

Yidi Zhang

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EDUCATION

University of California, Santa Barbara

Ph.D. in Communication

Advanced to Candidacy: January 2026

Advisor: Prof. Joseph B. Walther

Committee members: Prof. Craig R. Scott (UT Austin), Dr. Jiaying Liu

Santa Barbara, CA

2023 – 2027 (expected)

Michigan State University

Master of Arts in Communication

Advisor: Dr. Brandon Van Der Heide

Thesis: Testing attitude and behavioral intention toward online social support: A vicarious interactions perspective (Committee members: Profs. Sandi Smith and David Ewoldsen)

East Lansing, MI

2021 – 2023

City University of Hong Kong

Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication (Honors)

Hong Kong SAR

2016 – 2020

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

1. Holmstrom, A., Shebib, S., Hu, J., Lim, J., Zhang, Y., Bredland, A., Mazur, A., Mason, A., Allard, A., Boumis, J., Schulte, H., Ha, J., Wolfe, B., Szczyepka, M., Wu, P., **Zhang, Y.**, Cui, X., & Zhang, L. (2026). Theoretical distinctions between emotional and esteem-support messages: Examining effects and mediating mechanisms. *Communication Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502261426538>
2. Yik, B. J., **Zhang, Y.**, Nylund-Gibson, K., Ing, M., Krawiec, L., Houck, J. D., & Nacsa, E. D. (2026). Exploring heterogeneity in chemistry education research: Comparing cluster analysis and latent profile analysis. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*. Advance article. <https://doi.org/10.1039/D5RP00432B>
3. **Zhang, Y.**, & Van Der Heide, B. (2026). How observing interactions online affects attitudes and behavioral intention toward online social support: A vicarious interactions perspective. *Communication Research Reports*. *43*(1), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2025.2589105>
4. Yang, Y., Lange, R., **Zhang, Y.**, & Walther, J. B. (2025). How social responses to online hate messages affect hatefulness. *New Media & Society*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448251396951>
5. Pham, D., Van Der Heide, B., **Zhang, Y.**, Earle, K., Rathjens, B., Ulusoy, E., Mason, A. J., & Bredland, A. (2025). Testing the effects of providing feedback on perceiving selective self-

presentations in computer-mediated communication. *Media Psychology*. 28(5), 681–705.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2024.2418641>

6. Schmäzle, R., Liu, H., Delle, F., Lewin, K., Jahn, N., **Zhang, Y.**, Yoon, H., & Long, J. (2024). Moment-by-moment tracking of audience brain responses to an engaging public speech: Replicating the reverse-message engineering approach. *Communication Monographs*. 91(1), 31–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2023.2240398>
7. Rathjens, B., Van Der Heide, B., Earle, K., Ulusoy, E., Pham, D., Mason, A. J., **Zhang, Y.**, & Bredland, A. (2022). Negative online reviews and manager response: Applying expectancy disconfirmation theory in a CMC context. *Communication Reports*. 36(2), 110–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2022.2154815>

CONFERENCE PAPERS

1. **Zhang, Y.** (2026). *Strategy over source: How AI disclosure shapes perceptions of counterspeech*. Paper accepted to present at Comm Horizons @ UCD 2026: Communication in the Age of AI and Algorithms. Davis, CA, United States.
2. **Zhang, Y.** (2026). *Lost in identities: A computational approach to refine identities in online communities*. Paper accepted to present at the 76th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2026), Cape Town, South Africa.
3. **Zhang, Y.** (2026). *Can editable sources affect people's trust in online information? Exploring editability affordance on social media*. Paper accepted to present at the 76th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2026), Cape Town, South Africa.
4. Wang, M., **Zhang, Y.**, & Wang, L. H. (2026). *Advancing the use of latent transition analysis (LTA) in communication scholarship: An application to map shifts in privacy protection motivation*. Paper accepted to present at the 76th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2026), Cape Town, South Africa.
5. **Zhang, Y.** & Walther, J. B. (2025). *Strategies to deter online hate: Review, critique, and future research*. Paper presented at the National Communication Association's 111th Annual Conference (NCA 2025). Denver, CO, United States.
6. Walther, J. B., Li, Z., & **Zhang, Y.** (2025). *Assessing the hatefulness of social media posts: A continuous measure of hate using generative AI*. Paper presented at Comm Horizons @UCD 2025: Media, Health, and Society. Davis, CA, United States.
7. **Zhang, Y.**, & Wang, L. H. (2025). *Number of friends or mutual friends? Testing effects of different types of system generated cues on impression formation on SNS*. Paper presented at the 75th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2025). Denver, CO, United States.

8. **Zhang, Y., & Li, Z. (2025).** *Can AI help counter hate online? Comparing AI- and human-generated counter-messages.* Paper presented at the 75th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2025). Denver, CO, United States.
9. Malik, M., **Zhang, Y.,** Wang, M., & Wheeler, B. (2025). *Exploring the ripple effects of online hate speech: A mixed-methods study.* Paper presented at the 75th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2025). Denver, CO, United States.
10. Hu, J. M., Holmstrom, J. A., Lim, J., Zhang, Y., Bredland, A., Schulte, H., Ha, J. H., Wu, P-H.; Szczyepka, M., & **Zhang, Y. (2024).** *Supportive communication in response to low esteem-threatening situations: Comparing emotional and esteem support messages.* Paper presented at the National Communication Association's 110th Annual Conference (NCA 2024). New Orleans, LA, United States.
11. **Zhang, Y., & Van Der Heide, B. (2024).** *Vicarious interactions in online support communities: Testing attitude and behavioral intention toward online support.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2024), Gold Coast, Australia.
12. **Zhang, Y. (2024).** *Effects of anticipated future interaction on question asking in computer-mediated communication: Hyperpersonal and language perspectives.* Paper presented at the 74th Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2024), Gold Coast, Australia.
13. **Zhang, Y. (2023).** *Joining a new organization remotely: Newcomers' information seeking behaviors in CMC context.* Paper presented at the 73rd Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2023), Toronto, Canada.
14. Schmäzle, R., Ye, Q., **Zhang, Y.,** Yoon, H., Liu, H., Delle, F., Lewin, K., Jahn, N., & Long, J. (2022). *Moment-by-moment tracking of brain responses to an engaging story: A replication study using forward and reverse correlation to study narrative reception.* Paper presented at the National Communication Association's 108th Annual Conference (NCA 2022). New Orleans, LA, United States.
15. Van Der Heide, B., Mason, A. J., Earle, K., Ulusoy, E., Pham, D., Rathjens, B., **Zhang, Y., & Bredland, A. (2022).** *Does warranting theory function best outside of a truth-default state: Initial experimental evidence.* Paper presented at the National Communication Association's 108th Annual Conference (NCA 2022). New Orleans, LA, United States.
16. Pham, D., Van Der Heide, B., **Zhang, Y.,** Earle, K., Rathjens, B., Ulusoy, E., Mason, A. J., & Bredland, A. (2022). *Testing the effects of providing feedback on perceiving selective self-presentations in computer-mediated communication.* Paper presented at the National

Communication Association's 108th Annual Conference (NCA 2022). New Orleans, LA, United States.

17. Wang, S., Chu, T., Huang, G., & **Zhang, Y.** (2022). *A meta-analysis of credibility perceptions of bandwagon cues*. Paper presented at the 72nd Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2022), Paris, France.
18. Jin, X., Ye, Q., & **Zhang, Y.** (2021). *Trust and credibility: The differences between perceiving an AI anchor as AI and Human*. Paper presented at the 71st Annual International Communication Association Conference (ICA 2021), Virtual Conference.
19. **Zhang, Y.**, Jin, X., Ye, Q., & Zhao, X. (2021). *The cross-over effect of vividness and extroversion on the perceived trust in AI news anchor*. Paper presented at the Association for Education in Mass Communication and Journalism (AEJMC) Midwinter Conference 2021. University of Oklahoma, Norman, United States, Virtual Conference.
20. **Zhang, Y.** (2020). *Imagined audience and news readers' choice of commenting crossing platforms: Under the Chinese news environment*. Paper presented at the 2020 International Communication Association affiliated New Media International Conference at SJTU (SJTU-ICA), Shanghai, China, Virtual Conference.

WORKS UNDER REVIEW

1. **Zhang, Y.** (under review). Anonymity in communication: Functional roles and applications to online hate. Paper submitted to the *National Communication Association's 112th Annual Conference* (NCA 2026) for presentation. New Orleans, LA, United States.
2. **Zhang, Y.** (under review). Mapping methods in online hate research: A review, comparison, and future directions. Paper submitted to the *National Communication Association's 112th Annual Conference* (NCA 2026) for presentation. New Orleans, LA, United States.
3. **Zhang, Y.** (under review). Mapping methods in online hate research: A review, comparison, and future directions. Paper submitted to *Annals of the International Communication Association*.
4. Li, Z., Qin, J., Nan, Y., **Zhang, Y.**, Baum, M. A., Subramanian, S. V., & Viswanath, K. (under review). How does health misinformation shape vaccination outcomes? A meta-analysis. Paper submitted to *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

1. **Zhang, Y.** Strategy over source: How AI disclosure shapes perceptions of counterspeech. (manuscript in preparation; data collection done, writing in progress)
2. **Zhang, Y.**, Scott, C., & Walther, J. Anonymity in online hate: A scoping review (manuscript in preparation; data coding in progress)

3. Walther, J. B., Li, Z., & **Zhang, Y.** Assessing the hatefulness of social media posts: A continuous measure of hate using generative AI. (manuscript in preparation)
4. Walther, J. B., **Zhang, Y.**, Garcia, E., & Rosen, Z. Counterspeech effectiveness: A field experiment (manuscript in preparation)
5. **Zhang, Y.***, & Wang, L.* Number of friends or mutual friends? Testing effects of different types of system generated cues on impression formation on SNS (Manuscript in preparation, 2 rounds of pilot test done; accepted to conference, preparing journal manuscript; *shared first author)
6. Walther, J. B., **Zhang, Y.**, & Garcia, E. Literature review on counterspeech to deter online hate. (manuscript in final editing)
7. **Zhang, Y.** Attention or attraction? Exploring the effectiveness of humorous counterspeech to deter haters. (manuscript in preparation)

GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS

Mixture Modeling For Discipline-Based Education Researchers

- PIs: Prof. Karen Nylund-Gibson (UC Santa Barbara) & Prof. Marsha Ing (UC Riverside)
- Funded by National Science Foundation (NSF #2216175)
- Role: Research Assistant, Apr 2025 – Jun 2025
 - Held office hours to support STEM education researchers applying mixture modeling in their work
 - Analyzed data and developed instructional materials for teaching mixture modeling
 - Co-authored a comparative analysis of K-means and mixture modeling, published in Chemistry Education Research and Practice

Counterspeech as Response to Online Hate

- PI: Prof. Joseph B. Walther (UC Santa Barbara)
- Funded by the California Civil Rights Department
- Role: Research Assistant, Aug 2024 – Mar 2025
 - Conducted literature review and authored a review paper on counterspeech as a deterrent to online hate
 - Designed and executed a field experiment testing counterspeech effectiveness
 - Contributed to a government report and subsequent academic manuscripts

FELLOWSHIP

Doctoral Student Travel Grant

Organization: Academic Senate, University of California, Santa Barbara

Date awarded: Apr 2026

Amount: \$900

Graduate School Travel Fund

Organization: Graduate School, Michigan State University

Date awarded: June 2023

Amount: \$600

Graduate Office Fellowship

Organization: College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University

Date awarded: February 2023

Amount: \$1,500

Date awarded: September 2022

Amount: \$1,300

Date awarded: February 2022

Amount: \$3,200

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Lead Instructor

University of California, Santa Barbara

COMM191: Applying Communication to Internships in Organizations (Winter 2026)

- Enrolled students (N = 15)

COMM185: Communication Technology and Relationship (Summer 2025)

- Enrolled students (N = 47)

COMM1: Introduction to Communication (Summer 2024)

- Enrolled students (N = 40)

Teaching Assistant

University of California, Santa Barbara

COMM89: Theories of Communication

- Instructors: Dr. Norah Dunbar (Spring 2026), Dr. Walid Afifi (Spring 2024)
- Enrolled students (S26: N = 62; S24: N = 50)

COMM113: Media Effects on Individuals

- Instructor: Dr. Muniba Saleem (Fall 2025)
- Enrolled students (N = 175)

COMM160OH: Online Hate Speech

- Instructor: Dr. Joe Walther (Winter 2024)
- Enrolled students (N = 59)

COMM1: Introduction to Communication

- Instructor: Dr. Nikki Truscelli (Fall 2023)
- Enrolled students (N = 73)

Michigan State University

COM100: Human Communication

- Instructor: Dr. Allison Eden (Spring 2023)

MKT250: Business Communication: Oral and Written Skills

- Instructor: Dr. Amy Wisner (Fall 2022)

City University of Hong Kong

COM2105: Visual Communication

- Instructor: Dr. Sixian Lin (Fall 2019)

GUEST LECTURES

University of California, Santa Barbara

COMM160OH Online Hate Speech (Winter 2024)

Computational Approaches in Online Hate Research

Michigan State University

MI220 Methods for Understanding Users (Summer 2023/2024/2025)

Understanding Surveys in User Research

MENTORING

Research Assistants Advising

University of California, Santa Barbara

COMM199RA: Independent Research Assistants in Communication

(Spring 2024, Fall 2024, Spring 2026)

- Mentored 30 undergraduate research assistants across multiple research projects
- Led weekly research meetings to coordinate tasks and ensure project progress
- Provided hands-on training in a range of research skills, including literature reviews, experimental design, and data analysis
- Offered individualized feedback and support on graduate school applications

Recommendation Letter Writer

University of California, Santa Barbara

Sasha von Ende (Undergraduate research assistant; law school application)

Thien Thanh Vo (Undergraduate student; job application)

Sophia Fei (Undergraduate student; graduate school application)

Emma Dela Cruz (Undergraduate student; job application)

SERVICES

Ad hoc reviewing

Scientific Reports [1]

International Communication Association, 2023 – current

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

International Communication Association (2020 – Current)

National Communication Association (2022 – Current)

The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (2026 – Current)

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCES

Bytedance

Product Manager Intern

Beijing, China

Nov 2020 – Mar 2021

36Kr.com

Intern Journalist

Beijing, China

Mar 2020 – Jun 2020

Caixin Global

Intern Journalist

Shanghai, China

Jun 2018 – Aug 2018