

# Analysis of KFC's Marketing Strategy on the Short Video Platform

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**Abstract.** The target of this investigation and analysis is KFC, which is an internationally famous fast-food brand founded in the United States and has a strong market share all over the world with a huge international customer base. This study is mainly about the marketing strategy of KFC. To be precise, KFC's marketing strategy using short video platform and the effectiveness of current methods. With the advent of the new media era, short video is one of the most fancy and effective marketing channels. Therefore, KFC's research goal was to identify key aspects of its marketing strategy on short video platforms and evaluate how KFC currently utilizes these platforms for promotions. To achieve the set objectives, the methodology will employ two research methods. A literature survey, including academic and trade publications, will be conducted to gain insight into the use of short video platforms in marketing strategies such as KFC; In addition, a case study of KFC's short video marketing campaign will be conducted to measure its impact and effectiveness.

**Keywords:** KFC, Marketing Strategies, Short Video Platforms, Digital Marketing Campaigns, Brand Engagement Strategies, and Consumer Behavior.

## 1. Introduction

KFC, also known as Kentucky Fried Chicken, is an iconic global fast-food brand established in 1952 by Colonel Harland Sanders in the United States. Since then, the brand has spread into numerous countries with its signature fried chicken offerings and delectable desserts[1]. Over time, this fast-food giant has built up an enviable customer base around the globe and established itself as a prominent player within the fast-food industry.

The target of this investigation is KFC, an internationally acclaimed fast-food brand founded in the US with an impressive international customer base. The primary research question for KFC lies in understanding its marketing strategy leveraging short video platforms and the effectiveness of its current approach [2]. The research goals for KFC are to identify critical aspects of its marketing strategy on short video platforms and assess how KFC currently utilizes these platforms for promotional purposes [3]. To meet set objectives, the method that will employ two research methods [4,5]. A literature survey will be undertaken, including both academic and industry publications, to gain insight into short video platforms' usage in marketing strategies such as KFC's; furthermore, case analyses of KFC's short video marketing campaigns will be carried out to measure their impact and effectiveness.

Short video platforms have emerged as game-changers in modern marketing, revolutionizing how brands engage their target audiences. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts provide users with engaging videos featuring captivating images [6]. Their user-friendly interfaces and algorithm-driven content discovery have quickly earned these platforms widespread acclaim among viewers of all demographics. Marketing-wise, short video platforms present brands with unique opportunities for engaging their target consumers more interactively and authentically. Through short videos, brands can showcase products, launch creative campaigns and engage in user-generated content initiatives [7]. Furthermore, short videos foster a sense of urgency by inviting audience participation--making this form of video advertising ideal for limited-time offers or user-generated content initiatives.

This study analyzes KFC's marketing strategy on short video platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, with specific attention paid to TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube

Shorts. The primary objectives are to uncover critical aspects of their approach, and brand engagement assessments, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of KFC's approach and product lines. The research will evaluate KFC's use of video content across these platforms regarding themes, messaging, and formats while measuring user engagement and consumer response. This study will look into KFC's operations in China over the last three to five years using data gleaned from academic publications, case analyses, and consumer feedback [8]. This investigation seeks to provide valuable insight into enhancing marketing strategies on short video platforms for global brands like KFC.

This research assesses KFC's marketing strategy on short video platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, including TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. In particular, it will investigate their recent three to five-year content and campaigns from China, given KFC's significant market presence [9]. Data will be drawn from academic/industry publications/case analyses/ consumer feedback to provide valuable knowledge applicable to short video marketing strategies on global brands like KFC [10]. Finally, it hopes to offer valuable knowledge applicable to digital short video platforms used by international brands such as KFC in China, which could benefit digital strategies.

This research will employ a mixed-method approach, using literature survey and case analysis methods, to investigate KFC's marketing strategy on short video platforms in detail.

An extensive literature survey will review relevant academic and industry publications, scholarly articles, reports, and marketing studies covering short video marketing platforms in modern marketing - with their evolving strategies employed by global brands - providing a theoretical foundation and understanding. Furthermore, this stage will also examine best practices, challenges, and consumer behaviour trends related to short video marketing.

The case analysis will assess KFC's marketing activities on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts in China over the last three to five years [11]. Through examination of short video campaigns on these platforms, in order to identify themes, messaging techniques, and types of videos used by KFC to engage their target audiences. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as user engagement metrics and consumer feedback, will also be utilized as key performance metrics (KPIs) [12].

## **2. Background and Introduction to KFC**

KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) is an iconic global fast-food brand that has left an indelible mark since it launched. KFC can trace its success back to 1952 when Colonel Harland Sanders introduced his secret blend of eleven herbs and spices that revolutionized fried chicken. KFC opened its first restaurant in North Corbin, Kentucky, USA, the same year; popularity quickly skyrocketed among consumers worldwide. After decades of satisfying consumers worldwide with its signature "finger-lickin' good" taste, KFC became one of the leading global fast-food franchises, quickly growing into an international fast-food giant. Recognizable by its red and white logo, it quickly established itself as an icon representing quick, delicious dining across continents, becoming a household name.

KFC's rapid global expansion can be traced to its commitment to consistent quality and taste, achieved via franchising. As KFC established itself in different markets via franchising, local tastes were considered while keeping core offerings constant. Nowadays, they operate across numerous nations catering to an ever-increasing fan base who appreciate its signature blend of flavours. As digital technology revolutionized marketing practices and customer interactions, fast food companies faced new marketing and brand engagement opportunities and challenges. Social media and digital advertising platforms provided businesses new ways to connect with their customers through personalized and interactive interactions; consumer behaviour also altered significantly, leading to short video platforms emerging and becoming powerful marketing tools.

## 2.1. Time to Enter China

KFC's entry into China marked an essential landmark on its international expansion journey. Dating back to 1987 when KFC opened their first restaurant in Beijing - becoming one of the first Western fast-food chains following China's economic reforms and opening-up policy when China transitioned from a planned to market economy which presented both opportunities and obstacles to foreign businesses attempting to operate there.

KFC's success and growth in the Chinese market can be attributed to several key elements. As one of the first Western fast-food chains to enter China, KFC gained an early mover advantage, captivating consumers searching for unique culinary experiences. KFC used its pioneering status to foster positive associations between its fast-food products and rapid economic reforms and local tastes (KFC has since acknowledged this importance). KFC successfully expanded its Chinese customer appeal by tailoring its menu offerings to local preferences while remaining true to its core offerings, such as offering Chinese flavours in dishes like the Peking Duck Wrap and Egg Tarts infused with local flavours and ingredients. Through this localization strategy, they created dishes that resonated with Chinese palates, significantly increasing KFC's appeal among consumers.

Strategic partnerships and franchising played an instrumental role in KFC's rapid expansion across China. By working alongside local companies like Yum China Holdings, they enabled KFC to navigate regulatory complexity as well as cultural nuances successfully. KFC took advantage of joint ventures to tap the expertise and resources available from partners while maintaining control over brand operations. Furthermore, their unwavering emphasis on quality and consistency helped increase consumer trust in China. As KFC expanded, they invested in training and quality assurance measures designed to create an equitable experience at each store, drawing praise from Chinese customers who valued KFC's delicious cuisine. KFC's commitment to maintaining global standards cemented its standing as an industry leader in superior food products.

## 2.2. Store Growth Rate

KFC's rapid store expansion in China has been nothing short of astounding, establishing them as one of the country's premier and widespread fast-food chains. Their successful store growth strategy has significantly contributed to market penetration and brand visibility since entering 1987. At first, they focused on opening stores in major cities where consumer exposure and foot traffic were at their highest, later expanding further down into lower-tier cities and even smaller towns to reach out and capture previously unexploited markets, cementing themselves further as a go-to fast-food option among Chinese consumers.

KFC's store growth rate in China was ambitious and well-executed. Their ability to navigate the challenges associated with operating across a vast and varied market while consistently providing quality food and service was instrumental to its success. Prioritizing locations with high foot traffic allowed KFC to maximize visibility and accessibility while creating an advantage over rival brands. KFC's rapid store expansion has an outsized influence on market penetration and brand visibility in China. Increasing their footprint across urban and rural areas quickly became ubiquitous in the Chinese fast-food landscape. Their availability increased brand recognition for Chinese consumers regardless of location - facilitating repeat visits while building brand loyalty through the convenience of having KFC nearby.

## 2.3. Market Share in China

KFC has established itself as an impressive brand in China's fast-food industry, becoming a dominant player with outstanding market share and loyal consumers. KFC continues to capture hearts and tastebuds across China.

### 2.3.1. KFC's Market Share and Position in the Fast-Food Industry

KFC entered China in 1987, experiencing steady expansion across its restaurant network. KFC currently commands an impressive market share in Chinese fast food, competing closely with other

global fast-food chains for market supremacy. Early mover advantage and strategic store development played critical roles in solidifying KFC's position within this competitive industry [17]. KFC's success in China can be attributed to multiple factors, including its ability to adapt its menu according to local tastes and preferences, embrace Chinese culture in its marketing practices, and maintain consistent quality across its outlets. Furthermore, widespread visibility, convenient locations, and broad consumer appeal play vital roles in its market dominance.

### **2.3.2. Comparison with Competitors and Identification of Challenges**

KFC holds an impressive market share yet faces stiff competition from domestic and international fast-food chains looking for their share of China's vast consumer market. One such rival for KFC is McDonald's, another global fast-food giant that has long maintained an established presence here. Like KFC, McDonald's tailors its menus and marketing to address Chinese consumer tastes as part of a compelling fast-food rivalry. KFC faces domestic competition from local Chinese fast-food chains and regional brands who understand local tastes and nuances to create offerings that resonate with Chinese customers.

China's fast-food industry faces increasing competition from various emerging food delivery platforms that have experienced phenomenal growth over recent years. These platforms offer consumers multiple cuisines, from local to global; therefore, established fast-food chains like KFC must adapt their strategies in response to shifting market dynamics. Challenges arise due to changing consumer tastes and health-focused trends in China, where health is becoming a top concern, and demand is high for healthier foods. KFC must adapt its menu by offering indulgent fast-food items and healthier alternatives that meet this growing consumer trend while remaining relevant to customers' evolving demands.

## **3. Analysis of the Shortcomings of KFC's Marketing Strategy**

### **3.1. Regional Consumer Division Issues**

KFC's marketing strategy on short video platforms needs to improve its ability to cater to various regional cultures and preferences in China, an expansive nation with unique customs, cuisine, consumer behaviours, and customs from region to region. Therefore adapting marketing and product strategies in such regions requires careful thought KFC's regional consumer division issues can largely be traced to an all-or-nothing approach in their marketing content on short video platforms, with limited regional nuances on many of these videos that do not reflect precisely where their target audiences reside - leading them to feel excluded or ignored as individuals within them feel represented inadequately or do not find what they were seeking appealing or satisfying.

Content themes and messaging used on short video platforms may also differ based on regional preferences; campaigns promoting the celebration of traditional festivals might resonate more with consumers in one region than consumers from another cultural background. Cultural sensitivity is also paramount when engaging with audiences from diverse regional locations since certain symbols, gestures, or phrases may carry different connotations depending on where consumers reside; failing to consider these subtleties could result in misinterpretations or unintended offences.

### **3.2. Limited Social Media Marketing Channels**

KFC may appear limited on platforms like Douyin, Meituan, and Kuaishou due to its focus on these three channels for video marketing efforts. Although these three have large user bases within China, diversifying marketing channels could offer several benefits. KFC can extend its presence onto other popular social media platforms like Xiaohongshu, Facebook, and Instagram in order to reach a broader and more varied customer base, as these global-reaching channels attract international shoppers interested in experiencing Chinese KFC products - helping the brand expand globally while driving revenue growth.

KFC can draw inspiration from examples of brands that successfully diversify their marketing channels to serve as examples for KFC's efforts in diversifying its strategies. McDonald's, for instance, has successfully used platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Instagram to reach Chinese consumers while advertising its localized offerings. Such usage ensures a strong brand presence across various demographics, thus increasing brand recognition and loyalty. KFC can use multiple marketing channels to adapt its messaging and content for maximum impact and engagement. By tapping into social media's immense potential for reaching potential customers more directly and making its brand visible among new ones in today's fiercely competitive digital marketing arena.

## **4. Suggestions for Improvement and Innovation**

### **4.1. Localized Marketing Strategies**

KFC can improve and innovate its marketing strategy on short video platforms by employing localized campaigns with regional characteristics that tailor content and messaging specifically toward regional cultures and preferences. This approach increases audience engagement while strengthening brand connections. One idea would be creating "Taste of the Region" campaigns with KFC featuring short videos showcasing menu items inspired by regional flavors and ingredients, including limited-time offerings celebrating culinary traditions from different provinces or cities. Such campaigns can reinforce consumers' pride in local cuisine while building familiarity and attachment to the brand. Successful examples of localized marketing strategies can be seen in other brands' campaigns. Starbucks in China, for instance, has introduced regional-specific drink offerings inspired by ingredients and cultural themes native to each region, creating a sense of community for consumers while inspiring excitement around their brand. Fast food chains like Pizza Hut have introduced regionalized pizza flavours tailored to regional tastes and preferences.

### **4.2. Expanding Marketing Channels**

Expanding KFC's marketing presence across additional platforms such as Xiaohongshu, Facebook, and Instagram may bring numerous advantages and help the brand reach more target audiences. Xiaohongshu is an engaging social e-commerce platform in China used widely by young urban consumers interested in lifestyle, fashion, and travel. By tapping into its engaged community on this platform to promote its offerings to trend-conscious customers, KFC can tap into Xiaohongshu and capitalize on engaging its members. Facebook and Instagram are global social media powerhouses with massive international user bases, giving KFC the perfect opportunity to showcase its Chinese menu offerings to an international audience outside China - potentially drawing in tourists, expatriates, or curious consumers eager to try Chinese KFC products.

### **4.3. Targeting Middle-Aged and Elderly Customers**

KFC can effectively target middle-aged and elderly customers through various strategies. Utilizing demographic data to understand preferences and habits among these age groups will allow KFC to customize menu offerings and promotional campaigns accordingly, meeting customers' tastes and requirements. Businesses can appeal to older customers by implementing healthier menu offerings, offering senior discounts, and creating combo meals tailored to smaller appetites. Additionally, creating a warm and welcoming environment in-store by providing comfortable seating with accessible facilities can enhance their dining experience. Engaging this demographic through social media platforms or short videos with relatable content will further fortify brand loyalty and connection.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, KFC's marketing strategy analysis on short video platforms has revealed several key findings. The brand's early mover advantage, adaptation to local tastes, strategic partnerships,

and emphasis on quality have been instrumental in its successful establishment and growth in the Chinese market. However, challenges such as catering to diverse regional cultures, limited social media marketing channels, and reaching older demographics have been identified as areas for improvement.

To enhance KFC's marketing strategy, the proposed suggestions aim to address these shortcomings effectively. Implementing localized marketing campaigns that celebrate regional characteristics can foster a stronger emotional connection with consumers and reinforce brand loyalty. Expanding marketing channels to platforms like Xiaohongshu, Facebook, and Instagram can extend KFC's reach and engage domestic and international audiences. Targeting middle-aged and elderly customers with tailored offerings and promoting a welcoming dining environment can attract and retain this demographic, expanding KFC's consumer base. In the broader context, short video platforms have become increasingly significant in modern marketing. Their widespread adoption and popularity among consumers offer brands like KFC valuable opportunities to connect with audiences creatively and engagingly. Although the research has its limitations, it must acknowledge the results and research methods that were demonstrated by the author. By leveraging the power of short video content, brands can build brand awareness, drive consumer engagement, and shape consumer perceptions in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

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