

Evaluation of the School Clearance Process: Basis for the Development of a Web-Based Clearance Management System

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ABSTRACT

The manual school clearance process at Madridejos Community College (MCC) frequently leads to delays, incomplete signatures, confusing instructions, and dissatisfaction among students. This study evaluates the current clearance process to provide a basis for developing a web-based clearance management system. Using a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from students, instructors, and administrative personnel through online and pen-and-paper questionnaires. Results indicate a significant perception gap between stakeholders: students reported lower satisfaction levels and moderate agreement on issues such as missing signatures, confusing instructions, and unreasonable time requirements, while

instructors and administrative personnel rated the process more positively. Processing times revealed marked asymmetry, with students spending considerably more time per step and often requiring multiple visits, whereas staff completed tasks quickly and efficiently. These findings demonstrate that inefficiencies stem primarily from physical coordination demands and paper-based handling rather than review complexity. The predominant recommendation across all groups was the implementation of a web-based clearance management system featuring digital forms, electronic signatures, real-time tracking, and database integration.

Keywords: *School Clearance, Web-Based System, Process Evaluation, Student Satisfaction, Digital Management, Clearance Automation, Electronic Signature, Administrative Efficiency, Higher Education*

INTRODUCTION

School clearance is a necessary administrative step for students at the end of their studies, when transferring, or upon graduation. It involves getting signatures or approvals from different offices and instructors to verify fulfillment of obligations such as library clearances, financial dues, and academic requirements (Olatunde & Faboya, 2024). In many higher education institutions, including Madridejos Community College (MCC), this process remains largely manual and paper-based, leading to common challenges such as repeated visits, long waiting times, incomplete or missing signatures, document loss, and unclear instructions (Arefin, Choudhury, & Sharmin, 2020; Agbo-Ajala & Makinde, 2015). These inefficiencies are exacerbated during peak periods, like semester ends or graduation seasons, affecting both student convenience and institutional administrative workload.

Transitioning to digital solutions, particularly web-based clearance systems, offers significant improvements by automating form submission, enabling electronic approvals, providing real-time status tracking, and integrating with existing student databases to reduce errors and delays (Ekoro & Rajuno, 2024; Murtala, 2022). Digital clearance systems have been shown to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in higher education administration, ultimately improving the overall student experience (Han, 2024; Ibrahim & Sulaimon, 2021; Mwangi & Kamau, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the school clearance process at Madrideoj Community College (MCC). The study aims to identify the challenges and levels of satisfaction experienced by students, instructors, and administrative personnel to provide a basis for process improvement. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents according to the group:
 - a. Students
 - a.1. Sex;
 - a.2. Age;
 - a.3. Course / Program;
 - a.4. Year Level;
 - a.5. Length of experience in processing the clearance?
 - b. Instructor
 - b.1. Sex;
 - b.2. Age;
 - b.3. Highest Educational Qualification
 - b.4. Years of Teaching Experience
 - b.5. Department
 - c. Administrative Personnel
 - c.1. Sex;
 - c.2. Age;
 - c.3. Position;
 - c.4. Office / Department;
 - c.5. Years of Service at MCC
2. What is the total estimated time spent by students in:
 - 2.1 Obtaining hard copies of clearances;
 - 2.2 Filling in clearances;
 - 2.3 Securing signatures;
 - 2.4 Submission of clearances
3. What is the average time required for instructors to review and sign an individual student's clearance form?
4. What is the average time required for administrative personnel to review and finalize a single student's clearance form?
5. To what extent do respondents agree to the clearance issues:
 - 5.1. Missing or incomplete signatures on forms?
 - 5.2. Lost or misplaced documents during the process?
 - 5.3. Incorrect or incomplete information provided on the forms?
 - 5.4. Confusing instructions for completing the clearance?

6. What is the level of agreement regarding the satisfaction of the respondents in the clearance process, such as:
 - 6.1. Clear and understandable clearance requirements and instructions;
 - 6.2. Reasonable time required for each step;
 - 6.3. Convenient locations and hours for obtaining signatures;
 - 6.4. Overall clearance process
7. Proposed Improvements
Based on the feedback from the respondents, what specific suggestions can be implemented to improve the MCC clearance process?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a developmental-evaluative approach using a descriptive survey design. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires administered via two modes: (1) online questionnaires (Google Forms) and (2) traditional pen-and-paper surveys, distributed in February–March 2026.

Research Respondents

The study involved three respondent groups: (1) 52 students who were predominantly female, aged 20–24 years, enrolled in BSIT, BSHM, BSED, and BSBA programs, mostly in 2nd–4th year with multiple clearance experiences; (2) 20 instructors with balanced gender distribution, mostly 30–39 years old, holding Master's degrees, with 4–6 years of teaching experience across various departments; and (3) 6 administrative personnel with mixed gender, mostly 30–39 years old, holding positions such as office staff, registrar, library, guidance, and deans.

Data Collection

Three tailored questionnaires were used: (1) one for students, focusing on personal experiences, time estimates, issues encountered, satisfaction, and suggestions; (2) one for instructors, covering time to review/sign forms, perceived issues, and satisfaction; and (3) one for administrative personnel, addressing time to finalize clearances, issues, and satisfaction. All questionnaires were distributed in both digital (Google Forms) and pen-and-paper formats to accommodate respondent preferences and accessibility. All Likert-scale items used a 5-point response format (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

Demographic data and time estimates were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Likert items were analyzed via mean scores, with ranges reported for grouped sub-items (interpretation scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very High, 3.41–4.20 = High, etc.). Open-ended suggestions underwent thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

Figure 1: *Student's Sex*

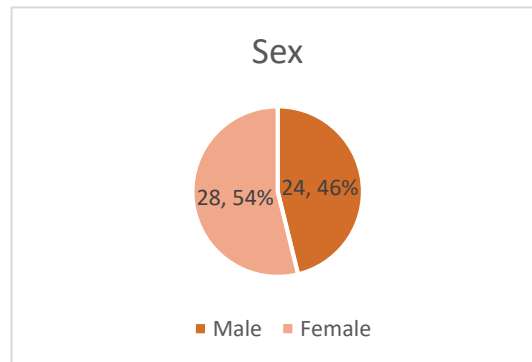


Figure 1 shows the sex distribution of the student respondents. Male students from the majority, comprising 52.85% (28 students), while female students account for 46.15% (24 students) out of a total of 52 respondents. This indicates a slightly higher representation of males in the sample.

Figure 2: *Student's Age*

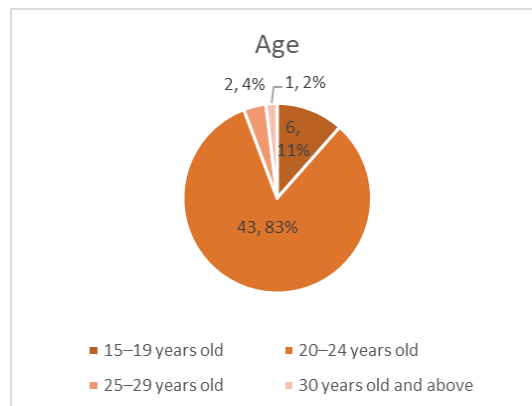


Figure 2 shows the age distribution of the student respondents. The vast majority are in the 20–24 years old category, comprising 83% (43 students), followed by the 15–19 years old group at 11% (6 students). A small number fall in the 25–29 years old range at 4% (2 students), and only 2% (1 student) are 30 years old and above.

Figure 3: Student's Year Level

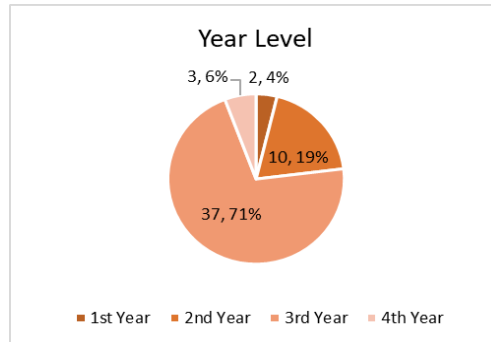


Figure 3 shows the year level distribution of the student respondents. The largest group consists of 3rd Year students, comprising 71% (37 students), followed by 2nd Year students at 19% (10 students). A smaller proportion are 4th Year students at 6% (3 students), and only 4% (2 students) are in 1st Year.

Figure 4: Student's Program

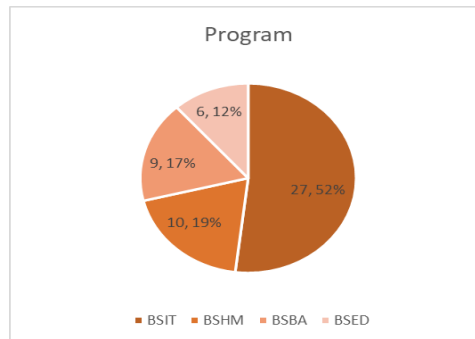


Figure 4 shows the program distribution of the student respondents. The largest group is from BSIT (Bachelor of Science in Information Technology), comprising 52% (27 students), followed by BSHM (Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management) at 19% (10 students). BSBA (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) accounts for 17% (9 students), while BSED (Bachelor of Secondary Education) has the smallest share at 12% (6 students).

Figure 5: Number of times students have completed clearance

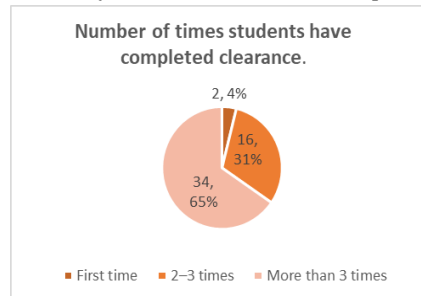


Figure 5 shows the number of times the student respondents have completed the clearance process. The majority, 65% (34 students), are completing it for more than 3 times. This is followed by 31% (16 students) who have completed it 2-3 times, while a small portion, 4% (2 students), have done it for the first time.

Figure 6: *Instructor's Sex*

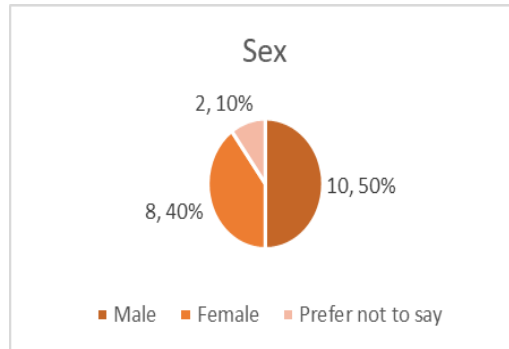


Figure 6 shows the sex distribution of the instructor respondents. The majority are Male, comprising 50% (10 instructors), followed by Female at 40% (8 instructors). A small portion, 10% (2 instructors), Prefer not to say.

Figure 7: *Instructor's Age*

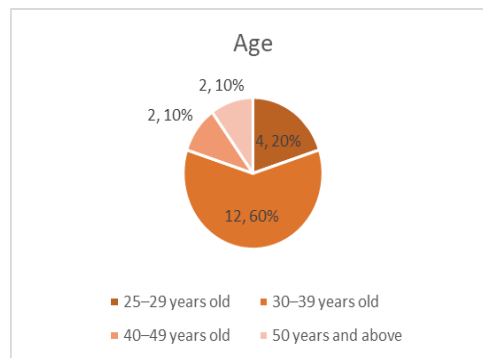


Figure 7 shows the age distribution of the instructor respondents. The largest group is in the 30-39 years old category, comprising 60% (12 instructors), followed by the 25-29 years old group at 20% (4 instructors). A smaller portion are 30-39 years old at 10% (2 instructors), and another 10% (2 instructors) are 50 years old and above.

Figure 8: *Instructor's Department/Program*

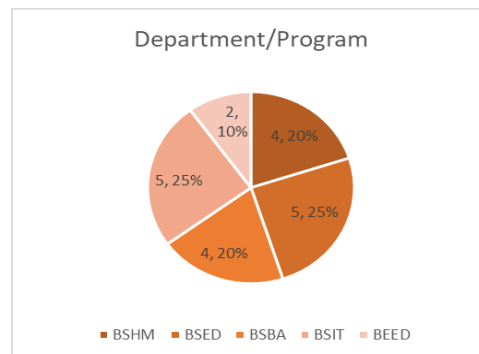


Figure 8 shows the distribution of instructor respondents by department/program: BSBA and BEED each at 25% (5 instructors), BSED and BSIT at 20% each (4 instructors), and BSHM at 10% (2 instructors). This indicates that half of the respondents (10 instructors) are from business (BSBA) and elementary

education (BEED), with secondary education and IT also well-represented, while hospitality management (BSHM) is significantly underrepresented.

Figure 9: *Instructor's Educational Qualification*

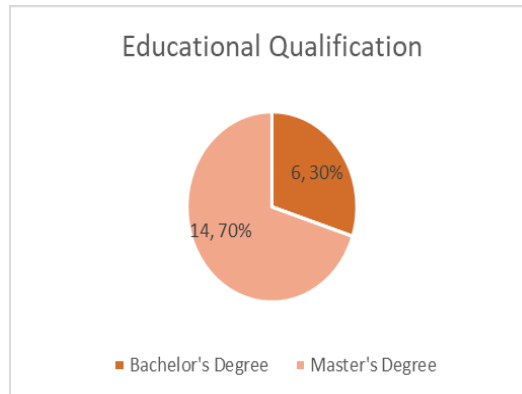


Figure 9 shows the distribution of instructor respondents by educational qualification: Master's Degree holders comprise the largest share at 70% (14 instructors), while Bachelor's Degree holders account for 30% (6 instructors).

Figure 10: *Instructor's Years of Teaching Experience*

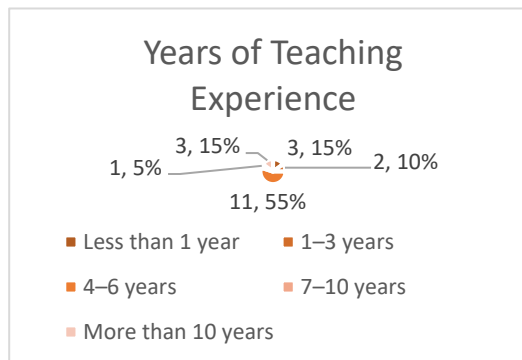


Figure 10 shows the distribution of instructor respondents by years of teaching experience. In this figure, those with 4–6 years of experience comprise the largest share at 55% (11 instructors). This is followed by instructors with less than 1 year and more than 10 years of experience, each accounting for 15% (3 instructors). Meanwhile, instructors with 1–3 years of experience represent 10% (2 instructors), and those with 7–10 years have the smallest share at 5% (1 instructor).

Figure 11: *Administrative Sex*

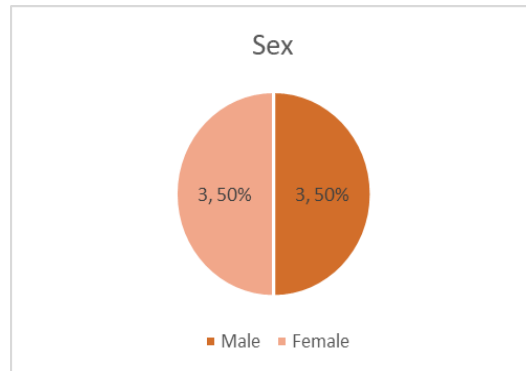


Figure 11 shows the distribution of administrative personnel by sex: Male and female personnel each comprise an equal share at 50% (3 individuals per group).

Figure 12: *Administrative Age*

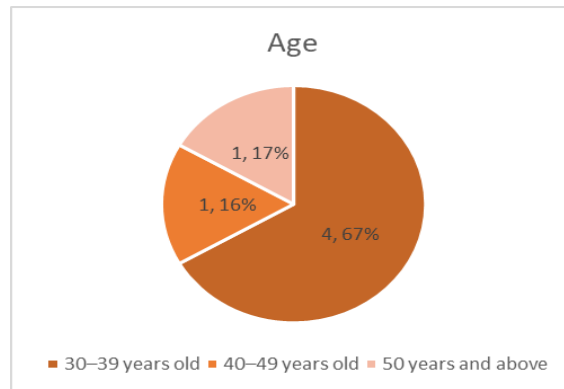


Figure 12 shows the distribution of administrative personnel by age: personnel aged 30–39 years old comprise the largest share at 67% (4 individuals), while those in the 40–49 years old and 50 years and above brackets each account for roughly 16–17% (1 individual each).

Figure 13: *Administrative Position*

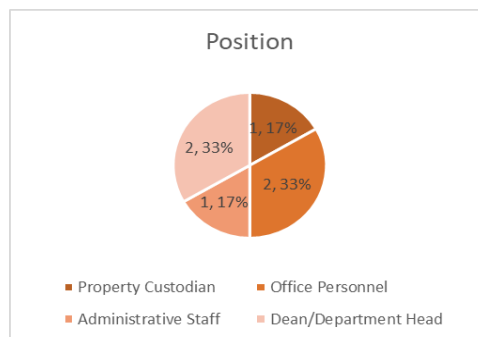


Figure 13 shows the distribution of administrative personnel by position: Office Personnel and Dean/Department Heads comprise the largest shares at 33% each (2 individuals per category), while Property Custodians and Administrative Staff each account for 17% (1 individual per category).

Figure 14: *Administrative Department/Program*

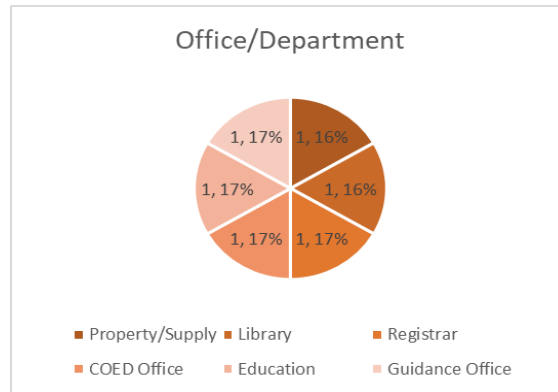


Figure 14 shows the distribution of administrative personnel by office or department: the respondents are evenly distributed across the Property/Supply, Library, Registrar, COED Office, Education, and Guidance Office departments, with each representing approximately 16–17% (1 individual per department) of the total.

Time Estimates

Figure 15: *Obtaining the clearance form*

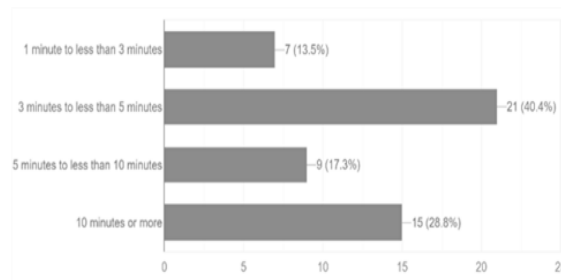


Figure 15 shows the distribution of time spent by students in obtaining the clearance form: those who spent 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes comprise the largest share at 40.4% (21 respondents), followed by those who spent 10 minutes or more at 28.8% (15 respondents). Meanwhile, 17.3% (9 respondents) spent 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes, and the remaining 13.5% (7 respondents) spent 1 minute to less than 3 minutes.

Figure 16: *Filling out the clearance form*

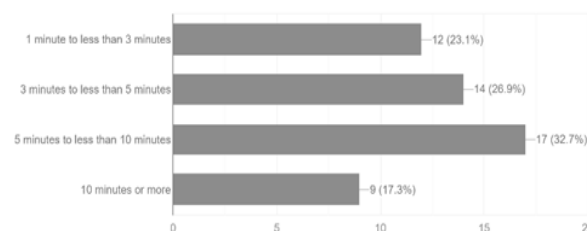


Figure 16 shows the distribution of students by the time taken for filling out the clearance form: those taking 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes comprise the largest share at 32.7% (17 respondents), while 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes account for 26.9% (14 respondents), followed by 1 minute to less than 3 minutes at 23.1% (12 respondents), and 10 minutes or more at 17.3% (9 respondents).

Figure 17: *Getting signatures from instructors/advisors*

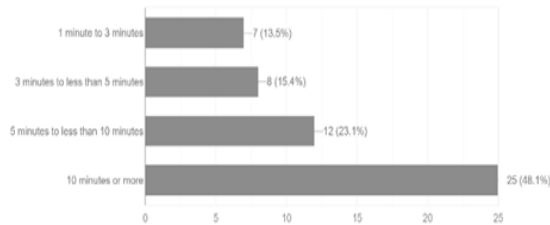


Figure 17 shows the distribution of students by the time taken for getting signatures from instructors/advisors: those taking 10 minutes or more comprise the largest share at 48.1% (25 respondents), while 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes account for 23.1% (12 respondents), followed by 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes at 15.4% (8 respondents), and 1 minute to 3 minutes at 13.5% (7 respondents).

Figure 18: *Submitting the form to the administrative office for final clearance*

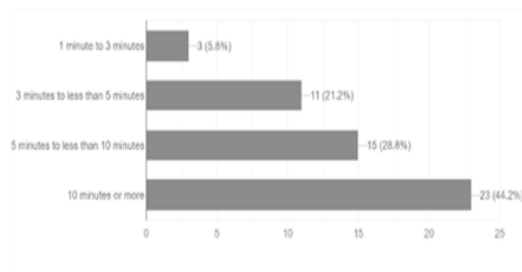


Figure 18 shows the distribution of students by the time taken for submitting the form to the administrative office for final clearance: those taking 10 minutes or more comprise the largest share at 44.2% (23 respondents), followed by 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes at 28.8% (15 respondents), 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes at 21.2% (11 respondents), and 1 minute to 3 minutes at 5.8% (3 respondents).

Figure 19: *Average time to review/ sign one student's clearance form*

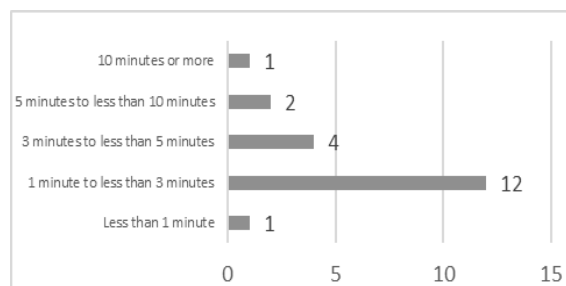


Figure 19 shows the distribution of instructor by the average time taken to review or sign one student's clearance form: those taking 1 minute to less than 3 minutes comprise the largest share at 60% (12 respondents), followed by 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes at 20% (4 respondents), and 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes at 10% (2 respondents). Both the Less than 1 minute and 10 minutes or more categories each account for 5% (1 respondent each).

Figure 20: Average time to review/finalize one student's clearance form

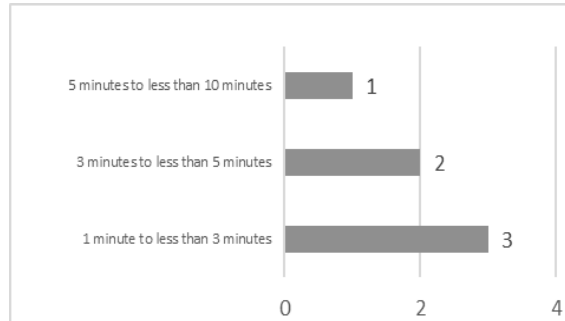


Figure 20 shows the distribution of administrative personnel by the average time taken to review or finalize one student's clearance form: those taking 1 minute to less than 3 minutes comprise the largest share at 50% (3 individuals), followed by 3 minutes to less than 5 minutes at 33.3% (2 individuals), and 5 minutes to less than 10 minutes at 16.7% (1 individual).

Agreement on Clearance Issues

Table 1. Student level of agreement on clearance issues

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Missing or incomplete signature on forms.	3.43	Agree
2. Lost or misplaced documents during the process.	2.7	Slightly Disagree
3. Incorrect or incomplete information provided on the forms.	2.98	Slightly Disagree
4. Confusing instructions for completing the clearance.	3.05	Slightly Disagree
Weighted Mean	3.04	Slightly Disagree

Table 1 Illustrates students agree that missing signatures are a problem, but disagree that documents get lost, information is incorrect, or instructions are confusing. Overall, they slightly disagree that these issues are serious (WM = 3.04).

Table 2. Instructor level of agreement on clearance Issues

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Missing or incomplete signatures on the clearance from.	3.6	Agree
2. Incorrect or incomplete information provided on the forms.	3.5	Agree
3. Confusing instructions for completing the clearance process.	3.42	Agree
4. The current clearance system and its support for an organized and efficient signing process.	3.35	Slightly Disagree
Weighted Mean	3.47	Agree

Table 2 illustrates that instructors agree that signatures, information, and instructions are problematic. However, they slightly disagree that the current system is organized and efficient. Overall, they agree that the process works well (WM = 3.47).

Table 3. *Administrative level of agreement on clearance issues*

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Missing or incomplete signatures on forms.	3.83	Agree
2. Incorrect or incomplete provided on the forms.	3.33	Slightly Disagree
3. Confusing instructions for completing the clearance.	2.95	Slightly Disagree
4. The existing clearance workflow is structures and supports proper processing.	3.39	Slightly Disagree
Weighted Mean	3.38	Slightly Disagree

Table 3 illustrates that the administrative personnel agree that missing or incomplete signatures on forms are a problem, but slightly disagree that incorrect information, confusing instructions, and issues in the clearance workflow are serious concerns, with an overall weighted mean of 3.38 interpreted as Slightly Disagree.

Satisfaction Levels

Table 4. *Students level of satisfaction on clearance process*

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Clear and understandable clearance requirements and instructions.	3.58	Agree
2. Reasonable time required for each step.	2.98	Slightly Disagree
3. Convenient locations and hours for obtaining signatures.	2.98	Slightly Disagree
4. Overall Clearance Process.	3.03	Slightly Disagree
Weighted Mean	3.14	Slightly Disagree

Table 4 Illustrates students agree that requirements are clear but disagree that time is reasonable and locations are convenient. Overall, they are slightly dissatisfied with the process (WM = 3.14).

Table 5. *Instructor level of satisfaction on clearance process*

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Clear and understandable clearance requirements and instructions.	3.48	Agree
2. Reasonable time required for each step of the clearance process.	3.38	Slightly Disagree
3. Convenient locations and hours for obtaining signatures.	3.37	Slightly Disagree
4. Overall clearance process.	3.04	Slightly Disagree
Weighted Mean	3.32	Slightly Disagree

Table 5 Illustrates that instructors agree that requirements are clear, but slightly disagree that time is reasonable, locations are convenient, and the overall process works well. Overall, they are slightly dissatisfied (WM = 3.32).

Table 6. *Administrative personnel level of satisfaction on clearance process*

Statement	Mean	Interpretation
1. Clear and understandable clearance requirements and instructions.	3.94	Agree
2. Reasonable time required for each step.	3.83	Agree
3. Convenient locations and hours for obtaining signatures.	4.28	Strongly Agree
4. Overall clearance process.	3.83	Agree
Weighted Mean	3.97	Agree

Table 4 shows that respondents agree that the clearance process is generally efficient, with convenient locations and hours for obtaining signatures receiving the highest rating (4.28, Strongly Agree), resulting in an overall weighted mean of 3.97 interpreted as Agree.

DISCUSSION

The results show that different stakeholder groups view the clearance process very differently because of their positions in the workflow. Students experience the process mainly as recipients, focused on completing requirements and collecting signatures. They notice problems like missing signatures, long waiting times, and moving between multiple offices. Because of this, they tend to focus on convenience and time issues rather than deeper structural problems. Instructors are in the middle, balancing clearance tasks with their teaching responsibilities. They see documentation errors and unclear instructions more often and are moderately aware of inefficiencies, but their main concern is how the process affects their workload.

Administrators, who manage the process, usually see it positively. Their familiarity with the workflow, offices, and rules allows them to handle tasks efficiently, so what students see as obstacles often seem routine to them. This difference in perspective matches research showing that people who design or manage processes often underestimate how difficult they are for new users. These differences are worsened by the manual, multi-step structure of the process. Students must go to several offices, wait in line, coordinate schedules, and follow up multiple times. Each step—getting forms, filling them out, collecting signatures, and submitting them—takes time, often stretching over days or weeks. Instructors and administrators only handle small parts of the process, so it feels much faster and simpler to them.

Students' frequent suggestion of digital solutions directly addresses these problems. Web-based systems with electronic forms, digital signatures, real-time progress tracking, automated checks, and notifications can remove the need for physical travel, reduce errors, and make the process more transparent. Research from other institutions shows that such digital systems reduce processing time, minimize mistakes, lower administrative burden, and improve satisfaction for everyone involved.

CONCLUSION

The manual clearance process at Madridejos Community College remains functional but inefficient, particularly from the students' perspective. Students face multiple office visits, long waits, and complex steps for completing requirements, while instructors and administrators encounter only parts of the workflow, creating a clear perception gap. Implementing digital solutions—such as online forms, electronic signatures, real-time tracking, and automated notifications—can streamline the process, reduce errors, and improve accessibility for all stakeholders. Therefore, this study provides strong empirical support for the development of a web-based clearance management system to enhance efficiency, clarity, and user satisfaction in higher education administrative processes.

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