

MUHAMMAD KASHIF AAKASH

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Researcher in disability and rehabilitation studies with expertise in qualitative and mixed-methods research. My work explores lived experiences of disability, health systems, and social inclusion through frameworks such as the **International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)**. I utilize diverse methodologies including in-depth interviews, survey research, and systematic reviews to examine disability and rehabilitation practice among health professionals and communities across international settings spanning South Asia, Europe and Middle East.

EDUCATION

PhD Candidate | Public Administration and Innovation for Disability and Social Inclusion, **Universita degli Studi della Campania, “Luigi Vanvitelli” Naples, Italy**, Dec 2023 – Nov 2026

- **Degree Completion:** Thesis submission (Sept. 2026) thesis defense (anticipated Nov 2026)
- **Funding:** Fully Funded PNRR doctoral scholarship – Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), Ministerial Decree DM 118/2023, M4C1 – Inv.4.1(EU NextGenerationEU)
- Dissertation: Integrating Evidence: Enhancing treatment outcomes in individuals with disabilities through Systematic Reviews and Qualitative Research
- Research focus: Disability and Rehabilitation research conducted within a national doctorate program, with primary research activities at Universita Politecnica delle Marche, UNIVPM Supervisory Panel:
 - Coordinator: Prof. **Francesca Gimigliano**, Professor, Luigi Vanvitelli
 - Advisor: Prof. **Maria Gabriella Ceravolo**, Professor, UNIVPM
 - Co-Advisor: Prof. **Marianna Capecci**, Professor, UNIVPM

M.Phil (Master of Philosophy) in Public Policy, **Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad, Pakistan**, Sep 2019 – Nov 2021

- Grade: 3.72 (4.0), Thesis Grade: 4.0 (4.0)
- Advisor: Prof. **Nasir Iqbal**, Associate Professor, PIDE
- Thesis Title: [The Economic Cost of the State-Owned Enterprises \(SOEs\): A Market Based Solution](#) | Defended: November 2021
- Policy analysis and quantitative methods training acquired during this program underpins my current approach to health systems and mixed-methods research.

BSc (Hons) (Bachelor of Sciences with Honors) in Agriculture, Major: Rural Development, **The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan**, Jan 2015 – Apr 2019

- Grade: 3.30 (4.0),
- Foundational training in rural development and community-based fieldwork informed my approach to participatory research methods.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Lived experiences of disability and chronic illness

- Family and caregiver experiences in health contexts
- Rehabilitation and social participation using the ICF framework
- Qualitative and mixed-methods health research
- Health systems and disability inclusion

RESEARCH AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Visiting Research Scholar | Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Istanbul Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University, Istanbul, Türkiye, Oct 2024 – Mar 2025

- Research Projects:
 - Living Beyond Functioning: A Qualitative Exploration of lived experiences, resilience, and participation in individuals with cerebral palsy
 - Exploring the role of digital and assistive Technologies in enhancing social inclusion for children with disabilities: A Systematic Review
- Advisor: Prof. **Resa Aydin**, Professor, Istanbul University
- Co-Advisor: Prof. **Nalan Capan**, Professor, Istanbul University

Independent Researcher, Self Employed, Islamabad Pakistan, Mar 2022 – Dec 2023

- Pursued independent policy and development research following completion of M. Phil
- Presented thesis research at the 2nd Annual General Conference, IBA Karachi (Mar 2022)
- Developed a focused research agenda in disability, health systems, and social inclusion, leading to **selection for a fully funded PNRR doctoral scholarship at an Italian university (2023)**

Research Assistant, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad, Pakistan, Jan 2021 – Mar 2022

- Advisors:
 - Prof. **Nadeem ul Haque**, Vice Chancellor, PIDE
 - Prof. **Nasir Iqbal**, Associate Professor, PIDE
 - Prof. **Zehra Gardezi**, Assistant Professor, PIDE
- Worked on multiple policy research projects involving survey design, field data collection, and quantitative analysis using STATA. Projects covered topics including state-owned enterprises, SME development programs, urban mobility and traffic management, and public health insurance policy.
- Conducted quantitative data analysis using STATA and supported qualitative data analysis.
- Designed field surveys and interview protocols, supervised field teams, and contributed to policy reports and briefs for national development projects funded by international organizations.
- Analytical outputs contributed to policy briefs and reports submitted to national and international stakeholders including USAID-funded development programs.

Teaching Assistant, School of Public Policy, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad, Pakistan, Sep 2020 – Feb 2021

- Advisor: Prof. **Nasir Iqbal**, Associate Professor, PIDE
- Course: Public Policy Analysis
- Assisted in teaching undergraduate classes in public policy analysis.
- Conducted tutorial sessions and facilitated discussions on selected course topics.
- Supported assessment activities including grading assignments and examinations.

- Provided academic support to students and coordinated course logistics with the instructor.
- Supported approximately 18 undergraduate students per semester in developing applied policy analysis skills.

PUBLICATIONS

1. Aakash, M.K. et al. Living Beyond Functioning: A Qualitative Exploration of lived experiences, resilience, and participation in individuals with cerebral palsy. Under Review at **Child: Care, Health and Development**.
2. Aakash, M.K. et al. Knowledge and use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: A Cross-Sectional survey among health professionals in Pakistan. Accepted at **Frontiers in Rehabilitation Sciences**.

Manuscript in Preparation

1. Aakash, M.K. et al. Exploring the role of digital and assistive Technologies in enhancing social inclusion for children with disabilities: A Systematic Review. Manuscript in preparation. (Data extraction and risk of bias assessment completed).
2. Aakash, M.K. et al. Assessing global Knowledge and Application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) among health and rehabilitation professionals and policy makers. Manuscript in preparation. (Data collection ongoing across 60 plus countries).

Academic Service

- Contributing Editor, PIDE Guide to Policy and Research (P&R) Magazine, Volume 3, Issue 1, theme Informal Economy of Pakistan. Published by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, (PIDE), Islamabad. <https://pide.org.pk/research/informal-economy-of-pakistan-policy-research-pr-vol-3-issue-1/>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOPS

1. **Oral Presentation**, Navigating daily life with Cerebral Palsy: A Qualitative study of lived experience and resilience in the 25th European Congress of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Medicine, ESPRM2026 on Mar 23-26 at Krakow, Poland.
2. **Neuro-rehab Wednesday Seminar Series** – Marche Polytechnic University UNIVPM. Presentation: Beyond Function: Everyday life and resilience among individuals with cerebral palsy: Evidence from Turkiye on Mar 2026 at Ancona, Italy.
3. **Participant**, “LIFE Winter School on Health and Well-Being at University of Lucerne, from February 17-19, 2026, at Luzern, Switzerland, (Credit ETC 01).
4. **Poster Presentation**, “*Knowledge and use of the ICF for health needs assessment and rehabilitation: The case of Pakistan*” in Congress 52° Congresso Nazionale SIMFER “La scienza riabilitativa e l’impegno nel territorio per una nuova etica della riabilitazione”, ha valutato ed ha ACCETTATO from 6-9 Oct 2024 at Padua, Italy
5. **Poster Presentation**, “*The Economic Cost of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs): A Market Based Solution*” in 2nd Annual General Conference by the School of Economics and Social Sciences on Mar 2022. Development: Discourses and Critiques at Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, Pakistan. Link:

<https://www.iba.edu.pk/ddc/pdf/kashif-aakash.pdf>

6. **Poster Presentation**, “*The Economic Cost of the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs): A Market Based Solution*” in 35th Annual General Meeting of the Pakistan Society for Development Economists (PSDE) on Nov 2021 at Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar, Pakistan. Link: <https://psde.pide.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/poster.pdf>

FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Conducted field-based research across multiple policy and development studies in Pakistan, including projects on urban mobility, informal economy, Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development, and public health interventions.
- Designed and implemented **surveys and semi-structured interviews**, coordinated field teams, and supervised primary data collection.
- Managed data cleaning and preparation using **STATA**, and contributed to analysis and reporting.
- Participated in research projects implemented with organizations such as the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and United States Agency for International Development.

SKILLS

Technical Proficiencies:

- **Stata**: Expertise in data cleaning, tabulation, visualization and advanced statistical analysis.
- **NVivo**: Advanced skills in qualitative data analysis, including case creation, classification, thematic coding (parent and sub-codes), matrix coding, cross tabulation and data visualization.
- **Python (AI-assisted)**: Working proficiency in data management, basic scripting, and analytical tasks, developed through applied research use with AI-assisted coding workflows; actively building independent fluency.
- **Kobo Toolbox**: Experienced in designing, programming, and deploying mobile-based data collection instruments for field surveys in low-resource and international settings; implemented a multilingual worldwide survey across 10 languages using machine-assisted translation, with survey instruments adapted for cross-national administration.
- **Microsoft Office Suite**: Advanced skills in MS word, excel and PowerPoint.

Research and Data Expertise:

- Strong background in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.
- Experienced in primary data collection (surveys, interviews, fieldwork).

Report and Policy Writing:

- Proven ability to draft policy brief, analytical report and research summaries for diverse audience.

Languages

- English - Fluent, Pashto – Native, Urdu - Native, Italian - Basic (Learning)

References: Available upon request

Updated May 21, 2026