

Generational Perspectives on E-Business Adoption in the Automobile Sector: A Comparative Study of First-Generation and Inherited Entrepreneurs

¹S. Indumathy, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>

²N. Rajalingam, <https://orcid.org/0000-0000-0000-0000>

^{1,2}Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu, India

Corresponding Author: *S. Indumathy (email: seninthu89@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT - The quick development of advanced innovations has fundamentally formed different enterprises, prompting variations and changes. The automobile sector has been remarkably influenced, interrupting customary plans of action and speeding up the joining of computerized innovations. One such innovation is e-business, which is vital in empowering automobile organizations to keep up with tasks, associate with clients, and drive development in the computerized period. Despite the rising pervasiveness of e-business reception in this area, there remains a requirement for a broad investigation into its particular effects and results. This study looks to address the hole by investigating the effect of e-business on the automobile business, with an emphasis on understanding how business visionaries from new and inherited entrepreneurs. The data were collected, and statistical tests such as Frequency Test, Chi-Square Test, Factor Analysis, and weighted average were conducted. By and large, this study features the groundbreaking effect of e-business on reshaping the automobile area. It highlights the significance of understanding different generational perspectives while exploring the developing computerized scene of this industry.⁴⁰

Keywords: *E-Business, First Generation Entrepreneurs, Inherited Entrepreneurs, Customer-Centric, Automobile, Adoption.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The domain of worldwide trade has gone through a sensational change directly following digitalization, essentially modifying different S. Modgil et al., [1], in their study on ‘Digital entrepreneurship and technological forecasting,’ stated that digital entrepreneurship has accelerated by creating a demand for innovative solutions in technology, healthcare, entertainment, and e-commerce to address various challenges. The automobile sector, customarily dependent on eye-to-eye deals and physical outlets, needed to quickly adjust to changes that disturbed retail chains and decreased customer interest. This ordinary industry,

known for its involved methodology, progressed to a virtual climate in a split second.

As the world transformed, customer expectations and business strategies also changed. Security concerns prompted a reassessment of buying habits, pushing the automobile industry to explore new ways to connect with and engage their customers. Faced by unprecedented challenges, businesses in all sectors found e-commerce to be a crucial lifeline essential for sustaining business operations through widespread uncertainty and disruption.

The nation is now on a digital trajectory characterized by a remarkable surge of online transactions that were driven by the Unified Payment Interface (UPI), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) among others. This shift was not only instrumental in advancing technology, but it also resulted in greater operational efficiency accompanied by huge cost savings.

Despite these difficulties, the automobile business unequivocally moved in the direction of e-business advances. E-business has turned into the new standard, with online deals stages, virtual display areas, and advanced showings through increased reality turning out to be progressively typical. The shift hasn't halted at deals; computerized devices are presently basic to vehicle adjusting, client care, and the planned operations of parts and supplies. In the face of these challenges, the industry has turned decisively toward e-business technologies.

A survey conducted in India in August 2022 by McKinsey & Company, Das et al., [2] stated that digital channels play a crucial role in consumer purchasing behaviour, with over 75 percent using digital or omnichannel platforms. Social media influences shopping decisions, especially for Gen Z and millennials who prioritize value and sustainability. Consumers are experiencing general price increases, showing dual behaviors of both

splurging and saving in different product categories.

A. Review of Literature

Acciarini, et al [3] investigated how digitization and sustainable business models interact. According to the research study's conclusions, developing creative and sustainable business models—especially in the automotive industry—requires integrating digitalization and sustainability. In order to obtain information from a variety of stakeholders, including Delta's dealer manager, an outside partner from the ICT research and sustainable mobility center, and sixty respondents, the study used semi-structured one-on-one interviews, archive data, and questionnaires. The report emphasized how digital technology may lessen market knowledge asymmetries, make lead generation and management easier, and improve the client's overall experience. The study also made clear how businesses may include sustainability in their business models by utilizing digital tools and technologies to create strategies that are more socially and environmentally conscious.

Hendricks & Mwapwele [4] in his systematic literature review explores the factors influencing e-commerce adoption in developing countries. They conducted systematic searches in various databases and included 23 peer-reviewed studies and 2 reports published in English between 2014 and 2021. The findings indicate that technological factors play a significant role in e-commerce adoption, such as cloud-computing compatibility and infrastructure barriers like internet speed and quality. Additionally, organizational factors, including management attitude and support, and environmental factors, such as competitive pressure and government policies, also influence e-commerce adoption. Furthermore, customer trust is identified as a crucial factor, affecting consumer decisions to engage in e-commerce environments.

Monye et al.[5] Their research study on the Impact of Industry (4.0) in the Automobile Industry conducted among industrial practitioners from various regions, including Germany, Brazil, and China emphasizes the need for increased awareness and understanding among automobile SME suppliers about the strategic value of Industry 4.0 technologies in manufacturing. It also underscores the importance of incorporating long-term improvement programs, including Industry 4.0 technologies, into the strategic planning of these firms to enhance their competitiveness, improve efficiency, and adapt to the changing demands of the automobile industry.

Khan, Taqi, & Saba, [6] made a study on 'The role of digitization in the automobile industry: The Indian perspective'. The study involves the use of

secondary data from various sources such as reports from automobile sector companies, special investigation team reports, newspapers, internet sources, interviews with industry officials, and previous research papers on the topic. The data collection methods include interviews, published reports, web searches, surveys on consumer behaviour, and video references from conclaves and forums. The study reveals that the key drivers of digitization in the automobile industry of India include connectivity, digital natives, sensors, processors, and different business models. These components play a crucial role in various aspects of the automobile sector, such as manufacturing, supply, marketing, selling, and servicing of automobile products. The technological advancements in global competitors have prompted the Indian automobile industry to embrace digitization and technological enhancements in the manufacturing sector. Additionally, the impact of digitization on the automobile industry is not only consumer-focused but also emphasizes productivity and efficiency.

Beheshti & Salehi-Sangari, [7] studied the adoption of the European Commission's definition of SMEs, focusing on firms employing less than 250 employees. The study excluded very small firms with less than ten employees. Data was collected from 500 randomly selected Swedish companies with 10 to 249 employees, resulting in 132 usable responses (26.4%). The respondents were a mix of manufacturing and service firms, with 60% representing manufacturing and 40% representing service. The study aimed to examine the impact of Internet-based e-business on Swedish SMEs, focusing on the length of implementation time, the degree of satisfaction with e-business, similarities and differences between manufacturing and service SMEs in e-business implementation, common concerns of SMEs in e-business implementation, and the benefits of e-business adoption. The findings revealed that most responding firms experienced cost savings from e-business implementation, with a higher percentage of service organizations reporting savings of 10% or more compared to manufacturing firms.

Kolemesina A, [8] in their study on paperless transport development projects for the automobile industry indicated that the implementation of electronic data interchange (EDI) systems for processing bills of lading can lead to significant financial savings and reduce processing time by almost 70%. Additionally, the study demonstrated that the optimization and digitalization of freight document workflows can positively impact the competitiveness of a company, improve operating times, and significantly increase the cost-efficiency

of transport operations. Their research involved a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The study utilized a survey to collect quantitative data, with a response rate of 25% from 14 out of 25 European plants. The survey was conducted via email and targeted individuals working in transport logistics and responsible for the receipt of incoming goods at various production sites in Germany, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, and Romania.

Calvo-Porrall and Pesqueira-Sanchez [9] studied generational differences in technology behaviour, focusing on Millennials and Generation X. Their study sampled 707 Millennials and 276 Gen X individuals to examine their reasons for using technology. The goal was to compare the underlying motivations and understand what drives technology usage among these two generational cohorts. The researchers used statistical techniques related to structural equation modelling, which helps analyse complex relationships and compare generational differences in technology behaviour. The study found that Millennials are mainly motivated to use technology for entertainment and hedonic purposes, while Gen Xers are driven more by utilitarian reasons and information-seeking. The research revealed that each generation has distinct ways of using and engaging with technology, indicating that the generational cohort significantly influences technology behaviour. The study provides empirical evidence highlighting the main differences and motivations behind technology use among Millennials and Gen Xers.

B. Statement of the Problem:

Innovative headway has carried unrivalled tests to the world's modern construction, healthcare, education including the automobile industry. Notwithstanding the far and wide accessibility of innovation, the business experienced critical deal slumps, raising worries about its versatility and flexibility. Major questions include disturbances for the worldwide production network, monetary vulnerability prompting conceded buyer buys, limitations on development influencing vehicle interest, and the brief conclusion of assembling plants and showrooms.

While innovation offered arrangements, for example, online deals and remote work, not all organizations could use these because of foundation impediments and generational contrasts in innovation reception. There is a deficient comprehension of how business people from various foundations and generational companions have adjusted to the combination of e-business into their customary plans of action.

Existing research doesn't adequately address the

turn of events and the cycle of e-business systems inside the setting of a quickly changing economy among various ages of business visionaries, nor does it completely investigate the variables impacting the reception of e-business innovation. This study tries to give a significant comprehension of the adoption of e-business technology among first and inherited entrepreneurs, and how their perception of e-business dynamics.

C. The objective of the Study:

With the perspectives of both first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs from the automobile retail industry in mind, the objectives are outlined as follows:

- To compare the e-business strategies and implementation experiences between first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs.
- To analyze the factors influencing e-business adoption among first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs in the automobile retail sector.
- To compare the generational perspectives on e-business adoption between first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs in the automobile retail sector.

D. Hypothesis:

To comprehensively compare the perception of entrepreneurs in adopting e-business strategies and implementation experiences between first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs, have formulated the following hypothesis "The generation of the entrepreneur has a significant impact on the adoption of e-business technology in the automobile sector."

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was employed to provide a detailed analysis of e-business adoption within the automobile retail sector in Tirunelveli District. The study sampled 80 automobile retailers. These participants were selected using convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique that facilitated the collection of data from individuals readily available and willing to participate. The study was conducted in Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu, which is the sixth-largest city in the state by vehicle count, with approximately 56,000 vehicles as on March 31, 2023. Dealerships of major automobile companies such as TATA, Mahindra, Volkswagen, Ashok Leyland, TVS, and Renault is present in this district. A pilot study was conducted with 20 respondents to identify and rectify any

issues in the questionnaire design. Reliability for the combined scales is measured at 0.820, which is very good. The feedback obtained was used to revise the questionnaire to ensure it effectively captured the necessary information to fulfill the study's objectives. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which was refined after the pilot study. The final questionnaire was distributed to the automobile retailers selected through sampling. Data analysis was conducted using several statistical tools. The overall reliability for the combined scales is measured at 0.820, which is considered to be very good. This suggests that, on the whole, the questionnaire used in the study is a reliable tool for measuring the constructs related to e-business in the context of the automobile retail sector. Percentage Analysis was used to understand the demographic and organizational characteristics of respondents. The Chi-Square test was performed to examine the association between e-business dynamics and entrepreneurs. Factor Analysis was utilized to uncover underlying relationships among observed variables connected to e-business. The weighted Average Method was applied to determine the importance assigned to different e-business factors.

III. RESULTS

Table: I
Entrepreneurial Characteristics and E-Business Implementation

Organization Characteristics		
Generation of Entrepreneur		
Particulars	N	Percentage(%)
First-Generation	34	42.5
Inherited	46	57.5
E-Business Implemented Duration		
Up to 5 years	53	66.3
Above 5 Years	27	33.8

The study of the entrepreneurial characteristics and E-Business implementation in the automobile sector in the Tirunelveli district obtained through the questionnaire is cross-tabulated. Table I, provides a summary of the entrepreneur and organizational characteristics of respondents. The data is categorized into two main sections: generation of entrepreneurs and implemented duration. Analysis shows that 57.5% of entrepreneurs have inherited their business, suggesting that a majority of organizations are family-run or passed down through generations.

This reflects a substantial tradition of family business continuation. And 42.5% of entrepreneurs represent the first generation, indicating a significant portion of organizations are founded by individuals without a family business background.

Table II
E-business Development Dynamics among New and Inherited Entrepreneurs

E-business Development Dynamics	Particulars	First-Generation Entrepreneur	Inherited Entrepreneur	χ^2 (df)	P value
E-business Implemented Duration	2-5 Years	28	25	6.857 (1)	0.009
	More than 5 Years	6	21		
Perceived E-business Expansion	Online Business growing faster than brick and mortar business	7	11	14.131 (2)	0.007
	Both are growing at similar rates	2	18		
	Brick and Mortar Business is growing faster than the online business	25	17		
E-business Strategy Iteration	Yes Based on customer feedback & market trends	34	38	6.57 (1)	0.01
	No Adjustment and Improvements made	0	8		

The analysis employs chi-square tests to understand the association between the entrepreneur types and various aspects of e-business development, including implementation duration, perceived expansion, and strategy iteration.

Table II explores the dynamics of e-business development among new-generation entrepreneurs compared to inherited entrepreneurs. In examining the e-business development dynamics between first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs, research has uncovered significant distinctions that merit consideration in the evolving landscape of digital commerce. The chi-square analysis reveals differentiated patterns in the adoption, perception, and strategic management of e-business between these two entrepreneurial cohorts.

There is a statistically significant difference ($p=0.009$) between the two groups in terms of the duration of e-business implementation. First-generation entrepreneurs are more likely to have implemented e-business within the last 2-5 years, whereas inherited entrepreneurs tend to have adopted e-business for more than 5 years. Inherited entrepreneurs, having embraced e-business at an earlier stage, seized the opportunity to establish a robust online presence and cultivate a loyal customer following. Their early adoption of e-business strategies has propelled them to the forefront of their industries, And it is also the reason for newer entrants, like first-generation

entrepreneurs, to adopt e-business technologies in the early stage of their business's practices into their operations. Inherited entrepreneurs may have established resources and capital that facilitate the adoption and maintenance of e-business technologies. This financial leverage allowed for earlier and perhaps more substantial investments in e-business infrastructures, contributing to their longer history of engagement in the digital domain. On the other hand, new-generation entrepreneurs face challenges in accessing the necessary capital to afford advanced e-business technologies. Despite these potential financial constraints, the high percentage of recent adopters within this group indicates a determination to integrate e-business solutions, potentially through more cost-effective or innovative means, to establish their foothold in the digital marketplace.

A significant discrepancy ($p = 0.007$) is evident in the way first-generation entrepreneurs and inherited entrepreneurs view the expansion of e-business in comparison with traditional brick-and-mortar operations. Table II indicates a notable divergence in opinions among inherited entrepreneurs regarding the growth of brick-and-mortar versus online businesses. While a significant number perceive brick-and-mortar growth as dominant, a considerable portion also believes that both channels are growing at similar rates. In contrast smaller number of first-generation entrepreneurs expressed the belief that online business is growing faster than brick-and-mortar businesses compared to inherited entrepreneurs, there still exists a non-agreement among first-generation entrepreneurs regarding the potential of online business growth. This suggests that even though most first-generation entrepreneurs may not perceive online business growth as dominant, their collective perspective still leans towards recognizing the significance of traditional brick-and-mortar channels in the evolving business landscape. While first-generation entrepreneurs acknowledge the importance, and potential growth of online business and adopt e-business strategies in the early stage of their business, they also recognize the enduring value and presence of traditional brick-and-mortar operations. This recognition may stem from factors such as customer habits, market stability, local presence, or the perceived trust and credibility associated with physical stores. Additionally, the coexistence of both channels allows for a diversified approach to reaching customers, catering to different preferences, and maximizing business opportunities in a rapidly evolving market. Meanwhile, responses from inherited entrepreneurs indicate their expertise in their respective fields, allowing them to

perceive the growth potential of e-business. Their deep understanding of industry trends and market dynamics enables them to recognize the importance of embracing e-business strategies to remain competitive in the evolving business landscape.

The analysis further reveals that both new-generation and inherited entrepreneurs are inclined to iterate their e-business strategies based on customer feedback and market trends. Inherited entrepreneurs, like their new-generation counterparts, prioritize adapting their e-business strategies to align with customer preferences and market dynamics. This underscores a collective recognition of the importance of customer satisfaction and responsiveness to evolving market demands in driving business success. Despite the overall inclination towards strategy iteration, the significant difference in responses indicates potential disparities in agility and adaptability between the two groups. Inherited entrepreneurs, possibly influenced by their familiarity with digital technologies and their business practices, may exhibit a higher propensity to respond quickly to customer feedback and market trends compared to new-generation entrepreneurs. However, Some inherited entrepreneurs may resist making changes based on customer feedback and market trends due to various factors. They might exhibit a conservative approach, preferring to maintain existing strategies to minimize disruption or uncertainty. Additionally, past success or industry stability could lead to complacency, where they perceive their current strategies as sufficient. There may also be a lack of awareness about the benefits of adapting strategies or resource constraints hindering implementation efforts. Furthermore, operating in stable industries with low competition could reduce the perceived urgency for change.

Table III

Key Factors Influencing E-Business Strategy and Operations

Factors	Item Description	Rotated Loading	% Variance	Eigen Value
Customer-Centric Operations	To gather valuable data about customer behaviour & preferences	.874	43.381	3.037
	To offer personalized services	.813		
	To reduce expenses	.807		
	To handle increased demand	.540		
Market Expansion	To access new market	.945	17.648	1.235
Business Optimization and Sustainability	To streamline our business	.640	16.251	1.138
	To align our business with sustainability goals	.928		

Factor analysis was performed to understand the key factors influencing entrepreneurs to adopt e-business strategies. This analysis results provide a detailed understanding of the key considerations

that drive the adoption of e-business strategy and operations.

Customer-centric operations have the highest variance at 43.381 percent, indicating that it is the most significant factor influencing business decisions. This factor encompasses a range of items that focus on gathering customer data, offering personalized services, reducing expenses, and handling increased demand. The strong loadings suggest that businesses prioritize customer-centric strategies to gain insights into behaviour and preferences, leading to enhanced production, service offerings and operational efficiencies. Market Expansion accounts for 17.648 percent of the variance with high loading on accessing new markets. This suggests that market expansion is a significant driver for many businesses, as they seek to grow their reach and customer base. The high eigenvalue of 1.235 further indicates that accessing new markets is an essential element of business strategy. Business Optimization and Sustainability accounts for 16.251 percent of the variance and emphasizes business streamlining and sustainability alignment. The notable loadings on "streamlining business" and "aligning with sustainability goals" imply that businesses are increasingly focused on operational efficiency and sustainable practices. This trend is likely driven by evolving consumer expectations and regulatory pressures to adopt environmentally friendly approaches.

Table IV

Reason for E-Business Adoption: Generational Perspectives

Factors	Reasons for Adopting E-business	New Generation		Ri	Ro	Inherited Entrepreneur Wa	Wo	Ri	Ro
		Wa	Wo						
Customer Insights and Personalization	To gather valuable data about customer behaviour & preferences	3.47	3.6525	HIGH	HIGH	3.13	3.75	HIGH	HIGH
	To offer personalized services	3.88				3.96			
	To reduce expenses	2.88				4.02			
	To handle increased demand	4.38				3.89			
Market Expansion	To access new market	4.15	4.15	HIGH		4.02	4.02	HIGH	
Operational Efficiency and Sustainability	To streamline our business	4	3.87	HIGH		4	4.035	HIGH	
	To align our business with sustainability goals	3.74				4.07			

(4.5 to 5.0 as Very High, 3.5 to 4.4 as High, 2.5 to 3.4 as Moderate, 1.5 to 2.4 as Low, 1.0 to 1.4 as Very Low)

Table IV presents an analysis of the reasons for adopting e-business strategies among first-generation entrepreneurs and inherited entrepreneurs with additional differentiation based

on the duration of e-business implementation, up to 5 years and above 5 years. This analysis aims to explore which factors drive the adoption of e-business within these different groups, providing insights into entrepreneurial focus areas.

New-generation entrepreneurs emphasize customer insights and personalization, with a weighted average (Wa) of 3.47 and a weighted overall (Wo) of 3.65, highlighting their strong focus on gathering data to guide business strategies. They prioritize personalized services (Wa = 3.88), indicating an eagerness to customize products to meet customer needs, and rate handling increased demand highly (Wa = 4.38), pointing to scalability. In contrast, inherited entrepreneurs also value customer insights, but with slightly lower (Wa = 3.13) and (Wo = 3.75), suggesting a more measured approach to data-driven decisions. Their focus on personalized services (Wa = 3.96) is close to the new generation, but with less emphasis, reflecting a conservative approach. This group also places higher importance on reducing expenses (Wa = 4.02), suggesting cost management is a significant driver.

Regarding market expansion, new-generation entrepreneurs score high with Wa and Wo is 4.15, indicating their ambition for growth and reaching new markets. Inherited entrepreneurs also rate high in this category (Wo = 4.02), but with a slightly lower overall emphasis, possibly indicating a more stability-oriented mindset. For operational efficiency and sustainability, new-generation entrepreneurs focus on streamlining business operations (Wa = 4.0, Wo = 3.87), showing moderate interest in sustainability (Wa = 3.74). Meanwhile, inherited entrepreneurs share a similar focus on operational efficiency, with Wa and Wo slightly above the new generation, but place more emphasis on aligning with sustainability goals (Wa = 4.07), reflecting a longer-term perspective.

IV. FINDINGS

First-generation entrepreneurs were more likely to have implemented e-business within the last 2-5 years, indicating recent adoption and adaptation to digital strategies. In contrast, inherited entrepreneurs had adopted e-business strategies for more than 5 years, showing earlier integration and longer experience with digital tools.

There is a significant difference ($p=0.007$) in how the two groups viewed e-business growth. Inherited entrepreneurs see more growth potential in e-business compared to traditional methods. First-generation entrepreneurs recognized the importance of e-business but still focused on traditional operations as well.

Both groups adjusted their e-business strategies

based on customer feedback and market trends. However, inherited entrepreneurs were more agile and responsive to changes, using their longer experience with digital technologies to quickly improve their strategies.

This study identified three key factors driving business success among entrepreneurs. Customer-centric operations emerged as the most crucial, representing 43.381% of the factors influencing success. It emphasizes understanding customer needs, offering personalized services, and managing increased demand. Market Expansion, accounting for 17.648%, focuses on using e-business to access new markets. Business Optimization and Sustainability, contributing 16.251%, underscores the importance of streamlining operations and adopting sustainable practices. Inherited entrepreneurs leveraging this strategy effectively.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study illuminates the critical importance of embracing e-business strategies for long-term success in the automobile retail sector. The stark differences between first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs' approaches provide valuable insights into the varying levels of digital maturity and strategic agility.

As the industry continues to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age, it is imperative for businesses to prioritize customer-centric operations, leverage e-business for market expansion, and adopt sustainable practices. By doing so, entrepreneurs can not only enhance their competitiveness but also drive significant growth and innovation.

The study's implications extend beyond the automobile sector, offering a blueprint for other industries grappling with digital transformation. The demonstrated benefits of e-business adoption, coupled with the strategic insights gleaned from both first-generation and inherited entrepreneurs, underscore the transformative potential of digital strategies in shaping the future of business.

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