

## **Conceptualization of Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) Grounded Theory Strategy: A Case Study of Iran Automobile Industry**

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### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize the Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) with inductive approach based on data collected through interviews at *Iran Khodro, Saipa, Bahman Group, Kerman Motor* and *Pars Khodro* (during 2008-2010). The interviewees are Iranian automobile brand experts. Applying the grounded theory (GT), we could theorize the process in shaping IBE with the aim of proposing an integrated picture of brand engagement as a third paradigm. Bearing in mind the strategic role of the proposed topic in companies' survival, we got into introducing brand for recognizing the engagement factors and then created the integrated brand engagement which let automobile industries' owners foresee and determine better. In this theory, "Brand Equity" is the central phenomenon whereas "Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)" is the causal condition. The central phenomenon is expressed in a set of actions and interactions, which is referred as "Customer Engagement". On the other hand, the Integrated Brand Communication (IBC) (as context conditions) and Shareholders Engagement elements (as intervening conditions) stabilize and expand the concept of engagement in the proposed model. The main consequence of this phenomenon is "Brand Engagement" leading to increase the long-term loyalty of customers, staffs and shareholders. These conditions lead all people who directly and/or indirectly involve with brand to advocate the brand because they have sense of belongingness and engagement to the brand even if they do not buy that product.

**Keywords:** Brand; Brand Engagement; Grounded Theory; Open Coding; Axial Coding; Selective Coding

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## 1. Introduction

Encountering the phenomenon of market globalization necessitates complying with certain requirements for Iranian industries and institutions and hence; delaying plans to encounter these unavoidable circumstances will most probably lead to adverse consequences that could cost not even internal markets rather result in elimination from international competitions. Therefore, all Iranian industries and institutions should prepare themselves to face this issue in due course of time.

For instance, Iran's automobile industry with more than 40 years of domestic operation as well as allocating 2.5% of GNP, 20% value added in industrial sector and 2.5% of total investment in the country, has experienced a 30 % growth over the past years. However, it has not yet achieved a remarkable position in world market. The continuation of this trend not only poses a problem for its entry into global market and international competition, rather endangers the strategic and long-term ability of the industry to maintain the internal market (Behkish, 2002:78).

With the current situation in mind, the foreseeable future can be prevented with having foresight in finding the appropriate market for domestic products and introducing a unique brand, of which, it seems, Iranian companies have so far been neglectful.

Albadavi (2009) holds that global change in automobile industries and the appearance of major brand-owning automobile manufacturers is a warning to all regional automobile manufacturers to prepare themselves to encounter future challenges otherwise they should leave the stage to other competitors. Therefore, the conversion of major traditional automobile-manufacturers into the brand-owning ones necessitates their extensive structural alterations as well as organizing their physical and spiritual properties. Undoubtedly, identifying the factors and implementing a brand-engagement approach for industries will be undeniable.

On the one hand, with respect to the occupation of one-sixth of the global trade by automobile industries, a particular attention to this key industry with an average technology, is not only justified, but its acquisition and encouragement by developing countries seems indispensable. On the other hand, the World Trade Organization (WTO) as one of the 118 factors of a third wave society and also paradigmatic transformations in the global automobile industries that are on the verge of an entry into the second century of their existence, are considered as the most strategic challenges to fledgling regional automobile manufacturers, particularly Iranian companies (Albadavi, 2010).

In the rapidly changing society, one should

not forget that although joining the WTO is an unavoidable necessity for countries like Iran, which is permanently accompanied by economic integration, however; studies show the elimination of a large part of industrial sectors and economic institutions of countries which are on the verge of officially joining this organization. Further, its short-term consequences such as unemployment and inadaptability to modern technology are a fact that challenges the countries' macro management. This issue necessitates ground preparation in competitive infrastructures of Iran's automobile industries to enter into the WTO and compete at an international level (Behkish, 2002:93).

Nowadays, brand adds value and credit to an organization as capital does and is recognized as a relatively stable competitive advantage at a universal level. As such, promoting the brand becomes, in many cases, the strategy of an organization (Buckingham, 2008:122).

De Chernatony (2006:273) believes that the brand management with an integrated approach means an active participation in all kinds of relationship established between customers and brand, clerk and clerk, clerk and customer, and clerk and other beneficiaries.

Kapferer believes that the brand is a commitment or a promise that you give your customers in interaction with them and, in the

long run, you should be loyal to them in any organizational decision or movement as well as any marketing process. But this issue requires an understanding of the nature of brand engagement of all those who are in one way or another involved with a certain brand. Therefore, all activities of an organization and its staff's operation have the capacity to influence the brand, and organization's overall orientation should be toward the Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) (Kapferer, 2007:118).

With the above-mentioned explanations, it shall be considered that the ultimate objectives in managing the brand engagement, with the approach of creating a favorable impression for both domestic and foreign customers as follow (Buckingham, 2008:25):

- Dominating domestic markets
- Increasing domestic and foreign customers' loyalty
- Increasing the power to transcend globalization barriers and gaining competitive advantages

Buckingham (2008) defines the brand engagement as a process of establishing a logical-emotional relationship between all people involved with the brand, which, of course, requires a comprehensive view of the issue regarding the influence of such factors as kind of behavior, orientation, perceptions, and beliefs of the people involved.

One of the recent studied areas in the brand creation process is building a solid integrated commitment based on the brand engagement approach. Considering the fact that the world class production with an internationally competitive approach is the only way for automobile industry to survive, therefore; the brand engagement is an undeniable necessity for the Iranian automobile industry.

Reviewing current theories regarding brand, such as Interbrand Evaluation Method (2000), Morphy's strategy for creating commercial brands (2003), 5 characteristics of brand and Aaker's Interpreting Variables of Brand (2004), Active Brand Pyramid of Mill-Ward Brown Institute (1998) , and also the Conceptual Model of Branding by Kelvin Keller (2001:33) show that the majority of these theories have been scrutinized and formulated based on a angle viewpoint and in accordance with quantitative researches.

It seems Passikoff (2008), Sprott (2009) and Buckingham (2008) too have advised the necessity for managers and stakeholders to modify their attitudes towards the integrated brand engagement approach.

Most marketing managers are well aware about the brand concepts, such as understanding customer needs, position detection, promotional and advertising activities, constructor components of a brand, but overall, what makes difficult in their

products' marketing and constructing the brand, is that they can't apply the marketing concepts for promoting the value of brand in an integrated manner.

The Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and the Integrated Brand Communications (IBC) are goal setting paradigms in advertising and communications and brand. These systematic models are looking for the promotion of effectiveness and synergy in relational and promotional activities of companies and brands. The models are provided in the framework of the aforementioned paradigm, through a coherent and structured communication (price, product, advertising and distribution). It causes the promotional activities of firm, fully and effectively with the objectives of marketing and sales strategies to be served and by identifying the components affecting the brand and, providing the models aimed for identifying the components and perceptual models indicators of brands.

Nevertheless, having a comprehensive view about the brand is the main concern of the new IBE paradigm. And the goal of this research is the phenomenology and processing the concept and finally providing an integrated brand engagement model for the automobile industry in Iran. In fact, this research considers strategies for managers and experts in using modern management tools and attitudes on the

brand engagement. According to the nature of the fundamental conceptualizations theory in this research, the following items are mentioned as sub- goals of this study:

- Developing the brand concepts and the brand engagement.
- Detecting the conditions governing on the integrated brand engagement in the automobile industry.

This study is based on the grounded theory that searches the design pattern of integrated brand engagement with the market globalization approach. In the grounded theory, hypotheses have not been identified rather this method extracts the hypotheses itself.

The current paper first searches for an integrated brand engagement model and then it provides the theory in the automobile sector. After extracting experts and specialists' viewpoints with regard to prioritizing importance, it recommends how to improve the brand policy in the automobile industry. Eventually, according to the research question, some assumptions are tested. The main question of this research is: what is the theory of Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) in Iran automobile industry?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Brand Engagement**

Brand engagement is defined as intense

commitment to a brand. The derivation of the word "engagement" evokes a form of emotional and moral commitments. To be engaged implies a condition or state of commitment where the state has been induced by an act of free will in response to seduction, attraction, or charm (Buckingham, 2008:13).

De Chernatony (2006:46), a marketing professor at the Open University Business School (Britain), defines the integrated brand engagement as an active participation in any type of communications, including communication between customers and brand, among employees themselves, employees and customers, employees and other stakeholders.

Brand is only a set of perceptions formed in customers or employees' mind. However, it needs to increasingly serve for more requirements every day. It also has to be sensitive for values such as originality of communication methods (Sprott, 2009:44).

Regarding the future of national brand, it is important to make difference between national and firm brand engagements. Success of a brand is mutually dependant on the dominant perception of that brand in local markets. Consequently, any decision making for purchase of a product with a specific brand implies on the company, and how company performs, its influence on the market etc. But in performing a brand engagement program, without considering that it is a national brand

or a firm brand, employees are the core in achieving the organization's business goals.

## **2.2. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

Market saturation often increases competition and brings changes in customers' tastes and needs hence; the Iranian automobile companies have faced with numerous challenges in commercial and industrial activities. In such circumstances, companies which apply their tools and capacities like new product designs and development, restructuring of distribution channels, high quality products, appropriate pricing and advertisement, overcome to these challenges and survive in an effective way. Advertisement as one of the most important tools in marketing can play a key role in policies and strategies such as customer relationship, new product introduction and brand image modification.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is one of the emerging approaches for goal-setting in advertisement and commercial communications. This is a systematic model seeking to enhance effectiveness and synergies among communication and advertising activities in enterprises. Through creating an integrated and structured relationships between the marketing matrix (price, product, advertisement and distribution), model uses the advertising activities effectively to serve for

marketing and sale strategies. In 1980s, some companies feeling the necessity of integration in advertising and promotional activities initiated the integrated marketing communications. This process synchronizes all the elements of promotion with all marketing activities which company uses to communicate with customers.

Marketing and advertising industries, in particular, have rapidly adopted concept of the integrated marketing communication. As a scientific and applicable concept, it was not a transitory phenomenon, but helped define by enriching the context with new terms such as new advertising, coordination in advertising and the integrated communication.

The American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) gives one of the very first definitions of the integrated marketing communication: "Integrated Marketing Communications is a concept which; through a master plan assesses all strategic communication tools such as advertisement, customer relationship, direct marketing and sale promotions, and combine them to ensure the transparency, sustainability and maximum effectiveness of marketing communications." This definition focuses on using all sale promotion forms, to maximize the effectiveness of communication. However, some researchers such as Don Schultz believe that the integrated marketing communication

means much more and it includes all communications and contacts of a company such as brand, image and so forth.

Many companies use the broad concept of IMC to coordinate and manage their communication plans to ensure that they provide a stable and effective image of company and its brands. However, the role of customers, employees, managers, suppliers and investors in brand creation and engagement, are overlooked in this paradigm (Passikoff, 2008:25)

The move towards an integrated marketing communication, is seen as one the most important enablers of marketing in 1990s. Changes in marketing environment (customers, technology and media) demands more consistency and effectiveness in advertising activities. Most changes have occurred in the integrated marketing communication paradigms, demographic aspects, life style, shopping patterns and media.

### **2.3. Integrated Brand Communications (IBC)**

The integrated brand communication- as a new and operational marketing paradigm-is a comprehensive strategy for communication which integrates all communication activities- such as customer relationship, sale, direct marketing, and face-to-face marketing and advertisement tools- and uses it to convince customers to purchase the product and the

brand as the most valuable property of the organization.

Since, this integrated communication is performed along with brand value management process, it implies on each step of brand value management. Since the integrated brand communication relies on all critical issues such as business strategies, financial activities and marketing communications, it is highly dependent on top management in the organization. Precisely, the brand communication performs as a catalyst to unify executives, financial and marketing managers, and ultimately helps remove the barriers within the organization (Aaker, 2008:134).

The initial value of the integrated communication for advertizing management is to provide a comprehensive procedure to enhance the brand and consequently to grow the business. Performing an integrated brand plan, a strategic approach focused on strong communication with consumers is required.

### **2.4. Toward a New Paradigm: Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE)**

Although creating an effective brand is a fundamental requirement to succeed in a business, in some cases, it accompanies with misunderstandings. For example, in many Asian companies, tendency to the brand creation is considered merely in the form of a pure marketing in which the ultimate goal is

attracting customer's attention in any possible way. As a matter of fact, the brand creation must be included in a strategic master plan of the organization with a comprehensive systematic support (Scott, 2003).

There are differences in type and size of different brands and key point is to select, develop and/or modify an appropriate brand which has the best compatibility and consistency with the organizational culture and management. Employees play a key role as brand representatives within the organization and even beyond. But the question needs to be answered is that how employees' commitment toward the brand can be assured? Through involving and training them in any aspects of brand strategy in the response. For example, Starbucks Company's decision to grant some company's share to successful employees shows its appreciation and gratitude. Goals which are pursued include (Spratt, 2009):

- Raising the morality of employees
- Creating motivation
- Appreciation and ensuring to buy company's proposed brands.
- Strengthening organizational values.

Employees would be committed if top management and owners known as leaders in this organizational process. The question still remains to be answered as why internal or external customers tend to a specific brand more than others remain loyal and committed to it?

A brand reflects its commitment and apparently customers would prefer a specific brand that affects their purchase intensively. For example, Toyota brand means it never disappoints customers; and with secure and safe product, customers feel secured as well. According to the concept of integrated marketing communication and integrated brand communication which are the dominant paradigms over the last decades, it seems that automobile companies have to do a continuous and intergraded marketing research process in order to achieve distinction. The successful brand is the one which acquires more customers' attention and loyalty in the whole purchasing process (Buckingham, 2008:99).

### **3. Methodology**

This research is an interpretive and its philosophical foundation is based on phenomenology. Interpretive research does not define dependent and independent variables in advance, and its assumption is that access to social facts (realities) is only possible through social constructs such as language, consciousness and sharing. In other words, the "reality" is affected by the human mental characteristics, a reality that cannot be considered independent from social structures, values and facts. Interpretive studies try to understand the phenomenon through interpretation given by people (Danaee Fard,



2004).

The general paradigm of this qualitative study is based on a constructivist or naturalistic approach which asserts that the reality is subjective and multi-faceted, constructed by researcher and participants (Lincoln & Guba; cited by Jones, 1999). Understanding ontological, epistemological, methodological stances as suggested by Creswell (2001) was the first stage of this research. Collecting and analyzing data as well as shaping theory are others stages. In sum, the grounded theory use three stages such as: 1) open coding (first stage) 2) axial coding (second stage) 3) selective coding (third stage).

#### 4. Analysis

##### 4.1. Analysis of Interviews

In this study, 16 samples were selected to be interviewed until reaching to sufficient information. The interview transcripts were the primary input to the analysis. Brainstorm on candidates simultaneously with transcription of the interviews, we generated concepts about subject of the study. In the brainstorm, we listed all different relationships and ideas about relations that came to our mind, discussed and organized them. The brainstorm produced a number of ideas and statements constituting immediate relations. At time, we could not call those statements for final as we had not related them directly to data. But we used them in the

analysis as starting point for our further work.

##### 4.2. Analysis of Document Studies

Writing memos is an important activity during the coding process (Corbin and Strauss, 2004:16). Since analysts cannot readily keep track of all categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytical process, there must be a codification system. Memos are not simply "ideas." They are involved in the formulation and revision of theory during the research process.

At least three types of memos are distinguished: code memos, theoretical memos and operational memos. The code memos relate to an open coding and thus focus on the conceptual labeling. The theoretical memos relate to an axial and selective coding and thus focus on paradigm features. Finally, the operational memos contain directions relating to the evolving research design as mentioned in the methodology section.

In this research, to supplement the interviews, documents made available by the proposed organizations were studied. These studies also inspired authors in preparing the interview guides.

It is worth mentioning that the present research was conducted during 2008-2010 and official documents from the companies (*Iran Khodro*, *Saipa*, *Bahman Group*, *Kerman Motor* and *Pars Khodro* as the 5 leading automobile companies in Iran) helped authors

acquire first-hand knowledge about the companies and their brand engagement.

The examination of documents i.e. market analysis and studies and expert recommendations supplemented authors' knowledge prior to the interview rounds. The concepts and descriptions in the documents made it easier to understand the respondents.

The information documents were used intensively to prepare the interview guides. This enabled authors to inquire about interesting phenomena such as the brand engagements.

At the outset, authors selected both electronic and paper documents in automobile companies. Gradually other documents could be included during data collection.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1. First Step: Open Coding**

The open coding is done through comprehending an event, labeling or a continuous comparison. In fact, it is a process through which the concepts are acknowledged. The open coding stages include: analysis and coding, categories discovery, categories explanation based on their characteristics. In this research, the open coding is presented in two parts; primary and secondary. After collecting key notes and concepts, six categories & fourteen concepts were presented. We made an open coding of the interviews in

order to categorize the candidates. This led to depart from the interview transcripts, which read a couple of times individually or collectively. In the meantime, tape recordings were transcribed completely, which means that authors were able to see both interview questions and respondents' responses. This enabled us to compare individual statements with the context in which they took place and consequently to see which question or part of the conversation led to which answer. While reading the interview transcripts, we made codes/notes in the margin referring to the statements that assessed as important for the respondent's understanding of system development and the method application.

After coding interview transcripts, we started on the subsequent phase aiming to get a perspective on the coding made in the individual interviews. To this, we used a poster measuring 1½ x 1½ meters on which we transferred all the coding from each interview grouped under each respondent. We also gave each coding a number and marked these with a reference to the page number of the transcript. This measure made it easier for us to distinguish statements from different respondents. This measure also enabled us to find statements that we wanted to check or see in which context they could take place. It was also important to be able to trace conclusions back to the documentary analyses. This visual

recording of codes allowed us to identify the source of statements and simultaneously to view all of them at one place. This subsequently made it easier to find relationships between statements by different

respondents.

Table 1 shows extracted categories, concepts and codes through open coding and axial coding. For avoiding offer detailed of all codes, we present six categories with their

**Table1** Categories, Concepts, Codes extracted by Open Coding and Axial Coding

Categories	Concepts	Codes
Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)	Pre-Sale Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Conditions of sale</li> </ul>
	Post- Sale strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public relationship</li> <li>• Promotion strategies</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• After sale services</li> </ul>
Integrated Brand Communications (IBC)	Brand Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be commitment to promising</li> <li>• Corporate Competitive Advantage</li> <li>• Valuable key factors of customers</li> <li>• Essential difference of company with competent</li> </ul>
	Brand Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional characters of product</li> <li>• Functional characters of brand</li> <li>• Functional favorable of brand</li> <li>• Idealistic characters of employee</li> <li>• Idealistic characters of corporate</li> </ul>
	Brand Image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical display</li> <li>• Feeling display</li> <li>• Sentimental display</li> </ul>
Brand Equity	Perceived Value of Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship benefit of brand</li> <li>• Relationship quality of brand</li> </ul>
	Perception to Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perception of accuracy of brand information</li> <li>• perception of brand developing</li> <li>• perception of investing in advertising</li> </ul>
Customer Engagement	Loyalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptual</li> <li>• Behavioral</li> <li>• Perceptual and behavioral</li> </ul>
	Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived value</li> <li>• Customer expectations</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Engagement	Shareholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate social responsibility (CSR)</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Corporate image</li> </ul>
	Managers Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Truthfulness</li> <li>• Sympathy</li> <li>• Assurance</li> </ul>
	Employee Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting in career</li> <li>• Feeling of belonging to corporate</li> <li>• Contribution in corporate decisions</li> <li>• Clearance of corporate expectations</li> </ul>
Brand Engagement	Perceptual Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand identity</li> <li>• Brand personality</li> <li>• Perception to brand</li> <li>• Brand image</li> <li>• Perceived value of product</li> </ul>
	Behavioral Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shareholder engagement</li> <li>• Involvement of managers</li> <li>• Employee engagement</li> </ul>

properties (concepts and codes) in summary.

## **5.2. Second Step: Axial Coding**

The purpose of this stage is to set a relationship between the produced categories (at the open coding stage). This action is done based on the paradigm model, and helps theorist (theoretician) easily perform theory process. Communication process in axial coding is based on the expansion of one category (Danaee Fard, 2004:60), as what is chosen as axial category in this research.

Based on the codes, we proceeded in an exceedingly iterative process and created a range of categories, under which we could fit different meanings behind the codes. In practice, we made a new poster with the same dimensions as the first one, to which we transferred code numbers representing each individual statement. We used a new poster to categorize the individual coding into categories and subcategories.

In the first poster, we grouped the statements around the respondents to whom they belonged. The second poster was used to find the general relationships between many statements, and therefore we placed the codes from the supporting statements around the general relationships. Each code from the first poster with the respondents' statements was placed on the second poster indicating the respondent and the code number. The

indication was made in color assigned to the research question. This form of notation ensured that we subsequently could find the relationship with the respondent's statement in the source material for verification or to amplify the information about the context, in which the statement was made. To group similar statements, which appeared in the interviews, we placed the attached code number, respondent, and color alongside.

In connection with the transfer of codes, we placed codes that were related to each other or belonged to primary or subordinate categories in such a way that the relationship was indicated. In terms of grounded theory, we applied the paradigm modeling as an analytical tool to integrate the conditional context – structure- in which a category is situated with the sequences of (inter) action – processes – that pertain to a phenomenon. The work involved complicated analyses and interpretations, including frequent conversations, discussions and thorough examinations of e many statements and their contexts, and it led to many iterations and changes.

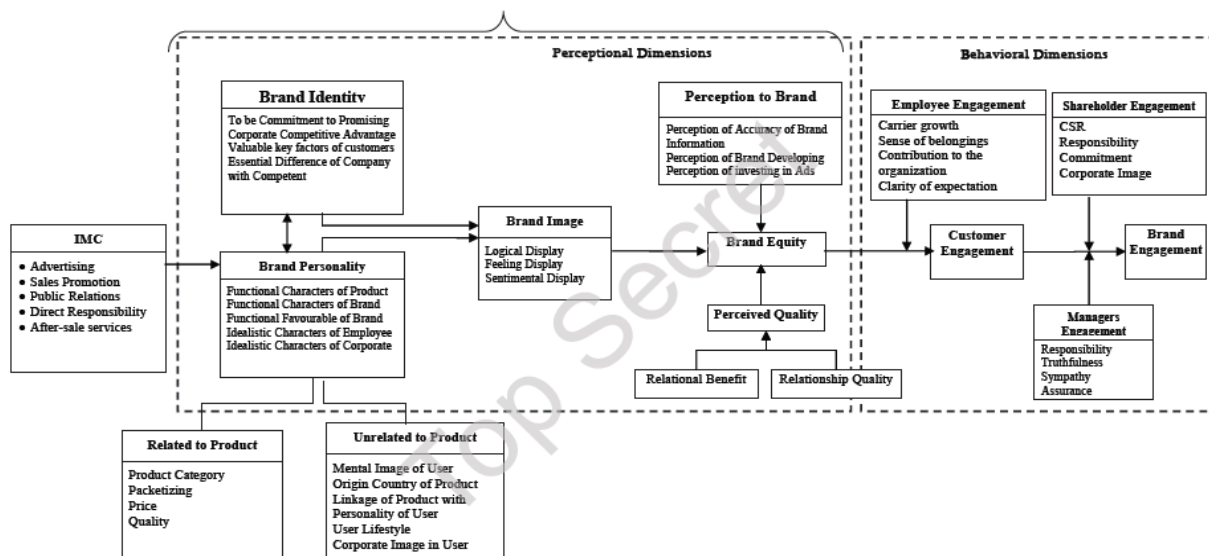
As a result, we achieved a visual picture of many codes grouped according to the content of statements. This enabled us to assess which statements we believed contributed to clarifying the importance of different categories. The results from the posters were

written down and grouped according to: 1) phenomena, 2) causes and contexts of the phenomena, 3) actions performed by persons under these conditions and 4) intended and unintended consequences of these actions. Thus, we produced a list of results derived from the texts. The axial coding based on paradigm model is shown in Figure 1.

**5.3. Third Step: Selective Coding** The selective coding is the main stage of theorizing, in a way that, it orderly connects

researchers try to create an image by aligning the categories and based on their relation. All the techniques in fundamental theorizing theory lead to a collected data-base. This is a middle-range theory, isolating descriptive and perceptual of a social process which has roots in inputs (data). This producing theory process can result in auditing ideas and cases to perform numerical research as well (Creswell, 2001).

In this research, the last part of the analysis



**Fig1** Axial Coding Paradigm Model-based (Picture of Complementary Model)

the axial category to other categories, proves it and corrects the categories which need more improvement and development. In fact, the

is based on the list describing partly the phenomena encountered in the interviews and partly the influence of the phenomena on the

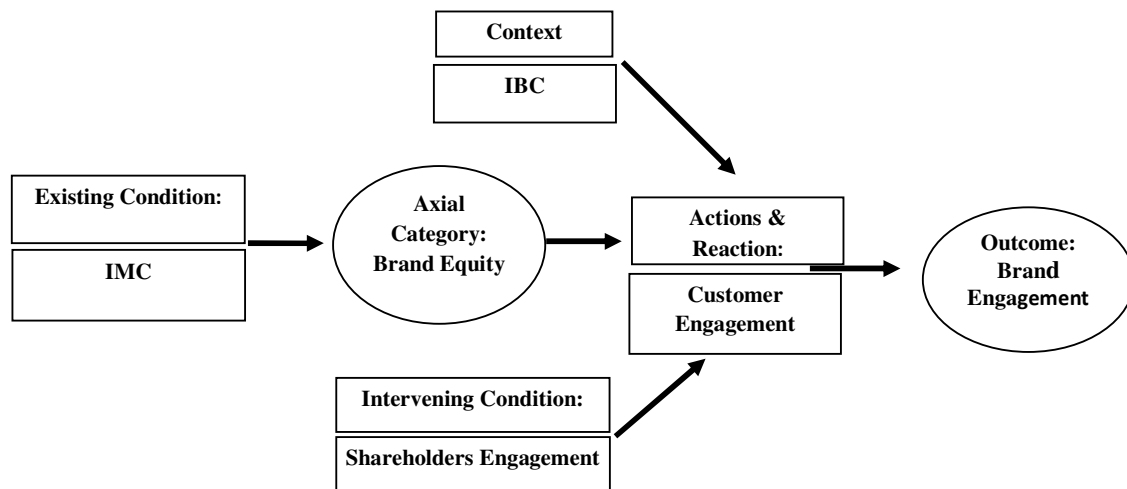
described the themes by means of related results. As each coding referred to a coding in the interview transcripts, we were able to recover the original interview quotations that led to the coding and use them in the description of the achieved results.

**5.3.1. Shaping IBE Theory: A Narrative Description**

Brand engagement relates to organization promises and how they are tied to individuals' act of free will, whether they are shareholders, managers, employees or customers. The motives for decision making are communication and loyalty, which are the most important aspect of brand engagement-a crucial step beyond the acceptance, ending in true and persistent commitment. However,

keeping and performing the promises is the critical factor to sustain this brand engagement process.

In Iranian business environment and particularly in automobile industry, due to transition from monopoly markets to competitive markets, the brand creation as a critical topic, needs relatively less time. Also, considering the fact that Iranian market is shifting to a competitive market, transition from a product oriented market to a brand oriented one is a necessity. It requires automobile companies to understand and adopt emerging marketing and branding concepts more and more. Figure 2 shows the Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) model which is extracted by grounded theory (GT) approach.



**Fig 2.** Integrated Brand Engagement (IBE) Theory

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to provide a framework of an integrated brand engagement based on fundamental conceptualization theory – which seems to be less known for Iranian researchers. It also consists of building a conceptual model for policy and decision makers in the Iranian automobile industry, to get prepared to enter into the global competitive markets.

In this research, sources such as: interviewing personnel, assessing (evaluating) documents and evidences, have been used in order to gather information (data). The time taken to collect the inputs (data) and reach the research theory is 10 months.

member check. Creating literature is central outcome of the grounded theory research.

Among three different research methodologies, analogous, analytical and inductive, the latter is rarely used in marketing and management studies. However, this study, using this methodology as well as the fundamental conceptualization theory, tries to model elements. The results are mostly based on the real data analysis which yields more reliable theory. Applying this strategy in the marketing and management leads to more validated results compare to other research methodologies. Providing this model which is based on the fundamental conceptualization theory and is conducted upon the real data (including experts and consumers of Iranian

**Table2** Categories and Elements of Paradigms Model

Research Categories	Elements of Paradigms Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual Conditions</li> <li>• Central Category</li> <li>• Context</li> <li>• Context</li> <li>• Actions &amp; Interactions</li> <li>• Consequence (Outcome)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications)</li> <li>• Brand Equity</li> <li>• IBC IMC (Integrated Brand Communications)</li> <li>• Shareholders Engagement</li> <li>• Customer Engagement</li> <li>• Brand Engagement</li> </ul>

The outputs (outcomes) of this research have been given to companies. Since the auditing method of this research has been "interview" and "coding of documents and interpretation", the derived categories were shown to interviewees to confirm the subject accuracy. The technique for verification of theory was

automobile industry), hopefully we will attract experts' attention more to the brand engagement.

In sum, we believe that the grounded theory that includes field studies and interpretation of documents is the best suited approach for the marketing research. In our case, it led to the invaluable results. The detailed description of

our approach and experiences would hopefully contribute to a further understanding of the method, which is a prerequisite for fruitfully applying it and inspiring other marketing in general and branding researchers in specific to take up the grounded theory as a marketing research method.

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## مفهوم سازی شناسه خواهی یکپارچه با استفاده از استراتژی تئوری مفهوم سازی بنیادی (مورد مطالعه صنعت خودروسازی ایران)

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هدف از مقاله حاضر ارائه مدل شناسه خواهی یکپارچه با رویکرد جهانی شدن بازار با استفاده از رویکرد تئوری مفهوم سازی بنیادی می باشد که در این تحقیق صنعت خودرو ایران به عنوان مورد انتخاب شده است.

هدف اصلی تحقیق حاضر ارائه و تدوین یک سیمایه منسجم و یکپارچه از شناسه خواهی بعنوان پارادایم سوم و نقشه راه در دهه جدید می باشد. که با در نظر گرفتن نقش استراتژیک موضوع تحقیق در بقاء شرکت ها با شناخت شناسه و مولفه های شناسه خواهی یکپارچه و متعقبات مفهوم سازی آن صاحبان صنایع خودروسازی قادر خواهند بود پیش بینی و تصمیم گیری بهتری را اتخاذ نمایند. در روش تحقیق حاضر به جای تمرکز بر رویکرد قیاسی از رویکرد استقرایی در تئوری سازی بهره می گیرد. اصل اساسی در این روش حرکت از سمت داده به سمت تئوری است. بر این اساس ضمن مرور کلی بر فرایند روش که سعی شده مفاهیم و مبانی نظری اصلی این روش تحقیق بیان شود، نتایج حاصل از بکارگیری این نوع روش تحقیق مبتنی بر تحقیق در حوزه مطالعات شناسه (برند) بررسی شده است که نهایتاً ماهیت شناسه خواهی یکپارچه و فرایند شکل گیری آن شناسایی شده و جایگاه هر یک از عناصر تشکیل دهنده الگوی شناسه خواهی در صنعت خودرو ایران در قالب مدلی ارائه شده است که در مدل استخراج شده استراتژی بازاریابی یکپارچه (شرایط شرطی)، ارزش ویژه عهد مشتریان (عملکرد و تعامل) و شناسه خواهی (برآمد) می باشند.

**واژگان کلیدی:** شناسه (برند)، شناسه خواهی، تئوری مفهوم سازی بنیادی داده، کدگذاری باز، محوری و انتخابی

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