

One large cappuccino for my Instagram, please!



In recent years, Instagram has lured many consumers from the confines of their existing realities and has encouraged them to form aspirational personas online. This is because consumers are obsessed with enhancing their self-images to impress their online following. Consumers' tendency to share their consumption experiences online has become an integral part of everyday life in forming and fostering their self-enhancing behaviour. This can be seen in the growing number of Instagram posts that reference speciality coffee consumption moments.

A study was conducted by Letšoba Selahle, a Master's student in the Department of Marketing Management, to investigate whether it is consumers' need to self-enhance by means of self-expression, or the handmade effect that better motivates consumers to engage in eWOM about speciality coffee on Instagram. A quasi-experiment was conducted in which an experimental stimulus (production method) was incorporated into a questionnaire, and 301 responses from speciality coffee drinkers were collected.

This study delivers a unique theoretical contribution to the topic of the handmade effect by providing insight that the handmade effect does indeed exist. More specifically, speciality coffee consumers perceive speciality coffee made by a barista to be more embedded with qualities of love than that which has been made by a machine or where no production method has been specified. Interestingly however, the results of this study further indicated that it is in fact the consumers' need for self-expression that better motivates them to share about their speciality coffee consumption on Instagram, and not the handmade effect.

It is therefore recommended that speciality coffee brands adopt proactive digital marketing strategies that facilitate consumers' desire for self-expression online. Speciality coffee brands should focus on creating strong online brand platforms to encourage consumers to curate their speciality coffee moments online. Furthermore, it is recommended that speciality coffee brands invest in self-expressive behavioural campaigns, such as product customisation, which have been shown to increase consumers' likelihood to engage in eWOM.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2019 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Letšoba Selahle under the supervision of [Dr. Liezl-Marié van der Westhuizen](#).