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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL COMPARISON, MATERIALISM, AND NEGATIVE AFFECT ON IMPULSIVE BUYING WITH CONFIDENCE AS A MODERATING VARIABLE AMONG E-COMMERCE CONSUMERS IN JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

Impulsive buying behaviour has become a crucial topic in consumer research in the era of e-commerce growth in Jakarta and the rise of *paylater* services in Indonesia. This study aims to analyse the influence of social comparison, materialism, and negative affect on impulsive buying, with confidence as a moderating variable. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire from 230 respondents aged 18–30. After conducting reliability and validity tests, hypothesis testing was performed using PLS-SEM. The results show that five out of seven hypotheses are supported. Social comparison has a significant positive impact on materialism and negative affect but does not significantly affect impulsive buying. Furthermore, materialism was found to increase both negative affect and impulsive buying behaviour. The findings also indicate that negative affect does not have a significant impact on impulsive buying. Confidence successfully moderates the relationship between social comparison and both materialism and impulsive buying, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of confidence are more capable of resisting impulsive urges and are less influenced by social pressure. This study provides important insights for businesses to design more ethical and effective marketing strategies while helping consumers make wiser financial decisions.

Key-Words: - **Social comparison, Materialism, Negative affect, Impulsive buying, Confidence, E-commerce, Paylater, Jakarta**

INTRODUCTION

Impulse buying has become a significant topic in marketing research, especially with the rise of digital platforms and social media. Social comparison often encourages individuals to measure their achievements and possessions against others, driving a desire for material status. Previous studies indicate that social comparison is a key factor triggering materialistic behaviour, which, in turn, leads to impulsive buying [1]. Materialism, which emphasizes happiness through possessions, is prevalent in societies under high social pressure [2]. Additionally, social comparison not only influences materialism but also increases negative affect, such as anxiety and envy [3]. Individuals experiencing negative emotions often engage in impulsive buying to cope with unpleasant feelings [4]. Materialism itself has been linked to emotional stress, suggesting that individuals may turn to impulsive buying to alleviate negative emotions. The relevance of this behaviour is heightened in Indonesia, where e-commerce activity, including the use of *paylater* services, has surged. The Financial Services Authority (OJK) reported a drastic rise in *paylater* contracts, from 4.63 million in 2019 to 79.92 million in 2023 [5], indicating increasing consumer interest in such payment methods. This financial behaviour encourages impulsive buying as consumers feel compelled to purchase without careful financial planning. Despite the significance of impulsive buying, research on the moderating effect of confidence remains limited. Confidence may play a critical role in mitigating the influence of social comparison and materialism on impulsive buying, as stated that confidence moderated the connection between materialism and impulse buying through depression. It was explained that more customers who were confident were less hesitant to make purchase judgements independently and were less influenced by environmental influences, resulting in reduced depression and impulse buying. [6].

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Impulsive Buying

Impulse buying is a phenomenon where consumers make sudden purchases of goods or services without prior planning, often driven by emotional urges or environmental stimuli [7]. Consumers now increasingly value online reviews not only for their hedonic appeal but also for their utilitarian benefits, highlighting a shift in how impulsive behaviour aligns with practical considerations in decision-making [8].

2.2. Materialism

Materialism is defined as the value placed on acquiring and owning material possessions, driven by desires or needs, and the behaviours performed to achieve these outcomes [9]. Individuals with high materialistic values are more likely to engage in unplanned purchases, believing that acquiring new items can enhance their self-image or alleviate negative emotions [10]. Social factors, such as social comparison, also influence materialism, as consumers feel pressured to own certain items to match others or meet societal expectations. This pressure is amplified by social media, which constantly exposes individuals to others' lifestyles, reinforcing the idea that material possessions represent success and happiness.

2.3. Negative Affect

Negative affect refers to a broad concept encompassing various emotional distress, such as irritability, stress, guilt, shame, anger, anxiety, and other negative emotions [11]. Research suggests that negative affect can trigger compensatory behaviours, where individuals engage in impulse buying to alleviate unpleasant emotions or seek temporary relief [12]. The availability of accessible shopping platforms and promotional features designed to capture consumers' attention further encourages this behaviour. Negative affect is often linked to excessive consumption, as individuals use products to soothe themselves or escape uncomfortable feelings.

2.4. Social Comparison

Social comparison is the process by which individuals evaluate themselves by comparing their achievements, abilities, or possessions with those of others [13]. Increased access to others' lives through social media has intensified this behaviour, with upward comparisons often leading to negative emotions like dissatisfaction, while downward comparisons can boost self-esteem by making individuals feel superior [14].

2.5. Confidence

Confidence is defined as an individual's belief in their abilities, skills, and judgments to successfully handle situations or complete tasks [15]. [16] found that consumers often engage in impulsive buying when experiencing emotional distress, such as anxiety, stress, and disappointment. Consumers with low confidence are more likely to rely on external information to evaluate products, as they may feel incapable of making independent judgments.

2.6. The relationship between variables

2.6.1. The Relationship between Social Comparison and Materialism

[17] found that the higher the intensity of social comparison, the greater the tendency for individuals to develop materialistic values. Upward comparison, where individuals compare themselves with those considered more successful, can trigger envy, further reinforcing materialism [18]. [19] emphasized that social media amplifies social comparison and materialistic tendencies, especially among adolescents and young adults, as they are driven to achieve social parity through the acquisition of possessions.

H1: Social comparison has a positive impact on materialism.

2.6.2. The relationship between Social Comparison and Negative Affect

[20] demonstrated that online social comparison can negatively impact self-evaluation and increase distress levels. [21] found that negative affect plays a crucial role in amplifying the effects of upward social comparison in online communication, which also contributes to impulsive consumption

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behaviour. [22] emphasized that social comparison on social media platforms, particularly on Facebook, can trigger various emotional responses, including negative affect such as envy and anxiety.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

H2: There is a positive relationship between social comparison on negative affect

2.6.3. The relationship between social comparison and Impulsive Buying

Social comparison plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, particularly when individuals compare themselves with those who share similar characteristics. [23] emphasized that social comparison can shape consumer behaviour, especially in contexts where individuals feel socially aligned with their peers. [24] further highlighted that social comparison among peers encourages impulsive buying, particularly on digital platforms where consumers are exposed to others' purchases. [25] found that upward social comparison on image-sharing platforms triggers impulsive buying, with envy and self-esteem acting as mediators in this behaviour.

H3. Social comparison has a positive impact on impulsive buying.

2.6.4. The relationship between Materialism and Negative Affect

Previous research has shown that materialism is associated with various negative outcomes, such as decreased life satisfaction, lower marital satisfaction, excessive consumption, and reduced well-being. [26] highlighted that materialism can negatively affect mental health by increasing emotional distress and dissatisfaction. [27] found a positive relationship between materialism and depressive symptoms, though it remains unclear whether materialism causes depression or the reverse. [28] emphasized that passive engagement with social media promotes materialistic tendencies, which further exacerbates stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with life.

H4. Materialism has a positive impact on negative affect.

2.6.5. The relationship between Materialism and Impulsive buying.

[29] stated that highly materialistic consumers are more likely to purchase goods to strengthen their self-concept and enhance their social status. [30] emphasized that the relationship between materialism and impulsive buying is a prominent psychological phenomenon among young adults. [31] further highlighted that materialism significantly increases impulsive and excessive buying behaviour, suggesting that materialistic tendencies drive consumers toward unplanned purchases to satisfy emotional needs.

H5. Materialism has a positive impact on impulsive buying.

2.6.6. The relationship between Negative affect and Impulsive Buying

[32] emphasized that a negative mood encourages consumers to engage in impulsive buying to alleviate unpleasant emotions. [33] found that depression and dissatisfaction are positively associated with increased impulsive buying behaviour. [34] further revealed that negative emotions, such as anxiety and depression, significantly impact impulsive buying, with consumers often using unplanned purchases as a coping mechanism during emotionally stressful periods, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

H6. Negative affect has a positive impact on impulsive buying.

2.6.7. The Moderating Effect of Confidence

[35] identified confidence as a crucial element in consumer decision-making, where individuals with high confidence are more independent in making choices and less influenced by external information. Tran [36], who found that confidence moderates the relationship between impulsive buying and external information, as confident consumers are less susceptible to external influences, reducing impulsive purchasing behaviour. [37] further emphasized that consumers with low confidence tend to rely more heavily on external information, as they feel less capable of making product evaluations independently.

H7a. Confidence moderates the relationship between materialism and social comparison.

H7b. Confidence moderates the relationship between impulsive buying and social comparison.

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Based on the prior explanation, this study model is copied from [36], as illustrated in figure 1 below.

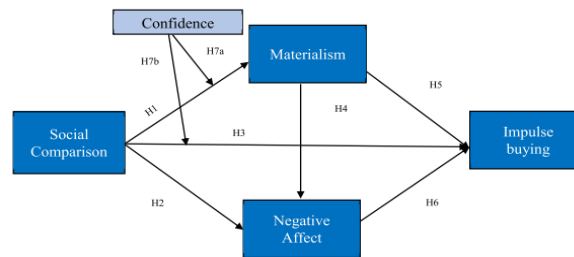


Figure 1. Research model

METHOD

This research adopts a quantitative approach using surveys as the primary data collection method, distributed through Google Forms to reach respondents efficiently. It follows the positivism paradigm, focusing on objective analysis to examine relationships among variables, including social comparison, materialism, negative affect, impulsive buying, and confidence as a moderating factor. The sampling technique applied is purposive sampling, targeting individuals aged 18-30 in Jakarta who engage in online shopping, with a final sample size of 230 participants. Analytical tools such as SEM PLS are employed to evaluate hypotheses, ensuring comprehensive insights into the research model and variable interactions

The data analysis uses SEM PLS to test the hypotheses and provide comprehensive insights into the relationships among the variables.

Social comparison refers to the idea that individuals compare themselves to others regarding achievements, wealth, appearance, and other aspects, and evaluate their self-worth based on these comparisons [13]. An example indicator for this variable is, “I always compare the way I perform tasks with how others perform them.”

Impulsive buying refers to the strong and spontaneous urge to make unplanned purchases without considering the potential consequences [7]. One indicator for this variable is, “I get very excited when I see something I want to buy.”

Materialism is defined as the value placed on acquiring and possessing material goods based on one’s desires or needs, and the behaviours taken to achieve those ends [9]. An example indicator for this variable is, “I admire people who own expensive homes, cars, and clothes.”

Negative affect encompasses a broad range of emotional distress, including irritability, stress, guilt, shame, anger, anxiety, and other negative emotions [11]. An indicator for this variable is, “I feel upset when I see other people’s achievements.”

Confidence is defined as an individual’s belief in their abilities, skills, and judgment to handle situations or complete tasks successfully [15]. An example indicator for this variable is, “In general, I am confident in my talents.”

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the respondent profile data from 230 respondents, most respondents are male (63.5%), with 36.5% female. Most respondents are aged between 22-25 years (57.83%) and 27-30 years (35.65%), while only 6.52% are between 17-21 years, with no respondents above 30 years old. Their residences are spread across various areas in Jakarta, with the highest concentration in West Jakarta (28.26%), followed by East Jakarta (26.09%) and South Jakarta (22.17%), while North Jakarta and Central Jakarta account for 13.48% and 10%, respectively. In terms of online shopping frequency,

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64.78% shop online 3-5 times per month, 23.48% shop 1-2 times, and 11.74% shop more than 6 times per month. Overall, the respondent profile is dominated by young males living in West Jakarta, with active online shopping behaviour, particularly at a frequency of 3-5 times per month.

The data analysis process involved multiple steps. Initially, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the key characteristics of the respondents and the data distribution. Following this, reliability and validity assessments were carried out to confirm the consistency and accuracy of the measurement instruments. Finally, the relationships among the variables were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with a focus on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM), ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed hypotheses

The result descriptive statistics from 230 respondents in table 1 below.

TABLE 1.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Standard deviation
PS1	3.452	4.000	1	5	1.225
PS2	3.126	4.000	1	5	1.537
PS3	3.226	4.000	1	5	1.513
PS4	3.174	4.000	1	5	1.473
PS5	2.896	3.000	1	5	1.318
PI1	3.635	4.000	1	5	1.246
PI2	3.739	4.000	1	5	1.272
PI3	3.470	4.000	1	5	1.482
PI4	3.461	4.000	1	5	1.260
MA1	4.135	4.000	1	5	0.877
MA2	3.843	4.000	1	5	1.154
MA3	3.848	4.000	1	5	1.295
MA4	3.643	4.000	1	5	1.192
AN1	2.661	2.000	1	5	1.285
AN2	2.652	2.000	1	5	1.364
AN3	2.839	2.000	1	5	1.494
AN4	2.809	2.000	1	5	1.438
AN5	2.774	2.000	1	5	1.368
AN6	2.478	2.000	1	5	1.388
KD1	3.896	4.000	1	5	1.050
KD2	3.983	4.000	1	5	1.261
KD3	3.913	4.000	1	5	1.231
KD4	3.857	4.000	1	5	1.158

Reliability results show in table 2

TABLE 2.
RELIABILITY RESULTS

Variable	Cronbach alpha	Composite Reliability
PS	0.881	0.913
PI	0.888	0.923
MA	0.841	0.894
AN	0.935	0.949
KD	0.917	0.940

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

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Table 3 display factor loading values ranging from 0.709 to 0.940

TABLE 3.
CONVERGENT VALIDITY

	AN	KD	MA	PI	PS
AN1	0.848				
AN2	0.859				
AN3	0.884				
AN4	0.863				
AN5	0.906				
AN6	0.850				
KD1		0.910			
KD2		0.904			
KD3		0.816			
KD4		0.936			
MA1			0.709		
MA2			0.881		
MA3			0.832		
MA4			0.863		
PI1				0.791	
PI2				0.940	
PI3				0.879	
PI4				0.849	
PS1					0.807
PS2					0.909
PS3					0.864
PS4					0.749
PS5					0.781

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

Table 4, the results validate that discriminant validity is attained.

TABLE 4.
FORNELL-LARCKER

	AN	KD	MA	PI	PS
AN	0.869				
KD	-0.597	0.893			
MA	0.400	-0.257	0.824		
PI	0.404	-0.322	0.752	0.866	
PS	0.477	-0.343	0.494	0.445	0.824

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

With correlation values between variables staying below the 0.90 criterion, Table 5's HTMT values demonstrate sufficient discriminant validity.

TABLE 5.
HTMT

	AN	KD	MA	PI	PS
AN					

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KD	0.638				
MA	0.446	0.261	0.860		
PI	0.446	0.336	0.546		
PS	0.521	0.363	0.860	0.482	

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

SEM-PLS was used for hypothesis testing, analysing key metrics such as VIF (Table 6), R² (Table 7), and F² (Table 8). Additionally, Table 9 summarises hypothesis testing.

TABLE 6.

VIF

	AN	KD	MA	PI	PS
AN				2.266	
KD			3.138	3.943	
MA	1.324			1.418	
PI					
PS	1.324		1.752	2.090	

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

Table 7 Negative affect (AN) explains 25.7% of its variance, materialism (MA) 25.8%, and impulsive buying (PI) 58.3% after adjustment.

TABLE 7.

R² RESULTS

Variable	R square	R square adjusted
AN	0.263	0.257
MA	0.267	0.258
PI	0.592	0.583

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

Table 8 The largest effect size is materialism (MA) on impulsive buying (PI) with 0.783, while confidence (PS) has the smallest impact on impulsive buying (PI) with 0.000.

TABLE 8.

F² TEST RESULTS

	AN	KD	MA	PI
AN				0.003
KD			0.031	0.028
MA	0.048			0.783
PI				
PS	0.140		0.105	0.000

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

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Table 9 Hypotheses H1, H2, H4, H5, H7a, and H7b are supported, while H3 and H6 are not supported based on path coefficients and significance values.

TABLE 9.
HYPOTHESES TESTING

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path β	T-value	P-value	Decision
H1	PS -> MA	0.366	5.725	0.000	Supported
H2	PS -> AN	0.370	6.152	0.000	Supported
H3	PS -> PI	-0.000	0.006	0.498	Not Supported
H4	MA -> AN	0.217	4.276	0.000	Supported
H5	MA -> PI	0.672	15.207	0.000	Supported
H6	AN -> PI	0.044	0.758	0.224	Not supported
H7a	KD x PS -> MA	0.250	1.980	0.024	Supported
H7b	KD x PS -> PI	0.149	2.340	0.010	Supported

PS : Social Comparison

PI : Impulsive Buying

MA : Materialism

AN : Negative Affect

KD : Confidence

DISCUSSION

The results of the first hypothesis (H1) show that social comparison has a positive and significant impact on materialism. This indicates that the more frequently individuals compare themselves to others, the stronger their tendency to adopt materialistic values. This process shapes their perception of needs and desires for certain goods, as if happiness or social status is measured through material possessions. These findings are consistent with previous studies. [2] highlight that more intense social comparisons lead individuals to develop materialistic tendencies. [18] explain that upward comparisons, involving people perceived as more successful, reinforce this behaviour. [38] further demonstrate that social comparison on platforms like social media encourages materialism and consumptive behaviour, particularly among students.

The second hypothesis (H2) posits that social comparison has a positive impact on negative affect, and the results support this. Frequent comparisons with others increase the likelihood of individuals experiencing negative emotions such as envy, anxiety, or depression. This aligns with existing literature that shows how social comparison, especially through social media, affects psychological well-being and fosters dissatisfaction with oneself. [20] identify that online social comparisons can lower self-evaluations and increase psychological distress. Similarly, [39] and [40] found that comparing oneself with positive profiles on social media correlates with higher depressive symptoms. Seeing the achievements of others often leads individuals to feel less accomplished, triggering feelings of envy, anxiety, and dissatisfaction with their own lives.

The third hypothesis (H3) finds no significant effect of social comparison on impulsive buying. This suggests that, in this study, social comparison does not play a decisive role in triggering impulsive purchases among respondents. This finding contrasts with previous research by [24] and [25], who found that social comparison, particularly on social media, encourages impulsive buying behaviour. Demographics may play a role in this result, as most respondents were male (63.5%) and aged between 22 and 30. Previous studies, such as [41], indicate that young women are more susceptible to impulsive purchases influenced by social comparison, especially regarding appearance or social status. Additionally, shopping habits in this study appear controlled, with 64.78% of respondents shopping three to five times a month and only 11.74% shopping more than six times. This suggests that many respondents may have better control over their shopping behaviour, reducing the impact of social comparison on impulsive buying.

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The fourth hypothesis (H4) shows that materialism has a positive impact on negative affect. The results reveal that materialism significantly contributes to emotional issues such as anxiety, depression, and life dissatisfaction. These findings are consistent with earlier studies. [26] reported that materialism leads to excessive consumption and reduced well-being. [42] emphasize that materialism heightens anxiety and social problems. [28] found that materialism promoted through social media worsens mental health by increasing stress and anxiety. Moreover, [43] show that during the COVID-19 pandemic, materialism amplified unhappiness through perceived threats, exacerbating negative emotions.

The fifth hypothesis (H5) suggests that materialism positively influences impulsive buying, and the results support this. Materialistic individuals tend to make purchases to strengthen their self-concept and elevate their social status. [29] and [30] found that individuals with materialistic tendencies are more inclined to buy impulsively. [44] observed that young consumers motivated by materialism often engage in impulsive buying.

The sixth hypothesis (H6) proposes that negative affect has a positive impact on impulsive buying. However, the results do not support this, indicating that negative emotions do not significantly influence impulsive buying among the respondents. One possible explanation lies in the demographic profile, with most respondents being young males. Prior research by [45] suggests that men are less likely than women to express emotions such as anxiety, empathy, or sadness, often channelling their feelings into physical activities or aggressive behaviours instead. Additionally, some studies, such as [46], note that while negative emotions like depression and anxiety may drive compulsive consumption, their effect on impulsive buying is not always significant. Similarly, [47] found that although negative emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic increased compulsive consumption, not all consumers were equally affected, indicating that negative affect is not always a primary driver of impulsive buying.

The seventh hypothesis (H7a and H7b) investigates the moderating role of confidence. The results show that confidence moderates the relationship between materialism and social comparison, as well as between social comparison and impulsive buying. Individuals with high confidence are more independent in decision-making and less influenced by external information, as highlighted [35]. [16] also found that confident consumers are less susceptible to social pressure, which reduces their tendency toward impulsive buying. The relationship between materialism and social comparison is similarly shaped by confidence. Consumers with low confidence rely more on external information [37]. [36] further supports this by showing that consumers with high confidence are less affected by external pressures and are less prone to impulsive purchases. This suggests that confidence acts as a buffer against social and environmental pressures, enabling consumers to focus on rational decision-making and resist impulsive urges within the context of social comparison.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the influence of social comparison, materialism, and negative affect on impulsive buying behaviour, with confidence as a moderating variable. The findings indicate that social comparison positively affects materialism, which in turn drives impulsive purchasing. This suggests that individuals who engage in social comparison tend to pursue materialistic values, reinforcing the link between social dynamics and consumerism in online shopping contexts.

Interestingly, negative affect does not show a significant impact on impulsive buying, challenging prior research that positions emotional distress as a primary driver. In contrast, materialism emerges as a stronger determinant of impulsive behaviour, emphasizing the role of consumer values over emotional triggers in the Jakarta e-commerce setting.

The moderating role of confidence reveals that individuals with higher self-esteem are more resilient to external influences such as social comparison and materialism. This finding underscores the importance of self-regulation, showing that internal factors like confidence can diminish impulsive tendencies. While the predominance of male respondents offers a distinctive perspective, future studies

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are encouraged to explore gender differences more comprehensively, as emotional expression and decision making patterns may vary between men and women.

The study's conclusions also have practical relevance for companies aiming to optimize their e-commerce strategies. Firms can appeal to consumers' materialistic tendencies and social motivations by employing influencer marketing and premium product promotions. Additionally, promoting consumer confidence through easy return policies and guarantees can enhance the shopping experience and encourage purchasing behaviour.

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