Muhammad Zia Mehmood

Department of Economics, Occidental College

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Academic Appointments

Occidental College 2026–present

Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Economics

Teaching: Managerial Economics; Development Economics; Intermediate Microeconomics.

Princeton University 2024–2026

Research Fellow

Education

University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business

Ph.D. in Business and Public Policy (Applied Economics) 2024

M.S. in Business Administration 2020

Graduate Certificate in Applied Data Science 2021

Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government

Master of Public Policy 2016

Lahore University of Management Sciences

B.Sc. (Honours) in Economics 2011

Research Fields

Managerial Economics; Development Economics; Entrepreneurship; Political Economy; Applied Microeconomics

Teaching Award

Earl F. Cheit Award for Excellence in Teaching 2023

Graduate Student Instructor award, Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley.

Job Market Paper

Short Messages Fall Short for Micro-Entrepreneurs: Experimental Evidence from Kenya

A field experiment with 4,700 micro-entrepreneurs in Kenya evaluates SMS-based business management training and demand for additional content. Training improves managerial knowledge and practices after three months, with stronger business effects among younger entrepreneurs, but these gains dissipate within twelve months. Entrepreneurs nonetheless exhibit positive willingness to pay for further training, highlighting sustained engagement as a constraint to scalable management training.

Publications

Command and Can't Control: Assessing Centralized Accountability in the Public Sector

With Saad Gulzar, Juan Felipe Ladino, and Daniel Rogger

Accepted, Nature

Improving Public Health Delivery in Punjab, Pakistan: Issues and Opportunities

With Michael Callen, Saad Gulzar, Ali Hasanain, Abdul Rehman Khan, and Yasir Khan

The Lahore Journal of Economics, 18 (Special Edition): 249–269, 2013.

Working Papers

Hot Bureaucrats: Heat and Effort in Public Administration

With Juan Esteban Garzón, Saad Gulzar, Juan Felipe Ladino, and Daniel Rogger

Combining satellite temperature data with monthly records for roughly 42,000 schools and 4,000 education officers in Punjab, Pakistan, we show that extreme heat reduces bureaucratic effort. Unexpected heat-wave timing provides a natural experiment: normally high-performing officers cut back the most, narrowing performance gaps. Schools that lose their monthly visit experience lower teacher presence and test scores in the following month, showing how heat weakens the government institutions needed for climate adaptation.

The Political Economy of Environmental Protection: Evidence from India

With Juan Felipe Ladino and Suraj R. Nair

We study how political incentives shape environmental protection during Diwali in India. Combining constituency-level election results with ground-based and satellite pollution measures, we examine firecracker restrictions and use close elections to estimate the effects of alignment with state governments. Preliminary estimates show higher Diwali-period pollution in constituencies narrowly won by state ruling-party candidates, highlighting the political challenges of environmental regulation when it restricts popular cultural and religious practices.

Research in Progress

Accounting for Accounting: Book-keeping Lessons from Nigeria

With Abiola Oyebanjo and Anne Krahn

Mobile Mentoring: Supporting Education of Vulnerable Children in Kenya

With Stephanie Bonds and Eric Ochieng

Teaching Experience

Occidental College, Department of Economics 2026–present

Visiting Assistant Professor

Courses: Managerial Economics; Development Economics; Intermediate Microeconomics

University of California, Berkeley, Department of Economics Summer 2022

Primary Instructor of Record, *Principles of Economics* (ECON 1; undergraduate)

- Designed the syllabus, lectures, problem sets, and examinations; supervised two teaching assistants.

University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business 2020–2022

Graduate Student Instructor, *Economic Analysis for Business Decisions* (MBA 201A)

- Taught six sections over three years, with approximately 75 students per section.
- Delivered online, in-person, and hybrid instruction.

Teaching Interests

Managerial Economics; Principles of Economics; Intermediate Microeconomics; Development Economics; Econometrics; Game Theory; Entrepreneurship

Seminars, Conferences and Workshops

2026 Nordic Conference in Development Economics (NCDE) – Linnaeus University
University of Utah, David Eccles School of Business, Department of Entrepreneurship and Strategy

2025 Symposium on Economic Experiments in Developing Countries (SEEDEC) – Bonn
Pacific Conference for Development Economics (PacDev) – University of California, Davis

2023 Advances with Field Experiments Conference (AFE) – University of Chicago
Business and Public Policy Student Seminar (BPP) – Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley
Development Economics Seminar – University of California, Berkeley

2022 Price Theory Summer Camp – Becker Friedman Institute, University of Chicago (selected participant)
Ph.D. Workshop on Experimental Development Economics (NOVAFRICA) – Nova School of Business and Economics
Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries Young Scholar Matchmaking Workshop (PEDL; selected participant)
Business and Public Policy Student Seminar (BPP) – Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley
Development Lunch – University of California, Berkeley

2021 Business and Public Policy Student Seminar (BPP) – Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

Selected Grants, Fellowships and Awards

CEGA Development Economics Challenge Award ($7,000)	2023
Rocca Dissertation Fellowship, Center for African Studies ($16,000)	2022, 2023
Ph.D. Fellowship, Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley	2018–2023
International Growth Centre (£20,000)	2022
Innovations for Poverty Action, Human Trafficking Research Initiative ($16,700)	2022
PEDL Small Research Grant (£6,500)	2022
Institute for Business Innovation Research Grants ($22,800)	2020, 2021, 2022
SurveyCTO Data Collection Research Grant	2021, 2022
Fulbright Scholarship, Master of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School	2014–2016
Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation Research Grant	2015
Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy Winter Research Grant	2015

Additional Research and Professional Experience

World Bank, DIME, Research Consultant Jan. 2017–June 2018

Designed and implemented research on technology-based accountability in Punjab's education bureaucracy with academic and government partners.

World Bank Pakistan, Research Consultant Nov. 2016–Jan. 2017

Health, Nutrition and Population

Mapped immunization-related technical assistance in Pakistan in coordination with government officials and development organizations.

Harvard University, Research Fellow Sept. 2014–May 2016

Center for International Development, Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD)

Designed, implemented, and evaluated a smartphone-based reporting system for frontline health workers in Pakistan with Harvard researchers.

Lahore University of Management Sciences, Research Assistant Aug. 2011–July 2014
Managed field experiments on technology, monitoring, and accountability in Pakistan's public sector.

Service and Mentorship

Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN) 2026–present
Mentor
Mentoring a prospective graduate student from Africa on program selection, application materials, and preparation for graduate study in economics.

University of California, Berkeley Fall 2022, Spring 2023
Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA), Peer Mentor, EASST Fellows

University of California, Berkeley 2021–2022
Economists for Equity at Berkeley (BEE), Leadership Board
Undergraduate mentoring and tutoring

University of California, Berkeley, Haas School of Business 2019–2020
Business and Public Policy Seminar, Co-Coordinator

Harvard University 2015–2016
Harvard Pakistan Student Group, President
Organized policy panel discussions and speaker events with Pakistani policymakers.

Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government 2015–2016
Pakistan Caucus, Chair

Languages

English (fluent); Urdu (native); Punjabi (native); Hindi (fluent, spoken)

References

Edward Miguel
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