

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Power of Differentiation Element(s) in Architecture Design

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Abstract

In the business world, “Differentiation” is a strategy used by competitors to set their products or services apart from similar offerings in the market. However, the idea of integrating differentiation into architectural design is not widely recognized among architects, and many remain unfamiliar with the concept. Even those who have some awareness of differentiation rarely implement it in their work, as it demands a highly skilled architect with a strong imagination and a solid understanding of business and investment returns in construction projects. Furthermore, differentiation in architectural design is seldom explored in academic literature, with only a few instances where the term is used to refer to characteristics or concepts that stray from its intended meaning. This paper examines the impact of incorporating a unique building component into a facility—one that is absent in similar structures at local, regional, or international levels. In some cases, such distinctive features may even enable the building to be considered for inclusion in the Guinness World Records. The paper begins by exploring the origins of the differentiation concept, investigates its misapplication in other fields, and analyzes a successful project that effectively employs differentiation in its architectural design. This project is then compared to the top 13 mixed-use developments currently dominating the real estate market in Egypt. Finally, the discussion section analyzes the entire topic in terms of design concept, attraction power, social impact, and return on investment.

Keywords: Real estate in Egypt, Gated Communities, Differentiation Element, Architectural Design, Guinness World Records architectural projects

1. Introduction

Architecture has historically been linked to iconic structures like churches and temples, fulfilling a need for familiar reference points in our increasingly secular society. However, in the rush to create new icons, many designers have transformed ordinary buildings into unnecessarily complex shapes that primarily aim to attract attention, often featuring whimsical names such as Spiral, Cocoon, Cloud, or Vortex. Some buildings, such as the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, aspire to iconic status but may not achieve it as great architectural works. Instead,

its significance often lies in its abstract form, raising questions about the applicability of such designs to conventional structures like hospitals or schools. Guggenheim’s debut coincided with the rise of “Look-at-me architecture.”¹ where eye-catching designs prioritize aesthetics over functionality, resulting in a competitive cycle of increasingly extravagant and memorable structures. [1]

¹“Look at me architecture” is an American term that refers to buildings characterized by exaggerated shapes and forms. Designed by architects seeking attention and recognition, this style often prioritizes spectacle over aesthetics, functionality, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness.

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Problem

Overall, the concept of incorporating a differentiation element into architectural design is not commonly known among architects, and many are unfamiliar with it. Even architects who are somewhat aware of “Differentiation” rarely apply it in their work, as it requires a highly talented architect who possesses both a vivid imagination and experience in the realms of business and return on investment for construction projects. Additionally, differentiation in architectural design is seldom addressed in academic literature, with only a handful of topics using the term “Differentiation” to refer to other characteristics and concepts that diverge from its intended meaning.

Scope

The scope of this research does not investigate design features that set a building apart through the use of advanced materials, cutting-edge technologies, or attention-grabbing “Look - at - me architecture.” Nor aiming to conduct a thorough investigation of the Egyptian real estate market. Instead, this study focuses on the impact of incorporating a new building component into an entire facility—one that is not found in other buildings of similar function at the local, regional, or international levels. Which in many instances, such unique components may even qualify the building for inclusion in the Guinness World Records.

Goal

The objective of this research is to investigate the impact and significance of incorporating a “Unique” architectural design element—specifically, a “Unique” building component—into a building facility. This study aims to demonstrate how such a unique feature can enhance the overall success of the design, the building itself, and the construction project as a whole. By analyzing the role of this unique component, the research explores its potential benefits, including improved aesthetics, increased functionality, and enhanced user experience. Ultimately, the findings are expected to highlight the importance of adding a unique architectural design component to the overall design in achieving project goals, increase traffic of visitors and attraction to the project, and contribute to the field of architecture by showcasing how unique design elements can elevate the quality and effectiveness of building projects in terms of expected revenues and return on investments.

Origin of the Concept

In economics and marketing, “Product differentiation”

(Or simply differentiation) refers to the process of distinguishing a product or service from others to enhance its appeal to a specific target market. This involves setting it apart not only from competitors’ products but also from the company’s own offerings. The term was first introduced by Edward Chamberlin² in his 1933 book, “The Theory of Monopolistic Competition.” [2]

A Simple Explanation

Picture two grocery stores³ situated close to each other in the same neighborhood, both competing to sell identical products like groceries, beverages, frozen meats, chicken, sausages, and hamburgers. Since they both provide essential daily items, they are guaranteed a steady monthly revenue. Given their proximity, it’s likely they share the same market share of customers, divided evenly at 50/50, assuming their product quality and service are at the same level. If one of these stores aims to attract more customers and increase its market share beyond its competitor, it must consider offering a unique product not available at the other store. This new offering would set it apart and provide a competitive advantage, serving as a “Differentiation element “designed to draw in more clients. For example, offering cooked food for households that are busy working or do not have enough time for preparing daily cooked food while the other store does not offer this extra product or service.

Differentiation in the World of Products and Business

Product differentiation is a strategy employed by businesses to distinguish their products or services from similar offerings in the market. This approach aims to create a competitive advantage and establish unique selling propositions (USPs) that set a product apart from its competitors. Additionally, companies with a diverse product portfolio may use differentiation to distinguish their various products from one another, thus preventing cannibalization. In recent years, many industries have experienced a significant reduction in barriers to market entry, resulting in a surge of competitive products.

²Edward Hastings Chamberlin (1899–1967) was an influential American economist born in Washington; He made significant contributions to microeconomics, particularly in competition theory and consumer choice, coining the term “product differentiation” to explain how suppliers can charge higher prices than what perfect competition would allow. [3]

³The author of this manuscript presents this explanation to clarify the concept of differentiation and make it more understood for readers.

In increasingly saturated markets, differentiation becomes essential for a product's survival. Any aspect of a product can serve as a differentiating factor⁴. While marketing primarily focuses on product positioning and often serves as the initial touchpoint for customers or prospects, differentiation extends beyond marketing—it encompasses every interaction a customer has with the product.

Generally, the distinguishing factor that sets products apart and defines a product's unique selling proposition (USP) can be virtually anything that makes it unique or different from others in the market. [4] Marketing or product differentiation involves outlining the distinctions between products or services, resulting in a list of these differences. This process aims to highlight the unique features of a firm's product and convey its value. [5]

Differentiation in the World of Education

Differentiation in the World of Education is a teaching approach that customizes lessons to align with the unique interests, needs, and strengths of each student. By implementing this technique, educators can provide students with options and flexibility in their learning processes, allowing for a more personalized educational experience. This approach recognizes that students have diverse learning styles and paces, enabling teachers to adapt their instructional strategies accordingly. Through differentiated instruction, teachers can modify content, processes, and products based on individual student profiles.

For example, they may offer varied reading materials, employ different teaching methods, or assign tailored projects that cater to students' preferences and abilities. This level of personalization fosters engagement and motivation, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. Ultimately, differentiated instruction aims to create an inclusive classroom environment where all students feel valued and supported.

⁴Product differentiation can be categorized into three main types: horizontal, vertical, and mixed differentiation. (i) Horizontal differentiation: involves products that offer similar quality and price, relying on personal preference, such as Pepsi vs. Coca-Cola or different bottled water brands. (ii) Vertical differentiation: depends heavily on price, where higher-priced products are perceived as having better quality, like branded items versus generics or designer clothing compared to basic options. (iii) Mixed differentiation: also known as simple differentiation, combines various factors and is often grouped with horizontal differentiation, exemplified by vehicles from different manufacturers in the same class and price range.

By focusing on individual needs, teachers can help students achieve their full potential, leading to improved academic outcomes and a deeper understanding of the material. This method not only enhances the overall learning experience but also equips students with the skills necessary to succeed in a diverse and ever-changing world. [6]

Miss Conceptions and Miss Use of the Term “Differentiation” in the World of Architecture Design

In general, the concept of differentiation is not commonly known among architects, and most of them are unfamiliar with it. Even architects who possess some knowledge or awareness of differentiation seldom incorporate it into their designs. However, certain buildings, particularly those from ancient civilizations, exhibit characteristics of differentiation through their unique designs.

A prime example is the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Furthermore, differentiation in architectural design is rarely found in the literature, with only a few articles using the word “Differentiation” to describe other characteristics and concepts that are distinct from the coined meaning of “Differentiation”.

For example, in a research article titled: “Differentiation as a Form of Knowledge Production in Architecture” by [7] published by North Dakota state University - “Differentiation” is seen as the slight discrepancies between various 3-Dimensional models of the same building generated by different architectural resources. (Figure 1) shows discrepancies between various 3-Dimensional models of “Villa Savoye” generated via different resources

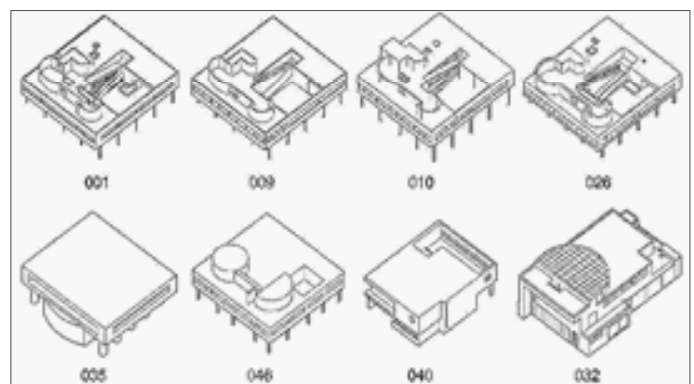


Figure 1. Shows discrepancies between various 3-Dimensional models of “Villa Savoye” generated via different resources. Ref. [7]

A second example of miss interpretation of the concept of differentiation in a way that differs from its original intent is akin to the previous example, but in this case, differentiation is used to delineate variations

of multiple roofing design options within a generated parametric structure, as illustrated in the following (Figure 2). [8]

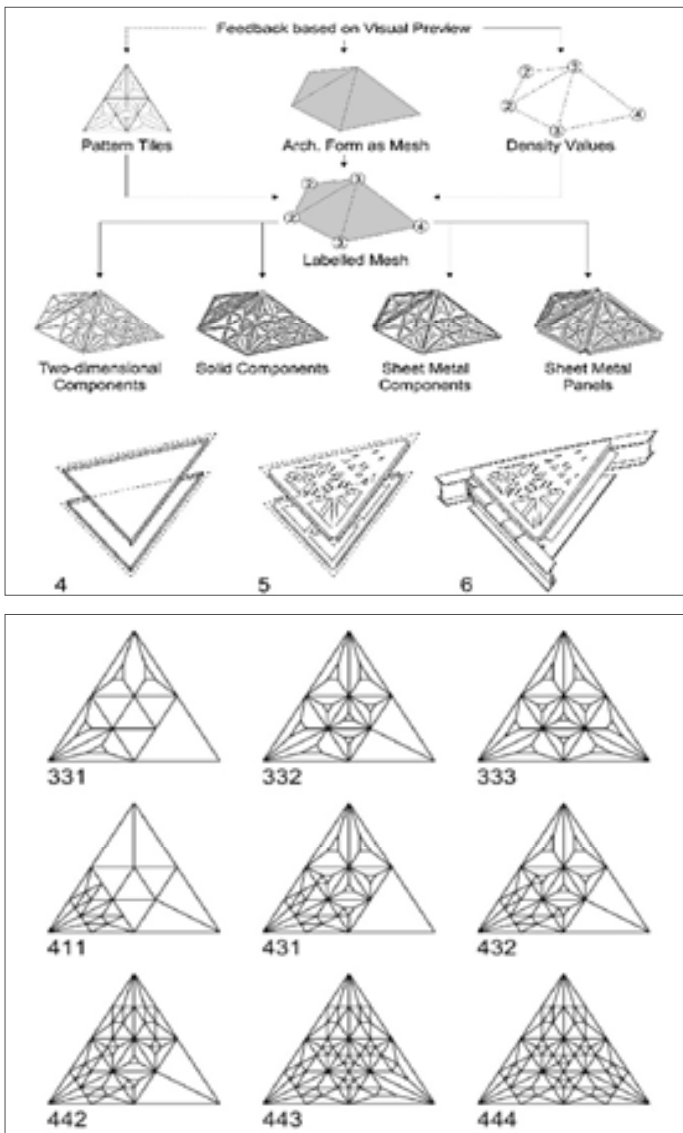


Figure 2. Shows how differentiation is used to delineate variations of multiple roofing design options within a generated parametric structure. Ref. [8]

A third example of miss interpretation of the concept of differentiation in a manner that diverges from its original purpose can be seen in certain design studio tutoring methods.

Some design instructors have developed a teaching approach outside the conventional design studio pedagogies at the undergraduate Manufacturing and Design Engineering (MaDE) program, introduced by the Segal Design Institute at Northwestern University in Sheridan Road, United States.

This design studio concept was crafted by Professors Dan Brown and David Gatchell, who rejected the idea of presenting students with a predefined problem or a design process with rigid checkpoints.

Instead, they promote exploratory research, creative critical thinking, and rigorous evidence-based reasoning and validation to encourage students to develop unique design solutions for real-world issues they identify.

They view this approach as a differentiation teaching method, which they refer to as “Differentiation by Design,” offering students a powerful and enriching experience. [9]

2. Method

“Tivoli Dome Heliopolis”, Almaza Area, Cairo, Egypt

An almost neglected old hotel situated in the Almaza neighborhood (Figure 3) part of Cairo’s renowned Heliopolis urban area known for its high standard of living, has been transformed architecturally into a collection of restaurants and coffee shops surrounding its old swimming pool, which has been converted into an artificial lake.



Figure 3. Screen capture showing a google map of the Tivoli dome in Almaza, Heliopolis, Cairo. Egypt. Ref. [10]

Design Components

Tivoli Dome provides a venue for Cairo’s high society to socialize and enjoy private meals at one of its 16 international restaurants and cafes. The establishments featured at Tivoli Dome include Outback Steakhouse, Chili’s, The Noodle House, Starbucks Coffee, Cedars, Coffeshop Company, Cafe Etoile, Tres Bon, Crave, Mori Sushi & Grill, Pascucci Cafe, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Beans, Pies & Cookies, Cilantro, Burger King, and Venezia.

The venue boasts Egypt’s largest outdoor LED screen, measuring 20 meters (5m x 4m), which broadcasts a special channel featuring music videos directly from the United States, as well as major soccer games for guests to enjoy.

The Architectural Differentiation Element in the Tivoli Dome

The concept of clustering popular café chains and restaurants around this open lake, originally the hotel's old swimming pool, (Figures 4, and 5) was compelling enough to earn it a Guinness World Record as the largest restaurant complex located around an open lake in the world.

The Tivoli Dome in Cairo, Egypt, has been awarded a Guinness World Record for having the Largest Food Court in the world.

The official ceremony took place on the evening of November 26th at 8:00 PM at Tivoli Dome, located at 70 Omar Ibn El Khattab Street in the Almaza area of Heliopolis. [11]



Figure 4. Group of arial scenes of the Tivoli Dome. Ref. [12]

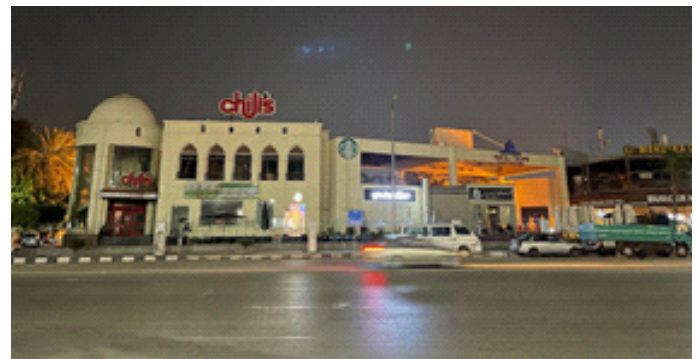


Figure 5. Night street scene of the Tivoli dome entrance. Ref. [13] Photo credit to "kareim Hany"



Anatomy of Today's Egyptian Real Estate Market

The real estate market encompasses the buying and selling of properties, including residential properties like houses and apartments, as well as commercial properties such as office buildings and industrial sites.

Beyond property sales, this market also includes leasing activities and the overall valuation of real estate.

It is divided into two main segments: residential and commercial real estate. The residential real estate market specifically focuses on property transactions and leases, which are further categorized into leases for apartments and houses.

Insights

Egypt's real estate market is witnessing increased demand as foreign investors are drawn to the country's stable economic growth and government initiatives.

Additionally, the average number of rooms per resident and the distribution of dwelling types—whether in houses or apartments—are tracked for both owners and renters. [15]

The commercial real estate sector is influenced by various factors, including the local economy, population growth, interest rates, and government policies.

Property prices in this sector can vary widely based on location, property type, building age, and local economic conditions. In some regions, government agencies regulate the commercial real estate market, establishing rules and standards for property transactions.

Moreover, the commercial real estate market serves as a crucial indicator of overall economic health, as the demand for commercial space is affected by employment rates, consumer confidence, and financing availability.

This market is also shaped by emerging trends, such as rapid technological advancements, the rise of e-commerce, increasing demand for co-working spaces, flexible work arrangements (both on-site and remote), and a focus on sustainability. Given these trends, the commercial real estate market is expected to continue growing steadily in the future.

Real Estate Market Competition Issues Concerning Innovative Architectural Design Ideas

The current Egyptian real estate and entertainment facilities market is characterized by intense competition among real estate developers.

In a bid to attract more clients, they are incorporating various architectural features into their residential, entertainment, and retail projects, which makes them dare to set high prices for their properties, positioning them among premium market offerings.

However, these developers face a common challenge: their architectural elements largely resemble one another. Many projects showcase identical landscapes, similar lakes, and comparable designs, leaving little to differentiate one developer from another beyond price competition.

By thinking outside the box and introducing unique architectural components into their projects, developers could alleviate the fierce competition they currently face in the Egyptian market.

The following (Table 1) is a comparison of the top 13 compounds in Egypt [16] primarily focusing on

residential facilities with additional amenities. A key observation across all these compounds is the striking similarity in their architectural components and amenities; there is a noticeable lack of unique or innovative architectural differentiation.

This analysis reveals a pattern of imitation, with many projects featuring identical landscapes, similar lakes, and comparable designs.

As a result, there is minimal distinction between developers, with the primary differentiating factor being price competition.

(Table 1) compiles similarities of design ideas across the top 13 Compounds in Egypt’s major urban areas: New Cairo district, 6th of October City, and Sheikh Zayed City (Figures 6, 7, and 8)



Figure 6. Google map image locating the New Cairo District in Egypt. Ref. [17]



Figure 7. Google map image locating the 6th of October City Egypt. Ref. [18]

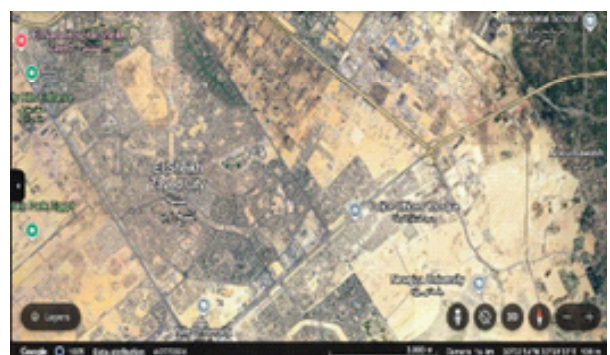




Figure 8. Google map image locating the Sheikh Zayed City in Egypt. Ref. [19]

Table 1. Compiled by the author of this manuscript showcasing similarities of design ideas across the top 13 Compounds Egypt's major urban areas: New Cairo district, 6th of October City, and Sheikh Zayed City information in the table is compiled from Ref[17]

A	New Cairo District
	<p>1. Palm Hills Katameya⁵ Developed by Palm Hills Developments, (Figure 9) a reputable real estate company in Egypt. Architectural features include Extensive green spaces and water elements for a serene living environment, Full-service compound with outstanding features like the Palm Hills Social and Sports Club, Gym, Swimming pools, Various restaurants, E-compound 24/7 security, Residential Facilities: Villas Twin houses, Penthouses, Apartments, Studios, and Duplexes</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 9. Photograph of Palm Hills Katameya. Ref. [16]</p>
	<p>2. Katameya Heights⁶ One of Cairo's premier compounds, renowned for its exceptional amenities and premium architectural designs. (Figure 10) Architectural features combine a top-notch golf resort with residential properties, setting it apart as a leading development with an array of amenities, including Tennis courts, Clubhouse, Health club, Gold's Gym, Nursery, Restaurants, and Kids' centers. residential facility ranges from apartments with different areas, and villas like Twin houses, and Duplexes</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Figure 10. Photograph of Katameya Heights. Ref. [16]</p>

⁵Palm Hills Katameya is Situated on 1 million sqm in New Cairo just off South 90 Rd., near the American University in Cairo.

⁶Katameya Heights is situated on Katameya Road, near the Ring Road. Close to Choueifat district and West Arabella district

3. Mountain View Hyde Park⁷

The overall design prioritizes a harmonious connection with nature, providing a tranquil escape from the bustling city streets. (Figure 11) It includes expansive green spaces and water features, with architectural elements such as landscaped areas, artificial lakes, schools, shops, walking paths, pedestrian bridges, bike lanes, and 24/7 security. Mountain View Hyde Park offers a range of residential options, including apartments, villas, townhouses, and twin houses.



Figure 11. Photograph of Mountain View Hyde Park. Ref. [16]

4. Mivida⁸

Mivida, (Figure 12) which translates conveniently into Spanish as "My Life," is a project launched by Emaar Misr, a prominent UAE-based development company. With an emphasis on eco-friendly living and green spaces, the compound features intricately designed buildings surrounded by expansive green areas. Architectural Facilities and Services include Lavender gardens, Playgrounds, Forests, lake, social centers, a park spanning 33 acres and residential facilities including Apartments, Townhouses, Villas, and Twin houses. Additionally, Mivida offers integrated services such as offices and clinics. schools, healthcare services, a shopping center, restaurants, cafés, a clubhouse, a sports club, and a business park.

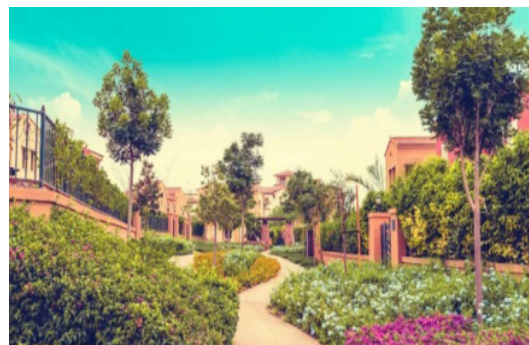


Figure 12. Photograph of Mivida. Ref. [16]

⁷Mountain View Hyde Park is situated overlooking Al Jazeera Club in New Cairo, Egypt, just a few minutes from the Ring Road.

⁸Mivida is located in New Cairo directly on 90 Rd. Nearby Attractions; With a strategic location, Mivida is situated close to New Cairo's most prominent attractionst

5. Villette

Villette (Figure 13) is created by Sodic Developments with spacious areas of greenery, Solar systems and sustainability functionalities are taken into consideration at Villette, the architecture design features Open green spaces, Parks, Sports park, Green sky roofs, Swimming pools, Gym, Medical care center, and Retail shops. Residential facilities include Apartments, Villas: Townhouses, Twin houses, Duplexes, and Sky condos.



Figure 13. Photograph of Villette Residential units. Ref. [16]

6. Eastown⁹

Eastown is another project by Sodic located in New Cairo. Facilities and Services: The compound is characterized by its serene countryside surroundings and beautiful landscapes, providing a range of entertainment services, including Restaurants, Cafés, Shopping boutiques, Eastown Hub, 24/7 security, Clubhouse, Swimming pool, Water features, and Spa. Property Types include Apartments, Villas: Townhouses, and Twin houses. Each residential unit offers the privacy residents desire while being just a short walk from the compound’s social hub. Additionally, the units are designed to meet the latest European standards and come in a variety of options.



Figure 14. Photograph of Eastown. Ref. [16]

⁹Eastown is situated in the 5th Settlement of New Cairo, just off 90 Rd on Al Nasr Rd.

7. Uptown Cairo¹⁰

Uptown Cairo (Figure 15) is another project by Emaar Misr, situated 200 meters above the ground in the heart of Cairo. This gated community features expansive green spaces with stunning golf views. The design of the residential properties is inspired by Spanish architecture. Uptown Cairo consists of eight sub-communities, offering a wide variety of sizes and types. Amenities include international golf course, Golf clubhouse, 17 community centers, Swimming pools, Gyms, Lounges, Restaurants and cafés. Property Types: Apartments and Villas: Twin houses, Townhouses, Duplexes, and Penthouses



Figure 15. Photograph of Uptown Cairo. Ref. [16]

B 6th of October City

8. New Giza¹¹

New Giza, (Figure 16) named after its developer, resembles a fully integrated city rather than just a compound. It comprises nine communities equipped with state-of-the-art facilities across various sectors, including entertainment, education, and essential services. Facilities and Services: New Giza University, Sports club, Medical center, Restaurants, Cafés, Five-star luxury hotel, Office spaces, Art galleries, Retail shops, Music Hall, Galleria Grove, and a Golf club. Property Types: Apartments and Villas: Townhouses, Twin houses, Duplexes, and Penthouses



Figure 16. Photograph of New Giza. Ref. [16]

¹⁰Uptown Cairo 1,200-acre community is situated in Mokattam, New Cairo.

¹¹New Giza is situated on elevated land 22 km from Cairo-Alexandria Road in 6th of October City.

9. Mountain View October Park¹²

Mountain View October Park (Figure 17) is uniquely distinguished by its breathtaking views of the Great Pyramids of Giza. The compound boasts expansive green spaces and features Mountain View’s signature designs, including spacious layouts and water features. Residents can enjoy various facilities and services, such as a sports center and medical facilities, all complemented by American-inspired architecture. Property types in the community include iVillas, villas, and townhouses



Figure 17. Photograph of Mountain View October Park. Ref[16]

10. Palm Hills October¹³

Palm Hills October (Figure 18) is situated in the heart of 6th of October City, covering an impressive area of 2 million square meters, with a design centered around lush green spaces and beautiful lawns. The community offers a range of amenities, including landscaped lawns, abundant greenery, a 27-hole golf course, 24/7 security, swimming pools, a designated kids’ area, a shopping center, retail shops, a social hub, and a healthcare center. The property types available include apartments, villas, twin houses, and townhouses.



Figure 18. Photograph of Palm Hills October. Ref. [16]

¹²Mountain View October Park is located in 6th of October City, adjacent to New Giza and Palm Hills October, just off Cairo-Alex Desert Road.

¹³Palm Hills October is situated in First 6th of October City, conveniently located just off the 26th of July Corridor.

11. O West Orascom¹⁴

O West Orascom, (Figure 19) developed by Orascom Developments, offers a fully integrated town-like environment that features a wide array of facilities and services. Residents can enjoy swimming pools, cafés, clinics, schools, a social club, and designated kids’ areas, all set within beautiful landscapes. The community also includes cycling lanes, walking tracks, abundant greenery, a business area, a retail mall, and supermarkets, along with maintenance services for convenience. Property types available within this vibrant community include apartments, villas, twin houses, and townhouses.



Figure 19. Photograph of O West Orascom. Ref. [16]

C Sheikh Zayed City

12. Westown¹⁵

Westown (Figure 20) located in the heart of the Beverly Hills compound, is another remarkable project by Sodic. The compound features the well-known Westown Hub, which provides a variety of recreational options for residents. amenities such as restaurants, cafés, retail shops, supermarkets, and office spaces, as well as nearby schools and 24/7 security. Property types available in Westown include villas, apartments, duplexes, twin houses, and townhouses.



Figure 20. Photograph of Westown. Ref. [16]

¹⁴O West Orascom is located on Al Wahat Road in First 6th of October City

¹⁵Westown compound is situated within Beverly Hills in Sheikh Zayed, offering direct access to the Cairo-Alexandria Road

13. Allegria¹⁶

Allegria (Figure 21) features an exclusive golf course designed by Sodic in collaboration with international designer and golf expert Greg Norman, offering expansive views of lush greenery. The community is equipped with a variety of facilities and services, including an international golf course, shops, golf equipment stores, service centers, recreational services, green areas, swimming pools, and several distinct sub-communities. Property types available in Allegria include villas, twin houses, townhouses, apartments, penthouses, and duplexes.



Figure 21. Photograph of Allegria. Ref. [16]

With Potential Risks Facing Today's Egypt's Real Estate Market, concerns regarding a potential real estate bubble in the Egyptian market occasionally arise. However, such assertions require careful examination, especially considering the strong indicators of the market's current resilience and capacity to navigate challenges. Addressing the concept of a real estate bubble, the majority of property purchases are for personal use rather than speculation, which apparently might contribute to market stability but does not guarantee it.

Although the government has instituted regulations for real estate development companies to mitigate speculative practices, the market does face tangible challenges, such as rising prices that affect purchasing power, a lack of affordable housing for lower-income groups, and the necessity for real estate products that align with evolving consumer preferences.

Egypt's real estate market has shown temporary resilience in adapting to economic difficulties, including currency devaluation and rising inflation. Companies have responded by offering payment solutions and implementing new marketing strategies, which have enabled continued growth. [16]

¹⁶Allegria is situated between the Cairo/Alex Desert Road and the Dahshour axis.

4. Discussion

Research Limitations in Literature

The concept of differentiation in architectural design, particularly from a business and return on investment perspective, is seldom explored in existing literature. Only a limited number of articles utilize the term "Differentiation," often applying it to various characteristics and concepts that deviate from its original definition. As a result, the idea of integrating a differentiation element into architectural design is not widely recognized among architects, many of whom lack familiarity with the concept.

Moreover, academic literature rarely addresses differentiation in architectural design. When it does, it often misapplies the term, using it to describe aspects unrelated to its core meaning. This lack of focus on differentiation leaves a significant gap in the understanding of how it can enhance architectural projects. The emphasis is often placed on aesthetic and functional considerations, with less attention given to how a differentiation element can drive the success of the built environment in terms of business and return on investments.

Research Limitations at the Level of Practice

Even those architects who have some awareness of "Differentiation" infrequently implement it in their designs. This is largely because effective differentiation requires a unique combination of skills: an architect must possess high talent, and a vivid imagination, while also having substantial experience in business and understanding the return on investment associated with construction projects. The necessity for this skill set makes it challenging for architects to apply differentiation principles in practice.

Research Problems and Goals

As previously mentioned, the concept of incorporating differentiation into architectural design is not widely recognized among architects, and many are unfamiliar with it. Even those who have some awareness of "Differentiation" rarely apply it in their work, as it demands a highly skilled architect with a strong imagination, along with experience in business and understanding return on investment for construction projects.

Furthermore, differentiation in architectural design is rarely explored in academic literature, with only a few instances where the term "Differentiation" is used to describe other traits or concepts that differ from its intended meaning.

The research used the above 13 examples to highlight the lack of architectural differentiation elements in most real estate projects and not for any other reasons except to clearly show that although:

- From a technical perspective, they are meant to convey a sense of luxury,
- And from a marketing perspective, they intend to attract clients.
- Since these two aspects represent the primary efforts of real estate projects to differentiate themselves from one another. However, from an architectural design perspective, none of them present any truly innovative or distinguished design concepts. Instead, they all feature same elements such as landscapes, lagoons, trees, and grassy areas—”Nothing particularly distinctive”.
- While the real estate market is replete with examples of projects that have failed despite substantial investments, underscoring the importance of innovation and differentiation in ensuring success.

5. Result

The Success Story of the “Tivoli Dome” acting as the first standalone food complex in Egypt, and since its grand opening in September 2009, the Dome attracted a diverse clientele of all ages and tastes. Renowned for its delectable food, attention to detail, and commitment to quality, it has become a popular gathering spot for Cairo’s musicians, celebrities, and elite, offering a delightful atmosphere to meet over a cup of coffee or a gourmet meal while enjoying the outdoor weather and picturesque scenery.

Tivoli Dome succeeded in attracting approximately 5,000 to 7,000 visitors each day, with numbers rising to between 8,000 and 10,000 on weekends and public holidays.

The venue features both indoor and outdoor seating areas, spanning two levels with an internal floor space of 5,600 m². It includes 16 restaurants and cafes, accommodating a total of 2,500 guests. The unique combination of tenants, along with the project’s location and layout, sets Tivoli Dome apart from anything else in Cairo, targeting the B+ and A-class clientele. [14]

The Role of the Architectural Differentiation Element in the Success of the Tivoli Dome

The power of the differentiation element in architectural design of the project has driven high visitor traffic to the dome since its launch, enabling

it to meet its return on investment goals. Without a fresh architectural concept or a unique differentiating design factor, the dome could have faced possible failures and/or a lack of interest from the outset.

Design Concept

The main design concept behind all the aforementioned residential developments is the creation of a gated community that is supposed to encompass everything necessary for modern day-to-day living. While this approach aims to provide residents with convenience and comfort, it raises questions about whether it can fully prevent inhabitants from feeling bored or wanting to venture outside the compound.

Attraction Power

The concept of living in a place where all necessary amenities are conveniently available alongside entertainment facilities is undeniably appealing. This is evident in the marketing messages portrayed in the media, which often depict idyllic scenes of families enjoying time together in their private gardens.

However, what is being sold is often more of an illusion of happiness rather than genuine contentment. For example, in a TV advertisement, the time spent showcasing the buildings is minimal compared to the scenes of a mother playing with her children in the garden of their villa.

These promotions focus on creating a sense of joy rather than presenting the actual product. Features such as gyms, retail areas, extensive greenery, pools, and lakes do not guarantee that these communities will retain their residents. Should this real estate bubble burst for any reason, all the appealing architectural elements may ultimately prove ineffective in sustaining the community. While a compound featuring a differentiation architectural element that has no equivalent in other compounds may sustain such market swings

Social Impact

The appeal of having all amenities within the community may lead to a sense of security and exclusivity; however, it can also inadvertently foster a culture of social segregation, and a discriminating behavior based on social and financial status. When residents have easy access to facilities such as shopping centers, recreational areas, and dining options without needing to leave the compound, they might become less inclined to engage with the broader community beyond its walls. This insular lifestyle could lead to a lack of interaction with diverse social groups and

experiences, which are essential for personal growth and community bonding.

In essence, while gated communities may offer a self-contained lifestyle that caters to various needs, they may also contribute to feelings of isolation and disconnection from the surrounding environment. As a result, it is crucial for developers to consider not only the convenience of their designs but also the potential for fostering social interactions that enrich the lives of their residents. Balancing the benefits of a gated community with opportunities for community engagement is essential to ensure a vibrant and inclusive living experience and minimize social segregation based on economic status and family incomes

Return on Investment

When it comes to investment, many individuals who purchase residential units in these gated communities are not doing so with the intention of living in them. Instead, they view these properties as a means of converting cash into assets, particularly in response to the diminishing value of the currency due to inflation. Additionally, some may engage in these purchases for purposes such as money laundering. Much like the real estate market bubble in the UAE, buyers acquire these units without the intention of occupancy, treating them primarily as investment vehicles rather than places to call home.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

- While major government initiatives, such as the New Administrative Capital, have expanded the range of real estate options and may support demand for the next few years, the Egyptian real estate market is currently showing signs of increasing demand alongside inflated prices. If this bubble were to burst, only the real estate projects featuring distinctive architectural elements that continue to attract interest will be able to withstand the market downturn.
- By thinking creatively and incorporating unique architectural features into their projects, developers can stand out in the highly competitive Egyptian market.
- As the real estate sector continues to evolve, the significance of differentiation in architectural design becomes increasingly important. Architects who understand the benefits of creating distinctive, eye-catching designs can meet both aesthetic and functional needs while also enhancing the financial

success of their projects. However, the challenge is that few architects actively pursue this approach, which stifles innovation and growth in the field.

- In conclusion, while the concept of differentiation in architectural design has great potential to improve both the visual appeal and financial success of projects, it remains largely underutilized in practice and academic discussions. By promoting a deeper understanding of how differentiation can be implemented, architects can develop designs that not only attract attention but also deliver substantial returns on investment.

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