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Keep formatting to a minimum and avoid underlining.

INDEPENDENT COLLEGE OF DUBLIN

Exploring the market potential of plant-based food and beverage in Dublin, in 2022.

Compiled by:

Fabiola Ramos Geia do Amaral

This project is submitted in part fulfilment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Studies.

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INDEPENDENT COLLEGE OF DUBLIN

Exploring the market potential of plant-based food and beverage in Dublin, in 2022.

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Abstract

Plant-based diet has become a growing trend, especially among young generations that seem to be more aware of the benefits of following a plant-based diet.

Studies have presented different motivations that make consumers to choose a plant-based lifestyle. Flexitarian consumers, for example, are driven primarily by the taste of the food, animal welfare and environmental impacts, while vegans are strongly driven by ethical opposition to the use of animals for food. Vegetarians are more concerned with animal welfare, taste of food and the impact that food has on the environment and their health.

The purpose of this study is to provide entrepreneurs with insights about the potential of plant-based food and beverage market in order to help them in their business decisions making.

To do so, the author of this research conducted a survey with 60 samples with focus on consumers preferences and opinions and 2 interviews with small business owners from Dublin, focusing on challenges and opportunities encountered by them regard plant-based food and beverage market.

It is fundamental for business owners to understand which aspects lead consumers to choose a particular type of food or drink and their points of view about what is being offered in the plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin.

Key words: plant-based food and beverage; sustainability; health; animal welfare; business; flexitarians; vegetarians; vegans.

List of Acronyms used

National Institutes of Health (NIH)	12
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Chapter I

1. Introduction

Studies predict that the plant-based global market tends to increase drastically due to the raising demand for sustainable products. Recent researches show that consumers are opting more often for plant-based products, driven mainly by concerns over health, environment, animal welfare and ethical beliefs (Elkin, E., 2021).

Based on this scenario, this research was developed with the purpose of exploring the market potential of plant-based food and beverage in Dublin.

Through the results of the qualitative and quantitative research, the author could better understand the consumers' and business owners' point of view. From that, the author conducted a discussion of the research findings together with the literature review, in order to generate valuable insights for entrepreneurs who want to pursue a more sustainable business model and identified aspects that can help them to meet customer's need. With the increase in demand for plant-based foods, it is essential that businesses start to innovate and adapt their food and drinks selection to meet consumers interests and succeed in this market.

1.1 Rationale for the study

This research study aims to understand consumer's needs and find out their preferences and considerations regarding plant-based food and beverage currently available in restaurants and cafes in Dublin. It also aims to identify challenges faced by business owners that are or want to be more engaged in the plant-based food and beverage market and how they can benefit from this current food movement.

The purpose of this study is to provide entrepreneurs with insights about the potential of plant-based food and beverage market in order to help them in their business decisions making.

1.2 Research objectives

The following research has as main objectives:

- ◆ To investigate the relation between Covid-19 and the increase in demand for plant-based foods in the last few years;
- ◆ To understand consumer's needs, their expectations and points of view towards plant-based food and beverage currently available in Dublin;
- ◆ To understand entrepreneur's perspectives;
- ◆ To identify the challenges faced by small business owners;
- ◆ To identify opportunities that have arisen due to the plant-based movement in Dublin.

1.3 Information gathering & data collection technique used

In this research project a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The quantitative research involved an online survey with a 14 closed-ended questionnaire that was applied to 60 individuals in total which included 20 vegan, 20 vegetarian and 20 flexitarian participants.

Through this questionnaire, the author could gather accurate information about consumer's tastes and their point of view about plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin.

The qualitative research carried out two face to face interviews, one with the owner of a vegan cafe and the other one with the owner of a non-vegan cafe. A total of 8 questions were asked to the interviewees. This type of research allowed the author to understand the challenges faced

by business owners regarding plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin and identify the opportunities that the plant-based current movement can bring to them.

1.4 Expected outcomes of the study

By conducting this research, the author expects to gather detailed information about the current plant-based market, from business owners and consumer's perspectives and provide information about the market potential of plant-based food and beverage in Dublin.

1.5 Chapter by chapter overview

Chapter 1: Introduction

A brief synopsis of the research topic that involves the market potential of plant-based food and beverage in Dublin, in 2022. It also introduce the research aims, purpose and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter contains an extensive review of the academic literature around the sub-themes generated from the main research question.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter the theoretical paradigm, research methods, and strategies to collect and analyse primary data are presented, including sampling techniques and ethical concerns.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

In this chapter the findings resulted from the data collected are discussed and critically analysed, and compared to the literature review.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

The final conclusions are presented in this chapter as well as recommendations for further studies and limitations encountered throughout the development of the research.

Chapter II

2. Literature review

Aspects of the literature are discussed in this chapter under the following 5 sub-themes chosen by the author.

2.1 Covid 19 and the increase in demand for plant-based foods in the last few years

Recent studies suggest that Covid-19 has changed the dietary habits of many people around the world (Mintel, 2020; Bord Bia, 2019). The pandemic has indeed forced people to rethink many of their current habits of consumption and attitudes towards the environment around them.

Health concerns and sustainability added to food safety, hygiene and the disruption in the meat supply chain (Euromonitor, 2020) made consumers seek a healthier lifestyle and reduce meat consumption, during the global crisis. The coronavirus is seen by a large number of consumers as a reason to reduce the consumption of animal products. In the UK, over 30% of consumers link the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic with the exaggerated consumption of animals (Mintel, 2021).

A study conducted in 9 key markets (Ireland, UK, Germany, Sweden, US, Italy, France, The Netherlands and China) showed that 64% of over 2.000 people interviewed are trying to eat more healthily (Bord Bia, 2021). The same study reports that Covid-19 has accelerated consumers' intentions to boost their immunity by eating healthily. In the same period, the consumption of meat substitutes in the retail sector increased, as well as the consumption of plant-based food, with consumers choosing more sustainably and ethically sourced products. Nonetheless, it has been reported that 70% of the adults interviewed do not follow any specific diet and the percentage of people following a restricted diet has declined from 2018 to 2020.

In view of the above, it can be seen that “association” with a plant-based lifestyle has grown, but the percentage of people adhering to the plant-based lifestyle remains relatively low (Bord Bia, 2021).

A recent report on the Plant-Based food and beverage Market in the Post Covid times observes that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be a big threat to most plant-based food and beverage market surroundings, however, the report also indicates that this industry is about to register optimistic growth rates during the period between 2021 and 2022 and an even greater growth forecast in the coming years (Plant-Based Food and Beverage Market, 2021).

2.2 Factors that drive consumers to choose a plant-based lifestyle

In the 1980s a researcher from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), T. Colin Campbell introduced the term plant-based to describe a diet that focuses on health rather than ethics (Jordan, A. 2022).

According to Alcorta, A et al (2021) a plant-based diet consists of eating predominantly vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, grains and seeds, without necessarily excluding occasional consumption of animal origin food, such as meat, fish, eggs and milk.

Recent studies indicates that sustainability, health and animal welfare are the main factors that drive consumers to choose a plant-based diet (Ploll & Stern, 2020; Stoll-Kleemann, S; Schmidt, U. 2017; Graça, J et al., 2019; Euromonitor, 2020; Fi Global Insights, 2020). According to Bonnet, C. 2020, in an interview for Fi Europe Connect presentation, “all these factors have led to profound dietary changes which explain the number of flexitarians growing faster than the number of vegetarians and vegans”.

Studies show that flexitarian consumers are driven primarily by the taste of the food, animal welfare and environmental impacts (Bord Bia, 2021). Flexitarians are more likely to choose

natural ingredients, free from additives and preservatives, due to dietary restrictions and concerns with their health and well-being.

Animal welfare is the main factor that most motivates vegetarians to choose a plant-based diet (Euromonitor, 2020). Vegetarians also consider the taste of food and the amount of sugar, salt, additives and preservatives, and the impact that food has on the environment, important aspects when making their food choices (Bord Bia, 2021).

Vegans are strongly driven by ethical opposition to the use of animals for food (Bryant, C. J., 2019; Euromonitor, 2020) and concerns about the origin of the food and the processes involved in food production.

Some authors also relate nutrition knowledge, attitudes, culture, social influences, social norms and identity (Stoll-Kleemann, S; Schmidt, U. 2017; Allen et al., 2018) to dietary habits.

2.3 Challenges faced by business owners

The Irish economy relies heavily on animal agriculture, thus the percentage of meat and dairy consumption in a daily basis is still relatively high in Ireland (Wrenn, C. L., 2019).

Nonetheless, recent studies revealed (Bord Bia, 2021; Wrenn, C. L., 2019) that there has been a significant change in Irish dietary habits, as the population has shown increasing concern about healthiness and environmental impacts caused by animal-based consumption.

Nowadays is quite easy to find a restaurant that offers at least one entirely plant-based meal in Dublin. In addition to this, it is relevant to observe that the vast majority of cafes around the city provides customers with plant-based milk options and beverage in general.

Aspects such as taste may be a limiting factor for consumers when it comes to plant-based choices (Intel, 2021). Consumers interested in adding more plant-based to their diet might hesitate when first experimenting plant-based alternatives, whether to the unfamiliarity with the ingredients or other aspects such as flavour, texture and appearance of the food (Alcorta, A et al., 2021). So, according to what was exposed, the big challenge for entrepreneurs that are

already engaged in the plant-based market or intend to incorporate a plant-based selection into their menus might be the introduction of high-quality plant-based options that are both nutritious and rich in flavour to their menu (Fi Global insights, 2020). The right selection and combination of ingredients is necessary in order to gain consumers' acceptance and at the same time prevent nutritional deficits in those who choose a plant-based diet (Alcorta, A et al., 2021). Currently, there is a large variety of plant-based food and beverage available in the market, including meat substitute products and milk alternatives, but the high cost of these types of products and limited awareness about plant-based diet are factors that might restrain market growth (Global Plant-Based Food and Beverage Market 2021-2028, 2021).

2.4 Opportunities for business owners

An increasing number of consumers globally are adopting a plant-based diet or adhering plant-based products to their diets (Bord Bia, 2021; Mintel, 2020). A study published by the EU-funded Smart Protein shows a 49% growth in European consumption of plant-based foods in the period between 2018 and 2020 (Pro-Veg International, 2021).

The availability and diversity of plant-based food have the potential to increase as the plant-based movement is growing at a fast pace. According to Elkin, E., 2021 by the end of 2030 the global market for plant-based foods is expected to grow drastically due to the increase in demand for sustainable products, while the growth of alternative dairy can double.

A study conducted by Pro-Veg International in partnership with Innova Market Insights points out that baked goods could be a good opportunity to increase business sales once it is easy to substitute animal-based ingredients for plant-based alternatives.

2.5 Flexitarians, vegetarians and vegans' requirements when choosing a plant-based food or beverage

The Bord Bia report 2021 found that vegetarians are more likely to be female in the age group between 18 and 44 years old. Vegans are also more likely to be female, in the age group between 18 and 35 years old, the youngest consumers of the three diet segments. Flexitarians are quite similar to vegetarians in terms of age group but are equally split in terms of gender.

The steady increase in the number of people that are prioritizing health and wellbeing shows that the plant-based lifestyle is not just a trend.

A European survey carried out with 7,500 people around 10 European countries, shows that 30% of participants are flexitarians while 7% are vegans and vegetarians. The survey also reveals that 39% of respondents intend to reduce their meat consumption in the future while 46% of the sample had already reduced their meat consumption, and 28% of respondents intend to reduce their dairy consumption in the near future. In total, around 3% of participants declared that they aim at increasing their plant-based food consumption (Pro-Veg International, 2021).

It has been found that European consumers consider taste and freshness the most important elements when choosing food products in general. When it comes to plant-based food, healthiness is also mentioned as an important factor.

Also, almost half of flexitarians interviewed think that there are not many plant-based food options in restaurants. Half of them consider the plant-based option too expensive (Pro-Veg International, 2021).

Chapter III

3. Methodology

This chapter aims to understand the research process carried out by the author, since it explains the philosophy used to develop a theory and the methods and techniques used to collect and analyse primary data in order to answer the research questions.

The research onion diagram proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) was used as a guide by the author to structure the research. The philosophy applied to this research is the interpretivism conducting an inductive approach to associate theory and hypotheses within the study. A mixed method research was applied by using a cross sectional questionnaire and interviews to collect data.

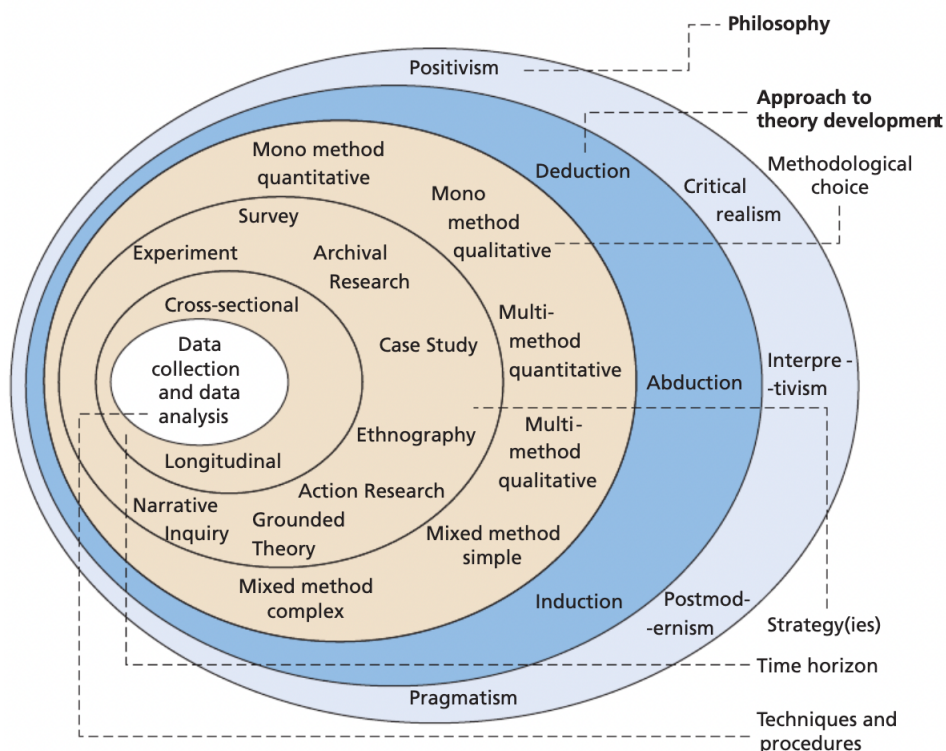


Figure 1 : Saunders Research Onion (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.1 Theoretical Paradigm

This study required an epistemological framework that enfolds the reality revealed by different research methods. The research philosophy refers to assumptions about different realities – ontological assumptions and human knowledge – epistemological assumptions, which help to understand the research questions, the methods used and interpret the findings.

The interpretivism approach focus on social phenomena. It seeks to understand human experiences, points of view, beliefs, values and attitudes, and to create new interpretations of multiple realities and subjective means.

3.2 Research Method

In this study, the primary data was gathered by using a mix method approach.

The qualitative method was applied through semi-structured interviews in person with small business owners. The quantitative method involved a close-ended questionnaire that was applied to a mix of vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian consumers.

3.3 Sampling techniques and sample size

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used on this research project.

For the quantitative research, a questionnaire with 14 closed-ended questions was develop with multiple choice and linear scale questions and applied to 60 individuals in total which included 20 vegan, 20 vegetarian and 20 flexitarian participants. The questionnaire was develop based on Theme 1 - Covid-19 and the increase in demand for plant-based foods in the last few years;

Theme 2 - Factors that drive consumers to choose a plant-based lifestyle; and Theme 5 - Flexitarians, vegetarians and vegans' requirements when choosing a plant-based food and/or beverage.

Through this survey, the author could gather credible information about consumer's preferences and their perspectives around plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin.

The qualitative research carried out two face to face interviews, one with the owner of a vegan cafe and the other one with the owner of a non-vegan cafe. A total of 8 questions were asked to the interviewees, being 4 questions based on Theme 3 - Challenges faced by business owners and 4 questions based on Theme 4 - Opportunities for business owners.

This type of research allowed the author to have knowledge of the challenges faced by business owners regarding plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin and identify the opportunities that the plant-based current movement can bring to them.

Table 1. Business owners interviewed in the study

Code	Position	Settings	Experience
ONVC	Owner	Non-vegan cafe in Dublin	5 years running a business
OVC	Owner	Vegan cafe in Dublin	5 years running a business

3.4 Data collection and Analysis

The collection of quantitative data was done through an online survey. The questionnaire consisted of 14 closed-ended questions, most of them were multiple choice and a few others linear scale questions. The survey was applied to 60 individuals in total, equally divided into 20 vegans, 20 vegetarians and 20 flexitarian participants who are members of plant-based groups on social medias.

All the responses obtained were consolidated in pie charts by google forms in real time which enabled the author to analyse all the data accurately and then compare that with the secondary research.

The qualitative data was collected through face to face interviews, carried out with two entrepreneurs that run a non-vegan cafe and a vegan cafe, respectively, in Dublin.

An invitation for the interview was sent by email and a meeting was arranged with each one of the business owners. Both interviews were recorded and then transcribed to a document, so the author was able to do a thematic analysis of the content collected.

3.5 Thematic coding

Table 2. Thematic Coding Analysis

ONVC 1 - Theme 3 - Challenges faced by business owners regarding plant-based food and beverage	Keywords in interview
Challenges	Price; fresh ingredients; storage; location
Prices of products	More expensive to buy and to sell; higher waste costs
Availability of products	Shortages; limited selection available to buy
Creation of a plant-based menu	Customer's expectations; taste; texture; appearance; right products; consistency

OVC 2 - Theme 3 - Challenges faced by business owners regarding plant-based food and beverage	Keywords in interview
Challenges	Price; covid; crises; source alternative ingredients
Prices of products	More expensive to buy and to sell
Availability of products	Shortages; organic ingredients; high quality products
Creation of a plant-based menu	Customer's needs, taste; combinations; health; nutrition; appearance
ONVC 1 - Theme 4 - Opportunities for business owners.	Keywords in interview
Items on the menu	Vegan sandwiches, vegan pizza, vegetarian sandwich, vegetarian pizza, vegan treats, plant-based drinks
More options	Expansion of the range of plant-based products; new seasonal selection
Changes on the menu	Creation of new vegan sandwich and pizza
Changes on the demand	Customers are more open and curious; healthier; more sustainable; inclusion; increase in demand; rise in sales of alternative milks
OVC 2 – Theme 4 - Opportunities for business owners.	Keywords in interview

Items on the menu	Vegan nourish bowls; vegan smoothies; plant-based drinks; vegan treats; vegan smoothies bowls
More options	Creation of a brunch menu for weekends; add more smoothies, non-coffee hot drinks
Changes on the menu	Pretty much the same signature dishes; core items; added plant-based porridge, soups, chia pudding and overnight oats
Changes on the demand	Increase in demand; customers and tourists are more open, pandemic, familiar to plant-based; awareness, increase in flexitarians diet

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This research is subjected to ethical concerns, once it involved people as samples. Thus, prior to engaging in this research, the author submitted an Ethical form¹ to Independent College Dublin indicating how ethical issues would be conducted throughout the development of the research.

The survey was developed with an informed consent² tab considering the ethical issues regarding the participation of the volunteers in the research.

In order to collect the qualitative data, the author sent an email to both cafe owners to invite them to participate in the research and to explain to them the purpose of the study, together with an Informed Consent Form³, which is a document composed of all the ethical considerations involved in their participation in the interview.

The interview was then scheduled after both parties agree to the ethical terms. The entire interview was recorded and then transcribed to be used in the research.

All the individuals who participated in the survey and interviews were informed of the confidentiality regarding their personal information. The author ensures data protection and anonymity of all participants in this research.

¹ See Appendix 1.

² See Appendix 2.

³ See Appendix 4.

Chapter IV

4. Findings and Discussion

This chapter aims to analyse and discuss the data collected from the quantitative and qualitative research. The main findings are put together within each respective sub-theme and compared with the literature review. The participants of the qualitative research were identified in this chapter according to Table 1 – Codes, created in Chapter III - Sampling techniques and sample size, in order to keep anonymity of the participants in this research.

4.1 Covid 19 and the increase in demand for plant-based foods in the last few years

By analysing the results of the survey, a total of 23 participants out of 60 changed their dietary habits due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 78,3% of them changed their dietary habits permanently, while 21,7%, temporarily.

When asked about the frequency the respondents consumed plant-based foods before and after the pandemic, it was found that in the post-pandemic period, 47 participants out of 60 frequently consume plant-based foods. Before the pandemic this number was 39. The number of people who rarely consumed plant-based foods before the pandemic was 6. After the pandemic, this number has dropped dramatically to 1 person.

The findings show that Covid-19 had in fact some impact on people's dietary habits. Recent studies mention that the pandemic made people rethink some of their habits of consumption, in order to pursue a healthier lifestyle, and their attitude towards the environment around them (Mintel, 2020; Bord Bia, 2019) . However, the Board Bia Annual report 2021 explains that the “association” with a plant-based lifestyle has grown, but the percentage of people adhering to the plant-based lifestyle still remains relatively low.

4.2 Factors that drive consumers to choose a plant-based lifestyle

The results show that 33,3% of the respondents pointed to sustainability as the main factor that drives them to choose a plant-based lifestyle, followed by animal welfare (28,3%) and health (21,7%). Personal beliefs, religion and coexistence are some other factors raised in the survey. Authors have spoken about the different motivations that make consumers to choose a plant-based lifestyle. It can be seen in Bord Bia Dietary Lifestyle Report (2021) that flexitarian consumers are driven primarily by the taste of the food, animal welfare and environmental impacts, while vegans are strongly driven by ethical opposition to the use of animals for food (Bryant, C. J., 2019; Euromonitor, 2020) and vegetarians are more concerned with animal welfare (Euromonitor, 2020), taste of food and the impact that food has on the environment and their health (Bord Bia, 2021).

Griffith Foods Sustainability Report (2021) cites that social interaction has influence on eating patterns, especially when it comes to meat reduction, which means that the dietary habits of a person can influence others that live together.

4.3 Challenges faced by business owners

The main challenges emphasised by both interviewees are the cost of buying plant-based products in general, especially when it comes to *“high quality organic ingredients and less processed products”*, according to OVC point of view. ONVC also stressed a higher waste cost index of alternative products. Both mentioned that the high costs of plant-based food and drinks leads to a higher selling price for the customers *“which makes it a bigger investment for them to buy in the product”*, added ONVC.

Shortage of alternative products is also mentioned by both interviewees, especially in “*unexpected events, such as crises, war and political conflicts*”, added OVC. Both said that sometimes can be difficult to source alternative ingredients, either because they are not available in the market or not carried by some of the bigger wholesalers/distributors. ONVC referred to the shortage of oat milk during the pandemic, which had a huge impact on sales while OVC had issues with the unavailability of acai, one of the most popular ingredients of the menu.

Another challenge considered by ONVC is to manage customer expectations in terms of maintaining taste, the texture and the overall appearance of plant-based products. From his point of view, most suppliers, such bakeries and patisseries, do not offer a wide variety of fresh plant-based products. OVC also agrees that can be a lot challenging to create a menu that attend customer’s needs considering taste, combinations, health, nutrition and overall appearance.

ONVC and OVC perspectives validate the literature review regarding the aspects that may represent potential challenges in business decision-making process regard plant-based products. According to Alcorta, A et al. (2021), the unfamiliarity with the ingredients or other aspects such as flavor, texture and appearance of the food can be limiting factors for consumers that seek to add more plant-based to their diet.

Yet, an interview published by Fi global insights states that the big challenge for entrepreneurs that are already engaged in the plant-based market or intend to incorporate a plant-based selection into their menus might be the introduction of high-quality plant-based options that are both nutritious and rich in flavour.

4.4 Opportunities for business owners

Both ONVC and OVC see a range of opportunities originated by the growing trend towards consumption of plant-based products.

It was noticed by both interviewees that, during the last few years, customers mindset as well as the demand for plant-based foods has changed, which confirms a study carried out by EU-funded Smart Protein that shows a 49% growth in European consumption of plant-based foods in the period between 2018 and 2020. The interviewees believe that consumers seem to be more open and curious about plant-based options, either due to health concerns or environmental awareness. ONVC mentioned that the sales figures of alternative milks increased from 9% to 27% in the last 4 years, which from his point of view is a huge increase, once the Irish economy still relies heavily on animal agriculture (Wrenn, C.L.,2019).

They also intend to expand their range of plant-based products options to their menu. ONVC plans to introduce new seasonal selections of plant-based food and drinks to the menu, by creating new vegan and vegetarian pizzas and sandwiches and replace some of its current treats. OVC intends to create an exclusive vegan brunch menu to be served only on the weekends and add more option to existing menu.

4.5 Flexitarians, vegetarians and vegans' requirements when choosing a plant-based food or beverage

When asked about which factor is more important in terms of plant-based food and beverage options available on a menu, 51.7% of the participants answered taste, while price is considered the least important factor for 48,3% of the respondents.

Only 30% of participants are satisfied with the variety of plant-based options offered by restaurants and cafes in Dublin, which explains the high percentage of consumers (96,7%) that think restaurants and cafes should expand their range of plant-based options. About the price of plant-based food and beverage in general, 46,7% of the participants think it is expensive, while 43,3% think it is fair. However, 56,7% of respondents think it is cheap to follow a plant-

based lifestyle. They were probably referring to a diet based on whole food and very little processed products.

A survey with 7,500 people around 10 European countries carried out by Pro-Veg (2021) found that European consumers consider taste and freshness the most important elements when choosing food products in general. The survey also found that almost half of flexitarians interviewed think that there are not many plant-based food options in restaurants. Half of them consider plant-based options too expensive. The results of Pro-Veg survey are pretty much the same as the data found in this research in terms of the requirements considered important in the flexitarians, vegetarians and vegans' points of view when choosing a plant-based food or beverage.

Chapter V

5. Conclusion

The findings of the primary research converge in many aspects with the literature review, especially in relation to the factors that have influence on consumers' eating choices and businesses decisions.

By analysing the findings regarding the opportunities originated by the growing trend towards consumption of plant-based products, it can be said that there is a great potential for growth in the plant-based food and beverage market in Dublin, once the consumers have become more curious and open to trying plant-based products, and more concerned with their health and environmental issues.

However, there are still big challenges to be overcome by business owners such as high prices of alternative products, the complexities of sourcing good quality alternative products, and consumer's acceptance.

Therefore, the right selection and combination of ingredients by restaurants and cafes in Dublin is essential to attract consumers who are seeking a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.

5.1 Limitations

Despite the amount of information found about consumption of plant-based products in general, there is a lack of literature around plant-based food and beverage served in restaurants and cafes in Dublin and data available regarding dietary habits post-covid.

It would also be more insightful to have a broader number of responses in the survey and entrepreneurs partaking the interviews, considering the number of people that have any level

of association with a plant-based diet and the quantity of restaurants and cafes that follow this approach or intend to introduce more plant- based foods to their business in Dublin.

5.2 Recommendations

Further researches should be conducted considering: the traditional farming culture in Ireland as a barrier to overcome since that has been meat and dairy intensive since inception; the rise of allergies which may be due to the increased hygiene standards could have made the population less resilient to infections leading to an increase in demand for non-dairy foods and drinks; and the huge influence of religion on the behaviour and demand for plant based alternatives in such a cosmopolitan city like Dublin.

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