MAHSA KAZEMZADEH

Senior UX Researcher

kazemzadeh.m77@gmail.com | +44 7471971047 | Edinburgh, UK | LinkedIn | Portfolio | GitHub | ORCID

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

UX researcher with 7+ years in UX, the last 5.5 in research, across digital health, e-commerce, fintech, social platforms and vehicle services. I research the mind behind the screen rather than the click: how people perceive, decide, trust and forget, and where attention and emotion actually break down. What I am best at is finding the human reason a behaviour happens, then turning it into a product decision a team can act on. Alongside industry work, I am preparing for a PhD on how AI interprets human emotion and the body.

SKILLS

- Mixed-Methods Research
- Product Discovery
- Research Strategy
- Behavioural Analytics
- Usability Testing
- User Journey Mapping
- Experimentation & CRO
- UX Measurement
- Information Architecture
- Trust & Responsible AI
- Stakeholder Management
- Research Operations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior UX Researcher **October 2025 – May 2026**

Aegis | Stealth-mode AI / digital mental wellness start-up | UK | Contract, remote

Early-stage AI-powered digital health platform. I led user, product and market research to shape the audience, opportunity and product direction before launch.

- Led generative research (20+ in-depth interviews with people from the target audience, plus market and competitor synthesis) that prioritised 70% of the roadmap around the highest-impact opportunities.
- Reframed the target audience through evidence-based segmentation, narrowing five user groups to three primary segments and sharpening product positioning.
- Built the company's first trust and responsible-AI research framework, examining user agency and human-in-the-loop boundaries; it fed the research narrative for two investor pitches.
- Ran think-aloud usability testing on sensitive health flows (consent and data sharing), surfacing friction the team revised in the next design iteration.

Senior UX Researcher **March 2025 – August 2025**

Together | Multinational social platform | Netherlands | Contract, remote

I owned end-to-end UX research for an 11-week programme across Canada, the Netherlands and Italy, from discovery through MVP.

- Led mixed-method research across three markets (39 interviews, 1,500+ survey responses, trust-scenario testing), synthesising 20,000+ data points to identify 9 critical trust barriers grouped into 4 trust patterns.
- Reframed the core trust problem, shifting direction from added privacy controls to clearer, market-aware defaults and contextual trust signals.
- Translated research into 14 design specs mapped to the 9 barriers (segments, journey maps, UX flows, wireframes); led bias-mitigation research across three user segments and mentored one junior researcher.

Senior UX Researcher **March 2022 – February 2025**

Okala | FMCG e-commerce, 3M+ daily active users | Tehran

First dedicated UX researcher on the team, leading research through a major platform redesign across Product, Design, Development, Marketing, Sales and Growth.

- Established the UX research function and research operations, running a sprint-integrated engine of 12 discovery reports on a bi-weekly cycle aligned to product KPIs and OKRs; mentored 2 junior researchers.
- Owned an end-to-end CRO and behavioural research programme (GA, Hotjar, Clarity, usability testing with 36 participants, 5,000+ survey responses, A/B testing), delivering +18% conversion, −30% cart abandonment and −15% time-to-purchase.
- Led IA and category redesign research (benchmarking, card sorting, tree testing), analysing 1,839 responses to restructure the category hierarchy around users' mental models.
- Led a post-purchase study linking friction to an 8% monthly churn factor in the affected cohort; the recommendations addressed the root causes of 62% of customer support tickets.

UX Researcher **March 2021 – February 2022**

iToll | Vehicle inspection and insurance services, 1M+ users | Tehran

- Led trust research (35 call-centre intercepts, session recordings, heuristic audits), reframing the problem from checkout friction to trust at physical handover and defining a three-layer Trustworthy Handover Model.
- Designed and prototyped trust mechanisms (identity verification, QR validation, real-time status) that moved into sprint planning.
- Contributed to redesigns that increased inspection checkout conversion by 19%, cut related call-centre contacts by 31% and lifted a separate insurance flow's conversion by 8%.

UX Researcher **April 2021 – July 2021**

Taline | Fintech, digital gold investment | Contract

- Set up the company's first UX research practice and repository; investigated cart-to-checkout abandonment with surveys and usability testing, and drove a payment-flow redesign that delivered a 25% uplift in basket-to-payment conversion.

Earlier roles **February 2018 – February 2021**

UX Designer, Dopely (part-time, Jan 2020 – Feb 2021) · Freelance UX Designer and Researcher (Feb 2018 – Nov 2020)

RESEARCH

When the Body Speaks First: How LLM Chatbots Respond to Early Bodily-Emotional Distress in English and Persian. Preprint, Zenodo, 2026. Sole author. doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23672279
Exploratory audit of three LLMs: 153 text responses plus 48 responses to four participants' body drawings; open data and code on GitHub.

The Body Knows First: Designing AI to Bridge the Help-Seeking Gap through Somatic-Emotional Self-Awareness. Position paper submitted to UKAIRS 2026; positive reviews, not accepted for lack of an institutional affiliation.

Confidential trauma-informed mental health research (2025 – 2026), with guidance from Prof Maria Wolters. About 110 survey responses and 5 interviews. Submitted to NordiCHI 2026 (not accepted); revised version not public for participant safety, available confidentially on request.

One Thing, Mind the Product hackathon MVP (May – June 2026). AI-driven habit-building app, researched, designed and shipped solo; identified four friction points behind goal abandonment and designed the prompting logic that turns a broad ambition into a SMART micro-habit.

EDUCATION

BSc Information Technology Engineering, Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch, 2017 – 2021. GPA 18.70/20 (UK First Class equivalent).

Courses: The Science of Mind and Decision Making (University of Cambridge, Coursera) · Understanding the Brain (University of Chicago, Coursera)

CERTIFICATIONS

Product Prioritization (PPC), Product School, 2026 · Product Analytics (PAC), Product School, 2022 · Prompt Engineering for Generative AI, LinkedIn Learning, 2025 · UX Research: Overcoming Data Anxiety, LinkedIn Learning, 2024

WRITING (MEDIUM)

Designing a "Step Zero" for Responsible AI in a Mental Health App · When Friction Is Functional: Designing Intentional Boundaries in AI Products · The Gamer's Brain: Neuroscience and UX in Game Research · Strategic Alignment of the Post-Purchase Experience for Customer Stabilization · The Effect of Visual Perception on Design

VOLUNTEERING AND OTHER

- Volunteer mentor for early-career UX researchers: about 15 mentees in 2023 and about 21 in 2024.
- Editor of the university student magazine, including an eight-issue interview series with care-home residents.
- Painter: work selected for the Tehran–Istanbul International Exhibition, Milad Tower, Tehran (2019).

TOOLS

Google Analytics · Hotjar · Microsoft Clarity · Figma · Miro / FigJam · Notion / Confluence · Google Forms · SurveyMonkey · Maze · Jira · n8n · Python · Claude / Gemini / ChatGPT