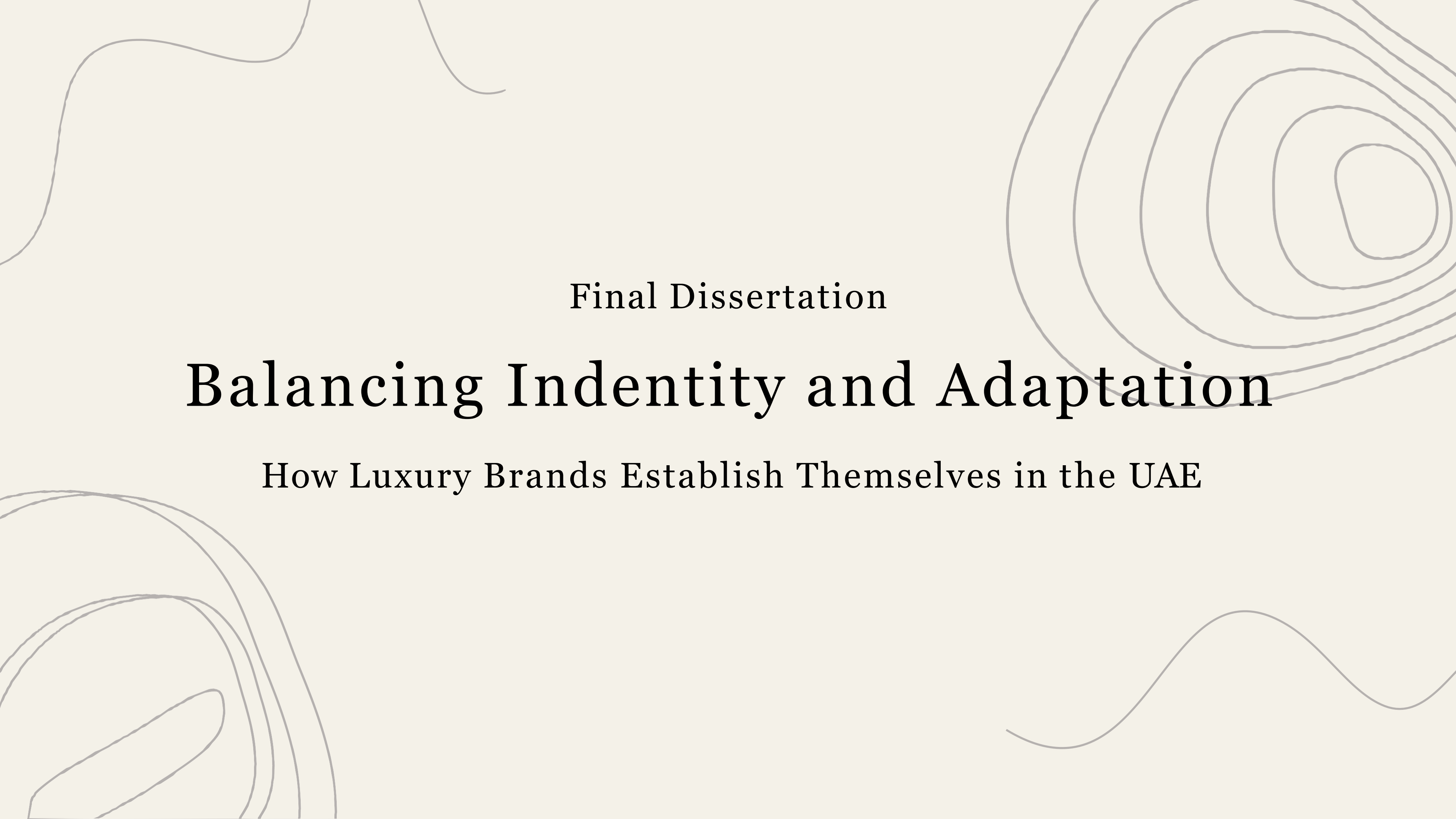




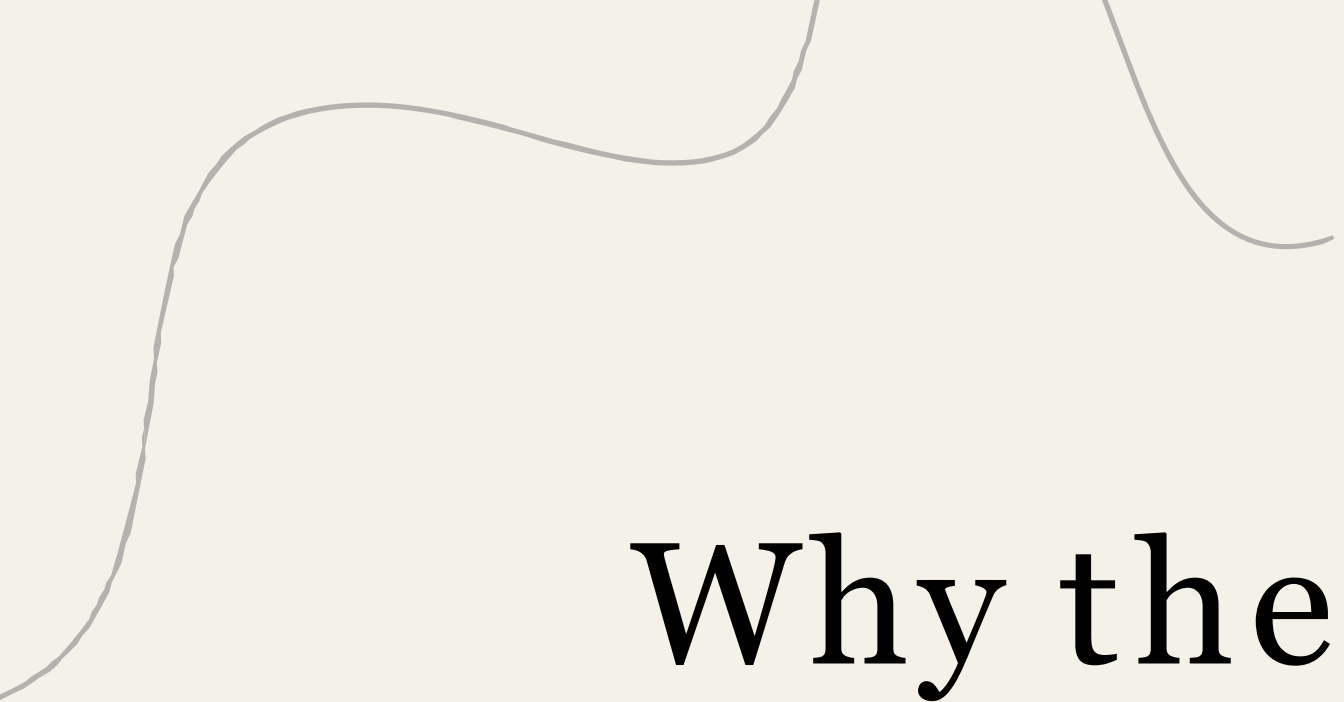
Final Dissertation

Balancing Identity and Adaptation

How Luxury Brands Establish Themselves in the UAE

Summary

1. Research question and why the UAE is a relevant case
2. Literature review
3. Methodology
4. Main findings
5. Contributions, managerial recommendations, limitations, professional development



Why the UAE is a perfect field

01

Luxury is highly visible
and meaningful

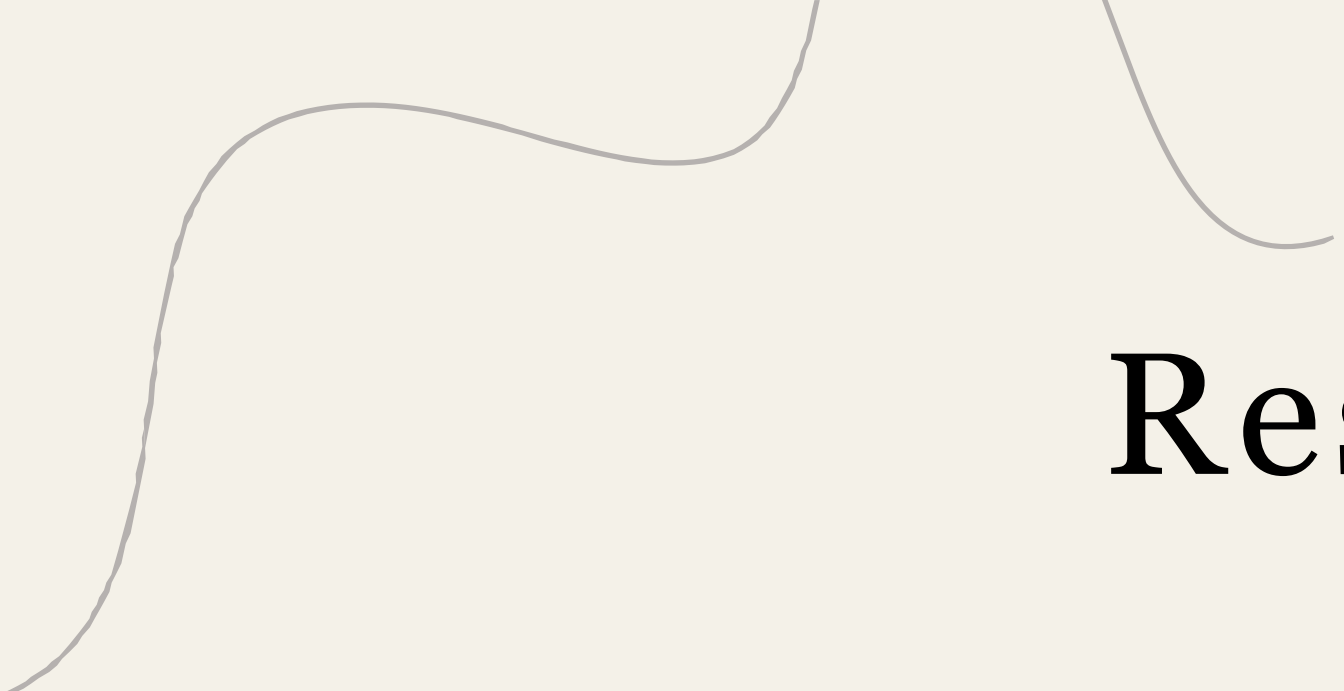
02

Social, cultural and
religious codes shape
consumption

03

Customers compare
experiences globally





Research Question

How can luxury houses successfully establish themselves in the UAE while maintaining their brand identity and authenticity?

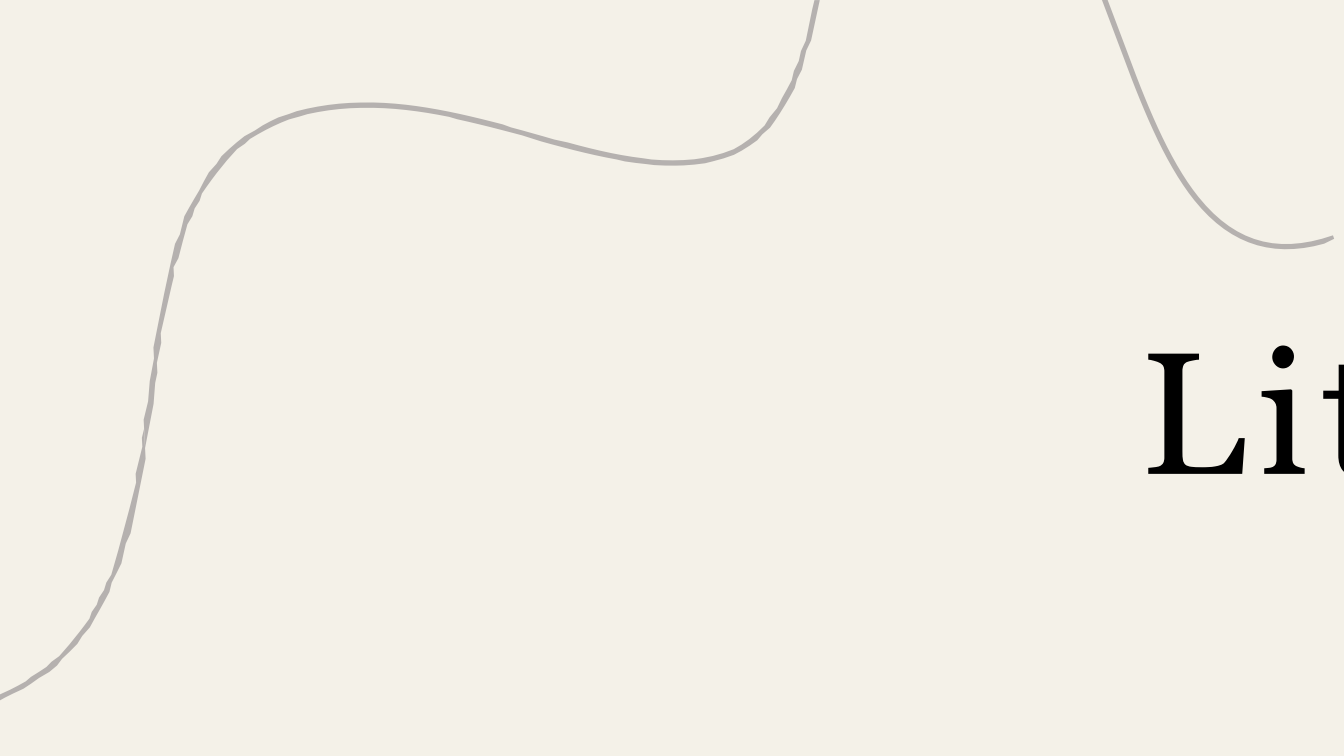
01 Brand identity

02 Cultural adaptation

03 Authenticity

04 Managerial implications



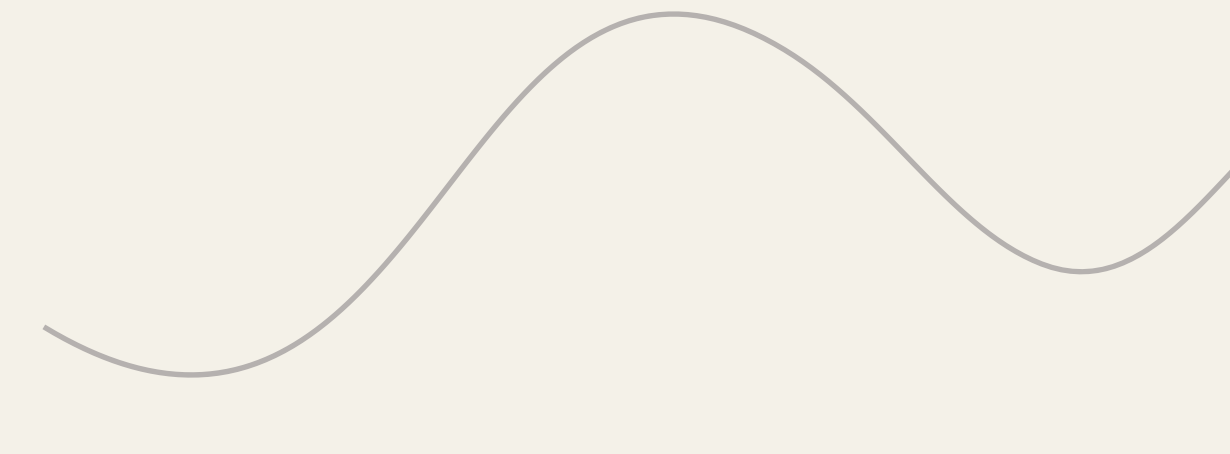


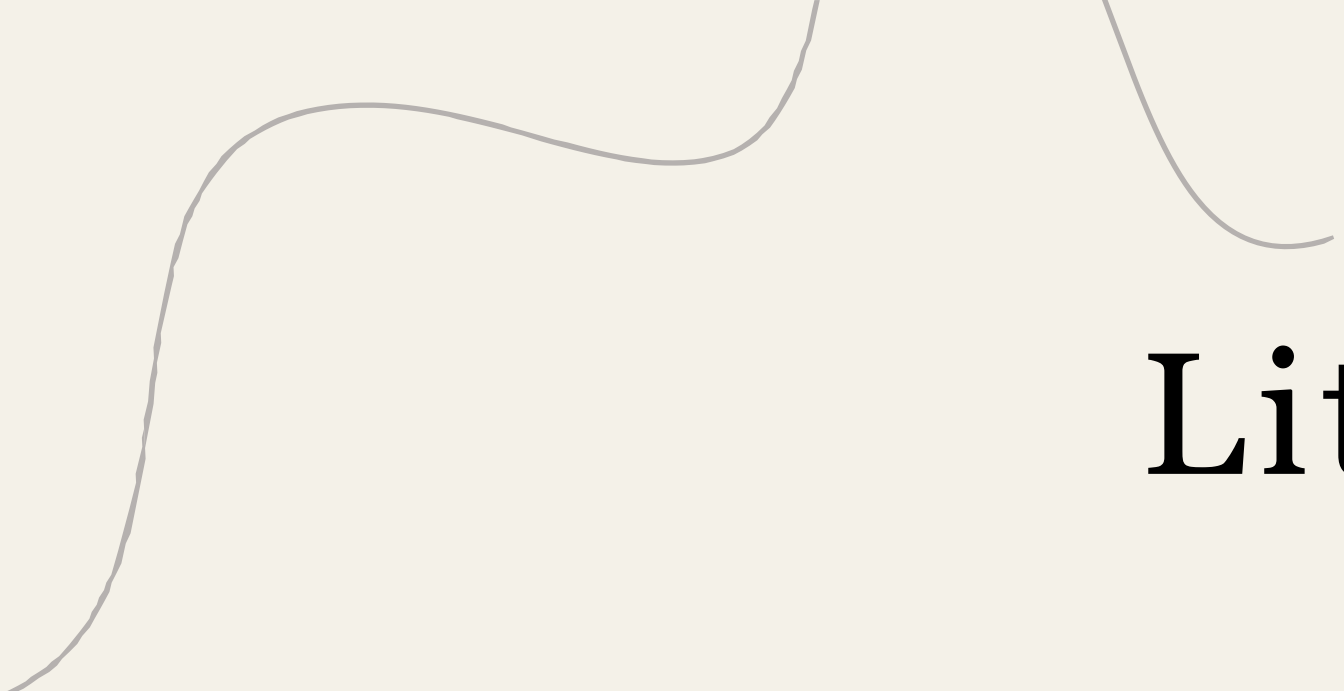
Literature Review

Brand Equity Theory

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)

“A brand creates value through strong and consistent associations in the consumer’s mind. In luxury, these associations are not only functional. They are emotional, cultural, and symbolic.”





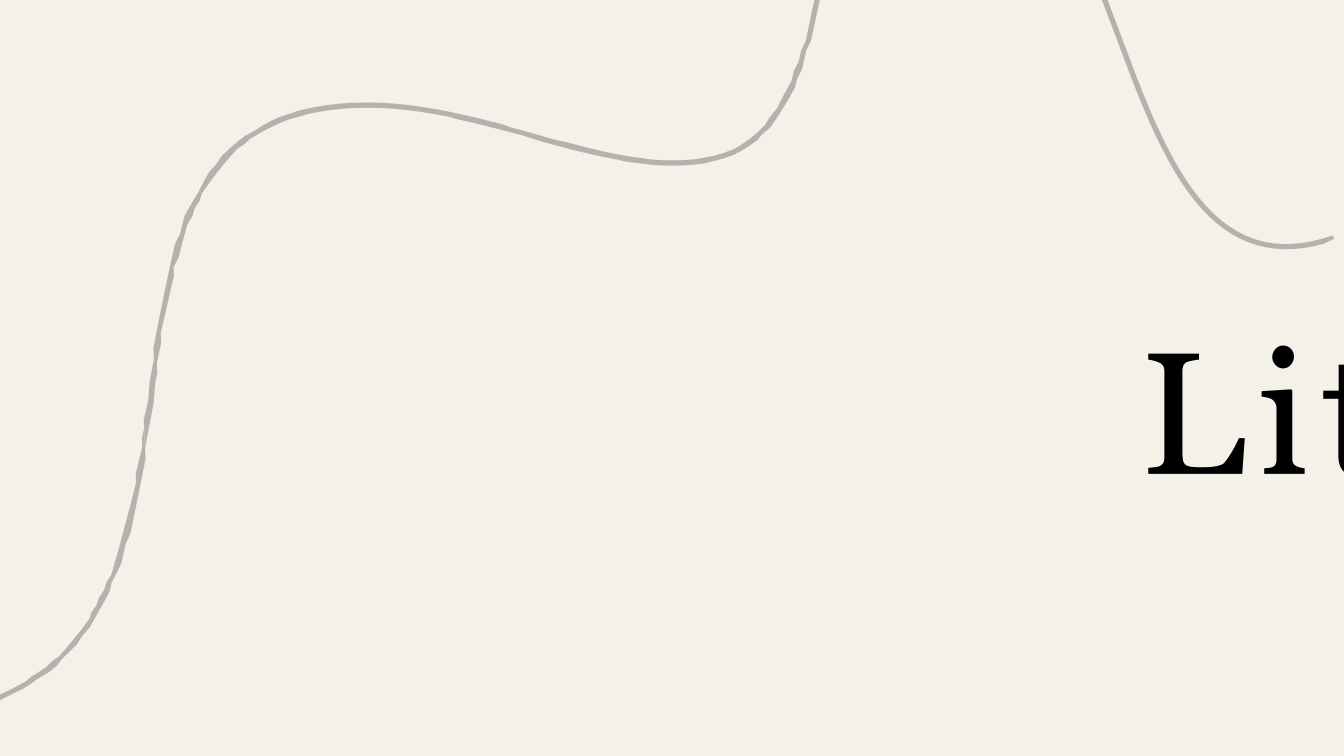
Literature Review

Brand Identity

Kapferer (2015)

“Luxury is built through a strong identity, a clear vision, and a certain discipline over time.”



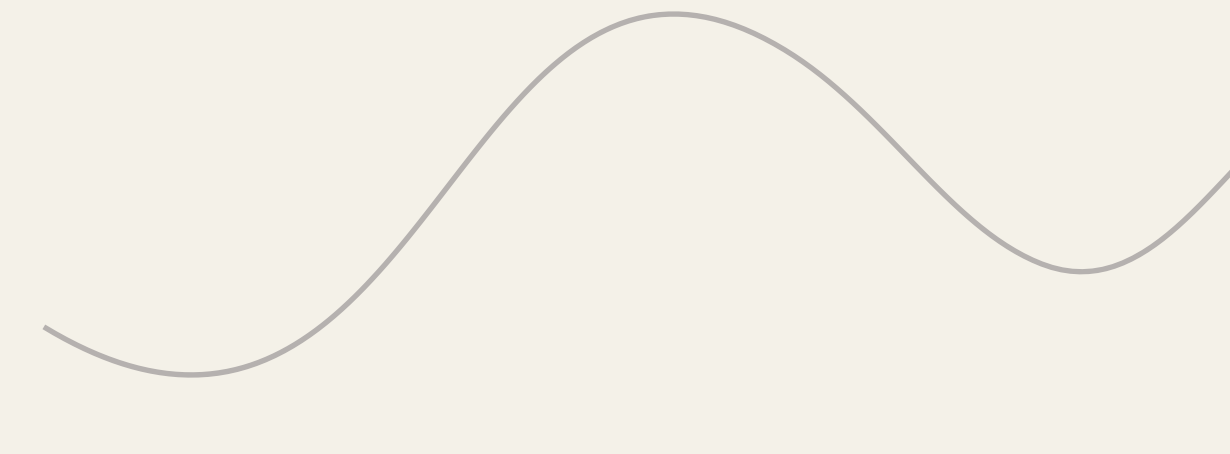


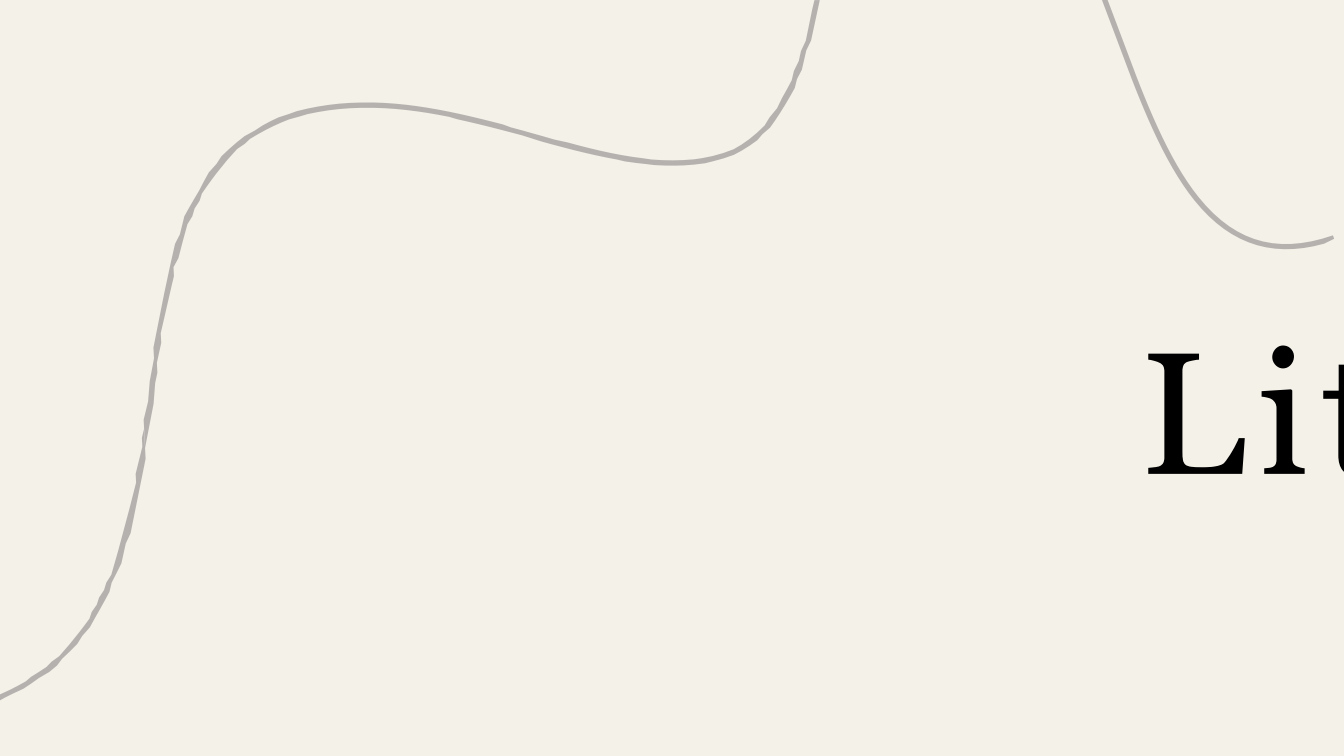
Literature Review

Cultural Adaptation

Hofstede (2001), de Mooji (2019)

“Cultural values shape how people interpret brands.”





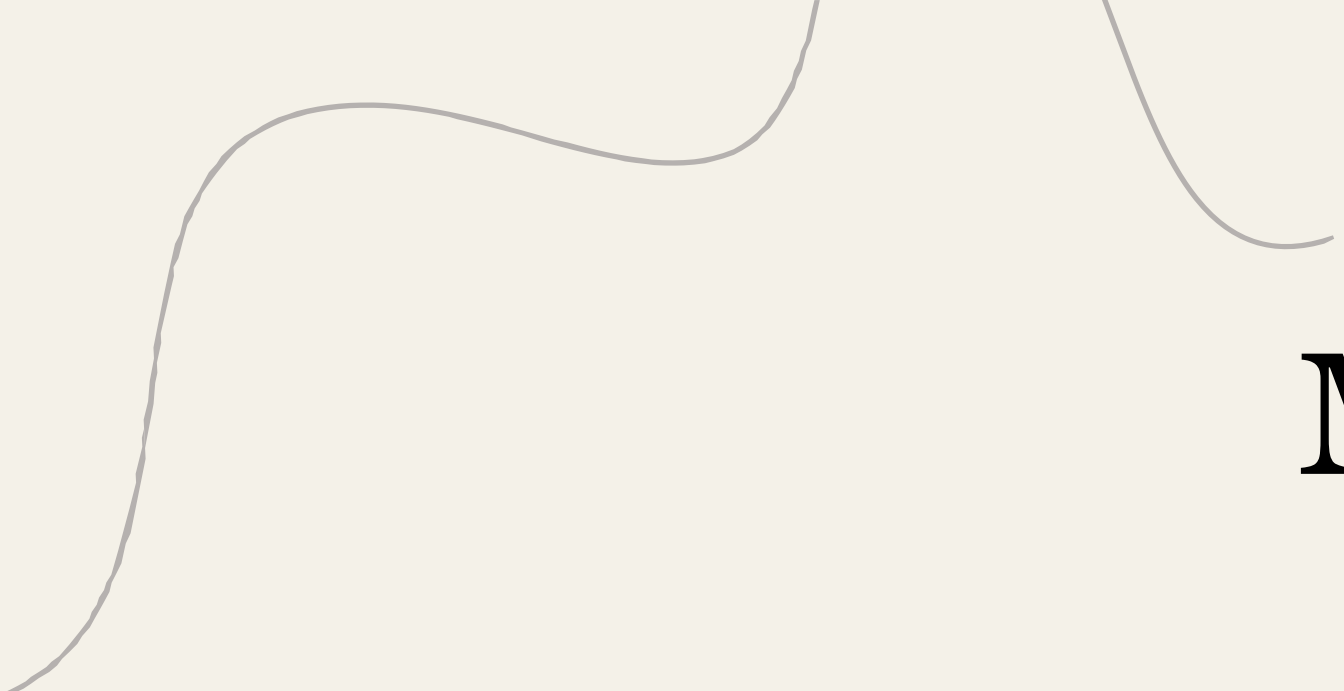
Literature Review

Authenticity

Berverland (2006), Morhart (2015)

“Authenticity is not just a marketing word. It can be analyzed through dimensions like continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism.”





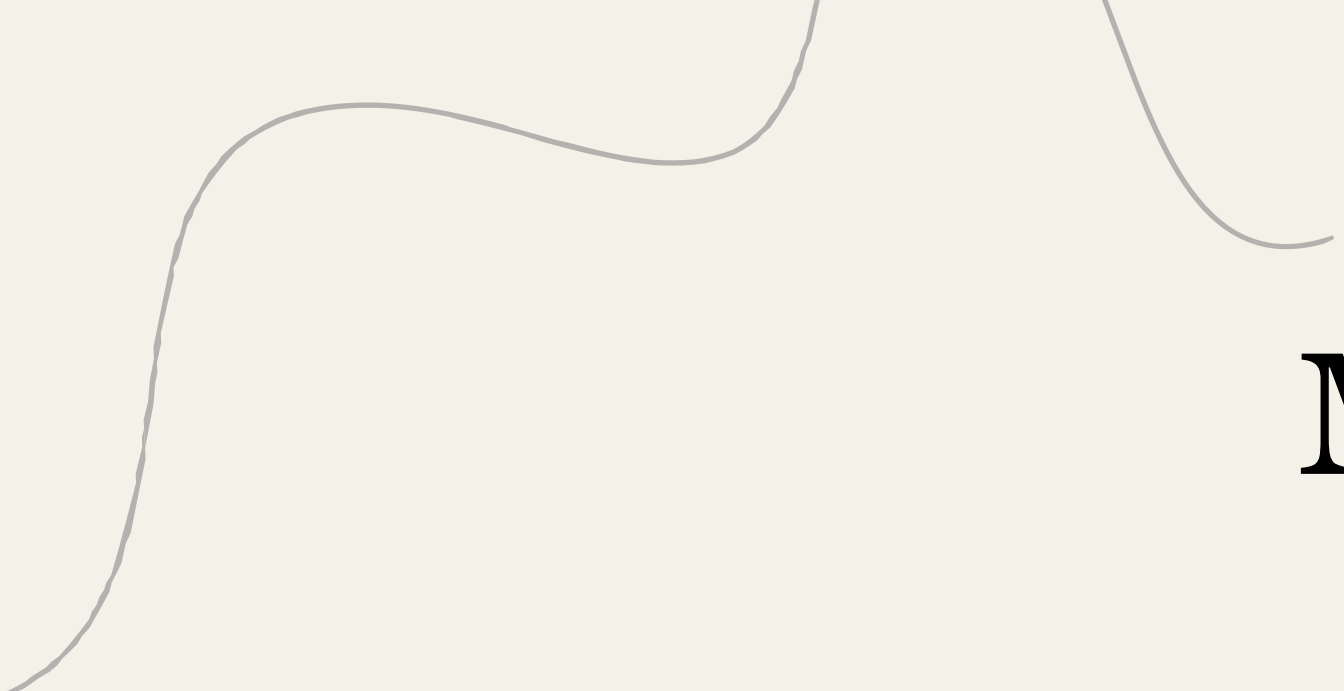
Main Findings

Finding 1- Brand identity is the foundation, and professionals see it as non-negotiable

- Professionals describe identity as stable and non-negotiable
- It becomes a decision filter: what can change vs what cannot
- In the UAE, customers expect global consistency

“Before adapting, luxury houses need a very clear definition of what their DNA is.”





Main Findings

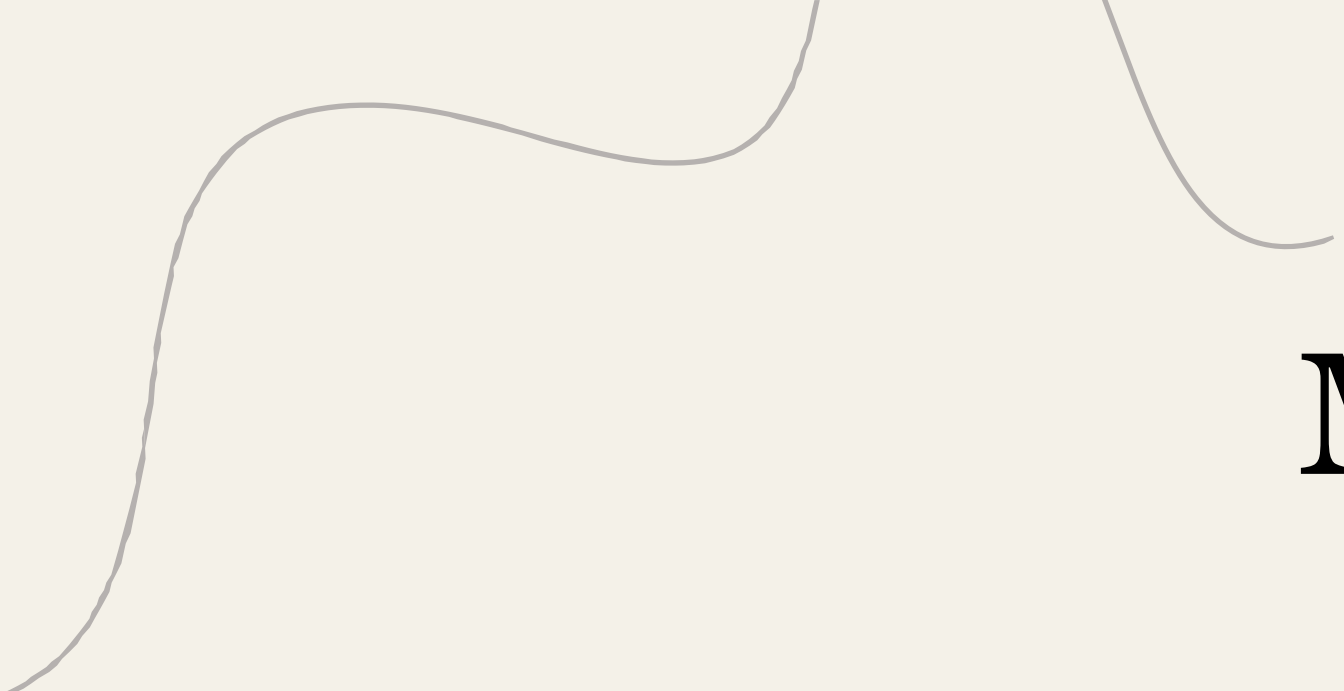
Finding 2 - In the UAE, adaptation is mainly “adjustment”, not transformation

Brands adapts mainly:

- Communication → more discreet visuals / tone
- Customer experience → privacy + service style
- Timing → Ramadan, specific rhythm / hours

But they keep the core identity unchanged





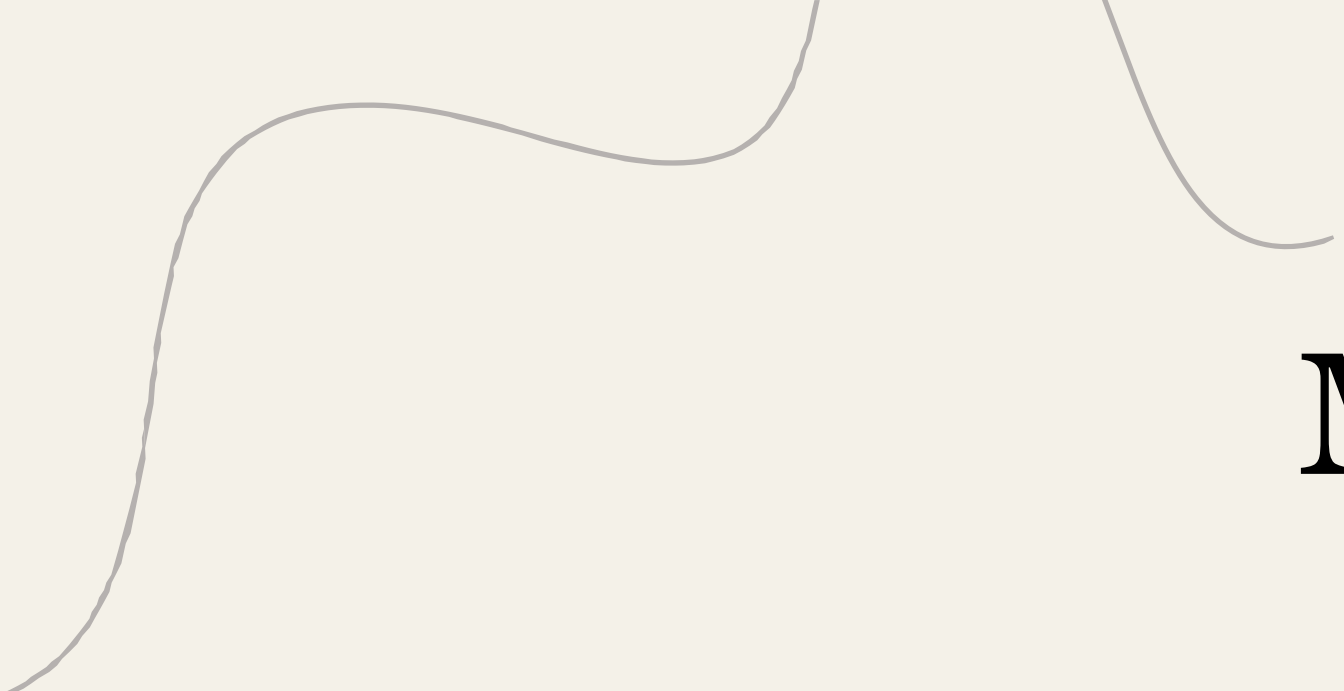
Main Findings

Finding 3 - Authenticity is perceived as alignment: what the brand says must match what it does

- Not a slogan: it must be demonstrated
- UAE customers notice inconsistency fast
- Over-adaptation looks artificial → loss of credibility
- Internal alignment matters: teams must understand the brand

But they keep the core identity unchanged



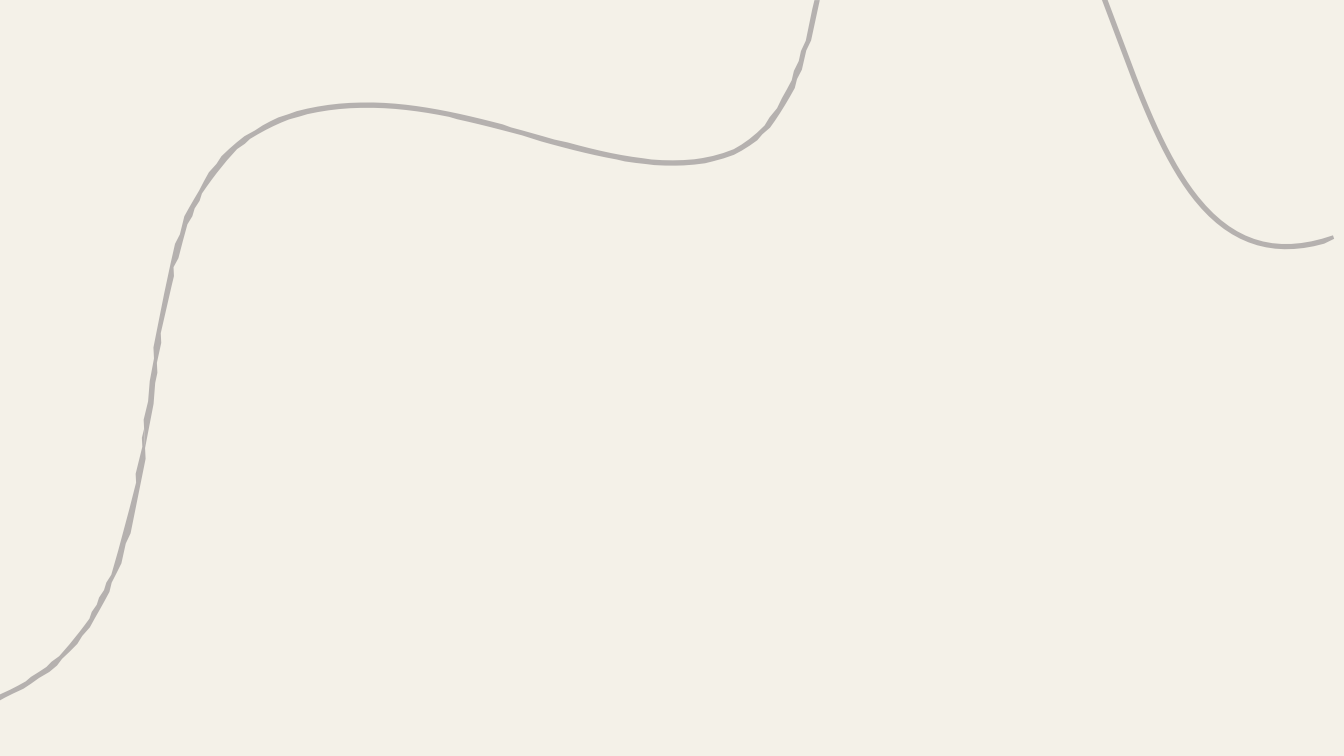


Main Findings

Finding 4 - What brands actually do: long-term strategy, strong guidelines, and investment in local teams

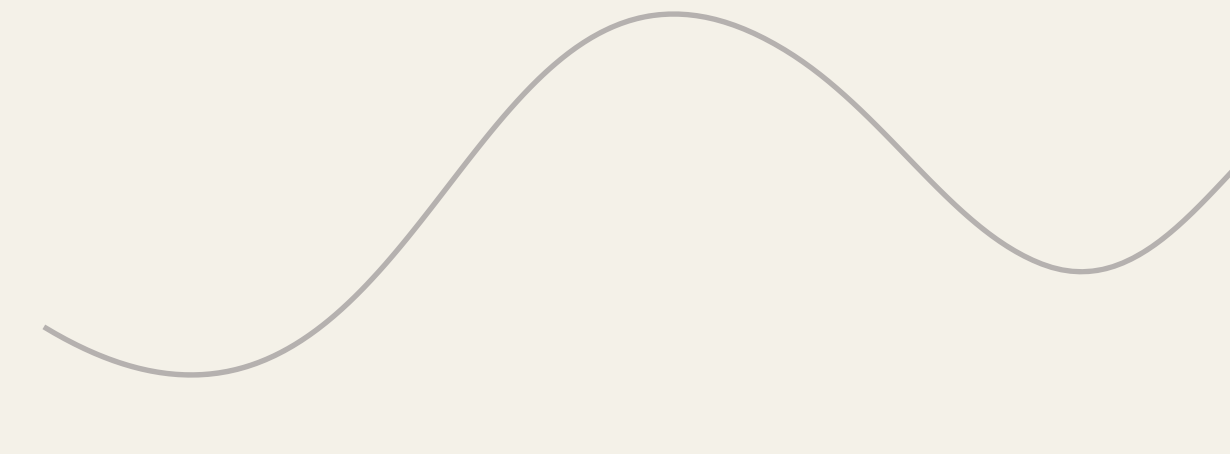
What successful brands do in practice

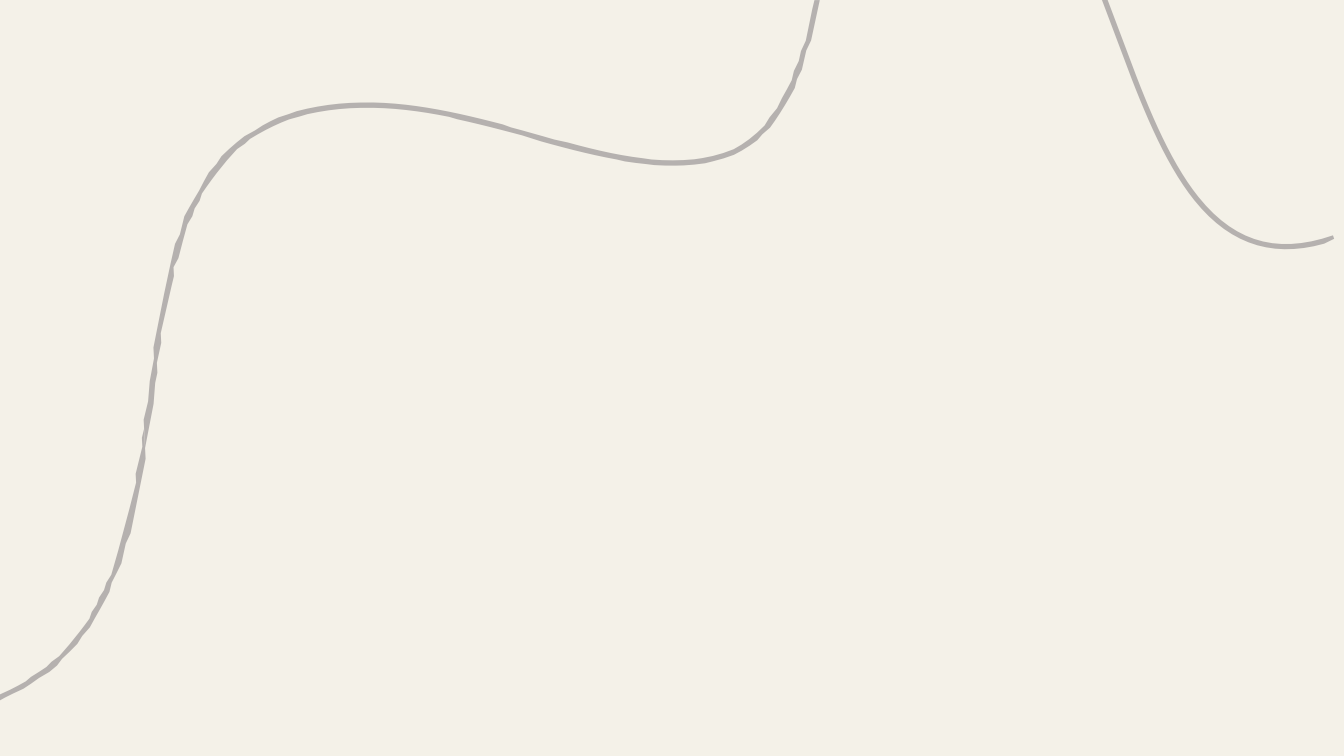
- Take a long-term approach
 - They keep a strong global structure
 - Invest in teams and training beyond product knowledge
- 



Discussion

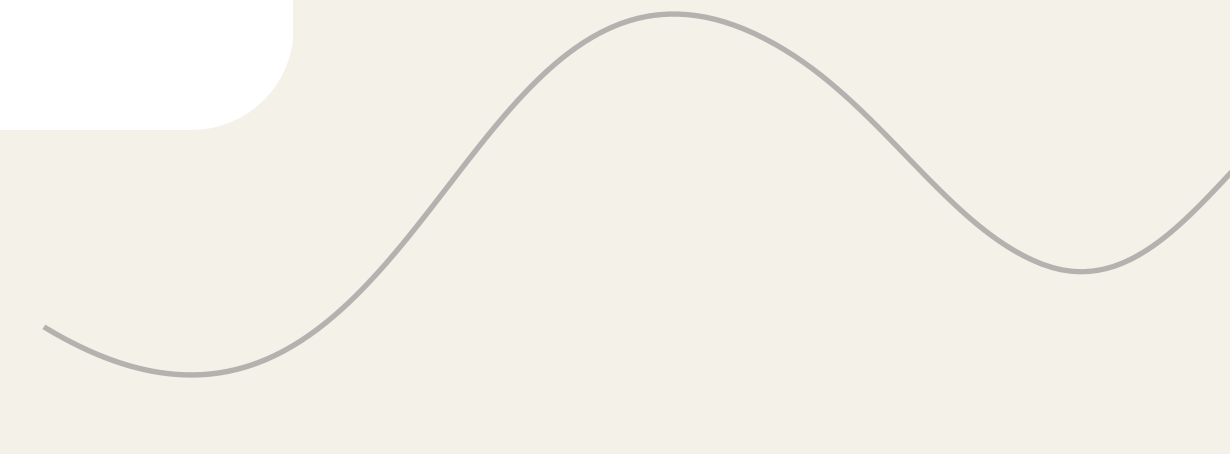
We see strong alignment with brand equity and luxury branding theory

- Consistency support brand value - Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993)
 - Luxury requires discipline - Kapferer (2015)
 - The key is not the “amount” of adaptation, but the accuracy of it.
- 



Contribution

This dissertation makes three main contributions

- 01** Addresses the research gap
 - 02** Contributes to cultural adaptation understanding
 - 03** Contributes to the authenticity debate
- 

Managerial recommendations

- 01** Clarify and formalize the brand DNA before entering the market
- 02** Treat adaptation as adjustment, not transformation
- 03** Invest in local teams and training
- 04** Adopt a long-term approach
- 05** Protect authenticity as a competitive advantage

Limitations

- 01** I used a qualitative approach, results are not generalizable
- 02** I focus on the UAE only
- 03** Interviews are mainly with professionals.



Professional Development

- 01** Strengthened my research skills
 - 02** Trained me to conduct interviews with professionals
 - 03** Helped me practice thematic analysis
- 

The background is a light beige color. It features several abstract line drawings. In the top left, there are a few wavy, curved lines. In the top right, there is a series of concentric, irregular circles. In the bottom left, there are more wavy lines, some forming a partial circular shape. In the bottom right, there is a single, long, wavy line.

Thank
You