

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Good Work Through Decent Work: Practices of Sixteen Unionized Firms in the Philippines

**Divina M. Edralin**

De La Salle University, Manila Philippines  
divina.edralin@dlsu.edu.ph

**Abstract:** This paper aims to describe the good work, through the decent work practices of 16 unionized firms, in the hotel, banking, airline, and broadcast industries in the Philippines, as stipulated in their Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), and based on five Decent Work Agenda dimensions. This study is primarily founded on the Social Doctrine of the Church on Human Work; the ILO's Decent Work Agenda as incorporated in Ghai's (2006) model; and the theory of Collective Bargaining of Edralin (2003). Results showed that there are many good work, through decent work practices of unionized firms, in the aspects of opportunities for work, productive work, equity in work, security at work, and representation at work, as provided in their CBAs. Findings also revealed that collective bargaining is a powerful vehicle that can help ensure that the implementation of the five dimensions of decent work in the workplace can lead to the securing of just wages, strengthening of unions, inclusion of the poor working people in society, and workers having a chance to a life of human dignity. A union is strong primarily because of its membership's solidarity, vigilance, and capacity to mobilize, which together with the protection afforded by legislation to workers, help persuade, if not pressure employers to manage their firms diligently and in good faith. At the policy level, it is recommend that the labor relations framework currently used by the DOLE be amended to more effectively implement decent work practices and promote collective bargaining.

**Keywords:** Good work, Decent work, Collective Bargaining Agreement, Unions, Humanizing employment practices

**JEL:** J51, J52, J53, J58, J83, M12, M54

*“So I promise that I will respect and protect the human rights and dignity of all people who are affected by my enterprise and will oppose all forms of discrimination and exploitation.”*  
—Global Business Oath, 2010

According to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, p.180), “work is a fundamental right and a good for mankind, a useful good, worthy of man because it is an appropriate way for him to give expression to and enhance his human dignity.” This principle is aligned with that of the *Decent Work Agenda*, which defines Decent Work as “productive work for men and women in conditions of freedom, equality, security, and human dignity” (International Labour Organization [ILO], 1999, p. 3).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Decent Work Agenda in 1999 as a platform rooted on four strategic pillars, namely: (1) full and productive employment; (2) rights at work; (3) social protection; and (4) promotion of social dialogue (ILO, n.d.). This Decent Work Agenda has also been embraced by the international community as a global goal (Rodgers, 2002), and is applicable to both developed and developing nations (Sengenberger, 2001).

Full and productive employment is the first element of decent work (Fields, 2003). However, in a labor surplus economy, some vulnerable groups are experiencing discrimination at work, namely, women, older workers, youth, and disabled persons (Gust, 2006). In the Philippines, full and productive employment is not yet attained when viewed against available employment opportunities. The April 2015 Labor Force Survey estimated employment rate at 93.6%, and unemployment at 6.4%. Labor force participation rate was placed at 64.6%, while the underemployment rate was estimated at 17.8% (<https://psa.gov.ph/content/employment-rate-estimated-936-percent-april-2015>).

Rights at work, the next decent work pillar, are guaranteed under the Philippine Constitution and labor laws, although certain gaps, inconsistencies (e.g., accommodation at work of disabled persons) or shortcomings in their enforcement (e.g., hiring of older workers) exist (Gust, 2006), and mainstreaming of precarious work arrangements is increasingly challenging. Precarious work, which has increased over the years worldwide, has undermined rights to work and job security. In the Philippines, based on the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (2011) Yearbook of Labor Statistics, it can be inferred that the incidence of precarious work reduces the pool of workers who can be unionized. In 2003, 19.2% of the

employees in non-agricultural establishments with 20 or more workers served either on casual, seasonal, contractual, or per project basis. However, in 2010, the share of precarious employment rose to more than one-fifth of employees (21.2%). The BLES data also revealed that, by type of non-regular employment, the average percentage of those hired as contractual is highest, followed by casuals, and then part-time (Edralin, 2014).

Social protection, the third pillar of decent work, includes protection in case of ill health, disability, or retirement, is intended for greater equality. Social protection that can lead to employee well-being includes happiness, health, and relationship (Van De Voorde, Paauwe, & Van Veldhoven, 2012). They found out that employee well-being, in terms of happiness and relationship, is congruent with organizational performance where both employees and employers have mutual gains, although health-related well-being appears to function as a conflicting outcome. In practice, social protection is limited to a minority of the labor force, mostly in the formal sector. Unemployment benefits are non-existent. Vulnerable groups, like the youth, the elderly, and migrant workers, or workers in the informal sector, depend in case of need on the extended family network and other traditional means of support (Gust, 2006).

Support for social dialogue, the fourth decent work pillar, calls for empowered workers who can collectively participate in the decision-making process through negotiation, where they can represent their interests and articulate their concerns (ILO, 1999). Productivity is generally higher in unionized firms compared to non-unionized ones, but that relationship is not absolute and has noteworthy exceptions (Freeman & Medoff, 1984). Higher productivity parallels good industrial relations, and can be stimulated by competition in the product market. Employees’ perceptions of a cooperative labor relations climate were positively influenced by procedural justice, the union’s willingness to adopt an integrative approach to bargaining, and management’s willingness to share information freely with the union (Deery & Iverson, 2005).

The Philippines launched its Common Agenda in October 2009, following the National Action Plan for Decent Work’s launching in May 2002 (ILO, n.d.). At the national level, the Decent Work Agenda had been embedded in the labor and employment goals in the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan for 2011-

2016 (Department of Labor and Employment [DOLE], 2011). The said Agenda emphasizes that quality employment creates social value for the common good and upholds the dignity of persons regardless of religion, race, gender, and age. It aims to include the “millions of workers outside the formal economy, and demands decent living conditions for all who work, as well as for those who should not work, or who cannot find adequate work” (Hoffer, 2012, p.64).

Globally, forced labor, unemployment, work discrimination, and violation of workers’ rights exist in various degrees. But on the basis of empirical evidence, countries eliminating forced labor, overcoming the various forms of discrimination in employment and occupation or eliminating the worst forms of child labor, are doing better economically and socially than those where rights at work are violated (Gust, 2006).

Contemporary human resource management (HRM) theories, on the other hand, emphasize that people are critical and essential factors in the continued existence and success of any business organization (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Edralin, 2014). Thus, from a strategic perspective, HRM policies and practices are linked to the organization’s objectives and should be effectively and efficiently implemented, as well as leveraged on people’s knowledge and engagement to create significant innovation and change. The Catholic Social Teachings echo the same theme, which acknowledges that the decisive factor today is increasingly the person’s development of technical competencies and interpersonal skills (Porth & McCall, 2001).

To make the greatest possible contribution to firm productivity, there is also a need to create a positive environment for human resources, like ensuring that HRM practices comply with the local and national laws, designing work that motivates and satisfies the workers, rewarding worker contribution, and creating an employment relationship and work environment that benefits both the firm as well as the workers (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2012). HRM practices in the form of support and development of trust that had been adopted, have a significant impact on employee well-being at work, and tend to be more positive in terms of promoting employee well-being at work amongst workers (Baptiste, 2007).

Workplaces where workers have more autonomy and voice lead to higher levels of satisfaction with the work itself than wage (Carr & Mellizo, 2013). Team voice significantly contributes to enhanced worker

efficiency when considered in conjunction with representative voice (Kim, Macduffie, & Pil, 2010).

Similarly, high or progressive use of HRM practices, like selectivity in staffing, training, and incentive compensation, are positively related to organizational performance such as productivity and financial returns (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Guest, Michie, Conway, & Shehan, 2003). Freeman and Medoff (1984) asserted that higher productivity and lower profitability appear to go hand in hand under collective bargaining. It was also noted that a cooperative labor-management relationship contributed to higher productivity and improved customer service (Deery & Iverson, 2005).

However, since wealth and power have been increasingly concentrated on fewer and fewer property owners in society and the workplace, workers have had to form unions to defend and advance their interests and that of their loved ones, who constitute the majority in the workplace and society. This is perhaps why the Magisterium “recognizes the fundamental role played by labor unions, whose existence is connected with the right to form associations or unions to defend the vital interests of workers employed in the various professions” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace [PCJP], 2004, p. 190). Furthermore, the Social Doctrine of the Church states that, “beyond their function of defending and vindicating, unions have the duty of acting as representatives working for “the proper arrangement of economic life” and of educating the social consciences of workers so that they will feel that they have an active role, according to their proper capacities and aptitudes, in the whole task of economic and social development, and in the attainment of the universal common good” (PCJP, 2004, pp.191–192).

The Philippine Constitution (Art. 211) also guarantees workers’ rights to unionize, bargain collectively, and strike, while the Labor Code declares it State policy to promote and emphasize the primacy of free collective bargaining, and promote free trade unionism as an instrument for the enhancement of democracy, and the promotion of social justice and development. Unionized firms are duty-bound under the said Code to collectively bargain in good faith with the unions duly certified as sole and exclusive bargaining agents relative to the economic and non-economic needs of their workers for them to have decent work. Despite these guarantees, the Philippines have a low level of unionization. As of 2007, of the 21,583,111 employed people, only 1.918 million

were union members; and only about 13% were covered by CBAs and CNAs (Aganon, Serrano, & Certeza, 2009). They attributed such a low level of unionization to several factors, such as management's efforts to prevent it through precarious employment, outsourcing, non-regularization of probationary employees, offering of different incentives to workers to dissuade them from joining the union, and in some cases, closure of the company when the workers organize a union. These factors undermine the unions' basic duty which is to defend and further workers' interests, by securing better terms and conditions of employment, and representing working people at the company, industry, national or global level as necessary.

Charlwood and Terry (2007) described the occurrence and diversity of representational forms, union, non-union, and "hybrid", and the structural characteristics of workplaces where they are found. They showed that hybrid systems of union and non-union representation are associated with the best outcomes; therefore, notwithstanding the continuing decline in the diffusion of the "traditional" union-based model of workplace representation, union presence is still a prerequisite for effective representation, while "pure" non-union forms benefit neither employee nor employer interests.

## Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to describe the good work, through the decent work practices of unionized firms, in the hotel, banking, airline, and broadcast industries in the Philippines. Specifically, this study analyzes these practices as stipulated in their Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) based on five Decent Work Agenda dimensions, namely: opportunities for work, productive work, equity in work, security at work, and representation at work. This paper also determines the effects on, and challenges to, the workers and unions in implementing CBA provisions as decent work practices, as perceived by the union members and officers. In general, the findings and recommendations of this study will prove helpful to unions, the academe, human resource practitioners, management, and policymakers, particularly the DOLE.

## Conceptual Framework

This study is primarily founded on the Social Doctrine of the Church on Human Work. It is also based on the ILO's Decent Work Agenda as incorporated in Ghai's (2006) model on the "interdependence of the four elements of decent work", and Edralin's (2003) theory of Collective Bargaining.

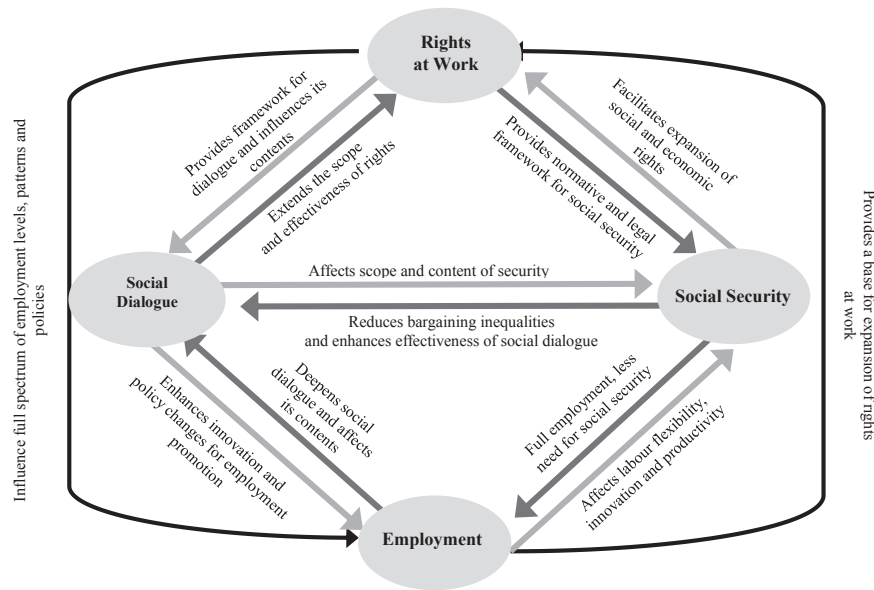
### *The Social Doctrine of the Church on Human Work*

The Social Doctrine of the Church on Human Work tackles the prophetic value of *Rerum Novarum*; tenets of the dignity of work; and the principles of the right to work, rights of workers, and solidarity among workers (PCJP, 2004). The tenets of the Dignity of Work state that human work have subjective and objective dimensions; that work, because of its subjective or personal character, is superior to every other factor connected with productivity, particularly pertaining to capital; that the relationship between labour and capital also finds expression when workers participate in the ownership, management, and profit; as well as, that rest from work is a right (PCJP, 2004, pp. 170–179). The Right to Work doctrine specifies that work is necessary; it is the responsibility of the State to promote active employment; work is a foundation for the formation of family life; women have the right to work; and child labour is a serious violation of human dignity (PCJP, 2004, pp.180–187). The Rights of Workers doctrine indicate that workers have dignity as human beings, so that their rights must be respected; they have the right to fair remuneration and income distribution; and striking is legitimate so that workers have the right to strike (PCJP, 2004, pp. 188–190). The doctrine on the Solidarity among Workers recognizes the fundamental role played by labour unions and pursuit of "new forms of solidarity workers' associations" (PCJP, 2004, pp. 190–193).

### *Decent Work Model*

The "interdependence of the four elements of decent work" developed by Ghai (2006) is shown in Figure 1. Decent work embodies four fundamental objectives related to workers' rights, social protection, employment promotion, and social dialogue. These four objectives must be integrated and mutually reinforce one another to ultimately attain fair globalization and





**Figure 1.** Interdependence between rights at work, employment, social security, and social dialogue (Ghai, 2006).

inclusive and sustainable development, as emphasized in the Social Justice Declaration. The generation of productive and quality work is necessary to minimize unemployment and underemployment. Moreover, enforcing workers’ rights, social protection, and social dialogue indicate fair treatment of workers. On the other hand, unjust treatment of workers by impeding their rights can hinder growth and development (Sengenberger, 2001).

*Collective Bargaining Model*

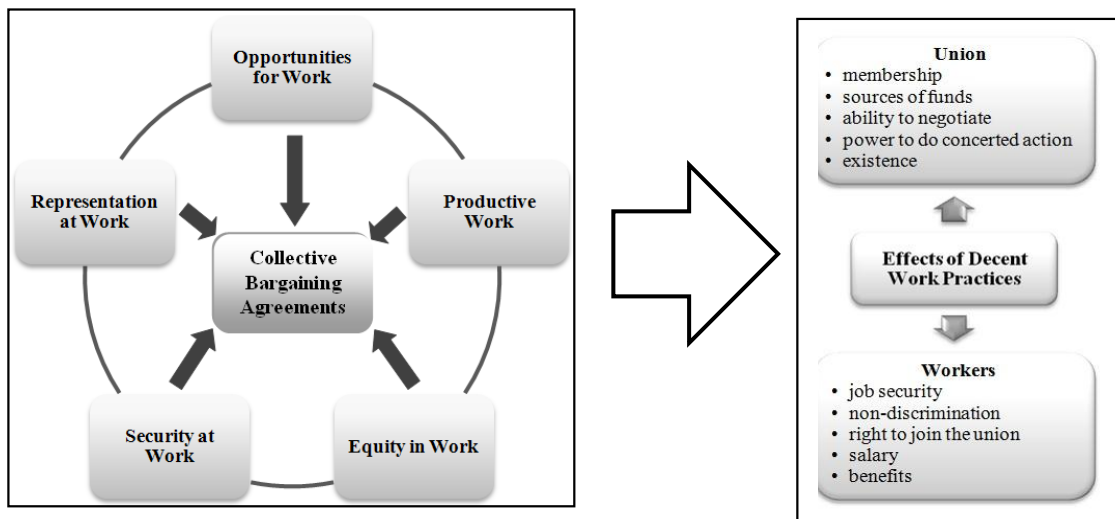
Freedom of association and collective bargaining have been recognized as enabling rights by the ILO’s Declaration on Social Justice for a fair Globalization (2008), and a pre-condition to achieve the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The ability of trade unions to bargain collectively is a central tool to improve working conditions and solve labor disputes, as well as to achieve social justice, decent work, and stability in societies (ILO, 2010).

In the Philippines, collective bargaining is the centerpiece of industrial relations. It is fundamental to labor-management relations, just as in many other countries where unions exist. The collective bargaining process has a legal framework, which does not really preclude voluntarism (Edralin, 2003). In the Philippines, particularly in the private sector, the right to collective bargaining emanates

from UN Instruments, ILO Conventions, the 1987 Philippine Constitution, and the 1974 Labor Code of the Philippines as amended. One of the major programs for industrial peace and stable employment is the promotion of collective bargaining (Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2009). Through collective bargaining, workers can negotiate with their employers on wages, hours of work, and other terms and conditions of employment to be contained in a written contract called a CBA.

**Operational Framework**

The operational framework (Figure 2) shows that collective bargaining, as stipulated in the CBAs, is one of the main points of access to decent working conditions and other benefits, and the most common way to determine wages in unionized firms. The negotiated provisions were analyzed based on five Decent Work dimensions, namely: opportunities for work, productive work, equity in work, security at work, and representation at work. These five dimensions are operationally defined as follows: (1) opportunities for work – firms’ efforts to provide chances so that persons who need work are able to find work that covers all forms of economic activity, including self-employment, unpaid family work, and wage employment in both formal and informal sectors



**Figure 2.** Operational framework of the study.

(Riguer, 2008); (2) productive work – workers should have acceptable livelihoods for themselves and their families, as well as to ensure sustainable development and competitiveness of enterprises and countries (Riguer, 2008); covers practices that motivate workers to work for the good of others so that they will flourish as well as their firm (Argandoña, 2009); (3) equity in work – women and men need to have equality of opportunity and treatment in work; it encompasses absence of discrimination at work, and in access to work, and ability to balance work with family life (Riguer, 2008); (4) security at work – safe workplaces should be ensured and workers’ health, livelihoods, and pensions should be safeguarded; there should be provisions for workers and their families for adequate financial and other protection in the event of health and other contingencies; it also recognizes workers’ need to limit insecurity associated with the possible loss of work and livelihood; includes precarious employment, pension, and termination of employment (ILO, 2012); and (5) representation at work – workers should be treated with respect at work; able to join organizations to represent their interests collectively; free to voice their concerns; and able to participate in decision-making about their terms and conditions of work (Riguer, 2008).

The effects of decent work practices were focused on the union as an organization and the workers, based on the qualitative perceptions of the union leaders and members. The effects of decent work practices on the union were measured in terms of membership, sources

of funds, ability to negotiate, power to do concerted action, and existence as an organization without being busted. On the other hand, the effects of decent work practices on the union and the workers were measured in terms of job security, non-discrimination, the right to join the union, salary, and other benefits.

## Methodology

The descriptive-exploratory research design based on a qualitative approach was used to determine the good work, through decent work practices, of 16 unionized firms. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the inquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field (Creswell, 2003). Different qualitative methods such as participant observation and intensive interviewing may be combined to take advantage of different opportunities for data collection and to enrich understanding of social processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The research design of the study is partly exploratory. According to Patton (2002), an exploratory research is conducted “where little work has been done, few definitive hypotheses exist and little is known about the nature of the phenomenon” (p.193). Moreover, exploratory research is conducted to discover what is happening and gain insight about the topic of interest as well as subsequent research are expected to provide conclusive evidence, thus it helps to crystallize a problem and identify information needs for future

research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012; Zikmund, 2003). This study is also partly descriptive, because descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or a phenomenon, gain information concerning the situations, events, or persons. Descriptive studies can yield rich data that lead to important recommendations (Saunders et al., 2012; Zikmund, 2003).

A directed content analysis was used since the research aimed to validate an existing framework about decent work as it relates to Philippine Decent Work Dimensions. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), existing theory or research can help focus the research question. It can provide predictions about the variables of interest or about the relationships among variables, thus helping to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between codes. Hence, the codes that were used in this study were based on the Decent Work Framework that included opportunities for work, productive work, equity in work, security at work, and representation at work. The use of the decent work framework as codes were all in line with the directed content analysis approach, which suggests that “using existing theory or prior research, researchers begin by identifying key concepts or variables as initial coding categories (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999 as cited in Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). These codes were then used as the guide for analysis.

The CBAs that were examined and the corresponding unions that they represent are shown in Table 1. Since a CBA is required to be registered with DOLE, it becomes a public document. Some CBAs (KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Employees’ Association, KAL Local Employees Association, Singapore Airlines Local Employees, and Thai Airways International Local Employees Association) were secured directly from DOLE. The other CBAs were provided by the union leaders through the assistance of the labor organizers of Labor Education and Research Network (Bank of Commerce Employees’ Union, BPI Employees Union, GSIS Family Bank Employees’ Union, Metrobank Card Corporation Employees Association, ABS-CBN Rank and File Employees Union, ABC 5 Employees Union, GMA Network, Inc. Employees’ Union, and PREIC-Radio Veritas Employees’ Union) and the National Union of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant and Airlines Industry (Century, Century Park Hotel Employees Labor Union,

Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Peninsula Employees Union, and Philippine Plaza) who were willing to participate in the study.

A combination of survey interview, focused group discussion (FGD), and participant observation methods were utilized to triangulate the data regarding the effects on and challenges to the unions and workers in implementing the CBA provisions as decent work practices. For the survey, a sample of 140 union members and officers of the 16 firms who were available and have detailed knowledge of their CBAs were purposively selected as research participants to answer the 2-page survey instrument. The verbal consent of the respondents was asked before the interview and their names were withheld for confidentiality. The survey protocol items were adapted from the Precarious Work study (Edralin, 2014) and which was validated with the union leaders and members during the CBA and Leadership trainings we facilitated. The protocol was pre-tested among other union members and officers prior to the actual survey.

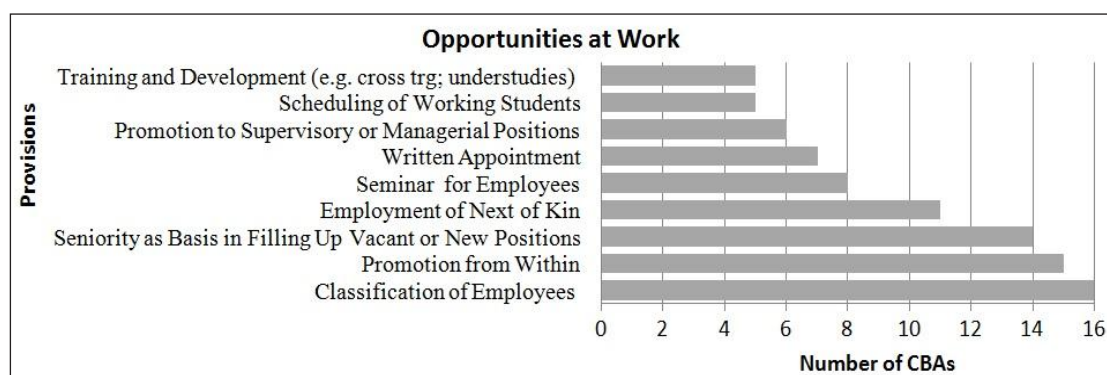
Furthermore, to ensure internal validity of the study, we performed triangulation of data. According to Creswell (2009), to check the accuracy of findings, triangulate the different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes. Hence, to ensure validity, we performed member-checking by soliciting feedback of union leaders and members during training and seminars we facilitated. Moreover, when the protocol was pre-tested among other union members and officers prior to the actual survey, we were establishing the validity of the study.

Lastly, some FGDs were conducted among union officers to get more in-depth description of the effects on the CBA implementation. Non-participant observation was done in the workplace to validate if the observable provisions in the CBAs are really implemented.

Since this is an exploratory-descriptive research, there was no intent to test any hypothesis, but to qualitatively answer the proposition that “good work can be achieved through the decent work platform for the advantage of the working people.” As such, the gathered data from the CBAs were content analyzed based on the framework, while the responses from the survey were described using frequency and percentage computations using EXCEL.

**Table 1.** List of CBAs that were Analyzed

Name of Union	Effectivity of the CBA	Name of Union	Effectivity of the CBA
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Employees' Association	17 Aug 2009 – 16 Aug 2014	ABS-CBN Rank and File Employees Union	11 Dec 2012 – 10 Dec 2017
KAL Local Employees Association	01 Nov 2010 – 31 Oct 2015	ABC 5 Employees Union	01 Nov 2010 – 31 Oct 2015
Singapore Airlines Local Employees Association	01 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2016	GMA Network, Inc. Employees' Union	01 Jul 2009 – 30 Jun 2014
Thai Airways International Local Employees Association	01 Jan 2010 – 31 Dec 2014	PREIC-Radio Veritas Employees' Union	01 May 2012 – 30 Apr 2017
Bank of Commerce Employees' Union	01 Jul 2013 – 30 Jun 2015	Century Park Hotel Employees Labor Union - NUWHRAIN	01 Jul 2010 – 30 Jun 2015
BPI Employees Union	01 Apr 2011 – 31 Mar 2016	NUWHRAIN-Hotel Intercontinental Manila Chapter	01 Jan 2011 – 31 Dec 2015
GSIS Family Bank Employees' Union	01 Jan 2010 – 31 Dec 2012	Peninsula Employees Union - NUWHRAIN	16 Dec 2011 – 15 Dec 2016
Metrobank Card Corporation Employees Association	28 Oct 2013 – 27 Oct 2015	NUWHRAIN - Philippine Plaza Chapter	01 Jan 2010 – 31 Dec 2014

**Figure 3.** Summary of the CBA provisions related to the opportunities for work Philippine decent work dimensions.

## Findings

This section presents a summary of the content analysis, survey and FGD conducted which are directly related to the propositions posited by the study.

Figures 3 to 7 show the outcome of the decent work practices, as stipulated in the CBAs, and the survey results based on the responses of the respondents regarding the effects and challenges of these decent work practices on the unions and workers.

**1. Opportunities for work** under the 16 CBAs are also extended to working students, enabling them to go to school before or after their work shifts.

The companies further commit to give seminars to enhance employees' work performance; as well as trainings and development opportunities, like cross training and understudy programs, to facilitate the development of their talents and potential, and increase their chances to be promoted or be assigned in another department with their acquired new skills. These are in line with the strategy of "enhancing human capital through education and training," as stated in the Government's PLEP 2011–2016 (DOLE, 2011, p. 29). It is noteworthy that 15 of the 16 companies agreed to implement the policy of "promotion from within." Fourteen out of 16 firms consented to observe seniority among the bases for filling up vacant or new positions,



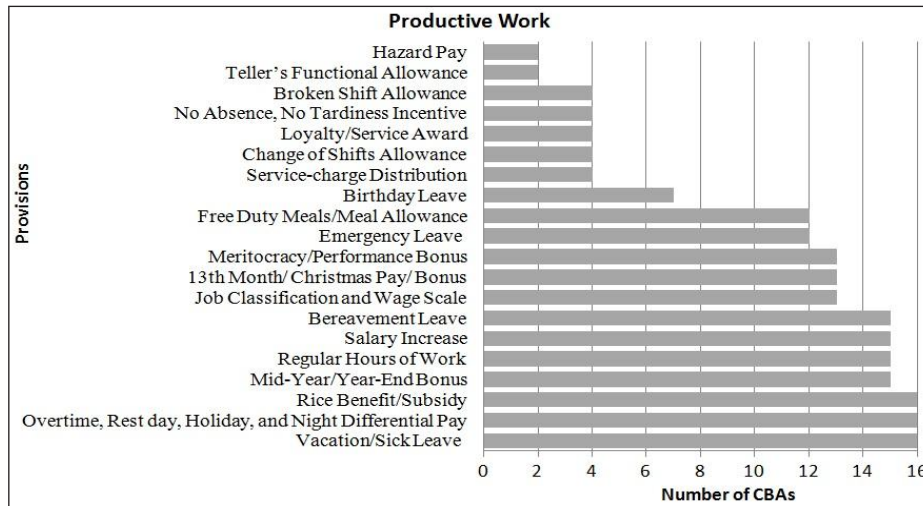


Figure 4. Summary of the CBA provisions related to the productive work Philippine decent work dimensions.

while 11 would observe the “employment of next of kin”, which practices could enable present workers of the firm to have the priority to occupy vacant positions, while the next of kin who retire or die will have the opportunity to be hired so that their family could still have a source of income.

2. **Productive work** related practices that motivate workers to work for the good of others so that they will flourish as well as their firm (Argandoña, 2009) are manifested in many of the CBA provisions that are above or over the minimum standards set by law. Understandably, since the legislature is dominated by business and land owners, these minimum standards are really not enough to have a decent life, so unions have had to secure provisions higher than said standards. After successive CBAs, all of the current CBAs provide wages better than the legal minimum, especially based on existing job and wage scales. This is consistent with the “Just Wage” Doctrine as emphasized in the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical of Pope Leo XIII which defines just wage as a wage sufficient to support a worker’s family (Porth & McCall, 2001). Above minimum, overtime pay, rest day, holiday and night work premium pay rates, as well as service charge sharing, are now being implemented. All 16 CBAs entitle employees to at least two weeks each of paid vacation and sick leaves, which in some cases are convertible to cash when not used by the end of the year. Several CBAs have provisions that are not required by law, such as broken/split shift allowance, hazard pay, teller’s functional allowance, and free duty meals.

All employers extend emergency and bereavement leave with pay of five days each, while seven out of 16 CBAs have birthday leave benefits. Some other benefits agreed on by the parties include rice subsidy, Christmas bonus, mid-year bonus, year-end bonus, performance bonus, and loyalty/service awards. The bundle of other incentives negotiated by the workers are expected to motivate them to do productive work that creates worthy products and services, which should in turn contribute to the generation of the common good as well as improvements in their own lives.

3. **Equity in work** is minimally promoted in the CBAs, and focused primarily on women’s welfare. All firms extend maternity benefits, by way of financial assistance, in addition to what the Social Security System provides. All the companies also implement the paternity leave law in support of employees’ spouses. The other CBA provisions for women workers’ benefit include those on family planning (Labor-Management Family Planning Coordinating Committee, Family Planning Incentives, and Family Planning Seminar), relief from heavy workload of pregnant women, and services of an obstetrician/gynecologist and of a pediatrician in the hotel clinic. These decent work-related provisions address the concerns of women, particularly “double burden”, which includes women’s paid productive work, community engagement, and unpaid reproductive labor (Hassanien, 2010), since it was found that large family size increased the burden of women, apart from engagements away from home (Cabaraban & Morales,

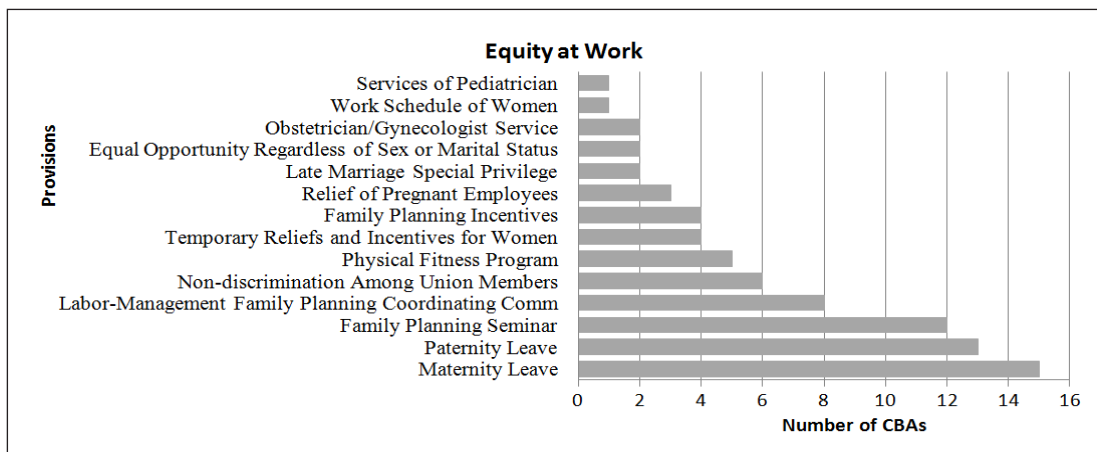


Figure 5. Summary of the CBA provisions related to the equity at work Philippine decent work dimensions.

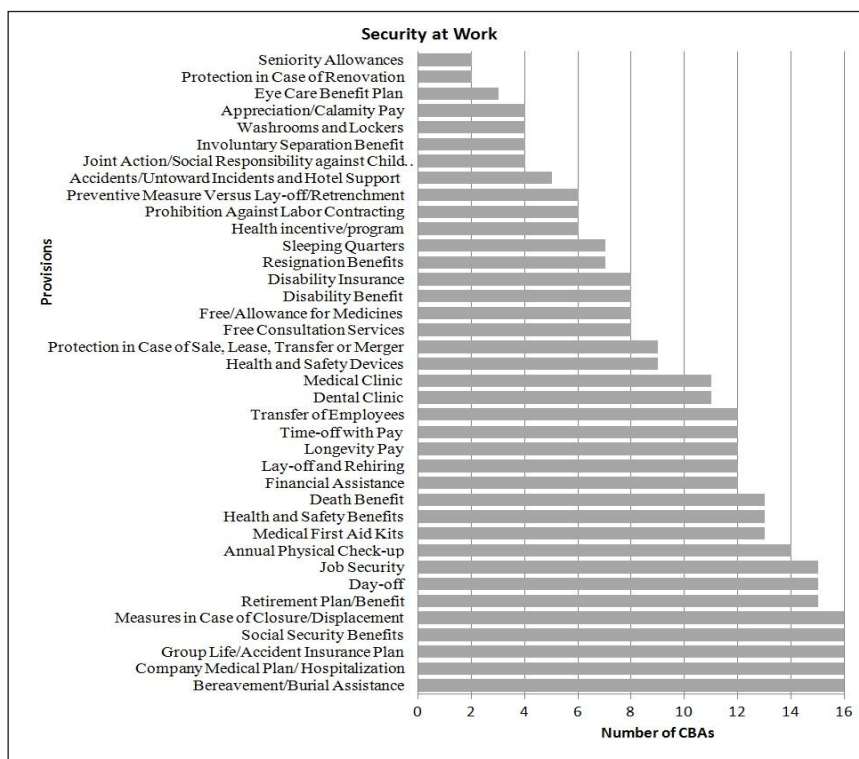


Figure 6. Summary of the CBA provisions related to the security at work Philippine decent work dimensions.

1998). There are also two CBAs which have clear provisions on “Equal Opportunity regardless of Sex or Marital Status.”

4. **Security at work** is stipulated in many of the CBAs in various ways. All CBAs provide for the job security of workers, to the effect that workers should not be terminated, dismissed, or reprimanded without due process. However, only six out of 16 CBAs guarantee to prevent precarious work, and protect

their regular employees through prohibition of labor contracting. All CBAs also stipulate that employees will be given social security, burial assistance, group hospitalization, and retirement benefits. Majority of the CBAs indicate provisions for disability, group life insurance, free medicine, and free medical consultation benefits. Several CBAs also have provisions for occupational health and safety of workers, such as provision of washrooms and lockers, medical first

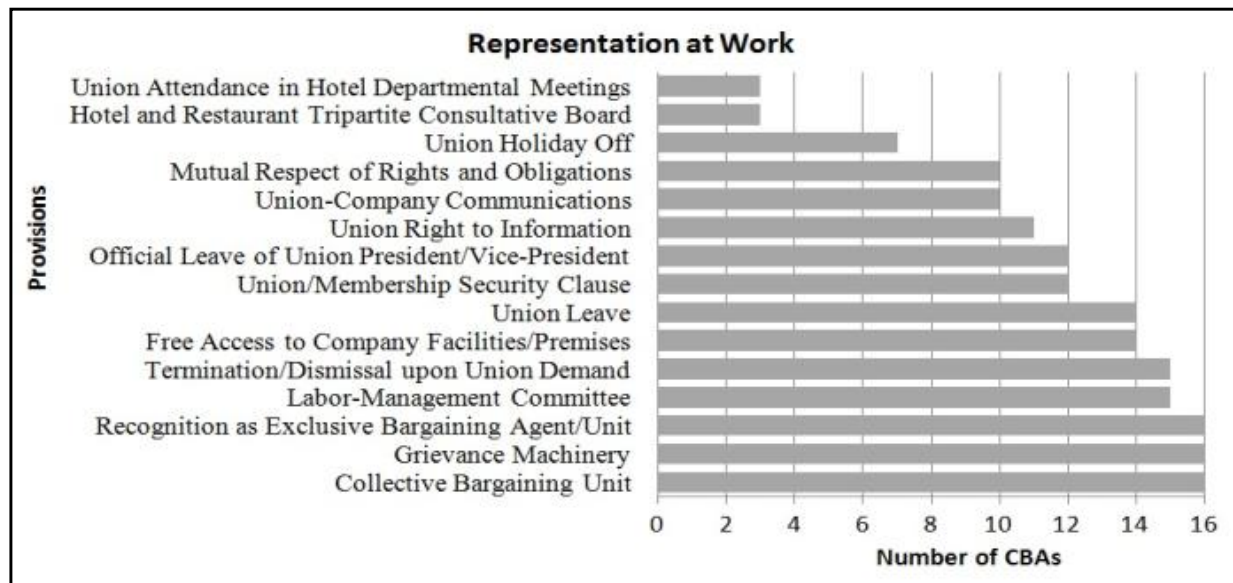


Figure 7. Summary of the CBA provisions related to the representation at work Philippine decent work dimensions.

aid kits, support in case of accidents and untoward incidents, and sleeping quarters. These benefits are decent work practices consistent with the view of Somavia (2002), that “decent work must be safe work (as cited in Takala, 2002). The implementation of such benefits create a work environment that allows the workers to feel secure; that in the performance of their jobs, they are mentally, physically, psychologically, socially, and economically protected by their employer, because they are the most valuable asset of the firm. This is in line with the principle that states “good work gives scope for the intelligence and freedom of workers, its context promotes social relationships and real collaboration, and it does not damage the health and physical well-being of the worker” (PCJP, 2012, p. 15).

**5. Representation at work** was very evident in the firms, since all the unions have managed to have their employers agree to guarantee to their unions, certain rights and privileges through the CBAs, such as free access to company premises, leaves for union officers and members, and free use of facilities for meetings/gatherings, office spaces, and bulletin boards. There are four hotel employers who also committed to provide funds for the union socials and union welfare loans. All CBAs have grievance machineries to settle labor and management disputes.

Employers in turn, also succeeded to have no strike and no lockout clauses and management prerogatives provisions in the CBAs, the two main provisions they seek, in exchange for the economic and other provisions therein. Important also was the provision for Labor-Management Committees (LMCs), which could promote cooperation between the parties in all the companies. From a humanistic management perspective as espoused by Arnaud and Wasieleski (2014), the LMCs and grievance machineries are means by which participative and delegative management could satisfy the need for autonomy; where the workers should have the possibility to take decisions and initiatives in their jobs; to be involved in developing the company policies and implementation thereof; and choose their means and ways of working. Moreover, in the Papal teaching of John Paul II, he was concerned that alienation is found at work and how this impacts the distribution in the workplace of the decision-making authority of “the whole person” (Porth & McCall, 2001). John Paul II exhorted that there has to be a new, creative participative decision-making structure to avoid alienation at work (Porth & McCall, 2001). The presence of LMCs and grievance machineries are structures that may also give limits to the unilateral decision-making authority of the employer.

**Table 2.** *Effects of Decent Work Practices on the Union as an Organization*

<b>Effects on the Union</b>	<b>Frequency (n=140)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
• Helps increase union membership/active members	132	94.29
• Increases union ability to bargain, to strike, or undertake concerted action	131	93.57
• Helps increase payment of membership dues as source of funds	130	92.86
• Enables full exercise of union rights or availing of union benefits and privileges	126	90.00
• Prevents management from union busting or dissolution of union	126	90.00
• Fosters greater unity or solidarity among members	126	90.00
• Encourages union organization or motivates workers to join union	124	88.57
• Helps increase the number of women leaders	123	87.86

### *Effects and Challenges of Implementing the CBA Provisions as Decent Work Practices*

**Union.** A big percentage of the unionists opined that decent work practices have significantly strengthened the union as an organization, because workers continue to join and be active in the union, and union strength is based on the density or number of its members and capacity to mobilize or launch a strike. Union dues collection has also increased, which is the main source of union funds they use for their various activities. When majority or all of the employees are union members, they are more able to mobilize and fully exercise their human, workers', democratic, and union rights, avail of union benefits and privileges, and even prevent management from busting or weakening the union. This is affirmed by the Catholic Social doctrine which state: "Unions and other forms of labor associations are to work in cooperation with other social entities and are to take an interest in the management of public matters. Union organizations have the duty to exercise influence in the political arena, making it duly sensitive to labor problems and helping it to work so that workers' rights are respected." (PCJP, 2004, p.192). As pointed out by one of the national executive officers of the hotel federation:

Our collective bargaining power has enabled us to secure better terms and conditions of work that are relatively far better than those of non-unionized hotel workers. We are assured of wage increases yearly such that our salaries now are way above the regional minimum wage. We also have other benefits like higher premium pay for overtime, rest day, night

differential, and holiday work than what the law requires. The hotel management is also aware that we can paralyze the hotel operations through a strike or any form of concerted action due to CBA negotiation deadlock or unfair labor practices.

The union officers, however, cite their biggest challenge to be the diminishing number of union members due to resignation, retirement, promotion, and increasing contractualization.

**Workers.** Many of the unionists perceived that job security and equity work redound to good work, not only for women workers, but for all workers. First, workers who become regular employees are more assured of decent working and living conditions. Their job security help them retain a job that is not precarious, possibly until retirement. Regular employees receive salaries and other benefits that are usually over and above the minimum required by law, and thru their union, these tend to increase every CBA renegotiation. In turn, they have financial stability for themselves and their families. The unionists also observed that in their company, it appears to be relatively easy for women to get employment, whether as rank and file, supervisor, department head, or manager, as long as they possess the necessary qualifications. The challenge is how to motivate all women workers to join and become active union officers, since until now, married women's priority are their families and other domestic responsibilities. The other challenge is the timeliness of reporting of CBA violations by management, as more often than not, members inform the union about these when it is too late to favorably act on the matter.



**Table 3.** *Effects of Decent Work Practices on Workers*

<b>Effects on Workers</b>	<b>Frequency (n=140)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Ensures job security	123	87.86
Guarantees the regularization of workers	120	85.71
Increases employees' wages and salaries or compensation	119	85.00
Enables the significant improvement of benefits	118	84.29
Provides financial stability to the employees and their family	113	80.71
Prevents discrimination	109	77.86
Fosters company loyalty because of benefits given to employees	105	75.00
Upholds dignity of women	105	75.00
Guarantees the assertion of rights of workers	100	71.43
Boosts self-confidence	95	67.86
Empowers employees who are mothers	90	64.29

The struggle for decent work for all seem to be gaining momentum since the management of the unionized firms find it harder to undermine wages and conditions of work, discriminate workers, and threaten to divide working people. Decent work practices flourish because government regulations require it, there is a big clamor for labor to comply with it, and employers are driven to become socially responsible to ensure good work and to guarantee that workers can provide for their family and raise their children. An example of this is the experience of another Union officer in a hotel as narrated below:

I started to work in the hotel more than 10 years ago. When I became a regular employee, I joined the union because I wanted to fight for my rights and the rights of my co-workers. Our union ensures that women are not discriminated or sexually harassed by anyone. We fully utilize our Labor Management Committee for our proposals on how to make our work life productive and implement the CBA provisions correctly. We also use the Grievance Machinery in cases where our union members have complaints against the managers or owners.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Based on the findings, good work is manifested through numerous decent work practices of unionized firms, as stipulated in their CBAs. It confirms that

collective bargaining is a powerful vehicle that can help ensure that the opportunity, productivity, equity, security, and representation at work of the workers can lead to the securing of just wages, strengthening of the unions, inclusion of the poor working people in society, and workers having a chance to a life of human dignity.

As noted by the union leaders, it is their union membership's solidarity, vigilance, and capacity to mobilize, as well as the protection afforded by legislation to the workers that help persuade, if not pressure employers to manage their firms diligently and in good faith. Because of the nature of the capitalist system, even Christian or conscientious employers have to resort to exploitative practices to generate the profits to give to their shareholders and managers, and only labor unions, labor parties, and civil society groups working together could moderate the greed that the system engenders.

There is no doubt that ensuring good work, through the decent work platform, actually favors the working people, their families, the companies they work for, and the integral development of the poor who have no access to employment is necessary. Towards this goal, and as recommended by the union leaders, it is imperative that major structural, political, and economic reforms be undertaken, such as (1) amending the Labor Code to enable collective bargaining to flourish in workplaces, (2) changing the labor relations framework that is implemented by the DOLE and align it more closely to ILO conventions, (3) adopting more equitable and inclusive economic policies, (4) developing effective

social as well as education programs that will liberate Filipinos from poverty and ignorance, and (5) protect them from the exploitation of employers whose main long-term goal is only to maximize profit.

A major paradigm shift to “triple bottom-line,” using the humanistic philosophy in managing the business for all the business stakeholders, is vital to align company practices with the principles of good work and achieve decent work. Corollary to this is the need to adopt the “right-based thinking” framework as an approach in the Decent Work Agenda of the Department of Labor and Employment. According to Sen (2013), the framework of right-based thinking extends to ethical claims that transcend legal recognition to the broader arena of social ethics.

Moreover, at the workplace level, there is a need to report promptly the violators of the decent work provisions. Educational campaigns should be conducted among the workers, unions, and employers about the details of the decent work agenda and how they can be active stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation. More unions should be organized, and existing ones strengthened, to enable workers to have greater bargaining power and lead the struggle to achieve decent work in all industry sectors. More businesspeople should show how they are becoming more organized and going public with their beliefs that redound in managing their business more responsibly. In the end, union and management, in the context of a caring workplace where people are willing to listen to the voice of one another and lend a helping hand, will become social partners, rather than antagonists on the negotiating table, towards developing greater participation and accountability in the firm to be able to enjoy decent work.

Finally, schools of management, especially Catholic colleges and universities, should revisit their curriculum to integrate faith and work rooted on Catholic Social Teachings. As such, a course on decent work and labor relations should be a must in the curriculum from K12 to college. Faculty and students should be able to critically analyze and make decisions on issues pertaining to good work within the boundaries of human dignity and common good. Faculty, with the support of the school administration, should undertake research and professional development projects and programs that will engage in social dialogues with the workers, employers, and the government, on ensuring that good work through decent work for all will be

realized, so that we can “extend prosperity for greater numbers of people, as well as create meaningful workplaces that can mitigate the moral and spiritual poverty that can animate corporate life,” (Naughton, 2014) and ultimately enhance the dignity of every Filipino.

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