Human desires range from basic needs to complex aspirations (Morsella, 2005). These desires emerge unconsciously and are refined through cognitive processes, forming the basis for our aspirations (Berridge, 2010). Achieving higher-order goals derived from these desires requires deliberate thought and robust decision-making (Hofmann et al., 2017). Studies show that achieving goals enhances happiness and fulfillment (Fujita, 2017; McCullough, 2003). However, conflicts arise when desires clash with goals or with each other. Most self-regulation research focuses on Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies (Henrich et al., 2010), limiting its global applicability and raising concerns about the universality of psychological theories. Cultural differences significantly shape perceptions, behaviors, desires, choices, and self-control, highlighting a gap in the literature.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Integrative theory of self-control.**

This theory involves two clusters: activation and exertion. The activation cluster, where desires e

Frequencies calculated for desire types and conflicting goal types. See figure 1 and figure 2.

**Hypothesis 1** Individuals from collectivist cultures (Nigeria) will experience higher or lower levels of desire-goal-conflict and higher desire and goal interconnectedness compared to individualistic cultures (Scotland).

**Hypothesis 2** Collectivist orientations, regardless of nationality, will experience higher or lower levels of desire-goal-conflict and higher desire and goal interconnectedness compared to individualistic cultures (Scotland).

**Methods**

**Design** A cross-sectional, correlational, and cross-cultural comparative study.

**Participants** 241 university students from Nigerian and Scottish universities, aged 18+, with diverse educational backgrounds.

**Recruitment** Advertisements, online platforms, snowball and convenience sampling.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria** Participants were 18+ and enrolled in Nigerian or UK universities, and are of Nigerian or Scottish cultural backgrounds.

**Procedure** Online surveys assessed desires, desire-goal conflict, interconnectedness, and cultural orientation.

**Measures** Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) Scale and Standardized Individualism-Collectivism Scale measured interconnectedness and cultural orientation. Desire types, conflicting goals, desire strength, and desire-goal conflict were assessed using Likert scales.

**Results** Frequencies calculated for desire types and conflicting goal types. See figure 1 and figure 2.

**Discussion**

Scottish participants exhibited higher desire strength, while Nigerian participants reported more desire-goal conflict, higher levels of goal and desire interconnectedness. Also, cultural orientation, regardless of nationality, influenced desire strength and desire-goal conflict. Horizontal-collectivism negatively predicted desire strength, vertical-collectivism positively predicted desire-goal conflict, and horizontal-individualism negatively predicted desire-goal conflict.

**Conclusion** Cultural orientations shape desire and desire-goal conflict experiences. Collectivist and individualistic cultures show distinct desire and goal dynamics, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive interventions in self-regulation studies.