ZHIYUAN LAI

Undergraduate at Peking University

Research interests include **digital inequality** and **inclusive technology**

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EDUCATION

Peking University, Beijing, China

B.M. in Information Management and Information System | GPA: 3.64/4.00	Sep 2023 - June 2027 (expected)
B.A. in Sociology (Minor)	Sep 2025 - June 2027 (expected)

PUBLICATION

*Corresponding author

Tang, Y.* & **Lai, Z.** (Under Revision) Empowering LGBTQIA+ Identity Formation in China Through LLM-based Chatbots. *Journal of Information Science*.

Lai, Z.* & Tang, Y*. (Accepted & Under Revision) Beyond or within the binary? Constructing gendered meanings in generative AI use. *iConference 2025*.

Chen, N.*, **Lai, Z.***, Li, J.*, Liu, Y.*, & Yan, P*. (Accepted & Under Revision) See, Trust, and Interact: How AI Disclosure Shapes High School Students' Trust. *iConference 2025*.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

AI & Society Research Group, Research Assistant   May 2024 - Present

Advisor: Dr. Pu Yan

- National Natural Science Foundation project "*A Study on the Influencing Factors and Mechanisms of the Algorithmic Divide*", conducting literature reviews and quantitative data analysis.
- Support a Beijing Social Science Foundation project "*A Study on Algorithm Literacy among Beijing Citizens*" by refining survey designs and analyzing data.

Undergraduate Research Program, Leader   May 2024 - Oct 2025

Public Trust and Attitudes toward Generative AI in China   Advisor: Dr. Pu Yan

- Led a multi-stage, mixed-methods study to address the gap in localized AI trust measurement.
- Developed and validated a GenAI Trust Scale for Chinese through two large-scale surveys.
- Designed and executed a field experiment using a Tobii eye-tracker to determine the causal impact of different AI disclosure strategies on user trust.
- Analyzed eye-tracking and survey data using R, discovering that simple AI labels enhance trust in conversational contexts but decrease it in news consumption.
- Conducted a related cross-cultural study on Taiwanese public attitudes at National Tsing Hua University (Summer 2025, advised by Prof. Tzu-Hua Wang).

SELECTED ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Peking University Challenge Cup Science Competition   Nov 2024 - Mar 2025

Rural Windows on Screens: Self-Presentation and Social Interaction of Middle-Aged and Elderly Women on Short-Video Platforms   Advisor: Dr. Xingkun Liang

- First Prize, University Level. Presented at the 2025 Chinese Sociological Association Annual Conference.
- Spearheaded a mixed-methods project combining ethnographic fieldwork in rural Hebei Province with computational social science methods.
- Independently scraped and analyzed public comment data from Douyin and Kuaishou using Python (BERTopic) to model user interaction and self-presentation.
- Authored the final report, which framed short-video use as a flexible resistance to social marginalization and a tool for community building.

Alienation in Parent-Child Relationships Among Youth in the Context of Social Acceleration   Feb 2025 - June 2025

Advisor: Dr. Xingkun Liang

- Independently designed and executed an empirical analysis using China Family Panel Studies data to investigate kin-estrangement.
- Utilized Stata for OLS regression, mediation, and moderation models, identifying that increased screen time significantly correlated with reduced parent-child intimacy.

HONORS & AWARDS

2023-2024   Award for Academic Excellence, National Encouragement Scholarship

2024-2025   Merit Student, National Encouragement Scholarship, Peking University Second-Class Scholarship

SKILLS

Languages	English (TOEFL: 104), Chinese (native), Hakka (native)
Programming Languages	Python, SQL, JavaScript, HTML, CSS
Quantitative Analysis	R, Stata, SPSS
Qualitative Analysis	NVivo