

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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1. Title

Consumer Brand Engagement in the Era of Immersive Marketing: A Case Study of *Squid Game* Season 2 Strategies

2. Introduction

Following the tremendous success of the acclaimed Korean television series *Squid Game* in 2021, fans eagerly awaited the arrival of season 2, which premiered in December 2024 after a three-year hiatus. The highly anticipated return of this thrilling drama was accompanied by exceptionally creative and immersive marketing strategies designed to engage audiences and build excitement. According to Forbes, *Squid Game* Season 2 garnered an impressive 68 million views during its premiere week, at the same time ranking number 1 in 92 countries, significantly surpassing the viewership of its first season¹.

Undoubtedly, this remarkable success can be attributed to the production and popularity of first season. However, a closer examination reveals that the marketing strategies for Season 2 are significantly larger and more innovative, especially when compared to the relatively traditional approaches used for Season 1. In addition to leveraging social media interactions and collaborating with various companies to create themed products and promotions, Netflix organized a series of events and immersive experiences that brought the thrilling games of *Squid Game* to life in various big cities.

These events took place in major cities, allowing participants to immerse themselves in the world of *Squid Game* season 2, generating excitement and a sense of community around the show's return. The campaign featured themed activities such as a *Squid Game* Maze in the Netherlands, and the longest *Red Light, Green Light* challenge in Asia². These initiatives invited fans to participate in simulated games inspired by the series, enhancing viewer engagement as well as creating a unique blend of entertainment and promotion.

¹ “Squid Game Season 2 Scores Record-Breaking Debut” *Tudum by Netflix*, 1 January 2025 (<https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/top-10-dec-23-2024>)

² “Squid Game Season 2 Smashes Top 10 Records as Millions Worldwide Take Part in Fan Activations and Experiences” (<https://about.netflix.com/en/news/squid-game-season-2-top-10-worldwide-fan-activations-and-experiences-recap>)

The entertainment industry is increasingly adopting innovative experiential and immersive marketing campaigns to engage audiences more effectively. These strategies often blend real-world interactions with digital elements, creating memorable experiences that resonate with fans. Examples include real-world scavenger hunts for *The Dark Knight*, a selfie application for the *Barbie* movie, and an Airbnb experience for *Inside Out 2*.

However, the extensive scale of immersive viral marketing campaigns of *Squid Game* season 2 has truly captivated the world, partially as a Korean drama series using the native Korean language in the programme. In order to analyse the effectiveness of *Squid Game* season 2's immersive marketing campaigns on consumer brand engagement, this paper will research and emphasize how these approaches converted passive viewers into active participants and examine the effectiveness on building the brand loyalty.

3. Literature review

3.1. Consumer Brand Engagement

Consumer brand engagement (CBE) refers to consumers' cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement dedicate to their interactions with a brand (Brodie *et al.*, 2011). These help consumers to understand the brand's value, loyalty, sharing their messages, brand's activities and finally the purchasing behaviors.

Scholars found consumer brand engagement essential as competitive advantage for businesses (Nysveen and Pedersen, 2014). Studies also explored the dynamics of consumer behavior regarding viral video sharing, demonstrating that the possibility of a consumer sharing a viral video is influenced by both their attitude toward the video itself as well as the brand being advertised. This dual influence highlights the interconnectedness of content perception and brand perception in shaping consumer actions (Huang *et al.*, 2013).

Research defined brand interactivity as the ways consumers engage with a brand through interactive content and experiences. Methods can be interaction on social media, including user-generated comment such as hearts and likes. Starbucks was quoted as a good example of successfully use of this (Barger, Peltier and Schultz, 2016).

Research indicates that exalted levels of consumer brand engagement are linked to enhanced customer loyalty, increased advocacy, and favorable word-of-mouth communication. Consequently, CBE is a vital focus for marketers who aim to cultivate enduring relationships with consumers (Razmus, 2021). Authoritative scholars indicated that CBE becoming more important since consumers are more empowered and linked in the digitalized world nowadays (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018).

Studies also suggested the reciprocal relationship between with Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE) and Social Brand Engagement (SBE). SBE refers to the engagement that occurs through social interactions on brand-hosted platforms, the relationship indicates that consumers who are engaged with the brand are more likely to interact with other consumers. (Vivek *et al.*, 2014).

Research also shows a strong positive correlation between CBE and consumer satisfaction, indicating that engaged consumers tend to report higher satisfaction levels with products and services (Fernandes and Moreira, 2019). This finding highlights the critical role of CBE as a predictor of both consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

3.2. Immersive marketing

Immersion is defined in research as both a process and an outcome of the consumer experience, where individuals become fully engaged with their experiential surroundings (Carù and Cova, 2003). Furthermore, the immersive experience is facilitated by an environment designed by enterprises to engage consumers' senses. This environment can be physical such as a concert hall or virtual such as online platforms, where the elements are curated to enhance engagement and satisfaction (Caru and Cova, 2006).

Since a decade ago, marketers started to introduce the idea of immersive marketing. As a form of marketing communications, brands such as Cadbury's use of inflatable structures for its sponsorship during the London 2012 Olympics, this experience also offered 'brand immersion' to customers. More, different experiential activities for instance, games and challenges can achieve the same objectives. (Gbadamosi, 2013)

In the realm of digital marketing, using technology for brand immersion as immersive marketing has gained significant attention in recent years. However the earliest stage of businesses using virtual reality (VR) can be traced back to before the year 2000, tourism field such as theme parks used VR as a promotional tool, thus meet a greater number of tourists needs (Dewailly, 1999). Nowadays, A great number of businesses in different industries are using wider range of technologies to provide a 3-D environment and promote their products, allowing consumers personal experience. Examples including the automotive manufacturer: The Volkswagen AR Showroom, and the Swedish furniture retailer: The IKEA Place App.

Majority of the research of immersive marketing are typically about integration of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) into marketing strategies, which create interactive experiences for consumers. They provide valuable insights into the intricate interplay between immersion, interaction, and social dynamics within virtual reality experiences. By highlighting the subtle impacts of these elements on user satisfaction and loyalty intentions this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how brands can effectively utilize VR technology to enhance customer engagement and nurture emotional connections (Hudson *et al.*, 2019).

In addition, Augmented Reality (AR) technology is recognized for its capacity to enhance consumers' online shopping experiences by improving product visualization, increasing engagement, and augmenting the overall perception of the shopping experience (Huang and Liao, 2014). These characteristics can significantly influence how retailers and brands are perceived and impact consumer behaviour.

After years of development, the term "Extended Reality (XR)" was introduced as a broad umbrella concept that includes augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and mixed reality (MR), and all experiences that blend the physical and virtual worlds. Research indicates that immersive learning enhances retention by 75% and boosts confidence by 275% (Ivey, 2024).

In addition to AR, VR, XR, and AI, which demand significant financial and time investments in research and development, social media serves as a widely used channel for immersive marketing. Social media is not only more cost-effective in terms of both time and money, but it also supports three key paradigms: Network capability which enables effective communication and interaction with consumers; image transferability which enhances brand recognition by crafting a cohesive brand narrative that resonates with the audience; as well as

personal extensibility which encourages consumers to engage actively, advocate for the brand, and maintain loyalty (Okazaki and Charles R. Taylor, 2013).

Hence, a large number of studies are examining the use of social media, etc. as immersive marketing. Successful social media marketing campaigns are increasingly recognized for their effective use of storytelling, real-time engagement, and interactive content. These elements not only capture audience attention but also foster deeper connections with consumers (Kidd, 2011).

Immersion, in a broader sense, encompasses various contexts where individuals immerse themselves and become deeply engaged in environments and activities, ranging from leisure to work (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The flow was described as a state of deep immersion and concentration, frequently attained in immersive marketing. When consumers enter this flow state, they are more likely to form strong emotional connections with the brand.

Using Abercrombie & Fitch's iconic fragrance strategy as a case study, five dimensions have been proposed for brands for truly impactful experiential and immersive marketing campaigns: These dimensions are sensory experience which appealing to the five senses: smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch to create a multi-dimensional experience; emotional experience to foster personal connections with the brand to evoke strong feelings and loyalty; action experience Keeping consumers actively engaged while providing a narrative they can share, enhancing their involvement with the brand; Thinking Experience Stimulating intellectual engagement and entertainment cultivating a sense of community by linking the brand to a larger cause, event, or movement, thereby enhancing community engagement (Akshayaa Rani M, 2024).

Last but not least, one of the most famous and successful offline immersive engagement events is the Pokémon franchise's various events, which have captivated audiences worldwide. Since the first official real-life event held in Chicago on 22 July 2017, Pokémon Go, shifted from an augmented reality mobile game played alone to a real-life experience with thousands players. Moreover, the games are still on³! These events allow participants to actively become part of the Pokémon universe, enhancing their connection to the brand. These strategies highlight the importance of immersive experiences in modern marketing and demonstrate how brands can create lasting impressions through well-executed offline events.

³ Pokémon GO events website (<https://pokemongolive.com/news/?hl=en>)

3.3. Relationship between immersive marketing and consumer Brand Engagement

While several studies suggest that integrating augmented reality (AR) into marketing strategies, which is one type of immersive marketing technology, may not always be practical for boosting consumer brand engagement due to different barriers or user familiarity (Jayaswal and Parida, 2023). Kumar (2022) also highlight that it is able to create engaging experiences however it does not directly lead to consumers' further engagement (Kumar, 2022). On the other hand, other research, including studies by the same scholar, supports the notion that AR can indeed foster shopping experiences and brand engagement (Kumar *et al.*, 2024).

Similarly, the combination of AR, VR, XR, and AI with conventional marketing methods is creating a new paradigm for consumer interaction. Immersive technologies hold considerable promise for enriching storytelling and enhancing customer engagement but also present challenges that must be thoughtfully addressed. As brands continue to explore these innovative approaches, understanding the dynamics of consumer behaviour in response to immersive experiences will be essential for developing effective marketing strategies (Kamaruddin *et al.*, 2023).

Forbes Councils Member Evgeny Popov emphasized the critical role of augmented reality (AR) and artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern marketing strategies. These strategies enable marketers to create engaging content and enhance stronger brand attachment (Popov, 2024).

Again, besides AR, VR and XR, there are a lot more immersive marketing ways which are also able to enhance consumers engagement and experiences also contribute to consumer brand engagement. Social media is one of them. While in the context of social media, "engagement" typically refers to a consumer "taking some action beyond merely viewing or reading." (Delahaye Paine, 2011).

Research supports the idea that businesses can boost consumer brand engagement by enhancing consumer brand interactions on social media platforms. This underscores the vital importance of social media in fostering CBE through interactive and engaging content (De Vries and Carlson, 2014; Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2015).

Additionally the interactive and collaborative elements of social media significantly impact brand engagement was highlighted. Consumer engagement can be analysed through various social media metrics, which provide valuable insights into how audiences interact with content, reflecting the interactive nature of modern consumer-brand relationships (Barger and Labrecque, 2013).

Consumers typically find endorsements from influencers as more credible compared to traditional advertisements. This perception of trust increases when influencers present immersive experiences that effectively showcase product features in engaging and interactive ways (Leung *et al.*, 2022). This concept is increasingly relevant in today's competitive market, where brands seek to differentiate themselves and foster loyalty among consumers.

While establishing emotional ties through storytelling and personalized experiences can significantly improve consumer engagement. Brands that effectively invoke emotions tend to experience increased loyalty and advocacy from their customers (Schouten, McAlexander and Koenig, 2007).

3.4. Immersive marketing strategies in entertainment industry

A study from India, home to the renowned Bollywood industry, highlights the common marketing techniques used for movies, including trailers, film posters, standees, various advertising forms, product placement, and co-branding or co-advertising merchandising. Many films are increasingly opting for more expensive strategies, such as digital marketing on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter to engage audiences. Additionally, more producers and actors are initiating challenges on social media to further connect with fans (Kumthakar, Bagmar and Darda, 2019).

Marketers are increasingly exploring immersive marketing strategies for movies and television series to boost audience engagement beyond traditional methods like sharing trailers, 2D advertising, and actor meet-and-greet events. These strategies aim to create deeper engagement and connections with audiences and enhance their overall experience.

Johnny Davis, managing director of Allied Global Marketing discussed about the evolving landscape of brand experiences within the entertainment sector, emphasizing the importance

of meaningful engagement in an increasingly digital world. including Shift from passive to active engagement, immersive brand experience enable deeper emotional connections with audiences, and more importantly their memorability (Davis, 2023).

In addition, marketers highlighted that the success of immersive marketing, especially can be found with the horror movie genre, stems from its capacity to immerse the audience in a real-life adaptation of the film. This approach blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality, resulting in a more engaging and impactful experience (Letorney, 2024).

Gamification is now everywhere, not surprisingly it is also been used by promotion of the entertainment industry. Other than launching common online lucky draw or voting game, etc. More exciting and immersive one was a decision making game allowing audience to select next steps of the story of the Netflix movie *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* (2018) which shared the same style of role-playing video games (RPGs). Analysis also claimed the use gamification, companies could be seven times more profitable⁴.

Theme parks such as Disneyland and Universal Studio have successfully integrated beloved characters from films and cartoons into their attractions to enhance visitor engagement and create immersive experiences. For instance, we can always imagine the excitement of being chased by a giant rolling stone like Indiana Jones. More examples include characters like Mickey Mouse, Snow White, and Spider-Man, who are featured in various rides, enabling guests to step into a fantasy world and interact with these iconic figures (Abd Rahman, Dawam and Chan, 2019). Followed by theme parks of *Harry Potter* and *Hunger Games*, fans have greatly enjoyed the immersive experiences offered. While theme parks serve as an effective offline strategy to maintain consumer brand engagement and loyalty, they may not be the ideal tool for promoting movies or television series prior to their release to boost box office sales.

The film *Barbie* (2013) exemplified the use of numerous innovative strategies, blending traditional and modern marketing techniques. In addition to a series of movie posters, a distinctive billboard featured only the iconic pink colour and the date, July 21. To make a splash, an AI application called the Barbie Selfie Generator was launched, allowing audiences to insert

⁴ Gamification in the World of Entertainment, @Goama, 1st March, 2022 (<https://goama.com/gamification-in-the-world-of-entertainment>)

themselves into a Barbie movie poster or pose next to Barbie in her car. Furthermore, more immersive marketing strategies included an Airbnb featuring a Barbie Dreamhouse and over a hundred brand partnerships, ranging from food to household products. Recommendation for future movie marketing was thinking outside the box (‘The Year of Barbie: A Marketing Case Study’, 2024).

Without a doubt, some remarkable and innovative immersive marketing strategies were utilized to promote the film *Barbie*. However, a social media case studies website characterized Netflix's marketing campaign for *Squid Game* Season 2 as "omnipresent" (Thakur, 2024). By effectively leveraging signature games and unforgettable characters from the episodes, Netflix not only promoted *Squid Game* Season 2 but also transformed it into a global celebration by combining immersive experiences, cultural integrations, and brand collaborations.

4. Case study: Marketing strategies of *Squid Game* Season 2

After the release of a poster and teaser for *Squid Game* Season 2 during Netflix Event Week in September 2024, various immersive marketing campaigns were launched globally, in addition to the wild spreading social media promotion. Intergraded ‘online’ and ‘offline’, *Squid Game* Season 2’s marketing immersion beyond technology and go into audience’s life and emotion. For instance the game settings created for the *Squid Game* environment, along with many others. Below is a list of its fun and immersive marketing campaigns found on websites of Nexflix⁵:

	Date: 30 October 2024 Campaign: <i>Squid Game</i>-themed pavilion and exclusive store at Lucca Comics & Games 2024 in Italy. Activities: Different games all around the city of Lucca, for instance “Red Light, Green Light” game challenge with the iconic Young-hee doll.
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⁵ Same as footnote 2



Date: 1 December 2024

Campaign: “Red Light, Green Light” game in Paris, France

Activities: 909 selected participants played the iconic game by avoiding the giant Young-hee doll’s gaze on the Champs-Élysées. It drew 20,000 on-site and 4.3 million YouTube viewers watching.



Date: 6-8 December 2024

Campaign: *Squid Game* Maze in The Netherlands.

Activities: navigated a treacherous maze filled with unexpected corridors, rooms, and game features designed to test their skills. Who among them can prove themselves as a worthy Pink Guard, and what rank can they achieve.



Date: 9 December 2024

Campaign: World premiere in Seoul, South Korea

Activities: 1,000 fans attended interactive games held in the *Squid Game* environment built at Dongdaemun Design Plaza. It drew 303,000 YouTube viewers watching in total.



Date: 12 December 2024

Campaign: *Squid Game*: The Experience in Sydney, Australia

(Also in New York, Madrid and Seoul in December 2024 and January 2025)

Activities: Players playing “Red Light, Green Light” game with the giant Young-Hee doll watching over, at Luna Park Sydney and Bondi Icebergs pool on 19 December.

	Date: 12 December 2024 Campaign: a 4.56K run in Los Angeles, United States Activities: 1,700 participants wearing the iconic green tracksuits, ran at evening, just hours prior to the US premiere in Los Angeles. The run started at the rainbow track at Los Angeles City College, and along iconic LA roads.
	Date: 14 December 2024 Campaign: “Red Light, Green Light” game and a 6K race in São Paulo, Brazil Activities: 2,000 fans avoiding giant Young-hee's watchful gaze at Parque Villa Lobos, those who moved were eliminated and barred from participating in the 6K race. Besides ‘standing by’ throughout the race, they also played a tug-of-war and a challenging maze with the fans.
	Date: 14-15 December 2024 Campaign: <i>Squid Game</i> Arena in Warsaw, Poland Activities: Fans were eager to test their reflexes and determination across four iconic challenges: Red Light Green Light, Dalgona Candies, Tug of War, and Marbles (Kanche). 200 winners from nearly 1,400 participants received prizes such as Puma tracksuits, posters.
	Date: 18 December 2024 Campaign: <i>Squid Game</i>: The Rave in London, United Kingdom Activities: 5,000 fans enjoyed a live music event with Korean artists and a Korean night market.

	Date: 22 December 2024 Campaign: “Red Light, Green Light” game in Jakarta, Indonesia Activities: More than 900 fans and legendary Indonesian athletes joined the longest Red Light, Green Light challenge in Asia, under the watch of 8-meter tall Young-hee doll and over 270 pink guards. It drew 3,000 on-site spectators and over 2 million viewers watching on YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.
	Date: On-going Campaign: <i>Squid Game</i>: The Challenge in different cities Activities: It is currently available in New York, Madrid, Sydney and Seoul. <i>Squid Game</i>: The Challenge include a virtual game zone, retail zone and night market⁶.

Table 1. A summary of Squid Game Season 2's global marketing immersion

Other than the big offline events, immersive marketing for *Squid Game* Season 2 was prevalent across social media, but one particularly unique instance was a video “Squid Game Pink Guards Spotted At A Local Laundromat” / “Pink Guards Laundromat” shared on Netflix's YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. In this video, a group of pink guards unexpectedly entered a laundry shop to wash the iconic green tracksuits, even cleaning the floor with red-coloured water that resembled blood. This surprising scenario startled the customers inside, whose expressions revealed their confusion about what was happening.

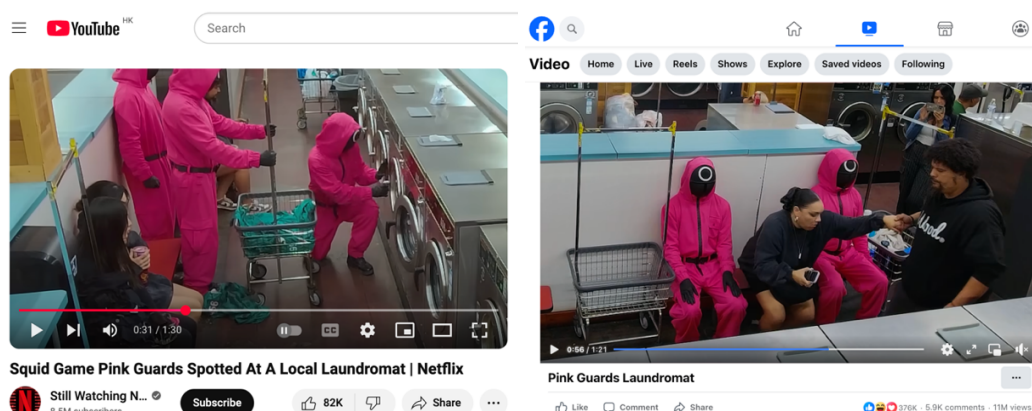


Image 1 and 2. “Squid Game Pink Guards Spotted At A Local Laundromat” / “Pink Guards Laundromat” video (Source: YouTube, Facebook of Netflix)

⁶ *Squid Game*: The Challenge, (<https://www.netflix.com/tudum/squid-game-the-challenge>)

This immersive marketing stunt was particularly special as it integrated the series' content and theme into an unexpected surprise, combining elements of both horror and humour. This approach effectively integrated the themes and content of the series into the marketing strategy, and many of the customers in the video appeared genuinely frightened, resulting in a memorable event that generated significant buzz. The video garnered millions of views, received hundreds of thousands of reactions (likes, loves, and laughs), and was shared at least ten thousand times.

	Views	Likes/loves/laughs	Comments / Forwards
YouTube	6.5 million	82 thousands	1.9 thousands
Facebook	11 million	376 thousands	5.7 thousands
Instagram	/	132 thousands	10.6 thousands

Table 2. A summary of impressions of Netflix' "Pink Guards Laundromat" video

Sprout Social, a social media analytics company, reported that the major social media engagement for Squid Game Season 2 from November 20 to December 20, 2024, reached 3.1 million likes, comments, and shares, resulting in 5.19 billion potential impressions across platforms like X, YouTube, Reddit, and Tumblr. Additionally, Besides showing trailers and advertising messages on social media platforms as before, this time the marketing team of *Squid Game* Season 2 also joined hands with language education platform DuoLingo, their online promotion achieved significant success⁷, as detailed below:

Platform	Views	Engagement rate	Industry benchmark
Instagram	10.1 million	3.88%	0.19%
TikTok	13.6 million	7.25%	0.1%

Table 2. Views and engagement rate of partnered social media campaign of Squid Game Season 2 and DuoLingo.

Duo the Owl is the official mascot of Duolingo, and in the promotional video, it donned the iconic pink hooded jumpsuits, acting the part of a Squid Game Pink Guard. This campaign, titled "Learn Korean or Else,⁸" was launched by Duolingo in partnership with *Squid Game* 2. The initiative aimed to promote learning Korean as well as its culture. It featured creative

⁷ "How Social Media Helped Drive Buzz For Netflix's 'Squid Game' Season 2" Tim Lammers, Forbes, 27th December 2024. (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/timlammers/2024/12/27/how-social-media-helped-drive-buzz-for-netflixs-squid-game-season-2>)

⁸ "Duolingo and Netflix Partner Launch 'Learn Korean or Else' Campaign Ahead of Squid Game Season 2", official website of Duolingo (<https://investors.duolingo.com/news-releases/news-release-details/duolingo-and-netflix-partner-launch-learn-korean-or-else>)

immersive marketing by using Korean lyrics for language learning, inspired by the drama's theme of "Korean or Get Eaten." Additionally, they introduced a TikTok Interactive Game Filter that allows Korean learners to test their skills through voice-activated challenges.



Image 3 and 4. “Korean or Get Eaten - Duolingo x Squid Game”
 (source: youtube- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bN2rUoX7540>)



Image 5. “Duolingo Squid Game Challenge”
 (source: Duolingo website)

This, of course, isn't the only brand partnership for *Squid Game 2*, nor is it the sole method of connecting with the audience's everyday life. A marketing blogger appreciated marketing strategy of *Squid Game* Season 2 which successfully created impacts in areas of global viewership, social media engagement, partner brand visibility as well as cultural impact. It is described as “The Marketing Genius” and the magic was “Turning Fans into Players”.⁹ First of all, there was a full-scale cultural event before the debut of showing the new television series. Furthermore, *Layla Revis*, Sprout Social VP of Social, Content and Brand Marketing also stated that *Squid Game 2* demonstrates how brands can enhance their influence through strategic partnerships that align with the story's essence. This creative and successful collaboration has

⁹ “Turning Fans into Players: The Marketing Genius of ‘Squid Game 2’” *The Better Blog*, 13 January 2025 (<https://mediashower.com/blog/squid-game-2>)

made waves globally, featuring brands like McDonald's in Australia, Just Eat in the U.S., and Tottenham Spurs in the U.K. ¹⁰

The exclusive *Squid Game* Meal was the world first collaboration of *Squid Game* season 2, which introduced by McDonald's Australia and Netflix. Consumers buying this especial *Squid Game* Meal not only can enjoy McDonald's Big Mac or Chicken McNuggets, but also turn to one of the gamers in the *Squid Game* by playing the iconic Dalgona Candy Challenge in the series. A dalgona candies or ppopgi is originating in South Korea, a traditional Korea candy made from melted sugar and baking soda, It is shaped using a cookie cutter that imprints designs like stars or hearts on its flat surface. Popular since the 1960s, it continues to be enjoyed as a nostalgic treat.¹¹. There are many different possible shapes stamped however there were only 4 different shapes found in the *Squid Game*, and therefore there were these 4 shapes offered in the *Squid Game* Meal. Buyers could get 1 of the 4 dalgona candy, also could join the McDonald's "Dare to Play" campaign by using the software to time and complete, winner would receive a grand prize of \$100,000.



Image 6 and 7. The Netflix *Squid Game* meal and “Dare to Play” game at McDonald's in Australia (Source: official website and Instagram of McDonald's Australia)

Through the marketing campaigns, we observed that consumers of the *Squid Game* Meal were engaging with both Korean culture and the TV series simultaneously. In terms of food and culture, other campaigns for *Squid Game* Season 2 also embrace the global fascination with Korean dining culture in fun ways. One notable initiative was a collaboration with Knorr to launch a limited edition series of spicy Korean ramen, highlighting the globally recognized flavours of Korean cuisine. Additionally, endorsed by another prominent Korean brand, the

¹⁰ “Netflix’s ‘Squid Game 2’ Marketing Strategy Pushed It to Record-Breaking 68M Views”. Roberto Orosa, *DesignRush*, 2 January 2025. (www.designrush.com/news/netflix-squid-game-2-breaks-record-with-68-million-views)

¹¹ Wikipedia: Dalgona Candy (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalgona>)

advertising features players in iconic tracksuits, inviting consumers to take on the challenge as well. Another inventive campaign with the prominent Korean food brand Bibigo that encouraged fan engagement by challenging fans to solve puzzles that involve uncovering the missing digits of a phone number shown on a billboards in various cities across the United States. This initiative invited audiences to participate in a real-world game that mirrored the intrigue of the popular Korean brand, *Squid Game*.

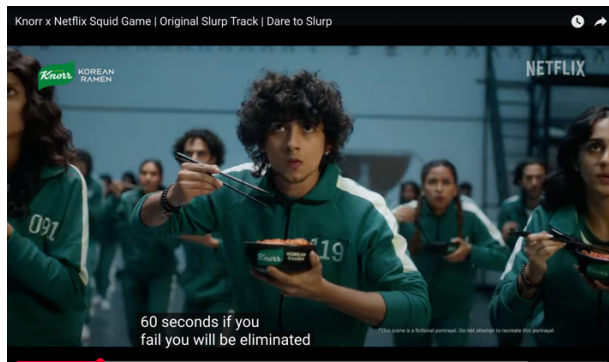


Image 8. Knorr x Netflix Squid Game | Original Slurp Track | Dare to Slurp
(Source: YouTube – Knorr India, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFIZxR5ImfI)



Image 9. Bibigo x Squid Game promotion
(Source: Instagram of bibigo USA - <https://www.instagram.com/bibigoUSA/#>)

Just Eat is a food delivery business in United Kingdom. It worked with Netflix and launched the engaging “EliminATE” game via their phone application on 26th December 2024, the same day *Squid Game* season 2 lands on Netflix. After receiving the delivery of food they have ordered, customers could open their phone application and join the ‘Red Light, Green Light’ game while enjoying their meals. Players had to avoid being caught by the infamous Young-hee, whose terrifying gaze eliminated many gamers in the series. While those caught could

continue eating, they would be eliminated from the game. However, if players successfully avoided detection, they had a chance to win a €10,000 cash prize. *Andrew Cocker*, Marketing Director for Just Eat UK & Ireland, expressed enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, “We’re so excited to be partnering with Netflix for what is a huge moment in cultural entertainment for our customers. With the Eliminate game, fans can take their passion for *Squid Game* to another level through ordering via Just Eat”¹².

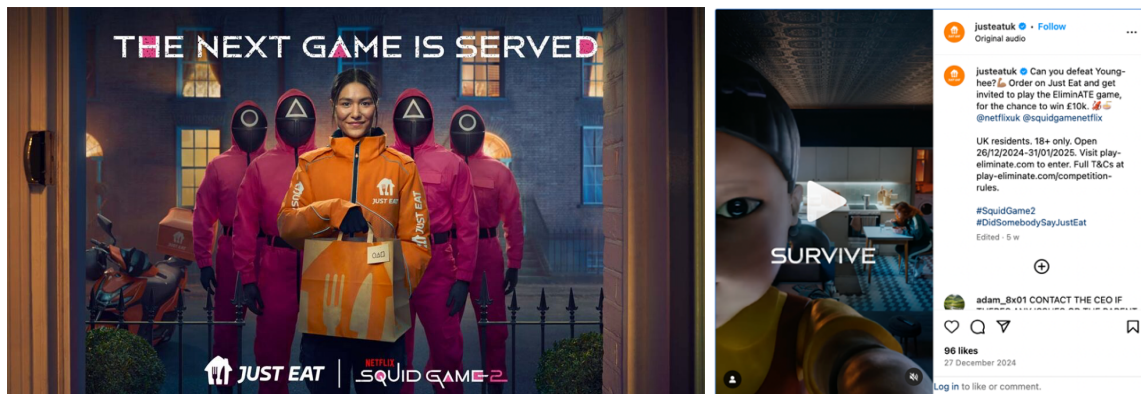


Image 10 and 11. “Play Eliminate on Just Eat | Just Eat x Netflix Squid Game 2”
(Source: official website and Instagram of Just Eat)

Football and *Squid Game* fans experienced a practically exciting atmosphere during Tottenham Hotspur’s Premier League matches against Liverpool and Wolverhampton Wanderers on 22 December and 29 December 2024 respectively, thanks to the club's partnership with Netflix. Fans spotted the iconic Squid Game guards wandering the stadium in their distinctive pink uniforms, providing chances of taking photos together. Additionally, a giant Young-hee doll, which was the icon of the "Red Light, Green Light" game in *Squid Game*, was “watching” outside the stadium before the matches¹³.

¹² “Squid Game teams up with Just Eat for new one-of-a-kind game with €10,000 grand prize” Olivia Fahy, *Geekireland*. 25 December 2024

(<https://geekireland.com/squid-game-just-eat-eliminate-game-e10000-prize>)

¹³ “Club Announcement – Club partners with Netflix ahead of Squid Game season 2” Official website of Tottenham Hotspur. (<https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/news/2024/december/tottenham-hotspur-partners-with-netflix-ahead-of-squid-game-season-2>)



Image 12. Club partners with Netflix ahead of Squid Game season 2 (Source: official website of Tottenham Hotspur)

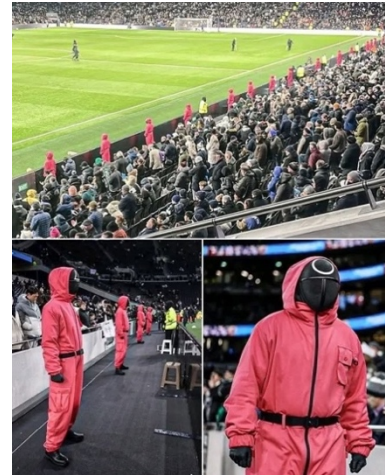
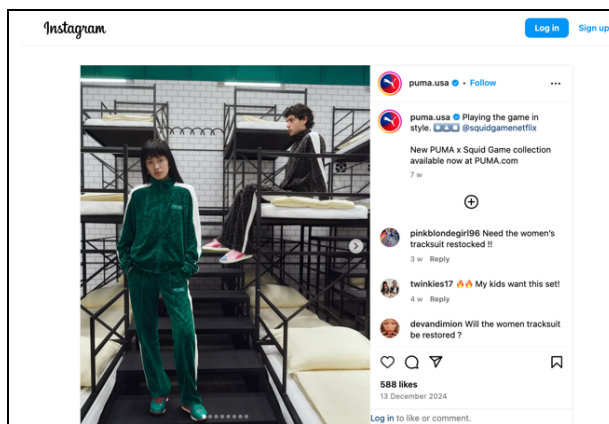


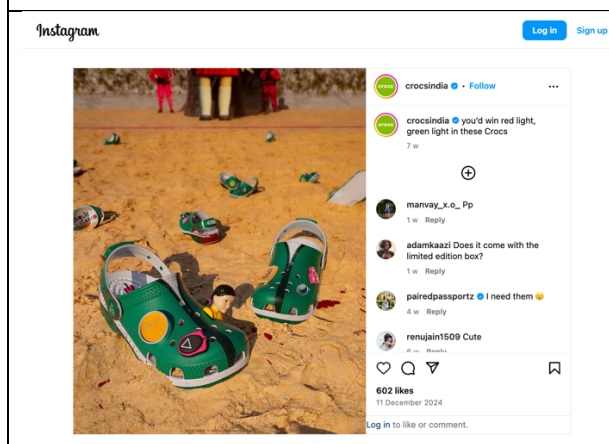
Image 13. Squid Game guards roaming the stadium (Source: Facebook of Daily Movies)

Last but not least, the crossover between international casual clothing brands and consumers' daily lives has become increasingly prominent, even creating a cultural phenomenon. By wearing these brands, consumers not only show their trendy style but also engage with a community, feeling like players in the game. Below are some examples:



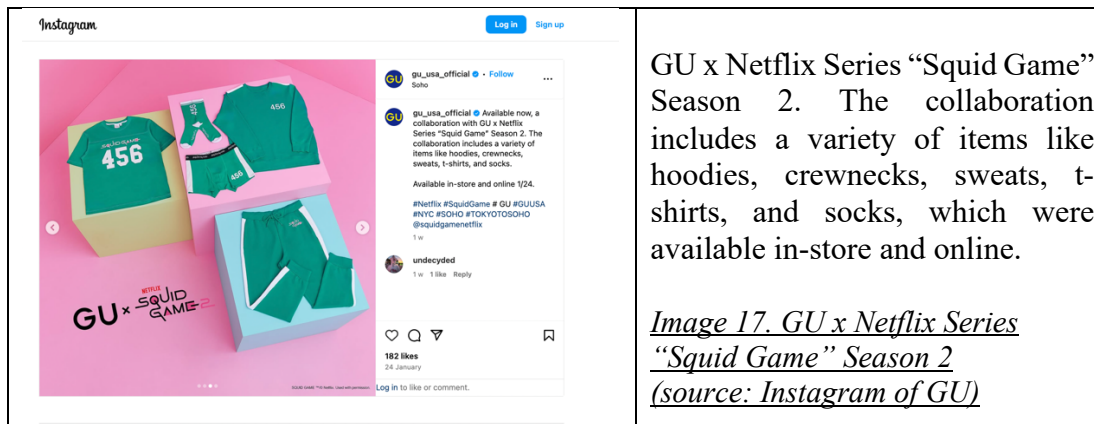
New PUMA x Squid Game collection available at PUMA.com, the collaboration includes jackets, hoodies, sneakers, backpacks and caps.

Image 14. New PUMA x Squid Game collection (source: Instagram of Puma)



Crocs Classic Clog x Squid Game available in-store, online and partnered retail shops.

Image 15. Crocs Classic Clog x Squid Game (Source: Instagram of Crocs)



GU x Netflix Series “Squid Game” Season 2. The collaboration includes a variety of items like hoodies, crewnecks, sweats, t-shirts, and socks, which were available in-store and online.

Image 17. GU x Netflix Series “Squid Game” Season 2 (source: Instagram of GU)

5. Research aim(s) and objectives

This research paper aims to investigate consumer brand engagement strategies utilized in the immersive marketing campaigns for *Squid Game* Season 2. While *Squid Game* is a Netflix series, it has transcended traditional entertainment boundaries, gaining global attention beyond Hollywood. Its campaigns extend beyond Korea, making a mark in diverse regions worldwide and integrating into everyday life. Even those who do not engage directly with the series may find themselves enjoying a meal at McDonald's or wearing Puma or Crocs.

By analysing the immersive experiences, social media interactions, and strategic partnerships that characterized the campaign, the study seeks to understand how these elements contributed to heightened consumer engagement and brand loyalty. The ultimate goal is to provide recommendations for future marketing initiatives within the entertainment industry. Research questions:

1. How effective was immersive marketing in strengthening audience connection to the story and themes of *Squid Game* Season 2 during the promotional campaigns?
2. In what ways did social media interactions enhance audience participation and engagement during the promotional activities for *Squid Game* Season 2?
3. How do the immersive marketing strategies used in the *Squid Game* Season 2 campaigns impact consumer brand engagement and loyalty?
4. What role did partnerships with brands play in expanding the reach and effectiveness of the *Squid Game* marketing campaign?
5. What impact did influencer partnerships have on the visibility and engagement levels of the *Squid Game* marketing initiatives?

6. Based on the insights from the *Squid Game* Season 2 marketing strategies, what recommendations can be made for future marketing initiatives in the entertainment industry to enhance consumer engagement?

These research questions aim to explore various dimensions of consumer engagement strategies employed during the immersive marketing campaigns for *Squid Game* Season 2, offering a comprehensive framework for analysis.

6. Proposed methodology

This study will utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative insights obtained from consumer interviews. The objective is to assess the effectiveness of full-scale recreations of iconic games, digital engagement campaigns, and brand partnerships ultimately providing valuable insights for marketers aiming to enhance brand engagement through innovative experiential strategies.

While the research primarily utilizes secondary data and existing literature, it acknowledges that the factors influencing the quality of marketing strategies may not be exhaustive. To address this limitation, the methodology will combine actual data with comparative analyses of various film marketing strategies, aiming for more accurate market analysis results. Future research should focus on aspects such as timing, genre, and promotional content. For instance, an effective strategy must consider optimal release times and tailor promotional content to align with the film's themes, ensuring targeted outreach to different audience segments.

For quantitative research, one suggestion is to analyze social media metrics, including likes, shares, and comments related to the *Squid Game* marketing campaigns. This data can quantify audience interaction and engagement with specific posts or partnerships. Additionally, designing a structured survey to measure consumer engagement levels before and after participating in marketing campaigns can be beneficial. Questions could assess brand awareness, emotional connection, and the likelihood of purchasing related products. Another avenue is to measure attendance and participation rates in immersive experiences like "Squid Game: The Experience," which can provide insights into how effective these events are at attracting consumers.

Sales data analysis is also important. By comparing audience ratings of *Squid Game* Season 2 to Season 1 after implementing immersive marketing strategies, you can gauge the impact of these initiatives. Collecting sales data from brands involved in partnerships, such as McDonald's, Puma and Crocs, before and after the launch of the *Squid Game* 2 marketing initiatives can reveal significant changes in consumer purchasing behaviour linked to the campaign. Lastly, using customer loyalty indices or Net Promoter Score (NPS) surveys can quantify changes in brand loyalty among consumers who engaged with the *Squid Game* season 2 campaigns compared to those who did not.

For qualitative research, performing in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in the marketing campaigns, including marketers from Netflix and brand partners, can yield valuable insights. These interviews can gather information on strategic decisions, challenges faced, and perceived effectiveness of various strategies. Additionally, conducting focus group discussions with participants who engaged with the *Squid Game* season 2 marketing campaigns will help explore their perceptions, emotional responses, and how these experiences influenced their connection to the brand.

Content analysis of user-generated content related to *Squid Game* season 2 on social media platforms can be another qualitative method. This analysis can identify themes, sentiments, and narratives that emerge from fans' interactions with the brand during the campaign. Furthermore, the reception and engagement levels of *Squid Game* Season 2 initiatives were profoundly shaped by cultural nuances. Elements such as traditional games, music, and language showcased Korean culture, both within the series and in the associated marketing campaigns. This analysis will also focus on participants' interactions with and understanding of Korean culture.

In conclusion, combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches will provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer brand engagement strategies employed during the immersive marketing for *Squid Game* season 2. Quantitative methods will offer measurable data on engagement levels and sales impacts, while qualitative methods will provide deeper insights into consumer perceptions and experiences. This mixed-methods approach will enrich your analysis and recommendations for future marketing initiatives in the entertainment industry.

7. Expected outcomes and contributions

One of the primary expected outcomes of this research is an enhanced understanding of immersive marketing. By providing empirical evidence and theoretical insights, the study aims to showcase the effectiveness of immersive marketing strategies in the entertainment industry. It will offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how immersive experiences can significantly enhance consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and emotional connections.

Additionally, the research will yield strategic recommendations for the entertainment industry. Practical guidance will be offered to entertainment companies and brands on how to effectively leverage immersive marketing for future campaigns. Best practices for creating engaging, interactive, and memorable brand experiences will be suggested, based on the success factors identified in the *Squid Game* season 2 campaigns.

Theoretical contributions are also a key focus of this study. It aims to enrich the existing literature on consumer behaviour, brand engagement, and immersive marketing by demonstrating how entertainment franchises can foster significant consumer brand engagement through strategic campaign design. Furthermore, the research will provide new perspectives on how global content can be successfully integrated into various aspects of consumer life through innovative marketing strategies.

Finally, the study will delve into cultural impact insights, offering valuable perspectives on how global content and marketing strategies can be tailored to resonate with different cultural contexts. It will emphasize the importance of cultural sensitivity and localization in crafting successful global marketing campaigns.

By achieving these expected outcomes, this research will contribute valuable insights to both academic knowledge and practical applications in the entertainment and marketing industries, particularly in the realms of immersive experiences and consumer engagement.

8. Research plan of work and timetable

Following the completion of the research proposal in the first two months, the research will be executed according to the following timetable:

8.1. Months 3-4: Quantitative Data Collection

In this phase, the primary focus will be on collecting quantitative data. Online surveys will be distributed to target consumers who have engaged with the *Squid Game* season 2 marketing campaigns. Additionally, social media data will be gathered using appropriate analytics tools to evaluate audience engagement levels. Sales data from partner brands, along with website traffic statistics, will also be collected to provide a comprehensive overview of consumer interactions.

8.2. Months 5-6: Qualitative Data Collection

During these months, qualitative data collection will be conducted. This will include organizing focus group discussions and conducting in-depth interviews with key stakeholders involved in the marketing initiatives. A content analysis of user-generated content related to *Squid Game* season 2 will also be performed to identify prevalent themes and sentiments. Furthermore, case studies on specific marketing initiatives will be developed to gain deeper understanding into consumer behaviour and engagement.

8.3. Months 7-8: Data Analysis

The data analysis phase will consist of analysing the quantitative data collected using statistical software, such as SPSS, to identify trends and correlations. Concurrently, qualitative data analysis will be performed using thematic analysis techniques to extract meaningful insights from the qualitative data gathered.

8.4. Months 9-10: Integration and Interpretation

In this stage, the integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings will take place to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer brand engagement strategies. The results will be interpreted in the context of the research questions and existing literature, ensuring a thorough and robust analysis.

8.5. Months 11-12: Report Writing and Dissemination

The final phase will concentrate on creating a comprehensive research report that details the methodology, findings, and conclusions of the study. Strategic recommendations for future marketing initiatives in the entertainment industry will also be developed. Finally, the findings will be disseminated through academic publications, industry conferences, and online channels to reach a wider audience.

By following this structured timetable, the research aims to provide valuable insights into consumer engagement strategies within the entertainment industry, particularly in relation to immersive marketing initiatives.

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