed, as well as the fact that things were not going to be perfect, was an ongoing challenge throughout the research process for me.

There were moments of doubt and frustration; however, I feel I grew in my ability to understand the literature as well as engage with it critically.

All in all, I believe that this scoping review process has been a valuable research journey and has aided in my aspirations of becoming a researcher in the field of neuroscience and psychology. This process has deepened my appreciation for having a knowledgeable and passionate supervisor, which has been extremely beneficial in enhancing my understanding of

not only lying but self-regulation as well. I feel the skills I have learnt within this process will aid me in becoming an evidence-based psychologist, which I believe is extremely important in being an up-to-date and ethical practitioner.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this scoping review has provided me with a formative understanding of the research process. Given the challenges I have experienced, I feel they have contributed to my overall growth as an emerging researcher and counselling psychologist. From the initial stages of formulating a relevant research topic to navigating the phases of data collection, interpretation, reporting information accurately and concisely, as well as writing the required information within the results and discussion phases, each of these stages provided unique challenges in terms of time management, critical thinking, and my academic writing development. Despite these challenges and times of uncertainty regarding the research process, the most important lesson for me throughout the process was consistency and making sure there was progress.

The collaborative work with my supervisor assisted with the motivation of the process and forced me to grow in my understanding of not only lying but self-regulation, which I use every day in clinical practice. His support really helped me to engage in the literature critically and helped clarify understandings of different researchers' writing styles and communication methods.

Ultimately, the process highlighted to me that research is not a linear process nor a perfect process, but a dynamic and evolving process that, when we face it with consistency and curiosity, can provide knowledge growth both personally and professionally.

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Addendum A (Compres Scientific Approval Letter)

Recommendation of the Scientific Committee to the NWU-HREC for a *No Risk Study*

Scientific Committee Information			
Name of the scientific committee	COMPRES	**Discipline(s)**	MHSC in Counselling Psychology
Research Entity	COMPRES	**Contact Person for the committee**	Thenjiwe Gazi
Faculty	Health Sciences	**E-mail of the committee contact person**	Thenjiwe.Gazi@nwu.ac.za

Study & Scientific Review Information			
Title of the study:	Original title (unedited):The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review Language edited: The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review (9 words)		
Researcher/Study Supervisor Initials, Name and Surname:	Prof Karel Botha	**NWU Number:**	1006 7973
Student Initials, Name & Surname:	Darian Bonner	**NWU Number:**	3267 7510
Other Researchers involved in the study *(Initials, Names and Surnames):*	Click here to enter text.		

Executive summary of the research: **Note: Please attach the proposal to the template and send to the NWU-HREC**	Lying is a significant everyday occurrence that individuals are faced with in normal everyday interactions, politics, intimate partner relationships, and within the workplace. Although lying is explained from different theoretical perspectives, it remains a complex concept not always well understood. This is specifically true regarding its relationship with self-regulation, evidenced not only by contradicting findings, but also in the paradoxical nature of what lying means in terms of effective self-regulation. The literature seems scattered and fragmented, and with no review studies available, a gap exists regarding scientific knowledge on the relationship between lying and self-regulation. The aim of the proposed research study is therefore to identify and map the breadth of evidence available on the relationship between lying and self-regulation. Arksey and O'Malley (2005) 5-step framework for scoping reviews will be implemented to conduct the review. Data will be analysed with inductive content analysis, while the necessary steps will be taken to ensure a trustworthy and ethically sound study.		
Potential risk level:	No risk	☒	**Motivate:** No humans.
Recommendation for the REC:	Exempted from review	☒	**Motivate** (e.g. systematic review not impacting on human participants, laboratory work with human cell lines etc.):

			Scoping review of literature, no humans.
Any additional comments	Motivate: See title.		
Chairperson of the committee	Prof Werner de Klerk		
Committee members present during the review **Note: Ensure no conflict of interest**	**Dr Erika** **Hitge Dr** **Sufran Smith** **Prof Vincent Mabvurira**		
Date of review	2024/07/24		

Prof Werner de Klerk
Digitally signed by Prof Werner de Klerk
North-West University

Carlien van Wyk
Digitally signed by Carlien van Wyk Date: 2024.08.06 17:14:21 +02'00'

Signature of Chairperson

Date: **2024/08/06**

Signature of Research Director

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Form developed by Prof Minrie Greeff, 1 March 2017 Form updated by Prof Minrie Greeff, 31 January 2019 Form updated by Prof Minrie Greeff, 8 May 2019 Form updated by Prof Minrie Greeff, 23 July 2019 Form updated by Prof Minire Greeff, 10 August 2019

Addendum B (HREC Ethical Approval Letter)

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
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North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC)

Tel: 018 299-1206
Email: Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za (for human studies)

4 September 2024

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE LETTER OF DECISION: NO RISK

Based on the review by the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC) on 04/09/2024, the NWU-HREC hereby clears your study as a no risk study. This implies that the NWU-HREC grants its permission that, provided the general conditions specified below are met, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review
Principal Investigator/Study Supervisor/Researcher: Prof KFH Botha

Student: D Bonner - 32677510

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Application Type: Single study

No Risk

General conditions:

The following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The commencement date indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-HREC reserves the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
  - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research;
  - withdraw or postpone clearance if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-HREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
    - submission of the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and/or

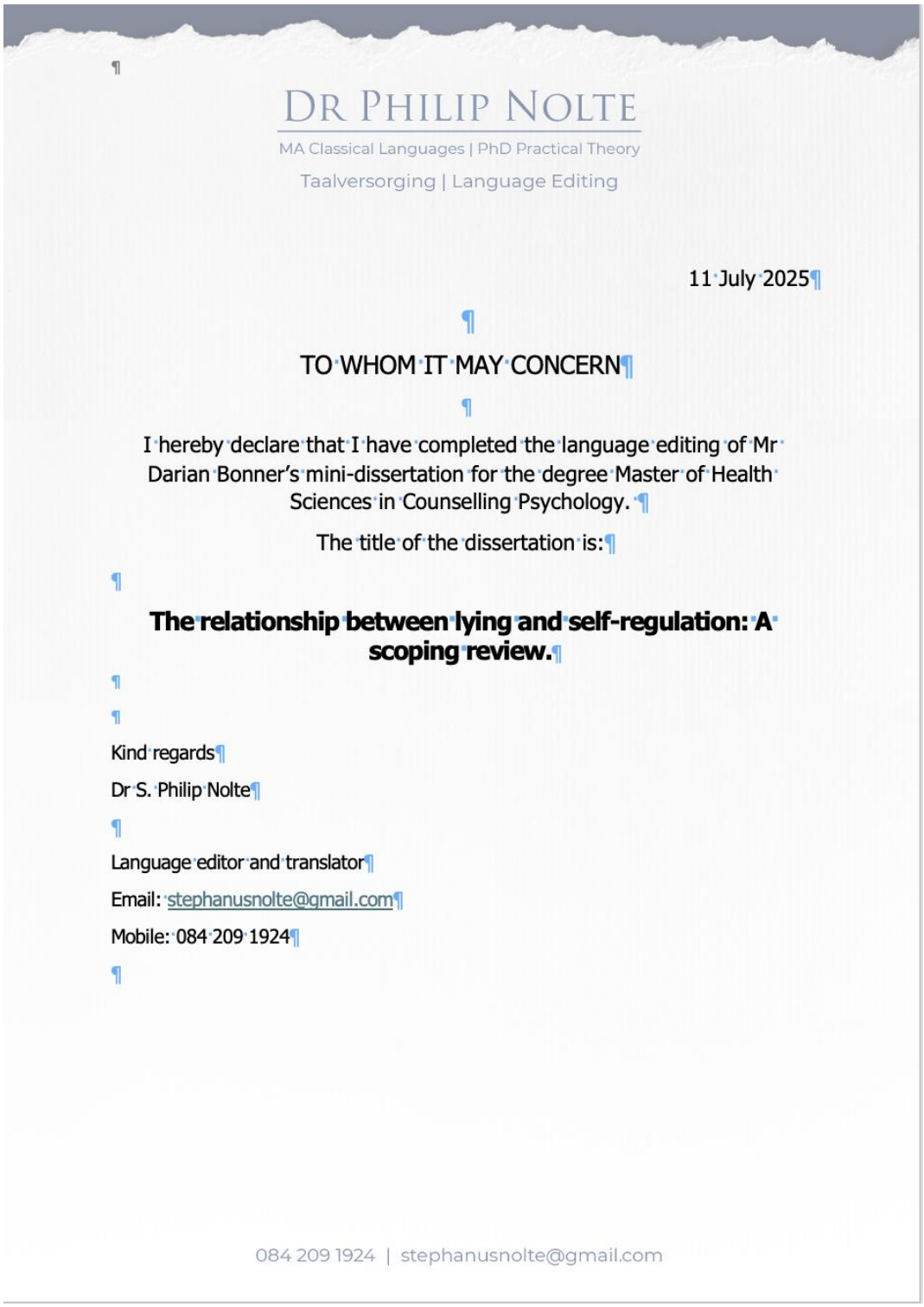
The NWU-HREC would like to remain at your service and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU-HREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

NWU-HREC Vice-chairperson

Head of the Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support

Addendum C (Language Editing Report)



DR PHILIP NOLTE

MA Classical Languages | PhD Practical Theory

Taalversorging | Language Editing

11 July 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby declare that I have completed the language editing of Mr Darian Bonner's mini-dissertation for the degree Master of Health Sciences in Counselling Psychology.

The title of the dissertation is:

The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review.

Kind regards

Dr S. Philip Nolte

Language editor and translator

Email: stephanusnolte@gmail.com

Mobile: 084 209 1924

084 209 1924 | stephanusnolte@gmail.com

Addendum D (Turn-It-In Report)

Dissertation FINAL Version 21 July 2025 - for TURNITIN.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	7%	7%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	journal2.um.ac.id Internet Source	1%
3	Sarah Volz, Marc-André Reinhard, Patrick Müller. "Does Ego Depletion Elicit Stronger Cues of Deception?", Open Psychology, 2022 Publication	<1%
4	doaj.org Internet Source	<1%
5	Floris van Veen, Sebastian Sattler, Guido Mehlkop, Fabian Hasselhorn. "Feigning Symptoms to Obtain Prescription Stimulants: A Vignette-Based Study on Its Conditions", Journal of Drug Issues, 2021 Publication	<1%
6	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<1%
7	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%

Addendum E (Solemn Declaration and Permission to Submit)

NWU Higher Degrees Administration

SOLEMN DECLARATION AND PERMISSION TO SUBMIT

1. Solemn declaration by student

I, **Darian James Bonner**

declare herewith that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation entitled (**exact registered/approved title**),

The relationship between lying and self-regulation: A scoping review

which I herewith submit to the North-West University is in compliance/partial compliance with the requirements set for the degree:

Master of Health Sciences in Counselling Psychology

is my own work, has been text-edited in accordance with the requirements and has not already been submitted to any other university.

LATE SUBMISSION: If a thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation of a student is submitted after the deadline for submission, the period available for examination is limited. No guarantee can therefore be given (should the examiner reports be positive) that the degree will be conferred at the next applicable graduation ceremony. It may also imply that the student would have to re-register for the following academic year.

Ethics number: NWU - 00158-24-S1 ORCiD: 0000-0002-7115-3704

Signature of Student: DJBonner University Number: 32677510

Signed on this 10 day of July of 20 25

2. Permission to submit and solemn declaration by supervisor/promoter

The undersigned declares that the thesis/dissertation/mini-dissertation:

- ✔ Complies with the A-rules and the technical requirements provided for in the Manual for Higher Degree studies and in faculty rules;
- ✔ Has been checked by me for plagiarism (by making use of TurnItIn software for example) and a satisfactory report has been obtained, and;
- ✔ That the work was language edited before submission for examination.

Faculty specific requirements as per A-rules: 1.3.2, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.4.2, 4.10.4, 5.3.2, 5.4.2, 5.10.2

- ✔ Complies with regards to faculty rules on submission or acceptance by an accredited scientific journal;
- ✔ Complies with regards to faculty rules on peer reviewed conference proceedings;
- ✔ The student is hereby granted permission to submit his/her mini-dissertation/ dissertation/thesis for examination.

Signatures of supervisor(s) and Promoter(s): (only compulsory in cases where there are co- or assistant- supervisor(s/promoters)

	Co-Supervisor/Co-Promoter	Assistant -Supervisor Assistant-Promoter

Original details: (10512187) M:\HDA Toolbox\Forms\Pdf fillable forms\13.Solemn Decl and Permission to submit exam copy.pdf 3 December. File reference: 7.1.11.3.2/3