Influences on International Students' Selection of a Regional U.S. Institution: A Descriptive Study

Yazmin Rodriguez

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in College Student Affairs at Eastern Illinois University.

Find out more about the program.

Recommended Citation
Masters Theses. 3599.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3599
Thesis Maintenance and Reproduction Certificate

FOR: Graduate Candidates Completing Theses in Partial Fulfillment of the Degree
Graduate Faculty Advisors Directing the Theses

RE: Preservation, Reproduction, and Distribution of Thesis Research

Preserving, reproducing, and distributing thesis research is an important part of Booth Library's responsibility to provide access to scholarship. In order to further this goal, Booth Library makes all graduate theses completed as part of a degree program at Eastern Illinois University available for personal study, research, and other not-for-profit educational purposes. Under 17 U.S.C. § 108, the library may reproduce and distribute a copy without infringing on copyright; however, professional courtesy dictates that permission be requested from the author before doing so.

Your signatures affirm the following:

- The graduate candidate is the author of this thesis.
- The graduate candidate retains the copyright and intellectual property rights associated with the original research, creative activity, and intellectual or artistic content of the thesis.
- The graduate candidate certifies her/his compliance with federal copyright law (Title 17 of the U.S. Code) and her/his right to authorize reproduction and distribution of all copyrighted materials included in this thesis.
- The graduate candidate in consultation with the faculty advisor grants Booth Library the nonexclusive, perpetual right to make copies of the thesis freely and publicly available without restriction, by means of any current or successive technology, including but not limited to photocopying, microfilm, digitization, or internet.
- The graduate candidate acknowledges that by depositing her/his thesis with Booth Library, her/his work is available for viewing by the public and may be borrowed through the library’s circulation and interlibrary loan departments, or accessed electronically. The graduate candidate acknowledges this policy by indicating in the following manner:
  
  X Yes, I wish to make accessible this thesis for viewing by the public
  
  _____ No, I wish to quarantine the thesis temporarily and have included the Thesis Withholding Request Form

- The graduate candidate waives the confidentiality provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) with respect to the contents of the thesis and with respect to information concerning authorship of the thesis, including name and status as a student at Eastern Illinois University. I have conferred with my graduate faculty advisor. My signature below indicates that I have read and agree with the above statements, and hereby give my permission to allow Booth Library to reproduce and distribute my thesis. My adviser’s signature indicates concurrence to reproduce and distribute the thesis.

Catherine Polydore

Printed Name

05/14/18

Date

Please submit in duplicate.
Influences on International Students' Selection of a Regional
U.S. Institution: A Descriptive Study

(TITLE)

BY
Yazmin Rodriguez

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
Master of Science in College Student Affairs
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2018
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

DATE
DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL CHAIR
OR CHAIR'S DESIGNEE

DATE

DATE
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER

DATE

DATE
THESIS COMMITTEE MEMBER
ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors influencing international students’ election to study in the United States in general and at a regional four-year institution, specifically. Furthermore, it was designed to gather descriptive information about the barriers and challenges they face. A triangulation mixed methods approach was utilized based on a previously described push-pull model. The findings indicated that Availability of scholarships or work, cost and fees, and Visa processing and visa cost are the most difficult factors that international students face when making the decision to study in the U.S. This corresponded well with the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions, in which students identified visa and immigration policies, standardized tests, and financial challenges as the most common challenges they had to face. In addition, Family, safety, and recognition of quality were found as being the significant/important influences on international students’ decision to study in the U.S. This corresponded well with the qualitative responses in which students identified Valuable and Flexible Education, Global exposure and culture, Exposure to field and research, and Opportunities as why they wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else. With regards to the institution specifically, students identified Cost and fees, Academics, Safety, and Affordability, among others as why they chose to attend EIU. Recommendations for college student affairs professional and the office of International Student and Scholars are also presented.

Keywords: International students, college selection, influences, push-pull model
DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this thesis to all international students studying in the United States. With everything going on in the world, specifically in the U.S. such as September 11 attacks and the recent presidential election of Donald Trump, many things have changed for you and your access to higher education in the U.S. I dedicate this to you because it is my hope that my study will assist higher education administrators to understand your challenges and the reasons you choose to study in the U.S. to better assist you and advocate for you. I sympathize with you and support you to give you more opportunities for your education.

Secondly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to all of my family members that emigrated from Mexico including my father, my grandparents, my aunts and uncles, and many other people in my life. I am so thankful for all of your sacrifices and for everything that you did to give yourself more opportunities and for the opportunities you have given me. Although you did not come specifically to the U.S. for your higher education I learned from my study the barriers and challenges you experienced and had to fight through to get to where you are today. You all truly inspire me and make this country a better place. The U.S. would not be the country it is without the diverse set of cultures and perspective that people bring, I thank all of you and dedicate my work to you.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The journey of writing this thesis was truly a rewarding process. I was challenged and supported in various ways, and I proved to myself that I had the ability to accomplish what I once thought was impossible. These accomplishments would not have been possible without the help of my many mentors, family members, friends, and my loving boyfriend.

First and foremost, words cannot express how grateful I am to have had a supportive thesis committee. Their continued support and encouragement throughout my thesis process was truly appreciated: Dr. Polydore, my thesis advisor, Dean Hendrickson, and Dr. Olausen. The wisdom shared during individual meetings will always be treasured. I offer my sincere gratitude for all of your time and support.

Thank you to my family who has supported me the most throughout this thesis journey and graduate school. You have provided so much love and support during the last six years as I pursued both my bachelor's degree and master's degree at Eastern Illinois University. You provided the foundation for my life and continue to inspire me. Thank you for providing me the strength and optimism during the hard times. I dedicate this thesis to all of you, for your sacrifices and for everything that you did to give yourself more opportunities and for the opportunities you have given me. Additionally, thank you to my friends and cohort who have motivated me through their academic and professional accomplishments. I could not have done it without you.

Finally, to my loving best friend, Vince Torres: I extend my deepest appreciation. Your encouragement when times were tough helped me persevere. Your advice and mentorship provided me with the support to accomplish my goal to complete my master's
degree. I would not be where I am without your love and support. I can't wait to see all the
great things we will accomplish together.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .......................................................................................................................... vii  

CHAPTER I .................................................................................................................................1  
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 1  
Purpose of the Study ................................................................................................................. 4  
Research Questions ................................................................................................................. 4  
Significance of the Study .......................................................................................................... 5  
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study .............................................................................. 6  
Definitions of Terms ............................................................................................................... 7  
Summary .................................................................................................................................. 8  

CHAPTER II ...............................................................................................................................10  
Review of the Literature .......................................................................................................... 10  
History of International Education in the U.S. ...................................................................... 10  
Motivations to Study in the U.S. ............................................................................................. 13  
Barriers and Challenges to International Education in the United States ......................... 16  
International Education at Eastern Illinois University ......................................................... 18  
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework .................................................................................. 26  
Research Questions ................................................................................................................. 27  
Summary .................................................................................................................................. 27  

CHAPTER III .............................................................................................................................29  
Methods ....................................................................................................................................... 29  
Design of Study ......................................................................................................................... 29  
Participants ................................................................................................................................ 30  
Research Site ............................................................................................................................ 30  
Instruments ................................................................................................................................. 31  
Data Collection .......................................................................................................................... 32  
Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................. 33  
Treatment of Data ..................................................................................................................... 35  
Summary ..................................................................................................................................... 35  

CHAPTER IV ................................................................................................................................36
Results and Findings ................................................................. 36
  Quantitative Findings ............................................................. 36
  Qualitative Findings ............................................................... 39
  Summary .............................................................................. 63
CHAPTER V ..................................................................................... 68
Discussion and Conclusion ...................................................... 68
  Suggestions for Future Research .......................................... 75
  Recommendations for the Office of International Students and Scholars ........... 79
  Limitations ........................................................................... 80
  Conclusion ............................................................................ 81
Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire ............................................ 92
Appendix B: Informed Consent ................................................... 96
Appendix C: IRB Approval ............................................................ 97
List of Tables

Table # | Page #
--- | ---
4.1: Percentages of Responses of International Students to Identified Challenges (N = 127) | 377
4.2: Percentages of Responses of International Students to Role Played in Coming to the U.S. (N = 126) | Error! Bookmark not defined.8
4.3: Percentages of Responses of International Students to Role Played in Coming to EIU (N = 126) | Error! Bookmark not defined.9
4.4: Summary of Themes Regarding International Student for Wanting to Study in U.S. | Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.5: Summary of Themes Regarding International Student Challenges | Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.6: Summary of Themes Regarding how International Student Heard about EIU | 52
4.7: Summary of Themes Regarding International Students Reason for Attending | Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER I

Introduction

The population of international students studying in the United States’ higher education institutions has experienced remarkable growth in recent years. Between 1975 and 2015, the number of students studying outside of their own home countries has increased from 800,000 students to 4.5 million (Hoover, 2015). In 1995 the overall world market for international education was estimated to reach 4.9 million students by 2025 (Blight, 1995), but that number was later revised to 7 million in 2015 (Hoover, 2015). According to the Institute of International Education’s (IIE) Open Doors Data (2016), in 2000-2001 there were 547,867 international students studying in the U.S. By 2015-2016, that number had risen to 1,043,839, a 7% increase to the previous year.

The U.S. higher education system outperforms others from across the world with the exceedingly diverse options there are for international students to choose from (Education USA, 2016). Whether it is between large public institutions to small private ones, to different geographical locations ranging from urban, rural, and suburban there are options for all international students to find where they fit best (Education USA, 2016). According to the NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NASFA) economic analysis of the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Institute of International Education for the 2015-2016 academic year, benefits from international students to the state of Illinois included a $1.6 billion financial contribution, 50,327 jobs supported, and 50,327 international students enrolled in states’ higher education institutions (NAFSA, 2016). In addition, international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities fund $32.8 billion, and support 400,812 jobs to the U.S.
economy. According to NAFSA, it was found that, “For every seven international
students enrolled, three U.S. jobs are created and supported by spending occurring in the
higher education, accommodation, dining, retail, transportation, telecommunications and
health insurance sectors (NAFSA, 2016, “Economic Analysis for Academic Year 2013-
2014,” para. 2).”

This internationalization, as it has become known, provides potential benefits at
multiple levels. In an era of tightening funds to higher education institutions by the state
and federal government, many are seeing internationalization as a viable means of
keeping their doors open (Bound, Braga, Khanna, & Turner, 2016; Redden, 2017). The
importance of internationalization is to enhance the students at U.S. institutions with
outside experiences and perspectives of international students (Education USA, 2016).
American and international students develop the opportunity to learn from one another.
Internationalizing brings a bigger expansion of the outside world to America (Education
USA, 2016). Former Secretary of State John Kerry (as cited by Education USA, 2016)
contributed to this view:

The international students who learn in our classrooms enrich our campuses and
our country. And when the 765,000 international students who studied in the
United States last year [2015] return home, the bonds that they have built here and
the friendships that they have forged will last a lifetime.

International education produces the advancements of learning, acceptance, and
respect of different people from various cultures and backgrounds. International
education also raises peace, safety, and happiness amongst peoples from all over the
world (NAFSA, 2016). Aside from these advancements, the growth in international
students in 2015 showed the positive influences that they also bring economically to this nation. During the 2015-2016 academic year, international students enrolled in higher education in the U.S. contributed $32.8 billion and supported over 400,000 occupations to the U.S. economy (NAFSA, 2016). The importance of internationalizing is significant especially from the increase in population and the benefits to this nation.

One institution that views internationalization as a viable option to counteracting its decreasing enrollment trends is Eastern Illinois University (EIU). Although no record could be obtained on when the first international student was admitted to EIU, the earliest report indicates that there was at least one international student at EIU as early as the year 1930 (Teachers College News, 1930, p.1). In 2005, 141 international students were enrolled; by fall 2017, that number had grown to 380. Undoubtedly, students from outside the U.S. are increasingly electing to leave their home country in pursuit of an American degree.

Many recent studies have focused on the adjustment impacts of the transitions of international students (Jindal-Snape & Rienties, 2016; Kashima & Sadewo, 2016; Schartner & Young, 2016), however few have looked at why students choose to study outside of their home country (Jogaratnam, Kim, & Noh, 2006; Kemp, Mazzarol & Savery, 1997; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002), how their decision developed, and the barriers and challenges that they face before leaving their home country (e.g. Agarwal & Winkler, 1985; Appelbaum, Gebbie, Han, and Stocking, 2015). For example, Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found that students choose to study overseas because of growth in economic and social statuses. Although there is some research on international students' reasons for choosing to study in the United States, are these the reasons why students choose to study
at EIU? What were some of the challenges they faced when preparing to come to the United States to study? How did they first hear about EIU? Why did they choose EIU instead of another university? These are some of the questions that this study resolved.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain increased understanding of the influences of international students as related to their selection to study in the U.S. in general, and Eastern Illinois University specifically. These influences were observed at Eastern Illinois University, a Regional U.S. institution. Regional institutions have seen an increase in enrollment in recent years from the offer of full range undergraduate programs and some master’s programs and doctoral programs (U.S. News, 2017). In this descriptive study, influences affecting the selection process of international students were defined as an effect on the character, development, or behavior based on push-pull factors of international students. This was done through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, through a triangulation mixed methods study. A triangulation mixed methods study is “a study in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously and used to validate and clarify findings” (Fraenkel, Hyun, & Wallen, 2012, p. G-9). This allows the researcher access to the benefits of both of the traditional modes of empirical inquiry.

**Research Questions**

There is no question that the population of international students at U.S. institutions is growing. This trend is also true of Eastern Illinois University. This study sought to understand “why do international students choose to study in the U.S.?” and
more specifically why study at EIU? To get to these general questions, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What barriers and challenges do international students face when making the decision to study in the U.S.?
2. What factors influence international students’ decision to study in the U.S.?
3. What factors influenced international students’ decision to study at EIU?

Significance of the Study

As institutions continue to expand their international recruiting (Fliegler, 2014), they could benefit from an increased understanding of why students elect to study in the U.S. and how that process develops. Furthermore, an understanding of why students choose to study at their institution, the factors that influence their decision making, would provide good insight, and can be used as part of a multilayered approach to better meet the needs of this population of students. An increased understanding of the decision-making process of international students can provide higher education administrators important insights on ways to improve the support of these students. It is significant to U.S. higher education administrators because countries are looking to increase populations of international students to study in their countries, therefore competing with the U.S. (Hemsley-Brown, 2012). There is increasing competition in the late 20th century globalization. Higher education internationalization continues to face many challenges beginning from the presidential election of Donald Trump. One of the first acts of the new Trump Administration was the attempted ban of travelers from other countries, predominantly from Muslim-majority countries. This created catastrophe among the U.S.
and specifically from higher education institutions in working with their international students from the banned countries (Zeleza, 2017).

In the United States, higher education has grown greatly from regional American students to national producing increases of international students on its campuses. There has been a push about the importance of recruiting these individuals for their higher tuition rates that contribute resources for the educational system (Chatfield & Lee, 2015). Aside from benefitting their institution, international students also have a prominent influence in the academic surroundings in America. This also brings diversity and knowledge of the global environment to the students in their classrooms (Wong, 2005). Finding the influences for why they make their decisions improves the continuation of increases of international students in the United States.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

**Delimitations.** Given the nature of the research, few limitations were identified on the study with regards to time and sample. The target population was all international students enrolled at Eastern Illinois University in the fall 2017 semester. There are a number of conditions set by the federal government that students have to meet in order to maintain legal student status. Typically this means that students were full-time enrolled. In addition, students had to be 18 years or older. The researcher placed no other limitations on who could participate.

**Limitations.** Many limitations restricted the progression and threatened the validity of the study. One limitation was the access to participants. It was difficult to have multiple participants fill out the survey when it was sent to them via email from the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). A second limitation was that the
researcher was dependent on a staff member from the OISS to send out the initial survey, and subsequent reminders. Though this is being identified as a potential limitation, it is not possible to ascertain how this impacted the study, given that on the flip side, international students are more familiar with that staff member, and many had developed a trusting relationship with her, and therefore were probably more likely to respond to an email from her. A third limitation was timing. The survey was administered on September 11, 2017. This could have been a busy time in the participants' lives that it delayed them from taking the survey.

**Definitions of Terms**

**Barriers.** An obstacle or circumstance, such as obtaining a visa or Form I-20, that prevents international students from moving along or gaining access to move forward to study in the United States (Urias & Yeakey, 2008).

**Challenges.** Some of the systematic or nonsystematic issues that may arise that impede international students from arriving or adjusting to the United States. Examples include financial arrangement, English proficiency, health care, home stay accommodations, etc. (Amat, Ishak, Mahmud, & Rahman, 2010).

**Decision-making.** “The thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options” (Business Dictionary, 2016).

**Influence.** “The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something, or the effect itself” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2017).
**Internationalization.** “The conscious effort to integrate and infuse international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the philosophy of postsecondary education” (NAFSA, 2016, “Internationalization,” para. 1).

**International recruitment.** The costly, competitive, and difficult work to increase enrollment rates of international students in higher education with strategic and deliberate actions (Chang & Choudaha, 2012).

**International student.** An individual “who temporarily resides in a country other than their country of citizenship or permanent residence to receive education” (Poyrazli, 2001, p.5).

**International student flow.** A form of communication that describes how countries interact and communicate with one another (Barnett & Chen, 2000).

**Motivation.** “The state or condition of being motivated or having a strong reason to act or accomplish something” (Dictionary.com, 2016).

**Summary**

The objective of this study was to understand what influenced international students’ choice to pursue an advanced degree in the United States in general and at Eastern Illinois University, more specifically. Chapter one includes the introduction, the purpose of the study, the research questions that guided the study, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, and the definitions of terms. Chapter two will have a review of the literature with an overview of the history of international education in the U.S., motivations of international students to study in the U.S., barriers and challenges affecting their decisions, and the history of international education at Eastern Illinois.
University. The Push-pull model and cultural capital will be explained as frameworks of understanding how and why international students make decisions to study in the U.S.
CHAPTER II
Review of the Literature

This chapter explores current research on internationalization, international education with a focus on the United States, and motivations to study in the U.S., especially where it intersects international education. It is organized chronologically, as well as from the general to the specific. It begins with information about the historical foundation of international education in the U.S. and at Eastern Illinois University. While also looking at the motivations international students have for studying in the U.S., barriers and challenges that impact their decision process, and the history of international education at Eastern Illinois University. Lastly, a detailed explanation of the Push-pull model and cultural capital will be explained to understand from a theoretical perspective how international students make decisions.

History of International Education in the U.S.

Though there is very little literature on the historical roots of internationalization of higher education (De Wit, 2009), there is no denying that international education has brought substantial influences to the U.S. from the building of our relationships with countries around the world to the significant impacts international students have brought to its shores (Dall’Alba & Sidhu, 2012). From the end of the Renaissance to the beginning of the 20th century, international academic attention became most important for academically gifted students making them the first student groups to be a part of the internationalization process. This allowed these qualified intelligent foreign students to travel in small groups to the most prestigious places to learn in the world. The main goal
of higher education at that time was to advance national identity rather than to spread worldwide knowledge (De Wit, 2009).

Although little research exists on internationalization or international education in the early 1900s, there was a certain shift that created more international collaboration and exchange in higher education, even before World War II (De Wit, 2009). This shift occurred in 1919 at the same time the Institute of International Education (IIE) was created in the U.S. from the result of World War I. The IIE was established by three Nobel Peace Prize winners consisting of Stephen Duggan Sr. who was a Professor of Political Science at the College of the City of New York and IIE's first President; Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University at the time; and Elihu Root, the former Secretary of State. Their reason for forming IIE was because they believed that greater understanding between nations was needed and that this would create long lasting peace. The founders knew that international education exchange would begin that lasting peace and form a foundation for development of understanding between nations (Institute of International Education, 2016). The creation of this council and others around the globe showed developing attention towards cooperation and exchange in international education (De Wit, 2009). In 1921 the U.S. Congress Legislation started to ban ways of entry to international students (Institute of International Education, 2016). Advocating for foreign students, the IIE went against the U.S. Legislation and lobbied for new student visas. In addition, they sent questionnaires to U.S. institutions in an effort to standardize the assessment of incoming international students. The IIE even proceeded to assist 300 deserted Russian students gain
employment or scholarships to continue their studies in the U.S. (Institute of International Education, 2016).

After World War II, while Europe was continuing to recuperate from the two world wars, international education exchange and cooperation expanded primarily in the U.S. (De Wit, 2009). By the time the war was over, higher education and academics were completely transformed. As Goodwin and Nacht (1991) stated,

Views of the world in US higher education were transformed almost overnight by the World War II. From a cultural colony the nation was changed, at least in its own eyes, into the metropolis; from the periphery it moved triumphantly to the center (p. 4-5).

Suddenly there were political explanations to encourage international education to gain knowledge and expand domains of influence from different parts of the world (De Wit, 2009). Developing countries in the 1960s and 1970s oddly became supporters of international academic exchange. The United States along with Canada, Australia, and Western Europe began dividing parts of their own development funds to fund higher education in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Internationalization strategies in higher education were dominating in the work to improve the structure of academic institutions in the developing world from 1950 to 1985 (De Wit, 2009). It was during that time that Agarwal and Winkler (1985), the first people to study the need for international education in the United States, completed a study of international students from 15 developing countries. They found, among other things, that international student flows had increased dramatically since the years between 1950 and 1960. However, in the late 1980s it began to decline because of tuition rate increases at U.S. institutions.
**Motivations to Study in the U.S.**

There are varying reasons why students choose to study and travel to a different country, specifically the United States (Jogaratnam, Kim, & Noh, 2006). This can be explained through different motivators impacting their decisions, which can make the process simpler or more challenging. Motivators for studying away from their home country include demand for higher education, enhanced future career, desire to travel for cross-cultural experience, programs-based or even social motivations, proficiency in the English language, the reputation of the host country and the host institution, safety, cost and fees, availability of scholarships or work, ease of visa processing and visa cost, historical or economic links between host country and home country, geographic proximity of host country, climate in host country, family and friends in host country, plans for immigration, and value for money (Jogaratnam et al., 2006; Kemp, Mazzarol & Savery, 1997). An early study by Agarwal and Winkler (1985) of international education in the United States amongst students from 15 developing countries found that tuition rates, academic opportunities offered in students’ home countries, income of the home country, and the expected benefits of studying overseas, were the major motivators for studying in the U.S. However, by the turn of the century, studying overseas was being driven by the growth in economic and social statuses of college graduates (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The limited education available in less developed countries caused a higher demand for students from developing countries to study in the U.S. and in other developed countries.
Kemp, Mazzarol, and Savery (1997) performed a mixed methods study to find which factors were the most important for Indonesian and Taiwanese students’ decision making process when choosing a destination to study in. They used 15 identified factors in their model of student survey data to find which characteristics were the most influential to students when choosing a study destination. These factors were the reputation of the host country, reputation of the host institution, safety, cost and fees, availability of scholarships or work, ease of visa processing and visa cost, historical or economic links between host country and home country, availability of specific teaching programs, geographic proximity of host country, lifestyle in host country, climate in host country, recognition of qualifications, family and friends in host country, plans for immigration, and lastly overall value for money. The researchers found that there are six pull factors that specifically provide a picture of the fundamental dimensions that impact the international students’ decisions of which destination country to study in.

The six factors are knowledge and awareness, personal recommendations, cost issues, environment, geographic proximity, and social links. Knowledge and awareness is influenced by the information provided to the student and their families about the potential destination country to bring ease that they can find the information. Having a better understanding of the host country in which they are looking to study and the country’s reputation of academic excellence and quality is very significant. Personal recommendations are the referrals or recommendations about the host country from parents and other people close to the student. Cost issues include the rate of tuition, housing and food, social and travel costs, etc. It is also important for the student to know the availability of financial assistance and potential jobs on campus. The fourth pull
factor, environment, is the climate and geographical setting of where the student would study. Geographic proximity refers to the distance from the student’s home country to their potential host country. Finally, the sixth factor is social links which helps international students to know friends or family who have visited or studied in that destination.

These six pull factors were the ones that most impacted the international students’ decisions of which destination country to study in. Findings suggested that Indonesian and Taiwanese students responded differently in their selection of the six factors that influenced their destination choices. The former rated factors influencing their host country destination decision of much greater importance than those from Taiwan indicating that studying abroad for an education has a greater ancestry for Taiwanese students than Indonesian students. This indicated that the motivations were not as important to the Taiwanese students because studying abroad was more expected of them while for the Indonesian students they had more reasons and motivations for wanting to study in a different country which is so rooted in their individual cultures (Kemp, Mazzarol & Savery, 1997).

Whether or not one is pursuing a graduate or undergraduate education may also impact students’ choice of an institution. A study by Appelbaum, Gebbie, Han, and Stocking (2015) addressed the importance of the opportunities given to foreign students when selecting graduate programs in the United States. Results from the survey showed that undergraduate and graduate students may have different motivations when selecting U.S. institutions. International graduate students made their decisions based more on motivations for professional aspects rather than social and personal aspects like
undergraduate students. It was clear that if the opportunity to pursue their higher education in the U.S. arose, graduate students would find a way to come to the U.S. to study because of the importance of their professional future careers. Furthermore, students in research majors and careers have an 86% chance of moving back to their home country to work if they feel they will be of higher value and demand there.

**Barriers and Challenges to International Education in the United States**

There are many barriers that exist for international students that could affect their ability to come to the United States for higher education. Going overseas is not a decision that a student can make immediately; thought and observation of all the various barriers they will run into must go into the decision-making process. Some of these barriers are lack of fluency in the host language, financial constraints, obtaining a visa or Form I-20, not knowing where they are going to live, and difficulties dealing with visas and official documents (Bolliger & Erichsen, 2011; Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007; Park, 2009; Urias & Yeakey, 2008; Yangyi, 2009).

Probably no single event has added to the barriers to international education as much as the September 11 attacks. After the attacks in 2001 of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, there was an increase in research mainly focused on international students. Since American society was so greatly affected after the attacks, international students began being looked at with suspicion (Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007). A few years after the September 11 attacks, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was added as a section of the Department of Homeland Security. This created a change in visa regulations and laws that is now a barrier for foreign students by creating a more difficult process to enter and study in the U.S. (Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007).
A challenge that current research emphasizes is academic and social isolation resulting from low English language proficiency. To begin, the effect of language on students during their overseas experience is a barrier that impacts if they decide to apply, if they will get admitted, and how their experience will be. Yangyi (2009) studied what main factors affect the adjustment of international students at U.S. institutions. They found that English proficiency ranged dramatically among the groups of participants. Asian students have low spoken English self-efficacy compared to the Black and White international students. This relates to and is supported by Park’s (2009) study of Korean students. She desired to find the driving force components that impact international students’ decisions to study in the U.S. She revealed that

In this process, various elements, such as opinions from parents and friends, information from media and websites about student visa processes, feasibility of admissions, educational environments, and economical and political conditions of each country, are all integrated in forming images and expectations on each country’s universities (p. 742).

Results from the quantitative study found that program quality and opportunity to improve second language proficiency were the major motivators for Korean students when studying in the U.S. As Korean students are part of the Asian student category, this also supports Yangyi (2009) study. Language proficiency is a significant factor in an international student’s decision, especially amongst the Asian population.

Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) conducted a mixed-methods study that examined international students’ experiences on traditional and online learning environments to gain awareness of the academic and social isolation that international students’
experience. Participants were 54 international students representing 54 countries. Interview questions were associated with the difficulties on university grounds, support systems, and suggestions for creating better learning environments. Findings suggested that international students, both in traditional and online programs, felt high levels of academic and social isolation precisely from having low English proficiency skills in order to communicate with faculty and American students. Although this study does not entirely relate to factors impacting international students' decision to study in the U.S., it still shows the significance of low English proficiency skills in an international student’s life.

**International Education at Eastern Illinois University**

Of the approximately 1,043,839 international students studying in the U.S. in 2016, 433 of them selected Eastern Illinois University (EIU) (EIU, 2016). However, there is very little literature of when international students began enrolling and attending the institution and when the Office of International Students and Scholars first opened. The earliest records show enrollment numbers back to the year 1980 for international students. A note was found stating that from 1973 to 1979 Non-Resident Aliens were included in the White Non-Hispanic category leaving information of the international student population unknown (E. Stuby, personal communication, January 24, 2017). The earliest of findings available about the department for international students at EIU is found in Eastern Illinois University’s undergraduate catalog of 1994-1995 with written description about International Student Services on EIU’s campus. In 1994-1995, the department was located in the Old Main building of Eastern’s campus in room 211. The department was called International Student Services at the time which is now named the
Office of International Students and Scholars. The time of the name change is unknown. At the time it was called International Student Services and was where the international student advisor was located to assist with immigration procedures and regulations and to provide services such as counseling to the international student population (Eastern Illinois University, 1995).

The oldest documentation found of an international student at EIU is from EIU's oldest newspaper, the Teachers College News. An international student from Monkan, China named Kao Chih Shen was interviewed in 1930. The article in the newspaper discusses what Kao is studying at EIU, how long he has been in the U.S., why he came to study in the U.S., and how long he planned to study in the U.S. Kao was not given the choice to come to the United States to study. Due to the large male population in China, Kao was sent to the U.S. by the governor of Monkdu in order to study banking and finance in the U.S. After four or five years, he was expected to return to China to study economic conditions of China and work for the Chinese government (Teachers College News, 1930, p.1). On the other hand, an article was found from 1966 of the Eastern State News when the name was changed from the Teachers College News. Rudolph D. Anfinson who was the adviser of the Association of International Students at the time was interviewed by the EIU newspaper. Anfinson indicated that he has been working with the foreign student population since after World War II when Edward Sere a student from Nigeria arrived at EIU being the first foreign student on campus as well as a Columbian girl who came shortly after. These two students were indicated by Rudolph D. Anfinson to be the first two foreign students at Eastern Illinois University. The very first
international student is still unknown due to the fact that the dates and documentation do not give the exact data or clarification of the first foreign student (Kallal, 1966, p.5).

After Kao Chih Shen, other newspaper articles were found on international student populations at EIU for years after. In 1947, the three foreign students registered at EIU were Suzue Iwatate of Honolulu, Marietta Perez of Colombia, South America, and Clara Fanakos who attended a high school in Greece (Eastern State News, 1947). In 1948, Erlina Moncada was the second student enrolled at EIU from Latin-America to hold a scholarship at EIU provided by the 19th District Woman’s Club and the International Institute of New York City. She lived in Pemberton Hall while she attended EIU (Eastern State News, 1948). By 1956, there were eight students from outside of the continental U.S. enrolled at EIU with only one who was native of American continents. Others came from some of the most distant parts of the globe. There were two freshmen from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in northern Africa who were in the U.S. for the first time when they came to study as both English majors. The student furthest from home was a sophomore from Sangli, India. There were two students from Honolulu who had never met until coming to EIU. Korea and Nigeria were also represented with a business major from Seoul, Korea and a senior chemistry major from Abeckuta, Nigeria. Lastly, there was a senior from San Jose, Costa Rica who was heavily involved in organizations on campus (Cutlip, 1956).

An article from the Eastern State News of 1957 spoke about an Ethiopian political science major who explained that this was his first time living outside of his home country. After he entered New York after coming from Ethiopia, he was surprised from all he saw and classified the U.S. as “a highly developed country in all respects of
modern civilization". He was anxious to further his studies in the U.S. but felt comfortable because EIU was recommended to him by Americans in the Point Four program that he was in (Eastern State News, 1957). By 1960, Korea dominated the international student population by approximately one half. At the time there were four Korean students, three students from Greece, one from Ethiopia, and one from Nicaragua. All nine were undergraduate international students with variety of majors in business, chemistry, physics, pre-engineering, social science, or a general education major (Eastern State News, 1960, p.9).

The Association of International Students (AIS) began on Eastern Illinois University's campus in 1962. The purpose of the organization was to promote international understanding at EIU. In 1964, the president of AIS at the time named Paul Nelson said that the organization was more of a counseling club for foreign students to express their thoughts and ideas with American students. At the time, there were approximately 30 members with half being international students and the other half American students with the occasional presence of ten members of the Charleston community. AIS's main goal for the 1964-65 academic year was to establish an International House that would serve as the meeting location for AIS meetings and a place of residence for the international students on campus. It was also their goal to begin an English course that would serve and assist the foreign student population which was fourteen students at the time (Rinnert, 1964, p.5).

In 1965, the Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities were given permission to give grant scholarships to foreign students to the four state schools in Illinois. This allowed international students to be applicable to registration fees and out-
of-state fees as well. The eligibility of the students would be determined by the dean of student personnel services who was Rudolph D. Anfinson at the time (Gibbs, 1965, p.1). By 1966, there were 25 foreign students at EIU with Anfinson working with the international student population. Anfinson stated that in his years of working with these students, he has observed that the two main problems foreign students have are the language barrier and financial difficulties. The foreign student adviser at the University of Michigan by the name of Robert Klinger visited EIU in hopes to assist and suggest improvements for the foreign student program at EIU. Klinger suggested twenty points that EIU would need to look into to improve the program and to become a forefront among U.S. colleges and universities. Some of Klinger’s points were having a proper size of the foreign community, the need for a full time adviser, and more foreign student scholarships. The main suggestion was to building an international center for the students to have as a resource on EIU’s campus. Anfinson then indicated that he felt an international center house would be established within two or three years (Kallal, 1966, p.5).

By 1973, Eulalee Anderson became the new international student advisor and replaced Carl Filskow. Anderson was raised in Brazil, and she attended a school where only Portuguese was spoken. She came to the U.S. to study at University of Oklahoma and later got married and settled in Mattoon, Illinois. She received her master’s degree in education from EIU in 1963 and later returned to Porto Alegre, Brazil to study at the University of Rio Grande do Sul after working for a few years in the Booth Library at EIU. She then returned back to EIU after her time in Brazil and became the new international student advisor. It was mentioned that she said she had the experience of
being a foreign students and would be able to help the international students and relate to their problems. As the new advisor, she began with many ideas and programming activities that she wanted to hold throughout her years in the position. Anderson worked with the American Field Service and helped organize the first Association of International Students of EIU's campus and also was the Homestay chairman of the project “Experiment in International Living” that placed foreign students in American family homes so the international students could see how American families in the community live (Sebright, 1973, p.3).

An article from the Eastern News of 1976 explained how international students would now be required to pay one year's tuition and housing deposit before they are able to be officially accepted to Eastern. Glen Williams, the vice president for student affairs, said that the reason they wanted to create this change was because there had been too many foreign students who were admitted to the university but then would not have any money after their arrival to the U.S. It was a way to help the foreign students to know when they arrive they will not have any problems or worries about payments. Matthew Kirui, the president of AIS at the time, argued and said this new rule would hurt the international students who were planning to work their way through school. The letter that was sent to all potential foreign students stated that before they were able to enroll and before the I-20 was forwarded to them, the cost of out-of-state tuition and housing for one year which was $3,296 at the time was to be paid to the International Student Office (Anderson, 1976, p.10).

In the fall of 1980, there were 161 foreign students at Eastern and the foreign student enrollment trends at the time were staying at the same level and not increasing.
Brigitte Chen, the international student adviser, said that EIU was lucky that the enrollment had not decreased because of the cut of foreign scholarships available. At the time EIU had 63 foreign scholarships which was less than the year prior due to budget cuts. Glenn Williams, the vice president for student affairs, said that the foreign enrollment rate gets better as the American dollar is devalued becoming more attractive to study in the U.S. According to the census of the Institute of International Education (IIE) of 1980, the Sunbelt states had an increase in the enrollment of foreign students while the Northeast and Midwestern states had a decrease in the number of foreign students enrolled in their institutions (Henry, 1980, p.1).

By 1982, Eastern saw a 7% decrease in the foreign student population while a national study showed an over 6 percent increase in the whole United States. The national study gathered by IIE reported that foreign students were 2.6 percent of the higher education population of 12.4 million students as well as 80 percent of the foreign student population coming from less-developed countries. Chen stated that overall there was not a good economic situation worldwide and that students from developed countries did not have to come to the U.S. to study as they had their own well-developed institutions. The foreign student population at EIU in 1982 was 116 students with the largest groups of students coming from Malaysia, Taiwan, China, and Canada with 75 percent of the foreign Eastern students citing U.S. institutions as their primary source for funding (Dumentat, 1982, p.1). Due to the decrease in foreign student enrollment, a Task Force on International Education was newly created by Stanley Rives, the vice president of academic affairs to study international programs at Eastern and to see what Eastern should be doing 5 years after in terms of international education. The committee was
going to discuss enhancing the foreign language study to promote more student interest, internationalization of the university’s curriculum, international exchange programs for students and faculty, the administrative structure of the program, and establishing a standing committee on international education (Dumentat, 1982, p.1).

Although Eastern’s foreign student enrollment decreased by 7% from 1981-1982, most of the other state universities in Illinois had an increase in their foreign student population. Southern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, and Governors State University reported slight increases in their foreign enrollments while University of Illinois and Chicago State University had slight declines. It was stated that Eastern is the only state university in the state of Illinois that is controlled by the Board of Governors that made the requirement of foreign students having to make a deposit of $2,500 when admitted to the university to cover the first semester’s fees and any debts that may incur while they attend the institution. This created a possible explanation for the poor international enrollment by requiring foreign students to make a deposit when enrolling to EIU. In addition, the foreign students at Eastern had to receive a score of 550 in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) while the other state universities requirements varied (Yamin, 1982, p.1).

In 2005, 141 international students were enrolled, hence the increases in international students are not only occurring in the U.S. but on EIU’s campus as well. In 2015, students from India formed the highest proportion in the international student population with 113 students (Butler, 2015). In the fall 2016 semester, 43 different countries represented EIU’s international students, with India still remaining as the highest in student population (B. Cuellar, 2016). The top leading countries of origin for
the United States in that year were China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Canada (Institute of International Education, 2016).

**Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This study was guided by the push-pull model and cultural capital. The push-pull model is essential to understand how and why international students make decisions to study in the U.S. The following summary of the Push-pull model and the concept of cultural capital will offer a possible explanation of why and how international students choose to study in the United States and choose the specific institution they are attending.

**Push-pull Model.** The push-pull factors framework explains the existence of the different motives that are fundamental to the choice of destination individuals decide to travel to (Mason, Moretti, & Raggiotto, 2016). Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) described the “push-pull” model as an explanation of international student flow. “Push” factors operate within the source country and initiate a student's decision to undertake international study such as escape, social interaction, prestige, etc. In contrast, the pull factors “...operate within a host country to make that country relatively attractive to international students such as natural attractions, local culture, etc. (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.82).” Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) investigated the factors that affect the choice of destination of international students among participants from China, India, Taiwan, and Indonesia. Students were administered a questionnaire in their native language with common questions to compare the data from the four countries represented. The purpose was to determine why students chose a specific country to study in and if the six pull factors had an influence. Results showed the majority of the participants were motivated by the belief that pursuing their education overseas would benefit their academic and professional
success more than staying in their home countries to study. Participants were also motivated by a desire to increase their understanding of “Western culture.”

**Cultural Capital.** The term ‘cultural capital’ is important for the power that it gives individuals in society to achieve goals and rise up the social ladder without having to have social or wealth capital (Throsby, 1999). Cultural capital is having assets that give individuals social mobility in a stratified society. The three elements that go into cultural capital are (1) being institutionalized with an education or specialized knowledge, (2) personified with speech, skills, and personality, and (3) objectified with style of dress or other belongings. Cultural capital is difficult to measure objectively but can be measured by how much value society places on the individual’s non-financial assets (Throsby, 1999). Bourdieu (1984) describes that students with social and cultural knowledge use it as their cultural capital to help them succeed and drive their learning experiences.

**Research Questions**

Based on the findings from the preceding review of literature, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What barriers and challenges do international students face when making the decision to study in the U.S.?
2. What factors influence international students’ decision to study in the U.S.?
3. What factors influenced international students’ decision to study at EIU?

**Summary**

Chapter two includes a literature review about international students and their motivations. The Push-pull model and cultural capital were very significant to the study
to understand how and why international students make decisions to study in the U.S. The overview of the literature showed how international education came to be and that it is an important and growing significance to college campuses around the U.S. as well as all over the world. International students have many reasons for selecting to study in the U.S. through various different motivators impacting their decisions. Among those include demand for higher education, desire to travel for cross-cultural experience, safety, cost and fees, availability of scholarships or work, enhanced future career, ease of visa processing and visa cost, historical or economic links between host country and home country, geographic proximity of host country, programs-based or even social motivations, proficiency in the English language, the reputation of the host country and the host institution, climate in host country, family and friends in host country, plans for immigration, and value for money (Jogaratnam et al., 2006; Kemp, Mazzarol & Savery, 1997). Additionally, international students continue to face many challenges in order to come to the United States for their higher education. Some of the challenge found include financial constraints, obtaining a visa or Form I-20, lack of fluency in the host language, not knowing where they are going to live, and difficulties dealing with visas and official documents (Bolliger & Erichsen, 2011; Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007; Park, 2009; Urias & Yeakey, 2008; Yangyi, 2009). Chapter three covers the methodological framework that was utilized to conduct this study.
CHAPTER III

Methods

This chapter provides detailed description of the methodological framework that was used to conduct this study.

Design of Study

This research utilized a triangulation mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis of international students at Eastern Illinois University. It was used to understand why students chose to study in the U.S., factors that affect college selection, and the experiences of international students for selecting a U.S. institution. According to Denzin (1978), triangulation is defined as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (p. 291). It is emphasized that researchers can gain greater accuracy by collecting more than one type of data on the same phenomenon (Denzin, 1978). Jick (1979) also highlighted the importance triangulation mixed methods has on capturing a holistic representation of the variables being studied that may uncover a unique variance.

The mixed method study used the triangulation approach by distributing a cross-sectional survey to undergraduate and graduate international students via email during the fall semester of 2017. This methodology was selected because the research questions are qualitative (why) and quantitative (what) in nature. Furthermore, “the strengths of the two methods will complement each other and offset each other’s respective weaknesses” (Fraenkel, Hyun, & Wallen, 2012, p. 561). The survey consisted of demographic questions as well as open-ended and close-ended questions about what motivated them to make the decision to study in the U.S. and at EIU along with what barriers and challenges
they faced throughout their cognitive and behavioral processes.

**Participants**

Participants were 127 international students enrolled at a U.S. midsized Midwestern four-year state university in the fall 2017 semester. Ages ranged from 18 to 36 ($M = 24, SD = 3.34$) years. Seventy-two (56.7%) participants were female; fifty-four (42.5%) were male. With regards to year in school, one hundred (78.7%) were graduate students, 4.7% were freshmen, 1.6% were sophomores, 7.1% were juniors, 7.9% were seniors. Most 74 (58.3%) participants identified themselves as Asian, while 17 (13.4%) identified as White, 15 (11.8%) as other, 14 (11.0%) as Black, 3 (2.4%) as Hispanic/Latino/a, and 2 (1.6%) as American Indian or Alaska Native. The American Indian or Alaska Native category was described as Alaska Native or Aleut, North American Indian, American Indian South, Caribbean Indian. Participants came from 24 out of the 44 different countries represented at EIU. The top six countries represented were India (46.5%), Nigeria and Saudi Arabia (both at 6.3%), China (5.5%), Nepal and Ghana (both at 3.9%).

Twenty-seven majors were represented with the three most represented majors being computer science (43 or 33.3%), technology 24 (18.6%), and biological sciences 16 (12.4%). Ninety-one (71.7%) participants reported English was not their first language, and for 100 (78.7%) participants, this was their first time studying in the U.S.

**Research Site**

The research site was a mid-sized Midwestern state university located in a rural community with a population of approximately 21,130 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2015) with the reported fall 2017 enrollment of 7,030 total students (Eastern
Illinois University, 2017). This research site includes students of multiple cultural backgrounds, including African American, White/Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic/Latino and others (Eastern Illinois University, 2016). The semester of fall 2017, there were a total of 378 international students with 126 undergraduates and 252 graduate students representing 44 countries from around the world (Eastern Illinois University, 2017). The site was selected because of the researcher’s access to the population of international students.

**Instruments**

**Demographic Questionnaire.** The survey for this research study included a number of demographic questions (e.g. “Which of the following best describes your racial and ethnic background?” and “What is your country of origin?”). Participants were asked to choose from a list of options that best described their demographic make-up. In order to further obtain specific information about the participants’ characteristics, additional information was collected which included their current year in school, race/ethnicity, home country, academic major, gender, age, if English was their first language, and whether or not they have studied in the U.S. before.

**Open-ended Questions.** Participants responded to four open-ended questions regarding their history and experience with choosing to study in the U.S. and Eastern Illinois University. Example of questions included “Please describe why you wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else.”, “What were some of the challenges that you had to overcome in order to come to the United States?”, “How did you first hear about EIU?”, and “Why did you choose to attend EIU?”

**Closed Ended Questions.** The last part of the survey included 3 different Likert
scale instruments developed by the researcher intended to measure international students’ selection process through using the factors from the push-pull model developed by (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). The first Likert scale was on the U.S., another on EIU, and the third was on the barriers and challenges of international students. The questionnaire items were created from information gathered through a review of the push-pull model. The rationale for ordering the survey with the Likert scale questions after the open-ended questions was to compare the responses from the open-ended questions to how the push-pull factors would be chosen. The participants were not able to return to their open-ended questions, giving the researcher information on which where equivalent. These included their reasons for selecting to study in the U.S and what factors influenced their decisions. Participants were asked to rate the level of difficulty of the factors to their decision. These ratings were on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) not at all significant/important or not difficult at all to (5) very significant/important or very difficult (McLeod, 2008).

There was a second scale to determine the roles family, friends, geographical location, etc. played in the participants’ decision to come to the U.S. to study. The scale required participants to rate the role each factor played in their decision to come to the U.S. on a scale of (1) not at all significant/important to (5) very significant/important. Some other factors included the reputation of the U.S., reputation of EIU, safety, cost and fees. See Appendix A for full survey.

**Data Collection**

The survey was sent out by the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) at the university from their department email to the whole international student
population. A draft email, which included a link, was sent to the OISS email and then forwarded to the individuals from the OISS email on September 11, 2017 with a call for participants. The researcher utilized the survey program Qualtrics with surveys distributed via email to all 388 of the international students enrolled at University during the fall 2017 semester.

The survey remained open for three weeks with reminder emails sent weekly after the initial distribution to encourage participation to increase the sample size of the study. After opening the survey email, only the participants who agree to the informed consent approved by EIU's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B) were allowed to continue with the study. Participants were offered a chance to win one of two $50 gift cards as an incentive. To be considered for the drawing, they provided their email address at the end of the survey. Winners were randomly selected. One hundred and fifty-one participants started the survey, but only 127 were used in further data analysis, representing approximately 33% of the international student population at EIU.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Analysis. After the completion of data collection, the data was exported to Microsoft Excel® for pre-analysis cleanup. Participants who did not complete at least one question from each section of the survey were removed, and not included in future analysis. Once this was completed the data was imported into The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations, and frequencies) were conducted on appropriate demographic and research question data.
Content Analysis. Content analysis was used to study the participants' behaviors through their written responses on the open-ended questions answered on the survey. This was to help explain some differences of why international students choose to study in the U.S., factors that influence their decision to study in the U.S. and in their decision making when selecting an institution, how they first heard about EIU, as well as the barriers and challenges they face when making the decision to study in the U.S. The researcher was able to see if any push-pull factors came into their answers in the open-ended questions as a summative content analysis which involved counting and comparisons of the keywords or content (Hsieh, H. & Shannon, S., 2015).

The responses from the qualitative questions were imported into Microsoft Excel for content analysis. A second column was created in each spreadsheet to write keywords found within the participants' answers to each question. After reading through all of the qualitative answers to the open-ended questions, the researcher found and put keywords in a written piece of paper for each of the four questions. When this step was complete the researcher then used descriptive coding by conveying a short phrase to each keyword or topic to summarize it with tallies to keep score of what phrases were used the most in the responses. When the list of codes was completed, a new sheet was added in a spreadsheet with the number of tallies short phrases were used and said in responses. Lastly, tables were created to show the most frequently provided answers or themes for each of the four questions. The summaries of the charts and major themes for each of the questions are provided in Chapter IV.
Treatment of Data

The data was collected through Qualtrics and then imported into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. From there the data from the Excel spreadsheet was imported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) for analysis. Prior to beginning of the basic demographics questionnaire, all participants were required to read and agree to an informed consent in order to participate in the study and continue to the survey (See Appendix B). The contact information was only assessed for contact the two winners of the random drawing for $50 Walmart gift cards. In order to increase confidentiality, all contact information was deleted from the data collection process and remained secure on a flash drive device. Pursuant to the IRB policy, the data was saved and will be kept for three years after the end of the research of the study. Once the three years have passed, the flash drive will be destroyed so everything will remain confidential.

Summary

This study utilized a triangulation mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis of international students at Eastern Illinois University. This design was used to understand why students chose to study in the U.S., factors that affect college selection, barriers and challenges they face, and the experiences of international students for selecting a U.S. institution. Participants represented about 33% of the population of international students enrolled at the four-year state university in the fall 2017 semester. The triangulation mixed method study was conducted using a survey that included basic demographic questions, close-ended, and open-ended questions to provide results for this study. Chapter IV contains the quantitative and qualitative results and findings from this study.
CHAPTER IV
Results and Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence the development of college selection of international students. Additionally, the study sought to have more understanding of the push-pull factors that influence the decision to study in the U.S. in general and Eastern Illinois University specifically. The push-pull factors framework explains the existence of the different motives that are fundamental to the choice of destination individuals decide to travel to (Mason, Moretti, & Raggiotto, 2016). This chapter presents the results of the survey conducted with international students at EIU, during the fall semester of 2017 to answer the quantitative questions: What factors influence international students' decision to study in the U.S.?, What factors influence international students' decision making when selecting an institution for study?, and What barriers and challenges do international students face when making the decision to study in the U.S.?

Quantitative Findings

Barriers and Challenges. The first research question investigated the barriers and challenges that international students' face when making the decision to study in the U.S. Participants rated the level of difficulty of push-pull factors from Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model regarding the process of coming to study in the United States on a Likert-type scale from (1) not difficult at all to (5) very difficult. The results are presented in Table 4.1. About 45% of those who responded indicated the availability of scholarships or work as being very difficult or somewhat difficult. The same percentage reported cost and fees as being a very difficult or somewhat difficult
challenge. About 52% indicated *English language proficiency* as being not difficult at all or somewhat not difficult.

Table 4.1

**Percentages of Responses of International Students to Identified Challenges**

(*N = 127*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Not diff. at all</th>
<th>Somewhat not diff.</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat diff.</th>
<th>Very diff.</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of scholarships or work</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and fees</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa processing and visa cost</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language proficiency</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form I-20</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* diff. = difficult

**Influences of Selection to Study in the U.S.** The second research question investigated was “What factors influence international students’ decision to study in the U.S.?” Participants rated the level of significance and importance of Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) push-pull model regarding the decision to study in the U.S. on a Likert-type scale from (1) *not at all significant/important* to (5) *very significant/important*. The results are presented in Table 4.2. About 73% of those who responded indicated *family* as being very significant/important or somewhat significant/important. The other two highest reported factors for being very significant/important or somewhat significant/important were *safety* (67.5%) and *recognition of quality* (67.5%) in the influences of selection to study in the U.S.
Table 4.2

Percentages of Responses of International Students to Role Played in Selecting the U.S.

\((N = 126)\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role played in coming to U.S.</th>
<th>Not at all sig./imp.</th>
<th>Somewhat not sig./imp.</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat sig./imp.</th>
<th>Very sig./imp.</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of U.S.</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and Fees</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship and Work</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Quality</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of EIU</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Money</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa and Visa Cost</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle in the U.S.</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and Economic Links</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends in the U.S.</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Proximity</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. imp. = important; sig. = significant

Influences of Decision to Study at EIU. The final research question investigated was "What factors influence international students' decision to study at EIU?"

Participants rated the level of significance and importance regarding the decision to study at EIU on a Likert-type scale from (1) not at all significant/important to (5) very significant/important using Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model. The results are presented in Table 4.3. About 63% of those who responded indicated the cost and fees as being very significant/important or somewhat significant/important. The other two
highest reported factors for being very significant/important or somewhat significant/important were academics (61.9%) and safety (61.1%) in the influences of decision to study at EIU.

Table 4.3

Percentages of Responses of International Students to Role Played in Coming to EIU (N = 126)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role played in coming to EIU</th>
<th>Not at all significant/important</th>
<th>Somewhat not significant/important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat significant/important</th>
<th>Very significant/important</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Quality</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost and Fees</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship and Work</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of EIU</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Money</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation of U.S.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle in the U.S.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa and Visa Cost</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends in the U.S.</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and Economic Links</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical Proximity</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Findings

This section presents the findings from participants' responses on the open-ended questions answered on the survey. A qualitative lens was used to answer the following
research questions: Why do international students choose to study in the U.S.?, What factors influence international students' decision to study in the U.S.?, What factors influence international students' decision making when selecting an institution for study?, and What barriers and challenges do international students face when making the decision to study in the U.S.? Participants were asked to describe why they wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else. Participants were also asked what were some of the challenges that they had to overcome in order to come to the United States? How did you first hear about EIU? and Why did you choose to attend EIU? The findings include different themes found from the coding process of the open-ended questions answered by the participants. This information includes an explanation of some differences of why international students choose to study in the U.S., factors that influence their decision to study in the U.S. and in their decision making when selecting an institution, how they first heard about EIU, as well as the barriers and challenges they face when making the decision to study in the U.S. The researcher was able to analyze and see if any push-pull factors came into their answers in the open-ended questions.

After analyzing and coding, the results of the coded responses to each of the four questions answered by the 127 participants were presented. In the event of all of the questions, most participants gave more than one answer to each question. The results counted by the researcher reflect all answers given; so because of this, there may be more answers than the number of participants for the four questions (i.e. when asked “Why did you choose to attend EIU?”, one participant said, “I chose EIU and only EIU but what is more important is EIU chose me. I loved the diversity of the campus, flexibility in courses, unique programs that fit the interests of students, all the support I got from the
friendly people I contacted before coming to EIU like the staff of Office of international students, Coordinator of School of Technology, etc., I felt like this is a student-friendly university. I am a big fan of small towns and a friendly community like Charleston was easy to choose. And who wouldn't want to be in a town that is second safest for international students!” This one response had answers that fit into multiple of the identified themes for reasons international students chose to attend EIU and so there will be some larger numbers in answers than the number of participants.

Why Study in the U.S.

The first qualitative question that participants responded to on the survey was:
Please describe why you wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else.

After coding analysis, seven major themes appeared as responses to this survey question were: Valuable and Flexible Education, Global exposure and culture, Exposure to field and research, Opportunities, Modern technology, Dream to come to U.S., and Combination of practical skills and theory. Following are descriptions of each of these themes with examples provided by survey participants.

Valuable and Flexible Education. Out of the total 104 responses to this question, there were 62 instances in which valuable and flexible education was mentioned as a reason why international students wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else. Students expressed the U.S. being known for its flexible and quality education, and from knowing that they wanted to come to the U.S. to receive that desirable U.S. degree. Examples of responses which illustrated this theme include, “United States is known for its best education system”, “Education degree of United
States is highly valued in my country. If I got degree from here there will be lots of job opportunities for me. Education system of United States has flexibility”, and

The US education system is considered the best. It is also very flexible, where I can explore different areas without much problem. The US also provides a great deal of funding for research works, which is an important criteria for a student from a developing country.

Many international students, their parents, and prospective employers perceive an American university degree as valuable (Palmer & Urban, 2014). Therefore it is not surprising that this emerged as the most identified reason why students at EIU wanted to study in the United States.

**Global exposure and culture.** The next most popularly identified reason for international students to study in the United States is for global exposure that the degree will afford them, as well as the opportunity to be exposed to multiple cultures while obtaining that degree. From the total 104 responses to this question, there were 25 occurrences of this theme. Students expressed the U.S. being a place where they can get global exposure to dive into a new culture where they would be able to meet people from all over the world. They emphasized that they wanted to study in the U.S. because of the diversity and the exposure to being around people of different nationalities. Some examples of this include: “I just want to globalize myself this is the best place to interact with different kind of international students”, “Any degree I get from studying in the United States can be used and recognized in any part of the world and they have higher educational opportunities and I get to experience the diverse American culture”, and “The qualification gotten in the United States can be used in any other country and I wanted to
experience a culture and life different from mine.” For international students at EIU, the prospect of a global experience while interacting with students from a number of other countries made the U.S. a good destination to pursue a higher education degree.

**Exposure to field and research.** The third theme that emerged as a result of this question was identified by 24 participants. They expressed that in the United States they would be allowed to have a greater exposure to the field they wanted to study in and have the advantage to do their own research. The following are examples given that fit into this theme: “Mainly study in U.S. gives you the global exposure and also study methodology they use in the university mainly concentrate on research rather than only studying the theoretical knowledge”, “Because of the technological advancement and research focus on academics”, and

The first reason is the availability of research opportunities. I always wanted to go in research in computer science so U.S. was a good option. Moreover, I had my cousins in U.S. who were going to sponsor my education here.

The majority of international students at EIU are graduate students, so being given the opportunity to have exposure to the field and research in the U.S. expands the prospects educational experience making the U.S. a good destination to pursue a higher education degree.

**Opportunities.** Twenty-three occurrences of responses included this as a reason why they wanted to study in the U.S. The participants voiced that studying in the U.S. would bring them many incredible opportunities to practice what they learn both in and out of the classroom environment. They also emphasized that the U.S. was known for giving opportunities and this would enhance their futures by studying in the U.S. Some of
the examples of this theme include: “To get a strong base in my major and furthermore because there are numerous opportunities to grow here”, “United States offers a wide variety of master’s program and this country is also called as land of opportunities. I would like develop myself as a database administrator and see myself as an entrepreneur after some years”, and one participant went into great detail and shared

First of all, it is a developed country. Second, it is the source for my major. Finally, it provides the opportunity to get rich experience, provides hands on learning, and creates a cooperative learning by providing unlimited opportunities to practice inside and outside the university.

International students made it known that studying in the U.S. would give them more opportunities than in their home countries. The U.S. is a developed country and offers learning outside of the classroom make the U.S. stand out as a good destination to pursue their education.

Modern Technology. The fifth theme that emerged as a result of this question was identified by 15 participants. They expressed that the United States is one of the leading countries in technology and studying in the U.S. would give them great exposure to modern technology. They stated that our technology is more advanced than in other places in the world and this would benefit them in their studies. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “USA is technology hub. USA is origin for many technologies and many big companies are located here. I feel it’s a best place to get global exposure” and “In India education system is not good as in U.S. and the technology in U.S. is very ahead.” The United States having such advanced and leading
technology influences international students to study in the U.S. to benefit them in their studies.

*Dream to come to U.S.* Fourteen occurrences were made of this theme for why the participants wanted to study in the U.S. Students expressed the U.S. being a place where they have always wanted to visit due to the reputation the country has from where they are from. Many participants made points that America is known for its education and for having so much freedom. Some examples include: “America is far away from my county, and it's famous for its education. I've watched a lot of American movies and dreamed about the life in America”, “My passion and dream is to study in the USA because the education here improves the knowledge as well as skills”, “From what I have heard United States has one of the best education system. From my undergrad it’s my dream to study in U.S” and one student revealed

Since my childhood itself, I used to dream about the computers and I always admire the famous programmers like Bill Gates mostly as like a computer programmer so then itself I decided to do masters with computer science as specialization and that is the reason I came to the USA.

International students expressed it always being a dream to visit the United States after seeing American movies and hearing about life and success in the U.S. This created an influence for them to choose to study in the U.S. for their higher education.

*Combination of Practical Skills and Theory.* There were 11 instances in which a combination of practical skills and theory was mentioned. Students expressed the U.S. being known for not only quality education but the U.S. educational system also having a combination of both practical skills and theory where they can learn outside of just the
classroom and through practical skills that they learn. Examples include: “In my country we are given best possible education but the balance between theory and practical knowledge lacks and United States education fills this gap of imbalance”, “Because the education in United States is more of a practical type. And by this type of education one can understand the concepts very easily”, and one participant went into much detail and stated

I saw the best destination for my graduate studies because their education system to me is the best. They combine practical studies with theory. Secondly, having a U.S. degree is really a valuable asset back home. You are more competitive with a U.S. degree back home because they see you to be really prepared for the real world problems.

From the responses of the participants, it showed that practical skills are highly valued and stand out from other teaching methods in other countries. International students wanted experiences other than just the learning of theory, making the U.S. a good destination for their education. Table 4.4 presents the summary of the themes.

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Study in the U.S.</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valuable and Flexible Education</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global exposure and culture</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to field and research</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern technology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dream to come to U.S.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of practical skills and theory</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Challenges. The second qualitative question that participants responded to was:

What were some of the challenges that you had to overcome in order to come to the United States? This question stimulated 103 total responses from the participants (See Table 4.5). From the responses, the six common themes found were *Visa and Immigration Policies, Standardized tests, Financial challenges, Cultural differences/Culture shock, Fear of loneliness and homesickness, and Language Barrier*. Below is a description of the themes with specific examples of each in the participants’ individual words.

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visa and Immigration Policies</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized tests</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial challenges</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences/Culture shock</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Loneliness and homesickness</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Visa and Immigration Policies*. Out of the total 103 responses to this question, there were 35 instances in which visa and immigration policies was mentioned as a challenge they had to overcome in order to come to the United States. Students expressed the difficulties specifically with interviews to obtain a visa. Examples include, “The most difficult is the visa process for all the paperwork we have to do. Additionally, I spent a lot of money sending documentation to EIU”, “A long process to get the admission and then the interview for visa, which is not an easy task, but I luckily, got the visa” and

Getting a visa to come to the U.S. is a very challenging, unpredictable experience.

Students have to convince the consuls during interview, at the U.S. embassy that
they are not planning to illegally immigrate but just pursuing a higher education. Consuls are made to think everyone wants to immigrate so getting a visa becomes challenging when you have to convince them. Sometimes even with a valid reason for applying for a visa, students are still turned down. This makes it complicated. Hence, you tend to feel a sense of great achievement when you are able to get a visa.

Many international students perceive the visa and immigration policies to be extremely challenging as well as the interviews to obtain a visa making it a more difficult process to enter and study in the U.S. (Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007). Therefore it is not surprising that this emerged as the most identified challenge that students at EIU had to overcome in order to study in the United States.

**Standardized Tests.** There were 27 instances of the theme of standardized tests being a challenge they had to overcome. Students stated that taking standardized tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) brought them a large amount of stress. This was something they would have to overcome and do well on in order to be able to study in the U.S. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “First challenge was to go through the standardized test for getting admitted to the master’s degree”, “My challenge was taking the SAT [Scholastic Aptitude Test], it was difficult getting full scholarship from any school with the score I had”, and “Leaving my family was tough and writing GRE [Graduate Record Examinations] enter ace exam was tough for me as I am not from technical or mathematical background.” International
students have to take various standardized tests which are a major challenge they have to overcome to score high and do well in order to study in the U.S.

**Financial Challenges.** From the total responses to this question, 24 occurrences were identified as financial challenges. Students expressed the struggle of not only being able to afford all the immigration documentation and tuition but also having to worry about living expenses and affording a flight back and forth from the U.S. to their home country. Examples include, “Financial planning mainly, studying in the U.S. is pretty expensive for an international student. I had to narrow down choices to universities offering financial aid in addition to the coursework meeting my interest”; “Money was and still is the biggest challenge. Not only because of the struggle to find tuition scholarships but also because of the currency exchange rate”, and The entire process was very lengthy. It takes about a year. I had to do IELTS [International English Language Testing System] n GRE [Graduate Record Examinations]. Application process is costly. I applied for 9 universities. For the application process, it cost me around 2000 USD (including postage fee, courier fee, ETS [Educational Testing Service] transcript sending fees). It was really way above me. But I made it.

Financial challenges are an encounter for international students at EIU before they arrive to the U.S. and remain a challenge while they are at EIU. Financially they have to pay for tuition, fees, airfare, sending documentation over to the U.S., living expenses, etc. This becomes more of a challenge with the currency exchange rate based on the home country of the student.

**Cultural Differences/Culture Shock.** The third theme that emerged was identified by 22 participants. They expressed that they were worried about how they would feel
mentally and adjust to the cultural differences when arriving to the United States. They were aware that something they would have to overcome was culture shock to adapt to their new environment and learning to be a part of a new culture. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “Mental strength as I am entering into very new world and should adopt a new culture. Glad I had overcome and doing well now”, “Being away from home, my family, and my friends. It was challenging adjusting to the new culture here”, and “Not knowing the "culture" here, many times I would not get the jokes behind referencing to some "old" movies.” Though students were attracted to the opportunity to interact with individuals from different cultures, many are still worried about their ability to adapt to American culture, and their ability to cope with being away from family and friends.

**Fear of Loneliness and Homesickness.** Another challenge which international students have to overcome is Fear of Loneliness and Homesickness, which occurred 21 times. Students expressed being worried and having a fear of leaving their home country and family behind. They were concerned with having feelings of loneliness and homesickness while studying in the U.S. for a long duration of time. Some examples of this include: “To be alone, and study hard to achieve your goals. Also, I am trying to make my family proud of me”; “It was the first time I traveled outside India so I had to overcome my fears and anxiety of going to a different country where knew no one”, and I had never been before in the USA. So, I was going through some tension and psychological issue since I alone had to travel the long distance from Bangladesh. However, after I arrived in the USA, I could manage the things and I was happy.
International students are not alone in the experience of this challenge. Studies have shown that students who missed family and friends had difficulties adjusting to college life (Dundes & Rajapaksa, 2002).

**Language Barrier.** Participants expressed a language barrier being a challenge that they had to overcome in order to come to the United States. This theme had 13 instances in the responses of the participants. Some examples include: “To get myself familiarized with American Culture and accent. We have had a great influence of British accent on our English and it was a great experience to learn the differences”, “Language will always be a big part of difficult. I was trying to understand what professor says during the class at my freshman year but I failed. The speed of my professor talking was way too fast that what I can understand.”

And one other participant shared,

> The language you always think that you have a good level of English. But the first couple of weeks, it was really hard. Harder than I expected it was even hard to have an ordinary conversation, you had to think through exactly everything before you spoke so you made sure that everyone understood you.

The international students at EIU had to overcome the challenge of a language barrier and some of the students still have to work through this challenge. They worry about their proficiency in the English language, and mainly their ability to understand their professors in classes and to have regular everyday conversations in the U.S.
First Heard About EIU. The third qualitative question that participants responded to was: How did you first hear about EIU? This question elicited 112 total responses from the participants (Table 4.6). After coding analysis, eight major themes appeared as responses to this survey question were Friends, Internet, Know current or past EIU student, Family, Exchange Programs, EIU website/social media, and Agent or Consultant. Within this space there were multiple responses to this question, so therefore the first eight themes were identified. Following are descriptions of each of these themes with examples that were provided by survey participants.

Table 4.2

Summary of Themes Regarding how International Student Heard about EIU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How first heard about EIU</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know current or past EIU student</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange Programs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIU website and Social Media</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agent or Consultant</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friends. The most popular answer, which accounted for 59 instances of the total 112 responses to this question, mentioned friends as how they first heard about EIU. Students expressed having friends who attended or are currently attending EIU as well as just friends who suggested EIU and attended or are currently attending other universities. “Friends” was a separate theme from “Know current or past EIU student” after seeing the responses of participants differentiating the two types of people they heard about EIU from. Examples of this include: “From a friend studying in Illinois State University”, “One my friend suggested about Eastern Illinois University. As per the recommendation,
I went through the EIU website and look forward to the courses offering and climate of the EIU...”, “My friend who went to University of Illinois told me about the school”, “I got to know from my colleagues and some of friends suggested me EIU”, and “I am searched internet like which is safest and rural environment university in USA. So I heard EIU through my friends and family members. And EIU OISS staff are excellent.” The students heard about EIU from friends and it is evident that most of the friends they heard from were not past or current EIU students.

Internet. From the total 112 responses to this question, 25 identified the internet as the medium through which they first heard about EIU when researching different universities in the U.S. The participants specifically used “Google” in many responses. Some examples include: “I started by community college up in Chicago, and when it was time for me to transfer to a four-year institution I was researching about different universities around, and came across Eastern”, “Internet. Found in the search of God public schools in Central America”, “I had a search in Google and I found it”, and “I have a friend in this university. So I hear about this university from him and I search in google also.” Online search engines are the way international students first heard about EIU from researching online.

Know current or past EIU student. Nineteen participants indicated first hearing about the university from a current or past EIU student. When this occurred, it was typically a student from the academic department that the participant was interested in. In addition, many were from their home countries. Some examples of this theme are, “A friend of mine just graduated from EIU this summer, so she was the one who referred EIU to me”, “From one of my best friend from Sri Lanka who graduated from EIU”, and
"I heard from one of my friend who was already a student in my department." Students first heard about EIU from knowing a student from their home country or from the academic department they hoped to study in.

**Family.** The survey participants expressed first hearing about EIU from their family. This theme had 14 instances in the responses of the participants where they described their family members having attended EIU or knowing someone in the area or who attended EIU. Some examples include: “I have used internet initially and later on got to know clearly through my cousin brother who studied in EIU”, “My cousin who went to University of Illinois told me about the school”, and “Family members had a previous experience studying at EIU.” In founding out about EIU, conversations with family members helped give more information about EIU.

**Exchange Programs.** The fifth theme that emerged as a result of this question was identified by 6 participants. The participants were aware that their home universities in their home countries had partnerships with EIU which made it easier for them to get more information. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “My university at home has a partnership with the EIU” and “EIU has partnership with the college I graduated in China. I saw the information about EIU on the school website.” A partnership between EIU and their home institutions brought knowledge on EIU and was how they first heard about it.

**EIU Website and Social Media.** There were 6 instances of the EIU Website and/or Social Media for how the participants first heard about EIU. Students stated that they first heard about EIU from a staff member at EIU reaching out to them leading them to the EIU website or from seeing information on social media as well as going straight to
the EIU website to get information about the university. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “EIU sent me an email that said if I had good grades in high school, I could apply for an in-state tuition scholarship”, “Through a colleague and the EIU official webpage”, and “I think they [EIU] got my email after I took the TOEFL.” EIU was the resource on how the students first heard about EIU on social media platforms, the direct EIU website, or from staff or faculty members who first reached out to them to inform the student on EIU.

**Agent or Consultant.** The survey participants expressed hearing about EIU for the first time from an agent or consultant. This theme had 5 instances in the responses of the participants. Some examples include: “While I was applying at various universities for transferring, I came along a Facebook post from a consultant”, “I heard about EIU from my extended family abroad and from my agent”, and “From agency.” Students were informed for the first time about EIU from agents or consultants who directed them to EIU.

**Reasons for Attending**

The final qualitative question on the survey was: Why did you choose to attend EIU? The research question received 111 responses from the participants which created eleven major themes. These themes were *Quality education, Environment, Faculty, Affordability, Research or Program interest, Safety, Opportunities, Friendly people, Friends, Financial Assistance,* and *Small class sizes.* Below are descriptions of those themes with examples of each.

**Quality education.** Answers to this question included 50 occurrences of EIU having quality education and this being the major factor of why students chose to attend
EIU. Students expressed EIU with a variety of themes that came into this specific theme but it was clear that they valued the quality education to gain knowledge and new skills as the number one reason why they chose to attend EIU. Examples to this theme include: “EIU is one of the safest universities in America and it provides quality but affordable tuition”, “The EIU environment and faculty was very good. To achieve my goals, learning skills and communication skills of quality makes me to attend EIU”, and “Illinois is safest place to live and is close to St. Louis where my sibling resides. I even heard about the quality of education at EIU. Good campus.” Many international students perceive an American university degree as quality education and look for this factor in the institution they choose to study (Palmer & Urban, 2014). Thus it is not unexpected that quality education appeared as the most identified reason why students choose to attend EIU.

**Environment.** Another popular reason for attending EIU was due to the environment of EIU, which was included in 24 of the total responses. Students chose EIU because of the environment for various reasons such as the buildings, the campus and community, being a quiet and peaceful environment, and the encouraging setting for having a sense of belonging in this home feeling environment as well. The participants offered answers to this question such as, “I like the small community of the EIU. To be honest, castle really is attractive and I have my most classes there. I just love to be here”

I was studying at EMU in Cyprus/Turkey. And they have an exchange program with EIU so I decided to apply for it. After one semester as an exchange student I decided to transfer here. Therefore, when I attended EIU for one semester I felt
that I belong here to this university not to any other. It feels like home even if I am 13 hour flight away from home.

And another participant went into great detail and stated,

I chose EIU and only EIU but what is more important is EIU chose me. I loved the diversity of the campus, flexibility in course, unique programs that fit the interests of students, all the support I got from the friendly people I contacted before coming to EIU like the staff of Office of international office, Coordinator of School of Technology, etc., I felt like this is a student-friendly university. I am a big fan of small towns and a friendly community like Charleston was easy to choose. And who wouldn't want to be in a town that is second safest for international students!

International students made it known that the environment of EIU and the surrounding community was attractive and assisted with their sense of belonging to feeling welcomed and at home. EIU’s peaceful, quiet, and small community made EIU stand out as a good institution to pursue their education.

**Faculty.** With 19 responses, participants mentioned the faculty as one of the reasons why they chose to attend EIU. They expressed the faculty going above and beyond to help them and making them feel welcomed in the campus community. They described faculty to be supportive, patient, encouraging, and helpful. Examples of responses in this category are, “I liked the environment and the way professors help students precisely what is needed”.

Out of the 9 universities I applied, I got selected to 4 universities. I choose this because I already knew about this. Dr. Lawrence who dealt with me as the grad
coordinator was very kind. Kind like a mother. So I did not have any problem of asking anything. Also I knew the course is reputable. The GA fee is reasonable. The living cost in the town is low.

Another response that was shared by a participant was,

Facilities, faculty, and activities of students attracted me. Professors are so friendly when I wanted to know about the university I spoke to few of faculty they answered my questions very patiently and explained me friendly I felt so good so I have chosen this university.

And another participant also shared their response about the faculty stating,

Because the faculty members is incredibly friendly. They are very encouraging to everyone. They also are very flexible in evaluating courses from other countries, and provide students with missing courses as they needed. Also, people here work very hard to provide students with all the possible opportunities to learn no matter how difficult are those for them.

Faculty members influenced the students to feel welcome by their friendliness and openness to assist them in their transition to be acclimated to the campus and their academic programs.

**Affordability.** Close behind, with 18 instances as a reason why they chose to attend EIU was because of the cost of tuition to attend EIU and the affordability compared to other universities in the U.S. Some examples of responses fitting in this theme include: “I chose to attend it because of the diverse community here and secondly because EIU was affordable being an international student”, “Because of the financial aid. They made it possible for my family and myself to be able to complete the rest of
tuition and living expenses money” and “EIU was institution that I could afford as international student, and I got scholarship as well when I was admitted.” Since financial challenges are a barrier international students have to overcome it is not unexpected that affordability appeared as a reason why students choose to attend EIU from its affordable cost.

**Research or Program interest.** Another popular reason for attending EIU was due to the research or program interest offered at the university, which was included in 14 total responses. The participants chose to attend EIU for their education because it offered their program or major interest as well as research interest. The participants offered examples to this question such as, “I found my major there and my friend encouraged me to attend EIU because it is good university especially in my major” and EIU provides MBA with Research option that is very much important to me because I want to be a research academician. Pursuing MBA with research concentration will help me better prepare for my future doctoral study. Besides that, this university has offered me Presidential graduate assistantship that is very prestigious. Working as teaching or research assistant will give me the opportunity to learn advanced teaching system and research from the extraordinary and resourceful professors of EIU.

Having the international students’ research and program or major interest influenced the students’ choice to choose to attend EIU.

**Safety.** The sixth theme that emerged as a result of this question was identified by 13 participants. The participants were aware of EIU being known for the second safest college town in the nation which was in many responses of the participants. The
following are examples that fit into this theme: “I came to know that it is the safest college in America. It was having a fee structure which was in my budget and most important it was having the course work which I wanted to study, “EIU lies in one of the safest and calmest place in United States. And the quality of education they are offering is also very great”, and “I came to know that EIU is located in Charleston, one of the safest college towns in the world. This information motivated me more to study in this university.” Though students were attracted to the environment, safety played a role in their influence to choose to attend EIU especially from coming from another country from across the world.

**Opportunities.** There were 11 instances of opportunities for being the reason they chose to attend EIU. Students stated that they chose EIU because of the opportunities to learn, have hands on experience, and to have more opportunities when they look for jobs in the future. The following are examples that fit into this theme: “There are lot of opportunities and knowledge to gain through job affairs and the events conducted to help students communicate with the other international students” and

I had a couple of friends who had graduated from EIU and their experience was wonderful. After their inputs, I decided that I should take up my course at EIU as it provides a whole lot of opportunities for us International Students.

International students made it known that studying at EIU would give them more opportunities than they would receive from studying at other universities. Through hands on experiences, assisting with job search processes, and other experiences outside of the classroom was a reason they chose to pursue their education at EIU.
Friendly people. The survey participants expressed choosing to attend EIU because of the friendly people they met involving faculty, students, staff, community members, etc. This theme had 10 instances in the responses of the participants. Some examples include: “Introduced to a senior from my program who was from the same place in India that I am from. She helped me shape my decision of choosing EIU to a large extent...”, “People are friendly, and they were open to the idea of me having my significant other with me even though we are not married yet!”, and “I loved how beautiful the campus was, and how friendly people were in and around the campus.” Friendly people involved various staff and faculty from EIU but also community members that made the international students feel welcome. Their friendliness assisted international students in the decision to choose to study at EIU.

Friends. Nine occurrences were made of this theme as a reason why the participants chose to attend EIU. Students expressed having friends that currently attend or graduated from EIU. They heard their friends’ positive experiences and outcomes of having successful careers from getting an education at EIU. Some examples include: “I chose EIU as it is one the best state universities. It was also recommended to me by a couple of friends who have graduated in Computer Technology”, “I got good feedback on this school. Most my colleagues suggested me this university...”

Two of my friends from my home country are studying in EIU business school. I came to know about degree programs, curricula, environment, and other relevant issues from them. This created a positive image of the university in my mind.

And another participant also shared their response about friends stating,
Like I earlier mentioned, a friend told me about EIU and I did my own research on academic ranking too. Also after graduation of my friend, he was able to secure a good job in one of the highest paying industry. I thought those industries employ only from Ivy League School.

Students expressed having friends that currently attend or graduated from EIU that have had positive experiences. Their friends also shared having successful careers from getting an education at EIU which brought them to choosing to attend EIU for their education.

**Financial Assistance.** This theme was identified through 8 instances as a reason for why the participants chose to attend EIU. They described the financial assistance theme as scholarship opportunities and particularly having the opportunity to have a graduate assistantship to assist them with tuition costs. Some examples of this theme are, “EIU recognizes the students merits and release funds which is much appreciable” and

The main reason, to be honest is the GA award. Unlike other colleges where they don’t give out GAs until one semester had completed, EIU gives this award to incoming students. Being one of the recipients of this award, it was a no-brainer for me. Other colleges did not provide funding.

Thus seeing financial challenges are a barrier international students have to overcome it is not surprising to see financial assistance as a reason why students choose to attend EIU. Financial assistance played a large role from scholarship and graduate assistantship opportunities available to the students.

**Small class sizes.** The final theme from the participants for why they chose to attend EIU was because of the access to small class sizes. This theme had 8 instances in the responses to the question and was explained as having more opportunity to build
relationships with their professors and to feel comfortable asking questions in class. Some examples include, "EIU does not have too many students to be in one class so I can easier to ask my professor a question if I had one during my class time", "EIU is a public state university. For each class we have only 20 students. If you have any doubts we can directly go to the professor desk and ask the suggestions. The professors in this university are good", and "Because I like small classes and I can keep in touch with professor and friends. They can help me a lot for classes . . ." Having easier accessibility to create relationships with faculty and classmates in small class sizes assist students' educational experiences which influenced their decision to attend EIU. Table 4.7 presents the summaries of the themes.

Table 4.7

Summary of Themes Regarding International Students Reason for Attending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Attending</th>
<th># of Occurrences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality education</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research or program interest</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly people</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Class Sizes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Quantitative Findings. The results of this study suggest that international students' most significant barriers/challenges to studying in the U.S. is financial, with top most reported areas being availability of scholarships or work and cost and fees. The
factors that were not as important were Form I-20 and English language proficiency. This is understandable because of disparity in the exchange currency rates between the U.S. dollar and most foreign currencies. In addition, a large number of international students come from developing countries. For the second research question, the participants rated the top three factors as Family, Safety, and Recognition of Quality in the role they played in coming to the U.S. The three factors that were the least significant were Family and Friends in the U.S., Immigration, and Historic and Economic Links. The top most reported factors for the third research question that influenced the participants’ decision making when selecting an institution for study were Cost and Fees, Academics, and Safety. These three factors played a role in the decision of the international students coming to study at Eastern Illinois University.

**Qualitative Findings.** International students at EIU chose to study in the United States instead of somewhere else, for a variety of reasons. The most popular included: Valuable and flexible education (U.S. is known for its flexible and quality education to receive a desirable U.S. degree), Global exposure and culture (new culture where they would be able to meet people from all over the world and exposure to be around people of different nationalities), Exposure to field and research (greater exposure to the field of interest and have the advantage to do their own research), Opportunities (U.S. is known for giving opportunities and this would enhance their futures by learning in and outside of the classroom), Modern technology (U.S. is one of the leading countries in technology with more advancement than in other places around world and this would benefit them in their studies), Dream to come to U.S. (U.S. being a place where they have always wanted to visit due to the reputation the country has from where they are from), and Combination
of practical skills and theory (combination of both practical skills and theory where they can learn outside of just the classroom and through practical skills they experience).

In addition, these students had to overcome a number of challenges in order to come to the United States. Some of those were challenges involving visa and immigration policies (difficulties obtaining a visa specifically with interviews), standardized tests (taking standardized tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) brought them a large amount of stress in order to be able to study in the U.S.), Financial challenges (not being able to afford all immigration documentation, tuition, living expenses and affording a flight back and forth from the U.S. to their home country), Cultural differences/Culture shock (worried about how they would feel mentally and adjust to the cultural differences when arriving to the U.S. and overcoming culture shock to adapt to their new environment), Fear of loneliness and homesickness (having fear of leaving their home country and family behind and concerns with feelings of loneliness and homesickness while studying in the U.S. for a long duration of time), and language barrier (challenge to communicate on a daily basis and understanding faculty and classmates in class).

There were varied responses for how the participants first heard about EIU. The responses most often by the participants were: Friends (friends who attended or are currently attending EIU as well as just friends who suggested EIU and attended or are currently attending other universities), Internet (participants specifically used “Google” when they first heard about EIU), Know current or past EIU student (knowing a current
or past EIU student typically from the academic department that the participant was interested in or from their home countries), Family (participants described their family members having attended EIU or knowing someone in the area or who attended EIU), Exchange Programs (participants were aware that their home universities in their home countries had partnerships with EIU), EIU website/social media (EIU staff members reaching out and leading them to the EIU website or from seeing information on social media as well as going straight to the EIU website to get information about the EIU), and Agent or Consultant (hearing about EIU for the first time from an agent or consultant).

Lastly, the international students were asked why they chose to attend EIU. The most common themes were: Quality education (reputation of the school and/or the quality of education received), Environment (physical environment such as the campus, surrounding community, quiet and peaceful setting, and encouraging for having a sense of belonging in the home feeling surrounding), Faculty (faculty going above and beyond to help them and making them feel welcomed in the campus community and described to be supportive, patient, encouraging, and helpful), Affordability (the cost to attend compared to other universities in the U.S.), Research or Program interest (EIU offered the program, major, or degree that interested them as well as research interest), Safety (aware of EIU being known for the second safest college town in the nation), Opportunities (opportunities to learn, have hands on experiences, and to have more opportunities when they look for jobs in the future), Friendly people (people the students met involving faculty, students, staff, community members, etc. making them feel at home), Friends (having friends that currently attend or graduated from EIU and hearing about their friends' positive experiences and outcomes of having successful careers from getting an
education at EIU), Financial Assistance (scholarship opportunities and particularly having the opportunity to have a graduate assistantship to assist them with tuition costs), and Small class sizes (having more opportunity to build relationships with their professors and to feel comfortable asking for assistance and questions in class).

The findings as a whole included an explanation of differences of why international students choose to study in the U.S., factors that influence their decision to study in the U.S. and in their decision making when selecting an institution, how they first heard about EIU, as well as the barriers and challenges they face when making the decision to study in the U.S. This chapter allowed readers to gain understanding on the push-pull factors that came into the participants' answers to understand why they chose to study in the United States and Eastern Illinois University specifically. In Chapter V the discussion of findings will be presented. This will conclude by providing implications for college student affairs, recommendations for the Office of International Students and Scholars at Eastern Illinois University, description of the study’s limitations, and include suggestions for future research on the topic of influences of the college selection of international students.
CHAPTER V

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted to gain increased understanding of the influences of international students' college selection to study in the U.S. in general and Eastern Illinois University, a regional U.S. institution, specifically. It was designed through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, through a triangulation mixed methods approach. Demographic information about the population of international students was gathered, as well as information about the factors that influenced their decision, including the barriers and challenges they faced when making the decision to study in the U.S. Additionally, the qualitative questions were intended to give the participants a voice in identifying why they wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else, the challenges they had to overcome in order to come to the United States, how they first heard about EIU, and why they chose to attend EIU. In addition, the study sought to gain understanding of areas for improvement by consideration of recommendations for college student affairs professionals, and the Office of International Students and Scholars at Eastern Illinois University, as well as suggestions for future research.

Discussion

International education creates the advancements of learning, acceptance, and respect of different people from various cultures and backgrounds around the world. International education also raises peace, safety, and happiness amongst peoples from all over the world bring all members of societies together (NAFSA, 2016). Although international education plays a significant role in the world, there has been increasing
competition into the early years of the 21st century for globalization specifically in higher education. Higher education institutions continue to face challenges with their international student populations which began with the presidential election of President Trump. The ban of travelers from other countries, predominantly from Muslim countries, was one of the first acts of the new Trump Administration. Since the beginning of President Trump's presidential election, it created upheaval among the U.S. and specifically from higher education institutions in working with their international students from the banned countries (Zeleza, 2017).

Major findings emerged from this study regarding influences of international students' college selection to study in the U.S. and Eastern Illinois University. The next few sections discuss the conclusions. Overall, the findings suggest that international students face various barriers and challenges when making the decision to study in the U.S. Additionally, there are numerous factors and reasons why international students choose to study in the United States and choose to attend EIU. The results to the findings are discussed below as well as recommendations for future research, implications for College Student Affairs, recommendations for future research, and limitations of the study.

**Barriers and Challenges.** Participants in this study identified three challenges based on the level of difficulty of push-pull factors from Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model regarding the process of coming to study in the United States. *Availability of scholarships or work* and *cost and fees* tied for the most difficult factors that international students faced when making the decision to study in the U.S. *Visa processing and visa cost* was the next most identified challenge that they faced. This
corresponds well with the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions, in which students identified *visa and immigration policies, standardized tests, and financial challenges* as the most common that they had to face. The most significant finding that emerged was the combination of finances that came into each of the factors along with visa and immigration policies. For the quantitative portion, the top three challenges that were identified all involved money or finances as a barrier. In the qualitative portion, the factors were the same but also included *standardized test* which was not an option as a challenge on the Likert-scale.

This corresponds well with Kemp, Mazzarol, and Savery’s (1997) description of cost issues which include the rate of tuition, housing and food, social and travel costs, visa costs, etc. The study showed the importance of students’ knowledge of availability of financial assistance and/or potential jobs on campus due to fear of not being able to remain in the host country for their education. Furthermore, an additional pressure to obtain financial support that is every so often limited for international students contributes to their stress and challenge to come to the U.S. (Mori, 2000). As for *visa and immigration policies*, this continues to be a challenge that international students have to overcome. This is congruent with findings by Maraj and Poyrazli (2007) which described the September 11 attacks in 2001 of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that added to the barriers to international education. Since American society was so significantly affected after the attacks, international students began being looked at with suspicion and resulted to the change in visa regulations and laws that is now a barrier for foreign students by creating a more difficult process to enter and study in the U.S. (Maraj & Poyrazli, 2007). This goes along with the new Trump Administration and the attempted
ban of travelers from other countries pre-dominantly from Muslim countries affecting populations of international students in the U.S. from obtaining a visa (Zeleza, 2017).

**Influences of Selection to Study in the U.S.** Participants in this study identified nine reasons for studying in the United States of the push-pull factors from Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) push-pull model regarding the pull factors. *Family* was found as being the most significant/important factor that international students were influenced by to study in the U.S. The other two highest reported factors were *safety* and *recognition of quality*. Other factors found include *cost and fees*, *reputation of U.S.*, *reputation of EIU, academics, value of money*, and *scholarship or work*. This parallels well with the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions, in which students identified *Valuable and Flexible Education, Global exposure and culture, Exposure to field and research, Opportunities, Modern technology, Dream to come to U.S.*, and *Combination of practical skills and theory* as why they wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else.

The most significant finding that emerged was the combination of *family* and *valuable or flexible education*. Although the parallel between the two findings was not immediately apparent, upon closer examination it can be argued that link can be made between *family* and how family pressure creates a large influence on *valuable and flexible education, safety, and recognition of quality, exposure to field and research, and opportunities*. For example, international families recognize that the U.S. education is valued, and may put strong emphasis on supporting or even initiating that process for their child/dren. They may apply pressure because they want their children or family members to have the best possible education. This corresponds well with Jackson and
Heggins' (2003) research on specifically the Asian international student population which links directly with this study as majority of students who completed the survey were of Asian backgrounds. They found that external push from home and family members, made students feel the pressure to get prestige from attending a United States institution recognized for its valuable and of high quality education. This was particularly interesting since students used the very same phrases in the open-ended responses, as if schooled in some way. Additionally, family could also have been selected based on the international student already having family residing in the United States or based on information from family who had previously studied in the U.S., which was a factor in them choosing the U.S. to study (Kemp, Mazzarol, & Savery, 1997).

Furthermore, this study is congruent to the findings of Kemp, Mazzarol, and Savery (1997) based on their push-pull model of Indonesian students choice and attraction to the U.S. The four factors found were the relative ease with the information obtained about U.S. education programs, having friends or family residing in the U.S., an established population of overseas students in the U.S., and a lower cost of living. Recognition of quality and valuable and flexible education came into the information obtained about U.S. education programs which is also supported by Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) study which showed that the host country must have reputation for quality education services where the quality is recognized by the home countries of the international students. Family and friends were also a factor with corresponds with family as the most significant/important factor that international students were influenced by to study in the U.S. Additionally, a lower cost of living corresponds with cost and fees, value of money, and scholarship or work.
Influences of Decision to Study at EIU. Participants in this study identified seven reasons for selecting EIU to study of the push-pull factors from Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model. Cost and fees was found as being the most significant/important factor. The other two highest reported factors were academics and safety followed by recognition of quality, family, reputation of EIU, and scholarships or work in the influences of decision to study at EIU. This corresponds well with the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions, in which students identified Quality education, Environment, Faculty, Affordability, Research or Program interest, Safety, Opportunities, Friendly people, Friends, Financial Assistance, and Small class sizes as why they chose to attend EIU.

The most significant finding that emerged was how all the pull factors of the Likert-scale portion of the survey directly linked with the responses in the open-ended questions. Cost and fees being the most significant/important factor directly parallels with affordability, scholarships or work, and financial assistance. It was seen that finances and being able to afford an education at EIU was the main reason why the international students choose to study at EIU. Family and friends were found as two of the factors for selecting EIU to study and this corresponds with Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) push-pull model for the importance of recommendations from friends and relatives for how they first heard about EIU through recommendations and having more knowledge and awareness about EIU from friends or family.

In addition, academics, quality education, faculty, recognition of quality, and research or program interest linked together as their program or major interest being a reason why they chose to study at EIU. One of the major findings was in the quantitative
findings reputation of EIU was one of the factors and that directly connected with many of the open-ended responses. EIU is known for quality education, a friendly inviting environment, helpful and supportive faculty, being affordable with opportunities for financial assistance, a safe community, providing opportunities with the relationships built with faculty in the small class sizes, and many of the international students already had friends at EIU before attending. Furthermore, reputation of the institution was found to be the most important pull factor of Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) study.

**First Hear About EIU.** Participants in this study identified eight major themes on how they first heard about EIU. These include *Friends, Internet, Know current or past EIU student, Family, Exchange Programs, EIU website/social media, and Agent or Consultant.* The most significant finding that emerged was *friends; know current or past EIU student, and family* being the top three major themes of how the international students first heard about EIU. These three themes show the importance of personal recommendations or referrals from family and relatives.

The three themes match up directly with Mazzarol and Soutar’s (2002) push-pull model for the importance of recommendations from friends and relatives. Reputation of the institution was found to be the most important pull factor so it was not surprising that the importance of recommendations from friends and relatives came up as an additional factor. The international students would be able to hear about the reputation of EIU making it attractive to the students based on recommendation and referral from people they know. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) found that, “Word-of-mouth referral is one of the most powerful forms of promotion that international education institutions use (p.85).” This was proven to be true in this study showing that from word-of-mouth is how current
international students first heard about EIU. This factor is probable to become more important the more international students that study in the United States or have family or friends that visit the U.S. for other reasons.

Suggestions for Future Research

The following recommendations are suggested for future research to be conducted by researchers interested in understanding more about international students.

1. Improvement of sample to receive more input of undergraduate international students since there were 100 (78.7%) graduate students who participated in this study. The total population of international graduate students at EIU is 67%, while 33% represents international undergraduate students.

2. Conduct the study on a larger scale, such as, different types of institutions to examine the college selection process in different settings.

3. Conduct a follow-up survey with the participants from this study to focus on transition and if their EIU experience is correlated to why they chose to attend EIU in the first place.

4. Conduct qualitative interviews with a few international students at EIU, interviewing the participants for richer more detailed data.

5. Conduct a study on the relationship between family and finances. Since finances resulted as the biggest challenge and family being a factor of why international students chose to study both in the U.S. and EIU it would be a great study to see how the two factors go together.

6. To access different cultural perspectives with international students from different countries; although our Asian (58.3%) participants correlated with the high Asian
population at EIU, accessing other cultural perspectives to get more input. As well as representation of majors represented will also help getting other cultural perspectives.

7. This study ended up addressing more recruitment needs than student affairs areas for international students. Thus, specific questions need to be asked to address student affairs areas that impact the services and assistance international students receive to arrive to their institution.

8. Interview student affairs professionals and professionals working with international students about their services and processes for getting international students to U.S. institutions.

**Implications for College Student Affairs**

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations could benefit student affairs professionals working with international students:

1. Participants’ responses focused more on their college selection process in this study but it was clear that a few of the international students’ challenges they knew they would have to face when making the decision to study in the U.S. were cultural differences/culture shock and fear of loneliness and homesickness. These two factors are ones that student affairs professionals can address when working with international students on college campuses. Student affairs professionals have a responsibility to students to create positive experiences from when they are prospective students, to current students, to former students. As professionals, knowing the concerns of challenges they will have will help with planning on how to assist them when they arrive. The following three recommendations are
proposed: Make sure international students are aware of resources to them including the counseling center, health insurance, and all areas and resources that will assist with their transitions and socio-emotional components. Offer events and sessions to address the assimilation of the international students to get them acclimated to the U.S. and the campus. Lastly, also have cultural activities that will assist the international students to be involved in their own culture such as international coffee hour, International Education Week, and other cultural events that will assist with their coping and managing of their homesickness.

2. In regards to recruitment, most international students first heard about EIU from friends; knowing current or past EIU students, and from family. Since knowing current or past EIU students came up as a theme the following recommendation is proposed: It would be beneficial for Alumni Services and the Office of International Students and Scholars to have a stronger relationship to remain in contact with international students' alumni. This will assist with recruitment and will build relationships on campus.

3. In the survey, when the participants were asked why they chose to study in the U.S. three of the themes that were shown by the international students were to have a global exposure in a new culture, to have opportunities, and because it has been their dream to come to the U.S. Having this knowledge and data as student affairs professionals will assist with providing services and programming to help fulfill the reason they chose to study in the U.S. The following three recommendations are proposed: Creating conversation buddy programs by pairing U.S. domestic students with international students will allow international
students to be more globally exposed and to learn more about the country and
culture they chose to study in. As well as robust programming that connects them
with the campus and community members. Finally, looking for potential
partnerships with departments on campus or in the community to work together
for programming for the international students.

4. To assist with the challenge of availability of scholarships or work and cost and
fees; providing a job fair or resource in order for international students to be able
to find on-campus jobs or graduate assistantships or opportunities to afford
higher education in the U.S.

5. Financial issues clearly relate to their time on campus after acceptance and
matriculation. Cost of living in the U.S. versus international students’ home
countries is an ongoing concern for some of them along with overall living
finances: Providing financial literacy training and having the Life Center reach
out to international students for sessions.

6. Additionally, three of the factors that influenced international students’ decision
when selecting EIU were the environment, the availability for opportunities, and
from the friendly people they met or spoke to. The connection to campus that the
international students have when they get onto campus is significantly important
in their transition and to retain them at the institution. As student affairs
professionals in areas such as orientation, housing, admissions, student life, and
others should evaluate ways to ensure students feel connected to campus to
provide the friendly welcoming environment they chose to attend EIU for along
with providing opportunities. The following three recommendations are proposed:
Develop orientation that is solely geared towards international students and work with campus partners to develop a way for international students to more easily find resources to assist in their transition.

Recommendations for the Office of International Students and Scholars

The following recommendations are proposed for the Office of International Students and Scholars at EIU specifically. However, data from this research study can be generalized to other institutions of similar size and demographic make-up to improve services offered to international students.

1. **Word-of-mouth recruiting:** As the data presented, many international students did not first hear about EIU from agents or consultants but instead from friends, family, or from knowing current or past EIU students. Finding a solution to provide an incentive or creative ways for providing incentives for successful recruitment for EIU students to share their experiences with people from their home countries to recruit more international students. This will not only benefit the students but will save the Office of International Students and Scholars finances from budgeting for agents and consultants and other forms of recruiting.

2. **Marketing piece to highlight affordability:** Improve the marketing piece and online descriptions to give clear explanation of tuition, fees, and housing options will assist prospective international students in making their decision. The pull factor influencing the international students’ selection of a U.S. institution was cost and fees or affordability.

3. **Publicize safety:** Continue to publicize Charleston as a safe college town as safety is a major pull factor in influence to selection an institution for study.
4. *Recruit more based on the reasons identified for selecting EIU*: Affordability and various forms of financial assistance, quality education with numerous research and program interests, many opportunities outside the classroom, friendly and safe community and environment, and small class sizes.

5. *Assessment of selection process*: Sending assessment once international students have begun their semesters to learn ways to better assist them in their selection process and to assist with challenges faced.

6. *Transitional activities*: Providing transitional activities and resources for international students due to two of the challenging factors being cultural differences/culture shock and fear of loneliness and homesickness. This involves intentionally reaching out to international students during their admission process and during orientation programs to address challenging factors.

**Limitations**

Many limitations restricted the progression and threatened the validity of the study. Four potential limitations of this study were identified and the following is a description of each. One limitation identified was the access to participants. It was difficult to get many participants to fill out the survey when it was sent to them via email through the Office of International Students and Scholars. The second limitation was inability to control if participants responded the survey multiple times on various email accounts. The third limitation was that the researcher directly emailed graduate department chairs to send out the researcher's email to encourage more participation in the survey. This influenced the sample due to professors responding differently to their email to the graduate students. It was shown that the sample was influenced from the
majority of the sample of international students being graduate students. The final limitation was utilizing the mixed methods research design. The researcher was not experienced or well-practiced in the methods of both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. This inexperience may have been a limitation.

**Conclusion**

This study was conducted to gain increased understanding of the influences of international students' college selection to study in the U.S. and Eastern Illinois University and the barriers and challenges they faced when making the decision to study in the U.S. International education has continued to be an important segment in U.S. higher education. The U.S. higher education system in the past has outperformed others from across the world with the exceedingly diverse options there are for international students to choose from (Education USA, 2016). It is clear from this study that international students are continuing to face several challenges when making the decision to study in the U.S. Additionally, there are numerous factors and reasons why international students choose to study in the United States and choose to attend EIU. EIU and other regional U.S. institutions can benefit from this study to better assist international students in their selection process by emphasizing the factors that are important or significant influencers on that population decision to study in the United States in general, but their institution more specially. In addition, it is probably more important today that international offices and programs should assist international students with the barriers and challenges they have to go through. Recent events in the U.S. with the presidential election of President Trump, have resulted in changes that may be detrimental to international education Other countries such as Germany, the U.K. and
Australia are ceasing the opportunities to sell their countries as more attractive. According to Rodriguez (2018), “In its most recent edition, Study.EU Country Ranking mentions the “Trump Effect” as one of the factors “making Europe more desirable to degree-seeking students from the U.S, Africa and Asia.” If internationalization is to remain a viable part of the enrichment of U.S. higher education, institutions must do what is needed to position themselves to win the minds of a population that are finding themselves with more options.
References


http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/decision-making.html


Cuellar, B. (2016, November 9). Email.


De Wit, H. (2009). Internationalization of higher education in the United States of America and Europe. IAP


http://www.dictionary.com/browse/motivation


Education USA. (2016). Why Internationalize? https://educationusa.state.gov/us-
higher-education-professionals/why-internationalize


http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/History/1920s#WiasL1MrLIU


Kemp, S., Mazzarol, T., & Savery, L. (1997). International students who choose not to
study in Australia: An Examination of Taiwan and Indonesia. *Institute for Research into International Competitiveness.*

file:///C:/Users/john/Downloads/Mazzarol%20and%20Kemp%201996.pdf


*Journal of Counseling and Development, 78*, 137–144.


https://istart.iu.edu/nafsa/reports/state.cfm?state=IL&year=2015


https://www.nafsa.org/About_Us/About_International_Education/Internationalization/


http://www.nafsa.org/Policy_and_Advocacy/Policy_Resources/Policy_Trends_and_Data/NAFSA_International_Student_Economic_Value_Tool/

Internationalization.

http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Research_and_Trends/Trends_and_Insights/The_Best_in_the_World__Not_in_Internationalization/


https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/influence


international students. *Forbes*. Retrieved from


*Teachers College News, Kao Chih Shen here this summer term.* (1930). *15*(3-S), 1.

https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkk


Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

Do you wish to continue?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Are you an international student at Eastern Illinois University?
   a. Yes
   b. No

What is your age?

What is your gender?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Other

Which of the following best describes your racial and ethnic background?
   a. White (Eastern European, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, North Coast of Africa,
          Northern European, Western European, White Caribbean, Other White)
   b. Black or African American (African, Black Caribbean, Black South or Central
      American)
   c. American Indian or Alaska Native (Alaska Native or Aleut, North American
      Indian, American Indian South, Caribbean Indian)
   d. Asian (Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, Other Southeast Asian,
      Vietnamese)
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Guamanian, Samoan, Other Pacific
      Islander)
   f. Hispanic/Latino/a
   g. Other

Current year in school?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Graduate Student
What is your academic major or program?

What is your country of origin?

Is English your first language?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Have you studied in the United States before?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Please describe why you wanted to study in the United States instead of somewhere else.

Who did you first talk to about wanting to study in the U.S.?
   a. A friend or family member
   b. An agent
   c. A representative from EIU
   d. A high school counselor
   e. Other

What were some of the challenges that you had to overcome in order to come to the United States?

How did you first hear about EIU?

Why did you choose to attend EIU?

Rate each of the following on a scale of (1) not difficult at all to (5) very difficult regarding the process of coming to study in the United States.
   a. Cost and fees
   b. Availability of scholarships or work
   c. Visa processing and visa cost
   d. Form 1-20
   e. English language proficiency

Rate each of the following on a scale of (1) not at all significant/important to (5) very significant/important, on the role they played in you coming to the U.S.
   a. Family
   b. Friends
   c. Geographical location
d. Reputation of the U.S.
e. Reputation of EIU
f. Safety
g. Cost and fees
h. Availability of scholarships or work
i. Ease of visa processing and visa cost
j. Historical or economic links between U.S. and your home country
k. Availability of specific academic programs
l. Geographic proximity of U.S.
m. Lifestyle in U.S.
n. Weather in U.S.
o. Recognition of qualifications
p. Family and friends in U.S.
q. Plans for immigration
r. Overall value for money

Rate each of the following on a scale of (1) not at all significant/important to (5) very significant/important, on the role they played in the decision of you coming to Eastern Illinois University to study.

a. Family
b. Friends
c. Geographical location
d. Reputation of the U.S.
e. Reputation of EIU
f. Safety
g. Cost and fees
h. Availability of scholarships or work
i. Ease of visa processing and visa cost
j. Historical or economic links between U.S. and your home country
k. Availability of specific academic programs
l. Geographic proximity of U.S.
m. Lifestyle in U.S.
n. Weather in U.S.
o. Recognition of qualifications
p. Family and friends in U.S.
q. Plans for immigration
r. Overall value for money

Thank you for your participation in this survey! I appreciate your time. Good luck with the rest of your semester! If you have any questions, please contact yrodriguez@eiu.edu.
Enter your name and email to be entered into a raffle to win 1 of 2 $50 Walmart gift cards for completing this survey. If you choose to enter this information, your data will still be kept anonymous. Thank you!

a. Email
Appendix B

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Yazmin Rodriguez from Eastern Illinois University. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are currently enrolled as an international student at Eastern Illinois University. The primary purpose of this study is to gain increased understanding of the development of the decision-making of international students as it relates to the decision to study in the U.S. and Eastern Illinois University specifically. There is no risk for participating, and your participation will help the international education community gain insights into effective ways of working with international students and recruitment. All data collected will be aggregate, and cannot be linked to any single individual. Any information that is obtained will remain confidential. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. However, in appreciation of volunteering your time, you will be provided with an opportunity to win 1 of 2, $50 gift cards to Walmart by entering your email address. This will be kept separate from the rest of the questionnaire to protect your identity. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Yazmin Rodriguez (Principal investigator) – yrodriguez@eiu.edu.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

It is expected that this study will contribute significantly to our understanding of factors that attract international students to mid-sized public universities. In addition, if you chose to, you may participate in a drawing for chance to win a $50 gift card (two will be awarded) for your time taking part in the survey.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your survey will be completed and submitted anonymously; your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be identified by name.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this research study is voluntary and not a requirement or a condition for being the recipient of benefits or services from Eastern Illinois University or any other organization sponsoring the research project. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits or services to which you are otherwise entitled.
Appendix C

IRB Approval

September 6, 2017

Yazmin Rodriguez
Counseling and Student Development

Thank you for submitting the research protocol titled, “Development of the International Student: Affective and Behavioral Processes for Selecting a U.S. Institution” for review by the Eastern Illinois University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has reviewed this research protocol and effective 8/31/2017, has certified this protocol meets the federal regulations exemption criteria for human subjects research. The protocol has been given the IRB number 17-096. You are approved to proceed with your study. The classification of this protocol as exempt is valid only for the research activities and subjects described in the above named protocol. IRB policy requires that any proposed changes to this protocol must be reported to, and approved by, the IRB before being implemented. You are also required to inform the IRB immediately of any problems encountered that could adversely affect the health or welfare of the subjects in this study. Please contact me, or the Compliance Coordinator at 581-8576, in the event of an emergency. All correspondence should be sent to:

Institutional Review Board
C/O Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Telephone: 217-581-8576
Fax: 217-581-7181
Email: euirb@www.eiu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation, and the best of success with your research.

John Bickford, Chairperson
Institutional Review Board
Telephone: 217-581-7881
Email: jbickford@eiu.edu