

**Contact
Information**

School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Wisconsin-Madison
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**Research/
Teaching
Interests**

Message Effects and Persuasion, Computational Communication Science, Health Communication, Communication of Morality

Employment

Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, *UW-Madison*

2024-present

- Director, Computational Approaches and Message Effects Research (CAMER) group
- Associate Director, Mass Communication Research Center
- Faculty Affiliate, UW-Madison Prevention Research Center

Assistant Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, *UW-Madison*

2019-2024

Education

Ph.D., Annenberg School for Communication, *University of Pennsylvania*

2019

- Advisor: Dr. Joseph N. Cappella
- Dissertation: Morality in Tobacco Control Messaging: Effects of Moral Appeals on Persuasion and Retransmission

M.A., Department of Communication, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

2012

B.A., Department of English, *Renmin University of China*

2010

**Awards and
Fellowships**

Top Poster Award (with Lynne M. Cotter)

2023

- The ComSHER division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

Terry Hynes Innovative Leadership Award

2023

- School of Journalism and Mass Communication, UW-Madison

University of Wisconsin-Madison Exceptional Service Award

2022

- Office of the Provost, UW-Madison

Abby Prestin Dissertation of the Year Award

2020

- Health Communication Divisions, International Communication Association & National Communication Association

Top Paper Award	2020
▪ Health Communication Division, International Communication Association	
Louis Maier Faculty Development Award	2019-24
▪ School of Journalism and Mass Communication, UW-Madison	
Dissertation Research Fellowship	2018-19
▪ Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania	
Best Project Award (with Xindi Wang, Qinyu E, and Tamime, Reham)	2018
▪ Summer School on Methods for Computational Social Science, University of Southern California	
The Sprague Award for best graduate student paper (with Dror Walther)	2017
▪ American Political Science Association	

Peer-Reviewed

Publications Journal Articles and Conference Proceedings

Underline = First author was a mentored student at the time of submission

* = Corresponding author

- 1) Sun, Y., Shen, L., Choi, J. S., Borah, P., Wagner, M., Shah, D. V., ***Yang, S.** (in press). Can generative AI enhance visual correction of health misinformation? An online experiment testing AI-generated debunking visuals and credibility boosters. *Journal of Mass Communication Quarterly*
- 2) Minich, M., Cotter, L.M., Kriss, L., Li, M., ***Yang, S.**, & ***Cascio C.N.** (in press). Pictorial warning labels reduce sharing intentions, alter self-relevance processes elicited by social media posts promoting cannabis edibles. *Journal of Communication*
 -Note: Minich and Cotter share the first authorship. Yang and Cascio share the corresponding authorship.
- 3) Li, G., Li, M., & ***Yang, S.** (in press). The “Whole-Of-Society” approach for misinformation correction: How expert didactic TikTok videos motivate citizen fact-checking and vaccine promotion. *Journal of Health Communication*.
[doi:10.1080/10810730.2025.2503179](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2025.2503179)
 -Note: G.Li and M.Li share the first authorship.
- 4) Duan, Z., Shao, A., Hu, Y., Lee, H., Liao, X., Suh, Y., Kim, J., Yang, K. C., Chen, K., & ***Yang, S.** (in press). Constructing vec-tionaries to extract latent message features from texts: A case study of moral appeals. *Political Analysis*
- 5) Li, J., Borah, P., Kang, J., Kim, J., Okada, T., Shen, L., Tao, R., & ***Yang, S.** (in press). News literacy matters, but for whom?: Political asymmetry in the effects of news literacy on COVID-19 health and political misperceptions. *Information, Communication & Society*.
[doi:10.1080/1369118X.2024.2341000](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2024.2341000)

- 6) Cotter, L. M., Hopkins-Sheets, M., **Yang, S.**, Passmore, S. R., Bhattar, M., Henning, E., Schultz, D., Latham, E., & *Jones, M. (2025). Increasing confidence for pediatric COVID-19 and influenza vaccines using messages affirming parental autonomy: A randomized online experiment. *Vaccine*, 53(126947), 1-7.
[doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2025.126947](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2025.126947)
- 7) Passmore, S., Henning, E., Margalit, C., Bhattar, M., **Yang, S.**, Latham, M., Schultz, D., & *Jones, M. (2025). Fostering trust in public health messaging: Tailoring communication for rural parents. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 39(2), 253-262.
[doi:10.1177/08901171241278886](https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171241278886)
- 8) Wang, Y., Chen, J., Tao, R., & ***Yang, S.** (2025). Coronaphobia or sinophobia: How journalistic practices in early COVID-19 coverage and online commentary affect health behavioral intentions and out-group discrimination in the U.S.. *Journalism*, 26(2), 345-364.
[doi:10.1177/14648849241241152](https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241241152)
- 9) Mi, R., *Yang, E., Tahk, A., Tarfa, A., Cotter, L., Lu, L. **Yang, S.**, Gustafson, D., Westergaard, R., & Shah, D. (2024). How use of an mHealth app explains antiretroviral medication adherence among people with HIV and substance use disorders: Modeling system logs and weekly check-ins. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 26(e57774).
[doi:10.2196/57774](https://doi.org/10.2196/57774)
- 10) Chuang, Y., Nirunwiroj, K., Studdiford, Z., Goyal, A., Frigo, V., **Yang, S.**, Shah, D.V., Hu, J., & Rogers, T. (2024). Beyond demographics: Aligning role-playing LLM-based agents using human belief networks. In *Findings of the 2024 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)*.
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2406.17232>
- 11) Li, G., Li, M., & ***Yang, S.** (2024). Correction by distraction: How high-tempo music enhances medical experts' debunking TikTok videos. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 29(5), 1-15.
[doi:10.1093/jcmc/zmae007](https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmae007)
-Note: All authors contributed equally.
- 12) Chuang, Y., Goyal, A., Harlalka, N., Suresh, S., Hawkins, R., **Yang, S.**, Shah, D.V., Hu, J., & Rogers, T. (2024). Simulating opinion dynamics with networks of LLM-based agents. In *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL)*.
arxiv.org/abs/2311.09618
- 13) ***Yang, S.**, Cotter L. M., Lu L., Kriss L. A., Minich M., Liu J., Silver L., & Cascio C.N. (2024). Countering online marketing and user endorsements with enhanced cannabis warning labels: An online experiment among at-risk youth and young adults. *Preventive Medicine*, 180(107877), 1-8.
[doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2024.107877](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2024.107877)
- 14) Sun., L., Wei, M., Sun, Y., Suh, Y., Shen, L., & ***Yang, S.** (2024). Smiling women pitching down: Auditing representational and presentational gender biases in image generative AI. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 29(1), zmad045.
[10.1093/jcmc/zmad045](https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmad045)

- 15) Cotter, L. M., & ***Yang, S.** (2024). Are interactive and tailored data visualizations effective in promoting flu vaccination among the elderly? Evidence from a randomized experiment. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 31(2), 317-328.
[doi:10.1093/jamia/ocad087](https://doi.org/10.1093/jamia/ocad087)
- 16) Tao, R., Wang, X., Wang Y., Yao, H., Wu, S., & ***Yang, S.** (2023). Emotions and norms: Influence of normative perceptions and persuasive impacts of discrete emotional appeals within pictorial tobacco control messages in China. *Health Communication*, 39(12), 2561-2576.
[doi:10.1080/10410236.2023.2277036](https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2023.2277036)
- 17) ***Yang, S.**, Tao, R., Bhattar, M., Shen, L., Jones, M., Garbacz, A., & Passmore, S. (2023). Designing and testing social media campaign messages to promote COVID-19 vaccine confidence among rural adults: A community-engaged approach featuring rural community leader and clinician testimonials. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 36(102508), 1-9.
[doi:10.1016/j.pmedr.2023.102508](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2023.102508)
- 18) Tao, R., Li, J., Shen, L., & ***Yang, S.** (2023). Hope over fear: The interplay between threat information and hope appeal corrections in debunking early COVID-19 misinformation. *Social Science & Medicine*, 333(116132), 1-11.
[doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.116132](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.116132)
-Note: Tao and Li share the first authorship.
- 19) ***Yang, S.**, Shen, L., Gregory, S., Edwards, D., & Passmore, S. (2023). Applying the Hornik & Woolf approach to identify top messaging themes to improve healthcare workers' COVID-19 vaccine confidence. *Journal of Health Communication*, 28(8), 507-525.
[doi:10.1080/10810730.2023.2230929](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2023.2230929)
- 20) Yang, E., & ***Yang, S.** (2023). Effects of moral frames within vaping prevention messages on current smokers' support for electronic cigarettes regulations. *Journal of Health Communication*, 28(7), 412-424.
[doi:10.1080/10810730.2023.2217104](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2023.2217104)
- 21) Tveleneva, A., Kim, S. J., Minich, M., Liu, J., Padon, A., Silver, L., & ***Yang, S.** (2022). Yet again conversations matter: The importance of interpersonal discussions, educational campaigns, and advertising on cannabis-related risk perceptions, attitudes, and intentions in at-risk young adults. *Journal of Health Communication*, 27(10), 717-726.
[doi:10.1080/10810730.2022.2153291](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2022.2153291)
- 22) Kim, S. J., Minich, M., Tveleneva, A., Padon, A., Liu, J., Silver, L., & ***Yang, S.**, (2022). Textual and pictorial enhancement of cannabis warning labels: An online experiment among at-risk U.S. young adults. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 237.
[doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2022.109520](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2022.109520)
-Note: Kim and Minich share the first authorship.
- 23) Duan, Z., Li, J., Lukito, J., Kai-Cheng Yang, Chen, Fan, Shah, D., & ***Yang, S.** (2022). Algorithmic agents in the hybrid media system: Social bots, selective amplification and partisan news about COVID-19. *Human Communication Research*, 48(3), 516-542.
[doi:10.1093/hcr/hqac012](https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqac012)

- 24) *Chen, K., Duan, Z., & **Yang, S.** (2022). Twitter as research data: Tools, costs, skill sets, and lessons learned. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 41(1), 114-130.
[doi:10.1017/pls.2021.19](https://doi.org/10.1017/pls.2021.19)
-Note: All authors contributed equally.
- 25) *Yang, Q., Herbert, N., **Yang, S.**, Alber, J., Ophir, Y., & Cappella, J. (2021). The role of information avoidance in managing uncertainty from conflicting recommendations about electronic cigarettes. *Communication Monographs*, 88(3), 263-285.
[doi:10.1080/03637751.2020.1809685](https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2020.1809685)
- 26) *Morgan, J., Sutton, J., **Yang, S.**, & Cappella, J. (2020). Impact of graphic warning labels on intentions to use alternate tobacco products. *Journal of Health Communication*, 25(8), 613-623.
[doi: 10.1080/10810730.2020.1827097](https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2020.1827097)
- 27) Dehlendorf, C., Fox, E., *Sharma, A., Zhang, J., **Yang, S.**, & Centola, D. (2020). Birth Control Connect: a randomized trial of an online group to disseminate contraceptive information. *Contraception*, 101(6), 376-383.
[doi: 10.1016/j.contraception.2020.01.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2020.01.014)
- 28) Wang, X., Shi, W., Kim, R., Oh, Y., **Yang, S.**, Zhang, J., & Yu, Z. (2019). Persuasion for good: Towards a personalized persuasive dialogue system for social good. In *Proceedings of the 57th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL)* (pp. 5635–5649).
[doi: 10.18653/v1/P19-1566](https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/P19-1566)
- 29) Kim, H. S., **Yang, S.**, Kim, M., Hemenway, B., Ungar, L. & *Cappella, J. N. (2019). An experimental study of recommendation algorithms for tailored health communication. *Computational Communication Research*, 1(1), 103-129.
[doi:10.31235/osf.io/nu6tg](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/nu6tg)
- 30) *Sutton, J., **Yang, S.**, & Cappella, J. N. (2019). Perceived effectiveness of objective features of pictorial warning messages. *Tobacco Control*, 28, e24–e30.
[doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054488](https://doi.org/10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054488)
- 31) ***Yang, S.**, Maloney, E., Tan, A., & Cappella, J. N. (2018). When visual cues activate moral foundations: Unintended effects of visual portrayals of vaping within electronic cigarette video advertisements. *Human Communication Research*, 44(3), 223-246.
[doi:10.1093/hcr/hqy004](https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqy004)
- 32) ***Yang, S.**, Tan, A., Hamilton, K., Fischbein, R., & Kenne, D. R. (2018). Cognitive roadblock not gateway: Effects of visual vaping cues on young adults' harm perceptions. *Tobacco Regulatory Science*, 4(2), 88-103.
[doi:10.18001/TRS.4.2.8](https://doi.org/10.18001/TRS.4.2.8)
- 33) Zhang, J., Brackbill, D., **Yang, S.**, Becker, J., Herbert, N., & *Centola, D. (2016). Support or competition? How online social networks increase physical activity: A randomized controlled trial. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 4, 651-657.
[doi:10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.08.008)
- 34) Zhang, J., Brackbill, D., **Yang, S.**, & *Centola, D. (2015). Efficacy and causal mechanism of an online social media intervention to increase physical activity: Results of a

randomized controlled trial. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, 2, 651-657.
doi:10.1016/j.pmedr.2015.08.005

- 35) *Cappella, J. N., & **Yang, S.** (2015). Constructing recommendation systems for effective health messages using content, collaborative, and hybrid Algorithms. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 659(1), 290-360.
doi:10.1177/0002716215570573
- 36) *Kam, J. A., & **Yang, S.** (2013). Explicating how parent-child communication increases Latino and European American early adolescents' intentions to intervene in a friend's substance Use. *Prevention Science*, 15,536-546.
doi:10.1007/s11121-013-0404-8

Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters

- 1) ~ **Yang, S.**, & González-Bailón, S. (2016). Semantic networks and public opinion. In J. N. Victor, A. H. Montgomery, & M. Lubell (Eds.), *Oxford University Press Handbook of Political Networks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2) ~ Shumate, M., Pilny, A., Atouba, Y., Kim, J., Peña-y-Lillo, M., Cooper, K.,...**Yang, S.** (2013). A Taxonomy of communication networks. In E. L. Cohen (Eds.), *Communication Yearbook 37*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Manuscripts under Review

- 1) *Sun, L., Pendyala, V., Chuang, Y., Yang, S., Feldman, J., Zhao, A., De Choudhury, M., **Yang, S.**, Shah, D. (revise and resubmit). Optimizing social media annotation of HPV vaccine skepticism and misinformation using large language models: An experimental evaluation of in-context learning and fine-tuning stance detection across multiple models. *Computational Communication Research*
- 2) ***Yang, S.**, Sun L., Tao R., Suh Y., Duan Z., Sun Y., Wang Y., & Liu J. (revise and resubmit). What makes a strong argument in health promotional messages? Identifying latent persuasive message features through an agnostic causal machine learning approach. *Health Communication*
- 3) Lu, L., Kwon, H., Wang, W., Cotter, L. M., Kriss, L. A., Minich, M., Liu, J., Cascio, C. N., & ***Yang, S.** (revise and resubmit). How cannabis warning labels and online social cues influence the valence and themes of youth word-of-mouth: AI-facilitated textual analysis of a randomized experiment. *International Journal of Advertising*
- 4) Zhang, T. H., Cao, X., Wang, Y., Liu, J., Wu, S., ***Yang, S.** (revise and resubmit). The effectiveness of moral appeals within pictorial tobacco control messages: Comparing American and Chinese smokers. *Journal of Media Psychology*
- 5) ***Yang, S.** (revise and resubmit). Kids and pets: How care-based moral appeals motivate the re-transmission of pictorial anti-smoking messages. *Communication Research*
- 6) ***Yang, S.**, Liu, J., Tang, H., Murashka, V.. (revise and resubmit). To share is to persuade? Combining eye-tracking with message evaluation data to explain the retransmission of pictorial antismoking campaign messages on social media. *Health Communication*
- 7) Lu, L., Cotter, L., Wang, Y., Liu, J., Cascio, C., & ***Yang, S.** (revise and resubmit). Weed out the myths: The interplay of warning labels, social cues on peer intervention and misinformation correction. *Health Communication*

Grants

Extramural Support

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Research Grant 2024-2029

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Michael Wagner (co-PI), Dhavan Shah (co-PI), \$2,966,450
Project Title: *Expansion of the Center for Communication and Civic Renewal*
Role: Co-Investigator

Convergence Accelerator (Track F) Trust & Authenticity in Communication Systems 2022-2024

National Science Foundation
Michael Wagner (PI), \$5,000,000
Project Title: *Course Correct: Precision Guidance Against Misinformation*
Role: Co-Principal Investigator

Convergence Accelerator (Track F) Trust & Authenticity in Communication Systems 2021-2022

National Science Foundation
Michael Wagner (PI), \$750,000
Project Title: *How Large-Scale Identification and Intervention Can Empower Professional Fact-Checkers to Improve Democracy and Public Health*
Role: Co-Principal Investigator

CDC Prevention Research Center COVID-19 Supplementary Grant 2021-2022

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Elizabeth Cox (PI), \$500,000
Project Title: *Connecting Behavioral Science to COVID-19 Vaccine Demand Network*
Role: Co-Investigator

CoronaVirusFacts Grant 2020-2021

The International Fact-Checking Network
Sijia Yang (PI), \$9,658
Project Title: *Identifying and Implementing Effective Visual Enhancements to Correct High-Priority COVID-19 Misinformation*
Role: Principal Investigator

Intramural Support

Research Forward 2024 2024-2026

Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, UW-Madison
Timothy Rogers (PI), \$499,152
Project Title: *An AI Terrarium for Understanding Intermediated and Personal Communication*
Role: Co-Investigator

Fall Competition Grant	2023-2024
Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, UW-Madison Sijia Yang (PI), \$65,593 Project Title: <i>Testing the Efficacy of Employing Automated Text Generation AI to Promote Vaccine Confidence: Bots as Messengers and Machine-Discovered Persuasive Message Features</i> Role: Principal Investigator	
WARF Accelerator Big Data Challenge Grant	2023-2024
Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation Sijia Yang (PI), \$25,000 Project Title: <i>VecOpt: Building Adaptable and Explainable Vectionaries to Improve Data-Driven Strategic Communication</i> Role: Principal Investigator	
Stakeholder and Patient Engaged Research Pilot Award	2022-2023
UW-Madison Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Malia Jones (PI), \$100,000 Project Title: <i>Community Co-Design and Pilot Test of Public Health Messages Addressing Pediatric Vaccine Hesitancy in Rural America</i> Role: Co-Principal Investigator	
Wisconsin Idea Collaboration Grant	2022-2024
Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education & UW-Madison Division of Extension Malia Jones (PI), \$59,985 Project Title: <i>Community Co-design and Randomized Controlled Trial of Messages Targeting Online Misinformation for Rural Wisconsinites</i> Role: Co-Principal Investigator	
Clinical and Community Outcomes Research Pilot Award	2021-2022
UW-Madison Institute for Clinical and Translational Research Susan Passmore (PI), \$74,904 Project Title: <i>Promoting COVID Vaccine Acceptance for Safety Net Providers and Patients in Wisconsin</i> Role: Co-Investigator	
Fall Competition Grant	2021-2022
Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, UW-Madison Sijia Yang (PI), \$70,032 Project Title: <i>Developing and testing the impacts of cannabis prevention messages for at-risk young adults</i> Role: Principal Investigator	

Wisconsin Partnership Program, UW-Madison
David H. Gustafson (PI), Ryan Westergaard (co-PI), \$470,000
Project Title: *Communication Support for COVID-CHESS*
Role: Co-Investigator

Fall Competition Grant 2020-2021

Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education, UW-Madison
Sijia Yang (PI), \$46,209
Project Title: *What Features Would Make Pictorial Tobacco Control Messages Persuasive and Shareworthy? A Hybrid Human-Computer Vision Approach*
Role: Principal Investigator

**Refereed
Conference
Presentations**

- 1) Cotter, L.M., **Yang, S.**, Liao, X., Henning, E., Bhattar, M., & Jones, M. (2024, June). Localness versus autonomy: Identifying promising message targeting strategies to improve parental confidence in vaccination through a randomized online experiment. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 2) Duan, Z., Yang, K.C., Hu, Y., Shao, A., Chen, K., & **Yang, S.** (2024, June). VecMFD—A Python library for computational analysis of moral appeals from English texts. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 3) Mak, M. K. F., Duan, Z., **Yang, S.**, & Wagner, M. W. (2024, June). Quit Twitter? The interplay of social identities, perceptions, and behavioral reactions to changing platform ownership. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 4) Minich, M.*, Cotter, L.*, Kriss, L., Lu, L., **Yang, S.**, & Cascio C.N. (2024, June). Pictorial warning labels reduce sharing intentions, alter self-relevance processes elicited by social media posts promoting cannabis edibles. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia. - Minich and Cotter share first-authorship
- 5) Duan, Z., Shao, A., Hu, Y., Lee, H., Liao, X., Suh, Y., Kim, J., Yang, K. C., Chen, K., & **Yang, S.** (2024, June). Constructing vec-tionaries to extract latent message features from texts: A case study of moral appeals. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 6) Lu, L., Cotter M. L., Wang, Y., Liu, J., Chris, C., & **Yang, S.** (2024, June). Weed out the myths: The interplay of warning labels and social cues on peer intervention and misinformation correction. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.

- 7) Lu, L., Kwon, H., Wang, W., & **Yang, S.** (2024, June). AI-enhanced insights into youth responses: A GPT4-powered exploration of the impact of cannabis warning labels and social cues. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 8) Kim, J., Lee, H., Liao, X., Duan, Z., Sun, L., & **Yang, S.** (2024, June). Unpacking health politicization: Distinguishing message versus perception effects on COVID-19 vaccine-related attitudes and partisan polarization. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 9) **Yang, S.**, Sun, L., Tao, R., Suh, Y., Duan, Z., Sun, Y., Wang, Y., & Liu, J. (2024, June). What makes a strong argument in health promotional messages? Identifying latent persuasive message features through an agnostic causal machine learning approach. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 10) Yang, E. F., Mi, R. Z., Tahk, A., Cotter, L. M., Tarfa, A., Lu, L., Li, M., **Yang, S.**, Gustafson, D. H., Westergaard, R., & Shah, D. (2024, June). Connecting to support: How use of an mHealth app explains antiretroviral medication adherence among people living with HIV and substance use disorders. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 11) Cotter, L. M., **Yang, S.**, Henning, E. E., Liao, X., Bhattar, M., & Jones, M. (2024, April). Localness v autonomy: Statistical methods for identifying promising message strategies to reduce vaccine hesitancy. Paper presented at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication. Lexington, Kentucky, USA.
- 12) Mak, M., Li, M., **Yang, S.**, Shah, D., & Wagner, M. (2023, May). *News, talk, and social: Linking political communication repertoires to political efficacy and trust*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 13) Tao, R., Wang, Y., Liu, J., Peng, Y., & **Yang, S.** (2023, May). *Identifying message characteristics in pictorial tobacco control images to predict emotional responses, reactance and discussion intentions among Chinese male smokers*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 14) Sun, L., Chuang, Y., Sun, Y., & **Yang, S.** (2023, May). *Adoption and implication of the Biased-Annotator Competence Estimation (BACE) model into COVID-19 vaccine Twitter data: Human annotation for latent message features*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 15) Shen, L., Sun, Y., Lee, D., Vraga, E., Bode, L., Borah, P., Shah, D., Wagner, M., & **Yang, S.** (2023, May). *Promoting truth: Using ads promotion and social bots to deliver misinformation correction on social media*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 16) Li, M., Li, G., & **Yang, S.** (2023, May). *Facilitating through distracting: Cognitive mechanism of debunking COVID-19 misinformation on TikTok*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 17) Duan, Z., **Yang, S.**, Shao, A., Chen, K., Hu, Y., Suh, Y., Kim, J., Lee, H., & Liao, X. (2023, May). *VecOpt: Development of a word embedding-based optimization approach*

to extracting moral appeals from text. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.

- 18) Cotter L. M., **Yang, S.**, Lu L., Kriss L. A., Minich M., Liu J., Silver L., & Cascio C.N. (2023, May). *Can enhanced cannabis warning labels mitigate youth-targeted marketing and pro-cannabis online social influences? Evidence from an online experiment among at-risk adolescents and young adult.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 19) **Yang, S.**, Tao, R., Bhattar, M., Shen, L., Jones, M., Garbacz, A., & Passmore, S.R. (2023, May). *Leveraging testimonials from clinicians and community leaders to develop and test COVID-19 vaccine promotional messages targeting rural adults: Converging evidence from an online experiment and Facebook/Meta A/B testing.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.
- 20) **Yang, S.**, Tao, R., Wang, X., Wang, Y., Wu, S., & Liu, J. (2023, March). *No more gifting: Identifying design features within pictorial tobacco warnings to improve perceived message effectiveness and reduce gifting intentions among Chinese male smokers.* Poster presented at the Society For Research On Nicotine & Tobacco Annual Conference. San Antonio, TX.
- 21) **Yang, S.**, Suh, Y. (2022, Nov). *Moralizing effects of pictorial anti-smoking messages: Behavioral consequences and emotional pathways.* Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. New Orleans, LA.
- 22) Duan, Z., Hu, Yi., & **Yang, S.** (2022, July). *Strategic usage of moral appeals by Twitter bots in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.* Paper presented at the International Conference on Computational Social Science. Chicago, IL.
- 23) **Yang, S.**, Shen, L., Gregory, S., Edwards, D., & Passmoare, S. (2022, May). *Applying the Hornik & Woolf approach to identify top messaging themes to improve healthcare workers' COVID-19 vaccine confidence.* Paper presented at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication. Lexington, KY.
- 24) **Yang, S.**, Shen, L., Li, J., Tao, R., Okada, T., & Borah, P. (2022, May). *Applying the Hornik & Woolf approach to identify high-priority COVID-19 misinformation for vaccine promotion.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.
- 25) Liu, J., Mi, R., Jeon, M., Fabbriatore, J., Wicke, R., Cojulun, L., Wicke, R., Mi, R., Cojulun, L., & **Yang, S.** (2022, May). *Evaluating the persuasive effect of construal level on elaborative processing and counterarguing in cannabis warning messages: An eye-tracking experiment.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.
- 26) Wicke, R., Mi, R., Cojulun, L., **Yang, S.**, & Liu, J. (2022, May). *Fight, not flight: An eye-tracking study on the effects of construal level on message reactance and avoidance of cannabis warning labels.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.
- 27) Li, J., Borah, P., Kang, J., Kim, J., Okada, T., Shen, L., Tao, R., & **Yang, S.** (2022, May). *News literacy matters, but for whom?: Political asymmetry in the effects of news literacy on COVID-19 health and political misperceptions.* Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.

- 28) Tao, R., Wang, Y., & **Yang, S.** (2022, May). *From comments to norms: Experimental evidence on how exposure to online COVID-19 news commentary can shape perceived norms of xenophobia*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.
- 29) Duan, Z., Chen, K., Shao, A., & **Yang, S.** (2022, May). *Differentiating discrete moral appeals in predicting online communicative actions: Analyzing a two-week fire-hose archival of COVID-19 tweets*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Paris, France.
- 30) Shen, L., Li, J., Tao, R., Minich, M., Okada, T., Borah, P., & **Yang, S.** (2021, Oct). *Diverging Roles of COVID-19 Misperceptions in Predicting Vaccination Intentions: Implications for Communication Campaigns*. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 31) **Yang, S.**, Kim, S. J., Tveleneva, A., Minich, M., Padon, A., Liu, J., & Silver, L. (2021, May). *Superiority of pictorial cannabis warning labels: Experiment evidence on perceived message effectiveness and recall among at-risk young adults*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 32) Duan, Z., Li, J., Lukito, J., Chen, X., Shah, D., **Yang, S.** (2021, May). *Bot as strategic communicator in the digital public space: Evidence for algorithmic agenda-setting during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 33) Chen, K., **Yang, S.**, Duan, Z. (2021, May). *Evaluating biases and sample representativeness of Twitter data*. Extended abstract to be presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 34) Minich, M., Kim, S. J., Tveleneva, A., Liu, J., Padon, A., Silver, L., & **Yang, S.** (2021, May). *Harshing the buzz: Message-induced negative affect mediates the effects of pictorial cannabis product warning labels on desired outcomes*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 35) Tao, R., Wang, X., Wu, S., Liu, J., Yao, H., Wang Y., & **Yang, S.** (2021, Feb). *Emotions and norms: Influence of normative perceptions and persuasive impacts of discrete emotional appeals within pictorial tobacco control messages in China*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 36) Li, J., Tao, R., Shen, L., & **Yang, S.** (2021, May). *Hope over fear: The effectiveness of hope appeal enhancements to debunk COVID-19 misinformation amid heightened threat*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 37) Yang, E., & **Yang, S.** (2021, May). *Care or purity: The power of moral values and frames on policy support for vaping regulation*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 38) Tveleneva, A., Kim, S. J., Minich, M., Liu, J., Padon, A., Silver, L., & **Yang, S.** (2021, May). *Conversations matter: The importance of positive and negative interpersonal discussion on cannabis-related attitudes, behaviors, and policy support in at-risk young adults*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.

- 39) Tao, R., Wang, X., Bao, S., Wang, Y., Yao, H., Wu, S., & **Yang, S.** (2021, Feb). *Impacts of discrete emotional appeals within pictorial tobacco control messages on perceived message effectiveness and intention to quit among Chinese male smokers*. Poster presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine Tobacco Annual Conference. Virtual conference.
- 40) **Yang, S.** (2020, April). *Kids and pets: the moralizing effects of care-based moral appeals in visual tobacco control messages on third-person regulation*. Poster presented at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication. Lexington, KY.
- 41) Murashka, V., Liu, J., **Yang, S.**, & Tang, H. (2020, May). *The role of attention and arousal as indicators of information processing in social media engagement*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 42) **Yang, S.** (2020, May). *Moral appeals and message persuasiveness: From textual to visual tobacco control messages*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 43) **Yang, S.** (2020, May). *Kids and pets: How care-based moral appeals motivate the retransmission of pictorial anti-smoking messages*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Gold Coast, Australia.
- 44) **Yang, S.**, Liu, J., Tang, H., & Murashka, V. (2019, May). *Attention grabbing, persuasiveness, and virality: Theme selection for social media-based health campaigns*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Washington, D.C..
- 45) Zhang, J., Oh, Y.J., Wang, X., Kim, R., **Yang, S.**, & Yu, Z. (2019, May). *First step towards an automated personalized persuasive conversational system: Investigating moderating effects of psychological factors*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Washington, D.C..
- 46) Yang, Q., Herbert, N., **Yang, S.**, Alber, J., Ophir, Y., & Cappella, J.N. (2019, May). *More is less? Interaction effects between conflicting recommendations and information avoidance on confusion about E-cigarettes*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Washington, D.C..
- 47) **Yang, S.**, Herbert, N., Ophir, Y., Alber, J., Yang, Q., & Cappella, J. N. (2019, Feb). *Implications of exposure to conflicting scientific recommendations for social diffusion of electronic cigarettes: Results from a randomized controlled experiment*. Poster presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine Tobacco Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA.
- 48) Herbert, N., **Yang, S.**, Yang, Q., Alber, J., Ophir, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2019, Feb). *Conflicting E-cigarette recommendations increase cynical beliefs in current and former smokers: Evidence from a randomized control trial*. Poster presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine Tobacco Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA.
- 49) Herbert, N., **Yang, S.**, Alber, J.M., Yang, Q., Ophir, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2018, May). *Developing measures of negative effects from contradictory e-cig information exposure*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Prague, Czech Republic.

- 50) Sutton, J., **Yang, S.**, & Cappella, J. N. (2018, May). *Improving the effectiveness of tobacco warning labels: An analysis of objective image features*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Prague, Czech Republic.
- 51) **Yang, S.**, Sutton, J., & Cappella, J. N. (2018, Feb). *Effects of visual features in graphic tobacco warning labels on quitting intention: A least absolute shrinkage and selection operator (LASSO) approach*. Paper presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine Tobacco Annual Conference. Baltimore, MD.
- 52) Tan, A., **Yang, S.**, Hamilton, K., Fischbein, R., & Kenne, D. (2018, Feb). *Effects of exposure to vaping cues within e-cigarette advertising on smoking and vaping urges among college students*. Poster presented at the Society for Research on Nicotine Tobacco Annual Conference. Baltimore, MD.
- 53) **Yang, S.**, Tan, A., Hamilton, K., Fischbein, R., & Kenne, D. R. (2017, Nov). *Roadblock to vaping among smokers or gateway to smoking among e-cigarette users: A randomized controlled trial on visual vaping cue effects on harm perceptions*. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. Dallas, TX.
- 54) **Yang, S.**, Maloney, E., & Cappella, J. N. (2017, Nov). *When the visual collide with the verbal: Using Moral Foundations Theory to explain multimodal persuasive eessages' effects on policy opinions*. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. Dallas, TX.
- 55) **Yang, S.**, Zhang, J., Dehlendorf, C., & Centola, D. (2017, Nov). *Applying Structural Topic Modeling (STM) to explain the efficacy of an online group intervention to promote perceived norms for using intrauterine devices*. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA.
- 56) **Yang, S.**, Zhang, J., Dehlendorf, C., & Centola, D. (2017, May). *What Topics Matter? Applying Structural Topic Modeling (STM) to extract insights from social media-based health interventions*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. San Diego, CA.
- 57) **Yang, S.**, Kim, H. S., Oh, P., Kim, M., & Cappella, J. N. (2016, June). *Comparing four collaborative filtering algorithms to effectively recommend anti- smoking health messages*. Poster presented at the 2nd Annual International Conference on Computational Social Science. Evanston, IL.
- 58) Kim, H. S., **Yang, S.**, Kim, M., & Cappella, J. N. (2016, June). *Assessing the effectiveness of recommendation algorithms for health message design: An experiment*. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual International Conference on Computational Social Science. Evanston, IL.
- 59) **Yang, S.**, Maloney, E., & Cappella, J. N. (2016, June). *Effects of visuals and arguments in electronic cigarette ads on smokers' perceptions of secondhand vaping*. Extended abstract presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. Fukuoka, Japan.
- 60) Walter, D., & **Yang, S.** (2016, Sep). *Candidates news coverage and electoral success: A semantic networks perspective*. Paper presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Conference. Philadelphia, PA.

- 61) **Yang, S.**, Oh, P., Kim, M., & Cappella, J. N. (2015, May). *Tailoring by “cloning”: A user-based collaborative filtering approach to recommend effective anti-smoking PSAs*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- 62) Kim, M., Baek, Y. M., **Yang, S.**, & Cappella, J. N. (2015, May). *Analyzing messages for their effectiveness: Content and executional features on smoking cessation advertisements*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- 63) Jingwen, Z., Brackbill, D., **Yang, S.**, & Centola, D. (2015, May). *The causal impact of social media on physical activity: A randomized controlled trial*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- 64) **Yang, S.**, Xu, J., Luo, M., & Qi, J. (2014, July). *Will Chinese government's online censorship boomerang? The effects of perceived censorship attempt initiated by different agents on rumor processing, spreading and evaluation of government among Chinese netizens*. Paper presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society for Political Psychology. Rome, Italy.
- 65) **Yang, S.** (2013, June). *Processes of online political discussions and public opinion(s) formation/expression: A three-stage model based upon emergent social identities*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference. London, United Kingdoms.
- 66) **Yang, S.** (2012, Nov). *A model based on normative theories: How Internet use and skills in the long run impact the watchdog role of the web and political cynicism of Chinese netizens*. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference. Orlando, FL.
- 67) Kam, J. A., & **Yang, S.** (2012, April). *Does targeted parent-child communication against substance use motivate Latino and European American adolescents to intervene in a friend's substance use? Testing a mediation model based on primary socialization theory*. Paper presented at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication. Lexington, KY.

Invited Talks

School of Journalism and Communication, Wuhan University	June 2025
College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida	May 2025
Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, UW-Madison	Nov 2022
Prevention Research Center, UW-Madison	July 2022
COVID-19 Webinar for Health Care Providers, Wisconsin Department of Health Services	Dec 2021
Department of Communication Arts, UW-Madison	March 2021
Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services	July 2020
Department of Medical Ethics & Health Policy, University of Pennsylvania	Summer 2019

Department of Communication, University of California, Davis	Fall 2018
Center for Tobacco Studies, School of Public Health, Rutgers University	Fall 2018
Department of Communication, Boston College	Fall 2018
Department of Advertising, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Fall 2018
College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida	Spring 2018
School of Communication and Information, Rutgers University	Spring 2018
School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon	Fall 2017

Teaching and Advising

Courses Taught

Information for Communication (J203), *UW-Madison*

- Taught in Spring 20, Spring 21, Spring 22, Fall 22 (revamped), Fall 23

Communication Research Methods (J658), *UW-Madison*

- Taught in Fall 2020

Concepts and Tools for Data Analytics and Visualization (J677), *UW-Madison*

- Taught in Spring 21, Fall 21 (revamped), Fall 22, Spring 24

Computational Approaches to Communication Research (J818), *UW-Madison*

- Taught in Spring 20 (developed), Fall 20, Fall 22

Message Effects (J880), *UW-Madison*

- Taught in Spring 22 (developed), Fall 23

Advising and Mentoring

Graduate Student Advising and Dissertation Committees, *UW-Madison*

- Current: Luhang Sun (co-adviser with Dhavan Shah)
- Current: Lynne Cotter (advisor)
- Current: Thomas Hongjie Zhang (advisor)
- Current: Feifei Zhao (advisor)
- Current: Xiaohui Cao (advisor)
- Current: Tianan Lin (advisor)
- Current: Alexis Moore (member)
- Current: Gaofei Li (member)
- Current: Liwei Shen (member)
- Current: Mengyu Li (member)
- Current: Xining Liao (member)
- Current: Yibing Sun (member)
- Current: Diego Romeo (member)
- Current: Hyerin Kwon (member)
- 2025: Zening Duan (co-adviser with Dhavan Shah, Asst. Prof., National University of Singapore)
- 2025: Linqi Lu (member, Asst. Prof., University of North Dakota)

- 2024: Lauren Kriss (member, Senior Program Coordinator, UT-Austin)
- 2024: Ran Tao (member, Postdoc, UNC at Chapel Hill)
- 2022: Tomoko Okada (member, Postdoc, Social Science Center Berlin)
- 2022: Jianing Li (member, Asst. Prof., Rutgers University)

Master Thesis Committees, *UW-Madison*

- 2025: Soyeong Cho (member)
- 2024: David Wei Wang (member)
- 2023: Sean Pauley (member)
- 2023: Wil Dubree (member)
- 2021: Theresa Vander Woude (member, Fellow with the US Environmental Protection Agency)

Supervised Student Independent Study, *UW-Madison*

- Spring 2022: Lynne Cotter (Ph.D. Student)
- Fall 2021: Yiting Duan (Undergraduate student)
- Fall 2019: Zening Duan (Ph.D. Student)

Supervised Senior Honors Thesis, *UW-Madison*

- 2020-2021: Cindy Liu

Mentor for the Undergraduate Research Scholars Program, *UW-Madison*

- 2021-2022: Yilin Du

Director for the Computational Approaches and Message Effects Research (CAMER) group, *UW-Madison*

- Graduate student members in Fall 2023: Total = 15
- Undergraduate student members in Fall 2023: Total = 7

Service

Departmental/University Service

Certificate in Digital Media Analytics, UW-Madison

- Founding faculty director 2023-Present

Committee Services:

- RISE AI Search Committee (member), SJMC 2024
- Graduate Committee (member), SJMC 2020-2021
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (member), SJMC 2019-2020, 2021-2022

Professional Service

Chaired Panels and Pre-Conferences:

- **Yang, S.**, Yilang Peng, Kaiping Chen, & Yingdan Lu. (co-organizers). (2024, May). *The Future of Computational Message Science: Theoretical Advances, Computational Frontiers, and Grand Societal Challenges*. International Communication Association Annual Pre-Conference. Gold Coast, Australia
- **Yang, S.**, & Lee, J. (co-chairs). (2021, May). *Persuasive messaging to curb the COVID-19 pandemic and infodemic: Questions and lessons from around the globe*. International Communication Association Annual Conference. Virtual conference.

- **Yang, S., & Walter, D.** (co-organizers). (2017, May). *Computational tools for text mining, processing and analysis*. International Communication Association Pre-conference. San Diego, CA.

Ad hoc Reviewer for Grants:

- *Swiss National Science Foundation*

Ad hoc Reviewer for Journals:

- *Journal of Communication, Communication Theory, Communication Monograph, Communication Research, Human Communication Research, Media Psychology, New Media and Society, The Information Society, Information, Communication & Society, Journalism, Public Opinion Quarterly, Journal of Children and Media, Social Media and Society, Communication and the Public, Health Communication, Journal of Health Communication, International Journal of Communication, Chinese Journal of Communication, The International Journal of Press/Politics, JAMA Pediatrics, Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association, Addiction, Tobacco Control, Nicotine & Tobacco Research, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, International Journal of Medical Informatics, International Journal of Public Health*

Community Service

Collaborator for the "I-TRUST: Implementation of Teleophthalmology in Rural Health Systems Study" project, leading the evaluation of culturally adapted, video-based patient education intervention to increase diabetic eye screening and teleophthalmology use in urban, Latinx communities

2024-2025

Co-investigator for the Communities Confronting COVID-19 (C3) project, leading the development and evaluation of a social media campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccines in rural Wisconsin

2021-2023

Co-author for the report titled "Promoting COVID Vaccine Acceptance for Safety Net Providers and Patients in Wisconsin", disseminated through the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association to clinicians and staff in the Federally Qualified Health Centers serving Wisconsin

2021-2022

Co-investigator for the COVID-19 Wisconsin Connect (CWC) project, leading the team to develop and maintain the COVID-19 Fact Checker on the CWC platform during early phases of the pandemic

2020-2021