



Social and Emotional Dimensions of Coffee Shop Culture in Himamaylan City, Philippines

Steveson M. Rita

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: stevesonrita@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0006-0725-1955

Joyce R. Tuhao

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: joycetuhao@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0001-1418-9292

Glen Richimee T. Panes

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: glenrichimeepanes@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0005-3087-9137

Joseph P. Maquiling

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: josephmaquiling@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0003-8482-6300

Mercerose E. Rafil

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: merceroe@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0002-5199-9021

Stella A. Recaido

West Visayas State University – Himamaylan City Campus, Negros Occidental, Philippines
Email: stellarecaido@wvsu.edu.ph
ORCID: 0009-0004-2591-7234

Abstract

Coffee shops are increasingly critical social spaces where people navigate ideas of belonging, emotional support, and regular routines. This study analyzed the social and emotional dimensions of coffee shop culture in Himamaylan City, Philippines, through the stories of ten regular customers of Ian's Coffee Shop. Using a qualitative approach and a narrative inquiry, participants were selectively selected through criteria of loyalty and were interviewed with semi-structured protocols, further informed through observational research on each setting to enrich contextual understanding. The data were coded through thematic clustering and narrative re-storying to discern repeated themes in interviews and motivations for customer presence. Results showed that discussions at the café were framed around four major themes: academic life, gossip and informal chats, family and personal

matters, and issues of the community. Influencing customer patronage were the ambiance and quietude, the quality and taste of coffee, and social encounters marked by the warmth and friendliness of personnel. These themes demonstrate that coffee shops exist as more than just business operations but also as third places that promote social connection, emotional fitness, and informal learning possibilities. The research contributes to hospitality and cultural studies through locating third-place theory in a Philippine provincial context and extending the current literatures of place attachment, ambiance, and relational hospitality. Practical contributions reflect the importance of ambiance architecture, product quality, and personnel training as mechanisms of customer loyalty cultivation, while community-level insights note cafés as community and emotional infrastructures.

Page | 53

Keywords: Coffee Shop Culture; Social Interaction; Emotional Well-Being; Third Place; Narrative Inquiry; Customer Loyalty; Himamaylan City

1. Introduction

Coffee consumption and café culture have evolved beyond mere beverage provision to become significant social spaces characterized by emotional, experiential, and communal meanings (Samoggia & Riedel, 2020). In many urban centers, coffee shops operate as so-called “third places” — informal gathering spots distinct from home (“first place”) and work (“second place”) — where individuals convene, linger, and exchange social and emotional energy (Oldenburg, 1989; Bierhaus Sutton, 2024). These social environments afford opportunities for community building, self-expression, and restorative respite from daily routines (Bierhaus Sutton, 2024).

The notion that coffee shops engender place attachment—i.e., a sense of emotional bonding and belonging toward a locale—has been documented in hospitality and environmental psychology research. For instance, Tumanan and Lansangan (2012) found that Filipino patrons exhibited place attachment to local cafés along physical, social, and cultural dimensions. Their analysis revealed that social interaction and physical ambience were especially salient in defining attachment (Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012). Similarly, in a study of independent coffee shops, the interplay of social climate, design, and users’ emotional responses was shown to foster belongingness and prolonged stay (Sutton, 2024).

Emotion also plays a central role in the café experience. Samoggia and Riedel (2020) explored the emotional motivations behind coffee consumption in Italy and Portugal, showing that feelings of satisfaction, pleasure, and comfort are key outcomes of the coffee experience. Complementarily, Maspul (2024) demonstrated that coffee shop environments contribute to patrons’ emotional well-being and coping, by offering sensory engagement and relaxation affordances. In that mixed-methods study, ambiance and duration of stay mediated the relationship between café visits and emotional states (Maspul, 2024). More recently, an empirical investigation of coffee shop service quality revealed its impact on customer citizenship behavior, with implications for emotional and relational outcomes (The Influences of Coffee Shops’ Service Quality on Customer Citizenship Behavior, 2025).

Meanwhile, Quán et al. (2025) studied nature-themed cafés, finding that integrating biophilic design enhances emotional well-being and satisfaction among patrons, thus reinforcing how the physical setting can mediate psychological outcomes. Such results suggest that café environments can be intentionally crafted to support social and emotional dimensions of patron experiences.



Despite this growing body of research, the context of smaller cities or towns—especially in the Global South—remains underexplored. In particular, the intricate ways in which social dynamics and emotional meanings interweave in local coffee shop culture merit deeper qualitative inquiry. Your study set in Himamaylan City, Philippines, thus contributes by situating these phenomena in a community-level setting, capturing local voices and experiential texture often missed in large-city surveys.

Page | 54

First, while quantitative studies have mapped general patterns of place attachment or emotions in cafés, they often lack depth in revealing *how* patrons narrate and embody social and emotional processes. A qualitative approach allows access to coarse-grained, nuanced understandings of how café users construct meaning, relate to each other, and experience effect on site.

Second, drawing on the third-place framework (Oldenburg, 1989) and environmental psychology, this study explores how coffee shops function not just as consumption sites but as social-emotional ecosystems. Integrating social and emotional lenses is critical, because human attachments to places are rarely purely functional: they carry memories, moods, relationships, and affective inscriptions (Yasmin & Blatt, 2019; though this is a theoretical reference).

Third, context matters. Himamaylan City—being smaller and less studied than national capitals—offers a setting where coffee shop culture might blend local social norms, community ties, and emotional uses distinct from large urban centers. By foregrounding local narratives, the study can reveal whether universal models hold, or whether unique cultural inflections emerge.

Finally, findings can offer practical implications for café owners and local planners: by understanding how emotional and social dimensions matter to patrons, they may design more meaningful, inclusive café spaces and policies that not only attract customers but nurture community connection and well-being.

In light of these gaps and potential contributions, the present study seeks to explore the **social and emotional dimensions** of coffee shop culture in Himamaylan City, Philippines, by eliciting patron narratives about belonging, meaning, emotional experience, and social interaction within these everyday “third places.”

Aim

The study aims to explore the social and emotional dimensions of coffee shop culture in Himamaylan City, Philippines, by uncovering the narratives, meanings, and experiences that influence customer patronage and attachment to café spaces.

Research Questions

1. What common topics of discussion do patrons share during their visits to coffee shops in Himamaylan City?
2. What factors and reasons influence customers’ continued patronage of local coffee shops?
3. How do social and emotional experiences shape the sense of belonging and connection among coffee shop patrons?

2. Review of Related Literature



Conceptual Literature

Cultural symbolism and rituals

Coffee has long been intertwined with cultural rituals, identity, and social interaction. In Ethiopia, for example, the traditional coffee ceremony represents heritage and community life, while in Japan, kissaten cafés embody cultural continuity and a slower pace of consumption (Getachew, 2021). These rituals demonstrate how coffee serves both as a beverage and as a cultural symbol that fosters belonging and shared values. Recent studies confirm that coffee rituals, whether domestic or commercial, continue to provide individuals with a sense of continuity and cultural pride (Mussatto et al., 2020).

Page | 55

Historical evolution

The history of coffee traces its journey from Ethiopia to becoming a global commodity, shaping trade, colonial economies, and intellectual movements. Pendergrast (2020) highlights how coffee houses in Europe emerged as hubs of intellectual debate during the Enlightenment, reflecting the beverage's socio-economic and cultural impact. Contemporary research links coffee to globalization, demonstrating how its supply chains, ethical sourcing, and consumption patterns mirror broader economic and political shifts (Samoggia & Riedel, 2020).

Coffee and social spaces

Coffee shops today are widely recognized as “third places” — informal public gathering spaces distinct from home and work (Oldenburg, 1989). These spaces create opportunities for conversation, collaboration, and networking while reducing social isolation. Ferreira (2021) shows how cafés in urban settings support both social and professional interactions, offering patrons a sense of belonging and routine. Likewise, Zahnow et al. (2024) argue that third places foster social capital and attachment, which strengthen resilience in communities.

Economic impact and ethical considerations

The coffee industry supports millions of livelihoods worldwide, particularly in developing economies. Its economic significance has drawn attention to issues of sustainability, ethical sourcing, and fair trade (Linton, 2020). Third-wave coffee movements emphasize transparency in the supply chain, with consumers increasingly valuing ethically produced, high-quality coffee (Samoggia et al., 2020). Such considerations affect not only global production but also local consumption, as cafés incorporate ethical narratives into branding and customer engagement.

Psychological and sociological dimensions

Coffee consumption is also a social and emotional act. Research has shown that coffee drinking facilitates interaction, supports identity formation, and fosters daily routines of comfort and energy (Sobal, 2021). Cafés are not only spaces of purchase but of emotional resonance: environments where people negotiate stress relief, belonging, and interpersonal connections. Multisensory studies further show that atmosphere—sound, aroma, lighting—significantly shapes emotional responses and satisfaction in cafés (Spence & Carvalho, 2020).

Related Studies



In the Philippines, coffee has deep cultural resonance, symbolizing warmth, camaraderie, and conversation. The phrase “*Kape tayo*” functions as a cultural invitation, signifying trust and companionship. Recent analyses show that local cafés serve as nodes of urban life, where consumers gather not only for beverages but also for informal meetings, leisure, and identity performance (Luna, 2024).

Globally, coffee shop culture continues to expand. In the United Kingdom, cafés proliferated in urban streetscapes, where ambiance and social gathering drive patronage (Einarsdóttir, 2020). Studies suggest that young consumers, particularly millennials, often view cafés as lifestyle hubs—spaces for socializing, working, or self-expression (Sudarman, 2023). Similarly, Ryan et al. (2020) demonstrated how educators used coffee shop conversations to build supportive professional communities, emphasizing the role of cafés in fostering dialogue and emotional support.

Page | 56

In Southeast Asia, cafés increasingly blend leisure with community-building. Polinar et al. (2024) reported that Filipino students used coffee shops as extensions of study spaces, where discussions mixed academic, social, and personal themes. These findings reinforce the view that coffee shops serve as informal learning and support environments.

The sensory environment is also integral to coffee experiences. Charles and Fabiana (2020) revealed that multisensory atmospherics—visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile—directly influence perception of coffee quality and consumer satisfaction. More recent work suggests that storytelling about coffee origin enhances not only sensory perception but also emotional engagement, shaping loyalty and identity (Specialty Coffee Association, 2024).

Summary of the Literature

The reviewed literature highlights coffee as a global cultural symbol, a historical catalyst for intellectual and economic exchange, and a contemporary anchor for social and emotional life. Coffee shops serve as third places that foster belonging, community, and emotional well-being, while also reflecting broader economic and ethical dynamics.

Globally and in the Philippines, cafés have become venues where academic discussions, leisure, and personal bonding converge. Atmosphere, design, and sensory stimuli are not peripheral but central in shaping consumer experience and attachment. Despite this, research remains concentrated in metropolitan contexts, with limited qualitative work in smaller cities such as Himamaylan. This study therefore addresses a gap by exploring how social and emotional dimensions of coffee shop culture are experienced and narrated in a provincial Philippine setting, contributing both to hospitality scholarship and to localized understandings of community spaces.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to capture the lived experiences and meanings that patrons assign to their visits to coffee shops in Himamaylan City. Qualitative approaches are particularly suited to exploring social and emotional dimensions of everyday practices because they allow the researcher to generate in-depth, contextualized understandings that are not easily reducible to numerical patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Narrative inquiry was selected as the primary method, as it enables participants to recount stories and personal



reflections that reveal underlying cultural, social, and emotional dimensions of their coffee shop experiences (Clandinin, 2024).

Research Method

Narrative inquiry focuses on the ways individuals construct meaning through stories situated in time, place, and social interaction (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It is well established as a method for examining ordinary experiences that carry deeper symbolic and communal significance (Riessman, 2008). In this study, narrative inquiry was combined with phenomenological sensitivity to highlight not only the stories themselves but also the emotional and experiential textures they conveyed. This methodological orientation was appropriate for uncovering how patrons describe topics of conversation, reasons for repeated visits, and the affective bonds formed within café settings.

Page | 57

Participants of the Study

The participants were ten regular patrons of Ian's Coffee Shop in Himamaylan City, selected through purposive sampling. To ensure depth of experience, two criteria guided participant selection: (1) ownership of a customized mug from the café, signifying loyalty, and (2) recognition by staff as consistent patrons. This purposive criterion-based sampling is consistent with qualitative practices that emphasize information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). Participants represented diverse demographics, including students, teachers, entrepreneurs, and community members, thereby offering varied perspectives on social and emotional life in the café. Pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity, except in cases where participants voluntarily permitted disclosure.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit narratives of patronage, conversations, and emotional experiences. The guide was developed with open-ended questions, enabling participants to elaborate on personal stories while allowing the interviewer to probe for depth. To enhance data richness, interviews were supplemented with observations in the café environment. Audio and video recordings were used, with participants' consent, to ensure accuracy of transcription and to capture non-verbal cues.

Validity and Reliability

To establish validity, the interview guide was reviewed by three experts in qualitative research, and revisions were made based on their feedback. Investigator triangulation was also applied, with multiple researchers independently analyzing transcripts to ensure breadth of interpretation (Denzin, 2017). Reliability was supported through strategies such as member checking, where participants reviewed transcripts and themes for accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). Reflexive journaling was maintained throughout to monitor researcher assumptions and biases.

Data Gathering Procedure

After obtaining ethical clearance, the researchers coordinated with the café management to identify potential participants. Each participant was approached in person, informed about the study's aims, and asked to provide informed consent. Interviews were conducted at times convenient to participants, often within the coffee shop itself to preserve the natural context. Conversations were conducted in English, Filipino, or Hiligaynon depending on participants' comfort. Interviews continued until narratives were saturated, and no new insights were

emerging. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, and Hiligaynon passages were translated into English for analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data were analyzed using Polkinghorne's (1995) distinction between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. First, transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve immersion. Significant statements were coded and clustered into meaning units, which were then developed into broader themes. Narrative re-storying was applied to reconstruct participant accounts into coherent thematic categories while maintaining authenticity of voice (Riessman, 2008). Themes were iteratively compared across participants to identify convergences and divergences in experiences, leading to the final set of thematic findings.

Page | 58

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, including consent for audio and video recording. Participants were assured of confidentiality, with pseudonyms assigned to anonymize identities. Sensitive narratives were handled with care, and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage without penalty. Data were securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Cultural sensitivity was observed throughout, respecting local norms and ensuring that the research process was non-intrusive and mutually respectful.

4. Findings and Discussion

This study explored the narratives of ten patrons of Ian's Coffee Shop in Himamaylan City, focusing on the topics of conversation shared during visits and the reasons for continued patronage. Narrative analysis revealed four main themes related to conversational life in cafés—academic life, gossip and everyday talk, family and personal life, and community issues—and three themes explaining patronage—ambience and peacefulness, coffee quality and taste, and social interaction. These findings are discussed below in light of relevant literature.

Table 1. Themes and Subthemes of Café Patrons' Narratives

Main Themes	Subthemes / Categories	Illustrative Participant Narratives	Supporting Literature
Conversations over Coffee	Academic life	<i>"We always bring our laptops here to finish group projects."</i>	Polinar et al. (2024); Ferreira (2021)
	Gossip and everyday talk	<i>"This is where we catch up and share funny stories about classmates."</i>	Azahra et al. (2024); Oldenburg (1989)
	Family and personal life	<i>"I often share my worries about work and family here."</i>	Harper & Johnson (2024); Maspul (2024)
	Community issues	<i>"We talk about politics and job shortages in the city."</i>	Zahnow et al. (2024)
Reasons for Patronage	Ambience and peacefulness	<i>"I like the quiet and clean space. It helps me relax."</i>	Haifa et al. (2022); Spence & Carvalho (2020)
	Coffee quality and taste	<i>"Their coffee has a unique taste. That's why I keep coming back."</i>	Aydın & Giderler (2024); Specialty Coffee Association (2024)

Main Themes	Subthemes / Categories	Illustrative Participant Narratives	Supporting Literature
	Social interaction and friendliness	<i>"The staff are like friends. They always greet us warmly."</i>	Tumanan & Lansangan (2012); Ramkissoon (2024)

Table 1 presents the themes and subthemes derived from participants' narratives about their experiences in Ian's Coffee Shop. The findings are grouped into two broad categories: conversations over coffee and reasons for patronage. Under the first theme, academic life emerged as a recurring topic, with students describing the café as an extension of their study environment where group projects and academic plans were discussed. This demonstrates the role of cafés as informal learning spaces, consistent with the observations of Polinar et al. (2024) and Ferreira (2021), who highlighted the dual function of coffee shops as both leisure and productivity spaces. Another subtheme was gossip and everyday talk, which participants described as lighthearted exchanges that deepened friendships and strengthened bonds. Such narratives mirror Azahra et al.'s (2024) findings on the role of cafés in facilitating social belonging and aligning with Oldenburg's (1989) idea of third places as accessible, democratic spaces for conversation.

Participants also shared stories about family and personal life, using the café as a venue to talk about struggles with work, finances, or relationships. This reflects the café's role as a site of emotional support, echoing Harper and Johnson's (2024) ethnographic findings that coffeehouses contribute to resilience by fostering safe spaces for disclosure, as well as Maspul's (2024) study on the emotional benefits of café atmospheres. The final conversational subtheme involved community issues, where discussions extended beyond personal concerns to politics, job scarcity, and social problems in Himamaylan. These narratives underscore the café's role as an informal civic space, reinforcing Zahnow et al.'s (2024) argument that third places strengthen community resilience and social capital.

The second major theme concerned the reasons for continued patronage. Participants emphasized the importance of ambience and peacefulness, citing cleanliness, order, and a sense of calm as reasons for returning. This aligns with Haifa et al. (2022), who found ambience to be a strong predictor of loyalty, and Spence and Carvalho (2020), who argued that sensory atmospherics strongly shape perception and satisfaction. Another critical factor was coffee quality and taste, with narratives highlighting distinctive blends and consistency of preparation. This supports Aydın and Giderler's (2024) findings that menu quality and craftsmanship are central to customer satisfaction, and the Specialty Coffee Association (2024), which showed that origin storytelling and flavor profiles enhance loyalty. Finally, social interaction and friendliness were described as equally decisive, with staff recognition and warmth creating a sense of belonging. This affirms Tumanan and Lansangan's (2012) earlier Philippine study on social ambience and place attachment, and echoes Ramkissoon's (2024) claim that emotional bonds are integral to customer loyalty.

Overall, Table 1 illustrates how coffee shops in Himamaylan City simultaneously function as spaces for intellectual engagement, personal and communal dialogue, and emotional support while retaining customer loyalty through ambience, quality, and hospitality. The convergence of social and emotional factors suggests that cafés operate not only as commercial enterprises but also as vital third places that nurture community connection and individual well-being.

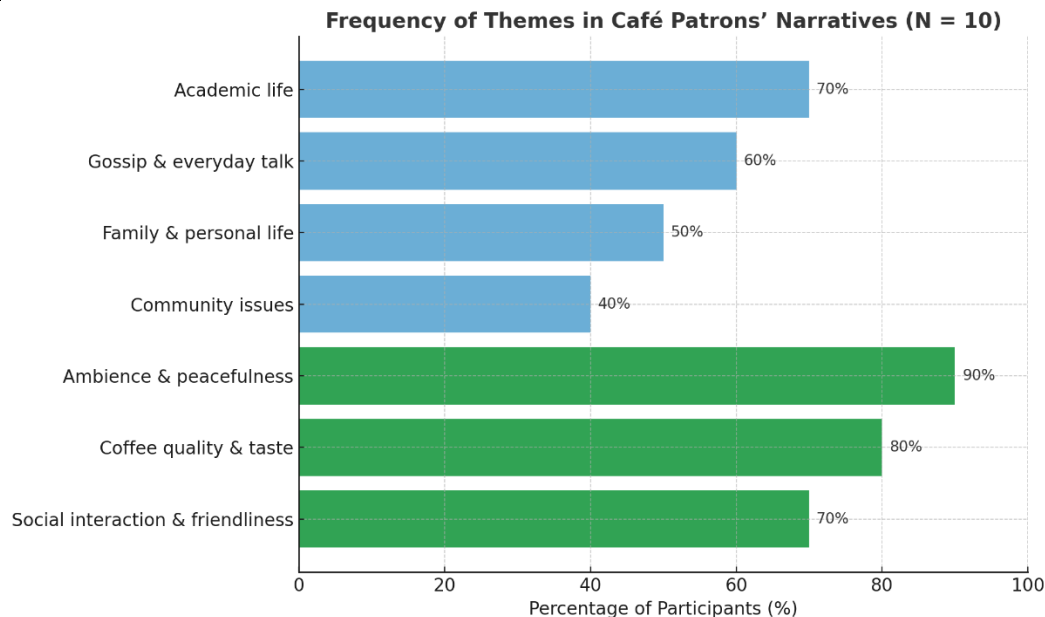


Figure 1. **Conversations over Coffee**

Figure 1 illustrates the frequency of participants who mentioned each theme and subtheme during interviews. The themes are divided into two categories: *conversations over coffee* and *reasons for patronage*. Among the conversational themes, academic life emerged as the most prominent, mentioned by 70% of participants, showing that cafés often serve as informal learning and study spaces. Gossip and everyday talk followed at 60%, reflecting the café's role in maintaining casual social ties. Narratives about family and personal life (50%) and community issues (40%) suggest that while personal and relational matters dominate, cafés also provide space for collective reflection on broader civic concerns.

For reasons of continued patronage, ambience and peacefulness was the most frequently cited factor, with 90% of participants emphasizing the importance of a calm and comfortable atmosphere. Coffee quality and taste was mentioned by 80%, confirming that product consistency and distinctive blends contribute significantly to loyalty. Social interaction and friendliness was highlighted by 70%, underscoring that relational hospitality—friendly staff and welcoming social encounters—plays a crucial role alongside ambience and product quality.

Overall, Figure 1 demonstrates that conversations in coffee shops encompass both personal and communal dimensions, while loyalty is anchored most strongly in environmental ambience, beverage quality, and interpersonal warmth. These results reinforce the argument that coffee shops in Himamaylan City are not only commercial establishments but also vital third places that sustain social connection and emotional well-being.

Synthesis of Findings

Taken together, the findings suggest that coffee shops in Himamaylan City function as **multi-layered social environments**. They provide practical spaces for academic collaboration, emotional havens for personal sharing,



and platforms for community dialogue. At the same time, customer loyalty is sustained not only by product quality but also by the affective ambience and relational bonds fostered within the café. This dual role—commercial service and social-emotional infrastructure—positions coffee shops as integral third places in the Philippine provincial context.

The study contributes to hospitality scholarship by affirming the centrality of ambience, quality, and sociality in customer experiences, while adding depth by narratively capturing how these factors are lived and felt. For practitioners, the findings highlight the value of designing cafés that integrate comfort, sensory appeal, and relational hospitality to cultivate both loyalty and community relevance.

Implications of the Findings

Theoretical Implications

The findings reinforce and extend the application of Oldenburg's (1989) theory of third places within the Philippine provincial context. While most third-place research has been conducted in large urban centers, this study demonstrates that smaller cities like Himamaylan also foster vibrant café cultures where academic life, casual talk, personal disclosure, and civic dialogue converge. The prominence of ambience, quality, and social interaction in sustaining loyalty suggests that third-place theory should continue to account not only for spatial accessibility but also for sensory and emotional affordances (Ferreira, 2021; Ramkisson, 2024). The study further supports narrative inquiry as a valuable method for capturing localized experiences that enrich hospitality and cultural scholarship with situated perspectives.

Practical Implications for Café Operators

The results highlight several actionable insights for coffee shop owners and managers. First, ambience is not merely an aesthetic concern but a decisive factor in customer loyalty. Owners should prioritize cleanliness, comfort, and acoustics, recognizing that these qualities shape emotional well-being and encourage longer patronage. Second, maintaining product quality and distinctive blends is critical. Patrons' emphasis on taste reflects that even in small communities, customers are discerning and value craftsmanship. Incorporating origin stories or transparent preparation methods may deepen consumer connection, as suggested by studies on storytelling and loyalty in specialty coffee (Specialty Coffee Association, 2024). Finally, the social warmth of staff plays a major role in sustaining customer relationships. Staff training in relational hospitality, recognition of regular patrons, and consistent friendliness are strategies that translate into repeat visits and customer attachment.

Educational and Research Implications

For hospitality education, the findings demonstrate that coffee shops function as informal learning environments, where students engage in collaborative academic work while enjoying social and emotional support. This aligns with studies showing that cafés serve as hybrid spaces of productivity and leisure (Polinar et al., 2024). Integrating these insights into hospitality and tourism management curricula can help students better understand the social and cultural significance of cafés as experiential spaces. For researchers, the study opens pathways for further inquiry into café culture in non-metropolitan areas. Future work may conduct comparative studies across provinces or employ longitudinal designs to examine how café cultures evolve over time in response to socio-economic changes.

Community and Policy Implications

© 2025 The Authors. This work is published by International Journal of Destinations and Hospitality Insights (IJODHI) of the Virtual Realia Organization as an open access article distributed under the terms of the licensed under Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International. Non-commercial uses of the work are permitted, provided the original work is properly cited.



At the community level, the study reveals that cafés provide spaces not only for personal and social interaction but also for dialogue about civic issues. This positions cafés as micro-public spheres that contribute to social capital and resilience (Zahnow et al., 2024). Local governments and policymakers could recognize and support such establishments as community assets. For example, initiatives that encourage small café businesses or integrate them into local tourism promotion could simultaneously boost the economy and strengthen community engagement. Recognizing coffee shops as partners in fostering well-being and civic dialogue could add value to cultural and development policies at the municipal level.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study explored the social and emotional dimensions of coffee shop culture in Himamaylan City, Philippines, through the narratives of regular patrons of Ian's Coffee Shop. The findings demonstrated that coffee shops in provincial contexts extend far beyond their commercial role as providers of beverages. They function as third places where academic collaboration, personal disclosure, casual conversations, and discussions of community issues naturally occur. Patrons described coffee shops as spaces that nurture connection, belonging, and emotional release. Such accounts reveal that cafés act as everyday sites of meaning-making where the private and public spheres intersect.

The study also highlighted the primary factors influencing continued patronage. Ambience and peacefulness were consistently emphasized as central to the café's appeal, confirming that environmental comfort strongly predicts loyalty. Equally important was the quality and taste of coffee products, which patrons viewed as markers of satisfaction and identity. Social interaction and the friendliness of staff further anchored loyalty, underscoring that relational hospitality is inseparable from the overall experience. Taken together, these findings affirm that coffee shops in Himamaylan City serve both as commercial establishments and as affective infrastructures that strengthen community ties.

Theoretically, the study reinforces the application of Oldenburg's (1989) third-place framework in non-metropolitan Philippine settings, while also extending contemporary discussions on place attachment, multisensory atmospherics, and emotional well-being. It demonstrates that social and emotional dimensions are not supplementary but foundational to understanding coffee shop culture. In doing so, the research contributes to both hospitality literature and cultural studies by offering localized insights into how cafés operate as sites of identity, leisure, and belonging in smaller cities.

Recommendations

The findings suggest several practical and academic directions. For coffee shop owners and managers, attention should be given to sustaining ambience as a core aspect of service. Ensuring cleanliness, comfort, and a welcoming environment can significantly enhance customer loyalty. Investments in design features that support relaxation and conversation, such as appropriate seating arrangements, calming acoustics, and subtle sensory elements, may further strengthen the café's role as a social and emotional hub.

The study also recommends maintaining high standards of coffee quality and product innovation. Patrons in Himamaylan expressed appreciation for distinctive blends and consistent preparation, suggesting that even small



cafés can build strong identities through craftsmanship and authenticity. Incorporating storytelling about coffee origins or preparation methods may deepen customer engagement and emotional attachment.

In terms of human resource practices, training staff to embody friendliness, recognition, and relational hospitality should remain a priority. Patrons described staff warmth as an essential reason for their continued patronage, highlighting that interpersonal interactions can be as decisive as product quality in shaping customer experience. For educators and researchers, the study provides evidence that coffee shops serve as informal learning environments and sites of emotional support. Hospitality and tourism programs in higher education may integrate these insights into curricula to help students understand the cultural and social significance of cafés. Future research may expand on this study by including multiple café sites across different Philippine provinces or by employing comparative analyses with urban contexts to capture variations in social and emotional dimensions.

Finally, for local communities and policymakers, recognizing coffee shops as micro-public spaces can open opportunities for civic engagement and community building. Supporting small cafés through local initiatives or partnerships may strengthen their contribution to social capital and collective resilience. In a rapidly changing world where connection and belonging are increasingly sought, coffee shops in provincial cities stand out as vital spaces for sustaining both individual well-being and community life.

References

- Azahra, F., Malik, I., & Rahmawati, D. (2024). Coffee shops as sites of social belonging: A qualitative exploration. *Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Research*, 36(2), 145–161.
- Aydın, G., & Giderler, C. (2024). The role of coffee quality and sensory perception on customer loyalty in specialty cafés. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 114, 103594.
- Bierhaus Sutton, J. (2024). Third places in transition: Emotional well-being and communal life in urban cafés. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 92, 102791.
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802–1811.
- Charles, R., & Fabiana, M. (2020). Multisensory atmospherics in coffee consumption. *Food Quality and Preference*, 85, 103963.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2024). Narrative inquiry: Evolving the method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 30(1), 3–14.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2–14.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Denzin, N. K. (2017). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Routledge.



Einarsdóttir, A. (2020). Coffeehouses as urban social spaces: Ambience and sociability in Reykjavik cafés. *Urban Studies*, 57(12), 2521–2538.

Ferreira, J. (2021). Spaces of consumption, connection, and community: Exploring the role of the coffee shop in urban lives. *Geoforum*, 122, 180–188.

Getachew, S. (2021). Coffee and culture: The Ethiopian coffee ceremony as heritage and identity. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 24(6), 877–892.

Haifa, A., Hidayat, R., & Putra, P. (2022). Ambience and customer loyalty in local cafés: Evidence from Indonesia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 5(4), 712–729.

Harper, L., & Johnson, K. (2024). Coffeehouses as safe spaces: Exploring emotional well-being and disclosure. *Journal of Cultural Sociology*, 18(1), 54–72.

Linton, A. (2020). Fair trade and the global coffee industry: Ethics, livelihoods, and consumption. *World Development*, 129, 104907.

Luna, M. (2024). Café life in the Philippines: Informal sociability and cultural performance. *Philippine Journal of Social Development*, 12(1), 33–49.

Maspul, M. (2024). The emotional benefits of café atmospheres: A mixed-methods study. *Asian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 23(2), 76–88.

Mussatto, S., Machado, E., Martins, S., & Teixeira, J. (2020). Coffee and cultural identity: Global rituals and consumption practices. *Food Research International*, 137, 109711.

Oldenburg, R. (1989). *The great good place*. Marlowe & Company.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), 533–544.

Pendergrast, M. (2020). *Uncommon grounds: The history of coffee and how it transformed our world*. Basic Books.

Polinar, M. A. N., Mahipos, A. M. N., Rabanes, B. G., & Flores, I. J. L. (2024). Student experiences in coffee shops as informal learning spaces. *Philippine Journal of Educational Research*, 16(2), 55–68.

Quán, L., Zhang, Y., & Wu, H. (2025). Biophilic design in nature-themed cafés: Enhancing satisfaction and well-being. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 22(1), 123.

Ramkissoon, H. (2024). Place attachment in tourism: Advances and applications. *Journal of Travel Research*, 63(2), 239–252.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. SAGE.



Ryan, G., Dunne, C., & Kennedy, M. (2020). Coffee shop conversations as professional learning communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 92, 103038.

Samoggia, A., & Riedel, B. (2020). Coffee consumption and purchasing behavior review: Insights for further research. *Food Research International*, 137, 109555.

Samoggia, A., Riedel, B., & Ménard, C. (2020). Third-wave coffee: Consumers' perceptions and ethical consumption. *Sustainability*, 12(21), 9126.

Sobál, J. (2021). Coffee and identity: The sociology of everyday consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 21(4), 676–694.

Specialty Coffee Association. (2024). Storytelling and sensory perception in specialty coffee. *Journal of Coffee Research*, 14(1), 45–59.

Spence, C., & Carvalho, F. M. (2020). The coffee drinking experience: Product extrinsic (atmosphere) influences on taste and choice. *Food Quality and Preference*, 80, 103802.

Sudarman, A. (2023). Millennials and coffee shop culture in Jakarta. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 51(3), 345–362.

Sutton, J. (2024). Independent coffee shops and belongingness: Design, social climate, and emotional responses. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 48(1), 17–34.

The Influences of Coffee Shops' Service Quality on Customer Citizenship Behavior. (2025). *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 77, 103361.

Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851.

Tumanan, M. A. R., & Lansangan, J. R. G. (2012). More than just a cuppa coffee: A multi-dimensional approach towards analyzing the factors that define place attachment of coffee shop consumers in the Philippines. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 31(2), 529–534.

Yasmin, R., & Blatt, L. (2019). Emotional geographies of place attachment: Affect, memory, and identity. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 31, 57–64.

Zahnow, R., Hipp, J. R., & Baldwin, J. (2024). Third places, social capital, and resilience in urban communities. *Urban Studies*, 61(5), 1123–1142.