



EFFECT OF DEMARKETING ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF PRODUCT QUALITY

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the effect of demarketing on consumer perception of product quality. In this survey, we find out the extent to which demarketing Strategy decreases demand and affect consumer perception of product quality; examine the effect of decrease in product demand on consumer perception of product quality; investigate the extent to which increase in product price affect consumer perception of product quality; investigate the extent to which limited product distribution affects consumer perception of product quality and determine the effect of narrow advertisement on consumer perception of product quality. Data for this study was collected using structured questionnaire containing 25 questions. Out of 350 questionnaires that were distributed, 323 were returned while 312 (89%) were usable. Data analysis was done using Cronbach's Alpha, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation matrix and one sample t-test. The t-test was used to accept/reject the hypotheses, through testing the average means of single sample based in the value of the scale midpoint. The Pearson correlation coefficient test results show that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables. It was recommended among others that Producers of essential goods/ services can improve their product perception in the minds of consumers by increasing product price as higher prices indicate product quality, decreasing offer which is reflected by having the product unavailable in the market, which will indicate the rarity of the product thus leading to the increase in its value and quality. In addition to limited distribution, which means rendering the product unavailable on the wide scale, and narrow advertising which reduces the incidence of the customer remembering the product; all these factors lead to increasing product value in the customer's perception.*

KEYWORDS: Demarketing, Consumer, Perception, Product Quality

INTRODUCTION

Societies across the world are faced with the problems concerning the habits and manners of consuming which negatively affect individuals, the community, and the environment which requires from all governmental organizations, specifically, and the civilian community as a whole to increase individual perception to improve consuming behaviour whether they were private or public.



Consuming habits and patterns are becoming a source of concern to all working agencies in public health-related field, infrastructure, and others, and these agencies try in a different way to have campaigns to affect individual behaviour and customer behaviour to change it to the right direction that serves the community and the economy. Here comes the valuable role of Demarketing which is marketing done in the opposite direction which means the attempt to affect demand by decreasing or limiting it through limiting the faulty and unjustifiable consuming tendency towards many products, and considering Demarketing, as many researchers see it, to be a process of customer persuasion to change their attitude towards products and services (Groff, 1998), as it represents hindering product or service consumption permanently or temporarily (Moore, 2003), Demarketing is an aspect of social marketing, as its philosophy is based on creating a healthier environment for the community as it represents an important tool to determine the consumption of a certain product permanently or temporarily (Shilpa et al 2007).

Demarketing is considered an important tool that is used to limit demand or consumption (or rationalize its use) of a certain product or service permanently or temporarily (fuel, electricity, water, etc.) due to the rarity of these resources and their importance economically to countries. It is used to limit the use of some products that damage public health, society, and community (smoking, alcohol, controlled medication and narcotics, etc.) as well as being used to limit the use of many daily used products (nutrition), in some countries that consume unreasonably in large amounts, this reflects the individuals' salary and the national income.

Demarketing represents the use of marketing techniques, as it is considered a complementary part of ordinary marketing, to influence customers into changing their attitude and behaviour towards specific products and services by using the elements of marketing (the product, prices, distribution, and advertising) as effective tools to establish Demarketing Strategy.

This study focuses on the effect of Demarketing on improving product quality in the customers perception by depending upon decreasing order through many tools (like decreasing offer, increasing process, limited distribution, and limited advertising) which affect customer perception regarding the value and quality of the product, which will be reflected by improving the product image in the mind of the customer.

This study differs from its predecessors which focused on the rationalization of some products (electricity, fuel, water, smoking, limiting alcohol consumption) as it focused on how to utilize a Demarketing strategy in influencing customers and improving product value in their minds, as this study included eight dimensions that cover the study model.

Research Objectives

Broadly, the study examined the effect of demarketing on consumer perception of product quality. The following specific objectives are stated:

1. To find out the extent to which demarketing Strategy decreases demand and affect consumer perception of product quality.
2. To examine the effect of decrease in product demand on consumer perception of product quality.
3. To investigate the extent to which Increase in product price affect consumer perception of product quality.



4. To investigate the extent to which limited product distribution affects consumer perception of product quality.
5. To find out the effect of narrow advertisement on consumer perception of product quality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Demarketing

Many researchers handled Demarketing and its strategies in many aspects, focused on smoking and studied the Demarketing effect on lowering this unhealthy, personally and socially damaging phenomenon and its effect on society as a whole (Moore, 2005) which was entitled the sociological impact of attitude towards smoking while (Brian et al, 2006) had a study which examined the drivers of risky behaviours such as smoking among the economically disadvantaged.

Derman (2008) focused on Demarketing's role in controlling and limiting smoking while Lee (2004) focused on studying the smoking phenomenon and its effect on African Americans in the United States of America, his study showed that smoking was more prominent in smoking-restricted areas like public areas, parks, and restaurants, in addition to their rejection of the tax increase on cigarettes.

Regarding electricity consumption, many researchers discussed this subject like Alqubaili (2009) which focused on using insulating material to decrease electrical consumption, the study concluded that using insulating material decreased electrical consumption by 46%, Altaweel (2011) studied the function of demand on electrical consumption in Gaza to initiate a comparison between the expected electricity that could be saved and the amount of expected consumption, the results showed that the amount of electricity was insufficient and did not meet the actual demand.

While ALHamid (2012) focused on specifying recruitment of practical and architectural ways to decrease and rationalize electrical consumption, the study concluded that electricity was majorly consumed in using air conditioning (cooling and heating) in Iraq.

Musdiq et al (2012) the aim of their study was to identify the possibility of applying Demarketing on electrical consumption to control random and unorganized consumption with rationalizing its use, the study concluded that Demarketing has a major role in electrical consumption in Iraq.

Ary et al (2014) focused on the role of marketing on electrical energy preservation programs in Brazil, this study confirmed the importance of this program in decreasing the waste. Salman (2015) focused on Demarketing effect on electricity consumption in Jordan, the most important conclusion was that awareness campaigns for individuals and increasing the price of electricity had a major role in a reasonable electrical consumption, the most important element in Demarketing that had effect on electricity consumption was awareness campaigns by repetitive advertising laws and civil society organizations.



Rudaina (2014) was entitled measuring the effectiveness of Demarketing in influencing consumer behaviour of individuals focusing on water consumption in Jordan, the study's concluded that there is an impact of the Demarketing campaigns in water consumption and the effect of following up the awareness campaigns which are carried out by civil society organization to realize consumption.

According to Bradley & Blythe (2013) the example of New Coke is a well-known and told example of Strategic Demarketing. As many numerous popular studies, for example Oliver (1986), Rengold (1988) and Clifford (2009). The extent to which an initial Demarketing whole exegetics was indeed (in Kotler & Levy terms) creating the appearance of a strategic marketing withdrawal with the express intention of boosting a declining brand (Haig, 2013). Regarding the use of Ostensible Demarketing Strategy, improving product image in the customers' perception through the employment of specific tools like decreasing offer, increasing price, narrow advertising, limited distribution, such studies are rare and limited which gives them their earned importance.

Marketing and Demarketing Concept:

According to Bradley & Blythe (2013) Demarketing can be defined as a deliberate attempt by marketers to reduce demand for a product by using the same tools and techniques as are normally used to increase demand. Dominic et al (2001) was the first who used the term "Demarketing" on the other hand Kolter & Levy (1974), were the researchers who defined it as Demarketing which represents the efforts aimed at reducing the demand for a product. Wall (2007) defined Demarketing as a use for marketing hypotheses to convince customers to change their attitudes and behaviours regarding certain products and services, meanwhile, Beetan & Pinge (2003) defined Demarketing as an attempt to decrease most or certain types of customers to consume a certain product for a limited time or permanently. While Robert & Moore (2005) defined Demarketing as the act of discouraging consumption or use of specific product or service. In light of what has been mentioned, we could say that Demarketing is an attempt in reducing demand on a certain product or service for several reasons:

- The organization being incapable of providing or prepare large amounts of the product or service enough to meet the demand
- The organization does not wish to provide a certain service or product due to:
- The relative increase of the distribution cost in a way that does not explain its presenting
- Decrease marginal profit
- Increased cost of marketing
- Rationalize the consumption of some high-priced products which are considered a strain on national economy, rare products, products that are considered damaging to public health and personal health, or even the irrational consumption of some home products or nutrients, this direction helps limit product consumption of endangered products (Kumar, 2010).



- Enhance product quality as some organizations are working to decrease commodity supply, product rarity indicates its high quality in the mind of individuals and customers (Stock et al, 2005).
- Increase product value through decreasing product display and increase the price within the concept of individuals needing products and services that they feel are not easy to procure, then feel glad for procuring it, so the rarity of a product and its availability in the market indicates the quality of the product which this rarity enhances customers' perceptions of product quality which will improve the product value in customers' perception.

Demarketing Strategy

These general vectors of Demarketing include and require changes of prevailing orientations for the usual marketing, this means a change in the work environment and its nature, concentrating the effort in that direction to decrease the demand which will decrease customers' willingness to buy, and this is the exact opposite to what usual marketing aims for.

Creating awareness in individuals regarding the necessity of economy in irrational consumption, this direction in Demarketing means a social and cultural change which indicates the conversion of social values and habits and consuming patterns away from overconsumption and towards limited consumption.

Kolter & Levy (1971) described three different types of Demarketing strategy, Medway et al (2011) indicated that Kolter & Levy (1971) identify three types of Demarketing strategies (Rudaina 2014) (Bradley & Blythe 2013) (Dharni et al 2011).

- **General Demarketing**, which is required when a company wants to shrink the level of total demand.
- **Selective Demarketing**, which is required when a company wants to discourage the demand coming from certain customer levels.
- **Ostensible Demarketing**, which involves the appearance of trying to discourage demand as a device for actually increasing. This strategy is seen implemented in organizations looking towards decreasing the demand on a specific product for a limited time while with the intention of increasing its price in the future and create the image of missing the product in the market which will create an impression in the customer's mind regarding the product quality making it valuable and worthy to be had.

Tools of Decreasing Demand

According to Keller and Levy (1971) they suggest using the classic tools of marketing to reduce demand, Bradley & Blythe (2013), Gupta (2014):-

- Curtail advertising expenditures for the product
- Reduce sales promotion expenditure
- Increase the price and other conditions of sale
- Curtail the number of distribution outlets



Consumer Perception

According to Alsomydai & Rudaina (2005) the system of perception in the behaviour area is translated through two factors; it's the spontaneous direction of external and internal physiological activity of the individual and customer. The second factor is choosing information; as individuals and customers have the freedom to choose certain information and discarding information that are unknown or mysterious. Subsequently, the behaviour of the customer or the individual and their satisfaction are affected by their level of perception.

Improving Product Reputation in Customer's Mind

In light of what was mentioned, customer's perception of product quality is affected by many factors (or Demarketing tools) like increasing product price (the relationship between price and quality) as higher prices indicate product quality, decreasing offer which is reflected by having the product unavailable in the market, which will indicate the rarity of the product thus leading to the increase in its value and quality. In addition to limited distribution, which means rendering the product unavailable on the wide scale, and narrow advertising which reduces the incidence of the customer remembering the product; all these factors lead to increasing product value in the customer's perception.

Hypotheses proposed for the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated in this study and they were stated in their null forms.

H1: Demarketing Strategy does not significantly decrease demand and affect consumer perception of product quality.

H2: Decrease in product demand has no significant effect on consumer perception of product quality.

H3: Increase product price has no significant effect on consumer perception of product quality.

H4: Limited product distribution affects consumer perception of product quality.

H5: Narrow advertisement has no significant effect on consumer perception of product quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This paper's broadly examine the effect of demarketing on consumer perception of product quality. The study is a descriptive survey. In order to identify relationships among the variables under consideration, questionnaires were used as the primary data collection method. This questionnaire was designed to capture the variables in the research questions. The population of the study consists of customers in Ado-Ekiti. Since the population is infinite, convenience sampling technique was used to select 350 customers who participated in the study. Out of the total of 350 questionnaire distributed, 323 questionnaires were answered which makes a 92%, eleven questionnaires were not fit for statistical analysis,



which decreased the total questionnaires answered and fit for analysis to 312 questionnaires. This represent 89% of total questionnaires distributed which is an acceptable percentage for scientific research.

Data analysis was done using Cronbach's Alpha, frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation matrix and one sample t-test. The t-test was used to accept/reject the hypotheses, through testing the average means of single sample based in the value of the scale midpoint. A midpoint equal to three was chosen by adding the lower coded of the Likert scale (1) and the upper code (5) of the Likert scale.

The research instrument was validated using cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a value of Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.79$) for all variables of the study, which is a good and suitable value for the purpose of the study being higher than the accepted percentage of 60%.

Table 1: Reliability Coefficient

No. of cases	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
312	0.79	25

The Results

By using descriptive analysis it was determined that the mean of all questions are over the midpoint (3) except for the questions (4, 5, 19, and 21) these results are shown in table (2):

Table 2: Results

Questions	Mean	Std. Dev	T Value	Sig.(2-tailed)
Dimensions of Demarketing Strategy				
1- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the decrease in product demand?	3.76	1.81	7.46	.000
2- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the decrease in product display?	3.63	1.20	9.34	.000
3- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the increase In product price?	3.67	1.09	10.88	.000
4- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the use of limited distribution strategy	2.90	1.43	-1.22	.222
5- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the use of narrow advertisement strategy?	2.85	1.56	-1.59	.113
6- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy affect the perception of consumers regarding product quality	4.57	.71	38.86	.000
7- Does the use of Demarketing Strategy improve consumer perception of product image?	4.30	.87	26.18	.000



Second dimension : decrease demand for product				
8- Does the decrease in demand affect product	3.83	.95	15.42	.000
9-Does the decrease iri demand affect product	3.43	1.19	6.43	.000
10-Does the decrease in demand affect the use of limited distribution?	3.45	1.81	6.85	.000
11-Does the decrease in demand affect the use of narrow advertisement?	3.77	1.36	10.03	.000
12-Does the decrease in demand improve consumer perception of product image?	4.60	.73	38.66	.000
13-Does the decrease in demand affect the perception of consumers regarding product quality?	4.35	.90	26.37	.000
14-Does the decrease in product display affect the perception of consumers regarding product quality?	4.36	.81	29.80	.000
15-Does the decrease in product display improve consumer perception of product image?	4.11	.96	20.33	.000
16-Does the increase in product price affect consumer perception regarding product quality?	4.25	.91	24.48	.000
17-Does the increase in product price improve Consume r perception of product image?	4.10	.99	19.48	.000
18-Does limited distribution affect consumer perception regarding product quality?	3.73	1.10	11.77	.000
19-Does limited distribution improve consumer perception of product image?	2.72	1.48	-3.24	.001
Sixth dimension : narrow advertisement				
20- Does narrow advertisement affect consumer perception regarding product quality?	3.71	1.24	10.21	.000
21- Does narrow advertisement improve consumer perception of product image?	2.89	1.36	-1.32	.187
22- Does consumer perception of product quality get affected by Ostensible	4.06	1.02	18.28	.000



23- Does consumer perception of product quality improve consumer perception of product image?	4.05	.93	19.98	.000
Eighth dimension: improving consumer perception of product image				
24- Is product image in consumer perception affected by Demarketing Strategy and its means?	4.25	.98	22.57	.000
25- Is product image in consumer perception affected by consumer perception of product quality?	4.15	.83	24.50	.000

Test of Hypotheses

The mean values of these are (H1 = 3.67, H2 = 4.24, H3 = 3.93, H4 = 3.23, H5 = 3.30). There values are above the scale midpoint (3).

These results were further validated by the one sample t-test which revealed that the overall mean different for these dimensions as a whole was statically significant (N = 0.000) at (Ns = 0.05) with a higher T -Value (H1 = 20.94, H2 = 30.92, H4 = 4.23, H5 = 5.23.) these scores are higher than tabular t (tabular = 1.96), as a result of the five hypothesis are accepted, these results are shown in table (3)

In order to test the relationship between the components of the study, Pearson correlation coefficient was adopted and the test result shows that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Dimension	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
D1	1.000				
D2	.393-.000	1.000			
D3	.280.000	.350-.000	1.000		
D4	.259.000	.353.000	.433.000	1.000	
D5	.086.000	.101.000	.138.000	.224.000	1.000

CONCLUSION

While marketing concept and marketing theory focused on the customer, meeting his needs and wants and satisfying them in a satisfactory way, Demarketing aims at rationalization or decreasing demand for some products such as water, electricity, smoking, energy, unjustifiable use of resources which have a great impact on the society. Despite its importance and its reflection to the whole societies economically, on our daily lives, public



health, personal health, among others, the concept has not been widely put into use.

This study has shown a positive correlation between study variables which are included in the study but this relationship has variable value in the correlation coefficient used, in addition to that, these variables were chosen by distributing them based on their influence and role in customer's perception of product quality.

These results are very important and have a great impact regarding business organizations and marketers if they required a broader use of Demarketing and its strategies through the findings of this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Producers of essential goods/ services can improve their product perception in the minds of consumers by increasing product price as higher prices indicate product quality, decreasing offer which is reflected by having the product unavailable in the market, which will indicate the rarity of the product thus leading to the increase in its value and quality. In addition to limited distribution, which means rendering the product unavailable on the wide scale, and narrow advertising which reduces the incidence of the customer remembering the product; all these factors lead to increasing product value in the customer's perception.
2. Government and other relevant agencies should create awareness in individuals regarding the necessity of economy in irrational consumption, this direction in Demarketing means a social and cultural change which indicates the conversion of social values and habits and consuming patterns away from overconsumption and towards limited consumption.
3. Government should discourage the excessive consumption of product such as electricity which is currently insufficient and did not meet the actual demand of the citizen.

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