



lina Ikonen

New in Groningen: lina Ikonen

lina Ikonen recently joined the Faculty of Economics and Business as an assistant professor within the Department of Marketing. She grew up in Finland and before coming to Groningen, obtained her PhD in Amsterdam and worked as an assistant professor at the University of Bath. She likes the collegial and friendly atmosphere of her new department in Groningen and to her, the Netherlands feels like a familiar home away from home. “At work, the people around you are what makes the difference.”

Why did you choose Groningen?

“This was a combination of many factors. Firstly, the University of Groningen and the Marketing department are world-class both in terms of research as well as teaching and I knew that this would be a great place as the next step in my academic career. Besides being an excellent fit in terms of the type of research and the level of ambition, it also always felt to me like a very collegial and friendly group. Both of these factors are something that I have always been looking for in my career, as I feel that academic work itself is very similar regardless of where you work – the people around you are what makes the difference. In addition, moving back to the Netherlands feels like returning to my second home.”



Could you tell us about your career so far?

“After finishing my Master’s in Marketing & Media Management, I started working as a Strategic Marketing Consultant in the financial industry. I really enjoyed the research element of the role, but felt that I was not able to spend enough time to really understand the issues we were looking into, so I ended up applying for a PhD position at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. After my PhD, I moved to the UK and worked as an assistant professor at the University of Bath before now joining the University of Groningen.”

Your expertise lies in marketing’s influence on consumer well-being. What kind of issues are dealt with in your research?

“My work broadly speaking seeks to understand how marketing, and more specifically retail marketing, influences consumer well-being. Most of this work relates to the marketing of healthy food products, for example looking to understand whether things like front-of-package nutrition labelling or price discounts on healthy foods are effective in promoting healthier food choices among consumers and how we could improve the effectiveness of labelling and pricing. I also work on understanding how consumers respond to more inclusive marketing communications, such as representations of more varied body-sizes by fashion brands.”

What is the societal relevance of your research?

“All of my work focuses on societally relevant outcomes, for instance regarding motivating healthy food consumption and sustainable energy consumption, and tries to provide insights to companies about the benefits of marketing that is also helpful for consumers.”

What can we expect from you in the future?

“I believe there is a lot of work to be done in understanding how marketing can be used to benefit not only businesses but also consumers and the society at large. I will continue my work to add to the discussion about ways to find and create such win-win situations.”

What publications from your body of work are you the proudest of?

“My first publication, in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, was a meta-analysis about the consumer effects of front-of-package nutrition labelling. I am especially proud of this project, because we were able to bring together research that was scattered across numerous fields of research, like marketing, nutrition science, public health and food science. It really shows the interdisciplinary nature of this topic. The paper has been received well, I have been able to present it at a number of international conferences such as the annual conference of the Association for Consumer Research and the American Marketing Association’s Marketing & Public Policy Conference. It was an honour to share some of the insights with policy makers and experts in the field of nutrition and it has been great to see the project continue to have an impact both within and outside of academia.”

Key publication

Ikonen, I., Sotgiu, F., Aydinli, A., & Verlegh, P.W.J. (2020) Consumer Effects of Front-of-Package Nutrition Labeling: An Interdisciplinary Meta-Analysis, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(3), 360-383.