

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:	DBA		
Module:	Critical Literature Review for Doctoral Research		
Module code:	HKBM7019	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Dr Tamara Savelyeva	Internal Verifier:	Dr Alice Te
Assignment Title:	Report	Word count (or equivalent):	7,500 words (+/-10%)
Submission deadline:	28 July 2025	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	28 August 2025 (Tentative)
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark: Work which is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at 50% for the first attempt and will be awarded a mark of 0% for re-assessment. Late submission penalties may be lifted only if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim. Work submitted more than 1 week late will be considered as a non-submission and will not be marked. The work may be considered as a submission for reassessment if offered by an Examining Board or if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

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1. Title

Evaluating the Role of Marketing Strategies in JellyCat's Rise as a Global Plush Toy Leader.

2. Abstract

This study evaluates the crucial role of marketing strategies in JellyCat's rise as a global leader in the high-end plush toy market. JellyCat, a renowned plush toy brand founded in London in the late 1990s, is celebrated for its unique, creative, and high-quality soft toys that have redefined traditional concepts of stuffed animals into whimsical companions endowed with distinct personalities and emotional appeal. The brand's designs often feature anthropomorphism, giving human-like qualities to inanimate objects, which enhances emotional connections with consumer .

The brand's market positioning emphasizes the delivery of safe, reliable, and artistically crafted products that cater to the growing consumer demand for imaginative, high-quality toys. This strategy has enabled JellyCat to build a loyal global customer base, notably among the expanding adult "kidult" segment, particularly in markets like China, where these plush toys serve as emotional companions and stress relievers in high-pressure social contexts. JellyCat has successfully tapped into the "treat yourself" economy, where consumers are willing to spend on small luxuries that provide comfort and joy. The brand's high-end pricing strategy positions its products as premium gifts, communicating that they are worth the cost due to their quality and emotional value.

However, there is a lack of comprehensive academic analysis on how its marketing strategies—particularly emotional engagement, scarcity, and digital integration—have fuelled this success. Existing research has not thoroughly examined the specific marketing mechanisms that have allowed JellyCat to cultivate brand loyalty, navigate diverse markets, and maintain a competitive edge.

This qualitative research aims to evaluate the role of JellyCat's marketing strategies in its ascent as a global plush toy leader. It will explore how emotional marketing, scarcity tactics, influencer collaborations, and cultural adaptation collectively shape consumer perceptions and

contribute to JellyCat's market expansion and brand strength. JellyCat utilizes social media platforms to engage with consumers, sharing product images, videos, and stories to enhance brand awareness and appeal. The brand's success in the Chinese market is attributed to its strategic use of emotional marketing, addressing stress and loneliness by positioning its plush toys as "emotional companions".

Additionally, utilizing Don Schultz's 4I Marketing Theory—Interesting, Interests, Interaction, Individuality—as a framework, this research delves into how JellyCat employs emotional marketing, anthropomorphic product design, and community engagement to cultivate brand loyalty and facilitate global expansion. By creating products that evoke strong emotional connections, JellyCat effectively taps into the desires of consumers seeking comfort and companionship, especially in today's fast-paced world. The "Interesting" principle involves adding engaging content to marketing to boost user enthusiasm. The "Interests" principle caters to consumers' economic and psychological needs. "Interaction" encourages communication between consumers and brands. "Individuality" focuses on personalized marketing based on diverse consumer intentions.

The study also examines JellyCat's strategic positioning within the "healing economy," where emotional comfort plays a central role in consumer decision-making. This positioning allows JellyCat to not only meet but anticipate the evolving needs and preferences of its audience. The brand emphasizes the emotional value of its products, providing consumers with warmth and companionship. Its marketing extends beyond traditional toy design by anthropomorphizing various images to create unique doll designs.

Participants will include stakeholders such as JellyCat staff, retail partners, and loyal consumers from various markets (e.g., UK, China). Purposive sampling will be employed to gather a diverse range of insights regarding JellyCat's marketing impact.

The study will utilize a qualitative case study design, incorporating semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. Around 10 to 15 participants will be interviewed to collect rich, contextual data, and targeting 50 to 80 customers who have consumed JellyCat's products or services. Participants will be asked about the reason they love or decided to buy and collect JellyCat's products. Secondary data will augment the interviews to triangulate findings,

enabling an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions related to JellyCat's marketing strategies.

This research will provide valuable insights into effective marketing practices that foster emotional connections and brand loyalty in the toy industry and beyond. It will contribute to marketing theory by integrating emotional engagement with scarcity and influencer strategies, offering practical guidance for brands aiming for global expansion and cultural adaptation. Additionally, it will enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour within the premium plush toy context. Cultural adaptation is crucial for global marketing campaigns, requiring research, strategy development, and consultation to adjust the message to the audience's culture.

For the limitations of the Qualitative Approach, while the qualitative case study approach provides rich insights, it limits generalizability beyond JellyCat's context. Firstly, accessing JellyCat staff and retail partners may present significant challenges. In addition, participant bias and researcher interpretation may influence findings, necessitating reflexivity and validation strategies. The study's focus on select markets may not capture all cultural nuances. However, its depth compensates for breadth, offering nuanced understanding that quantitative methods may not achieve.

This framework builds on recent analyses of JellyCat's emotional marketing, scarcity strategy, influencer collaborations, and market-specific adaptations, particularly its success in global brand positioning. Scarcity marketing, including limited editions and time-sensitive offers, creates urgency and exclusivity, driving consumer interest and boosting conversion rates. Influencer marketing leverages the reach and trust that influencers have with their audience to promote products and services.

Key concepts: JellyCat, 4I Marketing Theory, Emotional marketing, Scarcity marketing, Kidult toys, Nostalgia marketing, Experiential marketing.

3. Literature review

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the diverse marketing strategies that have driven JellyCat's rise as a global leader in the premium plush toy market. It examines key approaches including anthropomorphism and emotional marketing, which humanize the products and foster deep consumer connections. Scarcity marketing is analyzed for its role in creating exclusivity and collector appeal. The discussion also highlights kidult and nostalgia marketing strategies, reflecting JellyCat's success in tapping into the emotional and cultural desires of Millennials and Gen Z consumers. Furthermore, experiential marketing techniques are considered for their impact in delivering immersive and memorable brand interactions. Together, these strategies illustrate how JellyCat has effectively combined emotional engagement, cultural relevance, and innovative marketing to build a strong, globally resonant brand.

3.2 Marketing Theory and Frameworks

The rise of the internet and digital technologies in the 1990s created a strong demand for contemporary marketing theories. In response, Pazgal and Sikka (2001) presented the 4I marketing framework in their important chapter, "4I: A New Premise for Marketing Online," featured in *Internet Marketing Research: Theory and Practice*. Their model tackles the shortcomings of traditional marketing frameworks, like the 4Ps, in navigating the complexities of online marketing settings (Pazgal and Sikka, 2001).

By emphasizing the four pillars—Interesting (capturing attention), Interests (engaging consumer curiosity), Interaction (fostering two-way communication), and Individuality (personalizing consumer experience), it offers researchers and practitioners a solid framework for addressing the complexities of digital marketing.

attributes JellyCat's global success as a high-end plush toy brand to the 4I framework, showing how creative anthropomorphic designs appeal to both young and adult consumers. The brand enhances engagement through interactive social media and storytelling, fostering emotional connections and loyalty. Strategies like personalized experiences, scarcity marketing, and immersive brand experiences drive its rapid growth. Ren concludes that the 4I theory

effectively captures JellyCat's emotionally resonant marketing while highlighting areas for improvement (Ren, 2024).

Similarly, Liu (2025) notes that the four pillars work together to propel JellyCat's success. By leveraging playful emotional appeal, fostering interactive engagement, ensuring authentic value, and showcasing a unique brand personality, JellyCat transforms plush toys into meaningful products for adults. This integrated 4I framework helps build strong brand loyalty and sustain growth in a competitive market (Liu, 2025).

3.3 Anthropomorphism and Emotional marketing

Brand anthropomorphic marketing is defined as a strategy that incorporates human-like characteristics or elements into a brand or product, enabling it to exist in consumers' minds as a credible human persona. This humanization fosters emotional connections and relatability, thereby creating added value by making the brand feel more personable, trustworthy, and engaging to consumers (Guido and Peluso, 2015).

In a saturated toy market, JellyCat distinguishes itself through an innovative design approach that anthropomorphizes animals, plants, and other objects which with distinct personalities and expressions, thereby creating playful characters that foster emotional connections with a diverse audience, including both children and adults seeking companionship as well as comfort. Moreover, research indicates that anthropomorphic design and emotional engagement enhance customer imagination, improve brand recall, and ultimately drive purchasing behaviour. (Yan, 2024a) (Chen, 2024).

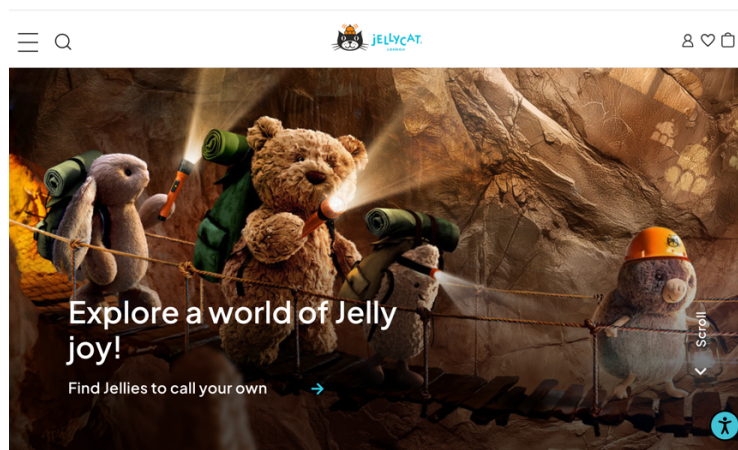


Image 1. Image of anthropomorphic plush toys (Source: JellyCat official website)

Emotions are a universal language, encompassing mental and physiological states linked to various feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. They involve a process where stimuli are perceived, leading to cognitive assessments that help individuals identify specific emotional states (Consoli, 2010). Consoli also defines emotional marketing as the study of eliciting emotions to encourage purchases, highlighting that buying decisions are influenced by both rational and emotional factors, with emotions crucial at every stage of the decision-making process. Scholars assert that emotional advertising is a vital component of marketing, influencing customers and leaving them with a positive impression of the brand (Magids, Zorfas and Leemon, 2015).

Other studies believe the concept of emotional marketing emphasizes significance of the emotional bond between companies and consumers, shaped by contemporary values and needs, creating a new symbol of consumer culture (Rytel, 2010). Therefore, businesses aim to forge emotional connections with consumers to build deep relationships and meaningful experiences around their products and services (Barnes, Southee and Henson, 2003).

A report shows that During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and societal uncertainty prompted young adults, particularly those in Gen Z, to seek comfort in playful products, leading to a diminishing stigma around adults owning toys. Communities like the “r/JellyCatplush subreddit” (an unofficial fan subreddit for JellyCat stuffed animals)¹, which boasts over 46,000 members, foster a sense of belonging and generate excitement through word-of-mouth about new releases and personal collections (Burleigh, 2025).

It is suggested as businesses seek to understand and leverage emotional nuances, the conclusion is a balanced approach that recognizes both rational and emotional aspects is essential (Kaushik, Choudhary and Choudhary, 2024). However, there is limited understanding of how people emotionally react to products and which design or interaction elements provoke these reactions (Majumdar., 2012).

¹ <https://gummysearch.com/r/JellyCatplush>

3.4 Scarcity marketing

Product and scarcity are key elements at the crossroad of marketing and psychology. A significant amount of research has focused on product attributes. (Kotler *et al.*, 2007). Scarcity describes the inherent limitations in economic exchanges caused by the disparity between the availability of resources and people's needs (Cannon, Goldsmith and Roux, 2019).

A demand-generated shortage happens when consumers believe that the available supply is insufficient to satisfy their demand, often triggered by promotions like "while stocks last" promotion. Conversely, a controlled deficit occurs when suppliers intentionally limit the product's availability, typically using "limited edition" strategies. Both types of scarcity enhance product desirability but do so from different angles (Hamilton *et al.*, 2019). Product scarcity can be shaped by status-enhancing benefits for various causes, especially when buying a product fulfils a desire for belonging while also showcasing a high social status (Goldsmith, Griskevicius and Hamilton, 2020).

It was suggested that scarcity significantly increases the perceived value, urgency, and desirability of products, making them more attractive to consumers (Yan, 2024b). Yin (2024) suggests JellyCat employs scarcity and hunger marketing through a fixed and limited edition model to stimulate consumer curiosity and tap into their inherent psychology to place orders. By leveraging hunger marketing strategies, JellyCat effectively drives product sales by appealing to consumers' desire for exclusivity and urgency (Yin, 2024).

It was highlighted that limited releases and exclusive items enhance JellyCat's image by creating a sense of scarcity and generating excitement akin to luxury product drops. In China, the grey market and Daigou (cross-border shopping agents) further amplify this perception, with some plushies reselling for double or triple their original prices. Furthermore, JellyCat manages supply and demand by releasing popular toys in limited quantities, particularly during holidays or special editions. This strategy creates urgency and competition, making limited editions emotionally satisfying purchases that boost brand perception. Missing out also builds anticipation for future releases, maintaining consumer engagement. (Wang, 2024).

However, scarcity appeals are effective only when consumers anticipate a significant level of scarcity (Shi, Li and Chumnumpan, 2020). In addition, variety scarcity caused by the

unavailability of a preferred brand can change assessment perceptions, leading consumers to defer their purchase or opt for a substitute (Hamilton *et al.*, 2019).

3.5 Kidult and Nostalgia marketing strategies

Kidults, primarily from the Millennial and Gen Z generations, engage with interests and media traditionally associated with children. This includes toys that inspire creativity and nostalgia, animated shows that evoke memories, immersive video games, and exclusive collectibles. They use these products for stress relief, escapism, and self-expression amid adult life pressures, seeking emotional connections and identity affirmation through their purchases (Lee and Jeon, 2022). In the study, it also suggests that Kidult marketing for this generation focuses on immersive experiences, limited editions, and exclusivity, all of which generate excitement and a sense of "fear of missing out" (FOMO).

Kidult toys act as a means of self-expression and identity for the MZ Generation. Research indicates that these products enable individuals to display their interests and personality, fostering a sense of belonging within communities of like-minded enthusiasts. Additionally, the MZ Generation often seeks nostalgia as a way to escape the pressures of adult life. Kidult toys evoke positive childhood memories, offering emotional comfort and joy, which significantly contributes to their popularity (Wang, 2024).

Nostalgia is a positive feeling—such as fondness or warmth—toward people, places, or things from one's formative years, like childhood or early adulthood (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991). Consumer nostalgic recollections tied to retail experiences can be classified into three categories: general personal memories, specific personal memories, and memories based on retailer features. Six key components influence these memories: people, products, store atmosphere, retailer knowledge, marketing materials, and shopping experiences (Shin and Parker, 2017).

Nostalgic responses are closely tied to consumers' personal histories and emotional connections with brands. Those with strong attachments to a brand experience heightened nostalgia from related marketing cues. Extensive prior use leads to vivid memories, amplifying the emotional impact of nostalgic marketing. Additionally, nostalgia varies based on individual brand history, making targeted nostalgic marketing more effective (Sultan, Muehling and Sprott, 2010).

Shields and Johnson (2016) define childhood brand nostalgia as a positive emotional attachment to a brand based on fond memories from a consumer's early experiences, particularly in childhood. This concept emphasizes brand-specific and emotionally charged memories associated with formative years (Shields and Johnson, 2016a). Furthermore, they also note that nostalgic consumers tend to have a positive bias toward the brand's original version, making them more sensitive to changes, which they perceive as more significant than those who are less nostalgic (Shields and Johnson, 2016b).

However, studies suggest the nostalgic mood brought negative impacts. Firstly, it is linked to feelings of warmth and spontaneity, a shift in one's perception of time, and a sense of mental distance from the routines of everyday life (Hetsroni, 2012). Moreover, Nostalgia has often been viewed negatively, seen as an unhealthy fixation on the past. However, it has also been emphasized that nostalgia enhances a proactive mindset, increases optimism, sparks inspiration, fosters creativity, and promotes prosocial behaviour (Sedikides and Wildschut, 2016).

3.6 Experiential Marketing Strategy

Experiential retail and marketing strategies have garnered considerable attention recently as brands aim to forge deeper connections with consumers. These methods emphasize creating memorable experiences that go beyond traditional transactions. This review consolidates key scholarly insights related to experiential retail and marketing.

Experiential retail involves crafting immersive shopping environments that boost customer engagement through sensory experiences. Pine II and Gilmore (1998) introduced the idea of the "experience economy," suggesting that businesses should create memorable events for their customers. This foundational concept is central to current discussions on experiential marketing (B. J. Pine II and J. H. Gilmore, 1999). It is based on the concept that consumers are not just passive recipients of advertisements but active contributors to the brand-building experience. By appealing to consumers' senses, emotions, and intellect, experiential marketing seeks to create unforgettable moments that make a lasting impact and encourage long-term loyalty (Schmitt, 1999).

Experiential marketing prioritizes the consumer's experience over just the product's features or benefits. While a relatively new concept, it has become a vital strategy that engages consumers both logically and emotionally. This approach involves researching consumer behavior to create tailored marketing plans, helping managers develop products or services that resonate deeply with their audience. (Akgün, 2021).

2024 marked the brand's 25th anniversary, JellyCat celebrated through unique global pop-up experiences, each reflecting the host city's culture and featuring exclusive plushies and creative themes starting from September 2023. Events and experiences including Paris, fish and chips in London, JellyCat Cafe experience in JellyCat Diner Experience in New York; JellyCat Patisserie Experience in Galeries Lafayette, Paris; JellyCat Fish & Chips Experience in London; JellyCat CAFÉ Experience in Shanghai, etc. ²

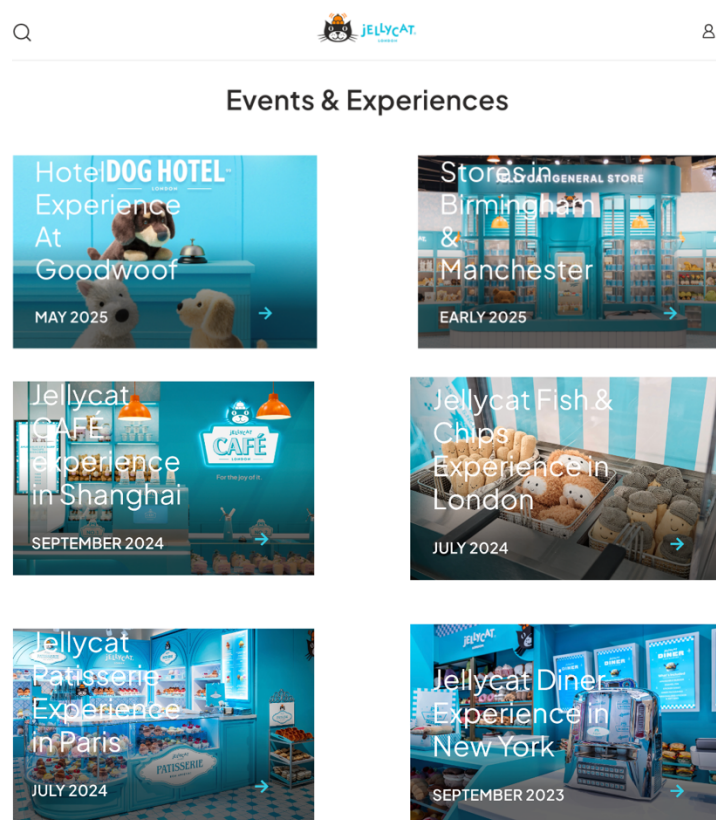


*Image 2. JellyCat's events and experiences
(Source: JellyCat official website)*



*Image 3. The toys were being "cooked and served" interactively during JellyCat experiences
(Source: 'A Visit to the JellyCat Diner at FAO Schwarz in New York' The Strategist, New York Magazine)*

² Information from JellyCat's events and experiences page (<https://eu.JellyCat.com/events-experiences>)

The brand leveraged its popularity by hosting immersive "experience stands" in prestigious locations such as Selfridges in London and FAO Schwarz in New York. These events, which included interactive elements like staff “flipping” JellyCat burgers, quickly went viral and were specifically designed to appeal to adult consumers (Burleigh, 2025).

Chuang's (2020) study on experiential marketing aligns with JellyCat's successful brand strategy. The brand exemplifies key principles such as emotional engagement, sensory experiences, and community building. By using immersive and interactive approaches, JellyCat enhances customer engagement and loyalty, emphasizing emotional connections and memorable interactions to drive brand growth. (Chuang, 2020).

In addition, Gu (2024) analyses JellyCat's marketing strategies, highlighting the role of experiential events in enhancing consumer engagement and loyalty. The study shows how JellyCat combines immersive physical experiences with digital amplification to strengthen brand loyalty and expand its global presence. Gu emphasizes the importance of experiential marketing in fostering strong consumer connections and a dedicated community. Additionally, JellyCat's offline retail strategy features elaborate packaging and in-store performances, boosting perceived product value and reinforcing its high-end image, which encourages consumers to pay premium prices. (Gu, 2024).

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Asmelash, L. (2025). 'JellyCats Are Everywhere. Why Are We Suddenly So Obsessed?' CNN, 6 April 2025.

This article examines the rising popularity of JellyCat plush toys among adults, connecting the trend to changing cultural views on adulthood and emotional well-being. It highlights how these soft toys provide comfort, nostalgia, and emotional escape, particularly during stressful times like the COVID-19 pandemic. Through interviews with adult collectors, the piece illustrates how plush toys offer psychological security and joy, challenging the idea that they are only for children.

Baxter, J. E. (2016). Adult nostalgia and children's toys past and present. *International Journal of Play*, 5(3), pp. 230–243.

Baxter examines how adult nostalgia enhances the appeal of children's toys, analyzing the emotional connections that drive adult interest and collecting. The article highlights the psychological and cultural factors behind nostalgic play, it explains the success of JellyCat's strategy.

Burleigh, E. (2025) 'JellyCat's \$250 Million Rise: How Gen Z's Mental Health Crisis and Need for Comfort Sparked a Plush Toy Frenzy.' *Fortune*, 16 Feb 2025.

This article examines JellyCat's significant revenue growth, reaching \$252 million between 2022 and 2023, largely fueled by Gen Z's demand for comfort during the pandemic. It highlights the brand's strategic marketing, product diversity, and strong social media presence as key factors in its success in the global plush toy market.

Cai, J. (2024). "Emotional-driven: The Function of Experiential Consumption in Improving Consumers' Purchase Intentions —— Take JELLYCAT as an Example." *Highlights in Business, Economics and Management* 46, 24 December 2024: pp. 77-83.

Using JellyCat as a case study, this paper highlights the shift from traditional marketing to strategies that prioritize emotional and experiential engagement, shows that consumers now seek brands that align with their emotions and values rather than just functionality and connects experiential marketing with consumer

behaviour lead to brand loyalty and purchase intention. It proves the success of JellyCat's experiential consumption.

Chang, E. (2024). 'Emotional value triumphs: inside JellyCat Café pop-up in Shanghai.' *China Skinny*, 11 Oct 2024.

This article discusses the launch of JellyCat CAFÉ in Shanghai, which opened in September 2024, it combines JellyCat's 25th anniversary with local culture, particularly Shanghai's café scene and the magnolia flower. It features staff dressed as café baristas and exclusive plush toys for a theatrical shopping experience. The pop-up showcases JellyCat's emotional marketing strategy by incorporating local motifs and sensory engagement and memorable experiences that personally connect consumers to the brand.

Chen, T. Y., Yeh, T. L., & Wang, Y. J. (2020). The Drivers of Desirability in Scarcity Marketing. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 33(4), pp. 924–944.

This study examines how different types of scarcity affect consumer desirability among luxury brand consumers in Taipei. It expands the scarcity-expensiveness-desirability model by detailing how perceived social status, uniqueness, and value mediate scarcity's effects, making it a useful tool for evaluating JellyCat's use of scarcity marketing.

Chen, Z. (2024). The Contributing Factors of High Consumer Loyalty to JellyCat Brand. *IEMB*, 27, pp. 141–150.

Chen's study examines the key drivers of JellyCat's strong consumer loyalty in the Chinese market. It identifies unique plush designs and storytelling, emotional attachment, and vivid brand memory as crucial for repeat purchases.

Chow, Y. (2024). 'Embrace Your Inner Child: How JellyCat Plushies Became the Latest Global Obsession.' *Tatler Asia*, 8 Nov 2024.

The article is written by an editor from Hong Kong. It showcases JellyCat's diverse offerings, from traditional teddy bears to quirky "amusable" plushies strategy of creating plush toys that feel like "friends" resonates with consumers seeking to heal their inner child that foster emotional connections.

Chuang, C. C. (2020). 'Experiential Marketing Strategy: The Empirical Study.' *International Review of Management and Business Research*, 9(1), pp. 79-88.

The study investigates how experiential marketing engages consumers and emphasizes that experiential marketing goes beyond customer satisfaction to foster emotional attachment and loyalty. Drawing on Schmitt's framework, the research highlights a shift from focusing on product features to fantasies, feelings, and fun, providing sensory and emotional values. It echoes JellyCat's innovative experience design and integrate multisensory marketing channels that strengthened its consumer-brand connections.

Consoli D. (2010) 'A new concept of marketing: the emotional marketing.' *Brand Research in Accounting, Negotiation and Distribution*, 2010, 1(1): pp. 52–59.

The paper introduces emotional marketing as a powerful strategy that focuses on evoking consumers' emotions to influence purchasing decisions. It outlines methods for measuring emotions through verbal, facial, and textual expressions, highlighting their significance for business strategy and customer relationship management. It means it is essential for companies like JellyCat to create emotional channels of trust with customers, moving beyond traditional attributes to offer symbolic and psychological value.

Cui, R. (2015). 'A Review of Nostalgic Marketing.' *Journal of Service Science and Management*, 8, pp. 125–131.

The study examines nostalgic marketing as a strategic tool that leverages consumers' emotional memories to enhance brand appeal and stimulate purchases. It emphasizes that nostalgia marketing focuses on selling emotional experiences rather than just products, making it a powerful approach for building brand loyalty and differentiation.

Dean, G. (2024–2025). 'JellyCat Pulls Supply Leaving Independent Shop Owners Confused.' *Power Commerce Blog; BBC News; Daily Dot*. June 2025.

The article examines JellyCat's controversial decision to stop supplying about a hundred independent UK retailers, leading to confusion and financial strain among small shop owners. The brand's "brand elevation strategy" focuses on partnering with larger retailers to manage rising demand powered by social media. Independent retailers have voiced frustration over JellyCat's lack of

communication, highlighting the tension between brand exclusivity and support for smaller businesses. This is a counterargument on JellyCat's marketing strategies.

Dehghanzadeh A. (2023) 'The JellyCat Craze: Why Are We So Attached? (2024).' Her Campus, UCSB, 29 October 2023.

This article is written by a university student editor, it offers a unique perspective from young people: it examines the emotional and nostalgic factors driving JellyCat's popularity, particularly among young adults and college students. It argues that JellyCat's unique designs which featuring simple eyes and embroidered smiles enable consumers to form comforting attachments that surpass traditional stuffed animals.

Gladwell, T. (2025). "Does JellyCat Mania Reveal the Dark Side of Social Media Fads?" *ShoutOut UK*, January 30, 2025.

Gladwell critically examines the explosive popularity of JellyCat, driven by social media platforms like TikTok, highlighting both the brand's commercial success and the darker implications of viral trends. The article also addresses issues like consumer obsession, resale market inflation, and the pressures social media fads place on brands and buyers, revealing the complex consequences behind the plush toy craze.

Gu, P. and Liang, W. (2023) 'The Inner Dynamics of Kidult Culture: Trending Toys and games, Theme Parks, and Animated Movies', *SHS Web of Conferences*. Edited by L. Lee, Z. Yan, and A.B. Azman, 167, pp. 01010.

This collection of analyses suggests the phenomenon kidult culture reflects postmodern identity dynamics centerer on flexibility and escapism. Additionally social media creates communities and elevates collectibles as social symbols.

Gu, R. (2024). 'The Marketing Strategy Analysis of JellyCat.' *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences*, 117(1), pp. 52-60.

This paper analyzes JellyCat's marketing strategies, highlighting the brand's innovative offline retail experiences and robust social media engagement. Use of interactive shopping environments, such as live product demonstrations, to create memorable consumer experiences and platforms like Facebook and Instagram are

leveraged to share engaging content, boosting brand awareness. This paper concludes that JellyCat's success is due to combination of experiential retail, strategic partnerships, and digital marketing.

Hamilton, C. (2025). 'Shoplifters, Scams and Supersoft Toys: How the JellyCat Craze Inspired a Crime Wave.' *The Guardian*. 8 Jan 2025.

Hamilton investigates the rise in shoplifting and scams targeting JellyCat plush toys amid the brand's soaring popularity. The article details how high demand and strong resale value have led to significant losses for independent retailers due to frequent thefts. It explores the challenges retailers and law enforcement face in combating these crimes while highlighting the brand's cultural significance and emotional appeal. It offers a nuanced view of the darker side of JellyCat's success in marketing.

Hardcastle, K. (2024). 'The Rise of Onomatoplay Retail: How Bringing Play To Life Is A Winner.' *Forbes*, 14 October 2024.

This article introduces Onomatoplay Retail, an innovation that transforms shopping into a playful, sensory-rich experience. Using JellyCat's diner-themed pop-up as a key example, it illustrates how sound effects, storytelling, and interactive elements engage both children and adults. The JellyCat Diner features staff mimicking cooking sounds, making plush toy shopping immersive and fun. The article argues that such experiential retail fosters natural play behaviours, creating lasting emotional connections beyond the store visit. It emphasizes that effective onomatoplay retail relies on thoughtful integration of sensory and imaginative elements to make shopping personal and memorable.

Hartmann, B. J., & Brunk, K. H. (2019). Nostalgia Marketing and (Re-)Enchantment. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 36(4), pp. 669–686.

The study explore how nostalgia marketing creates enchantment by turning ordinary consumption into emotionally meaningful experiences. They identify three routes to enchantment: re-instantiation—symbolic return to the past; re-enactment—infusing the present with past-themed brands; and re-appropriation—playful reinterpretation of the past. It provides insights for marketers on strategy, targeting, brand experience, and communication to deepen consumer connections.

Hung, XQ., Chiu, TP. (2023). 'Toys for Kidult: The Cross-Cultural Study of Customers' Behaviour Process of Designer Toys Online Visual Merchandise Display.' *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, vol 1835.

This study explores the purchasing behaviours of "kidults" — adults buying designer toys through online visual merchandising across cultures and how the growing kidult market, which seeks nostalgic and collectible high-end toys, is reshaping the global toy industry. The research shows that kidults prioritize emotional connections, aesthetic appeal, and brand storytelling, JellyCat enjoys this advantage.

Kirichanskaya, N. (2025). Labubu, JellyCat and more: How retailers can connect with the kidult consumer. *Inside Retail Asia*, 19 June 2025.

This article highlights how millennials and Gen Z, known as "kidults," are significantly boosting plush toys sales like JellyCat and Labubu and U.S. adults accounted for over \$7 billion in toy spending in 2024. It discusses how retailers can engage this demographic through targeted product lines and digital marketing that aligns with their mature yet playful identity.

Laneri, R. (2025). 'The Kidult Toy Industry Is Booming, Now Worth \$1 Billion.' *New York Post*, 4 Jan 2024.

This reports on the rapid growth of the kidult toy market, valued at \$1 billion in 2024, driven by adults buying toys aimed at children and they made up 28% of global toy sales, becoming the fastest-growing consumer segment, even surpassing children in some markets. It highlights the influence of Kidult toys.

Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). 'Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey.' *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), pp. 69–96.

The article highlights that modern customers interact with firms in complex, often social ways, necessitating integration across various business functions to ensure seamless experiences. It argues for a holistic approach to managing customer experience, considering the entire journey rather than isolated interactions. It echoes the journey of JellyCat's experiences.

Li, X. (2023). Using SWOT Analysis of JellyCat's Explosion in China's Youth Market.

Business Management and Finance Review, 38.

The article explores JellyCat's rapid rise among young consumers in China using a SWOT analysis, it highlights JellyCat's emotional marketing appeal amid rising stress and loneliness among Chinese youth, the effectiveness of limited editions, and diversified sales channels like live streaming. Recommendations include protecting intellectual property, adopting live sales, and adjusting pricing strategies to sustain growth. These valuable recommendations should be considered in the research paper.

Liu, Q. (2025). ‘诺丁斯伦理视角下 JellyCat 品牌营销策略的情感价值创造’ [Emotional

Value Creation of JellyCat Brand Marketing Strategy from the Perspective of Noddings Ethics of Care.] *E-Commerce Review*, 14(2), pp. 1364–1371.

Liu applies Noddings' ethics of care theory to analyze JellyCat's marketing strategy, the study highlights diversified sales channels, social media engagement, and unique emotional marketing tactics like limited editions and holiday specials. It shows how JellyCat's design, packaging, and storytelling foster deep emotional connections, enhancing brand loyalty.

Liu, Rounan. (2025). ‘基于 4I 理论的 JellyCat 品牌营销策略分析’ [Analysis of JellyCat's

Brand Marketing Strategy Based on the 4I Theory]. *电子商务评论 (E-Commerce Review)*, 14(4), pp. 1362–1367.

This article utilizes the 4I marketing theory to analyze JellyCat's success in China's changing consumer market. It argues that JellyCat has effectively transformed plush toys from children's products into emotional comforts for adults through unique design and emotional marketing. Additionally, JellyCat employs scarcity marketing to create exclusivity while immersive experiences and targeted digital strategies enhance consumer engagement. The study identifies limitations in brand exposure and localization, offering recommendations to optimize JellyCat's digital marketing.

Markiewicz-Italiano, M., & Sherman, H. (2024). 'JellyCat 2023 – A Strategic Analysis.' *Case Studies Journal*, 13(11), pp. 30–38.

The comprehensive case study provides a strategic analysis of JellyCat, employs frameworks like PLEST, Porter's Five Forces, value chain, and SWOT, etc. to analyse its strategies. It serves as a valuable resource for understanding and introducing JellyCat's strategies and positioning in the global toy industry.

Pazgal, A., & Sikka, S. (2001). '4I: A New Premise for Marketing Online.' In O. Lee (Ed.), *Internet Marketing Research: Theory and Practice*, pp. 150–175.

Pazgal and Sikka propose the 4I model—Intensity, Integration, Interaction, and Identification, as a framework for understanding online marketing. They argue that traditional models fall short in the digital environment. It emphasizes the need for intense customer engagement, integration of online and offline channels, interactive communication, and strong consumer identification with brands for marketing success in the digital age. It contributes to examining brands' marketing, like JellyCat, through the 4I framework.

Preece, C., Kerrigan, F., O'Reilly, D. (2024). 'Theorizing Regressive Nostalgia: Understanding Exclusionary Consumers as a Brand Threat.' *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 42, (2), June 2025, pp. 411-432.

The paper introduces regressive nostalgia, a negative form characterized by idealizing an imagined past tied to exclusionary preferences like racial purity and traditional masculinity. It also examines how loyal consumers may resist changes and react negatively to new iterations, threatening brand inclusivity. This is a good counterargument of nostalgia marketing.

O'Shea C. (2025). 'From queries to growth: JellyCat's journey with search data.' *Kantar Analytics*, 11 July 2025.

This report examines JellyCat's brand strength and cultural impact using search volume data in the UK from 2020 to 2025. It highlights the brand's remarkable growth, including a 41% year-on-year revenue increase in the US and a 95% rise in UK search volume over 12 months. Key success factors include emotional marketing, collectible product designs, strategic social media campaigns fueled by user-generated content, which drive ongoing brand engagement and loyalty.

Ren, S. (2024). 'The Impact of JELLYCAT's Emotional Positioning on Consumer Behavior in Chinese Youth Market.' *Dean & Francis Press*, 1 (1): Issue 6, 2024.

Ren's study investigates how JellyCat's emotional branding appeals to Chinese young consumers (ages 18-30), positioning its plush toys as "emotional companions" that alleviate stress and loneliness. It highlights unique product designs with anthropomorphic traits that foster emotional attachment and social sharing, especially on platforms like Little Red Book.

Ren, Y. (2025). 'JellyCat Brand Marketing Strategy Analysis - Based on 4I Marketing Theory.' *Frontiers in Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol 4 (10), 2024.

This analysis uses the 4I Marketing Theory to examine JellyCat's marketing success. It highlights the brand's focus on emotional connection, user-generated content, and community engagement. JellyCat also employs scarcity and experiential. Its anthropomorphic designs resonate with Gen Z's emotional needs, addressing the "loneliness economy".

Rogers, F. (2024). 'I can't stop buying JellyCats'. *Financial Times*, 21 December 2024.

This article explores the cult appeal of JellyCat plush toys, it highlights the founders' vision to revitalize the toy market with irresistibly soft and whimsically designed plush toys inspired by a child's affection for cats and jelly. The piece also notes the significant secondary market value of limited editions, with some retired toys fetching thousands of pounds, illustrating JellyCat's transformation from a niche brand to a cultural phenomenon.

Roberts, B. (2024). 'The License Global Toy Forecast 2025.' *License Global Magazine*, 10 December 2024.

This forecast highlights the dominance of kidult culture and nostalgia-driven purchasing. Major brands like LEGO and Mattel are prioritizing immersive experiences and omnichannel retail strategies to adapt to evolving consumer priorities.

Schmitt, B. (1999). 'Experiential Marketing.' *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 15(1/3), pp. 53–67.

The article introduces Experiential Marketing as a transformative approach that goes beyond traditional marketing's emphasis on functional features. It focuses on creating memorable customer experiences that engage consumers on sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and social levels. Schmitt proposes a strategic framework based on five Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), namely sense, feel, think, act and relate. It encourages the study about JellyCat's unique experience.

Sharma, S. (2024). 'The Rise of JellyCat: 25 Years of Magic, Nostalgia, and Soft Toy Mastery.' Ewha Brand Communication, wordpress.com, 3 Oct 2024.

Sharma chronicles JellyCat's 25-year journey from a small London startup to a global plush toy phenomenon. The article highlights its success in blending nostalgia, emotional connection, and luxury lifestyle brand and its appeal to the "kidult" market. It emphasizes the brand's use of limited editions, social media engagement, and immersive retail experiences to build a loyal fanbase.

Shi, X., Li, F., & Chumnumpan, P. (2020). The Use of Product Scarcity in Marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(2), pp. 380–418.

This review analyses how product scarcity can enhance market performance by boosting consumer demand and enthusiasm. A framework has developed to outline key factors influencing scarcity's effects on consumer behaviour and market dynamics, it offers insights into examining a brand's product scarcity.

Shin, A., & Zhu, H. (2024). 'JellyCat: "Pushing" Into New Markets.' *Ivey Business Review*, Spring 2025.

The paper examines JellyCat's strategic expansion into international markets, highlighting how the brand uses emotional marketing and experiential engagement to foster customer loyalty. Moreover, it also discusses JellyCat's success in creating scarcity through limited editions, enhancing perceived value and driving demand. It illustrates how JellyCat's emotional resonance and innovative marketing can drive rapid growth in competitive global markets.

Smith, K., & Hanover, D. (2016). *Experiential Marketing: Secrets, Strategies, and Success Stories from the World's Greatest Brands*. John Wiley & Sons. 2016.

The book offers a comprehensive guide on experiential marketing, highlighting the shift from traditional marketing to experience-driven strategies that engage consumers emotionally and physically. Drawing on case studies and interviews with over 150 global brands, it covers the history, principles, and psychology of experiential marketing, and practical strategies for creating impactful experiences and measuring their effectiveness. It gives insight of examining effectiveness of JellyCat's experiential marketing strategy.

Vimalan, D. (2025). Cute, Cuddly, Calculated: How Plushies Are Helping Brands Stay Relevant. *Marketing-Interactive*. 5 May 2025.

The article explores how limited-edition plushies have evolved from promotional giveaways to strategic tools for fostering emotional connections and brand loyalty. Highlighting campaigns by different brands, it demonstrates how plush toys serve as cultural touchpoints and conversation starters, particularly among Gen Z and millennials.

Wagner, B. (2010). 'Why Marketing Loves Nostalgia.' *Pioneer, University of Strathclyde Business School Magazine*, Winter 2010, pp. 4–7.

This article explores the strategic use of nostalgia in marketing, highlights how nostalgia marketing revives heritage brands and retro styles while aligning with modern values like sustainability and authenticity. It inspires the idea if JellyCat is a heritage brand. It prompts an examination of whether nostalgia is essential to JellyCat's marketing.

Wan, E. W., Chen, R. P., & Jin, L. (2017). Judging a Book by Its Cover? The Effect of Anthropomorphism on Product Attribute Processing and Consumer Preference. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(6), pp. 1008–1030.

This research shows that anthropomorphizing products enhances consumers' preferences for visually appealing. Through seven experiments, the authors find that consumers invest more time and money in seeking information about anthropomorphized products, leading to stronger preferences and purchase

intentions for attractive items. This explains JellyCat's consumer evaluation and decision-making processes.

Wang, X. (2024). 'Emotional Connection and Market Innovation: The Key Success Factors of JellyCat in the Chinese Market', *Transactions on Economics, Business and Management Research*, 14, AFTEM 2024.

This paper analyzes JellyCat's rapid success in the Chinese market, focusing on emotional marketing, scarcity tactics, and diversified channels. Wang argues that modern life increases loneliness among younger consumers, driving demand for products that offer emotional comfort. JellyCat's designs transform plush toys into companions, fostering deep emotional connections.

Wiedmann, K. P., Labenz, F., Haase, J., & Hennigs, N. (2018). 'The power of experiential marketing: exploring the causal relationships among multisensory marketing, brand experience, customer perceived value and brand strength.' *Journal of Brand Management*, 25(2), pp. 101–118.

This study explores how multisensory marketing engaging customers' five senses and creates memorable brand experiences that enhance perceived value and strengthen brand equity. Conducted in the luxury hotel industry, the research shows it is a key driver of brand experience, significantly influencing perceived value across financial, functional, social, and individual dimensions. It is a method for assessing JellyCat's experiential marketing.

Wilson, C., Connolly, J. (2025). 'JellyCat: Independent Shops Devastated as Brand Pulls Supply.' BBC News, 13 December 2024.

This article recounts how a shop owner identified a woman shoplifting JellyCat plush toys by reviewing CCTV footage. He traced the stolen toys to an online seller on Vinted. The piece highlights the growing issue of shoplifting fueled by the online resale market and the challenges retailers face in recovering expensive products like JellyCats.

Yan, R. (2024). 'Case Analysis of JellyCat's Marketing Strategies Based on the 4P Theory.' *SHS Web of Conferences*, 207, Article 01013.

This paper critically analyzes JellyCat's marketing strategies using the classic 4P

marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Yan emphasizes JellyCat's innovative product design, featuring anthropomorphism and inspiration from everyday objects, which fosters strong emotional connections with consumers, particularly youth facing social stress and loneliness. The paper concludes that JellyCat's integrated 4P approach, coupled with emotional marketing, has been key to its high brand recognition and consumer loyalty in the competitive Chinese market.

Yang, H. (2025). 'JellyCat Selling Emotions: How Plush Toys Become an Adult Fad.' *The Young Reporter*, Hong Kong Baptist University. 12 Feb 2025.

The article discusses the "security blanket effect," where adults seek companionship and stress relief through designs that evoke warmth and nostalgia. JellyCat's appeal is tied to social needs for connection and status, with consumers willing to pay premium prices for these emotional benefits. It provides insights from the perspective of the younger generation.

Yau, K. (2024). 'JellyCat Enjoys a Marketing Win in China, with Help from (G)I-DLE.' *Radii*, October 17, 2024.

This article examines JellyCat's successful marketing strategy in China, highlighting its innovative use of immersive experiences, such as a Shanghai pop-up café featuring K-pop star Song Yuqi. Its blend of nostalgia and playful environments, celebrity endorsements, and social media engagement has generated a strong consumer craze among young adults. It examines JellyCat's approach showcases how emotional and lifestyle marketing elevating itself into a cultural phenomenon in the Chinese market.

Yin, T. (2024). 'Research on Jelly Cat's Marketing Strategy Based on SWOT Analysis.' *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences*. 25 October 2024.

Yin's study employs SWOT analysis to evaluate JellyCat's marketing strategy, highlighting strengths like innovative packaging, effective use of offline stores, pop-up exhibitions, and social media for customer. Challenges include market competition and pricing strategies, while opportunities exist in expanding collaborations and enhancing brand experience.

Young B. (2025). 'I've Ditched Wine for LEGO: The Adults Spending Thousands on Toys – and Keeping Industry Alive.' *Sky News*, 10 July 2025.

This very updated article explores the trend of adult collectors investing in toys like LEGO, revitalizing the toy industry. It shares personal stories of adults who prioritize high-end collectibles over traditional leisure activities, emphasizing the emotional satisfaction and nostalgia they offer.

Zhou R. (2024). 'JellyCat: Marketing Strategies Based on Customer Emotions and Sentiment', *Finance & Economics*, 1(9).

This research paper explores how JellyCat's emotional marketing tactics, such as evoking happiness, nostalgia, and empathy which enhance consumer purchase intentions. It highlights the brand's storytelling and social media engagement, which cultivate emotional resonance beyond mere product functionality. The study links the increasing demand for companionship during social isolation to JellyCat's growth, reconfirming emotional marketing as a crucial driver of brand loyalty and sales.