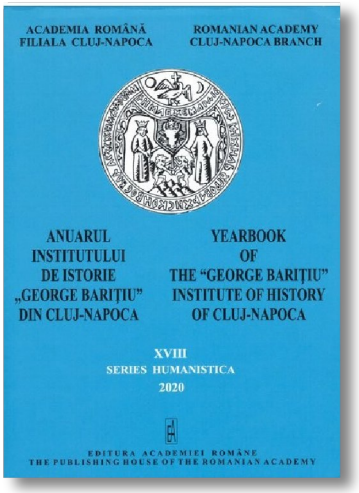

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PSIHOLOGIE ŞI ŞTIINŢELE EDUCAŢIEI

REASONS FOR HIDING THE TRUTH AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH MORAL COMPETENCE AND EMOTION REGULATION

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Abstract. *The link between one's moral life and her/his emotional life (in its emotion regulation aspect) is an understudied issue. In the present correlational descriptive research, this link is studied using two measures for one's moral life, in their relationship: Moral Competence Test (MCT, Lind, 1978,1985), and the C5 Questionnaire (Faiciuc, 2016b), in order to assess one's reasons for hiding the truth (grouped mainly on the egocentric - altruistic, and avoidance-approach axes), and her/his general tendency to hide the truth. For the emotion regulation part of the above-mentioned link, there were used six instruments, assessing several of its aspects: one for cognitive emotion regulation strategies (Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire: CERQ, elaborated by Garnefski, Kraaij and Spinhoven, in 2001), one for emotional dysregulation (Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale: DERS, elaborated by Gratz and Roemer, in 2004), three for emotional regulation goals (Measure A and B for the performance and learning goals for emotion regulation, elaborated by Rusk, Tamir, and Rothbaum, in 2011, and The Questionnaire for the Emotion Regulation Goals: QERG, elaborated by Faiciuc, in 2018), and one for metaemotions (Meta-Emotion Scale: MES, elaborated by Mitmansgruber, Beck, Höfer, and Schüßler, in 2009). At the research participated 144 students in the second year at the University of Fine Arts and Design from Romania (mean age: 20,22 years, 101 female, 39 males, and 4 did not disclose their sex), who completed at least one of the instruments used in the research. The results replicated a part of the results of a previous study (Faiciuc, 2016a), in which only the relationship between the MCT variables and those of C5 questionnaire was investigated. They also suggest that that link may be moderated by one's emotional dysregulation and its aspects, the expected correlations occurring mainly in the case of a low level of emotional dysregulation. The most stable correlation was the positive one between the moral competence index of MCT and the preference for those altruistic reasons for hiding the truth that invoke the desire to avoid harming a close person. An important positive correlation was also the one between the same moral competence index and the preference for the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth. There was obtained also an emotion regulation profile associated with each of the ten studied types of reasons for hiding the truth. It is a complex pattern of results that can be better understood in their interrelationship, in their support for each other. In this pattern, the positive relationship between one's*

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tendency to lie to others and to oneself (as revealed by one's emotion dysregulation) stands out. The data obtained with the QERG instrument suggest that the regulation of the positive emotions, in comparison with the regulation of the negative ones, may be differently linked with the investigated moral variables. These results bring also useful data regarding the convergent validity of the instruments involved in the present research, and can be helpful to understand the impact of a social environment that depletes one's emotion regulation resources on her/his moral life, and to guide moral education programs. Given the small samples that were used in many of the computed correlations, further studies are needed on larger and more heterogenous samples, in order to establish the stableness of the obtained results, and their generality, and to give also the opportunity for a more advanced data analysis of the relationships among the investigated variables, clarifying their causal direction.

Keywords: *moral competence, moral judgment stages, lying, self-deception, avoidance motivational focus, approach motivational focus, altruism, egocentrism, emotion regulation goals, emotional dysregulation, metaemotions, emotion regulation strategies*

Deceptively hiding the truth or lying is one of the most frequent immoral behaviors, if not the most frequent one. Although the existing studies have presented results that support two different perspectives (Smith, Hancock, Reynolds & Birnholtz, 2014): the everyday liars perspective (i.e. almost all people lie, with a normal distribution of the lies across population), and the prolific liars perspective (only a small proportion of the population lies a lot, with an asymmetric distribution of the lies across population), the general conclusion is still that almost all people lie. One of the most cited studies regarding lying is the one carried out by DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer and Epstein (1996), who found that lying is an everyday event, based on the self-reports (registered in a diary during a whole week) obtained from a sample of 70 college students and from a community sample with 70 participants: "participants in the community study, on the average, told a lie every day; participants in the college student study told two" (p. 991; only one participant from the college sample and six from the community sample reported no lies). A series of other studies have obtained similar results (e.g., Turner, Edgley, & Olmstead, 1975, apud Bryant, 2008; George & Robb, 2008; Hancock, Birnholtz, Bazarova, Guillory, Perlin & Amos, 2009; Jensen, Arnett, Feldman & Cauffman, 2004; Kalish, 2004, Knox, Schacht, Holt & Turner, 1993 and Patterson & Kim, 1991, apud Serota, Levine & Boster, 2010; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Serota et al., 2010), which indicate that around 90% of the participants from the investigated samples self-reported that they lied at least once in a week or have had a deceitful behavior in the relatively recent past. In experimental studies in which participants were tempted to lie without being caught (e.g., Fischbacher & Föllmi-Heusi, 2013; Mazar, Amir & Ariely, 2008; Pruckner & Sausgruber, 2013; Utikal & Fischbacher, 2013), or when the lies were checked in the recent text messaging (Smith et al., 2014), the proportion of the participants who lied was of about two thirds. It is true that, in some studies (e. g., Halevy, Shalvi & Verschuere, 2014;

Serota et al., 2010; Smith et al., 2014), in certain conditions, a small proportion of the participants lied the most, whereas the majority lied only a little, as it is supported by the perspective of the prolific liars, which suggests the existence of a certain guilt or lying aversion (Fischbacher et al., 2013).

Lying/hiding the truth is not only widespread as such, but may be linked with any other immoral behavior, to the extent to which it implies a form of cheating, deceiving or dissimulation, of covering up its immoral character or as a way to facilitate the attainment of an immoral goal. So, its frequency raises because it usually accompanies most of the other immoral deeds, as underlined also by Kligyte (2008), who noted that deception, as "a deliberate act designed to conceal or distort truth to mislead others", "is directly linked to unethical decision-making" (p. 5).

In comparison with other immoral acts, lying/hiding the truth has another particularity: the harm caused by lying is more subtle. It is frequently not so obvious, it may not imply a direct and concrete loss as such, or a physical harm. The deceived person may not react immediately signaling its sufferance, stirring empathy. Trust is something intangible; so, harming trust may not be something easily perceptible to the liar, to her/his target, or to witnesses. Therefore, because of its "ethereal" consequences, the socialization of telling the truth as a moral behavior may be harder and its (external or internal) control more difficult to obtain. Therefore, a person who is able to refrain from lying should have a more autonomous moral behavior, based more on principles than on concrete external consequences.

In spite of the fact that truth is so often hidden, telling the truth may be essential in maintaining the integrity of the "social tissue" (as noted also, for example, by Bok, 1978, apud DePaulo et al., 1996; Lindskold, & Walters, 1983), the reciprocal trust between people being necessary in order to keep going an interpersonal relationship or a community of people, i.e. the goal of any moral norm or behavior[1]. The utmost psychological and social importance of telling the truth is supported also by the results obtained by Graham, Meindl, Koleva, Iyer and Johnson (2015, pp. 5-6), in which they asked more than 1000 Mechanical Turk workers the following open-ended questions in a randomized order: "What are your most important moral values?", "What are some recent examples of things that you did (or didn't do) that did not live up to your moral values?", and "What are some recent examples of things that you did (or didn't do) that made you feel guilty?". Participants' self-reported "most important values" most often fell into Honesty (mentioned in 23% of responses) and Care (22%) categories, they

[1] As it will be seen below, the relationship between truth telling and maintaining a relationship or community is more complex and ambivalent, because some lies – white lies, altruistic or prosocial lies may aim apparently to maintain social relationships or to help communities, as lying was seen to be a communication or social skill (Camden, Motley & Wilson, 1984;DePaulo et al., 1996) that rather promote trust (when the benefits of lying clearly outweigh those of honesty in the eyes of the target, as noted by Levine & Schweitzer, in 2014, or Lupoli, Jampol & Oveis, in 2017), especially in the "every day liars" perspective. Lying is even socialized from an early age in the form of play, of the stories told to the children (e.g. about Santa Claus), or by encouraging them to tell altruistic lies. So, the main goal of socialization would be to learn the border between an admissible lie and an unacceptable one.

"were most likely to mention violations of Honesty (20%) and Loyalty (17%), with the majority of respondents describing lying to or letting down a friend or family member", and "failures related to Honesty (15%) and Loyalty (25%) violations (specifically ones directed to close others such as friends and family) were the most common responses" regarding the their guilt sources.

For all the above-mentioned reasons/considerations, truth telling may be viewed as the epitome of moral behavior or, in other words, hiding the truth may have a central role in shaping immoral behavior, as noted also by Yip & Schweitzer (2016). That is why, **the first general hypothesis** of this research, advanced also in Faiciuc (2016a), was that *the tendency to tell the truth, to be honest, should be linked with what was called to be moral competence and orientation, as defined by Lind (1985)*. This hypothesis was suggested also by the way the moral competence is assessed by Lind with his Moral Competence Test: MCT (formerly Moral Judgment Test: MJT). His instrument implies the idea that a moral competent person should strive for finding the truth, respects and loves the truth, as long as she/he is able to appreciate the quality of an argument that is in opposition with one's own opinion in a morally dilemmatic matter[2]. In other words, a moral competent person should be able that, for the sake of truth, to make a personal sacrifice, to put the truth above of the egotistic interest of being right, to surpass the well-known myside bias (e.g., Toplak & Stanovich, 2003).

A **second hypothesis** was based on the idea that the relationship between hiding de truth and moral competence should take into account the reasons for which one hides the truth. Several types of lies have been distinguished taking into view their reasons, purpose, or motivation. They were labeled sometimes differently by the authors who have studied them, in relationship with their meaning in a particular context. Such types of lies are:

- self-oriented lies vs. other-oriented lies (e. g. DePaulo et al., 1996);
- self-serving vs. other-serving lies (e.g., Smith et al., 2014; Yip et al., 2016);
- white lies (morally acceptable, tactful lies, which serve interests beyond the liar's ones), with two subtypes: Pareto lies (in which both the liar and the deceived person gain something), and altruistic lies (when the liar sacrifices something, and the deceived person is the only one having a benefit from that lie) vs. black/real lies (trust-violating lies), with two subtypes: selfish (when only the liar gains something), and spiteful lies (when both the liar and the deceived person lose something) vs. gray lies: ambiguous lies, which may seem to be like black lies, but are accepted as justifiable because of the circumstances (e.g. Bryant, 2008; Di Battista, 1994; Erat & Gneezy, 2012; Gneezy, 2005);
- blue lies: lies in the name of a collective good (Barnes, 1994, apud Fu, Evans, Wang & Lee, 2008);

[2] Moral competence is defined by Lind (2016) as "the ability to solve problems and conflicts on the basis of universal moral principles through thinking and discussion, instead of using violence, deceit, and force." (p. 45)

- prosocial lies (with two subtypes: lies to prevent emotional harm of others, and lies to promote the welfare of others) vs. selfish, antisocial lies, with two subtypes: to prevent a personal loss, or to promote a personal gain (Levine & Schweitzer, 2014; Lupoli, Jampol & Oveis, 2017);

- protective (with a prevention/avoidance regulatory focus, attempting to thwart negative, undesirable, outcomes; loss aversion) vs. beneficial lies (with a promotion/approach regulatory focus, aiming to obtain positive, desirable, outcomes, to gain something; Camden, Motley& Wilson, 1984; Cantarero, Van Tilburg & Szarota, 2018; Cui, Wu, S., Wu, H., Wang., Jiao & Luo, 2018);

Lupoli et al. (2017) note that "when given the opportunity to tell a prosocial lie, both lying and honesty can have different prosocial—and antisocial—consequences" (p. 3) and that "while prosocial lies are intended to benefit others, they may ultimately have detrimental effects on individuals and organizations" (p.1). An example for such a situation in which a benevolent intent can have harmful effects in its long-term consequences is an overly positive feedback (Lupoli et al., 2017), when compassion can lead both to a lie, in order to avoid the negative emotional impact of a negative feedback, or to telling the hurtful truth, having in mind its beneficial effects for the long-term accomplishment of the one who is the target of the feedback. Therefore, the situations in which prosocial lies are told tend to have a dilemmatic character, in which "two prosocial ethics are pitted against one another" (Lupoli et al., 2017): "to lie in order to reduce harm or provide care to another, or tell the truth, which could also provide benefits for the target" (p. 8).

One can note that the above-mentioned different types of lies can be placed on the coordinates of three classification axes: *self-other-collective gain*, *self-other-collective loss*, and *avoidance regulatory focus (loss aversion) vs. approach regulatory focus (gain willingness)*, axes that were discussed also by Janoff-Bulman and Carnes (2013, 2018), who speak also of a *prescriptive/promotion vs. proscriptive/prevention* axis regarding moral regulation. Several other relevant axes may be added: one on which the type of gain or loss varies from *material gain/loss to psychological and social gain/loss*, one in which the *level of psychological and social closeness of the liar to the deceived person or group* is considered, one in which the *magnitude of the expected loss/gain* of a lie is taken into account, the one of the *heteronomy vs. autonomy* of the lying reason, the expected *direct vs. indirect gain or loss* for the liar or for her/his target, and, finally, the expected *probability of being caught lying* or of *obtaining the expected benefit from lying*.

The existing data support mainly the alternative that self-serving lies are more frequent than the altruistic ones, and that the protective lies are more frequent than beneficial ones (see, for example, Cantarero et al., 2018; DePaulo, Ansfield, Kirkendol & Boden, 2004; Kligyte, Connelly, Thiel and Devenport, 2013).

The second hypothesis of this research predicts that *moral competence should correlate negatively with the preference for egocentric reasons to tell lies* as predicted also in Faiciuc (2016a). The prediction regarding the relationship

between moral competence and the preference for the altruistic reasons to tell lies is less clear cut, because of the above-mentioned ambiguous nature of the prosocial lies, as they can indicate both antisocial and prosocial tendencies, or both the respect for other moral principles (as the respect for other principled positions in the moral competence task) or simply a tendency to lie no matter the situation. Therefore, *moral competence should correlate positively with the preference for the altruistic reasons to tell lies, or may not correlate at all with it*, as it was the result obtained in Faiciuc (2016a). As in Faiciuc (2016a), it was predicted also that *moral competence should correlate negatively with the preference for those reasons for hiding the truth that indicate a conflict between the desire to respect the truth as a value and one's personal interest, in which personal interest is the winning part*. This prediction was made taking into account that moral competence is defined also as resulting from a conflict between egocentric affective tendencies and principled reasoning, in which principled reasoning is the winning part.

At the same time, the preference for egocentric reasons when lying should be positively associated with the preference for the lower levels of the moral orientations, i.e. the preconventional, immature ones, and negatively with the mature levels of the moral orientations, the ones defined by Lind (1985) for MCT. Conversely, the preference for altruistic reasons when lying should be positively associated with the preference for the higher levels of the moral orientations, i.e. the mature levels of the moral orientations, and negatively with the lower levels of the moral orientations, the preconventional, immature ones. As the in the case of the relationship between the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth and moral competence, this last prediction may be questionable, because of the ambiguous nature of the prosocial lies.

Because in Faiciuc (2016a) the expected negative relationship between the moral competence and the tendency to hide the truth was not obtained, I suspected that a masking factor may explain that result. Based on theoretical reasons, a plausible candidate for such a masking factor was one's emotion regulation ability. The reasoning behind this supposition was that it is not enough for a person to recognize a higher position of truth telling in the hierarchy of values in order to be morally competent in the sense given by Lind (1985). It is necessary also that such a person to be able to regulate the emotions generated by her/his personal interests that are in conflict with the value of the truth telling, so that they do not influence the final decision, leading to a behavior in contradiction with the truth telling value. In other words, egotistic or self-centered reasons (as the ones of being right when supporting a position in one's answering a moral dilemma, as in MCT) may elicit powerful emotions that can motivate immoral behaviors accompanied by the need to ignore the truth. In order to defeat such emotions that may stay in the way of one's intention of supporting the truth, one should have an efficient emotion regulation. Moreover, people who tend to lie, may tend to lie also about their feelings, as noted by DePaulo et al. (1996), who reported that, in their studies, at the "top of the list of the contents of people's lies was the category of feelings" (p. 991), usually pretending to feel more

positively than they did in fact. *Faking emotions may lead to emotion regulation difficulties in the long run and, consequently, to difficulties in supporting the truth in spite of one's personal interests, as it is shown in studies investigating emotional labor* (e.g., Grandey & Sayre, 2019), or authenticity (e.g., Anderson, Chen & Ayduk, 2019; Gillath, Sesko, Shaver & Chun, 2010). A vicious circle may exist between lying and emotion regulation, influencing moral behavior in general. So, from this perspective, *there should be a positive association between one's emotion regulation difficulties and her/his tendency to lie*. This prediction is supported indirectly by several empirical results, which indicate a positive association between personality traits linked with immoral behaviors and emotion dysregulation: e.g., Rogier and Velotti (2018) found that gamblers with grandiose narcissism had more difficulties regulating their emotions; Donahue, McClure and Moon (2014) showed that emotion regulation difficulties were positively associated with Self-Centered Impulsivity and global psychopathic traits and "that emotion regulation difficulties explained incremental variance in psychopathic traits over and above negative affect alone" (p. 186); Makowski, Pham, Lau, Leow, Raine and Chen (2020) obtained a positive association between lying frequency and deficits of impulse control in emotional contexts.

The above-mentioned prediction is supported by another line of argumentation, proposed by Gaudine and Thorne (2001), who suggest that positive emotions would facilitate the recognition of an ethical dilemma (increase one's ethical sensitivity), a more sophisticated level of prescriptive moral reasoning, more concordant with one's moral development, the selection of an ethical choice consistent with this prescriptive reasoning (because of the optimism in the successful implementation of that choice and the possible desire to maintain the positive emotion through good deeds), increasing one's ethical motivation. Moreover, a higher arousal would increase an individual's propensity to implement her/his moral intentions in moral behaviors, i.e. would increase one's moral character.

On the other hand, as noted by Makowski et al. (2020), difficulties in emotion regulation might impact lying because one's engagement in deception may be dependent on her/his ability to regulate the emotional states generated by the lying (stress, guilt, shame, etc.). The same idea is suggested by the sensemaking model for ethical decision elaborated by Mumford et al. (2008), who state that ethical decision involves dealing with emotions as a metacognitive strategy, i.e. emotion regulation. So, from this perspective, *a person who is more able to regulate the emotions associated with hiding the truth (distress, shame, guilt, etc.) should lie more frequently, because she/he does not have to avoid unpleasant emotions*. This prediction is supported by data obtained by Donahue et al. (2014), who showed that emotion regulation difficulties were negatively associated with Fearless Dominance psychopathic traits, and by Krokoszinski and Hosser's (2016) study, which demonstrated that face-to-face fraudsters, when lying, had lower cortical activation gains in brain regions associated with emotion regulation than violent offenders, indicating a more efficient emotion-regulation strategy. In other words, Krokoszinski et al. (2016) assume that "deception

challenges the liar not only cognitively but also emotionally, which requires emotion regulation processes" (p. 76), and that a better emotion regulation ability should be positively associated with the tendency to lie. However, they note that this emotion regulation ability is not a general emotion regulation ability or a situational emotional regulation when committing fraud, involving the conscious suppression of emotions and of their expression, or the generation of spontaneous justifications, as in the case of the violent offenders, or of the non-offenders, who, before and during deception, weigh the advantages and disadvantages of lying and actively search for justifications that would decrease the negative emotions associated with deception. The kind of emotion regulation ability that fosters lying is related with well-established internalized fraud-specific justification schemes, as an antecedent-focused emotion regulation that decreases the need of a response-focused emotion regulation, i.e. of a situational emotion-regulation. In the cited authors' view, such justifications schemes have a regulatory influence also before lying, not only after deception. So, the above-mentioned considerations lead to the *conclusion that emotion regulation may serve both the immoral goal of lying or the moral goal of telling the truth*. Moreover, although there are authors who claim that, besides self-gain and altruistic lies, there are also no reason lies (Zvi & Elaad, 2018), Makowski et al. (2020) note that lying is not, in most cases, an end goal, but rather the means to attain other goals. Such goals may be emotion regulation goals, as noted by DePaulo et al. (1996), who suggest that lying may serve emotion regulation goals in the context of social interaction, taking into account especially the emotional distress that occurred in their studies at the moment of lying and directly afterwards, but not before or after lying.

Consequently, the relationship between emotion regulation and the tendency to lie/tell the truth, which may influence one's moral competence, may be a complex one, dependent on particular conditions, other variables, and particular aspects of the emotion regulation and lying. Such particular aspects that should be taken into considerations are one's lying and emotion regulation goals, the emotions generated by having those goals, one's emotion regulation strategies in order to attain those goals, as well as one's ability to regulate those emotions or other incidental emotions, and one's ability to lie. In the present research, it will be explored the relationship of one's self-reported emotion regulation goals, her/his metaemotions generated by those goals, her/his cognitive emotion regulation strategies, and her/his ability to regulate emotions with one's goals/reasons for hiding the truth/lying (reasons which may be seen as justifications for the disengagement from the moral obligation of telling the truth). On the one hand, the position of truth in one's value hierarchy may be linked with the way people regulate their emotions, by influencing the emotion regulation goals or strategies, or by creating emotion regulation problems. Reciprocally, on the other hand, emotion regulation problems and ability, in their turn, may influence one's tendency to tell the truth/lie.

In the present study, the love of truth or the tendency to tell the truth, to be honest, was assessed by investigating the self-reported reasons for which a person

is willing to morally disengage from the moral imperative of telling the truth, i.e. the conditions in which a person would consider that she/he is justified to hide the truth or in which she/he would give in to temptation to hide the truth vs. the willingness to tell the truth no matter what. Comparatively with the usual lie, hiding the truth is a more general category of immoral behavior, encompassing also the "passive lie" (or subtle lie, as named by DePaulo et al., 1996), when one does not lie directly by giving false information, but indirectly, by intentionally withholding information that is important for other persons (e.g., paltering). Moreover, it was presumed that the syntagma of "hiding the truth", in comparison with the "lie" word, would be interpreted as less threatening by the participants from the point of view of a moral judgment, as less accusatory. Therefore, it was expected that it may encourage a more honest answer to the items regarding the reasons for which one would be willing or tempted to lie. The questionnaire through which one's preference for the reasons for hiding the truth were assessed was elaborated taking into account the above-mentioned axes that define the different types of lies based on their purpose or motivations. Given the high number of possible combinations for the values of those axes, for each combination of reasons was dedicated only a single item. From the same reason, there were selected only the most relevant combinations.

The relationship between the reasons for lying or truth telling and moral competence and orientation was studied in a previous research (Faiciuc, 2016a), as noted above. In the present research, one purpose was *to see if the results obtained in that research would be replicated in a similar sample*. Another purpose was *to extend the previous research in order to understand better the obtained results, by including several measures for assessing different emotion regulation aspects* that might be linked both with moral competence and the tendency to tell the truth/lie. To my knowledge, no other studies have investigated until now the relationship between this particular moral behavior: telling the truth and moral competence and the way they are linked with one's emotion regulation.

In what concerns the replication part of the present study, the main objective was to see which of the results obtained in the previous exploratory study are obtained for a new sample, to refine the previous data analysis at the level of the C5 items, in order to find out if some specific reasons for hiding the truth are linked with the moral judgment and behavior as measured through MCT, and, at the level of the main clusters obtained through cluster analysis, which indicated in the past research that are associated more with the autonomy/approach – heteronomy/avoidance dimensions than with the egocentric – altruistic dimension. In the present research, only the C5 version of the experimental questionnaire through which the reasons for which a person is willing the morally disengage from the moral imperative of telling the truth was retained, as it is the version that had more nuanced answers, which refer explicitly to a personal behaviorally aspect of lying, and because the results from Faiciuc (2016a) indicate that it supported to a

greater extent the predictions regarding the relationship between one's moral competence and her/his reasons for hiding the truth.

The predictions regarding the relationship between emotion regulation and the studied reasons for hiding the truth cover, as noted above, several aspects of emotion regulation: its preferred cognitive strategies, its goals, with their associated metaemotions, and its efficiency. The obtained results may be important theoretically, but also from a pragmatic point a view, as a way to find data about the convergent validity of the instruments used in this research and for moral education programs. This part of the correlational research had also an exploratory purpose, i.e. to find out unexpected relationships between the investigated variables.

The main prediction in what concerns the relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and the preferred cognitive strategies of emotion regulation was that *the preference for blaming other should correlate positively with the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth, and negatively with the one for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth.* A tentative prediction was that *the preference for the self-blame strategy should correlate positively with the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth, and negatively with preference for the egocentric reasons to hide the truth.* Because the *catastrophizing and rumination emotion regulation strategies may be more probable when one is self-centered, as a threat to one's security might be considered more important than the threat to another person or to a group, it may be that the preference for these strategies correlates positively with the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth, and negatively with the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth.* Correlatively, the same self-centeredness may impede the ease with which one is able refocus on positive thoughts, or to accept the situation, i.e. to ignore completely a negative situation or, respectively, to let it be. Therefore, it might be that *the preference for the positive refocusing, or acceptance strategies to correlate negatively with the preference for egocentric reasons for hiding the truth, and positively with the preference for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth.* Because the levels of the reasons for hiding the truth progress from a low ability to adopt the broad perspective needed to understand the upper levels of social organization to a higher one, it may be possible that this ability to be linked with the one required by the cognitive emotion regulation strategy of putting into perspective, which is also an ability to be able to see a situation that generates negative emotions in a broader perspective. Therefore, *the preference for the putting into perspective strategy should correlate positively with the preference for the higher levels of the reasons for hiding the truth and negatively with the preference for the lower ones.* Another prediction was that *the reasons for hiding the truth that imply personal suffering avoidance should correlate positively with the preference for cognitive emotion regulation strategies that involve the avoidance of the unpleasant experiences, and negatively with the preference for those strategies that involve acceptance of and confrontation with unpleasant situations and emotions. Conversely, the reasons for hiding the truth that imply an approach motivation, oriented toward gaining something or actively attaining*

some goal, should correlate negatively with the preference for emotion regulation cognitive strategies that involve the avoidance of the unpleasant experience, and positively with the preference for those strategies that involve acceptance of and confrontation with unpleasant situations and emotions. Theoretically, *the main strategy that involves acceptance of and confrontation with unpleasant situations and emotions should be the acceptance strategy. Self-blaming, rumination, and catastrophizing may be seen also as strategies through which an unpleasant emotion is not avoided.* In their case, the unpleasant emotions may be even exacerbated. *The main explicit avoidance strategy seems to be, theoretically speaking, the positive reorientation strategy, but this strategy, as well as the other possible avoidance strategies, which may mean implicitly a disengagement from the current situation, a kind of self-deception: positive reevaluation, putting into perspective, planification, blaming others, has an ambiguous status, as it involves an active avoidance, which can be seen, depending on the particular situation, like an approach strategy*, as noted also by Van Bockstaele, Atticciati, Hiekkaranta, Larsen and Verschuere (2019): "Situation modification involves changing aspects of a physical situation to change its emotional impact, without simply avoiding the situation." (p. 1).

Regarding the link between the reasons for hiding the truth and demonstrative vs. learning emotion regulation goals, it was predicted, in the first place, that *the preference for the learning goals for emotion regulation should correlate negatively with the general tendency to hide the truth, as a person interested to find out about her/his real feelings, i.e. one who does not deceive herself/himself, should have also a lower tendency to deceive other persons*. Correlatively, for a person for whom her/his image in the competition with other persons counts to a greater extent or who is afraid to confront herself/himself with her/his real emotions, i.e. for a person who prefers performance emotion regulation goals, the truth behind the personal image would count to a lesser extent. Therefore, *the preference for performance emotion regulation goals should correlate positively with the general tendency to hide the truth*. On the other hand, when one prefers performance-approach emotion regulation goals, being focused on the competition with other persons, she/he may be more egocentric, and less altruistic. That may mean that she/he would prefer also the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth, and not the altruistic ones. Therefore, *the preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals should have a positive correlation with the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth, and a negative correlation with the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth*. Finally, *the preference for avoidance reasons to hide the truth should correlate positively with the preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals, and the preference for approach reasons to hide the truth should correlate positively with the preference for the performance-approach emotion regulation goals.*

The general tendency to hide the truth should have a positive correlation with the metaemotion of suppression, which suggests one's desire to reject the truth of her/his emotional life, her/his tendency toward self-deception. This metaemotion

should correlate positively *especially with the preference for those reasons to hide the truth that imply the avoidance of some anticipated negative emotions, as an avoidance motivational focus can promote a suppressive emotional answer*. Also, *the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth should correlate positively with those metaemotions that indicate a preoccupation for the personal well-being, self-compassion, as it is the metaemotion of compassionate care*.

Given the above mentioned predictions regarding the link between the tendency to hide the truth and some emotion regulation strategies, goals, and metaemotions that are related, in general, with emotional dysregulation (other-blaming, performance emotion regulation goals, and metaemotion of suppression) and that, in general, one's tendency to not be dedicated to seeking and communicating the truth could hinder an effective emotional regulation (because the needed informational input and feedback for such a regulation is distorted), it was predicted that *the tendency to hide the truth, no matter the reason, and the preference for the avoidance reasons to hide the truth should be positively associated with the difficulties in emotion regulation, especially with the nonacceptance of the emotional answer, and with the lack of clarity of one's own emotions, as assessed with DERS. Other aspects of emotional dysregulation may also correlate positively with the tendency to hide the truth, because of their association with the two above-mentioned aspects. Emotional dysregulation, especially its aspect regarding the deficient impulse control, should be also positively associated with the preference for the third level of the reasons for hiding the truth, the one in which an egocentric reason for hiding the truth wins the competition with an altruistic one.* This prediction is suggested also by the results obtained by Draghici (2016), which indicate that "the ability to more quickly disengage from self-focused thought was associated with greater emotion regulation success, and a greater tendency towards engaging in self-focused thought was associated with increased emotion regulation difficulty". Although, as shown above, emotion regulation efficiency could be associated positively, theoretically, both with the egocentric and altruistic reasons for hiding the truth, still, it is predicted that *the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth may indicate one's inability to self-regulate, by taking into consideration the complexity of the social life, or one's inability to decenter, which may lead to difficulties in her/his emotion regulation, as those aspects may be important for an efficient and stable emotion regulation in any situation*. This prediction takes into considerations also the above-mentioned empirical result regarding the link between narcissism and emotional dysregulation. Correlatively, *the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth should be positively linked with the emotion regulation efficiency. On the other hand, the task of emotion regulation can be more difficult for a person who takes into considerations not only her/his personal emotions and interests, but also other persons' interests and emotions*.

QERG questionnaire was used in this research in order to check some of the results obtained with the other emotion regulation instruments, which were analyzed in their relationship with the reasons for hiding the truth, but also in order to add some

supplementary data, because it offers a more detailed picture of the possible goals for emotion regulation, taking into account also the distinct cases of the regulation goals for the positive emotions vs. the ones for the negative emotions. Because the data obtained with this questionnaire were more complex, being at a more detailed and systematic level of analysis, requiring also a more detailed interpretation, they will be presented completely in another paper, although many of them would have been useful in order to be corroborated with the data from the present research. Here, the data obtained with this questionnaire will be used mainly to support, in certain cases, the general hypothesis that *the regulation of the positive emotions may have a different importance than the one of the negative emotions in the investigation of the link between the moral variables from this study and the emotion regulation ones*.

Basically, the above predictions regarding the relationship between truth telling and the investigated aspects of emotion regulation are founded on the assumption of a structure of common goals and self-regulation processes, which may be reciprocally/circularly linked also with one's moral development and moral orientation. They may be important also in order to explain the relationship between the moral competence/orientation and one's tendency and reasons for hiding the truth. This aspect was investigated in the present research only regarding the emotional dysregulation, as it was the most obviously linked with the way moral competence is defined by Lind (1985), but the other aspects of emotion regulation can be important also, especially through their link with the emotional dysregulation. The obtained data in that respect will be presented completely in another work. In the present research, only those data that are directly relevant for the hypotheses investigated here will be selected.

At a higher level of analysis, the research tries to find data in order to understand the relationship between the tendency to hide the truth and its reasons, moral competence and emotion (dys)regulation, advancing the hypothesis *that the emotional dysregulation may be a moderator/suppressor variable in the relationship between the way truth and principled reason are valued by a person, as a predictor, and her/his moral competence indicated by her/his behavior in the MCT behavioral task, as an outcome*. As noted also above, the general idea was that, although a person may value truth or principled and altruistic reasons for hiding the truth, she/he may not act in accordance with this value orientation because she/he is unable the control the negative emotions triggered by competing reasons and values, as it is implied by the way in which moral competence was defined by Lind (1985). So, it may be that *the expected positive correlation between the altruistic reasons to hide the truth and moral competence will occur only for those persons who have a low level of emotional dysregulation.* Likewise, *the expected negative correlation between the tendency to lie and moral competence should occur also only for those persons with a low level of emotional dysregulation. The role played by emotional dysregulation may be important especially in the case of the relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth of level 3, i.e. when there is a conflict between the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth*

and the altruistic reasons for telling the truth, and moral competence, because a high level of emotional dysregulation may incline the balance towards the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth. So, *the relative preference for this kind of egocentric reasons for hiding the truth in comparison with other egocentric reasons for hiding the truth should correlate positively with moral competence for those participants having a high level of emotional dysregulation*, indicating that, in the both cases (telling the truth when there is a personal interest to lie, and recognizing the quality of the arguments of an opposing position), they acknowledge which is the right thing to do, but they may fail to do that thing, because of their emotional regulation problems. Finally, it is possible that *the expected negative correlation between the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth and moral competence to disappear for those participants who have a low level of emotional dysregulation*. One reason for this prediction would be the assumption that those participants with emotion regulation problems would use more lying as a way to regulate their negative emotions if they prefer a moral orientation on a lower stage. Those with a lower moral orientation who do not have emotion regulation problems, instead, would lie less in order to regulate their emotions, being capable of unfeeling, cynical, immoral acts, without hiding. A complementary reason for the above-mentioned prediction would be that those participants who are able to control better the emotions generated by their egocentric motivations might act finally based on altruistic reasons, if they have such reasons for hiding the truth or for considering the arguments of an opposing position.

The above-mentioned considerations can be applied also regarding the relationship between the general tendency to hide the truth or its reasons and the preference for the highest or lowest levels of moral orientation, i.e. stages of moral judgment.

All predictions regarding the link between the scores of the C5 questionnaire and several aspects of emotion regulation may provide also useful data in order to support the convergent validity of the instruments used in this investigation.

METHOD

Participants: The participants in the research were 144 students in the second year at a University of Fine Arts and Design from Romania (mean age: 20,22 years, 101 female, 39 males, and 4 did not disclose their sex), who completed at least one of the instruments used in the research. In order to secure confidentiality and the sincerity of the participants, they were required to note on the answer forms a pseudonym of their choice instead of their names. They received credit points for their voluntary participation. The number of participants may vary for each computed correlation, depending on the number of participants who gave answers for all the items used to compute the correlated scores.

Instruments

- **Moral Competence Test: MCT** (formerly Moral Judgment Test, MJT), elaborated by Lind in 1978, in its Romanian version (Lupu, 2009). It is an instrument for which there are numerous studies regarding its validity (see Lind, 2000). It was renamed in 2014 by Lind as Moral Competence Test in order to reflect better its purpose and to avoid possible confusions. The test includes two moral dilemmas (The workers' dilemma and the mercy-killing/doctor's dilemma), for which a solution is given by the author of the test. The respondents should rate (on a Likert scale with 7 points from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree") in what degree they agree or disagree with the given solution. Then, they have to rate to what degree they consider acceptable or not (on a Likert scale with 9 points from "I completely reject" to "I completely accept") six arguments in the favor of the given solution of a dilemma and six counterarguments for that solution. Each of the six arguments or counterarguments corresponds to one of the six levels (stages or types) of moral judgment development, as they were conceived by Lind, taking into consideration the Kohlbergian theory. They are described by Lind (2015b) as follows:

> Type 1. Use of physical or psychological force as a criterion of moral rightness: "The stronger party has the right of way."
> Type 2: Morality of simple exchange: "I do to you what you do to me."
> Type 3: Appeal to group solidarity and cohesion: "It is not good if this will harm the relationship to my family or my friends."
> Type 4: Appeal to the law as the ultimate arbiter: "The law and order must be preserved."
> Type 5: Keeping social contracts: "Promises and contracts must always be kept."
> Type 6: Referring to universal moral principles: "This maxima must be followed by everyone if we want to live in a world of peace. (p. 3)

A participant would have a higher score for the moral competence if she/he agrees or disagrees in a consistent way with the same types of moral arguments, no matter if they are pro or contra the solution preferred by her/him in solving the two dilemmas, taking into consideration only their moral quality. Lind (2000) states that C score of the moral competence (or C index) indicates the degree to which a respondent lets that her/his moral judgment to be determined by moral principles and considerations and not by "psychological forces", like the human tendency to select and accept only arguments that support a personal opinion or a personal decision. The C index ranges from 0 (lowest score) to 100 (highest score). Regarding the significance of the C index, Lind (2015b) describes several patterns of the answers of the respondents, in the ascending order of their corresponding C index:

> 1. Cannot distinguish between 'arguments' and 'opinions' on an issue: The participant says his/her opinion but refuses to rate the arguments.
> 2. Uses arguments only as justification for an opinion ("rationalization") but would not let argument inform opinion: The participant strongly accepts all arguments supporting own opinion, and strongly rejects all arguments opposing it.
> 3. Can distinguish the moral quality of arguments regardless of their opinion-agreement: The participant rejects inadequate arguments even if they support his/her opinion.
> 4. Uses counter-arguments as a source of own knowing and reflection: The participant rates also counter-arguments high if they relate to a shared moral principle. (p. 14)

A separate moral competence index was computed for the mercy-killing dilemma (named also the doctor's dilemma): Cd, and for the workers' dilemma: Cw. Besides the C index for the moral competence, there are computed also scores for the preference for each of the six levels of moral arguments. They indicate what was called by Lind the moral orientation aspect of the moral judgment, the affective one, depending on the levels of the moral arguments that are the most or the least preferred ones. Given that MCT is rather a cognitive ideographic experimental task through which it is evaluated a competence that is changeable, especially through experience, Lind (2000) does not recommend the computation of a coefficient of internal consistency or the assessment of the fidelity of this instrument.

- **Questionnaire of Reasons for Hiding the Truth: C5** (elaborated by Faiciuc in 2016b; see also Faiciuc, 2016a). It is an instrument with 31 items (see Appendix 1, for its English version), for which respondents were required to assess on a 5-point Likert scale (from 0: "not at all" to 5:"completely") to what extent the given statements are true in their case, i.e. if they have hidden or would hide the truth in the stated conditions. Those conditions were determined based on a theoretical analysis of almost all the possible reasons for which a person may be tempted to hide the truth or for which she/he hid the truth in the past. Some of those conditions may be interpreted as conditions in which a person is willing to morally disengage from the norm of truth-telling. Based on theoretical reasons, the items were conceived to represent five levels of reasons for hiding the truth. The items that indicate that the immoral behavior of hiding the truth is accepted because the moral value of telling the truth is not recognized as such, as a moral issue, were grouped in the first level (items 4, 5, 19, 24, 25, and 29). The items that suggest that the immoral behavior of hiding the truth was adopted or would be adopted based on imitation or motivated by reciprocity were grouped in the second level (items 3, 9, 8, 18, 30). Those items that suggest that the immoral behavior of hiding the truth was adopted or would be adopted because of a deficient self-regulation, which is dominated by egocentric reasons (the moral value of telling the truth is recognized, but it loses competition with the immoral behavior of lying) were included in the third level (items 1, 2, 6, 7, 20, 21, 22, 23). In the fourth level, the included items (10, 12, 14) indicate convergent altruistic and egocentric reasons for hiding the truth, when a lie may bring benefits indistinctly both to the liar or to another close person or to her/his close community. Finally, the fifth level groups items (11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 26, 27, 28, 31) that suggest an altruistic immoral behavior, which does not bring a direct personal, egocentric, advantage to the liar (on the contrary, it may cause some harm to the liar). The total score of C5 indicates the avoidance of hiding the truth no matter the situation, as a recognition that truth telling is the highest value. A score was computed for each level, by summing up the answers for the corresponding items. Two agglutinated scores were also computed, by summing up the scores for the levels that indicate egocentric reasons for hiding the truth (the first three ones), and the altruistic ones (the last two levels).

- **Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ)**, elaborated by Garnefski, Kraaij and Spinhoven, in 2001, translated into Romanian by the author of this research, and administrated in this version. It is a questionnaire with nine subscales, with a total of 36 items (4 items for each subscale), for which the answers were given on a 5-point Likert scale [from 1: "(almost) never" to 5: "(almost) always"], which "refers exclusively to an individual's thoughts after having experienced a negative event" (Garnefski, Kraaij and Spinhoven, 2002, p. 5). The nine subscales are: self-blame, other-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, acceptance, positive refocusing, refocus on planning, positive reappraisal, putting into perspective. Garnefski and Kraaij (2007) report an internal consistency coefficient α for the subscales that varies between .68 and .86, and a test-retest reliability between .48 (refocus on planning) and .65 (other-blame).

- **The Questionnaire for the Emotion Regulation Goals: QERG** (elaborated by Faiciuc, 2018). The questionnaire has 38 items, constructed based on a deductive method (a theoretical analysis of the investigated phenomenon): 9 items for assessing the self-reported level of satisfaction regarding the respondent's affective feelings and their expression on several dimensions (intensity, duration, frequency, and type), 16 items for assessing the preference for the investigated goals in the regulation of the affective feelings, 10 items for assessing the preference for the investigated goals of emotional expression regulation, 2 items for the assessment of the self-reported level of global success in emotional regulation (one for the emotional subjective feeling regulation, and one for the emotional expression regulation), and one item for assessing the self-reported level of the belief that emotions can be self-regulated. For each item, the answers are given on a 7-point Likert scale, with two versions (one from 0: "not at all" to 6: "extremely much", and another from -3: "strong disagreement" to 3: "strong agreement"). For 33 items, the answers are given separately for the positive and, respectively, negative emotions. Preliminary data supporting the convergent validity of QERG can be found in Faiciuc (2018).

- **Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale: DERS** (elaborated by Gratz and Roemer, in 2004, translated into Romanian by the author of this research, and administrated in this version). It is a 36-item self-report measure with six facets of emotion regulation (nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior, impulse control difficulties, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotion regulation strategies, lack of emotional clarity). Items are rated on a scale from 1 ("almost never [0–10%]") to 5 ("almost always [91–100%]"). Difficulty in emotion regulation is indicated by higher scores. The cited authors report for the whole questionnaire a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$), and, for each subscale, Cronbach's α was higher than .80.

- **Performance and learning goals for emotion regulation** (Rusk, Tamir & Rothbaum, 2011, translated into Romanian by the author of this research, and administrated in this version) were assessed with two measures (versions). The first

measure (**Measure A**) assesses with a 7-point Likert rating scale (from 1: "strongly disagree" to 7: "strongly agree") the preference for performance emotion regulation goals (Cronbach's α = .94, 8 items), and the preference for learning emotion regulation goals (Cronbach's α = .95, 8 items). The second measure (**Measure B**) assesses also with a 7-point Likert rating scale (from 1: "strongly disagree" to 7: "strongly agree") the preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals (Cronbach's α = .78, 4 items), the preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals (Cronbach's α = .93, 4 items), and the preference for learning emotion regulation goals (Cronbach's α = .90, 5 items).

- **Meta-Emotion Scale: MES** (Mitmansgruber, Beck, Höfer & Schüßler, 2009, translated into Romanian by the author of this research, and administrated in this version), a measure that assesses six types of discrete emotional reactions about one's own emotions: anger (4 items), compassionate care (7 items), interest (5 items), contempt/shame (5 items), tough control (5 items), and suppression (3 items). In the original version, the 29 items required an evaluation on a 6-point Likert scale (from 1: ''is not at all true for me" to 6: ''is completely true for me"). In the present research, a similar 7-point Likert scale was used, which included an intermediary option. Mitmansgruber et al. (2009) reported satisfactory internal consistency Cronbach α coefficients for the six subscales in two samples: all were higher than .77, for the anger, compassionate care, interest, and tough control scales they were higher than .82, and for suppression was .91. Two aggregate scales were proposed by the authors: for the positive metaemotions (interest and compassionate care, Cronbach's α higher than .85), and negative metaemotions (anger, contempt/shame, tough control, suppression, Cronbach's α = .91).

***Procedure**:* The instruments were administered collectively, on paper, without time limit, in four different sessions. The first session was separated by the second one by approximately six months, the second session from the third session by approximately one month, and the third one from the fourth one by two weeks. In the first session, only CERQ was administered. In the second session, QERG, the two measures elaborated by Rusk et al. (2011) for the performance and learning emotion regulation goals, and MES were administered. In the third session, it was administered DERS, and, finally, in the fourth one, MCT and C5. For the instruments that were not elaborated by me, the scores indicated by their authors in the cited works were calculated. In order to eliminate possible answer tendencies (for example, what Lind, in 2015b, names acquiescence, i.e. the participant's agreement with all arguments), for some of the instruments, an ipsitized version of the scores was computed, by subtracting from the absolute score of each item of an instrument the mean score of the absolute scores for all the items of that instrument, obtaining thus a relative score for that item. For C5, the same scores were computed as in Faiciuc (2016a). Five scores were added supplementary, which were obtained based on the main clusters resulted from the cluster analysis. For QERG, initially, no aggregate scores were computed.

RESULTS

Psychometric qualities of the instruments used in the research

The data obtained for MCT support, to a significant extent, the requirements for its validity formulated by Lind (2015a, 2015b). With only one exception, the six moral orientations were preferred in the required hierarchical order, but the same order is generally encountered also in other empirical studies (for example, Lind, 1986) in which MCT was used (see Table 1).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for the MCT moral orientation stages and for C index

	Stage 1	**Stage 2**	**Stage 3**	**Stage 4**	**Stage 5**	**Stage 6**	**C index**
N	53	53	54	54	54	54	52
Mean	-.1509	-.3962	1.8889	2.7222	3.5741	3.2407	14.5746
Median	.0000	.0000	2.0000	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000	12.4438
Std. Deviation	4.48672	4.14330	3.96526	3.79879	3.76980	3.32478	11.72064

> high negative correlations between the C-score on the one hand, and attitude scores for stages 1 and 2, on the other, and moderate correlations between C and attitudes to stages 3 and 4, and substantial positive correlations between C and attitudes to stages 5 and 6 (Lind, 2000, p. 7).

As the distribution for C index was significantly asymmetric, the nonparametric Spearman correlation coefficients were computed. Finally, the obtained pattern of correlations between the preferences for the six moral orientations did not followed the ideal quasi-simplex structure (a condition that is rarely met in the studies in which MCT is used), as it is required, but was relatively close to such a structure. That ideal quasi-simplex structure requires that the preferences for adjacent types of moral orientations should correlate more with each other than with the preferences for more distant stages, or, in other words, that, in the correlation matrix of all stages, the coefficients should decrease monotonously from the diagonal toward the corners of the matrix (Lind, 2015b).

Table 2

Correlations between C index and the preference for the six stages of moral orientations of MCT

		Stage 1	**Stage 2**	**Stage 3**	**Stage 4**	**Stage 5**	**Stage 6**
C index	**Spearman's rho**	-.241	-.362	-.066	.190	.302	.236
	p	.042	.004	.321	.088	.015	.046
	N	52	52	52	52	52	52

In the present research, the factor analysis with main component extraction and standard varimax rotation showed some deviations from the requirement that the factor loadings for the preference scores for the six stages should be orderly located on a simplex curve between the two obtained factors. For this sample, some order reversals occurred: stage 3 was placed before stage 2, stage 2 and 3 before stage 1, and stage 5 before stage 4. This result should be viewed in the light of Lind's (2003) note that "Because research findings suggest that the order between stages 1 and 2, as well as the order between stages 5 and 6 are not as clear as between the other stages, we allow for small deviations from this prediction." (p. 10)

For C5 questionnaire, in order to find out if social desirability was decisive in the participants' answers, the distribution of the scores for the items of C5 for which a greater agreement/preference would have been expected based on the social desirability (items 27, 28, and 31) was analyzed. As in Faiciuc (2016a), their distribution was significantly departed from the normal distribution, asymmetric, with a positive skewness, for items 28, and 31, and bimodal for the item 27 (the "0" and "1" answers were preferred by 55,9% of the participants for item 27, 62,7% of the participants for item 28, and 72,9% of the participants for item 31). Having the same aim, there were identified the items (see Table 3) with the highest preference (a mean score higher than 1,5), in comparison with the same type of items obtained in Faiciuc (2016a).

For CERQ, Cronbach's α coefficients were: for self-blame scale: α = .695; for acceptance scale: α = .527; for rumination or focus on thought scale: α = .632; for positive refocusing scale: α = .861; for refocus on planning scale: α = .766; for positive reappraisal scale: α = .836; for putting into perspective scale: α = .732; for catastrophizing scale: α = .613; for other-blame scale: α = .787.

For DERS, Cronbach's α coefficients were: for nonacceptance of emotional responses scale: α = .885; for difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior scale: α = .869; for impulse control difficulties scale: α = .861; for lack of emotional awareness scale: α = .705; for limited access to emotion regulation strategies scale: α = .876; for lack of emotional clarity scale: α = .76

For the performance and learning goals for emotion regulation, Measure **A**, Cronbach's α coefficients were: for the scale of performance goals: α = .782; for the scale of learning goals: α = .91

For the performance and learning goals for emotion regulation, Measure **B**, Cronbach's α coefficients were: for the scale of performance-avoidance goals: α = .843; for the scale of performance-approach goals: α = .837; for the scale of learning goals: α = .766.

For MES, Cronbach's α coefficients were: for anger scale: α = .827; for compassionate care scale: α = .797; for interest scale: α = .774; for contempt/shame scale: α = .723; for tough control scale: α = .735; for suppression scale: α = .468.

Table 3

The most preferred reasons in this research and in Faiciuc's (2016a) study and their descriptive statistics

Item	Mean (2020)	Median (2020)	Mode (2020)	Mean (2016)	Median (2016)	Mode (2016)
1	1,8400	2	1	2,0890	2	2
5	1, 5080	1	1	1,5778	1	0
6	2,13560	2	2	2,4440	2	1
7	2,2281	2	1	2,4440	2	2
10	1,6897	2	2	1,7778	1	1
12	2,0500	2	2	2,2889	2	3
14	1,9322	2	2	1,8222	2	1
16	1,7119	2	1	1,7111	2	1
21	1,8070	2	2	1,7556	2	2
22	1,6949	2	2	1,9771	2	3
26	1,8772	2	2	1,8409	2	2
2	1,6000	2	2			
13				1,5778	1	1
27				1,7045	1	1

The results of the hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items, using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method, as in Faiciuc (2016a), are presented in Figure 1.

In this research, we supplemented the cluster analysis for the C5 items using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage, and, because of the fact that only ipsatized scores for the C5 items had a normal distribution (tested with Kolmogorov-Smirnov test or with Shapiro-Wilk test), this cluster analysis was performed only for the ipsatized scores of the C5 items (see Figure 2, Appendix 3). The result obtained with this method was the closest to the way items were grouped into the five theoretical levels, based on their intended content when they were conceived. Other methods provided similar solutions, especially regarding the clusters placed on the higher levels of the hierarchy of clusters. The first cluster (10 items), with only two exceptions: items 2 (a level 3 item), and 3 (a level 2 item), includes items that were initially included in the level 5 (items 11, 13, 15, 16, 27, 28), or level 4 (items 12, 14) of the reasons to hide the truth. It may be named *the cluster of the altruistic reasons to hide the truth*. The second cluster (9 items), with only two exceptions: items 5 (a level 1 item), and 10 (a level 4 item), includes items that were initially included in the

level 3 of the reasons to hide the truth (items 1, 23, 7, 6, 22, 20, 21). It may be named as *the cluster of the winning egocentric reasons that are in conflict with altruistic reasons*. Finally, the third cluster (12 items), with three exceptions: items 26, 31, and 17 (as level 5 items), includes items that were initially included in the level 1 (items 24, 25, 19, 4, 29), or level 2 (items 30, 9, 18, 8) of the reasons for hiding the truth. It may be named as the *cluster of the purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth*. A similar cluster analysis was not performed in Faiciuc (2016a), because several ipsatized scores for the C5 items had a distribution significantly departed from normality.

General note

When for two correlated variables there was both an absolute and relative (ipsatized) score (in those cases in which it makes sense to compute the relative preference or importance for the content of an item), the correlations were computed by pairing the absolute scores with absolute scores, and the relative scores with relative scores (mainly in order to simplify the data analysis). When a variable did not have relative scores, it was paired both with the absolute, and the relative scores of the other variable. The data analysis was carried out on several levels of detail and with different measures in order to understand better to meaning of the obtained correlations, and in order to see if the obtained results are stable in different measure and data analysis contexts. Because of the small samples available for some of the computed correlations and because of the need to check the stableness of the obtained results, the bootstrap method, biased corrected and accelerated, was used in the computation of the statistically significant correlations. This method was used mainly for that part of the research that was not exploratory. In order to save space, the bootstrap method was not used for several analyses at a detailed level, with many statistically significant correlations. For space reasons, only the obtained 95% confidence intervals will be mentioned, noted as 95% CI.

Given the predominant exploratory character of the present research, the large number of computed correlations, and the controversy around the application of the Bonferroni correction (e.g., Streiner, 2015), this correction was not used in the present research.

The chosen statistical significance threshold was $p = .05$, but results close to this threshold will be reported in order to understand better the meaning of the obtained results, given the exploratory nature of this research.

The link between MCT and C5 questionnaire

Regarding the link between the MCT variables and C5 composite scores that was studied in Faiciuc (2016a), in what follows, the data that were replicated, i.e. found both in Faiciuc (2016a) and in the present research, will be underlined. As

some of the variables were significantly asymmetric, Spearman rank correlation coefficients, one-tailed, were computed.

The relationship between the C index of MCT and the computed scores for C5 questionnaire

Correlating the C index of MCT with the preference for the five levels of the reasons for hiding the truth, a statistically significant correlation, as in Faiciuc (2016a), was obtained only between the C index and the relative preference for the fourth level of reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .347, p = .013, N = 41, one-tailed (95% CI: [.013, .604]). Only for this sample, additionally, a statistically significant correlation was obtained between the C index and the preference for the fourth level of reasons for hiding the truth, i.e. for its non-ipsatized score. ρ = .306, p = .014, N = 48, one-tailed (95% CI: [.174, .607]). For this sample, also, there occurred the expected negative correlation between the C index and the relative preference for the first level of reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = -.296, p = .030, N = 41, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.580, .032]).

The relationship between the moral orientations assessed with MCT and the computed scores for C5 questionnaire

In what concerns the relationship between the MCT moral orientation stages and the preference for the five levels of the reasons for hiding the truth, the following results were stable, i.e. were found also in Faiciuc (2016a):

- the expected significant positive correlation between *stage 1 of MCT* and *level 1 of C5*: ρ = .474, p < .001, N = 47, one-tailed (95% CI: [.152, .632]);
- the expected significant positive correlation between *stage 1 of MCT* and *level 2 of C5*: ρ = .271, p = .003, N = 49, one-tailed (using the bootstrap method, the value was .234, p = .07, N = 41, with a 95% CI: [-.093, .511]);
- the unexpected significant positive correlation between *stage 4 of MCT* and *level 1 of C5*: ρ = .259, p = .038, N = 48, one-tailed (which was not statistically significand using the bootstrap method, ρ = .183, p = .126, N = 41, with a 95% CI: [-.120, .433]);

In the case of the relative preference for the five levels of C5 in their relationship with the relative preference for the MCT moral orientation stages, i.e. for ipsatized scores, two results were stable:

- the expected negative correlation between the relative preference for *stage 2 of MCT* and the *relative preference for the fourth level of C5*: ρ = -.337, p = .016, N = 41, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.642, .011]);
- the expected positive correlation between the relative preference for *stage 2 of MCT* and the *relative preference for the second level of C5*: ρ = .336, p = .016, N = 41, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.013, .593]).

In contrast with the sample from Faiciuc (2016a), in this sample, the positive correlation between the preference for the stage 1 of MCT and the one

for the level 1 of C5 was obtained also for the case of the ipsatized scores, i.e. a positive association between the *relative preference for the stage 1 of MCT* and *the one for the level 1 of C5*: ρ = .338, p = .015, N = 41, one-tailed (95% CI: [.040, .603]).

Relationship between the MCT variables and the answers to the C5 items

In the present research, the analysis was extended by including the results of the correlations obtained between the answers for the items of the C5 and MCT variables, in order to see if some particular reasons for hiding the truth were linked with the MCT variables and responsible for the correlations presented above, or for the absence of some expected correlations. Only those correlations that were statistically significant or close to the chosen statistical significance threshold both in the present research and in Faiciuc (2016a) were retained.

C index of MCT correlated only with relative preference (ipsatized score) for the item 12 of C5: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .338**, p = .015, N = 41, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .343**, p = .017, N = 38;

The *preference for the stage 1 of MCT* correlated with the preference for the following items of C5:

- item 4: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .282**, p = .023, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .341**, p = .015, N = 41;
- item 8: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .338**, p = .005, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .278**, p = .039, N = 41;
- item 14: ρ = .214, p = .067, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .283**, p = .036, N = 41;
- item 17: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .49**, p < .001, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .348**, p = .013, N = 41;
- item 18: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .245**, p = .043, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): ρ = .248, p = .059, N = 41;
- item 19: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .286**, p = .022, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .262**, p = .049, N = 41;
- item 24: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .373**, p = .004, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .271**, p = .045, N = 40;
- item 28: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .308**, p = .015, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .283**, p = .036, N = 41;
- item 30: ρ = .212, p = .07, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .309**, p = .025, N = 41.

The *preference for the stage 2 of MCT* correlated with the preference for the following items of C5:

- item 9: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .251**, p = .041, N = 49, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= .404**, p = .004, N = 43
- item 13: $\boldsymbol{\rho}$ **= -.256**, p = .036, N = 50, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): ρ = -.208, p = .09, N = 43

- item 17: $\boldsymbol{\rho = .269}$, $p = .029$, $N = 50$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\rho = .230$, $p = .069$, $N = 43$

- item 31: $\rho = .223$, $p = .06$, $N = 50$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho = .310}$, $p = .022$, $N = 43$.

The *relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT* (ipsatized score) correlated with the relative preference for the following items of C5:

- item 9 (ipsatized score): $\boldsymbol{\rho = .367}$, $p = .009$, $N = 41$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\rho = .265$, $p = .054$, $N = 38$;

- item 12 (ipsatized score): $\boldsymbol{\rho = -.301}$, $p = .028$, $N = 41$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho = -.355}$, $p = .014$, $N = 38$

The *preference for the stage 3 of MCT* correlated with the preference for the item 17 of C5: $\rho = .185$, $p = .09$, $N = 51$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho = .37}$, $p = .007$, $N = 43$.

The *preference for the stage 4 of MCT* correlated with the preference for the following items of C5:

- item 16: $\boldsymbol{\rho = .391}$, $p = .002$, $N = 51$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\rho = .203$, $p = .096$, $N = 43$;

- item 17: $\boldsymbol{\rho = .251}$, $p = .038$, $N = 51$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\boldsymbol{\rho = .383}$, $p = .006$, $N = 43$;

- item 25: $\rho = .209$, $p = .071$, $N = 51$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\rho = .209$, $p = .092$, $N = 42$.

The *preference for the stage 5 of MCT* correlated with the preference for the item 25 of C5: $\rho = .186$, $p = .096$, $N = 51$, one-tailed; in Faiciuc (2016a): $\rho = .214$, $p = .089$, $N = 41$.

Relationship between the MCT variables and the aggregate scores obtained through the hierarchical cluster analysis of the C5 items

In this research, a correlational analysis with the MCT variables was performed also for the aggregate scores obtained based on the two different cluster analyses of the items of C5 questionnaire, by summing up the corresponding scores (absolute or, respectively, ipsatized) of the items of the clusters that were placed on the highest level of the resulting hierarchy.

In the case of the hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage, the three main clusters placed on the highest level of hierarchy were selected and, correspondingly, three aggregate scores were computed, by summing up the ipsatized scores for the items included in each cluster. The following statistically or marginally significant correlations were obtained:

- the expected negative correlation between the *C index of MCT* and the *aggregate score for the third cluster of C5*, the one of the purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth: $\rho = -.291$, $p = .032$, $N = 41$, one-tailed (using the

bootstrap method, the value was -.255, p = .056, N = 40, with a 95% CI:[-.521, .027]), which was due to the correlation between the C index for the workers' dilemma and that aggregate score: ρ = -.399, p = .005, N = 41, one-tailed tailed (95% CI: [-.606, -.077]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the stage 2 arguments of MCT* and the *aggregate score for the third cluster of C5*, the one of the purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .300, p = .028, N = 41 (95% CI: [-.145, .631]);

- the tendency for the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the stage 2 arguments of MCT* and the *aggregate score for the second cluster of C5*, the one of the winning egocentric reasons in their competition with altruistic reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = -.24, p = .065, N = 41 (95% CI: [-.515, .093]);

- the tendency for the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the stage 6 arguments of MCT* and *the aggregate score for the first cluster of C5*, the one of the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .249, p = .058, N = 41 (95% CI:[-.151, .576]).

In the case of the *hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method*, the grouping of the reasons for hiding the truth was placed for the clusters of the highest level not on the egocentric vs. altruist axis (as the one based on the Pearson correlations of the ipsatized scores for the C5 items), but on a combination of the heteronomy (first cluster) vs. autonomy (the second cluster) axis and, respectively, gain/approach (first cluster) vs. prevention/avoidance axis (second cluster).

In the *first cluster* (items 24, 30, …, 23, see the dendrogram from Figure 1, Appendix 3), the reasons for hiding the truth are conditional on the perceived values of one's social group or society, including the social value of telling the truth. The values or behaviors promoted or not by a recognized authority (which may be represented by a stranger, not necessarily by a close or familiar person), by a significant social group, or within interpersonal relationships may be in accord or, on the contrary, in contradiction with the value of truth telling. In this case, hiding the truth is seen through the frames of blind obedience to some authority figure, of reciprocity, as a kind of exchange value in a bargain with another person or a group, or of conformity to a desirable current social model, which finally may lead to a kind of arbitrary moral relativism, as a foundation for moral disengagement. In other words, whether one lies or tells the truth depends in this case on what main values are supported in her/his particular social group or society, or by some authority figure. Essentially, this kind of reasons are heteronomous reasons, which indicate that truth telling is not internalized as a personal value, even when, apparently, they support altruistic/prosocial lies. The main purpose for hiding the truth in the case of these reasons is an expected personal gain (a direct gain or an indirect one, in

the case of the apparent altruistic reasons, through impression management), supported by an approach motivational focus, no matter if those reasons are apparently altruistic or egocentric. So, the above-mentioned reasons tend to justify beneficial lies, with a promotion/approach focus.

In *the second cluster* of reasons (items 5, 7, …, 26, see the dendrogram from Figure 1, Appendix 3), truth telling seems to be a rather internalized personal value, as they are reasons in which its personal importance is not explicitly or implicitly negated with reference to some social factor, but one that loses its internal competition with other personal or internalized social values, which can be the preferred ones. The personal importance of truth telling is even implicitly admitted in some of them, through the suggested involvement of possible moral emotions linked with moral identity, as guilt or shame of being caught lying. Therefore, these reasons may be viewed as rather autonomous reasons for hiding the truth, no matter if they are egocentric or apparently altruistic ones. This cluster of reasons justify mainly protective lies (egocentric or altruistic ones), i.e. they are reasons for hiding the truth with an avoidance motivational focus, through which, in general, it is avoided some kind of personal loss or suffering of the liar directly, or indirectly, through the avoidance of suffering of some close persons or through their help. Computing the two corresponding aggregate scores by summing up the answers for the items (in their initial version, or as ipstatized scores) included in each of the two clusters and their correlations with the MCT variables, the results presented in the Table 4 and Table 5 were obtained.

The relationship between avoidance vs. approach motivation and morality is a complex one, depending on the context in which it is investigated (see Cornwell & Higgins, 2015; Cornwell, Franks & Higgins, 2014). It has been studied so far mainly in the context of the prescriptive and proscriptive morality (Janoff-Bulman, 2011; Janoff-Bulman, Sheikh & Hepp, 2009), of its relationship with the promotion vs. prevention regulatory focus (Cornwell & Higgins, 2016; Liberman, Idson, Camacho & Higgins, 1999) and with the moral emotions (Camacho, Higgins & Luger, 2003; Dienstbier, Hillman, Lehnhoff, Hillman & Valkenaar, 1975), of the link between attachment styles, and moral behavior (deception) and judgment (Gillath et al., 2010; Robinson, Joel & Plaks, 2015), of dual-process theories of judgment in moral dilemmas (Bretz & Sun, 2018; Moore, Stevens & Conway, 2011), and of the way disgust influences moral judgment (Chapman, 2018; Landy & Goodwin, 2015; Wagemans, Brandt & Zeelenberg, 2018), but not in relationship with the moral competence as conceived by Lind (1985). In this particular context, several ideas were taken into considerations in order to predict what relationship might be between moral competence and, respectively, orientations and avoidance vs. approach aggregate scores of C5.

Table 4

Spearman rank correlations, one-tailed, between the aggregate scores for C5 based on the hierarchical cluster analysis using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method and MCT variables

	Score for the avoidance reasons C5 items	**Score for the approach reasons C5 items**
C index of MCT	***ρ* = .338**, *p* = .013, *N* = 43, (95% CI [.016, .557])	*ρ* = .072, *p* = .316, *N* = 47
Preference for the stage 1 of MCT	*ρ* = *.212*, *p* = .083, *N* = 44, (95% CI [-.047, .467])	***ρ* = .384**, *p* = .004, *N* = 48, (95% CI [.065, .575])
Preference for the stage 2 of MCT	*ρ* = -.151, *p* = .167, *N* = 43	*ρ* = .144, *p* = .165, *N* = 48
Preference for the stage 3 of MCT	*ρ* = .027, *p* = .431, *N* = 44	*ρ* = .192, *p* = .093, *N* = 49
Preference for the stage 4 of MCT	*ρ* = *.250*, *p* = .051, *N* = 44, (95% CI [.078, .520])	***ρ* = .240**, *p* = .049, *N* = 49, (bootstrap method: *ρ* = .245, *p* = .064, *N* = 40, 95% CI [-.035, .496])
Preference for the stage 5 of MCT	*ρ* = .174, *p* = .129, *N* = 44	*ρ* = .091, *p* = .268, *N* = 49
Preference for the stage 6 of MCT	*ρ* = .182, *p* = .119, *N* = 43	*ρ* = .002, *p* = .493, *N* = 49

The first idea is that an approach motivated person should be more motivated to be right in her/his preferred solution for the moral dilemmas of MCT, so she/he would reject more probably the arguments supporting an opposite position, which would decrease her/his moral competence index. From another point of view, an approach motivated person should be more motivated to accomplish her/his personal goals, and, if those goals are exclusively egocentric ones, she/he would be less inclined to respect moral rules. The second idea is that an avoidance motivated person would be more motivated to avoid being wrong, so that she/he would assess more thoroughly and agree more probably with the arguments supporting an opposite position, which would increase her/his moral competence index. On the other hand, avoidance motivation promotes a more deliberative kind of thinking (Cornwell et al., 2014; Pham & Avnet, 2004). In the same time, it may be that an avoidance motivated person is more prone to avoid the negative emotions that may be caused by losing something personal when telling the truth, or, through empathy, by the anticipated suffering of another person who might be affected by her/his telling the truth, which may be especially high when that person is a close one, in the case of the C5 items.

Table 5

Spearman rank correlations, one-tailed, between the aggregate scores in the ipsatized version for C5 based on the hierarchical cluster analysis using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method and MCT variables (ipsatized version)

	Ipsatized score for the avoidance reasons C5 items	**Ipsatized score for the approach reasons C5 items**
C index of MCT	$\boldsymbol{\rho = .350}$, p = .012, N = 41, (95% CI [.014, .584])	$\boldsymbol{\rho = -.349}$, p = .049, N = 41, (95% CI [-.584, .009])
Relative preference for the stage 1 of MCT	ρ = -.093, p = .282, N = 41	ρ = .09, p = .287, N = 41
Relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT	$\boldsymbol{\rho = -.444}$, p = .002, N = 41, (95% CI [-.664, -.164])	$\boldsymbol{\rho = .443}$, p = .002, N = 41, (95% CI [.094, .694])
Relative preference for the stage 3 of MCT	ρ = .020, p = .452, N = 41	ρ = -.018, p = .456, N = 41
Relative preference for the stage 4 of MCT	ρ = .075, p = .32, N = 41	ρ = -.076, p = .318, N = 41
Relative preference for the stage 5 of MCT	ρ = .119, p = .229, N = 41	ρ = -.117, p = .234, N = 41
Relative preference for the stage 6 of MCT	$\boldsymbol{\rho = .263}$, p = .048, N = 41, (95% CI [-.039, .558])	$\boldsymbol{\rho = -.261}$, p = .05, N = 42, (95% CI [-.559, .04])

In the case of MCT, the same tendency of caring not to harm another person would influence a respondent to judge more favorably the arguments of an opposite position, because that respondent has usually more empathy for her/his opponents. From yet another perspective, if the link between the behavioral inhibition system and avoidance motivational focus is considered, a better inhibition would help the cognitive control of the influence on one's moral judgment of the emotions triggered through the confrontation with an opposite position, whereas the dominance of the behavioral activation system, linked with the approach motivational focus, would increase the influence of the above-mentioned emotions on one's moral judgment. Consequently, *the aggregate score for the avoidance motivated reasons for hiding the truth should have a positive correlation with the moral competence index, whereas the aggregate score for the approach motivated reasons for hiding the truth should have a negative correlation with the moral competence index*. Because moral competence is also positively associated with a more mature level of the moral judgments, which involves a higher level of autonomy, and as avoidance reasons for hiding the truth tend to be more autonomous ones and the approach reasons for hiding the truth more heteronomous, from this perspective, also, the above-mentioned prediction is theoretically supported. The same theoretical argumentation regarding the level of autonomy in one's reasons for hiding the

truth suggests that *there should be a positive correlation between one's aggregate score for avoidance reasons of hiding the truth and her/his preference for the higher levels of moral judgment, and between one's aggregate score for approach reasons of hiding the truth and her/his preference for the lower levels of moral judgment*. Conversely, *there should be a negative correlation between one's aggregate score for avoidance reasons of hiding the truth and her/his preference for the lower levels of moral judgment, and between one's aggregate score for approach reasons of hiding the truth and her/his preference for the higher levels of moral judgment*.

The link between the investigated aspects of emotion regulation and the scores of C5 questionnaire

Because the instruments for the assessment of the considered aspects of emotion regulation in its relationship with the reasons for hiding the truth had scales with a non-normal distribution, in what follows, the Spearman rank correlation was used.

*The link between **CERQ** and the scores of **C5** questionnaire*

For the relationship between the *CERQ scales* and *the aggregate scores of C5*, the following statistically significant or marginally significant correlations were obtained:

- a tendency for the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the acceptance strategy* and the *preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = .271$, $p = .086$, $N = 27$, one-tailed;
- the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the acceptance strategy* and the *preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = .486$, $p = .005$, $N = 27$, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.072, .765]);
- a tendency for the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the acceptance strategy* and the *relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = .314$, $p = .095$, $N = 19$, one-tailed;
- a tendency for the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the acceptance strategy* and *the relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = -.314$, $p = .095$, $N = 19$, one-tailed;
- the unexpected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the rumination strategy* and the *relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = -.411$, $p = .04$, $N = 19$, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.765, .053]);
- the unexpected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the rumination strategy* and the *relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: $\rho = .411$, $p = .04$, $N = 19$, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.078, .773]);

- the expected positive correlation between *the relative preference for the positive refocusing strategy* and *the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .395, p = .047, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI [-.08, .732]);

- a tendency for the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the positive refocusing strategy* and the *relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = -.384, p = .052, N = 19, one-tailed;

- a tendency for the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the catastrophizing strategy* and the *relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = -.369, p = .06, N = 19, one-tailed;

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the catastrophizing strategy* and the *relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .388, p = .05, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.06, .722]);

- the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = -.424, p = .035, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.755, .135]);

- a tendency for the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .379, p = .055, N = 19, one-tailed;

- the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = -.437, p = .031, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.81, .116]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .437, p = .031, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.005, .760]).

In order to make a more detailed analysis of the results presented above regarding the relationship between the preferred cognitive emotion regulation strategies and reasons for hiding the truth, there were computed also the correlations of the preferred cognitive emotion regulation strategies with the scores for the five levels for reasons of hiding the truth, and with the *aggregate scores of C5* that were obtained by summing the items of each the three clusters that resulted through the *hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage* (cluster 1: altruistic reasons, cluster 2: egocentric reasons that won the competition with altruistic reasons, which will be named as the cluster of egocentrism-altruism conflict, cluster 3: egocentric reasons). The aggregate scores for the three clusters were correlated only with the ipsatized scores for CERQ (and for all the other emotion regulation measures from data analyses from below), because they resulted from ipsatized scores. The following results were obtained, while preserving the same predictions regarding the relationships between the egocentric vs. altruistic reasons for hiding the truth and the preferred emotion regulating strategies, as measured with CERQ:

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *score for the cluster of egocentrism-altruism conflict of C5*: ρ = .564, p = .006, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [.157, .854]);

- a tendency toward the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the other-blame strategy* and the *score for the cluster of altruism of C5*: ρ = -.364, p = .063, N = 19, one-tailed;

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for the catastrophizing strategy* and the *score for the cluster of egocentrism-altruism conflict of C5*: ρ = .398, p = .046, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [.022, .695]);

- a tendency toward the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the catastrophizing strategy* and the *score for the cluster of altruism of C5*: ρ = -.381, p = .054, N = 19, one-tailed;

The following correlations were obtained between the *relative preference for the **CERQ** strategies* and *the relative preference for the five levels of reasons of **C5***:

- the *relative preference for the level 1 reasons of **C5*** correlated negatively with the *relative preference for putting into perspective scale of **CERQ***: ρ = -.395, p = .047, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.743, .027]);

- the *relative preference for the level 2 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *relative preference for the acceptance scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .565, p = .006, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [.178, .846]), and tended to correlate negatively with the *relative preference for the rumination scale of **CERQ***: ρ = -.363, p = .063, N = 19, one-tailed;

- the *relative preference for the level 3 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with *the relative preference for the other-blame scale of **CERQ**:* ρ = .560, p = .006, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [.072, .876]), with *the relative preference for the catastrophizing scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .406, p = .042, N = 19 (95% CI: [-.013, .718), and tended to correlate negatively with *the relative preference for the acceptance scale of **CERQ***: ρ = -328, p = .085, N = 19;

- the *relative preference for the level 4 reasons of **C5*** tended to correlate positively with the *relative preference for the positive refocusing scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .327, p = .086, N = 19, one-tailed;

- the *relative preference for the level 5 reasons of **C5*** correlated negatively with the *relative preference for the other-blame scale of **CERQ***: ρ = -.556, p = .007, N = 19, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.830, -.101), and tended to correlate negatively with the *relative preference for the catastrophizing scale of **CERQ***: ρ = -.333, p = .081, N = 19.

The following correlations were obtained between the *preference for the **CERQ** strategies* and *the preference for the five levels of reasons of **C5***:

- the *preference for the level 1 reasons of **C5*** tended to correlate positively with the *preference for acceptance scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .313, p = .056, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the *preference for the level 2 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *preference for the acceptance scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .609, p < .001, N = 28, one-tailed (95% CI: [.189, .904]), and tended to correlate positively with the *preference for the catastrophizing scale of **CERQ*****:** ρ = .31, p = .058, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the *preference for the level 3 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *preference for the other-blame scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .356, p = .044, N = 24, one-tailed (95% CI: (-.203, .647]);

- the *preference for the level 5 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *preference for the putting into perspective scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .352, p = .036, N = 27 (95% CI: [-.024, .761]), and tended to correlate positively with the *preference for the acceptance scale of **CERQ***: ρ = .314, p = .052, N = 28, one-tailed.

*The link between the scales of the measures **A** and **B** of the performance and learning goals for emotion regulation and the scores of C5 questionnaire*

Regarding the relationship between *the aggregate scores of **C5*** and *the computed scores for the **A** and **B** measures* through which it was assessed the preference for the performance and learning emotion goals, the following results were obtained:

- a tendency toward the expected negative correlation between *the general tendency to hide the truth* (the total score for **C5)** and the *relative preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of the **A** measure*: ρ = -.272, p = .085, N = 27, one-tailed;

- a tendency toward the expected positive correlation between *the general tendency to hide the truth* (the total score for **C5**) and the *relative preference for the performance emotion regulation goals of the **B** measure*: ρ = .278, p = .081, N = 27, one-tailed;

- a tendency toward the expected positive correlation between the *general tendency to hide the truth* (the total score for **C5**) and the *relative preference for the performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals of the **B** measure*: ρ = .302, p = .063, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for the altruistic reasons to hide the truth* and the *relative preference for the performance-approach emotion regulation goals of the **B** measure*: ρ = -.534, p = .002, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.768, -.206]).

As in the case of CERQ, here also there was made a more detailed analysis of the relationship between the emotion regulation goals assessed with *measures **A** and **B*** and the reasons of hiding the truth, by using the *aggregate scores for the five levels of **C5***, and for the *three clusters of **C5** resulted from the hierarchical cluster analysis for the **C5** items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage*. The following results were obtained:

- a tendency toward the unexpected positive correlation between the *relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **A*** and *the score for the cluster of altruism of **C5***: ρ = .261, p = .094, N = 27, one-tailed;

- a tendency toward the unexpected negative correlation between the *relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **A*** and *the score for the cluster of egocentrism of **C5***: ρ = -.293, p = .069, N = 27, one-tailed;

- a tendency toward the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for learning emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **A*** and *the score for egocentrism-altruism conflict of **C5***: ρ = -.26, p = .096, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the unexpected positive correlation between the *relative preference for learning emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **A*** and *the score for cluster of egocentrism of **C5***: ρ = .408, p = .017, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [.02, .709]);

- a tendency toward the unexpected negative correlation between the *relative preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **B*** and *the score for egocentrism cluster of **C5***: ρ = -.3, p = .064, N = 27, one-tailed;

- a tendency toward the expected negative correlation between the *relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **B*** and *the score for altruism cluster of **C5***: ρ = -.262, p = .094, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the expected positive correlation between the *relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals as assessed with measure **B*** and *the score for egocentrism-altruism cluster of **C5***: ρ = .335, p = .044, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.06, .625]);

The following correlations were obtained between *the relative preference for the measure **A** and **B** scales* and *the relative preference for the five levels of reasons of **C5***:

- *the relative preference for the level 1 reasons of **C5*** correlated negatively with *the relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = -.371, p = .028, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI [-.734, .129]), and positively with *the relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .385, p = .024, N = 27 (95% CI: [.111, .617]);

- the *relative preference for the level 2 reasons of **C5*** did not correlate significantly with the relative preference for the scales of the **A** and **B** instruments;

- the *relative preference for the level 3 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .495, p = .004, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [.19, .703]), tended to correlate positively with the *relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .292, p = .07, N = 27, and tended to correlate negatively with the *relative preference for learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = -.293, p = .069, N = 27;

- the *relative preference for the level 4 reasons of **C5*** correlated negatively with the *relative preference for learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = -.38, p = .025, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.744, .047]), and tended to corelate positively with the *relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .312, p = .056, N = 27, one-tailed;

- the *relative preference for the level 5 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *relative preference for learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = .461, p = .008, N = 27, one-tailed (95% CI: [.024, .765]), correlated negatively with the *relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = -.546, p = .002, N = 27 (95% CI: [-.731, -.223]), and correlated negatively with the *relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = -.583, p = .001, N = 27 (95% CI: [-.790, -.225]).

The following correlations were obtained between the *preference for the measure **A** and measure **B** scales* and the *preference for the five levels of reasons of **C5**:*

- the *preference for the level 3 reasons of **C5*** tended to correlate positively with the *preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .320, p = .042, N = 30, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.233, .587]), tended to correlate positively with the *preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .282, p = .066, N = 30, and tended to correlate negatively with the *preference for learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = -.239, p = .097, N = 31;

- the *preference for the level 4 reasons of **C5*** correlated negatively with the *preference for learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = -.396, p = .012, N = 32, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.763, -.001]), and tended to corelate positively with the *preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals of measure **B*****:** ρ = .263, p = .076, N = 31, one-tailed;

- the *preference for the level 5 reasons of **C5*** correlated positively with the *preference for performance-avoidance emotion regulation goals of measure **B***: ρ = .312, p = .041, N = 27 (95% CI: [-.24, .657]), and tended to correlate positively with the *preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **A***: ρ = .247, p = .086, N = 27, one-tailed.

*The link between metaemotions assessed with **MES** and the scores of **C5** questionnaire*

For the predicted relationships between the *aggregate scores of **C5*** and the scores for the considered scales of the *Meta-Emotion Scale (MES)*, the following results were obtained:

- a tendency toward the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the suppression metaemotion* and the *general tendency to hide the truth* (total score of C5): ρ = .294, p = .064, N = 28, one-tailed;

- the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the metaemotion of compassionate care* and the *preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth*: ρ = .366, p = .028, N = 28, one-tailed.

The tendency toward the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the suppression metaemotion* and the *general tendency to hide the truth* was due mainly to an unpredicted significant positive correlation between the *preference for the suppression metaemotion* and the *preference for avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .380, p = .038, N = 30, two-tailed (95% CI: [-.019, .728]), and, to a lesser extent, to a tendency toward a positive correlation between the *preference for the suppression metaemotion* and the *preference for approach reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .282, p = .124, N = 31, two-tailed.

The detailed analysis taking into account *the aggregate scores for the three clusters resulted from the hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage* in their relationship with the *relative preference for metaemotions* did not found any of the predicted correlations.

The correlational analysis on the *five levels of reasons of C5* in relationship with the *preference for the metaemotions assessed with MES* indicated the following results:

- the *preference for the metaemotion of compassionate care* correlated positively with the *preference for the level 1 of **C5:*** ρ = .354, p = .025, N = 31, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.025, .7]), with the *preference for the level 2 of **C5***: ρ = .263, p = .022, N = 31 (95% CI: [-.003, .759]), but tended to correlate positively also with the *preference for the level 5 of **C5***: ρ = .243, p = .09, N = 32.

- the *preference for the metaemotion of suppression* tended to correlate positively with *the preference for the level 2 of **C5***: ρ = .257, p = .078, N = 32, with *the preference for the level 4 of **C5***: ρ = .282, p = .059, N = 32, and *the preference for the level 5 of **C5***: ρ = .243, p = .086, N = 33.

*The link between emotion dysregulation assessed with **DERS** and the scores of **C5** questionnaire*

The results obtained regarding the predicted relationships between emotional dysregulation (measured with **DERS**) and the considered scores of **C5** questionnaire are as follows:

- the expected positive correlation between the *total score of DERS* and the *total score of C5*: ρ = .313, p = .041, N = 32, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.029, .617]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *total score of DERS* and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .406, p = .009, N = 34, one-tailed (95% CI: [.038, .721]);

- a tendency toward the expected positive correlation between *the score for the scale of nonacceptance of emotional responses* and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .235, p = .077, N = 38, one-tailed;

- the expected positive correlation between the *score for the scale of impulse control difficulties* and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*:

ρ = .278, p = .048, N = 37, one-tailed (using the bootstrap method, the value was .249, p = .084, N = 32, with a 95% CI: [-.138, .59]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *score for the scale of lack of emotional clarity* and the *total score of C5*: ρ = .349, p = .019, N = 36, one-tailed (95% CI: [.131, .665]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *score for the scale of lack of emotional clarity* and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .349, p = .019, N = 36, one-tailed (95% CI: [.224, .723]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *score for the scale of limited access to emotion regulation strategies* and the *total score of C5*: ρ = .337, p = .021, N = 37, one-tailed (using the bootstrap method, the value was .268, p = .069, N = 32, with a 95% CI: [-.119, .59]);

- the expected positive correlation between the score for the scale of limited access to emotion regulation strategies and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .448, p = .002, N = 39, one-tailed (95% CI: [.008, .708]);

- the unpredicted positive correlation between the *score for the scale of limited access to emotion regulation strategies* and *the preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .321, p = .05, N = 38, two-tailed (95% CI: [-.041, .589]);

- the expected positive correlation between *the score for the scale of difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior* and the *preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth*: ρ = .353, p = .015, N = 38, one-tailed (using the bootstrap method, the value was ρ = .249, p = .084, N = 32, with a 95% CI: [-.138, .59]).

- the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of the level 3* and the *score for the scale of impulse control difficulties*: ρ = .295, p = .036, N = 39, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.016, .644]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of the level 3* and the *score for the scale of difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior*: ρ = .349, p = .015, N = 39, one-tailed (95% CI: [-.068, .586]);

- the expected positive correlation between *the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of the level 3* and the *total score of DERS*: ρ = .383, p = .012, N = 35, one-tailed (95% CI: [.045, .65]);

- the expected positive correlation between *the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of the level 3* and the *score for the scale of limited access to emotion regulation strategies*: ρ = .439, p = .002, N = 40, one-tailed (95% CI: [.047, .635]);

- the expected positive correlation between the *preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of the level 3* and *the score for the scale of lack of emotional clarity*: ρ = .446, p = .002, N = 39, one-tailed (95% CI: [.265, .695]).

A detailed analysis of the profile of the efficiency of one's emotion regulation in its associations with the three types of reasons for hiding the truth, resulted from the *hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage*, through which there were investigated also the predictions made regarding the emotional dysregulation of the respondents who prefer reasons for hiding the truth placed in the cluster of the altruism-egocentrism conflict, is presented in Table 6.

The detailed correlational analysis made on the *relative preference for the five levels of reasons to hide the truth of **C5** (for ipsatized and non-ipsatized scores)* in relationship with the scores for the DERS scales is found in Table 7, and Table 8.

Table 6

Spearman rank correlations (one-tailed) between **DERS** scales and the aggregated ipsatized scores for the three clusters resulted from the hierarchical cluster analysis for the **C5** items using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage

	Cluster *C5* altruism	**Cluster *C5* altruism-egocentrism conflict**	**Cluster *C5* egocentrism**
Total score DERS	ρ = .162, p = .188, N = 32	**ρ = .44**, p = .006, N = 32 (95% CI: [.097, .715])	**ρ = -.406**, p = .01, N = 32, (95% CI: [-.712, .001])
Nonacceptance of emotional responses	**ρ = .288**, p = .045, N = 36 (95% CI [-.075, .666])	**ρ = .29**, p = .043, N = 36 (95% CI: [-.106, .589])	**ρ = -.354**, p = .017, N = 36 (95% CI: [-.692, -.035])
Difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior	ρ = .187, p = .138, N = 36	**ρ = .456**, p = .003, N = 36 (95% CI: [.054, .731])	**ρ = -.419**, p = .005, N = 36 (95% CI [-.713, -.091])
Impulse control difficulties	ρ = .142, p = .208, N = 35	**ρ = .317**, p = .032, N = 35 (95% CI: [-.018, .656])	**ρ = -.371**, p = .014, N = 35 (95% CI: [-.666, .03])
Lack of emotional awareness	ρ = -.052, p = .382, N = 36	ρ = .012, p = .473, N = 36	ρ = .051, p = .384, N = 36
Limited access to emotion regulation strategies	ρ = .045, p = .396, N = 37	**ρ = .47**, p = .002, N = 37 (95% CI: [.156, .742])	ρ = -.183, p = .139, N = 37
Lack of emotional clarity	ρ = .05, p = .386, N = 36	**ρ = .341**, p = .021, N = 36 (95% CI: [.052, .601])	**ρ = -.342**, p = .021, N = 36 (95% CI: [-.765, -.146])

*The link between the answers for the items of the Questionnaire for the Emotion Regulation Goals: **QERG** and the scores of **C5** questionnaire*

The statistically significant correlations or those relatively close to the chosen statistically significance threshold between the items of QERG and the considered scores of C5 will be presented in a future paper. Here, only the QERG items that had such correlations are presented for each type of score for the C5 questionnaire, in the Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12.

Table 7

Spearman rank correlations (one-tailed) between **DERS** scales and the relative preference for the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth of **C5** (ipsatized scores)

	Level 1 of C5 (ipsatized)	**Level 2 of C5 (ipsatized)**		**Level 3 of C5 (ipsatized)**	**Level 4 of C5 (ipsatized)**	**Level 5 of C5 (ipsatized)**
Total score DERS	**ρ = -.336**, p = .03, N = 32	**ρ = -.401**, p = .011, N = 32		**ρ = .435**, p = .006, N = 32	ρ = *.277*, p = .062, N = 32	ρ = -.082, p = .327, N = 32,
Nonacceptance of emotional responses	ρ = -*.239*, p = .08, N = 36	**ρ = -.288**, p = .044, N = 36		**ρ =.285**, p = .046, N = 36	**ρ = .390**, p = .009, N = 36	ρ = -.081, p = .32, N = 36
Difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior	**ρ = -.286**, p = .046, N = 36,	**ρ = -.296**, p = .04, N = 36		**ρ = .451**, p = .003, N = 36	ρ = .187, p = .138, N = 36	ρ = -.108, p = .265, N = 36
Impulse control difficulties	**ρ = -.291**, p = .045, N = 35	ρ = -*.278*, p = .053, N = 35		**ρ = .357**, p = .018, N = 35	ρ = .221, p = .101, N = 35	ρ = -.077, p = .331, N = 35
Lack of emotional awareness	ρ = -.013, p = .47, N = 36	ρ = .036, p = .418, N = 36		ρ = .050, p = .387, N = 36	ρ = .013, p = .471, N = 36	ρ = -.170, p = .161, N = 36
Limited access to emotion regulation strategies	ρ = -.094, p = .291, N = 37	**ρ = -.275**, Âp = .05, N = 37		**ρ = .411**, p = .006, N = 37	ρ = .099, p = .28, N = 37	ρ = -*.218*, p = .097, N = 37
Lack of emotional clarity	**ρ = -.391**, p = .009, N = 36	**ρ = -.306**, p = .035, N = 36		**ρ = .326**, p = .026, N = 36	ρ = .074, p = .335, N = 36	ρ = .038, p = .414, N = 36

Table 8

Spearman rank correlations (one-tailed) between **DERS** scales and the relative preference for the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth of **C5**

	Level 1 of C5	**Level 2 of C5**	**Level 3 of C5**	**Level 4 of C5**	**Level 5 of C5**
Total score DERS	ρ = .134, p = .226, N = 34	ρ = .055 p = .379, N = 34	**ρ = .383**, p = .012, N = 35	**ρ = .301**, p = .042, N = 34	ρ = .195, p = .13, N = 35,
Nonacceptance of emotional responses	ρ = .035, p = .418, N = 35	ρ = -.056, p = .370, N = 38	ρ =.153, p = .177, N = 39	**ρ = .321**, p = .025, N = 38	ρ = .047, p = .389, N = 39
Difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior	ρ = .103, p = .263, N = 38,	ρ = .059, p = .362, N = 38	**ρ = .349**, p = .015, N = 39	ρ = *.252*, p = .064, N = 38	ρ = .137, p = .203, N = 39
Impulse control difficulties	ρ = .116, p = .247, N = 37	ρ = .106, p = .267, N = 37	**ρ = .295**, p = .036, N = 38	ρ = .193, p = .126, N = 37	ρ = .133, p = .213, N = 38
Lack of emotional awareness	ρ = .064, p = .352, N = 38	ρ = -.028, p = .434, N = 38	ρ = .064, p = .35, N = 39	ρ = -.052, p = .378, N = 38	ρ = -.018, p = .456, N = 39
Limited access to emotion regulation strategies	ρ = *.252*, p = .061, N = 39	ρ = .121, p = .231, N = 39	**ρ = .439**, p = .002, N = 40	ρ = *.213*, p = .097, N = 39	ρ = .195, p = .114, N = 40
Lack of emotional clarity	ρ = .122, p = .232, N = 38	ρ = .129, p = .22, N = 38	**ρ = .446**, p = .002, N = 39	ρ = *.239*, p = .075, N = 38	**ρ = .342**, p = .016, N = 39

The emotional dysregulation as a moderator variable for the relation between moral competence and the tendency and reasons for hiding the truth

In order to test the predictions made regarding the role of the emotional dysregulation as a moderator variable for the relation between moral competence and the tendency and reasons for hiding the truth, the participants were separated into two groups with different levels of emotional dysregulation based on the median value of the total score for DERS, for the other computed scores of DERS, for the item 36 QERG (which assesses one's perception on her/his ability to manage her/his emotions), as well as for the items 1, 3, and 5 of QERG (through which the participants assess if their positive and negative emotions are more intense, more frequent, and longer than they wanted to be, the answers for them

being aggregated into three scores: the level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive, negative emotions, and with one's excessive emotions in general, i.e., the three scores are also measures of emotional dysregulation).

Table 9

The items of QERG that correlated significantly or tended to correlate with the preference for the level 1, level 2, and level 3 of C5

Type of score	**Statistical significance of correlations**	**Type of emotions**	**Type of correlat…**	**Preference for the level 1 of C5**	**Preference for the level 2 of C5**	**Preference for the level 3 of C5**
Absolute score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive	6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, 26	3, 11, 13, 16, 18	6, 7, 9
			Negative			
		Negative emotions	Positive	2, 18, 20, 26	2, 9, 16, 18	3, 5, 9
			Negative			25
	Relatively close to the threshold of $p = .05$	Positive emotions	Positive	1, 3, 21, 22	7, 10, 19, 21, 22	2, 3, 20
			Negative			
		Negative emotions	Positive	4, 9	3, 4, 20, 26	18, 26
			Negative	25		36
Relative (ipsatized) score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive		16, 23,	6, 7, 9, 33
			Negative	28, 31, 34,	8, 28	11, 12, 13, 23, 24
		Negative emotions	Positive		9, 23, 25	3, 19, 20
			Negative	17, 27, 28, 29, 31, 34	27, 28, 34	23, 24, 25
	Relatively close to the threshold of $p = .05$	Positive emotions	Positive	1		28
			Negative		31	
		Negative emotions	Positive	9, 13, 33		5, 30
			Negative			

For the relationship between the total score of C5 and C index, there were obtained the following results. While, in the general sample, there was only a tendency toward a positive correlation between the two variables (see above), in the sample that completed also the DERS instrument, this positive correlation was statistically significant: $\rho = .42$, $p = .016$, $N = 26$, one-tailed. It remained statistically significant both for those participants with a low total score for DERS, and for those with a high total score for DERS. In accordance with the obtained data on this sample, only the following aspects of emotional dysregulation may moderate the investigated relationship, as a statistically significant correlation between the C index and the total score of C5 occurred only in one of the two groups of participants formed based on the median value of their DERS scores: *nonacceptance of*

emotional responses (the correlation was statistically significant only for those with a low nonacceptance of emotional responses: ρ = .522, p = .034, N = 13, one-tailed), *lack of emotional clarity* (the correlation was statistically significant only for those with a low lack of emotional clarity: ρ = .48, p = .019, N = 19, one-tailed), and *lack of emotional awareness* (the correlation was statistically significant only for those with a high lack of emotional awareness: ρ = .477, p = .031, N = 16, one-tailed).

Table 10

The items of QERG that correlated significantly or tended to correlate with the preference for the level4, level 5, and total score of C5

Type of score	**Statistical significance of correlations**	**Type of emotions**	**Type of correlations**	**The preference for the level 4 of C5**	**The preference for the level 5 of C5**	**Total Score of C5**
Absolute score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive	11, 20	4, 6, 18, 26, 31	2, 3, 6, 16
			Negative			
		Negative emotions	Positive	3, 5, 7, 18, 20, 27, 30		2, 3, 9, 18
			Negative		8, 18, 26, 29	
	Relatively close to the threshold of p = .05	Positive emotions	Positive	2, 9, 10, 31,32	20, 24, 34	9, 35
			Negative			
		Negative emotions	Positive	16, 32, 34	2, 3, 17, 24, 27, 28	16
			Negative	8, 36, 25,	7, 11, 25	25
Relative (ipsatized) score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive	20, 31	24	
			Negative		1, 7, 9	
		Negative emotions	Positive	7, 27	17, 24	
			Negative	8	1, 3, 5, 7, 26, 32	
	Relatively close to the threshold of p = .05	Positive emotions	Positive		12	
			Negative		6, 16, 20, 33	
		Negative emotions	Positive	19, 30, 31		
			Negative		9, 11	

Regarding the predicted moderation of the emotional dysregulation of the *relationship between the preference for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth and moral competence (C index)*, the following results were obtained. For the sample of the participants who completed DERS, statistically significant correlations were obtained for the C index with the preference for the level 4 of the

reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .439, p = .01, N = 28, one-tailed (obtained also on the entire sample), with the aggregate score for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .389, p = .02, N = 28, one-tailed (not obtained on the entire sample). In this sample, C index only tended to correlate positively with the relative preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth: ρ = .306, p = .064, N = 26, one-tailed (on the entire sample, this correlation was statistically significant).

Table 11

The items of QERG that correlated significantly or tended to correlate with the preference for the scores for the altruism, egocentrism and altruism-egocentrism conflict clusters of C5

Statistical significance of correlations	**Type of emotions**	**Type of correlations**	**Egocentrism cluster of C5**	**Altruism - Egocentrism conflict cluster of C5**	**Altruism cluster of C5**
Significant	Positive emotions	Positive		6, 7, 9, 33	31, 34
		Negative	28	12, 23, 24	1, 7
	Negative emotions	Positive	37, 25, 31	3, 5, 7, 19, 30	17, 27
		Negative	20, 27, 28, 34	24, 25	12, 21
Relatively close to the threshold of p = .05	Positive emotions	Positive	16, 23		27, 30
		Negative	38, 30, 31, 34	13, 18, 27	3, 5, 6, 33
	Negative emotions	Positive	23	23	18, 29, 31
		Negative	29, 30		3, 5, 13, 14,

The total score of DERS moderated the relationship between the preference for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth and moral competence (C index), as statistically significant correlations between the considered variables were obtained only for those participants who had low total scores at DERS: ρ = .736, p = .005, N = 11, one-tailed (for the relative preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth), ρ = .737, p = .003, N = 12, one-tailed (for the preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth), ρ = .553, p = .031, N = 12, one-tailed (for the aggregate score for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth), ρ = .464, p = .075, N = 11, one-tailed (for the aggregate ipsatized score for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth). Several of the aspects of the emotional dysregulation assessed with DERS moderated also the investigated relationship. Statistically significant correlations between the C index and the preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth were obtained only for those participants with a low level *of impulse control difficulties* (ρ = .544, p = .027, N = 13, one-tailed, for the absolute score of the level 4 of the reasons for

hiding the truth, and $\rho = .588$, $p = .014$, $N = 14$, one-tailed, for its ipsatized score). *Nonacceptance of emotional responses* moderated the relationship between the C index and the preference for the level 5 of the reasons for hiding the truth, as only those participants with a low score for this scale had a statistically significant correlation between those variables: $\rho = .495$, $p = .03$, $N = 15$, one-tailed.

Table 12

The items of QERG that correlated significantly or tended to correlate with the preference for the scores for the avoidance and approach clusters of C5

Type of score	**Statistical significance of correlations**	**Type of emotions**	**Type of correlations**	**Avoidance cluster of C5**	**Approach cluster of C5**
Absolute score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive	2, 6, 9, 20	3, 16, 18
			Negative		
		Negative emotions	Positive	1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 16	2, 18
			Negative	37, 25	3
	Relatively close to the threshold of $p = .05$	Positive emotions	Positive	7, 8, 16	4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 20, 26, 35
			Negative		
		Negative emotions	Positive	18, 20	4, 26, 29
			Negative		
Relative (ipsatized) score	Significant	Positive emotions	Positive	9, 33	18, 23
			Negative	12, 18, 23	9, 33
		Negative emotions	Positive	11, 19, 27, 30	8, 23, 25
			Negative	8, 23, 25	11, 19, 27, 30
	Relatively close to the threshold of $p = .05$	Positive emotions	Positive	28	12, 16, 24, 28
			Negative	16, 24	
		Negative emotions	Positive	7, 34	34, 24
			Negative	36, 24	

That is why, the relationship between the C index and the aggregated score for the altruistic reasons to hide the truth was also moderated by this variable, as the correlation between them was statistically significant only for those participants with a low nonacceptance of emotional responses: $\rho = .522$, $p = .023$, $N = 15$, one-

tailed. Instead, the positive correlation between the C index and the preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth was statistically significant both for those participants with a low level and a high level of the nonacceptance of emotional responses. Also, only those participants with low scores for the scale of lack of emotional awareness had a statistically significant positive correlation between the C index and the relative preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth: $\rho = .613$, $p = .01$, $N = 14$, one-tailed. Likewise, only those with low scores for the scale of *limited access to emotion regulation strategies* had statistically significant correlations between the C index and the absolute and relative preference for the level 4 of the reasons for hiding the truth: $\rho = .734$, $p = .001$, $N = 15$, one-tailed (for the absolute score), and $\rho = .783$, $p < .001$, $N = 15$, one-tailed (for the relative score). Finally, only those participants with a low score for the DERS scale of *lack of emotional clarity* had statistically significant correlations of C index with the relative preference for the level 4 of C5 ($\rho = .57$, $p = .005$, $N = 19$, one-tailed), absolute preference for the level 4 of C5 ($\rho = .612$, $p = .002$, $N = 21$, one-tailed), the preference for the level 5 of C5 ($\rho = .398$, $p = .033$, $N = 22$, one-tailed), the preference for the altruistic reasons of C5 ($\rho = .498$, $p = .011$, $N = 21$, one-tailed), and the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of C5 ($\rho = .406$, $p = .042$, $N = 19$, one-tailed).

The moderation of the regulation of the negative emotions for the relationship between the moral competence and the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth could not be verified with the corresponding QERG scores, as one of the two groups obtained by using the median value of those scores was smaller than seven participants (one of them had even three participants). So, only the case of the regulation of the positive emotions will be analyzed here, a case that is not explicitly considered in DERS. The level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions moderated the relationship between the C index and the relative preference for the level 4 of C5, as only those participants with a high level of unsatisfaction with their excessive positive emotions had a statistically significant correlation between the two variables: $\rho = .664$, $p = .009$, $N = 12$, one-tailed. A similar result tended to be obtained for the answers at the item 36 of QERG for the case of the positive emotions, as only those participants who assess their efficiency in managing their positive emotions as being low tended to have a positive correlation between the C index and the relative preference for the level 4 of C5: $\rho = .511$, $p = .066$, $N = 10$, one-tailed.

Regarding the importance of the emotional dysregulation for the relationship between the C index and those egocentric reasons for hiding the truth that imply their conflict with altruistic reasons (i.e. those of level 3, or those from the egocentrism-altruism cluster), the following results were obtained. The total score of DERS moderated the above-mentioned relationship, as a statistically significant correlation between the C index and the score for the preference for the level 3 reasons of C5 ($\rho = .511$, $p = .026$, $N = 15$, one-tailed), and, respectively, the

score for the egocentrism-altruism cluster (ρ = .475, p = .037, N = 15, one-tailed) was obtained only for those participants with a high level of emotional dysregulation.

The following aspects of emotional dysregulation moderated or tended to moderate the relationship between the C index and the score for the egocentrism-altruism cluster (in the sense that a statistically significant correlation between these variables was obtained only for those participants who had high scores for the DERS scales that assess those aspects): *impulse control difficulties* (ρ = .418, p = .054, N = 16, one-tailed), *limited access to emotion regulation strategies difficulties* (ρ = .454, p = .034, N = 17, one-tailed), *lack of emotional clarity* (ρ = .454, p = .034, N = 11, one-tailed). The relationship between the C index and the score for the level 3 of C5 was moderated by the following aspects of emotional dysregulation (in the sense that a statistically significant correlation between the above-mentioned variables was obtained only for those participants who had high scores for the DERS scales that assess those aspects): *impulse control difficulties* (ρ = .55, p = .014, N = 16, one-tailed), *difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior* (ρ = .479, p = .03, N = 16, one-tailed), *limited access to emotion regulation strategies difficulties* (ρ = .544, p = .012, N = 17, one-tailed), and *lack of emotional clarity* (ρ = .809, p = .001, N = 11, one-tailed).

The results obtained for the efficiency in the regulation of the negative emotions tended to be similar in the case of the self-reported efficiency in the regulation of the positive emotions, as indicated indirectly by the computed composite score for the unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions based on the QERG items. Only for those participants with a high level of that score there occurred a positive correlation between the C index and the score for the egocentrism-altruism cluster (ρ = .448, p = .072, N = 12, one-tailed), or, respectively, the preference for the level 3 of C5 (ρ = .656, p = .014, N = 11, one-tailed).

The relationship between the C index and the purely egocentric reasons to hide the truth was moderated by the emotional dysregulation, too. Only for those participants who had a low total score at DERS there occurred a statistically significant correlation between the C index and the relative preference for the level 2 reasons of C5 (ρ = -.600, p = .026, N = 11, one-tailed). However, it is to be noted that the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 correlated statistically significant with the C index only for those participants who had a high total score for DERS (ρ = -.468, p = .039, N = 15, one-tailed). In the same time, the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 tended to correlate negatively with the C index also for those participants who had a low total score for DERS (ρ = -.464, p = .075, N = 11, one-tailed). The following aspects of emotional dysregulation assessed with DERS moderated also the relationship between the C index and the egocentrism scores of C5. Only for those participants who had a high score at the scale for *impulse control difficulties* there was a statistically significant correlation between the C

index and the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (ρ = -.444, p = .042, N = 16, one-tailed), and between the C index and the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.641, p = .004, N = 16, one-tailed), but it is to be considered that the correlation between the C index and the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 tended to be statistically significant also for those participants who had a low score at the scale for impulse control difficulties C5 (ρ = -.467, p = .054, N = 13, one-tailed). C index had a statistically significant negative correlation with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.456, p = .033, N = 17, one-tailed), and with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (ρ = -.573, p = .008, N = 17, one-tailed) only for those participants who had a high score for the DERS scale of *nonacceptance of emotional responses*. Likewise, C index had a statistically significant negative correlation with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.705, p = .001, N = 16, one-tailed), and with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (ρ = -.524, p = .019, N = 17, one-tailed), and tended to correlate negatively with the relative preference for the level 2 of C5 (ρ = -.385, p = .07, N = 16, one-tailed) only for those participants who had a high score for the DERS scale of *difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior*. Only for those participants with a low score for the DERS scale of *lack of emotional awareness*, C index correlated significantly with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.512, p = .031, N = 14, one-tailed), but C index tended to correlate negatively with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 both for those with a high score at the scale of lack of emotional awareness (ρ = -.344, p = .096, N = 16, one-tailed), and with a low score at that scale (ρ = -.524, p = .019, N = 17, one-tailed). The *limited access to emotion regulation strategies* variable moderated only the relationship between C index and the relative preference for the level 2 of C5, as a statistically significant correlation between the two variables occurred only for those participants with a high score at this DERS scale (ρ = -.483, p = .025, N = 17, one-tailed). C index correlated statistically significant or tended to correlate with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 and, respectively, with relative preference for the level 1 of C5 both for those participants with a high (ρ = -.493, p = .022, N = 17, one-tailed, and, respectively, ρ = -.408, p = .052, N = 17, one-tailed), and a low score (ρ = -.512, p = .031, N = 14, one-tailed, and, respectively, ρ = -.574, p = .016, N = 14, one-tailed) at the scale of limited access to emotion regulation strategies. Finally, only for those participants with a high score at the DERS scale of *lack of emotional clarity*, the C index had a statistically significant correlation with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (ρ = -.556, p = .038, N = 11, one-tailed), and only for those participants with a low score at the DERS scale of lack of emotional clarity the C index correlated significantly with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.412, p = .04, N = 19, one-tailed).

The self-reported efficiency in the regulation of the positive emotions, as indicated indirectly by the computed composite score for the unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions based on the QERG items, moderated

also the relationship between the C index and the purely egocentric reasons to hide the truth. Only for those participants with a high level of unsatisfaction with their excessive positive emotions, the C index correlated statistically significantly with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (ρ = -.58, p = .024, N = 12, one-tailed), with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.65, p = .011, N = 12, one-tailed), and with the relative preference for the level 2 of C5 (ρ = -.531, p = .038, N = 12, one-tailed). It is to be noted that, for those participants with a low level of unsatisfaction with their excessive positive emotions, C index tended to correlate negatively with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 (ρ = -.539, p = .054, N = 10, one-tailed). This moderation was less clear when it was investigated using the answers at the item 36 from QERG for positive emotions, as the pattern of results was only somewhat similar. C index correlated statistically significantly or tended to correlate with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 and, respectively, with the relative preference for the level 1 of C5 both for those participants who reported that they are able to manage their positive emotions (ρ = -.512, p = .031, N = 14, one-tailed, and, respectively, ρ = -.604, p = .19, N = 12, one-tailed), and for those who reported that they are less able to manage these emotions (ρ = -.515, p = .064, N = 10, one-tailed, and, respectively, ρ = -.527, p = .059, N = 10, one-tailed). Instead, C index tended to correlate with the relative preference for the level 2 of C5 only for those participants who reported that they are less able to manage these emotions (ρ = -.539, p = .054, N = 10, one-tailed).

The possible moderation by the emotional dysregulation and its aspects of the relationship between the C index and the score for the avoidance cluster of C5, and, respectively, the score for the approach cluster of C5 can be found in the Table 13 (see Appendix 2).

The emotional dysregulation as a moderator variable for the relation between moral orientation and the tendency and reasons for hiding the truth

The total score of DERS was a moderator variable for the relationship between the reasons of hiding the truth and moral orientation. In what follows, only the data for the ipsatized scores will be presented. The expected statistically significant correlations for this relationship were obtained only for those participants with a low total score of DERS. They are presented in Table 14 (see Appendix 2).

Although the aspects of the emotion dysregulation assessed with DERS follow the same pattern of moderation of the relationship between the reasons of hiding the truth and moral orientation as in the case of the total score for DERS, there occurred some notable differences. In Table 15, it is presented the way the general pattern from the Table 14 is preserved for each aspect of

emotional dysregulation, and also for the two scores based on QERG items that were used in order to investigate this moderation for the special case of the positive emotions. Table 16 presents those emotional dysregulation aspects that moderated the relationship between the reasons of hiding the truth and moral orientation, but in the case in which the expected significant correlations occurred when the participants were in the group with high scores for those emotional dysregulation variables. The two tables are included also in the Appendix 2.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The psychometric proprieties of the instruments used in this research that were elaborated by other authors are similar with those reported by them. Of the 26 scales used for assessing emotion regulation, only for three of them the Cronbach's alpha was lower than .65 (acceptance and catastrophizing scales of CERQ, and the suppression scale of MES).

For the C5 instrument, the obtained data indicate that social desirability was not a decisive factor in the participants' answers. In other words, the socially desirable reason to lie/hide the truth in order to bring a benefit to an entire society (supposedly a white lie, for which one should be less ashamed than for a black lie) was rather rejected, not supported, or it may be weaker than the socially desirable answer to not approve any reason for hiding the truth. Both in Faiciuc (2016a) and in this research, the most endorsed items were the ones that invoke direct or indirect self-serving (not prosocial) reasons for hiding the truth (in general, black lies). In other words, self-oriented reasons to hide the truth or the reasons that invoke close social relationships for hiding the truth were preferred to the prosocial reasons that involve a relationship with strangers or society. In both studies, the highest preference was for a common set of 11 items (see Table 3). Only three of the most preferred items (those having a mean higher than 1,5) differed between the two samples. The similarity of the preference patterns in the two similar samples is a sign that the answers were not entirely random, that they may reflect the types of preferred reasons for hiding the truth in this kind of participants.

The results of the cluster analysis for the C5 questionnaire using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method (see Figure 1, Appendix 3) from the present research indicate a partial overlap with the ones from Faiciuc (2016a). Although for the clusters from the lower levels of the dendrogram the similarity was rather small, at the higher levels of the dendrogram, the structure of the clusters was rather similar. For both samples, at the highest level of the cluster hierarchy, two clusters were obtained. Of the 31 items, only seven items were

placed differently in the two clusters for the two samples, so that the meaning associated to the two clusters in the previous sample can be maintained for the present sample. As it was noted before, a better fit with the theoretical conception of the items and with the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth was obtained by using for the cluster analysis the Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage. It is possible that the seven items that were grouped through cluster analysis with different items than the ones with which they were grouped initially to have an ambiguous meaning, because they are too general and abstract. That is why they support different interpretations, which may vary depending on the particular context considered by the reader or the predominant experiences of the members of an investigated sample. For example, items 2 and 3, which were initially interpreted as referring to self-serving reasons for hiding the truth (out of fear, or to impress an authority), were grouped with prosocial reasons for hiding the truth, as if the lie was in the benefit of the person with authority or was a way to follow a valued social model, supported by an authority figure. The fact that items as 17, 26, and 31, which were conceived initially to represent prosocial reasons for hiding the truth or reasons that are based on higher principles, were grouped with self-serving reasons for hiding the truth may be a supplementary indication that social desirability did not play a major role in the answers for them.

Data about the convergent validity of QERG instrument could be found in Faiciuc (2018), but also in this research.

Relationship between MCT and C5 questionnaire

Relationship between the C index and the total score of C5

As in Faiciuc (2016a), the expected negative correlation between the general tendency to hide the truth (assessed with the total score of C5) and moral competence (assessed with C index of MCT) did not occur in this research either. On the contrary, on the entire sample, this correlation tended to be a positive one, and, on the sample that completed also the DERS instrument, this positive correlation was even statistically significant, no matter the level of emotional dysregulation assessed with DERS. This statistically significant positive correlation disappeared only for those participants who had a high score for the nonacceptance of emotional responses, for the lack of emotional clarity, or a low score for the DERS scale of lack of emotional awareness. So, it seems that emotion regulation does not moderate the relationship between the general tendency to hide the truth and moral competence as expected, this moderation being possible only for some aspects of the emotional dysregulation, and in a different direction than the predicted one. Further

studies, on larger and more diverse samples, would be needed in order to clarify this relationship. However, in case the result obtained in this sample is not accidental, it should be noted that one of the three emotional dysregulation aspects that seemed to moderate the relationship between the moral competence and one's willingness to hide the truth (lack of emotion clarity) is an aspect that had a significant positive correlation with the total score of C5, with one's general willingness to hide the truth. Moreover, the remaining two aspects, although they did not correlate significantly with the total score of C5, they may imply a kind of refusal of the "emotional truth", which may be something different than hiding or replacing the "emotional truth" through self-deception (which may result in lack of emotional clarity). So, all the three emotional dysregulation aspects seem to have a direct relationship with the "emotional truth", whereas the other three aspects (impulse control difficulties, difficulties engaging in goal-directed behavior, and limited access to emotion regulation strategies) do not have a direct relationship with it. The moderation of the lack of emotional awareness aspect was confirmed by a similar moderation of other variables that have a similar meaning with this DERS variable, one from the measure **A** instrument (assessing the preference for the learning goals in emotion regulation), and one from **MES**: metaemotion of compassionate care, which correlated or tended to correlate negatively with the DERS score (ρ = -.353, p = .022, N = 33, one-tailed, the correlation between the lack of emotional awareness and the preference for learning emotion regulation goals from measure **A**; ρ = -.249, p = .075, N = 35, one-tailed, the correlation between the lack of emotional awareness and compassionate care). In the both cases, only for those participants who had high scores for these variables (in the two groups separated for each variable by its median value) there was a positive correlation between C index and the total score of C5 (ρ =.508, p = .046, N = 12, one-tailed, for the compassionate care; ρ =.612, p = .014, N = 14, one-tailed, for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A**). The preference for learning emotion regulation goals from measure **B** tended to moderate the investigated relationship in the same way as the one from the measure **A**: the correlation between the total score of C5 and C index was statistically significant only for those participants with high scores for this variable: ρ =.437, p = .068, N = 13, one-tailed.

It may be that the moderation of the three aspects of emotional dysregulation for the relationship between moral competence and the willingness to hide the truth highlights a component of the C index that has a more complex relationship with the way people relate to the value of truth than it was expected initially, as a simple negative relationship between the C index and the tendency to lie. The visual inspection of the scatterplot of the relationship between these two variables suggests rather a nonlinear

relationship, as the highest scores for C index are obtained only for those participants who had an intermediary tendency to hide the truth, and the lowest levels of C index tend to be distributed toward the two ends of the tendency to hide the truth. Separating the entire sample into two groups based on the median value of the total score of C5, this nonlinear relationship is suggested also by the tendency of a positive correlation between the C index and total score of C5 for the group with a low total score of C5 (ρ =.329, p = .063, N = 23, one-tailed), and the tendency toward a negative correlation between the two variables for the group with a high total score of C5 (ρ = -.346, p = .08, N = 13, one-tailed). As there was obtained the expected significant positive correlation between the total score of C5 and the score for the lack of emotional clarity, it can be concluded that the expected negative relationship between the tendency to hide the truth and moral competence would be more likely for those persons who tend both to deceive others and the deceive themselves. For those who only deceive others, but not themselves, instead, the above-mentioned correlation was a positive one. This unexpected positive correlation can be better understood by inspecting the correlations of the total score of C5 with the relative preference for the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth, or with the three clusters through which the items of those levels are grouped. In this sample, the total score of C5 correlated significantly only with the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 5: Pearson correlation coefficient was r = -.264, p = .033, N = 49, one-tailed, and with the egocentrism-altruism conflict cluster: Pearson correlation coefficient was r = .253, p = .039, N = 49, one-tailed. In the sample from Faiciuc (2016a), the total score of C5 correlated statistically significantly only with the relative preference for the first level of C5: r = -.286, p = .035, N = 41, one-tailed. So, it seems that the positive correlation between the C index and the total score of C5 may not imply that those participants with higher moral competence are purely egocentric liars, who do not accept truth telling intentionally as a personal moral value, but rather persons who hide the truth contextually, who acknowledge the value of truth telling, but succumb to the temptation to lie because of some competing egocentric reasons when they have a problematic emotion regulation (those who prefer more the items of C5 included in the altruism-egocentrism cluster), or who hide the truth when the altruistic reasons meet the egocentric ones (those who prefer more the level 4 reasons for hiding the truth), because their tendency to tell the truth is defeated by an empathic concern especially for close persons, or because they want to gain something by maintaining a relationship through that lie. It is to be noted that the positive correlation between the C index and the total score of C5 might also mean that C index is not linked with the reasons for hiding the truth that refer to some abstract thinking, to a principled moral judgment in which truth telling is

defeated by other moral values, especially the ones regarding the welfare of society. Those persons who had a low total score of C5, who may be highly committed to telling the truth at any cost, no matter the context, who may see the truth as the highest value in their life, as the most important principle in their moral judgment, had also, surprisingly, a low moral competence. The reason for such a result may be the fact that such persons may have a more rigid way of thinking and may want to be self-consistent in the name of the truth, so much so that they may tend to absolutize their personal version of the truth. Consequently, in the MCT task, they may tend to reject opposing arguments, even though they are principled ones, i.e. with a higher quality, no matter their emotion regulation efficiency. This interpretation is supported by the positive correlation between the C index and the variance of a participant's answers for all the C5 items: ρ =.242, p = .047, N = 49, one-tailed, as well as by the positive correlation between the total score of C5 and the variance of the answers for the C5 items: ρ =.482, p < .001, N = 49, one-tailed. It is notable that , when the sample is separated into two groups based on the value at the DERS scale of lack of clarity of emotions, these statistically significant positive correlations on the entire sample are maintained only for the group of participants with a low level of lack of clarity of their emotions (ρ =.368, p = .046, N = 22, one-tailed, for the relationship between the C index and the above-mentioned variance, and ρ =.676, p < .001, N = 21, one-tailed, for the relationship between the total score of C5 and that variance).

So, it seems that, for those participants who deceive less, both other people and themselves (i.e., with a low tendency to lie) or who are less in conflict with their emotional truth (in the case of the nonacceptance of their emotions, when they would want to lie themselves), moral competence, in the way it was conceived by Lind (1985), was positively associated with a flexible moral judgment about lying. This flexibility may be linked with the ability to change one's perspective over a situation, by considering also the perspective of other people and the way truth may affect them, with the possible help of an empathic concern for them, as it is indicated also by the most stable result in the two studies (Faiciuc, 2016a, and the present research): the positive correlation between the C index and the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 4, especially between the C index and the preference for the item 12 of C5 that is included in that level of reasons for hiding the truth. This case of flexibility is in agreement with the Moral Myopia Model elaborated by Landy and Royzman (2018) and with the data obtained based on it. They suggest that better thinkers, who also have a principled moral judgment, "appear to think about considerations beyond well-learned rules, and to have a more nuanced, more differentiated and, one might say, richer moral domain", and that those thinkers "attend to more than just norms when delineating the

bounds of the moral" (p. 22). The above-mentioned flexibility may be contrasted with the rigidity of the persons on the autistic spectrum who tend to lie less because they have empathizing difficulties alongside with "an unusually strong drive to systemize" caused by a perspective on truth "as precise, reliable, consistent, or lawful patterns or structure in data" (Baron-Cohen, 2008, pp. 64-65). So, "their difficulties with empathy are the result of a mind that seeks the truth in a domain (emotions) that is not very lawful" (Baron-Cohen, 2008, p. 65). They may struggle also with their emotions. In such cases, when "emotional truth" is unclear, moral competence does not a have a positive association with the tendency to lie, as shown above.

Another case in which the flexibility in moral judgment about lying may occur is when a high agreement with the arguments of the adverse position (i.e., a high C index) occurs not because the value of the truth has been internalized as a personal principle at the top of the value hierarchy, as a personal commitment, but because the truth is seen through the prism of what is considered truth in the respondent's social environment, and how truth is valued in that environment. In other words, it is more a case of moral relativism in which one agrees with others because she/he does not have a strong personal position and can be easily influenced by others, especially closed ones, or tells the truth or not because of instrumental reasons. If the social norms are lax or do not sanction lying or even promote white or black lies, that person may tend to lie more, and, in the same time, in the MCT task, she/he may tend to agree with the opposing arguments as long she/he does not care too much about the truth or about imposing her/his personal position or version of the truth, because other egocentric or altruistic values are more important to that person. Such persons may not be preoccupied with their personal emotions, and do not pay much attention to them (like those who have high scores at the DERS scale of lack of emotional awareness), and maybe they do not try to find out their "emotional truth" or to judge it, as long as they, in general, are not particularly preoccupied with finding the truth. It is the case of those participants with a high level of lack of emotional awareness, or correlatively, low learning emotion regulation goals, or low compassionate care for their emotions. They also may lack emotional clarity. The above-mentioned cases and interpretations are reflected also at a more detailed level of analysis, in the way the five aspects of emotion regulation which moderated the relationship between the total score of C5 and C index moderated also the relationship between the C index and the answers to the items of C5 questionnaire. So, the C index correlated:

- for those participants with a low level of lack of emotional clarity, with the answers for the items 10, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 29 (positively significantly), and 4, 13, 15, 21, 26 (positively as tendencies), and, for those with a high level of this DERS

scale, with the answers for the C5 items 6 (positively significantly), 22 (positively as a tendency), and 18 (negatively significantly);

- for those participants with a low level of nonacceptance of emotional responses, with the answers for the C5 items 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20 (positively significantly), and 5, 17, 18, 27, 31 (positively as a tendency), and, for those with a high level of this DERS scale, with the answers for the C5 items 12, 14 (positively significantly), and 17 (negatively as tendency);

- for those participants with a low level of lack of emotional awareness, with the answers for the C5 items 1, 12 (positively significantly), 10 (positively as a tendency), and 17 (negatively as a tendency), and, for those with a high level of this DERS scale, with the answers for the C5 items 4, 6, 20, and 12, 22, 28 (positively as a tendency);

- for those participants with a low level of compassionate care for their emotions, with the answers for the C5 items 12 (positively significantly), 24, 25, and 31 (negatively significantly), and, for those with a high level of this metaemotion, with the answers for the items 1, 4, 6, 7, 12, 23 (positively significantly), and 5, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 19, 22 (positively as tendencies);

- for those participants a low level of preference for learning emotion regulation goals from measure **A**, with the answers for the C5 items 12 (positively significantly), 24, 27 (negatively significantly), and 31 (negatively as a tendency), and, for those with a high level of preference for this emotion regulation goal, with the answers for the C5 items 27, 28 (positively significantly), and 12, 19, 21, 29 (positively as tendencies).

Two cases are notable in the data presented in the previous paragraph. The first one, in relationship with the above-mentioned issue of the moral relativism in one's social environment, is the moderation of the relation between the C index and the answer for the item 18 of C5 (an item in which the reason for hiding the truth is that, in the respondent's community, hiding the truth is something usual, accepted, or easily tolerated) by the score at the DERS scale of lack of emotional clarity, in which, for those participants with a low score at that scale, the above-mentioned relationship was positive (ρ =.425, p = .024, N = 22, one-tailed), and, for those with a high score at that scale, it was negative (ρ = -.568, p = .034, N = 11, one-tailed). The second case is the moderation of the relation between the C index and the answer for the item 27 of C5 (an item in which hiding the truth is motivated by the avoidance of a peril that threatens the entire society) by the score at the learning emotion regulation goal of measure **A**: for those participants with a low preference for such emotion regulation goals, the above-mentioned relationship was negative (ρ = -.664, p = .007, N = 13, one-tailed), and for those with a high preference for them, that relationship was positive (ρ =.464, p = .03, N = 17, one-tailed). It

is a case in which the expected positive relationship between the moral competence and the preference for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of the highest level (one in which the consequences at a higher scale are considered and which may mean a higher level of abstract thinking) occurs for those participants who are interested to learn something from their emotions in their attempts to regulate them.

Relationship between the C index and the aggregate scores of C5

Unlike the previous research (Faiciuc, 2016a), in the present one, the predicted negative relationship between the preference for egocentric reasons for hiding the truth and moral competence was obtained in the case of the correlation between the C index and the relative preference for purely egocentric reasons to hide the truth of level 1, and also for the correlation between the C index and the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5. As in the previous research, the predicted positive relationship between the C index and the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth was obtained for the case of the relative preference for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 (additionally, in this research only, this correlation was statistically significant also for the non-ipsatized score of the preference for the level 4 reasons of hiding the truth), particularly the one mentioned in the item 12 of C5, the one in which hiding the truth is motivated by the desire to avoid harming a close person by telling the truth. *It is the most stable result, occurring no matter the sample*. Its stableness may be explained considering the fact that it is the type of reasons for hiding the truth that involves in the highest degree the ability to understand the perspective of another person over a situation and the willingness to be open to such a perspective and to accept it, aspects that are also important when solving the MCT task, through which moral competence is assessed. Moreover, the conflict between one's egocentric reasons and the altruistic ones that occur both in the MCT task and in the situations that are evoked by the C5 items of level 4 is more easily solved in the favor of the altruistic reasons when a close person is involved, and when harming her/him is avoided. In this case, not much of an emotion regulation is needed, because the possible negative emotions generated by lying are smaller as the moral breach is perceived to be also smaller, based on the altruistic justification. This conclusion is supported also by Cui et al. (2018), with a foundation in several cited studies, who state that "altruistically motivated deceptive behaviors are correlated with less moral conflicts because they are more acceptable both socially and morally" (p. 64). Emotion regulation would be needed rather to suppress the positive empathic emotions in case one would want to tell the truth in spite of harming a close person. On the other hand, a kind of regulation related with the emotional regulation through the executive function would still

be needed when lying a close person for altruistic reasons, if it is true that "To be dishonest, one needs to inhibit the default, honest response" (p. 68), as stated by Cui et al. (2018), based on several studies cited by them. Emotion regulation may be needed especially in the MCT task for those persons who prefer such kind of reasons for hiding the truth in order to obtain a higher C index, as, in the MCT case, the empathic feelings can no longer help directly in the conflict between one's egocentric reasons (the desire to be right), and altruistic reasons (the desire to consider the perspective of a hypothetical opponent).

The obtained relationship between the C index and the reasons of hiding the truth of level 4 is in agreement with a result obtained in a previous research of mine (Faiciuc, 2010), in which only the preference for the third level of moral judgment (a mature one), conceived by Gibbs, Basinger and Fuller (1992) to describe a decentered moral judgment for which the main focus is on the interpersonal relationship and one's empathic concerns, and not the preference for the fourth level of moral judgment, in which the main focus is on one's group or society, had a positive correlation statistically significant with the total correctness at a syllogistic task, especially with the correctness for the valid syllogisms, and with measures for cognitive autonomy, and autonomy of one's values. The above-mentioned result is also in agreement with a result obtained by Klimenko (2020): participants who tended the most to recall moral dilemmas in which there is an altruistic-egocentric moral conflict of the type in which the care for other competes with personal safety had a significantly higher moral competence (C index) than the participants who recalled the most other moral dilemmas (with a motivational altruistic – altruistic conflict, or motivational egocentric-egocentric conflict).

The predicted moderation of the emotional dysregulation for the relationship between the C index and the preference for altruistic reasons for hiding the truth was obtained, as, indeed, the main expected positive correlations between the above-mentioned variables (the ones between the C index and the absolute and relative preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 4, as well as between the C index and the absolute preference for the aggregate score for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth) occurred only for those participants who had low sores for emotional dysregulation (i.e., who are better able to regulate their emotions). The following aspects of emotional dysregulation: impulse control difficulties, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotion regulation strategies (in the case of the relationship between the C index and the reasons for hiding the truth of level 4), lack of emotional clarity (in the case of the relationship of the C index with the reasons for hiding the truth of level 4, and with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth), and nonacceptance of emotional responses (only in the cases of the relationship of the C index with the reasons for hiding the truth of level 5 and, respectively, with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth) were particularly important for

this moderation. The relationship between the C index and the preference for reasons to hide the truth of level 4 was moderated also by the level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions and, as a tendency, by the self-reported efficiency in managing one's positive emotions, in the sense that the expected positive relationship occurred only for those participants who were unsatisfied with their excessive positive emotions and with their regulation. It is notable that the discussed moderation by this aspect of the regulation of the positive emotions, assessed with QERG questionnaire, was in the opposite direction in comparison with the moderation of the similar aspect in the case of the regulation of negative emotions, which was assessed with the DERS scale for the nonacceptance of the emotional responses. In other words, the positive relationship between the C index and some altruistic reasons for hiding the truth occurred only for those participants who tend to accept their excessive negative emotions, but to reject their excessive positive emotions. The acceptance of the negative emotions was important only for the link between the moral competence and the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth of level 5, whereas the unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions only for the link between the moral competence and the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth of level 4. It may be concluded that the obtained data suggest that C index is positively related to a greater degree with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 than with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 5, and that this link occurs especially for those people who have few problems with the regulation of their negative emotions. The link between the C index and the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth of level 5, which presumably involve abstract thinking and principled moral judgment, occurred only for those participants who accept their negative emotions. This result may be linked with a result obtained by Makowski et al. (2020), in which the personality trait of honesty-humility had a negative correlation with the negative perceptions of lying. The cited authors explain that result by assuming that "honest individuals tend to approach deception with a more neutral stance. They may circumvent any moral judgment that typically comes with it and instead perceive deception as an objectively common phenomenon with no intrinsic nor absolute moral value." (p. 26). On the other hand, some of those participants who preferred reasons for hiding the truth of level 5 may be more utilitarian in their moral judgment, and this kind of judgment was shown to be positively associated "with a broadly immoral outlook concerning clear ethical transgressions in a business context, as well as with sub-clinical psychopathy", and with a "greater endorsement of rational egoism, less donation of money to a charity, and less identification with the whole of humanity" (Kahane, Everett, Earp, Farias, & Savulescu, 2015, p. 193). Others who prefer reasons for hiding the truth of level 5 may not have negative emotions at all, even though they are altruistic, because, for them, lying in

order to save a community or society is not seen as a dilemma, but rather as the single available moral option. So, in these cases, the preference for such reasons for hiding the truth may not be associated with the performance in a moral task in which the control of one's own emotions is thought to be important, as the MCT task is.

The obtained data supported also the prediction that the emotional dysregulation would moderate the relationship of the C index with the preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 3, and, respectively, with the score for the egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5, in the sense that only for those participants who had high scores for DERS (total score), for several subscales of DERS (impulse control difficulties, limited access to emotion regulation, lack of emotional clarity, and, for the case of the egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5, also, difficulties in engaging in goal directed behavior), and for the level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions (assessed with QERG) the above-mentioned relationships were positive in a statistically significant manner (with only two exceptions, in which it was only marginally significant). In this case, the acceptance of one's negative emotions or their awareness were not important, maybe because the primary issue for this kind of conflict is not to acknowledge or to accept one's negative emotions (as in the case of the negative emotions caused by lying for altruistic reasons), but to control them, because the negative emotions caused by one's egocentrism are not acceptable in any circumstances for a person that strives to behave morally. It may be that the nonacceptance of the excessive positive emotions would be linked with undesirable emotions that may be viewed as positive by respondents, as it is pride, for example, an emotion that may stay in the way of telling the truth.

Finally, the results supported also the prediction that the relationship between the preference for the purely egocentric reasons to hide the truth and moral competence would be moderated by the emotional dysregulation, although, in this case, the moderation was less clear and may be an accidental one when the total score for DERS is considered. The scores for C index and for the egocentrism cluster of C5 correlated negatively and statistically significant, as expected, only for those participants who had a high total score for DERS, i.e. those participants who had more emotion regulation problems, but this negative correlation was marginally significant also for those with a low total score for DERS. The moderation of the relationship between the C index and the relative preference for the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth of level 2 was clearer, but, in this case, it was in the opposite direction than the expected one, because the predicted negative correlation between the above-mentioned variables was statistically significant only for those participants who had a low total score for DERS. The fact that, in the case of the relationship between the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 and C index, the

moderation of the total score for DERS was less clear may be explained by the fact that the diverse aspects of the emotional dysregulation assessed with DERS moderated differently the relationships between the C index and the two kinds of egocentric reasons for hiding the truth: in some cases the expected negative correlations were statistically significant only for those participants with high scores at some of these aspects, whereas, in other cases, those correlations were statistically significant only for those with low scores at other such aspects. The expected negative correlation between the C index and the preference for reasons to hide the truth of level 1 was statistically significant for those participants with high scores at impulse control difficulties, nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior, but also for those with low scores at the scales of lack of emotional awareness, and the scale of lack of emotional clarity. The expected negative correlation between the C index and the preference for reasons to hide the truth of level 2 tended to be statistically significant for those participants with high scores at the scale for difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior, and was statistically significant for those with high scores at the scale of limited access to the emotion regulation strategies, at the level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions, low scores for the ability to manage their positive emotions, and a low total score for DERS. The expected negative correlation between the C index and the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 was statistically significant for those participants with high scores at impulse control difficulties, nonacceptance of emotional responses, difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior, and for the scale of lack of emotional clarity. These results indicate that the two kinds of egocentric reasons had different relationships with the moral competence as measured with MCT, and that these relationships were conditioned by different aspects of emotional dysregulation. Further studies would be needed in order to establish the stableness of these differences and to explain their causes. It is to be noted that the expected negative correlation between the C index and the preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth of level 2 was annihilated not when the total score at DERS was low, as predicted, but when that total score was high. This result may be explained by assuming that those people who lie out of reciprocity, not because they do not care at all about the truth (as the ones who prefer more the reasons for hiding the truth of level 1), because they were lied, or because those around them lie, would be discouraged to lie when they have a problematic regulation of their negative emotions linked with the fear of being caught lying. On the other hand, when they have problems regulating their seemingly positive emotions, as it may be considered pride, for example, they may be more tempted to lie out of revenge, or because they have the justification that others lie, too. The result regarding the statistically significant negative correlation between the C index and the relative preference only for the reasons of hiding

the truth of level 1 and only for those participants with low scores for the lack of emotional awareness and lack of emotional clarity may be accidental, because, for those with high scores for these DERS scales, that correlation tended to be negative, too, the statistical significance threshold being around $p = .1$. Still, this result may be explained based on the idea that those people who lie themselves or care less for their "emotional truth" (having high scores for the DERS scales of lack of emotional clarity, or lack of emotional awareness), but do not lie others for egocentric reasons should have a lower C index than those people who do not lie to others and to themselves.

The expected positive correlation between the C index and the preference for the avoidance reasons to hide the truth, and the expected negative correlation between the C index and the preference for the approach reasons to hide the truth occurred only for the ipsatized scores of the corresponding clusters, whereas, for the non-ipsatized scores, there occurred only the expected positive correlation between the C index and the preference for the avoidance reasons to hide the truth. It is a result that suggests that the preference for avoidance reasons to hide the truth may be more important for the link between moral competence and the reasons for hiding the truth, the preference for the approach ones being important not through its absolute value, but only through its value relative to the preference for the avoidance reasons to hide the truth. Emotional dysregulation moderated also the relationship of the C index with the scores for the avoidance and approach reasons for hiding the truth, especially in the case of the ipsatized versions of the corresponding C5 scores, and in the case of some particular aspects of the emotional dysregulation, but the pattern of this moderation is less clear, as it can be seen in the Table 13. It may be that the obtained results are accidental. Further studies are needed in order to see which of them are stable.

Conclusion for the relationship between the C index and the reasons for hiding the truth

It can be concluded based on the obtained results that, if we want to know whether a person is morally competent or not in the sense in which moral competence is conceived by Lind (1985), it is not so important to know if she/he generally tends to hide the truth/has a high respect for telling the truth as a value, but to know why she/he tends to hide the truth (i.e., the preferred reasons for which she/he hides the truth), if she/he has problems of emotion regulation or not, and, if she/has such problems, which is their kind. The reason for hiding the truth that was the most tightly linked with the moral competence index of MCT, in a positively way, was the one in which one hides the truth in order to avoid harming a close person. It is a result important for clarifying the meaning of the C index of MCT, as a consecrated measure for the moral judgment and behavior. It suggests that moral competence, as it is measured by

MCT, may be related in a significant measure to the care feeling or empathic concern for another person, especially a close one, to the openness to another person's view (maybe even to the point in which a person becomes easily suggestible, more willing to give up her/his principles for the sake of another person). The relationship between the C index and the reasons for hiding the truth was moderated by one's level of emotional dysregulation. The expected positive correlation between the C index and the preference for altruistic reasons to hide the truth occurred only for those participants who had a low level of emotional dysregulation, whereas the expected negative correlation between the C index and the preference for purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth tended to occur more clearly for those who had a high level of emotional dysregulation. The obtained results suggest that the persons with a high moral competence are more flexible in their moral judgment whether to hide or the tell the truth and are more avoidance/prevention focused in their decisions to hide the truth than those with a low moral competence. The expected results were obtained especially when it was considered the relative preference for the investigated reasons of hiding the truth, after the response tendencies were removed. Data obtained in this research can be used in order to support the idea on which the MCT was conceived, namely that, in order to assess one's moral competence, the interaction between the cognitive and affective aspects of morality is important. So, moral competence was associated in this study with the importance of the truth in a person's system of values, but her/his emotion regulation problems played a role also in this association.

Relationship between the MCT stages of moral orientation and the aggregate scores of C5

The stable relationships between the six MCT stages of moral orientation and the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth from C5 questionnaire, which occurred both in this sample and in the one from Faiciuc (2016a), were, on the one hand, the positive correlations of the preference for the stage 1 of MCT with the preference for the reasons of level 1 from C5 (expected, which in the present sample occurred also for the ipsatized scores), and with the preference for the reasons of level 2 from C5 (expected), of the relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT with the relative preference for the reasons of level 2 from C5 (expected), and of the preference for the stage 4 of MCT with the preference for the reasons of level 1 from C5 (unexpected). On the other hand, in both samples, there occurred also the expected negative correlation between the relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT and the relative preference for the reasons of level 4 from C5. It is to be noted that the expected results occurred especially for the lower levels of the two instruments, which indicate lower levels of moral judgment. The only expected result linked with the higher levels

of moral judgment was the one in which the relative preference for the reasons for hiding the truth that invoke the preservation of a relationship with a close person and of her/his wellbeing (level 4 reasons) was negatively associated with the relative preference for a morality of a simple exchange (stage 2 of MCT). Analyzing the correlations that occurred in both samples between the preference for the stage 4 of MCT and the items of C5 is hard to understand why there occurred the above-mentioned unexpected correlation between the preference for the stage 4 of MCT and the preference for the reasons of level 1 from C5, because this stage of MCT only tends to correlate positively with the item 25 of C5, which is a level 1 item. But analyzing those correlations separately on the two samples, in Faiciuc (2016a), the preference for the stage 4 of MCT correlated also positively (statistically significantly) with the item 5, and, in the present sample, also with the item 24 (both are level 1 items). So, it seems that a moral perspective in which the law is seen as the ultimate arbiter may imply a more relativistic view regarding the value of the truth, which is not recognized as a value in itself. The same relativistic stance over the truth tended to be associated positively also with the preference for a moral perspective in which keeping social contracts is in the foreground. The remaining associations between the C5 items and the MCT stages that were stable in the both samples are important in order to understand why the expected associations between the higher stages of MCT and the higher levels of C5 did not occur. It seems that some of the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth (item 14, of level 4, and items 28, 13, 17, and 31, of level 5) can be positively associated with the lowest stages of moral orientations (with stage 1: items 14, and 28, and with stage 2: items 13, 17, and 31), because of their ambiguous meaning, when helping others or society may bring a personal gain.

The preference for the morality of simple exchange (stage 2 of MCT) was positively associated, as expected, with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 (statistically significant), and with the score for the altruism-egocentrism cluster of C5 (as a tendency). The preference for the highest stage of moral judgment (stage 6 of MCT), referring to universal moral principles, only tended to be positively associated with the score for the altruistic cluster of C5, as expected.

The results supported only the expected positive association between the preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth and the lowest stage of moral judgment (stage 1 of MCT), and only for absolute scores, not for their ipsatized version. For the ipsatized scores of the stages of MCT and of the approach and avoidance clusters of C5, there occurred the expected negative correlation between the relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT (morality of simple exchange) and the relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth, the expected positive correlation between relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT and the relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth,

the expected positive correlation between relative preference for the stage 6 of MCT and the relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth, and the expected negative correlation between relative preference for the stage 6 of MCT and the relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth. It was unexpected the positive correlation of the preference for the stage 4 of MCT (appeal to the law as the ultimate arbiter) both with the preference for the avoidance cluster of C5 (as expected, marginally significant), and with the approach cluster of C5 (unexpected, statistically significant). It is a result that may be related with the above-mentioned one, which highlighted that this moral judgment stage may be linked with a relativistic stance over the truth. It suggests that this relativistic stance may be favored by an approach motivational focus. The avoidance/approach motivational focus in hiding the truth seems to be important in establishing the expected relationships between the moral judgment stages and reasons for hiding the truth rather at the extreme ends of the progression of moral stages.

Emotion dysregulation moderated also the relationship between the preference for the moral judgment stages and the reasons for hiding the truth. Many of the expected correlations (computed for ipsatized scores) presented above and other expected new ones occurred only for those participants who had a low emotional dysregulation, as it can be seen in Table 13. It is notable that, in this case, the total score for C5 (tendency to hide the truth) correlated, unexpectedly, positively with the relative preference for the stage 5 of MCT (morality of keeping social contract), and negatively with the relative preference for the stage 2 of MCT (morality of simple exchange). It is a result related with the unexpected positive correlation between the total score for C5 and C index presented above, having probably a similar explanation. It can be understood also based on the idea that a high level of emotion regulation problems can mask some of the expected relationships between the moral orientation stages and the reasons for hiding the truth, as it was also the case for some of the expected relationships between moral competence and the reasons for hiding the truth. This masking seems to be important especially for the relationships between the moral judgment stages and the two types of reasons for hiding the truth: with an avoidance vs. approach motivational focus, as more of the expected correlations occurred when only the participants with a low level of emotional problems were considered. When the investigated aspects of emotional dysregulation were taken into account separately, although the expected correlations occurred predominantly for those participants with low scores at these aspects (as it can be seen in the Table 14), following a similar pattern to the one obtained in the case of the total score for DERS, some expected and unexpected significant correlations occurred also for the participants with high scores at the above-mentioned aspects (see Table 15). In

the two above-mentioned tables, it can be seen that the moderation of the regulation for the positive emotions (assessed with QERG) overlaps only partially with the moderation of the regulation for the negative emotions (assessed with DERS) in the case of the relationships between the moral judgment stages and the reasons for hiding the truth. The moderation of the relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and the moral judgment stages occurred less frequently for the aspect of lack of emotional awareness (four cases of moderation), difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior (14 cases of moderation), and of self-perceived ableness to manage positive emotions, and more frequently for the aspect of impulse control difficulties (30 cases of moderation), of unsatisfaction with excessive positive emotions (30 cases of moderation), limited access to emotion regulation strategies (28 cases of moderation), of lack of emotional clarity (25 cases of moderation), and of nonacceptance of emotional responses (21 cases of moderation), as it can be noted in the Tables 14 and 15. The above-mentioned moderations occurred more for those participants with high scores for the emotional dysregulation in the case of the unsatisfaction with excessive positive emotions (19 cases of moderation), and for the scale of difficulties in engaging in goal directed behavior (8 cases of moderation). These results will not be commented in detail, as supplementary studies are needed in order to establish their stableness, given the very small samples for which they were obtained. They were presented only in order to support the idea that the aspects of the emotional dysregulation are important, too, in the analysis of its moderation of the investigated relationships between the moral judgment stages and the reasons for hiding the truth, and that there is an ordering of their importance.

Conclusion for the relationship between the moral orientation and the reasons for hiding the truth

The expected positive correlations of the lowers stages of moral judgment with the lower levels of reasons for hiding the truth, representing also egocentric reasons for hiding the truth, and with the approach reasons for hiding the truth were the ones that occurred the most frequently for the different conditions in which they were computed. The highest stages of moral judgment correlated also positively with the higher levels of reasons for hiding the truth, representing altruistic reasons for hiding the truth, and with the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth in some particular conditions. Emotional dysregulation and its aspects moderated the relationship between the moral orientation and the reasons for hiding the truth, the expected correlations being statistically significant only for those participants who had a low level of emotional dysregulation (total score at DERS). In their case, the tendency to hide the truth (the total score at C5) was also

unexpectedly associated negatively with the relative preference for the morality of simple exchange (stage 2 of MCT), and positively with the relative preference for the morality of keeping social contracts.

Relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and emotion regulation

Relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and cognitive emotion regulation strategies

As predicted, the relative preference for the *other-blame strategy* of CERQ correlated positively with the relative preference for the cluster of egocentric reasons of hiding the truth, especially with the relative preference (and with the absolute preference as well) for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth of level 3, with the relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth, and correlated negatively with the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth (with a tendency of such a correlation for the cluster of altruistic reasons of hiding the truth), with the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 5, and with the approach reasons of hiding the truth.

The predictions regarding the relationship between the *catastrophizing* strategy assessed with CERQ and the reasons for hiding the truth were also supported by data. The relative preference for this strategy correlated positively with the relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth, especially with the relative preference for those of the level 3, and with the relative preference for the altruism-egocentrism cluster of reasons for hiding the truth. The preference for the above-mentioned strategy tended to correlate positively also with the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 2. In the same time, the relative preference for the catastrophizing strategy tended to correlate negatively with the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth (and their cluster), especially with the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 5. The expected negative correlation between the preference for this type of emotion strategy and the one for the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth did not occur.

The predicted positive correlation between the scores of the CERQ scale for *rumination* and the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth was not supported. On the contrary, there occurred a tendency toward a negative correlation between the relative preference for this cognitive emotion regulation strategy and the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 2. The positive correlation between the relative preference for the rumination strategy and the relative preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth, and the negative correlation between the relative preference for that strategy and the relative preference for the approach reasons of hiding the truth

were also in contradiction with what was predicted. Nevertheless, it is an understandable result, if it is taken into account the idea that rumination, as a cognitive emotion regulation strategy, can occur rather as an attempt to prevent an unwanted event than in order to attain a desired result, although, finally, the negative emotion generated by anticipating that event is not avoided, as it was initially believed.

The support for the predictions regarding the link between the *acceptance* strategy assessed with CERQ and the reasons for hiding the truth was rather mixed. Indeed, as predicted, the preference for this CERQ strategy correlated positively with the preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth, especially with the preference for those of the level 5 (as a tendency), with the preference for the approach reasons for hiding the truth, and the relative preference for it tended to correlate negatively with the relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth of level 3, and with the relative preference for the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth. But, in contradiction with what was predicted, the relative preference for the acceptance strategy correlated positively with the relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth of level 2, with the absolute preference for these egocentric reasons, and tended to correlate positively also with the preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth of level 1. It is a result that explains the lack of the predicted negative correlation between the preference for this strategy and the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth, as long as it correlates positively with some of them, and negatively with others.

As predicted, the relative preference for the *positive refocusing strategy* of CERQ correlated positively with the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth, especially with the relative preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth of level 4, and tended to correlate negatively with the relative preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth.

The predicted relationship between the CERQ strategy of *putting into perspective* and the reasons for hiding the truth was supported only in that part in which the expected positive correlation occurred indeed between the preference for this strategy and the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 5, whereas the expected negative correlations between the preference for it and the lowest levels of the reasons for hiding the truth did not occur.

The prediction of a positive correlation between the preference for the *self-blame strategy* and the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth (and, correlatively, of a negative correlation between the preference for this CERQ strategy and the preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth) was not supported by the data.

Conclusion for the relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and cognitive emotion regulation strategies

The obtained results are, to my knowledge, the first ones that bring information regarding the link of the preference for the cognitive emotion regulation strategies assessed with CERQ with the altruistic vs. egocentric motivation in hiding the truth, as well as with the avoidance vs. approach motivational focus in that context. As expected, the preference (absolute or relative) for the *altruistic reasons* of hiding the truth correlated positively or tended to correlate positively with the preference for the acceptance, putting into perspective (especially in the case of the reasons of level 5 for these two strategies), and for the positive refocusing strategies (especially those reasons of level 4), and negatively with the preference for the other-blame, and catastrophizing strategies (especially in the case of the reasons of level 5 for these two strategies). The preference (absolute or relative) for the e*gocentric reasons* of hiding the truth correlated positively or tended to correlate positively with the preference (absolute or relative) for the other-blame, catastrophizing strategies (especially in the case of the reasons of level 3 for these two strategies, and also of the level 2, for the latter one), and, unexpectedly, for the acceptance strategy (especially for the reasons of level 2, and, as a tendency, also for the reasons of level 1), and negatively with the preference (absolute or relative) for the acceptance (only for the reasons of level 3), rumination (only for the reasons of level 2), and positive refocusing strategies. The preference (absolute or relative) for the *avoidance reasons* of hiding the truth correlated positively or tended to correlate positively with the preference (absolute or relative) for the other-blame, and rumination strategies, and negatively with the relative preference for the acceptance strategy. The preference (absolute or relative) for the *approach reasons* of hiding the truth correlated positively or tended to correlate positively with the preference (absolute or relative) for the acceptance strategy, and negatively with the preference (absolute or relative) for the rumination, and other-blame strategies.

It is notable that the cognitive emotion regulation strategies that are considered to be generally as positive, promoting psychological health, were associated positively especially with the preference for the altruistic reasons of level 5, the ones that involve a principled thinking. The preference for the altruistic reasons of level 4 correlated positively only with the emotion regulation strategy of positive refocusing. It may be an indication that these reasons for hiding the truth, the only ones that correlated positively with the moral competence index of MCT, may be linked with an ability to decenter and refocus in general, not only emotionally. This ability may be needed also in the MCT task, when the respondent has to refocus her/his thinking and emotions from the arguments that support her/his preferred position regarding the

presented dilemmas to the arguments of a hypothetical opponent. It should be noted also that the positive association between the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth and the cognitive emotion regulation strategies considered generally to be negative for one's psychological health was mainly due to the egocentric reasons of level 3, the ones that imply a conflict of the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth with altruistic reasons. In the same time, the preference for egocentric reasons for hiding the truth of level 2 can be even positively linked with a positive emotion regulation strategy, i.e. with the acceptance strategy. This relationship may reflect a pragmatic kind of thinking, even in the emotional life, for those participants who prefer a morality of a simple exchange, as it was shown above about this kind of participants with higher scores at the level 2 reasons of C5.

Relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and learning vs. (avoidance and approach) performance emotion regulation goals

The predicted correlations between the general tendency to hide the truth (total score of C5) and the preference for the performance and learning emotion regulation goals occurred in the expected directions, but only in some of the investigated cases, and only as tendencies. The general tendency to hide the truth tended to correlate negatively only with the relative preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A**, and positively only with the relative preference for the performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B**, especially with the avoidance ones.

The pattern of results was more complicated than it was predicted. Although many of the expected correlations occurred in general when they were investigated at a more detailed level, using the aggregate scores for the five levels of reasons for hiding the truth, and the aggregate ipsatized scores by summing up those levels in the two categories of the egocentric and altruistic reasons, with only one exception, they did not occur and tended to be even in the opposite direction when the analysis was made at the level of the clusters obtained using the Pearson correlation as a measure of similarity. The reason for that was the unexpected results obtained only for two of the five levels of the reasons for hiding the truth.

As expected, the (absolute or relative) preference for the *altruistic reasons* for hiding the truth of level 5 correlated positively or tended to correlate positively with the preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A** (only for the relative preference for the level 5 reasons of hiding the truth), and negatively with the preference for the performance emotion regulation goals of measure **A** (as a tendency, only for the absolute preference for the level 5 reasons of hiding the truth), and the relative preference for performance-approach emotion regulation goals. Instead,

unexpectedly, the (absolute or relative) preference for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 correlated negatively with the absolute and relative preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A**, and tended to correlate positively with the relative preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B**, especially with the performance-avoidance ones. These results are in agreement with some supplementary data. The preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 and of level 5 correlated negatively with the item 23 of the interest scale of MES ("I learn through my feelings"): ρ = -.315, p = .042, N = 31, one-tailed, in the case of the level 4 of C5, and ρ = -.296, p = .05, N = 32, one-tailed, for the level 5 of C5. These correlations can be put also in the context of the data that showed that the preference for the altruistic reasons to hide the truth correlated positively with the nonacceptance of the emotional responses. As long as one does not want to accept her/his emotional responses, it is reasonable to think that she/he does not want to learn from them. On the other hand, it may be possible that those persons who prefer altruistic reasons for hiding the truth prefer to learn in other ways than through their emotions.

The expected predictions regarding the relationship between the preference for the *egocentric reasons* to hide the truth and the investigated emotion regulation goals were obtained especially for the egocentric reasons of level 3. The (absolute or relative) preference for them correlated positively with the (absolute and relative) preference for performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B**, tended to correlate positively with the preference for approach and avoidance performance emotion regulation goals of measure **B**, and tended to correlate negatively with the (absolute and relative) preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A**. The relative preference for the level 1 reasons of C5 correlated positively with the relative preference for the performance-approach emotion regulation goals of measure **B**, as predicted. The aggregate ipsatized score for the egocentric reasons to hide the truth correlated also, as expected, with the relative preference for the performance-approach emotion regulation goals of measure **B**. Instead, the relative preference for the level 1 reasons of C5 correlated unexpectedly negatively with the relative preference for the performance emotion regulation goals of measure **A**.

Unexpectedly, no relationship was found between the preferences for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth and for the avoidance performance emotion regulation goals, and between the preferences for the approach reasons of hiding the truth and for the approach performance emotion regulation goals. It may be that the expected relationships were not found because the distinction avoidance – approach was investigated only on the performance dimension of the emotion regulation goals, and not also on the learning dimension of them, which might have been more relevant, given the predominant cognitive nature of

the reasons for hiding the truth. The two dimensions may interact in the results of the investigated correlations.

It is notable that, as expected, the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth were positively linked with the performance-approach emotion regulation goals, whereas the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 with the performance-avoidance ones. This result is in agreement with some of the above-mentioned results, as the moral competence index, with which the preference for the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 correlated positively, correlated also positively with the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth. Remarkable it is also that the preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 5 was linked positively, as predicted, with the learning emotion regulation goals, and that the results for the preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 3 revealed again its particular status, in which its conflictual nature is related more with aspects of emotional dysregulation, as the preference for the performance emotion regulation goals tends to be also (Rusk et al., 2011).

Relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and metaemotions

The expected positive correlation between the general tendency to lie (total score of C5) with the metaemotion of suppression was obtained only as a tendency, but the preference for the avoidance reasons for hiding the truth correlated statistically significantly with this metaemotion, as predicted. This metaemotion tended to correlate positively both with the egocentric reasons for hiding the truth of level 1 and level 2, and with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4. This suggests that the suppression, as a negative metaemotion, can be motivated differently, both because a person has egocentric goals and because she/he has altruistic, principled ones. This idea is supported by data. Computing the correlations of the preference for the reasons for hiding the truth with the two items of the suppression scale: item 25 ("I cannot come to grips with strong emotions."), and item 10 ("I fight strongly against my emotions."), the preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 2 correlated significantly with the answers for the item 25 (ρ = .321, p = .037, N = 32, one-tailed), whereas the preference for the reasons for hiding the truth of level 4 correlated significantly with the answers for the item 10 (ρ = .312, p = .041, N = 32, one-tailed). The positive correlation between the item 25 of MES, which indicates emotional dysregulation, and the preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 2 may seem in contradiction with the negative correlation between the relative preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 2 and the total score for DERS, or the score for its nonacceptance scale, which also indicate emotional dysregulation. The explanation for this apparent contradiction may be linked, on the one hand, with the observation

that the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 2 has a different psychological meaning than the one for the absolute preference for these reasons, the latter one being partially linked with response tendencies or with the situation of an internal conflict between contradictory preferences. On the other hand, the above-mentioned explanation may be found in the answers for the QERG items. Both MES item 25 and the preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 2 correlated positively with the QERG items "The intensity of my negative affective feelings is lower than I would want it to be" (ρ = .403, p = .015, N = 27, one-tailed, for the level 2 of C5; ρ = .419, p < .001, N = 72, one-tailed, for the item 25) and "The frequency of my undesirable positive affective feelings is greater than I would want it to be." (ρ = .461, p = .005, N = 31, one-tailed, for the level 2 of C5; ρ = .223, p = .03, N = 72, one-tailed, for the item 25). These results indicate either a problem with the regulation of the positive emotions, not with the negative emotions, as it is the case for DERS, or, possibly, the tendency of those having egocentric reasons of level 2 to answer based on some response tendencies, requiring a smaller effort, like the acquiescence tendency.

The metaemotion of compassionate care correlated positively, as predicted, with the preference for the egocentric reasons of hiding the truth, in general, and with those of level 1, and level 2. This result can explain why the preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A** and **B** did not correlate negatively with the general tendency to lie, entirely as expected: some of the items assessing those goals are linked in their meaning with the compassionate care for one's own emotions (this metaemotion correlated positively with the preference for the learning emotion regulation goals of measure **A**: ρ =.433, p < .001, N = 68, one-tailed). This metaemotion has also a part that tended to correlate positively with the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 5, the only ones that correlated positively also with the preference for the learning emotion regulation goals.

It is an interesting result that, from the perspective of metaemotions, those participants who prefer egocentric reasons for hiding the truth of the lowest level tend to be similar to those who prefer altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of the highest level, but probably from different causes. At a first glance, it may seem odd that the above-mentioned reasons to hide the truth correlated positively both with the metaemotion of compassionate care and with the one of suppression, because those metaemotions apparently have an opposite meaning. In fact, these two metaemotions do not correlate negatively. It can be conceivable that one would want to suppress her/his emotions out of compassionate care for oneself, whereas others out of compassionate care both for others and for oneself.

Relationship between the reasons for hiding the truth and emotional dysregulation

As expected, the general tendency to hide the truth (total score at C5), and especially the preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth, correlated positively with the emotional dysregulation (total score at DERS), particularly with its aspects of lack of emotional clarity, and limited access to emotion regulation strategies. The preference for the avoidance reasons of hiding the truth correlated positively also with the nonacceptance of emotional responses (only as a tendency), with the impulse control difficulties, and the difficulty engaging in goal-directed behavior, but not with the lack of emotional awareness.

The predicted negative correlation between the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth and emotional dysregulation did not occur. On the contrary, unexpectedly, it occurred a positive correlation between the score for the altruism cluster of C5 (preference for the altruistic reasons of hiding the truth) and the aspect of nonacceptance of emotional responses of the emotional dysregulation. It is notable that this positive correlation was due, in the main part, to the positive correlation between the relative preference for the altruistic reasons to hide the truth of level 4 and the above-mentioned emotional dysregulation aspect. This correlation is understandable, if it is taken into account the fact that some of the DERS items from the scale of the nonacceptance of emotional responses make reference to shame and guilt, i.e. to moral emotions, as the reasons for one's nonacceptance for her/his emotions. In order to see if those moral emotions are responsible for the above-mentioned correlations, there were computed the correlations of the (relative and absolute) preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 4 and, respectively, of the score for the altruism cluster of C5 with the items of the nonacceptance scale of DERS. Of the all six items of this scale, the clearest associations were the ones between the C5 scores mentioned above and the item 25 of the above-mentioned scale: "When I'm upset, I feel guilty for feeling that way." (ρ = .467, p = .002, N = 37, one-tailed, in the case of the relative preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 4; ρ = .363, p = .012, N = 39, one-tailed, in the case of the preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 4; ρ = .345, p = .018, N = 37, one-tailed, in the case of the score for the altruism cluster of C5). Still, even these correlations occurred only for those participants with a high score for DERS: (ρ = .616, p = .003, N = 19, one-tailed, in the case of the absolute preference for the reasons of level 4; ρ = .591, p = .005, N = 18, one-tailed, for the relative preference for reasons of the level 4, and ρ = .402, p = .049, N = 18, one-tailed, in the case of the score for the altruism cluster of C5), whereas, for those with low total scores at DERS, the expected positive correlations were only close to the chosen statistical significance threshold. The item 29 of the nonacceptance scale ("When I'm upset, I become irritated at myself for feeling that way.") correlated statistically significantly with

the score for the cluster of altruism of C5: ρ = .341, p = .019, N = 37, one-tailed, and tended to correlate with the relative preference for the level 4 of C5: ρ = .232, p = .084, N = 37, one-tailed. The positive correlation between this item and the score for the cluster of altruism of C5 was statistically significant only for those participants who had low total scores for DERS. Item 23 of the nonacceptance scale ("When I'm upset, I feel like I am weak.") correlated significantly only with the preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 4 (ρ = .394, p = .009, N = 36, one-tailed, and, in the case of the relative preference; ρ = .313, p = .028, N = 38, one-tailed). In the same time, although item 11 of the nonacceptance scale: "When I'm upset, I become angry with myself for feeling that way" only tended to correlate positively with the absolute and relative preference for the level 4 of C5: (ρ = .25, p = .068, N = 37, one-tailed, in the case of the absolute score, and ρ = .237, p = .073, N = 39, one-tailed, for the relative score), it correlated statistically significantly for those participants who had high scores for DERS (ρ = .391, p = .049, N = 19, one-tailed, in the case of the absolute score, and ρ = .474, p = .023, N = 18, one-tailed, for the relative score). It is notable that the expected correlations did not occur, not even as tendencies, for the items 12 ("When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way."), and 21 ("When I'm upset, I feel ashamed at myself for feeling that way.") of the nonacceptance scale. So, of the moral emotions, it seems that only guilt, and not shame and embarrassment, is important for the relationship between the nonacceptance of one's own emotions and the altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 4, especially for those participants with a high level of emotional dysregulation. This result suggests that the moral standards are rather internalized for those participants who prefer the reasons to hide the truth of level 4, as they tend not to judge their emotions based on their image in their social environment, as it is the case when one is embarrassed or ashamed. It is a result in agreement with the lack of the expected positive correlation between the preference for the emotion regulation strategy of self-blame and the preference for altruistic reasons of hiding the truth. In other words, finding the truth may be incompatible with placing an on-sided blame. In the same time, the relative preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth of level 1 correlated negatively significantly, for the participants with low total scores for DERS, with the answers for the items 23, 29, 25, and 12 of the nonacceptance scale (ρ = -.544, p = .022, N = 14, one-tailed, for item 23; ρ = -.603, p = .011, N = 14, one-tailed, for item 29; ρ = -.607, p = .011, N = 14, one-tailed, for item 25; and ρ = -.524, p = .024, N = 14, one-tailed, for item 12). The absolute preference for egocentric reasons to hide the truth of level 1, 2, and 3 correlated negatively significantly, for the participants with low total scores for DERS, with the answers for the item 29 (ρ = -.602, p = .009, N = 15, one-tailed, for the reasons of level 1; ρ = -.613, p = .010, N = 14, one-tailed, for the reasons of level 2; ρ = -.531, p = .021, N = 15, one-tailed, for the reasons of level 3). For the participants with a high

total score at DERS, the relative preference for the level 1 reasons of hiding the truth and, respectively, the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5 correlated negatively only with the item 11 of nonacceptance scale of DERS: ρ = -.43, p = .038, N = 18, one-tailed, for the level 1 reasons, and, respectively, ρ = -.508, p = .016, N = 18, one-tailed, for the egocentrism cluster of C5. For this kind of participants, the score for the egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5 correlated positively with the item 23 of the nonacceptance scale: ρ = .511, p = .015, N = 18, one-tailed. On the entire sample, the DERS item 23 maintained its statistically significant positive correlation with this kind of reasons to hide the truth (ρ = .389, p = .01, N = 36, one-tailed, for the level 3 reasons of C5, and ρ = .428, p = .005, N = 36, one-tailed, for the above-mentioned cluster), but correlated also statistically significantly with the relative preference for the purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth (ρ = -.451, p = .003, N = 36, one-tailed, for the level 1 reasons, and ρ = -.518, p = .001, N = 36, one-tailed, for the level 2 reasons), and also with the score for the egocentrism cluster of hiding the truth: ρ = -.503, p = .001, N = 36, one-tailed. For the entire sample, this score correlated also negatively with the DERS item 25: ρ = -.331, p = .023, N = 37, one-tailed, DERS item 11: ρ = -.319, p = .027, N = 37, one-tailed, and tended to correlate negatively with the DERS item 29: ρ = -.224, p = .092, N = 37, one-tailed.

The data obtained with DERS regarding the relationship of the preference for the altruistic and, respectively, egocentric reasons to hide the truth and the nonacceptance of the emotional responses can be verified by using new supporting data obtained with some other items of MES, besides the related items from the suppression and compassionate care scales of MES. In spite of its name, the contempt/shame scale of MES does not have items with a content similar to the ones from the nonacceptance scale of DERS, as the MES items do not emphasize one's attitude toward her/his emotions, but rather one's attitude toward oneself or the consequences for her/his activity of having emotions like shame, guilt, or contempt. Nevertheless, the reduced importance of shame for those participants with altruistic reasons for hiding the truth was confirmed by the negative correlation between the score for the altruism cluster of C5 and item 12 of the contempt/shame scale of MES ("When I am ashamed about my emotional reactions, I can hardly think of anything else."): ρ = -.5, p = .005, N = 26, one-tailed. The MES items more related with the nonacceptance scale of DERS, besides those from the suppression and compassionate care scales, are items from the anger, interest, and tough control scales of MES. The score for the altruism cluster of C5 correlated positively with the item 3 of the anger scale of MES ("I repeatedly get angry about my emotional reactions."): ρ = .324, p = .046, N = 28, one-tailed, and negatively with item 28 of interest scale of MES ("Time and again, my thoughts and emotions are fascinating and important to me"): ρ = -.327, p = .045, N = 28, one-tailed. The absolute and relative preference for the reasons to hide the

truth of level 4 correlated with the item 8 of the tough control scale of MES ("When I see my emotions as inappropriate, I get very strict with myself"): ρ = .438, p = .013, N = 26, one-tailed, for the relative preference, and ρ = .432, p = .007, N = 28, one-tailed, for the absolute preference. The relative preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 5 correlated positively with the ipsatized score for the item 18 of the interest scale of MES ("Negative emotions provide me with interesting information about myself."): ρ = .334, p = .047, N = 26, one-tailed, whereas the relative preference for the reasons of hiding the truth of level 4 correlated negatively with that score: ρ = -.327, p = .051, N = 26, one-tailed. The preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 5 correlated positively also with the item 6 of the tough control scale of MES ("I repeatedly force myself to pull myself together."): ρ = .347, p = .026, N = 32, one-tailed. On the other hand, the relative preference for the reasons to hide the truth of level 1 correlated negatively with the ipsatized score for the item 5 of the anger scale of MES ("Sometimes I could get really mad at myself about the way I react emotionally"): ρ = -.386, p = .026, N = 26, one-tailed, with the ipsatized score for the item 8 of the tough control scale of MES ("When I see my emotions as inappropriate, I get very strict with myself."): ρ = -.345, p = .042, N = 26, one-tailed. The ipsatized score for the item 8 of the tough control scale of MES correlated also negatively with the score for the egocentrism cluster of C5: ρ = -.446, p = .011, N = 26, one-tailed.

So, the above-mentioned correlations suggest that the preference for the altruistic reasons to hide the truth of level 4, the only ones that correlated also with the moral competence, as shown above, may be linked with a propensity to pass one's own emotions through a moral grid with high standards, so that the observance of the moral principles ends up having also a personal stake, a pseudo-egocentric one, which is added to the altruistic motivation of the preference for this kind of reasons to hide the truth. Maybe this personal stake may help the persons who prefer this kind of reasons for hiding the truth to have the required moral behavior in the MCT task, motivating them supplementarily, whereas those who prefer the more abstract and impersonal altruistic reasons for hiding the truth of level 5 lack such a helping, boosting, supplementary motivation. But the above-mentioned personal stake, with its accompanying unpleasant emotions, may also impede one's moral behavior and moral judgment, when one's emotion regulation resources are scarce, and when those emotions cannot be managed efficiently, an idea that is supported by the data presented above regarding the moderation of the emotional dysregulation, in general, and of many of its aspects for the relationship between one's altruistic reasons for hiding the truth and one's moral competence. In other words, when one fails to live up to the moral standards she/he has regarding her/his negative emotions, the higher these standards are, the more guilty she/he would feel (or irritated, dissatisfied, as accompanying feelings of guilt), especially when she/he has trouble regulating her/his own emotions. Because,

assumingly, those people who prefer egocentric reasons for hiding the truth do not have such emotional problems caused by guilt and its accompanying negative emotions, i.e. they have a simplified emotional life due to their ignorance regarding the other's needs, their emotion regulation problems would be smaller, not greater, as it was predicted initially, based on the idea that, because of their ignorance, they may have adjustment problems that would lead also to emotion regulation problems. Indeed, the data supported, contrary to the initial tentative hypothesis, that idea, as those participants with purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth (who prefer relatively more the reasons for hiding the truth of level 1 and level 2) had a lower level of emotional dysregulation, on almost all of its aspects. They seem self-absorbed in their emotional life, which is not judged based on external standards, so that it may be more easily regulated, because the regulatory needs are lower. This may be the reason for which their access to the emotion regulation strategies is also limited, because they do not have opportunities to develop such strategies or to exercise them. It is notable that the negative correlations of the emotional dysregulation and its aspects with the preference for the purely egocentric reasons to hide the truth occurred only in the case in which their computation was made with ipsatized scores for the C5 items. So, it may be that not the absolute preference for such egocentric reasons to hide the truth counts for one's emotion dysregulation, but the one that is relative to the preference for the altruistic and egocentric reasons of level 3 for hiding the truth. Instead, the (absolute and relative) preference for the egocentric reasons of level 3 correlated positively indeed, as expected, with the emotional dysregulation and with almost all of its aspects, revealing once more, as in the results presented previously, the conflictual nature of these reasons for hiding the truth, their potential to be generated by or to lead to emotion regulation problems.

The fact that those participants who prefer purely egocentric reasons for hiding the truth had smaller emotion regulation problems, in spite of the fact that they tended to prefer cognitive emotion regulation strategies, emotion regulation goals, and to have metaemotions that are generally considered to be negative for one's psychological health, suggests that certain combinations between the various emotion regulation aspects would count in the relationship between one's moral values or behavior and her/his emotional dysregulation. Further studies are needed in order to determine such combinations.

From the data presented in the Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12, it can be noted that the pattern of the correlations of the different emotion regulation goals investigated with QERG with the preference for the different types of reasons for hiding the truth was different in the case of the positive emotions in comparison with the one obtained in the case of the negative emotions. Supplementary studies are needed in order to validate the difference between the above-mentioned patterns.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The results replicated some of the results from a previous study (Faiciuc, 2016a), in which only the relationship between the MCT variables and those of C5 questionnaire was investigated. They also suggest that that link may be moderated by one's emotional dysregulation and its aspects, the expected correlations occurring mainly in the case of a low level of emotional dysregulation. The most stable correlation was the positive one between the moral competence index of MCT and the preference for those altruistic reasons to hide the truth that invoke the desire to avoid harming a close person. An important positive correlation was also the one between the same moral competence index and the preference for the avoidance reasons to hide the truth. There was obtained also an emotion regulation profile associated with each of the ten studied types of reasons for hiding the truth. It is a complex pattern of results that can be better understood in their interrelationship, in their support for each other. In this pattern, the positive relationship between one's tendency to lie to others and to oneself (as revealed by one's emotion dysregulation) stands out. The data obtained with the QERG instrument suggest that the regulation of the positive emotions, in comparison with the regulation of the negative ones, may be differently linked with the investigated moral variables. These results bring also useful data regarding the convergent validity of the instruments involved in the present research, and can be helpful to understand the impact of a social environment that depletes one's emotion regulation resources on her/his moral life, and to guide moral education programs. In this research, the strategy for the validation of the results of the data analysis was based on the use of multiple emotion regulation measures, and on the expected correspondence between the results obtained with them, as a kind of reciprocal validation. Nevertheless, given the small samples that were used in many of the computed correlations, further studies are needed, on larger and more heterogenous samples, using also experimental methods, in order to establish the stableness of the obtained results, and their generality, and to give also the opportunity for a more advanced data analysis of the relationships among the investigated variables, clarifying their causal direction. These studies should extend also the considered variables or moral tasks. For example, it is likely that the obtained pattern of results would be different depending on the gender of the participants, but this analysis was not possible in this sample, because it was unbalanced from this point of view, and, therefore, for some computations, the number of males would have been too small. An important limitation of the present research, besides the relatively small sample, was the fact that all the instruments used in it were self-report measures, which is all the more a problematic issue as one of those instruments assessed, ironically, the reasons for hiding the truth, which can also happen when the respondents answer to those instruments (a situation related with the well-known liar paradox).

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Appendix 1

C5 Questionnaire – English version

QESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT IN A DILEMMATIC SITUATION -EXPERIMENTAL VERSION

The items of the questionnaire from below aim to study how a person motivates a certain behavior in a dilemma situation or an impasse: whether or not to hide the truth, in circumstances that may or may not support one or the other of the alternatives.

Please answer these items based on your recent experience and on how you personally think about each of the considered circumstances, specifying the extent to which the statements made are valid or appropriate in your case. To do this, next to the number corresponding to each item in the table from the answer sheet, you will need to mark with an X the box corresponding to the answer you have chosen from the indicated options.

The results are useful for an empirical research. Therefore, you are asked to try to be as accurate as possible in completing the answers, so that the results of the research are undistorted.

We assure the confidentiality of your answers. Thank you!

1. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth in order to avoid personal physical suffering or material loss.

2. I have accepted / would agree to hide the truth when I have been asked / would be asked to do so by a person who has authority over me in some way.

3. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, too, when I found out / would find out that people with authority close to me or respected in society have done so in the past.

4. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth in order to gain something material in exchange for silence.

5. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth if I knew that the danger of me suffering an important negative consequence for myself because of doing that was small.

6. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide an uncomfortable truth when I had / would have the certainty that the hidden truth will remain hidden forever.

7. I preferred / would prefer to hide an uncomfortable truth when there was / would be missing an express request for me to say it, because it was / is not suspected by others.

8. I decided / would decide that I could hide the truth when I found out / would find out that other colleagues or friends of mine did / do the same.

9. I decided / would decide to hide the truth when the person or people I hid / would hide it from also hid something from me.

10. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to keep my relationship with a person I care about, who is important to me.

11. I decided / would decide to hide the truth in order to spare the feelings of a stranger to me.

12. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to avoid causing suffering to a close person who would have been / would be affected by finding out the truth.

13. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to avoid causing suffering to a stranger who would have been / would be affected by finding out the truth.

14. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to bring an advantage through my silence to a close person who needed / would need this advantage.

15. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to bring an advantage through my silence to a stranger who needed / would need this advantage.

16. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to avoid that a group of close people, or the community to which I belong to suffer some loss.

17. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to bring an advantage to a close group or to the community to which I belong.

18. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth if, in the community I am part of, hiding the truth is something common, easily accepted, or tolerated.

19. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth, thinking that it would not be such a heavy burden on my conscience.

20. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth, thinking that the rebukes of conscience would affect me less than what would have happened / what would happen by confessing it.

21. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth because of the shame I would have had / would have if I had said it / I said it.

22. I have decided / would decide to hide the truth out of fear that I will not be understood by those around me if I told it, and that they might ridicule me.

23. I gave in / would give in to the temptation to hide the truth in order to gain, or keep a good reputation or image in the eyes of others.

24. I decided / would decide to hide the truth because the reputation of being an honest person, who tells the truth, is not that important to me.

25. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that telling the truth is something relative, subjective, which depends on one's perspective on a situation, having no value in itself.

26. I preferred / would prefer to hide the truth in order to respect another principle or human value that I am guided by in my decisions, which was / would be more important, in my opinion.

27. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that, in this way, I could protect the society in which I live from a danger.

28. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that, in this way, I could bring a benefit to the society in which I live.

29. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that my individual decisions are too small and insignificant to be able to influence society in any way.

30. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that telling the truth is something that has little value in the society in which I live, being little respected.

31. I decided / would decide to hide the truth, thinking that, for the good of society, it is something more important than telling the truth, other values taking precedence.

Level 1: Items 4, 5, 19, 24, 25, 29

Level 2: Items 3, 9, 8, 18, 30

Level 3: Items 1, 2, 6, 7, 20, 21, 22, 23

Level 4: Items 10, 12, 14,

Level 5: Items 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 26, 27, 28, 31

Avoidance cluster of C5: bolded items

Approach cluster of C5: items without bolded words

Altruism cluster of C5: Items 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 27, 28

Egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5: Items 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23

Egocentrism cluster of C5: Items 4, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31

Appendix 2

Table 13

The rank correlations (one-tailed, statistically significant or tendencies) between C index and the score for avoidance cluster of C5, and, respectively, the score for the approach cluster of C5 for high and low levels of emotional dysregulation and its aspects

	Level	C index - avoidance cluster of C5	C index - approach cluster of C5	C index -ipsatized avoidance cluster of C5	C index - ipsatized approach cluster of C5
Total score of DERS	Low	**$\rho = .614$**, $p = .017$, $N = 12$	-	**$\rho = .709$**, $p = .007$, $N = 11$	**$\rho = -.709$**, $p = .007$, $N = 11$
	High	**$\rho = .58$**, $p = .009$, $N = 16$	-	$\rho = .389$, $p = .076$, $N = 12$	$\rho = -.389$, $p = .076$, $N = 12$
Nonacceptance of emotional responses	Low	**$\rho = .485$**, $p = .034$, $N = 15$	**$\rho = .485$**, $p = .047$, $N = 13$	-	-
	High	$\rho = .382$, $p = .065$, $N = 17$	-	**$\rho = .588$**, $p = .007$, $N = 17$	**$\rho = -.588$**, $p = .007$, $N = 17$
Difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior	Low	-	-	-	-
	High	$\rho = .35$, $p = .084$, $N = 17$		$\rho = .421$, $p = .052$, $N = 16$	$\rho = -.421$, $p = .052$, $N = 16$
Impulse control difficulties	Low	$\rho = .383$, $p = .088$, $N = 14$	-	$\rho = .462$, $p = .056$, $N = 13$	$\rho = -.462$, $p = .056$, $N = 13$
	High	**$\rho = .429$**, $p = .043$, $N = 17$	-	**$\rho = .559$**, $p = .012$, $N = 16$	**$\rho = -.559$**, $p = .012$, $N = 16$
Lack of emotional awareness	Low	-	-	**$\rho = .495$**, $p = .036$, $N = 14$	**$\rho = -.495$**, $p = .036$, $N = 14$
	High	$\rho = .42$, $p = .053$, $N = 16$	$\rho = .401$, $p = .062$, $N = 16$	-	-
Limited access to emotion regulation strategies	Low	**$\rho = .566$**, $p = .014$, $N = 15$	-	**$\rho = .67$**, $p = .004$, $N = 14$	**$\rho = -.67$**, $p = .004$, $N = 14$
	High	$\rho = .384$, $p = .058$, $N = 18$	-	**$\rho = .431$**, $p = .042$, $N = 17$	**$\rho = -.431$**, $p = .042$, $N = 17$
Lack of emotional clarity	Low	**$\rho = .481$**, $p = .014$, $N = 21$	$\rho = .328$, $p = .079$, $N = 20$	**$\rho = .43$**, $p = .033$, $N = 19$	**$\rho = -.43$**, $p = .033$, $N = 19$
	High	-	-	**$\rho = .527$**, $p = .048$, $N = 11$	**$\rho = -.527$**, $p = .048$, $N = 11$
QERG - Self-reported ability to manage positive emotions (item 36)	Low	-	-	-	-
	High	$\rho = .448$, $p = .072$, $N = 12$		$\rho = .434$, $p = .08$, $N = 12$	$\rho = -.434$, $p = .08$, $N = 12$
QERG- level of unsatisfaction with one's excessive positive emotions	Low	$\rho = .444$, $p = .097$, $N = 12$	-	-	-
	High	-	-	**$\rho = .629$**, $p = .014$, $N = 12$	**$\rho = -.629$**, $p = .014$, $N = 12$

Table 14

The rank correlations (statistically significant or tendencies, one-tailed) between the relative preferences for the six stages of MCT and for the relative preference for several types of reasons of hiding the truth from C5 for the participants with a low total score at DERS

	Stage 1 of MCT	Stage 2 of MCT	Stage 3 of MCT	Stage 4 of MCT	Stage 5 of MCT	Stage 6 of MCT
Level 1 of C5	**ρ = .864**, $p < .001$, $N = 11$					ρ = -.515, $p = .053$, $N = 11$
Level 2 of C5	**ρ = .555**, $p = .038$, $N = 11$		**ρ = .565**, $p = .035$, $N = 11$	**ρ = -.864**, $p < .001$, $N = 11$	ρ = .427, $p = .095$, $N = 11$	ρ = -.478, $p = .068$, $N = 11$
Level 3 of C5	ρ = -.445, $p = .085$, $N = 11$			**ρ = .727**, $p = .006$, $N = 11$	**ρ = -.545**, $p = .041$, $N = 11$	
Level 4 of C5	**ρ = -.536**, $p = .044$, $N = 11$	ρ = -.455, $p = .088$, $N = 11$	ρ = -.515, $p = .053$, $N = 11$	**ρ = .644**, $p = .013$, $N = 11$		ρ = .474, $p = .07$, $N = 11$
Level 5 of C5	ρ = -.509, $p = .055$, $N = 11$					ρ = .437, $p = .089$, $N = 11$
Altruistic reasons of C5	**ρ = -.718**, $p = .006$, $N = 11$			ρ = .455, $p = .08$, $N = 11$		**ρ = .715**, $p = .007$, $N = 11$
Score for altruism cluster of C5	ρ = -.518, $p = .051$, $N = 11$					
Score for egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5				**ρ = .755**, $p = .004$, $N = 11$		
Score for egocentrism cluster of C5	**ρ = .627**, $p = .019$, $N = 11$			**ρ = -.627**, $p = .019$, $N = 11$		
Score for the avoidance cluster of C5	**ρ = -.536**, $p = .044$, $N = 11$	ρ = -.473, $p = .071$, $N = 11$	**ρ = -.674**, $p = .011$, $N = 11$	**ρ = .855**, $p < .001$, $N = 11$		**ρ = .560**, $p = .036$, $N = 11$
Score for the approach cluster of C5	**ρ = .536**, $p = .044$, $N = 11$	ρ = .473, $p = .071$, $N = 11$	**ρ = .674**, $p = .011$, $N = 11$	**ρ = -.855**, $p < .001$, $N = 11$		**ρ = -.560**, $p = .036$, $N = 11$
Total score of C5		**ρ = -.755**, $p = .004$, $N = 11$			**ρ = .545**, $p = .041$, $N = 11$	

Table 15

The rank correlations (statistically significant or tendencies, one-tailed) between the relative preferences for the six stages of MCT and for the relative preference for several types of reasons of hiding the truth from C5 for the participants with *low* scores for the scales of DERS, for the item 36 of QERG (positive emotions), and the unsatisfaction with the excessive positive emotions (based on QERG items

	Stage 1 of MCT	Stage 2 of MCT	Stage 3 of MCT	Stage 4 of MCT	Stage 5 of MCT	Stage 6 of MCT
Level 1 of C5	**Sign. pos.**: 1 (marginally significant), 3, 5, 6		7 (ρ = **.766**, p = .005, N = 10)			*Tend. neg.*: 3 (ρ = **-.576**, p = .02, N = 13), 5 (tendency)
Level 2 of C5	**Sign. pos.**: 5 (tendency), 7 (neg. tendency)	8 (ρ = **.854**, p = .001, N = 10)	**Sign. pos.**: 1 (tendency), 3 (tendency), 5 (tendency)	**Sign. neg.**: 1 (tendency), 3 (tendency), 5 (ρ = **-.534**, p = .025, N = 14), 6	*Tend. pos.*: 1 (tendency), 6 (tendency)	*Tend. neg.*
Level 3 of C5	*Tend. Neg.*: 5 (ρ = **-.481**, p = .041, N = 14), 7 (pos. tendency)		8 (ρ = **.772**, p = .004, N = 10)	**Sign. pos.**: 5 (tendency), 6 (tendency), 8 (sign. neg.: ρ = **-.709**, p = .011, N = 10)	**Sign. neg.** 2, 3	
Level 4 of C5	**Sign. neg.**: 3, 5 (tendency)	*Tend. neg.*: 2 (ρ = **-.537**, p = .024, N = 14), 3 (ρ = **-.632**, p = .01, N = 13), 5 (tendency), 6 (ρ = **-.494**, p = .016, N = 19), 8 (tendency)	*Tend. neg.*: 3 (tendency), 7 (ρ = **-.553**, p = .049, N = 10)	**Sign. pos.**: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 (tendency)		*Tend. pos.*: 3 (ρ = **.645**, p = .009, N = 13), 5 (tendency),
Level 5 of C5	*Tend. neg.*: 1 (ρ = **-.603**, p = .011, N = 13), 6 (ρ = **-.406**, p = .042, N = 19)		7 (ρ = **-.766**, p = .005, N = 10), 8 (ρ = **-.766**, p = .005, N = 10)	8 (ρ = **.564**, p = .045, N = 10)		*Tend. pos.*: 1 (ρ = **.518**, p = .035, N = 13), 3 (tendency), 5 (tendency)
Altruistic reasons of C5	**Sign. neg.**: 1, 3, 5, 6		7 (ρ = **-.675**, p = .016, N = 10), 8 (neg. tendency)	*Tend. pos.*: 1 (ρ = **.566**, p = .022, N = 13), 2 (tendency), 4 (tendency), 5 (ρ = **.508**, p = .032, N = 14), 6 (ρ = **.569**, p = .006, N = 19), 8 (tendency)		**Sign. pos.**: 1, 3, 5, 6 (tendency)
Score for altruism cluster of C5	*Tend. neg.*: 3 (ρ = **-.571**, p = .021, N = 13), 5 (ρ = **-.503**, p = .033, N = 14)		7 (ρ = **-.766**, p = .005, N = 10)			3 (ρ = **.683**, p = .005, N = 13)

	Stage 1 of MCT	Stage 2 of MCT	Stage 3 of MCT	Stage 4 of MCT	Stage 5 of MCT	Stage 6 of MCT
Score for egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5		6 (φ = **-.679**, p = .011, N = 11), 8 (neg. tendency)	8 (φ = **.729**, p = .008, N = 10)	**Sign. pos.:** 1 (tendency), 5 (tendency), 6 (tendency), 8 (sign. neg.: ρ = **-.661**, p = .019, N = 10)	2 (ρ = **-.502**, p = .034, N = 14), 3 (tendency)	
Score for egocentrism cluster of C5	**Sign. pos.:** 5, 6	6 (φ = **.534**, p = .025, N = 14), 8 (φ = **.634**, p = .024, N = 10)	7 (φ = **.723**, p = .009, N = 10)	**Sign. neg.:** 6 (tendency)		
Score for the avoidance cluster of C5	**Sign. neg.:** 4 (tendency), 5, 7 (pos. tendency)	*Tend. neg.:* 3 (φ = **-.489**, p = .045, N = 13), 5 (tendency), 6, 8 (φ = **.902**, p < .001, N = 10)	**Sign. neg.:** 3 (tendency), 5 (tendency), 6, 8 (pos. tendency)	**Sign. pos.:** 1, 3, 5 (tendency), 6		**Sign. pos.:** 3 (tendency), 6 (tendency)
Score for the approach cluster of C5	**Sign. pos.:** 4 (tendency), 5, 7 (neg. tendency)	*Tend. pos.:* 3 (φ = **.489**, p = .045, N = 13), 5 (tendency), 6, 8 (φ = **-.902**, p < .001, N = 10)	**Sign. pos.:** 3 (tendency), 5 (tendency), 6, 8 (neg. tendency)	**Sign. neg.:** 1, 3, 5 (tendency), 6		**Sign. neg.:** 3 (tendency), 6 (tendency)
Total score of C5	1 (φ = **.514**, p = .036, N = 13), 4 (φ = **.458**, p = .05, N = 13), 6 (φ = .326, p = .087, N = 19)	**Sign. neg.:** 1, 2 (tendency), 5, 6			**Sign. pos.** 5	

Note: In Table 15, the statistical significance of the correlations that occurred in the Table 13 were noted with sign. pos. or sign. neg. (for the positive and, respectively, negative statistically significant correlations), and tend. pos. or tend. neg. (for the positive and, respectively, negative tendencies). The correlation coefficients were noted only in those cases in which they were statistically significant, and were new or have a different sign or significance status in comparison with the ones obtained in the Table 13. In the Tables 14, and 15, the investigated aspects of the emotional dysregulation were noted with the following numbers:

1. Nonacceptance of emotional responses
2. Difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior
3. Impulse control difficulties
4. Lack of emotional awareness
5. Limited access to emotion regulation strategies
6. Lack of emotional clarity
7. Unsatisfaction with positive emotions (QERG)
8. Self-perceived ableness to manage positive emotions (item 36 QERG)

Table 16

The rank correlations (statistically significant or tendencies, one-tailed) between the relative preferences for the six stages of MCT and for the relative preference for several types of reasons of hiding the truth from C5 for the participants with a *high* scores for the scales of DERS, for the item 36 of QERG (positive emotions), and the unsatisfaction with the excessive positive emotions (based on QERG items).

	Stage 1 of MCT	Stage 2 of MCT	Stage 3 of MCT	Stage 4 of MCT	Stage 5 of MCT	Stage 6 of MCT
Level 1 of C5	2 (φ = **.502**, p = .024, N = 16)	7 (φ = **.65**, p = .011, N = 12)			2 (φ = **-.503**, p = .023, N = 16), 8 (φ = **-.519**, p = .042, N = 12)	4 (φ = **.434**, p = .046, N = 16)
Level 2 of C5		7 (φ = **.762**, p = .002, N = 12)		2 (φ = **-.564**, p = .011, N = 16), 7 (φ = **-.564**, p = .028, N = 12)		
Level 3 of C5	3 (φ = **-.615**, p = .006, N = 16), 7 (rege tendency)				2 (φ = .422, p = .052, N = 16), 3 (φ = **.499**, p = .024, N = 16)	1 (φ = **.419**, p = .047, N = 17), 3 (φ = **.427**, p = .049, N = 16)
Level 4 of C5		7 (φ = **-.594**, p = .021, N = 12)	3 (φ = **.449**, p = .041, N = 16), 7 (φ = **.531**, p = .028, N = 12)			3 (φ = **-.463**, p = .036, N = 16)
Level 5 of C5		6 (φ = **-.596**, p = .026, N = 11)		7 (φ = **.701**, p = .006, N = 12)		
Altruistic reasons of C5	3 (φ = **.63**, p = .004, N = 16)	7 (φ = **-.503**, p = .048, N = 12), 8 (φ = **-.637**, p = .013, N = 12)		7 (φ = **.781**, p = .001, N = 12)	8 (φ = **.641**, p = .012, N = 12)	3 (φ = **-.458**, p = .037, N = 16), 8 (φ = **.592**, p = .021, N = 12)
Score for altruism cluster of C5	3 (φ = **.638**, p = .004, N = 16)	8 (φ = **-.573**, p = .026, N = 12)		1 (φ = **.434**, p = .041, N = 17), 4 (φ = **.458**, p = .037, N = 16)	8 (φ = **.65**, p = .011, N = 12)	8 (φ = **.776**, p = .001, N = 12)
Score for egocentrism-altruism cluster of C5	3 (φ = **-.536**, p = .016, N = 16)			1 (φ = **-.432**, p = .042, N = 17)	3 (pos. tendency)	1 (φ = **-.415**, p = .049, N = 17)
Score for egocentrism cluster of C5		7 (φ = **.699**, p = .006, N = 12)	7 (φ = **-.608**, p = .018, N = 12)			
Score for the avoidance cluster of C5	3 (φ = **-.436**, p = .046, N = 16), 7 (φ = **-.644**, p = .012, N = 12)	2 (φ = **-.444**, p = .042, N = 16), 3 (φ = **-.477**, p = .031, N = 16), 7 (φ = **-.811**, p = .001, N = 12)		1 (φ = **.451**, p = .035, N = 17)	3 (φ = **.486**, p = .028, N = 16)	1 (φ = **.597**, p = .007, N = 17), 2 (φ = **.475**, p = .031, N = 16), 5 (φ = **.477**, p = .026, N = 17), 7 (φ = **.519**, p = .042, N = 12)
Score for the approach cluster of C5	3 (φ = **.436**, p = .046, N = 16), 7 (φ = **.644**, p = .012, N = 12)	2 (φ = **.444**, p = .042, N = 16), 3 (φ = **.477**, p = .031, N = 16), 7 (φ = **.811**, p = .001, N = 12)		1 (φ = **-.451**, p = .035, N = 17)	3 (φ = **-.486**, p = .028, N = 16)	1 (φ = **-.597**, p = .007, N = 17), 2 (φ = **-.475**, p = .031, N = 16), 5 (φ = **-.477**, p = .026, N = 17), 7 (φ = **-.519**, p = .042, N = 12)
Total score of C5			2 (φ = **-.481**, p = .03, N = 16), 6 (φ = **-.539**, p = .044, N = 11)		5 (rege tendency)	7 (φ = **-.649**, p = .011, N = 12)

Appendix 3

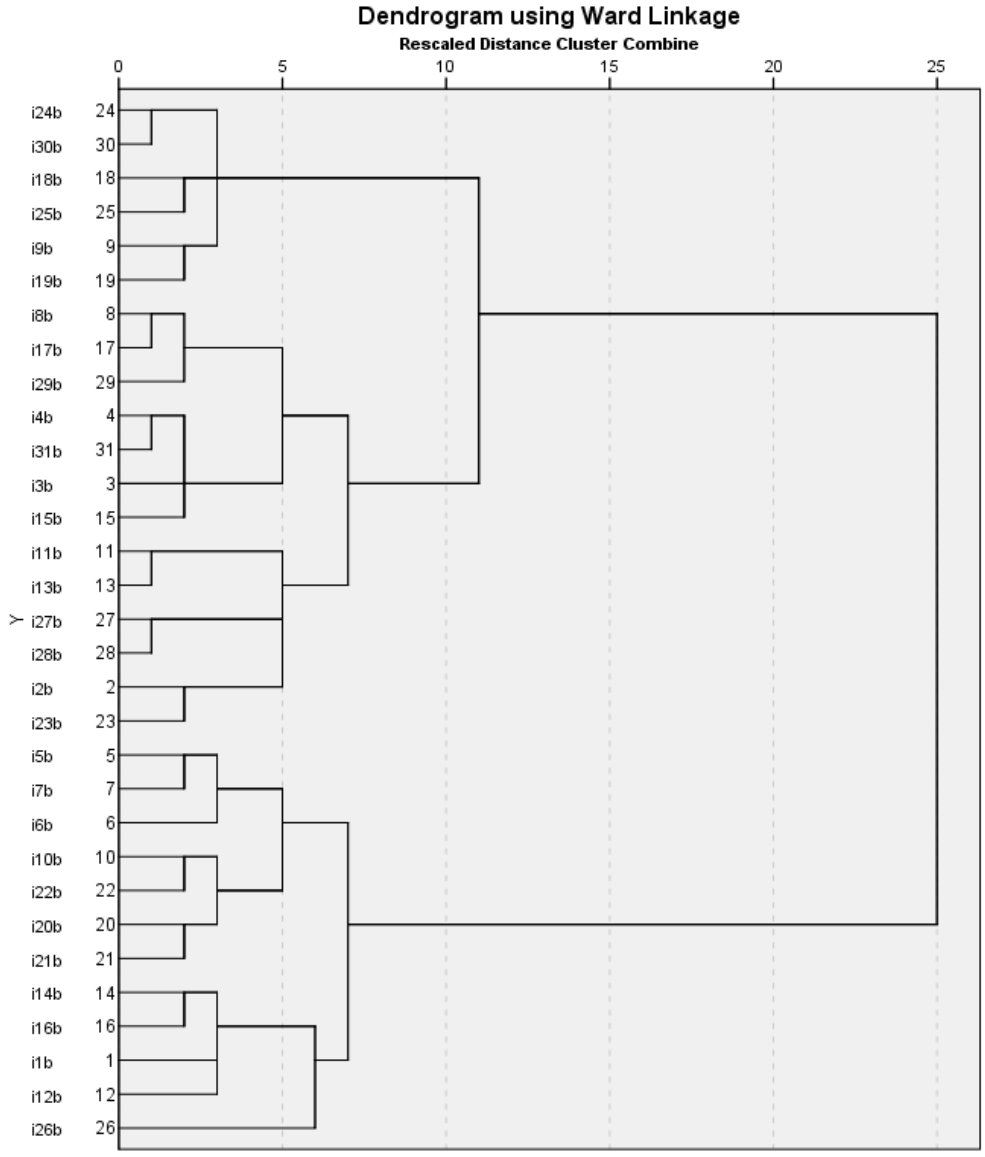

Figure 1

Dendrogram for the hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items, using squared Euclidean distance with Ward's method

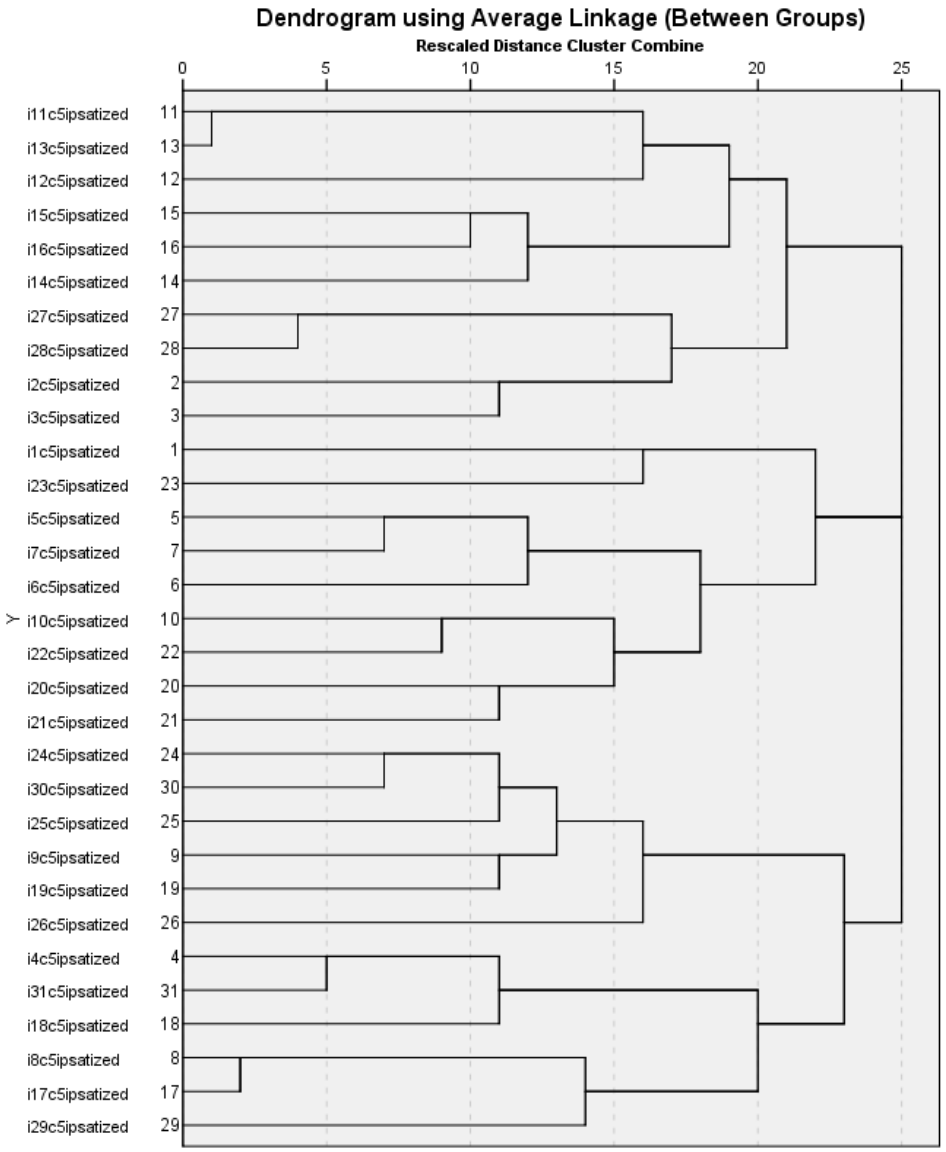

Figure 2

Dendrogram for the hierarchical cluster analysis for the C5 items (ipsatized scores) using Pearson correlation as a measure for similarity with the method of Between-groups linkage