

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58732

Title: Digital Transformation as a Catalyst for Brand Development: Strategic Insights from Emerging Markets.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.

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

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Reviewer's Comment for Publication.

(To be published with the manuscript in the journal)

The reviewer is requested to provide a brief comment (3-4 lines) highlighting the significance, strengths, or key insights of the manuscript. This comment will be Displayed in the journal publication alongside with the reviewers name.

- Significance:** The study is significant because it challenges the widespread assumption that digital transformation automatically strengthens brands. By positioning digital transformation as a conditional catalyst, the manuscript offers a more nuanced explanation of heterogeneous brand outcomes. Its emerging-market focus further enhances relevance by incorporating infrastructural, institutional, cultural, regulatory, and competitive contingencies that are frequently underrepresented in conventional digital-transformation and branding research.
- Strength:** The principal strength lies in the manuscript's integrative theoretical architecture. The DTBC framework connects digital transformation with customer-experience integration and organisational capabilities while incorporating digital maturity, strategic clarity, sector characteristics, and market context. The seven configurations further enhance conceptual originality. The manuscript also demonstrates strong awareness of its methodological limitations and avoids presenting illustrative cases as definitive causal evidence.
- Key Insight:** The central insight is that digital transformation does not independently create brand equity; it amplifies the strategic and organisational foundations already present within firms. Strong strategic clarity, integrated customer experiences, and organisational capabilities enable digital investment to generate sustainable brand value, whereas fragmented experiences, weak capabilities, or unclear positioning can dissipate investment. This conditional perspective provides a compelling basis for future empirical testing.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*Digital Transformation as a Catalyst for Brand Development: Strategic Insights from Emerging Markets.*” develops the Digital Transformation Brand Catalyst (DTBC) framework to explain inconsistent effects of digital investment on brand equity in emerging markets. Grounded in dynamic capabilities theory and based on an integrative review of 118 sources plus cases from India, Nigeria, Brazil, and Indonesia, it argues that digital transformation acts as a conditional catalyst. Effects are mediated by customer-experience integration and organisational capabilities, and moderated by maturity, strategy, sector, and context. Four value-creating and three value-dissipating configurations are identified. The paper reframes digitalisation as an amplifier of existing brand foundations rather than an automatic driver of equity.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Differentiate the theoretical gap from the empirical gap more systematically.
2. Provide stronger evidence supporting the opening claim that digital investments frequently fail to generate corresponding brand-equity improvements across emerging markets.
3. Provide a synthesis table summarising major studies, theoretical perspectives, contexts, methodologies, findings, and identified limitations across the four literature streams.
4. Separate digital transformation from routine technology adoption more explicitly.
5. Explain how differences in transformation intensity or maturity could affect the proposed brand-equity mechanism across firms.
6. Differentiate consumer-based brand equity from firm-based brand value.
7. Explain how the DTBC framework accommodates multiple dimensions of brand equity rather than treating equity as a single aggregate outcome.
8. Clarify whether CX integration is conceptually distinct from omnichannel integration.
9. Explain more precisely why CX integration should mediate rather than moderate the relationship between digital transformation and brand equity.
10. Explain why the four selected countries adequately illustrate contextual diversity.
11. Explicitly map sensing, seizing, and transforming onto each DTBC component.
12. Report the exact database search strings and screening procedures used.

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

The manuscript presents a timely and theoretically promising framework explaining why digital transformation does not uniformly generate brand equity in emerging markets. Its integration of dynamic capabilities, customer experience, organisational capabilities, and contextual contingencies is valuable. However, substantial revision is required to strengthen methodological transparency, substantiate the seven configurations, clarify construct boundaries, moderate causal claims, and establish stronger connections between evidence and theoretical propositions. I recommend Minor Revision before further consideration for publication. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.