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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope within the Context of Strategic Marketing Management

The present report is a critical analysis of strategic marketing activities at Starbucks and Costa Coffee, a first mover and a follower in the international coffeehouse market respectively. It also considers the responsiveness of the two companies to the external forces, formation of competitive positioning, and utilisation of the branding, innovation, and market expansion strategies to maintain long-run performance.

1.2 Significance of the Macro-Marketing Environment

The macro marketing environment analysis is important in strategic decision making processes as it allows organisations to scan external forces effectively organised to determine the opportunities and threats that are beyond their control. Such frameworks as PESTEL can assist firms in recognising the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal forces, thereby enabling them to predict change, reduce risk and align strategic decisions in the context of larger forces. This type of analysis forms the basis of resilient strategies that improve competitiveness, flexibility, and sustainability in the market.

1.3 Organisation and Scope of the Report with Key Focus Areas

This report has been divided into two sections. Task 1 evaluates the macro marketing environment as a PESTEL analysis and Task 2 analyses the responses of a strategy based on the Matrix of Ansoff and Generic Strategies of Porter. These are the critical actions, which are environmental scanning, the comparative strategic analysis, and the analysis of competitive positioning with the help of industry data.

2.0 Task 1: Analytical Assessment of Macro-Environmental Marketing Factors

2.1 Introduction to the Macro Marketing Environment

2.1.1 Macro-Environmental Analysis and Strategic Marketing Alignment

The macro environment of the coffeehouse industry in the world includes inflationary forces, ethical sourcing codes, online ordering solutions, and sustainability demands (Gierczak, 2025). These forces affect pricing, brand positioning, and customer engagement strategy used by Starbucks and Costa Coffee, and this has a direct impact on their competitive marketing performance.

2.1.2 PESTLE framework

Political

Cost structure, sourcing, and market access are affected by political conditions, including wage policies, packaging regulation, and trade policies, and stability. The UK living wage was raised to £13.45 per country and £14.80 in London and increased labour costs, and the February 2025 EU reusable packaging regulations and trade uncertainty impacted Starbucks supply chain and growth choice (Livingwage.org.uk, 2025E; European Commission, 2025).

Economic

Consumer demand and pricing depend on economic factors because the world coffee market is expanding from USD 284.8 billion in 2025 to USD 369.5 billion by 2030 due to rising disposable income and urbanisation, which invites Starbucks to use strategic pricing, menu diversification, and store investment (Grand View Research, 2025).

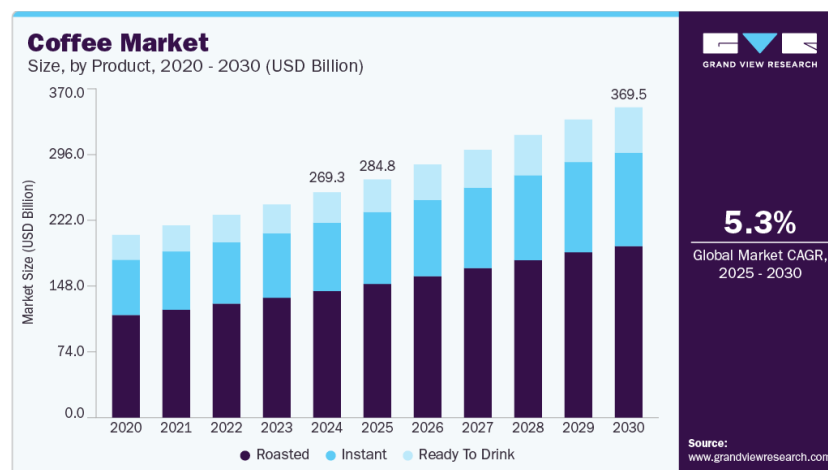


Fig 01: Global Coffee Market Size by Product, 2020–2030 (USD Billion)

Source: (Grand View Research, 2025)

Social

The consumer demand in the coffeehouse industry has been greatly affected by social trends, as 64 % of adults aged 25-39 indicated in 2025 that they consumed specialty coffee regularly on a weekly basis, the highest in comparison with other age groups (National Coffee, 2025).

Technology

Coffeehouses have been changed due to automation, online ordering, and R&D. In 2025, the completely automated coffee machine market is 4.16 billion dollar (Business Research Company). It is also predicted that robot barista solutions will be worth 1.27 billion dollars in 2026 (Business Research Insights).

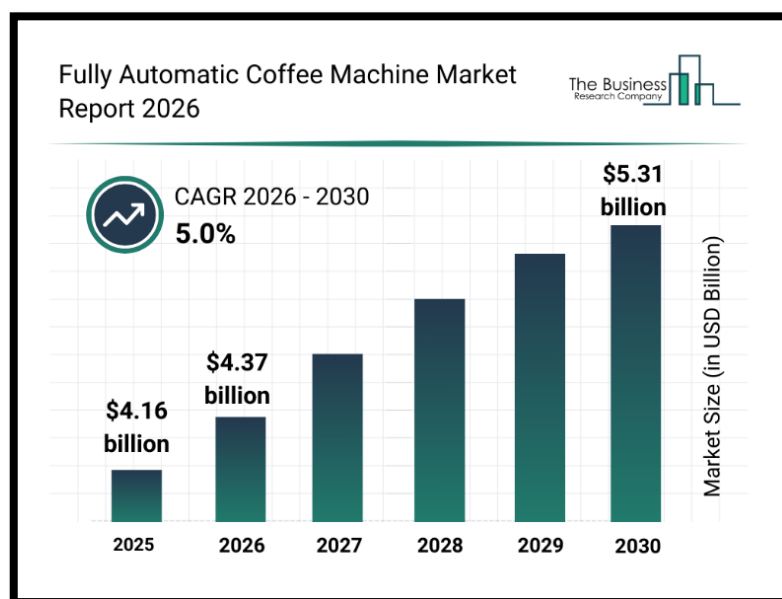


Fig 02: Fully Automatic Coffee Machine Market

Source: (Business Research Company, 2025)

Legal

Legal aspects including the EU Deforestation Regulation, stringent food safety regulations and labour compliance policies discharge higher operational expenses

and mitigation measures which highly affect pricing, sourcing policies, and regulatory compliance plans in the coffeehouse industry (CBI, 2024).

Environmental

The environmental pressures are in the process of redefining coffeehouse operations as sustainability determines consumer behaviour. The usage of reusable cups increased by 7.8 % after intervention, indicating that waste-reduction measures enhance environmental performance, as well as brand accountability in the retail of cafes (Sheppard et al., 2024).

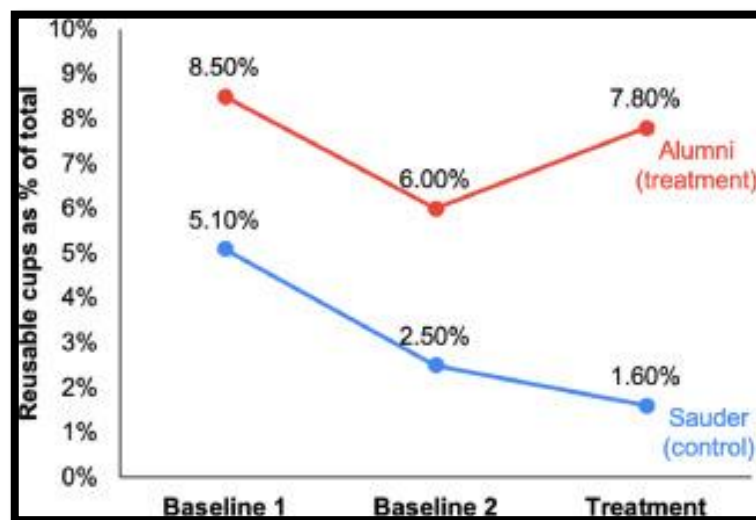


Fig 03: Impact of Sustainability Intervention on Reusable Cup Usage 2024

Source: (ELS-CDN, 2024)

2.2 Analysis of Two Prominent External Marketing Environment Actors

2.2.1 Identification and Rationale for Selecting Two External Actors

External Actor 1: Technological Change

Justification: Technological change is essential as mobile ordering, automation, and data analytics enhance the speed of service, personalisation, and operational efficiency in very competitive markets of coffeehouses.

External Actor 2: Environmental

Justification: Environmental sustainability is essential since conflicts on climate change, waste management, and ethical consumer demands directly affect packaging design, sourcing policies, expenditure, and brand image.

2.2.2 Analysis of Their Significance and Impact on the Selected Industry Technology

The mobile ordering, AI, and loyalty analytics make Starbucks more personalised and efficient by technological innovation with 35.5 million active Rewards members and more than 30 % mobile orders, and balancing employee retention investment is enforced by automation pressures (Starbucks, 2024c).

Environmental

Environmental sustainability increasingly shapes the global coffeehouse and specialty coffee retail industry as rising waste levels intensify regulatory and social pressure. Industry data shows the disposable cups market reaching about 12.5 billion USD in 2025 and projected to exceed 18 billion USD by 2034, encouraging firms to adopt reusable packaging and low-carbon practices (Market.us, 2025).

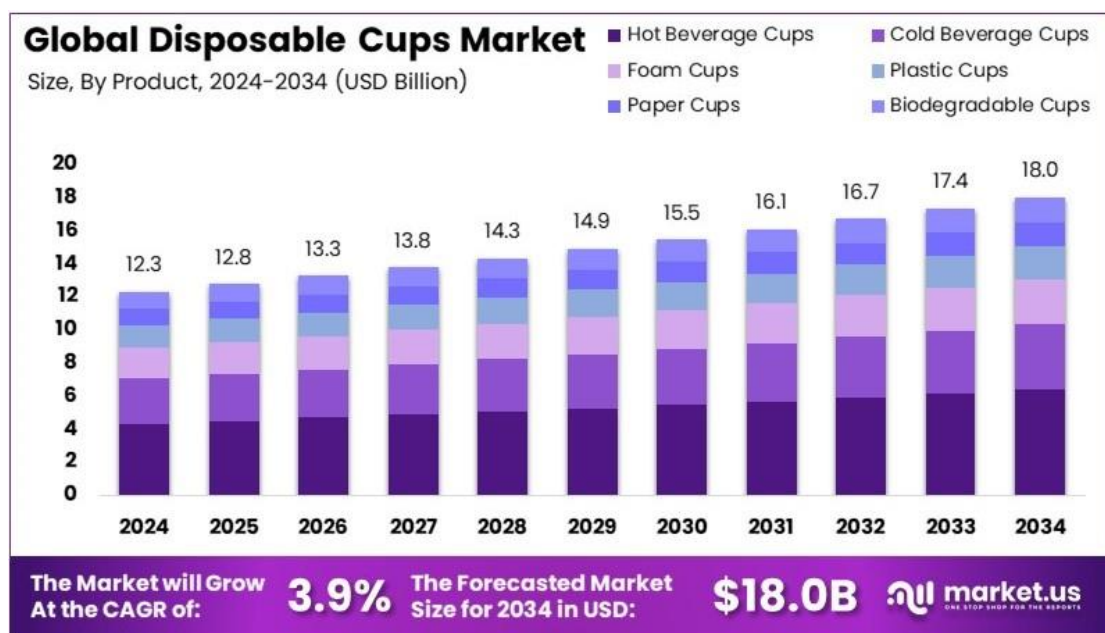


Fig 04: Global Disposable Cups Market

Source: (Market.us, 2025)

2.3 Analytical Examination of the Chosen External Actors

2.3.1 Technology

Impact on Starbucks

The technological innovation allows Starbucks to grow the personalised interaction and performance efficiency through the mobile ordering, AI assistants, and loyalty analytic. Starbucks has 35.5 million active Rewards members and more than 30 % mobile orders, but automation issues and service pressure require balanced investment in employee retention (Starbucks, 2024c).

Opportunities: Increased customer customisation, increased speed with automation, and better demand prediction with AI and mobile (Raju, 2025).

Threats: Cost of digital investment is high, cyber security and the quality of service is at risk due to excessive dependency on technology (Rogaski, 2004).

Key strategic implications: Focus on lifelong digital investment, merge AI-based personalisation, enhance cybersecurity, and balance automation and high-quality customer experience in store (Khadka, 2025).

Impact on Costa Coffee

The technological adoption allows Costa to scale digital convenience and efficiency. In 2025 Costa had more than 4,000 outlets and approximately 14,000 Costa Express outlets and modernised the Coffee Club app to send personalised deals - increasing loyalty and throughput but introducing integration and capital strains (Woods, 2025).

Opportunities: Implementation of established digital solutions and growth of Costa Express intelligent dispensers and promotions based on data to make it more convenient and keep customers (Wittayakhom et al., 2025).

Threats: Weak in-house technologies, costly to integrate systems and reliance on third-party systems to drive digital innovation (Singh and Vijay, 2025).

Key strategic implications: To enhance scalability and responsiveness to competition, Costa needs to speed up digital alliances, selectively invest in automation and analytics, enhance app integration, and standardisation of technology platforms (Voipio et al., 2024).

2.3.2 Environmental

Impact on Starbucks

Starbucks is experiencing an increasing environmental agenda: by 2024²⁵ it claims almost universal ethical sourcing through C.A.F.E. Practices, is extending EMEA

reusable-cup programmes by 2025, and has already saved approximately \$60m through its Greener Stores energy/waste initiatives creating reputational value but raising CAPEX and supply-chain climate issues (Starbucks, 2024a).

Opportunities: Improved brand value with 2025 carbon-cutting objectives, increasing reusable-cup programmes and increased demand on ethically grown coffee, which benefits high retail pricing and consumer loyalty (Chitez et al., 2026).

Threats: Increasing compliance expenses, supply volatility due to climate and rising sustainable packaging expenses and reputational risk associated with failing to deliver on environmental commitments (García-Sánchez and Rama, 2025).

Key strategic implications: To ensure long-term competitiveness, Starbucks should ensure sustainability as part of core strategy through investing in climate-resilient sourcing, scalable green infrastructure, and cost-efficient circular infrastructure to ensure sustainable packaging (Niguse et al., 2025).

Impact on Costa Coffee

In 2025, Costa Coffee has participated in a UK reuse initiative, known as Borrow Cup, to reduce its 388 million annual disposable cups, which improves circular branding and consumer interaction (Marsh, 2025). Also, due to the complexity of implementation of such systems, the company has to collaborate with recyclers and charities, which strains resources of followers relative to first movers.

Opportunities: Improved ecological branding, improved loyalty, leadership through compliance through reuse and recycling (Husriadi et al., 2025).

Threats: High rollout expenses, complicated logistics, dependency on suppliers, margin pressure, profitability (Ajmera et al., 2024).

Key strategic implications: Costa needs to focus on scalable sustainability partnerships, invest in selective circular infrastructure, and put environmental performance at the core of the brand and cost management (Ma et al., 2025).

3.0 Task 2: Strategic Approaches Adopted by Market Leaders and Followers

3.1 Starbucks's Strategic Responses

3.1.1 Starbucks' Strategic Adaptation to External Opportunities and Threats

Table: 1

External Challenges	External Opportunities	Strategic Responses & Evaluation
Rising operational costs	Rapid growth of mobile and digital ordering enhances engagement.	Starbucks strengthened digital investment, with mobile orders accounting for 30% of transactions in 2025, improving efficiency and sales conversion (Starbucks, 2025).
Climate risks threaten long-term supply stability.	Rising demand for ethical and sustainable products.	In 2024, Starbucks invested USD 88.3 million through the Global Farmer Fund to secure suppliers and reinforce sustainability branding (Starbucks, 2024b).
Stricter packaging and waste regulations.	Expansion of premium product segments.	Starbucks introduced plant-based beverages and circular packaging initiatives, strengthening brand perception and regulatory compliance (Liu, 2025).

3.1.2 Adoption of Ansoff's Matrix for Growth Strategy Development

Market Penetration

In 2025, Starbucks increased market penetration by enhancing loyalty ecosystem, service quality, and promotional calendar, which led to comparable store sales growth of 4 % to 0 % in the United States and 3 % growth in the international market, respectively, through app-based promotions and menu innovation (Starbucks, 2025).



Fig 05: Starbucks FY25 Comparable Store Sales Turnaround and Market Penetration Strategy

Source: (Starbucks, 2025)

Product Development

In 2025, Starbucks continued its product development by introducing protein-based cold foam beverages up to 36 grammes and expanding re ready-to-drink products throughout the country, making them more relevant to health-conscious consumers and bolstering brand growth and retention (Food & Wine, 2025).



Fig 06: Starbucks High-Protein Beverage Innovation

Source: (Food & Wine, 2025)

Market Development

Starbucks is developing markets in 2025 as the company enters six new Latin American cities, increasing to 1,000 stores in Mexico and opens a flagship community coffeehouse in El Salvador, increasing local connexion and regional representation using community-oriented formats and collaborations (Starbucks , 2025b).

Diversification

In 2025, Starbucks diversified into the ready-to-drink (RTD) coffee category, which is projected to be USD 38.5 billion by 2025, as it aligns product diversification with a trend in on-the-go drinking coffee and luxury beverages (Future Market Insights, 2025).

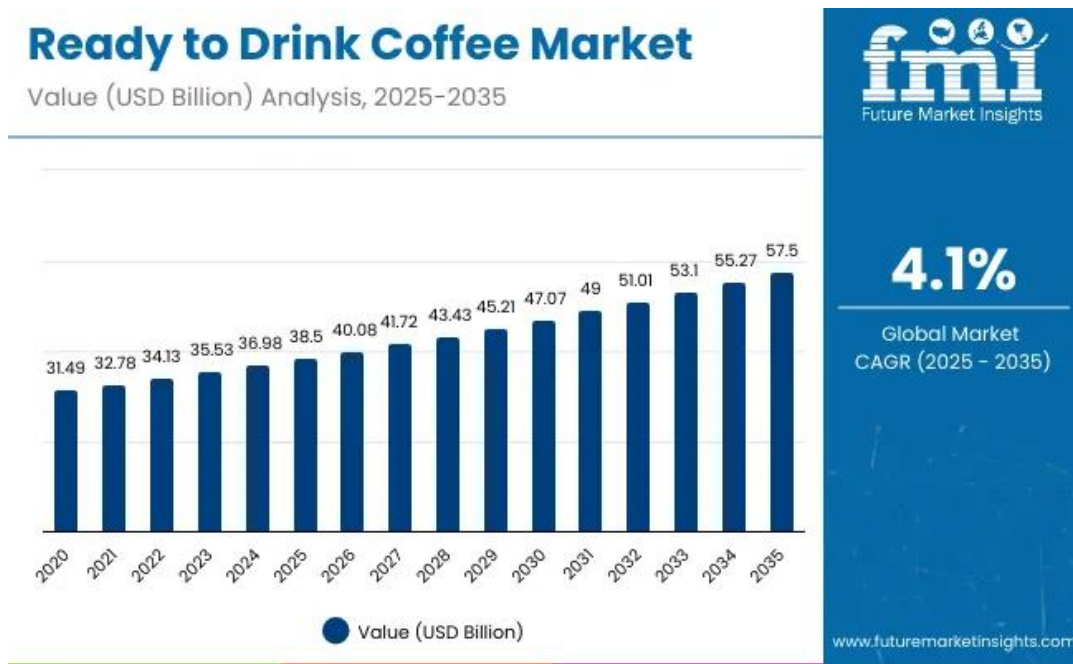


Fig: RTD Coffee Market

Source 07: (Future Market Insights, 2025)

3.1.3 Applying Porter's Generic Strategy Framework to Competitive Positioning

Cost Leadership

In an effort to achieve cost leadership in 2025, Starbucks, as part of a USD 1 billion restructuring effort to reduce costs to enhance efficiency in the face of competition, sought to streamline operations, shutter non-performing stores, and cut corporate positions (Starbucks, 2025a).

Differentiation

Starbucks differentiation strategy in 2025 include focus on high-end store experiences, third place atmosphere, and culturally specific loyalty programmes, establishing high emotional customer value.

Cost Focus

In 2025, Starbucks applied a cost-focus strategy in China by reducing prices on certain beverages by an average of 5 yuan to appeal to price-sensitive customers in the face of strong domestic competition to boost afternoon flows without launching an overall price cut (Reuters Staff, 2025).

Differentiation Focus

Starbucks employs a differentiation focus by creating high-end specialty products to serve upscale consumers in urban areas since the specialty coffee market across the globe has reached USD 111.5 billion in 2025 due to its unique store experiences demand value over simple cafe products (Factmr, 2025).

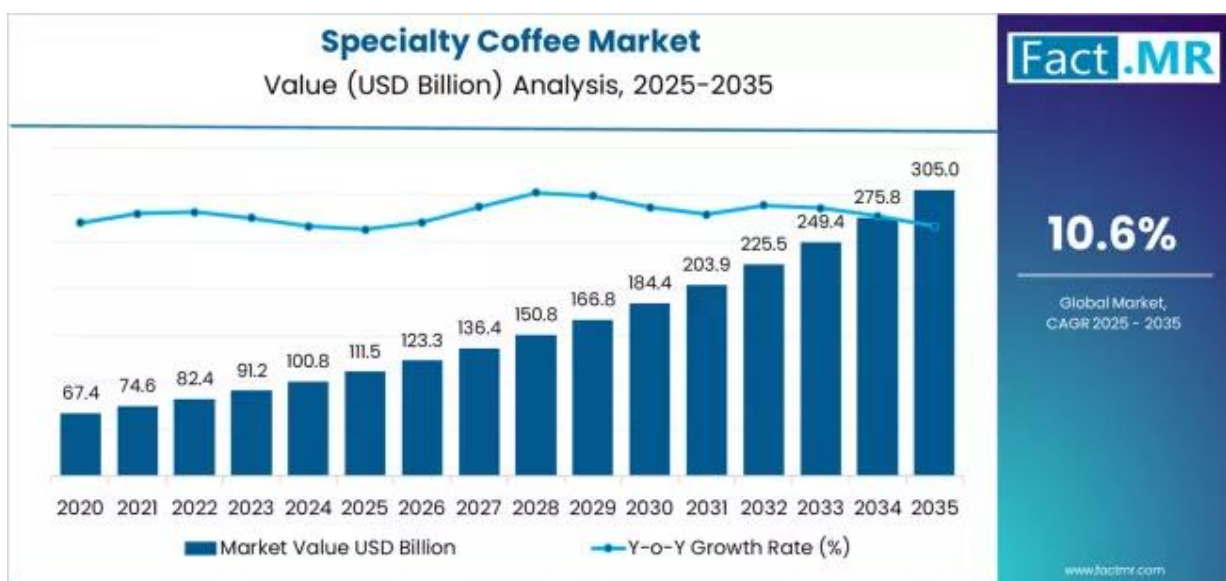


Fig 08: Speciality Coffee Market (2025-2035)

Source: (Factmr, 2025)

3.2 Strategic Responses Costa Coffee

3.2.1 Analysis of Strategic Adjustments Implemented by Costa Coffee

Table: 2

Follower Adaptation	Strategic	Details
Enhanced engagement	loyalty	The Costa Coffee Club loyalty app was modernised to enhance customer experience in the digital realm and personalised rewards to enhance customer retention and app usage by providing more relevant offers (Roksandic, 2025).
Global focus	expansion	The brand is also focusing on high growth markets like India where it expects to add 40-50 new stores every year and take 49% revenue growth locally through adaptation to consumer demands (Janberg, 2025).

3.2.2 Strategic Application of Ansoff's Growth Matrix Framework

Market Penetration

In the year 2025, Costa Coffee increased the market penetration by speeding up expansion and local sales development since revenue growth went up to 30.76% in India to INR 198.5 crore by promoting the outlet expansion and consumer engagement in the key markets (The Economic Times, 2025).

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Synopsis

Costa Coffee saw significant growth in India. Revenue rose by 30.76 percent. Profit increased by 28.4 percent. The company opened more stores, reaching 220 outlets. However, margins slightly decreased due to inflation. The brand aims to be among Costa's top five global markets. India's coffee market is growing rapidly. Costa Coffee is expanding in high-traffic areas.



British [coffee chain](#) brand Costa Coffee's India revenue from operations surged 30.76 per cent to Rs 198.5 crore in FY25, and its profit rose 28.4 per cent to Rs 149.7 crore.

The growth was driven by store expansion, as the number of outlets



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Fig 09: Costa Coffee India FY25 Revenue Growth and Sales Performance

Source: (The Economic Times, 2025)

Product Development

In 2025, Costa Coffee increased product development by creating its self-serve range, allowing the 7,000-plus Costa Express machines to serve both coffee and hot tea options, which has never been offered before, making the development more convenient and customer-choice friendly than ever (McGuire, 2025).

Market Development

In the 2025 market development, Costa Coffee plans to grow the market by 36 net new stores, 21 of which will be drive-thrus, and by increasing the number of outlets in high-footfall travel destinations, allowing greater access and competitive coverage of areas beyond core urban centres (Allegra Intelligence, 2026).

Diversification

In 2025, Costa Coffee grew beyond the cafe to UK branded coffee shop market segments where total sales topped 11,456 outlets totalling £6.1 billion and created avenues to broaden its services into drive-through, travel retail and value segments to tap into wider consumer interest (Pearce, 2025).

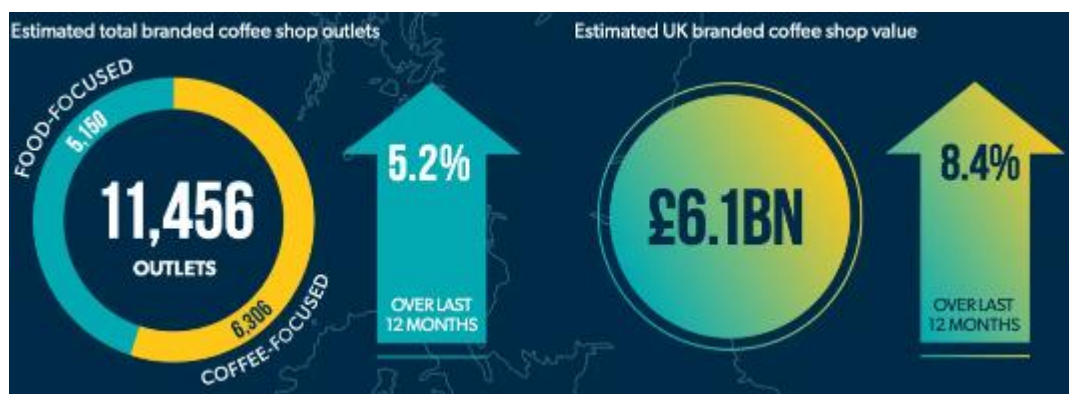


Fig 10: UK Branded Coffee Shop Market Size and Outlet Growth (2025)

Source: (World Coffee Portal, 2025)

3.2.3 Analytical Use of Porter's Generic Strategy Framework

Cost Leadership

Costa Coffee uses cost leadership to offer competitive prices in the coffee market of the UK, with its 2,663 stores having a 38.3 %age share in 2025, which allows it to offer value-based features that help maintain volume sales and competitive pricing (Lumina Intelligence, 2025).

Differentiation

Costa Coffee focuses on differentiation by promoting more personalised loyalty experiences by growing the number of apps by about 42% across significant markets, which drove sales to grow by about 8 %, enhancing its value proposition over other price players as well as accessibility of customers (Warc, 2025).

Cost Focus

The 2025 cost focus by Costa Coffee involved drive through, throughput efficiency, and value customers, with 12% reduction in service minutes achieved across the applied sites, which led to competitive positioning against the premium competitors (Hassan and Rukiman, 2025).

Differentiation Focus

Costa Coffee utilises a differentiation strategy by providing premium, experience-based services within the growing UK branded cafe market, where new drinks and designed store experiences will help it stand out of cheaper players in the £6.6 billion market by 2025 (IBISWorld, 2025).

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 Summary of Key Findings from Both Tasks

This report discussed coffeehouse responsiveness of Starbucks and Costa Coffee in the global market macro-environment. Task 1 has shown that political, economic, technological, and environmental factors have a significant impact in the pricing, sourcing, operations, and customer engagement. First-mover advantages will enable Starbucks to gain an edge regarding a highly-developed digital framework and sustainability leadership, and Costa will be able to alter and adjust to the market with the tested technologies and scalable business models. The technological change and environmental sustainability proved to be the strongest external force of the competitive positioning and the strategic priorities.

4.2 Strategic Importance of Environmental Analysis and Adaptive Marketing Strategies

The study creates the conception that continuous environmental scan assists companies to anticipate risks and capitalise upon the business opportunities effectively. The long-term brand equity of Starbucks is supported by the differentiation and innovation poles, yet selective diversification and cost-effectiveness of Costa makes it more affordable and accessible to a broader audience. The two organisations demonstrate that competitive sustainability demands a response in adaptive marketing supported by the Growth Matrix of Ansoff and the Generic Strategies developed by Porter. Overall, integration of external analysis in strategic planning improves organisational resilience, enables sustainable growth, and enables firms to respond to evolving consumer needs and mounting regulatory pressures in fluctuating global markets in advance.

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