

Tito L. H. Grillo

Assistant Professor
University of Alberta—Alberta School of Business
Contact: grillo@ualberta.ca

EDUCATION

University of Texas at Austin, *Marketing PhD*
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, *Marketing DBA*

RESEARCH INTEREST

Substantive interests



Adverse experiences

Every day, people worldwide face battles to protect their livelihood and well-being, from long periods of stress to social discrimination, financial strain, and political tensions. I am interested in how these adverse experiences shape consumers' thinking and behavior.



Social issues

Systemic social issues—such as social discrimination and socioeconomic inequality—are often the underlying root of the adversity people face in their daily lives. I am especially interested in understanding how consumers perceive these issues and potential solutions to combat them.

Theoretical interests



Hardwired tendencies, memory, and learning

I see consumer behavior as the interplay between things people learned while growing up, things humans are hardwired to do, and the stimuli consumers find in our modern world. In general, behavioral tendencies are very functional—we adopt thought processes and behaviors that have been rewarded while we were growing up, and our most fundamental natural tendencies exist because they helped our ancestors survive.

The twist is that many things in the modern world—such as money, technology, political discussions, and social tensions—were part of neither our formative experiences nor the lives of our ancestors. I try to understand what happens when early-learned or “primitive” tendencies confront such modern, “grown-up” challenges.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- **Grillo, Tito L. H.**; Yang, Shuhan; & Adrian F. Ward. (2024) Fairness Revisionism: Reducing Discrimination for the Future Reduces Perceived Unfairness in the Past. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. Volume 115, 104671. Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2024.104671> ^u

Related media coverage and knowledge mobilization

- Invited *Character and Context* article for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology: [Fairness Revisionism and the Dangers of Celebrating Social Progress](#) (2025).
- CBC's Radio Active interview: [Memories of discrimination can change](#) (2025).
- CBC News interview: [Can discrimination be remembered in a positive light?](#) (2025).
- University of Alberta's Folio article: [The fairness filter: progress skews perceptions of past discrimination](#) (2025).

- **Grillo, Tito L. H.** & Ward, Adrian F. (2022). How Childhood Adversity Shapes Susceptibility to COVID-19 Scams. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 7(1), 54-62 Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/711833>
- Fisher, Matthew; Smiley, Adam; & **Tito L. H. Grillo** (2021). Information Without Knowledge: The Effects of Internet Search on Learning. *Memory*, 30(4), 375-387 Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2021.1882501> ^μ

Related media coverage and knowledge mobilization

- KQED coverage: [Recent studies on the “Google effect” add to evidence that the internet is making us dumber](#) (2023).
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.** & Pizzutti, Cristiane (2021). Recognizing and Trusting Persuasion Agents: Attitudes Bias Trustworthiness Judgments, but not Persuasion Detection. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 47(5), 796-809 Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167220946197>

Related media coverage and knowledge mobilization

- Psychology Today coverage: [Trust Me, I'm an Expert](#) (2020)
- Psypost coverage: [Persuasive messages with ulterior motives are more effective when they reinforce a person's prior attitude](#) (2020)

^μ work with PhD student(s)

MANUSCRIPTS PIPELINE (SELECTED)

- Yang, Shuhan*; **Grillo, Tito L.H.***; & Argo, Jennifer. Stress Increases Consumers' Design Preferences for Minimalist Aesthetics. Submitted for second round, *Journal of Consumer Research*. ^μ
- **Grillo, Tito L.H.** & Moore, Sarah. The Socioeconomic Roots of Self-Construals: Consumers raised in Adverse Conditions Won't Become More Independent Because You Want Them To. Second round, *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- **Grillo, Tito L.H.**; Ward, Adrian F.; & Henderson, Ty. Panic! We're safe: How people's inferred personal probabilities of being affected change over the course of worsening crises. Invited for second round, *Risk Analysis*.
- Ward, Adrian F.*; **Grillo, Tito L.H.***; Yang, Shuhan; & Fernbach, Phillip. Confidence without Competence: Online Financial Search and Consumer Financial Decision-Making. Under review, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. Preprint: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4131784 ^μ

Related media coverage and knowledge mobilization

- MarketWatch coverage: [The internet is making you a worse investor](#).
- **Grillo, Tito L.H.**; Vieites, Yan; Abott, Paige; & Ward, Adrian F. Beyond values and beliefs: Self-interest underlies ideological polarization around domestic (and consensus around international) redistribution. In preparation for submission to *Nature Human Behavior*. ^μ
- Yang, Shuhan; **Grillo, Tito L.H.**; & Argo, Jennifer. How Categorical and Spectrum Thinking Shapes Consumers' Preferences For Products and People Associated With Mental Health Conditions. Data collection stage. Target journal: *Journal of Consumer Psychology* ^μ

*shared first authorship

^μ work with PhD student

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Yang, Shuhan; **Grillo, Tito L.H.**; & Argo, Jennifer. The Silver Lining of Categorical Thinking in Consumers' Preference for Options Related to Mental Health. Paper presented at the conference of the *Society for Consumer Psychology*, Las Vegas, NV, USA.
- Yang, Shuhan & **Grillo, Tito L. H.** (2024). Life Stress Shapes Aesthetic Preferences: The Case of Minimalist Design. Paper presented at the conference of the *Society for Consumer Psychology*, Nashville, TN, USA.
- Yang, Shuhan & **Grillo, Tito L. H.** (2023.) Life Stress Shapes Aesthetic Preferences: The Case of Minimalist Design. Paper presented at the conference of the *Association for Consumer Research*, Seattle, WA, USA.
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.**; Henderson, Ty; & Ward, Adrian F. (2023). Habituation to threats in sustained periods of crisis: Lessons from risk perceptions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Paper presented at the European conference of the Association for Consumer Research, Amsterdam, Netherlands.*
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.** and Adrian F. Ward (2022). Survival and Surplus Mindsets: How Early Life Socioeconomic Conditions Shape Risky Behaviors During COVID-19. Paper presented at the conference of the *Society for Consumer Psychology*, Virtual Conference.*
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.**, Pizzutti, Cristiane, and Adrian F. Ward (2020). The Effect of Google-Induced Confidence on Consumption Experiences. Paper presented at the conference of the *Association for Consumer Research*, Virtual Conference.*
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.**, Pizzutti, Cristiane, and Adrian F. Ward (2020). Googled-Induced Confidence in Decision Skills Changes Experiences. Paper presented at the conference of the *Society for Consumer Psychology*, Huntington Beach, LA, USA.*
- Ward, Adrian F., **Grillo, Tito L. H.**, and Phillip Fernbach (2019). From Novice to Know-it-All: Online Financial Search and Financial (Over)Confidence. Paper presented at the *Boulder Summer Conference on Consumer Financial Decision Making*, Boulder, CO, USA.
- Ward, Adrian F., **Grillo, Tito L. H.**, and Phillip Fernbach (2018). From Novice to Know-it-All: How Google-Based Financial Learning Affects Financial Confidence and Decisions. Paper presented at the conference of the *Association for Consumer Research*, Dallas, TX, USA.*
- **Grillo, Tito L. H.** and Adrian F. Ward (2018). Google-Induced Confidence Improves Experiences. Paper presented at the annual conference of the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, Atlanta, GA, USA.*

*presenter

CONFERENCE SESSIONS ORGANIZED/CHAired

- Cognitive Influences on Consumption Experiences (with Adrian F. Ward). Session held at the conference of the *Association of Consumer Research*, 2020.
- Financial Decisions in the Information Age (with Adrian F. Ward). Session held at the conference of the *Association of Consumer Research*, 2018.

PEER-REVIEW SERVICES

- Journal of Experimental Psychology: General (2025-present)
- International Journal of Consumer Studies (2024)
- Journal of Consumer Research (2023-present)
- International Journal of Research in Marketing (2022)

GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND RECOGNITIONS

- Honorable mention for the Donald and Margaret MacKenzie Distinguished Teaching Award (2024);
- EFF-SAS, University of Alberta (2022-2023, 2023-2024)
- University College Continuing Fellowship (2020-2022);
- The Society for Consumer Psychology's Schumann Dissertation Competition Finalist (2021);
- McCombs School of Business Fellowship (2018-2021);
- McCombs School of Business Research Scholarship (2017-2021);
- The Eugene & Dora Bonham Memorial Fund Scholarship (2018-2019);
- McCombs School of Business Recruitment Fellowship (2017-2019);
- Fulbright & CAPES Research Grant (2016-2017)

CURRENT DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- Shuhan Yang (4th year, co-supervised with Dr. Jennifer Argo)
- Erika Polishchuk (1st year, co-supervised with Dr. Jennifer Argo)

TEACHING

Undergraduate:

Marketing Analytics (2023-present), Avg. student evaluation score of the course: 4.65/5.

Honorable mention for the Donald and Margaret MacKenzie Distinguished Teaching Award 2024

Selected comments from students:

- *Tito is a great prof, he was very passionate which made it fun to come to class (2025).*
- *I really liked how this course took a very holistic approach, allowing students to gain exposure to theory, tactical, and presentation skills (2025).*
- *One of the best courses I have ever taken in Uni (2024).*
- *Phenomenal teaching! One of the best & most comprehensive courses I've taken! (2024)*
- *this class was always a great environment and I always enjoyed going to it. I have never made so many friends in a class, I liked how we would always be required to have a new group randomly created. This pushed us to work with other people we wouldn't normally work with. The prof and the TAs were always really happy to help (2024).*
- *ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING INSTRUCTORS IN UOFA (2024).*
- *Tito's teaching style and coursework blew my expectations out of the water. He made a mostly boring subject very engaging and enjoyable. He always was fair and treated his students with utmost respect. For a newer professor, he is one of the best I had during my years at UofA (2023).*
- *Tito makes learning marketing analytics very exciting. He is obviously passionate about the subject and cares about students and is willing to go above and beyond to help them (2023).*
- *Tito is the GOAT! The lectures are really interesting and formatted well. One of my favourite classes to date! (2023)*
- *The quality of this course was fantastic! Tito is a great professor and made the class interesting and was very knowledgeable! (2023).*

Advanced Marketing Analytics (2024-present). Small lab-based course--no course evaluation scores provided.

Selected comments from students:

- *Overall, I absolutely loved the course. I came into it with a strong enthusiasm for learning about analytics, which only grew throughout the class. I am grateful to have been part of such a wonderful and supportive group. Our TA, Shuhan, was incredibly helpful, always available to explain the data and teach various approaches to achieve results. Tito did an excellent job breaking down complex concepts step-by-step, making them more manageable. Despite the steep learning curve and often feeling like I was trying to catch up, I learned a tremendous amount about analytics and am excited to apply these skills in real life. (2024)*
- *The quality of instruction in this course was excellent. Tito has a talent for breaking down complex concepts into easy-to-understand steps, which made the learning process much smoother. The student challenges were really fun because we got a chance to teach in class, and I learned a lot from each challenge since they each introduced a new concept. Tito provided detailed guidelines for the big project, and it was fascinating to create and publish our own survey, collect real data, and analyze it. This was a new and cool experience for me. Tito and Shuhan were always open to helping out and would sit down with us to explain ways to improve our design. (2024)*

PhD Seminars:

Research Methodology in Marketing (PhD seminar, 2025)

Experimental Design for Behavioural Science (Phd seminar, 2025)