

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-51088

Date: 17/04/2025

Title: Strategic Leadership: Malavika Hegde's Café Coffee Day.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.

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

Reviewer Name: Dr. Bishwajit Rout

Date: 17/04/2025

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:** This paper sheds light on the pivotal role of strategic leadership during corporate crises through the lens of Malavika Hegde's turnaround of Café Coffee Day. It contributes to leadership, entrepreneurship, and crisis management literature by showcasing how emotionally grounded yet financially disciplined leadership can restore stakeholder trust and steer a company through financial adversity in the Indian business context.
- Strength:** The paper's primary strength lies in its data-backed narrative of corporate revival. It integrates financial metrics with strategic decisions to present a comprehensive case study. By combining leadership theory, real-world financial outcomes, and qualitative insight, it offers a well-rounded examination of resilience-driven transformation in a high-pressure business environment, setting a benchmark for similar turnaround case studies in emerging markets.
- Key Insight:** The key insight is that empathetic and ethical leadership, even in the face of overwhelming debt and personal loss, can redefine business trajectories. Malavika Hegde's journey illustrates how preserving legacy, optimizing operations, and maintaining internal morale can together forge a path from crisis to cautious recovery- challenging the notion that only aggressive financial restructuring ensures business survival.

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Reviewer's Comment / Report

The paper titled “*Strategic Leadership: Malavika Hegde's Café Coffee Day.*” provides a case-based examination of the transformation of Café Coffee Day (CCD) under the leadership of Malavika Hegde, following the tragic demise of its founder V.G. Siddhartha. The research highlights her strategic interventions in debt management, operational restructuring, and brand preservation. It serves as a powerful narrative of resilience-driven corporate leadership in times of crisis. The topic is timely, relevant, and contributes meaningfully to literature in leadership studies, crisis management, and business turnaround strategies. However, there are areas where the manuscript can be improved for scholarly rigor and clarity.

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. State that the study is based on qualitative secondary data analysis using public financial reports, interviews, and business journalism sources.
2. Clarify criteria for source selection and scope of analysis (e.g., time span FY2019–FY2024).
3. Justify the use of case study method (perhaps using Yin or Eisenhardt's framework).
4. Evaluate Malavika's leadership using a leadership theory lens (e.g., Transformational Leadership: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation).
5. While financial trends are presented, no ratio analysis or benchmarking is used. Add simple profitability ratios (EBITDA margin, return on assets) if possible.
6. Briefly compare CCD's performance to peers (e.g., Starbucks India) to provide external context.

This is a powerful and timely case study that deserves publication after key improvements. With better academic positioning, methodological clarification, and theoretical engagement, it can serve as a model case study in business education and management research. Accept with Minor Revisions- after addressing these refinements, the paper will be suitable for publication in IJAR.

I recommend this paper for publication after minor revision.