

# Demarketing For Sustainability: Examining Anti-“Black Friday” Communication Campaigns of Global Brands

## Dr. Cansu Tor Kadioglu

Assist. Prof.  
Faculty of Applied Sciences,  
University of Tarsus, Turkey  
(Corresponding author)  
Guest Researcher,  
Faculty of Behavioural,  
Management and Social Sciences,  
University of Twente, the Netherlands

## Dr. Esra Ozturk

Res. Assist,  
Faculty of Economics,  
Administrative, and Social Sciences,  
University of Toros, Turkey

## Abstract

With the development of technology, traditional promotion activities have been replaced by modern and relational strategies. The primary goal of the companies was not only to sell their products to their customers but to conquer their hearts to gain higher customer lifetime value. Although Black Friday means profit for most companies, it is criticized by conscious consumers for triggering over-consumption. Recognizing that traditional marketing strategies are no longer sufficient to gain the loyalty of environmentally conscious consumers, nowadays global brands show the courage to give the message "do not buy my product" to consumers. This paper presents a conceptual investigation into the use of green demarketing during Black Friday worldwide. In this context, anti-Black Friday communication campaigns of ten different global brands were examined. The findings of the research showed that these brands have emphasized sustainability along Black Friday and temporarily gave a “do not buy” message to their consumers. Even if these corporate social responsibility practices of brands are not real demarketing practices, it has been concluded that companies use demarketing as an important tool in creating a sustainable and responsible brand image. The main theoretical contribution of this study is to present researchers with a new perspective different from traditional demarketing practices.

**Keywords:** Demarketing, Sustainability, Black Friday, Corporate Social Responsibility

## Introduction

Today, social, cultural, economic, and technological developments have caused changes in the consumption habits of consumers and consequently the supply-demand equilibrium. After the industrial revolution, while promotion efforts increased due to the excess production, today manufacturers have become unable to meet the demand, especially in some sectors. As a result, the concept of marketing has started to change by reversal today and the concept of "demarketing"

has emerged (Kotler and Levy 1971; Beeton and Benfold, 2002; Seeletse 2016; Cintrón et al. 2017; Chaudhry et al. 2019). In the case of unforeseen excess demand, the main goal of the companies that cannot supply to meet that demand has been to successfully manage the increasing demand by implementing a successful demarketing strategy. Corporate/nonprofit partnerships are becoming more common and the application of corporate/nonprofit partnerships as Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives has increased in the last 15 years (Shumate and O'Connor 2010; Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020; Waymer, Gilliland, and Barbour, 2021). According to Edelman (2018), 64% of global consumers buy or boycott brands depending on social issues (Choi 2020). Additionally, a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) can mitigate the negative effects of a company's competency-related crisis (Kim and Choi 2020).

Kotler and Levy (1971) define demarketing as a brand's efforts to reduce demand for its products and outline three types of demarketing: general (reaction to supply shortage), selective (to repel undesired consumer segments), and ostensible (a scarcity signal) marketing. However, in today's conditions where consumers become more conscious and anti-consumption movements are widespread, demarketing activities are not used only to reduce demand, avoid unprofitable customers or attract customers by creating a perception of artificial shortage. Therefore, the concepts of "demarketing for sustainability" or "green demarketing" have emerged as a new category addressing today's changing conditions. Green demarketing has recently been proposed by Armstrong-Soule and Reich (2015) as an expansion of Kotler and Levy's (1971) three-category paradigm. Authors defined green demarketing as a type of corporate social responsibility and strategic green marketing initiative to reduce consumption. Research in green demarketing reveals that for-profit companies could properly promote individuals' anti-consumption inclinations under certain circumstances (Armstrong-Soule and Reich 2015; Kim, Ko and Kim 2018; Haque et al., 2020; Reich and Armstrong-Soule 2016;).

Demarketing is now used to raise awareness among consumers about unsustainable consumption processes and to encourage socially responsible consumption (Sodhi, 2011). Consumption is related to sustainability by nature. Since every choice about what to buy, how much to purchase, how much to consume, and how to dispose of it has a direct effect on the world and the next generations (Trudel, 2019). Thøgersen (2005) has argued that the three stakeholder groups that affect individuals' display of responsible and sustainable consumption behavior are (1) government, (2) consumer citizens, and (3) companies and all of them are in a relationship with each other. In this context, companies have started to design their promotional activities on the axis of "sustainability". In the changing world, the concept of "advertising" has been replaced by the concept of "goodvertising" aiming to raise awareness for a more sustainable world and prioritize social responsibility (Kolster, 2012). As an alternative for promoting sustainability, companies start using green demarketing advertising to convince consumers to abstain from buying redundant products (Sodhi, 2011; Armstrong, Soule and Reich, 2015; Hwang et al. 2016; Reich and Soule, 2016). Because green demarketing has so many potential benefits for brands and society overall, it is important to investigate every detail of such strategies. Consequently, green demarketing is a conceptually innovative concept that has the potential to expand both the demarketing and sustainability research streams, as well as promote sustainable business practices (Armstrong, Soule, and Reich, 2015).

Black Friday is undoubtedly a very valuable day for many businesses. However, from an ecological point of view, it is dark due to its mass consumption characteristics, and it leads people to "impulsive buying" due to the campaign and promotion frenzy. Uncontrolled shopping and unconscious consumption provide an environment for mass waste and unnecessary CO2 emissions. On Black Friday, one of the busiest shopping days of the year in 2020, online shoppers increased by 22% compared to the previous year, reaching a record level. A study by Money.co.uk suggests that shoppers could emit more than 386,243 tonnes of carbon emissions in 2021 (Ekoik, 2021). It is known that

consumers have created a Green Friday campaign as a Movement Against Black Friday. Green Friday argues that if buying a product or gift is inevitable, you should also consider the environmental impact of your shopping. Movement encourages people to shop more carefully and consciously and to 'thank nature'. The main purpose of this study is to examine global brands' anti-Black Friday communication campaigns within the scope of demarketing for sustainability. Several studies have been conducted in the literature regarding Black Friday discounts (Thomas and Peters 2011; Bell et al. 2014; Kwon and Brinthaup, 2015). However, most of the studies for Black Friday focused on the attitudes and behaviors of consumers. Studies examining the Black Friday strategies of companies have not been found frequently in the literature. Two research questions were used to guide this study: what are company sustainability efforts and secondly can demarketing strategy be an environmental protection practice in the long run?

This research is important in terms of breaking this one-sided perspective in the literature and filling this gap. The research aims to bring a new dimension to the traditional demarketing classification in the literature and to provide suggestions for marketing professionals to use demarketing tactics more effectively in corporate social responsibility practices. Therefore, presenting a new perspective to both researchers and practitioners in the context of demarketing strategies and corporate social responsibility practices will be the main contribution of this study. The rest of the study is organized as follows. In the following section, the conceptual framework based on demarketing, green demarketing, and goodvertising are discussed. Then, researchers move on to the research methodology and examine the anti-Black Friday campaign of ten different global brands. Lastly, implications of the findings are explored with consideration of limitations and foresight for future research.

## **Demarketing**

The primary task of the marketer is to adjust the demand to comply with long-term brand goals rather than increase sales without taking into account brand goals (Cullwick, 1975). Similarly, Beeton and Benfield (2002) argue that

excessive demand is also an important problem for the economy as well as excess supply, which stands out as the chronic unresolved problem of the economy. Consumers in today's global market are becoming more and more aware of environmental issues, demonstrating a high level of environmental concern (Krause 1993; Karim et al., 2020). This reorientation of the consumer mindset has led researchers to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence consumers' green consumption (Kim Yun, Lee, and Ko, 2016; Tarofder et al., 2019). The concept of demarketing was first defined by Kotler and Levy (1971) as a set of activities aimed at reducing the temporary or permanent demand of a particular customer group for a product. Some researchers defined it as antimarketing or being opposite of the marketing (Seeletse 2016; Kim et al. 2018). The main purpose of demarketing practices is to cope with the relatively decreasing or increasing demand in the market. Being able to cope with low demand as well as excess demand is a problem for businesses, so demarketing becomes an important marketing function (Kotler and Levy 1971; Farquar and Robson 2017). Demarketing has historically been applied for social ills or antisocial behavior such as gambling, drug use (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, opioids, heroin), prostitution and smuggling, graffiti, and pirated goods (Grinstein and Nisan 2009; Peattie, Peattie and Newcomber, 2016; Landreat 2020) and applied in the health sector to reduce smoking and inappropriate health care consumption (Beeton and Benfold 2002).

Kotler and Levy (1971) introduced three types of demarketing: general demarketing, selective demarketing, and ostensible demarketing. General demarketing is required when a company wants to decrease excess demand under three different conditions: temporary shortages, chronic over-popularity, and product elimination. Selective demarketing is necessary when a company wishes to limit demand among an unprofitable or undesirable customer segment. One of the best-known examples of selective marketing is the tourism strategy implemented for Bali Island (Bradley and Blythe 2014). Ostensible demarketing is used to create a perceived shortage of products to appeal to consumers (Medway, Warnaby, and Dharni, 2010).

Kahneman and Tversky (1984) emphasized the importance of scarcity appeals by stating that the loss or inability of consumers to gain something may be more motivating than gaining the same thing. Limited edition products, "sold out" labels, and limited discount messages are among the most common scarcity appeals employed by companies.

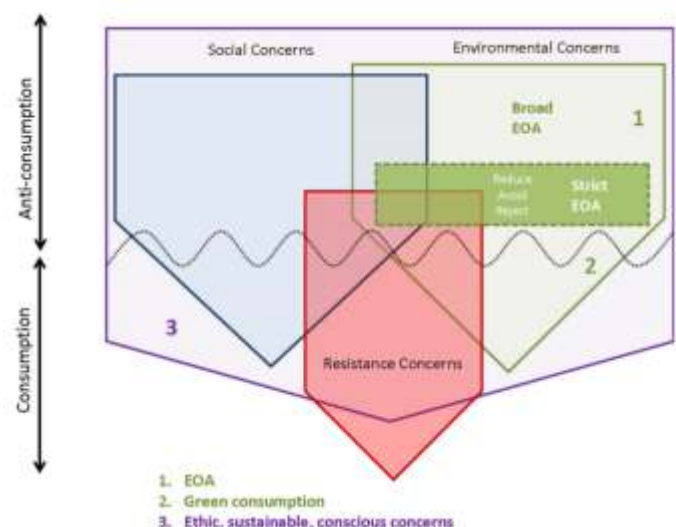
Gerstner et al. (1993) widen the scope of demarketing tools by proposing that demarketing be used as a differentiation strategy in which a company actively demarkets itself to distinguish itself from its competitors. Chaudhry et al. (2019) modified this three-category classification scheme to represent more current issues and expanded subcategories. Authors criticized the classification of Kotler and Levy (1971) by stating that it is a micro-environmental perspective and added new subcategories from a macro-environmental perspective, namely, protective demarketing, preventive demarketing, and combative demarketing. **Protective demarketing** is about decreasing the consumption of limited natural resources such as water, gas, oil, and other raw materials. Preventive demarketing entails encouraging people to consume fewer unhealthy products such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and sugary or fatty foods. **Combative demarketing** states that many companies in various industries are battling against the unwanted use of illegal products such as pirated and counterfeit goods.

## Demarketing for Sustainability (Green Demarketing)

Today, protecting the natural environment is an increasing concern for consumers, companies, policymakers, and society at large (Baker and Sinkula 2005). In the 21st century, the criticism of excessive consumption has grown (Singh, Sharma, Sharma, and Dwivedi, 2021). The economic crisis, social problems, and environmental problems caused by the current excessive consumption have caused changes in the lifestyles and consumption habits of consumers. Moreover, with postmodernism, consumption has completely lost its characteristic of being an economic problem and has come to the fore with its cultural dimension (Featherstone, 2008). Environmental and social sensitivities arising from excessive consumption

have caused an increase in pro-social consumption movements. Small and Cryder (2016) defined pro-social consumer behavior as self-sacrificing purchasing behavior for the good of others or the community. Anti-consumption is a research field that investigates the reasons for overconsumption (Black and Cherrier 2010; Zavestoski, 2002). Anti-consumers withstand the consumerist society by reducing their unnecessary consumption and trying to make their own consumption decisions (Zavestoski, 2002). Moreover, the number of environmentally friendly consumers is steadily growing, increasing the target population for environmental marketing efforts (Menon and Menon 1997). Given the potential that environmentally oriented anti-consumption (EOA) has in achieving environmental sustainability, defined here as acts directed against any form of consumption, with the specific aim of protecting the environment. Figure 1 is an attempt to visually indicate the scope of EOA and its overlap with related concepts.

**Figure 1. Consumption and Anti-consumption Model** (García-de-Frutos et al. 2018)



Companies have begun to adopt pro-social marketing concepts to create value by meeting the needs and expectations of pro-social consumers. Gopaldas (2015) examined pro-social marketing concepts in four basic classes: cause marketing, social marketing, green marketing, and positive marketing. The awareness of the



scarcity of natural resources and the growing impact of global influences on consumers (Shultz and Holbrook 1999) required an effective response from marketers. The adverse effect of the purchase, usage, and disposal of products began to be perceived as the marketing manager's responsibility and the concept of "demarketing for sustainability" has emerged (Sodhi 2011). This notion argues that the mission of the marketing managers is to control demand to meet long-term goals such as sustainability rather than increasing sales growth with blindly engineering. Companies today realize that the sustainability of their brand depends on more than simply selling more goods and services. Muhtar Kent, the former CEO of The Coca-Cola Company, emphasized the importance of health and stated that obesity is today's most challenging health problem. Kent argued that obesity is a global problem that will require all of us to come together and do our part (Chaudhry et al. 2019). Coca-Cola, with the awareness of this problem, has been introducing sugar-free and low-sugar products such as Diet Cola for years.

Some research conceptualizes demarketing for sustainability as a green demarketing strategy. **Green demarketing** is a form of corporate social responsibility and green marketing effort. Armstrong Soule and Reich (2015:1404) defined green demarketing as a brand's strategic endeavor to limit consumption at a category level by encouraging the focal brand purchase, presumably for environmental reasons. Authors show that the brand's environmental reputation and the brand's fit with sustainable business practices are determinants of consumer responses in their initial studies on green demarketing strategies. On the other hand, Ramirez, Tajdini, and David (2017) conceptualize green demarketing as "**pro-environmental demarketing**" and investigated the effects of these strategies on consumer attitudes and actual consumption. Kim et al. (2018) focused on a fashion brand, Patagonia, to study green demarketing advertising in the fashion industry. The findings indicate that green demarketing strategies positively affect consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in consumers who have either analytic or intuitive cognitive styles. Hesse and Rünz (2020) use a qualitative interpretive approach to

analyze consumer reactions to the Dutch airline KLM's "Fly Responsibly" campaign. They discovered that consumers' environmental concerns in response to green demarketing vary depending on the context.

Marketers have been accused of a wide range of guilts including fostering overconsumption, overusing packaging, restricting the functional life of products, and generating greenhouse gases. In this context, the main goal of marketing is reconsidered in the light of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Concordantly, demarketing practices for sustainability have grown in popularity. Demarketing is now used to create consumer awareness of unsustainable product use and disposal, the environmental impact of purchased goods and to encourage responsible consumption (Sodhi 2011). Companies trying to overcome the accusations against them have started to emphasize sustainability within the scope of their social responsibility activities. Demarketing strategies directed by brands' Black Friday communication campaigns are one of the most important of these corporate social responsibility activities.

### **Goodvertising - Promotion Tool of Demarketing**

Demarketing campaigns ordinarily contain traditional marketing efforts such as advertising, public relations, publicity, and sponsorships (Pechmann et al. 2003). Advertisements have become one of the competitive advantage tools of integrated marketing communication in today's intensely competitive environment where products are increasingly similar, and diversity is increasing. Attitude is a crucial aspect to predict the behaviors of consumers (Haque, 2010). The integrated marketing communication process is aimed to affect the attitudes and purchasing behaviors of the target consumers towards the products by using advertisements. In this context, it is possible to state that advertising performs four basic communication functions: informing, persuading, supporting, and reminding (Dunn et al. 1989: 65).

However, in today's competitive environment, it is not enough for a brand to explain the rationale or emotional functions of its products to consumers to create brand

equity. In the changing world, the concept of "advertising" has begun to be replaced by the concept of "goodvertising" aiming to raise awareness for a more sustainable world and prioritize social responsibility. Goodvertising is based on the belief that the outcome of doing good for people and the planet is also good for the brand. Because there is an increasing trend in consumer behavior regarding sustainability and the environment, 80% of consumers expect companies to play a role in solving society's problems (Kolster 2012).

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has demonstrated an important example of goodvertising using green demarketing in 2019. The most important sustainability strategy of the company, which has been at the top of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for the last 16 years, is to reduce its carbon footprint. The most prominent campaign of KLM was the initiative called "Fly Responsibly" launched in 2019. It includes a website with information on its commitment to sustainable fuel and practices. One of the most important features of the campaign is that it asks people to consider alternative means of transportation before flying (Wilson 2019). This initiative is a great example of green demarketing.

## Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to examine global brands' anti-Black Friday communication campaigns within the scope of demarketing for sustainability. In this context, the literature on the historical development of Black Friday will be presented in the first stage, and then the anti-Black Friday communication campaigns of ten selected global brands will be examined on the axis of the concept of "demarketing for sustainability". For the research purpose, a purposive sampling method was conducted, and the brands have been selected from among companies that announced that they would not sell their products to their consumers, instead of applying discounts on Black Friday. A total of 10 global brands were selected in this research and examined the demarketing communication campaigns released by the brands.

## Black Friday

One of the substantial factors in consumer buying behavior is price discounts. Discounts are marketing tools that drive

consumers to buy faster and more. One of the most important discounts around the world is Black Friday discounts. Black Friday emerged as a concept used in the United States for the first Friday after Thanksgiving, which is celebrated on the last Thursday of November. Black Friday, which marks the beginning of the Christmas holiday shopping season, is not considered a public holiday. However, for many employees, it has been seen as a holiday called "After Thanksgiving" (Simpson et al. 2011; Thomas and Peters 2011; Swilley, and Goldsmith, 2013) and has become a universally important part of American culture (Bell et al. 2014).

Although there are various explanations as to the origin of the term, the most plausible explanation is that Black Friday refers to the first point where retailers begin to see profits in the financial year. The term reflects the importance attached to retailers' profits in accounting terms moving from red to black (Smith and Raymen 2015; Nikhashemi et al., 2016). Hence, Black Friday refers to the day of the year that companies wish to switch from "losing money" to "earning money" (Thomas and Peters 2011). Over time, Black Friday has become widespread all over the world and turned into a crazy shopping day. The Black Friday campaign is being implemented at the same time as the US in Turkey, both in traditional stores and online stores. The "Black Friday" concept in Turkey, as well as the "Legendary Friday" concept, is also used. Legendary Friday is a new expression that is used as a sales strategy by some shopping and internet sales sites in Turkey (Dagtas and Yıldırım 2018).

Various studies have been conducted in the literature regarding Black Friday. Bell et al. (2014) proposed a culture-specific method by assessing Black Friday as a communication ritual for consumers. The author revealed that customers have engrossed in a consecutive set of symbolic actions such as seeking a bargain, choosing where to shop; designing in-store action plans, and designating roles to perform. Thomas and Peters (2011) explored the consumption rituals in the USA and indicated that Black Friday generates a collective consumption ritual that is performed by several generations of women and their intimate friends. Kwon and Brinthaup (2015) researched

to reveal the motivations, characteristics, and experiences of US consumers who shop in the Black Friday campaign. As a result of the research, they have found that Black Friday shoppers act with more hedonic motives than non-shoppers, give importance to pleasant shopping feelings, and have more positive experiences during this campaign period. As it is seen in the literature, most of the studies on Black Friday have focused on the attitudes and behaviors of consumers. There is not enough research examining Black Friday strategies of companies except for sales promotion. In this context, this research will fill the gap in the literature by examining the anti-Black Friday communication campaigns of brands within the scope of "demarketing for sustainability".

### Anti-Black Friday Campaigns of Global Brands

Nowadays, companies attach more importance to sustainability and start to emphasize this importance in their promotional campaigns. Black Friday campaigns are also one of the concepts affected by sustainability concerns. Some companies criticize the shopping spree and unnecessary consumption during the discount period within the scope of corporate social responsibility practices. In this context, brands are trying to position themselves as "responsible" brands in the minds of consumers by designing anti-Black Friday communication campaigns. In this research, the anti-Black Friday communication campaigns of ten different global brands will be examined and the demarketing strategy they follow will be revealed.

In 2019, London-based sustainable fashion brand Public Fiber demonstrated its opposition to Black Friday with its "Buy More Rubbish" communication campaign. In this anti-consumption initiative, Public Fiber aims to raise awareness by collaborating with The Ocean Cleanup, a non-profit organization producing sophisticated technologies to free the oceans from detrimental substances such as plastic (Marketing Türkiye 2020a). The brand constantly emphasizes the importance it attaches to sustainability by adopting the "Don't Compromise Today, For Tomorrow" motto as stated on its website.

**Figure 2:** Public Fibre's Anti-Black Friday Campaign (2019)



The cosmetics brand Deciem, which defines itself as an "abnormal beauty company", announced its boycott of Black Friday for the second time, closing all online and offline stores for Black Friday in 2020. The brand used the slogan "Knowvember" and released a communication video in this sense to raise awareness of climate change. Deciem indicated that skincare purchases should be based on education rather than impulse buying and emphasized the value of conscious and responsible consumption (Deciem 2020). Deciem co-founder and CEO Nicola Kilner stated that Black Friday is promoting over-consumerism rather than shoppers genuinely purchasing what they want (Stewart 2020). In other words, while positioning itself, the brand emphasized that they are against excessive consumerism that has negative consequences for "our planet" and Black Friday that supports excessive consumption.

Another brand that has taken an initiative against Black Friday is Allbirds, a sustainable accessories, and footwear brand. Using the "Green Friday" concept instead of Black Friday, Allbirds doubled prices instead of lowering them. The company has stated that it will donate the additional income from this campaign to "Fridays For Future", the international climate movement led by youth, established by environmental activist Greta Thunberg (Marketing Türkiye 2020a). Giving preference to a Green Friday instead of the Black Friday trend, Allbirds has invited customers to 'break tradition, not the planet' (Stewart 2020).

Another anti-Black Friday example is from the American outerwear company Patagonia. In 2011, the brand opposed Black Friday consumption with a courageous New York

Times ad holding the statement "Don't Buy This Jacket" (Marketing Turkiye 2020a). Although the "Don't buy this jacket" advertisement was criticized for damaging Patagonia's brand image (Nolan, 2011), the jacket ended up becoming Patagonia's best-selling product. The company's representatives claimed that product revenues climbed after the 'buy less' appeal with respect to this example of a green demarketing product campaign (Lowitt 2011). In 2015, Patagonia launched a campaign advocating for sustainability with the short film "Worn Wear" and encouraging consumers to fix their old clothes rather than buy new ones. This short film helped Patagonia differentiate its brand and helped consumers appreciate the durability and utility of the brand (Phipps 2015). In 2020, the brand emphasized a circular economy by launching the four-year "Worn Wear Program" for used garments with the "Buy Less, Demand More" campaign. With the swapping platform on the Patagonia website, it has allowed its customers to have renewed alternatives at a lower price (Marketing Turkiye 2020a). Currently, when shoppers search for new apparel on the Patagonia website, they will see a button that links to renewed options on the exchange platform at a cheaper price (Stewart 2020).

**Figure 3:** Patagonia's Anti-Black Friday Campaign (2011)



Welder Watch positions itself separately from other brands in 2020 Black Friday, as it has been for the last three years. Welder Watch, which does not offer any discounts on any special day of the year as a brand policy, does not change this stance during the Black Friday period. Welder Watch reveals its reaction during this shopping spree by closing its

website during the Black Friday period, let alone the discount. Welder Watch believes that its customers carefully select the product they like and that the shopping process is an activity of pleasure rather than chaos (Marketing Turkiye 2020b). Welder Watch gave the message "we do not sell on Black Friday" with the YouTube video launched in 2020. Unlike all other brands, OXXO invests in people with the motto "Green Friday" during the "Black Friday" period, when the retail world is experiencing a discount craze. The brand drew attention to the "Green Friday" concept with the pine saplings they distributed to customers against Black Friday, which encourages consumption. OXXO, which has adopted the Green Friday motto and has signed various environmental policies to date, distributed saplings in the ready-to-wear industry between 27-29 November 2020. During this period, OXXO gifted pine saplings to its first 10,000 customers who shop from its stores, website, and OXXO mobile application (Marketing Turkiye 2020b).

Mobile carrier GiffGaff encourages society to 'Check Your Drawers' this Black Friday, in a special campaign that genuinely deters extravagant consumption. The brand aims to make people think more about supporting a circular economy in mobiles and serves as an extremely unique message in one of the most notorious seasons of overconsumption (Stewart 2020). The data show that 55 million phones in availability in the UK are expected to be thrown away in drawers. GiffGaff's campaign is built on this fact. In this campaign, the brand encouraged the use of these idle phones while drawing attention to the environmental damage of the consumption frenzy (Marketing Turkiye 2020c).

**Figure 4:** Giffgaff's Anti-Black Friday Campaign (2020)





REI bucked trends starting in 2015 and switched out the lights with their #OptOutside campaign on Black Friday. An outdoors adventure retailer, REI closed its stores, offered its staff a paid holiday, and urged others to go outside with friends and family, instead of ducking it out at the mall. This campaign not only aligns with REI's mission but sets the brand apart from the dozens of other retailers that are competing for your attention during the holidays (Staff 2017). For the past 4 years, the company keep going this campaign and asks consumers to join the movement by refraining from shopping anywhere and instead of getting outdoors. Consumers can find free OptOutside stickers at REI for their reusable water bottles, bikes, and maybe even cars (Sekhon and Armstrong Soule 2020). Subsequently, REI won a Titanium Grand Prix at the 2016 Cannes Lions, one of the highest awards in advertising (Coffee 2016).

**Figure 5:** REI's Anti-Black Friday Campaign (2017)



Everlane is an apparel and accessories brand known for “radically transparent,” sustainable practices and pricing. They sent an e-mail this Cyber Monday with the subject line: “No Sale Today”. Inside messaging clarified that their regular practice of not forcing the price up means they make savings across the year and will not comply with Cyber Monday gimmicks (Staff 2017). The brand stated that their transparent prices are already %50 lower than most retailers in the e-mail. In other words, the brand also criticizes other brands that implement Black Friday by promising consumers that their brands are always on sale.

**Figure 6:** Everlane's Anti-Black Friday Message (2017)



Another brand that criticizes Black Friday is Fanfare-Sustainable Womenswear, which defines itself as a “sustainable fashion house”. On the official website of the brand, there is a special tab under the title “Our Anti-Black Friday Campaign”. The brand defines itself as a sustainable brand and states that they do not promote this overconsumption event. Moreover, Fanfare indicates that 10% of all sales placed on Black Friday will go towards their chosen charities that help poverty-stricken women (Fanfare 2020). The brand supports the “sustainable fashion house image” by giving the message “we see you and your future as more important than the profitability of our company” to its consumers and embodies this with the charity campaign.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Today, the demand of consumers exceeds the supply, and companies cannot meet this excess demand. Consequently, the concept of marketing has become reversed and the concept of "demarketing" has gained importance (Kotler and Levy 1971). While the main purpose of traditional demarketing is to manage demand, the concept of "demarketing for sustainability" has emerged in today's conditions where sustainability has become more important than the rate of return. In this context, demarketing is used to encourage sustainable and responsible consumption (Sodhi 2011) and to support corporate social responsibility projects of companies. Goodvertising, which is defined as the strategies where ads are created to add value to individual and social life (Kolster 2012), has taken its place among the promotional tools used in the context of demarketing.

Black Friday, which is widespread in the USA and then spreads to other countries, causes consumers to shop more and unnecessarily, that is, a consumption frenzy. Various research on Black Friday have been conducted in the literature (Bell et al. 2014; Thomas and Peters 2011; Kwon and Brinthaup 2015). However, most of the studies on Black Friday are about the attitudes and behaviors of consumers, and studies examining the Black Friday strategies of companies have not found many places in the literature. Whereas today, brands targeting conscious and responsible consumers are attempting anti-Black Friday campaigns to position themselves as socially responsible brands in the minds of their target consumers. This one-sided perspective is the most basic constraint of the literature on Black Friday applications, and this study has attempted to fill this gap in the literature by examining the anti-Black Friday communication campaigns of ten different global brands. In this study, demarketing practices that are used to promote sustainability were examined within the scope of anti-Black Friday campaigns of brands, with various examples provided. In the context of demarketing, the main theoretical contribution of this study is to present researchers with a new perspective on the axis of sustainability, different from traditional demarketing practices.

In addition to the theoretical contributions of the study, it is expected to make practical contributions to the field by providing foresight to marketing practitioners, especially in the design of corporate social responsibility activities and communication campaigns of companies. Although the quality and image of the brand are successful in differentiating itself from its competitors, the level of "responsible brand" perception of the brand in the minds of consumers should be investigated. Within the scope of corporate social responsibility practices, it is no longer considered sufficient to only donate or cooperate with charities as in the past. The courage to give the "do not buy my product" message to consumers as well as the "buy my product" message has gained importance today. Because consumers are attached to brands that consider themselves and society. The findings obtained from this study could contribute to companies developing successful demarketing practices and managing corporate social responsibility. It can be argued that prioritizing customers over company profit results in more loyal customers in the future. Besides, these results can support the development of effective policies and regulations about companies' sales promotions on Black Friday.

This research has provided a theoretical background to the historical development of the demarketing concept and an agenda for further research about demarketing for sustainability. Furthermore, this study has described different global brands' demarketing practices, and the function of demarketing practices in sustainability is presented. However, there are some critical considerations that businesses should bear in mind when engaging in demarketing activities for sustainability as part of their corporate social responsibility program. One of the most sensitive points that marketers face while managing demarketing practices is to be aware that demarketing strategies do not aim to eliminate demand and to ensure that the results of the strategy implemented do not reach the destruction of demand. The extent to which these anti-Black Friday communication campaigns affect consumers' perceptions of the brand image was not measured in this research. Nevertheless, future studies could test how these demarketing practices affect the perceptual and behavioral responses of target consumers.

## References

- Armstrong Soule, C. A., & B. J. Reich. (2015). Less is more: Is a green demarketing strategy sustainable? *Journal of Marketing Management* 31 (13–14), 1403–1427.
- Baker, W., & J. Sinkula. (2005). Environmental marketing strategy and firm performance: effects on new product performance and market share. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 33(4), 461–75.
- Beeton, S., & R. Benfield. (2002). Demand control: The case for demarketing as a visitor and environmental management tool. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 10 (6), 497–507.
- Bell, G. C., M. R. Weathers, S. O. Hastings, & E. B. Peterson. (2014). Investigating the celebration of Black Friday as a communication ritual. *Journal of Creative Communications* 9 (4), 235–251.
- Black, I. R., & H. Cherrier. (2010). Anti-Consumption as part of living a sustainable lifestyle: Daily practices, contextual motivations, and subjective values. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 9 (6), 437–453.
- Bradley, N., & J. Blythe. (2014). Demarketing: An overview of the antecedents and current status of the discipline. In *Demarketing*. Ed. N. Bradley, and J. Blythe, 1–7. New York: Routledge.
- Chaudhry, P. E., L. Cesareo, & A. Pastore. (2019). Resolving the jeopardies of consumer demand: Revisiting demarketing concepts. *Business Horizons* 62: 663–677.
- Choi, C. W. (2020). Increasing company-cause fit: The effects of a relational ad message and consumers' cause involvement on attitude toward the CSR activity. *International Journal of Advertising*.
- Cintrón, V. Q., J. Von Hack, M. M. Pérez Rivera, A. Y. Medina Velázquez, & J. D. Pellot. (2017). The evolution of demarketing literature. *Fórum Empréarial* 22 (1), 77–108.
- Coffee, P. (2016). *REI's anti-Black Friday campaign #OptOutside wins the Titanium Grand Prix at Cannes*. Retrieved from <https://www.adweek.com> (Accessed September 28, 2021).
- Cullwick, D. (1975). Positioning demarketing strategy. *Journal of Marketing* 39(2), 51–57.
- Dagtas, E., & O. Yıldırım. (2018). Kültürel emperyalizm çerçevesinde tüketim pratiklerinin Türkiye basınındaki yansımalarının çözümlemesi: 24 Kasım 2017 “Kara Cuma” örneği. *Global Media Journal: Turkish Edition* 9 (17), 96–127.
- Deciem. (2020). *Bye-bye Black Friday. Hello KNOWvember*. Retrieved from: <https://deciem.com/knowvember> (Accessed December 11, 2021).
- Dunn, S. W., A. M. Barban, D. M. Krugman, & L. N. Reid. (1989). *Advertising and its role in modern marketing* (7th ed.). New York: Dryden Press.
- Edelman. (2018). *Two-thirds of consumers worldwide now buy on beliefs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.edelman.com/news-awards/two-thirds-consumers-worldwide-now-buy-beliefs> (Accessed December 19, 2021).
- Ekoiq. (2021). *Kara Cuma'yı Yeşertmek*. Retrieved from: <https://ekoiq.com/2021/11/26/kara-cumayi-yesertmek/> (Accessed January 10, 2022).
- Fanfare. (2020). *Our Anti Black Friday Campaign*. Retrieved from: <https://fanfarelabel.com/blogs/the-true-fashion-journal/join-us-in-talking-about-anti-black-friday> (Accessed December 12, 2021).
- Farquhar, J. D., & J. Robson. (2017). Selective demarketing: When customers destroy value. *Marketing Theory* 17 (2), 165–182.
- Featherstone, M. (2008). *Postmodernizm ve tüketim kültürü*. (Trans. M. Küçük). İstanbul: Publishing House.
- García-de-Frutos, N., J. M. Ortega-Egea, & J. Martínez-del-Río. (2018). Anti-consumption for environmental sustainability: Conceptualization, review, and multilevel research directions. *Journal of Business Ethics* 148, (2), 411–435.
- Gbadeyan, A. R. (2010). De-Marketing of harmful products in Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 7(6), 449–455.



- Gerstner, E., J. Hess, & W. Chu. (1993). Demarketing as a differentiation strategy. *Marketing Letters* 4(1), 49–57.
- Gopaldas, A. (2015). Creating firm, customer, and societal value: Toward a theory of positive marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(12), 2446–2451.
- Grinstein, A., & U. Nisan. (2009). Demarketing, minorities, and national attachment. *Journal of Marketing* 73(2), 105–122.
- Haque, A. (2010). Islamic banking in Malaysia: A study of attitudinal differences of Malaysian customers. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 18(18), 7–18.
- Haque, A., Nayeem, A. R., Hossain, M. N., Abdullah, F., Sarker, M. N. I., & Akter, M. F. (2020). Factors affecting on consumers' purchase intention towards eco-friendly products in Malaysia. *Issues in Business Management and Economics*.
- Hesse, A., & S. Rünz. (2020). 'Fly Responsibly': a case study on consumer perceptions of a green demarketing campaign. *Journal of Marketing Communications*.
- Hwang, C., Y. Lee, S. Diddi, & E. Karpova. (2016). "Don't buy this jacket": Consumer reaction toward anti-consumption apparel advertisement. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 20, 4: 435–452.
- Kahneman, D., & A. Tversky. (1984). Choices, values, and frames. *American Psychologist* 39, 4: 341–350.
- Karim, W. M. Haque, A., Juhdi, N. B., Muhibbullah, M., & Ulfy, M. A. (2020). *The Effects of Visual Merchandising and Price Sensitivity on Impulse Purchase Behaviour among Young Apparel Shoppers in Bangladesh*, *International Journal of Business*, 7(3), 192–202.
- Kim, S., E. Ko, & S. J. Kim. (2018). Fashion brand green demarketing: Effects on customer attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing* 9, 4: 364–378.
- Kim, Y., & S.M. Choi. (2020). When good becomes bad: The role of corporate crisis and issue congruence. *International Journal of Advertising* 39, no. 4: 571–86.
- Kim, Y., S. Yun, J. Lee, & E. Ko. (2016). How consumer knowledge shapes green consumption: an empirical study on voluntary carbon offsetting. *International Journal of Advertising* 35, 1: 23–41.
- Kolster, T. (2012). *Goodvertising: Creative advertising that cares*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Kotler, P., & S. J. Levy. (1971). Demarketing, yes demarketing. *Harvard Business Review*, November–December: 74–80.
- Kwon, H.J., & T. M. Brinthaup. (2015). The motives, characteristics, and experiences of US Black Friday shoppers. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing* 6, 4: 292–302.
- Landreat, M.G., A. Dany, J. Y. Le Reste, D. Le Goff, A. Benyamina, M. Grall-Bronnec, & K. Gallopel-Morvan. (2020). Impact of alcohol marketing on drinkers with Alcohol use disorders seeking treatment: A mixed-method study protocol. *BMC Public Health* 20 (1), 467–468.
- Lowitt, E. (2011). *Patagonia's "Buy Less" Campaign May Lead to More Revenue*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2011/10/patagonias-buy-less-campaign> (Accessed September 29, 2021).
- Maktoufi, R., A. O'Connor, & M. Shumate. (2020). Does the CSR message matter? Untangling the relationship between corporate–nonprofit partnerships, created fit messages, and activist evaluations. *Management Communication Quarterly* 34 (2), 188–212.
- Marketing Türkiye. (2020a). *Black Friday'in tüketim çılgınlığına karşı omuz omuza!* Retrieved from: <https://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/haberler/black-fridayin-tuketim-cilginligina-karsi-omuz-omuza/> (Accessed September 14, 2021).
- Marketing Türkiye. (2020b). *İşte Black Friday'e savaş açan markalar...* Retrieved from: <https://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/haberler/iste-black-fridaye-savas-acan-markalar/> (Accessed October 22, 2021).



- Marketing Türkiye. (2020c). *GiffGaff, Black Friday arifesinde tüketim çılgınlığına meydan okudu!* Retrieved from: <https://www.marketingturkiye.com.tr/haberler/pazarlama/giffgaff-black-friday-arifesinde-tuketim-cilginligina-meydan-okudu/> (Accessed December 18, 2021).
- Medway, D., G. Warnaby, & S. Dharni. (2010). Demarketing places: Rationales and strategies. *Journal of Marketing Management* 27 (1-2), 124-142.
- Menon, A., & A. Menon. (1997). Entrepreneurial marketing strategy: the emergence of corporate environmentalism as market strategy. *Journal of Marketing* 61 (1), 51-67.
- Nikhashemi, S. R., Tarofder, A. K., Gaur, S. S., & Haque, A., (2016). The effect of customers' perceived value of retail store on the relationship between store attribute and customer brand loyalty: Some insights from Malaysia. *Procedia Economics and Finance*. 37, 432-438.
- Nolan, H. (2011). Oh brother Patagonia just give us a break with this sanctimonious crap [Weblog]. Retrieved from: <http://gawker.com/5863364/oh-brother-patagonia-just-give-us-a-break-with-this-sanctimonious-crap>
- Peattie, K., S. Peattie, & R. Newcombe. (2016). Unintended consequences in demarketing antisocial behaviour: Project Bernie. *Journal of Marketing Management*. 32, 1588-1618.
- Pechmann, C., G. Zhao, M. Goldberg, & E. Reiblinget. (2003). What to convey in antismoking advertisements for adolescents: the use of protection motivation theory to identify effective message themes. *Journal of Marketing* 67(2), 1-18.
- Phipps, L. (2015). *Product Branding: Which companies applied the strategy of demarketing their products?* Retrieved from: [https://www.quora.com/Product-Branding-Which-companies-applied-the-strategy-of-demarketing-their-products\\_](https://www.quora.com/Product-Branding-Which-companies-applied-the-strategy-of-demarketing-their-products_) (Accessed July 26, 2021).
- Ramirez, E., S. Tajdini, & M. E. David. (2017). The effects of proenvironmental demarketing on consumer attitudes and actual consumption. *Journal of Marketing, Theory and Practice* 25, 3. 291-304.
- Reich, B. J., & C. A. Armstrong Soule. (2016). Green demarketing in advertisements: Comparing “buy green” and “buy less” appeals in product and institutional advertising contexts. *Journal of Advertising* 45, 4, 441-458.
- Seeletse, S.M. (2016). Demarketing strategy to develop perceived product reputation: Applications in three distinct environments. *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 14, 4(1), 230-235.
- Sekhon T.S., & C. A. Armstrong Soule. (2020). Conspicuous anticonsumption: When green demarketing brands restore symbolic benefits to anticonsumers. *Psychology of Marketing* 37(2), 278-290.
- Shultz, C.J., & M. B. Holbrook. (1999). Marketing and the tragedy of the commons: a synthesis, commentary, and analysis for action. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*. 18(2), 218-29.
- Shumate, M., & A. O'Connor. (2010). The symbiotic sustainability model: Conceptualizing NGO-corporate alliance communication. *Journal of Communication* 60 (3), 577-609.
- Simpson, L., L. Taylor, K. O'Rourke, & K. Shaw. (2011). An analysis of consumer behavior on Black Friday. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*. 1(1), 1-5.
- Singh, G., S. Sharma, R. Sharma, & Y. K. Dwivedi. (2021). Investigating environmental sustainability in small family-owned businesses: Integration of religiosity, ethical judgment, and theory of planned behavior. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 173: 121094.
- Small, D.A., & C. Cryder. (2016). Prosocial consumer behavior. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 10: 107-111.
- Smith, O., & T. Raymen. (2015). Shopping with violence: Black Friday sales in the British context. *Journal of Consumer Culture* 17(3), 677-694.
- Sodhi, K. (2011). Has marketing come full circle?

- Demarketing for sustainability. *Business Strategy Series* 12(4), 177-185.
- Staff, W. (2017). *Trending: Anti-Black Friday and Cyber Monday Marketing*. Retrieved from: <http://blog.whereoware.com/anti-black-friday-cyber-monday/2017/12/> (Accessed November 22, 2021).
  - Stewart, R. (2020). *Top anti-Black Friday campaigns: Patagonia, Allbirds & more reject consumerism*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2020/11/27/top-anti-black-friday-campaigns-patagonia-allbirds-more-reject-consumerism> (Accessed October 15, 2021).
  - Swilley, E., & R. E. Goldsmith. (2013). Black Friday and Cyber Monday: Understanding consumer intentions on two major shopping days. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 20(1), 43-50.
  - Tarofder, A. K., Haque, A., Hashim, N., Azam, S. F., & Sherief, S. R. (2019). Impact of ecological factors on nationwide supply chain performance. *Ekoloji*, 28 (107), 695-704.
  - Thøgersen, J. 2005. How may consumer policy empower consumers for sustainable lifestyles? *Journal of Consumer Policy* 28(2), 143-178.
  - Thomas, B.J., & C. Peters. (2011). An exploratory investigation of Black Friday consumption rituals. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 39(7), 522-537.
  - Trudel, R. 2019. Sustainable consumer behavior. *Consumer Psychology Review* 2: 85–96.
  - Waymer, D., M. W. Gilliland, and J. B. Barbour. (2021). Examining the role of individuals' perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment in corporate-nonprofit partnership CSR advertisements. *International Journal of Advertising*.
  - Wilson, A. (2019). *Dutch airline KLM calls for people to fly less*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/jul/11/dutch-airline-klm-calls-for-people-to-fly-less-carbon-offsetting-scheme> (Accessed December 12, 2021).
  - Zavestoski, S. (2002). The social-psychological bases of anticonsumption attitudes. *Psychology & Marketing* 19(2), 149–165.