

Qixiang FANG

PhD Candidate in Statistics | Machine Learning | Natural Language Processing

in [linkedin.com/in/fqixiang](https://www.linkedin.com/in/fqixiang)  github.com/fqixiang

☎ +31 684 666 253 @ q.fang@uu.nl

📍 Padualaan 14, 3584 CH Utrecht, the Netherlands

👤 Born in 1992 in Guangdong, China



With an interdisciplinary background in statistics, research methodology, social sciences, software engineering and machine learning (ML), I am particularly interested in topics at the intersection of statistics and ML (e.g. statistical inferences with ML, measurements and causal inferences with textual data). I am also interested in the implications of such research for the social sciences and open-source research (statistical) software.

SKILLS

R Skills	Data manipulation (e.g. dplyr, pipeline, lubridate), data visualisation (e.g. ggplot2, plotly, tmap, ImageMagick), parallel computing (e.g. foreach), statistical modelling (e.g. glm, survival, discsurv, lme4, survey) and machine learning (e.g. caret, glmnet, rpart, keras)
Python Skills	Data manipulation (e.g. Pandas, Numpy), machine/deep learning (e.g. Scikit-learn, Keras, PyTorch), NLP (e.g. NLTK, Gensim, spaCy), web scraping and automation (e.g. Scrapy, Selenium)
Stats/ML Knowledge	GLM, multilevel, SEM, survival analysis and their Bayesian variants, statistical learning (e.g. regularisation, decision trees, ensemble methods, SVM), deep learning (CNN, RNN, Han), language models (e.g. Word2Vec, BERT, ERNIE), probabilistic survey and experimental designs
Other	JavaScript, SQL, Mplus, HLM, LaTeX, Git, SPSS

EDUCATION

2017 - 2019 MSc in Statistics (Cum Laude) at Utrecht University, The Netherlands

2013 - 2016 Joint BA in Psychology & Social Sciences (Cum Laude) at Jacobs University Bremen, Germany

EXPERIENCES

Now June 2020	PhD Candidate in Statistics ML NLP, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, The Netherlands <ul style="list-style-type: none">Project: Using knowledge from statistics, ML & NLP to improve measurements of and causal inferences with high-dimensional textual data.Supervisors: Dr. Daniel Oberski & Dr. Dong Nguyen <div>ML NLP SEM Causal Models Python R</div>
May 2020 September 2019	Research Assistant in Learning Analytics, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, The Netherlands <ul style="list-style-type: none">Project: Analysing digital trace data generated from online educational tools, with the goal to improve learning and teaching.Tasks: Conducted research and wrote a manuscript; reviewed for HRI 2020; taught two statistics courses; independently supervised a bachelor thesis; provided statistical consultancy for colleagues. <div>Learning Analytics Software Engineering Educational Science R</div>
July 2019 September 2018	Research Intern, STATISTICS NETHERLANDS, The Netherlands <ul style="list-style-type: none">Project: Understanding and predicting daily web survey response rates using interpretable machine learning models and predictors derived from weather and Google Trends records.Supervisors: Dr. Joep Burger, Dr. Ralph Meijers & Dr. Kees van BerkelOutput: Best thesis award; A paper accepted by <i>Survey Research Methods</i>. <div>Official Statistics R Regularisation Survival Analysis Response Modelling Interpretable ML</div>
May 2019 January 2018	Research Assistant, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, The Netherlands <ul style="list-style-type: none">Data collection, pre-processing, documentation and visualisation for <i>ASReview</i>.Developed online statistical tutorials (e.g. <i>discrete-time survival analysis</i>, <i>multilevel GLM</i>).Created 2D and 3D graphics to facilitate selection of priors for measurement invariance model.Used latent class analysis to investigate the influence of parenting styles on children's physical and psychological development for a research team. <div>Data Visualisation Literature Research Latent Variable Modelling Language Models R Python</div>
June 2017 October 2016	Data Analyst, WINIT GMBH, Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none">Automated update and retrieval of sales data using Python and JavaScript.Advised on warehouse storage and in-house logistics solutions based on data-driven insights.Data management using Excel, Google Spreadsheets, and SQLite. <div>Python JavaScript Web Scraping Web Automation Database Management</div>

August 2016
June 2015

Research Assistant, JACOBS UNIVERSITY BREMEN, Germany

- > Supervisors: Dr. Margrit Schreier & Dr. Katja Hanke
- > Project: The effect of meditation on the well-being of highly sensitive persons.
- > Tasks: Study design, data collection, data analysis and report writing.

Mplus SPSS Mediation Resampling Techniques

PUBLICATIONS & PROJECTS

MANUSCRIPT: THE ROLE OF TIME, WEATHER AND GOOGLE TRENDS IN UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING WEB SURVEY RESPONSE

Authors: Fang, Burger, Meijers, & Van Berkel

Abstract: We used interpretable machine learning models to predict daily web survey response rates over time, using only non-personal, privacy-friendly contextual data. For the predictors, we used time indicators (like day of a week, public holidays), weather records and societal trends indicators (e.g. disease outbreaks, societal concern about privacy issues, travel trends and terrorism salience) which we carefully constructed from Google Trends data. Our models achieved up to 15% reduction in prediction error compared to the state of the art approach, when tested on an independent data set.

Progress: **Accepted** by *Survey Research Methods*; **presented** at BigSurv20; [Preprint](#)

Interpretable Machine Learning Adaptive LASSO Discrete-Time Survival Analysis

MANUSCRIPT: TOWARDS ADAPTIVE SOCIAL COMPARISON FOR EDUCATION

2019 - 2020

Authors: Sosnovsky, Fang, De Vries, Luehof and Wiegant

Content: We conducted two experiments where we examined the influence of social comparison levels on students' learning behaviour and outcomes across different student subgroups. Based on the results, we advised on personalised education.

Progress: **Published** in EC-TEL 2020; [Access](#)

Personalised Learning Process Analysis Digital Traces Clickstream Analysis

MANUSCRIPT: A VISUALISATION OF MGCFA, ALIGNMENT AND APPROXIMATE MI WITH DIFFERENT PRIORS

2018 - NOW

Authors: Arts, Fang, Van de Schoot, & Meitinger

Content: We propose a novel visualisation method to facilitate selection of measurement invariance models.

Progress: **Submitted** to *Frontiers in Psychology - Quantitative Psychology and Measurement*.

Measurement Invariance Bayesian Multigroup CFA

PROJECT: ASREVIEW - ACTIVE LEARNING FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

2018 - 2019

github.com/asreview/asreview [Website](#)

Collected, pre-processed and documented both open-source and private data sets for the ASReview project; prepared word embeddings and visualised them in 3D space; tested software; supervised a Bachelor thesis about this project.

Output: A co-authored manuscript under review at *Nature Machine Learning*; [Preprint](#)

Python Data Collection Data Pre-processing Embedding Visualisation

PROJECT: CLASSIFYING WIKIPEDIA VITAL ARTICLES USING DEEP LEARNING

2019 - 2020

[github.com/https://github.com/fqixiang/PatternRecognition](https://github.com/fqixiang/PatternRecognition) [Paper](#)

Implemented a CNN in Keras as part of a course group project where we used multiple neural network architectures (CNN, LSTM and HAN) to predict the main topic of Wikipedia articles; wrote a substantial part of the project report (grade: 9/10).

R Python Deep Learning Keras CNN LSTM HAN

LANGUAGES

English ● ● ● ● ●
Mandarin ● ● ● ● ●
German & Dutch ● ● ○ ○ ○

+ CHARACTERS

- > Curiosity
- > Conscientiousness
- > Attention to details

REFERENCES

Dr. Daniel Oberski

Associate Professor, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

@ d.l.oberski@uu.nl

☎ +31 302 539 039

Dr. Dong Nguyen

Assistant Professor, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

@ d.p.nguyen@uu.nl

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