

# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND ONLINE MEDIA IN THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM: THE CASE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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**Abstract:** The advent of online media in tourism business has altogether revolutionised the whole system of performing business and brought about new ways of promoting tourism. Practitioners feared that traditional media had entered a death spiral and was no longer competitive in doing meaningful business. Others believed that traditional media was going to succumb to technology innovations that revolutionised the promotion industry. The purpose of this study is to make a comparative analysis of traditional media and online media as used for the promotion of tourism in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study employed a mixed method research approach and questionnaire and self-administered interviews were the two research instruments employed to tourists and tourism authorities respectively. The findings revealed that though there has been a dramatic increase in the uptake of online media by tourists, there are people still inclined to traditional media use. Tourists and tourism marketers still rely on both traditional media and online media for their information needs. The appropriation effect of online media to traditional media is not complete, therefore, media displacement rather than media replacement has occurred. The two can actually co-exist while having a complimentary effect to each other. Tourism marketers should not, by any means, underestimate the role of traditional media in the promotion of tourism. On the other hand, online media emerged as a new media with better efficiency than traditional media on certain dimensions such as interactivity and ability to reach the global market. The study recommends that tourism marketers and authorities need to improve the uptake of the Internet and to be more innovative online, without neglecting the use of traditional media.

**Keywords:** online media, traditional, KwaZulu-Natal, tourism, promotion, media

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## Introduction

This particular study is a pioneering endeavour in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and South African tourism sector. Very little research has been published regarding a comparative analysis of traditional media and online media for the promotion of tourism. According to Crisan and Berariu (2013) tourism is a commodity for sale and is consumed at the point of production. It is the customer who has to travel to the product, not the other way round. The tourism industry is growing very fast globally and is a cheaper way to earn the much needed foreign currency. Tourism is nevertheless a leading source of foreign exchange earnings in a country. According to Goyal and Sharma (2013) tourism is regarded as a key element in modern societies. It contributes to national and regional economic growth. As one of the most flourishing industries in recent years, tourism advertising can hugely

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influence the perceptions of the audience about a particular community or area. Given the significant contribution of the tourism industry in Kwazulu-Natal to the economy of South Africa and the competitive nature of the global tourism market, more advertising activities are needed in order to promote the industry and increase the earnings. Steady and good promotion is required to attract potential tourists and turn them into customers. Advertising is the main element which tourism organisations can use to influence actual and potential tourists to visit various tourist destinations in the province (Durban Tourism, 2013). Advertising can be executed in different media types. Modern age advertising is divided into two main groups, traditional media and online media advertising. Broadcast media such as radio and television, and print media such as magazines and newspapers, are what is referred to as traditional media in this study because they have been around for ages before the invention of online (Internet based) media. According to Howison, Finger and Hauschka (2014) online marketing refers to the process of using information and communication technologies as well as digital media to deliver marketing messages. In the past, the tourism industry and other business organisations relied heavily on traditional media to market their products and services (Strategic Direction, 2016). However, the advancement of network technologies and the increasing penetration of the Internet have prompted increasing numbers of organisations around the world to use online advertising in order to attract more customers in cyberspace, and to enhance their product sales and company profile (Huang, 2012).

The world of media is ever-changing and the advertising industry has undergone major structural changes in the past decade. The digital revolution has changed the way marketers approach media. The rise of user-generated-content (UGC) is also redefining the media landscape. Kelly & Jugenheimer (2008) highlight that the Internet has led to the rise of a wide variety of new kinds of media such as rich media, search engine marketing, streaming video or audio and social media. Other channels also came into play, including cellular phones, satellite radio, video games, and the iPod. Traditional media as a result faced significant challenges from the Internet revolution but it have also evolved. Opportunities are appearing in seemingly every avenue, malls now have digital signs showing television commercials, buses contain television sets, and ads are popping up in elevators. Advertising media is important and critical to the success of any advertising for several reasons. Assuming that the organisation has a great advertising campaign plan, with emphatic words, memorable themes and impressive visuals, what is good about it if those message elements do not reach the target audience. Kelly and Jugenheimer (2008) clearly indicate that a great advertising message presented to a wrong audience is a total waste of effort and time. They add that if one ignores the media strategies and only focuses on the message strategies, that individual risks sabotaging the entire package: the budget, the campaign, and everyone's hard work.

The synergistic effect available when using the appropriate combination of advertising media to convey marketing communications has been enhanced by modern information and communication technologies. Tourism agencies, organisations and related businesses must work together in promoting the tourism opportunities in KZN. They can align efforts and promote the tourism industry through the use of appropriate promotional campaigns (Crisan and Berariu, 2013). Some advertisers have switched to online media as they believe the Internet to be more efficient and effective, given the increase in cost of traditional media. However, that shift does not mean traditional advertising media would fade away completely in the near future. This can indicate that online media can to work in conjunction with traditional media in order to generate a significant increase in marketing

effectiveness. There is a diverse range of opinions on the tactics that can be employed tourism marketers in promoting its destinations and products. This study does not seek to prescribe technical aspects such as advertising design, rather it is simply highlighting the key guiding principles in making media decisions in the tourism industry.

### ***Traditional media analysis***

According to Pike (2016) traditional media have undergone radical restructuring in the past decade. The effect of free content available through web 2.0 technologies impacted negatively on the revenues of traditional media, which were forced to downsize in order to remain financially viable. Zentner (2012) state that the Internet is threatening the survival of traditional media. He observed a decline in the circulation of newspaper and advertising revenues over the previous decade. Print media advertising expenditures such as on magazines and newspapers have decreased sharply since 2000. Advertising expenditures on television and radio do not show consistent trends, and expenditures on online media advertising have grown rapidly over the past decade, from a very low level in 1998. The rise in the use of the internet has affected advertising expenditures across various media. However, the extent of the effect on each medium is still uncertain. Albeit online media appeared to have been replacing traditional advertising media outlets as a source of information, entertainment, and news, the existing estimated magnitudes of displacement impacts are much smaller than earlier predictions made during the early stages of the discovery of the Internet. Chao *et al.* (2012) argue that traditional media advertising is facing significant challenges as a result of the high prevalence of online media communications since the late 1990s.

### ***Online media analysis***

Gay *et al.*(2007) state that online marketing is the process of building and maintaining relationships with customers through online activities to facilitate the exchange of products, services, and ideas that satisfy the goals of both parties. Today's businesses are offered opportunities to distribute and promote their products and services through online marketing. Gay *et al.* (2007) further posit that it is necessary for tourism businesses to provide interactivity that meets a diverse range of potential consumers to enable the customers to select their choice, for example, inclusion of online booking facilities on the websites. In contrast, traditional marketing approaches lack interactivity. The Internet is now the fastest-growing medium with a 528.10% growth rate from 2000-2011. More people than ever around the globe are now able to surf the internet for products and services, due to the availability of efficient broadband connections and computers. Improving mobile infrastructure and networks in recent years have enabled mobile Internet users to enjoy high speed and to better explore information on the net. The Internet provides a wide range of new ways for users to interact with one another, with business, and with online content. This provision for interactivity is the greatest advantage of online marketing. Companies are now able to interact with potential and existing customers and this allows the business to get valuable information about their products and services, build customer relationships, and create a community that can be used as a source pool

### **Materials and Methods**

According to Kumar (2008) research is defined as a methodical way of collecting, analysing, and transforming data into interpretable forms. This study employed a descriptive research design which

aimed to achieve the objectives of the research through the use of mixed research method. For this reason two separate surveys were implemented. Convenience and purposive sampling techniques are the two types of non-probability sampling techniques that were used. The design employed two research instruments in the form of structured questionnaires and structured interviews. The questionnaire was personally administered to tourists visiting KwaZulu-Natal tourist destinations. Tourism KwaZulu-Natal (2014) states that there is an average of 7 947 146 tourists visiting Durban annually. A sample of 400 tourists was drawn because it was impossible to conduct a survey on the entire tourism population. The rationale behind the use of a structured questionnaire was to solicit information from the tourists and the rationale for structured interviews was to get in-depth responses on key issues pertinent to this study. A structured questionnaire was employed as it allows for uniformed response which in turn will make analysis easier. The varied and structured responses from both the tourists and the tourism marketers ultimately enriched the results of this study. The survey for the tourists was conducted on the beach front, Gateway Mall, Durban Station, and other public places popular with tourists. The researchers hired the services of a field worker, who, together with the researchers, helped to distribute and collect the questionnaires from the tourists. Questionnaires were dropped in a drop-box to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for quantitative data presentation and analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 24.0 was also used to analyse the data. In addition, structured interviews were employed to key informants such as Durban tourism authorities, KwaZulu-Natal tourism authorities, and travel agents and hotels in KZN. The researchers interviewed 7 participants actively involved in promoting tourism in KwaZulu-Natal in order to get in-depth responses to key issues pertinent to this study. Qualitative data was analysed using qualitative procedures such as preliminary and meta-coding.

## **Results and Discussion**

Data presentation will start with a detailed analysis of quantitative data obtained from the tourists using a self-administered questionnaire as the instrument. Thereafter, qualitative data obtained using structured interviews from key informants will be presented.

### ***Quantitative analysis***

The data collected from the responses was analysed with SPSS version 24.0. The results will present the descriptive statistics in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures. In total, 400 questionnaires were distributed and 298 were returned, giving a 74.5% response rate.

### ***The usage of traditional media and online media by tourists***

Figure 1 below summarises the scoring patterns for the statements: My media usage pattern changed in the last decade vs Which media do you spent more time using?

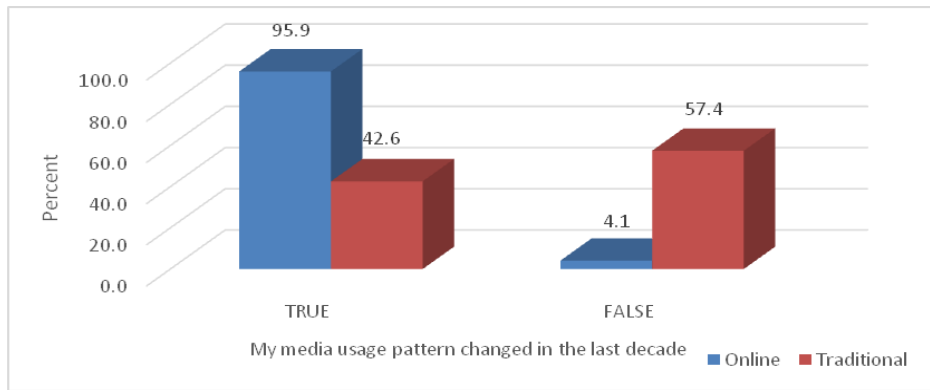


Figure 1. Media usage pattern of tourist

A large number of respondents who were online users (95.9%) indicated that there had been a major change in their media usage patterns. Approximately 43% of the traditional media users also indicated that there had been changes to their media usage patterns. The findings revealed that 57.4% of traditional media users did not change their media usage pattern in the last decade. This indicates that there are people still inclined to traditional media use. This implies that traditional media is still useful for the promotion of tourism ( $p < 0.001$ ). Figure 2 below indicates the frequencies of use of the different media.

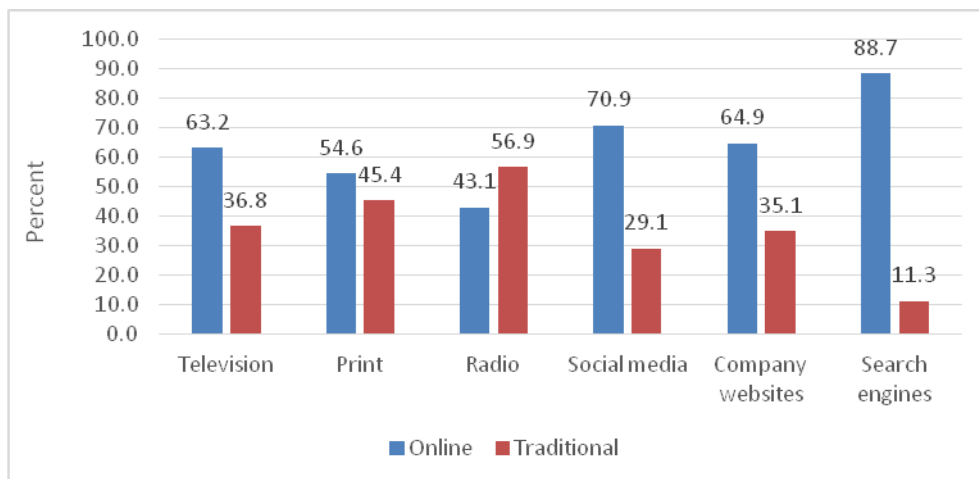


Figure 2. Media usage frequencies

There are similar usage patterns between the groups for print and radio ( $p > 0.05$ ). Print and radio are the mostly used traditional media channels by tourists, they have high values of 45.4% and 56.9% respectively, higher than other traditional media such as television. To support this, the report (KwaZulu-Natal Tourism 2016: 48) says that promotional efforts through radio stations such as Jozi FM and East Coast radio significantly improved the awareness of KZN as an attractive destination, sometimes evidenced by immediate sale of holiday packages to the province. ). KZN has 20% of radio listenership in SA, making it a leading province in terms of radio listenership. To reach the international market segment, Tourism KwaZulu-Natal has put in place strategic Joint Marketing Agreements with international like-minded bodies. The results are justifiable because majority of tourists (61.7%) who took part in the study were from within South Africa, 26.5% were from the rest of Africa, while 5%, 4% and 2.7% were from America, Asia and Europe respectively. However, in all instances, there is significantly higher usage by online media than traditional media. The findings

revealed that there is a higher usage of online media than traditional media among the tourists. This affirms an assertion by Goyal and Sharma 2013: 44) that there is extensive use of the Internet as a very important source of information.

Table 1 below reflects the mean scores for the statements that constituted this section. The means were tested between the two groups, with  $p < 0.05$  considered as significant. To determine whether the scoring patterns between the groups were similar, a Mann Whitney test was done. The null hypothesis claims that there is no difference in the central measure.

Table 1: Benefits of traditional media versus online media

		Online	Traditional	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Online media is best for interacting with marketers	E5.1	3.78	3.39	13035.00	-3.069	0.002
Traditional media is more reliable for information.	E5.2	3.44	3.71	27872.50	-2.327	0.020
Online media has a wider reach globally.	E5.3	4.13	3.53	12050.50	-4.574	0.000
Online media is more informative.	E5.4	4.04	3.30	11167.50	-5.866	0.000
Traditional media is more persuasive.	E5.5	3.49	3.47	15027.00	-0.108	0.914
Traditional media influenced my visit	E5.6	3.02	2.70	13772.00	-1.934	0.053
Traditional media and online media are complimentary	E5.7	3.72	3.12	12377.00	-4.022	0.000
Television	E5.8.1	3.72	3.29	13394.50	-2.507	0.012
Radio	E5.8.2	2.95	4.25	24775.00	-6.881	0.000
Print	E5.8.3	3.27	4.29	25175.50	-6.300	0.000
Social media	E5.8.4	3.93	3.83	13842.00	-1.900	0.057
Website	E5.8.5	3.30	2.78	13040.00	-2.992	0.003
Search engines	E5.8.6	2.77	1.49	10802.00	-6.427	0.000

The highlighted sig. values (p-values) are less than 0.05 (the level of significance), it implies that there were differences between the groups for the majority of these statements. The pattern of the mean scores is shown in Figure 3 below.

Similar patterns are observed, characterised by outstanding mean scores (4.13, 4.04, 3.78) for online media on certain variables and outstanding mean scores (4.29, 4.25, 3.38) for traditional media on certain variables as well. The results revealed by this pattern show that online media and traditional media have their own distinctive benefits for the promotion of tourist and this makes them both necessary and useful in the tourism sector. Benefits of online media were found to be strong on: “having a wider reach globally” (mean score 4.13), “being more informative” (mean score 4.04) and “interactivity” (mean score 3.78). Social media had a higher score in this regard (3.93). The results correlate with Chung, Nam and Stefanone’s (2012: 171) assertion that the Internet improved user interaction and the availability of information to any user in the world. Traditional media was found to be a “source of reliable information” (mean score 3.71). The print media and the radio medium, with

mean scores 4.29 and 4.25 respectively, were found to be of more benefit for the promotion of tourism as sources of reliable information.

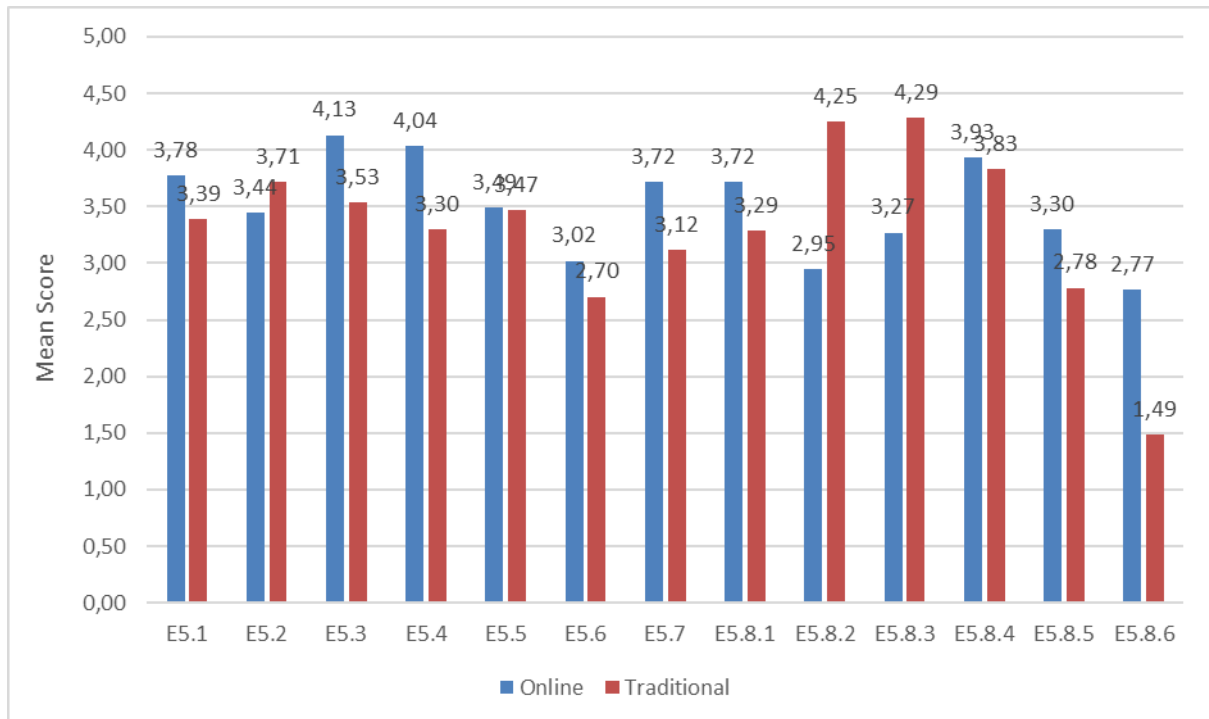


Figure 3: Benefits of traditional media versus online media

The findings associate with Brito and Pratas’ (2015: 123) assertion that brochures are ubiquitous and versatile tourism advertising medium. Results further correlate with KwaZulu-Natal Tourism (2016: 48) report that promotional efforts through radio stations such as Jozi FM and East Coast radio significantly improved the awareness of KZN as an attractive destination, sometimes evidenced by immediate sale of holiday packages to the province. The results suggest that online media and traditional media are complimentary and both are beneficial for the promotion of tourism.

**Cross tabulations (Hypothesis testing)**

The traditional approach to reporting a result requires a statement of statistical significance. A p-value is generated from a test statistic. A significant result is indicated with "p < 0.05". A second Chi square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables (rows vs columns). The null hypothesis states that there is no association between the two. The alternate hypothesis indicates that there is an association. The chi-square test results reveal that there are a number of significant relationships between the research statements and the respondents’ biographical data. From the Table 2 below, the p-value between “In which media did you come across an advertisement to visit KZN?”, “Which media do you spent more time using” and “Please indicate your nationality” is 0.009 for online media users and 0.004 for traditional media users.

Table 2: Chi-Square Tests: Nationality

Which media do you spent more time using?		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Online	Pearson Chi-Square	23.086 <sup>c</sup>	12	0.027	. <sup>b</sup>		
	Likelihood Ratio	27.692	12	0.006	0.008		
	Fisher's Exact Test	23.030			0.009		
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.042 <sup>d</sup>	1	0.838	0.857	0.434	0.028
	N of Valid Cases	196					
Traditional	Pearson Chi-Square	50.993 <sup>e</sup>	12	0.000	0.002		
	Likelihood Ratio	27.346	12	0.007	0.002		
	Fisher's Exact Test	24.512			0.004		
	Linear-by-Linear Association	7.584 <sup>f</sup>	1	0.006	0.005	0.002	0.001
	N of Valid Cases	101					
	N of Valid Cases	297					

This means nationality plays a role on media exposure and media choice of the travellers. Traditional media have limited exposure in international markets than online media.

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests: Employment status

Which media do you spent more time using?		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Online	Pearson Chi-Square	2.911 <sup>d</sup>	1	0.088	0.143	0.086	
	Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.796	1	0.180			
	Likelihood Ratio	3.378	1	0.066	0.143	0.086	
	Fisher's Exact Test				0.143	0.086	
	Linear-by-Linear Association	2.896 <sup>e</sup>	1	0.089	0.143	0.086	0.074
	N of Valid Cases	197					
Traditional	Pearson Chi-Square	10.557 <sup>f</sup>	1	0.001	0.002	0.001	
	Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	9.251	1	0.002			
	Likelihood Ratio	10.626	1	0.001	0.002	0.001	
	Fisher's Exact Test				0.002	0.001	
	Linear-by-Linear Association	10.453 <sup>g</sup>	1	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.001
	N of Valid Cases	101					
Total	Pearson Chi-Square	12.936 <sup>a</sup>	1	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	11.951	1	0.001			
	Likelihood Ratio	13.144	1	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Fisher's Exact Test				0.000	0.000	
	Linear-by-Linear Association	12.892 <sup>c</sup>	1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N of Valid Cases	298					



From Table 3 above, the p-value between “My media usage pattern changed in the last decade”, “Employment status” and “Which media do you spent more time using?” is 0.002 for traditional media users. This implies that there is a significant relationship between these variables highlighted in yellow. That is, for traditional users, the employment status of the respondent did play a significant role in terms of determining the media usage patterns. Significant relationships were mainly found on nationality and employment status. This implies that nationality and employment status play significant roles in terms of media usage.

### ***Correlations***

Correlation analysis is a statistical tool used to describe the degree to which two variables are linearly related to one another (Zar 1984: 226). Wegner (2010: 418) state that Pearson’s correlation frequently computes the correlation between two numerics (ratio-scaled) random variables. Bivariate correlation was performed on the (ordinal) data. The correlation value between “Traditional media is more believable than online media” and “I use traditional media to verify online media for tourism information” is 0.380. This is a directly related proportionality. Respondents indicate that the more believable traditional media is, the more respondents use it to verify online information, and vice versa.

There is a directly proportional relationship between the respondents’ perception of the influence of traditional media “I found that traditional media ads are more influential than online sources” and the statements: “I do trust information obtained via traditional media than via online media” ( $r = 0.643, p = 0.000$ ), “Traditional media is more reliable and accurate compared to online media” ( $r = 0.261, p = 0.008$ ), “I use traditional media to verify online media for tourism information” ( $r = 0.397, p = 0.000$ ), “Traditional media aroused my need to travel to KZN” ( $r = 0.470, p = 0.000$ ), “Information on traditional media caught my attention which made me visit KZN” ( $r = 0.470, p = 0.000$ ), and “From the information I found traditional media, I actioned this interest and came to KZN” ( $r = 0.529, p = 0.000$ ). All of these preceding correlation values between the statement, “I found that traditional media ads are more influential than online sources” and six of the given statements all support the existence of directly proportional relationships. Tourists indicate that traditional media is very influential in tourism as they have trust of that information and the information is reliable and accurate that they use it to verify online media information and can catch their attention and arouse their need to travel, leading to them taking an action to visit a destination.

There is also a directly proportional relationship between the statement “I am comfortable to use online media to source information” and the statements: “I prefer to use online media in order to access the testimonials of other tourists” ( $r = 0.549, p = 0.000$ ), “I drew my list of alternative places to visit through online media” ( $r = 0.434, p = 0.000$ ), “Interactions with virtual friends and marketers influenced my travel behaviour” ( $r = 0.291, p = 0.000$ ), “I became aware of certain tourists attraction in KZN through online media” ( $r = 0.415, p = 0.000$ ), “Online media has a wider reach globally” ( $r = 0.332, p = 0.000$ ), and “the information from online media aroused a desire in me to visit KZN” ( $r = 0.457, p = 0.000$ ). All of these preceding correlation values between the statement, “I am comfortable to use online media to source information” and six of the given statements all support the existence of directly proportional relationships. Respondents indicate that they are comfortable to use online media to source information from testimonials of other tourists, interacting with virtual friends and

marketers around the world and that information creates awareness of tourist attractions, is used to draw a list of alternative places to visit and can arouse a desire to visit a destination.

### ***Qualitative analysis***

Themes identified upon the analysis of the data gathered from structured interviews and in line with achieving the research objectives were used to present qualitative data.

### ***The effectiveness of traditional media***

This section provides a qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of traditional media for the promotion of tourism in this digital age. Traditional media is reported to be very effective in promoting tourism in KZN. Brochures are used the most, followed by billboards, radio and television respectively as revealed by the findings. One of the participants articulated that:

“ As you can see here, we still printing and stocking brochures because they are going out, people are taking them. People are still walking to our information offices to get these brochures with their cell phones in their pockets or hand bags. We also distribute brochures to international markets using different tour operators.”

The results reveal that brochures are also used to penetrate international markets. The interviewees also mentioned that they sometimes partner with radio stations, artists, television channels and publishers in foreign countries to promote certain events as well as the KZN destination. This shows that traditional media is not only effective in the local market, but also in the global market. The results show a matching pattern with the finding from quantitative analysis which revealed that print and radio are more beneficial to tourists as reliable sources of information.

### ***The adaptability of traditional media to current trends***

The results show that traditional media has adapted to current trends mainly in terms of their content such as the use of advertorials. One participant stated that:

“There is no need to buy a newspaper if you can streamline news on your tablet. But people still buy it for close to R20 because of the content in that newspaper.”

The way the content is packaged, especially advertisements, was revealed to have adapted to meet current trends.

### ***The response from traditional media advertising***

Almost all interviewees agreed that they are having a positive response from their use of traditional media. Half of the participants further pointed out that:

“Traditional media is still a very important part of promoting tourism in KZN. In support of this, another interviewee stated that: A lot of people still prefer to go to travel agents and book their trips than to do it on their own on the screen of the computer.”

Tourism authorities indicated that they have had more responses from traditional media than online media. This shows a matching pattern with findings from quantitative analysis which revealed that the are people still inclined to traditional media use in this digital age.

### ***Comparing the effectiveness of traditional media to online media***

Generally it was difficult for most participants to accurately state which media is more effective than the other. The participants elaborated that:

“We can’t say traditional media is more effective and we can’t say online media is more effective for the promotion of tourism because it depends on source markets and the trends in the source area. Online media is more effective in first world countries such as the UK than in countries such as South Africa and Ethiopia where traditional media proves to be still more effective.”

However, 60% of the participants clearly pointed out that traditional media is more effective in persuading people to visit a destination than online media. One participant stated that:

“Traditional media is more of a souvenir when you go back home with a brochure from the city you visited or a map. Digital media may completely be effective for promoting, say for example, electronic products, but not for tourism. Tourism is a psychological thing, it’s a geographical thing, it’s a socio-economic thing, and it’s an anthropological thing so it’s too complicated to be promoted entirely on digital media.”

It can be deduced here that tourism is a unique sector where traditional media is still yielding good results. However, its impact is limited in the international markets due to less exposure as revealed in the quantitative analysis above.

### ***The efficiency of using online media***

The participants were asked the following question, “Comparing with traditional media, how effective is online media for the promotion of tourism?” It was pointed out that online media is less expensive to use than traditional media and can effectively reach international source markets. These results resonate with the assertion by Len (2000: 46) who states that the global audience can effectively be reached by a simple web site in a relatively less expensive way. However, about 55% of the participants disagreed that online media is more effective. They elaborated that:

“Online media can’t give you a guaranteed captured audience as with traditional media. Everyone is on social media and counted in the numbers but you can’t effectively select the right people who can afford to travel.”

### ***The response from online marketing***

All participants acknowledged their presence online. However, about 50% of the participants were not happy with the response they are getting from online media. They elucidate that:

“You can have your social media, yes its fine, but you are talking to the already captured audience. Marketers today are too excited by social media and they think it will drive numbers. It gives awareness, yes, but in terms of generating conventions and creating value from those conventions, we doubt.”

Other participants expounded that:

“A very big organisation can post something interesting on Facebook but still gets 6 Likes, from those 6 Likes, 3 may be from people from the very organisation.”

### ***Effectiveness of online media***

All participants agreed that online media is effective to a certain extent and its benefits are not fully exploited in KZN. They expounded that: Internet connectivity in many rural destinations in this province is not as good as it should be. We also need to consider that our data cost and speed is not as fast as in other countries. The other interviewee illuminated that: Online media is still very young and still going through teething stages. Traditional media has been around for years and is not going away any time soon. However digital media still gets better day by day, but still is doesn't cater for every tourist in the meantime.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study contributes to the understanding of the performance of traditional media and online media for the promotion of tourism as used by both tourism marketers and the tourist visiting KwaZulu-Natal. Based on the quantitative data gathered from tourist, it was revealed that though there has been a major change in the media usage patterns of the tourists in the last decade as the uptake of online media increased dramatically, there are people still inclined to traditional media use. Print and radio are the mostly used traditional media channels by tourists. Brito and Pratas (2015) state that brochures are a distinctive advertising medium in the tourism industry, while Stuart and Chotia (2012) indicate that radio still remains an important medium in South. A higher usage of online media than traditional media among the tourists was however revealed. Though there is an increase in the consumption of online media, respondents indicated that they still use traditional media as well. Huang (2012) claim that traditional media and online media are complementary. Okazaki & Romero (2010) argue that individuals searching for information in a specific content area optimise their retrieval of information on that particular content area by exposing themselves to a multitude of media outlets. Two media can consequently coexist with some degree of displacement rather than a complete replacement. This study confirms that tourists still rely on both traditional media and online media for their information needs as these different media are more or less equally competitive depending on underpinning circumstances and geographical location of the traveller. The balance however may differ from destination to destination and from the point of departure of the tourist, as well as familiarity or prior experience to the destination.

Based on qualitative data gathered from tourism marketers, traditional media is reported to be very effective in promoting tourism in KZN, not only in the local market, but also internationally. All participants (marketers) acknowledged their presence online and agreed that online media is effective to a great extent, but its benefits are not fully exploited in KZN. Tourism authorities indicated that they have had more responses from traditional media than online media. However, tourists indicated that they use more of online media than traditional media for their travel information needs. The possible explanation for this miss-match is that though tourists consume more of online media, they may not be interacting with marketers or be viewing destination marketing messages, they can access other sites such as social media which have nothing to do with destination marketing organisations. It can be argued that online media is not as effective in the tourism sector as in other industries such as electronic products business. The issue of effectiveness also depends on the circumstance requiring an

explanation. It was made clear that effectiveness of the media mainly depends on the source market and the trend in that market. Online media is more effective among the visitors from first world countries such as the UK than visitors from third world countries such as Ethiopia and South Africa where people are still inclined to traditional media.

## **Conclusion**

There had been a major change in the media usage patterns as many travellers were adopting the new online media. Despite the change in the media usage patterns, traditional media is still useful for the promotion of tourism. The appropriation effect of online media to traditional media is not complete, therefore, media displacement rather than media replacement has occurred. Practitioners and customers need to come to terms with traditional media and online media co-existence rather than speculating the demise of one media (traditional media) whilst over-estimating the effectiveness of another media (online media). Tourism is indeed a unique sector where traditional media is still yielding good results whilst working alongside online media. Tourism marketers should not, by any means, underestimate the role of traditional media in the promotion of their destinations. There is however a higher usage of online media than traditional media among tourists. Online media emerged as a new media with better efficiency than traditional media on certain dimensions such as interactivity and ability to reach the global market. The study recommends tourism marketers and authorities to improve their uptake of the Internet and to be more innovative online. Practitioners need to rise above the non-traditional versus traditional media debate and begin to understand that success is achieved when one makes his/her service or product a part of the audience's everyday world. Marketers need to increase their presence online, without neglecting the use of traditional media. One of the limitations of this study was that it typically failed to factor out the respondents who had decided to visit KZN before they were exposed to any advertising. It's a drawback that the study was based on actual visits only and potential visitors were not incorporated. Studies of a similar nature should be conducted on an ongoing basis in order to keep abreast of developments in the market, given that the media landscape is ever-changing. What has been found to be true today cannot be equally true in the near future.

## **Declaration of Interest Statement**

The authors did not report any potential conflict of interest

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