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Designing a Thesis and Dissertation Counseling Platform for Sports Science Students (COVID-19 Pandemic)

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A B S T R A C T

Background: The environment and technologies are both changing. Changing environments are disappearing without the use of technology. The training environment and its services need to change, and if there is no immediate response to this issue, many services will be lost due to the inability to cope with the corona environment.

Methods: This study was conducted to design a thesis and dissertation counseling platform for sports science students (Coronavirus pandemic). Due to the limited presence of students and professors, especially non-native students in this course, there was a great need for this program among sports science colleagues. First, during a field interview, the platform features were identified and then database and user sections were designed in two stages.

Results: The system provides three applications accessible to each user. For administrative purposes, the process starts on the website's login page. The admin logs in using their registered Employee Identity Number and password. To manage users, including lecturers and students.

Conclusions: The results of this work could help provide specialized guidance and counseling services in sports science. We hope that by presenting the research-executive solution, we can play a desirable role in conducting research activities. This measure can also be fully responsive for post-COVID periods.

KEY WORDS

Counseling, Sports Science, Thesis, Dissertation
<https://jast.uma.ac.ir/>

Introduction

Research is one of the basic foundations in the development of societies, so that all scientific and logical movements are possible with the support of research. In fact, research is the main driving force in progress and development. This requires the improvement of service quality at all times, and COVID-19 has caused significant damage in this area. The web space provides an opportunity for everyone to use this space for their specialized services. Therefore, one of the tools that can help professors in providing these services is currently web space and software. Therefore, the main issue in this research is to identify the features that a platform should have for this particular case to help professors and students in research services.

What features are required to design a thesis and dissertation counseling platform for sports science students (COVID-19 period) from the professors' point of view?

What features are required to design a thesis and dissertation counseling platform for sports science students (COVID-19 period) from the students' point of view?

In order to do so, it was necessary to review the research literature on the subject to use similar thematic examples in this field. An example of research literature was also examined as follows.

Nilli et al. (2007) examined the quality of guidance in master's theses. The results showed that the supervisors had the most guidance in the initial stages of the research, such as the guide for choosing the topic and compiling the research proposal, as well as the final stages, such as compiling the dissertation report. The results showed that although there was a difference between the quality of supervisors' guidance according to the faculty and academic rank, but the difference was not significant. The obtained averages indicated that the level of students' satisfaction with professors has been more than other professors [9].

The abilities of postgraduate students of physical education and the quality of instructors' guidance in writing dissertations were studied by Mizani et al. (2011). Postgraduate students have rated their academic and practical abilities (average 2.45 out of 4) and the quality of supervisors' and advisors' guidance (average 2.65 out of 4) as average. In addition, the results showed a significant difference between the quality of dissertation guidance by supervisors and advisors ($P \leq 0.001$) that supervisors with an average of 2.75 were higher than advisors with an average of 2.54. There was a positive significant relationship between student abilities and the quality of instructors' guidance ($P \leq 0.001$). Also, there was a positive significant relationship between the variable of student's scientific and practical abilities with the variables of officials' attention to the dissertation results and its application ($P = 0.026$) and students' use of real data and lack of possibility of fraud ($P = 0.001$). In addition, there was a positive significant relationship between the variable of instructors' guidance quality and the fair evaluation of master's theses ($P \leq 0.001$) [8].

Hejazi and Abbasi (2002) studied the effective factors in increasing the quality of master's theses of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Tehran. The results showed that there was a significant

relationship between the quality of the thesis and 1- access to scientific resources 2- student's ability and familiarity in conducting research and 3- familiarity with research regulations and 4- performing the duties of the dissertation committee. The results of multivariate regression showed that the two variables of the student's ability and familiarity in conducting research and performing the duties of the dissertation committee were more effective in increasing the quality of the dissertation, respectively. Using Kruskal-Wallis test, a comparison was made between the ten disciplines of the faculty and it was found that the students of different departments of the faculty had the same opinion about the effect of the studied factors on the quality of the dissertation, i.e. the content of the dissertation but there was a significant difference between the format and structure of the dissertation. According to the results of the research, it was suggested that the dissertation committee be more active in continuously monitoring the dissertation affairs and creating more coordination between the supervisor, the advisor and the student. Expert professors should be considered and more importance should be given to these courses to increase the students' ability in using computers, research methods and statistics, interpreting and analyzing data, which in this research has been one of the most important and influential factors on the quality of the dissertation. Students' familiarity with the research regulations of the faculty as well as access to scientific resources and introduction of domestic and foreign experts have been other important points of this research [7].

Students' satisfaction with the dissertation process and its related factors in Tabriz University of Medical Sciences was conducted by Dehghani and Yamani (2009). The results showed that the mean ($\pm$ standard deviation) scores of dissertation supervisors, scientific skills development, research foundations, research skills development and dissertation evaluation process were 3.31 (± 0.95), 3.42 (± 0.71), 2.26 (± 0.80), 3.37 ($\pm 0.70\%$) and 3.47 (± 0.92), respectively. The mean factor score of research foundations was significantly lower than other factors ($P = 0.0001$). The mean score of satisfaction of female students regarding the factors of research foundations and development of research skills was higher than male students and had a significant difference ($P = 0.026$ and $P = 0.04$, respectively). Since research infrastructure is one of the important factors in research activities, attention to this issue should be at the top of higher education planning priorities [4,5].

Hidden Supervisor: The curriculum resulting from the interaction between the supervisor and the student in master's theses was studied by Bozorg and Khakbaz (2013). The results of this study showed that students expected to experience a guiding process from the supervisor and their initial perception of the mentoring process was different from what was formed for them, so to compensate for the difference in the expected situation and what experienced in practice, the "hidden supervisor" was usually chosen to fill the gap between the expected and existing situation. Obstacles to the implementation of general medical dissertation from the perspective of faculty members of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences were studied by Montazerifar et al. (2019). The most important obstacle from the faculty members' point of view was the inadequate training of students in reviewing texts and articles for which holding research method workshops could be effective [3].

Today, the use of expert and decision support systems has paved its way to every possible area of the world issues. Davarpour et al. (2007) also stated that in general, very few intelligent systems have been developed to guide a real sports team, and thus conducted a study entitled “Designing and Implementing Intelligent Coaching Software for a Football Team”, which each match will give the team the most chance of success by choosing the best arrangement and the most suitable player from the selection. During the match, it will manage various events and, if necessary, change the arrangement and the player to adapt the team to new conditions and maintain system restoration optimization.

Jung and Lin have also made efforts for basketball intelligent coaching. Jung developed the Naismith expert system, which seeks to select the best strategy from existing strategies based on its own rules. Lin also proposes a pattern for a decision support system for selecting basketball defense strategies [6].

Introduction of software for recording and analyzing damage and risk factors in football was done during a study by Bambaychi and Rahn timer (2008), in which information was easily recorded and corrected and stored in the computer with more confidence and data analysis was done easier and faster, it was easier for other people and non-experts to follow the work steps, and finally the results were more valid. This system can be easily modified and used for other needs, and the computer analysis system is more accurate and can be used in research on sports injuries [2].

The design of counseling systems as research work has not been considered so far and at the same time it is considered as a basic need of graduate students. Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine the basic features of web-based counseling for students’ research activities based on the research literature and field study, and then to focus on database design and user sections.

Material and Methods

The design was presented as a web-based software output. To start, the existing software in the field of service provision were examined and the necessary software features were reviewed. In the second stage, it was necessary to provide the necessary software features based on field interviews with graduate students and professors. By conducting field interviews and achieving theoretical saturation, the interviews were typed exactly and the central codes were selected. In the next step, the program protocol was documented and finally, using the computer programming language, the initial form of the program was prepared and considered for experimental use in the university.

User samples were selected from professors and masters and doctoral students as main users and the necessary features for this software were prepared by theoretical saturation method (table 1).

Table 1- Important features from the perspective of video tutorial users.

Share ability	easy access	Comment or question	downloadable	Video content	
*	*	*	*	*	Female students
*	*	*	*	*	male students
*	*	*	*	*	professors

Results

Platform structure designed by in figure 1 to explain more about the project. In this figure the main structure explain the relationships of user, admin and counselor. Using the MySQL help us to develop database and Mail server help us to send and receive message (figure 1).

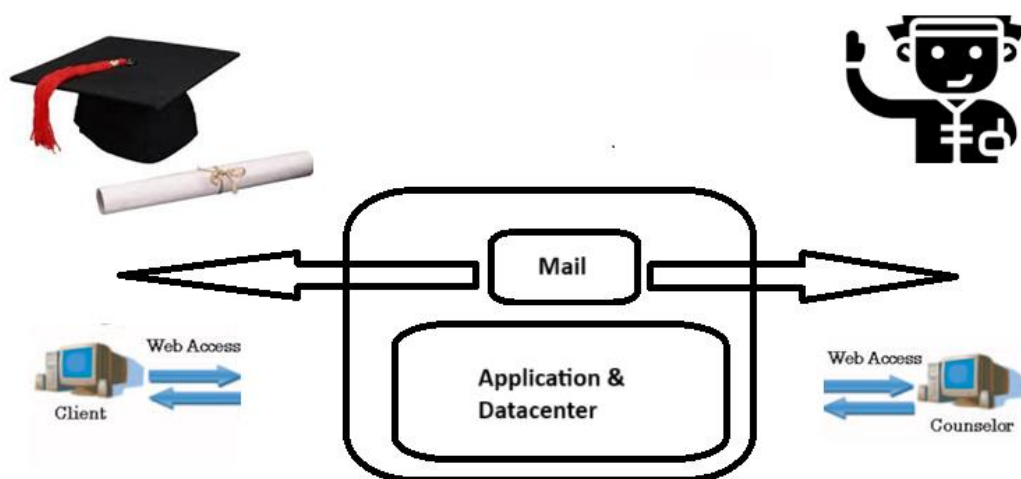


Figure 1: platform structure

Results

The results of this project are presented in the form of databases and user sections. The database contains tables that provide links to user sections for the data set. The first section is for students who can use the counseling and guidance services provided by university professors and enter their data in this app (Figure 1).

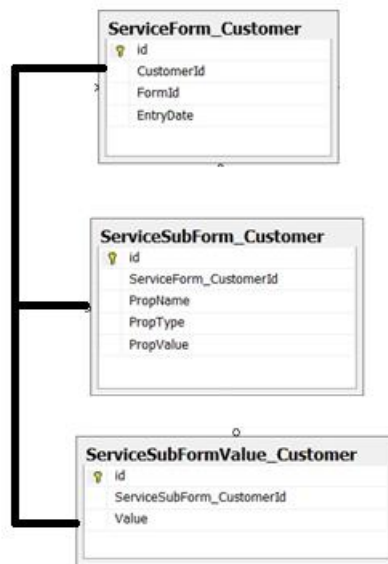


Figure 1. Student database diagram for use in counseling program

The second part is the supervisor and advisor who can choose a category for their guidance and counseling and register their services in this field (Figure 2).

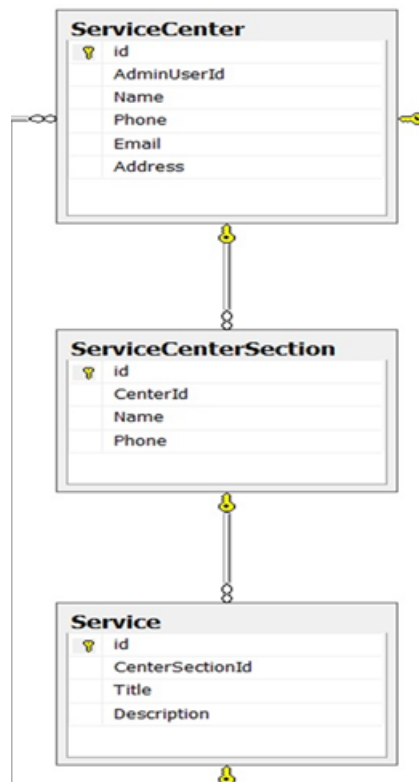


Figure 2. Diagram of professors' database for counseling in the counseling program

After registering on the site and confirming the user account, the customer can enter the website by entering his user information and password.

ثبت نام

ورود به سیستم

نام کاربری

رمز عبور

تکرار رمز عبور

رمز عبور را فراموش کرده ام

☐ مرا به خاطر بسپار

من ربات نیستم

ورود به سیستم

Figure 3. User login

Customer profiles such as main details, password changes, addresses and help information will be available on this page. Each professor can have several activity addresses, for example, Azad University; National and PNU. Students can visit the professor's place of work or view e-meeting addresses according to their coordination.



شماره تراکنش	مبلغ	تاریخ	وضعیت	کد پیگیری
TN-۲۰۲۱۴۲۷۱۴۵۶۲۴۶۵۰	۵,۰۰۰ تومان	۷ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۰	ناموفق	
TN-۲۰۲۱۴۲۲۱۶۲۰۲۸۸۹۰	۴۰۰,۰۰۰ تومان	۲ اردیبهشت ۱۴۰۰	ناموفق	

Figure 4. Profile settings

Supervisors in each course need to provide instruction to students on their own or in other resources, so that instruction is fully contained in the library. If the teacher has other resources in the training, it will be added to the site. The link of these resources can be sent in the messages between the student and the professor. All forms, instructions, formats and software can be downloaded from this panel for students.



ردیف	عنوان	دسته بندی	توضیحات	حذف
۱	آموزش روش تحقیق و تنظیم گزارش	مهارت پژوهشگری	  	

Figure 5. Educational content

Professors can also choose the type of service they need as guidance or advice and enter their guidance program.

The screenshot shows a web interface for selecting consulting services. At the top right, there is a red asterisk and the text "دسته بندی" (Category). Below this, there are three radio button options: "خدمات پژوهشی" (Research services), "مشاوره" (Consulting), and "راهنما" (Guidance). The "مشاوره" option is selected. Below the options is a large text area labeled "توضیحات" (Comments) on the right. The text area is empty.

Figure 6. Category of consulting services

After registration of the service by the user or consultant; the management department (Admin) can see the new services and after editing and seeing the relevant details, approve or reject the service for display on the site.



Figure 7. Enable or disable the service by the administrator

The service provider can specify its date and even the duration. In this way, a professor can offer his services in different departments and set a fee for his students for free and for other researchers such as research and development units of production units.

تاریخ شروع * ۱۴۰۰/۳/۸

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دسته بندی * ش

آدرس وبسایت

https://uma.ac.ir

بستن

افزودن ویژگی جدید

Figure 8. Period allowed for consulting services

On the other hand, the student can ask a question to his teacher; Set an appointment and even send the necessary files without restrictions. To practice student presentation, the meeting link can be sent to the student by the professor.

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ثبت سفارش

Figure 9. Ordering services by a student or customer

Discussion

One of the basic services in the postgraduate course is doing research activities and a thesis or doctoral dissertation, which is a result of the efforts of a student and several professors in the master's and doctoral courses [12,13]. Although there are systems for educational activities, no provision has been made for student guidance and counseling services. Therefore, according to previous studies, especially factors related to the quality of guidance and counseling services for dissertations by researchers such as Hejazi and Abbasi (2002) and satisfaction with services in Dehghani and Yamani research (2009) regarding the level of access to scientific resources, students' ability and familiarity in conducting research, familiarity with the research regulations and the infrastructure of the dissertation process was considered in the design of this program, and in addition to the possibility of consulting, comprehensive resources were considered to improve the quality of guidance and counseling services so that students could access these resources. More easily. Also, one of the main problems in creating appointments with professors was that in the form of a dynamic calendar in this system, it is possible to arrange appointments in the free time of professors and it can be done virtually or in person. In one of the previous researches, this issue was related to the students' dissatisfaction with the lack of sufficient time for professors, which has been expressed as a hidden supervisor in Bozorg and Khakbaz research (2013). Other facilities such as creating a defense information for other students and providing useful links such as invitations, conferences and workshops were among the topics covered during the field interview. It is hoped that with the completion of this service, students and professors will be able to carry out their research activities in a virtual context without being affected by the destructive effects of Coronavirus period, and students will be able to benefit from the maximum guidance from their professors with full satisfaction. In order to create a clear mentality of this program, a simplified form is presented in a chart (Figure 3). In this program, according to previous research, the required factors were considered to increase the quality of guidance and counseling services, and in addition, the necessary features in each software block were completed according to field interviews with students and professors.

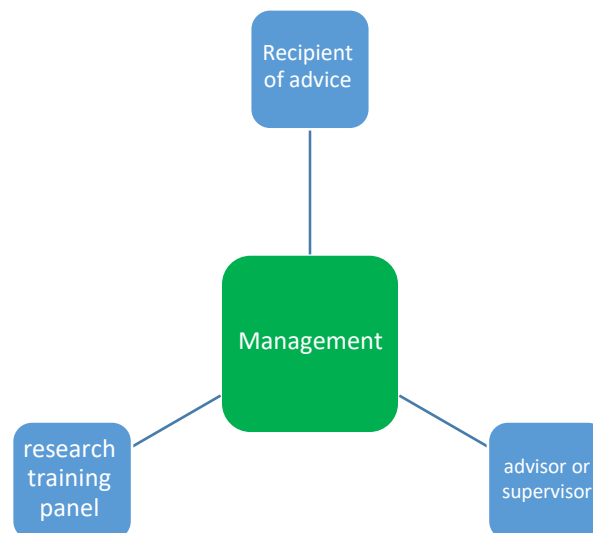


Figure 3. Simplified chart of online student research counseling and guidance

Conclusion

The approach to industry relations in this program was the main issue from the beginning of the design and we were looking for a solution that the services of professors could be available to the community and other industries. Students can receive service vouchers in this new approach and the research fee will be provided by the university in the form of these vouchers. Although such a view will initially meet with resistance from professors, but it is a new aspect in transforming academic services or at least the university can provide a guidance service voucher to the student up to a certain percentage. This will increase the dynamism of the university. This part of the work was introduced as a software item when some students were not satisfied with the quality of their supervisors' guidance or may benefit from the guidance of professors in other departments alongside their supervisor due to the limitations of the student group. Therefore, in this system, new solutions for university services are also provided. There is also the possibility that the university can be in contact with publications, and here the services related to the dissertation or project that need a transaction invoice for the financial department will be provided to the student as credit from the very beginning. This reduces the amount of financial activity. Student instead of money, receives credit, and this credit can be properly spent on publishing and laboratory services and even other definable services.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were observed in conducting this study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their participation was voluntary. The confidentiality of personal information was guaranteed, and the collected data were used solely for research purposes.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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طراحی پلتفرم مشاوره پایان نامه و رساله برای دانشجویان علوم ورزشی در دوران همه گیری کووید-۱۹

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چکیده	نویسنده مسئول عباس نقی زاده باقی
زمینه و هدف: محیط و فناوری‌ها همواره در حال تغییر هستند. در صورت عدم استفاده از فناوری، محیط‌های آموزشی و خدمات مرتبط با آن‌ها به سرعت منسوخ می‌شوند. با توجه به شرایط همه‌گیری ویروس کرونا و محدودیت حضور دانشجویان و اساتید، به‌ویژه دانشجویان غیر بومی، نیاز به ایجاد بستری فناورانه برای مشاوره و راهنمایی در امور پایان‌نامه و رساله احساس می‌شد. هدف این پژوهش، طراحی یک پلتفرم مشاوره پایان‌نامه و رساله ویژه دانشجویان علوم ورزشی در دوران همه‌گیری کووید-۱۹ بود. روش کار: ابتدا از طریق مصاحبه‌های میدانی، نیازها و ویژگی‌های اصلی پلتفرم شناسایی شد. سپس در دو مرحله طراحی، بخش‌های پایگاه داده و کاربری نرم‌افزار توسعه یافتند. یافته‌ها: سیستم طراحی شده شامل سه برنامه کاربردی برای هر کاربر است. فرایند ورود از طریق صفحه لاگین وبسایت انجام می‌شود؛ مدیر سیستم با شماره شناسایی پرسنلی و رمز عبور وارد شده و قادر به مدیریت کاربران (اساتید و دانشجویان) می‌باشد. نتیجه‌گیری: نتایج این پژوهش می‌تواند در ارائه خدمات مشاوره و راهنمایی تخصصی در حوزه علوم ورزشی مؤثر واقع شود. امید است این راهکار پژوهشی-اجرایی بتواند در ارتقای کیفیت فعالیت‌های تحقیقاتی در دوران کرونا و پسا کرونا نقش مطلوبی ایفا کند.	استناد به این مقاله: Naghizadeh-Baghi, A., nobakht sareban, F. Designing a Thesis and Dissertation Counseling Platform for Sports Science Students (COVID-19 Pandemic). <i>Journal of Advanced Sport Technology</i>, 2025; 9(1): -. doi: 10.22098/jast.2025.3610
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