

The Impact of Guerrilla Marketing on Perception of Marketing Innovation and Brand Trust*

(Research Article)

Gerilla Pazarlamanın Pazarlama Yeniliği Algısına ve Marka Güvenine Etkisi

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ABSTRACT

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Does guerrilla marketing influence perceptions of marketing innovation and brand trust? Alongside this question, the issue of whether perceptions of marketing innovation impact brand trust arose during the development of the research model and literature review. Thus, besides the main objective of the study, a secondary aim is to investigate the effect of marketing innovation perception on brand trust. To achieve these objectives, data were collected from a target audience using an online survey method within the framework of a quantitative research design. The collected data were first subjected to normality tests, followed by reliability and validity analyses of the scales. To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, frequency and percentage distributions were used, while regression analysis was employed to test the research hypotheses. Additionally, the mediating effect was tested within the proposed model framework. The study found that guerrilla marketing positively influences consumer perceptions of innovation, affects consumer purchasing decisions, and enhances brand trust. Additionally, marketing innovations were observed to have positive effects on consumer trust and perceived value. It can be stated that guerrilla marketing campaigns indirectly affect brand trust through marketing innovation, and these strategies enhance consumer trust with innovative and creative campaigns.

ÖZET

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Gerilla Pazarlama,
Pazarlama Yeniliği,
Marka Güveni, Tüketici
Davranışları

Gerilla pazarlamanın pazarlama yeniliği algısına ve marka güvenine etkisi var mıdır? Bu sorunun yanında araştırma modelini oluştururken ve literatür araştırması sırasında pazarlama yeniliği algısının marka güvenine etkisinin olup olmadığı sorusu ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışmada bu sorulara yanıt aranmıştır. Bu nedenle araştırmanın temel amacının yanı sıra bir alt amaç olarak, pazarlama yeniliği algısının marka güvenine etkisinin araştırılması da amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma amacı çerçevesinde nicel araştırma kurgusu ile belirlenen hedef kitle üzerinden çevrimiçi anket yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında toplanan veriler öncelikle normallik testine tabi tutulmuş, ardından ölçeklere ilişkin güvenilirlik ve geçerlilik analizleri yapılmıştır. Araştırmada katılımcıların sosyo-demografik özelliklerini tespit etmek için frekans ve yüzde dağılımlarından yararlanılmıştır, araştırma hipotezlerini test etmek için ise regresyon analizinden yararlanılmıştır, ayrıca araştırmada önerilen model çerçevesinde de aracılık etkisi test edilmiştir. Araştırmada gerilla pazarlamanın yenilikçi algısının tüketici davranışları üzerinde olumlu etkiler yarattığı, tüketici satın alma kararlarını etkilediği ve marka güvenini artırdığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca, pazarlama yeniliklerinin tüketici güveni ve algılanan değer üzerinde olumlu etkileri olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Gerilla pazarlama kampanyalarının, pazarlama yeniliği aracılığıyla marka güvenine dolaylı etkisi olduğu, bu stratejilerin yenilikçi ve yaratıcı kampanyalarla tüketici güvenini artırdığı söylenebilir.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing strategies have been changing rapidly recently. In today's competitive world, traditional methods are seen to be insufficient and therefore innovative approaches are being adopted, therefore. One of these innovative approaches is undoubtedly guerrilla marketing, which is a low-cost, incredibly creative and highly remarkable current marketing approach. This approach, which was introduced to the marketing literature by Conrad (1984), was initially developed for SMEs to have a widespread and efficient impact despite their limited budgets. It provides these businesses with a very important marketing strategy used to create awareness by attracting the attention of consumers without spending too much on advertising with their limited budgets, and to provide consumers with persuasive information about the product and service being promoted. Ultimately, guerrilla marketing is an extraordinary marketing approach based on unlimited imagination, high energy and social awareness.

Recognized in the literature as a contemporary marketing approach, this strategy aims to leave strong and lasting impressions on consumers by using unconventional and unexpected methods. The success of guerrilla marketing, therefore, largely depends on consumer perceptions. Perception of marketing innovation reflects consumers' views on how innovative and original a brand's marketing methods are, while brand trust represents the confidence and loyalty consumers have towards a brand. It is very important to determine consumers' perceptions of marketing innovation and brand trust. In this respect, guerrilla marketing can help identify consumer perceptions, especially for businesses, with a much more limited budget. In this way, businesses can develop marketing strategies that suit consumer perceptions.

Research shows that innovative marketing strategies develop positive perceptions in consumers in increasing brand trust. It is known that dynamic and contemporary marketing strategies that respond to consumer demands, expectations and desires are useful in gaining and subsequently developing consumer trust, which is extremely sensitive. As consumers find the brand valuable, they trust the brand. This paves the way for them to perceive the brand as reliable and ultimately enables the development of brand loyalty, which is extremely important for businesses. If attention-grabbing, creative and technology-enabled campaigns can create a story for consumers, they can leave a lasting and deep impression on consumers. Consumers prefer products and services where they find their own stories. However, it should not be forgotten that guerrilla marketing may disturb consumers in some cases. Because of its unusual nature, the possibility of unexpected reactions from consumers is among the negative aspects of guerrilla marketing.

Guerrilla marketing uses unconventional methods to attract consumers' attention. These methods can sometimes cause discomfort to consumers. Namely, some guerrilla marketing campaigns that are extremely exaggerated and aggressive may be perceived negatively by some consumers. This situation not only distracts guerrilla marketing from its purpose, but also causes great damage to the brand image. Apart from this, it is also known that the provocative nature of some methods used in guerrilla marketing causes some guerrilla advertisements to conflict with the law or the general values of society. This could lead to a loss of already fragile consumer confidence. In this regard, when a brand runs guerrilla marketing campaigns, it must pay particular attention to the cultural values of consumers and the socio-demographic structure of the society. A successful guerrilla marketing tactic in one country may cause a loss of image of the brand in another country. Therefore, brands must be very careful when building consumer trust with innovative marketing strategies and must pay utmost attention to consumer sensitivities in order to establish long-term relationships with consumers and be successful.

The aim of the study is to determine the effects of guerrilla marketing practices on consumers' perceptions of marketing innovation and to determine how these perceptions affect brand trust. The sub-objectives of the study include determining whether guerrilla marketing contributes to the innovative image of brands and whether it helps increase consumer trust in the brand. It was prioritized in the study to provide comprehensive information on the subject to both businesses and academics with the findings obtained in the study.

This study is divided into four main sections: introduction, conceptual framework, research, and conclusion and recommendations. The introduction gives an overview of the topic, defines the study's scope, and explains its main objectives. The conceptual framework focuses on reviewing previous research, particularly studies that provide valuable insights into the topic. The research outlines the significance of the study, describes the sample, explains the scales used, and presents the research model, hypotheses, and data analysis methods. In this section, frequency and percentage distributions were used to analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, while regression analysis tested the research hypotheses. Finally, the conclusion and recommendations summarize the findings, underline the study's contributions to the field, and highlight its originality. This section also discusses the unique gap the study addresses, acknowledges its limitations, and offers practical recommendations for businesses and suggestions for future research.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of guerrilla marketing, developed by Levinson (1984), has become a general term in the literature for the use of unconventional marketing approaches in promotional strategies. The Oxford English Dictionary defines guerrilla as “irregular warfare conducted by independent small groups” (www.oxfordenglish.com). The term “guerrilla” appeared in global literature during the Spanish resistance to Napoleon’s French occupation from 1807 to 1814. Guerrilla warfare, often referred to as the “weapon of the weak,” was used strategically to confront and weaken the enemy without conventional military engagement (Özgül, 2008).

The techniques used in guerrilla marketing parallel the concept of guerrilla warfare, requiring a guerrilla spirit to achieve success in the market. These techniques provide businesses with an advantage in transforming market opportunities into competitive edges. Additionally, guerrilla marketing is employed as an effective tool for small businesses against larger ones, creating instantaneous, memorable, striking, motivating, unexpected, highly unconventional, satisfying, and rapid effects on customers.

Initially used by small businesses to compete with larger companies in marketing (Arslan & Durlu-Özkaya, 2012) and to achieve high profits with low costs (Levinson, 2003; Prévot, 2006; Kotler, 2007), guerrilla marketing has now become a strategy adopted by both large and small businesses. Due to shifting economic conditions, large companies are now exploring methods to achieve optimal results with reduced budgets in their marketing and advertising efforts (Bigat, 2012). Additionally, both small and large firms have acknowledged the significant potential of guerrilla marketing and advertising (Zarco & Herzallah, 2023). Guerrilla marketing enables a company's brand, product, or service to more easily occupy a place in consumers’ minds (Dubauskas & Išoraitė, 2022). Ultimately, guerrilla marketing represents the preference for unconventional and innovative marketing strategies aimed at creating the greatest impact with minimal investment (Nufer, 2021).

With the impact of guerrilla marketing, small businesses have succeeded in capturing consumer attention as effectively as large companies for the first time. The unconventional, personal, and sometimes quirky advertisements of the 1980s laid the foundation for a marketing revolution in the following century. Guerrilla marketing became widespread in the 1990s. While large firms began increasingly applying guerrilla marketing strategies in their campaigns, consumers also started to notice changes in companies’ marketing approaches. For instance, the purpose of television commercials shifted from merely promoting products to entertaining viewers. Initially, the entire 30-second advertisements were focused on product sales, but it has been observed that the last 3 seconds are now dedicated to product promotion, while the first 27 seconds are devoted to entertaining the audience (Khare, 2017).

It is relatively easy for businesses to use guerrilla marketing methods to capture attention and stand out (Çeltek & Bozdoğan, 2012). Guerrilla marketing operates on the principle of reaching potential customers in unexpected places such as streets, sidewalks, public transportation vehicles, and bus stops, making it extremely eye-catching and memorable (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011; Çeltek & Bozdoğan, 2012). Indeed, a study by Parılı and Spahic (2019) involving university students measured the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing methods compared to traditional advertising methods. The findings indicated that traditional marketing communication is generally a high-cost, public-facing communication form that often fails to deliver the desired results. In contrast, guerrilla marketing methods were concluded to be a more effective communication tool. Similarly, another study conducted with university students in Pakistan (Shakeel & Khan, 2011) highlighted the significant role of guerrilla marketing methods in shaping consumer perceptions.

In traditional marketing, a specific budget must be allocated, whereas guerrilla marketing can be conducted with little to no budget. It is important to remember that guerrilla marketing is a promotional system that relies on unconventional methods (Yüksekbilgili, 2011), based on time, energy, and imagination (Kaden, 2007), and uses aggressive and extraordinary marketing techniques (Khare, 2017; Gedik, 2020). Levinson, the originator of guerrilla marketing, has defined the differences between guerrilla marketing and traditional marketing, emphasizing that guerrilla marketing requires innovative methods to achieve traditional marketing goals (Levinson, 1998).

Table 1. Characteristics of Guerrilla Marketing and Traditional Marketing

Guerrilla Marketing	Traditional Marketing
Imagination, time, and energy.	Money.
The significant imagination of small business owners.	Large businesses, substantial investments, major partnerships, and large marketing budgets.
The ultimate goal is profit. If high sales do not bring profit, they are meaningless.	Sales volume and high sales turnover are the primary focus.
Human behavior, human psychology.	Experience and forecasting play a significant role.
Focusing on the most optimal area.	Market segmentation and market diversification.

Linear growth is aimed by acquiring new customers.	Geometric growth is targeted by reaching new customers with the help of existing ones.
Competitive advantage is the goal.	Competition is temporarily set aside, and new opportunities are pursued even through collaboration with competitors.
There is a prevailing belief that the synergy created by the combination of advertising, email, and website leads to success.	The prevailing belief is that advertising, email, and websites alone bring success.
The message intended for the customer is clear and easily understood by the customer.	The message intended for the customer is not conveyed directly.
Marketing tools are diverse, and most are largely free of charge.	Marketing tools are limited and quite expensive.
It targets the subconscious and emphasizes details.	It targets the unconscious and does not focus on small details.

Source: Levinson, 1998.

Traditional advertising, both costly and declining in popularity over time, has compelled businesses to seek assistance from alternative media for product and service promotions. This shift was actually identified by Levinson in the early 1980s. In the mid-1980s, Levinson, for instance, surpassed conventional practices by attempting unconventional methods in traditional advertising campaigns, such as the Marlboro example. He used guerrilla advertising by placing cigarette packs in front of popular venues like bars and restaurants to create the impression that these cigarettes were favoured by the public, thereby capturing the attention of smokers within the target audience. Consequently, the sales figures for this brand rose from thirty-first place to first place (Lucas & Dorrian, 2007). Indeed, promotional items, objects, and sponsors in each environment capture customer attention in an appealing, creative, and innovative manner, surprising and influencing them (Gambetti, 2010; Sharma & Sharma, 2015). Similarly, street guerrilla marketing is essentially viewed as a modern form of outdoor media (Roux et al., 2013), a street-based communication element (Saucet & Cova, 2015); and it is emphasized as an interactive communication method that begins with street displays where customers relay advertising messages to their peers (Hutter & Hoffman, 2011). Furthermore, if guerrilla marketing advertisements are successful, the initial consumers who encounter the ad will eagerly share their product or service experiences with their friends, leading to a butterfly effect (Heper, 2008).

In guerrilla marketing and guerrilla advertising, surprising the consumer is one of the primary objectives. When an advertisement is unexpectedly understood and perceived, it tends to generate a positive attitude towards the brand, which in turn fosters the development of purchase intention (Nagar, 2015; Nunthiphatprueksa, 2017). While some guerrilla advertisements convey shocking messages (Ay et al., 2010), others use humour to surprise the consumer (Katke, 2016). Studies have indicated that surprise, or the act of surprising consumers, has an impact on both the perceived credibility of the advertisement and the formation of purchase intention (Dinh & Mai, 2015; Yıldız, 2017). Research conducted with small and medium-sized enterprises in Pakistan revealed that guerrilla marketing techniques, including viral marketing, street graphics, and memorable events, significantly and positively affect purchase decisions (Ahmed et al., 2020). Similarly, another study conducted in Egypt with 425 participants emphasized that advertisements employing methods such as creativity, humour, transparency, and surprise within guerrilla marketing are effective and efficient across all business sectors (Farid & Hammad, 2019).

Guerrilla marketing is a creative and unconventional strategy that has proven to be highly effective in shaping consumer perceptions of brand trust and marketing innovation. In exploring the impact of guerrilla marketing on brand trust, several studies have highlighted its effectiveness. For instance, Erdogan (1999) discusses the role of celebrity endorsements in enhancing brand trust and recall among consumers (Erdogan, 1999). Additionally, Seno and Lukas (2007) examined how congruence between a celebrity's image and the brand's image influences consumer attitudes and brand trust (Seno & Lukas, 2007). Similarly, Tam and Khuong (2015) argue that guerrilla marketing has a particularly strong impact on younger generations, enhancing their purchase intentions and reinforcing both trust and loyalty toward the brand. Muscat (2016) further adds that the engaging and distinctive features of guerrilla marketing capture consumer attention, making them view the brand as more authentic and reliable.

Guerrilla advertising can evoke a reaction such as "That's it" or "Wow" due to the element of surprise it creates (Nufer, 2013). Similarly, it has been identified that elements of guerrilla marketing, such as novelty, surprise, emotional arousal, and clarity, positively and significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions (Akgün et al., 2024). In this regard, guerrilla advertisements are also considered a form of marketing innovation. According to Penning and Kim (2009), marketing innovation involves introducing new and distinct directions in marketing by making significant changes and transformations in areas such as product design, packaging, positioning, promotional activities, and pricing to enhance the acceptability of products.

In the literature, the positive impact of innovations on marketing performance across organizations has been highlighted by several researchers. In this context, Koufteros et al. (2002) emphasize that the continuity and sustainability of innovations can lead to greater success in acquiring potential customers by meeting customer

expectations. Calantone (2006) demonstrates in his studies that all innovation efforts that create differentiation enhance marketing performance. It can be stated that these innovation efforts are valuable from the perspective of both existing and potential customers, thus enabling the sustainability of customer satisfaction and the increase of market share (Günday, 2007). Additionally, it is noted that businesses and organizations trigger innovations in a market-oriented manner (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990), and these innovations create performance-enhancing effects (Bulut et al., 2009; Han et al., 1998; Ramaseshan et al., 2002; Sandvick & Sandvick, 2003; Verhees, 2004; Tüfekci & Tüfekci, 2014; Sipahi & Barut, 2018).

Guerrilla advertising, in contrast to traditional advertising, is often considered a form of marketing innovation due to its lower cost and greater accessibility. In this regard, guerrilla advertising contributes to the field of advertising by offering agility, unpredictability, and surprise potential that are not present in traditional advertising. These elements help in the acceptance, adoption, and internalization of products and services by consumers, thus supporting marketing innovation.

Consumers are exposed to dozens of advertisements daily. The increasing number of deceptive and misleading ads has significantly undermined consumer trust in advertising. Guerrilla advertising aims to regain consumer trust through unexpected, sudden, and surprising content designed to capture attention. However, it is known that brands employ different motivations to build consumer trust. Brand trust emerges as a significant factor influencing consumers' product and service choices. Brand trust can be defined as the positive perception created in consumers because of marketers' stimuli (Rotter, 1980); the satisfaction of consumers' needs and desires (Chinomona, 2016); and a critical factor affecting customers' behaviour significantly during and after the purchasing process (Liu et al., 2012). Brand reputation, brand predictability, and brand competence are crucial in establishing brand trust. Guerrilla advertising is considered a more cost-effective promotional method compared to traditional advertising for building brand trust.

Brand trust, overall brand value, and pricing are also significantly influenced by culture. In a study conducted by Müezzinoğlu (2019) with participants from Turkey (428) and Greece (302), it was found that brand trust, overall brand value, and price awareness impact purchase intention. However, according to the data obtained from Greece, while brand trust and overall brand value influence purchase intention, price awareness did not influence purchase intention.

3. RESEARCH

This study utilized an online survey method to gather data from a targeted group, based on a quantitative research framework. Initially, the data were assessed for normality, followed by reliability and validity testing of the measurement scales. To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, frequency and percentage distributions were employed, while regression analysis was used to examine the research hypotheses. Furthermore, the proposed model was assessed for mediation effects. This section provides a comprehensive description of the statistical analyses performed during the research.

3.1. Research Objective

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the impact of guerrilla marketing on perceptions of marketing innovation and brand trust. Additionally, during the development of the research model and literature review, the question of whether marketing innovation perceptions affect brand trust emerged. Therefore, in addition to the main objective of the study, an additional goal is to examine the effect of marketing innovation perceptions on brand trust. Furthermore, since the research model suggests that marketing innovation perceptions might have a mediating role, another secondary objective of the study is to explore the mediating role of marketing innovation in the relationship between guerrilla marketing and marketing innovation perceptions.

3.2. Hypotheses

The primary goal of guerrilla marketing is to create a strong and lasting impact on consumers. These effective strategies often incorporate innovative and creative elements. Consequently, guerrilla marketing campaigns have the potential to enhance consumers' perceptions of marketing innovation. According to the literature, guerrilla marketing is perceived as innovative, and this perception positively influences consumer behaviour (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). This perception also affects consumers' purchasing decisions (Shakeel & Khan, 2011). Moreover, components of guerrilla marketing such as innovation, surprise, emotional arousal, and clarity are noted to have a significant and positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Akgün et al., 2024). Therefore, Hypothesis H1 posits that guerrilla marketing is expected to have a positive effect on the perception of marketing innovation.

H1: Guerrilla marketing influences the perception of marketing innovation.

Guerrilla marketing strategies aim to create an emotional connection with consumers, and this connection can help increase brand trust. Unexpected and creative campaigns can increase consumer trust in a brand because they

create the perception that the brand is different and innovative (Sengupta and Kankanhalli, 2017). Guerrilla marketing brings a marketing innovation in building brand awareness for products and services. Indeed, a study (Ahmed et al., 2020) found that brand awareness is a strong mediating variable that significantly increases the impact of purchase decisions, and technology plays an important moderating role that exerts a strong influence on the relationship between guerrilla marketing techniques and consumers' purchase decisions. Research demonstrates that guerrilla marketing significantly impacts brand trust by leveraging unconventional and memorable strategies. For example, Dahlén et al. (2009) highlighted how guerrilla marketing effectively engages consumers by creating an emotional connection, fostering trust in the brand's creativity and authenticity. In another study by Camilleri & Costa (2014), it was also demonstrated that guerrilla marketing significantly influences consumer perceptions of brand trust by presenting innovative, creative, and surprising advertisements that positively shape attitudes toward the brand. In this context, H2 hypothesizes that guerrilla marketing will have a positive impact on the perception of brand trust.

H₂: Guerrilla marketing influences the perception of brand trust.

It has been observed that the concepts of knowledge management and market orientation have significant effects on marketing innovation (Eskiler, 2009). Marketing innovation allows a brand to be perceived as innovative and modern by consumers, which can enhance their trust in the brand. The literature contains findings that suggest marketing innovation has positive effects on consumer trust (So et al., 2013). Additionally, in another study examining the impact of marketing innovation on perceived value, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Özdemir, 2017), it was found that while there is a weak relationship between marketing innovations, perceived value, perceived quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty, marketing innovations still have a significant and positive impact. Marketing innovation is not merely an effort to enhance the perceived value of products and services. Indeed, it has been shown that marketing innovation influences companies' international market performance (Biçimveren, 2017) and positively affects service performance (Hussein, 2019; Düzgün, 2021). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) posits that marketing innovation will have a positive impact on the perception of brand trust.

H₃: Marketing innovation influences the perception of brand trust.

While guerrilla marketing campaigns can have a direct impact on the perception of marketing innovation, this effect may also indirectly influence brand trust through marketing innovation. This can be explained by the adoption of innovative strategies in guerrilla marketing and the subsequent increase in consumer trust in the brand (Baltes & Leibing, 2008). Guerrilla marketing has contributed to both literature and industry by helping small businesses focus more on the market and gain a competitive advantage through the adoption of marketing innovations. Studies have shown that market orientation and innovation orientation positively affect firm performance (Tuncay, 2021). This underscores the necessity for businesses to follow innovations and changes to succeed in competition (Tuncay, 2021). Additionally, marketing innovation is particularly highlighted for providing firms with a competitive advantage (Jubair, 2023). In this context, Hypothesis 4 (H4) posits that marketing innovation is expected to mediate the effect of guerrilla marketing on the perception of marketing innovation.

H₄: Marketing innovation mediates the effect of guerrilla marketing on the perception of marketing innovation.

The objective of this study is to determine the impact of guerrilla marketing on the perception of marketing innovation and brand trust. To achieve this goal, regression analysis was used to identify the relationships between the dimensions. In this context, regression analyses were employed to examine the dimensions of guerrilla marketing, marketing innovation, and brand trust. The hypotheses formulated within the scope of the study were evaluated based on the results of the regression analysis.

3.3. Research Model

Based on the proposed hypotheses, the following model has been suggested in the study. This model, referred to as the research model, includes the three variables central to the study. In the research model, guerrilla marketing is positioned as the independent variable, while the perception of marketing innovation and brand trust are included as dependent variables. The research model features two types of arrow representations. Arrows drawn as continuous straight lines represent direct effects, whereas dashed curved arrows indicate indirect effects, signifying mediation. The model developed in line with the study's objective is presented in Figure.

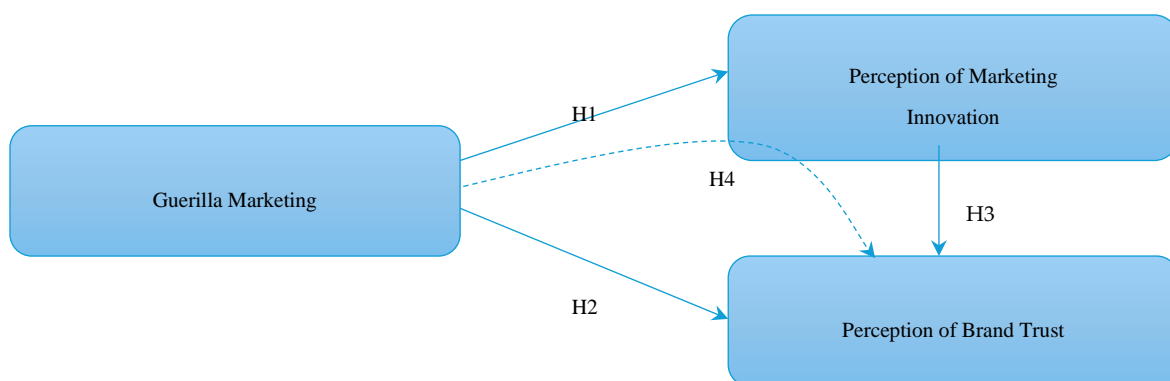


Figure 1. Research Model

3.4. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of university students who are the focal point of guerrilla marketing efforts and are considered to be more sensitive to guerrilla marketing. The reasons for selecting students as the sample include their higher usage of smartphones, better integration into the digital world, greater exposure to advertising activities used in guerrilla marketing, and higher levels of awareness regarding the subject. The participating students represent a diverse group with various social and demographic characteristics, thus providing a range of perspectives. This diversity enhances the generalizability and comprehensiveness of the study's results. Due to the vast size of the population and the impracticality of reaching all consumers within this population because of time and cost constraints, the study was conducted using a sample. A non-probability sampling method, convenience sampling, was chosen to collect the research data. University students in Isparta were selected as the sample criterion. Approximately 65,000 university students resided in Isparta at the time of the study. The scales and forms developed for the research were converted into an online survey for data collection. According to the sample size determination table, data needed to be collected from at least 384 participants. The online survey, open for fifteen days from June 20 to July 5, 2024, received responses from 487 participants. As no errors or omissions were found during the general review of the online surveys, analyses were conducted using the dataset obtained from these 487 participants. Before starting data collection, ethical approval was secured from the Isparta University of Applied Sciences Ethics Committee, with approval number 195/03, dated June 5, 2024.

The survey was designed with four distinct sections and prepared as a single form. The study considered numerous variables. A literature review was conducted on these variables, and scales used in various studies, which have been translated into multiple languages, were identified: guerrilla marketing (Öklük Sarı, 2018; Gümüštepe, 2020; Alsawaie, 2021; Limoncu, 2022); brand trust (Atılğan et al., 2009; Khan & Rahman, 2015; Khan & Fatma, 2017; Kazmi & Khaliq, 2019; Müezzinoğlu, 2019); marketing innovation (Uzkurt, 2008; Tekcangil, 2009; Çakı, 2021).

In addition to the measurement tools, the survey includes multiple-choice questions regarding the participants' socio-demographic characteristics. To assess participants' evaluations of the variables specified in the research model, a 5-point Likert scale was used: "Strongly Disagree (1)", "Disagree (2)", "Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)", "Agree (4)", and "Strongly Agree (5)".

3.5. Findings

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics

Gender	f	%	Age	f	%
Male	234	48.0	18-27	436	89.5
Female	253	52.0	28-35	28	5.7
Marital Status	f	%	36-43	13	2.7
Married	36	7.4	44-51	6	1.2
Single	451	92.6	52 and above	4	0.8
Education	f	%	Family Income	f	%
Associate degree	271	55.6	17,000 TL and below	179	36.8
Bachelor's degree	183	37.6	17,001 TL-30,000 TL	157	32.2
Postgraduate	33	6.8	30,001 TL-45,000	70	14.4
			45,001 TL-60,000	40	8.2
			60,001 TL and above	41	8.4

In the study, 234 participants are male and 253 are female. Overall, it is observed that the number of male and female participants in the study is nearly equal. Since the population of the study consists of university students, it is noted that the majority of participants are in the 18-27 age range. According to YÖK 2023-2024 data, the number of students enrolled in universities is 2,822,626 for associate degrees, 3,740,171 for bachelor's degrees, 409,559 for master's degrees, and 108,933 for doctoral degrees. The number of students in the 18-27 age range is 4,504,066 (istatistik.yok.gov.tr). Therefore, it can be said that the majority of participants are in this age group. The study also shows a high participation rate among associate and bachelor's degree students. Considering the total number of students enrolled in university, which is 6,562,797 for associate and bachelor's degrees, this distribution is also reflected among university students in Isparta (istatistik.yok.gov.tr). When examining the marital status of the participants, it is found that the majority are single. Regarding the family income levels of the participants, most of them have an income of 30,001 TL or less, accounting for 69% of the participants.

3.5.1. Normality, reliability, and validity analyses

To determine whether the data obtained in the study follow a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values can be used (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 79; Kurtoğlu & Özbölük, 2018, p. 703). It is noted that for data to be considered normally distributed, the calculated skewness and kurtosis values should fall within the ± 3 range (Garson, 2012, pp. 18-19; Kline, 1998). The skewness and kurtosis values for the items in the scales used in the study were calculated and found to be within acceptable limits. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variables are consistent with a normal distribution.

To test the reliability of the scales used in the study, the Cronbach's Alpha model was employed. The analysis revealed that the Cronbach's Alpha value for the guerrilla marketing scale is 0.913, for the brand trust scale is 0.972, and for the marketing innovation scale is 0.973. Accordingly, it can be stated that the scales have high reliability (Kalaycı, 2017, p. 405).

For testing the structural validity of the scales used in the study, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were applied sequentially. To test convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were computed. Additionally, to determine if discriminant validity was achieved, the correlations among latent variables and the square roots of the AVE values were calculated. According to the obtained values, it was determined that the data used in the study are suitable for factor analysis, and each variable in the scales loaded significantly and adequately onto their respective factors (Kalaycı, 2006, p. 322). To test the structural validity of the measurement model and whether the scales show consistency in the relevant sample of the study, CFA was conducted separately for each scale. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. AVE and CR Values for Convergent Validity Determination

Dimension	Items	Standardized β Values	AVE	CR
Guerrilla Marketing	GM4. Guerrilla marketing ads are an impactful and surprising advertising practice.	.914	.675	.817
	GM2. The product in the guerrilla marketing ad caught my interest and stayed in my mind.	.909		
	GM3. The brand's advertising message in the guerrilla marketing ad is clear and understandable.	.879		
	GM1. I would consider purchasing the product featured in the guerrilla marketing ad.	.862		
Brand Trust	BT3. My favourite brand delivers the quality it promises.	.963	.739	.801
	BT4. My favourite brand meets my expectations.	.942		
	BT2. The quality of my favourite brand is consistent.	.941		
	BT5. My favourite brand provides a satisfaction guarantee.	.934		
	BT6. My favourite brand is responsible	.922		
	BT1. I trust my favourite brand.	.920		
Marketing Innovation	MI8. I prefer products from companies that regularly review their sales techniques and find innovative methods.	.940	.814	.793
	MI5. I prefer products from companies that develop new distribution methods and tools to ensure their products and services reach customers more quickly and easily.	.935		
	MI4. I prefer products from companies that research innovative methods for pricing and payment conditions of their products and services.	.935		
	MI6. I prefer products from companies that continuously improve their marketing and promotional methods.	.933		

	MI7. I prefer products from companies that find new ways to establish and develop relationships with customers.	.926		
	MI3. I prefer products from companies that continuously update their product designs based on customer needs and competitor products.	.895		
	MI2. I prefer products from companies that conduct studies to explore new needs and market areas.	.890		
	MI9. I prefer products from companies that develop new business models that also maximize the interests of their partner firms.	.886		
	MI1. I prefer products from companies that adapt to continuously changing market conditions.	.832		

Factor analysis was performed in the study. Since the factor loadings of the items on the scales were above 0.45, no items were removed from the factor analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2004). The factor analysis for guerrilla marketing revealed that the items clustered into a single factor, with a total explained variance of 67.5%. For brand trust, the factor analysis also showed that the items clustered into a single factor, with a total explained variance of 73.9%. In the factor analysis for marketing innovation, the items were found to cluster into a single factor, with a total explained variance of 81.4%.

3.5.2. Testing of hypotheses

Regression analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses in the study. The results of the regression analysis for the hypothesis: H1: “Guerrilla marketing influences the perception of marketing innovation.” are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Impact of Guerrilla Marketing on The Perception Marketing Innovation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.698	.115		14.721	.000
Guerrilla Marketing	.584	.034	.614	17.115	.000
R	.614				
R ²	.377				
Estimated Standard Error	.81510				
Durbin-Watson	1.771				

* Independent Variable: Guerrilla Marketing, Dependent Variable: Marketing Innovation

As shown in Table 4, the R² value, which represents the explanatory power of the model, is 0.377. This indicates that guerrilla marketing can explain 37.7% of the variance in marketing innovation. Since the p-value for the independent variable guerrilla marketing is 0.000 (p < 0.05), it can be concluded that the hypothesis H1, which states that guerrilla marketing influences the perception of marketing innovation, is supported. This finding suggests that guerrilla marketing offers an innovative approach that can enhance perceptions of marketing innovation.

To test the hypothesis H2: “Guerrilla marketing influences the perception of brand trust,” regression analysis was utilized. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Impact of Guerrilla Marketing on The Perception Brand Trust

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.692	.118		14.355	.000
Guerrilla Marketing	.587	.035	.607	16.816	.000
R	.607				
R ²	.368				
Estimated Standard Error	.83329				
Durbin-Watson	1.721				

* Independent Variable: Guerrilla Marketing, Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

As shown in Table 4, the R² value, indicating the explanatory power of the model, is 0.368. This means that guerrilla marketing can explain 36.8% of the variance in brand trust. Since the p-value for the independent variable guerrilla marketing is 0.000 (p < 0.05), it can be concluded that the hypothesis H2, which states that guerrilla marketing influences the perception of brand trust, is supported. This result indicates that guerrilla marketing practices have the potential to improve brand trust.

To test the hypothesis H3: “Marketing innovation influences the perception of brand trust,” regression analysis was utilized. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Impact of Marketing Innovation on The Perception Brand Trust

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.991	.120		8.241	.000
Marketing Innovation	.723	.032	.712	22.345	.000
R	.712				
R ²	.507				
Estimated Standard Error	.73629				
Durbin-Watson	1.916				

* Variable: Marketing Innovation, Dependent Variable: Brand Trust

As shown in Table 6, the R² value, indicating the explanatory power of the model, is 0.507. This means that marketing innovation can explain 50.7% of the variance in brand trust. Since the p-value for the independent variable marketing innovation is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), it can be concluded that the hypothesis H3, which states that marketing innovation influences the perception of brand trust, is supported. This finding underscores the significance of marketing innovation in enhancing brand trust.

To test the hypothesis H4: "Marketing innovation mediates the effect of guerrilla marketing on the perception of marketing innovation," the Sobel test for mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS add-on in SPSS. The findings from this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		LLCI	ULCI	t	p
	B	Standard Error				
(Constant)	.7534	.1194	.5188	.9880	6.3107	.000
Marketing Innovation	.5531	.0391	.4763	.6299	14.1519	.000
Brand Trust	.2637	0.372	.1906	.3369	7.0876	.000
R	.7438					
R ²	.5532					
Estimated Standard Error	.4922					
LLCI	.1906					
ULCI	.3369					

* Independent Variable: Guerilla Marketing, Dependent Variable: Brand Trust, Mediating Variable: Marketing Innovation

Table 7 shows that the model generally provides significant results. In the Sobel test, to discuss the mediating effect, the LLCI and ULCI values must not include "0" within their interval. As can be seen from the table, since both LLCI and ULCI values are greater than zero and do not include the zero value, it can be stated that there is a mediating effect. With the inclusion of the mediator variable in the model, the explanatory power of guerrilla marketing's effect on brand trust, through the mediating role of the perception of marketing innovation, has increased to 55.3%. According to these findings, the hypothesis "H4: Marketing innovation mediates the effect of guerrilla marketing on the perception of marketing innovation." is supported. The analysis shows that marketing innovation significantly mediates this relationship, as indicated by the confidence intervals for the indirect effect not including zero. This suggests that the impact of guerrilla marketing on brand trust is partially explained by its effect on marketing innovation.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study is to analyze the effects of guerrilla marketing strategies on consumers' perception of marketing innovation and how this perception reflects on brand trust. Within this framework, the study seeks to determine whether guerrilla marketing strengthens the innovative image of brands and contributes to consumers' trust in the brand.

In this study, data was collected using an online survey method within the framework of a quantitative research design, targeting a specified audience. The collected data were first subjected to a normality test, followed by reliability and validity analyses of the scales. Frequencies and percentage distributions were used to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, and regression analysis was performed to test the research hypotheses. Additionally, the mediating effect was examined according to the proposed model.

Although there are numerous independent studies on guerrilla marketing, marketing innovation, and brand trust in the literature, no study has addressed these three topics in a single work. This is considered a key aspect of the study's originality. Specifically, while research on marketing innovation is often focused on product development or modifications to existing products, typically considered a method employed by businesses, this study presents guerrilla marketing as a form of marketing innovation. By doing so, it provides a new perspective to the existing

literature. The primary reason for highlighting guerrilla marketing in this research is its suitability as a method for adapting to rapidly changing consumer and marketing conditions.

In the research, a literature review was conducted on the scales used, and scales from numerous studies that have been translated into various languages were utilized. These scales include those for: guerrilla marketing (Öklük Sarı, 2018; Gümüštepe, 2020; Alsawaie, 2021; Limoncu, 2022); brand trust (Atılğan et al., 2009; Khan & Rahman, 2015; Khan & Fatma, 2017; Kazmi & Khaliq, 2019; Müezzinoğlu, 2019); marketing innovation (Uzkurt, 2008; Tekcangil, 2009; Çakı, 2021).

A model was proposed based on the hypotheses suggested in the research. This model, referred to as the research model, includes the three variables of interest (guerrilla marketing, brand trust, and marketing innovation). In the research model, guerrilla marketing is positioned as the independent variable, while marketing innovation and brand trust are identified as dependent variables. The model features two types of arrow representations (see Figure 1). Solid arrows represent direct effects, while dashed, curved arrows indicate indirect effects suggesting mediation.

In the literature, guerrilla marketing is noted for being perceived as innovative and for creating positive effects on consumer behavior (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). Furthermore, this perception is said to influence consumer purchase decisions (Shakeel & Khan, 2011). The components of guerrilla marketing, such as innovation, surprise, emotional stimulation, and clarity, are highlighted as having a significant and positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Akgün et al., 2024). These findings align with the results obtained in this study. Indeed, it is suggested that meeting customer expectations and thus successfully acquiring potential customers is more achievable through the continuity and sustainability of innovations (Koufteros et al., 2002). Similarly, it is emphasized that all innovation efforts that create differentiation are crucial for enhancing marketing performance (Calantone, 2006).

Guerrilla marketing, with its unconventional and creative strategies, is often seen as a highly innovative approach compared to traditional marketing methods. This aligns with the findings of the study, where guerrilla marketing's unique nature enhances perceptions of marketing innovation. The novelty and surprise elements inherent in guerrilla campaigns help to position them as more cutting-edge and inventive, thereby influencing consumers' views on the broader field of marketing innovation. This conclusion is supported by various studies that highlight the effectiveness of unconventional and innovative marketing tactics in shaping consumer perceptions of brand and marketing practices (Godin, 2007; Shakeel & Khan, 2011).

This study confirms that both guerrilla marketing and broader marketing innovation have significant impacts on brand trust. With an R^2 value of 0.368, guerrilla marketing explains 36.8% of the variance in brand trust, demonstrating its potential to foster emotional connections with consumers through creative, unexpected campaigns. Similarly, marketing innovation shows a stronger influence, explaining 50.7% of the variance in brand trust ($R^2 = 0.507$), reinforcing the importance of innovative marketing strategies in enhancing consumer trust and brand loyalty. These findings highlight the pivotal role that both guerrilla marketing and marketing innovation play in shaping consumer perceptions and improving brand trust (Sengupta & Kankanhalli, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2020).

The findings from this study support the idea that marketing innovation plays a key role in explaining how guerrilla marketing impacts brand trust. The results suggest that the effect of guerrilla marketing on brand trust is significantly strengthened when marketing innovation is considered as a mediator. This shows that the innovative nature of guerrilla marketing enhances consumer perceptions of a brand, ultimately boosting trust in it. The analysis reveals that marketing innovation helps explain a large portion of the effect, reinforcing the importance of using innovative marketing strategies to foster stronger consumer-brand relationships (Müezzinoğlu, 2019; Çakı, 2021; Limoncu, 2022).

Guerrilla marketing strategies aim to establish emotional connections with consumers, which can contribute to increased brand trust. Unexpected and creative campaigns can enhance the perception of a brand as distinct and innovative, thereby boosting consumer trust in the brand (Sengupta & Kankanhalli, 2017). Guerrilla marketing represents a form of marketing innovation that increases brand awareness for products and services. Indeed, a study by Ahmed et al. (2020) found that brand awareness serves as a strong mediating variable that significantly enhances the impact on purchase decisions, with technology playing a crucial moderating role in the relationship between guerrilla marketing techniques and consumer purchase decisions. These findings align with the results obtained in this study.

While guerrilla marketing campaigns can have a direct effect on the perception of marketing innovation, this effect may also indirectly impact brand trust through marketing innovation. This can be explained by the adoption of innovative strategies in guerrilla marketing and the way these innovations enhance brand trust among consumers (Baltes & Leibing, 2008). Guerrilla marketing, with its innovations introduced to the literature and industry, has

particularly contributed to small businesses by encouraging them to focus more on the market and gain competitive advantages by adopting marketing innovations. Studies (Tunçay, 2021) have concluded that market orientation and innovation focus positively affect firm performance. Thus, the need for businesses to follow innovations and changes to succeed in competition has once again emerged. These results align with the findings of this study. Additionally, the competitive advantage gained by firms through marketing innovation is particularly emphasized (Jubair, 2023).

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that the innovative perception of guerrilla marketing creates positive effects on consumer behaviour, influences consumer purchasing decisions, and enhances brand trust. Additionally, it is observed that marketing innovations have positive effects on consumer trust and perceived value. It can be said that guerrilla marketing campaigns have an indirect effect on brand trust through marketing innovation, with these strategies boosting consumer trust through innovative and creative campaigns. The study highlights that marketing innovations provide a competitive advantage to firms and positively impact firm performance. This is because guerrilla marketing enables a company's brand, product, or service to become more easily established in the minds of consumers (Dubauskas & Išoraitė, 2022).

The study presents several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, it used a convenience sampling method, which is relatively easy and cost-effective, but this may not offer a representative sample (Gegez, 2014). Additionally, the research was limited to university students from Isparta, restricting the diversity of the participant pool. The study's focus on a specific time frame and the inclusion of only university students, without considering broader geographic or demographic variations, further limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the use of an online survey method could potentially affect data quality, and cultural differences or sector-specific focuses may also influence the applicability of the results beyond this context. To address these constraints, future studies could expand their participant pool to include a wider range of educational backgrounds, professional sectors, and geographic locations. In particular, incorporating participants from diverse regions or professions, such as healthcare workers, engineers, or political figures, would likely improve the study's generalizability. Exploring the effects of cultural differences on the relationship between guerrilla marketing, perception of marketing innovation and brand trust would also add valuable insights. Additionally, comparative studies between urban and rural populations could reveal geographic variations in sustainable practices. These proposed extensions to the study could be explored through alternative methodologies, such as qualitative research or experimental designs, which may either confirm or challenge the conclusions drawn from the current study. This would contribute to a broader understanding of the variables involved and help to refine future strategic approaches.

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