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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF BEVERAGE FIRMS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

[1]Chris C. Ezenyimulu
chrisezenyimulu@gmail.com

[2]Faith C. Onwuchekwa
fc.onwuchekwa@unizik.edu.ng

[3]Hilda E. Osisioma

[1-3] Department of Business Administration, Nnamdi Aziliwe University
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

The Beverage industry is confronted with disruptive effects of rapid technological advancement and dynamic market conditions, understanding the factors that improve strategic positioning becomes imperative. This study examines the effect of digital transformation on strategic positioning of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of data analytics, leadership commitment and ecosystem partnerships on the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria. This study adopts a descriptive research design. A sample size of 385 respondents was selected from a population of 10,384 employees of five selected beverage firms in Southeast Nigeria. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire. The research questions were analyzed using frequency distribution while the hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The result revealed that: data analytics has a positive and significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East Nigeria ($\beta = 0.436$, $p = 0.000$); leadership commitment has a positive and significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East Nigeria ($\beta = 0.442$, $p = 0.000$);

ecosystem partnership has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on selling proposition of brewery firms in Southeast Nigeria (β = 0.025, p = 0.534). The study concluded that, internal capabilities particularly data analytics and leadership commitment significantly shape the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East Nigeria, while ecosystem partnerships currently exert minimal influence. The study therefore recommended that Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) in beverage firms should institutionalize the integration of advanced data analytics systems across all marketing and sales operations to enable data-driven hints that improve product positioning, customer targeting, and competitive value delivery, thereby enhancing their overall selling proposition.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Strategic Positioning, Beverage Firms, Data Analytics, Leadership Commitment, Ecosystem Partnership, Selling Propositions, Internal Capabilities

Introduction

The rapid pace of technological advancement and the continual evolution of market conditions have introduced significant challenges for organizations worldwide, including beverage firms in South-East Nigeria. As the business landscape becomes increasingly digital, understanding the concept of digital transformation is essential for firms seeking to adapt and thrive. Digital transformation involves integrating digital technologies across all facets of a business, fundamentally altering operational processes, value delivery, and customer engagement. It is a dynamic, ongoing process aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, fostering innovation, improving customer experiences, and enabling more agile decision-making. In today's increasingly digitized world, the importance of digital transformation cannot be overstated. Companies that neglect digital integration may risk falling behind competitors who leverage digital tools to improve their market responsiveness and operational effectiveness (Etuk, Usani & Inwang, 2025). Adebayo, Adesoba and Kayode (2024) posits that digital technologies have revolutionized traditional business models by providing opportunities to optimize operations, respond swiftly to customer needs, and develop innovative products and services. For beverage companies,

embracing digital transformation is particularly crucial for survival in a highly competitive and consumer-driven marketplace. Among the key enablers of digital transformation is data analytics, which allows firms to extract actionable insights from vast data pools. These insights can inform understanding of market trends, consumer preferences, and operational bottlenecks, leading to more strategic and informed decision-making. Qiao, Li and Hong (2024) noted that leadership plays a critical role in driving digital transformation initiatives. Effective leadership commitment involves investing in digital infrastructure, fostering a culture that embraces change, and being willing to disrupt legacy systems to realize long-term benefits.

Additionally, ecosystem collaborations with digital marketing firms, logistics providers, and fintech companies can streamline operations and expand market reach, creating a more resilient and competitive enterprise (Malherbe & Tellier, 2024). The beverage industry in South East Nigeria has experienced notable growth driven by urbanization, changing consumer lifestyles, and a rising middle class. This expansion presents both opportunities and challenges. The region's youthful population is eager for new product offerings, making the market highly attractive. However, fierce competition exists among local and international brands vying for dominance (Anene & Ile, 2025). According to Chang, Fernando & Tripathy (2015), to maintain relevance and profitability in this dynamic environment, beverage firms must continually adapt their strategies and digital transformation, particularly through data analytics, offers a pathway for these companies to strengthen their strategic positioning the manner in which they differentiate themselves in the marketplace and create value for consumers. Niu & Wang (2016) stated that one major component of strategic positioning is the selling proposition, which encapsulates the unique value a company promises to deliver to its customers, such as quality, pricing, brand reputation, or customer service. Digital transformation can significantly influence this positioning by enabling firms to make data-driven decisions that align with evolving

market demands. For instance, data analytics can facilitate targeted marketing, identify profitable customer segments, and optimize product offerings, thereby enhancing a firm's competitive edge. Furthermore, digital tools can improve operational efficiencies reducing costs and elevating product quality which reinforces the firm's value proposition (Oduntan & Oriola, 2025). Beyond operational improvements, digital transformation enhances customer interaction and relationship-building. Digital platforms enable direct-to-consumer engagement, fostering personalized experiences that strengthen brand loyalty. Additionally, digital solutions can improve supply chain management, allowing firms to respond more effectively to demand fluctuations and ensure timely delivery of products (Adebayo, Adesoba & Kayode, 2024). In South East Nigeria's burgeoning beverage sector, leveraging data analytics as part of a comprehensive digital transformation strategy is vital for strategic positioning. The market's growing demand for convenience, quality, and innovation necessitates real-time data insights to anticipate consumer preferences, respond swiftly to market shifts, and maintain competitiveness (Etuk, Usani & Inwang, 2025). Firms that successfully integrate digital transformation into their strategic frameworks and utilize data analytics for decision-making are more likely to stand out and sustain a competitive advantage in this fast-evolving industry.

The beverage industry in South-East Nigeria faces a significant challenge due to the limited adoption and implementation of comprehensive digital transformation strategies. Despite global trends emphasizing digitalization, many firms in the region especially in the beverage sector, still depend on traditional practices such as manual data management, conventional marketing methods, and minimal technological integration (Adeyinka, 2023). This reliance on obsolete approaches hinder their ability to respond promptly to shifting consumer preferences, emerging market trends, and increasing competitive pressures. In addition, the failure to utilize critical digital components like data analytics, ecosystem partnerships, strategic leadership, and process automation creates a substantial gap between

their current capabilities and the requirements for sustainable growth and competitive advantage (Akanwa & Egwu, 2023). As a result, these firms risk losing relevance in the market as more technologically savvy competitors leverage digital tools to enhance customer engagement and operational efficiency. Ideally, beverage companies should be well-equipped to harness digital transformation tools such as data analytics, committed leadership, and strategic partnerships to optimize their market positioning. Effective use of data analytics enables firms to make informed decisions, anticipate market trends, personalize offerings, and strengthen their value propositions. Globally, organizations that adopt digital strategies report improvements in customer insights, operational efficiency, and innovation capacity. However, many beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria lag behind in adopting these practices, which directly impacts their ability to communicate value, differentiate themselves, and effectively position themselves in the marketplace (Ebito & Obialor, 2024). This gap is compounded by insufficient leadership commitment, which diminishes the prioritization of digital initiatives and results in fragmented efforts that fail to align with strategic objectives (Etuk, Udoh & Usani, 2024). Without strong leadership to champion digital change, investments often remain superficial, limiting meaningful improvements in competitiveness. The lack of robust ecosystem partnerships restricts access to advanced technologies and collaborative opportunities essential for successful digital transformation (Okechukwu, Orga & Unachukwu, 2024). Strategic alliances with technology providers, logistics firms, and industry stakeholders facilitate resource sharing, innovation, and knowledge transfer major elements for building resilience and competitiveness (Taiwo, Adesoba & Adedotun, 2024). Without these collaborations, firms struggle to differentiate themselves through compelling value propositions tailored to customer needs (Oduntan & Oriola, 2025). Despite the potential benefits of digital tools to enhance customer engagement and operational efficiency, many beverage companies face barriers in adopting and implementing digital technologies, leaving them ill-prepared to meet the rapidly evolving market demands (Adeyinka, 2023). This situation poses a serious

threat to their sustainability and long-term competitiveness, underscoring the urgent need for empirical research to identify pragmatic strategies for holistic digital transformation that can support sustained growth and market relevance in South-East, Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The main aim of the study is to examine the effect of digital transformation on strategic positioning in beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Ascertain the effect of data analytics on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.
2. Determine the effect of leadership commitment on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.
3. Evaluate the effect of ecosystem partnerships on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

In line with the objective of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H_{o1}. Data analytics has no significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

H_{o2}. Leadership commitment has no significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

H_{o3}. Ecosystem partnerships have no significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The section reviews digital transformation and strategic positioning dynamics

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation involves integrating digital technologies into all business areas, fundamentally changing how organizations deliver value, engage with stakeholders, and adapt to market shifts (Nsikan et al., 2025). It's a comprehensive process that extends beyond technology adoption to include cultural, structural, and operational changes. Technologies like cloud computing, AI, IoT, big data, and blockchain enhance efficiency, productivity, and customer engagement, helping firms stay competitive by meeting evolving consumer needs and streamlining decision-making (John et al., 2025). Importantly, digital transformation is not just about new tools but requires rethinking core processes and interactions within organizations (Ellström et al., 2021). It influences leadership strategies, workflows, and customer engagement, enabling automation, personalization, and supply chain optimization especially in industries like manufacturing, retail, and services. Success depends on fostering an innovative, agile culture that supports experimentation and adaptation to rapid technological change (Etuk et al., 2025). As technology advances exponentially, organizations that fail to digitalize risk losing their competitive edge, making digital transformation a continuous, strategic process essential for long-term sustainability (Oduntan & Oriola, 2025).

Data Analytics

Data analytics involves collecting, examining, and interpreting large datasets to uncover patterns and insights that inform strategic decisions (Bhardwaj, 2022). It employs statistical and computational methods to improve operational efficiency, customer experience, and market understanding (Willetts et al., 2020). Data is gathered from sources like customer interactions, sales, social media, and market research (Asad et al., 2020). Advanced tools such as algorithms, machine learning, and visualization techniques analyze this data to identify trends, anomalies, and opportunities that support better decision-making across sales, product development, and competitive positioning (Bhardwaj, 2022).

Leadership Commitment

Leadership commitment refers to top management's active dedication toward strategic goals, especially digital transformation (Nasomboon, 2014). It involves aligning organizational vision with decisive actions, resource allocation, and fostering a culture of change (Abrell-Vogel & Rowold, 2014). Committed leaders demonstrate resilience and accountability, motivating organizational buy-in and ensuring initiatives are effectively implemented (Mlilo et al., 2025). In digital transformation, leadership commitment is critical as it legitimizes digital initiatives, influences organizational culture, and encourages innovation without which investments may remain superficial and fail to deliver value (Kwon & Jeon, 2020; AlNuaimi et al., 2022).

Ecosystem Partnerships

Ecosystem partnerships involve strategic alliances with external stakeholders suppliers, tech providers, distributors, and others to co-create value (Mindmatrix, 2025). These long-term, collaborative relationships leverage shared resources and knowledge, fostering innovation and expanding market reach (Hamonangan et al., 2024). In digital contexts, such partnerships are vital for accessing advanced technologies and adapting quickly to market demands, as firms integrate diverse expertise within a shared ecosystem (Malherbe & Tellier, 2024). For example, breweries collaborating with digital marketing, fintech, and logistics firms can enhance responsiveness and strengthen their competitive positioning highlighting the importance of ecosystem collaboration as a strategic driver for growth and resilience (Mindmatrix, 2025).

Strategic Positioning

Strategic positioning involves deliberately establishing a unique and valuable market stance that differentiates a firm from competitors and aligns with customer needs (Chang et al., 2015). It requires identifying a niche or advantage such as cost leadership,

differentiation, or specialization that allows the organization to deliver distinctive value and sustain competitive edges (Chereau et al., 2018). This process involves analyzing internal strengths and weaknesses, market trends, and consumer preferences to uncover opportunities for unique offerings (Nadube & Didia, 2018). A clear value proposition communicates a firm's key benefits, such as quality or innovation, which attracts and retains customers and fosters brand loyalty (Niu & Wang, 2016).

Selling Proposition

The selling proposition (USP) encapsulates the unique benefit a company offers, setting it apart from competitors (Niu & Wang, 2016). It articulates what makes a product or service compelling be it quality, price, sustainability, or innovation and guides marketing and branding efforts. Developing a strong USP involves understanding customer needs and aligning offerings to address their desires effectively (Hansen et al., 2011). A well-crafted proposition is clear, emotionally engaging, and sustainable, ensuring consistent delivery of promised benefits to reinforce brand identity and competitive advantage (Johnson et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework: Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) emphasizes a firm's ability to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes (Teece et al., 1997). It highlights the importance of organizational agility, learning, and innovation for sustained competitive advantage, particularly in industries experiencing rapid technological shifts (Ellström et al., 2021). In this context, data analytics serve as a key enabler, allowing firms to understand market trends, adapt offerings, and optimize processes to maintain strategic positioning. Leadership commitment and ecosystem partnerships further support dynamic capabilities by fostering innovation, resource

mobilization, and external collaboration critical for digital transformation success (Teece et al., 1997; Oduntan & Oriola, 2025).

Empirical Review

Etuk, Usani, and Inwang (2025) explored how digital transformation affects the marketing performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The study specifically examined the impact of digital transformation on sales volume and customer satisfaction. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, allowing data to be collected from 312 SME owners in Uyo at a single point in time using a structured questionnaire. The collected data underwent descriptive analysis, while simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The findings demonstrated that digital transformation significantly enhances sales volume, customer satisfaction, and the overall marketing performance of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. Oduntan and Oriola (2025) investigated how technological innovations contribute to the growth of breweries in Southwestern Nigeria in the post-COVID-19 era. The study was guided by one research question and two hypotheses and employed a descriptive research design. The study population comprised 6,206 staff members from International Breweries PLC in Southwest Nigeria. Using purposive sampling, four plants were selected, and a sample of 1,563 staff members participated. The research utilized two questionnaires: the Technology Skills Questionnaire (TSQ), with a reliability coefficient of 0.93, and the Business Growth Questionnaire (BGQ), with a reliability coefficient of 0.95. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research question, while inferential statistics were applied to test the hypotheses. The results indicated that skills in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, internet usage, networking, analytics, and machine learning are crucial for brewery business growth. Furthermore, the study established a significant positive relationship between the use of technological innovations and the growth of breweries.

Dibie and Nworie (2025) examined the relationship between disruptive technological innovation and profit growth among selected small-scale enterprises in Ebonyi State. The study aimed to determine the extent to which adopting artificial intelligence and blockchain technology influences the profit growth of these enterprises. A survey research design was employed, with a study population comprising 1,206 registered small-scale enterprises operating in Ebonyi State. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula, resulting in 300 business operators participating in the study. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and mean, were used to analyze the research questions, while Spearman's correlation analysis was applied to test the hypotheses at a 5% significance level. The findings indicated that adopting artificial intelligence and blockchain technology significantly and positively influences profit growth in small-scale enterprises in Ebonyi State. Adebayo, Adesoba, and Kayode (2024) examined the adoption of digital technology and its impact on the performance of SMEs in the food, drink, and beverage industry in Ondo State, Nigeria. A total of 350 questionnaires, representing 88% of the distributed surveys, were deemed valid for analysis. The collected data were coded and analyzed using frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores. Additionally, a non-parametric statistical test (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that digital technology adoption positively influences the performance of SMEs in the food, drink, and beverage sector in Ondo State. The study further confirmed a significant relationship between digital technology adoption and SME performance in the sector.

Adeyinka (2023) investigated how adopting digital technologies affects firm efficiency in Nigeria's manufacturing sector. The study utilized data envelopment analysis alongside the Tobit regression method to examine cross-sectional survey data collected from a sample of manufacturing firms. The findings revealed that digital technology adoption remains concentrated on lower-end devices and appliances, while the integration of advanced digital technologies essential for full-scale digital transformation remains relatively low.

Olomi and Akintokunbo (2022) explored the relationship between technological capability and strategic flexibility in food and beverage manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design was employed, with the study population consisting of fifteen registered food and beverage firms in the region. Since the research focused on organizational-level analysis, only strategic managers were included as respondents. A census sampling approach was used, ensuring that all fifteen firms participated, with four managers purposively selected from each, resulting in a total of 60 respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Instrument reliability was confirmed through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, with all items scoring above 0.70. Hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 at a 0.05 significance level. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between technological capability and strategic flexibility among food and beverage manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Mangifera and Mawardi (2022) examined the key drivers of digital transformation and their impact on financial performance among small food and beverage businesses in Surakarta and surrounding areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study assessed the role of technology availability, competitive pressures, and digital capability as enablers of digital transformation while also investigating the mediating effect of digital transformation on financial performance. A quantitative research approach was used, with data collected from 104 small business operators in the food and beverage sector who had adopted e-commerce and fintech solutions. The data were analyzed using Smart PLS 3.0 modeling. The findings highlighted that technology availability and the adaptability of business operators played a significant role in enabling digital transformation, which, in turn, positively influenced financial performance during the pandemic. Visscher, Hahn, and Konrad (2021) explored how industrial firms design innovation ecosystem strategies

through a multilayered framework that aligns both their activities and partnerships, while simultaneously securing their role within the ecosystem. Based on 98 in-depth interviews with executives, including CEOs and innovation leaders in Germany and the Netherlands, the study identified two distinct levels within innovation ecosystems. The first level, described as explorative, is characterized by its openness and focus on identifying innovation opportunities. The second level is exploitative, more restricted in structure, and dedicated to applying these innovations to create tangible value for customers. The researchers examined how organizations successfully operate across these two levels to achieve strategic alignment and establish a strong market position. The study also investigated how firms generate synergies across these layers and manage the inherent tensions between exploration and exploitation. Ultimately, the findings emphasized that innovation ecosystems serve as structured platforms that coordinate diverse interactions among various stakeholders, and that such partnerships are essential for sustaining innovation among industrial firms.

Kamalaldin, Sjödin, Hullova, and Parida (2021) examined how equipment suppliers in process industries adopt appropriate ecosystem strategies to drive digitally enabled process innovation. Using a multi-case qualitative research approach, the study analyzed how suppliers adjust their ecosystem involvement depending on the needs and characteristics of their industrial clients. The researchers identified four strategic ecosystem roles—namely orchestrator, dominator, complementor, and protector. These roles reflect the different ways firms can engage with digital innovation ecosystems. The study introduced a decision-making framework, helping suppliers determine the most effective ecosystem strategy by considering both their position in the ecosystem (as leader or follower) and their approach to collaboration or competition. The research underscores that strategic alignment within digital ecosystems is not uniform; rather, it must be tailored to match the contextual challenges and objectives of each participating firm. Omesa, Gachunga, Okibo,

and Ogutu (2019) assessed how leadership within Kenya's county governments influences the execution of strategic plans. The study was grounded in sequential, adaptive, and holistic theoretical frameworks. Employing a descriptive survey approach, data was gathered from 10 county governments six from the former Nyanza region and four from the former Western region. The research involved 240 participants selected through proportional stratified and simple random sampling. Data collection included both questionnaires and interviews with high-level managers. Validity and reliability were ensured using Cronbach's alpha during pre-testing. Data analysis combined descriptive statistics with regression, correlation, and ANOVA techniques. Findings revealed that leadership styles significantly predicted the success of strategic plan implementation. The study dismissed the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis, confirming a strong relationship between corporate leadership and strategy execution. It concluded that aligning leadership practices with strategic objectives is vital for effective strategy implementation in county governments.

The existing literature has extensively examined the effect of digital transformation on various aspects of business performance, including marketing performance (Etuk, Usani, & Inwang, 2025), business growth through technological innovations (Oduntan & Oriola, 2025), profit growth via disruptive technologies (Dibie & Nworie, 2025), and SME performance in the beverage sector (Adebayo, Adesoba, & Kayode, 2024). Furthermore, studies have explored digital technology adoption in manufacturing efficiency (Adeyinka, 2023), strategic flexibility in food and beverage firms (Olomi & Akintokunbo, 2022), and financial performance in small beverage businesses (Mangifera & Mawardi, 2022). However, a critical gap remains regarding the specific influence of data analytics, leadership commitment and ecosystem partnership on the selling proposition of beverage firms, particularly in South-East, Nigeria which gave rise to Content Gap. While prior studies have acknowledged the broader role of digital transformation in business success,

none have explicitly analyzed how data analytics, leadership commitment and ecosystem partnership jointly shape selling proposition within the beverage industry in this region which has produced Geographical Gap. These gaps necessitate further investigation to understand how data analytics, leadership commitment and ecosystem partnerships enhance selling proposition in beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

1. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to examine the effect of digital transformation on the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria. Descriptive design is considered appropriate for this study as it enables the systematic collection and analysis of data to clearly describe and assess the effects of digital transformation on strategic positioning of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population for this study consists of employees from five quoted beverage firms operating in South-East, Nigeria: Nigerian Breweries, Ameke, Enugu state; Nigerian Breweries, Ubachima, Imo state; International Breweries Plc. Onitsha. Anambra state, Life Breweries Co. Ltd. Onitsha, Anambra state; and Golden Guinea Breweries, Ubakala, Abia state. These firms - Nigerian Breweries(Ameke and Ubachima), International Breweries Plc. Onitsha, Life Breweries Co. Ltd., and Golden Guinea Breweries - hold significant market share, which makes them influential players in shaping industry trends and organizational practices related to digital transformation, leadership, and partnerships. Their substantial staff strength (totalling over 10,000 employees) indicates extensive operational scope and diverse organizational units, providing a comprehensive perspective on internal and external strategic dynamics. Furthermore, these companies' geographic dispersion across key economic zones within South-East, Nigeria (Enugu, Imo, Anambra,

and Abia states) ensures regional representativeness, capturing variations in market dynamics and organizational responses to industry challenges.

Table 1: Population of the Study

Firm	Address	Staff Strength
Nigerian Breweries, Ameke	9th mile corner, Enugu state	2,370
International Breweries, Onitsha	SABMiller Drive, Harbour Industrial Layout, Onitsha, Anambra State	2,076
Life Breweries Co. Ltd., Onitsha	87/97 Port Harcourt Rd, Fegge, Onitsha, Anambra	1,432
Golden Guinea Breweries, Umuahia	Aba Rd, Ubakala	2,116
Nigerian Breweries, Ubachima	Ubachima, Imo state	2,390
Total		10,384

***Source**: Field Survey (2025)*

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The Taro Yamane formula for finite populations was used to determine the sample size for this study, and it is presented below:

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the desired level of precision.

$$n = \frac{10,384}{1 + 10,384\ (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 385.1632; \text{ Sample size} = 385 \text{ respondents}$$

The strata distribution is shown in Appendix A.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data were collected via copies of a structured electronic questionnaires distributed online to employees of selected beverage firms. The questionnaire aimed to measure the usage levels of data analytics, leadership commitment, and ecosystem partnerships, and

their perceived impact on the selling proposition. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques for data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the characteristics of the data using frequency and mean analyses. Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis and evaluate the effect of digital transformation on the selling proposition. Regression analysis was preferred as it helped determine the strength and direction of the influence or the effect of digital transformation on the firms' strategic positioning.

Model Specification

To analyze the effect of digital transformation on the selling proposition, the study applied the regression model as follows:

$SEP_i = \beta 0 + \beta 1 DA_i + \beta 2 LC_i + \beta 3 EP_i + \mu_i$----------eqi

Where:

SEPi = Selling proposition

DAi = Data analytics

LCi = Leadership commitment

EP = Ecosystem partnership

β0 = Intercept

β1-3 = Parameter for data analytics

ų = Error term

2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

Analysis of the objectives of the study

Of the expected 385 responses, only 221 were duly submitted. Table 4.1 shows the analysis of the research questions based on the responses collected.

Table 2 Analysis of the objectives of the study

S/N	Data Analytics	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Data analytics improves decision-making processes within the company.	24	45	29	85	38	3.31	Agree
2	The company utilizes data analytics to track market trends and competitor performance.	26	31	42	64	58	3.44	Agree
3	Data analytics plays a key role in identifying new business opportunities for the company.	20	47	36	83	35	3.30	Agree
4	The company uses data analytics to understand customer preferences and tailor products accordingly.	36	30	26	85	44	3.32	Agree
	Leadership Commitment	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Decision**
5	Top management consistently communicates a clear vision aligned with strategic goals.	17	44	22	104	34	3.43	Agree
6	Leaders in this organization demonstrate strong commitment to the implementation of strategic initiatives.	29	34	23	72	63	3.48	Agree
7	Our executives are actively involved in supporting digital transformation projects.	21	24	33	80	63	3.63	Agree
8	Leadership prioritizes resource allocation toward activities that enhance our market position.	20	40	30	95	36	3.39	Agree
	Ecosystem Partnership	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Decision**
9	Our organization actively collaborates with external partners to create value.	16	50	28	83	44	3.40	Agree
10	We maintain long-term strategic relationships with suppliers, distributors, or technology providers.	20	34	23	87	57	3.57	Agree

11	Partnerships with ecosystem stakeholders have improved our innovation capacity.	25	32	31	80	53	3.47	Agree
12	We share relevant data and hints with partners to enhance collective performance.	26	33	30	73	59	3.48	Agree
	Selling Proposition	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Decision**
13	The use of data analytics has helped improve our product differentiation strategy.	17	49	27	86	42	3.39	Agree
14	Data analytics has enabled our company to create unique selling points that attract more customers.	30	37	27	70	57	3.39	Agree
15	The company's selling proposition is adjusted regularly based on hints derived from data analytics.	28	31	42	62	58	3.41	Agree
16	Our selling proposition aligns with the needs and preferences of the target market, as informed by data analysis.	20	48	37	77	39	3.30	Agree

Source: SPSS 26 Output (2025)

Table 2 provides a comprehensive analysis of the research objectives like data analytics, leadership commitment, and ecosystem partnerships influence on decision-making and the company's selling proposition. The frequency distribution reveals the extent of respondents' agreement or disagreement with each statement, offering insights into current organizational perceptions. Regarding data analytics, the first item examines its role in enhancing decision-making processes. The majority of respondents (85 agreed, 38 strongly agreed) perceive data analytics as beneficial, reflected in a mean score of 3.31, indicating general agreement. The second item, which assesses whether data analytics aids in tracking market trends and competitors, garnered similar support (64 agreed, 58 strongly agreed), with a mean of 3.44. The third item shows that most respondents (83 agreed, 35 strongly agreed) believe data analytics helps identify new opportunities, with a mean score of 3.30.

The fourth item, focusing on understanding customer preferences, also received positive responses (85 agreed, 44 strongly agreed), with a mean of 3.32.

In terms of leadership, Item 5 indicates that top management communicates a clear vision aligned with strategic goals, with 104 agreeing and 34 strongly agreeing, leading to a mean of 3.43. While this suggests positive perceptions, a minority expressed disagreement, indicating room for improvement. Item 6 highlights leadership commitment to strategic initiatives, with 63 strongly agreeing and 72 agreeing (totaling 135 positive responses), and a mean of 3.48, reflecting overall support but some skepticism. Active involvement in digital transformation projects (Item 7) received strong backing (63 strongly agree, 80 agree), with a high mean score of 3.63, signifying robust leadership support. Resource prioritization (Item 8) also showed general support (95 agree, 36 strongly agree), with a mean of 3.39, though some respondents perceive misalignment. Within ecosystem partnerships, Item 9 assesses active collaboration with external partners, with 83 agree and 44 strongly agree, but also notable disagreement (66), resulting in a mean of 3.40. Long-term strategic relationships (Item 10) are viewed more positively, with 87 agree and 57 strongly agree, producing a higher mean of 3.57. Partnerships' role in enhancing innovation capacity (Item 11) yielded mixed responses, though generally positive (80 agree, 53 strongly agree, mean 3.47). Data sharing practices (Item 12) also received strong support (73 agree, 59 strongly agree), with a mean of 3.48, though some gaps remain.

Finally, in the selling proposition, data analytics appears to support product differentiation (Item 1) and creating unique selling points (Item 2), both with mean scores of 3.39, indicating agreement. Regular adjustments based on data insights (Item 3) and alignment with market needs (Item 4) also received positive responses, with mean scores of 3.41 and 3.30 respectively. Overall, the data suggest that while there is widespread recognition of the importance of data analytics, leadership, and partnerships in shaping decision-making and market positioning, perceptions vary, and opportunities for strengthening internal and external strategic practices remain.

Test of Hypotheses

To analyze the effect of digital transformation on the selling proposition, the study applied a multiple regression technique. The multiple regression conducted to test the hypotheses is shown below in Table 4.2.

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809[a]	.655	.650	1.89677

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ecosystem Partnership, Data Analytics, Leadership Commitment

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1482.540	3	494.180	137.358	.000[b]
	Residual	780.709	217	3.598		
	Total	2263.249	220			

a. Dependent Variable: Selling Proposition

b. Predictors: (Constant), Ecosystem Partnership, Data Analytics, Leadership Commitment

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.175	.853		1.377	.170
	Data Analytics	.436	.049	.466	8.820	.000
	Leadership Commitment	.442	.055	.423	8.009	.000
	Ecosystem Partnership	.025	.041	.025	.622	.534

a. Dependent Variable: Selling Proposition

Source: SPSS 26 Output (2025)

Table 4.2 displays the results of the regression analysis examining how Data Analytics, Leadership Commitment, and Ecosystem Partnerships influence the Selling Proposition of beverage firms in South-East Nigeria. The model's adjusted R-squared value is 0.650, indicating that approximately 65.0% of the variation in the selling proposition can be

explained collectively by these three independent variables. This reflects a strong explanatory capacity of the model. The significance of the overall model is confirmed by the ANOVA F-statistic (p = 0.000), which shows that the predictors, as a group, have a statistically significant effect on the firms' selling propositions at the 5% significance level. Consequently, this justifies further interpretation of individual coefficients.

The regression constant is 1.175 with a p-value of 0.170, suggesting that when all independent variables are zero, the estimated selling proposition score is 1.175. However, since this p-value exceeds 0.05, the constant is not statistically significant, indicating that the baseline selling proposition without the influence of Data Analytics, Leadership Commitment, and Ecosystem Partnership does not significantly differ from zero. Therefore, the variations in the selling proposition are primarily driven by these predictors rather than by the intercept.

Test of Hypothesis I

H_{O1}: Data Analytics has no significant effect on the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

The coefficient for Data Analytics is 0.436 with a p-value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold, indicating high statistical significance. This suggests that a one-unit increase in the use of data analytics is associated with an approximately 0.436 increase in the firm's selling proposition, holding other factors constant. This positive and significant effect implies that leveraging data-driven tools enhances firms' capability to craft value offerings, personalize marketing strategies, and respond swiftly to consumer trends. The findings align with prior research Etuk et al. (2025) demonstrated that digital transformation through data analytics improves marketing performance and customer satisfaction, while Oduntan and Oriola (2025) linked analytics skills to business growth in breweries. Dibie and Nworie (2025) further supported this by showing how AI and blockchain technologies closely related to analytics drive profit growth. Overall, these

results reinforce the critical role of data analytics in shaping competitive selling propositions in the beverage industry.

Test of Hypothesis II

H_{O_2}: Leadership commitment has no significant effect on the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

The regression results show a coefficient of 0.442 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant positive effect. This means that an increase in leadership commitment correlates with approximately 0.442 units higher in the firm's selling proposition. When top management actively supports strategic initiatives, it fosters alignment, resource allocation, and innovation, which collectively strengthen the firm's market positioning. This finding corroborates previous studies Kimaku, Omwenga, and Nzulwa (2019) emphasized the importance of leadership commitment in strategic execution, while Omesa et al. (2019) linked leadership behaviours to successful implementation of strategic plans. Nyong'a and Maina (2019) also highlighted that committed leadership significantly influences strategy execution, especially in high-performing organizations. Similarly, Olomi and Akintokunbo (2022) demonstrated that leadership's technological capabilities contribute to strategic flexibility. Collectively, these studies support the conclusion that leadership commitment is vital for enhancing a firm's market differentiation and selling proposition.

Test of Hypothesis III

H_{O_3}: Ecosystem partnerships have no significant effect on the selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East, Nigeria.

The coefficient for Ecosystem Partnership is 0.025 with a p-value of 0.534, which exceeds the significance level of 0.05. This indicates that, statistically, ecosystem partnerships do not have a meaningful impact on the selling proposition in this context. The minimal effect size suggests that, despite existing collaborations, they may not be strategically integrated

to influence market positioning significantly. Weak alignment, limited trust, or underdeveloped integration could explain this insubstantial effect. This result contrasts with studies like Visscher, Hahn, and Konrad (2021), who emphasized the strategic value of ecosystem synergies, and Kamalaldin et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of tailored ecosystem strategies for innovation. However, it aligns with findings by Adeyinka (2023) and Mangifera and Mawardi (2022), who observed that many firms lack the maturity or structural capacity to translate ecosystem interactions into competitive advantages. In the context of South-Est Nigeria's brewery firms, this suggests that ecosystem partnerships are yet to be effectively leveraged for strategic differentiation, possibly due to underdeveloped collaboration frameworks or limited integration into core value creation processes.

The findings reveal that data analytics significantly enhances the selling proposition of brewery firms in Southeast Nigeria ($\beta = 0.436$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that firms effectively utilizing analytics tools can better tailor their marketing strategies, optimize pricing, and predict consumer preferences, thus strengthening their competitive edge. Data analytics enables decision-makers to personalize products, refine value propositions, and respond swiftly to market shifts, aligning offerings more closely with customer needs. Empirical studies support this conclusion; for instance, Etuk et al. (2025) found that digital transformation driven by analytics improved customer satisfaction and marketing outcomes among SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. Similarly, Oduntan and Oriola (2025) linked analytics skills to growth in Nigerian breweries, while Dibie and Nworie (2025) demonstrated that technologies like AI and blockchain related to analytics boosted profits in small enterprises. These studies collectively reinforce the critical role of data analytics in enhancing firm performance and market effectiveness.

Regarding leadership commitment, the results show a positive and significant impact on the selling proposition ($\beta = 0.442$, $p = 0.000$). Active support from top management fosters alignment, resource allocation, and innovation, which translate into stronger brand positioning and clearer market messages. Leaders' ability to inspire teams and allocate strategic resources ensures consistent and relevant value offerings. Previous research supports this, with Kimaku et al. (2019) and Omesa et al. (2019) highlighting leadership's vital role in executing strategic plans and delivering value. Olomi and Akintokunbo (2022) further emphasized that technological leadership contributes to strategic agility, crucial for maintaining a competitive selling proposition. These findings underscore that committed leadership is essential for firms aiming to craft compelling market offers.

In contrast, ecosystem partnerships show a positive but statistically insignificant effect on the selling proposition ($\beta = 0.025$, $p = 0.534$). While collaborations exist, they may not be strategically aligned or deeply integrated into core processes, limiting their influence on market differentiation. The weak impact could be due to limited trust, data sharing, or operational integration, rendering partnerships superficial rather than strategic. This partially contrasts with studies by Visscher et al. (2021) and Kamalaldin et al. (2021), who emphasize the value of well-developed ecosystems. However, it aligns with Adeyinka (2023) and Mangifera and Mawardi (2022), who note that many firms lack the capacity to leverage partnerships effectively for competitive gains. Overall, the findings suggest that in Southeast Nigeria, ecosystem partnerships have yet to mature into strategic assets that significantly influence the firms' selling propositions.

3. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical importance of internal organizational capabilities, notably data analytics and leadership commitment, in enhancing the selling proposition of brewery firms in Southeast Nigeria. The positive and significant effects of these variables highlight

that firms leveraging data-driven insights and strong leadership are better equipped to craft compelling market value propositions, fostering competitive differentiation. Conversely, the insignificant impact of ecosystem partnerships suggests that, at present, external collaborations are not strategically integrated or effectively utilized to influence market positioning. This may reflect limited network maturity or alignment issues. Overall, the findings imply that internal strengths are primary drivers of market perception and differentiation, whereas external partnerships remain underleveraged. For brewery firms seeking competitive advantage, investing in internal capabilities appears more impactful than relying on external alliances, which require better strategic integration to contribute meaningfully to their market differentiation efforts.

The inferential analysis carried out in the study revealed the following:

1. Data Analytics has a positive and significant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in Southeast Nigeria ($\beta = 0.436$, $p = 0.000$).
2. Leadership Commitment has a positive and significant effect on selling proposition of brewery firms in South-East Nigeria ($\beta = 0.442$, $p = 0.000$).
3. Ecosystem Partnership has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on selling proposition of beverage firms in South-East Nigeria ($\beta = 0.025$, $p = 0.534$).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings the following recommendations are made:

1. Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) in beverage firms should institutionalize the integration of advanced data analytics systems across all marketing and sales operations to enable data-driven hints that improve product positioning, customer targeting, and competitive value delivery, thereby enhancing their overall selling proposition.

2. Executive Leaders and Board Members need to demonstrate consistent strategic commitment by allocating adequate resources, setting clear digital transformation priorities, and actively monitoring digital implementation progress to ensure it directly enhances the firm's value proposition and market relevance.

3. Innovation Strategy Teams need to critically assess the structure and strategic focus of existing ecosystem collaborations, emphasizing co-innovation and mutual value creation, in order to convert such partnerships from peripheral support roles into core drivers of the firm's unique selling proposition.

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