

Operationalizing the antecedents and outcomes of union participation in the Indian context

Union participation in the Indian context

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Abstract

Purpose – Unions and organizations interests are often seen to be in competition. However, union-voice hypothesis suggests that unions can provide a distinctive mechanism to lower organizational costs by reducing exit behavior, absence from work and conflict levels at work. This study aims to look at union participation as a form of voice which is affected by a number of antecedents and in turn has an effect upon the workers performance (i.e. worker behavior effectiveness [WBE]) in an organization.

Design/methodology/approach – The study draws on data from 340 permanent labors working in 19 manufacturing units across different regions of India to explore both the antecedents and outcomes of union participation. Hypotheses are tested using mediation analysis.

Findings – Results indicate statistically significant relationships between union participation, its antecedents and WBE, with union participation partially influencing the relationship between the constructs.

Originality/value – Uniqueness of the study lies in its findings which report positive relationship among union participation, its antecedents and behavior effectiveness. Contrary to the traditional belief that unions are detrimental to the health of any organization, the study suggests that workers decision to join and participate in unions should be viewed positively because only if a person is willing to stay with the organization, he/she seeks to resolve the issues/problems through collective mechanism of union participation and which in turn leads to enhanced performance, reduced absenteeism at the workplace.

Keywords Manufacturing sector, Antecedents of union participation, Union participation, Worker behavior effectiveness, Mediating regression analysis

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

With increasing globalization, business dynamics have changed and new classes of professional managers have emerged as a result of dissociation of workers from the ownership and management. The complex organization structures, competition and indirect communication have gradually antagonized the relations between the employee and employer, giving rise to industrial aberrations in the form of strikes, demonstrations, lockouts and suspensions (Singh *et al.*, 2012). Further with a shift in the power from unions



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to management, decrease in government interventions, constant technological up-gradations and rising unprofessionalism of the employers (replacement of permanent workers with temporary and casual workers; dismissal, transfers and illegitimate wage deductions, etc.), industrial disputes and conflicts have become inevitable (Noronha, 2003). These disputes lead to loss of productivity and result in worker dissatisfaction. Additionally, these disputes also shoot up the worker turnover and absenteeism levels at workplace, thus reducing profits for the organization and impairing its reputation (Chatterjee and Patra, 2013; Lal, 2002). Hence, managing industrial relations (IRs) has become an important area of study for sustaining organizational effectiveness.

Trade unions are social institutions that provide an important platform for the collective representation, negotiation, promotion and protection of its member's interests – economic, political and social. They serve as protection shield against all the obstacles (legal and day to-day) that comes the workers way (Chhabra and Suri, 2005) and keep a check on the “unitarian” management tendencies. Unions constitute a desirable voice/response mechanism through which worker preferences and demands (individual, expressive and instrumental motives) can be easily broadcast and made subject to proper management consideration. Further, as a mechanism of collective voice, unions also act as a medium for venting out member's discontents related to their jobs, which is otherwise not possible on the individual level (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). Consequently, instead of responding to dissatisfaction by exiting, employees manifest their grievances via partaking in strikes and demonstrations (i.e. workers resort to union participation) and seek to have their dissatisfaction addressed. This way, unions help improve worker morale and cooperation and provide workers an alternative to quitting (Addison and Belfield, 2004) and absenting themselves from work (Deery *et al.*, 2014; Deery *et al.*, 1999). This stable workforce, in turn, exhibits greater productivity and efficiency (Freeman and Medoff, 1984) and decreased conflict levels at work (Peetz, 2012) which subsequently leads to substantial cost savings for the organization.

Even though researchers have immensely contributed to the field of union participation and its antecedents (that is provided explanation for why workers take part in strikes, rallies, demonstrations and union meetings, which is an indicator of participation in union related activities by its members and hence union democracy; and what antecedent conditions exhort participation in union activities), however, studies have rather neglected examining the outcomes of such participation. Particularly, “an empirical study for establishing linkages among the three constructs (namely, union participation, its antecedents and worker behavior effectiveness, [WBE]) needs to be undertaken” to understand how participation tactics influence workers' performance (i.e. WBE) at work (Chawla *et al.*, 2018, p. 218).

In the light of the given background, present study attempts to explore the possible statistical linkages of union participation and its antecedents with WBE, under mediating influence of union participation, taking Chawla *et al.*'s union participation model as the basis. This study, however, extends the existing model by identifying items for the proposed constructs (namely, union commitment, union instrumentality, union ideology, general pro-union attitudes, union support, union participation and WBE) and statistically validating the relationship among them, with reference to manufacturing units in India. Manufacturing sector has been purposely chosen for the present inquiry as India is a developing country and manufacturing sector is poised to make significant contributions to its economic growth.

The paper is organized into four broad sections, where, the first section deals with building up the conceptual framework by undertaking an extensive literature review on the

topic; second section presents the research methodology; third section is devoted to hypotheses testing and presentation of the results of data analysis; and fourth section concludes with research contributions, limitations and future research directions.

Conceptual development and review

Theory underpinning

Initially, union membership participation was profoundly studied in the USA during IRs golden age (Tannenbaum, 1965; Spinrad, 1960). Later, the area under discussion started receiving substantial interest in other English (Nicholson *et al.*, 1981) and non-English speaking countries as well, with the aim of ascertaining antecedents of union participation.

At the outset, membership participation was explained by Marxist theorists (Marx and Engles, 1977; Seidman *et al.*, 1958) in terms of members' frustration with the existing order and their urge to overthrow the oppressive order. Later, the theories on membership participation centered around the job and workers "stake in the job," advocating that members' dissatisfaction with their job, specifically, its economic factors, job contents and the status is influential in procuring vote in favor of union (Mason and Bain, 1993; Fiorito *et al.*, 1988; Bain and Prince, 1983; Odewahn and Petty, 1980; Berger *et al.*, 1983).

Another psychological approach, central to many economic explanations (Deery and Cieri, 1991; Hirsch, 1980; Cooke, 1983), elucidated membership orientations using the rational choice theory (Dunlop, 1944). Yet another part of theorizing on membership participation concentrated on the sociological approach, which predicted that the major influence of union membership – to be or not to be a union member, can be found in an individuals' social context – both within and outside the workplace (Guest and Dewe, 1988; Cooke, 1983).

Most of the above theories have been supported by subsequent researches in the West. Studies in the Indian context, e.g., Bhangoo (1989), Gani (1988), Arya (1982), Ramaswamy (1977), Pandey and Vikram (1969) and Sinha and Paul (1963), have either contradicted or partially supported these theories (Arya, 1982; Sheth, 1969).

In their attempts to find answers for the lack of membership participation in unions, though researchers sought the advice and counsel of people from varied backgrounds including sociologists, economists and statisticians, whose tools of inquiry ranged from simple direct response and observation to statistically extracted empirical investigations, yet no single school of thought can claim monopoly of insight into the area due to absence of shared conclusions on theoretical grounds and lack of convincing empirical support testing the validity of these theories (Perline and Lorenz, 1970).

All the above theoretical precedents hence suggest that a wide range of motives are at work, whereas an employee tends to take membership participation decision. This makes the study of participation behavior a complex phenomenon, which needs to be deliberated upon further for deriving a concrete set of factors that endorse union participation.

Systematic literature review

Systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, as proposed by Tranfield *et al.* (2003), was adopted for the present study which advocates use of both academic and contemporary literature sources for arriving at the research problem and hence objectives of the study. Following the SLR methodology, the review process for present inquiry was broadly divided into three stages:

The literature review is an integral component of any scientific study. To begin with, in *Stage 1*, a list of reputable journals, such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *American*

Journal of Economics and Sociology, American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, British Journal of Industrial Relations, Industrial and Labour Relations Review, Industrial Relations Journal, Int. J. of Business Excellence, Int. J. of Human Resource Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Industrial Psychology, Journal of Management Policy and Practice, Journal of Labor Research, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Pacific Sociological Review, Personnel Psychology and Personnel Review in the field were drawn.

Following the first step, various keywords and search terms were identified for conducting the systematic research. These include trade unions, union participation, antecedents of union participation, turnover, absenteeism, job satisfaction, behavior effectiveness and manufacturing sector.

Ensuing from the search results, a list of over 100 relevant articles was build up. Next, to minimize the chances of inclusion of secondary sources on the prejudices of researcher and to ensure delivery of reliable results to the end users (managers, stake holders, customers, etc.), the authenticity and genuineness of the ensuing fact(s) were assured by examining the values and assumptions underlying each of these studies. This aided in gaining insights on seminal works of eminent researchers in the field.

As the effectiveness of trade unions is greatly affected by degree of participation of members themselves in the management of trade unions (Nandakumar and Ravishankar, 1994), a structured review of the pertinent issues associated with union participation, relevant in the present scenario, was undertaken in *Stage 2*. During the review, it was found that:

[...] industrial disputes, consisting of strikes and lockouts, constitute an important source of disruption in production activity in India and, besides causing production loss, industrial disputes discourage investment and thereby slowdown economic growth.

This aroused researchers' interest in the domain and helped in delimiting the scope of current study, which is the present study is undertaken with the objective of statistically mapping and validating the role of union participation and its antecedents in achieving WBE in manufacturing units in India; the findings and conclusions are expected to aid organizations, managers and union leaders in using the collective force of trade unions for achieving WBE.

Bearing in mind the confines, the next stage, i.e. *Stage 3*, of SLR reports the findings of the literature review. The various variables, their definitions and inter-relations are duly presented.

The variables identified for the present study are outlined in [Table I](#), along with their respective literature sources.

Next, [Figure 1](#) shows the three main components that constitute the research model for present study and includes set of identified independent, dependent and mediating variable(s). The identified independent variables are union commitment, union instrumentality, union ideology, attitude toward union and union support; union participation is the mediating variable and WBE is the dependent variable.

The research variables presented in [Figure 1](#) above are duly established as hypotheses statements, which are presented underneath:

H1a. Union commitment has a significant impact on WBE.

H1b. Union commitment has a significant impact on union participation.

Variable	Definition	Sources
Union commitment	<p>It is defined as a measure of the extent to which an individual accepts or identifies with the goals and values of his/her union, such that he/she:</p> <p>(a) feels a sense of pride in belonging to the union;</p> <p>(b) willingly does routine tasks of union, and</p> <p>(c) readily engages in activities above and beyond those that are normally expected from a union member</p>	<p>Bolton <i>et al.</i> (2007), Fullagar <i>et al.</i> (2004), Sverke and Kuruvilla (1995), Kelloway <i>et al.</i> (1992), Fullagar and Barling (1989), Gallagher and Clark (1989), Gordon <i>et al.</i> (1980)</p>
Union instrumentality	<p>It is defined as a conscious psychological activity of assessing the amount of possible gains – both intrinsic as well as extrinsic, that unions can realize for its members</p>	<p>Gamage and Hewagama (2012), Gordon <i>et al.</i> (1995), Newton and Shore (1992), Chacko (1985), Fullagar and Barling (1989), Gani (1988), Arya (1982), DeCottis and LeLounarn (1981), Anderson (1978), Glick <i>et al.</i> (1977), Ramaswamy (1977), Strauss (1977), Pandey and Vikram (1969)</p>
Union ideology	<p>It is defined as a connected set of beliefs and values held by an identifiable social group, which gives its members a sense of solidarity, as well as helps them cope with employer exploitation</p>	<p>Sinclair and Tetrick (1995), Fullagar and Barling (1989), Klandermans (1989), Guest and Dewe (1988), Klandermans (1989), Kochan (1979)</p>
General pro-union attitudes	<p>It is defined as enduring propensities of an individual's feelings and thoughts toward participation or non-participation in union related activities</p>	<p>Chan <i>et al.</i> (2006), Deshpande and Fiorito (1989), Huszczo (1983), Gordon <i>et al.</i> (1980), Glick <i>et al.</i> (1977), Perline and Lorenz (1970), Spinrad (1960), Sayles and Starruss (1953)</p>
Union support	<p>It is defined as members' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the union values their contributions and cares about their well-being</p>	<p>Gibney <i>et al.</i> (2012), Tetrick <i>et al.</i> (2007), Fullagar <i>et al.</i> (2004), Fuller and Hester (2001), Sinclair and Tetrick (1995), Shore <i>et al.</i> (1994), Barling <i>et al.</i> (1992), Fullagar and Barling (1991), Robbins <i>et al.</i> (2010), Myers (1973)</p>
Worker behavior effectiveness	<p>It is defined as the extent to which the conduct of workers and actions undertaken by them are viable in achieving favorable outcomes for the organization</p>	<p>Fullagar <i>et al.</i> (2004), Tan and Aryee (2002), Fullagar <i>et al.</i> (1995), Huszczo (1983), Nicholson <i>et al.</i> (1981), Anderson (1979), Hagburg (1966), Miller and Young (1955), Sayles and Starruss (1953)</p>
Union participation	<p>It is defined as the behavioral involvement of active union members in combined action for achieving representative democracy and ensuring effective working of their local labor organization</p>	

Source: Adopted from Chawla *et al.* (2018)

Table I.
Summary of the identified research variables – definitions and supporting literature sources

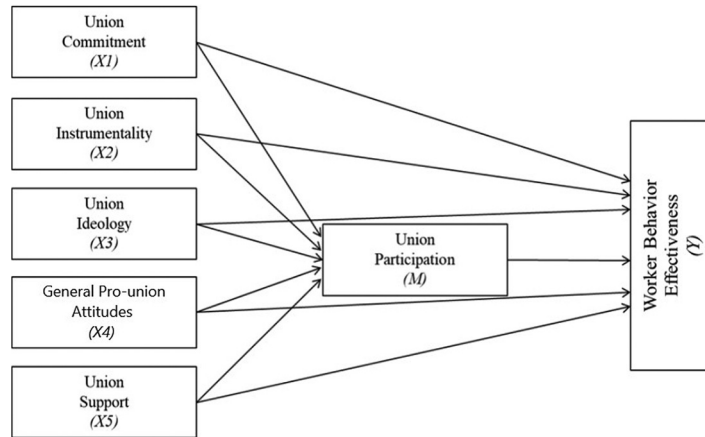


Figure 1. Proposed research model depicting linkages between independent, dependent and mediating variable(s)

Source: Adopted from Chawla *et al.* (2018)

H1c. Union participation has a mediating influence on the relationship between union commitment and WBE.

Researches in the field of union participation have explored the relationship between union commitment and union participation (Bolton *et al.*, 2007; Fullagar *et al.*, 2004; Sverke and Kuruvilla, 1995; Gallagher and Clark, 1989; Fullagar, 1986). Both cross-sectional (Bolton *et al.*, 2007) and longitudinal studies (Fullagar *et al.*, 2004; Fullagar and Barling, 1989; Gallagher and Clark, 1989) have indicated a unidirectional (union participation does not predict union commitment), as well as causal relationship (union participation is the key resultant of union commitment) (Sverke and Kuruvilla, 1995), between the two constructs. Gallagher and Clark (1989, p. 63), in their review of union commitment literature stated that, “Members in most cases will not be motivated to engage in action such as participating in union activities [...] unless they already possess a certain level of commitment.” The commitment of union members to their unions is a central component in understanding who will join, identify with, remain loyal and support the goals of the union (Trimpop, 1995; Barling *et al.*, 1992; Fullagar and Barling, 1987). Moreover, union commitment acts as a binding force that can help immunize an organization against turnover and absenteeism, by providing stable and dedicated workforce whose contributions coalesce into productive group actions. Thus, a relationship of union commitment with both union participation (Thacker *et al.*, 1989; Chan *et al.*, 2004) and WBE (Larson and Fukami, 1984) has been hypothesized in the present study.

H2a. Union instrumentality has a significant impact on WBE.

H2b. Union instrumentality has a significant impact on union participation.

H2c. Union participation has a mediating influence on the relationship between union instrumentality and WBE.

As early as 1944, John Dunlop in his book *Wage Determination under Trade Unions* held that union is a “decision-making unit” which tries to maximize some objective, considering

“wage bill for the total membership” to be the most appropriate union’s goal, subject to various constraints such as the firm’s labor demand curve.

Majority of the Indian studies (such as [Bhangoo, 1989](#); [Gani, 1988](#); [Arya, 1982](#); [Ramaswamy, 1977](#) and [Sinha and Paul, 1963](#)) have also postulated economic and security motives as one of the most important reasons for unionization. [Gordon et al. \(1995, p. 353\)](#), describe union instrumentality as “the perceived impact of the union on traditional (e.g. wages, benefits) and non-traditional work conditions (e.g. job satisfaction) that define the employment relationship.” [Newton and Shore \(1992\)](#) define union instrumentality as a conscious intellectual activity of assessing the costs and benefits associated with union membership. In the words of [Fullagar and Barling \(1989\)](#), union instrumentality refers to the perceived impact of the union on valued outcomes, such as pay and employment conditions. That is, it is the amount of possible gains that unions could pull off for their members. A Dutch researcher defines instrumental motives as those intentions that urge people to participate for the reason that they think they will stand to benefit from it – monetary backing during strikes, safety against the unpredictability of employers and additional union facilities ([Klandermans, 1989](#)).

Instrumental motivations underlying participation in union activities are thus believed to be based on calculative, utilitarian and self-oriented interests of employees ([Wiener, 1982](#)). When workers perceive that a union is instrumental in providing both wage and non-wage related benefits, they tend to participate in union-related activities ([Tetrick et al., 2007](#); [Chan et al., 2006](#); [Chacko, 1985](#)). Different studies have revealed that intrinsic as well as extrinsic rewards reinforce productivity, satisfaction with job and intent to leave ([Choo and Perry, 2009](#); [Gomez-Mejia and Balkin, 1984](#); [Weiner, 1980](#)). Thus, a relationship of union instrumentality with both union participation and WBE has been hypothesized for this study:

H3a. Union ideology has a significant impact on WBE.

H3b. Union ideology has a significant impact on union participation.

H3c. Union participation has a mediating influence on the relationship between union ideology and WBE.

In the words of [Fosh \(1993\)](#), union ideology reflects the solidarity orientation of members toward the unions, i.e. the members see union’s as having social and political goals. Different studies have shown that beliefs and values, or ideologies, may relate to society as a whole (general level) or to a particular level, such as workers organization, depending on the kind of structure under consideration ([Cousins, 1972](#); [Ramsey, 1975](#); [Nichols and Armstrong, 1976](#)). The ideology of union plays a vital role in endorsing union participation. Prominent support for the union ideology hypothesis comes from the works of eminent researchers in the field, such as [Kirton and Healy \(2013\)](#), [Heyes \(2012\)](#), [Sinclair and Tetrick \(1995\)](#), [Fullagar and Barling \(1989\)](#), [Klandermans \(1989\)](#) and [Guest and Dewe \(1988\)](#). As there always exists an “inevitable potential for conflict between management and workers,” due to differences in ideology ([Geare et al., 2009, p. 1147](#)), this conflict may lead to increased stress and anxiety levels among individuals, leading to a decline in their productivity and job satisfaction levels, and an increase in the turnover rates for an organization ([Bauer and Erdogan, 2009](#)). Hence, a relationship of union ideology with both union participation and WBE has been hypothesized for this study.

H4a. General pro-union attitudes have significant impact on WBE.

H4b. General pro-union attitudes have significant impact on union participation.

H4c. Union participation has a mediating influence on the relationship between general pro-union attitudes and WBE.

General pro-union attitude figures notably in the literature as one of the significant predictors of union participation. Sufficient empirical support has been provided to the hypothesis that attitudes not only play an important role in predicting whether workers join unions but also have shown a strong association with union participation (Chan *et al.*, 2006; Bamberger *et al.*, 1999; Huszycz, 1983; Gordon *et al.*, 1980; Anderson, 1979; Glick *et al.*, 1977; Perline and Lorenz, 1970; Spinrad, 1960; Sayles and Staruss, 1953). Members' perception of the potential impacts that a union can have on their own as well as fellow workers' performance affects their attitudes regarding participation or non-participation in the union activities. To induce workers to express a preference for unionizing, they must be satisfied with their current job (Kochan *et al.*, 1986), and union participation is viewed as influential in improving the satisfaction levels (Deshpande and Fiorito, 1989). Worker attitudes (in the context of unions) are also identified as a potential contributor to the indices of organizational and behavioral effectiveness, namely, worker performance, tardiness, absenteeism and turnover levels (Hammer, 1978). Therefore, it may be construed that WBE, general pro-union attitudes and participation in union activities reinforce each other. Hence, a relationship of general pro-union attitudes with both union participation and WBE has been hypothesized for the present study.

H5a. Union support has a significant impact on WBE.

H5b. Union support has a significant impact on union participation.

H5c. Union participation has a mediating influence on the relationship between union support and WBE.

Drawing from Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) concept of perceived organizational support, Shore *et al.* (1994, p. 971) explained union support perceptions as "members' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the union values their contributions and cares about their well-being," i.e. perceived union support is a manifestation of the extent to which members observe the union as being committed to them. Union support is based on the social exchange framework (Shore *et al.*, 1994) wherein mutual obligations occur on the part of parties to the exchange (Blau, 1964). When members perceive union as caring about their well-being and interests, they feel obliged toward the unions. This obligation, when met through participation in union related activities, in turn helps union achieve its goals (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986). Given the importance that members attach to this exchange principle, the union support perceptions are also likely to determine their intent to leave, absenteeism, productivity levels and intensity of latent conflict at the workplace. Hence, a relationship of union support with both union participation and WBE has been hypothesized for this study.

H6. Union participation has a significant impact on WBE.

Effectiveness appears as one of the most sought after dependent variables and a subject worthy of being studied or jotted down in the organizational sciences in the view of fact that it is the ultimate aim of every managerial endeavor (Kataria *et al.*, 2013). Organizations these days focus primarily on determining individuals' behavior within their organizations, with the aim of gaining knowledge about such aspects of the people as their jobs, work,

productivity, absenteeism, employment turnover and satisfaction (Robbins *et al.*, 2010). Participation in union activities (such as attending union meetings, filing a grievance, raising funds for the union, voting in union elections, paying union membership fee and taking part in strikes, rallies or demonstrations) and satisfaction arising from it are suggested to have implications on the worker performance, absenteeism at workplace, turnover intentions (Fiorito *et al.*, 1988) and conflict levels at the workplace (Myers, 1973). Hence, union participation is hypothesized to have a relationship with WBE in the present study.

Although the current section provided insights into key theoretical concepts, conceptual framework and hypotheses for the study, the subsequent section presents the corresponding research methodology adopted.

Research methodology

The research methodology used for this investigation comprises of quantitative research tools and techniques (Bhattacharjee, 2012). The principles of methods and the rules and postulates as used in present study have been discussed in detail underneath:

Much of the previous research in the domain of union participation also draws on primary data for generalizing about the population at large (Bose and Mudgal, 2012; Gamage and Hewagama, 2012; Gibney *et al.*, 2012). This study uses a cross-sectional field survey design wherein the identified variables are measured at the same point in time, using a single questionnaire.

Measurement instrument development and pilot testing

For developing the measurement instrument for this study, items of the various identified constructs along with their respective literature sources were identified which are presented in Table II.

For the present study, Likert scale items were used to obtain perceptions and opinions of respondents toward a series of written statements (items). Five-ordered categories labeled 1-5 were used, with the following intervals – “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral,” “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, for measuring responses related to study dimensions. Other prominent union related studies, such as Bolton *et al.*, 2007; Paquet and Bergeron, 1996 and Gani, 1992 have also shown strong evidence in favor of the usage of Likert scale for empirical work. The questionnaire was split into three sections. While in first section, information on the demographic profile of the respondents was sought; second section consisted of seven variables and 39 items, for predicting WBE achieved via participation in union activities and the last section, solicited enterprise and union characteristics related information from the respondents. Bearing in mind the vocabulary, education level and reading skills of the respondents, questionnaires were drafted in Hindi as well as English language. Due care was taken to use simple words in questionnaire. Structured questionnaire with close-ended questions was handed over to the respondents, wherein they were allowed to select just one response for each question posed.

The questionnaire was pilot tested by administering it to a small sample size of 114 respondents randomly selected from manufacturing units in India. Reliability values (Cronbach's alpha) for all the factors were calculated and are shown in Table III. It is generally agreed upon that lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. As the reliability statistics were found to lie within acceptable limits for each construct's item indicating the suitability of the questionnaire for final survey.

Table II.
Items adapted for the study

S. no.	Constructs	Citations	Items
1	<i>Independent variables</i> Union commitment	Kelloway <i>et al.</i> (1992), Gordon <i>et al.</i> (1980)	Deciding to join union was a sensible decision I will continue to be a union member for the rest of my job tenure I am willing to put in my time to make the union successful If asked I would run for elected office in the union If asked I would serve on a committee for the union In case of a problem, every member willingly files grievance with the union Every member provides possible information that might be useful to the union Union helps provide training that aids in developing skills and abilities Union ensures fair treatment from employers at work Union undertakes initiatives that helps enhance overall knowledge about the work Union helps in getting better wages Union helps provide job security Union ensures supply and use of safety equipments at work Union helps improve working conditions I believe in solidarity/unity that exists in union (we all are one) I am enrolled with union since other people with same attitude are together Union is a mechanism of collective voice
2	Union instrumentality	Gregan (2005), Chacko (1985), DeCotuis and LeLouarn (1981), Glick <i>et al.</i> (1977)	Union acts as a barrier to the exploitation of workforce Union membership fee is worth what we get in return Union does not force members to accept its decision Union works to get legislations that helps all workers Union fights against change as and when they turn up in the organization Union leadership is supportive for its members Union values my contribution toward its interests/benefits Union never ignores any complaint from me Union regards my interests when it makes decisions related to me Help is available from my union when I have a problem Union cares about my general satisfaction at work
3	Union ideology	Gregan (2005), Sinclair and Tetrick (1995)	
4	General pro-union attitudes	Deshpande and Fiorito (1989)	
5	Union support	Shore <i>et al.</i> (1994)	

(continued)

S. no.	Constructs	Citations	Items
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
6	Worker behavior effectiveness	Robbins <i>et al.</i> (2010), Myers (1973)	My productivity improves as a result of union participation Covert conflict at workplace decreases as a result of union participation I do not want to switch my job as a result of union participation I do not want to absent myself from work as a result of union participation
<i>Mediating variable</i>			
7	Union participation	Modi <i>et al.</i> (1995), Gani (1992)	I ensure timely payment of union membership fee I raise funds for union I attend meetings of the union I participate in strikes, rallies and 'dharnas' I vote in union elections I read union pamphlets, circulars, publications/notices regularly

Source: Derived from review of literature, compiled by the researchers

Table II.

Sampling

A finite sampling universe was chosen for the present study comprising of workers working in manufacturing units in India. The data was collected through survey from permanent workers belonging to registered and recognized trade unions, used in manufacturing units located in Northern, Central and Eastern India. Overall 19 manufacturing units, including government, public as well as privately owned organizations, were selected for the survey purposes. To ensure that the sample is fair, efficient and a reliable representation of its universe, Green (1991) recommends a minimum sample size of $50 + 8(k)$, where “k” denotes the number of predictors (Field, 2013). Therefore, with six predictors, a minimum sample size of $(50 + 8 \times 6)$ 98 observations was required for the study. However, data for the present study was collected from 403 respondents. To reduce the bias caused by missing data, the responses with incomplete or missing information were deleted (Leeuw, 2004). Owing to the paucity of time and other resources and difficulty in getting permission for survey from certain firms, purposive convenience sampling was used by the researchers to identify specific cities and manufacturing units well suited for conducting the survey. Efforts were made to collect data evenly across the regions to trim down the limitations of convenience sampling.

Data collection

For the purpose of current study, personally administered survey has been undertaken using questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed on company time at or about the work site and returned by each respondent directly to the researcher. Prior appointments were taken in each of the units located in different geographical regions. Out of 403 filled up questionnaires, 63 questionnaires were summarily removed on account of missing values and respondent biasness, leaving us with 340 valid responses that were included in the final analysis, thus registering a fairly good response rate of 84 per cent. The valid questionnaires were then coded and the raw data keyed into the statistical software, SPSS 20.0 version, for further analysis.

The subsequent section features the statistical data analysis and findings of the study.

Data analysis and findings

For the present study, the concepts of union participation and its antecedents were assessed using standardized scales adapted from previous studies therefore confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been directly applied on these scales. However, WBE is a term measured by the researcher, and hence, the concept is established using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and then CFA. The following section covers the EFA and CFA for identified factors in

Variable	Cronbach’s alpha
Union commitment (X1)	0.841
Union instrumentality (X2)	0.858
Union ideology (X3)	0.700
General pro-union attitudes (X4)	0.831
Union support (X5)	0.858
Union participation (M)	0.845
Worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.807

Table III.
Pilot study reliability statistics

Source: SPSS 20.0 output sheet

detail, followed by the various psychometric tests including, test for normality and homoscedasticity.

To establish a precise scale for measuring the WBE (dependent variable), EFA is used. Thereafter, CFA is done, wherein construct validity and reliability of all the scale items have been established through examination of:

- convergent validity statistics – assessed using structural composite reliability (SCR) and average variance extracted (AVE); and
- discriminant validity statistics.

Additionally, Cronbach’s alpha has also been used for assessing the internal consistency among variables in a summated scale.

EFA was used in the present study to establish a precise scale for measuring the WBE. As the study is designed to assess the proposed structure of WBE, a reasonable number of indicators (five) were included in the factor (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Principal component analysis (PCA) was used for identifying representative variables from a larger set of variables for use in the subsequent multivariate analysis. This technique (PCA) is also useful for data summarization (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Field, 2009). Varimax rotation was used to achieve a simplified and significant factor solution. To obtain a parsimonious factor structure and to identify the number of factors to be extracted, Kaiser’s criterion (Eigen value > 1) and percentage of variance criterion were used. Therefore, the factor was treated as significant if it had an Eigen value greater than or equal to 1 (Hair *et al.*, 2011) and if the extracted combination of factors account for at least 50 per cent of the total variance. Variables with strong factor loadings (greater than 0.5) were retained.

It is evident from Table IV that the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test value is 0.767 (which is above 0.5) and the significance level of Bartlett’s test of sphericity is 0.000 (which is less than 0.05), which indicates the appropriateness of factor analysis. Further, the component matrix (Table V) reveals that only one factor, with the Eigen value of 2.52 (which is greater than 1) is extracted, explaining 50.46 per cent of the total variance (value is derived from SPSS 20.0 output table: total variance explained). As only one component was extracted; hence, the solution could not be rotated further. Consequently, the rotated component matrix table was not generated. The factor loadings are found to be significant (above 0.5), with no cross loadings. As all the five variables loaded highly on one factor; hence, it can be concluded that these variables adequately represent the concept of WBE.

Next, CFA was used to test how well the theoretical specifications of the factors match the actual data.

For the present study, CFA was conducted to establish the scales of union participation and its antecedents and WBE. Hair *et al.* (2011) suggest convergent and discriminant validity as the most accepted forms of construct validity.

KMO and Bartlett’s test

Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.	0.767
<i>Bartlett’s test of sphericity</i>	
Approx. chi-square	382.082
Df	10
Sig.	0.000

Table IV.
KMO and Bartlett’s
test for worker
behavior
effectiveness

Source: SPSS 20.0 output sheet

The CFA results – values obtained for convergent, discriminant validity and Cronbach’s alpha tests – have been presented in *H5a* and *H5b*.

Table VI provides a comprehensive list of the factors identified for this study, along with their KMO and Bartlett’s test values, and the results of convergent validity and reliability analysis. It was observed that standard loadings for all the factors were greater than 0.5. The KMO test values were above 0.7 in all the cases and Bartlett’s test of sphericity values were also found significant at the level of 0.000, indicating appropriateness of factor analysis. The square of factor loadings (variance) and error (*e*) values were computed and provided to facilitate calculation of SCR and AVE values. For all the constructs/factors, SCR and AVE values were found to lie above the threshold limits of 0.7 and 0.5, respectively, demonstrating the presence of convergent validity in our theoretical framework. Further, with Cronbach’s alpha value greater than 0.7 for all the factors, it may be concluded that the factor structure is reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Table VII depicts the results of discriminant validity analysis. As the value of square root of AVE (in leading diagonal entries) for each construct was larger than the squared correlation between each pair of constructs, the discriminant validity of the constructs was established.

From the analysis presented above it may be concluded that the proposed theoretical model possesses reasonable reliability and construct validity.

Normality of data for the present study was ascertained using plots of residuals and statistics of skewness and kurtosis and descriptive statistics, namely, mean, median and mode. As the values of mean, median and mode were found to be nearly the same (Sekaran, 2003), the maximum absolute values of the skewness and kurtosis of the items were found to be 1.242 and 1.477, respectively, which were well within the limits recommended by past researchers (skewness < 2, kurtosis < 7) (Curran *et al.*, 1996). Hence, normality of the sample was deduced. Further, to test multivariate normality, Mardia’s (1970) coefficients of multivariate normality skewness and kurtosis were applied and the values were found to be non-significant (*p* < 0.05), indicating that the assumption were met.

Homoscedasticity for present study was evidenced graphically by plotting a scatter-plot of ZPRED against ZRESID (Field, 2009). As results indicated absence of any patterns of increasing/decreasing residuals around the straight line and an elliptical/oval shaped random array of points was seen with absence of any increasing or decreasing patterns of residual (Hair *et al.*, 2011; Field, 2009), this suggested that the assumptions for regression analysis were met.

Hypotheses of the study were tested using Baron and Kenny’s (1986), four-step model (refer to **Figure 2** for Baron and Kenny’s path diagram for mediation model) for determining

Table V.
Component matrix
for worker behavior
effectiveness

Item	Component matrix ^a	
	Eigen value	Component 1
V35_WBE_Productivity	2.52	0.707
V36_WBE_Conflict		0.783
V37_WBE_Turnovr		0.799
V38_WBE_Absenteeism		0.580
V39_WBE_Satisfaction		0.659

Notes: Extraction method: principal component analysis; ^a1 components extracted
Source: SPSS 20.0 output sheet

Questionnaire code	Items	Factor loading	KMO	Bartlett's test (Sig.)	Square of factor loading	Error	Cronbach's alpha	Structural composite reliability (SCR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
<i>Union commitment (X1)</i>									
V1	UC_Loyalty_Union Joining Decision	0.670	0.819	0.000	0.448	0.551	0.842	0.793	0.516
V2	UC_Loyalty_Membership/Tenure	0.700			0.489	0.510			
V3	UC_Willingness to Work_Time	0.737			0.543	0.456			
V4	UC_Willingness to Work_Elected Office	0.732			0.535	0.464			
V5	UC_Willingness to Work _Committee	0.781			0.610	0.389			
V6	UC_Responsibility toward Union_Grievance	0.735			0.540	0.459			
V7	UC_Responsibility toward Union_Info to Union	0.666			0.443	0.556			
<i>Union instrumentality (X2)</i>									
V8	Uln_IntrinsicBenefits_Skill and Ability	0.601	0.813	0.000	0.360	0.639	0.852	0.812	0.536
V9	Uln_Intrinsic Benefits _Fair Treatment	0.755			0.569	0.430			
V10	Uln_Intrinsic Benefits _Knowledge	0.701			0.491	0.508			
V11	Uln_Intrinsic Benefits _Wages	0.769			0.591	0.408			
V12	Uln_ExtrinsicBenefits_Job Security	0.757			0.572	0.427			
V13	Uln_Extrinsic Benefits _Safety	0.777			0.602	0.397			
V14	Uln_Extrinsic Benefits _Working Conditions	0.753			0.566	0.433			
<i>Union ideology (X3)</i>									
V15	Uld_Believe in Unity	0.748	0.759	0.000	0.559	0.440	0.769	0.773	0.590
V16	Uld_People with Same Attitude	0.780			0.608	0.391			
V17	Uld_Collective Voice	0.772			0.596	0.403			
V18	Uld_Exploitation	0.773			0.598	0.401			

(continued)

Union participation in the Indian context

Table VI. Identified factors with values of KMO and Bartlett's test and convergent validity and reliability tests

Table VI.

Questionnaire code	Items	Factor loading	KMO	Bartlett's test (Sig.)	Square of factor loading	Error	Cronbach's alpha	Structural composite reliability (SCR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
<i>General pro-union attitudes (X4)</i>									
V19	AtU_ Worth of Membership fee	0.713	0.844	0.000	0.508	0.491	0.855	0.845	0.633
V20	AtU_ Force to Accept Decision	0.794			0.629	0.370			
V21	AtU_ Legislation for All	0.836			0.699	0.300			
V22	AtU_ Fights Change	0.821			0.673	0.326			
V23	AtU_ Supportive Leadership	0.811			0.658	0.341			
<i>Union support (X5)</i>									
V24	US_ Values My Contribution	0.623	0.815	0.000	0.532	0.467	0.812	0.794	0.574
V25	US_ Never Ignores Complaint	0.828			0.686	0.313			
V26	US_ My Interests while making Decisions	0.784			0.614	0.385			
V27	US_ Get Help During Problem	0.807			0.651	0.348			
V28	US_ Cares about General Satisfaction	0.729			0.387	0.387			
<i>Union participation (M)</i>									
V29	UP_ Pay/Membership Fees	0.650	0.813	0.000	0.423	0.576	0.822	0.781	0.529
V30	UP_ Raise Funds	0.722			0.520	0.479			
V31	UP_ Attend Meetings	0.791			0.660	0.339			
V32	UP_ Participate In Strikes	0.745			0.555	0.444			
V33	UP_ Vote In Elections	0.734			0.539	0.460			
V34	UP_ Read Notices	0.717			0.513	0.486			
<i>Worker behavior effectiveness (Y)</i>									
V35	WBE_ Productivity	0.707	0.767	0.000	0.499	0.500	0.748	0.719	0.504
V36	WBE_ Conflict	0.783			0.612	0.387			
V37	WBE_ Turnovr	0.799			0.638	0.361			
V38	WBE_ Absenteeism	0.580			0.336	0.663			
V39	WBE_ Satisfaction	0.659			0.434	0.565			

Source: Compiled by researcher from SPSS 20.0 output sheet

the mediating effect of union participation in achieving WBE. Further, to evaluate statistical significance of the mediated path, Sobel (1982) test values were computed using an online calculator, provided by Preacher and Hayes (2008) on their website.

Although *H1a*, *H1b*, *H2a*, *H2b*, *H3a*, *H3b*, *H4a*, *H4b*, *H5a*, *H5b* and *H6* were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis, *H1c*, *H2c*, *H3c*, *H4c* and *H5c* were tested using mediating regression analysis. The regression analysis outputs as derived are reported together with the interpretation of respective hypotheses, in Table VIII as under.

As observed in Table VIII, all the Durbin–Watson statistics were found to lie within the acceptable range of 1-3 (Field, 2009). Hence, it may be deduced that the data is free from auto-correlation effect. The R^2 values denote that independent variables and mediating variable predict more than 30 per cent of WBE phenomena in all cases, which is considered a reasonably decent statistic for social science studies (Toole, 1998). The value of *adjusted R*² also points toward the suitability of sample size in comparison to the number of explanatory variables taken for the study. The regression analysis (β , *t-values* and critical *p-values* = 0.000) suggested positive and statistically significant relationships between union participation and its antecedents and WBE. Therefore, *H1a*, *H1b*, *H2a*, *H2b*, *H3a*, *H3b*, *H4a*, *H4b*, *H5a*, *H5b* and *H6* were supported.

Further, as the Sobel *p* values (as shown in Table VIII) were found to be less than 0.05 (Sobel, 1982) and *z* values were reported to be greater than +1.96 (Warner, 2013), this signifies that the indirect effects of antecedents of union participation on WBE via union participation are significantly different from zero (i.e. product of *ab* coefficients is not zero),

Study variables	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	M	Y
Union commitment (X1)	0.718 ^a						
Union instrumentality (X2)	0.589	0.732 ^a					
Union ideology (X3)	0.473	0.444	0.768 ^a				
General pro-union attitudes (X4)	0.403	0.451	0.355	0.796 ^a			
Union support (X5)	0.355	0.364	0.268	0.403	0.758 ^a		
Union participation (M)	0.432	0.362	0.338	0.233	0.253	0.743 ^a	
Worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.383	0.316	0.283	0.283	0.278	0.305	0.710 ^a

Table VII.
Discriminant validity
analysis

Note: ^a \sqrt{AVE}
Source: SPSS 20.0 output sheet

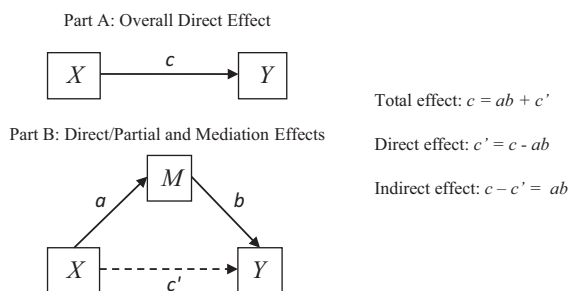


Figure 2.
Path diagram for
mediation model

Table VIII.
Summary of the hypotheses testing

Variables under study	Hypothesis	Path connecting variables	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Durbin-Watson	β coefficient	t-statistics	Sig.
Union commitment (X1) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H1a	Total effect (path c)	0.384	0.382	1.864	0.579	14.508	0.000
	H1b	Indirect effect (path a)	0.433	0.432	1.672	0.704	16.077	0.000
	H1c	Direct/partial effect (path c')	0.421	0.417	1.898	0.421	8.191	0.000
Union instrumentality (X2) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H2a	Total effect	0.317	0.315	1.719	0.531	12.527	0.000
	H2b	Indirect effect	0.363	0.361	1.957	0.650	13.874	0.000
	H2c	Direct/partial effect	0.389	0.385	1.742	0.341	6.769	0.000
Union ideology (X3) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H3a	Total effect	0.294	0.292	1.680	0.514	11.854	0.000
	H3b	Indirect effect	0.339	0.337	1.616	0.633	13.174	0.000
	H3c	Direct/partial effect	0.379	0.375	1.791	0.316	6.302	0.000
General pro-union attitudes (X4) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H4a	Total effect	0.283	0.280	1.611	0.436	11.538	0.000
	H4b	Indirect effect	0.234	0.231	1.524	0.453	10.148	0.000
	H4c	Direct/partial effect	0.397	0.393	1.779	0.283	7.140	0.000
Union support (X5) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H5a	Total effect	0.279	0.277	1.625	0.488	11.434	0.000
	H5b	Indirect effect	0.253	0.251	1.382	0.532	10.705	0.000
	H5c	Direct/partial effect	0.389	0.386	1.833	0.336	7.801	0.000
Union participation (M) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	H6	—	0.306	0.303	1.723	0.483	12.195	0.000

Source: Compiled by researchers from SPSS 20.0 output sheet

(continued)

Variables under study	Collinearity statistics		Hypothesis interpretation	z-statistics	Sobel ρ -value	Mediation Interpretation
	Tolerance	VIF				
Union commitment (X1) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)			Accepted	—	—	—
Union instrumentality (X2) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.567	1.765	Accepted	4.48	0.000	Partial mediation
Union ideology (X3) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.637	1.570	Accepted	5.68	0.000	Partial mediation
General pro-union attitudes (X4) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.661	1.514	Accepted	6.06	0.000	Partial mediation
Union support (X5) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.766	1.305	Accepted	6.27	0.000	Partial mediation
Union participation (M) to worker behavior effectiveness (Y)	0.747	1.339	Accepted	5.78	0.000	Partial mediation

Table VIII.

thus implying that $H1c$, $H2c$, $H3c$, $H4c$ and $H5c$ are accepted ($H1c, 2c, 3c, 4c$ and $5c: ab \neq 0$). Additionally, as the direct/partial effect (coefficient c') is statistically significant (Table VIII), it may be deduced that union participation partially mediates the relationship between antecedents of union participation and WBE.

The succeeding section presents the conclusive summary of research work undertaken in the study.

Discussion and conclusions

Based on the statistical analysis output, a conclusive model for the present study is drawn (represented in Figure 3). All the five dimensions taken for this study, namely, union commitment, union instrumentality, union ideology, general pro-union attitudes and union support, reveal having a significant positive impact on both union participation and WBE. With highest β value, union commitment emerges as the strongest predictor of both union participation and WBE. Furthermore, union participation is also found to have a significant positive impact on the WBE.

Additionally, using mediated regression as an approach for testing path linkages (to evaluate statistical significance of the mediated path and estimation of magnitude of mediating effect), the empirical results indicate significant indirect effects between the antecedents of union participation and union participation (coefficient a) and union participation and WBE (coefficient b) and a significant direct relation between antecedents of union participation and WBE (coefficient c'). Thus, it can be concluded that union participation plays an important role as a mediator in achieving WBE.

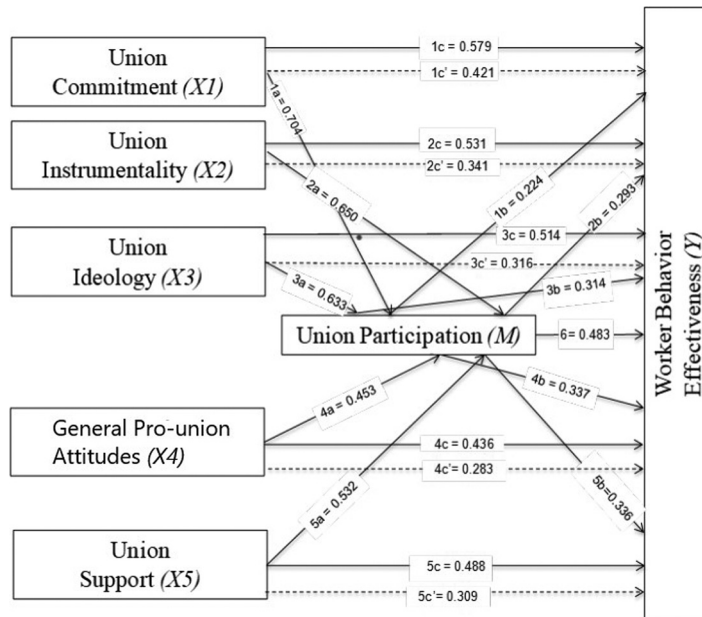


Figure 3.
Conclusive model

Notes: a, b, c and c' here represent the paths of Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step mediation model, and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 represent the respective hypotheses numbers

Practical implications

The study has practical implications for both union leaders and the management.

For union leaders, the study suggests that anti-management sentiments alone do not generate membership participation; rather, a broad range of intervening variables like, union commitment, union instrumentality, union ideology, general pro-union attitudes and union support perceptions go a long way in evoking a fair degree of union participation. All these motives, added with appropriate leadership guidance, can help establish a bond which will knit the members with the union and add to its internal strength. To influence membership participation, unions must provide their members with data on labor contracts at allegedly comparable workplaces, with the purpose demonstrating what unions can do for potential members at their own workplace. Work-related information should be effectively communicated to increase participation.

To build up coherence among union members, there must be congruence between members' perceptions and obtained results in terms of the organizational (union's) mission, goals and union orientation. Leaders therefore must strive hard to help individuals identify with the goals and values of union and make them perceive that union could help realize legitimate intrinsic as well as extrinsic gains for them. This recommendation is in line with Dunlop's "economic" union model and Ross's (1947) institutional-political view of the unions which suggests that unions try to maximize a non-measurable variable, namely, the economic welfare (wages, hours and conditions of work) of its members. In addition:

[. . .] trade unions' feature of the heterogeneity of their members, implies that individual union members often have conflicting preferences and interests due to differences in age, seniority, wages and other related factors. These features render the aggregation of the individual preferences of union members an extremely difficult task (Ross, 1947, p. 582, p.584) (as cited in Drakopoulos and Katselidis, 2012, p. 11).

As labor officials frequently misjudge their members' bargaining priorities, therefore, need analysis mapping may be undertaken from time to time. Well-designed surveys (guaranteeing respondent anonymity), incorporating the identified set antecedents of union participation will help provide the officials with a basic diagnostic self-evaluation of the membership's opinions and hence assist them in meeting members' needs. Fulfilled expectations in turn would motivate members to stay with the organization and deliver better outputs for the organization.

Trade unions may also consider publishing bi-yearly calendars wherein schedules of major events of the union, such as notification of formal and informal meetings, social events organized, must be listed. This will help build up an organized, mutually created social system of the effective devoted members. Unions must strive hard to put in place proper grievance redressal mechanism for members' well-being and feedback system for soliciting members' valuable suggestions. Timely responses to the complaints must be ensured and suggestions received must be duly implemented. This will help enhance member's participation in union activities, augmenting their perceptions of union support and justice, which in turn will consequently lead to reduced conflict, absenteeism and turnover and increased job satisfaction and productivity at the workplace.

Applying Hirschman's (1970) exit, voice and loyalty concept, the presence of exit option with workers can greatly reduce their chances of voicing their opinions through unions to resolve issues with the management/organization and hence stay. However, if workers' loyalty toward the organization is high, then workers are more likely to invoke their voice options keeping exit at bay. Still, however, the faltering organization cannot afford to ignore dissenting voices for long as loyalty can delay exit for a while, but not indefinitely. The organizations or the management, therefore, to enhance worker effectiveness should address

the exit/voice problem by encouraging workers to switch from exit to voice through the help of unions.

The results of this study also imply that workers decision to join and participate in unions should not be evidenced as detrimental for the organizations. In contrast, participation in union activities must be viewed positively. Only if a person is willing to stay with the organization, then he/she seeks to resolve the issues/problems through collective mechanism of union participation. As the findings of this study suggests a positive relationship between union participation and behavior effectiveness, this information can be used to frame and structure bargaining relationships. The managers and labor leaders in some ways share similar values – survival of the organization, increasing profits of the organization and preference for service to the society. If management approaches labor with an “us” against “them” attitude and mutually agrees on bargaining outcomes that fulfills workers’ preferred personal values, bargaining process would contribute toward positive individual and organizational outcomes, thus leading to a higher profits/revenues of the organization.

Strengths of the study

Given that the unionization affects workers psychological evaluations of work, which are in turn related to their performance and that such outcomes are equally influential in determining organization’s performance, the union leaders and management stand to benefit from results of this study. Further, the study has also made specific contributions to the existing body of literature on management for developing economies, witnessing similar growth patterns as India. The noteworthy contributions of the present research have been highlighted in the following paragraphs.

The present findings go further in that they suggest that behavior effectiveness is associated with workers’ belief that the unions can satisfy important individual, expressive (emotional and representative) and instrumental goals. Overall, the results of this study indicate that WBE is a function of the expected paybacks (individual, expressive or instrumental goals) obtained via participation in union activities.

$$WBE = f(UC, UIn, UIId, AtU, US, UP) + e$$

where,

WBE = worker behavior effectiveness;

UC = union commitment;

UIn = union instrumentality;

UIId = union ideology;

AtU = general pro-union attitude;

US = union support;

UP = union participation; and

e = error term.

The insights generated are of potentially great practical importance to the labor leaders and management because the results suggest that union participation is not simply an abstract concept or an indicator of passive attitudes; it is basic concept that can translate into behavior. The study reveals that Indian working class aligns personal aspirations and goals with their behaviors to evolve individually and collectively. It is thus important to identify what motivates members to join union and why do they actively participate in and support the activities of the union. The results can help union leaders to devise appropriate

strategies that may help enhance the membership participation and simultaneously provide a framework for strengthening the union solidarity.

Limitations and future research directions

The conclusions of the study are drawn on the basis of perceptions of the respondents, and the relationships are measured in terms of present attitudes and present behaviors. However, with time, the responses of people are likely to change. As questionnaires were personally administered by researcher to the respondents, response error may be existent due to the questionnaire design. Owing to the resource constraints, purposive convenience sampling technique is used to collect data. This might have resulted in researcher bias or accounted for non-random sampling errors.

The present research can also be carried forward in several ways, a few of which have been outlined as follows: as the coverage included conveniently selected manufacturing units in the country, the study can be extended to other non-industrial sectors of the economy, such as services, both nationally and internationally, using a more diverse sample of workers. Further, within the manufacturing sector, a comparative study, across ownership categories (public, private and government organizations) and sizes (small, medium and large) of the enterprises may be undertaken to identify differences in the perceptions of union members. As the opportunities for participation may vary from year to year and attitudes may be more stable at some stages of a career than at others, consequently, a longitudinal study may be conducted to track the changes in attitudes and behaviors of respondents, with respect to union participation over a period of time.

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