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Graduate Theses

Marcela V. Avanceña

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Graduate Theses

MARCELA V. AVANCEÑA

WALTER S. Monroe, the American authority on education speaks of the need of a "critical inventory of the accomplishments of research." The present writer, a librarian of an institution specializing in education, has felt this need keenly when challenged to satisfy the requests of research students desirous of knowing the status of previous and current studies of a graduate nature. It was therefore to meet this need in some measure that in 1950 a study was undertaken under the auspices and with the aid of the trained library staff of the National Teachers College, the institution sponsoring the investigation.

The problem was to ascertain the nature and amount of research work done in the private colleges and universities throughout the Philippines, records of which could be found in the library of the Bureau of Private Schools. The study necessarily included only the theses recorded or filed with the Bureau by private schools and universities up to December 1950. Theses submitted before the Second World War were, with a few exceptions, not available. Likewise research studies done at the state university, and consequently not filed with the Bureau, were not considered.

From time to time there have been sporadic attempts to inventory graduate work in one sector of research, namely in education, by the publication of abstracts of theses in educational journals. Most notable of these were the reports writ-

ten by Dr. Pedro T. Orata for the Philippine Journal of Education. But these efforts touched only a very small portion of the field.

In the United States this type of work is continuously done through the help and cooperation of the institutions concerned. There the main project is handled through the help of a central processing body, the U.S. Office of Education, which receives abstracts, and at times copies of theses, from colleges and universities throughout the country, and periodically puts out bibliographies covering all the theses reported.

A tentative survey at the Bureau of Private Schools showed that there were 466 theses on file as approved up to the end of 1950, and 93 others pending official action at that date, or a total of 559 theses to be examined in our study.

Of the 559 theses thus available for study only six bore a date previous to the Second World War. Therefore no certain or significant figures could be given for work done previous to the war, since nearly all pre-war records of the Bureau were lacking.

Of the 25 private colleges and universities offering graduate courses covered by the survey the University of Santo Tomas had the greatest amount of graduate work in general, with the University of Manila and Far Eastern University second and third respectively. Santo Tomas University was also the leader in the amount of educational research done. Adamson University was second and Arellano University a close third.

Of all the theses included in this investigation 361 could be classified as educational in both purpose and content, a proportion of 64.58% of the total work. The subject of "Teacher Training and Status" attracted the widest attention, with "Philosophy" and "General Sociology" a close second and third respectively. However if we consider the subjects "Philosophy" and "Sociology" too general, then "Moral and Religious Education" and "Education History" would rank second with 15 each; "Educational Theory" third with 14.

Some observations are possible regarding graduate theses as a result of the survey.

First there appeared to be no uniformity in the forms prescribed for the final drafts of research investigation. Dates, which are of primary importance in gauging the recency and consequent up-to-dateness of research work, were not always stated in the place where they may ordinarily be found in standard publications. In some instances the dates were not stated anywhere in the theses. In other instances the dates took the form of bracketed periods like: 1949-1950, indicating a school year rather than a definite day of accomplishment.

Still another point of wide divergence was in the information about the advisers under whose professional guidance the studies must have taken form and substance, and because of whom they might be expected to bear the imprint of a professional reputation and authority. In many of the theses the names of the advisers could hardly be deciphered from the scrawled signatures, which lacked the ordinary clarification of a typewritten name below the signature. Indeed in some cases these names were left out altogether with no statement of approval preceding the main draft of the research work. Moreover a few theses—rare cases it is true—did not even bear the name of the sponsoring institution. In the matter of bibliographies there was lack of standard forms and consistent styles.

Not all the theses covered by this study were available at their official depository, i.e. at the library of the Bureau of Private Schools. Some were out on loan, while others would seem to be constantly missing for one reason or another. Since permanence and continuity of tenure do not obtain among the intermittently changing personnel of the Bureau, the placing of due responsibility for the missing theses is practically impossible. Indeed these changes became sources of errors and inconsistencies in the records of the library's acquisitions. Some of the Bureau's librarians entered full and necessary data for bibliographic purposes, while others made at best but sketchy notations of titles and writers' names without the sponsoring institution.

No descriptive catalog files existed for the exact tracing of all theses in the library collection. Hence duplication of subject matter was not always avoided. In one instance the same subject treated from the same viewpoint by the same writer and for the same degree was submitted from different institutions for different major subjects of specialization. In another instance an institution sponsored and submitted two theses on an identical subject in the same year.

The lack of a readily available and "critical inventory of the accomplishments of research" seems manifest from the above observations, and this lack is an obstacle to the growth and effectiveness of research in the graduate departments of universities and colleges of the Philippines. A central processing body for graduate research work should be designated by the government for all universities and colleges irrespective of their status as private or public institutions. Such a body should be organized to gather effectively all bibliographic materials covering graduate research throughout the Philippines. Where no copy of a thesis is available, an abstract filed on a prescribed form containing the necessary information may then be forwarded to this body for compilation and publication in official bibliographies, to be put out periodically by the processing agency. In the United States, as remarked above, such work is officially undertaken by the U.S. Office of Education. In concurrence with this practice, therefore, our own Department of Education could undertake this task as part of its efforts to improve research in our land.

An alternative plan would be for all colleges and universities concerned to pool their resources and to designate one of their number as the processing agency. They could then apportion the expenditure involved in such an undertaking through the method of subscription, now universally used in professional indexing services. By this method a college or university would have to pay a subscription price commensurate with the amount of research it sent in for inclusion in the official bibliographies, binding itself to destroy and not give away whatever copies it discarded of the cumulative results of bibliographic works put out by the processing institution. In this way a continuous bibliographic service could

cover all research submitted to the processing agency, with the prohibitive cost of the work proportionately borne by all institutions concerned.

A private depository for all graduate theses should be designated in addition to the library of the Bureau of Private Schools to insure greater probability of survival in case of devastation by fire or war. In the case of war the writer believes that a private institution could be safer than a public one, experience having shown that private libraries survived the depredations of both looters and enemies alike.

A standard form should be prescribed for all kinds of research work to be submitted providing completeness of information regarding date, institution, adviser, pagination, bibliography.

The administration of the theses collections both at the Bureau and at the second deposit should be strictly according to accepted library practice. All the theses should be fully and uniformly accessioned as soon as they are approved for inclusion in the library collection. Each thesis should be catalogued fully for effective consultation and study. None of the theses should be allowed to circulate outside the library premises except in cases of inter-library loans, all other loans being confined to theses with duplicate copies in the collection.

The above conclusions and recommendations are based, as has been stated, on a survey made of the theses on file at the library of the Bureau of Private Schools at the end of 1950. However, subsequent to that date the writer of this paper made each year a similar study of the annual increment. The number of theses examined thus far for 1951 is 201; the number for 1952 is 259; for 1953 it is 168; and finally for 1954 we have reached 28, with more remaining for examination.

These theses were in each case studied with an eye to ascertaining the same facts as in the 1950 survey, and it can be said that no substantial change was observed during this period, either as regards the character of the theses submitted or the condition under which they are preserved. Therefore, the recommendations offered by the writer in the 1950 survey would seem to be still valid.

DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR AND INSTITUTION OF ALL GRADUATE THESES EXAMINED

INSTITUTION	1950		1949		1948		1947		1946		Pre-War		Total	Per cent
	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P	O	P		
Adamson University	17	1	19		11								48	8.6
Ateneo de Manila	6	1	13		10		4						34	6.08
Centro Escolar University	9	1	2										2	.35
Cosmopolitan College	2	3	8		8	2	1				1		24	4.3
Far Eastern University	12	3	13	1	13		10		1				53	2.33
Jose Rizal College			1		1		1						3	9.47
Manila Central University	6	1	5		4		2						18	.53
Manila Law College			1										1	3.22
Manila University	12	31	28		13		15		1				100	.17
National Teachers College	2		1		1								4	17.9
National University	4	1	4	2	1		1						13	.71
Phil. Christian College	2	1											3	2.33
Phil. Women's University								1					1	.53
Quezon College	2	1											3	.17
Sacred Heart Novitiate	1	11			2		3						20	.53
Sagrado Corazon	1	1	3		5		5				3		18	3.6
San Carlos, Colegio de	4	4	1		4								9	3.22
Sta. Scholastica													1	1.61
Sto. Tomas University	17	13	39	9	37		17		1		1		146	.17
Silliman University	1	2	1		4		1		3			1	10	26.15
Southern College			1				1		1				1	1.8
Southern Philippines	1												1	.17
Southern College													1	.17
Union College of Manila	8	1	3	1									12	.17
Visayas University		1	7		2								6	2.15
Unnamed Institution					5								2	1.07
Total for each item	107	76	155	13	121	3	60		2	6			15	1
Total for each year	183		168		124		60		2	6			16	
Percentage	32.74		30.06		22.18		10.74		.35	1.07			2.86	
P—Pending action														100.

O—Officially included

P—Pending action