

Is the Chocolate-Eating, Coffee-Drinking, Dog-Walking Red Wine Drinker a Prototype?

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PRELIMINARY – PLEASE DO NOT CITE OR CIRCULATE

Abstract

We asked whether there is a correlation in people’s preferences across the following dichotomies: red vs. white wine; coffee vs. tea; chocolate vs. vanilla; and dogs vs. cats. We find that there isn’t really, but we will hold on to the theory regardless.

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1 Introduction

A large body of preconceived notions suggests that there may be a relationship between whether people prefer chocolate over vanilla, coffee over tea, red wine over white wine, and dogs over cats. Specifically, people who prefer red wine should also prefer coffee, chocolate, and dogs; conversely, people who prefer white wine should also prefer tea, vanilla, and cats. Although this relationship doesn't really need justification, we set out to test it using an online survey in 1019 participants.

2 Methods

We conducted an online survey in November 2014 with 1019 participants from the online platform *Amazon Mechanical Turk*. Each participant was told that they are participating in a survey of preferences, and was presented with four questions:

1. Do you prefer coffee or tea?
2. Do you prefer white wine or red wine?
3. Do you prefer chocolate or vanilla?
4. Do you prefer cats or dogs?

Responses to each question were collected on a 5-point Likert scale, with the options “Strongly prefer A”, “Somewhat prefer A”, “No preference”, “Somewhat prefer B”, “Strongly prefer B” for each pair of items A, B in a question. We then computed the Pearson correlation coefficient between the answers to each of the six pairs of question; thus, we ask whether having a preference for chocolate is associated with having a preference for red wine, dogs, etc. We present results both for the sample as a whole, and separately for men and women.

3 Results

The results are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3, which present results for the whole sample, women only, and men only, respectively. For the entire sample, we find a significant positive association between preferring coffee and chocolate ($r = 0.10, p < 0.01$) and coffee and dogs ($r = 0.05, p < 0.10$), but no other significant relationships. The positive coefficients are driven mainly by men, who show a strong positive association between chocolate and coffee preferences ($r = 0.11, p < 0.01$) and dog and coffee preferences ($r = 0.11, p < 0.01$), with no other significant relationships. In contrast, women show a weaker positive relationship between chocolate and coffee preferences ($r = 0.09, p < 0.10$), and no positive association between dog and coffee preferences. However, strikingly, women show a *negative* relationship between preferences for dogs and red wine ($r = -0.09, p < 0.05$) and dogs

and chocolate ($r = -0.09$, $p < 0.10$). Thus, we fail to find consistent positive associations between preferences for chocolate, red wine, coffee, and dogs.

4 Discussion

This didn't work out. We still think there must be something there.

PREFERENCE CORRELATIONS, ALL PARTICIPANTS			
	Coffee	Red wine	Chocolate
Red wine	0.01 (0.75)		
Chocolate	0.10*** (0.00)	-0.02 (0.48)	
Dogs	0.05* (0.08)	-0.01 (0.68)	-0.03 (0.33)
Observations	1019		

Table 1: Correlation coefficients for the association between a preference for coffee vs. tea, red wine vs. white wine, chocolate vs. vanilla, and dogs vs. cats in 1019 participants in a survey on the online platform *Amazon Mechanical Turk*. Each participant was asked four questions. Each question was of the form “Do you prefer A or B?”, where A and B were items from the food pairs; i.e., participants were asked “Do you prefer red wine or white wine?”, etc. Answers were collected on a 5-point Likert scale with the answer options “Strongly prefer A”, “Somewhat prefer A”, “No preference”, “Somewhat prefer B”, “Strongly prefer B”. The order of presentation of the answer options was randomized within each question, while the order of presentation of the questions themselves was fixed. Each cell in the table represents the Pearson correlation coefficient between a participants’ answers to a given pair of questions, with p -values in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

PREFERENCE CORRELATIONS, WOMEN ONLY			
	Coffee	Red wine	Chocolate
Red wine	0.02 (0.70)		
Chocolate	0.09* (0.07)	-0.00 (0.93)	
Dogs	0.00 (0.98)	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.09* (0.05)
Observations	463		

Table 2: Correlation coefficients for the association between a preference for coffee vs. tea, red wine vs. white wine, chocolate vs. vanilla, and dogs vs. cats in the 463 female participants of the survey. Details on the survey are in the text and in Table 1. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

PREFERENCE CORRELATIONS, MEN ONLY			
	Coffee	Red wine	Chocolate
Red wine	0.01 (0.73)		
Chocolate	0.11*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.75)	
Dogs	0.11** (0.01)	0.03 (0.44)	0.03 (0.47)
Observations	556		

Table 3: Correlation coefficients for the association between a preference for coffee vs. tea, red wine vs. white wine, chocolate vs. vanilla, and dogs vs. cats in the 556 male participants of the survey. Details on the survey are in the text and in Table 1. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$