

# Antecedents of Union Commitment in Turkish Food and Transportation Sector

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the relationship between union commitment and a series of antecedents- general attitudes towards union, union satisfaction, perceived justice, union instrumentality, militancy- among 461 union members from food and transportation sectors in Turkey. Regression analysis was used to test the relationships between these antecedents and union commitment. Findings revealed that instrumentality explained the highest variance in union loyalty, then came the justice perception and perceived union support. Results suggested that members saw their relation with the union mostly as an economic one, but also perceived organizational support, procedural and interactional justice which reflects a social exchange approach appear to be important for level of union commitment. Implications of the study and recommendations for further studies are discussed.

## Introduction

Decline in union membership is not limited to developed countries' but it also affects developing countries. Turkish unions which are relatively late organized are no exception. In a time of declining membership, there is a lack of studies investigating workers' commitment to their unions despite the abundance of studies on workers' commitment to their employing organizations in Turkey. Development of an understanding regarding the union members' attitudes and behaviors are offered as a solution to halt the decline in membership (Kruvill, Gallagher & Wetzel, 1993) and to increase the effectiveness of unions in

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organizing, bargaining and retaining members (Johnson & Johnson, 1992) as it sheds light on workers' perceptions, attitudes and behavior towards unions. In this context, this study has aimed to investigate the antecedents of Turkish workers' union commitment among food and transportation sector's workers.

Parallel to the prevalence of the informal economy, acceleration of privatization, and rise in service sector employment, number of workers under the collective agreements decreased from 1.463.880 (19% of wage and salary workers) in 1990 to 1.030.024 (8,3% of wage and salary workers) in 2000 and in 2006 to 304.392 according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. The union density rate around 58,40% in July 2007 according to official statistics does not reflect the reality and real unionization rate in Turkey was predicted to be around 12-13% (Uçkan, 2007; 108). According to recent figures announced by Ministry of Labour and Social Security in July 2013, out of 11.628.806 workers only 1.032.166 workers are unionized which represents the %8.8 percent of total workers. The figures get worse in the dynamic and growing sectors like construction and textile.

As can be seen from the above figures, membership decline is drastic in Turkey. There is no doubt that contextual factors have contributed to decline in union membership, but we believe that the ignorance of members' commitment to union by academics and trade union authorities contribute no less than these contextual factors.

According to a study, 75 % of non-unionized Turkish workers and 86% of unionized workers indicated that unionization is necessary. However workers who were former union members thought that current union structures did not match the member's expectations. Results of this study revealed that members' union experience did not effect them positively (Urhan, 2004; 34). So it is worth to scrutinize the motives of union members' psychological attachment to their union (Barling, Fullagar & Kelloway, 1992). Although union commitment and its determinants were mentioned as an important field of research for industrial psychologists long ago (Iverson & Buttgieg, 1997), understanding of members' commitment, its antecedents and consequences has been limited in Turkey until recently (Demirbilek & Çakır, 2004, 2006; Bilgin, 2003; Bayazıt, 2008).

Thus, this study stemmed from the need to develop a deeper understanding regarding the antecedents of member's union commitment in Turkey. Fullagar and Barling (1987) pointed out the importance of union commitment with these words: "An understanding of commitment is important – not only for psychological research on unions, but also for labor [sic] leaders who wish to address the deteriorating levels of union participation and increase democratic involvement of rank and file members". Effectiveness and viability of unions depends on members' commitment (Fullagar et al., 1995) as it points to the workers' desire to retain union membership, willingness to put effort in the union activities, and a belief in and acceptance of union objectives (Gordon et al., 1980).

This study's findings can enlighten the union leaders and officials by providing a deeper understanding because union commitment is found to be strongly related to union participation (Fullagar, 1986; Friedman & Harvey, 1986). In a time of harsh changes imposed by international institutions to weaken the protections for workers, members' commitment to their union becomes the key to retain members and increase their participation for becoming stronger in the bargaining process as it is the fundamental source of union power. As a result, it is important to find out the reasons of workers' union commitment.

Research on union commitment and participation have used mostly North American samples (Chen, Snape & Redman, 2004; 533) except a few with non-Western samples (Aryee & Debrah, 1997; Aryee & Chay, 2001; Tan & Aryee, 2002; Bolton et al., 2007; Frenkel & Kuruvilla, 1999; Gamage & Hewagama, 2012). This study is noteworthy in this respect as it is drawn from a Turkish sample attempting to reveal union commitment of members and its antecedents.

First, the literature reviewed for determining the potential antecedents of members' union commitment. In the second part of the study, antecedents of union commitment were put forth with our hypotheses and analysis based on the data are reported. In the third part, implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

## **Literature Review**

### **Union Commitment**

Interest in union commitment started in the late 1940's (Katz, 1949) and in the early 1950's (Barkin, 1950, Purcell, 1954). This interest continued with the first serious conceptualization and measurement efforts by Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson, and Spiller in 1980. The union commitment literature transferred the notion of organizational commitment into a union context (Gordon et al. 1980 cited in Snape & Redman, 2006) and organizational commitment provided the theoretical basis of union commitment.

After three decades, union commitment is still considered as an important topic of study in Western literature with more than 100 articles and book chapters published (Bamberger, Kluger, & Suchard, 1999). Despite this intensive interest in Western literature, however, union commitment of Turkish workers began to be studied in the early 2000's. This delay shows itself as a numerical dearth of studies regarding Turkish workers' union commitment (Demirbilek, 2007; Bilgin, 2003; Bayazit, 2008; Karaca, 2011 ). We can also attribute this result to industrial relations departments' distance to behavioral sciences and ignorance on the applicability of this science to industrial relations for a long time.

Organizational commitment has been defined as the 'binding of an individual to organisation' (Gordon et al., 1980; 480). Gordon, Philpot, Burt,

Thompson and Spiller (1980) defined union commitment as the extent to which a member has a strong desire to retain union membership, willing to put effort in union work, sense of responsibility to union and a firm belief in union objectives.

Several models developed for measuring union commitment with different number of dimensions and conceptualizations (Sverke & Kuruvilla, 1995) as the phenomenon is generally explained as a multidimensional construct. The most entrenched and intensively used model has been the one by Gordon et al (1980). Depending on the conceptualization of organizational commitment by Porter et al. (1974), Gordon et al.'s model (1980) comprised four dimensions for measuring union commitment. These dimensions labelled as members' loyalty to the union are the workers' sense of responsibility to the union, willingness to work for the union, and belief in unionism (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson & Spiller, 1980).

Union loyalty signifies a sense of pride in union. Loyalty on the other hand includes a desire to retain union membership (Barling, Fullagar & Kelloway, 1992; 72). Belief in unionism which is another dimension of union commitment is general in nature and reflects a belief in the goal of unionism. Unlike union loyalty and belief in unionism which are attitudinal, willingness to work for the union and responsibility are behavioral in essence (Barling, Fullagar & Kelloway, 1992; 72, Demirbilek & Çakır, 2004; 23-26).

According to Gordon's findings loyalty to the union had the biggest variance and mentioned as the most stable dimension in other studies (Fullagar & Barling, 1989 cited in Tan & Aryee, 2002; 716). Union loyalty was found to be an antecedent of willingness to work for the union and responsibility to the union (Kelloway & Barling, 1993).

Low turnover rates, participation and quasi-citizenship behaviors are the positive consequences of organizational commitment documented frequently in literature. Likewise, understanding union commitment and its antecedents can bring about positive consequences for unions (Kelloway & Barling, 1993, Gordon, 1980).

### **Antecedents of Union Commitment**

Union commitment has various antecedents which are categorized under the heading of union-related and job and organizational related (Bamberger, Kluger & Suchard, 1999).

Studies indicated instrumentality as the most important antecedent of union commitment (Fuller & Hester, 1995) and union loyalty (Fullagar & Barling, 1990; Bamberger, 1999). Union instrumentality is defined as "the perceived impact of the union on traditional (e.g., wages, benefits) and non-traditional work (e.g., job satisfaction) conditions that define the employment relationship" (Gordon, Barling & Tetrick, 1995; 353). In other words, union instrumentality means union contribution to workers' wage and their working conditions and influence on the

employer in resolving dissatisfaction (Barling et al., 1992). If the workers perceive union as instrumental, t Union instrumentality is a repercussion of the economic model of unionism (Bamberger, Kluger & Suchard, 1999). First antecedent included in this study was instrumentality based on these studies' findings (Fullagar & Barling, 1987; Iverson & Kuruvilla, 1995).

It would be misleading if members' union commitment is relegated solely to an economic exchange. Based on this thought, social exchange approach is adopted for explaining the relation between member and union that can not be explained solely by union instrumentality. Social exchange approach to the member-union relationship refers to the support which is socioemotional (Sinclair & Tetrick, 1995).

Perceived organizational support is a reflection of social exchange between workers and organization. Workers evaluate to what extent the organization values their contributions and care about their well-being if they feel they are supported by the organization, they increase their commitment to the organization. Behavioral outcomes of this perception can be seen in the form of organizational citizenship behavior and reduced turnover. Depending on many studies on perceived organizational support, the concept of perceived support has been applied to unions as well.. As the members of a union feel support from their unions, they reciprocate with union commitment (Shore et al., 1994; Fuller & Hester, 2001; Aryee & Chay, 2001). Findings regarding the relation between perceived union support and union commitment (Shore et al. , 1986; Fuller & Hester, 2001) were in line with the studies investigating the relation between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al, 1986; Whitener, 2001). Therefore, the second antecedent of the study was perceived "union support." By incorporating perceived union support and union instrumentality as antecedents of union commitment, this study seeks to weigh which type of exchange was more important for Turkish workers in determining their level of commitment: social or economic.

Hypothesis 1: *Perceived instrumentality of union will be positively related to union commitment and explain more of the variance in union commitment than perceived union support*

Hypothesis 2: *Perceived union support will be positively related to union commitment.*

Different from other Turkish studies, perceived union justice was also measured for expanding our understanding on members' union commitment. Studies found organizational justice to be related to organizational commitment (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). Based on organizational justice studies, authors have expanded justice perception to union context for understanding members' attitudes and behaviors. Justice perceptions of union members positively influence union participation (Skarlicki & Latham, 1996). Organizational justice perceptions consists of three dimensions: distributive justice defined as the perceived fairness of the distribution of resources, procedural justice defined as the fairness of procedures used to allocate resources and interactional justice defined as the

perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment. In the context of this study, we measured only procedural and interactional justice perceptions of members because union organized in the transportation sector could not conclude a collective agreement, thus making the measurement of distributive justice irrelevant.

Interactional justice is an important point to consider in Turkish unionism as it reflects social sensitivities of authorities (Greenberg, 1993) which is thought to be the key to member retention. According to a Turkish study, 73,9 % of former union members and 49,6% of union members emphasized the insufficiency of trade unionists as the primary reason of why trade unions can not improve members' rights (Urhan, 2004;249). We thought that these responses had to be investigated from an inter-personal relationship perspective because generally union leaders remember members only before signing a collective agreement. Interactional justice refers to the interpersonal treatment that individuals receive from authorities during the decision-making process (Bies & Moag, 1986). Interactional justice found to be related to acceptance of organizational decisions (Bies & Moag, 1986), organizational citizenship behavior (Moorman, 1991) and most importantly support for industrial actions (Leung, Chiu, & Au, 1993). We believed that interactional justice would have a positive effect on the socialization experience of workers as union authorities and representatives show sensitivity to workers. Union justice perceptions of workers also have an effect on perceived union support.

Fairness of procedures in unions impacts workers' commitment to union as well. Procedural justice defined as the perceived fairness of the processes used to make decisions and includes voice, bias suppression, correctability and accuracy (Greenberg, 1986; Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Regardless of the perceived justice of the decision itself, fair procedures will result in more positive attitudes. Briefly, procedural justice can engender positive attitudes toward decisions that might be otherwise viewed negatively by providing workers with process control or voice (Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). Voice allows union members to contribute to decisions that affect them. Findings revealed that procedural justice is related to union attitudes more strongly than distributive justice (Eaton, Gordon & Kefe, 1992, Fryxell & Gordon, 1989 cited in Aryee & Chan, 2001;155). Having a say in union decision processes is found to be important and plays a role in union commitment studies. Turkish workers complain about lack of participation in union's decisions (Urhan, 2004). Furthermore, problems with the functioning and formation of committees in which the members are represented is a problematic area in Turkey (Sayım, 2007) which can influence the voice perceptions negatively. Therefore, including procedural justice could reveal important things in relation to member's commitment. Moreover union justice perceptions of workers also have an effect on perceived union support. Moving from these findings, procedural and

interactional justice are also added as the antecedents of union commitment. Following hypotheses were proposed:

*Hypothesis 3: Interactional justice perceptions of members will be positively related to union commitment and perceived union support.*

*Hypothesis 4: Perceived fairness of union procedures in general will be positively related to union commitment.*

Overall union satisfaction can be defined as a function discrepancies between member expectations and perceptions of union performance (outcomes) on a number of jobs and union-related facets (Fiorito, Gallagher & Fukami, 1988; Aryee & Chan, 2001; 516). Union commitment can also be a consequence of union satisfaction that had to be studied to test a full model for explaining union commitment. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

*Hypothesis 5: Overall union satisfaction will be positively related to union commitment.*

Last antecedent of the study was respondent's attitudes towards unionism in general. Positive attitudes towards unionism in general can serve as an antecedent to union commitment.

*Hypothesis 6: Attitudes towards unionism will be positively related to union commitment.*

## Method

### Sample

This study's sample came from a larger data collection effort of one of the researchers. It consisted two groups of participants. First group of respondents was workers from transportation sector affiliated with the Demir-Yol Is union and second group workers was food sector workers represented by one of the leading trade-unions named Tek-Gıda Is. We decided to measure the commitment of union members whose trade union qualifies as the union authorized to make the collective agreement. They were the trade unions associated with Turk-İş. According to this criteria, Demiryol-İş (*Turkish Railway Workers' Union*), Hava-İş (*Turkish Civil Aviation Workers' Union*), and Liman-İş (*Turkish National Port and Land Stevedores' Union*) members were included in the sample. In the manufacturing sector, the workplaces affiliated with Tek Gıda-İş (*Turkish Tobacco, Beverage, Food, and Allied Workers' Union*) were included in the study. The reason why Demiryol-İş (15.213), Hava-İş (13.593) and Liman-İş (3.142) were included in the study is that they represent more members in the transportation sector, which makes it possible to reach more employees. Tek Gıda-İş represents the maximum number of members (28.461) in the food branch of the manufacturing sector.

Respondents from transportation sector were reached by the personal contacts of the researchers while food sector workers were contacted through the channel of union officials. 700 self-administered questionnaires were distributed in envelopes and 470 were returned to researchers in sealed envelopes. Out of 470,

461 questionnaires were included for data analysis because of excessive amount of missing data in 9 of the questionnaires.

97% of the members were men and 3% were women. This underrepresentation of women in the sample made comparison based on gender impossible. 80% of the sample aged between 25-44. 23% of respondents worked in public enterprises while 77% worked for private companies. More than half of the respondents had a secondary school degree.

## Measures

The questionnaire developed for this study addressed a wide range of commitment's antecedents and union participation. 6 different scales focused upon the workers' union commitment and possible antecedents were included as they were related to the main interest of this study. We assessed the reliability of our measurement scales utilizing coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The Cronbach  $\alpha$  values of all scales fell within the range of 0,61 and 0,93.

Respondents were asked about the degree of agreement with each statement. A five point Likert type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) was used except for satisfaction with union. For "satisfaction with the union", response format was rearranged as "totally dissatisfied"(1) to "totally satisfied" (5).

Union commitment: Union commitment was measured using 30 item Organizational Commitment Scale of Gordon et al. (1980). Factor analysis supported the four factor structure proposed by Gordon et al.(1980).

Instrumentality: Instrumentality was measured by 5 items taken from Fullagar & Barling (1989).

Militancy: Militant tendencies of respondents were measured with items adapted from Martin (1986).

Perceived union support: Short version of Perceived Organizational Support scale developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) was used to measure union support. The original scale adjusted to union context by changing "organization" to "union". Sample items from the scale are: " Help is available from my union when I have a problem", "My union would ignore any complaint from me."

Perceived union justice: We investigated the fairness of union procedures in general like Skarlicki and Latham (1996,1997). *Procedural justice and interactional justice* were measured using Moorman's (1991) scale. These items were changed for the study by substituting "union local" for "organization" like Fuller and Hester did in their study (2007). The statements of the scale measure the degree to which union decisions include mechanisms that ensure the gathering of accurate and unbiased information, worker voice. For interactional justice items, we changed the "manager" to the term "local authorities".



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Attitudes towards unionism: Union commitment can be influenced by the members' attitudes towards unionism in general. Members' attitudes towards unionism were measured by the 5 item taken from Glick & Harder (1977).

Depending on previous studies, gender, educational attainment, age and tenure were asked in order to reveal the difference between groups.

Factor analysis was employed to determine the Gordon et al.'s (1980) union commitment scale dimensionality. Four factors were extracted like in the Gordon et al.'s scale (1980). Some items were deleted due to low factor loading of less than 0,50. Two items from loyalty and one item from belief in unionism were deleted. Factor analysis results of the scale are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1- Factor Analysis Result of Union Commitment Scale (Gordon et al.,1980)**

<i>Items</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>B</i>
I feel little loyalty toward this union	0,77			
I feel a sense of pride being a part of Union.	0,76			
Based on what I know and what I believe I can expect in the future ,I plan to be a member of the Union the rest of time I work fort his company	0,73			
The record of this union is a good example of what dedicated people can get done.	0,69			
The union's problems are my problems . Members of this local are not expected to have a strong personel commitment to the union	0,69			
Deciding to join the union was a smart move on my part.	0,67			
My values and the union's values are not very similar	0,64			
I have little confidence and trust in most members of my union	0,63			
Very little that the membership wants has any real importance to the union	0,61			
It is easy to be yourself and stil be a member of union.	0,55			
There is a lot to be gained by joining a union.	0,54			
	0,52			

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<i>Items</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>B</i>
A union member has more security than most members of management .	0,51			
I talk up to union to my friends as a great organization to be a member of.	0,51			
I rarely tell others that I m a member of union.	0,5			
The member does not get enough benefits for the money taken by the union for initiation	0,48			
It is the members duty to see that management is living by contract		0,74		
It is the duty of every worker "to keep his her ears open" for information that might be useful to the union.		0,71		
Even though he/she may not like parts of it, the union member must "live up to" all terms of the Articles of Agreement		0,69		
It's every union member's responsibility to see to it that management "lives up to" all the terms of the Articles of theAgreement.		0,65		
It's every member's duty to support or help another worker use the grievance procedure.		0,62		
It's every member's duty to know exactly what the Articles of Agreement entitle him/her to.		0,59		
Every member must be prepared to take the time and risk of filing a grievance.		0,54		
If asked, I would serve on a committee for the union.			0,83	
I doubt that I would do special work to help the union.			0,79	
If asked, I would run for an elected office in the union.			0,77	
I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected of a member in order to make the union successful.			0,76	
My loyalty is to my work, <i>not</i> to the union.				0,81

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<i>Items</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>B</i>
As long as I'm doing the kind of work I enjoy, it does <i>not</i> matter if I belong to a union.				0,80
I could just as well work in a non-union company as long as the type of work was similar.				0,38
<b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b>	0,83	0,76	0,79	0,65

*L= Loyalty; R=Responsibility W=Willingness to work for the union  
B=Belief in Unionism*

KMO=0,79    Bartlett's Test  $p= 0,00 < 0,05$

Total variance explained= %78

Factor analysis was conducted for all the other scales used in the study. For perceived union support, interactional justice, procedural justice, attitudes towards unions, satisfaction with union and militancy only one factor emerged verifying their original factorial structure.

**Descriptive Statistics, Correlation and Regression Results**

*Means, standard deviations and correlation between variables are shown in Table 2.*

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**Table 2- Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Loyalty	3,80	0,63	1,00									
Responsibility	4,08	0,64	0,72**	1,00								
Willingness	3,71	0,93	0,69**	0,62**	1,00							
Instrumentality Perceived	3,89	0,87	0,70**	0,63**	0,61**	1,00						
Organizational Support	3,54	0,71	0,54**	0,39**	0,50**	0,51**	1,00					
Procedural Justice	3,74	0,81	0,74**	0,60**	0,64**	0,74**	0,60**	1,00				
Interactional Justice	3,97	0,88	0,73**	0,63**	0,61**	0,75**	0,51**	0,87**	1,00			
General attitudes towards unions	2,99	0,46	0,09	0,14**	0,14**	0,28**	0,07	0,21**	0,29**	1,00		
Union Satisfaction	3,75	0,93	0,70**	0,58**	0,63**	0,76**	0,54**	0,80**	0,80**	0,26**	1,00	
Militancy	3,06	0,61	0,19**	0,23**	0,23**	0,27**	-0,02	0,10*	0,18**	0,12*	0,17**	1,00

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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Among the variables, responsibility had the highest mean score, followed by interactional justice perceptions, instrumentality and loyalty. High scores on responsibility to the union could be a result of social desirability bias. Workers depicted themselves as loyal members with a mean value of 3,80 and responsible to the union with a mean value of 4,08. Low mean value of general attitudes towards unions' is not surprising taking late industrialization of Turkey into account. Despite relatively high scores on justice dimensions, workers were undecided about their union support ( $M=3,54$ ). Loyalty correlated highly with instrumentality ( $r = 0,70, p < 0,0001$ ), satisfaction with the union ( $r = 0,70, p < 0,0001$ ) and justice perceptions ( $r = 0,72, p < 0,0001$ ). and moderately with perceived union support ( $r = 0,54, p < 0,0001$ ). Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4 were supported according to correlation results. Loyalty displayed significant correlation with all the antecedents involved in the study except general attitudes towards unions.

Union satisfaction correlated with all the union commitment dimensions. Hypothesis 5 was supported. General attitudes towards unions did not have significant relation with union loyalty ( $p > 0,05$ ) and have a weak significant relation with responsibility to the union. Hypothesis 6 partially supported.

Responsibility to unions correlated moderately with willingness to work for the union, instrumentality and interactional justice ( $r=0,62$  and  $0,63$  respectively).

Regression analysis was used to test the effect of antecedents on union loyalty. Based on previous studies, instrumentality perception appeared in the first step as it was found to be the most influential one. In step 2, perceived organizational support was added to the model to increase the level of explained variation of the model. Step 3 included procedural justice and Step 4 included interactional justice perceptions. In the following steps, other antecedents were added. By adding the variables in different steps allowed us to see the incremental effect of each antecedents on dependent variable.

**Table 3-Regression Analysis for Union Loyalty**

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F-value	Significance	Variable	Standardized Beta	p-value
1	0,476	0,475	382,03	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,690	0,000
2	0,527	0,525	233,78	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,560	0,000
					Perceived Union Support	0,261	0,000
3	0,606	0,603	214,432	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,303	0,000
					Perceived Union Support	0,114	0,004
					Procedural Justice	0,452	0,000
4	0,615	0,612	166,76	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,254	0,000
					Perceived Union Support	0,124	0,001
					Procedural Justice	0,303	0,000
					Interactional Justice	0,206	0,002
5	0,622	0,618	137,08	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,216	0,000
					Perceived	0,139	0,000

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					Union Support		
					Procedural Justice	0,330	0,000
					Interactional Justice	0,187	0,004
					Militancy	0,090	0,006
6	0,626	0,621	115,81	0,000	Constant		0,000
					Instrumentality	0,183	0,000
					Perceived Union Support	0,131	0,001
					Procedural Justice	0,298	0,000
					Interactional Justice	0,150	0,026
					Militancy	0,086	0,008
					Union Satisfaction	0,117	0,041

Model 1 is significant and has a high adjusted  $R^2$  of 47%. This clearly shows that 47% of the variance in union commitment can solely be explained by instrumentality. It can be thought that Turkish workers make an assessment regarding the cost and benefits associated with their membership to their union and their commitment to the union based on tangible gains. There is no doubt that economic exchange is important for union-member relations. But joining a union is voluntary and therefore quality of social exchange in terms of perceived union support and union justice is important on their loyalty levels. The inclusion of the “perceived union support” and “procedural and organizational justice” significantly improved the model with a  $R^2$  change of 13%. Model 6 which includes all the antecedents in our study accounted for 62% percent of the variation in union loyalty of food and transportation sector workers.

Caution must be shown with respect to the results of our regression analysis as Tetrick et al.’s study (2007) has revealed perceived instrumentality as an antecedent of perceived union support.

### **Conclusion**

As the Turkish trade unions face tough environmental conditions, study findings could be used as a basis for unions to increase their members’ commitment. Our research contributed to our understanding regarding union members’ commitment and its antecedents. Antecedents of this study explained 62% variance in loyalty. Turkish food and transportation sector workers’ instrumentality perception explained the highest variance in union loyalty and incremental variance explained by procedural and interactional justice together with perceived union support. But the usage of a short scale limited our understanding to dig deeper into the nature of the relationship between instrumentality and loyalty.

Members with a high instrumental tendency can be a double-edged sword for unions because of their intensive focus on wage increases and working conditions. As the contextual factors work against unions by limiting their bargaining power, unions carry the risk of losing members. Thus, an affective relation between members and potential members has to be created which is more difficult to do than to say. That’s where the justice perceptions become important. Beside union instrumentality, procedural justice perception of workers was found to be important for increasing union loyalty which gives workers control over the decision-making process. As a result, they reciprocate by exhibiting high levels of union loyalty.

Thus, union leaders can be trained on how fair decision can be made for increasing the members’ commitment level. But to achieve this end, we believe that Turkish union leaders need to revise their perspectives on unions. A study made by Altıparmak (2001;142 cited in Yorgun, 2007) reflect their perspectives. According to this study, 25 trade unionist attributed the trust crisis towards union to external factors. Therefore, this study can enlighten trade union leaders and provide a basis for changing their perspectives.

Justice perceptions should not be analysed in isolation. Therefore, further studies have to take personal dispositions and the interaction of these dispositions with justice perceptions into account, as suggested by Fuller and Hester (2007).

Despite its limitations, this study examined justice perceptions and perceived union support, militancy, general attitudes toward unions as possible antecedents of union loyalty that were not covered by previous studies in Turkey. However, this study’s findings have to be tested with a larger sample covering different sectors.



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