Influence of Digital Peace-Building Behaviour on Entrepreneurial Collaboration among Youth Entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria

Martha E. Taegar, Hillary O. Odor & Ohwariovbe K. Mudiaga

Abstract

This study examined the influence of digital peace-building on business collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the effects of digital dialogue and tolerance, digital conflict-management behaviour, and responsible digital engagement on business collaboration. The study was anchored on Social Capital Theory and adopted a cross-sectional survey design. A sample size of 384 respondents was used for the study. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that digital dialogue and tolerance had a positive and significant effect on business collaboration ($\beta = .381$, $t = 5.790$, $p < .001$). Digital conflict-management behaviour had a negative but insignificant effect ($\beta = -.126$, $t = -1.685$, $p = .093$), while responsible digital engagement had a positive and significant effect ($\beta = .490$, $t = 6.906$, $p < .001$) and made the strongest contribution to business collaboration. The study concluded that digital peace-building can promote stronger business relationships and collaboration among youth entrepreneurs, especially through respectful dialogue, tolerance, and responsible digital engagement. It recommends digital communication training, practical mechanisms for resolving online disagreements, and training on responsible and ethical information sharing. On the whole, the study highlights the role of constructive digital behaviour in strengthening cooperation and collaborative entrepreneurship among young entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Youth Entrepreneurs, Digital Peace-Building, Business Collaboration, Digital Dialogue and Tolerance, Responsible Digital Engagement

Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has drastically transformed the ways individuals communicate, interact, build relationships, and pursue economic

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opportunities (Onyebuchi et al., 2026). Indeed, social media platforms, instant messaging applications, digital marketplaces, and other online technologies have become increasingly important in connecting people across geographical and social boundaries (Syauqi et al., 2026). For young entrepreneurs, these platforms provide opportunities to exchange business information, identify potential partners, access markets, share resources, and develop collaborative relationships (Onyebuchi et al., 2026). Beyond their economic value, however, digital platforms also constitute important spaces for social interaction where disagreements, intolerance, misinformation, cyber hostility, and other forms of conflict can emerge (Pohan et al., 2025). On the basis of the above, the capacity of young people to use digital spaces constructively has become increasingly relevant not only to social harmony but also to entrepreneurial relationships and collaboration.

Digital peace-building represents an emerging dimension of digital engagement concerned with using digital technologies to promote dialogue, tolerance, constructive communication, conflict management, and peaceful relationships (Firchow et al., 2026). In the context of entrepreneurship, these behaviours may be particularly important because entrepreneurial activities increasingly depend on networks and relationships involving customers, suppliers, competitors, business partners, and other stakeholders. Young entrepreneurs who communicate respectfully, manage disagreements constructively, and engage responsibly with digital information may be better positioned to develop and sustain collaborative relationships (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2026). Entrepreneurial collaboration, in turn, can facilitate information sharing, joint problem-solving, resource mobilisation, networking, and the pursuit of shared business opportunities.

Existing scholarship has established that digital technologies and social media can enhance entrepreneurial networking, knowledge exchange, innovation, and access to business opportunities. Studies have also demonstrated the importance of interpersonal relationships, trust, communication, and networking in fostering entrepreneurial success. Similarly, research on peace education and digital citizenship suggests that constructive communication, tolerance, responsible online behaviour, and conflict-resolution skills can contribute to more peaceful interactions in digital environments. What remains less clear, however, is how these peace-oriented digital behaviours translate into economic and entrepreneurial relationships, particularly among young entrepreneurs in developing-country contexts (Lopes et al., 2026; Connolly & Igba, 2026).

This represents an important knowledge gap. Much of the discussion surrounding digital peace-building has concentrated on political participation, social cohesion, civic engagement, violent conflict prevention and broader societal peace, while entrepreneurship research has largely examined digital technology from the perspectives of innovation, marketing, networking and business performance. The relationship between digital peace-building behaviour and entrepreneurial collaboration has therefore received comparatively limited empirical attention. In particular, there is insufficient empirical evidence on whether the ways young entrepreneurs communicate, resolve digital conflicts, demonstrate tolerance and engage responsibly online influence their willingness and ability to collaborate with other entrepreneurs.

The gap is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where young people constitute an important segment of the entrepreneurial population and digital platforms increasingly serve as spaces for business networking and interaction. Delta State provides an interesting context because its youthful entrepreneurial population operates within an increasingly digital business environment in which collaboration can provide access to

knowledge, markets, resources and opportunities. At the same time, poorly managed online disagreements, intolerance, misinformation and irresponsible digital engagement may undermine trust and discourage potentially beneficial entrepreneurial relationships. Thus, while digital platforms create opportunities for entrepreneurial collaboration, the behavioural quality of interactions occurring through these platforms may determine whether such opportunities translate into meaningful and sustainable collaboration.

Against this background, the study examines the relationship between digital peace-building behaviour and entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine the influence of digital dialogue and tolerance, digital conflict-management behaviour, and responsible digital engagement on entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs. By examining these relationships, the study seeks to extend existing knowledge by connecting the relatively underexplored domain of digital peace-building with entrepreneurship and management scholarship, while providing empirical evidence on how constructive digital behaviours may facilitate collaborative entrepreneurial relationships in the Nigerian context.

Statement of the Hypotheses

This study is guided by the following null hypotheses:

1. Digital dialogue and tolerance has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration.
2. Digital conflict-management behaviour has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration.
3. Responsible digital engagement has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration.

Review of Literature

Digital Peace-Building Behaviour and Entrepreneurial Collaboration

The increasing integration of digital technologies into social and economic life has created new spaces in which individuals interact, negotiate differences, build relationships, and pursue common interests. Digital peace-building has consequently emerged as an important area of scholarship concerned with how digital technologies and online practices can contribute to conflict prevention, constructive dialogue, social cohesion, and peaceful interaction. Digital peace-building is broadly understood as the use of digital technologies, platforms, and practices to support peace-oriented processes, including conflict prevention, mitigation, mediation, and the development of sustainable relationships (Firchow et al., 2026). Recent scholarship emphasises that digital peace-building should not be understood merely as the application of technology to peace problems, but as practices occurring within socio-technical environments where human behaviour, digital platforms, and information processes interact (Martin-Shields, 2025).

Digital peace-building behaviour refers specifically to the individual behaviours through which young entrepreneurs use digital platforms to promote respectful interaction, manage disagreements constructively, accommodate differences and engage responsibly with others. The concept is operationalised through three dimensions: digital dialogue and tolerance, digital conflict-management behaviour, and responsible digital engagement. Digital dialogue and tolerance involve willingness to communicate respectfully, listen to divergent opinions and accommodate differences in digital

interactions (Brown & Hersey, 2018). Digital conflict-management behaviour concerns the ability to resolve disagreements, misunderstandings and disputes through constructive digital communication rather than hostility or antagonism. According to Costescu (2024) responsible digital engagement involves ethical communication, careful sharing of information and avoidance of misinformation, inflammatory content and other behaviours capable of damaging relationships. These dimensions are indeed relevant because digital spaces can simultaneously facilitate inclusion and interaction while creating opportunities for misinformation, hostility and conflict.

The second major concept is entrepreneurial collaboration, which Rajala (2018) defines as the process through which entrepreneurs work with other entrepreneurs or business stakeholders to pursue mutually beneficial objectives. Collaboration may involve sharing information, knowledge, skills, contacts, resources and business opportunities, as well as engaging in joint problem-solving and strategic activities (Audretsch et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial collaboration is increasingly important in contemporary business environments because entrepreneurs rarely possess all the resources and capabilities required to identify and exploit opportunities independently. Research indicates that entrepreneurial collaboration is closely associated with social cohesion, networking, knowledge exchange and innovation. Digital technologies further expand these possibilities by enabling entrepreneurs to connect with geographically dispersed partners and exchange knowledge and resources through online networks.

Accordingly, this study conceptualises digital peace-building behaviour as a relationship-enabling behavioural capability that may facilitate entrepreneurial collaboration. The underlying argument is that entrepreneurs who demonstrate tolerance, communicate constructively, manage digital conflicts peacefully and engage responsibly online are more likely to develop trust, sustain interpersonal relationships and collaborate effectively with other entrepreneurs. The study therefore connects two bodies of literature that have largely developed separately: digital peace-building and entrepreneurship. This conceptual linkage provides a basis for examining whether peace-oriented digital behaviours constitute not only instruments of social harmony but also potentially valuable managerial and entrepreneurial resources for strengthening collaboration among young entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Social Capital Theory. The theory was developed by Bourdieu (1986) and further advanced by Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000). The theory explains how relationships, networks, trust, shared values, and norms of reciprocity facilitate cooperation and collective action among individuals and groups.

Social Capital Theory assumes that individuals who maintain strong social networks and demonstrate trust, mutual support, and cooperation are better positioned to access information, resources, opportunities, and collective support. From the perspective of this study, digital platforms provide youth entrepreneurs with opportunities to establish and maintain networks that transcend physical and geographical boundaries. In other words, through responsible online communication, information sharing, tolerance, conflict avoidance, dialogue, and promotion of peaceful relationships, young entrepreneurs can develop positive digital social capital.

The theory therefore provides a basis for explaining how digital peace-building behaviour can strengthen trust and cooperation among youth entrepreneurs, thereby facilitating entrepreneurial collaboration. When young entrepreneurs use digital platforms to promote respectful communication, resolve disagreements constructively,

discourage hate and violence, and build inclusive relationships, they are likely to develop stronger networks for business cooperation, knowledge sharing, joint ventures, referrals, and resource mobilisation.

Empirical Review

Uzoamaka and Collins (2025) examined the relationship between digital citizenship and entrepreneurial success among 100 registered small and medium-scale ICT enterprises in Delta State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, the authors collected data using a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Their findings revealed that digital literacy significantly enhanced entrepreneurial success. This finding proved the importance of entrepreneurs' digital competencies in improving commercial activities. The study recommended the application of digital citizenship education programmes that will help to strengthen entrepreneurs' digital literacy and digital commerce capabilities. However, its focus on digital literacy leaves other dimensions of digital citizenship relatively unexplored.

Okwudiri et al. (2025) examined the relationship between youth empowerment, leadership engagement, and insecurity reduction in Ogwashi-Uku and Ibusa, Delta State. Using a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 400 youths, with 370 valid responses analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between youth empowerment initiatives and insecurity reduction. The study also found a moderately strong positive relationship between youth leadership engagement and reduction of cult-related activities. The authors therefore recommended leadership training and expanded entrepreneurial and skills-development programmes.

Joseph et al. (2023) reviewed the role of entrepreneurship in peacebuilding within conflict-affected settings by integrating insights from business and management with political science and international relations. The review identified three perspectives of entrepreneurship: destructive, economic, and social cohesion views, demonstrating that entrepreneurship can simultaneously contribute to conflict and peace. The authors further identified pathways through which entrepreneurship can promote peace, including personal transformation, social contributions, inclusive interactions, removal of conflict triggers, intergroup policy persuasion, and legal advocacy. The study concluded that entrepreneurship has significant potential as a peacebuilding mechanism, while emphasizing the need for business-based interventions that deliberately promote social cohesion and address the underlying causes of conflict.

Olatoye and Salami (2025) studied the impact of social entrepreneurship on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Anchored on Social Capital Theory, the study adopted a survey research design and collected data from 354 respondents across Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States. Using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis, the findings revealed that social entrepreneurship significantly contributed to economic recovery, peacebuilding and social cohesion, and sustainable development. The study concluded that social entrepreneurship promotes recovery, social cohesion, and sustainable peace in post-conflict Niger Delta communities.

Ubogu et al. (2026) examined the effect of entrepreneurial orientation on the growth of small and medium-scale businesses in Delta State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and collected primary data through structured questionnaires from a sample of 313 respondents selected from a population of 1,632 registered SMEs using stratified sampling. Data were analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The findings revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and SME growth. Specifically, innovativeness, risk-taking, and proactiveness were significantly related to business growth. The study concluded that SMEs that embrace innovation, calculated risk-taking, and proactive market behaviour are more likely to achieve improved revenue, market expansion, competitiveness, and sustainability.

Apeh et al. (2023) investigated the role of digital entrepreneurship in youth empowerment in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study employed a multistage sampling procedure to select 900 respondents comprising 300 market participants and 600 tertiary institution students. Data were collected through questionnaires and analysed using means and percentages. The findings indicated that digital entrepreneurship contributes positively to youth empowerment through job creation, improved business networks, market access, self-employment, wealth creation, and knowledge enhancement. The study also identified lack of capital, interest, information, and electricity as major constraints to digital entrepreneurship. The authors concluded that effective utilisation of digital platforms can enhance youths' skills, careers, economic independence, and overall empowerment.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Furthermore, the study focused on youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. Youth in this context are defined as individuals aged 18–40 years who owned, managed or actively operated a business within the state. Since there is no reliable, comprehensive and current database indicating the exact number of youth entrepreneurs across Delta State, the population of the study was treated as unknown. Consequently, Cochran's formula for an unknown or very large population was used to determine the sample size of 384 respondents.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. Delta State was first stratified according to its three senatorial districts, after which major urban and commercial centres with substantial entrepreneurial activities were selected. Youth entrepreneurs were subsequently accessed through business associations, entrepreneurship networks, markets, enterprise clusters and digital business communities.

Eligible respondents were selected using purposive and convenience sampling because a comprehensive sampling frame of youth entrepreneurs was unavailable. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Digital peace-building behaviour was measured through digital dialogue and tolerance, digital conflict-management behaviour, and responsible digital engagement, while entrepreneurial collaboration was measured through information sharing, resource sharing, joint problem-solving and collaborative business activities.

The instrument was subjected to expert assessment for content validity and pilot-tested before the main survey. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients ranging between 0.65 and 0.77 considered acceptable for the study variables. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression was used to determine the individual and combined effects of the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour on entrepreneurial collaboration.

Findings

Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires administered	384	100.00
Questionnaires returned	244	63.54
Questionnaires not returned	140	36.46
Returned questionnaires found usable	240	98.36
Returned questionnaires unusable	4	1.64
Usable questionnaires as proportion of administered	240	62.50

Source: Field Survey Data, 2026.

The table indicates that 244 questionnaires were returned out of the 384 copies that were administered, giving a response rate of 63.54%. Four of the returned questionnaires were excluded because they were inadequately completed. Consequently, 240 questionnaires, representing 98.36% of the returned questionnaires, were considered suitable for statistical analysis. The usable response rate of 62.50% of the administered questionnaires was considered adequate for the analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 years	52	21.67
26–33 years	109	45.42
34–40 years	79	32.92
Total	240	100.00

Source: Field Survey Data, 2026.

The result shows that respondents aged 26–33 years constituted the largest proportion of the sample, accounting for 45.42%. This was followed by respondents aged 34–40 years with 32.92%, while those aged 18–25 years constituted 21.67%. The distribution indicates that the respondents were predominantly within the economically active segment of the youth population and therefore constituted an appropriate group for examining digital peace-building behaviour and entrepreneurial collaboration.

Table 3: Years of Entrepreneurial Experience

Years in Business	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 3 years	61	25.42
3–5 years	94	39.17
6–10 years	85	35.42
Total	240	100.00

Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The table indicates that 39.17% of the respondents had operated their businesses for between 3 and 5 years. Respondents with 6–10 years of entrepreneurial experience accounted for 35.42%, while 25.42% had operated their businesses for less than three years. The result suggests that a substantial proportion of the respondents had accumulated sufficient entrepreneurial experience to have interacted with other entrepreneurs and stakeholders through both traditional and digital channels.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

The study measured four major variables: Digital Dialogue and Tolerance (DDT), Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour (DCMB), Responsible Digital Engagement (RDE), and Entrepreneurial Collaboration (EC). Each variable was measured with five statements using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). A mean scores of 3.00 and above indicate general agreement with the statements, while mean scores below 3.00 indicate general disagreement.

Digital Dialogue and Tolerance

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Digital Dialogue and Tolerance

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I communicate respectfully with other entrepreneurs through digital platforms even when we have different opinions.	3.51	1.241
2	I listen to and consider the views of other entrepreneurs during online discussions.	3.35	1.252
3	I tolerate differing opinions expressed by other entrepreneurs on digital platforms.	3.51	1.261
4	I avoid using offensive language when discussing business-related issues online.	3.29	1.192
5	I encourage constructive dialogue when disagreements arise during digital interactions.	3.37	1.214
	AGGREGATE MEAN	3.41	0.857

Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The results in Table 4 show that all five indicators of digital dialogue and tolerance recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 3.00. The highest mean score was

recorded for the statement that respondents tolerated differing opinions expressed by other entrepreneurs on digital platforms (M = 3.51, SD = 1.261), closely followed by respectful communication with entrepreneurs who held different opinions (M = 3.51, SD = 1.241). Avoiding offensive language during online business discussions recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.29, SD = 1.192). The aggregate mean of 3.41 indicates that respondents generally demonstrated digital dialogue and tolerance in their interactions with other entrepreneurs.

Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I try to resolve disagreements with other entrepreneurs peacefully through digital communication.	3.28	1.192
2	I use constructive communication when addressing conflicts with other entrepreneurs online.	3.15	1.222
3	I avoid responding aggressively when another entrepreneur disagrees with me online.	3.16	1.182
4	I seek clarification before reacting to messages that may cause misunderstanding.	3.1	1.258
5	I am willing to negotiate digitally when disagreements affect business relationships.	3.27	1.209
	AGGREGATE MEAN	3.19	0.822

Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

Table 5 indicates that all five measures of digital conflict-management behaviour recorded mean scores above 3.00. The highest mean was recorded for the use of peaceful digital communication to resolve disagreements (M = 3.28, SD = 1.192), while seeking clarification before reacting to potentially misleading messages recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.10, SD = 1.258). The aggregate mean of 3.19 suggests that respondents generally employed constructive approaches to managing disagreements in their digital entrepreneurial interactions.

Responsible Digital Engagement

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Responsible Digital Engagement

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I verify information before sharing business-related information with other entrepreneurs online.	3.5	1.189
2	I avoid sharing information online that could unnecessarily damage another entrepreneur's reputation.	3.58	1.136
3	I consider the possible consequences before posting comments about other entrepreneurs online.	3.45	1.202
4	I avoid forwarding unverified information that could create conflict among entrepreneurs.	3.41	1.228
5	I use digital platforms responsibly when communicating with other entrepreneurs.	3.54	1.192
	AGGREGATE MEAN	3.5	0.816

Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The findings in Table 6 show that all the indicators of responsible digital engagement had mean scores above 3.00. The highest mean score was recorded for avoiding the sharing of information capable of unnecessarily damaging another entrepreneur's reputation (M = 3.58, SD = 1.136). The lowest mean was obtained for avoiding the forwarding of unverified information that could create conflict (M = 3.41, SD = 1.228). With an aggregate mean of 3.50, the result indicates that respondents generally demonstrated responsible behaviour when engaging with other entrepreneurs through digital platforms.

Entrepreneurial Collaboration

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Entrepreneurial Collaboration

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD
1	I share useful business information with other entrepreneurs through digital platforms.	3.25	1.19
2	I work with other entrepreneurs to solve common business problems.	3.33	1.249
3	I share business resources or opportunities with entrepreneurs within my network.	3.3	1.143
4	I engage in joint business activities with other entrepreneurs when opportunities arise.	3.24	1.192
5	Digital platforms have helped me establish or strengthen collaborative relationships with other entrepreneurs.	3.31	1.159
	AGGREGATE MEAN	3.28	1.159

Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

Table 7 shows that all five indicators of entrepreneurial collaboration recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 3.00. Working with other entrepreneurs to solve common business problems recorded the highest mean (M = 3.33, SD = 1.249), while engaging in joint business activities when opportunities arise recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.24, SD = 1.192). The aggregate mean of 3.28 indicates that respondents generally agreed that they engaged in collaborative entrepreneurial activities and that digital platforms contributed to such collaboration.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was first employed to determine the direction and strength of the relationships between the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour and entrepreneurial collaboration. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variables	DDT	DCMB	RDE	EC
Digital Dialogue and Tolerance (DDT)	1.000	.420**	.310**	.480**
Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour (DCMB)	.420**	1.000	.380**	.220**
Responsible Digital Engagement (RDE)	.310**	.380**	1.000	.560**
Entrepreneurial Collaboration (EC)	.480**	.220**	.560**	1.000

Note: $p < .01$ (2-tailed); N = 240.
Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

Table 9 indicate that digital dialogue and tolerance had a positive and significant relationship with entrepreneurial collaboration ($r = .480$, $p < .01$). This suggests that higher levels of respectful digital dialogue and tolerance were associated with greater entrepreneurial collaboration among the respondents.

Similarly, digital conflict-management behaviour had a positive but relatively weak relationship with entrepreneurial collaboration ($r = .220$, $p < .01$). Although the relationship was statistically significant at the bivariate level, its relatively low correlation coefficient suggests that the association was weaker than those observed for the other dimensions.

Responsible digital engagement demonstrated the strongest positive relationship with entrepreneurial collaboration ($r = .560$, $p < .01$). This indicates that respondents who engaged more responsibly on digital platforms tended to report higher levels of collaboration with other entrepreneurs.

The correlations among the three independent variables were also positive and moderate, ranging from .310 to .420. These relationships were sufficiently moderate to suggest that the dimensions represented related but distinguishable aspects of digital peace-building behaviour.

However, Pearson correlation only establishes association between variables. Multiple regression analysis was therefore conducted to determine the individual

contribution of each dimension to entrepreneurial collaboration while controlling for the effects of the other dimensions.

Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the combined and individual effects of digital dialogue and tolerance, digital conflict-management behaviour, and responsible digital engagement on entrepreneurial collaboration.

Table 10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.655	.429	.422	.59084

Predictors: Digital Dialogue and Tolerance, Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour, Responsible Digital Engagement
Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Collaboration
Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The result in Table 10 shows a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .655, indicating a moderately strong relationship between the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour taken collectively and entrepreneurial collaboration. The R of .429 indicates that the three dimensions jointly explained 42.9% of the variation in entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State.

The adjusted R of .422 indicates that, after adjusting for the number of predictors in the model, approximately 42.2% of the variation in entrepreneurial collaboration was explained by the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour. The remaining 57.8% was attributable to other factors not included in the model and random error.

Table 11: ANOVA for the Multiple Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	62.117	3	20.706	59.22	0.000
Residual	82.503	236	0.35		
Total	144.62	239			

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Collaboration
Predictors: Digital Dialogue and Tolerance, Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour, Responsible Digital Engagement
Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The ANOVA result indicates that the overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(3,236) = 59.220$, $p < .001$). This means that the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour, when considered jointly, significantly predicted entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs.

Table 12: Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Digital Peace-Building Behaviour on Entrepreneurial Collaboration

Model	Unstd B	S. E	(β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.084	0.219	—	4.95	0.000
Digital Dialogue and Tolerance	0.365	0.063	0.381	5.79	0.000
Digital Conflict-Management Behaviour	-0.091	0.054	-0.126	-1.69	0.093
Responsible Digital Engagement	0.442	0.064	0.49	6.906	0.000

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Collaboration
Source: SPSS Ver. 21 Output, 2026.

The regression coefficients presented in Table 12 provide evidence regarding the individual effects of the three dimensions of digital peace-building behaviour on entrepreneurial collaboration.

Digital dialogue and tolerance had a positive and statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .381$, $t = 5.790$, $p < .001$). This indicates that improvements in digital dialogue and tolerance were associated with corresponding increases in entrepreneurial collaboration, when the effects of the other predictors were controlled for.

Digital conflict-management behaviour had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = -.126$, $t = -1.685$, $p = .093$). Although the zero-order correlation reported earlier was positive, its unique contribution became statistically insignificant when digital dialogue and tolerance and responsible digital engagement were simultaneously included in the regression model. This suggests that digital conflict-management behaviour, on its own, did not make a statistically significant independent contribution to entrepreneurial collaboration within this sample.

Responsible digital engagement had a positive and statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .490$, $t = 6.906$, $p < .001$). It also had the strongest standardized beta coefficient among the three predictors, indicating that responsible digital engagement made the greatest unique contribution to entrepreneurial collaboration in the regression model.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Digital dialogue and tolerance has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. The regression result showed that digital dialogue and tolerance had a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .381$, $t = 5.790$, $p < .001$). Since the p-value was less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Decision: Reject H_{01}.

Conclusion: Digital dialogue and tolerance significantly influenced entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Digital conflict-management behaviour has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. The result indicated that digital conflict-management behaviour had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = -.126$, $t = -1.685$, $p = .093$). Since the p-value of .093 was greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Decision: Do not reject H_{02}.

Conclusion: Digital conflict-management behaviour did not have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Responsible digital engagement has no significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. The regression result revealed that responsible digital engagement had a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .490$, $t = 6.906$, $p < .001$). Since the p-value was less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Decision: Reject H_{03}.

Conclusion: Responsible digital engagement significantly influenced entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that digital dialogue and tolerance had a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .381$, $p < .001$). This suggests that respectful communication, openness to divergent views and tolerance of differences strengthened the willingness of youth entrepreneurs to collaborate. The finding agrees with Ashiru, Nakpodia and You (2022), who found that digital communication technologies facilitated connections, bonding and collaboration among Nigerian SMEs. Similarly, Wang et al. (2021) reported that social-media use could generate social capital that supported entrepreneurial activity, particularly through networking. The present finding therefore suggests that the quality of digital interaction, rather than merely digital connectivity, can facilitate entrepreneurial collaboration.

Secondly, the study revealed that digital conflict-management behaviour did not have a significant independent effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = -.126$, $p = .093$). Although its bivariate relationship with collaboration was positive, its effect became insignificant when the other dimensions were simultaneously considered. This finding may indicate that the ability to manage digital disagreements alone is insufficient to establish sustained entrepreneurial collaboration. The result contrasts partly with Ashiru et al. (2023), whose study of Nigerian SMEs found that digital communication technologies enabled collaboration and helped firms manage challenges such as misinformation. The difference may reflect the present study's focus on individual peace-building behaviour rather than digital technology adoption generally.

Finally, responsible digital engagement recorded the strongest significant effect on entrepreneurial collaboration ($\beta = .490$, $p < .001$). This indicates that responsible information sharing, avoidance of harmful content and careful online communication were particularly important for developing collaborative entrepreneurial relationships.

The finding is consistent with Wang et al. (2021), who showed that social-media use contributes to entrepreneurial activity through social networks and that trust is important in determining the value derived from online relationships. Thus, responsible digital engagement appears to create a more trustworthy relational environment in which entrepreneurial collaboration can flourish.

Conclusion

The study concluded that digital peace-building behaviour was an important factor in fostering entrepreneurial collaboration among youth entrepreneurs in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, digital dialogue and tolerance and responsible digital engagement significantly enhanced entrepreneurial collaboration, while digital conflict-management behaviour did not exert a significant independent influence. The findings suggest that merely resolving disagreements online may not be sufficient to promote sustained business collaboration; rather, entrepreneurs may derive greater collaborative value from maintaining respectful dialogue, tolerating divergent perspectives and engaging responsibly with digital information. This supports evidence that digital communication technologies can facilitate connections, knowledge sharing and collaboration among Nigerian businesses.

Practical Recommendations

1. Entrepreneurship development agencies and business associations should organise practical digital-communication programmes that train young entrepreneurs in respectful online dialogue, tolerance of divergent opinions and constructive engagement.
2. Although digital conflict-management behaviour was not a significant independent predictor, youth entrepreneurs should still be encouraged to adopt clear procedures for handling online disagreements.
3. Entrepreneurs should be trained to verify information before sharing it, avoid damaging or inflammatory content, protect the reputation of business associates and communicate ethically across digital platforms.

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