

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Coffee beans were first discovered when a goat herder in Ethiopia noticed his goats were rather hyperactive after eating from a strange plant. It soon became a popular drink among the locals. Coffee was shipped to the Arabian peninsula after visiting Arab traders found the drink agreeable (Wintgens, 2004). It was spread via the slave trade in Arabian peninsulas, where it gained pre-eminence due to the Muslim ban on fermented alcoholic beverages (Bond, 2012). The demand for coffee quickly grew and during the 18th and 19th centuries, there was an expansion of coffee drinking throughout the whole world. Around 1738, Brazil obtained the seeds and to this day Brazil is one of the world's largest coffee producers (Spiller, 1998a).

Coffee is one of the most consumed drinks in the world. One of the most popular types is instant coffee, made by percolating then spray drying and freeze drying the roasted and ground coffee (Spiller, 1998a).

Coffee itself contains caffeine, which acts as a stimulant. This is the reason coffee is consumed most in the morning or during working hours. Coffee can also stimulate the production of two other stimulating hormones, cortisol and adrenaline. These two hormones are also commonly known as stress hormones. Stress hormones are usually secreted in response to a perceived threat in the environment. This explains why every time we drink a cup of coffee, there is a rise in our heartbeats and a sudden increase of energy. This is part of a fight-or-flight response.

Coffee also has strong antioxidant activity due to the presence of phenols and melanoidins. The antioxidant activity in coffee is affected by the green bean composition and processing methods (Vignoli *et al.*, 2011). With increasing roasting degree, there is also a loss of around 40% total antioxidant activity (Cämmerer and Kroh, 2006).

There has been an increasing interest in researching coffee and its effects—both psychological and mental. Peer pressure also has a part in coffee and coffee drinking. Peer pressure is also common amongst teenagers and, to some extent, young adults. An example of this is the growing number of coffee shops or cafes in urban parts of Indonesia, mostly targeted at young adults.

Knowledge is defined as the information, understanding, and skills one gains through education or experience. Accumulated, knowledge should have lasting effects on improving and increasing the general use of reasoning and learning abilities (Glaser, 1984).

Education is subjected to all the interpretations and bureaucratic processes of the system, assessed by tests and exams. Knowledge is subjected to all the individual bias as they are accumulated over time and experience, verified by life and reality, disguised as “old wives’ tales” or “local wisdom”. For example among Christians, coffee was once known as the devil’s drink because of its colour (Bond, 2012). At the time, the colour black had connotations of Satan. This was apparent in the Mormon religion, where people of dark skin were considered cursed by God. This was recently renounced in December 2013 (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2013). Coffee was rumoured to stunt children’s growth and cause cancer. In the 1800s, Germans believed coffee made women sterile. Some of these myths persist even in the twenty-first century despite

easy access to information. But where there is a rising interest in coffee and coffee shops (local and/or international), there is also concern for animal treatment. One of them being the Asian palm civets. Most people only know these animals as luwak coffee “producers”. Luwak coffee—derived from coffee beans consumed and excreted out by wild civet cats. This business has proven to be so lucrative that, in order to satisfy global demand, wild civets are now poached, caged in dirty cages (when civets like clean environments), terrible conditions and force-fed coffee beans to produce commercial quality coffee beans. The stress inflicted on these animals will lead to stress, and eventually lead to death as they cannot adapt to their new environment (Ambarrini, 2015). The recent increase in capturing the civets for luwak coffee may constitute as a significant threat to wild palm civet populations.

This research aims to gather and examine the public’s knowledge of coffee in general, along with the health myths and old wives tales surrounding coffee.

1.2. Limiting Scope

Coffee is an extensive topic. Due to such extensiveness, coffee in this paper therefore is limited to two major topics: coffee drinking habits and knowledge about coffee. Coffee drinking habits

1.3. Problem Statement

Is there any correlation between education levels and coffee drinking habits, and education levels and coffee knowledge?

1.4. Research Purposes

The purpose of this research is to know how knowledgeable the public are about coffee.

1.5. Benefit of Research

The results of this research will be expected to inform the public, especially the coffee drinkers, about the misconceptions of coffee drinking and coffee making.