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Research Article

The Nexus of Crowdfunding and Venture Creation: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic review explores how crowdfunding impacts entrepreneurial processes, business sustainability, and venture growth. By analyzing 19 SCOPUS-indexed studies, this review identifies crowdfunding's financial and non-financial benefits, including enhanced consumer insight, market exposure, and co-creation opportunities. Crowdfunding redefines stakeholder roles, fostering participatory ecosystems that enable innovation, strategic scaling, and resilience. Key findings emphasize the importance of stakeholder engagement and market validation while highlighting gaps in understanding long-term sustainability, cultural influences, and evolving backer-venture dynamics. These insights provide actionable strategies for entrepreneurs and researchers to harness crowdfunding's potential in venture creation.

Keywords: *Crowdfunding, Venture creation, Literature review*

Introduction

Crowdfunding has emerged as a transformative force in the entrepreneurial landscape, providing an alternative to traditional financing methods. Unlike venture capital, which often evaluates ventures based on fixed criteria, crowdfunding fosters an interactive ecosystem where stakeholders collaboratively shape business ideas and strategies (Belleflamme et al., 2014). As Ramsey et al. (2020) suggest, crowdfunding serves as an ecosystem facilitating resource exchange between stakeholders," enabling co-creation rather than mere judgment (Frydrych et al., 2014). This participatory dynamic redefines the roles of entrepreneurs, backers, and platforms, shifting the nature of exchange from transactional to relational.

Crowdfunding provides key non-financial benefits to entrepreneurs: consumer insight, market exposure, and a product development mechanism (Agrawal et al., 2011; Belleflame et al., 2014; Lehner et al., 2015; Mollick & Kuppuswamy, 2014). These benefits incentivize project owners to participate in crowdfunding and, more importantly, succeed (Agrawal et al., 2014). Nascent literature suggests other benefits: community development (Gooch et al., 2020; Vergara, 2017; Vergara & Vergara, 2023), entrepreneurial empowerment (Chan et al., 2020; Mahdiraji et al., 2023), and the

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exploitation of social capital (Troise et al., 2023) to gain outside funding (Alegre & Molekis, 2021; Roma et al., 2017; Vergara, 2017b; Vergara & Vergara, 2023) and to access knowledge systems (Troise et al., 2023). When these advantages compound with successful campaign outcomes, crowdfunding participation contributes to the growth and development of small firms and social enterprises (Eldridge et al., 2019), the development of their competitive advantages (Mahdiraji et al., 2023), and the legitimization of their operations (Maier et al., 2021; Vergara & Vergara, 2023).

Crowdfunding provides entrepreneurs access to resources needed for venture creation. It introduces an alternative venture creation process distinct from traditional models (Vergara, 2019). Bhave's (1994) model describes venture creation as an "iterative, nonlinear, feedback-driven, conceptual, and physical" process involving seven elements across four stages. Crowdfunding disrupts this sequence by changing how stakeholders interact, fundamentally altering product development, product exchange between firm and consumer, and, ultimately, the traditional venture creation process. It redefines consumer roles from mere buyers to co-producers and investors, integrating market feedback and funding earlier in the process (Vergara, 2019).

This systematic review is critical because it investigates how crowdfunding contributes to entrepreneurial value creation, business sustainability, and venture growth. By synthesizing findings from 19 SCOPUS-indexed studies, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of how crowdfunding supports venture creation, addressing critical themes like stakeholder engagement, market validation, and strategic scaling. The insights gained to advance the theoretical understanding of crowdfunding while offering practical applications for entrepreneurs seeking innovative funding solutions.

Methodology

This systematic review examines the intersection of crowdfunding and venture creation to identify how crowdfunding contributes to entrepreneurial processes, business sustainability, and long-term venture stability. The methodology comprises a structured search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and systematic analysis to ensure the rigor and relevance of the findings.

Search Strategy

The search was conducted using SCOPUS, a leading multidisciplinary database of peer-reviewed literature. SCOPUS was chosen because it indexes peer-reviewed journals that adhere to strict publishing and editorial guidelines. This ensures that the articles included are reliable and academically rigorous. It is one of the most significant abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature covering various disciplines. This makes it a rich resource for finding relevant studies across various fields and ensures that the literature review is based on high-quality, widely recognized research, strengthening their work's foundation and credibility.

The keywords "crowdfunding" and "venture creation" were applied to the Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields to retrieve a comprehensive set of studies addressing the topic—the initial search generated 31 papers encompassing various document types, disciplines, and contexts related to crowdfunding.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To refine the results, maintain focus on the research objectives, and mitigate subjective bias, the following criteria were applied:

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Document Type: Articles, Book Chapters, and Conference Papers.
2. Data Range: 2015-2024
3. Language: Full-text papers written in English.
4. Thematic Focus: Studies explicitly situating and focusing on crowdfunding in creating ventures, including its role in entrepreneurial processes, business development, and stakeholder dynamics.
5. Indexing: Publications indexed in SCOPUS to ensure peer-reviewed quality and academic relevance.

Exclusion Criteria:
1. Irrelevant Scope: Studies addressing crowdfunding in contexts unrelated to venture creation, such as purely philanthropic initiatives or non-business-related crowdfunding.
2. Insufficient Detail: Papers lacking substantial discussions on crowdfunding's impact on venture creation (e.g., brief mentions without analysis).
3. Non-English Texts: Papers written in languages other than English.

Final Sample Selection

From the initial SCOPUS-generated list, the search yielded 19 final studies that met the inclusion criteria after manual screening. These studies represent diverse perspectives on the connection between crowdfunding and venture creation, encompassing different crowdfunding models (e.g., equity, reward-based, donation) and contexts (e.g., sustainability ventures, SME growth, cultural influences).

Analytical Framework

The selected studies were analyzed using a structured framework to extract meaningful insights and draw connections across findings. The framework consisted of three interrelated approaches:
1. Thematic Analysis: This approach focused on identifying recurring themes across the studies, such as entrepreneurial value creation, stakeholder roles, business sustainability, and venture growth. The analysis uncovered patterns and central issues that characterize the relationship between crowdfunding and venture creation by grouping these themes.
2. Comparative Analysis: To highlight nuances in the findings, this step examined similarities and differences across geographic, cultural, and industry-specific contexts. This comparative perspective allowed for understanding how crowdfunding's impact varies depending on regional and sectoral dynamics, offering a richer interpretation of its role in different ecosystems.
3. Critical Synthesis: Finally, a synthesis was conducted to evaluate gaps and unanswered questions in the literature. This phase highlighted the current knowledge and identified areas where future research is needed, providing actionable insights for academics and practitioners alike.

Limitations of the Methodology

While this review adheres to a systematic approach, certain limitations should be acknowledged:
1. Database dependence. The reliance on SCOPUS excludes potentially relevant studies from other databases.
2. Subjectivity in screening. The selection process, while systematic, involved subjective judgments during the exclusion of irrelevant papers. However, the authors strictly complied with the selection criteria to ensure an unbiased and factual selection.
3. Narrow scope. The focus on crowdfunding's role in venture creation may limit generalizability to other areas of crowdfunding research. However, the scope of this review is intentionally restricted to SCOPUS-indexed articles to maintain feasibility and focus on high-quality sources within the available timeframe.

The review ensures that the selected studies offer robust and focused insights into the relationship between crowdfunding and venture creation, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical applications.

Primary Research Orientation

In this section, we offer a synthesis of key findings from reviewed literature. There are three primary research orientations: the choice to use crowdfunding by potential entrepreneurs, the unique nature of the crowdfunding exchange, and crowdfunding success and entrepreneurial venture creation. We chose these research orientations because they categorize literature based on where they situate the discussion of crowdfunding in the context of the venture creation process, as discussed in Vergara (2019).

1. Choosing Crowdfunding

Entrepreneurs choose crowdfunding as a strategic tool to achieve venture goals by evaluating how crowdfunding aligns with their capital, visibility, and stakeholder engagement needs. Insights from Bernardino and de Freitas Santos (2023), de Freitas Santos (2022), Leonelli et al. (2022), Meysken and Bird (2015), and Stevenson et al. (2022) explore the decision-making process and key factors influencing entrepreneur choice. Entrepreneurs consider benefits and weigh strategic fit with venture goals while examining this choice's regional context and cultural influences.

Financial capital remains a primary motivator, but crowdfunding also offers opportunities to leverage backer feedback, gain market insights, and build a loyal customer base. Crowdfunding provides financial backing for development and operational needs while generating market awareness and legitimacy. Entrepreneurs participate in crowdfunding to secure startup capital, bridge financing gaps, and fund future growth initiatives while also considering crowdfunding's ability to generate financial resources alongside non-monetary benefits such as market validation, visibility, and community building (Meyskens & Bird, 2015; Bernardino & de Freitas Santos, 2023). These align with previous conjectures on crowdfunding's key non-financial benefits of consumer insight, market exposure, and a product development mechanism (Agrawal et al., 2011; Belleflame et al., 2014; Lehner et al., 2015; Mollick & Kuppuswamy, 2014), which incentivizes crowdfunding participation and performance (Agrawal et al., 2014).

In equity crowdfunding, entrepreneurs may seek investors who can contribute expertise and networks, not just capital (Leonelli et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs in less-developed areas leverage crowdfunding to access global networks, overcoming regional constraints and fostering resilience (Leonelli et al., 2022). Crowdfunding facilitates entrepreneurial learning and enhances credibility, enabling ventures to attract follow-on funding or partnerships for scaling (Stevenson et al., 2022; Schenk, 2015). However, entrepreneurs should consider cultural and contextual alignment to influence backer participation (de Freitas Santos & Bernardino, 2022).

The discussion in the literature involves the subject of strategic fit for crowdfunding models or alignment with the venture type, indicating that crowdfunding is not a one-size-fits-all solution for all entrepreneurs. The choice may depend on the venture's perceived entrepreneurial value, the venture's development stage, or the characteristics of the entrepreneur. Meyskens and Bird (2015) posit that social ventures with high social value and low economic value should focus on donation crowdfunding, while those with both high social and economic value may benefit from debt crowdfunding. Furthermore, reward crowdfunding is suitable for ventures still proving their concept. Rewards-based crowdfunding allows entrepreneurs to validate ideas and refine products with early adopters, leveraging backer feedback to improve offerings (Schenk, 2015) and building a community that becomes brand advocates (Morland, 2017). Equity crowdfunding appeals to ventures with high economic value seeking substantial funding for their growth or strategic scaling (Meyskens & Bird, 2015; Leonelli et al., 2022; Stevenson et al., 2022). Stevenson et al. (2022), in particular, explore crowdfunding in the context of funding pecking order, proposing that there are strategic fund seekers who choose equity crowdfunding as a preferred funding method despite access to other funding methods. These fund seekers are drawn to the non-financial benefits of crowdfunding, including market validation, autonomy, demand-side complementary value, and community alignment. Their findings challenge the view that equity crowdfunding, in particular, is a last resort funding.

De Freitas Santos and Bernardino (2023) suggest cultural influences in crowdfunding choice, showing how entrepreneurs consider national culture and societal norms when adopting crowdfunding. Specific cultural dimensions positively influence crowdfunding knowledge (Bernardino & de Freitas Santos, 2022) and participation (de Freitas Santos & Bernardino, 2023). Crowdfunding perceptions also differ depending on regional development. Entrepreneurs in less-developed regions view equity crowdfunding as a strategic opportunity to overcome traditional financing gaps; in contrast, those in well-developed regions see it as an alternative to existing funding (Leonelli et al., 2022).

The studies by Grèzes et al. (2018), Morland (2017), and Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) enrich the discussion about how entrepreneurs choose crowdfunding to achieve their goals by offering specific contexts. Morland (2017) provides a business-specific case study, Grèzes et al. (2018) provide an industry-specific context, while Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) explore crowdfunding's contribution to Indigenous entrepreneurship.

Grèzes et al. (2018) emphasize the unique role of reward-based and donation-based crowdfunding in tourism ventures, aligning with crowdfunding as a financial and strategic tool. Their "crowdsourcing design model" highlights how entrepreneurs leverage the crowd for ideation, funding, and community engagement, reinforcing crowdfunding's valuable non-monetary benefits discussed in the literature. Similar to Morland (2017), Grèzes et al. (2018) stress the value of community-building, echoing Meyskens and Bird's (2015) emphasis on social value creation.

Morland's (2017) case study on Bedford Street Coffee Shop emphasizes entrepreneurial learning through crowdfunding, which aligns with Stevenson et al.'s (2022) insights into crowdfunding as a tool for entrepreneurial skill enhancement and market positioning. The study highlights the value of crowdfunding for fostering local customer loyalty, complementing Grèzes et al.'s (2018) focus on engaging niche communities.

Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) highlight the emancipatory potential of crowdfunding for Indigenous entrepreneurs, emphasizing cultural expression and socio-economic empowerment. This aligns with de Freitas Santos and Bernardino (2022), which examine cultural influences on crowdfunding adoption. Their typology of Indigenous crowdfunding campaigns (commercial, cultural, community, activist) complements Meyskens and Bird's (2015) framework by offering additional lenses for understanding the alignment of goals with crowdfunding models.

While some studies emphasize crowdfunding's scalability (Leonelli et al., 2022), Grèzes et al. (2018) focus on its applicability to niche industries like tourism, showing that scalability may not always be the primary goal. Instead, visibility and community engagement take precedence. On the other hand, Morland provides a micro-level perspective on crowdfunding, focusing on localized efforts and small business impacts. This contrasts with Leonelli et al.'s (2022) emphasis on regional disparities or Schenk's (2015) focus on innovative SMEs, offering an alternative lens for smaller, community-focused ventures. Parhankangas and Colbourne (2023) critique traditional venture funding structures by emphasizing entrepreneurship, highlighting crowdfunding as a tool for socio-cultural emancipation. This diverges from Schenk (2015), which focuses on crowdfunding's complementarity with traditional financing.

The studies broaden the understanding of crowdfunding as a flexible tool with the potential to address diverse entrepreneurial goals: financial (Leonelli et al., 2022; Stevenson et al., 2022), market testing and feedback (Meyskens & Bird, 2015; Morland, 2017), community building (Morland, 2017; Schenk, 2015), cultural and regional adaptation (Bernardino & de Freitas Santos, 2023; de Freitas Santos & Bernardino, 2022; Leonelli et al., 2022), and strategic positioning and scalability (Stevenson et al., 2022; Schenk, 2015). They highlight the importance of sector-specific and community-driven strategies (Grèzes et al., 2018; Morland, 2017) and the role of culture (Bernardino & de Freitas Santos, 2023; de Freitas Santos & Bernardino, 2022), regional dynamics (Leonelli et al., 2022) and emancipation (Parhankangas & Colbourne, 2023) in shaping crowdfunding. While aligned with the central premise that crowdfunding offers financial and strategic benefits, these studies also illustrate its adaptability to unique contexts and objectives, enriching the overall narrative surrounding the choice to participate in crowdfunding. Table 1 provides a summary of the reviewed literature.

Table 1. Literature Matrix: Crowdfunding Entrepreneurial Choice

Authors	Methodology	Findings
Bernardino and de Freitas Santos (2022)	Quantitative research approach using an online survey distributed to higher education students across the four countries. Data was analyzed using statistical methods like factor analysis and correlation tests.	Identifies cultural characteristics based on Hoftede's cultural dimensions theory that lead to high levels of crowdfunding knowledge
De Freitas Santos and Bernardino (2023)	Quantitative cross-country regression analysis using archival data from the global Alternative Finance Market Benchmarking Report	Identifies cultural characteristics based on Hoftede's cultural dimensions theory that lead to high levels of crowdfunding activity
Grèzes, Schegg, and Perruchoud (2018)	Mixed-method approach combining a literature review, qualitative interviews with project leaders, and quantitative analysis of Swiss crowdfunding projects conducted between 2010-2016	Crowdfunding provides both financial and non-financial benefits such as visibility, community building, and market validation.
Leonelli, Marcello, and Motresor (2022)	Qualitative approach utilizing case studies and interviews with entrepreneurs from different regions in Italy	Entrepreneurs in less-developed regions view equity crowdfunding as a strategic opportunity to overcome traditional financing gaps, while those in well-developed regions see it more as an alternative to existing funding.
Meyskens and Bird (2015)	Conceptual analysis with illustrative case examples	Identifies the crowdfunding model suitable for specific social and economic venture creation goals
Morland (2017)	Qualitative case study using a narrative and descriptive approach based on the entrepreneur's experiences and insights, supplemented by background research on the specialty coffee industry	Crowdfunding served not only as a financial resource but also as a community-building tool, engaging locals and coffee enthusiasts who became brand advocates for the new venture.
Parhankangas and Colbourne (2018)	Qualitative abductive non-participatory netnography using archival analysis of over 1,300 Indigenous campaigns	Develops a typology of Indigenous crowdfunding campaigns based on four main campaign types, each type representing distinct objectives, from raising economic capital to advocating for Indigenous rights and cultural preservation.
Schenk (2015)	Theoretical comparative study of extant literature	Crowdfunding offers unique advantages, such as community engagement, reduced reliance on traditional financial institutions, and early customer feedback, but has limitations to raising capital compared to institutional funding.

Authors	Methodology	Findings
Stevenson, McMahon, Letwin, and Ciuchta (2022)	Qualitative approach using an inductive multiple-case study design	identifies two types of fund-seekers: necessity fund-seekers, who use equity crowdfunding (ECF) as a last resort, and strategic fund-seekers, who choose ECF as a preferred funding method despite access to other sources.

2. Unique Nature of Crowdfunding Exchange

Crowdfunding profoundly affects the nature of exchange in venture creation by shifting it from a transactional economic model to a more social, participatory, and relational model. This transformation impacts the roles of stakeholders and the risks they face, as highlighted in Eiteneyer et al. (2019), Maciel and Weinberger (2024), Ndou et al. (2023), Ramsey et al. (2020), Sabia et al. (2022), and Boutillier (2020).

Crowdfunding transforms venture creation into a social and participatory process, blending market exchange with community-driven collaboration through social capital. Maciel and Weinberger (2024) propose crowdfunding as a market-fostering gift system. This system posits that reward-based crowdfunding acts as a social contract where consumers support market innovations without financial return, emphasizing community and support over profit, reshaping the central process of capitalism, and developing new market offerings. Backers' contributions are not purely transactional but acts of participation and validation. Eiteneyer et al. (2019) emphasize the role of social capital within crowdfunding platforms, where ventures leverage community ties to co-create innovative products. Sabia et al. (2022) describe the role of FOMO (fear of missing out) in creating emotional bonds between backers and entrepreneurs, further solidifying the social dimension of crowdfunding.

Notably, crowdfunding redefines the roles of entrepreneurs, backers, and platforms, creating new dynamics in the exchange. Ndou et al. (2023) find that entrepreneurs become active co-creation facilitators, engaging backers as financiers and co-creators who offer feedback, ideas, and market validation. Ramsey et al. (2020) highlight that entrepreneurs must adopt storytelling and relational skills to cultivate trust and enthusiasm among backers. On the other hand, backers evolve from passive consumers to active participants who seek social engagement, early access to products, and alignment with venture values (Maciel & Weinberger, 2024; Sabia et al., 2022). According to Eiteneyer et al. (2019), backers' roles expand to include contributing expertise and forming a part of the venture's extended innovation team.

Platforms act as mediators, facilitating trust and reciprocity between backers and entrepreneurs. They provide the infrastructure for interaction, reducing information asymmetry and transaction costs (Boutillier, 2020; Ndou et al., 2023). Maciel and Weinberger (2024) reimagine platforms as myth makers, reconceiving economic consumers who jointly exert agency over product innovation and offerings to distinguish exchanges beyond market transactions.

The shift to a social exchange model in crowdfunding creates unique risks for stakeholders. For entrepreneurs, crowdfunding reduces dependency on traditional financing but increases exposure to public scrutiny and the risk of unmet expectations from backers (Eiteneyer et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs face reputational risks if campaigns fail to meet promises, as backers' perceptions heavily influence future funding opportunities (Sabia et al., 2022). The shift in roles particularly increases the risks faced by consumers or backers. Ramsey et al. (2020) note that backers face higher risks due to limited formal investor protections, especially in equity crowdfunding. Backers also risk disappointment if ventures fail to deliver promised rewards or outcomes, exacerbated by the emotional investment encouraged by the social model (Maciel & Weinberger, 2024). Platforms face operational risks in maintaining trust and enforcing accountability among entrepreneurs and backers (Ndou et al., 2023).

Eiteneyer et al. (2019), Maciel and Weinberger (2024), Ndou et al. (2023), Ramsey et al. (2020), and Sabia et al. (2022) provide complementary yet occasionally divergent perspectives on the nature of exchange in crowdfunding. Most literature agrees that crowdfunding transforms traditional financial exchanges into social exchanges, emphasizing trust, collaboration, and community as pivotal in the framework.

Maciel and Weinberger (2024) see backers acting out of prosocial motivations, aligning with Eiteneyer et al.'s (2019) conjecture on the role of social capital in facilitating collaborative innovation. In contrast, Sabia et al. (2022) highlight backers' self-interested behaviors, such as leveraging emotional incentives like FOMO to gain exclusive access or prestige.

Most literature also agrees on the dual financial and non-financial benefits of crowdfunding. Ramsey et al. (2020) and Ndou et al. (2023) emphasize how crowdfunding simultaneously provides financial resources and strategic benefits like market validation and community support. The shared understanding is that crowdfunding is about raising capital and forging relationships that generate long-term value for ventures. Most authors emphasize the central role of platforms in enabling efficient exchanges. Eiteneyer et al. (2019) and Ndou et al. (2023) focus on how digital platforms facilitate trust-building and knowledge exchange among stakeholders, echoing the value of social ties (Boutillier, 2020). This mechanism reduces risks through transparency and engagement (Ndou et al., 2023), yet Eiteneyer et al. (2019) and Sabia et al. (2022) argue that the participatory nature of crowdfunding introduces risks, such as reputational damage for ventures if backers' expectations. Backers face project failure, risk of loss in non-financial crowdfunding, and risk of default in financial crowdfunding (Ramsey et al., 2020).

Eiteneyer et al. (2019) emphasize backers' active roles as co-creators and collaborators, extending beyond financial contributions. Maciel and Weinberger (2024) and Sabia et al. (2022), on the other hand, focus more on the symbolic and emotional aspects of backer involvement, with limited emphasis on technical collaboration. Ramsey et al. (2020) suggest that backer involvement in equity crowdfunding is often less personal and more transactional than reward-based models.

Crowdfunding transforms venture creation into a social, participatory exchange that reshapes the roles of entrepreneurs, backers, and platforms. While fostering community, collaboration, and innovation, it introduces new dimensions of risk, requiring stakeholders to navigate challenges related to trust, accountability, and engagement. This evolution highlights the need for clear strategies to manage the interplay of economic and social dynamics in crowdfunding ecosystems. The studies collectively underscore the complexity of the exchange dynamics in crowdfunding. While they align on the transformative, participatory, and hybrid nature of crowdfunding, they diverge in their views on stakeholder motivations, risk management, and the depth of backer engagement. This highlights the multifaceted and evolving nature of crowdfunding, influenced by context, platform type, and the stakeholders involved. Table 2 provides a summary of the reviewed literature.

Table 2. Literature Matrix: Nature of Crowdfunding Exchange

Authors	Methodology	Findings
Boutillier (2020)	Literature review	Emphasizes the critical role of trust in the entrepreneur-banker relationship, highlighting that despite changes in capitalism, these trust dynamics remain essential for successful entrepreneurial ventures

Authors	Methodology	Findings
Eiteneyer, Bendig, and Brettel (2019)	Structural equation modeling on a unique dataset that combines primary survey and secondary platform data from 710 crowdfunding ventures	Results provide a nuanced picture of how social capital dimensions are associated with backers as an information source and as codevelopers and, indirectly, with new product innovativeness
Maciel and Weinberger (2024)	Qualitative grounded theory approach using dataset from in-depth interviews	Crowdfunding as a market-fostering gift system, a social contract that entices consumers to fund the creation and enhancement of market offerings by mobilizing the logic and practices of gift-giving
Ndou, Scorrano, Mele, and Stefanizzi (2023)	Empirical analysis of 47 Italian equity crowdfunding campaigns	Identifies risk indicators for assessing investment opportunities in equity crowdfunding campaigns, with a focus on reducing information asymmetry for non-professional investors
Ramsey, Gallagher, Kincaid, and Loane (2020)	Qualitative analytical methodology using dataset from in-depth interviews	While crowdfunding presents opportunities for entrepreneurs to access capital, it also poses risks such as project failure and misalignment of expectations among stakeholders
Sabia, Bell, and Bozward (2022)	Qualitative research approach, using thematic analysis based on interviews with 15 crowd investors across Europe and North America	Fear of missing out (FOMO) influences crowd investors' decisions to engage in equity crowdfunding

3. Crowdfunding Success and Entrepreneurial Venture Creation

Extant literature discussed in Bento et al. (2019), Grau et al. (2021), Klepikova (2022), and Nespoli et al. (2022) provide a nuanced understanding of post-campaign success and venture stability in crowdfunding. These studies examine how success is defined, its contextualization in crowdfunding campaigns and post-campaign performance, and the critical factors influencing long-term venture stability. They also converge on the idea that crowdfunding fosters entrepreneurial value creation, supports business sustainability, and enables the growth and development of SMEs through a combination of financial, social, and strategic benefits.

While crowdfunding success is defined primarily in terms of meeting or exceeding funding goals during the campaign, Bento et al. (2019) extend this definition by including visibility and community engagement achieved during the campaign, which is pivotal for sustainability-oriented ventures. Nespoli et al. (2022) focus on the entrepreneurial value creation, where success includes funding and strategic outcomes like enhanced innovation capabilities, improved visibility, and strengthened investor relations. Klepikova (2022) defines success as the ability to sustain and scale ventures post-campaign, especially in regional contexts like the Irkutsk region, where entrepreneurial stability is linked to leveraging local resources and networks.

Grau et al. (2021) situate success within the crowdfunding ecosystem, highlighting how platform-specific dynamics and marketing strategies determine whether campaigns meet their targets. Bento et al. (2019) focus on sustainability-oriented ventures, showing how campaigns foster community-driven goals aligned with environmental and social missions. Nespoli et al. (2022) and Klepikova (2022) emphasize that campaign success is a starting point for venture stability. They discuss how ventures leverage funds to build dynamic capabilities and foster innovation, ensuring sustained growth in challenging markets or crises.

Crowdfunding drives value creation for entrepreneurs by leveraging both tangible and intangible resources. Grau et al., 2021 posit that value creation occurs through campaign success, which validates product-market fit, engages target audiences and builds brand visibility. They also suggest that entrepreneurs benefit from increased consumer feedback, enhancing product design and market strategies. On the other hand, Nespoli et al. (2022) focus on entrepreneurial value creation, highlighting how crowdfunding enables SMEs to develop dynamic capabilities like innovation, marketing, and strategic networking. These capabilities transform financial resources into broader organizational competencies. Klepikova (2022) sees value creation tied to regional entrepreneurial ecosystems. Crowdfunding supports localized SMEs by connecting them with communities that value their products and services, fostering regional innovation and collaboration. Bento et al. (2019) suggest that crowdfunding facilitates the creation of environmental and social value for sustainability-oriented ventures. Backer involvement aligns with entrepreneurs' goals to achieve dual financial and societal outcomes, contributing to long-term impact.

Literature also suggests that crowdfunding is instrumental in promoting sustainability by addressing resource constraints and fostering resilience. Entrepreneurs achieve sustainability by testing and validating their ideas in a risk-reduced environment. Successful campaigns provide the capital needed to maintain operations while demonstrating market potential. Nespoli et al. (2022) highlight how crowdfunding builds non-monetary value, such as visibility and customer relationships, essential for navigating economic uncertainty. This stability allows SMEs to focus on growth-oriented activities. Klepikova (2022) suggests that SMEs leverage crowdfunding to build sustainable regional ecosystems, utilizing local networks and infrastructures like coworking spaces and technoparks. Sustainability is achieved through collaborative efforts and shared community goals. Finally, Bento et al. (2019) submit that crowdfunding is a financial mechanism and a tool for promoting transparency and accountability for sustainability ventures. Backers' involvement ensures entrepreneurs stay aligned with their environmental and social missions.

Crowdfunding serves as launchpads for SME growth by addressing traditional financing barriers and providing opportunities for scaling. Campaigns allow SMEs to overcome funding gaps and establish themselves in competitive markets (Grau et al., 2021). Successful crowdfunding enhances their credibility, attracting further investment or partnerships. Crowdfunding may enhance its dynamic innovation, marketing, and team development capabilities that support long-term growth. Klepikova (2022) emphasizes regional development, where crowdfunding acts as a democratizing force, enabling SMEs in less-developed areas to access global markets and resources. Crowdfunding supports scaling sustainability ventures by building loyal communities of early adopters who advocate for the business, facilitating market expansion and deeper customer engagement.

These studies illustrate crowdfunding's multifaceted role in empowering entrepreneurs and SMEs by providing capital, fostering innovation, building strong networks, and promoting sustainability; crowdfunding transforms resource-constrained ventures into resilient and growth-oriented businesses, positioning crowdfunding as a critical tool for achieving long-term entrepreneurial and societal value. Table 3 provides a summary of the reviewed literature.

Table 3. Literature Matrix: Crowdfunding Entrepreneurial Venture Creation

Authors	Methodology	Findings
Bento, Gianfrate, and Thoni (2019)	Quantitative analysis using a dataset of 869 campaigns on Kickstarter, examining factors such as funding goals, sustainability indicators, and team composition through regression models	Sustainability-oriented ventures can leverage crowdfunding to achieve social and financial goals, highlighting gender diversity as a critical factor in success
Grau, Schulz, Bendig, and Brettel (2021)	Quantitative approach	Professional advisor support and technical support is positively related with venture survival
Klepikova (2022)	Qualitative approach with descriptive analysis based on secondary data, reports, and regional statistical information on entrepreneurship and economic development	Innovative entrepreneurship, supported by government grants and regional infrastructure (e.g., technoparks and coworking spaces), is crucial for sustainable development in the Irkutsk region.
Nespoli, Kozan, Scuotto, and Del Giudice (2022)	Qualitative case study approach, using interviews with Aimage's CEO and an external crowdfunding consultant to analyze the stages of value creation	Equity crowdfunding not only provided Aimage with capital but also enhanced its dynamic capabilities in innovation, marketing, and team development

4. Key Findings

The existing body of literature highlights crowdfunding as a transformative tool for venture creation by offering distinct financial, social, and strategic advantages. These advantages offer a path for SMEs toward business sustainability and growth. The unique crowdfunding dynamic also shifts stakeholders' roles, which fosters a participatory ecosystem and alters risks faced by stakeholders.

Entrepreneurial value creation. Crowdfunding facilitates the development of entrepreneurial capabilities such as innovation, market validation, customer engagement, and community building (Bento et al., 2019; Eiteneyer et al., 2019; Grau et al., 2021; Grèzes et al., 2018; Meyskens & Bird, 2015; Morland, 2017; Nespoli et al., 2022; Sabia et al., 2022; Schenk, 2015; Stevenson et al., 2022).

Business sustainability and growth. Crowdfunding provides financial and non-monetary resources (e.g., information, visibility, and trust) essential for sustainable growth (Eiteneyer et al., 2019; Grau et al., 2021; Grèzes et al., 2018; Klepikova, 2022; Leonelli et al., 2022; Maciel & Weinberger, 2024; Meyskens & Bird, 2015; Morland, 2017; Nespoli et al., 2022; Parhankangas & Colbourne, 2023; Ramsey et al., 2020; Schenk, 2015; Stevenson et al., 2022).

Shifts in stakeholder roles. Crowdfunding redefines the roles of all stakeholders: entrepreneurs, backers, and intermediaries/platforms, fostering a participatory ecosystem where backers contribute as consumers, advocates, collaborators, information sources, and investors (Morland, 2017; Parhankangas & Colbourne, 2023; Sabia et al., 2022; Schenk, 2015). These shifts in the roles and dynamics redefine the risks faced by stakeholders (Eiteneyer et al., 2019; Maciel & Weinberger, 2024; Ndou et al., 2023; Ramsey et al., 2020; Sabia et al., 2022).

Sector-specific insights. Research explores how crowdfunding works in various contexts, including sustainability ventures (Bento et al., 2019), regional development (Klepikova, 2022), cultural characteristics (Bernardino & de Freitas Santos, 2022; de Freitas Santos & Bernardino, 2023), and social impact projects (Parhankangas & Colbourne, 2023).

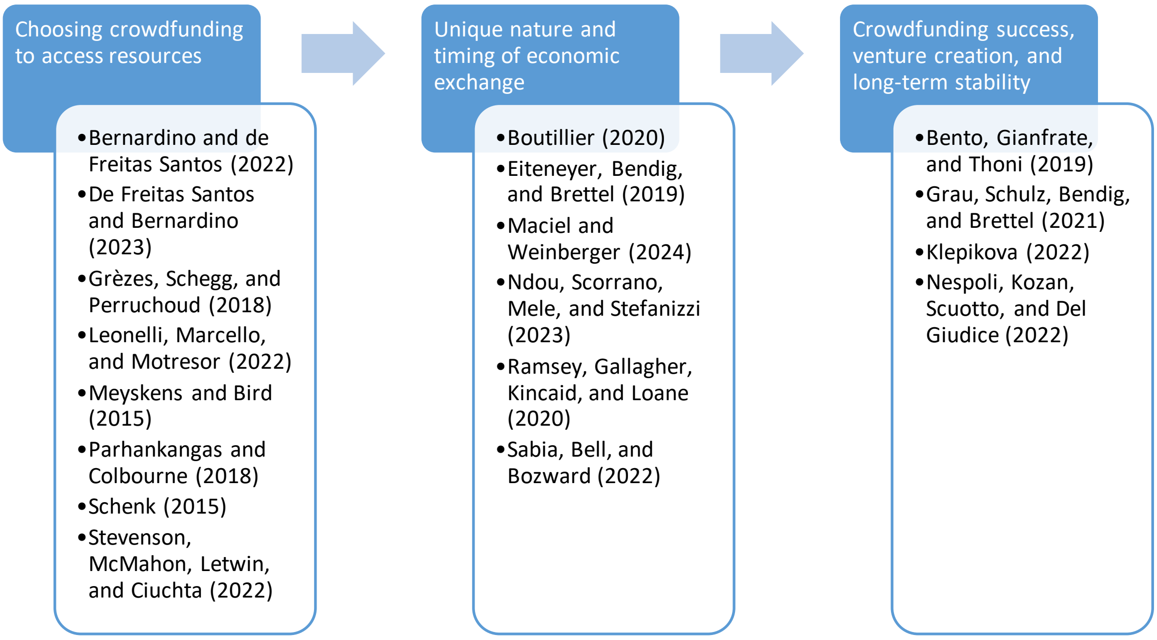

Figure 1. Literature Map

Future Directions

1. Post-Campaign Long-Term Impact

Despite its extensive coverage, many gaps remain, particularly in venture creation. While some studies address post-campaign success, more research is needed to understand the long-term sustainability and stability of ventures funded through crowdfunding. For example, how do ventures maintain relationships with backers after the campaign ends?

Existing literature (e.g., Grau et al., 2021; Sabia et al., 2022) primarily focuses on initial backer engagement. Questions remain about the evolution of backer involvement and how it impacts product development and market performance.

Examine how ventures transition from crowdfunding to traditional funding mechanisms or strategic partnerships for scaling.

2. Cross-Cultural and Regional Variations

While de Freitas and Bernardino (2022) examine cultural influences, more nuanced analyses are needed to explore how crowdfunding adoption and effectiveness differ across specific cultural and regional contexts.

Explore how crowdfunding can better serve underrepresented entrepreneurs, such as those in marginalized communities or non-traditional sectors.

Assess how crowdfunding platforms balance global outreach with local community-building efforts and how this impacts venture creation across geographies.

3. Risks and Ethical Considerations

There is limited understanding of the risks for backers and entrepreneurs, including financial failures, unmet expectations, and fraud. Research could explore how platforms can balance innovation with accountability,

Investigate how emerging technologies like blockchain and AI transform crowdfunding platforms and influence venture creation, including decentralized financing models.

4. Metrics Beyond Campaign and Financial Success

While financial targets are widely used as metrics for success, more attention should be given to social and environmental outcomes, especially for sustainability ventures.

Conclusion

This systematic review demonstrates that crowdfunding is vital for venture creation, offering financial resources and fostering a participatory ecosystem that drives innovation and sustainability. Crowdfunding facilitates entrepreneurial value creation by engaging stakeholders in co-creation processes, enhancing visibility, and building social capital. It also provides a strategic platform for scaling ventures and bridging financing gaps, particularly for SMEs and regional entrepreneurs.

Despite its benefits, this review identifies several gaps in the literature, including the need for more nuanced analyses of post-campaign sustainability, the evolving roles of stakeholders, and the influence of cultural and regional contexts. Future research should explore these areas, addressing how ventures maintain relationships with backers and adapt crowdfunding strategies to diverse ecosystems.

Crowdfunding's unique combination of financial and non-financial benefits underscores its transformative potential in venture creation. By leveraging these insights, entrepreneurs and scholars can further explore crowdfunding's role in shaping innovative and sustainable business practices.

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