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Intangible advertising and its effect on consumer choice

Kambiz Heidarzadeh Hanzae¹, Mehdi Behboudi^{2*}, Ateneh Qodsi Khah³, Mitra Monsefi³ and Ali Maneshi³

¹Department of Business Management, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

²Department of Business Administration, School of Management and Accountancy, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin Branch, Qazvin, Iran.

³Management and Productivity Research Center (MPRC), School of Management and Accountancy, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin Branch, Qazvin, Iran.

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This study examines a new concept, “intangible advertising,” in advertising theory. Unresolved questions on advertising effectiveness and obstacles such as, TV’s high costs make it important to study various factors defining and affecting intangible advertising. Accordingly, this study builds a comprehensive theoretical model explaining the effect of intangible advertising of brand on consumer choice. We examined four exogenous latent variables (advertisement type, product involvement, media and demographics) and one endogenous latent variable (intangible advertising of brand). We found that the exogenous variables successfully explain intangible advertising of brand and all of them collectively affect advertising effectiveness. Then we examined an empirical study on the impact of intangible advertising of brand on consumer choice. The results are reported.

Key words: Intangible advertising, brand, advertising effectiveness, scanning electron microscope (SEM).

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is “a paid non-personal communication from an identified sponsor, using mass media to persuade or influence an audience” (Richards and Curran, 2002). Generally, the field of display advertising is divided into three main groups. The first group is composed of the advertising usually displayed on TV at the intervals between programs. The second group is called subliminal advertising (Alam and Khalifa, 2009). Although, the morality and effectiveness of this kind of advertising are questioned by many researchers (Klass, 1958; Theus,

1994; Trappey, 1996; Block and Vanden Bergh, 1985), it is vastly used in product advertisements for TV serials and movies (Tsai et al., 2007). This kind of advertisement is placed in a movie or TV show in such a way that the audience considers it as a part of scenario rather than an external element (Ye and Raaij, 1997) and convinced that, the use of a specific product has led to the success of a movie character. It is reported that in this kind of advertisement, the defense mechanism of the body is weakened and the audience or consumer becomes more receptive to the advertising messages (Sharmistha and Braun, 2002). Therefore, it is considered as an influential advertising method (Janiszewski et al., 2003). The third kind of advertising, which henceforth is called “intangible advertising,” differs from subliminal advertising according to the following description:

*Corresponding author. E-mail: Behboudi1983@gmail.com. Tel: +989122811398.

Abbreviations: PSA, Public service announcement; CFA, confirmatory factor analysis; CFI, comparative fit index; RMSR, root mean square residual.

“Intangible advertising is a process by which advertisers

create a subconsciously familiarity from product in audience mind with the purpose of obtaining a better norm in audience decision making process, specifically, in the point of sale". In this way, the audience watches a program while not knowing that a specific brand is being advertised. The given brand is regularly advertised throughout the display, but in a fraction of second so that the audience cannot identify it; that is to say, the time of displaying the brand is shorter than the minimum time required for the identification of an object by the human eye. Indeed, this advertising method exerts its main influence upon the subconscious of the audience and causes them to be subconsciously familiar with the brand advertised. When shopping, this feeling of familiarity will enhance their buying intention and will guide their decision for buying. In this respect, the present study aims at investigating the effect of intangible advertising as a new concept in advertising theory. This study also embarks on finding out if intangible advertising is effective in promoting brand position in a consumer's mind or not, and if it can affect buying intention and consumer choice or not.

Review of the literature

Despite the long history of studies on subliminal advertising and its effects on advertisements, conclusions about its effectiveness can rarely be found. Most results obtained reveal that subliminal advertising has no effect on changing the position or behavior, particularly regarding advertising and marketing, for the stimuli employed in this kind of advertisement oppose several stronger stimuli perceived consciously by the consumer (Dixon, 1971; Severin and Tankard, 1979). The issue of subliminal advertising and its applications in advertisements were first proposed by Vance Packard (1957) as the "hidden persuaders" (Zanot et al., 1983). Then, James Vicary in 1957 indirectly incorporated the messages of "drink Coca Cola" and "eat popcorn" in a movie. The results of that study were 58 and 18% increases in the sale of Coca Cola and popcorn, respectively (Moore, 1982; Advokat, 1983). Champion and Turner (1959) conducted another related study in which a slide of a bowl of rice labeled "wonder rice" was displayed in a movie. However, the results of their study revealed no difference between experiment and control groups (Champion and Turner, 1959). In that same year, Byrne (1959) repeat the same study by displaying the word "beef" in the movie. This word was shown for 1/200 of a second during a movie, and then the participants were asked to select a sandwich from among different choices. Although the control group was hungrier than the experiment group, they showed little interest in beef sandwiches (Byrne, 1959). In the same year, DeFleur and Petranoff (1959) used the TV for creating subliminal

persuasion. The experiment, which lasted for five weeks, did not reveal any results showing the effect of subliminal messages on audience persuasion (DeFleur and Petranoff, 1959).

Hawkins (1970) repeated Byrne's experiment except that he displayed the word "Coke" and he found a greater feeling of thirst in the experiment group compared to the control group. However, subsequent researchers did not reach such results (Hawkins, 1970; Saegert, 1979). In another study, George and Jennings (1975) displayed slides containing the words "Hershey's Chocolate" during a program. Their study indicated that during 10 days after displaying the slides, no changes occurred in chocolate sales. Kelly (1979) found that there is no significance difference between the use of placement advertisement in magazines and other advertising methods regarding brand recall criterion. In 1983, a study was conducted in Washington D.C. aiming at investigating public opinion about subliminal advertising. In this study, a sample of 209 people was randomly selected and tested. 81% of the respondents stated that they were aware of this kind of advertising; also, in response to the question that whether this kind of advertising affects the buying behavior of those who are aware of it, 68% argued that subliminal advertising could be a successful method for selling products (Zanot et al., 1983).

Rosen and Singh (1992) used placement advertising for two lesser-known brands of "Liquor" and "Cologne". They found that placing advertising had not significant effect on any level of advertising effectiveness (Rosen and Singh, 1992). Theus (1994) and Trappey (1996) collected a summary of the studies conducted on subliminal advertising. Theus (1994) citing 128 previous studies, investigated psychological, physiological and behavioral responses. The last factor, "behavioral", is the most interesting to advertisers. Their study concluded that "research on brand choice behavior, per se, seems to be subject to little or no influence by subliminal suggestion". Also, Trappey (1996) reported that "the effect of subliminal marketing stimuli on influencing consumers' choice behavior or selection process is negligible". However, Cooper and Cooper (2002) placed "The Simpsons" in a TV program, both orally and as a display, and found that the two groups that were tested in a completely controlled manner had more interest in buying after being exposed to the placement advertisement.

Vicary's study was repeated in Taiwan in 2007. The study was conducted on 94 consumers in which two products of "Coca Cola" and "Reese's Candy Pieces" were indirectly displayed throughout the movie "Extra-Terrestrial". The findings show the effect of factors such as "brand awareness" and "consumer attitudes" (toward the movie, actors, and product placement), as well as lifestyle, on advertising effectiveness (Tsai et al., 2007). PratKanis and Aronson (1993), after expansive studies

on the issue, concluded that "in none of the studies, motivation and behavioral effects, as subliminal advertisers would claim, have been observed" (retrieved from: Sutherland, 1993). In this regard, Rogers and Smith (1993) argue that there is still no valid argument showing that "subliminal advertising has become a recognizable part of the culture, despite the lack of scientific evidence that it is practical or even possible". According to the literature, in previous studies, a product has been clearly but indirectly shown to the consumer during a film display. The only studies that have displayed the brand indirectly are Kelly (1977) and Kelly and Kessler (1978), the aim of which was comparing the effectiveness of subliminal and direct advertisements. The experiment group was exposed to an advertisement in which the brand name was subliminally placed and the control group was exposed to direct brand advertisement. Control and experiments groups were tested after the display, and no difference was observed between them. The important point of the above-mentioned study is that no comprehensive and exclusive definition of subliminal advertising has been offered, and all researchers have tested or expanded it according to their own viewpoints. However, the present study goes beyond the limitations of subliminal advertising and attempts to introduce a new concept - intangible advertising.

This concept originated from our definition of the third group of intangible advertising and displays the brand in such a short period that the eye can not directly detect it. Thus, this kind of advertising tries to affect the subconscious memory of the audience rather than its awareness. Since elements perceived by senses can lead to physiological, psychological or behavioral responses (Trappey, 1996), the present study seeks to create psychological response through intangibly presenting the brand. Unlike previous studies, this study intends to determine whether intangible advertisement is able to create a right psychological reaction or not. This study tests the change in consumer choice.

The main difference between the present study and the studies on subliminal advertising is that subliminal advertising transfers hidden messages to the audience which result in physiological responses and make them respond. When the messages "drink Coca Cola", "Eat Popcorn", or "Beef" are indirectly induced to the audience, they subconsciously incline toward eating popcorn or drinking Coca Cola, etc. This study embarks on investigating the brand position in audience's mind through showing the brand throughout a movie in the shortest time possible compared to the time when they clearly see it.

In this respect, the first step is identifying variables explaining the concept of intangible advertising or affecting its effectiveness. Accordingly, we first try to develop a hypothesized model of the influential factors in forming the effectiveness of intangible advertising.

However, since these factors have been tested in many studies and their results have been reported, the main focus of this study is not on the indicators. Because the study was conducted in Iran, the indicators are addressed, so that the hypothesis can be reexamined in Iran. The focus is on an empirical study to test the effects of intangible advertising of brand among audiences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Advertising type

Advertisement type is the first variable through which the advertisement is evaluated. All advertising in the media can be classified in five groups: (1) Products or service advertising, (2) public service announcement (PSA), (3) Issue advertising, (4) corporate advertising and (5) political advertising (Thorson, 1996). Each type of advertising has its own structure, through which the advertisement is clearly perceived. When the advertisement is classified in advertisement categories, the group in which the advertisement is classified provides an answer to the probable question of the consumers to a great extent (Rodgers and Thorson, 2000). Another reason of the importance of advertisement type is that it specifies the type of cognitive tools advertisement (Ibid). It is expected that the type of advertisement is an effective variable in intangible advertising of brand; hence, a hypothesis is formed as following:

Hypothesis 1: Employing various types of advertisements is effective in intangible advertising of brand.

Product involvement

Product involvement means how the product is placed in people's lives (Cushing and Douglas-Tate, 1985). For this study product involvement is defined as information processing, elaboration related to the degree of accurate processing, and attention directed to advertisement messages (Gardner et al., 1985), because product involvement affects consumer's processing, maintaining and restoring information; the higher product involvement, the more motivated are individuals for advertisement stimulant (Salmon, 1986). It has been reported that product involvement is the main determinant of consumer behavior in response to an advertisement (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). When product involvement is low, consumers do not process text claims of the brand (such as description of product features). The reason is that brand text claims of the brand require more cognitive efforts compared to image-based stimuli (Chattopadhyay, 1998) and consumers are

not well motivated to devote more cognitive efforts for low involvement products (Warrington and Shim, 2000). When product involvement is high, consumers process an advertisement more actively and devote more time and effort to it. Consumer perception is directly influenced by the degree of involvement they have with the advertisement or advertised product (Vaughen, 1986). Thus, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 2: The degree of consumer involvement with an advertised brand affects intangible advertising of brand.

Media

In all advertising activities, the ideal is to maximize the number of people who see the advertisement (reach) or to create the optimal situation of advertisement display by repeating it (frequency) (Hanafizadeh and Behboudi, 2008). Reach and frequency are proportional to each other; that is to say, publishing of an advertisement for people who have not seen, it is expanding its reach. On the other hand, this publishing is the average increase in display for those who have already seen it (DoubleClick, 2003). Displays through various media have different reach and frequency. Also, other variables such as the effect or qualitative value of an exposure (Kotler, 2001) and attitude toward media are effective in this regard. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Publishing of an advertisement from various media affects intangible advertising of brand.

Demographic variables

Demographic variables for segmenting consumer markets include age, family size, family life cycle, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, ethnicity, generation, nationality and social class (Kotler, 2001). Consumer wants, preferences and usage rates are often associated with demographic variables and measurement of demographic variables is easier in comparison to other variables (Sheridan, 1997). Even when the target market is described according to non-demographic variables (for example characteristic type), relating it to demographic variables is necessary for getting information about the size of the target market and media to be used for efficient access. The present study addresses three demographic variables of gender, age, and income. Gender differences affect attention to an advertisement. This factor is used as a main factor for sectioning the market (Reinhardt, 1999). According to Darley and Smith (1999), the main differences are: (1) Identifiability, (2) accessibility, (3) measurability, (4) responding to mixed

market factors and (5) profitability. Income is a factor that must be considered accurately. For example, the cheapest automobiles are not bought by really poor people; rather, they are bought by those who perceive themselves poor in relation to their ideals. Average and expensive automobiles are also bought by the higher social classes (Zetlin, 1994). Additionally, wants and capabilities of consumers change with their age (Rickard, 1994), although they may still be willing to use the same products. Therefore, marketers offer different designs, packaging and sale strategies for different age groups (Collins, 1996). In this regard, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₄: Demographical factors affect intangible advertising of brand.

Intangible advertising of brand

In order to explain a construct for intangible advertising of brand, we used three observer variables: Brand awareness (Rossiter and Percy, 1997; Keller, 2003; Ross and Harradine, 2004), brand recognition (Holden, 1993; Laurent et al., 1995; Mariotti, 1999; Radder and Huang, 2008), and brand popularity (Rise and Trout, 1981; Scherer and Ross, 1990; Kim, 1995).

Advertising effectiveness

To explain our advertising effectiveness construct, we used four observer variables:

Attitude: Attitude toward a product or service affects evaluation of the effectiveness of an advertisement, because consumers are affected by their attitude toward the product when responding to the advertisement (Onkvisit and Shaw, 2004). Attitude toward the ad exerts an effect on buying intention and mental backgrounds of the consumers (Ko et al., 2005).

Brand recall: Brand recall is the second level of brand awareness (Holden, 1993; Laurent et al., 1995; Mariotti, 1999) and refers to a consumer's ability to remember the brand from memory when it is associated with a relevant cue (Ross and Harradine, 2004). According to Keller (2003), brand recall relates to the capability of consumers to restore information from memory.

The buying intention: The buying intention toward a product depends on the attitudes toward and beliefs in this particular product (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Nowadays, buying intention reflects the predictable consumer behavior in future buying decisions (for example which product or brand is going to buy in the next occasion) that significantly help in the formation of consumer attitudes. In other words, buying intention is an

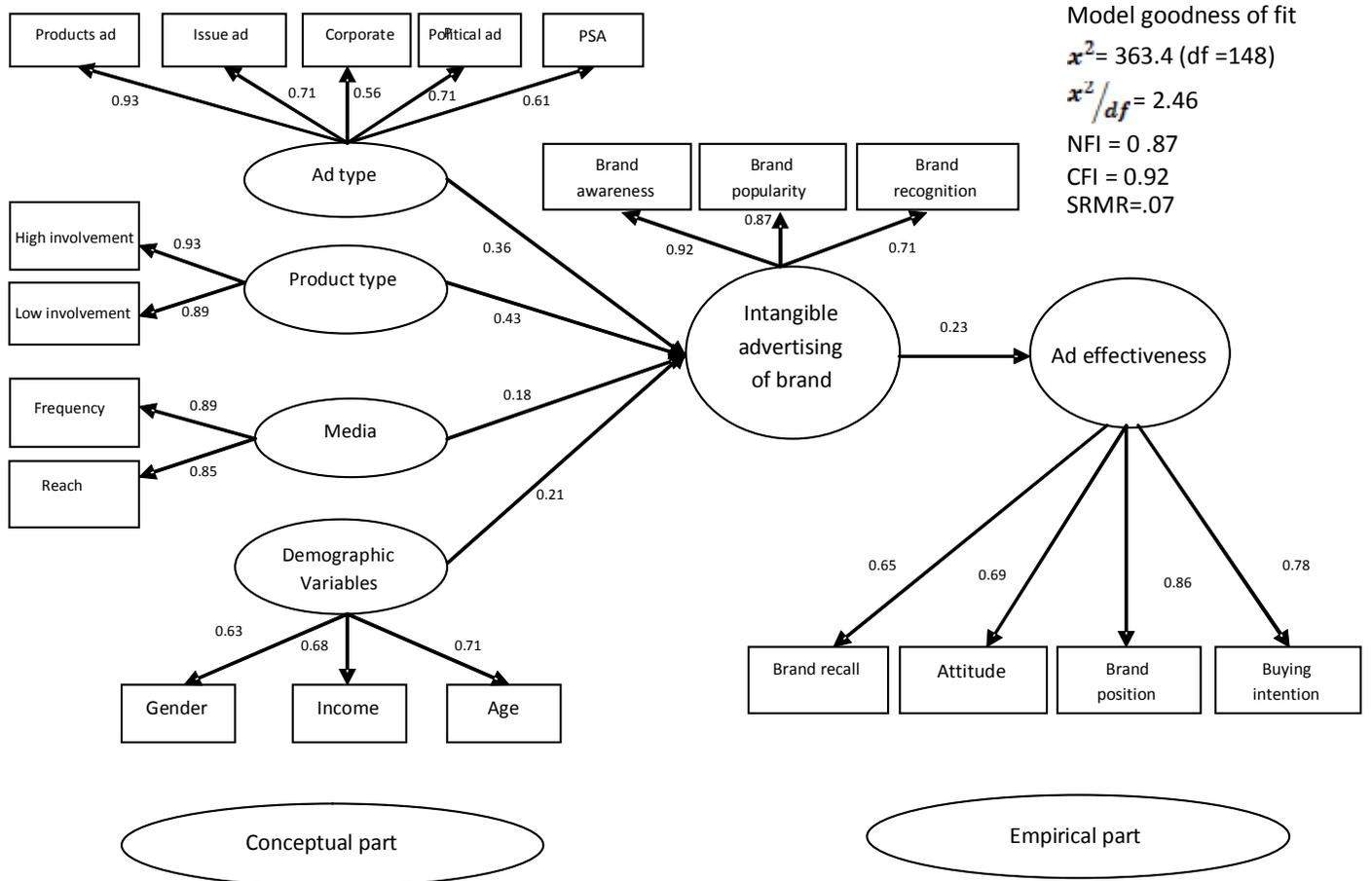


Figure 1. Structural model of intangible advertising.

attitudinal conduct pattern to future buying (Espejel et al., 2008). There are several measurement approaches to measure the buying intention (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Mittal et al., 1999; Chandon et al., 2005).

Brand position: Brand position refers to specific information about a brand in a consumer's mind. Since position only includes part of the information related to a brand, memory in this case, refers to sharing information (Anderson and Bower, 1979). A strong brand position enables consumers to receive the unique perceptions and influence of the brand (Aaker, 1991) and consumer perception of the brand affects the relations between consumer and firm in the long run (Fournier, 1998). Consequently, brand position can affect the amount of profit, expense-risk relation, and competitive advantages (Lee and Liao, 2009). In addition, brand position depends on consumer perception of the important features of the product, which enables them to recognize and compare rival products (Kotler, 1997). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is developed:

Hypothesis 5: Intangible advertising of brand affects

advertisement effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of the present study consists of two main areas. The first area covers testing hypotheses related to factors forming the construct of intangible advertising of brand and the second area is related to an empirical study where the changes made in the audience by intangible advertising of brand were measured (the conceptual and empirical part of Figure 1). In the first part, since the theoretical concepts of the hypotheses were extracted from the literature, the study relied merely upon an experts' questionnaire (five-scale likert format) and was restricted to confirmation of these factors in the new study domain. The results of this part are presented in Table 1. Factors composing the construct of advertisement effectiveness were confirmed by the experts. In order to find experts qualified for participation in the study, an operational definition of expert was proposed. The second part is an empirical study where two experiment and control groups are investigated. This area includes the following:

Sample

Sample selection and testing research questions faced with

Table 1. Key statistics

Latent variable	Observed variable	Number	Mean	SD	Factor loading	Cronbach
Media	Frequency	102	4.3	0.25	0.89	0.72
	Reach	102	4.1	0.24	0.85	
Ad type	PSA	104	4.5	0.57	0.61	0.78
	Political ad	103	3.6	0.4	0.71	
	Corporate ad	102	4.2	0.34	0.56	
	Issue ad	102	3.9	0.6	0.71	
	product or service ad	102	3.8	0.34	0.93	
Product type	High involvement	103	4.1	0.8	0.93	0.84
	Low involvement	103	3.9	0.6	0.89	
Demographic variables	Income	103	4.5	0.27	0.68	0.81
	Gender	102	4.2	0.21	0.63	
	Age	101	4.1	0.43	0.71	
Intangible brand advertising	Brand recognition	100	3.8	0.54	0.71	0.69
	Brand popularity	100	4.1	0.45	0.87	
	Brand awareness	100	3.8	0.63	0.92	
Advertising effectiveness	Brand recall	101	3.9	0.42	0.65	0.77
	Attitude toward brand	101	4.1	0.25	0.69	
	Brand position	100	3.5	0.47	0.86	
	Buying intention	100	4.1	0.31	0.78	

difficulties due to the novelty of the study. The statistical population of the study was done at three different universities - Islamic Azad University of Qazvin, Qazvin Kar University and Qazvin Ghazali University (the three big universities at Qazvin Province). The study was conducted in three business departments of these universities. The reason for this kind of sampling and selecting three universities for the study was the limited number of business students at these universities. Since, it intended to conduct the study on homogenous groups (in terms of age, income, education etc.), the sample changes into a population of sorts. All 157 students of Ghazali University were considered as control group, while 246 business students of Kar University were selected as experiment group. Also, a sample of 60 business students of Qazvin Islamic Azad University was selected for primary prioritizing of brands. This multiple sample had the advantage that none of the members of these three groups could interact with each other, which contributed to the reliability of the study. On the other hand, since the statistical population composed of homogenous participants (business students), the possibility of error decreased.

Measurement instrument

In order to evaluate the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of intangible advertising of brand on the consumer's choice of a specific brand, an innovative methodology was developed. In this study, an advertising video clip belonging to Honda Company that was repeatedly downloaded from Youtube.com and enjoyed high visit rate was first selected as the medium or host of displaying intangible brand. It was selected because it was not new to the audience, so that the attractions of Honda advertising do not affect them. Among 5 sections of this 2 min clip, the "Johnny Lightning"

toy brand was placed and displayed for 0.20 s. This display time was obtained through trial and error. In this regard, a time was confirmed when the image could not be directly observed and perceived and did not make any interruption in the advertisement display. Also, the audience had to consider it as part of the display rather than an external element. In order to investigate if the display time of the given brand is appropriate in the video clip or not, a sample of 120 participants (including three classes of Qazvin Islamic Azad University) other than experimental, control, and primary groups was randomly selected, and, after the advertisement was displayed, they were implicitly asked if they had seen "Johnny lightning" or not. After going forward in different round, only two people could see the image. Thus, the display time was decided to be appropriate.

Survey

In selecting the advertising scenario, it was decided to choose an industry whose members are not very familiar with the product and brands of that product group so that the brand could be considered as novel to them; hence, the toy industry was selected as the advertising scenario. In order to prepare the active brand and other brands involved in the study, a random sampling was conducted and the toy industry was searched through surfing the Internet. Four first brands were introduced and selected as the advertising candidates by the search engine for their high traffic rate and operational efficiency in the markets, including: (1) Burago, (2) Green light, (3) Johnny Lightning and (4) High way61. The survey was conducted in the classrooms of business management faculty. Before starting the survey, the audience was asked if they were familiar with a brand in toy industry. If one of the brands under

Table 2. Standard coefficient and significance values of five research hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Path		Significance value	Standard coefficient
Hypothesis 1	Ad type	4.35	0.36	Intangible brand advertising
Hypothesis 2	Product type	4.78	0.43	Intangible brand advertising
Hypothesis 3	Media	3.21	0.18	Intangible brand advertising
Hypothesis 4	Demographic variables	2.32	0.21	Intangible brand advertising
Hypothesis 5	Intangible brand advertising	5.47	0.23	Ad effectiveness

Table 3. Statistics of the first group.

Brands	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Highway	60	1.24	0.513	1
Johnny lightning	60	2.95	0.682	3
Burago	60	3.57	0.594	4
Greenlight	60	2.36	0.432	2

study was among those noted by the audience, that person would be identified and his/her opinion would not be evaluated in the study. First, the questionnaire was administered to the participants, but they were asked not to see the questionnaire before they were permitted to do so by the study team. Then the advertising video clip was displayed by video projector and after the display, the participants were asked to look at the questionnaire and check their favorite brand in less than 10 s, and assign a number from 2 - 4 to other alternatives.

Reliability and validity

The pre-test method was used to evaluate the reliability of the study. In this method, the primary questionnaire was first administered to 30 experts. The questionnaire included 4 brands. The experts believed that brand display in the questionnaire must follow a scientific method in order to raise its validity. Therefore, after obtaining the experts' views, the order of locating brand logos in the questionnaire was randomly determined. Also, in order to show the reliability of the questionnaire using data, its Alpha Cronbach was calculated to be 0.74. It shows that the questionnaire enjoys appropriate reliability. The reliability and validity of the model is calculated by LISREL (Table 1).

In order to select the advertising brand from among 4 candidate brands, a primary survey was conducted. Since it was possible to apply the views of the researchers that would make the study biased, another group of audience consisting of 30 male and 30 female students of business were asked to rank the 4 brands. Generally, it can be claimed that this study has a good reliability because the results of experiment groups showed that there is a difference between the primary sample group and other results.

Causal model

According to the literature and hypotheses formed, a causal model of intangible advertising of brand has been hypothesized including four latent exogenous variables (ad type, product type, media type, and demographic factors) and two latent endogenous variables (intangible advertising of brand and advertising effectiveness) (Figure 1).

Data analysis

In this study, the hypotheses were tested using structural equation analysis. To this aim, LISREL 8.53 was used. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3 and Figure 1.

Measurement model

Key statistics (item means, standard deviations, confirmatory factor loadings) for all research variables are presented in Table 1. Validation of the research instrument was performed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), via LISREL's measurement model. In order for an indicator to be considered as valid, it must account for at least factor loading of 0.6 for its related construct (Nunnally, 1978). All indicators mentioned gained this minimum value except for the indicator of commercial ad, with factor loading of 0.56. However, since the marginal significant is 0.55 (Cho and Cheon, 2004), this indicator was regarded as the confirmed *p*-value and preserved in the model. Figure 1 shows the output model of LISREL and confirmatory factor loadings related to each factor. The indicator of frequency with factor loading (0.89) has the highest correlation with the construct "media" compared to reach (0.85). In the construct "advertisement type", product advertising with factor loading (0.93) has the highest effect compared to other indicators, that is political (0.71), categorical (0.71), public service ads (0.61) and commercial (0.56). In the construct "product type", high involvement with factor loading (0.93) has the highest correlation with the construct compared to low involvement (0.89). In the construct "demographic factors", age with factor loading (0.71) has the highest correlation with the construct compared to other indicators that is, income (0.68) and gender (0.63). In the construct "intangible brand advertising", brand awareness with factor loading (0.92) has the highest correlation with the construct environment in comparison to other indicators that is, brand popularity (0.87) and brand recognition (0.71). Finally, in the construct "advertisement effectiveness", the indicator of brand position (0.86) compared to buying intention (0.78), attitude toward brand (0.69) and brand remembering (0.65) has the highest correlation with this construct.

Table 4. Statistics of control group.

Brands	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Highway	154	1.35	0.625	1
Johnny lightning	154	3.05	0.875	3
Burago	154	3.39	0.663	4
Greenlight	154	2.25	0.651	2

Table 5. Statistics of experiment group.

Brands	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Highway	242	1.87	.687	1
Johnny lightning	242	2.71	.962	2
Burago	242	3.09	.751	3
Greenlight	242	3.16	.863	4

Structural equation modeling

The first step in testing the research model is estimating model fit (Figure 1). In this study, the χ^2 test was employed to test model fit; it was found out that model fits the data but does not yield a very good value. The reason is that the χ^2 test is very sensitive to sample size. Thus, it does not yield a very good result in most structural tests (Cho and Cheon, 2004). The measured value in this study is 2.46 ($\chi^2 = 363.4$, $df = 148$). As it shown in Figure 1, Normed fit index (NFI) was 0.87, comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.92, and root mean square residual (RMSR) was 0.07. According to these measures, the model was found satisfactory.

Causal model analysis

The second step of the testing model is testing hypotheses through path significance analysis for each construct of research model and variance explanation (R^2) for each path (path coefficient and path significance are shown in Figure 1 and Table 2. As was expected, all five constructs introduced (hypothesis 1 to hypothesis 5) were significant ($p < 0.05$). In this study, the construct product type with path coefficient of 0.43, compared to ad type (0.36), demographic variables (0.21), and media (0.18) was identified as the most influential factor on intangible advertising. At the end, as it was hypothesized, it was found that five constructs (ad type, product type, media and demographic variables) explain successfully intangible advertising. The following results are obtained in the empirical part of the study. In general, three groups were investigated. The first group consisted of 60 participants, and the aim of the study was to obtain a primary ranking of brands (Table 3). In this study, the Johnny Lightning brand was ranked third with 2.95 mean and 0.682 of standard deviation and was selected as the advertising brand. Hence, the main question of the study was formed as "is intangible brand advertising able to change the ranking of an advertising brand (brand awareness, brand recall, brand position, and buying intention)?" The second group was the control group consisting of 154 participants who ranked the given brand (Johnny Lightning) in the third position but with the mean of 3.05 and standard deviation of 0.875 (Table 4). The third group, experiment group, consisted of 242 participants. After intangible

brand display and collecting the views of this group, it was found out that the advertised brand has been transferred to the second rank, with the mean of 2.71 and standard deviation of 0.962 (Table 5). This reveals that intangible display has been able to affect the preferences and choices of customers.

DISCUSSION

In today's world in which advertising plays a specific role in promoting the goals of firms, all investors seek to increase their profits in a different way and persuade their customers to buy. Companies can change the position of a product and must find a different way of advertising. A consumer is always exposed to hundreds of commercial advertisements monthly, and there are different mechanisms for advertising. Some believe that advertising mechanisms must be unconscious and below a perceptive threshold (Sutherland, 1993). For this reason, it does not seem that its effect becomes clear through introspection. Such practices may lead some people to a dark and manipulative view of advertising.

You might ask why some advertisements become permanent while others are forgotten soon? Most advertising institutes and customers seek to find answers to this question. In order to find them, the way of involvement must be considered. One point in this regard is the repetition and way of offering an advertisement that can involve the customer with the advertisement. Perception of the advertisement is another important feature of the advertisement.

Recent studies found that, in addition to information and emotion, advertising must consider a third dimension, which is unconscious (Ohme, 2007). The third dimension is responsible for creating unconscious desire.

The unconscious may be influenced by environmental factors such as subtle sounds, images, and photos, which are perceived in lower than stimulants' threshold. The goal of the third dimension is to enhance customer desire, along with better buying behavior (Ohme, 2007) and spurring consumers into purchase-related behavior.

Research conducted in this area has investigated the effects of such stimuli on attitude changes (McGinnies, 1949; Lazarus and McCleary, 1951; Weiner and Schiller, 1960), behavioral changes resulting from subliminal perceptions (Collier, 1940; DeFleur and Petranoff, 1959; Bevan, 1964), and the effects of subliminal perceptions on consumer behavior in marketing situations (Goerge and Jennings, 1975; Hawkins, 1970; Kelly, 1979).

Subliminal advertising was explored by one cinema owner in the U.S when he quickly displayed the phrases "Drink Coca Cola" and "Eat Popcorn" throughout a movie without telling the audience. Afterwards, he reported a huge increase in sale of Coca Cola and popcorn. More than 200 scientific papers were published around this issue (Sutherland, 1993).

The present study, unlike other studies conducted on unconscious advertising, used no messages to be perceived superficially, showing that the study does not seek to impose a message to the audience's minds and persuade them to buy a product and hence increase its sales. This study investigated psychological response rather than behavioral response. It was tried to indicate the effect of new advertising methods on brand position in consumers' minds. Another important point is that the concept of subliminal advertising was formed based on a conception of the threshold. Subliminal means "below the threshold", that is the lowest neural stimulation required for feeling. This level is a fixed point below which there is no awareness (Sutherland, 1993). It is assumed that subliminal advertising must be located somewhere below awareness threshold. In this study, the attempt was made to expose the audience to the stimulant so long that they could record it rather than being aware of it. Since then, research has shown that there is no absolute threshold below which we are unaware of something and above which we are aware of everything. Thus, it seems impossible for an advertiser to set his/her message right below the threshold or - at the threshold (Sutherland, 1993). However, the present study obtained the time of brand display through trial and error rather than relying upon below threshold theory; that is to say, the difference is exactly between using the text as a rational element and brand image as an emotional one.

The main contribution of this study involves three main dimensions. First, this study offers an advertising method of intangible display as a modern way of brand advertising in order to increase brand influence. The major difference between this type of brand advertising and other methods is the use of brand image for a very short time when the audience cannot see it. Previous

studies have used texts positioned in the display (Champion and Turner, 1959; Byrne, 1959; George and Jennings, 1975; Beatty and Hawkins, 1989) that are different from this method in two ways. First, the text can be seen, and second, text advertising is by itself a rational advertising pattern. Whereas, in this study, brand image was placed rather than brand textual claim, and since subliminal perception is more intuitional than rational (Theus, 1994), intangible brand display method is more valid. Second, this is the first attempt to offer a structural equation model in the area of advertising brand. This study indicated that the concept of intangible advertising involves four constructs-ad type, involvement type, media, and demographic variables-among which involvement type is the most important factor in developing intangible advertising.

In order to use this kind of advertising, the advertisement must be built for intangibly displaying the brand so that the brand is placed only intangibly in the advertisement. Intangible display of brand in commercials can be economical for firms having numerous brands. In this way, they intangibly display some of their new brand among advertisements of their other brands. Of course, it is recommended that the selected advertisements be of the types having more popularity among the public. It is suggested that two brands can be selected from among products complementing each other and keeping them close to each other on store shelves would help in remembering intangible brand.

Due to the presence of unconscious, which is the long-term memory, the question arises: Is intangible brand display liable to affect customers' decisions in the long term? The experiment showed that intangible brand display strongly affects customers' decision in the short term, but in order to test this effect and its durability in the long term, marketing researchers must investigate other methods. Another question is, "since yellow and red are used in the selected brand and these two colors have direct effect in the unconscious (high wavelength and low frequency) (Itten, 1974), will the result be the same if other brand is displayed instead of the selected one?" Considering the fact that examination was immediately done after displaying video clip, other question is "does intangible brand display affect the unconscious of the customers? And since unconscious is long-term memory, is this effect repeated in the next month?"

By intangible display, respondents identified and selected the given brand from among other brands, and this is the most important result this study was seeking, but tangible display must also be used to preserve the tendency of the customer toward selected brand. In fact, the intangible advertising task is absorbing and the tangible advertising task is keeping the product position.

Regarding display medium, it must be mentioned that the type of media in the first group was a questionnaire consisting of 4 brands related to the toy industry. For the

experiment group, a video clip was displayed through a video projector. Also, the effect of video displayed for participants must not be overlooked in terms of attraction and fascination at the end, in spite of the fact that the present study is examined in Iran, further generalization must be kept with this fact in mind.

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