ABSTRACT

Bangalore housing market is in the rise because of climatic advantages leading to best destination for education, health, employment and investment. However, studies show that there are oversupplies of houses. Significant increase in the inventory is putting pressure on builders. Though the external factors are improving, other factors such as effectiveness of marketing communication of builders’ are necessary for growth of the sector. Many studies have highlighted the added effectiveness of the promotion tools by synergy through of integrated marketing communication. 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 such as this focusing on specific sector are required.

The research is designed to test the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication for the housing projects done by the builders in Bangalore urban district. The effectiveness is measured in terms of whether the marketing communication through various promotion tools has reached the consumer and has created awareness, familiarity, liking and involvement towards the brand. 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. This roughly means that a person who is in the income tax
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 survey Tailored Design Method (TDM) proposed by Dillman (2007) was used. 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 and finally designed professionally. An online version of the questionnaire was also developed and distributed through email. The survey routine was carried out for a period of five months. Finally, there were 1413 responses received. After data preparation, the final tally of responses that are suitable for data analysis was found to be 1374.

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.

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.
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.

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. Being a cross sectional study, restricting to one geographical area, not controlling the environmental factors that can influence the marketing strategies, variables selected based on extant of available literature are some methodological limitations. The effectiveness of promotional tools is studied by focusing on the top 20 brands. Online surveys pose risk of low response rates; therefore, the survey was sent to large number of email addresses and was extended for a longer period. 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.