



**UNCONVENTIONAL MARKETING:
EXPLORING GUERRILLA MARKETING DIMENSIONS
IN INFLUENCING CONSUMER
PURCHASE INTENTION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Providing business managers with the right perception and preference of consumers are essentials determinants for the success of marketing activities. The research study will also be instrumental in providing insight on how guerrilla marketing utilizes theory of planned behavior (TPB) in reaching targeted groups and provide useful literature for academic purposes as well. Above all, the main study identifies the important dimensions of guerrilla marketing in influencing consumer purchase intention during the marketing process as part of the emergence practices in unconventional marketing. In order to achieve this goal, we propose a general model of guerrilla marketing concept with four dimensions, which we constructed by expanding prior research in marketing in order to reflect the dimensions or characteristics of guerrilla marketing. We hypothesize that the four dimensions are positively related to consumer purchase intention, and that their relative importance varies according to consumer perceptions. To validate the hypothesized model, we conducted a survey with 240 residents using self-administered questionnaires throughout Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley areas, aged between 18 – 29 years old but only 200 samples of respondents are usable. An empirical test is performed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Multiple Regression Analysis and Correlation Analysis. The results show an accepted reliability of EFA and all the four dimensions have a significant effect with customers purchase intention.

خلاصة البحث

تفضيل المستهلكين وهي من أسس لنجاح الأنشطة التسويقية فهذه الدراسة البحثية بدورها تلعب دورا في تقديم فكرة حول التسويق الحربي وكذلك تقدّم نظريّة السلوك المخطط (TPB) في الوصول إلى الفئات المستهدفة، كما أنّ الدراسة تظهر بعد الحقيقي لعملية التسويق الحربي كجزء من الممارسات في التسويق التقليدي. ففي تحقيق هذا الهدف، تقدّم في هذا البحث نموذجا عاما عن فكرة التسويق الحربي بأربعة أبعاد في البحث الموسع من أجل انعكاس هذه الأبعاد نفترض أن الأبعاد الأربعة ترتبط بشكل إيجابي في نية شراء المستهلك أو خصائص التسويق الحربي، والتي تشكل أهميتها النسبية تختلف وفقا لتصورات المستهلكين. للتحقق من صحة نموذج الافتراض، أجرى الباحثون مسحا مع 240 باستخدام الاستبانات المفتوحة في جميع أنحاء كوالا لمبور ومناطق وادي كلانج ما بين 18 و29 عاما، ومنها 200 من أفراد العينة صالحة للاستعمال. فقد تم البحث بإجراء تجربة خاصة باستخدام العامل التحليل الاكتشافي (EFA)، والتحليل الانحداري المتعدد والتحليل الارتباطي. وفي نتائجها، يمكننا أن نقبل دقة العامل التحليل الاكتشافي (EFA) والأبعاد الأربعة اللذان يؤثران في المستخدمين وفي عملية التسويق تأثيرا بالغا.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it confirms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Science in Marketing.

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DECLARATION

I here declare that this dissertation is the results of own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for my other degree at IIUM or other institutions.

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Signature.....

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MARKETING DIMENSIONS IN INFLUENCING CONSUMER
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a key management discipline that enables producers of goods and services to interpret customer needs, wants and desires and match them or exceed them by delivering the goods or services. Ghauri and Cateora (2010) note that, the effectiveness of the traditional advertising methods has declined in the past ten years. Similarly, marketing process has also been known to be expensive and as such a majority of small and medium enterprises find themselves in a position of not being able to market their goods and services due to lack of adequate marketing resources. This will call for marketing methods that use minimal cost but still deliverable.

Unconventional marketing is the spreading of marketing messages by use of unusual approaches in unexpected places with an aim of reaping maximum returns from minimal resources. One mode of unconventional marketing is guerrilla marketing. Prevot (2007) defines guerrilla marketing as a form of marketing that involves the attainment of predictable business objectives such as profits and satisfaction, with unconventional methods such as investing in personal dedication as opposed to financial resources. As such, guerrilla marketing enables business organizations to outdo their core competitors using relatively small but unexpected attacks that require a high level of creativity as well as imagination.

Guerrilla marketing is a means of gaining maximum business exposure while at the same time incurring relatively minimal costs (Prevot, 2007). In the same vein, Levinson (1999) points out that guerrilla marketing entails a form of unconventional

marketing where the expected results are usually highly rated but require relatively low or minimal resources to achieve. As such, it involves a high level of creativity as well as intelligence that deviates from the ordinary or the expected marketing trends. The same way guerrilla warfare differs from traditional warfare.

Malaysian businesses have embraced cost cutting measures among them is unconventional marketing. In the current days marketing messages are in most places as one goes on with their daily activities when walking down the street there are various billboards, stickers, posters, unexpected marketing performances. In the wide use of technology there are marketing messages in e mails, social media video clips on the internet among others communication modes. If the message is well implemented, it will catch the potential customer's attention and that will be the beginning of the effect of marketing, unconventional or traditional. In this line, this study will focus on establishing the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing in causing purchase intention.

1.2 STUDY BACKGROUND

Business organizations lose millions every year in the marketing process due to commonly occurring marketing mistakes that result to the marketing messages being misunderstood by the customers or being received by the unintended audience (Dahlen and Edenius, 2007), In the last decade it seems that traditional techniques of reaching consumers (especially younger generations), become less effective and the traditional advertising methods has declined in the past ten years (Ghauri and Cateora, 2010).

Chen (2011) points out that the concept of guerrilla marketing was established to address the marketing needs of the small and medium business enterprises. Ducoffe

and Curlo (2000) notes that the guerrilla-marketing concept had received much popularity in the business world in the 1990s and as such more and more business organizations began to incorporate this marketing concept in their overall marketing strategies. At this point, even the consumers started noticing huge differences in the changes of marketing strategies employed by business organizations. For instance, the commercials aired on the television channels changed the marketing strategies and started incorporating more humor in the marketing process as opposed to taking almost the entire advertisement time marketing the products.

The application of the guerrilla marketing concept to promote brand awareness in small and medium enterprises promotes efficiency in the process of marketing using a relatively small amount of money (Leach et al. 2008). Equally, the success of utilizing guerrilla marketing in brand awareness is enabled by the application of the modern marketing channels, customer proximity, high level of insistency and patience. Moreover, the rapid rate of technological advancement in the modern world has been of huge significance in the process of changing the advertising market; this has also given rise to more efficient and relatively marketing instruments such as ambush and viral marketing and as such leaving guerrilla marketing for use only in the promotion of goods and services.

Guerrilla marketing is reaching new heights in the world of marketing due to the development of the rapidly growing internet technology. According to Ducoffe and Curlo (2000), the new marketing trend in guerrilla marketing is viral marketing; this is in line with the fact that by the year 2003, viral marketing had been listed as one of the most effective and powerful guerrilla marketing concept by Levinson. Similarly, Prevot (2007) holds the opinion that viral marketing encompasses the concepts of all level marketing that captures all kinds of customers; as such, it is

considered to be more efficient than all other marketing concepts which lack the element of endorsement. In the same vein, the concept behind viral marketing is passing on extremely interesting or attractive marketing messages with the intention of making them to pass on the messages to their friends without being pressured or mandated to do so.

Boosting the effectiveness of viral marketing is the high rate of technological advancement especially in internet and mobile phone technology that enables guerrilla marketers to send marketing messages to large numbers of customers over a short time using emails, text messages as well as multimedia messages. As such, technology advancement has played a significant role in promoting the efficiency of viral marketing especially in ensuring that the marketing messages reach the highest possible number of customers within the shortest possible time.

According to Ay et al. (2010), the earliest form of viral marketing started with hotmail in the year 1997 where hotmail began to offer free email services. The marketing concept was incorporated at the bottom of every email with an invitation to the user's recipients to open up free email accounts. Due to this marketing strategy, hotmail became the fastest growing subscription based service in the world gaining approximately 12 million subscribers within the first one and a half years. During that particular time, Juno was Hotmail's major competitor and had acquired approximately a third of hotmail's subscribers and by the time Juno attained 12 million subscribers, it had spent over 20 million US dollars in its marketing campaign compared to the 500,000 US dollars used by hotmail to attain 12 million subscribers.

As noted by Chen (2011), Burger King launched the most efficient viral marketing campaign in the year 2004 that was labeled Subservient Chicken. The campaign was a web-based game whereby the customers would visit the Subservient

Chicken website and watch a video showing someone dressed in chicken attire seated on a sofa watching television. Chen notes that within the first 24 hours the website had attracted approximately 1 million viewers who increased to approximately 20 million within the first week of marketing.

Malaysia has witnessed a rise in technology use especially email and social media in line with the worldwide trend hence the target and effect of guerrilla marketing via the internet. Outside the internet advertisements, in the recent past IKEA based in Kuala Lumpur has used a staircase drawer in bid to market its strategy of storage innovative products that save space (Creative Guerilla Marketing, 2013).

To this end, my urge to research on guerrilla marketing was driven by the desire to explore the elements which are applied in guerrilla marketing in addition to exploring how effective the elements as strategies that make guerrilla marketing in the process of evoking the intention of the customers. Equally, I am also driven by the desire to explore the effectiveness of the guerrilla marketing concepts in influencing the customer purchase intention drives by the elements setting. The achievement of all these will not only add to my knowledge but will also lay a foundation for future research activities to be conducted on guerrilla marketing and its effectiveness in developing marketing strategies and advertising promotion.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Business operation cost has been rising in the past and businesses have to find methods to be profitable amidst this challenge. This necessitates cost effective, measures that reap maximum benefits for firms in both production and marketing of products. Marketing is done through advertising. In the last decade it seems that

traditional techniques of reaching consumers (especially younger generations), become less effective (Ghauri & Cateora, 2010). Ghauri and Cateora (2010) further note that the effectiveness of the traditional advertising methods has declined in the past ten years.

Similarly, the marketing process has also been known to be expensive and as such a majority of small and medium enterprises find themselves in a position of not being able to market their goods and services due to lack of adequate marketing resources. This has also necessitated the use of guerrilla marketing.

On top of that, the concept of guerrilla marketing stems is anchored on innovative strategies that aim at gaining large effects among consumers with a small budget. There exist a plethora of literature that has information on the various guerrilla marketing dimensions. Berger and Schwartz (2011) explored what drives immediate and ongoing word of mouth as a component of the instruments used in diffusing marketing messages. Alde et al. (2000) studied the effect of incongruity, surprise, and positive moderators on perceived humor in television advertising. Hughes (2005) showed effectiveness of buzz marketing and how it helps guerrilla marketers get people to talk about unconventionally advertisements. Roger (2003) explored how new marketing ideas can be diffused on minimum budget. These among other studies have explored how guerrilla marketing dimensions and its instruments like buzz marketing can be effective.

Therefore, it is important for marketers to know what dimension of the marketing message affects buyer's purchase intention as this is what will lead to the actual purchase. This will improve the designing of the marketing campaigns to tap maximum benefits by using minimum resources. In filling the gap, the researcher has measured creativity, surprise emotions, diffusion and minimum resources.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this research study aims at empirically analyzing the characteristics of guerrilla marketing in influencing customer purchase intention. To ensure the achievement of this aim, the following specific objectives will guide the research study.

1. To understand the dimensions of creativity, minimum resources, diffusion and surprise emotion employed in guerrilla marketing in influencing the customer purchase intention.
2. To explore the relationship amongst the guerrilla marketing dimensions in the marketing process; especially in evoking consumer purchase intention.
3. To analyze the impacts of guerrilla marketing dimensions on consumer purchase intentions.
4. To make recommendations based on the findings.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In pursuit and fulfillment of the study, the research study expects to answer and will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the dimensions employed in guerrilla marketing?
2. What is the relationship among the guerrilla marketing dimensions in the marketing process, especially in evoking consumer purchase intention?
3. What are the impacts of guerrilla marketing dimensions on consumer purchase intentions?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be useful to marketers who have embraced guerilla marketing. By establishing the dimensions that influence and how they influence purchase intention, marketers will have information that will aid them in designing marketing campaigns with maximum impact. Further, the understanding of effect of guerilla marketing dimensions on consumer intention will help business managers come up with cost effective campaigns that maximize profits.

The findings of this study will help consumer understand the dimension of guerilla marketing. The relationships of the guerilla marketing and purchase intention will help consumers when making purchase decision to avoid impulse buying. This will make consumers buy what they need and not just because the marketing message was creative or humorous.

Lastly, the findings of this study will add to the literature on marketing and enable the academicians understand the current trends in marketing. The findings will also form a platform for further research on related and complementary factors and instruments that affect consumer purchase intention.

1.7 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The dimensions of guerilla marketing do affect consumer purchase intention and attention but the scope of this study will only be purchase intention. The dimensions studied in this study will be minimum resource, creativity, diffusion and surprise emotion. The researcher will focus on understanding these dimensions and their effect on evoking consumer intention. The relationship will be explored empirically be

utilizing primary data collected among residents in Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley, with the age range between 18 – 29 years old.

1.8 THESIS OUTLINE

In this study, there are five chapters that been outlined to explain the structure of the study which systematically putting the ideas, interest and findings of the study. The first chapter will be largely introductory and structured to induct readers into the essence and significance of exploring and analyzing the characteristics of guerrilla marketing.

The second part is the literature review. In this chapter, the researcher will examine the past available literature on guerrilla marketing. This chapter is an exploration of the available literature on the empirical analysis of the guerrilla marketing which first introduces emergence of unconventional marketing followed by an in depth discussion of guerilla marketing dimensions. Through the synthesis of the above literature the proposed model of the study is developed.

The third chapter is research methodology. This chapter will focus on presenting the research methodology that will be utilized in the process of empirically exploring and analyzing the characteristics of guerrilla marketing.

The fourth chapter is about the research findings and discussions based on the findings. In this chapter, the researcher explains the research findings, discussions and analysis. The researcher will present the data that will be collected using primary questionnaires to create the basis for discussions as well as the analysis.

Finally, the fifth chapter is conclusion and recommendations. This chapter will detail a summary of the learning outcomes in addition to providing suggestions

(personal and from other scholars) for further research and how to promote increased performance of guerrilla marketing.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

As the introductory chapter, this chapter was structured to induct the reader into the concept of guerrilla marketing. The chapter began by introducing guerrilla marketing as a marketing strategy that aims at achieving maximum business returns from minimal input or minimal resources. From both the introduction as well as the background of the study, it is clear that an efficient guerrilla marketing plan should be based on the development of the business organization. Similarly, to promote the efficiency of the guerrilla marketing concept in impacting positively on the consumer intention; the planner/the guerrilla marketer should have a wide range of knowledge of the industry under which the business organization operates as well as the business operations in which the business specializes. Equally, the business advantages have been identified as the most powerful marketing weapon that can be applied in the process of guerrilla marketing to promote to set the business organization apart from its major competitors.

It is also clearly identified that the process of guerrilla marketing heavily relies on understanding the human behavior and utilizing this knowledge in the marketing process as opposed to vague judgment and guesswork. In the same vein, the guerrilla marketing concept heavily relies on taking the necessary marketing actions without the fear of facing failure along the way; this implies not being afraid to face new adventures in the process of marketing. The process of guerrilla marketing has been identified to enable small and medium enterprises to invest their energy as well as their passion into their businesses and as a result enjoy an exploratory journey with

their customers and have great business benefits in terms of increased performance in the market.

The major dimension of guerrilla marketing, as identified in the first chapter, is the marketer's creativity that should be consistently felt in all the marketing efforts. In this view, creativity was identified as the driving force that changes the minds to the customers and sways them into buying the products being offered for purchase by the marketer. To this end, chapter one induces the reader into understanding the concept that guerrilla marketing is based on creativity and knowledge; similarly, the reader is made to understand the fact that the more concrete the research conducted by the guerrilla marketer the more effective the marketing plan will be. Overall, an effective guerrilla marketing creativity was also identified to bear relatively significant points to the customers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an exploration of the available literature on the empirical analysis of the guerrilla marketing. The chapter first introduces emergence of unconventional marketing followed by an in depth discussion of guerilla marketing dimensions. The theory of planned behavior (TpB) upon which the study is anchored is also explored and the proposed model of the study is further developed.

2.2 UNCONVENTIONAL MARKETING EMERGENCE

Schindehutte et al. (2009) list a number of alternative unconventional marketing approaches that have been emerged over the past decade. Some of the more prominent new marketing practices that have been introduced and listed were relationship marketing, expeditionary marketing, guerrilla marketing, radical marketing, customer-centric marketing and pay-to-say marketing.

Relationship marketing is to be characterized as the way of identifying, establishing, maintaining, enhancing and terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders at a profit. Schindehutte et al. (2009) further notes that before the emergence of guerrilla marketing in 1993, the expeditionary marketing was introduced in 1992 as a way of creating markets before competitors. These include the continuous search for innovative products and concepts, lead rather follow and may tolerate failure.