



Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學心理學系

Apr
15
2026

Departmental Seminar

Food Preferences: Determinants and Modifications



Prof. Werner Sommer
Professor (Retired)
Humboldt-University at Berlin

11:00a.m. – 12:00n.n.

Room 715, 7/F
The Jockey Club Tower
Centennial Campus
The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The food that we eat is of great importance for physical health and the planet (biodiversity, climate change). If there is choice between different kinds of food, it is strongly influenced by our preferences. Therefore, food preferences are crucial for food choice and consumption. In my presentation, I will give an overview of the factors that determine food preferences and describe recent attempts to modify some of these preferences. Thus, in two studies we used post-hypnotic suggestions to foster healthy and plant-based food preferences and investigated the neural correlates of these modifications (Zahedi et al., 2020, *Appetite*; 2023, *Front. in Psychol.*). In a recent study conducted in Kenya (Zahedi et al., 2025, *Appetite*), we explored the power of story-telling to preschool children in modifying their food preferences. I will also show preliminary results of an ongoing study in Hong Kong about the association of the gut microbiome and food preferences, suggesting novel ways of intervention.

About the Speaker

Prof. Dr. Werner Sommer received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Konstanz in 1982 and was Professor of Biological Psychology and Psychophysiology at the Humboldt University at Berlin until his retirement in 2018, after which he continued his research and supervising activities in collaboration with researchers in Germany, China including the SAR Hongkong, Iran, Kenya, Poland, and Spain. He has worked and still works in diverse areas, such as language perception and production, movement preparation, cognitive conflicts, face recognition, emotion processing, methodology of event-related potential analysis and eye tracking, the Psychology of meals and food preferences, and individual differences in social cognition and cognitive functions. Werner Sommer has received numerous research grants and several visiting professorships. Currently he is adjunct Professor of the Faculty of Education of the National University of Malaysia and distinguished visitor and advisor of the Lifescience Imaging Center of the Baptist Universität Hong Kong. To date he has published more than 330 peer reviewed articles and book chapters that have been cited more than 18,000 times (H-index = 73).

Zoom Meeting (For participants who couldn't attend the Seminar in person)

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/99096653856?pwd=WlJONb9kqv15ibNzVpF989myWUADHG.1>

Meeting ID: 990 9665 3856 | Password: 705486

~ All are Welcome ~

Enquiry: bbecker@hku.hk

