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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58419

Title: Commercial Bank Transaction Charges and Financial Inclusion in Nigeria: Evidence from Customers\' Behavioural Perspectives

Recommendation:

Accept as it is ....

Accept after minor revision.................

Accept after major revision ....

Do not accept (*Reasons below*) ....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-002

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Overall Recommendation:

Major Revision

The manuscript addresses a timely and policy-relevant issue by examining how commercial bank transaction charges influence financial inclusion in Nigeria from customers' behavioural perspectives. The study integrates the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Consumer Behaviour Theory and employs a quantitative survey of 540 commercial bank customers. The topic is relevant for banking regulators, policymakers, and financial institutions, particularly in developing economies where financial inclusion remains a strategic objective. While the paper has several strengths, substantial revisions are necessary before it can be considered for publication.

The title accurately reflects the study's content, and the abstract clearly summarizes the objectives, methodology, findings, and practical implications. However, the manuscript contains several conceptual, methodological, statistical, and editorial issues that require careful attention. Although the literature review is comprehensive, it is overly descriptive and should provide stronger critical analysis. The authors should clearly explain how their study differs from previous research and emphasize the originality of their contribution. Several references cited are very recent (2025–2026) and should be verified to ensure they are published and accessible.

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The theoretical framework appropriately combines the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Consumer Behaviour Theory. Nevertheless, the manuscript would benefit from a clearer conceptual model illustrating the hypothesized relationships among transaction charges, awareness, perception, usage behaviour, and financial inclusion. Explicit hypotheses should also be formulated after the literature review rather than leaving readers to infer the expected relationships.

The methodology is generally appropriate. The use of a quantitative cross-sectional survey and multiple regression analysis aligns with the research objectives. However, the sampling procedure raises concerns regarding external validity. The combination of purposive and convenience sampling limits the representativeness of the findings and should be acknowledged more explicitly as a limitation. Although the sample size of 540 respondents is adequate, the manuscript provides insufficient information regarding respondents' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, income, education, occupation, and geographical distribution. These characteristics are essential for understanding the sample and improving the study's credibility.

The measurement section requires further improvement. While Cronbach's Alpha values are mentioned as exceeding 0.70, the actual reliability coefficients are not reported. The questionnaire items, scale development process, and sources of measurement should be presented more comprehensively. Since the study involves latent behavioural constructs, validity assessment through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) or Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) would considerably strengthen the measurement model.

The statistical analysis generally follows accepted procedures; however, some inconsistencies require clarification. The correlation analysis reports a positive relationship between transaction charges and financial inclusion, whereas the regression analysis shows a significant negative effect. Although this difference can occur due to multivariate adjustment, the manuscript should explicitly explain this apparent contradiction in the discussion section to avoid confusing readers.

Similarly, descriptive statistics reveal an exceptionally high mean score for financial inclusion (4.77 out of 5), indicating that respondents already exhibit very high financial inclusion despite reporting dissatisfaction with transaction charges. The authors should discuss this finding more critically and explain whether ceiling effects may have influenced the regression results.

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The regression model explains only 21.3% of the variation in financial inclusion ($R^2 = 0.213$). While acceptable in behavioural research, the authors should acknowledge that many other determinants of financial inclusion remain unexplained and suggest these variables for future research.

The discussion adequately compares findings with previous literature but remains largely confirmatory. Greater emphasis should be placed on explaining why the findings differ from some previous studies and what unique theoretical insights emerge from the Nigerian context. More discussion on policy implications for the Central Bank of Nigeria, commercial banks, and financial inclusion initiatives would also strengthen the practical contribution.

The conclusion appropriately summarizes the major findings and provides useful recommendations. Nevertheless, the recommendations could be more specific and actionable. For example, rather than recommending general transparency, the authors could propose standardized disclosure formats for transaction charges, fee caps for low-income customers, or targeted financial literacy programmes.

The manuscript also requires careful language editing. There are several formatting inconsistencies, spacing issues, repeated words (e.g., "Purpose: Purpose:" in the abstract), punctuation errors, inconsistent citation styles, and typographical mistakes throughout the paper. References should be carefully checked to ensure complete APA formatting consistency.