



Sip and Support

Investigating the Relationship Between Social Caffeine Consumption and Mental Health Among College Students

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Objective: Assess the impact of social caffeine use, pertaining to boba, on mental well-being among UCSD undergraduates

BACKGROUND



- Caffeine is a widely consumed psychoactive substance, with **92% of U.S. college students** consuming an average of 173 mg daily.
- Our research aim is to specifically investigate boba. Boba tea has grown in popularity on U.S. college campuses.
- Many **consume caffeine for its social appeal (39.1%)** and **mood-enhancing effects (18.2%)**, with drinks like boba tea and coffee serving as a social alternative to alcohol.
- Research suggests that social settings influence caffeine consumption, particularly among adolescents.
- While caffeine can enhance cognitive function, moderate consumption does not typically affect mood or performance.

METHODS



- Administered a cross-sectional study through an online Qualtrics survey (**n = 85, total survey respondents**).
- The inclusion criteria: UCSD undergraduate students.
- Exposure Variable:** How many times per week was boba consumed socially?
- Outcome Variables:** Feeling confident and distracted/disconnected after social caffeine consumption.
- Excel was utilized to carry out the Pearson chi-square tests.



Please scan QR code for **references**.

RESULTS

n = 55 UCSD Undergraduate Students

Figure 1. Types of Caffeine Consumed

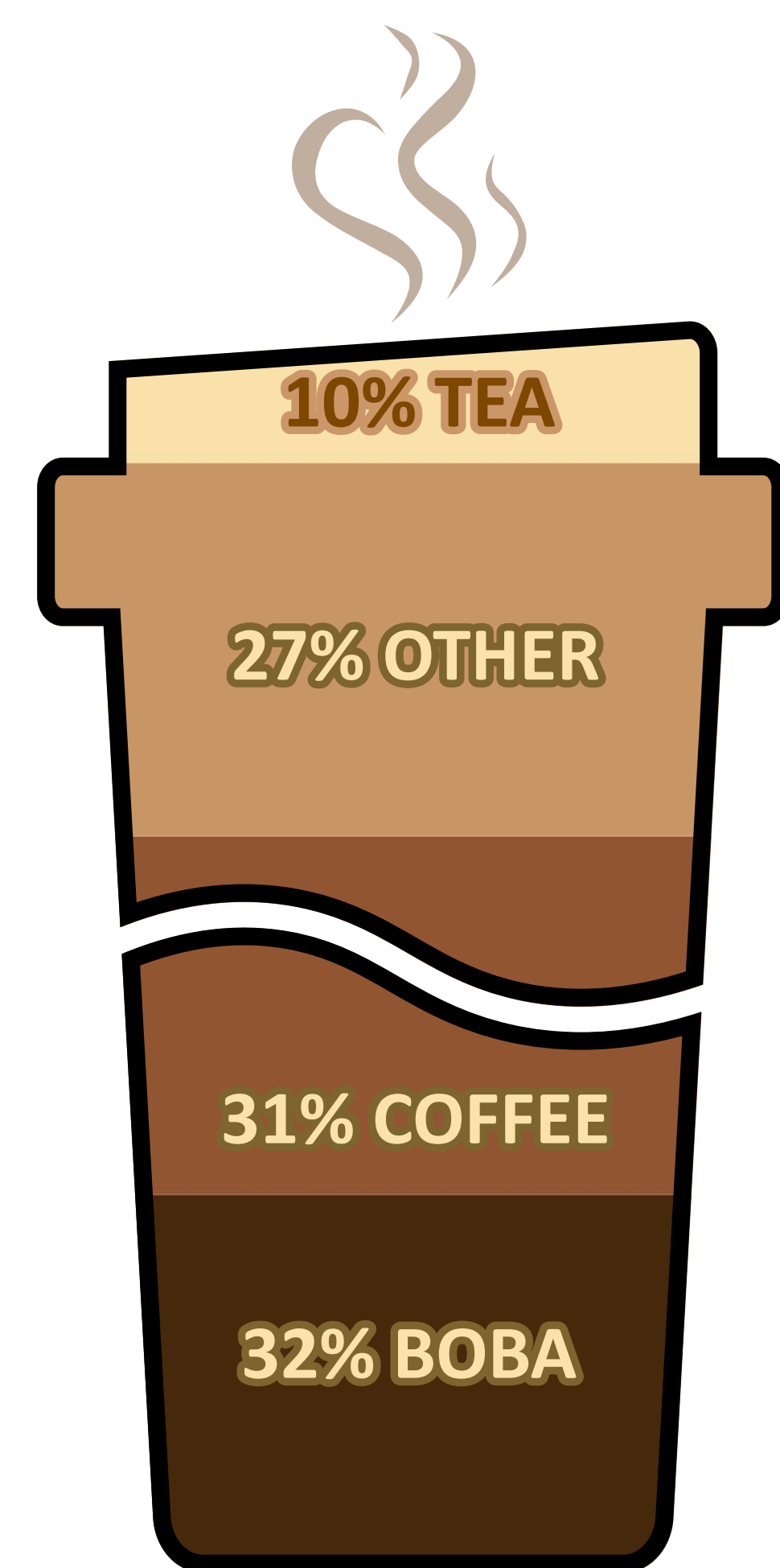


Figure 2. Caffeine Beverage Size Consumption by Year in College

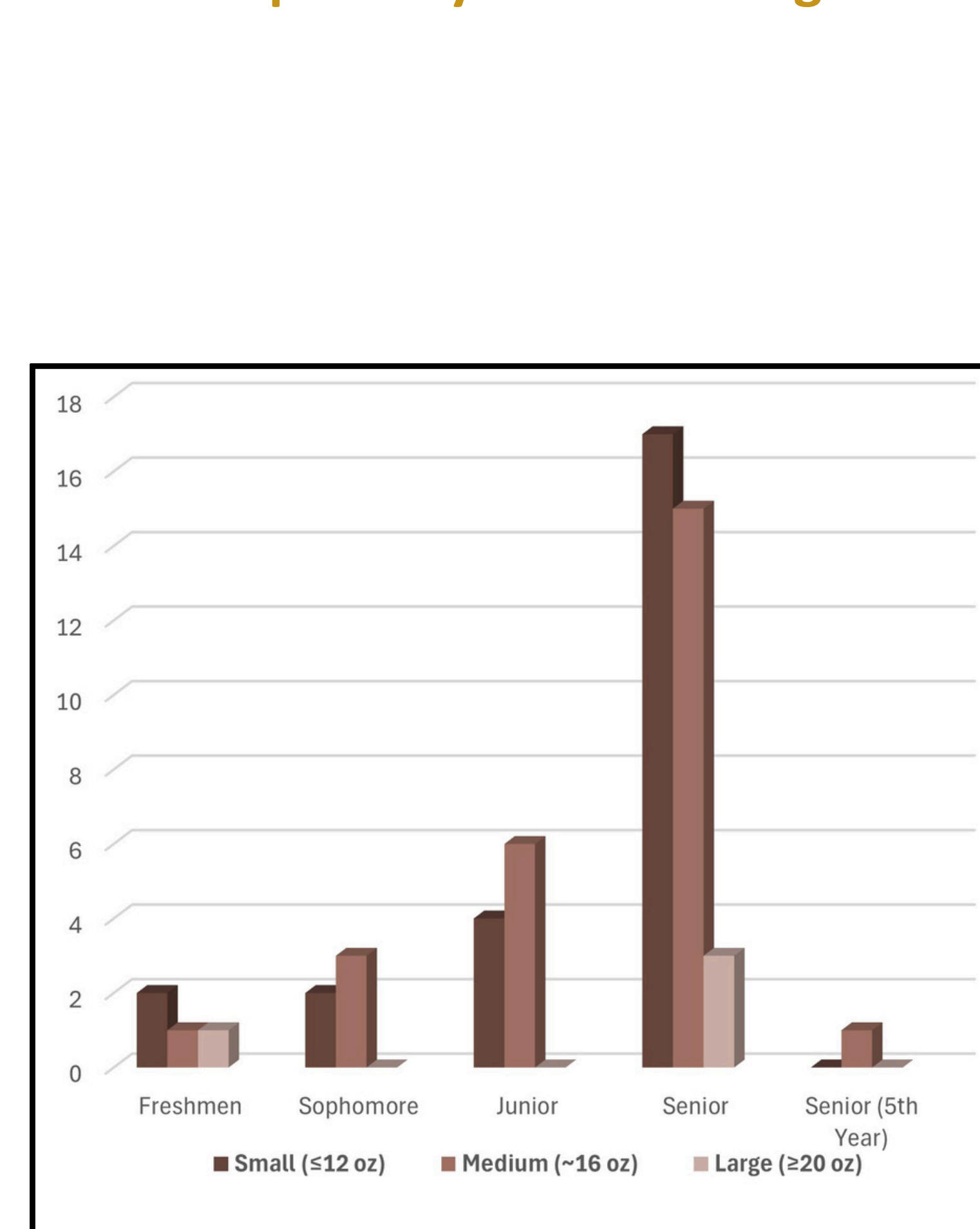


Figure 3. Perceived Mood when Purchasing Boba in Social Settings

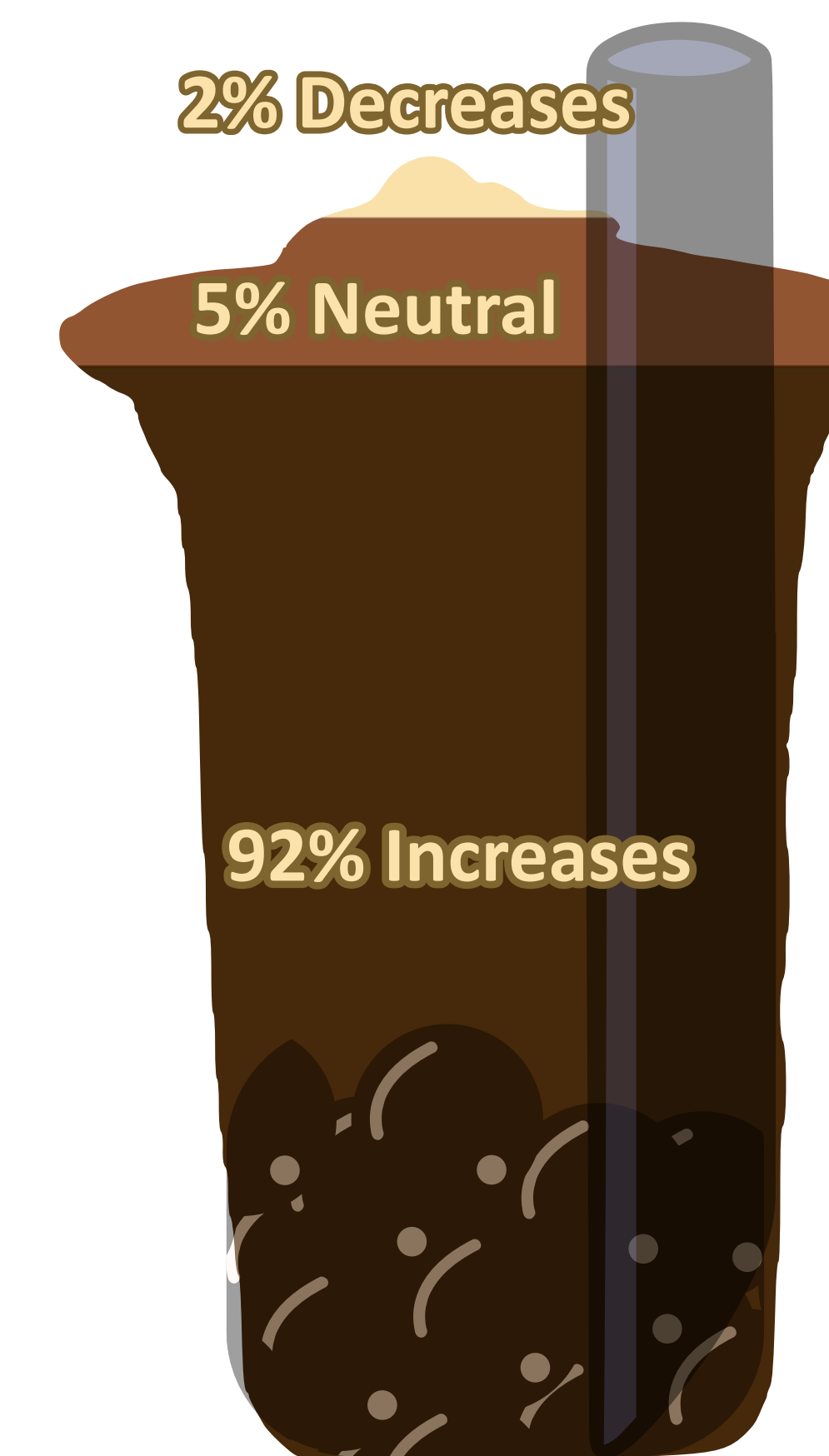


Figure 4. Chi-Square Test: Cups of Caffeine Consumed Per Week x Level of Self-Perceived Confidence after Consuming Caffeine in a Social Setting

	Low Confidence	High Confidence	Total
0x/Week	16	2	18
1-2x/Week	27	5	32
3-4x/Week	2	2	4
Total	45	9	54

With a p -value of ($p = 0.122$), no significance was found between quantity of boba tea consumed socially and the self-perceived levels of confidence.

- Low Confidence = includes responses of never, rarely, and sometimes
- High confidence = includes responses of often and always

Figure 5. Chi-Square Test: Cups of Caffeine Consumed Per Week x Level of Self-Perceived Disconnectedness after Consuming Caffeine in a Social Setting

	Low Distraction/Disconnection	High Distraction/Disconnection	Total
0x/Week	16	2	18
1-2x/Week	27	5	32
3-4x/Week	4	0	4
Total	47	7	54

With a p -value of ($p = 0.653$), no significance was found between quantity of boba tea consumed socially and the self-perceived levels of disconnectedness.

- Low distraction/disconnection = includes responses of never, rarely, and sometimes
- High distraction/disconnection = includes responses of often and always

CONCLUSION



- Social boba tea consumption was not significantly associated with confidence or distraction/disconnection.
- The social context of caffeine consumption may still be positively perceived by college students.
- Future research may benefit from more detailed beverage comparisons, mood measures, and a more diverse sample size to further explore patterns.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Educating Students:** Colleges can implement awareness campaigns about the effects of caffeine, promoting informed consumption and healthier habits.
- Alternative Social Activities:** Universities should offer non-caffeinated social options to reduce reliance on caffeine as a primary social beverage.
- Marketing Regulations:** Policymakers can enforce clearer labeling and responsible marketing of boba to protect student health.
- Mental Health Support:** Institutions can integrate caffeine consumption awareness into mental health resources, ensuring students make balanced choices.



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