



BREWING CONNECTIONS: COFFEE, PERSONALITY AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the complex relationship between coffee consumption, individual personality traits, and the perception of social support. It examines how coffee, as a cultural and social symbol, influences interpersonal relationships and feelings of support from others. The study uses a mixed-methods research strategy, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to analyse data from a diverse sample. While, the findings supports a positive association between coffee consumption and perceived social support ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), no significant relationship is found between coffee consumption and personality traits. The current research contributes to understanding the role of coffee in social interactions and its potential benefits for mental well-being.

Keywords: *coffee consumption, perceived social support, personality traits.*

Introduction

Coffee's Influence on Social Support

Coffee's impact on social support, a topic at the intersection of cultural anthropology, psychology, and sociology, remains a fascinating field of study. While the exact effects are not fully understood, coffee consumption is closely linked to social interactions and relationships. Coffee is commonly consumed in social settings like cafes and offices, where it fosters camaraderie and engagement. Across cultures, coffee symbolizes hospitality and plays a central role in rituals that strengthen social ties. The stimulant properties of caffeine can enhance mood and alertness, potentially leading to more positive perceptions of social support.

Coffee's role in daily routines and habits contributes to feelings of comfort and predictability, key components of social support. Additionally, coffee culture creates a sense of community and shared identity, especially in coffee shops acting as "third places" for socializing. In business, coffee serves as a facilitator of networking and professional relationships. While the relationship between coffee and social support is complex, it is clear that coffee plays a significant role in fostering social connections and perceptions of support.

Subjectivity of Perceived Social Support

Personal views, expectations, and how one interprets the actions of others are some of the variables that might affect one's subjective perception of social support. varied viewpoints and experiences might lead to varied perceptions of support between two people in the same social network. This subjectivity emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend how different people interpret and evaluate the assistance they receive from others.

Personality Traits and Coffee Consumption

The Big Five personality traits; conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to new experiences; have a lot to do with the research of social interaction and coffee intake. These characteristics have the power to affect people's perceptions, habits, and preferences in social situations when coffee is frequently drunk. Each attribute may be relevant in the following ways:

Extraversion: The desire to seek out social connections and sociability are linked to extraversion. Extraverts may be more likely to engage in social activities centred around coffee, such as meeting friends at a cafe or networking over coffee. Additionally, they can find greater pleasure in the social components of coffee intake, such interacting with baristas and attending events centred around coffee.

Neuroticism: Neuroticism is associated with a tendency to have negative emotions and emotional instability. People who score highly on neuroticism may drink more coffee because it helps them cope with stress and anxiety. Their patterns of coffee consumption may also be influenced by the possibility that they are more susceptible to the mood-enhancing effects of caffeine.

Agreeableness: Agreeableness is linked to cooperativeness and compassion. The social components of coffee intake, including holding coffee parties with friends or enjoying a coffee break with co-workers, may appeal to agreeable people. In social situations where coffee is involved, they could also be more sensitive to the needs of others.

Conscientiousness: Organization and self-control are linked to conscientiousness. People that are conscientious might be more inclined to follow a regular coffee habit, including making coffee at home every day at the same time. They might also be more conscious of their coffee-drinking behaviours, such as keeping an eye on how much caffeine they take in.

Openness to Experience: Having an appreciation for art and culture as well as being willing to try new things are linked to being open to experiencing new things. People with high openness levels could choose coffee in a more daring way, tasting different varieties or going to unusual coffee shops. Additionally, they can be more curious with the cultural facets of coffee consumption, like discovering the origins and brewing techniques of coffee.

Taking everything into account, these psychological traits can influence how people approach and engage in social interactions involving coffee. Researchers can learn more about how personality influences social behaviour and coffee consumption patterns, as well as how these aspects affect people's general well-being and social experiences, by analysing these characteristics.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Broughton and Payne (2020) highlight the impact of social resources and support on individuals' health during leisure activities (Cho, Martin, & Poon, 2015). House (1981) suggests that social networks, support, and ties significantly influence health, relationships, and stress levels. Research emphasizes the importance of maintaining interpersonal relationships, such as friendships, companionship, and dependability, for health and longevity (Cherry et al., 2013; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). Despite this, the hobbies, social support, and health of elderly men have been underexplored. The males in coffee clubs often exchange important social support, including instrumental, informational, emotional, and appraisal help. Support from friends and family is crucial for health and wellbeing (VonDras & Madey, 2004), and its impact on older men's wellbeing is significant. These findings suggest that social engagement and relationships contribute to older persons' success in later life (Steptoe & Fancourt, 2019). Recreation managers can utilize this knowledge by providing opportunities for informal

socialization among older individuals, such as drop-in areas, card and board games, and other social gatherings.

Qureshi et al., (2022) found a strong link between coffee consumption and a lower risk of depression but did not find a connection with psychological well-being. They studied the long-term relationship between coffee intake and improved psychological well-being, as well as the reverse relationship. The study involved women from the Nurses' Health Study and assessed their coffee consumption from 1990 to 2002 in relation to sustained levels of optimism and happiness from 2004 to 2012 and 1992 to 2000, respectively. Moderate coffee consumption (1-3 cups/day) was not related to happiness compared to minimal consumption, but high consumption (≥ 4 cups/day) was linked to a 3% reduced likelihood of sustained happiness. Moderate coffee intake was marginally associated with a higher chance of prolonged optimism. High optimism, but not happiness, was somewhat linked with maintaining a moderate coffee intake. Overall, the study found mostly weak correlations between coffee consumption and psychological well-being over 20 years, suggesting that while coffee may have a limited effect on psychological well-being, it might help protect against depression.

Samoggia et al., (2020) discuss coffee's evolution into a niche commodity, emphasizing its role in enjoyment, experience, lifestyle, and social status. The emotional aspects of coffee consumption have been underexplored. The study aimed to understand the feelings and routines associated with coffee consumption, reasons for drinking or not drinking coffee, and the impact of perceived health benefits on coffee consumption decisions. Through 467 in-person interviews in Portugal and Italy, the study found that coffee consumption is associated with positive emotions such as energy, pleasure, and satisfaction. Differences between the two

countries were minimal, and socioeconomic factors had little impact on emotions and purchasing intentions related to coffee. Understanding these emotional and functional aspects of coffee drinking is crucial for developing and commercializing new coffee products.

Ufer et al., (2019) discuss the rise of specialty coffee driven by nuanced customer demands. To optimize producer marketing strategies, understanding the sources of variation in consumer preferences is crucial. The study focuses on consumer personality profiles, particularly the Big Six traits, and their impact on willingness to pay for coffee from farmer cooperatives. Findings from a field trial using the Midlife Development Inventory reveal that consumers are willing to pay an extra \$1.31 for pour-over coffee from cooperative member farmers. Higher agency is linked to a reduced willingness to pay, while extraverted and conscientious consumers are more willing to pay a premium. The study suggests that intrinsic consumer attributes, like personality traits, play a significant role in purchase decisions, sometimes even more so than sociodemographic factors.

Lara (2015) discusses the association between personality traits like impulsivity, sensation seeking, and novelty seeking, and addiction to psychoactive substances. While some studies suggest a link between these traits and high coffee and caffeine intake, they often do not consider other caffeine sources or smoking. Overall, there is limited correlation between coffee consumption and personality traits. However, more immature and impulsive traits are correlated with cola consumption. Caffeine seems to benefit extroverted and impulsive individuals in terms of cognitive performance. Despite the potential for caffeine to counteract low energy levels during the circadian cycle, people tend to consume more coffee when they

are active. Regular caffeinated coffee consumption may also offer some protection against suicide, cognitive decline, and depressive symptoms.

Prati & Pietrantonio, (2010) states that numerous ideas exist to bolster the idea that social support has a protective effect following potentially traumatic situations. This meta-analytic evaluation looked at how first responders—firefighters, police officers, paramedics, and other emergency medical services personnel—perceived and received social assistance in relation to their mental health. The 37 empirical studies' effect sizes, according to the results, ranged from 0 to 0.46. With a weighted mean of 0.27, the total effect size was of modest magnitude. Additionally, moderator analysis revealed that received social support ($r=0.22$) had a much smaller effect size than perceived social support ($r=0.31$).

Topik (2009) notes that coffee, being the most popular legal drug globally, is among the most consumed and traded commodities worldwide. Its journey to this status has been complex, influenced by its medicinal properties and varied social roles. Originating in Africa in the late 1400s, coffee cultivation spread to various continents, including East Asia, Latin America, Arabia, and East Africa. Today, it is grown on every continent except Antarctica. Coffee's globalization has transformed it into a social drug with diverse roles in different social contexts, ethnicities, religions, symbolic rituals, cuisines, and environments. This historical ubiquity has earned it the nickname "the great pretender," as it has been more than just a passive observer in human history but an active player, using humans as vehicles for its global spread.

Gurpegui et al., (2007) aimed to investigate the relationship between personality, caffeine intake, and smoking effects. They surveyed 498 adults using a self-questionnaire covering sociodemographic factors, tobacco and caffeine intake, and the Temperament and Character

Inventory (TCI-125) to assess personality. After adjusting for smoking effects, they found that high caffeine consumption (>200 mg/day) was associated with the temperamental characteristic of novelty seeking (adjusted OR=2.0; 95% CI: 1.1-3.9) using logistic regression analysis. Even after adjusting for caffeine use, smoking (adjusted OR=1.8; 95% CI: 1.1-2.9) and heavy smoking (>20 cigarettes/day) (adjusted OR=1.8; 95% CI: 1.0-3.7) were both associated with novelty seeking.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To explore the relationships between coffee consumption habits, personality traits (specifically extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), and perceived social support.

Research Objective

- To examine the relationship between coffee consumption habits and personality traits, including extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness and openness to experience.
- To assess the perceived social support of individuals and how it relates to their coffee consumption habits and personality traits.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant positive relationship between coffee consumption and the individual's perceived social support, such that higher levels of coffee consumption will be associated with higher levels of perceived social support.
- There will be a significant relationship between coffee consumption and individual's personality traits.

Research Design

Cross-sectional study, using self-report questionnaires to assess coffee consumption, perceived social support, and personality traits. Statistical analysis, such as correlation and t-test, will be used to examine the relationships between variables. Utilizing a quantitative approach, the study will involve administering validated scales including Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and NEO- Five Factor Inventory along with a coffee consumption survey to a convenience Sample of 100 adults.

Sample

There were 100 adult Indians in the sample, over 18 years of age. There were 60 male and 40 female participants. Every participant admitted to having tried coffee at least once in their life time. The sampling methods that are employed are convenience sampling, which involves choosing participants who are available and willing to participate, random sampling, which selects samples at random, snowball sampling, which asks participants to refer their answers to others, and purposeful sampling, which chooses participants based on

predetermined characteristics or criteria, like age and prior experience with coffee consumption.

Tools

- **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS):** The MSPSS is a 12-item self-report questionnaire that assesses perceived social support from friends, family, and significant others. Each subscale (family, friends, significant others) contains four items rated on a 7-point Likert scale. It measures perceived availability of social support, showing good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.85-0.91) and test-retest reliability (0.75). The scale also demonstrates good construct validity, distinguishing between varying levels of perceived social support, and concurrent validity by correlating significantly with related measures.
- **NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI):** The NEO-FFI is a widely used personality assessment tool based on the Five-Factor Model (FFM), which describes personality in terms of five major dimensions. These dimensions are Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. The NEO-FFI has good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.70-0.80) and test-retest reliability (0.80-0.90 over 6 weeks to 2 years). It also shows good construct validity, distinguishing between individuals with different personality profiles, and concurrent validity by correlating significantly with other personality measures.
- **YouGov Daily,** part of the international research group YouGov, conducts surveys on various topics including politics, social issues, and consumer behaviour, with a focus on coffee consumption. These surveys gather data on coffee preferences, habits, and attitudes, including frequency of consumption, preferred types of coffee, and where coffee is typically consumed. The insights from YouGov Daily surveys offer valuable

information on coffee consumption patterns and trends across different countries, cultures, and demographics, aiding businesses, legislators, and researchers in understanding consumer behaviour and preferences related to coffee.

Brief of the Study

Coffee's Psychological and Social Impact: Coffee is more than a beverage; it significantly influences cultural norms and social interactions. Understanding the correlation between personality traits, perceived social support, and coffee consumption can illuminate its psychological and social benefits. People drink coffee for various reasons influenced by their personalities, impacting their social interactions and providing insight into its effects on relationships and behaviour. Coffee's ability to enhance mood and cognitive function affects how individuals interact socially, influencing their perceived social support and well-being. This research aims to deepen our understanding of coffee's role in social interactions and overall well-being by revealing the complex relationships between personality traits, perceived social support, and coffee consumption, potentially informing public health and social policies.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of study variables

		Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Neuroticism	36.11	4.79
2	Extraversion	38.16	5.64
3	Openness	35.98	4.78
4	Agreeableness	36.67	4.68
5	Conscientiousness	37.70	5.92

6	Significant others PSS	1.79	.47
7	Family PSS	4.63	1.23
8	Friends PSS	4.73	1.21
9	Total perceived social support	4.64	.98

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all the study variables – Personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness), Total perceived social support (Significant others, Family, Friends).

The descriptive statistics provided in Table 1 offer valuable insights into the characteristics of the study variables related to personality traits and perceived social support. Here's a detailed interpretation of the results: Neuroticism: The mean score for neuroticism is 36.11, with a standard deviation of 4.79. This suggests that, on average, participants in the study exhibit moderate levels of neuroticism. Extraversion: The mean score for extraversion is 38.16, with a standard deviation of 5.64. This indicates that, on average, participants exhibit moderate to high levels of extraversion. Openness: The mean score for openness is 35.98, with a standard deviation of 4.78. This suggests that, on average, participants exhibit moderate levels of openness to experience.

Table 2

Pearson's correlation between study variables

	Coffee drinking habit
Neuroticism	-.04
Extraversion	-.01
Openness	-.12
Agreeableness	-.01

Conscientiousness	-.04
Significant others_PSS	.11
Family_PSS	.26**
Friends_PSS	.28**
Total perceived social support	.27**

***Correlation is significant at 0.01 level*

Table 2 represents the coefficient of correlation between Coffee drinking habit and academic Personality [Neuroticism ($r = -0.04$), Extraversion ($r = -0.01$), Openness ($r = -0.12$), Agreeableness ($r = -0.01$), Conscientiousness ($r = -0.04$)], Total perceived social support ($r = 0.27$), [Significant others ($r = 0.11$), Family ($r = 0.26$), Friends ($r = 0.28$)].

The association between Coffee drinking habit and Total perceived social support (along with the two dimensions - Family, Friends) is significant and positive. Significant others dimension of perceived social support was not significant and positive.

The association between Coffee drinking habit and Personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness) is not significant and negative.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate how coffee consumption habits relate to personality traits (including extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), as well as perceived social support (friends, family and significant others).

The objective of the study was to examine the correlations between coffee consumption habits with personality traits and perceived social support and to further understand how these variables are related to each other and whether there are any significant associations that could

provide insights into the role of coffee consumption in social interactions and individual well-being.

The tools used in this research included the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to measure perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. Additionally, the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) was used to assess personality traits, including extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. These tools provided a standardized and validated way to measure the variables of interest, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study's findings. Along with that a coffee survey was also conducted on the sample of 100 adults to examine their coffee drinking habits.

Based on the correlation coefficients provided in Table 2 and the hypotheses H1 and H2, the following interpretations can be made:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There will be a significant positive relationship between coffee consumption and the individual's perceived social support, such that higher levels of coffee consumption will be associated with higher levels of perceived social support.

The correlation coefficients show that there is a significant positive relationship between coffee drinking habit and total perceived social support ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), as well as with family PSS ($r = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) and friends PSS ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$). This supports hypothesis H1, indicating that higher levels of coffee consumption are associated with higher levels of perceived social support from family and friends.

The finding that higher levels of coffee consumption are associated with higher levels of perceived social support from family and friends suggests several potential benefits and implications. Firstly, it indicates that coffee drinking may serve as a social activity that fosters connections and strengthens relationships with loved ones. This social aspect of coffee

consumption can contribute to improved mental well-being, as strong social support is linked to lower levels of stress and better overall health. Additionally, the association highlights the potential for coffee-related settings, such as cafes, to serve as environments that facilitate social interactions and support networks. Understanding this relationship can help inform interventions aimed at enhancing social support and promoting mental health through social activities like coffee drinking.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): There will be a significant relationship between coffee consumption and individual's personality traits.

The correlation coefficients between coffee drinking habit and the Big Five personality traits (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness) are all close to zero and negative, indicating no significant relationship between coffee consumption and personality traits in this study sample. This does not support hypothesis H2, suggesting that coffee consumption is not significantly related to any of the personality traits measured in this study.

In conclusion, the results provide support for hypothesis H1, indicating that higher levels of coffee consumption are associated with higher levels of perceived social support from family and friends. However, hypothesis H2 is not supported, as there is no significant relationship between coffee consumption and personality traits in this study sample.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between coffee consumption habits, personality traits (including extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), and perceived social support (from friends, family, and significant others). Utilizing the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) as measurement tools,

alongside a coffee survey, the study sought to understand the interplay of these variables and their implications for social interactions and individual well-being.

The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between coffee consumption and perceived social support, particularly from family and friends. This suggests that individuals who consume more coffee may experience higher levels of support from their social networks, which can have beneficial effects on mental well-being and overall quality of life. The association between coffee consumption and perceived social support highlights the potential role of coffee-related activities in fostering social connections and enhancing social support networks.

However, contrary to expectations, the study did not find a significant relationship between coffee consumption and personality traits. This suggests that while coffee consumption may be associated with social support, it may not be strongly linked to personality characteristics such as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience.

These findings have several implications for research and practice. They underscore the importance of social support in relation to coffee consumption habits and suggest that interventions aimed at promoting social support may benefit from incorporating coffee-related activities. Additionally, the study highlights the complexity of factors influencing coffee consumption behaviour and the need for further research to understand the underlying mechanisms.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on coffee consumption and social support, providing valuable insights into the relationship between these variables. Further research is warranted to explore the nuances of this relationship and its implications for individual well-being and social functioning.

Limitations

The sample size of 100 adults may not represent the broader population, limiting generalizability. The cross-sectional design prevents establishing causality between variables, suggesting a need for longitudinal studies. Self-report measures for coffee consumption, personality traits, and social support introduce potential bias. The study's focus on specific variables and exclusion of other relevant factors, along with the potential for social desirability bias, further limit its scope. Additionally, the study did not explore the context of coffee consumption or control for extraneous variables. Despite these limitations, the research sheds light on the intricate relationship between coffee consumption, personality traits, and perceived social support, suggesting avenues for future studies to address these limitations.

Future Implications

The implications of this research are broad, guiding future studies and interventions in several key areas. Firstly, it suggests that promoting social interactions over coffee could enhance social support networks, benefiting mental health. Secondly, café environments could be optimized to facilitate social connections, attracting customers seeking social support. Thirdly, interventions promoting social support and mental health could integrate coffee-related activities, such as coffee socialization groups. Fourthly, future research could delve into the mechanisms linking coffee consumption, personality traits, and social support, potentially through longitudinal studies. Fifthly, personalized interventions targeting specific personality traits or social support needs could be developed. Lastly, public health policies could consider the role of social support in coffee consumption habits and mental health, potentially leading to policies promoting social interactions and support networks for better health outcomes.

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