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# Correlation among Human Resource Flexibility Strategy, Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Organizational Performance in Ecotourism Industry

*Ling-Chuan Huang and Ping-Fu Hsu*

## Abstract

To satisfy the demands for production peak, reduce personnel costs for labor, limit the increase of employees in enterprises, and focus on corporate specialty to develop the competitive advantage, enterprises would generally apply human resource flexibility strategy to achieve the objectives. The practice of human resource flexibility strategy would change work-related characteristics; besides, the effect of the system on employees would decide the effort, absenteeism, or turnover. Aiming at supervisors and employees in ecotourism, as the research objects, a total of 500 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 351 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate of 70%. The research results reveal positive and significant effects of 1. human resource flexibility strategy on organizational citizenship behavior, 2. organizational citizenship behavior on organizational performance, and 3. human resource flexibility strategy on organizational performance. According to the results, suggestions are eventually proposed, expecting to provide essential assistance for the human resource flexibility strategy in ecotourism and assist in the sustainable development.

**Keywords:** ecotourism, human resource flexibility strategy, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational performance

## 1. Introduction

Tourism industry became a globally economic activity by the end of twentieth century and rapidly developed to become the major industry in the world in the beginning of twenty-first century. Modern people stress more on leisure, and convenient transportation facilitates the tourism market; especially, diverse tour design and service coverage with local characteristics and local culture are enriched and activated. To cope with the above demands, lots of scenic spots, with rural ecological environment and historical and cultural monument, would attract the visit of urban citizens for enjoying the landscape and experiencing

local culture. A lot of people therefore pay attention to special travel activity such as ecotourism. The participation in ecotourism and the development of ecotourism activity become the trend. Furthermore, convenient travel information acquisition from the Internet has made the tourism market become more competitive. An enterprise gradually emphasizes the employees' discretionary behavior, due to enhancing visitors' self-awareness and increasing unpredictability in the ecotourism management environment, to cope with changes in external environment and acquire competitive advantage. Conscientiousness, altruism, and active support emphasized in organizational citizenship behavior are the key factors in the effective operation of an organization. Nevertheless, human resource flexibility allows an organization to rapidly make response and adjustment to environmental changes. Facing high uncertainty environment, and globally high competition in the twenty-first century have changed human resource management into an enterprise from one that plays an auxiliary role in the function to one that places equivalent importance on the strategy. The application of human resource strategy flexibility therefore is regarded as a primary direction for organizational flexibility. For instance, job rotation allows employees to receive omnidirectional and multi-cultivation (job flexibility) and choices of salary and diverse welfare decisions (welfare flexibility) as well as understand the relevance between individual and company finance being linked with diverse evaluation methods (salary flexibility). Aiming at human resource flexibility strategy, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational performance in ecotourism, the research expects to provide essential assistance for the human resource flexibility strategy in ecotourism and assist in the sustainable development.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Human resource flexibility strategy**

Han et al. [1] defined flexibility as the ability of an enterprise to respond to various requirements in the dynamically competitive environment. Munir and Rahman [2] indicated that human resource flexibility was the human resource management measure taken by an enterprise to cope with the changes in market environment, aiming to stress on labor flexibility, which, with different combination, could generate distinct flexibility effects. Alameddine et al. [3] referred human resource flexibility strategy to flexibly adjust human resource structure, number of employees, job content, working hours, and employees' salary in human resource management to satisfy the requirements of enterprises for different level, different standard, and different model of human resource.

Referring to Do and Yeh [4], four dimensions of job flexibility strategy, time flexibility strategy, quantity flexibility strategy, and salary flexibility strategy are used for the discussion in this study.

1. Job flexibility strategy: Job flexibility strategy refers to employees' mobility and adaptability to execute certain work or task or employing employees with various skills to rapidly respond to the changes in work requirements and technology development.
2. Time flexibility strategy: Time flexibility strategy refers to an enterprise adjusting the time interval or hours in order to match the actual operation requirements or cope with changes in business requirements.

3. Quantity flexibility strategy: Quantity flexibility refers to an enterprise flexibly adjusting the investment in labor to match the fluctuation of market and businesses.
4. Salary flexibility strategy: Most research on salary flexibility involves in changing systematic salary structure to variability in order to fully reflect individual and corporate performance.

## **2.2 Organizational citizenship behavior**

Xu and Li [5] defined organizational citizenship behavior as employees' behaviors exceeding the standard required by the organization; such behaviors were discretionary and not controlled by formal payment systems, including helping colleagues who were behind, maintaining the cleanness of working environment, accepting tasks without complaints, actively accepting undesignated tasks, and proposing suggestions beneficial to the department. Such behaviors were not covered in the formal work statement and were called organizational citizenship behavior [6]. Ross [7] regarded organizational citizenship behavior as individual discretionary behavior, without direct or definite approval of the formal reward system of the organization, to assist organizational functions in effective operation. It was further explained that such discretionary behavior could not be forced to practice through work role requirements or job description, that is, not being restrained through employee contracts [8].

Referring to Tsai et al. [9], organizational citizenship behavior in this study is measured with the following dimensions:

1. Altruism: referring to employees actively helping specific others in the work tasks
2. General compliance: referring to employees' conscientious behavior of actively conforming to the organizational requirements for certain work roles, for example, punctuality, not wasting time, and obedience to rules

## **2.3 Organizational performance**

Chua et al. [10] regarded performance as the standard to measure outcome; when the measured object was an individual, it became job performance, while it was organizational performance when the object was an organization. Jadoo et al. [11] pointed out organizational performance as the measurement of an organization achieving the objective. van der Walt et al. [12] proposed "performance as the measurement of goal attainment of an organization" that could be explained with three points. 1. The measurement of performance was under the premise to confirm organizational objectives. 2. The measurement of performance contained the adoption of measuring methods and the expression of results. 3. The measurement of performance was based on occurred facts, that is, investing resources into an organization and taking outputs as the measurement object.

Referring to Do et al. [13], performance in this study includes three dimensions.

1. Effectiveness: Referring to the comparison of products and services offered by an enterprise with competitors. It is generally measured with sales growth rate and market share.

2. Efficiency: Referring to the ratio of input resources and outputs of an enterprise. It is generally measured with pre-tax income margin or return on investment.
3. Adaptability: Referring to the ability of an enterprise responding to opportunities and threats in the environment, for example, the quantity or sales rate of new products successfully listed in the market in certain period.

## **2.4 Research hypothesis**

Taking employees of high-tech industry in Taiwan as the object, Han et al. [1] found out the direct effect of employees' participation in human resource flexibility systems on organizational citizenship behavior. Coetzee and Stoltz [14] mentioned that the relationship between flexibility and employee behavior lies in flexibility being able to result in consistent common value and behavior of employees through the behavior scripts to enhance efficient internal coordination in the company. Do and Yeh [4] proved the effect of human resource flexibility strategy on employees' work behavior, where the practice of flexible working hours could reduce employees' attendance or enhance the productivity, mainly because the practice of human resource flexibility strategy (e.g., flexible employee training) resulted in positive employment relationship to reduce employees' absence and turnover. In this case, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H1: Human resource flexibility strategy shows positive and significant effects on organizational citizenship behavior.

Xu and Li [5] defined organizational citizenship behavior as individual discretionary behavior, which was not directly or definitely related to rewards, but could enhance organizational efficiency, including cooperation with colleagues, executing extra tasks without complaints, keeping time, voluntarily assisting others, efficiently utilizing time, well applying organizational resources, sharing opinions, and positively representing the organization [11]. Tsai et al. [9] revealed that organizational performance relied on the full support and devotion of all employees in the organization; a leader should construct employees' professional and leading ability, empower employees in the professional field, excite employees' activeness, and induce employees' organizational citizenship behavior to enhance organizational performance and be willing to share leaders' responsibilities. Accordingly, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H2: Organizational citizenship behavior reveals positive and remarkable effects on organizational performance.

Chua et al. [10] proposed the largest positive effect of job flexibility on soft performance (referring to patient satisfaction, medical service quality, professional development of members in departments, and employee satisfaction) to effectively promote organizational performance. Lúanaigh and Hughes [15] indicated that employees with proper autonomy of time would have higher satisfaction to further enhance the organizational performance. Do et al. [13] stated that an enterprise need not pay extra welfare expenses for non-typical workers of temporary staff and outsourcers that it could control the costs and effectively promote the organizational performance. Way et al. [16] proposed the maximal effect of human resource salary flexibility on employees' average monthly productivity that the higher salary flexibility would show better soft performance and higher average monthly production amount to effectively enhance organizational performance. As a result, the hypothesis is proposed in this study.

H3: Human resource flexibility strategy appears positive and notable effects on organizational performance.

### 3. Sample and measurement indicator

#### 3.1 Research sample and object

Aiming at supervisors and employees in ecotourism as the research object, a total of 500 copies of questionnaire are distributed, and 351 valid copies are retrieved, with the retrieval rate of 70%.

#### 3.2 Test of reliability and validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is regarded as an important part in SEM. For this reason, the measurement model should be tested before the two-stage model correction for evaluating the structural model with CFA. When the measured model fit is acceptable, the second step of SEM evaluation is preceded. When preceding CFA, it reveals the standards of the factor loadings of the dimensions in .60–.90, the component reliability in .75–.90, and the average variance extracted in .60–.80. The followings are observed: 1. the factor loadings are higher than .5; 2. the component reliability is higher than .6; and 3. the average variance extracted is higher than .5, conforming to the standards that the dimensions present convergent validity.

### 4. Empirical result analysis

#### 4.1 Structural model analysis

Structural model analysis covers the model fit analysis and the explanatory power of the overall research model. For this reason, seven numerical indices, referring to researchers' opinions, are used for testing the overall model fit in this study, including chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test,  $\chi^2$ -degree of freedom ratio, fit index and adjusted fit index, root mean square error, comparative fit indices, comparative hypothesis model, and chi-square difference of independent model. The overall result analyses are organized in **Table 1**.

From previous overall model fit indices, there is favorable goodness-of-fit between the structured model and the observation data, revealing that the theoretical model could fully explain the observation data. In this case, the correlation coefficient and correlation estimate of human resource flexibility strategy to organizational citizenship behavior and organizational performance could be further understood after the model fit test.

The research data, organized in **Table 2**, reveal good preliminary fit of the overall model.

In regard to internal fit, human resource flexibility strategy presents positive and significant correlations with organizational citizenship behavior (0.82,  $p < 0.01$ ), organizational citizenship behavior shows positive and remarkable correlations with organizational performance (0.88,  $p < 0.01$ ), and human resource flexibility strategy also shows positive and notable correlations with organizational performance (0.83,  $p < 0.01$ ) that H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Fit indices	Allowable limit	This research model	Model fit judgment
$\chi^2$ (Chi-square)	The smaller the better	16.75	
$\chi^2$ -degree of freedom ratio	<3	1.84	Conformed
GFI	>.9	0.97	Conformed
AGFI	>.8	0.84	Conformed
RMSEA	<.08	0.03	Conformed
CFI	>.9	0.92	Conformed
NFI	>.9	0.90	Conformed

**Table 1.**  
*Fit analysis of the research model.*

Evaluation item		Result
Preliminary fit internal fit	Job flexibility strategy	0.75**
	Time flexibility strategy	0.67*
	Quantity flexibility strategy	0.63*
	Salary flexibility strategy	0.70**
Organizational citizenship behavior	Altruism	0.74**
	General compliance	0.72**
Organizational performance	Effectiveness	0.73**
	Efficiency	0.76**
		0.71**
Source flexibility strategy → organizational citizenship behavior		0.82**
Organizational citizenship behavior → organizational performance		0.88**
Human resource flexibility strategy → organizational performance		0.83**

*Note: \*Stands for  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*for  $p < 0.001$ .*

**Table 2.**  
*Overall linear structural model analysis result.*

5. Conclusion

The research results reveal significantly positive correlations between ecotourism human resource flexibility strategy, organizational citizenship behavior, and organizational performance. The higher application of human resource flexibility strategy would show better organizational performance to enhance employees' organizational citizenship behavior. Especially in job rotation and multi-skill training, human resource flexibility strategy in ecotourism allows employees to engage in various works and learn new work contents. Employees being able to undertake different positions in different departments would understand the details of work execution processes, mainly because the participation process could induce the activeness and enhance the organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore,

human resource flexibility strategy in ecotourism contains the encouragement of increasing resource distribution. For instance, multi-skill training is the performance of employees being emphasized in ecotourism to enhance the organizational citizenship behavior and promote organizational performance.

## 6. Suggestion

From the research results and findings, the following practical suggestions are proposed in this study:

1. According to the requirement for organizational development, ecotourism is suggested to plan and cultivate professional skills and talents required for the organizational development. The flexible arrangement of job flexibility could be enhanced and human resource development could be more positively planned through systematical education training or planning of other learning opportunities (e.g., job rotation, project organization, or cross-department work team).
2. Ecotourism businesses should stress on the effect of salary system and salary structure on the organization and employees, properly change salary payment reference, increase the linkage between salary, employee performance, and employee skills, and enhance the flexibility ratio. Moreover, the connection between salary and strategic objective of ecotourism should be positively taken into account to encourage employees' work motivation as well as promote organizational performance and employees' organizational citizenship behavior.
3. Salary flexibility in ecotourism aims to have employees realize the relevance between salary and operation conditions of the company. The employees would present organizational citizenship behavior when the company could clearly deliver, explain, and describe the fair methods.

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