

Sokić, Katarina; Korkut, Darija

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# The Influence of Impulsivity and Values on Impulsive Buying

*Katarina Sokić*

*EFFECTUS - College for Law and Finance*

*Darija Korkut*

*EFFECTUS - College for Law and Finance*

## Abstract

This study examined the influence of impulsivity and values orientations on impulsive buying tendencies on convenience sample from the City of Zagreb ( $N = 220$ , 56% women) using the Baratt impulsivity scale, Buying Impulsivity Scale, and Value Orientation Scale. Participants were between the ages 20 years and 55 years, and all were employed. As predicted, bivariate correlations showed that impulsive buying tendencies were positively related to attention, motor and non-planning impulsivity. In addition, the results revealed positive association between impulsive buying tendencies and hedonistic value orientation. Results of hierarchical regressions analyses showed that motor and non-planning impulsivity, but not attention impulsivity, positively predicted impulsive buying tendencies. Moreover, the multiple regression analysis has shown that impulsivity and values explained 35% of the variance in impulsive buying tendencies. The results are in line with the theoretical assumptions proposed that some aspects of impulsive behaviour are associated with utilitarian-hedonistic value orientation.

**Keywords:** impulsivity, value orientations, impulsive buying

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## Introduction

Impulsivity is a predisposition for rapid, unplanned reactions to internal and external stimuli, regardless of the negative consequences. Impulsive actions occur as a reaction to an individual's failure to resist the temptations of internal or external stimuli (e.g. Moeller et al., 2001; Stanford et al., 2009). Relationship between impulsivity and impulsive buying at first sight is clear. Namely, it is reasonable to assume that these two constructs have a positive association due to the impulsive tendencies that underlie them.

According to dominant models of impulsivity (e.g. BIS model, UPPS-P model), impulsivity is complex construct which includes different emotional, behavioral and cognitive components. UPPS model (Cyders et al., 2007; Sperry et al., 2016; Whiteside & Lynam, 2001) encompasses four dimensions of impulsivity: urgency (positive and negative), lack of premeditation, lack of perseverance and sensation seeking. Considering that UPPS model was derived from Five-Factor Model of Personality, Whiteside and Lynam (2001) found that sensation seeking is associated with high extraversion, lack of premeditation and lack of perseverance are related to low conscientiousness, and that negative urgency is associated with high neuroticism. Whiteside et al. (2005) reported that negative urgency and sensation seeking was related to pathological gambling. Sperry et al. (2016) found that all UPPS dimensions, with the exception of sensation seeking, were related to increased troublesome behaviour in daily life.

In this paper, we were focused on the BIS model of impulsivity (Patton et al., 1995). This model includes three dimensions of impulsivity: attention, motor and non-planning. Attention impulsivity reflects the inability to focus on the task and includes attention and cognitive instability. Motor impulsivity is a combination of quick and reckless action and inconsistent lifestyle. Non-planning impulsivity reflects a lack of self-control (planning and careful reflection) and lack of cognitive complexity (enjoyment of complex mental tasks). The study by Mao et al. (2018) which used BIS-11 as a measure of impulsivity, shown a positive association between impulsivity and neuroticism, and a negative association between impulsivity and self-control.

Values plays an important role in understanding consumer behavior. Values are the sources of both attitudes and behavior, and represent what people believe is important in their lives; they are the internal guidelines (guides) of human behaviour (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Values are the result of socialization, personal experiences and the environment and significantly affect the attitudes and behavior of the individual (Rohan & Zanna, 2001; Schwartz, 1996). One of the most commonly used value models is the Schwartz model (1992) which links values to Maslow's theory. The model emphasizes that values arise from the needs of the individual.

Authors dedicated to the study of values (e.g. Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992) consent that there are a number of universal values that all people have but the composition of values differs with respect to their significance to the individual. Differences are conditioned by the personality and the social environment in which the individual grows up and acts leading to different value systems.

According to Franc et al. (2002), values are grouped into three value orientations: conventional, self-realising and hedonistic. These authors emphasize that conventional value orientation is a protective factor of socialisation, while hedonist value orientation is a risk factor of different forms of maladaptive behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse. Hedonistic orientation includes thrill -seeking, stream towards comfortable life, striving for a high standard of living and seeking fun and excitement. It is positively related to disinhibition, construct similar to impulsivity,

which encompasses negative affects and problems of impuls control (Ljubin-Golub & Sokic, 2016). In contrast, conventional orientation includes educational aspiration, helping others and honesty and living in accordance with one's moral principles and negatively related to disinhibition (Ljubin-Golub & Sokic, 2016).

### *Impulsive buying*

Impulsive buying is characterized by a strong urge to buy something immediate (Rook, 1987). Predisposition to impulsivity buying can significantly impair quality of life because and lead to poorness and social disapproval.

Rock and Fisher's (1995) concept of impulsive buying was operationalized through Impulsive Buying Scale, shown that normative evaluation moderate relationship between impulse buying trait and consumers' buying behaviors. Concretely, this relationship is significant "only when consumers believe that acting on impulse is appropriate" (Rook & Fisher, 1995). In Rock's earlier work (Rook, 1987), this author defined impulsive buying as strong urge, which occurs suddenly, the characteristics of the impulsive buying are: spontaneous, absence of thinking, lack of planning, the influence of current feelings and recklessness and spur-of-the-moment decisions. As we can see, impulsive buying encompasses cognitive components (e.g. absence of thinking, lack of planning) as well as affective components (e.g., spontaneous, feelings, lack of self-control).

Impulsive buying is associated with personality traits, especially with Extraversion and Neuroticism (Bratko et al. 2013), Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Extraversion (Shahjehan & Qureshi, 2019), Conscientiousness, Honesty-Humility in women sample and Agreeableness in men (Sokic et al., 2019).

### *Literature review*

The relationship between impulsivity measured by the BIS, impulsive buying and values is intriguing but is not well explored and the current study aimed to examine the relationship between the different dimensions of impulsivity as indexed by the BIS-11, impulsive buying and value orientations. Previous research has shown that impulsivity is related to socially unacceptable behaviours like aggression (Houston et al., 2003) and destructive communication (Tan et al., 2017). Additionally, impulsivity traits correlated negatively with self-regulation (Hofmann et al., 2014). Impulsivity per se is a diagnostic criterion for a wide range of mental disorders including ADHD, borderline personality disorder, bulimia, antisocial personality disorder (APA, 2013) and therefore is expected to be unrelated to conventional and self-realization values.

### *The present study and hypotheses*

The aim of this study was to investigate relationships between impulsivity, values and impulsive buying. We consider that understanding these relationships can help clarify the mechanisms underlying the reckless and harmful consumer's decisions.

Consistent with Rock and Fisher's (1995) conceptualization of impulsive buying, and in line with previous research (e.g. Sokić and Ljubin-Golub; Bratko et al., 2013), we hypothesize that impulsive buying would be positively associated with attention, motor and non-planning impulsivity (Hypothesis 1).

Consistent with previous findings (Ljubin-Golub & Sokic, 2016) and conceptualization of values (Franc et al., 2002) we predict a positive association between impulsive buying and hedonistic value orientation and negative association between impulsive buying and conventional values (Hypothesis 2).

## Methodology

### *Participants and procedure*

In this research we used convenience sample ( $N = 220$ , 56% women). Participants were at the age of 20 and 55 years ( $M_{age} = 26.07$ ,  $SD = 7.14$ ). Most of them were married (65%) and employed (92%). All participants were informed about nature of the study and they participated on a voluntary basis.

### *Measures*

Impulsivity was measured by the Baratt impulsivity scale (BIS-11; Patton et al., 1995). This questionnaire is a 4-point Likert-type scale and consists of 30-item which assess attention (e.g. I don't "pay attention", I "squirm" at plays or lectures, I often have extraneous thoughts when thinking), motor (e.g. I change jobs, I act on the spur of the moment, I buy things on impulse), and non-planning (e.g. I say things without thinking, I am more interested in the present than the future) impulsivity.

Values were measured using Value Orientation Scale (VOS; Franc et al., 2002) which consists of 18 items grouped into three value orientations: conventional (5 items), self-realising (6 items) and hedonistic (7 items). The VOS is five-point Likert scale (from 1 = not important at all to 5 = very important).

Impulsive buying was measured by the Impulsive Buying Scale (IBS; Rook & Fisher, 1995). This seven-point Likert scale consists of nine items (e.g. I buy things according to how I feel at the moment, I often buy things spontaneously, I carefully plan most of my purchases).

## Results

### *Descriptive statistic*

Result of descriptive statistic are presented in Table 1. Alpha coefficient scores as indicator of internal reliabilities are adequate for all scales (in a range from .67 to .89).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and internal consistency values

#### **Descriptive statistics and internal consistency values of BIS-11, VOS and IBS for all sample (N = 220)**

	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Sk</b>	<b>Ku</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
<b>BIS-11</b>					
<b>Attentional impulsivity</b>	16.82	3.37	0.44	0.39	.67
<b>Motor impulsivity</b>	21.31	3.92	0.45	0.94	.71
<b>Non-planning impulsivity</b>	22.67	4.22	-0.08	-0.38	.72
<b>Values Orientations</b>					
<b>Conventional</b>	25.16	3.05	-0.55	0.19	.78
<b>Self-realization</b>	22.67	2.06	-1.27	1.68	.80
<b>Hedonistic</b>	26.20	4.35	-0.26	0.87	.76
<b>Impulsive buying</b>	25.87	6.65	0.39	-0.13	.89
<b><math>\alpha</math> = Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math>. Sk - skewness, Ku - kurtosis.</b>					

Source: Authors' work

Additionally, results of all scales showed adequate range. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2014), skewness and kurtosis scores were acceptable (i.e. in a range from -2 to + 2).

### *Correlation and regression analyses*

Pearson's correlation coefficients are displayed in Table 2. Intercorrelations between impulsivity scales are low to moderate (from .30 between attention and non-planning impulsivity to .48 between attention and motor impulsivity) which is in line with earlier findings (e.g. Gatner et al., 2016; Sokić and Ljubin-Golub, 2019).

Values orientations scale demonstrated low to moderate intercorrelations (from .20 between conventional and hedonistic values to .55 between conventional and self-realization values).

As predicted, impulsive buying is positively associated with attention, motor and non-planning impulsivity.

In line with hypotheses, impulsive buying showed a positive association with hedonistic values, but not a negative association with conventional values.

Table 2

Pearson's correlation coefficients

**Table 2 Pearson's correlation coefficients (N= 220).**

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
<b>1. Attention impulsivity</b>	-	<b>.48**</b>	<b>.30**</b>	<b>-.23**</b>	<b>-.13*</b>	<b>.17**</b>	<b>.28**</b>
<b>2. Motor impulsivity</b>		-	<b>.31**</b>	<b>-.13*</b>	<b>-.05</b>	<b>.19**</b>	<b>.54**</b>
<b>3. Non-planning impulsivity</b>			-	<b>-.15*</b>	<b>-.18**</b>	<b>-.04</b>	<b>.30**</b>
<b>4. Conventional v.o.</b>				-	<b>.55**</b>	<b>.20**</b>	<b>.02</b>
<b>5. Self-realization v.o.</b>					-	<b>.27**</b>	<b>.07</b>
<b>6. Hedonistic v.o.</b>						-	<b>.16**</b>
<b>7. Impulsive buying</b>							-

**Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$**

Source: Authors' work

Results of multiple regression analyses (Table 3) shown that hedonistic values and motor and non-planning impulsivity positively predicted impulsive buying.

As we have seen, predictors explained 35% of the variance in impulsive buying. Values orientations entered in Step 2 explained 6% of the variance in impulsive buying, thus partially confirming Hypothesis 2.

The impulsivity components accounted for 29% of unique predictive variance beyond values. As expected, motor and non-planning impulsivity but not attention impulsivity, were positive predictors of impulsive buying, partially confirming Hypothesis 1. However, the positive relationship between impulsive buying and hedonistic value orientation becomes non-significance after adding impulsivity dimensions. This result suggests that the positive relationship between impulsive buying and hedonistic values we can attribute to the overlap hedonistic values with impulsivity.

Table 3  
Multiple hierarchical regressions

Multiple hierarchical regressions predicting impulsive buying from the impulsivity and values (N = 220).								
Criterion	Predictors		$\beta$	<i>t</i>	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	<i>F</i>	Change $R^2$
Impulsive buying	<b>Step 1</b>				.04**	.04**	5.48**	
		Gender	.21	3.22**				
		Age	-.09	-1.36				
	<b>Step 2</b>				.08*	.06*	4.27**	.04**
		Gender	.24	3.58**				
		Age	-.05	-.74				
		Conventional v.o.	-.07	-.98				
		Self-realization v.o.	.04	.46				
		Hedonistic v.o.	.20	2.93**				
	<b>Step 3</b>				.37**	.35**	17.34**	.29**
		Gender	.18	3.21**				
		Age	-.18	-.32				
		Conventional v.o.	.03	.45				
		Self-realization v.o.	.08	1.30				
		Hedonistic v.o.	.06	1.14				
		Attention impulsivity	.06	1.02				
	Motor impulsivity	.46	7.50**					
	Non-planning impulsivity	.14	2.47*					

**Note: Standardized beta coefficients are presented.  $R^2$  = coefficient of determination. Adj.  $R^2$  = Adjusted  $R^2$ . Change  $R^2$  = change for impulsivity dimensions entered in a separate step after controlling for gender, age and values.**  
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

Source: Authors' work

## Discussion

The main goal of this study was to explore relations between impulsive buying, impulsivity and values. Results of correlation analyses are partially confirmed our hypotheses. As predicted, at a bivariate level, impulsive buying was positively associated with all impulsivity dimensions. These results are expected and logical because Rock's construct of impulsive buying is based on behavioural, cognitive and emotional features of impulsivity. Therefore, impulsive buying and impulsivity are partially overlapping constructs underlying similar psychological mechanisms. First, these are lack of impulse control, impaired affect regulation and behavioral restraint. As expected, impulsive buying was positively related to hedonistic values. This result is in line with the conceptualization of hedonistic value orientations (Franc et al., 2002) as values characterized by thrill seeking, aspiring towards comfortable life, striving for a high standard of living and seeking fun and excitement.

In addition, our result is in line with the previous finding, which shown positive associations of all BIS-11 scales, and hedonistic values but only in women sample (Ljubin-Golub & Sokic, 2016). In this study, we did not investigate gender differences between examined variables, which should be done in future research.

As expected, hedonistic values were found to be positively related to impulsive buying and explained 4% of the variance. Contrary to our hypotheses, conventional value was an insignificant predictor of impulsive buying. Impulsivity dimensions



explained an additional 29% of variance over the values, with values becoming insignificant.

Our results suggest that impulsivity dimensions (especially motor and non-planning impulsivity), outperformed the values and are more relevant to impulsive buying than values. Although impulsive buying is partly explained by impulsivity dimensions and value orientations, a large amount of the variance in impulsive buying (i.e. 65%) remains unexplained, suggesting that other factors are also important. Among such factors, the environmental/contextual factors probably some of the most influential.

## Conclusion and practical implications

The current study showed that some aspect of impulsivity (e.g. motor and non-planning dimensions of this construct) have a very important role in understanding impulsive buying tendencies. In addition, hedonistic values significantly predicted impulsive buying. Gender was explained a significant amount of variance in impulsive buying, thus future research should explore the role of gender in relations between examined variables. Overall, this study can help us to better understanding impulsive buying which stand important role in consumer behaviour and is becoming a growing problem in today's society.

### *Limitations and further implications*

The first limitation of this work is the use of self-report measures given the impact of shared method variance. The use of a convenience sample may not exhibit the full range of impulsivity. Therefore, future studies should also use general population samples and clinical and incarcerated samples. To the better understanding of the relationship between examined variables, future research needs to include other impulsive buying measures, which include different cognitive and affective aspects of impulsive buying. Likewise, consideration should be given using behavioral tasks for measuring both, impulsivity and impulsive buying. In addition, future research should be conducted with control of sociodemographic variables such as monthly income, marital status and educational level.

As we mentioned above, the results showed that a large amount of the variance in impulsive buying remains unexplained, thus, future research should explore the role of regret, depression, anxiety, stress, but also other emotions in the context of impulsive buying.

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## About the authors

Katarina Sokić works as a senior lecturer at the EFFECTUS College for Law and Finance in Zagreb. She graduated at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law. At the same faculty, she received her MA degree in a civil law. She got her PhD in Psychology from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In his research work, she mainly deals with psychology of individual differences and personality psychology. Author can be contacted at email: [ksokic@effectus.com.hr](mailto:ksokic@effectus.com.hr).

Darija Korkut works as a senior lecturer at EFFECTUS College for Law and Finance in Zagreb. She graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She is a doctoral student (ABD) of Information Society at the Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto, Slovenia. Her research interests are creativity, innovation, analytical management, critical thinking, and behavioural economics. She has authored books in domains of social network analysis, game theory, competitive analysis, and creativity. Author can be contacted at email: [dkorkut@effectus.com.hr](mailto:dkorkut@effectus.com.hr).