

Yiling Zhang

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RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Research Interests: Household/Consumer Finance; Fintech; Behavioral Economics; Consumer Decision-Making; Food Insecurity

Teaching Interests: Household/Consumer Finance; Family Economics; Consumer Behavior; Consumer Policy; Consumer Analytics; Applied Econometrics/Statistics

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI May 2024 (Expected)
Doctor of Philosophy, Consumer Behavior and Family Economics
Doctoral Minor: Educational Psychology
Committee: Cliff Robb and Yiwei Zhang (co-chairs), Lydia Ashton, Evan Polman
Dissertation: Expense-tracking Behavior Within the Context of Financial Self-regulation

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY May 2018
Master of Public Administration, Cornell Institute for Public Affairs
Concentration on Economic and Financial Policy
Fellowship Award \$ 3,000 annually

Fudan University, Shanghai, China June 2016
Bachelor of Law
International Politics
Outstanding Student Scholarship (2012-2016), Qinglian Fellowship

WORKING PAPERS

(Job Market Paper) *Financial Self-regulation: How Does Expense-Tracking Inform Financial Behaviors*

This paper examines expense-tracking as a self-regulatory behavior within the context of financial self-regulation using administrative-level user data from a Chinese financial app and survey data from American respondents.

How Do Individuals Keep Tabs on Personal Spending

This paper combines subjective behavioral data from a self-designed survey with objective behavioral data from the administrative-level user data from a Chinese financial app to examine the motivations, methods, and timing of expense-tracking practices and their impact on financial outcomes.

The Fresh Start Effect: How Temporal Landmarks Promote Expense-tracking Behavior

(Under Review in the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*)

This paper explores the role of the “fresh start effect”, the tendency to pursue aspirational behaviors following temporal landmarks among people with a fresh start mindset, in motivating expense-tracking using online search data and administrative data from a Chinese tracking app.

PUBLISHED ARTICLES (*peer-reviewed)

Addo, F. R., & Zhang, Y. (2019). *The Emerging Millennial Wealth Gap*. New America.

Abstract: Wealth inequality among different racial and ethnic groups has been a defining feature of American society. However, new dynamics are emerging with the rise of the Millennial generation that will likely impact the extent of future divides. In this chapter, we examine racial wealth inequality among Millennial young adults. Along with summarizing wealth profiles of young Millennials of color, we explore wealth inequality within the context of historical legacies of Black-White wealth inequality, the proliferation of debt—specifically student loan debt—and the ongoing marital retreat. We also examine how the association of income and education with wealth vary significantly by race and ethnicity and contribute to pre-existing/intergenerational wealth gaps. If the trends we describe continue—and are ignored by policymakers—dramatic levels of inequality according to race and ethnicity will endure for decades to come.

*Zhang, J., & Zhang, Y. (2015). *China's Energy Security: Urgent Issues and Strategic Opportunities under New Situation*.

Fudan International Studies Review (Chinese Social Science Citation Index), 17, 130–146.

Abstract: The challenges of energy security facing China currently have broken through the paradigm of traditional security of supply, it is increasingly associated with negative externalities due to rapid economic growth over the past three decades. The solutions to challenges are no longer confined to traditional going out policy but promoting energy revolutions driven by both market-oriented reform and technological innovations, consequently a high-efficiency, saving, and low-carbon energy system formed. At the same time, China should take full advantage of strategic opportunities under the new situation, increasing voice and voting in the process of global energy governance reform, establishing a common energy security system of Northeast Asia via promoting mutual energy connection and building the Energy Triangle among China, Central Asia, and Russia.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Using Online Shopping to Improve WIC Redemption and Retention, Madison, WI May — Aug. 2021
Research Assistant for Prof. Lydia Ashton (lashton@wisc.edu)

Impact of Student Loans on Health, Madison, WI Sep. 2018 — Aug. 2019
Project Assistant for Prof. Fenaba Addo (faddo@email.unc.edu)

Florida’s Bad Faith Liability and Increasing in Insurance Payments, Ithaca, U.S.A. June 2017 — Nov. 2017
Research Assistant for Prof. Sharon Tennyson (sharon.tennyson@cornell.edu)

Using Firework Laws to Capture State’s Risk Preference, Ithaca, U.S.A. July 2017 — Dec. 2017
Research Assistant for Prof. Donald S. Kenkel (dsk10@cornell.edu) and Prof. Rick Geddes (rrg24@cornell.edu)

TPP’s Challenges and Chinese Government’s Countermeasures, Shanghai, China Oct. 2015
Coauthored this policy memo and received an external grant from the Shanghai Social Science Association

Public Opinions in BRICS before BRICS Summit 2015, Shanghai, China Dec. 2014 — May 2015
Coauthored this policy memo and received an external grant from the Fudan Media and Opinion Research Center (FMORC)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lead Lecturer, CNSR SCI 201 Consumer Insights (In-person), Madison, WI Jan. 2024 — Current

Lead Lecturer, CNSR SCI 201 Consumer Insights (Online), Madison, WI Aug. 2023 — Dec. 2023

Lead Lecturer, CNSR SCI 201 Consumer Insights (In-person), Madison, WI Aug. 2022 — May 2023

Course Description and Objectives: The Consumer Insights course provides essential training in research methods. It is structured around four key phases of research: problem definition, data collection, data analysis, and communication of results, with a focus on real-world decision-making. Throughout the course, students will delve into primary and secondary research methods, exploring both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, particularly emphasizing descriptive and inferential statistics. Students will acquire practical skills essential for extracting meaningful insights from data to inform strategic decision-making in various professional domains.

Teaching Assistant, CNSR SCI 201 Consumer Research & Analysis, Madison, WI Aug. 2021 — May 2022

Course Description and Objectives: The Consumer Research & Analysis course provides essential training in research methods. It is structured around four key phases of research: problem definition, data collection, data analysis, and communication of results, with a focus on real-world decision-making. Throughout the course, students will delve into primary and secondary research methods, exploring both qualitative and quantitative analytical techniques, particularly emphasizing descriptive and inferential statistics. Students will acquire practical skills essential for extracting meaningful insights from data to inform strategic decision-making in various professional domains.

Teaching Assistant, CNSR SCI 657 Consumer Behavior, Madison, WI Aug. 2019 — May 2021

Course Description and Objectives: The Consumer Behavior course provides an in-depth exploration into the “why” behind consumer actions, integrating perspectives from marketing, economics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of various viewpoints on consumption, delve into techniques employed by marketers to shape consumer desires and analyze the impact of consumer actions on their daily lives. The course also focuses on developing an understanding of consumer behavior that would help improve overall consumer welfare.

SERVICE

Conference Proposal Reviewer, American Council on Consumer Interests

2023 2021

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATION (*presenter)

- *Yiling Zhang and Nancy Wong, AMA Summer Conference, *Why, How and When Individuals Track Expenses, and Implications for Financial Outcomes*, American Marketing Association, U.S.A Aug. 2023
- *Yiling Zhang, American Council on Consumer Interest (ACCI) Annual Conference 2021, *Financial Self-regulation: How Does Expense-tracking Inform Financial Behaviors?*, U.S.A May 2023
- *Yiling Zhang and Nancy Wong, AMA Winter Conference, *Financial self-regulation in the FinTech era: The Role of Expense-tracking*, American Marketing Association, U.S.A Feb. 2023
- Yiling Zhang and *Nancy Wong, ANZMAC 2022 Conference, *Financial Self-regulation: Budgeting versus Tracking*, The University of Western Australia & Curtin University, Australia Dec. 2022
- Yiling Zhang and *Nancy Wong, 2022 Society for Consumer Psychology Boutique Conference on The Global Consumer: Consumer Insights from Cross-Cultural Research, *Cultural Influence on Financial Self-Regulation: Budgeting and Expense Tracking*, Society for Consumer Psychology, Singapore July 2022
- *Yiling Zhang, American Council on Consumer Interest (ACCI) Annual Conference 2021, *When Do Individuals Budget? The Impact of Fresh Start Effect on Setting Up, Implementing and Attaining Expense-Tracking Goals*, Online May 2021
- *Fenaba R. Addo, Sharon Sassler and Yiling Zhang, Population Association of America Annual Conference 2021, *Early Cohabitation and Educational Attainment in Young Adulthood*, Online May 2021
- *Fenaba R. Addo, Sharon Sassler and Yiling Zhang, 2020 APPAM- Research Across the Policy Lifecycle, *Early Cohabitation and Educational Attainment in Young Adulthood*, Online Nov. 2020

PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE POSTER (*presenter)

- *Yiling Zhang and Nancy Wong, 2022 AMA Marketing + Public Policy Conference, *Keeping Tabs on Myself: Tracking as Self-Regulation in Financial Goal Attainment*, Online June 2022
- *Yiling Zhang and Nancy Wong, 2021 Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, *Keeping Tabs on Myself: Tracking as Self-Regulation in Financial Goal Attainment*, Online Oct. 2021

FELLOWSHIP, FUNDING AND AWARDS

- Job Market Grant (\$1,000)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison Oct. 2023
- Conference Travel Scholarship (\$1,675)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison May 2023
- PhD Dissertation Award (\$3,300)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison March 2023
- Steenbock Trust Fund Award (\$950)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison March 2023
- Conference Travel Scholarship (\$1,300)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison Feb. 2023
- PhD Dissertation Award (\$1,210)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison March 2022
- Robin A. Douthitt Teaching Fellowship (\$184,500)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison Sept.2021 — May 2022
- Summer Time Academic Research Award (\$1,800)**, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison June 2020

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- beBit**, Shanghai, China May — July 2016
Consultant Assistant and recognized and highly praised by general manager
- Uber**, Shanghai, China March — May 2016
Operation Team Intern and received excellent feedback on SOPs in regular meetings
- Shanghai World Trade Organization (WTO) Affairs Consultation Center**, Shanghai, China Jan. — March 2015
Research Department Intern and received reference from the director of the research department

PROGRAMMING AND LANGUAGES

Programming: Stata (proficient), R, SPSS, SAS, L^AT_EX

Languages: English (proficient), Mandarin (native)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI); Association for Consumer Research (ACR)