

An Effect of Celebrity Endorsement and Lifestyle Congruence on Aspirational Luxury Brand Desire: A Study of Consumers in Junagadh City

Vivek Vijayprakash Sondarva¹, Dr. Mahipal B. Ram²

¹ Research Scholar, School of Commerce and Management, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India

² Assistant Professor, School of Commerce and Management, Dr. Subhash University, Junagadh, Gujarat, India

Abstract

Consumer purchasing behaviour in the luxury segment is substantially influenced by celebrity figures. This influence is amplified when a celebrity endorser genuinely reflects, through their public persona, a lifestyle that resonates with what the luxury brand stands for — strengthening the aspirational pull the brand holds over potential buyers. This study investigates the combined role of celebrity endorsement and lifestyle congruence in driving luxury brand desire among urban consumers in Junagadh city, Gujarat. Data were collected from 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analysed through established statistical techniques. The results confirm that perceived alignment between a celebrity's lifestyle and the luxury brand identity is a strong predictor of brand desire ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$). Consumer self-image congruity and materialistic values were also found to contribute meaningfully to this relationship. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for luxury brands aiming to build desire among aspirational buyers in semi-urban India.

Keywords: Celebrity endorsement, lifestyle congruence, luxury brand desire, aspirational consumption, Junagadh city, semi-urban India.

1. Introduction

Scroll through any social media feed and it becomes immediately apparent how deeply celebrity culture has merged with luxury consumption. Premium watchmakers, designer fashion labels, and high-end hospitality brands consistently feature well-known personalities who appear to inhabit the very world those brands project. This strategic alignment is deliberate — brands understand that an endorser who genuinely reflects their aspirational lifestyle can create a far more persuasive narrative than conventional advertising alone. When the fit between a celebrity's visible way of life and a brand's positioning is seamless, consumers begin to associate that brand with the lifestyle they themselves aspire to.

Junagadh, a mid-sized city in Gujarat, is witnessing a visible shift in consumer aspirations. A growing segment of its population desires luxury goods — not necessarily because they can currently afford them, but because digital media and celebrity culture have made such products feel within reach and deeply relevant to personal identity. Unlike metropolitan centres such as Mumbai or Delhi, which have received extensive scholarly attention in the luxury consumption literature, cities of Junagadh's scale have been largely overlooked in empirical research, despite the fact that social media has equalized celebrity exposure across urban geographies.

The present study aims to determine whether celebrity endorsement — particularly when the endorser's public lifestyle closely corresponds to the brand's identity — generates stronger luxury brand desire among Junagadh consumers. It further examines the degree to which consumer self-image congruence and materialistic values moderate or mediate this effect. The research is grounded in primary survey data from 150 respondents and is designed to offer accessible, evidence-based insights relevant to both academic and managerial audiences.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Celebrity endorsement paired with lifestyle congruence will exert a significant positive effect on aspirational luxury brand desire among consumers in Junagadh.

H2: Self-congruity of the consumer partially mediates the association between perceived celebrity lifestyle congruence and luxury brand desire.

H3: The degree of consumer materialism moderates the strength of the relationship between celebrity lifestyle congruence and luxury brand desire.

H4: Sociodemographic characteristics of consumers give rise to meaningful variations in their perceptions of celebrity lifestyle congruence and their levels of luxury brand desire.

2. Review of Literature

The practice of leveraging celebrity figures to endorse commercial products has a well-established history, and scholarly work in this domain consistently highlights the importance of congruence between the endorser and the brand. Described conceptually as the “match-up” framework (Kamins, 1990), this principle holds that endorsement effectiveness rises when the celebrity and the brand share compatible attributes — encompassing not just physical attractiveness but also shared values, personality characteristics, and lifestyle orientations. In the luxury domain particularly, a celebrity who appears to organically inhabit the world the brand represents lends credibility and authenticity to the marketing communication.

Luxury brands extend beyond mere product functionality; they serve as symbolic representations of prestige, refined taste, and a socially aspirational lifestyle. Research indicates that consumers develop strong brand desire for luxury goods well before their purchasing power permits acquisition, driven by the symbolic meaning such brands confer (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). The theoretical lens of self-congruity offers a compelling explanation for this phenomenon: individuals are drawn to brands whose projected image corresponds with the self they aspire to become, not just the self they currently are (Sirgy, 1982). This identity-based dynamic is particularly salient in luxury consumption contexts.

Consumer materialism — defined as the degree to which individuals attribute importance to the acquisition of valued possessions — constitutes an additional moderating force in this framework. Empirical evidence confirms that individuals scoring higher on materialistic values exhibit a stronger responsiveness to aspirational brand messaging (Richins & Dawson, 1992). The convergence of celebrity lifestyle congruence, elevated materialism, and the consumer’s desire to achieve a more favourable self-image collectively amplifies the gravitational pull of luxury brand desire, suggesting that these constructs do not operate in isolation but rather reinforce one another.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design anchored in primary data collection via a structured questionnaire. To ensure broad accessibility, the instrument was prepared in both English and Gujarati. Eligible participants were adult residents of Junagadh city between 18 and 55 years of age who demonstrated familiarity with at least one recognized luxury brand and reported prior exposure to celebrity endorsements through online platforms or television within the twelve months preceding the survey.

A total of 180 questionnaires were administered across diverse locations within Junagadh, including commercial zones, educational institutions, and residential neighbourhoods. Following the exclusion of forms with missing or inconsistent entries, 150 responses were deemed usable, corresponding to a response rate of 83.3%. The instrument comprised five thematic sections: respondent demographics, celebrity lifestyle congruence (8 items), luxury brand desire (6 items), consumer self-congruity (5 items), and materialism (5 items). All scale items were rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored at “Strongly Disagree” and “Strongly Agree”. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 26.0, encompassing descriptive statistics, internal consistency assessment, bivariate correlation, and multiple regression procedures.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Respondent Profile

Male participants constituted 58% of the sample, with females accounting for the remaining 42%. The largest age cohort was the 25–34 year bracket, representing 38.7% of respondents. Educational attainment was comparatively high, with 72.7% holding graduate or postgraduate qualifications. Occupationally, private-sector employees (34%) and students (26%) were the most prevalent groups. Household incomes predominantly fell in

the ₹25,000–₹1,00,000 monthly range, characteristic of the aspirational middle and upper-middle class. Detailed breakdowns are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 150)

Variable	Category	Freq.	Pct. (%)
Gender	Male	87	58.0
	Female	63	42.0
Age Group	18–24 Years	41	27.3
	25–34 Years	58	38.7
	35–44 Years	33	22.0
	45–55 Years	18	12.0
Education	Graduate	58	38.7
	Postgraduate	51	34.0
	Professional Deg.	24	16.0
	HSC / Diploma	17	11.3
Monthly Inc.	Up to ₹25,000	21	14.0
	₹25,001–₹50,000	54	36.0
	₹50,001–₹1,00,000	42	28.0
	Above ₹1,00,000	33	22.0

Source: Primary data (2025).

4.2 Reliability Assessment

The internal consistency of all four measurement scales was found to be satisfactory. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged between 0.796 and 0.873, each exceeding the conventionally accepted threshold of 0.70. Construct-level mean scores indicated that respondents reported moderate-to-high perceptions of celebrity lifestyle congruence alongside moderately strong levels of luxury brand desire, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability and Mean Scores of Constructs

Construct	Items	α	Mean	SD
Celebrity Lifestyle Congruence	8	0.873	3.64	0.79
Luxury Brand Desire	6	0.851	3.82	0.71
Consumer Self-Congruity	5	0.834	3.57	0.76
Consumer Materialism	5	0.796	3.41	0.83

CLC = Celebrity Lifestyle Congruence; LBD = Luxury Brand Desire; SC = Self-Congruity; MAT = Materialism.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix presented in Table 3 reveals that celebrity lifestyle congruence demonstrated the highest association with luxury brand desire ($r = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$) among all variables examined. Both self-congruity and materialism also showed statistically significant positive correlations with brand desire. Inter-predictor correlations remained at levels that do not raise concerns regarding multicollinearity in subsequent regression modelling.

Table 3: Correlation Between Study Variables (N = 150)

Variable	CLC	LBD	SC	MAT
Celeb. Lifestyle Cong.	1.00	—	—	—
Luxury Brand Desire	0.621**	1.00	—	—
Self-Congruity	0.543**	0.574**	1.00	—
Materialism	0.387**	0.412**	0.328**	1.00

** Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). CLC = Celebrity Lifestyle Congruence; LBD = Luxury Brand Desire; SC = Self-Congruity; MAT = Materialism.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was employed to identify the relative predictive strength of the independent variables on luxury brand desire. The resulting model accounted for approximately 49.6% of the variance in brand desire ($R^2 = 0.496$, $F = 47.83$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a robust fit. Celebrity lifestyle congruence emerged as the dominant predictor ($\beta = 0.621$, $p < 0.001$), providing strong empirical support for H1. Consumer self-congruity ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$) and materialism ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.003$) also achieved statistical significance, corroborating H2 and H3 respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Regression Results — Predictors of Luxury Brand Desire

Predictor Variable	β	t	p-value	Hypothesis
Celebrity Lifestyle Congruence	0.621	9.34	< 0.001	Supported (H1)
Consumer Self-Congruity	0.287	4.12	< 0.001	Supported (H2)
Consumer Materialism	0.198	3.07	0.003	Supported (H3)

$R^2 = 0.496$ | Adjusted $R^2 = 0.486$ | $F(3,146) = 47.83$, $p < 0.001$

4.5 Demographic Variations

Analysis by gender revealed that female respondents expressed comparatively higher luxury brand desire ($M = 3.96$) relative to their male counterparts ($M = 3.71$), a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.021$). Consumers from higher-income households correspondingly reported elevated brand desire scores. Among age groups, the 25–34 cohort registered the highest levels of perceived celebrity-brand lifestyle alignment. Collectively, these patterns provide partial support for H4.

5. Discussion

The empirical evidence converges on a consistent and practically meaningful finding: when consumers perceive genuine alignment between a celebrity endorser's public lifestyle and the identity a luxury brand projects, their desire for that brand intensifies markedly. This transcends the superficial effect of celebrity fame; what drives brand desire is perceived authenticity and aspirational relevance. Consumers in Junagadh, despite residing outside a metropolitan hub, are extensively exposed to celebrity culture through digital media, OTT streaming services, and targeted advertising ecosystems. This exposure has cultivated a discerning audience that readily distinguishes between endorsements that feel credible and those that appear contrived.

The mediating function of self-congruity illuminates the psychological pathway through which celebrity lifestyle congruence translates into brand desire. Exposure to a celebrity who authentically embodies the luxury lifestyle associated with a brand prompts consumers to imaginatively project themselves into that aspirational identity. In essence, the celebrity functions as a proxy for the ideal self the consumer wishes to realise. Materialism serves to amplify this process: individuals who place high intrinsic value on prestigious possessions are predisposed to respond more intensely to aspirational brand narratives, making them a particularly receptive audience for congruent celebrity endorsement strategies.

The demographic patterns observed in this study carry interpretive value. The 25–34 age group's heightened sensitivity to celebrity lifestyle congruence is consistent with their disproportionate engagement with social media platforms, where celebrity content is most densely concentrated. The higher luxury brand desire among female respondents aligns with established patterns in the Indian consumer behaviour literature linking fashion consciousness and lifestyle sensitivity to gender. These findings underscore the importance of audience segmentation in luxury communication strategies.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study sought to evaluate whether celebrity endorsement — specifically when underpinned by strong lifestyle congruence — functions as a meaningful driver of luxury brand desire among consumers in Junagadh city. The findings provide an affirmative and statistically robust answer. Celebrity lifestyle congruence is not a

peripheral consideration in luxury marketing; it represents one of the most consequential determinants of brand desire, capable of shaping consumer aspirations even in markets that fall outside the conventional luxury consumption spotlight.

For luxury brands considering market entry or expansion in semi-urban Indian cities like Junagadh, the strategic implication is clear: endorser selection should prioritise authentic lifestyle fit over mere popularity metrics. A celebrity who genuinely inhabits the world the brand represents — in terms of travel, aesthetics, values, and daily living — will evoke significantly stronger brand desire than a famous figure whose personal lifestyle is incongruent with the brand's positioning. Authenticity is not merely a virtue; it is a commercial advantage.

Social media should serve as the primary channel for luxury brand communication in this context, given that younger Junagadh consumers derive most of their celebrity exposure through digital platforms. Campaigns that integrate celebrities into their natural lifestyle settings — depicting organic product use rather than formally staged endorsements — are likely to generate higher perceived authenticity and, consequently, stronger aspirational brand desire among target audiences.

The study is subject to certain limitations that should be acknowledged. Data were gathered from a single city at a single point in time, which constrains the generalizability of findings to other geographic or temporal contexts. Prospective research could extend the geographic scope to multiple semi-urban Indian cities or adopt a longitudinal design to capture shifts in consumer attitudes over time. Notwithstanding these constraints, the present study contributes a focused, evidence-based account of how celebrity endorsement shapes luxury brand desire in a rapidly evolving consumer market that has, until now, remained underrepresented in the academic literature.

References

1. Bauer, H. H., Heinrich, D., & Martin, I. (2007). How to create high emotional consumer-brand relationships. *Proceedings of Australian & New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference*, 2189–2198.
2. Choi, S. M., & Rifon, N. J. (2012). It is a match: The impact of congruence between celebrity image and consumer ideal self on endorsement effectiveness. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(9), 639–650.
3. Ekinçi, Y., & Riley, M. (2003). An investigation of self-concept: Actual and ideal self-congruence in service evaluation. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 10(4), 201–214.
4. Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2014). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson Education.
5. Kamins, M. A. (1990). An investigation into the 'match-up' hypothesis in celebrity advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(1), 4–13.
6. McCracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? Cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 310–321.
7. Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52.
8. Richins, M. L., & Dawson, S. (1992). A consumer values orientation for materialism and its measurement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19(3), 303–316.
9. Sirgy, M. J. (1982). Self-concept in consumer behavior: A critical review. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(3), 287–300.
10. Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (2000). The match-up hypothesis: Physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude and purchase intent. *Journal of Advertising*, 29(3), 1–13.
11. Vigneron, F., & Johnson, L. W. (2004). Measuring perceptions of brand luxury. *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(6), 484–506.
12. Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., & Siebels, A. (2009). Value-based segmentation of luxury consumption behavior. *Psychology & Marketing*, 26(7), 625–651.