Sher Afghan Asad

Assistant Professor of Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences

Chicago, IL, USA U.S. Permanent Resident

(+1) 312-810-6250 asad.sherafghan@gmail.com sherafghanasad.com

---

Applied microeconomist using field experiments and administrative data to study the microfoundations of state capacity and market performance.

Research Interests

Applied Microeconomics • Public and Development Economics • Behavioral and Experimental Economics • Economics of Gender and Discrimination

Academic Positions

Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) — Assistant Professor of Economics, 2020–Present

Iowa State University — Visiting Assistant Professor of Economics, 2024–2025

Education

Ph.D., Economics, Iowa State University, 2020

Fulbright Scholar; Prescott Award for Research Creativity

M.Sc., Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2011

B.Sc. (Hons.), Economics, Forman Christian College, 2010 (Gold Medalist)

Peer-Reviewed Publications

- **Asad, Sher Afghan**, Husnain Fateh Ahmad, and Hadia Majid (2025). "Price and Prejudice: Gender Discrimination in Online Marketplaces." *Journal of Development Economics*, 177, 103540. Featured on VoxDev.
- **Asad, Sher Afghan**, Ritwik Banerjee, and Joydeep Bhattacharya (2023). "Do Workers Discriminate Against Their Out-Group Employers? Evidence from an Online Platform Economy." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 216, 221–242. Covered in *The New York Times*.

Working Papers

- *Auditing from Below: Experimental Evidence on Consumer Receipt Lotteries* (with Isabelle Cohen). Three randomized experiments with a tax authority in Pakistan; funded by IGC. AEARCTR-0016251.
- *Technology Without Teeth: Voluntary Digital Monitoring in a Low-Capacity State* (with Isabelle Cohen). Revise & Resubmit, *Journal of Public Economics*.
- *Vulnerable Markets: Impact of Extreme Flooding on Agricultural Supply Networks* (with Omar Gondal and Farah Said). 2025.
- *A Theory of Discrimination with Motivated Agents* (with Osama Khan).
- *Do Nudges Induce Safe Driving? Evidence from Dynamic Message Signs* (with Kevin Duncan). 2023.

- *Impact of COVID-19 on Fresh Produce Supply Chains: Evidence from Pakistan* (with Omar Gondal). 2022.

Research in Progress

- *Big Push? Experimental Evidence on Compliance Traps* (with Michael Best, Anders Jensen, and Adnan Khan). Randomized enforcement experiment with provincial tax authorities; funded by J-PAL Governance Initiative and IGC. AEARCTR-0015910.
- *Incidence of Evasion Rents: Who benefits from the spoils of evasion?* (with Michael Best, Anders Jensen, and Adnan Khan). Measures who captures the rent from evaded consumption taxes — trained buyers with randomized payment instruments observe, purchase by purchase, what the customer saved, what the firm kept, and what the state received; funded by IGC.
- *Improving Property Tax Collection with Computer Vision* (with Adnan Khan, Ben Olken, and Mahvish Shaukat). Randomized evaluation of algorithm-assisted property assessment; funded by J-PAL Governance Initiative, IGC, and the World Bank.
- *From Margins to Mainstream? Gender Discrimination in Online Marketplaces* (with Maham Rasheed). Administrative platform data and randomized audit experiment; funded by PEDL/CEPR.
- *Asymmetric Information and Relational Contracts in Agricultural Supply Chains* (with Omar Gondal and Farah Said). Funded by IGC and J-PAL ATAI. AEARCTR-0012787.
- *Revolving Credit for Micro-Enterprises: Evidence from Punjab's Asaan Karobar Card* (with Farah Said). Regression discontinuity and transaction-level analysis of a state-subsidized revolving credit line, in partnership with the Bank of Punjab; funded by the Weiss Fund.

Book Chapters

- **Asad, Sher Afghan** (2025). "Taxation in Pakistan: Challenges, Reforms, and the Case for a Scientific Approach." In R. Pande (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Pakistan* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Competitive Research Grants

- Gates Foundation — USD 70,000 (2026)
- Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, University of Chicago — USD 25,000 (2026)
- Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL), CEPR — GBP 40,000 (2025)
- International Growth Centre (IGC) — Multiple grants totaling over GBP 500,000 (2021–2026)
- J-PAL Governance Initiative — USD 75,000 (2023)
- J-PAL Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI) — USD 30,000 (2023)
- Russell Sage Foundation — USD 7,500 (2019)

Total competitive research funding (as PI or co-PI): over USD 1.5 million.

Presentations

2026: National Tax Association Annual Conference, Pittsburgh; Econometric Society North American Summer Meeting, Atlanta; AEA Annual Meeting (ASSA), Philadelphia

2025: PEDL Early Career Researcher Workshop, Yale University; Econometric Society World Congress; Bridge the Gap Conference, World Bank, Washington DC
2024: NBER Summer Institute; National Tax Association Annual Conference, Detroit; Western Economic Association International, Seattle; Paris Dauphine, PSL University
2023: Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago and LSE; National Tax Association Annual Conference, Denver; ICTD–IDS
2022 and earlier: BREW-ESA, Bangalore (2022); NBER Summer Institute, IT and Digitization (2021); IZA/University of Luxembourg IDSC Workshop (2020); ASSA, San Diego (2020); Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago (2019, 2017) and Boston University (2018)

Teaching Experience

Courses Designed and Taught: Microeconomic Theory (Graduate), Public Finance, Principles of Microeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Game Theory, Development Economics, Issues in Economic Policy, Behavioral Economics, and Experimental Economics.
Institutions: Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), 2020–Present; Iowa State University, 2024–2025.
Textbook in Progress: *Public Economics for Developing Countries* — undergraduate text organized around the developing-country state; draft chapters serve as the course text for Public Finance (LUMS, Fall 2026).
Mentoring: Supervised over ten undergraduate and master's theses in development, behavioral, and experimental economics.
Recent evaluations (LUMS, Fall 2025): Public Finance 4.9/5; Issues in Economic Policy 4.5/5.

Policy Engagement and Applied Research

LUMS–FBR Research Partnership — LUMS Lead (2026–Present)
Building a research–policy partnership between LUMS and Pakistan's Federal Board of Revenue to evaluate the digitization pillar of FBR's Transformation Plan — production monitoring, digital invoicing, POS integration, algorithmic audit selection, and officer incentive reforms — using anonymized administrative data; supported by the Gates Foundation through Karandaaz, with researchers at the University of Manchester, LSE, Columbia, MIT, the University of Washington, and ICTD (IDS Sussex).
Asian Development Bank (ADB) — Gender and Public Finance Specialist (2026–Present)
Leading gender integration in the design of a major ADB-financed tax administration digitalization program, including its Gender Assessment and Action Plan and inclusive digital service design; also authoring a commissioned paper on gender and taxation for ADB's Country Gender Assessment, informing the Country Partnership Strategy.
World Bank Group — Consultant, Poverty & Equity Global Practice (2024–2025)
Conducted fiscal incidence and distributional analysis for Sri Lanka's *Public Finance Review* and *Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR).*
GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) — International Consultant (2024–2025)
Advised on the modernization of subnational property taxation, including the transition to market-based valuation systems and institutional coordination for local revenue mobilization.

Adam Smith International (FCDO–SEED Programme) — Advisor (2023–2024)
Designed and implemented a randomized field experiment to evaluate behavioral and enforcement-based interventions for improving tax compliance in the hospitality sector.

Government and Institutional Research Partners: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR); Punjab Revenue Authority; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority; Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department, Punjab; The Urban Unit, Government of Punjab; Agriculture Department, Government of Punjab; Bank of Punjab.

Awards and Honors

Fulbright Fellowship (2015–2020)
Prescott Research Scholarship, Iowa State University (2019)
Outstanding Student Award & Magna Cum Laude, Forman Christian College (2010)

Service

Research Committee, Seminar Committee, Curriculum Review Committee, Micro/IO Cluster Committee, Search Committee (LUMS)
Reviewer: *Economic Inquiry, Economics Bulletin, PLOS ONE, ICTD Publications*

Professional Affiliations and Research Networks

J-PAL Invited Researcher
Research Affiliate, International Growth Centre (IGC)
Research Grantee, Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics
Research Grantee, Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL)
Director, Public Finance Research Cluster, Mahbub ul Haq Research Centre (MHRC)
Member, American Economic Association (AEA); Econometric Society; Economic Science Association (ESA)

Technical Skills

Stata • R • Python • ArcGIS • SQL • LaTeX • oTree

References

Adnan Q. Khan
Professor in Practice, School of Public Policy
London School of Economics
a.q.khan@lse.ac.uk

Anders Jensen
Associate Professor of Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School
anders_jensen@hks.harvard.edu

Michael Best
Associate Professor of Economics
Columbia University
mcb2270@columbia.edu

Joydeep Bhattacharya
Professor of Economics
Iowa State University
joydeep@iastate.edu

Updated: August 2026