

AI-Enhanced Business Models: Catalyzing International Trade and Entrepreneurial Growth

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Abstract :

This study explores the role of AI-enhanced business models in fostering international trade and entrepreneurial growth. By analyzing global trends and practical integration strategies, the study identifies two main categories of AI-driven models — AI-enabled and AI-native business models and demonstrates how they enhance business efficiency, scalability, and global market access. Focusing on emerging economies such as Algeria, the paper highlights the strategic potential of AI as a catalyst for innovation, youth entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic development in the digital age.

Key words: AI-enhanced business models, international trade, entrepreneurial growth, innovation, emerging economies, sustainable development.

Résumé :

Cette étude explore le rôle des modèles d'affaires renforcés par l'IA dans la promotion du commerce international et de la croissance entrepreneuriale. En analysant les tendances mondiales et les stratégies d'intégration pratiques, l'étude identifie deux catégories principales de modèles pilotés par l'IA - les modèles d'affaires basés sur l'IA et les modèles d'affaires natifs de l'IA - et démontre comment ils améliorent l'efficacité des entreprises, l'évolutivité et l'accès au marché mondial. En se concentrant sur les économies émergentes telles que l'Algérie, le document met en évidence le potentiel stratégique de l'IA en tant que catalyseur de l'innovation, de l'entrepreneuriat des jeunes et du développement économique durable à l'ère numérique.

Mots clés : Modèles d'affaires renforcés par l'IA, commerce international, croissance

entrepreneuriale, innovation, économies émergentes, développement durable.

ملخص :

تستكشف هذه الدراسة دور نماذج الأعمال المعززة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في تعزيز التجارة الدولية ونمو ريادة الأعمال. وتحدد الدراسة، من خلال تحليل الاتجاهات العالمية واستراتيجيات التكامل العملية، فئتين رئيسيتين من النماذج التي تعتمد على الذكاء الاصطناعي - نماذج الأعمال المعززة بالذكاء الاصطناعي ونماذج الأعمال المعززة بالذكاء الاصطناعي، وتوضح كيف تعزز هذه النماذج كفاءة الأعمال وقابلية التوسع والوصول إلى الأسواق العالمية. بالتركيز على الاقتصادات الناشئة مثل الجزائر، تسلط الورقة الضوء على الإمكانيات الاستراتيجية للذكاء الاصطناعي كمحفز للابتكار وريادة الأعمال الشبابية والتنمية الاقتصادية المستدامة في العصر الرقمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نماذج الأعمال المعززة بالذكاء الاصطناعي، التجارة الدولية، نمو ريادة الأعمال، الابتكار، الاقتصادات الناشئة، التنمية المستدامة.

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the global economic landscape. Far from being confined to technological niches, AI is now invading all sectors, enabling automation, improving decision-making and unlocking unprecedented efficiency. In the context of international trade and entrepreneurship, AI is a transformative engine that accelerates business operations, opens to new markets and drives competitive advantage for startups and established companies alike.

AI technologies are transforming value chains and reshaping traditional business operations. Scholars like Chesbrough (2010) emphasize the dynamic nature of business model innovation, especially in response to technological disruptions. According to Buntic et al. (2021), AI plays a critical role in mitigating digital risks in international markets, further enabling businesses to expand

globally.

Sjodin et al. (2023) conceptualize the synergy between AI capabilities and circular business model innovation, highlighting how firms can utilize dynamic capabilities to drive sustainable outcomes. Similarly, Sena and Nocker (2021) explore the dual nature of AI in business models, referring to the "good, bad, and ugly" implications of AI implementation. The McKinsey Global Institute (2025) reports that firms integrating AI into their core operations show significantly higher productivity and performance metrics, while the World Economic Forum (2025) emphasizes AI's role in transforming global industries.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze and illustrate how AI-enhanced business models contribute to the expansion of international commerce and the development of entrepreneurial ventures. It seeks to highlight the strategic value of integrating AI into business models to:

- Boost trade efficiency and scalability,
- Encourage youth-led entrepreneurship,
- Promote economic sustainability and global competitiveness.

This study addresses the following key question:

- *What are the categories and components of AI-enhanced business models that significantly influence international trade and entrepreneurial growth?*

Additionally, it explores:

- *Why and how should entrepreneurs, particularly in emerging economies, integrate AI to strengthen their business operations and global reach?*

This research adopts a qualitative, exploratory approach based on a comprehensive literature review, document analysis, and global statistical data. Sources include peer-reviewed journals, international think tank publications, and market reports such as those by Statista (2024), McKinsey (2025), OECD (2023), and the International Trade Centre (2023).

The study relies on document analysis to:

Classify AI business model typologies.

Map AI implementation across the Business Model Canvas (BMC).

Examine real-world case studies of companies integrating AI into trade-related operations.

Rather than relying on hypothesis testing, the paper takes a conceptual and interpretative lens

to identify patterns and practical implications.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework:

2.1. Definitions:

Artificial Intelligence:

A broad field of computer science focused on creating systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence (OECD, 2022; McKinsey & Company, 2025).

Business Models:

Business Models (BM) are defined as a schematic representation that refers to the framework or structure that outlines how a company creates, delivers, and captures value. It provides a strategic roadmap for how a company operates and generates profits. (Ferdi, 2018). They are a system that defines how a firm creates, delivers, and captures value (Chesbrough, 2010).

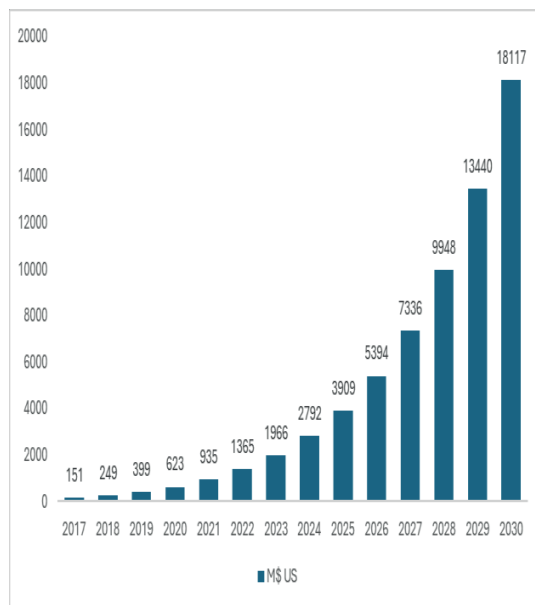
Artificial Intelligence Business Models:

The exact definition of this emerging concept remains subject to debate, with varying perspectives among scholars. However, there is general agreement that it represents the convergence of two distinct domains: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Business Models (BM) (Bouadila & Boucha, 2025). Artificial Intelligence is commonly defined as the capability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to execute tasks traditionally associated with human intelligence (Khalfallah & Bendjelloul, 2023). Importantly, AI extends far beyond humanoid robots and conversational agents like ChatGPT or Gemini. Market research indicates a remarkable expansion in the AI sector, which is projected to reach a value of USD 1,811,747.3 million by 2030. This growth corresponds to a global compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 35,9%, and an even higher rate of 44% in the Middle East and Africa. Such projections highlight the increasing focus on AI's transformative potential, not only for business innovation but also for broader societal advancement.

According to Statista and PwC reports, the global AI market is projected to exceed \$305 billion by 2026 with a compound annual growth rate CAGR 2025-2031) of 26.60%. The World Economic Forum (2023) predicts that over 80% of global trade-related services will be impacted by AI automation and digitalization in the coming decade. AI

adoption in trade logistics, procurement, and compliance is already enhancing international transactions, transparency, and response times.

Figure 01: Global artificial intelligence market, 2017 - 2030 (US\$M)



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on data from [Grand View Research](#)

3. AI-Business Models: Dual Typology and Role as a Catalyst

3.1. Dual Typology of AI Business Models:

After analyzing various AI-driven business models from both existing literature and real-world companies, a new classification emerged—one that uses the degree of AI implementation as its primary criterion.

1. Category 1: AI -Integrated Business Models

These are traditional companies that incorporate AI technologies into one or more components of their existing business models to enhance efficiency, decision-making, and customer experiences. The integration is typically targeted and strategic, involving specific processes rather than a complete transformation (Bouadila & Boucha, 2024). For example:

Maersk, a global logistics and shipping company, uses AI to optimize routes, automate documentation, and predict container demand. These improvements reduce delivery times, lower emissions, and enhance customer service.

Amazon, although a tech giant, integrates AI in various operational segments such as demand forecasting, personalized marketing, automated inventory systems, and intelligent warehousing.

Alibaba uses AI in customer service (chatbots), smart supply chains, and dynamic pricing strategies, significantly boosting its cross-border e-commerce operations.

The value in this model lies in applying AI to enhance or automate key activities, reduce operational costs, and improve service delivery within an existing commercial framework.

2. Category 2: AI -Native Business Models

These are companies whose core value proposition and revenue generation depend entirely on AI technologies. Their business logic, operations, and offerings are AI-driven from the ground up. Unlike Category 1, the product or service itself is AI-based. OpenAI offers AI models such as ChatGPT and Codex, providing developers and enterprises with tools to build smart applications. The business model revolves around API access, licensing, and enterprise solutions.

DeepMind, a subsidiary of Alphabet, develops AI solutions for healthcare, energy efficiency, and complex scientific challenges. Its value lies in the application of cutting-edge machine learning algorithms.

DataRobot and UiPath are also examples of companies that operate based on AI-native platforms offering services such as AutoML, AI-based workflow automation, and enterprise-level decision intelligence tools.

These businesses represent the new frontier of entrepreneurship where AI is not a tool but the foundation of business creation and scalability. They exemplify how emerging technologies can birth entirely new markets and customer demands.

3.2. AI Enhanced Business Model Canvas BMC:

The following model shows how AI can be integrated into business models in the trade sector to improve efficiency, accuracy, and scalability in global commerce:

- **Customer Segment:** AI-driven market segmentation, demand forecasting

AI helps companies understand their customers better by segmenting them into meaningful groups based on behavior, geography, or purchasing habits.

For example, AI can identify specific trends among importers in Asia vs. Africa and forecast demand for certain goods based on seasonality, economic indicators, or real-time market shifts.

- **Value Proposition:** Smart recommendation engines, real-time tracking, predictive logistics

The core promise made to customers is efficiency, personalization, and foresight. AI's role:

- o Recommendation engines: Suggest optimal shipping methods or trade routes.
- o Real-time tracking: AI-enabled IoT and GPS data keep customers updated on shipments.
- Predictive logistics: AI forecasts delivery times, potential delays, or supply chain disruptions before they occur.
- Channels: AI-powered digital trade platforms, intelligent chatbots

These are the digital mediums through which companies deliver their value proposition. AI's role:

- o Digital platforms: Automate trade processes (e.g., smart contracts, customs forms).
- o Chatbots: Offer 24/7 customer support, answer trade-related inquiries, and assist in order placement.
- Customer Relationships: NLP for multilingual support, sentiment analysis

How the company interacts and builds loyalty with customers. AI's role:

- o Natural Language Processing (NLP): Enables support in multiple languages, breaking down global trade barriers.
- o Sentiment analysis: AI understands customer satisfaction levels from reviews or interactions to improve service quality.
- Key Resources AI infrastructure, data sets, cloud APIs

Critical assets the company needs to operate the AI-enhanced business model. This includes:

- o AI infrastructure: High-performance computing systems.
- Data sets: Trade data, shipping history, customer behavior etc.

- o Cloud APIs: Integration tools for accessing third-party AI tools or services (e.g., Google Cloud, AWS, etc.)

- **Key Activities:** Predictive supply chain, fraud detection, customs automation

The main tasks a company must perform to deliver its value proposition. AI's role:

- o Predictive supply chain: AI anticipates disruptions and adjusts the supply flow.
- o Fraud detection: Flags suspicious patterns in transactions or documentation.
- o Customs automation: AI completes customs declarations, checks for compliance, and accelerates clearance.

- **Revenue Structure:** Reduced manpower, automated processing

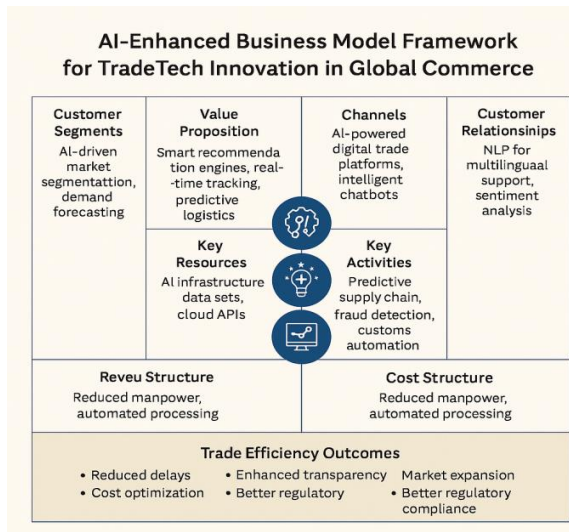
AI allows companies to cut costs and increase profit margins by automating routine processes, thus lower labor costs, faster transactions which means more volume, improved customer experience means more repeat business.

- **Cost Structure:** Reduced manpower, automated processing

The company saves money in areas like staffing and manual data entry. AI contributes by:

- o Reducing human error.
- o Automating repetitive tasks like data entry, tracking, or document checking.
- o Requiring fewer full-time employees for operational roles.

Figure 02: AI- Enhanced Business Model Framework for TradeTech Innovation in Global Commerce,



Source: Elaborated by authors using a generative AI tool,

Real-Life Case: Flexport: “The Digital Freight Forwarder Revolutionizing Global Trade”:

Customer Segments: Flexport serves global importers/exporters, including SMEs and multinational enterprises. Using AI, it segments customers based on trade volume, seasonal trends, and shipping behaviors.

Value Proposition: Flexport offers predictive logistics, real-time tracking, and smart recommendation systems to optimize trade operations. AI helps identify optimal shipping routes, detect disruptions, and improve shipment accuracy.

Channels: Customers interact through AI-powered digital platforms and intelligent support systems. Flexport's chatbots and cloud-based APIs offer seamless integration with users' supply chains.

Customer Relationships: Using NLP and sentiment analysis, Flexport provides multilingual support and monitors customer satisfaction in real time. This helps build stronger global client relationships.

Key Resources: Flexport relies on a strong AI infrastructure, proprietary data sets, and cloud technologies. Its platforms are powered by predictive models trained on customs data, global logistics trends, and shipment histories.

Key Activities: AI is used for customs automation, fraud detection, and supply chain optimization. Flexport automates document processing, ensuring compliance with international trade laws.

Revenue Structure: Flexport earns through logistics services, premium analytics, and trade finance. AI enables lower labor costs and faster, error-free operations, boosting profitability.

Cost Structure: AI significantly reduces manual labor by automating tracking, compliance checks, and communication processes, contributing to a scalable and cost-efficient model.

4. AI Business Models as a Catalyst for International Trade and Entrepreneurial Growth:

4.1. As a catalyst for Entrepreneurial Growth:

AI-enhanced business models transform the entrepreneurial landscape in several fundamental ways:

1. Lower Barriers to Entry

AI tools (like no-code platforms, predictive analytics, and intelligent assistants) allow entrepreneurs with limited technical knowledge to launch tech-enabled startups. This democratizes innovation and opens doors for more entrepreneurs, especially in emerging markets. Example: Small-scale fashion entrepreneurs using AI-powered demand forecasting or AI design tools to minimize waste and customize collections.

2. Increased Agility and Scalability

Entrepreneurs can iterate and pivot faster using AI for customer insight analysis, market trend predictions, and product testing. AI enables lean, adaptive business models that scale faster with fewer resources. Chesbrough (2010) highlights that innovation in business models, particularly those incorporating new technologies like AI, significantly reduces risk while enhancing opportunity.

3. Enhanced Value Creation

AI enables personalization at scale, hyper-targeted marketing, and smart automation. This boosts value creation for customers and makes the business more competitive globally. Sena & Nocker (2021) discuss how AI contributes to value innovation and redefines customer engagement through cognitive technologies.

4. Enabling AI-Native Startups

Some entrepreneurs build entire businesses around AI as a core offering. These AI-native ventures (e.g., OpenAI, DataRobot) represent a **new class of startups** whose innovation is inherently driven by technological capabilities.

4.2. As a catalyst for International

Trade:

AI is also revolutionizing how trade happens across borders, making global commerce faster, smarter, and more connected:

1. Smart Supply Chains and Logistics

AI is used in real-time tracking, route optimization, demand forecasting, and warehouse automation—essential components of efficient global trade. For example, Maersk uses AI to optimize shipping logistics and customs compliance, reducing delays and boosting global competitiveness.

2. Market Intelligence and Trade Analytics

AI analyzes global demand, trade regulations, customer behavior, and currency fluctuations to help companies enter and operate in foreign markets more efficiently. McKinsey (2025) and ITC (2023) show how AI adoption improves trade competitiveness and helps SMEs internationalize.

3. Digital Trade Platforms and E-Commerce

AI-powered platforms such as Alibaba and Amazon are reducing frictions in cross-border trade. They help with language translation, fraud detection, and consumer personalization across cultures.

4. Risk Management and Compliance

AI helps detect trade fraud, ensure regulatory compliance, and manage international payment risks. This improves trust in global B2B transactions. Buntic et al. (2021) note that AI tools reduce digital risk exposure in global operations, essential for scaling internationally.

The intersection of AI business models and international trade means that entrepreneurs can now think globally from day one. AI lowers operational costs, enhances productivity, and allows even small firms to compete internationally. These AI-business model's support:

- Resilience in international trade, and
- Agility and innovation in entrepreneurship.

Additionally, by creating smarter, more sustainable, and data-driven models, entrepreneurs are not just adapting to the global market, they are actively shaping it.

5. Main Findings & Recommendations:

AI is not merely a support tool, it is transforming business models into globally scalable systems. Companies are leveraging AI to improve decision-making, automate logistics, personalize global customer experiences, and reduce trade friction across borders.

This study introduces a dual typology of AI-enhanced business models, distinguishing between AI-integrated models, which incorporate AI to support and optimize traditional functions (Traditional firms embed AI into specific components of the business model (e.g., customer segmentation, logistics optimization, inventory forecasting...etc. These enable efficiency, adaptability, and competitiveness in international trade), and AI-native models, which rely entirely on AI technologies as the core of their value creation and delivery mechanisms. It highlights how artificial intelligence acts as a catalyst for international trade by enhancing operational efficiency, enabling predictive logistics, and unlocking new market opportunities through advanced data analytics. The research also emphasizes the strategic importance of AI-based business models for entrepreneurial growth and international trade acting as a catalyst.

The conceptual framework developed in this study illustrates exactly where AI can be integrated into each of the BMC components (e.g., AI in key resources, smart cost structure, predictive revenue models, AI-enhanced customer relationships). This offers entrepreneurs and trade actors a roadmap for redesigning their operations in the digital age.

In light of recent global conflicts (e.g., the Iran–Israel crisis, disruptions in Hermes/Red Sea/Suez Canal transit), AI-based systems have helped companies reroute supply chains, forecast risks, and manage complex international trade flows in real time.

AI empowers startups and SMEs to enter global markets with fewer resources by reducing operational costs, enhancing data-driven decision-making, and increasing access to market intelligence, it also offers market access opportunities for Algerian entrepreneurs and startups, helping reduce trade barriers. This drives inclusive, scalable, and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the strategic integration of AI tools by businesses, especially in trade-related functions such as market intelligence, customer engagement, and global supply chain optimization. Policymakers are encouraged to support the development of AI-native startups through targeted incentives, digital infrastructure investment, and cross-sector

innovation partnerships. It is also essential to align national trade and innovation strategies with the ongoing AI revolution to maintain competitiveness in global markets. Furthermore, the study calls for the integration of digital and AI literacy within entrepreneurship and business education programs to prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs for technology-driven economies. And the promotion of the Adoption of AI-Driven BMC in Trade and Entrepreneurial Training, where governments, incubators, and universities should introduce the AI-enhanced Business Model Canvas as a strategic tool to help local entrepreneurs modernize their models and compete internationally.

It is also recommended that policy makers start supporting AI adoption through incentives, infrastructure investment (e.g., digital infrastructure), and regulatory frameworks that promote ethical AI use while encouraging innovation.

It's also recommendable to establish Public–Private Platforms for AI Trade Intelligence where AI-based platforms should be developed (or expanded) to help SMEs analyze export opportunities, regulatory barriers, and competitor landscapes using real-time data.

Finally, ongoing research and monitoring are advised to evaluate the impact of AI implementation and to position emerging markets as future-ready hubs for digital trade and innovation.

6. Conclusion

In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, economic uncertainty, and global trade disruptions, artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a futuristic concept but a strategic imperative. This research has explored how AI-enhanced business models are fundamentally reshaping the landscape of international commerce and entrepreneurial ecosystems. Through a dual-category lens—distinguishing between AI-integrated and AI-native business models—it has become evident that AI is not only enhancing operational efficiency but also redefining how value is created, delivered, and captured on a global scale.

The integration of AI into key business model components, as illustrated through the AI-enhanced Business Model Canvas, demonstrates tangible

opportunities for trade actors and entrepreneurs to boost scalability, sustainability, and competitiveness. Whether through predictive logistics, automated customer engagement, or AI-driven risk management, the application of AI within business models enables firms—especially SMEs and startups—to navigate complex global markets with greater agility and resilience.

Moreover, considering recent geopolitical tensions, disruptions in global trade routes, and increasing market volatility, AI has emerged as a critical tool for crisis response, supply chain optimization, and strategic foresight. Its role in enabling data-driven, adaptive, and sustainable business strategies highlights its catalytic potential for economic transformation and inclusive entrepreneurial development.

As Algeria and other emerging economies seek to open their markets to the world, investing in the adoption, localization, and innovation of AI-driven business models will be vital. Encouraging startups to embrace AI not just as a tool, but as a foundation for value creation, can accelerate international integration, foster innovation, and drive long-term economic growth.

Ultimately, AI business models are more than a trend—they are a paradigm shift that must be understood, supported, and strategically implemented to unlock the full potential of international trade and entrepreneurial advancement.

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