CLASSIFICATION OF STATISTICIANS IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

by

HAROLD ROSEN*

Statisticians, by the very nature of their profession, should appreciate and be sympathetic with the purposes of position classification. I think this is so because they fully understand the significance and importance of a systematic and objective treatment of a large body of data.

The data which the Wage and Position Classification Office (WAPCO) is concerned with are the duties and responsibilities of some 185,000 government employees. Just as statisticians collect, analyze, classify and interpret numerical facts, the job analyst collects, analyzes, interprets and classifies job duties and responsibilities. The two professions have much in common.

First, as we should in any profession, let us define some of the terms used in position classification.· A *class* consists of all those jobs or positions in the government service that are enough alike in duties and responsibilities and in the qualifications required to do the work, that they all can be given the same salary and title, and for administrative processes, may be treated alike.

A *position* is an assigned set of duties and responsibilities. The position is to be distinguished from the employee who happens at the time to be occupying it. The position is classified according to duties assigned, not according to the qualifications of the incumbent. So, the incumbent of a position with janitorial duties may happen to have a law degree. The position will be classified as a janitor, not as an attorney.

What is the purpose behind the classification of positions? Why is it needed? Probably the best demonstration of the need can be seen by a listing of the rates of pay and titles for

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* Consultant, Wage and Position Classification Office.

positions now in the government service, which, by our investigation, have all been found to be doing approximately the same work. The duties in each case are those of a first-level professional statistician. The salaries now being paid for these duties range from ₱1440 to ₱4500. Among the titles now being used are:

Statistical Clerk	Permit Agent
Review Clerk	Chief Statistician
Statistician	Draftsman
Clerk	Storekeeper
Assistant Chief of Division	Attorney
Senior Statistician	Agent
Clerk-Typist	Helper

Yet, all of these employees are performing the same level of statistical work.

This inconsistency in pay and titles causes the same problems in management as would be caused in a statistical survey where the inter-quartile range would mean $Q_1 — Q_3$ to one statistician and the 10th to the 90th percentile to another.

In order to correct this situation, the WAPCO was established in July 1953 as a PHILCUSA-FOA Counterpart Project for the purpose of establishing a classification and pay plan for employees of the national government.

The American management consulting firm of Louis J. Kroeger and Associates was employed to conduct the survey and to train a staff of Filipino technicians to maintain the plan once it is established. Originally the survey was to cover approximately 45,000 national government employees. It has since been expanded to include all government corporations and public school teachers, increasing the total coverage to almost 185,000 employees.

The survey itself began with the preparation of a questionnaire on which each employee listed his duties and responsibilities. To date, we have received and reviewed 95,000

questionnaires. In certain fields such as teaching, a sampling technique was used, but in most cases, every employee in the department has submitted a statement of his job.

The questionnaires were then sorted into groups which included all positions working in a certain occupation, regardless of level. Two hundred and thirty-seven such occupational groups were formed, of which the Statistical Group is one. Our next problem was to divide each occupational group into levels of difficulty and responsibility. Each position was reviewed for the technical difficulty of the duties, the independence of action, the responsibility for supervision and other job characteristics, all of which are significant in determining the level of a position. In order to add to the information on the questionnaires, over 26,000 individual interviews were conducted with employees all over the country. The result of this phase of investigation was the grouping of all positions in each occupational group whose duties were similar into a single class. A specification for each such class was then prepared, showing a title, a general definition, a list of typical duties performed, and the qualifications required to perform the work.

After the classes had been described and established, salaries became the next item of importance. In order to find out what private industry was paying for comparable jobs, WAPCO conducted an extensive salary survey in over 300 private firms throughout the country. A number of key jobs were selected to be surveyed. After collecting the salaries paid for these jobs, statistical summaries showing the inter-quartile range, the median, and the arithmetical average were prepared. These data then became one of two reference points for setting the salaries for related classes in the government service. The other reference point was the evaluation of relative level of difficulty of duties and responsibilities as reflected in the classification plan itself.

How has the survey affected the government statisticians? First, after reviewing over 95,000 questionnaires, we were able to isolate approximately 300 positions who were engaged in statistical work, exclusive of the actuarial work of the GSIS.

These 300 positions were then evaluated to determine those which were comparable in terms of level of difficulty and responsibility. Five such levels (classes) were identified, ranging from the *Statistical Aides* who perform non-professional statistical recording and computations to the *Chief Statisticians* who exercise a high level of technical and administrative supervision over a professional statistical activity.

Each of the 300 positions was allocated to one of the five classes to which a title had been assigned. Qualifications guides have been prepared which reflect the training and experience required to perform the work of the class. An appropriate salary range will be determined for each class so that the tremendous differences in pay for the same work will no longer be possible.

Positions are classified on an objective basis, and titles and salaries are assigned which reflect duties and responsibilities. In this way, a Statistician I means the same kind of work in the Central Bank or the Budget Commission. A Senior Statistician will get the same pay whether in the Manila Railroad or the Department of Finance. Civil Service can recruit and examine for classes of positions whose duties and responsibilities are clearly defined and for which the required knowledges, skills and abilities can be accurately determined. The Budget Commission can more effectively evaluate departmental personnel requests by using standardized class titles. In these, and many other ways, the classification of positions serves as an aid to management.

As for the government employee, he knows that his salary will compare favorably with those of all other employees in the government who are doing the same kind of work. Political pressure and favoritisms are removed as a basis for his pay. The general duties of the position to which he is being assigned will be known because there is a description on record which defines the duties of the class.

Professional organizations such as the Philippine Statistical Association will likewise benefit from the survey. The

standardization of titles, the establishment of qualifications, and the setting of proper salaries are all consistent with the objectives of any professional organization.