

Assessment of the Evolving Role of Real Estate Agents (REAs) and Customer Preferences Towards Home Buying

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Abstract

Real estate agents are registered professionals who connect buyers and sellers. Their primary purpose is to help clients make informed decisions while navigating the intricacies of real estate transactions. Nowadays, evolving customer needs in real estate are essential to the success and sustainability of any organisation. Customer preferences, needs, and behaviours are constantly changing due to various factors such as technological advances, cultural shifts, economic changes, and social trends. Thus, this research was undertaken to study the evolving role of real estate agents (REA) and customer preferences toward home-buying decisions, and to analyse the relationship between the evolving role of REA and customer preferences. All data is analysed using content analysis to respond to real estate agents and customers. The role of a real estate agent lies in their professional practice, guaranteeing customer satisfaction, as it is essential to establish long-term relationships and encourage good word-of-mouth referrals. Finally, this study contributes to the development of real estate agents' roles and client preferences, aiming to strengthen long-term connections in house purchasing decisions and provide better home marketing any sales.

1. Introduction

An estate agent is a crucial intermediary in the real estate market, facilitating the smooth transaction of property assets. Their responsibilities are multifaceted, encompassing a range of activities. This summary highlights their importance, key responsibilities, and the necessary skills for success in this profession. Estate agents play a crucial role in property transactions, providing expert advice, market insights, and support. They manage property marketing, viewings, negotiations, and legal compliance. Their communication and negotiation skills help clients navigate the complexities of buying and selling property.

Understanding customer preferences is crucial for businesses to succeed in today's competitive market. Cultural background, personal experiences, socioeconomic status, and psychological influences influence these preferences. Tailoring products, services, and marketing strategies to meet evolving needs and desires helps businesses succeed in today's market. Customer preferences constantly evolve, influenced by trends,

technological advancements, and societal norms. Businesses can identify emerging patterns, predict future demands, and innovate by analysing these preferences, such as the shift towards convenience in digital technology.

Real estate agents play a crucial role in connecting buyers and sellers. With extensive knowledge of local real estate markets, legal requirements, and transaction procedures, they guide clients through the complexities of property deals. Their primary goal is to help clients make informed decisions. Real estate agents rely on their networks and market expertise to match unique buyer requirements. Their responsibilities include negotiation, explaining complex concepts, and maintaining strong client relationships. Adaptability and a commitment to excellent service are essential for long-term success in this dynamic field (Settlements, 2023).

Home buying is a significant financial decision, especially for first-time buyers. Real estate agents assist buyers in navigating the process, providing market knowledge, negotiation skills, legal advice, and industry connections. Partnering with reputable agents can save time and help find a suitable home (Lopez, 2023). In today's evolving real estate landscape, understanding customer preferences is crucial. Factors beyond price and square footage now influence property purchases. A recent survey revealed that approximately 90% of consumers are satisfied with their agents; however, challenges persist, including listing prices and fees. Some homebuyers may draft documents without the assistance of a real estate agent (Nicholas, 2023).

Becoming a property agent in Malaysia requires dedication and a willingness to learn. Successful agents possess honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, and empathy. However, legal challenges can arise. The two most common lawsuits against real estate agents involve negligence and breach of fiduciary duty. Negligence occurs when agents fail to propose property inspections to potential buyers. Breach of fiduciary duty occurs when agents prioritise personal gain over clients' best interests. Customer preferences have a significant impact on the housing market, influencing builders' decisions regarding home sizes and features (Sophia Ling, 2019). Thus, the objectives of this study are to determine the evolving role of REA in home-buying decisions and to analyse the relationship between the evolving role of REA and customer preference.

2. The Evolving Role of Real Estate Agents and Customer Preferences

The real estate industry continually evolves to meet the changing needs and preferences of buyers and sellers. In recent years, technological advancements and changing market dynamics have significantly impacted the role of real estate brokers. At this time of year, it is essential to understand the shifting landscape of the real estate industry and what to expect from real estate agents. The agent's job has experienced tremendous change in the ever-changing real estate environment. Their tasks have expanded beyond buying and selling (Anon, 2023). Today, in the competitive Northern Beaches market, real estate brokers have evolved into multifaceted professionals who can meet the demands of increasingly informed and technologically savvy customers. Table 1 summarises previous studies on the evolving role of real estate agents.

Table 1 *Evolving Role of Real Estate Agents*

No	Role	References	Context
1	Property Showing	(Barresi, 1968)	a professionally scheduled appointment that allows potential buyers to tour a home
2	Contract Preparation and Review	(Gresham & Zane O, 1974)	prepared and reviewed contracts to protect both parties and facilitate smooth transactions
3	Property Valuation	(Pagourtzi et al., 2003)	calculating the value of a property. Investors use it to make informed decisions
4	Closing Process	(Turnbull et al., 2007)	the final step in the home-buying journey
5	Negotiation	(Urbanavičiene & Zavadskas, 2009)	a blend of strategy, intuition, and compromise
6	Property Marketing	(Sirgy, 2014)	attract potential buyers and showcase properties effectively
7	Client Representation	(Gambirazio, 2020)	relationship between a real estate agent and their client during a transaction
8	Network of Industry Professionals	(Settlements, 2023)	nurturing relationships with real estate agents, brokers, lenders, inspectors, appraisers, and attorneys is essential for seamless transactions and long-term success

Real estate sales must adapt to evolving customer preferences, needs, and behaviours due to technological advancements, cultural shifts, economic changes, and social trends. This shift is redefining the essence of real estate and altering property transaction dynamics. Factors like square footage, price tags, and amenities are no

longer the exclusive influencers, ensuring the relevance and sustainability of real estate sales. Table 2 summarises previous literature on evolving customer preferences in real estate.

Table 2 *Evolving Customer Preferences*

Bil	Customer Preferences	References	Context
1	Timely Response to Customer Complaints	Connie and Fernando (2001)	In real estate, timely response to customer complaints is crucial for maintaining a positive reputation and fostering trust. Addressing complaints promptly shows customers that concerns are taken seriously, leading to higher satisfaction and loyalty. This builds trust, demonstrating reliability and professionalism in significant investments. Resolving issues quickly prevents minor problems from escalating into major ones, saving time and resources. Ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements also prevents potential fines or legal disputes. Successful real estate practices must prioritise efficient communication and prompt complaint resolution.
2	Customer-Focused Approach	S. Karna (2009)	A customer-focused approach in real estate involves understanding clients' unique needs and preferences to provide exceptional service and build lasting relationships. This involves actively listening and effectively communicating with clients, tailoring services to meet expectations. Real estate professionals must be responsive, address concerns promptly, provide accurate information, and offer personalised property recommendations. Building trust is crucial; agents must demonstrate reliability, integrity, and professionalism. This approach encourages repeat business and generates referrals, which is essential for long-term success in the industry. Ultimately, a customer-focused approach in real estate enhances client satisfaction, strengthens the agent's reputation, and leads to more successful transactions and a thriving business.
3	Societal Image	Connie and Fernando (2001)	The societal image in real estate is crucial to the industry's reputation and public trust. Real estate agents and companies must maintain a positive image through integrity, transparency, professionalism, ethical practices, fair pricing, and legal adherence. Community engagement and sustainability are also essential for a positive societal image. Emphasising eco-friendly practices and supporting environmentally friendly developments can enhance the industry's image. Continuous effort and commitment to ethical practices, transparency, and community involvement are necessary to build and maintain a positive societal image in real estate, which not only gains clients' trust and respect but also contributes to the overall perception of the industry.
4	Courteousness	Karna (2009)	Courteousness in real estate involves treating clients, colleagues, and stakeholders respectfully and carefully. It involves being polite, professional, and attentive, ensuring clear communication. Real estate agents must be punctual, listen to client needs, provide honest information, dress appropriately, and maintain a friendly demeanour. This courteous approach builds solid relationships and trust, demonstrating clients' value and respect. It can lead to positive experiences, lasting professional relationships, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and repeat business, which is essential for long-term success in the industry. A courteous real estate agent fosters a positive image and reputation, contributing to a more professional and trustworthy industry. This focus on respectful behaviour can enhance client satisfaction and loyalty, leading to a more fulfilling career in real estate.
5	Customer Feedback	Mohit (2010)	Customer feedback in real estate is crucial for improving services and client satisfaction. It involves actively seeking and listening to clients' opinions and experiences about their interactions with

			agents and services. Feedback can be gathered through surveys, online reviews, direct conversations, and follow-up emails. Positive feedback reinforces effective practices, while constructive criticism provides insights for enhancement. Consistently collecting and responding to feedback can build stronger client relationships, foster loyalty, and attract new business. A commitment to excellence and client satisfaction can boost an agent's reputation and credibility in the market.
6	Promptness	Haddad (2011)	Promptness in real estate is crucial for smooth transactions and maintaining strong client relationships. It involves timely communication, responding to inquiries, attending meetings, and following up on tasks. This demonstrates professionalism, reliability, and respect for clients' time, enhancing trust and satisfaction. Real estate agents must respond promptly to phone calls, emails, and property showings and provide updates throughout the buying or selling. Promptness gives professionals a competitive edge by securing opportunities quickly and efficiently. Prompt actions can significantly impact deals or bidding on properties in a market where timing is critical. A commitment to promptness improves the client's experience. It contributes to a real estate agent's reputation for reliability and efficiency, leading to more successful transactions, higher client satisfaction, and increased referrals and repeat business.
7	Healthy REA-Customer Relationship	Moyinola and Olatoye (2011)	A healthy Real Estate Agent (REA)-customer relationship is built on trust, transparency, and effective communication. The agent must understand each client's unique needs and preferences, providing personalised service that aligns with their goals. They should be responsive, address clients' concerns promptly, and provide honest information about properties, market conditions, and the buying or selling process. Mutual respect and professionalism are essential, and agents should handle interactions with courtesy and integrity. Regular follow-ups and client engagement reinforce the relationship and encourage long-term loyalty, benefiting the agent through repeat business and referrals. A healthy REA-customer relationship is a partnership where both parties work together towards a common goal, resulting in successful transactions and positive experiences for all involved.
8	Appointment of Experienced Construction Professionals	PiyushRathod et al. (2016)	The appointment of experienced construction professionals in real estate is crucial for meeting client expectations and resulting in successful transactions. Real estate professionals must understand and prioritise customer preferences to make informed decisions about hiring experts with the necessary skills and experience. These professionals have extensive knowledge of materials, techniques, and industry best practices and can customise projects to meet client desires. They can also anticipate and address potential challenges during the project, ensuring customer satisfaction. Their expertise leads to higher-quality outcomes and stronger client relationships. Aligning customer preferences with the skills and capabilities of experienced construction professionals ensures efficient execution of real estate projects, resulting in satisfied clients and successful transactions.
9	Technological Integration	Kattan (2020)	Technological integration in real estate is crucial for meeting client needs and expectations. Advancements in technology like virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) improve property search experiences, while AI and big data analytics offer personalised property recommendations. Blockchain technology ensures transparency and security in transactions, while IoT and property management software offer streamlined maintenance and management solutions. These technologies enable professionals to deliver efficient, transparent, and personalised services, leading to

			higher client satisfaction and successful transactions. Integrating these technologies in real estate ensures clients a seamless and efficient experience.
10	Sustainability and Environmental Consciousness	Andreassen (2023)	Customers and sustainability in real estate is growing as people become more environmentally conscious. Today's customers prioritise properties with green building practices, energy efficiency, and sustainable materials. This demand drives real estate developers and agents to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Sustainable features like solar panels, energy-efficient appliances, and water-saving fixtures attract eco-conscious buyers and renters. Green certifications like LEED or BREEAM increase a property's marketability and value, making it a wise investment. Customer preferences and the growing recognition of environmental responsibility drive the push for sustainability in real estate. Real estate professionals can meet modern consumers' needs and contribute to a more sustainable future by aligning with these values.
11	Location and Accessibility	Andreassen (2023)	Customer preferences for location and accessibility influence real estate decisions. Buyers and renters prioritise areas with convenience, amenities, and a desirable lifestyle, such as proximity to work, schools, public transportation, and essential services. Accessibility is also crucial, considering the availability of infrastructure like roads, sidewalks, and bike paths. Families prefer quality schools and safe neighbourhoods, while young professionals prefer vibrant urban areas with nightlife and cultural attractions. Well-connected properties with easy access to major highways, airports, and public transit systems are sought. At the same time, walkable neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces appeal to those seeking a balanced community experience. Understanding these preferences helps real estate professionals match clients with properties that meet their needs, leading to higher satisfaction and successful transactions.
12	Flexible and Multifunctional Spaces	Koren (2023)	The demand for flexible and multifunctional spaces in real estate is transforming the design and marketing of properties. As lifestyles evolve, buyers and renters seek spaces that can quickly adapt to their changing needs. These spaces can be easily converted into different uses, such as transforming a guest bedroom into a home office or a dining area into a study nook. Multifunctional design elements, such as movable walls, modular furniture, and built-in storage solutions, are attractive to modern consumers, allowing them to reconfigure spaces based on current requirements. This trend towards personalised and efficient living environments is reflected in the demand for such spaces, which can lead to higher satisfaction and successful transactions. Offering properties with these features appeals to a broader audience and enhances the property's value and usability in the long term.
13	Lifestyle and Amenities	Gowda (2024)	Customer preferences for lifestyle and amenities influence real estate decisions. Modern buyers and renters seek properties that meet their basic living needs and enhance their quality of life. These preferences include amenities like fitness centres, swimming pools, communal gardens, and playgrounds, which promote an active and healthy lifestyle. Proximity to lifestyle amenities like cafes, restaurants, shopping centres, and cultural venues enhances the living experience. Work-life balance is also a critical factor, with clients seeking properties with home office spaces or near business hubs to improve efficiency. Community-focused amenities like shared lounges, co-working spaces, and event areas appeal to those who value social interaction and community engagement. Real estate professionals can better meet clients' needs by understanding and catering to these preferences, leading to higher

			satisfaction, successful transactions, and a strong market reputation.
14	Affordability and Value	Herbst (2024)	Customer preferences for affordability and value are crucial in real estate decisions, influencing buyers and renters. Affordability refers to the cost of purchasing or renting a property within a budget that customers can manage without financial strain, especially for first-time buyers, young families, and individuals with fixed incomes. Real estate professionals must understand and address these budgetary constraints by offering financial flexibility and ease options. Value encompasses not only the price but also the benefits and features of the property relative to its cost. Clients seek properties that provide good value for their money, which often includes modern appliances, energy-efficient systems, quality finishes, and strategic locations. Understanding these preferences allows agents to tailor their services and listings to meet clients' financial capabilities while offering the best possible value for their investment.
15	Safety and Security	Haney & Furman (2023)	Real estate decisions are influenced by customer preference for safety and security. Buyers and renters prioritise properties and neighbourhoods with a secure environment, directly impacting their well-being. Key factors influencing these preferences include low crime rates, effective law enforcement, and security measures like gated communities, surveillance cameras, and well-lit streets. For families, proximity to reputable schools and safe play areas is crucial. Features like secure entry systems, alarm systems, and fire safety measures enhance security. Developers and agents can attract clients by highlighting these safety aspects and community initiatives. Ensuring properties and neighbourhoods meet high safety standards can increase client satisfaction, foster trust, and contribute to successful real estate transactions, benefiting individual clients and the real estate market.
16	Design and Aesthetics	Herbst (2024)	Customer preference for design and aesthetics in real estate significantly influences property choices. Modern buyers and renters are drawn to properties that reflect their personal style and offer functional living spaces. Design elements like open floor plans, natural light, quality finishes, and modern amenities are highly sought after. Aesthetics, including interior design choices like colour schemes, textures, and materials, create an inviting atmosphere. Exterior design makes a property stand out, including curb appeal, landscaped gardens, well-maintained facades, and attractive architectural details. Customers appreciate flexible, multifunctional spaces that can adapt to their changing needs. Sustainable and eco-friendly design elements, such as energy-efficient appliances and environmentally conscious materials, are becoming increasingly desirable. Real estate professionals can better meet client expectations by understanding and catering to these preferences, resulting in higher satisfaction and successful transactions.
17	Community and Social Responsibility	Herbst (2024)	Customer preference for community and social responsibility in real estate is driving market trends, resulting in increased demand for properties that promote individual well-being and collective good. These properties are highly desirable, as they foster social interaction and a sense of belonging. They also support local businesses and economic development within the community. Social responsibility in real estate also includes sustainability initiatives and environmentally friendly practices, such as green building practices, sustainable materials, and energy efficiency. Features like recycling programs, green roofs, and renewable energy sources resonate with eco-conscious buyers and renters. Companies that engage in philanthropic activities, support local charities, and participate in community service projects attract

18	Post-Pandemic Considerations	Charles S. Gascon & Jacob Haas (2020)	more socially responsible clients. By aligning their operations with these values, these companies not only meet customer preferences but also build a positive reputation and foster long-term loyalty. In essence, customer preference for community and social responsibility in real estate reflects a broader desire to live in environments that contribute positively to society and the planet. Post-pandemic real estate trends have shifted towards adaptable, health-focused, and community-oriented living environments. Remote work has increased demand for properties with dedicated home office spaces and flexible work environments. Outdoor spaces like gardens and parks are increasingly important for outdoor living and recreation. Health and safety features are crucial, with enhanced ventilation systems and touchless entry being highly desirable. Proximity to essential amenities and services has gained priority, supporting a more localised lifestyle. Community-oriented developments with shared spaces, such as fitness centres and social lounges, are in high demand. Sustainability is also a significant factor, with buyers preferring energy-efficient homes and sustainable building practices. The desire for flexible living arrangements has grown, reflecting a shift towards adaptable, health-focused, and community-oriented living environments.
19	Market Sentiment and Economic Factors	Cheung & Lee (2021)	Market sentiment and economic factors significantly influence customer preferences in real estate. Market sentiment, reflecting buyers' and investors' confidence, drives demand and pricing trends. Positive sentiment often leads to increased buying activity and higher property values, while negative sentiment can result in market slowdowns and price corrections. Economic factors like interest rates, employment rates, and GDP growth also shape customer preferences. Low interest rates encourage home purchases and investment, while high rates can deter buyers. Employment rates and economic stability affect buyers' financial confidence, affecting their willingness to invest in property. Moreover, economic conditions like inflation and government policies impact real estate markets. Understanding these dynamics helps real estate professionals anticipate trends, advise clients, and make informed decisions, enabling them to navigate the market effectively and accurately meet customer preferences.
20	Emotional Triggers	Herbst (2024)	Emotional triggers in real estate significantly influence customer preferences and decision-making processes. Key factors that trigger these emotions include a space's overall ambiance, architectural design, and personal feel. A home with warmth, coziness, and a functional layout can create a sense of comfort and belonging. Memories and aspirations also serve as powerful emotional triggers, as buyers might envision family gatherings, children playing in a safe backyard, or the joy of relaxing in a beautifully designed living room. The neighbourhood environment, such as friendly neighbours, community amenities, and proximity to cherished locations, can evoke positive feelings that tip the scales in favour of one property over another. The emotional impact of a property's potential, how it can be customised or improved to reflect the buyer's personal style and future dreams, can also be a compelling motivator. Understanding these emotional triggers enables real estate professionals to better stage and present properties, leading to successful transactions and satisfied clients.

The evolving role of estate agents is closely tied to shifting consumer demand in the real estate industry. Clients seek personalised services, market insights, and ethical practices, alongside access to digital tools such as virtual tours and online listings. Agents are expanding their roles to include value-added services such as market analysis, property staging, and sustainable housing solutions. Real estate agents can build stronger client

relationships and deliver exceptional service in a dynamic marketplace by adapting to market trends and customer expectations.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using survey questionnaires to gather data on the interaction between real estate agents and customer preferences. The area focused on in this study is Johor Bahru, Johor. Both real estate agents and clients participated through online surveys, with responses analysed to assess agents' behavioural patterns and responsibilities. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from journals, books, and other supporting documents. The data collection technique for this study involved distributing a questionnaire to 103 registered real estate agents and 100 experienced house purchasers as part of the research sample. Descriptive analysis and correlation analysis were used to analyse the gathered data.

Table 3 Overall Research Methodology

Research Objectives	Method	Variable	Tools	Output
To determine the evolving role of real estate agents (REA) and customer preference toward home-buying decisions.	Quantitative Data -Survey Questionnaire -103 respondents of Registered Real Estate Agent. -100 respondents of customer homebuyers.	Agent Role: - Property Showing - Contract Preparation and Review - Property Valuation - Closing Process - Negotiation - Property Marketing - Client Representation - Network of Industry Professionals	Descriptive statistic	Evolving role of real estate agents (REA) and customer preference.
To analyse the relationship between the evolving role of real estate agents (REA) and customer preference.		Customer Preference: - Timely Response to Customer Complaints - Customer-Focused Approach - Societal Image - Courteousness - Customer Feedback - Promptness - Healthy REA-Customer Relationship - Appointment of Experienced Construction Professionals - Technological Integration - Sustainability and Environmental Consciousness - Location and Accessibility - Flexible and Multifunctional Spaces - Lifestyle and Amenities - Affordability and Value - Safety and Security - Design and Aesthetics - Community and Social Responsibility - Post-Pandemic Considerations	Correlation analysis	Relationship between the evolving role of real estate agents (REA) and customer preference.

4. Results and Discussion

The study consisted of a questionnaire from 203 men and women aged between 25 and 40 > who were real estate agents and home buyers. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the participants' demographic data. Questions included their age, gender, and whether they were real estate agents or home buyers. Table 4 summarises the demographic characteristics of the sample population.

It is apparent from this table that there were very few respondents aged 40 years and above (19.2%). Most respondents came from the 30-35 age group (29.6%). The data also includes the character of each respondent. The highest percentage, 110 (54.2%), was found in females, while the lowest rate, 93 (45.8%), was found in males. According to the respondents' designations, 103 were Real Estate agents, and 100 were Home Buyers.

Table 4 Demographic profiles of all the respondents in the study

CHARACTERISTICS	NO OF RESPONDENT	
	N	%
Gender		
Female	110	54.2
Male	93	45.8
Age of Respondent		
25 – 30 years old	49	24.1
30 – 35 years old	60	29.6
35 – 40 years old	55	27.1
40 years old and above	39	19.2
Designation of the Respondent		
Real Estate Agent	103	50.7
Home Buyers	100	49.3

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Evolving REAs and Customer Preference Towards Home Buying Decision

The evolving role of estate agents reflects a blend of traditional practices and modern technological advancements. While combining conventional and digital marketing methods is widely recognised as essential for effective property promotion, the value of a strong industry network remains crucial for enhancing service quality and streamlining transactions. Technological innovations in AI and data analytics are reshaping the real estate landscape, enabling agents to cater to tech-savvy clients in competitive markets. However, traditional skills like negotiation and in-person property showings still play a vital role in meeting the diverse needs of buyers and sellers. The industry is thus transitioning towards a more dynamic, tech-enhanced approach while maintaining the core human expertise that remains central to successful real estate transactions. The overall findings on the evolving role of estate agents are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Descriptive Analysis of The Evolving Role of Estate Agents

No	Question	Mean
Q13	Combining conventional and digital marketing methods is effective for promoting properties.	3.54
Q16	A strong network of industry specialists is critical for improving service quality and transaction efficiency.	3.43
Q1	Technological advancements have significantly transformed the role of real estate agents.	3.41
Q8	A final walk-through is important to ensure the property is in the agreed-upon condition and all repairs are completed.	3.39
Q9	Obtaining homeowners insurance and establishing an escrow account for property taxes and insurance is important.	3.39
Q5	Digital transformation improves agent efficiency while maintaining some manual real estate contract management processes.	3.38
Q4	Automation improves contract management by reducing time and allowing agents to focus on more critical responsibilities.	3.38
Q12	An effective online presence through real estate websites, social media, and digital marketing is required to reach a larger audience.	3.35
Q7	Predictive analytics has had a significant impact on real estate investments or decisions.	3.33
Q14	AI provides more accurate and reliable property valuation estimates by analysing real-time data and market trends.	3.27
Q6	Predictive analytics is particularly helpful at assisting REA in making data-driven choices.	3.25
Q2	Virtual and 3D tours effectively give potential buyers a realistic view of the property.	3.25
Q10	AI chatbots enhance the client experience by providing quick and accurate responses.	3.22
Q15	AI assists landlords in increasing their chances of a successful sale by attracting potential buyers and maintaining property conditions.	3.22
Q3	Artificial intelligence (AI) and data analysis can help real estate agents work more efficiently.	3.13
Q11	AI chatbots are more effective than traditional methods in handling customer queries and arranging viewings.	2.97

The findings from Table 5 emphasise that customer preferences in real estate strongly align with factors that directly enhance their quality of life, including exceptional customer service, safety, and community balance. The highest-rated statements reflect the importance of personalised services, secure environments, and well-rounded neighbourhoods that cater to lifestyle needs. On the other hand, lower-rated statements, such as the preference for multifunctional spaces or financial flexibility, suggest that these aspects are less critical compared to other priorities like location, amenities, and security. Real estate professionals can maximise client satisfaction and success by focusing on these top priorities while addressing concerns around lower-rated preferences to meet evolving customer demands effectively.

Table 6 *Descriptive Analysis of Customer Preferences*

No	Question	Mean
Q2	The REA should prioritise customer service and meet prospective house buyers' expressed and inferred demands.	3.59
Q11	Real estate professionals must ensure a balanced community experience when selecting properties, matching the client's preferences with suitable options.	3.58
Q15	Choosing a property with low crime rates is crucial, and security measures like gated communities, surveillance cameras, and well-lit streets enhance its appeal.	3.54
Q17	Customer preference for community and social responsibility reflects societal and planet-positive living environments, encompassing sustainability initiatives and environmentally friendly practices in real estate.	3.52
Q1	The REA should take immediate and quick action to attend to complaints raised by the customer.	3.51
Q8	Making an informed decision about hiring a construction specialist based on the client's preferences is important. This is because experienced construction professionals have extensive knowledge of materials and techniques.	3.50
Q9	Technology integration enhances customer satisfaction by enabling efficient and transparent services, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of professionals.	3.50
Q3	The politeness/ kindness of the REA (or his site/ office representatives) shown towards the customer.	3.47
Q4	Periodical feedback from customers is crucial regarding their level of expectation and fulfillment of needs.	3.45
Q19	Real estate professionals must understand economic factors to provide effective advice to clients, as economic stability significantly influences buyers' real estate investment decisions.	3.44
Q10	Real estate professionals should proactively promote environmental sustainability by adopting eco-friendly practices to meet the needs of modern consumers.	3.40
Q18	The demand for community-oriented developments with shared spaces, such as fitness centers and social lounges, is primarily driven by health and safety features.	3.39
Q5	Real estate agents must be attentive to client needs and ensure clear communication. Courtesy involves treating clients, colleagues, and stakeholders with respect and care.	3.39
Q16	Interior design elements, including color schemes, textures, and materials, create a welcoming atmosphere. This appeals to clients who value flexible, multifunctional spaces that adapt to their evolving needs.	3.34
Q7	Providing honest information about real estate and market conditions and trust is an important component of a healthy REA-client relationship.	3.30
Q6	Real estate agents must respond promptly to inquiries and communicate timely. Promptness is crucial for smooth transactions in real estate.	3.28
Q20	Emotional triggers influence buyers, including friendly neighbours, community amenities, and proximity to cherished locations, which significantly impact the appeal of a property.	3.28
Q13	Understanding and catering to lifestyle preferences can achieve higher client satisfaction, and proximity to amenities like cafes, restaurants, shopping centres, and cultural venues enhances the living experience.	3.27
Q14	Real estate professionals must provide clients with options that offer financial flexibility and convenience as clients seek properties that offer better value.	3.23
Q12	Evolving lifestyles require adaptable and multi-functional spaces. Most customers seek spaces that can accommodate their rapidly changing needs.	3.15

4.2 Correlation Analysis of the Evolving Role of Real Estate (REAs) and Customer Preferences.

The relationship between the evolving role of estate agents and customer preferences has been analysed using the Pearson correlation test—the result is shown in Table 7 and the scatter plot (refer to Figure 1) below. There was a strong correlation between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences, $r = 0.457$, $n = 204$, $p < 0.001$. The R-value of 0.457 showed a strong positive linear correlation between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences. In summary, there were significant differences between the two variables, as indicated by a p-value of less than 0.001.

Table 7 Summary table for Pearson's correlation analysis

	Mean $\pm$ SD	Pearson's correlation, r	p -value
The Evolving Role of REA	3.32 ± 0.64	0.457	<0.01
Customer Preferences	3.41 ± 0.80		

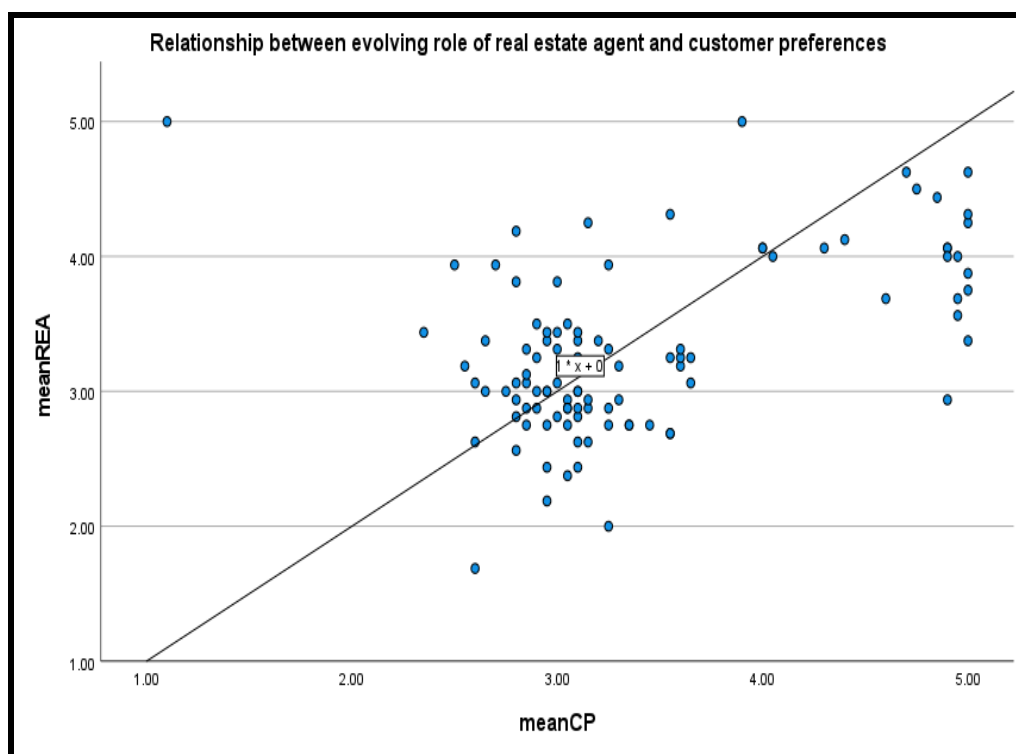


Fig. 1 The relationship between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences

The descriptive analysis highlighted the importance of integrating traditional practices with modern technologies for real estate agents, while customer preferences prioritised exceptional service, safety, and community balance. A strong positive correlation was identified between the evolving roles of real estate agents and customer preferences, emphasising the need for real estate professionals to adapt their practices to meet client expectations. In summary, these findings highlight the dynamic relationship between evolving real estate practices and customer demands, laying the groundwork for improving service delivery in the sector.

The research examines the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences in home-buying decisions through a quantitative approach, utilising questionnaires. The findings indicate that agents prioritise combining conventional and digital marketing methods, maintaining strong networks, and leveraging technological advancements to meet modern demands. However, scepticism about AI and chatbots exists among agents, as many prefer personal interactions due to concerns over AI's effectiveness and potential job displacement.

Regarding customer preferences, the top priorities include personalised service, a balanced community experience, and security, emphasising low crime rates and safety features. Customers value agents who address both expressed and implied needs, offering properties that match their lifestyle preferences. However, critical

views on financial flexibility and adaptable spaces were lower, as some customers prioritised location, aesthetics, and immediate needs over affordability and flexibility.

The second objective is to investigate the relationship between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences. The research findings were gathered using an SPSS approach to determine correlations between two respondents. According to the research analysis, a strong correlation was found between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences, $r = 0.457$, $n = 204$, $p < 0.001$. The strong correlation between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences suggests a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as the role of real estate agents evolves, primarily through the adoption of new marketing strategies, leveraging technology, and focusing on customer service, there is a corresponding shift in customer preferences towards valuing these aspects as well. For example, customers increasingly prioritise personalised service, security features, and a balanced community experience where agents adapt their strategies to meet modern demands. The statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) indicates that this correlation is highly unlikely to be due to chance, reinforcing the idea that the evolving practices of real estate agents have a meaningful impact on customer expectations and preferences. In essence, the evolution of real estate agents' roles, including the adoption of technology and enhancements to service quality, aligns with and supports customer preferences. As agents adapt, customers' expectations change to reflect these new approaches.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study provide a foundation for future research, offering valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of real estate and customer preferences. The recommendations presented here serve as a roadmap for exploring the impact of AI technology adoption on customer demand in the real estate sector. As part of this quantitative research design, targeted respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire that captured their perspectives on various subjects. For future studies in this area, it is recommended that researchers continue to apply quantitative research methodologies, incorporating both real estate agents and homebuyers as respondents. This dual approach will enable a comprehensive analysis, providing a clearer understanding of the relationship between technological advancements and customer preferences, ultimately strengthening the validity and relevance of the research findings.

In conclusion, this study successfully achieved all its objectives by analysing questionnaire data utilising the SPSS program. The findings reveal a clear relationship between the evolving role of real estate agents and customer preferences, highlighting how various factors influence agents' choices regarding AI adoption. Implementing AI in the real estate sector not only addresses current needs but also can increase technology adoption among industry professionals. Despite these valuable insights, the study acknowledges several limitations and offers recommendations for future research to enhance the understanding of these dynamics further. Ultimately, this research provides crucial insights for all real estate agents, enabling them to understand better the challenges and opportunities associated with adopting new technologies to enhance the efficiency and convenience of property purchase and sale management.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Author Contribution

*The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Aini Najihah Ahmad Halim, Mohd Hafizal Ishak; **data collection:** Aini Najihah Ahmad Halim; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Aini Najihah Ahmad Halim, Mohd Hafizal Ishak; **draft manuscript preparation:** Aini Najihah Ahmad Halim, Mohd Hafizal Ishak, Azlina Md Yassin, Nurul Afiah Ahmad, Haidaliza Masram, Puvaneswary Thanaraju. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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