

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-58670

Title: Peer Pressure and Lifestyle Inflation: Analyzing the Impact of Social Comparison on Financial Behavior Among High School Students .

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-130

Detailed Reviewer's Report

1. Overall Evaluation

The manuscript addresses a relevant and contemporary topic in consumer behaviour by examining the influence of packaging attractiveness, scarcity marketing, social media exposure, and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on impulse buying behaviour. The study attempts to integrate visual, social, and psychological factors into a single consumer behaviour framework. The manuscript also connects the study with consumer psychology, social influence theory, behavioural economics, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. The manuscript is clearly structured and provides a detailed discussion of the research background, literature, methodology, findings, hypothesis testing, limitations, and recommendations. The findings indicate that social media exposure and FOMO have a statistically significant positive relationship with impulse buying behaviour, whereas packaging attractiveness and scarcity marketing do not show statistically significant relationships. However, the study has some important limitations. The sample is very small and includes respondents from 14 to 59 years, although the stated focus is on young adults. More than 60% of respondents are below 18 years. This creates a mismatch between the research population and the actual sample. The study also relies on self-reported data and some measurement scales have limited reliability. Overall, the manuscript has good academic and practical potential, but methodological improvements and stronger empirical validation are required.

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2. Strengths

2.1 Relevant and Contemporary Topic - The study focuses on impulse buying in the context of social media, FOMO, digital marketing, and visual branding. This is highly relevant to present-day consumer behaviour.

2.2 Clear Research Variables- The manuscript clearly identifies important factors affecting consumer behaviour:

- Packaging Design
- Visual Branding
- Scarcity Marketing
- Social Media Exposure
- FOMO
- Impulse Buying Behaviour

This provides a useful framework for studying digital consumer behaviour.

2.3 Good Theoretical Foundation - The manuscript uses concepts from consumer psychology, social influence theory, behavioural economics, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. The integration of external stimuli, psychological responses, and consumer behaviour provides a reasonable theoretical foundation.

2.4 Strong Literature Discussion - The literature review explains how packaging, visual branding, social media, and psychological factors can influence consumer decisions. The discussion provides a useful theoretical background for the proposed relationships.

2.5 Interesting Empirical Finding - One of the strongest findings is the significant positive relationship between social media exposure/FOMO and impulse buying behaviour. The reported correlation is $r = 0.346$ with $p = 0.013$, indicating a weak-to-moderate but statistically significant relationship.

2.6 Useful Interpretation of Packaging - Packaging attractiveness received the highest mean score of 4.02, indicating that respondents consider packaging important for product perception. However, its correlation with impulse buying was only $r = 0.063$, $p = 0.658$, showing that attractive packaging alone may not lead to impulse purchases. This distinction is useful and interesting.

2.7 Discussion of Non-Significant Findings - The manuscript does not simply ignore the non-significant results. It explains that scarcity marketing may create urgency but may not independently lead to impulse purchases.

2.8 Practical Recommendations - The recommendations relating to ethical packaging, responsible marketing, consumer awareness, financial decision-making, and digital literacy provide useful practical implications.

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3. Areas for Improvement

3.1 Sample Size Needs to Be Increased - The study has only 53 survey responses, which is quite small for drawing broader conclusions about consumer behaviour.

3.2 Target Population Needs to Be Clearly Defined - The research focuses on young adults, but respondents range from 14 to 59 years, with 62.3% below 18.

3.3 Sampling Method Should Be Improved - A larger and more representative sampling method would strengthen the study.

3.4 Strengthen Statistical Analysis - The study mainly relies on descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

3.5 Avoid Causal Interpretation - The study identifies relationships rather than cause-and-effect relationships. Therefore, statements such as “social media causes impulse buying” should be avoided. The findings should instead be described as “social media exposure and FOMO are significantly associated with impulse buying behaviour.”

3.6 Improve Reliability of Scales - The manuscript itself acknowledges that some scales showed limited reliability.

3.7 Strengthen the Hypothesis Development - The hypotheses should be more directly connected to the literature review. The theoretical reason for expecting each independent variable to influence impulse buying should be clearly explained.

3.8 Clarify FOMO as a Mediating Variable - The manuscript refers to FOMO as a mediating variable in the research framework. However, the analysis presented does not appear sufficient to establish mediation.

3.9 Discuss Non-Significant Relationships More Deeply - The non-significant relationship between packaging and impulse buying is an important finding and deserves greater theoretical explanation. Similarly, scarcity marketing showed a positive but non-significant relationship ($r = 0.228$, $p = 0.108$). The authors should explain whether scarcity works only when combined with social influence, FOMO, or other psychological factors.

3.10 Improve Generalisability - Because of the small sample and broad age distribution, the findings should be presented as exploratory findings rather than conclusions applicable to all young consumers.