

WAPCO'S "Geographic Differentials"

By Pedro N. Manos

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Pedro N. Manos, former Analyst in the Wage and Position Classification Office is at present Budget Officer of the Institute of National Language. He is the author of two previous articles about the WAPCO Plan which were published in the Philippine Educator**

He sent the present article as a sequel to the previous ones and in answer to the many letters of inquiry he has been receiving from teachers in the field. He hopes it will clarify the questions now in the minds of thousands of teachers in the provinces concerning their salary adjustments under the WAPCO Plans.

REORGANIZATION Plan No. 2-A, otherwise known as the WAPCO Pay Plan provides for a rate of pay for Manila and surrounding provinces, which is different from that in the rest of the country. This "geographic differential" as it is called, places the salary of a position in the Manila area (which includes the provinces of Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga and Bulacan and the chartered cities of Manila, Pasay, Quezon, Cavite, Tagaytay and San Pablo) four ranges higher than those for similar positions in the provincial area which comprises the rest of the provinces and chartered cities.

It is, therefore, not surprising that when the various bureaus and offices began doling out adjustment salaries of their personnel, the provincial employees, notably the teachers, voice their protests against the "injustice" done to them. The following table shows the various classes and pay ranges for teachers in

the different levels as well as a comparison of the Manila and provincial rates.

Range	Minimum Salary	Range	Minimum Salary	Range	Minimum Salary
23	— 1800	29	— 2424	35	— 3264
P	— 1476	P	— 1980	P	— 2676
24	— 1884	30	— 2544	36	— 3432
P	— 1548	P	— 2088	P	— 2808
25	— 1980	31	— 2676	37	— 3612
P	— 1632	P	— 2196	P	— 2952
26	— 2088	32	— 2808	38	— 3792
P	— 1884	P	— 2304	P	— 3108
27	— 2196	33	— 2952	39	— 3984
P	— 1800	P	— 2424	P	— 3264
28	— 2304	34	— 3108	40	— 4188
P	— 1884	P	— 2544	P	— 3432

Note:

The provincial rate denoted by "P" is four ranges lower than the corresponding Manila rate.

It may readily be seen in the table that a teacher stationed in the Manila area, whose position is in level 1, range 27, gets a minimum salary of ₱2196 per annum. (See range 27). If this same teacher were assigned anywhere in the provincial area, say Marinduque or Samar, she would get only ₱1800. (See range 27-P).

The teacher in either case, however, will not actually receive the full minimum salary. If in the first

Classes	Ranges of Pay					
	Level	Less than ETC or Equivalent	ETC or Equivalent	BSE or Equivalent	BSE + 20 or Equivalent	MA or Equivalent
Elementary Classroom Teacher) Secondary Classroom Teacher)	1	24	27	30	31	32
Elementary School Head Teacher) Secondary School Head Teacher I) Guidance Coordinator)	2	26	29	32	33	34
Sec. School Head Teacher II) Teaching Positions (Instructors)) 2-year Post Secondary School)	3		31	34	35	36
Sec. School Head Teacher III) Arts & Trades Instruction Supervisor I)	4		33	36	37	38
Sec. School Head Teacher IV) Arts & Trade Instruction Supervisor II)	5			38	39	40

* Pedro N. Manos—"WAPCO'S Classification Plan"; Philippine Educator, November 1956, Vol XI, p. 21; 'The Teacher

Under the WAPCO Plans", Philippine Educator, January 1957, Vol. XI, p. 34.

case she were receiving, say ₱1680 before the implementation of the WAPCO Plan, her actual salary as adjusted would be ₱1734.80 (or ₱1735 in round figures). This is found by subtracting the current salary (₱1680) from the WAPCO minimum (₱2196) and then adding 30% of the difference, which is ₱154.80, to the current salary.

In the second case the teacher would receive ₱1716 which may be arrived at in the same way. That is, ₱1800 (WAPCO minimum) less ₱1680 (current salary) equals ₱120, 30% of which is ₱36. This added to ₱1680 gives ₱1716.

Following the above procedure, any teacher (or any employee whose position has a range equal to one of those given in the table) who is entitled to adjustment in salary equal to or more than the WAPCO check up his adjusted pay.* An employee already receiving a salary equal to or more than the WAPCO minimum for his position, is not entitled to any adjustment this year unless she raises her position level and/or salary range.

Going back to the question of geographic differential, many believe that its application in the WAPCO Pay Plan is rather impractical and arbitrary. Granting that the cost of living in Manila, Quezon City and Pasay is higher than that in other cities and in the provinces outside the Manila area, no amount of explanation can convince the teacher in a barrio school in southern Tarlac that he spends less for his food, clothing, and lodging than does another barrio teacher just across the border in northern Pampanga, and is therefore entitled to a lesser salary.

A much less understandable situation is that of a head teacher in a school in Nueva Ecija who under the WAPCO Plan receives the provincial rate of ₱1980 (range 29-P), while an ordinary classroom teacher in a neighboring school in Bulacan would get the Manila rate of ₱2196 (range 27). There are many more similar situations which tend to prove the impracticability of applying the geographic differential in a small and economically homogeneous country like ours.

In its annual report dated December 29, 1954 the WAPCO justifies the application of the geographic differential in its pay plan by stating that data collected from private employers in various places in the country show significant differences between the general level of salaries prevailing in Manila and that found in other areas. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that these salary differences reflect differences in the cost of living between Manila and the provinces, the report says.

* Computations in the previous articles of the author as mentioned above were based on the Manila rates.

In the absence of definite figures or data on the cost of living in the provinces and in Manila, which the WAPCO admits are not available, many think that the geographic differential in the WAPCO pay plan is rather onerous and should, therefore, be eliminated.

Speaking of cost of living standards, it may be said that house rentals are generally higher in Manila and its suburbs than in the provinces. This, however, is compensated by the cheaper prices of certain foodstuffs, clothing and construction materials in the city. In addition to this, the opportunity of getting or continuing one's education is greater for those who are employed in Manila or the neighboring provinces.

Public School teachers in Manila have the special privilege of working for lesser number of hours than those in the provinces because they hold classes either in the morning or in the afternoon, only. This places teachers in the Manila area at a greater advantage since they can pursue higher studies during their off sessions, thus raising their educational qualifications and consequently their salary ranges. A study conducted by this writer revealed that under the WAPCO plan the average salaries of public school teachers in the divisions of Manila, Cavite, Pampanga, Rizal, Bulacan and Laguna, all in the Manila area, are the highest among those in the various school divisions. This may be attributed to the higher educational qualifications of teachers in these provinces on account of the proximity of these places to the colleges and universities in Manila. This fact, alone, should be sufficient argument for the non-application of the geographical differential to the teaching positions.

The application of geographic differential to provincial positions runs counter to the principle of "equal pay for equal work," upon which the WAPCO Classification plan is said to be based. It defeats the very purpose of position classification, which is the standardization of salaries, for it adopts different standards of pay for the Manila and the provincial areas. Whatever explanations the WAPCO experts may give, the employees affected by the geographic differential will always question why those performing exactly the same duties, just because they happened to be stationed in different cities or provinces should be given different salary rates.

This principle of geographic differential may work out well in the United States, but it is doubtful if it could be justifiably applied in the Philippines. This is one thing the American consultants of the WAPCO forgot to consider when they made their recommendations. Our own Filipino classification experts should look into this matter deeply with a view to eliminating this onerous provisions of the WAPCO plan. Congress, likewise, should respond to public opinion regarding the Plan so that its apparent inequities and injustices could be corrected.