

## Time and impulsivity – the interconnected psychological phenomena

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*This article tries to explain basic factors underlying the interconnection between impulsivity (with the emphasis on its apparent characteristics) and time perspective theory (with the emphasis on hedonism and fatalism). It has been reported in many studies that time perspective is an underlying concept that can describe and explain the bottom-line mechanism underlying impulsive behavior. Moreover, the time perspective theory is continually becoming far more known theory trying to describe of human performing in complexity. Thus, its relevance to impulsivity is strengthened.*

*key words: theory of time perspective, present fatalism, present hedonism, impulsivity.*

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### **Introduction**

Time has been fruitfully studied concept ever since an article illuminating and describing mechanisms through which it operates in our mind by Gonzales and Zimbardo was published (Gonzales& Zimbardo, 1985). Although there are still plenty of questions to be answered that have not been answered yet (e.g., what does the time have to do with our physiological correlates or how many components is necessary to establish psychometrically strong theory?), theory of time perspective has been becoming the more and more appreciated socially constructed human behavior related theory.

### **Impulsivity and clinical populations**

Thus, like any other models striving for recounting mechanisms underlying human psyche, this concept which labels itself as inborn and relatively consistent structure, is a part of many other studies that try to describe multifaceted psychological operations related to performing of

individual in healthy participants and clinical patients as well (Alvos, Gregson, & Ross, 1993; Willis, Sandy, & Yaeger, 2001; Zimbardo, Keough, & Boyd, 1997). When it comes to clinically treated populations, drug addictions, aggressive behavior, health undermining behavioral tendencies and problems pertaining to sexual promiscuity, all of that is interconnected together from the point of one common problem – high level of impulsivity.

### **Impulsivity and time**

Even though time perspective theory has been well described and, therefore, is well-known to readers, basic definition is still necessary. Time perspective theory is described in terms of its factors. Past (positive and negative), present (fatalistic and hedonistic) and future (unidimensional aspect) all operates as interrelated facets which uncover throughout diverse social situations which serve as triggers of particular psychological functioning and peculiar behavior (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999).

When it comes to impulsivity, many of us know how it operates within socially and personally anchored situations. People who describe themselves as impulsive (be it inventories, questionnaires or other behavioral scales) are usually perceived as unable to wait for a moment in situations that requires them to be patient. They have problems of resisting offensive forms of behavior, go to the great extension to threaten their or other people`s physical and psychological health or do not recognize the benefits that long-lasting patience and suppressing impulses would bring to them. Of greatest importance, inability to resist temptation is the most salient facet of most people who face the above described problems, treated or not treated (see picture 1).



**Picture 1.** *depicts woman which would probably (we cannot say for sure) score high on impulsivity scale. That means, she is usually unable to resist temptation and delay gratification.*

### **How does the time project onto the impulsivity?**

Two major factors of time perspective theory must be taking into account when trying to comprehend the association between it and impulsivity. The present fatalism and the present hedonism, as supported by many studies on risky behavior, have been immensely joint to impulsivity. Of course, there are two absolutely different mechanisms associated with both of them (Willis et al., 2001).

Fatalism: people who are high on fatalism usually do not believe their effort is enough to change anything and has no impact on the course their destinies will take. They are referred to as people who score high on external locus of control and do not possess intrinsic motivation. No matter which conditions their beliefs stem from, they are usually wiling to undertake many risky behavior (sexual intercourse without using preservation, driving car while saliently exceed speed limit, etc.)

Hedonism: it is important to note that hedonistic people show the same behavioral missteps as those mentioned earlier (fatalistic individuals). Even though courses of actions and their impact might be totally identical when compared with previous time perspective factor, there are different reasons underlying their behavior. The present hedonists are not desperate or weak individuals. All they want to do is to have funny times. According to time perspective theory, hedonists are people who attract attention of many people and they have many strong positions in groups. They approach every day as being their last one and accommodate their repertoire of behavior to that. These people usually wear a smile on their faces, want to be a friend, spend a lot of money for buying unnecessary things and pay for friends in restaurants. They simply enjoy being with other people. The best illustration of this kind of persons we can see on celebrities, sportsmen and sportswomen, actor and actress who are well-known for their desire to be seen and heard.

### **Conclusion**

This article tried to explain basic factors underlying the interconnection between impulsivity (with the emphasis on its apparent characteristics) and time perspective theory (with the emphasis on hedonism and fatalism). It has been reported in many studies that time perspective is underlying concept that can describe and explain the mechanism underlying impulsive behavior. The time perspective theory is continually becoming far more known theory trying to describe of human performing in complexity.

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**Introductory picture [online] and picture 1 [online] were downloaded [2014-09-11] on WWW:**

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