
INTEGRATION STRATEGY AND THE PERFORMANCE OF BREWING FIRMS IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of integration strategy on the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria, with particular emphasis on backward integration strategy and forward integration strategy. The study was motivated by the persistent operational and profitability challenges confronting brewing firms despite their significant contribution to Nigeria's economy. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 319 management staff drawn from eight purposively selected brewing firms in Nigeria, while a sample size of 187 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, whose validity was established through face and construct validity, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with the aid of SPSS version 25 at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that backward integration strategy has a positive and significant influence on the performance of brewing firms ($R^2 = 0.639$, $\beta = 0.884$, $t = 17.744$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, forward integration strategy exhibited a positive and significant influence on firm performance ($R^2 = 0.672$, $\beta = 0.857$, $t = 26.839$, $p < 0.05$), with forward integration demonstrating a relatively stronger predictive effect. The study concluded that effective implementation of integration strategies significantly enhances the operational performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria. It therefore recommended that brewing firms should strengthen backward integration through partnerships with local suppliers and increased local sourcing of raw materials, while simultaneously expanding forward

integration by developing company-owned distribution channels and branded retail outlets to improve market access, operational efficiency, and long-term competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: Integration Strategy, Backward Integration Strategy, Forward Integration Strategy, Firm Performance, Brewing Firms, Southern Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary business environment is marked by intense competition, rapid technological change, and globalization. In a highly competitive business environment, developing new strategies that can generate new value in the face of competition or even new markets and customers is therefore essential to an organization's survival (Uttong, Ekanem, & Uwa, 2024). Thus, managers and owners of business organizations are confronted by certain critical decisions regarding strategies which could be adopted if their businesses must remain competitive with sustained growth and profitability. One of such strategic decisions is integration strategy. Integration strategy may be in form of vertical integration, where a business expands its control over upstream suppliers or downstream distributors, or horizontal integration, where it acquires or merges with competitors to consolidate market position. Additionally, this strategy can include conglomerate or diversification strategy. Successful integration strategies foster collaboration, streamline processes, enhance innovation, and enable the organization to respond more effectively to environmental shifts, thereby securing long-term stakeholder value.

Integration strategy refers to a coordinated approach in which an organization aligns its resources, capabilities, and activities across different functions, business units, or stages of the value chain to achieve synergy and competitive advantage (Izediuno et al., 2024). This is based on the recognition that improvement of manufacturing industry performance, including brewing firms, remains a critical factor for rapid growth of any economy (Oshodi, 2022). By integrating strategies at the corporate, business, and functional levels, firms can create a unified direction that maximizes the impact of each operational decision.

Haleblian et al. (2009) assert that integration takes place when two businesses merge their resources, liabilities, and cultural values on an equal footing across diverse enterprises and industries, or alternatively when one business purchases and takes over the operations of another business. Furthermore, organizations do tend to lose their highly skilled human resource much more sooner than they can afford to replace them, it is therefore of utmost

importance for success seeking organization to develop strategic succession plans for the total organization as these will help sustain the corporate structure in the competitive business environment (Akpan, Brownson, & Uwa, 2023). Integration has made a substantial contribution to the development of corporate competitive advantage, renewal, and expansion, though most integration processes do not achieve the anticipated economic and strategic goals.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The brewing industry is a dominant force within the entire manufacturing sector in Nigeria, contributing over N2.9 trillion (8.46%) in Real GDP per quarter as clearly reflected in National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports. According to year 2024 (Q2) NBS reports, the brewing sector consistently served as a top contributor to the overall Non-Oil GDP and a major source of tax revenue, employment, corporate social responsibility and overall economic growth, even while the firms themselves were navigating extreme profitability challenges due to fluctuating economic conditions including inconsistent government policies, rising inflation, rising production costs, and intense competition from both local and foreign brands. The devaluation of the naira, high inflation rates and unstable energy supply have resulted in increased operational expenses, thereby eroding profit margins. Additionally, changing consumer preferences, driven by health consciousness and alternative beverage options, have intensified market competition. These factors have contributed to declining sales growth, reduced capacity utilization, diminished shareholder value, and the businesses become extremely challenging.

Despite their significant contributions to economic growth, brewing firms in Nigeria face severe operational and profitability challenges, raising concerns about appropriate management strategy to enhance their performance in an increasingly competitive and volatile business environment. Previous researches advocate integration strategies as one of the management strategies that brewing firms adopt to enhance operational synergy, reduce costs, and strengthen market positioning (Fapohunda and Olayide, 2023; Olhager and Feldman, 2018). However, it appears that Nigerian brewing firms have not fully leveraged such strategic synergy between procurement of raw materials, production, marketing, and distribution functions. Limited strategic integration has constrained their ability to respond swiftly to market changes and optimize resources with resultant low performance. Moreover, existing researches on integration strategy did not examine the influence of all its dimensions

on the performance of brewing firms in Nigeria, Generating a culture of innovation in your company is a critical initiative today but despite this, many businesses combat internal challenges that slow the process (Ukpong, Uwa, & Ekanem, 2022). These situations underscore the need to further investigate how the dimensions of integration strategy individually influence the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria. The specific objectives include;

- i. To examine the influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.
- ii. To ascertain the effect of forward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does forward integration strategy influence performance of brewing firms in Nigeria?

1.5 Statement of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

Ho₂: Forward integration strategy does not significantly influence performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The idea and qualitative characteristic of this study are discussed in this section of the study. These include the element that offer comparability, verifiability, timeliness, and ability of integration strategy and the performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

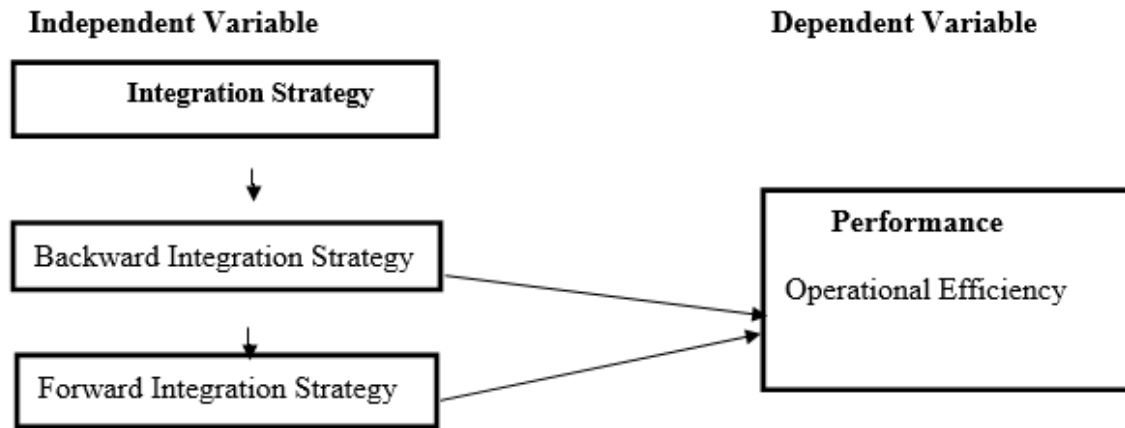


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model of Integration Strategy and Firms' Performance by the Researcher, (2026).

2.1.1 Integration Strategy

Integration strategy is an important tool in building a competitive business. Businesses can use various integration strategies to increase their influence in supply and distribution or lessen competition. This can help them consolidate and expand their place in the market and increase their competitiveness. According to Bauer and Friesl (2022), strategic integration is the process of combining two or more separate entities, such as companies or departments within a company, to achieve greater synergy and coordination in pursuit of strategic goals. It is a key strategy for companies seeking to grow and gain a competitive advantage by leveraging the strengths of multiple entities.

There are two main types of integration strategy; vertical integration and horizontal integration. Vertical integration involves combining entities at different levels of the supply chain, such as a manufacturer acquiring a supplier, and a retailer acquiring or a distributor. Horizontal integration, on the other hand, involves combining entities at the same level of the supply chain, such as two competing companies merging to create a larger entity with more market share. The benefits of strategic integration can be significant. By combining entities, companies can achieve greater economies of scale and cost savings, streamline processes, and reduce duplication of effort. They can also gain access to new markets, distribution channels, and technologies, and create a larger pool of resources to invest in research and development (Clinton-Etim, 2020). According to Wado (2018), integration strategy refers to the quality of cooperation that exists among different groups towards achieving an effective and compelling framework. Oshodi (2022) and Uwamahoro (2018) posit that integration strategy depicts the

degree to which the various business activities, including those of its suppliers, customers and other members of the supply chain are being integrated together. It encompasses various forms, including vertical integration where firms extend control upstream to suppliers (backward integration) or downstream to customers and distributors (forward integration). Integration strategy is one of the management strategies that brewing firms adopt to enhance operational synergy, reduce costs, and strengthen market positioning (Fapohunda and Olayide, 2023; Olhager and Feldman, 2018).

By consolidating control over upstream and downstream activities, integration strategy not only supports operational resilience but also provides a sustainable foundation for long-term profitability and growth. Organizations must face scarcity of resources, at least, in one area. When such situations occur in an organization, employees as well as organizations do not just compete for the limited resources, they fight for it (Etim, Brownson & Akpaetor, 2023). The growth of management not only involves the acquisition of knowledge, competence and experience, but also the development of resilience (Imagha, Ugwunwanyi & Akpaetor, 2021).

2.1.2 Dimensions of Integration Strategy

Integration Strategy has different and notable dimensions stated in the extant strategic management literature. These dimensions include backward integration strategy, forward integration strategy, taper integration strategy, conglomerate strategy and horizontal strategy (Abolarinwa et. al. 2020). This study considered just the vertical dimensions which are backward integration strategy and forward integration strategy.

2.1.2.1 Forward Integration Strategy

Forward integration strategy is a form of vertical integration in which an organization extends its operations downstream in the value chain, moving closer to end customers by acquiring or establishing control over distribution, retail, or other post-production activities. This approach enables firms to improve market access, strengthen customer relationships, enhance product availability, and capture a greater share of the value generated from their offerings (Hutzschenreuter et. al., 2014). The concept, which has been discussed in strategic management literature since the works of scholars like Ansoff (1965), is often employed as a competitive move to reduce dependency on third-party distributors and safeguard market position. Makop (2022) shared the opinion of Hunger and Wheelen (2009) that forward integration involves a firm entering into the act of distributing or selling its current product and moving upwards in the production/distribution process towards the consumer. Forward

integration therefore comes to play when an organization draws closer to the end users, thereby exercising more control over how its products and services are supplied and sold to the consumers. In industries with high competition and distribution bottlenecks, such as the brewing sector, forward integration can involve establishing proprietary distribution networks, branded retail outlets, or direct-to-consumer sales platforms.

2.1.2.2 Backward Integration Strategy

Backward integration strategy is a form of vertical integration in which an organization expands its operations to assume control over its suppliers or sources of raw materials, components, or intermediate inputs (Kitoto, 2025). Makop (2022) explains that backward integration involves an organization's activities in diversifying closer to the sources of raw materials, thereby exercising control over the cost, availability and quality of the supplies it is aiming to purchase. This strategic move aims to secure the supply chain, reduce production costs, improve quality control, and minimize dependence on external vendors (Izediuno et al., 2024). By internalizing supply chain activities, firms can improve operational efficiency, protect profit margins and gain greater strategic control over critical resources (Grant, 2020). In resource-intensive industries such as brewing, backward integration may involve investments in agricultural production, raw material processing plants, or packaging facilities. In Nigeria, for instance, Nigerian Breweries Plc operates malting plants in Aba and Kaduna to produce malted barley locally, thereby reducing reliance on imports, mitigating foreign exchange risks, and supporting government policies on local sourcing. Such strategic initiatives enable brewing firms to enhance production stability, reduce vulnerability to supply chain disruptions, and strengthen their long-term competitive position.

2.1.3 Performance

Inwang *et. al.* (2025) assert that the focal point of modern-day organizations has been their performance. This stems from the fact that performance constitutes a measure used to determine whether the organization is doing well or not. The concept of performance lends itself to an almost infinite variety of definitions, many of which relate to specific contexts or functional perspectives. Firm's Performance was conceptually defined and measured with non-financial performance like market share, firm profitability, firm efficiency, competitive advantage, customer satisfaction, and firm creativity. The concept of organizational performance is fundamental to businesses as the basis through which organizations evaluate the extent to which their set goals are being achieved (Inwang, 2025).

Fapohunda & Olayide, 2023, and Ali et. al. 2023 posit that performance in the digital era of today is heavily dependent on integration. They maintain that businesses integrate in order to improve consumer experience, get data-driven insights, and streamline operations. The performance of an organization is adjudged positive when the activities of an organization yield favourable consequences (Nnabuife & Itua, 2021). Organization performance has been the most important consideration for every organization, be it profit or non-profit organization (Uforo, Malachi, and Don, 2022).

2.1.4 Measures of Firms' Performance

The word performance is derived from job performance or actual performance, which refers to an individual's actual accomplishment at work (Ekanem *et al.* 2026). Performance is fundamental measure of an organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives effectively and efficiently (Ekanem & Efi, 2025). Performance is not a mere finding of an outcome, but rather it is the result of a comparison between the outcome and the objective (Ekanem, 2021). Various metrics are often employed to measure performance. These comprise financial (such as return on assets, return on equity, and gross profit margin/profitability), operational efficiency indicators (including production efficiency, cycle time, employee engagement, innovation, quality), and customer-related (including customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and market share) performance indices (Fapohunda and Olayide, 2023).

2.1.4.1. Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency refers to a business's capacity to create maximum value from its resources, minimizing waste of time, effort, and money while maintaining or improving product/service quality. Operational efficiency can be defined as the ratio between outputs gained from the business and an input to run a business operation. When improving operation efficiency, the output to input ratio improves. It is a measure of how well an organization's inputs (like costs and labour) are converted into outputs (like revenue and customer satisfaction). Improving customer satisfaction and increasing shareholder value both depend on achieving operational efficiency. Therefore, improving operational efficiency is one of the companies' top objectives and is the performance indicator adopted for this study.

2.1.5 Integration Strategy and Performance of Brewing Firms in Nigeria

Inwand et. al. (2025) described integration as the quality of cooperation existing among different groups involved in a production/supply chain as a strategy to achieve an effective and more coercive whole. They conducted a study to investigate the relative importance of

integration strategies on the performance of brewing industry in Nigeria. The research was aimed at addressing insufficient knowledge of how integration strategies relatively influence the performance of brewing firms in Nigeria. They came to a conclusion that there was a strong link between integration strategies and performance of brewing firms in Nigeria. Specifically, internal integration carries the highest influence on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria, followed by supplier integration while customer integration would have lowest influence on the brewing firms' performance. The essence is to maximize profit by capturing consumer surplus, but the difficulty is in comprehending customer preferences and willingness to pay (Bassey, Ekanem & Edem, 2025).

2.1.6 Backward Integration Strategy and Performance of Brewing Firms in Nigeria

Backward integration strategy has become a critical competitive tool for brewing firms in Nigeria as they seek to strengthen supply chain control, reduce operational costs, and improve overall performance. This strategy involves acquiring or establishing ownership over upstream activities, such as the cultivation of raw materials and the processing of intermediate inputs, to reduce dependence on external suppliers (Ansoff, 1965; Porter, 1985). In Nigeria, Oshodi (2022) investigated the impact of backward integration policy on manufacturing firms' value added and discovered that backward integration policy through the use of local raw materials significantly increased manufacturing firms' value added by all the sampled firms across the industry. The persistent volatility of foreign exchange rates, rising import tariffs, and government policies promoting local content have accelerated the adoption of backward integration by breweries. By securing critical inputs internally, brewing firms can improve production stability, strengthen brand competitiveness, and achieve sustainable profitability in Nigeria's highly competitive beverage market.

2.1.7 Forward Integration Strategy and Performance of Brewing Firms in Nigeria

Forward integration strategy is a form of vertical integration in which a company extends its operations downstream in the value chain by taking control of distribution channels, retail outlets, or direct customer engagement (Porter, 1985; Ansoff, 1965). In the brewing industry, forward integration may involve establishing proprietary distribution networks, acquiring retail outlets, investing in branded hospitality venues, or leveraging direct-to-consumer sales platforms. In Nigeria, where intense competition, high distribution costs, and inconsistent market access remain major challenges, forward integration has emerged as a strategic leverage for performance improvement. Izediuno et al. (2024) examined Integration

Strategies and Competitive Advantage in Manufacturing Sector in Ogun State, Nigeria. Findings indicated that both vertical integration strategies and horizontal integration strategy with coefficients of 0.556 and 0.843 had a positive and significant impact on competitive advantage.

By controlling the downstream segment, these firms can reduce reliance on third-party distributors, ensure product quality consistency, secure faster market feedback, and adapt pricing strategies to changing consumer preferences. Consequently, forward integration not only drives revenue growth but also enhances market competitiveness and long-term business sustainability in Nigeria's dynamic brewing sector. Not only do strategically agile organizations anticipate change well, but they also thrive on it, using uncertainty as a driving force for innovation and ongoing development (Bassey, Uwa, & Okurebia, 2023).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Transaction-Cost Theory by Ronald Coase (1937)

Transaction Cost Theory (TCT) was propounded by Ronald Coase (1937). This theory, also known as Transaction Cost Economics (TCE), posits that firms expand their boundaries when the cost of transacting in the market exceeds the cost of organizing internally. This implies that production will take place within the firm when the cost of putting in place production through the market exchange is higher than within the firm. The transaction cost theory was further developed by Oliver Williamson (1975), asserting that firms choose the governance structure that minimizes the sum of production costs and transaction costs. He noted that high transaction costs are generally driven by factors such as asset specificity (investments that are difficult to redeploy to other uses or users - e.g. specialized equipment), uncertainty/complexity (unpredictable market conditions or complex transactions), and opportunism/bounded rationality (the risk that one party may act in self-interest - opportunism, or the inability of parties to foresee every contingency - bounded rationality).

According to Makop (2022), vertical integration strategy involves decisions regarding which aspects of the value chain should be outsourced and which should remain within the boundaries of the organization. This is often referred to as the "Make-or-Buy" decision. Make-or-Buy decisions provide answers to such questions as: Why do some organizations go for a vertically integrated structure, where others are specialists in one stage of production and outsource other stages to outside firms? The concern here is, should a firm produce its own inputs, buy them in the spot market or preserve the relationship with a specific vendor?

This decision will go a long way in determining the firm's level of vertical integration, since each decision is a pointer to the nature of the operation a firm will engage in and which it will outsource from the suppliers (Walker & Weber, 1984). This thinking is concerned with the decision whether the firm should integrate backwards, which is "to internalize production of the raw materials instead of sourcing it from the external supplier" (Sudarsanam, 2010). The "make" part of the decision, therefore, shows that ownership is joint, and control rights are integrated, whereas under the latter, they are separate.

Therefore, Transaction Cost Theory aligns with the adoption of the backward integration and forward integration strategies among brewing firms as a step towards mitigating operational inefficiencies, minimizing external transaction uncertainties, and improving overall firm performance.

2.3 Empirical Review

Inwang *et. al.* (2025) conducted a study to investigate the relative importance of integration strategies on the performance of brewing industry in Nigeria. The research was aimed at addressing insufficient knowledge of how integration strategies relatively influence the performance of brewing firms in Nigeria. Survey research design was used for the study. The study population comprised 273 managerial staff, while sample size as determined using Taro Yamane formula was 162. Data were collected through administration of questionnaire and a response rate of 73.5 % was achieved. The research hypotheses were tested by multiple regression method. Findings indicated that with R^2 value of 0.386, there is a significant positive influence of internal integration strategy on the firms' performance. The analysis also indicated that in terms of their relative importance, internal integration strategy ($\text{Beta} = 1.302$, $t = 3.288$ $P < 0.05$) will have the highest influence on the firms' performance than supplier integration strategy ($\text{Beta} = 0.377$, $t = 2.772$ $P < 0.05$); followed by customer integration strategy ($\text{Beta} = 0.931$, $t = 2.421$ $P < 0.05$). It was therefore concluded that there was a strong link between integration strategies and performance of brewing firms in Nigeria. Specifically, internal integration carries the highest influence on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria, followed by supplier integration while customer integration would have lowest influence on the brewing firms' performance.

Kim *et. al.* (2025) investigated integration and performance in modern manufacturing firms; the role of knowledge and product complexity. The objective of the study was to examine how vertical integration of pre- and post-production activities affect performance through

their contribution to firm's core production capabilities. A Python algorithm was developed to text-mine from Annual Reports of 7,740 manufacturing firms in the United Kingdom between 2003-2019 periods. This permitted the construction of a longitudinal data set capturing firms' non-production activities, covering pre-production (e.g. R&D, design) and post-production (e.g. distribution, logistics). Fixed-effects and system generalized method of moments (GMM) estimators were used to investigate how the integration of different functions impacted firm performance, and the moderating role of product complexity. Findings showed that the vertical integration of pre-production activities - but not the integration of post-production activities - enhances performance. The integration of both pre- and post-production activities also enhances performance. Product complexity exhibits a U-shaped moderating effect on the relationship for pre-production and post-production activities individually, but not for both types of activities together.

Kitoto (2025) investigated the Effect of Unrelated Diversification Strategy on Organizational Performance among Star-Rated Hotels in the Kenyan Coast. An embedded mixed method comprising a descriptive survey and exploratory research design was used. The study was conducted on the Kenyan Coast. Stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the hotels, purposive sampling was used to strategic managers and random sampling was adopted to select both middle and lower-level managers. Data were collected through a questionnaire and interview schedule. 383 questionnaires were distributed and 29 managers interviewed. Descriptive statistics and simple linear regression were used to analyzed the data. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. 354 questionnaires were duly filled, representing 92% response rate, while 29 general managers interviewed represented 80.6%. The simple regression model result showed that $R\text{-square} = 0.558$. This means that 55.8% of performance is explained by conglomerate and collaboration diversification strategies. The result indicated that conglomerate diversification strategies ($p\text{-value} < 0.0001$) and collaboration diversification strategies ($p\text{-value} = 0.031$) are significant predictors of the performance of star-rated hotels on the Kenyan Coast. The study recommended that hotels wishing to increase or retain their financial position and market share and also achieve economy of scale even during business turbulence should employ an unrelated diversification strategy.

Olamide and Peter (2024) conducted a research on Impact of Integration Strategy on Organization Performance, Case of Ideal Waster Manufacturing Industry in Ibadan, Oyo

State. The study objective was to evaluate the impact of integration strategy on organizational performance, using descriptive research design. The study population was 53 employees of Ideal Water Manufacturing Industry in Ibadan, Oyo State. Descriptive statistics was used where mean and standard deviation was interpreted appropriately. Regression analysis was also used to provide inferential statistics. The findings indicated that human resources management and marketing integration strategies provided significant improvement in organization performance. The result also showed positive correlation between integration strategies and performance of the organization. The study concluded that there was significant impact of the integration on the performance of the organization.

Ekon and Isayas (2024) looked at the variables influencing strategic management practices across Nigerian SMEs. The research design used was survey research and population of the study was beverage firms globally with the sample size of 180 firms. Data were collected using online questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modelling. The study found that strategic management techniques including identifying possibilities in the environment, developing and implementing strategies, and evaluating strategies had a big influence on how well organizations performed throughout the sampling time.

Adejare et. al. (2023) examined strategy integration, sustainable drivers of firm internationalization performance - Moderated by environmental uncertainty and firm capabilities. The objective was to examine the relative impact of market, non-market strategy, and strategy integration on the performance of medium and large organizations in Portugal. The research used structured questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The instruments were administered online using survey monkey to the management staff of selected multinational corporations in Portugal. The survey was sent to over 1900 management staff who were decision-makers in those organizations, and only 302 responses were received and used for the analysis. A 5-point Likert scale response type for each construct item was used in the survey, and structural equation model (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses, while confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the fitness of the model. The findings revealed that strategy integration provides a more sustainable competitive performance than either market or non-market strategy when used separately, especially in highly regulated and standardized business contexts such as Portugal. The research concluded that market, non-market strategy and strategy integration enhance firm performance (market and competition, and customer satisfaction) in different and unique ways.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was employed in this study to collect data from the brewing firms at a single point in time. The design is appropriate for examining the relationships between multiple integration strategies (forward, backward, taper, conglomerate and horizontal) and firm performance. It allowed for efficient and cost-effective data collection while enabling both descriptive insights and analytical evaluation through regression analysis. Although causality could not be established, the design provides a robust framework for identifying existing patterns and associations that can inform managerial decision-making and guide future research.

3.2 Population of the Study

There are eleven (11) firms operating in the brewing firm in Nigeria but eight (8) were purposively selected for the study. The firms that were selected have engaged in a series of quality service delivery and they are among the top players in the brewing firms in Nigeria. these firms are Nigeria Breweries Pls, Champion Breweries Plc, International Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Golden Guinea Plc, Bature Brewery, Pabod Breweries Ltd and Intafact Breweries. The number of employees and management staff in these organizations is shown in the table 3.2.1. Therefore, three hundred and nineteen (319) management staff of the selected firms were used as the population in the study.

3.3 Sampling Size Determination

To avoid bias in data collection, the sampling distribution strategy is regarded as a crucial issue in research. To ensure that every person in the population has an equal chance of being selected, this study used stratified sampling to select it respondents. A huge sample size cannot ensure accuracy. As a result, the sample size within the intended population was specified by the researcher.

For calculating sample sizes, this study used Krejcie and Morgan Formula, which is stated as follows: $s = [x^2 np (1-p)] / [d^2 (n-1) + x^2 p (1-p)]$

Where

n = require sample size

X² = The table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level
(3.841), same as (1.96). (1.96)

N= The population size

P = The population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

D = The degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.50)

Since N = 319

$$n = [3.841 (319) (0.5) (1-0.5) / [0.052 (319-1) + [3.841(0.5) (1-0.5)$$

$$3.841 (319) (0.5) (0.5) / [0.0025 (318) / [3.841(0.5) (0.5)$$

$$220.8575 / [0.7975 + 0.96025]$$

$$306.31975 / 1.75525$$

$$= 187$$

By approximation, sample size is (n) = 187

3.4 Sampling Technique

Stratified sampling technique was adopted for the study. For copies of questionnaire to be proportionally allotted to different cadre of employees in the study organization, Bowley's formula for proportionate representation was used which as follows:

$$N_h = nN_H$$

Where: n = sample size

NH = population of a strata

N = population

Substituting;

INDUSTRIES	MANAGEMENT STAFF	SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION
Nigeria Breweries Plc	$72 \times 187 / 319 = 42$	42
Champion Breweries Plc	$22 \times 187 / 319 = 14$	14
International Breweries Plc	$42 \times 187 / 319 = 27$	27
Guinness Nigeria Plc	$14 \times 187 / 319 = 12$	12
Golden Guinea Plc	$23 \times 187 / 319 = 13$	13
Intafact Breweries	$56 \times 187 / 319 = 31$	31
Pabod Breweries Ltd	$49 \times 187 / 319 = 25$	25
Bature Brewery	$41 \times 187 / 319 = 26$	26
TOTAL	319	187

Source: Researcher's Computation (2026)

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

This study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. The data on the number of employees per firm were obtained through secondary source while data on employees' experiences came directly from the field.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

This study adopted a structured questionnaire designed to measure the independent and dependent variables. A 5-point Likert-scale ranging from Strongly Agreed SA (5), Agreed A (4), Undecided U (3), Disagreed D (2) down to Strongly Disagreed SD (1) was used for integration strategies, while quantitative indicators were used for performance metrics. The questionnaire was divided into section A (for demographic characteristics of the respondents) and section B (for research questions relevant to the problem at hand). A total of 175 questionnaires were distributed among the staff of the selected eight (8) brewing firms in southern part of Nigeria.

3.7 Research Instrument

The research instrument used was structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section A measured the participants' demographic details which include race, age, gender, tenure and job level. Section B comprised the integration strategies and performance of the brewing firms. The questionnaire was virtually self-administering survey and consists of 20 statements measuring the two major dimensions of integration strategy, namely; backward integration strategy and forward integration strategy and performance. The statements of the questionnaire were configured using the five-point Likert-scale. The instrument was pre-tested to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability. The questionnaires were administered to selected respondents in the eight (8) firms. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, and their participation was made voluntary and confidential to ensure ethical considerations. The completed questionnaires were checked for completeness before analysis.

3.9 Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument used was face and construct validity. Face validity means the transparency of a test as it appears to test participants. Also, construct validity is the degree to which a test measure what it intends to measure. A pre-test instrument was used also, to validate the instrument. Few copies of the questionnaire were administered to some staff of selected brewing firms for completion and during the exercise, observations and criticisms were made and corrections done before preparing the final copies. However, the supervisor made adjustments and gave guidelines on the validation.

3.10 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability means the consistency and stability of result when a measuring scale is repeated on the study on the same group of respondents. Reliability ensures the closeness of responses

or data collected from the respondents in the field. Therefore, to measure the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest measure was used on 10 respondents in each of the company used for the study. It was administered on interval of two weeks. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to calculate and to measure the reliability of the instrument; the value of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient as presented by Mohsen and Dennick (2011) is shown in table 3.2. To measure the performance, four question items were used from past research works of Michael (2018). The instrument had acceptable degree of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7.

Table 3.2: Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha Values.

Cronbach' alpha	Internal consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: Mohsen and Dennick (2011).

The result of analysis of Cronbach Alpha coefficient is also shown below:

Table 3.3: The Reliability Indexes of Cronbach Alpha.

Variable	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Test-retest		Internal consistency
Backward integration strategy	4	.83	.81		Good
Forward integration strategy	4	.78	.71		Acceptable
Performance	4	.89	.81		Good
Cluster Mean	12	.83	.78		Acceptable

Source: Researcher's computation (2026)

The result on Table 3.2 shows the alpha coefficient of each variable and the overall clustered mean, indicating that the instrument was reliable for used.

3.12 Empirical Specification of Model

The following empirical models were developed and used to test the null hypotheses of this study as below presented:

$$P = F(IS)$$

$$P = F(BIS)$$

$$P = F(FIS)$$

$$P = F(TIS)$$

$$P = F(CS)$$

$$P = F(HS)$$

In order to ascertain the combined influence of Integration Strategy model and Performance, the composite model is given below for objective 1, 2, 3, 6.7,9 and 9:

$$P = f(BIS, FIS, TIS, CS, HS)$$

Equations 1-5 above can be rewritten in its explicit form as below:

$$P_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BIS + \varepsilon \quad \text{eq.1}$$

$$P_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FIS + \varepsilon \quad \text{eq.2}$$

$$P_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BIS + \beta_2 FIS + \beta_3 BIS + \varepsilon + \beta_4 CS + \beta_5 HS \quad \text{eq.6}$$

Where:

FIS = Forward Integration Strategy

BIS = Backward Integration Strategy

β_0 = Intercept Coefficient

β_1, β_2 , = Coefficients of the independent variables

E = Error term

3.12 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize respondents' characteristics and adoption of integration strategies. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between integration strategies and the firms' performance, ensuring that all regression assumptions (normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity) were satisfied. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentage was used to analyse the data while inferential statistics such as Simple Linear and multiple regression analysis were used to test the null hypotheses for the study, using statistical software programme known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25.

3.13 Decision Criteria

The quantitative outcome was determined through linear and multiple regression models to test at a 95 per cent confidence level, therefore, where the p-value (significant value) is less than 0.05, the relationship is ruled to be statistically significant. In the quantitative analysis, the effect of the firms' actions on the environment was used to determine the firm performance.

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.3 Presentation of Data Analysis of Empirical Data

4.3.1 Examine the Influence of Backward Integration on the Performance of Brewing Firms in Southern Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Analysis of Responses on the influence of Backward Integration Strategy on the Performance of Brewing firms.

Backward Integration Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1: The firm has invested in farming or production of key raw materials used in brewing.	67 (39.0%)	59 (34.3%)	13 (7.5%)	22 (12.7%)	11 (6.5%)
Q2: Backward integration has reduced our dependence on imported raw materials.	66 (38.4%)	71 (41.2%)	2 (1.2%)	21 (12.2%)	12 (7.0%)
Q3: The strategy has helped to reduce production costs in the firm.	71 (41.2%)	66 (38.4)	21 (12.2%)	12 (7.0%)	22 (12.7%)
Q4: Our firm has greater control over the quality of raw materials due to backward integration.	67 (39.0%)	58 (29.1%)	14 (7.5%)	20 (11.6%)	13 (5.8%)

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The analysis in Table 4.2 shows that a total of 67 respondents representing 39% strongly agreed that the firm has invested in farming or production of key raw materials used in brewing. A total of 59 respondents representing 34% ticked agree, 13 (7.5%) ticked undecided, 22 (12.7%) respondents ticked disagree and 11 (6.5%) respondents ticked strongly disagreed. With regards to the second question, a total of 66 respondents representing 38.4% strongly agreed that Backward integration has reduced the dependence on imported raw materials. A total of 71 respondents representing 41.3% ticked agree, 2 (1.2%) ticked undecided, 21 (12.2%) respondents ticked disagree and 12 (7%) respondents ticked strongly disagree. With regards to third question, 71 respondents representing 41.2% strongly agreed that the strategy has helped to reduce production costs in the firm. A total of 66 respondents representing 38.4% ticked agree, 21 (12.2%) ticked undecided, 12 (7%) respondents ticked disagree and 22 (12.7%) respondents ticked strongly disagree. With regards to fourth question, shows that a total of 67 respondents representing 39.0% strongly agreed that the firm has greater control over the quality of raw materials due to backward integration. A total of 58 respondents representing 33.7% ticked agree, 14 (8.0%) ticked undecided, 20 (11.6%) respondents ticked disagree and 13(7.6%) respondent ticked strongly disagree.

4.3.2 Ascertain the Influence of forward integration strategy on the Performance of brewing Firms in Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Analysis of Responses on the influence of forward integration strategy on the performance of brewing firms.

Forward Integration Strategy	S	S A	D D	D	S D
Q1: Our firm has invested in company-owned distribution channels.	67 (39.0%)	58 (33.7%)	14 (8.1%)	20 (11.6%)	13 (7.6%)
Q2: The firm has established branded retail outlets or beer parlours to reach customers directly.	68 (39.5%)	58 (33.7%)	11 (6.5%)	13 (7.6%)	22 (12.7%)
Q3: Forward integration has helped improve product availability in the market.	67 (39.0%)	59 (34.3%)	13 (7.5%)	22 (12.7%)	11 (6.5%)
Q4: The strategy has strengthened our relationship with distributors and retailers.	66 (38.4%)	71 (41.2%)	2 (1.2%)	21 (12.2%)	12 (7.0%)

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The analysis in Table 4.3 shows that a total of 67 respondents representing 39% strongly agreed that the firm has invested in company-owned distribution channels. A total of 58 respondents representing 33.7% ticked agree, 14 (8.1%) ticked undecided, 20 (11.6%) respondents ticked disagree and 13 (7.6%) respondents ticked strongly disagree. With regards to the second question, a total of 68 respondents representing 39.5% strongly agreed that the firm has established branded retail outlets or beer parlours to reach customers directly. A total of 58 respondents representing 33.7% ticked agree, 11(6.4%) were undecided, 13 (7.6%) respondents ticked disagree and 22 (12.7%) respondents ticked strongly disagree.

With regards to third question, 67 respondents representing 39% strongly agreed that forward integration has helped improve product availability in the market. A total of 59 respondents representing 34.3% ticked agree, 13 (7.5%) ticked undecided, 22 (12.7%) respondents ticked disagree and 11 (6.5%) respondents ticked strongly disagree. With regards to fourth question shows that a total of 66 respondents representing 38.4% strongly agreed that the strategy has strengthened our relationship with distributors and retailers. A total of 71 respondents representing 41.2% ticked agree, 2 (1.2%) ticked undecided, 21 (12.2%) respondents ticked disagree and 12 (7%) respondents ticked strongly disagree.

4.3.6 Hypotheses Testing

In the construct of conceptual model, six null hypotheses were used for the study. The hypotheses were tested using simple linear and multiple regressions. These hypotheses result are presented in the subsequent sections.

4.3.6.1 Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria

$$P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{BIS} + \varepsilon$$

Table 4.8: Model summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.799 ^a	.639	.637	.30171	1.688
. Predictors: (Constant), backward integration strategy					
b. Dependent Variable: Performance					

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	28.659	1	28.659	314.834	.000 ^b
Residual	16.203	171	.091		
Total	44.862	172			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), backward integration strategy					
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.466	.153		3.055	.003
backward integration strategy	.884	.050	.799	17.744	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Performance					

Source: Researchers Computation (2026)

A simple linear regression analysis was carried out to look at the prediction of the performance of brewing firms from backward integration strategy to test the first null hypothesis, which state that backward integration strategy has no significant influence on the performance of brewing industries in Nigeria. From the result in Table 4.7, R-square of the regression analysis is .639. This finding suggests that 63.9 % of the variance in performance is explained by backward integration strategy of brewing industries in Southern Nigeria. The

analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed the existence of a positive significant influence and the study found that the regression model is a strong fit for predicting the influence between variables under study [$F = 314.834$, $t = 17.744$ and $p < 0.05$]. Given this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is positive and significant influence of backward integration strategy on performance of brewing industries in Southern Nigeria. Similarly, the study revealed that every unit increase in clarity of vision would cause an increase of 88.4% in performance of brewing industries in South-South and South East Nigeria (Beta = .884, $p = 0.000$).

4.3.6.2 Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: Forward integration strategy does not significantly influence on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

Ho₂: Forward integration strategy does not significantly influence on performance of brewing firms in Nigeria.

$$P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{FIS} + \varepsilon$$

Table 4.9: Model summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.820 ^a	.672	.671	.15647	1.445
a. Predictors: (Constant), Forward integration strategy					
b. Dependent Variable: Performance					

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1Regression	17.637	1	17.637	720.352	.000 ^b
Residual	8.618	171	.024		
Total	26.255	172			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Forward integration strategy					
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	.273	.058		4.741	.000
Forward integration strategy	.857	.032	.820	26.839	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Performance					

A simple linear regression analysis was carried out to look at the prediction of the performance of brewing firms from forward integration strategy to test the second null hypothesis, which states that forward integration strategy has no significant effect on the

performance of brewing Firms in Southern Nigeria. From the result in Table 4.8, R-square of the regression analysis is .672. This finding suggests that 67.2 % of the variance in performance is explained by forward integration strategy of brewing Firms in Southern Nigeria. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) confirmed the existence of a positive significant influence and the study found that the regression model is best fit for predicting the influence between variables under study [$F = 720.352$, $t = 26.839$ and $p < 0.05$]. Given this result, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is positive and significant influence of forward integration strategy on performance of brewing Firms in Southern Nigeria. Similarly, the study revealed that every unit increase in forward integration strategy would cause an increase of 85.7% in performance of brewing Firms in Southern Nigeria (Beta= .857, $p=0.000$).

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The study was carried out to ascertain the influence of integration strategy on the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria. The result of the study showed that there is a significant influence of integration strategy dimensions (forward integration and backward integration) on the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with several studies in the literature (Ongongo and Mang'ana (2023), Shaqqour (2020), and Oshodi (2022).

Looking at the result of the simple linear regression analysis to examine the influence of backward integration strategy on the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria, the finding revealed that backward integration strategy can explain 63.9 per cent of the changes in the performance of brewing firms. This is because backward integration strategy is very important to a business organization in the sense that the use of local raw materials helps to reduce costs of production and enhance manufacturing performance, thereby having the potential to improve the economy. This would also reduce the country's reliance on imported raw materials. (Oshodi, 2022). Makop (2022) investigated the impact of vertical integration strategies on the growth of small and medium enterprises. The objective was to examine the extent to which small and medium enterprises have been affected by vertical integration strategy, and dwelled on how the control of raw materials supply influences the growth and performance of small and medium enterprises in Jos, Plateau State. The population of the study consisted of the entire SMEs in Jos metropolis of plateau State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a total of 70 SME operators that constituted the sample

size. The data collected were analyzed using regression analysis. The findings of the revealed that control of raw materials supply and taking over of distribution centres have significant effect on the growth of SMEs in Jos. The study concluded that vertical integration strategies have significant impact on the growth of SMEs in Jos. For SMEs to and expand, the study recommended vertical integration strategies (control of raw materials supply and taking over of distribution channel points) should be made a priority by business owners to achieve growth and expansion of their business horizons for profit maximization.

Forward integration strategy is another component of integration strategy where its implementation will create a significant improved the already existing process. In a linear model, Forward integration strategy showed a statistically significant influence on the performance of brewing firms with its ability to explain 53.0 per cent of the change in the performance of brewing firms. This is in line with the work of Maroof et al. (2017) which analyzed the effect of Vertical Integration Strategy on the financial performance of the combined enterprises in Pakistan. Methodology adopted was mixed methods approach including survey and innovation performance data from 20 food processing plants. The research design used was comparative analysis, assessing innovation outputs and processes between plants with and without data warehousing systems. Population of the Study was innovation managers and production supervisors in food processing plants in Pakistan and sample size was 20 plants. Data were analyzed using innovation output metrics analysis and qualitative assessment of innovation processes through case studies and interviews. The results showed that vertical mergers greatly improved the financial performance of the combined companies for the benefit of investors, financial experts, advice companies, and investment banks, sane suggestions are requested.

5.1 CONCLUSION

From the study conducted, it was concluded that backward integration strategy and forward integration strategy are relational dimensions that can influence the performance of Brewing firms like Nigeria Breweries Pls, Champion Breweries Plc, International Breweries Plc, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Golden Guinea Plc, Intafact Breweries, Pabod Breweries Ltd and Bature Brewery. The empirical results of the study clearly underscore the following:

- i. Forward integration strategy and backward integration strategy are significant positive determinants of the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria.

- ii. Firms that consider the application of integration strategy dimensions such as forward integration strategy and backward integration strategy are likely to record a better Key Performance Indicator (KPI).
- iii. Although both integration strategy dimensions used in this study were statistically significant, the coefficient for forward integration strategy had a higher significant influence at 0.683 on the performance of brewing firms in Southern Nigeria.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The studied brewing firms should strengthen partnerships with local farmers by providing inputs, technical support, and guaranteed purchase of their farm produce. Firms in the brewing industry should see backward integration strategy as a strategic asset that drives sustainability, innovation, and market leadership.
- ii. It is recommended that the brewing firms should effectively implement backward integration strategy as this will not only reduce production costs and ensure a steady supply of quality raw materials but also enhance competitiveness, promote agricultural development, and support long-term sustainability of the brewing industry in Nigeria.
- iii. The brewing firms were encouraged to set up branded direct distribution channels to afford them faster response to market changes, build stronger relationships with their customers, obtain actual market information, improve their brand image and better control of their value chain.

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