Yan Zhang

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Experience

Assistant Professor Aug. 2025 – Present
Department of Sociology, Texas State University *San Marcos, TX*

Assistant Professor Aug. 2023 – Aug. 2025
Department of Sociology, East Carolina University *Greenville, NC*

Postdoc Research Scientist 2021 – 2023
Center for Demography of Health and Aging, University of Wisconsin–Madison *Madison, WI*

Education

Ph.D., Sociology Michigan State University, 2021
Committee: Hui Liu(Chair), Zhenmei Zhang, Ning Hsieh, William Chopik

M.A., Sociology The State University of New York at Buffalo, 2016

B.A., Sociology China Agricultural University, 2014

Research Interest

Family Demography, Medical Sociology/Population Health, Aging & Life Course, Quantitative and Computational Methodology

Peer-Reviewed Publications

[15] Yan Zhang, Isaac Kolam, and Dmitry Tumin. "Preinjury functional status is associated with functional status after hip fracture in older adults without preinjury perceived social support". In: *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research,* 10.1097 (2025).

[14] Yan Zhang and Jason Fletcher. "Research Note: The Association between Parity and Odds of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementias Status". In: *Demoghaphy,* 11585876 (2024).

[13] Yan Zhang and Hui Liu. "Parent-Child Relationship Quality and Older Parents' Cognitive Trajectories". In: *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships,* 02654075241283974 (2024).

[12] Yan Zhang, Yiyang Yuan, Maria Roche-Dean, Irving Vega, and Richard Gonzalez. "A Visualization Tool to Study Dyadic Caregiving Health Profiles". In: *Journal of Aging and Health,* 08982643241255739 (2024).

[11] Yan Zhang, Jason Fletcher, Qiongshi Lu, and Jie Song. "Gender differences in the association between parity and cognitive function: Evidence from the UK biobank". In: *Social Science & Medicine* 320 (2023), p. 115649.

[10] Jooyoung Kong, Scott D Easton, and Yan Zhang. "Sexual and marital satisfaction in older adulthood: effects of childhood and adulthood violence exposure". In: *The Gerontologist* 63.2 (2023), pp. 285–296.

[9] Yan Zhang. "Fertility history and risk of cognitive impairment among older parents in the United States". In: *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B* 77.12 (2022), pp. 2326–2337.

[8] Zhenmei Zhang, Hui Liu, and Yan Zhang. "Marital loss and cognitive function: does timing matter?" In: *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B* 77.10 (2022), pp. 1916–1927.

[7] Yan Zhang and Jason Fletcher. "Parental status in later life and parents' risk of cognitive impairment". In: *SSM-Population Health* 16 (2021), p. 100968.

[6] Hui Liu, Zhenmei Zhang, and Yan Zhang. "A national longitudinal study of marital quality and cognitive decline among older men and women". In: *Social Science & Medicine* 282 (2021), p. 114151.

[5] Yan Zhang and Hui Liu. "Individual's gender ideology and happiness in China". In: *Chinese Sociological Review* 54.3 (2021), pp. 252–277.

[4] Hui Liu, Ning Hsieh, Zhenmei Zhang, Yan Zhang, and Kenneth M Langa. "Same-sex couples and cognitive impairment: Evidence from the Health and Retirement Study". In: *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B* 76.7 (2021), pp. 1388–1399.

[3] Yan Zhang and Hui Liu. "A national longitudinal study of partnered sex, relationship quality, and mental health among older adults". In: *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B* 75.8 (2020), pp. 1772–1782.

[2] Hui Liu, Yan Zhang, Sarah A Burgard, and Belinda L Needham. "Marital status and cognitive impairment in the United States: evidence from the National Health and Aging Trends Study". In: *Annals of Epidemiology* 38 (2019), pp. 28–34.

[1] Hui Liu, I-Chien Chen, Lindsey Wilkinson, Jennifer Pearson, and Yan Zhang. "Sexual orientation and diabetes during the transition to adulthood". In: *LGBT health* 6.5 (2019), pp. 227–234.

Non-Peer Reviewed Publications

Yan Zhang. Parenthood and Health. *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society*, 6 Volume Set, 2nd Edition (eds W.C. Cockerham, R. Dingwall and S. Quah). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118410868.wbehibs111.pub2

Boyan Zheng, Yan Zhang & Jason Fletcher. Estimating Causal Effects between Number of Children and Older Parents' Cognitive Function Using HRS Data and IV Approach. (Preprint, SocialArXiv, doi: 10.31235/osf.io/4db7z)

Under Review

Yan Zhang & Zhiyong Lin. Parental Status, Family Complexity, and Unmet Care Needs in Later Life.

Yan Zhang & Mingfei Zhang. Mapping Fertility Narratives at Scale Using Large Language Models.

Yan Zhang. Family Structure and Transitions Into and Out of Homeboundness: Evidence from the National Health and Aging Trends Study, 2011–2024.

Yan Zhang, Jada Morris & Dmitry Tumin. Health Insurance Coverage Gaps and Preventive Healthcare Use after Medicare Eligibility.

Haowei Wang, Catherine Garcia, Yan Zhang, Jeung Hyun Kim & Marc A Garcia. State Policy, Immigrant Status, and Disability among Midlife Asian Americans.

Haowei Wang, Catherine Garcia, Yan Zhang, Jeung Hyun Kim & Marc A Garcia. Beyond Aggregated Advantage: Heterogeneous Age Patterns of Disability Across Pan-ethnic Asian Americans.

Grants (funded)

2024 Rapid Pilot Grant ($10,733), Center for Demography of Health and Aging, University of Wisconsin–Madison, PI: Yan Zhang

Grants (unfunded)

2024 "Bi-directional relationships between pain and SES among middle-aged and older adults." National Institute on Aging (R03 AG090928-01). Impact Score: 25; Percentile: 9% (Unfunded). Co-PIs: Yan Zhang and Adrianne Frech

2022 Grant application & Resubmission: "Parenthood in later life and older adults' risk of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD)." National Institute on Aging (R03 AG080214-01). Impact Score: 50; Percentile: 41% (Unfunded). PI: Yan Zhang

Awards & Honors

2026 College Achievement Award for Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activity ($500), Texas State University

2026 Scholarship and Teaching Excellence Program (STEP) ($600), Texas State University

2022 Paper presentation honorarium at the NHATS/NSOC Dementia Care Conference ($5,000), University of Michigan

2019 Summer Publishing Fellowship, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University ($6,500)

2017-2020 Graduate Office Fellowship Award, Michigan State University

2011-2013 Excellent Student First-class Scholarship, China Agricultural University

Teaching Experience

Instructor 2025 - present
Department of Sociology *Texas State University*

- SOCI5352 Dementia and Care
- SOCI3363 Medical Sociology
- SOCI5363 Medical Sociology

Instructor 2023 - 2025
Department of Sociology *East Carolina University*

- SOCI3213 Methods of Research
- SOCI6312 & 6313 Multivariate Techniques and Analysis
- SOCI3327 Introductory Medical Sociology

Instructor 2017
Department of Sociology *Michigan State University*
- SOC216 Sex and Gender

Teaching Assistant 2016 - 2019
Michigan State University
- SOC882 Analysis of Social Data II
- SOC281 Social Research Methods
- ISS315 National Diversity and Change: United States
- ISS210 Individual and Society

Mentorship Experience

Master thesis committee member
Department of Sociology, Texas State University
- Jennifer Lee, Deborah Yorke, Rachel Burnside, Melinda Ward

Department of Sociology, East Carolina University
- Zsa Zsa Ayres, Jada Morris

Selected Presentations & Invited Talk

08/2026 American Sociological Association, NYC, NY.
1. Yan Zhang. Mapping Fertility Narratives at Scale Using Large Language Models (Paper session)
2. Yan Zhang. Quantifying Social Media Narratives Using Large Language Models: A Scalable Workflow for Social Measurement (Flash talk)
3. Yan Zhang & Zhiyong Lin. Parental status, family complexity, and unmet care needs in later life (Roundtable)
4. Yan Zhang, Marc A. Garcia, Catherine Garcia, Haowei Wang & Jeung Hyun Kim. Cognitive Difficulties among Asian Americans Older Adults (Roundtable)

04/2025 Population Association of America, Washington D.C.
1. Yan Zhang & Zhiyong Lin. Parental status and unmet care needs in later life: Evidence from the National Health and Aging Trends Study (Oral session)
2. Yan Zhang. Kinship and Transition Probability in Homeboundness Using Markov Models (Flash session)

04/2024 Population Association of America, Columbus, OH
1. Yan Zhang, Chenghao Li & Yang Wang. The Impact of Parity on Cognitive Function Using Instrumental Variable Approach: Evidence from the One-Child Policy in China (Poster session)
2. Yan Zhang, Isaac Kolam & Dmitry Tumin. Perceived Social Support Before Hip Fracture and Post-Injury Functional Status Among Older Adults (Poster session)

02/2024 Workshop on Determinants of Adult Mortality, Morbidity, and Healthy Aging in LMICs (virtual), Center on the Economics and Demography of Aging (CEDA), The University of California Berkeley
1. Yan Zhang, Chenghao Li & Yang Wang. The Impact of Parity on Cognitive Function Using Instrumental Variable Approach: Evidence from the One-Child Policy in China

01/2024 Carolina Population Center, Interdisciplinary Research Seminar Series. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
1. Yan Zhang. Number of Children and Older Adults' Cognitive Function in the U.S., UK, and China

11/2023 The Gerontological Society of America, Tampa, FL
1. Yan Zhang, Yiyang Yuan, Maria Roche-dean, Richard Gonzalez & Irving Vega. A Visualization Tool to Study Complex Health Profiles and Variations by Age, Wealth, Race, and Partner's Cognitive Status (Symposium)

04/2023 Population Association of America, New Orleans, LA
1. Yan Zhang, Zhiyong Lin & Hui Liu. Marital Status and Unmet Care Needs of Older Adults in the U.S. (Oral Presentation)
2. Yan Zhang & Jason Fletcher. The Association between Parity and Parent's Risk of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementias Status (Oral Presentation)

04/2023 The Computational Demography Working Group (CDWG), The University of Washington, Seattle. Invited Speaker (virtual)
1. Yan Zhang. Parenthood and Older Adults' Cognitive Health

11/2022 The Gerontological Society of America, Indianapolis, IN
1. Yan Zhang & Hui Liu. Relationship Quality and Older Parents' Cognitive Trajectories: A National Longitudinal Study in the United States (Symposium)
2. Yan Zhang & Jason Fletcher. Number of Children and Risk of Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia: Evidence from the UK Biobank (Poster)
3. Jooyoung Kong, Scott Easton & Yan Zhang. Sexual and Marital Satisfaction in Older Adulthood: Effects of Childhood and Adulthood Violence Exposure (Paper)

05/2022 NHATS/NSOC Dementia Care Conference, Ann Arbor, MI
1. Yan Zhang & Zhiyong Lin. Rely on Your Spouse or Your Kid(s)?: Marital Status, Parental Status, and Unmet Care Needs of Older Adults with and without Dementia (Oral presentation)

04/2022 Population Association of America, Atlanta, GA
1. Yan Zhang. Fertility History and Risk of Cognitive Impairment Among Older Parents in the U.S. (Oral presentation)
2. Yan Zhang & Jason Fletcher. Fertility and Cognition: Do Genetic Factors, Family Background, and Presence of Spouse Matter? (Poster session)

08/2021 American Sociological Association, Family Section (virtual)
1. Yan Zhang. Relationship Quality Between Older Parents and Children: Impact on Parents' Cognitive Functioning (Oral presentation)

08/2020 American Sociological Association
1. Yan Zhang. Childlessness, Number of Children, Children's Gender, and Risk of Dementia among Older Adults (Roundtable, virtual)

08/2019 Society for the Study of Social Problems, New York City, NY
1. Yan Zhang. Gender Role Ideology, Self-rated Health and Happiness in China (Roundtable)

11/2018 The Gerontological Society of America. Boston, MA
1. Yan Zhang & Hui Liu. A National Longitudinal Study of Partnered Sex, Relationship Quality, and Psychological Well-being among Older Adults (Symposium oral presentation)

04/2018 Population Association of America, Denver, CO
1. Yan Zhang & Hui Liu. Partnered Sexuality and Mental Health among Older Adults: A Gendered Life Course Perspective (Oral presentation)

08/2017 American Sociological Association. Montreal, Canada
1. Yan Zhang. Gender Role Ideology, Self-rated Health and Happiness in China Based on CGSS (Roundtable)

Professional Training

Workshops:

2023 9th Annual Berkeley Workshop on Formal Demography, The University of California, Berkeley

2022 Michigan Center for Contextual Factors in Alzheimer's Disease (MCCFAD) Summer Data Immersion program, University of Michigan

2017-18 ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods, University of Michigan
1. Longitudinal data analysis, Structural Equation Model with Latent Variables
2. Maximum Likelihood Estimation II: Advanced Topics (survival analysis), Simultaneous Equation Models

Statistical Skills: Structural Equation Model, Multilevel Model, Mixed-effects Model, Event-History Hazard Model/Survival Analysis, Growth Curve Model, Dyadic Analysis (Actor Partner Interdependence Model), Social Network Analysis

Memberships

Population Association of America (PAA)

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

Professional Service

Journal reviewer

Aging & Mental Health, BMC Geriatrics, Chinese Sociological Review, Cogent Psychology, Journal of Aging and Health, Journal of Marriage and Family, Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, Journal of Women's Health, JMIR Aging, Longitudinal and Life Course Studies, Nature Communications, PloS one, Population Studies, Research on Aging, Sociological Perspectives, Sexuality Research and Social Policy, Social Science & Medicine, The Journals of Gerontology: Series B

Conference discussant Population Association of America (2021-2022, 2025)

Co-lead and webinar coordinator	ESPO Webinar Task Force, GSA (2023-2024)
Coordinator	Family, Population, and Health Laboratory, MSU (2019-2021)