

# THE USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE SHARING ECONOMY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

*Leticia Polanco-Diges*<sup>1</sup>  
*Felipe Debasa*<sup>2</sup>

## ABSTRACT

In recent years, the emergence of new digital platforms of sharing economy has given rise to considerable changes in consumer behavior. These new ways of consumption in online environment have to be driven by specific digital strategies adapted to sharing economy. This Systematic Literature Review aims to cover an existing gap in the literature and to organize the main digital marketing strategies, techniques, or tactics that can be implemented on these platforms in accordance with the objectives and core values of this business model. First, we outline a framework of the sharing economy, including a discussion of the definition of the concept of SE, objectives, importance, and implications for consumer behavior. Then, a methodology of the literature review is developed based on previous literature on the two key terms—“sharing economy” and “digital marketing”—retrieved from databases such as Web of Science and Scopus. The interpretation and analysis of the results allow for the identification of the main digital marketing strategies and techniques to apply on collaborative platforms. Finally, the conclusion outlines the importance of digital marketing in the online environment, as well as of enhancing the user-generated content and e-word-of-mouth on these platforms.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Digital Marketing Strategies, UGC, e-WoM, User Experience, Peers-to-Peers Collaboration.

JEL Classification: M13, M30

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Recent advances in new technologies—particularly, information and communication technologies (ICTs)—have caused important changes in the social and economic fields (Pouri & Hilty, 2018). New business models as Sharing Economy (SE) or new funding methods in managerial project as Crowdfunding has given rise due to ICTs, both of them has emerged as alternatives to solve existing problems (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2018).

SE, alternatively referred to as consumer-to-consumer (C2C), peer-to-peer (P2P) or collaborative economy (Chappelow, 2020), is mainly characterized by facilitating the exchange of goods and services among users by promoting social and sustainable consumption. This is achieved through the interaction between users who freely share their opinions, recommendations, and experiences online.

While the term “collaborative economy” is used in this study, in should be noted that, since the end of this decade, there has been a debate about the terminology used to refer to the corresponding phenomenon. Alternative terms used to refer to collaborative economy

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<sup>1</sup> Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain (leticia@polancodiges.net)

<sup>2</sup> Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid, Spain (felipe.debasa@urjc.es)

include circular economy, in reference to recycling, or orange economy, with cultural and creative industries.

The digital era is characterized extensive use of new technologies and permanent connectivity through the Internet, all of which have led to significant changes in consumer behavior (Labrecque et al., 2013). Due to the accessibility infinite sources of information, users are increasingly well-informed. According to Reyes-Menedez et al. (2020), users today seek out for themselves what they want to know, create content, also known as user-generated content (UGC), and share it altruistically on social media, thereby encouraging interaction and collaboration between anonymous users. Another concept that is of vital importance to digital marketers is the electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) (Saura et al., 2019). These new tendencies highlight the need to adapt traditional marketing communication strategies to a digital environment, as correct implementation of digital marketing (DM) strategies implies great benefits to e-business (Saura et al., 2017).

The originality of this study contributes to provide valuable knowledge about what are the main DM strategies are implemented in SE businesses. Furthermore, there is not previous studies founded in which these strategies were organized clearly. Therefore, the research objective focuses on the review of main strategies, techniques, or tactics of DM applied by collaborative economy business models according to their objectives; we also review the challenges associated with implementation of such strategies. To this end, the present study undertakes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 contextualizes and defines the term “sharing economy”, as well as discusses the relevance and impact of sharing economy on the society, in general, and on consumer behavior, in particular. The importance of DM strategies in digital ecosystems is also introduced giving room to the development of the research questions. Furthermore, Section 3 presents and explains the methodology of SLR. The results of the analysis of previous studies retrieved from databases, as well as the main DM strategies and techniques that can be applied in this type of business, are presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 provides answers to the research questions addressed in this study and draws conclusions.

## **2. FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Sharing or Collaborative Economy**

The SE is a business model that emerged in the late 1990s and became a sustainable way of doing business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Máñez & Gutiérrez, 2016). According to Rodríguez et al. (2017), the main drivers of the collaborative economy are (1) the Internet and digital culture; (2) changes in society and culture; (3) economic crises; and (4) environmental problems.

SE appears where there is a legal framework that allows it. This typically occurs either due to the absence of regulation, as in Anglo-Saxon systems, or by specific *ad-hoc* regulation. Wherever the legal framework is not clear, a social debate usually arises; accordingly, incidents—such as those related to Uber, applications of food distribution, tourist rooms, and so forth—can occur. In the United States and Europe, the level of competence is usually delegated to the public administrations closest to the citizens.

Collaborative economy businesses are platforms developed entirely in a digital environment. Such businesses are based on the exchange of goods and services among users and on promoting a more sustainable lifestyle. These platforms have given rise to new forms of interaction between consumers who share, exchange, or rent second-hand products.

These activities have had a great impact on consumer behavior in digital media (Máynez & Gutiérrez, 2016).

The SE model has been implemented in different industries—particularly, those related to transportation and hospitality (e.g., Uber or Airbnb); however, SE businesses have also been launched in the domains of consumer goods (i.e. Wallapop or Cash Converters) and media and entertainment (i.e. Spotify or SoundCloud). Each of these sectors implements this collaborative economic model, adjusting to their commercial activity and their relationship with consumers, as well employs the DM strategies that allow them to attract users, encouraging their participation and consumption.

The SE is based on the following four key pillars (Series, 2015):

1. *Digital platforms that connect spare capacity and demand*: These platforms provide the connectivity and interaction between supply and demand in real time without spatial limits.
2. *Transactions that offer access over ownership*: Consumers tend to avoid owning property and prefer to share or rent it. Transactions in collaborative economy models can take the form of renting, lending, subscribing, reselling, swapping, or donating.
3. *More collaborative forms of consumption*: Consumers feel more comfortable conducting transactions with more social interaction than in the traditional forms of exchange.
4. *Branded experiences that drive emotional connection*: User experience with digital platforms is essential to connecting emotionally with them. DM plays an important role here. Strategies must be oriented towards generating experiences that lead to a more loyal and faithful relationship between the consumer and the company.

## 2.2 Customer Behavior in Sharing Economy Platforms

As SE business models emerge as essentially digital platforms, it is important to understand consumption habits and motivations of users in this environment.

The connectivity allowed by the Internet provides consumers the access to a wealth of information that can guide their purchasing decisions. Accordingly, users become more dependent on the opinions of other users generated through e-WoM and UGC in social networks. Martínez-Cortiña (2016) highlighted the following five characteristics of a collaborative economy: (1) *peace of mind*; no uncertainty; (2) *freedom* to choose various options in the face of single markets; (3) *simplicity*, i.e. ease of use and understanding; (4) *transparency*, i.e. absence of hidden flaws; (5) *community* where users interact among equals “peer to peer”, which strengthens the bonds of belonging to the same community.

Communication and interaction between peers is one of the main reasons why younger consumers are particularly active in the new digital environments. Younger consumers tend to create communities with similar interests and tastes, which enhances collaboration and exchange of goods and services among this cohort. However, other groups of population are more apprehensive about using digital platforms, as they are afraid of interacting with strangers or feel insecure while communicating via digital platforms. The ease of use and immediacy of transactions is another important incentive in this domain. More and more people are looking for platforms that are easy, intuitive, and customized to the tastes and interests of consumers—and all these characteristics are essential for the development of a good consumer experience.

User’s participation in SE is fundamental to be operational. Its participation could take place in several forms being the users themselves the ones who sell, lend or share its goods or services, or creating a conversation with other (e.g. making reviews) which encourage them their trust for using this type of digital platforms. Then, users are part of companies’ performance, users no longer have a passive attitude; instead, they now collaborate and get involved.

On the other hand, they become more demanding and seek higher quality and better service in the offer. This makes obtaining their loyalty a more complicated task for digital marketers. Therefore, the importance of implementing effective DM strategies should not be underestimated.

Social trends towards living a more sustainable lifestyle and the growing concern for the environment are further important characteristics of consumers in the collaborative economy businesses. However, according to Hamari et al. (2016), there can be discrepancies between consumers' attitudes and actual behavior.

On the other hand, the money saved by consumption on these platforms is another important driver of users' participation.

In this sense, the main objective of the present study is to bridge the existing gap in the literature with an extensive survey of available strategies, techniques, or tactics of DM that can be applied in a collaborative economy. The results are interpreted in an exploratory way, leaving room for future research to empirically confirm their effectiveness.

In order to the development of the research questions, firstly, it is taken into account the benefits of the implementation of DM strategies in e-businesses. Since, some of these DM strategies are more commonly used than others and some of them are more effective depending on the business model. Therefore, the RQ1 answers the following issue: *What are the main digital marketing strategies that can be applied to sharing economy platforms?*

Secondly, considering that user participation is essential in the SE, it is interesting to go further and analyze how digital marketing can be implemented to boost user's participation. Then, RQ2 is address as follows: *How can digital marketing help the sharing economy to increase and encourage user participation?*

### 3. METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

In order to address the research questions formulated in this paper, we use the methodology of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The goal of SLRs is to identify and synthesize previous research findings (Snyder, 2019). This methodology allows one to obtain a comprehensive understanding of a specific topic, as well as acquire the essential concepts and implications. It is important to highlight the potential contributions of SLR for both academia and industry.

Any methodology requires some previous data for its analysis and interpretation. In the case of a SLR, the process consists of the collection of articles and their subsequent evaluation through a qualitative approach. In the present study, the development of the methodology was guided by the systematic sequential process proposed by Brocke et al. (2015). Similarly, to facilitate the preparation of the SLR, PRISMA Statement was used (Moher et al., 2015).

In the present study, the research methodology was developed using the following two major international academic databases: Web of Science and Scopus (Chadegani et al., 2013). These databases were searched using relevant key terms (see Table 1).

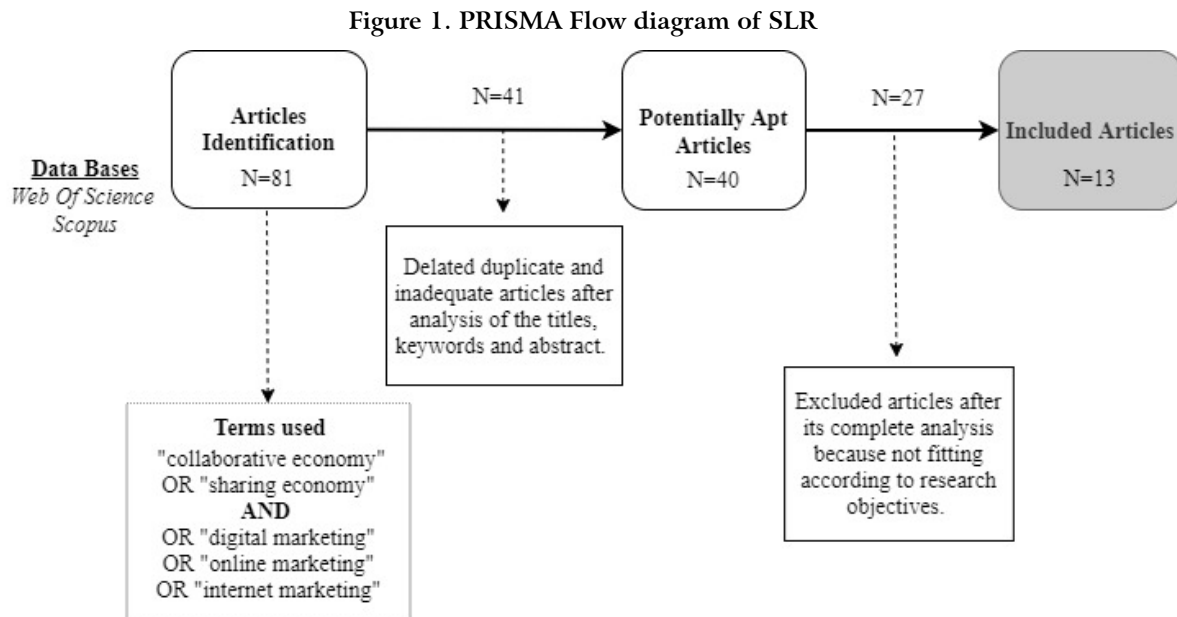
**Table 1. Terms used in the databases**

| Database       | Terms used               |     |                       | Filtered by | Fields   |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----|-----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Web of Science | share economy            | AND | digital marketing     | Articles    | Title    |
| Scopus         | OR collaborative economy |     | OR online marketing   | Open Access | Abstract |
|                |                          |     | Or internet marketing | English     | Keywords |

Source: Own Elaboration

The process unfolded as follows. First, relevant words related to SE and DM were identified. Next, a total of three queries were carried out in each of the databases, keeping the terms “share economy” OR “collaborative economy” fixed and alternating three other key terms related to marketing strategies in an online environment (“digital marketing”, “online marketing”, “internet marketing”) were used alternatively. The search for similar terms allowed us to expand the results. In addition, it was specified that these terms had to appear in the title, abstract or keywords. For a more precise search, we filtered by type of document to focus only on open access articles written in English (see Table 1).

After obtaining a total of 81 articles, we proceeded to follow the PRISMA methodology to identify the significant articles in accordance with the objectives of our review (see Figure 1).



Source: diagram.net

First, it we eliminated duplicate results, as well as the results where the terms used in the titles, abstracts, and keywords did not match our research purpose. As a result of this filtering, a total of 40 articles remained in the dataset. Second, a more detailed review was carried out, with a particular focus on the application of digital marketing strategies in sharing economy models, conclusions, and implications. As a result of this three-stage filtering process, our dataset was reduced to a total of 13 articles.

#### 4. RESULTS

The collaborative economy businesses are digital platforms where DM strategies are applied. In this section, we outline major DM strategies used in this business model, discuss how they are being applied, as well as present the effects they (can) cause on their users. In addition, we will also define several other significant concepts.

The analysis of the selected articles (N=13) demonstrated that these digital platforms obtain good results when they ground their DM strategies in user experience (UX) (Salvi & Fabiana, 2019). The related UX strategies should be designed in order to facilitate self-storytelling among users in online ecosystems (Pera et al., 2016). In this way, consumers can share their opinions and show their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the activities of SE businesses. This behavior is popularly known as electronic e-WoM. It is considered one

of the main factors affecting consumer loyalty and companies' brand reputation in digital ecosystems (Salvi & Fabiana, 2019).

Lalicic and Weismayer (2018) confirmed the relationship between service quality (SQ) and consumers' loyalty. However, this study was focused on an offline environment.

Innovative business models, such as collaborative economy, based their strategies on encouraging engagement among users and between users and companies (Pisano et al., 2015). Accordingly, social media marketing strategies (SMM) are widely used by such businesses. Social networks are an important communication channel for e-businesses, as it allows them to obtain greater visibility and encourages closer and more informal interactions with consumers.

In order to interact with their followers and create content, collaborative economy businesses create profiles in major social networks such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. One of the main objectives is to create a community among users and to encourage users within this community to interact with each other, share experiences, opinions, and even show their (dis)satisfaction or satisfaction with a product or service (Rowe, 2017). The feeling of community, together with trust and social relations, are the backbone of collaborative economy platforms (Lee, 2016).

Furthermore, the results showed that one of the main challenges in online environment is users' distrust in using digital platforms. As mentioned above, one possible way to circumvent user trust is to encourage companies to promote UGC through social networks or on their own platforms. UGC is the content about a brand or company generated by users, in a totally altruistic way, on digital platforms or social networks; in UGC, users freely express and share their experiences and opinions with other users (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2020). There is evidence that UGC has a greater impact on consumer behavior and online trust than platform-generated information (Zloteanu, 2018). According to Camacho-Otero et al. (2019), positive reviews lead to an increase in sales and participation in respective businesses. Another determining factor here is the quality of generated content.

As argued by Palos-Sanchez et al. (2018), the analysis of data from user searches provides a wealth of information and insights for collaborative economy businesses. The results of such analysis also highlight the existence of significant correlations among the terms related to social networks, technology use, and Internet access. All this confirms the importance of implementing strategies such as SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Marketing).

Furthermore, several other studies showed that creating content in blogs—particularly, in the tourism and hospitality sectors—is a very efficient and cost-effective way of promotion, as it improves the image of the business (Sabou et al., 2014). Likewise, there is also evidence showing that, particularly in the fashion sector, using ambassadors or key opinion leaders positively influences consumer decisions in online environments (Lee & Chow, 2020). However, this type of research has by now remained exploratory.

According to Dellaert (2019), collaborative economies have made consumers part of the production and operating process on digital platforms, which involves the development of consumer-based strategies. This user involvement is called customer co-production. However, for this to happen, it is essential that strategies with an informative and emotional-experiential nature are developed beforehand to gain users' trust (Nadeem et al., 2020). In order to identify customer these profitable co-productions and to personalize marketing actions for consumers, providing them with greater support and information so that they continue to generate value, DM strategies extensively use data analytics (Dellaert, 2019). Relationship marketing in online environment favors personalized communication with users, which is an essential factor for obtaining their feedback (Casais et al., 2020). Furthermore, close and personalized interaction reduces distrust and credibility doubts

that digital environment frequently elicits in users. Online relationship marketing (ORM) strategies are implemented to involve consumers in customer co-production (Casais et al., 2020). Our results demonstrated that the use of software for data management and analysis, as well as matching mechanisms for the development of customer-based strategies, are particularly effective in this regard (Dellaert, 2019).

Finally, the results showed that the application of Freemium models is useful to achieve differentiation on SE platforms. This effect is due to the heterogeneity of users, where price is a determining factor of consumer behavior (Querbes, 2017). In addition, this type of model allows for the exchange of user data, which is an advantage for digital marketers, as they can use these data to develop personalized strategies according to users' interests, searches, or purchase history and thus make relevant offers or provide content that is valuable to their customers. All this leads to an increase of confidence, satisfaction, and loyalty of clients on digital platforms.

This section concludes with tables 2, 3, and 4 providing a clearer view of the results obtained.

Table 2 shows a classification of authors' contribution found in the SLR according to the main DM strategies and key concepts of the SE.

**Table 2. Relevant papers found in the Systematic Literature Review**

| Authors                          | Digital marketing strategies |     |     |     |                   |                   |     |                      |       |     | Key concepts      |         |            |           |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-------------------|-----|----------------------|-------|-----|-------------------|---------|------------|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------|------------------------|------------|---------------------|
|                                  | UX                           | SEM | SEO | SMM | Freemium strategy | Content marketing | ORM | Influencer marketing | e-WoM | UGC | Self-storytelling | Reviews | Engagement | Community | Social Media | e-trust | e-loyalty | Consumer co-production | Ambassador | Key opinion leaders |
| Camacho-Otero et al. (2019)      |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   |     |                      | •     | •   | •                 |         |            |           |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
| Casais et al. (2020)             |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   | •   |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              | •       | •         | •                      |            |                     |
| Dellaert (2018)                  |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   | •   |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              |         |           | •                      |            |                     |
| Lalicic and Weismayer (2018)     |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   |     |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              |         | •         |                        |            |                     |
| Lee (2016)                       |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   |     |                      |       |     |                   | •       | •          | •         |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
| Nadeem et al. (2020)             |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   | •   |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              | •       |           | •                      |            |                     |
| Palos-Sanchez and Correia (2018) |                              | •   | •   |     |                   |                   |     |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
| Pera et al. (2016)               | •                            |     |     |     |                   | •                 |     |                      | •     |     | •                 |         |            |           |              | •       | •         |                        |            |                     |
| Pisano et al. (2015)             |                              |     |     | •   |                   | •                 |     |                      |       |     |                   | •       |            | •         |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
| Querbes (2018)                   |                              |     |     |     | •                 |                   |     |                      |       |     |                   |         |            |           | •            | •       |           |                        |            |                     |
| Rowe (2017)                      |                              |     |     |     |                   |                   |     |                      | •     |     |                   |         | •          | •         |              |         |           |                        |            |                     |
| Sabou et al. (2014)              |                              |     |     |     |                   | •                 |     | •                    |       |     |                   |         |            |           |              |         |           |                        | •          | •                   |

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 3 provides a summary of main digital marketing strategies used in sharing economy. Key concepts are defined in Table 4.

**Table 3. Main digital marketing strategies applied in sharing economy**

| Digital marketing strategy        | Definition  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| User Experience Strategies (UX)   | All strategies related to user experience in a concrete environment or device when interacting with a company during its purchase decision process journey. A user experience strategy consists of developing strategies that align the company's objectives, technical capabilities, and customer needs. This type of strategy is irresponsible of facilitating spaces for the creation of useful and desirable content for users, provides an accessible and easy web (usability), and increases credibility. |
| Search Engine Marketing (SEM)     | A combination of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Advertising (SEA) strategies. However, this classification is not always accepted by marketers.   |
| Search Engine Optimization (SEO)  | Strategies implemented to organically improve the authority and traffic of a website. Search results in higher positions get a better online reputation. A good positioning of the website makes it more visible and attracts users.  |
| Social Media Marketing (SMM)      | A set of actions of a company in social networks to establish a more direct communication with users and to encourage interaction between them. It promotes the creation of bonds between the brand and the user in addition to the sale of products or services.   |
| Freemium strategy                 | Business model that allows users to enjoy a service for free; however, a small fee is charged for exclusive advantages or more advanced tools according to users' needs and interests.  |
| Content Marketing                 | It consists of the creation of quality and updated content in the online environment (social networks, website, blogs, etc.) that is interesting to the user. It is a perfect complement to be developed together with other types of strategies, such as SEO. It aims to connect with the audience, transmit messages, and share information. It also provides value to users for free and creates bonds with them in the long term.   |
| Online Relational Marketing (ORM) | It consists of the creation of strategies and actions customized to each user based on the provided information (e.g., search history, purchase history, questions, complaints, etc.). It aims to influence users' e-trust and e-loyalty.   |
| Influencer Marketing              | Advertising actions performed in social networks by influential people focused on their community of followers, whether large or small. The so-called influencers recommend and test a brand's products or services, fostering trust and encouraging the participation of their followers.  |

Source: Own Elaboration

**Table 4. Key concepts in sharing economy for digital marketing**

| Key Concepts                     | Definition   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) | The exchange of consumers' positive and negative opinions about a brand, product, or service through the Internet.   |
| User-generated content (UGC)     | Content generated by users on social platforms about a brand, product, or service. Users generate content in their own profiles based on their experiences, without receiving anything in return, by encouraging interaction with other users. In addition, positive comments enhance other users' confidence in a product, service, or company. |
| Self-storytelling                | The information shared by users in their profiles of a collaborative economy platform (e.g., profile description). It is related to personal reputation and is of crucial importance for users to connect and generate trust on these platforms.   |
| Reviews                          | Users' opinions and evaluations after exchanging a product or service, or the opinions made about the users whose services (e.g., purchase, renting, etc.) they have used.   |



|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Engagement             | The capacity of interaction and attraction between users and the company for the establishment of links between them. This concept is usually used as an indicator of commitment in social networks; however, in collaborative economy businesses, it refers to users' participation in this type of platforms.  |
| Community              | Users' feeling of belonging to a group in an online environment. User communities tend to be groups that are very loyal to a brand or company, particularly because of the message they convey. The users who are part of these communities are the most loyal consumers and the main advocates in the event of negative comments.   |
| Social Media           | Digital platforms where people interact with each other, generate content, exchange opinions, and create a sense of community with other users. Companies tend to use platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, among others, as a communication channel to create conversation and engagement with their users or to attract new ones by creating content related to the interests of their followers. |
| e-trust                | Users' confidence in decision to (not) participate or not in collaborative economy businesses in an online environment. Online trust is a determining factor of user behavior.   |
| e-loyalty              | Consumer behavior towards a brand when, upon a successful purchase of a product or service, the consumer feels satisfied. Online loyalty also refers to the client's advocacy and the fidelity to continue buying in the company.  |
| Consumer co-production | Participation and involvement of consumers in the functioning and processes in the sharing economy. For instance, participation and engagement of users who sell, rent, or offer services on this type of platforms are essential to the development of these companies.   |
| Ambassador             | Users, sometimes celebrities, who actively promote a brand or product because they really like it. These people frequently do not receive any kind of financial compensation for their recommendations. Such users generate confidence and reasons to participate/consume in this type of business.  |
| Key opinion leaders    | Also known as "influencers". Key opinion leaders are people who are paid by companies to promote a product, brand, or service through social networks. Key opinion leaders encourage e-WoM among their community of followers and can gain trust of other users.   |

Source: Own Elaboration

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study used the SLR methodology to identify major DM strategies used in SE business models. Based on the results of the review, we were able to answer the research questions addressed in this study.

First, with regard to RQ1 about the main DM strategies applied in collaborative economy businesses, we found that the implementation of strategies based on UX, SMM, SEO, and SEM are fundamental to achieve profitable results in this type of business. Another effective strategy to boost loyalty of current consumers and to attract potential ones is the integration of ORM strategies and interpretation of both qualitative (e-WoM or UGC) and quantitative (historical purchases or purchase value) data.

Second with regard to RQ2 questioning how digital marketing can help collaborative economies to encourage user participation in their platforms, we found that the implementation of SMM strategies, along with the support of a good development of UX within the websites or online platforms, can effectively encourage user participation and interaction. A particular important role is placed by positive UGC and e-WoM, which increase customers' e-trust and e-loyalty. Regarding increasing user participation, DM strategies are useful when are implemented as a mean of obtaining user's information. The analysis of

user's data that they leave in digital environments. This information provides insights about how to draft DM strategies successfully. For example, in case of UX strategies tracking heat maps to know how users navigate online helps to improve the usability and then users' participations in SE business. On the other hand, according to the results obtained, SMM and social networks are important to create engagement and create conversation between users, then social networks and SMM strategies implemented in this media results appealing to the interaction of users when the content created is relevant and interesting for them. To know what content is more appropriate, data analysis is key.

### **5.1 Managerial Implications**

UGC and e-WoM are very useful sources of information for companies, a real mine of information and customers' insights. Therefore, our results imply that collaborative economy companies should provide spaces inside digital platforms where interaction between users would be encouraged. Accordingly, we recommend a greater investment in UX, as it is a fundamental basis for the development of DM strategies.

According to Reyes-Menendez (2020), the analysis of information from e-WoM and UGC allows SE businesses to better know their audiences and to implement policies oriented to clients' interests and needs through SMM strategies. A relevant example in this respect is the use of techniques such as sentiment analysis (SA) in social networks like Twitter. SA can be useful to identify users' feelings about a company or identify what topics may be more appropriate for the development of content that creates engagement with social networks (Reyes-Menendez et al., 2020). However, an inappropriate implementation of SMM strategies can negatively influence company's online reputation. All in all, UGC analysis is key to identifying insights and relevant information about consumer behavior to develop the most appropriate strategies for companies' success (Saura et al., 2019).

Furthermore, companies should be able to have the necessary resources and skills for the analysis of user data collected from their platforms and social networks. Accordingly, it is important to integrate ORM strategies. In addition to facilitating the creation of DM strategies, such as more personalized email marketing or direct marketing strategies, the incorporation of software for customer management could provide a company a greater advantage over its competitors. On the other hand, search marketing strategies must be carefully designed to achieve a better positioning in search monitors in both an organic and paid way. According to García et al. (2019), SEO strategies are the most effective to rank blogs in the highest position of search engines. There is evidence that the websites whose results appear in the first positions tend to be the ones that generate more user confidence and are thus the first to be visited. Furthermore, using tools to analyze the trends based on search terms (e.g. Google Trends) can help decision executives and managers of collaborative economy to predict consumers preferences (Palos-Sanchez & Correia, 2018).

A final recommendation is to implement freemium models for those users who have been attracted and need more exclusive services. Doing so will serve to collect information from those users. Direct personalized strategies based on users' interests and encouraging user loyalty and co-creation should also be applied.

### **5.2 Limitations and Future Research**

The present study has several limitations. First, relevant previous studies on SE and DM strategies are rather scarce, which resulted in a rather limited dataset that we analyzed in the present study. Second, we selected a small sample to be analyzed due to the irrelevant content found in the databases according to our research objectives. And finally, there were

found some marketing strategies not to focus on online environment which are important to gain customer's loyalty and trust.

In this respect, it should be noted that, since SE businesses are developed in a digital environment, there are no notable differences with respect to e-businesses based on B2B or B2C as far as the application of DM strategies is concerned (Saura et al., 2019). However, considering a knowledge gap in this field, future research should focus on the differences between collaborative economy businesses and businesses based on a B2B or B2C relationship. There is evidence showing that, in the latter type of businesses, mobile applications (MAP) are incorporated as the main means of participating in this business model due to their easy accessibility for users (Kannan, 2017). Therefore, no mention is made of the strategies that can be implemented in apps to attract or encourage consumer participation with mobile user experience or application search optimization (ASO) and their effectiveness.

On the other hand, considering Lalicic and Weismayer's (2018) finding about SQ in an offline company and its influence on consumer loyalty, our contribution is as follows. From a digital perspective, SQ can be integrated through UX in terms of web design, ease of use of the platform, user privacy, responsiveness, and creation of spaces that encourage interaction among users, thus encouraging user-generated content. Digital spaces to evaluate or review the services/products offered is a common practice in SE businesses.

In summary, the results of the present study allow us to make the following conclusions. First, our results convincingly demonstrate the strong impact of UGC and e-WoM on consumer behavior. Therefore, collaborative economy businesses should seek for the ways to increase the volume of UGC and e-WoM on their platforms. Second, our results underscore the relevance of both qualitative and quantitative customer data collection for further analysis and interpretation. To this end, it is essential to implement DM strategies that facilitate the collection of user information and the integration of software capable of organizing and analyzing this information. Then, based on the obtained insights found, DM strategies can be used to develop appropriate actions that would best suit each consumer.

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