CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents the summary of the thesis followed by the recommendations. The chapter also highlights the contribution of this research to knowledge and practice. Limitations and future directions are also explained. The chapter ends with the conclusion.

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Bangalore housing market is in the rise because of climatic advantages leading to best destination for education, health, employment and investment. Compared to other South Indian metropolises, Bangalore enjoys good growth indices in the residential sector. However, a snapshot survey by realty practitioners L.J. Hooker on the Bangalore real estate reveals that there are over 35% oversupplies of this apartment stock represents 77 per cent. The unsold inventory alone costs the builders of Rs. 65,411 crore and the financial burden of Rs. 1,000 crore a month during 2014. The sales velocity of new projects has come down leading to reduction in price. Significant increase in the inventory is putting pressure on builders(Siraj, 2014).

Though the market is recovering from the recession, other factors such as effectiveness of marketing communication of builders are necessary to be understood. Marketing communications consist of six broad categories of tools: personal selling, advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotions and interactive marketing. Many studies have
highlighted the added effectiveness of the promotion tools by synergy through of integrated marketing communication. Integrated marketing communications involves the coordination of all promotional Promotion (Communication) Place (Convenience) Product (Customer) Price (Cost) activities—media advertising, direct mail, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations—to produce a clear, unified, consistent and compelling customer-focused message about the organizations and its product. Nevertheless, execution of the IMC plan also requires an evaluation process to ensure the effectiveness of the effort. Usually the effectiveness is measured by two methods. One is the sales results for every rupee spent. The other method is an indirect evaluation in which the enhancement in brand equity is measured.

Since the selection of communications methods is subject to a variety of factors such as nature of the market, Nature of the product, Stage in the product life cycle, Price, and funds available for promotion, micro studies specific to the factors are required to understand the effectiveness of the promotion tools.

Brand awareness, Brand familiarity, brand likeability and product involvement are used in finding the effectiveness of the integrated marketing communication in this study. In theory, if a person is unfamiliar with a brand, the information they get from the marketing communication and should have a relatively strong influence on their attitude towards the brand.

The purpose of the study is to identify and analyze the integrated marketing communication strategies across several enterprises, societies & Government bodies engaged in the provision of housing and find the impact
of them in bringing a positive change in terms of their objectives, growth and new trends in the field of housing sector. This research aims to identify the applicability & usefulness of the current integrated marketing communication strategies that are used in marketing housing projects in Bangalore urban district. The study also suggests the various methods and strategies that will be more beneficial in the interest of both the users and providers.

Therefore, the research question for the study is framed as:

“Are the Integrated Marketing Communication Strategies for Housing Projects in Bangalore urban district effective?”

The following objectives were framed for the study:

- To analyze the influencing factors in formulating the integrated marketing communication strategies for housing projects in Bangalore urban district.
- To compare the different existing methods of integrated marketing communication strategies in marketing housing projects.
- To explore and analyze the innovative methods of integrated marketing communication strategies for marketing housing projects.
- To study the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication strategies of different housing projects providers in Bangalore urban district.
- To compare the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication strategies of different housing projects providers in Bangalore urban district.
To suggest methods to implement effective integrated marketing communication strategies by housing projects providers.

The scope of the study is set to study the housing projects in the geographical jurisdiction of Bangalore urban district. The study covers the integrated marketing communication strategies of different players in housing sector. The study covers the importance, methods and effectiveness of integrated marketing communication strategies in marketing housing projects.

The research is designed to test the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication for the housing projects done by the builders. The effectiveness is measured in terms of whether the marketing communication through various promotion tools has reached the consumer and has created familiarity, liking and involvement towards the brand. An ex-post facto or descriptive study is done. The method of research utilised in a descriptive study is usually the survey method. The unit of analysis is individual consumers. Population for the study is defined by the capacity to buy a house. Using the price to annual income ratio of around 3.5, a household with an annual income of Rs 3.5 Lakhs is considered potential to buy a house. This roughly means that a person who is in the income tax bracket. There are around 4.5 lakhs income tax payers in Bangalore district. Sampling frameworks is created using email database that is validated and updated until April 2014 with details about taxpayers, residing in Bangalore urban district. The sample size required for the study was calculated as 1280. Considering a low response rates for e-mail survey, the questionnaire was sent to 15000 people randomly selected from the email database.

A pretested, structured instrument was used for measuring the response. To maximise the probability of response rate in an email
Tailored Design Method (TDM) proposed by Dillman (2007) was used. It also provides a systematic procedure for survey implementation. The survey instrument was developed by adopting standard scales for brand recall, Brand recognition, involvement, brand familiarity and brand likeability. The exposure and experience of the promotional tools were listed from various sources and the scale measuring the frequency of exposure to the promotional tool of a particular brand was included. Demography details of the respondent such as Age, Gender, Education, Occupation and Income are also measured. The questionnaire is validated in various stages. Content validity was evaluated by topic expert, academicians and language experts. At the last stage, a pilot test was conducted. The examination of the pilot study demonstrated a good response to the questions and utilization of the scale. The questionnaire was designed with proper sections that had briefing about the concept being measured and the instructions for filling the questionnaire.

The link to the questionnaire was emailed to the respondent as per schedule. The survey routine was carried out for a period of five months. Finally, there were 1413 responses received. The responses are collected in a spreadsheet. From the Spreadsheet the data is coded and imported to Statistical software ‘SPSS’. Thirty-nine responses were found incomplete and unusable. After data preparation, the final tally of responses that are suitable for data analysis was found to be 1374. The multiple items that measure a single concept such as Advertisement, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Publicity, Personal Selling, Interactive Marketing, Brand Awareness, Brand Recognition, Brand Recall, Brand Image, Familiarity, Brand Likeability and Involvement are categorised and computed by aggregating them into a new variable.
The conceptual model for the study shows the effectiveness of the promotional tools is measured by its influence on the brand awareness, familiarity and likeability. Familiarity is calculated by the Q-score and the synergy is tested by the interaction effect of promotional tools on brand outcomes.

6.1.1 Summary of Findings

The first real estate brand that was recollected by the respondents were Mantri, Sobha, Prestige, Purvankara and Salarpuria. Among all the brands, Mantri, Sobha and prestige were the most recognizable brand in real estate industry of Bangalore. Twenty brands were randomly presented to the respondents. On the frequency of seeing the brand, there was almost equal number of respondents in each category between very often to never. This shows that the brands presented during the study had range of familiarity to enable the study to correlate with the marketing communication efforts.

The brand awareness of the presented brands was little above the average. Many respondents agreed that they know about the company. Majority of the respondents agreed that they can recognize the brand among other brands, are aware of the brand and know about the brand.

The measures of brand image revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that some characteristics of the brand come to their mind quickly and they can quickly recall the symbol or logo of the company. Little less than half of the respondents agreed that the brand has a strong personality, have a clear impression of the type of people who bought the brand and the brand has a strong image.
The respondent’s exposure to the various advertisements of the presented brand was measured. The results show that the respondents have seen newspaper, classified, magazine and billboards of the brand very often. Majority of respondents have been exposed to radio, television, transit ads, wall painting, lamppost and tree ads, and digital & neon signs often. Posters, Point of sales, cinema ads and slides are sometimes seen.

The study revealed that cash refund offers, price packs, premiums are often seen. Gifts, sweepstakes, contest, games and patronage rewards are sometimes seen. Sales promotion using point of purchase is seldom seen.

Under personal selling, majority of the respondents have often seen fairs and trade shows. Majority of them said that they have heard of site visits by the company. Sales calls and visit by sales persons were sometimes seen.

In the direct marketing activities, the study found that many respondents have come across direct mailers, newspaper inserts and catalogues of the presented brand often. Majority said that they had telemarketing of the brand sometime.

The study found that in interactive marketing, Search engine marketing and social networking was often seen by majority of respondents. Other interactive tools such as email, banner, blogging, pop ups, mobile apps, banners pop ups were seen sometimes by majority of the respondents.

The study shows that more than half of the respondents have often seen the media sponsors, event sponsors, public utilities and media
Almost half of the respondents reported that they have often come across social responsibility activities of the builders.

On an average, involvement of the respondents on the brands was found high. This is revealed by their interest in reading about the product, paying attention to the ads more, looking for more information talk about the brand with others, seek advice and spending time in choosing. Majority of the respondents agreed that they have compared the product characteristics, found difference in brands, would always look for best brands.

The likeability measures reveal that the majority of the respondents felt the brand exciting, appealing, fascinating, involving, clear, pleasant and meaningful. Majority of the respondents have average in liking in terms of importance, relevance, creative, warm and realistic. On negative feelings of likeability such as boring, means nothing, worthless and not needed, majority of the respondents scored low meaning that the likeability was positive. Many were neutral that the brand is entertaining.

The reliability of reflective constructs; brand awareness, brand image, personal involvement inventory and brand liking are found to be above the threshold level.

The calculation of Q-Score for familiarity of the housing brand revealed that Mantri, Sobha, Prestige, Purvankara and Brigade are having good familiarity among the twenty brands tested. Windsor, Mahaveer, RMZ, Embassy and Godrej have the least familiarity among the twenty brands tested.
Comparing the various tools used for marketing communication in the housing projects, the study shows that respondents are exposed to more public relations followed by advertisement and direct marketing. Exposure to Personal selling and sales promotions were found next. There was little exposure to interactive marketing compared to other tools. This may be because of the degree of use of internet and computers.

Before testing the hypotheses using inferential statistics, since the respondents were exposed to twenty different brands, it was ensured that the variables measured across the brands were not significantly different. All the responses are held in one group or further analysis such as regression and two way ANOVA.

The regression test to find how the promotion tools individually influence the brand awareness reveals that all the promotion tools have significant influence on the brand awareness. Comparison of the regression models reveal that advertisement predicts the change in brand awareness more followed by public relations and personal selling.

The individual influence of promotional tools on brand image is tested through regression analysis and the results reveal that public relations affect the brand image more followed by advertisement. Sales promotion and public relations were found to influence involvement of the consumer towards the brand more. Public relations were found to influence the brand likeability more. This was followed by sales promotion and personal selling.

Simultaneous effect of the promotional tools on brand awareness is analysed using regression. The results showed that all the promotion tools
have impact on the brand awareness. This means that each tool adds to the brand awareness.

Effect of promotional tools on brand image is analysed using regression. The results revealed that except for personal selling, other promotional tools have influence on the brand image. Advertisement and public relations were found to influence involvement. Advertisement, sales promotion and public relations were found to influence brand likeability. This shows that the individual influence is altered when the promotion tools are used together.

To verify the synergic effect of the promotion tools, interaction effect is analysed using the two-way ANOVA. Before that, the correlation between brand awareness, brand image, involvement and likeability is established. The correlations were good and significant. Since the study uses six independent variables, the interaction effect can be modelled as two, three, four, five and six way interactions. This study will only test two-way and the six-way interaction effects. GLM procedure in SPSS allows only up to five-way interaction. Therefore, GLM procedure is used for two-way interaction and regression with product of six independent variables is used for six-way interaction affect.

To find the one to one interaction of the promotional tools a Two-way ANOVA with interaction effect is done by GLM technique in SPSS. The results of two-way interaction effect of promotional tools on brand awareness show that for the interaction of advertisement and Public relations, between direct marketing and interactive marketing, between sales promotion and direct marketing, and between sales promotion and public relations do not have an influence on brand awareness. Except for
the mentioned relations, other interactions have an influence on the brand awareness.

The results of two-way interaction effect of promotional tools on brand image show that sales promotion, public relations, the interaction of advertisement and Public relations, between advertisement and sales promotion do not have a significant influence on brand image.

Similarly, interaction between direct marketing and interaction marketing, between sales promotion and direct marketing and between sales promotion and public relations do not have a significant influence on brand image. Except for the mentioned relations, other interactions have an influence on the brand image.

The results of two-way interaction effects of promotional tools on involvement show that only interactive marketing, public relations, the interaction of advertisement and sales promotion, have a significant influence on involvement. Except the mention variables, other variables and interactions do not have an influence on involvement.

The results of the two-way interaction effect of promotional tools on likeability show that personal selling, direct marketing and interactive marketing do not have significance on the likeability. The interaction of direct marketing and interaction marketing, between sales promotions and direct marketing, between personal selling and interactive marketing do not have significance on the likeability. Similarly, interaction between sales promotion and interaction marketing and between sales promotion and public relations do not have influence on likeability. Except
for the mentioned relations, other interactions have an influence on the likeability.

Six-way interaction effect to test the synergy of all promotion tools together on brand awareness reveal that the synergy has can influence on the brand awareness. Therefore, apart from the individual and simultaneous effect, when the messages across the tools are consistent, the synergy will create more brand awareness.

The interaction effect of all the promotion tools on brand image is analysed using regression. The results show that the synergy has influence on brand image and adds to the individual and simultaneous effect. However, comparing its effect on brand awareness, the results show that the effect is more on brand awareness than the brand image.

The interaction effect to test the synergy of all promotion tools together on brand likeability reveal that the synergy has can influence on the brand likeability. Therefore, apart from the individual and simultaneous effect, when the messages across the tools are consistent, the synergy will create more brand liking. However, comparing its effect on brand awareness and brand image, the results show that the effect is less than brand awareness and brand image.

The interaction effect of all the promotion tools on involvement is analysed using regression. The results show that the synergy does not have an influence on involvement. However, the tools independently create involvement, their synergy does not add to the involvement.
The difference in the study factors such as brand awareness, brand image, personal involvement, brand likeability and exposure to the promotional tools among the various demography characteristics were tested using one-way ANOVA. The results reveal that there is difference in responses among the different age groups, educational levels, occupation, income level and gender.

Among the different age group, Interactive marketing was found to be different. Except for advertisement and sales promotion all other factors varied among the respondents of different educational background. All the factors varied among the respondents of different occupation. For respondents of different income level, sales promotion, personal selling, interactive marketing, involvement were found to be different. Among the gender, the results show that personal selling and interactive marketing are different.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS

We live in an age that is driven by information and technological breakthroughs. Consumers today have access to more information and are able to compare before buying decisions. Homebuyers have become more experienced and perceptive, and have learned to decode real estate advertisements and buzzwords.“Cosy” and “charming” for example have become synonymous with “small” to most potential homebuyers. Neuroscientists say that modern technology is changing the way our brains work. Therefore, the concepts such as AIDA need to be revisited to understand the how marketing communication can effectively work. In addition, marketing communications in the technological age not
only use the technology to reach the consumers effectively but also need to be reflecting the way consumers think.

The outcome of the study recommends that the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication is not by the synergy of the entire range of promotion tool but precisely choosing the combination of the tools. The choice needs to be based on the product. Housing products are high priced and decisions are many times lifetime oriented. Consumers consider many factors in buying decision and marketing communication need to be strategic to convince to buy the product from their company. This means that builders need to understand what to communicate so that it creates an attention. In addition, mass communication messages are short and should be mainly used as a tool for awareness, reminder. Personal communication tools are effective in creating the closeness of the brand with the consumers. Therefore, for creating brand likeability, and brand involvement, builders should use the personal communication tools. However, the synergy of the marketing communication is first due to the consistency of the message whereby consumer is able to track the same message across the media and effectiveness is due to the combination of personal and impersonal communication tools.

Interactive marketing as a personal communication tools is becoming popular because it is capable of provide a varying digital content. Today almost 70 percent of potential homebuyers look for homes online; and almost 40 percent look at advertisements in newspapers and other publications. As the popular notation, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Online advertisements are recommended to including at least six photographs. Photographs are useful in highlighting positive features of the house. Other media use animated or architectural drawing for presenting the
picture. Interactive online media is helpful in creating virtual tour of the home; giving potential buyers a 360-degree view of the home. Being personal tool it is required to entice the customers to visit it in person. This requires the IMC to include the web address for the online listing in the print ad to attract buyers.

### 6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Earlier studies have found the effectiveness of promotional tools and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and their impact on various marketing concepts has already been tested in other sectors. However, promotion mix under the marketing mix will be influenced by other tools such as product, price and place. Therefore, there is a need for micro studies to test the effect of marketing communication in the context of product difference, price levels, demand and availability. This research attempts to investigate in such a context of housing projects. The study contributes to the knowledge on what is the effect of promotion tools on branding of builders. The study also contributes to the knowledge on the synergy of the promotional tools on branding of builders.

Luck and Moffatt (2009) reviewed many definitions on IMC. They conclude that IMC is a clear and consistent image, or positioning strategy across all marketing communication, or speaking with a single voice. Earlier researches argue that synergy is a primary benefit of IMC. The central principle of IMC is that each communication medium enhances the contribution of all other media. IMC explains that whole is being greater than the sum of all parts and the strengths of one are used to offset the weaknesses of others. However, the outcome of the study highlight that certain promotional tools have an insignificant effect. Knowing the
weakness of a tool and still having it in the mix will only moderate. It will not synergise the effect. Therefore, IMC not only means the consistency of the message across the various marketing communication, but also identifying the tools that can reach the consumers effectively in terms of coverage and then identifying which tools can overlap the communication and provide the synergy.

They argued that defining IMC from this perspective is very narrow. Strategic brand consistency exists when a brand does what it says, from the customer’s perspective. What the brand says and what it does are reinforced by what others say about it. Therefore, a market orientation and external focus play a prominent role in brand equity (Luck and Moffatt, 2009)

6.4 CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

The contribution of this research to the practice adds value to thesis. The study reiterates that not only quantifiable marketing communications is important also a synchronized consumer centric media platform is necessary for effective marketing of housing projects. The study identifies the promotional tools that are effective for housing projects and recommends that the integrated marketing communication need to combine impersonal and personal communication tools for more effect. This is evident from Schultz (2006) who argued the consumer controlled integration and synergy is important. Integration and synergy come from media consumption by the consumer, and not the media distributed by the marketer. Similar to Duncan and Moriarty (1998) this study also reiterates that customers and other stakeholders automatically integrate brand messages. Marketers must decide whether to relinquish this
integration or manage it. Therefore, in practice it is important that successful integration is required for synergy.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like any other research, this study too, has certain limitations. The limitations of this study can be summarised in two categories: One on the scope of this thesis in terms of concepts and theories and the other in terms of research methodology. Certain limitations on the scope of the study are provided as opportunities for future research.

Geographically, the study is limited to the urban district of the Bangalore city. The area is chosen because of the real estate growth and the presence of major builders. A social concern on housing projects is to provide low cost homes to the lower income group and is largely supported by government schemes. Due to this, marketing strategies of the low cost housing projects are different. This study does not consider low cost housing projects. Commercial ventures targeting medium and high-income groups that are heavily marketed are the scope of the study.

On the research approach, the main limitation is being cross sectional study. The study does not look at the changes in the market demand, the reasons and the adaptation of marketing strategies. The time-period of the study is focused on the immediate effect after the first economic recession of the twenty first century in 2008. However, the study does not control the environmental factors that can influence the marketing strategies. The variables of the study are selected based on extent of available literature. The promotional tools are equally selected from both mass impersonal and individual personal promotional tools.
There are a few methodological limitations for the study. The effectiveness of promotional tools for a single brand will limit the generalisation and render the study worthless. Instead of focusing on a single brand, if the research focuses on the concept alone and is brand neutral, does not help the respondents to think under a context. Specific information will be lost and the details will be averaged. Therefore, the study focuses on the top 20 brands and the responses are stratified and randomised automatically during the web survey. For the validity of the stratified response, equality of the measures between the 20 groups is tested using ANOVA and ensured that there is no bias. The survey is done using online method. As online surveys are prone to low response rates, for collecting adequate responses, the survey was sent to large number of email addresses and was extended for a longer period.

6.6 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Housing projects are unique product that can be looked as necessity, asset, or an investment and are high priced that requires lifetime earning to buy. The choice of the product depends on suitability, affordability, and adequacy. Housing projects have marketing strategies different from other products. Housing projects will have to have efficient promotion tools to convince the consumer in a complex buying situation. This research has looked at the effectiveness of IMC over the individual promotion tools on housing brands. However, IMC is not just integration of advertising and promotional activities. Luck and Moffatt (2009) argued that IMC strategies need to be focused beyond the integration and branding. They identified seven key themes that are interdependent and linked through strategic communication. They include communication, branding, relationship management, cross-functional planning, integration, synergy and market orientation. This study mainly focused on integration, synergy,
communication and branding. Relationship management, cross-functional planning and market orientation were not considered. Future studies can look at how IMC effectiveness can be improved by relationship management, cross-functional planning and market orientation.

Schultz and Schultz, (1998) proposed that marketing activities in twenty-first century will be customer centric because of information technology. Information technology has enabled customers today to access information, purchase products and services anywhere, anytime. Customers are can also decide what constitutes value and what relationships are important, needed, and wanted. Therefore, IMC perspective in terms of Information technology usage by marketers and customers need to be researched. Though this research investigated the interactive marketing as one of the promotion tool and how it synergies other promotional tools, research focusing exclusively on the impact of information technology on IMC will be a future proposition.

6.7 CONCLUSIONS

For housing projects in Bangalore Urban district, newspapers carry huge advertisements of various housing projects. This lead to the research question if the promotional tools have an effect and if the integrated marketing communication (IMC) will have more effect on the sales of housing project. The results show that IMC certainly have more effect on the housing brands. However, the synergy is created by a few promotional tools only. Thus the study provides a direction for marketing of housing projects and provides suggestions for improving the effect of integrated marketing communication strategies to the housing projects marketers.