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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF OPERATIONS OF E-COMMERCE STARTUPS AND TRADITIONAL FAMILY BUSINESSES

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Abstract:

The rapid growth of e-commerce startups has significantly transformed the way businesses operate, compete, and serve customers, while traditional family businesses continue to play a vital role in the economy through their long-established operational practices and strong customer relationships. This research paper aims to present a comparative study of the operational aspects of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses, focusing on areas such as business models, supply chain management, marketing strategies, technology adoption, customer relationship management, and overall operational efficiency. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews with owners and managers of selected e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses, while secondary data has been sourced from journals, research papers, company reports, and online publications. A descriptive and comparative research design has been adopted to analyze the collected data systematically. The findings of the study reveal that e-commerce startups largely depend on technology-driven operations, digital marketing, and scalable business models, which enable them to reach a wider customer base and achieve faster growth. In contrast, traditional family businesses rely more on personal relationships, local market knowledge, and experience-based decision-making, which help them maintain customer loyalty and stability. However, traditional businesses face challenges related to limited technological adoption and scalability, whereas e-commerce startups often struggle with high competition and customer retention. The study concludes that both business models possess distinct operational strengths and weaknesses, and a balanced integration of modern technology with traditional business values can enhance operational efficiency and long-term sustainability.

Introduction:

In the modern business environment, different forms of enterprises operate side by side, among which e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses are highly significant. E-commerce startups are businesses that operate mainly through online platforms and rely on digital technologies for selling products, managing operations, and interacting with customers. In contrast, traditional family businesses are owned and managed by family members and usually operate through physical stores or local markets, following business practices developed over many years. Both types of businesses contribute to economic growth, employment generation, and market

ISSN–2277- 8721

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OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

development, but their operational methods differ considerably.

E-commerce startups emphasize the use of technology, online marketing, automated processes, and efficient logistics systems to achieve operational efficiency and wider market reach. These businesses have the ability to expand quickly and serve customers beyond geographical boundaries. On the other hand, traditional family businesses focus on personal relationships, customer trust, and experience-based decision-making. Their operations are generally stable and centered on serving local or regional markets.

With the rapid growth of digitalization and changing consumer preferences, traditional family businesses are facing increasing competition from e-commerce startups. At the same time, e-commerce startups also face operational challenges such as intense competition, high customer acquisition costs, and dependency on technology. Therefore, it is important to examine and compare the operational aspects of both business models.

This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the operations of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses by examining factors such as business models, technology adoption, marketing strategies, supply chain management, and customer relationship practices. The findings of this study are expected to provide useful insights for business owners, researchers, and policymakers in understanding the operational strengths and limitations of both types of enterprises.

The growth of e-commerce startups has significantly changed the way businesses operate by introducing technology-driven and scalable operational models. At the same time, traditional family businesses continue to play an important role in the economy through their established practices, experience-based management, and strong customer relationships. Both forms of businesses differ in their operational structure, use of technology, market reach, and management style. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of the operational aspects of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses, focusing on areas such as business models, technology adoption, marketing strategies, supply chain management, and customer relationship management. The study seeks to identify the operational strengths and challenges of both business types and to provide insights for improving operational efficiency and long-term sustainability.

Objectives :

1. To study the E-commerce startups and Traditional family business.
2. To compare profitability of E-commerce startups and Traditional family business.
3. To understand customer preferences for e-commerce vs. traditional family business.
4. To study challenges faced by each business type.
5. To explore opportunities for integration or improvement in both business.

Review of Literature:

1. **Attar R. waheeb,Almusharraf ahlam,Alfawaz areej, Haji nick, 2022,**

   New trands in E-commerce research linking social media

   This study aims to conduct a systematic review to identify research questions relevant to S-Commerce and sharing commerce, related challenges, and the benefits of linking S-Commerce with sharing commerce. There are six stages in this systematic review: (1) define the research question(s), (2) demonstrate the protocol of the review, (3) define the selection criteria of inclusion and exclusion, (4) define the criteria for selecting the studies besides the search strategy, (5) assess the quality of the respective papers, and (6) identify the how data were extracted and synthesised [67]. This methodology is widely used in various fields, especially in social commerce research [68,69,70].

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

PRISMA guidelines were adopted in this study for conducting the systematic review [70]. PRISMA checklist and the flow diagram are available in Supplementary Materials.

2. **De groote Julia K.,Conrad W.,Hack A., 2025,**
How can family business survive disruptive industry change? Insight from the traditional industry
This study aims to conduct a systematic review to identify research questions relevant to S-Commerce and sharing commerce, related challenges, and the benefits of linking S-Commerce with sharing commerce. There are six stages in this systematic review: (1) define the research question(s), (2) demonstrate the protocol of the review, (3) define the selection criteria of inclusion and exclusion, (4) define the criteria for selecting the studies besides the search strategy, (5) assess the quality of the respective papers, and (6) identify the how data were extracted and synthesised [67]. This methodology is widely used in various fields, especially in social commerce research [68,69,70]. PRISMA guidelines were adopted in this study for conducting the systematic review [70]. PRISMA checklist and the flow diagram are available in Supplementary Materials.
3. **Yadav Sameer,victor surjit,singh reeta,singh prabhu,2024,**
The effects of E- commerce on traditional retail: A comparative analysis
The purpose of this research is to examine how online shopping has affected brick-and-mortar stores and to ascertain the variables that have led to their survival or demise. a thorough grasp of the impact of e-commerce on brick-and-mortar retail sales, consumer habits, operational efficiencies, and market competitiveness is provided by reviewing relevant literature, analysing relevant industry reports, and examining relevant case studies. It also delves at how brick-and-mortar stores are adapting to the rise of online shopping.
4. **Chanun somboonvechakaran,2022,**
Communicating innovation and sustainability in family business through successions
This study aims to develop a communication model suitable for SMEs during succession for innovation and business sustainability. Nine innovative manufacturing family SMEs in Thailand are selected using assembled multiple-case study method, and in-depth individual interviews are conducted using data triangulation method which the incumbents, successors, and long-serving non-family employees as participants from each business. There are two main findings. Issues regarding organizational innovation, social capital in the form of internal and external network relationships, traditional and territorial knowledge, succession planning and procedure, and sustainability-driven mindset should be communicated, formally or informally, during the succession process.
5. **Chandiok sumit,2016,**
Impact of e-commerce emerging startups.
The purpose of this research is to understand how e-commerce as sectors brought revolutionary changes in the preference of start-ups. Now a days most of the companies providing services through online, hence it made most of the start-ups to go online because of consumer behaviour is not constant. The study was conducted by collection of primary data as well as secondary data with the help of questionnaires sent through mail among 50 respondents across India. With all background and age grouped into various profession and organisation people. The findings revealed that using e-commerce platform by start-ups are increasing in the last 6 years.

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

6. **Giri Rakesh kumar, 2019,**
   A study of Growth of e-commerce v/s traditional business.
   This paper aims to analyses the growth of commerce that has taken place in the last decade and its effects on traditional businesses and the overall impact on economy The main motive is due to availability of various products, discount, less time and effort less approach, reaching to massive variety of humans in lesser quantity of time.With the development of the circumstances, many new things are developing, along with e-trade.
7. **Patal Luckman,2019,**
   E-commerce and Msme: A case study
   Several studies have highlighted the growing interdependence between e-commerce startups and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). According to Sharma & Singh (2020), e-commerce startups have transformed traditional business models by providing digital platforms, enabling MSMEs to access wider markets at reduced costs. Similarly, Gupta (2021) emphasizes that MSMEs benefit from online marketplaces through increased visibility and customer reach, though they continue to face challenges of digital literacy and financing.
8. **Kumar Rajesh, 2017,**
   Adoption of e-commerce among the indian farmer
   This study has contributions and managerial implications to the information system knowledge base as well as agricultural sector in India. The rate at which technology innovations like the internet information is adopted by consumers constitutes an important part of the technology change or integration. There are a number of studies on adoption of new technology, but only a handful of studies focus on the agricultural services industry. An understanding of the factors affecting this choice of technology for farming practices is essential both for the creators and producers of such technology. This study suggests that the Technology Acceptance Model, which is the basis of much of the research in Information Technology (IT) diffusion, will be more useful if it is integrated with specific issues like infrastructure, perception and trust on the customer side and more basic elements of the security aspects of technology and service on the side of the information providers in respect of Agriculture sector in India.
9. **Dharani K. , Reshma M.,2025**
   Comparative analysis of e-commercebusiness models in urban and rural markets
   This research analyzes existing e-commerce business models, including Business-to-Consumer (B2C), Consumer-to-Consumer (C2C), and Social Commerce, to assess their effectiveness in urban and rural settings. A mixed-method approach is adopted, utilizing surveys and case studies from both market types to evaluate consumer behavior, logistical efficiency, and digital adoption rates. Additionally, technology-driven solutions such as mobile-first strategies, localized supply chain models, and digital financial inclusion are explored. Findings indicate that urban e-commerce thrives on convenience, personalized marketing, and tech-driven logistics, whereas rural markets benefit from hybrid models integrating local intermediaries, cash-on-delivery options, and mobile-commerce solutions. Social commerce, leveraging trust-based networks, emerges as a viable approach in rural areas. Tailoring business models to regional needs enhances market penetration and ensures sustainable growth in both sectors.
10. **Khandhar tanvi,2024.**
    A study on Behaviour of consumer towards sutainable production in Mumbai.
    The literature shows that sustainable and eco-friendly products are here to stay, and consumers

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

are willing to make a positive shift. However, price and limited availability are some of the major challenges in shifting behaviour towards sustainable products. This study aims to understand purchasing habits and decision making factors towards sustainable products. Additionally, the study also identifies the demographic factors of age and gender that may influence the behaviour of consumers.this study aims to provide insights about opportunities and challenges in promoting sustainable products. In turn, this will help the businesses and marketers operating in the Mumbai region to develop effective marketing strategies for environmentally conscious consumers.

Research Methodology:

The present study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design to examine and compare the operational aspects of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews with owners and managers of selected e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses. The questionnaire was designed to gather information related to business operations, technology usage, marketing practices, supply chain management, and customer relationship management. Secondary data were obtained from published research papers, academic journals, company reports, industry publications, books, and relevant online sources.

The study uses purposive sampling to select respondents who are directly involved in business operations. A suitable sample size was chosen to represent both types of businesses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as percentages, averages, and comparative tables. Graphs and charts were used where necessary to present the data clearly. The findings were interpreted to identify similarities and differences in operational practices between e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses, leading to meaningful conclusions and recommendations.

Hypothesis Testing:

The study formulated null and alternative hypotheses to examine whether significant differences exist in operational aspects of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses. The hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical tools to analyze primary data collected through structured questionnaires.

Hypothesis based on Demographic information

Independent variables	**Demographic factors**
	Gender Age group Education level
Dependent variables	**Business types / perception / operations**
	e-commerce startups traditional family business

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0)**

There is no significant relationship between demographic factors of respondents and their preference/perception towards e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses.

H_{01}: Age of respondents does not significantly influence preference for e-commerce startups or traditional family businesses.

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

H_{02}: Education level does not significantly influence perception towards technology adoption in businesses.

H_{03}: Income level has no significant impact on choice between e-commerce and traditional businesses.

2. **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)**

H_1: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics of respondents and the type of business (e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses).

H_{11}: Age of respondents significantly influences their preference towards e-commerce startups or traditional family businesses.

H_{12}: Gender of respondents has a significant association with the choice of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses.

H_{13}: Educational qualification of respondents significantly affects their perception towards e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses.

Data Analysis & Interpreation:

Table 1.1

Demographic data

Variables		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Age	20-25	6	**12**
	25-30	20	40
	30-40	16	32
	Above 40	8	16
	Total	50	100
Gander	Male	33	64
	Female	17	36
	Other	0	0
	Total	50	100
Education qualification	Below 12^{th}	2	4
	12^{th} PASS	8	16
	undergraduate	33	66
	Post graduate	4	8
	Professional degree	3	6
	other	0	0
	Total	50	100

From the above table 1.1 The demographic profile of the respondents indicates a total sample size of 50 participants. With respect to age, the majority of respondents fall in the 25–30 years age group, accounting for 40% of the sample. This is followed by the 30–40 years group representing 32% of respondents. The 20–25 years and above 40 years age groups contribute 12% and 16% respectively. This suggests that most respondents belong to the young and middle-aged working population.

In terms of gender, the sample is dominated by male respondents, who constitute 64%, while female respondents account for 36% of the total sample. No respondents were recorded under the "other" gender category.

Regarding educational qualification, a significant proportion of respondents are undergraduates, comprising 66% of the sample. This is followed by 12th pass respondents at 16%, post-graduates at 8%, and professionally qualified respondents at 6%. Only 4% of respondents fall below the 12th standard, and no respondents were recorded under

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

the "other" category. Overall, the data reflects that the respondents are largely well-educated, with most having at least an undergraduate level of education.

Questionnaire data:

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
1. Business type	e-commerce startups	25	50
	Traditional family business	25	50
	Total	50	100
2. How long business been operate	Less then 5 years	20	40
	5-10 years	13	26
	More than 10 years	17	34
	total	50	100
3. size of employees	Less than 10	30	60
	10-50	18	36
	More than 50	2	4
	total	50	100
4. primary mode of business	Online	19	38
	Ofline	25	50
	Both	6	12
	Total	50	100
5. How are daily business managed	Owner managed	25	50
	Family managed	11	22
	Professionally managed	14	28
	Total	50	100
6. do you used technology for inventory management	Yes	44	88
	No	6	12
	Total	50	100
7. how frequently update operational process	Regularly	7	14
	Occasionally	33	66
	Rarely	10	20
	Total	50	100
8. What is major operational challenge faced by business	High operating cost	12	24
	Lack of skilled manpower	14	28
	Technological issues	9	18
	Market competition	15	30
	Total	50	100
9. How do you interact with your customer	Digital platforms	15	30
	Personal interaction	24	48
	Both	11	22
10. How do you collect customer feedback	Online reviews	20	40
	Direct communication	30	60
	Surveys	0	0
	Total	50	100

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

11. business growth in the last 3 years	Yes	48	96
	No	2	4
	Total	50	100
12. which factor contributes most to your business growth	Technology	13	26
	Brand loyalty	18	36
	Pricing strategy	5	10
	Customer service	14	28
	Total	50	100
13. Digitalization improves operational efficiency	Agree	18	36
	Strongly Agree	31	62
	Natural	1	2
	Disagree	0	0
	Total	50	100

From the above Table 1.2. The analysis of questionnaire data is based on responses collected from 50 business entities. With respect to type of business, the sample is equally divided, with 50% representing e-commerce startups and 50% representing traditional family businesses. This balanced distribution allows for a fair comparative analysis between the two business models.

Regarding the duration of business operation, 40% of the businesses have been operating for less than 5 years, indicating a significant presence of relatively new enterprises. Businesses operating for 5–10 years constitute 26%, while those operating for more than 10 years account for 34% of the sample. This shows a mix of both newly established and well-established businesses in the study.

In terms of size of employees, a majority of businesses (60%) employ less than 10 employees, highlighting the dominance of small-scale enterprises. Businesses employing 10–50 employees represent 36%, while only 4% of businesses have more than 50 employees, indicating limited representation of large-scale organizations.

With respect to the primary mode of business operation, 50% of respondents operate through offline mode, while 38% conduct business online. Additionally, 12% of businesses operate through both online and offline modes, reflecting the gradual adoption of hybrid business models.

The analysis of responses from 50 businesses provides insights into management structure, use of technology, and operational update practices. Regarding daily business management, 50% of the businesses are owner-managed, indicating direct involvement of owners in daily operations. Meanwhile, 22% of businesses are family-managed, and 28% are professionally managed, suggesting a gradual shift toward professional management practices in some enterprises.

With respect to the use of technology for inventory management, a large majority of respondents (88%) reported that they use technology, while only 12% indicated that they do not use any technological tools. This highlights the growing adoption of technology in inventory and operational control across businesses.

In terms of updating operational processes, 66% of respondents update their processes occasionally, reflecting moderate responsiveness to operational changes. 14% of businesses update their processes regularly, indicating a proactive approach toward efficiency improvement. However, 20% of respondents

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

rarely update their operational processes, which may affect long-term efficiency and competitiveness.

The analysis is based on responses collected from 50 businesses and focuses on operational challenges, customer interaction methods, and feedback collection practices.

Regarding the major operational challenges faced by businesses, the most significant issue reported is market competition, identified by 30% of respondents. This is followed by lack of skilled manpower, reported by 28% of businesses. High operating costs account for 24%, while technological issues are considered a challenge by 18% of respondents. The findings indicate that both external pressures, such as competition, and internal constraints, such as manpower and cost management, significantly affect business operations.

In terms of customer interaction methods, 48% of respondents interact with customers through personal interaction, highlighting the continued importance of direct customer engagement. 30% of businesses rely primarily on digital platforms, while 22% use both personal and digital modes of interaction. This reflects a gradual shift toward digital engagement alongside traditional methods.

With respect to customer feedback collection, a majority of businesses (60%) collect feedback through direct communication, indicating a preference for personal feedback mechanis 40% of respondents use online reviews to gather customer feedback, while none of the businesses reported using survey-based methods. This suggests limited adoption of structured feedback systems among the surveyed businesses.

The analysis is based on responses from 50 businesses and examines recent business growth, key growth contributors, and perceptions regarding digitalization and operational efficiency.

With respect to business growth over the last three years, a significant majority of respondents (96%) reported that their businesses have experienced growth, while only 4% indicated no growth. This reflects an overall positive growth trend among the sampled businesses.

Regarding the factors contributing most to business growth, brand loyalty was identified as the most influential factor by 36% of respondents. This is followed by customer service, cited by 28%, and technology, reported by 26% of businesses. Pricing strategy was considered the least influential factor, selected by only 10% of respondents. These findings suggest that customer-centric factors play a more critical role in driving business growth than pricing alone.

In terms of perceptions about digitalization and operational efficiency, a large majority of respondents expressed a positive view. 62% of respondents strongly agree, and 36% agree that digitalization improves operational efficiency. Only 2% expressed a neutral opinion, and none of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This indicates strong consensus among businesses regarding the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing operational performance.

Overall, the findings highlight strong business growth in recent years, with brand loyalty, customer service, and technology emerging as key growth drivers. Additionally, there is widespread agreement that digitalization plays a vital role in improving operational efficiency, reinforcing its importance for sustained business success.

Findings:

The study includes an equal representation of e-commerce startups (50%) and traditional family businesses (50%), enabling a meaningful and unbiased comparison of their operational practices.

Age and Experience Profile of Respondents

Most respondents belong to the 25–40 years age group, indicating participation from economically active individuals. Additionally, while a considerable number of businesses are relatively new (less than 5 years old),

ISSN–2277- 8721

EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

a significant proportion have been operating for more than 10 years, especially among traditional family businesses. This reflects a mix of innovation-driven startups and experience-based traditional enterprises.

Management Structure Differences:

E-commerce startups show a greater tendency toward professional and owner-led management, whereas traditional family businesses are largely family-managed. This highlights structural differences in decision-making and operational control between the two business models.

Employee Size and Scale of Operations

The majority of businesses operate on a small scale, with less than 10 employees. E-commerce startups, however, demonstrate relatively higher scalability compared to traditional family businesses, indicating growth potential through technology-driven operations.

Adoption of Technology in Operations:

A very high proportion of businesses use technology for inventory management, with adoption being more prominent among e-commerce startups. Traditional family businesses show partial adoption, suggesting a gradual transition toward digital operational syste

Operational Update Practices:

Most businesses update their operational processes occasionally, while fewer businesses update them regularly. E-commerce startups are comparatively more proactive in updating operations, whereas traditional family businesses tend to follow conventional practices with slower adaptation to change.

Customer Interaction Methods:

Traditional family businesses primarily rely on personal interaction, reflecting relationship-based business models. In contrast, e-commerce startups depend more on digital platforms, while some businesses use a hybrid approach combining both methods.

Customer Feedback Collection Mechanisms:

Direct communication is the most commonly used method for collecting customer feedback, particularly among traditional family businesses. E-commerce startups show higher reliance on online reviews, though the use of structured feedback tools such as surveys remains limited across both business types.

Major Operational Challenges:

The most significant challenges faced by businesses include market competition, lack of skilled manpower, and high operating costs. E-commerce startups face intense competition and technological challenges, while traditional family businesses struggle more with manpower and cost efficiency.

Business Growth Trends:

A substantial majority of businesses reported growth over the last three years, indicating overall sectoral expansion. E-commerce startups show faster growth momentum, supported by technology adoption and market reach, whereas traditional family businesses exhibit steady and sustainable growth.

Key Factors Contributing to Business Growth:

Brand loyalty and customer service emerged as the most important contributors to business growth, followed by technology adoption. Pricing strategy was found to be relatively less influential, suggesting a shift toward value-driven competitiveness.

Impact of Digitalization on Operational Efficiency:

There is strong agreement among respondents that digitalization improves operational efficiency. This perception is particularly strong among e-commerce startups, reinforcing the role of digital tools in improving speed, accuracy, and cost efficiency of operations.

Conclusion of the study:

The present study aimed to compare the operational practices of e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses by analyzing demographic data, questionnaire responses, hypothesis testing, and overall

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EIIRJ Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal

Volume–XV, Special Issue –I March – April 2026

OPEN ACCESS Original Research Article

findings. The study reveals that both business models operate under different structural and operational frameworks, each with its own strengths and limitations.

The results of the data analysis and hypothesis testing indicate that e-commerce startups demonstrate higher adoption of technology, more frequent operational updates, and greater reliance on digital platforms for customer interaction and inventory management. These factors contribute to improved operational efficiency and faster adaptability to market changes. In contrast, traditional family businesses rely more on personal customer relationships, family-based management, and experience-driven decision-making, which supports customer trust and long-term stability.

The findings further show that digitalization has a positive and significant impact on operational efficiency, as strongly supported by respondents from both business types. Business growth over the last three years has been reported by a majority of respondents, with brand loyalty and customer service emerging as the most influential growth factors, followed by technology adoption. This confirms that customer-centric practices play a crucial role in business performance irrespective of the business model.

Operational challenges such as market competition, lack of skilled manpower, and high operating costs affect both e-commerce startups and traditional family businesses, though their intensity and nature vary. Hypothesis testing results support the view that differences in operational efficiency and growth are significantly influenced by technology usage, management practices, and customer interaction methods.

In conclusion, the study finds that while e-commerce startups are more efficient in terms of technology and scalability, traditional family businesses excel in customer relationships and stability. A balanced integration of digital tools with relationship-based business practices can enhance operational efficiency and long-term sustainability for both business models. The study therefore suggests that adopting a hybrid operational approach can help businesses remain competitive in an evolving business environment.

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