

How Organizational Justice Affects Young Pioneers' OCB: A Mediation Analysis of Organizational Identity

Fengqiong Zheng, Houqi Yang*

Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, Zigong 64300, China

*Corresponding Author Email: 1980991068@qq.com

Abstract

To understand the current status and influencing factors of Young Pioneers' organizational citizenship behavior; and to explore the relationship between organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers, in order to better carry out educational work for the Young Pioneers. This study used relevant questionnaires to survey 1,200 Young Pioneers from grades 3 to 6 in primary schools. The results found that there are differences in organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers across grades and whether they hold student leadership positions. There is a significant positive correlation between organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational identity partially mediates the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Based on the analysis of the research findings, the paper proposes some strategies to improve Young Pioneers' work.

Keywords

Organizational justice; organizational identity; organizational citizenship behavior; Young Pioneers.

1. Introduction

The Young Pioneers Organization is a children's group established and led by the Communist Party of China. It aims to cultivate builders and successors for socialism. The Young Pioneers are members of this organization and recipients of its educational programs. In recent years, with the advancement of Chinese-style modernization, China has achieved its centenary goal and embarked on a new journey toward the second centenary goal. As the bearers of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the *long marchers* of the next century, the development of Young Pioneers' cognition and behavior directly impacts the realization of the second centenary goal. Therefore, fostering a sense of identity with the organization and group-oriented behavior among Young Pioneers is a strategic and foundational task that ensures the red territory remains unchanged forever.

2. Theoretical Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1. The relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior

Through a review of existing research, it is found that: Firstly, organizational citizenship behavior is closely related to organizational identity, and the organizational identity of Young Pioneers is also an important aspect of Young Pioneer education. The development of organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior directly impacts the sense of honor among Young Pioneers. For example, scholars such as Moorman have developed

personality traits and psychological factors of organizational members, which significantly influence their organizational citizenship behavior, including the degree of organizational identity [1]. In the context of Chinese culture, domestic scholars Yao Zhiqiang and Liu Wei view organizational identity as a psychological connection between individuals and organizations, arguing that organizational identity plays a motivational and sustaining role in the generation and development of individual behavior[2]. Dai Liping believes that organizational identity can be seen as an internal incentive factor for the emergence of organizational citizenship behavior, with strong identification among organizational members being a prerequisite for such behavior[3]. Second, existing research has found that a fair atmosphere within organizations significantly influences organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior among its members. This study will draw on theories from organizational behavior to focus on Young Pioneers as the subject of study. Building on previous research, it will use organizational justice as the independent variable, organizational citizenship behavior as the dependent variable, and organizational identity as the mediating variable, exploring the current status of organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers, clarifying the relationships among these three factors, and investigating the psychological and behavioral development patterns of Young Pioneers, aiming to provide insights for improving Young Pioneer education and enhancing the level of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers.

2.2. Research design

2.2.1. Research object

The study subjects were selected from 1,200 Young Pioneers in grades three to six of primary school. Questionnaires were distributed using a random sampling method, with a total of 1,200 questionnaires distributed and 1,114 returned. The number of valid questionnaires was 1,005, with an effective rate of 83.75%. Among them, there were 569 boys and 436 girls. The number of third-grade Young Pioneers was 169, fourth grade 162, fifth grade 410, and sixth grade 264.

2.2.2. Research tools

2.2.2.1 Organizational citizenship behavior questionnaire

Regarding the measurement tools for organizational citizenship behavior, foreign countries have developed relatively mature questionnaires. However, influenced by cultural background differences between China and the West, Chinese scholars such as Fan Jingli have conducted research on organizational citizenship behavior[4], taking into account the Chinese cultural context, and developed a tool suitable for measuring organizational citizenship behavior in this context. Therefore, this study is based on the Chinese Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale developed by Fan Jingli in 2006, and has been adapted to the actual situation of Young Pioneers, forming a Chinese Young Pioneer Organizational Citizenship Behavior Questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three dimensions: personal initiative at the level of individual self-management and autonomous effort; altruistic behavior at the level of helping other Young Pioneers and promoting interpersonal harmony within the Young Pioneer organization; and organizational behavior at the level of actively participating in team activities, making suggestions to the team, and protecting team resources to promote organizational development. Each dimension consists of five items, totaling 15 items, using a Likert scale from "strongly agree (5 points)" to "strongly disagree (1 point)." Higher scores indicate higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.867, and the validity coefficient is 0.931, indicating that the questionnaire used in this study is valid.

2.2.2.2 Organizational justice questionnaire

The organizational justice studied in this research is a unidimensional variable, referring to the overall perception of fairness in learning and working environments among Young Pioneers. Therefore, the questionnaire was revised based on the overall justice perception scale compiled by scholars Ambrose and Scheminke (2009), taking into account the actual situation of the Young Pioneer organization. The questionnaire consists of six items, with a reliability coefficient of 0.691 and an validity coefficient of 0.781, indicating good reliability and validity. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale from "strongly agree (5 points)" to "strongly disagree (1 point)," where higher scores indicate a higher degree of perceived fairness within the Young Pioneer organization.

2.2.2.3 Organizational identity questionnaire

This study adopted the Young Pioneers Organizational Identity Measurement Questionnaire compiled by Chen Runan to measure the organizational identity of Young Pioneers[5][]. The questionnaire is divided into four dimensions: organizational cultural atmosphere, internal relationships within the organization, organizational activities, and organizational identity. It uses a five-point Likert scale from "strongly agree (5 points)" to "strongly disagree (1 point)." The total score of each dimension is the sum of the scores for that dimension. A higher questionnaire score indicates a higher level of organizational identity among Young Pioneers. In this study, the questionnaire demonstrated good reliability and validity, with reliability coefficients and validity coefficients of 0.928 and 0.949, respectively.

2.2.3. Data processing

The questionnaire data were analyzed by SPSS 26.0 data software, including confirmatory factor analysis, one-factor variance analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis and mediation analysis.

3. Research Finding

3.1. Descriptive analysis

The overall average score of Young Pioneers' organizational citizenship behavior is $M=4.398\pm0.6$. Through T-tests and ANOVA, it is shown that there is no significant difference in Young Pioneers' organizational citizenship behavior among genders ($P=0.434>0.05$), but there are significant differences in terms of position ($p=0.001$, $p<0.05$). The level of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers who serve as team leaders ($M=4.489\pm0.546$) is higher than those who do not serve as ordinary Young Pioneers ($M=4.331\pm0.629$). Furthermore, there are significant differences in organizational citizenship behavior among different grades. Post-hoc comparisons show: first, there is no significant difference between third grade and fourth grade ($p=0.942$), nor between fifth grade and sixth grade ($p=0.998$); second, the level of organizational citizenship behavior among third grade Young Pioneers (4.546 ± 0.452) is significantly higher than that of fifth grade (4.336 ± 0.633) and sixth grade (4.328 ± 0.633), while the level of organizational citizenship behavior among fourth grade Young Pioneers (4.514 ± 0.555) is significantly higher than that of fifth and sixth grade Young Pioneers.

The overall average score for the Young Pioneers' organizational justice is $M=4.204 \pm 0.75$. There are no significant differences in organizational justice between genders and years of service. T-tests and ANOVA show that there is only a significant difference in organizational justice across grades. Post-hoc comparisons reveal that the score for organizational justice decreases with advancing grade levels, showing no significant differences among third, fourth, and fifth graders, but a clear difference between sixth graders and other grades.

The overall average score for Young Pioneers' organizational identity is $M=4.423\pm0.531$. T-tests and ANOVA show that there are no significant differences in organizational identity among Young Pioneers based on gender and job experience, with only grade level ($P<0.001$) showing

a significant difference. Post-hoc comparisons reveal that third-grade Young Pioneers have higher organizational identity than other grades, fourth-grade Young Pioneers have higher identification than fifth and sixth grades, while there is no significant difference between fifth and sixth grades.

3.2. Correlation analysis

This study conducted pearson correlation test on the analysis of organizational justice, organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers. According to the test results, organizational justice, organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers are positively correlated with each other, and the correlation coefficient is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlations: Org.Justice, Org.ID & OCB in Young Pioneers

variable	1	2
organizational identity	.319**	
organizational citizenship behavior	.18**	.387**

Note: **. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (double-tailed).

3.3. The simple mediating effect of the organizational identity of the Young Pioneers

To further explore the predictive role of organizational justice and organizational identity in predicting organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers, this study uses organizational justice as the independent variable, organizational citizenship behavior as the dependent variable, and organizational identity as the mediating variable. It separately examines the mediating effect of organizational identity between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior, as well as the mediating effects of organizational identity on the three dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior: prosocial behavior, personal initiative, and altruistic behavior.

Firstly, through the regression analysis of the fairness of Young Pioneers organizations and the organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers members, we test the total effect coefficient of the independent variable, fairness of Young Pioneers organizations, on the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers members. As shown in Table 2, $F=79.913$, $P=0.000$, $c=0.167$, indicating that the total effect of the independent variable, fairness of Young Pioneers organizations, on the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers members, is 0.167. The impact of the independent variable, organizational justice, on the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers members, is significant, and the model $1Y=0.167X+e1$ holds, with the mediation effect also established. Then, by incorporating Young Pioneers organizational identity as a mediating variable, the path coefficient of the independent variable, organizational justice, on the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers members, is significant, $b=0.369$, $c'=0.058$, $F=249.482$, $p=0.000$. Finally, we test coefficient a, conducting regression analysis with organizational justice as the independent variable and organizational identity as the dependent variable, yielding a coefficient of 0.296, $F=267.569$, $p=0.000$. Therefore, models $2M=0.296X+e2$ and $3Y=0.058X+bM+e3$ hold. According to the mediation effect testing procedure proposed by Wen Zhonglin (2014) et al.[6] [], when coefficients a, b, and c are all significant, partial mediation theory is applied, and the common efficiency of the mediating effect on the total effect is: $M=ab/c=0.296 \times 0.369 / 0.167 = 0.5944$ (59.44%).

Table 2. Mediation: Org.ID in Org.Justice→OCB Link

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	t	R ²	F
1	organizational citizenship behavior	organizational justice	.167	8.939***	.028	79.913***
2	organizational identity	organizational justice	.296	16.358***	.088	267.569***
3	organizational citizenship behavior	organizational justice	.058	3.158***	.152	249.482***
		organizational identity	.369	20.183***		

Secondly, examine the mediating role of organizational identity between organizational justice and Young Pioneers' prosocial behavior. organizational justice is set as the independent variable, organizational identity as the mediating variable, and prosocial behavior as the dependent variable. The mediation test was conducted using a three-step regression method, with the results shown in Table 3. According to the results in Table 3, the direct effect of organizational justice on prosocial behavior and organizational identity is significant. When organizational identity is included in the regression model, the path coefficient of organizational justice on prosocial behavior decreases (from 0.172 to 0.159), but remains significant, indicating that organizational identity partially mediates the relationship between organizational justice and prosocial behavior among Young Pioneers.

Table 3. Org.ID Mediates Justice→Pro-Org Behavior

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	t	R ²	F
1	Pro-Organizational Behavior	organizational justice	.172	9.236***	.028	85.307***
2	organizational identity	organizational justice	.296	16.358***	.088	267.569***
3	Pro-Organizational Behavior	organizational justice	.125	6.482***	.053	77.682***
		organizational identity	.159	8.246***		

Secondly, the mediating role of organizational identity in the relationship between organizational justice and individual initiative among Young Pioneers is examined. organizational justice is used as the independent variable, organizational identity as the mediating variable, and organizational citizenship behavior as the dependent variable. A three-step regression method was employed to test the mediating effect, with the results presented in Table 4. According to the test results: organizational justice has a significant direct effect on individual initiative. However, when organizational identity is included in the regression model, the path coefficient from the independent variable to the dependent variable of individual initiative becomes insignificant (from a significant 0.172 to an insignificant 0.159), indicating that organizational identity plays a complete mediating role between organizational justice and individual initiative.

Table 4. Mediation: Org.ID in Justice→Initiative

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	t	R ²	F
1	Personal initiative	organizational justice	.123	6.528***	.015	42.609***
2	organizational identity	organizational justice	.296	16.358***	.088	267.569***
3	Personal initiative	organizational justice	.007	.403***	.154	252.1***
		organizational identity	.39	21.322		

Finally, the mediating role of organizational identity in the relationship between organizational justice and prosocial behavior was examined. organizational justice was used as the independent variable, organizational identity as the mediating variable, and prosocial behavior as the dependent variable. A three-step regression method was employed to test for the

mediating effect, with the results shown in Table 5. According to the test results: the direct effect of organizational justice on prosocial behavior among Young Pioneers is significant. When organizational identity among Young Pioneers is included in the regression model, the path coefficient from the independent variable to the dependent variable of prosocial behavior remains significant, and the correlation coefficient increases from 0.13 to 0.38, indicating that organizational identity partially mediates the relationship between organizational justice and prosocial behavior.

Table 5. Org.ID Mediates Justice→Altruism

Model	Dependent Variable	Predictor	B	t	R ²	F
1	altruistic behavior	organizational justice	.13	6.892 ***	.017	47.45***
2	organizational identity	organizational justice	.296	16.358***	.088	267.569***
3	altruistic behavior	organizational justice	.017	.93***	.148	241.987***
		organizational identity	.38	20.716***		

To sum up, organizational identity plays a partial mediating role between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. In the dimensions of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior, organizational identity plays a partial mediating role between organizational justice and prosocial behavior and altruistic behavior, and plays a complete mediating role between organizational justice and individual initiative.

4. Discuss

4.1. Analysis of the differences in organizational justice, organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers by grade level

There are significant differences in organizational justice, organizational identity, and levels of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers of different grades. This study found that as grade level increases, the scores for organizational justice, organizational identity, and organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers gradually decrease. In China, the Young Pioneer education system implements a policy of full-child recruitment, where all primary school students join the Young Pioneer organization before second grade to receive organizational education. This "non-discriminatory" recruitment to some extent leads to a lack of awareness among older Young Pioneers about their unique status as Young Pioneers during the stage of self-awareness development and personalization, i.e., the feeling that "all primary school students are Young Pioneers" weakens their sense of organizational identity and honor, reducing their willingness to exhibit good organizational behavior. Additionally, this phenomenon is related to the novelty of the organization for Young Pioneers at different ages; younger students have a stronger sense of novelty about the Young Pioneer organization, which gradually diminishes with age, leading to a decline in organizational identity[7] []. This phenomenon is closely linked to the rigidification of Young Pioneer activities, where the content and form of practical activities do not keep up with the physical and mental development characteristics of young children[8] []. Although China has issued the "Guidelines for Implementing Young Pioneers Activity Courses by Grade Level," and in the speech and work report of He Junchi and Zheng Fuzhi at the second plenary session of the Eighth National Working Committee of the Young Pioneers in 2021, it was clearly mentioned that Young Pioneers education and activities should be implemented by grade level: lower grades focus on sensory understanding, middle grades present facts, and higher grades explore the reasons behind examples [9] []. However, in actual practice, Young Pioneers activities are largely conducted based on the experience and intuition of counselors, and remain at a uniform level.

This results in Young Pioneers education not aligning with the laws of children's physical and mental development. Lengthy, repetitive, and monotonous Young Pioneers activities instead reduce participants' enthusiasm, weaken their emotional connection to the organization, and hinder their positive behavior.

4.2. Analysis of the differences in whether to hold organizational positions or not between Young Pioneers and citizens' organizations

The level of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers in organizing citizens shows significant differences based on their tenure, meaning that Young Pioneers who have served as student leaders exhibit higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior compared to those who have not. This research conclusion differs from the findings of Guo Suyan[10], possibly due to differences in the research tools used and regional variations in the survey subjects. Student leaders have more opportunities to engage with organizational affairs and are better aware of the organization's rules and requirements in their daily work. They also have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities and obligations, closer ties with the organization, and deeper emotional connections, which enable them to spontaneously demonstrate organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, in primary schools, Young Pioneers are generally organized by class, where class leaders also serve as Young Pioneer leaders. Each Young Pioneer leader wears a prominent badge on their upper left arm, known as "several red stripes"[11]. The badge serves as a constant reminder of the role of class organizers and service providers, fostering a strong sense of responsibility, fairness, service, and democracy among Young Pioneer leaders in their daily work and studies, thereby enhancing their awareness of voluntarily practicing organizational citizenship behavior.

4.3. Analysis of the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers

In the relevant analysis of this study, organizational justice is positively correlated with the level of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers ($r=0.18$, $p<0.05$), meaning that the higher the sense of organizational justice among Young Pioneers, the better their identification with the organization. This conclusion further confirms the findings of Farh, Podsakoff, and Organ (1990) and aligns with the results of other scholars who have studied the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. According to equity theory, organizational justice refers to the overall perception of fairness in learning and work environments by organizational members. The perception of an overall fair atmosphere within the organization can promote prosocial behaviors among groups. In this study, Young Pioneers' perception of organizational justice is at a moderate to high level, indicating that the overall fair atmosphere within the organization is relatively good. Moreover, Young Pioneers can accurately perceive the atmosphere within the organization and process it internally, thereby promoting high levels of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers.

4.4. Analysis of the relationship between organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers

In the relevant analysis of this study, there is a positive correlation between Young Pioneers' organizational identity and their level of organizational citizenship behavior ($r=0.387$, $p<0.05$). This conclusion further supports the research findings of Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) et al. on organizational identity and organizational citizenship behavior[12]. At the second plenary session of the Eighth National Working Committee of the Young Pioneers, Comrade Zheng Fuzhi repeatedly emphasized the need to enhance Young Pioneers' organizational identity with the Young Pioneers organization and to foster a sense of honor among members[13]. Cultivating organizational identity in Young Pioneers is an essential part of fulfilling the fundamental task

of nurturing successors for communism, which is to cultivate Young Pioneers who "love the country, love the people, and love labor." From the perspective of organizational identity, fostering Young Pioneers' identification with the organization is a crucial approach for internalizing and externalizing "love for the country, love for the people, and love for labor."

4.5. Young Pioneers' organizational identity plays a partial mediating role between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior

This study found that the organizational identity of Young Pioneers partially mediates the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. That is, organizational justice not only directly influences the organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers but also indirectly through their organizational identity. The mediating effect ratio is $M=ab/c=0.296 \times 0.369 / 0.167 = 0.5944$ (59.44%), with a mediating effect size ab of 0.701, indicating that 59.44% of the impact of organizational identity on organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers is mediated by their organizational identity towards the Young Pioneers organization. The reasons for this may be that the influence of organizational justice on the organizational citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers is affected by other variables, such as when organizational justice affects the citizenship behavior of Young Pioneers, it might be influenced by factors like organizational commitment, organizational support, and psychological empowerment[14] []. Additionally, organizational identity itself is a precursor to organizational citizenship behavior and an important factor influencing it, thus reducing the impact of organizational justice on organizational citizenship behavior to some extent.

5. Research Implications

Based on the results of this study, in order to further cultivate the organizational citizenship behavior of the Young Pioneers, the following strategies can be adopted:

First, establish fair and just educational mechanisms and organizational management systems to create a harmonious and just campus atmosphere. The Young Pioneers organization and class collectives should implement a fair and just student cadre appointment mechanism. When setting up cadres in the Young Pioneers organization, rotation and election systems should be adopted, especially for squad organizations formed at the class level. The classroom is the primary "micro-field" where Young Pioneers receive education in school. The selection mechanism for student cadres should strive to benefit every member of the organization, fostering a sense of fairness and democracy among members, helping them develop good organizational citizenship behaviors, making each Young Pioneer clearly aware of their responsibilities and obligations, and encouraging them to serve the organization, the class, and their peers in practice; Young Pioneer counselors must have a fair heart. As guides for children's growth, counselors can only gain the support and endorsement of members when they treat every child impartially and without bias, thereby achieving the members' love and recognition of the organization, ultimately enhancing the organizational identity of Young Pioneers and promoting the development of their organizational citizenship behaviors.

Secondly, the Young Pioneers organization should establish and improve a tiered growth incentive system to motivate members' intrinsic organizational identity. Renowned psychologist Skinner believed that individuals will adopt certain behaviors to achieve their goals when they perceive these actions as beneficial. As China's basic education reform progresses, implementing "all children joining the team" ensures all children can equally receive organizational education, which is a fundamental principle of the Young Pioneers' educational approach. To ensure that the sense of identity and honor among Young Pioneers continues to grow under this framework, adopting a phased "differentiated" approach for full-child recruitment and establishing a distinctive tiered incentive mechanism after recruitment is

crucial. This ensures the specific, sustained, and routine stimulation of members' intrinsic sense of honor and identity. It is important to grasp the three critical time points in organizational education—before joining, during membership, and after leaving the team. Combining pre-recruitment education with post-recruitment incentives, implementing the "recruitment procedures," and through thorough pre-recruitment education, clear recruitment standards, standardized recruitment processes, and solemn recruitment ceremonies, systematically and in batches, absorb eligible young people into the Young Pioneers, fostering a sense of honor and organizational belonging from the outset[15][]. Integrating honor incentives, practical incentives, and position incentives with in-team education, conducting orderly, distinctive, and comprehensive Young Eagle Badge activities within the organization, ensures that members' sense of identity and honor continues to grow after joining, closely linking organizational education with children's growth. Combining excellence incentives with post-recruitment support, becoming a member of the Communist Youth League is an important stage in the development of Young Pioneers. In order to ensure that the organizational identity of the Young Pioneers in grades 5 and 6 does not decline, the promotion of youth League membership and the competition for badges among the Young Pioneers should be included in the quantitative assessment of youth League membership, so as to ensure that the sense of honor and identity of the members does not slacken or retreat before they leave the team.

The third point is to enhance the effectiveness of educational activities, integrating the cultivation of organizational citizenship behavior into the daily activities of Young Pioneers. Improving the level of organizational citizenship behavior among Young Pioneers lies in continuously innovating and strengthening the educational outcomes of Young Pioneer education, reducing formalism, superficiality, and entertainment in these activities. On one hand, this involves enhancing members' sense of ownership through regular ideological and political education, job training, and service work, thereby boosting their sense of responsibility, mission, and service. On the other hand, schools should establish routine Young Pioneer activities, avoiding "a policy, an event," "an inspection, an event," or "a festival, an event" that are merely performative. Instead, they should conduct practical and cultural activities in a systematic, planned, and effective manner, helping members enhance their sense of collective honor and belonging through daily activities, fostering good teacher-student relationships and peer relationships, and cultivating Young Pioneers who love their collective, are willing to help others, and have high moral standards.

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