

(Mary) Shaocong MA

PhD in Social Science

Division of Social Science

Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)

Email: marysma@ust.hk

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Developmental psychology: Socio-cognitive development, socio-emotional development

Social psychology: Judgment and decision-making, social influence

Education: Early childcare, caregiver-child relationships

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Research Assistant Professor, Division of Social Science, HKUST, 2024-Now

Post-Doctorate Research Associate, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, 2023-2024

Research Interests: Development of moral emotions and cognition

Advisor: Amrisha Vaish

EDUCATION/ACADEMIC TRAINING

Visiting Scholar, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, 2022-2023

Research Interests: Development of social learning and emotions

Advisor: Paul L. Harris

PhD, Division of Social Science, HKUST, 2020-2023

Thesis: *From Whom Should I Learn? Examining the Development of Selective Learning Impacted by Informants' Perceived Competence and Warmth*

Advisors: Eva E. Chen, Michelle Yik

MPhil, Division of Social Science, HKUST, 2018-2020

Thesis: *Preferring Naturals or Strivers: People's Perceptions and Behaviors Towards Others with Different Sources of Achievement*

Advisor: Eva E. Chen

MEd, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong, 2017-2018

Thesis: *Foreign Domestic Helpers' Involvement in Non-Parental Childcare: A Multiple Case Study in Hong Kong*

Advisor: Hui Li

BS, School of Psychology, Nanjing Normal University, 2013-2017

Thesis: *Father Involvement and Children's Resilience: The Role of Implicit Identity of Masculine Characteristics*

First Prize in Bachelor Thesis Competition among around 272,000 competitors

Advisor: Xiaoping Li

Awarded University Excellent Graduate

RESEARCH

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

- Shu, Y., Li, H., **Ma, S.**, Bian, L. (2024). The impact of sufferers' wealth status on pain perceptions: Its development and relation to allocation of healthcare resources. *Developmental Science*. 4-year Impact Factor (IF): 5.563.
- Ma, S.**, Cui, Y. K., Suárez, S., Chen, E. E., & Corriveau, K. H. (2023). Are dominant figures more trustworthy? Examining the relationship between parental authoritarianism and children's trust preferences in the U.S. and China. *Infant and Child Development*. 4-year IF: 2.105.
- Ma, S.**, Tsay, C., & Chen, E. E. (2023). Preference for talented naturals over hard workers emerges in childhood and consequently shapes behavior. *Child Development*, 94(3), 674-690. doi: 10.1111/cdev.13886. 4-year IF: 6.260.
- Ma, S.**, Tsay, C., & Chen, E. E. (2023). Talented naturals are perceived as more competent and trustworthy than hard workers. *Current Psychology*. doi: 10.1007/s12144-023-04763-2. 4-year IF: 2.855.
- Chen, E. E., **Ma, S.**, Bala, M., Groves, J. M., & Gaither, S. E. (2023). Do we perceive ethnic ingroup members as wealthier? Examining Hong Kong children's inferences of wealth status based on resources and ethnic group membership. *Cognitive Development*. 66, doi: 10.1016/j.cogdev.2023.101334. 4-year IF: 2.604.
- Ma, S.**, Li, J., & Chen, E. E. (2022). Does screen media hurt young children's social development? Longitudinal associations between parental engagement, children's screen time, and their social competence. *Early Education and Development*. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2022.2151401. 4-year IF: 3.935.
- Ma, S.**, Chen, E. E., & Li, H. (2020). Foreign domestic helpers' involvement in non-parental childcare: A multiple case study in Hong Kong. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 34(3), 427-446. doi:10.1080/02568543.2019.1701588. 5-year IF: 1.8.

WORKING PAPERS

REVISING AND RESUBMITTING

- Ma, S.**, Cui, Y. K., Wan, S., Chen, E. E., & Corriveau, K. H. (R&R). Children consider informants' explanation quality together with their social dominance in seeking novel explanations. *Child Development*. 4-year IF: 6.260.
- Ma, S.**, Payir, A., McLoughlin, N., & Harris, P. L. (R&R). How testimony impacts beliefs in science and religion. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. IF: 19.9.

SUBMITTED

- Ma, S.**, Chen, E. E., & Yik, M. (Under review). Balancing morality and cultural expectations: development of Chinese individuals' evaluations on peers' achievement-related lying.
- Chen, E. E., **Ma, S.**, Bala, M., Groves, J. M., & Gaither, S. E. (Under review). Whom do I like more? Examining ethnic majority and minority children's socializing preferences in Hong Kong.

SYMPOSIA ORGANIZED

Navigating social growth: What factors impact young children's social development? Co-chair with E. E. Chen at the 2024 International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (2024, June 16-20), Lisbon, Portugal.

Observing, conforming, and internalizing: How does social learning occur across different contexts and cultures? Co-chair with E. E. Chen at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting (2023, March 23-25), Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Dong, X., Jeong, M., & **Ma, S.** (2024, June 23-26). Reverse the curse of failure: Learning cues increase willingness to seek (and share) failure experiences [Paper presentation]. International Association for Conflict Management (IACM), Singapore.

Ma, S., Chen, E. E., & Yik, M. (2024, June 16-20). Chinese children and adults' evaluations of peers engaging in achievement-related lying. In **S. Ma** & E. E. Chen (Co-Chairs), *Navigating social growth: What factors impact young children's social development?* [symposium]. Paper to be presented at the 2024 International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Lisbon, Portugal.

Chen, E. E., Kao, C.-H., Lin, C.-C., Hsu, H.-C., & **Ma, S.** (2024, June 16-20). What is Buddha like? Examining young Taiwanese children's considerations of human and supernatural agents. In K. H. Corriveau (chair), *Children's perspectives on religion: Cognitive and behavioural dimensions* [symposium]. Paper to be presented at the 2024 International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development, Lisbon, Portugal.

Ma, S., Harris, P. L. & Chen, E. E. (2024, March 21-23). *Trusting competent or sociable informants? Examining the impact of evaluation modes on children's trust decision-making processes* [Poster presentation]. 2024 Cognitive Development Society Biennial Conference, Pasadena, CA, United States.

Clayton, S., **Ma, S.**, Shu, Y. & Vaish, A. (2024, March 21-23). *Boundaries of early forgiveness: the impact of apology type and transgression frequency on children's forgiveness decisions* [Poster presentation]. 2024 Cognitive Development Society Biennial Conference, Pasadena, CA, United States.

Jeong, M., Dong, X., & **Ma, S.** (2023, November 17-20). Preference for the natural advice-giver: Failure is overlooked unless people think about who learned [Paper presentation]. Society for Judgment and Decision Making Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, United States.

Chen, E. E., **Ma, S.**, Bala, M., Groves, J. M., & Gaither, S. E. (2023, October 14). Perceptions of wealth status among young children in Hong Kong [Paper presentation]. International Conference on Child Development and Family Studies, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Ma, S., & Chen, E. E. (2023, March 23-25). Social learning of conformity: Children and adults' evaluations of conformists versus non-conformists across different contexts. In **S. Ma** & E. E. Chen (Co-Chairs), *Observing, conforming, and internalizing: How does social learning occur across different contexts and cultures?* [Symposium]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.

Ma, S., & Chen, E. E. (2023, March 23-25). Longitudinal associations between non-indigenous, indigenous, and immigrant mothers' engagement and children's

- socioemotional development in Taiwan. In E. E. Chen (Chair), *Examining familial and early developmental processes among ethnic majority and minority families in Asia* [Symposium]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.
- Chen, E. E., **Ma, S.**, Bala, M., Groves, J. M., & Gaither, S. E. (2023, March 23-25). Is my group better? Investigating Hong Kong ethnic majority and minority children's socializing preferences. In E. E. Chen (Chair), *Examining familial and early developmental processes among ethnic majority and minority families in Asia* [Symposium]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.
- Ma, S.**, Cui, Y. K., Chen, E. E. & Corriveau, K. H. (2023, March 23-25). *Children weigh informants' explanation quality over their power in explaining present, but not future, questions* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Salt Lake City, UT, United States.
- Ma, S.**, Li, J., & Chen, E. E. (2022, July 13–15). How does screen time impact Taiwanese Chinese children's development? Longitudinal associations between parental engagement, children's screen time, and social competence. In J. Chang (Chair), *Self and Relationships: Perspectives on Cultural and Social Change* [Symposium]. The 12th Conference for Chinese Psychologists, Taipei, Taiwan. <https://www.12thcpc.org/>
- Ma, S.** (2021, November 27). *Succeeding from talent or effort? Source of achievement impacts competence-related judgments and consequently shapes trust decision-making* [Paper presentation]. The Inaugural Hong Kong Judgment and Decision-Making Day, Hong Kong SAR, China.
- Ma, S.**, & Chen, E. E. (2021, April 7–9). Talent versus hard work: Examining the parental influence on children's preferences for talent over effort. In E. E. Chen (Chair), *Examining the relationship between parenting and young Chinese children's emotional, sociocognitive, and academic development* [Symposium]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, United States. <https://www.srcd.org/event/srcd-2021-biennial-meeting>
- Ma, S.**, & Chen, E. E. (2021, April 7–9). *Does source of achievement matter? Examining the naturalness bias in Chinese children and adults* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, United States. <https://www.srcd.org/event/srcd-2021-biennial-meeting>
- Ma, S.**, Cui, Y. K., Munoz, M., Qiu, F. W., Suárez, S., Chen, E. E. & Corriveau, K. H. (2021, April 7–9). **Examining the relationship between parental authoritarianism and children's trusting preferences in China and the U.S.* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, United States. <https://www.srcd.org/event/srcd-2021-biennial-meeting>
- *This presentation was selected as the 2021 SRCD Strategic Plan Poster Winner exemplifying international research related to child development.
- Ma, S.**, & Chen, E.E. (2020, May 2–4). *The natural or the striver? Examining gender differences and parental impact on the naturalness bias* [Poster presentation]. Construction of the 'Other': Development, Consequences, and Applied Implications of Prejudice and Discrimination in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, United States. <https://www.srcd.org/event/construction-other-development-consequences-and-applied-implications-prejudice-and> (Conference canceled as impacted by COVID-19)

- Ma, S.,** Chen, E.E., & Li, H. (2019, March 21–23). *Foreign domestic helpers' involvement in non-parental childcare: A multiple case study in Hong Kong* [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Baltimore, MD, United States.
- Ma, S.,** Wang, Y., & Li, X. (2019, March 21–23). *Father involvement and children's resilience: The impact of implicit identity on masculine characteristics of different genders*. [Poster presentation]. The Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Meeting, Baltimore, MD, United States.
- Ma, S.,** & Hua, S. (2017, May 18–20). *Investigating exceeding early childhood education in China* [Paper Presentation]. The World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) Asia Pacific Regional Conference, Hong Kong SAR, China.
- Hua, S., & **Ma, S.** (2017, May 18–20). *Investigation of parental companion for preschoolers in China: Taking Parents in Nanjing as an Example* [Paper Presentation]. The World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) Asia Pacific Regional Conference, Hong Kong SAR, China.

GRANTS

- University Grants Council Research Travel Grant (RTG). SCR2023 Biennial Meeting (RTG22/23.HSS005). Grant Awardee. 2023. 4902 HKD.
- Research Grants Council General Research Fund Grant (GRF). The naturally talented or the hard worker? Examining the emergence and development of the naturalness bias over time (GRF 16601921). Student Investigator; Principal Investigators: Eva E. Chen & Michelle Yik. 2021-2023. 325,701 HKD.
- University Grants Council Research Travel Grant (RTG). SCR2021 Biennial Meeting (RTG20/21.HSS003). Grant Awardee. 2021. 662 HKD.
- University Grants Council Research Travel Grant (RTG). SCR2019 Biennial Meeting (RTG18/19.HSS010). Grant Awardee. 2019. 10,500 HKD.
- Nanjing Normal University Research Travel Grant. OMEP 2017 Asia Pacific Regional Conference. Grant Awardee. 2017. 3,800 RMB.

HONORS

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Overseas Research Awards for PhD Students, 60,000 HKD (2022-2023)
- Dr Charles Chan Postgraduate Scholarship, 54,090 HKD (2021-2022)
- Postgraduate Studentship, approximately 1,080,000 (HKUST, 2018-2023)
- Rolling Scholarship for Excellent Students, approximately 1,500 CNY (Nanjing Normal University, 2014-2017)

AWARDS

- Early Career Scholar Travel Award, International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD), 2024
- HKUST RedBird Academic Excellence Award (20,000 HKD Award), HKUST
- SRCD Graduate Student Travel Award (300 USD Award), The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) Biennial Meeting, 2023

Overseas Research Awards (60,000 HKD Award), HKUST, 2022-2023
Dr Charles Chan Postgraduate Scholarship Award (54,090 HKD Award), HKUST, 2021-2022
Strategic Plan Poster Winner, SRCD Biennial Meeting, 2021
First Prize, Bachelor Thesis Competition, Jiangsu Province, China, 2018
First Prize, Bachelor Thesis Competition, Nanjing Normal University, 2018
University Excellent Graduate, Nanjing Normal University, 2017
Second Prize, Psychological Research Paper Competition, Academic Conference of Psychology in Jiangsu Province, 2016
First Prize, Best Research Paper Competition, Contemporary Educational Practice and Teaching Research (Chinese Journal), 2015
Merit Student Award, Nanjing Normal University, 2013-2015

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING ASSISTANT, HKUST (2018-2023)

SOSC 1960: Discovering Mind and Behavior

A common core course in Psychology for 120 undergraduates from different schools
Assisted in teaching; graded assignments; offered essay consultation.

SOSC 2210: Social Psychology

A specialized course in Psychology for 80 undergraduates from different schools
Gave guest lectures; assisted in teaching; graded assignments; offered assignment consultation.

SOSC 2400: Intermediate Statistics for Social Research

An advanced statistics course for students who conduct research in Social Science
Led tutorials; gave lectures; graded quizzes and problem sets; offered assignment consultation.

SOSC 3120: Economic Development

A specialized course in Economics for undergraduate students in Social Science
Graded assignments; offered assignment consultation.

SOSC 3550: Educational Psychology

A specialized course in Psychology for undergraduates from different schools
Gave guest lectures; assisted in teaching; graded assignments; offered assignment consultation.

SOSC 3700A: Quantitative Social Analysis Practicum

A one-on-one supervision course for undergraduates conducting research in Psychology
Supervised an undergraduate to design research, conduct a literature review, collect survey data, and write up research reports.

*The supervisee has enrolled in a postgraduate research program awarded a full scholarship.

SKILLS

Research Methods

Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Method

Programming/Statistics

R/RStudio, JAMOVI, JASP, SPSS, Inquisit, E-Prime, CLAN, NVivo, Qualtrics

Languages

Mandarin (Native), English (Fluent), Cantonese (Conversational)

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

INVITED TALKS

“From whom should I learn? Different cues shaping social learning preferences.”
Developmental Lunch, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, VA, United States. February 27, 2024.

“Are you naturally talented or hardworking? Examining the development of evaluations toward individuals with different sources of achievement.” Social Cognitive Development Lab, Department of Psychology, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, CA, United States [virtual]. May 10, 2023.

“Whom do I prefer? Examining the impact of perceived warmth and competence on children and adults’ socializing and learning preferences.” Harris and Rowe’s Lab, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, United States. September 27, 2022.

GUEST LECTURES

“How to teach effective lessons in a Hong Kong kindergarten?” National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan [virtual]. May 20, 2022.

“How can educational psychology promote learning in kindergarten?” HKUST, Hong Kong, China. October 26, 2021.

“The psychology of happiness.” HKUST, Hong Kong. November 30, 2020.

WORKSHOPS

“Be a good-enough parent to facilitate children’s learning.” Parenting Forum, Hebei, China. May 19, 2022.

“Statistics workshop: What is moderating effect?” HKUST, Hong Kong, China. May 6 & November 2, 2020.

“Learn with fun: How to design play-based learning activities for kindergarteners.” Tong-yuan Kindergarten, Jiangsu, China. June 11, 2019.

“Get ready for graduate schools: How to build a study plan that works?” Excellent Graduate Forum, School of Psychology, NNU, Jiangsu, China. May 28, 2017.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Why people reward innate talent over hard work, *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, May 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20230517-why-people-reward-innate-talent-over-hard-work>

Guiding 3-year-olds to socialize with peers in kindergarten, *Slow Growth Magazine* [Chinese], April 2023.

Understanding preschool-aged children's habits to collect "junk," *Slow Growth Magazine* [Chinese], March 2023.

Preference for naturally talented over hard workers emerges in childhood, HKUST researchers find, *Eurek Alert*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, February 2023. <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/978227>

*Also featured by *HKUST Website*, *Wen Wei Po* (香港文匯網), *Science Daily*, *Science Blog*, *Psychreg*, *The Mirage*, *Bioengineer.org*, *Phys.org* etc.

Helping parents to rebuild secure relationships with children after separations, *Slow Growth Magazine* [Chinese], November 2022.

Understanding preschool-aged children's sensitive period for order, *Slow Growth Magazine* [Chinese], May 2022.

<h2>PROFESSIONAL SERVICE</h2>

Professional Affiliations: American Psychology Association (APA), APA Division 7: Developmental Psychology, Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), SRCD Asian Caucus, Cognitive Development Society (CDS), International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD)

Volunteer Research Assistant: Assisted in coding transcripts for research (see Chen, E. E., Ng, C. T. K., Corriveau, K. H., Yang, B., & Harris, P. L. (2020). Talking about personality: Evidence for attributions to self and others in early childhood. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 21(2), 191-212.)

Journal Reviewer: *Cognition*, *Child Development*, *Developmental Science*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Personality and Individual Differences*, *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *Infant and Child Development*, *Journal of Cognition and Development*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Cogent Education*

Book Co-Reviewer: *Mental Health Education Textbooks (for Primary Schools in China)*, *Encyclopedia of Mental Health 2nd Edition (Chinese Translation)*