

Abstract

This study investigates how sustainability orientation (environmental vs. social) influences backers' willingness to support in donation-based crowdfunding, drawing on warm glow theory. We aimed to confirm whether environmental (H1) and social (H2) orientations positively impact donation intention, and whether social sustainability (H3) has a stronger effect.

Using a vignette-based experiment, 301 responses were collected, which were randomly assigned to environmental, social, or neutral conditions. 287 responses remained after initial data cleaning (e.g., attention checks, missing values). For the main regression analyses, 286 participants were included after the exclusion of one influential outlier. Data were analyzed via multiple linear regression with robust standard errors.

Results showed strong support for H1 and H2: both environmental ($\beta = 1.414$, $p < .001$) and social ($\beta = 1.178$, $p < .001$) sustainability significantly and positively predicted donation intention. H3 was not supported. There was no significant difference in impact between social and environmental orientations ($\beta = -0.226$, $p = .338$). The Warm Glow effect itself was confirmed as a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.216$, $p = .014$). Additionally, perceived idea quality had a strong, accelerating positive effect ($\beta = 0.071$, $p = .025$).

These findings highlight the broad appeal of sustainable projects in crowdfunding and suggest that both environmental and social causes can evoke comparable emotional rewards. For crowdfunding campaign managers, this means clearly articulating any sustainability mission and ensuring a high-quality project idea are crucial for success.

Keywords

Crowdfunding, donation-based crowdfunding, sustainability, environmental, social, warm glow, intention to donate, vignette experiment, idea quality