

Career Incentives of Nonprofit Sector: Case of Religious Tourism Sector in Saudi Arabia

Hatim Bukhari

Assistant Professor

Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering

College of Engineering

University of Jeddah

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

habukhari@uj.edu.sa

Abstract

In the domain of human resources, the factors that encourage employees to transition to a specific sector are commonly known as "job incentives" or "career incentives." These encompass elements such as competitive salaries, appealing benefits packages, prospects for career progression, professional development initiatives, a positive work atmosphere, and meaningful tasks aligned with an employee's values and objectives.

Saudi Arabia, in its ambitious 2030 Vision, aims to raise the nonprofit sector's contribution to the GDP from 3% to 5%. A key focus for achieving this goal is the religious tourism sector. This paper scrutinizes the incentives within the nonprofit realm, specifically within the religious tourism sector. To pinpoint the necessary incentives for attracting highly skilled personnel, a survey was conducted using Gallup's Employee Engagement Survey. Additionally, exit interviews were analyzed to comprehend the reasons behind employees leaving the sector.

The findings revealed that certain factors significantly influence employee turnover. Addressing these factors expected to enhance employee retention and increase the sector's overall appeal. These factors include, among others, the work environment, job security, opportunities for career growth, and the perception of nonprofit sector employees. Study has shown the important challenges faced by the non-profit sector organizations and pointed out some valuable incentives needed for the organizations to help and guide the stakeholders for developing a more conducive work environment to provide best possible services to the pilgrims at holy places.

Keywords:

Career incentives, NPOs, Nonprofit, and Saudi Arabia. (10 font)

1. Introduction:

The non-profit sector encompasses a diverse range of organizations dedicated to social good, cultural preservation, and religious service. While traditional career paths often prioritize financial compensation, the non-profit world offers distinct incentives that go beyond monetary rewards. This research delves into the specific case of the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, a rapidly expanding non-profit industry driven by the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and its commitment to welcoming pilgrims and visitors for performing the religious rituals at the holy city of Makkah and Madinah. This paper explores the unique career incentives that attract and retain talent in this non-profit religious tourism sector, drawing on the experiences of industry professionals and relevant literature.

The non-profit sector offers a unique and rewarding career path for individuals who are passionate about making a positive impact on the world. In Saudi Arabia, the non-profit religious tourism sector is a particularly dynamic and growing area, offering a variety of career opportunities with distinct incentives. Contributing to the growth and development of the non-profit religious tourism industry in Saudi Arabia directly translates to serving the needs of

millions of pilgrims and visitors (KILIÇ, 2024). This can also be highly fulfilling for individuals who find purpose in supporting religious practices and cultural exchange. Working in the non-profit religious tourism sector allows individuals to contribute to the preservation and promotion of Islamic heritage and values. This can be especially meaningful for those who are intrinsically motivated by faith and cultural identity (Tabrani and Marlizar, 2017).

The non-profit religious tourism sector offers a diverse and challenging work environment; it is affecting the personal and professional development. Individuals can gain new skills, knowledge, and perspectives through interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds. The emphasis on shared goals and values often fosters a strong sense of community and collaboration within the non-profit religious tourism sector. This can create a negative and non-supportive work environment where individuals feel unvalued and not appreciated. While not always the primary motivator, the religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia does not offer competitive salaries and benefits packages that are comparable to other industries. However, in reality, by doing this we can provide financial security and stability for individuals and their families (Thornburg, 2024).

The work culture in the non-profit religious tourism sector may vary depending on the specific organization and role. However, there is often an emphasis on maintaining a healthy work-life balance, allowing individuals to pursue personal interests and spend time with loved ones. Working in the non-profit religious tourism sector often involves interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. This can provide unique travel opportunities and a chance to broaden one's horizons and understanding of the world. The non-profit religious tourism sector presents a dynamic and ever-evolving work environment. Individuals can expect to encounter unique challenges and opportunities that contribute to a stimulating and rewarding career path (Marshall, Mottier and Lewis, 2015).

2. Literature Review:

The non-profit religious sector, though often facing salary limitations, attracts and retains dedicated professionals by offering unique career incentives beyond financial rewards. This literature review examines these incentives within the context of the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, a rapidly growing and culturally significant non-profit industry in the Kingdom. Drawing on relevant academic literature and industry reports, it explores the distinct motivations that attract and retain talent in this specific domain.

Several studies highlight the strong influence of intrinsic rewards in attracting and retaining individuals to the non-profit sector. These often include a sense of purpose, making a positive impact on society, and contributing to a cause one believes (Hassan *et al.*, 2022). Within the religious tourism sector, this translates to serving pilgrims, facilitating meaningful experiences, and fostering spiritual fulfillment (Ramkissoon, 2023). Research specifically in the Saudi context emphasizes the importance of "religious commitment" as a driving force for employee motivation within the sector (Laing and Laing, 2019).

While financial compensation may be lower, the non-profit sector can offer diverse opportunities for professional growth and skill development. Studies highlighted the potential for learning new skills, gaining leadership experience, and developing specialized expertise within specific non-profit fields (Kayal, 2023). Similarly, the Saudi religious tourism sector provides opportunities to acquire unique skills in cultural competency, hospitality management, and religious knowledge (Maltio and Wardi, 2019).

Working in the non-profit sector, particularly in diverse fields like religious tourism, fosters intercultural understanding and appreciation. Studies emphasized the enriching experience of interacting with individuals from different backgrounds and gaining insights into their cultures and practices. Within the Saudi religious tourism sector, interacting with pilgrims from diverse parts of the world promotes cultural understanding and breaks down stereotypes (Jouda *et al.*, 2022).

Feeling like the one one's work contributes to a larger societal good is a significant motivator in the non-profit sector. This is particularly evident in the context of the Saudi Vision 2030, where many individuals working in religious tourism express a sense of purpose in contributing to the Kingdom's ambitious goals for the sector (Bin Rayan and Al Noor Salik, 2022). This sense of contributing to a national vision further strengthens their sense of purpose and job satisfaction.

"The personas and motivation of religious tourists and their impact on intentions to visit religious sites in Saudi Arabia" by Ghadeer Kayal provides a comprehensive analysis of the popularity of various religious sites in Saudi Arabia, the personas of prospective visitors, and their intentions to visit (Kayal, 2023). The research revealed that several religious sites in Saudi Arabia are popular and have potential for further consideration by various stakeholders. Additionally, the study identified four personas of prospective visitors based on their motivation and demographics, providing valuable insights for decision-makers and marketing practitioners in designing suitable plans for prospective visitors. Furthermore, the research found a significant association among three motivational variables (self-esteem, relationship, and physiological needs) and the participants' intentions to visit the religious sites (Mobiny and Ramos, 2020).

The results of this study indicate non-profit organizations in both countries face similar challenges and opportunities despite their differences in development of its sectors. In terms of challenges and opportunities, it was financing It has been identified as a challenge in the non-profit sector that reflects other challenges, such as capacity To achieve the organization's tasks, maintain and motivate employees (Mir and Kulibi, 2023).

Finding compatible staff and volunteers were identified as an opportunity, while maintaining staff and volunteers present challenges and opportunities. Motive found presented at non-profit organizations in Sweden, Brazil and intrinsic motivation, specifically, it has been mentioned as being present among staff and volunteers in nonprofit organizations by all managers interviewed (Laing and Laing, 2019).

The results showed three motivational dimensions: religious, social and psychological. Cultural and shopping. In addition, there is evidence of a relationship between age marital status and average daily expenditure per capita with some motivational variables (Hassan *et al.*, 2022).

The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia recognizes the importance and capacity of the tourism industry and considers it one of the main drivers in economic diversification efforts. Study focused on the role of tourism marketing in creating a growing and thriving tourism sector. Study found the tourism marketing initiatives undertaken by the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the results they achieved can also be utilized in the non-profit sector organizations for the holy rituals (Mir and Kulibi, 2023).

Study conducted a data analysis process and thematic analysis, where employing competitive advantages and compensation, fostering an innovative and engaging organizational culture, enabling employee development, and sustaining High levels of employee satisfaction were identified. Study results has recommended that nonprofit managers to provide internal and external rewards to improve culture (Thornburg, 2024).

2.1 Literature Synthesis:

Below is the detail of literature with main objectives and references:

Study Objectives	References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth and development of the non-profit religious tourism industry 	(KILIÇ, 2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial security and stability for individuals and their families 	(Thornburg, 2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning new skills, gaining leadership experience, and developing specialized expertise within specific non-profit fields • Serving pilgrims, facilitating meaningful experiences, and fostering spiritual fulfillment • Capacity To achieve the organization's tasks, maintain and motivate employees 	(Kayal, 2023), (Ramkissoon, 2023), (Mir and Kulibi, 2023)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of purpose, making a positive impact on society, and contributing to a cause one believes • Interacting with pilgrims from diverse parts of the world promotes cultural understanding and breaks down stereotypes 	(Hassan <i>et al.</i> , 2022), (Jouda <i>et al.</i> , 2022), (Bin Rayan and Al Noor Salik, 2022)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem, relationship, and physiological needs) and the participants' intentions to visit the religious sites 	(Mobiny and Ramos, 2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving force for employee motivation within the sector 	(Laing and Laing, 2019)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the preservation and promotion of Islamic heritage and values 	(Tabrani and Marlizar, 2017)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals can expect to encounter unique challenges and opportunities that contribute to a stimulating and rewarding career path 	(Marshall, Mottier and Lewis, 2015)

3. Methodology

A mixed research approach was employed; utilizing detail questionnaire distributed and found 166 valid respondents working in various roles within the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia. Participants were selected to represent Age, Gender, Nationality, Experience and Job Position and Allocated Role. Data was analyzed quantitatively to identify key motivations and incentives driving career choices and satisfaction within the non-profit religious tourism sector. The electronic survey was distributed using different social media channels.

Secondly, researcher has conducted interviews with a group of respondents to further investigate the quantitative study results with qualitative study results and shown in the thematic analysis in the paper.

Demographic Details:

The research identified several key themes related to career incentives in the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia.

- **Age:** Results extracted from the questionnaire showed that out of 166 valid, complete respondents 85 percent are male respondents, and 15 percent are female respondents. Which indicates that male representation is highly convinced and have opportunity to serve in the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia (Figure 1).

Age Representation of Respondents

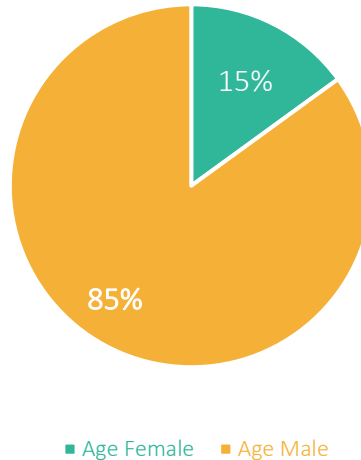


Figure 1: Age Representation of Respondents

- **Nationality:** Results of the questionnaire showed that out of 166 valid, complete respondents, 86 percent are Saudi respondents, and 14 percent are non-Saudi respondents. Which indicates that Saudis are understands the importance of this non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia and participating in a big number. Study also showed that non-Saudis are also participating from their local arrangements to facilitate the pilgrims especially during hajj operations (Figure 2).

Nationality Representation of Respondents

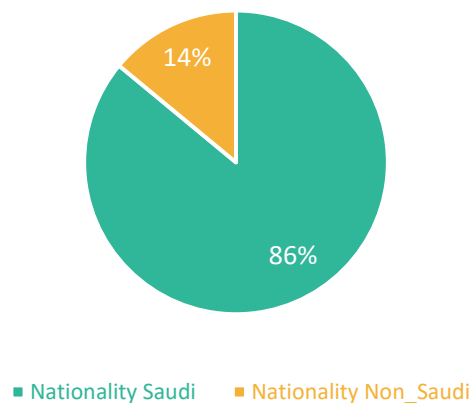


Figure 2: Nationality Representation of Respondents

- **Experience:** Figure below shows the detail of experience of participants, 2 years 25 percent, 3 to 5 years 23 percent and 5 years and above 52 percent (Figure 3).

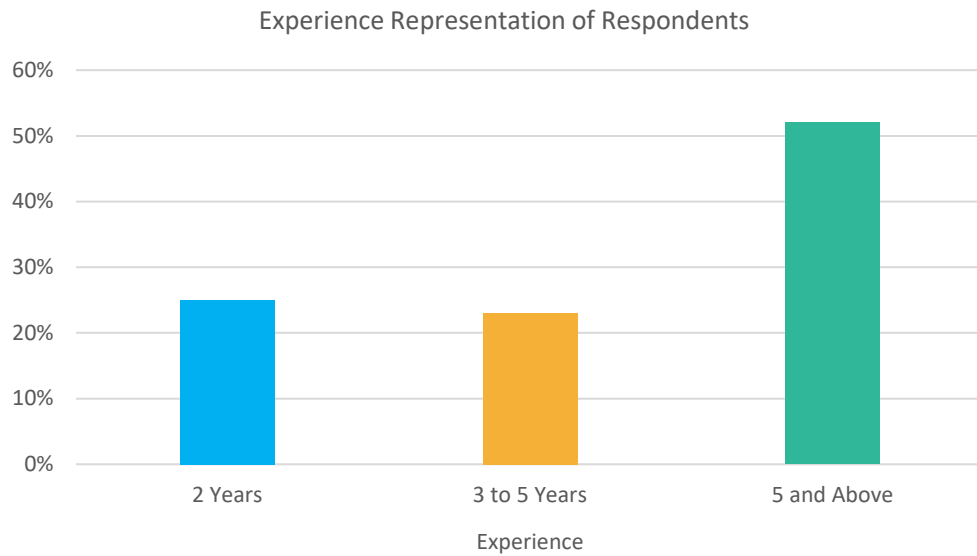


Figure 3: Experience Representation of Respondents

- **Job Position and Role Assigned:** Results extracted from the questionnaire showed that out of 166 valid and complete respondents, 86 percent respondents agreed to participate in the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia, and 14 percent respondents disagreed. Which indicates that a high number of participants agreed to willingly participate in the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia (Figure 4).

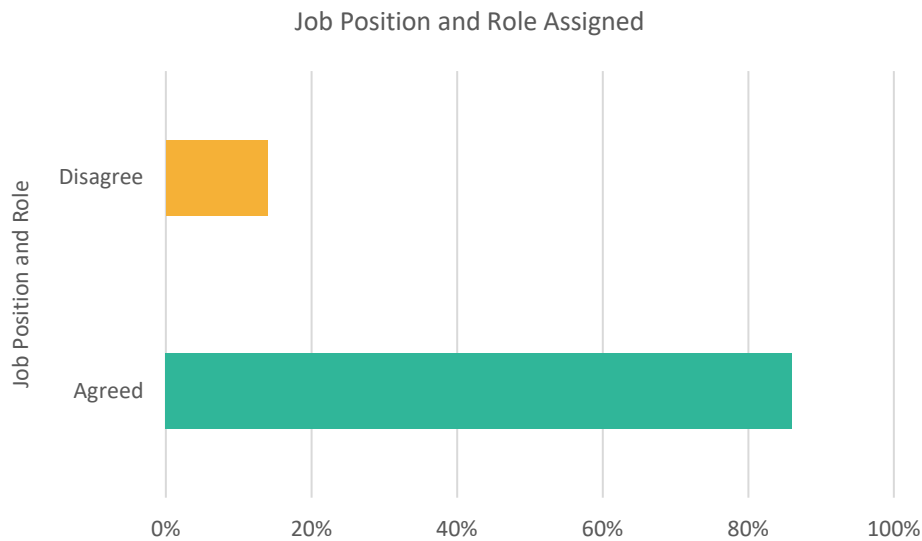


Figure 4: Job Position and Role Assigned of Respondents

4. Discussion

The findings highlight the multifaceted nature of career incentives in the non-profit sector, extending beyond financial compensation to encompass intrinsic rewards, professional development opportunities, and the chance to contribute to a meaningful cause. The non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia exemplifies this dynamic, offering individuals the opportunity to serve pilgrims, gain valuable skills, immerse themselves in diverse cultures, and contribute to the Kingdom's Vision 2030. These findings have important implications for attracting and retaining talent in the non-profit sector more broadly.

The Table 1 below illustrates the detail of study items based on the detail questionnaire, analyzed by using the five point Likert scale, showing Agree, Strongly Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respective for each study item listed in the table. Furthermore, means and Cronbach's Alpha values are calculated to further strengthen the statistical results of the study as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Means and Cronbach's Alpha Results

Sections	Items	Agree	Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Cronbach's alpha
Work Environment	Q1	8	9	45	48	56	4.02	0.71
	Q2	36	18	27	21	64	4.16	
	Q3	16	7	29	36	78	3.77	
	Q4	8	7	20	44	87	3.68	
Functional	Q1	5	5	24	43	89	3.76	0.84
	Q2	15	7	20	41	83	3.53	
	Q3	11	13	26	34	82	33.5	
	Q4	6	16	18	47	79	3.67	
Professional Development	Q1	21	7	24	29	85	3.4	0.63
	Q2	24	8	15	28	91	3.56	
	Q3	26	10	22	43	65	3.53	
	Q4	18	13	21	40	74	4.31	
Direct Manager	Q1	12	15	22	31	86	3.41	0.78
	Q2	15	10	19	39	83	3.54	
	Q3	12	10	16	44	84	3.55	
Goals and follow-up	Q1	14	11	22	42	77	3.54	0.71
	Q2	24	10	23	46	63	3.56	
	Q3	12	7	31	48	68	3.54	
Financial Advantages	Q1	37	25	40	29	35	3.52	0.61
	Q2	44	20	33	28	41	3.46	
	Q3	44	30	23	29	40	3.43	
Sector specificity	Q1	16	6	19	23	102	3.66	0.59
	Q2	17	10	21	31	87	3.43	
	Q3	15	12	32	35	72	3.42	
	Q4	14	7	22	39	84	3.57	

In addition to this, linear regression analysis also performed for evaluating and assessing the significance and strength of the study variables as per the benchmark given and recommended by the academicians. F values and P values are showing the details in the detail is given below (Table 2):

Table 2: Linear Regression Results

Study Variables	F Value	P Value
Work Environment	38.38	0.01*
Functional	18.35	0.01*
Professional Development	35.38	0.01*
Direct Manager	20.66	0.01*
Goals and Follow-up	19.38	0.01*
Financial Advantages	21.37	0.01*
Sector Specificity	22.65	0.01*

The research identified several key themes related to career incentives in the Saudi religious tourism sector based on some interview outcome:

1. **Intrinsic Rewards:** Participants overwhelmingly emphasized the deep sense of personal fulfillment derived from serving pilgrims and contributing to a higher purpose. The opportunity to facilitate meaningful experiences and connect with individuals from diverse cultures was highly motivating.
2. **Professional Development:** To attract and retain highly qualified employees, the sector should offer opportunities for professional growth and skill development. Although participants reported gaining expertise in areas like cultural competency, and religious knowledge, a need of fostering management and professional development has been highlighted.
3. **Cultural Immersion:** Working within the religious tourism sector fosters intercultural understanding and appreciation. Participants described the enriching experience of interacting with individuals from diverse backgrounds and gaining insights into different cultures and religious practices.
4. **Contribution to Vision 2030:** Many participants expressed a sense of purpose in contributing to the Kingdom's ambitious goals for the religious tourism sector. The opportunity to play a role in shaping the future of the industry and promoting Saudi Arabia's cultural heritage was a significant motivator.
5. **Social Recognition:** Despite the community's appreciation of serving pilgrims and religious tourists, there is a prevailing negative impression and perception of working in the non-profit sector. There is a general social perception that working in this sector is of lesser value compared to working in the private or government sector. Therefore, changing the societal mindset about working in the non-profit sector is a key motivator for attracting employees to this sector.

Finally, study has shown some of the important challenges and incentives required for the non-profit sector organizations:

4.1 Challenges

Table below (Table 3) states the important challenges needs to be addressed for more stable and steady environment for non-profit religious sector in Saudi Arabia. Common challenges are the low salaries in non-profit organizations, lack of medical insurance for the wife or parents and lack of financial bonuses and entitlements for overtime work. In addition, it also states that poor medical insurance class rating, no discussion forums in the non-profit sector and lack of residential places for overnight stay in the holy sites.

Furthermore, difficulty of navigating between facilities and providing services and difficulty in the career ranking and time in and out is more than the normal working hours, weak appreciation and motivation for achievements, lack of focus on training and development courses for employees and lack of a clear goal for the non-profit organization and Lack of fee exemptions from bank.

Table 3: The most prominent challenges for workers in non-profit organizations

Data	Funding	Technology & Communication	Infrastructure	Human Resource	Research & Development	Policies
No data available for accessing	<p>Low salaries in non-profit organizations</p> <p>Lack of medical insurance for the wife or parents</p> <p>Lack of financial bonuses and entitlements for overtime work</p> <p>Poor medical insurance class rating</p>	No discussion forums in the non-profit sector	<p>Lack of residential places for overnight stay in the holy sites</p> <p>Difficulty of navigating between facilities and providing services</p>	<p>Difficulty in the career ranking</p> <p>Time in and out is more than the normal working hours</p> <p>Weak appreciation and motivation for achievements</p> <p>Lack of focus on training and development courses for employees</p>	Lack of a clear goal for the non-profit organization	Lack of fee exemptions from bank

4.2 Incentives

Table 4 below states the important incentives for more viable and sustainable business environment for non-profit religious sector in Saudi Arabia. The most important incentives like hiring retired experts for executive boards, bridging the gap between the job seekers and job providers in non-profit sector. Furthermore, providing financial grants to civil society organizations, including the most prominent electronic equipment required for managing the organization’s work, launching a business incubator program for new non-profit organizations, providing soft loans for building business headquarters, service offices, or purchasing equipment, organizing career oriented workshops/seminars for jobs for the non-profit sector

Encouraging capacity building programs for the non-profit sector through the communication channels create co-working spaces for new non-profit organizations, providing free consulting services to new organizations. Providing capacity-building training for non-profit staff on the topic of volunteer management and appreciation. Giving priority to those holding volunteer certificates launching an annual research journal dedicated to research related to the non-profit sector. Establishing an information office for those wishing to work within the non-profit sector, launching an annual excellence award for the non-profit sector. Establishing a new government unit that focuses on follow up on and accelerating requests from new non-profit organizations within the ministry.

Table 4: The most prominent motivators in the non-profit sector

Data	Funding	Technology & Communication	Infrastructure	Human Resource	Research & Development	Policies
Hiring retired experts for executive boards	Providing financial grants to civil society organizations, including the most prominent electronic equipment required for managing the organization's work	Organizing career oriented workshops/seminars for jobs for the non-profit sector		Providing free consulting services to new organizations	Launching an annual research journal dedicated to research related to the non-profit sector	Establishing a new government unit that focuses on follow up on and accelerating requests from new non-profit organizations within the ministry
Bridging the gap between the job seekers and job providers in non-profit sector	<p>Launching a business incubator program for new non-profit organizations</p> <p>Providing soft loans for building business headquarters, service offices, or purchasing equipment</p>	Encouraging capacity building programs for the non-profit sector through the communication channels	Create co-working spaces for new non-profit organizations	<p>Providing capacity-building training for non-profit staff on the topic of volunteer management and appreciation</p> <p>Giving priority to those holding volunteer certificates</p>	<p>Establishing an information office for those wishing to work within the non-profit sector</p> <p>Launching an annual excellence award for the non-profit sector</p>	

5. Conclusion

This research highlighted some of career incentives that need to be offered by the non-profit religious tourism sector in Saudi Arabia within the non-profit business environment. Moving forward, organizations within the sector can leverage these findings to attract and retain talent by emphasizing the intrinsic rewards, professional development opportunities, and the chance to contribute to a meaningful cause. By effectively communicating these distinct advantages, the non-profit sector can compete effectively for talent and continue to fulfill its vital role in society. Study has shown statistical results including demographic details and the five point Likert scale details of the study questionnaire. Study has shown the important challenges faced by the non-profit sector organizations and pointed out some valuable incentives needed for the organizations. The study results will definitely help and guide the stakeholders to develop better work environment right from initiating a new business organization to providing best possible services to the pilgrims at holy places.

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

This study acknowledges limitations, including the focus on a specific sector and the potential for self-selection bias among participants. Future research could explore career incentives across a wider range of non-profit sectors and incorporate quantitative methods to provide broader generalizations. Additionally, investigating the long-term career trajectories of individuals within the non-profit sector would offer valuable insights into career progression and retention strategies.

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Biography

Hatim Bukhari is an Assistant Professor in the Industrial and Systems Engineering Department at University of Jeddah. Currently, he serves as vice dean of development and sustainability of the institute of research and consultations. Dr. Bukhari holds PhD in Industrial Engineering & Management Systems from University of Central Florida, and MSc in Engineering Management and Leadership from Santa Clara University, and BSc in Mechanical Engineering from King Abdul Azizi University. His research interest includes Engineering Management, Quality Management, Internet of Thing (IoT) applications, and Supply Chain Management.