



# International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

## Self-Identity as a Trigger for Impulsive Buying of Hot Wheels Collectors

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### ABSTRACT.

Entering 2025, Indonesian society is currently facing a stressful economic situation. Purchasing power continues to weaken, making it difficult for many people to meet their daily needs, let alone purchase items beyond basic necessities. This phenomenon is interesting because it contrasts with the behavior of the Hot Wheels collector community, who remain active in purchasing Hot Wheels, even impulsively. This behavior is important to study because it shows that psychological factors, particularly self-identity, can be more dominant than economic pressures in driving consumer behavior. This study aims to determine the relationship between self-identity and Impulsive Buying. This study used a quantitative method with a snowball sampling technique, involving 385 Hot Wheels collector respondents in Indonesia. The analysis results showed that self-identity has a significant relationship with Impulsive Buying ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ). This finding confirms that self-identity can drive Impulsive Buying behavior even in difficult economic conditions.

**Keywords:** Self-Identity, Self-Control, Impulsive Buying, Hotwheels, Collectors

### INTRODUCTION

Entering the year 2025, the Indonesian people are faced with increasingly pressurized conditions. Purchasing power continues to weaken, making it difficult for many people to meet their daily needs, let alone to buy goods beyond basic necessities. The weakening of purchasing power is expected to continue haunting the Indonesian economy throughout 2025 (Lazuardi, 2025). Although the government stated that the occurrence of deflation is one form of success in controlling prices of several commodities, the reality on the ground shows a different picture. The decline is more due to the low ability of the people to consume (Sahal, 2025). One of the causes of the decline in purchasing power in Indonesia is that 14,000 formal workers lost their jobs. This situation has resulted in a reduction in sources of income, leading to a significant decrease in people's purchasing power (Setyawan, 2025).

A unique phenomenon that contradicts the aforementioned reports has emerged among collectors. Hot Wheels is one of the popular toy brands that has successfully attracted attention and has a wide fan base from various backgrounds, ranging from children to adults (Rachmadi, 2023). The miniature toy cars, which were once only viewed as children's playthings, have now shifted in meaning to become high-value collectibles. The detailed designs and the presence of limited editions make Hot Wheels highly sought after by Hot Wheels collectors, including in Indonesia, where its existence is no longer seen merely as a toy, but rather as a valuable collectible item (Utama & Maulana, 2025).

Based on the results of a preliminary survey conducted on 25 Hot Wheels collectors, a real example can be seen in the Hot Wheels R34 Fast & Furious edition of Brian O'Connor where the official price is only Rp60,000, but in the collector's market, it can reach Rp150,000 per piece. Similarly, the Hot Wheels Team Transport Porsche RWB, which has a retail price of Rp300,000, surged to Rp900,000, along with many other limited editions whose prices have more than doubled, yet are still sought after by collectors. Additionally, 64% of Hot Wheels collectors are predominantly from the lower to middle-income worker group, one reason they often buy Hot Wheels is because their self-identity is tied to being Hot Wheels collectors. This phenomenon shows that the appeal of Hot Wheels lies not only in the quality of the products but also in their stories and exclusivity. This is in contrast to the research conducted by (Indrianawati & Soesatyo, 2015) which states that income levels have a positive and significant impact on consumption levels. This study aims to understand more deeply how self-identity as a collector can influence impulsive buying. Hot Wheels collectors do not only buy diecasts as a hobby, but also as part of self-expression and social status within their community.

According to Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), Impulsive Buying is a spontaneous, unplanned buying behavior triggered by emotional urges resulting from external stimuli. Rook and Gardner (1993) add that impulsive purchases occur without rational consideration and are often accompanied by strong emotions such as excitement, momentary satisfaction, or an escape from stress. Meanwhile, Solomon and Rabolt (2009) emphasize that this behavior usually arises due to sudden emotional pressures that are difficult to control, leading consumers to make immediate purchases without planning or evaluating alternatives. According to Verplanken and Herabadi (2001), impulsive buying is influenced by several key factors, namely: the marketing environment, the consumer situation, and personal characteristics. (Dawson and Kim, 2009) added three internal factors: impulsive tendencies,

psychological conditions, and normative evaluation. Meanwhile, (Loudon and Bitta, 2002) emphasized product characteristics, marketing strategies, and consumer characteristics. According to (Verplanken and Herabadi, 2001), impulsive buying consists of two main aspects, namely cognitive and affective. The cognitive aspect indicates a low level of planning or rational consideration before making a purchase, leading to decisions arising spontaneously without alternative evaluation.

In contrast, the affective aspect relates to emotional urges such as pleasure or attraction to the product, which often drives individuals to purchase without self-control, even though it may later lead to regret. (Zahden and Ristiani, 2012) state that identity reflects an individual's awareness in positioning themselves and giving meaning to their existence. A strong identity makes a person more confident in carrying out their social roles. Conversely, according to (Santrock, 2003), failure to form an identity can lead to identity confusion, which is confusion in planning for the future and adjusting social roles. (Reed, 2012) adds that self-identity is the label or category that individuals use to define themselves, which then influences the way they think, feel, and act. (Fuhrman and Dolaba, 1990) explain that self-identity is influenced by environmental conditions and individual aspects, such as democratic parenting that provides space for children to express themselves, the presence of role models used for identification, and environmental homogeneity that facilitates direction in life. (Santrock, 2003) adds that parenting styles play an important role: democratic patterns encourage identity achievement, authoritarian tends to produce identity foreclosure, while permissive leads to identity diffusion. In addition, cultural and ethnic identities also have an influence, where strong ethnic awareness supports positive attitudes towards oneself and other groups. According to (Reed, 2012), there are five aspects of self-identity. Identity salience indicates how prominent an identity is in the self-concept and its influence on attitudes and behaviors. Identity association relates to the emotional or symbolic connection a person has with a category of identity, for example, as a collector. Identity relevance emphasizes that behavior, including consumption, is influenced by the relevance of identity to a specific context. Identity verification describes an individual's need to ensure that their identity aligns with their ideal self-image and is recognized by others. Lastly, identity conflict explains the existence of multiple identities within an individual that may sometimes be in conflict with each other.

Research on Impulsive Buying has been extensively conducted in various contexts, such as online shopping, beauty products, and credit services. (Asri, 2025) found that self-identity does not impact Impulsive Buying among students at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, whereas (Batistuta, 2022) reported that self-concept does influence Impulsive Buying among female students at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang during the pandemic. Furthermore, (Fadillah, 2024) found that self-control can suppress the desire to engage in Impulsive Buying among young adult individuals who play online games. Based on these differing findings, this study aims to explore how self-identity as a collector influences Impulsive Buying, thereby providing new insights into the development of consumer psychology research.

This research aims to gain a deeper understanding of how self-identity as a collector can influence impulsive buying. Research on impulsive buying is important to investigate, because if this phenomenon is allowed to go unexamined, its impact can become widespread. From an economic perspective, vulnerable groups are at risk of experiencing wastefulness that disrupts family financial stability. The negative impacts of impulsive buying include increased spending, emerging financial problems, disruption of non-financial plans, and feelings of disappointment from excessive purchases (Tinarbuko, 2006). Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is whether there is a positive relationship between self-identity and impulsive buying, meaning that the higher the self-identity, the higher the impulsive buying behavior. Conversely, the lower the self-identity, the lower the impulsive buying.

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## METHOD

This research is designed to explore the influence of self-identity on Impulsive Buying behavior among Hot Wheels collectors in Indonesia, with the aim of understanding the psychological mechanisms behind consumptive behavior in the context of collecting hobbies. In this study, the dependent variable measured is Impulsive Buying behavior, while the independent variable is self-identity. The research population consists of Hot Wheels collectors, and the number of research subjects is 385, selected with specific criteria to ensure the relevance and validity of the data. The participant criteria include individuals who actively purchase Hot Wheels primarily for personal collection purposes, not merely as toys for children or relatives. Additionally, participants have collections that are stored as part of their hobby, without a minimum ownership limit, and they are actively involved in various activities related to collecting, such as buying, trading, hunting for special editions, and participating in collector communities both online and face-to-face.

The sampling technique used is snowball sampling, where the researcher starts with a number of collectors as initial respondents, and then asks them to recommend other collectors who meet the study criteria. This strategy allows the researcher to reach a dispersed and hard-to-access population directly. The distribution of the questionnaire is conducted through two approaches, namely online and offline. The online method includes sending through personal messages, WhatsApp community groups, and specific Facebook forums for Hot Wheels collectors. Meanwhile, the offline method is carried out through gathering activities or in-person meetings of collectors. In addition, the researcher involves fellow collectors to disseminate the questionnaire link to their networks, resulting in a total of 385 respondents from various regions in Indonesia, providing adequate representation of the collector population.

The research instrument consists of two main scales: the Impulsive Buying Scale and the Self-Identity Scale. The Impulsive Buying Scale was developed based on the theory (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001), which divides impulsive behavior into two aspects, namely cognitive and affective. Construct validity testing was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), with item correlation coefficients ranging from 0.571 to 0.717. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.838 indicates that this scale has good and consistent reliability for use in research. Each item in this scale is designed to capture the cognitive and emotional tendencies of individuals in making impulsive purchases.

The Self-Identity Scale was developed based on the theory (Reed et al., 2012) and consists of five main aspects, namely Identity Salience, Identity Association, Identity Relevance, Identity Verification, and Identity Conflict. The results of the construct validity test through CFA indicate that the

correlation coefficients between items range from 0.478 to 0.866, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.913, indicating very high reliability. This scale uses a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (STS) to Strongly Agree (SS), with items arranged in both favourable and unfavourable forms to minimize social response bias. The design of this scale allows for a comprehensive measurement of individual identity as a collector, including how they perceive, feel, and express that identity in the context of collecting hobbies.

Data analysis was conducted using simple regression analysis to test the relationship between self-identity as an independent variable and Impulsive Buying as a dependent variable. Before hypothesis testing, checks were carried out for parametric statistical assumptions such as normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance, to ensure the data's suitability with the analytical techniques used. All analyses were processed using SPSS for Windows version 26, which facilitates the calculation of regression coefficients, significance of relationships, and precise interpretation of results. This approach allows the research to empirically assess the influence of self-identity on Impulsive Buying behavior, while also providing a deep understanding of the psychological internal factors that drive consumer behavior in collector communities.

With this methodological design, the research not only emphasizes the simple relationships between variables but also considers the social, psychological, and collective behavioral contexts that shape impulsive drives, ensuring that the results can provide relevant scientific contributions to the study of consumer behavior psychology, particularly in the context of collection hobbies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before conducting data analysis, a series of assumption tests are carried out as a prerequisite for the use of parametric or non-parametric statistics. The normality assumption test with residual values of Impulsive Buying based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov calculations shows a p-value of 0.200 ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that the data is normally distributed. Next, the results of the linearity test between Self-Identity and Impulsive Buying show a significance value of 0.008 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a non-linear relationship. Based on the results of the assumption tests above, the only assumption that is not met is the linearity test, thus this study uses Non-Parametric statistics.

Table 1 illustrates the categorization of data for each research variable based on Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD). The categorization of this research data uses five categories: Very Low (VL), Low (L), Medium (M), High (H), and Very High (VH). This grouping is carried out to obtain a more detailed description of the distribution of levels for each variable among the 385 respondents involved in the study.

Table 1. Data Categorization

Variable	Impulsive Buying	Identity Self
Mean	30,90	64,77
SD	7,26	12,29
SR (%)	8,1%	7%
R (%)	24,2%	22,1%
S (%)	37,7%	38,2%
T (%)	22,6%	27%
ST (%)	7,5%	5,7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>385(100%)</b>	<b>385(100%)</b>

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are in the medium category for both the Impulsive Buying variable (37.7%) and self-identity (38.2%). In the Impulsive Buying variable, the distribution of respondents is quite even, with 24.2% in the low category, 22.6% in the high category, and a small portion in the very low (8.1%) and very high (7.5%) categories. Meanwhile, for the self-identity variable, in addition to the most dominant medium category (38.2%), there are 27% of respondents in the high category, 22.1% in the low category, and only a few in the very low (7%) and very high (5.7%) categories. These findings indicate that, in general, the levels of Impulsive Buying and self-identity among collectors are at an intermediate level with a significant tendency towards the high category.

Table 2 presents information regarding the duration or length of time respondents have spent collecting Hot Wheels. This data provides an overview of how extensive the respondents' experience as collectors is, which can reflect their level of attachment, consistency, as well as intensity in engaging in the collecting activity. This information is also important for understanding the background of the respondents, as the length of collecting experience can influence behavior patterns, motivations, and tendencies in making impulsive purchases.

Table 2. Duration of Collecting Hotwheels

Duration of Collecting Hotwheels	Amount	Percentage
1 Bulan - 6 Bulan	37	10%
6 Bulan - 1 Tahun	74	19%
1 Tahun - 3 Tahun	116	30%
3 Tahun - 5 Tahun	43	11%
Diatas 5 Tahun	115	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the majority of respondents have experience collecting Hot Wheels in the range of 1–3 years (30%) and over 5 years (30%). This indicates the presence of two dominant groups, namely relatively new collectors and those who have been engaging in this hobby for a long time. Others are dispersed in the categories of 6 months to 1 year (19%), 3–5 years (11%), as well as the group that has just started collecting within the period of 1–6 months (10%). Overall, these findings depict the diversity of experience levels among respondents, from beginners to experienced collectors, which could potentially influence the intensity and patterns of impulsive buying behavior.

The results of the simple regression analysis indicate that the relationship between self-identity and Impulsive Buying is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) and a positive direction of the relationship. This reaffirms that the higher the self-identity score an individual has, the greater their tendency to engage in impulsive buying. Conversely, individuals with low self-identity tend to exhibit lower levels of Impulsive Buying. These findings suggest that self-identity is not merely a psychological dimension that serves to reinforce the stability and consistency of one's identity, as described by Erikson (1968), but can also be a factor that triggers consumer behavior when that identity is strongly linked to certain roles or communities. In the context of Hot Wheels collectors, a strong self-identity reflects a strong attachment to the status of being a collector, which drives impulsive buying behavior as a form of self-expression and validation of identity within their social environment.

Psychologically, this finding emphasizes that self-identity as a collector plays a central role in motivating impulsive buying behavior. For individuals who have internalized their identity as a 'true collector,' the act of buying is not only seen as an economic activity, but also as a means to express oneself, assert existence, and strengthen psychological position within the collector community. In other words, impulsive buying is driven not only by momentary emotional impulses such as excitement or stress that one wants to relieve immediately, but also by the need to maintain and assert social and psychological identity. The stronger an individual's attachment to the collector identity, the greater the likelihood of spontaneous purchases, even when those purchases are unplanned or do not fall within primary needs.

This phenomenon is in line with research (Iyer et al., 2020), which states that Impulsive Buying behavior is not solely influenced by situational factors such as promotions, discounts, or store layouts, but also by internal factors related to self-identity. Identity gives personal meaning to the products purchased, so the act of buying can be seen as a form of self-affirmation. In the context of Hot Wheels collections, the items bought are not just physical products, but symbols of emotional attachment, prestige, and social recognition within the community. These products become a representation of the collector's identity, and impulsive purchases serve as a strategy to assert status and self-existence both in one's own eyes and in the view of relevant social groups.

Furthermore, this finding shows that the impulsive behavior of collectors has complex symbolic and social dimensions. Purchases not only satisfy functional or entertainment needs, but also reflect a deep emotional involvement in the act of collecting. In many cases, the urge to buy impulsively arises as a form of internalization of the norms and values of the collector community, where owning limited editions or certain products becomes an indicator of loyalty, status, and identity recognized by fellow community members.

Overall, these findings make a significant contribution to the development of consumer psychology, particularly in the context of hobbies and collection communities. This research emphasizes the importance of considering internal psychological factors, such as self-identity, in analyzing consumer behavior, while also highlighting how impulsive purchasing can be understood as an expression of identity and emotional attachment. Thus, this research opens up opportunities for further studies that examine strategies for managing impulses and consumer behavior based on a deep understanding of self-identity in various hobby communities.

## CONCLUSION

This research aims to understand how self-identity influences Impulsive Buying behavior among Hot Wheels collectors in Indonesia, considering the role of self-control as a mediating variable. The focus of this research arises from the socio-economic phenomenon in 2025, where public purchasing power decreases, yet impulsive purchases within the collector community remain high. This situation provides an opportunity to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying consumptive behavior that seems to contradict the general economic conditions.

The research findings indicate a positive relationship between self-identity and impulsive buying behavior. This means that the stronger a person's identity as a collector, the greater the tendency to engage in impulsive purchases. These findings affirm that self-identity is not merely a psychological label but

also a significant driving factor in determining spontaneous purchasing decisions. The urge to buy impulsively is not only triggered by momentary emotions. This study found that such behavior is also related to self-expression, social existence reinforcement, and affiliation with collector communities. In other words, impulsive buying can serve as a way for individuals to assert their social position and demonstrate emotional attachment to their collection hobby. Theoretically, this study contributes new insights to the development of psychology, especially in understanding consumer behavior within collector hobby communities.

The urge to make impulsive purchases is not solely an economic decision, but also a manifestation of identity expression, emotional attachment, and social validation within collector groups. In conclusion, this research emphasizes the importance of considering internal psychological factors, such as self-identity, in the analysis of consumer behavior, in addition to situational factors. These findings open up opportunities for further research related to impulse management strategies based on the understanding of self-identity, and can serve as a foundation for developing psychological interventions for individuals with a tendency for impulsive buying in the context of hobbies or collections.

#### Advice

Based on the findings of this study, Hot Wheels collectors are expected to be more aware of and understand the psychological processes underlying their consumptive behavior. Understanding that impulsive purchases are often triggered by the urge to assert one's identity as a true collector can help individuals become more reflective and critical before making purchases. This awareness is particularly important in an increasingly challenging socio-economic context, where the ability to manage expenses becomes crucial. Collectors need to distinguish between purchases driven by genuine needs, purchases that are of long-term investment value, and purchases that merely fulfill momentary emotional urges. With this awareness, consumptive behavior can be better controlled without reducing satisfaction and attachment to the collecting hobby.

For the collector community, both those who interact through online forums and in face-to-face meetings, this research suggests strategic efforts to enhance collective awareness regarding the importance of self-control in consumer activities. The findings indicate that impulsive urges often stem from the need to assert one's identity as a collector. Therefore, the community can play an active role in shaping its members' perceptions of how collective and individual identities influence purchasing decisions. For example, the community could facilitate discussions or workshops that emphasize the relationship between collective identity, self-control, and consumer behavior. With this approach, community members can learn to manage buying impulses in a healthier way, maintain a balance between emotional satisfaction and financial responsibility, and build more sustainable collection practices.

For future researchers, this study opens up opportunities to explore additional psychological variables that may mediate or moderate the relationship between self-identity and impulsive buying. Although self-control in this study was not found to be a significant mediator, other psychological dimensions such as social comparison, fear of missing out (FOMO), and emotion regulation are believed to have important influences in the context of collecting behavior. Further research is also recommended to use a longitudinal design to track the dynamics of self-identity and self-control over time, and how changes in these two factors affect consumption patterns. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind Impulsive Buying in collector communities, while also providing a foundation for more targeted intervention strategies.

In addition, for policymakers and financial literacy institutions, the results of this research have practical implications in designing more contextual and psychological education programs. Financial literacy programs that only emphasize planning and fund management aspects may be less effective in preventing impulsive purchases, especially among collectors who have a high emotional attachment to their hobbies. Integrating an understanding of self-identity and strengthening self-control in educational materials can enhance individuals' ability to resist consumer impulses arising from internal psychological pressures, rather than solely from external factors or lack of planning. Policies and programs that combine psychological reflection, self-identity awareness, and impulse control techniques are believed to help collectors make wiser and more responsible purchasing decisions.

Overall, the proposed suggestions emphasize the importance of a holistic approach involving individuals, communities, and financial literacy policies to manage impulsive behavior in the context of collecting. By understanding the psychological roots of Impulsive Buying, individuals can develop internal strategies to resist fleeting urges, communities can guide healthy collecting practices, and institutions or public policies can create an environment that supports wise consumption management. This approach benefits not only individual financial well-being but also the sustainability of collecting hobbies as meaningful social and psychological activities.

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