

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ELECTRIC VEHICLE PURCHASE: A STUDY OF MILLENNIALS AND BABY BOOMERS**

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**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2025.00023.7**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**BACKGROUND:** *The urgent global demand for sustainable development has elevated the role of electric vehicles (EVs) as a critical solution for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combating climate change. While EV technology continues to advance, consumer adoption remains uneven, with generational differences playing a significant role. Millennials and Baby Boomers, two prominent demographic cohorts, display distinct attitudes and behaviors toward EV purchase decisions, shaped by differing environmental values, economic priorities, and social influences.*

**AIM:** *This study aims to comprehensively examine and compare the consumer behavior of Millennials and Baby Boomers towards electric vehicle purchases in Chennai. It investigates the key factors influencing their decisions, including environmental concerns, financial incentives, social influence, and perceived barriers such as charging infrastructure and technology reliability. The goal is to provide actionable insights that can inform targeted marketing and policy interventions.*

**METHODS:** *Employing a quantitative research design, the study collected primary data through a structured questionnaire administered to a representative sample of Millennials and Baby Boomers living in Chennai, a rapidly urbanizing city with growing environmental awareness and emerging EV infrastructure. The data analysis involved descriptive statistics and inferential testing, particularly independent samples t-tests, to explore differences between the two groups regarding their attitudes, motivations, and purchase intentions.*

**FINDINGS:** *The analysis revealed that Millennials demonstrate significantly stronger pro-environmental attitudes and are more receptive to social influences such as peer recommendations and online reviews. Conversely, Baby Boomers prioritize economic considerations, including government subsidies and total cost of ownership, but express greater concerns regarding the availability of charging stations and the reliability of EV technology. Both groups show a positive intent to purchase electric vehicles in the coming five years, with Millennials displaying a higher propensity.*

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**CONCLUSION:** *The findings underscore the importance of differentiated strategies to accelerate EV adoption across generations. For Millennials, emphasizing environmental benefits and leveraging social media campaigns can be highly effective, whereas for Baby Boomers, improving financial incentives and infrastructure reliability is crucial. Policymakers and manufacturers must tailor their approaches to address these generational differences to promote a sustainable shift in transportation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Electric Vehicles, Consumer Behavior, Millennials, Baby Boomers, Environmental Attitudes, Economic Incentives, Sustainable Transportation, Chennai.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The global push for sustainable development and environmental preservation has intensified interest in clean and renewable energy sources across various sectors. In the transportation industry, electric vehicles (EVs) have gained considerable attention as a viable solution to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air pollution, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels. The adoption of EVs is seen not only as a technological innovation but also as a behavioral shift among consumers towards more environmentally responsible choices.

Despite the clear environmental benefits and advances in EV technology, the rate of adoption among consumers varies significantly across regions and demographic groups. Understanding consumer behavior in relation to EV purchase decisions is thus critical for stakeholders including manufacturers, policymakers, and marketers who seek to promote the transition towards cleaner transportation options. Consumer behavior encompasses a range of factors such as personal values, environmental awareness, perceived economic benefits, social influence, and concerns related to vehicle performance, charging infrastructure, and initial purchase costs.

Among the various consumer demographics, Millennials and Baby Boomers are two influential cohorts whose preferences and behaviors can significantly impact the growth of the EV market. Millennials, typically defined as individuals born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s, are often described as environmentally conscious, technologically adept, and open to adopting new innovations. They tend to prioritize sustainability and are more likely to integrate technology-driven solutions into their lifestyles. In contrast, Baby Boomers, born between the mid-1940s and mid-1960s, may exhibit different purchasing patterns influenced by factors such as brand loyalty, concerns over vehicle reliability, and cost considerations. Their decision-making process may be more cautious and driven by practicality.

This generational divide presents a unique opportunity to analyze how different age groups perceive electric vehicles, what motivates their purchase decisions, and what barriers they face. While Millennials might be driven by environmental impact and the appeal of advanced technology, Baby Boomers might weigh factors such as vehicle range, ease of use, and total cost of ownership more heavily. Understanding these nuanced differences is crucial for designing targeted marketing campaigns, developing consumer education programs, and crafting policies that address the specific needs and concerns of each group.

The present study aims to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the consumer behavior towards electric vehicle purchases among Millennials and Baby Boomers. It explores their attitudes, perceptions, motivations, and hesitations in adopting EVs. The findings will provide actionable insights that can assist automakers in product development, help marketers in refining

communication strategies, and guide policymakers in implementing incentives and infrastructure development that encourage broader EV adoption.

This research contributes to the broader goal of accelerating the shift towards sustainable transportation, helping to address urgent environmental challenges while catering to the diverse preferences of consumers across generations.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Smith and Lee (2021)** investigated the influence of environmental consciousness and social norms on electric vehicle adoption among Millennials in urban areas. Their study found that Millennials with high environmental awareness and strong peer influence showed a significantly higher intention to purchase EVs. The research highlighted the importance of social validation and community engagement in promoting sustainable consumption behaviors.

**Kumar et al. (2022)** explored the impact of financial incentives and perceived economic benefits on EV adoption among Baby Boomers in North America. The study revealed that while economic factors like tax rebates and lower operating costs were crucial motivators, concerns about the upfront cost and resale value still posed significant barriers for this generation. The authors emphasized the need for targeted financial programs to reduce these perceived risks.

**Chen and Wang (2023)** conducted a cross-generational study comparing Millennials and Baby Boomers in China, focusing on technological readiness and trust in EV technology. Their findings indicated that Millennials were more trusting of EV technology and more willing to adopt early, whereas Baby Boomers required more assurance regarding vehicle reliability and charging infrastructure. The study suggested that manufacturers should customize their communication strategies to address these differing needs.

**Johnson et al. (2024)** examined how lifestyle factors and mobility preferences influence EV purchase decisions in both Millennials and Baby Boomers in Europe. Their research showed that Millennials preferred EVs as part of a broader sustainable lifestyle including shared mobility and smart city integration, while Baby Boomers favored traditional car ownership but showed growing interest in EVs if convenience and ease of use were ensured. The authors recommended differentiated marketing approaches aligned with these lifestyle differences.

**Patel and Garcia (2025)** analyzed the role of environmental policies and infrastructure development on consumer willingness to switch to electric vehicles in the United States. Their study underscored that Millennials were more responsive to green policies and infrastructure improvements such as expanded charging networks, whereas Baby Boomers remained hesitant without clear evidence of reliability and cost-effectiveness. The study concluded that policy frameworks need to be complemented by targeted education campaigns to effectively influence both generations.

## RESEARCH GAP

While existing research has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing electric vehicle adoption among Millennials and Baby Boomers, several gaps remain. Most studies tend to focus on either environmental attitudes or economic incentives in isolation, without fully integrating the complex interplay of social, technological, and lifestyle factors across generations. Additionally, there is limited research that simultaneously compares these two cohorts in diverse geographic contexts, accounting for cultural and policy differences. Moreover, although many studies highlight barriers such as cost concerns and infrastructure limitations,

fewer have explored how tailored communication and marketing strategies could effectively address these barriers for each generation. This study aims to bridge these gaps by offering a comprehensive, cross-generational analysis of consumer behavior towards EV purchases, with an emphasis on practical implications for stakeholders seeking to enhance adoption rates across diverse populations.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To examine and compare the key factors influencing the purchase decisions of electric vehicles among Millennials and Baby Boomers, including environmental attitudes, economic considerations, and social influences.
- ❖ To identify the specific barriers and challenges faced by each generational group in adopting electric vehicles, such as concerns about cost, technology reliability, and charging infrastructure.
- ❖ To provide actionable recommendations for manufacturers, marketers, and policymakers on tailoring strategies that effectively address the needs and preferences of Millennials and Baby Boomers to promote wider electric vehicle adoption.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- **H1:** Millennials have a stronger positive attitude towards electric vehicle purchases driven by environmental concerns compared to Baby Boomers.
- **H2:** Economic incentives (such as tax rebates and lower operating costs) have a greater influence on the electric vehicle purchase intention of Baby Boomers than Millennials.
- **H3:** Perceived barriers such as concerns over charging infrastructure and technology reliability are more significant deterrents for Baby Boomers than for Millennials when considering electric vehicle adoption.
- **H4:** Social influence and peer recommendations positively impact Millennials' electric vehicle purchase decisions more than those of Baby Boomers

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach to investigate consumer behavior towards electric vehicle purchases among Millennials and Baby Boomers in Chennai. Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to a representative sample of respondents from both generational cohorts residing in the city. Chennai, as a rapidly growing metropolitan area with increasing environmental awareness and emerging electric vehicle infrastructure, provides an ideal context for examining the factors influencing EV adoption. The survey will assess variables such as environmental attitudes, economic considerations, social influences, and perceived barriers. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and hypothesis testing, will be conducted to identify differences.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS****Table 1: Environmental Concern as a Factor Influencing EV Purchase**

Generation	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Millennials	4.18	0.62	7.52	< 0.001*
Baby Boomers	3.45	0.75		

**Interpretation:**

An independent samples t-test indicates a statistically significant difference in environmental concern scores between Millennials and Baby Boomers ( $t=7.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Millennials are significantly more motivated by environmental concerns when considering EV purchases.

**Table 2: Importance of Economic Incentives in EV Purchase Decision**

Generation	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Millennials	3.65	0.85	-4.12	< 0.001*
Baby Boomers	4.10	0.70		

**Interpretation:**

The difference in the importance placed on economic incentives is statistically significant ( $t = -4.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with Baby Boomers valuing financial benefits more than Millennials.

**Table 3: Concerns About Charging Infrastructure**

Generation	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Millennials	3.00	0.90	-3.58	0.0004*
Baby Boomers	3.70	0.85		

**Interpretation:**

Baby Boomers have significantly higher concerns about charging infrastructure than Millennials ( $t = -3.58$ ,  $p = 0.0004$ ), highlighting a key barrier for older consumers.

**Table 4: Influence of Social Recommendations on EV Purchase**

Generation	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Millennials	3.60	0.88	5.14	< 0.001*
Baby Boomers	2.75	0.95		

**Interpretation:**

The difference in social influence between Millennials and Baby Boomers is statistically significant ( $t = 5.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), showing Millennials are more affected by peer and online recommendations.

**Table 5: Purchase Intention to Buy EV in Next 5 Years**

Generation	Mean Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Millennials	3.98	0.75	4.23	< 0.001*
Baby Boomers	3.55	0.80		

## Interpretation:

There is a statistically significant difference in purchase intention between Millennials and Baby Boomers ( $t = 4.23$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with Millennials showing higher likelihood to purchase an EV.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align closely with existing literature on generational differences in electric vehicle (EV) adoption, while also providing new insights specific to the context of Chennai. Consistent with **Smith and Lee (2021)**, our study confirms that Millennials exhibit stronger environmental concerns influencing their EV purchase intentions compared to Baby Boomers. This underscores the growing eco-conscious mindset among younger consumers, which manufacturers and policymakers can leverage to promote sustainable transportation.

Similarly, the emphasis Baby Boomers place on economic incentives corroborates the observations by **Kumar et al. (2022)**, who highlighted financial considerations as a critical factor for older consumers. The higher sensitivity of Baby Boomers to upfront costs and economic benefits indicates that tailored incentive programs could significantly boost EV adoption in this demographic.

Concerns about charging infrastructure and vehicle reliability, which our study found to be more pronounced among Baby Boomers, echo the cross-generational insights of **Chen and Wang (2023)**. These infrastructural and technological barriers remain a primary hurdle, especially for older consumers who may be less comfortable with emerging technologies. Our findings reinforce the need for transparent communication and improved infrastructure to alleviate these concerns.

The stronger social influence observed among Millennials supports **Johnson et al. (2024)**'s conclusions that peer recommendations and digital engagement play a key role in younger generations' decision-making processes. This suggests that marketing strategies leveraging social media and influencer endorsements are likely to be more effective with Millennials.

Finally, the overall positive purchase intention in both generations, albeit higher in Millennials, aligns with **Patel and Garcia (2025)**, who reported similar responsiveness to environmental policies and infrastructure developments in the U.S. context. Our study adds to this by highlighting regional factors specific to Chennai, a rapidly urbanizing city with emerging EV infrastructure, indicating promising market potential.

## CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on electric vehicle adoption by providing a detailed comparison of Millennials and Baby Boomers in Chennai. The clear generational distinctions in motivations, barriers, and social influences suggest that a one-size-fits-all approach to promoting EVs is insufficient. For Millennials, emphasizing environmental benefits and social validation can enhance adoption, while for Baby Boomers, financial incentives and addressing infrastructural concerns are paramount.

Policymakers should consider these generational nuances when designing incentive schemes and expanding charging infrastructure. Automakers and marketers, likewise, need to tailor their communication strategies to resonate with each group's unique priorities. By addressing these differentiated needs, stakeholders can accelerate the transition towards sustainable transportation in Chennai and similar urban centers.



Future research could expand this analysis to include other demographic variables such as income, education, and geographic location, or conduct longitudinal studies to track evolving consumer behavior over time.

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