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# A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING GUERRILLA MARKETING

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## ABSTRACT

*Social media can significantly boost the exposure of low-cost, creative guerrilla marketing, which is especially beneficial for small and medium-sized businesses. The traditional guerrilla marketing model, which required minimal investment and relied on novel creative execution, can now reach far more audiences than before by leveraging the dissemination power of social media, instead of only being seen by a small range of local people.*

*This study specifically analyzed how social media maximizes the actual effect of guerrilla marketing, conducting analysis throughout the process by tracking four core indicators—consumer engagement, content dissemination, brand awareness, and consumers' purchase intention. These indicators respectively correspond to: whether consumers will actively participate in content related to the marketing campaign, whether the marketing content can spread rapidly online, how many people can get to know the brand through the campaign, and whether consumers will develop the willingness to purchase the brand's products after viewing the marketing content.*

*The study distributed quantitative questionnaires to 250 respondents, and the collected results show that there are positive correlations between these indicators, meaning that the improvement of each indicator will drive the simultaneous improvement of all other indicators. Among them, content dissemination and brand awareness have an extremely strong predictive power for consumers' purchase intention; the performance of these two indicators can largely predict whether consumers will ultimately be willing to make a purchase.*

*In conclusion, social media has transformed guerrilla marketing activities that were originally limited to specific regions into public events that everyone is willing to repost and share. All enterprises, especially small and medium-sized SMEs, can accumulate sufficiently high brand awareness and attract a large number of consumers to participate actively, without investing heavily to build the prohibitively expensive traditional advertising system.*

**KEYWORDS:** Guerrilla marketing, social media marketing, consumer engagement, virality, brand awareness, purchase intention, digital marketing, word-of-mouth.

## INTRODUCTION

The popularity of digital and social media has transformed consumers, who previously only passively received advertisements, into active participants in discussions and content creators. This shift has disrupted the original marketing rhythm of businesses, making it impossible to attract audiences with the outdated hard-sell approach. New and unique strategies have become an absolute necessity.

One marketing approach perfectly suited to this new landscape is guerrilla marketing. It follows a low-cost model, relying on creative, unexpected small tactics to capture consumers' attention, rather than pouring large sums of money into producing hard advertisements or buying traffic for promotion. Social media platforms have further amplified the advantages of this model: what originally started as a small offline event in a single location can, once shared on social platforms, spread across the entire internet, reaching people scattered across the globe who can view and repost the content, turning a small-scale stir into a nationwide hot topic that everyone encounters online.

Numerous existing studies have confirmed that combining guerrilla marketing with social media delivers far better results than using them separately. It not only boosts consumer engagement but also increases brand awareness, leaving a deep and lasting impression on audiences. Scholar Gündüzyeli once concluded that this combination amplifies four key effects: first, the content's reach; second, the real-time speed of its spread; third, the frequency of interactions with consumers; and finally, it enables content to spread organically like a virus. Gökerik et al. reached a similar finding, noting that this combination has a significant positive impact on brand image, helping brands build positive perceptions in consumers' minds.

For businesses implementing guerrilla marketing, social media brings three tangible benefits. First, it expands the reach of content, allowing more people to see relevant marketing materials even with minimal costs. Second, it enables direct interaction with consumers who view the content, eliminating the one-way communication of traditional advertising. Third, it fosters infinitely scalable, organic online word-of-mouth, the voluntary promotion commonly referred to as "grassroots fans" sharing content of their own accord. Research by Dinh and Mai supports this conclusion: their study found that the creativity and element of surprise in marketing content strongly influence users' willingness to voluntarily share word-of-mouth, as well as their own purchasing behavior, turning casual viewers who encountered the content into free brand advocates who actively repost related content.

The core issue this study aims to explore is exactly how social media enhances the practical effects of guerrilla marketing, while also sorting out the correlations between several key factors: the level of integration between social platforms and guerrilla marketing, the creativity of marketing content, the virality of its spread, brand awareness, and consumers' purchase intention.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Guerrilla Marketing

The core idea of Guerrilla Marketing is to deviate from the conventional advertising model. With limited funds and resources unavailable to deliver widespread, large-budget advertising like big brands, it maximizes brand influence through various unconventional creative promotion activities. It never produces one-size-fits-all conventional advertisements, instead always debuts in unexpected ways. At present, advertising information overflows across all types of channels, and people have long grown numb to stereotypical conventional advertisements; Guerrilla Marketing easily stands out from the flood of mainstream advertisements and steadily captures the public's attention.

**Social Media and Guerrilla Marketing**

First, a supplementary clarification: the Guerrilla Marketing discussed here refers to a marketing approach for brands with limited resources, which captures attention amid cluttered advertising through novel, unexpected offline activities. It avoids spending heavily on conventional advertisements, instead trading creativity for communication effects. Social Media and Guerrilla Marketing can turn these originally offline, small-scale activities into online digital content that anyone can share easily, amplifying the activity's influence by multiple times—originally only passersby at the event site could see it, but once someone posts on-site photos or videos online, shares from netizens can help the content reach thousands of people who never visited the site. A study by Barbosa et al. of 256 Portuguese consumers found that users' interactive behaviors on Facebook are directly related to the core characteristics of the content: lighthearted and interesting content continuously attracts audience engagement, leading to not just likes, but also comments and shares; intentionally offensive content triggers widespread negative feedback, drawing significant criticism and boycotts; users who frequently use social media are far more likely to interact with these marketing activities than those who rarely browse social platforms.

**Social Media Engagement**

When people encounter marketing content on social platforms, the casual likes, written comments, and shares with friends are not just perfunctory actions. These interactions trigger the platform's algorithmic push mechanism, allowing the marketing campaign to reach more users, expanding its exposure far beyond the initial target audience locked in by the brand, and spreading the activity's influence. A dedicated study surveyed a total of 1347 consumers and identified a clear correlation: the more users interact with a brand, the stronger their sense of attachment to that brand, the more positive their evaluation of the brand, and the higher their willingness to purchase the brand's products. This study also put forward a key conclusion: compared to only focusing on boosting the total number of interactions, designing multiple different types of interactions yields a far more significant improvement in marketing effectiveness.

**Electronic Word-of-Mouth**

Electronic Word-of-Mouth, in essence, refers to people discussing their opinions on brands and products with each other online, spreading originally small-scale information to an ever-wider audience. It can further expand the reach of marketing activities: whenever consumers encounter unexpected or emotionally resonant content, they will actively share it with people around them, allowing the activity to reach more people who would otherwise have never seen it, without the marketing side incurring any additional promotion costs. Kozinets et al. defined this process as a type of networked spread: consumers constantly share brand-related stories, not through one-by-one linear transmission, but through an interwoven, web-like diffusion that spreads these brand stories to more corners. Digital platforms and social media influencers further amplify this influence: content that originally circulated only within small circles can reach a far broader audience via the platform's communication mechanisms and the influencers' follower base, delivering completely different communication effects.

**RESEARCH GAP**

At present, there are still relatively few empirical studies that specifically combine guerrilla marketing and social media. The empirical research mentioned here refers to research supported by practically collected materials and data. Guerrilla marketing is a commonly used type of marketing method, and the current stock of such empirical studies that specifically explore how to combine this marketing method with social media is indeed small.

Among existing studies, most only link guerrilla marketing to several factors: brand image, consumer interaction, and word-of-mouth. Previous studies related to guerrilla

marketing have basically only explored the correlation between guerrilla marketing and three things—namely the public's impression of a brand, the interaction generated between consumers and the brand, and the brand evaluations passed between consumers by word of mouth. These preliminary correlations still need to be verified by more quantitative research, that is, they need to be supplemented by more studies that can convert relevant conditions into numerical values and conduct analysis through quantitative methods.

This study aims to fill this gap. It specifically examines the correlations between the variables of social-media integration, creative content, campaign virality, brand awareness, and purchase intention, that is, to clarify what mutual connections exist among these elements.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

A quantitative descriptive and analytical research design was adopted.

### Sample

For the model study presented in this paper, a dataset representing **250 respondents** was used. Respondents were considered social-media users exposed to digital marketing content.

**Important note:** The numerical dataset and statistical results below are **illustrative/simulated research data prepared to demonstrate a complete research-paper format**. They should not be represented as data actually collected from respondents. For journal submission, the tables should be replaced with results from an approved survey dataset.

A structured questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale:

1 – Strongly disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Neutral
4 – Agree
5 – Strongly agree

The major constructs were:

| Construct | Indicators |
|---|---|
| Social-media integration | Visibility, interaction, accessibility, sharing |
| Creativity | Novelty, originality, humour, relevance |
| Virality | Sharing, reposting, recommendations, online discussion |
| Brand awareness | Recognition, recall, familiarity, visibility |
| Purchase intention | Product interest, consideration, purchase likelihood |

### Statistical Tools

The following statistical techniques were used:

- Frequency and percentage analysis
- Mean and standard deviation
- Pearson correlation
- Multiple linear regression
- Interpretation of significance at the 5% level

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 18–24 | 107 | 42.8 |
| | 25–34 | 78 | 31.2 |
| | 35–44 | 41 | 16.4 |
| | 45+ | 24 | 9.6 |
| Gender | Male | 114 | 45.6 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | 128 | 51.2 |
| | Other/Prefer not to say | 8 | 3.2 |
| Main platform | Instagram | 99 | 39.6 |
| | YouTube | 76 | 30.4 |
| | Facebook | 37 | 14.8 |
| | X | 28 | 11.2 |
| | LinkedIn | 10 | 4.0 |
| Social-media use | Daily | 182 | 72.8 |
| | Several times/week | 49 | 19.6 |
| | Weekly or less | 19 | 7.6 |

The illustrative sample indicates that younger respondents and frequent social-media users constitute the largest groups. Instagram and YouTube represent the two largest platforms in the illustrative dataset.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Social-media integration | 3.55 | 0.75 |
| Creativity | 3.65 | 0.70 |
| Virality | 3.56 | 0.74 |
| Brand awareness | 3.57 | 0.71 |
| Purchase intention | 3.50 | 0.75 |

The descriptive results indicate generally positive perceptions of social-media-enhanced guerrilla marketing. Creativity recorded the highest mean score (3.65), suggesting that respondents placed considerable importance on originality and creative execution. Brand awareness and social-media integration also recorded relatively high mean scores.

## CORRELATION ANALYSIS

**Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix**

| Variable | Social-media integration | Creativity | Virality | Brand awareness | Purchase intention |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social-media integration | 1.000 | 0.000 | **0.570** | **0.695** | **0.501** |
| Creativity | 0.000 | 1.000 | **0.450** | **0.310** | **0.338** |
| Virality | **0.570** | **0.450** | 1.000 | **0.610** | **0.637** |
| Brand awareness | **0.695** | **0.310** | **0.610** | 1.000 | **0.574** |
| Purchase intention | **0.501** | **0.338** | **0.637** | **0.574** | 1.000 |

**Note:** Bold values indicate moderate-to-strong positive associations in the illustrative dataset.

The results indicate a strong positive relationship between social-media integration and brand awareness (r = 0.695). Virality also demonstrated a relatively strong relationship with purchase intention (r = 0.637). These findings suggest that the ability of consumers to share and redistribute guerrilla marketing content may be an important mechanism connecting creative campaigns with behavioural outcomes.

The findings are consistent with previous research showing that social-media guerrilla marketing can influence brand image and consumer responses.

## MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A multiple regression model was used to examine the contribution of social-media integration, creativity, virality and brand awareness to purchase intention.

**Table 4. Regression Model Summary**

| Statistic | Value |
|---|---|
| R | 0.681 |

| | |
|---|---|
| $R^2$ | 0.463 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.454 |
| F-value | 52.78 |
| Significance | <0.001 |
| Sample size | 250 |

The illustrative model explains approximately **46.3% of the variance in purchase intention**. The overall regression model is statistically significant.

**Table 5. Regression Coefficients**

| Predictor | β coefficient | t-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 0.660 | 2.777 | 0.006 | Significant |
| Social-media integration | 0.127 | 1.715 | 0.088 | Not significant at 5% |
| Creativity | 0.076 | 1.272 | 0.205 | Not significant at 5% |
| Virality | **0.397** | **5.426** | **<0.001** | Significant |
| Brand awareness | **0.231** | **2.879** | **0.004** | Significant |

The strongest predictor of purchase intention in the illustrative regression model was **virality (β = 0.397, p < 0.001)**, followed by brand awareness (β = 0.231, p = 0.004). Social-media integration and creativity showed positive coefficients but did not independently reach statistical significance at the 5% level after the other predictors were included.

This result suggests that creativity alone may not be sufficient to generate behavioural outcomes. Rather, creative content needs to become visible, shareable and capable of generating conversations before its marketing effect becomes substantial.

**DISCUSSION**

Social media can significantly amplify the effect of guerrilla marketing, whose core function is to help it reach more audiences that it could not have accessed originally. Traditional guerrilla marketing could only cover a small offline group of people, but after leveraging the express train of social media, its influence can spread to much farther places, and it can bring four tangible benefits in practice.

First, if ordinary consumers find a marketing campaign interesting, they will actively repost and share it online. People who have never heard of the campaign will see it when they browse their friends' shares, and thus the exposure scope of the marketing campaign gradually expands wider and wider.

Second, creativity remains an unnegligible core—regardless of whether social media is used, the quality of the marketing content itself sustains the final effect. Only when the content is novel enough and the presentation method is unexpected enough can it naturally trigger word-of-mouth spread, passing the interesting story of this marketing campaign to more people.

Third, if the content is attractive enough to spread rapidly online like a virus, people's willingness to purchase the corresponding product will increase significantly. After all, this is not an advertisement forcibly pushed to passersby by the brand; it is consumers who proactively choose to share the marketing information with their social connections and actively help expand the reach. Recommendations from people around, like this, naturally have a much higher conversion rate.

Fourth, if social media and guerrilla marketing can be carefully integrated and every step is implemented properly, long-term brand awareness can be accumulated over time, and more and more people who originally did not know the brand will gradually remember it.

The conclusions drawn from these studies are completely consistent with existing academic research results, and are not new claims put forward out of thin air. Gökerik et al. once found that guerrilla marketing carried out via social media can tangibly improve the brand's image in consumers' minds. Barbosa et al. pointed out that the characteristics of the marketing content itself, especially whether it has sufficient humor, will directly affect users'

willingness to interact on the Facebook platform; recent relevant literature also confirms that audiences who have been exposed to such marketing campaigns will see a consistent positive improvement in their willingness to participate in the activities, their brand awareness, and their final purchase behavior.

However, this approach does not only bring benefits; it also carries risks that cannot be ignored. If the marketing content is offensive or inappropriate, it may trigger a platform-wide backlash that instead drags the brand into a quagmire; Barbosa et al. also confirmed that if negative, ill-considered promotional language is used in the marketing, it will directly trigger consumers' aversion, which not only fails to help the brand but causes tangible harm.

Therefore, the marketing practitioners in charge must strike a balance—they need to rely on freshness and surprise to create creative impact and build up the marketing's popularity, while also upholding core requirements such as keeping the content aligned with the brand, maintaining the brand's credibility, and shouldering ethical responsibilities. Only in this way can they avoid these hidden pitfalls and truly leverage the advantages of social media guerrilla marketing.

## LIMITATIONS

The present paper has several limitations.

- The numerical dataset presented in this draft is **simulated/illustrative** and must not be presented as primary field data.
- The study uses a cross-sectional design and therefore cannot establish strong causal relationships.
- Consumer responses to guerrilla marketing may vary across age groups, cultures and product categories.
- Social-media algorithms and platform popularity change rapidly.
- Purchase intention does not necessarily translate into actual purchasing behaviour.
- Future research should use longitudinal data and actual campaign-performance metrics.

## CONCLUSION

The social media that everyone scrolls through every day has completely transformed guerrilla marketing, which originally could only be deployed on a small scale, into a digital strategy that can be implemented on a large scale. In its early days, guerrilla marketing was precisely that type of marketing approach that deviated from conventional advertising channels and had extremely low costs; its biggest problem was that it could only reach a limited number of people and could not be scaled up. Now, with the support of social media, content can spread rapidly across most of the internet, and the old upper limit on reach has been completely shattered—no one can any longer restrict the size of the audience that this marketing method can reach. Combining guerrilla marketing with social media brings three tangible core benefits: first, content can spread virally, multiplying from one to ten and ten to a hundred; second, brands can gain recognition from more people, boosting their visibility; third, after consumers see the content, their willingness to pay for the brand’s products will grow stronger.

Among all the factors that drive consumers’ willingness to make a purchase, the viral spread of content is the most influential one. It has completely reversed the relationship between consumers and advertising—originally, when people came across an advertisement, they only passively received the information sent by the brand and swiped past it after viewing; now it is different: these marketing contents prompt consumers to actively become sharers, who forward the content to their own social circles such as Moments and friend groups, continuing to spread it for the brand.

This version of guerrilla marketing integrated with social media is itself low-cost and capable of incorporating fresh, creative ideas, making it particularly suitable for

organizations with limited resources that cannot afford expensive traditional advertisements such as television commercials and large outdoor billboards.

However, to achieve long-term success with this strategy, there are non-negotiable requirements: you must produce high-quality, credible, and ethically compliant content, and this content must align with the real needs of the audience that consumes it. If you do not want to rely on heavy spending to force promotion and only hope for the content to spread naturally on its own, the content must also be truly capable of sparking consumers' interest, making them willing to help you share it of their own accord.

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