

## COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PRIVATE LABEL BRAND “K – TAKE IT VEGGIE” IN SLOVAKIA AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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### **Abstract:**

Current food market is influenced by many trends in diet including healthy eating habits. The aim of submitted paper was to study consumer behavior and preferences towards private label brand “K - take it veggie” of Kaufland company in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The brand has recently appeared in the market and comprising vegan and vegetarian products. The research was focused on several vegan products such as plant based milks and soy yogurts. The primary data was obtained by questionnaire survey conducted on the sample of 816 respondents. For deeper examination, 13 hypotheses were statistically tested by Chi - Square Test of Independence and Cramer’s V coefficient. Based on the results, the step of Kaufland to launch this brand is perceived in positive way in both countries, nevertheless both Slovak and Czech respondents pointed out insufficient brand promotion. In both countries, the major source of information about this brand is provided by leaflets and references. Furthermore, research measured respondents’ satisfactions with plant - based milks and soy yogurts and it can be concluded that the most respondents are satisfied with price range and packaging design in both countries. Regarding the plant-based milk preferences, respondents from both countries prefer almond and soy milks. The least preferred is oat milk. In addition, the part of consumer research statistically tested several dependencies. For Slovakia, five dependencies were confirmed involving plant based milk preferences and two demographic factor: place of living and age; purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and two demographic factors – income and share of vegan food in diet and finally soy yogurts preferences and age. For the Czech Republic, dependencies were confirmed between plant based milk preferences and gender and between purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and income.

### **Key words:**

Consumer Behaviour, Vegan Products, Private Label, K - Take It Veggie, Slovakia, Czech Republic

JEL: M31

## **1 Introduction**

Consumer behaviour has become an essential factor in each business and many companies do not develop a new product without proper consumer research. In general, consumer behaviour is defined as behaviour during searching, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing the products and services which will satisfy consumer needs (Horská et al., 2009, Kretter, Kádeková, 2011). Development of consumption is marked by different developmental stages (Kubicová et. al., 2014). The new generation of consumers can be divided according to 5 E - egoistic, ecological, ethical, e - consumer and ethnical consumer. Ethical consumers consider the consequences of their private consumption on society (Nagyová et al., 2012). Thus, managers must be able to determine how their organizations can

become more socially responsible, ecologically sustainable, and economically competitive. It does so not only because it makes good business sense but also because of the unique relationship that industry has with the environment, on which it relies for a continuous, adequate supply of safe, high quality raw materials from which to make world-renowned food and drink products (Holienčinová, Dobák, 2015).

Nowadays, a food market is influenced by the new trends connected with healthy lifestyle, animal welfare, ethical consumption. In addition, the level of income has a certain influence on consumption patterns (Kubicová, Kádeková, 2016). More and more consumers are aware of how their consumption affects the environment. Many of them become more informed and attached to healthier lifestyle including dietary system (Kubeláková, Košičiarová, 2016). One of the most popular trends in healthy diet is veganism, which can be described as a higher level of vegetarianism where is banned eating animal products as well as exploiting animals. Many consumers became vegans due to ethical, moral and health issues. Furthermore, some cases can include the meat disgust or friend influence. Being a vegan involves the consumption of plant-based diet. Therefore, market for vegan products is still growing Maragon et al. (2016). The word vegan was firstly used by Donald Watson, who is considered as a founder of British organisation "Vegan Society" (Pavličková, n.d.). Moreover, veganism is a lifestyle or philosophy based on animal rights and planet protection and vegans are people who do not eat animal products such as meat, dairy products, honey, eggs as well as do not use the products made from animal materials - wool, fur, leather and feathers (Veganstvo.org, n.d.). The most essential motives in becoming a vegan are health issues, ethical consumption and environmental concerns. The first motive includes personal well-being, while the rest is connected with animal welfare and eco - friendly consumption. Moreover, these motives affect not only food trends but also consumer lifestyle (Janssen et al., 2016). The majority of consumers who follow vegan diet have strong social network that helps them to adjust their lifestyle with veganism (Greenebaum, 2012). This current trend shifts the needs and wants as well as forces the producers to offer healthy food products with certain functionality. For example, plant-based milks in beverage sector are produced as alternative to milk, made for consumers who have lactose intolerance, cow milk allergy or simply, want to live healthier (Sethi, Tyagi, Anurag, 2016). The most vegan products can be found in supermarkets either without label or with the label "Vegan" as a guarantee certificate which claims that product is free of animal ingredients. Many food corporations label their products as vegan in order to attract this segment and even some supermarket started to label their assortment like this. During the purchase, the majority of vegans are looking for vegan trademark which indicates that particular product does not include any animal-derived ingredients (The vegan society, n.d.).

Private label brands are produced for retailers and wholesalers in order to increase assortment, profit and satisfaction of customers. They are sold predominantly in the stores of particular retailer. They are less costly in terms of production, research and development, advertisement and sales promotion (Nagyová, Sedliaková, 2014). The good private label can create a strong consumer loyalty to certain product (Ipek, Askin, Ilter, 2016) and it can be considered as an effective tool for differentiation in order to increase competitiveness in the market. However, it can be perceived as brand indicating lower quality in comparison to other brands (Tolusic et al., 2015, Trevena et al., 2015).

Hypermarket Kaufland responded on changing trend in food consumption by creating its own private label brand "K - take it veggie". This brand is focused primarily on vegans and vegetarians as well as on consumers who want to eat healthy. The products are mostly plant based and organic. The company objective is to attract consumers who search for certain alternatives to animal products and consider themselves as ethical consumers. Each product of this private label has trademark V - label which informs consumer whether it is a vegetarian or a vegan category. In spite of narrow product range, consumers can find different types of plant based milks, various tofu products, spreads, yogurts, ice - creams, ready to serve products such as falafel, lasagne, spaghetti or pizza. All these products are offered to consumers with conscious consumption (Kaufland.sk, n.d.).

## 2 Objective and Methods

The aim of the scientific paper is to identify consumer behaviour towards vegan products of the private label brand "K - take it veggie" in Kaufland. In order to obtain the primary data, the questionnaire survey was conducted online in January 2017 in two countries – Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The online questionnaire was distributed into several Facebook groups oriented on vegetarian and vegan diet. The questionnaire results were compared between mentioned countries. There were reached 816 respondents from which 408 were from Slovakia (14 % males and 86 % females) and 408 ones from the Czech Republic (12 % males and 88 % females). The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first one consisted of questions towards consumer behaviour and the second one involved demographic questions. The data from the survey was evaluated by using contingency table in Excel and afterwards it was statistically tested by using statistical methods, such as Chi - Square Test of Independence, Cramer's V Coefficient and Testing for equality of proportions between two samples. Obtained data was verified and for deeper analyses had been formulated following hypotheses:

### Slovakia and the Czech Republic

Hypothesis No. 1: We assume the private label brand "K - take it veggie" is more promoted in the city than in the countryside.

Hypothesis No. 2: We assume there exists the dependence between plant-based milk preferences and respondents' place of living.

Hypothesis No. 3: We assume there exists the dependence between plant-based milk preferences and respondents' gender.

Hypothesis No. 4: We assume there exists the dependence between plant-based milk preferences and respondents' age.

Hypothesis No. 5: We assume there exists the dependence between soy yogurt preferences and respondents' place of living.

Hypothesis No. 6: We assume there exists the dependence between soy yogurt preferences and respondents' gender.

Hypothesis No. 7: We assume there exists the dependence between soy yogurt preferences and respondents' age.

Hypothesis No. 8: We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of "K - take it veggie" products and respondents' income.

Hypothesis No. 9:

We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of "K - take it veggie" products and respondents' type of diet.

Hypothesis No. 10: We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of "K - take it veggie" products and respondents' share of vegan food in diet.

Hypothesis No. 11: We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of "K - take it veggie" products and respondents' nationality.

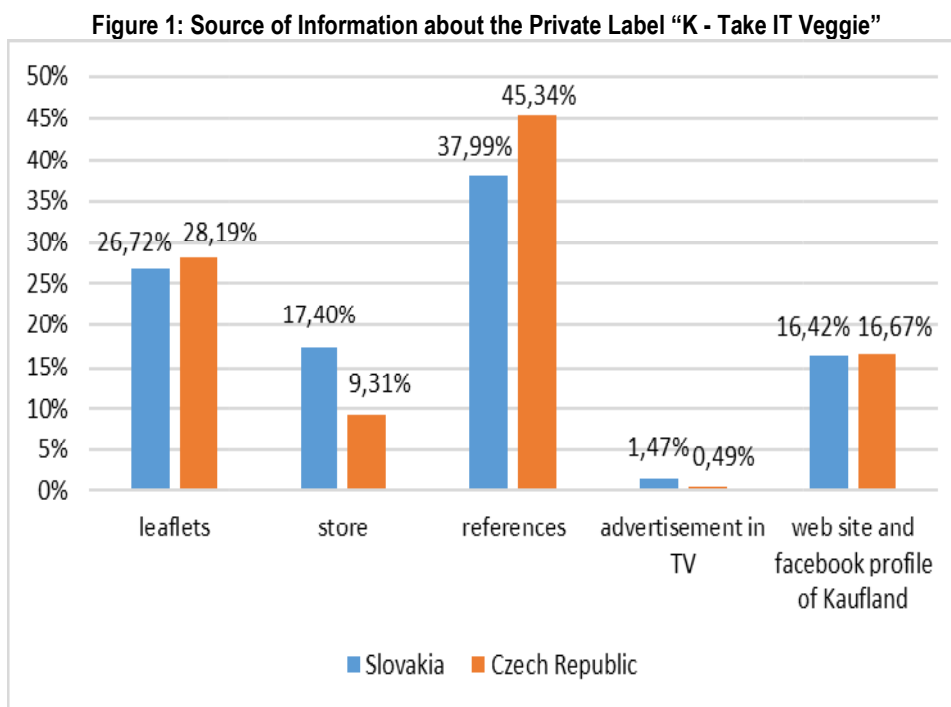
Hypothesis No. 12: We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of plant based milks and respondents' nationality.

Hypothesis No. 13: We assume there exists the dependence between purchase frequency of soy yogurts and respondents' nationality.

## 3 Results and Discussion

For the purpose of submitted paper had been selected few questions from questionnaire survey from Slovakia as well as the Czech Republic. The data was analysed, graphically illustrated and compared between countries. Moreover, some questions were examined by statistical tests in order to verify hypotheses.

First of all, we studied how respondents evaluate the decision of Kaufland to create their own private label brand which includes vegan products. The majority of Slovak respondents (99.02 %) as well as Czech respondents (94.61 %) consider this as a positive step. Afterwards, it was examined how respondents inquired information about Kaufland private label brand of vegan products “K - take it veggie”. Data show (see Figure 1) that the most frequent source of information in both countries were references and leaflets while the least frequent was advertisement on TV.

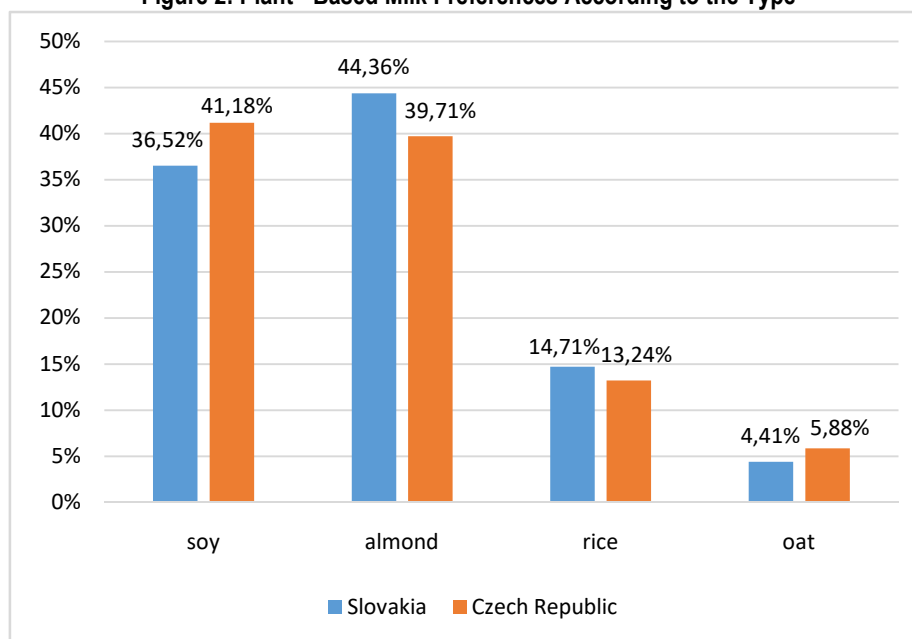


Source: own processing 2017

Moreover, the authors examined whether the private label “K - take it veggie” brand is promoted sufficiently in the market with vegan products. The majority of respondents from Slovakia (68.38 %) as well as from the Czech Republic (66.18 %) think that this brand has insufficient promotion and there should be used more marketing tools. Due to the fact that Kaufland is situated in large cities, we tested whether this brand is more promoted in the city than in countryside. Based on the Testing for equality of proportions between two samples, it can be concluded, that in both countries this private label brand “K - take it veggie” is equally promoted in city as well as in countryside. The rightness of hypothesis was not confirmed. The value of test statistic was 0.2155 for Slovakia and 2.6424 for the Czech Republic while for both countries the critical value at the significant level  $\alpha = 0.05$  was 1.6448.

Figure 2 illustrates plant based milk preferences according to the type. The most preferred type for Slovak respondents is almond milk (44.36 %) followed by soy milk (36.52 %) while in comparison to Czech respondents, the most preferred is soy milk (41.18 %) followed by almond milk (39.71 %). In general, consumers perceive soymilk as a perfect alternative for milk, therefore it has high preferences (Wansink, B., et al., 2005). The least preferred type is oat milk in both countries while in other countries is quite popular because it is soy free milk (Fuentes, Fuentes, 2017).

**Figure 2: Plant - Based Milk Preferences According to the Type**



Source: own processing 2017

The next step was hypothesis testing by using Chi-Square Test of Independence and Cramer's V Coefficient. According to Table 1, five hypotheses were confirmed for Slovakia. Dependencies exist between plant based milk preferences and 2 demographic factors – place of living and age (hypothesis no. 2 and 4), soy yogurts preferences and age (hypothesis no. 7) and purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and two demographic factors – income and share of vegan food in diet (hypothesis no. 8 and 10). All dependencies have weak strength.

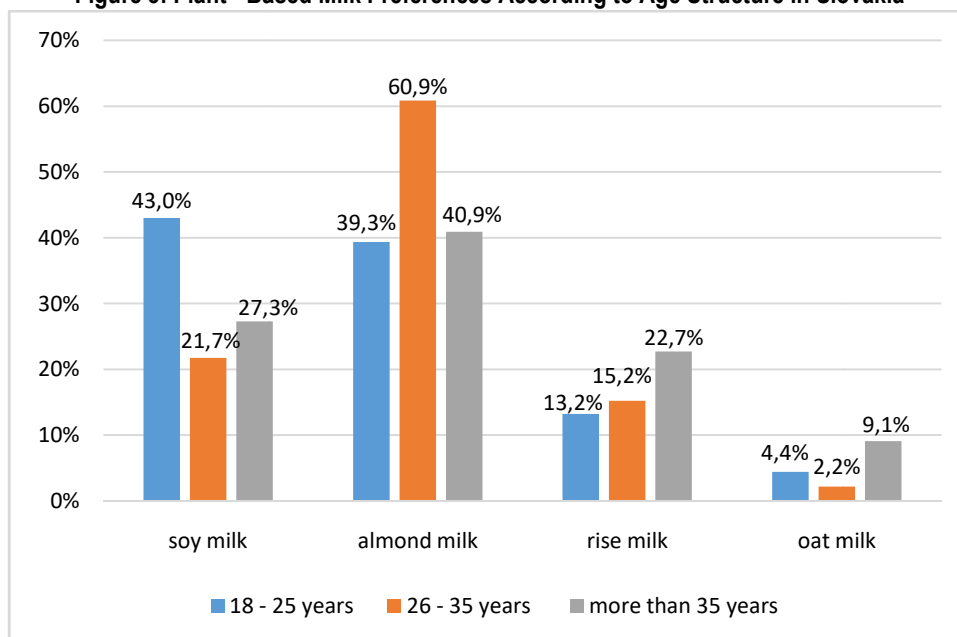
**Table 1 Results of Chi-Square Test of Independence for Slovakia**

Factors	p-value	Correlation	Cramer's V coefficient
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' place of living	0.0395	yes	0.1430
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' gender	0.3410	no	-
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' age	0.0010	yes	0.1663
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents' place of living	0.2405	no	-
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents' gender	0.4580	no	-
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents' age	<.0001	yes	0.2226
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents' income	<.0001	yes	0.1730
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents' type of diet	0.4225	no	-
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents' share of vegan food in diet	0.0051	yes	0.1520

Source: own processing 2017

The first confirmed dependence is illustrated in Figure 3, and shows differences in preferences of each age category. Soy milk is preferred by younger generation (18 – 25 years) while rice and oat milk is preferred by older generations (more than 35 years). The highest preferences for almond milk was obtained within the age category between 26 – 35 years.

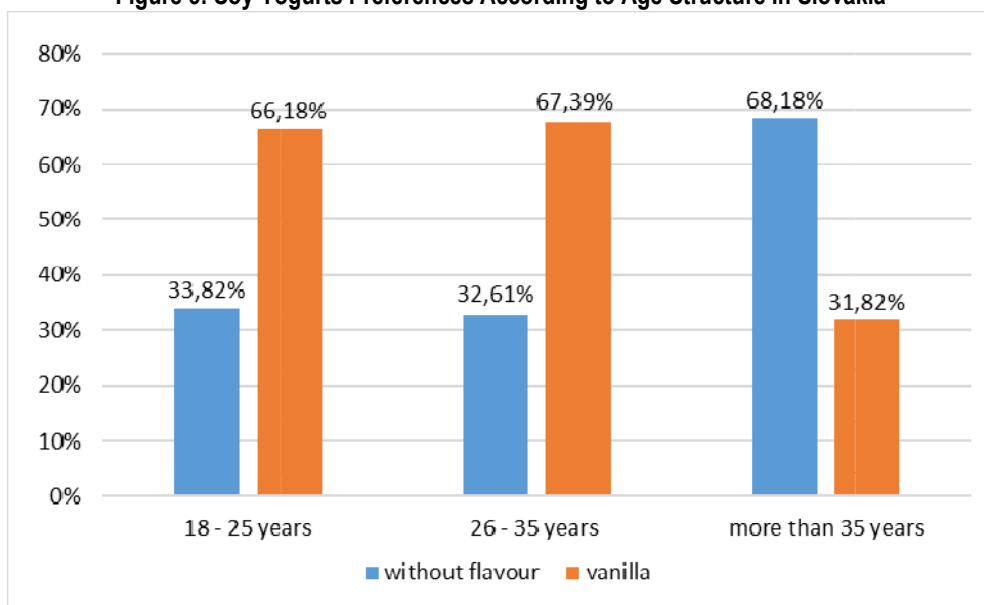
**Figure 3: Plant - Based Milk Preferences According to Age Structure in Slovakia**



Source: own processing 2017

According to the confirmed hypothesis No.7, respondents had to show preferences between two types of soy yogurts – vanilla flavour and without flavour. Younger generations (18 – 25 years and 26 – 35 years) prefer more vanilla yogurts than those without flavour while older generation (more than 35 years) prefers typical soy yogurts without flavour.

**Figure 5: Soy Yogurts Preferences According to Age Structure in Slovakia**



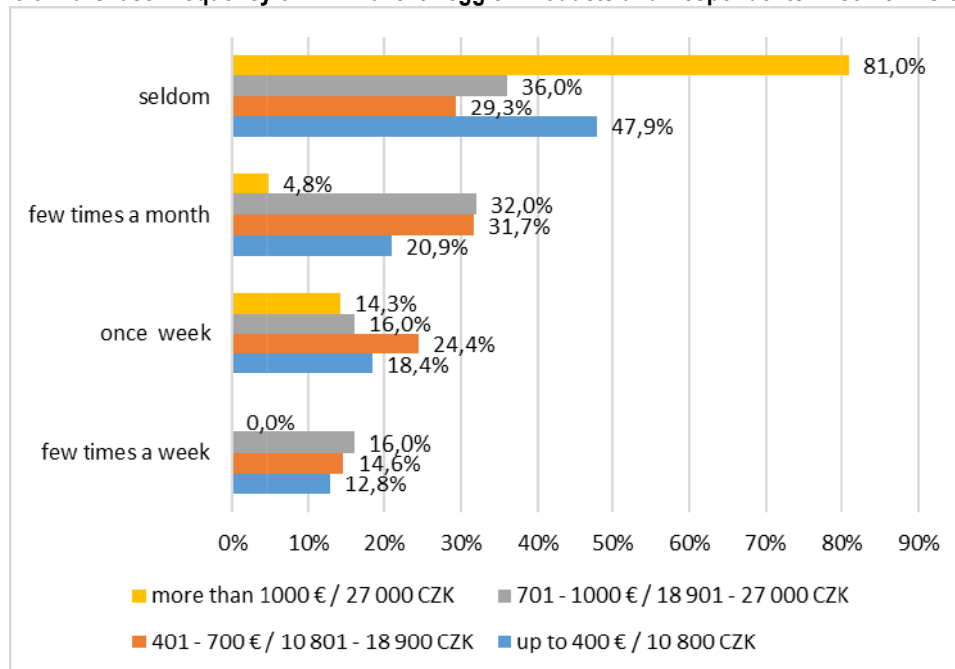
Source: own processing 2017

Figure 6 shows another confirmed hypothesis No.8, where frequency of purchase depends on respondents' income. The lowest income category - up to 400 € has the highest percentage share in seldom purchases (47.9%), the category 401 – 700 € purchases once a week (24.4%) or few times a month (31.7%) and the category 701 – 1000 € purchases it few times a week (16%). It can be concluded that as the income increases the frequency of purchase increases as well. The category more than 1 000 € is special case where highest percentage was obtained in seldom purchases (81%).



It is assumed that this category prefers to buy different vegans brands in specialty shops. These brands are more expensive but they can afford it.

**Figure 6: Purchase Frequency of “K – Take It Veggie” Products and Respondents’ Income in Slovakia**



Source: own processing 2017

The hypothesis were tested by using Chi - Square Test of Independence and Cramer's V Coefficient also for the Czech Republic. Only two dependencies were confirmed. First dependence exists between plant based milk preferences and gender (hypothesis No. 3). Second dependence was confirmed between purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and income (hypothesis No. 8). Both of them have weak strength (see Table 2).

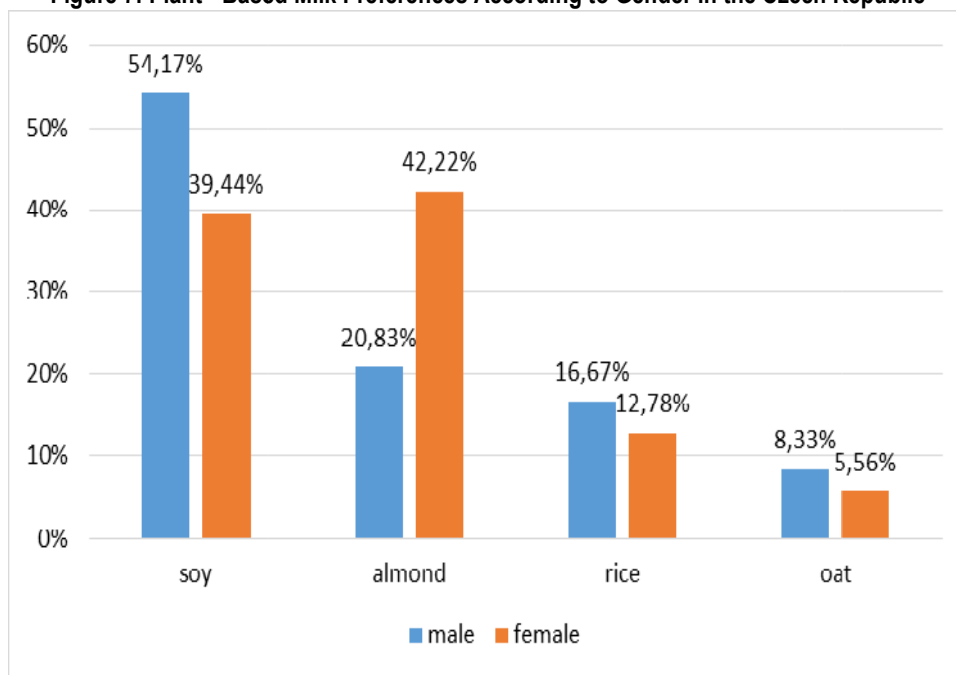
**Table 2 Results of Chi-Square Test of Independence for the Czech Republic**

Factors	p-value	Correlation	Cramer's V coefficient
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' place of living	0.0672	no	-
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' gender	0.0430	yes	0.1413
Plant-based milk preferences and respondents' age	0.5521	no	-
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents' place of living	0.0705	no	-
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents' gender	0.8781	no	-
Soy yogurt preferences and respondents age	0.3999	no	-
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents' income	0.0074	yes	0.1356
Purchase frequency of „K - take it veggie” products and respondents' type of diet	0.2464	no	-
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents' share of vegan food in diet	0.5235	no	-

Source: own processing 2017

In figure 7 is shown confirmed hypothesis no.3 and a certain difference in plant - based milks preferences regarding respondent gender in the Czech Republic. It can be observed that soy milk is preferred by males (54.17 %) while almond milk is preferred by females (42.22 %). Furthermore, rice and oat milks are slightly more preferred by males than by females.

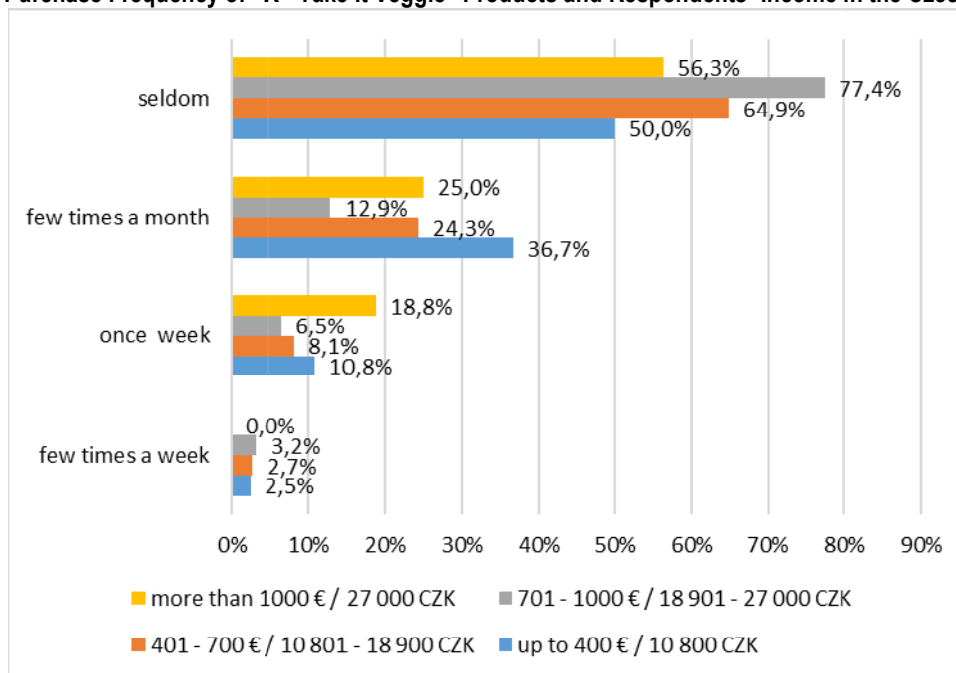
**Figure 7: Plant - Based Milk Preferences According to Gender in the Czech Republic**



Source: own processing 2017

Regarding the second confirmed hypothesis (see Figure 8), the majority of respondents purchase “K - take it veggie” products either once a week, few times a month or seldom. Respondents in the category with income more than 1000 € purchase these products in higher percentage share once a week (18.8 %) while respondents from the lowest income category (up to 400 €) purchase them in higher percentage share a few times a month (36.7%). Seldom purchases are made by respondents from income category 701 – 1000 € (77.4%).

**Figure 8: Purchase Frequency of “K - Take It Veggie” Products and Respondents’ Income in the Czech Republic**

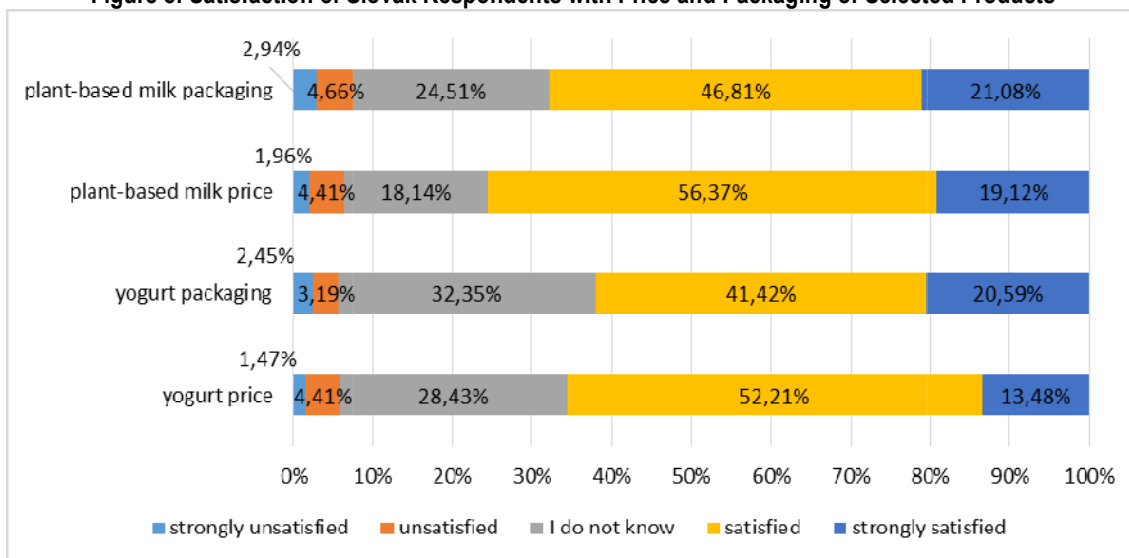


Source: own processing 2017



In addition, the authors measured the satisfaction of respondents with price and packaging in case of plant - based milk and soy yogurt regarding the private label brand “K - take it veggie“. Majority of Slovak respondents are either satisfied or strongly satisfied with the price as well as with packaging of both products (see Figure 8). It can be stated that the price and packaging were properly tailored by Kaufland.

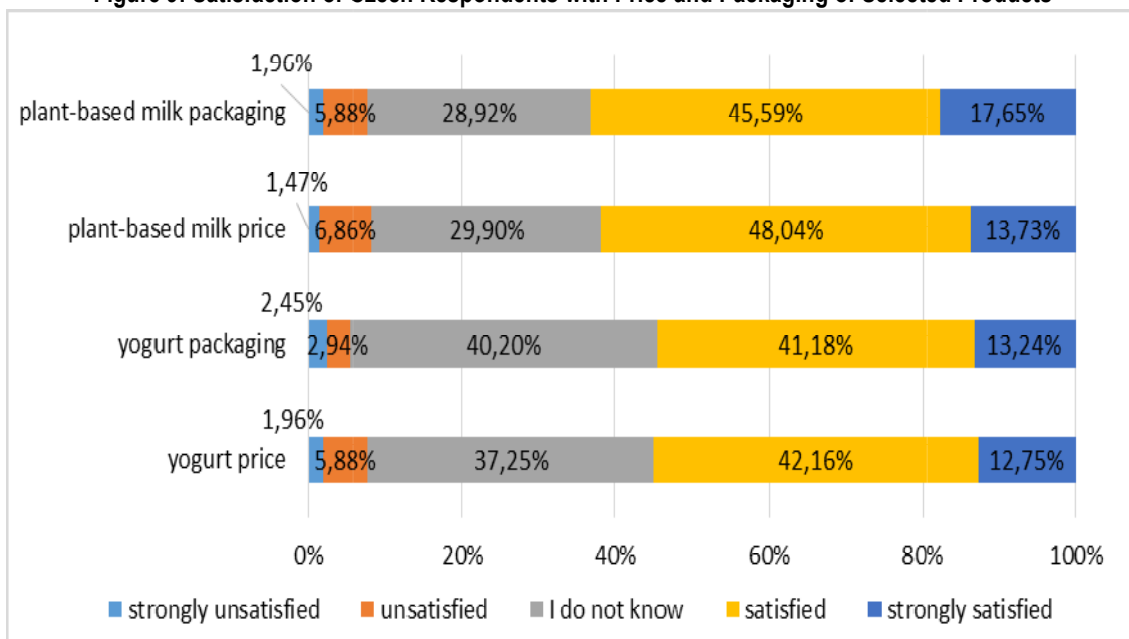
**Figure 8: Satisfaction of Slovak Respondents with Price and Packaging of Selected Products**



Source: own processing 2017

Figure 9 illustrates respondents’ satisfaction with price and packaging in terms of plant-based milk and soy yogurts regarding the private label brand “K - take it veggie“ in the Czech Republic. There can be observed the same situation as in Slovakia. The majority of respondents are either satisfied or strongly satisfied with the price as well as with packaging of vegan products.

**Figure 9: Satisfaction of Czech Respondents with Price and Packaging of Selected Products**



Source: own processing 2017

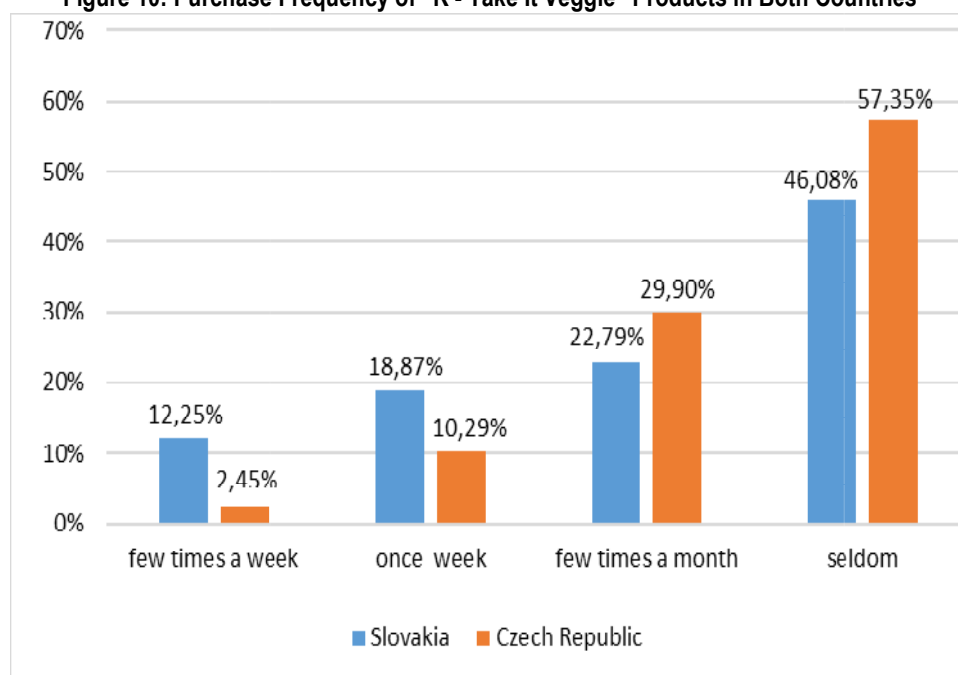
The last three hypothesis were focused on dependencies between purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products, plant based milks, soy yogurts and respondent’s nationality. In all three hypothesis were confirmed dependence. According to Figure 10, Slovak respondents purchase these products in deferent frequency than respondents in the Czech Republic. More than a half of Czech respondents purchase it seldom (57.35 %) while Slovak respondents purchase either seldom (46.08 %), few times a month (22.79%) or once a week (18.87 %). The significant difference between these two countries occurs in percentage share in four categories of purchase frequencies. In categories few times a week and once a week dominate Slovak respondents, whereas in categories few times a month and seldom dominate Czech respondents. It can be concluded that respondents in Slovakia purchase these products more often than respondents in the Czech Republic.

**Table 3 Results of Chi-Square Test of Independence for Purchase Frequency and Nationality**

Factors	p-value	Correlation	Cramer’s V coefficient
Purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and respondents’ nationality	<.0001	yes	0.2371
Purchase frequency of plant based milks and respondents’ nationality	<.0001	yes	0.2744
Purchase frequency of soy yogurts and respondents’ nationality	0.0102	yes	0.1273

Source: own processing 2017

**Figure 10: Purchase Frequency of “K - Take It Veggie” Products in Both Countries**



Source: own processing 2017

Majority of consumers adopt plant-based diet from ethical reasons as well as they want to support sustainable consumption (Rosenfeld, Burrow, 2017) as well as environmental issues due to high exploitation of resources by intensive husbandry (Cramer et al., 2017). For example, plant-based milks are commonly marketed as good alternative to conventional milks which are unethical and unhealthy (Hoek et al. 2011). Nevertheless, maintaining the plant-based diet is connected with the accessibility of alternative products in food stores (Ruby, 2012) and in general, many among consumers perceive huge problem with current situation in the market with plant-based products including the availability of these products (Beverland, 2014). However, many supermarkets started to sell these type of products and it is

necessary to set up a good communication and promotion of these products by pointing out benefits towards health and sustainability in order to attract new consumers (Verain et al., 2017). Consumption can be increase by marketing alternative products or vegan substitutes in different way as conventional food products (Wansink, B., et al. 2005). Marketing should be based on multi-niche approaches and promotion of sustainable alternatives. (Jackson, Russell, Ward, 2007).

#### 4 Conclusions

The aim of submitted paper was to examine consumer behaviour towards vegan products of the private label brand “K - take it veggie” in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. This brand has been introduced to the market just recently as a response to changing trends in diet and the majority of consumers from both countries consider this as a positive step however they think that the brand should be more promoted among potential consumers. Kaufland operates only in large cities nevertheless promotion of its private label brand is the same in the city and countryside. In both countries the most common source of information about this brand were references and leaflets. According to plant - based milks preferences in both countries respondents prefer soy and almond milks. The majority of respondents were satisfied with price and packaging and the same situation was with soy yogurts. Frequency of purchase regarding private label brand “K - take it veggie” differs between countries.

Hypothesis testing confirmed 5 dependencies in case of Slovak respondents. The first dependency is between plant - based milk preferences and place of living, the second is confirmed between plant - based milk preferences and age, where younger generations prefer soy and almond milk. The third dependence is between soy yogurts preferences and age, where younger generations prefer vanilla flavour. The fourth dependence is confirmed between purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and income, where respondents with higher income tend to buy these products more often. The last dependence is between and share of vegan food in diet and purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products. In case of Czech respondents only two dependencies were confirmed. The first exists between plant - based milk preferences and gender, where almond milk is preferred by females and soy milk by males. The second dependence is confirmed between purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie” products and income. In addition, dependencies were tested towards purchase frequency of “K - take it veggie”, purchase frequency of plant-based milks, purchase frequency of soy yogurts and respondents’ nationality. In all three cases the dependence was confirmed and it can be stated that Slovak respondents tend to purchase them more often than Czech respondents in general.

The given study is focused on vegan products of the private label brand “K - take it veggie”, therefore authors recommend to extend consumer research with more vegan products. Interesting would be to study consumer preferences towards vegan products in other countries for the purpose of mutual comparison.

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