

# The Impact of JELLYCAT's Emotional Positioning on Consumer Behavior in Chinese Youth Market

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## Abstract:

In the modern fast-paced and high-intensity epoch, young people face various life pressures and emotional needs, and buying dolls has become a good way for them to release their emotions. Along with the dynamic changes in preferences of the young Chinese market, the development trend and product design of the plush toy market are also taking place. How to create a differentiated correlation between brand positioning and consumer cognition to raise brand market competitiveness has become a focal point. JELLYCAT has introduced the Amuseable series of products since 2018, describing dolls as living accessories that resonate emotionally with consumer group and occupy a tiny place in the Chinese youth market. This article begins with the brand awareness among Chinese young consumers, exploring the Chinese youth market competitiveness of JELLYCAT's emotional positioning in terms of consumer behavior, consumption motivation, and social marketing through questionnaire surveys and some consumer interviews. It not only provides a deeper understanding of the emotional needs of young groups, but also provides more reference value for the brand positioning of similar doll brands.

**Keywords:** emotional positioning; consumer behavior; Chinese youth market.

## 1. Introduction

On Double Eleven in 2023, JELLYCAT, a high-end gift brand with a price range of 139-1699, emerged victorious, with an average transaction price of 465 yuan, a year-on-year increase of 44.8%, surpassing Disney to become the highest selling brand in the plush fabric art category, sparking discussions in the Chinese market. In the global market, brand posi-

tioning plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception, and creating differentiated positioning is the key to sustainable brand development [1]. A brand embodies both the core values of a company and the sum of consumers' perceptions of its products and services [2]. As a source of symbolic value for a product, there is no necessary connection between the brand and the product itself. Dessart et al.'s "con-

sumer involvement” theory fully demonstrates that the brand is a direct reflection of the added value of a product recognized by consumers [3, 4]. Creating a unique brand positioning through the relationship between the brand and consumers is conducive to enhancing international market competitiveness. Additionally, Keller pointed out that emotional positioning of a brand can enhance the emotional connection between the brand and consumers, influencing their purchasing behavior and loyalty to the brand [5]. Claudiu-Cătălin and Munteanu further emphasized that consumers have increasingly valued non consumer needs of products in recent years, and a brand attitude consistent with consumer attitudes is key to gaining a loyal customer base [6]. However, existing research mainly focuses on exploring the relationship between brand positioning and consumer cognition in Western markets, lacking systematic analysis of the impact of brand positioning on consumer behavior in the Chinese market. Meanwhile, most of these studies focus on analyzing industrial and manufacturing brands as the main case, neglecting the relationship between emotional positioning and the young consumer market. This study integrates questionnaire surveys of young consumers in some urban areas of China and consumer interviews to investigate in detail the impact of JELLYCAT brand’s emotional positioning on the purchasing decisions of young consumers in China. It helps relevant enterprises to efficiently and correctly position their brands, while also emphasizing the potential of brand positioning to drive consumption among young people. It provides practical reference for such international brands to adjust their brand positioning in the rapidly changing Chinese market.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1 Consumer Research

According to relevant reports, young groups in China are the main consumer force of JELLYCAT. Therefore, this study selected young consumers aged 18-30 in some urban areas of China as the survey subjects to understand the popularity, consumer perception, and emotional response of the JELLYCAT. This survey employed the method of distributing online questionnaires through the Wenjuanxing mini program and offline questionnaires at subway stations with high-foot traffic, exploring the influence of JELLYCAT brand’s emotional positioning on consumer behavior in the Chinese urban youth market from the aspects of consumer liking degree, consumption motivation, and repeat purchase rate.

A total of 304 online and offline questionnaires were distributed, and invalid questionnaires were screened according to the respondents’ response time, regularity of answer

items, and lie detection questions. Among them, 213 valid questionnaires were collected online and 63 valid questionnaires were collected offline, with an effective rate of 90.3%.

### 2.2 Consumer Interview

Due to further understand the brand awareness of JELLYCAT among young people in China, this study selected some respondents for online telephone interviews based on their level of brand love and purchase frequency. The study enquired the inner link between product image and brand positioning, as well as their impact on consumer behavior, from the aspects of descriptive evaluation and design language of JELLYCAT by consumers. All online interviews are recorded using relevant recording devices with the consent of the interviewees, and the personal information of the interviewees is not published.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Integrating online and offline questionnaire surveys and consumer interview data, using EXCEL software to create corresponding bar charts and pie charts to visually display the main motivations, the main willingness to repeat purchases, and the main cognition of product design of young Chinese consumers to buy JELLYCAT, further verifying the connection between the brand’s emotional elements and consumer behavior.

This method obtained second-hand data by consulting market analysis reports and official brand information, aiming to understand the dynamic changes in preferences of young people in Chinese cities. This will provide data support for studying the competitive advantage of JELLYCAT brand’s emotional positioning among young people totally.

## 3. Research Findings and Discussion

### 3.1 Consumer Cognition

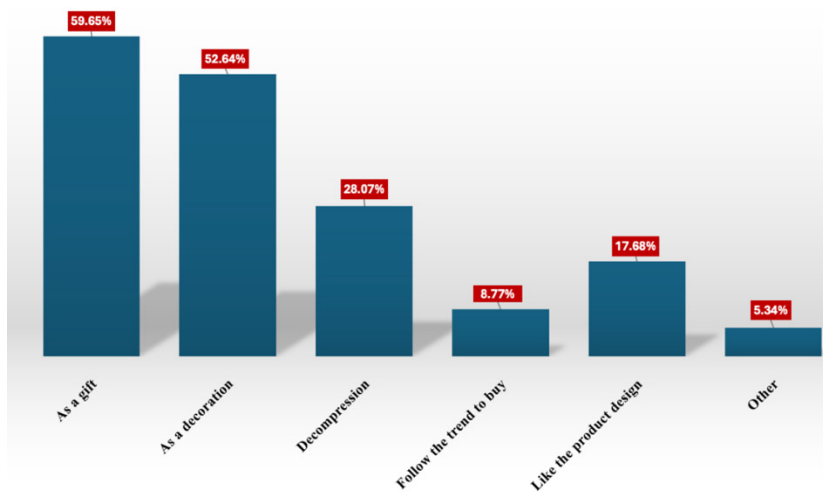
By integrating effective online and offline questionnaires, relevant data shows that the JELLYCAT brand is highly prevalent among young consumers in urban areas of China. Among the surveyed group, 73.68% of consumers conveyed a strong interest in the JELLYCAT brand, 82.17% of consumers reported having purchased JELLYCAT products, and 66.78% of consumers indicated that they would repurchase JELLYCAT products. Additionally, the interviewed young consumer group generally described the JELLYCAT brand as their own baby or their healing partner.

Here are some typical consumer reviews: “When I feel stressed and tired, I pick up my Barcelona baby, touch its fur, feel it speak, and feel relieved and comforted.”

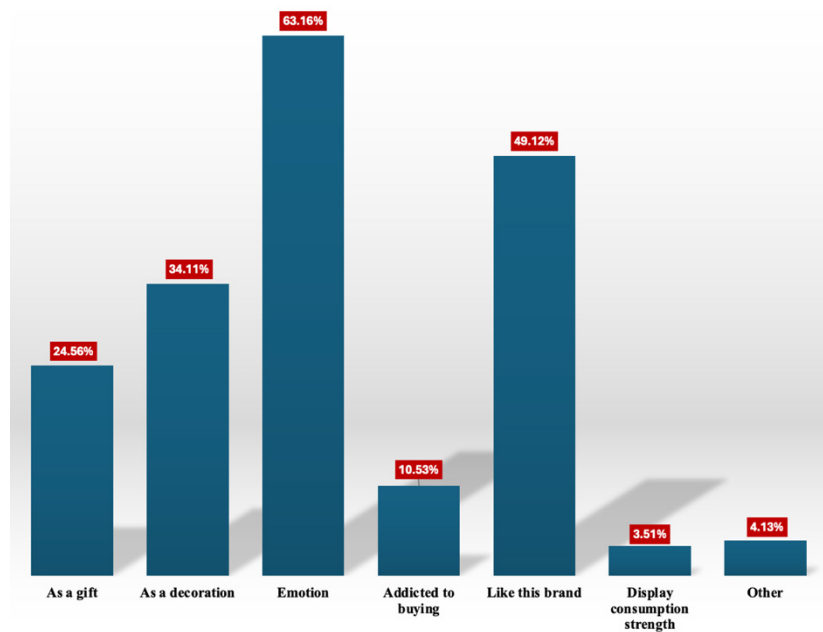
(Interviewee A, 19 years old) “I named my wobbly little dog a wobbly one. His sleeping appearance is very similar to my early morning state, and it makes me feel at ease as a classroom partner.” (Interviewee B, 21 years old) “I think what I bought was not just a doll, but also a sense of companionship. At that time, working alone in another city was too lonely, and Bonnie Rabbit was like my baby, giving me a lot of warmth.” (Interviewee D, 29 years old) These description fully demonstrate that JELLYCAT’s product emotions can stimulate consumers’ emotions, and the resonance of the emotional value it provides has a positive impact on consumer behavior [7].

### 3.2 Main Consumption Motivation

By comparing the consumption motivation of consumers to purchase the JELLYCAT brand and their willingness to repurchase the JELLYCAT brand, the results show that using the brand as gifts and decorations is the main consumption motivation for young Chinese people to purchase JELLYCAT (Figure 1), while the main consumption intention for young Chinese people to repurchase JELLYCAT is to express their emotion through secondary creation of the brand (Figure 2).



**Fig.1 The consumption motivation of young people to buy JELLYCAT in some urban China**

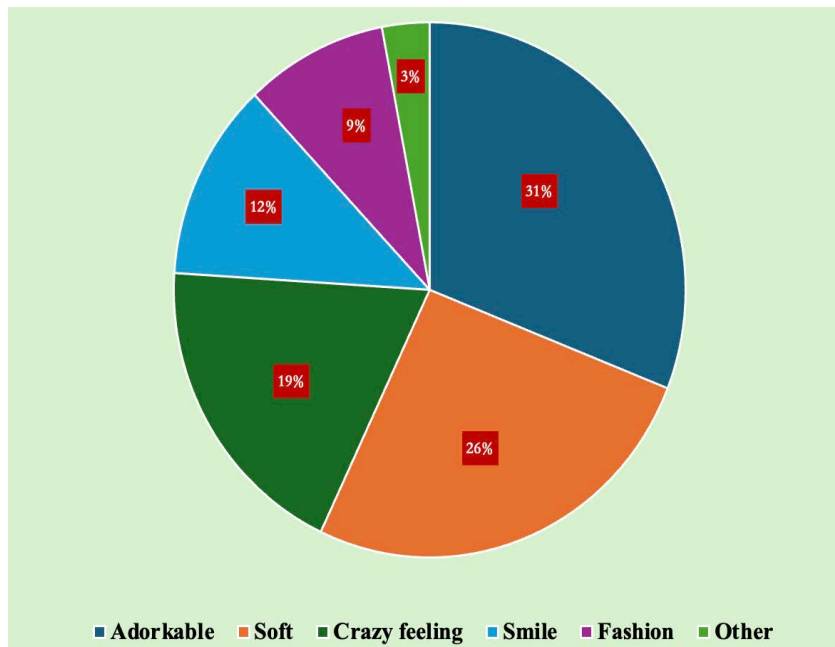


**Fig. 2 The willingness of young consumers to repurchase JELLYCAT in some urban China**

Through further interviews with consumers, relevant data shows that the emotional elements included in JELLYCAT product design are the main reason for young Chinese

consumers to repeat purchases (Figure 3), which demonstrates that in the value driven 3.0 era of the market, JELLYCAT brand’s design elements such as crazy bean eyes

have a certain appeal to consumers (18-30 years old).



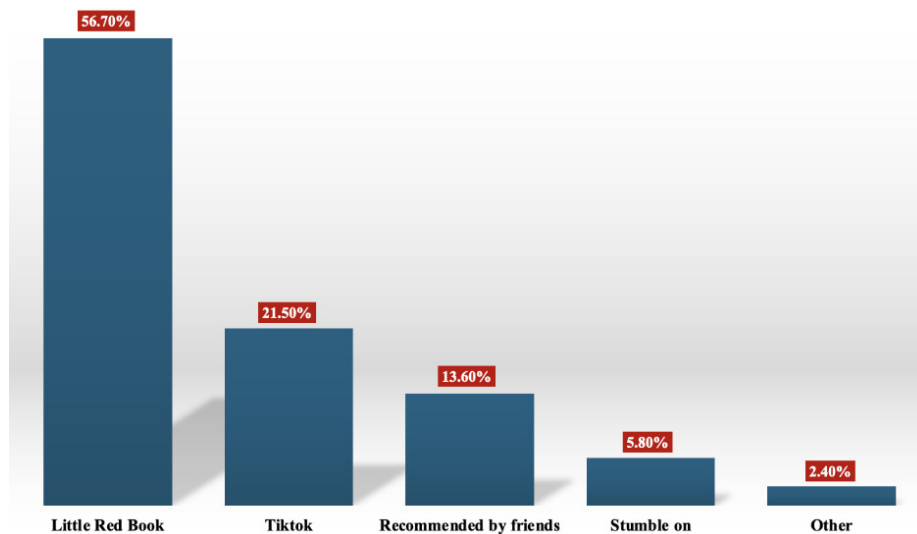
**Fig. 3 Cognition of JELLYCAT product design among some young people in China**

The main design elements of JELLYCAT are bean eyes and smiling face, which are added to most daily items. Product designs that are highly favored by young consumers, such as an eggplant with a curled mouth but seemingly unhappy, a puffed little penguin, and a potted plant with hands and feet. JELLYCAT establishes a consistent emotional connection and resonance with consumers

through its unique brand identity, which has a significant impact on consumers' consumption [8].

### 3.3 Social Interaction and Marketing

Among the surveyed group, most consumers showed that social media platforms such as Little Red Book were their major routes for learning about JELLYCAT (Figure 4).



**Fig. 4 The route for young consumers who know JELLYCAT in some urban China**

The Internet provides a convenient platform for users to share their buying experience, then the emotional resonance between consumers and dolls is further enlarged, such as their second creation behavior of eggplant has

spawned many expression packs and cultural creation [9]. "Mr. Qie is fun, my part-time work Qie has the same state as me." (Interviewee C, 27 years old) "With just a few finger movements, you can create your own mental state

for the day, and Qie's belly is suitable for painting." (Interviewee E, 19 years old)

This eggplant has transformed into a spokesperson for emotional value, sometimes as a girl wearing pearl earrings, and sometimes as a muscled man being tired up. Consumers through creation interact fully with dolls on social media platforms, while also bringing a large amount of traffic to the brand. As of August 2023, there are over 930,000 notes related to JELLYCAT on Little Red Book, with approximately 264,400 people participating in discussions and 749 million views on such topics.

The young consumer group has gradually become the main consumer group for plush toys, and they are more inclined to define these as a life companion and emotional support [10]. Many consumers have expressed that JELLYCAT is not just a simple doll, but more like a lively partner that endows them with exclusive emotional value. Compared to other similar brands (such as Pop Mart, Disney and so on) that use hot IP marketing to expand their market competitiveness, JELLYCAT has not engaged in excessive official marketing. Each doll of JELLYCAT is given the definition of furry friends, for example, the Barcelona bear is crafted as the perfect bedtime companion. Create an exclusive background story through the heartwarming conversation between the Barcelona bear and Bonnie Rabbit to personalize the brand, utilizing the brand's emotional sugar affection to resonate emotionally with consumers' purchasing decisions, obtaining a stable and loyal consumer group.

JELLYCAT will also implement the personification of plush toys in offline store sales. In May 2024, the staff in JELLYCAT and BEAST Pop-up store (Beijing) packages potted dolls by virtual heating and loosening, and calls them friends of customers. JELLYCAT utilizes brand experience to showcase its emotional brand positioning [11]. These seemingly childish actions give consumers a sense of ceremony, effectively enhancing the shopping experience and having a positive impact on consumer behavior.

## 4. Conclusion

This study mainly adopts the research methods of online and offline questionnaire survey and consumer interviews to explore the consumption behavior among young Chinese, and finds that emotional value has become the first choice of young Chinese consumers, and more and more young people tend to take plush toys as life companionship and emotional sustentions. By creating a distinctive emotional brand positioning, JELLYCAT has transformed its product from simple toys into warm gifts, while emphasizing the secondary creation of its products, and

gained many loyal young Chinese consumers, providing advice for the positioning and promotion of other similar brands in the young Chinese market. However, due to limitations in the collection of relevant information and the scope of consumer surveys, its systematicity needs further verification. Subsequent research can provide more scientific and rigorous support for the universal conclusions through a larger range of consumer group research and case analysis of multiple similar brands.

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