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KFC: International Marketing in China and the United Kingdom

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1. Introduction

KFC is a recognizable brand across borders, but China and the United Kingdom demonstrate that recognizability is created with the help of variants of the same brand. KFC has become a localised digitally dense system of quick-service in China, but in the UK, it is a mature system of convenience-and-value brand in tighter health-related regulation and more sensitive to deals (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a; Office for National Statistics, 2026). The main argument is that the competitive edge of KFC is not due to localisation itself, but to the orientation of adaptation to the channel economics, regulatory, and trust-management imperatives in every market. This report explores the extent to which KFC is adapting in each market using PESTEL, Hofstede, STP, the 7Ps, Porters Generic Strategy in China, ethics, recommendations, and reflections (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Yuksel, 2012; Islami, Mustafa and Topuzovska Latkovikj, 2020; Gibbs and Great Britain Further Education Unit, 1988).

2. Company Background

KFC is a fried-chicken company whose brand image is based on a familiar flavour, the convenience of fast service and the Colonel legend. Within Yum! It is under a mission of grow the most loved, trusted and connected restaurant brands in the world and KFC has the mission of becoming the favorite fried chicken in the world (Yum! Brands, 2026; KFC Global, 2026). KFC has more than 1,000 restaurants in the United Kingdom employing over 33,500 people and ordering centres on dine in, take away, delivery and through an application (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b). Yum China operates the brand in China and by December 2024, the brand had a total of approximately 13,000 restaurants across almost 2,500 cities, becoming the largest quick-service restaurant brand by system sales in the country (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a).

This national couple demonstrates two manifestations of international logic of KFC. China is localised, has a high intensity of delivery, and wider service system, whereas the UK is

mature in the market, compares values, and has more scrutiny (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026d). The directional strategy part is thus best tested in China and the value protection is tested in the UK.

3. Comparative Macro-Environment Analysis: PESTEL

3.0 PESTEL Definition and Use

PESTEL simplifies the external factors by categorizing them into political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors to enable firms to decide whether a market is favorable or risky before the in-depth analysis of the strategy starts (Yuksel, 2012). In this case it has been used as a launching screen in KFC in China and the UK, but it is acknowledged that it cannot stand alone as a positioning or operational fit (Yuksel, 2012; Theodosiou and Leonis, 2003).

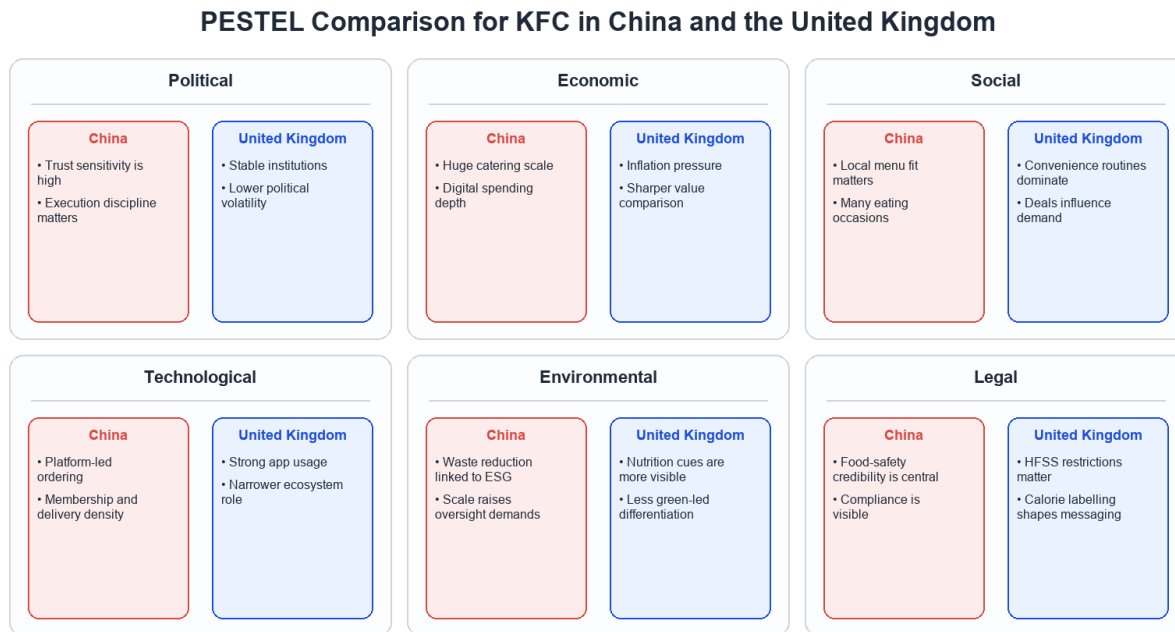


Figure 1: PESTEL framework adapted for KFC in China and the United Kingdom

Source: Section 3 citations.

3.1 Political and Legal Forces

China is appealing due to scale and depth of demand, but it is a market where food safety, credibility of regulations and operating discipline are all of central brand legitimacy. Food safety is now an integral part of the business according to Yum China, whereas an older

KFC China food-safety bulletin indicates that the brand has had to rebuild trust in public, as opposed to keeping it hidden (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d; Yum China / KFC China, 2013).

UK is more predictable institutionally but the regulatory environment is more stringent in its public-facing marketing activity. The advertising restrictions imposed by HFSS, the calorie-labelling regulations, and CAP advice on brand advertising limit the extent to which KFC can part the indulgent product communication and brand communication in paid media and online (Department of Health and Social Care, 2021; Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2026; Advertising Standards Authority and Committee of Advertising Practice, Both markets are easy to handle but China is more execution-sensitive and UK more communication-constrained.

3.2 Economic Forces

China continues to be economically appealing as the market is still huge and online. Reported national statistics include 2025, catering income of 5,798.2 billion yuan and online retail sales of 15,972.2 billion yuan, and Yum China Holdings, Inc. report still reflects scale benefits (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2026; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a). But scale is competition, as well.

This is not the case in the UK. It is a highly developed consumer market where restaurant and cafe inflation has been high and this justifies KFC focus on snack-box entry points, deals and app rewards (Office for National Statistics, 2026; KFC UK and Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK and Ireland, 2026c). The market remains favourable, although poor value communication is likely to be observed soon.

3.3 Social Forces

Social forces are particularly significant since KFC is marketing habit and convenient events just as it is selling chicken. Local breakfast, products launches in a region, and localisation of advertisements imply that in China, social acceptance relies on its ability to be read as culturally usable, and not necessarily only globally famous (Yum China

Holdings, Inc., 2022; Dong, 2024). Studies exploring the online-to-offline food delivery also reveal that convenience, incentives, taste appeal, and safety assurance influence adoption very forcefully (Wang and Scrimgeour, 2021).

The UK has a tight linkage between demand and convenience, habit, and sensitivity of promotion. Those who regularly use online food delivery services claim that the effort is minimised and offers are more significant than the disadvantages, which contributes to the popularity of the app, rewards, and deals of KFC (Keeble, Adams and Burgoine, 2022; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c). The two markets are equally socially favourable, although China and the UK have stronger rewards on local fit and reliable value, respectively.

3.4 Technological Forces

One of the strongest tools in China is technology since the digital consumption is a part of everyday life. Digital consumption is officially reported to have taken up 46.5% of household expenditure in the first half of 2025 and that the earnings of food-deliveries were over one trillion yuan, whereas the results of Yum China Holdings, Inc. indicate that the sales related to delivery comprised a very high percentage of the company sales (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2025; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b). The UK is also digitally developed, although the accent is smaller since the bigger platform environment is not as dominant as in China (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b).

3.5 Environmental Forces

Both markets can be seen to have environmental pressure, but it is not foregrounded equally in consumer-facing positioning. In China, the more recent social-impact and ESG communication connections relate waste management and business controls to business credibility (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025a; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d). In the UK, environmental differentiation is less significantly considered in the publicity compared to other areas such as nutrition, HFSS status, and responsible defaults (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026d).

3.6 PESTEL Favourability Summary

The two markets are favourable, yet they reward diverse logics of adaptation. China provides scale, digital depth and space to broad differentiation whereas the UK provides institutional stability but responds more quickly to weak value communication or bad compliance indicators (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2026; Office for National Statistics, 2026; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a).

Table 1: PESTEL favourability matrix for KFC in China and the United Kingdom

Factor	China	United Kingdom	Judgement
Political and legal	Large opportunity, but food-safety legitimacy and operational compliance matter strongly	Stable institutions, but tighter HFSS and calorie-labelling rules	China offers scale; the UK offers predictability
Economic	Large catering market and strong digital-retail growth	Mature market with persistent restaurant inflation	Both attractive, but the UK is more value-sensitive
Social	Local menu relevance and occasion breadth matter strongly	Convenience, routine use, and deals shape demand	China rewards localisation; the UK rewards dependable value

Technological	Dense digital-consumption ecosystem and very high delivery intensity	Strong app and delivery use, but a narrower platform role	China has the stronger technology advantage
Overall	Favourable but execution-heavy	Favourable but margin-sensitive	Both are viable, but they reward different forms of adaptation

Source: Section 3 citations.

4. Cultural and Consumer Behaviour Comparison: Hofstede

4.1 Comparative Hofstede Interpretation

Hofstede is not obsolete as it puts national inclinations and branding as well as communication decisions in a connection (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). The 6-D tool of the Culture Factor Group gives China 80/43/66/30/77/24 and the UK 35/76/66/35/60/69 in the long-term orientation, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, motivation towards achievement and success, and indulgence (The Culture Factor Group, 2026). Based on that, China may be interpreted as a more power distance and long-term oriented country whereas the UK is a more individualistic and indulgent one. This is one reason why KFC China emphasizes more on the symbolic aspects of local menu, but KFC UK remains more focused on a convenience-and-value presentation. Nonetheless, the ecology of platforms and regulation in the UK and China do not solely rely on culture: adaptation is also informed by these factors (de Mooij and Hofstede, 2010; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Dong, 2024; The Culture Factor Group, 2026).

Table 2: Hofstede 6-D scores for China and the United Kingdom

Dimension	China	United Kingdom
Power distance	80	35
Individualism	43	76
Motivation towards achievement and success	66	66
Uncertainty avoidance	30	35
Long-term orientation	77	60
Indulgence	24	69

Source: The Culture Factor Group (2026).

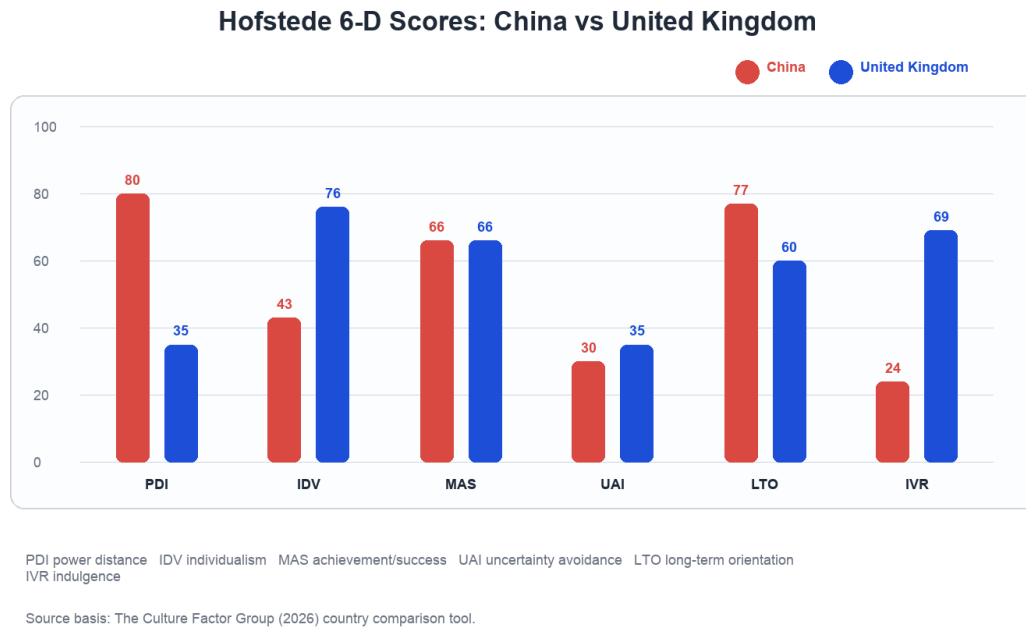


Figure 2: Hofstede-based cultural comparison between China and the United Kingdom]
Source: The Culture Factor Group (2026); author visualisation.

The most significant problem is the interpretation of brand signals by each market, as far as consumer behaviour is concerned. Local breakfast products, modified menus, and accessibility with plenty of platforms make KFC feel a part of the Chinese community instead of foreign and alien (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Wang and Scrimgeour, 2021). The impact of online delivery frequency in the UK is more strongly connected with low effort, habit and promotions, which contributes to the understanding of the power of reward-based communication (Keeble, Adams and Burgoine, 2022; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c). This is how KFC maintains a common brand core, albeit with varying market-based mechanisms of relevance.

4.2 Advantages and Limitations of Hofstede

The benefit of Hofstede lies in that it maintains the cultural comparison in an orderly manner. But the critique by McSweeney is important since the national culture is not able

to provide explanation of the platform economics, regulation as well as the variation within a country (McSweeney, 2002). Hofstede is therefore supposed to lead the interpretation as opposed to being a deterministic script. Here, it assists in understanding why the symbolism of local menus is more important in China and why easy individual choice is more important in the UK but the cultural explanation is not enough as the success of KFC is also based on the access to digital facilities, price framing, and quality of executing (McSweeney, 2002; Liu et al., 2021).

5. STP and Positioning Analysis

5.1 Segmentation

In both countries KFC has employed differentiated segmentation with the variables weighted differently. Geographic variation is a consideration in China due to the fact that the brand serves thousands of cities with the younger digital audience, urban family, breakfast consumers, snack buyers, and the delivery-based convenience seekers are separate occasions (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Wang and Scrimgeour, 2021). Psychographically, the offer needs to look to be modern but something that can be used locally. The logics of segmentation in the UK are more restrictive: convenience seekers, users of a deal through the app, purchasers of a group meal, and customers who value low effort and promotion are the primary figures of the visible target pool (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c; Keeble, Adams and Burgoine, 2022). China thus compensates breadth in most uses-cases, as compared to the UK, which compensates a more focused emphasis on repetitive value practices.

Table 3: Explicit segmentation variables used in the China and United Kingdom comparison

Variable type	China	United Kingdom
Geographic	multi-city spread and regional variation	national market with more standardised service expectations
Demographic	younger digital users and urban families	convenience-led adults, app users, and group meal buyers
Psychographic	modern but locally usable eating occasions	dependable value and low-friction convenience

Behavioural	breakfast, snack, delivery, and family-use occasions	deal response, app repeat use, and delivery convenience
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Source: Section 5 citations.

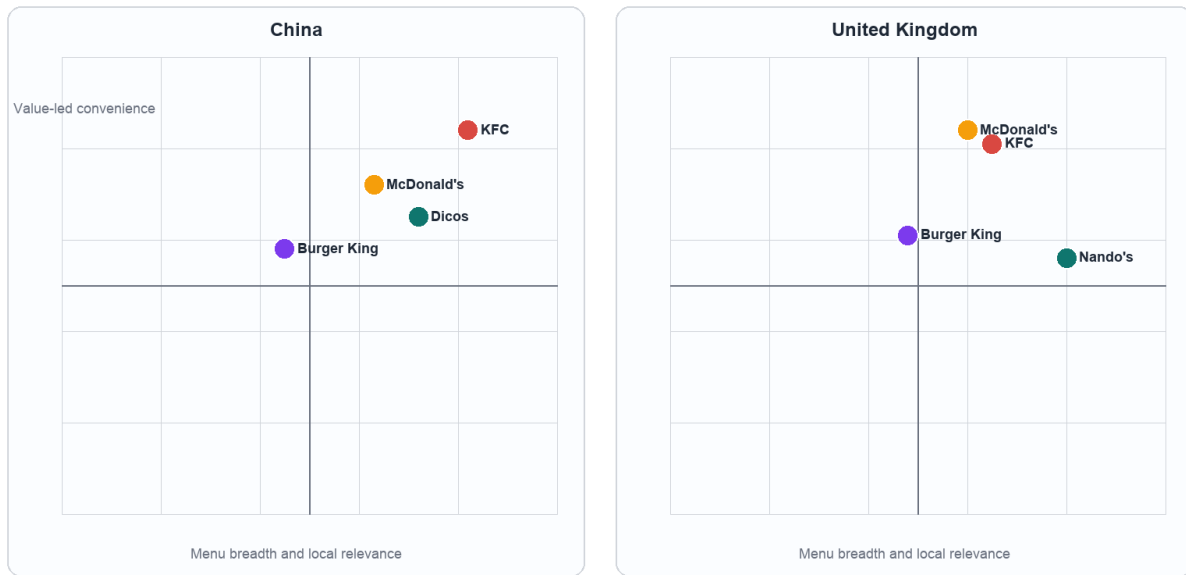
5.2 Targeting

The targeting strategy of both countries has some differences, yet China is more inclined towards broad differentiated targeting. KFC expands into both breakfast, snacks, coffee, family usage, and delivery based routine consumption, which would be appropriate in a market where the visibility of platforms favors brands that are useful in a wide range of occasions (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b). In the UK, the focus of targeting is more market-penetration logic-based, available luxury, reliable value, and recurrent conversion of apps are the top-performing, and the deals serve as the source of traffic and retention (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c).

5.3 Positioning and Perceptual Explanation

KFC is identifiable as the fried-chicken authoritative in both nations, but the perceptual reasoning is different. KFC China ranks higher than most rivals around the world on a spectrum of menu breadth and local relevance to value-led convenience due to its localised range coupled with high levels of digital access; that increases relevance but complexes the supply-chain (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Liu et al., 2021). In the UK, KFC is more conveniently positioned relative to McDonald but differentiates based on chicken-based familiarity and heavier value signalling the benefit is the increased clarity, but the cost is that the brand is commoditised by price, in case of becoming over-promotional, as well (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c; Keeble, Adams and Burgoine, 2022).

Perceptual Map of KFC Against Key Quick-Service Competitors



Positions are interpretive and based on the comparative evidence discussed in the report.

Figure 3: Perceptual map of KFC against key quick-service competitors in China and the United Kingdom] Source: Section 5 citations; author map.

6. Comparative International Marketing Mix (7Ps)

6.1 Standardised Brand Core Across Both Markets

An important brand core is still being standardised in China and the UK by KFC. The brand of fried chicken, fast-service accessibility, familiar visual identity, and bundle-based meal logic has been maintained in both markets, and both are based on online ordering to maintain a consistent contact with the consumers (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a). This is important as KFC succeeds not by being generic in every country but by retaining the core and adjusting the ways in which value, occasions and trust are realized in the local context (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003; Liu et al., 2021).

6.2 Offer and Value Architecture: Product + Price

In China adaptation of products is much deeper. Localisation, according to Yum China, is a strategy of strategic focus, where the Chinese breakfast products, regionally-inspired menu items, and a product-renewal cycle are developed to expand the instances when KFC is a preferred choice (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a). This expanse is suitable in a market where cultural proximity and utilisation are as important as global familiarity. The UK product system is more limited since the focus is more on the well-known favourites, packages and convenient decision-making as opposed to local menu symbolism (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c).

The other role that price plays in each market is different. Price is an aspect of communication in the UK. Promotional-pricing, market-penetration logic is observed in a mature market where there is inflation pressure (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; KFC UK and Ireland, 2026c; Office for National Statistics, 2026). China is never price-indifferent, but the more compelling narrative is that KFC is establishing value by providing a broad, locally applicable offering that is offered via a comprehensive service network and not by a primarily discount-based one (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Gallarza-Granizo, Ruiz-Molina and Schlosser, 2020). China expands breakfast, coffee, and chicken

occasions to more dayparts depth-and-width wise, compared to the UK, which maintains slim width to defend on simplicity (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; KFC UK & Ireland, 2026a). China thus enhances value based on breadth and local fit whereas the UK on visible affordability. The trade-off is that the wider menu of China brings with it complexity in operation and the UK with its deal-based clarity has been able to condition consumers to wait till they are offered a promotion.

6.3 Channel and Service Architecture: Place + Process + People

The largest market gap is present in place and process. China is the place where digital consumption is highly integrated and delivery expenditures are enormous and channel design is a competitive advantage, as opposed to a support mechanism (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2025; National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2026). The 2025 performance of Yum China indicates that delivery has provided a very high proportion of sales, whereas investor-day communication has offered digital capability as a part of the competitive moat of this firm (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b). The place strategy of KFC China is thus a highly choreographed one: restaurants, delivery, membership, coffee add-ons, local menu discovery collaborate. That is structural channel strength in that data, membership and fulfilment are reinforced.

The situation in the UK is also reliant on digital access, however, the issue of service is different. The application, reward system, and delivery channels are important, but the stress lies more on consistency of fulfilment and smooth-sailing implementation than creating a massive multi-occasion ecosystem (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026b; Shankar et al., 2024). Service quality is a reliable source of satisfaction in all cultures in quick-service restaurants, indicating that KFC UK cannot solely use offers as the motivator when service delivery fails (Gallarza-Granizo, Ruiz-Molina and Schlosser, 2020). China, on the other hand, requires people and processes to maintain trust on a large scale, particularly due to the history of food-safety concern (Yum China / KFC China, 2013; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d). China is more adaptive in terms of channel and process whereas

the UK is more reliant on reliable performance and thus its channel model is more readily copied.

6.4 Communication and Experience Architecture: Promotion + Physical Evidence

The most appropriate approach in this case is integrated marketing communication, in that the process should be considered as a whole, and not as a series of individual advertisements (Kliatchko, 2008; Mulhern, 2009). Localisation, cultural symbolism, and platform visibility are all used to construct communication in China, and hence IMC is an all-on discovery mechanism, and not a campaign-only feature (Dong, 2024; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022). In the UK, communication is more operant: app rewards, offers, nutrition cues, and responsible defaults are doing a lot of the work, whereas the promotion of the products so indulgent cannot be done in the paid media due to the HFSS rules (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026d; Advertising Standards Authority and Committee of Advertising Practice, 2025; Committee of Advertising Practice, 2026). That reduces creative freedom but also forces clearer separation between brand salience and product temptation. Physical evidence adheres to the same reasoning: in China it helps to scale and reassure; in UK it helps to be clear and to demonstrate visible compliance.

6.5 Key Adaptation Judgement

KFC balances recognisability and localises menu breadth, channel design, service choreography, and value communication unequally in the two markets. This is important since it is not just the product adaptation that will enable it to engage in the international market, but a combination of offer, channel and communication architecture (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003; Liu et al., 2021).

Table 4: Clustered 7Ps comparison for KFC in China and the United Kingdom

Cluster	China	United Kingdom	Strategic reading
Standardised brand core	Recognisable KFC identity with chicken-led familiarity	Recognisable KFC identity with chicken-led familiarity	Brand sameness is retained in both markets
Offer and value architecture	Broader localisation, breakfast depth, stronger occasion range	Narrower menu logic, stronger visible-value signalling	China differentiates through breadth; the UK through value clarity
Channel and service architecture	Delivery-heavy, membership-led, digitally dense system	App-enabled convenience with stronger emphasis on fulfilment consistency	China adapts process more deeply
Communication and experience architecture	Cultural resonance and platform visibility	Offers, rewards, nutrition cues, and regulation-shaped messaging	The UK communicates under tighter promotional limits

Source: Section 6 citations.

7. Directional Development Strategy in China: Porter's Generic Strategy

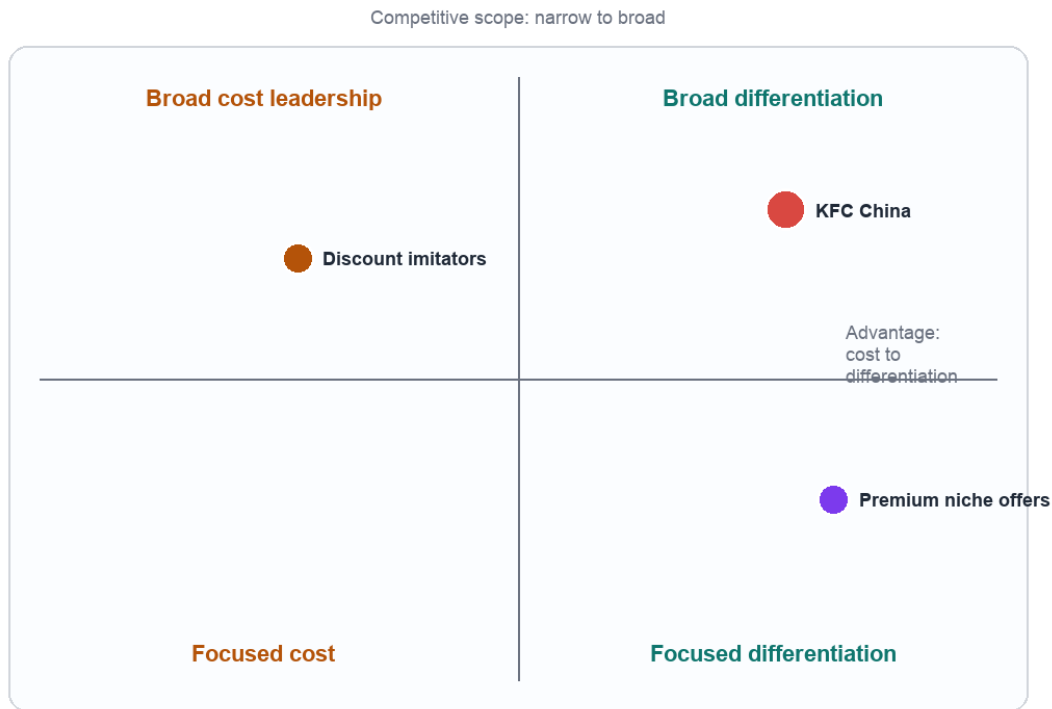
7.1 Framework Definition and Rationale

The generic strategies describe how companies seek a competitive advantage by cost leadership, differentiation, or focus, though subsequent studies indicate that actual performance is based on whether the selected approach is coherent or on textbook purity (Islami, Mustafa and Topuzovska Latkovikj, 2020). China is the more robust location where this model can work since the level of localisation of KFC, product renewal, location visibility, and scale can be seen more clearly in China compared to the more developed and value-squeezed UK market (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a).

7.2 Application to KFC China

KFC China can be considered as a wide differentiator. It is neither a small premium player nor is it basing on a simple low-cost offering. Rather, it leverages a familiar chicken core, wide-ranging localisation, intensive digitalisation, and national scale to make the brand familiar and helpful in the local daily life (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2022; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Dong, 2024). The local relevance at scale, instead of exclusivity, is differentiated in the breakfast range, design of regional menu, intensity of delivery, and the large membership ecosystem (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b).

Porter's Generic Strategy Positioning for KFC in China



Interpretation: KFC China sits in the broad-differentiation space because scale, localisation, and digital access create advantage without requiring the market's lowest price.

Figure 4: Porter's Generic Strategy positioning for KFC in China

Source: Section 7 citations.

7.3 Critical Evaluation

The model by Porter has limitations due to the fact that quick-service markets that are platform-intensive make the distinction between value, convenience and differentiation unclear (Islami, Mustafa and Topuzovska Latkovikj, 2020). Nevertheless, it is still applicable here since it compels a directional judgement. Based on the balance of evidence, KFC China competes by ensuring that local relevance is easy to select on numerous occasions, rather than being the lowest cost provider in the market. The negative is that wide differentiation is costly: an increased menu selection, a wider supply-chain, training of service personnel all increase the risk of coordination, and thus the same breadth that creates relevance may weaken execution in the case of slow-moving trust systems.

8. Ethical Issues in KFC's Marketing Mix

8.1 Ethical Examples in the Chosen Focus Country

China is the better country in the ethics segment since the problems directly relate to the current quality of marketing offered by KFC and its trust baggage. The positive example would be the Food Bank program, which repackages the surplus food and distributes it at over 1,000 locations in over 180 cities and demonstrates that the operational scale can be associated with a decrease in waste and value to the community (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025a). The second favorable case is the focus on food safety and digital control at Yum China, such as AI-supported monitoring and early-warning technologies that enhance the quality control at the store level (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d). These instances are important since they relate ethics to product and process as opposed to generic claims of CSR (Murphy, 2017).

8.2 Unethical or Contested Examples in the Chosen Focus Country

The heritage of food-safety trust in China is the most disputed one. As evidenced in the previous food-safety bulletin of KFC China, the company was forced to discuss the issue of risk management and corrective action in the supply chain directly, which implies that the ethical issue at hand was not only technical but reputational (Yum China / KFC China, 2013). A second opposed problem is a frictionless consumption of digital. The performance of KFC China indicates that the participation in delivery is very high and broader delivery studies indicate that incentives, low effort and perceived value might increase routine use (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026b; Shankar et al., 2024). That is a commercial force to reckon with, yet it also begs the question of how much of a nudge should be based on convenience.

8.3 Ethics-to-7Ps Mapping

The most practical ethical judgement is thus conditional and not a celebratory one. Substantive waste and safety systems can be cited by KFC China, yet it cannot be deemed entirely ethical as long as trust repair remains reactive to some extent and digital

convenience continues to be employed to add to the habitual consumption. (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025a; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d; Murphy, 2017).

Table 5: Ethics examples mapped to relevant 7Ps elements for KFC in China

Issue	Ethical reading	7Ps link
Food Bank initiative	Positive use of scale to reduce waste and widen access	Product, Process, Physical Evidence
AI-supported food-safety oversight	Positive because it strengthens trust and quality control	Process, People, Physical Evidence
Legacy supplier and safety controversy	Negative because product credibility and brand trust were weakened	Product, Process, Promotion
Incentive-heavy digital delivery and easy ordering	Contested because convenience can intensify impulsive consumption	Place, Process, Promotion, Price

Source: Section 8 citations.

9. Strategic Recommendations

The recommendations are split by country because the strategic problem is not the same in China and the UK.

9.1 Recommendations for China

1. KFC China ought to reduce product innovation to menu lines, which integrate localisation and repeatability and monitor them using service-reliability KPIs, as opposed to novelty itself (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d).
2. Internal control should be presented as a visual trust signal by ensuring that the brand is called out in entertainment food-safety and ingredient-assurance cues during app checkout, delivery-tracking and pick-up screens (Yum China / KFC China, 2013; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d).
3. These are the recommendations that KFC continues with platform visibility but changes more of the app communication towards quality, breakfast, and coffee events to ensure that demand is not over-trained to respond to discounts (Shankar et al., 2024; Dong, 2024).

9.2 Recommendations for the United Kingdom

1. KFC UK ought to defend the value with more explicit entry-price bundles and rewards via the app as opposed to frequent deep discounting, which would sustain volume but would not complete commoditisation of the brand (KFC UK & Ireland, 2026c; Office for National Statistics, 2026).
2. Order accuracy, wait time, and the use of the app as brand metrics used by the UK business (in manager scorecards) should be the responsibility of the UK business since fulfilment consistency is included in the positioning itself (Keeble, Adams and Burgoine, 2022; Gallarza-Granizo, Ruiz-Molina and Schlosser, 2020).
3. KFC UK ought to address pressure on HFSS and calorie-labeling by redesigning menu boards and app journeys around more frequent default, lighter swaps, and cleaner brand-level messages instead of reactive compliance edits (Department

of Health and Social Care, 2021; Committee of Advertising Practice, 2026; KFC UK and Ireland, 2026d).

9.3 Trade-Off Note

The primary trade-off in both markets is a trade-off between local relevance, complexity of operations and brand coherence. Further adaptation can enhance relevance, but may increase coordination pressure (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003; Liu et al., 2021).

Table 6: Operational accountability cues for implementing the country recommendations

Country	Priority	Primary owner	First review signal
China	Localisation with repeatability	Marketing and Operations	repeat sales of localised SKUs; service reliability
China	Digital trust and safety cues	Quality Assurance and Digital	complaint recurrence; trust-cue visibility in app journeys
United Kingdom	Value architecture without over-discounting	Marketing and Finance	promoted-order margin; entry-bundle mix
United Kingdom	Fulfilment consistency as positioning	Operations and Digital	order accuracy; wait time; app drop-off

Source: Section 9 analysis.

10. Conclusion

The comparison reveals that KFC has its strength in international marketing based on its coordinated partial adaptation instead of mere standardisation. China is the larger market due to scale and online integration providing space on a large scale to differentiate, but it is also more execution-sensitive as trust and the quality of the processes become critical at scale (Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2025b; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026a; Yum China Holdings, Inc., 2026d). UK is more stable but more margin sensitive due to inflation, HFSS restriction, and comparative of a deal, KFC is forced to lean towards more value communication and higher fulfilment consistency (Office for National Statistics, 2026; Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2026; KFC UK and Ireland, 2026c). The sameness in KFC is effective, as the menu, channels, communication signals, and trust signals are articulated in different ways across markets (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003; Liu et al., 2021).

11. Reflective Account: Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

The reflective cycle of Gibbs helps me to discuss my approach to this assignment, what I got to know during the process and what I will do differently in a similar assignment in the future (Gibbs and Great Britain Further Education Unit, 1988).

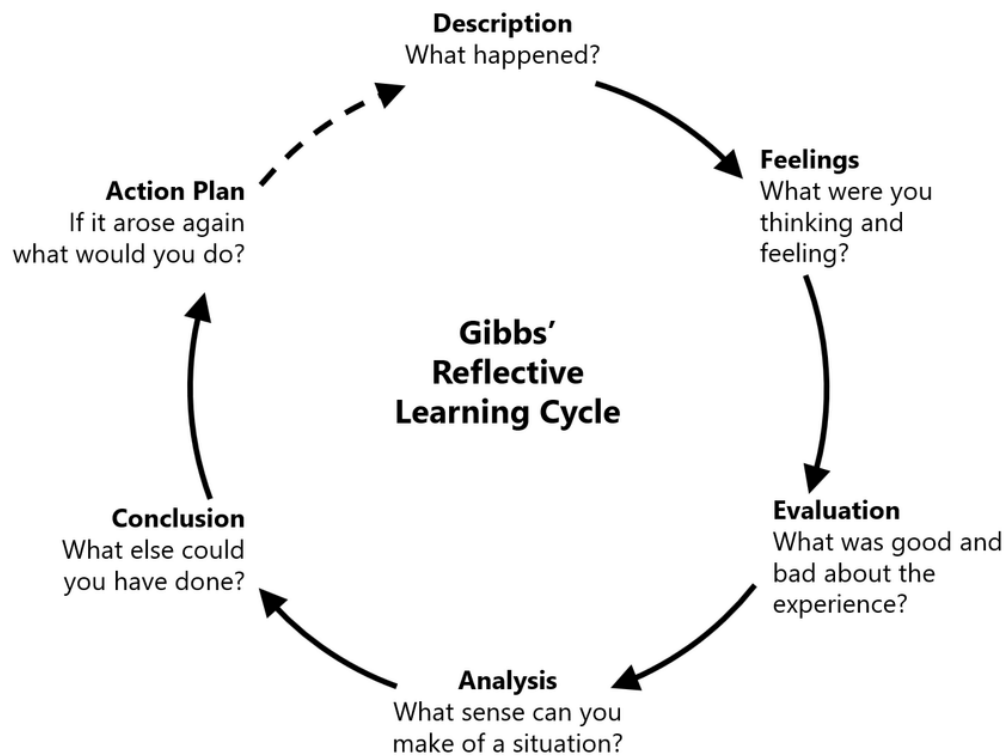


Figure 6. Gibb's Reflective Cycle (Medium, 2023)

11.1 Description

This task involved the analysis of KFC in China and the UK and comparing the adaptation of marketing of one global brand in two very different settings. Initially, I thought that gathering existing evidence was to be my biggest challenge. Practically, the more difficult task was to make decisions concerning how to employ the frameworks without making the report too descriptive. I was required to lay out the information about regulation, culture, digital ordering, pricing, and consumer behaviour and then make it a single argument instead of a series of unrelated parts.

11.2 Feelings

I felt differently in the process. Initially, I was quite confident since KFC is not a new brand, and the primary models were not new to me. That confidence faded as I started to write, since I could see how easy it was to get the work becoming framework-led rather than analytical. And when some of the earlier paragraphs began to sound like an explanation in a textbook instead of my own opinion, I was in a state of vexation. But as I started relating digital ecosystems in China to value-led competition in UK, I became more involved as the comparison began to seem like it was more than mechanical.

11.3 Evaluation

The good thing about my method was that I did not base on a single type of source. The company reports, government directives, market data and journal articles were useful in testing my assumptions that the claims made by KFC were supported by a broader evidence. The other strength was that it became easier to compare the two frameworks when I assumed that each framework was addressing a different question. The weaker aspect of my process was however the first draft of some of the parts of the process, particularly culture and STP where I was overly preoccupied with covering the model and not necessarily making a judgement. This made the paper slow up as I was now required to trim overrun and sharpen the argument.

11.4 Analysis

This experience taught me that good international marketing analysis does not have to have a large number of frameworks applied but rather depends on how well each of the frameworks is applied. PESTEL allowed me to compare the external pressures in China and the UK, but not the consumer meaning or brand choice on its own, which justifies the opinion of Yuksel on the framework but does not give a precise picture of the environmental forces, when they are not accompanied with more detailed analysis (Yuksel, 2012). Hofstede helped in the organisation of cross-country differences, but the criticism of McSweeney was, nonetheless, significant since culture as a factor alone could not be used to explain KFC in China; the other factors that influenced the behaviour were platform economics, convenience, and reach (McSweeney, 2002). I also understood that

STP and the 7Ps got even stronger when I stepped even further and enquired what each difference meant to profitability, performance, and brand management. To that extent, the assignment became better as I was no longer using the models as content; I was now using them as evaluation tools.

11.5 Conclusion

On the whole, the task helped me to better understand how the local circumstances limit the choice of international marketing in the situation when the brand is globally familiar. The key thing that I learned is that I should not just compare but have a reason as to why a difference matters and what trade-off it brings. I also came to know that I should reflect on what I really had a problem with doing in the course of the work, but not merely a summary of the steps I took.

11.6 Action Plan

In case I did a similar assignment in the future, I would begin the definition of the central argument and then write separate parts. I would also develop a more elaborate planning grid that depicts the role of every framework, the evidences to be used to support every claim and the exact point of comparison between the two countries. In research, I would seek contradictory evidence prior to the research so that by the time of evaluation, I would have put it into the draft. Lastly, I would allot more time to formulate the reflective part in my own words, in such a way that it sounds like an account of learning, as opposed to the continuation of the analytical conversation (Gibbs and Great Britain Further Education Unit, 1988).

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