

Ijaz Ahmad

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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Higher Education Administration Aug 2024
University of Georgia (Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education) Athens, Georgia, USA

Dissertation: *The role of ideas, institutions, and interests in state higher education funding patterns in the United States, 2005-2021 (a quantitative study using fixed- and random-effects models)*

Advisor: [Professor James C. Hearn](#)

Master of Administrative Sciences Jun 2018
University of Tampere & Danube University Krems Tampere, Finland, Krems, Austria
Beijing Normal University (3rd semester) Beijing, China

Thesis: *Understanding University-Society Engagement for Innovation: The role of individual actors in institutionalizing the regenerative medicine research field in the University of Tampere (Finland), 1986-2017 (a qualitative study)*

Advisor: [Professor Yuzhuo Cai](#)

Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Government and Public Policy Jun 2013
National Defense University Islamabad, Pakistan

Thesis: *Public Service Motivation in Pakistan: Incidence & Antecedents (a quantitative survey)*

Advisor: Professor Syed Bashir Hussain

Bachelor of Science (BS) in Electrical Engineering Feb 2000
NWFP University of Engineering & Technology Peshawar, Pakistan
Emphasis: Communication Systems

WORK EXPERIENCE

University System of Georgia, Research and Policy Analysis Atlanta, Georgia, USA
Summer Intern (Part-Time) May 2024 – Aug 2024

University of Georgia, Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education Athens, Georgia, USA
Graduate Research Assistant (Part-Time) Aug 2019 – May 2024

University of Georgia, Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education Athens, Georgia, USA
Instructional Assistant in Prof. James C. Hearn's doctoral course (Part-Time) Jan 2022 – May 2022

University of Georgia, Small Business Development Center(SBDC) Athens, Georgia, USA
Graduate Assistant (Part-Time) Aug 2019 – May 2020

Tampere University, Higher Education Group Tampere, Finland

Doctoral Researcher with Prof. Yuzhou Cai (Part-Time)
 Funding Source: HELIX4EU Project (3114100051)

Jun 2019 – Aug 2019

Tampere University, Higher Education Group
EDUFI Fellowship

Tampere, Finland
 Mar 2019 – Aug 2019

Funding Source: The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI)

Research Project: Promoting Social Engagement in the Context of the Global Knowledge Economy: A Challenge for Finnish Universities

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila
Acting Director for Office of Research, Innovation, & Commercialization (ORIC)

Taxila, Pakistan
 Oct 2017 – Mar 2019

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila
Acting Deputy Director for Alumni Affairs (Additional Duty)

Taxila, Pakistan
 Oct 2017 – Mar 2019

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila
Acting In charge of Internationalization (Additional Duty)

Taxila, Pakistan
 Oct 2017 – Mar 2019

European University Association
Policy Advocacy Intern (Full-Time)

Brussels, Belgium
 May 2016 – Jun 2016

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila
Deputy Director Placement (Full-Time)

Taxila, Pakistan
 Oct 2013 – Mar 2019

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila
Research Scholar (Full-Time)

Taxila, Pakistan
 Jul 2012 – Oct 2013

TNB Liberty Power
Procurement Engineer (Full-Time)

Ghotki, Sindh, Pakistan
 Dec 2010 – Apr 2011

National Highway Authority
Procurement Engineer (Full-Time)

Islamabad, Pakistan
 Dec 2009 – Nov 2010

Engineering Research & Development Company
Manager Technical (Full-Time)

Islamabad, Pakistan
 Dec 2006 – Aug 2007

Engineering Research & Development Company
Assistant Manager Technical (Full-Time)

Islamabad, Pakistan
 Aug 2001 – Nov 2006

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles

Cai, Y., & Ahmad, I. (2021). From an Entrepreneurial University to a Sustainable Entrepreneurial University: Conceptualization and Evidence in the Context of European University Reforms. *Higher Education Policy*, 36(1), 20-52. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-021-00243-z>

Yallew, A. T., Juusola, H., Ahmad, I., & Törmälä, S. (2018). Exploring principal-agent theory in higher education research. *Working Papers in Higher Education Studies*, Vol 3, Issue 1, 78-98.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15625733>

Hussain, S.B., **Ahmad, I.** (2015). Public service motivation: Incidence and antecedents in Pakistan. *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*, 6(10), 1354-1373. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15625454>

Book Chapter

Hearn, J. C., & **Ahmad, I.** (2023). Emerging Work on Tertiary Policy Diffusion in Western European and North America In Jungblut, J., Maltais, M., Ness, E., & Rexe, D. (eds.), *Comparative Higher Education Politics: Policymaking in North America and Western Europe* (vol. 60, pp. 503-515). Springer, Cham.

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25867-1_21

Conference Presentations

Williams, K.L., & **Ahmad, I.** (2024). Hidden Barriers: Graduate Students in STEM & Possible Obstructions to Researcher Identification, 2024 AERA Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, USA, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15626167>.

Ahmad, I. (2023). Understanding higher education reforms in Pakistan: Policies, processes, and policy entrepreneurs 2001-2022, 2023 WES-CIHE Summer Institute, Boston College, Massachusetts, United States.

Ahmad, I., & Hearn, J. C. (2020). A conceptual framework for understanding the adoption and diffusion of performance-based funding model in European higher education, 36th EGOS Colloquium, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15626018>

Dissertations

[The role of ideas, institutions, and interests in state higher education funding patterns in the United States](#), 2005-2021: A quantitative study using fixed- and random-effects models conducted for the **doctoral dissertation** defended in **2024** at the **University of Georgia's** McBee Institute of Higher Education (**USA**).

Understanding University-Society Engagement for Innovation: The role of individual actors in institutionalizing the regenerative medicine research field in the University of Tampere (Finland), 1986-2017; a qualitative study conducted for the **master's dissertation**, defended in April **2018** at **Tampere University (Finland)**, <https://trepo.tuni.fi/handle/10024/104634>.

Publications aimed at the Practitioners' Community (Service activities)

[Governance: Choosing the Higher Education Commission\(HEC\) of Pakistan's Chair \(2025\) \(an op-ed\)](#)

Co-developed **policy recommendations on governance reforms for Pakistan's higher education system** in collaboration with higher education experts from Pakistan and the U.S.; findings were presented to the Prime Minister's Task Force on Higher Education to inform national policy discussions and reform efforts (**2021**).

RESEARCH FUNDING, GRANTS, & SCHOLARSHIPS

- Received a competitive \$3,000 short-term research grant from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS) (Wisconsin, USA) in 2023 for a project titled "Seeing Beyond Control: Assessing the Impact of the 18th Constitutional Amendment on Pakistan's Higher Education." The 18th Amendment created a natural experiment condition within Pakistan's higher education system.
- Received Graduate Research and Instructional Assistantship at the University of Georgia's Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education under the supervision of Professor James C Hearn.

- Received a competitive nine-month research fellowship grant from the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) in 2018 to conduct doctoral research at Tampere University focusing on "Promoting Social Engagement in the Context of Global Knowledge Economy: A Challenge for Finnish Universities."
- Received the prestigious European Erasmus Mundus Scholarship to pursue Europe's flagship higher education master's program—Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MARIHE)—from 2015 to 2017. Universities in Austria, Finland, Germany, and China jointly offered the program.

RESEARCH OUTPUT

Projects

- Collected, cleaned, imputed, and aggregated panel data from several federal-level datasets, including IPEDS's several surveys, across 50 U.S. states, analyzing it with **fixed- and random-effects models** in STATA to investigate **ideational, institutional, and strategic factors** associated with incremental shifts in state-level higher education funding patterns and advanced literature on higher education policy and management (**a macro-state level quantitative longitudinal research**).
- Designed quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interview protocols, informed by web scraping a sample of U.S. colleges, to examine institutional responses to the COVID-19 pandemic—focusing on operations, finances, academics, and impacts on the university community (students, faculty, and staff)—across 152 small, access-oriented private colleges in the U.S. (**a sector-level mixed-methods research**).
- Analyzed data from elite interviews to triangulate quantitative findings and examine how small, private, nonprofit access-oriented colleges in the U.S. navigated the COVID-19 crisis. The analysis revealed emulative behaviors—particularly the imitation of state flagship universities—as a strategy to gain legitimacy during extreme uncertainty, contributing to the scholarly literature on institutional resilience (**a sector-level mixed-methods research**).
- Cleaned and analyzed survey data using multiple regression in STATA to examine how psychosocial factors—such as campus climate, sense of belonging, and mentoring—shape researcher identity development among STEM graduate students; addressed missing data through multiple imputation, co-authored the resulting paper, and presented findings at the 2024 Annual AERA Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (**a meso-institutional level quantitative survey**).
- Collaborated with a team of researchers on a SHEEO Association-funded project to develop a comprehensive state authorization inventory. Collected qualitative data from seven agencies across four states (NY, MI, IN, and DE) through web scraping; identified key state-level factors and formulated hypotheses to examine their influence on state authorization processes and the quality of education in those states (**a macro-state level exploratory research**).
- Aggregated, cleaned, and analyzed publicly available research funding data (2013–2022) from multiple U.S. Department of Agriculture programs using STATA and Power BI, highlighting funding inequities between 1862 land-grant colleges (called Predominantly White Institutions(PWIs)) and 1890 land-grant institutions, called Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (**an exploratory sector-level quantitative descriptive research**).
- Systematically identified, reviewed, and critically synthesized empirical and conceptual literature from leading peer-reviewed academic journals to help formulate research goals and inform the theoretical frameworks of multiple new projects during their initiation phase.
- Collaborated with a diverse team of graduate and undergraduate students on several survey design projects, including a National Science Foundation-funded study assessing race- and gender-based intersectional experiences of Black women in computing. Programmed and implemented the survey in Qualtrics, incorporating features to ensure sample validity and data integrity in online data collection (**a micro-student level mixed-method research**).
- Analyzed student and course enrollment data from 26 public postsecondary institutions, sourced from the University System of Georgia's (USG) data warehouse, leveraging MS Excel to explore four dimensions while ensuring confidentiality. Demonstrated through system-level descriptive analysis that students generally performed better online, except at state colleges where face-to-face performance was higher, effectively

dispelling doubts in policymakers' minds about the quality of online education in the post-COVID-19 pandemic surge and supporting effective decision-making at the institutional level. Demonstrated through descriptive analysis that graduate students generally performed better in face-to-face courses, although some online sections outperformed their face-to-face counterparts (***an exploratory sector-level quantitative descriptive research***).

- Analyzed power dynamics and equity relationships in Pakistan's higher education reforms (2001- 2022) using **network ethnography** to identify key policies and policy entrepreneurs (***a macro-country level qualitative study***).
- Assessing the impact of Pakistan's 18th Constitutional amendment on higher education— examining student access, equity, efficiency, quality, and relevance of higher education (***a macro-country qualitative study currently in progress***).

RESEARCH SUPERVISION & MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Supervision

- **Mentored three undergraduate students** in their research as part of an NSF-funded project, providing guidance throughout the entire process—from identifying scholarly literature across various databases (e.g., Web of Science), compiling publications using EndNote, and conducting reviews with Abstrackr and Citavi, to developing research questions, performing data analysis, and writing manuscripts. The students presented their work at the University of Georgia's Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities (CURO) Symposium held in April 2024 in Athens, Georgia, and submitted an abstract at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Undergraduate Student Education Research Training Workshop in April 2024 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Management Experience

As Acting Director for the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization

- Secured opportunities to establish Industry-Academia collaboration by connecting the University of Engineering & Technology Taxila's (UETT) faculty with professionals from public and private sector organizations interested in collaborative research. Coordinated meetings between both parties, including preparing agendas and drafting minutes of meetings.
- Negotiated and established strategic research linkages between academia and industry, securing over PKR 15M in funding.
- Drove collaboration through faculty research proposals under the Technology Development Fund of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and other governmental bodies.
- Collaborated with faculty and staff from across the institution by serving on several committees, focusing on procurement, new campus construction, and institutional performance evaluation, and prepared reports based on committee work.
- Supported the assessment and reporting needs of the university and its departments to federal and other accrediting agencies (institutional and programmatic accreditation).

As Deputy Director of Placement & Acting Deputy Director of Alumni

- Delivered **one-on-one and group career coaching and advising** to undergraduate students in career planning and professional development.
- Boosted alumni relations and networking opportunities by supporting alumni events logistically.
- Organized over 100 on-campus recruitment events and facilitated resume-writing seminars for 3,000 students.

TEACHING ACHIEVEMENTS

University of Georgia, Louise McBee Institute of Higher Education

Athens, Georgia, USA

Teaching Assistant

Jan 2022 - May 2022

- Served as an instructional assistant to Professor James Hearn in his doctoral course on Organization & Governance of Higher Education.
- Delivered a guest lecture on European higher education reforms and the role of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission in these reforms.
- Evaluated student work, including assignments, midterms, and final examinations, and advised students.

Beijing Normal University

Beijing, China

Teaching Assistant

Sep 2016 - Nov 2016

- Served as an instructional assistant to Dr. Yuzhuo Cai in his master's course on *Research & Innovation in Higher Education: Insights from Practice(MARIH19)*, mentoring students both one-on-one and in groups on writing business school-style cases of innovation in higher education.

University of Engineering & Technology Taxila

Taxila, Pakistan

Adjunct Lecturer

Jan 2015 – May 2015

- Taught a *Professional and Social Ethics* course to a Bachelor of Electronics Engineering class, aligning course-level outcomes with the program learning outcomes and assessing student performance through formative and summative assignments.

MOST SIGNIFICANT OTHER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Manuscript Reviewer for the journals:

- Educational Research & Evaluation Journal
- Triple Helix (a peer-reviewed journal of University-Industry-Government Innovation and Entrepreneurship)

Invited Lecture:

- Delivered a keynote speech at the National Entrepreneurship Education Faculty Development Program, organized by GIFT University (Gujranwala, Pakistan), held on August 18-19, 2023. This speech focused on how Pakistani faculty can play an entrepreneurial role in the ongoing higher education reform, which was informed by my two research projects and internship experience at the European University Association.

SKILLS

Statistical Analysis: Competent in descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including ANOVA, cluster analysis, regression, and quasi-experimental methods.

Data Analysis and Visualization: Proficient in MS Excel, **STATA, Power BI, SQL, and NVivo**.

Survey Design and Data Collection: Experienced in designing and implementing surveys with **Qualtrics**.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

English (C2 level), Urdu (native proficiency), Hindi & Pashto (C2 level listening & speaking)