

# Motivational Drivers in Donation-Based Crowdfunding Systems: Empirical In-sights from the Ehsan Platform in Saudi Arabia

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## Abstracts

Crowdfunding is an effective method for raising funds, with donation-based crowdfunding standing apart from other models due to the absence of rewards or financial returns for donors. This research focuses on understanding the motivating factors behind Saudi society's participation in donation-based crowdfunding, specifically on the Ehsan platform. Through analyzing 30 successful campaigns, conducting surveys, and interviewing a social media influencer, we explore intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, campaign features that attract support, and the impact of influencers. Our findings highlight the significant positive influence exerted by influencers, emphasizing the critical role of clear campaign descriptions and compelling storytelling. Additionally, we identify the preferred campaign types, such as debt, orphan sponsorship, disaster relief, and the optimal timing for donor contributions. The study reveals that Saudi participants engage in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the Ehsan platform primarily driven by sympathy, personal satisfaction, and a sense of community. The trustworthiness of campaigns and the platform's user-friendly interface emerge as crucial factors in fostering donor engagement. Notably, our research underscores the higher success rate of securing sponsorships for younger orphans and the increased donor engagement during religious events. Moreover, this research recognizes the importance of sustainability in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the Ehsan platform. Future investigations will encompass an extensive analysis of crowdfunding platforms in Saudi Arabia, contributing to further advancements in this field.

**Keywords:** donation-based crowdfunding; sustainability; consumer behaviour; social sustainability; social impact; motivation factors; donation; Saudi Arabia; social media.

## Introduction

Crowdfunding has rapidly emerged as a popular method for project owners to seek funding from a large pool of potential investors [1]. This phenomenon involves collecting small contributions

from a large number of people through Internet platforms and social networks [2]. Crowdfunding models can be classified into four types based on the benefits earned by campaign supporters: equity-based, reward-based, lending-based, and donation-based crowdfunding campaigns [1], [3]. While existing literature on crowdfunding has primarily focused on entrepreneurial ventures using reward-based, lending-based, and equity-based crowdfunding models [1] [3], donation-based campaigns stand out in the realm of crowdfunding, as donors contribute out of altruism rather than for rewards or benefits [4]. Although crowdfunding is well-known in the US and Europe, it is a relatively new emerging trend in countries such as Saudi Arabia. Most research studies have examined and explored famous crowdfunding platforms such as Indiegogo [5] and KikStarter [6].

To the best of our knowledge, academic findings regarding the success drivers of donation-based crowdfunding projects in Saudi Arabia are lacking, despite donation-based crowdfunding being the most prevalent type of crowdfunding in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries [7]. Therefore, this study focuses on donation-based crowdfunding, particularly on the recently established crowdfunding platform called Ehsan [8]. Ehsan is a Saudi Arabian donation platform that prioritizes charitable work and operates with transparency through online payment channels and campaign selection.

The objective of this research is to assess the role of the Ehsan platform in regulating charitable funding in Saudi Arabia, promoting social responsibility, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Understanding the motivations that drive donors to participate in donation-based crowdfunding platforms like Ehsan is essential for maintaining the platform's sustainability and continued impact.

This study aims to investigate the motivation factors that drive donors to participate in Ehsan crowdfunding campaigns, which have achieved a significant total donation amount of S.R 4,695,240,675 (approximately 1,252,064,180 USD) as of the time of writing [8]. By understanding these motivations and preferences, Ehsan can develop strategies to enhance donor engagement and foster long-term relationships with its supporters. The sustainability of the platform will be crucial in ensuring its ability to continue facilitating charitable funding and making a positive social impact in Saudi Arabia.

To comprehensively explore Saudi society's motivations for donating and participating in Ehsan crowdfunding campaigns, we adopt a mixed-methods approach. In the qualitative phase, we conducted a survey to investigate the features of the Ehsan platform that motivate Saudi society to participate, as well as the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of donors [9]. In the quantitative phase, we manually collected a dataset comprising 30 successful campaigns focused on orphan sponsorship from the Ehsan platform. Additionally, we analyzed Ehsan's official X (formerly Twitter) account and posts from social media influencers to gain further insights into campaign dynamics.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides background information and a review of related work, Section 3 describes the materials and methods employed in the study, Section 4 presents the results and ensuing discussion highlighting the implications for

Ehsan's sustainability and suggesting future research directions, and finally, Section 5 concludes the paper.

## Background and Related Work

Crowdfunding is a form of crowdsourcing, which leverages the collective knowledge and input of a large online community to accomplish challenging tasks that machines alone cannot fulfill [10]. Crowdfunding has emerged as an effective method for raising funds, offering various models with distinct benefits for campaign supporters. According to [11], there are four types of crowdfunding. The first type is reward-based crowdfunding, where entrepreneurs seek funds from the public and, in return, offer a developed product or service [12]. Kickstarter, the largest US crowdfunding platform [6], is an example of reward-based crowdfunding. The second type is donation-based crowdfunding, where the public invests in specific causes, initiatives, or projects without expecting repayment [12], [13]. Ehsan [8] is an example of an online donation-based crowdfunding platform. Ehsan based in Saudi Arabia prioritizes charitable work and operates with transparency through online payment channels and campaign selection. The third type is lending-based crowdfunding, where individuals collectively lend money to entrepreneurs for a venture or project [12]. Kiva is an example of a lending-based online crowdfunding platform [14]. Lastly, equity-based crowdfunding involves entrepreneurs promoting their ventures or projects to gather targeted equity investments from investors [1], [3]. Wefunder, an American platform [15], serves as an example of an equity-based crowdfunding platform.

The parties involved in crowdfunding campaigns include the founders or beneficiaries who initiate and benefit from the campaigns, and the backers or donors who contribute their financial resources. These parties are connected through crowdfunding platforms, such as the Ehsan platform in our case [16]. Ehsan was launched by the Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA) in March 2021 under the supervision of eleven government entities. It offers diverse campaign types, including debt and overdue bills relief, orphan sponsorship, disaster relief, prisoners' relief, and various projects [17].

The success of Ehsan's National Campaign for Charitable Work, which raised over 300 million S.R. (80 million USD) in a few days, marked a significant milestone in charitable crowdfunding in Saudi Arabia. This success has paved the way for the growth of other Saudi crowdfunding platforms such as Jood Eshan, focusing on providing housing for the needy [18], Sahem, facilitating international donations [19], and the national donation platform, Donate [20].

In summary, the evolving landscape of crowdfunding in Saudi Arabia has witnessed the rise of donation-based platforms like Ehsan, with diverse campaign types and substantial contributions. This has led to the emergence of other crowdfunding platforms, contributing to the growth of charitable crowdfunding in the country.

The following sections provide an overview of existing research on donation-based crowdfunding, including donor motivations, completion effects, platform recommendations, and the role of crowdfunding intermediaries. These studies offer valuable insights into understanding the dynamics of donation-based crowdfunding and its impact on fundraising campaigns.

## 2.1 Donation-based crowdfunding

Donation-based crowdfunding (charitable crowdfunding) is a form of crowdfunding that aims to raise funds for charitable causes. Authors in [21] try to answer the question “How do IT affordances support donor motivations in charitable crowdfunding?”. To answer this question, the authors conduct a comparative study of two different charitable crowdfunding campaigns and collect their different data before, during, and after their runtimes from 2014-2106. In addition to conducting interviews with campaigns' parties, campaigns donors, campaign creators and platform workers. The first campaign supports community development in Malawi and called "Earthship Kapita" and hosted in a crowdfunding platform called Chuffed. The second campaign was "Medical Research" that supports cancer research and conducted in crowdfunding platform called Thinkable. To analyze data authors transcribed and coded all interviews using NVivo software qualitative data analysis. In conclusion authors state that the style and type of information presented on crowdfunding platforms plays an important role in how donors will respond to campaign and enabling the role of charitable crowdfunding in support different types of donor motivation (individual or social motivations, and intrinsic or extrinsic motivations.) that are not supported effectively or not supported at all in offline charity.

In another study by authors in [22], a model is developed to explore donors' motivations in crowdfunding platforms by considering their self-determination needs and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. To explore the factors that motivate donors to participate and donate in crowdfunding platforms, authors conducted an online survey to collect data of donors whose participate in different donation based crowdfunding platforms. They collected data of 436 donors by using a popular survey website in China ([www.wjx.cn](http://www.wjx.cn)). A 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was adopted to measure each item. Results state that the sense of self-worth, altruism and ease of use, and social connections have positive impact on donors' intentions through intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Authors in [23] focused on understanding 'the completion effect' in charitable crowdfunding (this means the campaign completed 'success' and reaches its targets). To understand this effect authors, conduct a regression analysis of two charitable crowdfunding platforms the Benevolent US-based crowdfunding platform and JustGiving UK's biggest charitable fundraising platform. Authors collect data on all donations made on Benevolent between November 2011 and June 2014, via restricted agreement with Benevolent in addition to information of recipient's self-report when applying for their requests to be posted on the platform. Benevolent operates a provision-point mechanism, where the target must be raised within 90 days, or else the recipient receives no money. For JustGiving, authors collect data on all donations to individual campaigns that set and reach a fundraising target. Although Benevolent and JustGiving differ in their fundraising strategies, both platforms display a strong and noticeable pattern that the authors refer to as the completion effect: donors give much more money to fulfill the fundraising goal. For Benevolent, the range of percentages stops at 100% because campaigns on this site end after they meet their objective. On the other hand, the range of percentages for JustGiving goes beyond 100% because projects on platform can still raise money after they meet their target. In conclusion, authors find that in order to personally meet their fundraising targets, donors make donations that are noticeably larger, more frequently, and more quickly, according to writers.

Authors in [24] conduct an exploratory study to highlight potential areas for future research into crowdfunding as an inclusion mechanism that might motivate a wider adoption of social causes. By offering a state of the art and benchmarking of current Crowdfunding platforms, or "CFPs," with a focus on donation-based crowdfunding. This work intends to highlight the issues associated with crowdfunding. In methodology, the study divided in three phases: (1) empirical overview; (2) CFPs classification scheme definition; and (3) CFPs benchmarking and analysis. In conclusion, there are many challenges that appear in this research such as: Campaign starvation: some campaigns are funded quickly, while others do not receive any funds.

In [25], researchers focus on measuring various factors in the GoFundMe crowdfunding platform that can lead to the success of a crowdfunding campaign such as campaigns specifications, the campaign goal amount, factors such as the campaign text description, study the cover page picture and its features such as the number of people in the picture, their gender, their age, if the pic include kids, their position in the picture and their facial expressions, then analyze and study the relationship between these factors and the success rate of the campaign. They propose a fusion classifier to combine these textual and pictorial features. As a result, they identify that crowdfunding platforms can suggest the most influential textual and pictorial descriptions to their fundraisers to reach their goal amount quickly and successfully.

## 2.2 Crowdfunding Intermediaries

Researchers in [26] aim to study how crowdfunding platforms build and preserve legitimacy in social entrepreneurship context. They used the case study method and selected three Spanish intermediaries that promote social entrepreneurship projects. Each platform has a different geographic coverage and different crowdfunding model. "Lateuater.org" has an equity-based model. "Colectual" has a lending-based model. "La Bolsa Social" has a mixed model: reward-based model and donation-based model. Researchers collect the data from multiple sources by conducting a recorded and transcribed interviews with the three platforms managers and employees, from the three platforms' websites and from traditional press news and each member of the research analyzed these data and wrote his finding. Results demonstrate that every intermediate host project is made by companies at different stages of their life cycles. The Colectual.com and Lateuater.org informants highlighted the importance of crowdfunding for new businesses as well as the early stages of microenterprises and SMEs. Such businesses typically don't have access to standard finance sources because of their high risk. These findings corroborate the data presented in the literature.

In [27], researchers explore the role of networks and discussion forums between fundraisers and backers in developing effective word-of-mouth for crowdfunding campaigns. The analysis manually gathered information on reward-based Indiegogo projects that were active between January 2014 and December 2015. In conclusion, a campaign is considered successful if the rate of financing is higher than or equal to 100%. The success of crowdfunding is greatly affected by the project description's language. Using Italian to present a project reduces its chances of success by 9%. The language used clearly affects how many people can understand the project description and therefore how many potential backers there are. On the other hand, using English to describe a project can attract both domestic and international backers. As a result, projects presented in English are more likely to be financed than those presented in Italian. The findings

demonstrate that using links to external websites to give potential funders more information is important and raises the likelihood of achieving the target by 6%. Further, the results clearly highlight the remarkable importance for campaigners to expand their message and audience using social networks.

Researchers in [28] conducted a systematic literature review to identify factors that impact backers' behavior in reward-based crowdfunding (RBCF) campaigns. A total of 33 papers were analyzed, and a large set of factors were identified and classified into nine main themes: Team Characteristics, Project Characteristics, Social Influence, User Generated Content, Risk, Distrust, Upfront Marketing, Environment Readiness, and Backers Motivation. The findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of these factors and provide insights for fund-seekers to design successful RBCF campaigns. The study highlights the importance of considering these factors in order to enhance the chances of attracting backers and achieving crowdfunding goals.

In summary, the existing research on crowdfunding encompasses various aspects such as donor motivations, completion effects, platform recommendations, and the role of crowdfunding intermediaries. The studies discussed in this section provide valuable insights into understanding the dynamics of charitable crowdfunding and the factors that influence the success of crowdfunding campaigns. However, there is still ample room for further research in this area, particularly concerning the motivations that drive Saudi society's engagement in crowdfunding platforms. To address this gap, it is imperative to explore the underlying factors that motivate individuals in the Saudi context to participate in crowdfunding initiatives. This paper aims to bridge this research void by examining the role of Ehsan.sa, a prominent crowdfunding platform in Saudi Arabia, in promoting social responsibility and assessing its overall impact on Saudi society. In summary, a number of important results derived from investigations across many nations and platforms are presented in the following section.

- In Malawi, a comparative study on Chuffed ("Earthship Kapita") and Thinkable ("Medical Research") emphasizes the significant role of the style and type of information presented on crowdfunding platforms in influencing donors' responses to campaigns.
- Moving to China, a donation-based study incorporating several crowdfunding platforms shows that contributors' goals are positively impacted by the feeling of self-worth, charity, simplicity of use, and social connections through both extrinsic and intrinsic motives. Using an online survey with a 7-point Likert scale to rate each item is part of the applied approach.
- A regression study of the JustGiving and Benevolent platforms in the US and the UK aims to understand the 'completion effect' in charity crowdfunding. The findings show that contributors must significantly increase the size, frequency, and speed of their contributions in order to reach their fundraising goals.
- On the other hand, difficulties are visible in the research environment, such as campaign starvation and problems with crowdfunding platforms that depend on donations. Three steps are used in a thorough exploratory research to give insight into the complexity of the crowdfunding environment: an empirical review, the definition of the crowdfunding platform (CFP) categorization system, and CFP benchmarking and analysis.

- Platforms such as GoFundMe use a fusion classifier to assess several elements that affect crowdfunding campaign performance by combining textual and graphical campaign information.
- The case study carried out in Spain looks into the crowdfunding sites "La Bolsa Social," "Colectual," and "Lateuaterra.org," each of which uses a different model, such as reward/donation-based, equity-based, or lending-based. Understanding the strategies such crowdfunding platforms use to establish and preserve credibility in the field of social entrepreneurship is the major goal of this study.
- An examination of reward-based Indiegogo campaigns in Italy shows the significance of project description language to the success of crowdfunding. The study highlights the critical role that networks and discussion platforms between funders and fundraisers have in generating effective word-of-mouth by utilizing theories of social identity and signaling.

Finally, a thorough analysis of the literature finds and classifies nine patterns that influence backers' behavior in reward-based crowdfunding projects. To shed light on how reward-based crowdfunding is changing as a financing alternative, this study intends to investigate its application during the COVID-19 epidemic.

## Materials and Methods

In our methodology, we followed a three-step approach to gather information and insights. First, we examined and studied the Ehsan platform and its campaigns, with a specific focus on orphan sponsorship campaigns that successfully achieved their funding goals. This allowed us to understand the dynamics of the platform and the factors contributing to campaign success. Second, we conducted a survey to explore the features of the Ehsan platform and its mobile app that attract people to participate in Ehsan's campaigns. The survey also aimed to investigate donors' internal and external motivations for participating in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the platform. Additionally, we sought to understand the role of social media influencers in supporting and promoting these campaigns. Third, we conducted an interview with a social media influencer who is active on Snapchat and Instagram platforms. The interview aimed to delve deeper into the role of social media and its influencers in spreading the culture of crowdfunding and supporting Ehsan campaigns. By engaging with the influencer, we gained insights into their experiences, strategies, and perspectives on using social media to promote and garner support for donation-based crowdfunding campaigns. Figure 1 illustrates the flow diagram of our research methodology design.

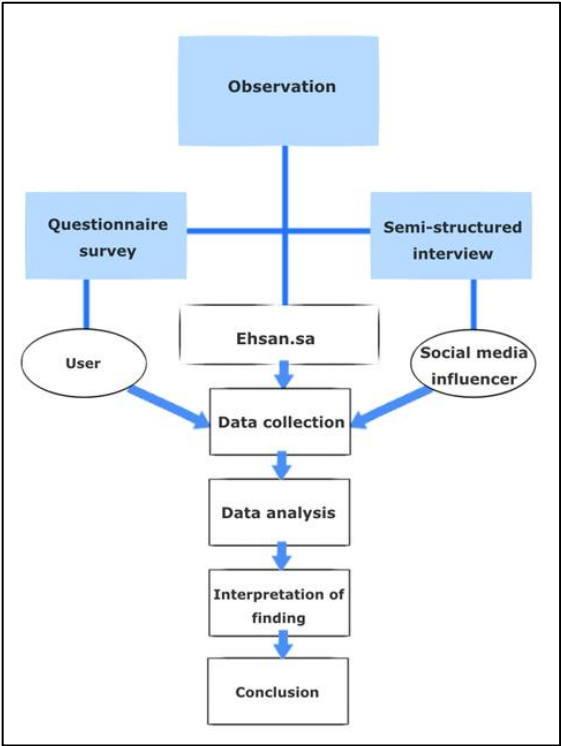


Figure 1. Research methodology design flow diagram.

3.1 Study Platform and Data Collection

We examined and studied the 'Ehsan' crowdfunding platform, which focuses on donation-based campaigns. As of the time of our study, the platform had a total of 36,498 successfully completed campaigns. Within this context, we specifically explored successful orphan sponsorship campaigns on the platform. To gather data for our analysis, we manually collected information from 30 records of successfully completed campaigns on the Ehsan platform. The dataset we created, named Ehsan\_Orphan\_dataset, consists of 13 columns containing details such as orphan names, campaign descriptions, gender, case numbers, publishing and completion dates, orphan age, number of days to complete the campaign, orphan stage, and charitable organization names. Within our dataset, the percentage of females and males is equal, with each comprising 50% of the sample. For the sake of transparency and accessibility, we have made the dataset publicly available on GitHub [29].

3.2 Survey

We conducted an online survey titled "Donors' motivations to participate in Ehsan crowdfunding platform". The survey was conducted from 29/10/2023 to 10/11/2023. Ninety respondents answered eight questions of varying types, including checkboxes, multiple choice, and 5-point



Likert scales. Checkboxes also included 'other' option, allowing respondents to provide their own answers. We used the survey to gain knowledge about Ehsan platform features that attracts people to participate in it and to define and collect Saudi society motivations in participating in a donation based crowdfunding campaigns. The survey questions aim to ensure that we comprehensively cover all aspects of the Ehsan platform, gather information that can enhance our research functionality, and gain a clear understanding of Saudi society's experience in using such platforms. The goal is to identify potential limitations and shortcomings and develop solutions to address them, ultimately benefiting platform users. We used Google Forms to create the survey and Microsoft Excel to analyze the survey results, including identifying outliers and duplicates. We also translated Arabic suggestions written by participants in the survey to English. Comprehensive information regarding the study's procedures, confidentiality measures, and data handling practices was provided to participants. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and their ability to decline or discontinue at any time. All the participants provided informed consent. The data was handled in compliance with privacy regulations and the protocols of this study were approved by the internal departmental committee, however, there is no number awarded. All procedures were performed in accordance with the guidelines set forth by King Saud University.

### 3.3 Interview

We conducted a semi-structured interview with a social media influencer who is active on Snapchat and Instagram. The interview was conducted via WhatsApp application messages and initially conducted in Arabic, which was later translated into English. The interview aimed to explore the role of social media and its influencers in spreading the culture of crowdfunding and supporting Ehsan campaigns. The interviewer provided informed consent for the interview.

## Results and Discussion

Corresponding to the research objectives, this section presents the results of the study, focusing on the motivations of Saudi society to participate in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the Ehsan platform. The findings are discussed in relation to various aspects related to donor motivations, shedding light on the factors that drive individuals to contribute to charitable causes through crowdfunding.

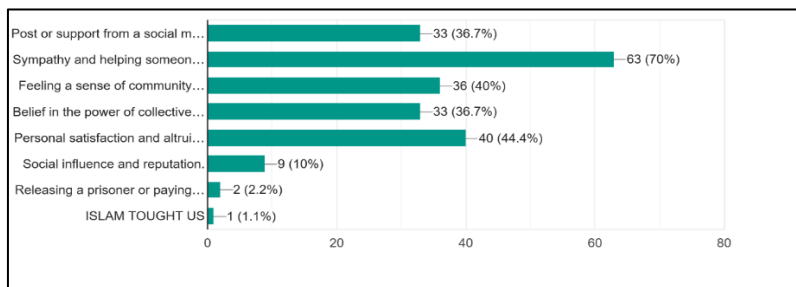


Figure 2. Motivations of participants in Ehsan campaigns.

Figure2 presents the motivations of participants in Ehsan campaigns. The results reveal that the primary motivation for participants is sympathy and the desire to help someone in need, with 70% of participants indicating this as their main driving factor. In second place, personal satisfaction and altruism were reported by 44.4% of participants. Additionally, 40% of participants mentioned feeling a sense of community and connection as a motivator. The influence and support from social media influencers, as well as a belief in the power of collective contributions, were reported by 36.7% of participants. Social influence and reputation had the lowest percentage of participants at 10%.

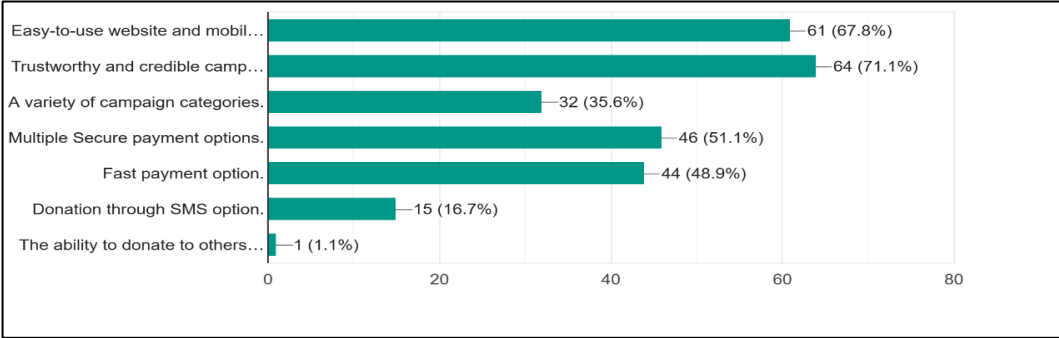


Figure 3. Features of the Ehsan platform that motivate participants.

Figure 33 analyzes the features of the Ehsan platform that motivate participants. The results indicate that the two most significant motivations reported by participants are trustworthy and credible campaigns, with 71.1% of participants expressing the importance of this feature. Additionally, an easy-to-use website and mobile app were reported as motivating factors by 67.8% of participants, as indicated in reference [30]. Multiple secure payment options and fast payment options were also significant motivators, with 51.1% and 48.9% of participants respectively. A variety of campaign categories and the option to donate through SMS had lower percentages of participants at 35% and 16.7% respectively.

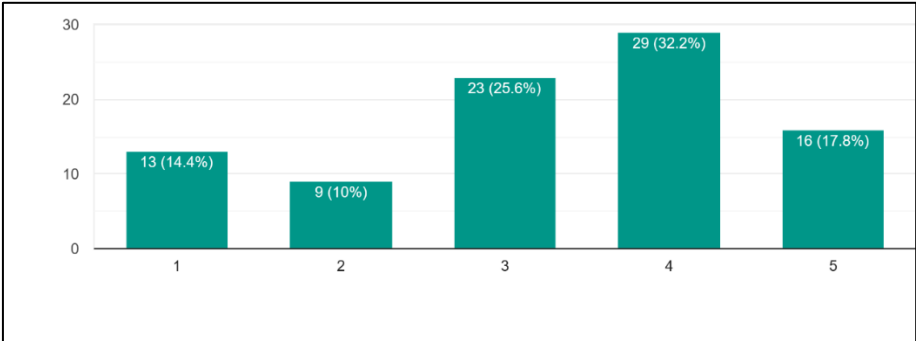


Figure 4. The role of social media influencers in supporting donation decisions.

Figure4 explores the role of social media influencers in supporting donation decisions. The results indicate that social media influencers do indeed influence donors to participate in Ehsan campaigns. Out of the 90 participants, 29 stated they were influenced, and 16 stated they were very influenced by social media influencer campaigns' posts.

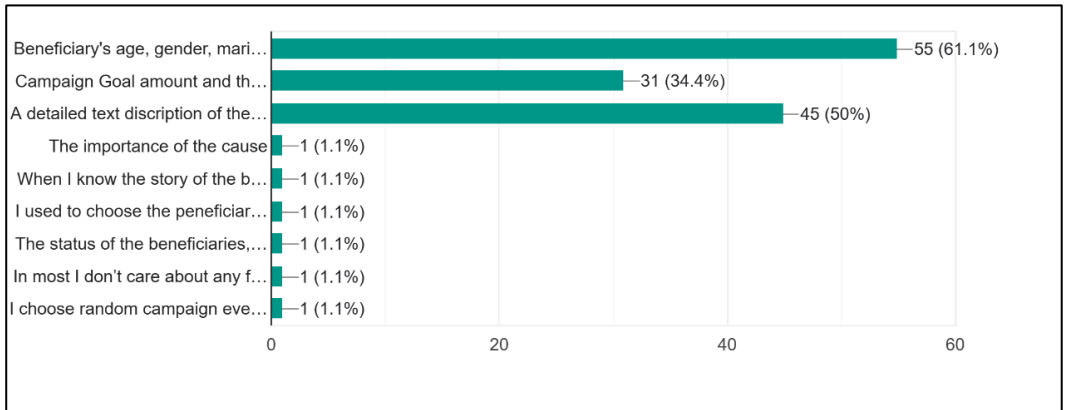


Figure 5. Ehsan campaigns specifications.

Figure5 focuses on analyzing the campaign specifications, including the text description, beneficiary status, and campaign goal amount. The findings support that beneficiary characteristics affect the donation process and the time period to achieve the campaign's goal. Specifically, 61.1% of participants agreed that they choose to participate in campaigns based on the beneficiary's status. Furthermore, a detailed text description of the campaign was chosen by 45% of participants as an important factor influencing their decision to participate. The campaign goal amount and the percentage of the current collected amount were also significant, with 34.4% of participants considering these factors when deciding to donate. These findings further support the idea that beneficiary characteristics, campaign descriptions, and the campaign goal amount play a role in motivating donors to participate in Ehsan campaigns.

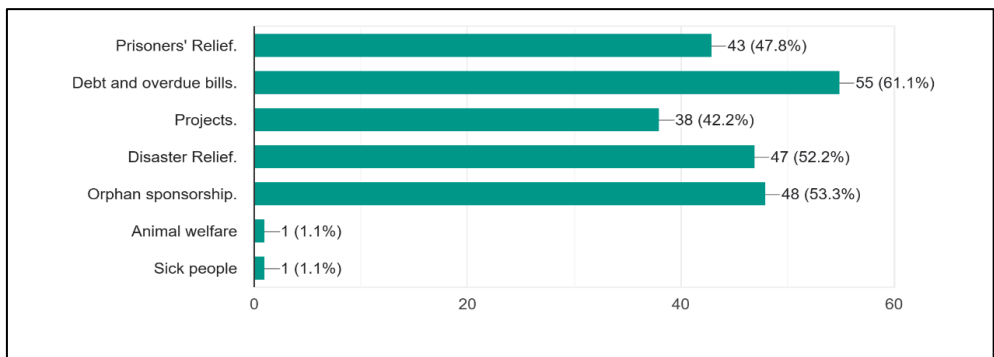


Figure 6. The preferred campaign types for donors

Figure examines the preferred campaign types for donors. Debt and overdue bills ranked first with 61.1% of participants, followed by orphan sponsorship with 53.3%, disaster relief with 52.2%, prisoners' relief with 47.8%, and projects with 42.2%. These findings provide insights into the types of campaigns that attract donors on the Ehsan platform.

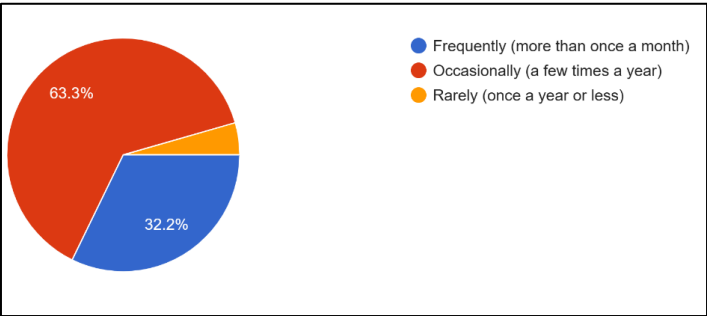


Figure 7. Participations contribution rate in Ehsan campaigns.

Figure 7Figure 7 analyzes the participation contribution rate in Ehsan campaigns. The majority of participants (63.3%) reported participating occasionally (a few times a year), while 32.2% donated frequently (more than once a month), and 4.5% participated rarely (once a year or less). This information sheds light on the frequency of donor participation on the platform.

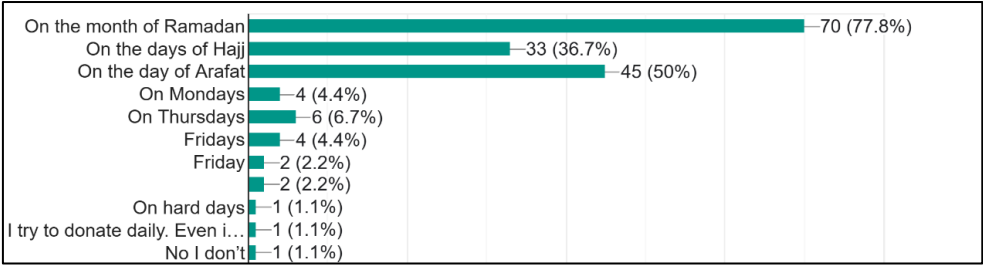


Figure 8. Donors' preferred time to participate in Ehsan.

Figure8 explores the preferred times for donors to participate in Ehsan campaigns. The results indicate that the month of Ramadan had the highest participation rate, with 77.8% of participants choosing to donate during this time. Additionally, 36.7% indicated their preference for donating on Hajj days, and 50% chose the significant day of Arafat, which is the greatest day of pilgrimage (Hajj). On the other hand, Thursdays had a participation rate of 6.7%, and Mondays had a rate of 4.4%. Nine participants mentioned that they prefer to donate on Fridays. Some participants did not have a specific preferred time and donated whenever they wanted or on various occasions such as receiving their salary or even every day.

These findings highlight the strong association between religious and significant events, such as Ramadan and Hajj, and donor participation in Ehsan campaigns. They also indicate the

importance of aligning campaign efforts with these specific timeframes to maximize donor engagement and contributions.

In the analysis of orphan sponsorship campaigns, the study revealed a strong correlation between the age of the orphan and the likelihood of successfully completing the sponsorship campaign. It was found that younger orphans had a higher chance of being sponsored, irrespective of their gender. Additionally, campaigns posted by the official Ehsan's X (formerly Twitter) platform account demonstrated a remarkably high success rate, highlighting the significance of engaging the crowd in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns. This finding aligns with previous research [31], which emphasizes the role of crowd engagement in equity-based crowdfunding campaigns.

The study also emphasizes the influential role of social media influencers in the success of Ehsan campaigns. These influencers possess the ability to engage their followers and effectively communicate the stories of the campaign's beneficiaries, which significantly contributes to attracting donations. This underscores the positive impact of storytelling in crowdfunding campaigns and funders' engagement [32], [33].

Overall, the study's results shed light on the motivations of Saudi society to participate in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the Ehsan platform. Participants were primarily driven by sympathy and a desire to help those in need, followed by personal satisfaction, altruism, and a sense of community. Trustworthy and credible campaigns, an easy-to-use platform, and secure and fast payment options were significant motivators. Social media influencers played a role in influencing donors, emphasizing the power of social media in mobilizing support. Factors such as beneficiary characteristics, campaign descriptions, and the campaign goal amount influenced donor participation. Preferred campaign types included debt and overdue bills, orphan sponsorship, disaster relief, prisoners' relief, and projects. Donors participated occasionally, with a higher engagement during religious events such as Ramadan and Hajj. Younger orphans had a higher chance of successful sponsorship, and campaigns posted by the official platform account had a higher success rate. These findings provide valuable insights for campaign strategies, donor engagement, and platform enhancements to maximize participation and impact.

This research also recognizes the importance of sustainability in donation-based crowdfunding campaigns on the Ehsan platform. As we explore intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, campaign features, and the impact of influencers, the findings emphasize the significance of integrating sustainability principles into these initiatives. Clear campaign descriptions and compelling storytelling can effectively communicate the environmental, social, or economic benefits of the cause, fostering a stronger connection between donors and sustainability efforts. Moreover, by identifying preferred campaign types such as debt, orphan sponsorship, and disaster relief, opportunities arise to incorporate sustainable practices within these areas. For instance, campaigns promoting sustainable debt repayment solutions, environmentally conscious orphan sponsorship programs, or disaster relief efforts focusing on resilience and long-term sustainable development. By considering sustainability as an integral aspect of crowdfunding campaigns, we can further enhance their impact and contribute to the advancement of sustainable practices within the Saudi society. It is recommended that Ehsan takes certain measures to ensure the

sustainability of their platform. To increase the probability of campaign success, it is recommended that campaigns clearly indicate their start and completion dates, provide a comprehensive text description based on the campaign type, campaign goal amount, and beneficiary status, as observed in previous research [21], [34], [35]. Furthermore, the inclusion of images in campaigns can enhance their chances of success.

The findings of this study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the representativeness of the findings. Additionally, the study focused specifically on Ehsan campaigns within the Saudi Arabian context, and caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to other regions or countries with different socio-cultural contexts.

Future research should consider conducting comparative analyses of different crowdfunding campaign types to determine their effectiveness and the factors influencing their success. Additionally, developing robust frameworks for measuring campaign impact on beneficiaries can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and sustainability of crowdfunding initiatives in addressing social issues.

In a previous study [36], it was mentioned that sustainable ventures have a higher likelihood of securing investments by appealing to social investors through crowdfunding platforms compared to traditional funding methods. To further expand on this research, it would be valuable to explore the concept of sustainable crowdfunding platform capitalism, as suggested in another study [37]. This would involve examining the intersection of sustainability, crowdfunding, and platform-based economic systems to gain a deeper understanding of their dynamics and implications.

## Conclusions

The results of this research contribute to academic literature as to the best of our knowledge, academic findings regarding the success drivers of donation-based crowdfunding projects in Saudi Arabia are lacking, despite donation-based crowdfunding being the most prevalent type of crowdfunding in the GCC countries [7].

The objective of this research is to assess the role of the Ehsan platform in regulating charitable funding in Saudi Arabia, promoting social responsibility, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Understanding the motivations that drive donors to participate in donation-based crowdfunding platforms like Ehsan is essential for maintaining the platform's sustainability and continued impact. Ehsan's sustainability relies on the engagement and support of donors who contribute to its campaigns.

In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into donor motivations and preferences within the context of Ehsan campaigns, it is important to acknowledge the limitations and consider the recommendations for sustainability. Addressing these limitations and implementing the suggested recommendations can enhance the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the Ehsan platform.

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## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, R.A.; Data curation, W.A.; Formal analysis, W.A.; Funding acquisition, R.A.; Investigation, W.A.; Methodology, R.A.; Project administration, R.A.; Resources, R.A. and W.A.; Supervision, R.A.; Validation, R.A. and W.A.; Visualization, W.A.; Writing—original draft, W.A.; Writing—review and editing, R.A. and W.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Data Availability Statement

Data are publicly available on GitHub [29].

## Ethical Approval

The data was handled in compliance with privacy regulations and the protocols of this study were approved by the internal committee. All procedures were performed in accordance with the guidelines set forth by King Saud University.

## Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all the participants of the study.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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