ABSTRACT

Daily life provides ample opportunities to gain financially by behaving unethically. Interestingly, people sometimes lie a lot, sometimes lie just a bit, and sometimes refrain from lying altogether. What determines however, the extent to which people lie knowing they cannot be caught? Using a simple task allowing people to lie anonymously to gain financially we found that the degree of lying depended on the extent to which people could justify their lies to themselves. People find value in private justifications for their lies, allowing them to lie for money while feeling honest.