

Guerrilla marketing's effects on Gen Y's word-of-mouth intention – a mediation of credibility

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to integrate guerrilla marketing characteristics into advertising model through which the perceived effects of guerrilla marketing on Gen Y are identified, and to examine such effects on word of mouth (WOM) activity with the mediation of message credibility.

Design/methodology/approach – The study obtains its exploratory purpose through quantitative method by asking Gen Y participants about their perceptions of 20 guerrilla advertisements in the questionnaires. Those advertisements and the advertising scales are selectively chosen from previous literature so that the results truthfully reflect the effects of guerrilla marketing under consumer perspective.

Findings – The results show that, creativity, as a combination of novelty and relevance, has the strongest direct and indirect effect on WOM intention. Similarly, surprise factor, the claimed root philosophy of guerrilla marketing, is confirmed when it also impacts directly and indirectly consumer behaviour. Message credibility plays a meaningful mediation role, and through this, message clarity manifests its indirect influence on WOM.

Originality/value – The study supports the belief that guerrilla marketing is suitable for any business because of its effectiveness and efficiency. More significantly, the awareness of Gen Y consumers of the advertisements, with or without knowing that these ads belong to guerrilla advertising, strengthens the expectation that guerrilla marketing in general and guerrilla advertising in particular are recommended choices when they reflect what common marketing and advertising should be.

Keywords Guerrilla advertising, Guerrilla marketing, Message credibility, Word of mouth
Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Modern technology has been shaping the ways businesses do marketing. It enables audiences to edit TV commercials (Chiagouris, 2006), enriches online promotional contents through the power of the internet to such an extent that online advertising has become the fastest growing type these days (Levinson and Lautenslager, 2009). However, the flourishing of advertisements inevitably leads to advertising clutter, an occasion when a large number of advertisements appear in certain places (Abdul-Razzaq *et al.*, 2009). It curtails attention to promotional messages (Rotfeld, 2006), negatively influences attitudes towards the ads (Obermiller *et al.*, 2005), and reduces brand and ad memorability (Hammer *et al.*, 2009). In such circumstances, traditional marketing finds itself ineffective. Guerrilla marketing, consequently, arises as a worthy consideration.

Guerrilla marketing is an unconventional marketing method based on time, energy and imagination instead of big marketing budgets (Levinson, 1984). It is most suitable for organizations which do not have resources to confront directly with their large competitors and have to deploy unexpected and creative tactics to reach their target customers. There are two implications from this concept: first, the unexpectedness and novelty of guerrilla approaches help companies to penetrate into consumer awareness



through advertising clutter; and second, such is their efficiency that not only SMEs but also big corporations have been exploiting them. Guerrilla marketing enables marketers to reach target prospects with minimum waste within a small budget (Hatch, 2005). It employs a combination of tools such as public relations, advertising and marketing into an offensive strategy to reach consumers through a variety of means, such as attention-getting street graphics, strange occurrences, memorable events, buzz, viral marketing, etc. (Chionne and Scozzese, 2014). Among them, word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing plays an exceptionally pivotal role.

WOM has been a popularly academic studied concept for many decades (Weiss *et al.*, 2008). It has proven to be more persuasive than advertising and the consumer's own attitude (East *et al.*, 2005) and even claimed to be one of the most effective ways to attract and keep customers (Lo, 2012). WOM recommendations are believed to not manifest strong commercial contents (Harrison-Walker, 2001) and generated between those who have no personal interest in that kind of action (Chung and Darke, 2006), resulting in higher credibility than commercial advertisements (Herr *et al.*, 1991). However, one notable fact is that positive product evaluations do not always lead to positive WOM (Holmes and Lett, 1977), which means only those who are reasonably motivated are likely to conduct such behaviour. At that time, one question arises: WOM, as a tool of guerrilla marketing, helps to affect consumer behaviour, but when as a focal construct, what effects of guerrilla marketing will influence its existence, and in turn impact the purchase decision?

The research embraces that question when it endeavours to identify guerrilla marketing effects (through guerrilla advertisements) on WOM activities of Gen Y in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. From previous literature, the guerrilla marketing characteristics were selectively included in the model and their effects, through the mediation of message credibility, on WOM were evaluated. The combined quantitative method, taking advantage of advertising scales, and qualitative method, exploring consumer perceptions of guerrilla effects, is a clear significance of the research, of which the results may achieve certain generalizability and help to pave ways for future guerrilla marketing research in Vietnam contexts.

Literature review

Guerrilla marketing effects – the independent variables

Rather than assess the guerrilla marketing concept under the perspective of “the activity, set of instructions, and processes for creating communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (The American Marketing Association (AMA), 2015), the study attempts to clarify its influence on consumers under their perspective. As mentioned by Ay *et al.* (2010), guerrilla advertising is the most innovative and creative part of guerrilla marketing. Through the integration of advertising scales and characteristics of guerrilla marketing, seven guerrilla marketing effects, also seven independent variables, are established. They are (message) clarity, surprise, aesthetics (well-craftiness), humour, novelty, relevance (meaningfulness) and emotion arousal.

Novelty

Novelty is common descriptor of creativity. According to some researchers, it is the first criterion to decide whether a product is creative (Jackson and Messick, 1967). It has two characteristics: divergence from the norm and a sense of uniqueness, implying that advertisements which are inconsistent with others of the same product category are novel

(Stoltman, 1991). As a component of creativity, novelty positively affects advertising effectiveness, and together with relevance, it positively affects consumer attitude and behaviour (Ang *et al.*, 2012). Examining novelty's impact is, therefore, essential.

Relevance (meaningfulness)

The concept in this study is ad relevance, the meaningfulness when customers perceive of the ads when they communicate the product. To some academicians, relevance means the appropriateness of an original advertisement, through which its creativity is evaluated (Ang and Low, 2000). According to Heckler and Childers (1992), relevance is the reflection of how information embodied in an ad contributes to or detracts from the ad message. Only when an ad shows some meanings about the product will its novelty create creativity (Haberland and Dacin, 1992). Once creativity is built, its impact on purchase behaviour is expected (Till and Baack, 2005). Moreover, practitioners and academicians are in consensus that creativity is a powerful tool to solve the problem of advertising clutter, and when its definitions are plentiful, it is important to understand how customers, the participants, judge and react to it (Smith *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, relevance and novelty, as subcomponents of creativity, are the two vital independent variables in the proposed model.

Aesthetics (well-craftiness)

In previous literature, aesthetics is the third dimension of creativity (Mercanti-Guerin, 2008). However, coming to direct sense of experience, the stylistic and well-craftiness of a product are the first symbols of perceived creativity. Aesthetics in the study does not focus on the beauty but on the structured construction of the message (Besemer and O'Quin, 1986). It is the way in which signs are combined and form complex interactions (Berlyne, 1960). "By strategically violating certain rules of the code, so as to activate overlapping and intertwining semantic chains that are normally not associated", practitioners are able to create aesthetics effects in advertising (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992). In this research context, aesthetics is expected to contribute to the originality and uniqueness of guerrilla advertisements and affects the consumer attitude.

Humour

Humour is the final aspect of creativity (West *et al.*, 2008). Marketers should catch their customer attention before they wish them to take any interest in the products (Pieters *et al.*, 2002). Under this aspect, humour plays critical role. Conceptually, humour is characterized in terms of stimulus properties and determined through humour devices, the type or technique to make an advertisement "humorous" (Sternthal and Craig, 1973). Humorous advertisements lead to a more positive attitude towards the ads, the brands and increase purchase intention (Eisend *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, the role of humour as a component of creativity and its impact on the dependent variable are worth evaluating.

Clarity

The reason that clarity is included in the model is comprehensible because even if the advertisements are novel and such novelty is relevant to the extent that creativity is created, it may not necessarily portend that the participants understand the intended messages embodied in those advertisements, through which their subsequent actions are motivated. At that time, message clarity, which relates to the ability of one's individual to understand a message, has to be considered. Moreover, Hafer *et al.* (1996)

posited that complex message requires cognitive effort to understand. Thus, before consumers consider the product or the brand through the advertisements, they must understand the message.

Surprise

The unexpectedness that guerrilla advertisements strike on consumers, the sensational feeling that makes them “wow” or “aha”, is a powerful factor. It exists in many subcomponents of guerrilla marketing such as sensation and ambient marketing (Nufer, 2013), and is considered as the root of guerrilla philosophy (Druing and Fahrenholz, 2008). Surprise arouses feelings and results in more elaborate information processing when there is an incongruity between an ad and the expectation of that ad (Halkias and Kokkinaki, 2014). Moreover, when the message is perceived differently from what is expected, there will be more favourable attitudes towards the ad and the brand, resulting in higher consumer purchase intention (Nagar, 2015). Nonetheless, little theoretical understanding of the very essence of surprise exists (Itti and Baldi, 2008). Accordingly, the paper is expected to shed some light on this concept.

Emotion arousal

Emotion arousal is the final independent variable in the model. According to (Mandler, 1995), novelty leads to emotional consequences, which in turn evaluate whether the ad will be accepted or resisted by consumers. Two dimensions of emotion are valence and arousal. The former refers to concrete values whereas the latter mentions a kind of body activation (Feldman, 1995). Research has shown that positive moods have a positive relationship with favourable evaluations of unexpected stimuli while negative moods have a reverse relationship (Isen and Shalker, 1982). Nevertheless, as the concept implies itself, the research does not attempt to identify specific emotions (valence-focus) but evaluates the other dimension (arousal-focus). For this and other convenient purposes, out of the methods of measuring emotions (Sorensen, 2008), the research employs PAD model (the Arousal dimension) of Mehrabien and Russell (1974). Along with the other two concrete emotional variables (surprise and humour), emotion arousal variable is intended to capture a general picture of consumer feelings and their attitudes towards guerrilla advertisements.

Mediating role of credibility

There are four types of credibility: source credibility (Elizabeth and Heather, 2014); medium credibility (Zhang *et al.*, 2014), advertising credibility and advertisement content credibility (or message credibility). The final concept lies in the scope of this study.

Advertisement content credibility is “the extent to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the ad to be truthful and believable” (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989), of which the underlying process is the comparison between what is said and what is done (Herbig and Milewicz, 1995). It has positive impact on consumer attitudes towards advertising and increases purchase intention (Tsang *et al.*, 2004). With such belief, ambiguous or incomprehensible information will be perceived as less credible and has negative influence on consumer behaviour (Cronkhite and Liska, 1976). Accordingly, no matter how creative and original guerrilla advertisements are or how surprising and amazing the impressions they make on consumers, their effects will decrease in neglect of a reasonable amount of message credibility.

Besides, guerrilla marketing encompasses a wide range of unconventional tactics to grasp consumer attentions in cluttered environment. These new, unexploited and

unusual media will reduce advertiser competition and they themselves become a distinctive source of communication (Burke and Srull, 1988). Furthermore, using proper media helps to enhance ad credibility and in turn positively affects ad and brand attitude (Dahlén *et al.*, 2008). As a result, credibility is proposed in the model as the mediator between guerrilla marketing characteristics and WOM behaviour to assess the assumption that when participants are impressed by guerrilla features and persuaded by advertisement contents, they will, in the most common sense, pass the information to others.

WOM

Arndt (1967) stated that WOM communication is “a person to person communication where the person who receives information regarding a product, brand or service from a communicator perceives the information as non-commercial”. It is a vital component of a marketing process because consumers are very likely to depend on the advice of others when they make purchase decisions (Cheema and Kaikati, 2010). WOM proves itself to be more effective in influencing consumer behaviour than traditional advertising channels (Herr *et al.*, 1991) and retaining customers over time (Trusov *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, the current traditional marketing methods generally ignore WOM communication between customers (Villanueva *et al.*, 2008). Such is WOM’s important role in marketing that other forms of communication such as buzz marketing, viral marketing have to leverage its power (Helm, 2000), and so does guerrilla marketing (Gruber, 2004).

Guerrilla marketing focuses on simplicity and draws the attention of the recipients to the message, which motivates them to distribute it further through WOM activity (Ahuja *et al.*, 2007). According to Baltes and Leibing (2008), guerrilla marketing is described as “promotional strategies that use unconventional locations with an intensive WOM campaign to push and spread products into the market”. There are two kinds of WOM: input and output. Input WOM is the pre-purchase WOM derived from third parties and output WOM is the post-purchase WOM provided to third parties (File *et al.*, 1994). These two specific kinds of WOM will depend on the willingness that customers perform their action, which in turn depends on the relationship (the tie) that customers possess when strong tie mentions the personal relationships in family, relatives and friends (Chung and Tsai, 2009), and weak tie refers to the impersonal sources such as strangers, magazines, newspapers, etc. (De Matos and Rossi, 2008).

In the proposed hypothetical model, through the effects of guerrilla tactics and the mediation of message credibility, the consumers will be motivated to perform their WOM activity. The variable WOM at that time may clearly be claimed as input WOM (an important factor in the information research). However, it is undeniable that the recipients who conduct their WOM activity may already have experienced the products, and with the exposure to the advertisements, they are more motivated to share their experiences with others. In short, WOM in the model emphasized the activity, the communication of the sender of WOM rather than its type.

Gen Y

The research investigates behaviour of Gen Y because of its three important characteristics. First, it has huge buying power (Sullivan, 2003). Second, it is familiar and conversant with technology, open-minded, and even have high advertising literacy (Lenhart and Madden, 2007), to such an extent that “companies have to take into consideration [...] as it does not welcome commercial messages with open arms”

(Paul, 2001). Third, it is the potential customer segment in the near future, which will greatly influence the way businesses do marketing. Also, this generation is most responsive to humorous and emotional advertising (Morton, 2002), and has steadily increased the use of the Internet while decreasing the use of television and radio (Bridge Rattings, 2007). Hence, guerrilla marketing proves itself as a favourable choice to approach this customer segment.

There is no agreement to the age range of Gen Y (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2009). For convenience purposes, this research captures Gen Y's age range in Australia, those born from 1980 to 1994 (McCrimble Research, 2006). In Vietnam, Gen Y possesses similar characteristics (Vietnam Marketing and Management Institute(VMI), 2012). According to Vietnam General Statistics Office (2009), Vietnamese Gen Y accounted for 26.9 per cent the total population. In Ho Chi Minh City, Gen Y took up 33.82 per cent the population, approximating 10.5 per cent of Gen Y in the country. In 2013, Vietnamese Gen Y still had a high proportion of 24.7 per cent in the population, and even though there is no precise number of Gen Y in Ho Chi Minh City, the importance of studying guerrilla marketing effects on this type of consumer behaviour is already self-evident.

Model hypotheses

For further analysis, this study hypothesized that:

- H1. Novelty, relevance, aesthetics, humour, clarity, surprise and emotion arousal positively affect credibility.
- H2. Novelty, relevance, aesthetics, humour, clarity, surprise, emotion arousal and message credibility positively affect WOM.
- H3. The effects of novelty, relevance, aesthetics, humour, clarity, surprise and emotion arousal on WOM are mediated by credibility.

Research methodology

Data collection and sampling method

This study aimed to achieve the two purposes: identifying the effects of guerrilla marketing on Gen Y behaviour (qualitative) and confirming such effects by integrating the advertising scales from previous literature into the proposed model (quantitative). Unit analysis of the study was at individual level. As one of the first guerrilla marketing study in Ho Chi Minh context, convenience sampling method was applied.

The questionnaires were translated appropriately into Vietnamese to properly measure the consumer perception of guerrilla advertisements. Total 423 questionnaires were received but usable sample size was 383. Factor analysis and multiple regressions were carried out using SPSS version 20.0. The mediation power and indirect effects of independent variables were confirmed using bootstrapping method.

Measurement scale

To obtain the purpose of understanding consumer perception of guerrilla marketing rather than the intended effects proposed by marketing managers and agencies (Smith *et al.*, 2007), the study selectively combined the advertising scales with guerrilla marketing effects. By exposing participants to a means of guerrilla tactics (e.g. guerrilla advertisement), valid and reliable distinctive features of guerrilla marketing were achieved.

All the independent, mediating and dependent variables were measured on seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Novelty

was adapted from Andrews and Smith (1996), ad relevance scale and aesthetics from Mercanti-Guérin (2008), humour scale from Zhang (1996), message clarity from De Pelsmacker *et al.* (2002), surprises scale from Scherer (2005), emotion arousal from Mehrabien and Russell (1974), message credibility from Beltramini (1988) and Goldberg and Hartwick (1990) and WOM was adjusted from Harrison-Walker (2001) and Goyette *et al.* (2010).

Data analysis

Principal component analysis was used with varimax rotation method to examine meaningful factors from the proposed model. The seven independent variables resulted in four factors as in Table I.

Novelty and relevance were grouped into one factor. As discussed above, novelty and relevance are essential dimensions of creativity (Ang and Low, 2000; Smith *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, the factor was reasonably named after that. The second factor was message clarity and the third factor was humour. The final factor comprised three items of surprise scale and one item of novelty scale. Based on content validity, it was rationally convincing to name the final factor “surprise”. Total variance explained of all factors was 77.706 per cent. KMO was 0.950 and Barlett’s test of sphericity reached its significant value ($p=0.000$), showing good sampling adequacy. Cronbach’s α ’s for the four factors all were greater than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), displaying high reliability. Thus, the four factors were meaningful and reliable for further analysis.

Variables	Factor loadings	Cronbach’s α
Creativity		0.949
The ads are fascinating	0.784	
The ads have good ideas	0.759	
The ads are interesting	0.754	
The ads are original	0.744	
The ads make you think	0.718	
The ads are fresh	0.717	
The ads have deep meaning	0.694	
The ads allow the product to be differentiated	0.647	
The ads are unique	0.578	
Clarity		0.939
I understood the message very well	0.867	
I can quickly understand the ad message	0.861	
It is easy to understand the ad messages	0.850	
I found the message very clear	0.839	
Humour		0.933
The ads are playful	0.815	
The ads are funny	0.791	
The ads are humorous	0.777	
The ads are amusing	0.765	
Surprise		0.867
The ads make me dumbfounded	0.851	
The ads make me startled	0.818	
The ads are amazing	0.715	
The ads are unexpected	0.649	

Table I.
Summary of
independent
variables

Similarly, Table II showed the factor analysis of the group of dependent variables. The mediator credibility and dependent variable WOM were two meaningful factors with total variance explained of 75.678 per cent. KMO value was 0.917 and significant Barlett's test of sphericity value was $p = 0.000$. Cronbach's α 's for the two factors were above 0.9, highly exceeding the recommended value of 0.7. The two scales thereby were valid and reliability for subsequent analysis.

For convenience of further analysis, the revised hypotheses should be:

- H1.1.* Creativity positively affects credibility.
- H1.2.* Clarity positively affects credibility.
- H1.3.* Humour positively affects credibility.
- H1.4.* Surprise positively affects credibility.
- H2.1.* Creativity positively affects WOM.
- H2.2.* Clarity positively affects WOM.
- H2.3.* Humour positively affects WOM.
- H2.4.* Surprise positively affects WOM.
- H2.5.* Credibility positively affects WOM.
- H3.1.* The effect of creativity on WOM is mediated by credibility.
- H3.2.* The effect of clarity on WOM is mediated by credibility.
- H3.3.* The effect of humour on WOM is mediated by credibility.
- H3.4.* The effect of surprise on WOM is mediated by credibility.

Variables	Factor loadings	Cronbach's α
Credibility		0.936
The ads are sincere	0.869	
The ads are trustworthy	0.862	
The ads are honest	0.852	
The ads are believable	0.834	
The ads are convincing	0.818	
The ads are likely	0.773	
Word of mouth		0.942
When I tell others the products of these companies, I will tell in great details	0.868	
I am proud to tell others that I use the products of these companies	0.857	
I will not miss an opportunity to tell others about the products of these companies	0.847	
I will tell good things about the products of these companies	0.845	
I will tell people more about these companies than other companies of any type	0.809	
I will recommend the products of these companies to a friend who is interested in them	0.778	
I will tell people more about these companies than other same type companies	0.748	

Table II.
Summary of
dependent variables

Research findings

The profile of participants in the research

From Table III, female in the survey had greater proportion than male (62.4 per cent compared to 37.6 per cent). This may attribute to certain behavioural explanation in the results. Gen Y, by definition, is composed of a wide age range. However, in this study, it could be clearly seen that the age segment from 1980 to 1985 had the lowest percentage. This may be a limitation but also a gap for future research to examine particular consumer segments in Gen Y. The high frequency of using the internet (79.4 per cent) and the high frequency of advertisement exposure (the percentage from “moderate” to “very much” advertisement exposure took up 89.3 per cent) provided certain implications about the influence of technology and the effects of advertising clutter phenomenon on consumer behaviour.

Relationship between guerrilla marketing effects, credibility and WOM

In Table IV, all correlations are significant at the 0.01 level. The highest was between creativity and humour ($r = 0.748$), implying humour may be a criterion for the audiences to evaluate the advertisement creativity, and the lowest was between WOM and clarity ($r = 0.400$), suggesting that the clearer the message was, the more likelihood the participants would perform their WOM activity. All variables were correlated with WOM. Among them, credibility had the strongest relationship ($r = 0.567$). The four factors also correlated to the mediator. Creativity, consisting of novelty and relevance scales, had the most significant effect on message credibility ($r = 0.604$). Next was surprise ($r = 0.575$), clarity ($r = 0.513$) and then humour ($r = 0.453$). Those correlations

	Frequency (N)	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	144	37.6
Female	239	62.4
Total	383	100.0
<i>Year of birth</i>		
1980-1985	34	8.9
1986-1990	183	47.8
1991-1994	166	43.3
Total	383	100.0
<i>Frequency of using the internet</i>		
Over 3 hours	304	79.4
From 2 to 3 hours	47	12.3
From 1 to 2 hours	28	7.3
Less than 1 hour	4	1.0
Total	383	100.0
<i>Frequency of advertisement exposure</i>		
Very much (over 7 ads)	175	45.7
Fairly much (from 5 to 7 ads)	77	20.1
Moderate (from 3 to 5 ads)	90	23.5
A little (from 1 to 3 ads)	36	9.4
No exposure (0 ads)	5	1.3
Total	383	100.0

Table III.
Demographics of participants

assisted the expectation that when the advertisements were novel, their message were relevant and triggered certain emotions such as surprise or humour, the participants would found the advertisements more believable and convincing, which in turns increased the probability that they would impart their experiences to others.

Testing hypotheses

To test the group of hypotheses, *H1*, a multiple regression was conducted between the four factors and the mediator credibility.

From Table V, creativity, clarity and surprise had significant effect on message credibility when creativity had the highest influence ($\beta = 0.346, p < 0.01$) and clarity had the lowest ($\beta = 0.181, p < 0.01$). This implied that the novelty and relevance of the ad message amazed the participants, and, when the message was clear enough to comprehend, the participants found them sincere and trustworthy. Humour, however, did not contribute to such process when its effect on credibility was not significant. Therefore, *H1.1, H1.2, H1.4* were confirmed and *H1.3* was rejected.

To test the group of hypotheses, *H2*, another multiple regression was performed between all variables and WOM.

In Table VI, among the four factors, creativity and surprise had significant impact on the dependent variables ($\beta = 0.237, p < 0.01$ and $\beta = 0.230, p < 0.01$, respectively), supporting the common expectation that the more the customers were amazed by the creative advertisements, the more likelihood that they would share their feelings with others. The mediator credibility also strongly influenced WOM and its effect was the strongest among the variables ($\beta = 0.321, p < 0.01$), implying that the more convinced the audiences felt towards the ads, the more likelihood they would talk about them.

	Word of mouth	1	2	3	4	5
1. Creativity	0.550	1.000				
2. Clarity	0.400	0.618	1.000			
3. Humour	0.428	0.748	0.521	1.000		
4. Surprise	0.551	0.659	0.438	0.568	1.000	
5. Credibility	0.567	0.604	0.513	0.453	0.575	1.000
Mean	4.30	5.52	5.23	5.47	4.59	4.52
SD	1.26	1.10	1.42	1.19	1.31	1.17

Table IV.
Correlations between variables

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	<i>B</i>	SE	β	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Constant	0.816	0.238		3.437	0.001
CREATI: creativity	0.346	0.073	0.323	4.751	0.000
CLARITY: clarity	0.181	0.040	0.219	4.475	0.000
HUMOR: humour	-0.078	0.057	-0.079	-1.359	0.175
SURPRI: surprise	0.278	0.046	0.311	6.056	0.000

Table V.
Significant effects on mediator

Notes: Dependent variable: credibility; predictors: creativity, clarity, humour, surprise; ANOVA: $F(4, 378) = 77.322, Sig. = 0.000, p < 0.05$; model summary: $R^2 = 0.450$

Table VI.
Significant effects on dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	SE	β		
Constant	0.434	0.267		1.623	0.105
CREATI: creativity	0.237	0.083	0.206	2.851	0.005
CLARITY: clarity	0.016	0.046	0.018	0.345	0.730
HUMOR: humour	-0.006	0.064	-0.006	-0.092	0.927
SURPRI: surprise	0.230	0.053	0.239	4.321	0.000
CREDI: credibility	0.321	0.057	0.298	5.635	0.000

Notes: Dependent variable: word of mouth; predictors: creativity, clarity, humour, surprise, credibility; ANOVA: $F(5, 377) = 54.291$, Sig. = 000, $p < 0.05$; model summary: $R^2 = 0.419$

Two other factors, clarity and humour, did not exert any significant impact on the dependent variable. Thus, *H2.1*, *H2.4* and *H2.5* were supported; *H2.2* and *H2.3* were rejected. The findings were summarized in Figure 1.

Factors indirectly affect purchase intention

To confirm the significance of indirect effects, bootstrapping method was used. The notion was that if zero fell within the lower and upper boundary, no indirect effect was found. On the other hand, if the range between lower and upper boundary did not contain zero, indirect effect could be claimed (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). With this, Table VII confirmed the indirect effects of creativity, clarity, and surprise on WOM and the meaningful mediation of message credibility at 90 per cent confidence interval.

One notable finding was that although clarity did not have direct significant influence on WOM, its indirect effect was found through credibility. Humour, as it did not affect both the mediator and the dependent variable, had no significant value. Both creativity and surprise had direct and indirect effects on WOM but creativity, as the combination of novelty and relevance, had the strongest impact among all

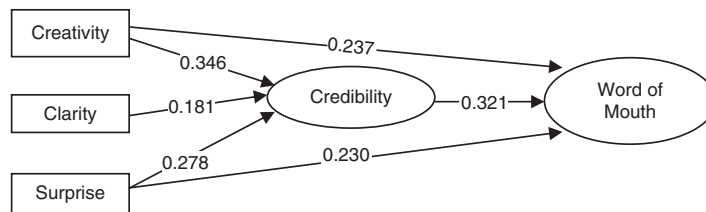


Figure 1.
Path coefficients of word-of-mouth model

Note: All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

Table VII.
Direct, indirect and total effects

Variables	Direct	Indirect	Total	LLCI	ULCI
Creativity	0.237	0.111	0.348	0.0637	0.1643
Clarity	–	0.058	0.058	0.0326	0.0877
Surprise	0.230	0.089	0.319	0.0564	0.1276
Credibility	0.321	–	0.321		
Total	0.788	0.258	1.046		

variables ($\beta = 0.348$). Accordingly, H3.1, H3.2, and H3.4 were accepted; H3.3 was rejected. Total effect of the proposed model was 1.046 and the indirect effect was 0.258, a percentage of 24.66 per cent.

Discussion and conclusion

Discussions of the findings

First, consistent with research in advertising, novelty and relevance indeed interact and combine with each other into creativity factor (Mercanti-Guérin, 2008). It has transparent power in terms of both direct and indirect effect on WOM behaviour, and in turn affects consumer purchase behaviour (Ang and Low, 2000). Moreover, in previous studies, creativity is examined as a mediator (Smith *et al.*, 2007). This research pushes its power to a greater extent when successfully drawing a straight line between creativity, as a combination of the two independent variables, and behavioural outcome.

Second, surprise, which is believed to be the root of guerrilla marketing philosophy (Druing and Fahrenholz, 2008) and the main difference between guerrilla and traditional marketing (Hutter and Hoffmann, 2011), has both direct and indirect on WOM activity. The result supports the common sense that when the participants perceive the ads as creative and are startled by them, they will have higher tendency to share such impressions with others.

Third, the meaningful mediation of credibility widens the knowledge about advertisement content credibility when little research has been conducted about this concept (Verma, 2014). Its role clarifies the expectation that the more consumers are surprised by the advertisements, the more they are motivated to apprehend the messages (Halkias and Kokkinaki, 2014) and the higher probability that they are convinced by them. Furthermore, the clearer the messages, the easier for consumers to comprehend and believe them, and with the feelings of amazement, they will perform their WOM activity and other purchase behaviours (Tsang *et al.*, 2004).

Fourth, strange as it may seem, the study provides some "truthful" implications when it includes a wide range of guerrilla advertisements comprising different products of different brands to measure consumer perception. More specifically, previous literature of WOM have pointed out that WOM behaviour is significantly influenced by many factors such as regulatory focus (Chung and Tsai, 2009), message appeal (rational vs emotional) (Wu and Wang, 2011), tie strength (Bansal and Voyer, 2000), culture values (Chung and Darke, 2006), etc. All of the factors that impact WOM may appear simultaneously in the model and their effects may even one another out, resulting in an objectively significant relationship between guerrilla marketing characteristics and consumer's WOM behaviour through the mediation of message credibility.

Limitations and implications for future research

First, the insignificant effect of humour on either the mediator or the dependent variable raises a concern whether this factor has any power. From previous literature, humour is believed to have impact on consumer behaviour (Eisend *et al.*, 2014). As a dimension of creativity (West *et al.*, 2008), humour is highly expected to have significant power on WOM. The result in this research may be attributed to the fact that different kind of products, culture values (collectivism vs individualism), gender difference, motivational values (Elbers, 2013), frequency of using product, etc., will play different roles in determining whether an advertisement is humorous to an individual. Future research may explore this belief and contrast the findings with the result.

Second, the inability of emotion arousal to be a meaningful factor produces worthy consideration because PAD scale is best used to measure dimensions underlying emotion states rather than any specific emotions (Richins, 1997). In the study, however, because of wide range of demographics and product categories, emotion arousal of individuals may have ruled out one another, just as (Barrett, 1998) suggested: "Different individuals may use the same self-report labels in different ways. The same emotion word can be used to communicate different experiences by different people". Thus, using self-report questionnaires is a challenge for researchers to measure emotional aspects as they have seriously cognitive bias risk (Sorensen, 2008). Further research may apply other emotion measuring methods to more effectively evaluate the existence and influence of emotion arousal on intended variables.

Third, WOM in the study is measured based on the performance (WOM activity) and valence (positive WOM). This chosen measurement scale reflects the significant contribution of the study as (Mazzarol *et al.*, 2007) have stated: "Little research, however, has addressed antecedents of WOM when considering WOM as a focal construct", fixing the gap in the common belief that satisfaction and quality factors are enough to create positive WOM (Gremler *et al.*, 2001). Nonetheless, because such integration does not clarify whether those who see the advertisements have experienced the products or not (the undefined distinction between input and output WOM), the results mostly support the belief that after participants see the guerrilla advertisements, they will share the information (about the advertisements, the products, or the brands) to others rather than actually positively "praise" the product, which results only from the post-purchase step during their consuming behaviour. Future research may narrow the gap by clarifying the type of WOM and the effects intended to measure.

Fourth, as a qualitative using quantitative method, the research achieves generalizability by using guerrilla advertisements belonging to different products of different companies. Regardless of such defensible reason, the results may still be general for a particular strategy for a specific product. Future research may have many opportunities to evaluate which types of product that guerrilla advertisements are most suitable for, which specific age and gender in Gen Y with different type of motivational values will decisively impact the outcomes, or whether the importance lies in the products or in the distinctive tools of guerrilla marketing when big companies nowadays have been exploiting them most, etc.

Recommendations for marketing managers

The hypothetical model integrates guerrilla marketing characteristics into advertising scales to measure WOM activity and valence. For guerrilla marketers, and also advertising agencies, they may make the best out of the model to understand the effects under Gen Y perspective. For example, managers understand that the root philosophy of guerrilla marketing, i.e. surprise factor, and the creativity the consumers perceive through the advertisement will have direct effect on WOM activity. Consequently, if WOM is meant to be an input factor, managers know how to actively create it when the proactive management of WOM is commonly believed to be out of control (Lovelock, 2001). In addition, the perceived creativity in the model encourages marketing managers to consider the gap between what they think their customers may think and what their customers really act. This will be beneficial for any advertising strategy which aims to be novel and/or unique to catch the consumer attention.

On the other hand, guerrilla marketing is originally born for SEMs. Still, the results of the model support the expectation that any company can take advantage of guerrilla

marketing characteristics to achieve their objectives. More particularly, one may see that if an advertisement is creative, easy to understand and triggers a certain feeling of surprise, it will significantly impact consumer behaviour. In that circumstance, it is claimable that any kind of advertisements which have those characteristics may help to acquire the intended purposes. That is undeniably true. However, guerrilla marketing consists of a wide range of tactics which produce many desirable effects. If marketing managers and advertising agencies can take advantage of those, the effects will be obtained in an effective and efficient manner. Moreover, the guerrilla marketing in this study is measured through guerilla advertisement, only one of the guerrilla tactics. If managers flexibly choose the different and suitable guerrilla strategies at specific stages of product development for specific segments of Gen Y, the outcomes should be much fruitful.

In spite of the limitations, the study is supposed to obtain its purpose. That is, as one of the first study of guerrilla marketing in Vietnam, specifically in Ho Chi Minh context, it helps to identify guerrilla marketing characteristics under consumer perspective. In addition, by combining advertising scales, the study strengthens the generalizability of the results and provides many implications for both the academicians and the managers. Guerrilla marketing is new not because it has been recently born but because little research (in Vietnam context) is conducted about it. With the two obtained purposes, this study is believed to help extend the understanding about how to affect consumer behaviour through the usage of guerrilla tactics and apply them into businesses when guerrilla marketing position in the contemporary marketing has increasingly achieved acclaims.

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Further reading

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