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MASTER'S THESIS

**EVOKING A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL
MARKETING: THE CASE OF PRIVATE STUDENT HALLS OF
RESIDENCE**

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1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of experiential marketing has gained significant traction in recent years, reflecting a paradigm shift in how businesses engage with consumers. Unlike traditional marketing, which primarily focuses on the functional attributes of products and services, experiential marketing aims to create memorable and meaningful experiences that foster emotional connections and brand loyalty. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) noted, we have entered an "experience economy" where value is no longer derived from commodities, goods, or services, but from staged experiences that engage consumers on multiple levels. Marketeers are no longer selling products or services alone—they are curating moments that generate lasting impressions.

Many researchers have explored the strategic dimensions of experiential marketing. Schmitt's (1999, 2010) framework introduced five types of strategic experiential modules—sense, feel, think, act, and relate—each aimed at stimulating consumer engagement through different experiential pathways. These concepts were later extended into more structured brand experience dimensions by Brakus et al. (2009), who emphasized sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioural responses as key aspects of consumer-brand interaction. Pine and Gilmore's four realms of experience—entertainment, education, escapism, and aestheticism—further enriched the theoretical understanding of how experiences can be classified and designed.

In this context, multisensory marketing has gained prominence as a central component of brand strategy. Lindstrom (2005) and Hultén (2011) underline the importance of engaging multiple senses to form emotional bonds and increase brand loyalty. This is particularly relevant in markets where the need for differentiation and emotional connection is paramount. As shown by Wiedmann et al. (2018), an orchestrated sensory approach can elevate brand perception, enhance consumer value, and foster attachment.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how experiential marketing can evoke a sense of belonging among students residing in private student halls. It aims to identify the key elements shaping students' brand experiences, understand the factors influencing these experiences, and examine how these experiences affect students' identification with the brand and their sense of belonging within the residence. In an era of increasing competition and commodification in student accommodations, experiential marketing strategies offer the potential to create emotional bonds and foster a sense of community—critical factors for Generation Z students in their decision-making processes. Through this investigation, the thesis seeks to understand how private student halls address students' need for belonging through experiential cues and interactions within these spaces.

The research is guided by the following questions: 1) What elements contribute to the brand experience of students living in private student dorms? 2) What factors influence the brand

experiences of student residents? 3) In what ways do students experience their brand interactions in private student dorms? 4) To what extent do students identify with the brand of their private student dorm? 5) How does the sense of belonging manifest in students living in private student dorms? These questions aim to provide insights into the role of experiential marketing in shaping students' perceptions and emotional connections within private student accommodations.

To address these questions, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach. First, qualitative ethnographic methods—comprising direct observation and semi-structured interviews—are employed to explore the lived experiences of student residents. The qualitative phase informs the development of a quantitative survey that tests hypotheses based on the initial findings. This survey will statistically validate the impact of experiential elements on belonging, satisfaction, and brand identification.

The thesis begins by introducing experiential marketing within the context of private student halls, exploring the experience economy, its development, trends, and branded experiences, including types, multisensory dimensions, design, and measurement. It then examines customer experience, focusing on rational and emotional factors, brand relationships, and consumer-brand identification, with particular attention to the sense of belonging. The research is contextualized within private student halls, analysing their specific characteristics and how they address students' need for belonging. The methodology section outlines the ethnographic approach, including observations, interviews, and data analysis. The findings are presented around key themes such as sensory cues, subjective experiences, memorable events, community formation, and consumer-brand identification, followed by hypothesis testing and quantitative results. The thesis concludes with a discussion on implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research, offering practical recommendations for marketers in the student housing sector.

2 EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Experiential marketing provides customers with unique and memorable experiences with the purpose of establishing a positive customer–brand relationship and has become one of the key challenges for brand managers (Wiedmann et al., 2018). In contrast to traditional marketing, experiential marketing does not view consumers as rational decision-makers who care about functional features and benefits, but rather as rational and emotional human beings who are concerned with achieving pleasurable experiences (Schmitt, 2010). Since customers are willing to pay more for a unique experience than for a standard service (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2004), it is expected experiential marketing will replace traditional feature-and-benefit (F&B) marketing (Schmitt, 1999). Therefore, brand management has shifted focus from price/value ratio to memories and uniqueness (Dwivedi et al., 2018).

In the following chapter, I will explore the concept of the experience economy, providing an overview of its origins and how it has evolved over time. Additionally, I will examine how the value of economic offerings has shifted, emphasizing the growing importance of creating unique and memorable experiences. The chapter will also highlight current trends in market offerings, including the increasing demand for immersive, personalized experiences, and the role of sensory and emotional engagement in shaping consumer behaviour.

2.1 The Experience Economy

Experience economy is the stage of economy where value is created through experience, i.e. memorable and subjective events, based on sensory information, that evoke emotions and leave impressions (Same & Larimo, 2012) that are causing a cognitive, affective or conative change in attitude (Mischel & Shoda, 1995; Neyrinck et al., 2006). Compared to previous stages of economy, it creates bigger value, which is reflected through bigger return on investment, customer satisfaction & brand loyalty (Pina & Dias, 2021).

The idea of experience economy was first introduced by Pine & Gilmore in 1998, who, looking back, realized how over time, economic value has been gradually increasing. At a societal level, it progressed through three stages: commodity/agrarian economy, manufacturing/industrial economy and service economy. They recognized experiential economy as the next stage in the development of economy.

Figure 1 summarise the economic distinctions they identified. The earliest stage, the commodity economy, was concerned with the extraction of substances from the world around us. Next, starting with the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, came the manufacturing economy, where the primary economic offering was the making of products.

The manufacturing economy did not replace the commodity economy entirely, but added an additional economic offering. In the twentieth century followed the service economy, where the offerings of highest value were the delivery of intangible services. Now, in the twenty-first century, many developed societies are entering the experience economy, where the highest-value economic offerings are experiences. In the experience economy, businesses stage memorable experiences for customers, which are entertaining and educational rather than functional and utilitarian in nature (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

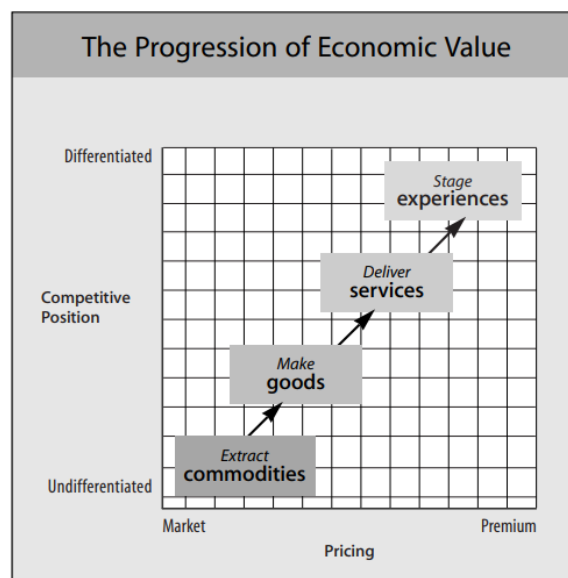
Figure 1: Economic Distinctions

Economic Distinctions				
Economic Offering	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic Function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of Offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key Attribute	Natural	Standardized	Customized	Personal
Method of Supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of Demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

Source: Pine & Gilmore (1999).

In short, the marketeers have constantly been trying to increase the economic value by creating a better proposal for their customer. Therefore, from selling commodities/raw materials, they have first moved towards selling finished goods/products, managing to increase the economic value. This was further increased by offering clients services, and finally reached a new height by creating the holistic experience. The progression of economy value is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: The Progression of Economic Value



Source: Pine & Gilmore (1999).

In the progression of economic value, higher value is achieved with increasing differentiation – since a unique offer is hard to compare to the competitors' offer, price

becomes just one of the factors to consider when customers are making a purchase decision. As suggested by Zeithaml (1988), unique value proposition can make customers less sensitive to price changes. Furthermore, research by Bei and Chiao (2001) supports the idea that when consumers perceive a product as unique and valuable, they are more likely to tolerate higher prices. These findings highlight the importance of creating distinct and memorable experiences or products to reduce price sensitivity among consumers (Larsen et al., 2017; Zeithaml, 1988) and therefore enable the shift from market pricing to premium pricing.

In recent years, experience thinking has become mainstream, but is still constantly changing in order to respond to the arising trends. One of these trends is the micro trend of “experience first” (Seymour Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2019), which suggests that customers today desire immersive, in-tense, off-the-beaten track experience, as they crave meaningful human interactions and a sense of belonging in a world dominated by technology (Foresight Factory, 2019; Batat, 2019; Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2019).

More and more people are searching for meaning, happiness, sensations, new forms of fulfilment and core values, which they often find in market offerings (Fortezza & Pencarelli, 2011). Products can become more emotionally and psychologically comfortable through product semantics, which is concerned with the relationship between the user and the product on one hand, and the importance that objects assume in an operational and social context on the other hand (Johansson, 2000). Therefore, according to Monö (1996), when designing the products, designers should consider four semantic functions of products: to describe, to express, to signal, and to identify.

More recent experiential marketing research suggests that extraordinary consumption experiences do not need to be placed within antistructure frames, but may be occurring within ‘everyday’ structural frames (Skandalis et al., 2019).

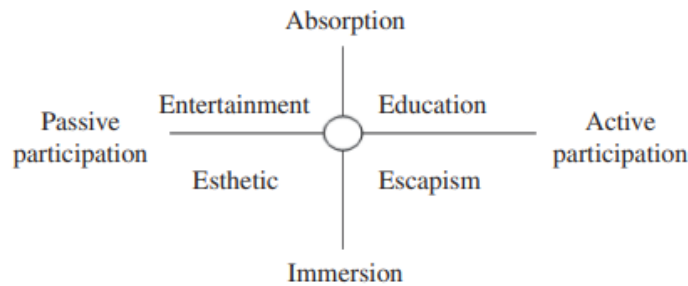
2.2 Branded Experience

Brakus et al. (2009) have defined brand experience as subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand’s design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments. Brand experiences result from all sorts of consumer interactions with a brand at various touchpoints. The construct therefore relates to the summary impression of the brand as a whole, and not only its subcomponents.

Pine and Gilmore (1999) delineate four dimensions of experiences: entertainment, education, escapism, and aesthetic. Entertainment experiences involve passive absorption through the senses, such as attending a concert or watching a movie. Educational experiences require active participation, engaging the mind and the body to increase knowledge or skill, such as attending a workshop or a lecture. Escapist experiences involve immersive and active

participation, allowing individuals to escape their ordinary lives, such as through adventure travel or video games. Finally, aesthetic experiences are about being immersed in an environment while remaining passive, like visiting a museum or enjoying a scenic location. The four dimensions of an experience are visually presented in figure 3. Together, these dimensions highlight the varied ways in which experiences can be crafted and consumed to create memorable and meaningful engagements.

Figure 3: The Four Dimensions of an Experience



Source: Pine & Gilmore (1999).

2.2.1 Types of Experiences

According to Schmitt (2010), for customers, the marketer can create five different types of experiences, or strategic experiential modules (SEMs): sensory experiences (SENSE); affective experiences (FEEL); creative cognitive experiences (THINK); physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (ACT); and social-identity experiences that result from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE). These experiences are implemented through so-called experience providers (ExPros), such as communications, visual and verbal identity, product presence, electronic media, etc., as presented in figure 4.

Figure 4: Schmitt's Experiential Grid

The Experiential Grid

		ExPros						
		communications	identity	product	co-branding	environments	web sites	people
SEMs	SENSE							
	FEEL							
	THINK							
	ACT							
	RELATE							

Source: Schmitt (2010).

Sensory Experiences involve engaging customers through their senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. For example, a brand might use ambient music or distinctive scents in their stores to enhance the shopping experience. Affective Experiences are emotional experiences that connect with customers on an emotional level. Marketing campaigns that evoke feelings of joy, pride, or nostalgia are examples of this type of experience. Creative cognitive experiences engage customers through creative thinking and problem-solving. Brands might use puzzles, trivia, or thought-provoking advertisements to stimulate the minds of their audience. Physical experiences, behaviours, and lifestyles focus on physical experiences and encouraging customers to take specific actions or adopt particular behaviours. Fitness brands, for example, often promote active lifestyles through their marketing. Social-identity experiences connect customers with a larger social context. This could involve experiences that align with a community or a social cause, creating a sense of belonging among customers.

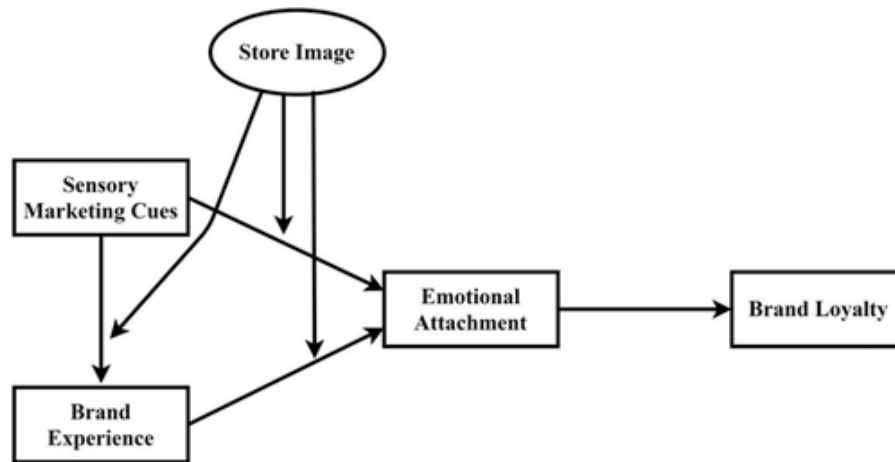
2.2.2 Multi-Sensory Experiences and Their Dimensions

To incorporate a holistic and unique experience, it is important to not only focus on specific activities but also form a multisensory experience that is predominantly induced by marketing activities in the context of a brand management strategy (Lindstrom, 2005).

Each of the five senses can offer an enormous potential to induce positive feelings, thereby forming a memorable and emotional connection between the consumer and the brand (Hultén, 2011). Considering which sense they are tackling, we can recognize five dimensions of the experience: visual, acoustic, haptic, olfactory, and gustatory. Their well-matched interplay, ensured through a coherent multisensory marketing strategy, further creates customer perceived value and brand strength (Wiedmann et al., 2018).

Experiential marketing approach that encompasses an orchestrated stimulation of the senses can affect various dimensions of customer perceived value, including financial, functional, social and individual value perception. Additionally, it has been shown that the interplay of these individual evaluations not only builds a positive brand strength, but also results in affective, cognitive and conative responses to the brand (Wiedmann et al., 2018). According to Shahid et al. (2022), sensory marketing cues affect emotional attachment directly and indirectly via brand experience. Further, emotional attachment results in brand loyalty. Figure 5 shows the role of sensory marketing and brand experience in building emotional attachment and brand loyalty.

Figure 5: The Role of Sensory Marketing and Brand Experience in Building Emotional Attachment and Brand Loyalty



Source: Shahid et al. (2022).

The multisensory experience approach creates perceived value to the customer and helps build a positive relationship between the customer and the brand to successfully differentiate themselves from their competitors (Wiedmann et al., 2018).

2.2.3 The Experiential Marketing Mix

Multisensory marketing helps create a brand experience that affects customer perceived value and the relations with the brand. However, this is just one component of experiential marketing.

Different from the traditional marketing mix, the experiential marketing mix is customer-experience-focused and incorporates elements beyond a product's functional attributes. As mentioned before, those elements include the emotional, sensory, social, cognitive, behavioural, and relational aspects of the consumption and purchase experience. To design such experiences, experiential marketing as a strategic framework incorporates seven controllable components of the mix (7Es): experience, exchange, extension, emphasis, empathy, capital, emotional touchpoints, and the emic/etic process (Beig & Khan, 2022).

Today, the targeted use of sensory cues is becoming increasingly important for marketing managers to effectively appeal to consumers (Chang & Chieng, 2006; Wiedmann et al., 2013).

2.2.4 Measuring Experience

Measuring customer experience in marketing research often involves quantitative measurement scales that capture various dimensions of the experience. Wiedmann et al.

(2018) propose using multi-dimensional scales to assess experiential value, incorporating factors such as sensory appeal, emotional impact, and social interaction. Similarly, Oh et al. (2007) suggest employing scales that measure constructs like entertainment, educational value, escapism, and aesthetic appeal. These scales typically involve Likert-type items where respondents rate their agreement with statements designed to reflect different aspects of their experience. By applying these measurement scales, researchers can quantitatively analyse the effectiveness of experiential marketing strategies and their impact on consumer behaviour.

Satisfaction is influenced positively and directly by affective and sensorial experience and loyalty is influenced positively and directly by affective and behavioural experience. The results also indicate the existence of an indirect relationship between the sensory experience and the affective experience with loyalty having the mediating effect of satisfaction (Carmes et al., 2022).

To predict and monitor the success of sensory marketing activities, it is necessary to assess consumers' perception of sensory cues. For this purpose, Haase & Wiedmann (2018) developed a holistic scale to measure consumers' sensory perception along the five dimensions of visual, acoustic, haptic, olfactory, and gustatory perception – the sensory perception item set (SPI). The SPI consists of 20 adjectives (four per sense) and is the first measurement tool that includes and thus enables a consistent measurement with regard to all five senses.

To predict and monitor the success of behavioural marketing activities, it is essential to assess consumers' actions and physical engagement with the brand. For this purpose, researchers such as Oh et al. (2007) have developed comprehensive scales to measure behavioural experiences. These scales focus on consumers' participation and interaction with brand activities, capturing data on frequency, duration, and intensity of behaviours. Additionally, behavioural experience can be measured through observational techniques and self-reported metrics that evaluate the physical actions consumers take in response to marketing stimuli, providing a robust framework for understanding consumer behaviour in experiential marketing contexts.

3 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customer experience (CX) refers to the overall impression and perception customers develop through interactions with a company over time (Forrester Research, 2010). It encompasses both rational and emotional dimensions, crucially shaping customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy (Verhoef et al., 2009).

This chapter examines the concept of customer experience (CX) as a multidimensional construct encompassing both rational and emotional aspects of consumer interactions with brands. It explores the factors shaping CX, including customer preferences, motivations, and

emotional responses, and highlights the importance of brand-customer relationships built on awareness, authenticity, and trust. In addition, the chapter outlines key frameworks such as customer experience management (CEM) and consumer–brand identification (CBI), both of which contribute to deeper customer engagement. Particular attention is given to the sense of belonging, which emerges as a critical outcome of meaningful brand interactions and a central construct in understanding how experiential strategies foster lasting emotional connections between customers and brands.

3.1 Knowing the Customer (The Rational and the Emotional Side)

To understand a customer, a deep exploration of their rational preferences and emotional responses is needed (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). By integrating insights from both aspects, businesses can tailor their products, services, and interactions to better meet customer expectations and desires, thereby enhancing overall CX (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Customer preferences are the specific choices individuals make based on their tastes, habits, and expectations (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). By analysing these evolving preferences through quantitative and qualitative research methods (Rust & Huang, 2014), businesses can develop offerings that closely align with customer needs and desires (Verhoef et al., 2015), thereby improving satisfaction and loyalty. According to Fortezza & Pencarelli (2011), people today are increasingly searching for meaning, happiness, sensations, new forms of fulfilment, and core values, which they often find in market offerings.

Customer motivations encompass the underlying reasons driving their purchasing behaviours and brand choices (Homburg et al., 2012). These motivations can range from functional needs to emotional desires (Oliver, 1997), influencing decision-making processes and long-term engagement with brands. Recognizing these motivations enables businesses to design strategies that resonate more effectively with customers (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), fostering stronger relationships and loyalty over time (Homburg et al., 2012).

Emotions play a critical role in shaping customer experiences and perceptions (Verhoef et al., 2009). Positive emotions such as joy and satisfaction enhance customer loyalty and advocacy (Babin et al., 2004), whereas negative emotions like frustration or disappointment can lead to dissatisfaction and churn (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2006). Effective management of emotional experiences requires businesses to identify and respond to emotional triggers during customer interactions (Verhoef et al., 2009), thereby improving overall CX and customer retention (Homburg et al., 2012).

3.2 Brand-Customer Relationship

The relationship between a brand and a customer is essential for a brand’s long-term success, encompassing both emotional and transactional connections between a brand and its

customers. This relationship is built on several key pillars, including brand awareness, authenticity, and trust, all of which are crucial in shaping customer perceptions and behaviours. Over time, these elements strengthen the bond between the customers and the brand, often resulting in the formation of brand communities, creating a network that reinforces the brand's value (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; McDonald, 2016).

Brand awareness serves as the starting point in building any brand-customer relationship. It refers to how familiar customers are with a brand and how readily they can recall or recognize it in a crowded market. Brands with higher awareness levels are more likely to be chosen over less familiar alternatives, as familiarity builds initial trust. Research has shown that strong brand awareness increases customer engagement, making customers more likely to interact with and purchase from brands they recognize (Eggert, 2015). Brand awareness is crucial for establishing the brand's presence in consumers' minds, laying the groundwork for future interactions and loyalty (Eggert, 2015).

Authenticity is another critical factor in strengthening the brand-customer relationship. Authentic brands are perceived as being genuine, transparent, and aligned with the values they promote. In an increasingly sceptical market, customers are drawn to brands that exhibit honesty and consistency in their messaging and actions. Authenticity fosters emotional connections, with customers seeing these brands as trustworthy and aligned with their own values (McDonald, 2016). By presenting a clear, honest image, brands can create deeper bonds, leading to higher levels of trust and loyalty (Chandon, 2018).

Trust is the cornerstone of any enduring brand-customer relationship. It is built over time through consistent, positive experiences that reinforce the brand's reliability. Trust ensures that customers feel confident in their choice of brand, leading to repeat purchases and advocacy. Studies have shown that trust plays a vital role in customer loyalty, as it makes customers less likely to switch to competitors and more likely to recommend the brand to others (Thompson, 2020). Without trust, even brands with strong awareness and authenticity may struggle to maintain customer loyalty in the long term (Johnson, 2022).

Researchers suggest consumers sometimes coalesce into distinct subgroups of society on the basis of a shared commitment to a brand (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Thompson et al., 2006). These subgroups are called brand communities and portray the brands as an essential device for connecting people to one another (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; O'Guinn & Muniz, 2009; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010). They are identifiable as they have a hierarchical social structure, a set of shared beliefs and values, and a unique set of rituals and jargon.

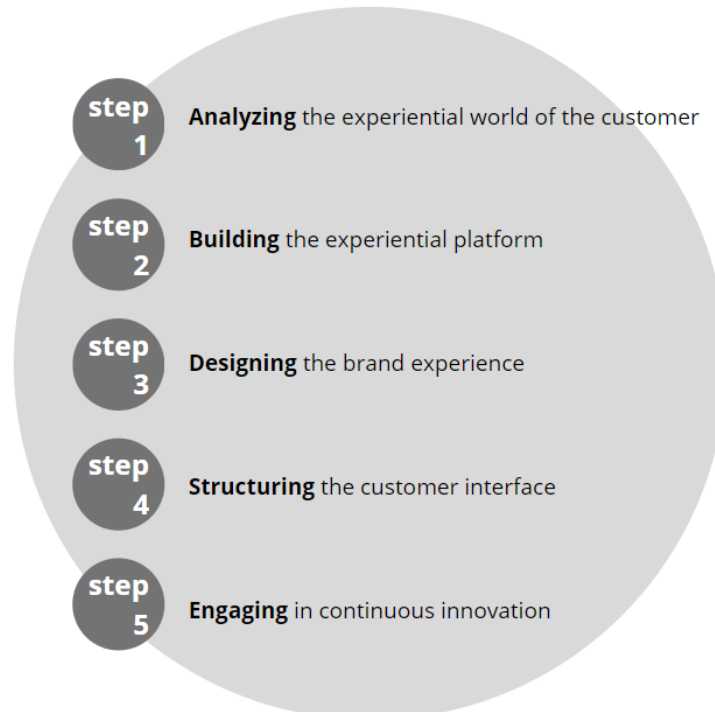
3.3 Customer Experience Management

Customer experience management (CEM) is the process of strategically managing a customer's entire experience with a product or a company. It is a customer-focused management concept rather than a "marketing" concept and a process-oriented satisfaction

idea rather than an outcome-oriented one. CEM connects with the customer at every touchpoint and calls for the integration of different elements of the customer's experience (Schmitt, 2003).

As displayed in figure 6, the CEM framework provides a structured approach to enhancing customer relationships by focusing on five critical stages. The first stage, analysing the experiential world of the customer, involves gaining a deep understanding of customers' needs, behaviours, and emotions at every interaction point. This insight allows businesses to tailor their strategies to better meet customer expectations. In the second stage, building the experiential platform, companies develop a foundational structure that ensures consistent delivery of experiences aligned with the brand's promise. The third step, designing the brand experience, emphasizes the creation of sensory and emotional components that resonate with customers, ensuring that every touchpoint reflects the brand's identity. The fourth phase, structuring the customer interface, focuses on designing seamless and efficient interaction points, whether physical or digital, that enhance the overall experience. Finally, engaging in continuous innovation is essential for maintaining a competitive edge, requiring ongoing updates to the customer experience based on feedback and emerging trends. This cyclical process ensures that brands remain relevant and customer-centric, continuously refining their approach to meet evolving expectations (Schmitt, 2003).

Figure 6: The Five Steps of the CEM Framework

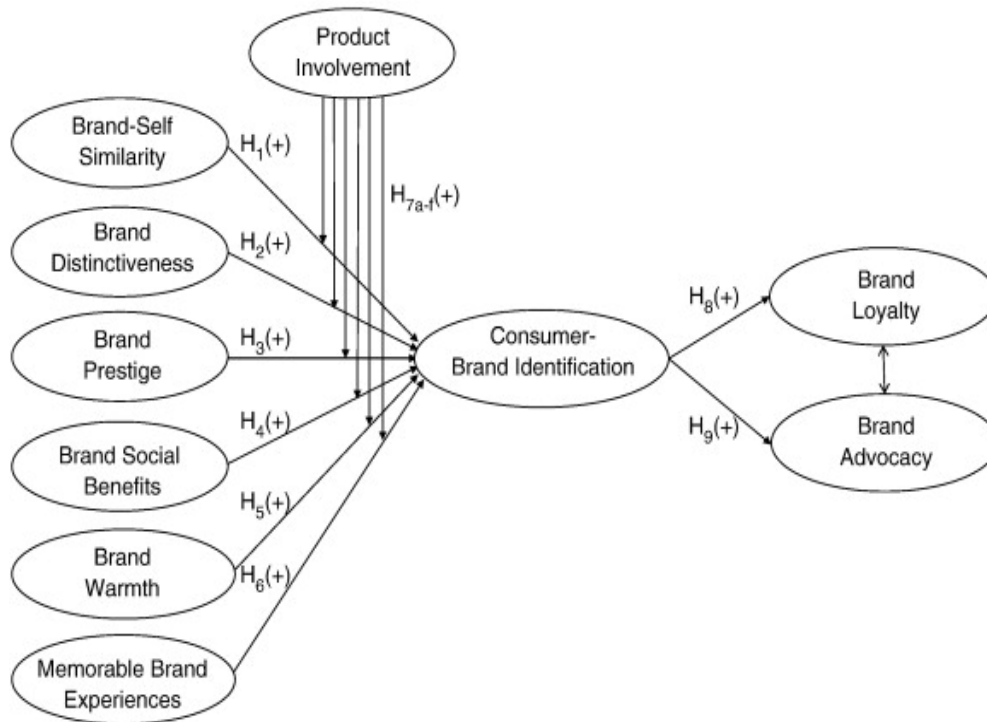


Source: Schmitt (2003).

3.4 Consumer Brand Identification

Customer–brand identification is a customer's psychological state of perceiving, feeling, and valuing his or her belongingness with a brand (Lam et al., 2010). The concept of consumer–brand identification (CBI) is central to our understanding of how, when, and why brands help consumers articulate their identities. Figure 7 depicts the way this is influenced by five drivers: brand–self similarity, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefits, brand warmth, and memorable brand experiences. Further, we find that all five of these antecedents have stronger causal relationships with CBI when consumers have higher involvement with the brand's product category. Finally, CBI is tied to two important pro-company consequences, brand loyalty and brand advocacy (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Figure 7: Consumer-Brand Identification – Conceptual Framework



Source: Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012).

To enhance CBI and raise brand loyalty and advocacy, marketers should attempt to provide unique and vivid experiences that engender indelible memories.

3.5 Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging is defined as the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment (Hagerty et al., 1996). It has been described and defined as one specific

interpersonal process that influences health and is closely related to indicators of both social and psychological functioning (Hagerty et al., 2004).

Belongingness is a basic human motivation and all people share a strong need to belong (Maslow, 1962). As Maslow explained in the quote that opens this chapter, "If both the physiological and the safety needs are fairly well gratified, then there will emerge ... belongingness needs." Sense of belonging generally refers to a feeling of connectedness, that one is important or matters to others (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). The absence of a sense of belonging typically is described as a "sense of alienation," rejection, social isolation, loneliness, or "marginality," which has been linked to negative proximal and long-term outcomes such as dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, depression, substance abuse, and suicide (Hagerty et al., 2002).

Sense of belonging can be measured using the Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI). SOBI is a 27-item, self-report instrument consisting of two separately scored scales, SOBI-P (psychological state) and SOBI-A (antecedents). According to the results of research by Hagerty & Patuski (1995), it is a valid and reliable measure of sense of belonging. SOBI-A appears to reflect an individual's motivation for sense of belonging. The items of SOBI-A are presented in figure 8.

Figure 8: Sense of Belonging Instrument SOBI-A

SOBI-A

1. It is important to me that I am valued or accepted by others.
2. In the past, I have felt valued and important to others.
3. It is important to me that I fit somewhere in this world.
4. I have qualities that can be important to others.
5. I am working on fitting in better with those around me.
6. I want to be a part of things going on around me.
7. It is important to me that my thoughts and opinions are valued.
8. Generally, other people recognize my strengths and good points.
9. I can make myself fit in anywhere.

Psychological sense of belonging, Antecedents to sense of belonging

1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree

Source: Hagerty & Patuski (1995).

4 PRIVATE STUDENT HALLS

Private student halls are like the traditional halls of residence, which are owned by universities, but usually offer shared flats and studio apartments with excellent quality accommodation and communal facilities (Rightmove, n.d.). This often includes gyms,

games rooms, cinema rooms, stylish communal areas, comfortable study areas, and free on-site social events (The Student Housing Company, n.d.). The role of student accommodation is important to students as it does not only satisfy the need for housing but also in perpetuating student culture. Due to many factors, a gap in the market has been created and resulted in a rise in the provision of private student accommodation (Hlope, 2020).

This chapter explores the concept of private student halls, focusing on their role in meeting the diverse needs of students. It describes the specifics of private student accommodation, comparing it to traditional university-provided housing. This chapter further examines the profile of students as customers, their needs, and how private student halls can cater to these needs through various features and services. Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the chapter emphasizes the importance of fostering a sense of belonging, safety, and community to enhance students' well-being and academic success.

4.1 Specifics of the Accommodation

Private halls are not owned by the university but may appear to be similar to the traditional halls of residence. They are usually laid out in shared flats and studio apartments with excellent quality accommodation and communal facilities. These are a comparatively new addition to the student accommodation market as a compromise between university accommodation and traditional rented houses.

Compared to renting a private house, staying in a private hall is a relatively easy option, as the bills are usually included, communal areas are cleaned and looked after, there is maintenance staff on site, a manned reception desk would assist with lost keys and post, there are social activities organized, and the accommodation usually includes ensuite bathroom facilities, sometimes even a carpark. Further, friends can rent rooms within a flat and become allocated flatmates instead of renting a whole flat together, which allows for flexibility, since the separate tenancy agreements prevent the liability of having to replace a flatmate if they decide to leave.

On the other hand, such accommodation might mean less independence than renting privately and can result in higher fixed cost.

In this chapter, I will identify and describe the customers of private student halls, dive into the specifics of students as customers, present the specific needs of university students, and observe how private student halls can cater to different levels of needs of their customers.

4.2 Customers

The customers of these accommodations are mostly university students, in any stage of their education (prep-schools, bachelor, masters, doctoral), who can usually rent the place per semester or study year. However, some places are not exclusively accepting students; among

exceptions there are often young professionals – single or couples. Further, some residences also offer some short-stay packages or even hostel/hotel services for travellers.

With marketisation of higher education and the increased personal financial contributions individual students make towards their higher education, there has been a rise of the so-called ‘student-consumers’ (Tomlinson, 2015). The view of students as customers has been controversial and observed by many researchers. According to Cuthbert (2010), students have multiple roles and relationships, with the role of customer being just one among many. He argues students should be treated as customers in any area, where a market-regulated commercially provided service can easily be substituted – such as student residential accommodation.

Understanding the diverse needs of university students is crucial for fostering an environment that promotes their academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being. Various aspects that contribute to a holistic student experience include academic support (Tinto, 1993), sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012), mental and physical health (Kitzrow, 2003; Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010), financial assistance (Baum et al., 2010), career preparation (Binder et al., 2015), and life skills development (Zimmerman, 1990). By addressing these needs comprehensively, a supportive and inclusive atmosphere can be created that retains the students at universities (Astin, 1999; Fisher & Sloan, 2013).

According to Baik et al. (2015), 'emotional reasons' are the most common factors students cite for seriously considering deferring or dropping out. More specifically, different researchers have recognized many negative effects related to a lack of sense of belonging among students. For instance, students who do not feel like they belong are less likely to stay in college (Berger, 1997) and tend to have worse academic performance (Walton & Cohen, 2007). On the other hand, positive effects of sense of belonging, which stems from perceived support from peers, teachers, and family members, has been well-documented in numerous studies (Hoffman et al., 2002-2003; Johnson et al., 2007; Strayhorn, 2008). Further, many students suggest that fostering a more inclusive and caring sense of community can enhance their well-being, therefore, creating a caring, supportive, and welcoming environment is crucial (O'Keeffe, 2013).

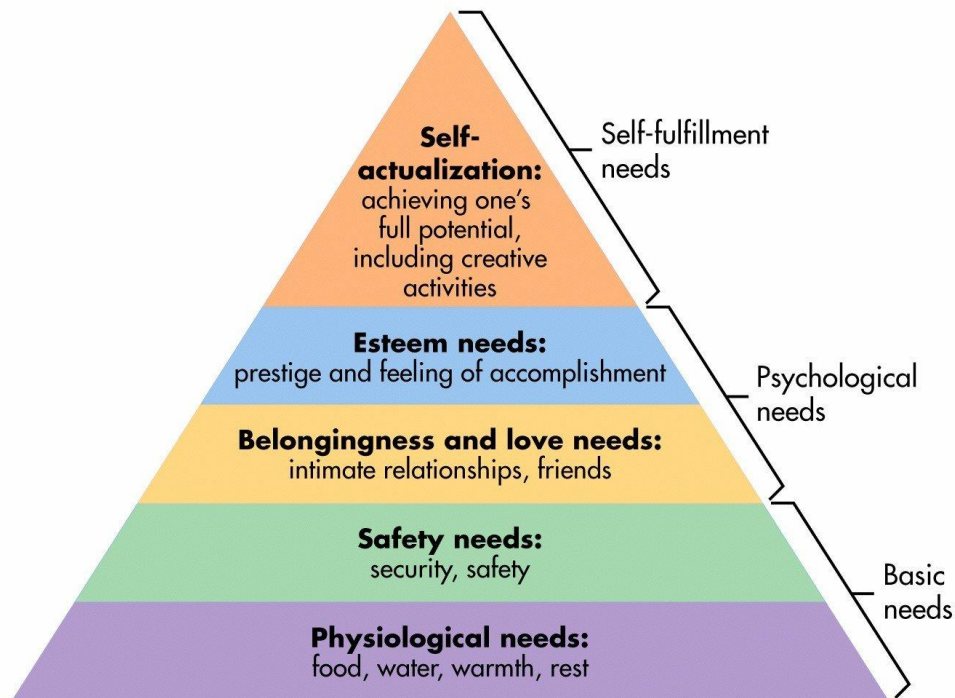
However, unfortunately recent research indicates a rising perception of loneliness among university students, which implies that their needs for love and belonging are not being met (Baik et al., 2019).

4.2.1 How Private Student Residency Halls Can Fulfil the Students' Needs

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, presented in figure 9, humans have different levels of needs. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological (food, clothing, shelter), safety (job security), love and belonging needs (friendship, sense

of connection), esteem (status, recognition, freedom), and self-actualization. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to higher needs.

Figure 9: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: McLeod (2007).

Differing from other types of accommodations, the private student residency halls not only cover the basic physiological needs of students, but also provide a sense of safety and security, especially to the ones that are studying away from their hometowns. Further, with their marketing, they are moving towards the higher levels of the pyramid – by fostering communities, they aim to provide a positive environment to fulfil the needs for love and belonging. One may even argue they address the students' need for self-esteem by providing the lush premises that can represent a status symbol or the need of freedom, since the rules are often different from the ones in public student dorms. In general, they appear to shift from addressing basic physiological needs toward fulfilling psychological ones. According to Maslow, such progression might help students to further develop their inner potential and – among other aspects – achieve academic success.

4.3 Multisensory Stimuli and Brand Experience in Private Student Halls

Building on the understanding of private student halls as environments that address students' needs for belonging and community, multisensory marketing plays a vital role in enhancing resident experience. As a key element of customer experience management, multisensory marketing strategically engages multiple senses to create immersive and emotionally

resonant brand experiences (Schmitt, 1999; Krishna, 2012). Such sensory stimuli influence cognitive and emotional responses, shaping overall brand experience and fostering positive associations (Brakus et al., 2009; Hultén, 2011).

In practice, private student halls implement multisensory marketing through spatial design, ambient factors like lighting and scent, and social programming, creating environments that encourage place attachment and emotional bonds with the brand (Gentile et al., 2007; Tsai, 2016). This multisensory approach not only differentiates these halls in a competitive market but also supports customer-brand identification and a sense of belonging, fulfilling important psychological needs of residents (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Rihova et al., 2015).

5 EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING PRACTICES IN PRIVATE STUDENT HALLS

Based on the theoretical framework presented in the first three chapters, I developed the foundation for the empirical part of the research, which explores experiential marketing practices and their role in fostering a sense of belonging among residents of private student halls. The empirical research is designed using a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic fieldwork—including participant observation and interviews—with a quantitative survey distributed among current and former residents to validate and expand the qualitative findings.

This chapter presents and justifies the methodology adopted, including the data collection methods used. It also addresses the ethnographic process and highlights the strengths and limitations of this methodology.

5.1 Purpose, Goals and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore how experiential marketing practices within private student residences contribute to the development of a sense of belonging among student residents, and how this, in turn, influences their brand experience and identification with the brand. By combining ethnographic and quantitative methods, the study aims to identify the key experiential factors that shape the student living experience and transform it into a meaningful brand relationship.

The goals of this thesis are to investigate how private student residences use experiential marketing to shape residents' lived experiences and to identify the key elements that contribute to a sense of belonging in this context, including sensory cues, emotions, memories, and social needs. It also aims to understand how a sense of belonging affects residents' perception of the brand and their identification with it. Another goal is to develop and test a conceptual model that links experiential marketing components with brand experience and customer-brand identification. Finally, the thesis seeks to offer insights for

marketeers on how to design immersive brand experiences that foster emotional and social bonds.

The research questions are:

- What elements contribute to the brand experience of students living in private student dorms?
- What factors influence the brand experiences of student residents in private student dorms?
- In what ways do students experience their brand interactions in private student dorms?
- To what extent do students identify with the brand of their private student dorm?
- How does the sense of belonging manifest in students living in private student dorms?

5.2 Methodology

To better understand the elements that shape the experience of the community of residents in private student halls and to examine the outcomes of the brand experience, the primary research method employed is ethnography. This qualitative approach enables the identification of patterns in residents' behaviours and attitudes and facilitates the development of hypotheses.

Given the inductive nature of ethnographic research, conclusions will be drawn from a relatively small sample and subsequently generalized. To enhance the validity and objectivity of the findings, the qualitative research will be complemented by quantitative hypothesis testing. The hypotheses derived from the ethnographic data will inform the design of a questionnaire, which will be distributed among current and former residents of private student halls. The analysis of the survey results aims to further substantiate the initial qualitative insights.

5.3 Conducting and Analysing the Qualitative Study: Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography is a research method that relies heavily on up-close, personal experience and participation, not just observation, by researcher. It typically employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation, and documents (Genzuk, 2003). It is conducted by a single investigator who 'lives with and lives like' those who are studied (Van Maanen, 1996).

5.3.1 Observation

Between July 2017 and February 2021, I lived in four private student halls: Iglu (Australia), The Student Hotel (The Netherlands), Garza Sada 1892 (Mexico), and Livensa Living (Portugal). I spent around five months as a student resident in each, which allowed me to experience everyday life within each community.

Being part of these communities gave me the opportunity to collect data through direct observation and informal conversations with other student residents and on-site staff. These interactions were unstructured and occurred naturally in shared spaces such as kitchens, study areas, and common lounges. Informal exchanges like these are often considered valuable in ethnographic research, as they can reveal spontaneous insights and reflect authentic social dynamics (Spradley, 1980). Through this approach, I was able to identify the elements of experiential marketing applied in the halls and observe how they shaped students' experiences and contributed to their sense of belonging.

I kept a diary throughout this period, documenting key observations, conversations, and personal reflections. This helped me track recurring themes and specific moments that stood out. In addition to informal observation, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with current and former residents, which added further depth and context to the observational data.

5.3.2 Interviews

The semi-structured interview was divided into two parts. The first part is focused on observing the residents' brand experience, both from a rational and an emotional perspective – more specifically, I observed their recollection of the factors affecting their senses, emotions and memories. The second part is focused on customer-brand identification and sense of belonging. The questions can be found in appendix 1.

The interviewees were asked a set of questions that were prepared ahead, however, I adjusted the order, skipped some questions, or added some when needed, which gave me the opportunity to further explore particular themes.

5.3.3 Sample Description

I interviewed 8 people, 4 females and 4 males, who experienced living in a private student hall. They are listed in table 1. They are between 21 and 28 years old (they were between 19 and 24 when they were residents). They are of different racial, national, cultural/ethnic background, all of them in the process of completing/with completed university level degrees. I have met all of them personally and was able to follow along their experience while living in private student halls myself.

Table 1: Interviewees

Interviewees	Name	Residence
1	Maya	Livensa Living Porto Boavista
2	Pristine	Iglu Brisbane City
3	Gioryl	The Student Hotel Amsterdam West
4	Joao	Livensa Living Porto Boavista
5	Juan Carlos	Garza Sada 1892
6	Bastian	Garza Sada 1892
7	Kalina	Iglu Brisbane City
8	Maria	Livensa Living Porto Boavista

Source: own work.

5.3.4 Data Analysis

To analyse the qualitative data collected through my research, I followed a structured process based on thematic analysis. The dataset mainly included interview transcripts, alongside my field notes, the research diary, and other written materials gathered during the research.

I started by transcribing all interviews word for word, to ensure every detail of the conversation was accurately captured. After that, I immersed myself in the data by reading through the transcripts several times. I also reviewed my field notes and research diary entries, which added useful context and helped me better understand the participants' responses.

Once I was familiar with the material, I began with the coding process. I used an inductive approach, which means the codes were not set beforehand but developed directly from the data. I identified important phrases, repeated ideas and notable patterns across the transcripts and written notes. These were marked as initial codes.

Then, I grouped similar codes into themes. This step involved recognizing patterns, links, and differences in the data, and checking to see how they connected to the research questions. I went back and forth between the original data and the developing themes to fine-tune them and make sure they stayed true to the participants' words and experiences.

This process helped me identify key themes that reflect the participants' perspectives and form the basis for the findings that were further tested via quantitative research.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of my qualitative results, I employed the technique of triangulation, which involves cross-verifying findings using multiple methods, data sources, or researchers. Triangulation is critical in qualitative research as it helps to mitigate biases that could arise from relying on a single data source or method. By utilizing this approach, I could enhance the credibility of my findings and ensure that they reflected a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research subject. Specifically, the ethnographic observations I conducted were cross-checked with interview data and diary notes, enabling me to confirm recurring patterns and themes, thereby reinforcing the trustworthiness of my conclusions.

5.4 Conducting and Analysing the Quantitative Study: Hypothesis Testing

To complement my ethnographic findings, I transformed my qualitative insights into hypotheses that could be tested empirically. These hypotheses were grounded in the patterns I identified during my ethnographic research, and they provided a structured framework for further investigation.

5.4.1 Hypotheses

Based on the conclusions of the qualitative research, I developed the following 6 hypotheses:

H1: Multisensory Marketing influences Brand Experience.

H2: Emotions shape Brand Experience.

H3: Memorable events shape Brand Experience.

H4: The identities of the customers that are motivated to belong (i.e. have higher antecedents of Sense of belonging) will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

H5: The identities of consumers that feel like they are part of community will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

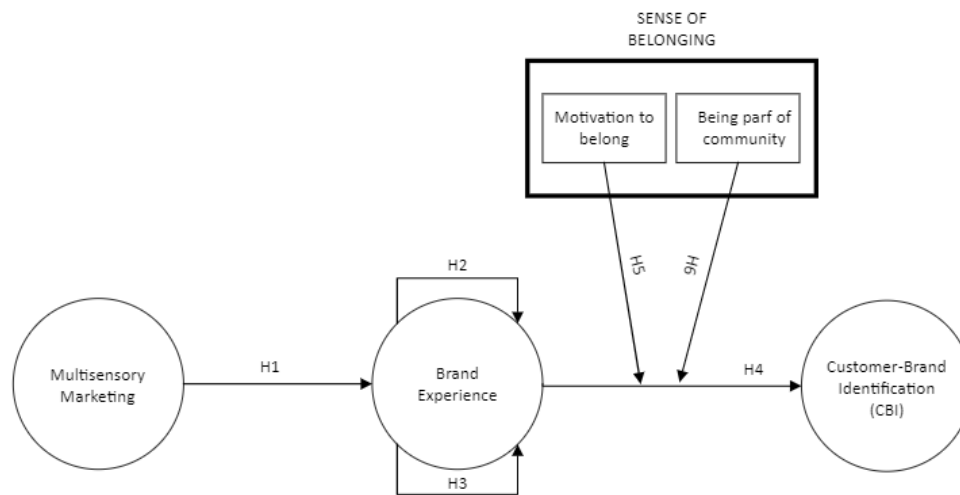
H6: Positive brand experience leads to a stronger identification with the brand.

5.4.2 Conceptual Model

The hypotheses formulated based on qualitative research findings are further supported by relevant literature. To visualize the relationships between key concepts, I developed a

conceptual model illustrating how multisensory marketing, brand experience, sense of belonging, and customer-brand identification (CBI) are interconnected.

Figure 10: Conceptual Model



Source: own work.

Description of the Model:

1. Multisensory Marketing influences Brand Experience (H1):

Hypothesis H1: Multisensory marketing directly influences the brand experience. It involves engaging multiple senses (sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell) to create a more immersive and memorable brand experience. Sensory elements in the consumption environment enhance the brand experience by stimulating positive affect and deeper cognitive processing (Krishna, 2012; Hultén, 2011). The model suggests that sensory aspects of interactions between the brand and the audience can be controlled – by engaging the senses positively, we create more positive experiences.

2. Emotions shape Brand Experience (H2):

Hypothesis H2: The model suggests that the brand experience is partially a result of emotions – emotions influence how consumers perceive, remember, and interact with a brand. When thinking of a brand experience, consumers evaluate it based on the emotions they've experienced (Brakus et al., 2009). Emotional responses play a crucial role in shaping consumers' overall evaluation and attachment to a brand, influencing their future behaviours and loyalty (Ladhari, 2007; Schmitt, 1999).

3. Memorable events shape Brand Experience (H3):

Hypothesis H3: The model suggests that the brand experience is partially a result of memorable events – events consumers will remember when thinking about their experience,

and associate them with the experience itself. When thinking of a brand experience, consumers evaluate it based on memories they can recall (Brakus et al., 2009). Memorable experiences create lasting impressions that influence how consumers relate to a brand and can enhance brand loyalty over time (Arnould & Price, 1993; Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

4. Brand Experience to Customer-Brand Identification (CBI) (H4):

Hypothesis H4: A positive brand experience can lead to stronger identification with the brand, where customers see the brand as part of their own identity. This connection occurs because engaging and meaningful brand experiences help consumers incorporate the brand into their self-concept (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Escalas & Bettman, 2005).

5. Sense of Belonging moderates how Brand Experience influences Customer-Brand identification (CBI) (H5 & H6):

Hypothesis H5: The identities of the customers that are motivated to belong (those with higher antecedents of Sense of belonging) will be somewhat articulated by the brand. This aligns with findings that individuals with a stronger need to belong tend to incorporate brands into their self-concept as a means of fulfilling social connectedness (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

Hypothesis H6: The identities of consumers that feel like they are part of community will be somewhat articulated by the brand. Sense of community strengthens the emotional bonds consumers have with brands, which reinforces their identification with those brands (McAlexander et al., 2002).

The model proposes that multisensory marketing creates a strong brand experience, which enhances customer-brand identification both directly and indirectly by fostering a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging further strengthens customer-brand identification, contributing to a loyal customer base and positive word of mouth (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Overall, the model underscores the importance of multisensory marketing in generating positive brand experiences that cultivate a sense of belonging and lead to stronger customer-brand identification. By understanding and leveraging these relationships, brands can build deeper and more meaningful connections with their customers.

5.4.3 Questionnaire

Based on the hypotheses, I developed a set of items for the formative measurement model for each concept. The questionnaire items are available in the appendix 3.

The questionnaire starts with a filter question, to make sure our sample is relevant for representing the population of students living in private student dorms. This is followed by chapters on demographic information, multisensory marketing, and brand experience, which include questions adapted by the empirical study of luxury hotels (Wiedmann et al., 2018).

For the concept of sense of belonging, I used the questions from the SOBI-A instrument (Hagerty & Patuski, 1995), measuring antecedents of sense of belonging. In the last chapter, we observe Customer-Brand Identification (CBI) of our sample with Likert-scale questions based on the CBI drivers: brand-self similarity, brand distinctiveness, brand social benefits, brand warmth, and memorable brand experiences.

The questionnaire was distributed among both current and past residents of private student halls. To ensure that participants are representative of the population of private student hall residents, I employed a non-probability sampling approach, utilizing convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling; as my research focuses on the experiences of students living in private student halls, it is essential that the participants are directly drawn from this population. To facilitate this, I initially targeted individuals who are currently residing in or have previously lived in private student halls. I had access to some of these residents through personal contacts, but in order to further diversify the sample, I also asked them to share the survey with other students they knew who fit the criteria. This approach ensures that the sample is inclusive of different perspectives and experiences within the private student hall community.

5.4.4 Sample Description

The questionnaire was distributed to the observed population of current and past residents of private student dorms in August 2024, yielding 41 responses. Of these, 39% were current residents of a private student dorm or a similar student accommodation at the time of completing the questionnaire, while 61% were past residents. The respondents had lived in private student dorms across the following countries: Australia, the Netherlands, Mexico, Portugal, Israel, Slovenia, and Austria. Some respondents had lived in multiple private student dorms across different countries.

Regarding gender, 56.1% of the respondents identified as female, 41.5% as male, and 2.4% chose "prefer not to say." At the time of moving into the residence, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23 (48.8%), followed by 41.5% who were between 18 and 20, and 9.8% between 24 and 26. No respondents moved in before the age of 18, and no respondents moved in at age 27 or older. When moving out, 58.5% were in the 21–23 age group, 19.5% were in the 18–20 and 24–26 age categories, and 4.9% were aged 27 or older.

In terms of education, most residents moved into the residence with a high school diploma (52.2%) or a bachelor's degree (41.5%), with a smaller percentage holding a master's degree (7.3%). Many residents completed their studies while staying at the residence, as the highest level of education attained upon moving out differed significantly: 40% had completed a bachelor's degree, 30% had completed a master's degree, and 2.5% had completed a doctoral degree.

During their stay at the residence, the majority of respondents were either exchange students (48.8%) or full-time students (46.3%), with 4.9% being part-time students or part-time employed.

6 FINDINGS

This chapter covers the main findings of the data collected from the field notes, the semi-structured interviews and the auto-ethnographic data from the researcher's experiences. This chapter consists of 6 main themes that were found through the data analysis.

In this chapter, I will identify the main themes, present them, and summarise the main findings of my qualitative research. The findings will be turned into a hypothesis, presented with a conceptual model, and their validity will be further tested via quantitative research.

6.1 Findings from the Qualitative research

The analysis was conducted by sorting, translating, and organizing the data into codes, parent codes, and then themes, as shown with examples in Table 2. The whole process is illustrated in Appendix 3. An interpretive perspective was adopted in order to understand the motivations, thinking, and ideas of the sample being studied.

Table 2: Examples of the Process of Coding

Data	Codes	Parent Codes	Themes
"It looked very nice"; "very trendy"; "stylish living room"	Positive visual first impression	Design and Aesthetics	Sensory Cues
"Very new, very modern"; "nicely decorated"	Modern design	Design and Aesthetics	Sensory Cues
"Always clean"; "very clean and organized"	Cleanliness and order	Design and Aesthetics	Sensory Cues
"A lot of daylight"; "doesn't feel like a dungeon"	Natural lighting / brightness	Design and Aesthetics	Sensory Cues
"Very calm, very quiet"; "felt calm over there"	Quiet/peaceful atmosphere	Noise and Sound Environment	Sensory Cues
"Staff trying to control the noise"; "designated quiet areas"	Noise control mechanisms	Noise and Sound Environment	Sensory Cues
table continues			

Table 2: Examples of the Process of Coding (cont.)

Data	Codes	Parent Codes	Themes
“Music in the lobby”; “different languages”; “talking/shouting”	Music and voices as ambiance	Noise and Sound Environment	Sensory Cues
“There are people who are homesick, living alone for the first time, first time abroad, experiencing cultural shock...”	Homesickness & Cultural Adjustment	Emotional States Influencing Experience	Subjective Episodes
“Students may experience stress related to the heavy study workload or frustration with difficult content...”	Academic Stress	Emotional States Influencing Experience	Subjective Episodes
“We didn’t feel like strangers... you had friends you could enjoy yourself with.”	Friendship & Belonging	Social Bonds and Emotional Support	Subjective Episodes

Source: own work.

The final identified themes, as presented in table 3, are: sensory cues, subjective episodes, memorable events, need to belong, sense of community, and consumer-brand identification.

Table 3: Main Themes Identified

Main Themes	Brief summary of theme
Sensory cues	Residents’ experiences are shaped through all five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell.
Subjective episodes	Residents perceive and evaluate experiences through their emotions.
Memorable events	Residents recall their experiences based on fragmented memories tied to specific events.
Need to belong	Residents express inherent human motivation to form social connections and feel accepted.
Sense of community	Residents described varying perceptions, understandings, attitudes, and emotional connections toward the community.
Consumer-brand identification	Residents expressed a sense of identification and alignment with the brand.

Source: own work.

6.1.1 Sensory Cues

The following auto-ethnographic data collected demonstrates how the senses of the residents were engaged through their experience with private student dorms – from the very first touchpoint and throughout their entire stay.

Many future exchange students, including me, used the internet as their main source of information to find housing in a foreign country – for example, a quick Google search would result in various scores, including the sponsored ads of private student accommodations at the very top of the page. They would include attractive photos of fancy buildings, designer furniture and a long list of amenities – from study rooms and common areas to kitchens, the laundry room, cinema room, game room, gym, and even saunas and swimming pools. The websites are also very informative and might offer a virtual tour through the residency.

Upon the first visit, the residents were happy to see the residence matched the photos and the rooms were clean and spacious. The places weren't noisy, providing a nice environment to study and feel cozy in. There was a comfortable chair next to the desk that would support the spine while spending long hours studying and writing assignments. In the first week, the residence would spoil us daily with events that included free food. Similar events were later held weekly. Furthermore, there was daily fresh fruit provided for us at the residence's lobby. There was an AC unit in every room that could also be used for heating so we could manage the temperature in our rooms based on our preferences.

According to Haase et al. (2018), sensory perception is an important factor in understanding and effectively appealing to consumers. A holistic communication concept that takes all five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste) into account (Hui & Bateson, 1991; Brakus et al., 2009) should be applied in order to create an overall experience that leads to positive consumer perception and favourable consumer behaviours (Wiedmann et al., 2013; Turley & Milliman, 2000; Zeithaml, 1988). Sensory marketing has an important role in generating memorable brand experiences and positive brand performance (Haase et al., 2018).

During the interviews, our residents were able to recollect different memories based on the sensory cues, especially when comparing their residence to the other student residences, with visual cues being generally most frequently mentioned, especially when thinking of their first encounter with the residence, whether online or upon their first visit. *“It looked very nice, I saw on the website ...”* says Maya, thinking back on her first time coming across the ad on Instagram. *“For me, it was just the design and you know, the decoration ... It is all very pretty, very trendy, and that's the first thing that I noticed,”* she adds when describing her first time entering the residence building, while Joao pointed out what he noticed was that there was *“... a huge living room,- that was very stylish.”* *“The infrastructure is quite recent. It is very youthful looking ... It looked very new, very modern,”* and *“the place is*

really nice, it is nicely decorated ... more modern, like furniture and stuff,” answered Maria and Pristine in a similar way when describing the premises.

They were fast to recognize the unique design features (of the building, rooms and furniture), brightness of the spaces, and cleanliness. As pointed out by Joao, visual cues are the ones noticed by people that do not stay at the residence: *“The first thing I see is the eye-catching graffiti on the building. Every person that passes by is like: What is that?”* Bastian mentioned there was *“a modern building, a nice outside area, and nice views”*, while Gioryl said the difference he *“immediately noticed was the size of the room.”* However, not everyone was impressed with the design choices. Kalina thinks the furniture seemed *“flimsy, cheaply made. ... Everything was like very white. I felt like it was kind of like cheap, plasticky feel.”*

“There is a lot of light – a lot of daylight, so it doesn’t feel like a dungeon. It feels very open,” Joao said in comparison when describing the space. *“Livensa was very clean and tidy ... For me, it’s very important to live in a place like that that’s very clean and organized,”* said Maya. Pristine responded similarly: *“Iglu is quite clean compared to other places.”* Joao agreed: *“It was clean pretty much all of the time. It was always clean!”* Juan Carlos also pointed out the importance of cleanliness, dismayed at how in another residence he was staying at, *“the pool was like green instead of blue and the gym was not clean.”* Kalina on the other hand had a different experience, as she remembers *“it wasn’t as clean as I would have liked it.”*

When talking about the acoustic cues, they often mentioned low noise levels. *“You are obviously looking to have fun but also you are looking to study, and at the residence that was easy to do because despite the common spaces where people can be loud, you had designated areas where you have to be quiet and study. When I think of Livensa, I just remember it was very calm, very quiet, so not a lot of noise at all ... At the other residence that I used to stay at, it was just loud all over,”* says Maya. Pristine described her residence as *“conducive”* thanks to the absence of noise, Gioryl said it was *“more quiet”* compared to another residence, and Juan Carlos pointed out he *“felt calm over there”*, while at another residence, he didn’t, since *“there was too much noise, every day, even on Sundays and at 11 PM.”* *“Iglu played music in the lobby, no?”* tried to remember Pristine. On the other hand, Maria had no doubts: *“Oh, you can hear music, you can definitely hear music – especially when it’s like the end of exam season or when it’s summer.”* She also remembers she could *“hear many different languages”* and people talking, shouting or knocking on the door, but also the staff members trying to control the noise level. *“Don’t do that,”* and *“guys, turn the volume down because people are trying to study,”* she quoted.

On the other hand, while many enjoyed the calm atmosphere, some even think it was too calm: *“In terms of sound it was very quiet overall, I would prefer it to be a bit more noisy sometimes – it helps me concentrate,”* says Joao, pointing to how similar cues might be perceived differently by different residents, depending on their personal preference.

Furthermore, some residents who were staying there at the time of the lockdowns in 2020/2021, described common spaces of that time as “empty”, since visits were prohibited and gatherings discouraged.

When talking about the tastes, the (past) residents often associate them with the food served at the events organized by the residence staff. *“I think of pancakes! From the free food events that we had,”* says Pristine. Similarly, Maya remembers *“when we checked in and when we checked out, on both occasions they were giving out these cookies. Livensa cookies! So if I have to think of a taste, then it is sweet because of that.”*

Furthermore, some of them associated it with the food prepared at the private social gatherings for the residents. For example, Maria said: *“The taste I connect with Livensa is ...Uh, all types of food! Especially Italian, because there is a lot of Italian people and I’ve tried their pastas ... There is a lot of people from all over the world and you end up having meals together, so you get a little taste of every country,”* once again hinting at the international community of the residence. Similarly, Joao says: *“It doesn’t remind me of any particular dish. We made a lot of dishes from different countries, so I couldn’t pick one,”* later adding *“maybe something sweet and sour at the same time because of the good and bad moments.”*

On the other hand, Kalina was able to remember the flavour, but not the origin: *“My most distinct memory was like a very sweet chocolatey hazelnut spread thing which I have no...I don’t really know where that’s coming from.”* Later, she insightfully added: *“Generally, I feel like my memories are triggered by food. Like I connect best to memories that have to do with food.”*

Furthermore, they noticed the absence of odours. *“I don’t remember the smell of Iglu, there isn’t really much smell,”* says Pristine. *“I couldn’t smell much, so I think that’s neither good nor bad,”* and *“the smell didn’t leave a mark, so I guess that says something. It didn’t smell like anything in particular,”* Bastian and Joao responded similarly, while Maya described the smell as *“okay. I wouldn’t say that it smelled like a perfume or scented candles or anything.”* *“I don’t really smell enough of anything, it is just Livensa! It doesn’t smell bad,”* says Maria, directly proving how sensory experience can be associated to the brand itself.

Regarding the sense of touch, the interviewees pointed out the pleasant temperature. *“The temperature was great It was warm, you could be in a T-shirt all the time,”* said Maya. Very similarly, Gioryl described the temperature in the common area as *“pleasant – if you went there in shorts and a T-shirt, you still would be fine.”* *“We have AC and we can regulate that if we want to, however we want to, but it never feels cold to me,”* concluded Maria.

They also mentioned coziness. *“The room was quite cozy,”* said Pristine. *“The Student Hotel library was very cozy, you just feel a certain warmth. They have very nice couches to sit on,”* said Gioryl, while on the other hand, Maria noticed that nice design does not always equal comfort. While she mentioned it was *“comfortable to sit down in the common area. It is*

really nice to sit down on the couches,” she had a different experience with the bean bags: “It looks like it’s going to be nice to sit on, but it is not that nice.” On the other hand, Maya, who stayed at the same residence, said: “It is comfortable to sit anywhere.”

We can conclude that sensory cues collectively shaped the residents' experience.

6.1.2 Subjective Episodes

The following auto-ethnographic data collected demonstrates how emotions might affect the experience of staying in a private student dorm.

Despite having things in common, students at the residences are still unique people with unique situations and complicated emotions.

There are people who are homesick, living alone for the first time, first time abroad, experiencing cultural shock – all these new experiences can intensify emotions and affect the way residents view their experience of staying in a private student dorm.

Many of these situations might encourage people to connect with other residents in a similar situation, to support each other, hang out, and experience new things together.

Furthermore, during the semester, students may experience stress related to the heavy study workload or frustration with difficult content/course, which may further affect their experience.

In general, it seems like all these intense emotions are consciously or subconsciously shaping the experience and how the residents perceive it. On one hand, people make friends faster, on the other, conflicts can intensify.

“When you are in a place that’s colourful, vibrant, and has all these nice designs, you also feel happy, it influences your mood a lot,” Maya identified how the surroundings have influenced her emotions. On the other hand, Kalina admitted she regrets that her experience was influenced by her relationship: *“I was a little bit not present...I was too caught up in my first relationship instead. Talking with the ex too many hours each day, I feel like I probably missed out on a lot.”*

Maria was feeling *“grateful, for having the opportunity to bond with people that I would probably never have crossed paths with,”* while Pristine remembers *“I felt comfortable, I was at peace.”* Juan Carlos had similar feelings: *“I felt calm over there. It goes back to feeling comfortable. I enjoyed just being in my room, I could stay in my room and my apartment for the weekend and I didn’t get bored.”*

“We didn’t feel like strangers among other people. You felt like you had friends you could just enjoy yourself with and do stuff that I would do with my family at home,” says Joao. *“It*

felt like home...I was very comfortable...I was very happy there. The element of people being welcoming and taking care of you and you being in a safe place – that’s something I would compare to what I feel at home. I felt like I could live my stuff anywhere, I was very comfortable,” said Maya, while Gioryl admitted: *“Now I have my own space and everything but I don’t feel as much at home as I did there.”*

With Kalina, we further discussed the concept of home. Looking back at her experience at the private student residence in Australia, she said: *“I think my bedroom felt like home. Home is a place where I feel like I have privacy, peace of mind. Where I have psychological safety also, besides regular physical safety – where I feel safe...I am able to just relax and be myself and not have anyone else perceiving me ... So I feel like my bedroom was a place that I could retreat to. But the rest of the place, I would say no.”*

“Overall, it was just really fun. You would feel like people were trying to give you a good time,” summarized Maya. However, the most common negative feeling recognized was the anger connected with unfavourable decisions made by the residence staff. *“We felt a bit uncomfortable...It could felt like you were being watched all the time,”* she remembers the strict rules.

Besides the objective elements residents can identify with their senses, their experiences are subjective – emotions play an important factor in how they see their experience. It seems that most of the feelings are very positive. Looking back at their experience, the residents remember the *fun* times they had, stating they felt *comfortable* and *safe*, and the *nice* people that made them *feel like home*.

Since most of the emotions were expressed when talking about the memories, we can recognize how closely these are connected – it seems like stronger emotions released at the time make the specific moments more memorable.

6.1.3 Memorable Events

The following auto ethnographic-data collected demonstrates how memories are an integral part of experience.

There is a quote by the novelist Milan Kundera: “Memory does not make films, it makes photographs.” I wrote it down and pinned it on the wall during one of my stays in a private student dorm, as a reminder of the fact of how fungible the memory is. This creates opportunity for marketers – by framing memorable positive photos related to their brand into the minds of the customers, they will remember their experience more fondly.

Despite the fact that everyone has unique memories, there seem to be some occasions when the brain is more eager to “collect the photo” that will be recollected later. I noticed

that the most recollectable episodes seem to be the ones that are either very unique (and can not be replicated) and/or the episodes connected to strong emotions.

All residences seem to be well aware of the importance of first impressions as they take extra care of the residents upon their first visit or move-in day. They greet you with a smile, call you by your name, give out goodie bags with promotional goods, and eagerly show you the beautiful facilities. To make the stay unforgettable, they host different free events throughout the entire semester, such as different social gatherings accompanied by music and snacks, movie nights, game nights, workout sessions, workshops, etc.

However, they seem to have different approaches to how to resolve conflicts that occur sooner or later. Most commonly, conflicts would happen when there was a breach of rules (e.g. residents being noisy late at night or in areas that are supposed to be quiet) or when the residence would fail to provide/sustain what was promised (e.g. malfunctioning facilities or restricted access). I noticed these conflicts often cause emotional responses, and are something residents would remember – the residences that managed to resolve conflicts better seem to have more satisfied residents who would advocate for the brand.

What drastically influenced the experiences during my stays at two of the residences was the global pandemic of Covid-19. The “new reality” affected everyone, inside and outside of the residence. Due to measures applied by the authorities, student accommodation companies had to adopt new rules that affected the residents and changed their everyday life. Events were cancelled, visits prohibited, gathering discouraged, and common areas closed. The emotions intensified, as the unique situation emerged.

One of the things that residents seem to remember the most are the beginnings, from moving into the residence to meeting new people. *“The tour was very nice,” “They just treated us nicely and they talked about everything that we should know ... And yeah, we liked it.” “It was a student house that had just opened up. We were the first residents there, it was still quite empty, and we met at a photoshoot that the management organized,”* are some of the memories described by Joao, Juan Carlos, and Maya.

Another thing residents can recall easily are themed events or events paired with food: *“Taco night – this is the first thing that popped in my mind,”* said Joao, while Kalina remembers *“when we got like a ton of pizza from Domino’s! All of them were like 5 dollars.” “On Mondays, we would have events! On the second floor, we had a barbeque space where everyone would gather and get free food like pancakes, hotdogs, etc. It was free food. We also had events on our own, like Friendsgiving dinner and stuff. And we would go out together to visit places,”* remembers Pristine. She says part of these gatherings were initiated by the residential staff, and some were organised among the residents. Similarly, Maya recognised staff endeavours: *“They were trying very hard to create all of these initiatives for us like the Halloween party or themed activities and every time there was a holiday they would decorate the rooms.”*

Residents were also fast to remember incidents. *“One time, the AC ruined my computer. I blamed it on Garza Sada and they called insurance and got me a new laptop, so at the end of the day, it wasn’t a bad experience at all,”* remembers Juan Carlos. Pristine on the other hand has a more negative experience with the staff upon her moving out, after she had cleaned the apartment and they came to inspect it: *“They told me they were going to charge me for cleaning, because a certain area wasn’t clean, but when I moved in, that area was really dirty. So that wasn’t very pleasant. If I had known, I would just pay for a cleaning service first.”*

Those who were staying at the residence during the pandemic were also not be able to look past this aspect. *“The whole time we were living there /.../ the lockdown was implemented and we spent lots of time at the residence. There were lots of restrictions and we just stayed in the student house and did everything there basically,”* and *“there was a lockdown and we spent lots of time at the residence,”* Joao and Maya summarized their experiences, making it clear that this affected their stay the most and is something they remember clearly. *“My favourite memory was probably when the onset of covid. It is the most memorable ... That’s something we were all experiencing and I was blessed to get to go through it in there,”* says Juan Carlos, who has very positive feelings related to his stay at the residence during the pandemic. *“My least favourite memory for sure was when at some point, I was there by myself. I didn’t know what I was going to do with this new situation and how I was going to make the most out of it,”* says Bastian on the other hand, remembering the stressful situation while staying in another country.

Dealing with the “new reality”, in society in general and in their respective residences, most of the residents were not particularly fond of some of the new restrictions. The stressful situation seemed to escalate negative feelings. However, as noted by one of the resident, the shared experience connected the residents: *“I think it was us being mad at the residence for the rules they imposed on us that really brough us together.”*

When reflecting on past experience, residents defined them based on memorable events, i.e. extraordinary moments, rather than on their everyday routines. As mentioned before, it seems that this is closely related to the emotions. Extraordinary moments are recognized as such not just due to the difference in activities comparing to the routine, but also due to the fact they are more easily recollectable because of the emotions connected to them.

6.1.4 The Need to Belong

Based on my participant observation, especially upon moving into the residence and the initial weeks of my stay, people at private student residences are very open to forming friendships and building new relationships. They generally want to belong to a group and are looking for a community they can become part of.

For international students/exchange students who move to a new country without social capital, the access to community is an especially important factor that makes them opt for the residence, knowing they will most likely find a group of people to hang out with.

Furthermore, this need was also recognized among domestic students, especially at the time of the lockdown in 2020, when they had limited access to their communities due to various restrictions (e.g. prohibition of student events and gatherings, shorter operating hours of restaurants and bars, curfew) and the change in behaviour (spending less time out of home).

When asked about the reason for their move into the residence, interviewees often expressed they were trying to make friends and prevent feelings of loneliness. *“The first thing that I remember was that I was there for a purpose – not just to live there, but also to make friends. At that time, I just came from Sudan, so obviously, I didn’t know anyone in the Netherlands, so yeah, that was very important to me,”* says Gioryl. As described by Pristine, living at a residence *“gives you private space but at the same time it gets you a shared space, which makes living there not so lonely. You still have friends around you As an exchange student, you can go live together and meet new friends and go through the exchange program together”*. Maya had similar motivations: *“When the pandemic began, I was living alone in an apartment, like a studio apartment in Porto, and it would get pretty lonely.”* Looking for an alternative accommodation option, she chose a private student accommodation, where she could *“meet a lot of people, make a lot of new friends... Have fun and not be alone during the pandemic.”* Or as per Kalina: *“It’s important for people to feel like they are not alone... I would rather live with someone that I knew and commuted a little bit further than live closer to where I was going to school and not know anyone.”*

Maya recognised her and other residents actively wanted to connect with others: *“I made a big effort in getting to know everyone... I would always try to strike up conversation. We would go and organise a lot of parties and dinners and events for ourselves. We were only there for a few months wanting to make friends, to meet people and to have fun.”* Similarly, Maria and Pristine recognised that *“everyone was quite friendly with each other ... We all had the same mentality – we wanted to share the time we spent there,”* and *“There is a great variety of people and I felt like everyone was quite friendly with each other. There wasn’t anyone being upset with anyone,”* while Gioryl pointed out: *“Obviously, when you come to study to a new country where you don’t know anyone, it’s a bit easier to get along with people.”*

One of the main needs residents were trying to address by selecting the particular residence was fulfilling the need to belong. Based on the interviews held, residents feel the need to belong and are actively trying to fulfil it.

6.1.5 Sense of Community

During the first weeks of the semester, when new people most commonly move into the residences, friend groups start to form. While initially, people are more open to joining groups and forming new bonds, eventually, the groups become established and people usually hang out within established circles.

I noticed that the layout of the residence itself can influence the dynamic of the community, especially the access to the kitchen – where there are shared kitchens, people automatically create circles, as sharing a kitchen inevitably makes interactions more frequent.

Despite the residents generally being open to forming connections with others, people who stayed at the residence for longer periods would look for connections outside of the residence – being faced with the constant changes of the residence community every semester, they wanted to make sure their community was more permanent.

Often, people would cut ties with the residence after moving out, especially when the rest of their friend group would move out, too.

At the time of complete lockdown, the sense of community within the residences had become much stronger, as the community was somewhat isolated from the outside world. However, the community itself was smaller, as many residents moved out and moved (back) in with their families.

The community gets established via smaller circles of people that hang out. As Kalina said: *“I wouldn’t include everyone in the building in that community, I think I would say my community were the people in our apartment.”* Similar, Bastian said he had connections *“with immediate roommates”* while Gioryl said people would mostly hang out with those *“who were on the same floor”*. Maya noticed how her group was part of a bigger community: *“We had this close group of friends that we would spend basically all the time with, but apart from this inner circle group, there were also some extra people that would join occasionally and that was also very nice.”*

These groups form in different ways. Talking about her group, Maya recognised how it was influenced by the actions of the residence staff: *“We met at a photoshoot that the management organised. Since it was a new building, they wanted to photograph the areas, the rooms, the common spaces and they asked us (the residents) to model.”* She further emphasized their efforts of forming community via communication channels: *“They created this big WhatsApp group for everyone... Maybe we would create one ourselves if there wasn’t one, but still, the fact they did it just made things easier – to meet people and make friends.”* Additionally, she recognised the staff would act *“like they were your friends”* and that they *“were really encouraging people to make friends, they would even introduce you to some people.”* Gioryl mentioned common areas as an important factor: *“The kitchen was*

shared, so that is where you'd meet a lot of people, because everyone was coming there to cook at least twice a day."

On the other hand, some people already joined the residence with other people they knew from before. Juan Carlos, who moved in with one of his friends, remembers. *"There was only two of us and we wanted a room for four people, so they told us they can accommodate us with another two people."* It was similar for Kalina: *"I knew that I would be living with one other student from my home university because we had connected a little bit earlier and asked to be in the same unit, but the other four bedrooms I had no idea who would be living in them."*

All the residents mentioned they felt like a part of the group and were able to describe it, often associating it with the feeling of "home".

"One thing that stayed with me is the sense of community... Now I have my own space, but I don't feel as much at home as I did at The Student Hotel... One thing I kind of miss is having that shared area, because that's where you meet people ... We were like-minded people, so I think most of us got along very well," said Gioryl, comparing residency life to his current living arrangement.

"I think the best part of it was that it gave me a sense of community. Living with that many other people, even though it meant the kitchen was dirty, I had a default group of friends and it made it less lonely... I feel like that's probably the best part – feeling like I know people and they know me," Kalina emphasized her favourite thing about living in a community.

As an exchange student, you get really lonely sometimes because you miss home ... But at Iglu, they become your family and friends," said Pristine.

"The thing that made it feel like home were the people I shared the experience with. I feel we connected in a way we would in a family... It really felt like home, because we didn't feel like strangers... You felt like you had friends you could just enjoy yourself with and do the stuff I would do with my family at home," Joao said in comparison.

Juan Carlos elaborated: *"I was part of the residence, because I knew the staff – they knew my name and I knew their names and I knew which one was going to be on shift which day. And I knew I could count on them."*

"The people that you meet are home in a way, because they give you the type of warmth, the type of human contact that to me means home," Maria similarly pointed out what makes the experience home-like.

"There really is a community, you spend a lot of time with the other residents, and you do everything there - so you're studying there during the day but then you're also cooking

together, making meals and watching movies and just spending time in the common areas,” Maya described her co-living experience.

“People come and go all the time. In our floor, most people had 5–6-month contracts. I was in a bit of a different situation – I had two 5-month contracts. So September to February, it was great, you know, we met everyone. Then they all left and new people came ... Obviously, when people come and go, it is different,” Gioryl pointed out how fragile and ever-changing such community might be. Maya had a similar impression: “When one of the people I would hang out with left, the dynamic changed a lot.” Joao looked at the downside: “It was really sad when one of the people I would hang out with moved out and left the country.” According to Bastian, that might be the reason some people avoid making connections: “When you have people who study there their whole degree, for them maybe there is less of an incentive to get to know someone who just stays for four months”.

Residents feel they are part of community. They recognize this is partially established, but partially created; staff can play a role in bringing communities together through communication (topics of conversation, use of channels) and different events, but the interactions between the people shape it and create a unique dynamic.

The community of student residence creates a home-like environment for the residents; however, it is subject to constant changes, which might somewhat disrupt the experience but on the other hand make it feel more unique.

6.1.6 Consumer-Brand Identification

The residents of private student residences I was staying at always refer to their accommodation with their brand names (*Iglu*) or brand names variations (*Garza Sada*, *Livensa*, *Student Hotel*), instead of e.g. the residency, student hall, student dorm, etc., which proves how strongly the brand is part of their stay, even subconsciously. For them, the residence and the residence/brand name are the same thing, so they often claim the brand as their own, thinking of the residence as their accommodation.

Similarly, they use brand names when talking about the residence personnel (e.g. *Livensa said*, *Garza Sada arranged*, *the Student hotel prepared*, *Iglu provided*, etc.). At some residences, even the community of residents is named after the brand and this name is used in every-day conversations (e.g. *Livensers*).

When talking about their first encounter with the residence, interviewees described them as “very fancy”, “trendy”, “modern”, “stylish”, “carefully planned out for students”, “comfortable”, “youthful”, “international”, “clean”, “reputable”, “luxurious”, and “lush”. As they evaluated that would be an appropriate place for them to stay, it might mean these descriptors are something they relate to or value and wish to embrace. It might also relate to how they wish to be perceived, which would indicate a brand social benefit. Since

they chose their residence among many alternative options, it might also indicate a certain level of brand distinctiveness that was also backed with descriptors as “*the best*” and comparisons to features and attributes of other residences or housing options.

For example, one resident described: “*Livensa was very clean and tidy, and for me, it’s very important to live in a place like that.*” They continued by hinting at brand distinctiveness: “*The other residence I visited was very messy in my opinion.*” Another resident compared how his residence felt much more international and since he had just moved into the country, he found it a better fit than the alternative residence with mainly domestic students.

Maya remembers how upon the first visit, the employees “*really tried to show you how your life can be living there,*” and seemingly, this convinced her to sign the lease. Similarly, Maria felt “*welcomed. You know, like this space is for you.*”

One of the interviewees expressed how she felt different activities for residents were incentivised by the marketing department trying to tick the boxes: “*I think that they hosted events just to say that they hosted events, so they could market that.*” The majority of residents actually felt like the activities were carried out to give them a good time. “*It feels very catered to you and it’s nice,*” says Maria. “*You would really feel like they were trying to give you a good time and good experience, so being a resident, you felt kind of special,*” remembers Maya. “*There are always thing going on, but at the same time, it’s your house,*” she says, pointing to the strong connection she felt with the residence. “*I felt like we were the main characters,*” she summarised.

“*I was part of Livensa. They took pictures of us and posted them online,*” said Joao, providing an interesting insight as to how the involvement of consumers in promotional materials might enhance their connection to the brand by reinforcing the idea that costumers and the brand are inseparably connected. In his case, becoming a brand ambassador enhanced his bond with the brand.

Interestingly, many residents relate the brands to their personal growth. “*The Student Hotel really gave me a network of people and an opportunity to form new friendship, because if I had never met the people that I have met, I probably never would have become a personal trainer,*” said one of the interviewees. “*It was the first time I lived on my own, so that was a huge step for me. I learned a lot of things living on my own. You become very independent. /.../ So I would say I matured at The Student Hotel.*” “*Before I went to Garza Sada, I was not a good swimmer, and then I left Garza Sada and I kind of know how to swim a bit more professionally,*” said another interviewee. “*I think I learned a lot about myself, /.../ You have a degree of freedom and space to reflect on yourself. /.../ I think it shaped my personality to a degree and how I view the world.*” Further, one of the interviewees said her experience of staying at the private student residence “*changed my life – the way I look at friendships and human relationships in general. It has also helped me a lot in getting out of*

my comfort zone, feeling more confident in my capability of being in a social context and talking to people and making friends without being so self-conscious.”

While residents seem to have related to the brand while staying there, some of them don't anymore, as they are now at a different stage of life. *“It worked for me at the time, but I wouldn't live there for longer than we did,”* said Kalina. Juan Carlos, who stayed at his residence for 2 years, pointed out: *“Once I left, I never went back. That was my graduation semester. I graduated, and then moved out of this area of the city. And all my friends were graduating, too, no one I know was still living there. So I have never gone back there.”* This might indicate that back when they were residents, there was certain brand-self similarity that disappeared once they moved back to their home country or finished studies and in a way changed, while the brand stayed the same.

The brands of private student residences seem to help residents articulate their identities. The residents recognize themselves not only as young people and students, but also as residents of a specific residency. Furthermore, they recognize how their unique housing experience has contributed to their personal development – for example, those who lived alone for the first time, identify their stay at the residence as a key point in becoming independent. Those who were more introverted recognised the opportunity of being surrounded with many like-minded people who were willing to form friendships as the residence helped them get out of their comfort zone. In general, the (past) residents connect many personal episodes from the time of their stay at the residence with the residence and its brand, no matter the brand's actual involvement in a specific episode.

Residents have a personal relation to the brand and subconsciously perceive it as a part of them, or at least as part of a specific stage in their life that made them who they are today. Therefore, we can conclude they perceive it as leaving a long-lasting imprint.

Based on the extensive ethnographic research and themes recognized through the interviews, I conclude the following:

- Residents recognize various sensory marketing cues as part of their experience.
- Residents' experiences are subjective – emotions play an important factor in how the residents see their experience.
- Residents define their experience based on memorable events.
- Residents feel the need to belong and were trying to fulfil it.
- Residents feel they are part of community.
- Private student residences help residents articulate their identities.

6.2 Quantitative Research: Questionnaire

The findings of the qualitative research were further validated through quantitative research. Building on the insights derived from ethnographic observation and interviews, the

quantitative phase involved hypothesis testing using survey data collected from current and former residents of private student halls. This approach allowed for the empirical testing of relationships proposed in the conceptual model, providing a broader and more objective basis for the initial qualitative findings.

H1: Multisensory marketing influences brand experience.

To observe the correlation between multisensory marketing and brand experience, I first had to make compute variables of Multisensory marketing and Brand experience. The individual formative items can be seen in appendix 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Compute Variables Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience

	mean	σ
<i>Multisensory marketing</i>		
Visual	42.398	.86366
Acoustic	34.817	.93607
Haptic	39.854	.81901
Olfactory	35.463	.96127
Gustatory	30.915	125.469
<i>Brand experience</i>		
Sensory	36.016	113.583
Affective	38.455	.97780
Behavioural	37.724	.95870
Intellectual	35.772	113.535

Source: own work.

Results of the descriptive statistics of compute variables Multisensory marketing and Brand Experience, presented in table 4, show that residents recognize various sensory marketing cues as part of their experience, with visual cues being the most significantly recognised followed by the haptic. The least recognised was the gustatory part.

H0: There is no relation between Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience

H1: There is a relation between Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience

Correlation between Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience is shown in table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Between Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience

		Multisensory Marketing	Brand Experience
Multisensory Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	0.726**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	41	41
Brand Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.726**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is less than 0.001, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience are correlated. As the Pearson correlation is 0.726, which indicates a strong positive correlation, I can say that the multisensory marketing is positively related to brand experience.

I can confirm the hypothesis, as the students who were positively affected by the multisensory marketing tend to enjoy their overall brand experience more, so I can confirm that multisensory marketing influences the brand experience.

H2: Emotions shape Brand Experience

To observe the correlation between emotions and brand experience, I had to make compute variable of Positive emotions. The individual formative items can be seen in appendix 3.

H0: There is no relation between Positive Emotions and Brand Experience

H1: There is a relation between Positive Emotions and Brand Experience

Correlation between Positive Emotions and Brand Experience is shown in table 6.

Table 6: Correlation Between Positive Emotions and Brand Experience

		Positive Emotions	Brand Experience
Positive Emotions	Pearson Correlation	1	0.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	41	41
Brand Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.545**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is less than 0.001, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience are correlated with each other. As the Pearson correlation is 0.545, I can say that the multisensory marketing is moderately and positively related to brand experience.

I confirm the hypothesis, as the students who have positive emotions regarding residency tend to enjoy their overall brand experience more, so I can confirm emotions are an important factor in how the residents see their experience.

H3: Memorable events shape Brand Experience

To observe the correlation between memorable events and brand experience, I had to make compute variable of Memories. The individual formative items can be seen in appendix 3.

H0: There is no relation between Memories and Brand Experience

H1: There is a relation between Memories and Brand Experience

Correlation between Memories and Brand Experience is shown in table 7.

Table 7: Correlation Between Memories and Brand Experience

		Memories	Brand Experience
Memories	Pearson Correlation	1	0.463**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.002
	N	41	41
Brand Experience	Pearson Correlation	0.463**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.002	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is 0.002, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that Memories and Brand Experience are correlated. As the Pearson correlation is 0.463, I can say that memorable events are moderately and positively related to brand experience.

I confirm the hypothesis, as the students who have fond memories of residency tend to enjoy their overall brand experience more, so I can confirm residents define their experience based on memorable events.

H4: Brands help consumers articulate their identities

To observe the correlation between brand experience and consumer-brand identification, I had to make compute variable of Consumer-brand Identification. The individual formative items can be seen in appendix 3.

H0: Brands don't have any correlation with consumers identities

H1: Brands affect consumers identities

Correlation between Brand Experience and CBI is shown in table 8.

Table 8: Correlation Between Brand Experience and CBI

		Brand Experience	CBI
Brand Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	0.816**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	41	41
CBI	Pearson Correlation	0.816**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is less than 0.001, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that brand experiences and consumer brand identities are correlated. As the Pearson correlation is 0.816, which indicates a very strong positive correlation, I can say brand experiences and customer-brand identification are very strongly related.

I confirm the hypothesis as it seems that brands can help consumers articulate their identities through experiential marketing by creating brand experiences.

H5: The identities of the customers that are motivated to belong will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of SOBI-A Items

	mean	σ
It is important to me that I am valued or accepted by others.	4.29	.782
In the past, I have felt valued and important to others.	4.27	.775
It is important to me that I fit somewhere in this world.	4.39	.771
I have qualities that can be important to others.	4.37	.581

I am working on fitting in better with those around me.	3.90	1.114
I am working on fitting in better with those around me.	3.90	1.114
I want to be a part of things going on around me.	4.29	.750
It is important to me that my thoughts and opinions are valued.	4.22	.759
Generally, other people recognize my strengths and positive traits.	4.17	.704
I can make myself fit in anywhere.	3.68	1.059

Source: own work.

Results of the descriptive statistics of SOBI-A items presented in table 9 show the residents had high ascendants of sense of belonging, so they are motivated to connect with other people.

This scale consists of 9 items with scores ranging from 27 to 45, the mean score being 37.59.

H0: The identities of consumers that have high motivation for sense of belonging won't be articulated by the brand

H1: The identities of consumers that have high motivation for sense of belonging will be somewhat articulated by the brand

Correlation between Motivation to belong and CBI is shown in table 10.

Table 10: Correlation Between Motivation to Belong and CBI

		Motivation to Belong	CBI
SOBI_A_means	Pearson Correlation	1	0.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	41	41
CBI	Pearson Correlation	0.625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is less than 0.001, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that Motivation to Belong and Customer-Brand Identification are correlated. As the Pearson correlation is 0.625, which indicates a strong positive correlation, I can say that being motivated to belong to a community is positively related to CBI.

I confirm the hypothesis that the identities of consumers that have high motivation for sense of belonging will be somewhat articulated by the brand, as the residents who scored high on SOBI-A instrument tend to be the ones whose identity has been articulated by the brand of their residency.

H6: The identities of consumers that feel like they are part of community will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

The item measuring the intensity of the resident's feelings of being part of the residency community is presented in appendix 3.

65.85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were part of community, while 14.63% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 19.51% did neither agree nor disagree.

The results of the questionnaire show most of the residents felt they were part of the community.

H0: There is no relation between feeling one is part of the community and Customer-Brand Identification

H1: There is a relation between feeling one is part of the community and Customer-Brand Identification

Correlation between Customer-Brand Identification and Being part of Community is shown in table 11.

Table 11: Correlation Between Customer-Brand Identification and Being Part of Community

		CBI	Being Part of Community
CBI	Pearson Correlation	1	0.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
	N	41	41
Community	Pearson Correlation	0.666**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
	N	41	41

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: own work.

As the p-value of Pearson correlation is less than 0.001, which is less than 5% of the level of significance, I rejected the null hypothesis, meaning that Customer-Brand Identification and the feeling of being part of the community are correlated. As the Pearson correlation is 0.666, which indicates a strong positive correlation, I can say that being part of community is positively related to CBI.

I confirm the hypothesis that the identities of consumers that feel like they are part of community will be somewhat articulated by the brand, as the residents who agreed they feel they were part of a community tend to be the ones whose identity has been articulated by the brand of their residency.

7 DISCUSSION

This section discusses the key findings of the study in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework, highlighting how students' experiences in private student residences shape their sense of belonging and consumer–brand identification. Drawing from both qualitative and quantitative data, the discussion interprets how multisensory cues, emotional engagement, and social dynamics contribute to brand experience and long-term brand attachment. The implications for experiential marketing strategies are examined, followed by a critical reflection on the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

7.1 Summary of Main Findings

The main themes identified through qualitative research, which examined the experiences of students residing in private student residences, revealed the following:

- Residents recognize various sensory marketing cues as part of their experience.
- Residents' experiences are subjective – emotions play an important factor in how the residents see their experience.
- Residents define their experience based on memorable events.
- Residents feel the need to belong and were trying to fulfil it.
- Residents feel they are part of community.
- Private student residences help residents articulate their identities.

The following hypotheses were confirmed through quantitative research:

H1: Multisensory Marketing influences Brand Experience.

H2: Emotions shape Brand Experience.

H3: Memorable events shape Brand Experience.

H4: The identities of the customers that are motivated to belong (i.e. have higher antecedents of Sense of belonging) will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

H5: The identities of consumers that feel like they are part of community will be somewhat articulated by the brand.

H6: Positive brand experience leads to a stronger identification with the brand.

This study confirms that, for residents of private student accommodations, multisensory marketing enhances brand experience by engaging multiple senses to create immersive and emotionally resonant interactions. Emotions significantly influence how consumers interpret

and evaluate their brand experiences, affecting memory retention and overall engagement. Similarly, memorable events contribute to stronger brand experiences by leaving lasting impressions associated with the brand. Positive brand experiences deepen customer–brand identification, increasing the likelihood that consumers will integrate the brand into their self-concept. Furthermore, this relationship is influenced by a sense of belonging: individuals with a stronger need for connection, or who feel part of a community, are more likely to incorporate the brand into their identity.

7.2 Interpretations of the Findings

The findings provide valuable insight into how experiential marketing strategies can foster a sense of belonging and strengthen consumer–brand identification within the context of private student residences.

Central to this understanding is the qualitative research, which offers rich, nuanced accounts of how students experience belonging, attachment, engagement, and identification in these environments. Residents’ narratives reveal that multisensory cues, emotional moments, and social interactions collectively create a lived experience where the need to belong is actively fulfilled. This sense of belonging nurtures emotional attachment to the residence, encouraging deeper engagement with brand-related activities and spaces. As residents become more engaged, they increasingly incorporate the brand into their evolving self-concept, exemplifying a strong consumer–brand identification.

Firstly, the consistent use of brand names (e.g., Livensa, Iglu, The Student Hotel) by residents to describe not only physical spaces but also staff, social environments, and activities suggests that the brand becomes intertwined with students’ everyday lives. This linguistic habit reflects a high level of internalisation, aligning with the concept of consumer–brand identification, where the brand becomes a meaningful part of the consumer’s self-concept (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003).

Secondly, the emphasis on emotional experiences and memorable events highlights how emotions act as mediators in shaping brand experiences. This supports earlier findings that emotional engagement enhances memory encoding and influences how experiences are evaluated (Brakus et al., 2009). Participants shared emotionally charged narratives—from feeling “welcomed” to being treated like “main characters”—demonstrating how personalised and emotionally resonant brand interactions become significant and memorable.

The role of social connection also emerged as a defining factor. Residents actively sought a sense of belonging and described how communal spaces and organised events facilitated friendships, peer support, and personal growth. This finding is consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Baumeister and Leary (1995), which identifies the need to belong

as a central human motivation and a key driver of consumer behaviour in socially immersive environments.

Moreover, the brand functioned as a vehicle for identity construction. Many participants described their experience in private residences as transformative, helping them become more independent, self-assured, or socially connected. This suggests that the brand is not simply consumed—it is lived. Through their engagement with the brand, students explored and expressed aspects of their evolving identities, which supports Holt's (2002) theory of brand identity construction.

Notably, the strength of brand identification appears to be both temporal and context-dependent. Some residents felt a strong identification with the brand during their stay but experienced a diminishing connection after leaving the residence. This suggests a more dynamic understanding of brand loyalty—one that is deeply tied to specific life stages or experiential contexts.

Together, these findings illustrate that experiential marketing in private student residences effectively cultivates a multi-dimensional sense of belonging by engaging students emotionally, socially, and psychologically, thereby strengthening consumer–brand identification and fostering a lasting connection between residents and the brand.

7.3 Implications of the Findings

This research confirms that living in a private student residence constitutes a unique and immersive consumer experience, offering fertile ground for the strategic application of experiential marketing. The “ultimate experience” identified—where consumers are surrounded by the brand almost continuously—enables the identification of key experiential components and their psychological outcomes. These insights can inform the development and branding of future student residences that aim to thrive in today's experience-driven economy.

The findings emphasize the importance of sensory engagement, emotional resonance, memorable events, and opportunities for social connection. These dimensions collectively shape brand experience and influence consumer–brand relationships. By leveraging these elements, marketers and developers can design residential environments that not only fulfil students' functional housing needs but also support their psychological well-being and encourage long-term brand attachment.

The study also illustrates the value of combining qualitative ethnographic research with quantitative analysis. This mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the lived experience of students, while also validating patterns through hypothesis testing. As a result, the findings extend beyond isolated narratives and can be applied to broader strategic considerations in branding and experiential design.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, the ethnographic component required the researcher to live among participants, which introduced the potential for observer and confirmation bias. While triangulation and a mixed-methods approach were employed to mitigate these potential biases, it remains challenging to maintain complete neutrality, particularly when diary notes reflect subjective interpretations of events.

Second, the observational research was limited to specific student residences to which the researcher had access. This may have introduced availability and affinity bias. Furthermore, some interviews were conducted with individuals who had already left the residence. While this allowed for reflection on long-term effects, it also increased the risk of memory distortions, such as rosy retrospection.

From a quantitative standpoint, certain constructs—such as brand identification and sense of belonging—were complex and difficult to measure directly. Although compound variables were created to approximate these concepts holistically, this process involved a degree of simplification. Cross-referencing with qualitative insights helped mitigate this limitation, but the risk remains.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

While both the qualitative interviews and the SOBI-A questionnaire confirmed that student residents in private accommodations are strongly motivated to fulfil their need to belong, future research could expand this comparison. For instance, a study exploring students living in private apartments could reveal whether significant differences exist in their levels of belonging and brand identification.

A second avenue for future research would be a comparative analysis of various private student residences to assess which brands succeed in fostering the strongest and most enduring emotional connections with residents. Such research could offer actionable insights for marketers and property developers on how to design environments that encourage stronger community formation and brand loyalty.

Additionally, future studies could explore the role of specific organized events and activities in fostering a sense of belonging and consumer–brand identification. By identifying which types of communal experiences produce the greatest impact, such research could refine experiential strategies to further enhance the student living experience.

Finally, considering the growing focus on student well-being, further research could investigate the relationship between brand experience and mental health outcomes. For example, examining how emotional branding and community-building initiatives affect

stress levels, emotional well-being, and satisfaction with life could inform best practices in student housing design and management.

8 CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the role of experiential marketing in fostering a sense of belonging among students living in private student dorms, specifically focusing on how multisensory marketing, brand experience, and customer-brand identification interact to enhance residents' experiences. Through a combination of qualitative ethnographic research and quantitative analysis, the study highlighted the significance of sensory cues, emotional connections, and memorable events in shaping students' perceptions of their living environment.

One of the key findings of this research was that multisensory marketing plays a central role in crafting a positive and immersive brand experience, which subsequently influences students' identification with the brand of their student dorm. The emotional responses triggered by these experiences are not only integral to the way students perceive their residence, but also serve as the foundation for a stronger connection to the brand itself. Additionally, memorable events, those significant moments that stand out in students' daily lives, help to anchor their connection to the brand, making the experience more personal and meaningful.

A central theme of this research is the concept of belonging, which was found to be a powerful driver in how students identify with the brand. The sense of belonging emerged as a key factor in how students relate to their residence and how the brand, in turn, is integrated into their self-concept. Students with a stronger sense of belonging were more likely to feel that the brand aligned with their personal identity, reinforcing the emotional connection and fostering brand loyalty.

To visualize the relationships between these concepts, I developed a conceptual model that illustrates how multisensory marketing influences brand experience, and how this experience, in turn, influences customer-brand identification, with a critical moderating role played by the sense of belonging. This model emphasizes that:

- Multisensory marketing enhances brand experience by engaging multiple senses to create more immersive, positive interactions.
- Emotions and memorable events play crucial roles in shaping brand experience, influencing how students perceive, remember, and connect with their residence.
- The sense of belonging moderates the relationship between brand experience and customer-brand identification, making it a pivotal factor in strengthening students' emotional attachment to the brand.

Ultimately, this thesis underscores the importance of understanding how experiential marketing strategies can create deeper, more emotional connections between consumers and brands. By focusing on the multisensory aspects of the experience and cultivating a sense of belonging, private student dorms can foster stronger brand identification, resulting in a more engaged and loyal resident base.

These findings provide valuable insights for marketers, as they reveal the power of creating experiences that go beyond just functionality, shaping how students connect with their living environment. By leveraging sensory cues, fostering emotional connections, and enhancing the sense of belonging, private student halls can differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive market, offering more than just a place to stay but a community to belong to.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary in Slovene

Magistrska naloga "Vzbujanje občutka pripadnosti skozi izkustveno trženje: primer zasebnih študentskih domov" obravnava vlogo eksperimentalnega marketinga pri vzpostavljanju občutka pripadnosti med študenti, ki bivajo v zasebnih študentskih domovih. Glavni cilj raziskave je bil raziskati, kako veččutni marketinški pristopi, blagovna izkušnja in identifikacija potrošnika z blagovno znamko skupaj oblikujejo in bogatijo izkušnjo prebivalcev ter krepijo njihovo povezanost z bivališčem.

Raziskava je potekala kot kombinacija kvalitativne etnografske študije in kvantitativne analize, kar je omogočilo celovit vpogled v subjektivne izkušnje študentov in preverjanje hipotez s statističnimi metodami. Kvalitativni del je zajemal opazovanja in polstrukturirane intervjuje, skozi katere so bile izpostavljene teme, kot so veččutni dražljaji, čustveni odzivi, nepozabni dogodki, občutek pripadnosti, občutek skupnosti ter identifikacija z blagovno znamko. Kvantitativni del je potrdil hipoteze o vplivu teh dejavnikov na oblikovanje blagovne izkušnje in identifikacijo s znamko.

Pomembna ugotovitev je, da veččutni marketing, ki aktivira različne čute (vid, sluh, vonj, otip), ustvarja bolj poglobljeno in prisotno blagovno izkušnjo. Ta multisenzorični pristop pomaga prebivalcem, da doživljajo prostor bolj intenzivno in osebno, kar krepi njihovo čustveno vez z blagovno znamko. Čustva, ki so sprožena v teh interakcijah, igrajo ključno vlogo pri oblikovanju zaznave in spomina na bivališče, saj emocionalno nabiti trenutki ostanejo v spominu kot nepozabni dogodki, ki še dodatno utrjujejo pozitivno doživljanje.

Občutek pripadnosti se izkazuje kot ključen psihološki mehanizem, ki moderira povezavo med blagovno izkušnjo in identifikacijo s blagovno znamko. Študenti, ki močneje občutijo pripadnost skupnosti in imajo izrazito potrebo po socialni povezanosti, z večjo verjetnostjo sprejmejo blagovno znamko kot del svoje osebne identitete. Ta identifikacija z blagovno znamko presega zgolj funkcionalno vlogo bivališča in se razvija v obliko čustvene zvestobe in dolgotrajne povezanosti.

Poleg tega je raziskava pokazala, da blagovne znamke zasebnih študentskih domov ne predstavljajo le fizičnih prostorov, temveč tudi socialne in kulturne kontekste, v katerih prebivalci soustvarjajo svoje izkušnje in identiteto. Organizirani dogodki, skupni prostori in vsakodnevne interakcije z osebjem in drugimi študenti prispevajo k ustvarjanju občutka skupnosti, ki je ključen za zadovoljstvo in dobro počutje prebivalcev.

Na podlagi rezultatov je bil razvit konceptualni model, ki prikazuje zaporedne povezave: veččutni marketing krepi blagovno izkušnjo; ta izkušnja, podkrepljena z močnimi čustvi in spomini, spodbuja identifikacijo potrošnika z blagovno znamko; občutek pripadnosti pa to povezavo še okrepi kot pomemben moderirajoči dejavnik.

Ta raziskava prispeva k teoretičnemu in praktičnemu razumevanju eksperimentalnega marketinga v kontekstu zasebnih študentskih domov ter ponuja konkretne usmeritve za

oblikovalce in tržnike, ki želijo ustvariti okolja, kjer prebivalci ne zgolj bivajo, temveč se počutijo kot del skupnosti. Poudarek na čutnih izkušnjah, emocionalni vključenosti in socialni povezanosti lahko pomaga razvijalcem in upravljavcem zasebnih študentskih domov, da ponudijo edinstveno izkušnjo, ki presega zgolj funkcionalno zadovoljitev bivanjskih potreb in ustvarja trajno čustveno vez z blagovno znamko.

Appendix 2: Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview

Table 1a: Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview Related to Brand Experience

Brand experience
What are the first things that come to mind when thinking of ... (the residence)?
How is it living at the residence?
Describe your day at the residence.
What did you notice the first time you visited the residence?
Please, compare your residence with other residences.
What do you get for the price you pay?/ Does what you get compensate the price you pay?
What is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of your experience being a resident of ...?
What is your favourite memory? What is your least favourite memory?

Source: own work.

Table 2a: Questions for the Semi-Structured Interview Related to Consumer-Brand Identification & Sense of Belonging

Consumer-brand identification & sense of belonging
What were your reasons for selecting this accommodation?
What would be different if you selected any other accommodation?
When did you feel like the residence was your home?
What are the best parts of staying at this accommodation?
Do you feel you are part of the residence?
Would the residence be the same without you?
Describe a typical resident of (the residence).
Are you a typical resident? Why?

Source: own work.

Appendix 3: Coding

Table 2: Illustration of the Process of Coding

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
“It looked very nice”; “very trendy”; “stylish living room”	Positive visual first impression	Design and Aesthetics	Sensory Cues
“Very new, very modern”; “nicely decorated”	Modern design		
“Always clean”; “very clean and organized”	Cleanliness and order		
“A lot of daylight”; “doesn’t feel like a dungeon”	Natural lighting / brightness		
“Flimsy, cheaply made furniture”; “cheap, plasticky feel”	Negative design impressions		
“Very calm, very quiet”; “felt calm over there”	Quiet/peaceful atmosphere	Noise and Sound Environment	
“Staff trying to control the noise”; “designated quiet areas”	Noise control mechanisms		
“Music in the lobby”; “different languages”; “talking/shouting”	Music and voices as ambiance		
“I would prefer it to be a bit more noisy sometimes”	Personal preference for sound		
“Doesn’t smell like anything”; “no particular smell”	Neutral/absent smells	Smells and Scent Associations	
“Smelled okay”; “didn’t smell bad”	Mildly positive associations		
“It is just Livensa! It doesn’t smell bad”	Brand association through smell		
“Livensa cookies”; “pancakes from free food events”	Event-based food	Taste and Food- Related Memories	
“Italian pastas”; “meals together with others”	Cultural food experiences		
“Sweet and sour – good and bad moments”	Emotionally linked tastes		
“Memories are triggered by food”; “chocolatey hazelnut spread”	Memory triggers through taste		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
“Could be in a T-shirt all the time”; “AC regulated individually”	Pleasant temperature control	Temperature, Comfort, and Texture	
“Very cozy”; “comfortable chairs”; “nice couches”	Physical comfort and coziness		
“Bean bags looked nice but weren’t comfortable”	Mismatch between appearance and feel		
“It doesn’t smell bad – it’s just Livensa”	Brand as a sensory whole	Multisensory and Holistic Impressions	
“At the other place, it was noisy/dirty/etc.”	Comparison to other residences		
“Triggered by food”; “design features they remembered”	Memories linked to specific sensory triggers		
“Too quiet vs. just right”; “design admired vs. disliked”	Contrast in individual perception		
“There are people who are homesick, living alone for the first time, first time abroad, experiencing cultural shock...”	Homesickness & Cultural Adjustment	Emotional States Influencing Experience	Subjective Episodes
“Students may experience stress related to the heavy study workload or frustration with difficult content...”	Academic Stress		
“I was too caught up in my first relationship... I feel like I probably missed out on a lot.”	Romantic Distraction/Regret		
“When you are in a place that’s colourful, vibrant ... it influences your mood a lot.”	Environmental Influence on Mood		
“We didn’t feel like strangers... you had friends you could enjoy yourself with.”	Friendship & Belonging	Social Bonds and Emotional Support	
“You would feel like people were trying to give you a good time.”			
“Many of these situations might encourage people to	Mutual Support		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
connect with other residents ... to support each other.”			
“Grateful, for having the opportunity to bond with people I’d probably never have crossed paths with.”	Gratitude & Appreciation		
“I felt calm over there... I could stay in my apartment and didn’t get bored.”	Safety and Comfort	Feeling of Home	
“It felt like home... people being welcoming and taking care of you.”			
“My bedroom felt like home... a place I could retreat to... peace of mind, psychological safety.”	Private Space as a Retreat		
“Do stuff I would do with my family at home.”	Comparisons to Family or Real Home		
“Now I have my own space... but I don’t feel as much at home as I did there.”			
“Looking back... residents remember the fun times... they felt comfortable and safe.”	Positive Emotional Recall	Emotional Memories and Recall	
“I was very happy there... I felt like I could live my stuff anywhere.”			
“Stronger emotions released at the time make the specific moments more memorable.”	Emotionally Charged Memories Are Most Vivid		
“We felt a bit uncomfortable... it felt like you were being watched all the time.”	Feeling Monitored or Restricted	Negative Emotional Responses	
“The rest of the place [outside bedroom], I would say no [didn’t feel like home].”	Disappointment or Discomfort		
“The most recollectable episodes seem to be the ones that are either very	Uniqueness and irreplicability	Emotionally Charged Moments	Memorable Events

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
unique (and can not be replicated)."			
"Episodes connected to strong emotions."	Emotional intensity		
"They greet you with a smile, call you by your name, give out goodie bags..."	Personalized welcome	First Impressions and Welcome Rituals	
"The tour was very nice"; "It was a student house that had just opened..."	First-day memories		
"Halloween party or themed activities..."	Themed events	Organised Social Events	
"Taco night"; "Pancakes, hotdogs"; "Friendsgiving dinner..."	Food-centered gatherings		
"Some gatherings were initiated by the residential staff, and some were organised among the residents."	Management-initiated vs resident-led events		
"The AC ruined my computer"; "Malfunctioning facilities..."	Facility failures or damage	Negative Events and Conflict Situations	
"They told me they were going to charge me for cleaning..."	Staff-related disputes		
"Feeling watched all the time..."			
"Residences that managed to resolve conflicts better seem to have more satisfied residents."	Conflict resolution and brand impression		
"We spent lots of time at the residence"; "Everything was done there basically."	Lockdown life	Covid-19 and the "New Reality"	
"It was something we were all experiencing..."	Collective emotional memory		
"I was there by myself"; "I didn't know what I was going to do..."	Isolation and stress		
"Us being mad at the residence ... really brought us together."	Bonding through shared adversity		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
“Memories defined based on extraordinary moments ... more easily recollectable because of the emotions connected to them.”	Memory-emotion connection	Emotional Anchoring of Memories	
“Memory does not make films, it makes photographs.”	Photograph metaphor	Emotional Anchoring of Memories	
“People at private student residences are very open to forming friendships and building new relationships.”	Openness to new social connections	General Social Openness	Need to Belong
“They generally want to belong to a group and are looking for a community they can become part of.”	Desire for community and group membership		
“For international students/exchange students who move to a new country without social capital... access to community is especially important.”	Importance of community for newcomers	Community Access	
“Domestic students, especially during the lockdown in 2020, experienced limited access to their communities.”	Importance of community due to external restrictions	Community Access	
“I was there for a purpose – not just to live there, but also to make friends.”	Intentional move to prevent loneliness	Motivations for Moving In	
“Living at a residence gives you private space but also shared space, which makes living there not so lonely.”	Balance of private and shared spaces		
“I could meet a lot of people, make a lot of new friends... have fun and not be alone during the pandemic.”	Seeking social connection during isolation		
“It’s important for people to feel like they are not alone.”	Need to avoid loneliness		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
“I made a big effort in getting to know everyone... we would organise parties, dinners, and events.”	Active social engagement	Social Effort & Interaction	
“Everyone was quite friendly with each other... we all had the same mentality – we wanted to share the time we spent.”	Friendly social environment	Social Atmosphere	
“When you come to study to a new country where you don’t know anyone, it’s a bit easier to get along with people.”	Ease of social bonding in new environments		
“Residents feel the need to belong and are actively trying to fulfil it.”	Active pursuit of belonging	Fulfilment of Need to Belong	
“During the first weeks of the semester, friend groups start to form... eventually, groups become established and people hang out within established circles.”	Formation and stabilization of friend groups	Formation and Dynamics of Community	Sense of Community
“The layout of the residence influences community dynamics, especially shared kitchens where interactions are more frequent.”	Physical environment shaping interactions	Influence of Physical Space	
“The kitchen was shared, so you’d meet a lot of people, everyone cooked at least twice a day.”	Shared spaces as social hubs		
“People staying longer looked for connections outside the residence due to frequent community changes every semester.”	Transience of community members	Community Stability and Permanence	
“People come and go all the time, with short contracts, making community fragile and ever-changing.”	Community instability due to transient residents		
“Often people cut ties with the residence after moving	Community dissolution after departure		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
out, especially when friend groups move out.”			
“When friends move out, dynamics change; some avoid making connections due to short stays.”	Impact of turnover on social dynamics		
“During lockdown, sense of community became stronger, though community size was smaller due to many moving out.”	Strengthening of community during isolation	Community Response to External Events	
“My community were the people in our apartment”; “Connections with immediate roommates”; “People mostly hang out with those on the same floor.”	Smaller, localized social circles	Community Subgroups and Circles	
“Some residents already knew people before moving in and formed groups accordingly.”	Pre-existing social ties		
“We met at a photoshoot organised by management; they created a WhatsApp group; staff acted like friends encouraging socializing.”	Role of management in community formation	Community Facilitation by Staff	
“Staff knew residents by name and residents could count on staff.”	Familiarity and trust with staff		
“Felt part of the group; associated community with feeling of home.”	Community as source of belonging and home-like feeling	Emotional Meaning of Community	
“Community creates a home-like environment, but constant changes disrupt and make the experience unique.”	Community uniqueness vs. instability		
Residents use brand names (Iglu, Livensa, etc.) instead of “dorm” or “residence.”	Use of brand as primary identifier	Brand as Part of Identity	Consumer-Brand Identification

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
Residents refer to staff and services with the brand name (e.g., “Livensa said”).	Brand reference in everyday communication		
Resident communities take on brand-based nicknames like “Livensers.”	Community named through brand		
“We recognize ourselves as residents of a specific brand, not just students.”	Self-identification through brand affiliation		
Brands described as “stylish,” “clean,” “international,” “luxurious” – residents identify with these traits.	Identification with brand traits	Perceived Brand-Personality Match	
Residents preferred their residence over others because of traits they valued.	Brand distinctiveness through comparison		
Resident described the brand as “very clean” compared to an alternative residence that was “messy.”	Self-image aligned with brand image		
Marketing interactions made the residence feel personally welcoming.	Personalized brand communication	Brand Connection Through Experience	
Activities “felt catered” and “made you feel special.”	Events reinforcing resident value		
Maya: “It’s your house.” “We were the main characters.”	Residence felt like home; created special status		
Joao: “They took pictures of us and posted them.”	Resident involvement in brand promotion	Co-Creation & Brand Engagement	
Resident gained friends and career direction due to residence (e.g., personal trainer, network).	Brand as enabler of life opportunities	Brand as a Life Stage Marker	
“I matured at The Student Hotel.” “I became more independent.”	Brand linked to personal growth		
“I became a better swimmer,” “It shaped how I view the world.”	Residence linked to transformation		

Examples/Notes	Sub-Codes	Category	Main Theme
“Changed my life... helped me be more confident socially.”	Self-development through residence experience		
Episodes from their stay are remembered through the brand lens.	Memory and meaning tied to brand		
“It left a long-lasting imprint.”	Lasting emotional connection to brand		
“It worked for me at the time, but not now.” “I never went back.”	Temporal relevance of brand identity	Shifting Brand-Self Similarity	
Brand reflects who they were at that point in life.	Brand linked to identity at specific life stage		

Source: own work.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire Items

Table 3a: Items of the Formative Measurement Model of Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience

Multisensory marketing
Visual
“The appearance of private student dorms is very attractive.”
“Private student dorms are very nice to look at.”
“Private student dorms have an appealing style.”
“Private student dorms are a feast for the eyes.”
“Private student dorms are a real eye-catcher.”
“Private student dorms have a premium design.”
Acoustic
“The music played in the communal area of private student dorms is very nice to listen to.”
“The sound scape in private student dorms is very pleasant.”
“The sounds in private student dorms make me comfortable.”
“Private student dorms are not noisy.”
Haptic
“The materials in private student dorms feel absolutely good.”
“The shared premises of private student dorms are very cozy.”
“In private student dorms, the temperature is comfortable.”
“The furnishings in private student dorms are very nice to touch.”
“Private student dorms offer a cushy comfort.”
Olfactory
“Private student dorms smell very nice.”
“The scent in private student dorms is very pleasant.”
“The fragrance in private student dorms is very appealing.”
“The odour in private student dorms is delightful.”
“The aroma in private student dorms is very enchanting.”
Gustatory
“I enjoy drinks available at the premises.”
“I am satisfied with the food & beverage options provided on site.”
“The site offers tasty food.”
“I enjoy food provided by the residence.”

Table 3a: Items of the Formative Measurement Model of Multisensory Marketing and Brand Experience (cont.)

Brand experience
Sensory
“Private student dorms make a strong impression on my senses.”
“Private student dorms are interesting in a sensory way.”
“Private student dorms appeal to my senses.”
Affective
“Private student dorms induce feelings and sentiments.”
“Private student dorms are emotional.”
“I have strong emotions connected to my memories of private student dorms.”
Behavioural
“I engage in physical actions and behaviours when I stay at private student dorms.”
“Private student dorms with provided facilities and activities encourage my physically activity.”
“Private student dorms are action oriented.”
Intellectual
“In private student dorms, I engage in a lot of thinking.”
“Private student dorms make me think.”
“Private student dorms stimulate my curiosity.”

Source: own work, adapted by the empirical study of luxury hotels (Wiedmann et al., 2018).

Table 4a: Items of the Formative Measurement Model of Positive Emotions

Positive Emotions
“Hearing my student residence's name brings positive emotions.”
“Coming across my residence's marketing material evokes positive emotions.”

Source: own work.

Table 5a: Items of the Formative Measurement Model of Memories

Memories
“I have good memories connected to the residence.”
“Thinking of the residence brings up good memories.”

Source: own work.

Table 6a: Items of the Formative Measurement Model of Consumer-Brand Identification

<i>Consumer-Brand Identification</i>
"I believe in the ideas promoted by the residence."
"I have a lot in common with other residents."
"I identify with the brand of my residence."
"My community in the residence is unique."
"My residence is one of a kind."
"I recognize my residence's logo."
"I believe my student residence is different from other student residences."
"I believe my student residence is different from other private student residences."
"I believe my student residence is different from public student residences."
"I recognize my residence's name."
"By being a resident, I have access to different benefits."
"In my residence, I feel I am part of the community."
"By being a resident, I have access to a community."
"Thinking of the residence bring up good memories."

Source: own work.

Table 7a: Item Measuring the Intensity of the Resident's Feeling of Being Part of the Residency Community

"In my residence, I feel I am part of the community."

Source: own work.

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Evoking a Sense of Belonging through Experiential Marketing: The Case of Private Student Dorms

Hi,

I am writing my master thesis focused on observing experiences by residents of private student dorms and similar accommodations.

If you are/have been living in a similar arrangement, please, share your experience with me. :)

Thank you!

** Indicates required question*

1. Are you a resident of a private student dorm or similar student accommodation *option**? *

* A shared flat or a studio apartment within a residential complex not owned or managed by a university, but by a private company or organization, that offers communal areas with study areas, games rooms, cinema rooms, gyms and/or similar and is marketed towards students.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No, but I have been in the past.
- ☐ No.

Demographic information

If you are not a resident of this type of student accommodation anymore, please, insert the data for when you were.

2. In which country are/were you a resident of a private student dorm? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Australia
- ☐ The Netherlands
- ☐ Mexico
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Other: _____

3. Please, share the name of the residence (optional)

4. Gender *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

5. Age when moving into the residence *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-23
- ☐ 24-26
- ☐ 27 or above

6. Age when moving out of the residence *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-23
- ☐ 24-26
- ☐ 27 or above

7. Education (highest level completed when moving into the residence) *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Highschool
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Other

8. Education (highest level completed when moving out of the residence)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Highschool
- ☐ Bachelor degree
- ☐ Master degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree
- ☐ Other

9. Status that best describe you at the time of living in the residence

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Exchange student
☐ Full time student
☐ Part time student, part time employed
☐ Full time employed
☐ Other

Multisensory marketing

10. The appearance of private student dorms is very attractive. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

11. Private student dorms are very nice to look at. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

12. Private student dorms have an appealing style. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

13. Private student dorms are a feast for the eyes. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

14. Private student dorms are a real eye-catcher. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

15. Private student dorms have a premium design. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

16. The music played in the communal area of private student dorms is very nice to listen to. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

17. The sound scape in private student dorms is very pleasant *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

18. The sounds in private student dorms make me comfortable *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

19. In private student dorms it's not noisy. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

20. The materials in private student dorms feel absolutely good. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

21. The shared premises of private student dorms are very cozy. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

22. In private student dorms, there is comfortable temperature *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

23. The furnishings in private student dorms are very nice to touch. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

24. Private student dorms offer a cushy comfort. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

25. In private student dorms, it smells very nice. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

26. The scent in private student dorms is very pleasant. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

27. The fragrance in private student dorms is very appealing. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

28. The odor in private student dorms is delightful. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

29. The aroma in private student dorms is very enchanting. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

30. I enjoy drinks available at the premises. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

31. I am satisfied with the food & beverage options provided on site. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

32. The site is offering tasty food. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

33. I enjoy food provided by the residence. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

Brand Experience

34. Private student dorms make a strong impression on my senses. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

35. Private student dorms are interesting in a sensory way. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

36. Private student dorms appeal to my senses. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

37. Private student dorms induce feelings and sentiments. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

38. Private student dorms are emotional. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

39. I have strong emotions connected to my memories from private student dorms. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

40. I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I stay at private student dorms. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

41. Private student dorms with provided facilities and activities encourage my physically activity. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

42. Private student dorms are action oriented. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

43. In private student dorms, I engage in a lot of thinking. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

44. Private student dorms make me think. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

45. Private student dorms stimulate my curiosity. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

Sense of belonging

46. It is important to me that I am valued or accepted by others. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

47. In the past, I have felt valued and important to others. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

48. It is important to me that I fit somewhere in this world. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

49. I have qualities that can be important to others. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

50. I am working on fitting in better with those around me. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

51. I want to be a part of things going on around me. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

52. It is important to me that my thoughts and opinions are valued. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

53. Generally, other people recognize my strengths and good points. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

54. I can make myself fit in anywhere. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

Consumer-brand identification

55. In my residence, I feel I am part of the community. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

56. I have a lot in common with other residents. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

57. I identify with the brand of my residence. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

58. I believe in the ideas promoted by the residence. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

59. I believe my student residence is different from the other student residences. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

60. I believe my student residence is different from other private student residences. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

61. I believe my student residence is different from public student residences. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

62. I recognize my residence's logo. *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

63. I recognize my residence's name.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

64. By being a resident, I have access to a community.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

65. By being a resident, I have access to different benefits.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

66. My residence is one of the kind.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

67. My community in the residence is unique.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

68. Being a residents makes my student life better.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

69. I feel accepted by my residence.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strongly agree

70. I have good memories connected to the residence.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strongly agree

71. I am happy to tell non-residents about my residence.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strongly agree

72. Hearing my student residence's name brings positive emotions.

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

stro ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ strongly agree

73. Coming across my residence's marketing material evokes positive emotions.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

74. Thinking of the residence bring good memories.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

75. I often mention my residence in daily conversations.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

76. Staying at another accommodation would change my student experience.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

77. My semester would not be the same, have I stayed in any other place.

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
stro	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	strongly agree

Thank you for your participation!

If you can, please, share this questionnaire with your friends from the residence.

p.s. Don't forget to submit the form. :)