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Investigating the Impact of Product/Celebrity Match on Consumers' Purchasing Intentions of Real Estate in Egypt

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of product/celebrity match on consumers' purchase intentions in the Egyptian real estate market. While celebrity endorsements are widely used across industries, limited research has explored their role in high-involvement sectors like real estate, particularly within developing countries.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed online to a sample of 384 Egyptian respondents. Data were analyzed using SPSS, including reliability, validity, frequency, and correlation analyses.

Findings: The findings reveal a statistically significant relationship between product/celebrity match and purchase intentions, suggesting that alignment between a celebrity's image and the real estate brand enhances consumer buying behavior.

Implications: The study offers practical insights for marketers on selecting endorsers whose public personas align with the brand identity of the property being promoted.

Originality: This research contributes original value by extending the application of the product match-up theory to an understudied industry and geographic context, providing empirical evidence from the underexplored Egyptian market.

Subject Area: Business Management, Consumer Behavior, Marketing

KEYWORDS: Celebrity Endorsement, Product/Celebrity Match, Real Estate, Purchase Intentions

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements have long been recognized as an effective and rapid means for consumers to gather relevant information during product evaluation and purchase decisions (Zhang et al., 2023). In today's media-saturated environment, consumers are constantly exposed to marketing communications through television, radio, digital platforms, and public spaces (Zakari et al., 2019). This saturation has contributed to shorter attention spans, reducing the effectiveness of traditional advertising methods in capturing consumer interest and loyalty. One strategy that has demonstrated effectiveness across various industries is the use of celebrity endorsements. Research and practice have shown that celebrities can significantly enhance advertisement visibility and brand recall, potentially leading to increased financial returns (Qader et al., 2022). However, advertising goals differ across industries, and in the real estate sector, marketing efforts aim to attract potential buyers or renters for residential or commercial properties (Ullah et al., 2021). Without an effective marketing strategy, properties may remain unsold, leading to reduced demand in specific regions (Wan Rodi et al., 2024). In this context, celebrity endorsements have emerged as a valuable tool for increasing awareness of real estate brands. Celebrities, with their significant media presence and social media influence, can help shape brand image and attract target segments (Udochukwu, 2024; Yöreş, 2017).

The Egyptian real estate market, in particular, is shaped by both cultural values and economic conditions. Homeownership is deeply rooted in Egyptian society, symbolizing stability and long-term investment. Societal norms, such as the expectation for men to provide homes for themselves and their children, and the custom of securing a home before marriage (typically between ages 25–27), contribute to sustained demand (Real Estate's Big Picture, 2016). Furthermore, economic factors, such as currency devaluation and inflation, have accelerated consumers' purchase behavior, as real estate is increasingly viewed as a secure investment (El-Zahwey, 2019). Within this context, the Product Match-Up Hypothesis becomes especially relevant. This theory suggests that the effectiveness of a celebrity endorsement depends on the degree of perceived congruence between the celebrity's image and the endorsed brand (Adam & Hussain, 2017). When consumers perceive a natural fit between the celebrity and the real estate brand, they are more likely to view the endorsement as authentic and persuasive, increasing their purchase intentions (Udochukwu, 2024). This study aims to examine how perceived congruence between a celebrity and a real estate brand influences purchase intentions among Egyptian consumers. In doing so, it addresses a gap in the literature regarding endorsement effectiveness in high-investment, culturally significant markets such as real estate. The study is guided by the following research questions: (RQ1) What are the theoretical foundations and empirical relationships between product/celebrity match and consumer purchasing behavior? (RQ2) What is the impact of product/celebrity match on consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions toward celebrity-endorsed real estate properties in Egypt?

By answering these questions, the research contributes empirical insights into the role of celebrity-brand congruence in influencing consumer decisions, with implications for both academia and real estate marketers operating in emerging markets. The following section presents a review of relevant literature and outlines the methodology used to test the product match-up hypothesis. The subsequent sections discuss the findings and offer conclusions and recommendations for future research and practice.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Celebrity endorsers are commonly used in advertising for their ability to enhance message effectiveness, primarily by being perceived as trustworthy and knowledgeable about the promoted product (Van Der Waldt et al., 2011). This section explores the concept of celebrity endorsement, specifically its relevance and impact in real estate advertising. It also discusses the product match-up theory in relation to the research problem, providing a foundation for understanding how celebrity-brand congruence can influence consumers' purchase intentions in the real estate industry.

2.1. Celebrity Endorsement

Incorporating celebrities into marketing strategies is a common approach for major companies seeking to enhance their brand image (Erdogan, 1999). Advertisers believe that messages conveyed by famous personalities capture attention and are more memorable (Ohanian, 1991). Celebrity endorsements allow marketers to leverage the celebrity's image and attributes to strengthen brand promotion (Onewo et al., 2021). Many people view celebrities as role models, influencing consumer preferences in areas such as fashion, lifestyle, and behavior (Yöreş, 2017). To differentiate themselves in competitive markets, firms frequently use celebrity endorsements to capture consumer attention and build credibility (Khan, 2018). These endorsements not only elevate brand image but also improve the perceived credibility of the brand's message. Celebrities can attract public attention, shape consumer attitudes, and boost purchasing intentions (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). When well-aligned, celebrity endorsements can lead to higher sales, increased brand value, and improved return on investment (Soleimani et al., 2020). However, some businesses still struggle to evaluate how consumers perceive these endorsements and the impact on brand evaluation (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019).

2.2. Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement in the Real Estate Industry

An endorser's effectiveness is partly shaped by the meanings they embody, including their status, lifestyle, and personality, which marketers leverage to convey brand messages (McCracken, 1989). Celebrity endorsements bring prestige and visibility to a brand, especially in competitive markets (Onewo et al., 2021). Their effectiveness hinges on perceived attractiveness, credibility, and the degree of fit between the celebrity and the endorsed product (Laddha et al., 2024). In the real estate sector, celebrity endorsements are a strategic tool for boosting awareness and brand credibility. Given their strong media presence and social media influence, celebrities help generate visibility and trust in real estate developments (Udochukwu, 2024). When a celebrity aligns with a real estate brand, their image transfers to the brand, enhancing its appeal (Chen & Zong, 2024). Many Egyptian real estate advertisements, particularly during Ramadan, use celebrities to promote developments. A review by Daily News Egypt found that 90% of real estate ads during this period featured celebrities (Al-Aees, 2021). According to Hassan Nasr, CEO of El Nasr Real Estate, such campaigns inspire confidence and signal financial stability (Al-Aees, 2021).

2.3. The Product Match-Up Theory

A central element of successful endorsement is the perceived fit between the celebrity and the endorsed product (Misra & Beatty, 1990). The match-up hypothesis posits that an endorsement is more effective when the celebrity's attributes align with those of the product (Erdogan, 1999; Hussain et al., 2021). This theory emphasizes congruence based on characteristics such as attractiveness or expertise (Kamins, 1990). When the endorser's image complements the brand, consumer responses tend to be more favorable (Choi & Rifon, 2012). For example, an athlete endorsing a sports brand reflects a strong match, while a mismatch (e.g., an athlete endorsing musical instruments) may weaken the endorsement effect (Knoll & Matthes, 2017). Although the match-up theory has empirical support, findings remain mixed. Some studies show positive effects of match-up on attitudes and purchase intentions, while others find limited impact, suggesting that its effectiveness may depend on cultural and product-specific contexts (Min et al., 2019). Additionally, earlier research focused heavily on physical attractiveness, which may overlook more relevant traits like expertise and trustworthiness (Min et al., 2019). In the real estate context, when a celebrity's image and lifestyle align with the property being promoted, the endorsement feels more authentic and trustworthy, which enhances consumer confidence and purchase intention (Udochukwu, 2024).

2.4. Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will buy a product following their evaluation (Yusoff, 2023). It stems from a consumer's perceived need and favorable perception of the product (Nabil et al., 2022). When a credible and well-known celebrity endorses a brand, consumer trust and interest often increase (Tarigan et al., 2023). Purchase intentions are influenced by perceptions of the brand, the advertisement, and the celebrity. The alignment between celebrity and brand plays a critical role in shaping these perceptions (Macheka et al., 2024). A strong match improves brand recall and intention to purchase (Fern et al., 2015; Arora et al., 2019). Endorser-product congruity also enhances credibility and consumers' willingness to pay premium prices (Hsu & McDonald, 2002). In real estate advertising, when a celebrity's lifestyle and image match the property being promoted, consumer trust increases, making a purchase more likely (Udochukwu, 2024).

Based on the reviewed literature, it is hypothesized that, **H1: The perceived match between the celebrity and the real estate brand has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions in Egypt.** To examine this hypothesis, a conceptual framework was developed, as illustrated in Figure 1. The following section outlines the research methodology employed to test this hypothesis and explore the relationship between celebrity-brand congruence and purchase intentions in the Egyptian real estate market.

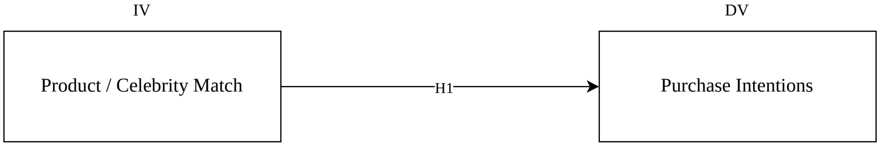

Figure 1

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a descriptive design, aiming to systematically explore the relationship between product/celebrity match and consumers' purchasing intentions within the context of real estate advertising in Egypt. Following a deductive approach, the study draws upon existing theories, specifically the Product Match-Up Theory, to formulate and test hypotheses regarding the impact of celebrity-product congruence on consumer behavior. To collect primary data, an online survey was utilized as the research strategy. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, offering a practical and cost-effective means to reach a diverse pool of respondents across various locations. The target population for this study comprised Egyptian adults aged 25 and above, living in metropolitan cities. This demographic was selected based on their higher likelihood of having the financial means and decision-making authority necessary for real estate investment. A non-probability river sampling method was used, wherein participants voluntarily accessed the survey through shared links on social media platforms. The survey instrument consisted of several structured sections. It began with an introductory paragraph clarifying the research purpose which is: measuring the effect of product-celebrity match on real estate purchase intentions, and assuring participants of the anonymity and academic nature of the study. The second section included nominal questions to assess consumer behavior toward celebrity-endorsed real estate advertisements. The third section measured the product-celebrity match variable using a 3-item, 7-point semantic differential scale with bipolar adjectives such as "Not compatible – Compatible," "Not a good fit – Good fit," and "Not congruent – Congruent," adapted from Rifon et al. (2004). Subsequently, purchase intention was assessed using a 3-item, 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," adapted from Putrevu and Lord (1994), representing the study's dependent variable. The final section gathered demographic data, including age, gender, income level, and education.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 24), ensuring the validity and reliability of the measurement tools. Descriptive statistics were used to establish the sample profile and explore participants' attitudes toward celebrities and celebrity-endorsed advertisements. Correlation analysis was performed to assess the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships between key variables.

4.1. Scale Reliability and Validity

To ensure the quality and consistency of the measurement tools used in this study, both reliability and validity analyses were conducted. Reliability, which reflects the stability and consistency of the instrument, was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. This coefficient measures internal consistency, with values closer to 1 indicating stronger reliability. As shown in Table 1, all scales used in the study achieved Cronbach's alpha values above 0.5, reflecting acceptable reliability levels. Validity, on the other hand, evaluates whether the instrument accurately measures the intended constructs. Factor loadings were examined to assess this, with all items loading above 0.7, confirming strong item-to-construct relationships. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated to confirm construct validity. All AVE values exceeded the 0.50 threshold, indicating strong convergent validity and further affirming the strength of the measurement model.

Table 1. Reliability and validity analysis

Variable	F. L		AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Product/Celebrity Match	X11	.866	0.785	0.862
	X12	.901		
	X13	.890		
Purchase Intentions	DV1	.896	0.756	0.809
	DV2	.890		
	DV3	.821		

4.2. Frequency Analysis

Frequency analysis was used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of the 384 respondents, as shown in Table 2. Most respondents (85.4%) were aged between 25 and 40, with 14.6% aged 40 or older. In terms of education, 51.3% held a college degree, 45.8% had a postgraduate qualification, and 2.9% had a high school diploma. Females represented 59.6% of the sample, while males accounted for 40.4%. Over half were single (54.4%), and 41.4% were married. Most respondents (64.6%) had no children, with smaller percentages having one (13%), two (18.2%), or more than two children (4.2%). The majority resided in Alexandria (68.2%) and Cairo (28.4%). Regarding employment, 69.8% were full-time employed, and 37.8% earned between 10,000 and 30,000 EGP per month.

Table 2. The Respondents Socio-Demographic Traits

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENT	Percentage %
Age	
25 – less than 40	85.4
40 and above	14.6
Highest Completed Level of Education	
High School	2.9
College Degree	51.3
Post-Graduate Degree	45.8
Gender	
Female	59.6
Male	40.4
Marital Status	
Single	54.4
Married	41.4
Divorced	3.1
Widowed	1.0
Number of Children	
None	64.6
One	13.0
Two	18.2
More than two children	4.2
City of Residence	
Cairo	28.4
Alexandria	68.2
Port Said	1.3
Mansoura	.8
Giza	.8
Dakahlya	.3
Elminya	.3
Current job status	

Employed part-time	16.1
Employed full-time	69.8
Self-employed	9.4
Unemployed	4.7
Average Monthly Household income in Egyptian Pounds:	
5,000 – less than 10,000	16.4
10,000 – less than 30,000	37.8
30,000 – 50,000	26.8
Above 50,000	19.0

In addition to demographic analysis, frequency analysis was also applied to the introductory questions to summarize participants' exposure to celebrity-endorsed real estate advertisements. As shown in Table 3, 44.3% of respondents reported occasional exposure, and 42.4% encountered them very often, while only a small percentage (13.3%) rarely or never saw such ads. This indicates strong visibility of celebrity endorsements in the Egyptian real estate market.

Table 3. Frequency of Exposure to Celebrity-Endorsed Real Estate Advertisements

Consumer's Exposure	Percentage %
Never	6.0
Hardly	7.3
Occasionally	44.3
Very often	42.4

Table 4 shows that 78.9% of respondents find celebrity-endorsed advertisements more attention-grabbing than non-celebrity ones, while only 21.1% prefer ads without celebrities.

Table 4. Type of Advertisement That Most Captures Consumer Attention

Type of Advertisement	Percentage %
Non-celebrity endorsed advertisements	21.1
Celebrity endorsed advertisements	78.9

4.3. Correlational Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationships between the independent and dependent variable (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This technique helps determine whether a meaningful relationship exists and to what extent the variables are related. Specifically, Pearson correlation analysis was used for the study's hypothesis to assess the association between the variables. Hypothesis 1: The perceived match between the celebrity and the real estate brand has a significant impact on consumers' purchase intentions in Egypt. The Pearson correlation between Product/Celebrity Match and Purchase Intentions is 0.264**, showing a positive, weak, and significant relationship at the 99% confidence level ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that a stronger perceived fit between the celebrity and the product is associated with higher purchase intentions.

5. RESEARCH CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Celebrity endorsement has become an increasingly powerful advertising strategy in Egypt, especially in the real estate sector. Research has shown that celebrity presence in advertisements significantly boosts consumer awareness and captures attention, leading to increased brand profitability (Qader et al., 2022). In the real estate industry, endorsements not only enhance visibility but also shape consumer attitudes and influence purchasing decisions (Yöreş, 2017). This study found that product/celebrity match significantly impacts Egyptian consumers' purchase intentions in real estate, a market where celebrity culture plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and consumer behavior. When the celebrity endorser's image aligns with the product or brand, it strengthens product recall and boosts motivation to purchase (Fern et al., 2015). These findings support Udochukwu (2024), who noted that a celebrity's lifestyle, status, or personal brand that resonates with the real estate offering enhances the authenticity of the endorsement and its persuasive power. Similarly, Khan (2018) argued that effective advertising relies heavily on a strong match between the celebrity and the product, a point further reinforced by Lim et al. (2017), who emphasized the importance of congruence between the endorser and the product for achieving favorable advertising outcomes.

5.1. Theoretical Contribution

This research explores the impact of product/celebrity match on real estate purchase intentions in Egypt, filling a gap in the literature where most studies on celebrity endorsements have focused on low-involvement industries like fashion, with little attention given to high-involvement sectors such as real estate, particularly within the Egyptian context. The study contributes to the field by offering empirical evidence on how celebrity endorsements influence consumer behavior in real estate marketing. It emphasizes the strategic importance of selecting and positioning celebrity endorsers to resonate with consumers and enhance advertising effectiveness. The findings reinforce the relevance of the product match-up theory in shaping purchase intentions. Additionally, the research provides a valuable academic contribution by validating celebrity endorsement constructs in a developing market, addressing a gap left by previous studies that focused mostly on developed countries or select emerging economies. By demonstrating the visibility and effectiveness of celebrity-endorsed advertisements among Egyptian consumers, the study offers region-specific insights that are both timely and significant.

5.2. Managerial Implications

This study offers practical insights for real estate marketers in Egypt on how to effectively use celebrity endorsements to enhance consumer purchase intentions. The findings show that product/celebrity match significantly influences consumers' decisions to purchase real estate, emphasizing the importance of selecting endorsers whose public image aligns with the values, aesthetics, and lifestyle of the property. In the high-involvement real estate sector, where purchases are both emotionally and financially significant, Egyptian consumers are drawn to advertisements that feel authentic and aspirational. A celebrity whose image fits well with the property can foster trust, relatability, and desire, thus boosting purchase intentions. Marketers should therefore prioritize not only a celebrity's popularity but also the alignment between their image and the real estate brand's identity when making casting decisions.

5.2. Research Limitations

The research used a non-probability river sampling method, which may have introduced bias and limited sample representativeness, as most respondents were from urban areas, particularly Cairo and Alexandria, and aged 25 and above. This geographic and age restriction limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader Egyptian population, especially those from rural areas or younger age groups. Additionally, the focus on real estate advertising within Egypt narrows the applicability of the results to other industries or regions. The study also only explored product/celebrity match and did not consider other factors, such as those in the meaning transfer or source credibility models, which could have provided a deeper understanding of celebrity endorsements' impact. Furthermore, the research did not account for external factors like Egypt's economic conditions, which influence consumer purchasing power in high-involvement sectors like real estate. Finally, the exclusively quantitative approach, while efficient, could not capture the emotional and psychological depth of consumer perceptions, which would be better explored through qualitative or mixed-method approaches. These limitations suggest a need for further research to refine and build on these findings.

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