

PROFILING AND CHARACTERIZATION OF PLANT-BASED PRODUCTS CONSUMERS IN CHILE

PERFIL Y CARACTERIZACIÓN DE LOS CONSUMIDORES DE PRODUCTOS DE ORIGEN VEGETAL EN CHILE

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ABSTRACT

The consumption trend of plant-based products has increased worldwide due to different reasons, and Chile has been a good example of this trend. Although sustainability, health, nutrition and taste may all seem to be main drivers for flexitarians seeking plant-based food and beverages, to date there is no research that allows characterizing and profiling Chilean consumers of plant-based products. Hence, this work seeks to close this gap. To address this problem, we conducted an online survey of 512 people, mainly focused on the Metropolitan Region and Valparaíso. Using Ward's method, we identified 3 clusters: (1) Animal friendly, (2) Planet friendly and (3) Healthy lifestyle, where, respectively, animal welfare, care for the environment and concern for health are prioritized.

KEYWORDS

Plant-based products; Functional foods; Healthy foods; Flexitarians; Consumer profiling and segmentation.

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1. Introduction. 2. Literature Review. 3. Materials and methods. 4. Results. 5. Discussion and concluding remarks. 6. Conclusions. References.

RESUMEN

La tendencia de consumo de productos de origen vegetal ha aumentado en todo el mundo por diversas razones, y Chile ha sido un buen ejemplo de esta tendencia. Aunque la sostenibilidad, la salud, la nutrición y el sabor pueden parecer los principales impulsores para los flexitarianos que buscan alimentos y bebidas de origen vegetal, hasta la fecha no existe investigación que permita caracterizar y perfilar a los consumidores chilenos de estos productos. Por lo tanto, este trabajo busca cerrar esta brecha. Para abordar este problema, realizamos una encuesta en línea a 512 personas, enfocándonos principalmente en la Región Metropolitana y Valparaíso. Utilizando el método de Ward, identificamos 3 grupos: (1) Amigables con los animales, (2) Amigables con el planeta y (3) Estilo de vida saludable, donde, respectivamente, se prioriza el bienestar animal, el cuidado del medio ambiente y la preocupación por la salud.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Productos de origen vegetal; Alimentos funcionales; Alimentos saludables; Flexitarianos; Perfilado y segmentación de consumidores.

SUMARIO

1. Introducción. 2. Revisión de literatura. 3. Materiales y métodos. 4. Resultados. 5. Discusión y observaciones finales. 6. Conclusiones. Bibliografía.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Products of vegetable origin (also termed plant-based products) are those obtained from plants, either by harvesting fruits, vegetables or cereals, or through the extraction of oils or starches. These products include fruits, vegetables, legumes, cereals, nuts and seeds, all of which are an important source of essential nutrients for our diet (Albuquerque et al., 2020). In recent years, the consumption of these products has increased in popularity around the world due to a growing awareness of its health benefits (Afshin et al., 2019) but also out of concern for a more sustainable environment (Carlson et al., 2017).

According to Hielkema y Lund (2021b), among the main drivers behind the reduction in meat consumption (and therefore increasing consumption of vegetable products) are the awareness of the environmental impact of meat consumption and growing social awareness of the benefits for those consumers who avoid animal-based products in or consume them in a reduced fashion (Sanchez-Sabate et al., 2019). Graça et al. (2015). investigate the willingness to switch to a plant-based diet and identify three clusters: (1) a pattern of disgust towards meat together with moral internalization; (2) a pattern of low affective connection to meat and willingness to change habits; and (3) a pattern of attachment to meat and an unwillingness to change habits. Yin et al., (2022) investigates the drivers of green vegetable consumption in Beijing, China, finding the information and reputation of the product's origin as key factors, as well as the reputation of its brand.

In line with the above, Francis y Sarangi (2022) found that, within the millennial population of India, the main concern of plant-based products consumers is the environmental dimension, namely a concern for sustainability, over other issues such as social or economic and Khan y Abbas (2023) find that moral beliefs such as idealism and relativism have an impact on ethical and pro-environmental consumption, thus influencing consumers' decision to opt for plant-based products over animal-based products.

The structure of this study is as follows: Section 1 introduces the topic. Section 2 provides a literature review on the consumption of plant-based products. Section 3 details the materials

and methods, including data collection and analysis approaches aimed at identifying the characteristics and preferences of Chilean consumers of plant-based products through segmentation and clustering. Section 4 presents the results, with a descriptive analysis of the sample and the findings from the cluster analysis. Finally, Section 5 discusses the findings and provides conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Plant-based products, also known as plant-based or "plant based," are products made entirely from plant ingredients, meaning they completely exclude animal-based ingredients in their components, processes, and products. This includes meat and all animal body derivatives, such as fat, skin, bones, and cartilage, as well as milk and its derivatives, eggs and their derivatives, honey, and other ingredients.

2.1. Entry Barriers to Plant-Based Product Consumption

Regarding the entry barriers for the consumption of plant-based products, Hielkema and Lund (2021b) identify some barriers such as food neophobia, identity incongruity, habitual behavior, and practical difficulties. Michel et al. (2021), studying the German population, finds that price and taste are among the main barriers to the consumption of plant-based products.

2.2. Demographic Characterization of Plant-Based Consumers

Studies have also been conducted to characterize consumers who follow a plant-based diet in demographic terms. For example, Gale et al. (2007) study the population in the United Kingdom and find sociodemographic similarities, where this type of consumer is more likely (compared to those who follow an omnivorous diet) to be female, belong to a non-manual occupational social class, and hold a higher degree or equivalent professional qualification. Meier and Christen (2012) also find a higher likelihood of plant-based consumption among women, further concluding that gender is an important factor in determining a person's environmental impact.

2.3. Attitudes and Beliefs Toward Plant-Based Products by Product Type

Additionally, there is research that seeks to understand attitudes and beliefs towards plant-based products, distinguishing by product type. For example, Spendrup and Hovmalm (2022), studying the Swedish population, categorized plant-based products into three subtypes according to their level of processing, concluding that products with a lower degree of processing are perceived as healthier and a better option for combating climate change. According to Figueroa et al. (2021), Latin America is undergoing a significant epidemiological and nutritional transition, with a trend towards a higher incidence of food-related chronic diseases. In this context, many consumers have opted for healthier lifestyles in the hope of preventing these chronic diseases, which includes, among other pillars, a strong emphasis on healthy eating, leading many people to switch to a plant-based diet and completely abandon meat consumption.

2.4. Environmental Argument

Regarding environmental impact, the argument against the consumption of animal-based products and services is based on information presented by Greenpeace, which states that animal-based products, such as meat and dairy, contribute nearly 60% of food-related

greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (2018, p.6) and 14% of global GHG emissions, equivalent to the entire global transportation sector (Greenpeace, 2018, p.38). Additionally, livestock farming is believed to be the main factor behind land use changes, as from 1960 to 2011, the production of animal-based foods caused 65% of the changes in land use (Greenpeace, 2018, p.18), not only due to the physical presence of animals but also because of the land required to grow feed for livestock, which amounts to 26% of the planet's land surface, according to data from the same organization. This has led to the loss of native forests, grasslands, and savannas, such as in the Amazon in Brazil. It also causes a loss of global biodiversity, as nearly 80% of all land species of mammals and birds are threatened or endangered due to habitat loss or the demand for pasture and water. According to figures, "for each gram of protein, the water footprint of beef is six times greater than that of legumes," with animal production representing 29% of the planet's total water footprint (2018, p.38).

The negative impact on animal populations coexisting with the meat industry has also been studied by Imperial College London, where postdoctoral researcher Rikki Gumbs commented in an interview with CNN Chile (2020): "We calculated how much evolutionary history we would lose. And that number came out cosmically large, even I didn't expect it (...) around 50 billion years of evolutionary history are under threat."

2.5. Health Argument

This category is one of the most controversial in arguments against the consumption of animal-based products, as it questions whether these products are truly nutritious and constitute a healthy diet for humans. According to Greenpeace figures in their report promoting reduced animal product consumption, "for every 50g of daily intake of processed meat, the risk of developing colorectal cancer increases by 18%," as processed meat has been classified as carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Furthermore, red meat consumption is associated with obesity, a higher risk of type II diabetes, and "people who consume a daily portion of red meat (processed or unprocessed, such as beef, lamb, and pork) have a 31% higher risk of suffering a heart attack compared to those who consume only 1.5 portions of red meat per week" (Greenpeace, 2018, p.26).

The health crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus has also highlighted the risk of contracting diseases transmitted through animal-based foods, including bacteria, viruses, protozoa, helminths, and harmful chemicals that cause diseases (Greenpeace, 2018, p.28). Furthermore, large quantities of antibiotics are used in industrial livestock farming, generating resistance to these medications. According to the World Health Organization, antibiotic resistance could cause more deaths than cancer by 2050 (Greenpeace, n.d.).

2.6. Animal Welfare Argument

The argument also extends against the excessive abuse of the animal kingdom, referring to the "unequal relationship through which modern 'Man' built his position regarding other animals," as defined in the 1970s and 1980s by a group of philosophers and thinkers at Oxford University (Méndez, 2020, p.2). This was the first reference to the concept of speciesism, which Singer defined as "a prejudice or partial attitude favorable to the interests of members of our own species and against those of other species" (2001, p.42). Currently, the speciesist relationship supports the belief that the arbitrary manner in which humans relate to non-human animals is valid, viewing them as inferior beings and assigning them purpose and reason for existence solely based on their species, thus comparing speciesism to racism, patriarchy, and heteronormative systems (Méndez, 2020).

In 2012, a group of researchers discovered that all mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians,

fish, and some invertebrates have feelings, leading to a call for awareness regarding humanity's responsibility for its actions and how we interact with our environment and the beings within it (Certified Humane, 2019). "Animals, like humans, feel pleasure, pain, happiness, and misery. Happiness is never displayed as clearly as when young animals play together, such as kittens, puppies, lambs, much like our own children" (Darwin, 1880). This argument aims to help animals by overcoming existing cultural biases that, for example, define species suitable for food, companionship, entertainment, among others, labels that vary depending on geographic location and cultural, religious, and social characteristics.

As a result, the rejection of animal-based products or products containing animal ingredients has led to an increase in products that do not contain them, replacing them with plant-based ingredients. These products are chosen and identified through studies on the qualities of different plants and vegetables to provide alternatives with similar qualities, that is, substitutes for animal-based products that can resemble nutritional content, taste, appearance, texture, and other attributes.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the characterization and profiling of plant-based products consumers in Chile, we collected cross-sectional data from an individual survey which was carried out successfully. The survey was hosted at www.surveymonkey.com which allowed to meet the target audience upon which this survey was conducted in Chile, particularly in the Metropolitan Region of the country and in city of Valparaíso, 5th Region. The reason behind the choice of the target population lies in the fact that between both regions they represent over 50% of the population according to the last Census (2017) carried out by the INE (national statistics institute of Chile).

After eliminating the incomplete questionnaires, the total number of individuals who fully answered the survey was 512.

Likewise, considering that among plant-based product consumers are vegetarians and vegans, it is relevant for this research to take into account the latest (and only) online census organized by the organization *Vegetarianos Hoy* in 2013 (<https://todosdecidimos.org/fundacion-vegetarianos-hoy/>). This census provides part of the guidelines for selecting the target audience for this research. According to the data collected, the majority, 70% of respondents, are located in the 5th Region and the Metropolitan Region. About 19% live from the 6th Region southward, and 11% from the 4th Region northward. Regarding age range, 9% are under 18 years old, 78% are between 18 and 30 years old, 11% between 30 and 50 years old, and only 2% are over 50 years old.

4. RESULTS

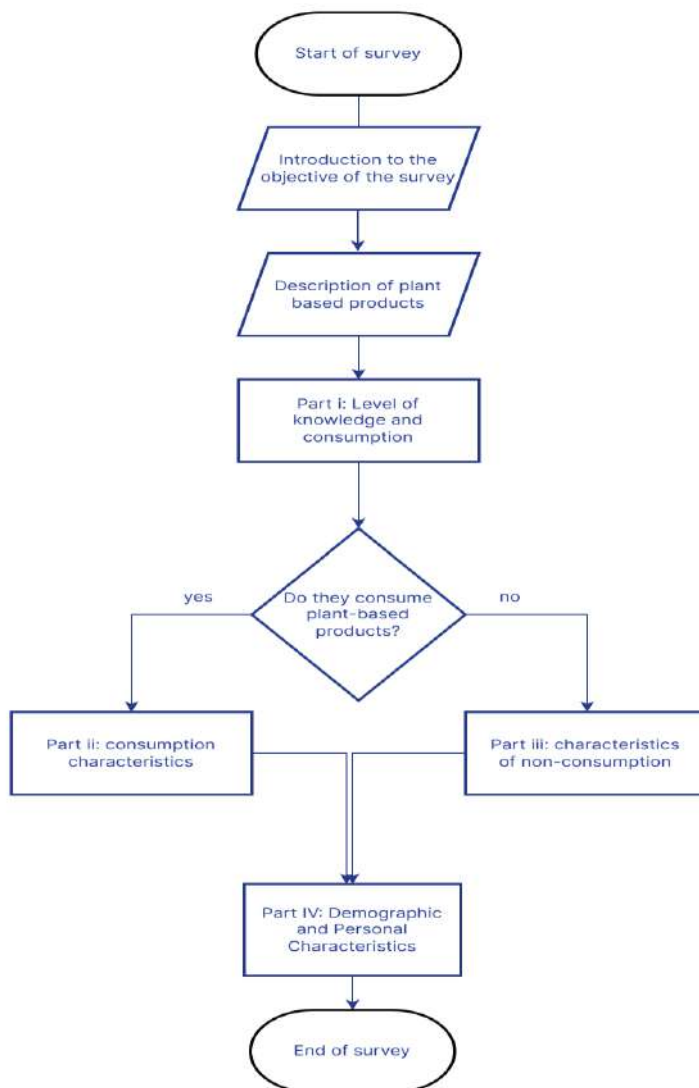
In this section we begin by carrying out a descriptive analysis of the participants' responses, both in terms of frequency and semantic content, to then continue with the cluster analysis.

4.1. Descriptive analysis of the participants' responses

For the first question of the survey of the total number of valid questionnaires, 14% (71 individuals) do not consume products of vegetable origin, while 86% do (441 individuals). On the other hand, we asked this last group of consumers to report their level of knowledge about products of vegetable origin, obtaining, as a result, that for the most part they have medium or

high knowledge level, so it can be said that, generally speaking, consumers are informed people. Regarding demographic variables, the proportion of men and women is balanced. This is due to the fact that 51% turned out to be female and 47% male (the remaining 2% are not classified in either of the two categories). In turn, we observed a predominance in the age range of between 20 and 25 years, representing 52% of the total sample.

Figure 1: Survey design



Source: Own elaboration

Along the same lines, we found in these consumers a predominance of people who have a university degree or are enrolled in higher education, mostly university educational level, with 72%. This segment is followed quite far away by those who completed secondary (high school)

education with 18%. Regarding socioeconomic levels of those surveyed, we found that in the sample there is no predominance of any particular segment, with most of them found in the middle-middle class and upper-middle class segments (according to Chilean socioeconomic cross-sections) in similar proportions.

Table 1: Characterization of the consumers of plant-based products in the survey

Variable	Characteristic	n
Gender	Female	227
	Male	207
	non-binary gender	7
Age range	less than 14 years	2
	15-19	52
	20-25	229
	26-34	109
	35-45	28
	46-55	14
	56-70	7
Education level	Postgraduate	40
	Higher education	320
	Middle education	78
	Basic education	3
Socioeconomic level	AB	6
	C1a	56
	C1b	51
	C2	81
	C3	89
	D	78
	E	55
	F	25
Knowledge level (Plant - Based Products)	Very high	151
	Medium	146
	Enough	90
	Low	52
	Without knowledge	2
Lifestyle	Lifestyle with meat	199
	Lifestyle without meat	242
Monthly spend in plant-based products (CLP)	More than 100.000	43
	Between 50.001 and 100.000	166
	Between 10.001 and 50.000	169
	Less than 10.000	63

Source: Own elaboration

Describing consumers now in terms of their behavior and preferences, the vast majority spend monthly between 10,000 CLP and 100,000 CLP (between 12 and 120 US dollars approximately) on plant-based products, preferring to purchase these mostly in independent stores over large supermarket chains. The channels through which they find out about these products are predominantly digital channels, highlighting among these the use of social networks such as Instagram and Facebook. The latter makes sense, considering the age group with the highest participation in the sample (20 to 25 years). In turn, we found that this age range also correlates well with the complementary activities that these consumers carry out, which explains why such activities as "watching movies, series or anime" are in first place

among the choices. Such activities nowadays go hand in hand with platforms like Netflix, HBO Max, etc. whose audience is mostly the younger population.

When asked, among the consumers of plant-based products, if they include meat as part of their diet, 55% report consuming it, of which almost 80% follow a pescatarian or flexitarian diet. On the other hand, 45% of those who do not include any type of meat in their diet, for the most part, turn out to be either vegans or vegetarians (for more detail see table 1).

Delving into the diet of consumers of plant-based products, we found that the product most consumed by them is milk, followed quite closely by meat, the latter making sense considering that most report including meat in their diet.

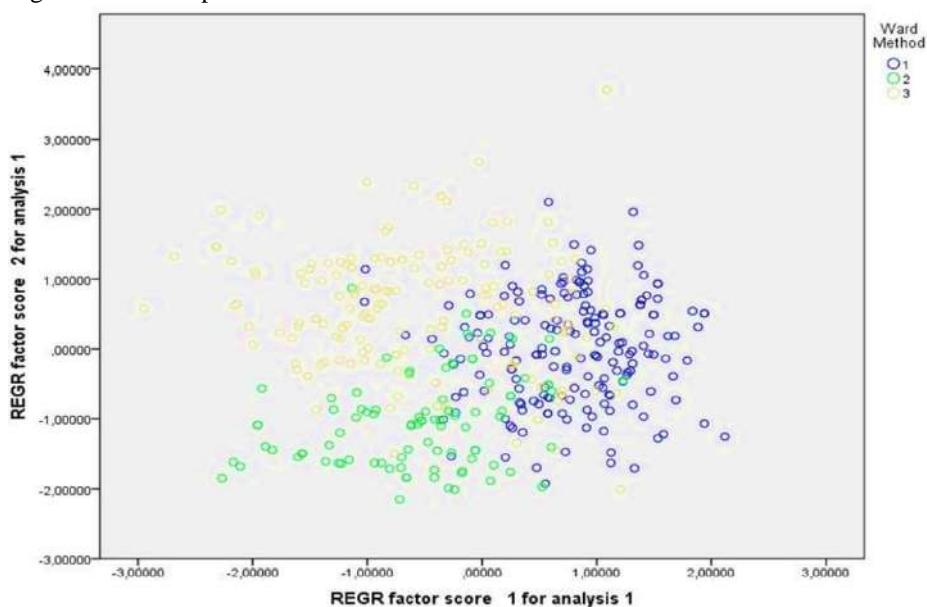
4.2. Clusters Analysis

For cluster analysis, we use the following set of variables:

- 1) Knowledge level
- 2) Reasons for consumption
- 3) Frequency of consumption
- 4) Place of purchase
- 5) Family and social context
- 6) Consumption in CLP
- 7) Lifestyle

On the other hand, using the Ward method, 3 clusters were determined, of which the means can be seen in table 2.

Figure 2: Clusters plotted



Source: Own elaboration

With the information obtained from the rotated components, and analyzing the KMO coefficient, which has a value of 0.782 (table 3), it is determined that there is an acceptable

sample adequacy, hence we may be confident that the information gathered and the results to be reached will be significant. Likewise, after obtaining the rotated components, components 1 and 2 can be seen which the X and Y axes represent respectively from Table After obtaining the above information, we plotted the clusters using the component matrix rotated 1 and 2 as the X and Y axes respectively and distinguishing the elements according to the clusters (Ward method). The result is presented in figure 2.

Finally, based on the analysis previously described, we obtained the following clusters:

4.2.1. Cluster 1: Animal Friendly

Its main characteristic is having a lifestyle oriented towards veganism or vegetarianism. Its main motivation for consumption is concern for animals, that is, the consumption of vegetable-based products has a decisive ideological aspect. This may also explain why it is the cluster with the highest frequency of consumption of make-up and personal care products of vegetable origin.

Tabla 2: Ward's means

Ward method	Hellob	Flavour	Assorted	Colest	Belittles	Intolerant	Environment	Sustain	Animal				
1	3.85	3.70	3.32	2.77	4.71	1.78	4.65	4.65	4.78				
2	3.88	3.60	3.76	2.63	3.95	1.91	4.02	3.93	3.68				
3	3.99	3.69	3.76	3.36	3.68	2.89	3.96	3.53	3.81				
Total	3.91	3.68	3.58	2.96	4.17	2.22	4.26	4.08	4.19				
Ward method	Milk	Meat	Ice cream	Cream	Yogurt	Margar	Cheese	Tofu	Cookie	May	Maqui	Home	
1	2.99	2.09	1.14	1.34	1.55	1.88	2.45	2.03	2.39	2.25	3.15	2.77	
2	0.85	2.49	0.43	0.63	0.70	0.70	0.52	0.43	1.54	1.75	1.56	0.65	
3	3.03	2.84	1.62	1.70	2.55	2.55	2.78	0.55	2.44	2.35	2.73	2.98	
Total	2.56	2.45	1.17	1.33	1.75	1.88	2.17	1.15	2.23	2.18	2.66	2.41	
Ward method	OnlPym	Press Pyme	OnlGr	Press Great	own								
1	0.63	0.77	0.29	0.62	0.35								
2	0.19	0.26	0.25	0.77	0.15								
3	0.25	0.39	0.19	0.65	0.16								
Total	0.39	0.52	0.24	0.66	0.24								
Ward method	Family	Social	CLPconsum	Lifestyle	met								
1	0.79	1.00	2.66	7.39	3.44								
2	0.73	1.00	1.73	2.21	2.75								
3	0.80	0.87	2.14	2.55	2.35								
Total	0.78	0.95	2.27	4.51	2.89								

Sources; Own elaboration

Likewise, it is the only cluster in which over 90% of its members indicate having within their family circle, people who consume products of plant origin, which when added to the fact that 96% of them know consumers in their social circles like friends and acquaintances, indicates the strong social component that can exist in its consumption. Also relevant was the

fact that, among the most performed complementary activities, are social events such as going to restaurants or bars, going to the theater and art events, and traveling. Finally, it is the cluster that has the highest level of consumption, which may be directly related to the fact that the predominant socioeconomic level is C3, which indicates a middle-upper socioeconomic level, with greater purchasing power which in turn can be explained by the educational level of these people, noting that it is the cluster that has the largest number of people with a postgraduate degree, thus having greater possibilities of obtaining higher salary jobs, which in turn should imply having a higher purchasing power.

Tabla 3: KMO and Barlett test

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy		0.782
Bartlett's test of sphericity	approximate chi square	3.415.424
	gl	465
	sig	0.000

Sources; Own elaboration

Tabla 4: Rotated component array

0	1	2
Lifestyle	0.729	-0.016
Animal	0.715	0.028
Sustent	0.702	-0.110
Menosca	0.676	-0.080
Environment	0.629	0.003
Tofu	0.618	0.143
Conoci	0.567	-0.079
CLPconsum	0.513	0.180
Onlpym	0.465	-0.082
Maqui	0.428	0.333
PresPyme	0.399	0.100
Own	0.378	0.069
Meat	-0.267	0.234
Healthy	0.165	0.123
Flavour	0.151	0.120
OnlGr	0.047	0.038
Cheese	-0.083	0.652
Cream	0.048	0.639

Ice cream	0.017	0.622
Yogurth	-0.143	0.619
Margar	-0.132	0.597
Milk	0.196	0.554
May	0.168	0.435
Colest	0.173	0.220
Intoler	0.019	0.215
PresGran	-0.033	-0.191
Varied	-0.034	0.180
Family	0.081	0.169
Social	-0.007	0.102

Sources; Own elaboration

4.2.2. Cluster 2: Planet Friendly

Like the previous cluster, veganism and vegetarianism predominate within their lifestyle, so it is assumed that their consumption is more related to an ideological aspect rather than something superficial. This is confirmed in the analysis by the fact that the environment and its sustainability are among the main motivations for consumption. This would explain why, among the products with the highest consumption, the vegetable substitute for meat is, which is the product of animal origin that has a production process with the highest level of contamination. It is the only cluster that has the age range of 15 to 19 years in the top positions, that is, the youngest respondents in this research. Finally, as previously mentioned, the younger generations are increasingly close to the digital age and media, hence this

would explain why it is the only cluster where the online sales channel of small and medium-size enterprises and independent stores has the first place within the places of purchase.

4.2.3. Cluster 3: Healthy Lifestyle

In this cluster, which is within the top 3 of the "lifestyle" categories, there are those who regularly or partially consume products of animal origin, such as eggs and cheese, in their diets or in other aspects of consumption. Within the reasons for their consumption, health well-being predominates, which would explain why dairy, eggs and meat products are first among the frequencies of consumption. This is explained by the fact that, although these products may present a high level of fats and toxins, they are nevertheless considered part of a traditional healthy diet. It is worth mentioning that, among the most carried out complementary activities of this cluster, there are those that have a direct relationship with sports and intense physical activity, whether individually practiced or groupwise, thus confirming the interest in maintaining a healthy life and preventive health concerns. Unlike the other two previous clusters, this one has a greater number of members who indicated that they obtained their products in large supermarkets or restaurants or fast-food chains, that is, they do not buy their food in small independent stores or shops.

Finally, in the group of 71 people who do not consume products of vegetable origin at all,

we proceeded to identify their reasons for not consuming them and their possible motivations for consuming them, in addition to their psych demographic characteristics, which would help to make the assumption of which cluster does the aforementioned belong to in case of being classified. Among the reasons why they do not consume this type of product, the fact that they are not interested in it dominates in the first place. Secondly, they defend those that do not like vegetable-based diet due to taste concerns. Finally, there are consumers who do not consume these types of products due to their price and demographic accessibility. However, among those surveyed who do not consume these types of products, more than 50% of them, considering all the reasons for not consuming such products, answered that they are willing to consume them. On the other hand, among those who would be willing to consume plant-based products, we found a stronger tendency to consider plant-based products as an option among women rather than men.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The plant-based products market sector has been growing significantly in many countries over the years (Wild et al.,2014), and Chile is an example of this trend, yet there is a noted lack of qualitative data examining consumers 'characteristics and profile, as well as their motivations for the consumption of these products. In general terms, upon examining the three clusters found in the study, we find that consumers of plant-based foods are motivated by the concern for animals, the environment as well as for personal health concerns, and a significant percentage of those that do not consume this diet due to taste concerns and physical strength concerns due to sports performance and/or other intensely demanding physical activities said they would be willing to try plant-based alternatives to their regular diets containing meat, eggs and dairy products, agreeing that some of these alternatives are healthier than animal-based foods. It is worth mentioning a common misconception regarding consumers of plant-based products, namely that vegan lifestyle is the one that leads the lifestyle of plant-based products consumers. Likewise, there might be the impression that the sometimes-false belief that consumers whose lifestyles do not include meat consumption predominate over those who do consume it, given that the average obtained in the variable "Lifestyle" shows that there is no significant relationship between lifestyle-consumption. Nevertheless, products of plant origin are increasingly seen as an option or substitute for products of animal origin, either because they are more environmentally friendly, respect animal rights, or because they signify an improvement in people's health. The main and most distinct characteristics of consumers who opt for products of vegetable origin, from the analysis carried out, show that these correspond to young people between the ages of 20 and 25 years of age, who are university students or have recently graduated and are working professionals, who have a high knowledge of this type of products and are predominantly environmentally conscious. Most of them are related to lifestyles of zero (vegan) or partial (flexitarian) meat consumption, being aware of the consequences of meat and animal-origin products consumption on health, animals and the environment.

Based on the results obtained, we can conclude that it is possible to segment the consumer market in Chile for products of plant origin, identifying and differentiating them either by demographic characteristics such as gender, lifestyle, age, as well as by dependent variables such as the reason for consumption, and the consumption frequency of these products, among others. Therefore, in accordance with the above, we identified three types of customers: animal friendly, planet friendly and healthy lifestyle. Likewise, the identification of the predominant

age of the consumers of products of plant origin allows a more complete analysis of their qualities and social context, thus allowing, for example, to recognize that the most utilized medium of information for this group of people is Instagram, when it comes to finding information of products and vendors. On the other hand, 44% of consumers of independent restaurants, small stores and shops, and food chains are dissatisfied, representing an opportunity for improvement in this niche.

Finally, when analyzing non-consumers of products of plant origin, our research was able to conclude that, among the respondents who did not consume such products, given their demographic characteristics such as age, occupation, in addition to their motivations for possible consumption, and especially considering the type of complementary activities that this segment practices regularly, they could be classified as consumers of cluster 3: Healthy lifestyle

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the findings of this study provide an in-depth analysis of plant-based product consumers in Chile, successfully characterizing and segmenting them into three specific clusters: those motivated by animal welfare, environmental care, and personal health. This classification not only enhances understanding of the underlying motivations of Chilean consumers but also highlights the importance of factors such as educational level, age, and lifestyle in the adoption of a plant-based diet. Contrary to common perceptions, not all consumers are strictly inclined towards a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle; many include individuals seeking to reduce animal product consumption to varying extents due to ethical, environmental, and health values.

Moreover, this analysis reveals the central role of social media, especially Instagram, as a primary source of information and outreach for these consumers, underscoring the need for effective digital marketing strategies to capture the interest of this segment. Opportunities for improvement are also observed in independent stores and restaurant chains, given the percentage of consumers expressing dissatisfaction.

Finally, the study suggests the need for future research to expand these findings and comparatively analyze the behavior of plant-based product consumers in other geographical and cultural contexts.

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