

Perception of Users Towards IMC Strategies in the Real Estate Sector with Reference to Palakkad District

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ABSTRACT:

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is a deliberate strategy that integrates many communication methods and channels to effectively deliver a consistent message to a specific target groups, with the goal of efficiently achieving marketing objectives. This study investigates users' perception of IMC strategies in the real estate sector, focusing on Palakkad District. Using a descriptive research methodology, data was collected from 200 respondents through standardised questionnaires and analysed using percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, and one-way ANOVA. Findings reveal that most respondents are female, aged between 25-34 years, located in south India, with higher secondary education, and earning a monthly household income of Rs.20,001-Rs.50,000. Various IMC tools, such as email marketing, social media platforms, real estate websites, direct marketing, CRM software, print advertising, and mobile applications, were assessed for effectiveness, with social media marketing receiving the highest satisfaction ratings. Factors influencing the usage of IMC strategies include cost-effectiveness, consistency in messaging, flexibility, alignment with target audience preferences, and competitive pressure. Overall, users express satisfaction with the impact of IMC strategies in the real estate sector, particularly in reaching potential buyers or tenants and generating leads. This study contributes to understand the user perceptions and preferences regarding IMC strategies in the real estate sector, offering insights for practitioners and researchers alike.

Keywords: IMC, Real Estate Sector and User Perception

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Introduction

The Indian real estate market is experiencing a 30% growth rate, particularly in Tier II and Tier

III cities [1]. This growth can be attributed to factors such as the increase in the middle class population, investments from Non-Resident

Indians, Foreign Direct Investment, expansion of multinational corporations, establishment of educational institutions, growth of IT, BPO, food processing, and healthcare sectors, and rising middle-class income[2].

In the current dynamic business landscape, marketing has undergone substantial changes, requiring brands to embrace a holistic strategy that integrates many communication channels to effectively express a cohesive message [3]. IMC seeks to unify all marketing communication efforts in order to create a coherent brand experience for consumers [4]. IMC is the deliberate and coordinated management of several promotional elements to efficiently convey a consistent message across numerous communication channels.

The core of IMC is the concept of synergy, where each marketing communication element collaborates to strengthen the brand's value proposition and foster significant connections with consumers [5]. IMC planners and strategists develop marketing information systems to promote a comprehensive understanding of brand perceptions, facilitate prompt communication with consumers, and enable a deep understanding of competitive brand activity [7].

Studying how customers perceive IMC techniques in the real estate industry offers useful information that can guide marketing strategies and improve the effectiveness of communication efforts [8]. By understanding user attitudes, interests, and behaviours, real estate professionals can customize their IMC strategies to effectively connect with their intended audience, leading to increased engagement, trust establishment, and long-lasting relationships in a highly competitive environment [9].

Statement Of The Problem

The incorporation of information technology into real estate companies is anticipated to enhance efficiency and operational effectiveness [10]. The utilization of the internet can impact the real estate industry by facilitating the

connection between sellers and purchasers, hence eliminating the need for intermediaries and improving overall efficiency and speed [11]. Efficient marketing communication tools are essential for the success of a firm. Real estate companies must employ effective promotional strategies to convey information about their products or brands to potential customers. Regular assessment of the effectiveness of IMC tools is essential for achieving optimal sales performance, market volume, and market share [12] [13].

A considerable number of businesses in country acknowledge the significance of utilizing digital marketing to establish meaningful relationships with their customers [14]. This study evaluates the way customers perceive the IMC approach implemented by real estate companies in Palakkad District. It aims to enhance the understanding of how the promotional impacts sales performance and assists managers in effectively allocating their financial resources. The research inquiries should focus on the fundamental aim of the investigation.

- What are the different types of IMC tools used in real estate marketing?
- How many factors influence the use of IMC strategies in the real estate sector?
- What is the level of satisfaction in using the IMC tools for real estate marketing?

Objectives Of The Study

- To identify various tools used in real estate marketing communication.
- To analyse the factors that influence the use of IMC strategies in real estate sector.
- To measure the respondents' satisfaction level in using the IMC tools for real estate marketing.

Scope Of The Study

The study focuses specifically on Palakkad District in Kerala, India. This geographical limitation allows for a localised examination of

consumer perceptions within a distinct market environment. The primary objective is to understand how consumers in Palakkad District perceive IMC strategies employed by real estate firms. This includes assessing their awareness levels, attitudes towards various communication channels, and the effectiveness of messaging in influencing their decision-making process.

Research Methodology

Type of research:

The study is descriptive, with the objective of examining users' perceptions of IMC strategies in the Palakkad District. Descriptive research enables a thorough analysis of the fundamental components, factors influencing usage, and satisfaction elements relevant to the study goals.

Data Collection Source:

Primary data: The main data were gathered by administering standardised questionnaires to respondents in Palakkad district.

Secondary data: Secondary data has been obtained from reliable sources, scholarly publications, and industry reports. This data provides further background, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence to substantiate the conclusions and analyses obtained from the source data.

Sampling Method: Simple random sampling method has been used for the study.

Sample Size: A total of 240 samples were approached and out of the same 201 were considered to be valid and it was rounded off to 200 and thus the sample size of the study is 200.

Tools used for analysis: Percentage analysis, descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	86	43.0
	Female	114	57.0
Age	18-24 years	51	25.5
	25-34 years	90	45.0
	35-44 years	42	21.0
	45-54 years	11	5.5
	Above 55 years	6	3.0
Location	North India	47	23.5
	South India	90	45.0
	East India	50	25.0
	West India	8	4.0
	Central India	5	2.5
Education Level	Primary School	43	21.5
	Higher Secondary	95	47.5
	Bachelor's Degree	45	22.5
	Master's Degree	11	5.5
	Professional Degree	6	3.0
Marital status	Married	65	32.5
	Unmarried	135	67.5

Employment Status	Employed	54	27.0
	Self-employed	85	42.5
	Unemployed	41	20.5
	Student	14	7.0
	Others	6	3.0
Monthly Household Income	Less than 20,000	66	33.0
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 50,000	77	38.5
	Rs. 50,001 - 1,00,000	29	14.5
	Rs.1,00,001 - 2,00,000	20	10.0
	More than 2,00,000	8	4.0
Total		200	100.0

The above table provides demographic information about the sample population of 200 respondents. The sample is fairly balanced in terms of gender, with 57% female and 43% male respondents. The majority of respondents fall within the 25-34 age range (45%), followed by 18-24 years (25.5%) and 35-44 years (21%). Older age groups (45-54 years and above 55 years) represent a smaller portion of the sample. South India has the highest representation in the sample (45%), followed by East India (25%) and North India (23.5%). West India and Central India have lower representation (4% and 2.5% respectively). Higher secondary education is the most

common level of education (47.5%), followed by a bachelor's degree (22.5%) and primary school (21.5%). Master's degree and professional degree holders constitute smaller proportions of the sample. The majority of respondents are unmarried (67.5%), while 32.5% are married. The largest proportion of respondents are self-employed (42.5%), followed by employed (27%) and unemployed (20.5%). A smaller portion are students (7%) or fall into the "others" category (3%). The most common income bracket is Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 50,000 (38.5%), followed by less than Rs. 20,000 (33%). Higher-income brackets (Rs. 50,001 - 1,00,000 and above) represent smaller sample proportions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for various tools used in real estate communication strategy

	N	Mean	SD
Email Marketing	200	2.14	1.145
Social Media Platforms	200	2.47	1.022
Real Estate Websites and Portals (e.g., Zillow, Realtor.com)	200	2.41	1.085
Direct Marketing	200	2.31	.974
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software	200	2.35	1.012
Print Advertising (e.g., Newspaper Ads, Magazines)	200	2.32	1.015
Mobile Applications for Property Search and Communication	200	2.43	1.158

Respondents rated email marketing at 2.14 indicating moderate variability in ratings. The mean rating for social media platforms is 2.47, suggesting slightly higher perceived effectiveness than email marketing, with relatively low variability in ratings. The mean rating for real

estate websites and portals is 2.41, indicating moderate effectiveness and variability in ratings. Respondents rated direct marketing at 2.31 on average, suggesting moderate effectiveness and relatively low variability in ratings. The mean rating for CRM software indicates moderate

effectiveness and variability in ratings. Print advertising received an average rating of 2.32, suggesting moderate effectiveness and variability in ratings like other communication tools. The

mean rating for mobile applications indicates moderate variability in ratings, with slightly higher perceived effectiveness compared to some other tools.

Table 3 Comparison between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and various tools used in real estate communication strategy

Ho1: There is a significant difference between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and various tools used in real estate communication strategy

Demographic variables	Particulars	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Employment Status	Employed	54	2.32	0.503	.384	.820
	Self-employed	85	2.34	0.619		
	Unemployed	41	2.36	0.650		
	Student	14	2.52	0.658		
	Others	6	2.21	0.933		
	Total	200	2.35	0.606		
Monthly Household Income	Less than 20,000	66	2.13	0.527	9.856	.000
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 50,000	77	2.29	0.541		
	Rs. 50,001 - 1,00,000	29	2.57	0.561		
	Rs.1,00,001 - 2,00,000	20	2.96	0.665		
	More than 2,00,000	8	2.34	0.675		
	Total	200	2.35	0.606		

The study found a significant difference (0.820) in employment status among respondents and various tools used in real estate communication strategy, while no significant difference (0.000) was found between the monthly household income and these strategies.

Monthly household income

The survey indicates that respondents with monthly income ranging from Rs.20,000 to Rs.2,00,000 are in agreement with the use of various tools in the real estate sector.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Factors influencing the use of IMC Strategies in Real Estate Sector

Particulars	N	Mean	SD
Cost-effectiveness of IMC	200	2.52	1.203
Consistency in messaging across various communication channels (e.g., online, offline)	200	2.49	1.143
Flexibility in adapting to changing market trends and consumer preferences	200	2.30	1.206
Integration of digital marketing tools with traditional marketing methods	200	2.37	1.258
Alignment with the target audience's preferences for receiving information about real estate properties	200	2.26	1.170
Ability to create a cohesive brand image and identity across all marketing channels	200	2.29	1.151

Availability of resources (e.g., skilled personnel, budget) to implement and maintain an IMC strategy effectively	200	2.13	1.249
Competitive pressure and the need to differentiate from other real estate firms through effective communication strategies	200	2.25	.981
Valid N (listwise)	200		

The above table indicates that the respondents agree with cost-effectiveness of IMC (2.52), consistency in messaging across various communication channels (e.g., online, offline) (2.49), flexibility in adapting to changing market trends and consumer preferences (2.30), integrating digital marketing tools with traditional marketing methods (2.37), align with the target audience's preferences for receiving information about real estate properties (2.26),

ability to create a cohesive brand image and identity across all marketing channels (2.29), availability of resources (e.g., skilled personnel, budget) to implement and maintain an effective IMC strategy (2.13) and competitive pressure and the need to differentiate from other real estate firms through effective communication strategies (2.25) influencing the use of IMC strategies in real estate sector.

Table 5 Comparison between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and the factors influencing the use of IMC strategies in real estate sector

Ho2: There is a significant difference between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and the factors influencing the use of IMC strategies in real estate sector.

Demographic variables	Particulars	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Employment Status	Employed	54	2.42	0.670	.714	.584
	Self-employed	85	2.31	0.692		
	Unemployed	41	2.20	0.603		
	Student	14	2.36	0.740		
	Others	6	2.48	0.597		
	Total	200	2.33	0.668		
Monthly Household Income	Less than 20,000	66	2.20	0.601	2.730	.030
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 50,000	77	2.32	0.646		
	Rs. 50,001 - 1,00,000	29	2.32	0.783		
	Rs.1,00,001 - 2,00,000	20	2.73	0.663		
	More than 2,00,000	8	2.52	0.699		
	Total	200	2.33	0.668		

The study found a significant difference (0.584) between respondents' employment status and factors influencing the use of IMC strategies in the real estate sector, but no significant

difference (p-value = 0.030) was found between respondents' monthly household income and these factors.

Monthly household income

The study found that factors influencing the use of IMC strategies in the real estate sector are

agreed upon by respondents with monthly income ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 2,00,000.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics for Level of Satisfaction in using IMC Tools

Particulars	N	Mean	SD
Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) in reaching potential buyers or tenants	200	1.98	1.171
Impact of Email Marketing campaigns in generating leads or inquiries for real estate properties	200	2.00	1.020
User Engagement on Real Estate Websites and Portals (e.g., Zillow, Realtor.com) for property listings or searches	200	2.34	.926
Effectiveness of Direct Marketing campaigns in promoting real estate properties or services	200	2.24	1.075
Convenience and Accessibility of Mobile Applications for property search and communication with real estate agents or property managers	200	2.27	1.180
Value provided by Podcasts or Webinars offering insights and updates on real estate market trends and investment opportunities	200	2.33	1.311
Responsiveness and Support received through Live Chat services on real estate websites or applications	200	2.37	1.170
Valid N (listwise)	200		

These descriptive statistics provide insights into the level of satisfaction among users regarding various IMC tools in the real estate industry. The above table indicates that the respondents are highly satisfied with the effectiveness of social media marketing in reaching potential buyers or tenants (1.98). The respondents are satisfied with the impact of email marketing campaigns in generating leads or inquiries for real estate properties (2.00), user engagement on real estate websites and portals (e.g., Zillow, Realtor.com) for property listings or searches (2.34),

effectiveness of direct marketing campaigns in promoting real estate properties or services (2.24), convenience and accessibility of mobile applications for property search and communication with real estate agents or property managers (2.27), value provided by podcasts or webinars offering insights and updates on real estate market trends and investment opportunities (2.33) and responsiveness and support received through live chat services on real estate websites or applications (2.37).

Table 7 Comparison between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and the level of satisfaction in using IMC Tools

Ho3: There is a significant difference between the demographic variables (employment status, monthly household income) of the respondents and the level of satisfaction in using IMC tools.

Demographic variables	Particulars	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Employment Status	Employed	54	2.15	0.663	.263	.901
	Self-employed	85	2.26	0.649		
	Unemployed	41	2.22	0.666		
	Student	14	2.26	0.749		
	Others	6	2.12	0.746		

	Total	200	2.22	0.661		
Monthly Household Income	Less than 20,000	66	2.14	0.665	1.810	.129
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 50,000	77	2.14	0.623		
	Rs. 50,001 - 1,00,000	29	2.34	0.683		
	Rs.1,00,001 - 2,00,000	20	2.47	0.700		
	More than 2,00,000	8	2.47	0.683		
	Total	200	2.22	0.661		

There is a significant difference between the employment status (0.901) and monthly household income (0.129) of the respondents and the level of satisfaction in using IMC tools.

Findings

- Most of the respondents are female.
- Majority of the respondents are between the age group of 25-34 years.
- The majority of the respondents are located in south India.
- Maximum of the respondents finished their higher secondary education.
- Most of the respondents are single and self-employed.
- Most of the respondents having a monthly household income of Rs.20,001-Rs.50,000.
- Respondents rated email marketing at 2.14 indicating moderate variability in ratings. The mean rating for social media platforms is 2.47, suggesting slightly higher perceived effectiveness compared to email marketing, with relatively low variability in ratings. The mean rating for real estate websites and portals is 2.41, indicating moderate effectiveness and variability in ratings. Respondents rated direct marketing at 2.31 on average, suggesting moderate effectiveness and relatively low variability in ratings. The mean rating for CRM software indicates moderate effectiveness and variability in ratings. Print advertising received an average rating of 2.32, suggesting moderate effectiveness and variability in ratings similar to other communication tools. The mean rating for mobile applications indicating moderate variability in ratings, with slightly higher perceived effectiveness compared to some other tools.
- Respondents with monthly incomes ranging from Rs.20,000 to Rs.2,00,000 are in agreement with the use of various tools in the real estate sector.
- The respondents agree with cost-effectiveness of IMC, consistency in messaging across various communication channels (e.g., online, offline), flexibility in adapting to changing market trends and consumer preferences, integrating digital marketing tools with traditional marketing methods, align with the target audience's preferences for receiving information about real estate properties, ability to create a cohesive brand image and identity across all marketing channels, availability of resources (e.g., skilled personnel, budget) to implement and maintain an effective IMC strategy and competitive pressure and the need to differentiate from other real estate firms through effective communication strategies influencing the use of IMC strategies in real estate sector.
- The study found that factors influencing the use of IMC strategies in the real estate sector are agreed upon by respondents earning less than Rs.20,000 per month.
- The respondents are highly satisfied with the effectiveness of social media marketing in reaching potential buyers or tenants. The respondents are satisfied with the impact of email marketing campaigns in generating

leads or inquiries for real estate properties, user engagement on real estate websites and portals (e.g., Zillow, Realtor.com) for property listings or searches, effectiveness of direct marketing campaigns in promoting real estate properties or services, convenience and accessibility of mobile applications for property search and communication with real estate agents or property managers, value provided by podcasts or webinars offering insights and updates on real estate market trends and investment opportunities and responsiveness and support received through live chat services on real estate websites or applications.

Suggestions

- Real estate firms should utilise a diverse range of communication channels, including emails, social media platforms, and mobile phones, to efficiently reach their desired target audience. This will enhance the spread of knowledge among individuals and influence consumer behaviour.
- Ensure the uniformity of brand messaging across all communication channels, including advertising, social media, websites, and offline marketing materials. Consistency cultivates trust and enhances the brand's reputation among users.
- The user's text is a bullet point. Companies can formulate a triumphant IMC strategy by astutely amalgamating several techniques to attract the maximum number of prospective clients.
- Every real estate company must include web marketing as an essential component of their overall marketing plan. Online marketing comprises several components, mostly include web marketing, E-commerce, and social media marketing.
- Offer visitors informative and relevant content, such as market research, purchase guidance, and neighbourhood descriptions, to educate them and promote the real estate company as a trustworthy authority in the industry.
- The user's text is comprised of a solitary bullet point. Online marketing has clear benefits in comparison to traditional marketing, leading real estate companies to dedicate a greater proportion of their money to online media rather than traditional marketing techniques.
- Real estate companies should strategically tailor their marketing message to directly target potential buyers, taking into consideration of the suitable moment.
- Real estate companies' marketing managers should allocate more resources for organizing holiday events in order to effectively promote their products and attract a larger pool of potential clients. Companies can enhance their brand identification by imprinting their logos and mottos onto little gift items such as mugs, plates, key-holders, and pens.
- Emphasize the importance of providing prompt and tailored customer support through various channels such as phone calls, emails, and social media interactions. Timely and supportive replies can improve user contentment and impression of the brand.
- Human resource managers can provide training to their sales forces on how to tailor marketing messaging for a specific target audience, while ensuring consistency with other promotional mix instruments.
- Personal selling strategy has a substantial impact on sales success, and firms could enhance this relationship by integrating it with advertising and sales promotion.
- Public Relations/Publicity has a comparatively minimal impact on sales success. Marketing managers should optimize the visual appeal and tailor the content of printed marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, etc. in order to effectively increase buyers' awareness.
- Real estate professionals should regularly and consistently list their homes on

appropriate web channels. This is the method via which they engage with their prospective customers.

- Real estate professionals must familiarize themselves with, actively participate in, and continuously stay informed about pertinent online marketing approaches and strategies for their properties.
- Display testimonials, reviews, and success stories from contented customers as a means to establish credibility and foster confidence. Social proof acts as substantiation of the real estate company's dependability and has the potential to positively impact the perception of potential purchasers.

Conclusion

The perception of users towards IMC strategies in the real estate sector yields nuanced conclusions, reflective of evolving consumer expectations and industry dynamics. There's a growing recognition among users of the value of cohesive messaging across various marketing channels. IMC strategies that seamlessly integrate traditional methods like print advertising with digital platforms such as social media and websites are increasingly favoured. Users perceive such approaches as more comprehensive and trustworthy, contributing to enhanced brand credibility and recall.

Organizations must effectively communicate with both prospective and current customers. Effective communication not only enhances relationships with clients but also provides firms with a competitive advantage. Effective communication ensures that messages and relevant information are delivered to recipients in the intended manner. It is important to successfully integrate diverse brand promotion methods in order to clearly express the distinctive features of brands to the end-users.

IMC is a potent technique that combines many marketing channels to convey a cohesive and persuasive brand message. IMC strategically coordinates advertising, public relations, direct marketing, social media, and other promotional

efforts. This approach aims to cultivate more robust customer relationships, boost sales and revenue, improve competitive advantage, adapt to market fluctuations, and utilize various channels to effectively reach the intended audience. Digital communication enables novel methods of engaging with audiences and facilitates the customization and adjustment of messages. Therefore, there are numerous opportunities available to establish a connection with the consumer and enhance engagement and communication with the brand. This involves placing the consumer at the core of advertisers' communication strategies. In addition, the emergence of technology has completely transformed the manner in which users engage with real estate marketing campaigns. Immersive experiences, such as virtual tours, augmented reality applications, and interactive websites, have gained significant influence in altering user perceptions. IMC tactics that utilize state-of-the-art technologies to provide captivating and interactive experiences are seen as innovative and forward-looking, attracting the attention and interest of users in a competitive market.

This study provides practical recommendations that help to improve the internet marketing tactics of real estate brokers. Agents can utilize the knowledge acquired to improve their online presence, enhance their digital advertising strategies, and establish stronger connections with potential clients. Understanding the factors that influence consumer decisions in the digital world enables agents to customize their marketing approaches, potentially resulting in higher client engagement and successful transactions. Successful IMC strategies in this industry focus on creating a unified message, tailoring communication to individual users, being transparent, and using technical advancements to connect with consumers and generate significant engagement and conversions. Real estate brands can strategically utilize IMC to cultivate robust connections with users, cultivate brand loyalty, and stimulate business expansion in a fiercely competitive market by comprehending and aligning with user expectations.

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