

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

A Student Project and Dissertation Management System is a digital platform designed to streamline the planning, execution, supervision, and evaluation of academic projects and dissertations throughout a student's academic journey (Simon, 2023). It provides structured processes for submitting proposals, assigning supervisors, scheduling consultations, tracking progress, and managing feedback. The system serves as a centralized hub that enhances coordination between students and faculty, reduces administrative workload, and ensures timely and organized completion of academic work. By integrating various academic stages and communication tools, such a system supports a more efficient and transparent approach to academic project management.

Efficient management of academic projects and dissertations is essential in higher education, enabling students to progress in an organized manner through their academic experiences. At Ardhi University department of CSM, the lack of an integrated system to manage academic projects has led to considerable issues. These issues include delays in supervisor assignments, challenges in monitoring project advancements, obstacles in arranging consultations, and inadequate communication of dissertation-related updates. As a result, both students and faculty are burdened with administrative tasks that hinder academic effectiveness.

Prior research has pointed to similar challenges in dissertation and academic project management. Ivanović et al. (2013) discussed the importance of centralized systems to improve visibility and management of PhD dissertations, emphasizing the need for user-friendly platforms to streamline workflows. However, many existing systems, like the ones described by Ivanović (2013) concentrate mainly on the storage and retrieval of completed dissertations, overlooking earlier academic projects and multi-year supervision. Moreover, frameworks such as PADDIES (Project Administration and Dissertation Delivery Innovations and Education Support) address certain aspects of project management but fall short in providing comprehensive support for multi-year functionality (Pike & Towey, 2022).

The focus of this project is to develop a unified Project and Dissertation Management System that can handle academic projects throughout all years of study. Unlike current solutions that mainly focus on final-year dissertations, this system will also support projects from Year 1, Year 2, and following years, ensuring a comprehensive approach to managing academic projects. By automating processes, improving communication, and centralizing project oversight, this system will tackle the significant gaps found in existing solutions, creating a scalable model that could be applied in other departments and educational institutions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

At Ardhi University, the management of academic projects and dissertations which guided by CSM department faces significant inefficiencies due to reliance on manual processes. Tasks like assigning supervisors, tracking project progress, and scheduling consultations are carried out without a centralized system, which leads to disorganized workflows. Communication regarding project-related announcements, such as deadlines and evaluation criteria, often lacks consistency, leaving students unclear about critical aspects of their academic progress.

These challenges have created various difficulties. Delays in supervisor assignments, missed consultations, and uneven workloads among faculty members have become common issues. Miscommunication further disrupts students' ability to meet expectations and complete their projects effectively. Existing tools used in other institutions, such as those by Ivanović et al. (2013), focus on document storage or administrative tasks but fail to address the full lifecycle of academic projects. Additionally, frameworks like PADDIES concentrate on administrative efficiency but lack robust tools for tracking academic projects across all years of study (Pike & Towey, 2022).

To address these issues, this project proposes a Project and Dissertation Management System designed to meet the unique needs of CSM department. The system will simplify supervisor assignments, provide tools for monitoring progress, streamline consultation scheduling, and centralize project-related announcements. By tackling these challenges, the proposed system aims to improve academic project management by CSM department at Ardhi University and set a standard for efficient academic project administration in higher education institutions.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to develop a project and dissertation management system case of CSM department at Ardhi University.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The following are specific objectives:

- i. To identify and gather the requirements for project and dissertation management system
- ii. To design the project and dissertation management system
- iii. To implement the project and dissertation management system
- iv. To test and validate the project and dissertation management system

1.4 Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions will be answered:

- i. What are the key requirements for developing a Project and Dissertation Management System?
- ii. What design principles should be applied to create an effective Project and Dissertation Management System?
- iii. How can the identified requirements be implemented in the development of the system?
- iv. What methods can be used to test and validate the functionality and usability of the Project and Dissertation Management System?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The Student Project and Dissertation Management System offers several key benefits that directly address the challenges associated with managing academic projects and dissertations within the CSM Department at Ardhi University.

- i. **Improved Efficiency and Coordination:** The system automates essential processes such as supervisor assignment, consultation scheduling, project progress tracking, and

dissemination of announcements. This streamlines administrative operations and enhances coordination among students, supervisors, and academic staff.

- ii. **Enhanced Student Support:** By offering a centralized platform with timely updates and structured guidance, the system ensures consistent support for students throughout their academic projects. This contributes to higher-quality outputs and increased student satisfaction.
- iii. **Transparency and Fairness:** The system promotes equitable distribution of supervisory responsibilities and ensures clear communication of deadlines and evaluation criteria. This fosters transparency, minimizes miscommunication, and supports fair treatment for all stakeholders.
- iv. **Scalability and Adaptability:** Although initially developed for the CSM Department at Ardhi University, the system is designed to be adaptable and scalable, making it suitable for implementation across other departments and institutions with similar needs.
- v. **Preparation for Future Careers:** By encouraging effective project management and structured research practices, the system helps students develop key professional skills such as time management, critical thinking, research planning, and teamwork preparing them for future career challenges.

1.7 Structure of the report

The structure of the report involves the arrangement of chapters in the report that describe the various activities done to make the report complete and successful. The following is how chapters are categorized and a brief description of each chapter's content;

- i. Chapter One, Introduction. This chapter comprises the general initiation of the project (information background, statement of the problem, general objectives and specific objectives, research questions and limitation of the work).
- ii. Chapter Two, Literature review. It is all about the evaluation and critical analysis of the relevant read to the project topic. Here there is summarization and systemization of arguments made by another researcher.