Divya S, M. A.
https://www.divyasresearch.com/
sddivya95@gmail.com | Divya.S@uga.edu
(954) 305 5926 | (65) 9477 5335

EDUCATION

Ph.D. *Graduate School* *Doctoral Fellow*	Communication Studies *Health Communication* University of Georgia GPA: 3.96/4.0 Dissertation title: *"Leveraging AI Chatbots to Improve Health Outcomes: Investigating Attitudes, Behavioral Intentions, and Safe Sexual Health Management."* Committee: Dr. Soroya McFarlane (Chair), Dr. Chelsea Ratcliff, Dr. Sachiko Terui, Dr. Hua (Helen) Wang	Candidacy Entry: May 2024
Professional Certification	Sexual Health Education Initiative Columbia University Teachers College	2024
Professional Certification	Data Science in Health Technology and Economics Certification Genentech	2024
M.A. *Graduate Fellow*	Health and Interpersonal Communication GPA: 4.0/4.0 University of Miami Advisor: Dr. Michael J Beatty	2021
B.A.	Psychology and Communication Studies University at Buffalo Advisor: Dr. Hua (Helen) Wang	2018

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Artificial Intelligence and Healthcare, Health Technology, Digital Health Interventions, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Entertainment Education, Health Disparities, Persuasion and Social Influence, Message Effects, Behavioral Science, Mixed-Methodologies, User Experience Research

RECOGNITIONS, HONORS AND AWARDS

2021-Present	**University of Georgia Graduate School Doctoral Fellowship Award** ($80 124)	University of Georgia
2021-Present	**University of Georgia Teaching Assistantship** ($28 000)	University of Georgia
2024	**Principal Investigator-AI and Sexual Health Education Research Funding** ($15 000)	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
2024	**International Research Travel Award** ($1750)	University of Georgia
2024	**Departmental Research Travel Award** ($2100)	University of Georgia
2024	**Runner-up for Best Poster Award** *"Do we look good? Mediating NGO legitimacy in social media".*	74th Annual International Communication Association Conference
2023	**Outstanding Poster Award** *Southeastern Universities Graduate Research Symposium 2023*	Southeastern Universities Symposium
2022	**University of Georgia-University of Liverpool Research Fellowship Award** *"The Use of AI and Health Information Seeking Behavior."*	University of Georgia University of Liverpool
2022	**Summer Research Fellowship (NIH)** ($3200) *"Neuroimaging approaches to improve prediction of smoking initiation and nicotine use escalation among young adult electronic nicotine delivery systems users."*	University of Georgia
2021	**Runner-up for Best Paper Award** *"Advocating 'Refugees': Questioning victimhood and voice in NGOs' use of Twitter."*	71st Annual International Communication Association Conference
2019-2021	**University of Miami Graduate Fellowship Award** ($67 000)	University of Miami
2021	**University of Miami Outstanding Graduate Student Award (Top Student)**	University of Miami
2018	**International Research Travel Award** ($1000)	University at Buffalo

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Wang, H., Yue, Z., & **S, D.** (2023). Challenges with using popular entertainment to address mental health: A content analysis of Netflix series 13 Reasons Why Controversy in mainstream news coverage. *Frontiers in Psychology (14)*. http://doi: 10.3389/fpsyt.2023.1214822.

Terui, S., **S, D.**, & Acheampong, B. (2022, June). Language-discordance and its impacts in healthcare: Patients' perspectives on barriers to equity in health. Book chapter in *Communication and Organizational Changemaking: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (Routledge publication)*.

PAPERS UNDER REVIEW

McFarlane, S. J., Callands, T., Francis, D., Swartzendruber, A., & **S, D.** (2024). Feasibility and acceptability of a multimedia childbirth education intervention for birth companions of Black women and birthing people. *Maternal and Child Health Journal.*

S, D. (2024). Unlocking the future of healthcare: Exploring acceptance towards embracing health chatbots. *Journal of Health and Technology*.

S, D. & Flint, M. (2024). "Will it be weird?" Understanding young adults' intentions of using STI self-testing kits in the South of the US: A reflexive study guided by the health action process approach. *International Journal of Sexual Health*.

S, D., Farahmandian, R., & Fraser, S. (2024). Addressing medical gaslighting among LGBTQ+ students: Exploring experiences and proposing AI-Driven solutions. *The American Journal of Medicine.*

S, D. (2024). A UX research guide to conducting empathetic research. A sexual health chatbot case study. *Journal of User Experience.*

Seelig, M., Yang, Z., **S, D.**, Gao, Y., & Yang, J. (2023). Exploring GenZ's engagement with climate change videos on YouTube. *International Journal of Communication*

PAPERS IN PROGRESS

S, D. & Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2024). What users want: Prioritizing digital features in sexual health chatbots for enhanced user experience.

S, D. & Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2024). A US national survey uncovering users' perceptions and motivational intentions towards sexual health chatbots.

S, D. & Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2024). Subgroup analysis of education, age, and location: Understanding intentions to use chatbots for health management based on demographic features.

S, D. & Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2024). Humanizing technology: The effect of empathetic human-like interactions on user satisfaction in sexual health chatbots.

S, D. & Planned Parenthood Federation of America (2024). Testing the future of sexual health: A human-centered co-design chatbot prototype with enhanced symptom checker and conversational message design.

S, D. (2024). The impact of e-Health literacy on the use of sexual health chatbots.

S, D., McFarlane., S. J., & Ratcliff, C. (2024). Exploring Young Adults' Intentions to Use Sexual Health Chatbots for Health Information: An Application of the UTAUT 2 Model.

S, D., McFarlane., S. J., & Terui, S. (2024). Exploring Human vs. Chatbot-Mediated Communication: Sexual Health Chatbots as a Resource for LGBTQ+ Young Adults in the U.S. South.

Fedd., A & **S, D.** (2024). The implications of approach-avoidance motivations and dimensions of sexual communication for sexual functioning: A dyadic approach

Fedd., A & **S, D.** (2024). The association between romantic partners' approach-avoidance goals on relational support. Testing the supportive sex talk

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

McFarlane, S. J., Callands, T., Francis, D., Swartzendruber, A., & **S, D.** (November 2024**).** Feasibility and acceptability of a multimedia childbirth education intervention for birth companions of black women and birthing people. Paper to be presented at the *National Communication Association Conference 2024*. New Orleans, Louisianna.

S, D. (October 2024). Chatbot chronicles: Navigating sexual health information with AI. Poster to be presented at the *American Public Health Association Conference 2024*. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

S, D. (June 2024). Users' experience talking to a chatbot about sexual health. Conducting empathetic UX research. Poster presented at *User Experience Professionals Association International Conference 2024*. Hollywood, Florida.

Kim, M., & **S, D.** (June 2024). "Do we look good? Mediating NGO legitimacy in social media". Paper presented at *74ᵗʰ Annual International Communication Association Conference 2024*. Gold Coast, Australia. **Runner-up Award.**

S, D., Farahmandian, R., & Fraser., S. (April 2024). Unveiling the shadows: Delving into LGBTQ+ individuals' encounter with medical gaslighting. Poster presented at *6th California University of Science and Medicine Annual Research and Scholarship Activity Symposium 2024*. Colton, California.

Terui, S., **S, D.** & Acheampong, B. F. (November 2023). Language-discordance and its impacts in healthcare: Patients' perspectives on barriers to equity in health. Paper presented at *National Communication Association Conference 2023*, National Harbor, Maryland.

S, D. (November 2023) The motivators and challenges faced by young adults when using sexual health chatbot. Poster presented at *American Public Health Association Conference 2023*. Atlanta, Georgia.

S, D. (March 2023) Examining the facilitators and barriers of promoting STI self-test kits on college campuses. Poster presented at *Southeastern Universities Graduate Research Symposium 2023*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama. **Outstanding Poster Award.**

Liu, J., McMains, J., Fabbricatore, J., Worsdale, A., Jones, E., Bhatikar, N., Wang, Y., **S, D**., & Sweet, L. (March 2023). Neural response to flavored e-cigarette packages predicts vaping frequency among non-smoking young adult vapers. Paper presented at the *Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco Annual Meeting*. San Antonio, Texas.

Jia, X., & **S, D.** (January 2022). The impact of social media influencers' conspicuous consumption posts on brand attitude and purchase intentions. Paper presented *at International Association for Media and Communication Research 2022*. Beijing, China.

Kim, M., & **S, D.** (May 2021). Advocating 'Refugees': Questioning victimhood and voice in NGOs' use of Twitter. Paper presented at *71st Annual International Communication Association Conference 2021*. Paris, France. **Runner-up for Best Paper Award**.

S, D. (March 2021). Nonverbal communication and message effects by health leaders (Covid-19). Paper presented at *Eastern Communication Association Conference (Virtual) 2021*.

S, D. (October 2020). Nonverbal communication by leaders during a pandemic. Paper presented at *78th Annual New York State Communication Association Conference (Virtual) 2020*. **Top Paper Award Finalist.**

Fraser, S., & **S, D**. (October 2020). When doctors go digital: Can communication apprehension be reduced by doctors with an online presence? Poster presented at *78th Annual New York State Communication Association Conference (Virtual) 2020*.

S, D., Fraser, S., & Dhara, A. (September 2020). A new norm: An analysis of Singapore's digital interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Poster presented at *International Conference for Communication in Healthcare (Virtual) 2020*.

S, D., Fraser, S., & Muellner, M. (April 2020). Using Instagram for health communication. Workshop. *Creating Space 10 Conference Vancouver 2020* by the Canadian Association for Health Humanities, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Yue, Z., **S, D.**, & Wang, H. (September 2018). What is the reason why? How the mainstream news media covered 13 Reasons Why. Paper presented at *CDC National Conference on Health Communication, Media & Marketing*, Atlanta, Georgia.

INVITED TALKS/LECTURES

S, D. (October 2024). Bridging Data and Design: Unveiling Mixed Methods Insights in Sexual Health Chatbots from Nationwide Insights. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America.*

S, D. (October 2024). Innovative and Empathetic Design for Health Technology. Lecture to be presented at the *University of North Texas, College of Visual Arts and Design*.

S, D. (August 2024). Comm 4625 Communication and Health Disparities. Lecture presented at the *University of Georgia.*

S, D. (July 2024). Unlocking the future of health: Insights and innovations in chatbot technology. *Planned Parenthood Federation of America.*

S, D. (March 2023). Health education campaigns using memes and entertainment education. *Halifax Canada Sexual Health Center Community-Based Program.*

RESEARCH GRANTS/FUNDING

2023-2024   **PI: Planned Parenthood Federation of America Digital Health Interventions External Research Funding**
($15 000)
Title: *Leveraging AI Chatbots to Improve Health Outcomes. Creating a Digital Health Concierge.*

2022-2023   **Graduate Research Fellow: Presidential Interdisciplinary Seed Grant Program** *($131 982)*
Title: *The THRIVE Project. Development of a patient-centered communication intervention to improve black maternal outcomes.*
PI: Dr. Soroya Mcfarlane, Department of Communication Studies, University of Georgia

2021-2022   **Graduate Research Fellow: NIH & FDA Center for Tobacco Products K01 and R21** *($870 145)*
Title: *Neuroimaging approaches to improve prediction of smoking initiation and nicotine use escalation among young adult electronic nicotine delivery systems users.*

PI: Dr. Jiaying Liu, Department of Communication Studies, University of Georgia
K01 Mentored Research Scientist Career Development Award in Tobacco Regulatory Research, NIH & FDA Center for Tobacco Products

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fall 2023-present	**Digital Health Research Scientist** Collaboration with the product team to develop innovative improvements in artificial intelligence and digital health for the organization's digital product ecosystem. User experience research, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys were included. *Under NDA.*	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Spring 2023-present	**Lab Manager- CONCHUS LAB** The goal of research assistance was to understand how culture influences health, and how communication interventions that translate science for diverse populations might be effective in reducing health disparities. Assisted with paper writing and liaising with undergraduates for grant-funded work.	University of Georgia
Spring 2022- Fall 2022	**Lab Manager-CHARM LAB** Organized and directed data collection and participant recruitment liaising with 15 undergraduate research assistants on various assignments associated with the K01 pilot, K01, and R21 Studies.	University of Georgia
2020	**Research Assistant- Dr. Michelle Seelig** Assisted in data coding and analysis for studies involving behavioral countering of online conspiracy theories.	University of Miami
2019	**Research Assistant- Dr. Tsai Wanhsiu (Sunny)** Assisted in data coding and analysis for studies involving health technology and communication law.	University of Miami
2018	**Research Assistant- Dr. Hua (Helen) Wang**	University at Buffalo

Assisted with research on mental health and
entertainment education through coding, paper
writing, and conference presentations.

2018	**Research Assistant – Dr. Melanie Green**	University at Buffalo

Assisted in data collection and execution of lab
studies involving message effects and
narratives.

RESEARCH TRAINING

2018-present	**CITI Human Subjects Training**	University of Georgia

Completed Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI)
Courses in the following areas related to human-subjects
research: Social & Behavioral Research, Social & Behavioral
Research-Children, Social & Behavioral Research-
International, Social & Behavioral Research-Children &
International, Social & Behavioral Research-Internet, Social &
Behavioral Research-Pregnant Women, Social & Behavioral
Research-Prisoners, and Biomedical Research.

2022	**University of Liverpool Research Training Course**	University of Liverpool

Received fellowship to be trained under leading researchers at
the University of Liverpool in the areas of artificial intelligence
and information-seeking behavior.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2021-present	**Instructor of Record** COMM1500: Interpersonal Communication	University of Georgia
Fall 2023-present	**Instructor of Record** COMM3700: Empirical Research Methods	University of Georgia
Summer 2024	**Instructor of Record** COMM1500E: Interpersonal Communication Online	University of Georgia
Spring 2020-Spring 2021	**Teaching Assistant** COS 391/691: Relational Communication	University of Miami
Fall 2020-Spring 2021	**Teaching Assistant** COS 602: Empirical Research Methods (Graduate Students)	University of Miami

| Spring 2020 | **Teaching Assistant** | University of Miami |
| | COS 210: Written Communication | |

| Spring 2020 | **Teaching Assistant** | University of Miami |
| | COS 211: Public Speaking | |

| Summer 2018 | **Teaching Assistant** | University at Buffalo |
| | PSY 300: Social Psychology | |

REVIEWER

2024	**American Public Health Association Conference 2024**
	Sexual and Reproductive Health Division
	Public Health Education and Health Promotion Division
2023	**UXPA International Conference 2024**
2022	**73rd Annual International Communication Association Conference 2022**
	Media and Health Communication Division
2021	**72nd Annual International Communication Association Conference 2021**
	Media and Health Communication Division

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

August 2024- Present

Digital Health Research Consultant, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

- **Consulted on UX research and strategic initiatives** to develop and optimize digital health products, focusing on AI-driven innovations and user-centered design principles.
- **Conducted comprehensive UX research** (surveys, interviews, usability testing, heuristic evaluations) to inform product development and ensure alignment with the needs of diverse user groups.
- **Advised cross-functional teams** (product managers, engineers, designers) on enhancing product accessibility, inclusivity, and usability, delivering tailored solutions for specific user populations.
- **Provided actionable insights** through detailed research reports, shaping key decision-making processes and influencing the product roadmap for digital health tools.
- **Led the evaluation of product prototypes**, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methods to inform iterative design improvements and elevate the overall user experience.
- **Designed frameworks for continuous feedback**, ensuring ongoing improvements through rapid iteration and optimization of digital health interventions based on user data and stakeholder input.

August 2023-Present	**Digital Health Research Scientist, Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

- **Lead behavioral researcher** evaluating Planned Parenthood's digital health products and their role as navigators within the organization's broader product ecosystem.
- **Leveraged expertise in behavioral science** (e.g., biases, heuristics, decision-making, and informational-reward expectancies) and **mixed-methods UX research** to optimize digital health interventions, resulting in improved **user retention**, adherence, and **product efficacy**.
- **Applied quantitative methods** (e.g., regression analysis, multivariate statistics) and **qualitative techniques** (e.g., thematic and reflexive analysis) across diverse data sources, including **national surveys**, interviews, and **usability testing** for the new symptom checker intervention.
- **Conducted a national survey** to gather insights into **user preferences** for chatbot design features and motivations for chatbot usage, driving key **product improvements** and enhancing **user engagement**.
- **Translated complex behavioral science concepts** and **key research findings** into **actionable insights** for stakeholders, influencing **product strategy** and aligning with organizational goals.

January-August 2023	**UX and Evaluation Researcher, Passion for Life and 2 Empower U Podcast**

- **Performed comprehensive data evaluation** by analyzing survey responses and conducting follow-up observations, gaining critical insights into user experience and facilitating focus group discussions.
- **Led UX research efforts** to gather actionable insights for product enhancement strategies and inform upcoming initiatives, ensuring alignment with user needs and expectations.
- **Developed and delivered research presentations and reports** tailored for key stakeholders, effectively communicating findings and driving informed decision-making, leading to over 50% improvement in UI/UX performance.

SERVICE

2021	**University of Georgia, Department of Communication Studies Virtual Open House**

Graduate student volunteer for the department's virtual open house and information session.

2021	**University of Miami, School of Communication New Faculty Search Committee**

Organized interactive sessions among graduate students and potential faculty members.

2020- 2021	**Graduate Student Association Senator** School of Communication representative, a key role in decision-making involving graduate activities and student welfare.
2019	**University of Miami, School of Communication, "All of Us" Campaign** Campaigns fostering unity and strength during COVID-19, a key role in creative caption development.
2019	**University of Miami Disability Services** Volunteer note-taker for students with learning disabilities. Awarded 60 community service hours.

LANGUAGES, SKILLS, AND AFFILIATIONS

Languages   English (native), Mandarin (native), Tamil (basic understanding)

Skills

Behavioral Science Expertise: Skilled in applying behavioral research methodologies to analyze human health data and deliver science-based strategies and interventions.

Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Proficient in mixed-methods research, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and usability testing. Expert in statistical analysis techniques such as regression analysis, multivariate statistics, SEM, and subgroup analysis.

Data Analysis and Visualization: Experienced in analyzing large datasets using tools like SPSS, R, Excel, and Qualtrics. Proficient in data visualization and reporting using Tableau and Google Analytics to provide actionable insights.

UX and Human-Centered Design: Proficient in UX research tools such as NVivo, Lookback, Miro, Figma, UserTesting, and UserZoom, applying heuristic evaluations, card sorting, and tree testing to enhance user experience. Experienced in AI-driven digital health solutions.

Health Data Science: Adept at integrating behavioral science and data analysis to inform behavioral health interventions, leveraging tools like Qualtrics, Mechanical Turk, and thematic and sentiment analysis for health data insights.

Research Methodologies: Strong background in ethnographic studies, A/B testing, and thematic analysis. Skilled in developing and executing research protocols to inform evidence-based decision-making.

Consulting and Stakeholder Collaboration: Proven ability to consult with stakeholders and translate complex data sets into meaningful insights, recommendations, and behavioral health strategies.

Prototyping and Usability Testing: Experienced with prototyping tools like Figma and Adobe XD, as well as usability testing platforms such as Optimal Workshop and Maze.

CITI Certified in Human Subjects Research.

Affiliations   American Public Health Association
American Society of Health Economists
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (Health Technology,
Innovation and Artificial Intelligence)
International Communication Association
National Communication Association Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society
University of Miami Alumni Association
User Experience Professionals Association
Women Global Health Georgia Chapter

References

Dr. Hua (Helen) Wang

Professor

Department of Communication

University at Buffalo

hwang23@buffalo.edu

Dr. Michael Beatty

Professor

School of Communication

University of Miami

mbeatty@miami.edu

Dr. Soroya Julian McFarlane

Assistant Professor

Department of Communication Studies

University of Georgia

soroyajmcfarlane@uga.edu

Naily Nevarez

Associate Director Product Research and Design

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

naily.nevarez@ppfa.org