

# Innovative Attraction Strategy for Waqf Donors: Case of Saudi Arabia

Allaa AbdelBari <sup>1</sup>, Ridzwan Bakar <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctorate Student at Grenoble Ecole De Management (GEM),France; allaa\_bari@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>Professional Lecturer at Multimedia University (MMU),Malaysia; ridzwan.bakar@mmu.edu.my

\*Correspondence email : allaa\_bari@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** The concept of Waqf is as deep-rooted in Islam; yet is still confronted with challenges and issues in Muslim countries. Many scholars have discussed the topic of waqf and questioned why it is getting vanished in Muslim countries, while trust in the western world is succeeding progressively. This study aims to propose a framework, Innovative Attraction Waqf Donors Strategy Matrix as a sustainable means of charity in Saudi Arabia. This paper is emphasized attracting cash waqf donors and the researcher is embracing a specific donor, young donors. Young generation donors are Millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha. Issues and challenges like lack of awareness of waqf, waqf management, legal, financial, and others have led waqf donors to fear and step backward in donating. This paper aims at exploring an innovative attraction strategy for waqf donors, as one of the funding sustainability instruments. Besides, this paper is based on some of the challenges facing the Waqf industry in general, and waqf donors specifically in Saudi Arabia. It concludes by suggesting a strategy to attract waqf donors and solve some of their facing issues. The paper offers a theoretical model based on Saudi Arabia's experience, to change donors' fear into attractive donation habits, therefore, nourishing waqf through sustainable funding. The study develops prior research and highlights the tentative innovative strategy of reviving waqf by attracting more donors. The study adopts a qualitative approach where research, interview, and discussion as well as primary data collection were employed. The paper suggests some relevant opinions for Saudi Awqaf Ministry and practitioner considerations.

Received: November 2022

Accepted: July 2023

Published: December 2023

**Publisher's Note:** JCBIF stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Copyright:** © 2023 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Keywords:** Waqf; Cash Waqf; Waqf Donors; Sustainable Funding; Financial Technology; Innovative Attraction Strategy; Millennials; Gen Z; Gen Alpha

## 1. Introduction

Waqf means (alhabsh) holdings and to stop; meaning you hold your money or assets to Allah; for the people's benefit (Cizakca, 1998) and it is merely a religious charitable foundation (Cizakca,1998; Ridzwan, 2019). Many scholars like Cizakca, Mohsin and Ridzwan and other waqf scholars established literature that supports cash waqf. Cash waqf is defined as the detention cash amount from the waqf founder (waqif) that is perpetually devoted according to the waqif's instructions for society's welfare (Mohsin, 2019). Waqf and cash waqf existed since the birth of Islam and has mainly practiced during the Seljuk Dynasty. Turkey is considered the number one Muslim country that practices waqf up to date in all its industries, and there are 68 waqf universities (Ridzwan, 2019; Mahamood & Rahman 2013) . There are a lot of successful examples

which practiced waqf; Al-Azhar University in Egypt established in 975 AD is considered the oldest waqf university. University of Al-Qurawwin in Morocco that established in 1,200 AD. Both are still existed and represent the waqf spirit. Also, Universiti Islam Malaysia is considered the first waqf-based university (Ridzwan, 2019; NoorInayah, 2014). Waqf is a kind of worship that every Muslim should seek to change people's lives to a better version filled with sustainable development goals. Waqf offers an opportunity to deliver lifelong support to people and their communities; where the asset is dedicated by its owner (waqif) to become a waqf (endowment) that generates revenues to serve all socioeconomic aspects like in education, religious purposes, healthcare, etc. (Mohsen, 2009; Cizaka & Mohsin, 2009). Cash waqf is a movable endowment, in which the donated waqf is in cash form. The principal amount is kept preserved while the generated revenue is used for socioeconomic purposes (Mohsen, 2009). The scarcity of awareness of waqf (such as only rich people can contribute to waqf, waqf can only be in form of land or used for religious purposes like mosques; mismanagement of waqf, all these issues) resulted in a decrease in waqf donations in the Muslim community. The level of awareness among donors and potential donors in Saudi Arabia about waqf and cash waqf is still not high. Efforts should be extensively made to allocate awareness among the Muslim communities in general. Therefore, this research study has only one question: How to Attract Waqf Donors? The following sections will help us to answer this question and fill our research gap. This paper is organized as follows, starting with the abstract and then the introduction. In the third section, materials and methods will be placed. The fourth and fifth sections comprise results and discussion respectively. Finally, in the sixth and seventh sections, the conclusion and patents will be given.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This research has adopted a qualitative research methodology in the form of exploratory research. The data collection methods were mainly literature reviews and discussions as both the primary and secondary data were employed to obtain theoretical information. The literature review was collected from conference papers, journals, articles, and books based on waqf, cash waqf, trust, and young generation (their behavior, preferences, and characteristics). Then a pilot study was made with 15 participants from a combination of Gen X and Baby Boomers Generation (to clearly understand their behavior, preferences, and fears; since they are the high percentage donors currently existing in Saudi Arabia), Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha. After we conducted our results from our pilot study, the discussions were made with our research sample of 70 participants from Millennials (30 participants), Gen Z (30 participants), and Gen Alpha (10 participants). Afterward, data analysis and results have been placed which is the description progression, resulting from organizing data into categories. Subsequently, the findings were validated and results were presented with the proposed Innovative Attraction Strategy Matrix for Waqf Donors. The study built evidently and illustrated the strategic matrix of how to attract waqf donors and revive waqf in Saudi Arabia with full observation and experiment view.

## **3. Results**

This section is providing our pilot study, research data sampling, and then illustrates the innovative attraction strategy matrix for waqf donors under the Saudi Arabia case.

### *3.1. Data and Results:*

#### **3.1.1. Pilot Study Data and Results**

A pilot study was conducted before starting this study for 3 reasons; to identify the research question; test the method being proposed to use for this research paper; and use the results as a guide to the methodology of a large-scale experiment. As it has been stated earlier, choose to embrace a specific generation donor to illustrate the attraction

strategy for waqf donors, which are young generation; however, Baby Boomers and Gen X have been added as they represent the current highest donors of waqf or other forms of donation in Saudi Arabia.

Hence, we chose to test and study our waqf donation discussion in our pilot study on 10 participants from our young generation sample. We preferred to add 5 participants from the highest existing percentage of waqf donors in Saudi Arabia (Baby Boomers and Gen X) to clearly understand how to build our attraction strategy. The participants were of the following generations:

- 3 participants from Baby Boomers (people who were born between 1946 – 1964);
- 2 participants from Gen X (people who were born between 1965 – 1980);
- 4 participants from Millennials (people who were born in 1981 – 1994);
- 3 participants from Gen Z (people who were born between 1995 – 2012);
- 3 participants from Gen Alpha (people who were born in 2013 - 2025);

We conducted online/personal semi-structured discussions with our 15 participants for our pilot study. Following is the summary of our results from the pilot study:

- **Baby Boomers and Gen X (5 participants)**

The level of awareness of the waqf concept was high with all 5 participants, they were already participating in waqf donations for education and religious purposes. They were willing to participate in more waqf donation activities but without the interference of human management (waqif), and they expressed their high fear and worry about the mismanagement of the existing waqf process. Two of them stated that they hesitate to engage in any new waqf project as the waqf process is so complicated and loses transparency in all phases. There is no appreciation or word for them. They wanted more secure and safer transactions for their donation payments and with a very short process. They were ready to help share and participate in the campaign of the awareness of waqf to their kids and grandkids. They expressed fear that their children are not participating in any waqf donation except for zakat and sadaqah as they believe that waqf is only done by old people or people who are about to die.

- **Millennials (4 participants)**

The level of awareness of the waqf concept was low with all 4 participants, as they think waqf is only for religious purposes like building mosques and participating in printing holy Quran. They showed high eagerness and great passion to participate in waqf donation and support waqf fundraising campaigns through social media and be part of it. They want to participate and learn more about waqf in workshops and conferences. They contribute only in zakat and sadaqah donations and they prefer online donations through existing platforms. They love video gaming and spent most of their free time and weekends playing video games and participating in gaming competitions.

- **Gen Z (3 participants)**

They don't know at all what waqf is. They know very well about sadaqah and zakat and they love to contribute to it from their daily and weekly spending. They are energetic- they grab the idea of waqf and love it. For them, it is an investment in Allah. They have tender hearts and love to support the community with all it takes. They love to share happiness and want every individual in the community to receive equal treatment for every good deed.

- **Gen Alpha (3 participants)**

There was no awareness of the waqf concept, however, all the 3 participants were aware very well of sadaqah, to whom we give it, why we give it, and by which means. After explaining to them what waqf means in simple meaning, they understood it and were enthusiastic about asking their parents to participate and to give them money to contribute to any waqf project. They also were ready to support any waqf by asking friends to participate and contribute.

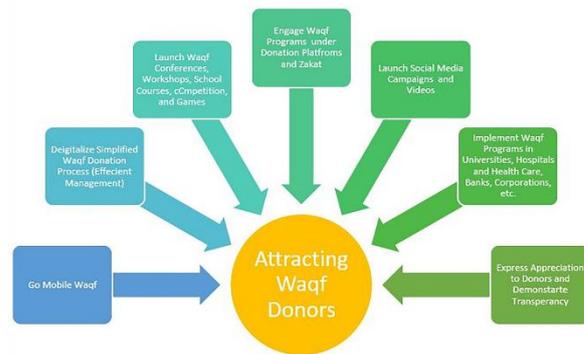
After conducting our pilot study we were very sure that our research question is the best question to fill the research gap and to move forward with our selected young generation (Millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha) to attract them towards waqf donation with our innovative attraction strategy matrix with its 7 pillars. The following section comprises results from this research sampling data of 70 participants which include 30 participants from Gen Z, 30 participants from Millennials, and 10 from Gen Alpha. Observations and views of the researcher from the data collection of discussions formulated the proposed strategic matrix for attracting waqf donors that are illustrated and described in the following section

#### **4. Discussion**

##### *4.1 Innovative Attraction Strategy Matrix for Waqf Donors: Saudi Arabia Case*

This section presents the innovative attraction strategy matrix for waqf donors that was proposed by the researcher and author of this paper. The proposed strategic matrix in a country like Saudi Arabia will enable the escalation of the status of waqf among its industries and the general public. The researcher of this paper believes that her innovative attraction strategy for waqf donors should target and attract young generation donors to waqf. As young generation (Gen Z, Alpha, and even Millennials) are the fuel engine of our community. The innovative strategy should be started in schools. Curriculums must have waqf as a subjective course to be taught to students, so the awareness of waqf is raised from early ages among young people. They will always offer continuous donations even if it is less than older and richer donors. They also will offer great resources through volunteering and social media influence. Following Saudi Arabia's vision of 2030, the young generation is the future. Engaging young people will be creating a long-lasting relationship with the existing different generations; young and adults who will become regular donors as they graduate and work. Young generations are capable of leveraging social media channels. 61% of Gen Z contributed to donations due to social media influencers' videos and campaigns and 79% are well to participate in waqf donations regularly throughout the whole year. Besides, 42% want to be entrepreneurs and establish nonprofit organizations. Moreover, 85% of millennials contribute to donations and are willing to be regular waqf donors and donate on a monthly program basis. Also, 47% are participating in volunteering for social causes they love and care about. We are also aware that they are a visually oriented generation, and they represent a higher percentage of using and enthusiastic about technology and social media. Hence, we should benefit from these characteristics and create donation campaigns through social medial channels and through launching a go-mobile waqf application or online website, where they easily can donate. With the help of both young generations, we can create fun events for fundraising.

By knowing how to attract young donors to a nonprofit, your organization will build long-lasting relationships with teenagers and young adults who can become regular contributors as their bank accounts get bigger. In addition, valuable volunteers can be acquired who know how to reach other people in their age group by leveraging important social media channels. We should engage all different levels of donors in our attraction strategy, not only businessmen/women, so the whole community is involved in the good deeds. The researcher of this paper proposed a strategic matrix for attracting waqf donors as presented below in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Innovative Attraction Waqf Donors Strategy Matrix: Sustainability Strategy

The proposed strategic matrix in Figure 1 illustrates the 7 pillars to be followed to attract waqf donors and revive waqf in Saudi Arabia. First, Go-Mobile Waqf in any institution in any industry that wants to call for waqf fundraising, should launch it online via mobile devices. While on-the-go in applications or through websites ease the process of donation on all different levels of donors with a single click can be facilitated. Most importantly, the waqf donation website should be mobile-responsive. As it has been mentioned earlier, Gen Z, Alpha, and Millennials are characterized by technology passion. This will increase their attraction behavior toward waqf donations.

Second, Digitalize Simplified Waqf Donation Process facilitates using digitalized platforms through financial technologies that will take the management process of waqf to an efficient, effective, and secure level that will attract more donors and solve the biggest issue of vanishing waqf and waqf donors (Abib, 2020). Employing financial technologies in waqf like waqf crowdfunding and blockchain will improve sustainability funding by attracting more waqf donors (Salami, Tanrıvermiş, & Erciyes, 2022). Moreover, the platform should include an optimized shortened waqf donation form because all donors regardless of their age prefer to donate in seconds and not take half an hour to fill out donation forms.

Third, launching waqf conferences, workshops, school courses, programs, events, competitions, and games to increase awareness of waqf is another promising strategy. As we discussed earlier, one of the main issues of waqf absences is a scarcity of waqf awareness. Today, if you ask any 5 years old kid in Saudi Arabia what Sadaqa is? he/she will quickly answer because we raise our children about giving sadaqah for all needy people in many different forms. However, when it comes to waqf, most people's generations do not know what waqf is. Lack of awareness vanished waqf and its beauties (Sharip , Awang, & Ismail, 2021). The researcher of this paper suggested that to bring abolish this issue from its roots, we should increase the awareness of waqf by launching more waqf conferences, and workshops, engaging with school/college curriculums and spreading knowledge in all educational institutions and corporations, and through social media. Another innovative way of knowledge sharing is organizing competitions by setting up a contest and asking the participants and audience to donate to express their support for a specific waqf donation purpose. The young generation (Gen Z, Alpha, and Millennials) have a great passion for video games, we could employ this passion in waqf donation (Maleki & Hosseini, 2020). by creating waqf donation video games and enabling live streaming services like Twitch. Twitch is a video live streaming service that emphasizes video game live streaming, including broadcasts of esports competitions and real-life streams. It is operated by Amazon subsidiary Twitch Interactive. The waqf fundraiser for such a project can select a gamer in his/her corporation, institution, or a family member to be the spokesperson and streamer, then get it going. Subsequently, such an innovative pillar will dramatically attract millions of young generation to donate for waqf.

Fourth, engaging the waqf program under donation platforms and zakat is a pragmatic strategy. Being Muslims, we perform Zakat yearly, and many platforms have

already existed in Saudi Arabia for Zakat and other donation forms like sadaqah, one-time donations, or regular periodic donations. Engaging waqf programs as a kind of donation in such existing platforms will increase attraction, and donor behavior for waqf and will increase the awareness of the waqf concept among Saudi Arabia's different generations.

Fifth, launching social media campaigns and videos is helpful in this regard. An interesting and powerful pillar in the researcher's innovative strategy is waqf fundraising through social media. Social media can illustrate as a messenger stage to connect and motivate Young generations (Gen Z, Alpha, and Millennials) to waqf donation. Young generations use Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and Snapchat most of the time. It is imperative to use social media for the benefit of the community. Short reels and videos about waqf in general or about donations for a specific waqf project with attaching the link of the donation and asking for sharing will help engage the audience. Young generations are generously giving people, they are ready to give, share, participate in the donation and ask their families and friends to donate to causes they believe in. They consider it their priority to fix all problematic issues in their community. Moreover, Waqf fundraisers can professionally create their great storytelling content using a small sample of Gen Z and Gen Alpha to attract donors towards waqf donation. We can also create Facebook pages for waqf fundraising and include hashtags on Twitter for specific waqf donations. Besides, many powerful ideas can be used to share the knowledge of waqf plus attract donors. In return, millions of Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen Alpha will walk, talk, and act as waqf ambassadors.

Sixth, waqf programs must be included in universities, hospitals and health care, banks, corporations, etc. Today in Saudi Arabia, institutions under different industries are missing waqf donation programs. Universities should call for waqf donations for developing education as a sustainable goal to sustain waqf funding for both undergraduates' and graduates' studies as well as research. Hospitals also should call for waqf donations through their platforms to support waqf funding for needy patients who require surgeries, treatments, medications, and consultations. Moreover, banks should establish donation programs to sustain waqf funding. All institutions and corporations should implement Waqf Corporation to sustain waqf funding through digitalized platforms to attract more donors for waqf donation.

Lastly, the act of expressing appreciation to donors and demonstrating transparency can be a positive way to expedite the Young generation's appreciation of transparency and trust values, by their participation in waqf donation they will build a trust relationship towards the waqf donation project or platform. In return, they should receive full transparency about the project activities and waqf fundraising. They should also receive gratitude and a word of appreciation to support that trustworthy feeling in them and let gain them as sustained waqf donors. Emails, text messaging, hashtag tweets, and snap videos can all serve in showing appreciation and expressing Thank you to all waqf donors. Such an appreciative attitude will increase the donors' attraction behavior and will build a sustained trusted relationship towards waqf donation.

## **5. Conclusions and Suggestions**

Throughout Islam, there are many successful examples of Waqf even successful trust examples rooted based on the waqf concept (Cizakca, 2011). However, Waqf is fading in many Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia in the last decades due to many reasons. This paper delivers an all-inclusive view based on the observation, research, and experience of the researcher of this paper. Additionally, the author of this paper would take this study to higher practice and execution level in upcoming papers and her Doctoral Thesis. The author of this paper believes that the Ministry of Awqaf, institutions, and waqf fundraisers will value the proposed Innovative Attraction Strategy Matrix for Waqf Donors and will adopt it to revive waqf in the Saudi community.

Consideration and attention should be taken to some listed challenges and opportunities by strategy experts, governmental agencies, and ministries. The paper suggested emphasizing specific donors' generation, which is the young generation as they are the fuel engine of our community and our giving ambassadors. Besides, this paper recommended that all institutions including universities, schools, hospitals, banks, etc. run their waqf and adopt the inventive strategic matrix as proposed to attract waqf donors and bring life back to waqf. Finally, it is time to embrace our young generations and depends on them to take a dynamic role in developing, backing up, and creating waqf revolutions in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim communities.

**6. Patents:** This paper includes patents of the invention for the whole 7 pillars matrix and waqf attraction strategy towards the young generation, to the author of this paper (Abdelbari Allaa)

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Acknowledgments:** We want to thank the 10<sup>th</sup> Global Waqf Conference administration and management for all the support we received to submit and present our paper.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Abib, A. (2020). *Sources of Development Funds for Somalia concerning Blended Finance* (Doctoral dissertation, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar)).
2. Cizakca, M. (1998). Awqaf in history and its implications for modern Islamic economies. *Islamic Economics Studies*, 6(1), 43-70.
3. Cizakca, M. (2011). *Waqf in History and its implications for modern Islamic Economies*. In: Kahf M and Mahamood SM (eds) *Essential Readings in Contemporary Waqf Issues*. Kuala Lumpur. CERT, 1- 42.
4. Charity donation intention via m-payment apps: donor-related, m-payment system-related, or charity brand-related factors, which one is overkill? *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 17, 409-443.
5. Donorhut Team (2016). How to Build Donor Trust and Increase Donor Retention. Retrieved from <https://www.donorhut.com/blog/build-donor-trust-increase-donor-retention>.
6. Gallan, T. Online Communities: An Examination of Online Community-Based Case Studies.
7. Mahamood S.M. & Rahman A. (2013)a. *Towards the establishment of a Malaysian Waqf University: Model for development* (RG284-11HNE). University of Malaya.
8. Mohsin, M. I. A., & Muneeza, A. (2019). Integrating waqf crowdfunding into the blockchain: a modern approach for creating a waqf market. In *Fintech in Islamic finance* (pp. 266-279). Routledge.
9. Mohsin, M. (2009). *Cash waqf: A new financial product*. Prentice Hall.
10. Mohsin, M. I. A., Dafterdar, H., Cizakca, M., Alhabshi, S. O., Razak, S. H. A., Sadr, S. K., ... & Obaidullah, M. (2016). Financing the development of old Waqf properties. *New York: Palgrave Macmillan US*. Retrieved March 27, 2021.
11. Norazlina, M., Alam, S., & Ridzwan, A. (2019). Maslahah approach towards the imposition of ta'widh in Islamic banking. *Global Journal Al-Thaqafah, Special Issue*, 39-48.
12. Noor Inayah Yaa'kub. (2014). The transformation of the role of waqf in the higher learning education in Malaysia : a new paradigm for Islamic financial. *11th Kuala Lumpur Islamic Finance Forum*, (November).
13. Ridzwan, B., Wardah, S., Rapih, Z., & Farzana, S. (2019). Corporate Waqf University: A Sustainability Model. *Journal of Emerging economics and Islamic Research*, 7(1) 2019, 24 – 36.
14. Salami, M. A., Tanrivermiş, H., & Erciyas, A. H. (2022). The growth, opportunities, and challenges facing Islamic finance in Nigeria: evidence from waqf and Sukuk. *Islamic Finance in Africa*, 193-207.
15. Sharip, S. M., Awang, M., & Ismail, R. (2021). The effect of motivating language and management effectiveness: empirical evidence from Waqf institutions in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*.