Ekonomi

A Research on the Perceptions of Cotton Producers to Form a Producers' Union in Şanlıurfa - Turkey

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Turkey is one of the few countries in the world in terms of both its cotton production and consumption capacity. Şanlıurfa is ranked in the first place in Turkey in terms of cotton production as it produced approximately 40% of Turkey's total production. The purpose of this research is to determine why, despite the potential of Şanlıurfa, the "cotton producers' union" could not be established and how they perceive the establishment of the producers' union. The main material of this research is the data obtained from the cotton producers who were selected through a simple random sampling method. In this context, surveys were conducted in 2019 through face-to-face interviews. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used in the analysis. In line with the results obtained, it was determined that age, education level, farming experience, amount of land and income were statistically effective factors on the perception of farmers regarding the formation of producers' unions. In consonance with the research result; young farmers who have low farming experience, high educational level, low land, and low income are more willing to establish a "cotton producers' union". It was concluded that the tribal structure of the region was effective in the failure to establish the producers' union. This research is the first study in Şanlıurfa conducted on this subject.
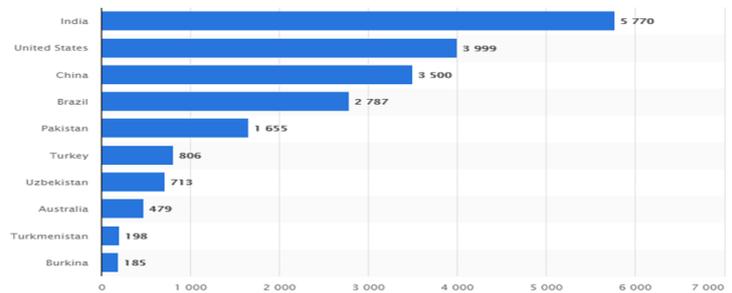
I. Introduction

Cotton is one of the most important agricultural products that are widely produced and traded in the world. Due to its feature of being a fibre and oil plant, it still maintains its importance today as a strategic agricultural product (Küçük & Aydoğdu, 2020). Cotton is cultivated in approximately 3% of the total cultivation areas of developing countries (Küçük & Issı, 2019). The product that has the most cultivation area and production value among the industrial plants is cotton (Mart, 2007). It is an important industrial plant that constitutes the raw material of the textile industry with cotton fiber, vegetable oil industry with oil obtained from the core, feed and pulp industry, linters, paper, furniture, and cellulose industries (UCTEA, 2020). There is a need for high-quality cotton for high value-added products which is produced by the textile industry in Turkey (Küçük & Aydoğdu, 2020; Özüdoğru, 2019; Küçük, 2015). As stated in the International Cotton Advisory Commission's (ICAC) report, around 26 million tons of fiber cotton was produced in the world as of the 2017-2018 season (Balçık, 2019). As reported by the forecast data for the 2018/19 season, Turkey, as the eleventh ranking country with the area used for cotton production in the world, rank second in the cotton fiber yield, sixth in cotton production, rank fifth in the consumption of cotton and sixth in cotton imports (Küçük & Aydoğdu, 2020; Statista, 2020a; Anonymous, 2019) furthermore, according to the report of Turkey's Chamber of Agricultural Engineers, namely "Cotton Report-2018", approximately 25% of the world's cotton production was made in China, 22% in India and 15% in the USA in 2016 (UCTEA, 2020) while Turkey's share in world cotton production was 3% in 2016 (Statista, 2020b).

While China has been the country with the largest cotton production area in the world for many years, India has surpassed China with an increase in production in recent years. The first 6 countries producing cotton in the 2018/19 season in the world were India, the USA, China, Brazil, Pakistan and Turkey (Figure 1; Statista 2020b). The top five worldwide countries in cotton consumption were China, India, Pakistan, Turkey and Bangladesh in the same season (Statista, 2020a, 2020b; OECD, 2016).

Cotton production was started the first time in the 11th century in the Seljuk period and continued until today with its productivity of soils and climatic conditions in Turkey (Uyanık & Çelikel, 2019; Uyanık & Oğulata, 2013). In Turkey, about 2.4 million tons of cotton with seed production was made in the 2017-2018 production season. While Turkey ranked seventh in the world with about 850 thousand tons of cotton fiber production (UCTEA, 2020), a year later it ranked sixth in the world from 2018 to 2019 by about 806 thousand tons of production (Statista, 2020b).

Figure 1: Worldwide cotton production by country in 2018-2019 (in 1,000 metric tons)

Turkey is a net importer of cotton. In 2018, it ranked fourth in the world with 1.4 million tons of consumption (UCTEA, 2020). As seen in Figure 2, Turkey, with 762 thousand tons of cotton import, ranked fourth in the world in the 2018-2019 production season. Total cotton production is unable to meet the domestic market demand, in consonance with many years of trend analysis, due to built-in processing and export of textiles, but Turkey will remain in the position of importers in the future, too (Küçük & Aydoğdu, 2020; Özüdoğru, 2017).

Figure 2: Leading cotton importing countries in 2018-2019 (in 1,000 metric tons) (Statista, 2020a).
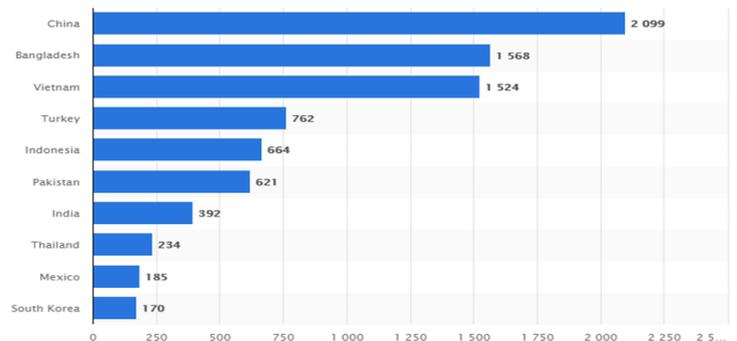
While Turkey had had a total of 40.97 million hectares of farmland in 2001, it was found to be 37.82 million hectares in 2018 (Aydoğdu & Altun, 2019). The total farmland was 38.30 million hectares in 2019, while 23.09 million hectares were cultivated in Turkey (TUIK, 2019). The cultivation rate was 60.3% in 2019. In 2018, 5 million acres of cotton were cultivated in Turkey and 44.62% of this acreage was in Şanlıurfa. The amount of cotton cultivated area in Şanlıurfa was 2.31 million acres (TUIK, 2020). Şanlıurfa is the province with the highest agricultural production area of the GAP project, and Harran Plain is the most important cotton production area (Aydogdu et al., 2018). Turkey's cotton with seed production was 2.5-million-ton in 2018 and about 40% of this amount of production was realized in Şanlıurfa. The amount of cotton with seed produced in Şanlıurfa was 1.02 million tons in 2018. Şanlıurfa is a city where most cotton production is made in Turkey (Balçık, 2019; Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2019; TUIK, 2020).

Although Şanlıurfa is producing about 40% of Turkey's total cotton production, there is not any producers' association of cotton producers in Şanlıurfa. In addition to the high cost of cotton breeding, the competition problem among crops, the lack of enough agricultural support (Mart, 2007), the problem of organization also affects cotton agriculture negatively. It has been determined that the amount of agricultural support in Şanlıurfa has a decisive influence on farmers' product planting, especially in their cotton planting decisions (G. Sevinç, Aydoğdu, Cançelik, & Sevinç, 2019).

In many countries of the world, there are many problems in the agricultural sector such as low productivity in production, inadequate organization, inefficient agricultural training and publications, insensitivity to the environment in agricultural production, insufficiency of farmers in the agricultural products market and lack of competitiveness with other sectors (G. Sevinç, 2018). On the other hand, due to the low-income levels of the farmers in general, organized structures are needed to improve the living conditions, increase the level of welfare and ensure the development of rural agricultural workers. Globally, a large part of the problems in the agricultural sector stems from the inability of producers to act together. In other words, it is possible to overcome the problems with an only conscious organization (Cançelik, Aydogdu, & Sevinç, 2020; G. Sevinç, 2018).

To create effective organizational models for the dispersed agricultural producers to help them penetrate the market under a single roof and to be effective in protecting their rights in the market; agricultural organizations in all agricultural policies implemented in Turkey were discussed and supported in every period (Tan & Karaönder, 2013). In Turkey, the "Agricultural Producers' Unions Law" numbered 5200 has been issued in 2004. The purpose of the law is to help agricultural producers have agricultural personality by coming together based on product or product group to be able to plan production in line with the demand, to improve product quality, to send products to the market in accordance with the norms and standards applicable to the marketing and to take measures to increase the marketing power of the products on a national and international scale and to establish producer associations. The relevant law demands to create positive effects on agricultural production both nationally and locally. The desired national effect national is about planning and improving agricultural production, ensuring the smooth access of agricultural products to users; thereby ensuring formal registration of agricultural activities. The international aim is to increase export revenues through quality and competitive products. The local aim is to ensure the continuity of agricultural activities and increase the welfare levels of farmers by eliminating the marketing problems of their products arising from agricultural activities.

This research aims to determine the factors affecting the perceptions and approaches towards the establishment of the "cotton producers' union" of the farmers producing cotton in Şanlıurfa.

2. Material and Methods

The main material of this research is the primary data obtained from the farmers who were producing cotton in Şanlıurfa. Primary data is a type of data collected by the researcher using various tools both in qualitative and quantitative studies (Bayram, 2015; Lorcu, 2015). Such data can be collected through three methods. These are survey, observation and interview. The method used in this research is the survey method. In the province of Şanlıurfa, which is a research area, there are approximately 20 thousand farmers who were producing cotton in 2019 (Başbağ et al., 2011). The following sampling formula was used to calculate the number of farmers to be surveyed (Anderson, Sweeney, Williams, Camm, & Cochran, 2014). The sampling volume was determined with a 95% confidence and a 10% margin of error.
In the formula;

n: Sample size,

N: Number of the mass in the population, which is 20,000 farmers, in this case,
r: The average of the allowable margin of error (10%),
p: The farmer's acceptance to participate in the survey, the rate of sampling. It is taken as 0.5 to calculate the maximum number of participants in the survey.
q: The possibility of the farmers not participating in the survey, the rate of not entering the sampling (1-p). It is taken as 0.5.
$Z_{\alpha/2}$: z scale value, 1.96.

σ_p^2: The variance of the ratio, $\sigma_p^2 = \left(\frac{r}{Z_{\alpha/2}}\right)^2 = \left(\frac{0.10}{1.96}\right)^2 = 0.051^2$

$$n = \frac{N * p * q}{(N-1) * \sigma_p^2 + p * q} = \frac{20000 * 0.5 * 0.5}{(20000 - 1) * (0.051)^2 + 0.5 * 0.5} \cong 96$$

Using the formulas and calculations given above, the number of farmers to be surveyed was determined as 96.

The surveys were conducted in 2019 with the farmers selected through a simple random sampling method. The data obtained through questionnaires were entered into the Excel database, analyzed, evaluated and reported by using the Kruskal-Wallis test. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a nonparametric alternative to one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) between groups. This analysis provides a comparison of three or more groups with continuous variables and is widely used in research. In this analysis, the values are converted into sequential, and sequential averages are compared for each group. Thus which group is significantly differed is found out (Bayram, 2015; Lorcu, 2015; Demirgil, 2010).

3. Results and Discussions

To measure the perceptions of the farmers who cultivated cotton regarding the establishment of a producers' union; Expressions about the establishment of producers' union, membership of producers' union, necessity for producers' union, positive contributions of producers' unions to marketing opportunities and product prices were asked to the participants. The internal consistency analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires used in this type of research was determined by the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The Cronbach alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. A negative value is an indication that the scale does not measure similar properties. The low alpha value indicates that the test is not homogeneous, which measures several properties together. A value between 0.60 and 0.80 indicates that the analysis is reliable, and a value above 0.80 indicates high reliability (Kılıç, 2016; Aydogdu, Mancı, & Aydoğdu, 2014; Tavşançıl, 2002). Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the expressions given above was found to be 0.93. This value indicates that expressions are related to each other and are also very reliable for use in the analysis.

In the research, the analysis of the basic components was then applied to the expressions and the expressions were collected under a single index value. Thus, a general summary of the statements was obtained. This index value explains 74% of the variance. In the research, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to determine how participation in the variables regarding the perception of producers' union created after the principal components analysis differed in terms of age, education, experience, land and income variables. The descriptive statistics of the variables are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	1	4	2.67	1.176
Education level	1	6	3.28	1.574
Farming experience	1	4	2.68	1.100
Land size	1	3	2.05	0.800
Income	1	3	2.17	0.829

Table 2 shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test to determine whether there is a difference in the attitudes of the participants towards the producers' union in terms of age, education level, farming experience, land size, and income. In one hand, the ability to act in an organized way in agricultural activities is closely related to the age variable. On the other hand, there is a serious pressure of the tribal structure on the positive changes that may occur in the social structure in the rural area of Şanlıurfa province. Tribal types are the organizations created as social and political organizations, following demands such as the satisfaction of economic needs and ensuring life security against external dangers (Uluç, 2010). Associations that allow producers or growers to benefit from the advantages of acting together (production, marketing, etc.) could not escape the clampdown of the tribal system, which is one of the dynamic social structures of the region (Cançelik et al., 2020).

Table 2. The test statistics of the farmers' perceptions of forming a producers' union

Variables	Groups	N	Rank Average	Test Statistics	
Age	35 and less 36-45 46-55 56 and over	23 18 23 32	55.33 61.00 48.52 36.55	Chi-square df p-value	10.9743 **0.012***
Education level	Illiterate Literate Primary School Secondary School High School University	17 13 28 10 20 8	27.29 47.92 45.70 65.25 59.78 55.19	Chi-square df p-value	17.6175 **0.003***
Farming Experience (year)	1-10 11-20 21-30 31 and over	17 27 22 30	48.09 54.94 54.77 38.33	Chi-square df p-value	6.6063 **0.086**
Land size (acre)	Less than100 100-200 201 and more	28 35 33	59.16 48.70 39.24	Chi-square df p-value	7.8022 **0.020***
Income (TL)	Less than100,000 100,000-200,000 200,001 and over	26 28 42	55.31 52.84 41.39	Chi-square df p-value	5.0012 **0.082**

*,**,*** indicates the degree of the statistical significance level of 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01 respectively.

According to the results in Table 2, a statistically significant difference was found between the subgroups in the age variable, at the significance level of p <0.05 [p = 0.012 <0.05], and their attitudes towards producers' union. Binary comparisons were made with the Mann-Whitney U test to determine from which group the difference originated. Appropriately, it is possible to say that the participants who are '56 and above' are more negative about the issue of forming a producers' union than the participants in other age groups. The effort to be organized in a rural area and to create a producers' union is to change traditions in agricultural activities and to bring innovation in social life. In terms of adapting to innovations in rural areas; the fact that young farmers are more open and willing than middle-aged and older farmers is a finding revealed in the other academic studies (Sezgin, 2010; Elbashir, 1991). In this regard, the result is consistent.

Frederick W. Frey who served as an expert in State Planning Organization in Turkey conducted a research and pointed to the basic elements of the rural social structure in Turkey. These elements are poverty, the poor connection of the villages with the outside world, social inactivity, low literacy rate, and the domination of a faithful culture (Türkdoğan, 2008). Individuals living in rural Turkey are usually not open to much change and education; exhibiting conservative attitudes towards change, using religious elements in all areas of life and has a structure that is connected to it wholeheartedly. Therefore, their cautious about their development, sometimes even biased and can refuse the development without examining and questioning (Davran, Sevinç, & Cançelik, 2020; Sevinç, Davran, & Sevinç, 2016).

The positive change desired in the social structure is possible with the education that can be given to the general public. In terms of education variable, according to the results in Table 2, a statistically significant difference was found between the sub-groups of the education variable in their attitude towards the perception of creating a producers' union at the p <0.01 significance level [p = 0.003 <0.01]. Binary comparisons were made with the Mann-Whitney U test to determine from which group the difference originated. Thus, it is possible to say that illiterate participants are more negative about the issue of forming a producers' union than the other participants with different educational level. As the education level of farmers increases, their desire to establish a producers' union increases and their perception of acting together develops. In this sense, the result is consistent.

In terms of farming experience variable, conforming to the results in Table 2, a statistically significant difference was found between the subgroups of the experience variable in their attitude towards the perception of establishing a producers' union at the p <0.10 significance level [p = 0.086 <0.10]. Binary comparisons were made with the Mann-Whitney U test to determine from which group the difference originated. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the participants who have more than 30 years of farming experience are more negative about the issue of forming a producers' union than the participants with less experience.

The experience of farmers in agricultural activities increases the technical knowledge of farmers. Farmers with long farming experience have high self-confidence and do not need external support much during the period from cultivation to marketing. Experienced farmers are less willing to act jointly and build producers' unions, as they minimize their problems in agricultural activities and marketing. In this regard, the result is consistent.

When the results in Table 2 were considered in terms of the land size variable, a statistically significant difference was found between the sub-groups of the land size variable in their attitude towards the perception of forming a producers' union at the p <0.05 significance level [p = 0.020 <0.05]. Binary comparisons were made with the Mann-Whitney U test to determine from which group the difference originated. Accordingly, it is possible to say that the participants with less than 100 acres of land are more positive about the issue of forming a producers' union than the participants who have a larger land size. Farmers with high land sizes are also farmers with sufficient stock of machinery and equipment needed for agricultural activities. Since the cotton production amounts of farmers in this group are high, they can also reach, move and compete more easily in the market. Therefore, they do not need to establish a producers' union; they can move easily and make decisions with their means. In this sense, the result is consistent.

In terms of income variable, just as the results in Table 2, a statistically significant difference was found between the subgroups of the income variable in their attitude towards the perception of creating a producers' union at the p <0.10 significance level [p = 0.082 <0.10]. Binary comparisons were made with the Mann-Whitney U test in order to determine from which group the difference originated. Correspondingly, it is possible to say that the participants with an income of more than 200.000 TL are more negative about the issue of producers' union than the participants with a lower income level. A high-income level means that that farmer does not have any problems with cotton production and marketing. It is normal for the farmer who does not suffer from these problems to be part of the establishment of a producers' union. In this regard, the result is consistent.

4. Conclusion

In this study, it has been statistically found that young farmers with less farming experience, high level of education, low land size and income favour the formation of the cotton producers' union more. The biggest obstacle to the establishment of a producers' union in the region is the tribal structure. The tribal structure is a social organization model that is caused by the internal dynamics of the social structure of the region and it is very difficult to eliminate such a structure or reduce its effects. The tribal system is a form of social solidarity and is a system of greater unity and commitment than the family. Producers' unions emerge as a result of individuals' rational thinking and economic interests, with their free will.

The tribal system provides some of the benefits that producers' associations will provide for farmers. However, the general problem in the tribal system is that income is not distributed equally and individuals do not have a declaration of free will. This system takes its existence from uneducated, non-querier, materially dependent people. Therefore, the tribal system hinders the improvement of the education level and welfare level of the people of the region, especially in the rural areas.

The producers' associations guide the agricultural planning and policies of the countries by ensuring the registration of agricultural production. Producers' unions also have a positive impact on farmers' agricultural income and operational profitability by increasing their competitiveness in the market. This will positively affect the welfare of both the farmer and the Region as well as the whole country, Turkey. It is inevitable to act considering this social structure of the region and to prepare the plans and policies within this framework. Therefore, these findings obtained for the establishment of a producers' union are important. The results obtained from this study provide useful information for researchers, decision-makers, and policymakers on an organization. This study is the first study conducted specifically in GAP-Şanlıurfa on this subject.

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