

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58785

Title: Bridging the Mirror: A Multidimensional Examination of Brand Architecture and Inclusivity in Building Consumer Brand Equity.

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 positions inclusivity as a structural component of brand architecture rather than merely a promotional activity. By examining multiple dimensions across Indian cosmetic brands, it offers a potentially useful framework for understanding contemporary brand differentiation. Its emphasis on accessibility, cultural representation, gender, skin diversity, and strategic alignment provides relevant implications for inclusive brand management.
- Strength:** The manuscript's principal strength lies in its multidimensional conceptualization of brand inclusivity. It integrates established brand-management theories with contemporary concerns involving diversity, accessibility, technology, and consumer representation. The structured five-dimensional audit, 7-point scoring framework, and application of K-Means, PCA, and hierarchical clustering provide an innovative analytical direction. The managerial recommendations further enhance the paper's practical relevance.
- Key Insight:** The central insight is that meaningful brand inclusivity requires alignment between internal brand identity and externally experienced consumer touchpoints. The study suggests that brands differ substantially in how comprehensively they address shade diversity, skin types, gender, cultural representation, and physical accessibility. However, demonstrating that these differences actually produce superior consumer relationships and brand equity requires stronger empirical validation through consumer-level evidence.

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Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*Bridging the Mirror: A Multidimensional Examination of Brand Architecture and Inclusivity in Building Consumer Brand Equity.*” examines modern brand architecture through a multidimensional “one-way mirror” framework, distinguishing internal existential constructs (identity, core values, personality) from external relational constructs (risk reduction, shorthand utility, relationship quality). Focusing on sectors such as cosmetics, it argues that authentic brand inclusivity bridges these domains. By embedding inclusive principles into the firm’s core, brands reduce purchase risks, provide cognitive shortcuts for diverse consumers, strengthen relationships, and deepen brand resonance. The analysis positions inclusivity as a strategic mechanism for building sustainable long-term consumer brand equity in fragmented markets.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. Reduce broad background discussion and foreground the study's specific contribution.
2. Organize literature thematically around the five proposed inclusivity dimensions.
3. The manuscript should avoid presenting the absence of empirical research as a generalized claim unless the literature search strategy and coverage adequately substantiate that assertion.
4. The proposed theoretical relationships should be represented in a clearly labelled conceptual diagram showing antecedents, inclusivity dimensions, mediating mechanisms, and expected brand-related outcomes.
5. Develop explicit theoretical pathways connecting inclusivity to brand equity.
6. Explain the theoretical justification for each rubric dimension more rigorously.
7. Discuss potential researcher and AI-assisted scoring biases more explicitly.
8. Separate descriptive objectives from causal or explanatory objectives.
9. H1 and H2 should be reformulated as exploratory propositions if the study does not directly measure consumer risk, cognitive shorthand, relationship quality, resonance, or brand equity.
10. The authors should report inter-rater reliability or independent validation procedures because qualitative brand auditing involves substantial interpretive judgment, even when AI-assisted tools are used.
11. The manuscript should avoid equating a larger radar-chart area automatically with superior overall brand equity because brand equity itself was not directly measured in the audit.

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The manuscript addresses a timely and strategically significant issue by connecting brand architecture with multidimensional inclusivity in the Indian cosmetic industry. Its conceptual ambition, contemporary literature base, and innovative use of clustering techniques are commendable. However, substantial methodological and theoretical revisions are necessary, particularly concerning measurement validity, AI-assisted scoring, hypothesis-method alignment, statistical interpretation, and evidence-based conclusions. Minor Revision is recommended before the manuscript can be considered suitable for publication. Addressing the identified weaknesses will make it suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.