Determinants of Employees' Union Attitudes: A Cross Cultural Comparison between India and Taiwan

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Abstract This study examines union attitudes of employees and its determinants using data drawn from a survey of 207 and 369 employees from organizations in India and Taiwan respectively. The authors find, first, that the difference in union attitudes across the participants' work stress, work situation dissatisfaction and leadership style of managers (supervision) were highly significant in both the nations' sample, whereas, such difference across participants' job autonomy was significant only in Taiwanese sample. Both dimensions of collectivism in the study were able to predict union attitudes of participants for Taiwanese, whereas, horizontal collectivism was able to predict the attitudes negatively for the Indian. Likewise, horizontal individualism was able to predict union attitudes positively for the Taiwanese sample, and negatively for the Indian sample. Finally, the results shown that nation was able to moderate the relation between the work related predictor variables and union attitudes.

Introduction

Employee's attitude towards union has emerged as a topic of central importance in the industrial relations literature. However, a very few studies have examined union attitude constructs as dependent variables, and have focused on the correlates of employees' values and culture. Despite the considerable interest in union attitudes of employees, the industrial relations and psychological literatures have paid little attention to how union attitudes are formed across different national cultures. The research presented here was designed to develop a measure of national cultural differences vis-à-vis union attitudes, and data were collected from employees of industrial organizations located in two different nations to permit examination of these issues. This paper reports the results of that investigation, including findings on the role played by national cultural differences in explaining differences in employees' attitudes toward unions.

Globally the decline in union density (see Pencavel, 2005) is increasing the regional inequalities and had caused a threat to trade union situation at various levels from global to local. The logical fallout of the aforesaid trade union situation is that a great deal of progress on union membership will be increasingly dependent upon the workers' decision to join unions in future. This is indeed a consistent story that was not shaken on the comparison of the two growing Asian economies – India and Taiwan in addition to a few countries in the developed world (e.g.,

OECD countries). However, one story will not fit all (See Freeman, 2005). This paper tackles the questions just raised. How 'convergent' or 'divergent' are the employee and their attitudes in industrial organizations? Are employees attitudes simply standardized stream of views? Do they largely offer similar kind of orientation? Or, have they developed a range of alternative approaches? If so, do these reflect national and cultural differences? In addition, how do these differences matter? The principal aim of this study is to explain variation in employees' attitudes toward union between and within nations. Several studies have examined the employees' attitudes toward union and few studies even tried to relate culture at individual and organizational level with employees' attitude towards union. However, as these studies have been based on samples from within one country, it may be difficult to fully discern the effects of national culture on attitudes or behaviour when all our cases are embedded in the same or similar contexts. In this study, we address this problem by using a cross-national sample and applying comparative industrial relations theory to develop hypotheses concerning whether cultural difference between countries result in national differences in employees' attitudes toward union.

Furthermore, as most of union attitude researches have been conducted in predominantly western countries with entire different forms of union growth and with an Anglo cultural tradition, we cannot be sure that these findings will generalize to the Indian and Taiwanese employees who has rather different cultural traditions, societal institutions, family structures, and individual value dimensions. Hence, it is important at the present time to make a cross-national study by posing a research question: In the context of the changing socio-political and economic conditions existing in both the nations, will the employees from India and Taiwan participate in unions as their forerunners have done over the past years? It is worthwhile to obtain data from employees from India and Taiwan to see if there are any commonalities in the factors that attribute to their union attitudes and which in turn might interact with each other to make a significant impact on the attitude. Three clusters of factors that were examined are work situation dissatisfaction, work stress, job autonomy and leadership style of managers, and individual cultural variables of individualism and collectivism and their effect on attitudes toward union membership.

Why India and Taiwan

The present study involved a sample comprising Indian and Taiwanese participants. From the economic growth perspective, it is frequently said in the context of Taiwan's 'Go-South

Policy', that India and Taiwan share a common focus because India is looking east, and Taiwan is going south (Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, Austaiwan Linkage, Feb 2006). However, India and Taiwan differ in terms of their culture and their political, economic and industrial relations systems. First, if we compare the trade union membership and changes in trade union density between India and Taiwan over the past decades, we can see that negative change in union density rate is much larger in case of Taiwan (> –20%) compared to India (> –5% and < –20%) (World Labour Report, 1997-98). Second, fundamentally there are variations in the ways in which both the nations have witnessed the role played by trade union in their history of labour movement. Third, the two countries differ markedly in organization at the national level. Taiwanese unions are organized into three primary federations, one each for blue-collar, white-collar, and professional members. Within each federation, however, unions are organized on both industrial and occupational lines. Indian unions are primarily organized on political lines as most of them are affiliated. Most of these unions are either organized on an industrial basis, or the larger politically affiliated national federations have their units at an enterprise level. Fourth, collective bargaining in Taiwan is highly centralized and carried out at the level of the federation in terms of wages, although there has been a strong movement toward increased decentralization during the past few years. Collective bargaining in India tends to be more decentralized to the local union level. Though there is no concrete legal framework to guide collective bargaining in India, yet most of the bargaining takes place on mutual understanding between union and management.

Although exceptions may exist, Indian unions generally have traditional goals, focusing on "business unionism," whereas Taiwanese unions hold broader social goals that go beyond the traditional collective bargaining relationship, such as the unemployment insurance system, and increasing industrial and economic democracy. Finally, we intended to focus upon two different nations – one of the nations from a liberal market economy (Taiwan) versus one of the nations from recently industrialized and transitional economy (India). The diversity of the samples facilitates an assessment of the cross-cultural generalizability of the propositions examined in this paper.

In this study, we try to address the basic research question – do differences in attitudes toward union exist across nations, particularly the India and Taiwan? In the present study, we will focus upon two Asian cultures – Indian (South East Asian) and Taiwanese (East Asian)

cultures. We selected the East-South East contrast because of the importance of the growth of the two Asian economies in the recent past from an economic perspective (refer to Taiwan's Go-South Policy). It was selected because of industrialized East Asian nations to international business, and due to the substantial differences between these cultures (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede and Bond, 1988). While a range of behaviours certainly exists within each of these culture groups, important constants within the two Asian cultures –also differentiate them from one another (Triandis et al. 1986; Triandis et al., 1990; Bontempo, Lobel and Triandis, 1990). The difference is much profound on the account of culture vis-à-vis religion (primary religions of East Asian cultures emphasizing on the importance of group in society versus traditional Hindu context which render Indian culture infertile with respect to the growth of individual). Hofstede (2002) observed that India has individualism with higher ranking compared to Taiwan's rank on individualism. Thus, a primary contrast underlying the difference between India and Taiwan is the relative focus on good-of-the-individual / family (relative Individualism / Familialism) in South East Asia versus good-of-the-group (Collectivism) in East Asia.

Theoretical rationale

Employees' desire for unionization has been studied often and undoubtedly, one finding that has been reached consistently is that employee satisfaction helps account for employees' desire for union representation (see Parkes and Razavi, 2004). However, offering little support for exit-voice theory, job dissatisfaction played only a minor role in predicting union membership, a like finding also reported by Guest and Dewe (1988) and Khaleque (1993). Furthermore, the dominant "exit-voice theory" of Freeman and Medoff (1984), besides having a mixed empirical support (Hersch & Stone, 1990; Schwochau, 1987), has largely ignored the impending influence of individual differences of personality, value and culture on membership. Moreover, even if the literature suggests a consistent negative relationship between job satisfaction and pro-union attitude and behaviour, yet, job satisfaction is not a single, global construct. Separate facets of job attitude (e.g., work stress, job security which is often viewed as highly significant outcome of work dissatisfaction) may be differently related to union attitudes.

Another job related factors which is found to be closest to the situational factors specific to job (like job autonomy) is the leadership style of managers or supervisors. This variable is essentially an environmental factor which reflects on social support to employees like degree of consideration expressed by supervisors (Iverson & Kuruvilla, 1995), or communications and

relations with managers (DeCotiis & LeLouarn, 1981; Faber & Saks, 1980). According to Windolf and Haas (1989), the large organizations where workers are guided by impersonal bureaucratic rules, which prevent close interactions between management and workers, lead to greater union density. But, one of the integral components of the impersonal bureaucratic rules remains as the leadership style of supervisors and managers at work. This environmental factor was found to be strongly correlated with union attitude; hence, it was included in the main design of the present study.

Individualism and collectivism

Among the many constructs for cross-societal comparisons on individual work values, the individualism-collectivism (I-C) construct has consistently been acknowledged as a powerful indicator of differences among societies. The researcher focuses on this distinction in the present study. It provides a key dimension in studies of attitudes toward unions (Storey & Bacon, 1993). Among the many dimensions that can further distinguish individualism and collectivism is the horizontal-vertical aspect. Triandis (1995, 2001) suggested that individualism and collectivism might be horizontal where equality is emphasized or vertical where hierarchy is emphasized. From Triandis's conceptualization, four types of cultures can be identified. These are (1) horizontal individualism (HI-uniqueness); vertical individualism (VI-achievement oriented); (3) horizontal collectivism (HC-cooperativeness); and (4) vertical collectivism (VC-dutifulness; Triandis, 2001; Triandis & Suh, 2002). With the increasing number of studies of within and across culture comparisons in recent times, we believe that it would be useful to employ the Traindis's conceptualization of four types of culture (HI, VI, HC and VC) for a careful investigation of individual's orientation within and across each of the two cultures and its effect on attitudes.

Attitudes toward union membership

The concept of attitudes toward union membership is a measure that typically has emphasized opinions about unionism rather than loyalty to and feelings towards a specific union. It is viewed as a broader concept embracing more than attitudes toward organized labour. As a result, it is relevant not only to union members, but also to non-members to understand how an employee generally perceived collective force like trade unions in an organization. Attitudes toward union membership is defined in the present study as an employee's feelings about any forms of union (from Smith and Hopkins's 1979 conceptualization and measurement of

"attitudes toward union") and perceptions of the best forms of representation (adapted from Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, and Spiller's 1980 definition of "belief in union and in the objectives of organized labour"). Besides, the union attitudes measure employed in the present study is relatively independent of all other forms of work and job attitudes, and does preclude attitudes toward other areas of life and work.

Hypotheses development

The existing literature on union attitudes is restricted in its treatment of employees from different nations. Therefore, for the purpose of deriving hypotheses, researcher relied on factors, which were found in studies on western sample to be important correlates of union attitudes. In the analysis model, age and job tenure were included in the predictive model for the control purposes in light of literature demonstrating their significance in relation to union membership. Following paragraphs describe the rationale underlying the selection of predictor variables and hypotheses tested based on the three clusters of factors.

Work situation (dis)satisfaction

Theoretically, high levels of job satisfaction have been associated with a decreased demand for union representation. The literature suggests a consistent negative relationship between job satisfaction and pro-union attitude (Kochan, 1978; Schiesheim, 1978; Freeman and Medoff, 1984). Since the sample studied in both India and Taiwan is a mixed bag of organizations with and without union which has co-decision making power in respect of various work conditions, and is seen to be instrumental and not instrumental and in view of evidence that support for favourable union attitudes tends to be greater among employees characterized by high levels of dissatisfaction with their work situation, it was predicted that:

Hypothesis 1 Employees characterized by high levels of dissatisfaction with their work situation will be more favourable in their attitudes toward unions than employees who have low levels of dissatisfaction with their work situation.

Other job related situational and environmental factors

A considerable amount of studies (See DeCotiis & LeLouarn, 1981; Heneman & Sandver, 1983) have reported that job related contextual factors also play an important role in differentiating between favourable and unfavourable union attitudes. However, from a cognitive perspective, Duncan and Stafford (1980) found that jobs low in autonomy and skills used and high in machine pacing were more likely to be unionized. Furthermore, Kochan (1978) found

that for white collar workers dissatisfaction with task related factors was correlated with pro-union vote intent (attitude). Thus, certain task factors may operate to influence union attitude either directly or indirectly through the worker's perceived dissatisfaction with various feature of the work environment (Youngblood, DeNisi, Molleston and Mobley, 1984). Jobs that are low in motivating potential or autonomy should evoke a more positive union attitude (Summers, Betton & DeCotiis, 1986). Taking into consideration the empirical evidence that support for favourable union attitudes tends to be greater in a job with low autonomy, it was predicted that:

Hypothesis 2a: Employees who perceive their job to be highly autonomous and perceive that such jobs require high degree of skills will be less likely to have favourable attitudes toward union membership than employees who are in jobs which are low in autonomy and skills used and high in machine pacing.

Looking into the literature which suggests a consistent negative relationship between job satisfaction and pro-union attitudes and keeping in view the observation that work stress is often viewed as highly significant outcome of work dissatisfaction, it was also predicted that:

Hypothesis 2b: Employees characterized by high levels of stress in their work situation will be more favourable in their attitudes toward unions than employees who have low levels of stress in their work situation.

Researchers in past have observed that union instrumentality and support (favourable union attitude) are lessened in situations where employees perceive employer or management (and not the union) as one who provides them their desired benefits (see Summers *et al.*, 1986). Leigh (1986), and DeCotiis and LeLouarn (1981) contended that workers who feel isolated from employers or who are unable to influence management were more likely to have favourable union attitude or turn to unions. Therefore, in terms of affect, workers who express less satisfaction with various facets of the work environment (pay, supervision, security, and so forth) are predicted to express higher intentions to have favourable union attitudes. This conceptualization explicitly recognizes that although a worker may be satisfied with some features of the work environment such as job itself or co-workers, dissatisfaction with other features, such as supervision, may still serve to trigger a pro-union attitude. In view of the evidence that support for favourable union attitudes tends to be greater among employees with lesser social support from supervisor or managers reflecting the autocratic leadership style of managers or supervisors, it was predicted that:

Hypothesis 2c: Employees who perceive their manager's style of leadership as democratic and express more satisfaction with supervision will be less likely to have favourable attitudes toward union membership compared to employees who perceive their manager's style of leadership as an autocratic and express dissatisfaction with supervision.

Union attitude in a cultural context

As pointed out by Windolf and Haas (1989), conformity to internalized norms like "value orientation" is often considered a strong motive for joining union[i]. Gordon et al. (1980) suggested that the primary means of influence of stability of union commitment would seem to be pro-union socialization (pre- or post-entry). This implies that the cultural variable of I-C, which develops in early socialization processes in the family and are referred to the social connectedness among individuals (Earley & Gobson, 1998), are likely to influence the union attitudes. The expanding research literature suggests that dispositional factors like culture are primarily responsible for the temporal stability and cross-situational consistency of job satisfaction (Agho *et al*., 1992, 1993). Therefore, it appears reasonable to investigate whether individual dispositional variables of cultural values would affect union attitudes directly or indirectly via their effects on job satisfaction and other job related contextual factors.

The cultural values of horizontal and vertical collectivism and individualism were included in the main design of the study as predictor variables of union attitudes of employees. Horizontal individualism (HI) reflects an individual's tendency to have an independent self-concept, to value uniqueness, and to make independent choices. However, independence and the opportunity to exercise some control over one's life were frequently cited by employees as major reasons for their favourable union attitudes and membership (Bakke, 1945). This is also an important point in the work of Kornhauser (1965) and Alutto and Belasco (1972). Likewise, vertical individualism (VI) stresses the importance of competition. Cangemic, Clark, and Harryman (1976) found pro-union employees to score lower than pro-company employees on personality assessments of achievement and endurance and higher than pro-company employees on the need for succor. Subsequently, the stereotype of the pro-union employee appears to be one who possesses relatively low levels of self-esteem. Parkes and Razavi (2004) have reported that union members, as compared to non-members, are higher in negative affectivity and consequently more prone to psychological complaints and dissatisfaction with their environment. Besides, attitudes toward collective bargaining are less favourable among internals than among

externals (Bigoness, 1978). Synder et al. (1986) have also reported that lower levels of competence and low internal control were present among union members as compared with non-members. In view of the above evidences, it was predicted that:

Hypothesis 3a: Employees characterized by high levels of horizontal individualistic cultural values (reflected in high levels of independent self-concept and greater desire to make independent choices) will be more favourable in their attitudes toward union membership than employees characterized by high levels of vertical individualistic cultural values (reflected in high levels of achievement orientation and greater desire to do things of their own and greater emphasis on importance of competition).

Collectivism and collectivistic orientations are predicted to be highly significant in determining union attitudes (Kelly & Kelly, 1994). The cultural bond (which is more commonly evident in collectivistic culture compared to an individualistic culture), it is reasonable to support, might serve as an indirect cause of union commitment (Dubin et al., 1976; Morrow, 1983). It leads to Hypothesis 4b, but no separate priori predictions were made about the direction of effects of each of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of collectivism in view of the inconsistent literature.

Hypothesis 3b: Employees characterized by high levels of horizontal collectivistic (reflected in valuing social relations with equals and cooperating with in-groups) and vertical collectivistic cultural values (reflected in valuing social relations with superiors and willing to sacrifice for in-groups) will be more favourable in their attitudes toward union membership.

Method

Predictor variables

Work situation Satisfaction

Based on review of the extant literature, mainly with regard to probable influence of work situation dissatisfaction on pro-union attitudes the seven items measuring how important each facet of job was to the employee (IJF subscale), and seven items measuring how much his or her job actually provided each facet (JAP subscale) were used. Given the context in the present study, the researcher initially tested 10 items from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (NCSR, UK) on participants for each of the two sub-scales. The factor analysis of all 10 items for both the subscales produced high loadings for all seven items on one factor, and lower loadings and more overlap for the three excluded items in both Indian and Taiwanese samples

with significant statistics[ii]. Dissatisfaction scores were calculated by subtracting each employee's response to how much his or her job actually provided each facet from how important the facet was to the employee (see Smith & Hopkins, 1979). This provides an intuitively appealing measure of the discrepancy between what an employee wants and what an employee feels he or she is receiving from the job (adapted from Smith and Hopkins, 1979). For the construct of work situation dissatisfaction, negative score represent more endorsement of the construct, whereas, positive score represent work situation satisfaction.

Horizontal and vertical collectivism and individualism

The Individualism-Collectivism Scale (INDCOL, Triandis, 1995) was used to measure the individual cultural value orientation of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism. The INDCOL consists of 32 items with eight items designed to evaluate each of the four subscales: HI, HC, VI, and VC. To test for the goodness of fit of INDCOL to the proposed model, a CFA was done using linear structural relationships (LISREL 8, Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993) techniques by the method of maximum likelihood. All indicators loaded significantly on their respective latent variables for both samples[iii]. The correlations between the four subscales in the present study corroborated the findings from the previous work of Triandis (1995) for both samples. The differences in participants' individual cultural values across their demographic and job related characteristics were assessed for both samples (see Table 2). Particularly important are demographic variables like age and gender (Kurman & Sriram, 2002).

Work stress, job autonomy, and Leadership style of managers

Based on a review of the relevant literature 16 items from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (NCSR, UK) were initially tested on participants drawn from both samples and the responses were scored from 1 to 6 of each of the 16 items. A CFA was conducted as a means of assessing the viability of the three factors as separate constructs (results of CFA were significant[iv]). To increase indicator stability and meet sample size guidelines for parameter estimation, single factor method was employed to form reduced set of indicators for each predictor variable. Finally, the scale used for measuring work stress, job autonomy, and leadership styles comprises of three, four and three items respectively.

Dependent variable

The dependent variable (i.e., participants' attitudes toward union membership) was measured by a nine items scale. To correspond to our conceptualization of union attitude

encompassing different forms and direction, six items from Smith and Hopkins (1979) and six items from the Union Member Survey Scale of "Compulsory Unionization" study (Wallis Consulting Group 1999) were initially tested on participants. The responses were made on six-point scale (1 = strongly agree; 6 = strongly disagree) for all the 12 items and lower scores represent more endorsement of the construct of favourable union attitudes. The factor analysis of all 12 items produced high loadings for all nine items on one factor, and lower loadings and more overlap for the three excluded items (Coefficient alphas = 0.911 [India] and 0.855 [Taiwan]; Gutman Coefficient = 0.857 [India and Taiwan]). The analysis of responses was done by summing scores for each individual across the nine items in the scale and dividing the score by the number of items to which the individual responded (Smith & Hopkins, 1979).

Participants

The original plan was to sample full-time employees broadly from multiple companies to represent as wide variety of sectors / organizations / positions as possible. Under the constraints of time and resistance of organizations to participate in "study on union", data were finally collected using a variety of methods[v] in India and Taiwan. Although the sample of participating companies was not technically random, effort was made to solicit cooperation of a diverse sample of organizations from both the nations. Employees (workers and supervisors) from different functions (based on their key functions and job levels like worker / operator, and supervisor) participated in the survey, which took place between April 2007 and January 2008. With a response rate of 59 %, the actual data collected was completed in nine-month period between May 2007 and January 2008 in India and a total of 390 responses were obtained, for a response rate of 68% in Taiwan. After case-wise deletions for missing values, the usable sample sizes were 207 and 369, respectively, for India and Taiwan. The measurements employed in the study were obtained from all 576 participants. The translation-backtranslation method was used in the application of the questionnaire to the Taiwanese sample[vi]. In both nations, extensive discussions were held with both academicians and union officials (leaders and office bearers) to ensure that the questions would be understood in the same way by union members in the two samples.

Sample characteristics

The Indian sample was 46.8 % male (*n* = 97), with a mean age of 32.2 years (SD = 9.34 years), and mean job tenure of 2.96 years (SD = 5.58 years). Forty-one (19.8 %) had a bachelor's

degree, 44 (21.3%) had a master's degree and 120 (58%) had a diploma in technical-vocational fields. Seventy two percent of the present sample from India ($n = 149$) were worker or operator (coded 1), 28 % (n = 58) were low-level executives (like supervisors coded 2). The Taiwanese sample was 56.5 % female ($n = 209$), with a mean age of 33.3 years (SD = 10.94 years), and mean job tenure of 3.07 years (SD = 4.98 years). Seventy three percent of the present sample from Taiwan were worker or operator (coded 1), 27% were low-level executives (like supervisors coded 2). Compared to 36% ($n = 75/207$) Indian participants, 37.3% ($n = 137/369$) of Taiwanese participants were member of any union or federation during the data collection process. Individual dimension wise summated score reveals that 52.7 % of participants ($n = 109$) were HI, 50.2 % ($n = 104$) were HC, 48.8 % ($n = 101$) were VI, and 50.2 % ($n = 104$) were VC in Indian sample. While in the Taiwanese sample, 50.3 % of participants ($n = 186$) were HI, 56.5 % ($n = 209$) were HC, 55.7 % ($n = 206$) were VI, and 55.4 % ($n = 205$) were VC.

Results

Attitudes toward union membership

It was expected that employees from the two nations might have different union attitudes – an expectation strongly held by many researchers in the area of comparative industrial relations research. However, observations from present study did not bear out the expectation. Fifty-three percent Indians ($n = 110$) as compared to 52.2% ($n = 193$) Taiwanese have favourable union attitudes. Bivariate relationships between union attitudes and other independent variables (see Table 2) shows that the difference in union attitudes across participants' job autonomy (JA) was highly significantly for Taiwanese ($F_{6,\ 363} = 4.816$, $p<0.001$) and not for the Indians.. The correlations among the variables, means, and SDs of the predictor variables and dependent variable are shown in Table 1.

Within-cultural analysis

Pearson correlation analyses conducted separately for both the nations among all the research variables (See table 1) suggest that the overall picture is that WSD was not found to be significantly related to union attitudes in both the nations; hence, our Hypothesis 1 was tentatively not supported. In addition, WS and JA were related to union attitudes, hence our Hypotheses 2a and 2b were tentatively supported and Hypothesis 2c was partially supported. A more stringent test of these hypotheses was done using the multiple regression technique – regressing[vii] union attitudes on job related predictor and controlled variables. R^2 measuring the

variability in the outcomes, which is accounted for by the predictors in each of the three models, allows the researchers to select one of the models with maximum number of predictors and maximum value for R^2. In addition, β coefficient values reflect on Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3.

Results of the regression analysis (see Table 3) for WSD (β = –0.217, $p<0.05$) in the final model provided support partly to Hypothesis 1 only for the Indian sample. However, by regressing union attitudes on horizontal and vertical I-C at the first step and then with WSD in the second step and other job related variables in the third step, the regression analysis (see Table 4) for WSD in the final model provided support partly to Hypothesis 1 for both the samples (β = –0.157, $p<0.01$ [India]; β = –0.107, $p<0.01$ [Taiwan]). The regression result (see Table 3) shows that Hypothesis 2a was partly supported for the Taiwanese sample (JA [β = 0.101, $p<0.05$] in Model-2). Regression results for both the samples support Hypothesis 2b only in Model-2 (β = 0.338, $p<0.001$ [India]; β = 0.380, $p<0.001$ [Taiwan]). In addition, by regressing union attitudes on horizontal and vertical I-C at the first step (see Table 4), the regression result for both the samples in the final model supported Hypothesis 2b (β = 0.243, $p<0.001$ [India]; β = 0.124, $p<0.001$ [Taiwan]). The variability in the outcomes, which is accounted for the six predictors–WS, JA, LSM, and WSD along with controlled variables in final model is 18% (R^2 =0.18) for the both Indian and Taiwanese.

Following this comprehensive analysis, a further series of analyses were then carried out to test hypotheses 3a and 3b. The same procedure as outlined earlier was repeated with four dimensions of individual culture and one predictor of WSD in the equation[viii]. Overall, the regression results (see table 4) suggest that Hypothesis 3a was supported partly for the Indian sample, and was supported only for HI dimension for the Taiwanese. With respect to Hypothesis 3b, results in the final model for the Indian sample suggest that HC was able to predict union attitudes significantly (β = –0.147, $p<0.05$), but not positively. Whereas, for the Taiwanese, the results in the final model suggest that both HC (β = 0.286, $p<0.001$) and VC (β = 0.283, $p<0.001$) were able to predict the union attitudes significantly and positively.

Discussion

Few studies have explored cross-cultural differences and most studies that have been conducted outside of territories of the Anglo tradition have not been comparative. This study systematically compared results in two distinct cultural groups: the collectivist Taiwanese and the individualist (familialist – "Indian individualist") Indian. We found that some results

generalize adequately, while others produced differences. The main findings of the present study are discussed below, with particular reference to the role of the predictor variables and the extent to which it supports or refutes the expectations borne out of previous studies.

Interestingly, work situation dissatisfaction was found to be a significant negative predictor of union attitudes for both the samples, while considering the predictive role of individual cultural dimensions of participants along with the job related predictor variables in deciding union attitudes. This implies that individual cultural dimensions are instrumental in strengthening predictive role of participants' dissatisfaction with work in determining union attitudes. As our separate analyses of union attitudes for the Indians and Taiwanese have indicated, there are important differences. It suggests that dissatisfied employees from relatively individualistic culture would prefer to resort to other techniques (including 'exit') rather than exercising their choice to 'voice' their dissatisfaction through any forms of collective representation like union. They are contended in the cultural context and do not particularly think that they need help or assistance of unions to express their dissatisfaction with work situation.

The interpretation of the finding for Hypothesis 2a suggests that the Indians will be satisfied with their work situation when they perceive their job to be highly autonomous and perceive that such jobs require high degree of skills (Iverson and Kuruvilla, 1995) and therefore, on account of job satisfaction, they will have less favourable union attitudes (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). Furthermore, due to their individualistic orientation they will perceive that union represents a power structure within the organization and hence would get less involved in activities of such structure, which would restrain their autonomy in job. On the contrary, the Taiwanese due to their collectivistic orientation will get more involved in a union when they perceive their job to be highly autonomous because in such situation apart from being satisfied with the work situation, they will also perceive that union being a representative of a power structure within the organization would provide them the required support to remain autonomous and would protect their unique skills by preventing changes like 'automation'.

Two interpretations seem possible from the findings for Hypothesis 2c. First, the Indians, due to their individualistic orientation, will exercise greater freedom and autonomy under a democratic leadership and will be satisfied with the supervision in job, and will finally have negative union attitudes owing to job satisfaction. Contrary to this, the Taiwanese, due to their collectivistic orientation, will get more involved in a union largely because they will perceive

that the democratic leadership style of their manager represents a less hierarchical structure within an organization and thus enable a group to collectively work under such flat structure. Second, the finding for Hypothesis 2c indirectly supports the view that dissatisfaction with secondary facet of work environment like supervision would trigger pro-union attitude more in a individualistic culture (India) than collectivistic culture (Taiwan).

Partly supporting Hypothesis 3a, horizontal and vertical individualism were significant predictors of union attitudes for the Indians. However, the finding for horizontal individualism reveals that Indian participants' desires to be unique and to do their own things were less associated with favourable union attitudes. This finding supports the view that Indian participants with favourable union attitudes has lesser need for independence and opportunity to exercise control over one's life compared to those who have unfavourable attitudes. This implies that horizontal individualistic employees from India would prefer to remain unique and exercise their freedom without any support from institution like union and they are contended in the cultural context and do not particularly think that they need help or assistance of unions to grow in their career. On the contrary, supporting Hypothesis 3a, the finding for horizontal individualism for the Taiwanese sample supports for favourable union attitudes tends to be greater among employees with greater need for independence and opportunity to exercise some control over one's life (Bakke, 1945). This implies that horizontal individualistic Taiwanese employees would have favourable union attitudes owing to their high levels of independent self-concept and greater desire to make independent choice (Alutto & Belasco, 1972; Kornhauser, 1965).

Likewise, the finding for vertical individualism for both the nations supports the view that higher levels of competence and higher internal control are to be commonly found among union members compared to non-members in both Indian and Taiwanese organizations. According to this finding, the vertical individualistic employees in both the nations, due to their greater respect for competitiveness, would prefer to progress in career with the support from institution like union. These high achievers would exhibit a potentially greater need for organizational and social support in the form of their association with union in organization. Membership of the union may be seen as one means of obtaining such support. The finding for Hypothesis 3b for Taiwanese sample supports the view that in a relatively collectivistic culture (Taiwan), horizontal and vertical collectivistic individuals who value social relations with equals

and superiors in organization respectively and prefer to cooperate with and submit to authorities of in-group respectively will regard the in-group (union) as an essential part of their responsibility and will show their dutifulness through union membership or cooperate with the in-group (union). Contrary to this, for the Indians, the findings support the view that in a relatively individualist culture, both horizontal and vertical collectivistic individuals will have less favourable union attitudes.

It is apparent that additional data and theoretical frameworks are required to investigate this issue more clearly. Future research may wish to examine the different access of national groups to positions of culture and job related contextual variables within the organizations in these two nations. If, for example, the legislative provisions on unionization at work place are stringent and supply of labour is abundant, majority group members in an individualistic culture may perceive the union as a legitimate body to represent the cause of the employees. In nations that successfully negotiate and work for their workers' well-being, would the presence of union have less negative effect? These are the types of issues that merit extra consideration in the literature on comparative industrial relations.

Limitation and future directions

Regardless of the encouraging support for the rigorous test of hypotheses, on the issue of generalization of the results, some limitations need to be acknowledged. It is possible that we have not measured other more important contextual factors or individual dispositional variables such positive or negative affectivity or personality traits. However, the point we wish to make is that it is important for researchers to include appropriate dispositional and contextual variables in all studies of union attitude, given the significant relationships that we have found in our results. In particular, dispositional variable such as culture are universalistic, germane to individuals, not just employees working in organizations studied from India and Taiwan. Although we have examined only a few contextual variables in this study, our results raise the possibility that contextual variables may be more important than many other categories of variables in explaining union attitudes particularly in individualistic culture (India). It is also possible that the impact of contextual variables on employee attitudes may vary from setting to setting as well.

Our study has made a significant contribution to bridging the gaps of knowledge in issues pertaining to union attitudes in a cross-cultural perspective. However, there are methodological limitations, which should be kept in mind in the interpretation of these results. First, our data

have been collected only from few firms from India and Taiwan. We could not infer causal relationship largely as the data were cross-sectional. Longitudinal data are better suited to test for causal links identified by a theory than are cross-sectional data such as those that we have used. Therefore, such longitudinal designs in which both criterion variables and predictor variables are measured over time might be useful in future studies measuring similar influence. Future studies measuring similar influence may use data from multiple organizations and societies in Indian and Taiwan to provide informative validation of the present study's result. There is also the concern of possible percept-percept bias. For example, union attitude and behaviour is often considered an outcome of job satisfaction, but it is possible that union behaviour may act as a cause rather than effect. For instance, those who are having favourable union attitude and highly involved with union activities tend to put less time and energy into work, to the detriment of job. Interestingly, for the Indian, but not the Taiwanese, favourable union attitude was negatively related to work situation dissatisfaction. It thus reminds us once again that the notion of job satisfaction and union attitude can vary across nations. Another limitation is that we only managed to compare the Indian with the Taiwanese due to limited time and resources, thus no conclusions should be drawn concerning other cultural groups. Our results may not even generalize to other Chinese societies, such as the PRC, which has its unique political, economic, social and most importantly labour characteristics.

Despite the limitations, a number of imperative issues emerge out of the study findings that must be considered by those concerned with employee-management relations in the two nations. This study was able to show that some relations of job related contextual factors and individual dispositional factors of culture with union attitudes generalize across the individualist and collectivist societies, whereas specificities with each culture remain. The findings extend the large body of research in comparative industrial relations that focus on job related contextual and individual dispositional factors known to be significant in relation to union membership.

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Table 1: Mean, SD, and inter-correlations between variables for the Indian and Taiwanese samples

Variable	Indian [a] Mean	SD	Taiwanese [a] Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age (years)	32.10	2.32	27.32	1.59	-	.233 ***	.691 ***	–.182 ***	.057	.068	.084	–.137 **	.074	–.017	–.157 ***	–.118 **
2. Gender [b]	--	--	--	--	–.310 ***	-	.151 **	–.088	–.012	.133 **	–.018	–.057	–.010	.008	–.049	–104 *
3. Job tenure (years)	5.32	0.63	3.23	1.23	.807 ***	–.080	-	–.215 ***	.209 ***	–.063	.229 ***	–.147 **	.035	–.080	–.194 ***	–.098 *
4. Work stress	7.91	1.99	7.716	1.86	.004	–.153 *	–.052	-	.152 ***	.198 ***	–.083	.379 ***	.234 ***	.375 ***	.393 ***	.380 ***
5. Job autonomy	8.57	3.53	11.81	5.62	.019	.083	–.189 **	.159 *	-	–.170 ***	.544 ***	.162 ***	.299 ***	.295 ***	.193 ***	.265 ***
6. Work dissatisfaction	–4.63	5.39	–4.96	6.01	.178 *	–.100	.052	.081	–.090	-	–.356 ***	.024	.066	.146 **	.117 *	.043
7. Leadership style	7.64	2.55	8.78	3.62	.128	.074	–.049	–.015	.130 *	–.417 ***	-	.094 *	.223 ***	.215 ***	.031	.174 ***
8. Union attitudes	26.21	9.41	24.96	7.45	–.001	–.280 ***	.329 ***	.297 ***	–.150 *	–.035	–.107	-	.501 ***	.636 ***	.648 ***	.546 ***
9. Horizontal individualism	20.28	4.35	22.65	5.22	.385 ***	–.053	–.140 *	.010	.211 ***	–.076	.290 ***	–.162 *	-	.529 ***	.489 ***	.688 ***
10. Horizontal collectivism	18.51	4.45	19.29	5.56	.178 *	.121	–.221 **	.089	.317 ***	–.031	.171 **	–.223 ***	.577 ***	-	.755 ***	.567 ***
11. Vertical collectivism	21.09	4.65	20.88	4.12	.217 **	–.015	–.262 ***	.149 *	.269 ***	.139 *	.263 ***	–.115	.500 ***	.499 ***	-	.611 ***
12. Vertical individualism	22.63	4.04	23.87	4.98	.385 ***	–.148 *	.195 **	.242 ***	.134 *	–.002	.353 ***	.278 ***	.452 ***	.263 ***	.489 ***	-

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$

[a] $N = 207$ (India),369 (Taiwan) The upper triangle is the correlations matrix for Taiwanese sample, the lower triangle is the correlation matrix for Indian sample.

[b] Gender = gender of respondent correlated (point-biserial) with scale scores: Negative correlations indicate women have higher scores than men for Indian sample, whereas for Taiwanese sample, there is no correlation between gender and union attitudes.

Table 2: Vertical and horizontal individualism–collectivism orientation of employees and attitudes toward
Union membership for the Indian and Taiwanese samples

Independent variables	Dependent variables [a]									
	Indian sample					**Taiwanese sample**				
	HI	HC	VI	VC	ATUM	HI	HC	VI	VC	ATUM
Age (*F* value)	2.399 ***	1.466 †	1.672 *	2.556 ***	1.822 **	1.104	0.964	2.228 ***	1.161	1.879 **
Gender (*t* test)	3.883 *	2.330 †	0.757	5.708 **	0.387	1.540	0.691	0.297	0.072	1.222
Job tenure (*F* value)	0.747	1.889 **	1.071	1.530 †	1.727 **	0.754	1.317 †	2.435 ***	1.756 **	1.949 **
Work stress (*F* value)	1.455 †	1.326 †	2.347 ***	1.431 †	2.382 ***	2.034 ***	3.603 ***	3.349 ***	3.709 ***	5.268 ***
Job autonomy (*F* value)	1.859 *	3.790 ***	2.258 ***	1.904 **	1.085	2.585 ***	3.073 ***	2.481 ***	4.298 ***	4.816 ***
Work situation dissatisfaction (*F* value)	2.344 **	1.146	2.273 ***	2.794 ***	2.053 **	1.585 *	1.510 *	1.342 †	1.693 ***	3.447 ***
Leadership style of managers (*F* value)	3.125 ***	1.899 **	2.970 ***	2.040 **	2.063 **	1.905 ***	2.624 ***	1.922 ***	3.903 ***	8.640 ***

* $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$ $N = 207$ (India), 369 (Taiwan)

[a] HI = Horizontal individualism, HC = Horizontal collectivism, VI = Vertical individualism, VC = Vertical collectivism, ATUM = Attitudes toward union membership

Table 3: Regression analysis for the Indian and Taiwanese samples without culture as a predictor variable

Independent variables [b]	**Indian Sample** [a]			**Taiwanese sample** [a]		
	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 1	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 2	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 3	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 1	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 2	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 3
Work stress	0.327 ***	0.338 ***	0.157	0.379 ***	0.380 ***	0.362 ***
Job autonomy	–0.192 ***	–0.211 ***	–0.018	0.052	0.101 *	0.090 †

Leadership style of managers	–0.077	–0.133 *		0.097[†]	0.094[†]	
Work situation dissatisfaction		–0.136 *	–0.217 *		–0.032	–0.015
Age			–0.123			0.070
Job tenure			0.201			–0.133 *
R^2	0.137	0.159	0.175	0.161	0.171	0.178
Adjusted R^2	0.125	0.142	0.157	0.154	0.162	0.160
Overall model F	10.491	10.551	1.074	23.402	22.470	12.165
Standard error	8.82	8.82	6.48	6.28	6.30	6.26
Degrees of freedom	3, 203	4, 202	6, 200	3, 365	4, 364	6, 362

[a] $N = 207$ (India), 369 (Taiwan) [†] $p<0.10$ * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$
[b] Work situation dissatisfaction and other work related factors were standardized prior to analysis
[c] Standardized beta coefficient value

Table 4: Regression analysis for the Indian and Taiwanese samples with culture as a predictor variable

Independent variables [b]	Indian Sample [a]			Taiwanese sample [a]		
	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 1	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 2	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 3	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 1	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 2	Attitudes toward union membership [c] Model 3
Horizontal individualism	– 0.218 **	–0.223 **	–0.159 *	0.128 **	0.130 **	0.160 ***
Horizontal collectivism	–0.138 *	–0.140	–0.147 *	0.266 ***	0.275 ***	0.286 ***
Vertical individualism	0.503 ***	0.501 ***	0.484 ***	0.115 *	0.110 *	0.081
Vertical collectivism	–0.183 *	–0.174 *	–0.122	0.314 ***	0.317 ***	0.283 ***
Work situation dissatisfaction (WSD)		–0.031	–0.157 **		–0.066	–0.107 **
Work stress (WS)			0.243 ***			0.124 ***
Job autonomy (JA)			–0.126 *			–0.076
Leadership style of managers (LSM)			–0.220 ***			–0.013
R^2	0.227	0.228	0.327	0.500	0.504	0.520
Adjusted R^2	0.212	0.209	0.300	0.494	0.497	0.510
Overall model F	14.841	11.877	12.040	91.113	73.954	48.958
Standard error	8.36	8.37	7.88	4.86	4.84	4.78
Degrees of freedom	4, 202	5, 201	8, 198	4, 364	5, 363	8, 360

[a] $N = 207$ (India), 369 (Taiwan) * $p<0.05$ ** $p<0.01$ *** $p<0.001$
[b] Individual cultural values of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism and work situation dissatisfaction and other work related factors were standardized prior to analysis
[c] Standardized beta coefficient value

[i] Windolf and Haas (1989) in an attempt to understand whether the influence of variables that actually do explain the propensity of a worker to join a trade union (cross-sectional) has changed over time within a sample has found that in communities with strong working class traditions, workers feel obliged to become union members regardless of the economic costs or benefits and as social origin point to the early socialization process in the family, a white-collar worker who grew up in a working class environment is assumed to be positively oriented toward unions.

[ii] Coefficient alphas for IJF = 0.731, and for JAP = 0.726 and 0.752 for the entire scale (combination of two subscales) for the Indian sample and coefficient alphas for IJF = 0.930, and for JAP = 0.951 and 0.916 for the entire scale for the Taiwanese sample. Correlation between the two subscales was modest for Indian sample: IJF and JAP were correlated at

$r = 0.223$, $p<0.01$. For Taiwanese sample, IJF was positively correlated with JAP ($r = 0.440$, $p<0.01$). Guttman Coefficient for IJF = 0.509 and for JAP = 0.621 for Indian sample and 0.838 and 0.901 for IJF and JAP respectively for Taiwanese sample.

[iii] Results of the CFA yielded following fit indexes: for Indian sample, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.821, RMSEA = 0.043 (model accounts for 82.1% of variance and covariance of variables); NNFI = 0.849. For Taiwanese sample, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.891, RMSEA = 0.051(model accounts for 89.1% of variance and covariance of variables); NNFI = 0.913. Coefficient alphas for Indian sample are HI = 0.643, HC = 0.613 VI = 0.618 and VC = 0.560 and 0.820 for overall INDCOL scale. Coefficient alphas for Taiwanese sample are HI = 0.671, HC = 0.863, VI = 0.756, and VC = 0.806 and 0.919 for overall INDCOL scale.

[iv] The factor analysis of all 16 items produced high loadings for four items on one factor (WS with eigen-value = 3.217, standardized alpha coefficient = 0.627), five items on the second factor (JA with eigen-value = 1.761, standardized alpha coefficient = 0.813), and four items on the third factor (LSM with eigen-value = 1.680, standardized alpha coefficient = 0.852) and very low loadings for the excluded three items in Indian sample. For the Taiwanese sample, the factor analysis of all 16 items produced high loadings for three items on one factor (WS with eigen-value = 3.860, standardized alpha coefficient = 0.670), four items on second factor (JA with eigen-value = 1.881, alpha coefficient = 0.937) and three items on third factor (LSM with eigen-value = 1.680, alpha coefficient = 0.962) and very low loadings for the excluded six items.

[v] For example, in Taiwan, some participants were working adults taking college advanced courses who were interviewed in classroom after the classroom session; some were interviewed through personal contacts, and some were members of professional organizations who were contacted and asked to participate. On the contrary, almost all respondents from Indian sample participated in the data collection process through taking up the blank structured questionnaire.

[vi] The method: the English version of the questionnaire is translated into Chinese (Mandarin) by one person; when it has been determined that the Taiwanese version reflects accurately the meaning of the questions in English, a second person retranslates the questionnaire from Chinese (Mandarin) back to English; and finally the original English version and the English version translated from Chinese are compared to determined whether the question have the same meaning. The two different people responsible for the translation and retranslation (or "back translation") are chosen based on their knowledge of the sample, the subject matter and field of research, and their knowledge of the language.

[vii] WS, JA and LSM (total predictors = three) were entered in the first model. In the next step one more variable of WSD (total predictors = four) were entered in the second model. In the third step, along with four variables of job related contextual factors and WSD, two controlled variables – age and job tenure were entered in the third model (total variables entered = six) (method adopted in all three models was forced entry).

[viii] However, in the third step, along with five variables of individual culture and WSD, three predictor variables – WS, JA, and LSM were entered in the third model (total variables entered = eight). The method adopted in all three models was forced entry.