

# Yi Zhang

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I am a social psychology researcher with 6+ years of experience designing experiments and using quantitative methods to analyze both lab and naturalistic data. I am passionate about using data to understand human behavior and inform adaptive decision-making.

## — Education —

### University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

- Ph.D. in Social Psychology (expected in May 2026)
- M.A. in Psychology (received August 2022)

### New York University, New York, NY

- B.A. in Psychology (with Honors) and Philosophy (received in May 2018)

## — Skills —

**Programming:** R, Python, SPSS, SQL, Bash, Javascript/HTML/CSS

**Statistical analysis:** regression, multilevel modeling, significance testing, machine learning, natural language processing, social network analysis

**Software and tools:** Qualtrics, Pavlovia, Cloud Research, Imer, scikit-learn, ggplot, seaborn/matplotlib

**Research methods:** interview, usability testing, online experiments (A/B testing), in-lab experiments (survey & log studies), diary studies, social network analysis

## — Research Experience —

### PhD Student at *University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA* | 2020 - Present

- Designed 10+ research studies on social connection and decision-making, using online surveys and behavioral analysis, resulting in four conference presentations and two manuscripts under review.
- Applied multilevel modeling and machine learning on natural language and social network data to understand psychological phenomena in real-world contexts.
- Communicating research findings to field experts and incorporating stakeholders' and peer reviewers' feedback to refine research project goals.

### Research Intern at *Flourish Science, Remote* | July 2024 – Present

- Collaborated with design, product, and science teams to design a new user activity for the Flourish app, improving user well-being by encouraging deep social connections.
- Conducted user interviews and usability testing to inform product design.
- Refined product prototype through survey analysis, NLP, and fine-tuning of LLM prompts.

### Lead researcher at *Letters to Strangers, Remote* | October 2023 – Present

- Led a 12-week longitudinal study assessing the impact of a letter-writing intervention on student well-being, generating actionable insights for mental health programming.
- Facilitated focus group discussions and analyzed quantitative survey data to evaluate intervention efficacy, identifying key factors contributing to student well-being improvements.

### UX Researcher/Data Analyst for *PaceTodo, independent project* | May – Aug 2022

- Designed surveys and conducted user interviews on time-management patterns. Analyzed and visualized data to inform the design of PaceTodo—a time-management wellbeing app.
- Conducted usability testing and shared insights with UX and engineering teams, contributing to the successful beta launch of the PaceTodo App on Android.

### Lab Manager/Research Coordinator at *Columbia University, New York, NY* | 2018 – 2020

- Conducted quantitative analysis of 800+ survey responses on drinking behavior in social networks; presented key findings at a national conference.
- Coordinated research compliance and finance of 20+ lab members, contributing to the successful application and renewal of four multi-year grants (total award over \$1,000,000).

## — Awards and Grants —

- 2022                      Honorable mention, APS Student Grant