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INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION IN RURAL HOUSING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HOME-BUYING DECISIONS IN UBON RATCHATHANI, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of integrated marketing communications on shaping home-buying decisions in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand. Drawing on established frameworks – including the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, and 6Ms – and psychological theories such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and symbolic consumption, the research explores how functional and symbolic messaging converge to influence purchase intent. Through in-depth interviews with key informants who purchased homes within the last three years, six emergent themes were identified: Security and Peace of Mind, Community and Belonging, Achievement and Pride, Purposeful Living, Affordability and Access, and Escape and Freedom. Each theme is aligned with specific Maslow’s needs and corresponding symbolic meanings, illustrating how targeted message formats – from legal assurances and cultural narratives to premium visuals and transformational storytelling – address practical concerns and deeper emotional drivers. The findings reveal that tailored, emotionally resonant marketing messages enhance consumer confidence, foster community identity, and motivate aspirational shifts in lifestyle. This integrative, theme-based model provides valuable insights for developers, marketers, and policymakers seeking to design more effective communication strategies that resonate with the complex needs of rural home buyers.

KEYWORDS: Marketing Communication, Symbolic Consumption, Maslow’s Hierarchy, Home-Buying, Rural Housing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ubon Ratchathani Province, in northeastern Thailand, is a region where enduring cultural traditions and emerging economic practices converge (Loslier, 1993). Each year, approximately 3,500 to 4,000 new housing units—mainly single-detached homes and townhouses—enter the market, reflecting both the quest for affordable living and a deep-rooted cultural commitment to familial and multigenerational homeownership (Lophongpanit *et al.*, 2019). In such a dynamic context, housing is not simply a transaction; it is an expression of basic human needs and a symbol of identity (Ngeoywijit *et al.*, 2022).

Understanding these dual dimensions requires an approach that integrates both practical marketing strategies and psychological insights (Batra & Keller, 2016). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains that homeownership satisfies core survival needs—providing shelter and security—while also enabling higher aspirations such as belonging and self-esteem (Keller, 2001). Similarly, the concept of symbolic consumption reveals that consumers often select homes not only for functional benefits but also to express individual identity, cultural affiliation, and social status (Finne & Grönroos, 2017). Together, these theories underscore the fact that the decision to purchase a home in Ubon Ratchathani is shaped by both utilitarian and deeply personal motivations (Wu, 2024).

In response to the complexities of this evolving market, this study aims to design and validate an integrated marketing communication master planning model.

This model consolidates well-established frameworks to deliver a comprehensive strategy for rural housing. Specifically, it combines:

- 4Ps & 7Ps to structure product and service strategies alongside effective delivery mechanisms (Chigbu *et al.*, 2023).
- 4Cs to incorporate a customer-centric perspective that adapts to local nuances (Fleming & Hardaker, 1993).
- STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning) to ensure personalized approaches that resonate with distinct market segments (Koutridi & Christopoulou, 2023).
- AIDA & 5As to map out the customer journey and guide the flow of communication (Xu *et al.*, 2023).
- 6Ms for structured, methodical campaign planning (Jónsdóttir & Gísladóttir, 2023).
- Symbolic Consumption & Maslow's Hierarchy to align marketing messages with deeper

psychological and emotional drivers (Panyik *et al.*, 2011).

By integrating these frameworks, the model is designed to identify, craft, and deliver marketing messages that speak directly to rural customers' needs, values, aspirations, and decision-making patterns. This holistic approach addresses the practical aspects of home buying while also honoring the symbolic meanings that guide consumer behavior.

The research problem driving this study is clear: How can housing policies and marketing strategies in Ubon Ratchathani be refined to balance affordability, cultural traditions, and the evolving aspirations of home buyers? Current market practices often overlook the delicate interplay between fundamental needs and the symbolic values embedded in homeownership. Addressing this gap can offer significant benefits for policymakers, developers, and marketing practitioners seeking to create more resonant and sustainable housing solutions.

To explore this challenge, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What economic, cultural, and social factors shape the rural housing market in Ubon Ratchathani?
2. How do financial constraints and emerging financing practices influence the buyer's journey in balancing basic needs and higher aspirations?
3. How can the integrated model—combining the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, 6Ms, and symbolic consumption frameworks enhance communication strategies to better align with rural consumers' decision-making patterns?

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Analyze key market supply metrics and pricing structures to understand market segmentation.
2. Examine the role of both formal and informal financing mechanisms in influencing home purchasing decisions.
3. Explore how basic human needs interact with symbolic consumption to shape consumer behavior.
4. Develop and validate an integrated marketing communication master planning model that supports effective outreach and engagement within the rural housing market.

Through this integrated approach, the study not only contributes to a richer academic conversation around rural development and marketing communication but also offers practical insights that

can help bridge the gap between traditional values and modern economic aspirations in Ubon Ratchathani.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Integrated Marketing Communication Frameworks in Rural Markets*

A robust body of literature highlights the importance of integrated marketing communication (IMC) in creating a coherent strategy for diverse sectors (Schultz & Patti, 2009). Traditional frameworks such as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) and the extended 7Ps (adding People, Process, and Physical Evidence) have long served as the backbone for product and service strategy (Hartley & Pickton, 1999). These models support developers and marketers in structuring their offerings and ensuring effective communication (Hu et al., 2023). Complementing these, the 4Cs (Customer, Cost, Convenience, Communication) model shifts the focus toward a customer-centric approach, which is particularly critical in rural contexts where local nuances play a significant role (Vynogradova & Drokina, 2020).

Additional frameworks such as STP (Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning) help in tailoring messages to distinct market groups (Caliskan et al., 2020), while consumer journey models like AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)—and its evolution to the 5As (Awareness, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate)—map out how individuals interact with marketing messages (Keller, 2016). Tools like the 6Ms (Measurement, Manner, Medium, Message, Money, Manpower) further structure campaign planning and help gauge effectiveness (Xu, 2021). Although these models have been successfully applied in various settings, few studies have integrated them specifically for rural housing markets, leaving a gap in understanding how to harmonize these elements to address both local economic realities and cultural traditions (Schultz & Schultz, 1998).

2.2. *Psychological and Symbolic Dimensions in Home Buying*

Home buying is a decision that extends far beyond mere functionality. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs explains that a home satisfies not only basic requirements—such as shelter and security—but also higher-level needs like belonging, esteem, and even self-actualization (Kaynak et al., 2022). This progression highlights why many see owning a home as a milestone of personal and familial

achievement.

In parallel, the theory of symbolic consumption offers another layer of insight. Homes often serve as more than physical assets; they are symbols of identity, success, and cultural values (Pinaraswati et al., 2023). In this view, architectural style, location, and interior design are not randomly chosen but are carefully selected to communicate social status and personal identity. These frameworks suggest a causal relationship where effective marketing messages that resonate with consumers' deeper needs can significantly influence the decision-making process within the housing market (Puspitaningtias et al., 2025).

3. EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS FROM UBON RATCHATHANI'S HOUSING MARKET

3.1. *Tradition Meets Transformation*

Ubon Ratchathani Province offers a compelling example of how traditional values and modern economic forces combine to create a vibrant housing market (Loslier & Porapakkham, 1992). Every year, approximately 3,500–4,000 new housing units enter the market, with single-detached homes accounting for about 60% and townhouses about 30% (Loslier, 1993). This composition not only underscores a longstanding cultural commitment to independent property ownership and multigenerational living but also reflects an earnest demand for affordable housing options (Prayukvong et al., 2007).

Market segmentation further enriches the understanding of this region. Entry-level properties priced between ฿1.2 million and ฿2.5 million primarily cater to middle-income families who view homeownership as a foundation of stability (Ngeoywijit et al., 2022). In contrast, the higher-priced segment, with units costing between ฿2.5 million and ฿4 million, attracts government employees and local entrepreneurs. This segmentation is indicative of a semi-agrarian economy that is increasingly embracing entrepreneurial farming, thus revealing a broader transformation in regional livelihood strategies (Kosa et al., 2025).

3.2. *Financial and Competitive Dynamics*

Financial accessibility remains a critical challenge in Ubon Ratchathani. For many households, purchasing a home is a significant achievement that requires creative financing solutions. Data indicate that around 70% of buyers rely on institutional bank loans—often through the Government Housing Bank—while roughly 20% turn to informal financing channels. These patterns highlight enduring issues of

household debt and limited liquidity that affect both consumer behavior and developer strategies (Ihara, 2013). In response, developers are increasingly introducing flexible payment models. Nearly half of the new projects now feature low-down-payment installment plans, and emerging trends such as rent-to-own schemes are beginning to ease the financial burden for households in both the agricultural and informal sectors (Srivoramas *et al.*, 2023).

The competitive landscape in Ubon Ratchathani is equally dynamic. Over 50 local developers collectively command about 70% of the market, leveraging intimate knowledge of local culture and preferences to foster community trust. Meanwhile, national firms like SC Asset hold the remaining 30% market share. Regional leaders such as Baan Ubon Group (15% share) and Isan Pattana Homes (10% share) successfully deploy hyper-localized strategies that emphasize the values of multigenerational living and proximity to agricultural cooperatives, reflecting deep-seated cultural norms (Huttasin *et al.*, 2015). There is also an emerging interest in eco-friendly design, such as solar-powered homes, indicating that even in markets where tradition is paramount, there remains a clear openness to innovation (Tsumita *et al.*, 2024).

4. GAPS IN THE LITERATURE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Despite the depth of research on traditional marketing frameworks and the psychological drivers behind home buying, there remains a significant gap in studies that integrate these approaches specifically for rural housing markets like Ubon Ratchathani. While individual frameworks provide valuable insights, an integrated model that combines the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, and 6Ms with the theories of symbolic consumption and Maslow's Hierarchy could better address the nuanced decision-making processes of rural consumers. This integration is essential for creating communication strategies that not only inform but also resonate on an emotional and cultural level.

Future research should explore:

- **Integrated Causal Relationships:** How do pricing, financing, and product offerings intersect with emotional and symbolic factors to shape home-buying decisions?
- **Cultural Adaptation in Messaging:** In what ways can marketing strategies be tailored to reflect local cultural values while promoting modern housing solutions?
- **Empirical Validation:** What quantitative measures can be used to validate an integrated

marketing communication model in rural contexts, thereby linking theory with actionable insights?

In summary, the literature demonstrates that an effective approach to rural housing marketing must blend practical communication frameworks with deep psychological and cultural insights. By merging these perspectives, especially within the context of Ubon Ratchathani's evolving housing market, future models have the potential to offer more empathetic, targeted, and ultimately successful strategies for both policymakers and developers.

4.1. Research Methodology

4.1.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case-study approach to explore how integrated marketing communication frameworks and psychological theories influence home-buying decisions. Rather than measuring variables through statistical surveys, the research emphasizes rich narrative accounts and thematic insights from key informants. The goal is to uncover the nuanced dynamics behind product and service strategies, customer centricity, market segmentation, communication flows, structured campaign planning, and the deeper emotional drivers of home buying.

4.1.2. Population and Sampling

4.1.3. Target Population

The study focuses on individuals residing in Ubon Ratchathani Province who have decided to purchase a house within the past three years. This group is considered non-finite due to the open and evolving nature of the housing market in the region.

4.1.4. Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling strategy will be employed to select key informants. These informants are chosen based on their ability to provide in-depth information about their home-buying experiences, particularly regarding how integrated marketing strategies and psychological drivers influenced their decisions. Although quantitative studies often use formulas like Cochran's to calculate sample size, the qualitative approach here targets the attainment of theoretical saturation. Approximately 30 key informants will be interviewed, with additional interviews conducted if new themes continue to emerge.

4.2. Data Collection Methods

Two primary methods will be used to gather

qualitative data:

- **Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews:**
- **Procedure:** Interviews will be conducted face-to-face or via secure online video conferencing, depending on the respondent's preference and logistical considerations.

- **Interview Guide:**

A semi-structured interview guide will be developed to ensure coverage of the following topics:

- **Product and Service Strategies:** How aspects of the 4Ps/7Ps (e.g., product quality, pricing strategies, distribution channels, and promotional tools) influenced their home-buying decision.
- **Customer-Centric Perspectives:** Insights related to the 4Cs, focusing on how convenience, cost, communication, and customer needs factored into their choice.
- **Market Segmentation and Personalization:** Experiences that highlight the role of STP in aligning housing options with specific lifestyle or socio-economic factors.
- **Customer Journey and Communication Flows:** Reflections on how awareness, interest, desire, action, and advocacy (as captured in AIDA/5As) shaped their purchasing process.
- **Campaign Planning and Messaging:** Discussion on the influence of structured marketing efforts (6Ms) and how these strategies resonated at different stages of their decision-making.
- **Emotional and Symbolic Drivers:** How fundamental needs (as explained by Maslow's Hierarchy) and the symbolic meaning of home ownership influenced their choices.
- **Recording and Transcription:** With informed consent, interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to facilitate detailed analysis.

4.2.1. Supplementary Self-Administered Online Questionnaire

Although the focus is qualitative, a brief online questionnaire will be offered as a supplementary tool for respondents who prefer written narratives. This instrument will include open-ended questions mirroring the topics discussed in the interviews. It will serve to enrich the data with additional textual insights and offer flexibility for informants who may find this mode more comfortable.

4.3. Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis. The process will involve:

- **Coding:** Transcripts from interviews and responses from the online questionnaire will be systematically coded. An initial codebook will be developed based on the theoretical frameworks (4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, 6Ms, Symbolic Consumption, and Maslow's Hierarchy) and refined iteratively as new themes emerge (Tsai, 2005).
- **Thematic Development:** Codes will be grouped into broader themes that capture the deep contexts and causal relationships between marketing communication elements and the emotional/symbolic drivers behind home-buying decisions (Andrew & Larceneux, 2018; Besbris, 2016).
- **Use of Software:** Qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo) may be employed to organize, retrieve, and interrelate data efficiently (Dash et al., 2021).
- **Trustworthiness:** Techniques such as member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail will be used to enhance the credibility and dependability of the findings (Gerashi & Fakhreddin, 2021).

4.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical rigor is paramount in this qualitative inquiry. All participants will be provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's purpose, their rights (including the right to withdraw at any time), and measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Data will be securely stored, and personal identifiers will be removed during transcription. Special considerations will be given to the culturally sensitive context of Ubon Ratchathani.

This qualitative approach—centering on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with purposively selected key informants, supplemented by open-ended online questionnaires—will enable the study to capture a rich, holistic understanding of how integrated marketing communication strategies and psychological influences converge in the home-buying process. The methodology is designed not only to reveal the "what" and "how" of these decisions but also to uncover the "why" behind them, offering vital insights for both academic inquiry and practical applications in rural housing marketing.

4.5. Research Findings

The qualitative inquiry with key informants—

home buyers in Ubon Ratchathani within the last three years—revealed several interrelated themes that illuminate how integrated marketing communication frameworks and psychological drivers converge in the home-buying decision. These themes not only reflect the practical aspects of product and service strategies (e.g., the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, and 6Ms) but also capture the

deeper emotional and symbolic dimensions of home ownership as explained by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and symbolic consumption.

Based on the data, we developed the following conceptual model (Table 1), which links each theme to its corresponding Maslow level, symbolic meaning, recommended communication formats, and the expected impact on purchase intent.

Table 1: Conceptual Details.

Theme	Maslow’s Level	Symbolic Meaning	Key Message Formats	Expected Impact on Purchase Intent
1. Security & Peace of Mind	Safety	Trust, stability	Legal document visuals, testimonials, safety infographics	Increase confidence, reduce risk aversion
2. Community & Belonging	Belonging	Identity, local connection	Cultural videos, family narratives, and location benefit showcases	Strengthen emotional resonance with the location
3. Achievement & Pride	Esteem	Success, recognition	Premium visuals, influencer tours, and awards presentations	Appeal to upward mobility and enhance image
4. Purposeful Living	Self-actualization	Legacy, meaning	Eco-living feature highlights, family value stories, long-term vision clips	Motivate deep, value-based purchase intent
5. Affordability & Access	Physiological	Inclusion, opportunity	Transparent pricing content, WhatsApp flyers, tiered package presentations	Facilitate action through perceived attainability
6. Escape & Freedom	Esteem → Self-actualization	Freedom, nature, peace	Drone shots, transformation storytelling, serene imagery	Inspire aspirational lifestyle shifts

Following Table 1, each theme is explored in detail. Together, they show how legal assurances, cultural narratives, status appeals, and transparent pricing address both practical needs and emotional motivations. This integrated approach demonstrates how marketing strategies can build trust, inspire aspiration, and strengthen connections in rural housing markets.

Theme 1: Security & Peace of Mind

Key informants frequently highlighted that a home is regarded as a haven. This theme, aligned with Maslow’s basic safety needs, captures the drive for stability and trust. Respondents valued promotions that featured legal assurances and verified testimonials—elements that bolster confidence and ease the fears associated with significant financial commitments. The use of safety infographics emerged as particularly effective in

communicating a secure investment, thereby reducing risk aversion.

Theme 2: Community & Belonging

The desire for connection and identity was another prominent theme. Home buyers in Ubon Ratchathani emphasized the importance of locating in communities that resonate with their cultural and familial values. Promotional materials such as cultural videos and family narratives effectively conveyed the sense of local connection and inclusion. This theme, which corresponds to Maslow’s belonging need, reinforces how community-focused messaging can evoke emotional resonance and strengthen the buyer’s sense of identity with the locale.

Theme 3: Achievement & Pride

Many respondents associated their home purchase with personal and social success. This

theme, rooted in the esteem level of Maslow’s hierarchy, reflects buyers’ aspirations for recognition and status. High-quality visuals, influencer-led tours, and presentations of featured awards were reported to influence those aiming for upward mobility. Such messages not only emphasize functionality but also highlight the prestige and image enhancement that comes with owning a well-regarded property.

Theme 4: Purposeful Living

For a subset of buyers, the home represents more than an asset—it embodies a legacy and long-term aspiration. Aligning with the self-actualization level, this theme captures the symbolic meaning of purposeful living. Emphasis on eco-living features, family values, and a long-term vision in marketing communications resonated deeply with respondents looking for meaning beyond mere ownership. This approach is intended to motivate a value-based purchase intent by encouraging buyers to see their home as part of a legacy.

Theme 5: Affordability & Access

Recognizing that the majority of respondents face financial constraints, affordability remains a core factor. This theme touches on the physiological level of needs, with buyers seeking inclusiveness and realistic opportunities. Transparent pricing content, the use of easily accessible communication channels (e.g., WhatsApp flyers), and clear package tiers help make the housing offer appear attainable. As a result, these approaches are expected to facilitate action by reducing financial barriers.

Theme 6: Escape & Freedom

Lastly, the allure of a transformative lifestyle—marked by freedom, nature, and peace—resonated strongly with several informants. This theme encompasses the transition from esteem to self-actualization, appealing to those interested in aspirational lifestyle shifts. Marketing practices such as compelling drone shots, transformation stories, and serene imagery help encapsulate the promise of an escape from the mundane, inspiring buyers to envision a refreshed, liberating home environment.

Integrative Insights

The integration of these themes with established marketing frameworks demonstrates that effective communication strategies in the rural housing market must address both tangible (functional) and intangible (emotional and symbolic) factors. By aligning the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, and 6Ms frameworks with the deeper layers of Maslow’s needs and symbolic consumption patterns, marketers can craft a compelling narrative that enhances purchase intent. This comprehensive, theme-based model provides a strategic roadmap for developers and policymakers seeking to create resonant, impactful marketing communications that meet the complex needs of rural home buyers. In brief, Figure 1 presents an informative and practical model that depicts the cyclical process of effective rural housing marketing, showing how each step—from integrating themes to enhancing purchase intent—supports more resonant and impactful communication strategies.

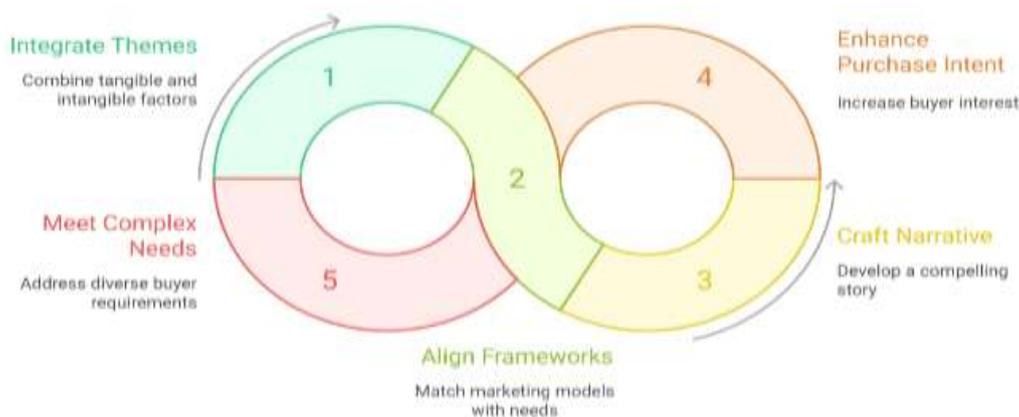


Figure 1: Cycle of Effective Rural Housing Marketing (Authors).

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the complex interplay between traditional marketing communication frameworks and deeper psychological drives in the home-buying decision among Ubon Ratchathani residents. The thematic

model illustrates that home ownership is not solely a rational transaction based on tangible attributes such as product quality or pricing (as outlined by the 4Ps/7Ps and 4Cs) but is also deeply influenced by symbolic consumption factors (Tsai, 2005). For instance, the need for security, captured through

legal assurances and safety infographics, directly corresponds with Maslow's safety needs and fosters a sense of trust and stability (Andrew & Larceneux, 2018). Similarly, the importance of community and belonging, as conveyed through cultural narratives and localized communication, satisfies higher-level emotional needs, reinforcing buyers' identities and social connections (Besbris, 2016).

Moreover, the study demonstrates that tailored communication strategies, such as those defined by STP and the AIDA/5As frameworks, are essential for guiding potential buyers through their journey from initial awareness to advocacy (Dash *et al.*, 2021). The integration of structured campaign planning (6Ms) with the nuanced messaging that leverages the symbolic values of achievement, purposeful living, affordability, and the desire for escape reveals that effective marketing must engage both the rational and aspirational dimensions of consumer decision-making (Batra & Keller, 2016). In practical terms, these insights suggest that housing developers and marketers in rural settings should design campaigns that not only present the physical benefits of a property but also resonate emotionally, thereby enhancing purchase intent and long-term customer satisfaction (Finne & Grönroos, 2017). This integrated approach enriches our understanding of consumer behavior in rural markets and offers a strategic roadmap for future research and practice in developing sustainable, culturally attuned housing solutions (Lophongpanit *et al.*, 2019).

However, these findings suggest that legal assurances, cultural narratives, status-oriented messaging, and transparent pricing can collectively address both practical concerns and deeper emotional motivations among rural home buyers. Notably, no clear demographic differences were detected in the prominence of these themes; the symbolic and functional drivers appeared broadly consistent across age and income groups within the sample. This consistency highlights the potential for integrated marketing strategies to resonate widely across diverse buyer segments in the Ubon Ratchathani housing market (see more in Favilukis and Van Nieuwerburgh, 2017; Wang, 2021).

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Drawing on the thematic synthesis of integrated marketing communication frameworks and psychological drivers, this study identifies several actionable strategies with the potential to inform both academic discourse and practical interventions in rural housing marketing:

1. Integrate Emotional and Rational Appeals:

Marketing communication should be designed to address both functional considerations—such as legal assurances, transparent pricing structures, and clear financing mechanisms—and symbolic dimensions that evoke cultural resonance, familial identity, and aspirational narratives. This dual-focus approach can enhance consumer trust and strengthen the perceived value proposition.

2. Emphasize Community Identity and Belonging: Campaigns that foreground location-specific benefits, community narratives, and localized cultural touchpoints are likely to foster stronger emotional connections. Such strategies reinforce the buyer's sense of belonging and identity alignment with the residential environment, thereby increasing engagement and purchase intent.
3. Enhance Financial Accessibility and Transparency: The deployment of clear, simplified messaging around financing options, coupled with flexible payment structures (e.g., tiered packages, rent-to-own schemes), can significantly lower perceived barriers to entry. Utilizing accessible communication channels, such as social messaging platforms, also contributes to the perception of attainability and inclusivity.
4. Position Homeownership as Purpose-Driven and Aspirational: Effective messaging should situate homeownership within broader narratives of personal legacy, ecological stewardship, and long-term self-actualization. Visual storytelling techniques that underscore these aspirational dimensions can motivate purchase behavior by appealing to consumers' higher-order psychological needs.

6.1. Research Contribution

This study makes several significant contributions by illuminating how specific characteristics of marketing messages and communications influence the decision to purchase a house, particularly in the context of Ubon Ratchathani's dynamic rural housing market.

6.2. Theoretical Contributions

1. Integration of Communication Frameworks with Psychological Drivers: The research integrates classical marketing communication frameworks—such as the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, and 6Ms—with psychological theories (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and

symbolic consumption). This synthesis provides a more nuanced understanding of how functional messages (e.g., product quality, pricing, service delivery) work in tandem with emotional and symbolic cues to shape purchase intentions. In doing so, the study extends existing theory by demonstrating that effective marketing in the housing sector requires addressing multiple layers of consumer needs.

2. **Theme-Based Model of Message Effectiveness:** By categorizing communication strategies into key themes (Security & Peace of Mind, Community & Belonging, Achievement & Pride, Purposeful Living, Affordability & Access, and Escape & Freedom), the study offers a conceptual model that links each theme with specific Maslow levels and symbolic meanings. This model not only explains how different elements of messaging—ranging from legal assurances to aspirational storytelling—influence the home-buying journey but also offers a structured approach to predict the expected impact on purchase intent.

6.3. Practical Contributions

1. **Customer-Centric Message Crafting:** The findings reveal that home buyers in Ubon Ratchathani respond favorably to messages that address both their immediate concerns (e.g., safety, affordability) and aspirational goals (e.g., social recognition, purposeful living). Developers and policymakers can leverage these insights to design marketing messages that are sensitive to local cultural nuances and economic realities, ensuring that communications resonate at both functional and emotional levels.
2. **Guidance for Strategic Campaign Planning:** The research underscores the importance of a structured campaign planning process. Applying the 6Ms framework ensures that every aspect of a marketing campaign—from the choice of medium to the measurement of outcomes—is thoughtfully aligned with the target audience's psychological drivers. This holistic approach enables more precise segmentation (via STP) and a smoother buyer journey (as captured by AIDA/5As), thereby increasing the likelihood of converting interest into action.
3. **Enhanced Community Engagement:** The study draws attention to the role of culturally infused

marketing in building community trust and a sense of belonging. By using tailored approaches (such as cultural videos, family narratives, and localized testimonials), marketers can effectively harness community sentiment. This not only supports immediate purchase decisions but also builds long-term brand loyalty and word-of-mouth advocacy, essential for sustainable growth in rural markets.

6.4. Overall Significance

In summary, this research contributes both to theory and practice by demonstrating that successful marketing communications in the housing sector must simultaneously cater to rational considerations and deeper emotional aspirations. The integrated, theme-based model provides a strategic roadmap for developers and marketers seeking to enhance purchase intent through messages that foster trust, recognition, and a deep connection with local values. Future applications of this model could extend to other sectors where functional benefits and symbolic meanings converge, paving the way for more empathetic and effective marketing practices.

These contributions enrich our understanding of how carefully crafted marketing messages influence consumer behavior and offer actionable insights for creating more compelling and culturally resonant housing marketing strategies in rural environments.

6.5. Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of integrated marketing communication frameworks on home-buying decisions in Ubon Ratchathani, several limitations should be noted:

1. **Qualitative Nature and Generalizability:** The qualitative approach, centered on in-depth interviews and supplementary open-ended responses, enabled a rich exploration of personal experiences and emotional drivers. However, the findings are context-specific and largely reflective of a smaller, purposively selected sample. This limits the generalizability of the results to broader populations or different rural settings.
2. **Sampling Limitations:** By employing purposive sampling to target key informants who have purchased a house within the last three years, the study may be prone to selection bias. Although this method ensured the participants had relevant experience, the reliance on voluntary participation may have excluded views from individuals who chose

not to engage or lacked connectivity with the recruitment channels, potentially skewing the results.

3. **Subjectivity and Researcher Bias:** As with most qualitative research, the analysis is heavily interpretive. The identification and coding of themes based on established frameworks (such as the 4Ps/7Ps, 4Cs, STP, AIDA/5As, 6Ms, Maslow's Hierarchy, and symbolic consumption) require subjective judgment. Efforts were made to enhance trustworthiness through techniques such as peer debriefing and member checking; nonetheless, researcher bias may still influence the interpretation of data.
4. **Temporal and Contextual Constraints:** The study focuses on home-buying decisions made within the past three years in Ubon Ratchathani. Given the dynamic nature of the housing market and economic conditions, the findings might be time-sensitive, and the influence of marketing messages or consumer preferences may evolve in response to broader economic or social changes.
5. **Integration of Multiple Frameworks:** While the integrated model provides a comprehensive view of both functional and emotional drivers,

synthesizing multiple theoretical frameworks can be challenging. The complexity involved in linking tangible marketing elements with abstract psychological needs leaves room for oversimplification or misinterpretation of the causal relationships between different factors.

6. **Limitations of Data Collection Methods:** The combination of face-to-face interviews, online semi-structured questionnaires, and the reliance on self-reported information may introduce biases such as recall bias and social desirability bias. Furthermore, the online component, though valuable for reaching a wider audience, may not fully capture the perspectives of less tech-savvy or digitally underserved populations.

In summary, while the study offers a valuable thematic model and deep insights into the decision-making process, its findings should be interpreted with an understanding of these methodological and contextual constraints. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, expanding the sample to include diverse rural regions, and employing mixed methods approaches to validate the integrated conceptual model further.

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