The Measurement of Buzz Marketing: Bloggers as a Model

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Abstract

Buzz marketing is one of the modern marketing methods that have begun to arouse the interest of researchers to know its effects , whether on the organization or customers . This study aims to reach a better understanding of buzz marketing ; Therefore , three techniques by which this technique can work have been presented. Then the study suggests a measure to identify the level of buzz marketing in business . The techniques and the questionnaire were presented to a scientific committee composed of experts in the field of marketing management to test the validity . The scale was practically tested by a sample of (208) bloggers who became known and have good popularity in social media . After collecting the answers of the sample members and analyzing them in statistical programs -SPSS V.23 & AMOS V.23- to conduct tests to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the scale , this study presented a 10-item scale that could be used in future studies dealing with buzz marketing .

Keywords : Buzz marketing , Fake war , unexpected action , deliberately revealing a secret , Covert marketing .

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1. Introduction

Marketers tended to generate modern ideas in marketing , after the decline in the effectiveness of traditional promotion methods , due to the chaos of advertisements that began to affect people's focus , in addition to the exaggeration element contained in the advertisements , which made people not believe everything they saw and heard. Buzz marketing is one of the modern methods whose idea was generated from the ringing of the bell and the echo that results from it , considering that the sound of the bell is a strong sound that can alert people to something even if these people are in a quiet place . Getting people to interact with the marketing message , talk about it , follow the reactions and be a part of it , is the best indicator of the success of the buzz marketing message . Buzz marketing is a suitable method of indirect promotional communication since humans can speak . After successfully creating the "buzz" , the marketing message will spread exponentially through individuals , and business organizations may rely on influential individuals to spread the message faster , thus opinion leaders are identified and recruited as allies in spreading the buzz . Creating "buzz" may mean nothing if it is not accompanied by actual results . Buzz is a means , not an end. The goal is to increase product sales , and one of the means available to achieve it is buzz .

The researcher has noticed that some talk about this method and covert marketing interchangeably . Of course , there are common points between these two methods , and the most important of these points is that word of mouth and electronic word of mouth are the main supports for the work of the two methods . After reviewing the previous studies , the search problem was determined by the following points : (1) The presence of conceptual overlap between buzz marketing and covert marketing , (2) There are no techniques that clarify closely how buzz marketing operates , and (3) There is no scale for buzz marketing . Thus , the research objectives are summarized in the following : (1) Deciphering between the concepts of buzz marketing and covert marketing , (2) Suggesting techniques that explain how buzz marketing works , and (3) Providing a proposed scale through which the level of buzz marketing is identified . The importance of research stands on the reasons for going into the research subjects , as well as the benefit achiev ed from the research results , therefore we can summarize the importance of research with the following points : (1) buzz marketing is one of the contemporary topics that meet the attention of researchers at present , and (2) Supporting researchers in their future studies that are going into the subject of buzz marketing and trying to identify its level in organizations .

The paper consists of five sections , the first section displays the concept of buzz marketing . The second section displays the three proposed technologies for the work of buzz marketing. The third section displays the steps for building the scale and testing it . The fourth section displays the scale in the final form . The fifth section displays the conclusions .

2. Literature review

2.1. The concept of buzz marketing

One of the techniques that attempts to create conversations among and with current and potential customers is buzz marketing (Sprague and Wells, 2010). Many marketers have begun to consider "buzz" as a new discipline in the world of marketing and media, so "buzz" has become an important element when developing

marketing plans, but the big challenge facing marketers is how to create "buzz" around their brands for the first time (Henry, 2003). Marketers resort to this method because traditional advertisements no longer work well as a result of advertising chaos, in addition to the consumer's mood becoming upset with advertisements and trying to avoid them (Nyilasy, 2007). According to (Foxton, 2007), Buzz Marketing is "a marketing technique that uses an actual event or performance to create echo". Echo means something more complex than word of mouth. The buzz begins at a certain point through an exciting event, followed by a high-impact sound similar to applause or screaming, which begins to bounce from one surface to another until it fades and becomes silent. But the clever part is creating an echo campaign that takes years, maybe decades, to fizzle out.

Buzz marketing is a promotional stance focused on maximizing word of mouth for a product or phenomenon in a viral manner via technology, whether through personal conversations or large-scale discussions in social media. It is a process by which people influence the actions or attitudes of others (Mohr, 2017). Buzz marketing can be likened to those marketing messages that are in the form of a tsunami of chatters (Notarantonio and Quigley, 2009). Through buzz marketing, companies want to appear to their audience through an exciting theatrical or cinematic scene (Taufique & Shahriar, 2011). Buzz marketing is defined as a marketing strategy that aims to attract the attention of customers by maximizing the marketing message to some extent, as buzz marketing must be dealt with not only as advertising programs that attract attention in the media but also attract public discussions (Thomas, 2004). It is also defined as "getting the attention of consumers and the media to the point where talking about your brand is fun, cool, and worth spreading" (Gardner, 2005). According to (Allard, 2007), the emergence of new marketing methods -buzz Marketing is one of them- that differ from traditional marketing methods is due to the following reasons: (1) the number of products has become very large, (2) the sources of consumer information have become abundant, (3) the volume of marketing communications has become unlimited, (4) the product life cycle has become short. Among the negatives of pretentious marketing are: (1) The spread of the marketing message very quickly, which may lead to the creation of demand that exceeds the supply, and thus the customer may become frustrated, (2) Buzz marketing efforts can backfire if customers react negatively to the stir (Holdford, 2004). Buzz marketing has been categorized into two types: (1) direct marketing, face-to-face when information is delivered by direct interaction, and (2) indirect marketing when information is transmitted via the Internet or mobile phones (Sorokin, 2012). According to (Mohr, 2007), the advantages of buzz marketing are: (1) its costs are low compared to the costs of traditional promotion methods, (2) its risks are lower, given that the amounts invested in it are not large, (3) it increases the level of audience viewing because the buzz marketing messages are exciting, (4) Because of the excitement contained in the buzz marketing message, the level of talk about it will increase, (5) Buzz marketing messages are more believable by people than the marketing messages that are generated from traditional promotion methods. According to (Ahuja et al., 2007), buzz marketing may resort to the use of a third party to spread the marketing message to create a positive conversation about the brand, product or organization, the aim of which is to influence the convictions

of consumers. There are several roles that the third party can play, namely: (1) Endorser, that is, speaking on behalf of the brand (2) Distributor, that is, carrying out marketing activities as if he were an ambassador for the brand (3) Researcher, that is, serving as sensors that transmit the reactions of customers to the organization (4) Consumer, that is, consuming the product and motivating the family to consume it also (5) Influencer, that is, contributing to the formation of the opinion of the family and peers.

The author found that there is a kind of confusion between the concepts of covert marketing and buzz marketing after reading many articles that discussed the concept of buzz marketing. Covert marketing is a marketing method that uses secretive marketing tools that are able not to disclose the relation between the brand producer company and the sponsor of the message (Martin and Smith, 2008). It is the marketing tactic of a firm whereby the customers cannot believe that the message is related to the firm (Sprott, 2008). It is a marketing method that cautiously conceals the intention and the sponsor of the marketing message (Black and Nevill, 2009). It is a method of advertising a product when the customers are not aware of the convincing way used to encourage them to buy it (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016). To express our opinion on this issue, we found that buzz marketing works in secret sometimes, but it mainly depends on creating a stir that can arouse the attention of customers. As for covert marketing, it does not necessarily make a stir, so it can be said that there is some overlap - not a match - between buzz marketing and covert marketing. (Allard, 2007) also emphasizes that the existence of a similarity between buzz marketing and covert marketing is just a myth, as buzz marketing is not covert marketing. Accordingly, the researcher presents his opinion regarding the difference between covert marketing and buzz marketing in Table (1).

Table (1) Differences between covert marketing and buzz marketing

Covert Marketing	Buzz Marketing
It works secretly.	It doesn't have to work in secret.
The identity of the source of the marketing message is hidden.	The identity of the source of the marketing message does not have to be hidden.
Covert marketing doesn't have to make a stir.	The goal is to create a stir among those interested.

2.2. Buzz marketing techniques

In the previous section, it was pointed out that there is confusion between the concepts of "buzz marketing" and "covert marketing", after reviewing many books and articles that dealt with "buzz marketing". In addition, it was indicated that there is no integrated measure that includes techniques, dimensions and questions to identify the level of buzz marketing. The core of the buzz marketing work lies in how to create a stir about a product and/or organization and/or brand. From this core, I propose in this research techniques of buzz marketing, which are:

- **Fake war**

Media wars and mutual accusations between any two parties gain people's attention. This interest may stem from the curiosity of people who want to know what will happen. The existence of a media war puts the two sides of the conflict in the spotlight, thus making the audience focus more on them. Sometimes one of the consequences of this war is to suggest to the audience that the two conflicting

parties are the main leaders within their scope of work. This can be seen in the media wars and the hostile statements between the election candidates, to suggest to the audience that these two candidates are the closest to winning the elections (Kriel, 2018). Fake wars generate news with widespread appeal, spreading more on social media than real information (Nyilasy, 2019). It is possible to take advantage of these consequences and invest them in the field of marketing, especially if a fake war is created that is prepared in agreement with one of the competitors, as this will attract the customer's interest and make him follow and wait for what will happen. In addition, this fake war may suggest that the two conflicting parties are the market leaders in their field of work, thus promoting them.

- **Unexpected action**

  A lingerie ad featuring Kylie Minogue was posted online. This ad caused a great buzz, as the ad was downloaded and forwarded nearly 100 million times (Amy-Chinn, 2006). Another example, is Pontiac Motors awarded 276 of its new G6 to every member of the live audience of the Oprah Winfrey Show. This action caused a buzz because it made people talk about it (Train and Winston, 2007). Differentiation in the marketing message is an important element in creating buzz (Mohr, 2007). Buzzers are working to raise a problem through personal actions that carry out strange incidents to cause a stir that interests people (Handini and Dunan, 2021). It's not an endorsement of the actions that will be mentioned, just examples illustrating the technique. In 2008, there was media hype as a result of the Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zaidi throwing his shoes at US President Bush at the press conference he held at that time with the Iraqi Prime Minister in Baghdad. In 2021, there was media hype as a result of President Donald Trump's supporters storming the US Capitol. In the same year, there was an uproar when a man standing in a crowd slapped French President Emmanuel Macron in the face while on a tour of southern France. As mentioned, business organizations can think of how to create an unexpected, unique and interesting scene that makes people talk about it a lot on social media. Therefore, this scene is the main generator of the buzz, and therefore it will be credited with spreading the brand and making it known among people.

- **Deliberately revealing a secret**

  General Motors launched a campaign that included top executives from the automaker to publish online diaries of their thoughts, opinions and forecasts relevant to their industry, which attracted a large number of readers daily (Kirby and Marsden, 2007). "Deliberately revealing a secret" means intentionally allowing the publication of a certain secret by the organization, provided that the organization does not disclose its relationship to the leaking of the secret. The leak of secrets in general attracts people and raises their curiosity to know the details of this secret, as it makes them interact with the stir that this leak will cause. According to (Hill and McGinnis, 2007), people like to know what happens behind the scenes. Curiosity is a trait that stems from the human instinct for exploration. Some of the secrets that are leaked do not involve moral or legal violations, but from the point of view of some it is considered a scandal, and scandals - as some like to call them - have a massive market of followers in social media. Organizations can exploit the characteristic of human curiosity to leak certain secrets - which do not harm the organization's

reputation, of course - within a dramatic atmosphere to excite people and gain their interest.

3. Steps to create the scale

The steps for building the scale can be summarized as follows:

- **The first step:** Choosing the method of building the scale, as there are measurement models, the most important of which are formative measurement models and reflective measurement models. Formative measurement models which are "interpretative sets of indicators" used as a basis for underlying latent construct, by contrast, reflective measurement models assume that "fundamental factors ... lead to something observable" (Sarstedt et al., 2016). Measurement models differ according to the assumed direction of causality between the latent construct and its measures. Either it is assumed that the latent structure leads to its measures or it is assumed that the latent structure results from its measures. Where the assumed direction of causality is from construction to its measures, reflective measurement models are appropriate (MacKenzie et al., 2005). In formative measurement models, the measures are not interchangeable, but instead, each is taken to represent an essential part of the conceptual domain of the latent construct. In reflective measurement models, the measures are assumed to be objective and interchangeable with each other (Hair et al., 2020). When choosing a suitable measurement model, many complex conceptual and methodological questions have to be considered. Researchers are advised to use measurement models that accurately reflect the nominal importance of the construct, where the nominal meaning of a construct is the meaning assigned without reference to empirical information. That is, it is the intrinsic and determining nature of the construct that provides the basis for hypothesizing relationships with other constructs, developing observable indicators, and so on (Howell et al., 2007). Accordingly, it can be concluded that the construction of the scale of this research is based on reflective measurement models, as the techniques that have been proposed represent the working methods of buzz marketing, in the sense that the use of any of the techniques alone may cause a buzz, therefore not all techniques need to be used to It is said that the organization uses buzz marketing. The choice of these techniques came after a deep observation of the methods used by some bloggers to get a lot of views, and how these methods work in achieving the required buzz.

- **The second step:** The buzz marketing techniques - which were proposed by the researcher - were presented to a scientific committee made up of seven experts in the field of marketing management, who hold a Ph.D. with a Professor degree. In addition, the idea of dimensions was explained to the committee by the researcher. These dimensions were determined after a deep understanding of the idea of buzz marketing, which considers that creating "buzz" is the main key to the work of this method. It has been approved by the Scientific Committee to adopt these techniques as dimensions of buzz marketing as they logically embody the concept of buzz marketing on the one hand, and there is no conflict between these techniques and the concept on the other hand.

- **The third step:** A questionnaire for buzz marketing techniques was designed by the researcher, and the questionnaire was presented to the scientific group for

evaluation. According to experts' opinions, some questions have been reformulated to appear in their final form and meet the validity tests.

- **The fourth step:** To test the questionnaire, it was distributed to a group of bloggers : social media celebrities, and admins of famous pages in social media, so their number was (208) individuals. A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the response level in the sample "5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree". The researcher conducted two tests, the first Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) aimed to check the adequacy of the sample, the value of which should be between (0.05-1). The second is the Bartlett test, which ensures the quality of the measurements, where the results must be within a confidence interval ≤ 0.05. SPSS V.23 was used to generate the results, as shown in Table (2).

Table (2) KMO & Bartlett's tests

Techniques	KMO test	Bartlett's test		
		Chi-Square	Df	Sig
Fake war	0.837	627.103	6	0.001
Unexpected action	0.731	352.644	3	0.001
Deliberately revealing a secret	0.724	293.302	3	0.001

According to the results Table (2), the quality of the measurement is achieved as it is inferred when all values of (KMO) are higher than (0.05) and those values are significant (less than 0.05) (Kaiser and Rice, 1974).

- **The fifth step :** When it is required to build a new scale, exploratory factor analysis must be tested to determine the percentage of contribution of each item in certain variable, and the percentage of contribution must exceed (0.30) so that it is not excluded from the scale. Table (3) shows the results of this analysis.

Table (3) Component Matrix

Variables	Items	component
Fake war	1	0.850
	2	0.927
	3	0.915
	4	0.898
Unexpected action	5	0.877
	6	0.905
	7	0.924
Deliberately revealing a secret	8	0.890
	9	0.906
	10	0.858

According to the results of Table (3), it is clear that all items belonging to the three techniques exceed the acceptable contribution rate of (0.30). Therefore, all items will be kept and moved to confirmatory factor analysis in the next step.

- **The sixth step:** To check the degree of saturation of the individual items in the questionnaire, a confirmatory factor analysis test was carried out. The purpose of this test is to check whether it is necessary to exclude or limit some items from the questionnaire. The AMOS V.23 program defines saturated positions where the saturation value must be greater than or equal to (0.40). The 10 items exceeded this value, as shown in Figure 1.
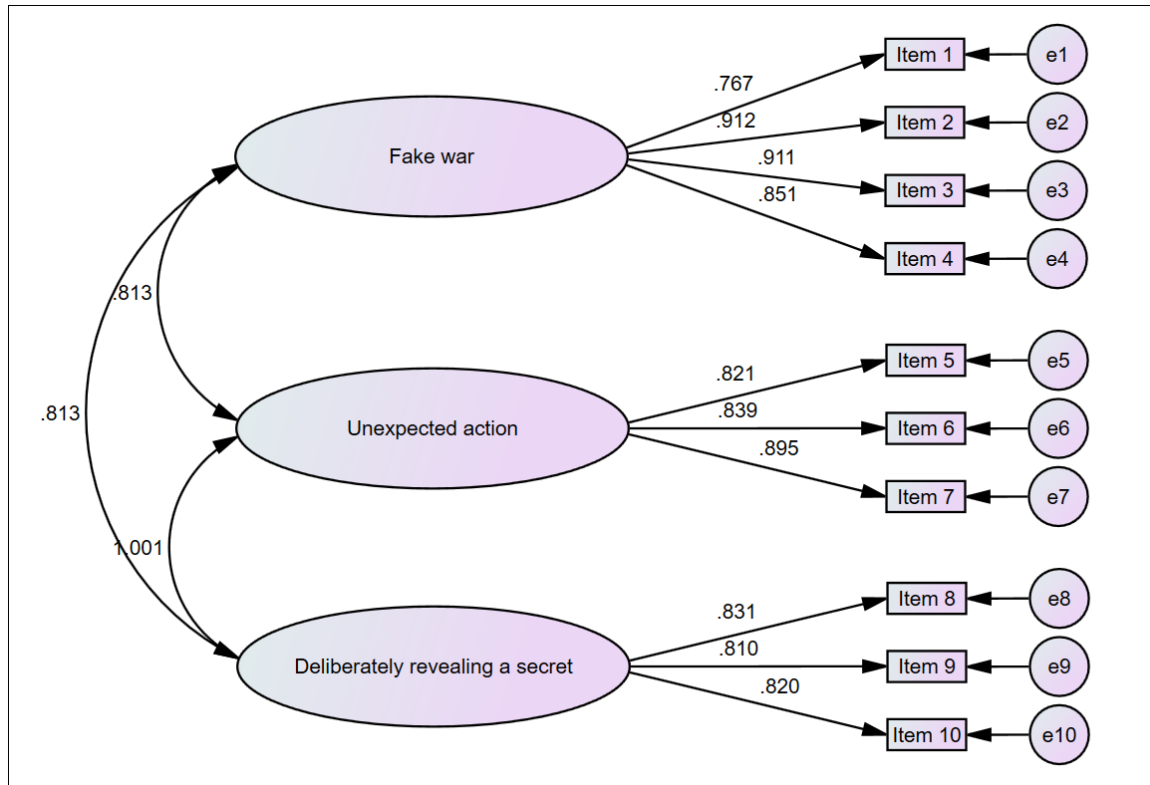
Figure (1) Confirmatory factor analysis of buzz marketing scale

- **The seventh step:** Reliability tests are carried out. The alpha-Cronbach coefficient was used to measure the data consistency of the scale. To be statistically acceptable in management and behavioural studies, the value must be greater than (70%) (Lance et al., 2006) (Table 4).

Table (4) Reliability tests

Techniques	Items questionnaire	Alpha-Cronbach
Fake war	(1-4)	0.920
Unexpected action	(5-7)	0.884
Deliberately revealing a secret	(8-10)	0.860
All questionnaire	(1-10)	0.948

According to the results (Table 4), it is obvious that all Alpha-Cronbach values exceed the acceptable minimum of (0.70), this indicates that if the same conditions are available, the same questionnaire, same sample, the scale will give results that are close to the results of this research.

4. Buzz marketing scale

In the third section, the necessary tests were carried out for the proposed scale, and items that did not succeed in reaching the required values were excluded, so that the scale would be ready for display as shown in Table (5).

Table (5) Buzz Marketing Scale (Author's suggestion)

Techniques	Items
Fake war	• Reaching an agreement with a competitor for the exchange of accusations. • Exerting the necessary efforts to engage in a media war with the competitor.

	• **Coordinating with the competitor to make the mutual discourse aggressive and provocative.** • **Generating anticipation among people for what comes next.**
Unexpected action	• **Working towards creating a shocking scene.** • **Working towards creating a unique scene.** • **Working towards creating a mesmerizing scene.**
Deliberately revealing a secret	• **Selecting specific secrets to convey to the public.** • **Turning the leaked secret into a dramatic situation.** • **Making the leaked secret go "trending."**

5. Conclusions

Buzz marketing revolves around how to create buzz, creating buzz is evidence that this method is starting to work. The success of this method depends on the nature of the buzz that was created. The buzz may have positive or negative effects, and the reason for this is due to the correct or incorrect estimate of people's reactions to that buzz. Buzz marketing may not work secretly, and may not hide the relationship of the buzz marketing message to the organization, this is what distinguishes it from covert marketing. Creating buzz is a big challenge, so buzz marketing can work by creating fake wars that are agreed upon in secret, creating an unexpected work that is unique and exciting, or deliberately revealing a secret. About building the scale, it can be said that the scale has gone through several modifications, represented by reformulating and deleting some items, to be in its final form consisting of 10 items after its success in the statistical tests conducted on it. Thus, this scale is presented to new researchers to test it and ensure the quality of its measurement, or it may be a seed for a better future scale after its development.

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قياس التسويق الطنان : المدونون إنموذجاً

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المستخلص

يُعد التسويق الطنان أحد أساليب التسويق المعاصرة التي بدأت تثير اهتمام الباحثين لمعرفة آثارها سواء على المنظمة أم الزبائن . تهدف هذه الدراسة للوصول إلى فهم أفضل للتسويق الطنان ؛ وعليه تم تقديم ثلاث تقنيات يمكن أن يعمل بها هذا الاسلوب ، ومن ثم الوصول الى مقياس مقترح للتعرف على مستوى التسويق الطنان في منظمات الأعمال. لقد تم عرض التقنيات والاستبيان على لجنة علمية مكونة من خبراء في مجال إدارة التسويق لاختبار مدى صدقها ، بعدها تم اختبار المقياس عملياً على عينة مكونة من (208) مدوناً ذا شهرة وشعبية جيدة في وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي . وبعد جمع إجابات أفراد العينة تمت الاستعانة بالبرامج الإحصائية (SPSS V.23) و(AMOS V.23) لإجراء الاختبارات اللازمة للتأكد من دقة وثبات المقياس . ختاماً ، قدمت هذه الدراسة مقياساً مكوناً من 10 فقرات يمكن إستخدامه في الدراسات المستقبلية التي تتناول التسويق الطنان .

الكلمات المفتاحية : التسويق الطنان ، الحرب المزيفة ، فعل غير متوقع ، افشاء سر بشكل متعمد ، التسويق السري .

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