

A Study On Insights into Guerilla Marketing in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract

The concept of Guerilla Marketing was first put forward by Jay Conrad Levinson in 1984. Guerilla Marketing is unconventional way of marketing a product or service. An appropriate example for this would be the popularisation of the film Kabali by the producer Kalaipuli S. Thanu by the advertisement on the AirIndia aircraft. Even though this concept was proposed thirty years ago, it has become a weapon in the marketing arsenal only in the recent years. This concept can be used to counter a marketing attack or to create buzz around the market or to make a marketing message viral. Initially it was thought that this concept was meant only for small organisations, but of late some of the big giants like Burger King, Intel, Samsung, Nike and many more have utilized this concept to conquer the world. Educational Institutions especially higher educational institutions in India recently facing a tough competitions from every nuke and cranny. India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of student's enrolment. When it comes to advertisements, educational sector uses more conventional methods of marketing to attract students. In this scenario - Can Guerilla Marketing be beneficial to the higher educational institutions in India? A probe was undertaken to answer this research problem through this study.

Key words: Guerilla Marketing, Higher Educational Institutions, Insights

1. Introduction

The dawn of 21st century had thrown many new challenges to all organisations across the globe. One such challenge is to find anew creative way of reaching the modern consumers. It is apparent that the old and traditional way of creating interest among the consumers could not fetch the desired results at all times. Also consumers are clever enough to skip these kind of marketing activities such as online marketing, e-mail marketing, etc. Recent researches reveal that consumers avoid traditional and modern day marketing strategy with ease. At this juncture organizations strive for influencing consumers pose the following vital question?

Is there any new, innovative and more effective way of reaching consumers?

2. The Concept of Guerilla Marketing

In 1984 Jay Conrad Levinson answered this question by introducing an entirely new and innovative concept to the marketing world called Guerilla Marketing in his book titled 'Guerilla Marketing'. Now what is this Guerilla Marketing?

Guerilla Marketing is unconventional way of marketing a product or service. An appropriate example for this would be the popularisation of the film Kabali by the producer Kalaipuli S. Thanu through the advertisement printed on the AirIndia aircraft. Even though this concept was proposed thirty years ago, it has become a weapon in the marketing arsenal only in the recent years. The following are the dimensions of Guerilla Marketing.

1. Wild Posting: Adhere posters wildly at buildings, streets and construction sites with or without proper permissions.
2. Ambient Marketing: Very innovative, cool and pleasant, generally out-door in nature.
3. Ambush Marketing: One company counters the Ads placed by rivalries.
4. Viral Marketing: Messages were spread from one person to another through social media and blogs.
5. WOM: People talks about their experiences to their groups and suggest them accordingly.
6. Buzz Marketing: Controversies were created to make loud gossips in the market.
7. Stealth Marketing: Consumers were advertised without their knowledge.
8. Alumni Push: Information and suggestion provided by alumni

3. Research Gap

A comprehensive literature review revealed that only a very few studies were conducted in Guerilla Marketing in India. For the study 50 research works in connection with Guerilla Marketing were collected. All these reviews revealed that no study was conducted in Chennai to give insights into Guerilla Marketing in Higher Educational Institution. As the Guerilla Marketing concept is gaining attentionall over the world, a research on this particular topic is mandatory. Hence to fill this research gap this study was undertaken.

4.Literature Review

Sivakumar (2023) examined the unique strategies of Guerrilla marketing and its efficacy on consumer behaviour. The results of the study identified a strong relationship between Guerrilla marketing and consumer behaviour. Viral marketing or WOM was considered to be an effective medium of marketing communication.

Lalit (2023) studied the impact of Guerrilla marketing among middle aged smart phone users in Delhi. It was opined that the business hours need to have a clear idea of Guerrilla marketing and also suggested that the company has to analyse marketing communication strategies before implementation. Swity Balwani et al. (2017) in their study revealed that the respondents felt comfortable with unconventional way of Advertising and they enjoyed it.

5. Statement of the Problem

Guerrilla Marketing is conducting an innovative and unconventional marketing campaign in unexpected places. The primary objective of guerrilla marketing is to create a distinctive and thought-provoking advertisementaimed tocreate buzz and consequently to get positive responses from the consumers. Educational institutions normally spend less amount for advertisements when compared to

manufacturing and services providing organisations. Due to the ever increasing competitions in this service sector, of late, institutions are in focus on smart way of increasing their student enrollment. Now would guerilla marketing positively influence the students and parents if the organisations in the higher education system decide to invest its money and time? This study was an attempt to get some insights on this research question.

6. Objectives of the Study

The following are the research objectives.

1. To study the theoretical concepts of Guerilla Marketing
2. To study whether unconventional marketing influences students
3. To study whether guerilla marketing influences student enrollment

7. Research Methodology

The research design employed in the research is causal design. This research design is employed in this study because the primary aim of this research work is to examine the effect of guerilla marketing on student enrollment. Guerilla marketing is measured by using the dimensions Wild Posting, Ambient Marketing, Ambush Marketing, Viral Marketing, Word of Mouth, Buzz Marketing, Stealth Marketing and Alumni Push and Student Enrollment (SE) is measured by using three measurement items. The study employed Convenience Sampling method to collect data from the respondents. The data was collected from the students of Higher Education Institutions as the study is about student's enrollment. The sample size is fixed at 100. Structured Questionnaire is used to collect the data from the respondents. Percentage Analysis, independent sample t-test and Multiple Regression were used to analyse the collected data.

8. Results and Discussion

8.1 Descriptive Statistics

The data was collected from 65 male and 35 female students. All the students were undergoing undergraduate course in Higher Education Institutions, Chennai when the data was collected. The details of gender composition are presented in the following table.

Table 1
Gender

Gender	Frequency
Male	65
Female	35
Total	100

Source: Developed for the study

For the question 'who or what influenced the decision of getting admission in Higher Education Institutions, 47 respondents said that their parents influenced the decision and 30 students said their

friends and relatives influenced to take that decision. It is quite interesting to see that only 2 students out of 100 students said that they were influenced by the advertisements. The following table presents the result.

Table 2
Admission Decision

	Frequency
Advertisement	2
Parents	47
Friends/Relatives	30
Self	13
Former Students	8
Total	100

Source: Developed for the study

For the question which would be the appropriated media for educational advertisements, 39 students said broadcast media and 25 students said media. The following table presents the results.

Table 3
Appropriate Media for Educational Institutions

Media	Frequency
Print Media	10
Broadcast Media	39
Outdoor Media	9
Internet Media	17
Social Media	25
Total	100

Source: Developed for the study

For the question, the factor essential for the enrollment of the student, 40 respondents said reputation and 27 respondents said scholarship. Again it is interesting to note that only three students said advertisements are essential for the enrollment.

Table 4
Essential for Enrollment

Frequency	Percent
Website	3
Infra-structure	12
Scholarship	27
Advertisement	3
Reputation	40
Qualified Faculty	15
Total	100

Source: Developed for the study

The dimensions of the guerilla marketing and the dependent variable student enrollment are measured using five point Likert Scale. The descriptive statistics of these items are presented in the following table.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Guerilla Marketing and Student Enrollment

Sl. No.		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Guerilla Marketing				
1.	Wild Posting	100	3.06	1.340
2.	Ambient Marketing	100	3.04	1.497
3.	Ambush Marketing	100	3.18	1.473
4.	Viral Marketing	100	3.82	1.258
5.	Word of Mouth	100	3.50	1.481
6.	Buzz Marketing	100	2.58	1.609
7.	Stealth Marketing	100	2.97	1.617
8.	Alumni Promotion	100	3.05	1.604
Student Enrolment				
1.	Ad influences the enrollment	100	2.07	1.513
2.	Ad increases the reputation	100	2.44	1.343
3.	Unconventional ad is essential	100	4.00	1.206

Source: Developed for the study

The inspection of the descriptive statistics of the above items reveal that most of the values are almost three. However the item ‘Unconventional ad is essential’ has the highest mean value of 4. This indicates that the students felt unconventional ad is essential for the educational institution. This increased the curiosity of the researcher to know whether both the gender has the same perception. This is examined in the following sub-section of the study ‘Inferential Statistics’.

8.2 Inferential Statistics

The main objective of this section of the study is to investigate differences between male and female students with respect to their perception of guerilla marketing. The descriptive statistics revealed that ‘Unconditional ad is essential’ for the educational institutions. To have more insights it is essential to know whether both the genders have the same perception. To examine this the following research hypothesis was developed.

H1o: There is no significant differences among genders about the essentiality on unconventional ad.

H1a: There is significant differences among genders about the essentiality on unconventional ad.

There are two variables in this hypothesis. They are gender and unconditional ad is essential. Gender is a categorical variable. It has only two categories. They are male and female. ‘Unconditional ad is essential’ is a continuous variable. Independent sample t-test is preferable for these kinds of variables. Hence independent sample t-test was conducted.

The results of the test are presented in the following Table.

Table 6
Independent Sample T-Test

Constructs	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Unconventional ad is essential	2.123	98	.036

Source: Developed for the study

The results of the independent sample t-test indicate that the Null Hypothesis should be rejected. It implies that there is significant difference with respect to both male and female as $t(98) = 2.123, p = .036$. Hence it can be concluded that the perception of both male and female differ in connection with 'Unconventional ad is essential'. To have an in-depth insight the researcher decided to examine the cross tabulation of these two variables. The cross tabulation is presented as follows:

Table 7
Gender vs Unconventional ad is essential

			Unconventional ad is essential				
			Not Extremely essential	Not essential	Neither essential nor not essential	Essential	Extremely essential
Gender	Male	Count	7	2	13	17	26
		% within Gender	10.8%	3.1%	20.0%	26.2%	40.0%
	Female	Count	1	1	2	12	19
		% within Gender	2.9%	2.9%	5.7%	34.3%	54.3%
Total		Count	8	3	15	29	45
		% within Gender	8.0%	3.0%	15.0%	29.0%	45.0%

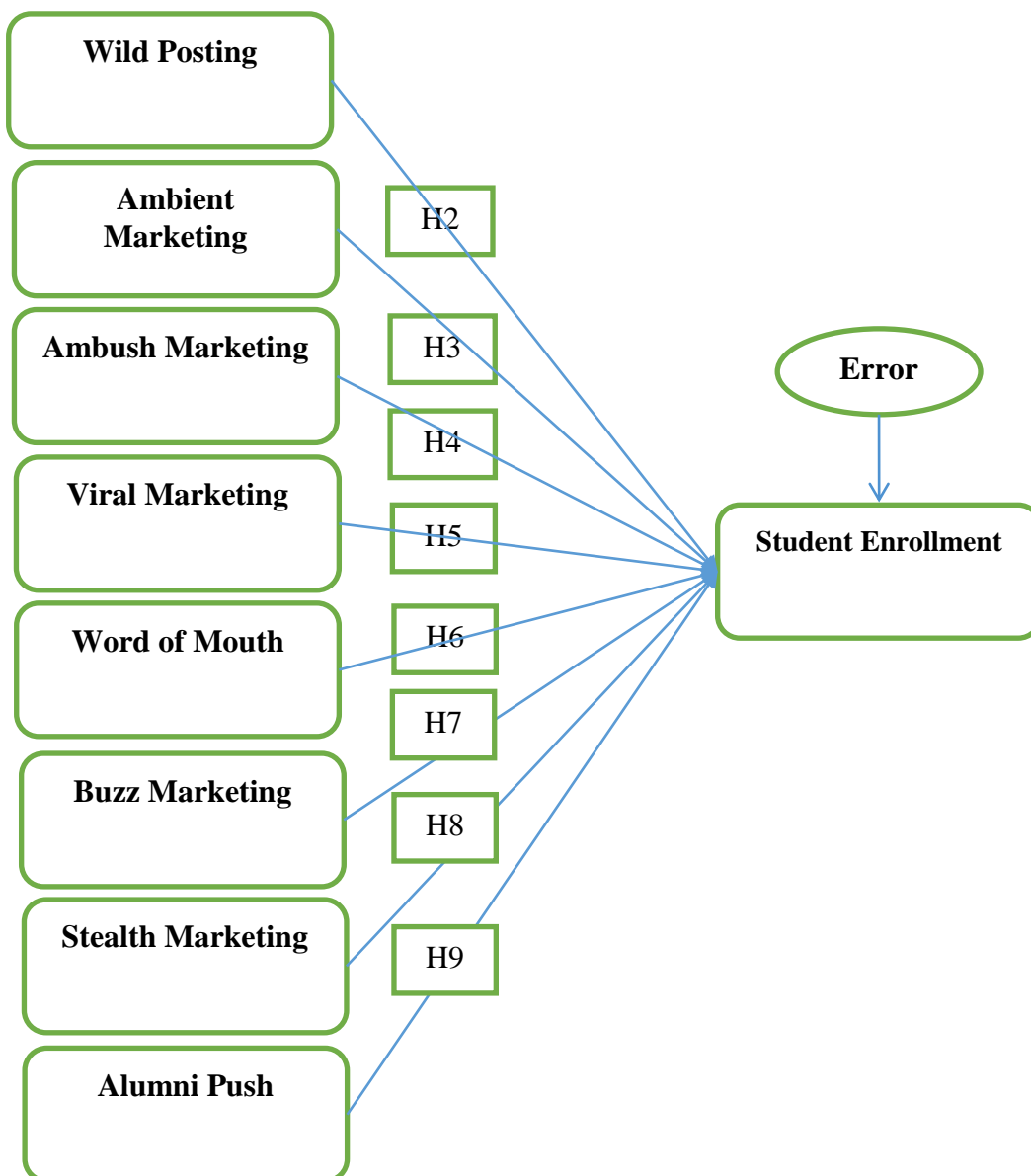
Source: Developed for the study

The above table reveals that nearly 89% of female felt that 'Unconventional ad is essential' whereas only 66% of male felt that 'Unconventional ad is essential'. This indicates that both male and female students perceive differently. Hence it can be concluded that female students feel unconventional ad is essential.

8.2.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to assess the relationship between guerilla marketing and student enrollment. It is used to determine whether a set of independent variables influence another dependent variable. In this study it is used to determine whether the eight dimensions positively influences student enrollment. The proposed conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework of the study



The following research hypotheses were developed to assess the relationship.

H2o: There is no significant relationship between wild posting and student enrollment.

H2a: There is a significant relationship between wild posting and student enrollment.

H3o: There is no significant relationship between ambient marketing and student enrollment.

- H3a: There is a significant relationship between ambient marketing and student enrollment.
- H4o: There is no significant relationship between ambush marketing and student enrollment.
- H4a: There is a significant relationship between ambush marketing and student enrollment.
- H5o: There is no significant relationship between viral marketing and student enrollment.
- H5a: There is a significant relationship between viral marketing and student enrollment.
- H6o: There is no significant relationship between word of mouth and student enrollment.
- H6a: There is a significant relationship between word of mouth and student enrollment.
- H7o: There is no significant relationship between buzz marketing and student enrollment.
- H7a: There is a significant relationship between buzz marketing and student enrollment.
- H8o: There is no significant relationship between stealth marketing and student enrollment.
- H8a: There is a significant relationship between stealth marketing and student enrollment.
- H9o: There is no significant relationship between alumni push and student enrollment.
- H9a: There is a significant relationship between alumni push and student enrollment.

Before passing on to multiple regression analysis, tests of regression assumptions were conducted. The basic classical linear regression model (CRLM) assumptions were tested. A constant term was included to meet the assumption that the errors have zero value. Scatter plot did not exhibit any non-linear pattern and hence linearity assumption was also met. The Scatter Plot analysis clearly showed homoscedasticity have not been met by the variables. Condition of normality was also met through the normal p-p plots. Hence the study moved on to the next stage of hypotheses testing.

Table 8
Hypothesis Testing

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.217	.458		7.026	.000
	WP	.067	.069	.114	.972	.334
	ABIM	-.038	.064	-.074	-.605	.547
	ABUM	-.039	.059	-.073	-.655	.514
	VM	-.077	.064	-.124	-1.196	.235
	WOM	.034	.058	.065	.590	.557
	BM	-.060	.051	-.124	-1.196	.235
	SM	.028	.052	.058	.534	.595
	AP	-.032	.052	-.066	-.611	.543

a. Dependent Variable: StudentEnrollment

Source: Developed for the Study

Table 8 indicates whether the hypotheses were accepted are not. Here all of the hypotheses were rejected because of significant p value ($p < 0.05$). Hence it can be concluded that there exists significant relationship between dependent variables and independent variable. Hence the following relationships are valid.

- H2a: There is a significant relationship between wild posting and student enrollment.
- H3a: There is a significant relationship between ambient marketing and student enrollment.
- H4a: There is a significant relationship between ambush marketing and student enrollment.
- H5a: There is a significant relationship between viral marketing and student enrollment.
- H6a: There is a significant relationship between word of mouth and student enrollment.
- H7a: There is a significant relationship between buzz marketing and student enrollment.
- H8a: There is a significant relationship between stealth marketing and student enrollment.
- H9a: There is a significant relationship between alumni promotion and student enrollment.

The above table indicates that the t-values are high. This indicates strong explanatory power of that independent variable. Overall, the model is a good fit. Based on the above analysis the following regression equation would be derived to represent the model:

The general regression equation is:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

By using the above mentioned equation, the equation of the model developed in this study can be written as:

$$SE = 3.217 + .067 WP - .038 ABIM - 0.039 ABUM - .077 VM + .034 WOM - .060 BM + 0.028 SM - 0.032 AP$$

where SE stands for Student Enrollment, ABIM stands for Ambient Marketing, AMUM stands for Ambush Marketing, VM stands for Viral Marketing, WOM stands for Word of Mouth, BM stands for Buzz Marketing, SM stands for Stealth Marketing and AP stands for Alumni Promotion.

9. Insights gained

The main objective of this study is to gain some insights into the Guerilla Marketing. The following are the insights gained by this study.

1. Conventional advertisements have very less influence on student community.
2. Parents have very good influence on students in selecting a particular college.
3. Broadcast media is considered as appropriate media for educational advertisements.
4. Reputation and scholarship influence students while selecting an educational institution.
5. Institutions having qualified faculty also influence students.
6. Most of the dimensions of guerilla marketing have average effect on the students.
7. Both male and female perceive unconventional marketing differently.
8. Female students are more influenced by the unconventional ad than the male students.
9. All the dimensions of guerilla marketing have significant influence on student enrollment.
10. Overall unconventional marketing activities have more influence on students than the traditional marketing.

10. Limitations of the study

The following are the limitations of the study.

1. The sample size is limited to 100 respondents only. It may not represent the views of entire population.
2. Only students were considered for collecting data. Other stakeholders such as parents, faculty and management were excluded.
3. At the data collection stage convenience sampling method was adopted. It limits the generalisation of the results.
4. Bias may be in the responses. It may affect the validity of the results.
5. The data was collected from ThiruthangalNadar College. It limits the applicability of the findings to other higher educational institutions.

11. Conclusion and Future Research Direction

This study aimed to determine the influence of guerrilla marketing on student enrollment. Guerrilla marketing is the recent innovation in the Field of Marketing. It also aids creativity and innovation in the marketing field. The results of this study suggested that the Guerilla Marketing influences student enrollment. Hence in terms of managerial implications, higher educational institutions could use this concept to increase their enrollment. For further research, this study may be replicated with more number of samples. This study may also be replicated by including in the sample other stakeholders such as parents, faculty, and management members of the particular institution. Future studies can be undertaken by probability sampling technique.

According to Jay Conrad Levinson, Marketing is not an event, but a process. It has a beginning, a middle, but never an end. The same applies to this concept too. This concept may be three decades old, but it is going to rule world ever and forever.

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