

Bibliometric Mapping of Crowdfunding and Social Entrepreneurship in the MENA Region: Co-occurrence and Co-citation Analysis

Cartographie bibliométrique du crowdfunding et de l'entrepreneuriat social dans la région MENA : Analyse des cooccurrences et des co-citations

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Keywords: Social entrepreneurship, crowdfunding, bibliometric analysis, co-occurrence, co-citation, MENA region.</p> <p>JEL : L31, L26, G23, C18.</p>	<p>This article proposes an in-depth bibliometric analysis of crowdfunding and social entrepreneurship in the MENA region, using the VOSviewer tool to explore the evolution of these concepts over the past decade. The aim is to comprehensively map the academic landscape through the examination of co-occurrence and co-citation data. Leveraging the Scopus and Web of Science databases, we analyzed scientific literature covering the period from 2015 to 2024, selecting 58 documents relevant to this study. The results highlight two main axes structuring the research: financial and motivational mechanisms, and the analysis of academic support structures. The study also identifies reference authors such as <i>Mollick</i> and <i>Lehner</i>, who stand out for their influential contribution to the field. This research provides a structured and rich view of academic contributions in the MENA region, and offers a solid foundation for researchers and policy-makers wishing to strengthen social entrepreneurship through crowdfunding.</p>
Informations sur l'article	Résumé
<p>Mots-Clés : Entrepreneuriat social, crowdfunding, analyse bibliométrique, co-occurrence, co-citation, région MENA.</p> <p>JEL : L31, L26, G23, C18.</p>	<p>Cet article propose une analyse bibliométrique approfondie du crowdfunding et de l'entrepreneuriat social dans la région MENA, en s'appuyant sur l'outil VOSviewer pour explorer l'évolution de ces concepts au cours de la dernière décennie. L'objectif est de cartographier de manière exhaustive le paysage académique grâce à l'examen des données de co-occurrence et de co-citation. En exploitant les bases de données Scopus et Web of Science, nous avons analysé la littérature scientifique couvrant la période de 2015 à 2024, sélectionnant 58 documents pertinents pour cette étude. Les résultats mettent en lumière deux axes principaux structurant la recherche : les mécanismes financiers et motivationnels, ainsi que l'analyse des structures de soutien académique. L'étude identifie également des auteurs de référence tels que <i>Mollick</i> et <i>Lehner</i>, qui se distinguent par leur contribution influente au domaine. Cette recherche fournit une vision structurée et riche des contributions académiques dans la région MENA et offre un socle solide aux chercheurs et décideurs désireux de renforcer l'entrepreneuriat social par le biais du crowdfunding.</p>

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Introduction

In the light of growing societal and economic challenges, social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding have emerged as innovative solutions, particularly in developing countries (Lehner, 2013). By reconciling a social mission with economic viability, social entrepreneurship offers an alternative to traditional development models (Asli & El Idrissi Slitine, 2013). For its part, crowdfunding, by mobilizing collective contributions via online platforms, redefines modes of financing by diversifying sources and promoting inclusion (Bessière & Stéphany, 2017).

In the MENA region, these two concepts are playing a growing role in meeting local and global needs. Here, social entrepreneurship is seen as an effective strategy for tackling structural challenges, while crowdfunding offers entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to raise funds while respecting their societal values (Lehner, 2013).

However, despite their obvious potential, research on these two themes remains relatively recent and fragmented in the MENA region (Meyskens & Bird, 2015). This study aims to fill this gap by offering an in-depth bibliometric analysis of scientific publications on crowdfunding and social entrepreneurship in this region. Through an exploration of co-occurrence and co-citation data, we map the academic landscape, identify key contributions and highlight emerging trends.

This work makes a significant contribution by highlighting the links between these two concepts and their implications for the socio-economic development of MENA countries. It also provides a valuable basis for researchers, policymakers and practitioners wishing to deepen their understanding and promote innovative initiatives in this field (Calic & Mosakowski, 2016).

The study is organized as follows: the practices of social entrepreneurship (SE) and crowdfunding (CF) are defined in section 2. The research data, methods and software used to generate these results are presented and discussed in Section 3. Section 4 presents the results and analysis, namely descriptive statistics of the dataset, keyword co-occurrence over time and analysis of article co-citation in this field. Section 5 discusses the results. Conclusions, limitations and suggestions for further study are presented in the final section.

1. Literature review.

a. Social entrepreneurship:

In recent years, social entrepreneurship has emerged as a key player in the response to global societal and environmental challenges. At the intersection of social mission and economic viability, it is attracting the attention of researchers, policy-makers and investors, testifying to a shift in the way businesses can contribute to the common good. Although its founding principles are not new, the rise of social entrepreneurship reflects a growing awareness of the limits of traditional development models, prompting the exploration of more inclusive and innovative approaches to meeting pressing needs.

Social entrepreneurship first emerged in Italy in the late 1980s, before spreading to the rest of Europe in the second half of the 1990s, in tandem with the rise of social and environmental crises. In the United States, this phenomenon dates back to the late 1990s, supported by local players such as Bill Drayton, founder of Ashoka, and major universities (Harvard, Columbia, Yale), which mobilized by organizing high-level conferences and new university programs on the subject. By the late 1990s, social entrepreneurship had firmly entered the academic sphere,

sparkling increasing interest among researchers and leading to the publication of numerous scholarly articles (Janssen et al., 2013).

According to (Asli & El Idrissi Slitine, 2013), this concept is defined as “... any private initiative, driven by one or more people militating for change, combining economic efficiency and positive societal impacts, innovating in several ways, distributing few profits and reinvesting in the societal mission” (our translation).

For Zahra, Gedajlovic, Neubaum and Shulman, social entrepreneurship concerns the activities and processes undertaken to uncover, define and exploit opportunities to increase social wealth through the creation of new enterprises or the innovative management of existing organizations (S. A. Zahra et al., 2009). Thus, social entrepreneurship enterprises are organizations whose aim is to connect their social mission with entrepreneurial action (Oster et al., 2004; Tracey & Phillips, 2007).

Lehner (2013), for his part, outlines the contours of SE: “all kinds of ventures that have a social or environmental mission as their primal goal, which aim to be financially and legally independent and strive to become self-sustainable by means of the market.” With this definition, he highlights three elements that characterize a social enterprise: social mission, financial independence and self-sufficiency through the means of the market.

This abundance of ideas highlights the richness and complexity of social entrepreneurship. Constantly evolving in response to societal needs and shifting local and global economic dynamics, social entrepreneurship remains a dynamic field. However, despite its growing relevance and significant scientific contributions over the past three decades, the field continues to grapple with a critical challenge: the absence of a consensual definition and a clear, unified conceptual framework (S. Zahra et al., 2006).

b. Crowdfunding:

Crowdfunding, or participatory financing, involves soliciting a large number of people to contribute to a project, often via online platforms, with relatively small individual contributions. Rather than turning to a few major investors, this model is based on the idea that the accumulation of small sums can lead to significant amounts. According to (Lehner & Nicholls, 2017), crowdfunding involves appealing to a broad audience, with the aim of raising small individual contributions that, put together, can generate substantial amounts. Unlike traditional financing methods where a few investors contribute large sums, crowdfunding favors the idea of diversifying funding sources by relying on the participation of many individuals. This model has the advantage of making projects accessible to a wider community, thus encouraging a greater diversity of funding sources.

The social and collaborative aspect is at the heart of crowdfunding, a point highlighted by Bessière & Stéphanie (2017), who distinguish two main axes: the importance of social networks and crowd involvement. Social media make it possible to disseminate information rapidly to a wide audience, thereby broadening access to funding to a more diverse and global audience (Belleflamme et al., 2010). At the same time, this financing relies on the personal commitment of contributors, often motivated by social or altruistic reasons. Whether through donations, rewards, equity investments or loans, the willingness to support a project is frequently fueled by a desire to participate in a cause that goes beyond a simple financial return (Bessière & Stéphanie, 2017). This model thus embodies a form of collective solidarity where individual involvement creates a dynamic of mutual support.

c. Crowdfunding serving social entrepreneurship:

Crowdfunding has become a powerful tool for supporting social entrepreneurship, enabling social entrepreneurs to raise funds without going through traditional investors. It is particularly well suited to social entrepreneurship, as it enables project leaders to fund initiatives while remaining true to their societal values. Lehner (2013) points out that contributors are above all attracted by the ideologies and social missions carried by these projects, rather than by the potential financial gains. This orientation represents a major opportunity for social enterprises, which seek both social impact and financial autonomy. By enabling social entrepreneurs to mobilize resources while affirming their commitment to society, crowdfunding perfectly meets the specific needs of this sector.

Crowdfunding platforms also provide social projects with international visibility, particularly useful for initiatives that address issues with a global reach. Social entrepreneurs, often committed to global environmental and humanitarian issues, can thus mobilize an international community that shares their values. According to Lehner (2013), this global dimension is an asset for social entrepreneurs, enabling them to rally support from diverse backgrounds, all driven by the desire to contribute to a common cause, whether ecological, educational or humanitarian.

In addition to direct funding, crowdfunding enhances the credibility and legitimacy of social projects in the eyes of traditional financial institutions (Meyskens & Bird, 2015). As Majid & Neysen (2017) mention, the success of a crowdfunding campaign serves as validation in the eyes of banks or other lending institutions, increasing entrepreneurs' chances of accessing other sources of funding. This "social validation" effect enables social enterprises to build up an image of seriousness and feasibility, creating leverage to further develop their project. In this way, crowdfunding serves as a springboard to other types of financing for social entrepreneurs.

Suárez & Hwang (2013) observe that social enterprises are more likely to receive donations compared to commercial entrepreneurs. This explains why social entrepreneurs are particularly attracted to crowdfunding as a funding method. Indeed, according to Calic & Mosakowski (2016), crowdfunding campaigns run by entrepreneurs with a societal mission have a higher success rate than those with a purely commercial focus.

Furthermore, crowdfunding amplifies the community dimension specific to social entrepreneurship. This funding approach, based on collective support, is perceived as a democratic process where the crowd itself selects the projects to be supported, a phenomenon Lehner (2014) describes as "crowd-endorsement." This collective, visible support acts as a positive signal to potential new contributors and reinforces the legitimacy of social entrepreneurs. Crowd validation adds a dimension of trust and commitment to the project, contributing to its lasting success.

2. Research methodology.

a. Study Area:

This article focuses on analyzing the scientific production of the crowdfunding method in articles on social entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

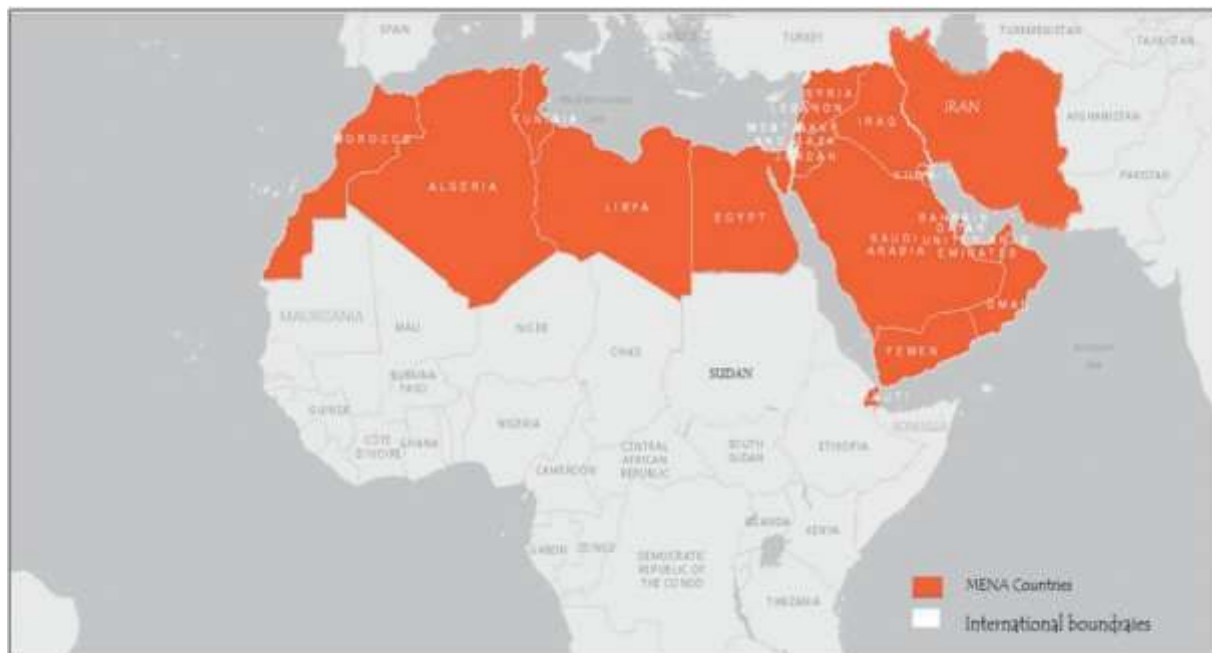
The MENA region refers to a group of countries located between North Africa and West Asia, characterized by complex cultural, economic and geopolitical ties. Although there is no universal

definition, it generally includes 19 countries, from Morocco in the west to Iran in the east, and from Sudan in the south to the Gulf states in the north.

In this article, we adopt the World Bank definition, including the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen, as well as the West Bank and Gaza (Palestine) (Figure 1).

MENA is distinguished by its ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, including Arab, Persian, Berber and Kurdish populations, and sharing a common influence of Islam in societal dynamics.

Figure 1: Study area, MENA region countries according to the World Bank definition



Source: (Devkota et al., 2022).

b. Data Collection and Research Criteria:

For this study, the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases were exploited to carry out a targeted bibliometric analysis of publications relating to social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding in the MENA region. This approach aims to explore previous research linking these two themes, with a view to identifying key academic trends and contributions in this field.

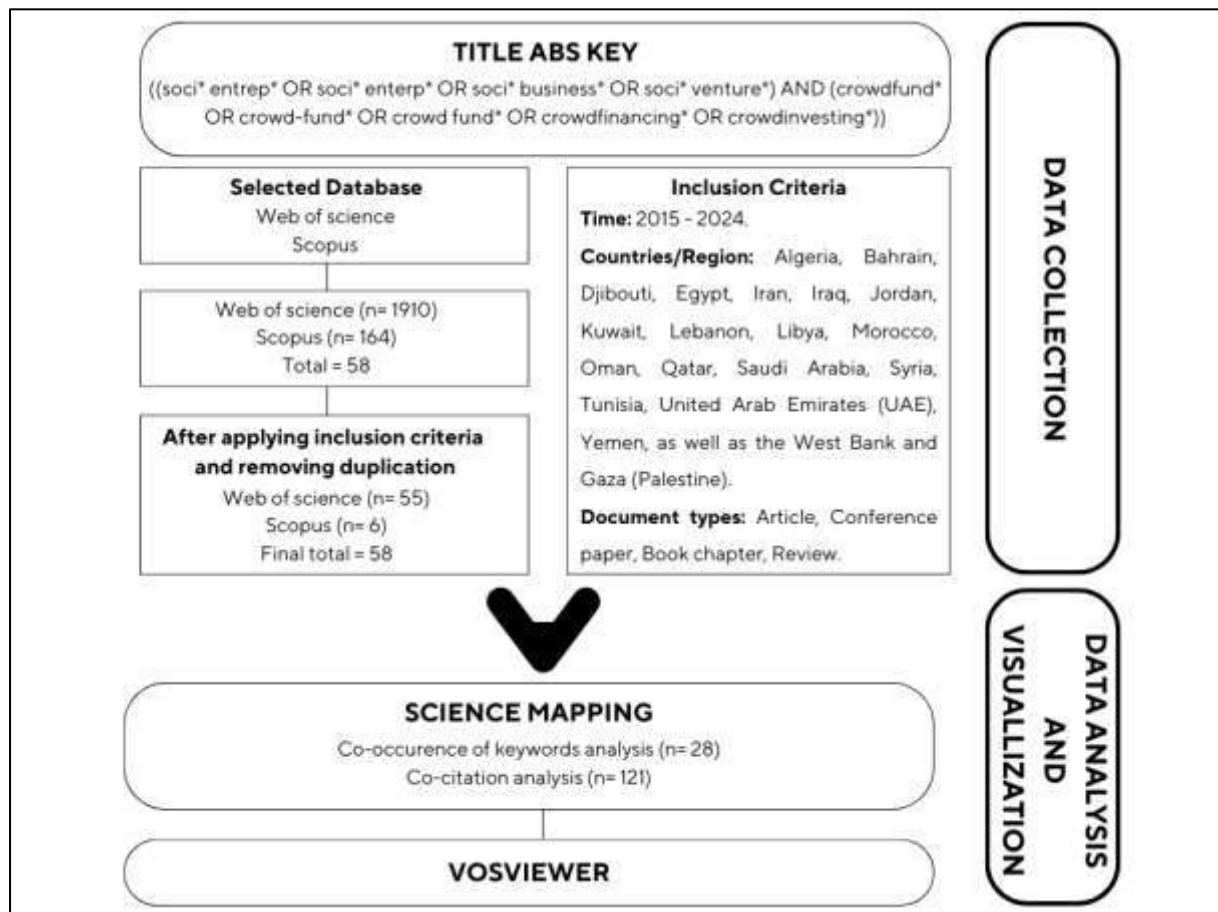
The selection of WoS and Scopus databases is based on their rigor and the quality of their sources, ensuring that studies come from reputable journals where results have undergone careful scientific evaluation. To establish a representative corpus, we employed an advanced search query built around the following keywords: (soci* entrep* OR soci* enterp* OR soci* business* OR soci* venture*) AND (crowdfund* OR crowd-fund* OR crowd fund* OR crowdfinancing* OR crowdinvesting*). This collection covers the period from January 2015 to September 2024, with precise filtering criteria applied to publication titles, keywords and abstracts (Table 1).

Table 1: Criteria for collecting data

Keywords Search	((soci* entrep* OR soci* enterp* OR soci* business* OR soci* venture*) AND (crowdfund* OR crowd-fund* OR crowd fund* OR crowdfunding* OR crowdinvesting*))
Time Span	1 January 2015 to September 2024
Database	Web of Science and Scopus
Language	All
Subjects	Business, Management, Business Finance, Economics, Development Studies, others

Source: authors.

A summary of the bibliometric indicators and measures applied to collect and structure the WoS and Scopus data is presented in Figure 2, providing an overview of the methods and criteria used for this analysis.

Figure 2: Data extraction process and analysis flowchart inspired from PRISMA diagram

Source: authors.

c. Method:

Bibliometric analysis is a branch of computer science that examines publication trends, academic collaborations and conceptual relationships in a research field, using a variety of statistical techniques (Broadus, 1987; Cuccurullo et al., 2016). It relies on indicators such as keyword co-occurrence, co-citation and bibliographic linkage to identify dominant themes and connections between publications. Bibliometric analysis is particularly useful for obtaining an overview of the current state of research in a specific field, providing information on influential authors, international collaborations, and emerging sub-themes. This enables researchers to better understand the evolution of a field and identify research gaps or opportunities (Donthu et al., 2021).

In this study, bibliometric analysis was chosen to explore the link between crowdfunding and social entrepreneurship in the MENA region, a field that is enjoying growing academic interest but remains relatively unstructured. By applying this method, it is possible to map research networks, identify the most cited works, and identify central concepts, thus facilitating a better understanding of the academic dynamics of this subject.

Two methods have been chosen for bibliometric analysis: word co-occurrence and co-citation analysis. The first is an approach developed by French researchers to analyze the frequency of occurrence of words together in scientific publications (Rostaing, 1996).

Small (1973) based his approach on the preliminary work of Kessler (1963) to develop a mapping method widely adopted in bibliometrics: co-citation analysis. Co-citation analysis is a method in bibliometrics that examines the relationships between articles based on the times they are cited together in other studies (Rostaing, 1996). Rather than focusing on the articles that cite, this method concentrates solely on the articles cited.

Using this method in VOSviewer, we were able to identify the significant studies that have guided research over the last decade. VOSviewer is a software program specializing in the creation of bibliometric network maps, making it easy to visualize relationships between publications, authors and concepts. It generates interactive maps based on data from academic databases, structuring information in the form of clusters and networks.

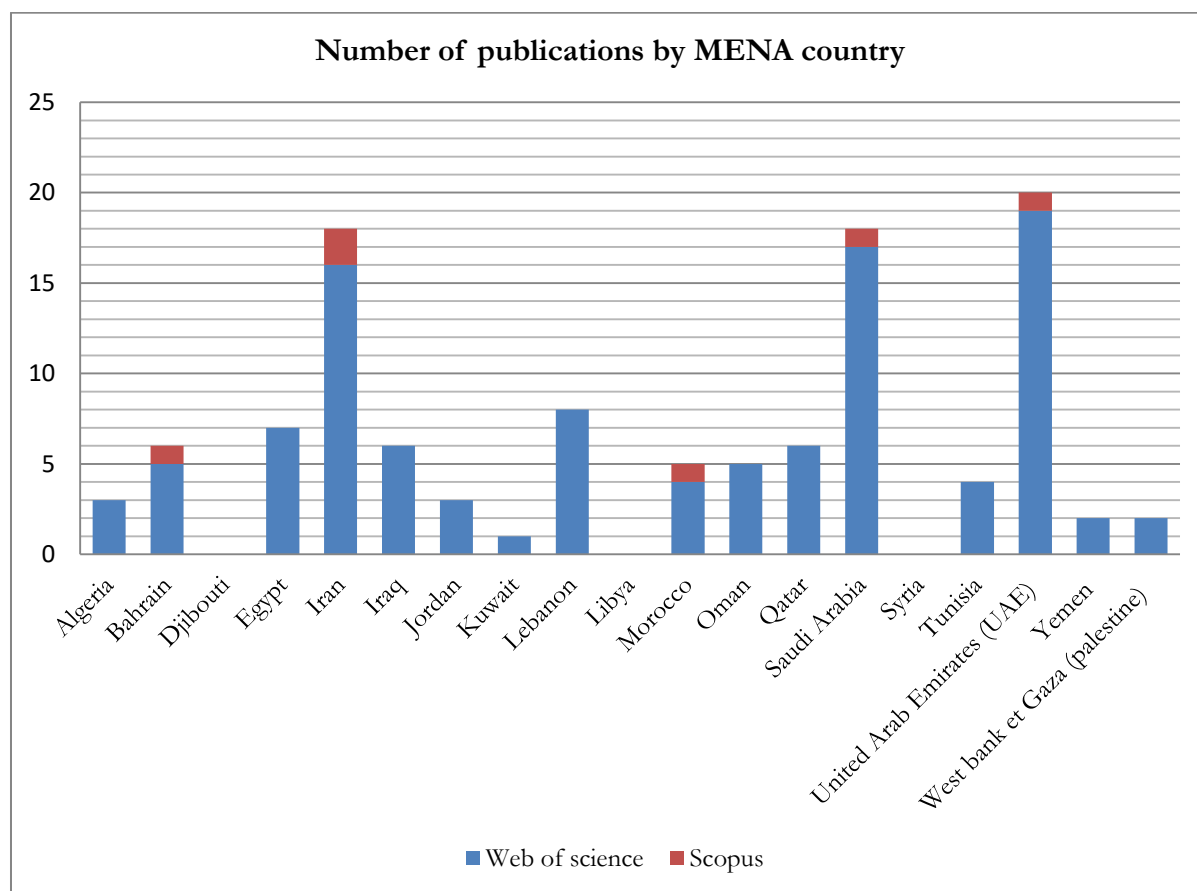
3. Results and Analysis.

This section begins with an overview of publications by country, followed by an examination of publication trends. Next, a keywords co-occurrence analysis identifies dominant themes, and finally, a co-citation analysis highlights author networks and key references in the field.

a. Publication by Country.

Web of Science clearly dominates in terms of quantity, with more regular coverage and significantly higher volume over the whole period. This may reflect greater recognition of studies in this field by WoS-indexed journals, or a preference for this database among researchers working on the MENA region.

On the other hand, the Scopus database remains marginal, with only 6 publications over the whole period. This low figure may indicate an under-representation of research on this topic in Scopus-indexed journals, or a preference for other geographical or thematic areas.

Figure 3: Number of publications in the SE-Crowdfunding field in MENA region

Source: authors.

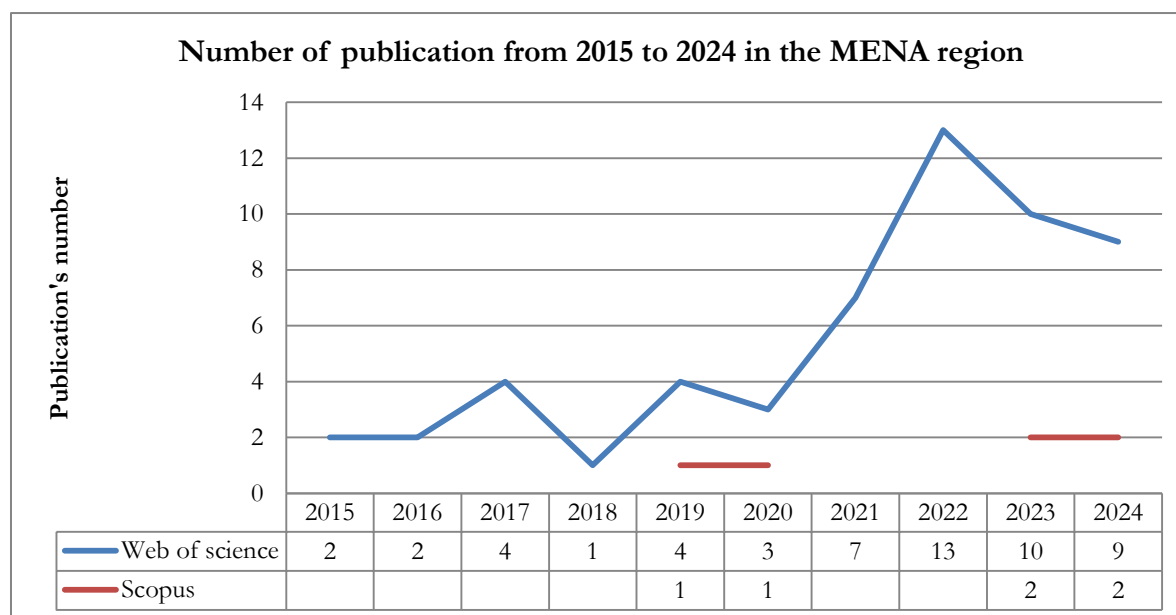
A number of countries, such as the United Arab Emirates (19 papers), Saudi Arabia (17 papers) and Iran (16 papers), dominate, accounting for a significant proportion of scientific output in the MENA region and reflecting substantial investment in research and innovation. Conversely, countries such as Libya, Syria and Djibouti have zero output, which may reflect academic, political or economic constraints. The West Bank and Gaza (2 articles) and Yemen (2 articles) also show very low contributions, underlining an urgent need to strengthen research capacities in these regions.

b. Publication Trends:

The figure shows the evolution of publications on social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding in the MENA region, indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases.

In Web of Science, the data show a significant increase in publications over the years, particularly from 2022 onwards. From 2 publications in 2015, the number reaches 13 in 2022, marking a peak, after a slow and modest progression during the first years. In fact, since 2015, the progression remained limited, reaching a maximum of 4 articles per year until 2020, before intensifying significantly. While Scopus only recorded its first publication in 2019.

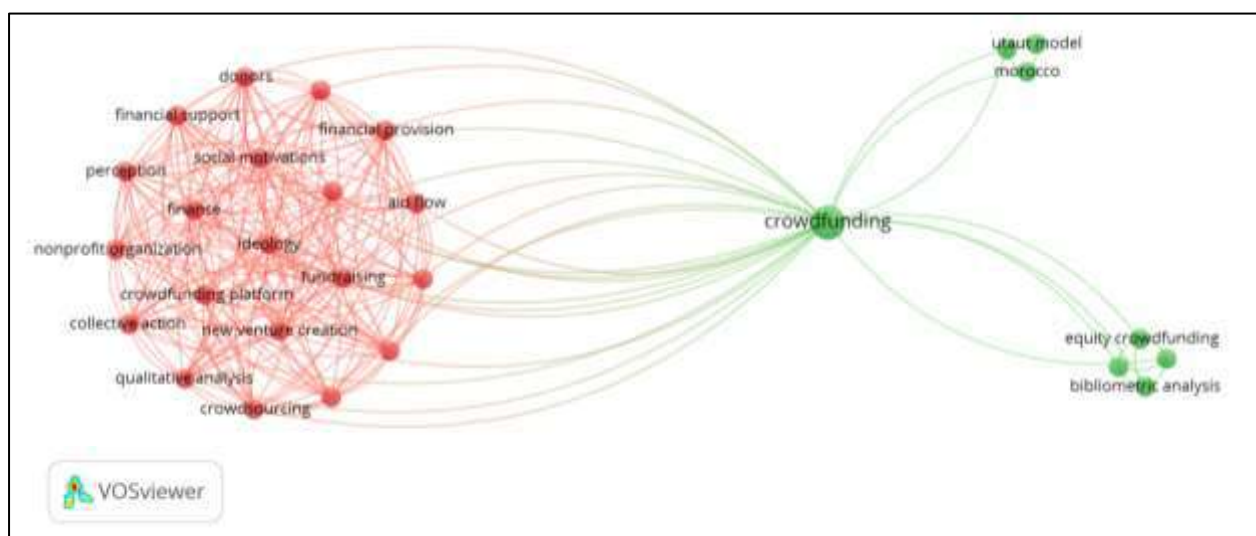
Around 72% (42/58) of articles were published between 2020 and 2024, demonstrating a significant acceleration in research on this topic. However, despite this progress, the total number of publications remains modest, particularly in Scopus, indicating that research in this field in the MENA region is still emerging.

Figure 4: Number of publication in the MENA region by years.

Source: authors.

c. Keywords Co-Occurrence Analysis:

The co-occurrence map in the figure 5 presents 28 keywords divided into two distinct clusters, connected by 226 links, illustrating the conceptual structure of research on crowdfunding. Cluster 1, comprising 20 keywords, is primarily centered on social and financial aspects of crowdfunding. Key terms such as “aid flow,” “financial support,” “nonprofit organization,” and “social motivations” highlight the alignment of crowdfunding with collective and philanthropic goals. Other terms, like “new venture creation” and “crowdsourcing,” underline its significance in supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. The dense interconnections within this cluster suggest a strong thematic focus on solving social problems and mobilizing resources.

Figure 5: Co-occurrence of keywords.

Source: authors.

Cluster 2, consisting of 8 keywords, has a more analytical and geographic orientation. Keywords like “bibliometric analysis” and “knowledge mapping” emphasize the methodological tools employed in studying crowdfunding. Meanwhile, terms such as “Morocco” and “UTAUT model” reflect localized research and theoretical exploration of adoption behaviors. Additionally, the presence of “equity crowdfunding” indicates an interest in specific types of crowdfunding and their implications for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This map highlights the dual focus of crowdfunding research: its practical applications and its theoretical foundations.

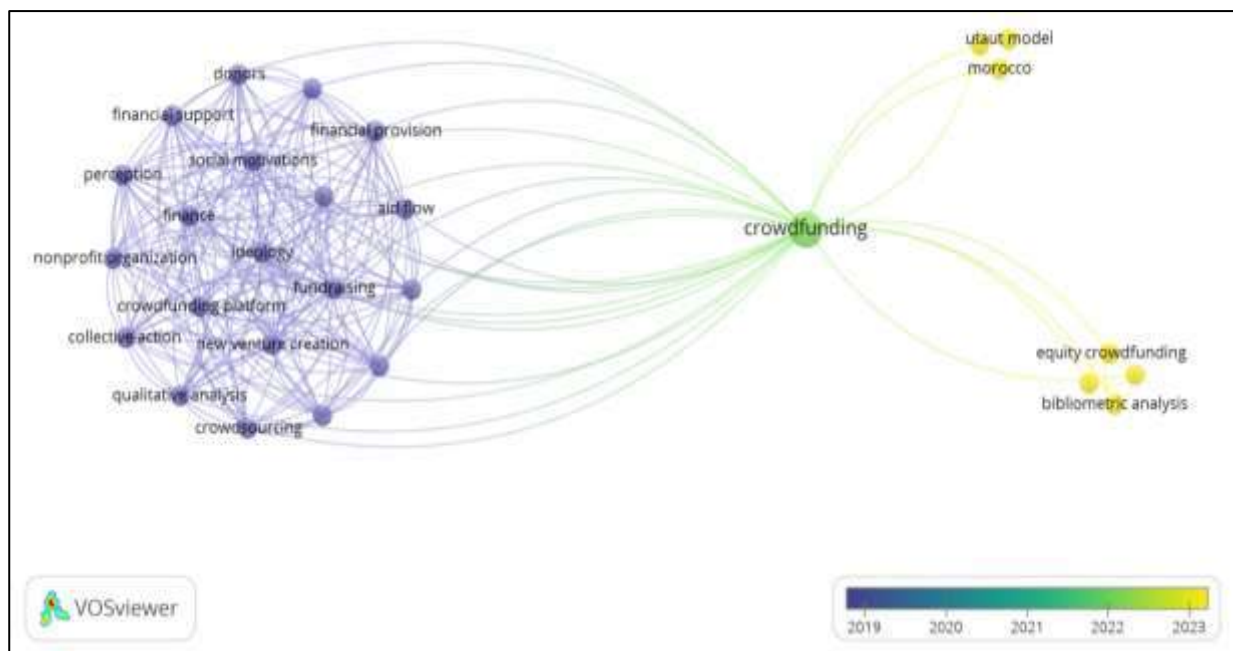
Table 2: Clusters of Keywords.

Cluster	Number of key words	Keywords
1	20	aid flow, collective action, crowdfunding motivation, crowdfunding platform, crowdsourcing, donors, extrinsic motivation, finance, financial provision, financial support, fundraising, ideology, motivation, new venture creation, nonprofit organization, perception, problem solving, qualitative analysis, social motivations, social problem
2	8	bibliometric analysis, citation structure, crowdfunding, equity crowdfunding, knowledge mapping, morocco, small and medium-sized enterprises, utaut model

Source: authors.

The temporal co-occurrence diagram provides insights into the evolution of research themes in crowdfunding over time. The map features 28 keywords grouped into two clusters, with colors indicating the average publication year for each keyword.

Figure 6: Temporal Diagram of Keywords Co-occurrence.



Source: authors.

Cluster 1, in shades of blue and purple, represents earlier research themes, such as "financial support," "aid flow," "crowdsourcing," and "social motivations." These keywords reflect foundational studies focused on the social and financial dynamics of crowdfunding, emphasizing its role in resource mobilization, philanthropy, and collective action. The dense connections within this cluster highlight the interconnected nature of these themes, forming the backbone of earlier crowdfunding research.

Cluster 2, shown in yellow and green, captures emerging topics like "bibliometric analysis," "UTAUT model," and "equity crowdfunding," which have gained prominence from 2021 onward. This shift suggests a growing academic interest in methodological tools and localized studies, particularly within specific geographic and sectoral contexts, as evidenced by keywords like "Morocco" and "small and medium-sized enterprises."

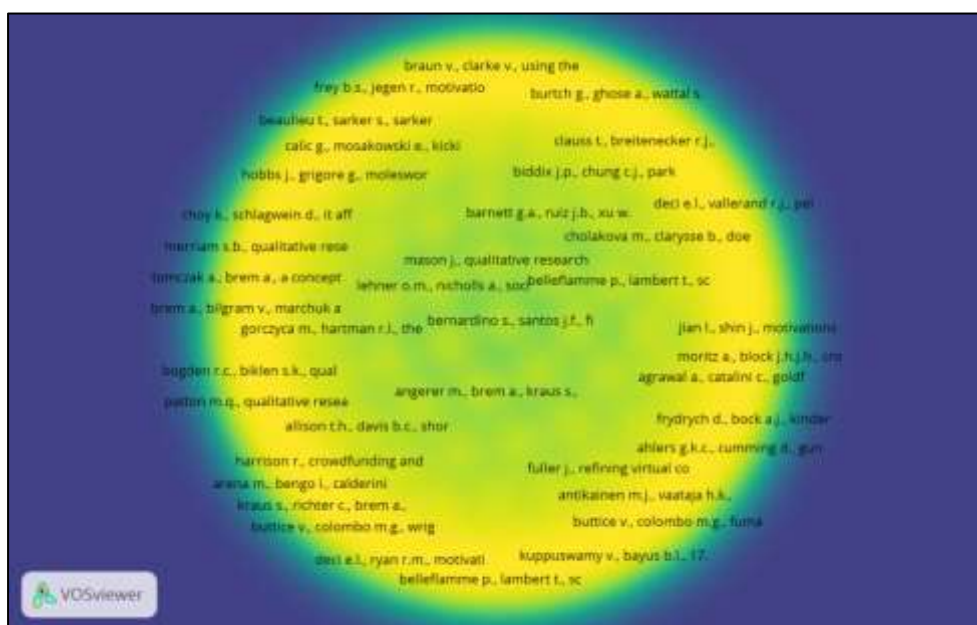
The temporal gradient underscores a progression from the foundational exploration of crowdfunding's practical applications toward more analytical and theoretical investigations, marking an evolution in the research landscape. This trend reflects the maturation of the field, with a stronger focus on specialized frameworks and geographic specificity in recent years.

d. Analyse de Co-citation:

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Figure 7: co citation cited reference density visualization.

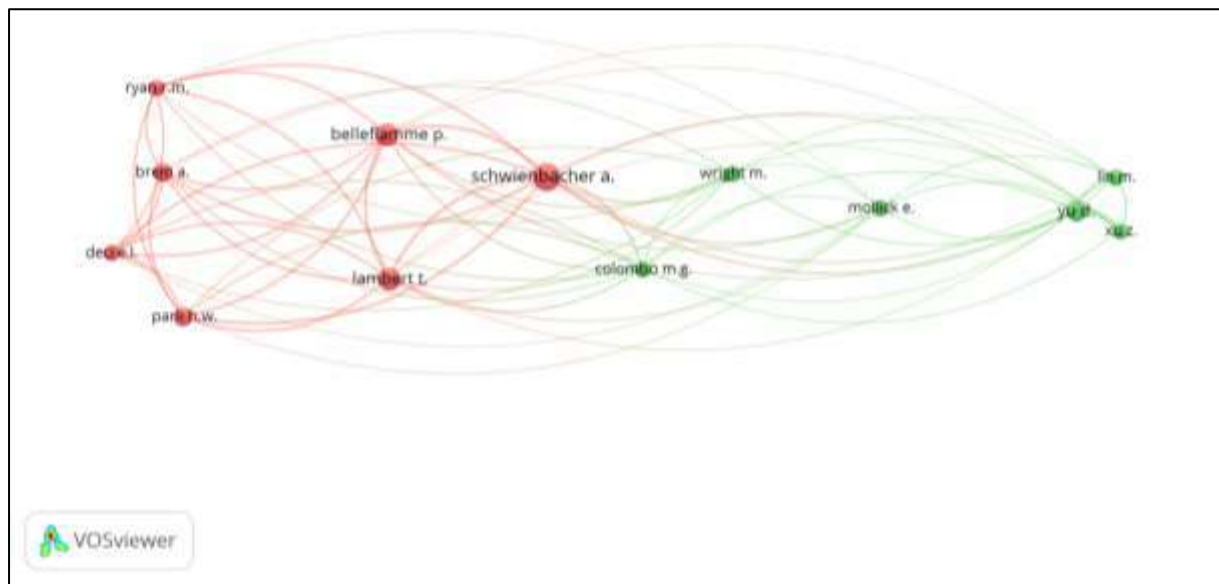


Source: authors.

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Figure 8: Co citation cited authors.



Source: authors.

The co-citation map in the figure provides an overview of the most influential authors in crowdfunding research based on co-citation relationships. The network includes two main clusters, reflecting distinct research areas or thematic focuses within the field.

The first cluster, represented in red, features prominent authors such as *Belleflamme P.*, *Schwenbacher A.*, *Lambert T.*, and *Brem A.*. These authors are well-known for foundational studies exploring crowdfunding mechanisms, models, and motivations, as well as the financial and strategic implications of crowdfunding campaigns. The dense connections within this cluster highlight a strong interrelationship among these researchers, indicating a shared body of work frequently cited together.

The second cluster, shown in green, includes authors like *Mollick E.*, *Lin M.*, and *Xu Z.*, who focus on emerging trends, including the digital platforms' dynamics, the behavior of participants, and technological advancements in crowdfunding ecosystems. The links between authors such as *Mollick E.* and *Schwenbacher A.* bridge foundational studies and newer perspectives, indicating an overlap between classic and contemporary themes in the field.

The figure also demonstrates the global reach of the topic, with contributions spanning financial, technological, and social dimensions of crowdfunding. The strength of co-citation links (thicker

lines) suggests that certain authors, such as *Belleflamme P.* and *Mollick E.*, play a central role in shaping the conceptual framework of the domain.

This network highlights the foundational and evolving intellectual contributions, offering insights into key authors whose work has significantly impacted the development of crowdfunding research.

4. Discussion.

a. Crowdfunding and social entrepreneurship practices in the MENA Region

In Cluster 1 of the Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis, the 20 keywords, such as *extrinsic motivation*, *financial aid*, *crowdfunding motivation*, *fundraising*, and *non-profit organizations*, show that researchers in the MENA region are focusing on the practical aspects of crowdfunding, in particular how crowdfunding platforms and support mechanisms influence fundraising and the creation of new businesses. The concepts of *problem-solving* and *perception* suggest that social entrepreneurship is perceived as a strategic solution to the region's complex socio-economic challenges. This cluster also highlights the importance of social and collective motivations, emphasizing how participatory financing can catalyze collective action to solve *social problems*.

In the Saudi Arabian context, initiatives such as Islamic *real estate crowdfunding* (RECF) on platforms such as Aseel have revolutionized access to investment opportunities. These platforms reduce financial barriers, streamline processes and broaden the investor base, while minimizing entry and exit costs (Aysan et al., 2024). This model has led to increased adoption of crowdfunding within a framework that respects Islamic principles.

In Egypt, two innovative internet platforms, *Shekra* and *Yomken*, have recently been established as the first crowdfunding platforms to follow the principles of Islamic finance and microfinance in the region. Interestingly, although Sharia-compliant, these platforms do not explicitly claim to be “Islamic”, placing greater emphasis on service quality, partnerships, risk-sharing and social impact (Alonso, 2015). This approach marks an ideological shift that positions Islamic finance as a more inclusive and modern player compared to conventional models.

The temporal analysis of keywords offers a valuable perspective on the evolution of research interests. Terms such as *crowdsourcing*, *crowdfunding platform*, and *extrinsic motivation* were among the first topics studied, reflecting initial concerns around the fundamental mechanisms of crowdfunding. However, more recent terms such as *equity crowdfunding* and *knowledge mapping* signal a broadening of the field towards more complex funding methods and in-depth analysis of academic contributions. This evolution reflects a shift towards a better understanding of financing structures and strategic implications for social entrepreneurship projects in the MENA region.

Equity crowdfunding is particularly noteworthy in this context, offering social enterprises the opportunity to raise funds in exchange for equity shares. This model could pave the way for more significant investment in social impact projects, while promoting a more inclusive approach to investment opportunities. From the point of view of social entrepreneurship, the rise of crowdfunding has introduced a new channel for mobilizing resources from a wide range of investors. Unlike traditional financing, crowdfunding offers social entrepreneurs a closer alignment between their social objectives and investor expectations, helping to strengthen the societal impact of projects (Brown et al., 2017). This alignment not only reflects an ethical commitment to responsible practices but also opens up opportunities to improve the economic

performance of enterprises, demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between societal impact and business success (Ouskou et al., 2024).

b. Scientific production in the MENA region

Talking about scientific production in the MENA region, the analysis shows that certain authors stand out for their marked presence in co-citations. These authors have often written influential articles that are frequently referenced by other studies. These may include researchers such as Mollick E., known for his work on the dynamics of crowdfunding, or Lehner O.M., whose studies on participatory financing for social enterprises are benchmarks in the field. In cluster 2 of the Keyword Co-occurrence analysis, keywords such as bibliometric analysis, citation structure, equity crowdfunding, knowledge mapping, indicate a particular interest in the analysis of academic contributions in the field, as well as in the application of crowdfunding to specific business models such as SMEs. The presence of terms such as utaut model (model of acceptance and use of unified technology) shows a focus on the acceptance of crowdfunding technologies in the region.

However, the uneven distribution of publications in the MENA region reflects disparities in academic priorities, resources and research infrastructure. While some countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Iran, stand out for their high output, many regions remain under-represented, revealing gaps and untapped opportunities. It is essential to strengthen research efforts in these countries to promote solutions adapted to local challenges.

Conclusion

This bibliometric study mapped research on social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding in the MENA region, revealing two major axes structuring this field.

The first axis highlights the relationship between social entrepreneurship and crowdfunding. The results show that crowdfunding acts as an essential lever for social entrepreneurs, allowing them to mobilize resources while affirming their societal values. Innovative approaches such as Islamic crowdfunding and equity crowdfunding demonstrate a specific cultural and economic adaptation to the region (Aysan et al., 2024). This model does not only provide funds: it also amplifies the visibility of projects and strengthens their legitimacy among local and international stakeholders (Meyskens & Bird, 2015).

The second axis focuses on the evolution of scientific production in this field. Analyses reveal a marked progression since 2020, with increasing attention to bibliometric tools and analytical methodologies, such as co-citation and knowledge mapping (Lehner & Nicholls, 2017). However, disparities in academic contribution between the heavily represented Gulf countries and regions such as Libya or Yemen highlight persistent inequalities in research infrastructure.

These findings highlight not only the transformative potential of crowdfunding for social entrepreneurship, but also the need to strengthen academic research and regional collaboration. Moving forward, efforts should be made to fill research gaps in underrepresented countries and to deepen analyses of the interactions between local ecosystems and crowdfunding models. As well, these findings highlight the need to design tailored policies that foster robust local entrepreneurial ecosystems and support the diffusion of crowdfunding platforms.

However, this study is not without limitations. First, the geographical scope focuses mainly on countries included in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, which may lead to an underrepresentation of some regions or unindexed local contributions.

For the future, further studies could broaden the analysis by integrating unindexed local data, exploring the real impacts of crowdfunding projects on local communities, and studying the interactions between crowdfunding platforms and public policies. It would also be relevant to explore how technological innovations, such as blockchain or artificial intelligence, influence the development of crowdfunding in contexts specific to the MENA region.

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