



The Role of Demarketing Strategy in Improving Brand Reputation: An Analytical Study of The Opinions of a Sample of Nutritional Supplement Users Who Frequent Bodybuilding Centers in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate

Marwoan Abd Ul Husein Mohsan

University of Al-Qadisiyah / College of Administration and Economics /
Business Administration Department, Email: mrwanalrmahy6@gmail.com

Atheer Abdul Ameer Hassoni

University of Al-Qadisiyah / College of Administration and Economics /
Business Administration Department, Atheer.almashady@qu.edu.iq

Received: November 8, 2021; reviews: 2; accepted: June 29, 2022.

Abstract

This study aims to search for the effect of the Demarketing strategy with its dimensions (price raising, counter-advertising, distribution, reducing product quality), on the brand reputation in its dimensions (brand reliability, brand charity), in bodybuilding centers in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate, and a problem was presented The study in a main question (what is the effect of the Demarketing strategy on the reputation of the brand), and the study sample included the users of nutritional supplements in the centers, and the questionnaire was used in collecting data, as 386 responses were obtained from users of nutritional supplements in the bodybuilding centers In Al-Qadisiyah Governorate, using the random sampling method in Al-Diwaniyah Governorate, and the descriptive analytical approach was adopted in the study, and then the data was analyzed by adopting some statistical methods such as (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, linear correlation coefficient, simple and multiple regression coefficient) and to test the scale was employed (Alpha Cronbach, factor analysis), and the results were reached using the statistical program such as (SPSS.V.27) and the program (Amos.V.26), as the results of the study confirmed That there is an impact of a Demarketing strategy on a brand's reputation.

Keywords

Demarketing strategy, brand reputation

JEL Classifications: J11, F43

1. Introduction

Marketing in the current era seeks to satisfy the needs and desires of consumers, urging them to repeat purchase and increase it and motivate them to do so. that the organization does not have enough of the product, which leads it to reduce the number of sales, and prompt consumers not to buy this product, but the concept of the Demarketing strategy and its elements took a completely different approach in the recent period, as it became employed to reduce the consumption of goods and services that harm the environment and society And the individual, such as smoking and nutritional supplements, as well as focusing on how to reduce individuals' consumption of products that harm the national economy, such as electricity and water, on the other hand, building a brand's reputation is one of the desired goals of successful organizations through the creation of advertising campaigns aimed at building a positive image supported by During which the formation of consumer attitudes towards the special performance of the brand's products in the presence of a highly competitive market environment and strengthening the loyalty of this opinion of society and the Winning its confidence in the contents of advertising messages to the masses also for its brand, and the intentions of repurchasing means that the customer will buy the product again in the future and it reflects his loyalty to the product, and stated, that the Demarketing strategy has an impact on the purchasing decision of customers, so The current study attempts to achieve a basic goal, which is to explain the factors affecting the relationship between the Demarketing strategy and the reputation of the purchasing brand. This main question and its implicit ramifications, by presenting assumptions based on the intellectual and applied controversy in previous studies, in the light of which it came to building a conceptual and hypothetical model that frames the relationship between the variables of the study in a way that gives importance and an intellectual contribution to be added to the marketing studies.

The First Topic: Research Methodology

First: The Problem of the Study

The concept of Demarketing is one of the concepts that organizations did not seriously adopt to reduce the demand for products, whether in the Arab world or in Iraq, and most of those interested in this vital aspect were presented in the form of foreign studies, and as a result of the invitation of a number of researchers to conduct a number of studies regarding reverse To reduce the consumption of nutritional supplement products for bodybuilding, which may cause an increase in the rate of work of the kidneys, as its excessive work may cause an increase in the rate of excretion of body fluids, which may lead to dehydration, and the rate of excretion of dissolved salts and minerals in body fluids, including calcium, may also increase. May lead to a decrease in the level of calcium in the blood; Organizations,

producers, service providers or brands that take advantage of Demarketing to pull customers in their favor and keep them away from the rest of their competitors, and all defective products and potentially harmful products have a negative impact on the reputation of the brand, and this is what this research attempts to address by answering the following question :(What is the impact of the Demarketing strategy on the reputation of the brand), and the following sub-questions emerge from it:

1-What is the nature of the relationship between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation among the nutritional supplement users who frequent the bodybuilding centers of the study sample?

2-Is there a clear perception of Demarketing among the users of nutritional supplements who frequent the bodybuilding centers of the study population?

3-Is there a significant effect of Demarketing strategies on the brand reputation of the study population?

Second: The Importance of the Study

1-The importance of this study is represented by the importance of the topic that deals with the impact of Demarketing on the reputation of the brand, as this study, to the knowledge of the researcher, is the first that deals with the studied variables in the service sector.

2-The importance of the researched variables at the intellectual and applied level in the field of business administration, as the study contributes to enriching the knowledge side of topics that the local and Arabic library lacks, including the issue of reverse marketing, which is one of the modern variables that attract great interest from researchers, and this enrichment is not limited to presentation and narration Rather, it includes exposure to the nature of the potential relationships between them, whether through discussion based on the logical and mental framework, or at the level of practical testing of a set of hypotheses by linking these variables.

Third: - The Objectives of the Study

1- Detecting the level of availability of the dimensions of the Demarketing strategy (price raising, counter-advertising, distribution, reducing product quality) among the users of nutritional supplements who frequent the bodybuilding centers of the study sample.

2-Identifying the level of brand reputation dimensions (brand reliability, brand benevolence) among the study sample.

Fourth: Research Hypotheses

A-The first main hypothesis: There is a positive, significant correlation between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation.

B-The second main hypothesis: There is a significant influence relationship between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation.



Figure 1. The Hypothesis of the Study

Fifth: The Study Population and Sample

The study was applied to a sample of 386 users of nutritional supplements who frequent bodybuilding centers. The random sample method was adopted in order to collect the necessary data, and the sample size was determined. According to the study, it requires (377) responses to represent This community, the researcher distributed (400) questionnaires to the sample members, and (386) questionnaires were retrieved and assembled for the purpose of preparing them for the analysis process.

The Second Topic: The Theoretical Framework for Research

First: The Concept of Demarketing Strategy

The marketing function is within the well-known concept that it seeks to increase demand and expand the supply of markets in an unlimited way of products, but it occurs in certain periods that the shopping management in organizations may not be able to meet the protests and desires, or that there is a certain category of customers that these organizations do not want In dealing with them or wanting to dispense with them temporarily or permanently, hence a modern concept of marketing called Demarketing (Demarketing) in the seventies of the last century as a result of the increase in demand for certain products at a time when organizations cannot meet that increase in demand (Armstrong et al., 2011). (Chaudhry et al., 2019) pointed out that Demarketing is an integral component of general marketing that must be clarified in a broader way rather than from a limited viewpoint, and also that the marketing department must be more familiar with the areas of the marketing mix consisting of product, price, promotion, distribution, etc. It is related to changes in the internal and external marketing environment, whether from excessive supply of demand or to excess demand. It is an important tool used to reduce demand or consumption, or to rationalize its use of a particular good or service, permanently or temporarily due to the scarcity and importance of these resources. Demand permanently or temporarily, and educate customers about resource depletion or excessive consumption of harmful products

(Aboud et al., 2019). He defined it as a philosophy or approach to be followed by the management of organizations through the practice of marketing methods and techniques for the purpose of reducing demand, and limiting consumption on a particular product to achieve better health benefits for society (Hall et al., 2021). As for (Salem, 2018), he sees that it is the efforts made by the organization aimed at reducing the demand for the product, due to the lack of a sufficient quantity of the product equal to the demand for the product or leads to health problems or may have a great harm to the economy.

Second: The Importance of the Demarketing Strategy

Demarketing is often seen as a response to saturated demand and marketers' concerns about the inability or unwillingness to provide a service for reasons of sustainability, and is therefore a reactive strategy to reduce demand rather than a preventive tool (Lindberg et al., 2021).

The importance of the Demarketing strategy is important to the organization for several reasons, including (AL-Samydai et al., 2018; Weiler et al., 2019):-

1- The ability of the organization or producer is not sufficient to provide large quantities of the product or service in order to meet the perpetual demands.

2-The organization or producer does not want to provide a specific product or service for the following reasons- :

A- A relative increase in the cost of distribution in a way that does not explain its presentation.

b- A decrease in marginal profit.

C - increase the cost of marketing.

3-Rationalizing the consumption of some expensive products that are a burden on the economy, scarce products, products that harm public and personal health, or even the irrational consumption of some household products or nutrients.

4-This trend helps in reducing the producer's use of endangered products.

5-Enhancing product quality, as some organizations are working to reduce the supply of goods.

6- Increasing the value of the product by reducing its supply and increasing the price within the concept that says that customers need products and services that they feel difficult to obtain, and then feel happy to buy them.

Demarketing can be used to create awareness in the general community about the need to economize on irrational consumption, such as wasting water and electricity, and therefore it is a social and cultural change to show the transfer of values, social habits and consumption patterns away from excessive consumption and towards limited consumption (Seeletse, 2016).

Third: - Dimensions of the Demarketing Strategy

1-Raise the Price

In some cases, the government raises prices for a specific good or service by imposing taxes on it, which leads to raising the final prices of the good or service,

and then the demand for it decreases by customers, and humiliation leads to discouraging buying with a larger quantity of the good or service (Weiler et al., 2019). (Aboud et al., 2019), and organizations wishing to raise the prices of their products to meet the excessive demand may face some restrictions accompanying this increase (AL-Samydai et al., 2018).

This can be done through the following strategies: introducing or increasing prices/user fees, discouraging/stopping product discounting practices, introducing differentiated pricing where the price rises disproportionately with the increase in the invoice price with increased consumption (Salem, 2018).

2- Counter Ads

Counter advertising is defined as the advertisement that is used to limit the consumption or use of a product and is described as harmful to the environment and to humans alike. Not to excessively consume medical products or to consume tobacco, drugs or alcohol that have serious health damages, and this is done through printed and published advertisements or warning leaflets (Aboud et al., 2019).

And both (AL-Samydai et al., 2018; Weiler et al., 2019) indicated that this can be done through the following strategies: stopping or reducing the promotion of product consumption in certain markets, not promoting certain services, and promoting or emphasizing restrictions related to By consuming the product, and warning customers of environmental conditions under which activities may be curtailed. (Kirchner, 2016) explained that this dimension can be applied by emphasizing appropriate/minimum impactful behavior in promotional materials, and highlighting the environmental degradation that can occur in the event of product consumption.

3-Distribution

For products in general, their distribution will be in limited quantities, and specific distribution outlets, whether for medical products that include health warnings related to the lives of customers or other products related to this regard (Salem, 2018). This can be done through the following strategies: limiting distribution to make the product less available, reducing the ease of access to certain services, limiting the total quantity of goods/services, limiting the quantity per customer, introducing reservation systems using a first-come-first-served customer allocation system First, it limits overall capacity, limits total number of customers, and strategizes to encourage the use of other sources (Aboud et al., 2019).

4-Reducing the Quality of the Product

Reducing the quality of the product's content usually leads to a gradual decrease in the demand for that product, and despite the use of this method in

reverse marketing, some researchers had a different and opposite opinion on the use and application of this method in reverse marketing, as quality is an essential factor that cannot be compromised or bypassed (Aboud et al., 2019). (Kirchner, 2016) stated that highlighting the negative aspects of a product / service intentionally to reduce demand, or divert attention from a particular product / service (this approach may actually raise the image of the organization and its products / services and increase demand (unintentional marketing) For unexpected reasons, if potential customers perceive these negative aspects as positive.

Fourth: The Concept of Brand Reputation

The development of brand reputation means more than just customer satisfaction, as it is something the organization gains over time and indicates how different customers evaluate the brand (Amblee et al., 2008). Reputable organizations and brands attract more customers and the brand will lose its positive reputation if it fails to meet its stated message or marketing signals (Veloutsou et al., 2009).

Brand reputation occurs primarily through the signals that producers send to the market and the degree to which the regulatory tactics of marketing signals support (Afzal et al., 2010). Customers retain brands as part of a value-added product, and this brand creates a difference from other products (Han et al., 2015).

Brand reputation can be judged by customers' opinion, comments, appreciation and beliefs. If customers suggest the use of a brand, this is considered a sign of good reputation (Sengupta et al., 2015). Brand reputation refers to the attitude of customers that the brand is good and reliable, and brand reputation can be developed through advertising and public relations, and it enhances its quality (Jurisic et al., 2011). It is the result of the company's activities and interaction with customers, which are mostly characterized by the goods and services provided and the relationship of brands with customers and society (Mahmood et al., 2020).

Fifth: The Importance of Brand Reputation

For each to become successful and thus profitable, brands must have gained a positive reputation. Brand names are often repositories of brand reputation, and the high-quality performance of one product can often be transferred to another via the brand name (Amblee et al., 2008). (Zhang et al., 2007) pointed out that a reputable brand is a strong asset, which benefits from a high degree of loyalty and thus from the stability of future sales. Outstanding price.

Brand reputation is important for strengthening the social position of the organization and improving its profits, if customers want to promote social self-actualization through association with a brand that has a high reputation.

(Martínez-Ferrero et al., 2018) pointed out that customers who buy reputable brands are customers who want to show their social status. When customers buy any products, they will think about brand reputation, and customers

see fewer risks towards brands. With a high reputation, and thus can stimulate the purchase decision.

Sixth: The Dimensions of Repurchase Intention

1-Brand Reliability

Brand reliability is defined as the ability of an existing brand name to act as a guide to reduce customer perceptions of risk when evaluating brand extension in a particular product category. The value of building a brand portfolio (Foroudi, 2019). Brand reliability is one of the key factors in assessing consumer confidence, which is key to brand success, because it is based on the consumer's belief that the brand can deliver the value it has promised (Cvitanović, 2018). Reliability is the expectation that the brand will continually operate as the customer perceives (Naznin, 2019).

2-Ehsan Brand

The starting point for developing trust is a feeling of benevolence. In order for the organization to gain the trust of customers, it must show some interest in their personal interests and strengthen the goodwill of the parties involved in order to build and support this relationship (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2015). and the well-being of other partners and their motivation to pursue common goals and benefits (Theemling, 2013). And I think (Yadollahi et al., 2016) that charity refers to the amount of effort that workers make towards maintaining the position and reputation of the organization.

(Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2017) indicated that charity depicts the extent of concern for the general interest of customers and work to create a positive work environment characterized by cooperation and credibility. Brand charity is related to care and concern for the well-being of customers and other stakeholders (Verma et al., 2020), brand charity as it represents the extent of the organization's goodwill towards doing good to achieve customers' goals regardless of the profit motives that the organization seeks to achieve. And (Heidkamp et al., 2021) found that brand charity appears by improving the treatment of customers with care and humanity throughout crises and changes, and brand charity as representing the extent to which it is believed that the organization aims to do good to the other trusted party, Charity focuses on strengthening the relationship with the trusted organization by promoting intentions and motives that improve altruism at the organization level.

The Third Topic: The Practical Aspect of Research

First: - The Independent Variable: The Demarketing Strategy

It is noticed from the answers of the study sample shown in the table (1) that the studied sample realized the importance of paying attention to the

dimension of raising the price, which means that the studied sample tended to increase the price of the product to reduce demand and at the same time practice an increase in promotions and privileges on the product that contains low content of materials or dimensions The smallest, and this obtained an arithmetic mean of (3.34) and a standard deviation of (0.59), indicating the consistency and consistency of the answers of the studied sample as a result of the availability of (67%) from the price-raising dimension, as it became clear through the sample answers that all dimensions of the Demarketing strategy variable got a mean My arithmetic ranged between (3.11-3.34) and relative interest (62%-67%) to indicate the awareness of the studied sample of the importance of placing conditions on the purchase process.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear from the answers of the studied sample that the general arithmetic mean of the Demarketing strategy variable was (3.19) and with a standard deviation of (0.538), which means that the studied sample realized the importance of rationalizing the consumption of some expensive products that are a burden on the economy or rare products or products that Harmful to public and personal health or even irrational consumption of certain household products or nutrients, and this has received a relative interest equal to (64%).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Demarketing Strategy Variable

ت	dimension	mean	standard deviation	Relative importance	Availability level	importance
1	raise the price	3.34	0.59	67%	Available	1
2	counter ads	3.14	0.643	63%	Available	3
3	distribution	3.11	0.697	62%	Available	4
4	Reduce product quality	3.16	0.741	63%	Available	2
Demarketing strategy variant						
mean	3.19	standard deviation	0.538	Relative importance		64%

Second: -A Summary of The Brand Reputation Variable

The answers of the study sample shown in Table (2) indicate the awareness of the studied sample of the importance of interest in the charity dimension of the brand, which means that the studied sample tends to perceive certain purchase transactions as being more beneficial than others, which saves the costs of searching for information amid ambiguity and inconsistency in information. This obtained an arithmetic mean of (3.27) and a standard deviation of (0.604), indicating the consistency and consistency of the answers of the studied sample as a result of the availability of (65%) from the dimension of charity for the brand. It ranged between (3.16-3.27) and relative interest (6-65) to indicate the awareness of the studied sample of the importance of linking a positive reputation with high quality, so that they feel satisfied with their purchases.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear from the answers of the studied sample that the general arithmetic means of the brand reputation variable amounted to

(3.22) with a standard deviation of (0.591), which means that the studied sample realized the importance of investing the brand’s reputation in order to stimulate consumption for consumers who use a reputable brand, and this achieved have a relative interest equal to (64%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Brand Reputation Variable

	dimension	mean	standard deviation	Relative importance	Availability level	importance
1	Brand reliability	3.16	0.666	63%	Available	2
2	Charity for the brand	3.27	0.604	65%	Available	1
brand reputation variable						
mean	3.22	standard deviation	0.591	Relative importance		64%

Third: Hypothesis Testing

The First Main Hypothesis

There is a statistically significant correlation between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation

The results reviewed in Table (3) showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation, which is a strong direct relationship and its amount is (0.736) and at the level of significance (0.01), which means that the calculated (T) value of (21.304) higher than the tabular (T) value, as well as the existence of a correlation between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation dimensions and ranged from (0.615) for the charity dimension of the brand to (0.747) for the dimension of brand reliability, and based on the above, the validity of the first main hypothesis can be accepted, which states On (there is a statistically significant correlation between the Demarketing strategy and brand reputation), which means achieving organizational goals depends on knowing the needs and desires of the target markets and providing what satisfies the requirements of customers better than competitors.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix the Relationship between Demarketing Strategy and Brand Reputation

Stand ard	raise price	counter ads	distribution	Reduce product quality	Demarketing strategy
Brand reliability					
R	.257**	.627**	.747**	.717**	.747**
T	5.211	15.772	22.018	20.156	22.018
Charity for the brand					
R	.183**	.536**	.664**	.550**	.615**
T	3.648	12.442	17.402	12.905	15.284
brand reputation					
R	.238**	.628**	.761**	.685**	.736**
T	4.802	15.814	22.986	18.425	21.304
Sig. (2-tailed) =0.000			**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		
T= 2.364	N=386				

The Second Main Hypothesis

There is a significant statistically significant effect of the Demarketing strategy on the brand reputation

Table (4) shows the structural model of the study that shows the effect of the Demarketing strategy on the reputation of the brand. As for the one-way stocks from the independent variables to the dependent variable, they represent the standard regression coefficients, and the value shown above the brand reputation variable represents the interpretation coefficient (the coefficient of determination) that They are called standard coefficients (used to test hypotheses) (R^2), which show that the Demarketing strategy variable is able to explain (54.2%) of the changes that occur on the brand reputation variable in the sample concerned, and the remaining percentage (45.8%) is attributed to contributions Other variables not included in the study model.

It is also noted from the table () that the value of the marginal slope coefficient (β) of (0.838), which means that increasing the levels of availability of the Demarketing strategy by one unit of standard deviation will lead to an increase in the levels of brand reputation by (83.8%) per unit deviation. One standard, with a standard error of (0.023), and based on the outputs of the structural model of the influence relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the fourth main hypothesis of the impact hypotheses is accepted.

Table 4. Results of Analyzing the Impact of Demarketing Strategy on Brand Reputation

path		standard weights	standard error	critical value	R^2	(P)
Demarketing strategy	<--- Brand reputation	0.838	0.023	36.435	0.542	0.001

2. Conclusions and Recommendations

2.1 Conclusions

1- The results showed that there is a significant correlation between the Demarketing strategy and the brand reputation, which means that the studied sample is aware of the importance of improving the customer's perception of the product.

2-The presence of a direct and significant impact of the Demarketing strategy on the reputation of the brand, which means that the attention of the studied sample is directed towards providing value to customers in a way that preserves or improves the well-being of both the customer and the community, which contributed to the company's awareness and education campaigns about excessive consumption of the product.

3-The results showed that there is an indirect effect of the Demarketing strategy on the reputation of the brand, which means the interest of the studied sample in making more efforts aimed at reducing the demand for the product, due to the lack of a sufficient quantity of the product equal to the demand for the product or leading to health problems or may It has a great effect on the economy.

4-The results showed the company's tendency to increase prices in order to reduce the purchase of nutritional supplements, in addition to this, this increase affects the consumer's view of the quality of the product.

5- The interest of the studied sample in advising customers not to use a specific commodity or service, such as not consuming excessively medical products or consuming tobacco, drugs or alcohol with serious health damage, and this is done through printed and published advertisements or warning leaflets.

6-The studied sample's awareness of the importance of limiting distribution to make the product less available, reducing the ease of access to certain services, limiting the total quantity of goods/services, limiting the quantity per customer, introducing reservation systems using a first-come-first-served customer allocation system, This limits the total capacity, limits the total number of customers, and develops a strategy to encourage the use of other sources.

7- The interest of the studied sample to reduce the quality of the product by searching for alternative ways to use it so that it can be reused several times and increase the value attributed to that product, or create new dimensions that contain a smaller amount of the product or reduce or replace the amount of harmful substances in the product.

8-The studied sample is directed to increase the price of the product to reduce the demand and at the same time to exercise an increase in promotions and privileges on the product that has a low content of materials or with smaller dimensions.

9-Awareness of the studied sample of the importance of rationalizing the consumption of some expensive products that are a burden on the economy, scarce products, products that harm public and personal health, or even the irrational consumption of some household products or nutrients.

10-The interest of the studied sample is a collection of the opinions, perceptions and attitudes of the organization's stakeholders, employees, customers, suppliers, investors, community members, activists, media and other stakeholders

2.2 Recommendations

1-The need for the studied sample to realize the importance of the brand's ability to attract great approval from customers, which requires the studied sample's attention to the customer's orientation to address the problems of the brand by responding to them cautiously.

2- The studied sample should pay attention to improving the social status of the organization and improving its profits, which requires it to urge customers to

promote social self-realization through association with a brand that has a high reputation.

3-The need for the studied sample to realize the importance of improving the customer's desire to repeat purchases in the future, which requires the studied sample to realize the importance of providing the necessary information and knowledge regarding the importance of nutritional supplements and the way to use them without harming the body.

4-The necessity of the studied sample's interest in repurchasing a good or service based on what was obtained from the same company, and its willingness to pay a higher price to obtain these goods and services, and tends to do it regularly.

5-The studied sample should study the attitude of customers towards achieving a certain behavior by engaging in repeated purchases with the retailer.

6-The need for the study sample to pay attention to improving the brand's reputation is more economically beneficial than constantly searching for new customers, which requires conducting continuous studies in order to find more new and/or industry-specific justifications for the brand's reputation.

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