



INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL ADVERTISING APPEALS OF HAMRAHE AVAL MOBILE OPERATOR ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISING AND BRAND ATTITUDE (CASE STUDY: STUDENT USERS OF MOBILE IN THE AREA OF TEHRAN)

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ABSTRACT

Recently, increasing competitive circumstances in telecommunication network of Iran market and accelerating private sector growth as well as providing more financial incentives for private sector led to increased need of companies to marketing and promotional activities, particularly TV advertising efforts. The influence of advertising on attitude toward brand is one of the critical issues in the area of advertising. Hence, this study aims to investigate the effect of emotional and rational TV advertising of Hamrah Aval Operator on attitude of customers towards its brand and advertising efforts. This study is applicable in terms of objective and is cause and effect in terms of implementation. To collect data, a self administrated questionnaire was employed. Population is user students of mobile in the area of Tehran. Using a convenience sample of 390 respondents, data was analyzed by confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Results indicated that there is positive, direct and significant relationship between: 1) rational appeals and attitude toward advertising efforts, 2) rational appeals and attitude toward brand, 3) rational appeals and brand attitude, 4) attitude toward advertising efforts and brand attitude. However, the effect of emotional appeals on attitude toward advertising was not supported.

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Contribution/ Originality

This study contributes in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive framework for assessing the effect of advertising appeals on attitude towards advertising and consequently, brand attitude. In fact, this study is one of very few studies which have investigated the relationships among various types of advertising appeals and attitudes towards brand and advertising efforts.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most marketing communications (including advertising, personal selling, and public relations) attempt to affect customers' brand preferences by presenting positive attributes of the brand or communicating the brand with positive symbols. However, there is a stream of research suggesting that messages can include some negative information about a brand and still be more effective than if no negative information were presented (Pechmann, 1992). Advertising is one of the most important commercial activities in the modern competitive environment. Companies hope that customers will purchase their products/services due to the advertisements, which deliver messages about a certain brand and its products/services. Of all marketing weapons, advertising is widely known for its long lasting impact on viewer's mind (Feiz *et al.*, 2013). Companies cannot make dream to be well known brands until they invests in their promotional efforts, for which consumer market is dominating through advertisements (Hussainy *et al.*, 2008). Customers are more likely to associate with advertisements of those brands, which have emotional and rational values and messages. Emotional and rational appeals provide a strong brand cue and stimulate category-based processing. Advertisers employ different appeals in advertisements which arouse the viewer's emotions which lead to purchase intention for product. They use different psychological barriers, models, celebrities, create persuasive attractive environment which directly impacts on customers' mind and their purchase intention. Furthermore, attitude has crucial importance in psychology but it is also have great extent use in social sciences and marketing. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) stated that attitudes are psychological tendencies which grow by addition from learning and a continuous attention towards object. Lin (2008) defined advertising attitude is a continuous reactive orientation got from a certain purpose. The purpose of this paper is to propose a structural model of advertising appeals to examine whether emotional and rational advertising appeals can influence brand attitude and attitude toward advertising of Hamrahe aval Company as a main mobile operator in the context of telecommunication industry in Iran.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Advertising Appeals

Advertising appeals aim to influence the way consumers view themselves and how buying certain products can prove to be beneficial to them. The message conveyed through advertising appeals influences the purchasing decisions of consumers. Different types of appeals in adverts can be seen in the media today. Kotler (1997) pointed out in his study that advertising appeal is the theme of advertisement. To make the audience receive a necessary message, advertisers have to put some driving power into the message, and the driving power is the appeal. Every advertising appeal represents an attraction, which arouses consumer's desires. Kotler (2003) divided advertising

appeals into rational and emotional appeal. To meet the varying demands of their target consumers, advertisers commonly use rational appeal and emotional appeal in their advertising in an attempt to influence consumer behavior. By rational advertisement appeal, the product can be emphasized to highlight its functions and benefits to the consumer. On the other hand, Emotional Advertising appeal places stress on meeting consumers psychological, social or symbolic requirements where many purchase motives come from. Kotler (1997) defined rational appeal as rationally oriented purchase stimulated by directly giving explanations of a product's advantages. Rational appeal focuses on the benefits consumers may enjoy in an advertisement, it emphasizes that a product or service could achieve the function and benefits consumers desires. He further defined emotional appeal as the stimulation of consumers purchase intension by arousing positive or negative emotion. According to Kotler, positive emotional appeals covers, humor, love, happiness, sex, music, adventure, fear, romance, emotional and sensitive words. Our study adopted two emotional appeals suggested by Kotler including fear appeals and humor appeals. Fear appeal is a factor that can have incredible influence on individuals. Fear is often used to good effect in advertising and marketing campaigns of beauty and health products including insurance. Advertising experts indicate that using moderating levels of fear in advertising can prove to be very effective. Humor appeal is an attempt that is used in around 30% of the advertisements. Humor can be an excellent tool to catch the viewer's attention and help in achieving instant recall which can work well for sale of product. It can be excellently used when it is related to some benefit that the consumer can derive without which the joke might over power the message. According to the marketing literature, rational appeals include one-sided appeals, two-sided appeals, and comparative appeals. Persuasive communication that presents only one point of view; also called one-sided appeal. Most mass media advertising messages are one-sided. A one-sided message is more appropriate for an audience that is favorably disposed toward the view being presented or is unlikely to be exposed to the other side. A religious fund-raising appeal is usually one-sided on the assumption that the targeted audience is favorably disposed toward the view being expounded and is unlikely to be receptive to other religious beliefs. With a more skeptical audience, a one-sided message is less effective than a two-sided message which presents both points of view and then arguments to counter the opposing view (Ettgar and Goodwin, 1982). A two-sided message for a service bureau might acknowledge that a competitor is located closer to the prospect and then assert that proximity is irrelevant if the service bureau is doing a good job. A two-sided appeal is more appropriate to an audience that is favorably disposed toward the opposing view or is likely to be exposed to strong arguments for the other side. An audience that favors another brand or point-of-view must be persuaded to abandon that view before a new view can be accepted. Two-sided messages work best with an educated audience that tends to make informed choices like industrial buyers. The order in which the views are presented in a two-sided appeal can affect the impact of each message depending upon the audience characteristics (Feiz *et al.*, 2013). Comparative advertising is an advertisement in which a particular product, or service, specifically mentions a competitor by name for the express purpose of showing why the competitor is inferior to the product naming it. Comparative advertising, also referred to as 'knocking copy', is loosely defined as advertising

where “the advertised brand is explicitly compared with one or more competing brands and the comparison is oblivious to the audience (Feiz *et al.*, 2013).

2.2. Advertising Appeals and Customer Attitude

Attitude is an essential concept in psychology, but it is also widely applied in the social sciences and marketing. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) defined attitude as a learning orientation based on which a state of constant like or dislike is generated towards a certain object. Kotler (1997) suggested that attitude refers to an individual’s long-lasting perceived evaluation of like, dislike, emotional feelings, and action intention towards an object or idea. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) stated that attitudes are a psychological tendency accrued from learning and a continual evaluation towards a subject. Lin (2008) defined advertising attitude as a continuously reactive orientation learned from a certain object. Such an orientation represents an individual’s personal standards such as like and dislike, and right and wrong. The attitude held by consumers caused by advertising can be classified into two components: cognition and affection. Cognition and affection stand for thinking and feeling, respectively (Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999). Allport (1935) pointed out that the difference between the two components lies in that cognition stands for an individual evaluation towards external stimulation, while affection reflects an individual’s internal feelings. Attitudes are typically derived from judgments which everyone makes. In psychology, it is believed that attitudes are originated from an ABC approach; that affect behavioral change, and cognition. Rettie *et al.* (2010) suggested that using prying tactics in advertising while competing for customers’ interest can be frustrating to the audiences and can lead to similarity of pessimistic public attitude towards advertising. Hence, advertising appeal is applied to attract the consumers’ attention, to change the consumers’ concept of the product, and to affect them emotionally about a specific product or service (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). According to Belch and Belch (1998), advertising appeal is applied to attract consumers’ attention. Advertising appeal aims at influencing consumers’ attitude and emotions about a related product or service. It is classified into rational and emotional appeals (Belch and Belch, 1998). Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) indicated that advertising appeal may change consumers’ attitude. By using broadcast messages to trigger consumers’ inner momentum psychologically, consumers are likely to echo and recognize the advertising messages and further change their attitude towards the advertised product. Ray and Batra (1983) pointed out that emotional identification comes before rational identification during a cognitive process. Emotional messages are more vivid and thus rational appeal works better than emotional appeal in attracting consumers’ attention. Aaker and Norris (1982) found that the advertising attitude created by rational appeal is better than that by emotional appeal. Rational appeal appears to provide information explicitly and directly related to a product, which attracts consumers’ attention more easily and generates a better advertising attitude. Based on the above literature review, the research hypotheses for this study is developed as follows:

- H1. Rational appeals have a positive and significant relationship with attitude toward advertising.
- H2. Rational appeals have a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.
- H3. Emotional appeals have a positive and significant relationship with attitude toward advertising.
- H4. Emotional appeals have a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.

H5. Attitude toward advertising has a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.
 The conceptual model of the study is shown in Figure 1.

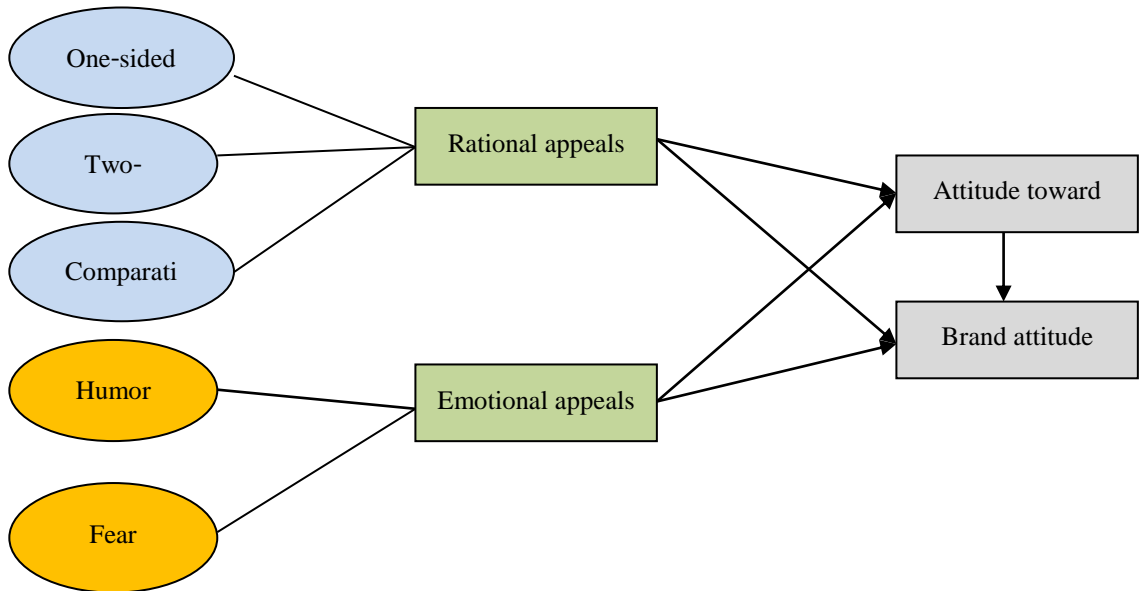


Figure-1. Conceptual model of the study

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling

To achieve research goal, a survey research design was used at Tehran. The target population was student users of mobile phones and used telecommunication services of Hamrahe Aval Company during a four-week period of research in November and December 2013. A confidence interval approach was used to determine the sample size, suggested by Burns and Bush (1995). With 50% of the estimated variability in the population Burns and Bush (1995), the sample size was set at 384 at the 95% confidence level. We used convenience sampling plan. Students, who were employed in the universities of Tehran, selected randomly to achieve estimated sample.

3.2. Instrument

The survey questionnaire consisted of three major sections. The first section included questions relating to students characteristics to identify the socio-demographic characteristics. This section helps to gather information about gender, age, education, length of watching TV in week, and tendency to watching TV advertising. The second section is about emotional and rational appeals. This section concludes dimensions of fear, humor, one-sided, two-sided and comparative appeals. Twelve questions were adopted and modified in this section, including three items for fear appeal, three items for humor appeal, two items for one-side appeal, two items for two-side appeal, and two items for comparative appeal. A five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly agree) was employed to measure mentioned

appeals. The third section contains the scale of students' attitudes towards advertising and brand attitude, which modified by the researcher and used 15 questions to measure these dimensions. A combined five-point Likert scale was employed to measure the above determinants. A pilot test was performed to assess how well the survey instrument captured the constructs it was supposed to measure, and to test the internal consistency and reliability of questionnaire items. The first draft of the survey instrument was distributed to 30 randomly selected students who were studies in University of Tehran, the largest University among other universities of Iran in terms of number of students. A total of 30 questionnaires were collected at the site. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the internal consistency reliability. The independent variables including advertising appeals show a significant internal consistency of 0.831. The Cronbach's coefficient of dependent variables including, brand attitude and attitude toward advertising was 0.734. Based on the results of the pilot test, the final version was modified considering questionnaire design, wording, and measurement scale.

3.3. Data Analysis

For hypothesis testing, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling were used. The data was processed with the LISREL. The results of CFA are presented in the Table 1. All of factor loadings are above 0.3 indicating good discriminant validity.

Table-1. CFA results

Factor	Item	Standardized loading	t-value	Error	Result
Rational appeals (one-sided, two-sided, comparative)	APPEAL1	730/	16/26	0/47	Significant
	APPEAL2	820/	19/16	0/33	Significant
	APPEAL3	760/	17/25	0/42	Significant
	APPEAL4	540/	11/10	0/71	Significant
	APPEAL5	690/	15/14	0/52	Significant
	APPEAL6	650/	13/02	0/58	Significant
Emotional appeals (fear and humor)	APPEAL7	600/	12/70	0/64	Significant
	APPEAL8	540/	11/09	0/71	Significant
	APPEAL9	710/	15/63	0/50	Significant
	APPEAL10	750/	16/65	0/44	Significant
	APPEAL11	760/	18/21	0/38	Significant
	APPEAL12	790/	18/28	0/37	Significant
Attitude toward advertising	ADV1	680/	14/19	0/54	Significant
	ADV2	780/	16/99	0/40	Significant
	ADV3	590/	11/89	0/65	Significant
	ADV4	630/	12/99	0/60	Significant
	ADV5	590/	11/98	0/65	Significant
	ADV6	640/	13/12	0/59	Significant
	ADV7	550/	10/93	0/70	Significant
Brand attitude	BA1	860/	13/40	0/25	Significant
	BA2	920/	14/14	0/16	Significant
	BA3	890/	18/54	0/20	Significant
	BA4	730/	17/38	0/47	Significant
	BA5	530/	17/52	0/71	Significant
	BA6	480/	17/75	0/77	Significant
	BA7	480/	18/86	0/77	Significant
	BA8	280/	17/41	0/92	Significant

4. RESULTS

4.1. Sample Profile

A summary of the samples is provided in Table 2.

Table-2. Characteristics of respondents

Percent	Level	Characteristic
38.2	Male	Gender
61.8	Female	
12.6	Primary or below	Education
62.8	University	
24.6	Post-graduate	
71.8	Under 25	Age
25.1	25-30	
2.3	31-35	
0.8	Above 36	
44.9	Less than 1 h	Length of watching TV in week
29	1-2 h	
18.2	2-3 h	
6.9	3-4 h	
1	More than 4 h	
43.8	Very low	Tendency to watching TV advertising
34.6	Low	
15.4	To some extent	
4.9	High	
1.3	Very high	

4.2. SEM Results and Hypotheses Testing

Figures 3 and 4 show the proposed among between advertising appeals, attitude towards advertising, and brand attitude. The overall model fit was good, $\chi^2/df = 2.99$, RMSEA = 0.077, GFI = 0.84, CFI = 0.92, IFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.82. The effect of advertising appeals on attitude toward advertising and brand was significant (p -value = 0.000).

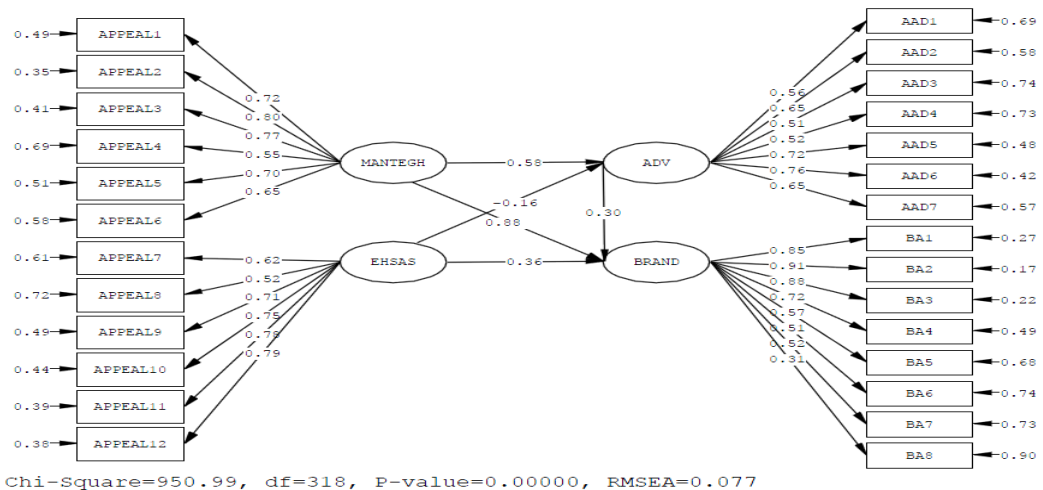


Figure-2. Standardized path coefficient

Note: MANTEGH= Rational appeals; EHSAS= Emotional appeals; ADV= Attitude toward advertising; BRAND= Brand attitude

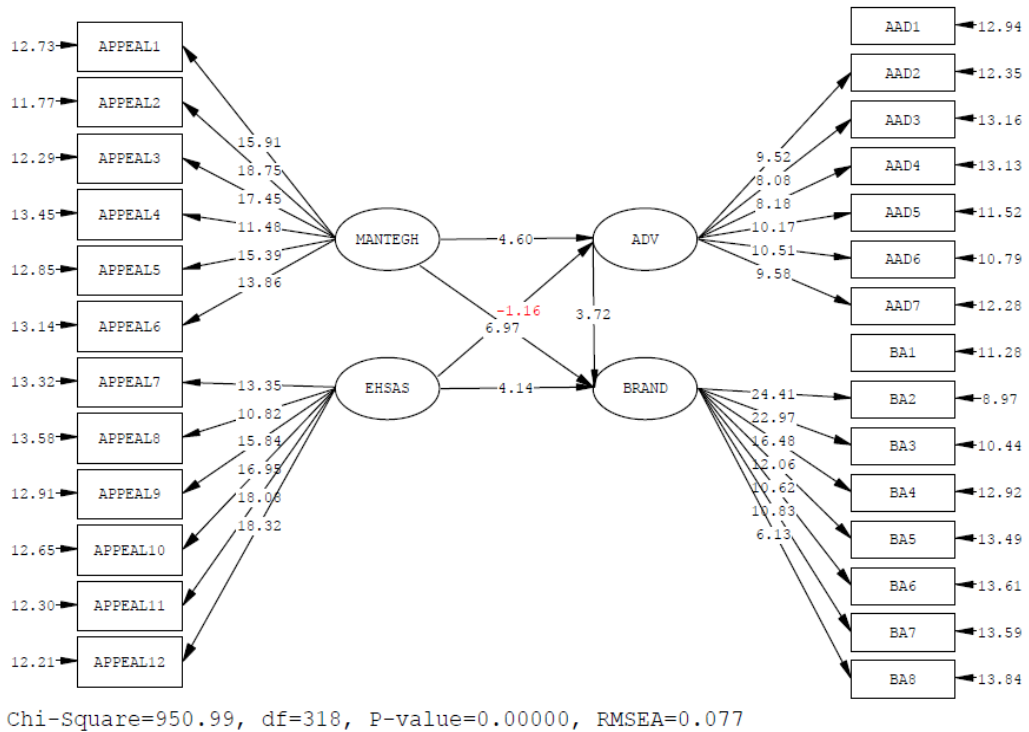


Figure-3. Significant coefficients

Note: MANTEGH= Rational appeals; EHSAS= Emotional appeals; ADV= Attitude toward advertising; BRAND= Brand attitude

All tests are directional t-tests of the critical ratios of the regression weight estimates over the estimates of their standard errors provided in the LISREL output. As shown in Figure 3, all of three paths specified in the hypothesized model are found to be statistically significant. When t-values are in the range of +1.96 to -1.96, the hypothesis will reject (Hair *et al.*, 1998). As predicted, H1 and H2 were largely supported by the data of this study, in that rational appeals had a positive and significant effect on attitude toward advertising ($\beta = 0.58$, $t = 4.6$) and brand attitude ($\beta = 0.88$, $t = 6.97$). However, the effect of emotional appeals on attitude toward advertising was not significant ($\beta = -0.16$, $t = -1.16$); rejecting H3. As predicted by H4, emotional appeals had a positive and significant effect on brand attitude ($\beta = 0.36$, $t = 4.14$). The structural equations results supported H4. As predicted by H5, attitude toward advertising was positively associated with brand attitude ($\beta = 0.30$, $t = 3.72$); supporting H5. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table-3. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Description	t-value	Result
H1	Rational appeals have a positive and significant relationship with attitude toward advertising.	4.60	Supported
H2	Rational appeals have a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.	6.97	Supported
H3	Emotional appeals have a positive and significant relationship with attitude toward advertising.	-1.16	Rejected
H4	Emotional appeals have a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.	4.14	Supported
H5	Attitude toward advertising has a positive and significant relationship with brand attitude.	3.72	Supported

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of current study was to investigate the effect of emotional and rational advertising appeals on brand attitude and attitude toward advertising of Hamrahe Aval Company as a main operator of Mobil phone in Iran. Results indicated that emotional and rational appeals have a significant influence on brand attitude. Further, rational appeals had a positive relationship with attitude toward advertising. However, there was not found significant relationship between emotional appeals and attitude toward advertising. In addition, attitude toward advertising was positively associated with brand attitude. Our study has several managerial implications. Rational appeal is a type of advertising that focuses on main functions of product/service and encourage the consumers to purchase advertised products/services based on a rational decision (Arens, 2006). Messages that show economic of scale, advantages and applications of a product/service are of which messages that rational appeals have been used in the producing them. Advantages and characteristics of products are presented in the rational appeals and marginal issues would be prevented. Hence, the main concern of this appeal is to attract the consumer's attention toward the product/service. Rational appeals are useful when advertised product is a high involvement one such as computer. Hence, high involvement products have high cost and value; they require higher level of risk-taking. Thus, consumers need to more rational and complete information about these products. According to prior research, effect of attitude toward advertising on the effectiveness of advertising is an antecedent of brand attitude. The effect of advertising attitude on brand attitude in the context of low involvement product/service and/or emotional advertising is more important than consumers faced with high involvement products or services (Mehta and Purvis, 1995). Attitudes towards advertising influence the purpose of purchase. If the main goal of advertising is to create positive attitude toward advertising efforts and brand efforts, the more likely purchasing behavior or a positive emotional response to advertising can be a key index of evaluating advertising effectiveness. In the previous research, brand attitude has been defined as "customer willingness to respond desirably or undesirably regarding a particular brand (Laczniak and Carlson, 1989). Research indicated that emotional response to an advertisement is positively related to brand awareness, brand attitude, and purchase behavior. It seems that when customers prefer a certain advertisement, they would probably like advertised brand and are more ready to purchase that brand. Consumers who have positive attitude toward brand, they would focus on message claims related with that brand, while consumers who have negative attitude toward brand would focus on operational elements of advertising.

5.1. Managerial Implications

According to the findings of current study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Using experts, designers and professional graphics for designing advertising programs content

According to H1, H2 and H4, advertising appeals have a significant effect on brand attitude and attitude towards advertising efforts. Hence, experts, designers, and graphics should attend to the relationship among the variables and provide customers with advertising appeals that affect audience perspective on advertising efforts and brand in which the advantages and characteristics of their SIM cards and services to attract more and more customers.

Focusing on usage of advertising appeals in TV advertising efforts

According to [Hornik and Miniario \(2010\)](#), advertisements that employed advertising appeals in their content are more convicting than other advertisements and lead to create positive attitude toward advertising efforts. Hence, advertising managers should focus on using suitable advertising appeals in marketing messages and attain more precise information on their customers' attitude towards the company advertising efforts and as a result, provide programs in order to remove their weaknesses in employing advertising appeals.

- Using creative ideas in advertisement to create positive attitude toward advertisement

According to H5, one of the ways of creating effective advertisement and positive attitude toward advertisement and brand attitude is creativity in advertisement. An advertiser company should know the products and product lines of the company. Creativity in advertisement should attend to the objective. The objective is to improve the company image in the society. Hence, creativity needs to be based on the company objective. Kotler believed that creativity in advertising means that author could not guess the result and follow the advertisement curiously.

- Usage of synergy principle in advertisement

According to H5, one of the ways of creating effective advertisement and positive attitude toward advertising and brand attitude is employment of synergy principle. Advertising efforts of company should follow a united line. The company should change its advertisement in a regular line. Diversity should related advertisement efforts to each other. Certain elements should be repeated in in the advertisements to attract followers to the advertisement content. Integrated communicational systems include advertisements, sales persons, public relations, and direct advertisement. These factors related organization to the external environment. It should be included fixed elements in these factors. This would help audiences to relate these factors to each other.

- Usage of more emotion in content of advertising efforts to affect attitude and behavior of customers

Penetration in emotions of audiences is more influential on the rations of people. Advertisement should not simply focus of the ration of customers. The company should penetrate in emotions of people in addition to their ration.

Usage of differentiation principle

One of the ways of creating effective advertisements with respect to concentration on positive attitude and behavior of consumers is usage of differentiation principle. Never follow the crowd. The company should do a different action compared to other competitors. If competitor made an advertisement that is not popular and attractive, the company should negotiate the advertisement producer to make a different advertisement for the company. Company would be the first, if it tries to be differentiated.

- Usage of Customer Relationship Management strategies in order to meet the needs of customers

Hamrahe Aval Company should try to satisfy customers' need by an organized Customer Relationship Management system to improve relationships with customers and meeting their needs as possible.

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