

**Czech University of Life Sciences Prague**  
**Faculty of Economics and Management**  
**Department of Management and Marketing**



**Master's Thesis**

**Doing business in Japan:  
Surprising Popularity of Nestlé KitKat on Japanese  
Market**

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# CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

## DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Seakling Duong

Economics and Management

Thesis title

**Doing business in Japan – Surprising Popularity of Nestle KitKat on Japanese Market**

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### Objectives of thesis

This diploma thesis will determine the factors that contribute to the current popularity of one of Nestle's candy products, KitKat, in Japan. In this research the specifics of advertising in the Japanese marketplace will be identified, with particular emphasis on this segment.

### Methodology

This thesis comprises two main parts: Theoretical and Practical.

The theoretical part will be a thorough review of recent academic and other reliable literature.

The practical part will use mainly secondary data including research papers, marketing and culture-related journals, case studies on KitKat in Japan, reports from Nestle, and other related articles.

It will be supplemented by a survey on the opinions of Japanese or people who live in Japan, about KitKat in order to compare it with the findings.

**The proposed extent of the thesis**

approx 60-80 pages

**Keywords**

Japan, Culture, Nestle, Rowntree, Kitkat

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Kotabe M., Helsen K., (2020), Global marketing management (8th edition), London: Wiley, 768pp, ISBN-13: 978-1119563112

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**Declaration**

I hereby declare that I wrote this Diploma Thesis titled “Doing Business in Japan: Surprising Popularity of Nestlé KitKat on Japanese Market” on my own, using only the listed sources cited in the Reference section. As the author of this diploma thesis, I declare that this research does not violate the copyrights of any other individual.

In Prague 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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### **Acknowledgment**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Ing. Richard Selby, Ph.D., for his advice and guidance throughout my journey to complete this diploma thesis. I also wish to extend my special thanks to my sisters and best friends for their support throughout my academic journey and to the respondents who participated in my survey. Finally, I deeply owe my supportive family for their unweaving encouragement and unconditional love. I am wholeheartedly grateful for their continuous and countless support throughout my entire life.

**Doing business in Japan:  
Surprising Popularity of Nestlé KitKat on Japanese Market**

**Podnikání v Japonsku:  
Překvapivá popularita Nestlé KitKat na japonském trhu**

## **Abstract**

Traveling from the United Kingdom, KitKat first debuted in Japan in 1973 as a British chocolate bar wrapped in its iconic red packaging. Around three decades later, Nestlé in Japan discovered its distinct market and embraced a different marketing approach than in the U.K. by positioning KitKat as a lucky charm to support students, and, later, as a regional souvenir for travelers. The diploma thesis aims to shed light on the factors and unique set of marketing strategies adopted by Nestlé Japan that contribute to KitKat's popularity in Japan. The thesis is divided into theoretical and practical parts, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches are applied. The theoretical part includes an overview of Nestlé's KitKat, marketing analyses, concepts of branding, and wordplay strategy. In the practical part, secondary data was collected to conduct an extended SWOT Analysis and to analyze the unique characteristics of KitKat, Nestlé's strategic decisions capitalizing on those characteristics, KitKat's emotional resonance with Japanese consumers, and how KitKat transformation aligns with the National branding concept in Japan. Primary data was collected through a survey to gain insights into KitKat Japan from consumers' perspectives. Survey results are closely aligned with the study's findings. The thesis has proven the existing effectiveness of Nestlé's advertising strategies including the impacts of wordplay marketing and KitKat's status as a lucky charm and as a souvenir.

**Keywords:** *Japan, Culture, Nestlé, Rowntree, KitKat, Glocalization, Marketing, Wordplay, Consumer, Lucky Charm*

## **Souhrn**

KitKat, který putoval ze Spojeného království, poprvé debutoval v Japonsku v roce 1973 jako britská čokoládová tyčinka zabalená do ikonického červeného obalu. Asi o tři desetiletí později Nestlé v Japonsku objevilo svůj odlišný trh a přijalo jiný marketingový přístup než ve Spojeném království tím, že umístilo KitKat jako talisman pro štěstí na podporu studentů a později jako regionální suvenýr pro cestovatele. Diplomová práce si klade za cíl osvětlit faktory a unikátní soubor marketingových strategií přijatých společností Nestlé Japan, které přispívají k popularitě KitKat v Japonsku. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a praktickou část a jsou uplatněny kvantitativní i kvalitativní přístupy. Teoretická část obsahuje přehled KitKat od Nestlé, marketingové analýzy, koncepty brandingů a strategii slovní hry. V praktické části byla shromážděna sekundární data za účelem provedení rozšířené SWOT analýzy a pro analýzu jedinečných vlastností KitKat, strategických rozhodnutí Nestlé využívajících tyto vlastnosti, emocionální rezonance KitKat u japonských spotřebitelů a toho, jak se transformace KitKat shoduje s konceptem National branding v Japonsku. Primární data byla shromážděna prostřednictvím průzkumu s cílem získat náhled na KitKat Japan z pohledu spotřebitelů. Výsledky průzkumu jsou úzce sladěny s výsledky studie. Práce prokázala stávající efektivitu reklamních strategií Nestlé včetně dopadů slovního marketingu a postavení KitKat jako talismanu pro štěstí a jako suvenýru.

**Klíčová slova:** *Japonsko, kultura, Nestlé, Rowntree, KitKat, Glokalizace, Marketing, Slovíčkaření, Spotřebitel, Přívěsek Štěstí*



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## 1. Introduction

As one of the world's most prominent economic powerhouses, Japan has emerged as a captivating land of immense investment and business opportunities, gathering investors and big market players from different industries globally. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) net inflow in Japan experienced a substantial rise, reaching its highest level of \$62.58 billion in 2020, 53.94 percent higher than in 2019 (World Bank, 2023a). Nestlé, in the heart of East Asia, Japan has been renowned for its profound cultural heritage and the unique blend of tradition and modernity that has thrived for centuries. The cultural influences can be seen across areas such as animation, manga, fashion, traditional cuisines, and gaming, showcasing potential cultural resources Japan possesses to bolster its soft power, and to ensure their optimal utilization, the government has introduced the Cool Japan initiative, setting their goals as to promote these valuable cultural assets (McGrey, 2002 & Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). Therefore, for multinational companies (MNCs) to establish their market in Japan, embracing such a cultural and regional asset is crucial for their success.

The process, known as glocalization, involves customizing and localizing products to bridge the gap between global and local concepts (Sukhasvasti, 2020). In the food industry, MNCs glocalize their food products to ensure their acceptance by local consumers, and by demonstrating cultural sensitivity and gradually introducing new flavours and culinary traditions to the locals, they create innovative products that surpass local alternatives and establish a competitive advantage over non-glocalizing competitors (Sukhasvasti, 2020). The same strategy is used by Nestlé S.A., one of the key players in Japan's chocolate market, to popularize its chocolate brand, KitKat, in Japan (Rao, 2018). Unlike typical glocalization, Japan takes on a unique characteristic, where a significant portion of global products entering the market undergo extensive and ongoing glocalization while, unlike elsewhere, national dietary or religious guidelines influencing product adaptation do not exist (Sukhasvasti, 2020). Glocalization makes it possible for visitors to Japan to try local versions of foreign products such as trying a Sakura drink at Starbucks, tasting Gudetama McFlurry at McDonald's, or getting a bite of Wasabi KitKat (Sukhasvasti, 2020).

Japan generated the world's second-largest revenue of \$172 billion in 2022, followed by the United States, from the confectionary market (Statista, 2023). The industry is overloaded with an enormous range of local and global brands, competing over establishing brand

identity associated with a sense of locality. Tourists' spending increased by \$2.1 billion in 2016 on confectioneries (Wadlow, 2020). The influx of tourists visiting Japan in 2019, reaching a record-breaking 31.9 million after gradually growing since 2011, reflected a substantial increase in interest in Japan (World Bank, 2023b). The market size of the chocolate industry in Japan is projected to be \$4,6 billion in 2023 and anticipated to reach \$ 5 billion by 2028, with a growth rate CAGR of 1.66% through the forecasted period, 2023-2028 (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). This expansion is driven by cacao's numerous health benefits including lower blood pressure, disease prevention, stress relief, and alleviation of allergies and rheumatism (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

Nestlé's KitKat does not originate in Japan, to begin with, yet the country has become a KitKat powerhouse and the second country with the highest KitKat consumption after the United Kingdom when it comes from (Nestlé Japan, 2023). Starting in the early 2000s, recognizing KitKat's association with luck in 2002, Nestle made a strategic decision to market KitKat as a symbol of luck for students (Okada, 2012). Since then, it has become a lucky charm and a gift of encouragement and appreciation. KitKat mini-size bar alone is sold for approximately 4 million every single day, and unlike in other countries, KitKat is exceptionally customized with more than 400 flavours in Japan, including special editions that represent food identities of individual regions across Japan (Rao, 2018 & Nestlé Japan, 2023). From weird wasabi flavour to soy sauce, hot Japanese chilly to cheesecake-flavored KitKat, Japan indeed leads the snack games. Premium KitKat chocolate shops are known as Chocolaterie, serving as a house full of limited-edition KitKat made from high-quality chocolate and wrapped delicately as a gift (Radecki, 2022). In Japan, KitKat's journey has evolved from being ordinary to becoming a luxury chocolate. Furthermore, the launching of regional KitKat flavours also serves the purpose of "Cool Japan," the government's national branding strategy for promoting Japan.

This extensive glocalization observed in Japan appears perplexing and diverse, making it an interesting subject for research. To gain comprehensive insights into the factors driving KitKat's remarkable success in Japan, this research delves deeper into Nestlé 's unique marketing strategy or strategic decisions and the uniqueness of this iconic brand in Japan while providing further insights into KitKat's journey in the Japanese market. Especially, the findings from the survey will shed light on how effective these strategies are.

## 2. Objective and Methodology

### 2.1 Objective

This diploma thesis will determine the factors and unique marketing strategies that contribute to the current popularity of one of Nestlé's candy products, KitKat, in Japan's market. In this research, the specifics of advertising in the Japanese marketplace will be identified, with particular emphasis on this segment. The research will shed light on the intricate set of strategies implemented by Nestlé Japan and draw a conclusion of the study by comparing them with the findings from the survey analysis. Economic impacts will be also concluded in the Result section.

### 2.2 Methodology

#### 2.2.1 Research Questions

In this diploma work, the author intends to answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of unique advertising strategies are adopted by Nestlé to promote KitKat in the Japanese market?
2. What are the factors that contribute to KitKat's popularity in the Japanese market?
3. How is KitKat perceived by people residing in Japan? What are their opinions on KitKat Japan?
4. From KitKat's story, what are the lessons can multinational companies operating in Japan possibly learn to thrive from Nestlé?

To further gain insights to answer the third research question regarding the perspective of people residing in Japan on KitKat, the author also proposes the following hypotheses to study the relationships between the five variables.

*Ho: There is no relationship between Nationality and how KitKat is perceived as a brand.*

*Ho: There is no relationship between Nationality and awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

*Ho: There is no relationship between Profession and awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

*Ho: There is no relationship between the fact that respondents have received or given KitKat as a gift and their awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

#### 2.2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This thesis is structured into two main parts: the theoretical and the practical parts.

The theoretical part, utilizing a qualitative approach, comprises a comprehensive examination of academic literature. This includes an overview of KitKat's presence in Japan, the concept of glocalization, the application of wordplay marketing, and the concept of

nation branding, along with an overview of nation branding in Japan. It also includes a theoretical explanation of strategic marketing analyses, SWOT Analyses, and TOWS Matrix which is popularly known as an extended SWOT analysis. Both will be subsequently applied in the practical part of this thesis. The data for this part are primarily sourced from desk research, including publications, reports, books, research journals, and statistical data from esteemed organizations, for example, the World Bank.

In the practical part, both qualitative and quantitative analyses are applied. In the first part of the practical analysis, the author delves into all distinctive characteristics of KitKat in Japan, Nestlé's wordplay marketing, additional values KitKat brings to its consumers, and the application of the "Cool Japan" perspective of Nestle through its KitKat. Subsequently, two primary analyses will be conducted. Firstly, a comprehensive SWOT analysis is conducted to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of KitKat in Japan followed by an extended version of the SWOT Analysis or a TOWS matrix. This section relies mainly on secondary data derived from a variety of sources such as research papers, marketing and culture-related journals, case studies on KitKat in Japan, reports from Nestlé S.A., and others. To complement the practical part, a quantitative analysis is also applied. Primary data is collected through a survey questionnaire that targets respondents in Japan, focusing on gathering information regarding their awareness, experiences, and opinions on KitKat in the country.

- **Characteristics of the Survey Questionnaire**

This survey research is a type of basic representative research; therefore, it may not be able to reflect the opinions of all the people in Japan. The target of the survey includes Japanese residents and foreigners residing in Japan for at least three months, on a long-term visa. The first reason for selecting three months as the minimum period of stay for respondents is to ensure their adaptation to a foreign country and awareness of the products, thereby enhancing the credibility of the collected data. However, the author acknowledges that individuals may take different amounts of time to adapt to a new country. The second reason, as stated on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2023), is that the validity of a long-term visa starts from 90 days or three months. Therefore, the minimum duration of stay for the target foreign respondents is set at three months.

The survey was translated into two languages, English and Japanese, and was conducted in Google Forms. It was distributed through various social platforms, including several



Facebook groups targeting foreigners living in Japan, Messenger, LINE, Twitter, and Instagram. Furthermore, utilizing these platforms, the survey was also distributed to students from different schools in Japan, specifically from Toho High School in Nagoya City and Kanto Gakuin University in Yokohama City, through various student representatives. The author was able to reach out to a third-year student from Kanto Gakuin University and received his help to distribute the surveys to students on campus. As for the content, there are a total of 22 questions divided into five sections, focusing on demographic information, product awareness, customer preferences, consumer consumption habits, and opinions on wordplay marketing and regional KitKat versions. To ensure the anonymity of responses, no personal details such as names or email addresses were required. The final section gave optional space for respondents to share and write about their experiences with KitKat.

The data collection period spanned from the 17th of October to the 17th of November 2023, with a total of 132 participants from diverse age groups taking part in the survey. To analyze the data obtained from the survey, in addition to Microsoft Excel, the author uses IBM SPSS Statistics program version 29 to generate results for descriptive analysis and to run reliability tests involving the calculation of Cronbach alpha coefficients to measure the reliability of Likert scale questions. For hypothesis testing of categorical nominal variables, the author uses the Chi-Square Test and Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test.

Insights from the questionnaire are used to compare with other findings of this thesis.

### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1 Overview of Japan KitKat**

##### **3.1.1 History- summary of KitKat's journey**

The earliest introduction of KitKat started in the 1930s by Rowntree, a Britain chocolate factory named after Henry Isaac Rowntree, who was known to have acquired primarily a cocoa factory in York which then grew into a chocolate and candy manufacturer (Rao, 2018). KitKat was initially presented in 1935 as a crispy wafer four-finger chocolate bar, called "Chocolate Crisp" which was later extended to "KITKAT Chocolate Crisp" in May 1937, to serve workingman during their meaningful minutes of short breaks with sweets and cheerfulness, goes well with its current slogan "Have a break, have a KitKat" (Rao, 2018 & Nestlé, 2023). The red iconic packaging with the red logo name was used in 1937, the same year in which the company also introduced its concept of linking Break and KitKat (Nestlé, 2023). Nestlé calls this concept their "indispensable brand asset of KitKat" (Nestlé, 2023).

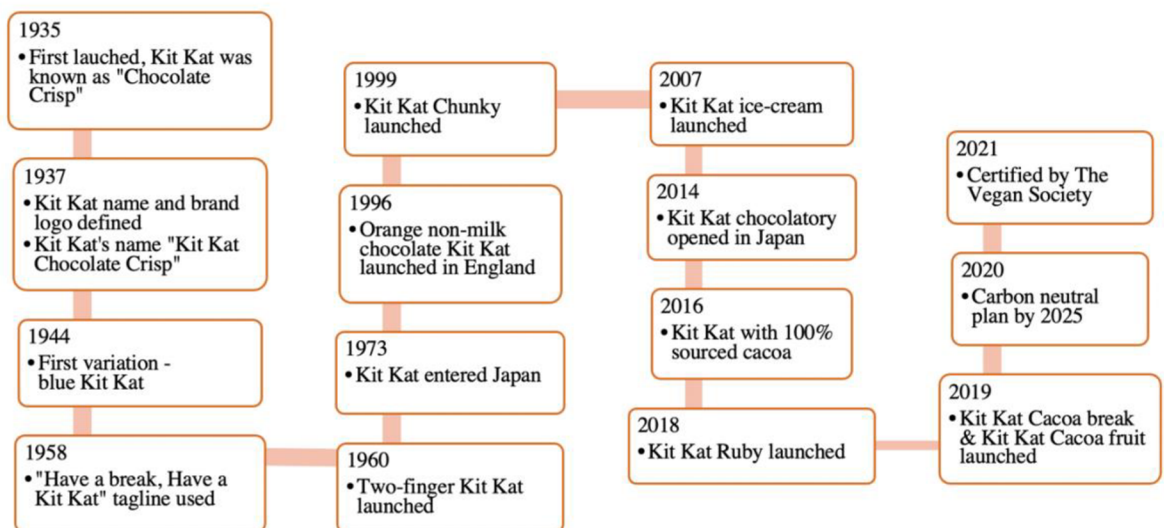
A year before World War II started, in 1944, the first variant of KitKat, dark chocolate with a blue package, was introduced (Nestlé, 2023). During the War, Rowntree altered its recipe due to the shortage supply of milk which prevented them from producing the same Chocolate Crisp KitKat, forcing them to also shorten the original name to "KitKat" stamped on a newly transformed blue package (Nestlé, 2023). A note attached to the new blue KitKat was "No more Chocolate Crisp till after the war," and as 1949 marked the year the war ended, milk supply was no longer an issue, and the Red packed KitKat also slowly returned to the market, yet the name "Chocolate Crisp" was never be used again (Nestlé, 2023). The back-then and current headline of KitKat popularly known as "Have a break, have a KitKat" was first introduced in 1958 and has been incorporated in KitKat campaigns till the present (Nestlé, 2023). Two years later, in 1960, the currently known classic KitKat with two-finger was created, and it was in 1999 that the first KitKat Chunky was introduced (Nestlé, 2023). In 2007, the first "KitKat Ice Cream" showed up on the market while the first KitKat Ruby was introduced later in 2018 (Nestlé, 2023).

According to Nestlé's Official Website (2023), the year 1973 marked the first entry of KitKat to Japan and until 1988, Rowntree was acquired by Nestlé, and a year after, the very first production of Nestlé KitKat started at Nestlé's Kasumigaura Factory in Japan. Whereas in England, the origin land of KitKat, the first creation of orange-flavoured no-milk KitKat came in 1996, which later inspired further development of KitKat flavors and shapes. The

first KitKat Chocolatory in Japan was established in 2014 and has today expanded to eight chocolates (Radecki, 2022).

In terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), KitKat has begun its journey as the foremost chocolate bar that is completely cocoa sustainably sourced since 2016 and has dedicated itself to being a carbon-neutral brand by 2025 as declared in its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 (Nestlé, 2021). Taking a step further in the name of sustainability, KitKat has been also verified by The Vegan Society in 2021. Various ranges of KitKat that can be found on markets include two-finger KitKat, four-finger KitKat, KitKat Chunky, KitKat pop, seasonal KitKat, Vegan KitKat, and KitKat tablets.

*Table 1 Summary of KitKat Journey*



Source: Own work, based on Nestlé (2023)

### 3.1.2 The KitKat in Japan and its Varieties

The very first flow of KitKat into Japan was in 1973; however, the earliest customized KitKat Japan version, the reason for its today's popularity, was brought to the Japanese marketplace until the introduction of new flavours by Nestlé Japan. A decade later after being imported by Rowntree, KitKat was taken over by Nestlé, a today universal food and drink company originated from Switzerland (Rao, 2018). Today, Nestlé's factories in Kasumigaura and Himeji have been used for KitKat productions, and KitKat sales, from 2010 onward, have witnessed a significant surge, experiencing a 50 percent increase (Rao, 2018).

Tejal Rao, the California restaurant critic for The Times, got a chance to visit inside the Kasumigaura factory and interviewed various representatives from Nestlé, including chief pastry Yasumasa Takagi. When being asked what makes KitKat a KitKat, the chief unreluctantly answered “the wafer,” which is decently prepared, making the light weighted KitKat bar dry, crunchy, crispy, quickly melted in your mouth along with a light bready, plain, soft, and toasted flavour. The broken and not-evenly-engraved wafers are used at farms as animal feed (Rao, 2018). The recipe of the wafer is constantly maintained at its defined standard; however, Rao also observed a small difference that makes up a Kit Kat bar in different countries as she mentioned “In Britain, Nestlé uses milk crumb, a sweetened, dehydrated milk product, to make the bars. In the United States, Hershey uses nonfat milk and milk fat, while in Japan, the factories work with whole-milk powder” (Rao, 2018).

Unique flavour varieties of KitKat Japan are what differentiates them from other KitKats. After taking over Rowntree, the marketing department at Nestlé started new flavour experiments, and its first Japanese flavour creation, Strawberry KitKat, being first placed for sale in Hokkaido during the beginning of the strawberry season, was considered a huge hit (Rao, 2018) 2021). This strawberry Kit Kat was coated in milk chocolate that acquired a pink hue from the inclusion of finely ground powder made from dehydrated strawberry juice (Rao, 2018). Further expansion of new unique flavours is the result of both new flavour experiments of the product development team at Nestlé and the collaborations between Nestlé and pastry chef Yasumasa Takagi, who was hired in 2003 by Nestlé to come up with innovative series of KitKat flavours (Rao, 2018). These new flavours are continuously being discovered by Takagi and later added to KitKat Chocolatory, an elegant high-end KitKat featured stores with limited-edition KitKat (Rao, 2018). At the same time, Nestlé also partners with famous local brands such as Tokyo Banana which is known for its cream-filled cakes, inspiring Nestlé to develop a new flavour concept based on those of their partners’ specialty (Rao, 2018).

As much as strawberry KitKat is preferred by the locals, it is also famous among foreign visitors, serving as inspiration for Nestlé to look into producing new flavours associated with Japanese regional products (Rao, 2018). Additionally, to expand and establish a presence in the souvenir market, Nestlé also forms partnerships that help them to highlight Japan's tradition of omiyage, a practice involving the exchange of gifts when returning from trips. From the 2000s onward, KitKat has also associated itself with students as the familiarity

between KitKat pronunciation in Japanese (Kitto-Katto) and the sound of the phrase “Kitto Katsu”(meaning “surely win/pass”) in the Kyushu dialect have been widely spread among students in Kyushu province and across Japan, making it very popular as a lucky item (Nestlé, 2023).

A former marketing manager at Nestlé Japan, Ryoji Maki, told the New York Times that “Japan is No. 1 in terms of sales and profits, compared with Nestlé’s other markets” (Rao, 2018). According to Nestlé’s Official Website (2023), after the U.K., Japan is the second country with the world's largest consumption of KitKat and a powerhouse where more than 400 flavours of KitKat have been discovered so far, among which some can be found only in specific regions of the country, and hundreds of various flavours more across the globe. These whole ranges, on a yearly basis, are not always available on the market, meaning that only a selection of their "core" flavours (around forty) is always available together with other complementary flavours that are new, seasonal, local, or on limited offer, totaling from twenty to thirty flavours (forward2me, 2021). The core flavours, based on Rao from the New York Time (2018), are called “sweetness for adults” and refers to flavours such as matcha, milk and dark chocolate, sake, strawberry, Tokyo banana, and wasabi. Seasonal flavours are added to the excitement like the sakura flavours that bloom during the springtime or the refreshing mint chocolate delights that emerge in early summer (Samantha, 2022). New flavours are regularly unveiled every few months. There are also varieties of Japanese alcohol-infused flavours such as rice wine, plum wine, yogurt wine, and yuzu wine that have garnered considerable recognition (Samantha, 2022). In terms of variants, approximately four million mini-KitKats are sold every day in Japan, making it the most popular KitKat type (Rao, 2018).

KitKat Chocolatory, a brand operated under chief Yasumasa Takagi, is defined by Nestlé as “a boutique specialty Kit Kat store offering a range of special edition products” (Radecki, 2022). At each Chocolatory, Kit Kats are not only available in various flavours but also meticulously handcrafted using premium chocolate and exceptional ingredients (Radecki, 2022). Among eight KitKat Chocolateries in Japan, Ginza Chocolatory is opened as both a KitKat souvenir shop and a café where customers are able to enjoy high-end sweets, buy numerous premium KitKats, and get personalized gifts with name and decoration patterns based on their choices, packed in a premium classy box (Radecki, 2022).

Based on KitKat Japan’s Website accessed on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, KitKat products are divided into 4 main categories: regular products, souvenir products, and KitKat Chocolatory products (See in Appendix, *Table 36*). Souvenir products are products with special regional flavours inspired by local dishes from different prefectures across Japan, serving as a perfect souvenir for travelers. Other flavours that could be available, on the rotating run, are presented in *Table 2*.

*Table 2 KitKat Flavour Varieties*

Adzuki Bean Sandwich	Choco banana	Hokkaido cheese and chocolate	Raspberry passionfruit
Apple	Cinnamon cookie	Hokkaido roasted corn	Red potato
Amazake	Citrus golden blend	Hokkaido melon with mascarpone cheese	Rilakkuma hotcake
Bakeable custard	Corn	Hot Japanese chili	Rock salt
Baked potato	Cough Drop	Kinako	Royal milk tea
Banana	Creme brulée	Kobe pudding	Ruby chocolate
Blueberry cheesecake	Double cookie	Black tea	Sakura
Brown sugar syrup	Edamame	Kuchidoke kakao	Salt and caramel
Butter	European cheese	Lemon cheesecake	Shikuwasa
Cafe au lait	Exotic Tokyo	Maple	Shinshu apple
Cantaloupe	Fruit parfait	Melon and cheese	Soy flour
Cappuccino	Ginger ale	Miso soup	Soy sauce
Caramel macchiato	Golden citrus	Muscat of Alexandria	Strawberry cheesecake
McFlurry	Green bean	Okinawa sweet potato	Sweet pudding
Cherry	Hōjicha	Oreo ice cream	Triple berry swirl
Cherry blossom mochi	Hokkaido cheese and chocolate	Pear	Vegetable juice
Cherry blossom green tea latte	Hokkaido roasted corn	Pumpkin	Watermelon
Chestnut	Hokkaido melon with mascarpone cheese	Ramune soda	Yokohama cheesecake
			Yūbari melon
			Yuzu

Sources: Forward2Me (2021)

### 3.2 Marketing Analysis

#### 3.2.1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis has been existing and evolving since its first appearance. It was first said to be used in the early 1950s by professors at Harvard Business School while some researchers argued that its origins can be traced back to the 1960s when Albert Humphrey conducted an analysis of Fortune 500 companies at Stanford Research Institute to create an innovative system for managing and controlling organizational change (Madsen, 2016, cited in Benzaghta, et al, 2021). During and after the 1960s, the use of SWOT analysis by various scholars became widespread and its concept was considered a significant advancement in strategic thinking and remained so until the 1990s when it, according to Hoskisson et al. (1999) cited in Benzaghta, et al (2021), has been considered a fundamental framework within

strategic management scope. Thanks to its proven credibility and legitimacy, SWOT analysis has been applied in various contexts and integrated with other methodologies to enhance its effectiveness and precise results; for instance, PESTEL analysis (Adem et al., 2018; Muzahidul et al., 2020; Wu, 2020).

SWOT analysis, a fundamental tool utilized by organizations to assess their market position, reviews strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It is widely employed during periods of uncertainty to identify either internal, referring to activities falling under the company's management scope, or external environment, concerning activities falling out of the control of the business (Rozmi et al., 2018; Wu, 2020, cited in Benzaghta, et al, 2021). Deriving from Renault (2023), internal factors encompass available resources and prior experiences including human resources, physical resources, financial resources, programs administered, and the systems employed by the business, experience, and reputation of the company in the industry. In contrast, external forces and circumstances are those factors beyond firms' control such as new market trends, cultural influences, domestic and global economic situations, funds supplies, demographic factors, location of business in terms of regional development and area accessibility, and legislations adopted (Renault, 2023). **Strengths** concern internal factors that facilitate the achievement of organizational goals, while **weaknesses** encompass internal elements that hinder success. **Opportunities**, on the other hand, include external factors that support the organization in attaining its objectives and not only represent positive environmental aspects but also opportunities to address gaps and initiate new initiatives. Conversely, **threats** refer to external factors that pose barriers or potential obstacles to the organization's goal attainment (Aldehayyat & Anchor, 2008; Fleisher & Bensoussan, 2003; Lee & Lin, 2008; Shrestha et al., 2004, cited in Benzaghta, et al, 2021).

### 3.2.2 TOWS Strategic Matrix

The combination of the four areas of SWOT analyses allows the companies to produce further strategic options. Taking into account internal and external aspects, management can formulate four main alternative strategies such as SO, ST, WO, and WT at different levels as indicated in the below table (Bayram & Üçüncü, 2016; David et al., 2019; Povilanskas & Labuz, 2012; Thomas et al., 2014; Usman & Murakami, 2011, cited in Benzaghta, et al, 2021).

Table 3 TOWS Strategic Alternatives Matrix

TOWS Matrix		External	
		Opportunities	Threats
Internal	Strengths	SO maxi-maxi	ST maxi-mini
	Weaknesses	WO mini-maxi	WT mini-mini

Source: Own work based on Benzaghta, et al. (2021)

The TOWS analysis is a strategic analysis tool that systematically evaluates both external and internal factors influencing a company's current competitiveness and possible capacity to grow. While sharing similarities with the widely known SWOT analysis, the TOWS analysis emphasizes the correct sequence of steps for conducting a thorough strategic analysis according to Michael Watkins, the traditional order of the SWOT acronym is misleading since an analysis of strengths is conducted in the first step (Wozniak, 2023). Watkins (2023) argues that managers should initially investigate any possible environmental threats, which allows them to properly plan and prepare to proactively address these threats before moving on to assess other areas of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and other factors. Typically, the general principles and suggestions for management that arise from employing the TOWS analysis are straightforward in theory but challenging to implement in practice as the company needs to focus on evading threats, taking advantage of arising opportunities, reinforcing weaknesses, and conducting crucial activities on its areas of expertise and competitive advantages (Wozniak, 2023).

TOWS matrix focuses on a combined four choices of strategies:

**SO (Strength – Opportunities)** focuses on utilizing strengths to seek opportunities (Renault, 2023). It is known as the maxi-maxi strategy, involving aggressive expansion and diverse growth. This scenario pertains to a company that possesses a dominant position in its surroundings and is presented with favorable prospects (Wozniak, 2023).

**WO (Weakness- Opportunities)** focuses on utilizing opportunities to surmount weaknesses (Renault, 2023). It is known as the mini-maxi strategy. In this case, the company faces numerous vulnerabilities that are linked to its weaknesses; however, its surroundings offer a greater number of opportunities (Wozniak, 2023). To devise an effective strategy, it is important to capitalize on these opportunities while simultaneously minimizing or addressing the weaknesses within the organization (Wozniak, 2023).



**ST (Strength- Threats)** focuses on utilizing strengths to prevent threats (Renault, 2023). It is known as the maxi-mini strategy. This refers to a situation when the company is facing challenges in its progress due to undesired external circumstances, primarily referring to the presence of various threats, and to tackle these threats, the company can leverage its significant internal strengths (Wozniak, 2023).

**WT (Weakness- Threats)** focuses on mitigating weaknesses and preventing threats (Renault, 2023). It is known as the mini-mini strategy. In this scenario, the company lacks any chances for growth or advancement as it functions in unfriendly conditions, has limited potential for transformation, and lacks notable advantages that could withstand challenges (Wozniak, 2023). The mini-mini strategy essentially implies two scenarios, a pessimistic one where liquidation is taken into account and an optimistic scenario when the company is struggling to withstand or merge with another (Wozniak, 2023).

The benefits of TOWS analysis lie in its efficacy in assessing both internal and external aspects. This approach fosters creativity, enabling the generation of a range of strategies to navigate external challenges, optimizing strengths, and mitigating weaknesses. TOWS analysis is instrumental in recognizing opportunities and threats, empowering organizations to leverage their strengths effectively, and identifying potential strategic partners (Wozniak, 2023). However, there are several drawbacks. As it does not specify concrete strategies to be carried out, leaving the decision-making entirely up to the company, it also disregards potential costs associated with implementing a specific strategy, fails to account for the possible consequences of the strategies implemented, and neglects external aspects such as the macroeconomic environment and political, social, and technological context, all of which can significantly impact a company's operations (Wozniak, 2023).

### **3.3 Glocalization**

As defined in a recent Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2023), the term "Glocalization" refers to "the fact of adapting products or services that are available all over the world to make them suitable for local needs." Correspondingly, as cited in Sukhasvasti (2020), the Oxford University Press explained this term as "the action, process, or fact of making something both global and local, specifically the adaptation of global influences or business strategies in accordance with local conditions; global localization."

Cited in a book titled “Globalization: A Critical Introduction” by Victor Roudometof (2016b), the Oxford Dictionary of New Words (1991) defined "Glocalization" as a term originates from a translation of the Japanese word "*dochakuka*," which made its first appearance in 1989 during an interview between Yoshihisa Tabuchi and Michael Schrage, where this "*dochakuka*" expression used by Yoshihisa Tabuchi was interpreted as "become deeply rooted." The term “glocalization” was later popularized in English-speaking academia by sociologist Roland Robertson who got his hand, on his way to Tokyo in 2002, on an English-language Japan Times newspaper featuring an article highlighting the newly existing term so-called “glocalization” (Roudometof, 2016a). Prior to that, it is worth noting that between the 1980s to 1990s, the CEO of Sony Corporation, Akio Morita, had also frequently adopted this glocalization concept in their marketing-promoting and branding-strategies (Edgington and Hayter, 2012, cited in Roudometof, 2016a) and although in 2014, there were a claim that EBSCO host search contain this term in their records in between 1966 and 1987, there were actually none. Reflecting on “*dochakuka*” itself, two authors-Martin and Woodside (2008) mentioned in their research journal that this word emerged from the adjustments made to farming techniques based on specific geographical conditions. Considering today’s modernized world, the glocalization concept has been integrated into Japanese marketing to highlight the tendency of consumers to favor localized variations of global products, specifying how cultural values play such a significant role in this case (Martin, Drew, and Arch G. Woodside, 2008).

However, despite the similarity between the definition of "*dochakuka* " mentioned above and the one found in the Dictionary, the Japan Times newspaper in 2002 brought back this term into the Japanese language by adopting the English term (Robertson, 2002, cited in Sukhasvasti, 2020), which suggests the possible existence of disparity between the original Japanese term "*dochakuka*" and its supposed English translation; hence, how glocalization should be defined still raise a question. Despite the lack of solid theoretical foundations until recently regardless of how widely the concept has been known and used in marketing, several researchers throughout the years have provided various interpretations of the term (Sukhasvasti, 2020).

While Robertson underlined the interdependent, interactive, and unifying relationship between the global and local factors to explain glocalization, Alexander added that the local factors tend to more likely influence, and not be eradicated by or mixed with, global factors

and both forces coexist interdependently to establish heterogeneity (Sukhasvasti, 2020). On the other hand, another author, Giddens, proposed that glocalization and the local forces are the responses arising from globalization and the global forces where the local cultures are being restored, and these global factors stimulate the local ones to emerge and blend (Sukhasvasti, 2020). A study conducted by Forrester, Jonathan, and Matusitz (2009) concerning Successful Glocalization Practices involving Japan as a case study has pointed out that when being defined in marketing concept, glocalization means for international firms to be successful in a new market, they need to acknowledge and embrace the significance of the local culture by engaging with it. In the latest theory of Roudometof (2016b), the author agreed with Alexander's theory and further highlighted his key idea that glocalization should be regarded as one self-contained and independent concept with the capacity to manifest in numerous glocalities to suit various circumstances and is beyond just the overshadowing influence of globalization.

### **3.4 Wordplay Marketing**

Advertisements can take various forms, among which the use of wordplay is one popular case. Wordplay marketing is simply how the marketers play with the words or phrases used for the advertisement of the products. Advertisement refers to the text through which advertisers communicate their products to their potential customers (Okada, 2012). Defined by Korčárk (2012) in his research, wordplay refers to “a linguistic phenomenon based on structural features of language such as homonymy, literal or figural language, idioms, polysemic words, and many others in an attempt to create a humorous message.” It is frequently employed in advertisements for different products because of its remarkable ability to be remembered, and because humor is an effective tool for persuasion, especially in advertising (Korčárk, 2012).

According to Okada (2012), Wordplay can be seen at various linguistic levels from phonological, graphological, lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels. The most popular form of Wordplay is a pun, which is defined differently by numerous scholars, and so are their types. The popularity of using puns is not a new trend. As further highlighted in Okada's book (2012), due to the flowing Romance loanwords into the language system in the middle English period and the Latinization of vocabulary in the time of the Renaissance, puns were widely used, explained by Kokeritz, cited in Okada (2012) and became vastly popular within the Elizabethans, the Victorians, and the Tudors, the classical Greeks as well as Romans (Redfern, 1984. et al, cited in Okada, 2012). The term "pun" originates from the

Latin word "paronomasia," which refers to a comical manipulation of words, involving the use of multiple-meaning words or words that share similar sounds, and it entails both a literal interpretation and a suggested or implied meaning (Okada, 2012).

Puns, as described in Okada's book (2012), are often separated into three types which are Homonyms, Homophones, and Homographs. In the same book, other two authors, Leech (1969) and Attardo (1994), agreeingly define "*Homonyms*" as words with identical spelling and pronunciation yet with different translations, "*Homophones*" as words with identical pronunciation yet differ in spelling and meaning, and "*Homograph*," on the other hand, as words with identical spelling yet different pronunciation and meaning. However, Florman (2017) specified in his article that sometimes even words with similar, not identical, sounds are also classified as homophonic puns. Other scholars like Hockett (1977) (cited in Okada, 2012) simply considers puns as words with similar sound. Although these three are the main type of puns that has been classified in various literature, many online article authors also commonly mention another three types of puns, namely *compound*, *recursive*, and *visual* puns. Defined by Masterclass (2021) and author Daniel (2023), a *compound* pun simply means a pun that comprises multiple puns within a single sentence. However, according to Florman's (2017) assertion, the provided definition lacks clarity in explaining the concept of a compound pun. Florman (2017) claimed that compound pun seems to encompass two distinct concepts, either referring to a bunch of interconnected puns that mutually play off one another or puns that merge phrases through a common word. A *recursive* pun, on the other hand, involves two elements of wordplay, where comprehending the meaning of the initial element is essential for the subsequent element to be understood (Masterclass, 2021 & Daniel, 2023). Lastly, a *visual* pun, also known as a graphological pun, use visual elements like image or graphics rather than phonetic writing to convey a humorous or clever meaning (Masterclass, 2021 & Daniel, 2023).

Additionally, based on research conducted by other authors namely Canhui as cited in Chang (2018) and Yi-bo (2015) on similar topics regarding the analysis of Puns in the English Advertising Language, there are commonly two characteristics of puns- *Ambiguity*, which is defined by Leech (1983) as cited in Yi-bo (2015) as "a kind language item which has two or more than two cognitive meanings," and *Double context*, meaning a pun with dual meanings, literal and intended. In their studies, Chang (2018) and Yi-bo (2015) classified puns into four types- homophonic, semantic, idiomatic, and grammatical explained as follows:

- Homophonic pun: as explained previously, it is a type of wordplay where a word shares a similar or identical sound with another word.
- Semantic pun: a word used in a sentence once or multiple times, yet each occurrence carries a different meaning. Author Yus (2003) as cited in Yi-bo (2015) highlighted that “Many puns have a covert interpretation and one overt interpretation which searched for after reaching the covert one.” This type of pun draws more attention from people as they try to dig into and eliminate unrelated meanings based on the context.
- Idiomatic pun: idiom words or slang effectively used in capturing the attention of audiences as they are concise and efficient. Due to their engaging nature, many advertisers incorporate idioms or slang into their advertisements to make them more engaging. They replace the original words with homophonic ones, creating a special effect that adds value to the advertisement.
- Grammatical pun: involves the manipulation of grammar, including intentional omission or alteration of certain structures or words.

*Table 4 Types of puns and examples*

Types of Puns	Examples
Homonyms	“Two <i>silk</i> worms had a race. It ended in a <i>tie</i> .” (Tie mean as a verb “necktie made from silk,” or as a noun “equal result”)
Homophones	“You can tune a guitar, but you can’t <i>tuna</i> fish. Unless of course, you play bass.” – Douglas Adam (“Tuna” sounds just like “tune a”)
Homographs	“You can tune a guitar, but you can’t tuna fish. Unless of course, you play <i>bass</i> .” – Douglas Adam (Bass could mean an instrument (pronounced as <i>beyss</i> ) and a fish type (pronounced as <i>bass</i> )- both has same spelling)
Compound	“Where do mathematicians go for fun? To a Möbius <i>strip</i> club!” (a common word “Strip” from “Mobius strip” and “strip club” merged)
Recursive	“May the <i>Fourth</i> be with you.” (Used by fans of the Star War, emerged from popular phrase “May the Force be with you,” and the facts that May 4th is known as a “Star Wars Day”)
Visual	“Giant electric fan placed in a stadium with the caption “ <i>Biggest Fan</i> ”
Semantic	“We <i>suit</i> you.” (An ad for a clothing brand. <i>Suit</i> here as a verb means “fits or be appropriate” and as a noun mean “a set of matching garments)
Idiomatic	“A <i>BERD’s in hand</i> .” (The uses of “BERD” meaning “the bank of reconstruction and development” and the idiom “a bird in hand is worth two in the bush”)
Grammatical	“Ask for <i>More</i> .” (An ad pun used by the “More” cigarette brand)

Source: Yi-bo (2015), Chang (2018), Daniel (2023) & Masterclass (2021)

As a result of Yi-bo's (2015) study, the author concluded major findings of the realistic functions of puns used in advertisements including alerting and grabbing the attention of the audiences at their first encounter with the brand due to the pun's humorous and ambiguity characteristics, shortening words and space for advertisement while giving brief information with its multiple meanings, enhancing the aesthetic impact of the language used, and serving as a tool for sidestepping social taboos. The used term "Taboo," in Yi-bo's (2015) study, refers to things strongly prohibited due to, for instance, customs or beliefs; henceforth, employing a pun can allow for the implicit communication of certain information as in the realm of advertising, which serves as a means of conveying information, it is important to avoid the use of negative or offensive words.

In this dissertation, an examination of Nestlé's utilization of wordplay marketing to enhance the appeal of KitKat for both domestic and global consumers emerges as a central strategic pillar that plays a pivotal role in the overarching triumph of its branding efforts.

#### **3.4.1 The Japanese Lucky Charms for the exam: Good Signs Reading**

For centuries, many Asian cultures have been intertwined with beliefs in objects and superstitions, and Japan is no exception to this phenomenon. The entrance exam is regarded as a significant event, as its outcome has the potential to shape one's future. The examination period occurs from late January to March, and in Japanese, this overwhelmed and stressed period is named "*shiken jigoku* (試験地獄), translating as "examination hell" (Wu, 2020). As emotional support plays a vital role in motivating students, it is common for them to receive gifts or items that are associated with good luck to uplift their spirits and serve as tokens of well-wishing for success. Typically, students visit a shrine and purchase from there an amulet or "*omamori*," the symbol of luck, before their exams (Okada, 2012). It is crucial to understand the importance of sign reading rooted in Japanese culture. Written in Okada's book (2012), the Japanese hold a "strong belief in symbolism and the meaning objects entail." The idea of avoiding doing something that is believed to bring bad luck become a norm. In addition, Okada's research (2012) has demonstrated tons of other metaphorical expressions commonly believed by Japanese students, through the results of the survey, to be avoided during a period of important occasions. *Table 5 and 6* below are the summary of those connections between particular activities and the meanings associated with them.

Table 5 Activities before exams and their meanings

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Meanings</b>
Avoid slipping on the street	Slip: <i>suberu</i> (Japanese), implying meaning “fail”
Avoid falling	Fall down: <i>korobu</i> (Japanese), implying meaning “fail”
Avoid tripping over	Trip over: <i>tsumazku</i> (Japanese), implying meaning “fail”
Avoid dropping things	Drop: <i>ochiru</i> or <i>otosu</i> (Japanese) imply meaning “fall”
Avoid eating peanuts	Peanut: <i>Rakkasei</i> , and <i>Rakka</i> (Japanese) means “fall”
Avoid saying the above words	Their meanings imply “failure”
Place KitKat with a warmer to let it melt	Melt: <i>tokeru</i> (Japanese), implies acing the exams and solving questions

Source: Okada (2012)

In addition, the belief in interpretations of words associated with luck also extends to the choices of foods students eat before their exams, seen as a way to lift up their spirits and invite luck. The term used to identify this type of meal is “Shōbumeshi,” which can refer to various types of foods depending on how people define them (Nippon, 2022). A survey conducted on high school students by Study Sapuri Shinro revealed that pork cutlet (in Japanese: *Katsu*, also translated as “Win”) received the most votes, or 81.8 percent among other food choices as a good luck meal students consume before the exam (Nippon, 2022). For more Shōbumeshi, see Table 6.

Table 6 Activities before exams and their meanings

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Description</b>
Traditional practices	Pray at Shrine to God of “Study” Buy Shrine amulet ( <i>Omamori</i> ) Writing on the wooden- wishing board ( <i>Ema</i> )
Eat meals perceived to bring luck or known as “Shōbumeshi”	<b>Shōbumeshi</b> may include: .Pork cutlet ( <i>Katsu</i> = Win) .Rice balls ( <i>Omusubi</i> = Good connection) .Sea bream ( <i>Tai</i> , similar to <i>Medetai</i> = Auspicious) .Sticky fermented bean ( <i>Natto</i> , persistent) .Sukiyaki ..., and others.
Buy wordplay items	KitKat, Kit Mail ( <i>Kitto Katsu</i> = you will win!) Pentagon shaped- pencils (Pentagon = <i>Gokaku</i> , but <i>Gokaku</i> also means “pass.”) Ukaaru cracker ( <i>Ukaaru</i> = pass)

Source: Okada (2012) & Nippon (2022)

### **3.5 Nation Branding**

Other than actors like companies who seek new opportunities to expand their target customers internationally, numerous countries with the government as a lead have as well embraced social platforms and other methods as part of their efforts to promote their culture to global audiences. This endeavour, according to Sukhasvasti (2020), commonly referred to as "nation branding," involves the initiatives of countries showcasing a distinctive and predominantly favorable image of themselves to gain various benefits.

Understanding the definition of a “brand” helps marketers easily grasp the concept of national branding. The authors Keith and Dinnie (2008) outlined two crucial components of any existing brand to be the visual representation and underlying characteristics, especially value-adding features of the brand, which both contribute to creating a distinct set of traits in consumers' minds. Other than serving as a marketing tool to set products apart, it is also a cultural form of communication, conveying product stories and fulfilling consumer needs through its image (Cayla. et al, 2008). A brand, in another definition by the American Marketing Association (2007) cited in Montanari & Giraldi (2018), refers to “name, term, design, symbol or any other feature that identifies the seller’s goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers.” Based on this definition, there is a need for a brand to incorporate its own unique characteristic that sets it apart from others to establish itself. Realistically speaking, as stated by Fan (2010), cited in Montanari & Giraldi (2018), a brand goes beyond just a label as it covers an intricate collection of images, associations, meanings, and experiences that reside in people's minds and becomes an intangible idea that simplifies the decision-making process (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2008, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). Brands considered to be successful are those establishing a long-lasting competitive advantage and attaining favorable outcomes in terms of profit and performance (Chernatony et. al, 2011, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018).

The idea of a brand has expanded its scope to describe a range of things, brand as a nation is no exception. In line with the concept of developing distinctive value-enhancing products and services brands for customers, the concept of a country branding aims to achieve the same objectives but on a broader scale, specifically for an entire nation as emphasized by Anholt (2007). National branding as defined by Dinnie (2008) means “the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences.”



Fetscherin (2010) asserts that a country brand is a public entity that is multifaceted and incorporates various levels, elements, and fields of study that cover the entire perception of a nation, comprising economic, political, historical, and cultural dimensions while country images is another often-confused different concept in literature. According to Knott et. al (2015), country branding does not exist independently and is deliberately and strategically created and managed; meanwhile, a country image, according to Pappu & Quester (2010), results from perceptions and impressions that consumers hold, and the processed information international customers perceived of a particular nation which this image, according to Knott et. al (2015), can be utilized, although not always be the case, to foster nation branding resulting in reputation enhancement. Achieving a strong country brand plays a role as a catalyst for export stimulation, tourists, investments, and immigration attractions, thereby fostering the development of nations, Fetscherin (2010) stated.

Another relevant concept to both country image and country branding is the so-called country-of-origin effect. It is described by Bloemer et.al, 2009 as “a specific marketing phenomenon through which consumers are consciously or unconsciously stimulated (e.g., by the “made in” label) and acts as an assessment criterion when forming their attitude to a product.” The forces of stimuli may result from either a country's image (how global audiences perceive the nation) or from the result of country branding. The country-of-origin effect also influences various companies’ significant decisions regarding the location of factories and business operation, sale, purchasing, and investment decisions (Giraldi, 2016; Matiza & Oni, 2014).

### **3.5.1 The Objective of Nation Branding**

According to author Dinnie (2008), the aims of establishing country branding involve attracting more visitors, encouraging investments, boosting exports, and additionally in the long run, enticing skilled individuals. Following these objectives, Anholt (2007) advocates using the term "competitive identity" to denote the fusion of brand management, public diplomacy, trade, and the stimulation of investments, exports, and the tourism sector.

As one of the global, impactful, essential, and rapidly growing industries, the *tourism sector* plays a major role in promoting a country’s phase of growth and in affecting the management of a country brand (Fetscherin, 2010, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). Among various challenges, understanding the diverse demands of tourists and their places of interest which

would greatly help with initiating a careful plan of a suitable country brand strategy is one of the challenges (Nikolova & Hassan, 2013, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). Other factors such as destinations of visiting, services offered, pricing factors, means of transport, options of accommodated places, and cultural and lifestyle factors of a nation are aspects that can be utilized to achieve gains (Kotler & Gertner, 2004 & Dinnie, 2015). According to Hurn (2016), these aspects demonstrated that “the country, its characteristics, and branding can often be used to gain an advantage.” In addition, the fact that tourist products have a strong connection to services offered has posed challenges for branding managers in terms of quality assurance (Blain et.al, 2005). Although greatly influencing consumer experience based on Nikolova & Hassan (2013), this process is crucial for establishing a competitive advantage to attract tourists as stated by Dwyer & Kim (2003). The tourism industry is expressed by Elliot et.al (2011) and Pike (2008) as “an image-oriented sector” implying that competition within this sector primarily revolves around the perception created, considering that a destination incorporates various aspects; thus, establishing a one positive and impactful image raised a challenge.

***Foreign investment*** comes with a range of benefits that nations cannot neglect; thus, nations competitively try hard to secure (Sirr, Garvey & Gallagher, 2012, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). According to the same authors, the endeavor of attracting investments is predicated upon cultivating a convincing national image seeking to enhance the perception of prospective investors and corporations and stimulating their inclination toward investment.

In relation to ***increasing exports***, country branding also plays a role in enhancing its worth. To boost exports, countries strive to establish a global competitive advantage by formulating their exporting and branding strategies based on aspects such as geographical location, prevailing institutional conditions, and available resources (Sun, Paswan & Tieslau, 2016, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). In other cases, countries promote their exports by portraying a particular image and a defined set of values (O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2000, cited in Montanari & Giraldi, 2018). As mentioned by Dinnie et.al (2010), to orchestrate these branding endeavors aimed at fostering exports, nations also promote through specialized entities known as export promotion organizations (EPOs).

In connection with skilled labor attraction, a convincing country brand invites international *talents* and students who will acquire valuable experience to be shared with their surroundings, resulting in influencing the country's image among international consumers (Kilduff et. al, 2014). Hence, managing country brands is vital for talent attraction and shaping global perceptions.

### **3.5.2 National Branding in Japan: The Cool Japan**

The origin of "Cool Japan" arose from Douglas McGrey's influential 2002 article titled "Japan's Gross National Cool" where he shed light on Japan's cultural rise as a superpower (Sukhasvasti, 2020). His idea was found to have coincided with famous Joseph Nye's concept of soft power as a potent national asset (Sukhasvasti, 2020).

In his article (2002), McGrey highlighted the following cultural power evolution of Japan as an economic power. Tracing back to the tremendous growth of the Japanese film industry in the early 2000s, the top festival prize at the Berlin Film Festival in 2009 was rewarded to Japan's *Spirit Away*, the very first animation to win (McGrey, 2002). For the very first time, a Japanese Manga exhibition was launched at Frankfurt's major publishing show (McGrey, 2002). The prominent Japan-Pop music star Namie Amuro in the 1990s amassed a substantial fan base across Asia despite never embarking on a tour in the United States (McGrey, 2002). From Tokyo fashion to magazines featuring Japanese lifestyle gained a massive hit primarily among millions of teenagers (McGrey, 2002). In the U.S., from Hollywood films, TV series, and after-school cartoons to video games of top-selling Sony PlayStation and Nintendo were all significantly inspired by Japanese manga and anime (McGrey, 2002). Furthermore, according to McGrey (2009), the New York Times style editor called Tokyo "the real international capital of fashion" while famous European cities of fashion like Paris or Milan were just followers. The article also highlights the decade of 1980s as a period that Japan spearheaded a unique type of superpower—based solely on its robust economy where Japanese firms claimed an intellectual high ground that left competitors, even in the United States, eagerly seeking guidance on Japanese management techniques and scrambling to replicate their successes (McGrey, 2002). Even in the 2000s, despite the unfortunate political and economic situation, Japanese cultural influence surpassed that of the 1980s when it held the status of an economic superpower (McGrey, 2002). Based on the same article, Joseph S. Nye Jr. described national cool as "soft power" that is immeasurable and defined the term as a means used by a nation to shape the desires

and values of other nations or their populations. National cool represents a concept that underscores how commercial trends, products, and a country's ability to generate them can be harnessed for political and economic purposes (McGrey, 2002). According to him, despite possessing a substantial reserve of soft power, Japan is said to have limited avenues to fully capitalize on it; for instance, the lack of support for foreign immigrants restricts national cool from achieving its goal of foreign and domestic infusions. He further highlighted that Japan's insularity is the reason that limited its utilization of economic soft power. Globalization has reduced this inward focus, yet economic downturn and political chaos have shaken fundamental values in areas like business culture and family life, and these values might revive with economic recovery or turn into a new era of national uncertainty, further influenced by demographic factors caused by Japan's aging population (Joseph S. Nye Jr, 2002). The convergence of McGrey's article and Joseph Nye's concept spotlighted Japanese culture and its rising global interests which demonstrated an opportunity for the government to utilize as a tool for economic recovery, triggering the launch of cool Japan policy in 2004.

According to a study conducted by Sukhasvasti (2020), the Japan Brand Working Group, which was later renamed twice as the Cool Japan Advisory Council in 2010 and the Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council in 2015, was launched by the government of Japan in 2004 with the purpose to enhance Japan's reputation, aspiring to become a globally admired and respected nation. The current chair of the council is the minister Shunichi Yamaguchi (The Cabinet, 2023). The official adoption of the "Cool Japan" slogan marked a significant milestone in 2005, and the commitment of the committee was to direct its efforts toward three primary domains: food culture, fashion, and local brands, which later in 2015 extended to four - design, content, cuisine, and regions specifically targeting private business sector (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). To bring attention to products in these three domains, various projects and special events were organized domestically and overseas (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). The same report (2015) also highlighted that the focuses of Cool Japan as derived from the Intellectual Property Strategic Headquarters (2011) cover “everything from games, manga, anime, and other forms of content, fashion, commercial products, Japanese cuisine, and traditional culture to robots, eco-friendly technologies, and other high-tech industrial products.” Cool Japan, as defined in the same report (2015), is simply known as “aspect of Japanese culture that non-Japanese perceived as cool.”

Furthermore, as stated by the Intellectual Property Strategic Headquarters of the Cabinet Office (2023), the Cool Japan Public-Private Partnership Platform involves the collaboration of both governmental entities comprising twelve government ministries and five public institutions, and 45 private enterprises, spanning various industries like content creation, culinary and food, travel, production, and supply chains. A total of 21 experts and executives from the private sector make up the platform's "Advisory Board" (Cabinet Office, 2023). Notable undertakings of this platform are an international promotional gathering and educational sessions organization for members (Cabinet Office, 2023).

In addition, in May of 2016, an interim report regarding the effort focused on creating Cool Japan hubs and fostering collaboration between these hubs (inter-hub collaboration) was initiated along with some projects to be carried out in 2016, and a final report made in 2017 has clarified two main focuses which are to “communicate and roll out measures and know-how related to inter-hub communication” and “strengthen the functions of Cool Japan hubs through collaboration and networking” (Cabinet Office, 2017).

### **3.5.3 The Cool Japan Strategy**

Following the Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council (2015), the Cool Japan Strategy is regarded as an integral element of Japan’s national brand strategy and is described as “an effort that aims to disseminate Japan’s attractiveness and allure to the world and to incorporate and harness global growth for domestic economic growth.” As further clarified in this report (2015), the strategy serves beyond the purpose of boosting Japan’s economy through Cool Japan promotions and export expansions but also bringing more tourists to Japan. Besides, the growth of overseas fans would stimulate consumption within Japan which, if coupled with Visit Japan initiatives, would result in a higher influx of foreign visitors to Japan based on an anticipated multiplier effect as stated in the report (2015). Moreover, as innovative private-sector firms have been supported by the government, they also play a key role in progressing Cool Japan initiatives; hence, by offering innovative products and services aligned with Cool Japan, revitalizing, and promoting traditional Japanese attractions, they thrive. The approach combined with intensified competition results in rejuvenating Japan’s economy.

The strategy progressed in three following phases where the initial one involved various discussions mainly revolved around enhancing the capacity to promote Cool Japan.

Consequently, an Action Plan to Strengthen Cool Japan Communications was formulated. Cool Japan's mission- "Japan, a country providing creative solutions to the world's challenges"- was introduced by the Cool Japan Movement Promotion Council in the next phase and is planned to be achieved as in its proposal. The third phase came in early 2015 with a primary concept to formulate a business plan that brought growth to Japan's economy with all Cool Japan policies considered ecosystem and to scale up the Cool Japan, period up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games and onward become their targets of focus. The council discussed ways, considering the Visit Japan initiative and regional creations, to integrate policies focusing on economic gains and policy direction to be pursued.

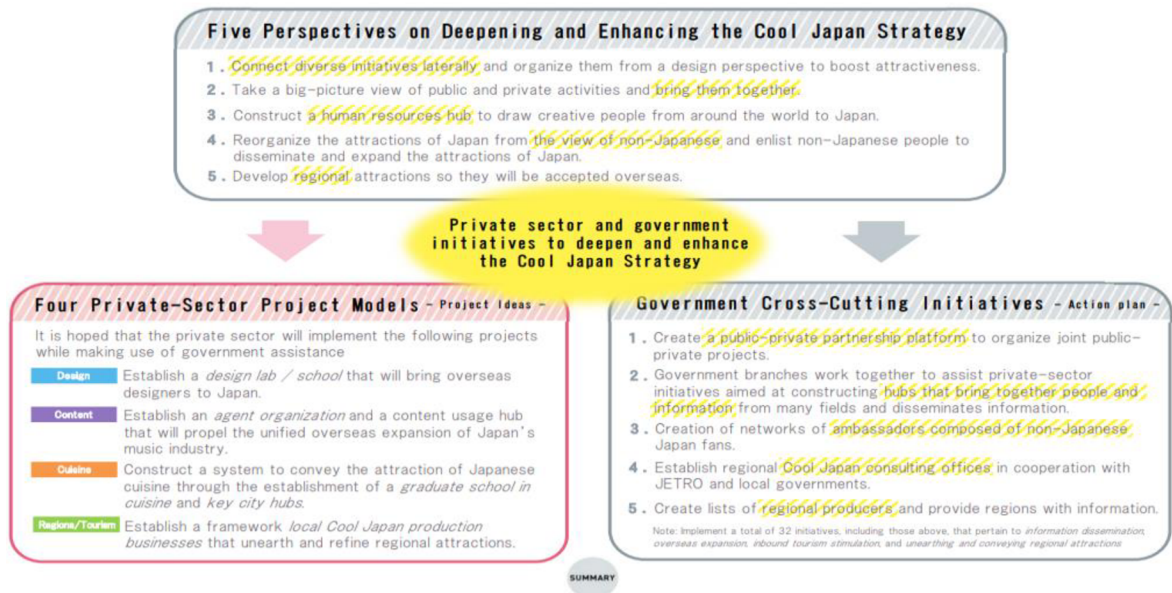
### **Five perspectives of the Cool Japan strategy**

Considering five different viewpoints to strengthen and enrich the Cool Japan Strategy, the Council compiled private-sector project models and government-wide initiatives. (*Figure 1*)

As a result of the council's negotiation, these five perspectives are:

1. Connecting diverse initiatives laterally through the perspective of design
2. Bringing policies and businesses together
3. Constructing a human resources hub
4. Incorporating the views of non-Japanese
5. Enhancing regional attractions

Figure 1 Five Perspectives of the Cool Japan Strategy



Source: Cabinet Office (2015)

Serving the best purpose of this study, only the fourth and fifth perspectives will be practically analyzed in the practical part. The fourth perspective regarding “Incorporating the views of non-Japanese,” as explained in the Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council report (2015), refers to the idea of collaborating with non-Japanese fans including those of influential individuals to promote and expand Cool Japan overseas and re-examining and modifying the perception of what really defines "attraction of Japan" from these non-Japanese’s standpoints. As is commonly known, Japan, through its famous cuisines, fashion industry, and other various aspects, has gained admiration from fans worldwide; hence, it is believed that these non-Japanese fans hold the potential to serve as valuable partners in promoting Cool Japan overseas according to the report (2015). Yet, it's important to consider that non-Japanese’s perception of what is "cool" may differ from the traditional "attractions of Japan" perceived by the locals. In contrast, Japan also needs to be cautious when exporting Japanese products and services overseas under the assumption that they embody the allure of Japan without studying non-Japanese standpoints (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015).

In relation to the fifth perspective “Enhancing regional attractions,” the council has pointed out how massive potential resources such as local cuisines, artistic traditions, and diverse sake types in domestic regions have been underestimated and not been utilized to serve their optimal purpose, most remaining untapped and unused. Even when certain regions have

managed to uncover and utilize these resources, their expansion overseas has been inconsistent, failing to enhance the overall attractiveness of Japan. Hence, to address such an issue, it is crucial to bring out the hidden dormant Cool Japan resources in regional areas and compile them in a manner that brings extra value, transforming them into products that resonate with international customers. Equally important is the comprehensive packaging which ensures the packed regional resources contribute to the appeal of Japan as a whole. Derived from Sukhasvasti (2020), this has demonstrated that “the government considers regionalism and the diverse regional identity to be an integral part of Japanese identity and attractiveness.”

As aforementioned, private sector enterprises play a crucial role in expediting the execution of the Cool Japan initiative and are well-positioned to benefit from government assistance. After consultations with experts, for the private sector, the council has identified four primary themes “design, content, cuisine, and tourism or regions,” and within these themes, specific projects have been proposed, along with suggested project samples, serving as practical models for private-sector businesses to draw inspiration from and implement (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). Additionally, to further advance the strategy, the Cabinet Secretariat consolidates diverse ministry and agency projects and promotes these initiatives as unified government initiatives, also known as government cross-cutting initiatives (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015).



## **4 Practical Part**

### **4.1 KitKat's wordplay marketing in Japan**

#### **4.1.1 The Pun: Kitto-Katto**

The pure promotion of KitKat as an exotic British snack during its early entry into Japan, combined with the fact that KitKat is a foreign-originated brand, made its future in the Japanese market very uncertain; the concern was also expressed by the Nestlé Japan executive from Kobe region (Tett, 2021). However, the discovery of the unexpected twist in the Japanese name of KitKat in 2002 seemed to mark a turning point and a future changer that has resolved concerns about its unstable future.

Differing from cases where companies strategically create puns in logos or slogans to convey the story of their brands to customers, the wordplay of KitKat was serendipitously discovered and initially popularized by the customers themselves, particularly students. Since then, wordplay marketing has become among the most crucial strategies that significantly contributed to KitKat's remarkable success in the Japanese market. Since 2004, Nestlé Japan has marketed KitKat not just as a simple chocolate bar but as a good-luck snack for students, especially to support them during the exam months. This marketing approach was initially inspired by the rise in KitKat sales in the Kyushu area during the 2002 exam period when students began purchasing KitKat as, for the first time, a gesture of good luck (Okada, 2012 & Tett, 2021).

The association between KitKat and a lucky charm is attributed to the linguistic fact first noticed by students that the word “KitKat” in Japanese is pronounced as Kitto-Katto (キットカット), which phonetically resembles the phrase Kitto-Katsu (きつと勝つ), meaning “surely/certainly, you will win/pass” (Okada, 2012 & Tett, 2021). Based on the theoretical part, since the two words in Japanese share similar sounds despite their different meanings, this is a case of homonym pun.

The lucky-charm KitKat made its way to the second position in 2003 then the first position in 2004 on a chart voted by students as their preferred lucky object (Okada, 2012). With a successful launch of the KitKat “lucky charm” campaign, Nestlé won the 2005 ABME (Asian Brand Marketing Effectiveness) top award in Singapore (Payne, 2023). During an interview with Okada (2012), Nestlé Japan also highlighted a 150 percent rise in KitKat sales during the 2017 exam season compared to 2002 when KitKat position as a lucky charm had

not been fully established, indicating the effectiveness of pun marketing in Japan and the strong belief in good omens among the Japanese. Following the promotion of KitKat as a “lucky charm” through the launch of Kitmail, Nestlé won another Grand Prix Media reward at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival in 2010 (WARC, 2009).

Although it may not be the most reassuring start, this linguistic coincidence not only has boosted sales and solidified KitKat’s position in the Japanese market till today but has also sparked a commercial trend in the industry. Over the past decades, more confectionery companies, including Lotte Co. Ltd and Meiji Seika Kaisha, Ltd, have adopted similar approaches in customizing their products or names to new versions carrying meanings of luck or success in the exam (Okada, 2012). It is imperative to comprehend that the practice of puns is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture and closely intertwined with both positive and negative fortunes (Okada, 2012). Therefore, wordplay strategy is particularly effective in Japan thanks to these pre-existing metaphorical beliefs deeply ingrained in Japanese culture, taking KitKat as an example.

#### **4.1.2 KitKat’s initiatives to support students.**

In this section, the author has identified various initiatives undertaken by Nestlé Japan to capitalize on the good-luck charm status of KitKat, especially among students.

##### **4.1.2.1 Newly designed package- the exam version**

After positioning KitKat as a lucky charm for students, Nestlé Japan released its new Sakura package design KitKat, aiming to deliver a cheering message and support to students during shiken jigoku (Okada, 2012 & Tett, 2021). Written on a package is the phrase “*Kitto Sakura saku yo,*” meaning “Certainly, the cheery blossoms will bloom.” As explained in Okada’s book (2012), the Sakura flower carries a distinct meaning for the Japanese, symbolically linking the cherry blossom to both achievement and failure. Further cited in Tett (2021) from the Financial Times, according to Sugai’s case study, “because of the revered position that the cherry blossom season [holds] in Japan, blooming cherry trees [are] equated with abundance and success.”

In Japanese literature, linking the meaning of Sakura to success and failure, the expression “sakura saku,” meaning “the cherry blossoms will bloom,” signifies passing the exam while the phrase “sakura chiru,” translated as “the cherry blossoms have fallen,” carries the opposite meaning or failing the exam (Okada, 2012). With that being said, the phrase “*kitto*

*sakura saku yo*” used on the sakura-package KitKat carries the message that “students will definitely pass the exam” (Okada, 2012 & Tett, 2021).

#### **4.1.2.2 Examinee Support Campaigns: The Smart Partnerships**

Upon discovering this seasonal exam-lucky-charm pattern in 2002, as a President and CEO of Nestlé Japan, Kozo Takaoka initiated a project dedicated to supporting students named the "Examinee Support Campaign" which has gradually grown significantly, enabling the collaborations between KitKat and businesses across industries (Wu, 2020 & Motohiro, 2023).

##### **- collaborations with the *Hotel businesses***

As mentioned by Aoki (2020) during an interview with Wu (2020), during the university entrance exams period spanning from January to March, students commonly lodge in hotels located near the examination centers to sit for several exams at various universities of their choice. Takaoka believed that having the desk hotel staff gift these students KitKats along with a few words of motivation would help alleviate a portion of their pressures and stresses while, at the same time, bringing more value to the hotels (Motohiro,2023). Nevertheless, except for two hotels, many others were unpleasant to collaborate with as they viewed such a campaign as nothing beyond Nestlé’s marketing tool. Consequently, these two hotels received tons of thank-you notes from students who succeeded in their exams, leading to more hotels, accumulating to over 300 hotels nowadays, participating in the initiative from 2003 onward (Motohiro,2023).

##### **- collaborations with *Post offices***

Nestlé Japan's partnering with Japan Post led to the launch of “Kit Kat mail or Kit Mail” in 2009. This new Sakura and *omamori* designed KitKat box with blank spaces (in front and at the back) on the package is placed on sale every year, typically during *shiken jigoku*, at approximately 20000 post offices across Japan, allowing people to send KitKat with accompanying written message of encouragement to cheer up the students (Okada, 2012 & Motohiro, 2023). Inside the box are four KitKat mini and an *omamori*-shaped bookmark with a message of wishing for luck (Motohiro, 2023 & Sally, 2015). The KitKat Mail campaign achieved remarkable success, with the packages selling out in less than a month and generating revenue of \$11 million (WARC, 2009). This campaign earned Nestlé a Grand Prix Media award in 2010, with praise from the media jury chair, Nick Brien, who stated, “It was a brilliant idea, flawless execution, and amazing results. They created a business model that didn't exist before” (WARC, 2009).

- **collaborations with the *Railway Company***

In a 2019 collaborative effort involving Tokyo Metro and Yahoo, a "Sakura Saku Route Navi" was introduced as a service, provided at no cost, offering precise navigation to lead students to the primary entrance of their testing location. Moreover, a usual Kit Kat Mini Examinee Support Pack does not only come with KitKat bars but also "Tokyo Metro 24-hour tickets" (Motohiro, 2023).

- **collaborations with *Stationary***

Demonstrated in Okada's book (2012), a stationery pack came with a pack of KitKat bars along with a KitKat-designed red mug in a pentagon (Gokakukei - 五角形) shape as this shape looks similar to the shape of the first character in the similar pronounced word "Gōkaku - 合格," meaning "passing or success" in Japanese. Another pack includes, instead of a mug, a KitKat design of a pen, clips, and an eraser.

- **the expansion of the KitKat versions for students**

Another two special packs are designed to deliver students tons of good luck through the designed-on packages or on the chocolate bar words of motivation and encouragement.

*Table 7 KitKat exam versions*

<b>Kit Kat Mini Examinee Support Pack</b>	This pack contains 14 of mini-KitKat with various cheering messages such as "Do Your Best," "Good Luck," and similar engraved on each bar. The new foldable package design has been introduced during the 2020 exam period, allowing customer to fold the outside package into a handmade Omamori or Kit kat amulet.
<b>Kit Kat Mini Red and White Pack</b>	This pack includes two variations of Kit Kat coming in 14 pieces in which seven are red (or milk chocolate) and the other 7 are white (or white chocolate). Based on Sally (2015), this pack is the result of partnerships between KitKat and twenty universities nationwide, where messages from these universities are stamped on the package of these 14 mini-KitKat.

Source: own work, based on (Wu, 2020 & Sally, 2015).

Although stumbled upon incidentally, the initiative of positioning KitKat as a good luck snack product for students has earned Nestlé Japan an immense bond that emotionally connects their products, KitKat, to students. Amid the challenging phase of Japanese student

academic life, Nestlé Japan has conveyed its emotional support that is perceived as crucial and needed in the society through its iconic brand, KitKat.

## 4.2 Unique Characteristics of KitKat Japan

The author has identified various characteristics in terms of KitKat's bar designs, target markets, flavors, and varieties that differentiate KitKat Japan from KitKat in the rest of the world. The findings are explained as follows.

### 4.2.1 Size, Wafer, and Health-Conscious Features

The size of KitKat in Japan is smaller than it is in other countries. According to Demetriou from *The Telegraph* (2015), instead of serving 6 pieces of KitKat fingers per pack, it is served in 4 pieces only. The concept, according to a representative from Nestlé Japan, is inspired by the post-World War II surge in chocolate's popularity and the distinctions in Japanese sweet consumption, as well as the range of sweetness in chocolate (Demetriou, 2015). As explained by Alex Villela, a former business executive manager from Nestlé Japan, "The way of consuming chocolate in Japan is quite different from the UK. Because chocolate is very sweet compared to traditional Japanese confectionery, it's normally only consumed in small amounts, and it is still regarded as a treat" (Demetriou, 2015).

In 2020, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, Nestlé Japan announced a redesigned lighter version of KitKat mini which is said to contain sugar, amounted to ten percent less (McGee, 2020 & Nagase, 2020). Moreover, along with smaller packages, the weight of the original KitKat mini is brought down to 9.9 grams from 11.6 grams and to 9.7 grams from 11.3 grams for other KitKat minis. As reported in *Japan Today* by McGee (2020), these changes apply to six classic KitKat Mini ("Otona No Amasa" in Japanese or referred to as "Adult Sweetness") that are regularly sold on the market including the original, dark chocolate otona no amasa, matcha otona no amasa, stronger matcha or otona no amasa koi, strawberry otona no amasa, and hojicha otona no amasa.

Figure 2 KitKat "Adult Sweetness" versions



Source: Nestlé Japan, cited in Nagase (2020).

The representative of Nestlé Japan tweeted explaining that this initiative is undertaken to tackle the health concerns expressed by customers who are being cautious with calorie content and sugar level in their chocolate consumption (McGee, 2020). Therefore, the company has decided to modify KitKat's formula by substituting a portion of the sugar with whole milk and soy milk okara powder and transforming each portion into bite-sized pieces to make it more convenient to eat and less concern for calorie-conscious customers (McGee, 2020 & Nagase, 2020).

During Rao's visit to the KitKat factory in Kasumigaura, an interview with Chef Takagi provided us with many interesting details and facts. Among them, Takagi has specified the unique part of the KitKat itself is the wafer, which is well distinguished from the rest made by other companies. The recipe of the wafer remains up to the standard and confidentially unrevealed, yet based on Rao's (2018) observation, KitKat's wafer in Japan is made from whole-milk flour.

*“In Britain, Nestlé uses milk crumb, a sweetened, dehydrated milk product, to make the bars. In the United States, Hershey uses nonfat milk and milk fat, while in Japan, the factories work with whole milk powder. In Japan, Nestlé buys most of its cacao beans from West Africa. In the United States, a mix of beans from West Africa and Latin America is favoured”* Rao mentioned in *The New York Times* (2018).

### **The Healthier versions KitKat**

In connection with what has been discussed earlier, by showcasing variations in size (bite-sized bar) and weight to address health concerns, Nestlé Japan is demonstrating its efforts in positioning KitKat as more than just a typical confectionery, but rather a healthy snack product. The “sweetness for adult” KitKat contains less sugar, resulting in a slightly bitter taste, which makes it a healthier snack choice for health-conscious consumers (Samantha, 2022). The KitKat Sublime from the Chocolatory is an elegant single-stick bar made with high-quality ingredients, making it a bite-sized healthy treat. Similarly, the so-called Big Little KitKat (see *Figure 3*) contains bite-sized square pieces coming in a resealable package, allowing consumers to enjoy KitKat in smaller portions and manage their sugar intake (Caden, 2023).

*Figure 3 Big Little KitKat and KitKat Sublime from KitKat Chocolatory*



Source: Caden (2023)

In 2019, the very first seventy percent dark chocolate, *KitKat Chocolatory Cacao Fruit Chocolate*, made solely using cacao fruit was introduced on KitKat Chocolatory in Japan before it reached the rest of the countries (Nestlé, 2019). According to Nestlé (2019), the two main ingredients are the bean and pulp extracted from the cacao itself.

*"We're proud to bring chocolate lovers a new chocolate made entirely from the cocoa fruit without adding refined sugar. This is a real innovation which uses the natural sweetness of the cocoa pulp to provide a pure, novel chocolate experience"* said the Head of Strategic Business Units, Marketing and Sales at Nestlé, Patrice Bula.

Highlighted on Tokyo Snack Box (2023), various KitKat flavours are made from ingredients that offer a spectrum of health advantages. For example, Matcha, which is an ingredient infused in Matcha KitKat, has gained recognition due to its positive impact on health, including its ability to enhance metabolism and its abundant antioxidant content. Likewise, the sweet potato KitKat variant from Okinawa consists of high fiber content along with vitamins and antioxidants derived from purple sweet potato, and the whole wheat KitKats is believed to contain a nutritious ingredient, whole wheat, known for its ability to enhance dietary fibre content (Tokyo Snack Box, 2023).

#### **4.2.2 The Omiyage KitKat: KitKat in the Souvenir market**

Another factor that distinguishes KitKat Japan from other KitKats is its well-established souvenir market in Japan, which is backed up by many promising culture-related factors.

“Omiyage” is simply a Japanese term for a customary practice or an important social etiquette of bringing back gifts from trips to share with friends, family, or colleagues (Samantha, 2022). According to the *Los Angeles Times*, since gifting people treats has become a tradition in Japan while the country’s regional culinary heritage and domestic industries come with a deep pride within, the glocalization of KitKat in Japan is indeed an

important key leading to its success (Kaiman, 2017). In an interview, the president of J.Walter Thompson Japan, Wataru Kageyama, mentioned *omiyage* a crucial gift-giving ritual, implying the close connection of *omiyage* to a strict norm followed by the majority of people (Kaiman, 2017).

As explained by Takuya Hiramatsu, a representative for Nestlé Japan, in an interview with *the Los Angeles Times*, the very first own creation of snacking tradition in Japan existed in Hokkaido, the northernmost primary island of Japan, since 1990, which inspired the KitKat marketing team to believe that all souvenir shops across the nation including on the island could benefit more if their snack selections are diversified (Kaiman, 2017).

*“Wherever you went, you could only find rice cakes, but people got kind of bored with traditional rice cakes,”* said Takuya Hiramatsu (Kaiman, 2017).

In the past, rice cake was a customary regional souvenir people would bring home; therefore, with an idea to expand souvenir selections, Nestlé Japan invented in 2000 its very first Hokkaido-exclusive strawberry-flavored KitKat, a new edition which brought immense popularity and further inspired the company to further explore limited-edition flavours by utilizing locally sourced ingredients (Kaiman, 2017). Ryoki Maki, a marketing manager at KitKat, told *The New York Times* that after the release of the strawberry KitKat, the company conducted market research, which revealed that the popularity of this strawberry KitKat arose from not only foreign tourists but also from the local ones (Rao, 2018). This insight led Nestlé Japan to see KitKat as a potential unique Japanese souvenir rather than just a mere chocolate bar (Rao, 2018). Due to this, the company started exploring the possibilities of incorporating similar initiatives in other cities, aiming to create chocolates that would resonate with consumers and evoke the essence of each location (Rao, 2018 & Kaiman, 2017). The regional KitKat, also named “Gotochi KitKat,” has constantly made its way to the market since then. As a result, over time in Japan, KitKat flavours have revolved around regional Japanese products, and varieties of distinct and exotic flavours of KitKat started popping up in various places.

Regarding the presence of KitKat on the souvenir market and how it can be successful, Rao (2018) emphasized the importance of persuading consumers to perceive KitKat as a Japanese delicacy that authentically captures the unique characteristics of a region despite its distant foreign origins. In addition to souvenir shops, KitKats are placed on sale alongside other



traditional snacks in public service areas, popular spots where travelers often make quick stops to purchase souvenirs (Rao, 2018). For example, spanning over 200 miles, the Chu Expressway is one significant four-lane highway cutting through multiple prefectures as it links Tokyo to Nagoya (Rao, 2018). At rest stops along this expressway which are visited by countless people every day, a KitKat version of Kikyō shingen can be notably seen sitting next to the traditional Kikyō shingen mochi sweets (Rao, 2018).

Nowadays, Nestlé Japan has developed a huge range of KitKat souvenir selections, including the special regional KitKat made from exotic ingredients exclusively sourced from different prefectures across Japan and the Chocolatory products, both are featured on Nestlé Japan's official website (2023). KitKat regional flavours are said to be one of the great picks for souvenirs due to their compact size, unique tastes, cute packaging, and separately wrapped bite-sized portions (Samantha, 2022). For example, a wasabi KitKat creation is inspired by Shizuoka prefecture, a land well-known for its large-scale wasabi farming which existed more than 500 years ago (Explore Shizuoka, 2022). Whereas in Hiroshima, Momiji Manju KitKat, a locally made pastry from rice and buckwheat, was created after Ryoji Maki, a marketing manager of KitKat, noticed that people from his hometown in Hiroshima had a deep affection for Momiji Manju, which he called their "soul food" (Kaiman, 2017).

Moreover, the KitKat Chocolatory, where varieties of high-end and limited-edition KitKats are sold as they are finely made from high-quality cacao and are decently wrapped, turns KitKat into a premium product (Kaiman, 2017 & Radecki, 2022). In addition, what makes KitKat perfectly fit into a souvenir market seems to be its association with the positive and cheering message behind the linguistic coincidence of its name "Kitto-Katto," translating as "surely, you will win," which will further be discussed in the next part.

Rather than a mere candy, KitKat has become a luxury souvenir. Especially, by expanding KitKat's market by addressing omiyage in Japanese tradition, the brand has discovered a promising potential market that comes with room for growth and long-term stability.

#### **4.2.3 Flavour Expansions and Distinctions**

In Japan, KitKat is more than just an ordinary chocolate bar; it's a souvenir, a delightful treat for students, a symbol of luck, and a touch of luxury, yet still an affordable and delicious, sweet. As previously discussed, the flavours development of KitKat in Japan has evolved since the launch of Hokkaido Strawberry KitKat. Up to the present, the ongoing development

of KitKat flavours in Japan has led to the creation of over 400 different KitKat varieties (Nestle, 2023). As mentioned in the theoretical part (Section 3.2.1), in addition to the classic core flavours that are daily available on sale, there are other thirty to forty limited versions of KitKat including the regional, seasonal, alcohol-infused, one-time existed, Chocolatory, comeback flavours along with also completely new KitKat flavours being introduced every few months (Samantha, 2022 & forward2me, 2021). Among these long lists of flavours, many appear to be very unusual such as cough drop, apple vinegar, hot Japanese chili, edamame, soy sauce, miso soup, and even green soybean flavours. In addition, among these huge flavour varieties, there is a specific divided group of KitKat known as “otona no amasa” which appears in a dark coated wafer (refer to *Figure 2*). The term “otona no amasa” refer to “sweetness for adult” which, as obvious as it sounds, refers to the KitKat type designed mainly for adults and has been introduced since 2010, containing less sugar yet a bitter taste due to the dark chocolate (Samantha, 2022). This adult sweetness version comes in various flavours such as dark chocolate, white chocolate, matcha, dark matcha, strawberry, hojicha, raspberry, and caramel (Caden, 2023).

Many of the existing and emerging KitKat varieties in Japan feature flavours or characteristics that are the first of their kind in the world of chocolate, which makes KitKat even more unique. For some flavours, there is written instruction on how to, in the best way, consume them. Refrigerating first before consuming would make the Nuts & Cranbeery KitKat taste better while the ice cream KitKat flavour should be toasted first to enhance the taste (Samantha, 2022). For the very first time, a bakeable version of chocolate was introduced by Nestlé through KitKat. In March 2014, Nestlé Japan exclusively launched two variations of KitKat - KitKat mini original chocolate and KitKat mini pudding- that can be baked for two minutes, transforming them into a crunchy cookie (Nestlé, 2014a). Later, there are also bakeable Cheesecake KitKat and Sweet Potato KitKat flavour (Caden, 2023). These new creations, another remarkable achievement by pastry chef Takagi, have further solidified Japan's reputation as a hub for unique and intriguing KitKat flavours.

Such a wide range of glocalization on KitKat, with various variations and features, cannot yet be found anywhere else besides Japan.

#### 4.2.4 The Massive Glocalization of KitKat: Japanese Regional and Seasonal KitKat

Despite its global presence, KitKat's localization efforts in Japan have been consistently remarkable and exceptionally diverse. Over the past two decades, Nestlé in Japan has introduced over 400 distinct KitKat flavours, including a substantial array of limited-edition variants, starting from the initial release of the strawberry flavour (Sukuvasti, 2020).

- **Regional KitKat or Gotochi KitKat (ご当地)**

Appearing in their own unique packaging and attractive designs, regional KitKat is the varieties of KitKat flavours thoughtfully crafted using locally sourced exotic ingredients that encapsulate the unique essence of each region in Japan (Samantha, 2022). Capturing different Japanese prefectures in a unique way and as a snack makes KitKat Japan one of the top picks for souvenirs thanks to their compact size, cute packaging, and wrapped bite-sized portions (Samantha, 2022). Starting initially with Hokkaido as the source of inspiration for the first strawberry KitKat, Nestlé's flavour development team, under the lead of Nestlé Japan's CEO Kohzoh Takaoka, has extended this concept to various regions (Sukuvasti, 2020 & Kaiman, 2017). For example, the Okinawan Sweet Potatoes KitKat can be found in Kyushu and Okinawa. The Adzuki bean-sandwich KitKat bars originated in Nagoya, where this delightful, toasted treat first appeared in a tea shop during the early 1900s, gradually making its way onto cafe menus across the region. Simultaneously, customers can look forward to another unique KitKat flavour, Wasabi, from Shizuoka prefecture (Rao, 2018). According to Kahan (2023) from Tokyo Weekender, these regional flavours are often made as limited editions, primarily to showcase the essence of regions, but sometimes also to boost tourism in less touristy prefectures, and even to raise funds for areas damaged by disasters. As of the present, there are over forty flavours of regional KitKat (Kahan, 2023 & Caden, 2023). Before diving further, it is important to highlight that Japan is divided into nine regions and 47 prefectures (Nippon, 2023). Deriving from articles published by Live Japan (2020) and Caden (2023), below are some of the Gotochi KitKat for different regions.

- **The eastern part**

- **Kanto region**

##### **Tokyo**



A new flavour introduced in 2022 called “Tokyo Island lemon” primarily made and replicated from juice powder of the so-called “island lemon,” cultivated in the UNESCO heritage site, Ogasawara

Island, which is located in Tokyo's Ogasawara Island chain and only is accessible by boats from the mainland (McGee, 2022).

## Kanagawa



Associated with Kanagawa prefecture, Nestlé Japan has introduced the KitKat flavour of Strawberry Cheese Cake, a famous specialty from the region. Buyers might notice the decoration of the package with a picture of cheesecake and a white chocolate-covered KitKat bar (Live Japan, 2020).

## Tochigi



Tochigi prefecture, also known as the Strawberry Kingdom, is famous for its sweet premium quality strawberries and has been a leading producer of strawberries in Japan since 1968, with its Tochi-otome variety being the most widely cultivated in the country (Strawberry Kingdom TOCHIGI, 2017). Hence, to capture the essence of this regional fruit, Nestlé has introduced its famous pink Tochi-Otome Strawberry KitKat combining a kind of milky strawberry taste.

- **Tohoku region**

## Iwate



Iwaizumi Yogurt KitKat was launched as a part of a fundraising initiative to support the victims of the 2016 earthquake in Iwate prefecture, a place where Iwaizumi yogurt is popularly known for its yummy taste and milky texture (Caden, 2023).

## Miyagi



For centuries, Zunda, a soybean paste made from crushed edamame, has been a well-known traditional and healthy snack or dessert popularly eaten in Miyagi prefecture and can be seen used in various kinds of traditional desserts (Henry, 2021). Recognizing its long history as a traditional food, Nestlé Japan has replicated its taste in its Zunda KitKat and Zunda Shake KitKat.

## Yamagata



Among prefectures, Yamagata is popularly known as the “kingdom of fruit” and a home to a massive variety of fruits harvested in large amounts and high-quality produced sake, especially as a land with the best cherry and where seventy percent of cherries in Japan come from; hence, Cherry KitKat was introduced by the Nestlé Japan team to highlight one of the Yamagata’s delicacies (Nippon, 2018).

## Aomori



KitKat bar inspired by Aomori prefecture is the Aomori Apple KitKat and Aomori Apple Pie KitKat as Aomori prefecture is well-known for its large, sweet, and succulent Aomori apples (Caden, 2023).

### ➤ The Western part

- Chukogu region

## Hiroshima



The representing KitKat flavour for Hiroshima prefecture is the Hiroshima Momiji Manju KitKat, decorated with a distinct shape from the rest of other KitKat varieties. “Momiji” refers to maple leaves, and “Manju” are steamed buns that are typically filled with sweet red bean paste. Manju is a well-known type of wagashi, a traditional Japanese sweet, and is also one of the most popular desserts in Japan from Miyajima. Momiji manju, as the name suggests, is a manju pastry shaped like maple leaves (Wallin, 2021).

- Kyushu & Okinawa regions

## Fukuoka



Amaou Strawberry KitKat bar, a pink chocolate with a lighter strawberry smell but richer taste than Tochi-Otome KitKat’s has been introduced as a signature KitKat wafer for the Fukuoka prefecture. The Amaou strawberry is considered one of Japan's most favored types, cultivated in Fukuoka Prefecture in Kyushu (Schroeder, 2021a). The name Amaou comes from the

Japanese words for "red," "round," "large," and "delicious," and it is admired for its generous size, vivid red colour, juiciness, and delectable sweetness (Schroeder, 2021a).

## Okinawa



An alternative souvenir flavour from Kyushu connected to Okinawa is the Purple Sweet Potato KitKat, which comes in an uncommon purple hue. The highly nutritious Okinawan sweet potatoes have gained popularity even in Hollywood due to their exceptional health benefits and stunning appearance (Schroeder, 2021b). These purple bundles of goodness have a creamy beige outer layer, but their insides are vividly purple, which instantly enhances the visual appeal of any meal they are added to. Originating in South America, this Purple Sweet Potato adapted so well to the climate of Okinawa and became a vital crop with cultivation spreading to other areas of Japan (Schroeder, 2021b).

### ➤ The Central part

- Chubu region

## Shizuoka



Wasabi chocolate KitKat is another unique wafer flavour of KitKat introduced for Shizuoka prefecture. The chocolate has an uncommon green color and doesn't emit any discernible spicy or wasabi aroma; however, upon consumption, you can immediately savour the distinct flavour of wasabi (LiveJapan, 2020). For centuries, wasabi has been growing naturally in the mountains of Japan, with large-scale farming starting about 500 years ago in Shizuoka. This prefecture is also a known home to some of the largest "Sawa" wasabi farms, which account for nearly half of all the wasabi cultivated in Japan (Explore Shizouka, 2022).

## Nagano



Nagano's identity is strongly associated with apples, just like it is with mountains, snow, and monkeys with the regional symbol of a green bear with an apple on its head, demonstrating the inseparable connection between apples and the region's identity (Nagano Japan, 2021). Nagano is well-known across Japan for the exceptional quality, impressive size, and delightful taste

of its apples (Nagano Japan, 2021). The signature flavour of KitKat representing Nagano prefecture is Shinshu Apple flavour KitKat, encasing in milk chocolate emitting a subtle apple fragrance and a powerful and delightful sweetness derived from the apple flavour (LiveJapan, 2020).

## Aichi



The KitKat signature for this region is the Azuki Bean (Sweet Bean Jelly) KitKat with a red bean flavour stronger than the chocolate taste itself. "Anko" is a red bean paste known as "azuki" which holds a prominent position in traditional Japanese sweets and has been cherished by the Japanese for many generations (Savor Japan, 2020). As Anko can be prepared and served in numerous ways, KitKat red bean flavour is another creative way of serving Anko.

- **Kansai region**

## Kyoto



Two distinct local flavours introduced for Kyoto prefecture are the Itohkyuemon Uji Matcha (Green Tea) and Itohkyuemon Roasted Tea. Itohkyuemon, a Kyoto-based company with a heritage of over 185 years, has earned widespread praise from both visitors and residents for its exceptional green teas (LiveJapan, 2020).



Kyoto is undeniably famous for its immersive Japanese Tea Ceremony, making it an ideal location for savoring the exquisite essence of green tea, hence, integrating the brilliant taste of green tea through KitKat is another way to enhance the consumer experience of KitKat while promoting the regional taste of Kyoto (LiveJapan, 2020).

## Hyogo



Locating near Osaka, Kobe is the capital city of Hyogo prefecture, a home that inspires the development of the Kobe Pudding KitKat, whose flavour is often described as a delightful fusion of creme brulee and caramel pudding, enhanced by a subtle citrus undertone (Ayvazyan, 2022). Although Kobe is famous for its renowned Kobe beef, its second most celebrated delicacy is the Kobe Pudding. This Japanese custard pudding, known as "purin," is a mix of eggs and fresh cream, featuring a delicate hint of citrus (Ayvazyan, 2022).

➤ **The Northern part**

• **Hokkaido region**

**Hokkaido**



Given its climate situation, Hokkaido is known as home to many regional fruits, especially their famous melon known as “Yubari melon.” Specifically grown in Yubari town, this melon is regarded as one of the



world's finest, rarest, and most expensive melons in Japan, cultivated in a very limited number of fields (Schroeder, 2021c). Drawing inspiration from this regional specialty, Nestlé introduced the Yubari Melon KitKat.



Furthermore, Nestlé has introduced two additional Hokkaido-inspired KitKat flavours, one combining melon and mascarpone cheese, and the other featuring red bean and strawberry (Caden, 2023).

In addition to the above well-known regional KitKat flavours, there are many other regional KitKat flavours that have been developed to highlight the specialties of other prefectures, as briefly outlined in the table below.

*Table 8 Other KitKat Regional Flavours*

<i>Prefecture</i>	<i>KitKat Flavours</i>	<i>Prefecture</i>	<i>KitKat Flavours</i>
<b>Gunma</b>	Safari maple	<b>Nagano</b>	Kyoho Grape
<b>Ehime</b>	Iyokan	<b>Niigata</b>	Le Lectier
<b>Ibaraki</b>	Onsen Manju	<b>Tokushima</b>	Peach
<b>Kumamoto</b>	Black Sugar Donuts Ikinari Dango	<b>Yokohama</b>	Harbor Marron
<b>Miyazaki</b>	Summer Mango	<b>Hiroshima</b>	Kotsudo Original Momiji

Source: Caden (2023)

▪ **Seasonal KitKat**

Exclusive to Japan, in addition to the aforementioned Gotochi KitKat, there is also an extensive selection of seasonal KitKat varieties, seasonally released in limited editions. Inspired by culinary seasonality in Japan, Nestlé Japan has come up with KitKat flavours that replicate the Japanese food palates based on the changes in seasons. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that the concept of seasonality has a significant impact on Japanese cuisine. The Japanese key term for seasonal ingredients is 'Shun (旬),' denoting the specific time of the year when a particular food is at its peak freshness and flavour (Ernt, 2020).



Similarly, as explained in Bestor’s handbook (2011), “the term *Shun* (which calendrically indicates a unit of roughly ten days) is used to refer to foodstuffs that are *in the season*.” In Bestor’s book, the changes in seasonality were also explained through seafood, which in Japanese culinary ingredients are differentiated, not just by quantity like how season defines the availability of foods, but also by names based on its characteristics, time, and place of fishing. Seasonal specialty or shun alter based on seasons. As explained by Ernt (2020), cold desserts like shaved ice desserts and refreshing fruit like watermelon are the most popular treats during summer. The famous Japanese dessert for Christmas is a strawberry sponge cake (or “Kurisumasu keki”) made primarily with strawberries, hence, making strawberry a winter’s Shun speciality (Ernt, 2020). Shun fruits for the fall season include savoury sweet potatoes, chestnuts, persimmons, and apples whereas, in spring, Ichigo strawberry, Ichigo daifuku (rice cake strawberry flavoured), and cherry blossom-themed (Sakura) snacks are the most well-known (Ernt, 2020). Emphasizing the seasonal aspects in Japanese culture results in a greater concentration on harvesting periods, ensuring continuous availability of fresh and savoury foods throughout the entire year.

Like how seasonality defines Japanese culinary culture, Nestle Japan has also introduced KitKat in seasonal editions. Four seasons in Japan are winter, spring, summer, and fall, and within each season, different KitKat flavours can be spotted on limited sale. For example, Sakura-themed KitKat flavours are typically introduced during the springtime cherry blossom season, while flavours such as ice cream, lemon, or mint chocolate become available during the early summer months (Caden, 2023). During the fall, customers can enjoy chestnut or milk tea flavours, and a variety of strawberry flavours is typically offered during the winter season (Caden, 2023). Tabel 8 shows some of KitKat's seasonal varieties.

*Table 9 KitKat Seasonal Flavours*

<i>Seasons</i>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Fall</b>
<i>KitKat Flavours</i>	Party Ice Cream	Sakura	Ocean Salt	Sweet Potato
	Strawberry Milk	Sakura Mochi	Salt Lychee	Chestnuts
	Strawberry Daifuku	Sakura Sake	Salt & Lemon	Apple Pie
	Strawberry Gateau	Sakura Kinako	Premium Mint	Café Au’ Lait
	Chocolate	Sakura Matcha	Premium Citrus Mint	Milk Tea
	Orange chocolate	Peach	Premium Peach Mint	Mont Blanc
	Pistachio	Peach Parfait	Summer Ice cream	
			Cookies & Cream Ice Cream	

Source: Caden, 2023

These rotations in flavours based on regions and seasons also span across KitKat Chocolatory products where these special limited flavours could not be found elsewhere except in Japan.

#### **4.3 The Application of the Cool Japan Perspective in KitKat Japan**

As previously mentioned in the theoretical part under the five perspectives of the Cool Japan strategy, the **fourth perspective** regarding “Incorporating the views of non-Japanese” involves taking into consideration the opinions of non-Japanese on what they defined as the attractiveness of Japan (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). Based on this perspective, various factors are considered for a Japanese product to be exported to an international market, all aimed at presenting it in its optimal form to meet the expectations of foreign customers. In terms of KitKat as a brand, one can observe that it is neither a Japanese brand nor a newcomer to the global market. Existing since 1935, Nestlé’s KitKats have been directly sold in over 85 countries, and the Guinness Book of Records (2010) has estimated yearly sales of 17.6 billion KitKat fingers alone, equating to a KitKat finger consumption rate of 540 per second (Nestlé, 2023). To enhance further its appeal among non-Japanese customers as a KitKat Japan version, Nestlé Japan has introduced more than 300 flavours, including seasonal and regional editions (Nestlé, 2023). Additionally, while consumers might become used to classic packaging, KitKat Japan varieties appear in appealing designs and are neatly packaged in a convenient-size box, making it an ideal choice for a delightful, sweet treat, and a cherished Japanese souvenir.

Likewise, prompted by underutilization and insufficient global recognition of Japan's existing resources, including regional cuisines, the **fifth perspective** of the Cool Japan emphasizes the importance of '*enhancing regional attractions*' or unveiling the potential uniqueness of these regions overseas (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015). In this case, as a renowned global food company, the author observes that Nestlé Japan has developed a wide range of regional KitKat Japan varieties to encapsulate the cherished essence of traditional specialties from different regions across Japan. This concept has garnered affection not only from the foreign visitors or non-Japanese, the potential influencer of promoting Japan overseas, but also from the local travelers. In addition, there are two main factors to be considered. Firstly, KitKat's intention to enter the souvenir market is attributed to the diversity of its products and the exclusive regional flavours it offers. This makes KitKat an excellent gift choice for both Japanese individuals, considering their

traditional gift-giving culture, as well as for foreigners seeking souvenirs that encapsulate a sense of Japan. Secondly, according to Sukhasvasti (2020), foreign customers have also become a crucial target group of Nestlé's KitKat. Consequently, these two factors converge to suggest that beyond the local Japanese market, a growing number of foreigners are anticipated to buy KitKat, whether as souvenirs or keepsakes from Japan or to experience the novel variations of exclusive KitKat Japan's regional flavours, which are distinctively made compared to KitKat elsewhere. This phenomenon further amplifies that the awareness of KitKat Japan will also enhance the awareness of Japanese regions associated with them.

As a result, the introduction of the regional KitKat does contribute to enhancing the regional charms specifically through tastes or the local specialties, corresponding to the fourth and fifth perspectives of the Cool Japan strategy. This initiative aligns precisely with the essence of 'Cool Japan,' particularly in terms of promoting a part of authentic Japanese cuisines to international audiences, enhancing the attractiveness of the culture and the country.

#### **4.4 The Value-Added Connections: Emotional Resonances with Consumers**

It is believed by the CEO of Nestlé Japan, Kohzoh Takaoka, that success for a company cannot be achieved solely through product diversification; there is a need to deliver features that bring added value to consumers (Sukhasvasti, 2020). In the case of KitKat, while delving into the bigger picture, the extensive diversification and globalization efforts undertaken by KitKat Japan have forged various value-added connections with customers in the form of emotional resonance. In this study, the author observes these emotional connections through five main key activities executed by Nestlé Japan on its iconic brand, KitKat.

##### **4.4.1 KitKat as a Lucky Charm**

Given the strong belief in Japanese culture regarding signs or symbols associated with luck, Nestlé Japan has marketed KitKat as a lucky bar for students since 2002 after discovering the linguistic coincidence of the word *KitKat* to the phrase *Kitto-Katto*, translating as “you will definitely win.” As discussed in Section 4.1.2, the brand's extensive efforts including its collaborations with local businesses such as stationary, hotels, post offices, and universities, as well as the launch of special KitKat exam versions with encouragement messages to support students emotionally during their challenging examination periods allow Nestlé's KitKat to establish and solidify a strong bond between the brand and its targets, students.

#### **4.4.2 The Rarity of Japanese KitKat**

To begin with, the creation of limited-edition KitKat varieties aligns with the Japanese market's situation where exclusive products are appealing for purchase regardless of their price range. As per an interview with Kohzoh Takaoka with AdAge, in Japan, the attractiveness of limited goods extends beyond high-priced items to include lower-priced sectors, such as the confectionary industry where KitKat falls, which may be an uncommon case in overseas markets (Sukhasvasti, 2020 & Madden, 2010). Takaoka also described Japan as a market that follows a “convenience store business model,” wherein new products swiftly replace older ones on the shelves to keep up with customers' fast-paced changing demands and interests. Therefore, the popularity of lower-priced limited-version products in Japan seems to be primarily attributed to the fast-changing market and the convenience store business model, where consumers are accustomed to trying out newly released products, rather than being solely driven by Japanese consumer preferences. It establishes the concept of “buy now or miss it” in consumers’ minds. Considering these aspects, the appeal of limited-edition products along with the prompt purchasing decisions of Japanese customers for new products has driven KitKat's attractiveness in the market. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this market dynamic is also one of the exceptional reasons behind KitKat's success in Japan because as further stated by Takaoka, similar product diversification strategies were unsuccessful in the UK, primarily due to varying market requirements and lower interest among UK consumers in new, lower-priced limited products (Sukhasvasti, 2020 & Madden, 2010).

In addition to attracting domestic consumers, by recognizing these regional Japanese-exclusive KitKat as “souvenirs from Japan,” foreign tourists have also become an important target group for Nestlé Japan (Sukhasvasti, 2020). According to the Japan Tourism Agency, foreign tourists spent over one trillion yen, two times higher than in 2022, during the first quarter of this year, among which accommodation (345.8billion yen) emerged as the largest category of their expenditure, while shopping (241.7billion yen) came in as the second largest, followed by food and drink (232.1billion yen) as the third largest (Travel Voice, 2023). A statistic from the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) in 2019 revealed that “Snacks” within the “Shopping” category were the most purchased products by tourists from seventeen out of twenty selected countries (Sukhasvasti, 2020). These findings highlight the potential of the snack industry in Japan and the growing interest in Japanese

snacks among tourists, which presents a promising opportunity for KitKat's growth as it is marketed not just as a snack but also as a souvenir from Japan, highlighting the essence of the country through its different unique regional flavours.

More importantly, concerning a matter of glocalization, as highlighted by Takuya Hiramatsu, a representative from Nestlé Japan's marketing team, the assortment of unique and eccentric flavours was not just a coincidence, but it serves as a strategic response to rejuvenate the Japanese food market, which has been contracting due to the increasing aging population (Murai, 2018). From these insights, the process of glocalizing KitKat's flavours undeniably revitalizes the declining market while infusing it with thrills for the customers.

To sum up, by consistently introducing new Japanese-exclusive KitKat varieties, Nestlé Japan not only positions KitKat as an affordable premium snack and local souvenir but also heightens consumers' excitement and intent to purchase, all while adapting to the rapidly changing demands of Japanese customers in a shrinking food market.

#### **4.4.3 The Promotion of Japan through KitKat**

Thirdly, the comprehensive process of glocalization, which transforms the international brand KitKat into a diverse range of Japanese regional KitKat variants, has nurtured a sense of tradition and locality among the Japanese, fostering a deep sense of cultural pride. This will be proven in the survey part of the thesis, in Section 4.7.1. In a nation where the traditional approach is highly valued, the glocalization of foreign brands to seamlessly integrate into the Japanese market especially through conveying the essence of different regions, taking Gotochi KitKat as an example, is expected to be wholeheartedly embraced by the locals. Various related studies have been conducted to prove this, among them are the following. As reported in *The Times* by Iyer (2019), a fascinating study conducted by Richard Florida of the University of Toronto regarding the cultural proximity of forty-five nations ranked Japan as the top country on the list. The author also implied that despite Japan's efforts to embrace globalization and attract international visitors, its unique cultural identity and historical continuity remain its defining characteristics. Furthermore, under the initiative of the Government of Japan, the Agency for Cultural Affairs implements the Japan Heritage, dedicated to rejuvenating and preserving the identity of the locals and communities through the utilization and promotion of cherished tangible and intangible cultural assets along with their historical significance, domestically and globally (Agency for Cultural

Affairs, 2023). At the same time, among all the focuses of the Cool Japan, as mentioned in the theoretical part, the promotion of Japanese cuisine is also one of them (Cool Japan Strategy Promotion Council, 2015).

In conclusion, these initiatives strongly demonstrate Japan's commitment to promoting its nation through various means, and Nestlé Japan's strategies of diversifying KitKat flavours to portray the essence of Japanese prefectures through their local specialties and tastes align closely with the aforementioned cultural promotion efforts.

#### **4.4.4 The Consistency of the Tagline: “Have a break, Have a KitKat.”**

Last but not least, an underestimated coincidence in the meaning behind the brand's tagline, which targets the lasting social issues in Japanese society. The tagline, although universally applied, resonates deeply with what the Japanese workers are currently dealing with, the so-called “Karoshi” or “work-till-death” culture.

Along with KitKat popularity as a lucky charm, it is crucial to recognize the consistency of KitKat's tagline “Have a break, have a KitKat” which has never changed since its origin in 1958. The idea behind the brand is simply to designate KitKat as a "social snack" forging a connection with people's daily lives by becoming a little snack they can easily grab anytime during their brief breaks (Gupta, 2022). As explained by Gupta (2022) from *WIRED*, rather than making the customers feel like they are the target of an advertisement, the tagline reminds them to pause for a moment and enjoy the KitKat. Rarely highlighted in other studies and research, this meaning behind the tagline, although it happened to be a coincidence, showcases KitKat's engagement in addressing the prevalent concern of overwork without break issues, especially within Japanese society.

The Japanese word “Karoshi - 過労死” comes from a breakdown of three words- “kagiru- 過ぎる” means “over,” “roudo- 労働” means “work,” and “sinu/sibou- 死ぬ/死亡” means “die”. Karoshi translated as “death by overwork” has earned its own name as one of the most concerning social issues recognized officially by the Ministry of Health of Japan since 1987 and remains a triggering issue (Fuerte, 2021). A “Workstyle reform bill” introduced by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2018, due to the low rate, around 50 percent, of taking paid leave, aimed to push employers to encourage their employees to use up their holidays (Hunt, 2021). However, various loopholes in the law that perpetuated chronic overwork

remained unaddressed. The cap, for the first time, introduced a limit on overtime, which was set at a dangerously high level of 80 hours per month, meaning an average of 60 hours of weekly overtime if combined with the standard eight-hour workday (Hunt, 2021). Despite acknowledging that exceeding 80 hours of monthly overtime poses a karoshi risk, the government legalized working up to that threshold along with allowing for "special months" during which up to 100 hours of overtime could be undertaken at the employer's discretion (Hunt, 2021). According to Iwahashi from the labor rights organization POSSE, "The government is saying, if you work to this threshold, then you could die – but you can work to this threshold" (Hunt, 2021). While the Japanese government acknowledges approximately 200 yearly karoshi-related injury claims, the advocates estimate the actual toll to be about 10,000 fatalities, and the National Defense Council's helpline receives 100-300 calls annually for work-induced stress and illness compensation (Hunt, 2021). In an interesting OECD report on Work-Life balance, Japan is in the 6<sup>th</sup> position as a country with the highest rate of employees, 15.7 percent, working very long hours (OECD, 2023).

The coincidence of the idea of reminding to take a break behind the KitKat's tagline could be seen as closely resonating with this serious overworking issue of karoshi in Japanese society in the sense that this tagline encapsulates a meaning that people should also rest and enjoy a snack. Without knowing, the customers might have established an emotional connection with the brand while the brand itself is offering emotional value through its products. Indeed, people require a break and the issue of karoshi has reached a global scale, hence, this simple tagline may not be any special case for KitKat in the Japanese market. However, the fact that Karoshi is being a legally addressed case due to a higher rate of stress and suicide, the tagline weighs deeper in Japanese society.

#### **4.4.5 KitKat Social Contributions Amidst the Crisis**

Japan's tectonic positioning and local weather conditions make it susceptible to frequent natural disasters, particularly earthquakes and typhoons. Nestlé Japan has been contributing to the recovery of areas affected by disaster since 2011, especially through its popularly known Kitto Zutto Project, an ongoing project committed to offering support to contribute, in the long-term, to the restoration of Japanese regions that are severely damaged by disasters (Nestlé in Society, 2012).

According to a report from Nestlé Japan (2012), under the name of KitKat, Nestlé Japan launched a new project known as the “Kitto Zutto Project” or “Sure to Continue Project” initially aimed at supporting the recovery of Iwate prefecture’s Sanriku railway, which was heavily affected by the massive Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. As explained in the *Los Angeles Times* by Kaiman (2017), in March of 2011, following a series of events including an earthquake, a tsunami, and a nuclear incident that brought extensive devastation to the Pacific coastline of Japan, individuals expressed their unity by sending KitKats, with an attached message: "*kitto fukkyu kanau*," translating to "a definite recovery awaits you" to the affected area (Kaiman, 2017). As part of the project, the relief funds for the reconstruction of the railway line were generated through the sales of the World variety KitKat Mini, with 20 yen from each individual package sold reserved for donation, accumulating to a total of 18 million yen (Nestlé in Society, 2012). The assistance also included the adornment of two train cars operating from Yoshihama station, where the surroundings were decorated with Sakura to inspire hopes and livelihood of the region once again. Subsequently, from 2014 till May 2015, to commemorate the railway's complete restoration and revitalize tourism in the area, a distinctive offer allowed passengers to utilize select limited-edition KitKats as a valid form of travel pass (Kaiman, 2017). This marked the first time a Japanese railway company authorized the use of chocolate bars as a legitimate means of travel ticket (Nestlé, 2014b). Their contribution has brought love, smiles, and hope to many people’s lives.

In addition to the contribution through donations, in following years, Nestlé Japan also launched a new special version of KitKat, featuring local flavours sourced from the regions impacted by disaster. A portion of revenues earned from sales of these KitKats was donated as a relief fund to the affected regions. Below are some other cases of KitKat Japan’s contribution to the recovery process of other impacted regions.

**Earthquake attack in Kumamoto (2016):** Kyushu’s Kumamoto region was massively devastated by recurring earthquakes, resulting in the collapse of its 400-year-old heritage fortress and numerous houses, which in turn forced people to seek temporary shelters (McGee, 2018). Nestlé Japan, through its Kitto Zutto project, launched *Kumamoto Tea KitKat* in 2016 sourcing tea as ingredients from the region to support farmers whose businesses were ruined due to the disasters (McGee, 2018). Given that a black bear mascot named Kumamon is the character representing the Kumamoto region, all these new KitKat



versions for the Kumamoto region had the design of Kumamon on them along with encouraging messages on each pack (McGee, 2016). As a result, a total of 7.5 million yen was raised and donated through the Red Cross (PR Times, 2018).

*Figure 4 Kumamon and Ikinari Dango regional KitKat*



Photo source: SoraNews (McGee, 2016)

As the region's signature sweet is the Ikinari Dango, which resembles a dumpling made with rice flour dough filled with potato and red bean paste, in 2018, KitKat's premium flavour replicating the taste of Ikinari Dango was released to raise additional funds for the region (McGee, 2018). Ten yen from each package sold was earmarked for the Kumamoto reconstruction relief fund. Considering the estimation in 2016 that the restoration of the Kumamoto castle will span over three decades with a projected cost of 63.4 billion yen for the entire process, a portion of every purchase of all Kumamoto KitKat versions will continue to be meaningfully dedicated to the region's renovation (Sugiura, 2023 & McGee, 2018). In 2018, donating through the Nippon Foundation, Nestlé Japan raised a total of 6 million yen from Ikinari Dango KitKat sales (PR Times, 2018).

**Typhoon attack in Iwate prefecture (2017):** In 2017, the prefectures of Hokkaido and Iwate were severely impacted by typhoons, causing widespread effects on lives and houses throughout the regions (McGee, 2017). Notably affected was Iwaizumi, a town in Iwate, which was among the hardest-hit areas where not only its infrastructure but also the well-established production of the popular Iwaizumi Yogurt had suffered significant damage (McGee, 2017). According to Nestlé Japan's Press Release as cited in McGee (2017), approximately six months later, Nestlé Japan stepped in to offer its support by collaborating with the yogurt brand, introducing a new limited edition of KitKat featuring *Iwaizumi yogurt* as a star ingredient, which in turn played a crucial role in the resumption of Iwaizumi yogurt production in Iwate. Under Kitto Zutto project, the company has committed to allocating ten yen from each sale of this KitKat, or 8 million yen in total towards the region's renovation (McGee, 2017 & PR Times, 2018).

**Earthquake and Storms Attacks on Osaka and West Japan (2018):** In the months of June and July 2018, Osaka was struck by a powerful earthquake, then the western part of Japan, especially in the prefecture of Okayama, was devastated by the strongest storms and floods on record (Baseel, 2018). The tragedies caused extensive damage to infrastructure and tourism in the area, and most importantly, resulted in the loss of many lives. During the recovery process, Nestlé Japan extended the sale of their limited-edition Hiroshima KitKat regional flavour, Momiji Manju, to be sold across Japan, aiming to raise funds to support the region’s rebuilding process (Baseel, 2018 & Nestlé Japan Press Release, 2018).

According to summarized data from the Nestlé Japan press release posted on PR Times (2018), the table below shows other disaster-related supports from KitKat.

*Table 10 KitKat contributions to regions impacted by disasters*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Released KitKat flavours</b>	<b>Fund raised</b>
2007-2008	Financial bankrupt of the Yubari City	KitKat Yubari Melon	27 million yen
2007	Chuetsu-Oki earthquake in Niigata	KitKat white	1 million yen
2008	Iwate-Miyagi Nairiku earthquake	KitKat Apple	1 million yen
2011	Great East Japan earthquake	KitKat Zunda	12 million yen
2015	Tree planting at Sakura Saku Baseball Stadium	KitKat Tohoku Mixed juice	750 000 yen

Source: Nestlé Japan, cited in PR Times (2018)

Overall, as a food and beverage company, Nestlé Japan has actively expanded its collaborations to make meaningful social contributions through various avenues, including its iconic KitKat brand. Their initiatives under the Kitto Zutto project have played a meaningful role in supporting the recovery of disaster-affected regions and people in those areas. During challenging times, the company has stepped up to support farmers and local producers by launching new KitKat flavours with locally sourced ingredients. Such an initiative not only helps protect and promote regional identity through taste but also revitalizes local productions as seen in the case of Iwagami Yogurt resumption. More importantly, it also provides essential financial and emotional support for area recovery through relief funds and encouraging messages. As a result, KitKat’s contributions have undeniably instilled hope in the lives of many, fostering a sense of emotional gratitude among the locals and a deeper connection between them and the brand itself.

## **4.5 SWOT Analysis of KitKat Japan**

### **4.5.1 Strengths**

Strengths refer to various attributes including KitKat's unique competitive advantages in the Japanese market and its distinctive position among competitors within the chocolate industry in Japan. These are also factors that contribute to the brand's success and growth throughout the years based on the above market research.

**Unique and effective (wordplay) marketing:** Since Nestlé positioned KitKat as a lucky charm to support students, not only did its sales during the 2017 exam period increase by 150 percent compared to 2002, but KitKat was also voted by students as their preferred lucky charm object (Okada, 2012). In 2009, over 250,000 KitMail boxes were sold within the three-month exam period as people purchased them to send encouraging messages to each other. As Nestlé was awarded the 2010 Grand Prix Media Award at Cannes for its KitMail campaign, Mediabrands Worldwide's CEO, Nick Brien even praised this initiative as a brilliant concept that was executed exceptionally well, emphasizing further that Nestlé had innovatively pioneered such a distinctive business model (WARC, 2009). In addition, various KitKat Exam editions also feature designs with motivational messages on the boxes or directly on KitKat bars. Capitalizing on the traditional interpretation of good signs, KitKat has focused on the student encouragement market since 2002, using wordplay strategies as its unique approach, which significantly contributes to the brand's popularity and rise in sales. Furthermore, unlike other brands that attempt to employ wordplay strategies for marketing purposes, KitKat's lucky charm nature was discovered naturally through its name, creating an authentic connection with customers without the sense of overt salesmanship.

**Emotional connections:** beyond its appealing physical presence, KitKat has the ability to forge emotional connections that resonate with consumers. The CEO of Nestlé Japan, Takaoka, considers this added value as a key factor behind KitKat's best-selling status (Sukhasvasti, 2020). KitKat is not only seen as a symbol of luck that offers emotional support to students during their pressured moments but also serves as a social snack, encouraging people to pause and enjoy KitKat, as its tagline suggests. Meanwhile, KitKat's Japan-exclusive flavours have brought excitement to the market, and KitKat has resonated with consumers by incorporating local culinary traditions into regional KitKat variations, thereby highlighting the essence of different Japanese regions and their food cultures to the world.

**Huge varieties of unique and exclusive flavours:** Instead of replicating KitKat's marketing approach in the UK, Nestlé Japan embarked on its own distinctive flavour experimentation journey, resulting in the release of approximately 400 KitKat flavours to date including all

limited-edition and Chocolatory varieties (Nestlé, 2023). Japan has become a KitKat powerhouse, leading the snack game. Despite being a foreign brand, Nestlé Japan has undertaken a massive glocalization to tailor KitKat to the local market, taking into account social and cultural factors. The iconic KitKat Japan collection spans a wide range, from classic milk chocolate bars to alcohol-infused flavours like sake, from regional varieties such as Okinawa sweet potatoes to seasonal options like Sakura blossom, and even unconventional flavours such as Japanese chili and soy sauce.

**Product innovations and skilled human resource:** Taking into consideration the convenience store business model in Japan mentioned by Nestlé's CEO in Japan (Sukhasvasti, 2020), KitKat's creativity in ongoing flavour development, approximately 400 up-to-present, to meet fast-changing customer preferences and ignite excitement in a market filled with a multitude of choices is considered a strength. Furthermore, the KitKat Chocolatory, under the guidance of the talented Pâtissier Yasumasa Takagi, is expected to introduce more innovative and premium aspects of KitKat (Nestlé, 2017). Moreover, the skilful and creative people at KitKat who make KitKat's prosperous journey possible in Japan cannot be neglected. In 2017, the KitKat team received the 2017 Ad Age Creativity 50 award from the leading global outlet in the marketing and advertising field, Ad Age, in recognition of their creativity (Nestlé, 2017). Including the manager in the Kyushu area who was the first to notice student purchasing behaviour, the innovative marketing team that devised clever strategies for promoting KitKat, and the creative product development team expanding KitKat into a unique range of 400 varieties, it is evident that skilled employees are a vital strength for Nestlé Japan. These individuals, across different roles, contribute to the success of KitKat's journey, making it a well-recognized brand.

**Strong and stable market, strong market research:** From the first appearance of KitKat as a Chocolate Crisp in the 1930s (Rao, 2018) in the UK to its global presence, the brand has existed for almost a century now. KitKat first debuted in the Japanese market in 1973 (Rao, 201), and since the early 2000s, it has also successfully carved out its unique identity separate from the original U.K. market. The fact that it has consistently thrived in two promising markets in Japan- one targeting students as a good luck charm and the other the traditional customary omiyage market- has helped the brand build a stable base and has undeniably proven its strengths and future potential. In addition, despite being a foreign brand and its presence in a highly competitive market, Nestlé, thanks to its iconic KitKat, managed to be

among the top confectionary companies in Japan in 2022 according to a report from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2022).

**Recognition in gift-giving and souvenir market:** Recognizing the potential of the souvenir market, Nestlé Japan deliberately embraces traditional Japanese gift-giving culture. The introduction of special regional and seasonal KitKat flavours, inspired by regional culinary specialties and typical Japanese seasonal palates, has made KitKat an ideal souvenir for locals especially foreign visitors as a piece of their Japan memories. Additionally, KitKat's status as a symbol of good luck has made it a popular gift for various occasions, from simple gestures of appreciation to well-wishing for success in exams. The simplicity and convenience of buying KitKat and the options to write message on the package add up to its reputation as a gift.

**Decent social image:** KitKat's active involvement in supporting areas affected by various disasters, especially through the Kitto Zutto Project, has not only showcased the brand's corporate responsibility but has also contributed significantly to the enhancement of its positive public social image. In terms of sustainability, as committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025, KitKat is actively prioritizing the complete use of renewable electricity, investing in tree planting and forest preservation, and partnering with farmers to enhance sustainable farming practices (Nestlé, 2021).

**Healthy features:** Despite being in a chocolate market, Nestlé Japan has already undertaken several health-oriented initiatives to become a healthier snack, such as reducing the bar's weight or forms to minimize its sugar content, launching a sugar-free cacao KitKat, and introducing flavours crafted from premium ingredients with health benefits. Moreover, the Chocolatory also offers premium KitKat made with high-end quality cacao and dried fruit.

**Smart partnerships and strong network:** for KitKat distribution, including the KitKat Chocolatory at Ikebukuro Station, KitKat can be found as well in Don Quijote, drug stores, candy stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, and souvenir shops in Tokyo and in the airports (Jorden, 2023). Thanks to collaborations with Amazon Japan and Rakuten, KitKat can also be purchased online. In terms of supporting students and regions affected by disasters, the brand has formed various partnerships such as with the Japan Post, railway companies, universities, stationaries, hotels, local sweet producers, and so on. Some collaborations focus on new flavour developments, such as partnerships with Tokyo banana

and Sake breweries. More importantly, the local chef Pastry Takagi has worked closely with Nestlé Japan to develop various unique KitKat delicacies. All these collaborations showcase the brand's extensive network within the Japanese market.

#### 4.5.2 Weaknesses

Weaknesses include factors that could potentially hinder KitKat's success in the Japanese market. In this section, the author has pinpointed the features of KitKat, as a product, that has not yet met consumers' needs, taking into consideration current market trends and the position of KitKat as a souvenir product.

**Health concerns:** due to concerns about sugar intake and the fact that the culture of chocolate consumption is not yet fully established in Japan (Demetriou, 2015), Japanese consumers have demonstrated a heightened awareness of their sugar intake. Based on the Harvard Case study (2023), their chocolate consumption remained the same despite festival seasons. Although in 2018, Nestlé Japan responded by reducing the classic KitKat's weight (McGee, 2020 & Nagase, 2020), the majority of KitKat products retain their standard sugar level, which might affect the purchasing decision of health-conscious consumers and KitKat sales. This has showcased the limited healthier KitKat options for buyers.

**Excessive flavours:** an overwhelming number of new flavours might make it more challenging for KitKat to convey its novelty and uniqueness. Additionally, too many variations under one product line may also raise questions about product quality control. Since over 400 hundred flavours have been released (Nestlé, 2023), this has built up customers' expectations for new flavours. Failure to keep pace with launching new flavours or versions could potentially leave KitKat trailing behind other snack brands.

**Unfriendly package for post-sending:** while being a symbol of luck makes KitKat suitable for various gifting purposes, not all the current KitKat packaging is designed for postal sending. If customers wish to send KitKat by post as a gift, they need to pay extra shipping fees for additional packaging or envelopes to ensure that KitKat is properly wrapped for sending (Harvard Case Study, 2023). These inconveniences may lead them to consider other better alternative gift options.

#### 4.5.3 Opportunities

Based on the aforementioned analysis, KitKat Japan demonstrates more strengths than weaknesses across various aspects. In this section, the author identifies potential growth

opportunities for KitKat in the Japanese market, taking into account its strengths, weaknesses, related statistics, and current trends as well as the evolving needs of the market.

**Entering the healthy snack market:** Given the Japanese tradition of moderate sweet consumption despite festival seasons, Nestlé should also consider the development of healthier KitKat variants. Building upon Nestlé Japan's proactive steps to enhance KitKat's appeal among health-conscious sweet enthusiasts, as outlined in Section 4.2.1, the company may consider also extending these healthier improvements across a wider range of KitKat varieties. From sourcing high-quality ingredients to reducing the sugar content in each bar, these seemingly small yet impactful initiatives mark the company's strides toward establishing KitKat as a key player in the health-conscious snack market, serving as a superior alternative compared to its competitors.

**Global market expansion:** The significant increase in the number of foreign visitors to Japan and their spending, reaching one trillion yen during the first quarter of this year, demonstrates the rising global interest in Japan and its products, particularly snacks, which are among the top categories of tourist spending (Travel Voice, 2023). Hence, since most KitKat varieties are exclusive to Japan, the company has opportunities for market expansion, such as through an e-commerce platform, to facilitate the distribution and sales of authentic Japanese KitKat to other countries. Despite being available on websites such as Amazon Japan or Rakuten, the shipping is at the moment limited to within Japan (Jorden, 2023). Expanding Japanese KitKat's availability abroad will lead to a rise in revenues and allow KitKat to reach its global customers, especially those who are fans of Japanese snacks.

**Partnership growths:** similar to KitKat's partnership with Tokyo Banana, a brand famous for its creamy-filled cakes, from which Nestlé drew inspiration for Tokyo Banana KitKat, Nestlé could also expand its collaborations with other local businesses to gain further inspiration for developing unique and delightful KitKat flavours and campaigns.

**Enhance presence in souvenir market, package renovations:** as the number of tourists in Japan continues to grow along with their interest in Japanese snacks, this presents a significant opportunity for Nestlé to introduce more exotic regional KitKat varieties, elegantly and properly packaged to reflect their status as a souvenir representing Japan. In relation to that, as a reputable brand in the souvenir market and a symbol of good luck, Nestlé Japan could enhance KitKat's packaging for convenient shipping. Similar to the Kit Mail's

box, which includes space for personalized messages and is designed for postal sending, Nestlé could introduce a new variant for each of all KitKat flavours with postal packaging. Proper packaging would reduce shipping costs for customers, making it more convenient to send KitKat as a gift. Exclusive Japanese flavour and packaging for post and gifting purposes will enhance KitKat's position in the souvenir market for local consumers and tourists.

**Flavours diversification:** In the context of a shrinking and saturated Japanese snacks market, as highlighted by KitKat's marketing team representative, Takuya Hiramatsu, KitKat's strategy of glocalization, achieved through the consistent introduction of numerous flavours and assortments, enables KitKat to sustain its attractiveness and rejuvenate excitement in the market (Sukhasvasti, 2020). To keep up with the market trend and demand and enhance its appeal to tourists, it is imperative for KitKat to unveil creative and enticing flavours, especially a healthier variant of KitKat.

#### 4.5.4 Threats

Alongside the growing popularity of KitKat in Japan, the confectionery chocolate market is gradually expanding, and changing consumer trends pose various threats to KitKat's position in the market. Below are threats that have been identified by the author.

**High competition:** The confectionery industry in Japan is saturated with a variety of brands producing various kinds of snacks. According to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2022), out of 7,664 chocolate food and drink products, approximately 2,500 were chocolate confectionery items launched between 2017 to 2022. Nestlé Japan holds around 6% of the confectionery market share, while major competitors like Meiji Holding Co. Ltd, Lotte Corporation, and Morinaga & Company, Ltd dominate the majority of share in the market (Mordor Intelligence, 2023). Hence, as the market becomes highly competitive, even slight differences in product features, quality, or price could potentially impact KitKat's sales.

**Potential imitations by other businesses:** as more companies enter the confectionery market with similar products to KitKat, KitKat's marketing strategies that are perceived to be successful are learned and become highly susceptible to replication by its competitors. This replication not only impacts KitKat's uniqueness but also influences consumer purchasing decisions due to the availability of more good luck-associated alternatives, potentially leading to decreased sales. For instance, a similar wordplay strategy targeting students can be easily adopted by other brands. In the early 2000s, when KitKat gained



popularity as a ‘lucky charm’ for exams and saw a rise in sales, Meiji Seika Kaisha also customized the design and name of its cracker from ‘Kaarū’ (カール) to ‘Ukaaru’ (うかゝる) to make it sound closer to the word ‘Ukaru’ (うかる/受かる), translating as ‘to pass.’ Additionally, the company also replaced its candy name ‘High Lemon’ with ‘High Lerumon,’ translating as ‘I can enter’ (Okada, 2002).

**Health concerns:** As previously mentioned, the sugar content in sweet products could potentially impact KitKat consumption among Japanese consumers. With a growing trend towards health-conscious choices, consumers’ preferences may shift towards healthier products or dietary supplements, leading to a reduced demand for chocolate and a gradual decline in revenue for KitKat.

**Natural disaster:** given Japan's vulnerability to frequent natural disasters, Nestlé Japan may encounter the risk of disruptions in its supply chains and delivery processes, including the delivery of local ingredients, especially for limited products made with regional specialties. Consequently, these factors may contribute to unpredicted suspensions in production.

**Economic and legal factors:** any changes in food, business, or related regulations in Japan hold the potential to influence various aspects such as KitKat’s production or marketing activities. The economic situation also plays a crucial role in influencing people’s welfare and shaping their saving and spending behaviors, subsequently impacting KitKat’s sales.

#### **4.6 TOWS matrix**

*Table 10* provides a summary of the above SWOT Analysis, outlining a total of nine strengths, three weaknesses, five opportunities, and five threats of KitKat in Japan. Each of these SWOT elements is assigned ordinal numbers to facilitate the demonstration of combined proposed strategies for KitKat Japan in the TOWS Strategic Alternatives Matrix (see *Table 11*).

Table 11 Summary of SWOT Analysis

SWOT	Internal	
	Strengths	Weaknesses
External	S1: Unique and effective (wordplay) marketing	W1: Health concerns
	S2: Emotional connections	W2: Excessive flavours
	S3: Huge varieties of unique and exclusive flavours	W3: Unfriendly post-sending packaging
	S4: Product Innovation and skilled employee	
	S5: Strong and stable market, strong market research	
	S6: Recognition in Gift-giving and souvenir market	
	S7: Good social image	
	S8: Healthy features	
	S9: Smart partnerships & network	
		Opportunities
	O1: Entering a Healthy Snack market.	T1: Rising competitors
	O2: Global Market expansion	T2: Potential imitations
	O3: Partnership growths	T3: Healthier alternatives
	O4: Flavour diversification	T4: Natural disasters
	O5: Enhancing presence in souvenir market and Package Renovation.	T5: Economic and legal factors.

Source: own work, based on SWOT analysis

The TOWS Matrix is an extended version of the SWOT Analysis, wherein strategies and action plans are proposed based on possible combinations of each internal and external element of the SWOT Analysis (see *Table 11*) (Renault, 2023). In the TOWS Matrix, the relationships between KitKat’s internal and external factors are taken into account in order to formulate four choices of strategies (SO, ST, WO, and WT), aiming at fostering strengths, minimizing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and eliminating threats for KitKat in Japan (Wozniak, 2023). Under each strategic alternative are additional combined strategies, explained with examples or proposed ideas.

## Proposed Strategies and justifications

Table 12 TOWS Strategic Alternatives Matrix

TOWS Matrix		External	
		Opportunities	Threats
Internal	Strengths	SO (maxi-maxi) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S4, S5, O4, O1</li> <li>• S8, S4, O1</li> <li>• S5, S3, S6, O2</li> <li>• S7, O3</li> <li>• S4, S3, S9, O4</li> <li>• S1, S3, S4, S6, O5</li> </ul>	ST (maxi-mini) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S8, T3</li> <li>• S2, S4, S9, T2</li> </ul>
	Weaknesses	WO (mini-maxi) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W1, O1</li> <li>• W3, O3, O5</li> <li>• W2, W1, O4</li> </ul>	WT (mini-mini) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W1, T1, T3</li> <li>• W2, T1</li> <li>• W2, T2</li> </ul>

Source: Own work, based on SWOT Analysis

- Strength – Opportunity (maxi-maxi):** utilizing strengths to gain opportunities.
 

**(S4, S5, O4, O1)** By understanding local market trends and consumer preferences, KitKat can leverage this knowledge to develop flavours or versions of KitKat that closely align with the needs of a broader range of its target consumers. From flavour development and resourcing ingredients to promoting a new campaign, KitKat has a creative and skilled team who has years of experience. For instance, given that Japanese consumers are mindful of their calorie intake when it comes to sweets, KitKat should prioritize the development of healthier, low-sugar, or sugar-free products.

**(S8, S4, O1)** Coupled with its creative human resources, market knowledge, and experience in launching low-sugar KitKat variants, the brand possesses a significant potential to make inroads into the healthy snack market. By capitalizing on these strengths, KitKat can expand its offerings to meet the growing demand for healthier snack alternatives.

**(S5, S3, S6, O2)** Most of KitKat's varieties are exclusive to Japan, and its diverse range of flavour editions makes it highly attractive to non-Japanese consumers, especially those who love sweets or are fans of Japan. KitKat can utilize its assets, including its huge range of offers, its reputation as a Japanese souvenir, and its long-standing brand presence, to facilitate its expansion into other countries. For instance, KitKat can explore partnerships with snack subscription companies that send monthly snack boxes to consumers in different

countries or launch its own commercial KitKat website where customers can purchase authentic Japanese KitKat at standard prices, rather than overpaying on other online platforms.

**(S7, O3)** KitKat's social image and its well-established status in Japan make it easier for Nestlé Japan to gain recognition as a reliable brand. Consequently, KitKat can leverage this reputation as an asset to establish collaborations with other local business partners. For example, KitKat may consider partnering with local producers or farmers of traditional Japanese sweets to incorporate the essence of these traditional delicacies into KitKat products.

**(S4, S3, S9, O4)** To develop new and interesting flavours, KitKat can seek inspiration from its current partnerships or renovate its wide range of existing flavours to fit into a healthier KitKat variant. Additionally, it can utilize its skilled human resources, particularly its creative product development team, which has years of experience in proposing new flavour experiments and, more importantly, has expanded KitKat today into 400 flavours.

**(S1, S3, S4, S6, O5)** To enhance KitKat's position in the souvenir market, Nestlé can capitalize on its strengths, including unique wordplay strategies that imply KitKat as a good luck charm for good wishes, a diverse range of flavours, especially those associated with Japan, and its current reputation as a suitable gift choice. Coupled with a skilled team capable of creatively executing marketing campaigns by leveraging these resources, KitKat has the potential to solidify its position. Regarding package renovations, drawing inspiration from the design concept of the KitKat mail, the talented KitKat team can extend their creativity to the packaging of other KitKat varieties, particularly the souvenir KitKat editions intended for postal sending purposes. To further diversify souvenir options, the author also suggests Nestlé introduce a mixed souvenir box, housing various regional KitKat and other limited editions in an elegant box. Another innovative idea is a mixed good-luck box featuring KitKat designed for well-wishing purposes, such as the omamori foldable KitKat package or KitKat with motivational messages on the bar or package.

## 2. **Strength – Threats (maxi-mini):** utilizing strengths to prevent threats.

**(S8, T3)** To address concerns about shifting consumer preferences towards healthier products over sweets or chocolates, Nestlé Japan can consider modifying the formulas of existing flavours to ensure their higher health benefits and lower health impacts. In other words, it may consider introducing a new line of healthy KitKat options to the market. This

new range, for example, can feature ingredients that offer health benefits while containing fewer calories. For example, Nestlé Japan could introduce an 'adult sweetness' version, a bitter range of KitKat, across all flavours, rather than just the current regular one.

**(S2, S4, S9, T2)** To maintain its uniqueness despite being vulnerable to imitations by competitors, having a talented human resource, KitKat can rely on its creative teams to propose new innovations whether in flavour developments, packaging designs, special editions, or extra features for KitKat, for example, a bakeable KitKat. Additionally, with a strong network and extensive partnerships, KitKat can leverage these strengths to seek inspiration for innovations. To further mitigate threats, it is crucial to integrate and deliver additional value in KitKat for consumers, whether in terms of health benefits, emotional support, or other aspects. Therefore, in terms of marketing, KitKat can leverage its natural coincidence as a lucky charm and capitalize on its established emotional connection to strengthen its relationship with consumers. While many companies adopt wordplay strategies, KitKat's status as a lucky charm was discovered naturally within its brand name. Capitalizing on these diverse strengths will enable Nestlé to consistently present KitKat in a new and innovative light, making it more challenging for imitations.

3. **Weakness – Opportunities (mini-maxi):** utilizing opportunities to overcome weaknesses.

**(W1, O1)** To minimize the impacts of the majority of KitKat being high in sugar content as a bar of chocolate, KitKat can use its potential to enter a healthy snack market by slowly shifting its existing products or future products to be fully focused on healthy trends.

**(W3, O3, O5)** To address the challenge of having unsuitable packaging for postal delivery, KitKat can consider leveraging two potential opportunities. Firstly, with the new postal packaging designs of KitKat, including souvenir editions, buyers can effortlessly send these properly wrapped KitKat directly without having to pay for extra envelopes. Secondly, KitKat can extend its collaborations with private postal service companies, in addition to the Japan Post, to enhance the possibility of sending KitKat through mail posts. Rather than creating new designs for KitKat, Nestlé can create KitKat gift envelopes or boxes in various sizes for post-sending and have them distributed to all postal service companies. This way, customers wanting to send multiple KitKat packs can easily obtain appropriate packaging for their gifts. The boxes or envelopes should be provided for free although it might not be advantageous for the company, it is an approach to reduce shipping costs for customers.

**(W2, W1, O4)** With the opportunity to introduce new flavours, Nestlé Japan should not only focus on creating unique and exciting flavours but also explore options that incorporate a healthier formula while maintaining the standard quality and tastes.

4. **Weakness – Threats (mini-mini):** minimize weaknesses when combined with threats.

**(W1, T1, T3)** KitKat, under Nestlé Japan, operates in an environment where health has become a critical focus and a prevailing trend among consumers, yet KitKat has not been able to meet the needs of health-conscious consumers. The growing demand for healthier alternatives introduced by other companies could potentially shift consumer preferences away from KitKat. To address the issues, Nestlé Japan, as suggested earlier, should consider introducing more, for example, KitKat low-sugar options, even if not entirely sugar-free.

**(W2, T1)** Introducing an excessive number of flavours can affect KitKat's novelty and uniqueness while also raising consumer expectations for new flavours, editions, or campaigns. In such a competitive market, if KitKat fails to meet these expectations on time, this will give its competitors higher chances. To address this, Nestlé could consider various initiatives for flavour development, as suggested under maxi-maxi strategies (S4, S3, S9, O4), or it could reduce the number of yearly newly released flavours and focus on promoting or enhancing existing flavours instead. For example, this might involve modifying the sugar formula, redesigning packaging, or introducing new forms of existing KitKat flavours.

**(W2, T2)** KitKat flavours in Japan are renowned for their creativity and uniqueness, with the majority being innovations not previously developed in chocolate by other confectionery companies. However, due to the abundance of KitKat flavours and editions, the popular ones can be susceptible to imitations by competitors. To resolve this, the author suggests that Nestlé Japan focuses not only on flavour diversification but also on delivering additional values to consumers, such as emotional connections, health benefits offerings, or quality enhancement. Additionally, KitKat can strengthen its competitive advantage by leveraging its status as a good-luck snack and capitalizing on its popularity in culture-related omiyage traditions.

## 4.7 Survey Questionnaire

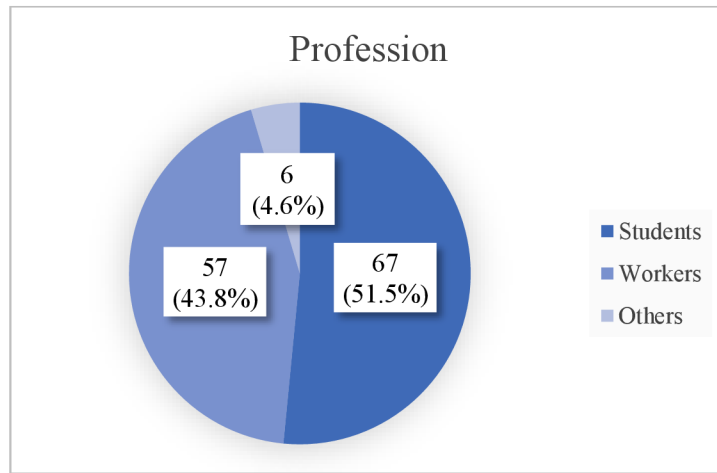
### 4.7.1 Finding and Analysis

#### Section 1: Demographic factors

Regarding demographic factors of participants, the data collected includes information on their professions, age groups, and nationality. As for non-Japanese respondents, they are asked to specify their duration of stay in Japan.

Among a total of 130 respondents, the majority (51.5%) are students, 43.8% are workers in different fields, and only 4.6% belong to the “Others” category (*Figure 5*).

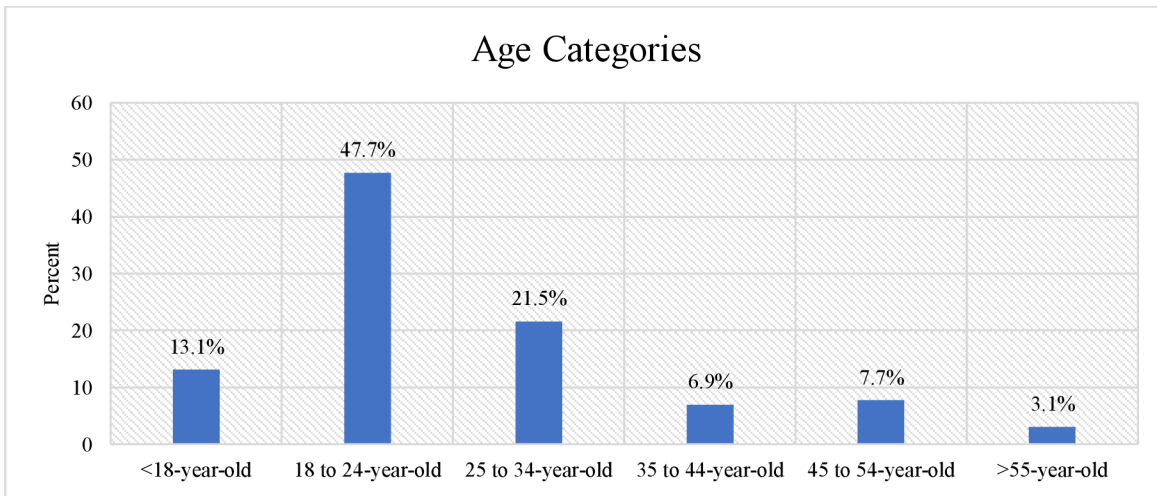
*Figure 5 Profession*



Source: own work (based on survey data)

The survey participants are from different age categories, which reflects a diverse range of generations in responses. Since half of the total respondents are students, the results correspondingly show that the majority of respondents, accumulating to 60.8%, are up to 24 years old, which is the most likely age group for students. The second highest percentage, 21.5%, belongs to respondents whose ages are from 25 to 34 years old. Only 6.9% are from the third age category (35 to 44 years old), and the rest of 10% are people older than 45 years old (fourth and fifth categories). (*Figure 6*)

Figure 6 Age Categories

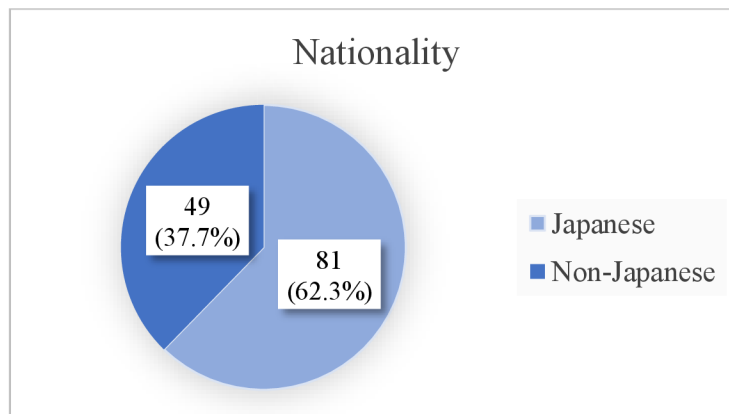


Source: own work (based on survey data)

To gain insights into the nationality of respondents and facilitate the purpose of studying the relationship of this variable with others, participants were asked to specify whether they are Japanese residents or foreign residents living in Japan for at least three months. The reason for selecting three months as the period minimum is due to the concern about participants' awareness of KitKat. Further details have been already explained in Section 2.2.2.

A survey result shows that 62.3% of respondents are Japanese nationals, and 37.7% are foreign long-term residents in Japan (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Nationality



Source: own work (based on survey data)

For Non-Japanese respondents, they were asked to specify their duration of stay in Japan. As a result (Figure 8), most of them (30.6%) stated that they had stayed in Japan for 5 to 10 years. In total, a combination of 57.1% are respondents who have stayed in Japan between



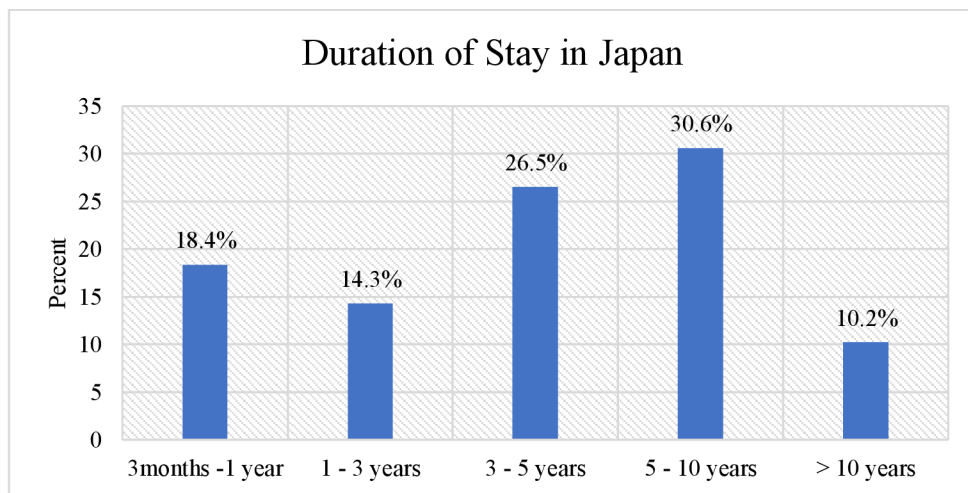
3 to 10 years, or 67.3% have stayed for over 3 years. 18.4% have stayed for 3 months to 1 year, and 14.3% have stayed for 1 to 3 years. Although KitKat is a foreign brand, due to the concern of foreign respondents' knowledge of KitKat in Japan, the longer period of stay for the majority of respondents, as shown in the results, is indeed more reliable for the research.

*Table 13 Duration of Stay in Japan*

		Duration of Stay in Japan			Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Valid	3months -1 year	9	6.9	18.4	18.4
	1 - 3 years	7	5.4	14.3	32.7
	3 - 5 years	13	10.0	26.5	59.2
	5 - 10 years	15	11.5	30.6	89.8
	> 10 years	5	3.8	10.2	100.0
	Total	49	37.7	100.0	
Missing	System	81	62.3		
Total		130	100.0		

Source: own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

*Figure 8 Duration of Stay in Japan*



Source: own work (based on survey data)

## Section 2: Consumer awareness

Among a total of 132 respondents, 98.5% answered that they have heard of KitKat and only 1.5% or 2 people have never heard of KitKat before. These two respondents, based on the survey results, are Japanese (*Table 14*). Since the following survey questions are formulated for those who have heard of KitKat, respondents who have never known KitKat were not able to continue to the next section and were taken to the end page of the survey. Hence, as two respondents are excluded, the sample size for this survey analysis is 130.

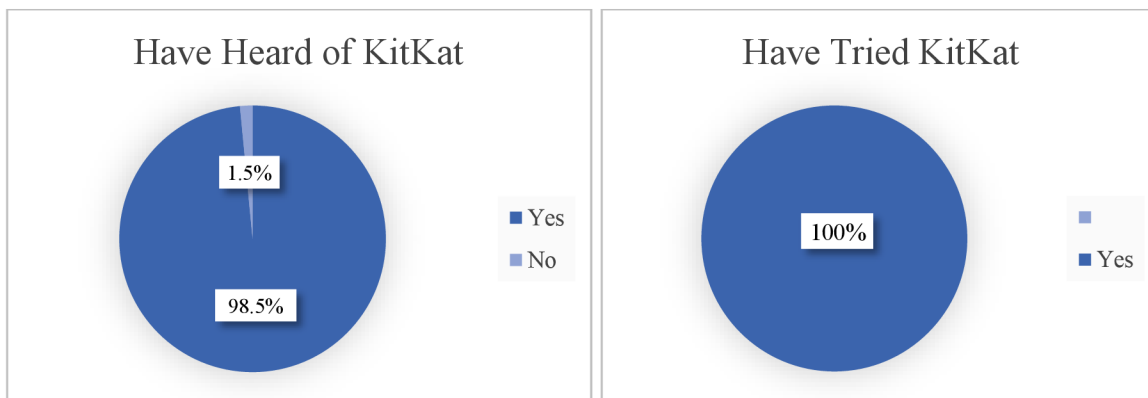
Table 14 Contingency table: Have Heard of KitKat and Haver Never Heard of KitKat

Nationality	Have Heard of KitKat	Have Never Heard of KitKat	Total
Japanese	81	2	83
Non-Japanese	49	0	49
<b>Total</b>	130	2	132

Source: own work (based on survey data)

Among the 130 respondents who have heard of KitKat, all of them also have tried KitKat.

Figure 9 Percentage of people who have heard of and tried KitKat



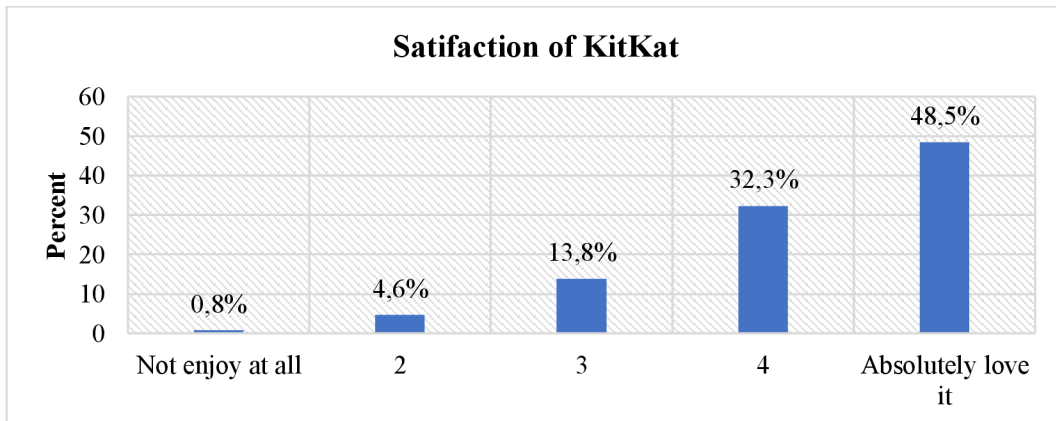
Source: own work (based on survey data)

### Section 3: Consumer Preference

In this section, respondents who have tried Kitkat are asked to rate their satisfaction, their likelihood to pick Kitkat over other brands, their purchasing reasons, and their favorite Kitkat group.

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents "Not enjoyable at all" and 5 indicates "Absolutely love it," the majority of respondents, accounting for 48.5% (63 respondents), rated their satisfaction level as 5. Another 32.3% (42 respondents) rated their satisfaction as 4, 13.8% (18 respondents) rated 3, 4.6% (6 respondents) rated 2, and only 0.8% (1 person) opted for 1. These results demonstrate that the majority of individuals who have tried KitKat are also highly satisfied with the product. (Figure 10)

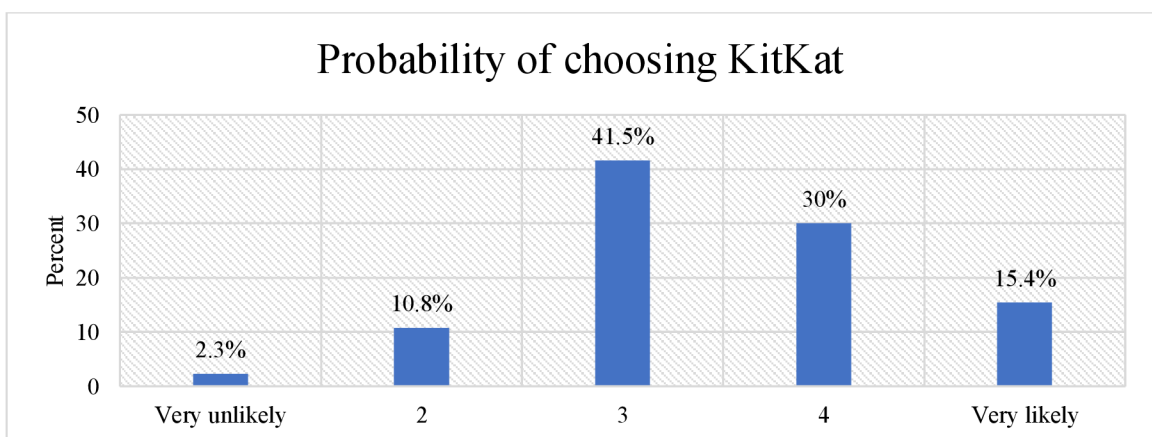
Figure 10 Satisfaction level of KitKat by consumers



Source: own work (based on survey data)

Using the same scale from 1 to 5, participants were asked to rate their likelihood of choosing KitKat over other snack brands with 1 being "Very unlikely" and 5 "Very likely." Surprisingly, even though satisfaction with KitKat is high, when compared to other snack brands, the majority of respondents (41.5% or 54 people) rated 3 or "Neutral" in terms of their inclination to choose KitKat. However, when the rating levels are grouped, 45.4% or 59 respondents have rated 4 and 5, indicating a higher likelihood, while only 13% or 17 respondents have rated 1 and 2, indicating lower likelihood of choosing KitKat. Therefore, the majority are more likely to choose KitKat than other snack brands. (Figure 11)

Figure 11 Probability of choosing KitKat



Source: own work (based on survey data)

In the next questions, participants were asked to pick a maximum of four out of all eight provided options (reasons) as the main reasons that they purchased a KitKat. Multiple selections are allowed. For each selection of a reason, that reason was given 1 score. The result is shown in Table 15 below.

Voted by 62,3% of total respondents, the main reason for buying KitKat is due to the taste and quality factors. The second most selected reason agreed by 50,8% of respondents is due to the possibility of choosing a variety of flavours and versions, whereas 32,3% of respondents only buy KitKat on impulse when they see interesting flavours. Only 10,8% buy Kitkat as a good luck charm while 30% buy KitKat as a present. This result has shown that the majority of the respondents buy KitKat more as a present rather than a lucky item.

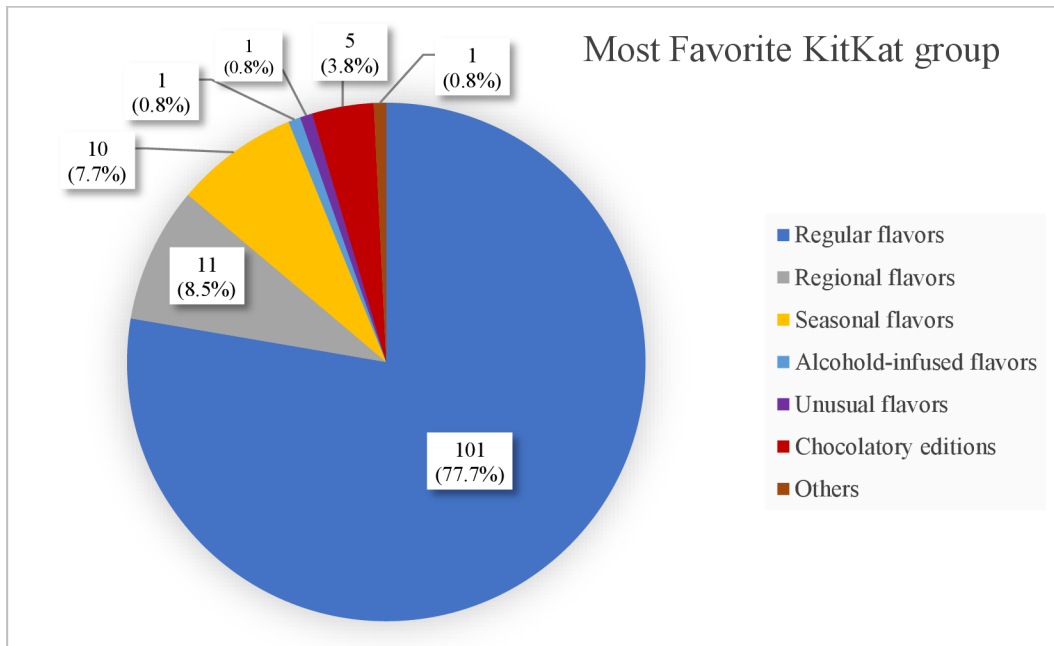
*Table 15 Reasons of Buying KitKat*

Reasons of buying KitKat	Item score	% out of overall respondent
Variety of flavour and versions	66	50,8%
Taste and quality	81	62,3%
Package designs	14	10,8%
Omiyage and present for special occasion	39	30,0%
Good luck charms	14	10,8%
Impulse buying	42	32,3%
Low-sugar options	7	5,4%
Others	6	4,6%
Never purchased a KitKat	2	1,5%

Source: own work (based on survey data)

*Figure 12 below* presents the most favorite KitKat versions selected by respondents. Regular flavours are selected by 101 people or 77.7% out of the total respondents as their most preferred KitKat group, followed by regional KitKat as the second most favorite group chosen by 11 people, or 8.5% of respondents. Seasonal flavours were chosen by 7.7% of respondents, while each of the other two groups—alcohol-infused and usual flavours—were selected by 0.8% of respondents, respectively. There is a huge difference in responses for each selection, which could mean that the regular KitKat flavours are still the most preferred variety, and there is still a need for further improvement to promote other KitKat editions.

Figure 12 Most Favorite KitKat Group



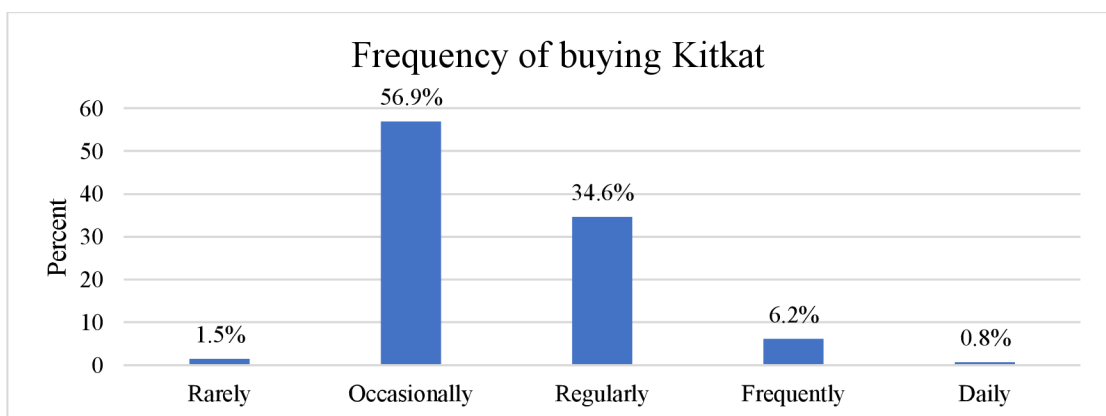
Source: own work (based on survey data)

#### Section 4: Consumer Consumption

In this section, the author has asked two questions regarding respondents' frequency of buying Kitkat and their experience of buying KitKat as a gift.

To understand consumer consumption behavior, it is crucial to gain insights into the frequencies of their purchases. The survey presented respondents with five options to describe their buying habits: Rarely (Once every few months), Occasionally (Once a month), Regularly (A few times a month), Frequently (Once a week), and Daily (Every day). The results in *Figure 13* show that the majority of respondents or 56.9% buy KitKat occasionally or on a monthly basis, and 34.6% buy KitKat regularly or multiple times a month.

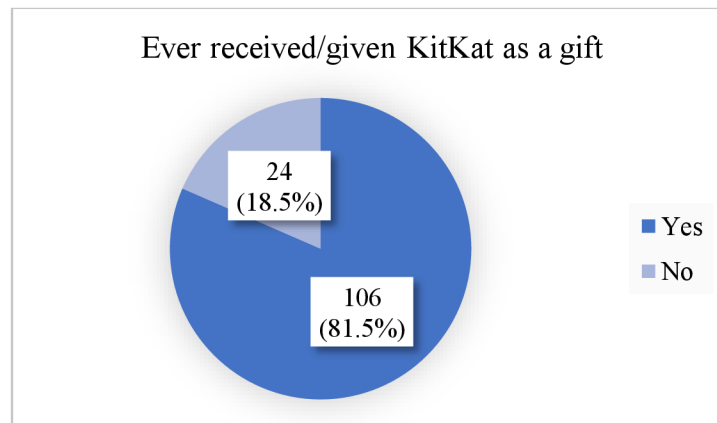
Figure 13 Frequency of buying KitKat



Source: own work (based on survey data)

In terms of purchasing purposes, the majority, 106 or 81.5% of respondents, have bought or received KitKat specifically as a gift. (Figure 14)

Figure 14 Percentage of respondents receiving or giving KitKat as a gift



Source: own work (based on survey data)

Among these respondents, they are asked to share the purpose of the gift. Multiple selections of purposes are allowed. For each selection, the author scores that reason 1 point.

As shown in Table 16, 42.5% mentioned giving KitKats to others as a way of sharing sweets without any special reasons. At the same time, 36.8% stated they had gifted KitKat as an omiyage or back-from-trip present, 32.1% to wish for good luck, 29,2% to show gratitude and appreciation, and only 11,3% as a seasonal present. Based on the survey results, it can be inferred that KitKat is perceived as a suitable and highly appreciated present for various occasions, especially for back-from-trip, well wishes, and pray-for-good-luck gifts.

Table 16 Purposes of Gifting KitKat

Purposes of gifting KitKat	Item score	% out of overall respondent
To wish for good lucks	34	32,1%
To show gratitude and appreciation	31	29,2%
To give as omiyage gift	39	36,8%
To give as gifts for special occasions	26	24,5%
To give as seasonal gifts	12	11,3%
To try new flavours	26	24,5%
No special reasons	45	42,5%
Others	3	2,8%

Source: own work (based on survey data)

As for the 24 respondents who have never bought KitKat as a gift, they are also asked to specify their reasons. Multiple selections of reasons are allowed. For each selection, the author scored that reason 1 point.

Results in *Table 17* show that there are two main reasons which have received equal although slightly higher scores than the rest. These two main reasons for not buying KitKat as a gift are, firstly, because these participants prefer other snack brands or types of gifts than KitKat (agreed by 33,3%), and secondly, they are hesitating about choosing the right flavor for the gift recipients (scored by 33,3%). Moreover, 25% of survey participants mentioned that they do not consider KitKat as a suitable gift choice while another 25% reported that they have not encountered the right occasion to present KitKat.

*Table 17 Reasons for not gifting KitKat*

Reasons of not buying kitkat as a gift	Item score	% out of overall respondent
Do not consider KitKat as appropriate gift	6	25,0%
Prefer other snack brands or gifts	8	33,3%
Not sure about preference of recipients	8	33,3%
Have not found an occasion to gift KitKat	6	25,0%
Others	1	4,2%

Source: own work (based on survey data)

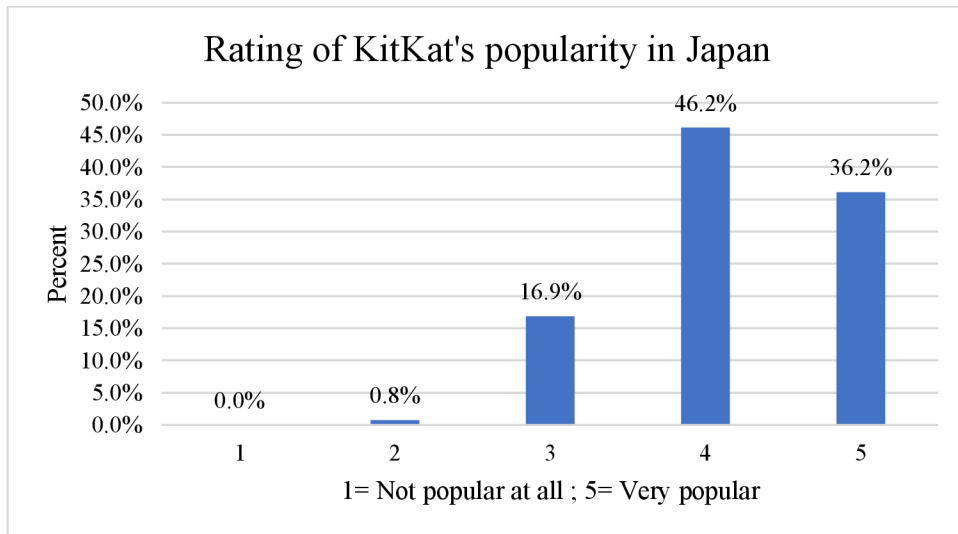
## Section 5: Consumer opinion

- **Wordplay marketing**

To understand the influence of wordplay marketing of KitKat on respondents and their opinions on regional KitKat, this section concentrates on two parts. The first part concerns the wordplay marketing of KitKat, involving its status as a lucky charm. The second part focuses on their opinions on regional KitKat as well as other marketing-related initiatives of Nestlé on KitKat in Japan and the extent these initiatives influence the consumer decision to purchase KitKat.

The survey participants were asked to rate their opinions of how popular they think KitKat is in Japan on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “Not popular at all,” and 5 means “Very popular.” Results show that a significant number of respondents (36.2% or 47 people) rated KitKat as “very popular.” The majority, accounting for 46.2% or 60 people, rated KitKat popularity as 4. Only 0,8% (1 person) rated its popularity 2, while around 17% (22 people) rated it 3. To sum up, the majority of respondents, 82.4% if combined those who rated 4 and 5 together, perceive KitKat as popular to very popular in Japan. (*Figure 15*)

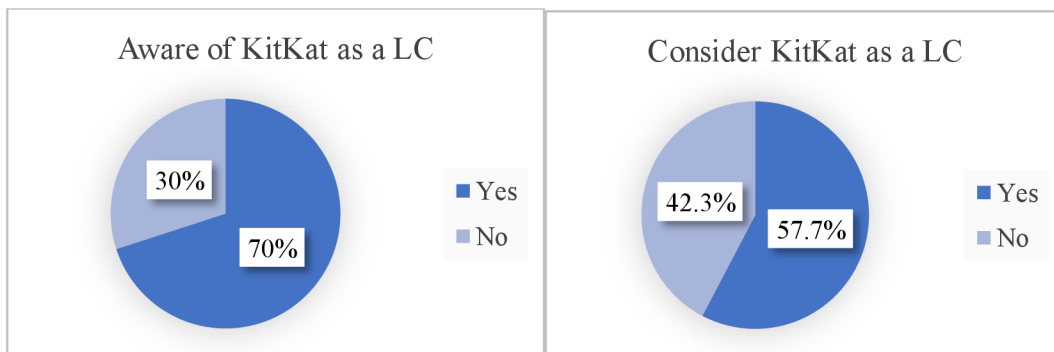
Figure 15 Rating of KitKat's popularity in Japan



Source: own work (based on survey data)

In relation to KitKat's reputation as a lucky item, 91 respondents (70%) stated that they are aware of the fact that KitKat is sold as a lucky item for students during an entrance exam period. However, when being asked if they personally consider KitKat their good luck items, only 75 (57.7%) out of 130 individuals answered “Yes.” (Figure 16)

Figure 16 Percentage of respondents aware and consider KitKat as a lucky charm



Source: own work (based on survey data)

A crosstabulation (Table 18) was generated to examine the relationship between the two variables. The results revealed that among the 75 respondents who regard Kitkat as their lucky item, 11 were not initially aware that Kitkat is sold as a lucky charm.



Table 18 Contingency Table: Aware of KitKat as a LC \* Consider KitKat as a LC

**Aware of KitKat as a LC \* Consider KitKat as a LC Crosstabulation**

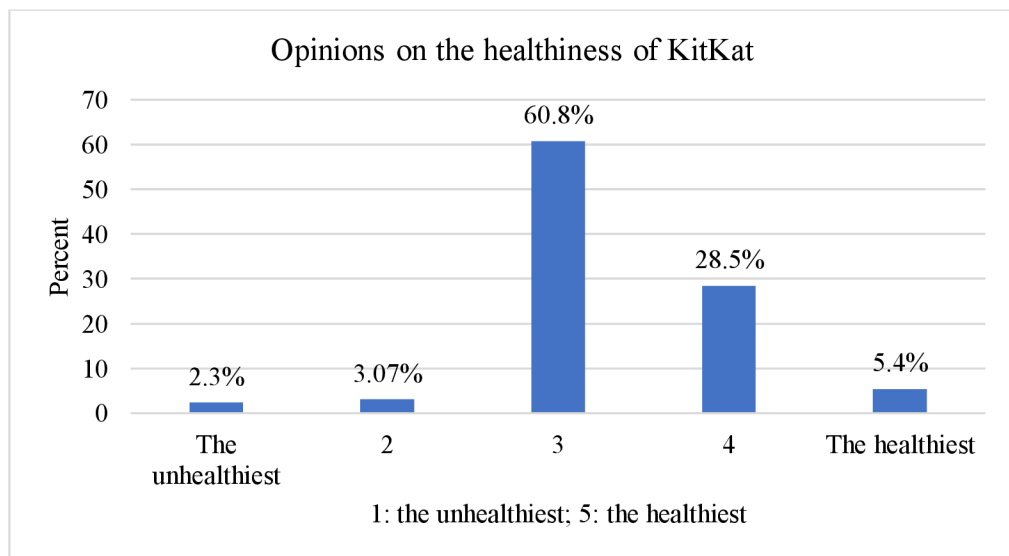
Count

		Consider KitKat as a LC		Total
		Yes	No	
Aware of KitKat as a LC	Yes	64	27	91 (70%)
	No	11	28	39 (30%)
Total		75 (57.7%)	55 (42.3%)	130 (100%)

Source: own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

Corresponding to the SWOT analyses, the healthier options of KitKat are limited while the healthy trend is surging, and healthier alternatives are rising in number. The results of the survey in *Figure 17* showed that 60.8% of respondents rated KitKat 3 in terms of how healthy the product is compared to other snack brands. This indicates the need to improve the quality of Kitkat in terms of health benefits.

Figure 17 Opinions on the healthiness of KitKat



Source: own work (based on survey data)

The next question is dedicated to understanding the impact of wordplay on consumer purchasing decisions. In a study conducted by Okada (2012), students were asked if there were particular activities they or others had done before an exam to pray for success, with the majority of responses involving various wordplay-related activities. Therefore, to study the current impact of wordplay marketing in a practical aspect, the respondents in this survey were also asked to select the activities that they or someone they know have done, with Okada's study as a reference, which is perceived as ways to obtain good luck before an exam. Multiple selections of items were allowed.

As result indicated in *Table 19*, the traditional way of praying at the Shrine received the highest score as selected by 46,9% or 61 out of the total 130 respondents. Buying, sending, or receiving KitKat scores the second highest as agreed by 43 or 33,1% of respondents. Despite having a smaller number of respondents, these results correspond with Okada’s survey findings. In terms of wordplay-related activities, eating meals perceived to bring luck (shōbumeshi) received the third highest score of 39 based on 30% of respondents. Avoiding expressions associated with failure received 34 points from 26.2% of respondents while buying items with auspicious meanings earned 30 points from 23.1% of participants. On the other hand, 26.9% or 35 individuals did not find these metaphors or good omen readings meaningful and instead believed in the value of hard work and diligent preparation. In conclusion, the majority of chosen items by respondents fall into the category of objects associated with wordplays. This has demonstrated the presence of humor, and creativity in words playing, as well as a significant belief in good signs and expressions among the consumers in Japan.

*Table 19 Activities before an exam to bring good luck*

	Activities	Item score	Percentage (ratio to total respondents)
<b>Wordplay items associated with good lucks</b>	KitKat-related activities (buy, receive, send KitKat or KitMail, warm KitKat to melt)	43	33,1%
	Buy items with names associated with lucks	30	23,1%
	Eat shōbumeshi (meals names related to good luck/signs)	39	30,0%
	Not saying negative words (fail/slip/drop...etc)	34	26,2%
<b>Traditional ways</b>	Pray at the Shinto Shrine, buy an amulet (shrine lucky charms), or write wishes on Ema (wooden plates)	61	46,9%
<b>None</b>	Just study hard	35	26,9%
<b>Others</b>	<i>Others</i>	4	3,1%

Source: own work (based on survey data)

- **Regional KitKat**

To understand the opinion of respondents on regional KitKat, a Likert-scale question was used. First, to measure the reliability of the questions of these statements or items, a reliability test was conducted. Cronbach’s alpha (*Table 20*) equal to 0.847 indicates a “good” level of internal consistency reliability of all items on the scale (see Appendix, *Table 35*). This means the items on the scale are strongly correlated and the responses are consistent.

*Table 20 Reliability Test of Opinions on Regional KitKat*

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.847	.847	4

Source: Own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

*Table 21* shows how Cronbach’s alpha will change if any of the items are deleted. In this case, removing the second item would lead to achieving the highest alpha of 0.823, meaning the rest of the items are more significantly related. However, Cronbach alpha is already the highest, therefore, removing any items is not necessary.

*Table 21 Item-Total Statistics (1)*

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Cultural promotion	10.65	9.670	.647	.462	.822
Glocalization of foreign products	10.97	9.766	.643	.430	.823
Would buy regional KitKat as Omiyage	10.95	9.633	.700	.565	.799
Would buy regional KitKat as Japan gift	10.79	9.065	.749	.614	.777

Source: Own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

Based on the results (*Table 22*), the majority of respondents (34.6%) strongly agreed with the first statement, stating that regional KitKat is contributing to promoting Japanese regions and their food cultures. The average rating is 3.8, meaning the majority agreed rather than disagreed with this statement. As for the second statement regarding the glocalization of foreign products, although 29.2% rated their opinions as neutral, there are 28.5% somewhat agreed and 23.8% strongly agreed with the statement. Therefore, a total of 68 people (52.3%) agreed that they would like to see other foreign snack companies localize their products like KitKat. While 37.7% (49) somewhat agreed that they would buy KitKat as a Japanese gift for their foreign or home country friends, 34.6% also somewhat agreed that they would buy KitKat as a Japanese gift for foreigners. In *Table 16*, for each statement, the average ratings are from 3.51 to 3.8, considering the level of rating with 5 being “strong agree,” this indicated that the majority of respondents agreed rather than disagreed with all four statements.

Table 22 Opinions on Regional KitKat

Statements	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewh at agree	Strongly agree	Means
1. I believe that regional KitKat is contributing to promoting Japanese regions and their food culture	13 (10.0%)	3 (2.3%)	26 (20.0%)	43 (33.1%)	<b>45</b> <b>(34.6%)</b>	<b>3.8</b>
2.I would like to see other foreign snack companies adapt their products to Japan like what KitKat is doing	12 (9.2%)	12 (9.2%)	<b>38</b> <b>(29.2%)</b>	37 (28.5%)	31 (23.8%)	3.48
3.I would buy regional KitKat as a return-from-trip gift if I visit other regions in Japan	12 (9.2%)	11 (8.5%)	32 (24.6%)	<b>49</b> <b>(37.7%)</b>	26 (20.0%)	3.51
4.I would buy regional KitKat as a gift-from-Japan for my foreign friends/friends in home country	13 (10.0%)	7 (5.4%)	28 (21.5%)	<b>45</b> <b>(34.6%)</b>	37 (28.5%)	3.66

Source: own work (based on survey data)

Various marketing strategies adopted to promote KitKat have been discussed earlier in Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.4. To understand the influence of these initiatives on purchasing decisions, respondents were asked to rate their opinions. First, as the Likert scale was used, to measure the reliability of the questions of these statements or items, a reliability test was conducted. Cronbach’s alpha (*Table 23*) equal to 0.847 indicates a “good” level of internal consistency reliability of all items on the scale (see Appendix, *Table 35*). This means the items on the scale are strongly correlated and the responses are consistent.

Table 23 Reliability Test of Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Decision

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.870	.871	7

Source: Own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

Table 24 below shows how Cronbach’s alpha will change if any of the items are deleted. In this case, removing any items will not increase the value of alpha, as the original value of 0.87 is already considered high.

Table 24 Item-Total Statistics (2)

Item-Total Statistics					
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Variety	22.14	25.578	.695	.640	.845
Taste and quality	21.95	25.657	.604	.379	.857

limited KitKat	22.12	25.266	.673	.729	.847
Omiyage regional KitKat	22.16	25.237	.725	.728	.841
Social contributions	22.48	25.709	.595	.481	.858
Initiatives to support students	22.55	25.599	.607	.501	.856
low-sugar KitKat	22.55	24.838	.633	.459	.853

Own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

Table 25 below summarizes the respondent's rating of the influencing level of different marketing initiatives of KitKat. The average rating for each factor is also presented in the table. The weighted average equals 3.71, calculated as an overall average of all Means, will be used to compare with the average rating to conclude the level of influence of each factor.

Table 25 Factors Influencing Consumer Purchasing Decision

Statements	Not influenced	Slightly influenced	Neutral	Moderate influence	Strongly influenced	Means
There are many KitKat varieties to choose from	3 (2.3%)	14 (10.8%)	19 (14.6%)	<b>57</b> <b>(43.8%)</b>	37 (28.5%)	3.85 94
The taste and quality of KitKat	6 (4.6%)	9 (6.9%)	17 (13.1%)	40 (30.8%)	<b>58</b> <b>(44.6%)</b>	4.04 98
KitKat has many limited-edition flavours including seasonal and regional flavours and Chocolatory versions	5 (3.8%)	11 (8.5%)	23 (17.7%)	<b>47</b> <b>(36.2%)</b>	44 (33.8%)	3.88 91
KitKat has regional flavours, great for back-from-trip gift and for promoting Japanese food culture	4 (3.1%)	11 (8.5%)	25 (19.2%)	<b>53</b> <b>(40.8%)</b>	37 (28.5%)	3.83 90
KitKat has donated funds to help rebuild regions affected by disasters	6 (4.6%)	20 (15.4%)	35 (26.9%)	<b>40</b> <b>(30.8%)</b>	29 (22.3%)	3.51
KitKat exam versions/campaign support students during their challenging time, which is an entrance exam	8 (6.2%)	16 (12.3%)	<b>43</b> <b>(33.1%)</b>	36 (27.7%)	27 (20.8%)	3.45
KitKat has various healthier (adult) options with less sugar level, ex: sugar-free Cacao Fruit KitKat	12 (9.2%)	13 (10.0%)	<b>39</b> <b>(30.0%)</b>	38 (29.2%)	28 (21.5%)	3.44

Source: own work (based on survey data)

Among all, the taste and quality of KitKat is the **main** factor as agreed by the highest percentage of respondents (75.4%) or 98 out of 130 people. Specifically, 44.6% regarded this factor as strongly influenced, and 30.8% as moderately influenced their purchasing decision of KitKat. On average, respondent rated this factor 4.04 (>3.71), indicating a significant influence of this factor on their buying decision. The **second** most influential factor is the introduction of a variety of KitKat options, offering consumers more choices. A total of 94 people (72.3%) indicated that this factor influences their purchasing decision for KitKat. Among them, 43.8% considered this factor to have a moderate influence, while 28.5% deemed it to strongly influence their buying decisions. The average rating for this factor is 3.85 (>3.71), indicating a significant impact on their purchasing decisions. The **third** most influential factor is the introduction of limited versions (seasonal and regional flavours) of KitKat. A total of 91 people (70%) rated this factor as influencing their purchasing decision of KitKat, of which 33.8% considered it as strongly influenced and 36.2% as moderately influenced their buying decision. The average rating for this factor is 3.88 (>3.71), indicating a significant influence of this factor on their buying decision. The **fourth** most influential factor is the launches of regional KitKat, taking into consideration its characteristics as an Omiyage or a Japanese souvenir. A total of 90 people (69.3%) rated this factor as influencing their purchasing decision of KitKat. Precisely speaking, 40.8% considered this factor moderately influenced and 28.5% strongly influenced their buying decision. The majority of respondents on average rated the degree of influence of this factor 3.83 (>3.71), meaning this factor significantly influenced their decision. The **fourth** most influential factor on the purchasing decision of KitKat is KitKat's contribution to the affected area through its donation funds, as agreed by 69 people or 51.1% of respondents. Among them, 30.8% found it moderately influential, and 22.3% strongly influenced their decision. The average rating for this factor is 3.51 (<3.71), indicating a relatively low impact on their purchasing decisions. The last two factors, compared to the rest, were found to be the least influential factors on the purchasing decisions of consumers. Although the majority of respondents agreed on the influence of both factors when rating frequencies of 4 and 5 were combined, the breakdown of 5 level rating showed that the majority voted 3, indicating that they considered the impact of both factors to be neutral or neither impacting nor not impacting their decision.

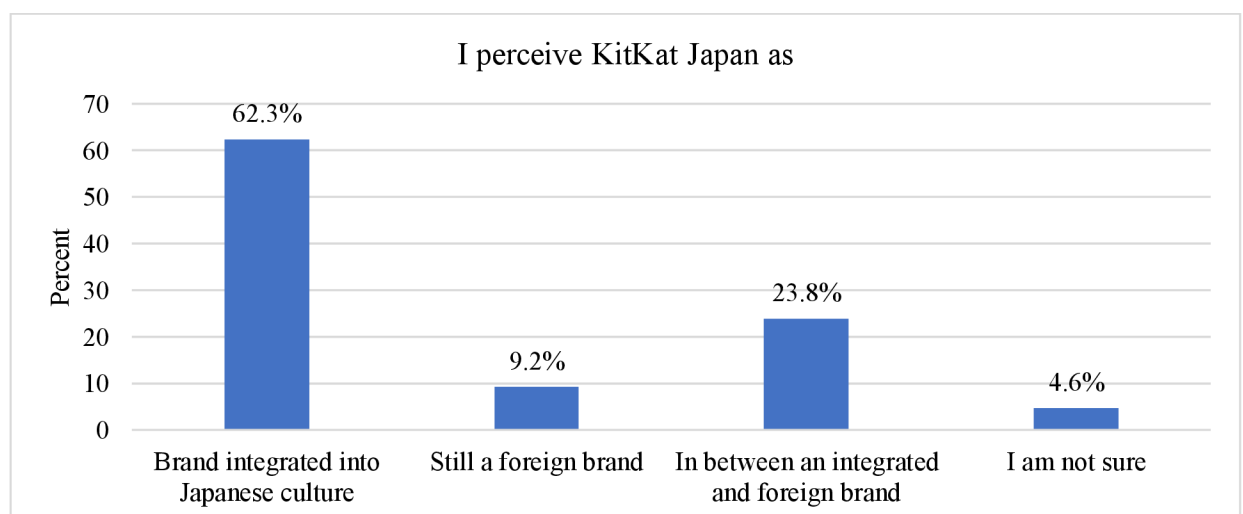
In the last question of the survey, the participants expressed their final point of view on the status of KitKat in Japan. With Nestlé’s efforts in glocalizing its KitKat products and promoting them in a unique way, it is imperative to hear how consumers in Japan really perceive KitKat. The results are presented in *Table 26* and *Figure 18* below. More than half of the total respondents, equal to 62.3% or 81 people, stated that they perceived KitKat as a brand integrated into Japanese culture and 23.8% considered KitKat as not a purely foreign brand, but a brand that falls somewhere between local and foreign. Nevertheless, the data also reveals that 9.2% of respondents perceive KitKat as a foreign brand. This perspective may result from various factors, such as KitKat's glocalization efforts not resonating with them or not meeting a certain standard for them to categorize the brand as local. Alternatively, they might have stronger preferences for other local brands.

*Table 26 How KitKat Japan is Perceived*

		<b>I perceive KitKat Japan as</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Brand integrated into Japanese culture	81	62.3	62.3	62.3
	Still a foreign brand	12	9.2	9.2	71.5
	In between an integrated and foreign brand	31	23.8	23.8	95.4
	I am not sure	6	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own work (based on survey data, calculated in SPSS)

*Figure 18 Respondents' view on KitKat as a brand*



Source: own work (based on survey data)

#### 4.7.2 Additional Insights

Before proceeding to submit responses to the questionnaire survey, the author included an optional written space for respondents to share any interesting experiences they had encountered with KitKat. Consequently, a total of 17 comments from respondents were received (see Appendix). The key insights derived from most of these comments revolve around KitKat's role as a good luck item, a souvenir from Japan, and a well-wishing gift that can be sent along with a written message. This aspect of KitKat has been mentioned multiple times in the comments by different respondents.

**Respondent 1:** *When I was in middle school, my friends and I wrote messages on the backs of Kit Kats and gave them to each other on the day of competition in the brass band club. "Congratulations on your birthday gift!" I wrote and sent it. I also often send it when I don't have a deep personal relationship but want to give a small present.*

**Respondent 2:** *I had a friend who wrote a message for me using a KitKat message. Since it was a paper package, members of the same club could write many messages and give them to seniors when they graduated.*

**Respondent 3:** *I once received a gift package with photos taken on a trip as a keepsake gift, and it's wonderful to be able to create original packaging like this. The contents are simple and can be bought anywhere, but it left a lasting impression on me and I'm glad I received it, so I still keep it.*

**Respondent 4:** *There's a column to write a message on the package of KitKat, that's why I choose KitKat for presents.*

**Respondent 5:** *At my junior high school graduation ceremony, I received a Kit Kat from a friend with a message written on the back, and I remember being very happy about it.*

**Respondent 6:** *I give KitKat chocolate when I exchange with other countries' students!*

**Respondent 7:** *My favorite memory is when my friends and I gave each other Kit Kats and ate them during our lunch break during the exam.*

According to these comments, KitKat holds a deeper and special meaning in people's memories, surpassing its role as a simple chocolate bar. Whether it is about expressing appreciation, offering congratulations, sending well-wishes through hand-written messages, creating or preserving memories, fostering friendships, or simply sharing sweets during the exam period, KitKat is indeed a little yet meaningful gift. Beyond its taste and quality, the product's simplicity and the option to write a message on the package make KitKat a versatile and cherished gift.



### 4.7.3 Hypothesis Testing

To prove the relationships between various categorical variables from the survey, hypothesis testing will be conducted. Since the testing involves categorical data, the Chi-Square Test and Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test are used.

- **Hypothesis 1**

*Ho: There is no relationship between Nationality and how KitKat is perceived as a brand.*

*H1: There is a significant relationship between Nationality and how KitKat is perceived as a brand.*

A significant level  $\alpha = 0.05$  is selected.

The result of the test will show whether being a Japanese or a foreigner living in Japan impacts how they perceive KitKat as a brand.

*Table 27 Contingency table: Nationality and How I View KitKat*

			Nationality * How I perceive KitKat Crosstabulation				Total
			How I view KitKat				
			Brand integrated into Japanese culture	Still a foreign brand	In between an integrated and foreign brand	I am not sure	
Nationality	Japanese	Count	60	7	10	4	81
		Expected Count	50.5	7.5	19.3	3.7	81.0
	Non-Japanese	Count	21	5	21	2	49
		Expected Count	30.5	4.5	11.7	2.3	49.0
Total		Count	81	12	31	6	130
		Expected Count	81.0	12.0	31.0	6.0	130.0

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

The majority of Japanese respondents view KitKat as an integrated local brand while the number of non-Japanese respondents who view KitKat as local same as those who consider KitKat a brand in between. The crosstabulation indicates the differences in the observed count and the expected count, also known as the estimated count if the null hypothesis is to be true. *Table 27* shows a significant difference between these two counts.

Table 28 Test Result: Nationality and How I View KitKat

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.823 <sup>a</sup>	3	<.001	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	16.626	3	<.001	.001
Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test	16.495			<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.358 <sup>b</sup>	1	<.001	<.001
N of Valid Cases	130			

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5.

The minimum expected count is 2.26.

b. The standardized statistic is 3.370.

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

Since more than 20% of observation counts are less than 5 (*Table 28*), the Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact test is applied in this case. P-value < 0.001, which is less than a significant level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between Nationality and how KitKat is perceived as a brand.

▪ **Hypothesis 2**

*Ho: There is no relationship between Nationality and Awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

*Ho: There is a significant relationship between Nationality and Awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

A significant level  $\alpha = 0.05$  is selected.

The result of the test will show whether being a Japanese or a foreigner in Japan has any relation with people's awareness that KitKat is known to be a lucky charm (LC) in Japan.

Table 29 Contingency Table: Nationality \* Aware of KitKat as a Lucky Charm

Nationality * Aware of KitKat as a LC Crosstabulation					
		Aware of KitKat as a LC		Total	
		Yes	No		
Nationality	Japanese	Count	67	14	81
		Expected Count	56.7	24.3	81.0
	Non-Japanese	Count	24	25	49
		Expected Count	34.3	14.7	49.0
Total	Count	91	39	130	
	Expected Count	91.0	39.0	130.0	

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

The majority of Japanese respondents are aware of KitKat reputation as a lucky charm while the majority of non-Japanese respondents are not aware of this fact. The crosstabulation

(Table 29) indicates significant differences in the observed and the expected count. The higher these differences, the more likely the null hypothesis is to be rejected.

Table 30 Test Result: Nationality \* Aware of KitKat as a Lucky Charm

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.547 <sup>a</sup>	1	<.001	<.001
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	14.979	1	<.001	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	16.338	1	<.001	<.001
Fisher's Exact Test				<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.420 <sup>c</sup>	1	<.001	<.001
N of Valid Cases	130			

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.70.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

c. The standardized statistic is 4.052.

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

Since no observation counts are less than 5 (Table 30), the Chi-Square Tests test is used in this case. P-value <0.001, which is less than a significant level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is again rejected. There is a significant relationship between Nationality and Awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.

### ▪ Hypothesis 3

*Ho: There is no relationship between Profession and Awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

*H1: There is a significant relationship between Profession and Awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

A significant level  $\alpha = 0.05$  is selected.

The test result will show whether the profession of respondents (being a student, worker, or others) has any relation with their awareness that KitKat is known to be a lucky charm (LC).

Table 31 Contingency Table: Profession and Awareness of KitKat as a Lucky Charm

		Aware of KitKat as a LC		Total	
		Yes	No		
Profession	Students	Count	48	19	67
		Expected Count	46.9	20.1	67.0
	Workers	Count	40	17	57
		Expected Count	39.9	17.1	57.0
	Others	Count	3	3	6
		Expected Count	4.2	1.8	6.0
Total		Count	91	39	130
		Expected Count	91.0	39.0	130.0

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

The majority of students and workers are both aware of KitKat reputation as a lucky charm. The crosstabulation (*Table 31*) shows very small differences in observed and expected frequency;  $H_0$  is likely to be true.

*Table 32 Test Result: Profession and Aware of KitKat as a Lucky Charm*  
**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.230 <sup>a</sup>	2	.541	.604
Likelihood Ratio	1.134	2	.567	.604
Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact Test	1.371			<b>.545</b>
Linear-by-Linear Association	.563 <sup>b</sup>	1	.453	.514
N of Valid Cases	130			

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.80.

b. The standardized statistic is .751.

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

Since more than 20% of observation counts are less than 5, the Fisher-Freeman-Halton Exact test is used in this case (*Table 32*). P-value = 0.545, which is higher than a significant level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. There is no significant relationship between the profession and the awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm. Therefore, being a student does not make a person know more about KitKat.

#### ▪ Hypothesis 4

*H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between the fact that respondents have received or given KitKat as a gift and their awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between the fact that respondents have received or given KitKat as a gift and their awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.*

A significant level  $\alpha = 0.05$  is selected.

The results of the test will show whether the fact that respondents have ever received or given KitKat as a gift has any relation with their awareness that KitKat is known to be a lucky charm (LC).

Table 33 Contingency Table: Ever received/given KitKat as a gift \* Aware of KitKat as a Lucky Charm

**Ever received/given KitKat as a gift \* Awareness of KitKat as a LC Crosstabulation**

		Aware of KitKat as a LC		Total	
		Yes	No		
Ever received/given KitKat as gift	Yes	Count	83	23	106
		Expected Count	74.2	31.8	106.0
	No	Count	8	16	24
		Expected Count	16.8	7.2	24.0
Total		Count	91	39	130
		Expected Count	91.0	39.0	130.0

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

The majority of respondents who have received or given KitKat as a gift are also aware that KitKat is considered a lucky charm in Japan while those who have never received or given KitKat as a gift are not aware of this fact. The contingency table (Table 33) shows a significant difference between the observed and expected counts; *H<sub>0</sub>* is likely to be rejected.

Table 34 Test Result: Ever received/given KitKat as a gift \* Aware of KitKat as a Lucky Charm

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.844 <sup>a</sup>	1	<.001	<.001
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	16.763	1	<.001	
Likelihood Ratio	17.383	1	<.001	<.001
Fisher's Exact Test				<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.699 <sup>c</sup>	1	<.001	<.001
N of Valid Cases	130			

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.20.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

c. The standardized statistic is 4.324.

Source: Own work, computed in SPSS based on survey data

Since no observation counts are less than 5 (Table 34), the Chi-Square Test is applied in this case. P-value = <.001, which is less than a significant level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant relationship between the fact that respondents have received or given KitKat as a gift and their awareness of KitKat as a lucky charm.

## 5 Results and Discussions

To answer the research questions, it is crucial to highlight the major findings from the practical part. When identifying what makes KitKat Japan exceptional, it is impossible to neglect Nestlé Japan's efforts in transforming KitKat from merely chocolate from the other side of the world into a flavourful and creative delicacy, even a luxury sweet, that carries from a simple to a deeper meaning as a gift, a souvenir, a symbol of lucks, and even a present that remind people of Japan. One of the most important marketing strategies is the extensive glocalization of KitKat into more than 300 flavours, taking inspiration from local business partnerships and various aspects of Japanese culture, including traditional sweets and drinks, regional and seasonal specialties, gift-offering practices, and even the interpretation of object meanings. Correspondingly, 72% of survey respondents also claimed that having such a huge variety of KitKat to choose from indeed influenced their buying decisions, and 52.3% agreed that they would like to see more foreign snack companies glocalize their products just like KitKat. The glocalization strategy is one of the key factors that transform KitKat to be more local but uniquely special especially to foreigners, enhancing its position in the souvenir market. In relation to this, another unique strategy is KitKat strategy in capitalizing on the customary omiyage culture, considering its wide range of glocalized KitKat. Approximately 70% of survey respondents reported the possibility of buying regional KitKat as a souvenir from the trip as one of the factors influencing their buying decision, and 81.5% said they have at least once bought or received KitKat as a gift. Compared to other KitKat varieties, the regular flavour is the main group preferred by most respondents (77.7%) while the regional flavour group placed second. Third, in addition to flavour variations, Nestlé has also introduced other creative KitKat varieties such as a bakeable KitKat, a smaller or bite-size KitKat-mini, a KitKat Adult version with lower sugar, and especially a popular KitMail box which comes with a writing space suitable also for postal sending. These kinds of KitKat are also exclusive to Japan. The survey respondents expressed their high satisfaction with the paper packaging of KitKat that allows them to write and receive handwritten messages from others, making it a memorable keepsake for them. Regarding the lack of focus on the healthier innovations of KitKat, results from the survey also correspondingly show that compared to other snack brands, 60.8% of respondents rated KitKat's healthiness 3 (neutral), meaning KitKat has not yet been considered a healthy snack. The fourth unique advertising strategy is regarding the strategic use of wordplay marketing to market KitKat as a good luck item for Japanese students during an exam period. From the survey data, wordplay items

received the most votes as items students bought to invite luck for the exam. Among these items, 33,1% of respondents voted for KitKat and its related activities. This finding also aligns with findings in Okada's study although conducted with greater sample sizes. 70% of respondents stated that they are aware that KitKat is known as a lucky item, but only 57.7% personally consider KitKat their good luck item. Along with positioning it as a lucky charm, Nestlé has collaborated with partners from hotels to stationaries and from universities to railway companies, collaborations which the author called "the Smart Partnerships." Involving these partnerships, the launch of KitKat exam versions or KitKat campaigns to support students, based on the survey result, is among the least influential factors that impact consumers' decision to buy KitKat if compared with the other 5 factors. Nevertheless, this result may be impacted by the limited sample size and ranking options provided. Lastly, to further capitalize on its lucky charm status, Nestlé has associated KitKat with its corporate social responsibility activities through the launch of new KitKat versions to contribute to the revitalization of damaged regions by disasters. Considering KitKat as an item of well-wishing for recovery, this initiative not only generates profits for Nestlé but also enhances its reputation as a brand. Based on data from the survey, 51.1% of respondents consider KitKat social contribution as a factor influencing their buying decision. Yet, compared to other factors, social contribution does not impact KitKat sales as much as other factors like KitKat's taste, quality, huge varieties, and versions. All these strategies have contributed in various ways to delivering additional value that emotionally connect KitKat to consumers.

The effectiveness of the above-mentioned strategies is also facilitated by market conditions, including the adoption of the convenience store business model and consumer purchasing behaviour toward new and limited goods. KitKat's popularity is further derived from social and cultural factors such as people's well-appreciated attitude rooted in their culture, gift-giving traditions, the tendency toward preserving regional identities, the seasonality concept in Japanese cuisine, as well as the beliefs in metaphorical expressions and positive signs.

KitKat was promoted as a British chocolate upon its arrival in 1973 to Japan. In addition to being a foreign brand, its inability to meet consumers' demands and align with their consumption culture were drawbacks hindering its growth. Reflecting on Nestlé Japan's journey of bringing KitKat to this day, the author has identified a few important lessons that other international companies should consider when venturing into the Japanese market. First, it is crucial to acquire a strong knowledge of the market and the industry, including

target consumers, their lifestyles, local norms and culture, the industry of business and its associations with Japanese culture and values, current trends in the industry, and so on. Therefore, conducting deep market research is important. Secondly, glocalization is a key to getting closer to the locals and resonating with them. Depending on a one-size-fits-all tactic could potentially leave one behind its competitors that have a more flexible strategy. Glocalizing products can be done in various ways depending on the nature of the business. For example, in Japan, wordplay marketing is powerful, as this study's findings suggested, if applied properly in the right business context. Thirdly, in an intensely competitive industry like confectionary, it is important to stand out, meaning to stay unique, updated, creative, and innovative. Whether enhancing the existing products' features, launching a new edition, or introducing premiumization of products to loyal consumers or new markets, diversification is not enough. A marketer should consider delivering additional value to the consumers, for example, through stories consumers can resonate to establish emotional connections.

Concluding from the SWOT Analyses, KitKat possesses various crucial strengths in terms of partnership and collaborations, reputation in the Japanese markets, product diversifications and innovations, uniqueness of marketing, and most importantly, highly skilled teams of employees. Capitalizing on these strengths, KitKat can easily explore its potential opportunities whether it is about jumping into the healthy trend, expanding partnerships, exploring new flavours, or enhancing its presence in the Japanese souvenir market. With the rising number of competitors and the possibility of being imitated, it is crucial to stay innovative and strengthen its current competitive advantages. Various strategies are proposed in the TOWS Matrix. Last but not least, in terms of economic impacts, the adaptation of KitKat to the Japanese market aligns perfectly with the Cool Japan policy introduced by the government of Japan. Through the sales of regional KitKat variations, which is a suitable souvenir choice for tourists, Nestlé takes part in promoting Japanese regions and their local cuisine. The increases in tourist spending also generate income for the company as well as for the economy, expanding the size of the confectionery market. In addition to exporting Japanese culture overseas, KitKat's regular release of new flavours or versions keeps the Japanese food market refreshing and exciting. The expansion in local business collaborations does not just create employment but supports local producers, where Nestlé sources its KitKat ingredients from.



## **6 Limitations and Recommendations**

Although the research has covered various aspects of Nestlé's strategic decisions in promoting KitKat, there are some limitations to be taken into consideration. First of all, this study does not focus on all forms of KitKat marketing adopted by Nestlé Japan. Rather, it focuses specifically on a set of unique strategies that contribute to KitKat's popularity in Japan; those are strategies distinctly adapted to the Japanese market. Therefore, the other common yet important types of marketing such as social media marketing or influencer marketing were not covered in this research. Another limitation is associated with the lack of some statistical data from Nestlé, such as a report on sales of KitKat for the Japanese market in a particular year, as such reports are not publicly accessible. Last but not least, the sample size of the survey is limited since it is conducted only as a complementary part of the practical analysis. Therefore, the survey results might not be able to fully represent the opinions of overall Japanese and foreign residents in Japan. The results of this research may serve as a resource and inspiration for future research; however, it is important to consider that due to market variations, Nestlé's strategies in marketing KitKat in Japan might not be effectively applicable in other markets outside Japan.

For future studies, the researchers may consider focusing on how other multinational companies, regardless of the industries to which they belong, approach a market like Japan. Another possibility is to explore the extent of effectiveness of wordplay strategies in marketing contexts other than the confectionery market. More importantly, it is important to note that Nestlé's marketing strategy to promote KitKat in the UK was proven ineffective in Japan, and vice versa. Hence, to understand the impacts of cultural variations on marketing, it would be interesting to conduct research on whether the same or similar concept of Nestlé's strategies in Japan, including the effectiveness of using wordplay and the embracing of regional specialty, will be able to resonate with local consumers and generate similar effective results in other countries, especially those with similar culture to Japan.

## 7 Conclusions

This diploma thesis has comprehensively explored various aspects of Nestlé's successful marketing strategies in transforming KitKat from an overseas brand to establishing its current position as a brand perceivably integrated into Japanese culture in a highly competitive confectionery market. The survey analysis has provided further useful insights into how KitKat is perceived by people in Japan. The summary of results in Section 5 proves that the major findings from the survey closely align with the study's findings and SWOT Analysis. Not only do the majority of respondents consider KitKat more of a local brand but they also recognize KitKat's status as a lucky charm, a gift, and a souvenir, while expressing their satisfaction with KitKat's quality and varieties. A high degree of glocalization plays a significant role in elevating KitKat's popularity in Japan to another level, transcending its status from an ordinary snack to a gift for a loved one or friend from afar, a way of expressing appreciation and gratitude, a souvenir for the local and Japan visitors, a little yet meaningful treats for students during their hard time, and even amulet of luck.

The Marketing analyses point out internal weaknesses, especially concerning health factors, and external threats arising from market competition and changes in trends, economic, and legal factors but also highlight KitKat's strengths that can be capitalized on to exploit opportunities. Through different approaches, including product innovations, delivering added value, local collaborations, skilled talent sourcing, and others, the author has proposed multiple actionable strategies for KitKat Japan to maximize its strengths and grasp opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and preventing threats. As a foreign brand, being able not just to survive but to thrive in a Japanese market and resonate with the locals, KitKat's journey in Japan indeed offers many valuable lessons that other businesses can learn from. As more businesses thrive, the economy, too, will grow in a positive direction.

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## Appendix

Table 35 Rule of Thumb: Cronbach Alpha Coefficient

Alpha	Reliability Level
> .9	Excellent
> .8	Good
> .7	Acceptable
> .6	Questionable
> .5	Poor
< .5	Unacceptable






Source: George & Mallery (2003)

Table 36: Products available on Nestlé Japan's Official Website (2023)

Regular products		
<p>KitKat mini</p> 	<p>Kitkat Little Whole High Cacao Pouch 41g</p> 	<p>KitKat Mini Whole High cacao</p> 
<p>KitKat Mini Adult Sweetness</p> 	<p>3 KitKat Minis</p> 	<p>KitKat Little Strawberry Pouch 45g</p> 
<p>KitKat Mini Adult Sweetness Dark Matcha</p> 	<p>KitKat Mini Adult Sweetness Strawberry</p> 	<p>KitKat Bar</p> 
<p>KitKat Mini Whole Wheat Biscuits</p> 	<p>KitKat Little Pouch 50g</p> 	<p>KitKat Mini Adult Sweetness</p> 
<p>KitKat Mini Yokubari Double Whole Wheat Biscuits</p> 	<p>KitKat Mini Chocolate Orange</p> 	<p>KitKat Mini Whole Grain High Cacao</p> 
Souvenir products		
<p>Hiroshima Souvenir KitKat Mini Takatsudo Original Momiji Manju</p>	<p>Hokkaido Souvenir KitKat Mini Hokkaido Red Bean &amp; Strawberry</p>	<p>Shizuoka/Kanto Souvenir KitKat Mini Tamaruya Wasabi Flavour</p>

		
Tochigi Souvenir Kitkat Mini Tochiotome	Yokohama Souvenir Kitkat Mini Strawberry cheesecake Flavour	Kyoto Souvenir KitKat Mini Itokyuemon Uji Matcha
		
Japan Souvenir KitKat Mini Strawberry Chessecake Flavour	Japan Souvenir Kitkat Mini Sake Masuizumi	Tokai/Hokuriku Souvenir KitKat Mini Azuki Sandwich Flavour
		
Yamanashi Souvenir KitKat Mini Kikyouya Kikyou Shingen Mochi	Tokyo Souvenir Toktyo Banana KitkAt 12 pieces, 6 pieces	Kyoto Souvenir KitKat Mini Ito Kyuemon Uji Hojicha
		
Kyushu Souvenir KitKat Mini Amaou Strawberry	Shinshu Souvenir KitKat Mini Shinshu Apple	Kyushu/Okinawa Souvenir Kitkat Mini Purple sweet potato

### KitKat Chocolatory

					
kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree
Kit Kat Chocolatory Sublime Bitter 1 bottle	KitKat Chocolatory Sublime Milk 1 bottle	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Matcha 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Strawberry 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Bitter 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Milk 1 sheet
					
kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree	kit kat chocolate tree
KitKat Chocolatory Sublime White 1	KitKat Chocolatory Sublime Ruby 1	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Cassis 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Raspberry 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix White 1 sheet	KitKat Chocolatory Pick To Mix Ruby 1 sheet

Source: Nestlé Japan, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

## Survey Questionnaire (Japanese/English)

### Section 1: あなたについて (Demographic information)

1. 職業 (Your profession)
  - 学生 (Students)
  - 社会人 (Workers)
  - その他 (Others)
2. あなたの年齢 (Your age)
  - 18歳以下 (less than 18-year-old)
  - 18歳～24歳未満 (18 to 24-year-old)
  - 25歳～34歳未満 (25 to 34-year-old)
  - 35歳～44歳未満 (35 to 44-year-old)
  - 45歳～54歳未満 (45 to 54-year-old)
  - 55歳以上 (55 and over)
3. あなたの国籍 (Your nationality)
  - 日本国籍 (I am a Japanese)
  - 外国人であり、日本に3ヶ月以上滞在した経験がある (I am a foreigner who is staying (studying or working) in Japan for at least 3 months)
4. あなたはどのぐらい日本に滞在していますか? How long have you been in Japan?
  - 3ヶ月～1年未満 (3 months - 1 year)
  - 1年～3年未満 (1 - 3 years)
  - 3年～5年未満 (3 - 5 years)
  - 5年～10年未満 (5 - 10 years)
  - 10年以上 (over 10 years)

### Section 2: 製品の認知度 (Product awareness)

5. キットカット」というチョコレートブランドを知っていますか? Have you heard of the chocolate brand "KitKat"?
  - はい、もちろんです (Yes, of course)
  - いいえ、聞いたことがありません。このオプションを選択すると、アンケートを答えなくなり、最後のページに移動します (No, I have never heard -if you select this option, you won't be able to continue the survey and will be taken to the end page)
6. これまでキットカットを食べたことがありますか? Have you ever tried a KitKat before?
  - はい (Yes)
  - いいえ (No)
7. 1から5までの段階で、キットカット ジャパンを食べるのがどれくらい好きですか? How much do you enjoy eating KitKat Japan on a scale from 1 to 5?
  - 全く好きではありません (Not at all)

- とても好きです (Absolutely love it)
  - 消費者の好み (Consumer Preferences)
8. 日本のチョコレートブランドの中で、他のチョコレートブランドではなくキットカットを選ぶ可能性はどのくらいですか? Among all chocolate brands from Japan, how likely are you to pick KitKat over other chocolate brands?
- 非常に低い (Very unlikely)
  - 非常に高い (Very likely)
9. キットカットを買う主な理由はなんですか? 最大4つまで選べます。キットカットを購入したことがない場合は、最後のオプションを選択してください。Please select the main reasons that make you buy KitKat (select up to 4). If you have never bought a KitKat, please select the **last** option.
- キットカットには非常に多くのフレーバーとバージョンがあります (レギュラー、ご当地、大人のあまさ、季節のフレーバーなど) (KitKat comes in so many flavours and versions, such as Regular, Gotochi, Otona no amasa, Seasonal flavours... etc.)
  - キットカットの味と品質が好きです (I like the taste and quality of KitKat)
  - キットカットのパッケージデザインが好きです (I like the design of KitKat packages)
  - 家族や友人へのお土産や、特別な日 (パーティー、バレンタイン、ホワイトデー、誕生日、プレゼント交換会など) のプレゼントとしてキットカットを購入します (I buy KitKat for family or friends as a back-from-trip gift or present for special occasions such as parties, valentine, white-day, birthdays, and gift-exchanging events...)
  - キットカットをお守りとして購入します (例: 受験のため) (I buy KitKat as a good luck charm for myself or others, for example: before an entrance exam))
  - 新しいフレーバーや面白いフレーバーを見つけると、キットカットを衝動買いしてしまうことがあり、特別な理由はありません (Sometimes I buy KitKat on impulse when I see new or interesting flavours, no special reasons)
  - キットカットには糖質制限バージョンがあるため、購入します (I buy KitKat because it has lower-sugar options)
  - その他 (Other reasons)
  - キットカットを買ったことがありません (I have never bought a KitKat)
10. キットカットのフレーバーの中で一番好きなのはどれですか? Which group of KitKat flavours is your favorite?
- レギュラーフレーバー「ダークチョコレート、ミルクチョコレート、抹茶、日本酒、ストロベリー、わさび、東京バナナ、大人の甘さ/大人の甘さ」 (Regular flavours, for example: Dark chocolate, Milk chocolate, Matcha, Sake, Strawberry, Wasabi, Tokyo Banana, and sweetness for adults/otona no amasa)
  - ご当地フレーバー (例: 沖縄の沖縄いも味、北海道の夕張メロン味) (Regional flavours, for example: Okinawa Sweet Potato flavour from Okinawa or Yubari Melon flavour from Hokkaido)
  - 季節のフレーバー「例: 春は桜フレーバー、冬はいちご大福フレーバー、夏はサマーアイスクリーム、秋はスイートポテトフレーバー」 (Seasonal flavours, for example: Sakura Blossom flavour for Spring, Strawberry Daifuku for Winter, Summer Ice-cream for Summer, and Sweet Potatoes for Fall... etc)

- アルコール入りフレーバー（「プレミアム日本酒、梅し酒、美人風ゆず酒、ヨーグルト酒、さくら酒、ラムレーズン (Alcohol-infused flavours, for example: Premium Japanese Sake, Umeshi Sake, Bijofu Yuzu Sake, Yogurt Sake, Sakura Sake, Rum Raisin)
- 珍しいフレーバー「咳止めキットカット、ストロベリー&ティラミス、醤油、ホットシンスチリ、アップルビネガー、ジンジャーエール、ロイヤルミルクティー、きなこおはぎ、パイナップル」(Unusual flavours, for example: Cough Drop Kit Kats, Strawberry & Tiramisu, Soy Sauce, Hot Shinsu Chili, Apple Vinegar, Ginger Ale, Royal Milk Tea, Kinako Ohagi, Pineapple)
- ショコラトリーキットカット「サブライムキットカット、アイハートティー...」(Chocolatory KitKat, for example: Sublime KitKat, I Heart Tea... etc)
- その他 (Others)

### Section 3: 消費者の消費 (Consumer consumption)

11. どのくらいの頻度でキットカットを購入しますか? How often do you buy KitKat?

( ) キットカットを買います (I buy KitKat...)

- (毎日) (Daily)
- (毎週) (Frequently- once a week)
- (毎月) (Regularly- a few times a month)
- (あまり購入しません) (Occasionally- once a month)
- (購入しません) (Rarely- once every few months)

12. キ

ットカットを誰かから受け取ったり、ギフトとして誰かに贈ったりしたことがありますか? Have you ever received a KitKat from or given a KitKat to someone as a GIFT?

- はい (Yes)
- いいえ (No)

13. 通常、贈り物の目的は何ですか? What are usually the purposes of the gift?

- 「きつと勝」っぽいので幸運を祈ります。例：試験の前（試験に合格するように）、インタビューの前 (To wish for good luck because it sounds like "Kitto Katsu," meaning "you will win/pass." For example: before an exam, interview... etc)
- 感謝と感謝の気持ちを表すために (To show gratitude and appreciation)
- 旅行のお土産としてキットカットを購入します (To share KitKat as a souvenir from a trip "omiyage")
- パーティー、バレンタイン、ホワイトデー、誕生日、プレゼント交換会などの特別な日の贈り物に (A gift for a special occasion like party, valentine, white-day, birthday, gift-exchanging event... etc)
- ホリデーシーズンや特定の季節にぴったりの季節のギフト (A seasonal gift for holidays or specific seasons)
- キットカットを楽しんだり、新しいさまざまなフレーバーを試したりするためだけに (To enjoy or try new and different KitKat flavours)

- 特別な理由はなく、ただお菓子を分け合うだけに (No special reasons, just want to share sweets)
  - その他 (Others)
14. プレゼントとしてキットカットを購入したことがない理由を教えてください? Why have you never bought KitKat as a gift?
- キットカットは特定の機会や相手にとって適切な贈り物ではないと思います (I don't think KitKat is an appropriate gift for certain occasions or recipients)
  - キットカットよりも他のスナックブランドや他のギフトの方が好きです (For some reasons, I prefer other snack brands or other gifts than a KitKat)
  - 相手が何味が好きか、チョコレートが好きかどうか分かりません (I am not sure about the other person's preference on chocolate or their preferred flavours)
  - キットカットをプレゼントするのにふさわしい機会に出会ったことがありません (I haven't encountered suitable occasions to give KitKat as a gift.)
  - その他 (Others)

#### Section 4: 消費者の意見 (言葉遊びマーケティング) Consumer opinions (wordplay marketing)

15. 日本におけるキットカットの人気は1から5の段階でどのくらいだと思いますか? In your opinion, how popular is KitKat in Japan on a scale from 1 to 5?
- 全く人気がありません (Not popular at all)
  - とても人気 (Very popular)
16. キットカットは日本語では「きっと勝」というフレーズに似た「キットカット」で、「きっと勝てる/合格する」という意味です。2002年から九州地方の学生が「キットカット」を買うようになりました。受験幸運の象徴 (岡田、2012) キットカットが受験のお守りとして販売されていることをご存知ですか? KitKat in Japanese is "Kitto-Katto (キットカット)" similar to the phrase "Kitto Katsu (きっと勝つ)," translating as "Certainly, you will win/pass." In 2002, students in the Kyushu area started buying KitKats as a symbol of luck for exams (Okada, 2012).  
Are you aware that KitKat is sold as an exam good luck charm?
- はい、これについては聞いたことがあります (Yes, I have heard of this)
  - いいえ、そんなこと聞いたことありません (No, I have never heard of this)
17. キットカットも「きっと勝つ」と発音が似ているので、縁起物として考えていますか? Do you also consider KitKat as one of the good luck items as it is phonetically sound similar to the phrase Kitto-Katsu?
- はい (Yes)
  - いいえ (No)
18. あなたまたはあなたの知人が入学試験前に成功を祈るために行った以下の活動にチェックを入れてください (Tick the activities below that you or someone you know have done to pray for success before an entrance exam)
- キットカットを買う/受け取るか、  
カットメールの送受信、キットカットをカイロで温めて溶かすのは「合格する」という意味です (Buy/receive KitKat, send/receive KitKat mail, or keep



KitKat with a warmer to let it melt (tokeru) because it means "you can solve all questions")

- 神社での参拝、お守りの購入・授与、願い事成就絵馬への書き込み (Pray at Shinto shrine, buy/receive a shrine lucky charm amulet [omamori], or write on the wooden wish-fulfilling plate [Ema])
  - 五角形（合格）の鉛筆やその他の肯定的な名前のアイテム（キットカット以外）を購入または受け取ります。（例：「受かる」又は「ウカール」という単語が書かれているおやつ、ハイレルモンキャンディー、雪見だいふく...など） Buy/receive gokaku-shaped pencils or other items (other than a KitKat) with positive names, example: Ukaaru corn cracker, High Lerumon Candy, Yukimi Daifuku... etc)
  - 勝負飯を食べる（カツ）、（おむすび）、（鯛）、（すき焼き）... (Eat meals associated with good luck, also known as "shōbumeshi," such as pork cutlets ("katsu" = win), rice balls ("omusubi"= good connection), sea bream (tai, similar to "medetai" = auspicious), sukiyaki ... etc)
  - 落ちる、滑る、物を落とす、または落ちる、滑る、落ちることに関連する言葉を言わないように注意すること (Try not to fall down/slip/drop things or say words related to fall/slip/drop)
  - 上記のどれでもありません。ただ、しっかり勉強すること！（None of the above. Just study hard!)
  - その他 (Others)
19. キットカットの多くのフレーバー（小麦、抹茶、さつまいもなど）は健康に良い材料から作られており、特に高品質のカカオと材料が使用されているチョコレート版が人気です。日本で人気のキットカットミニサイズとキットカット大人の甘さは、海外のキットカットに比べて糖質を抑えた一口サイズのおやつです。
- このことを考慮すると、キットカットは他のお菓子ブランドと比べてどれくらい健康的だと思いますか？ Many KitKat flavours (wheat, matcha, sweet potatoes... etc) are made from ingredients with health benefits, especially the Chocolatory editions where high-quality cacao and ingredients are used. The popular KitKat mini and KitKat adult versions are a bite-size treat, containing less sugar content compared to KitKat outside Japan. Considering this, how healthy do you think is KitKat compared to other sweet brands?
- 最も不健康的 (The unhealthiest)
  - 最も健康的 (The healthiest)

## Section 5: 地域キットカットに関する最終意見 (Final Opinions on Regional KitKat)

現在、日本には400種類以上のフレーバーのキットカットがある。その中でも「ご当地キットカット」は、日本各地の食材を使ったフレーバーです。これらの品種は、地元の人や外国人旅行者にとって、お土産や日本土産として最適です。たとえば、「広島もみじ饅頭キットカット」は、広島県の伝統的なもみじ饅頭からインスピレーションを受けています。

Currently, there are more than 400 flavours of KitKat in Japan. Among them, Gotochi KitKat is the [flavours](#) that use ingredients from different regions across Japan. These varieties serve as great omiyage or Japanese souvenir for locals and foreign travelers. For

example, Hiroshima Momiji Manju KitKat is inspired by the traditional Momiji Manju from Hiroshima prefecture.

<写真提供：東京スナックボックス (photo from: Tokyo Snack Box)> (KitKat box sample displayed)

20. 地域のキットカットについてどう思いますか?

(右にスクロールしてその他のオプションが表示されます) What is your opinion on regional KitKat? (Scroll right for more options)

Likert-scale options:

強く同意しません (Strongly disagree)	少し反対します (Somewhat disagree)	普通 (Neutral)	ある程度同意します (Somewhat agree)	とても同意します (Strongly agree)
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Statements:

- 地域キットカットは日本の地域とその食文化を敬遠することに貢献していると信じています。(I believe that regional KitKat is contributing to promote Japanese regions and their food culture)
- キットカットのように他のスナック菓子の外資系企業も自社の製品を日本に適応させてほしいと思います (I would like to see other foreign snack companies adapt their products to Japan like what KitKat is doing)
- 日本の他の地域に行ったら、その地域のキットカットを旅行の帰りのお土産として買うと思います (I would buy regional KitKat as a return-from-trip gift if I visit other regions in Japan)
- 外国の友人や地元の友人への日本からのお土産として地域のキットカットを購入します (I would buy regional KitKat as a gift-from-Japan for my foreign friends/friends in home country)

21. 以下はネスレ日本がキットカットのために実施した活動の一部です。

次の各要素は、キットカットの購入決定にどの程度影響しますか? (右にスクロールしてその他のオプションが表示されます) Below are some activities carried out by Nestlé Japan for KitKat. How much does each of the following factors influence your purchasing decisions of KitKat? (Scroll right for more options if not visible)

Likert-scale options:

まったく影響を受けません (Not Influenced at all)	少し影響を受けました (Slightly Influenced)	普通 (Neutral)	中等度の影響を受けます (Moderate Influenced)	強い影響を受けました (Strongly Influenced)
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Statements:

- キットカットはたくさん種類から選べます (There are many KitKat varieties to choose from)
- キットカットの味と品質 (The taste and quality of KitKat)
- キットカットには季節限定フレーバーやご当地フレーバー、ショコラトリバージョンなどの限定フレーバーが多数あります (KitKat has many limited-edition flavours including seasonal and regional flavours and Chocolatory versions)

- キットカットには地域の味があり、お土産や日本の食文化の促進に最適です) (KitKat has regional flavours, great for back-from-trip gift and for promoting Japanese food culture)
  - キットカットは災害の被害を受けた地域の復興を支援するために資金を寄付しました (KitKat has donated funds to help rebuild regions affected by disasters)
  - キットカット試験バージョン/キャンペーンは、学生の困難な時期（入試）をサポートします) (KitKat exam versions/campaign support students during their challenging time, which is an entrance exam)
  - キットカットには、糖分を抑えたさまざまな健康的な（大人向け）オプションがあります。例: 無糖のカカオフルーツ キットカット) (KitKat has various healthier (adult) options with less sugar level, ex: sugar-free Cacao Fruit KitKat)
22. キットカットをブランドとしてどう見ていますか? How do you perceive KitKat as a brand?
- 日本文化に溶け込むブランド (A brand that integrates into Japanese culture)
  - やはり海外ブランド (Still a foreign brand)
  - 外国ブランドと地元ブランドの間 (In between being a foreign and local brand)
  - よく分かりません (I am not sure)

### Section 6: Comments

キットカットで経験した興味深い事実

があれば、お気軽に私と共有してください。

私との短いインタビューに参加できる場合は、お気軽にご連絡ください:)

Feel free to share with me any interesting facts (if there is any) you have experienced with KitKat. Please feel free to drop your contact if you are available for a short interview with me :)

Comment tables (English translation next to the sentence)

頑張ってください！ [I wish you the best!] Here is my email contact <email hidden>
There's column to write message on the package of kitkat, that's why I choose kitkat for presents.
中学校の卒業式で、友達からパッケージの袋にメッセージが書かれたキットカットをもらって、すごく嬉しかった思い出があります。 [At my junior high school graduation ceremony, I received a Kit Kat from a friend with a message written on the back, and I remember being very happy about it.]
I love and enjoy Kit Kat every time! Kit Kat always make me happy 😊
海外の学生と交流するときはたまにキットカットをプレゼントします！ [I give KitKat chocolate when I exchange with other countries' students!]
中学生の時、吹奏楽部でコンクールの当日に友達とキットカット裏にメッセージを書きあって、プレゼントした。誕生日の贈り物にもおめでとう！と書いて送った。他にも深い人間関係では無いけれどささやかなプレゼントをしたい時に送ることが多い。 [When I was in middle school, my friends and I wrote messages on the backs of Kit Kats and gave them to each other on the day of a competition in the brass band club. Congratulations on your birthday gift! I wrote and sent it. I also often send it when I don't have a deep personal relationship but want to give a small present.]
ない [not have]

<p>キットカットのメッセージを用いて、メッセージを作ってくれた友達がいた。紙のパッケージなので、同じ部活のメンバーでメッセージをたくさん書いて、先輩の卒業時に渡すことができた。 [I had a friend who created a message for me using KitKat messages. Since it was a paper package, members of the same club could write many messages and give them to seniors when they graduated.]</p>
<p>キットカットは私にとって突然食べたくなるチョコレート菓子の一つです。たぶん、疲れたときなどに欲しくなるのだと思います。ですから袋のファミリーパックよりも箱入りの2パックはいった食べ切れるタイプのものをよく買います。ウエハースのザクザク感とチョコレートの量の配分、チョコレートの質などとてもお気に入りです。</p> <p>[KitKat is one of the chocolate sweets that makes me suddenly want to eat it. I think I probably want it when I'm tired. That's why I often buy boxed 2-packs that can be eaten up, rather than family packs in bags. I really like the crunchiness of the wafers, the distribution of the amount of chocolate, and the quality of the chocolate.]</p>
<p>日本ではクリスマスというよりハロウィンであげたり、もらったりすることが多い気がします。 [In Japan, I feel like people give and receive gifts more often on Halloween than on Christmas.]</p>
<p>リサーチ済みの情報かもしれませんが、日本のキットカットの方がフレーバーが多いので外国人が驚くと大学のホームステイに行っていた先輩が話していたというのを思い出した。 [This may be information that has already been researched, but I remember that a senior at my university homestay told me that Japanese Kit Kats come in more flavors, which surprises foreigners.]</p>
<p>I didn't know that kitkat have so many tastes.</p>
<p>受験の時に友達とキットカットをプレゼントしあって、受験中のお昼休憩に食べたのが一番の思い出 [My favorite memory is when my friends and I gave each other Kit Kats and ate them during our lunch break during the exam.]</p>
<p>KitKat in Japan are too small. Prefer the larger size you can get in the UK - 2 finger or 4 finger options as well as the chunky. Also prefer the taste of the European version (comparison of the standard milk choc version only).</p>
<p>外国に住んでいる外国人の方から必ずキットカットを買ってくるように言われています。現地でもキットカット売っていますが、子供たちは日本のキットカットが大好きです。 [Foreigners living in other countries always tell me to buy KitKat. Kit Kats are also sold locally, and children love Japanese Kit Kats.]</p>
<p>In the UK kitkat normally comes with 4 pieces and a piece is twice as long as a Japanese one, so I find it good for a small snack compared to a normal UK one. Also, in the UK, we have chunky KitKat, which I have never seen in Japan. my email is &lt;email hidden&gt;if you want any further insights.</p>
<p>旅行で撮られた写真付きのパッケージを思い出のプレゼントとしていただいたことあり、こういうオリジナルパッケージ作れるのはとても素晴らしいことです。中身はシンプルでどこでも買えるものだが、印象に残るし、いただいて嬉しいものだし、今でもずっと保管しています。 [I once received a gift package with photos taken on a trip as a keepsake gift, and it's wonderful to be able to create original packaging like this. The contents are simple and can be bought anywhere, but it left a lasting impression on me and I'm glad I received it, so I still keep it.]</p>