

Student On-Campus Coffee Drinking Habits Among Post-Graduate Students in Thailand

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Abstract

This study examines the coffee drinking habits of post-graduate students in an international program at a university in Thailand. With the increasing popularity of coffee culture among students worldwide, understanding coffee consumption on campus is important for its role in academic and social life. The research focuses on the frequency of coffee consumption, preferred locations, and the impact of coffee on study habits. A 15-item Likert scale questionnaire was administered to 20 post-graduate students to assess their coffee habits and its potential effect on productivity and social interactions. The results show that coffee consumption plays a significant role in both academic and social settings, with students reporting improved focus and relaxation as benefits. Some students, however, expressed concerns about the health risks associated with excessive coffee consumption.

Keywords: *Coffee consumption, Post-graduate students, Study habits, Social interactions, Productivity, Health effects*

Introduction

Coffee has been a common feature on university campuses, offering students a quick source of caffeine for late-night study sessions and early morning lectures. For many post-graduate students, coffee is more than a beverage; it is a social ritual, a source of comfort, and a tool for productivity. The growing presence of coffee shops on and around university campuses has made coffee consumption a regular part of students' routines. These establishments provide spaces for social interaction and relaxation, while also supporting focused study and concentration.

The relationship between coffee consumption and academic performance has been a subject of interest in recent years, with research suggesting that moderate caffeine intake may enhance focus, alertness, and cognitive function (Patton, 2022). For many students, coffee is a vital part of their academic journey. Coffee shops, both on and off-campus, have become spaces where students can engage in study groups, take a break, or network with peers (Mocha's and Javas, 2022). The casual, yet focused, environment of a coffee shop can promote concentration and help mitigate stress, making it an attractive study venue for students.

This study investigates the coffee drinking habits of post-graduate students enrolled in an international program at a university in Thailand. Coffee consumption has become deeply embedded in the daily routines of students worldwide, especially in academic environments. With its widespread popularity, understanding how coffee consumption affects students' academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being is critical. This research addresses a gap in understanding how coffee consumption influences study habits, productivity, and social engagement among post-graduate students.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform university policies and initiatives aimed at improving the student experience. As coffee is often associated with both academic performance and social interactions, exploring students' consumption patterns can provide valuable insights into how these habits impact productivity, focus, and stress levels. Additionally, understanding students' concerns about the health effects of excessive coffee intake can guide universities in developing strategies to promote healthy consumption behaviors. Ultimately, this research can contribute to the design of campus spaces and services that enhance both the academic and social environments for students.

Literature Review

The issue of caffeine consumption among college students has garnered increasing attention due to concerns regarding its potential health implications, particularly the combined use of energy drinks and alcohol. Several studies have examined the role of caffeine in students' academic and personal lives, providing valuable insights into consumption patterns, associated health risks, and the influence on study habits.

Lee et al. (2013) investigated the dietary habits and caffeine consumption of 190 college students in Incheon, South Korea. The study grouped participants into three categories based on their caffeine intake to assess nutrient intake and dietary quality. The findings revealed that most students consumed coffee daily, with males averaging 156.8 mL and females 157.4 mL.

Popular coffee drinks included caramel macchiatos, café lattes, and americanos, with slight gender preferences. Students with higher caffeine intake exhibited greater emotional and utilitarian motivations for drinking coffee, particularly related to flavor and the prevention of sleepiness. Moreover, the study found a positive correlation between coffee intake and the use of nutrition labels, especially among female participants. These results highlight the need for nutrition education about the impact of coffee consumption on overall dietary habits.

Viado (2024) explored the perceived effects of coffee consumption on study habits at Cavite State University, surveying 208 students. The study found that a majority of students consumed coffee daily, with 76.44% drinking coffee regularly and 57.21% preferring both hot and cold types. Most students believed that coffee positively affected cognitive function, energy levels, productivity, and mood during study sessions. However, some students reported experiencing dependency and withdrawal symptoms, emphasizing the potential negative consequences of excessive coffee consumption. The study suggests that coffee is an integral part of students' academic lives but calls for further research on its potential risks, particularly concerning dependency.

Svikis et al. (2022) examined the associations between caffeine consumption (from both energy drinks and coffee) and substance use behaviors among 1,986 college freshmen. The study found that students consuming both energy drinks and coffee were more likely to exhibit symptoms of alcohol dependence, engage in risky behaviors, and have a family history of substance abuse or mental health issues. The study concluded that caffeine use, particularly from energy drinks combined with coffee, may contribute to higher rates of substance use and problem behaviors, highlighting the importance of considering both sources of caffeine when studying their effects on health and risky behaviors.

Stachyshyn et al. (2021) assessed the caffeine consumption habits of 317 New Zealand tertiary students. Nearly all participants consumed caffeinated products regularly, with coffee, tea, and chocolate being the most common sources. The study found that one-third of participants consumed caffeine levels above the threshold for adverse health effects, and 14.3% exceeded the recommended safe daily limit of 400 mg. Despite experiencing adverse symptoms, such as distress or negative impacts on daily life, most participants did not reduce their caffeine intake. This suggests that public health initiatives targeting tertiary students may be necessary to mitigate the potential harms associated with excessive caffeine consumption.

The consumption of coffee and caffeinated beverages among university students has emerged as a significant area of research, with studies examining various factors that influence drinking behaviors, associated health risks, and cultural variations in consumption patterns.

This literature review synthesizes findings from multiple studies conducted across different geographical locations and cultural contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of coffee consumption patterns among young adults in academic settings.

Cross-cultural research by Yan and Li (2016) examined factors affecting coffee consumption among university students in Sweden and China, revealing that both external factors such as culture, price, and social influences, as well as internal factors including personality, psychological influences, learning, and knowledge, significantly impact consumer behaviors. Their mixed-methods study demonstrated distinct consumption characteristics across different cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of understanding local consumer preferences for effective market penetration. The study particularly emphasized price as a crucial determinant in coffee selection, suggesting that affordability remains a primary consideration for student consumers across different economic contexts.

The relationship between beverage consumption patterns and lifestyle factors has been extensively documented in research conducted among Korean university students. Kim et al. (2011) investigated commercial beverage consumption patterns among 407 male university students, categorizing participants into rare, moderate, and frequent consumption groups based on weekly serving frequencies. Their findings revealed that frequent consumers of commercial beverages, including coffee, were more likely to engage in problematic dietary behaviors such as frequent snacking, meal skipping, eating out, consuming processed foods, and drinking alcoholic beverages. This pattern suggests that high coffee consumption may be part of a broader constellation of lifestyle choices that could impact overall nutritional quality and health outcomes.

The health implications of coffee consumption among students extend beyond dietary considerations to encompass broader risk behaviors and physical health indicators. Research conducted at Universitas Airlangga by Gizi et al. (2023) found significant correlations between coffee drinking habits and blood pressure among student organization members, alongside associations with nutritional status and high sodium diet consumption. This cross-sectional study of 80 students highlighted the potential cardiovascular implications of coffee consumption, particularly when combined with other dietary risk factors common among university populations.

Further evidence of coffee consumption as part of a cluster of risk behaviors emerges from research conducted among Romanian medical students. Goția et al. (2013) found that 58.34% of surveyed students consumed coffee regularly, with higher incidence rates among female students compared to males. Their study revealed that coffee consumption often co-occurred

with other risk behaviors including smoking, irregular eating patterns, and sedentary lifestyle choices. The researchers noted that students frequently lacked regular meal schedules and predominantly consumed fast food, suggesting that coffee consumption may serve as a compensatory behavior for inadequate nutrition or irregular lifestyle patterns.

The distinction between different types of caffeinated beverages and their associated behavioral correlates has been explored in research comparing energy drink and coffee consumption patterns. Kelly and Prichard (2016) conducted a comprehensive study of 159 university students, comparing high-end energy drink consumers with frequent coffee drinkers. Their findings revealed significant differences between these two groups, with high-end energy drink consumers demonstrating more risk-taking behaviors, including increased drug and alcohol use, less frequent seat belt use, and greater sleep disturbances. In contrast, frequent coffee drinkers did not show significantly different patterns of risk behaviors, sleep disturbances, or mental illness diagnoses compared to the general population, suggesting that coffee consumption may represent a less problematic form of caffeine intake among university students.

Recent research conducted among Indonesian university students has further illuminated the social and environmental factors influencing coffee consumption patterns. Ramadhiani et al. (2023) found that 52.5% of surveyed non-health undergraduate students demonstrated high levels of coffee drink consumption, defined as three to four times per week or more. Their analysis identified peer influence as the dominant factor affecting consumption levels, alongside smoking behavior, availability of coffee at home, and accessibility factors. This finding underscores the significant role of social networks and environmental availability in shaping consumption behaviors among young adults.

The body of literature consistently demonstrates that coffee consumption among university students is influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, social, economic, and personal factors. Studies reveal concerning associations between high coffee consumption and various health and behavioral risk factors, including poor dietary habits, irregular eating patterns, elevated blood pressure, and engagement in other risk behaviors. However, research also suggests important distinctions between different types of caffeinated beverages, with coffee consumption appearing less problematic than energy drink use in terms of associated risk behaviors.

The prevalence of coffee consumption among university students across different cultural contexts appears remarkably consistent, with studies reporting rates ranging from approximately 36% to 75% depending on the specific population and measurement criteria

employed. Cultural factors play a significant role in consumption patterns, as evidenced by the differences observed between Swedish and Chinese students, while economic factors such as price sensitivity remain important considerations across different contexts.

The literature highlights several areas requiring attention in future research and intervention development. The social nature of coffee consumption, particularly the influence of peer networks and social acceptance, suggests that intervention strategies should consider group-based approaches rather than focusing solely on individual behavior change. Additionally, the association between coffee consumption and broader lifestyle patterns indicates that comprehensive health promotion programs may be more effective than targeted interventions focusing exclusively on caffeine intake.

Educational implications emerge from these findings, particularly the observation that many students remain unaware of caffeine content in various beverages and may not recognize the potential health implications of their consumption patterns. The consistent association between coffee consumption and irregular eating patterns, poor dietary quality, and other risk behaviors suggests that coffee drinking may serve as an indicator of broader lifestyle issues that warrant attention in student health and wellness programs.

Together, these studies emphasize the widespread consumption of caffeine among college students, its impact on academic performance, and the potential risks associated with excessive intake. While caffeine, particularly in coffee, is commonly consumed for its cognitive and mood-enhancing effects, there is growing evidence that excessive consumption may contribute to dependency and other health-related concerns. Public health strategies that address these issues, including education on moderation and healthier alternatives, could help reduce potential harms linked to caffeine consumption among students.

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach to assess the coffee drinking habits of 20 post-graduate students enrolled in an international program at a university in Thailand. The sample size was chosen to reflect a small, yet representative group of students who regularly consume coffee on campus. Participants were selected through convenience sampling from a pool of students who volunteered to participate in the study. The study sample consisted of 20 post-graduate students (12 male, 8 female). The students were from diverse cultural backgrounds, with a mix of Thai and international students. All participants were aged between 22 and 35 years.

Data were collected through an online 15-item Likert scale questionnaire, which was designed to gather information on participants' coffee consumption habits, preferences, and perceptions. The questionnaire covered topics such as the frequency of coffee consumption, preferred locations for drinking coffee, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of drinking coffee in relation to academic performance. The responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was distributed via email, and participants were given one week to complete it. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns in coffee drinking habits.

Results and Discussion

The study identified several key findings regarding the coffee consumption habits of 20 post-graduate students enrolled in an international program at a university in Thailand.

Regarding the frequency of coffee consumption, 90% of participants reported drinking coffee at least once a day, with 40% consuming it two or more times daily. Only 10% consumed coffee occasionally, typically once or twice a week.

In terms of preferred locations for drinking coffee, 75% of students favored on-campus coffee shops or study lounges, while 25% preferred off-campus cafes or drinking coffee at home.

The perceived benefits of coffee consumption were also notable. A majority, 80%, believed that coffee helped improve focus and maintain alertness during study sessions. Additionally, 60% of participants viewed coffee as a social tool, often drinking it with classmates or colleagues during breaks or after lectures.

In terms of productivity, 70% of students reported feeling more productive after drinking coffee. Furthermore, 55% felt that coffee helped reduce stress levels during periods of heavy academic workload.

Health considerations emerged as a concern for some participants. Half of the students, 50%, expressed worries about the potential health effects of excessive coffee consumption. Additionally, 40% made efforts to limit their coffee intake to avoid negative effects such as anxiety or sleep disturbances.

Lastly, regarding coffee preferences, 65% of students preferred espresso-based drinks, such as lattes and cappuccinos, while 35% favored regular drip coffee or instant coffee.

The results of this study indicate that coffee consumption is an integral part of the daily routine for many post-graduate students in Thailand. The majority of participants reported

drinking coffee at least once a day, and on-campus coffee shops were the preferred locations for coffee consumption. This reflects the broader global trend of coffee shops serving as informal study spaces, where students can focus, collaborate, and relax (Arriaga, 2021).

The reported benefits of coffee, particularly its role in enhancing focus and productivity, are consistent with existing literature that suggests moderate caffeine consumption can improve cognitive function and concentration (Patton, 2022). For many students, coffee is not only a tool for academic performance but also a social activity. The finding that 60% of students use coffee as a social tool suggests that coffee drinking serves as an important avenue for networking and building relationships within the academic community (Mocha's and Javas, 2022).

However, the concerns raised by some students about the potential health effects of excessive coffee consumption warrant attention. Although coffee is widely consumed for its stimulating effects, overconsumption can lead to negative side effects, such as increased anxiety, sleep disruption, and dependence (Patel, & Pownal, 2024). Universities could play a role in educating students about the healthy consumption of coffee and providing alternative, non-caffeinated beverages in study spaces.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed for university administrators, student support services, and future students to enhance the on-campus academic and social experience. These recommendations aim to leverage the positive aspects of coffee culture while addressing the concerns highlighted by students.

Thai universities should consider creating more designated coffee and study zones on campus. These spaces could be designed to promote a balance between focused work and social interaction. For example, some areas could be designated as quiet zones for individual study, while others could be designed to facilitate group work and social gatherings. This would acknowledge the dual role of coffee in academic life and provide students with a variety of environments to suit their needs.

To address students' concerns about the health risks of excessive coffee consumption, universities could launch awareness campaigns or provide educational materials on responsible caffeine intake. These initiatives could be part of broader wellness programs and could offer information on healthy hydration, sleep hygiene, and alternative ways to boost energy and focus. Providing a wider range of healthy, non-caffeinated beverage options in on-campus cafes and vending machines would also offer students more choices.

Finally, for post-graduate students, a proactive approach to managing their coffee consumption is recommended. Students should be encouraged to monitor their intake and pay

attention to how coffee affects their sleep and stress levels. Utilizing on-campus resources, such as health and wellness centers, can provide additional support and guidance. By consciously integrating coffee into their routine, students can maximize its benefits for productivity and social engagement while minimizing potential negative health impacts.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This research provides valuable insights into the coffee drinking habits of post-graduate students in Thailand, highlighting the significant role that coffee plays in both academic and social contexts. Coffee consumption is highly prevalent among students, with many citing its benefits for focus, productivity, and socializing. However, concerns about the potential health effects of excessive coffee intake suggest that universities should consider promoting balanced coffee consumption and offering alternative beverages to support students' overall well-being.

Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of coffee consumption on post-graduate students' academic performance, especially the potential risks of excessive caffeine intake. A longitudinal study tracking cognitive and academic outcomes over a semester or academic year would offer valuable information on the sustained impact of coffee on focus and productivity.

Research could also explore the relationship between coffee consumption and overall health, specifically its effects on sleep, stress, and mental health. It would be useful to compare students who limit their caffeine intake with those who consume larger amounts to assess any differences in stress management and academic performance.

Additionally, future studies could examine the role of coffee in social interactions. Since many students reported drinking coffee as a social activity, understanding how coffee consumption influences networking and academic collaboration would be beneficial. Research could explore whether social coffee consumption affects academic success and relationships among post-graduate students.

Research may also focus on the effectiveness of educational programs designed to promote healthy coffee consumption. Investigating how universities can educate students about the risks of excessive coffee consumption and offer non-caffeinated alternatives could improve student well-being and reduce negative side effects such as anxiety and sleep disturbances.

Finally, cross-cultural studies comparing coffee consumption habits among post-graduate students from different regions would be valuable. Examining how cultural differences

influence coffee consumption could provide a broader understanding of the impact of caffeine on students' academic lives.

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