

# From Quiet Past to Vibrant Future

## Federico Magni

PhD in Management  
Recipient, Hong Kong PhD Fellowship



Specializing in the branch of management studies examining 'organizational behavior', Federico's work looks at micro-level behaviors, both individual and on a team level, and their impact on workplace dynamics. Holding a Master's degree in Arts, Culture, Media and Entertainment from the Università Bocconi in Milan, Federico arrived at HKUST with a particular interest in looking at how the structural dynamics and processes within the artistic and creative industries differ from comparable companies in the for-profit sector. His two current research projects relate to disparate areas of management research. The first explores the relationship between employee creativity and power dynamics within the workplace, while the second is an out-of-the-box exploration of free will and creativity. Always looking with a mind to submit to journals and get published, Federico's time at HKUST has been invaluable in learning essential tools and honing his current competencies.

## Expanding Eastwards

After completing his Master's in Italy and working in business consulting for a while, Federico felt unsatisfied with his work and wished to pursue his studies further. He was particularly intrigued by the idea of leaving Europe and experiencing life in a vibrant Asian metropolis.

*"Feeling the desire to be challenged and to explore a world out of my comfort zone, I soon felt unsatisfied with my job and wished to pursue another path... I applied to HKUST and finally decided to come here, because of the university's high profile and Hong Kong's vibrating lifestyle."*

The unique experiences offered by Hong Kong, combined with the lack of language barrier and HKUST's stellar academic reputation made the final decision of where to study a simple one.



## Learning from the Best

Unlike many PhD's at HKUST, students in management don't enter the course with a specific supervisor from the beginning, they have to seek out and secure a mentor for themselves. This allowed Federico to work with a number of faculty members before finding someone compatible with his research interests.

*"I was lucky enough to work with a senior faculty member who is working on creativity. It has been very helpful for me to have something concrete and interesting to work on, and I am learning a lot bringing forward the project with his support."*

The variety and quality of the professors available to collaborate with is extremely useful for students looking to carve out an academic niche and hone their research skills.

*"My department features a variety of professors with different work-style and approaches to research, so that us PhD students can experiment and understand which style fits us best!"*

Beyond teaching and mentoring excellence, Federico has found the support from the department to be invaluable to his work and academic development. The department hosts a variety of stimulating events for students, particularly presentations by outside professors.



## Attaining Balance

For Federico, the key to maintaining solid academic output is maintaining a balanced and varied lifestyle. Time management is critical to this, ensuring that when you get away from work you are able to remain structured.

*"Research life is a rollercoaster, it can get hectic at times and very uneventful some other times... I think it is very important to create some routines that, no matter what, you are going to follow."*

Activities of choice to achieve this vary from person to person, but he considers the three most important ways to switch off and achieve balance are exercise, eating and exploring. Seeing the sights of Hong Kong, using HKUST's extensive facilities and enjoying the city's food culture have been critical to his success and significantly improving his academic output.

*"This fosters what is called the 'incubation' phase of unconscious thinking in psychology - when your brain keeps working below the level of consciousness on the issues you are currently focused on and, sometimes, enlightens you with a spark of genius! Don't we all need that?"*

## A Vibrant City with Great Opportunities

Federico's time at HKUST has been sufficiently enjoyable and valuable that he would recommend all international students, especially those looking for new challenges, to get out of their comfort zone and broaden their horizons in Hong Kong.

*"If anybody from a different part of the world is interested in starting a study experience in Asia, I would say that HKUST is one of the best places they can come to, both for the university and the city."*



## Moving Forward

Planning to stay while he finishes his studies, Federico credits his time at HKUST with fostering a desire to work in the wider academic world as a researcher. While he's unsure of the exact path this might take as of now, that's half the excitement of pursuing a PhD!