

Revolutionizing marketing strategies: analyzing guerrilla marketing, brand image, and brand awareness impact on Gen Y purchasing decisions

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Abstract. *The rise of digital technology and social media platforms has made traditional marketing approaches less effective in capturing the attention of the tech-savvy Generation Y. There has been an increased interest in guerrilla marketing tactics, which employ unconventional strategies to engage consumers. This study investigated the impact of guerrilla marketing, brand image, and brand awareness on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y consumers. The study adopted the Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory and conducted an empirical study the following constructs: viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, street graphics marketing, brand awareness, brand image, and purchase decision. Data was collected from 442 Generation Y respondents in Thailand. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to analyse the model and construct's reliability. At the same time, the partial least squares structural equation modelling technique was adopted to explore the relationship of the study constructs. The results indicated that the purchase decision of Generation Y was significantly influenced by ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing. The research revealed that brand image and brand awareness exerted a substantial impact on purchase decisions and served as key mediators in the relationship between guerrilla marketing and purchase decisions among Generation Y. The study emphasised the importance of guerrilla marketing techniques and leverage of the power of social media to influence purchase behaviour. Marketing managers should consider these techniques to attract Generation Y.*

Keywords: guerrilla marketing, brand image, brand awareness, generation Y, purchase decision.

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Introduction

Having a strong brand image and recognition is essential to the success of any firm in today's fast-paced and intensely competitive market. Hence, guerrilla marketing is needed due to its unconventional and affordable strategy that stresses zeal and inventiveness (Al-Attari, 2021). According to Soomro et al. (2021), guerrilla marketing aims to make a lasting impression by luring clients with shocks, mystery, and fun. Zarco and Herzallah (2023) state that it is a covert, yet influential marketing strategy that seeks to influence customers

personally. Because conventional forms of advertising lack innovation and have little impact owing to the media's saturation, consumers frequently avoid them, since when consumers visualise the information, they soon need to remember it (Ikpegbu et al., 2017; Rogers, 2022).

Guerrilla marketing, on the other hand, is all about originality and inventive problem-solving (Bilgin, 2020). Davis & Davis (2021) state that to approach clients; this marketing strategy uses unconventional and unexpected techniques, including stunning and mesmerising them with distinctive notions they have never seen before to influence purchase decisions. Giving clients a distinctive and memorable experience is crucial to guerrilla marketing's attempt to stand out from the competition (Nadanyiova & Das, 2020). Matin et al. (2020) also assert that guerrilla marketing is gaining popularity as a successful way for companies to introduce their products and services. Businesses may raise brand recognition and boost revenue by developing an engaging and memorable experience (Hammad, 2021; Srinok & Zandi, 2021). Consumers' sense of urgency may be raised through guerrilla marketing using creative and unconventional tactics, which could make people feel pressured to buy the advertised goods or services.

Millennials, commonly called Generation Y, are a significant demographic segment that has emerged as a vital market for numerous companies (Soomro et al., 2021). Soomro et al. (2021) further point out that the demographic is well recognised for its distinctive tastes and habits, including a keen interest in digital media and a demand for natural, tailored experiences. Guerrilla marketing is a viable tactic for companies wishing to reach this market and influence consumers' purchasing choices. By offering a customised and engaging experience, guerrilla marketing can significantly influence Generation Y's purchasing behaviour (Khan & Abir, 2022). This set of consumers loves innovation and authenticity and is more likely to respond favourably to marketing initiatives that uphold these principles. According to Soomro et al. (2021), guerrilla marketing may offer this audience a distinctive and memorable experience catered to their interests and preferences, eventually influencing their purchase choice.

Guerrilla marketing may also affect Generation Y consumers' purchasing decisions by fostering a sense of social influence. According to Ana and Istudor (2019), this population respects their peers' opinions and is well-connected on social media. Guerrilla marketing efforts that employ social media and user-generated content might capitalise on Generation Y customers' need for social influence and influence their purchasing behaviour. Zarco and Herzallah (2023) state that a guerrilla marketing strategy that involves organising a user-generated content competition or a social media challenge, for example, may foster a sense of social influence and community around the advertised good or service. Hence, it may influence Generation Y consumers' desire for and approachability toward the good or service, impacting their buying choice.

Guerrilla marketing may also influence Generation Y consumers' purchasing choices by fostering a perception of exclusivity and limited supply. Kapferer and Michaut (2019) point out that this group prefers distinctive and exclusive experiences, and marketing strategies that appeal to their demand for exclusivity are more likely to succeed them. Rogers (2022) acknowledges that a product or service's exclusivity and restricted availability can be emphasised through guerrilla marketing, which may eventually influence Generation Y customers' purchasing decisions. For instance, a limited-edition product or a pop-up shop with a short lifespan might be created as part of a guerrilla marketing campaign to convey exclusivity and scarcity (Bilgin, 2020). The latter may influence Generation Y

consumers' desire for and approachability toward the good or service, which may impact their buying choice.

The study focuses on the evolving marketing effectiveness, particularly within the tech-savvy Generation Y demographic. As traditional marketing approaches struggle to capture the attention of this demographic in the era of digital technology and social media, the study seeks to address the research problem by understanding that in the face of the diminishing effectiveness of traditional marketing strategies in engaging Generation Y, there is a pressing need to understand and evaluate the impact of guerrilla marketing tactics, specifically ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing, on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y consumers. Furthermore, the study explores the mediating role of brand image and brand awareness in influencing the relationship between guerrilla marketing strategies and the purchase decisions of Generation Y. The research problem also calls for an examination of the relevance and effectiveness of guerrilla marketing techniques in the contemporary marketing landscape, highlighting the importance of leveraging social media to influence the purchase behaviour of Generation Y. Additionally, what is the mediating role of brand image and brand awareness in the relationship between guerrilla marketing strategies and the purchase decisions of Generation Y? This research addresses the evolving challenges faced by marketing managers in capturing the attention and influencing the purchase behavior of Generation Y in the digital age, emphasizing the significance of guerrilla marketing techniques and the strategic utilisation of social media.

There has been an increased trend in the adoption of Guerrilla marketing in the business arena (Davis & Davis, 2021). As a result, extensive research is vital to map out the crucial aspects surrounding this new marketing technique. However, very few substantial research studies can be found in Thailand. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing in the Thai market and its potential impact on consumer behaviour and purchase decision-making in Generation Y. The specific objective of the research was, therefore, (1) to determine the effects of viral, ambush, buzz, and street graphic marketing strategies on the purchase decision of Generation Y; (2) to find out the effect of brand awareness on the purchase decision of Generation Y; and (3) find out the effect of brand image on purchase decision of generation Y. Businesses in Thailand may better grasp how to use this marketing strategy to meet their marketing goals and thrive in a crowded market by looking at these critical factors.

Literature review and hypothesis development

The Hierarchy of Effects Theory

The Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory is a marketing communication paradigm first presented in 1961 by Robert Lavidge and Gary Steiner (Uhm et al., 2022). The theory describes how customers decide after seeing an advertising or marketing message whether to purchase an item (Páramo et al., 2021). Kaur and Sharma (2022) illustrate that the theory proposes that the purchase decision process can be broken down into six distinct stages: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. The first stage is awareness, where the consumer becomes aware of the product or service (Páramo et al., 2021; Uhm et al., 2022). The second stage is knowledge, where the consumer gains information about the product or service (Mangalam, 2022). The third stage is liking, where the consumer develops

a favourable attitude towards the product or service (Bodunde & Ohu, 2022). The fourth stage is a preference, where the consumer prefers the product or service over competitors (Páramo et al., 2021). The fifth stage is conviction, where the consumer becomes convinced that the product or service is the best choice (Nandi et al., 2019). The final stage is a purchase, where the consumer decides to buy the product or service (Páramo et al., 2021; Uhm et al., 2022). Marketers need to guide consumers through each stage, building on the previous one to lead to a purchase. According to the Hierarchy of Effects Theory, consumers pass through each stage in order, each one building on the one before it (Uhm et al., 2022). Mangalam (2022) points out that a marketing message must drive the consumer through each phase to be effective, eventually resulting in a purchase. The idea also acknowledges that customers can withdraw from decision-making at any time (Nandi et al., 2019). For example, a consumer can learn about a product without the information or motivation to move on to the next step (Bodunde & Ohu, 2022).

Similarly, a customer may form an attachment to a product, but may be unable to acquire it owing to financial restrictions (Kaur et al., 2022). According to Páramo et al. (2021), the hierarchy-of-effects idea is used by marketers to create advertising and promotional tactics that are targeted to each level of the decision-making process. For example, advertising communications promoting product awareness can include strong graphics or memorable phrases to gain customers' attention (Bodunde & Ohu, 2022). Messages focusing on building preference may emphasise the product's distinctive qualities or benefits (Lubyté, 2021). Applying to guerrilla marketing, the Hierarchy-of-Effects theory guides the creation of ads that strategically lead consumers through these stages, starting from attention capturing and interest generation to stimulating desire and eventually spurring action or commitment. By aligning guerrilla marketing tactics with each hierarchy stage, marketers can craft persuasive and targeted experiences to influence consumer behaviour effectively and achieve the desired results. The Hierarchy-of-Effects Theory has been critiqued for oversimplifying decision-making and neglecting the complexities of consumer behaviour (Nandi et al., 2019; Páramo et al., 2021). It is, nonetheless, still a popular and vital approach in marketing communications.

The concept of guerrilla marketing

Guerrilla marketing is a unique and creative marketing style that emphasises excitement and inventiveness to attract customers in new ways (Dimobi & Anyasor, 2020). Usani (2022) asserts that this approach to marketing aims to differentiate itself from typical advertising strategies by leaving a lasting impression on customers. Guerrilla marketing is the advertising of a product or service using unusual and unexpected means (Manyal & Mittal, 2020). According to Roxas et al. (2023), the notion of Guerrilla Marketing has changed with the advent of Industry 4.0, which has opened up new avenues for firms to communicate with their target audience. Gkarane et al. (2019) utilise a case study of a Greek SME to demonstrate how a combination of conventional and digital resources may be used to construct a worldwide Guerrilla Marketing plan. Lubyt (2021) stresses the application of Guerrilla Marketing ideas in brand positioning for small and medium-sized businesses. Farooqui (2021) uses structural equation modelling to investigate the influence of Guerrilla Marketing in Pakistan's textile sector and its impact on customer purchasing behaviour.

The components of guerrilla marketing

The following are the components of guerrilla marketing:

Viral marketing

Viral marketing is a fast-expanding approach that leverages social media and other digital channels to swiftly distribute a message or information to a target audience (Ahmed et al., 2020a). According to Gkarane et al. (2019), it is a low-cost strategy that leverages the power of social media to spread the message and raise brand recognition. The efficacy of viral marketing is determined by elements such as the message's originality, the reliability of the source, and the content's relevancy to the target demographic (Ahmed et al., 2020b; Manyal & Mittal, 2020). The research suggests that viral marketing considerably influences brand recognition and customer purchasing behaviour, making it an important component of guerrilla marketing initiatives. Hence the hypothesis:

H1: Viral marketing has a significant and positive influence on the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.

Ambush marketing

Ambush marketing is a contentious marketing tactic that involves establishing a connection between a business and an event without being an official sponsor (Gkarane et al., 2019). Gümüštepe (2020) points out that brands frequently utilise this method to achieve maximum visibility without paying the hefty fees involved with official sponsorship. Khanna et al. (2019) state that ambush marketing has generated attention and raised brand recognition. However, it may have a detrimental influence on the event and its official sponsors. Ambush marketing may influence customer behaviour and brand impression, emphasising the need to know its ramifications. (Gkarane et al., 2019; Gümüštepe, 2020; Khanna et al., 2019). These assumptions led to proposing Hypothesis 2 as follows:

H2: Ambush marketing exerts a significant and positive influence on the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.

Buzz marketing

Buzz marketing is a potent word-of-mouth marketing method to create buzz about a product or service (Ouf, 2023). According to Ahmed et al. (2020a), this method is highly effective since customers trust their friends' opinions more than traditional advertising. The goal of buzz marketing is to create enthusiasm and interest in a product or service so that customers can share their experiences and recommendations with others around introducing a new product or rekindling interest in an existing product or service (Putri Bestari et al., 2021). Buzz marketing substantially influences customer purchase intention and is critical to developing brand image and recognition (Ahmed et al., 2020b; Bestari et al., 2021). These arguments led to the suggestion of Hypothesis 3:

H3: Buzz marketing has a significant and positive influence on the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.

Street graphics

Street graphics are a type of guerrilla marketing that uses public locations to produce aesthetically appealing and engaging displays that promote a company or product (Zarco & Herzallah, 2023). Street graphics may help companies stand out and attract the attention of

their target audience by employing innovative and unique approaches (Dubauskas & Išoraitė, 2022). According to Al-Attari (2021), street graphics may enhance brand exposure and drive customer interest. Some studies have also looked at the impact of street graphics on customer behaviour, such as their potential to influence shopping decisions (Roux & Saucet, 2020; Zarco & Herzallah, 2023). When proposing Hypothesis 4, these perspectives were taken into consideration:

H4: *Street graphics have a significant and positive influence on the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.*

Brand awareness (as a mediating factor)

Brand awareness may substantially impact the efficacy of guerrilla marketing initiatives (Wiryanan & Wardana, 2020). According to Barbosa et al. (2022), consumers' familiarity and recognition of a brand can impact their word-of-mouth activities, advertising believability, content-sharing intents, and purchasing behaviour. Several research studies have investigated the link between guerrilla marketing and brand awareness as a moderating factor, mainly how guerrilla marketing affected word-of-mouth activities, brand image, content sharing intents, and purchasing behaviour (Rehman & Al-Ghazali, 2022; Riley et al., 2016; Zarco & Herzallah, 2023). Understanding the role of brand awareness in moderating guerrilla marketing efficacy can help marketers develop more effective programmes that resonate with their target demographic (Wiryanan & Wardana, 2020). Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H5: *Brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.*

H6a: *Brand awareness mediates the relationship between viral marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.*

H6b: *Brand awareness mediates the relationship between ambush marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.*

H6c: *Brand awareness mediates the relationship between buzz marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.*

H6d: *Brand awareness mediates the relationship between street graphics marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.*

Brand Image (as a mediating factor)

Brand image is a mediating element that influences consumers' perceptions and connections with a brand (Husnain et al., 2021). According to research, guerrilla marketing can improve brand image, resulting in greater purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Husnain et al., 2021; Khowjoy et al., 2023; Zarco & Herzallah, 2023). Barbosa et al. (2022) discovered that guerrilla marketing on Facebook can improve brand image and boost intent to share material. Rehman and Al-Ghazali (2022) found that social advertising, individual variables, and brand image substantially influenced purchasing behaviour toward fashion apparel businesses. These assertions led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

H7: *Brand image has a significant and positive influence the purchasing decision of Generation Y in Thailand.*

H8a: *Brand image mediates the relationship between viral marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.*

H8b: Brand image mediates the relationship between ambush marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.

H8c: Brand image mediates the relationship between buzz marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.

H8d: Brand image mediates the relationship between street graphics marketing and the purchasing decision of Generation Y.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework model was developed from the literature review and the hypotheses above. The model comprises four independent variables – viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing. Brand awareness and brand image were the mediating variables, while the purchase decision was the dependent variable.

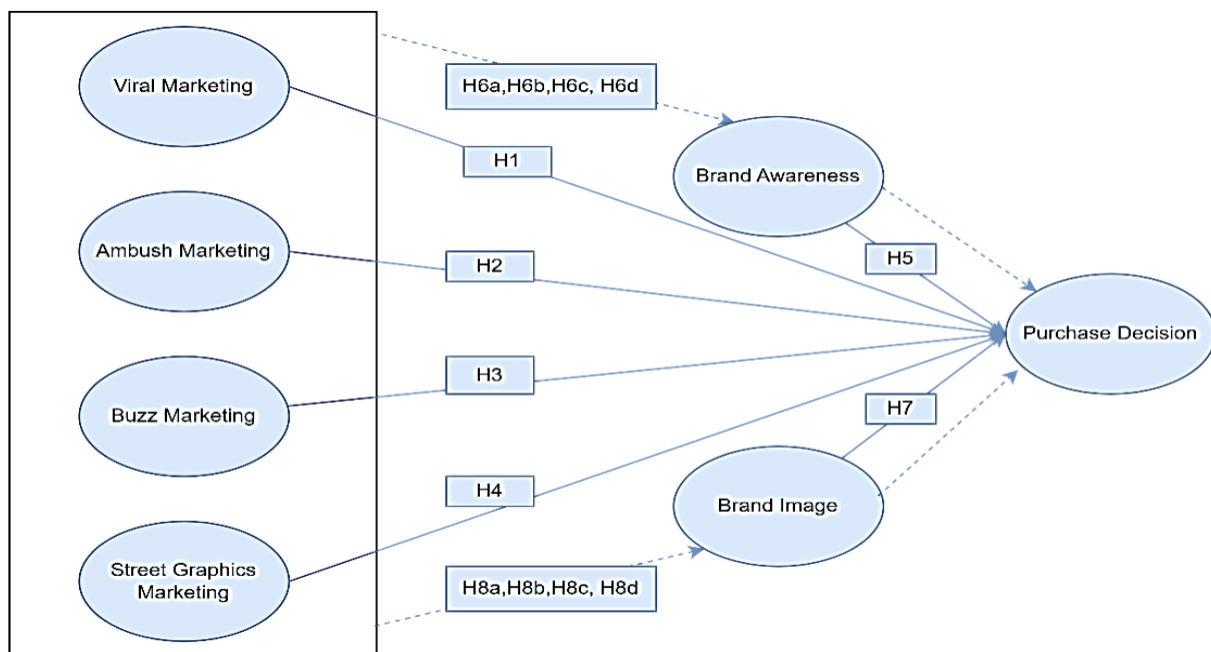


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Author's elaborations.

Methodology

This research applied the quantitative research method, as it was considered appropriate to determine the effect of guerrilla marketing on the purchasing decision of Generation Y. This methodology was considered suitable as it established the relationship among the evaluated study constructs. The quantitative strategy involves using a measurement scale to collect empirical data. The data collected is then analysed using suitable statistical techniques. The quantitative study findings of a sample are then generalised to the whole population.

The study applied quantitative research because it precisely measures study variables (i.e., brand image, brand awareness, and purchasing decisions), allowing for the quantification of the variables using established scales and metrics, which provide a more

accurate assessment of their influence and relationship. Also, because of the complexity of the relationships binding guerilla marketing, brand awareness, brand image, and purchasing decisions, quantitative approaches allow for the use of sophisticated statistical analyses, including, in this instance, regression analysis, SEM and factor analysis to find out the various relationships and interactions among the study variable. Quantitative studies allow for generalisability, thus enabling the findings to be applied to a wider population beyond the study sample (Barroga et al., 2023; Kotronoulas et al., 2023).

The population of the study was Generation Y, also referred to as the Millennials in Thailand. These are individuals who were born between the years 1981 to 2000. They comprise about 27% of the Thai population of 71.75 million (Data Reportal, 2023), thus putting the Gen Y population at approximately 19,000,000. Since this population is large, a representative sample for the study was selected based on the recommendation of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The target sample for the survey was extrapolated to 442 respondents, which was considered an appropriate representative of the study population. The stratified random sampling was adopted by choosing five major districts of Thailand as clusters, i.e. (Bangkok, Chonburi, Khon Kaen, Chiang Mai, and Phuket). The convenience sampling approach was then adopted to collect the information from Generation Y. The questionnaire was distributed face-to-face and online via Google Forms during the data collection. Primary data was collected from the study sample using a structured open-ended questionnaire. The scales/questions used for the study were developed with reference to the literature, with slight adjustment to fit the current study.

This study developed a survey instrument by adapting items from established scales measuring: viral marketing from Hoyer and Brown, (1990); ambush marketing from Meenaghan, 1994; buzz marketing from Mira and Ghanbari, (2017); street graphics marketing from Soomro et al., (2021); brand awareness from Ahmed, et al. (2020); brand image from Wu and Wang, (2014); and purchase intention from Powrani and Kennedy (2018). The scales are listed in Appendix. The questionnaire was hosted online from December 2023 to January 2024 using Google Forms, where the respondents were required to answer and submit. For those who did not have access to Google Forms, the questionnaire was delivered face-to-face, where they answered and gave back to the researcher. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand, with approval code EC-KMITL_67_009. The Ethics Committee granted the study an exemption waiver in compliance with the international guidelines for human research protection as the Declaration of Helsinki, The Belmont Report, the CIOMS Guideline, International Conference on Harmonization in Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP). The author ensured that no personal identifying information was included in the questionnaire and participants gave informed consent to participate in the survey. This was the basis for obtaining ethical approval.

The data was analysed using various techniques. First, descriptive statistics were used in the evaluation of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The collected data was tested for reliability and validity using Cronbach's alpha and convergent validity techniques. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the study model, including various model fitness tests. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) tests were conducted to assess and test the study's hypotheses.

Results

Demographic characterises

The demographic characteristics of the study variables were evaluated using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics considered gender, age, education, and marital status. About gender, females were the most, comprising 53%, males comprised of 41%, while others (LGBTQ+) were 6%. The age of the respondents was evaluated where the Millennials who were born between 1986-1990 were the majority (30.8%), followed by those who were born between 1991-1995, comprising 26.5%, followed by those who were born between 1981-1985 who were 26.2% and lastly those aged 1996-2000 who were 16.5%. The respondents' education was also evaluated, with the majority having a degree (45.9%), followed by those with a certificate or diploma (35.1%). The study also assessed the marital status of the respondents, where the majority were single (47.7%), followed by those who were married (38.2%). The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	182	41.2
	Female	232	52.5
	Other (LGBTQ+)	28	6.3
	Total	442	100
Age	1981-1985	116	26.2
	1986-1990	136	30.8
	1991-1995	117	26.5
	1996-2000	73	16.5
	Total	442	100
Education	Certificate / Diploma	155	35.1
	High School or Lower	35	7.9
	Undergraduate	203	45.9
	Post-Graduate or Higher	49	11.1
	Total	442	100
Marital Status	Single	211	47.7
	Married	169	38.2
	Divorced	62	14
	Total	442	100

Source: Analysis from field data.

Evaluation of the model

The fitness of the model was evaluated by conducting various tests such as Goodness of Fit (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI). Goodness of Fit (GFI) is a statistical measure that assesses how well a model fits the observed data with values ranging from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a better fit between the model and the data. A GFI value in close to 1 indicates a high level of concurrence between the proposed model and the empirical data, implying that the model effectively explains the relationship among the variables. The CFI assesses the degree of fit between the proposed model and the observed data by conducting a comparison with a baseline model with values ranging from 0 to 1, where a higher number signifies a stronger match. RMSEA measures the discrepancy between the observed data and the model's reproduced data per degree of freedom. The RMSEA value ranges from 0 to ∞ , where

lower values indicate better fit. IFI evaluates how well the proposed model fits the observed data by comparing it to a baseline model, often the null model, which represents the absence of relationships between the variables. Its value ranges from 0 to 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates a better fit (Byrne, 1994; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004; Tucker & Lewis, 1973). The required threshold for these tests is dictated by Byrne (1994), Tucker and Lewis (1973), and Schumacker and Lomax (2004). These results are summarised in Table 2, which shows that the required threshold was reached.

Table 2. Evaluation of the measurement model

Fit Indices	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI	NFI	IFI	PCFI
Criteria	<=0.08	>0.80	>0.90	<0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.50
Measurement model	0.056	0.850	0.923	0.915	0.87	0.924	0.829
Decision	Satisfactory						

Source: Authors own elaboration based on the results from AMOS version 24.

The reliability and validity of the study constructs were also evaluated. The evaluation was conducted by running the CFA for the convergent validity, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted. The results are summarised in Table 3. The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the study. The findings revealed that all the variable values had a significance level exceeding 0.75, which was way above the recommended threshold of >0.60, according to Hair et al. (2010). The standardised factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate the validity of the constructs. The results show that all the values were above the recommended threshold of 0.5 as suggested by Ahment et al. (2017) and Kline (2016).

Table 3. Reliability and validity evaluation

Variables	Constructs	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Ambush Marketing	AM1	0.77	0.880	0.595	0.883
	AM2	0.74			
	AM3	0.808			
	AM4	0.732			
	AM5	0.803			
Brand Awareness	BA1	0.685	0.837	0.507	0.839
	BA2	0.67			
	BA3	0.742			
	BA4	0.746			
	BA5	0.713			
Brand Image	BI1	0.68	0.857	0.546	0.859
	BI2	0.763			
	BI3	0.734			
	BI4	0.766			
	BI5	0.748			
Buzz Marketing	BM1	0.749	0.863	0.557	0.864
	BM2	0.773			
	BM3	0.765			
	BM4	0.71			
	BM5	0.732			

Variables	Constructs	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.712	0.754	0.786	0.779
	PD2	0.742			
	PD3	0.468			
	PD4	0.526			
	PD5	0.615			
Street Graphics	SG1	0.534	0.766	0.797	0.773
	SG2	0.629			
	SG3	0.682			
	SG4	0.602			
	SG5	0.692			
Viral Marketing	VM1	0.733	0.877	0.588	0.878
	VM2	0.754			
	VM3	0.795			
	VM4	0.766			
	VM5	0.785			

Source: Authors own elaboration based on the results from AMOS version 24.

Hypothesis evaluation

The hypotheses were evaluated using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) tests. The research found that the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decision was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.234$, $p = 0.009$), rejecting H1. The path coefficient between ambush marketing and purchase decision was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.126$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H2. The path coefficient between buzz marketing and purchase decision was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.086$, $p = 0.022$), supporting H3. The path coefficient between street graphics marketing and purchase decision was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.068$, $p = 0.012$), supporting H4. The path coefficient between brand awareness and purchase decision was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.806$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H5. The path coefficient between brand image and purchase decision was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.350$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H7. In addition, the mediating effect of brand awareness on the effect of guerrilla marketing (viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing) on purchase decisions was evaluated. The results indicated that brand awareness significantly mediated the effect of viral, buzz, ambush, and street graphics marketing on Generation Y purchase decisions. As a result, H6a, H6b, H6c, and H6d were supported.

Similarly, the mediating effect of brand image on the effect of guerrilla marketing (viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing) on purchase decisions was evaluated. The results indicated that brand awareness significantly mediated the effect of viral, buzz, ambush, and street graphics marketing on Generation Y purchase decisions. As a result, H8a, H8b, H8c, and H8d were supported, by H8b were not supported.

Table 4. Results for hypothesis evaluation

Hypothesis	Path Relationships				Beta	S.E.	C.R.	P	
Direct Relationship									
H1	VM	-->		PD	-0.234	0.089	-2.63	0.009	
H2	AM	-->		PD	0.126	0.033	3.878	***	
H3	BM	-->		PD	0.086	0.037	2.283	0.022	
H4	SG	-->		PD	0.068	0.027	2.524	0.012	
H5	BA	-->		PD	0.806	0.109	7.407	***	
H7	BI	-->		PD	0.35	0.085	4.091	***	
Mediating Relationship									
H6a	VM	-->	BA	-->	PD	0.483	0.006	76.100	0.000
H6b	AM	-->	BA	-->	PD	0.035	0.003	10.385	0.000
H6c	BM	-->	BA	-->	PD	0.073	0.004	18.488	0.000
H6d	SG	-->	BA	-->	PD	0.041	0.003	14.873	0.000
H8a	VM	-->	BI	-->	PD	0.215	0.005	43.172	0.000
H8b	AM	-->	BI	-->	PD	0.006	0.003	2.344	0.000
H8c	BM	-->	BI	-->	PD	0.033	0.003	10.800	0.000
H8d	SG	-->	BI	-->	PD	0.031	0.002	13.918	0.000

*** = significant at 99% confidence level; ** = significant at 95% confidence level; VM = viral marketing; AM = ambush marketing; BM = BM = buzz marketing; SG = street graphics marketing; BI = brand image; BA = brand awareness; PD = purchase decision

Source: Authors own elaboration based on the results from AMOS version 24.

This study intended to evaluate how guerrilla marketing influences the purchase decisions of the Millennials or Generation Y. The purpose was to determine how guerrilla marketing aspects, such as viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing are adopted and implemented as marketing strategies and how they affect the intention to purchase or the actual purchase decision and behaviour of young generations. Guerrilla marketing implies a unique and creative marketing style that emphasises excitement and inventiveness to attract customers in fresh ways (Dimobi & Anyasor, 2020). It is a marketing approach that aims to differentiate itself from typical advertising strategies by leaving a lasting impression on customers. This research found that the four aspects of guerrilla marketing, viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing, have a significant influence on the purchase decisions of Generation Y. Among them, ambush marketing was found to have the greatest impact. If ambush marketing increases by one unit, then the purchase decision would improve by 0.126. This implies that the unorthodox and frequently unexpected characteristics of guerrilla marketing have a significant impact on this particular generation, shaping their choices when it comes to purchasing products in different categories and businesses. This research considers, therefore, that ambush marketing is an effective technique for attracting the attention of the people. This is supported by Gümüštepe (2020), who indicated that ambush marketing is a marketing method used to achieve maximum visibility, while Khanna et al. (2019) indicated that ambush marketing has been beneficial in generating attention and raising brand recognition.

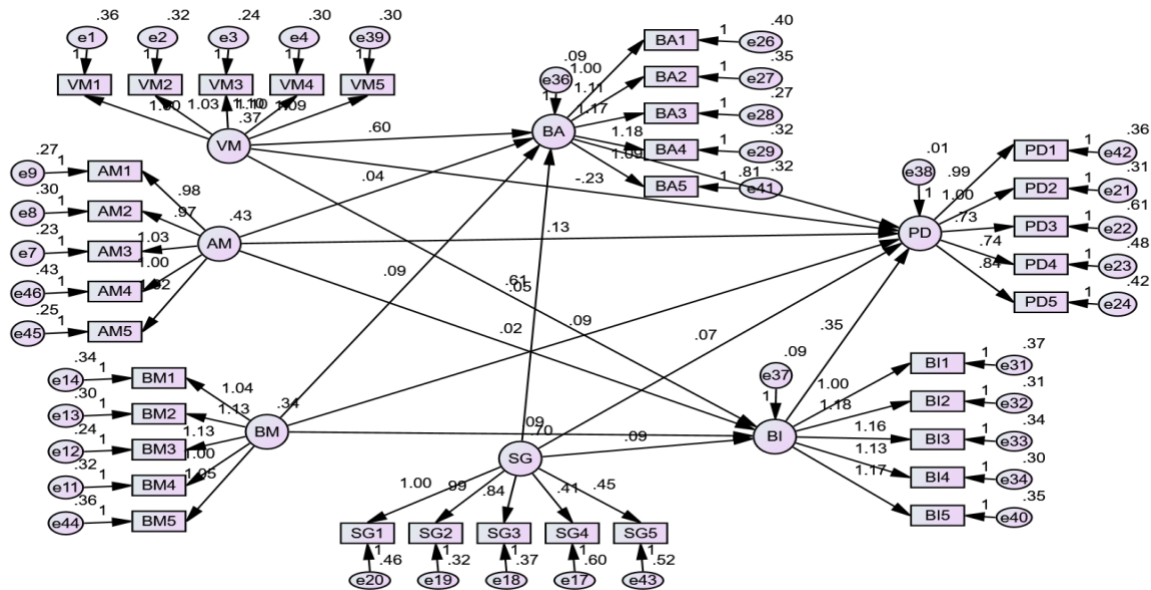


Figure 2. Results for hypothesis evaluation

Source: Authors own elaboration based on the results from AMOS version 24.

This research found that viral marketing has a strong influence (beta = 0.234) on Millennials' purchase decisions. However, this influence was negative. This finding suggests that although viral marketing can effectively attract attention and stimulate curiosity within the Millennial demographic, it may not necessarily lead to favourable purchasing behaviour. This may suggest certain disadvantages linked to viral marketing, such as doubt regarding excessively viral or exaggerated material, abundance of brands, or the disparity between viral messaging and actual purchase intention. The study found that increased viral marketing negatively affects the purchase decision of the Millennials. Viral marketing is a type of marketing that leverages the power of social media to spread the message quickly, with the intention of getting the brand known in the market. The findings of this research, therefore, contradict those of Ahmed et al. (2020a), whose view supported that viral marketing is a fast-expanding approach that swiftly distributes a message or information regarding a brand, product, or service to a target audience. Gkarane et al. (2019) also suggested that it is a low-cost strategy that leverages the power of social media to spread the message and raise brand recognition. For Millennials, this study found that viral marketing has a negative effect on their purchase decision.

Buzz marketing and street graphics marketing strategies were found to significantly and positively influence the purchase decision of Generation Y. It implied that the increased use of these techniques would improve the purchase decisions of the Millennials. This research suggests that street graphics and buzz marketing have a significant effect on consumer behaviour. Consumers are more likely to visit a store when they see a good advertisement/advertisement, especially if they are going there for the first time. They also tend to be more proactive in their search behaviour, which means that they will go straight to the store instead of first searching online or going through social media websites. These results are in line with that of Ahmed et al. (2020a), who indicated that this marketing is highly effective, since customers trust their friends' opinions more than traditional advertising. Additionally, Dubauskas and Išoraitė (2022) observed that street graphics may

help companies stand out and attract the attention of their target audience by employing innovative and unique approaches. The effect of brand awareness and brand image were also investigated. The research revealed that in addition to having a significant influence on the purchase decision, brand image, and brand awareness mediates the effects of viral marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing on the purchase decision. It implies that for businesses, products, and services that have been already established in the market, implementing viral marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing would have a higher influence on the purchase decision of Generation Y.

Implications and recommendations

From this research, both theoretical and managerial implications could be highlighted. From the theoretical perspective, this research developed a conceptual framework that investigated the effect of guerrilla marketing on the purchase decisions of Millennials. Two critical aspects were developed. First, the critical elements and dimensions of guerrilla marketing include viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing. These marketing strategies are vital as far as influencing customer behaviours is concerned. Additionally, this study integrated the aspects of guerrilla marketing concepts with brand image and brand awareness aspects. These aspects were found to be active in creating unique and memorable experiences for young consumers. It could be considered that guerrilla marketing could be more effective in influencing purchase decisions as compared to traditional marketing.

Regarding the managerial implications, this research recommends that guerrilla marketing is the new norm of marketing that has a significant influence on Generation Y. Guerrilla marketing leverages the power of social media. Therefore, the marketing department should consider using social media platforms as a critical tool to reach Generation Y. Companies should leverage social media platforms to create buzz around guerrilla marketing campaigns and increase consumer engagement.

To have a maximum influence on Generation Y, this research recommends that guerrilla marketing should be integrated with digital marketing. Guerrilla marketing can be integrated with digital marketing strategies to create a comprehensive marketing campaign. Social media platforms can be used to amplify the impact of a guerrilla marketing campaign, leading to greater brand exposure and engagement. Guerrilla marketing can be a powerful tool for businesses to reach out to Generation Y consumers. A well-executed guerrilla marketing campaign can create a lasting impression on the target audience, leading to greater brand exposure, engagement, and loyalty.

Conclusions and future research

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of guerrilla marketing strategies on the purchasing decisions of Generation Y. The impacts of guerrilla marketing investigated included viral marketing, ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing. The mediating effects of brand awareness and brand image on the effect of guerrilla marketing strategies were investigated. The research adopted quantitative techniques with primary data collected from Generation Y respondents. The results indicated that ambush marketing, buzz marketing, and street graphics marketing have significant and positive influences on the purchase decision of Generation Y and agrees with some literature utilised

in the research (Ahmed et al., 2020a, 2020b; Bestari et al., 2021; Gkarane et al., 2019; Manyal & Mittal, 2020). Viral marketing was found to have a negative significant influence on their purchase decision. Brand image and brand awareness were found to have a significant influence on purchase decisions and significant mediators of the guerrilla marketing effect of purchase decision of Generation Y.

From the implications, it will help marketers and brand managers in designing effective guerrilla marketing strategies to target and engage the tech-savvy Generation Y. By enhancing brand image and brand awareness, companies can effectively influence Generation Y's purchasing decisions and gain a competitive edge in the dynamic marketplace. The research recommended that guerrilla marketing is important, as it leverages the power of social media to influence purchase behavior. Marketing managers should implement well-planned and executed guerrilla marketing to create a lasting impression on the target audience. Additionally, guerrilla marketing strategies can effectively shape the brand image and increase brand awareness, ultimately influencing the purchasing decisions of Generation Y. By adopting unconventional and innovative guerrilla marketing techniques, marketers can capture the attention and loyalty of this influential consumer segment. The limitation of this research is that it targeted Generation Y only as the study population. Future research could look at a different study population to compare the results. As well this study adopted structural equation modelling (SEM) as the analysis technique. Future researchers could use different methodologies, such as regression analysis.

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Appendix

Constructs	Sources	
Viral Marketing		
VM1	Viral marketing campaigns play a crucial role in capturing my attention and interest in a brand	Hoyer & Brown, 1990
VM2	Viral marketing campaigns are effective in spreading brand messages among Generation Y consumers	
VM3	I am more likely to share and discuss brand-related content that has gone viral	
VM4	Viral marketing campaigns enhance my perception of a brand's uniqueness and innovation	
VM5	Viral marketing campaigns positively influence my purchasing decisions	
Ambush Marketing		
AM1	Ambush marketing influences my brand preferences and choices of generation Y	Meenaghan, 1994
AM2	Ambush marketing enhances the visibility and exposure of a brand during major events	
AM3	Ambush marketing can lead me to switch my loyalty from official sponsors to ambushing brands	
AM4	Ambush marketing can lead to legal issues and potential lawsuits for brands engaging in such practices	
AM5	Ambush marketing has the potential to generate significant brand exposure at a lower cost compared to official sponsorship	

Constructs	Sources	
Buzz Marketing		
BM1	Buzz marketing creates a sense of excitement and curiosity about a brand or product	Mira & Ghanbari, 2017
BM2	Buzz marketing enhances your awareness of new products or services	
BM3	Buzz marketing campaigns are effective in capturing the attention of Generation Y consumers	
BM4	Buzz marketing positively influences my purchasing decisions	
BM5	Buzz marketing campaigns make me more likely to recommend a brand to others	
Street Graphics Marketing		
SG1	Street graphics marketing effectively captures my attention and makes me curious about the brand.	Soomro et al., 2021
SG2	Street graphics marketing is an innovative and creative way to promote a brand	
SG3	Street graphics marketing positively influences my purchasing decisions	
SG4	Street graphics marketing creates a positive and memorable brand experience for me	
SG5	Street graphics marketing is an effective tool for reaching and engaging Generation Y consumers	
Brand Awareness		
BA1	Brand awareness plays a crucial role in shaping my preferences for certain products or services	Ahmed, et al., 2020
BA2	The level of brand awareness affects my perception of a product's quality	
BA3	I am willing to pay a premium price for a product or service from a well-known brand.	
BA4	Brand awareness plays a crucial role in shaping my preferences for certain products or services	
BA5	I am more likely to purchase a product or service from a brand that I am aware of.	
Brand Image		
B11	A strong brand image makes me more likely to choose a product over its competitors	Wu & Wang, 2014
B12	The brand image of a product has a significant impact on my recommendation to others	
B13	A positive brand image enhances my perception of the product's value for the price	
B14	A strong brand image increases my loyalty towards a product.	
B15	Brand image plays a crucial role in my decision-making process.	
Purchase Decision		
PD1	Guerrilla marketing campaigns influence my purchase decisions more than traditional marketing methods	Powrani & Kennedy, 2018
PD2	I am more likely to purchase a product that engages in guerrilla marketing tactics	
PD3	Guerrilla marketing efforts increase my intention to make a purchase decision.	
PD4	Guerrilla marketing campaigns create a positive perception that influences my purchase decision	
PD5	Brand awareness significantly affects my perception of the product/service and influences my purchase decision	

Source: Adapted and assembled by the author from existing literature.