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“Measuring, Representing, and Steering Premium–Value Brand
Positioning in Beauty and Personal Care”

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Abstract

This thesis develops a framework for measuring, representing, and steering premium value brand positioning in beauty and personal care. Using anonymized facial moisturizer catalog text from Amazon Reviews '23, pairwise premium/value judgments are elicited from Qwen3-8B and aggregated with a Bradley-Terry model to estimate brand-level positioning scores. The resulting scale is internally consistent, produces plausible brand rankings, and correlates with median price while remaining distinct from price. It is then tested whether this behavioral scale is represented inside the model by training ridge probes on attention-head activations from brand-specific prompts. The premium value ordering is linearly recoverable from later-layer activations, and the learned directions can be reused for activation steering. Positive steering shifts generated product copy toward refined, sensory, and elevated language, while negative steering shifts it toward practical, accessible, and value-oriented language. The results show that premium-value positioning can be measured from marketplace text, recovered from model internals and used to control marketing language generation.