

ALESSANDRO BUFFOLI

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EDUCATION

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2021 – Present
Ph.D. in Marketing (GPA 3.90/4)

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2019 – 2020
Master of Science in International Management – CEMS (GPA 3.81/4) – Exchange at WU Vienna

Università Degli Studi Di Brescia, 2013 – 2018
Bachelor in Business Administration (Final Mark 107/110) – Exchange at ESCE Paris

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Food Marketing, Sustainability, Green Consumption, Packaging, Digital Marketing

PAPERS

- 1) **Buffoli, Alessandro** and Anirban Mukhopadhyay, “From Ugly to Loved: The Compassionate Consumer's Journey Towards Embracing Unattractive Produce”, Under Review at *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)* (Resubmitted)
- 2) **Buffoli, Alessandro**, Sang Kyu Park and Anirban Mukhopadhyay, “The Plastic Paradox: Investigating Purchase Quantities of Groceries in Eco-Unfriendly Packaging”, Manuscript Under Preparation
- 3) **Buffoli, Alessandro**, Sang Kyu Park and Anirban Mukhopadhyay, “The Influence of Packaging Material on Consumer Behavior: Bridging the Gap Between Normal and Ugly Produce”, Three Studies Completed

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 1) **Championship of the HKUST 3MT® - Three Minutes Thesis Competition 2025** : *competition designed to challenge students to present their research to a non-specialist audience in under 3 minutes*
- 2) **HKUST RedBird Academic Excellence Award 2025**: *This award is made upon nomination by the School of Business and Management and recommendation of the assessment panel following a rigorous review, in recognition of academic excellence and leadership skills.*

- 3) **Member Of Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) HKUST Chapter 2023:** *Membership is by invitation only to the top graduates and students, recognizing the outstanding scholastic achievements*
- 4) **SBM Dean's Postgraduate Scholarship 2022-2023:** *Awarded to recognize and honour the academic merits and research potential of research postgraduate students*
- 5) **HKUST RedBird Academic Excellence Award 2022:** *This award is made upon nomination by the School of Business and Management and recommendation of the assessment panel following a rigorous review, in recognition of academic excellence and leadership skills.*
- 6) **Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Award 2021-2024:** *Awarded to candidate who demonstrate outstanding qualities of academic performance, research ability / potential, communication and interpersonal skills, and leadership abilities.*
- 7) **HKUST RedBird Recruitment Award & Academic Excellence Award 2021:** *Awarded to excellent PhD candidates, in recognition of their outstanding academic performance and research capacity.*
- 8) **MSc In International Management Admission Scholarship 2019:** *Awarded for the outstanding performances and all-rounded capabilities*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant

For my teaching assistant roles, I led tutorial sessions, evaluated students' presentations and explained core concepts/introduced advanced topics.

- 1) MARK3610: Digital Marketing, Spring 2023, Spring 2024 and Spring 2025
Evaluations: 4.33/5 (2024); 4.43/5 (2025)
- 2) MARK3430: Global Marketing, Fall 2024
- 3) MARK4290H: Judgment and Decision Making for Marketers, Fall 2023
- 4) MIMT5310: Understanding Consumers: A Strategic Approach, Fall 2022

Tutoring

GMAT Exam Tutor, 2020-2021

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

Presentations:

- 1) "From Ugly to Loved: The Compassionate Consumer's Journey Towards Embracing Unattractive Produce", **Asia-Pacific 3MT® Competition, HKUST Representative, 2025**

- 2) "The Plastic Paradox: Investigating Purchase Quantities of Groceries in Eco-Unfriendly Packaging", **Association for Consumer Research Annual Conference 2025, Washington D.C., USA**
- 3) "Beyond Aesthetics: The Effect of Compassion on Consumer Preferences for Unattractive Produce", **Association for Consumer Research Annual Conference 2024, Paris, France**
- 4) "From Ugly to Loved: The Compassionate Consumer's Journey Towards Embracing Unattractive Produce", **HKUST Marketing Department, 2nd Year Paper, 2023**

Discussant Roles:

- 1) **HKUST Business School PhD Student Conference 2024, Discussant**

Attended Conferences:

- 1) **Association for Consumer Research Annual Conference 2025, Washington D.C., USA**
- 2) **Asia Pacific International Association for Consumer Research Conference 2024, Bali, Indonesia**
- 3) **Association for Consumer Research Annual Conference 2024, Paris, France.**
- 4) **Association for Consumer Research Annual Conference 2023, Seattle, USA**

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Ad Hoc Reviewer:

The Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference (ANZMAC), 2024

Institutional Service:

Student Ambassador, Fok Ying Tung Graduate School (FYTGS), Marketing Photo Shooting Initiative, HKUST, 2025

RPG Student Representative, University Grants Committee (UGC) Meeting, Nominated by School of Business and Management (SBM), HKUST, 2024

Speaker, Information Session on MPhil & PhD Studies at HKUST, 2023

WORKING EXPERIENCE

Anderson & Partners Educational Consulting, 2021-2022
Co-Founder, Singapore

The European Chamber Of Commerce In Hong Kong, 2020
Research and Advocacy Analyst, Hong Kong

Le Clair S.R.L., 2017-2018

Marketing Manager, Chiari (BS), Italy

ABSTRACTS

From Ugly to Loved: The Compassionate Consumer's Journey Towards Embracing Unattractive Produce

Despite being safe, nutritious, and edible, unattractive produce (i.e., “ugly” fruits and vegetables) is frequently discarded by retailers and consumers due to its appearance, thereby significantly contributing to food waste and climate change. This research studies how compassion, an important trait that is relatively neglected in consumer research, influences consumers’ responses to unattractive produce. We show that individuals high in compassion are more likely to prefer unattractive produce than those low in compassion, and demonstrate that this preference is driven by the activation of compassion. Specifically, compassionate consumers are more likely to ‘notice’ the suffering condition of unattractive produce, ‘feel’ for such produce, and ‘respond’ to the suffering by choosing it. Conversely, individuals low in compassion demonstrate aversion to such produce due to their reluctance to engage with its perceived inferiority. We explore a labelling intervention that may increase the likelihood of individuals low in compassion to purchase unattractive produce, by promoting such produce using strength-based messaging. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

The Plastic Paradox: Investigating Purchase Quantities of Groceries in Eco-Unfriendly Packaging

Despite significant environmental harm, plastic packaging remains prevalent in the food industry. This research demonstrates that consumers purchase larger quantities of perishable goods (e.g., tomatoes) when packaged in plastic versus paper. This effect occurs because plastic packaging strongly activates consumers’ contamination prevention beliefs—the perception that plastic better shields against bacteria and pollutants. The effect weakens for non-perishables (e.g., flour), moderated by shelf life. Critically, larger purchases do not accelerate consumption, arguably increasing both plastic waste and food waste. This work establishes packaging material as a key driver of purchase quantity through contamination prevention beliefs, revealing a hidden sustainer of plastic reliance.