

BRANDS COMMUNICATING IMAGES:
A STUDY OF *KFC* IN INDIA

Manal Magdy Mohammed Hassan¹
And
Udaya Narayana Singh²

ABSTRACT

Globalization has made the world smaller, affecting all aspects of life – from managing production, corporations and industries to opening of markets and competition, and in creating appropriate technologies. As a process through which products, people, ideas, culture, and capital, globalization leads to an integrative system. It has seen a rapid increase in cross-border movement of goods, services, technology, and capital. Today, many multinational corporations are seen crossing over to other countries by reworking on their priorities and product campaign. Their biggest challenge is to study the cultural differences between their country of origin and new hosts to make their products suitable for the new market. In many cases, these campaigns are aimed at creating ‘needs’ or ‘requirements’ in the minds of the prospective customers. It is interesting to see how they promote their ‘Brands’ and what they want to communicate to the new customers. This variability of brands remaining the same but their products undergoing innovative changes. is worth looking at, although there would also be products that are common in both cultural spaces. The readjustments and alterations happen because the consumers in the target locations may still respect their own culture and beliefs while accessing these brands. That is why the brands must also learn to respect the new cultural setting and plan for an image-building exercise in these new locations through novel communicative strategies. In this paper, we study how the big brands follow different market planning and advertising strategies to be able to survive in the international market. How, when needed, they go beyond their original mandate and specifications, and alter or change their images and products to sustain and compete in these new and emerging markets. As a case study, *KFC* or *Kentucky Fried Chicken* as a brand has been taken here to draw certain conclusions.

¹ Amity School of Communication, Amity University Haryana

² Chair-Professor & Dean, Faculty of Arts, Amity University Haryana

BRANDS COMMUNICATING IMAGES: A STUDY OF *KFC* IN INDIA

1. BACKGROUND

Dmitri Kuksov (2007), in his essay on ‘Brand Value in Social Interaction,’ claims that all consumers find a great value in associating themselves with a brand – the cigarette one smokes, or the suit one puts on or the pen one writes/signs with or the car one drives etc. The economic value of the association with a particular brand comes from its “effect on information exchange between consumers engaged in a search for partnerships with each other. It turns out that the brand use can be valuable to consumers for communication even when they do not have the proper incentives to make simple conversations valuable or informative.” In other words, like two strangers in a train compartment begin talking about the weather, two strangers with a set of common brands in use can also fall back on these items to break the ice. It is obvious that brands can affect various stages of consumer choice processes. All strong brands can ensure business and profitability to the companies by creating a sense of continuity and that is what makes them relevant across cultures.

Keller (2003) had provided a useful characterization of ‘Brand’ as an asset because it creates “(i) a greater customer loyalty, (ii) less vulnerability to competitive marketing actions and fluctuations due to market sentiments, (iii) larger margins to hide unforeseen financial issues and market tribulations, (iv) “more inelastic consumer response to price increases and more elastic consumer responses to price decreases, (v) greater trade cooperation and support, (vi) increased marketing communication effectiveness, (vii) increased licensing opportunities, and (ix) additional brand extension opportunities.”

It is noticed that many multinational corporations with a steady brand-name are seen crossing over to other countries by reworking on their marketing strategies and product campaign. Their biggest challenge is to study the cultural differences between their country of origin and new hosts to make their products suitable for the new market. In many cases, these campaigns are aimed at creating ‘needs’ or ‘requirements’ in the minds of the prospective customers. It is interesting to see how they promote their ‘Brands’ and what they want to communicate to the new customers. This variability of brands remaining the same but their

products undergoing innovative changes. is worth looking at, although there would also be products that are common in both cultural spaces. The readjustments and alterations happen because the consumers in the target locations may still respect their own culture and beliefs while accessing these brands. The present paper is an analysis of one such highly popular brand and its successes in penetrating the highly competitive and heterogenous market in India.

In particular, this study will explore how, KFC or *Kentucky Fried Chicken* as a brand went beyond their original mandate and specifications, and how they altered or changed their images and products to sustain and compete in these new and emerging markets such as in India. Since any location or geographic segmentation shows distinct purchasing habits and choices, it was not perhaps easy to make this market penetration, especially because prior availability of numerous food choices or options in this traditionally culture-rich space. The biggest challenge before KFC was to study the cultural differences between their country of origin and new hosts to make their products suitable for the new market. The campaigns were also aimed at creating 'needs' or 'requirements' in the minds of the prospective customers.

2. THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The phenomenon of globalization has had a significant effect on the food systems of developing countries around the world. However, for the big food chains which grow globally and need the increase in access and availability, they need to study the foreign market before entering it to sustain and grow further. As is known, the food industry will include agricultural activities such as raising crops, livestock, and seafood – given the soil and temperature of the target country. It must also pay attention to manufacturing, especially on agrichemicals, agricultural construction, farm machinery and supplies, seed, etc. Thirdly, there is also food processing – from preparation of fresh products for market, use of different media or oil, and actual manufacturing of prepared and packaged food products. The role of the manufacturing in the food industry in relation to provision of foods must take care of these four main objectives: Customer satisfaction, Safety, providing product information and maintaining commercial viability.

However, for a food brand to succeed, one must remember that the ingredients, methods of preparation, preservation techniques, and types of food eaten at different meals vary among cultures. The areas in which families live and where their ancestors originated influence food likes and dislikes. These food preferences result in patterns of food choices within a cultural or regional group. Food items themselves have symbolic value or meanings attached to them. For instance, in the Arab countries in the month of Ramadan they eat special dishes after the first day of fasting. Alternatively, in the United States, at the time of celebration of 'Thanksgiving', the popular food is to have turkey. Some food beliefs and practices also originate because of religious beliefs. Around the world, Muslims eat only "Halal" food which adheres to the Islamic law, as defined in the Quran. The market for halal products in ASEAN countries is today worth over US\$46 billion per annum, and worldwide US\$150 billion (Fischer 2012: 18). With improved food processing technologies, and with increased migration and globalization of products, now Halal-certification has become increasingly important to the Muslim community.

The Hindus have similar restrictions with respect to certain food practices that are common in the USA. The Jews also observe "Kashrut" that complies with the traditional Jewish law as well. Many followers of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism are vegetarians because of a doctrine of non-injury to any living being or nonviolence. Thus, culture plays a role in food related habits. For instance, some people eat with forks and spoons and some others use chopsticks, but a large number of people use fingers. Therefore, the campaign and images must reflect this aspect carefully. In most parts of the world, food is associated with hospitality. Therefore, sensitivity to food rules and customs are important in building and strengthening cross cultural relationships.

This paper studies how KFC as a brand target consumer internationally. More specifically, how KFC also alters, modifies and changes their products under the same brand umbrella (KFC) in different countries with special reference to India. This study is more about the strategies used to communicate images of their brand rather than conduct an empirical study on a wide scale. The qualitative research method used here in looking for datum and information has to draw from previously published ad-campaigns, marketing research articles and available reviews. For various reasons – beginning from secrecy to difficulties in accessibility of hard data, it is difficult to gather precise and detailed input data for this study where we depend on the secondary data to elaborate on the idea of branding.

With the increasing number of expatriates and immigrants around the world, an area worth investigating is how the activation of a national, global, or cosmopolitan identity may influence the evaluations of global brands. Research has suggested that identity salience exists when a certain identity is accessible to a consumer. Future research could investigate how KFC might activate different identities.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study makes use of a qualitative research strategy is applied on the campaign for KFC, where the connection between several different variables is established mainly through interpretation of the cultural context, and not on any quantitative data. The design is, therefore, descriptive and exploratory in nature. It is ‘descriptive’ in that it involves collection of data through online campaign stories and pages, and on the observation of experts in order to test our hypotheses and to answer the questions concerning the current status of globalization of brands in food industry by taking KFC as a model. The study is also ‘exploratory’ because this study conducted in the context of India explains a communicative strategy adopted by the new brands in the emerging markets.

The study has an inductive approach in that it aims to gather in-depth understanding of how KFC has expanded so much and so far, and how the brand has survived worldwide. The research has transformative procedure using a theoretical perspective. Besides, it is an action research which makes us study the socio-cultural situation of new spaces. It also involves a case study procedure which requires an in-depth systematic investigation of a phenomenon like KFC as a brand in food industry, for which a variety of data collection procedures are used.

The study for this research exercise lasted from March to April in 2020. The qualitative data presented here is collected to present the specific cross-cultural adaptation process initiated by KFC. Secondary data, gathered with the help of a variety of search engines and tools from the web and social network sites, has been used to support the study. The keywords in the search were the following: *adaptation, culture, intercultural/cross-cultural adaptation, fast food chain, internationalization, global market* and *marketing mix*. Relative information is gathered from published literature online, from e-zines, e-news portals and online journals, opinion articles, management articles, news items, and authentic websites managed by the

KFC - an American fast food restaurant chain headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. It specializes in serving specialized chicken items and is now synonymous with fried chicken across the world. Started in March 1930, the brand has moved out from the USA to other parts of the world. How much of this global outfit has compromised with the local settings is worth exploring as behavioural changes in consumers may be either more striking or more subtle due to closer global–local interactions in everyday consumption (Sun & Chen 2009). KFC is perhaps one of the best-case studies in this respect.

4. KFC AND DIFFERENT COOKING TRADITIONS

One can begin with a general belief, beautifully put together by Keating (2011: 73) where he says in his essay, ‘How food explains the world,’ the following: “They say you are what you eat. And that applies to countries and cultures as much as individuals. The food in our mouths defines us in far more fundamental and visceral terms than the gas in our tanks or the lines on a map. So it’s not surprising that the most important questions of global politics often boil down to: What should be eat?” He reminded us about the early days of Egypt's anti-government uprising when Hosni Mubarak's embattled regime was hoping to tie the protesters to a sinister foodstuff: Kentucky Fried Chicken. Reports on state television described protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square munching on free buckets of KFC, with its 100 plus restaurants in Egypt, arguing that there was a proof of subversive foreign influence. There were also reports of the government paying its thugs with chicken dinners from KFC, and street vendors jokingly shouting "Kentucky" to hawk everything from popcorn to falafel. This is only corroborated by Schielke & Winegar (2012) in their report: ‘The Writing on the Walls of Egypt.’

Fortunately, KFC had originated in a heterogenous country such as the *United States of America (USA)* – which is known as a "melting pot" in which different cultures have contributed their own distinct "flavours" to create what could be called the American culture. The term Western culture often refers broadly to the cultures of Europe and the United States taken together. The American cuisine was influenced by both Europeans and Native Americans in its early history. Today, there are a number of foods that are commonly identified as American, such as hamburgers, hot dogs, potato chips, macaroni and cheese, and

meat loaf. The expression – "As American as apple pie" has come to mean something that is authentically American. There are also styles of cooking and types of foods that are specific to a region within the US. Southern-style cooking is often called "American comfort food" and includes dishes such as fried chicken, collard greens, black-eyed peas and cornbread. Tex-Mex, popular in Texas and the Southwest, is a blend of Spanish and Mexican cooking styles and includes items such as chili and burritos and relies heavily on shredded cheese and beans. Jerky, dried meats that are served as snacks which was created in the United States.

In comparison with the US, the *United Kingdom* - has a rich indigenous culinary tradition. Further, its colonial history and experience in different parts of the globe has profoundly enriched its native cooking traditions. British cuisine absorbed the cultural influences of its post-colonial territories, too, in particular those of South Asia. The British Empire facilitated a knowledge of Indian cuisine with its "strong, penetrating spices and herbs". The United Kingdom Food Industry is primarily driven by the colonies of America, South East Asia and India in particular. The spices in food are coming from the South East Asian countries and India.

As for other European countries, the European or western cuisine also became richer because of the borrowings from countries by the European settlers and colonists from France, Spain, Portugal and Holland. Here, the term "European", or more specifically "continental" cuisine, is used to refer more strictly to the cuisine of the western parts of mainland Europe. Meat is more prominent in the dishes and is substantial in serving size. Steak and cutlet are common dishes across the West. Western cuisines also emphasize on the use of grape wine and sauces as condiments, seasonings, or accompaniments (in part due to the difficulty of seasonings penetrating the often-larger pieces of meat used in Western cooking). Many dairy products are utilised in cooking here. There are hundreds of varieties of cheese and other fermented milk products. The better-off also make pasta, dumplings and pastries. The potato has become a major starch plant in the diet of Europeans and their diaspora since the European colonisation of the Americas. Corn meal is a major part of the cuisine of Italy and the Balkans. Although flatbreads like pizza and rice are eaten in Europe, they are only staple foods in limited areas, particularly in the Southern Europe. To add to the above, the Salads are an integral part of European cuisine.

The Middle Eastern and Arabic cuisine, on the other hand, includes dishes from three main regions, also known as the Maghreb, the Fertile Crescent, and the Arabian Peninsula. Most of

the meat dishes are made with cows and buffalo meat, mutton, lamb, chicken, goat or camel meat. In all the Muslim countries, pork is prohibited, and sheep and other animals are slaughtered using the halal method. Around the Mediterranean area, especially in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, one can get a wide variety of seafood. River and lake fishes are also widely consumed. As one can see, a cuisine reflects the culture of great trading in spices, herbs, and foods. And the amounts and types used generally vary from region to another like sesame, saffron, black pepper, garlic, cumin, cinnamon, parsley and coriander. Also, rice is the staple and is used for most dishes; wheat is the main source for bread. Hot beverages are served more than cold, coffee and tea are at the top of the list. The Middle East food culture is meat and the cooking is mostly grilled. The spices used are moderate in nature. Some parts of Arabic nations like Egypt and Lebanon there is a huge influence of European cuisine in their food culture due to their geographical proximity with European countries. There is a profound love for sweets and chocolates across the Arabic nations.

Given the above description of cooking and eating styles in the Western and Mediterranean contexts, KFC could easily see that Indian food was different from the rest of the world not only in taste but also in cooking methods. Throughout India, be it in the north or in the southern parts, spices are used generously in food. Given the range of diversity in soil type, climate, culture, ethnic groups and occupations, these cuisines vary substantially from each other and use locally available spices, herbs, vegetables, and fruits. Indian food is also heavily influenced by religion by the Hindu tradition, and cultural choices and conventions. Consumption of beef is a taboo even for a non-vegetarian Hindu, as cows are considered sacred in Hinduism. Beef is generally not eaten by the Hindus in India, except for Kerala, and in parts of southern Tamil Nadu and in the north east. The most important and frequently used spices and flavourings in Indian cuisine are whole or powdered chilli pepper, black mustard seed, cardamom, cumin, turmeric, asafoetida, ginger, coriander, and garlic. One popular spice mix is *garam masala*, a powder that typically includes seven dried spices, especially black cardamom, cinnamon, clove, cumin, black peppercorns, coriander seeds and anise star. Sweet dishes are also often seasoned with cardamom, saffron, nutmeg, and rose petal essences. The Indian Food Industry/Market is thus primarily driven by spices. As staple food, vegetables, Rice, Wheat and Pulses are mostly used as staple food across the major part of India. For the vegetarians, Indian cuisine allows Paneer to be used in place of chicken or other forms of meat to create parallel dishes.

Indians are also fond of Chinese and other Southeast Asian cuisine with a strong emphasis on lightly prepared dishes with a strong aromatic component that features such flavours as citrus and herbs such as lime, coriander/cilantro and basil. Ingredients in the region contrast with the ones in the East Asian cuisines, substituting fish sauces for sauce and the inclusion of ingredients such as galangal, tamarind and lemongrass. Cooking methods include a balance of stir-frying, boiling and steaming. Chinese food staples such as rice, soy sauce, noodles, tea, and tofu, and utensils such as chopsticks and the wok, can now be easily found in India and elsewhere. The preference for seasoning and cooking techniques of Chinese food items depend on differences in historical background and ethnic groups. Geographic features including mountains, rivers, forests and deserts also have a strong effect on the locally available ingredients in India, considering that the climate of China varies from tropical in the south to subarctic in the northeast. Imperial, royal and noble preference also plays a role in the change of Chinese cuisines to suit the local traditions in India. Because of imperial expansion and trading, and a long connection with the Chinese people, the ingredients and cooking techniques of the Chinese cuisines are suitably adopted and modified in India.

5. KFC AND CONSUMER CULTURE EXPLANATIONS

Given the above background, any food giant that approaches the Indian market has to suitably add or modify their items. The Consumer Culture Theoreticians (CCT) would naturally point towards this direction. The US where the parent company is located has the main menu of fried chicken, coleslaw, biscuit, mashed potato, added with soft drink options of Coke and Pepsi. But in Japan, the KFC had already made a few additions to the menu, by using apple pie, French fries, cutlet, wrap, ginger ale, iced tea, and lemon tea to their menu. Japan being a nation that boasts of one of the world's most refined cuisines, it is surprising that KFC should have any appeal at all to the sophisticated Japanese palate. They offer there two options for the burger as well: a standard chicken filet or a "wafu" Japanese style one that has a slightly sweet soy sauce taste. And as the Japanese people love coffee jelly, KFC added coffee jelly and ice cream to the dessert menu. This shows that KFC does have a strategy of adjusting to the taste of the new cultural spaces where it plans to expand to.

In China, KFCs serve fried chicken, but their menu items are capable of luring Chinese consumers to eat at KFC for breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea or snacks, dinner, and late-night snacks. Here, they also serve a variety of local dishes like egg tarts, congee (rice porridge),

shrimp sandwich, mocha ice cream, and soy sauce wing. For drinks, they have added local peach oolong tea, pineapple and orange juice. Besides, KFC offers home style Chinese meals that makes consumers feel right at home. By contrast, on KFC's menu for the Greater China region nearly half of the products are specially designed with Chinese features (Bian, 2009). Some of their products are particularly popular for featuring the eight schools of Chinese cuisine, for example: Egg and vegetable soup, Dragon Twister (chicken roll of old Beijing), and Grass Jelly Milk Tea, etc. These products are improved by adding special seasonings or Chinese ingredients to cater to Chinese tastes. In 2004, KFC launched Wong Lo Kat herbal tea (the oldest brand of herbal tea in Guangdong) only in Guangdong province; this is the first completely localized product of KFC.

In Vietnam, one of the key points to note about the menu is how most meals are served with a small side salad and a Vietnamese style soup. Rather than formalising products to the original recipe, KFC in Vietnam localizes its food to adapt to Vietnamese taste. Moreover, they use soybean oil which is healthier and familiar to Vietnamese customers. Mashed potato is also advertised heavily, while fries take a lesser and a more obvious role in the meals. Rice and gravy are available as replacement for the French fries. Their meals seem to rely heavily on the side dishes and constructed with the sides as a start and then chicken items are added. In addition to the traditional dishes such as fried chicken and hamburgers, KFC has added a number of items processed with Vietnam tastes such as Crispy Chicken with Lemon Leaf, Crispy Chicken without Bones, Soft Bread, mixed Cabbage, especially some dishes of chicken rice. With making the expansion into other materials, KFC has created excitement and curiosity for domestic consumers (KFC Vietnam 2016). In Thailand, too, the menu has Thai chicken which is cooked by Thai herb to make the food more spicy and sour taste as Thai style food and in some menu, chicken is served with green curry and rice.

As many in the UK are turning vegan, while expanding there, the company adapted to the new English culture creating taste-specific menus for local vegan customers by launching a vegan chicken burger which replaces KFC's typical chicken breast fillet with a fillet made from Quorn which has been coated in the original recipe herbs and spices. Similarly, in 2009, KFC Israel hoped to attract more business by adhering to Jewish religious dietary laws. KFC chicken is traditionally coated with milk powder, violating rules against mixing meat with dairy. KFC Israel developed a milk-flavoured soy powder to be used as a kosher substitute.

In India, KFC had once challenged itself to stay true to its original products yet still create a menu that appeals to a wide consumer base. They estimated – based on the reports of the Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations that half the Indian population was vegetarian. And the other half also lives a vegetarian lifestyle for about 90 days of the year. Hence, KFC-India gets a new vegetarian twist and has established new "layers" based on the consumers' longing to include rice and vegetarian offerings on its menu. In response, KFC began offerings including the Veg Twister, veg strips and Veg Rocking Burger. Moreover, they added items like rice bowls and paneer zinger, which the consumers would not get in the parent country. These are specifically made for the Indian clientele because culturally India is a rice consuming nation as a part of its staple food habits. In India, the side drinks now include "Krushers" – which flavoured drink with crushed ice to beat the heat and spicy food.

6. THE AD CAMPAIGNS & SITUATION ANALYSIS OF MARKETING MIX

Advertising campaigns in the food industry has a distinct challenge for marketing experts who must ensure significant benefits even at the time of start of new operations. The problem is that food marketers deal with highly perishable products that may or may not appeal to the customers, or may create a niche market, at times. Food advertising can leverage sensual appeals like taste, smell, sight, and texture on a more powerful level than other product categories. They can appeal to consumers on a practical, physiological and emotional level at once, and in that respect, the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) comes into play. Food industry giants have used the strategies under CCT as it identifies consumption values influencing consumer choice behaviour. A perfect advertising and marketing strategy could influence the decision that is influenced by any or all the five consumption values as per CCT. A number of disciplines (including economics, sociology, several branches of psychology, and marketing and consumer behaviour) have contributed to the theory and research relevant to these values. CCT framework helps the marketing and advertising campaigns KFC or such other food industry to diffuse through the consumer research and identify preferences, attitudes, motivations, and buying behaviour of the targeted customers. This would help in creating marketing campaigns targeting a specific segment of population. And that would be the key to improve the product and successfully market it to the customers.

When KFC started to expand out of the parent location, USA, there were some key strategies that they followed - the delivery of the right product to the right customer, at the right place, at the right time and at the right price through right communication and promotion. KFC's success has come as a combination of clever localization, savvy pricing strategies, successful consumer education, and a menu that appeals to the target communities as well to the changing preferences of the sophisticated. Further, considering the language difference between different cultures, many international brands need to pay special attention on the translated versions of their brand and product names when expanding into another country, especially in China where people show more interest on names with propitious meaning, or with funny pronunciation that easy for them to remember.

Let us consider the following aspects of the KFC's Situation Analysis and their marketing strategies:

Price: KFC is very smart when it chooses a new product to decide on its pricing strategy. To enter the Vietnam market, it had set a low initial price in order to penetrate the market quickly and deeply to attract many buyers quickly to gain market share. That could be called the market penetration pricing. The advantages of it is as follows: A price sensitive market; inverse relationship of production and distribution cost to sales growth; and a low prices to keep competition out of the market. This Strategy was very effective when, by 2006, KFC started to get profit and the number of customers increased quickly. Currently KFC has increased the prices after they gained enough loyal customers. They also used the strategy of 'Optional Pricing' which is used by companies to attempt to increase the amount customers spend once they start buying. Optional 'extras' increase the overall price of the product or service. In KFC's case, customers can buy the main items present in their menu and can then opt for "extras" or "sides" like drinks or desserts which go well with the main item that they purchased. The result is that the customer ends up paying for the main item that he/she wanted to buy and also for the add-ons. KFC offers differential pricing where the products are available as individual as well as bundles or in combos. The pricing of bundles is less as compared to the combined price of all the products. It is especially lucrative in price sensitive markets like India.

Product: The original product is pressure fried chicken nuggets flavoured with secret seasoning of 11 ingredients. Other specialties of KFC are Extra Crispy Chicken, home style sides and buttermilk biscuits. In 1990, KFC expanded its menu and offered other chicken preparations like chicken Fillet Burgers and wraps, salads, potato fries, desserts and

beverages. KFC has now optimized its product offerings as per the geography and demand. Now, it has over 300 different menus as a part of its marketing mix product strategy across different locations worldwide. Its restaurants had done product adaptation in order to suit local tastes, cultures and religious practices prevalent in the new countries and regions.

Promotion: At one time, KFC launched a campaign that gave free large chips to any customer who presented a receipt from a previous KFC purchase along with feedback about their experience with KFC. While venturing into China, considering the language difference between two cultures, KFC paid special attention to the translated versions of their brand and product names. In China people show more interest in names with propitious meaning, or with funny pronunciation that are easy for them to remember. In the Vietnam market, KFC runs a promotion programme which discounts food on specific days. This programme does offer not only on weekdays, but also on weekends. Hence, customers have variable choices to make. This promotion targets the price sensitive market like Vietnam. KFC has a website as well as presence in social networking websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. It also depends on mass media for promotion. The KFC advertisements appear in print as well as broadcast media. It also uses billboards and hoardings on internal city roads as well as highways for advertisements. It is famous for its taglines like the 'Finger Lickin' Good', 'Nobody Does Chicken Like KFC' and 'So Good' and these are always included in the promotional activities. It was found that KFC commercials are seen at least once a week by 185 million viewers.

Placements: It is important to figure out if a product is suited for the placement that one has selected. It is also wise to determine an exit strategy if a product does not do well and one needs to find a new sales channel. Out of different kinds of food products in their menu, KFC mainly sells fried chicken, burgers and drinks in their numerous chain stores in different countries. They follow the same recipe to maintain the quality of the food products in all the restaurants. Brand positioning statement of KFC is their slogan mentioned earlier (eg, "its finger lickin' good!"). The target customers of KFC have an age group of 4-50 years. KFC is a trust-worthy brand for them whose food products can be enjoyed by the whole family or in an environment of social gathering. They emphasize on creating good memory and positive feelings towards their products. Whenever one thinks of KFC, one has to think of somebody. It can be your family, friends, loved ones or somebody else, somebody to share the fun of eating and to share the taste. This is how the KFC targets its potential customers.

SWOT Analysis: One can prepare a detailed SWOT analysis of KFC that aims to examine the strengths and the weaknesses of the brand and how it communicates or builds its image. It can also look into the opportunities the company should explore and the threats it should keep an eye on. As for the *Strength*, we could mention the following points: (i) Global Network, (ii) Trade Secret, (iii) Brand Name and Recognition, (iv) Backing of a Powerful Corporation That has already experienced how to adjust their campaigns and offerings. Under its *Weakness* in the Indian context, one could mention: (i) Limited Vegetarian Options, (ii) Does not Cater to the 'Health Conscious' Population, and (iii) Food-culture conflict – considering India to be a pluri-cultural space, unlike many other nation-states. The *Opportunities* include (i) Changing the Menu for the Health-Conscious Population, and (ii) Bringing in a greater variety to cater to the potential vegetarian customers. One could say that the *Threats* would include the following: (i) Dynamics of local rules and regulations because they often differ from one state to the other, (ii) Currency fluctuations, and (iii) Local Competitors from other multinationals (such as the McDonald's, Subways or Barrista) and local chains (such as Haldiram Bhujjiawala or Bikanerwala).

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

KFC has diversified and added many local flavours and cultures into its original product and change in its branding and marketing strategy across the world. It has also learned to adapt to new markets and evolving in some unexpected ways. Even in the land of its origin, the experiments were done. In fact, KFC had begun with an experiment as Studebaker (2015: 174) narrated: "In the 1930s Harland Sanders, the Kentucky colonel [whose face is still used heavily in their ad campaigns], was serving fried chicken to motorists at his filling station in Corbin, Kentucky. Seeing opportunity in potentially reducing the 35 minutes it took to pan fry his chicken, he bought an early commercial pressure cooker and rigged it up to fry with oil. The method more than halves the time of pan frying and produces crispier skin and moister meat than deep frying - and maintains a "Southern fried" flavor. Sanders is credited as a pioneer of postwar fast food, and the pressure fryer was the key to the early success of his franchise model for Kentucky Fried Chicken."

KFC has used market segmentation to reach various markets in different parts of the world and to create value for its main products. It has segmented its market by geographical

location, psychometric, demographic and behavioural factors. Apart from their core product of fried chicken, KFC has targeted consumers globally by accommodating the local food culture into their menu. They have a differential strategy while promoting offers which are different across the regions and also takes into consideration the parameters like age. KFC targets the youth specifically which is in line with the Consumer Consumption Theory.

In the initial days, KFC went through many *avatars* because of changes in the ownership and marketing decisions. For instance, after Sanders sold Kentucky Fried Chicken in 1964 for two million dollars, its new owners decided to rigidly chain the brand, used - “think red-and-white-striped cupolas” and denied franchise to the black New York businessman Horace Bullard who created his own version of "KFC" in 1968 to call it the Kansas Fried Chicken, with 18 locations nationwide. In 1972, an Afghan immigrant, Zia Taeb started a job at a Kansas Fried Chicken, but decided to run his own operation - Kennedy Fried Chicken and began cloning it.

KFC has been flexible in its advertising and marketing campaigns as there is very high competition amongst the regional local players, and hence the inclusion of local culture and regional preferences has been incorporated into the strategy of KFC to become a global leader in the food industry. As Kwok & Yu (2016: 311) reported, even in the B2C (Business to Consumers) communications using *Facebook* facilities – which opened up in 2008 for organizations engaged in business, KFC has been communicating its image very well in different countries. A survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management revealed that social media such as *Facebook* had become corporates’ most popular website for external communications and is cited by about 45% of informants (Leonard, 2012). Today, a company’s brand message can reach more people through these platforms than via external billboards. However, the full implications of different kinds of communication strategies used by corporations such as KFC on different platforms and in different countries could be brought out in detail only through a thorough external survey as outlined by Jadoon, Butt & Hayat. (2016) by using their measurement variables for globalization, consumption patterns and culture.

REFERENCES

- Barbarossa, Camilla. (2018). 'Consumer reactions to food safety scandals: A research model and moderating effects' in *A handbook of food crime: Immoral and illegal practices in the food industry and what to do about them*, edited by Allison Gray, Ronald Hinch, Chapter 23: 385-402.
- Bhasin, Hitesh. (2020). 'What is Brand Adaptation? Brand Adaptation Examples and Challenges.' Weblog [Online]: <https://www.marketing91.com/brand-adaptation/> [Accessed: 7th March].
- Bian J. (2009). 'KFC's evolution in China.' China Citic Press.
- Borden, Neil H. (1984). 'The concept of the Marketing Mix.' *Journal of Advertising Research*. September number; Classics, Volume 2. 7-12
- Fischer, Johann. (2012). 'Branding halal: A photographic essay on global Muslim markets,' *Anthropology Today*, 28.4: 18-21 (August number), Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
- Jadoon, Atif Khan, Abdul Rauf Butt & Muhammad Azmat Hayat. (2016). 'Development of measurement models for globalization, consumption patterns and culture.' *Pakistan Economic and Social Review* 54.2: 327-61 (Winter number).
- Keating, Joshua. (2011) 'How food explains the world' *Foreign Policy*, 186: 73-75 (May/June number).
- Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). *Kentucky Fried Chicken*. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.kfc.com> [Accessed: 13th March 2020].
- Keller, K. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Kwok, Linchi & Bei Yu. (2016). 'Taxonomy of Facebook messages in business-to-consumer communications,' *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 16. 4: 311-328 (October number).
- Leonard B. (2012). HR has a role in corporate social media. *HR Magazine* 57(1): 16.
- Li Y. (2007), 'The internationalization strategies of KFC and McDonald's in China.' North East University of Finance.
- McCarthy, E. Jerome. (1960). 'Basic Marketing a Managerial Approach.' Illinois USA: Richard D. Irwin Inc.
- Mbaskool, 'KFC Marketing Mix (4Ps) Strategy.' [Online]. Available from: <https://www.mbaskool.com/marketing-mix/services/17502-kfc.html>. [Accessed 20th of March]
- Schielke, Samuli & Jessica Winegar (2012). 'The Writing on the Walls of Egypt,' Middle East Report, No. 265; In *Egypt: The Uprising Two Years On*, 13-17; Middle East Research and Information Project, Inc. (MERIP)
- Studebaker, Luke. (2015) 'Crispy Chicken Several Ways,' *Log*, 34: 174-76 (Spring/Summer number, Anyone Corporation).
- Sun, Jiaming & Xiangming Chen. (2009). 'Fast foods and brand clothes in Shanghai: How and Why locals consume globally.' In *Shanghai Rising: State Power and Local Transformations in a Global Megacity*, edited by Xiangming Chen & Zhenhua Zhou, University of Minnesota Press, Chapter 10: 215-35.

- Tien, Nguyen Hoang. (2019). Customization and standardization of the business strategy of foreign enterprises in Vietnam. *International Journal of Research in Marketing Management and Sales* 1(2): 44-50. Available from: <http://www.marketingjournal.net/article/view/16/1-1-12> [Accessed: 27th March 2020]
- Tormsen, David.(2020) '9 ways KFC is completely different in other countries.' [Online] Available from: <https://www.mashed.com/29305/9-ways-kfc-completely-different-countries/> [Accessed: 14th March].
- Willis, Jerry W. (2007) '*Foundations of Qualitative Research Interpretive and Critical Approaches.*' [Online] United States of America. Sage Publications Inc; Cf at: [https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=dWJMxUkQukIC&oi=fnd&pg=PR13&dq=Willis+\(2007\)&ots=PY_KjWv_uT&sig=EQJNRybVeXo6KVet8xYRfU-PGd0#v=onepage&q=Willis%20\(2007\)&f=false](https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=dWJMxUkQukIC&oi=fnd&pg=PR13&dq=Willis+(2007)&ots=PY_KjWv_uT&sig=EQJNRybVeXo6KVet8xYRfU-PGd0#v=onepage&q=Willis%20(2007)&f=false) [Date of access: 9th March 2020]