CO-BRANDING AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS ON MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LUXURY HOTELS

by

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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Abstract

This study investigates how co-branding affects word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth behaviors, memorable guest experiences, brand image, and intention to return to Dubai's luxury hotel industry. The study investigates how strategic alliances between luxury hotels and well-known brands affect consumer attitudes and behavior using a mixed-methods methodology that combines focus group and survey data. According to qualitative research, co-branding enhances sensory experiences, emotional involvement, and perceived prestige, all of which significantly helps in the creation of memorable experiences. According to quantitative findings, co-branding considerably improves memorable experiences and the revisit intention, but its direct impact on brand image is less apparent than expected, possibly as a result of a small sample size. Strong determinants of guest loyalty and positive word-of-mouth behaviors were found to be memorable experiences, highlighting the significance of emotional and sensory connections in luxury hospitality. The report emphasizes that when supported by outstanding service quality, authentic and well-aligned co-branding initiatives can generate enduring impressions and brand advocacy. The managerial implications point to the necessity of properly chosen collaborations that satisfy visitors' demands for exclusivity and customization. In order to validate and extend these findings across more comprehensive contexts and longitudinal frameworks, further research options are suggested, recognizing limitations relating to sample size, cultural specificity, and cross-sectional design.

Keywords: **Co-branding; Memorable Experiences; Luxury Hospitality; Brand Image; Revisit Intention; Word-of-Mouth**

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Building memorable guest experiences in today's luxury hospitality market is essential to foster loyalty and differentiate yourself in a competitive environment. Co-branding is an effective method for accomplishing this, in which two well-known companies collaborate to provide a unique and enriched experience. Co-branding allows luxury hotels to combine the best features of both brands, giving visitors a more comprehensive experience than either could provide on its own. Notable examples such as Cloud 22 Atlantis the Royal, and The Lana Hotel Dior Spa in Dubai demonstrate how luxury hotels and other luxury brands can co-brand to increase memorable guest experience and create a unique brand image in their thoughts (Whalen & Sisson, 2022; Murtas et al., 2022). Despite the fact that co-branding is popular in the hotel industry, more research is still needed to determine how these alliances especially impact guests' memorable experiences. By investigating the effects of co-branding on brand image, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth– with a particular emphasis on luxury hotels in Dubai – this study aims to fill that gap.

Beyond just improving individual brand recognition, these partnerships foster a synergy that frequently results in greater customer loyalty. When two companies collaborate, they can capitalize on each other's advantages to produce a unique experience that appeals to customers looking for exclusivity. Taking the Ritz-Carlton and Bvlgari's partnership as an example, the combination of both luxury hotel and upscale design expertise results in a product that strongly connects with customers and improves the perspectives of both companies. (Quamina et al., 2023). Although co-branding has potential benefits, there are some drawbacks including possibility of misalignment, which can affect the brand image negatively if the collaboration does not meet customer expectations (Suzuki & Kanno, 2022).

In luxury hospitality, where establishing emotional and sensory connections is frequently the key to customer satisfaction, memorable experiences are also essential. Positive feelings and a lasting impression are characteristics of memorable experiences, according to the Memory-Dominant Logic (MDL) framework. Memorable experiences in luxury hotels promote word-of-mouth recommendations and drive guest loyalty (Harrington et al., 2019). By including unique, luxurious amenities that engage guests and generate remarkable stays, co-branding can further improve these experiences

(Nowacki & Niezgoda, 2023). In order to improve consumer retention and brand loyalty, this study will look at how co-branding affects these kinds of experiences.

Additionally, in the luxury industry, a positive brand image is crucial since it influences consumer expectations and promotes customers' retention. The combined image of the two companies in co-branded luxury hotels makes for a more powerful, cohesive appeal that draws in guests who value exclusivity and quality. However, there are some gaps in current research including how co-branding in luxury-only partnerships impacts memorable guest experiences and brand image within the hospitality sector (Murray et al., 2024). This study, therefore, by examining the effect of co-branding on memorable experience, brand image, revisit intention, and WOM/eWOM in Dubai's luxury hotel market, aims to address these knowledge gaps.

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative data from focus groups with quantitative data from surveys to obtain information about how customers perceive the co-branding. This study by emphasizing on luxury hotels in Dubai, a city which is famous for its high-end tourism and luxury branding, will offer insights into how co-branding can improve guest experiences and create loyalty. The results of this study will give hotel managers and marketing experts in the luxury industry valuable guidance by demonstrating how co-branding can help hotels stand out from the competition and create long-lasting connections with their guests.

In summary, the goal of this study is to expand knowledge of how co-branding in luxury hospitality creates memorable experiences, and strengthens brand image, revisit intention, and WOM/eWOM. Through an analysis of these dynamics in the luxury hotel market in Dubai, this study adds to the expanding body of knowledge regarding strategic partnerships in the hospitality industry and provides useful advice for creating co-branding alliances that successfully increase brand appeal and guest loyalty.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Creating unforgettable guest experiences is the pathway to luxury hotel brand loyalty and differentiation. Co-branding is a strategic tool in this sector, where two brands collaborate to enhance mutual value and reputation. The luxury sector makes this possible through partnerships like that of Cloud 22 with Atlantis the Royal and the Dior Spa at The Lana. These examples illustrate how co-branding can build distinctiveness and satisfy guests in memorable ways. This literature review surveys the scholarly writings on the impact of co-branding in luxury hotels; it appears to be a faint but still present part of the global branding literature. We focus on the substantial but still emerging body of work that looks at the branding impact and the impression of guests in the hospitality setting, with a specific focus on luxury hotels and their brands. We end with some thoughts on the state of the literature.

2.1 Co-Branding

As Mrad et al., (2018) point out, when it comes to describing this type of marketing strategy, the co-branding literature is still ambiguous. Co-branding is referred to by a variety of names, such as joint branding, ingredient branding, and brand alliance. However, in order for any kind of co-branding agreement to be valid, the following requirements must be fulfilled: (1) the partnership should be based on an estimated duration; (2) the primary goal should be to jointly develop a new product in order to enter a new or existing market; and (3) the names of both brands must appear on the product.

Co-branding occurs when two brands collaborate to strengthen each brand's equity, creating a synergy that enhances value for both partners (Whalen & Sisson, 2022). Co-branding can take many different forms, such as ingredient co-branding, same company co-branding, or joint venture (Mrad et al., 2018). Joint venture form of co-branding occurs when two independent companies form a partnership for a shared product or service. Same company co-branding or intra-company co-branding takes place when two brands from the same company collaborate to enhance brand equity. In addition, when one brand’s product/component is integrated into another brand’s product to enhance functionality or value of the product, the integrated co-branding forms (Mrad et al., 2018).

Co-branding benefits both entities by allowing them to leverage each other's strengths and generate a positive spillover effect, which may raise brand awareness, attract new customers, and foster loyalty (Murtas et al., 2022). According to Yu et al., (2021), when two high-equity brands partner, they generally receive more favorable reviews than they would independently. For example, Whalen & Sisson (2022) illustrate this with the co-branding example of Bulgari and Ritz Carlton, where Bulgari brings expertise in design and luxury product marketing, while Ritz Carlton contributes its proficiency in developing, marketing, and managing luxury hotels. Together, these two brands epitomize luxury for consumers, setting their product apart from other luxury hotel brands. Using these two brands can assist in establishing legitimacy in recently entered markets (Whalen & Sisson, 2022).

As Quamina et al., (2023) point out, co-branding strategies have been widely adopted across various fields. Murtas et al., (2022) emphasize that co-branding creates a unique offer through asset-sharing between a host brand and other participants, aiming to raise brand awareness and create a "buzz" in the market. Co-branding is increasingly valued as a strategy to boost brand equity, allowing each partner to share complementary skills, knowledge, and resources.

An essential component of successful co-branding is the complementarity of the parent brands. Complementarity refers to how well the strengths of the brands align to enhance the co-branded product's value (Leuthesser, 2003). This complementarity can occur at two levels. Core complementarity involves both brands contributing significantly to the essential functionality or key benefits of the co-branded product. For example, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Hershey's chocolate combine to create a product that appeals to the core tastes of consumers. Extended complementarity, on the other hand, involves a brand lending its reputation and perceived quality to enhance the image of the co-brand, even if it does not directly influence its core functionality. A prime example of extended complementarity is the Godiva and Slim-Fast co-branded cake mix, which combines the premium taste associated with Godiva and the calorie-conscious appeal of Slim-Fast (Leuthesser, 2003).

Leuthesser et al. (2003) also discuss four distinct co-branding strategies that reflect the objectives and focus of a partnership. Reaching in utilizes core complementarity to deepen market penetration within existing customer segments. This

approach ensures that the co-branded product offers enhanced functional benefits to its loyal customer base. Reaching out focuses on accessing new markets by leveraging core complementarity to attract a broader audience, thereby expanding the customer base for both parent brands. Reaching up emphasizes extended complementarity, enhancing the image and perceived value of the co-branded product. This strategy often involves associating with a brand that lends an aspirational or premium appeal to the partnership. Lastly, reaching beyond combines elements of both reaching out and reaching up, allowing the co-branded product to simultaneously target new markets and elevate its brand image. These strategies showcase the versatility of co-branding in addressing varied market objectives while maximizing the strengths of each brand.

Co-branding yields several advantages, including enhanced brand equity, positive association transfer to partner brands, and risk reduction when entering new markets. Furthermore, research suggest that co-branding offers businesses a cost-effective approach to extending brand influence through shared associations and reduced competition (Quamina et al., 2023). Suzuki & Kanno (2022) note that co-branding is especially advantageous for reinforcing brands beyond current brand equity, providing additional benefits like increased brand associations, rivalry minimization, and partnership synergies. However, there are potential risks associated with co-branding include potential harm to partner brands due to unfavorable associations or poor brand alignment (Shen et al., 2018). Suzuki & Kanno (2022) add that poor customer experience with a co-branded product can harm the brand's reputation, even if the fault lies with the partner. For these reasons, careful planning is essential when selecting co-branding partners to ensure successful brand alignment.

Adopted by many major brands, co-branding is used to increase brand recognition, attract new clients, and foster loyalty. This approach has proven beneficial in various business sectors, including B2B alliances and CSR-based partnerships (Quamina et al., 2023). They also point out that co-branding often enhances brand image, increases client loyalty, and raises brand awareness. The technique’s widespread use reflects its perceived value in the competitive landscape of luxury hospitality, where brands benefit from strategic alliances that elevate brand identity and reputation. While existing studies have explored co-branding between luxury and non-luxury brands and its impact on customer satisfaction, there remains a gap in understanding how

collaborations between luxury hotels and luxury brands influence customer satisfaction and the creation of memorable experiences.

2.2 Memorable Experience of Luxury Hotels

The luxury hotel industry, which generated $83.10 billion in 2017, is expected to grow at 4.3% annually, demonstrating its strong position in global tourism (Popp et al., 2021). These Five-star hotels are classified as luxury lodging establishments that offer exceptional accommodations and outstanding guest experiences through flawless service and first-rate amenities. From design and craftsmanship to product quality, their dedication to perfection is evident, and their staff members are constantly polite, attentive, and willing to go above and beyond for customers (Yue et al., 2024).

The luxury hotel sector is distinguished by a focus on customer experience and personalized service, which are critical to competitive positioning and differentiation. Studies highlight that memorable guest experiences drive both customer satisfaction and loyalty, with overall guest happiness significantly linked to the quality of interactions. A memorable experience in the context of hospitality and tourism was defined for this study as one that was favorably recalled after the event (Murray et al., 2024).

Luxury hospitality prioritizes intangible factors like memorable experiences and emotional connection, which contribute to high guest expectations. Luxury guests typically seek extraordinary experiences that stand apart from daily life and leave a lasting impression. Coco Chanel famously stated that luxury “begins where necessity ends” (Okonkwo, 2007, p.7), highlighting the subjective nature of luxury (Bühring, 2015). Research emphasizes that both tangible (e.g., room quality) and intangible elements (e.g., staff warmth) influence memorable guest experiences, aligning with Service-Dominant logic (S-D logic) and co-creation principles (Nowacki & Niezgoda, 2023).

According to Harrington et al., (2019) Memory-Dominant Logic (MDL) is described as the delivery of service experiences with the intention of adding value by transforming them into unforgettable experiences. In order to promote memories, this reasoning blends the ideas of experience and co-creation with emotional arousal and thoughtful observations. In order for memories to be considered "memorable," the

incumbent must have had favorable experiences. The MDL focuses on memorability and how long the customer's mind is occupied by co-created memories. This is about tying together the encounters that result in experiences, either individually (by one of the parties) or collaboratively (by two or more of the parties).

The concept of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) underpins customer loyalty and competitive advantage. Studies highlight that experiences are memorable when they offer unique sensory and emotional stimulation (Hosseini et al., 2021). Memorable experiences, also called “Unreasonable Hospitality,” surpass ordinary service and create lasting impressions, enhancing customer retention and word of mouth (WOM) (Murray et al., 2024). The importance of MTEs has been underscored by research on behavioral intentions, where positive, memorable experiences are linked to increased loyalty and repeat visits (Kim & Chen, 2020). Nowacki & Niezgoda (2023) suggest that memorable experiences yield higher satisfaction than services alone, making them invaluable for guest retention. Murray et al., (2024) emphasizes that the most successful emotional constructors for memorability seem to be uniqueness and personalization. On the other hand, a not effectively carried out, co-created process might result in bad experiences which can cause value to be co-destroyed. Unexpectedly pleasant features of an event will probably boost incident recall, reflection, and memorability in the process of creating experiential value. Conversely, it has been demonstrated that service failures lead to stronger memories, whereas core failures are more likely to cause switching behaviors and unfavorable WOM.

Harrington et al., (2019) points out that the core of MDL is how interactions result in the formation of memories, a recall factor, and memory. These interactions do not only concentrate on co-creating a pleasant outcome. Memorable experiences that emerge from interactions with favorable results are associated with reminiscing.

According to Murray et al., (2024), "positive emotional experience" is a key electronic word of mouth (eWOM) driver and is similar to the concept of memorable experience. According to the researchers, eWOM is a multifaceted construct that is essential for comprehending brand sentiments and figuring out what factors contribute to positive eWOM—two things that are crucial for the strategies of hospitality firms. The researchers discovered that the nature of service failures, the frequency of those failures, and the approach to recovery impacted whether the failure was memorable.

Customers were less likely to forget and forgive when a service failure was a major factor, which led to more bad word-of-mouth and service provider switching. Service recovery did, however, reduce unpleasant memories and actions. In cases when the frequency of failures did not seem to affect memory, negative failures were associated with stronger memories than positive ones. Recently, there has been a focus on the development of memory-dominant logic (MDL), which has led to an emphasis on experiential value and the value provided by the experience's memorability (Murray et al., 2024)

Research supports that positive experiences are central to guest loyalty and revisiting intentions, as travelers rely on past memories to guide future decisions (Hosseini et al., 2021). Remarkable experiences stand out from daily routines, contributing to competitive advantage in tourism. Moreover, unusual and emotionally engaging experiences are more memorable, supporting guest retention through quality interactions and exceptional service (Nowacki & Niezgoda, 2023). Memorable experiences help retain guests and foster loyalty, especially when intangible aspects like personal interactions are prioritized (Shahid & Paul, 2022; Hosseini et al., 2021).

2.3 Brand Image

Brand image plays a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and expectations, especially in the luxury hospitality sector. Brand image refers to customers' perceptions and beliefs, shaped by associations stored in their memories (Anjarwati et al., 2019). In luxury hospitality, brand image reflects the hotel’s ability to deliver on its promises and creates a foundation for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Positive brand image influences loyalty by encouraging repeat patronage and recommendations (Shen et al., 2018). Additionally, according to several academics, brand image has been a fascinating topic of discussion in the marketing literature and serves as an effective marketing instrument crucial for differentiating businesses. Research on brand image has been acknowledged as central to marketing and advertising studies and as a principle for addressing tactical marketing mix issues, which is instrumental in creating long-term brand equity (Dam & Dam, 2021).

According to Dam & Dam (2021), brand image comprises consumers' perceptions of a brand, as evidenced by the associations they hold about it. A strong brand image not only helps customers recognize the brand’s value and needs but also

sets it apart from competitors. This differentiation increases the likelihood that customers will purchase the brand. Companies or their products that maintain a consistently positive public image enjoy a more advantageous position in the market, leading to a lasting competitive advantage, enhanced market share, and improved performance.

Brand loyalty, another essential aspect of brand strength, is closely related to a brand's image. Aaker (1991) defines brand loyalty as a customer's commitment to repeatedly choosing a brand, an attribute that can yield increased market share, premium pricing, and reduced marketing costs (Minkkinen, 2024). In hospitality, brand image is tied to memorable experiences that exceed consumer expectations, creating lasting impressions that foster loyalty (Murray et al., 2024). Memorable guest experiences also strengthen brand loyalty through emotional connections and positive word-of-mouth (WOM). When customers find their expectations exceeded, they share positive feedback, further enhancing brand loyalty and reputation (Minkkinen, 2024).

In luxury hospitality, brand loyalty aligns with consumer attachment to memorable and satisfying experiences, making it a valuable asset for luxury brands. Minkkinen (2024) describe brand loyalty as a multifaceted concept, encompassing both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. Additionally, brand image, maintained through high service quality, significantly impacts loyalty in competitive markets (Anjarwati et al., 2019). Memorable experiences are pivotal for consumer retention, especially as travelers use these memories to guide future decisions (Hosseini et al., 2021). Remarkable experiences stand out due to sensory and emotional engagement, setting memorable travel experiences apart from routine ones (Kim & Chen, 2020). This emotional engagement strengthens brand image and builds customer loyalty, establishing memorable travel experiences (MTEs) as a key competitive advantage within the tourism sector (Nowacki & Niezgoda, 2023).

In conclusion, brand image plays a central role in fostering customer loyalty and competitive differentiation. By providing memorable experiences that reinforce a positive brand image, luxury hotels can strengthen their market position and maintain a sustainable appeal to diverse consumer demographics (Hosseini et al., 2021).

2.4 Revisit Intention

Revisit intention is a key indicator of customer loyalty, particularly in the context of luxury hospitality where exceptional service and distinctive experiences often determine guest retention. The likelihood that a user will return to the same hotel is referred to as revisit intention (Sharma & Bhat, 2022). The importance of attracting repeat visitors is critical for the sustainability of luxury hotels, as many tourist destinations rely heavily on loyal, returning customers. Given the abundance of comparable offerings in the market, where customers have a wide array of choices (Sharma & Bhat, 2022), luxury hotels must go beyond acquiring new clients and focus on increasing the value of existing users by encouraging repeat visits.

In this competitive landscape, it becomes imperative for hotels to not only meet but exceed guest expectations. Emotional satisfaction and personalized services significantly enhance the probability of customers making another transaction. When hotels are able to satisfy emotional needs and deliver on promised experiences, they create a strong foundation for customer loyalty.

Research has shown that consumer attitude plays a direct role in shaping behavioral intention, particularly within the domain of luxury consumption. Specifically, in the luxury hospitality context, revisit intention denotes a customer's inclination to return to the same hotel after a prior positive experience (Yue et al., 2024). Moreover, satisfaction has consistently been correlated with revisit intention—higher levels of satisfaction naturally lead to higher likelihoods of return (Sharma & Bhat, 2022).

Hence, to foster revisit intention, luxury hotels must focus on creating memorable and emotionally resonant experiences. These efforts not only build strong customer relationships but also provide a competitive edge in a saturated market.

2.5 Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are critical factors in influencing customer decision-making and promoting brand loyalty, particularly in the digital age. Through digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WeChat, and TripAdvisor, travelers now have the ability to share their experiences and recommendations more broadly than ever before. Web 2.0 has enabled

travelers to interact, exchange experiences, and seek peer opinions, significantly boosting the impact and reach of eWOM.

According to Sharipudin et al., (2021), travelers are increasingly relying on digital recommendations when making travel decisions. More recent studies suggest that post-purchase emotions such as satisfaction, product experience, and loyalty strongly influence both favorable recommendations and revisit intentions (Sharipudin et al., 2021).

In the hospitality industry, eWOM and revisit intention are particularly shaped by post-stay evaluations, which encompass service experience, satisfaction, and emotional commitment (Sharipudin et al., 2021). Positive consumer attitudes toward a brand's goods and services often translate into beneficial outcomes, including increased purchase intent, repeat behavior, willingness to pay a premium, and positive WOM Consumer loyalty has been consistently found to be a strong predictor of WOM behavior (Sharipudin et al., 2021).

In addition, studies in the hospitality domain affirm that loyal clients are more inclined to generate positive eWOM. Favorable eWOM not only influences purchase intention and destination choice but also serves as a reference point for future travel decisions (Sharipudin et al., 2021). Consumers who have positive evaluations are more likely to enhance their booking and return intentions compared to those who had unfavorable experiences.

In sections discussing memorable experiences and brand image, prior literature has highlighted that these constructs also influence WOM. Specifically, memorable and emotionally compelling guest experiences tend to trigger organic positive WOM, as customers are inclined to share stories that stand out. Likewise, a strong and consistent brand image cultivates trust and satisfaction, encouraging guests to advocate for the brand. These connections demonstrate the layered relationship between guest satisfaction, brand loyalty, and WOM behavior.

In conclusion, WOM and eWOM serve as powerful extensions of consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. As such, luxury hotels should invest in strategies that not only ensure exceptional service but also encourage satisfied guests to share their

experiences digitally, thereby amplifying the hotel's reputation and attracting both repeat and new visitors.

This literature study examines how co-branding improves memorable experiences for guests and strengthens brand image within luxury hotels. By combining complementary skills, co-branding alliances create synergy, increase brand equity, and foster consumer loyalty. According to research, memorable guest experiences—which are crucial in the luxury hotel industry—are driven by unique, personalized interactions that arouse emotional response and strengthen brand loyalty and image through positive word-of-mouth. Despite previous research, there are still some gaps about how co-branding luxury hotels with other luxury companies affects guest satisfaction, which calls for more investigation.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for analyzing the connections between co-branding, brand image, memorable experiences, repurchase/visit intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM/eWOM) behavior in the context of luxury hotels has been established based on the assessment of the body of current literature. According to the framework showing in Figure 1, co-branding improves memorable experiences and brand image, which in turn affects visitors' intentions to make repeat purchases or return and to participate in constructive WOM/eWOM. Figure 1 shows the suggested conceptual framework.

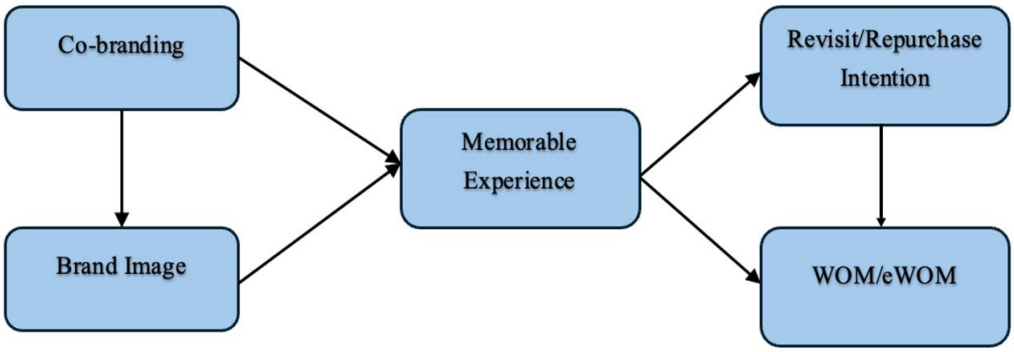

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.7 Research Gaps and Hypotheses

Despite these findings, the research on luxury hotel co-branding and its impact on memorable experiences show a few important knowledge gaps. Although co-

branding's impact on customer satisfaction has been studied, no research has specifically examined how luxury hotel and high-end brand alliances can create unforgettable guest experiences. Collaborations between luxury and non-luxury brands have frequently received more attention, with little attention paid to luxury-only partnerships and their unique impacts on consumer perception. This gap emphasizes the necessity of an in-depth study into the ways in which co-branding in luxury hotels affects customers' memories and ensuing brand loyalty. Furthermore, despite the fact that memorable experiences are acknowledged as being crucial for both client retention and word-of-mouth marketing, their direct relationship to co-branded luxury hotels is yet unexplored. By investigating how co-branding in luxury hospitality creates memorable experiences that boost word-of-mouth and revisit intention, this study aims to fill these gaps. A more sophisticated comprehension of co-branding's function in the luxury market may be attained through this study, providing information to companies looking to reinforce their place in the market through strategic alliances. Therefore, we examine our fist hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: *Co-branding positively affects brand image*

Through co-branding, luxury hotels can link with prominent and reputable partner brands, which raises the hotel brand's perceived worth and uniqueness. Customers' perceptions of the brand are improved and refined as a result of this synergy, which is particularly important in the luxury market where value is determined by perception. premium hotels that collaborate with other premium brands, like those in fashion or design, project an aspirational image that strengthens the image of each brand. Thus, it is anticipated that co-branding serves as a valuable tool for enhancing a luxury hotel's brand image.

Hypothesis 2: *Co-branding fosters positive memorable experience*

Collaborative efforts between luxury hotels and luxury brands often result in elevated guest experiences that are highly personalized and unique. Moments that emotionally connect with guests are created through the integration of specific design elements, services, and unique products from both brands. Positive emotions are generated by these co-created experiences, which improves memory retention and increases the possibility that visitors will remember the moment long after their visit.

Hypothesis 3: *Brand image contributes positively to memorable experience*

Prior to the actual guest experience, a strong and reputable brand image raises expectations. Guests arrive with great emotional engagement and expectation when luxury hotel brands are seen as superior, fashionable, and exclusive. Meeting or exceeding these standards increases the experience's perceived worth and makes it more memorable. Therefore, the way a moment is processed and remembered is shaped by the brand image, which serves as a psychological primer.

Hypothesis 4: *Memorable experience has a positive effect on revisit intention*

Experiences that surpass guests' expectations and emotionally engage them create a lasting memory that greatly increases their desire to return. The more memorable a guest's stay, the more likely they are to return to the same hotel in the context of luxury hotels, where clients want not only amenities but also life-changing experiences. Good memories serve as comparison points and build brand loyalty, which motivates the revisit intention.

Hypothesis 5: *Memorable experience positively influences WOM and eWOM*

Visitors who had memorable and emotionally engaging experiences are more likely to share with others about them. eWOM from websites like TripAdvisor, Instagram, and YouTube has a significant influence in today's digital environment. Storytelling, online reviews, and social media sharing are all driven by memorable encounters; these serve as reliable recommendations and expand the hotel's customers. The repute and visibility of the brand are improved by this word-of-mouth effect.

Hypothesis 6: *Revisit intention has a favorable effect on WOM and eWOM*

Informal brand ambassadors are frequently created by visitors who want to stay at a hotel again. Their loyalty and desire to return indicate a high degree of satisfaction and trust, which encourages them to share with others about the hotel. This practice increases the brand's visibility through both digital reviews and traditional word-of-mouth. Additionally, loyal guests who plan to return are more likely to defend the brand and provide valuable feedback, which enhances the hotel's reputation online.

Based on aforementioned hypotheses that co-branding in luxury hotels positively impacts customer satisfaction, brand image, and creates memorable

experiences that foster guest loyalty and encourage positive word-of-mouth. These theories highlight how co-branding may be used strategically to set luxury hotels apart from the competition and increase visitor retention by creating unforgettable experiences. To test these hypotheses, the methodology part has been accomplished and is presented in the following section, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of co-branding's effectiveness in the luxury hospitality market.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Method

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of co-branding on memorable guest experiences, brand image, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth in luxury hotels. The rationale for selecting a mixed-methods approach lies in its ability to provide both the richness of lived consumer experiences and the empirical strength of quantitative validation. Given the multifaceted nature of co-branding and the emotional and perceptual dimensions involved in luxury hospitality, a combination of methods enables a more robust exploration of the research questions.

The qualitative aspect of the study is conducted through two focus group discussions, each consisting of five participants. The participants are purposively selected based on two key criteria: they either have stayed at luxury hotels within the past year or they are active consumers of luxury products and brands. This sample is intentionally designed to represent individuals who are deeply familiar with the luxury market, both as hotel guests and as buyers of high-end fashion, beauty, or lifestyle products. The dual perspective offers nuanced insights into how brand collaborations influence expectations and experiences across luxury touchpoints.

Each focus group is moderated by the researcher and begins with a clear introduction explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring participants are comfortable, and emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers (which can be found in the appendix). Discussions are recorded with participant consent and last approximately 60 minutes. The guide used for discussion consists of five structured sections: the first section serves as a warm-up, inviting participants to describe their associations with luxury hotels and name brands they are familiar with in Dubai. The second section explores awareness of co-branding, including real-life examples such as the Dolce & Gabbana collaboration with Atlantis the Royal's Cloud 22. Participants are asked to evaluate how such collaborations affect their perception of luxury and exclusivity. The third section presents fictional co-branding scenarios using curated pairings of luxury hotels and iconic brands (e.g., Atlantis the Royal x Ferrari, Address x Emirates, One&Only One Za'abeel x Nespresso). Participants react to these scenarios by discussing whether they find the pairings compelling, aligned with the luxury identity,

and likely to influence their decision to stay at the hotel. In the fourth section, the discussion shifts to consumer expectations of luxury experiences, and participants reflect on whether brand partnerships elevate or diminish these experiences. Finally, the discussion concludes with reflections on the most memorable potential partnerships and how luxury hotels can leverage co-branding to stand out and create lasting emotional impressions.

The insights from these focus groups are analyzed thematically. The researcher identifies recurring patterns, emerging sentiments, and key narratives that illustrate how participants perceive co-branded hotel experiences, what makes an experience memorable, and how brand prestige plays a role in the emotional value of a stay. This qualitative layer is essential to understanding the depth of consumer interpretation and allows for interpretation beyond what can be captured through predefined survey categories.

To complement the qualitative findings, a quantitative online survey is conducted with a sample of 60 participants who have stayed at luxury hotels. As mentioned in the appendix, the survey includes screening questions to ensure respondents meet the inclusion criteria—primarily, having stayed at one or more luxury hotels in recent years. The survey comprises five key sections. The first section collects demographic information such as age, employment status, and frequency of luxury hotel stays. The second section focuses on awareness and perceptions of co-branding, asking respondents to evaluate how brand partnerships influence their view of hotel quality and exclusivity. Questions include rating the perceived effectiveness of co-branding and comparing experiences at co-branded versus non-co-branded hotels. The third section addresses the concept of memorable experiences, asking to what extent co-branding enhances the uniqueness or emotional impact of a hotel stay. Participants are also asked to select which elements they believe contribute most to a memorable co-branded experience—such as brand image, exclusive services, or personalized guest interactions. The fourth section evaluates revisit intention by measuring respondents' willingness to return to a co-branded hotel or choose one over a non-co-branded alternative. The final section explores word-of-mouth behavior, including both traditional and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Participants are asked how likely they are to share co-branded hotel experiences with others and what factors motivate

that sharing—such as unique architecture, luxury service, or the appeal of the brand partnership itself.

3.2 Data Analysis Method

The data collected from both the qualitative and quantitative phases were analyzed using structured and systematic approaches to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and insights emerging from the focus group discussions. After transcribing the recordings, the transcripts manually coded, identifying recurrent themes related to perceptions of luxury, co-branding experiences, brand image, memorable experiences, revisit intentions, and word-of-mouth behaviors. This analysis was conducted following a method similar to NVivo's structured coding approach, enabling systematic organization of data and deeper interpretation of participants' narratives.

For the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies, were calculated to summarize participant responses across key variables: co-branding perception, brand image, memorable experiences, revisit intention, and WOM/eWOM behavior.

Inferential analysis involved conducting a series of simple linear regressions using Excel's Data Analysis Toolpak. Regression models were used to examine the relationships between variables and test existing hypotheses. Coefficient values (R) and coefficients of determination (R^2) were reported to measure the strength and significance of each relationship.

Chapter 4. Findings

This chapter outlines the findings from the study's qualitative and quantitative phases, which demonstrate the mixed method approached used to investigate how co-branding affects brand image as well as memorable experience (RQ1, RQ2), how brand image influences memorable experience (RQ3), how memorable experience impacts both revisit intention and WOM/eWOM (RQ4, RQ5), and how revisit intention affect WOM/eWOM (RQ6).

Two focus groups were conducted to gather the qualitative data, which was then thematically examined to identify participant perspectives and trends. Additionally, the suggested research hypotheses were tested using statistical analysis of the quantitative data collected through structured surveys.

4.1 Qualitative Data

As part of qualitative data gathering process, two focus groups with five participants each were used to collect the data, yielding ten respondents in total. Purposive sampling was used to select participants in order to guarantee that they were relevant to the objectives of the study. According to Kelly (2010), purposeful sampling is "used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information" (p. 317). It is a method of locating and choosing cases that will make efficient use of the limited research resources (Campbell et al., 2020). Every participant had actively engaged with luxury products in sectors including fashion, travel, and beauty, and they had all stayed at luxurious hotels in the past year. With a range of nations and cultural backgrounds and ages ranging from the early 20s to the mid-40s, the group provided a wide diversity of viewpoints on luxury consumption and branding expectations.

Both focus groups were semi-structured and included open-ended questions to help participants discuss different aspects of co-branding, memorable experiences, and luxury hospitality. The semi-structured sessions allowed for free-flowing discussion while keeping the study's goals in mind. For in-depth analysis, each session, which lasted roughly 60 minutes, was audio recorded, with participant approval, and transcribed. Following, a theme analysis was performed on the transcripts. This required getting to know the data, doing initial coding, identifying themes, reviewing, defining, and naming themes. NVivo-style manual coding techniques were used to

support the analysis in order to help with pattern recognition and methodical data organizing. This method generated seven main themes including: 1) Perception of Luxury, 2) Memorable Experience Drivers, 3) Co-Branding Awareness and Perception, 4) Enhancement of Brand Image, 5) Desire for Experiential Offerings, 6) Revisit Intention and Word-of-Mouth, and 7) Suggestions for Future Co-Branding, that captured participants' expectations, preferences, and perceptions of co-branded luxury hotel experiences. The following sections, as indicated in Table 1, address each theme by focusing on participant's narratives to emphasize on depth and context.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis of Focus groups

Theme	**Description**	**Supporting Quotes**	**Interpretation**
Luxury Perception	How participants define and identify luxury in hotels.	"I assume premium services, trained employees." "Smell of luxury." "Design is very important… people want to take pictures."	Participants associate luxury with sensory elements, design, exclusivity, and high-end service. The aesthetic appeal and Instagram-worthiness play a significant role, especially for youth.
Memorable Experience Drivers	Elements that make a hotel stay unforgettable.	"They offered welcome gifts, spa, pool, unlimited food…" "Staff was polite and gave me a better room." "Smell, design, and exclusive services."	Personalized service, unexpected upgrades, and attention to detail create memorable experiences. Sensory appeal

			contributes to emotional memory.
Co-Branding Awareness & Perception	Participants' familiarity with and interpretation of co-branding.	"Versace, Louis Vuitton, Ferrari…" "I saw Louis Vuitton collaboration at Royal Atlantis." "Cloud 22 by Dolce & Gabbana is exciting."	Many participants are aware of co-branding in Dubai. They find such partnerships innovative and consider them proof of the hotel's luxury status.
Enhancement of Brand Image	Whether co-branding improves or harms the image of the hotel and the brand.	"It depends… Middle class thinks it's great, upper class may think it's not exclusive anymore." "It enhances the image when you see collaborations with top-tier brands."	Some believe it democratizes luxury, while others think accessibility undermines exclusivity. Brand image is sensitive to target demographics.
Desire for Experiential Offerings	Interest in interactive and branded experiences.	"Perfume exclusive to the hotel from Dior or Chanel." "Events, fashion shows, and social media moments."	Participants want more than a room—they want stories and moments they can share. Immersive branded experiences are highly attractive.

Revisit & Word-of-Mouth Intentions	Likelihood of returning or recommending based on co-branded experiences/ How digital sharing and influencers shape hotel choices.	"If it's memorable, I'd definitely suggest it to friends and family." "I will revisit if they give loyalty points or discounts." "Design is important so people can take pictures and share on social media"	Positive experiences lead to stronger loyalty and recommendations. Value-added offers are especially appealing. Social media and influencer marketing influence guests' decisions. Aesthetics and digital presence are key for luxury.
Suggestions for Future Co-Branding	Participant-generated ideas for partnerships.	"Collaboration with Emirates Airlines, FC Barcelona, Ferrari…" "Perfumes in the room exclusive to the hotel."	Participants want partnerships aligned with personal passions. The more personalized the experience, the more effective and memorable it becomes.

4.1.1 Perception of luxury

The idea of luxury was complex, encompassing both material characteristics (such location, architecture, and materials) and intangible components (like exclusivity, atmosphere, and emotional resonance). According to the participants, luxury

experiences are intended to be immersive and sensual, with every component carefully chosen to arouse feelings of distinction, elegance, and refinement.

As mentioned by one of the participants, *"The smell of luxury when you enter the lobby."* Another explained, *"Exclusive services is the number one for me, and the second is the smell of luxury."* This demonstrates the importance of sensory immersion in forming first impressions of a hotel's level of luxury. Another frequently mentioned factor was design and aesthetics, *"Nice design also attracts a lot of people there."* Another one added, *"I assume premium services, hospitality, employees."* These characteristics, along with physical and emotional comfort, framed participants' perceptions of luxury. Additionally, when participants talked about design in relation to visual appeal, digital shareability was implied. *"The design is very important because these are the new generation—they want to take a picture of themselves and post them on social media,"* as one member of the second group stated.

4.1.2 Memorable experience drivers

Memorable experiences were not only associated with physical attributes such as amenities or facilities. Rather, participants described intimate, unexpected, or emotionally satisfying situations. These included brand interactions, unanticipated service improvements, and atmosphere components.

One participant explained an instance where *"the hotel gave me a personalized welcome gift and free access to the spa. It was unexpected, and I still remember it months later."* Another recalled, *"There was a problem with my room, and they upgraded me with no questions asked. That kind of service makes me want to stay with them again."*

These kinds of interactions are consistent with the Memory-Dominant Logic (MDL) concept, which suggests that service encounters are more memorable when they include positive emotional peaks, particularly when they come as a surprise. Crucially, these experiences weren't always expensive or luxurious; rather, they were significant because they were customized for each person, indicating that personalization is a key component of luxury memorability.

4.1.3 Co-Branding awareness and perception

The idea of co-branding became a major topic of conversation among the attendees, especially in relation to perceptions of luxury, memorability, and emotional connection. Participants in both focus groups showed a thorough and sophisticated comprehension of co-branding in the context of luxury hospitality. Their observations demonstrated a vital understanding of brand compatibility, authenticity, and symbolic value in addition to acknowledging co-branding initiatives.

When asked if they had encountered co-branding in luxury hotels, several participants enthusiastically described real-world examples, one participant advocated*," In the Royal Atlantis I saw collaboration of the Louis Vuitton with the Royal Atlantis and I was surprised… a very big suitcase over there. It was very nice, beautiful."* This comment not only demonstrates familiarity with co-branding, but it also shows how these kinds of partnerships can create emotional and visual landmarks in a hotel setting—items that are discussed and remembered long after the first experience. The affective strength of brand presence is demonstrated by the participant's emphasis on being "surprised" and characterizing the feature as "beautiful."

This sentiment was also expressed by other participants. Participants cited the "*Cloud 22 in Atlantis the Royal, collaborating with Dolce & Gabbana"* as examples when prompted. The participants' cognitive connections between hotel identity and the luxury brands they collaborate with are illustrated by these references. In other words, a well-known luxury brand's presence within the hotel ecosystem is not a rare occurrence; rather, it is a component of the hotel's recognized identity.

More significantly, the participants acknowledged that co-branding turns the hotel from a place to stay into a representation of aspiration, taste, and lifestyle. When talking about the D&G spa partnership with Atlantis the Royal, for instance, one member stated, *"They are offering these products and services for the customers, they're using Dolce & Gabbana's(D&G) products and towels. It means that this hotel is super luxury."* This quotation highlights a key idea in luxury hospitality co-branding: brand association gives the host hotel prestige, credibility, and symbolic capital. In addition to increasing emotional and symbolic value, the existence of an exclusive brand serves as a tool for quality assurance.

It's interesting to note that co-branding wasn't always seen favorably. Although the majority of participants agreed that high-profile partnerships improved the hotel's reputation for luxury, several highlighted that the effect varied depending on how well-known, prestigious, and relevant the brand was. One participant stated, *"It depends on what they collaborate with. Like if it's a brand we know."* This emphasizes how important customer recognition and brand alignment are. Therefore, a co-branded experience can only be successful if the partner brand appeals to the target market. A mismatch may cause apathy or even damage the reputation of the brand.

4.1.4 Enhancement of brand image

The belief that co-branding improves the brand image of luxury hotels, as long as the partnership is strategically aligned and carried out with exclusivity, consistency, and authenticity, was one of the most important takeaways from the focus group discussions. The majority of participants agreed that a luxury hotel's partnership with a well-known luxury brand frequently results in an increase in both parties' circumstance, trust, and desirability. This image improvement was viewed as a symbolic partnership that conveys exclusivity, quality, and shared ideals rather than just a marketing move.

A specific example was given by one of the participants, *"It gives me the confidence when I use D&G's spa because I know that these brands, and I can use their products It's really beneficial for me when I visit this area of the hotel.I feel comfortable."*

This claim demonstrates how the hotel's services gain credibility when a well-known luxury brand is present. The brand name serves as a sort of trust certificate, reinforcing the visitor's confidence in the hotel's general standards, and quality. Another participant offered a broader perspective on how collaborations influence brand perception, *"If the Atlantis the Royal is collaborated with Dolce & Gabbana, it means that this hotel is a super luxury hotel, and it would enhance the brand image of this hotel so much if it is prominent."* This participant suggests that the hotel's luxury character is enhanced through its partnership with a well-known brand by linking its association to perceived status.

These findings highlight how crucial target audience alignment and strategic fit are to luxury co-branding partnerships. Co-branding's ability to improve a hotel's image

depends not just on the brand but also on how the partnership is perceived in light of the customer's values, status objectives, and desired lifestyle.

4.1.5 Desire for experiential offerings

The participants' strong desire for immersive, customized, and emotionally compelling experiences—especially when they were produced through co-branding partnerships—was an ongoing theme in both focus groups. Participants underlined that the most effective co-branded experiences are those that arouse emotions, activate multiple senses, and provide a sense of personal connection to the brand, rather than being content with simple product placements or brand signs.

One participant clearly articulated this when they said: *"I can't imagine how beautiful can be, how interesting can be staying in a hotel that collaborates with the brand that I like so much. Some special fashion shows, or events. it's like a special experience that I can have and very interesting for me. I would like to experience it."* This illustrates the strength of emotional attachment and brand familiarity. Participants wanted to interact with high-end products that gave opportunities for social storytelling and identity affirmation, rather than merely coming across them at random.

Similarly, discussions regarding scent, interior design, and exclusive access highlighted the desire for a multisensory, immersive environment. One participant made the following remarkable comment: *"Dior perfumes in the room would be amazing—it gives the place a signature scent, something you remember."*

These observations offer strong proof in favor of the theoretical assumption that, in the highly competitive luxury hotel industry, experiential co-branding is an essential strategy for boosting memorability, loyalty, and brand uniqueness.

4.1.6 Revisit intention and word-of-mouth

The willingness of the participants to return to luxurious hotels that provided outstanding, co-branded, and emotionally intense experiences was a frequent and significant theme that emerged from both focus groups. This was closely related to their tendency to share these experiences with others via social media and in-person interactions. According to the participants, emotional fulfillment, immersive design, and personalized service all had a significant impact on their desire to stay at a hotel again. Their commitment was motivated by the co-branded experience's lasting

emotional impact rather than just functional satisfaction (comfort, cleanliness, etc.). One of the participants mentioned that: *"It gives me confidence; I prefer to go to this hotel. It gives me a sense of comfort. I would like to go always."*

These observations indicate, the intention to return is strongly motivated by favorable feelings, brand familiarity, and trust in the quality of the services. This is consistent with the Customer Loyalty Theory, which maintains that emotional satisfaction from a previous experience is a powerful predictor of returning customers, particularly in the luxury market where emotional and symbolic value are crucial.

Participants also indicated that they were very eager to tell others about their great experiences, both as a method to engage with others and to establish themselves as brand insiders and tastemakers. The experience's exclusivity, emotional resonance, and uniqueness were all major factors in their decision to recommend.

The responses of some participants: *"If the collaboration had a unique thing to do and, you know, new experiences, then yeah, I would recommend it.",* and *"Having photos in these events, posting on social media, creating posters for ourselves is memorable, you are not going to forget them."* These responses show that when co-branded experiences are emotionally engaging and visually compelling, they transform guests into brand advocates which is a powerful form of unpaid marketing. This is especially important in luxury contexts where influencer culture and peer recommendations are highly valued.

4.1.7 Suggestions for future co-branding

The participants' enthusiastic and innovative ideas for future co-branding collaborations in the luxury hotel industry were the last theme to emerge strongly from both focus group conversations. These recommendations were not only spontaneous ideas; rather, they represented a desire for personalized, identity-driven experiences as well as deeper customer goals and brand attachments. By actively participating in creative co-creation, participants positioned themselves as collaborators and brand advocates in addition to being consumers.

A key theme was the idea of cross-industry collaborations, particularly with fashion, automotive, airline, and sports brands. For instance, one participant proposed: *"If the hotel is collaborating with Emirates airline and they took you with high-end*

services to the airport, it means you have some offer, some discount, I believe it's going to be a good experience." This illustrates a growing demand for seamless, end-to-end luxury journeys, where guests enjoy a consistent branded experience from air to accommodation.

Luxury fashion and fragrance were frequently mentioned. One participant shared: *"Maybe Dior or Chanel, then you will feel or smell some luxury perfume that is exclusive for that hotel."*
This highlights a desire for multi-sensory brand integration, especially when the brand holds personal or aspirational value for the guest.

Participants also expressed interest in experiences tied to sports and entertainment. A notable suggestion was: *"I'd like a collaboration with FC Barcelona, maybe you get a free ticket, or a jersey signed by the players."* These ideas reflect the desire for co-branding that offers emotional exclusivity and personal connection, aligning with the concept of aspirational branding.

In conclusion, the qualitative data provided a valuable insight into how guests emotionally perceive and react to co-branded luxury hotel experiences. Underlying attitudes, expectations, and behaviors that could affect brand engagement and loyalty were brought to light by the depth of participant replies. The quantitative results, which provide measurable proof to support and expand the themes found, are presented in the following chapter in order to build on these findings and evaluate their broader relevance.

4.2 Quantitative Data

As part of the study's quantitative phase, a structured online survey was carried out to supplement the qualitative findings. A total of sixty respondents took part in the survey. A series of screening questions was included at the start of the questionnaire to make sure the answers were reliable and relevant. Only those who answered that they have previously been at a luxury hotel were allowed to complete the entire poll. This strategy made guaranteed that every response represented the opinions of participants who had direct knowledge of luxury hospitality, which is essential to the study's goal of analyzing how co-branding affects memorable guest experiences. In order to test the hypotheses and assess the connections among co-branding, brand image, memorable

experiences, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth behaviors, the quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches.

4.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and explore the key characteristics of the data collected from the survey participants which has been shown in Table 2. This analysis provides insight into the central tendencies, distribution, and variability of responses across the main variables of interest in this study, including perceptions of co-branding, brand image, memorable experience, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM/eWOM) behavior.

The descriptive analysis included five core Likert-scale-based variables based on the questions asked from participants:

1. Brand Image: *"How do you think a brand collaboration impacts your perception of the hotel's luxury and quality?"*
2. Memorable Experience: *"How would you describe the impact of co-branding on your expectations/memorable experiences for a luxury hotel stay?"*
3. Association with Memorable Experience: *"To what extent do you associate co-branding with providing a unique and memorable experience in luxury hotels?"*
4. Revisit Intention: *"If given the opportunity, how likely are you to stay at a co-branded luxury hotel in the future?"*
5. WOM/eWOM Intention: *"How likely are you to discuss or share information about a co-branded luxury hotel on social media or with friends/family?"*

Each of these items was measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Very unlikely/Significantly decreases perception) to 5 (Very likely/Significantly enhances perception).

The descriptive analysis clearly illustrates the participants' generally favorable reactions toward co-branding in the luxury hotel sector. Out of all the factors examined, the brand image variable, which measures how brand partnerships affect the perceived luxury and quality of a hotel, had the highest average score (M = 4.57) and the lowest standard deviation (SD = 0.50). This shows that there was widespread agreement

among participants as well as that the great majority of respondents believed that co-branding improved their opinion of a hotel's brand image. This consistency implies that co-branding is seen as a crucial component in enhancing or maintaining a hotel's luxurious reputation in the eyes of visitors.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Q10_BrandImage		*Q12_MemorableExperience*		*Q14_CoBrandingEffectiveness*	
Mean	4.571428571	Mean	4.490566038	Mean	4.120689655
Standard Error	0.066728481	Standard Error	0.08356464	Standard Error	0.092284268
Median	5	Median	5	Median	4
Mode	5	Mode	5	Mode	4
Standard Deviation	0.499350227	Standard Deviation	0.608359759	Standard Deviation	0.702816045
Sample Variance	0.249350649	Sample Variance	0.370101597	Sample Variance	0.493950393
Kurtosis	-1.984189378	Kurtosis	3.397851252	Kurtosis	-0.918267084
Skewness	-0.296681848	Skewness	-1.29415623	Skewness	-0.172519161
Range	1	Range	3	Range	2
Minimum	4	Minimum	2	Minimum	3
Maximum	5	Maximum	5	Maximum	5
Sum	256	Sum	238	Sum	239
Count	56	Count	53	Count	58
Q15_RevisitIntention		*Q17_WOM_eWOM*			
Mean	4.344827586	Mean	4.212121212		
Standard Error	0.096995781	Standard Error	0.22928403		
Median	4.5	Median	5		
Mode	5	Mode	5		
Standard Deviation	0.738697862	Standard Deviation	1.317136472		
Sample Variance	0.545674531	Sample Variance	1.734848485		
Kurtosis	-0.86924609	Kurtosis	0.99768674		
Skewness	-0.65606974	Skewness	-1.465185511		
Range	2	Range	4		
Minimum	3	Minimum	1		
Maximum	5	Maximum	5		
Sum	252	Sum	139		
Count	58	Count	33		

While the majority of participants believed that co-branding made their stay more memorable, a small percentage of respondents had more neutral or less enthusiastic opinions. This is indicated by the similarly high (M = 4.49) but slightly more variation (SD = 0.61) perception of memorable experience as influenced by co-branding. Individual variations in how visitors define or evaluate "memorable" moments or how much they saw and interacted with the co-branded items during their visit could be the cause of this difference. However, the overall mean is still high, confirming the idea that co-branding contributes to creating memorable and unique hotel experiences.

A mean score of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.70 were found when evaluating the relationship between co-branding and memorable experience. This

variable assesses whether visitors see a clear connection between co-branded components and the creation of memorable experiences. The wider range of answers shows more variation in the degree to which visitors associate this with being typically positive, even though the mean still shows this. Some guests may have seen more subtle brand partnership integrations, while others may have encountered more apparent or immersive co-branded environment. This could be explained by differing exposure to or understanding of co-branded aspects.

With a comparatively high mean (M = 4.34), the variable evaluating revisit intention showed that visitors were usually willing to consider staying at a co-branded luxury hotel again. However, the standard deviation of 0.74 indicates that these intents differ to some extent. It is conceivable that although the co-branding enhanced the overall impression, other elements such as cost, location, or consistency of service might affect whether a visitor would truly decide to return.

With a mean score of 4.21 on the word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth behavior (WOM/eWOM) measure, participants showed an intense desire to share with others about their experiences. However, this measure also had the biggest standard deviation (SD = 1.32), indicating that visitor answers varied significantly. While some participants were more hesitant, others expressed a very high possibility of sharing their experiences with friends and family or on social media. Individual differences in social media habits, psychological qualities (such as extroversion versus introversion), or opinions about what is appropriate to share publicly could all be contributing factors to this variation. Even if a guest had a good experience, they might not feel obliged to share with others about it, which emphasizes how complex post-visit behavior can be.

According to the descriptive statistics, co-branding is often seen favorably in a number of aspects that are important to the visitor experience. Although there are notable variances, especially in WOM/eWOM behavior, the general pattern suggests that co-branding tactics are not only well-liked by hotel visitors but are also linked to positive behavioral and experiential outcomes. The next inferential analyses, which seek to statistically examine and validate the correlations among these constructs, are well-founded on these findings.

4.2.2 Regression

A series of simple linear regressions were conducted to test the proposed hypotheses regarding the relationships between co-branding effectiveness, brand image, memorable experience, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth behavior within the context of luxury hotel experiences. The results revealed varying strengths of association between the variables, providing insight into how guests perceive and respond to co-branded luxury hotel experiences as shown in below tables.

The first hypothesis, as presented in Table 3, investigated whether co-branding effectiveness positively influences the perception of brand image. The regression analysis yielded a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.298 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.089. This indicates that only 8.9% of the variation in brand image perception is explained by participants' perception of co-branding. While the direction of the relationship aligns with the hypothesis, the strength of the association is relatively weak, suggesting limited influence of co-branding on brand image perception.

Table 3: Regression Analysis — Effect of Co-Branding on Brand Image

Hypothesis 1

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.298424595
R Square	0.089057239
Adjusted R Square	0.072187929
Standard Error	0.480989129
Observations	56

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	1.221356421	1.22135642	5.27924598	0.02548236
Residual	54	12.49292929	0.23135054		
Total	55	13.71428571			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	3.808080808	0.338388585	11.2535735	8.873E-16	3.12965254	4.48650907	3.12965254	4.48650907
X Variable 1	0.185858586	0.080890343	2.29766098	0.02548236	0.02368321	0.34803396	0.02368321	0.34803396

In contrast, according to Table 4, the relationship between co-branding and memorable experience was stronger, with an R^2 of 0.227. This demonstrates that 22.7% of the variation in memorable experience could be attributed to perceptions of co-branding effectiveness. Guests who believed co-branding added value were more likely to describe their stay as memorable, showing a moderate level of support for the link between these two constructs.

Table 4: Regression Analysis — Effect of Co-Branding on Memorable Experience

Hypothesis 2

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.476107938
R Square	0.226678769
Adjusted R Square	0.211515608
Standard Error	0.540203047
Observations	53

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	4.362497062	4.36249706	14.9493079	0.000314
Residual	51	14.88278596	0.29181933		
Total	52	19.24528302			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	3.002265006	0.392015424	7.65853797	4.9834E-10	2.2152612	3.78926881	2.2152612	3.78926881
X Variable 1	0.361834655	0.093583571	3.86643349	0.000314	0.1739578	0.54971151	0.1739578	0.54971151

As indicated in Table 5, further analysis revealed that brand image was a moderately strong predictor of memorable experience, with an R^2 of 0.336. This suggests that 33.6% of the variance in guests' perceived memorability of the experience was associated with how positively they viewed the hotel's brand image. This supports the idea that a well-established and appealing brand can significantly enhance the experiential value of a hotel stay.

Table 5: Regression Analysis — Effect of Brand Image on Memorable Experience

Hypothesis 3

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.579556009
R Square	0.335885167
Adjusted R Square	0.322602871
Standard Error	0.502358076
Observations	52

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	6.381818182	6.381818182	25.28818444	6.73045E-06
Residual	50	12.61818182	0.252363636		
Total	51	19			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	1.254545455	0.649130803	1.932654327	0.058953055	-0.049272134	2.558363043	-0.049272134	2.558363043
X Variable 1	0.709090909	0.141007786	5.028735869	6.73045E-06	0.425868437	0.992313382	0.425868437	0.992313382

The findings of Table 6 also indicated that memorable experiences had a strong impact on revisit intention. With an R^2 of 0.409, the analysis showed that 40.9% of guests' likelihood to return to the hotel was explained by how memorable they found

their stay. This highlights the critical role that experiential quality plays in driving customer loyalty in the luxury hotel sector.

Table 6: Regression Analysis — Effect of Memorable Experience on Revisit Intention

Hypothesis 4

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.639224914
R Square	0.408608491
Adjusted R Square	0.396539276
Standard Error	0.539957737
Observations	51

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	9.870699223	9.870699223	33.8554337	4.4497E-07
Residual	49	14.28616352	0.291554358		
Total	50	24.15686275			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	1.144654088	0.563228027	2.032310242	0.047560987	0.012804992	2.276503184	0.012804992	2.27650318
X Variable 1	0.726415094	0.124844861	5.818542231	4.4497E-07	0.475529954	0.977300235	0.475529954	0.97730023

Additionally, as presented in Table 7, memorable experience was found to be a significant predictor of word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth behavior. The R^2 value of 0.352 suggests that 35.2% of the variation in sharing behavior was due to the memorability of the stay, confirming that customers who had meaningful and memorable experiences were more inclined to recommend the hotel to others, either personally or via social media.

Table 7: Regression Analysis — Effect of Memorable Experience on WOM/eWOM

Hypothesis 5

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.593572936
R Square	0.352328831
Adjusted R Square	0.32834101
Standard Error	0.86473018
Observations	29

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	10.98294011	10.98294011	14.68782137	0.000688237
Residual	27	20.18947368	0.747758285		
Total	28	31.17241379			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	-1.578947368	1.580850056	-0.998796415	0.326761088	-4.822583755	1.664689018	-4.8225838	1.66468902
X Variable 1	1.294736842	0.33783358	3.832469356	0.000688237	0.601559594	1.987914091	0.60155959	1.98791409

Finally, according to Table 8, revisit intention emerged as the strongest predictor of WOM and eWOM. The regression analysis produced an R^2 of 0.652, indicating that

65.2% of the variance in sharing behavior was explained by the likelihood of returning to the hotel. This finding demonstrates a very strong relationship and reinforces the idea that customer loyalty and future intent are key drivers of advocacy behavior.

Table 8: Regression Analysis — Effect of Revisit Intention on WOM/eWOM

Hypothesis 6

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.807538449
R Square	0.652118347
Adjusted R Square	0.640122428
Standard Error	0.80628867
Observations	31

ANOVA

	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	35.34060721	35.3406072	54.3616829	4.0123E-08
Residual	29	18.85294118	0.65010142		
Total	30	54.19354839			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*	*Upper 95%*	*Lower 95.0%*	*Upper 95.0%*
Intercept	-2.110294118	0.862849657	-2.4457263	0.02076071	-3.8750198	-0.3455684	-3.8750198	-0.3455684
X Variable 1	1.419117647	0.192473948	7.37303756	4.0123E-08	1.02546422	1.81277107	1.02546422	1.81277107

In summary, while the impact of co-branding on brand image was relatively weak, the results provide growing evidence that co-branding contributes to creating memorable experiences, which in turn significantly influence revisit intentions and word-of-mouth engagement. These findings highlight the importance of enhancing brand perception and experiential value as strategic levers for improving customer retention and generating positive brand advocacy in the luxury hospitality industry.

4.2.3 Graphical representation of survey results

Visual representations of specific survey results are included in addition to descriptive data and regression analyses to improve comprehension of respondents' attitudes and actions around co-branding in the upscale hospitality industry. Important findings including participants' awareness of co-branding procedures, tendency to select co-branded hotels, reasons for word-of-mouth advocacy, and the perceived influence of co-branding on memorable guest experiences are presented in the following figures. The primary trends found in the study are more clearly illustrated by these graphical summaries, which support the quantitative data analysis.

As shown in Figure 2 the respondents' degree of knowledge about co-branding partnerships in the upscale hotel industry. A significant majority (80%) of respondents were already aware with the concept before taking the survey, according to the results. This high degree of familiarity reflects the growing popularity and strategic importance

luxury hotels focus on alliances with well-known international brands. This knowledge implies that co-branding campaigns are not only common but also becoming more and more anticipated by guests as a component of staying at a luxury hotel. As a result, brand partnerships have probably grown to be a crucial component of consumer perception and brand positioning strategies in the luxury hospitality sector.

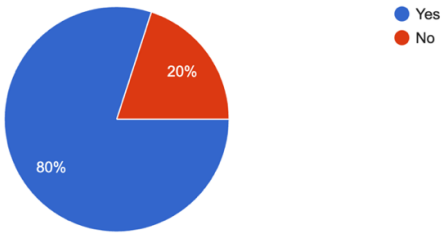

Figure 2: Respondents' Awareness of Co-Branding in Luxury Hotels

The probability that respondents will choose a co-branded luxury hotel for future trips is shown in Figure 3. According to the findings, 50% of respondents said they were extremely likely to select a place to stay that were co-branded, and other respondents also indicated favorable inclinations. This high purchase intention demonstrates how co-branding shapes consumer behavior in the market for luxury hospitality. Co-branding seems to increase perceived value, prestige, and distinctiveness, which makes co-branded hotels more appealing to selective customers looking for unique and remarkable experiences.

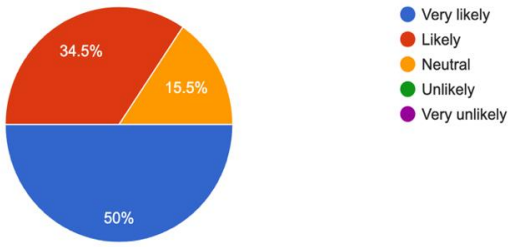

Figure 3: Likelihood of Staying at a Co-Branded Luxury Hotel

The main motivators for visitors to share information about co-branded luxury hotels on social media or through word-of-mouth are illustrated in Figure 4. The entire luxury experience (54.2%), unique architecture and design (62.7%), and excellent service (54.2%) were the main motivators. These results highlight how important sensory appeal, emotional connection, and exceptional experiences are in

creating brand advocacy behaviors. By creating strong emotional connections in visitors' memories, co-branding efforts for luxury hotels that prioritize experiential uniqueness, and high-quality service can greatly increase positive word-of-mouth and support the Memory-Dominant Logic (MDL) framework.

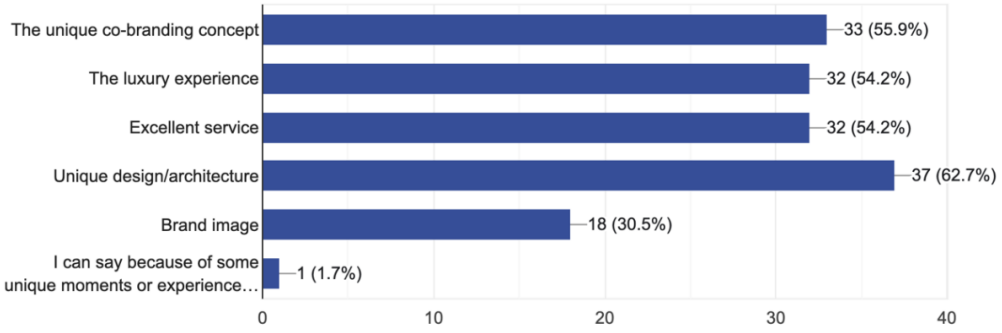

Figure 4: Main Reasons for Sharing Information About Co-Branded Luxury Hotels

Co-branding has a significant impact on creating memorable guest experiences, as seen in Figure 5. While a sizable percentage also mentioned benefits, over half of the respondents (47.5%) said that co-branding really improved their experience. This outcome demonstrates how important strategic brand alliances are to enhancing the luxurious hotel experience's emotional and sensory aspects.

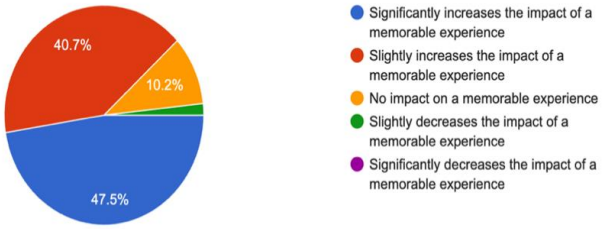

Figure 5: Perceived Impact of Co-Branding on Memorable Experiences

Over time, co-branding increases brand loyalty, advocacy behaviors, and revisit intentions by strengthening the emotional bonds that customers develop with hotel brands in addition to improving the brand image. These observations are very consistent with the Memory-Dominant Logic and experiential marketing viewpoints covered in the literature review.

Chapter 5. Discussion

This research set out to investigate how co-branding in luxury hotels influences brand image, the creation of memorable experiences, revisit intention, and advocacy behavior in the form of word-of-mouth (WOM) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, the findings illuminate how guests perceive and respond to co-branded experiences, particularly within the context of Dubai's luxury hospitality industry. This chapter discusses these findings in light of the hypotheses and existing literature, while also acknowledging the limitations posed by the relatively small sample size (n = 60), which may constrain the broader applicability of the statistical results.

The first hypothesis proposed that co-branding positively affects brand image. According to the first theory, co-branding enhances brand perception. This assertion was adequately supported by qualitative data, as participants frequently discussed how their trust and appreciation of the hotel were increased by collaborations with high-end, prestigious brands. The hotel's reputation was anticipated to be enhanced by these partnerships, which added levels of emotional and symbolic significance. Co-branded amenities like branded spas, designer toiletries, or rooms with a fashion theme, for example, were seen as further expressions of the luxury brand. This supports the claim presented by Whalen & Sisson (2022) that co-branding strengthens brand equity through positive associative transfer.

Nevertheless, a little modest statistical relationship was shown by the quantitative study ($R^2 = 0.089$). The limited strength indicates that co-branding by itself might not significantly change perceptions of brand image in isolation, even while it is directionally beneficial. Other factors, like location, personal experience, brand heritage, and service quality, are probably going to have a big impact as well. The lack of statistical significance could potentially have been caused by the small sample size; this link might be more noticeable with a larger and more varied dataset. These findings are consistent with Leuthesser et al. (2003)'s focus on fit and complementarity: not all co-branding initiatives have the same effect, and misaligned alliances might even damage a brand's reputation.

The second hypothesis, which was more strongly confirmed by both data sets, suggested that co-branding creates memorable experiences. Examples of guests

remembering special, sensory, and emotionally impactful events made possible by co-branding—like welcome kits created by fashion labels or scent branding associated with a certain luxury partner—were abundant in the qualitative findings. Guests were left with emotional memories long after their visit because to these unique, narrative elements. These stories support the ideas of Memory-Dominant Logic (Harrington et al., 2019), which argues that memories are more likely to be formed by experiences that appeal to the senses and emotions.

According to quantitative data, the association was moderate but significant (R^2 = 0.227), indicating that co-branded products significantly increase memorability but need to be implemented carefully to have this effect. This is in line with Nowacki & Niezgoda's (2023) research, which emphasizes the value of carefully selected, immersive experiences in luxury tourism. It's important to keep in mind that the tiny sample size might have once more lessened the significance of the findings, particularly considering how subjective and complicated "memorability" is and how much it varies from person to person.

The third hypothesis investigated if a memorable experience is positively impacted by brand image. This was thematically common in the qualitative findings and supported by a larger connection (R^2 = 0.336). Visitors stated that the hotel brand's status and repute affected their expectations. Anticipation fueled by a powerful, aspirational brand image prepared individuals to notice, value, and recall finer details. This is consistent with the findings of Dam & Dam (2021), who discovered that brand image significantly influences guests' perceptions and emotional responses. Similarly, Minkkinen (2024) proposed that visitors' interpretations of service encounters are frequently influenced by their perception of brand value.

Both qualitative and statistical evidence confirmed the fourth hypothesis, which states that revisit intention is positively impacted by memorable experiences (R^2 = 0.409). Participants frequently expressed a desire to stay at hotels again where they were made to feel valuable, seen, and emotionally involved. These opinions are in line with those of Sharma & Bhat (2022), who highlighted emotional fulfillment as a crucial factor in determining customer loyalty. Many respondents saw a memorable co-branded experience as a symbolic representation of comfort, status, or personal accomplishment—elements that naturally support the desire to return.

A moderate regression result ($R^2 = 0.352$) supported the fifth hypothesis, which claimed that memorable experiences have a favorable impact on WOM and eWOM. Whether in casual chats or on social media, participants were especially excited to share experiences that were unique, luxurious, and visually appealing. This is in line with study by Murray et al. (2024) and Hosseini et al. (2023), which highlighted that sharing emotionally charged and remarkable experiences is more likely to occur, especially in the luxury market where social signaling is crucial to consumer behavior.

According to qualitative research, guests frequently gain social and personal benefits from sharing these kinds of experiences, particularly when they include co-branded components that improve their reputation. This is in line with the performative aspect of luxury consumption that was covered by Turunen et al. (2020).

The sixth hypothesis, which states that visit intention has a favorable impact on WOM/eWOM, finally showed the best statistical evidence ($R^2 = 0.652$). The most likely visitors to participate in advocacy activities were also those who indicated a strong desire to return. This result is consistent with Chen & Li (2022) and Sharipudin et al. (2021), who found revisit intention to be a powerful predictor of organic brand promotion. Focus group participants frequently cited going back to the same co-branded hotel as an opportunity to endorse the brand since they felt their own experiences validated the hotel's promises. This strong correlation implies that hotels should consider the intention to return as an indication of possible word-of-mouth marketing leverage in addition to a loyalty indicator.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

In Dubai's luxury hotel industry, this study investigated the effects of co-branding strategies on word-of-mouth behaviors, memorable guest experiences, brand image, and revisit intention. The study, which used a mixed-methods approach, gave an in-depth understanding of how co-branding enhances the guest's experience and promotes customer advocacy and loyalty.

The quantitative results did not demonstrate a statistically significant correlation between co-branding and brand image, despite the qualitative data suggesting that co-branding can enhance a hotel's perceived prestige and uniqueness. This illustrates an essential achievement: while co-branded features could be valued by visitors, they do not always result in a measurable improvement of the hotel's brand image over the near future. Rather, other factors like overall guest pleasure, previous brand equity, or service consistency might be more important.

On the other hand, the outcomes perfectly demonstrated how co-branding contributes to memorable experiences. Co-branded features, like branded amenities, sensory design, and storytelling collaborations, increased emotional engagement and memorability, according to both qualitative accounts and statistical findings. Consequently, it has been demonstrated that a strong brand image, regardless of how it was created, greatly improves the memorability of guest experiences.

Furthermore, memorable experiences were found to be important predictors of revisit intention. Visitors who had memorable experiences and deep emotional bonds during their visits were more likely to want to return. This connection supports current theoretical frameworks that highlight the significance of symbolic consumption and emotional satisfaction in the luxury hospitality industry.

Additionally, the study confirmed that guests' desire to participate in WOM and eWOM was positively impacted by memorable experiences. Hotel experiences that were unique, emotionally meaningful, and co-created were more likely to be shared and recommended by guests. Lastly, it was discovered that the best indicator of WOM and eWOM behaviors was revisit intention, underscoring the connection between brand advocacy, loyalty, and emotional involvement.

Overall, this study contributes to the knowledge of experiential co-branding by demonstrating that, although co-branding can enhance the luxury hotel experience and encourage loyalty, it might not be able to change brand image on its own without the support of more deep brand values and superior customer service. The implications for managers are obvious: co-branding is an effective tool for creating strong feelings, but in order to reach its full potential, it needs to be carried out with authenticity and accompanied by a comprehensive brand experience.

Chapter 7. Limitations

It should be noted that this study has several limitations even if it offers insightful information about the impact of co-branding in luxury hospitality. One significant limitation was the quantitative phase's comparatively small sample size (n = 60), which might have decreased the regression analysis's statistical power and restricted how broadly the results could be applied. The quantitative results did not demonstrate a significant positive association between co-branding and brand image, which may be a reflection of the difficulties in working with a small sample size, even though the qualitative feedback indicated that co-branding projects can increase perceived prestige.

The study's geographic and cultural focus is another drawback. The study, which was limited to the luxury hotel industry in Dubai, provides context for the findings, which show that luxury consumption is strongly linked to social visibility, exclusivity, and status signaling. Because of this, guest's perceptions in this location might be different from those in other areas, which would restrict the results' applicability in more general worldwide situations.

Another drawback of the cross-sectional research design is that it only records visitor opinions at one particular moment in time, failing to take into consideration potential changes in experiences and loyalty practices. Furthermore, the study only included the viewpoint of the guests, excluding the opinions of hotel managers or brand partners that are involved in creating and implementing co-branding plans.

Considering these limitations reveals areas where further study might expand and deepen our knowledge of co-branding strategies in luxury hospitality.

Chapter 8. Managerial Implications

The findings of the research offer valuable real-world advice to brand strategists and managers of luxurious hotels who are looking to maximize their co-branding initiatives. Making sure that co-branding efforts are genuinely in line with the hotel's fundamental brand identity is one of the most important lessons learned. Just collaborating with a well-known luxury brand does not ensure that guests will see your establishment favorably. Guests are perceptive and may quickly distinguish between partnerships that seem genuine and those that seem weak or out of alignment. In order to meet the expectations of their target audience, managers must carefully choose partners whose brand values, customer profiles, and experiential components align.

Another important implication is that co-branding should be used to create sensory-rich and emotionally compelling experiences rather than depending only on symbolic associations. Partnerships that appeal to visitors' emotions and senses through narrative, customized experiences, and multisensory branding, have a higher chance of producing enduring memories that inspire advocacy and loyalty. Co-branded experiences that are both luxurious and "shareable" on digital platforms can boost organic marketing efforts in a highly competitive luxury market like Dubai, where social signaling is crucial.

The results also highlight the need for all co-branding efforts to be based on service excellence. The entire guest experiences including service quality, personalization, and emotional connection, remains crucial to boosting brand equity since co-branding by itself does not substantially improve brand image. The hotel's core value proposition should be strengthened rather than replaced by co-branding.

Co-branding efforts must also be continuously assessed to make sure they continue to appeal to changing visitor tastes. Hotels may improve their strategies, strengthen successful relationships, and modify or stop collaborations that fail to offer the desired value by gathering and evaluating guest feedback regarding co-branded experiences. Luxury hotels will be able to fully utilize the potential of co-branding to enhance visitor experiences, develop emotional loyalty, and encourage natural brand support in a market that is becoming more and more experience-driven with a dynamic, guest-centered approach.

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Appendix

Questions

Focus Group Questions

Section 1: Warm-Up & General Understanding

1. When you think of luxury hotels, what are the first words or images that come to mind?
2. Can you name any luxury hotels in Dubai that you are familiar with? What do you associate with them?
3. What does "collaboration " mean to you? Have you ever come across a luxury hotel collaborating with another brand?
4. Can you recall a memorable experience you recently had…at a luxury hotel.

Section 2: Awareness and Perception of Existing Collaborations

4. Have you heard of any collaborations between luxury hotels and other brands (e.g., fashion, automotive, technology, dining, etc.)? If so, which ones?
5. How do you feel about these collaborations? Do they enhance the luxury experience for you? If so, can you recall any event?
6. Example Discussion:
    - Are you aware of the Dolce & Gabbana collaboration with Atlantis The Royal's Cloud 22?
    - What are your thoughts on this partnership? Do you think it aligns with the luxury image of both brands?
    - If you had the opportunity, would you be more interested in visiting Cloud 22 because of this collaboration?

Section 3: Evaluation of Fictional Co-Branding Scenarios *(Using cards with hotel and brand logos/pictures)*

7. I'm going to show you some potential brand collaborations between luxury hotels and high-end brands. Please look at these pairs and share your initial thoughts:
    - Address and Emirates
    - Atlantis The Royal and Ferrari: Ferrari-inspired suite interiors, Rooftop Ferrari cocktail lounge, luxury drive packages, exclusive Ferrari merchandise for guests.
    - One&Only One Za'abeel x Nespresso
    - Do you think this collaboration makes sense?
    - Would this partnership increase your interest in staying at the hotel?

    - What kind of experiences or services would you expect from this collaboration?
8. If you could create your own luxury hotel collaboration, which brands would you choose?
9. Would you be more likely to stay at a luxury hotel if it had an exclusive partnership with a brand you admire (e.g., luxury fashion, car brands, or gourmet dining)? Or it doesn't matter?

Section 4: Consumer Expectations and Experience

10. What do you expect from a memorable luxury hotel experience? What elements make a hotel stay truly special for you?
11. How do you think a brand partnership could enhance (or take away from) such a memorable experience vis a vis your luxury hotel?
12. Let's discuss if a co-branded experience influences your likelihood of recommending the hotel to others.

Section 5: Closing Questions

13. Looking at all the potential collaborations we discussed, which one stood out to you the most?
14. Any final thoughts on how luxury hotels can leverage co-branding to create unforgettable guest experiences?

Survey Questions

Section 1: Screening Questions

1. Have you ever stayed at a luxury hotel?
    - Yes (please go to Q3.)
    - No (If no, please stop the survey. Thank you)
2. Have you ever stayed at a luxury hotel that is co-branded with another well-known brand (e.g., Atlantis the Royal and Dolce & Gabbana Cloud 22, Dior Spa The Lana Hotel)?
    - Yes
    - No

Section 2: Demographic Information

3. What age group do you fall into?
    - 18-24 years old
    - 25-34 years old

- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55+ years old

4. Which of the following best describes your ethnic or cultural background? (Select one)
    - Asian
    - African
    - Middle Eastern
    - European
    - North American
    - South American
    - Australian/Pacific Islander
    - Other (Please specify)
5. What is your current employment status?
    - Self-employed
    - Fully employed
    - Part-time employed
    - Unemployed
    - Student
    - Home-maker
    - Retired
6. How frequently do you stay in luxury hotels?
    - Once a year
    - 2-3 times a year
    - More than 3 times a year
7. What was the purpose of your last luxury hotel stay?
    - Business
    - Leisure
    - Special occasion (e.g., anniversary, honeymoon)

- Other (Please specify)

Section 3: Co-Branding and Brand Image

8. Before this survey, were you aware that some luxury hotels collaborate with well-known brands?
   - Yes
   - No
9. How would you rate the concept of co-branding in luxury hotels in terms of effectiveness?
   - Very effective
   - Effective
   - Neutral
   - Ineffective
   - Very ineffective
10. How do you think a brand collaboration impacts your perception of the hotel's luxury and quality?
    - Significantly enhances perception
    - Slightly enhances perception
    - No impact
    - Slightly worsens perception
    - Significantly worsens perception
11. In your opinion, how does staying at a co-branded luxury hotel compare to a non-co-branded luxury hotel? (Select all that apply)
    - Provides a more luxurious experience
    - Increases exclusivity and uniqueness
    - Enhances service quality
    - No significant difference
    - Other (Please specify)

Section 4: Memorable Experience

12. How would you describe the impact of co-branding on your expectations/memorable experiences for a luxury hotel stay?

- Significantly increases the impact of a memorable experience
- Slightly increases the impact of a memorable experience
- No impact on a memorable experience
- Slightly decreases the impact of a memorable experience
- Significantly decreases the impact of a memorable experience

13. In your opinion, what do you think are the key elements contributing to a memorable stay at a co-branded luxury hotel?
    - Brand image
    - Unique collaborations
    - Exclusive services
    - Interior design and aesthetics
    - Personalized guest experiences
    - Other (Please specify)
14. To what extent do you associate co-branding with providing a unique and memorable experience in luxury hotels? (Select one)
    - Very strongly
    - Strongly
    - Neutral
    - Weakly
    - Not at all

Section 5: Revisit Intention

15. If given the opportunity, how likely are you to stay at a co-branded luxury hotel in the future?
    - Very likely
    - Likely
    - Neutral
    - Unlikely
    - Very unlikely

16. Would you prefer a co-branded luxury hotel over a non-co-branded luxury hotel for your next stay?
    - Yes, definitely
    - Maybe
    - No

Section 6: Word-of-Mouth (WOM) & Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

17. How likely are you to discuss or share information about a co-branded luxury hotel on social media or with friends/family? (Select one)
    - Very likely
    - Somewhat likely
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat unlikely
    - Very unlikely
18. What are the main reasons you would discuss or share information about a co-branded luxury hotel? (Select all that apply)
    - The unique co-branding concept
    - The luxury experience
    - Excellent service
    - Unique design/architecture
    - Brand image
    - Other (Please specify)
19. How likely are you to recommend a co-branded luxury hotel to others based on your perception or experience?
    - Very likely
    - Likely
    - Neutral
    - Unlikely
    - Very unlikely

Vita

Dorrin Vahid was born in 1999 in Tehran, Iran. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering from the Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, in 2021.

She moved to the United Arab Emirates in 2023 and is currently pursuing her master's degree. During her graduate studies, she worked as a Research Assistant under the supervision of senior faculty members at the School of Business Administration. Her research contributions included market analysis, financial data analysis, and business strategy development, with a particular focus on projects aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to her academic pursuits, she participated in specialized research projects. She was recognized for outstanding contributions in a university-sponsored marketing project for Samsung, achieved second place in the AUS Research Award for a paper presented in the "Economics for Managers" course, and presented her research paper on co-branding in luxury hospitality at the 2025 Graduate Students Research Conference.