

Humane Coffee: Meaning Symbolic Interaction of a Cup of Coffee

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Abstract

Coffee is like a human figure who tolerates its connoisseurs. Coffee communicates and gives social meaning. Coffee not only has a meaning as a daily drink, but coffee also has the meaning of something else for its connoisseurs. This study aims to reveal coffee tolerance among its connoisseurs so as to produce social meanings. Research data was obtained through observation and interviews with respondents (café visitors and tourists). This paper concludes that coffee tolerance and its connoisseurs produce social meanings for its connoisseurs: coffee is identity, inspiration, love, solution, passion, friend, motivation, cooperation, change, and cohesion.

Keywords: *coffee symbolic interaction, communication, coffee tolerance, humane coffee.*

INTRODUCTION

Coffee is second only to water and one of the most consumed beverages worldwide. Since its invention, coffee has been a beverage served in homes, cafes, and restaurants. Global coffee consumption has increased, especially in coffee-drinking countries in Africa, Asia, and Oceania (4.1%). Demand in traditional markets grew by 1% in Europe and 2.5% in North America. Consumers are interested in the quality and origin of coffee products, as well as social, environmental, and economic sustainability. The pleasure of coffee produces the world community to consume coffee every day (Samoggia and Riedel, 2019). Based on data from the International Coffee Organization (ICO), global coffee consumption reached 166 million bags measuring 60 kilograms (kg) in the 2021 period. The amount of consumption has increased by 1% compared to 2019, with 164.2 million bags (Naurah, 2023). ICO reported that the highest coffee consumption rates in the world are in Europe and America. The volume of coffee consumption in Europe was recorded at 54 million bags in 2021. Meanwhile, the volume of coffee consumption in the Americas region, if totaled (North America, South America, Central America, and Mexico), reached 63.53 million bags in 2021 (Santika, 2023).

The consumption of coffee has become a traditional culture, in addition to having a material function (coffee enjoyment) but also having a social function. In Finland, with an increase in coffee consumption of 2.64 cups per day, the culture of coffee breaks is

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mandatory for all workers. In Norway, with 7.2 kg of coffee per capita, or an average of two cups daily, coffee had become the most popular drink among aristocrats in the early 18th century, and until now, Norwegians have had the habit of inviting friends (relatives) to drink coffee at home. In the Netherlands, with 6.7 kg per capita, or an average of 1.84 cups per day, people know the term 'koffietijd' (coffee time) as a symbol of the habit of consuming coffee. In Slovenia, with 6.1 kg per capita, or equivalent to 1.68 cups per day per person, people have the habit of drinking coffee in cafes, which they call kavarana. In Australia, it is 5.5 kg, or the equivalent of 1.51 cups per day. The culture of drinking coffee in Austrian society began in 1638, and coffee was served precisely with savory, sweet foods. Indonesia also knows the culture of coffee drinking traditions (Hasyim et al., 2020).

The culture of consuming coffee produces social meanings for its connoisseurs. Coffee has the meaning of something else that is human (Reyes, 2019). In addition to being a daily drink, coffee is also part of traditional culture. Coffee plays an important role in society because several cultural aspects are closely intertwined regarding social life, thus elevating values that still maintain a symbolic charge. Some societies place coffee as their cultural identity (Oktafarel et al., 2021).

For the Toraja ethnicity of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, coffee is not just a daily drink (Bigalke, 2006). However, coffee is part of traditional culture, especially at the death feast, called Rambusolo (Harususilo, 2022). Toraja coffee has a social function as a symbol of building and strengthening social interaction. The social function of Toraja coffee is realized by giving gifts to family, colleagues, and neighbors who will carry out the Rambusolo party. For example, when someone dies, the Torajan people (family, colleagues, and neighbors) come to visit with coffee as a form of condolences and kinship. Likewise, when the Rambusolo party is carried out, they have a tradition of bringing coffee as a gift (Hasyim et al., 2019).

The people of Sumatra Island, Indonesia, have a tradition of drinking coffee as part of traditional ritual ceremonies. Coffee has an important role in several indigenous traditions in Sumatra. In Minangkabau custom, drinking coffee is often done as part of traditional processions such as weddings, family gatherings, or other traditional ceremonies. Coffee is considered a drink that brings blessings and good luck in indigenous traditions. Drinking coffee for the people of Sumatra is not just about enjoying the rich taste of coffee; it also involves cultural values, traditions, and social closeness. Coffee drinking habits in Sumatra reflect togetherness, warmth, and a strong social life in the community. In every cup of coffee, there is a story and meaning that connects people and enriches everyday life (Asad, 2023).

Coffee can produce a story told by coffee lovers. This drink can tell a story based on the experience of consuming coffee by connoisseurs, and the public space that is a place to enjoy coffee is a café where visitors spend all day consuming coffee while doing routine work or discussing. The tradition of drinking coffee has undergone a shift from home to café (Ukers, 2009; Faisal & Hashim, 2022). The culture of drinking coffee strengthens one's identity, expresses certain values, and improves interpersonal bonding. The fulfillment of the meaning of coffee consumption culture began to take shape in a café, which was previously identified with eating, drinking, and gathering facilities. This has been changed to accommodate the self-actualization and socialization of urban communities. Café has become a public space for someone to achieve satisfaction, pride,

inspire ideas, discuss with others, self-actualize, show togetherness, and others (Jolliffe, 2011; Farasa & Kusuma, 2015).

With the increasing number of coffee drinkers in the world and the fact that it has become part of the cultural traditions of a country and various ethnicities, coffee has certain meanings. An interesting thing to examine from a semiotic perspective is coffee as a mythical language system. This paper aims to reveal the general view (social meaning) of coffee as not just coffee.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts qualitative research methods by applying observational methods and interviews (Moleong, 2007). The observation and interview method for this study aims to obtain information about the meaning of coffee connoisseurs attitudes towards coffee in public spaces (cafés). The interview method is to create a story in a form that has been provided online regarding their tolerance for coffee. Researchers prepared a fill-in format where coffee visitors wrote stories about the meaning of coffee. The study respondents were café visitors who consumed coffee.

The approach method used to analyze data is semiotics, a science that examines coffee as a sign system that refers to meaning as something else (Peirce, 1966). Coffee contains meaning on an informative level and a symbolic level (metaphorical connotations). The informative level is coffee, which means a daily drink. The symbolic level is that coffee has common views (social meanings) in society (Barthes, 1999).

Research data Characteristics

Based on the results of data collection through direct conservation and online questionnaire distribution, the number of respondents (coffee consumers in cafes) was 70. This data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires shows that there are 70 coffee stories told by respondents as coffee kinsmen. From 70 coffee stories as data, after going through the selection process and data analysis, 50 coffee stories were obtained.

The characteristics of the research data obtained are age, gender, and occupation (education). As stated in the table, 1.

Table 1. This study examines the characteristics of respondent data with respect to age, gender, and occupation, presented in percentages.

Gender	Man		Woman	
	56		44	
Age	16-25	25-34	35-44	45-54
	46	34	10	10
Education	SMA	Bachelor	Magsiter	Doctor
	54	40	4	2
Work	Mahaiswa	PNS	Employee	Entrepreneurial
	40	10	30	20

Based on the characteristics of respondent data (coffee consumers), respondents who consume coffee based on gender are 28% men and 22% women. This data shows that coffee connoisseurs in coffee shops (cafés) today also come from many women. Thus, the number of male and female coffee connoisseurs is balanced by 22-28%.

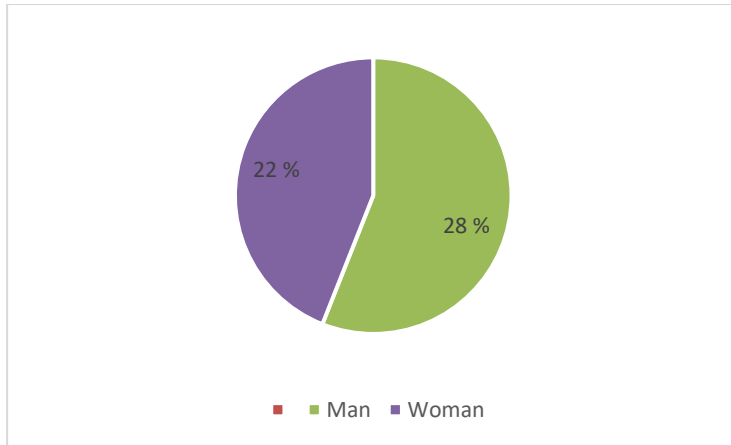


Figure 1. Number of coffee consumers by gender

Coffee consumers have the habit of consuming coffee every day (in a glass) for an average of 3 cups per day. Based on the results of this study, of the 50 respondents who made coffee stories, the average amount of coffee consumed per day (glass) was 1 glass, amounting to 4%; 2 glasses, 3 glasses, 52%; 4 glasses, 6%; 5 glasses, 10%; and 6 glasses, 2%.

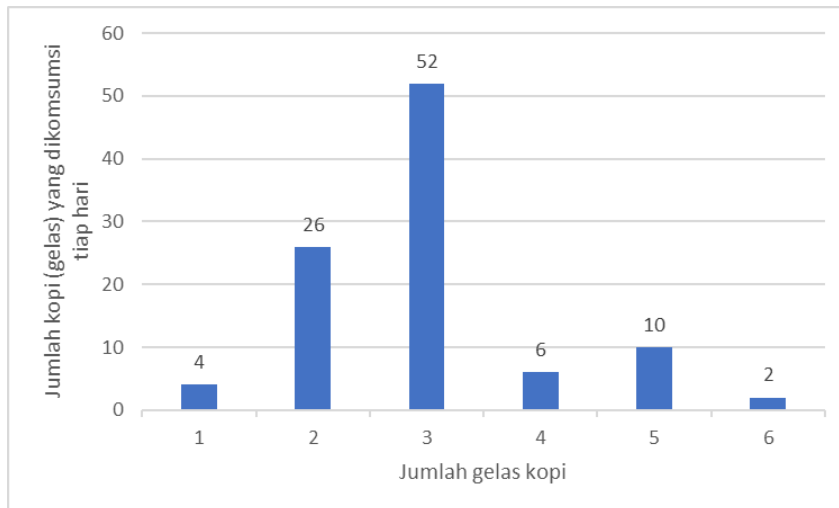


Figure 2. Number of coffees per day (in %)

From this data, it can be concluded that as many as 50% more coffee consumers drink coffee, as much as three cups per day. Furthermore, regarding places to enjoy coffee drinks, almost 100% of them visit coffee shops (cafés). This means that coffee shops (cafés) have become public spaces to consume coffee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Coffee Story

This study produced 20 (see Table 2) coffee story themes obtained from coffee consumers. This coffee story is the result of consumer tolerance to coffee, stories of experiences obtained by consumers related to daily activities (education, work, activities related to hobbies, etc.) while consuming coffee.

Table 2. Coffee story theme

No	Story theme
1	Toraja Black Coffee, Prayer Coffee
2	With him hurts, not being with him hurts much more
3	An addictive taste, for addicts
4.	When sipping coffee passes through the tongue
5.	Coffee is <i>magic</i>
6.	Without you my spirit would be lost
7.	Coffee and Tranquility
8.	Coffee companions
9.	No writing without coffee
10	Love Coffee
11	Bitter taste, yet gives pleasure
12.	Coffee, I love you
13.	Coffee and I have a story
14.	Coffee is a convenience
15.	Coffee, Bullies, being Friends
16.	Coffee is one of the spirits to start the day
17.	Black But Sweet in the Right People
18	Loved coffee to the end
19	Coffee is heaven
20	Coffee refreshes the mind

Toraja Black Coffee, as medicine (prayer)

The coffee story themed Toraja black coffee as medicine (prayer) is a coffee story associated with the meaning of black connotations in coffee. The color of the coffee drink is black. The black color in coffee munes connotes by coffee connoisseurs (coffee consumers) darkness. Then the meaning of darkness is interpreted in prayer as a wish that a man (husband) who consumes black coffee drink is "dark" (cannot glance) at other women besides the wife.

With him, not being with him hurts much more.

Coffee stories themed with him sick and not being with him much more sick are associated with connoting coffee as a companion to life. The story begins with the aroma of coffee making him try drinking it. The fragrance made him fall in love. Starting from that experience, he always drank coffee. Because of his love for coffee, he always brings a thermos of coffee to work, so his friends call him Si Thermos Kopi. His favorite activity is that he refills five coffees in his thermos every day as a companion when doing various activities.

An addictive taste for addicts

Coffee stories have the theme of opium flavors for addicts. This coffee story connotes a best friend helping to remove various burdens. Coffee in this story has a metaphorical connotation; that is, coffee is associated with friends. The metaphorical relation of coffee as the target shutter and companion as the source shutter Friends as source shutters have the characteristics of loyalty (solidarity) attitudes, which then, through a metaphorical process, transfer meaning to coffee (meaning similarity). Coffee has the metaphorical meaning of loyal friends who will be loyal to those who consume coffee.

Coffee stories tell the story of a coffee connoisseur who tries to taste coffee as the first coffee is consumed. The coffee that tastes bitter and sweet is finally named. Since then, coffee has become his best friend to remove various burdens.

When sipping coffee, it passes through the tongue.

Coffee stories that have the theme that a sip of coffee passes through the tongue connotes the bitterness of life must be passed as the bitter taste of coffee passes through the tongue.

Coffee in this story has a metaphorical connotation, namely that the bitterness of coffee is associated with the bitterness of the life that must be lived.

The story of coffee tells the story of a coffee connoisseur realizing that sips of hitan coffee passing through the tongue make him realize that life is not always beautiful, not always sweet, nor always colorful, but sometimes humans also have to taste bitter and black humiliation. Indeed, the way of life gains balance from two different sides. The wheel of life is turning, sometimes above but also sometimes below, sometimes beautiful but also sometimes gray.

Coffee is magic

The coffee-themed story of magic connotes the disgrace of coffee, which can solve all problems. Coffee in this story has metaphorical connotations, namely the relationship between coffee and magic. Coffee is associated with magic, which has a commensurate meaning in coffee that has magic (magic). In an instant, the problem can be solved.

This coffee story tells the story of a coffee connoisseur realizing that coffee is not just an ordinary drink; drinks that have a distinctive aroma and black color provide a sensation and are pleasant. Without coffee, it feels like something is lacking in him. Black coffee is a mandatory item that he must buy and carry everywhere. When the head feels heavy, coffee can lighten and soothe it. For work matters, coffee is certainly the drink he is most looking for. This coffee drink is a magic that is always alluring anytime and anywhere, able to give a million spirits from every sip, provide warmth from every aroma, and provide healing when you are having headaches and stress. Coffee provides peace when the world is out there making jokes. Coffee is magic.

Coffee, without you, my spirit is gone.

The coffee-themed coffee story, *Without You, My Spirit Is Gone*, connotes humane coffee. Coffee in this story has metaphorical connotations, namely a human figure who helps others by giving encouragement. Coffee is described as a humane drink that has a character that can help others, provide motivation in living life, and facilitate various activities.

This coffee story tells the story of the habit of coffee lovers drinking coffee since high school. At first, he only tried to drink coffee because he joined the brother who always drank coffee. Over time, he also drank and liked it. Every time he drinks a cup of coffee, he feels that he is not easily sleepy. When on the move, before he drinks coffee, he makes himself excited and energized. And the best thing after doing many activities, such as all day and work, is to pile up tasks. If you want to quickly lose fatigue, yes, drink a cup of coffee. For him, not drinking coffee every day makes him less enthusiastic about carrying out activities.

Coffee and Tranquility

Coffee stories with the theme of coffee: coffee gives peace, connoting coffee as a human figure that gives peace of mind to people who consume it. Coffee in this story has metaphorical connotations, namely coffee as a human figure who helps others by providing tranquility. Coffee is described as a humane drink that has a character that can help others, provide motivation in living life, and facilitate various activities.

This coffee story tells the story of coffee lovers who initially raised a lot of doubts about how to approach coffee. But when his state of mind was collapsing and his mind was raging, coffee came and brewed a lot of calm. At first, he really didn't like it. Over time, coffee was always with him. He was always with the coffee, which started the morning when he woke up. He brewed the black ground coffee. There was a sense of eagerness if he had seen the worn-out jar containing black ground coffee. But on the contrary, if the coffee grounds in the jar are not there, the morning feels bland.

Coffee companions

Coffee stories with the theme of coffee friends connote coffee as friends (friends) who are always loyal to accompany them. Coffee in this story has metaphorical connotations, namely the relationship between coffee and friends. Coffee is associated with friends, which has a commensurate meaning in coffee that has the character of solidarity with friends in various affairs (activities).

This coffee story tells the story of coffee lovers who initially drank coffee because they were faced with many tasks that had to be completed late at night. For that, he needed coffee to help him with his work. The distinctive aroma of coffee has been able to bring him more awareness when doing tasks at night.

No writing without coffee

The story of coffee, which has the theme of no writing without coffee, connotes a humane drink that provides human benefits to those who consume it. Coffee is a symbolic metaphor for a human figure who has the character to provide social benefits, namely motivators (encouragers). This coffee story starts with consumer awareness of coffee as an encouragement. For him, coffee is a very powerful encouragement to complete tasks or work.

Love Coffee

This coffee story has the theme of love for coffee. Coffee carries symbolic connotations that connect it with love. Coffee connotes a relationship of intimacy and affection between coffee connoisseurs and the coffee they consume.

This coffee story begins with the fragrant fragrance of coffee made by his wife. A cup of coffee was offered by the wife. It tastes more than just coffee. Enjoy it no longer with taste but with heart. The coffee made by the wife encourages the morning to start the activity. It feels like obliterating all restlessness.

Bitter taste yet gives pleasure

This coffee story is themed even though the taste of coffee is bitter, but coffee gives pleasure. Coffee connotes the enjoyment of coffee given to its connoisseurs. The connotation of enjoyment in question is not only the taste of coffee but also that coffee provides enthusiasm (inspiration) for connoisseurs in carrying out their activities.

The coffee story begins with the coffee connoisseur's awareness of the taste of coffee consumed, which has become an inseparable part of his life. His parents, who have made coffee a routine drink every day at home and introductory coffee activities in the morning before going to work or school,

Coffee, I Love You

The coffee story with the theme 'coffee, I love you' connotes coffee as a figure who has a character that provides human benefits to its connoisseurs. The human benefit of coffee is to provide enthusiasm and inspiration to its connoisseurs. Because of the human benefits provided, connoisseurs can dialogue (communicate) with coffee.

The coffee story begins with a choice, stating that if he is given the choice of choosing coffee or work, then he chooses coffee. Coffee is the most important drink in life. Coffee can provide more enthusiasm and encouragement to do daily activities.

Coffee, My Hope

Coffee stories with the theme 'coffee, my hope' connote coffee that gives hope to coffee connoisseurs. Coffee carries symbolic connotations and has human benefits that give hope to its connoisseurs.

The coffee story begins with his testimony from the age of four, seeing his mother make coffee for his father and adult children. Coffee in the morning becomes a breakfast dish before going to work. At the age of 10, he was allowed to drink coffee made by his mother, and coffee became his life expectancy for all activities.

Coffee is a convenience.

The coffee story with the theme 'coffee is comfort' connotes coffee that provides comfort (enjoyment when needed in conditions of many activities) to coffee connoisseurs. Coffee carries the meaning of symbolic connotations and has human benefits that provide comfort (enjoyment) to its connoisseurs. Coffee has social benefits, while product benefits include tasting coffee. The social benefits of coffee given to connoisseurs are the comfort and enjoyment found when connoisseurs do various activities.

Coffee, bullying, and being friends

Coffee connotes a human figure who can be friendly with its connoisseurs. Coffee contains symbolic metaphorical meanings by connecting coffee with friends. The metaphorical relationship between coffee and friends shows that coffee has a friendly character, a human product that can be friendly to humans (coffee connoisseurs). At first, coffee was a nuisance. Over time, the coffee that always accompanied him became his best friend.

Coffee and the spirit to start the day

Coffee stories with the theme of coffee and the spirit to start the day connote coffee as a human figure who has a human character to provide motivation to start activities for its connoisseurs. Coffee contains a symbolic metaphorical meaning: a human product that provides social benefits to others (coffee lovers). Coffee is an encouragement to start the day. Coffee provides new energy and enthusiasm for all activities every day.

Black but Sweet in the Right People

The story of coffee with a black theme, but sweet to the right person, connotes that even though coffee is black, it still gives sweetness (the sweetness of life) to those who consume it. Coffee has a symbolic metaphorical meaning as a human figure who chooses coffee connoisseurs to provide the sweetness of coffee behind the bitterness of the coffee.

Loving Coffee to the End

The coffee story, with the theme 'loving coffee to the end', connotes the human benefits of coffee provided until coffee connoisseurs love coffee to the end. Coffee has a connotation, which is to provide social benefits to connoisseurs.

The coffee story begins with a coffee farmer talking about his love for coffee. He spends time tending to plants until they produce encouraging harvests. With his love for coffee, the farmer enjoys his own brewed coffee. Every morning before work, at noon during work breaks, and in the afternoon after eating, he always drank coffee, his own concoction.

Coffee is heaven

The coffee story, themed 'coffee is heaven', connotes the symbolism of coffee as a paradise that gives great pleasure to those who demand it. Coffee has a symbolic metaphorical meaning that connects coffee with heaven. The relationship between coffee and heaven produces a metaphorical meaning in coffee, as coffee gives extraordinary pleasure as well as the pleasure that is in heaven.

Coffee refreshes the mind

Coffee stories with the theme of coffee refresh the mind, connoting coffee as a human figure who provides social benefits to those who consume it. Coffee has a symbolic

metaphorical meaning as a human figure who has a human character who can help coffee kinsmen by providing freshness of mind.

The coffee story begins with: Coffee, for me personally, is not just a drink, but a drink to stimulate the mind. My experience with coffee was when I felt overwhelmed and powerless, even when faced with a lot of work. After instantly drinking coffee, my mind was refreshed. Coffee also helps me when I stay up late to do chores in the middle of the night. My mind kept working even though it was midnight, and it was all because of coffee. When I am dizzy, coffee can relieve the dizziness in my head. When I write on social media and suddenly the mind does not care, drinking coffee seems to be a way to open the mind and come up with beautiful and interesting words. Coffee is also very enjoyed with friends when having a dialogue, and there are sometimes many great ideas that happen at that time.

Coffee Myths

Myth, from a semiotic perspective, is a common view in society presented in the form of stories. According to Bartes (1957), myths are paroles, messages, and communication systems. Myth is a view spoken in society that contains messages and becomes a language system (mythical language) in society. So, the coffee myth is a common view of coffee spoken in society that contains a message. Coffee myth is a language system (communication system) consisting of a first language called langue (the language on which myths are formed) and a second language called myth (general view).

Coffee as a first language is a sign (verbal and nonverbal language) on which to base the foundation for giving birth to myth as a second, common view (social meaning, universal meaning, and social code). As a first language, coffee is a sign of identity as a beverage whose ingredients are coffee grounds. So, the function of coffee material in the first language is beverages and beverage commodities that are packaged and branded. As a second language (myth), coffee is a social identity formed in society that contains common views. Coffee at the level of myth (second language) no longer contains meaning as a drink (material benefits as a drink), but contains social meaning or social benefits in society.

The coffee myth found in the results of this study has a general view (the social benefits of coffee), which is presented in the form of stories and conveys social messages (table 3).

Table 3. Coffee myths

No	Coffee Myths	Coffee mythical message
1	Coffee is a prayer	Toraja black coffee drink as medicine (prayer) for the couple (husband)
2	Coffee is togetherness	During life Together with coffee, if not with him, can become jatu sick
3	Coffee is an addictive taste, for addicts	Starting from the Orang Tua coffee business, Arabica coffee shipments
4.	When sipping coffee passes through the tongue	The bitter taste of coffee on the tongue is a parable of the bitter journey of life that must be passed
5.	Coffee is <i>magic</i>	Morning, without coffee is empty. A night without coffee is a waste. Coffee has become part of life's journey.
6.	Without coffee the spirit will disappear	Drinking coffee makes us very excited and does not make us sluggish
7.	Coffee is tranquility	At first hesitate to approach coffee, after which coffee gives tranquility
8.	Coffee is a best friend	Friendly Coffee That Inspires Life
9.	No writing without coffee	Coffee is a very powerful encouragement to complete writing (thesis)

10	Coffee is Love	The fragrant fragrance of coffee gives love in the heart
11	Bitter taste, yet gives pleasure	Coffee has become an indispensable part of my life
12.	Coffee, I love you	Coffee in my opinion is the most important drink in my life
13.	Coffee and I have a story	Coffee loyal friends from childhood to adulthood
14.	Coffee is a comfort	When things are collapsing, and the mind is raging, coffee comes and brews a lot of calm
15.	Coffee is a bully, being a Best Friend	Coffee interferes with sleep, but coffee provides a solution in completing many tasks
16.	Coffee is the spirit to start the day	Cultivate passion and start work with coffee
17.	Coffee is Black, but Sweet to the Right People	This coffee, it feels like ideas about lecture plans and college motivation become directed.
18	Loved coffee to the end	Rice coffee consumption, afternoon and evening is an introduction to activity (work)
19	Coffee is heaven	This drink is magic that can solve problems (work stress, headaches, etc.)
20	Coffee is the freshness of the mind	Coffee is an introduction to completing all the work

CONCLUSION

The results of this study can provide conclusions that coffee stories contain a general view of coffee among coffee consumers. The general view of coffee suggests that the emphasis on meaning is not on the meaning of material benefits as a beverage but on the resulting social meaning as a mythical language system containing discourse (parole), messages, and communication systems. Coffee discourse is a speech about the social function of coffee in society. The message of coffee is that coffee contains social messages (coffee gives motivation, encouragement, and love). The coffee communication system is a system of coffee mythical language that is communicated in society. For example, having a meeting at a café to discuss something Those who will attend have a common communication system, so they want to attend the meeting in the café.

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