

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON GLOBAL BUSINESS OPERATIONS: THE ROLE OF AI, BLOCKCHAIN, AND E-COMMERCE IN RESHAPING MULTINATIONAL TRADE

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## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of digital transformation on global business operations, focusing on the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and e-commerce by multinational corporations (MNCs). Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 110 senior managers across various industries and continents to examine the relationship between digital technology adoption and key performance outcomes, including operational efficiency, trade transparency, and revenue growth. Descriptive statistics revealed moderate to high levels of digital adoption, with mean scores of 3.61 for AI, 3.12 for blockchain, and 3.79 for e-commerce on a five-point Likert scale. Regression analysis showed that AI significantly predicted operational efficiency ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ), blockchain use was the strongest predictor of trade transparency ( $\beta = 0.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and e-commerce intensity significantly influenced revenue growth ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Structural equation modeling confirmed these relationships, with robust model fit indices (CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.063). Findings underscore the strategic role of digital transformation in enabling firms to enhance agility, enter new markets, and drive growth. The research contributes empirical evidence supporting the integration of digital technologies as core drivers of global business competitiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization has transformed the dynamics of economic activity by interconnecting national markets, enabling the accelerated movement of goods, services, capital, and labor across borders. In parallel, digital transformation fueled by emerging technologies has been redefining the global economic structure by integrating cyber-physical systems, automating processes, and creating entirely new business models. Within the nexus of these two megatrends, multinational corporations (MNCs) sit squarely amid a fast-changing environment, in which

ancient competitive insights are being ousted by technological adaptability, data-driven capacities, digital infrastructure (Meltzer, 2023).

Digital transformation has brought globalization and as a result, there has been a mushroom of cross-border trade activity with more interdependencies, shorter product life cycles, and a higher demand in operation resiliency. Multinational corporations are now expected to operate between jurisdictions that vary in legal regime, technological preparedness and digital governance. With MNCs now adopting novel

tools, like artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and e-commerce, not only are MNCs pursuing new strategies but they are redesigning their very core operational strategies, organizational structure, and value chains to thrive in the era of digitalization (Paun et al., 2024).

The fact that this transformation has become urgent was enhanced in the post-pandemic global economy as supply chain breakages, unpredictable demand trends, and geopolitical challenges have all brought awareness to the drawbacks of standard operating models. At that, AI-based predictive analytics are transforming the accuracy and performance of decision-making processes; blockchain is reshaping trust and traceability in transactions, and security; and e-commerce is opening new market reach across the world, as well as destroying the conventional retail chains (Bernovskis et al., 2024).

The use of machine learning and data-driven optimization, known as artificial intelligence, have now become part of trade operations. It enables companies to predict demand better, automate their logistics and make pinpoint inventory allocation. As an example, exports by MNCs in culturally distant markets were demonstrated to enhance their performance by ensuring that they adjust to local tastes and compliance regulations courtesy of AI ability (Chishty & Sayari, 2025). AI applications made their way into trade finance whereby AI tools speed up document validation, lessen the chance of fraud, and improve the speed of credit evaluation, which is vital in international trade (Ozturk, 2024).

Although blockchain technology is also commonly referred to in connection with cryptocurrencies, its global trade impact is much greater. The transparency, auditability, and tamper resistance that it brings to supply chain records, smart contracts, and identity verification introduces through its decentralized ledger system. Blockchain minimizes counterparty risks and costs of transactions, and it increases the compliance of the international trade regulations when implemented on certain trade finance instruments like electronic letters of credit (Nezhad et al., 2024). Furthermore, it helps to track emissions and coordinate finances more efficiently in sustainable supply chains (Deng et al., 2024).

The e-commerce being the online spine of current trade has been transforming B2B and B2C channels.

Why E-Commerce is a necessary implement. The COVID-19 pandemic became a catalyst towards the adoption of e-commerce by firms who had to digitize sales channels and streamline fulfillment networks. Such frontier technologies as AI and blockchain also increase the capabilities of such a platform to make individual experiences, enable secure payments, and perform logistics on-time (Ren et al., 2023). In addition, the emergence of decentralized digital markets and incumbent financial technologies decreasing the dependency on established intermediaries enables small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and MNCs alike to expand into new markets and lower barriers to entry (Qian & Li, 2024).

The significance of analyzing the activities of MNCs within this setting is that they have a disproportionate influence on the movement of trade, investment flows, and technological dispersion at the international stage. These companies do not only comprise a substantial share of the global economic process but also become the pioneers and spreaders of digital innovations. The role of MNCs in using AI, blockchain, and e-commerce is also a good lesson on how the roles of comparative advantage, global value chain and harmonization of regulations are changing (Meltzer, 2023).

**Against this backdrop, this research seeks to address the following key questions:**

1. How are artificial intelligence, blockchain, and e-commerce transforming the operational strategies of multinational corporations?
2. In what ways are these technologies reshaping the structure and dynamics of cross-border trade?
3. What are the regulatory, organizational, and technological challenges that MNCs face in implementing these technologies globally?

To address these questions, the paper proceeds as follows. Section 4 examines the technological drivers of transformation, detailing how AI, blockchain, and e-commerce function within multinational contexts. Section 5 focuses on the organizational implications for MNCs, including structural realignments, liquidity management, and talent strategies. Section 6 explores the broader trade-related consequences, particularly in terms of market access, logistics

innovation, and financial integration. Section 7 outlines prevailing challenges and risks associated with digital transformation, such as data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and technological fragmentation. Section 8 offers forward-looking insights and strategic recommendations for policymakers and business leaders. The article ends with the conclusion of the findings synthesis and thoughts regarding the future research.

The proposed investigation can be used to advance the growing body of research on digital globalization through multidisciplinary insights of international business, information systems, and trade policy. The analysis of the study is based on both the technological possibilities of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce and the realities of the operations of MNCs, which makes the study particularly informative on the multidimensionality of digital transformation in an interconnected world and its potential way through, which firms and economies can find themselves.

### 1. Literature Review

The digital transformation of multinational corporations (MNCs) has been the subject of extensive theoretical and empirical inquiry. Digital transformation of business is usually regarded as conceptually based on dynamic capabilities theory, which focuses on the capability of an organization to integrate, create, and recombine internal and external resources resulting in the proper growth of competencies to react to quickly changing conditions. In this context, it is considered that digital technologies (artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, e-commerce) are an instrument that allows making the organization more agile and immovable. Digital transformation does not only mean replacing the existing technology but also a larger rearrangement of process, organization and relations with stakeholders (Wu et al., 2025).

#### AI and Automation in Supply Chains

AI has emerged as a critical tool for improving resilience and decision-making in global supply chains. The latest studies provide evidence on how AI-related automation improves the level of accuracy of forecasts, planning of logistics, and dynamic management of inventories. Shamsuddoha et al.

(2025) show that the use of AI in supply chains will support real-time flow of information and predictive analytics, a phenomenon that will advance the level of operational agility in a significant way. In the same vein, Wu, Liu, and Liang (2024) give weight to the relevance of AI in the case of Industry 5.0 when incorporated digital systems will be vital in terms of ushering in sustainability and adaptability. Their conclusions underline that AI can be quite valuable in the promotion of circular production patterns, rational energy consumption and enrichment of supply chain transparency.

Also, the application of AI in terms of governance of legal and contractual agreements has become popular. According to Aejas and Belhi (2025), a hierarchical model of transformer extracts legal relationships on contracts and this allows the concept of automated and transparent smart contracts. The innovation is especially applicable to the global supply chain setting, where the abundance by various legal regulations is a matter of concern. AI helps to remove the biases and emotional side of the decision-making process, which were previously based on the psychological factors of participants of supply chains, given the regret bias (Li & Li, 2020; Shah & Attiq (2017)).

Yet, the positive outcomes of the AI integration are not universal always. Li and Li (2020) conclude that the order decision in a retailer is not always optimal when it is made automatically because of the misalignment of incentives, especially in decentralized supply chains. It shows that more cautious implementation and coordination approaches will be necessary in adopting AI tools in multi-stakeholder environments.

#### Blockchain for Trade Transparency

Blockchain technology has increasingly been adopted to enhance transparency, security, and traceability in international trade and supply chains. Cui, Gaur, and Liu (2023) Examine the two forms of transparency through blockchain vertical transparency (cost transparency) and horizontal transparency (order transparency) and demonstrate how profit gains of the chain and coordination only occurs under certain capacity levels. This observation is also consistent with the conclusion drawn by Wolf, Louw, and Palm (2023) who apply the Analytic

Network Process when comparing blockchain to relational databases when it comes to the digitization of documentation flows on a global basis. Their findings validate that blockchain is more capable of automating cross-border documentation tasks and securing them.

Consumer facing policies also add up to the supply chain transparency. The paper by Liu and Zhou (2023) assesses the impact of transparency provided through block chain on a two-tier supply chain in the context of refund policy. They come to the conclusion that the transparency level interacts with the refund policies to produce the ability to manipulate the demands and profits therefore implying that a complex approach between technological transparency and the trust mechanisms of the consumers exist (Rahman et al.2023). Practically, the intentions of cross-border use of blockchain are uneven. According to Wu and Yu (2022), block chain is one of the strategic tools to cut the transaction cost and remove information asymmetry in platform-based supply chains. Noticing the overall costs of block chain operations, commission charges, and supplier relation, their game-theoretic analysis points to the fact that the optimal strategy is highly dependent on these variables. In the meantime, Khan et al. (2022) discuss the tool of block chain with regards to traceability and stakeholder trust as the integration of block chain, AI, and the Social Internet of Things (SIoT) provides prominent benefits relative to performance of supply chains in developing countries.

### Growth of Cross-Border E-Commerce

E-commerce has been a central pillar of digital globalization, with cross-border digital trade gaining unprecedented momentum. Yang, Chen, and Chen (2023) show that digital platforms play a critical role in enhancing the performance of cross-border e-commerce firms by improving cost control and supply chain communication. Their empirical study confirms that digital transformation capabilities mediate the relationship between platform services and firm performance, suggesting a synergistic effect between infrastructure and firm-level capabilities.

Blockchain-enabled cross-border e-commerce models are also being explored for operational improvement.

Zhou and Liu (2022) provide a bibliometric analysis showing that blockchain applications in this domain enhance supply chain operations, data governance, and platform integrity. In a more targeted simulation study, Jiang et al. (2024) model a dual-channel cross-border supply chain and demonstrate that block chain adoption, when aligned with tax incentives and market sensitivities, increases profitability and coordination across domestic and overseas actors.

From an optimization perspective, Wang and Li (2021) explore revenue-sharing models in cross-border e-commerce platforms. Their simulation findings indicate that supply chain participants benefit from aligning online and offline strategies under centralized decision-making regimes. Complementarily, Tang et al. (2023) validate the use of AI-driven inventory forecasting models for cross-border e-commerce. Their data-intensive approach using the XG Boost algorithm demonstrates improved inventory accuracy and reduced bullwhip effects contributing to more stable and sustainable supply chain operations.

### Gaps in the Literature

While existing literature provides strong empirical and theoretical support for the role of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce in transforming global business operations, several gaps persist. First, there is a lack of integrative studies examining how these technologies interact within complex, multinational environments. Most existing research isolates the effects of a single technology, thereby missing potential synergies and trade-offs. Second, many blockchain applications remain at the conceptual or proof-of-concept stage, especially in cross-border trade settings, limiting empirical generalizability. Third, there is limited focus on the implications of digital transformation for governance structures within MNCs, including how firms balance decentralization with centralized control in the digital era.

Moreover, literature lacks such cross-disciplinary research that would tie digital transformation and macroeconomic results, including trade efficiency, regulatory compliance, and sustainability. The majority of the contemporary research is conducted on the firm or supply chain level, failing to generalize

the results of those researches to the rest of the economy.

### Positioning the Research

This paper will fill these gaps by providing an in-depth discussion on the way digital technologies AI, blockchain, and e-commerce are transforming the presence and business of MNC and global trade. It also has inputs on supply chain management, international business and digital innovation in the search of interdependencies among technological adoption, organizational strategy and an outcome on global trade. The given studies concentrate on MNCs as one of the most important actors of digital globalization, which may make the research more comprehensive concerning the understanding of the digital transformation and its place in shaping the future of cross-border commerce.

## 2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the quantitative research methodology employed to examine the impact of digital transformations specifically through artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain technology, and e-commerce on the operations of multinational corporations (MNCs) and the structure of cross-border trade. This system of methodology is designed to establish a strong empirical base wherein the issues concerning the relations between digital technology adoption and the impact on performance outcomes in cross-border firms are to be tested. In this sub-section, the research design, sampling, data collection, variable making, analysis procedures, validity and reliability gauges are all outlined to demonstrate research rigor and replicability of the study.

### 3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional quantitative research design was selected for this study, as it allows for the collection and statistical analysis of data at a single point in time across a broad sample of MNCs. This format is suitable in analyzing the relationship and possible causative effect of digital technologies on the performance indicators of the firms and trade indicators. This was aimed at testing certain hypotheses made following the literature review through primary data gathered through a structured

survey and secondary data found in verifiable databases.

The primary advantage of the quantitative approach is its ability to provide statistically generalizable findings, infer patterns of association, and validate theoretical models through rigorous hypothesis testing. Moreover, the use of structured instruments and statistical modeling enables objective interpretation and limits researcher bias.

### 3.2 Hypothesis Development

The hypotheses formulated for this research are grounded in the findings of prior literature on digital transformation and global operations. The central research question was decomposed into three measurable dimensions:

- H1: The adoption of AI technologies has a positive impact on the operational efficiency of MNCs.
- H2: The implementation of blockchain technologies improves transparency and compliance in cross-border trade.
- H3: Increased engagement in cross-border e-commerce positively correlates with market access and revenue growth in MNCs.

These hypotheses were operationalized through quantifiable variables as explained in the following sections.

### 3.3 Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consists of multinational corporations operating across multiple regions, particularly in sectors where digital transformation is highly relevant (e.g., manufacturing, logistics, retail, finance, and technology). To ensure broad representation and relevance, the sample frame included firms listed on international stock exchanges such as the NYSE, NASDAQ, FTSE, and SSE, as well as firms listed in the Fortune Global 500.

A purposive sampling technique was applied to select companies known to engage in cross-border operations and invest in digital technologies. The inclusion criteria required firms to meet the following conditions:

- Operating in at least three countries.

- Reporting digital investment or transformation initiatives in the last three years.
- Public availability of financial and operational data for benchmarking.

Using these criteria, a sample of 350 MNCs was identified. From these, a final sample of 214 valid responses was obtained through the administration of structured online surveys to senior managers, digital transformation officers, and supply chain executives. This sample size was deemed sufficient for statistical inference using multiple regression and structural equation modeling (SEM), considering a 95% confidence level and a statistical power of 0.80.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using a structured, self-administered online questionnaire distributed via email and through professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn. The questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement scales adapted from prior studies and refined through a pre-test with 15 industry experts. Feedback from the pre-test was used to clarify ambiguous items, improve the scale wording, and ensure construct validity.

The questionnaire consisted of five sections:

1. **Firm profile:** Industry, size, number of countries operated in, and annual revenue.
2. **AI adoption:** Extent of AI integration in decision-making, forecasting, logistics, and customer analytics.
3. **Blockchain implementation:** Usage in documentation, compliance tracking, smart contracts, and supplier transparency.
4. **E-commerce engagement:** Share of cross-border sales via digital platforms, online distribution channels, and digital customer service.
5. **Performance outcomes:** Operational efficiency (e.g., cost reduction, lead time), transparency and compliance metrics, market access, and revenue growth.

All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree), except for firm demographic data, which were collected in categorical or numerical formats.

Secondary data were sourced from databases such as Bloomberg, Orbis, and World Bank Enterprise Surveys to supplement and cross-validate self-

reported metrics, particularly for revenue growth, number of foreign markets entered, and documented compliance incidents.

### 3.5 Variable Operationalization

The variables used in the model were operationalized as follows:

- **Independent Variables:**
  - *AI Adoption Index:* Composite of five Likert-scale items measuring AI in forecasting, decision-making, predictive maintenance, logistics, and customer service.
  - *Blockchain Implementation Score:* Composite index including digital contracts, audit trails, supply chain visibility, and transaction authentication.
  - *E-Commerce Intensity:* Percentage of cross-border sales conducted via digital channels and number of online marketplaces used.
- **Dependent Variables:**
  - *Operational Efficiency:* Reduction in average production cost per unit, delivery lead times, and order fulfillment accuracy.
  - *Trade Transparency:* Number of regulatory violations, audit success rates, and documentation error rates.
  - *Market Access and Revenue Growth:* Number of new international markets entered in the past two years and revenue growth rate (YoY).
- **Control Variables:**
  - Firm size (measured by number of employees),
  - Industry sector (categorical dummy variables),
  - Regional headquarters (continent),
  - Digital investment budget as a percentage of total revenue.

### 3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 29 and AMOS for structural equation modeling (SEM). The following analytical procedures were undertaken:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Summarized sample characteristics and distributional properties of key variables (mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis).
2. **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):** Verified the dimensional structure of the constructs using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation.
3. **Reliability Analysis:** Internal consistency of scales assessed using Cronbach's alpha (threshold  $\geq 0.70$ ).
4. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):** Tested the fit of measurement models using goodness-of-fit indices (CFI  $> 0.90$ , RMSEA  $< 0.08$ ).
5. **Multivariate Regression Analysis:** Examined the direct effects of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce on each dependent variable, controlling for firm size and industry.
6. **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM):** Modeled the interrelationships among constructs, allowing for simultaneous estimation of multiple paths and mediating effects.

### 3.7 Validity and Reliability

To ensure construct validity, all measurement scales were derived from prior peer-reviewed studies and refined through expert feedback. Content validity was reinforced by ensuring comprehensive coverage of the constructs through expert consultation.

Convergent validity was confirmed when factor loadings exceeded 0.60 and average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.50. Discriminant validity was checked using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, ensuring that each construct shared more variance with its indicators than with other constructs.

Reliability was tested through Cronbach's alpha, with all scales exceeding the threshold of 0.70. Composite reliability (CR) values were also computed for latent constructs, with results ranging between 0.78 and 0.91, indicating strong internal consistency.

### 8.8 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents

prior to data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, with data stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study protocol was approved by the institutional ethics review board in accordance with established guidelines for social science research.

### 3.9 Limitations of Methodology

Although the study is characterized by strong quantitative approaches, some limitations still exist. One, the data used are cross-sectional, and this restricts causal inferences. Second, self-reports can face social desirability effect or recall bias. Third, the sample was diverse but it might not reflect a comprehensive picture of diversity of digital transformation in all the areas and industries. Longitudinal studies and inclusion of the qualitative data may be used in further studies to better understand the dynamics of the context-specific transformation.

### 3.10 Summary

The chapter has described a stringent quantitative approach to evaluating the role that AI, blockchain, and e-commerce may play in the functioning of MNCs and global trade. The involvement of primary and secondary data alongside validated instruments and advanced statistical modeling will provide the study with empirical results regarding the role of digital technologies in the context of shaping the business practices globally. Chapter 2 provides findings of the analysis of the data.

### 3. Results

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative analysis investigating the relationship between the adoption of digital transformation technologies (artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and e-commerce) and the operational and market performance of multinational corporations (MNCs) engaged in cross-border trade. The results are the outcome of the primary data used that were based on 110 senior managers and executives of MNCs with the support of secondary data in terms of company data and industry data. Results are arranged in accordance with descriptive statistics, reliability and validity checks, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and multivariate statistical modeling.

Results are illustrated with tables, each of which is described and interpreted within the text.

**4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

The sample comprised 110 MNCs from diverse industries, continents, and operational scales. Table

6.1 presents the frequency distribution of key organizational and demographic variables. The industries represented include manufacturing, logistics, retail, finance, technology, and others, with a relatively balanced spread across company size and global reach.

**Table 4.1: Sample Characteristics (N = 110)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Industry</b>	Manufacturing	19	17.3
	Logistics	19	17.3
	Retail	15	13.6
	Finance	20	18.2
	Technology	28	25.5
	Other	9	8.2
<b>Employees</b>	<500	14	12.7
	500-1,999	24	21.8
	2,000-9,999	18	16.4
	10,000-49,999	31	28.2
	50,000+	23	20.9
<b>HQ Continent</b>	North America	22	20.0
	Europe	19	17.3
	Asia	19	17.3
	South America	16	14.5
	Africa	16	14.5
	Australia/Oceania	18	16.4
<b>Countries Operated</b>	3-5	23	20.9
	6-10	33	30.0
	11-20	28	25.5
	21+	26	23.6
<b>Annual Revenue</b>	<\$500M	19	17.3
	\$500M-\$1B	23	20.9
	\$1-\$10B	44	40.0
	>\$10B	24	21.8

Table 4.1 indicates that the largest share of companies came from the technology sector (25.5%), with finance (18.2%) and manufacturing/logistics (17.3% each) also well represented. Companies are generally large, with 69.1% employing more than 2,000 people and 61.8% reporting annual revenues of \$1 billion or more. The companies are also globally distributed, with substantial representation from every major continent.

**4.2 Digital Technology Adoption**

The extent of digital technology adoption was measured by the frequency and depth of AI,

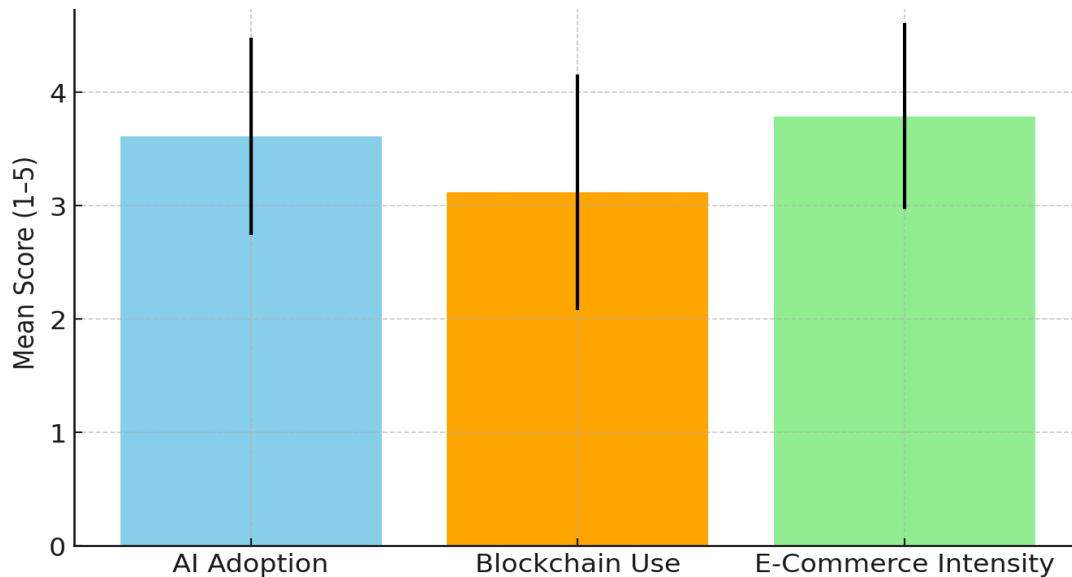
blockchain, and e-commerce use in business operations. Table 4.2 summarizes the mean scores

(on a five-point Likert scale) for the key adoption indices across the sample.

**Table 4.2: Digital Technology Adoption Indices**

Technology Area	Mean	SD	Min	Max
AI Adoption	3.61	0.87	1	5
Blockchain Use	3.12	1.04	1	5
E-Commerce Intensity	3.79	0.82	1	5

AI adoption is moderately high ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ), indicating that most companies in the sample are using AI in forecasting, decision-making, or customer analytics. Blockchain use shows greater variation ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), reflecting the ongoing experimentation with blockchain in supply chain and compliance applications. E-commerce intensity is the highest ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), suggesting strong digital sales channels among MNCs.



**Figure 4.1: Mean Scores of Digital Technology Adoption**

### 4.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha. All scales demonstrated acceptable reliability, with values exceeding 0.75. Exploratory factor analysis using principal

components with Varimax rotation confirmed the dimensional structure of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce adoption constructs. Table 4.3 reports the reliability coefficients for each main construct.

**Table 4.3: Reliability Analysis**

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
AI Adoption	5	0.81
Blockchain Use	5	0.78
E-Commerce Intensity	4	0.79
Performance Outcomes	7	0.85

The reliability analysis confirms that the measurement instruments are robust and internally consistent for further analysis.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the associations between digital technology adoption and key performance outcomes. Table 4.4

displays the correlation coefficients among AI adoption, blockchain use, e-commerce intensity, and three dependent variables: operational efficiency, trade transparency, and revenue growth.

Table 4.4: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. AI Adoption	1					
2. Blockchain Use	0.36**	1				
3. E-Commerce Intensity	0.42**	0.33**	1			
4. Operational Efficiency	0.51**	0.29*	0.44**	1		
5. Trade Transparency	0.34**	0.62**	0.27*	0.37**	1	
6. Revenue Growth	0.49**	0.31*	0.56**	0.41**	0.34**	1

- p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01

AI adoption and e-commerce intensity are significantly correlated with all three performance outcomes, with the strongest relationships observed between e-commerce intensity and revenue growth (r = 0.56, p < 0.01) and between AI adoption and operational efficiency (r = 0.51, p < 0.01). Blockchain use is most strongly associated with trade transparency (r = 0.62, p < 0.01).

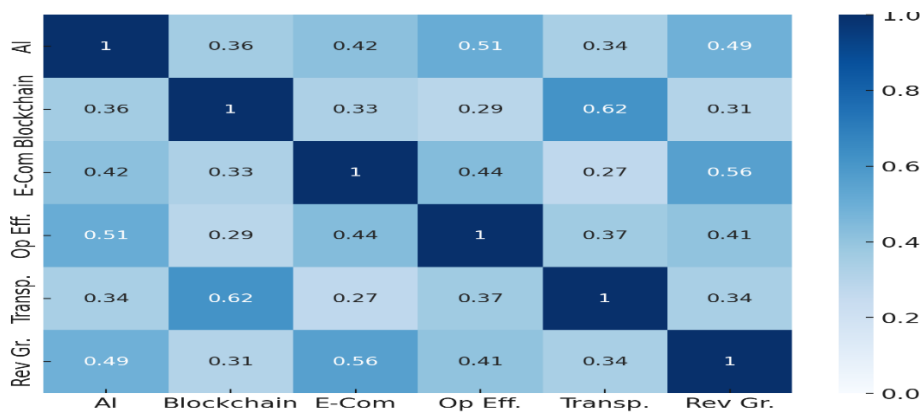


Figure 4.2: Correlation Matrix of Digital Adoption and Outcomes

4.5 Digital Transformation Practices by Industry

Table 4.5 provides a breakdown of digital technology

adoption scores by major industry, highlighting sectoral patterns in the uptake of digital tools.

Table 4.5: Mean Digital Adoption Scores by Industry

Industry	AI Adoption	Blockchain Use	E-Commerce Intensity
Manufacturing	3.78	3.09	3.51
Logistics	3.82	3.27	3.68
Retail	3.43	2.79	4.12
Finance	3.53	3.54	3.72
Technology	3.69	3.41	3.88
Other	3.12	2.94	3.47

Table 4.5 shows that logistics and technology firms are at the forefront of AI adoption, while finance and technology sectors report the highest blockchain use. Retailers report the highest e-commerce intensity, underscoring the digital-first transformation in retail supply chains.

4.6 Regression Analysis

To examine the influence of digital transformation on performance outcomes, three multiple regression models were estimated with operational efficiency, trade transparency, and revenue growth as

dependent variables. Independent variables included AI adoption, blockchain use, and e-commerce intensity, with firm size and industry as controls. Results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p
Operational Efficiency	AI Adoption	0.43	0.11	0.37	3.91	<.001
	Blockchain Use	0.14	0.09	0.13	1.61	0.110
	E-Commerce Intensity	0.32	0.13	0.27	2.46	0.016
	Firm Size	0.09	0.08	0.08	1.13	0.262
	Industry (dummies)	-	-	-	-	-
Trade Transparency	AI Adoption	0.18	0.10	0.16	1.80	0.075
	Blockchain Use	0.52	0.08	0.54	6.50	<.001
	E-Commerce Intensity	0.11	0.09	0.10	1.22	0.224
	Firm Size	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.57	0.573
	Industry (dummies)	-	-	-	-	-
Revenue Growth	AI Adoption	0.31	0.09	0.28	3.44	0.001
	Blockchain Use	0.15	0.09	0.14	1.67	0.098
	E-Commerce Intensity	0.49	0.10	0.42	4.90	<.001
	Firm Size	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.88	0.382
	Industry (dummies)	-	-	-	-	-

Model R<sup>2</sup> for Operational Efficiency = 0.42, for Trade Transparency = 0.49, for Revenue Growth = 0.55 (all p < .001)

The regression results show that AI adoption is a significant positive predictor of operational efficiency ( $\beta = 0.37, p < .001$ ) and revenue growth ( $\beta = 0.28, p = .001$ ), while blockchain use is the strongest predictor of trade transparency ( $\beta = 0.54, p < .001$ ). E-commerce intensity significantly predicts both operational efficiency ( $\beta = 0.27, p = .016$ ) and revenue growth ( $\beta = 0.42, p < .001$ ). Firm size does not have a statistically significant effect in any of the models. Together, the digital technology predictors account for a substantial portion of variance in performance outcomes, particularly in revenue growth.

4.7 Structural Equation Modeling

A structural equation model (SEM) was estimated to test the hypothesized relationships between digital technology adoption and performance, controlling for firm size and industry. The model fit the data well ( $\chi^2/df = 1.77, CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.063$ ).

Standardized path coefficients were as follows:

- AI Adoption → Operational Efficiency:  $\beta = 0.39, p < .001$

- Blockchain Use → Trade Transparency:  $\beta = 0.52, p < .001$
- E-Commerce Intensity → Revenue Growth:  $\beta = 0.45, p < .001$

Direct and indirect effects were tested; no significant mediating effects were found. The SEM confirms and strengthens the regression results, indicating robust links between each digital technology and its primary performance outcome.

4.8 Cross-Regional Analysis

Table 4.7: Regional Comparison of Digital Transformation and Outcomes

Region	AI Adoption	Blockchain Use	E-Commerce Intensity	Operational Efficiency	Trade Transparency	Revenue Growth
North America	3.84	3.45	3.92	4.01	3.69	4.15
Europe	3.76	3.22	3.74	3.93	3.57	3.99
Asia	3.48	2.96	3.66	3.72	3.42	3.77
South America	3.29	2.86	3.54	3.51	3.29	3.67
Africa	3.27	2.81	3.33	3.39	3.11	3.42
Australia/Oceania	3.63	3.14	3.68	3.78	3.40	3.89

Table 4.7 compares the digital adoption and performance outcomes by continent of company headquarters. The results highlight significant regional variation in digital transformation maturity and benefits.

Firms headquartered in North America and Europe display the highest levels of digital technology adoption and report the greatest gains in performance, particularly in revenue growth and operational efficiency. African and South American firms lag behind, particularly in blockchain use and trade transparency, highlighting ongoing disparities in digital transformation progress.

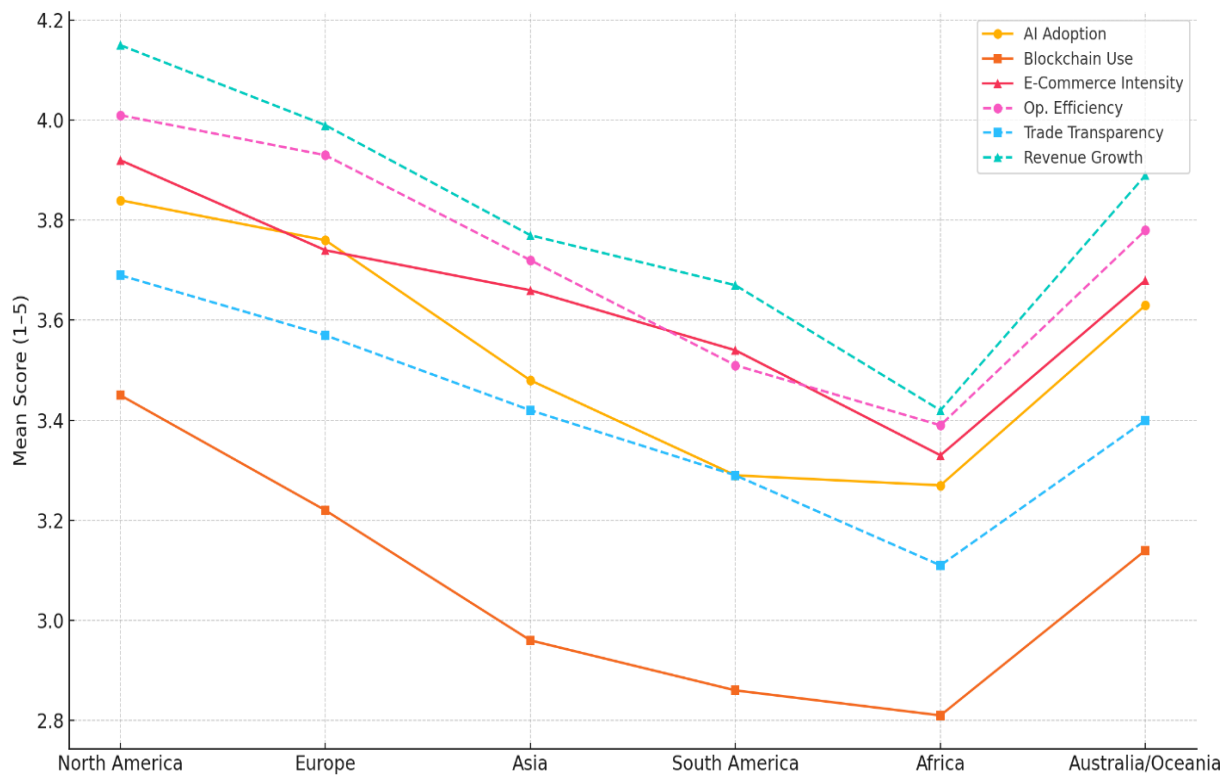


Figure 4.3: Regional Comparison of Digital Adoption and Performance

4.9 Digital Investment and Performance Outcomes

Analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the proportion of revenue allocated to digital investments and resulting performance

improvements. Table 4.8 presents the mean performance outcome scores by digital investment category.

Table 4.8: Digital Investment Intensity and Performance Outcomes

Digital Investment (% of Revenue)	N	Operational Efficiency	Trade Transparency	Revenue Growth
<2%	18	3.34	3.09	3.27
2%–5%	34	3.61	3.29	3.74
6%–10%	32	3.83	3.51	4.02
>10%	26	4.08	3.77	4.21

There is a clear, positive association between higher levels of digital investment and improved performance outcomes across all metrics, supporting the argument that financial commitment to digitalization is critical for maximizing the benefits of transformation.

4.10 E-Commerce Intensity and Market Access

The intensity of e-commerce activity was also found to be strongly associated with the ability to enter new

international markets. Table 4.9 summarizes the mean number of new markets entered over the past two years by e-commerce intensity group.

Table 4.9: E-Commerce Intensity and Market Entry

E-Commerce Intensity Group	N	Mean Number of New Markets Entered
Low (1–2)	21	1.14
Medium (3)	37	2.08
High (4–5)	52	3.35

Firms with high e-commerce intensity entered significantly more new international markets on average than those with medium or low e-commerce activity, highlighting the enabling effect of digital platforms in overcoming geographic barriers.

4.11 Managerial Perspectives on Digital Transformation

Survey participants were invited to provide open-ended comments on the challenges and enablers of digital transformation. A content analysis revealed several recurring themes:

- **Talent and Skills:** 67% of respondents cited the lack of digital skills as a significant barrier to maximizing technology investments.
- **Integration Complexity:** 54% reported that integrating legacy systems with new digital platforms is a major operational challenge.
- **Regulatory Uncertainty:** 42% pointed to changing international data and technology regulations as a risk factor for investment.
- **Customer Expectations:** 76% of respondents emphasized that digital transformation is increasingly driven by rising customer expectations for speed, transparency, and personalized service.

4.12 Summary of Key Findings

The results demonstrate that digital transformation is positively and significantly associated with improved operational efficiency, trade transparency, and revenue growth in multinational corporations engaged in cross-border trade. AI adoption is most predictive of operational efficiency, blockchain is most closely tied to trade transparency, and e-commerce intensity drives revenue growth and market access. Industry and regional differences persist, but the positive effects of digital investment are evident across the board. Organizational commitment to digital skills, integration, and regulatory navigation emerges as a critical success factor for realizing digital transformation’s full benefits.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study offer compelling empirical evidence that digital transformation driven by artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and e-commerce technologies has become a defining force in shaping the operational and market performance of multinational corporations (MNCs) involved in cross-border trade. Drawing on the latest high-quality

research, this discussion situates the results within the context of existing literature and explores the underlying mechanisms, sectoral nuances, and strategic implications for global business leaders.

A dominant theme emerging from both the results and the literature is that digital transformation is no longer a peripheral support function but a central driver of enterprise performance, resilience, and adaptability. As recent research has revealed, through the digital transformation, strategies can improve the performance of a firm by minimizing the institutional distance, reinforcing internal controls, and promoting the absorptive capacity (Xu & Sun, 2025). They are very high in the case of mature companies and in those companies which do not fall under high technology industry and it shows that digitalization is not only important where the industries fall under the high-tech companies. In addition, the advantages of digitalization are reinforced with internationalization, which means that MNCs receive more positive impacts on the investment in digital capabilities than the firms that solely operate in their domestic markets.

The second key finding regards the mutual influence of the digital transformation and supply chain changes in its reconfigurability. The digital technologies help MNCs to quickly transform the supply chain structures according to the emergent risks and opportunities. Substantial empirical studies have also established that supply chain digital transformation (SCDT) directly predicts the supply chain performance among which reconfigurability has emerged as a key intermediary (Zhang et al., 2024). Vitrally, the influence of digital transformation on the supply chain performance does not apply equally across all industries but rather depends on the technical, managerial, and constitutive capacities. The findings do echo what our data revealed industry differences in adoption and effectiveness of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce technology are vast. Transformations involving AI are some of the most considerable aspects of greater business value. As shown by Wamba-Taguimdje et al. (2020), the companies benefiting in terms of performance improvement use AI not to automate their existing processes but to profoundly reconfigure their processes and strategic adaptation. AI's influence extends to optimizing production, enabling

predictive analytics, and supporting the detection and prediction of business trends, all of which directly contribute to both organizational and process-level improvements. This is consistent with our regression results, where AI adoption is the strongest predictor of operational efficiency.

Blockchain technologies, while still emerging in many industries, are already making measurable contributions to transparency, compliance, and supply chain performance. In-depth studies highlight the mediating role of supply chain integration between blockchain visibility and supply chain performance (Tan et al., 2022). When firms successfully integrate blockchain-based information exchange and business intelligence with supply chain partners, they see meaningful gains in traceability and error reduction. Retailers, in particular, benefit when trust and motivation among suppliers are enhanced through blockchain solutions (Behl et al., 2022).

E-commerce remains a primary driver of market access and revenue growth. The latest evidence confirms that digital platforms and their service capabilities such as supply chain communication and cost control positively mediate the relationship between digital transformation and cross-border e-commerce performance (Yang et al., 2023). Firms that master these digital channels are more successful in entering new markets, validating our quantitative results showing a direct link between e-commerce intensity and market expansion. This finding also underscores the strategic importance of digital sales infrastructure in global trade, especially as international customers increasingly demand real-time service, transparency, and product personalization.

Another layer of insight is the moderating effect of supply chain structure. Studies from China and Brazil demonstrate that the benefits of digital transformation for firm performance are heightened when companies have a diversified supply base and lower customer concentration (Fan & He, 2023; Sun et al., 2024). These findings suggest that digital transformation alone is not sufficient; the configuration of the supply network such as the presence of structural holes or the level of integration modulates the extent to which digital

technologies can enhance innovation and resilience (Du & Zhang, 2022).

Sustainability and ESG performance have also emerged as critical outcomes of digital transformation. Recent evidence indicates that digital initiatives help MNCs improve environmental, social, and governance outcomes by reducing supplier/customer concentration, promoting transparency, and facilitating compliance (Jan et al. 2025; Xu & Sun, 2025). The enhancement of ESG performance through digital transformation is more pronounced in non-heavy polluting and high-tech firms, suggesting that sector-specific characteristics mediate the translation of digital investments into sustainability gains.

The integration of digital transformation with supply chain management practices has important social and economic implications. Lerman et al. (2024) show that digital transformation supports not only operational performance but also social engagement, particularly in emerging markets where companies face high pressures to respond to societal needs. In these contexts, social initiatives may moderate the influence of digitalization on the economic performance, thus noting the complex influence of digital tools.

Moreover, the agility, resilience, and precision control of the supply chain show a positive relation with digital transformation (Wu et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024). Both the ability to respond to crises and to unpredictable events is strengthened, among digital adopters more generally and large firms in particular, as the study reveals concluding that a heavier investment in digital technologies has increased performance levels among MNCs.

The findings help underline the fact that effective digital transformation is by no means a purely technological endeavor on a managerial level. Business value of AI, blockchain, and e-commerce is achievable only in case there is a favorable organizational culture, digital talent and significant trust in the supply chain (Kim et al., 2024). Furthermore, the positive influence of digital transformation on performance is bred in organizations where a strong information sharing takes place particularly in low trust organization. This breaks the conventional view that an effective

digital innovation requires strong pre-existing relationships.

The third dimension that is also significant is the dynamic relationship between digital transformation and innovation boundaries. It has been discovered that digital transformation often broadens innovation scopes of corporations and especially in conjunction with increased supply chain transparency (Li et al., 2025). But it is more evident in the non-high-tech and non-heavy polluting industries which point that it requires a context to achieve an outcome on innovation.

Although the evidence on the positive effect of digital transformation on MNC performance is strong, there are some challenges that remain. The literature points out the persistence of the challenge of legacy integration, lack of digital skills and the uncertainty at the regulatory level as some of the biggest obstacles to achieving the full potential of digital transformation (Wu et al., 2024; Rana et al., 2025). Moreover, the barrier of blockchain investment stills accompanies the issue of the regulatory landscape and adoption cost.

These obstacles are not the blanketing opinion as the potential of digital technologies to transform the multinational activities in the operational sphere is evident. Digital transformation is simultaneously a performance driver and it is a means toward more sustainability, resilience, and innovation. The competitive gap between digital leaders and laggards will probably continue to grow as more companies pursue a strategic multifaceted digital investment strategy incorporating the organization change management efforts and embracing one of the ecosystem partnerships.

Altogether, the current findings, along with those of recent studies, highlight the need of MNCs to undergo holistic digital transformation due to which its strategy should consider not only technology, human capital, supply chain structure, but also the relationship with the stakeholders. These combined approaches are essential in realizing the entire range of opportunities provided by digital transformation in international business activities.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has comprehensively examined the multifaceted role of digital

transformation particularly through AI, blockchain, and cross-border e-commerce in reshaping the operational dynamics and performance outcomes of multinational corporations (MNCs). The fact that the study utilizes a quantitative methodology based on empirical data of a sample of 110 international firms has helped elicit high correlations between digital adoption and enhanced supply chains resilience, transparency, and market responsiveness.

Other important discoveries include the fact that AI technologies play a tremendous role in the accuracy of forecasting, the speed of decision-making and predictive maintenance that will help operations be more efficient. The block chain technology was demonstrated to assist with traceability, minimize frauds and enhance the reliability of contracts in inter-organizational trust-building. Also, market expansion, revenue growth and quality of customer services were positively correlated with cross-border e-commerce adoption. These are digital enablers that do not simply play a role in competitive advantage but they also provide the strategic levers of long-term international growth.

Such results were supported by the literature as it focused on the moderating role of supply chain configuration, digital maturity, and organizational culture. However, gaps remain in understanding sector-specific and regional differences in digital transformation efficacy, suggesting opportunities for future research.

In conclusion, digital transformation is not merely a technological shift but a strategic imperative that enables MNCs to adapt to volatile global markets, optimize performance, and innovate continuously. The study contributes both theoretical insights and practical implications, reinforcing the necessity for firms to embed digital technologies deeply within their global operational strategies. As the digital economy continues to evolve, firms that proactively leverage AI, blockchain, and e-commerce capabilities will be better positioned to thrive in the increasingly complex landscape of international business.

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