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**Paper: “Innovation Capabilities and Digitally Deliverable Service Exports in China and India: An ARDL-ECM Analysis, 2000-2024”**

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Corresponding Author: Dunel Rajkumar

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Peer review:

Reviewer 1: Foldi Kata  
University of Debrecen, Hungary

Reviewer 2: Jihad Jami  
Abdelmalik Essaadi University, Tangier, Morocco

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Reviewer A:

Recommendation: Accept Submission  
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**The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.**

YES. The title 'Digital Bridges or Digital Divides? The Impact of Innovation Capabilities on Digitally Deliverable Service Export' is evocative, informative, and accurately reflects the comparative focus of the study on China and India. The metaphor used is conceptually aligned with the article's conclusions. However, the title could have been slightly more specific by mentioning the two countries (China and India) or the time frame (2000–2024) to improve searchability and indexability.

**The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.**

YES — with minor reservations. The abstract effectively presents the study's objectives (examining innovation capabilities' differentiated impact on ICT service exports), methodology (ARDL-ECM), and key findings for China and India. The conclusions are clearly stated. However, the abstract does not explicitly mention the time period (2000–2024), which is an important contextual element. A brief mention of the key quantitative results (e.g., ECT values) would also add scientific rigour.

**There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.**

A FEW ISSUES NOTED. The article is generally well-written in academic English, but several issues require attention: (a) Occasional awkward phrasing (e.g., 'shows extremely advantageous advantages of the magnitude of innovation' in the section on Figure 2 — this is redundant and unclear); (b) Some sentences are overly long and difficult to parse; (c) There is a typo 'ADRL-ECM' instead of 'ARDL-ECM' in two places (Tables 5 and 8 caption text); (d) Minor stylistic inconsistencies in verb tense (mixing present and past tense in the discussion). Overall, a careful language proofread is recommended before final publication.

**The study METHODS are explained clearly.**

YES — generally well-explained. The methodology section is rigorous and detailed. The rationale for selecting the ARDL-ECM approach is clearly justified (mixed integration order, small sample robustness). Variable selection is transparent, well-documented in Table 1, and grounded in prior literature. However, two concerns arise: (a) The authors do not explicitly report the unit root tests (ADF, PP or KPSS) to confirm integration orders, which is standard practice before ARDL estimation; (b) Lag selection criteria (e.g., AIC/BIC) are not reported. These omissions should be addressed to ensure full methodological transparency.

**The results are clear and do not contain errors.**

YES — results are clearly presented, though some issues exist. The regression tables (Tables 3 and 6) are well-structured and easy to read. The comparative summary (Table 9) is a valuable addition. However: (a) In Table 3 (China), the ECT coefficient is marked with a single asterisk (\*) but the note says \* denotes 10% significance — yet the p-value is 0.000. This notation is inconsistent with convention and should use \*\*\* for 1% significance; (b) The significance of lnPA for India (reported as 0.488 at  $P < 0.05$ ) in the text contradicts Table 6, where  $p = 0.026$  (which is indeed significant at 5%, but the text states this inconsistently at different points). These discrepancies must be clarified.

**The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.**

YES. The conclusion is well-structured and logically follows from the empirical findings. The distinction between China's infrastructure/human-capital-driven model and India's innovation/exchange-rate-led model is clearly articulated and policy-relevant. The final call for context-specific policy interventions is appropriate and aligned with the evidence. The conclusion could have been strengthened by acknowledging study limitations (small sample size N=25, single-proxy for innovation, omission of institutional quality variables).

**The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.**

YES — mostly adequate. The reference list includes 20 references covering relevant foundational literature (Freund & Weinhold, 2002/2004; Hausmann et al., 2007; Rodrik, 2018) and recent works (Baldwin & Forslid, 2023; Yeerken & Feng, 2024). All references appear correctly formatted in APA style with DOIs. However: (a) The reference 'Nie (2023)' appears to be a working paper from a personal website — its academic status and reliability should be verified; (b) The reference list could benefit from additional empirical comparative studies specifically on China–India ICT dynamics; (c) Recent institutional/governance literature on digital trade policy is notably absent.

***Please rate the TITLE of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

***Please rate the METHODS of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

***Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

**Overall Recommendation!!!**

Accepted, minor revision needed

## Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

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Reviewer C:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

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### **The TITLE is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.**

Your title is clear and relevant, but it is slightly too general for a scientific journal standard. It does not reflect key elements of the study, such as the country comparison, method, and time period.

A stronger version would explicitly include these elements. For example:

“Innovation Capabilities and ICT Service Exports: A Comparative ARDL-ECM Analysis of China and India (2000–2024)”

### **The ABSTRACT clearly presents objectives, methods, results, and conclusions.**

The abstract is well-structured and includes all key elements. However, it should be more concise and easier to read.

Shorten sentences, remove repetition, and focus only on the most important results and one clear conclusion.

### **There are a few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.**

The article needs professional language editing to meet journal standards. Many sentences should be simplified to improve clarity and readability. Grammar and verb tense errors should be corrected throughout the text. Word choice and phrasing should be made more natural and academic. Repetitions should be removed to make the text more concise. Overall, careful proofreading will significantly improve the quality of the paper.

### **The study METHODS are explained clearly.**

The methods section should explain the modelling process more step by step. It should clearly describe how the ARDL model was implemented in practice. The criteria for selecting lag lengths should be specified. Variable transformations, such as logarithms, should be justified more clearly. Data preparation steps should be described in more detail. The explanation should focus more on practical execution, not only theory. All steps should be detailed enough to allow replication. Improving clarity and transparency will strengthen the scientific quality.

### **The results are clear and do not contain errors.**

The results are generally understandable, but they need clearer presentation to meet journal standards. Some interpretations are confusing or not fully consistent with the reported statistics. The connection between tables and the written explanation should be strengthened. Each result should be explained more directly and in a simpler way. Statistical significance should be reported consistently across all results. Some statements should be checked to avoid possible misinterpretation of coefficients. Redundant explanations should be reduced to improve clarity. Clearer structure and more precise interpretation will improve the overall quality.

**The CONCLUSION or summary is accurate and supported by the content.**

The conclusion is generally aligned with the results and reflects the main findings of the study. However, it should more clearly link each key claim to specific empirical results. Some statements are too general and should be made more precise. The summary should avoid repeating earlier sections and focus on the core contributions. Policy implications should be more directly derived from the findings. Limitations of the study should be briefly acknowledged. The conclusion could better highlight the added value of the research. Stronger alignment with the results section will improve scientific credibility.

**The list of REFERENCES is comprehensive and appropriate.**

The reference list is generally relevant and includes key sources on trade, digitalization, and innovation. However, it should include more recent studies to reflect the latest developments in the field. Some important and highly cited works may be missing. The balance between theoretical and empirical sources could be improved. More sources specifically focused on ICT service exports would strengthen the paper. Consistency in formatting should be carefully checked across all references. All cited works in the text should be fully matched in the reference list, expect 1 above table 4. Pesaran, Shin, and Smith (2001). A more comprehensive and updated reference base will improve academic quality.

***Please rate the TITLE of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the ABSTRACT of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

***Please rate the LANGUAGE of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

3

***Please rate the METHODS of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the RESULTS of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the CONCLUSION of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

***Please rate the REFERENCES of this paper.***

[Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]

4

**Overall Recommendation!!!**

Accepted, minor revision needed

**Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):**

The paper addresses a relevant and timely topic and shows a clear research direction. The title is appropriate, but it should be more specific by including the country comparison and method. The abstract is well structured, but it should be shorter and more concise. The language needs careful revision, as there are grammatical errors and awkward expressions throughout the text. The methodology is appropriate, but it requires more detailed explanation to ensure transparency and reproducibility. You should clearly describe model implementation, lag selection, and data preparation steps. The results section is informative, but some interpretations should be clarified and made more precise. Ensure consistent reporting of statistical significance and stronger links between tables and explanations. The conclusion reflects the main findings, but it should be more directly supported by the empirical results. You should also briefly mention the limitations of the study. The reference list is relevant, but it would benefit from more recent and specialized sources. Overall, the paper has strong potential, but it requires revision to meet journal standards.

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