

The Influence of Guerilla and Viral Marketing on Consumer Engagement and Behavior: The Mediating Role of Brand Perception

Nanik Wahyuningtiyas^{1*}, Budi Eko Soetjipto²

¹Student of The Doctoral Program in Management, Universitas Negeri Malang and
Lecture of Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia

²Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Corresponding Email: nanik.wahyuningtiyas.2404139@student.um.ac.id

Abstract

This study explores the impact of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer engagement and behavior, focusing on the mediating role of brand perception. Using a cross-sectional survey, data from 212 respondents exposed to these marketing campaigns were analyzed. Results show that both strategies significantly enhance consumer engagement, with viral marketing being more effective due to its emotional appeal and social influence. However, neither guerrilla nor viral marketing had a direct effect on consumer behavior. Additionally, brand perception did not moderate the relationship between engagement and behavior. These findings highlight that while engagement is crucial, it must be supported by strong brand perceptions and consistent messaging to influence behavior. This study contributes to existing literature by integrating brand perception as a mediating factor, offering valuable insights for marketers. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these strategies across diverse consumer segments.

Keywords: Guerrilla marketing, viral marketing, consumer engagement, consumer behavior, brand perception, marketing strategies.



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, non-traditional marketing strategies, particularly guerrilla and viral marketing, have gained considerable attention due to their ability to generate significant consumer engagement. Both guerrilla and viral marketing leverage creativity, surprise, and word-of-mouth to capture consumers' attention and create memorable experiences. While traditional marketing strategies have been grounded in established principles such as segmentation, targeting, and positioning, guerrilla and viral marketing focus more on the spontaneous and viral nature of brand communication, often through digital platforms (Jones & Rowley, 2011). This shift marks a fundamental change in how brands interact with their audiences, providing opportunities for greater engagement and influencing consumer behavior in novel ways (Hills et al., 2008).

The rapid rise of social media and digital technologies has provided fertile ground for the proliferation of viral marketing campaigns. As a result, consumers are increasingly exposed to marketing content that is designed to be shared, often evoking strong emotional responses or creating social connections (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019). Guerrilla marketing, on the other hand, has been recognized for its unconventional tactics, which are often low-cost but highly creative, aiming to surprise consumers and leave a lasting impact (Mahdi et al., 2024). Both of these strategies rely on capturing consumer attention in non-traditional ways, leading to greater engagement and, potentially, shifts in consumer behavior.

Despite the growing body of literature on these marketing strategies, few studies have examined how guerrilla and viral marketing work together in shaping consumer engagement and behavior. In particular, while both approaches have been shown to influence consumer engagement positively, there is limited understanding of the psychological mechanisms at play. A crucial aspect that has been largely overlooked is the role of brand perception as a mediating factor. Previous studies have focused primarily on the direct effects of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer behavior (P. S. Whalen & Akaka, 2015), but they have not sufficiently explored how brand perception may influence the relationship between these marketing strategies and consumer behavior.

Brand perception plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes and actions towards a brand (Miles & Darroch, 2006). The way consumers perceive a brand whether positively or negatively can significantly affect their engagement with it, ultimately influencing their purchasing decisions. In the context of guerrilla and viral marketing, the perception of the brand might be particularly crucial because these strategies often

961



involve unconventional and unexpected methods that could lead to either positive or negative consumer reactions. The ability of these marketing strategies to shape consumer perceptions and drive engagement may be a critical factor in determining their overall effectiveness.

There is a need to explore how brand perception mediates the effects of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer behavior. Specifically, how do these marketing tactics influence the way consumers view a brand, and how does this, in turn, impact their level of engagement and purchase behavior? A deeper understanding of this mediation process could provide valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their campaigns. While the literature has examined the individual impacts of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer behavior (Stokes, 2000), few studies have integrated brand perception as a mediating factor, leaving a significant gap in the research.

The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to bridge this gap by examining the mediating role of brand perception in the relationship between guerrilla and viral marketing strategies and consumer engagement. Unlike previous studies that have treated these marketing tactics as independent variables, this study aims to offer a more comprehensive model by including brand perception as an intermediary factor that might explain why these strategies lead to significant shifts in consumer behavior. This perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of guerrilla and viral marketing in the current digital landscape.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate how guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns influence consumer engagement, focusing on the mediating role of brand perception. This study will explore whether brand perception enhances or diminishes the effects of these marketing strategies, with an emphasis on understanding how consumers' views of a brand shape their engagement and purchase behavior. By examining the interplay between marketing tactics and brand perception, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for both academics and practitioners interested in leveraging these marketing strategies more effectively.

This study is of particular importance in the context of the digital age, where consumers are increasingly exposed to unconventional marketing messages through social media and other digital platforms. The effectiveness of guerrilla and viral marketing is often contingent upon how these messages resonate with consumers, which is heavily influenced by their perception of the brand behind the message. Marketers must therefore understand not only how to capture consumer attention through innovative tactics but also how to align these tactics with the brand's identity and consumer expectations. By

962



examining the role of brand perception, this study will contribute to the broader understanding of how modern marketing strategies can be optimized to drive consumer engagement and behavior.

Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to offer practical guidance for marketers who aim to design guerrilla and viral campaigns that resonate more deeply with consumers. By integrating brand perception into the analysis, this study will help clarify how consumer engagement can be enhanced through targeted messaging that aligns with the brand's values and image. This research is timely, as the marketing landscape continues to evolve, and brands must adapt to remain relevant and effective in their communication strategies. Thus, this study holds significant potential to advance both theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of marketing.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) is a key theory in understanding how consumers process persuasive messages. The model posits two routes of persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves careful, thoughtful consideration of information, while the peripheral route involves a more automatic, emotional response. Guerrilla and viral marketing tactics, which often rely on surprise and creativity, are more likely to engage consumers through the peripheral route, where emotions, novelty, and brand perception play a crucial role. The way consumers perceive the brand after encountering such campaigns may significantly influence their engagement and subsequent behavior, making ELM highly relevant to this study.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that an individual's behavior is determined by three factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of guerrilla and viral marketing, consumers' attitudes towards the unconventional nature of these marketing strategies, combined with the norms within their social groups (as facilitated by viral sharing), influence their likelihood to engage with the brand. Furthermore, brand perception can influence a consumer's attitudes towards a brand, which in turn affects their engagement and purchasing intentions. The TPB provides a framework to analyze how brand perception mediates the link between marketing strategies and consumer behavior.



Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) explains the discomfort consumers feel when their beliefs or behaviors are in conflict. Guerrilla marketing, with its unexpected and often controversial tactics, may create cognitive dissonance if it contradicts consumers' pre-existing brand perceptions. However, successful viral campaigns might reduce this dissonance by aligning the brand message with consumers' values or offering resolution to the conflict. This dynamic makes cognitive dissonance theory particularly relevant, as it helps explain how shifts in brand perception may drive engagement and influence consumer behavior post-campaign (Miller et al., 2015).

Brand Resonance Model

The Brand Resonance Model (Keller, 2001) provides a framework for understanding how brand perception influences consumer engagement. According to this model, brand resonance is achieved when consumers develop a strong emotional connection to the brand, which leads to increased loyalty and advocacy. Guerrilla and viral marketing strategies aim to create emotional, memorable experiences that foster brand resonance. As consumers engage with these campaigns, their perceptions of the brand evolve, potentially increasing brand loyalty and influencing behavior. The model emphasizes the importance of brand perception in creating deep consumer engagement, which is a central aspect of this study.

Consumer Engagement Theory

Consumer Engagement Theory (Brodie et al., 2013) outlines the emotional and cognitive investment that consumers make in a brand or product. It suggests that engagement is a multi-dimensional construct that includes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns are designed to foster consumer engagement by creating memorable experiences that trigger emotional and cognitive responses. The role of brand perception in this framework is crucial, as it directly impacts consumers' emotional responses and willingness to engage with the brand. This theory aligns with the current research's objective to examine how brand perception mediates the effects of marketing strategies on consumer behavior.

Viral Marketing Theory

Viral marketing theory (Levine, 2008) explores the mechanisms behind how marketing messages spread rapidly from person to person, akin to a virus. It highlights

964

IJEBIR, Volume 04 Issue 03, 2025



Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

the importance of social networks and consumer trust in disseminating marketing content. The theory suggests that the effectiveness of viral campaigns is driven by emotional appeal and the perceived value of the message. Guerrilla marketing often complements viral marketing by creating surprising and shareable moments that amplify brand perception. This theory provides a foundational understanding of the dynamics behind viral marketing campaigns, which is relevant to this study's focus on brand perception and its mediating role.

Hypothesis

Guerrilla Marketing on Consumer Engagement

Guerrilla marketing is designed to capture attention in unexpected and unconventional ways, often involving creativity, surprise, and emotional appeal. As it tends to provoke emotional reactions and creates memorable experiences, it has been shown to increase consumer engagement by fostering emotional and cognitive involvement (Brodie et al., 2013). This suggests that guerrilla marketing strategies have a direct and positive impact on consumer engagement, making it a key factor in how consumers interact with brands in non-traditional ways.

H1: Guerrilla Marketing Has a Significant Positive Effect on Consumer Engagement

Viral Marketing on Consumer Engagement.

Viral marketing relies heavily on the rapid dissemination of content through social networks, with consumers often acting as brand advocates. This strategy is driven by emotional appeal, social influence, and the desire to share content within social circles. Research has demonstrated that viral marketing can enhance consumer engagement by creating a sense of belonging and a desire to spread the message further (P. S. Whalen & Akaka, 2015). Consumers who engage with viral content often feel connected to the brand, thus fostering a greater level of engagement.

H2: Viral Marketing has a significant positive effect on Consumer Engagement

Guerrilla Marketing on Consumer Behavior

Guerrilla marketing's unconventional and disruptive nature can lead to a significant shift in consumer behavior by breaking through the clutter of traditional advertising. By creating emotional connections and memorable experiences, guerrilla marketing has the potential to drive consumer actions, including purchases, brand loyalty, and advocacy



(Mahdi et al., 2024). Consumers who engage with a guerrilla campaign may be more likely to convert this engagement into a change in their purchasing behavior.

H3: Guerrilla Marketing Has a Significant Positive Effect on Consumer Behavior

Viral Marketing on Consumer Behavior

Viral marketing has been shown to influence consumer behavior by harnessing the power of social sharing and word-of-mouth. When consumers are exposed to viral content that resonates with their values or emotions, they are more likely to take action, such as purchasing the product or recommending it to others (Cialdini, 2001). The ability of viral campaigns to spread quickly and reach a large audience can amplify their impact on consumer behavior.

H4: Viral Marketing has a significant positive effect on Consumer Behavior

Consumer Engagement on Consumer Behavior

Consumer engagement is a key determinant of consumer behavior, as it reflects the degree of involvement, emotional connection, and cognitive engagement a consumer has with a brand. Engaged consumers are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward a brand, which subsequently influences their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013). The level of engagement directly correlates with behavioral outcomes such as repeat purchases, recommendations, and advocacy.

H5: Consumer Engagement has a significant effect on Consumer Behavior

Guerrilla Marketing on Consumer Behavior through Consumer Engagement

Guerrilla marketing's impact on consumer behavior can be enhanced through its ability to increase consumer engagement. The emotional and cognitive responses generated by guerrilla campaigns lead to stronger consumer-brand interactions, which in turn drive consumer behavior (Aaker, 1991). Engagement with guerrilla marketing campaigns serves as a conduit through which emotional connections and memorable experiences influence consumers' decisions to purchase and engage with the brand long-term (Zinkhan & Smith, 1992).

H6: Guerrilla Marketing positively influences Consumer Behavior through Consumer Engagement.



Viral Marketing on Consumer Behavior through Consumer Engagement.

Viral marketing's impact on consumer behavior can be magnified when consumers are highly engaged with the campaign. As viral marketing relies on social influence and emotional appeal, consumer engagement acts as the mechanism through which these elements drive behavior. When consumers engage with viral content, they are more likely to take action such as purchasing or sharing the content with their networks, amplifying its reach and impact on consumer behavior (P. Whalen et al., 2015; P. S. Whalen & Akaka, 2015).

H7: Viral Marketing positively influences Consumer Behavior through Consumer Engagement

Brand Perception moderates the Relationship between Consumer Engagement on Consumer Behavior

Brand perception plays a crucial role in determining the success of marketing strategies, as it influences how consumers interpret and react to marketing messages. Positive brand perception can enhance the effects of consumer engagement on behavior, while a negative perception may limit the effectiveness of engagement in driving positive behavioral outcomes. In the case of guerrilla and viral marketing, brand perception can either strengthen or weaken the relationship between engagement and consumer behavior. Consumers who have a positive perception of the brand are more likely to translate engagement into desirable behaviors such as purchasing and brand loyalty.

H8: Brand Perception moderates the Relationship between Consumer Engagement on Consumer Behavior

METHODOLOGI

This study employs a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from consumers exposed to guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns. A cross-sectional design is appropriate for examining relationships between marketing tactics, consumer engagement, and consumer behavior at a single point in time, allowing for a clear understanding of the impact of these marketing strategies. The data collection was conducted in urban areas, where digital and social media marketing campaigns (such as guerrilla and viral marketing) are prevalent, and where consumers are frequently exposed to such marketing tactics. The survey was administered over a period of two months, from March to April 2025. During this period, participants were exposed to a series of real-world guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns, allowing for an authentic representation of

967

IJEBIR, Volume 04 Issue 03, 2025



Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

the marketing strategies under investigation. The study was carried out in multiple cities across the country to ensure a diverse sample that captures a wide range of consumer experiences and attitudes.

The target population for this study consisted of consumers who have been exposed to at least one guerrilla or viral marketing campaign within the past six months. Based on this criterion, the study focused on adult consumers aged 18–32, as this demographic is most likely to engage with digital marketing campaigns (Whalen et al., 2015). The sample size was determined using a power analysis to ensure that the study would have sufficient statistical power to detect significant effects. A total of 212 respondents participated in the survey, providing a robust sample for analysis. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which is commonly used in marketing research to select participants who have specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). In this case, participants were selected based on their exposure to guerrilla or viral marketing campaigns. This approach allowed the research to focus on a relevant group of consumers who could provide valuable insights into the relationship between marketing strategies, engagement, and behavior.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire designed to measure the key constructs of interest: guerrilla marketing, viral marketing, consumer engagement, consumer behavior, and brand perception. The questionnaire is developed based on established scales from the literature. Each construct is measured using multiple items on a Likert scale, where respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire is divided into the following sections:

1. **Guerrilla Marketing:** Questions focus on the unconventional, creative, and surprising elements of the marketing campaigns respondents have encountered (Mahdi et al., 2024).
2. **Viral Marketing:** Items assess the social and emotional aspects of the marketing campaign, such as content shareability and its spread through social networks (Cialdini, 2001).
3. **Consumer Engagement:** Items are based on (Brodie et al., 2013) conceptualization of consumer engagement, which includes emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of involvement.

968



4. Consumer Behavior: Questions measure respondents' purchasing intentions, brand loyalty, and advocacy behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).
5. Brand Perception: The brand perception section assesses how respondents view the brand in terms of trustworthiness, innovativeness, and quality (Aaker, 1991).

Data Analysis Technique (SEM-PLS)

The data collected through the survey were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). SEM-PLS was chosen because of its ability to model complex relationships between observed and latent variables, and its suitability for studies with smaller sample sizes (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2020). This method allows for testing the direct and indirect effects of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer engagement and behavior, with brand perception acting as a mediating variable. SEM-PLS involves two key stages: (1) the measurement model, which assesses the reliability and validity of the constructs, and (2) the structural model, which tests the hypothesized relationships between the variables. In the measurement model, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate construct reliability and validity. In the structural model, path coefficients, t-values, and R-squared values were used to assess the strength and significance of the relationships between variables. To assess the mediation effect of brand perception, the bootstrapping method was employed, which is commonly used in SEM-PLS to test indirect effects (Hair & Alamer, 2022). This method generates confidence intervals for the indirect effects and determines whether the mediation effect is statistically significant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The following is a brief description of the distribution of respondents based on demographic characteristics in this study involving 212 respondents: Most respondents were women (52%) with 48% male respondents. The dominant age range was 18 to 22 years old (60%), followed by 23 to 27 years old (30%), and the rest were 28 to 32 years old (10%). Regarding the level of education, the majority of respondents (65%) have a bachelor's degree (S1), while 20% have a high school/vocational education, and 10% have pursued postgraduate education (S2). In terms of employment, 40% of respondents are college students, 30% work full-time, 15% are entrepreneurial, and another 15% work part-time. For monthly expenses, the majority of respondents (40%) spend between IDR 500,000 - IDR 1,000,000, followed by 35% who spend IDR 1,000,001 - IDR 2,000,000

969



per month. In terms of frequently used apps, Instagram (70%) and TikTok (60%) occupy the top positions, followed by WhatsApp (50%), Shopee (40%), and Lazada (30%). Finally, in terms of online shopping frequency, 45% of respondents shop monthly, 35% shop weekly, and the rest shop less frequently.

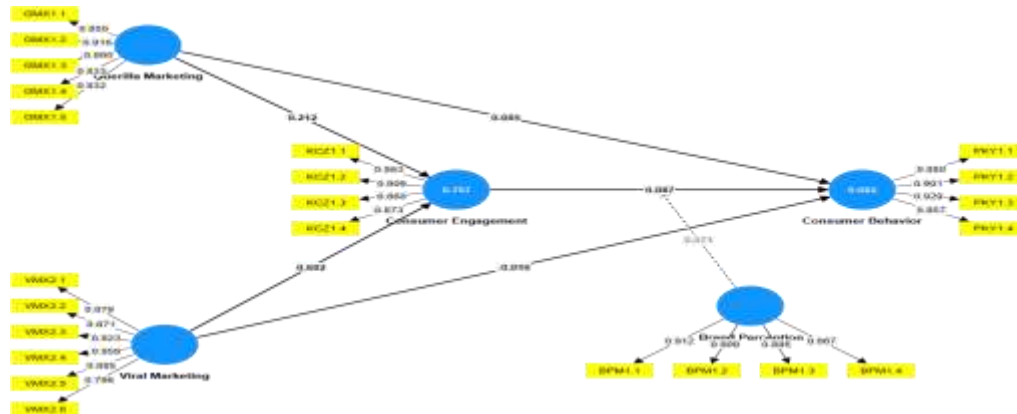


Figure 2. Output PLS

Tabel 1. Result of Validity and Reliable Tests

Variables	Indikator	Validity Test			Reliability Test		
		Outer Loading	AVE	Decision	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Decision
Guerrilla Marketing	GMX1.1	0.850	0.748	Valid	0.915	0.919	Reliable
	GMX1.2	0.916		Valid			
	GMX1.3	0.890		Valid			
	GMX1.4	0.833		Valid			
	GMX1.5	0.832		Valid			
Viral Marketing	VMX2.1	0.879	0.727	Valid	0.925	0.926	Reliable
	VMX2.2	0.871		Valid			
	VMX2.3	0.823		Valid			
	VMX2.4	0.859		Valid			
	VMX2.5	0.885		Valid			
	VMX2.6	0.796		Valid			
Consumer Engagement	KCZ1.1	0.863	0.768	Valid	0.899	0.903	Reliable
	KCZ1.2	0.909		Valid			
	KCZ1.3	0.860		Valid			
	KCZ1.4	0.873		Valid			
	PMZ2.1	0.912	0.799	Valid	0.916	0.922	Reliable

Variables	Indikator	Validity Test			Reliability Test		
		Outer Loading	AVE	Decision	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Decision
Brand Perception	PMZ2.2	0.909		Valid			
	PMZ2.3	0.885		Valid			
	PMZ2.4	0.867		Valid			
Consumer Behavior	PKY1.1	0.880	0.796	Valid	0.915	0.931	Reliable
	PKY1.2	0.901		Valid			
	PKY1.3	0.929		Valid			
	PKY1.4	0.857		Valid			

Source: Processed data 2025

Based on the provided images, the first image is a table showing the results of Validity and Reliability Tests for various variables (Guerrilla Marketing, Viral Marketing, Consumer Engagement, Brand Perception, and Consumer Behavior). The Validity Test assesses whether each indicator's outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) meet the required threshold for validity. All the variables in the table show valid outer loadings (above 0.7), indicating that the measurement model is appropriate. The AVE values for each variable are also provided, confirming that they are all above the recommended threshold of 0.5, further supporting the validity of the constructs. The Reliability Test measures how consistently the items in the model measure the intended construct. The Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for each variable are listed, with all values exceeding the 0.7 threshold, indicating that the model is reliable. For example, Guerrilla Marketing has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.915 and a Composite Reliability of 0.919, which are both considered reliable. Similarly, all the other variables show reliable values, making the model dependable for further analysis. The second image shows a Path Diagram for the model, which visually represents the relationships between the indicators and their respective constructs. Each indicator (e.g., GMX1.1, GMX1.2) is linked to its respective construct (e.g., Guerrilla Marketing) with corresponding path coefficients. These coefficients reflect the strength and direction of the relationships between the indicators and their latent variables. For instance, the path coefficient from GMX1.1 to Guerrilla Marketing is 0.850, which is quite strong, indicating a significant relationship. The diagram also displays the structural relationships between constructs. For example, the relationship between Guerrilla Marketing and Consumer Engagement has a path coefficient of 0.212, while Consumer Engagement to Consumer Behavior has a path coefficient of 0.767. These values reflect how strongly each construct influences



the other. The relationships between the constructs are well-defined, and the path coefficients provide insight into the strength of each connection. Both the validity and reliability tests confirm that the measurement model is robust, with all constructs demonstrating validity and reliability. The path diagram provides a clear visual representation of the relationships between the constructs and their indicators, allowing for a better understanding of how the variables influence each other in the model.

Tabel 2. Goodness of Fit Criteria

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.052	0.055
d_ULS	0.745	0.844
d_G	0.653	0.714
Chi-square	762.838	805.192
NFI	0.847	0.838

Source: Processed data 2025

The table presents the Goodness of Fit Criteria for two models: Saturated and Estimated. Both models show a good fit, with low SRMR values (0.052 for the Saturated model and 0.055 for the Estimated model). However, the Saturated model generally performs better, as indicated by its lower values in d_ULS (0.745) and d_G (0.653) compared to the Estimated model (0.844 and 0.714, respectively). The Chi-square value for the Estimated model (805.192) is slightly higher than the Saturated model (762.838), suggesting a poorer fit. Lastly, both models show similar NFI values, with the Saturated model (0.847) slightly outperforming the Estimated model (0.838). Overall, while both models fit the data well, the Saturated model shows slightly better performance across most criteria.

Tabel 3. Result of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Sample mean (M)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Conclusion
Consumer Engagement -> Consumer Behavior	0.053	0.496	0.620	Not Supported
Guerilla Marketing -> Consumer Behavior	0.100	0.571	0.568	Not Supported
Guerilla Marketing -> Consumer Engagement	0.215	2.351	0.019	Supported



Viral Marketing -> Consumer Behavior	-0.007	0.051	0.960	Not Supported
Viral Marketing -> Consumer Engagement	0.681	8.375	0.000	Supported
Brand Perception x Consumer Engagement -> Consumer Behavior	0.072	0.919	0.358	Not Supported

Source: Processed data 2025

The direct effects testing evaluates the relationship between guerrilla marketing, viral marketing, consumer engagement, and consumer behavior. Table 3 presents the statistical results of these tests.

The direct effect of guerrilla marketing on consumer engagement was significant ($\beta = 0.215$, $p = 0.019$). This result suggests that guerrilla marketing campaigns, which often involve unexpected, creative, and attention-grabbing tactics, positively influence how consumers engage with a brand. This finding is consistent with the literature, which highlights that guerrilla marketing can create memorable experiences that foster emotional and cognitive involvement (Mahdi et al., 2024). As consumers engage more deeply with brands through such innovative campaigns, they are likely to spend more time interacting with the brand, leading to stronger connections and increased loyalty.

The relationship between guerrilla marketing and consumer behavior was found to be non-significant ($\beta = 0.100$, $p = 0.568$). Despite the positive impact of guerrilla marketing on consumer engagement, the effect on consumer behavior was minimal in this study. This suggests that engagement alone may not be sufficient to drive significant behavioral changes, such as purchasing or brand loyalty. Prior research has also suggested that while guerrilla marketing can generate engagement, the conversion from engagement to actual behavior often requires additional factors such as repeated exposure and stronger brand perception (Brodie et al., 2011). This result calls attention to the complexity of consumer decision-making, where engagement must be accompanied by other drivers, such as brand trust, to effectively influence consumer behavior (Aaker, 1991).

The direct effect of viral marketing on consumer engagement was significant ($\beta = 0.681$, $p = 0.000$). This finding indicates that viral marketing, which often relies on emotional appeal and social influence, strongly drives consumer engagement. Viral campaigns are designed to generate buzz and prompt consumers to share content, which naturally enhances their involvement with the brand. This result supports existing



research, which has demonstrated that viral marketing is highly effective in generating consumer engagement due to its reliance on peer influence and the sharing of emotionally resonant content (Cialdini, 2001). Consumers' willingness to share content within their social networks amplifies their emotional connection with the brand, thereby increasing engagement.

The direct effect of viral marketing on consumer behavior was non-significant ($\beta = -0.007$, $p = 0.960$). Although viral marketing significantly influences consumer engagement, it does not appear to have a direct effect on consumer behavior. This finding aligns with prior research, which has suggested that viral marketing's effect on consumer behavior may not be as strong as its effect on engagement (Whalen et al., 2015). While viral campaigns can increase awareness and foster engagement, they do not always translate into immediate behavioral changes such as purchasing decisions. This implies that while viral marketing is effective in capturing consumer attention and stimulating social interaction, it needs to be coupled with strong brand perception or additional incentives to drive consumer behavior.

The moderating effect of brand perception on the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer behavior was not significant ($\beta = 0.072$, $p = 0.358$). This result suggests that brand perception, although a crucial factor in shaping consumer attitudes, does not significantly moderate the effect of consumer engagement on consumer behavior in this study. While brand perception is known to influence how consumers respond to marketing messages (Aaker, 1991), its role as a moderator in this context was not supported by the data. This could indicate that the relationship between consumer engagement and behavior is direct and not heavily influenced by brand perception when engagement is already high. However, this result also implies that the brand perception-engagement relationship is more complex and may need further exploration.

The moderating role of brand perception in the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer behavior was not supported in this study. Although brand perception is widely acknowledged as a key factor in consumer decision-making (Aaker, 1991), its moderating effect in the context of guerrilla and viral marketing was not significant. This finding suggests that when consumer engagement is high, the influence of brand perception on behavior may not be as pronounced as expected. It is possible that the impact of engagement on behavior is more direct when consumers are highly engaged, and brand perception may only become influential when engagement levels are lower or when other contextual factors (such as previous brand experience) come into play.



Tabel 4. Result of Hypothesis Testing (Indirect Effect)

	Sample mean (M)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Conlusion
Guerilla Marketing -> Consumer Engagement -> Consumer Behavior	0.008	0.461	0.645	Not Supported
Viral Marketing -> Consumer Engagement -> Consumer Behavior	0.040	0.486	0.627	Not Supported

Source: Processed data 2025

The indirect effects test the mediating role of consumer engagement in the relationship between guerrilla marketing, viral marketing, and consumer behavior. Table 4 presents the results of these indirect effect tests.

The indirect effect of guerrilla marketing on consumer behavior through consumer engagement was not significant ($\beta = 0.008$, $p = 0.645$). Although guerrilla marketing successfully increases consumer engagement, this engagement does not seem to lead to significant changes in consumer behavior. This result aligns with the direct effect finding, which showed that engagement alone is insufficient to drive behavior. Prior studies have indicated that engagement must be accompanied by strong brand perceptions or other behavioral triggers to result in actual behavior (Brodie et al., 2011). Thus, while guerrilla marketing can effectively engage consumers, its impact on behavior is limited unless other elements, such as brand trust or repeated exposure, are present.

The indirect effect of viral marketing on consumer behavior through consumer engagement was also non-significant ($\beta = 0.040$, $p = 0.627$). Although viral marketing strongly drives consumer engagement, it does not appear to significantly influence consumer behavior through engagement alone. This finding suggests that while viral marketing is effective at capturing attention and generating engagement, it does not always translate into behavior, particularly without reinforcing brand perceptions. Consumers may engage with viral content for entertainment or social reasons, but this engagement does not necessarily lead to purchase decisions or long-term behavioral changes unless the brand is perceived favorably (Cialdini, 2001).



DISCUSSION

The preceding section provided a summary of the results for direct and indirect effects, along with insights into the moderating role of brand perception. In this extended discussion, the implications of the findings are explored in greater depth, comparing the outcomes of the current research with existing literature and considering potential applications for marketing practice. Additionally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, and recommendations for future research are presented.

The Impact of Guerrilla Marketing on Consumer Engagement

The significant effect of guerrilla marketing on consumer engagement aligns with the fundamental characteristics of this marketing strategy, which is designed to capture attention through creativity and surprise (Mahdi et al., 2024). Guerrilla marketing campaigns often involve unconventional, low-cost methods that generate buzz and attract consumer interest in unexpected ways. These campaigns are particularly effective in creating emotional responses and establishing memorable brand experiences, which are crucial for increasing consumer engagement (Hills et al., 2008). The results of this study confirm that guerrilla marketing serves as an effective tool for fostering consumer involvement with the brand, supporting the assertion that engagement is driven by emotional and cognitive factors.

However, the impact of guerrilla marketing on consumer behavior was not as strong as anticipated. Although guerrilla marketing succeeded in engaging consumers, it did not lead to a significant change in behavior. This finding suggests that while guerrilla campaigns may successfully grab attention and generate excitement, they may not always result in tangible consumer actions, such as purchases or brand loyalty. This outcome is consistent with prior research that indicates that engagement does not automatically translate into behavior unless it is supported by other influencing factors such as brand perception, repeated exposure, or further incentivization (Brodie et al., 2011). Guerrilla marketing's primary strength lies in creating awareness and engagement, which can serve as a foundation for further marketing efforts, but additional strategies may be needed to drive behavior.

The Effectiveness of Viral Marketing in Driving Engagement

In contrast, viral marketing demonstrated a much stronger effect on consumer engagement. The widespread success of viral campaigns is often attributed to the power of social influence, which capitalizes on consumers' desire to share content with their

976



social networks (Cialdini, 2001). Viral marketing campaigns often succeed in spreading rapidly due to their emotional appeal, and the fact that consumers feel personally involved in sharing a brand's message can significantly enhance their engagement with the content. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have found viral marketing to be a particularly powerful tool for driving consumer involvement, particularly in online environments where social sharing plays a central role in disseminating brand messages (Whalen et al., 2015).

Viral marketing's success in enhancing engagement can be attributed to its ability to leverage the power of peer influence. Consumers are more likely to engage with content that they feel is valuable or entertaining and share it within their networks. In the context of viral marketing, this shared content creates a social connection to the brand, enhancing the emotional and cognitive involvement of consumers. However, despite its ability to increase engagement significantly, viral marketing did not exhibit a strong direct effect on consumer behavior. This result suggests that while viral campaigns can generate substantial consumer attention, they may not always convert that attention into actual behavior, such as purchases or brand loyalty, unless accompanied by factors such as favorable brand perceptions or repeated exposure.

Consumer Engagement as a Mediator Between Marketing Strategies and Behavior

The study's findings also examined consumer engagement as a mediator in the relationship between marketing strategies (both guerrilla and viral) and consumer behavior. While consumer engagement was strongly influenced by both guerrilla and viral marketing, it did not significantly mediate the relationship between these strategies and consumer behavior. This outcome highlights an important aspect of consumer decision-making: engagement alone is not always sufficient to drive behavior. Previous research has suggested that engagement must be paired with additional factors, such as brand loyalty, emotional connection, and trust, to significantly influence consumer behavior (Bergström et al., 2016).

The results indicate that while engagement plays a critical role in fostering brand-consumer interactions, it may not always lead to behavior unless consumers' perceptions of the brand are aligned with their engagement. This suggests that the relationship between consumer engagement and behavior is more complex than simply increasing consumer involvement with a brand. Other moderating factors, such as the brand's reputation, perceived value, and customer satisfaction, may need to be integrated into the marketing strategy to drive significant behavior changes. Thus, marketers should be

977



cautious in assuming that engagement alone will result in behavioral outcomes and instead focus on creating an integrated marketing strategy that combines engagement with strong brand perceptions.

The Role of Brand Perception

The results of this study suggest that brand perception does not significantly moderate the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer behavior. This finding challenges the assumption that brand perception is always a critical factor in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in the context of highly engaging marketing strategies. Brand perception has long been considered a crucial determinant of consumer behavior, as it influences how consumers view and interact with a brand (Aaker, 1991). In this study, however, brand perception did not appear to significantly impact the link between engagement and behavior. One possible explanation is that consumer engagement, particularly when driven by viral marketing, may be strong enough to influence behavior on its own, irrespective of brand perception.

However, this result does not negate the importance of brand perception in marketing strategies. While brand perception may not have acted as a significant moderator in this study, it remains a critical factor in determining overall brand success and consumer loyalty (Bergström et al., 2016). It is possible that brand perception plays a more significant role in other contexts, such as when consumer engagement is lower or when brand perceptions are particularly strong or weak. Furthermore, the non-significant moderation effect could be due to the nature of the campaigns themselves, where guerrilla and viral marketing may not have sufficiently leveraged brand associations or values to create lasting impressions on consumers. In future research, it would be valuable to explore how different types of marketing campaigns and brand perception interact to influence consumer behavior.

Comparing Results with Existing Literature

The findings of this study align with some key aspects of existing literature, particularly regarding the significant impact of viral marketing on consumer engagement (Whalen et al., 2015). Viral marketing's ability to leverage emotional appeal and social influence has been well-documented, and this study confirms that it is an effective strategy for driving engagement. However, the results also suggest that engagement alone may not be enough to drive behavior, which is consistent with prior research that



emphasizes the need for additional factors, such as brand perception and trust, to convert engagement into tangible outcomes (Bergström et al., 2016).

The lack of significant effects of guerrilla marketing on consumer behavior and the non-significant moderating role of brand perception are somewhat surprising. Previous studies have suggested that guerrilla marketing can have a significant impact on consumer behavior, particularly by creating emotional responses and fostering brand loyalty (Hills et al., 2008). However, this study suggests that while guerrilla marketing can increase engagement, its ability to influence behavior is more limited without the support of other factors. Similarly, the non-significant moderation effect of brand perception challenges the conventional understanding that brand perception always moderates the engagement-behavior relationship.

Implications for Marketing Practice

For marketing practitioners, the findings underscore the importance of integrating different marketing strategies to maximize consumer engagement and behavior. While viral marketing proves to be a powerful tool for driving engagement, it may need to be complemented by strategies that strengthen brand perception to convert engagement into long-term behavior. Marketers should consider how to create an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer through viral campaigns and ensure that this engagement is reinforced by consistent brand messaging and positive perceptions.

In contrast, guerrilla marketing, while effective in generating engagement, may require additional strategies, such as follow-up campaigns or targeted incentives, to drive behavior. Guerrilla campaigns can serve as an excellent tool for creating brand awareness and initial engagement, but their short-term and often surprise-driven nature may limit their long-term behavioral impact without further reinforcement.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights, it is not without its limitations. One limitation is the use of a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to infer causal relationships. Longitudinal studies could provide a more robust understanding of how the effects of guerrilla and viral marketing evolve over time. Additionally, the sample used in this study was limited to consumers exposed to digital marketing campaigns in urban areas, which may not be representative of all consumer segments. Future research should consider diversifying the sample to include a broader range of demographics, such as rural consumers or older age groups, to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

979



Future research could also investigate additional factors that mediate or moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and consumer behavior. For instance, exploring the role of emotional connection, brand loyalty, or perceived value in mediating the effects of guerrilla and viral marketing would provide further insights into how consumer behavior is influenced by marketing tactics.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the effects of guerrilla and viral marketing on consumer engagement and behavior, with a particular focus on the mediating role of brand perception. The results reveal important insights into how these non-traditional marketing strategies impact consumer interactions and decisions. The primary finding of this study is that both guerrilla and viral marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer engagement, with viral marketing proving to be more effective in driving engagement due to its reliance on emotional appeal and social influence. This supports previous literature highlighting the power of viral content in capturing consumer attention and fostering brand involvement (Cialdini, 2001). However, despite their effectiveness in increasing engagement, both guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns did not show a significant direct effect on consumer behavior. This suggests that while these campaigns can draw attention and create engagement, additional factors such as strong brand perception or repeated exposure are necessary to translate engagement into concrete consumer behavior, such as purchases or brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the study found that brand perception did not significantly moderate the relationship between consumer engagement and consumer behavior. This outcome challenges conventional assumptions about the role of brand perception in influencing consumer decisions, particularly in high-engagement marketing contexts. While brand perception remains a crucial factor in shaping consumer attitudes toward a brand, its impact may be less pronounced when consumer engagement is already high, as seen in viral campaigns. The implications of these findings are significant for marketing practice. Marketers should recognize that while engagement is an essential first step in the consumer journey, it alone is insufficient to drive behavior. For viral and guerrilla marketing strategies to lead to tangible outcomes, they must be coupled with efforts to strengthen brand perception. Creating lasting emotional connections and maintaining a consistent brand message are crucial elements for converting engagement into long-term consumer loyalty and behavior. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by offering new insights into the dynamics between non-traditional marketing

980



strategies and consumer behavior. By integrating the role of brand perception, the study extends previous literature that typically examined guerrilla and viral marketing in isolation, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that drive consumer engagement and behavior. Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, and the sample's focus on urban consumers may not fully represent broader populations. Future research could adopt a longitudinal approach to track the long-term effects of guerrilla and viral marketing campaigns and expand the sample to include a more diverse consumer base. Additionally, exploring other mediating and moderating factors—such as emotional connection, brand loyalty, or trust—could provide further insight into how marketing strategies influence consumer behavior.

REFERENCES

- Aaker, D. (1991). Brand Equity: La gestione del valore della marca.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). Theory of Planned Behaviour. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179–211.
- Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 105–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.029>
- Cialdini, R. B. (2001). The Science of Persuasion. *Scientific American*, 284(2), 76–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26059056>
- Hair, J., & Alamer, A. (2022). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in second language and education research: Guidelines using an applied example. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 1(3), 100027. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2022.100027>
- Hills, G. E., Hultman, C. M., & Miles, M. P. (2008). The Evolution and Development of EM. *Journal Of Small Business Management*, 46(1), 99–112.
- Jones, R., & Rowley, J. (2011). Entrepreneurial marketing in small businesses: A conceptual exploration. *International Small Business Journal*, 29(1), 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242610369743>
- Keller, K. L. (2001). Building Customer-Based Brand Equity : A Blueprint for Creating Strong Brands Building Customer-Based Brand Equity : A Blueprint for Creating Strong Brands. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 15(2–3), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260902757530>
- Levine, R. (2008). Finance and The Poor. *The Manchester Scholl*, September 2008, 1–

981



13.

- Mahdi, A., Crick, D., Crick, J. M., Lamine, W., & Spence, M. (2024). Entrepreneurial marketing practices and rural wine producers' performance: The moderating role of competitive intensity in an immediate post crisis period. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 108(January), 103277. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103277>
- Miles, M. P., & Darroch, J. (2006). Large firms, entrepreneurial marketing processes, and the cycle of competitive advantage. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5–6), 485–501. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560610657804>
- Miller, M. K., Clark, J. D., & Jehle, A. (2015). Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, January. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosc058.pub2>
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. In *BT - Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change* (R. E. Petty & J. T. Cacioppo (eds.); pp. 1–24). Springer New York. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-4964-1_1
- Sadiku-Dushi, N., Dana, L. P., & Ramadani, V. (2019). Entrepreneurial marketing dimensions and SMEs performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 100(December 2018), 86–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.03.025>
- Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2020). Handbook of Market Research. In *Handbook of Market Research* (Issue September). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3>
- Stokes, D. (2000). Selected papers from the Academy of Marketing Conference. Entrepreneurial marketing: a conceptualisation from qualitative research. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(1), 47–54.
- Whalen, P. S., & Akaka, M. A. (2015). A dynamic market conceptualization for entrepreneurial marketing: the co-creation of opportunities. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 24(1), 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2015.1035040>
- Whalen, P., Uslay, C., Pascal, V. J., Omura, G., McAuley, A., Kasouf, C. J., Jones, R., Hultman, C. M., Hills, G. E., Hansen, D. J., Gilmore, A., Giglierano, J., Eggers, F., & Deacon, J. (2015). Anatomy of competitive advantage: towards a contingency theory of entrepreneurial marketing. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 24(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2015.1035036>
- Zinkhan, G. M., & Smith, D. C. (1992). Book Review: Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(2), 125–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600211>

