

Factors Influencing the Formation of Union Attitudes

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Abstract

Underpinned by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, this study examined some factors that influence the formation of the attitudinal constructs of affective union commitment, calculative union commitment and union satisfaction among a sample of unionised employees (N=426) in Singapore. Data was obtained with the aid of structured questionnaires. LISREL 7 confirmatory factor analysis provided weak support for the distinctiveness of the three attitudinal constructs. Results of regression analysis revealed that the model explained different amounts of the variance in the attitudinal constructs. Furthermore, although union instrumentality and union communication were related to all three attitudinal constructs, in general the independent variables were differentially related to the three constructs. For example, union socialisation was related only to affective union commitment while procedural justice was related to affective union commitment and union satisfaction, and distributive justice was related to union satisfaction and calculative union commitment. Limitations of the study, directions for future research and implications of the findings are discussed.

Behavioural unionism research has been dominated by efforts to understand and explain members' union-related behaviours as a way to ensure the institutional future of unions. In recent years, this effort has assumed a renewed sense of urgency in view of the decline in union membership and the general sense of crisis that seem to have enveloped unions globally (Deery and Plowman, 1991; Chang and Sorrentino, 1991). In view of the centrality of attitudes in explaining and predicting behaviours (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), it has become critically important to understand the formation of union attitudes. The importance of union attitudes such as commitment was underscored by Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson and Spiller (1980), in their assertion that:

since the ability of unions to attain their goals is generally based on members' loyalty, belief in the objectives of organised labour and willingness to perform services voluntarily, commitment is part of the very fabric of unions (p.480).

Gallagher and Strauss (1991), also noted that:

satisfied, highly committed members are more likely to support their unions in strike or political activities and to assist in organising campaigns. Further, satisfied members serve as living advertisements of the advantages of union membership and to help win elections as well as public support generally (p.139).

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Although as major attitudinal constructs, union satisfaction and union commitment have enjoyed some research attention, Kuruvilla, Gallagher and Wetzel (1993), noted that such research efforts have been bedeviled by a number of factors which limit our ability to examine the formation of union attitudes from a policy perspective. Two such factors noted by Kuruvilla, et al. (1993) are: (a) the inconsistency in the definitions of variables and variations in items used to measure union attitudes and, (b) the absence of a theoretical framework to guide the choice of variables. Based on data obtained from a unionised sample in Canada and Sweden and guided by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, Kuruvilla, et al. (1993) demonstrated the discriminant validity of union commitment and union satisfaction and reported some variables that influence the formation of union attitudes. While an important contribution to the literature on union attitudes, many of the variables they examined as determinants of union attitudes (e.g. friends' views about unions) are beyond the control of unions especially considering their concern with a policy perspective. Secondly, their focus on only affective union commitment is inconsistent with the growing view that, like organisational commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990), union commitment is multidimensional (Kelloway, Catano and Southwell, 1993; Sverke and Kuruvilla, 1993; Sverke and Abrahamsson, 1993) and has both affective and calculative or continuance components.

This study, therefore, aims to build on the work of Kuruvilla, et al. (1993), by (a) examining the discriminant validity of affective union commitment, calculative union commitment and union satisfaction and, (b) guided by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, examine the influence of a broader range of factors that are under the control of unions on the three union attitudes. Data for the study were obtained from a sample of unionised employees in Singapore.

Union attitudes: conceptual and empirical distinctions

Research on union commitment received a boost with the development of Gordon, et al.'s (1980) union commitment scale. As a global affective response to the organisation, commitment constitutes a basic underlying measure of the extent to which an individual accepts or identifies with the goals and values of the broader organisation (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian, 1974; Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). Gordon, et al.'s union commitment scale was based on Porter and associates conceptualisation of organisational commitment. Given the conceptual heritage of Gordon, et al.'s (1980) scale, they defined union commitment as a desire to remain a member of the union, a willingness to put forth effort on behalf of the union, and a belief in and acceptance of the goals of the union. Furthermore, they suggested that the union commitment construct is constituted by four interrelated components: (a) loyalty to the union; (b) responsibility to the union; (c) willingness to work for the union and, (d) belief in unionism. Of the four components, only union loyalty captures the affective attachment conceptualisation of union commitment while willingness to work for the union and responsibility to the union are treated as union behavioural intentions (Wetzel, Gallagher and Soloshy, 1991; Kelloway, et al., 1993).

There is evidence in the organisational commitment literature that Porter and associates conceptualisation of commitment represents only one form of organisational commitment.

Allen and Meyer (1990), empirically demonstrated the discriminant validity of three forms of organisational commitment - normative, affective and calculative or continuance. However, of the three forms, affective and calculative commitments have been more widely accepted and used in the literature (Meyer, Allen and Gellatly, 1990; Randall, Fedor and Longenecker, 1990). Consistent with the organisational commitment literature, there is empirical (Sverke and Kuruvilla, 1993) and theoretical (Kelloway, et al., 1993) support for the view that Gordon et al.'s (1980) conceptualisation of union commitment should be distinguished from calculative commitment. Based on Weber's (1968) rationalistic theory of social action, Sverke and associates distinguished between instrumental rationality-based commitment (calculative) and value rationality-based commitment (affective). In the view of Sverke and associates, instrumental rationality-based commitment reflects a utilitarian relationship between members and the union, and it is based on a conscious assessment of the costs and benefits associated with membership. In contrast, affective or value rationality-based commitment refers to value congruence between the member and the union, and is therefore determined by things other than the individual's mere hedonistic calculations. As noted by Newton and Shore (1992), affective commitment describes the extent to which members identify with and internalise the goals and beliefs of the union.

As an attitudinal construct, union satisfaction has not witnessed the same level of research attention as union commitment. Fiorito, Gallagher and Fukami's (1988) conceptualisation of union satisfaction was based on Locke's (1976) definition of job satisfaction. He defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable and positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences, and a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering," (p.1299). Following the discrepancy view of job satisfaction, Fiorito, et al. (1988) conceptualised union satisfaction as a function of the discrepancy between expectations (what the union should do) and perceived outcomes (what the union does). Expectations and/or outcomes were defined in terms of bread and butter issues, improvements in the quality of working life and union internal relations or the relationship of the rank and file with the union leadership. As an affective orientation of union members toward the union to which they belong, union satisfaction can be assessed overall by balancing the specific satisfactions and dissatisfactions involved with membership (Leicht, 1989).

Gallagher and Strauss (1991) noted that although union satisfaction and union commitment have been statistically shown to be related, they represent two distinct constructs. In their view, a unionised employee may value the union highly but be dissatisfied with it because it does not meet his or her expectations. In general, theoretical distinctions between union commitment and union satisfaction have been based on the distinction between organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Mowday, et al., 1982; Williams and Hazer, 1986). As an attitudinal construct, union commitment is distinguished from union satisfaction on the basis that the former represents an affective response to beliefs about the union as a whole, while the latter represents an immediate response to the union's performance on specific aspects of the work environment. On the strength of the preceding distinction, Mowday et al. (1982: 28) suggested that "... commitment emphasises attachment to the employing organisation, including its goals and values, whereas satisfaction emphasises the specific task environment where an employee performs his or her duties". Furthermore, as commitment requires an employee to make a more global assessment of his or her relationship to the union, it is developed over a relatively long

period. In contrast, union satisfaction develops more quickly because it is associated with specific aspects of the union's performance in the work environment. In addition to theoretical distinctions between the two attitudinal constructs, empirical demonstrations of the dimensionality of the two constructs have been reported in the literature (Klandermans, 1989; Kuruvilla, et al., 1993). For example, Klandermans (1989) reported union commitment to be a stronger predictor of union turnover than is union satisfaction in a sample of Dutch unionised employees.

The preceding discussion may primarily apply to the distinction between affective union commitment and union satisfaction. Regarding calculative union commitment and union satisfaction, although Sverke and Kuruvilla (1993) reported a high zero-order correlation between the two constructs ($r = .40$; $p < .001$), they can be distinguished on theoretical grounds. Calculative commitment focuses on the basis of attachment to the union and is rooted in the expectation of rewards and cost contingencies in comparison to available alternatives. While benefits or the union's performance may be central to sustaining both attitudinal constructs, as with affective union commitment, calculative union commitment may develop much more slowly than union satisfaction. Furthermore, dissatisfied union members may not necessarily quit the union, while those who are calculatively committed to the union may quit if the costs of membership outweigh the benefits.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Following previous research on union attitude formation (Kuruvilla, et al., 1993), the theoretical model that underpinned this study and guided the selection of variables is Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. They posited that as rational beings, humans systematically process information to form beliefs, or combine new information with existing beliefs to form attitudes. Three processes identified by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) as underpinning belief formation are: (a) descriptive belief - formed as a result of direct experiences with the union; (b) inferential belief - formed on the basis of prior inference about the union or descriptive belief; and (c) informational belief - formed by accepting the information provided by an outside source. Following from the belief formation processes, union attitudes are conceptualised in this study as additively stemming from informational and descriptive beliefs.

As an informational belief, perceived union instrumentality is preferred to general beliefs or attitudes about unions because of Desphande and Fiorito's (1989) suggestion that union instrumentality is a more specific construct than union image as it more clearly measures a belief rather than an attitude. Kuruvilla, et al. (1993) reported a significant positive relationship between union instrumentality beliefs and union satisfaction and union commitment in their sample of Swedish and Canadian employees. Fullagar and Barling (1989) also reported a significant positive relationship between union instrumentality beliefs and union loyalty in their sample of South African unionised employees. The second category of variables considered in this study falls under what Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe as informational belief. The first such variable is union socialisation which is concerned with the transmission of the values, beliefs and goals of the union to the newcomer. It has been demonstrated in the literature that a newcomer's experience of

attitudes, particularly affective union commitment (Gordon, et al., 1980; Fullagar and Barling, 1989; Fullagar, McCoy and Shull, 1992; Kuruvilla, et al., 1993; Fullagar, Gallagher, Gordon and Clark, 1995; Fullagar, Clark, Gallagher and Gordon, 1994). The second informational belief examined in this study is union communication, defined as the extent to which the union leadership informs or makes the members aware of union-related activities and goals. Using a conceptually similar variable Kuruvilla, et al. (1993), reported reading of the union newsletter to be significantly positively related to union commitment in their Swedish, but not Canadian, sample of unionised employees. It is, however, expected that the extent to which members are knowledgeable about union activities, its directions, and what the union is doing on their behalf will positively impact on members' union attitudes.

Perceived influence in union decision-making is a descriptive belief variable examined in this study. Child, Loveridge and Wamer (1973) distinguished between two logics in the governance of unions: (a) administrative rationality which is concerned with goal-implementation or the operating system; and (b) representative rationality which is concerned with goal formulation. The ability of members to influence union decision-making will prevent the imposition of the administrative logic of union governance on the representative logic. The perception of a union as an oligarchy (Michels, 1959) may negatively affect members' attitudes to the union. Leicht (1989), for example, reported member democracy or involvement of members in union decision-making to be significantly positively related to union satisfaction.

In addition to the traditional predictors of union attitudes, in recent times, there is growing interest in examining the effect of workplace justice as afforded by the grievance system on members' attitudes to the union. A grievance represents some degree of conflict between the grievant and the organisation and the grievance procedure is the mechanism for seeking an internal resolution of this conflict (Feuille and Delaney, 1992). Two dimensions of workplace justice examined in the literature are procedural and distributive justice. Procedural justice refers to the extent to which perceptions about the fairness of outcomes in organisations are based on the processes and procedures used to determine those outcomes. Distributive justice on the other hand, describes the extent to which resources are distributed among an organisation's personnel and the criteria used to determine outcomes of resource allocation decisions (Folger and Greenberg, 1985). Fryxell and Gordon (1988) reported that the amounts of procedural and distributive justice afforded by the grievance system was strongly related to satisfaction with the union. Clark, Gallagher and Pavlak (1990), also reported that the process and representative dimensions (procedural) of attitudes toward the grievance procedure (ATGP) significantly influenced the loyalty dimension of union commitment. In contrast, ATGP-effect which focuses on outcomes or distributive justice was not related to union commitment or loyalty.

Finally, extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfactions are examined in this study as control variables. As job attitudes, they are descriptive of current job and employment conditions. Brief and Rude (1981), cited in Kuruvilla, et al. (1993), noted that attitudes toward the local union are influenced by an employee's affective reactions to previous economic consequences of his or her immediate employment context. The employer's treatment of employees is one condition that should enhance the effectiveness or instrumentality of unions. Hence, the extent to which a union is able to influence job and employment

conditions will positively influence the attitudes of union members. Previous research has reported extrinsic satisfaction to be significantly positively related to union satisfaction (Fryxell and Gordon, 1989; Kuruvilla, et al., 1993) and negatively to union commitment (Kuruvilla, et al., 1993).

In sum, this study builds on the work of Kuruvilla, et al. (1993), by using a sample of unionised employees in Singapore to examine some influences suggested by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action on the formation of union attitudes. It contributes to the literature on union attitudes in two ways. First, it extends the work of Kuruvilla, et al. (1993) by examining in addition to union satisfaction, the affective and calculative dimensions of union commitment. Second, it examines workplace justice afforded by the grievance system as a union descriptive belief and therefore, a possible source of influence on the formation of union attitudes.

A brief account of Singapore's industrial relations system

As in many countries, the industrial relations system in Singapore provides an institutional framework for the interaction of labour, government and employers. Trade unions, organised either along industrial or enterprise lines, are affiliated to the national labour organisation, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC). Singapore's industrial relations system can be described as a mixture of collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration. It is also based on the principle of tripartism that stresses joint consultation at both national and plant levels (Tan, 1993). Given the tripartite nature of industrial relations in Singapore, Frenkel (1993) has described the industrial relations system there as a form of state corporatism. Affiliates of the NTUC enjoy a large degree of autonomy in their internal operations. They, however, depend on the NTUC for information, advice and support in the conduct of enterprise industrial relations. Collective bargaining is predominantly at the enterprise level and involves such traditional issues as wages, job security and working conditions. Both unionised and nonunionised employees enjoy the same benefits that accrue from collective bargaining resulting in a major free rider problem (Chew, 1991). Nonunionised employees are, however, not represented by the union should they be aggrieved, and do not enjoy nonbargainable benefits provided by the unions. Such nonbargainable benefits include discounts at NTUC-operated supermarkets, insurance, training, subsidies, retirement benefits, and use of NTUC clubs and resorts at concessionary rates. Another feature of industrial relations in Singapore is the legal prohibition of union shops.

Like their counterparts elsewhere, the trade union movement in Singapore has experienced a decline in membership from 31.4 percent in 1980 to 21.9 percent in 1990 (SILS, 1992: 94). A report by the Asian Development Bank, cited in Frenkel (1993), observed that the incentive to join unions has been limited by labour shortages, rising real wages, and statutory requirements for the provision of benefits which amounted to nearly 40 percent of wages in 1990. Given the steady decline in membership rates and the recognition that positive union attitudes are critical to the internal governance and effectiveness of unions, it becomes useful to understand and therefore, manage the development of such union attitudes as union commitment and satisfaction.

Method

Sample and Procedures

Data for this study were embedded in a larger study of members' involvement in unions in Singapore and were collected with the aid of structured questionnaires from house or enterprise unions, that is, single company unions. Two of the five unions were in the petrochemical industry and one each in the banking, telecommunication and pharmaceutical industries. The leadership of the five unions were briefed on the objectives of the survey and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. On consenting to participate in the survey, an administrative officer in each union office was requested to co-ordinate the survey. With the assistance of the survey co-ordinator, questionnaires were randomly distributed to union members through the union's internal mail. Attached to each questionnaire was a letter that explained the objectives of the survey, and further assured respondents of the voluntary nature of participation in the survey, and the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Completed questionnaires were returned sealed in envelopes provided by the researchers to the survey co-ordinator in each of the participating unions.

Of the 700 questionnaires distributed, 459 were returned. Of this number, 33 were discarded either because they contained too many missing data or had uniform response sets. The data for this study was based on 426 usable questionnaires, which represented an effective response rate of 60.8 percent. Of the 426 respondents, 222 (52 percent) were females and 202 (47.3 percent) were males, while two did not indicate their gender. The respondents were mainly in the 25-40 age group (65.5 percent), 73.9 percent were married and about 41 percent had a union tenure of more than ten years.

Measures

Union satisfaction

An eight-item scale based on the work of Jarley, Kuruvilla and Casteel (1990) was used to measure union satisfaction. Respondents were requested to indicate the extent of their satisfaction [(1) "very dissatisfied" to (5) "very satisfied"] with the union's performance in such areas as "Getting better wages for members" and "Improving job security". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.92.

Affective union commitment

A seven-item adaptation of Caldwell, Chatman and O'Reilly's (1990) scale was used to measure affective union commitment. Sample items are "My attachment to my union is based primarily on the similarity of my values and those represented by the union" and

"Since joining my union, my personal values and those of the union have become similar". The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.83.

Calculative union commitment

An eight-item scale based on the perceived benefits of union membership was used to measure calculative union commitment. While both unionised and non-unionised employees in Singapore receive the same benefits based on the collective bargaining agreement, unionised employees receive nonbargaining benefits. For example, the central union organisation, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) operates a chain of supermarkets and union members obtain discounts when they shop at these outlets. The extent to which such nonbargaining benefits are considered important and may not be obtainable elsewhere would constitute the basis of commitment to the union. Sample items are "I joined the union in order to receive discounts at NTUC Fairprice" and "I joined the union in order to be protected from unfair dismissal or firing". Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.85.

Procedural Justice

A six-item scale informed by the work of Fryxell and Gordon (1989), was used to measure procedural justice. Respondents were requested to indicate the perceived fairness of grievance resolution procedures. Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Sample items are "In resolving a grievance, the union leadership shows a real interest in trying to be fair" and "The grievance procedure ensures that both sides of the story are thoroughly heard". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.90.

Distributive Justice

Following Fryxell and Gordon (1989), a five-item scale that focused on the ends, whether in terms of rights preserved or the benefits obtained, as a result of having a grievance procedure, was used to measure distributive justice. Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Sample items are "The grievance procedure lets me stand up for what I think is right even if it is not popular" and "The grievance procedure protects me against unfair disciplinary action on the part of my supervisor". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.86.

Union socialisation

A seven-item scale informed by the work of Gordon, et al. (1980), was used to measure union socialisation. Response options ranged from (1) "very inaccurate" to (5) "very accurate". Sample items are "A representative of the union clarified the goals of the union when I first joined the union" and "The history of the union and its achievements were explained to me when I first joined the union". The scales's alpha reliability is 0.95.

Union communication

A three-item scale developed for this study was used to measure union communication. Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Sample items are "Anyone interested in obtaining information about the union can easily do so by reading the union newsletter" and "The union leadership does a good job of keeping members informed about the goals and general affairs of the union". The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.80.

Union instrumentality

The four-item scale used to measure union instrumentality focused on the effectiveness of the union in securing benefits for the members at the workplace. Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". Sample items are "Our union is effective in protecting the job security of members" and "Our union is effective in providing fringe benefits that meet members economic and noneconomic needs". The scale's alpha reliability in this study is 0.79.

Perceived influence in union decision-making

Members perception of the extent to which they influence union decisions was assessed by a single item. "In my union, members do not have much say over what the union does" (reverse-scored). Response options ranged from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree".

Intrinsic satisfaction

Twelve items from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss, Dawis, England and Lofquist, 1967) were used to measure intrinsic satisfaction. Response options ranged from (1) "very dissatisfied" to (5) "very satisfied". Sample items are "The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities" and "The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.89.

Extrinsic satisfaction

Six items from the MSQ (Weiss, et al., 1967) were used to measure extrinsic satisfaction. Response options ranged from (1) "very dissatisfied" to (5) "very satisfied". Sample items are "The chances for advancement on this job" and "The praise I get for doing a good job". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.80.

Data Analysis

LISREL VII (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1988) confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the discriminant validity or empirical distinctions between the three union attitudes. Four measurement models were estimated - a null, 1-factor, 2-factor and 3-factor models. A measurement model specifies the hypothesised relationship between the latent constructs and the manifest variables. The fit statistics of goodness of fit (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), root mean square residual (RMSR), normed fit index (NFI) and non-normed fit index (NNFI) were used to examine the fit of the models to the data. For the RMSR, values range from zero to one with lower values representing a better fit while for the GFI, AGFI, NFI and NNFI values range from zero to one, with higher values representing a better fit. The second stage of data analysis involved computation of alpha reliabilities and descriptive statistics of the study variables. Regression procedures were used to examine the effect of the variables suggested by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action on the three union attitudes. To facilitate comparisons, standardised beta coefficients were reported.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the LISREL confirmatory factor analysis that examined empirical distinctions between the three union attitudes. A review of the fit statistics reported in Table 1 provides preliminary evidence on the dimensionality of the three union attitudes. Both the 1-factor and 2-factor models did not provide a good fit to the data relative to the 3-factor model (Chisq/df = 999.3/227; GFI = 0.82; AGFI = 0.78; RMSR = 0.06; NFI = 0.84 and NNFI = 0.82).

Table 1: LISREL confirmatory factor analysis results of the union attitude measures

Model	Chi/Sq.	DF	p <	GFI	AGFI	RMSR	NFI	NNFI
Null	5649.81	253	.000	0.26	0.12	0.34	-	-
1-Factor	2621.45	230	.000	0.54	0.45	0.15	0.36	0.33
2-Factor	1463.65	229	.000	0.72	0.67	0.08	0.68	0.65
3-Factor	999.36	227	.000	0.82	0.78	0.06	0.84	0.82

Although the fit statistics of the 3-factor model indicated only a modest fit to the data, it falls within the zone of acceptability, thereby providing preliminary albeit weak evidence on the empirical distinctions between the three union attitudes. Correlations between factors were as follows: .519, between union satisfaction and union affective commitment, .200 between union satisfaction and calculative union commitment, and .350 between affective union commitment and calculative union commitment. The high correlation between

affective union commitment and union satisfaction suggests that, although they are empirically distinct, they are not independent (see Kuruvilla, et al., 1993).

The descriptive statistics of the study variables are reported in Table 2. A cursory examination of the table reveals that respondents perceived more than average (5-point scale) experience of the study variables. The magnitude of the standard deviations is indicative of the degree of consensus in respondents' experience of the variables.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the study variables (N=426)

Variables	Means	Std
Affective union commitment	3.28	.61
Calculative union commitment	3.42	.66
Union satisfaction	3.26	.79
Union instrumentality	3.55	.71
Union socialisation	2.87	.91
Union communication	3.32	.77
Perceived influence in Union decision-making	3.10	.98
Procedural justice	3.27	.62
Distributive justice	3.23	.67
Extrinsic satisfaction	3.05	.69
Intrinsic satisfaction	2.99	.57

Variables were scored on a 5-point response format such that the higher the score the higher the perceived experience of the variable.

Results of the regression procedures that examined the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables of union satisfaction, calculative union commitment and affective union commitment are presented in Table 3. Differences in the effect of the independent variables on the three union attitudes as indicated by the standardised beta coefficients, provide another means of empirically demonstrating the distinctiveness of the three union attitudes.

Table 3: Results of regressing the attitudinal constructs on the independent variables (N=426)

Independent variables	Affective Union Commitment	Dependent Variables calculative union commitment	Union satisfaction
Union instrumentality	.20** ¹	.22**	.26***
Union socialisation	.29***	.09	.13
Union communication	.16*	.18**	.20**
Perceive influence in union decision-making	.15*	.04	.22**
Procedural justice	.26***	.08	.18*
Distributive justice	.14	.15+	.19**
Extrinsic satisfaction	.12	.24**	.28***
Intrinsic satisfaction	.04	.02	.01
R ²	.34	.18	.49
Adjusted R ²	.43	.16	.47

*** p < .001

** p < .01

* p < .05

+ p < .06

¹ standardised beta weights

An examination of the table reveals that the model accounted for the most variance in union satisfaction (R² = .49), followed by affective union commitment (R² = .45) and the least variance in calculative union commitment (R² = .18). The table further reveals that with the exception of two variables, the independent variables were differentially related to the three union attitudes. The union belief variable of union instrumentality was significantly positively related to all three attitudinal constructs and so was the union informational belief variable of union communication. Union socialisation was significantly positively related to only affective union commitment (beta = .29, p < .001). Distributive justice was significantly positively related to union satisfaction (beta = .19, p < .05) and calculative union commitment (beta = .15, p < .06) but not to affective union commitment. Procedural justice was significantly positively related to affective union commitment (beta = .26, p <

.01) but not to calculative union commitment. While intrinsic satisfaction was not significantly related to any of the attitudinal constructs, extrinsic satisfaction was positively related to calculative union commitment ($\beta = .24, p < .01$) and union satisfaction ($\beta = .28, p < .001$) but not to affective union commitment. In general, differences in the factors influencing the formation of the union attitudes examined in this study provide further evidence on the distinctiveness of the union attitudes.

Discussion

As an "organisation the officials of which attempt to enter into job regulation and collective bargaining with employers on behalf of its members" (Child, et al., 1973: 71), unions have emerged and function as an integral part of the institutional structure of industrialised capitalist countries. However, in spite of the presence of unions in nonwestern countries and their facing similar crisis (e.g. decline in union members) as unions in western countries, much of the research that has focused on union attitudes and behaviours as a way of ensuring the institutional future of unions has been based on unionised employees in western countries particularly the United States. Based on the work of Kuruvilla, et al. (1993), and underpinned by Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action, the study reported here examined some factors that influence three attitudinal constructs at the interface of members-union relations using a sample of unionised employees in Singapore.

The results of the LISREL confirmatory factor analysis revealed some support, albeit weak, for the discriminant validity of the attitudinal constructs of affective union commitment, calculative union commitment and union satisfaction. As noted earlier, the fit statistics suggested only a modest fit of the model to the data although the hypothesised 3-factor model revealed the best fitting statistics. While the discriminant validity of affective union commitment and calculative union commitment (Sverke and Kuruvilla, 1993) and that of affective union commitment and union satisfaction (Kuruvilla, et al., 1993) have been demonstrated, the authors are not aware of any study that has examined all three attitudinal constructs. In spite of the poor fit statistics revealed by the confirmatory factor analysis, the three union attitudes are "sufficiently distinct to permit comparison between their relative relationship" with the antecedents examined in this study.

The results of the regression procedure to examine the factors that influence the formation of the attitudinal constructs revealed similarities and differences in their determinants. Union instrumentality was significantly positively related to all three attitudinal constructs indicating that the perceived effectiveness of the union in securing benefits for members is critical to enhancing the attitudes of union members. Kochan, Katz and McKersie's (1986) observation that deep dissatisfaction with current job and employment conditions and the belief that unionisation can be helpful or instrumental in improving these jobs and conditions, appear to be related not only to the decision to unionise but also, shape members attitudinal linkage to the union. Another common influence on the formation of all three union attitudes revealed by the regression analysis is union communication. Open communication channels between the leadership of the union and the members keep the members informed about what the union is doing, its achievements and problems. Being informed about the achievements of the union may contribute greatly to the instrumentality

perceptions of the members, thereby influencing their attitudinal linkage to the union. The effect of union communication on union satisfaction has been demonstrated in the literature (Jarley, et al., 1990).

The results of the regression analysis revealed union socialisation to be significantly positively related to affective union commitment but not to union satisfaction and calculative commitment. The effect of socialisation experiences in influencing members' commitment to the union has been reported with some regularity in the literature (Gordon, et al., 1980; Fullagar, et al., 1992; Kuruvilla, et al., 1993; Cohen, 1993; Fullagar, et al., 1994; 1995). Gordon, et al. (1980) defined the socialisation experience as the degree to which the union is successful in passing on the values of the organisation and observed that it was the most critical determinant of membership commitment. As affective union commitment describes value congruency between the member and the union, the findings suggest that this may best be achieved through union socialisation. That union socialisation was nonsignificantly related to union satisfaction and calculative commitment demonstrates the distinctiveness of the attitudinal constructs. On the strength of their findings on the linkage between members' attitudes toward the grievance procedure and union commitment, Clark, et al. (1990) called for studies outside the North American context to examine the generalisability of their findings. The results of this study revealed that both distributive and procedural justice are related to union satisfaction, procedural justice is related to affective union commitment, and distributive justice is related to calculative union commitment. The positive relationship between procedural justice and affective union commitment corroborates the findings of Clark, et al. (1990), while that between procedural justice and union satisfaction is consistent with the findings of Fryxell and Gordon (1989). In terms of the workplace justice afforded by the grievance system, the results of our findings seem to suggest that unionised employees' perception of the fairness of the grievance system, both in terms of the grievance resolution process and "the rights preserved or the benefits obtained", are important factors shaping the formation of union attitudes.

Perceived influence in union decision-making revealed a significant positive effect on both union satisfaction and affective union commitment, but not calculative union commitment. The perceived influence in the union decision-making - union satisfaction relationship is consistent with Leicht's (1989) finding that union democracy positively influenced union satisfaction. The extent to which members perceive the union as not demonstrating oligarchic tendencies (Michels, 1959) reinforces one's belief in unions and also leads to a favourable evaluation of the union. The effect of perceived influence in decision-making may even be more marked among members who desire to influence union policy formulation. The nonsignificant relationship between perceived influence in union decision-making and calculative union commitment may suggest that members who are calculatively committed to the union are relatively less concerned with policy formulation compared with the outcomes of policy implementation. Consistent with previous findings (Kuruvilla, et al., 1993), extrinsic satisfaction was significantly positively related to the attitudinal constructs of calculative union commitment and union satisfaction. Unions in Singapore provide a whole range of benefits such as training and educational grants as well as the traditional bread and butter benefits. However, since both unionised and nonunionised employees receive the same benefits negotiated by the union with manage-

ment (Chew, 1991), it may well be the nonbargaining benefits that positively influence union satisfaction and calculative union commitment.

The findings of this study should be considered against a backdrop of its limitations. A major limitation of the study is the poor fit statistics revealed by the confirmatory factor analysis that examined the discriminant validity of the union attitudes. Factor analysis results (not reported) obtained by varimax rotation, however, revealed three factors and the items loaded cleanly onto their respective factors. Given that the discriminant validity of the union attitudes has not been previously examined, the results of the present effort should be considered exploratory. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the data implies that cause-effect relations cannot be inferred from our findings. For example, to convincingly demonstrate the effect of socialisation experiences on attitudes, socialisation experiences should be examined shortly after these experiences and attitudes measured at a latter point (Fullagar, et al., 1995). Retrospective socialisation experiences and the likelihood of imperfect recall could have biased the data. Third, the self-report data suggest the possibility of method variance. However, considering the nature of the variables examined in this study, it would have been impossible to obtain "objective" data. The differential effect of the independent variables on the attitudinal constructs might have attenuated the extent of the method variance problem. Finally, although members of five house or enterprise unions provided data for this study, the focus on a single country with its peculiar industrial relations system might restrict the generalisability of the findings reported here. The study was, however, underpinned by an established theoretical framework (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the findings are fairly consistent with those based on unionised employees in western countries. This may be indicative of similarities in the process of attitude formation.

Should the findings reported in this study be corroborated by research in other industrial relations systems, they will have practical implications for revitalising unions. The effect of socialisation experiences on members affective union commitment suggests that unions should pay more attention to the processes through which new union members are brought into the union. Recent research has demonstrated the effect of union socialisation experiences on union commitment and participation (Fullagar, et al., 1994; Fullagar, et al., 1995). Fullagar and associates reported that individual socialisation assessed in terms of a member's ad hoc union experiences was a stronger predictor of union commitment relative to institutional socialisation. Based on the findings of Fullagar and associates, union leaders should enhance the ad hoc individual experiences in the early years of union membership as a way of enhancing member-union value congruency. In addition to focusing on such activities as personal invitations to union meetings, helping new members to solve work problems and provision of information concerning the union, union representatives should be sensitised to the role of these activities in the new member's internalisation of and identification with union values.

The significant positive effect of the two dimensions of workplace justice on union attitudes suggest a role for the grievance system in enhancing union attitudes. Thomson (1974: 1), noted that the grievance procedure functions as a private law with its own interpretation, practices and customs built up over time, with the contract serving as the statutory legislation for the parties. Thus, by promoting workplace justice through the grievance procedure, unions will not only be guaranteeing workers due process (Gordon, 1988), but

also enhancing their union attitudes. As a dimension of workplace justice, procedural justice should be negotiated as part of the union contract and union representatives should ensure that it meets the characteristics of a grievance procedure outlined by Feuille and Delaney (1992: 207). Namely, guarantees the right of the employee to file a grievance and to be represented by the union, specifies steps through which the grievance proceeds and steps for applying the grievance to successive higher steps. Having negotiated a grievance procedure as part of the union contract, union representatives should take great pains to explain to the membership their rights and obligations and, how the grievance procedure works. Pertaining to distributive justice, unions should be concerned with the quality of representation as it affects the outcomes of the grievance procedure. To this end, union representatives should be trained in dispute resolution. Additionally, Clark, et al. (1990) suggested that unions may need to implement improved systems for tracking and monitoring grievances and increasing the number of union staff involved in grievance processing. Given the significant effects of union communication and perceived influence in union decision on union attitudes, the leadership of unions should expand communication channels. This may be done through union newsletters and frequent informal and formal interactions with the membership to keep them informed of what the union is doing, what it has achieved and problems it is encountering. These communication activities should be reinforced by widening decision-making through participatory leadership. A participatory leadership style that highlights the importance of consultation and both the formal and informal involvement in union decision-making may generate more informational feedback between the union leadership and the membership. To prepare the leadership of unions for their new roles, they should be provided training in participatory leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. In conclusion, it appears that securing the institutional future of unions may entail the development of human resource practices similar to business organisations, in order to effectively manage the member-union interface or linkage.

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