Digital Marketing Collaboration and Online Consumer Shopping Behavior: A Synergistic Relationship between E-Retailers and Online Consumers in South-South, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT: *The mirage of informational challenges between e-retailer and online consumer calls for synergetic studies in recent times. This study seeks to determine the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior in south-south, Nigeria. 214 sample was surveyed from two sample groups (online retailers and online consumers) in threes state; Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta State. Pearson correlation coefficient, Partial correlation and multiple regression statistical tests were used to test the various hypotheses. The findings revealed that information sharing, knowledge sharing, content sharing and incentive sharing are predictors of online purchase; though the multiple regression analysis did not support information sharing and knowledge sharing in online consumer category. It further revealed that trust is a key moderator of digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior. Thus, the study concluded that content sharing and incentive sharing affect actual online purchase. Therefore, the study recommends that online retailers should always develop quality and attractive brand content that will encourage consumers to re-share in order to gain more market exposure and penetration in the digital space. Finally, online retailers should increase their digital marketing efforts in regards to information and knowledge sharing by providing relevant and detailed description of product information that will help online consumers to learn about the benefits of the product better.*
KEYWORD: *Digital marketing, digital marketing collaboration, trust, online consumer shopping behavior and online purchase.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria has the highest population of internet users in Africa and occupied the 10th position in the world with a population of about 93,591,174 and penetration rate of 48.8% (Africa Telecommunication Industry Reports, March 2017). The Nigeria online market has a potential worth of $10 billion dollars with about 300,000 online orders being made on daily basis (www.mobile media info-tech.com). This shows that the adoption rate of online shopping in Nigeria is growing rapidly. Business organizations in Nigeria have seen the increasing rate of online shopping as an opportunity as well as challenge to manage and sustain the unseemly customer behavior and patronage. Many retailing firms today have changed marketing communication campaign models by integrating online informational collaborations as part of their integrated marketing communication strategy, most especially in business to consumer market (B2c). This informational synergy between consumer and retailers has resort to digital marketing strategy as a means of communication to create effective reach to consumers, mutual dialogue, benefit sharing and customer loyalty as well as building strong relationship with them.

However, despite the advantages of digital marketing, most firms are yet to reap the full benefit and adopt it and while some lacks the digital capabilities to manage online relationship and big data, develop content and protect privacy; thereby resulting to poor brand exposure, loss of opportunities and profit erosion. In order to get it right or gain competitive advantage, firms going digital are expected to look out for core digital anchor partners with high digital capabilities and collaborative culture in managing online related activities, in order to influence actual online purchase. Consequently, Online consumers are becoming more apprehensive in regards to what to buy from e- retailer store, the quantity of brand information for price comparison, value of purchase and which e-store to recommend to buy due to amount of information available for their varieties of purchase decisions; this has affected their satisfaction, profit projection and is detrimentally. Consumer online shopping behavior explanation and thus requires much investigation on the domains of informational collaboration.

Perhaps, the rationale of digital marketing collaboration is not only to share information, content, knowledge, on-line reviews, incentives or interactions with consumers but also enhances effective distribution

that would result to competitive advantage (Bharadwaj, Elsawy, Pavlou & Venkavaran, 2013) as well as collaborating with team members, departments and strategic partners at all levels (Neifield, 2014) to ensure partners purchase behavior and delivery satisfaction.

Without trust online business cannot exist. Collaborative online relationship has a unique value propositions base on commitment, trust, credibility (Merisavo, 2006; Neifield, 2014, Osatuyi, 2013) and privacy. These are key moderators of digital marketing collaboration and customer loyalty. Digital marketing collaboration has been a viable tool for brand exposure and loyalty, but only achievable with a committed and trusted relationship.

Collaboration as digital marketing communication strategy requires information sharing, content sharing, interactivity, personalization, knowledge sharing, incentive sharing (Merisevo, 2006; Osatuyi, 2015; Khan & Jan, 2015) co-creation, online community and affiliate marketing. These whole dimensions of digital marketing collaboration have not been fully exploited and related to purchase behavior by most Nigerian e-retailers, in spite of the immense benefits it provides in the business domain. The reasons are attributed to the fact that digital media proliferation has taken over the entire online landscape with consumers entertaining fear and so many perceived risks ranging from financial loss risk, product quality risk, delivery risk, time loss risk, e-retailing source risk, privacy risk, defective product risk (Sreya & Raveendran, 2016) and even product return risk . In addition, fraud, i.e cyber crime in the internet and lack of legislation and credible institutions to address cyber crime are adversely affecting the rapid growth of digital marketing adoption in Nigeria (www.mobilemedia info-tech.com).

However, irrespective of the significance and studies on digital marketing (adoption, integrative, relational), surprisingly little existing theoretical and empirical research studies on digital marketing has not capture the underlying concept of informational collaboration as an effective communication strategy in influencing online consumer shopping behavior. This study aimed at providing theoretical and empirical insights on collaborative relationship in digital marketing value chain in business to consumer (B2C) market and how it could influence online consumer shopping behavior.

In view of the above, this study is aimed at providing solutions to the following problems:

▪ To what extent do information sharing, knowledge sharing, content sharing and incentive sharing influenced online consumer shopping behavior?

▪ Or does trust moderates the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online shopping behavior?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The exponential advancement in information and communication technology and intense competition has spurred firms to initiate digital marketing strategy. This has helped to reshape strong brand relationship, strengthen dialog between firms and consumers, making it quite easy to share and understand relevant information content at least cost. In spite of its significance, it is observed that the theoretical understanding, construct development and definitions are still developing (Merisavo, 2006). Perhaps for the purpose of clarity and understanding, Digital Marketing refers to as the uses of digital technologies in order to create an integrated targeted and measurable communication that is capable of acquiring and retaining customers and also maintaining strong relationship with them (smith, 2007 as cited in Grishikashvili, Dibb & Meadows, 2014).

The concept of collaboration has been one of the most interesting and important strategic initiative in contemporary business relationship. It is being regarded as the key element that can help a company to grow its customer base without spending money in digital marketing (Team YS-Dell Small Business, 2018). Collaboration requires that participating members should come together to align resources and develop ideas to achieve pre-determined goals (Igwe, Coker & Chukwu, 2016). Company that really understands the strength of collaboration will go beyond their level of operation and start delivering timely, cost-effective digital marketing campaigns that truly attract the attention of consumers and engaging them to be loyal customers.

Several collaborative theories have been put up in digital marketing to show consumer perceptions on online shopping. Prominent among such theories are collaborative consumption (John, 2013; Hamari, Sjoklint & Ukkonen, 2016) and digital marketing communication (Merisavo, 2006; Bharadwaj et al 2013; Stephen, 2015). The theory of collaborative consumption refer to as peer- to-peer based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services, coordinated through community based online services (Hamari, Sjoklint & Ukkonen, 2016). The collaborative consumption theory has its theoretical underpin on the sharing economy theory (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; John, 2013). The share economy theory emerges from technological development that have resonated sharing of both physical and non-physical goods and services, through the availability of various information systems on the internet (Hamari, Sjoklint & Ukkonen, 2016). However, the digital marketing communication theory does not have clear theoretical underpinning and comprehension of its impact on consumer perceptions (Mulhern, 2009). As such, in this study, digital marketing

collaboration is basically fashioned as a variant of the contemporary technological driven sharing economy theory.
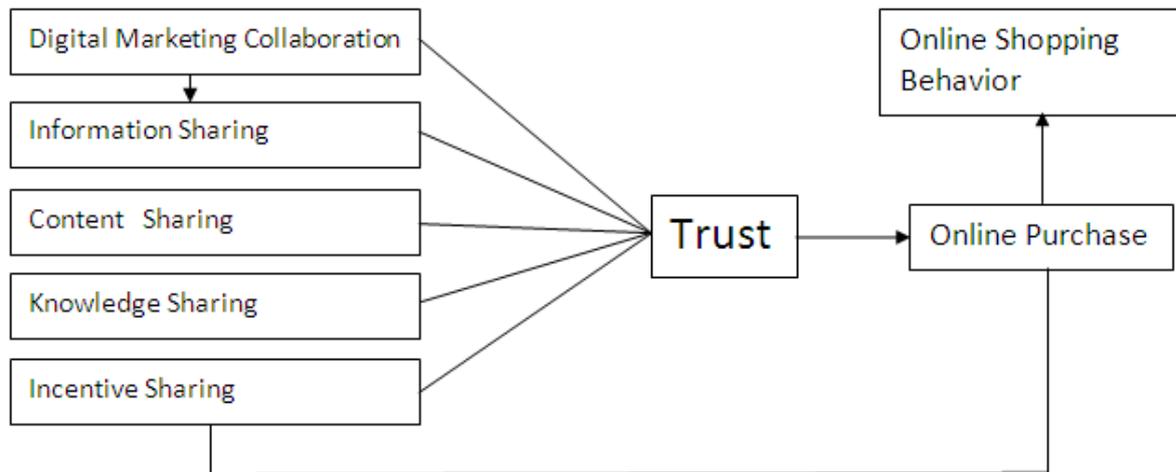
2.2 The Concept of Digital Marketing Collaboration

The concept of digital marketing collaboration as a construct has not been conceptualized in extant digital marketing literature but relatively sharing the same theoretical space with collaborative marketing. Collaborative marketing appears to be a broad concept in the sense that it is used in different context both in traditional marketing and digital marketing which could be misleading based on its conceptualization. For instance, Sawney (2001) and Castellano (2019) conceptualized collaborative marketing in terms of online synergy between consumers and producers, while scholars like Ochterski (2012), Ateke & Kalu (2016) and Yuncu & Yuncu (2016) adopted it in terms of traditional synergy between firms. In order to reconcile this theoretical ambiguity, digital marketing collaboration is been conceptualized on the basis of addressing synergistic relationship in online or digital space, which is more specific.

Digital Marketing collaboration is built on technological platform of web 2.0, which enhances collaboration and actual sharing of user generated content and heavily reliant on the internet and social dynamics (John, 2013). The concept is perceived to be a new discipline in marketing, which is still evolving and perhaps there is no generally accepted definition of the construct. We can push knowledge further by conceptualizing the concept, which is another cardinal reason for embarking on this study. Digital marketing collaboration is the process whereby firms actively engaged participating members in technological related marketing activities through a well coordinated network by encouraging them to share information, ideas and contents as well as maintaining sustainable and profitable relationship. Such network could be consumer-to-consumer, business-to-consumer or business-to business.

In this study, we are interested in looking at the collaborative strategies that drives digital marketing value chain with special reference to social media interactions, e-mails and mobile phones and its effects on online consumer shopping behavior in terms of actual online purchase in business-to-consumer market.

Fig 1.   Conceptual Model and Hypotheses Development

Source: Researchers' Conceptual framework, 2020.
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2.2 DIMENSIONS OF DIGITAL MARKETING COLLABORATION

As shown in the conceptual framework, the dimensions of digital marketing collaboration are information sharing, content sharing, knowledge sharing, and incentive sharing. The measure being the dependent variable is online purchase and while trust is regarded as the moderating construct. The focus of this study is to examine how digital marketing collaboration influence actual online purchase, and to ascertain how trust help to moderate the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior.

2.2.1 Information Sharing

Information sharing involves a deliberate action for the mutual exchange of vital information among partners in timely manner (Igwe, Coker & Chukwu, 2016). With the aid of information sharing, participants in a relationship could be able to capture, store and provide information that can enhance sound decision making (Simatupang & Sridharan, 2002). This is not far-fetched as digital marking channels such as social media marketing, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing and search engine optimization marketing are gathering

momentum as a reliable channels for sharing critical products and services information to consumers in real time and monitor product/ service delivery state. The role of information sharing in digital marketing collaboration most especially social media enhances consumer engagement (Osatuyi, 2013; Yoong & Lian, 2019) and patronage. However, consumers share information regarding their purchase experiences with others by giving positive or negative comments concerning the brands. When positive comments are given by consumer, it leads to increase in consumer's purchase of product or service in e-stores (Kaplan & Haenlin, 2010). The use of digital channels in sharing information has yielded positive results as several studies have proven so (Erickson, 2011; Osatuyi, 2013; Yoong & Lian, 2019) because it helps to increase brand awareness and customer loyalty in e-stores (Merisevo, 2006; Khan, Liang & Shahzad, 2015). That is why in Nigeria big retail players like DSTV, MTN, GLO Mobile, Money Deposit Banks, Jumia and JiJi always engage their customers by sharing product or service information promptly on daily basis through digital channels like mobile phones, e-mail and social media to keep customers informed about new product development, promotions as well as sharing ideas concerning service improvement.

In respect of the above discussion, we therefore hypothesized as follows:

H1a: *Information sharing in digital channels significantly and positively influence online purchase in online retailer perspective.*

H1b: *Information sharing in digital channels significantly and positively influence online purchase in online consumer perspective.*

2.2.2 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge Sharing refer to as the activities that provides information and ideas by helping others to resolve problems, create new ideas or implement processes (Cumming, 2004). According to Pangil & Chan (2014) claimed that knowledge sharing is basically a mechanism by which ideas are transferred from one individual to another. We can say that knowledge sharing is the process of disseminating ideas from one person to another in a network of relationship in order to keep them informed. The sharing of information and knowledge in a social network sites between company and customer is a vital aspect of knowledge management (Kovacs & Wensley, 2015). That is why scholars are saying that information sharing activities have a strong nexus with knowledge sharing activities because its supports knowledge management in the organization (Ruggles, 1998; Ghaisani, Handayani & Munajat, 2017). Knowledge sharing is a very complex task because individuals find it difficult to share knowledge with others, believing that knowledge is power and need not to be transferred easily. Individual's that possess a power motive of knowledge sharing usually show leadership skills, enjoy drawing attention and try to get recognition from other participants in online community (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006).

Business organizations are worried with this challenge of how to influence this category of persons to share their knowledge with others or the organization. In order to promote knowledge sharing in online platforms, retailers or managers should introduce incentives that would motivate employees and customers to promote innovation, learning and sharing knowledge. Many scholars have argued that people are willing to share knowledge online without expectation of incentives (Daven port & Prusak, 2000; Fehir & Gachter, 2000). They believed that knowledge is shared as a result of "altruism," which implies that the intention to share knowledge rest on the perceived enjoyment in helping others (Mc Manus, 2016). This action is very peculiar among social media platforms like face book, twitter, watts app, linkindin and wikis, where people interact, share ideas, share video and images, and also make comments regarding their observations. However, knowledge sharing enable participants to express suggestions regarding new product design ideas, brand (co-creation), participate and learn new knowledge. Knowledge Sharing would likely increased satisfaction, new and exciting experience of value, strategic asset and very significant driver of organizational performance (Yesil & Derili, 2013; Kovacs & Wensley, 2015). Knowledge sharing could be measured in terms of idea creation, knowledge captured, idea dissemination, idea acquisition and idea application (Dalkir, 2005) and the level of knowledge/information shared is based on social, relational, cognitive, structure capitals available to the firm and the consumer (Ghahtarani, Sheikhmohammady & Rostami, 2020).

One of the fundamental considerations that prompted this study is how knowledge sharing could impact on online purchase action. We hereby hypothesized that:

H2a: There is significant and positive relationship between knowledge sharing and online purchase in online retailer perspective.

H2b: There is significant and positive relationship between knowledge sharing and online purchase in online consumer perspective.

2.2.3 Content Sharing

The rationale of content sharing as a dimension of digital marketing collaboration was lifted from the concept of content marketing. Content marketing involves the process of creating, distributing and sharing relevant compelling and timely content to engage consumers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes such that it encourages them to convert to a business building out comes (Jarvienen et al., 2012). Content sharing deals with the process of exchanging relevant and valuable digital contents such as pictures, videos, blog text, music, animation and social media posts among participants in order to create awareness, attract and retain customers. Developing relevant and updated content that would attract and retain customers is a very complex and strategic task in achieving digital marketing success. In developing content, there are critical issues the organizations or retailers need to address in order not to waste digital marketing efforts such as: what type of content do consumers perceived relevant and valuable? What type of content do they always share? Which digital channel do they mostly share the content? How do they consume the content? In proffering answers to these strategic questions, portends that the organization is developing and sharing contents that drives consumer engagement in the digital space (www.webaffect.com).

According to merisavo (2006), the content of communication has an effect on how customers perceive and value the information they receive or retrieve, and how this affects their relationship with the brand and the marketer. This has made marketers or retailers to realize that quality brand content has a great influence to convert visitors online to loyal customers. In fact quality brand content should be designed in a way that consumers can easily download, view, shared and should be able to strike the customers touch points. Brand content need to be periodically updated and shared to keep the customers engaged, entertained and inspired; this help attract and sustain the brand relationship with the customers. Merisavo (2006) made a clear taxonomy of brand content communication to be relational and promotional contents. He opines that relational content of brand communication such as information about new products, usage tips, or invitation to event has a longer implication of enhancing customer attitude and loyalty, while the promotional content of price promotion (price reduction) and persuasive letters are specifically designed for short term effects such as drastic increase in sales and other responses.

Notwithstanding the classes of brand content communication, brand content sharing enhances brand promotion awareness, increases customer engagements, and drives sales through customer acquisition and lead generation (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Retailers are expected to engage the customer by sharing quality contents that are more entertaining in order to absorb the customer in a deeper and more compelling manner, which in turn deepens and intensify the relationship and the connection that the customer has with the brand (Hanke, 2015). This deeper relationship with the customer results to brand loyalty and trust by asking not only what consumer needs but more importantly what they value as individuals (www.webaffect.com). The study conducted by Chadwick Martin Bailey (2010) found that individual prefer to share content based on two (2) psychological triggers such as rational and emotional triggers. The rational triggers implies that people share content because it is relevant and valuable to share with others, while the emotional triggers deals with fun or emotional appeal. Perhaps, to influence online purchase actions, marketers are expected to provide quality brand content that will trigger interactions about the content and also encourage consumers to re-share the content to gain popularity. As the brand content gained popularity among friends and families, it increases online purchase and brand loyalty of customers (Mu & Cicek, 2012).

Based on the foregoing, we therefore hypothesized as follows:

H3a: *Brand content sharing positively and significantly influenced online purchase in online retailer perspective.*

H3b: *Brand content sharing positively and significantly influenced online purchase in online consumer perspective.*

2.2.4 Incentive Sharing

The concept of incentive refers to as something that motivates an individual to perform an action (Wikipedia, 2017). In the context of digital marketing collaboration, it involves the process of exchanging relevant promotional rewards through digital channels among participants in order to stimulate online purchase action. The principle consideration in attracting more users to share brand content and information on digital platforms is by designing incentive plan (Chen, Zhang, Yang, Wang & Chen, 2014) that would impact on the market. Online customer incentive plan encourage customers to always write and disseminate their reviews and comments (Chen et al., 2014). Strong brand like Jumia, Konga, JiJi, Amazon and Afrozon in Nigeria, have realized that the best way to drive online purchase actions is to provide or share motivational incentives to customers; such as Jumia Black Day and Weekend price reduction. This has made them to share incentives that could better incentivize their esteem customers to spread the word about their presence, campaign and content on digital channels among their peers. A lot of companies that have digital presence online had increased their customers' base by effectively sharing the right incentives to participants and providing free delivery services.

Yip & Law (2002) opines that online retailers that provide free delivery services, warranty, product return and other incentives like price discount tend to cause more online traffic to their stores. Incentive sharing is very significant in collaborative settings, because it enhances trust, and rapid users' engagement. These incentives shared could be explicit or implicit in nature (Yip & Law, 2002). The explicit incentives are regarded as tangible rewards such as financial payments like coupon, cash rebate and discount for contest that is used to encourage participants (Yip & Law, 2002; Chen et al., 2014). The implicit incentives are intangible in nature such as status relationship or recognition among peers which makes the individual to feel good as an active participant of the community.

In view of above discussion, we therefore hypothesized as follows:-

H4a: Incentive sharing significantly and positively influence online purchase in online retailer perspective.

H4b: Incentive sharing significantly and positively influence online purchase in online consumer perspective.

III. TRUST

Trust is regarded as a moderating construct in this study and stands as an interface variable between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior. The concept of trust refers to as the degree to which a customer perceived that the seller/online site is honest, confident, benevolent and competent to fulfill customer need and remove element of failure (Ryssel & Ritter, 2000). We can allude that trust is the degree to which partners demonstrate high level of credibility, sincerity, and confidence among each other in an exchange relationship. Trusted behavior is developed over time, because people learn to trust each other by taking note of their individual behaviors. For instance, an online merchant that displayed high quality brand content online and promised to deliver same in time, enables one to earn more trust when fulfilling such promises. It shows high level of integrity and honesty from the part of the individual or retailer fulfilling the promise. Transparency and authenticity displayed in digital environment, add value to the relationship by increasing the level of trust and brand loyalty (Greenberg, 2010; Laroche et al., 2012). Dabrowski, Basinska & Sikorski (2014) reinvigorated that trust is positively correlated to online brand loyalty.

However, from the empirical study conducted by Himanen (2011) found that there is no clear evidence that trust is an outcome of digital marketing communication, but rather trust was seen and created through competency (promise Fulfillment) and credibility (reliability and honesty). The role of trust is to build customers confidence on the brand and increase their level of online involvement and purchases. Trust helps to reduce uncertainty and information asymmetry and make customers feel comfortable with their brands (Pavlou, Liang & Xue, 2007; Laroche et al., 2012). Brand trust is one of the most important variants of online purchase and brand loyalty (Mc cole & palmer, 2001; Laroche et al., 2012). Perhaps in Nigeria, there is high degree of distrust between e-retailers and online consumers in terms of products or services offerings online. This has caused low patronage in online shopping among Nigerian consumers.

In view of the above positions, we therefore hypothesized that:

H5a: Trust significantly and positively moderates the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online shopping behavior in online retailer perspective.

H5b: Trust significantly and positively moderates the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online shopping behavior in online consumer perspective.

IV. ONLINE CONSUMER'S SHOPPING BEHAVIOR

Online shopping behavior consists of a rational process of purchasing products or services through the internet by the consumer (Li & Zhang, 2002). Online shopping behavior is a kind of individual's overall perception and evaluation for products or services during online shopping, which could result in bad or good outcome (Shahzed, 2015). Apparently, online shopping gives consumer the privilege to adequately search and compare various product or service alternatives from different online stores that are located in different locations. As consumers' spend time to interact online by sharing information content and knowledge, the impact is certain to influence online shopping decisions. Perhaps digital marketing collaboration via social media, e-mail, paid search and mobile phones has emerged as strong influencers of online purchase. Elham, Israa & Sara (2014) opines that consumers would be more desirable to purchase online if variety of products information and content are provided adequately as well as offering warranties. Online purchase behavior could be operationalized in terms of attitude towards online shopping, intention to shop online and online purchase i.e actual purchase (Li & Zhang, 2002).

In this study, we are specifically interested in looking at online purchase as a measure of online shopping behavior.

4.1 **Online Purchase**

Online purchase is the actual purchase action of the consumer in the rational buying process. It is the point where the consumer actually placed an order and pay for the products or services online. On line attitude is influenced by time constrain, convenience, perceived risk, demographic and personal characteristics and web quality (Li & Zhang 2002; Kotler & Amstrong, 2010). Online purchase measure decision revolves around frequency of purchase, value of purchase, unplanned purchase (Koufaris et al., 2002). Additional, purchase action involves several more decisions such as the right e retailing shop, place and time of delivery, mode of payments, delivery, installation and usage. It extends to recommendation and satisfaction behavior in contact use (Koufaris et al., 2002). The marketer should be able to help the consumer to narrow down the associated perceived risks that has affected the purchase action by collaborating with other consumers by requesting them to share information, content and knowledge feeling, opinion, future behavior about their experiences in using the company's products or services to other consumers online. This would help to build trust and online purchase action. Most companies used celebrity to share product content and information online to establish credibility and trust.

V. METHODOLOGY

The population of this study consists of the totality of online retailers and online consumers that engage in online marketing activities and online shopping in Nigeria respectively; through social media, e-mails, and mobile phones. The e-retailers here are online merchants like Jumia, Konga, Wish and Kaymu etc. and affiliates i.e those that allow their sites to be used for advertisement and sales of products like JIJI.COM, Wazobay.com, and cheki.com etc. in order to influence online purchase. Perhaps, it is complex and frustrating to study the entire e- retailers with branches all over the country and the online consumers in Nigeria; the researchers decided to study an accessible population of online consumers in only 3 States in the south-south region in Nigeria namely; Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta State. The researchers adopted a triangulated approach which involves the mixture of quantitative and qualitative research designs i.e primary (descriptive survey) and secondary sources of data collection methods respectively. The primary source entails the distribution of questionnaires through face-to-face interaction with online retailers and online consumers as well as mail survey through the internet. The questionnaire was grouped into two categories, which comprises one for online consumers and the other for online retailers. While the secondary source has to do with exploratory study (literature review) in order to gain insightful knowledge about the problem. Since there is no available statistics that accounted for the population of online shoppers and e-retailers in South-South, Nigeria, the researchers deemed it necessary to carry out a preliminary investigation via pilot study to ascertain the sample size. In the pilot study, three (3) online retailers were selected and 15 respondents were chosen from 3 states in the south-south region. Then 15 consumers were selected from the 3 states strictly on those that have engaged or still engaging in online purchase for the past two years. The reason for selecting active or relative active online shoppers is to enable us to gather first hand information relating to the investigation. None active online shoppers may not have been able to give relevant information necessary for the study. Therefore, we limited our study to only these categories of consumers. Before the instrument was distributed it was pre-tested for its content validity.

However, from the 30 selected respondents only 25 were able to completely fill and returned their pilot survey instrument accounting for 83% (0.833), while 5 respondents were not able to fill and return their survey instrument accounting for 17% (0.167). As a result, the Top Man's formula was deployed to determine the sample size that will be the true representation of the entire population of interest.

$N = z^2 PQ/e^2$
Where N= Sample size
P= Probability of responses
Q= Probability of no response
e= Standard error
Z= Degree of confidence
$N= (1.96)^2 (0.833)(0.167)/(0.05)^2$
N= 3.8416 *0.139111/0.0025
N= 0.53441/0.0025= 213.76
N= 214

The sample size is approximately 214.
The sample size was selected using stratified sampling techniques on the basis of geographical region and judgmental sampling techniques on the basis of only active online users. The sampling distribution is displayed below:

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Size

S/NO.	Category of Digital Chain Partners	Sample
1.	**Online Retailers in 3 south-south States, Nigeria:**	**140**
2.	**Online Consumers in 3 south-south States, Nigeria:**	
	Bayelsa State **22**	
	Rivers State **30**	
	Delta State **22**	
	Total	**214**

Source: Field survey, 2020.

Table 2: Summary of Questionnaire Distribution

S/NO. Responses	Digital chain partners in 3 South-south States, Nigeria	Sample	Respondents	Rate of Responses %
1.	**Online Retailers**	**140**	**58**	**51.79**
2.	**Online Consumers**	**74**	**54**	**48.21**
	Total	**214**	**112**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2020.

As shown in table 2 above, out of the 214 questionnaires distributed to the target population only 112 respondents completely fill and returned theirs which accounted for 52.3% rate of response, while 102 respondents which accounted for 47.7% did not completely fill or returned their questionnaires. The response rate is little above average, which is the acceptable limit where conclusion could be drawn from any population of interest. The reason for the low response rate is as a result of the fact that majority of the instruments were sent through a mail survey via e-mail and messenger; some of the target respondents could not give attention to it.

5.2 Measurement

The six (6) constructs highlighted in this study used the multi-item measure scales extracted from Yip & Law (2002); Mu & Cicek (2012); Pangil, & Chan (2014); Khan, Liang & Shahzad (2015); Igwe, Coker & Chukwu (2016); Bauman (2016); Yoong & Lian (2019) and modified to suit this study.

- **Information Sharing**: We post quality online information concerning our brand on daily basis; we disseminate reliable information on price changes; we share information on new product/services; we post latest and timely information on sales promotions.
- **Knowledge Sharing**: We share ideas openly on how to improve our product/services; we are willing to share knowledge/ideas with customers; we teach our customers on how to use our products and we update customers with latest information. Our staffs with expert knowledge are ready to help customers.
- **Content Sharing**: We share new product content online; we share relevant video, audio and picture contents; we share content on promotions; we share content on customer experience.
- **Incentive Sharing**: We provide commission for selling our product/services; we give promotional incentives like price discount; we share risk with customers on delivery/reverse logistics and free delivery.
- **Trust**: Our customers have confidence in us; we enjoy honesty from them; they keep to their promise. I am confident my e-retailer will accept refund in their service failure.
- **Online Purchase**: Our customers keep patronizing us; they increase the volume of online purchase; always develop the intention to buy from us; they are satisfied with our products.

However, the survey questionnaire consists of 24 items designed by using 5 point Likert scale to measure the responses ranging from strongly agreed (5) to strongly disagreed (1). The scales adopted in this study were verified against reliability. The Pearson's product moment correlation, partial correlation and multi-regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses with the application of SPSS 20.0.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Retailers Sample N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	Consumers Sample N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Information sharing	58	3.41	1.487	.987	54	1.625	0.728	.862
Knowledge sharing	58	2.55	1.445	.978	54	1.803	0.915	.884
Content sharing	58	3.51	1.338	.940	54	2.53	1.324	.928
Incentive sharing	58	3.218	1.478	.964	54	1.90	1.143	.954
Trust	58	3.263	1.435	.986	54	2.868	1.488	.977
Online shopping	58	3.168	1.515	.986	54	2.5	1.397	.971
Valid N (Listwise)								

Source: SPSS Result, 2020.

The results from table 3 shows that the mean scores of the dimensions of digital marketing collaboration such as information sharing, knowledge sharing, content sharing and incentive sharing in online-retailers category are 3.41, 2.55, 3.51 and 3.218 respectively. While the mean scores for online consumers in regards to the dimensions are 1.625, 1.803, 2.53 and 1.90 respectively. The moderator which is "trust" in both categories is 3.263 and 2.868, while online shopping is 3.168 and 2.5. Perhaps the cronbach alpha coefficient in all the dimensions measured are all greater than 0.7 cut-off mark, which implies that the instruments are very reliable. However, in the online retailer's category, it appears that information sharing and content sharing have the highest mean scores, while the case is quite different in the online consumer's category where information sharing activities appears to be low but content sharing is seen to be high. It therefore means that content sharing is the predominant digital marketing collaborative communication strategy used by e-retailers to influence online-consumer's shopping behavior.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

The pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was adopted to ascertain the strength of relation between the dimensions of digital marketing collaboration and online purchase at $p < 0.05$ level of significance and the results are tabulated below in table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Correlation Analysis

Variables	Online Retailers Pearson correlation (r_1)	Online Consumers Pearson correlation (r_2)
Information sharing	.884**	.725**
Knowledge sharing	.807**	.700**
Content sharing	.749**	.742**
Incentive Sharing	.802**	.739**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3.2.1 Hypothesis 1a & 1b: There is significant and positive relationship between information sharing and online purchase.

The result of the findings as depicted in table 4 shows a very strong positive and significant relationship (r_{1a}=.884** and r_{1b}=.725**) between information sharing and online purchase in both categories at $P < 0.0005$, N=58 and N=54 respectively. Hence, we can infer that information sharing as dimension of digital marketing collaboration is a predictor of consumer online shopping behavior in terms of online purchase.

3.2.2 Hypothesis 2a & 2b: There is significant and positive relationship between knowledge sharing and online purchase.

From the table 4 above, the result shows a very strong positive and significant relationship (r_{2a}=.807** and r_{2b}=.700**) between knowledge sharing and online purchase in both categories at $P < 0.0005$, N=58 and N=54 respectively. Hence, we can say that knowledge sharing is a predictor of consumer online shopping behavior in terms of online purchase.

3.2.3 Hypothesis 3a & 3b: There is significant and positive relationship between content sharing and online purchase.

From the table 4 above, the result shows a very strong positive and significant relationship (r_{3a}=.749** and r_{3b}=.742**) between knowledge sharing and online purchase in both categories at $P < 0.0005$, N=58 and N=54 respectively. Thus, we can say that content sharing is a predictor of online purchase.

3.2.4 Hypothesis 4a & 4b: There is significant and positive relationship between incentive sharing and online purchase.

The result in table 4 above, shows a very strong positive and significant relationship (r_{4a}=.802** and r_{4b}=.739**) between incentive sharing and online purchase in both categories at $P < 0.0005$, N=58 and N=54 respectively. Therefore, we can say that incentive sharing is a predictor of online purchase.

3.3 Partial Correlation Analysis

The partial correlation analysis was conducted to ascertain the moderating influence of trust on the relationship between digital marketing collaboration (DMC) and online shopping behavior (OCSB). The result is shown in table 5 below.

Table 5: Summary of Partial Correlation Table

Control Variable	Online Retailers (Pearson correlation (r_{5a}) on DMC and OCSB)	Online Consumers (Pearson correlation (r_{5b}) on DMC and OCSB)
Trust	.466**	.418**

Source: SPSS Result from cells containing zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

3.3.1 Hypothesis 5a & 5b: Trust moderates the relationship between digital marketing collaboration (DMC) and online consumer shopping behavior (OCSB).

The finding reveals that there is significant and positive correlation (r_{5a}=.466** and $r_{5b=}$.418**) on the effect of trust on the relationship between DMC and OCSB. The coefficient of determination indicated that 46.6% and 41.8% of trust affects the relationship between DMC and OCSB in online retailer and online consumer category respectively. This shows that trust has a positive effect on the relationship between digital marketing collaborative communication and online shopping behavior.

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analyses were carried out to validate the theoretical assumptions of H1a, H2a, H3a, and H4a in retailer's category and H1b, H2b, H3b and H4b in consumer's category. The essence of the multiple regression analysis is to ascertain the linear combination of the predictor variables that statistically correlates with the criterion variable.

6.4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis for Online Retailer Category

Table 6 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.978[a]	.956	.953	.304

a. Predictors: (Constant), Incentive sharing, Content sharing, Knowledge sharing, Information sharing.

Table 7 ANOVA[a] (Model Fit)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	107.131	4	26.783	290.524	.000[b]
1	Residual	4.886	53	.092		
	Total	112.017	57			

a. Dependent Variable: Online Purchase
b. Predictors: (Constant), Incentive sharing, Content sharing, Knowledge sharing,
Information sharing.

Table 8 Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.174	.166		1.051	.298		
	Information sharing	.448	.077	.463	5.802	.000	.129	7.750
	Knowledge sharing	.280	.057	.296	4.906	.000	.226	4.421
	Content sharing	-.315	.084	-.246	-3.733	.000	.189	5.284
	Incentive sharing	.521	.080	.502	6.500	.000	.138	7.243

a. Dependent Variable: Online Purchase

The results from the multiple regression analysis as shown in table 8 above, shows the impact of digital marketing collaboration (DMC) on online consumer shopping behavior (OCSB). All dimensions of DMC such as information sharing (INFS) (β=.463, P< 0.0005), knowledge sharing (KS) (β=.296, P< 0.0005), content sharing (CS) (β=-.246, P< 0.0005) and incentive sharing (IS) (β=.502, P < 0.0005) are said to be significant predictors of OCSB because they provided support for the theoretical assumptions and pearson's correlation hypotheses H1a, H2a, H3a and H4a in online retailer's category at r=0.000< 0.0005.
It further depicted that DMC statistically and significantly predict OCSB at $F_{(4, 53)}$ = 26.783, P < 0.0005, R^2= 0.956.This denotes that the regression model is a good fit of the data. Perhaps from the model summary on table 7 shows that DMC explains (0.956) 95.6% of the variability of online consumer shopping behavior. Therefore, the general multiple regression equation to predict online purchase (OP) is:
OP= β + β1X1 + β2X2 + β3X3 + β4X4…………………βnXn
OP= 0.174 + 0.448X1 + 0.280X2 -0.315X3 +0.521X4
OP= 0.174+ 0.448INFS + 0.280KS-0.315CS+0.521IS
The result from the multiple correlation analysis table shows that the variance inflation factors (VIF) are not greater than 10 and the tolerance level is not less than 0.2 or 0.1 which implies that there is no multi-collinearity problem.

6.4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis for Online Consumer Category
Table 9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.823[a]	.677	.650	.810

a. Predictors: (Constant), Incentive sharing, Content sharing,
Knowledge sharing, Information sharing.

Table 10: ANOVA[a] (Model Fit)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	67.328	4	16.832	25.637	.000[b]
1	Residual	32.172	49	.657		
	Total	99.500	53			

a. Dependent Variable: Online Purchase

b. Predictors: (Constant), Incentive sharing, Content sharing, Knowledge sharing, Information sharing.

Table 11: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.339	.373		-.911	.367		
	Information sharing	.079	.479	.028	.164	.870	.227	4.408
	Knowledge sharing	.024	.408	.010	.060	.953	.254	3.936
	Content sharing	.375	.131	.442	2.866	.000	.277	3.605
	Incentive sharing	.750	.238	.435	3.144	.000	.345	2.900

a. Dependent Variable: Online purchase

The results from the multiple regression analysis as shown table 8 above, shows the impact of digital marketing collaboration (DMC) on online consumer shopping behavior (OCSB). The two dimensions of DMC such as content sharing (β=0.442, P< 0.0005) and incentive sharing (β=0.435, P < 0.0005) are said to be significant predictors of OCSB because they provided support for the theoretical assumptions and pearson correlation of hypotheses H3b and H4b in online consumer's category at r=0.000< 0.0005, while information sharing (β=0.028, P> 0.0005) and knowledge sharing (β=0.010, P > 0.0005) does not provide support for the theoretical assumption and pearson correlation of hypotheses 1b and 2b at r =0.000< 0.0005, because the computed values exceed the P values, hence the alternative hypotheses is rejected and null hypotheses are accepted on this ground. These are significant findings because several empirical studies have supported information sharing and knowledge sharing as key predictors to online shopping behavior but this study has taken a different stand point. The reason is that many factors could give rise to this but more specifically online retailers focused more attention at sharing brand contents and sharing incentives than sharing relevant and timely information and knowledge concerning their product or service offerings online. Therefore, online consumers are of the view that most online retailers do not share relevant information on digital channels regarding their brands for security and competitive factors.

However, table 7 depicted that DMC statistically and significantly predict OCSB at $F_{(4, 49)}$ = 25.637, P < 0.0005, R^2= 0.677.This denotes that the regression model is a good fit of the data. Perhaps from the model summary on table 7 shows that DMC explains (0.677) 67.7% of the variability of online consumer shopping behavior. Therefore, the general multiple regression equation to predict online purchase (OP) is:

OP= β + $\beta_1 X_1$ + $\beta_2 X_2$ + $\beta_3 X_3$……………………$\beta_n X_n$

OP= - 0.339 + 0.375X_3 + 0.750X_4

OP= - 0.339 + 0.375CS + 0.750IS

The result from the multiple correlation analysis table shows that the variance inflation factors (VIF) are not greater than 10 and the tolerance level is not less than 0.2 or 0.1 which implies that there is no multi-collinearity problem.

Table 12: Summary of Findings

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	Online Retailer Sample	Online Consumer Sample
Information Sharing	Online Purchase	Supported	Not Supported
Knowledge Sharing	Online Purchase	Supported	Not Supported
Content Sharing	Online Purchase	Supported	Supported
Incentive Sharing	Online Purchase	Supported	Supported
Online Trust	Online Purchase	Supported	Supported

Source: SPSS Results, 2020.

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Unlike previous studies, we focus on the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior. From the first hypothesis 1a & 1b, the study reveals that information sharing influences actual online purchase in online retailer's category. The reverse is the case for the consumer

category, because the multiple regression analysis did not support the theoretical assumption H1b and the Pearson correlation of hypothesis H1b as well. This implies that when there is synergy between online consumer and online retailer in digital platforms like social media, e-mail marketing and mobile phones in sharing relevant and timely online brand information; it influences actual purchase of the brand. This finding validated the findings of Khan, Liang & Shahzad (2015) that quality product information sharing is positively correlated to customers' satisfaction on re-purchase intention in e-stores. Though, this finding is not in agreement with that of the consumer category, because online consumers are of the view that online retailers not often share relevant product/service information to them due to security risk and competitive factors; rather they are more predominant in sharing brand content information and incentives in real time.

Furthermore, the study also reveals that knowledge sharing as a digital marketing collaborative mechanism actually influenced online purchase action. This finding is supported by the multiple regression analysis in the online retailer's stand point, which gives credence to the theoretical assumptions and the Pearson correlation of hypothesis H2a, but the reverse is the case for hypothesis H2b because the multiple regression analysis did not support the theoretical assumption and Pearson correlation of hypothesis H2b. The findings from hypothesis H2a corroborated with prior studies of Pangil & Chan (2014) that knowledge sharing is a significant predictor of virtual team effectiveness. The finding is also in agreement with Yoong & Lian (2019) that surveillance which is adopted as a variant of knowledge sharing is a key predictor of customer engagement which in turn gives rise to online purchase intention. Perhaps these findings contradict with the finding of hypothesis H2b in our study. The reason is attributed to the fact that online consumers are of the view that online retailers are not creating platforms that requires their contributions in terms of sharing product/service ideas for improvement (co-creation) as well as not sufficiently educating them with latest information concerning their brands, rather they are more interested in sharing brand contents and promotional incentives to stimulate online sales.

However, from the third hypotheses 3a and 3b, the findings reveal that content sharing strongly influenced consumer online shopping behavior, thereby resulting to actual online purchase in both categories. These findings are strongly supported by the multiple regression analyses in both categories. These findings corroborated with the findings of Yoong & Lian (2019) that the attraction of brand content sharing drives customer engagement thereby resulting to consumer purchase intentions. Perhaps several scholars are of the view that quality brand content communication and sharing enhances brand promotion awareness, increase customer engagement and drive online sales by converting online visitors to loyal customers (Merisavo, 2006; Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Our findings are also in agreement with these assertions in relation to brand content sharing.

In addition, the fourth hypotheses in our study reveals that incentive sharing has a robust positive influence on online consumer shopping behavior which resulted to actual online purchase, because it is supported by the multiple regression analyses in both categories which in turn validated the theoretical assumptions and the pearson correlation of hypotheses H4a & H4b. These findings is espoused with the empirical findings of Chen, Zhang, Yang, Wang & Chen (2014) which revealed that when retailer provides infomediary with customer incentive cost sharing contract (rebate or price discount) to encourage infomediary to recommend (referrals) customers, it gives rise to quick, easy, and informed consumer online shopping decisions, thereby increases the efficiency of potential online customers.

Finally, from the fifth hypotheses, the results reveal that online trust is a key moderating variable that interface between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior in both categories. The results show that online trust plays a vital role in digital marketing value chain among digital partners in online marketing relationship. This finding is in agreement with prior findings(Dabrowski, Basinska & Sikorski (2014) that customer trust in a website as an endogenous variable correlates positively to customer loyalty as well as ease of use, information content, personalization, recommendations, service demonstrations, visual clarity, customer care, user guidance and interactivity which are all variants of digital marketing collaborative communications.

VIII.   CONCLUSION

In respect of the objective of this study, it was revealed that the four dimensions of digital marketing collaboration such as information sharing, knowledge sharing, content sharing and incentive sharing relates positively with online consumer shopping behavior in terms of actual online purchase in the online retailer's category, while only two of the dimensions such as content sharing and incentive sharing relates with actual online consumer's purchase in the consumer category. Perhaps the results of this study shows that information sharing has a robust positive impact on online purchase than the other three dimensions in online retailer's category, while content sharing has the highest positive impact on online purchase in online consumer's category. Admittedly, among these dimensions content sharing and incentive sharing are the most popular dimensions that proved to be significant holistically when all the variables are being linearly regressed; which

imply that they are the predominant digital marketing collaborative strategies adopted by online retailers to stimulate online purchase actions. Therefore, it can be concluded that information sharing, knowledge sharing, content sharing and incentive sharing give rise to online consumer's purchase.

In regards to online trust, we discovered that trust actually moderates the relationship between digital marketing collaboration and online consumer shopping behavior. This implies that without the attribute of online trust, digital marketing collaboration cannot be effective because the digital marketing space is characterized with so much perceived risks that create fears in the minds of participating members including the retailers and consumers. Therefore the presence of online trust helps to reduce risks and fears among parties in an online exchange relationship.

The study recommends that online retailers should increase their digital marketing efforts regarding information and knowledge sharing by giving relevant and detailed description of products/services information (features) that will help online consumers to learn about the benefits of the product better. This could influence most of the consumers that are online visitors to be loyal customers.

Secondly, online retailers are expected to update online consumers with product information in terms of new arrivals, warranty, guarantee, and product return policy and sales promotions on daily basis to remind them of the existence of their brand online. Thirdly, online retailers should always develop attractive brand content that will encourage consumers to re-share in order to gain more market penetration in the digital space. Online retailers should strive to create a platform that will encourage online consumers to give reviews or recommendations concerning brand experiences that could create room for products/services improvement. Finally, e- retailer should respect, be open and adequately provide enough information and act in manner that will instill trust between collaborative partners.

Limitations and Further Directions

This study has some few limitations. Firstly, the construct digital marketing collaboration is more of informational corroboration and has not been fully conceptualized in extant literature; this makes the conceptualization a little difficult because we did more of extrapolation study, Other relational and integrative collaboration need to be investigated. Secondly, the dimensions chosen in this study is scarcely been used by scholars in this context. Thirdly, online purchase was used as a proxy. Fourthly, the sample size for each sampling group is small and limited to online retailers and online consumers; surprisingly little existing theoretical and empirical research studies on digital marketing has not capture the underlying concept of collaboration in south-south, Nigeria. Fifthly, the study only made used of four major dimensions of digital marketing collaboration, there are other dimensions that were not considered such as affiliate marketing, co-creation, online community, interactivity and personalization. Sixthly, it is observed that only one moderator 'trust' was used which is not a sufficient condition for online engagement. Finally, this study is basically on digital marketing value chain between businesses to consumers; the business to business synergy is not considered. Therefore, scholars should look at the construct critically to ascertain if actually the dimensions are in line with the concept in order to expand our model.

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