

Trade Union Participation in Leather Industry in Kolkata

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Leather industry is one of the high employment generating industries in India. As per one estimate the sector can generate about 6 million direct and indirect employment by the end of 2015. Trade unionism is a common practice in many of the leather manufacturing organizations. The trade union formation shows a great deal of variations from small, medium to large organizations. In the small and medium leather organizations trade unions are functioning under the industrial union banner whereas in large organizations unions are mostly organization specific. This paper attempts to study different factors like union loyalty, union instrumentality, 'them and us' attitude, workplace collectivism etc. as the determinants of trade union participation in the organized leather industry in Kolkata.

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Introduction

The Kolkata leather industry has been divided in to different sub-sectors such as tannery units (medium and small scale), export oriented leather goods manufacturing units, fabricator of leather goods and units catering to indigenous market, fabricator of industrial gloves, small, medium and large scale footwear manufacturers, house-hold manufacturing units and merchant exporters etc. The available data shows that the trends in the employment creation by these sub-sectors are not uniform. The lack of uniformity seems to be natural as the number of units in each type of sub-sectors widely varies across leather industry in Kolkata. For example, the number of micro-enterprises across sub-sectors of Kolkata leather industry has been maximum creating highest number of employment whereas the number of large scale units in the leather industry has been very limited. Table 1 shows the trend in employment creation in the sub-sectors over the years.

During 2007-2009 period employment in Kolkata leather industry has increased at a very moderate rate of about 4.6%. The growth rate is relatively higher in

Table 1 Trend of Employment Creation in the Sub-sectors of Leather Industry of Kolkata

Sub-sector	No. of units	Employment (2007-08)	Employment (2008-09)
Tannery units	224	8450	8900
Export oriented leather goods manufacturing	236	23600	25000
Fabricator of leather goods and units catering indigenous market	1200	3600	3800
Industrial gloves manufacturer cum exporter	31	4650	4800
Fabricator of gloves	200	6000	6000
Large scale footwear manufacturer	1	3000	2970
Small scale footwear manufacturer	25	1000	1100
Fabricator and house hold manufacturing units	2000	10000	10500
	Merchant Exporter		
Leather goods exporter	96	1920	2000
Leather gloves exporter	11	220	250
Total	4024	62440	65320

Source: Diagnostic Study Report of Kolkata Leather Cluster, EDI (2009)

fabricator and house hold manufacturing units, export oriented leather goods manufacturing units etc. However, the only large scale footwear manufacturing unit in the Kolkata leather cluster has witnessed reduction in the number of workers.

In majority of the units across different sub-sectors of the Kolkata leather cluster, the working conditions are not only appalling but there is also scant regard for workers safety or health.

Except a few major leather and leather products manufacturing units, in majority of the units across different sub-sectors of the Kolkata leather cluster, the working conditions are not only appalling but there is also scant regard for work-

ers' safety or health. Though, the traditional leather units of Kolkata is dominated by low caste and Muslim migrant workers from neighboring states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Eastern Uttar Pradesh, the entry of people from different backgrounds are growingly visible in the sector. About 70% of the workers engaged in the industry are traditionally employed as temporary workers. Most of them join the industry as workers with very low or no skill and they acquire required skills simply by observation at the initial stages. Very often these low skilled new entrants to the sector acquire skill under the guidance of their relatives or somebody else from their place of origin, also employed as worker in a leather unit in Kolkata. They are the people who actually bring these very cheap workers from their villages to enable them to learn the required skills at the place of their employment.

Minimum wages are not followed in most cases.

However, the labor market is flexible and intensively competitive and mostly they are paid on a piece rate basis. Abundant supply of labor together with the absence of unit level strong labor unions has pushed down the wages to the reservation level. Minimum wages are not followed in most cases and the workers are also not in the position of demanding higher wage rates as the supply of labor is in abundant. According to a recent government order, the minimum wage rate for unskilled /low skilled workers in tanneries and leather manufacturing units in KMDA area should be Rs. 162.33, Rs. 178.46 for semi-skilled workers and for the highly skilled workers it should be Rs. 196. 31. In reality very few units comply with these minimum wage rates. In most of the manufacturing units, specially in the leather footwear and accessories manufacturing units, work is based on almost putting out system and during peak season the workers work for 16 to 18 hours per day and during the slack season the daily working hour comes down to 6 to 7 hours per day only causing loss of employment to many low skilled or unskilled workers. However, the limited number of workers under the regular pay-roll remains with their jobs. In tanneries and fabricating units the machine operators and highly skilled workers are offered regular employment and in leather product manufacturing units the high skilled workers, specially the solemen and uppermen are kept as fixed workers. The practice of child labor and

the women workers is rampant in many small home based leather product manufacturing units. It has been growingly restricted in organized units due to self regulation by the units themselves under the surveillance of respective industry bodies like Indian Leather Products Association etc. Though the regular workers and supervisory staffs in formal sectors in the Kolkata leather industry are covered under Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, Employees State Insurance Act and the Payment of Gratuity Act, large number of temporary, casual and contractual workers do not get these facilities. The unions campaign to extend the provisions of the PF Act to the temporary, casual and contractual workers of Kolkata leather industry. But it has not been possible as the numbers of such workers' continue to vary from season to season and very insignificant level of permanency exists for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Kolkata leather industry. However, since 2008 with the passing of the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act by the Government of West Bengal, the conditions of the irregular workers from the Kolkata leather industry has improved along with the same types of workers from other industries as well. Still the coverage of the Act has not reached any significant level and majority of the irregular workers are yet to be benefited in the state from many industries, including the leather industry.

Kolkata Leather Cluster Unionism

Three different trends in trade union involvement are clearly visible in Kolkata

leather industry. In low to moderate technology leather units, specially in the tanneries, the unskilled or low skilled irregular workers join the trade unions with the main objective of ensuring the job with the same unit even in the case of seasonal employment along with reasons like ensuring higher wages, whereas the semi-skilled or skilled workers with relatively permanent employment status tend to join trade unions with the objective of enjoying collective power to safeguard themselves against any unfair decision by the employers. The highly skilled professionals, mostly independent professionals employed through retainership basis have their own unions on the issues of professional advancement, remuneration, service contracts etc. However, the rate of unionization across the Kolkata industry does not show any specific trend as different types of people employed in the sector have different penetration rates and different units also show the different levels of unionization. Most of the units do not have unit level unions and instead have industry level unions with different penetration rates across industries. These industry or craft unions are politically affiliated and have different levels of influence on the respective union members at the local levels.

From the overall industry perspective the trade unionization rate is not only relatively low (less than 10%), but also the union membership is unevenly distributed across units.

Workers of Kolkata leather industry are affiliated to three different unions

based on their professional status. For instance, most of the medium scale leather units have the presence of Calcutta Tannery Workers Union (affiliated to INTUC), Calcutta Leather Workers Union (affiliated to AITUC), Bengal Leather Workers Union (affiliated to CITU) and All Bengal Charmakar Union (INTUC affiliated) whereas in relatively larger units like Asian Leather Limited, Bata India Limited etc. with relatively larger workforce, the existence of organization specific trade unions has been traditionally witnessed. In Bata factory at Batanagar near Kolkata, eight unions affiliated to different political parties exist over last 40 years and the Bata Mazdoor Union (affiliated to INTUC) and Progressive Workers Union (affiliated to CITU) demand majority union status with larger workforce support during this period. Bata has the highest trade union penetration rate as more than 90% of its current workers of about 3000 people are members of either of the unions. However, from the overall industry perspective the trade unionization rate is not only relatively low (less than 10%), but also the union membership is unevenly distributed across units. State level unions affiliated to the different political central unions are also active to varying degrees which have considerable influence on the casual and temporary workers of Kolkata leather industry. Since AITUC and CITU are the central unions with the largest membership among most of the unorganized sector, it can be accepted that the temporary and casual workers from the leather industry in Kolkata are also the members of major craft unions active in West Bengal. INTUC has some 60000

members in the unorganized sector in West Bengal, but it has little bargaining activity in the leather sector.

A report by the Department of Labor, Government of West Bengal (2009) has shown a steady growth in the number of trade union membership in Kolkata leather industry. Majority of the trade union members are from tanneries followed by manufacturers and fabricators. Table 2 shows the growth pattern of the union membership in the leather industry of Kolkata.

Change in trade union membership

Table 2 Growth Pattern of Trade Union Membership in Kolkata Leather Industry

Year	Approx. total union membership	Approx. rate of change over the previous year membership (in percentage)
1989-90	5916	NA
1990-91	6760	14.27%
1991-92	7270	7.54%
1992-93	7305	0.48%
1993-94	7690	5.27%
1994-95	8100	5.33%
1995-96	8789	8.50%
1996-97	9600	9.22%
1997-98	10200	6.25%
1998-99	10560	3.52%
1999-2000	10733	1.63%
2000-2001	11414	6.81%
2001-2002	10500	-8%
2002-2003	10900	3.80%
2003-2004	11150	2.29%
2004-2005	11600	4.03%
2005-2006	12133	4.59%
2006-2007	12545	3.39%
2007-2008	12300	-1.95%
2008-2009	12716	3.38%

Source : Department of Labour, Government of West Bengal (2010)

in the Kolkata leather industry does not follow any specific trend, though period wise pattern may be identified. For example, during 1993-97 the number of union membership increased steadily, whereas since 1997 to 2000 the number decreased. In the years 2001-2002 and 2007-2008, the decrease in numbers of trade union membership has been at the rate of -8% and -1.95% respectively.

Review of Literature

Mathur and Mathur (1962), Reveri (1972), Soman (1957), Karnik (1960), Kennedy (1955), Sharma (1963), Fonseca (1964), Ghosh (1960) and Malhotra (1963) have provided information, both theoretical and empirical, on trade union movement in India. The studies of Kennedy (1955), Vaid (1962), Dufty (1964), Fonseca (1964), Sharma (1963), Johri (1967), Soman (1957), Nigam (1984), Agarwal (1984) and Bhangoo (1987) have raised issues such as process of unionism, its role in economic development, role of the legislation and government in promoting unionism, new problems and challenges of trade unions and other related issues of trade unionism in India. The major limitation of these studies is their excessive dependence on secondary data without using behavioral data. Studies on unionism at the area, industry and enterprise level are very few in India. Kulkarni's (1946) research was the pacer-

setter in the real sense. Kennedy (1955), Sheth (1960), Singh (1968), Murphy (1981), Gaur (1986) and Asdhir (1987) have studied trade unionism in Bombay, Tamil Nadu, Ahmedabad, Rajasthan and Punjab by applying historical approach. Pandey and Vikram (1969) studied trade unions in Delhi's construction industry and Bograte (1968) have worked on the trade union movement among the Kolkata dock workers. The important area, industry or plant level studies include those of Mast (1969), Thakur (1968), Punekar (1958), Vaid (1965), Ramaswamy (1977), Sahoo (1977), Monga (1973), Arya (1980), Sinha (1984) etc. The studies indicate that there has not been any significant difference in characteristics of trade unions at area, industry, state and national levels with regard to multiplicity of units, inter-union and intra-union rivalries and other important aspects of the trade unionism.

Pandey and Vikram (1969) have done the causal analysis on level of workers' participation in trade unions in Indian industries. They have identified the attributes such as lack of enlightened leadership, illiteracy among workers, managements' hostility, low interest of the workers etc. The studies by Dayal and Sharma (1970), Sinha and Paul (1963), Ganguli (1954), Sayles and Strauss (1953), Monga and Mogga (1981) and Mukherjee (1985) have investigated the variables, attitude toward unions' functions and other perceptions. These studies have mainly investigated the relationship between trade union participation and different variables like age, length of service, sex, wage satisfaction, promotion, rural or urban background, educational level etc.

Significant researches have also been observed on the fundamental characteristics of trade union leadership in India. Researches in this regard can be witnessed in streams like dependence of leadership efficiency on different demographic factors of the leader, level of political interference in trade union leaderships etc. Mathur and Raman (1962), Dayal and Sharma (1976), Singh (1980) and Rao (1984) have attempted to analyse the leadership efficiency with the help of factors like age, gender, caste, parental occupation, political affiliation etc. Reindrop (1971), Ramaswamy (1977) and Acharji (1980) have observed that the outsiders, mainly the political leaders play the dominant role in the functions of trade unions in many industries. Pattabhi (1967), Aziz (1974), Ashraf (1974), Baveskar (1974) in their research works have highlighted the political manipulations, dependence and weakness of the unions and the use of union funds for different political purposes. Nanda (1968) and Ramaswamy (1971) have contributed significantly to research on the outside political intervention in trade union leadership in the country. They have categorically shown the role of politically affiliated trade unions in civil elections in different parts of the country.

West Bengal used to account for 65 percent of India's leather goods exports.

Available literature on Kolkata leather industry mostly comprises different reports, monographs and few research papers. Report of Council of In-

dian Leather Exports (2005) has provided the information that West Bengal used to account for 65 percent of India's leather goods exports (1999-2000 exports were valued at USD 226 million). But its share of total Indian leather and leather goods exports is 15 percent. The European Union and North America are the leading importers of West Bengal's leather and leather goods (79 percent and 12 percent respectively). Unfortunately, West Bengal is generally considered a source of low-priced, poor quality leather goods. Improving the quality of both leather and leather goods is a problem as most tanneries and manufacturers are small and cannot afford the investments required to upgrade production facilities. Only a few manufacturers have modern equipment. But most of them are handicapped by low overall production capacity, which prevents them executing large export orders. However, West Bengal is still considered India's largest manufacturer of leather goods. In addition to BIL (annual capacity over 20 million pairs of shoes/uppers) there are approximately 20,000 small units making footwear/uppers (12 million pairs per year); industrial gloves (50 million pairs per year); garments (800,000 pieces per year); and accessories and luggage 35 million pieces per year). Annual Report of the Indian Leather Producers Association (2009) has observed that Kolkata is the single largest concentration of leather industry in West Bengal and Kolkata offers the leather industry several advantages like easy availability of a wide variety of leather (cow, calf, buffalo, sheep, goat); low production costs; a large pool of unskilled, semi-skilled and

skilled workers at competitive rates; and abundant water and power. An airport and two ports facilitate exports. West Bengal's leather industry directly and indirectly employs over 200,000 people. Roy and Satyaki (2009) has conducted an extensive research on the institutional failures and imperfections that prevail in the supply of indivisible inputs and collective action in a typical 'low-road' cluster in Kolkata and has argued that market failures due to the existence of information imperfections, externalities and public good and the institutional failure to resolve those shortcomings only partially explain the depressed status of these clusters, including Kolkata leather cluster. He further added that, the explanation critically rests on the fact of asymmetric power relations and conflicts arising between the trader and the small producer reproducing a production relation that thwarts the high road growth path. The spawning of small enterprises in such clusters is a result of self-exploitative fragmentation that does not flow from entrepreneurship, but from the survival strategy of labor in the context of depressed wages. In this working paper the author has highlighted all comprehensive issues like production organization, labor process and other issues pertaining to the socio-economic analysis of the functioning of the Kolkata leather cluster. The paper further observes that most of the units are owned by the male and about 87.5 % of the units surveyed by the author are either owned as proprietorship or as family owned house-hold work. Though very few literatures have been identified on the work-force pattern and labor practices in the Kolkata leather in-

dustry, researches by Sabharwal (2000), Roy & Satyaki (2009) may be considered as pioneering on the issue. Report on leather industry including footwear and other art works in India, published by the Labor Bureau, Ministry of Labor and Employment, Government of India (2008) has given a comprehensive picture on the working conditions and social backgrounds of the workers, working in the leather industry across India, including the leather industry at Kolkata, which should be considered as another important source to depend on.

Significant amount of research is available in the knowledge domain regarding the impact of different factors on the trade union participation by the workers. Bolton et. al (2007) have comprehensively explained the concept of trade union participation as the collective involvement of members in union related activities, which are closely related to the effective functioning of the union. Gamage and Hewagama (2012) have divided the union participation activities into two categories namely formal and informal. According to Fuller et al (1995) the formal activities consist of involvement in elections, participation of meetings, voting, filing grievances and serving as an office bearer. They have also identified informal union activities like helping other members to file grievances, reading union publications, talking about the union with others. Cohen (1994) has empirically identified the similarities and differences among six forms of union participation namely union commitment, participation in decision making, participation in union activities, attitudinal mili-

tancy, serving in elected offices and the propensity to strike. Most of the research on union participation has considered it as a multi-dimensional construct. McShane (1986), Tetrick et al (2007) and Jinadasa & Opatha (1999) have mentioned these multi-dimensional influences in determining the trade union participation. Shore and Newton (1995) in their study have included some other measures as communication and civic virtue. Scholars like Gorden et al (1980), Metochi (2002), Fullagar (1986), Kuruvilla et al (1990) have identified the importance of demographic variables like gender, age and race in influencing the trade union participation by the workers in their respective research papers along with the relationship between behavioural attitudes and union participation. Barling, Kelloway and Bremermann (1991), Desphande and Fiorito (1989) have suggested that having positive attitudes about the union is positively related to voting for unionization. Fullagar and Barling (1989) found that union loyalty resulted in greater formal participation in union activities. It implies that, the members who feel loyal to their union are more likely to vote in union elections and participate in union meetings and activities. Morrow & McElroy (2006) have observed that there is a significant positive relationship between satisfaction with communication from national union leaders and union loyalty. Monnot et al (2010) has found that the magnitude of the relationship between commitment and participation are moderated by status-based group members, i.e., white collar vs. blue collar. Shore, Tetrick and Newton (1994) have developed another model on union commitment

and participation. According to the model variables like organizational commitment, job satisfaction and pro-union attitudes are the antecedents of union commitment. Further the relationship between union instrumentality and union commitment is mediated by pro-union attitudes. Researchers have developed two viewpoints to substantiate the model. The first view has been aligned with the economic exchange perspective which emphasizes the members' commitment to unions due to instrumentality perceptions of the union. This view implies that unions are able to improve the terms and conditions of workers. The second view deals with the social exchange perspective which considers the union as a source of support for its members.

Objectives of the Study

The paper attempts to analyse the impact of different factors like perceived union loyalty, perceived union instrumentality, perceived 'them and us' attitude and the collectivism at workplace on the trade union participation in the organized leather industry in Kolkata.

'Union loyalty' can be defined as the pride in union a member possesses (Gorden et al., 1980). In other words, it can also be explained as the continuous mental as well as physical association of a member to an organization talking about his /her occupational interests. 'Union instrumentality' has been explained by the Newton and Shore 1992 as the economic exchanges of union membership in terms of cost benefit analysis. 'Them and us' has been explained as the basic difference

between the management and the workers side (Metochi, 2002). 'Collectivism' has been comprehensively explained as closely linked individuals willing to give priority of the group interests rather than individual one (Cregan, Bartram & Stanton, 2009) .

Hypothesis

Based on above objectives, following hypotheses has been framed:

- H1: Perceived union loyalty is a significant factor influencing trade union participation.
- H2: Perceived union instrumentality is a significant factor on trade union participation.
- H3: Union members perceived 'them and us' attitude is a significant influence on the willingness to participate in trade union activities .
- H4: Workplace collectivism significantly influences the trade union participation of the workers .

Data Collection

The sample consists of seven leather units of Kolkata with the presence of the trade unions. Specific care has been taken to shortlist these units with at least 20% unionized workforce, from both regular and irregular categories. It has been observed that most of the unionized workers are from the operational categories. Very few supervisory staffs and no managerial employees have been found to be unionized in these surveyed leather units. 350 questionnaires

were distributed in manual forms in the selected seven companies, 50 questionnaires for each organization. After rejecting the incomplete questionnaires 254 valid questionnaires were used for data analysis purpose. Hence, the response rate was 72.5 percent. The responses to the questionnaire were registered on a 5-point Likert scale. The data has been collected during a period of 90 days in the January -March 2012 period.

Testing of Reliability

The internal item consistency reliability has been examined with Cronbach's alpha test. The coefficient has been calculated for the aggregate sample of 254 respondents. The result shows that alpha value of each instrument has been above .7, which suggests the internal reliability of the instrument is satisfactory.

Table 1 Reliability of the Instruments

Item No.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Union loyalty	0.856
2	Union instrumentality	0.751
3	Them and Us	0.745
4	Workplace Collectivism	0.725
5	Union participation	0.893

Testing of Validity

The validity testing of the questionnaire has been done by using factor analysis. The factor loadings of .30 or higher is normally considered in the interpretation as a factor. Whereas the factor loadings in the range of 0.30 -0.40

are considered to meet the minimal level for interpretation of structure, loadings 0.50 or greater are considered practically significant. Factor loading exceeding +0.70, is considered as being indicative of a well-defined structure Union loyalty, union instrumentality, 'them and us' attitude, workplace collectivism and union participation had 32 items and the results of factor loading over 0.5 for each item has been produced by principal component factor analysis. The internal consistency of items within each variable has been shown by Alpha coefficients being greater than 0.60. The results showed that construct validity of the questionnaire has been at a satisfactory level.

Results

The hypotheses have been tested by using statistical techniques of correlation and linear regression analysis. As final hypothesis of the study involved in testing the aggregate effect of all the variables on union participation, multiple regression analysis has also been conducted.

The correlation between union loyalty and union participation is 0.582, which is the strongest association compared to other variables. The correlation coefficient is .305 at .05 significance level in between the union instrumentality and union participation. This shows a moderate relationship between these two variables. Two other correlations, namely between 'them and us' attitude and union participation as well as the correlation between workplace collectivism and the

Table 2 Correlation among the Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Correlations				
			Union loyalty	Union instrumentality	Them & Us	Workplace collectivism	Union participation
Union Loyalty	3.09	.970	1.0	.550*	.144	.139	.582*
Union instrumentality	3.40	.824	.550*	1.0	.373*	.294*	.305*
Them and Us	3.18	1.012	.144*	.373*	1.0	-.007	.093
Workplace Collectivism	4.02	.589	.139	.294*	-.007	1.0	.054
Union participation	3.17	.844	.582*	.305*	.093	.054	1.0

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

trade union participation have been found to be not significant

The linear regression analysis (Table

3) attempts to explain the level of significance of impact of four variables on trade union participation in the sample leather units.

Table 3 Linear Regression Analysis

Variables	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate	F value	Sig. (p < .05)
Union loyalty	.338	.334	.82609	80.745	.000
Union instrumentality	.093	.087	.96702	16.160	.000
Them & Us	.009	.002	1.001	1.380	.241
Workplace collectivism	.003	-.003	1.014	.455	.501

There is a positive association between perceived union loyalty and union participation.

R square for the union loyalty (.338) implies that 33.8% of the variance in union participation in trade union of the operational level workers is explained. At the same time only a small margin of error (e = .83) is involved in the regression line. It can be concluded that there is a positive association between perceived union loyalty and union participation. Therefore, the first hypothesis is proved.

The second hypothesis is the association between perceived union instrumentality and union participation. The linear regression analysis shows that R square is .093 with standard error of estimate of .967, which implies a slight impact on union participation. The F value is 16.160, which is significant at 5% level (p = .05), suggesting that union instrumentality has significantly explained 9.3% of the variance in union participation.

The third hypothesis implies a positive relationship between union members'

perceived ‘them and us’ attitude and trade union participation by the workers. The simple regression analysis indicates F value of 1.380, which is not significant at 5% confidence level. Hence it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between union members’ ‘them and us’ attitude and trade union participation.

There is no significant relationship between union members’ them and us’ attitude and trade union participation.

The fourth hypothesis is also not accepted as the R square value .003 with the F value of .455 is not significant at the 5% confidence level, though the correlation coefficient indicates a positive relationship. Hence the hypothesis signifying the relationship between the workplace collectivism and union participation is not substantiated.

Conclusion

The study has found the empirical evidence to support that the perceived union loyalty and union instrumentality have positive significance impact on trade union participation union members. How-

Table 4 Summary Results

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis	Significant/ Insignificant	Conclusion
1	Perceived union loyalty is a significant factor influencing trade union participation	Significant	Hypothesis is accepted
2	Perceived union instrumentality is a significant factor on trade union participation	Significant	Hypothesis is accepted
3	Union members ‘perceived them and us attitude’ is a significant influence on willingness to participate in trade union activities	Not significant	Hypothesis is not accepted
4	Workplace collectivism significantly influences the trade union participation of the workers	Not significant	Hypothesis is not accepted

ever, ‘them and us’ attitude and workplace collectivism have not been observed to have significant impact on trade union participation in the sample leather units.

Limitations

The study however has the following limitations:

■ All the data have been collected through single source self reported

measures. Therefore, common method variance may be a major problem. Responses of individual survey items may not be truly independent as there has been a chance influence of group membership. Further research has the scope to limit this shortcoming.

■ This study is also limited to four factors of trade union participation of the operational level employees in the

sample leather units of Kolkata. Future studies can be done regarding trade union participation of non-operational employees of the same industry.

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