

# dr. Taufiq Pasiak: The Story of Coffee and Coffee Glasses

Monday, 25 April 2022 11:02 WIB



**UPNVJ PR** - Have you ever felt the difference in the sensation of coffee taste when you drink coffee from glasses of different shapes, sizes and colors? In several places that I've been to, chefs, baristas and sellers provide different glasses to fill with brewed coffee. At Hotel Harper Jl. Prince Mangkubumi Jogjakarta, the coffee cup is tall, large (similar to a beer glass) and white in color, with a handle on the side (When fully filled it is almost as much as two cups of coffee in Jalan Roda coffee house, Manado City). At Four Point Hotel Surabaya (next to Tunjungan Plaza) the coffee cup is quite large, white in color with a wide mouth and a handle on the side, without a coaster. Similar to one of the glasses at Solong coffee house, Banda Aceh. At Swissbel Hotel Manado, the container is in the form of a cup (cup glass), smaller than the one at the Four Point Hotel, white in color, slightly wider at the bottom with a handle and a placemat (when I'm at Swissbel, I prefer to fill my brewed coffee in a small transparent glass which is commonly used for infused water).

At Kongji Belitung or Manggar coffee houses, they provide a short transparent cup (cup glass) and a medium plastic cup for their coffee. At Aming Pontianak coffee house the glasses and spoons are cute, and I haven't found them anywhere else. On Jl Wahid Hasyim, Central Jakarta, there is a Phoenam coffee house whose cups are old-fashioned. At the Jalan Roda Manado coffee house, just like the average coffee house in Manado, the container is a transparent cup (cup glass), medium sized with a handle and a saucer. In elite coffee houses like Starbucks, the cups are made of white plastic and shaped like a chimney, and they provide it in various sizes and there are pictures / writings on it, which are known to resemble pint glass. At Bakoel Koffie Cikini I enjoyed the coffee in a glass called Irish coffee cup, which is a tall cup with a foot stalk; while my friend enjoyed it in a common coffee cup. If in Jogja there is Coffee Clinic where you can choose the taste of your coffee yourself, then in South Jakarta there is Harapan Djaya coffee house, Jl. Panglima Polim where you can choose the glass you will use. In Manado, I could not find this kind of freedom to choose our own cup of coffee. You coffee sellers should try this style.

## Cups and Bitter Taste

Research by Dorn et al (2014) found that if you enjoy coffee in a white cup then the intensity and enjoyment of the coffee taste is higher than if you enjoy it in a transparent or colored cup (is this why hotels provide containers in white cups or glasses? So we pay more money compared to a coffee house on the side of the road. Even though they have the same type of coffee). Researchers also found that coffee would be less sweet in white cups than transparent or colored cups (seems OK to use transparent or colored cups for those on a low-calorie diet). The taste and aroma of your coffee or drink is influenced by what you see and what container it is used in. Which tastes sweeter: a red water or clear water? Most people would say that red drinks taste sweeter better than clear ones, or black ones.

In the old days, when I was a student, I felt that the chicken noodles sold by paddlers in my village (Teling Bawah-Banjer) tasted better and more delicious compared to when I tried similar noodles in several locations in Manado today, even by the same seller with the same ingredients. I just realized that in the old days, sellers used large flat plates, while today's sellers use bowl-shaped plates. Steward and Goss (2013) found that the shape of the plate, and moreover in combination with the color, greatly influences the taste and amount eaten. Fisman (2013) found that hot chocolate drinks will taste better if they are drunk in orange plastic cups than white ones. Other researchers found that *caffè latte* was stronger and less sweet when served in a white porcelain glass than a glass mug.

Dorn (2014) found that sweetness affects the personality 'agreeableness' with other people. Including the emergence of the urge to help others. That is, if you feel the sensation of the delicious sweet taste of coffee, then the will to help others will soon manifest. On the other hand, according to research by experts led by Sagioglou (2014) from the University of Innsbruck Austria, if you have a tendency for violence, aggressiveness, narcissism, hostility, and for psychopathy (crazy) in general, then coffee with bitter taste (expresso) will trigger the nature of that. If you are a very firm, solid and tough person with moral values, then bitterness will make you even tougher. My experience observing the topic of conversation in a coffee shop proves that the conversation becomes louder, tenser and piercing almost always started by those who enjoy black coffee with a striking bitter taste.

Even situations could affect our enjoyment. Have you ever noticed that the average classic coffee house has a wooden bench with a table for 4 people? Or take a look at the table chairs at Starbucks or Espresso. These amateur interior designers send a message to us coffee connoisseurs that coffee tastes good only when we drink it together. There is no enjoyment of coffee if you sit alone. The pleasure of coffee is present in laughter and stories that flow among the connoisseurs. In classic coffee houses, sitting on a bench will limit the length of time to sit (our buttocks muscles will already be uncomfortable by the time 30 minutes have passed by). Have you ever felt the atmosphere at Jalan Roda, Tikala coffee house, coffee house at Pasar Sehat and Pasar Karombasan (which I called the old player coffee house) while enjoying a cup of coffee? The sensation is different. Not only because of the glass, taste, aroma, but also where we sit, the position of the table chairs and even the shape of the tables and chairs.

A number of studies have found that under bright lighting people become more emotional and more sensitive. So to manage emotions the experts use a range of lighting. They call it Incandescent affect. Blue light, for example, can affect cognitive abilities, memory, alertness, decision making and response to something if given during the day or night. How could this happen? Light affects from eyes to the emotional and primitive part of the human brain, called the limbic system. Systems thinking-1, in the terms of Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman, works instinctively and always tries to bring people to conditions of safety and comfort. If you get a sensation that creates a sense of security and comfort, then your emotions will be relatively stable. System 1 will be quieter and you will find it easier to think a little harder. That's why most people learn better in situations where their emotions are relatively stable. And generally it happens in the early morning after waking up, or in the middle of the night after resting for a while.

### **Name and Taste**

Does the name of the food-beverage menu affect your taste and appetite? For example, do the names kopi tubruk and kopi arang (many around Tugu Yogyakarta station) affect your taste? *Yes*, that's how most of the audience felt when I asked them. A friend of mine sent me a packet of arabic spiced coffee, and immediately I felt the coffee become a little bit incensed even though there was no incense in it. Unfortunately, another friend of mine sent me a Captain's coffee and I didn't feel like a Captain at all. Hahahahaha. Some patients feel healthier if the mineral water is named Zamzam water compared to giving them some common brand mineral water. Many of my patients feel better when they are given ospamox or intermoxil than amoxicillin. Even though it contains the same amoxicillin. Therefore, Shakespeare was wrong when he said 'what is in a name' (what is the meaning of a name).

A group of researchers led by Okamoto (2008) used a number of liquids with a certain taste. They divided 46 study subjects into two groups: the group labeled with names (lemon, coffee jelly, caramel candy, and consomme soup) totaled 27 people and the group labeled only with numbers for each liquid. The result? The group labeled with beautiful names showed higher liking, familiarity and intensity than the group labeled with numbers alone. You wanna try it? Go to the Teras Cafe in the Megamas complex, and look at the menu names. I'm sure your taste buds go up according to the beauty of the menu name. On the other hand, would you feel better and drain your wallet for coffees called Black Coffee/espresso or coffees called just plain Kopi Hitam? I'm sure you will find Black Coffee and espresso more enjoyable and will spend your wallet on them. Have you ever had higher expectations of intelligence and warmth from those named Jason, Elisabeth, Suzana, than the names Sule, Jaja Mihardja or Tukul? This is where the power of menus and names becomes very important. Marketing experts generally call it Branding.

### **Multisensory Creature**

If you eat or drink, then you are not only dealing with what you are enjoying. Unknowingly, you are also dealing with containers, colours, shapes and surroundings. The enjoyment of food and drink is not only because of its taste, but also because of non-food factors that trigger almost all of your sensory organs. You

enjoy them not only with the organs of taste (gustatory) on the tongue, but also with the organs of smell (olfactory), hearing (auditory), sight (visual) and touch (somatosensory). Even your emotions are involved.

Humans are multisensory or multimodal creatures. We have a number of senses (common misconception is that we only have 5 senses. But we have more than that). The brain is designed in such a way to integrate all the senses we have. So that without you knowing it, your brain captures more information than just what you observe with your eyes, ears, nose or tongue. Sensory information that is limited by the brain will be completed and detailed. This ability, if optimized in such a way, will be a formidable power in decision making.

Decision making is deeply rooted in your ability to manage information. Information received by only one sense is much less accurate than by multiple senses. That's why, the phrase 'listen more, talk less' can imply that multisensory information should be the main criterion in making decisions. It is implied from this that in a world that is overloaded with information as it is today, sharpness in selecting and sorting information must be an important part of thinking. Multisensory and multimodal means that you must carefully use all of these tools to obtain accurate information.

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Export tanggal : Monday, 15 December 2025 Pukul 07:11:16 WIB.

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