

THE USE OF TRADITIONAL VERSUS E-MARKETING IN SMES IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The revolution of the internet has changed the way many organisations conduct business in today's market environment, and has specifically changed in the way companies market products to consumers. E-marketing allows a marketer to not only reach a broader target market than traditional methods, but substantially reduces marketing costs as well, which can mean the difference between success or failure in small medium enterprises (SMEs). Multiple studies have investigated traditional and e-marketing practices, however, few studies have focused on SME marketing practices and their use of e-marketing in developing economies. This article provides an insight into current marketing tools employed by SMEs in South Africa and provides a comparative analysis between traditional and e-marketing tool usage. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to SME owners, whereby data was analysed by means of frequency occurrence. The main results stemming from the research indicate that SME owners have no preference in using either traditional or e-marketing tools, with majority preferring to use both. However, the majority of marketing tools being used and receiving the most effective rating according to SME owners is directed towards e-marketing tools. From the results obtained recommendations are made to policy-makers, SME managers, development agencies and business owners so as to establish an appropriate strategy to improve SME marketability within South Africa. The findings can be universally applied as studies have shown that there is a lot of similarity in the challenges faced by SMEs irrespective of where they come from.

Key Words: Marketing, Traditional Marketing, E-Marketing, SMEs.

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1. Introduction

It is widely known in business spheres that the internet and e-commerce can enhance an organisation's exposure and performance in business, especially relating to small medium enterprises (SMEs) as the use of the internet allows SMEs to be more competitive on both a local and international platform (Cloete, Courtney & Fintz 2002:2). E-commerce provides all organisations, including SMEs, with cost effective tools to market themselves to their target audience, assist in the identification of potential opportunities, help to improve communications and to gather information (Cloete et al 2002:2). While a number of studies have investigated the comparison between traditional and e-marketing (Salehi, Mirzaei, Aghaei & Abyari 2012:385), few studies have, however, made a comparative analysis regarding the usage of traditional and e-marketing practices employed by SMEs in developing economies such as South Africa. This paper therefore aims to investigate South African SME businesses' usage of traditional and e-marketing practices. The following section outlines the aim and objective of the study and provides a

brief background of traditional and e-marketing practices; whereafter SMEs and their importance are discussed. Finally the research methodology is discussed followed by the results, limitations, recommendations and conclusions of the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Marketing: traditional marketing versus e-marketing

Marketing plays a fundamental role in the success of any enterprise as it helps organisations to identify and satisfy customer needs, which in turn earns the organisation a profit. According to the American Marketing Association the term, marketing, can be defined as the "...set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large" (AMA 2014). Marketing can take on a variety of forms; however, the two main methods that are prominent in modern day society are that of traditional and e-marketing activities (Salehi et al 2012:385). Traditional marketing includes many forms of marketing

activities; in essence they are the most common forms of advertising methods that one sees every day, and has four main categories, namely: telephone, broadcast, print and direct mail (Marketing-schools, 2012). In contrast e-marketing can be seen as the use of information technology to communicate, deliver value and build relationships with one's customers in such a way as to benefit investors and the organisation as a whole (Liew & Loh in: Rentchler & Hede 2007:38,40). Essentially e-marketing can be seen as the result of information technology (IT) applied to traditional offline marketing principles and techniques (Hasan 2011:201).

Amhed and Hussain (2014:189) conducted a comparison between traditional marketing and e-marketing and a number of differences between these methods were identified. Firstly, they indicate that there is a difference in cost in those traditional marketing methods such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television all carry a price tag relating to quality and target reach. E-marketing, on the other hand, can also carry a cost in that the business pays for the platform the organisation makes use of. However, the cost involved is relatively low which makes it a viable option for small businesses. In this respect it would imply that e-marketing is more affordable for small businesses as opposed to traditional methods, as small businesses' success relies largely on reducing costs while increasing the organisation's sales (Salehi et al 2012:386-387). Another difference is that of immediacy. Traditional marketing takes time to set up and requires various drafts to be formulated before the draft can go to print or be broadcasted. With e-marketing techniques, however, it can, if required, be instantaneous, and further provide an immediate impact by delivering meaning and information upon request (Amhed & Hussain 2014:189; Salehi et al 2012:386-387). E-marketing provides an easier means of feedback compared to traditional marketing. Organisations can track the amount of e-traffic received and can monitor the conversion rates of viewing to purchase (Amhed & Hussain 2014:189). E-marketing can be seen to have an advantage with regard to frequency as traditional marketing is much more expensive when it comes to cost per view. While traditional marketing tools are affective in reaching a broad target market, teenagers and millennials are a target segment that is using technology more frequently and they are apt to be exposed to e-marketing campaigns, which could tie in well with the target market of a small business (Amhed & Hussain 2014:189). Ahmed and Hussain (2014:189) also indicate a similarity between the two marketing forms as they are both able to attract a specific demographic segment and therefore could potentially miss out on a specific target market. Finally, small medium enterprises need to keep the factor of permanence in mind when considering which medium to select. To this end traditional marketing media, once printed, remains as is for a

period of time, while e-marketing methods are less permanent and can change without huge associated costs (Amhed & Hussain 2014:189). From the comparison of traditional marketing and e-marketing it can be seen that e-marketing is an attractive method for SME businesses. While many SMEs still make use of traditional marketing methods, the internet has led to a more connected environment, and the growth of users making use of internet in business has resulted in a decline of the use and distribution of traditional marketing media. (Hasan 2011:201). It has therefore become important to evaluate the usage of traditional marketing versus e-marketing by SMEs in South Africa.

2.2 Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa

There is no general definition for what a small medium enterprise (SME) is. Definitions that exist come from business, economics and development literature, but vary in terms of size, turnover and number of employees (Mutula & Brakel 2006:402; Cloete et al 2002:1). However, the framework most broadly used to define SMEs in South Africa comes from the National Small Business Act 102 of 1996, which identifies five types of businesses based on annual enterprise turnover and size, number of employees, and an organisation's gross assets. The various types of enterprises are as follows (Abor & Quartley 2010:221):

- *A survivalist enterprise:* This type of company includes hawkers and vendors and is considered pre-entrepreneurial (part of micro-enterprise) as the income generated is less than the minimum standard income or the breadline.
- *A micro-enterprise:* These companies often are not registered; examples of such would be spaza shops and taxis. They usually employ not more than five people and turnover is often less than R150 000 per annum.
- *Very small enterprise:* This type of company has access to technology and operates in the formal market. It usually consists of 10 employees, but in industries like mining, manufacturing and construction for example, it could be 20 employees.
- *Small enterprise:* These companies usually exhibit more complex business structures and practices and consist of no more than 50 employees.
- *Medium enterprise:* This type of company is characterised by decentralised power with an extra management layer. The maximum number of employees is 100, however, in industries such as mining, manufacturing and construction the maximum number of employees is 200.

For the purpose of this research, however, SMEs are classified as businesses that have one chief

executive officer (CEO) and not more than 50 employees (Cloete et al 2002:1).

Small medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in economic development as they help to create jobs, they contribute to innovation, stimulate growth and furthermore are seen to help alleviate poverty in developing economies (Esselaar & Stork 2008:87; Abor & Quartey 2010:218; Elliot & Boshoff 2005:44; Jeppesen 2005:463). In today's business environment, SMEs make up about 91% of formal businesses, contribute between 52 and 57% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), and approximately 60-61% to employment (Falkena, Abedian, Von Blotnitz, Coovadia, Davel, Madungandaba, Masilela & Rees n.d: 23; Abor & Quartey 2010:218). It is evident from these figures that SMEs play a vital role in the South African economy and therefore it becomes apparent why there is growing recognition of the important role they play in economies worldwide.

2.3 Importance of marketing to SMEs

Marketing is important for the growth of any business, as without it a business could offer the best products on the market but nobody would know of their existence (Hawes in: fin24 2013). Small firms in the beginning phases often face marketing challenges which can determine the success or failure of the business. The lack of a sophisticated marketing strategy can therefore be seen as problematic. While the importance of marketing applies to both large and small firms, small firms generally do not have the financial capacity or the resources to embark on an extensive marketing campaign, where traditional media would normally be employed (McCartan-Quinn & Carson 2003:204-206). E-marketing is therefore ideal for small businesses because of the fact that e-marketing can be implemented at a relatively low cost while still allowing small businesses to compete directly with larger organisations (Sundararaj 2013:193; McCartan-Quinn & Carson 2003:204-206). It creates significant opportunities for cost efficient, flexible messages that can reach the critical mass of customers that is needed for the company to be seen as successful. The marketing characteristics of small businesses is that they are faced with different competitive scenarios, do not always engage in marketing practices, and they have inherent production and pricing flexibility, but generally lack strong brand names and market power. The true competitive advantage that SMEs have is that they are more flexible than larger firms (McCartan-Quinn & Carson 2003:204-206).

A small firm with an implemented marketing plan will have the ability to establish direct contact with the customer or potential customers, thereby allowing for immediate communication among parties (Sundararaj 2013:193). Typically firms would also be able to rapidly change and respond to customers' changing needs (McCartan-Quinn &

Carson 2003:205). Globalisation and digitalisation have transformed the way business is conducted and how businesses compete in the marketplace. However, the problem is that many SMEs are employing traditional tools to stay competitive instead of taking on e-marketing tools to take on the competition (Modimogale & Kroeze 2009:504). Therefore it becomes important that research be conducted in order to investigate where South African SMEs stand in terms of traditional and e-marketing tool utilisation. The following section discusses the research methodology employed.

3. Aim And Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which small medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa utilise traditional and e-marketing tools.

Data collection was done by means of distributing self-administered questionnaires to a sample of SME owners who registered their businesses at an official state institution for SMEs. The questionnaire consisted of quantitative questions allowing small business owners to indicate the utilisation of various traditional and e-marketing tools. The sampling methodology utilised was that of non-probability, convenience sampling, which enabled the researcher to collect data quickly and easily. A sufficient number of questionnaires were distributed to achieve a confidence level of 95% and an error margin of 10% at 50% response distribution. A total of 71 useful responses were received which is an error margin of 11.38%. The number of responses will only give a general indication of how important traditional marketing and e-marketing tools are in South African SMEs.

The quantitative data was analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics V22. The data was checked, coded and corrected, and descriptive statistics (frequency counts) were used to describe the findings. Descriptive statistics are used to describe which marketing tools have been used previously, how often these marketing tools are used, and how effective the tools are perceived to be. The Independent samples Mann-Whitney U test was used to test for significant difference in the percentage of respondents who have been using traditional marketing tools and e-marketing tools in the past; are using traditional marketing tools and e-marketing tools "Often & Always"; who rated the effectiveness of traditional marketing tools and e-marketing tools as "Effective & Very Effective".

4. Findings

The findings are described taking into account the characteristics of the sample in terms of the number of employees, how frequently the marketing plan is updated, how much is spent on marketing actions per

month and whether the respondents prefer to use traditional or modern e-marketing tools.

4.1 The sample characteristics

Of the 71 businesses/ respondents that were included in the survey, 67 provided information on the number of employees they have in their business. Fifty five (82.1%) of the businesses have less than 20 employees. The number of employees was non-normally distributed, with skewness of 3.42 (SE = 0.293) and kurtosis of 12.06 (SE = 0.578). The majority (50%) of the 66 businesses who provided information on the frequency of updating their

marketing plan, update their marketing plans once a year while 27.3% of them update it once a month. The frequency of updating the marketing plan was normally distributed, with skewness of -0.261 (SE = 0.295) and kurtosis of -0.253 (SE = 0.582). The majority (51.5%) of the 68 businesses that provided information on their monthly expenses on marketing activities spend less than R1 000 per month, with 38.2% of them spending between R1001 and R5000 (table 1 below). The monthly expenses on marketing activities was non-normally distributed, with skewness of 1.202 (SE = 0.291) and kurtosis of -1.330 (SE = 0.574).

Table 1. The sample characteristics

Number of Employees	Count(n)	%	Monthly Marketing Expenses	Count(n)	%
Less than 20	55	82.1	Less than R1 000	35	51.5
21-40	7	10.4	R1 001-R5 000	26	38.2
41-60	1	1.5	R5 001-R10 000	5	7.4
61-80	2	3.0	More than R10 000	2	2.9
More than 100	2	3.0	Total	68	100.0
Total	67	100.0			
Frequency of Updating Marketing Plan	Count(n)	%			
Once a week	3	4.5			
Once a month	18	27.3			
Once a year	33	50.0			
Once every 5 years	12	18.2			
Total	66	100.0			

4.2 Descriptive analysis on the past use of marketing tools

On the use of different marketing tools respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed tools (traditional (9) and modern e-marketing tools (5)) they have used in the past to promote their businesses. The top five marketing tools which were used by more than 50% of the respondents were business cards (75.4%), e-mails (68.4%), pamphlets (61.4%), social media (61.4%), social media (59.6%) and websites (56.1%). Three of the top five marketing tools used are modern

e-marketing tools. Furthermore, 43.9% of the respondents reported to have used SMS and newspapers for marketing. Traditional tools like magazines, posters and radio have been used by only 22.8, 21.1 and 19.3% of the respondents respectively. Similarly, blogs have been used by only 21.1%. The two least used marketing tools are traditional billboards and TV – used by only 8.8 and 5.3% of respondents respectively (figures 1 and 2). The Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly: U (11) = 28, p = 0.240.

Figure 1. Percentage of Respondents using Traditional Media in the past

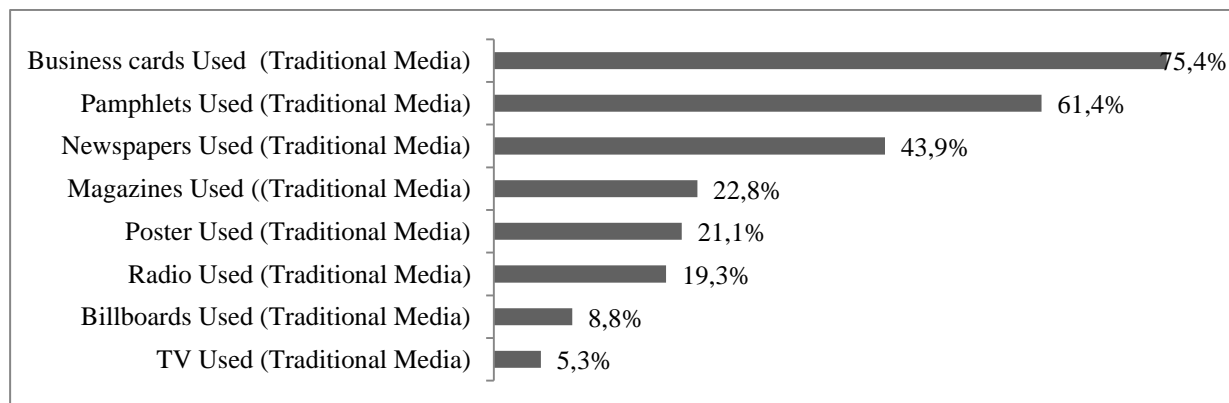


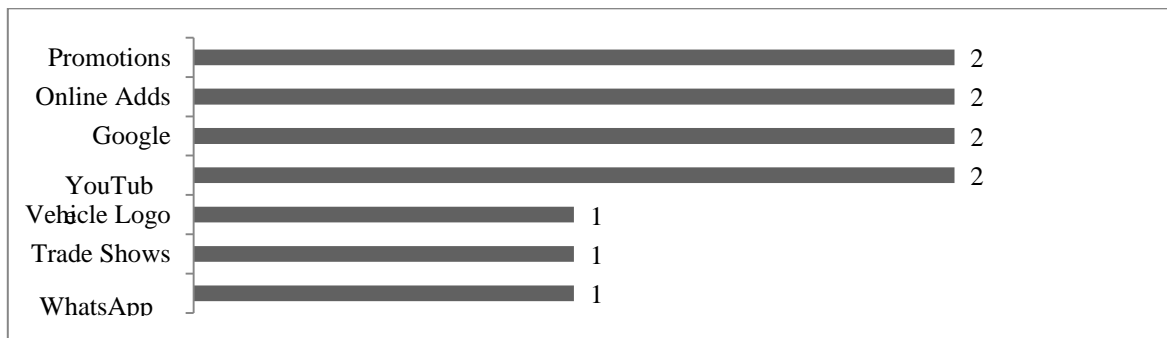
Figure 2. Percentage of Respondents using E-marketing tools in the past



Other marketing tools used in the past were mentioned by a few of the respondents. They were: promotions, online advertisements, Google,

YouTube, vehicle logos, trade shows and WhatsApp (figure 3).

Figure 3. Number of respondents who used other marketing tools used in the past



4.3 Descriptive analysis on the frequency of using marketing tools

From the descriptive statistics for the questions on the frequency of use of the different marketing tools, it is clear that the frequencies are non-normally distributed (table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the questions on the frequency of use of marketing tools

	N		Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
	Valid	Missing								
Traditional marketing tools										
Pamphlets	63	8	3.05	4.00	4	1.549	-.270	.302	-1.516	.595
Business cards	69	2	4.03	5.00	5	1.424	-1.310	.289	.323	.570
Radio	58	13	1.69	1.00	1	1.188	1.611	.314	1.492	.618
TV	55	16	1.22	1.00	1	.738	3.936	.322	16.102	.634
Billboards	57	14	1.44	1.00	1	1.053	2.358	.316	4.456	.623
Poster	58	13	2.16	1.00	1	1.374	.719	.314	-.902	.618
Magazines	59	12	1.78	1.00	1	1.260	1.342	.311	.450	.613
Newspapers	58	13	2.24	1.00	1	1.455	.625	.314	-1.165	.618
e-Marketing tools										
Social media	59	12	3.15	4.00	1	1.720	-.266	.311	-1.713	.613
SMS	55	16	3.00	3.00	1 ^a	1.453	-.226	.322	-1.307	.634
Website	64	7	3.33	4.00	5	1.662	-.480	.299	-1.465	.590
Blogs	46	25	1.91	1.00	1	1.503	1.222	.350	-.267	.688
E-mail	65	6	4.00	5.00	5	1.447	-1.309	.297	.244	.586

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

With the exploratory nature of this study, the data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Due to the sample size, the two lowest frequency scales and the two highest frequency scales were combined and the analysis was done on the three rating scales. Figure 4 below reports on the frequency of using traditional marketing tools. Of the 71 SMEs which were surveyed, more than 50% are using business cards and pamphlets, either often or always. TV, billboards, radio, magazines, newspapers and posters are never used by more than 50% of the respondents.

The majority of the least frequently used tools are traditional marketing tools (figure 4).

For e-marketing tools, more than 50% of the respondents are using e-mails, websites and social media, either often or always. Blogs are never used by more than 50% of the respondents. The frequency of the use of SMSes is in between the most popular and least popular tools, with 32.7% using it rarely or not at all and 43.6% using it either always or often. The majority of the most often used tools are modern e-marketing tools (figure 5).

Figure 4. Frequency analysis of the frequency of using traditional marketing tools

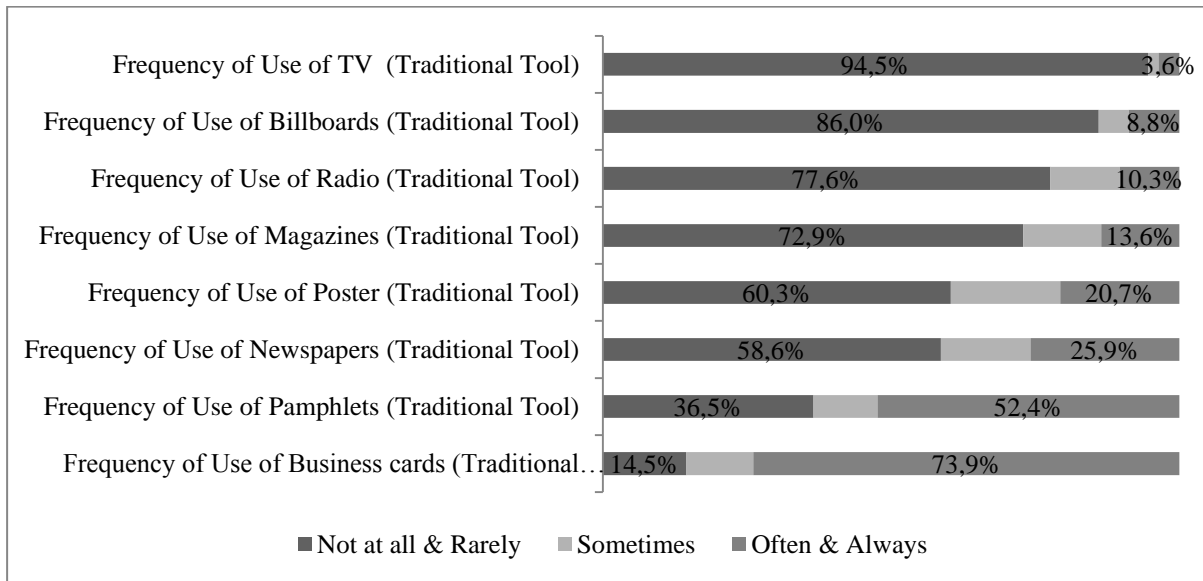
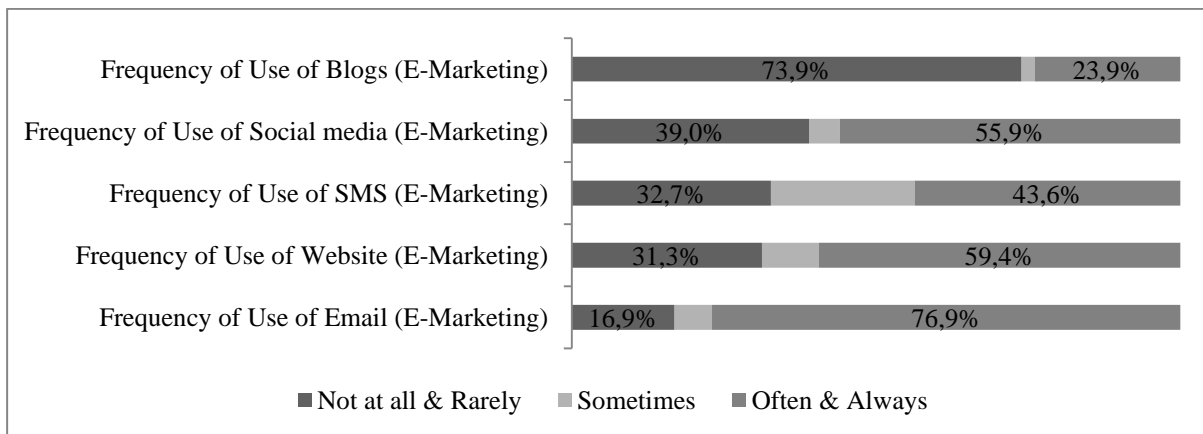


Figure 5. Frequency analysis of the frequency of using e-marketing tools



The Mann-Whitney U test results show that the two groups did not differ significantly in the percentage of respondents who indicated the frequency of use of the marketing tools as “Often and Always”, $U(11) = 33, p = 0.057$.

Treating the variable as continuous, and keeping in mind that higher values correspond with higher levels of agreement with a statement, one can see from the means that the two most frequently used

marketing tools are business cards (Mean = 4.0) and e-mails (Mean = 4.0) (figures 6 & 7). This is followed by websites, social media, pamphlets and SMS, all with means higher than or equal to 3, which is the middle value of the scale (from 1 to 5). Four of the top 6 used marketing tools are e-marketing tools. The majority of the marketing tools least frequently used (with means lower than 3) consist mostly of the traditional marketing tools and they are: blogs,

newspapers, posters, radio, magazines, billboards and TV.

Figure 6. Mean values of the ratings of the frequency of using traditional marketing tools

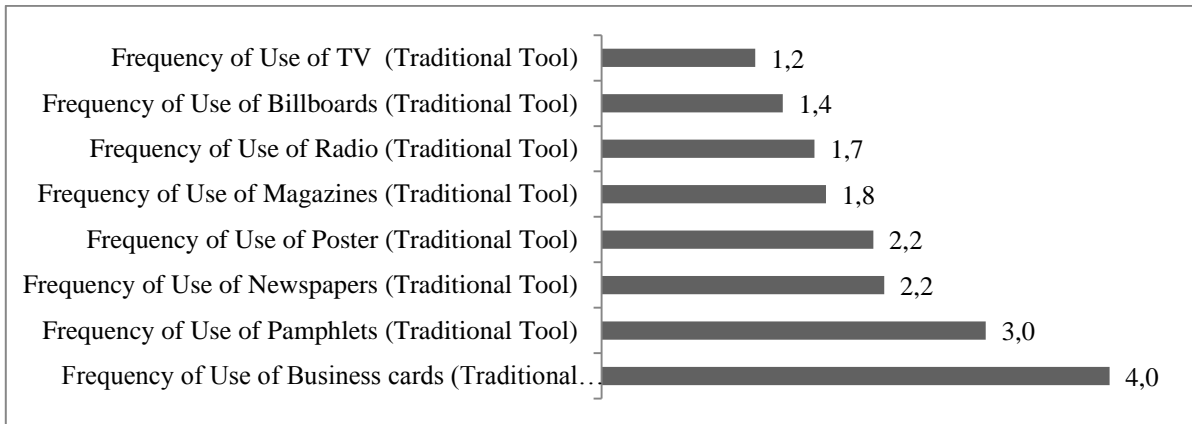
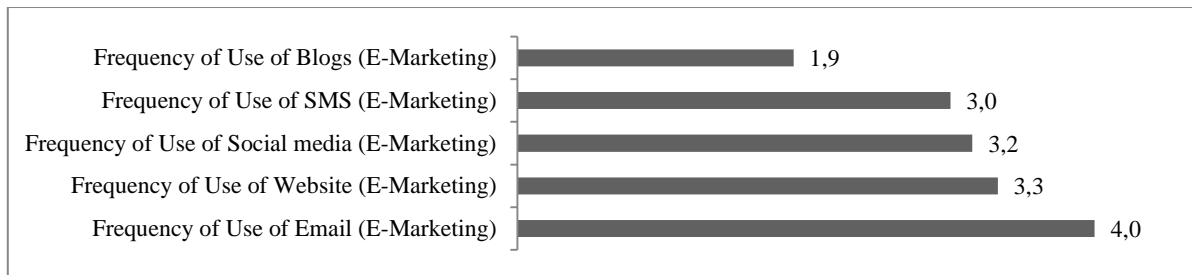


Figure 7. Mean values of the ratings of the frequency of using E-marketing tools



4.4 Descriptive analysis on the effectiveness of the use of marketing tools

From the descriptive statistics for the questions on the effectiveness of use of the different marketing tools, it is clear that the frequencies are non-normally distributed (table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the questions on the effectiveness of use of marketing tools

	N		Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
	Valid	Missing								
Traditional Marketing tools										
Pamphlets	63	8	3.57	4.00	5	1.411	-.577	.302	-.954	.595
Business	65	6	4.12	4.00	5	1.023	-.886	.297	-.033	.586
Radio	59	12	3.49	4.00	5	1.490	-.647	.311	-.940	.613
TV	54	17	3.35	4.00	5	1.662	-.435	.325	-1.462	.639
Billboards	53	18	3.28	4.00	5	1.598	-.396	.327	-1.405	.644
Poster	54	17	3.59	4.00	5	1.381	-.602	.325	-.758	.639
Magazines	49	22	3.29	3.00	3 ^a	1.500	-.359	.340	-1.171	.668
Newspapers	55	16	3.47	4.00	5	1.438	-.544	.322	-.975	.634
E-marketing tools										
Social	59	12	3.63	4.00	5	1.530	-.772	.311	-.851	.613
SMS	57	14	3.54	4.00	5	1.390	-.694	.316	-.657	.623
Website	62	9	4.06	4.00	5	1.172	-1.456	.304	1.545	.599
Blogs	51	20	3.14	3.00	1 ^a	1.523	-.276	.333	-1.390	.656
E-mail	61	10	4.00	4.00	5	1.155	-1.142	.306	.533	.604

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

All of the traditional marketing tools are rated as either very effective or effective by most of the respondents (more than 50%), except magazines (44.9%). The top three tools rated in terms of efficiency (very effective or effective) are business cards, radios and pamphlets (figure 8). The bottom three are posters, billboards and magazines. Similarly, all of the e-marketing tools are rated as either very

effective or effective by most of the respondents (more than 50%), except blogs (49%) (figure 9).

The Mann-Whitney U test results show that the two groups did not differ significantly in the percentage of respondents who indicated the effectiveness of the marketing tools as “Effective and Very Effective”, $U(11) = 31, p = 0.107$.

Figure 8. Frequency analysis of the effectiveness of using traditional marketing tools

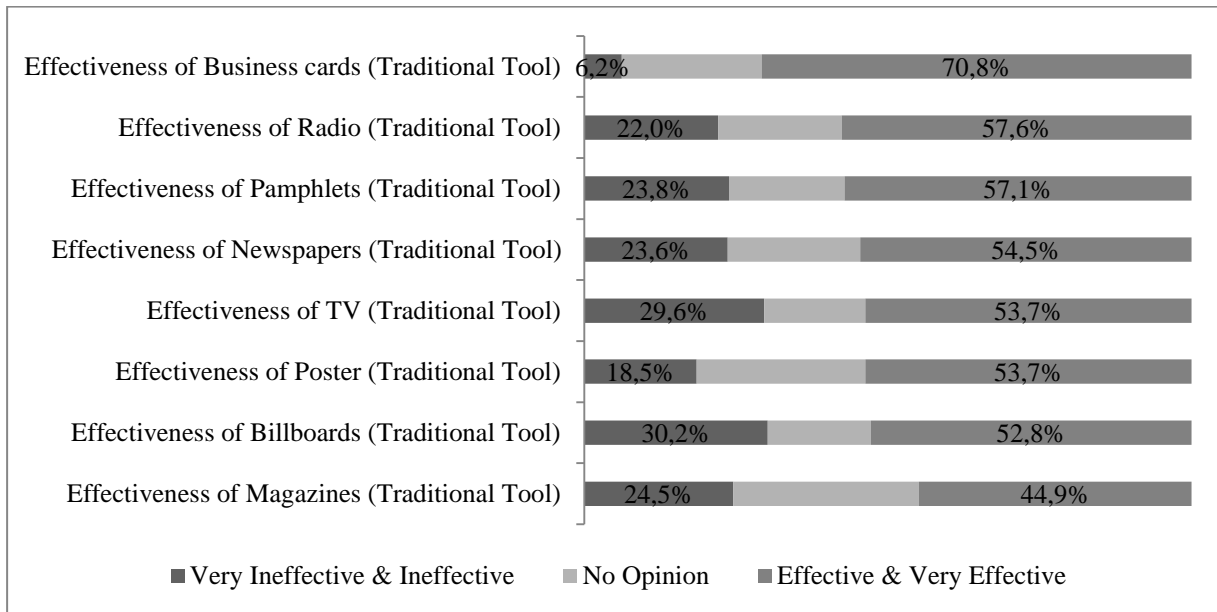
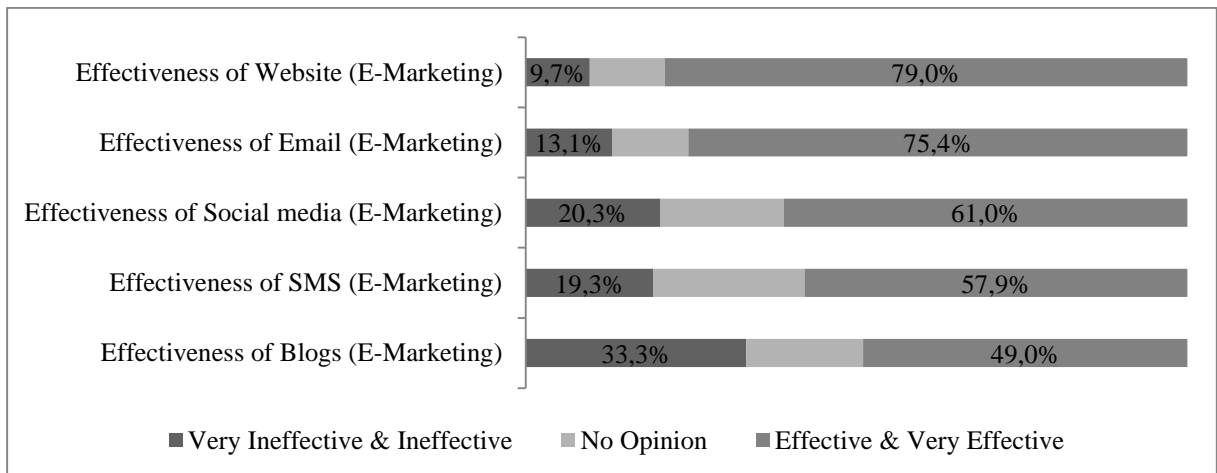


Figure 9. Frequency analysis of the effectiveness of using e-marketing tools



Treating the variable as continuous, and keeping in mind that higher values correspond with higher ratings of effectiveness, one can see that the three most effective marketing tools are perceived as business cards (mean = 4.1), websites (mean = 4.1) and e-mails (mean = 4.0) (figures 10 & 11). This is followed by the rest with all of the tools rated with an average above 3, which is the middle value of the scale (from 1 to 5).

Figure 10. Mean values of the effectiveness ratings of using traditional marketing tools

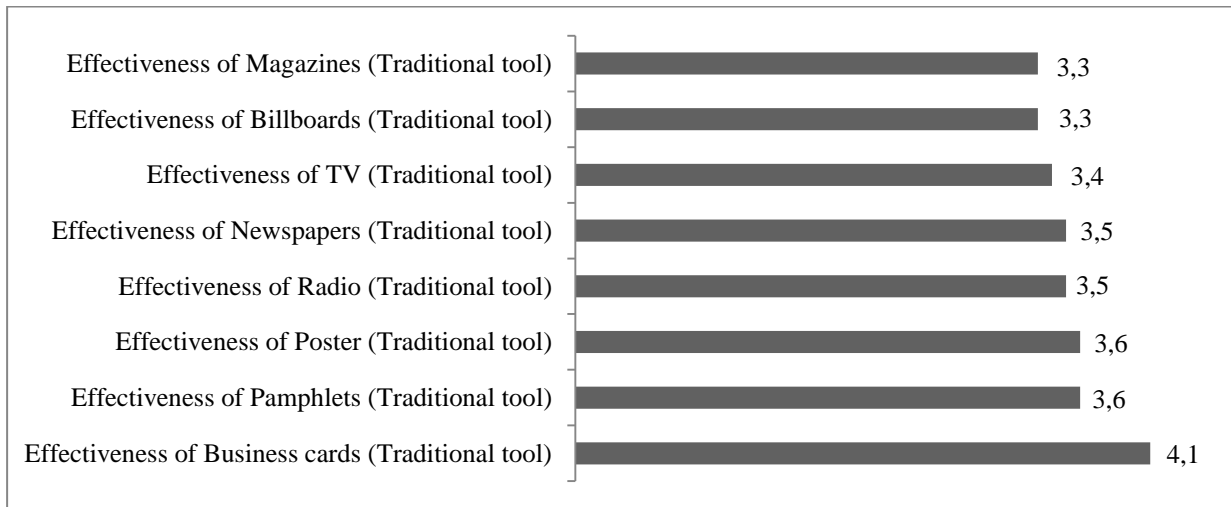
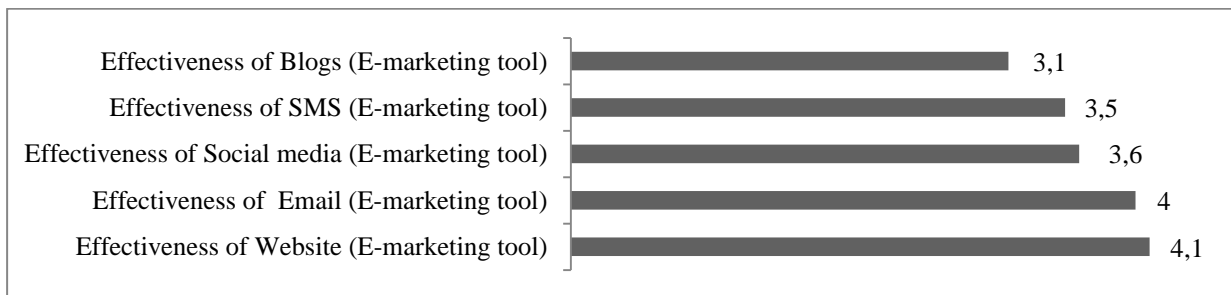


Figure 11. Mean values of the effectiveness ratings of using e-marketing tools



4.5 Descriptive analysis on the preference of the type of marketing tools

The respondents were asked which type of marketing tool they preferred to use. Most of the respondents (77.1%) preferred to use both traditional and e-

marketing tools (figure 12). The preference of the respondents was non-normally distributed, with skewness of -1.743 (SE = 0.287) and kurtosis of 1.531 (SE = 0.566).

Figure 12. Preference of the type of marketing tools to use (percentage of respondents)



5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Small medium enterprises (SMEs) play a significant part in the development of the South African economy by making up roughly 91% of formal businesses, contributing between 52 and 57% of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP), and making up approximately 60-61% of employment (Falkena, Abedian, Von Blotnitz, Coovadia, Davel, Madungandaba, Masilela & Rees n.d:23; Abor &

Quartey 2010:218). With such a large impact on the economy it becomes important that researchers pay specific attention to the methods such entities are employing to assist in strategy development and improvement. This article investigated the techniques and materials used to communicate, inform, stimulate consumer interest and motivate action – referred to as marketing tools– used by SMEs. Traditional marketing tools involve paid print advertisements and commercials such as pamphlets, billboards, radio,

magazines and newspapers. E-marketing tools involve computer software to reach and communicate with potential customers such as social media, SMS, blogs, e-mails and websites.

The study revealed that the respondents were mainly from businesses with less than 20 employees who update their marketing plans once a year and spend less than R1 000 per month on marketing activities.

The top five marketing tools which were used in the past are: business cards, e-mails, pamphlets, social media and websites. Three of these top five marketing tools used are modern e-marketing tools. Other marketing tools used in the past which were not listed in the questionnaire were promotions, online ads, Google, YouTube, vehicle logos, trade shows and WhatsApp. No significant difference was found in the percentage of respondents who were using traditional and e-marketing tools previously.

Currently the marketing tools used most frequently by more than half of the respondents are the same as the top five tools used in the past, namely: business cards, e-mails, websites, social media and pamphlets. TV, billboards, blogs, radio, magazines, newspapers and posters are not used by most of the respondents. The frequency of the use of SMSes falls between the most popular and least popular tools. The majority of the most often used tools are modern e-marketing tools, while the majority of the least frequently used tools are traditional marketing tools. No significant difference was found in the percentage of respondents who were using traditional and e-marketing tools "Often & Always".

All of the marketing tools are rated as either "Very Effective or Effective" by most of the respondents, except blogs. The top three tools rated in terms of marketing tools are websites, e-mails and business cards. The bottom three are billboards, blogs and magazines. No significant difference was found in the percentage of respondents who rated the effectiveness of e-marketing tools and traditional marketing tools as "Effective & Very Effective".

There is no preference in using either e-marketing or traditional marketing tools, with most of the respondents preferring to use both. Although e-marketing tools are not preferred above traditional marketing tools, the study shows that the majority of the marketing tools which are currently used are e-marketing tools and the majority of the most effective rated tools are also e-marketing tools.

It is therefore recommended that SME's invest in human resources and infrastructure for the optimum use of traditional and e-marketing tools as they will stimulate the growth of the enterprise. Given the small sample size that was used (n = 71), the results only give a general indication and can therefore not be generalised as being representative of all South African SMEs. Further research in this area is therefore recommended.

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