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INCREASING ENROLLMENT: EVALUATING COLLEGE-CHOICE FACTORS AT
A MIDWEST CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

by

Jeremy J. Hayes

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

School of Graduate and Continuing Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for

The Degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Ethical Leadership


May 2014

INCREASING ENROLLMENT: EVALUATING COLLEGE-CHOICE FACTORS AT
A MIDWEST CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

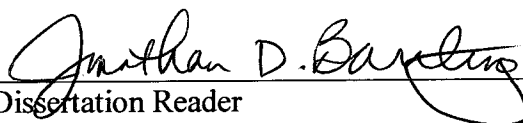
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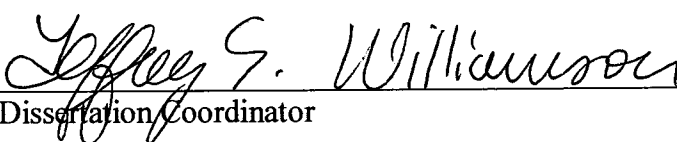
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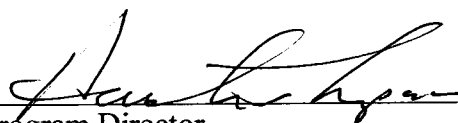
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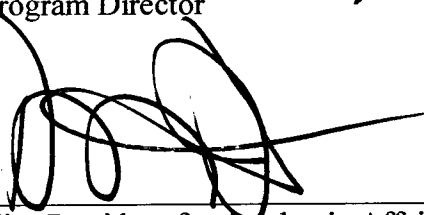
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Dissertation Coordinator

6-8-14
Date


Program Director

June 9, 2014
Date


Vice President for Academic Affairs

June 9, 2014
Date

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DEDICATION

To my mom and dad, Nancy and Mark Hayes, thank you for all of your love, words of encouragement, and unwavering support. You instilled the work ethic and values in me that made this possible. Mom, you taught me how to work hard, and dad, you taught me how to work smart. You guys were always a phone call away from helping me with anything I ever needed throughout this entire process. You were the perfect role models for me throughout the years and planted the seeds for this accomplishment. Thanks for everything, you guys are the best.

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the college-choice factors of 628 freshman students from a Midwest Christian University to determine which variables had the greatest impact on their decision to attend a particular university. Surveys were distributed to freshman students at the new-student orientation during the fall of 2012. The results indicated that institutional factors have the most influence on freshman students' college-choice decision. In addition, marketing factors are slightly more influential than non-marketing factors. The campus visit is the most influential factor effecting the college-choice decision. The findings also revealed that marketers can be just as influential, if not more, than parents and peers in effecting which university students choose to attend. Parents are the most influential college-choice factor in which a university has no control. Finally, demographics played a minimal role in the college-choice decision of freshman students at the Midwest Christian University. The majority of the participants were white and from the suburbs within the state.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prospective college students have many options to choose from when deciding which higher education institution to attend. The options range from traditional public and private four-year universities, to online colleges, to community colleges and more. When making the college-choice decision, some potential students consider going to various colleges and universities, while others quickly decide to enroll in a particular school. What compels potential students to enroll in private universities as opposed to other colleges and universities? College-choice has been defined as “the process through which students decide whether and where to go to college” (Bergerson, 2009, p.2).

Factors that affect enrollment include: marketing, the admissions process, financial aid, peer influence, and student advisors. For example, what roles do customer service and university websites play on influencing potential undergraduate students to enroll in universities? Prospective students have expectations of the information they can find online from colleges. Students are seeking academic program details, a list of degrees offered, and cost of attendance. If this information is difficult to find, unclear, or is part of a poorly designed website, potential students will likely remove the college from the list of potential institutions that they might attend (Noel-Levitz, 2010a).

In recent years, formalized marketing concepts have become important in the decision- making process of college administrators. The introduction of senior-level

marketing positions in higher education institutions is evidence of an increased focus on these efforts (Quatroache, 2004). Marketing offers countless benefits to colleges that can harness their creative energy toward positive and long-term institutional enhancement (Mitchell, 1980). The strengths of the student body are used as a marketing tool in emphasizing the quality of the university and the ability to achieve rankings, and encourage prospective students to enroll in the institution (Filter, 2010). Understanding the factors that influence enrollment can help universities succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace for education. This study will review the factors that contributed to students' choice to enroll in a specific private university.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the challenges private universities face to increase enrollment, private universities must modify their enrollment marketing strategies to increase undergraduate enrollment while fulfilling their educational mission. Higher education is now facing increasing competition from for-profit universities and reduced funding from typical sources (McCoy, 2011). The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the factors that influence undergraduate students to enroll at a particular Midwest Christian University as well as fill a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. The analysis will aid the marketing strategies at private universities to increase their enrollment. The goal of the researcher is to evaluate what compels potential students to enroll in a specific university in order to uncover opportunities to improve marketing strategies in efforts to increase enrollment.

There is no research on record that analyzes an entire population of incoming freshman students at a private university by comparing the student-recruitment marketing

efforts controlled by an institution to the factors that impact college-choice over which an institution has little or no control (Donnellan, 2002). This represents a significant gap in research. While institutions can control their marketing mix factors including product, price, promotion, and place, other environmental forces are beyond their control. These environmental forces include social, economical, competitive, and technological forces. By identifying trends related to each of these forces, institutions can develop and maintain successful marketing plans (Kerin, Hartley, & Rudelius, 2011).

Background

Enrollment management is an imperative part of increasing enrollment and managing the factors that affect the college-choice decision of potential students. Enrollment management typically includes both an administrative structure and a coordinated approach to achieving the optimum recruitment of students. By coordinating efforts in marketing recruitment, admissions, financial aid, orientation, and retention enrollment management influences the size and make-up of the student body (Hossler & Kemerer, 1986). The field of enrollment management has embraced an approach to understanding consumer behavior and college-choice through psychographic and demographic data, and advanced marketing techniques (Posecznick, 2010). Enrollment of students ensures fiscal solvency of colleges and universities through tuition dollars, provides opportunities for the school to market themselves based on the demographics of the population, and earns rankings on the selectivity of the admitted class (Morse & Flanigan, 2008). Because most higher education institutions are tuition driven, the college admissions landscape has taken on an exceedingly competitive nature (Barr, 2002). To successfully recruit and enroll desired populations, it is essential for administrators to

understand why individuals choose to enroll at their particular institution of higher education instead of at other schools (Filter, 2010). By understanding why the variables that influence college-choice, administrators are able to assess the strength of their enrollment management process in order to matriculate an incoming class that is large enough to generate the necessary tuition revenue (Samuel, 2009).

Throughout the late 1970's and early 1980's colleges increasingly used more advanced and aggressive marketing strategies to attract both students in general and high performing students in particular (Duffy & Goldberg, 1998). In the last 20 years, enrollment management has gone from a strategy practiced at a small number of private universities to the standard procedure at most public and private institutions (Hossler, 2004). Within the previous 10 years, colleges had begun to approach comprehensive enrollment management through the implementation of consumer-based knowledge when recruiting qualified students. As a result of this approach, colleges have needed to spend increasing amounts of their limited budget on marketing efforts to understand, manage, and attract potential students. In 2004, private four-year universities spent an estimated \$2,167 to recruit a student, and admissions spent on average 58% of their time counseling prospective students (Hawkins & Clinedinst, 2006). As the number of prospective students continues to grow, colleges need to refine their marketing strategies to reduce costs and maximize reach to optimize their return on investment.

The college-choice process occurs in three stages: predisposition, search, and choice (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). In reviewing the factors that lead to college-choice of undergraduate students, many of the same principles that pertain to graduate and international students apply. Across all levels of higher education peer influence,

customer service, marketing, recruitment, educational programs, and efforts from the admissions office play a significant role in helping prospective students select where to go to college. Understanding previous research on college-choice factors of graduate and international students can be used to enhance the understanding of college choice factors of undergraduate students.

In evaluating marketing strategies universities use to increase enrollment, the background can be broken down into five sections that include studies that focus on undergraduate students, community college students, high school students, graduate students, and international students. These studies found various influences on college-choice decisions of potential students including peer influence, various marketing efforts, and the level of faculty involvement in recruiting efforts. While the purpose of this study is to determine the college-choice factors of students in a private university, it is important to identify the factors that contribute to a prospective students' college choice, regardless the institutional level. Understanding these factors will enhance a university's marketing plan to increase enrollment. The following studies will provide a background on prospective students of various higher education institutions and the findings related to their college-choice decision.

Undergraduate Students

The following studies focused on the college-choice factors of current and prospective undergraduate students. Norwood (2009) distributed surveys to African American freshman at predominately-white four-year universities to determine the factors that influenced their choice of college. Norwood found that the top factor for these African-American students' choice of college was academic reputation of school,

followed by indications that graduates of the school received good jobs, and social reputation. The least important factor of college choice of these African-American students was advice received from a counselor. Norwood's study indicated that African-American students have very similar methods for choosing colleges at predominately-white colleges. Race does not seem to be a significant factor in the choice of college in this particular study.

Donnellan's (2002) research reinforced Norwood's (2009) findings that advice received from counselors played little role in the college-choice decision-making process. Donnellan distributed a survey to 453 freshmen at the University of Massachusetts to determine whether marketing factors controlled by a university have a greater impact on college choice than external environmental factors uncontrollable by a university. Donnellan showed that non-marketing factors were more influential on the respondents' college-choice decisions than marketing factors. The most influential non-marketing factors were parents and friends. The most influential marketing factors to the respondents were the campus visit and information provided about specific majors. Price was the most influential institutional attribute on college choice. Donnellan's study reinforced that peers have a strong influence in the college choice of a potential student. Marketing strategies may need to be focused on peers as well as potential students. This study closely reflected the research that was conducted to evaluate college-choice factors at the Midwest Christian University as Donnellan's survey instrument was adapted for this study. While Donnellan used a case study at a public university, the research conducted at the Midwest Christian University will be a case study at a private university. Donnellan's study also failed to represent the population from a demographics standpoint.

While Donnellan's (2002) study focused on undergraduate students at a public university, Sauder (2008) researched the college-choice factors of prospective students of private universities. Sauder studied the views of Adventist college-bound students and the factors that influenced their college choices. Sauder utilized a mixed method approach that involved focus groups as well as a nationwide telephone survey of college-bound Adventists. Sauder found that students not attending Adventist academies reported little to no contact with Adventist college recruiters, and stated that academic program and closeness to home were important motivators for college choice. Spirituality was also an important motivator for students headed towards Adventist colleges. Sauder's study described religious factors that influenced potential college students' decisions and the lack of knowledge they received based on the kind of high school they attended. Religious factors should be considered when marketing private universities.

While the previous studies focused on overall college-choice factors of prospective students, Martin's (2006) research focused on marketing to students through university websites. Martin studied the presentation of information on university websites through the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) of information processing. Martin's HSM proposed that when people were presented with a message, they will either cognitively process the information by carefully analyzing the message or draw conclusions about the information based on personal *theories* triggered by an element of the message. Martin evaluated college students in two experiments that assessed information processing and its effect on attitude formation from university websites. Martin's first experiment included 281 participants where message elements on a university website were changed to determine the effects on attitude of the students by

the inclusion, absence or combination of; a student photograph, a quote from a student, and statistics about the university. Martin's second experiment included 328 participants and involved manipulating the amount of student testimonials on the site and language type. Martin showed that both the type and amount of message elements presented on college websites had an effect on the measures of attitude toward the university and measures of intent to gain more information about the university. Martin's study provided insight into the importance of marketing universities through websites. Just a few adjustments to some web pages gave students a different view about a college.

In a similar study, Pegoraro's (2006) research compared the efficiency of several university websites. Pegoraro studied the content of Canadian University websites and compared the standard usability guidelines of websites established through previous research. Pegoraro found the level of usability was fair to good, while the relationship marketing content was only moderate to fair. Pegoraro assessed content for relationship building capacity using previous research into student expectations for website content. Pegoraro found a significant negative correlation between usability and relationship marketing content where institutions performed well at one or the other aspect of their websites, but not both. Pegoraro also found a significant correlation between website usability and institutional size and operating budget. Pegoraro's study described how the internet should be a marketing equalizer among universities vying for enrollment and website traffic; however, large universities have the edge in efficient websites due to significantly larger operating budgets than smaller institutions. The Midwest Christian University would be considered a smaller institution with a lower operating budget than many larger institutions. However, if website marketing is found to play a diminished

role in college-choice factors of freshman students, the website marketing plan may need to be reviewed for enhancement opportunities.

Whereas the previous studies focused on the factors that cause students to enroll in a particular university, Thoene (2011) researched the factors that caused students to enroll in particular courses. Thoene reported that college administrators and faculty members at a Midwestern college were facing financial cutbacks and needed to justify their program offerings; however, the college administrators and faculty who were studied did not know what information sources students relied upon when choosing courses. Thoene measured four factors that influence students to enroll in particular courses: academic advisors, parents, peers, and RateMyProfessor.com. Through surveys that were distributed to 467 students at this particular Midwestern college, Thoene discovered that academic advisors had the highest influence in determining in which classes students enrolled, followed by peers, parents, and RateMyProfessors.com. By understanding the influences that each of these factors had on college students during course selection, faculty members may be able to develop effective marketing strategies to encourage more students to enroll in their courses. Thoene's study provided insight into factors that influenced college students' decisions in course selection. Marketing specific courses may be just as valuable as college's marketing to increase enrollment.

The following study looked at how to improve a particular Associate in Arts program within a university. Bacon (2010) reported that the enrollment and retention of students in the Associate in Arts program at the University of Delaware were below the University of Delaware's expectations due to poor image issues associated with community colleges, and the University of Delaware's marketing mix of product, price,

place, and promotion. The University of Delaware established an Associate of Arts Program to ensure that students at branch campuses were prepared for the challenges of the University, however, enrollment numbers remained below expectations of the University. Bacon's study utilized surveys distributed to high school seniors and guidance counselors in Delaware, Associate in Arts program faculty and staff, and both enrolled students and students who graduated from the Associate in Arts program.

According to Bacon, the price of education at a university was an indicator of product quality, status and prestige. Bacon indicated that a negative image impact of the Associate in Arts program at the University of Delaware existed because the tuition was set at comparable prices to community college rates and because university branch campuses were located at community college sites. In addition, the University of Delaware gave minimal attention to promotional events to launch the Associate in Arts program, which contributed to enrollment numbers below the university's expectations.

Bacon's study provided insight about the challenges that universities face in developing an image consistent with university standards. Educational programs, like products, need to be promoted and have the right marketing strategy to succeed. Tweaking a product's image can give new life to that product and be the difference between success and failure. As competition within higher education institutions continues to grow, so do the number of branch campuses provided by private universities. While many private universities require freshman students to take classes on the main campus, Bacon's findings on the University of Delaware's unique program could be applied to non-traditional students of private universities with college experience who are allowed to take courses at branch campuses.

Community College Students

The subsequent studies focused on prospective students' decisions to attend a particular community college. Quatroache (2004) compared demographic and geographic student groups in relation to both the promotional marketing methods to which they are most receptive and their college-choice preferences. Quatroache distributed surveys to 753 freshmen at community colleges during student registration sessions. Quatroache revealed that there were consistent similarities among demographic and geographic groups' first choices of promotional marketing activities and college-choice factors and activities. While few differences existed among some of these geographic and demographic segments, Quatroache stated that direct mail, brochures, and radio spots were the most cost-effective methods of reaching the greatest number of students to promote a community college's low cost and convenient location. Quatroache's study described how marketing to various geographic segments should be very similar given the similar responses to his survey.

While Quatroache's (2004) study found that marketing strategies to various geographic segments should be similar, Romali's (2011) research uncovered how marketing strategies need to be adjusted when the marketing budget is reduced. Romali studied several California community colleges and their changes in enrollment strategies associated with a California Senate Bill that equalized funding to all of the state's community colleges, paying each community college at the same rate per full-time equivalent student. Prior to the Senate Bill passing in 2006, California community college funding levels were disparate, with some colleges gaining significantly more funding per student than other colleges. Romali explored how California community colleges

capitalized on enrollment growth strategies by conducting personal interviews with senior academic and student services administrators from two colleges in the Pacific Community College District. Romali used pattern coding to identify possible themes across responses and found that institutions could improve enrollment by using institutional research data, linking enrollment to budget, capitalizing on marketing/outreach opportunities, and efficiently scheduling courses. Many private universities continue to increase enrollment goals while budgets decrease, Romali's study illustrated how a college can be successful while having to adjust their marketing strategy because of a limited budget.

Community colleges must continue to re-evaluate their marketing plans to see what strategies work. Denton (2007) compared and evaluated television-viewing habits of freshman at Meridian Community college and looked for the message that called them to action to enroll. Denton distributed a survey to freshman, which included *call-to-action* preferences, media preferences and habits, and perceived goals. In the end, Denton identified television advertisement as the preferred message for encouraging further interest in Meridian Community College; however, the impact of a positive reference by family and friends was the leading influence to attend Meridian Community College. Denton's study described how, although television advertisement is a good way to establish a brand image, peer references is still the leading decision factor for potential students. Enhanced marketing plans may need to be developed for everyone involved in the decision making process, not just the potential student.

Dickenson (2003) researched the marketing and enrollment management strategies of newly-enrolled students at Southeast Technical Institute (STI), a two-year

college. Dickenson distributed surveys to 286 new students during orientation and achieved a 100% response rate. Students answered questions relating to the factors that affected their choice of college. While the actions of STI staff may have exerted some influence during the college-choice process, students' preconceived notions of what they knew about the institute was much more influential than most other factors. Students felt that printed material and personal campus visits were more influential than the use of mass media. Students' decisions to attend STI were mostly influenced by their friends. Dickenson's study gave a unique perspective about what influenced students to enroll into college on their first day of school, as opposed to surveying students mid-year or after graduation. Dickenson's survey distribution method was highly effective in receiving a 100% response rate and the research to be conducted at the Midwest Christian University will use the same effective method of survey distribution.

Mayfield (2005) conducted a study to use social network analysis as a tool to identify a target marketing audience for the vocational educational programs in a southern California community college. Mayfield assessed students' social networks through means of measuring the influence of people in their lives. Mayfield found parents, teachers, counselors, field professionals and peers as the most obvious people to influence a potential student. Through a survey method, including questions about demographics and a peer influences, Mayfield compared three vocational educational programs at a southern California community college. Mayfield indicated that all three vocational education programs drew unique individuals. Marketing to these individuals was most effective if done through the internet, targeting parents of prospective students, targeting students already on the community college campus, and making sure the

program's initial contact person was warm and considerate. In addition, Mayfield determined that the counselor was the weakest influence in the student's decision for career or program enrollment. Mayfield's study found that marketing individual programs was more effective than marketing the community college as a whole. It may also be more effective to increase enrollment at a private university by marketing individual programs rather than the university as a whole.

High School Students

The following studies involve college-choice factors of high school students. If perceptions of recruiting efforts of high school students are known, then universities can have a better idea where to focus their marketing efforts. Smith (2006) administered a survey to approximately 1,700 Western New York high school students to study their college selection process. Smith analyzed how students' perceptions of different college search resources varied according to their racial background, parents' educational backgrounds, academic ability, academic aspiration, and geographic focus of their college searches. Smith revealed that academic ability, academic aspiration, and parental education had no effect on how students rated the usefulness of any college selection resources during the search and choice phases of the college selection process. Students rated college websites as the most useful source during the college search stage. Finally, students perceived campus tours as the most useful search resource while deciding which college to attend. In Smith's study, race, parents' educational backgrounds, academic ability, and academic inspiration did not affect the way high school students search for colleges. Although these demographic factors were found not to have an effect on college-choice factors of high school students in New York, they are worth evaluating in

students at the Midwest Christian University as perceptions of students change after they have enrolled in a particular university.

McLeod (1990) compared the meaning of 15 photographs of various college settings to high school seniors with the meaning of the same photographs to adult participants in continuing education activities. McLeod projected slides to 76 adults and 75 high school students. To differentiate between the two groups' perceptions of photographs, McLeod used a semantic differential scale, a method of interpreting the psychological meaning of a concept by use of what words mean to individuals. McLeod found that the adult group saw the pictures as more positive than the high school group. McLeod's study described how the same college marketing photographs can invoke two different sets of feelings for potential students of various age categories. Marketing publications must be studied at all levels of educational institutions to establish which demographic groups of people they will appeal to most.

Graduate Students

In reviewing the factors that cause graduate students to enroll at specific universities, Andrignola (2010) studied the factors that lead working adults to enroll in graduate programs. Through a qualitative interview process of 25 working adults enrolled in graduate school, Andrignola revealed that students expect the same level of customer service from institutions of higher education as they do when they purchase all other goods and services. Andrignola's results showed that educated consumers are well-informed shoppers and are looking for points of differentiation to help them decide where to buy. While many colleges look and act alike, the level of customer service will ultimately set them apart. Andrignola's study illustrated how similar the purchase

practices are between prospective college students and regular consumers. Customer service is important in education and business, and is an integral part of attracting potential students. Potential students at all levels have come to expect a high level of customer service when entering a university at any level. If the customer service does not meet their expectations, students are more likely to go elsewhere to receive an education.

While customer service was found to be an important factor in Andrignola's (2010) study, Stack (2010) found that the ability to balance work and school is also an important college choice factor for graduate students. Stack identified college choice factors that influenced working graduate students to enroll in an M.B.A. program at a private university. Stack distributed surveys to 341 currently enrolled business graduate students at the university. In the end, Stack found that the ability to balance work and school most strongly influenced students' decisions to enroll at the university. While the enrollment factors for M.B.A students may be different from undergraduate students, the overall study provided somewhat of an outline for researching enrollment factors of undergraduate students. Similar instruments and methodologies can be used to determine college-choice factors of prospective undergraduate students in private universities, however, the outcomes of the studies may be different as undergraduate students are generally not employed full-time.

Although identifying how to spend a marketing budget and how to provide a balanced work life is important in recruiting graduate students, it is also important to utilize faculty members in recruiting efforts. Woodhouse (2006) studied graduate faculty involvement in graduate student recruitment at a research university to determine if faculty were involved in enrollment strategies. Woodhouse surveyed 148 graduate faculty

members and found an overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that graduate student recruitment is not a required part of their job responsibilities, however, these faculty members engage in day-to-day recruitment of students. Woodhouse described how faculty members go beyond their scope of duties to increase enrollment at their university. Having faculty members involved in recruitment efforts may be another cost-effective way to increase enrollment at private universities.

International Students

Many of the factors that affect the college-choice decision of prospective international students are similar to those of domestic undergraduate students. Buuck (1996) studied the recruitment of international undergraduate students at 18 small private colleges and universities in Wisconsin, consisting of fewer than 4,000 full-time undergraduate students. Buuck conducted his study in four phases. In Phase I, Buuck sent a survey to the colleges and universities to gain data on recruitment and retention statistics. In Phase II, Buuck sent a survey to all international undergraduate students who were currently enrolled in the surveyed institutions. In Phase III, Buuck conducted 11 interviews with administrators at three of the surveyed institutions. In Phase IV, Buuck conducted 18 interviews with international undergraduate students at the same three institutions. Buuck indicated that most international undergraduate students first heard about their chosen college/university through friends and relatives. Most international undergraduates chose to attend a college/university because it offered the academic major they wished to pursue. Buuck's study provided a large sample size that described how international students made their college-choice decision. Peer influence was found to be a significant factor in exposing international students to institutions of which they would

not otherwise have been aware. Peer influence may have a similar effect on domestic students at private universities.

In addition to offering the right academic major, Kim (2001) found that academic reputation is also an influential college-choice factor to international students. Kim researched the effectiveness of institutional marketing and recruiting activities aimed at attracting international undergraduate students, as well as the impact these have on the college choice of such students at three universities in New York. Kim distributed surveys to randomly selected international undergraduate students and school administrators involved in international admissions and recruitment. Kim also conducted interviews with the school administrators. The results of Kim's study showed that academic reputation and costs were the most influential factors in choosing to apply and enroll in a school. Service-related factors, availability of international student services and helpfulness of staff, as well as other school characteristics, campus location and community size, were rated as low in importance. While college-choice factors of international students will not be the focus in the research to be conducted at the Midwest Christian University, Kim's research could provide additional insight.

In a related study, Wang (2009) researched the institutional marketing and recruitment strategies that two Canadian universities had developed to attract international undergraduate students to study on campus. Wang collected data from the universities through interviews with university leaders and international students, and an on-line survey with international students. Wang determined that most international students chose a university based on its reputation and program quality, followed by the recognition of the degree in their home country, tuition and expenses, and the quick

response of the university. Wang's study showed how international students have very similar college-choice traits as domestic students. Marketing enrollment strategies for international students may not be much different from marketing strategies for domestic students.

Yang (2003) studied the strategies, rationales, and public policies at the institutional, provincial, and federal levels concerning international student recruitment in the 16 public colleges of Alberta, Canada. Yang distributed surveys to all of the Alberta public colleges, conducted personal interviews with selected college personnel involved with international student recruitment, and analyzed documentation. Yang discovered that international students were recruited to enrich campus culture, generate revenue, and internationalize the public college in Alberta. Yang also found that very few colleges had specific strategic recruitment planning, rather, recruitment strategies relied on web publications, brochures, advisors, and alumni. Most of the colleges in this study developed websites and flyers and hoped students would show up, without having any real recruitment strategy or analysis. Colleges in the United States and Canada should have marketing plans in place to manage enrollment strategies to increase enrollment. If it is uncovered that students surveyed have a wide range of factors that affected their college-choice decision, then marketing efforts may need to be enhanced to target specific demographics to improve marketing budget efficiencies.

Mallet (2007) investigated recruitment strategies that influenced international undergraduate enrollment at 61 public and private institutions in the United States from 2003 to 2005. The universities that Mallet studied centered on undergraduate instructional programs with an arts and sciences focus. Mallet examined various

international undergraduate recruitment practices, reasons why international students chose to attend particular universities, and how these areas were recognized by lead international admissions personnel. Mallet distributed surveys to undergraduate admission personnel from 61 arts and science universities. Mallet noted that there were no significant differences in international enrollment numbers between public and private universities from 2003 to 2005, and Mallet's study found that recruiting strategies geared toward international students did not change between public and private universities over that three-year time span.

The background research provides a brief overview of studies that focused on the college-choice factors of undergraduate students, community college students, high school students, graduate students, and international students. Understanding the factors that contribute to a prospective students' college-choice, no matter the institutional level, will corroborate the findings of this study and enhance a private university's marketing plan to increase enrollment. This study addressed a void in the current research related to sample size, lack of demographic information, and factors that an institution can control versus those factors it cannot control. The research conducted at the Midwest Christian University sampled nearly 100% of the incoming freshmen and determined the differences in college-choice factors of students at a particular Midwest Christian University.

Research Questions

The topic of this research sought to study the college-choice factors that influenced undergraduate freshman students at a Midwest Christian University. With the growing competition of higher education, how do private universities attract potential students? It is evident that college student marketing concepts are needed to achieve institutional enrollment goals (Whiteside, 2004).

This study sought to find:

1. What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?
2. What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?
3. What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?

Description of Terms

College-choice. “The process through which students decide whether and where to go to college” (Bergerson, 2009, p.2).

Enrollment management. A campus-wide effort that includes the coordination of related efforts to achieve the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation of students (Dolence, 1990).

Institutional factor. The characteristics of a college or university that are appealing to applicants. The list includes location, price, and scholarships (Donnellan, 2002).

Marketing factor. An element of a college or university's marketing strategy for recruiting students controllable by the institution. The list includes course catalogs, open houses, Facebook pages, and Websites (Donnellan, 2002).

Non-Marketing factor. Factors impacting college-choice that are not directly controllable by an institution. The list includes parents, friends, alumni, and current students (Donnellan, 2002).

Non-traditional students. Students who take a break longer than six months after graduating high school prior to attending a college or university.

Prospect. A student who has not inquired about the college, but who is in a potential pool of candidates who have been identified as having a possibility of enrolling. An example of a prospect would be a student on a mailing list purchased from the College Board who fits the parameters of a *typical* student (Lee, 2010).

Reach. The number of different people exposed to an advertisement (Kerin et al., 2011).

Stealth applicants. Students whose applications for admission represent the first recorded contact with the university (Dupaul, 2010).

Traditional students. Students who attend a college or university within six months of graduating high school.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant given the increased competition among colleges to increase enrollment. The research identified which factors had the greatest influence in determining why freshman students chose a particular Midwest Christian University over other higher educational institutions. Understanding how freshman students perceive pre-

enrollment interactions with universities can be important in determining how marketing strategies can be improved in the future. This study can be used as a guide for admissions staff at private universities to see which controllable and uncontrollable marketing factors have the most influence in the college choice of potential students.

Process to Accomplish

The research will begin by administering paper-and-pencil surveys to incoming freshman students at the Midwest Christian University during the freshman orientation. Once the surveys were completed and collected, the results were tabulated to determine what factors influenced the enrollment decision.

This study was conducted at a Midwestern Christian University. The population of this study consisted of all incoming freshman students currently enrolled at the Midwest Christian University. As of fall 2010, the Midwest Christian University consisted of approximately 3,500 undergraduate students. Of these students, the freshman class had nearly 750 students (“Education”, 2013). The Midwest Christian University is described as:

The Midwest Christian University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that provides approximately 100 fields of study consisting of four schools and one college. The School of Graduate and Continuing Studies offers a variety of master's degrees in such fields as business, counseling, education, nursing, ministry, as well as nontraditional adult degree completion programs and a Doctor of Education degree. The Midwest Christian University believes in faith as an integral part of education and has a nearly 100-year-old foundation dedicated to Christian education (Olivet Nazarene University, 2012).

In an attempt to survey as many incoming freshman students as possible, a purposive sample of freshman students from the Midwest Christian University was surveyed during the freshman orientation held on August 27, 2012. It was anticipated that if students are surveyed prior to the start of classes during new student orientation that they will have a better recollection of why they chose to enroll at the particular private university over other schools. This purposive sample will include both traditional and non-traditional students across all subject majors. Data collection will be done in cooperation with the admissions team from the Midwest Christian University.

Prior to the study, written permission was obtained from the Administration at the Midwest Christian University to conduct research in their institution. Through an informed consent form, participants were given a brief description of the study, and were asked to voluntarily participate. To assure anonymity, students were not required to state their names on the survey. Participants were not subjected to any physical harm and it was anticipated that there was no mental harm associated with the study. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

To begin the study, a cover letter was provided to the Midwest Christian University employee in charge of making announcements at the orientation and a specific introduction was read to all freshman students. University employees present at the orientation passed out consent forms to each student and allow five minutes for completion. University employees collected the consent forms and place them specific labeled in envelopes. Next, surveys were passed out to the students. The participants were given 10 minutes to complete the survey. Upon completion, students turned in their surveys to the university employees. The university employees placed the completed

surveys in other specific labeled additional envelopes. Following the completion of surveys, the researcher collected the envelopes containing the consent forms and the completed surveys. The survey results were tabulated to determine the factors that freshman students say contributed to their choice of which university to attend.

The survey has been adapted from Donnellan's (2002) work, with the author's permission. The questionnaire included several four/five-point Likert scales, ranking scales, and multiple-choice questions relating factors that led to their decision to attend a particular Midwest Christian University. The data collected is a snapshot of the current beliefs in the sample populations at a given time.

The adaptations to Donnellan's (2002) survey are subtle, but essential to achieve the results that are necessary to answer the research questions that pertain to college-choice factors at private universities. It should be noted that Donnellan's survey was written for students at the University of Massachusetts (UMass). The modifications to Donnellan's survey included:

- Question one has been eliminated, which consisted of a five-point Likert scale that asked "How influential were the following factors in your decision to attend UMass?" The options for participants to circle included: TV ads featuring former UMass graduates Rick Pitino and Jack Welch, Radio ads featuring former UMass graduates Rick Pitino and Jack Welch, and TV news coverage about positive things happening at UMass. This question does not pertain to the study at hand, which consisted of students at private universities, as UMass has several university advertisements specifically focused at two particular alumni.

- Questions two and three have been changed from 5-point Likert scales to 4-point Likert scales. Questions two and three related to how influential certain people/factors were in one's decision to attend a university. The choices included: 1. Not influential, 2. Somewhat Influential, 3. Moderately influential, 4. Very influential, and 5. Not applicable. Converting these questions into 4-point Likert reduces confusion in a *not applicable* answer and provides a weighted score in the statistics.
- A response to question three has been changed. Question three asked "How influential were each of the following factors in your decision to attend UMass?" An option for the participant to circle was changed from "UMass viewbook" to "The MCU Facebook page". With the growth of Facebook over the last few years, this option is more relevant as a possible influence to college-choice than a viewbook, therefore the information obtained from this option is more valued.
- A response to question six has been inversely changed. Question six asked "Please circle the rating that best reflects your agreement with the following statements:". The response that was changed stated "Academic preparation at UMass is as good as prestigious private institutions". This question has been changed to "Academic preparation at MCU is as good as prestigious public institutions". UMass is a public school asking students feelings about private schools, to ask this question inversely keeps the overall meaning of this response intact.
- In question seven, a UMass viewbook reference has been changed to MCU Facebook page.

- Question eight asked several questions to determine the demographics of the students taking the survey. Within question eight, question two stated “My present age is ____”. This question has been replaced with: “I categorize myself as a:” a) Freshman (new student), b) Transfer student (previous time spent at another college or university). Incoming transfer students are expected to be present during the orientation. For this study, the focus is on differentiating college-choice factors between freshman and transfer students rather than determining the age of all the participants.
- A question about religion status has also been added to the demographic area of the survey. It is important to determine if the religion of the participants plays a factor in their college-choice, especially in the case of a religious private university. When determining what a private university can do to increase enrollment, this is a factor that cannot be overlooked by a private university.

Upon completion of the surveys, the results were tabulated and evaluated through a descriptive analysis to determine what factors influenced the enrollment decision of students currently enrolled at a private university (Question one). A series of tables were used to provide a summary of the data. Means and standard deviations were computed for rankings of institutionally controlled influencers on college choice, the college-choice influencers uncontrollable by the institution, and the institutional attributes (Donnellan, 2002).

Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted comparing demographic data with the descriptive analysis to determine what demographic factors were present in the enrollment decision of students (Question two). Demographic data consisted of gender,

race, location, previous educational experience, and religion. The demographic data was evaluated to determine the impact demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors.

Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted comparing demographic data with institutionally controlled influencers and influencers not controlled by the institution (Question three) (Donnellan, 2002). Institutionally controlled influencers consist of university web sites and various recruitment materials. Bivariate correlations were conducted to compare the rankings and ratings of institutionally controlled influencers, influencers not controlled by the institution, and various demographic data (Donnellan).

The results of the study represented the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll at a Midwest Christian University and fulfill a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. The research findings will be able to be applied to other private universities around the country. The results of the research should enhance marketing strategies at private universities to increase undergraduate enrollment.

Summary

This chapter included an introduction to the study and research topic. The chapter included a statement of the problem, a brief background, research questions, description of terms, significance of the study, and process to accomplish. The next chapter will provide a more in-depth review of the relevant research, the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll in private four-year universities, and the other areas that influenced the college-choice decision of freshman students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature as it relates to prospective students' college-choice decision. The review is separated into three sections that directly correlate to the research questions. The first section includes studies that primarily focus on student demographics as they relate to college-choice factors. The second section discusses institutional marketing factors and their effect on recruiting potential students. The third section describes research on institutional non-marketing factors, which are uncontrollable by an institution. Although most of the studies focus on one topical area, some of the studies cross multiple sections (Donnellan, 2002). While the purpose of this research is to determine the college-choice factors of students in a private university, it is imperative to identify the various influences that contribute to a prospective students' college-choice decision, regardless the institutional level. Understanding the previous research conducted in these areas is important in fully comprehending college-choice factors as they relate to a private university, as many of these findings have common characteristics. This chapter will conclude with a summary of how these sections relate to the research at hand.

Demographics

Comparing demographic data with the college-choice decision is an important step in determining which demographic factors may have an impact on the enrollment decision of potential students. Demographics is referred to as describing a population according to selected characteristics age, gender, ethnicity, and occupation. The United States continues to change its racial and ethnic population. Approximately one-third of United States' residents belong to the following racial or ethnic groups: African American, Asian American, Native American or Alaskan American, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. To adapt to this new marketplace, many businesses are developing multicultural marketing programs that reflect unique attitudes, communication preferences, and lifestyles of different races and ethnic groups. Knowing a student's previous educational experience or race could identify trends and provide insight into their college-choice decision-making process that could be useful for colleges and universities to develop multi-cultural marketing plans, marketing programs that reflect unique aspects of various races, to increase enrollment (Kerin, Hartley, & Rudelius, 2013).

This section provides a review of research that had a primary focus of describing demographic information while evaluating the college-choice decision-making process. While marketing and non-marketing factors are present in this research, the key element of these studies involves the findings of various demographic factors present in each study. Demographic data evaluated in this section consists of gender, race, location, previous educational experience, and religion. In reviewing research related to demographics, the literature can be broken down into three sections that focus on high

school students, undergraduate students, and the admissions staff. Each one of these groups, domestic or international, plays a role in providing a background of literature of the college-choice decision-making process of prospective students. The studies described in the following section have an emphasis on demographics and its effect on the college-choice decision.

High School

Smith (2006) administered a survey to approximately 1,700 Western New York high school students to study their college selection process. Smith analyzed how students' perceptions of different college search resources varied according to their racial background, parents' educational backgrounds, academic ability, academic aspiration, and geographic focus of their college searches. Smith revealed that academic ability, academic aspiration, and parental education had no effect on how students rated the usefulness of any college selection resources during the search and choice phases of the college selection process. Students rated college websites as the most useful source during the college search stage. In addition, students perceived campus tours as the most useful search resource during the choice phase. Smith found that race, parents' educational backgrounds, academic ability, and academic inspiration do not affect the way Western New York high school students search for colleges to enroll. This research may reinforce the study at hand; however, it is worth exploring the demographics of freshmen at a Midwest Christian University given the variance in backgrounds.

In a related study, Mozie-Ross (2011) conducted a quantitative study that determined how high school graduates who identified teachers as influential in their choice of college differed from graduates who did not, in terms of demographic and

academic characteristics and college-choice outcomes. Data was drawn from 17,734 high school graduates, from 41 public and private four-year institutions, from their responses to the 2006 Admitted Student Questionnaire, a market research tool developed by the College Board that was administered by the participating institutions to admitted students. Mozie-Ross' results indicated that high school teachers were most influential to students who were non-White, had lower grades and test scores, and came from lower income backgrounds. In terms of college-choice outcomes, Mozie-Ross found that teachers were most influential among students who attend institutions in their home state, attended less competitive schools, and attended institutions where the perceived emphasis was on quality of students' academic experience, including opportunities for student involvement outside of the classroom. No differences were found among gender or type of high school or college attended.

Tan (2009) conducted an international study where the researcher examined the applicability of major United States college-choice factors to 226 high school seniors in the Philippines. After an extensive review of literature, the researcher determined that the following categories were the main contributors to college-choice decisions of students in the United States: student characteristics, institutional characteristics, significant others, and institutional marketing. Tan's results indicated that all of the major U.S. college-choice factors were important, to some degree, to high school seniors in the Philippines. Also, academic ability and demographics attributes were found to have contributed similarly to the college-choice decision in the Philippines as compared to the United States, while the educational level of parents did not appear to apply to college-choice factors of Philippine students. While international students are not the focus of the

study conducted at the Midwest Christian University, it is important to note that influences that affect college-choice decisions are similar throughout the world. With the proper recruiting practices in place, these strategies can be applied to most universities.

Undergraduate

While the previous study focused on prospective college students in Asia, Kim and Gasman (2011) conducted in-depth interviews with 14 Asian American first-year college students at an elite private Northeastern U.S. university to determine the factors that affected their college-choice process. The structured interviews typically lasted 1-2 hours and were recorded and transcribed for evaluation. The interview questions focused on students' high school experiences, how the students made decisions about their college opportunities, educational level of parents, and how expectations may have influenced their decision-making processes. Kim and Gasman's results showed that the participants considered their social networks, especially family and peers, to be the most important factor in the decision making process about where to apply and attend college. In addition, external sources of information provided by various media outlets were found to have played a lesser role in the students' college-choice process. The study conducted at the Midwest Christian University can provide direct supplemental information related to Kim and Gasman's study involving Asian American students. The survey used at the Midwest Christian University asks students to classify themselves by race, including Asian, and asks students how influential their parents and peers were in their college-choice decision-making process.

In an effort to explore the demographic differences in high achieving students, Brooks (2006) sought to determine if a model existed that significantly increased a

researcher's ability to explain the enrollment status of high-achieving freshmen based on the influence of selected academic and demographic characteristics. The population consisted of all high-achieving freshmen, $ACT \geq 28$ and academic $GPA \geq 3.0$, who were admitted to a particular research-extensive university in the Southern region of the United States in 2005. Independent variables were collected from the admissions and student aid databases and included the student's residency status, college entrance examination score (ACT), gender, offer of admission to Honors College, academic high school GPA, as well as several other variables. Through a discriminant analysis, Brooks identified a statistically significant model that increased the ability to accurately explain the enrollment status of high-achieving freshmen. The model correctly classified 65% of the subjects, which was 30% improvement over chance. The variable that had the most impact on enrollment was whether the student's parent graduated from the institution. While the study at the Midwest Christian University will not state which university the student's parents graduated from, the research will show how influential the parents were in the student's decision-making process. With findings of a strong influence from the students' parents, the study could further confirm Brooks' results.

In other research related to above average performing students, Dale (2010) conducted a case study to examine the college-choice process of high-achieving freshman students at Arizona State University. The researcher obtained information by conducting 12 interviews, four focus groups with 3-5 students each, and reviewing the pre-enrollment recruitment files on all of the participating honor-students. Dale's results showed that the people who influenced the students' decision to attend Arizona State University were their parents, peers, other family members, college representatives, and

high school teachers and counselors. The factors that influenced the participants' college-choice decision were location, opportunities, programs, The Honors College, social aspect/fit, and the campus visit. Dale's results also indicated that the participants ultimately made their decision by settling for comfortable alternatives due to time and resource limitations based on location/experience, programs/plans, familiarity with Arizona State University, and Arizona State University as a springboard to future opportunities.

Admissions

Due to the challenges of affirmative action in higher education admissions, Burns-Wallace (2009) conducted a qualitative study that examined the experiences of 24 senior undergraduate admission diversity officers in relation to legal, institutional, and personal conditions that affect their success. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the admission officers at three different types of selective institutions: Elite Research, Small Liberal Arts, and Public Flagship. During the analysis, six categories were identified that captured the essence of the participants' shared experiences, which included 1. Motivation, Identity, and Survival; 2. Realities and Legalities; 3. Context, Value, and Race; 4. Philosophies and Partnerships for Success; 5. the Students and Beyond; and (6) Unmet Needs. Burns-Wallace's primary finding was that most senior admission diversity officers felt a responsibility to give back to students with similar personal paths, whether the students were minority, low-income, or first-generation college-goers. The admission officers were found to have closely identified themselves with the students they recruited and felt a need to stretch on allowing admission into the institution, making college more possible for various minority populations. Do all

universities make exceptions to admission requirements to obtain diversity in the student population? The survey distributed at the Midwest Christian University asked freshman students to provide their race as well as categorize their high school grade point average. While many factors are considered when admitting potential students into a university, grade point average is an important factor. Within the study at the Midwest Christian University, grade point average will be measured between all races to identify any trends.

Marketing Factors

The marketing factors discussed in this section focus on controllable elements of higher educational institutions' marketing strategy that are used to help recruit potential students. Institutions can enhance these controllable marketing factors without much difficulty to attract prospective students, such as making changes to course catalogs, improving availability of open houses, and enhancing Facebook pages and Websites. Many of these marketing factors directly affect the college-choice decision of potential students and are controlled by the institution (Donnellan, 2002). Marketing is referred to as the activity for creating offerings that benefit the organization, its stakeholders, and society. Marketing involves far more than simply advertising or selling. In serving both buyers and sellers, marketing looks to discover the needs and wants of prospective customers, and to satisfy them. Institutions and organizations use controllable factors such as the marketing mix, or the four P's: product, price, place, promotion, to manage various elements of the customer value proposition (Kerin, et al., 2013).

This section provided a review of studies that were found to have an emphasis on controllable marketing factors within universities. Institutions reviewed in this section have the ability to enhance their marketing plans to appeal to potential students. The

marketing factors discussed in this section involve doable changes to institutional marketing plans to increase enrollment, such as changing the verbiage within a campus tour or increased follow-up efforts on applicants. In reviewing the literature related to marketing factors, the studies have been condensed into three sections that focus on prospective students, undergraduate students, and the admission/recruiting staff. The research described in the following section has an emphasis on controllable marketing factors and their effect on the college-choice decision.

Prospective

In a study involving a cost-effective recruitment strategy, Damron (2011) evaluated the impact of sharing academic success stories during campus tours on prospective students' perceptions of academic quality, speed of the application process, and matriculation status. Campus tour guides provided 156 prospective students with controlled and experimental tours; the experimental tours included sharing academic success stories. Surveys were then administered to the participants after the tour to assess student perceptions. Damron concluded that the sharing of academic success stories on campus tours did not have an impact on student's perceptions of academic quality, speed of the application process, and matriculation status. Students participating in the study at the Midwest Christian University will be asked to rate how influential a campus visit was during their college-choice process. Scores in this section can be evaluated to determine if any changes need to be made to the campus tour process.

In a related study, Morris (2009) evaluated time intervals between various prospective student interactions with a university during the admissions process to determine if these time intervals were useful in predicting enrollment. The sample

consisted of 4,098 applicants, of a possible population of 12,450 prospective students, who applied for undergraduate admissions at a medium-sized, sectarian university located in Southeast Virginia between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2007. The time related variables Morris used in the study were the inquiry date, application date, submission of transcripts date, submission of writing assessment date, and the number of days between students' initiated contacts with the university. Morris' results confirmed that the time related variables were all significant in predicting enrollment. The variables with the strongest predictive capabilities were both the number of days between the students' initial date of inquiry and date of application, and the number of days between the date of application and the dates of various submissions of supplemental application requirements. Essentially, as the number of days between student inquiry, submission of application, and submission of various supplemental writing assessments decreased, the likelihood of enrollment increased. College-choice was found to be more predictable when the days between of the various contact points were minimal.

Undergraduate

Howard (2002) sought to find whether institutional rankings published by news magazines played a role in the college decision-making process of potential students. Surveys were distributed to 14,541 freshman students from 40 public and private ranked and unranked institutions across 13 states. Howard's results showed that the majority (56.7%) of the students indicated that college rankings were either very important or somewhat important in selecting their college or university. Students attending ranked universities or colleges also deemed institutional rankings by news magazines significantly more important in their college-choice process than students attending

unranked institutions. The study conducted at the Midwest Christian University will further explore if the perceptions of others contribute to the college-choice decision-making process. While institutional rankings are not directly measured in the study at the Midwest Christian University, the survey asks students to rate their feelings related to news coverage and perceived impressions of outsiders' views of the university.

In researching the students' views of universities marketing efforts, Dupaul (2010) studied the ways in which *stealth applicants* searched for prospective colleges to attend. In 2010, stealth applicants represented approximately 30% of college applications (Noel-Levitz, 2010b). Dupaul's qualitative case study included interviews with students who were stealth applicants at a private, mid-sized university located in the southwest United States. Dupaul found that stealth applicants used traditional search methods in their college search. However, these students displayed high levels of skepticism and mistrust of university marketing materials as well as stress and fear about college. Technology was also found to facilitate stealth applicant's anonymous search for information about universities.

Armstrong (1997) conducted 10 focus groups involving randomly chosen freshman students at the University of North Texas, a large metropolitan research university located 30 minutes north of Dallas, to determine the factors that influenced them to enroll into the University. Armstrong found that the factors that most influenced freshman students to attend the University of North Texas were convenient location, low cost, and the good reputation of the field of their study. Students were also found to believe that the University had a very friendly campus and were pleased with the overall academic environment. Finally, Armstrong found the participants were not greatly

influenced by the marketing materials used by the University to recruit students, such as a university booklet, brochure, and videotape. Students provided feedback on how to strengthen the marketing material including making the material more graphically appealing and involving more easy-to-read information regarding the cost to attend the University of North Texas.

On a related note, students surveyed at the Midwest Christian University were asked to rate/rank the effectiveness of various university marketing materials and to what extent price affected their college-choice decision. While students will not be asked to provide feedback on how to improve marketing efforts, results will show how influential certain marketing efforts are to freshman students. Results can be used to enhance marketing efforts in areas that were rated as ineffective.

Anderson's (2010) quantitative research study focused on freshman students' decision-making processes among those who chose to major in business at a small Midwest private college. Anderson described that, of the freshman students who were surveyed, their major choice factors for attending the Midwest private college include: getting a better job, making more money, and obtaining training for a specific career. In addition, four variables that students used in their decision-making process include: college's good reputation, the offer of financial assistance, the belief that graduates get good jobs, and a positive campus visit. Within the research, Anderson described the challenges of college recruiting, which include: decreasing number of high school graduates, more educational offerings, a tightening of the credit markets, and changing college expectations of the *millennial* generation. These recruiting challenges are common in colleges and universities across the country.

Tucciarone (2007) conducted three focus groups, involving 69 students enrolled in advertising courses at a public four-year institution in St. Louis, Missouri, to determine how advertising affects the college-choice process. In the end, the researcher found that parents, siblings, friends, career aspirations, cost, scholarships, institutional reputation, location, sports, high school counselors, and college visits played a larger role in the college-choice process than advertising. Despite the numerous influencers that affected college-choice, only the athletes and international students acknowledged the role of advertising as a college-choice factor. Participants in the study rated the following advertising strategies as the most influential in their college-choice process: college recruiters, radio advertisements, billboards, campus visits, websites, and virtual tours. Advertising may have triggered thoughts and attitudes, but overall, the participants suggested that the college-choice process was largely based on word-of-mouth advice. Tucciarone's research showed that advertising initiatives by universities have the ability to persuade prospective students if the university has conducted the research necessary to understand and assess students' wants and needs. Influencers such as parents, siblings, friends, and cost are considered more persuasive than advertising in the college-choice process. However, if students express specific wants and needs, such as athletes or international students identified by the university, then advertising has a greater effect on search and college-choice. Therefore, universities that identify a key consumer insight can develop specific advertising that can trigger specific outcomes (Tellis, 2004).

Cheong (2010) studied the relationship between psychological attributes and the liking and use of interactive Website features. Cheong interviewed prospective and freshman college students who were willing members of a fan page associated with

Rochester Institute of Technology, a higher education institution in Rochester, NY with more than 16,000 students. Cheong's results showed that price consciousness was related to liking of Frequently Asked Questions and blogs and the use of tuition cost estimators. The researcher also found that students who were active users of a social media Website, *Facebook*, did not differ significantly in their use and liking of interactive features on Websites of institutes of higher education than from students who were non-users of the social media Website. While, Cheong took an in-depth look at the relationship between participants' use and liking of interactive features and their college-choice factors, the study conducted at the Midwest Christian University will be an overview of the factors that students' consider influential in their college-choice process. Included in the research at the Midwest Christian University are students' rankings of the Midwest Christian University's Facebook page and Web page as influential. The research will determine if there are any connections between student's rankings of the Midwest Christian University's Facebook page and Web page with any other factors such as price or demographics. If students are found to rate the Midwest Christian University's Facebook page and Web page as very influential in their college-choice process and the same students also rate price as a very influential factor, potentially more could be done on these sites in terms of clarifying pricing or financial aid options to attract prospective students.

In a related study in evaluating social media as a recruitment tool, Parrot and Tipton (2010) researched how prospective college students use social media in their application process. The researchers conducted a national survey, through help of their company Widmeyer Communications, of 500 freshman students at public and private

two- and four-year institutions, where students were asked about their college search process over the previous year. In the end, Parrot and Tipton found that although it was part of the information gathering process, social media constituted the least important tool for obtaining information in advance of the application decision. The Web was found to be the most integral part in the decision-making process and social networking could be used as an extension of the digital strategy that an institution already has in place. While students' college-choice decision may not ultimately depend on the various social media sites, these sites can enhance an institutions reach and frequency of a target market that is exposed to a particular message at an inexpensive cost. Despite being a major influence in the college-choice decision, it is worthwhile for universities to take advantage of these methods of advertising.

Jenkins (2006) conducted a case study at Dallas Metropolitan College (DMC), a small African-American liberal arts college in Texas, to uncover problems with dwindling enrollment because of a shrinking amount minority applicants and competition from other colleges. Jenkins' study sought to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the school's prior recruitment campaigns and to identify the successful marketing strategies utilized by the McDonald's Corporation. Jenkins used three research methods, which included a case study, historical analysis, and oral interviews, to make recommendations for future recruitment at DMC. Jenkins' research poses an innovative spin on increasing enrollment by utilizing marketing practices from a successful company. While most studies rely on uncovering marketing strategies at the college level, Jenkins looked at what worked in corporate America and then applied it to the college level. It may be useful to look at other corporate marketing strategies and try to apply

them to the college level. This research is useful in enhancing marketing efforts at smaller colleges and universities as well as focusing on recruiting minorities. While companies continue to build off each other's marketing strategies, it may be useful for institutions of higher learning to increase their research efforts in utilizing areas of their competitors marketing strategies.

In researching the students and the admissions team, Furukawa (2011) studied high-achieving student perceptions and the areas that may have influenced their choice of college. Focus groups and interviews were conducted with freshman honor students at a large, public, four-year public institution located in the Southwestern United States. Data was also collected through interviews with admissions staff and a document analysis of the university viewbook. Furukawa found that the students identified cost, institutional characteristics, institutional communication, institutional fit, and family as the areas that influenced their college-choice decision. The administration staff described their intent to pursue target-marketing efforts toward high-achieving students, putting some emphasis on outreach to parents.

In related research involving the admissions team and freshmen, Jennings (2008) studied the perceptions of admissions staff and first-year students at four women's colleges to determine if there was a discrepancy between the two during the college-choice process. Students and admissions members from Agnes Scott College, Mount Holyoke College, Scripps College, and Stephens College participated in the study. Data was collected by administering surveys to the admission staff and first-year students as well as through a review of recruitment resources. The survey questions focused on the perception of the features and benefits promoted by each college, recruitment resources

offered to applicants, and the external influences that played a role in the applicant's college-choice process. Jennings results found that the admissions staff and first-year female students had very similar perceptions during the college-choice process. Both groups indicated that resources involving in-person connections were very influential during the recruitment process. Students and staff also agreed that academics and scholarships were highly influential features and benefits of the colleges. In regards to recruitment resources, both populations felt campus visits and feedback from current students was very important. Both groups also felt that the external influence that played the most prominent role was applicants' female caretakers. Finally, both groups agreed that all of the printed and online content was less influential than the factors that focused on personal interactions when determining choice of college. The main difference in perceptions between the administrative staff and the students was that the staff tended to be more positive than the students when asked to rank factors on a Likert scale.

Admissions/Recruiting

Vander Schee (2010) described how college enrollment officers have a positive effect on admissions yield, first-year retention, and employee satisfaction at two small colleges, four-year institutions consisting of less than 1,500 students, where the model of relationship marketing and enrollment management theory were implemented. Prospective college students frequently read in promotional literature that the college experience is unique and personal to each individual. However, they often experience the opposite. Small colleges can overcome this issue by utilizing a college enrollment officer, who employs relationship marketing, seller expertise, and interaction frequency to meet enrollment goals. Vander Schee's research on enrollment officers provides detailed

information on the challenges colleges and admissions counselors experience in recruiting new students. Vander Schee also described the positive impact enrollment officers have on admissions yield. Participants in the study at the Midwest Christian University will be asked whether they agree with the statement, “The recruitment material that the Midwest Christian University uses to attract students portrays the Midwest Christian University accurately”. It should be noted that if a unique and personal college experience is an important college-choice factor, as found in Vander Schee’s study, then enrollment officers should have a positive effect on the college-choice decision of potential students and should be utilized at smaller universities to attract potential students.

In reviewing literature related to the recruitment processes at the community college-level Hart (2010) conducted case studies at three U.S. community colleges to assess their enrollment management plans to determine what strategies have contributed toward their enrollment growth. Data was collected by conducting various interviews and focus groups with admissions, financial aid, and orientation staff, as well as college faculty members. Enrollment management documents of the participating community colleges were also reviewed. Hart found that these particular community colleges were most successful at implementing enrollment strategies when there were high levels of communication, collaboration, and institutional commitment to enrollment management. Barriers to successful enrollment strategies included a lack of institutional commitment to enrollment management as well as limited staffing, space, and financial resources.

The purpose of Harris’ (2010) study was to determine if characteristics existed among enrollment management professionals (EMPs) that contribute to their influence to

increase enrollment of community college students. Harris' significant findings included: (a) EMPs with strong leadership skills were more effective in recruiting students; (b) EMPs were actively involved in the college strategic planning process; and (c) strong marketing, collaboration, and caring skills were found to have the strongest correlation for EMPs and institutional effectiveness. Harris' study provided a profile of enrollment management professionals who are effective at managing and increasing enrollment.

Wright (2001) explored the marketing strategies used by two-year community colleges in Western Pennsylvania. Surveys and follow-up interviews were conducted on 15 participants at five community colleges that were members of the Western Pennsylvania Community College Resource Consortium. The respondents at each community college included the President, the Director of Marketing or Public Relations and the Director of Admissions. As a result of her research, Wright concluded the following: 1. many inconsistencies reported within and among the colleges regarding the marketing planning process; 2. inconsistencies in the marketing evaluation methods; 3. underutilization of the information gathered from marketing research studies of the community colleges; 4. plans to develop workforce training needs that were not implemented; and 5. colleges should review the internal communication practices to ensure that all staff who would be affected by the marketing planning process would have a better understanding of why certain decisions are being made. Based on the findings Wright believed, in an effort to attract potential students, that more time and effort should be spent refining the college's marketing plan, determine when the marketing plan should be conducted, and identify who should be involved. Colleges should evaluate what

marketing activities are being used, and why they should or should not continue using to enhance efforts to attract potential students.

Striegler (1991) investigated the roles of the admissions officers in marketing higher education institutions. Leaders in the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers were asked to nominate people who they considered to be experts in marketing in higher education. Fourteen individuals were then selected and surveyed to determine their beliefs on the importance of marketing in higher education by the year 2000. Striegler's results indicated that by the year 2000, admissions officers would be expected to have marketing backgrounds and work with top-level administrators in developing the institution's strategic goals. Marketing to prospective students has become more popular than ever due to the increased competition from traditional and for profit higher education institutions. Schools must now employ marketing professionals to seek and battle for the enrollment of potential students.

In a later study, Clark (2000) provided a historical perspective of undergraduate recruitment at Tennessee State University and addressed the impact that marketing has had on enrollment. Clark utilized a historical method of research by reviewing minutes of the Board of Regents, minutes from meetings of administrative committees, academic affairs council and various committees of the University. Clark used published and unpublished information to investigate events that impacted the growth and development of the University's marketing strategies. In the end, Clark found that the following recruitment practices were deemed effective and should be included in every institution's recruitment program: campus tours, informational brochures or view books, and high school visits by college admissions representatives. Campus tours for interested students

ranked very highly in the recruitment of new students because prospective students were found to have placed a great deal of emphasis on the opportunity to visit the campus and gain insight into the character and culture of the institution. Informational brochures or view books also ranked as one of the most important pieces in helping potential students choose a college because prospective students were found to have been very interested in obtaining such information and reviewing information about the institution, admission requirements, and financial aid. Students were found to be especially interested in brochures when they were bright and colorful. Finally, high school visits by admissions representatives was also found to rank highly in recruiting high school students because these students were found to have preferred the personal contact in the high school setting as opposed to those contacts outside the school in the local community. This same practice was found to be accurate for community college transfer students. While fundamental marketing strategies of universities are similar, Clark's research provides an outline of what marketing strategies were shown to work over a ten-year period.

Having a fundamental marketing strategy is an invaluable part of recruiting potential college students; however, these marketing plans must have support from leadership to be successful. Hilpert (1985) surveyed presidents from 353 private postsecondary institutions in 43 states and conducted interviews with 38 participants to determine if presidential leadership perspectives had an effect on the enrollment success or nonsuccess in private colleges and universities. Hilpert's findings included: 1. institutions with unsuccessful recent enrollment patterns used more resources than their more successful counterparts to achieve adequate enrollments; 2. the effectiveness of some marketing practices were significantly related to particular institutional

characteristics, while the effectiveness of other practices, including word-of-mouth recruiting by alumni, were independent of institutional characteristics; 3. many admissions activities commonly used by the institutions were not demonstrably effective in enhancing the marketing efforts, including admissions personnel visits to high schools; and 4. presidents were frequently uncertain about the causes of enrollment success. The marketing practices discussed in the study include evaluating the effectiveness of current marketing plans, maintaining flexibility, implementing the individuality of each institution, affirming the president's role, developing marketing professionals, and evaluating the effects of adaptations. While the research conducted at the Midwest Christian University will not require any input from the president of the university, Hilpert's results revealed that marketing to prospective students should be a strategic part of institutional management.

As discussed in Hilpert's (1985) study, inconsistencies in marketing strategies within colleges and universities have been found to hinder marketing to potential students. In a related study, Baron (1987) researched the types of recruitment strategies used to recruit graduate schools to determine the effectiveness of these practices. Baron distributed surveys to 366 members of the Council of Graduate Schools to determine graduate student recruitment practices. The three recruiting strategies that were used most often by graduate schools were: 1. providing financial assistance through scholarships or grants; 2. developing and distributing a Graduate School publication describing the School and the programs offered, and 3. developing and distributing promotional material featuring specific programs, related research, and faculty and student achievements. The four recruiting strategies that were found to be most effective were: 1. providing financial

assistance through scholarships or grants; 2. utilizing personal contact of the college staff through phone calls and campus visits; 3. maintaining contact with colleagues at other colleges to exchange referrals on prospective students; and 4. developing and distributing promotional material featuring specific programs, related research, and faculty and student achievements. Based on the results of the research, a model for graduate student recruitment was developed to enhance the effectiveness of the recruitment efforts of graduate students. The major steps in this model are assessment, develop recruitment objectives, develop recruitment strategy, implement recruitment program, and monitor and evaluate recruitment program. Baron found it was important to establish a supportive relationship between the Graduate School and the academic departments for a successful graduate student recruitment program.

In looking at religious factors that affect college-choice decisions, Liechty (2000) conducted research at Goshen College, a small Mennonite liberal arts college, to study the college's relationship between its supporting denomination, the Mennonite church, and the college's denominational ties. Liechty surveyed and interviewed the faculty and the administrative team at Goshen College regarding their attitudes toward the relationship between the college and the denomination. According to previous research on secularization of higher education institutions with religious ties, the consensus view was that market pressures have forced religious colleges to disengage their denominational ties, but this was not the case for Goshen College. Liechty's results indicated that the majority of administrators at Goshen College believed that parts of the Mennonite church were secularizing, while educators at Goshen College were trying to preserve the college's religious tradition. The President of Goshen College worked

toward making the college more prestigious in order to appeal to a Mennonite market increasingly interested in status, while at the same time seeking to make connections with other religious markets that may be sympathetic to the mission of the college. Liechty's research described the marketing issues a private college goes through while attempting to increase enrollment. For example, should a college market to a mass audience or stay true to the college's values to attract more students? Liechty also described the challenges a university staff and president go through to market a college. The research at hand involving the Midwest Christian University also has a known affiliation with specific religion and faces similar challenges. While religion is not a focus in the study, students surveyed will be asked to name the religion that closely resembles their religious beliefs. It is worth exploring the relationship between religion and other college-choice factors at the Midwest Christian University to determine if anything can be done to enhance marketing efforts to specific religious groups of students.

Wuestenberg (2003) researched the admission policies for NCAA Division I-A athletes. Eleven university admission directors from Division I-A universities participated in personal or phone interviews regarding their admission policies for student athletes. Wuestenberg showed that recruited athletes received several benefits in the admission process at NCAA Division I-A institutions. These benefits included a coded or "marked" file, a preliminary review of documentation, sponsorship from the athletic department, possible financial scholarships, support in the appeal process, and occasionally, presidential involvement. Wuestenberg's study indicated that admission directors were aware of the benefits that NCAA Division I-A athletes received during the admissions process. Student athletes with less than stellar academic performance had the

opportunity to attend and play for university's they would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend if it were not for their athletic ability, increasing their likelihood and playing a factor in athletes' decisions to attend such schools. Wuestenberg also described the enrollment pressures that the admission directors face. While the college-choice factors of athletes is not a focal point in the research conducted at the Midwest Christian University, varsity sports as well as scholarships are components of the survey that students have the opportunity to rate as influential factors to attend the Midwest Christian University. Overall trends in students that rate varsity sports and scholarships very high may merit additional investigation.

In a study that focused on recruiting minority students, Coiner (1990) sought to find successful marketing strategies for the recruitment of Mexican-Americans into four-year higher educational institutions. A survey was mailed to admissions directors of four-year colleges and universities located in six southwestern states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas, to determine which programs were found to be very successful and those which were to not be very successful in recruiting Mexican-Americans. Coiner found that the most successful marketing strategies to prospective Mexican-American students were: 1. on-campus programs and activities, including support groups for Mexican-Americans, 2. off-campus programs and activities, including career fair programs, 3. perceptions, including parent preference for the institution close to home and current Mexican-American students promoting the institution, and 4. reducing cost, including providing scholarships for Mexican-Americans. The successful marketing strategies identified in this study may be used to develop recruitment plans for Mexican-Americans at other four-year institutions.

Robison (2007) examined the experiences of international students recruited through third-party agents to explore the ethical dimensions of institutions using these outside agents. The researcher conducted interviews with recruiting officers and international students, surveyed recruiting officers, and collected documents from a small private four-year university and a small public four-year university located in one Midwest state. Robison found that there was no conclusive answer to whether the institutions examined were acting ethically by using outside agents third-party agents in recruiting international students, however, suggestions were offered to assist in preventing unethical behavior by outside agents. These suggestions included conducting company profile research to establish criteria for selecting an agent, using a formal contract developed by the university, meeting agents in person, making a concentrated effort in communicating with potential students throughout the recruitment process; and obtaining student feedback to evaluate the agent's performance. In the survey distributed at the Midwest Christian University, freshman students were asked whether they are from in-state, out-of-state, or another country. While it is unknown if the Midwest Christian University uses third party agents to recruit international students, these students will be categorized to determine if any trends exist in their college-choice decision-making process as compared to domestic students. Any outlying negative feedback from international students may deem additional investigation.

Jivasantikarn (2003) studied the student enrollment recruiting practices of private vocational institutions in Thailand to discover whether these schools used marketing activities to enhance enrollment and to what extent they used them. A survey was distributed to 367 admissions directors and officers at private vocational schools

throughout Thailand to assess the level of usage of 15 commonly used marketing techniques, including advertising and target marketing. Jivasantikarn's results showed that the most used marketing technique was publicity, followed by target marketing. The least used marketing technique was hiring a marketing director, followed by hiring a marketing consultant. Schools of different sizes were found to use different levels of advertising research and publicity to market their institutions. In the end, private vocational institutions in Thailand used enrollment marketing, focused heavily on promotion, to attract students and perceived it to be effective. The major marketing activities that contributed to college-choice factors were various forms of advertising, direct mail, and target marketing.

Finally, Hoover (2010) studied the post-admission recruitment process of college students by universities. Hoover stated the importance of the yield, the ratio of the number of students accepted by the college compared to the number of students enrolled, and the yield's effect on college ratings and rankings. According to Hoover, Lafayette College used personalized recruitment processes. One example is that Lafayette College used personalized admissions letters to refer to the prospective student's high school and subject of their application essay. Hoover's study of Lafayette College's post-admission recruitment process also described the challenges of enrolling college students after they were accepted. The research conducted at the Midwest Christian University will focus on students that have been accepted and enrolled into the university. The personalized recruitment effort measured in the study at the Midwest Christian University will be a phone call from Admissions. If this personalized recruitment effort is found to be significantly influential in students' decision to attend the Midwest Christian University,

it may be worth exploring other ways to enhance the personalized recruitment efforts within the University.

Non-Marketing Factors

While colleges and universities can control their marketing mix factors, there are environmental forces, or uncontrollable social and economic forces, that affect the decisions of potential students. These non-marketing factors consist of personal influences relating to potential students' college-choice decision, such as parents, friends, alumni, current students, guidance councilors, current teachers and factors relating to cost (Kerin, et al., 2013). These factors affect the college-choice decision of potential students and are not directly controllable by an institution (Donnellan, 2002). While not directly controlled by a college or university, it is important for institutions of higher learning to understand these uncontrollable factors to determine what, if anything, can be done to curb the opinions of potential students and their peers. In reviewing the research related to non-marketing factors, the literature has been broken down into three sections that focus on high school students, undergraduate students, and graduate students. The studies in this section are related to non-marketing factors and their effect on the college-choice decision.

High School

Streveler (1986) researched the extent to which South Dakota high school students remain with their first choice of a post-secondary institution or their first career choice between the end of their junior year and the end of their senior year. Five-thousand two-hundred seventy-two high school juniors enrolled in a South Dakota high school were surveyed in the spring of 1984 and then surveyed again as seniors in the

spring of 1985 to determine if the students had made changes in their institutional or career choices. Students who had made a change in their first choice of an institution were also asked to explain the reason for the change. Streveler's results indicated that 65% of the students surveyed changed their selection of their first choice institution. Streveler's research also showed that students were more likely to change their selection of a college or university to the same type of institution rather than changing to a different type. Student interest in out-of-state institutions was relatively stable. Students were also more likely to change their selection of a college or university over their selection of a career. Finally, Streveler found that the students made their selection changes mostly because of reasons related to institutional or program preferences, where the originally selected institution did not match their current academic and career goals. Students surveyed at the Midwest Christian University will be also be asked whether they are from in-state or out-of-state and whether the selection to attend the Midwest Christian University was their first choice. Students who express that the decision to attend the Midwest Christian University was not their first institutional choice will be asked to select a reason why they chose to attend the University in lieu of other institutions.

While Streveler's (1986) study focused on traditional high school students, Henry (2011) researched the college-choice process of Catholic homeschooled students by interviewing 25 Catholic homeschooled students who applied to Benedictine College, a small Liberal Arts college located in the Midwest. Henry's results showed that the primary college-choice influences included cost, location, academic programs, and religion. Parents were also found to have played an important role in the college-choice process for all of the participants, as well as family and friends. Finally, homeschooled

students were found to have gone through a college-choice process very similar to traditionally-schooled students, however, participants often lacked guidance and support from their peers and the colleges through the process. Many of the college-choice influences discussed in Henry's research are also components of the survey to be distributed to students at the Midwest Christian University. While homeschooled versus traditionally-schooled is not a component in the study to be conducted at the Midwest Christian University, students will be asked to provide demographic information such as what type of community they came from and high school grade point average. These characteristics can then be broken down for evaluation of trends to improve target marketing.

Briles (2009) surveyed 750 high school seniors from six New Jersey high schools, three public and three Catholic, to determine which factors were most important to them in their college selection process. Briles results indicated that availability of a major and cost were the two most important college-choice factors for the high school seniors surveyed. Other results showed that Catholic school males were found to be much less concerned with taking out student loans as compared to Catholic school females or public school students. Students surveyed were found to have valued the opinions of their teachers more than their guidance counselors. In addition, students rated their parents as the most important source of information in the college-choice decision process. Students surveyed at the Midwest Christian University will be asked to rate the level of influence guidance counselors and high school teachers had on their decision to attend that particular university. This study could provide further support for Briles research.

In a similar study, Collins (2006) surveyed 1,533 graduating high school students across the United States to determine why some students who were members of the Church of Christ chose to attend a college or university affiliated with the Church of Christ while others did not. The following college choice factors were examined between the two groups: academic reputation, desired academic programs, cost, importance of attending a Church of Christ higher educational institution, church involvement, family influence, quality of facilities, reputation of graduates, and the importance of distance of college from home. Collins results showed that the most significant difference among students surveyed was that students who chose to attend a Church of Christ college or university perceived the importance of attending a Church of Christ school. These students also perceived Church of Christ colleges or universities to have better academic quality, to offer more desired academic programs, and to be less expensive. These students tended to be more involved in church activities, were more likely to have immediate family members who had attended Church of Christ institutions, and were less concerned about the distance of college from home. Religion also plays a role in the survey to be distributed to students at the Midwest Christian University. Students will also be asked to provide the religion that most closely resembles their beliefs. Various religions can then be categorized to determine if religion plays a factor in the college-choice decision-making process at the university.

Undergraduate

Schoenherr (2009) examined the differences in college-choice factors between traditional high achieving freshman students who chose to attend higher-tiered universities and traditional high achieving freshman students who chose to attend lower-

tiered universities. The researcher incorporated data gathered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) 2004 freshman survey. The sample included students from 97 universities who scored in the 90th percentile of the SATs and ACTs, lived 100 miles away from home, and were attending their first choice college. Schoenherr's results showed that the availability of financial aid to be the most important factor in determining whether students would attend a higher-tiered or lower-tiered university. Although university expenses and academic reputation were found to be significant factors of the tier level of university attended, they were of less importance compared with the attention to financial aid by high achieving students.

Irwin (2008) studied college freshman students' perceptions of their own self-efficiency, the confidence in one's ability to be successful at a given task (Bandura, 1997), and the role it played in their college choice process. A mixed-methods approach was used by surveying 278 first-year students from community colleges and four-year universities, as well as conducting interviews with 30 students from the same sample. Irwin found self-efficiency to be an influential part of the students' college-choice process, particularly in performance aspects of self-efficiency, such as high school GPA, which mattered more to four-year university students than community college students. Community college students' college choices were found to be limited by their relatively lower high school GPAs. Irwin's results also indicated that community college students conducted less extensive college searches compared to four-year university students.

In comparing two institutions, Kaczynski's (2011) research explored how students who followed a sibling to a university were influenced by their siblings during the

college-choice process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 participants at two four-year universities in the United States. The participants were first-year college students who had an older sibling that was currently enrolled at the university.

Kaczynski's results showed that siblings played a role in the college choice process of the students who followed their sibling to the same university. Participants were found to be drawn to their siblings' university because of their increased knowledge about the university over other schools. In addition, the siblings' experiences encouraged participants to attend the university their sibling attended, regardless of whether the experiences were positive or negative.

In a recent study, Ryan (2012) compared the college-choice factors that influenced 84 freshman music majors from two public and two private universities located in Illinois and Missouri. Data was collected by distributing surveys that focused on the following areas: academic, financial, institutional, and personal/social, as well as a follow-up interview. Ryan's results showed that financial factors had the most influence in these music majors' choice to enroll in a specific university, followed by institutional, academic, and personal/social attributes. Gender and GPA did not appear to have influenced the decision of these students to enroll in a particular university. Findings at the Midwest Christian University could further support this study on a larger scale. With the exception of the follow-up interviews, the study at the Midwest Christian University focuses on very similar college-choice areas and will be conducted with the entire population of a freshman class, as opposed to a handful of students with the same major from four different institutions. However, academic majors are not specified in the survey to be distributed at the Midwest Christian University.

Stevenson (2011) conducted a qualitative study that investigated the college-choice factors of students who chose to attend military junior colleges. Interviews were conducted with 18 students enrolled in junior military colleges and their parents to determine college-choice factors. Stevenson concluded that these students go through a very similar search process as students from traditional colleges and consider factors such as the school's reputation, size and location. The students were found to have supportive parents, influential peers, and concerns about paying for college. The students expressed their desire to pay their way through college as they did not want to cause a financial burden on their family. The parents also expressed concerns about how their child's education would be financed.

Abou-Nassif (2011) sought to identify and rate in order of importance the factors that affected the college-choice decision of high school students entering college in Lebanon. Surveys were distributed to approximately 720 students across six provinces and twelve schools in Lebanon. Abou-Nassif's results showed that the students ranked the following college-choice factors from most to least important: parents, family, income, cost of college, friends, residence location, and gender. The results of this study involving the evaluation of college-choice factors of prospective students in Lebanon supports results of previous research conducted in the United States.

Graduate

Kanyi's (2009) mixed method research sought to understand why particular students enrolled in Rowan University's Doctor of Education in Ethical Leadership program. The researcher conducted 30 telephone interviews and collected 172 surveys from potential doctoral candidates as well as six interviews with current students. Data

was also collected using focus groups consisting of faculty, current students, and potential students. Kanyi found that the prospective students chose to enroll in the doctoral program because it was often a major goal in life and it broadened career opportunities. K-12 Teachers were also found to be more likely than higher education professionals to see the doctorate enhancing their career opportunities beyond their current profession. Kanyi also concluded that prospective students believed the balance of work and family life as well as logistical factors such as proximity, affordability, availability of financial aid, admission requirements, program focus, and length were important considerations in the enrollment process at Rowan University.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this section provided an overview of the research conducted on the college-choice factors of prospective students. Various types of institutions and research methods were included to provide a spectrum of influences contributing to college-choice decisions on various levels. The review included research that focused on demographics, institutional marketing, and non-marketing factors that correlate with the research questions of the study. Understanding demographic data could aid in identifying trends and provide insight into the college-choice process that could be useful for institutions of higher education to develop multi-cultural marketing plans (Kerin, et al., 2013). The review of the marketing factors provided an overview of the current marketing strategies that were controllable by institutions and in place to attract potential students. Finally, the review of studies involving non-marketing factors showed that universities continue to face challenges in attracting students, as these studies contained, for the most part, uncontrollable challenges in attracting potential students.

While the purpose of this research is to determine the college-choice factors of students in a private university, it is necessary to identify the range of influences that contribute to a prospective students' college-choice decision, regardless the institutional level.

While universities cannot control all of the factors related to college-choice decisions of potential students, it is important for institutions to understand these factors to develop sound marketing plans in an effort to attract potential students. In reviewing the literature, a few major themes occur throughout the literature. College-choice influences seem to be consistent regardless of the institutional level or location. Gender and race appear to play a less significant role than academic background in the college-choice process. Finally, influence from parents and peers appear to play a significant role in the college-choice decision-making process. Many of the findings in the previous research appear to have common characteristics that help provide an understanding of college-choice for a private university, and serve well as a foundation for this current study.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the factors that influence undergraduate students to enroll at a Midwest Christian University as well as fill a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. There is no research on record that analyzes an entire population of incoming freshman students at a private university by comparing the marketing and non-marketing factors of an institution (Donnellan, 2002). This represents a significant gap in research. By identifying trends related to various demographics and marketing and non-marketing factors, institutions can develop and maintain successful marketing plans.

This chapter provided an in-depth review of various studies related to this research. Chapter 3 will provide results related to the survey distributed to incoming freshman students at a Midwest Christian University. The survey results will present statistics on demographics, marketing factors, and non-marketing factors related to the college-choice process.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the factors that influence undergraduate students to enroll at a Midwest Christian University as well as fill a void in the research of college choice-factors in private universities. The research questions illustrate and examine responses from freshman students entering a Midwest Christian University. Understanding how freshman students perceive pre-enrollment interactions with universities can be important in determining how marketing strategies can be improved in the future. This section will discuss the research design, population, data collection, analytical methods, and limitations of the research. In seeking to study the college-choice factors that influenced undergraduate freshman students at a Midwest Christian University, the researcher sought to find:

1. What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?
2. What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?
3. What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey was completed by the participants prior to beginning their first semester at a Midwest Christian University. The survey was conducted at a single point in time and provided a snapshot of current attitudes and beliefs of incoming freshman students (Gay, et al., 2009). The research questions focused on the college-choice factors of freshman students. The quantitative data obtained from the survey was analyzed to determine the college-choice factors that affected freshman students' decision to enroll in a particular university.

The survey was adapted from Donnellan's (2002) work and was used with the author's permission. The questionnaire consisted of various structured items, including several four/five-point Likert scales, ranking scales, and multiple-choice questions relating factors that led to the participants' decision to attend a particular Midwestern Christian University (Gay, Mills, & Airaisian, 2009). The survey was divided into seven sequentially numbered sections and each section included multiple sub-questions. The data collected was a snapshot of the beliefs in the sample population at a given time during the new-student orientation.

The first section asked the participants to rate the influence of various people on their college-choice decision which was considered a non-controllable marketing factor by the Midwestern Christian University. Previous research found the list of people included in this section had an impact on college-choice decisions. The list of people included:

- Father
- Mother

- High-school guidance counselor
- High-school teachers
- Friends
- Current University students
- University Alumni

Participants were also given the option to add a person they may have considered to be influential. Participants ranked the level of influence of each person using a four-point Likert scale in which:

- 1 = *not influential*
- 2 = *somewhat influential*
- 3 = *moderately influential*
- 4 = *very influential*

In the second section, participants were asked to rate the level of influence of college-choice factors that were considered to be controllable marketing factors by the University. These factors incorporated a list of various student-recruitment tools that universities often use to increase enrollment. The list recruitment tools included:

- University Facebook page
- University course catalog
- Information about a major
- Campus visit
- Attending an open house
- University Web page
- Phone call from admissions

Respondents were also given the option to add university related factor that may have been influential. Participants ranked the level of influence of each controllable marketing factor using a four-point Likert scale in which:

- 1 = *not influential*
- 2 = *somewhat influential*
- 3 = *moderately influential*
- 4 = *very influential*

The third section of the survey asked students to rate the influence of the university attributes in their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University. The list of institutional attributes included:

- Location
- Campus safety
- A specific major
- A variety of majors
- Price
- Scholarships
- Financial Aid
- Intramural sports
- Varsity sports
- Social life
- Diversity

Respondents were also given the option to add university related attributes that may have been influential in their decision to attend. Participants ranked the level of influence of each university attribute using a four-point Likert scale in which:

- 1 = *not influential*
- 2 = *somewhat influential*
- 3 = *moderately influential*
- 4 = *very influential*

The fourth section of the survey asked students to rank the university attributes in terms of their importance on their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University on a scale from one to ten, where ten was the most important and one was the least important factor. All of the university attributes from section four were included in the ranking scale with the exception of *intramural sports* and *varsity sports*, which were combined into *sports*.

In the fifth section, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with various statements pertaining to the views and opinions of the Midwest Christian University (MCU). The list of statements included:

- *The recruitment material that MCU uses to attract students portrays MCU accurately.*
- *The news media is harsh in its coverage of MCU.*
- *I am satisfied with my decision to attend MCU.*
- *MCU has some very successful graduates.*
- *MCU will prepare me for a good career.*
- *Academic preparation at MCU is as good as prestigious private institutions.*

- *MCU grads speak highly of MCU.*
- *People outside of MCU have a favorable view of the University.*

Participants ranked the rating that reflected their agreement with the statements using a five-point Likert scale in which:

- 1 = *Strongly Agree*
- 2 = *Agree*
- 3 = *No Opinion*
- 4 = *Disagree*
- 5 = *Strongly Disagree*

The sixth section asked participants to rank a list of ten recruitment tools in terms of importance on their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University on a scale from one to 10, where 10 was the most important factor and one was the least important factor. The list of recruitment tools included:

- The University Facebook page
- News coverage about the University
- Your parents
- TV or radio advertising
- Information about a major
- A campus visit or attending an open house
- Your friends
- Present University students or University Alums
- The University Web page
- High school guidance counselors or teachers

In the seventh section of survey, participants were asked to provide demographic information about themselves. The demographic sought to find the participants’:

- Gender
- Traditional/ non-traditional students
- Race
- In-state vs. out-of-state/ country
- Community
- Religion
- High school GPA
- Educational level of mother
- Educational level of father
- Priority choice to attend the University

Population

The 747 incoming freshman students of the Midwest Christian University represented the population of this study (“Education”, 2013). During the new-student orientation held on August 27th, 2012, 691 students were present and completed the survey. Of the 691 participants, 628 participants identified themselves as freshman students, 59 participants identified themselves as transfer students and 4 participants did not identify themselves as either a freshman or transfer student. For the purpose of this study, identifying college-choice factors of freshman students, the sample size will consist of the 628 participants that identified themselves as freshman students. The overall response rate was 100% of those students present during the new-student orientation.

During the survey, the participants were asked to provide demographic information about themselves. The demographics of the 628 participants, as described by the participants, revealed the gender was 57.6% female and 42.4% male. Race consisted of 85.2% white, 6.1% African American, 3.9% Latino, 1.3% Asian and 0.6% Native American, 2.9% described as other. A location breakdown showed 57.1% from Illinois, 41.9% from out of state, and 1.0% from out of country. Communities in which the students came from were 17.8% urban, 53.8% suburban, and 28.4% rural. Participants classified their religious beliefs as 49.6% Protestant, 8.3% Catholic, 10.1% Unaffiliated, and 31.9% other. A summary of the participants' high school GPA included 0.6% less than 2.0, 3.2% between 2.0-2.49, 11.4% between 2.5-2.99, 30.2% between 3.0-3.5, and 54.5% over 3.5. Respondents described the highest level of education attained by their parents as 17.0% high school, 18.8% two-year college, 37.4% four year college, 26.8% graduate school or beyond. Of the colleges to which the students applied, the Midwest Christian University was the first choice for 67.2% of the students, second choice of 18.9%, third choice of 8.1%, and fourth choice of 5.8%.

Nearly every survey was fully completed by the participants. Duplicate and unclear responses were omitted from the results. Questions from the participants regarding the clarity of the survey were not answered during the completion of surveys.

Data Collection

In an attempt to survey as many incoming freshman students as possible, a purposive sample of freshman students from the Midwest Christian University were surveyed during the new-student orientation on August 27, 2012 (Gay et al., 2009). It was anticipated that if students were surveyed prior to the start of classes during new student

orientation that they would have a better recollection of why they chose to enroll at the particular university over other higher education institutions. This sample included both traditional and non-traditional students across all subject majors. Data collection was done in cooperation with the admissions team from the Midwest Christian University.

Obtaining Permission

Upon the review of research involving college-choice factors of incoming freshman students, it was determined that a survey was needed to conduct the research at-hand to capture the feedback of incoming students at a particular Midwest Christian University. Donnellan's (2002) survey sought to find similar answers to the research at-hand involving college-choice factors of freshman students. As a result, Donnellan was contacted via email and he provided permission to use and adapt his survey as needed.

Setting-up

On the day of the new-student orientation, the researcher brought 800 consent forms and 5-page surveys to the university auditorium, due to the estimated attendance as described by the university administrative team. Prior to the orientation, the university administrative team requested that consent forms and surveys be separated into piles of 30, as each university volunteer present during the orientation would be responsible for the distribution and collection of the 30 consent forms and surveys.

The study was conducted at a pre-determined time during the middle of the orientation. Following a break in the orientation, the researcher was notified that the study would take place when the orientation resumed. Approximately 25 university volunteers were each given 30 consent forms, 30 surveys, and two large manila envelopes. Each volunteer was specifically instructed to distribute the consent forms first

and allow five minutes for completion. The volunteers then collected the completed consent forms and placed them into a manila envelope. The volunteers then distributed the surveys to the students that turned-in the consent forms and allowed 10 minutes for completion. The volunteers then collected the surveys from the students and placed them into the other manila envelope. Upon completion, the volunteers brought both envelopes to the researcher just outside the auditorium along with any uncompleted consent forms and surveys.

Distributing Surveys

After providing the university volunteers with the materials and instructions necessary to conduct the study, an introduction letter was provided to the Midwest Christian University employee in charge of making announcements at the orientation. The introduction letter provided a brief overview of the study, informed students that the study was voluntary, and provided the students with the directions for completing the consent forms and surveys. The specific pre-written introduction was read to all new students in-attendance at the orientation. University volunteers then distributed the consent forms to the students and allowed five minutes for completion. The consent form provided a brief description of the study and asked students to participate in a questionnaire voluntarily. Participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. University volunteers then collected the consent forms and placed them into large manila envelopes.

Next, the university volunteers distributed the 5-page survey to the students. To assure anonymity, students were not required to state their names on the survey. The participants were given 10 minutes to complete the paper-pencil survey. Upon

completion, students remained stationed and turned-in their surveys to the nearby university volunteers. The university volunteers then placed the completed surveys into the additional manila envelopes. Following the completion of surveys, the researcher collected and securely filed the envelopes containing the consent forms and the completed surveys. The survey results were then tabulated to determine the factors that freshman students identified as contributing toward their choice to attend a particular Midwest Christian University.

Analytical Methods

Various analytical methods were used throughout the study to summarize the results of the survey. The responses from the paper and pencil surveys were tabulated and organized using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Data was then transferred into a SPSS spreadsheet to perform further analytics. Descriptive analyses were used to determine which factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students. Descriptive analysis and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to determine the impact demographic characteristics had on college-choice factors. Descriptive analyses were also used to compare the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college choice decision of freshman students.

To answer research question number one, “What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?”, descriptive analyses were used to determine the participants’ responses to the surveys and discover the factors that most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students. The responses to each survey question, with the exception of question seven, involving demographic information, were used to answer this research question.

The responses from each question were tabulated and organized using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The raw data was summarized using descriptive statistics, including mean and modes, to determine the influential college-choice factors. The compiled data was analyzed using bar graphs and frequency tables.

To answer research question number two, “What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?”, descriptive analyses and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to evaluate the impact of demographic characteristics on college-choice factors. The responses to the question seven, the demographic section, were applied to every question throughout the survey. Means and standard deviations were computed for the ratings and rankings of the controllable marketing influencers on college-choice, uncontrollable marketing influencers on college-choice, and the university attributes. Data was analyzed using frequency tables. Analyses of variance were then conducted to compare gender, race, residence, community, and religion to the ratings and rankings of controllable marketing influencers on college-choice, uncontrollable marketing influencers on college-choice, and the university attributes. Frequency tables were used to analyze this data.

To answer research question number three, “What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?”, descriptive analyses were used to determine the impact of marketing versus non-marketing on the college-choice decision of freshman students. The answers from survey question number one, “How influential were each of the following people in your decision to attend the Midwest Christian University (mother, father, etc.)?”, were compared to the answers from survey question number two, “How

influential were each of the following factors in your decision to attend the Midwest Christian University (the university Facebook page, the university course catalog, etc)?” Survey question number one was designed to identify the uncontrollable marketing factors, while survey question number two was intended to identify the controllable marketing factors. Each question was tabulated to determine the mean and modes of the influential factors. Means and modes were then computed for the ratings of the controllable marketing influencers on college-choice and uncontrollable marketing influencers. Each section, controllable marketing factors and uncontrollable marketing factors, was then tabulated and given an overall mean score to determine which section had a greater impact on freshman students’ decision to attend a particular Midwest Christian University. Frequency tables and bar charts were used to analyze this data.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this study was that it involved a single Midwestern Christian University. Although the study used a large sample size of the incoming freshman class, other universities could have been used to generalize the results. The results of this study should not be generalized directly to all Christian universities throughout the United States.

Another limitation was the diversity of the incoming freshman class at this particular university. The sample consisted of predominately white students. The university researched is a Christian University located in a predominately white Midwestern suburb and therefore sampling does not reflect the diversity of students found in universities across the country.

The final limitation of this study was that the surveys were distributed at a single point in time prior to enrollment. While it was determined that distributing the surveys during freshman orientation would be the most efficient way of capturing the largest sample size and attaining students' thoughts on college-choice factors prior to beginning classes at the Midwest Christian University, other environmental factors could have played a role in the students' survey answers after enrollment, but prior to the freshman orientation.

Summary

This chapter described the research design, population, data collection, analytical methods, and limitations of the research. The study is guided by the research questions at hand. The next chapter will provide a thorough description of the findings and conclusions related to the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll in the Midwest Christian University.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study was conducted to aid the marketing strategies at private universities to increase their enrollment. The focus of this research centered on student perceptions and the degree in which they were influenced by various non-marketing and marketing factors to attend a particular university. This chapter answers the following research questions:

1. What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?
2. What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?
3. What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?

Quantitative data was collected from undergraduate students prior to beginning their first semester at a Midwest Christian University through administering a survey. The quantitative data obtained from the survey was analyzed to determine the college-choice factors that affected freshman students' decisions to enroll in a particular university. This section presents the findings, conclusions, as well as implications and recommendations of this research.

Findings

This section answers research question 1: What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?

Ratings for Factors that Influenced the College-Choice Decision

In questions one, two, and three of the survey, participants were asked to evaluate the influence of various non-marketing, marketing, and institutional factors as they relate to their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University. These survey questions consisted of four-point Likert Scales; one was *not influential*, two was *somewhat influential*, three was *moderately influential* and four was *very influential*. Descriptive statistics were used to compute mean and standard deviation scores of each variable. These findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Evaluating the Influence of Individual Non-Marketing,
Marketing, and Institutional Factors*

| Variables | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Non-Marketing | | | |
| Father | 626 | 2.64 | 1.05 |
| Mother | 623 | 2.88 | .99 |
| High School Counselor | 622 | 1.40 | .73 |
| High School Teacher | 620 | 1.52 | .82 |
| Friends | 622 | 2.13 | 1.02 |
| Current Students | 626 | 2.53 | 1.09 |
| Alums | 622 | 2.18 | 1.17 |
| Marketing | | | |
| Facebook Page | 627 | 1.50 | .81 |
| Course Catalog | 622 | 1.81 | .93 |
| Info about a Major | 619 | 2.77 | 1.00 |
| Campus Visit | 626 | 3.46 | .79 |
| Open House | 617 | 2.09 | 1.17 |
| Web Page | 623 | 2.07 | .99 |
| Call from Admissions | 626 | 2.23 | 1.06 |
| Institutional | | | |
| Location | 626 | 2.83 | 1.03 |
| Campus Safety | 623 | 2.39 | 1.06 |
| Specific Major | 624 | 3.04 | 1.02 |
| Variety of Majors | 625 | 2.32 | 1.06 |
| Price | 621 | 2.53 | 1.12 |
| Scholarships | 625 | 3.43 | .80 |
| Financial Aid | 622 | 3.04 | 1.05 |
| Intramural Sports | 625 | 1.97 | 1.02 |
| Varsity Sports | 623 | 2.17 | 1.27 |
| Social Life | 625 | 2.86 | .91 |
| Diversity | 626 | 2.35 | 1.01 |

When evaluating the level of influence that the various college-choice factors had on enrollment, the participants indicated that the campus visit ($M=3.46$) was the most influential factor in their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University. The next most influential factor was scholarships ($M=3.43$), followed by a specific major ($M=3.04$), financial aid ($M=3.04$), and mother ($M=2.88$). The least influential factors, as

described by the participants, were the high school counselors ($M=1.40$), Facebook page ($M=1.50$), and high school teachers ($M=1.52$).

This section answers research question 3: What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?

Ratings for Marketing and Non-Marketing Factors that Influenced the College-Choice Decision

The first survey question focused on determining the level of influence of non-marketing factors played in freshman students' decision to enroll at the Midwest Christian University, while the second survey question focused on finding the level of influence of marketing factors. These survey questions consisted of four-point Likert Scales from; one was *not influential*, two was *somewhat influential*, three was *moderately influential* and four was *very influential*. Descriptive statistics were used to determine mean scores for the non-marketing factors and the marketing factors. The results of survey questions one and two are presented in Table 2, as they directly relate to research question #3.

Table 2

Comparing the Influence of Non-Marketing and Marketing Factors

| Variables | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Non-Marketing | | | |
| Father | 626 | 2.64 | 1.05 |
| Mother | 623 | 2.88 | 0.99 |
| High School Counselor | 622 | 1.40 | 0.73 |
| High School Teacher | 620 | 1.52 | 0.82 |
| Friends | 622 | 2.13 | 1.02 |
| Current Students | 626 | 2.53 | 1.09 |
| Alums | 622 | 2.18 | 1.17 |
| Total | | 2.18 | 1.116 |
| Marketing | | | |
| Facebook Page | 627 | 1.50 | 0.81 |
| Course Catalog | 622 | 1.81 | 0.93 |
| Info about a Major | 619 | 2.77 | 1.00 |
| Campus Visit | 626 | 3.46 | 0.79 |
| Open House | 617 | 2.09 | 1.17 |
| Web Page | 623 | 2.07 | 0.99 |
| Call from Admissions | 626 | 2.23 | 1.06 |
| Total | | 2.27 | 1.144 |

Of the marketing and non-marketing variables that were measured, the marketing factors ($M=2.27$) were found to be slightly more influential than non-marketing factors ($M=2.18$). The overall total mean score of non-marketing factors was negatively affected by the low scores received from high school guidance counselor ($M=1.40$) and high school teacher ($M=1.52$). The overall total mean score of marketing factors was positively affected by the high scores received from campus visit ($M=3.46$) and info about a major ($M=2.77$).

Ratings for Institutional Factors that Influenced the College-Choice Decision

In question three of the survey, participants were asked to rate the level of influence level of influence institutional factors played in their decision to enroll at the

Midwest Christian University. This survey question consisted of four-point Likert Scales from; one was *not influential*, two was *somewhat influential*, three was *moderately influential* and four was *very influential*. Although the research at hand focused on determining the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision at the Midwest Christian University, it is important to note that Institutional factors were identified as having played the largest role in influencing freshman students' decision to attend the Midwest Christian University. Descriptive statistics were also used to develop mean and standard deviation scores for the institutional factors. These findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Evaluating the Influence of Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| Location | 626 | 2.83 | 1.03 |
| Campus Safety | 623 | 2.39 | 1.06 |
| Specific Major | 624 | 3.04 | 1.02 |
| Variety of Majors | 625 | 2.32 | 1.06 |
| Price | 621 | 2.53 | 1.12 |
| Scholarships | 625 | 3.43 | 0.80 |
| Financial Aid | 622 | 3.04 | 1.05 |
| Intramural Sports | 625 | 1.97 | 1.02 |
| Varsity Sports | 623 | 2.17 | 1.27 |
| Social Life | 625 | 2.86 | 0.91 |
| Diversity | 626 | 2.35 | 1.01 |
| Total | | 2.63 | 1.117 |

Of the institutional factors that were measured, the total overall mean score was $M=2.63$. The institutional factors that played the largest role in influencing the college-choice factors at the Midwestern Christian University were scholarships ($M=3.43$), specific major ($M=3.04$), and financial aid ($M=3.04$). The institutional factors that played

the least role in influencing college choice factors was found to be intramural sports ($M=1.97$), varsity sports ($M=2.17$), and variety of majors ($M=2.32$).

Rankings of Institutional Factors That Influenced the College-Choice Decision

In question four of the survey, participants were asked to rank institutional factors in terms of importance to attend the Midwest Christian University on a scale of one to ten, with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean of each institutional factor. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Rankings of Institutional Factors that Influenced the College Choice-Decision

| Institutional Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Location | 6.02 | 2.744 |
| Campus Safety | 4.28 | 2.480 |
| Diversity | 3.95 | 2.434 |
| Social Life | 5.69 | 2.363 |
| Sports | 4.63 | 3.271 |
| Specific Major | 6.71 | 2.863 |
| Variety of Majors | 4.74 | 2.522 |
| Price | 5.71 | 2.743 |
| Scholarships | 7.45 | 2.530 |
| Financial Aid | 5.87 | 2.751 |

Note. $n=563$. The variation in *sample size* is due to the number of participants not correctly ranking each variable on a scale from one to ten, using each number only once. Responses that did not correctly rank each variable from one to ten were omitted.

When ranking the institutional factors in order of importance to attend the Midwest Christian University, overall, participants felt that scholarships ($M=7.45$) was the most important factor. The next most important institutional factor was a specific major ($M=6.71$), followed by location ($M=6.02$). The participants identified the least

important institutional factor in their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University was diversity ($M=3.95$), followed by campus safety ($M=4.28$), and sports ($M=4.63$).

Only responses that ranked each institutional factor from one to ten were included in the results. This represented about 90% of the total respondents ($n=563$). While the results of the *ranking* of institutional factors in Table 4 were fairly consistent with the *rating* of institutional factors in Table 3, the difference in the number of respondents may explain the slight variation in importance of institutional factors when comparing results presented in Table 4 to Table 3 results.

Student Perceptions of Statements Related to the Midwest Christian University

In question five of the survey, participants were asked to rank their level of agreement to various statements relating to their satisfaction with the Midwest Christian University. The students were provided a five-point Likert scale, in which one was *strongly agree*, two was *agree*, three was *no opinion*, four was *disagree* and five was *strongly disagree*. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the means of each statement. The findings are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Student Perceptions of Statements Related to the Midwest Christian University

| Statement | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|
| The recruitment material that MCU uses to attract students portrays MCU accurately. | 625 | 1.89 | .799 |
| The news media is harsh in its coverage of MCU. | 624 | 3.33 | .799 |
| I am satisfied with my decision to attend MCU. | 623 | 1.54 | .085 |
| MCU has some very successful graduates. | 625 | 1.67 | .847 |
| MCU will prepare me for a good career. | 624 | 1.50 | .734 |
| Academic preparation at MCU is as good as prestigious institutions. | 624 | 1.87 | .843 |
| MCU grads speak highly of MCU. | 625 | 1.43 | .744 |
| People outside of MCU have a favorable impression of the University. | 623 | 2.09 | .945 |

Of the eight statements relating to students perceptions of the Midwest Christian University, participants most strongly agreed with the statement that MCU grads speak very highly of MCU ($M=1.43$). The next statement that participants agreed with most strongly was MCU will prepare me for a good career ($M=1.50$), followed by I am satisfied with my decision to attend MCU ($M=1.54$). The statement that participants agreed with the least was the news media is harsh in its coverage of MCU ($M=3.33$). The next statement that participants agreed with the least was people outside MCU had a

favorable impression of MCU ($M=2.09$), followed by Academic preparation at MCU is as good as prestigious private institutions ($M=1.87$).

Rankings of Marketing and Non-Marketing Factors That Influenced the College-Choice Decision

In question six of the survey, participants were asked to rank marketing and non-marketing factors in terms of importance to attend the Midwest Christian University on a scale of one to ten, with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean of each institutional factor. The findings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Rankings of Marketing and Non-Marketing Factors that Influenced the College-Choice Decision

| Marketing/ Non-Marketing Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|-----------|
| The MCU Facebook page | 4.18 | 2.353 |
| News coverage about MCU | 3.28 | 2.166 |
| Your parents | 7.21 | 2.546 |
| TV or radio advertising | 3.29 | 2.295 |
| Information about a major | 6.85 | 2.370 |
| A campus visit or open house | 8.06 | 2.420 |
| Your friends | 5.95 | 2.529 |
| Present MCU students or MCU alums | 6.90 | 2.231 |
| The MCU Web page | 5.32 | 1.966 |
| High school guidance counselors or teachers | 4.03 | 2.590 |

Note. $n=550$. The variation in *sample size* is due to the number of participants not correctly ranking each variable on a scale from one to ten, using each number only once. Responses that did not correctly rank each variable from one to ten were omitted.

When ranking the marketing and non-marketing factors in order of importance to attend the Midwest Christian University, overall, participants felt that a campus visit or attending an open house ($M=8.06$) was the most important factor. The next most important factor was parents ($M=7.21$), followed by present MCU students or alums ($M=6.90$). The participants identified the least important factor in their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University was news coverage about MCU ($M=3.28$), followed by TV or radio advertising ($M=3.29$), and high school teachers and guidance counselors ($M=4.03$).

The next section answers research question 2: What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?

This section evaluates the impact of seven demographic characteristics on the participant's decision to attend a Midwest Christian University. Each demographic characteristic is compared to the non-marketing, marketing, and institutional factors that may have influenced their decision to attend MCU.

Relationship Between Gender and College-Choice Factors

ANOVAs were used to determine if there were significant differences among the responses of males and females in regards to what influenced their college-choice decision. ANOVAs were used to compare the relationship between gender and the ratings of non-marketing factors, marketing factors, and institutional factors. The results of gender compared to non-marketing factors are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Relationship Between Gender and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Gender | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | Male | 265 | 2.63 | 1.029 |
| | Female | 361 | 2.64 | 1.064 |
| | Total | 626 | 2.64 | 1.048 |
| Mother | Male | 264 | 2.80 | .995 |
| | Female | 359 | 2.94 | .983 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.88 | .990 |
| HS Counselor | Male | 264 | 1.38 | .715 |
| | Female | 358 | 1.41 | .738 |
| | Total | 622 | 1.40 | .728 |
| HS Teachers | Male | 265 | 1.50 | .822 |
| | Female | 355 | 1.54 | .827 |
| | Total | 620 | 1.52 | .824 |
| Friends | Male | 265 | 2.19 | 1.038 |
| | Female | 357 | 2.09 | 1.000 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.13 | 1.017 |
| Current Students | Male | 265 | 2.48 | 1.087 |
| | Female | 361 | 2.57 | 1.083 |
| | Total | 626 | 2.53 | 1.085 |
| Alums | Male | 264 | 2.20 | 1.180 |
| | Female | 358 | 2.17 | 1.158 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.18 | 1.167 |
| Sum of Non-Marketing factors | Male | 266 | 2.17 | 1.111 |
| | Female | 362 | 2.19 | 1.121 |
| | Total | 628 | 2.18 | 1.116 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results from Table 7 showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in their ratings of influence of any non-marketing college-choice factor. The largest difference between males and females responses was that females rated their mothers ($M=2.94$) as more influential than males ($M=2.80$). Overall, females rated the non-marketing variables slightly higher ($M=2.19$) than males ($M=2.17$).

An ANOVA was also used to determine if there was a significant difference between gender and the ratings of college-choice marketing factors. The results are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Relationship Between Gender and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Gender | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | Male | 265 | 1.42 | .745 |
| | Female | 362 | 1.57 | .847 |
| | Total | 627 | 1.50* | .808 |
| Course Catalog | Male | 264 | 1.77 | .922 |
| | Female | 358 | 1.84 | .937 |
| | Total | 622 | 1.81 | .930 |
| Info about a Major | Male | 264 | 2.70 | .982 |
| | Female | 355 | 2.82 | 1.014 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.77 | 1.002 |
| Campus Visit | Male | 265 | 3.39 | .819 |
| | Female | 361 | 3.52 | .771 |
| | Total | 626 | 3.46* | .794 |
| Open House | Male | 262 | 2.06 | 1.111 |
| | Female | 355 | 2.11 | 1.213 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.09 | 1.170 |
| University Web Page | Male | 263 | 1.90 | .940 |
| | Female | 360 | 2.19 | 1.002 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.07** | .986 |
| Call from Admissions | Male | 264 | 2.09 | 1.030 |
| | Female | 362 | 2.33 | 1.064 |
| | Total | 626 | 2.23** | 1.056 |
| Sum of Non-Marketing factors | Male | 266 | 2.18 | 1.121 |
| | Female | 362 | 2.33 | 1.156 |
| | Total | 628 | 2.27** | 1.144 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings from Table 8 showed that there was a significant difference overall between male ($M=2.18$) and females ($M=2.33$) and their ratings of the influence of marketing variables ($p < .01$). Women rated the influence of the University Facebook page ($M=1.57$) significantly higher than men ($M=1.42$, $p < .05$). Females also rated the campus

visit ($M=3.52$) as a significant higher influence than males ($M=3.39$, $p<.05$). Females rated the University Webpage as having a significantly higher influence ($M=2.19$) than males ($M=1.90$, $p<.01$). The final significant difference was the rating of the call from admissions ($p<.01$), women rated this as being more strongly influential ($M=2.33$) than men ($M=2.18$). There were no significant differences in the ratings influence between men and women in course catalog, info about a major, or open house.

The final gender comparison used an ANOVA to find out if a significant difference existed among the gender of an individual and the ratings of institutional factors. The findings are listed in Table 9.

Table 9

Relationship Between Gender and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Gender | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | Male | 265 | 2.71 | 1.071 |
| | Female | 361 | 2.92 | .986 |
| | Total | 626 | 2.83* | 1.027 |
| Campus Safety | Male | 266 | 2.09 | 1.037 |
| | Female | 357 | 2.61 | 1.021 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.39** | 1.059 |
| Specific Major | Male | 265 | 2.94 | 1.021 |
| | Female | 359 | 3.11 | 1.006 |
| | Total | 624 | 3.04* | 1.015 |
| Variety of Majors | Male | 265 | 2.25 | 1.023 |
| | Female | 360 | 2.38 | 1.085 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.32 | 1.060 |
| Price | Male | 264 | 2.39 | 1.121 |
| | Female | 357 | 2.64 | 1.104 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.53** | 1.118 |
| Scholarships | Male | 264 | 3.44 | .747 |
| | Female | 361 | 3.43 | .837 |
| | Total | 625 | 3.43 | .800 |
| Financial Aid | Male | 264 | 3.00 | 1.021 |
| | Female | 358 | 3.07 | 1.075 |
| | Total | 622 | 3.04 | 1.052 |
| Intramural Sports | Male | 264 | 2.13 | 1.046 |
| | Female | 361 | 1.86 | .981 |
| | Total | 625 | 1.97** | 1.017 |
| Varsity Sports | Male | 265 | 2.48 | 1.300 |
| | Female | 358 | 1.95 | 1.198 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.17** | 1.269 |
| Social Life | Male | 265 | 2.79 | .920 |
| | Female | 360 | 2.91 | .901 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.86 | .910 |
| Diversity | Male | 265 | 2.27 | .989 |
| | Female | 361 | 2.41 | 1.013 |
| | Total | 626 | 2.35 | 1.005 |
| Sum of Institutional Variables | Male | 266 | 2.59 | 1.116 |
| | Female | 362 | 2.66 | 1.123 |
| | Total | 628 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Overall, females rated the influence of institutional ratings ($M=2.66$) higher than males ($M=2.59$), although the results showed that there was not a significant difference. However, females rated the influence of campus safety ($M=2.61$) significantly higher than males ($M=2.09$, $p<.01$). Females also rated price ($M=2.64$) as significantly more influential than males ($M=2.39$, $p<.01$). In addition, women listed a specific major ($M=3.11$) as having a significantly higher impact than men ($M=2.94$, $p<.05$). Females also rated the influence of location ($M=2.92$) significantly higher than males ($M=2.71$, $p<.05$). On the other hand, males rated the influence of intramural sports ($M=2.13$) significantly higher than females ($M=1.86$, $p<.01$). Men also rated varsity sports ($M=2.48$) as having a significantly higher influence in their college-choice decision than women ($M=1.95$, $p<.01$). There were no significant differences between males and females in their ratings of variety of majors, scholarships, financial aid, social life, and diversity.

Relationship Between Race and College-Choice Factors

ANOVAs were also used to determine if there was a significant difference between students' race and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 10, students' race is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 10

Relationship Between Race and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | African American | 38 | 2.61 | 1.152 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.00 | 1.069 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.46 | 1.103 |
| | Native American | 4 | 3.00 | 1.414 |
| | White | 527 | 2.66 | 1.030 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.11 | 1.132 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.64 | 1.048 |
| Mother | African American | 38 | 3.18 | 1.010 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.25 | 1.035 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.00 | 1.063 |
| | Native American | 4 | 3.00 | 1.414 |
| | White | 525 | 2.86 | .976 |
| | Other | 17 | 2.65 | 1.057 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.89 | .988 |
| High School Counselor | African American | 37 | 2.05** | 1.026 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.63 | 1.061 |
| | Latino | 23 | 1.74 | 1.054 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.00** | .000 |
| | White | 525 | 1.33** | .654 |
| | Other | 18 | 1.39 | .698 |
| | Total | 615 | 1.39 | .727 |
| High School Teachers | African American | 37 | 1.89 | .994 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.88 | 1.126 |
| | Latino | 24 | 1.92 | 1.060 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.00** | .000 |
| | White | 522 | 1.47 | .784 |
| | Other | 18 | 1.67 | .907 |
| | Total | 613 | 1.52 | .825 |
| Friends | African American | 38 | 2.13 | 1.070 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.63 | .744 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.33 | 1.239 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.00 | 0.816 |
| | White | 524 | 2.14 | 1.005 |
| | Other | 17 | 1.94 | 1.029 |
| | Total | 615 | 2.14 | 1.015 |

| Non-Marketing Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Current Students | African American | 38 | 2.32 | 1.042 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.75 | 1.165 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.04** | 1.083 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.25** | .500 |
| | White | 527 | 2.53 | 1.075 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.44 | 1.149 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.53 | 1.081 |
| Alums | African American | 38 | 2.05 | 1.184 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.50 | 1.069 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.58 | 1.176 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.00 | 1.155 |
| | White | 524 | 2.16 | 1.161 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.39 | 1.290 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.18 | 1.166 |
| Sum of Variables | African American | 38 | 2.31 | 1.136 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.38 | 1.169 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.45 | 2.443 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.89 | 1.166 |
| | White | 529 | 2.16 | 1.109 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.09 | 1.109 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.18 | 1.116 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When looking at how students rated the overall influence of non-marketing variables, there was no significant difference among races, however, there were significant differences in the way particular races answered various questions. African Americans ($M=2.05$) rated the influence of high school guidance counselors significantly higher than Whites ($M=1.33$, $p < .01$) and Native Americans ($M=1.00$, $p < .01$). Also, Whites ($M=1.47$), Asians ($M=1.88$), African Americans ($M=1.89$), and Latinos ($M=1.92$) rated the influence of high school teachers significantly higher than Native Americans ($M=1.00$, $p < .01$). Latinos ($M=3.04$) rated the influence of current students significantly higher than Native Americans ($M=1.25$, $p < .01$). Overall, Latinos ($M=2.45$) were most influenced by non-marketing factors and Native Americans ($M=1.89$) were the least

influenced. There were no significant differences in responses between races in rating the influences of father, mother, friends, and alums.

In Table 11, another ANOVA is used to compare students' race to influential marketing factors. The results are listed below.

Table 11

Relationship Between Race and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| FaceBook Page | African American | 38 | 1.66 | 1.021 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.75 | 1.165 |
| | Latino | 24 | 1.75 | .897 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.00** | .000 |
| | White | 528 | 1.47 | .769 |
| | Other | 18 | 1.83 | 1.098 |
| | Total | 620 | 1.50 | .809 |
| Course Catalog | African American | 37 | 1.89 | 1.048 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.38 | .916 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.08 | 1.100 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.75 | .957 |
| | White | 525 | 1.77 | .904 |
| | Other | 17 | 1.82 | 1.131 |
| | Total | 615 | 1.80 | .929 |
| Information about a Major | African American | 36 | 2.83 | 1.056 |
| | Asian | 7 | 3.14 | 1.069 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.75 | .794 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.25 | .957 |
| | White | 523 | 2.77 | 1.007 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.72 | 1.018 |
| | Total | 612 | 2.77 | 1.001 |
| Campus Visit | African American | 38 | 3.47 | .762 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.38 | 1.061 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.13 | 1.035 |
| | Native American | 4 | 3.50 | .577 |
| | White | 527 | 3.49 | .775 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.22 | 1.003 |
| | Total | 619 | 3.46 | .796 |

| Marketing Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Open House | African American | 37 | 2.30 | 1.175 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.50 | 1.069 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.29 | 1.160 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.50 | 1.000 |
| | White | 520 | 2.06 | 1.170 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.06 | 1.211 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.08 | 1.168 |
| Web Page | African American | 37 | 2.62* | 1.063 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.75 | 1.282 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.29 | .955 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.50 | 1.000 |
| | White | 525 | 2.02* | .962 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.28 | 1.074 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.08 | .988 |
| Call from Admissions | African American | 38 | 2.71* | 1.160 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.25 | 1.282 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.38 | 1.173 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.25* | .500 |
| | White | 527 | 2.19 | 1.028 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.56 | 1.199 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.23 | 1.057 |
| Sum of Variables | African American | 38 | 2.50 | 1.182 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.57 | 1.182 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.38 | 1.088 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.82 | 1.056 |
| | White | 529 | 2.25 | 1.140 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.34 | 1.180 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.27 | 1.144 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When reviewing the results of how students rated the overall influence of non-marketing variables, there was no significant difference among different races, however, there were significant differences in the way certain races answered particular questions. African Americans ($M=1.66$), Asians ($M=1.75$), Latinos ($M=1.75$), Whites ($M=1.47$) rated the influence of the University Facebook page significantly higher than Native Americans ($M=1.00$, $p < .01$). Another finding was that African Americans ($M=2.62$) rated the influence of the University Web page significantly higher than Whites ($M=2.02$,

$p < .05$). In addition, African Americans ($M = 2.71$) rated the influence of a call from admissions significantly higher than Native Americans ($M = 1.25$, $p < .01$). In the end, Asians ($M = 2.57$) were most influenced by the marketing factors and Native Americans ($M = 1.82$) were least influenced. There were no significant differences in responses between races in rating the influences of course catalog, info about a major, campus visit, and open house.

A final ANOVA is used in this section to determine if a significant difference exists between participants' race and institutional marketing factors. Findings are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Relationship Between Race and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | African American | 38 | 2.82 | 1.036 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.25 | 1.035 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.92 | 1.060 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.50 | .577 |
| | White | 527 | 2.81 | 1.028 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.28 | 1.074 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.83 | 1.030 |
| Campus Safety | African American | 38 | 2.76 | 1.149 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.63 | .916 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.33 | 1.007 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.00 | 1.155 |
| | White | 525 | 2.35 | 1.057 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.72 | 1.018 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.38 | 1.061 |
| Specific Major | African American | 38 | 3.08 | 1.124 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.50 | 1.309 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.08 | .717 |
| | Native American | 4 | 3.25 | .500 |
| | White | 525 | 3.03 | 1.020 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.22 | .943 |
| | Total | 617 | 3.03 | 1.016 |

| Institutional Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Variety of Majors | African American | 37 | 2.70 | 1.102 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.38 | .916 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.38 | 1.056 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.75 | .957 |
| | White | 527 | 2.28 | 1.051 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.33 | 1.138 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.32 | 1.056 |
| Price | African American | 37 | 2.49 | 1.216 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.25 | 1.165 |
| | Latino | 23 | 2.52 | .994 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.50 | 1.000 |
| | White | 524 | 2.54 | 1.117 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.83 | 1.200 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.54 | 1.118 |
| Scholarships | African American | 38 | 3.39 | .946 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.38 | .744 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.29 | .806 |
| | Native American | 4 | 3.25 | .500 |
| | White | 526 | 3.44 | .785 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.56 | .922 |
| | Total | 618 | 3.43 | .797 |
| Financial Aid | African American | 37 | 3.43 | .835 |
| | Asian | 8 | 3.38 | .518 |
| | Latino | 24 | 3.17 | 1.129 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.25 | .957 |
| | White | 524 | 3.00 | 1.060 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.28 | 1.127 |
| | Total | 615 | 3.04 | 1.052 |
| Intramural Sports | African American | 38 | 2.16 | 1.053 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.88 | .991 |
| | Latino | 24 | 1.79 | .779 |
| | Native American | 4 | 1.25 | .500 |
| | White | 526 | 1.96 | 1.014 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.39 | 1.243 |
| | Total | 618 | 1.97 | 1.016 |
| Varsity Sports | African American | 38 | 2.68 | 1.297 |
| | Asian | 8 | 1.63 | .744 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.13 | 1.262 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.50 | 1.732 |
| | White | 524 | 2.14 | 1.261 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.33 | 1.372 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.17 | 1.269 |

| Institutional Variables | Race | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Social Life | African American | 38 | 2.82 | .982 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.38 | .744 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.58 | 1.139 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.50 | .577 |
| | White | 526 | 2.88 | .900 |
| | Other | 18 | 3.11 | .758 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.86 | .910 |
| Diversity | African American | 38 | 2.61 | 1.054 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.25 | .707 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.54 | 1.103 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.00 | .816 |
| | White | 527 | 2.31 | .992 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.89 | 1.079 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.35 | 1.003 |
| Sum of Variables | African American | 38 | 2.81 | 1.124 |
| | Asian | 8 | 2.53 | 1.028 |
| | Latino | 24 | 2.61 | 1.092 |
| | Native American | 4 | 2.44 | .974 |
| | White | 529 | 2.61 | 1.117 |
| | Other | 18 | 2.90 | 1.138 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

There were no significant differences in responses between races in rating the influences of any of the institutional variables.

Relationship Between Location and College-Choice Factors

ANOVAs were used to determine if there was a significant difference between students' location and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 13, students' location is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 13

Relationship Between Location and Non-Marketing Factors

| Institutional Variables | Location | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | In-State | 356 | 2.63 | 1.052 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.63 | 1.043 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.00 | 1.095 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.63 | 1.048 |
| Mother | In-State | 354 | 2.95 | 0.995 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.77 | 0.975 |
| | Another Country | 5 | 3.40 | 0.894 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.88 | 0.989 |
| High School Counselor | In-State | 355 | 1.48** | 0.782 |
| | Out-of-State | 260 | 1.28** | 0.622 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.67 | 1.033 |
| | Total | 621 | 1.40 | 0.728 |
| High School Teachers | In-State | 355 | 1.60* | 0.863 |
| | Out-of-State | 258 | 1.41* | 0.744 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.17 | 1.169 |
| | Total | 619 | 1.52 | .825 |
| Friends | In-State | 354 | 2.15 | 1.062 |
| | Out-of-State | 261 | 2.10 | 0.961 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.50 | 0.548 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.13 | 1.017 |
| Current Students | In-State | 357 | 2.56 | 1.107 |
| | Out-of-State | 262 | 2.48 | 1.053 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.00 | 1.095 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.53 | 1.084 |
| Alums | In-State | 355 | 2.09 | 1.166 |
| | Out-of-State | 260 | 2.30 | 1.157 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.67 | 1.211 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.19 | 1.167 |
| Sum of Variables | In-State | 358 | 2.20 | 1.129 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.14 | 1.095 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.63 | 1.093 |
| | Total | 627 | 2.18 | 1.116 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When looking at how students rated the overall influence of non-marketing variables, there was no significant difference among whether the students were from in-state out-of-state or another country. However, there were two significant differences in

the way students from different locations rated various influential non-marketing factors. First, in-state students ($M=1.48$) rated the influence of high school counselors significantly higher than out-of-state students ($M=1.28$, $p<.01$). Also, in-state students ($M=1.60$) rated the influence of high school teachers significantly higher than out-of-state students ($M= 1.41$, $p<.05$). Overall, students from another country ($M=2.63$) were most influenced by the non-marketing factors while students from out-of state ($M=2.14$) were least influenced by these factors.

The second ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' location and the influence of marketing factors in their college-choice decision. The results are listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Relationship Between Location and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Location | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | In-State | 358 | 1.56 | .847 |
| | Out-of-State | 262 | 1.44 | .754 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.17 | .408 |
| | Total | 626 | 1.50 | .808 |
| Course Catalog | In-State | 357 | 1.81 | .927 |
| | Out-of-State | 258 | 1.80 | .936 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.67 | 1.033 |
| | Total | 621 | 1.80 | .930 |
| Information about a Major | In-State | 354 | 2.77 | 1.011 |
| | Out-of-State | 258 | 2.77 | .993 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.50 | .837 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.77 | 1.001 |
| Campus Visit | In-State | 357 | 3.41 | .855 |
| | Out-of-State | 262 | 3.55 | .680 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.67 | 1.033 |
| | Total | 625 | 3.46 | .794 |
| Open House | In-State | 351 | 2.22 | 1.203 |
| | Out-of-State | 259 | 1.92** | 1.105 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.33* | .516 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.08 | 1.168 |
| Web Page | In-State | 356 | 2.14 | 1.001 |
| | Out-of-State | 260 | 1.98 | .954 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.50 | .837 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.07 | .984 |
| Call from Admissions | In-State | 358 | 2.21 | 1.082 |
| | Out-of-State | 261 | 2.26 | 1.009 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.50 | 1.225 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.23 | 1.054 |
| Sum of Variables | In-State | 358 | 2.30 | 1.148 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.24 | 1.367 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 1.76* | 0.983 |
| | Total | 627 | 2.27* | 1.143 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Overall, students from in-state ($M=2.30$) and out-of-state ($M=2.24$) were influenced significantly higher by the marketing factors than students from another country ($M=1.76$, $p < .05$). When reviewing the individual marketing variables, In-state

students ($M=2.22$) were influenced significantly higher than out-of-state students ($M=1.92$, $p<.01$) and significantly higher than students from another country ($M=1.33$, $p<.05$) in the open house.

The final ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' location to institutional marketing factors. The findings are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Relationship Between Location and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Location | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | In-State | 358 | 3.15 | .928 |
| | Out-of-State | 261 | 2.40 | 1.005 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.67 | 1.033 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.83 | 1.028 |
| Campus Safety | In-State | 354 | 2.50** | 1.097 |
| | Out-of-State | 262 | 2.24** | .993 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.33 | 1.033 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.39 | 1.060 |
| Specific Major | In-State | 356 | 3.01 | 1.057 |
| | Out-of-State | 261 | 3.07 | .958 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.00 | .894 |
| | Total | 623 | 3.03 | 1.015 |
| Variety of Majors | In-State | 355 | 2.35 | 1.062 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.28 | 1.061 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.50 | 1.049 |
| | Total | 624 | 2.32 | 1.060 |
| Price | In-State | 355 | 2.59 | 1.117 |
| | Out-of-State | 259 | 2.43 | 1.109 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.17 | 1.169 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.53 | 1.117 |
| Scholarships | In-State | 358 | 3.41 | .807 |
| | Out-of-State | 260 | 3.47 | .783 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.33 | 1.211 |
| | Total | 624 | 3.43 | .800 |
| Financial Aid | In-State | 356 | 3.04 | 1.060 |
| | Out-of-State | 259 | 3.04 | 1.043 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.83 | 1.169 |
| | Total | 621 | 3.04 | 1.052 |

| Institutional Variables | Location | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Intramural Sports | In-State | 358 | 2.03 | 1.030 |
| | Out-of-State | 260 | 1.89 | .994 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.50 | 1.049 |
| | Total | 624 | 1.97 | 1.017 |
| Varsity Sports | In-State | 357 | 2.09 | 1.236 |
| | Out-of-State | 259 | 2.26 | 1.303 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.50* | .837 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.18 | 1.269 |
| Social Life | In-State | 357 | 2.84 | .921 |
| | Out-of-State | 261 | 2.89 | .896 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.17 | .983 |
| | Total | 624 | 2.86 | .910 |
| Diversity | In-State | 357 | 2.33** | 1.026 |
| | Out-of-State | 262 | 2.35* | .971 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 3.50** | .548 |
| | Total | 625 | 2.35 | 1.005 |
| Sum of Variables | In-State | 358 | 2.67 | 1.122 |
| | Out-of-State | 263 | 2.57 | 1.111 |
| | Another Country | 6 | 2.96 | 1.014 |
| | Total | 627 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When looking at how students rated the overall influence of institutional variables, there was no significant difference among whether the students were from in-state out-of-state or another country. Although, there were significant differences in the way students from different locations rated various influential institutional factors. In-state students ($M=3.15$) rated location significantly higher than out-of-state students ($M=2.40$, $p < .01$). Also, In-state students ($M=2.50$) rated the influence of campus safety significantly higher than out-of-state students ($M=2.24$, $p < .01$). In addition, students from another country ($M=3.50$) rated the influence of varsity sports significantly higher than in-state ($M=2.09$, $p < .05$) and out-of-state students ($M=2.26$, $p < .05$). Finally, students from another country ($M=3.50$) rated the influence of diversity significantly higher than in-state ($M=2.33$, $p < .01$) and out-of-state students ($M=2.35$, $p < .05$). Overall, students

from another country ($M=2.96$) were influenced the most by institutional factors, while out-of-state students ($M=2.57$) were influenced the least by these factors.

Relationship Between Community and College-Choice Factors

ANOVAs were used to determine if there was a significant difference between students' community and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 16, students' community is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 16

Relationship Between Community and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | Urban | 109 | 2.77 | 1.006 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.62 | 1.073 |
| | Rural | 175 | 2.56 | 1.020 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.63 | 1.047 |
| Mother | Urban | 109 | 2.99 | .928 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.86 | 1.020 |
| | Rural | 172 | 2.83 | .974 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.88 | .991 |
| High School Counselor | Urban | 108 | 1.47 | .791 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 1.38 | .699 |
| | Rural | 173 | 1.35 | .713 |
| | Total | 613 | 1.39 | .720 |
| High School Teachers | Urban | 108 | 1.61 | .874 |
| | Suburban | 329 | 1.47 | .785 |
| | Rural | 174 | 1.54 | .830 |
| | Total | 611 | 1.51 | .814 |
| Friends | Urban | 109 | 2.11 | 1.117 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.13 | .971 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.11 | 1.030 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.12 | 1.013 |
| Current Students | Urban | 108 | 2.65 | 1.088 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.48 | 1.121 |
| | Rural | 176 | 2.55 | 1.035 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.53 | 1.091 |
| Alums | Urban | 108 | 2.16 | 1.153 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 2.15 | 1.185 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.25 | 1.145 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.18 | 1.167 |
| Sum of Variables | Urban | 110 | 2.25 | 1.133 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.16 | 1.208 |
| | Rural | 176 | 2.17 | 1.096 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.18 | 1.116 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results of Table 16 revealed that there was no significant difference between the community in which students grew up and their ratings of influence of any non-marketing college-choice factor. Overall, students from urban communities ($M=2.25$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the highest and students from suburban communities ($M=2.16$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the lowest.

The next ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' community and marketing college-choice factors. The results are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Relationship Between Community and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | Urban | 110 | 1.58 | .892 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 1.46 | .793 |
| | Rural | 175 | 1.53 | .786 |
| | Total | 618 | 1.50 | .810 |
| Course Catalog | Urban | 109 | 2.01* | 1.084 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 1.79 | .918 |
| | Rural | 172 | 1.70* | .825 |
| | Total | 613 | 1.80 | .930 |
| Information about a Major | Urban | 108 | 2.78 | 1.062 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 2.73 | 1.008 |
| | Rural | 172 | 2.84 | .966 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.77 | 1.005 |
| Campus Visit | Urban | 110 | 3.50 | .726 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 3.41 | .845 |
| | Rural | 175 | 3.54 | .717 |
| | Total | 617 | 3.46 | .791 |
| Open House | Urban | 107 | 2.17 | 1.232 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.07 | 1.153 |
| | Rural | 171 | 2.04 | 1.175 |
| | Total | 608 | 2.08 | 1.172 |
| Web Page | Urban | 109 | 2.17 | 1.050 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.01 | .985 |
| | Rural | 175 | 2.11 | .958 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.07 | .990 |
| Call from Admissions | Urban | 110 | 2.19 | 1.096 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.27 | 1.083 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.17 | .980 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.23 | 1.057 |
| Sum of Variables | Urban | 110 | 2.34 | 1.177 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.25 | 1.144 |
| | Rural | 176 | 2.26 | 1.126 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.27 | 1.145 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

When looking at how students rated the overall influence of marketing variables, there was no significant difference among communities. However, students from urban communities ($M=2.01$) were found to be influenced significantly higher in regards to

course catalogs than students from rural communities ($M=1.70, p<.05$). Overall, students from urban communities ($M=2.34$) were influenced the most by marketing factors and students from suburban communities were influenced the least ($M=2.25$).

The last ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' community to institutional marketing factors. The findings are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Relationship Between Community and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | Urban | 109 | 2.81 | 1.023 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 2.85 | 1.009 |
| | Rural | 176 | 2.80 | 1.065 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.82 | 1.027 |
| Campus Safety | Urban | 110 | 2.34 | 1.078 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.39 | 1.059 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.37 | 1.061 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.38 | 1.061 |
| Specific Major | Urban | 110 | 3.14 | .972 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 3.03 | 1.021 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.99 | 1.020 |
| | Total | 615 | 3.04 | 1.011 |
| Variety of Majors | Urban | 110 | 2.42 | 1.120 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 2.33 | 1.055 |
| | Rural | 175 | 2.23 | 1.031 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.32 | 1.060 |
| Price | Urban | 108 | 2.54 | 1.080 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.56 | 1.145 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.48 | 1.111 |
| | Total | 612 | 2.54 | 1.123 |
| Scholarships | Urban | 110 | 3.44 | .784 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 3.43 | .795 |
| | Rural | 174 | 3.41 | .833 |
| | Total | 616 | 3.43 | .803 |
| Financial Aid | Urban | 109 | 3.17* | .980 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 3.09* | 1.017 |
| | Rural | 173 | 2.83* | 1.148 |
| | Total | 613 | 3.03 | 1.056 |

| Institutional Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Intramural Sports | Urban | 109 | 2.04 | 1.079 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 1.94 | 1.025 |
| | Rural | 175 | 1.97 | .958 |
| | Total | 616 | 1.97 | 1.016 |
| Varsity Sports | Urban | 110 | 2.46** | 1.290 |
| | Suburban | 330 | 2.02** | 1.250 |
| | Rural | 174 | 2.30* | 1.260 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.18 | 1.270 |
| Social Life | Urban | 110 | 2.79 | .978 |
| | Suburban | 331 | 2.82 | .891 |
| | Rural | 175 | 2.97 | .909 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.86 | .913 |
| Diversity | Urban | 110 | 2.39 | 1.041 |
| | Suburban | 332 | 2.30 | 1.009 |
| | Rural | 175 | 2.44 | .980 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.35 | 1.007 |
| Sum of Variables | Urban | 110 | 2.68 | 1.117 |
| | Suburban | 333 | 2.62 | 1.122 |
| | Rural | 176 | 2.62 | 1.111 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.63 | 1.118 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that there are no significant differences overall in the influences of institutional factors when compared to the communities in which the students were from. Although, financial aid was identified as significantly less of an influence to rural students ($M=2.83$) when compared to urban ($M=3.17$, $p < .05$) and suburban students ($M=3.09$, $p < .05$). Also, suburban students ($M=2.02$) were significantly less influenced by varsity sports than urban ($M=2.46$, $p < .01$) and rural students ($M=2.30$, $p < .05$). In the end, urban students ($M=2.68$) were influenced the most by the total of institutional factors evaluated.

Relationship Between Religious Beliefs and College-Choice Factors

In this section, three ANOVAs were used to determine if there was a significant difference between students' religious beliefs and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 19, students' community is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 19

Relationship Between Religious Beliefs and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | Protestant | 302 | 2.57 | 1.028 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.65 | 1.055 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.56 | 1.050 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.74 | 1.075 |
| | Total | 609 | 2.63 | 1.048 |
| Mother | Protestant | 300 | 2.83 | .961 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 2.92 | 1.047 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.71 | 1.046 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.96 | 1.007 |
| | Total | 606 | 2.87 | .993 |
| High School Counselor | Protestant | 301 | 1.32 | .667 |
| | Catholic | 49 | 1.59 | .911 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 1.45 | .803 |
| | Other | 193 | 1.40 | .693 |
| | Total | 605 | 1.38 | .715 |
| High School Teachers | Protestant | 301 | 1.45 | .793 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 1.70 | .909 |
| | Unaffiliated | 61 | 1.57 | .884 |
| | Other | 191 | 1.52 | .780 |
| | Total | 603 | 1.51 | .810 |
| Friends | Protestant | 301 | 2.11 | .984 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 2.12 | 1.023 |
| | Unaffiliated | 61 | 2.15 | 1.123 |
| | Other | 193 | 2.15 | 1.020 |
| | Total | 605 | 2.12 | 1.011 |
| Current Students | Protestant | 302 | 2.51 | 1.093 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.45 | 1.172 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.66 | 1.144 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.53 | 1.059 |
| | Total | 609 | 2.53 | 1.093 |

| Non-Marketing Variables | Community | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Alums | Protestant | 301 | 2.23 | 1.145 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 2.18 | 1.257 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.05 | 1.179 |
| | Other | 192 | 2.11 | 1.175 |
| | Total | 605 | 2.17 | 1.166 |
| Sum of Variables | Protestant | 303 | 2.15 | 1.100 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.23 | 1.142 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.16 | 1.138 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.20 | 1.125 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.17 | 1.115 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results of Table 19 revealed that there was no significant difference between student's religion and their ratings of the influence of any non-marketing college-choice factor. Overall, students who claimed to be Catholic ($M=2.23$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the highest and students who stated they were Protestant ($M=2.15$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the lowest.

The second ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' religious beliefs and marketing college-choice factors. The results are listed in Table 20.

Table 20

Relationship Between Religious Beliefs and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Religion | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | Protestant | 302 | 1.40 | .726 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 1.59 | .942 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 1.65 | .889 |
| | Other | 195 | 1.57 | .861 |
| | Total | 610 | 1.50 | .811 |
| Course Catalog | Protestant | 300 | 1.72 | .896 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 1.94 | 1.058 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 1.81 | 1.022 |
| | Other | 193 | 1.88 | .925 |
| | Total | 605 | 1.80 | .934 |

| Marketing Variables | Religion | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Information about a Major | Protestant | 300 | 2.74 | 1.010 |
| | Catholic | 48 | 2.75 | .978 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.85 | .956 |
| | Other | 193 | 2.79 | 1.030 |
| | Total | 603 | 2.77 | 1.007 |
| Campus Visit | Protestant | 302 | 3.51 | .755 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 3.36 | .921 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 3.42 | .821 |
| | Other | 195 | 3.43 | .812 |
| | Total | 609 | 3.46 | .794 |
| Open House | Protestant | 298 | 1.98 | 1.162 |
| | Catholic | 48 | 2.27 | 1.250 |
| | Unaffiliated | 60 | 2.13 | 1.228 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.15 | 1.144 |
| | Total | 600 | 2.08 | 1.171 |
| Web Page | Protestant | 299 | 1.99 | .952 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.33 | 1.160 |
| | Unaffiliated | 61 | 2.21 | .985 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.07 | .997 |
| | Total | 606 | 2.07 | .992 |
| Call from Admissions | Protestant | 301 | 2.16 | 1.047 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.25 | 1.129 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.23 | 1.047 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.32 | 1.056 |
| | Total | 609 | 2.23 | 1.057 |
| Sum of Variables | Protestant | 303 | 2.21 | 1.148 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.36 | 1.184 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.33 | 1.144 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.31 | 1.135 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.27 | 1.147 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results of Table 20 revealed that there was no significant difference between student's religion and their ratings of the influence of any marketing college-choice factor. Overall, students who claimed to be Catholic ($M=2.36$) rated the influence of marketing factors the highest and students who stated they were Protestant ($M=2.21$) rated the influence of marketing factors the lowest.

The final ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' religious beliefs to institutional marketing factors. The findings are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Relationship Between Religious Beliefs and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Religion | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | Protestant | 302 | 2.74* | 1.032 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 3.20* | 1.040 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 3.08 | .980 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.79 | 1.002 |
| | Total | 609 | 2.83 | 1.027 |
| Campus Safety | Protestant | 301 | 2.23* | 1.023 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 2.48 | 1.092 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.48 | 1.083 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.56* | 1.087 |
| | Total | 607 | 2.38 | 1.063 |
| Specific Major | Protestant | 300 | 2.96 | 1.042 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 3.16 | .925 |
| | Unaffiliated | 61 | 3.18 | .922 |
| | Other | 195 | 3.08 | 1.007 |
| | Total | 607 | 3.04 | 1.011 |
| Variety of Majors | Protestant | 301 | 2.19 | 1.022 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.35 | .996 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.44 | 1.081 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.46 | 1.111 |
| | Total | 608 | 2.31 | 1.061 |
| Price | Protestant | 301 | 2.52 | 1.094 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.57 | 1.153 |
| | Unaffiliated | 61 | 2.59 | 1.116 |
| | Other | 192 | 2.52 | 1.162 |
| | Total | 605 | 2.53 | 1.121 |
| Scholarships | Protestant | 300 | 3.47 | .738 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 3.37 | .871 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 3.52 | .805 |
| | Other | 195 | 3.34 | .879 |
| | Total | 608 | 3.43 | .804 |
| Financial Aid | Protestant | 302 | 3.03 | 1.062 |
| | Catholic | 50 | 3.20 | 1.069 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.97 | 1.071 |
| | Other | 192 | 3.01 | 1.044 |
| | Total | 606 | 3.03 | 1.057 |

| Institutional Variables | Religion | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Intramural Sports | Protestant | 300 | 1.98 | .985 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.02 | 1.068 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 1.97 | 1.055 |
| | Other | 195 | 1.95 | 1.039 |
| | Total | 608 | 1.97 | 1.014 |
| Varsity Sports | Protestant | 298 | 2.01* | 1.232 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.33 | 1.275 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.40 | 1.299 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.32* | 1.293 |
| | Total | 606 | 2.18 | 1.270 |
| Social Life | Protestant | 300 | 2.89 | .895 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.63 | .937 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.98 | .859 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.83 | .956 |
| | Total | 608 | 2.86 | .916 |
| Diversity | Protestant | 302 | 2.27 | .998 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.35 | .996 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.42 | 1.001 |
| | Other | 194 | 2.46 | 1.039 |
| | Total | 609 | 2.35 | 1.013 |
| Sum of Variables | Protestant | 303 | 2.57 | 1.115 |
| | Catholic | 51 | 2.70 | 1.122 |
| | Unaffiliated | 62 | 2.73 | 1.111 |
| | Other | 195 | 2.67 | 1.123 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.63 | 1.119 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of institutional factors when compared to students' religion. However, significant differences found when comparing students' religion to the influence of individual institutional factors. Students that categorized their religion as Catholic ($M=3.20$) were influenced significantly higher by the location than students that categorized their religion as Protestant ($M=2.74$, $p < .05$). Also, students that categorized themselves as Other ($M=2.56$) were influenced significantly more by campus safety than students that categorized themselves as Protestant ($M=2.23$, $p < .01$). Students that defined their religion as Other ($M=2.32$) were influenced significantly more by varsity sports than

Protestants ($M=2.01$, $p<.05$). Finally, students that described themselves as unaffiliated were influenced the most by institutional factors, while students that described themselves as Protestant were influenced the least ($M=2.57$).

Relationship Between High School GPA and College-Choice Factors

Three ANOVAs were used in this section to determine if there was a significant difference between students' high school GPA and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 22, students' high school GPA is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 22

Relationship Between High School GPA and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.00 | .816 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.35 | 1.182 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.55 | 1.131 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 2.71 | 1.033 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 338 | 2.62 | 1.030 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.63 | 1.047 |
| Mother | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.75 | .500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.85 | 1.182 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 69 | 2.83 | 1.070 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 2.92 | .978 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.87 | .967 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.87 | .989 |
| High School Counselor | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.25 | .500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 19 | 2.11 | 1.100 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 70 | 1.50 | .794 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 1.39 | .727 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 336 | 1.33 | .657 |
| | Total | 616 | 1.39 | .722 |
| High School Teachers | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.50 | .577 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 19 | 1.84 | 1.015 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 70 | 1.59 | .732 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 185 | 1.50 | .828 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 336 | 1.49 | .821 |
| | Total | 614 | 1.52 | .819 |

| Non-Marketing Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Friends | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.291 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.35 | 1.182 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 70 | 2.36 | .901 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.08 | 1.002 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 336 | 2.08 | 1.020 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.12 | 1.011 |
| Current Students | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.00 | 1.414 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.85 | 1.040 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.70 | 1.047 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.48 | 1.102 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.50 | 1.089 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.53 | 1.089 |
| Alums | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.25 | 1.500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.35 | 1.226 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.39 | 1.213 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.17 | 1.177 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 335 | 2.13 | 1.146 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.18 | 1.167 |
| Sum of Variables | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.04 | 1.701 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.38 | 1.162 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.28 | 1.105 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.18 | 1.124 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 338 | 2.15 | 1.108 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.18 | 1.115 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Results of Table 22 revealed that there was no significant difference between student's high school GPA and their ratings of the influence of any non-marketing college-choice factor. Overall, students with a high school GPA of 2.0-2.49 ($M=2.38$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the highest and students with a high school GPA of greater than 3.5 ($M=2.15$) rated the influence of non-marketing factors the lowest.

The next ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' high school GPA and marketing college-choice factors. The results are listed in Table 23.

Table 23

Relationship Between High School GPA and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.25 | .500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.20** | .894 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 1.65 | .927 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 1.54* | .818 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 1.42** | .755 |
| | Total | 621 | 1.51 | .810 |
| Course Catalog | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.50 | 1.000 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 1.75 | .967 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 70 | 2.00 | 1.036 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 185 | 1.82 | .936 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 1.76 | .905 |
| | Total | 616 | 1.81 | .932 |
| Information about a Major | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.000 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.50 | .946 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 68 | 2.84 | 1.045 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 185 | 2.86 | .922 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.72 | 1.043 |
| | Total | 614 | 2.77 | 1.005 |
| Campus Visit | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.75 | .500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 3.30 | .657 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 3.32 | .875 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 3.54 | .706 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 3.46 | .822 |
| | Total | 620 | 3.46 | .790 |
| Open House | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.00 | 1.414 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.30 | 1.129 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.23 | 1.136 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 184 | 2.11 | 1.178 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 332 | 2.02 | 1.174 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.09 | 1.172 |
| Web Page | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.00 | .816 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 19 | 2.53 | 1.172 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.04 | 1.075 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.09 | .946 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.04 | .982 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.07 | .988 |

| Marketing Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Call from Admissions | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.75 | 1.500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.40 | 1.046 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.37 | 1.072 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.30 | 1.072 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 2.16 | 1.036 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.23 | 1.055 |
| Sum of Variables | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.40 | 1.227 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.42 | 1.506 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.35 | 1.147 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.31 | 1.136 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 2.23 | 1.150 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.27 | 1.144 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Overall, there were no significant differences in the influences of marketing factors when compared to students' GPA. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' high school GPA to the influence of individual marketing factors. Students that had a high school GPA of 2.0-2.49 ($M=2.20$) were influenced significantly higher by Facebook than students that had a high school GPA of 3.0-3.5 ($M=1.54$, $p < .05$) and students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 ($M=1.42$, $p < .01$). Students with high school GPA's of 2.0-2.49 ($M=2.42$) were influenced the most by marketing factors, while students with high school GPAs of greater than 3.5 were influenced the least ($M=2.23$).

The last ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' high school GPA to institutional factors. The findings are shown in Table 24.

Table 24

Relationship Between High School GPA and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.50 | .577 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 3.15 | .875 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.49* | 1.054 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.81 | 1.027 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 2.88* | 1.015 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.83 | 1.024 |
| Campus Safety | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.50 | .577 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.40 | 1.046 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 69 | 2.42 | 1.143 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 2.43 | 1.111 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.34 | 1.013 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.38 | 1.060 |
| Specific Major | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.50 | 1.000 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 19 | 2.89 | 1.100 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 3.10 | .973 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 3.09 | .947 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 3.00 | 1.049 |
| | Total | 618 | 3.04 | 1.011 |
| Variety of Majors | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.00 | 1.155 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 18 | 2.56 | 1.199 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.48 | 1.080 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.26 | 1.045 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 338 | 2.30 | 1.055 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.32 | 1.060 |
| Price | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.75 | 1.500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.45 | 1.191 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 69 | 2.13** | 1.070 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 2.38** | 1.098 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 335 | 2.72** | 1.101 |
| | Total | 615 | 2.54 | 1.121 |
| Scholarships | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.291 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.95 | .945 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 3.11** | 1.076 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 3.32** | .806 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 3.59** | .663 |
| | Total | 619 | 3.42 | .802 |

| Institutional Variables | GPA | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Financial Aid | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.50 | .577 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 3.15 | .875 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 3.11 | 1.049 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 3.04 | 1.021 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 335 | 3.01 | 1.089 |
| | Total | 616 | 3.03 | 1.054 |
| Intramural Sports | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 1.75 | 1.500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.35 | 1.226 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.11 | 1.076 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 186 | 2.01 | 1.013 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 338 | 1.90 | .984 |
| | Total | 619 | 1.97 | 1.017 |
| Varsity Sports | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.25 | 1.500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.45 | 1.356 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.30 | 1.292 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 187 | 2.25 | 1.313 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 335 | 2.10 | 1.233 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.18 | 1.269 |
| Social Life | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 3.25 | .500 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 3.10 | .968 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.90 | .913 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.90 | .928 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 336 | 2.81 | .903 |
| | Total | 619 | 2.86 | .912 |
| Diversity | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.50 | 1.000 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.65 | 1.226 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.46 | .892 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.45 | 1.071 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 337 | 2.26 | .971 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.36 | 1.006 |
| Sum of Variables | Less than 2.0 | 4 | 2.73 | 1.149 |
| | 2.0 - 2.49 | 20 | 2.74 | 1.118 |
| | 2.5 - 2.99 | 71 | 2.60 | 1.117 |
| | 3.0 - 3.5 | 188 | 2.63 | 1.113 |
| | Greater than 3.5 | 339 | 2.63 | 1.119 |
| | Total | 622 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of institutional factors when compared to students' high school GPA.

However, significant differences were found when comparing students' high school GPA

to the influence of individual institutional factors. Students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 ($M=2.72$) were influenced significantly greater by price than students with high school GPA's between 2.5-2.99 ($M=2.13$, $p<.01$) and students with high school GPA's between 3.0-3.5 ($M=2.38$, $p<.01$). Students with high school GPAs of 3.5 or greater ($M=2.88$) were influenced significantly higher by the location than students with a high school GPA between 2.5-2.99 ($M= 2.49$, $p<.05$). Also, students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 ($M=3.59$) were influenced significantly greater by scholarships than students with high school GPAs between 2.5-2.99 ($M=3.11$, $p<.01$) and students with high school GPAs between 3.0 and 3.5 ($M=3.32$, $p<.01$). Finally, students with high school GPA's between 2.0-2.49 ($M=2.74$) were influenced the most by institutional factors, while students with high school GPA's between 2.5-2.99 were influenced the least ($M=2.60$).

Relationship Between Parents' Highest Level of Education and College-Choice Factors

In this section, three ANOVAs were used to determine if there was a significant difference between students' parents' highest level of education completed and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 25, students' parents' highest level of education completed is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 25

Relationship Between Parents' Highest Level of Education and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Parents' Education | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | High School | 105 | 2.28** | 1.079 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.53* | 1.079 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.66** | .992 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 2.87** | 1.016 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.63 | 1.047 |
| Mother | High School | 104 | 2.52** | 1.033 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 2.96* | 1.050 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.84* | .945 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 3.08** | .920 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.87 | .990 |
| High School Counselor | High School | 105 | 1.50 | .798 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 1.52 | .829 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 1.32 | .675 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 1.33 | .636 |
| | Total | 617 | 1.39 | .722 |
| High School Teachers | High School | 105 | 1.58 | .818 |
| | Two-Year College | 114 | 1.66 | .958 |
| | Four-Year College | 230 | 1.43 | .766 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 1.51 | .777 |
| | Total | 615 | 1.52 | .819 |
| Friends | High School | 106 | 2.20 | 1.116 |
| | Two-Year College | 115 | 2.29* | 1.041 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 1.96* | .920 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 164 | 2.20 | 1.016 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.12 | 1.011 |
| Current Students | High School | 106 | 2.65 | 1.122 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.61 | 1.066 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 2.43 | 1.093 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.54 | 1.074 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.53 | 1.089 |
| Alums | High School | 106 | 2.09 | 1.207 |
| | Two-Year College | 115 | 2.27 | 1.142 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 2.16 | 1.174 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.21 | 1.156 |
| | Total | 617 | 2.18 | 1.168 |
| Sum of Variables | High School | 106 | 2.11 | 1.108 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.25 | 1.130 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.11 | 1.093 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.25 | 1.133 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.18 | 1.115 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results from Table 25 revealed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of non-marketing factors when compared to the highest educational background attained by students' parents. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' parents' educational background to the influence of individual non-marketing factors. Students whose parents' highest education attained was graduate school or beyond ($M=2.87$) were influenced significantly higher by their father than students whose parents' highest education attained was high school ($M=2.28$, $p<.01$). Students whose parents' highest education background attained was a four-year college ($M=2.66$) were also influenced significantly higher by their father than students whose parents highest education attained was high school ($M=2.28$, $p<.01$). Also, students whose parents' highest education attained was grad school or beyond ($M=2.87$) were influenced significantly higher by their father than students whose parents' highest education attained was a two-year college ($M=2.53$, $p<.05$).

When looking at students whose parents' highest education attained was high school ($M=2.52$), their college-choice decision was influenced significantly less by their mother than students whose parents' highest education attained was a two-year college ($M=2.96$, $p<.05$), a four-year college ($M=2.84$, $p<.05$), and grad school or beyond ($M=3.08$, $p<.01$). Also, students whose parents' highest educational level attained was a two-year college ($M=2.29$) were influenced significantly more by their friends than students whose parents' highest educational level attained was a four-year college ($M=1.96$, $p<.05$). Overall, students whose parents' highest educational level attained was a two-year college ($M=2.25$) and grad school and beyond ($M=2.25$) were influenced the most by non-marketing college-choice factors, while students whose parents' highest

educational level attained was high school ($M=2.11$) and a four-year college ($M=2.11$) were influenced the least.

The second ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' parents' highest level of education completed and marketing college-choice factors. The results are displayed in Table 26.

Table 26

Relationship Between Parents' Highest Level of Education and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Parents' Education | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | High School | 106 | 1.67 | .933 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 1.60 | .852 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 1.44 | .723 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 1.43 | .796 |
| | Total | 622 | 1.50 | .810 |
| Course Catalog | High School | 106 | 1.84 | 1.006 |
| | Two-Year College | 114 | 1.86 | .940 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 1.78 | .861 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 1.77 | .979 |
| | Total | 617 | 1.80 | .932 |
| Information about a Major | High School | 106 | 2.69 | 1.027 |
| | Two-Year College | 114 | 2.89 | .944 |
| | Four-Year College | 230 | 2.78 | .978 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.72 | 1.064 |
| | Total | 615 | 2.77 | 1.004 |
| Campus Visit | High School | 106 | 3.45 | .852 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 3.48 | .786 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 3.46 | .760 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 3.47 | .799 |
| | Total | 621 | 3.47 | .790 |
| Open House | High School | 104 | 1.97* | 1.178 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 2.43** | 1.203 |
| | Four-Year College | 229 | 2.07* | 1.149 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 163 | 1.93** | 1.136 |
| | Total | 612 | 2.08 | 1.172 |
| Web Page | High School | 105 | 2.15 | 1.054 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.21 | .981 |
| | Four-Year College | 230 | 1.98 | .939 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 2.04 | 1.011 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.07 | .988 |
| Call from Admissions | High School | 106 | 2.43 | 1.113 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.42 | 1.093 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.13 | 1.005 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.12 | 1.032 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.23 | 1.055 |
| Sum of Variables | High School | 106 | 2.32 | 1.170 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.41* | 1.138 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.23 | 1.117 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.20* | 1.164 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.27 | 1.145 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results from Table 26 revealed that students whose parents' highest education attained was from a two-year college ($M=2.41$) were influenced significantly higher by marketing factors than students whose parents' highest educational background attained was graduate school or beyond ($M=2.20$, $p<.05$). Significant differences were also found when comparing students' parents' educational background to the influence of individual marketing factors. Students whose parents' highest education attained was a two-year college ($M=2.43$) were influenced significantly higher by an open house than students whose parents' highest education attained was high school ($M=1.97$, $p<.05$), a four-year college ($M=2.07$, $p<.05$), and grad school and beyond ($M=1.93$, $p<.01$).

The final ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' parents' highest level of education completed to the influence of institutional factors. The findings are listed in Table 27.

Table 27

Relationship Between Parents' Highest Level of Education and Institutional Factors

| Marketing Variables | Parents' Education | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | High School | 106 | 2.77 | 1.140 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 2.95 | 1.045 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 2.78 | 1.012 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.85 | .948 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.83 | 1.024 |
| Campus Safety | High School | 105 | 2.53 | 1.127 |
| | Two-Year College | 114 | 2.72** | 1.101 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 2.22** | .972 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.28 | 1.045 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.38 | 1.059 |
| Specific Major | High School | 105 | 3.05 | 1.041 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 3.15 | .980 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 3.03 | 1.013 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.98 | 1.012 |
| | Total | 619 | 3.04 | 1.011 |
| Variety of Majors | High School | 105 | 2.24 | 1.123 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.54 | 1.087 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 2.29 | 1.051 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.26 | 1.001 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.32 | 1.060 |
| Price | High School | 105 | 2.29** | 1.107 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 2.47 | 1.146 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 2.52 | 1.118 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 164 | 2.77** | 1.076 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.54 | 1.120 |
| Scholarships | High School | 106 | 3.27 | .931 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 3.46 | .772 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 3.44 | .747 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 164 | 3.48 | .802 |
| | Total | 620 | 3.43 | .801 |
| Financial Aid | High School | 104 | 3.06 | 1.069 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 3.28* | .967 |
| | Four-Year College | 231 | 2.99 | 1.040 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 2.90* | 1.097 |
| | Total | 617 | 3.03 | 1.053 |
| Intramural Sports | High School | 105 | 1.84 | 1.039 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.06 | 1.045 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 1.97 | .993 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.00 | 1.018 |
| | Total | 620 | 1.97 | 1.017 |

| Marketing Variables | Parents' Education | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Varsity Sports | High School | 106 | 2.01 | 1.231 |
| | Two-Year College | 115 | 2.10 | 1.273 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 2.28 | 1.270 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 165 | 2.21 | 1.292 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.18 | 1.270 |
| Social Life | High School | 106 | 2.77 | .969 |
| | Two-Year College | 116 | 2.90 | .954 |
| | Four-Year College | 232 | 2.77* | .881 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 3.02* | .867 |
| | Total | 620 | 2.86 | .911 |
| Diversity | High School | 105 | 2.44 | .990 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.46 | .996 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.26 | .985 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 166 | 2.36 | 1.045 |
| | Total | 621 | 2.36 | 1.005 |
| Sum of Variables | High School | 106 | 2.57 | 1.154 |
| | Two-Year College | 117 | 2.73 | 1.125 |
| | Four-Year College | 233 | 2.59 | 1.097 |
| | Graduate School or Beyond | 167 | 2.64 | 1.109 |
| | Total | 623 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings showed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of institutional factors when compared to students' parents' education. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' parents' education to the influence of individual institutional factors. Students whose parents' highest level of education was a two-year college ($M=2.72$) were influenced significantly higher by campus safety than students whose parents highest level of education was a four-year college ($M=2.22$, $p < .01$) and students whose parents' highest level of education was grad school and beyond ($M=2.28$, $p < .01$). Also, students whose parents' highest education was grad school or beyond ($M=2.77$) were influenced significantly more by price than students whose parents' highest education was high school ($M=2.29$, $p < .01$). In addition, students whose parents' highest education was a two-year college ($M=3.28$)

were influenced significantly greater by financial aid than students whose parents' highest level of education was grad school or beyond ($M=2.90, p<.05$). Also, students whose parents' highest level of education achieved was grad school or beyond ($M=3.02$) were influenced significantly higher by social life than students whose parents' highest level of education was a four-year college ($M=2.77, p<.05$). Overall, students whose parents' highest educational background was a two-year college ($M=2.73$) were influenced the most by institutional factors and students whose parents highest educational background was high school were influenced the least ($M=2.57$).

Relationship Between Priority Choice to Attend MCU and College-Choice Factors

Three ANOVAs were used in this section to determine if there was a significant difference between students' priority choice to attend the Midwest Christian University and what may have influenced their college-choice decision. In Table 28, students' priority choice to attend MCU is compared to non-marketing college-choice factors.

Table 28

Relationship Between Priority Choice to Attend MCU and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Priority Choice | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Father | First Choice | 414 | 2.60 | 1.031 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.77 | 1.041 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.70 | 1.129 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.39 | 1.103 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.63 | 1.047 |
| Mother | First Choice | 413 | 2.82 | .979 |
| | Second Choice | 115 | 2.96 | .995 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 2.94 | 1.008 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 3.11 | 1.063 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.87 | .990 |
| High School Counselor | First Choice | 412 | 1.33 | .683 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 1.50 | .740 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 1.48 | .789 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 34 | 1.59 | .957 |
| | Total | 612 | 1.39 | .724 |

| Non-Marketing Variables | Priority Choice | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| High School Teachers | First Choice | 412 | 1.50 | .794 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 1.56 | .827 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 1.49 | .845 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 34 | 1.68 | 1.065 |
| | Total | 611 | 1.52 | .820 |
| Friends | First Choice | 409 | 2.15 | 1.006 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.15 | .970 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.00 | 1.107 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 1.86 | 1.046 |
| | Total | 612 | 2.12 | 1.011 |
| Current Students | First Choice | 413 | 2.62* | 1.090 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.32* | 1.014 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.52 | 1.111 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.25 | 1.180 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.53 | 1.089 |
| Alums | First Choice | 412 | 2.29* | 1.182 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 1.97* | 1.050 |
| | Third Choice | 48 | 1.90 | 1.171 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.11 | 1.237 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.19 | 1.168 |
| Sum of Variables | First Choice | 415 | 2.19 | 1.114 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.17 | 1.081 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.14 | 1.157 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.14 | 1.186 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.18 | 1.115 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results from Table 28 revealed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of non-marketing factors when compared to the students' priority-choice to attend MCU. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' priority-choice decision to the influence of individual non-marketing factors. Students for whom MCU was their first college-choice ($M=2.62$) were influenced significantly higher by current students than students for whom MCU was their second choice school ($M=2.32$, $p < .05$). Also, students whom for MCU was their first college-choice ($M=2.29$) were influenced significantly higher by alums than students for whom MCU was their second choice school ($M=1.97$, $p < .05$). Overall, students whose first

priority choice to attend MCU ($M=2.19$) were influenced the most by non-marketing factors, while students whose choice to attend MCU was their third choice ($M=2.14$) or fourth choice or greater were influenced the least ($M=2.14$).

The next ANOVA in this section was used to find out the relationship between students' priority choice to attend MCU and marketing college-choice factors. The results are listed in Table 29.

Table 29

Relationship Between Priority Choice to Attend MCU and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Priority Choice | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Facebook Page | First Choice | 415 | 1.51 | .789 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 1.55 | .868 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 1.44 | .787 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 1.42 | .937 |
| | Total | 617 | 1.51 | .812 |
| Course Catalog | First Choice | 413 | 1.83 | .931 |
| | Second Choice | 114 | 1.85 | .885 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 1.66 | .939 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 1.53 | 1.055 |
| | Total | 613 | 1.80 | .933 |
| Information about a Major | First Choice | 409 | 2.80 | .993 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.76 | .992 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 2.61 | .975 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.50 | 1.159 |
| | Total | 610 | 2.76 | 1.003 |
| Campus Visit | First Choice | 414 | 3.57* | .684 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 3.34* | .864 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 3.22 | .996 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 3.00* | 1.069 |
| | Total | 616 | 3.46 | .791 |
| Open House | First Choice | 408 | 2.10 | 1.179 |
| | Second Choice | 115 | 2.17 | 1.179 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 1.92 | 1.047 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 34 | 1.79 | 1.175 |
| | Total | 607 | 2.08 | 1.169 |
| Web Page | First Choice | 412 | 2.07 | .964 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.16 | 1.027 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 1.82 | .905 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.06 | 1.241 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.07 | .990 |
| Call from Admissions | First Choice | 415 | 2.21 | 1.038 |
| | Second Choice | 115 | 2.25 | 1.083 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.16 | 1.037 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.47 | 1.230 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.23 | 1.058 |
| Sum of Variables | First Choice | 415 | 2.30 | 1.114 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.28 | 1.081 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.12 | 1.157 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.12 | 1.186 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.27 | 1.115 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings showed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of marketing factors when compared to the students priority-choice to attend MCU. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' priority-choice decision to the influence of individual marketing factors. Students for whom MCU was their first college-choice ($M=3.57$) were influenced significantly higher by a campus visit than students for whom MCU was their second choice school ($M=3.34, p<.05$) and fourth choice or greater ($M=3.0, p<.05$). Overall, students whose first priority choice to attend MCU ($M=2.30$) were influenced the most by marketing factors, while students whose choice to attend MCU was their third choice ($M=2.12$) or fourth choice or greater were influenced the least ($M=2.12$).

The last ANOVA in this section was used to compare students' priority choice to attend MCU to institutional factors. The findings are displayed in Table 30.

Table 30

Relationship Between Priority Choice to Attend MCU and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Priority Choice | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Location | First Choice | 413 | 2.83* | 1.035 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 3.02** | .861 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.40* | 1.030 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.78 | 1.198 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.82 | 1.023 |
| Campus Safety | First Choice | 411 | 2.40 | 1.055 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.39 | 1.011 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.12 | 1.100 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.50 | 1.231 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.38 | 1.062 |
| Specific Major | First Choice | 412 | 3.09 | .997 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.96 | 1.020 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 2.92 | .975 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.83 | 1.159 |
| | Total | 614 | 3.03 | 1.011 |
| Variety of Majors | First Choice | 415 | 2.29 | 1.067 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.33 | 1.034 |
| | Third Choice | 47 | 2.45 | 1.059 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.53 | 1.134 |
| | Total | 615 | 2.32 | 1.064 |
| Price | First Choice | 410 | 2.45 | 1.092 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.71 | 1.096 |
| | Third Choice | 49 | 2.69 | 1.211 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.78 | 1.312 |
| | Total | 611 | 2.54 | 1.121 |
| Scholarships | First Choice | 412 | 3.39 | .795 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 3.45 | .846 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 3.44 | .861 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 3.69 | .624 |
| | Total | 615 | 3.42 | .803 |
| Financial Aid | First Choice | 411 | 2.98 | 1.050 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 3.08 | 1.068 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 3.06 | 1.096 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 34 | 3.41 | .957 |
| | Total | 612 | 3.03 | 1.055 |
| Intramural Sports | First Choice | 412 | 1.96 | .991 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.03 | 1.038 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 1.94 | 1.132 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.03 | 1.134 |
| | Total | 615 | 1.98 | 1.018 |

| Institutional Variables | Priority Choice | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Varsity Sports | First Choice | 411 | 2.07** | 1.237 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.32 | 1.303 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.76** | 1.318 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.25 | 1.296 |
| | Total | 613 | 2.18 | 1.272 |
| Social Life | First Choice | 413 | 2.95 | .856 |
| | Second Choice | 116 | 2.71 | .978 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.74 | .965 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.53 | 1.082 |
| | Total | 615 | 2.87 | .911 |
| Diversity | First Choice | 413 | 2.37 | .993 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.30 | 1.036 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.42 | 1.052 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.31 | 1.064 |
| | Total | 616 | 2.36 | 1.008 |
| Sum of Variables | First Choice | 415 | 2.61 | 1.109 |
| | Second Choice | 117 | 2.66 | 1.108 |
| | Third Choice | 50 | 2.63 | 1.145 |
| | Fourth Choice or Greater | 36 | 2.69 | 1.205 |
| | Total | 618 | 2.63 | 1.117 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results from Table 30 revealed that there were no significant differences overall in the influences of institutional factors when compared to the students priority-choice to attend MCU. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' priority-choice decision to the influence of individual institutional factors. Students for whom MCU was their third college-choice ($M=2.40$) were influenced significantly less by location than students for whom MCU was their first choice school ($M=2.83$, $p < .05$) and second choice ($M=3.02$, $p < .01$). Also, students for whom MCU was their third college choice ($M=2.76$) were influenced significantly higher by varsity sports than students for whom MCU was their first college choice ($M=2.07$, $p < .01$). Overall, students whose priority choice to attend MCU was fourth or greater ($M=2.69$) were

influenced the most by institutional factors, while students whose choice to attend MCU was their first ($M=2.61$) were influenced the least.

Correlation Between Parents Educational Achievement and College-Choice Factors

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the student's parental educational level and various college-choice influential variables. Table 31 compares the non-marketing variables to parent's educational level.

Table 31

Correlation Between Parents Educational Achievement and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Correlation | Parents' Education |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Father | Pearson Correlation | .188** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 621 |
| Mother | Pearson Correlation | .157** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 618 |
| High School Counselor | Pearson Correlation | -.102* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .011 |
| | N | 617 |
| High School Teachers | Pearson Correlation | -.060 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .137 |
| | N | 615 |
| Friends | Pearson Correlation | -.034 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .405 |
| | N | 617 |
| Current Students | Pearson Correlation | -.046 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .256 |
| | N | 621 |
| Alums | Pearson Correlation | .017 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .680 |
| | N | 617 |

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

The results revealed that a positive correlation exists between students' parents' educational level and the influence of father ($p<.01$) and mother ($p<.01$). There was a negative correlation between students' parents' educational level and the high school counselor. No correlation existed between students' parents' educational level and the influence of high school teachers, friends, current students, or alums.

The next bivariate correlation analysis compared students' parents' educational level to marketing variables. The results are listed in table 32.

Table 32

Correlation Between Parents Educational Achievement and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Correlation | Parents' Education |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Facebook Page | Pearson Correlation | -.113** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 |
| | <i>N</i> | 622 |
| Course Catalog | Pearson Correlation | -.033 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .415 |
| | <i>N</i> | 617 |
| Information about a Major | Pearson Correlation | -.010 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .811 |
| | <i>N</i> | 615 |
| Campus Visit | Pearson Correlation | .003 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .946 |
| | <i>N</i> | 621 |
| Open House | Pearson Correlation | -.058 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .155 |
| | <i>N</i> | 612 |
| Web Page | Pearson Correlation | -.061 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .130 |
| | <i>N</i> | 618 |
| Call from Admissions | Pearson Correlation | -.124** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .002 |
| | <i>N</i> | 621 |

* $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$

The analysis revealed that a negative correlation exists between students' parents' educational level and the influence of the Facebook page ($p < .01$) and call from admissions ($p < .01$). There was no correlation found when comparing students' parents' educational level and the influence of the course catalog, information about a major, campus visit, open house, or Web page.

The final bivariate correlation analysis in this section compared students' parents' educational level to institutional variables. The results are displayed in table 33.

Table 33

Correlation Between Parents Educational Achievement and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Correlation | Parents' Education |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Location | Pearson Correlation | .002 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .962 |
| | <i>n</i> | 621 |
| Campus Safety | Pearson Correlation | -.130** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 |
| | <i>n</i> | 618 |
| Specific Major | Pearson Correlation | -.038 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .340 |
| | <i>n</i> | 619 |
| Variety of Majors | Pearson Correlation | -.026 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .524 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Price | Pearson Correlation | .139** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Scholarships | Pearson Correlation | .071 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .078 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Financial Aid | Pearson Correlation | -.083* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .038 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| Intramural Sports | Pearson Correlation | .035 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .388 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Varsity Sports | Pearson Correlation | .062 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .123 |
| | <i>n</i> | 618 |
| Social Life | Pearson Correlation | .071 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .077 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Diversity | Pearson Correlation | -.045 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .267 |
| | <i>n</i> | 621 |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The findings revealed that a positive correlation exists between students' parents' educational level and the influence of price ($p < .01$). A negative correlation was found to exist between students' parents' educational level and the influence of campus safety ($p < .05$) and financial aid ($p < .01$). There was no correlation found when comparing students' parents' educational level and the influence of the location, specific major, variety of majors, scholarships, intramural sports, varsity sports, social life, or diversity.

Correlation Between High School GPA and College-Choice Factors

Bivariate correlation analyses were also conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the student's high school GPA and various college-choice influential variables. Table 34 compares the non-marketing variables to student's high school GPA.

Table 34

Correlation Between High School GPA and Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Correlation | GPA |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Father | Pearson Correlation | .040 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .320 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Mother | Pearson Correlation | .032 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .426 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| High School Counselor | Pearson Correlation | -.139** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| High School Teachers | Pearson Correlation | -.060 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .139 |
| | <i>n</i> | 614 |
| Friends | Pearson Correlation | -.084* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .038 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Current Students | Pearson Correlation | -.073 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .070 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Alums | Pearson Correlation | -.063 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .116 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that a negative correlation exists between student's high school GPA and the influence of their high school guidance counselor ($p < .01$) and friends ($p < .05$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's high school GPA and the influence of their father, mother, high school teachers, current students and alums.

The next bivariate correlation analysis compared student's high school GPA to the influence of non-marketing variables. The results are listed in table 35.

Table 35

Correlation Between High School GPA and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Correlation | GPA |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| Facebook Page | Pearson Correlation | -.150** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | <i>n</i> | 621 |
| Course Catalog | Pearson Correlation | -.045 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .263 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Information about a Major | Pearson Correlation | -.011 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .784 |
| | <i>n</i> | 614 |
| Campus Visit | Pearson Correlation | .026 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .525 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Open House | Pearson Correlation | -.085* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .037 |
| | <i>n</i> | 611 |
| Web Page | Pearson Correlation | -.046 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .255 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| Call from Admissions | Pearson Correlation | -.087* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .030 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings revealed that a negative correlation exists between student's high school GPA and the influence of the university Facebook page ($p < .01$), open house ($p < .05$), and call from admissions ($p < .05$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's high school GPA and the influence of the course catalog, information about a major, campus visit and the university Web page.

The final bivariate correlation analysis in this section compared student's high school GPA to the influence of institutional variables. The findings are displayed in Table 36.

Table 36

Correlation Between High School GPA and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Correlation | GPA |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| Location | Pearson Correlation | .038 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .343 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |
| Campus Safety | Pearson Correlation | -.059 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .145 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| Specific Major | Pearson Correlation | -.032 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .424 |
| | <i>n</i> | 618 |
| Variety of Majors | Pearson Correlation | -.062 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .122 |
| | <i>n</i> | 619 |
| Price | Pearson Correlation | .176** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | <i>n</i> | 615 |
| Scholarships | Pearson Correlation | .253** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | <i>n</i> | 619 |
| Financial Aid | Pearson Correlation | -.020 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .626 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Intramural Sports | Pearson Correlation | -.087* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .030 |
| | <i>n</i> | 619 |
| Varsity Sports | Pearson Correlation | -.070 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .082 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| Social Life | Pearson Correlation | -.069 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .084 |
| | <i>n</i> | 619 |
| Diversity | Pearson Correlation | -.100* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 |
| | <i>n</i> | 620 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that a positive correlation exists between student's high school GPA and the influence of the price ($p < .01$) and scholarships ($p < .01$). A negative correlation was found to exist between student's high school GPA and the influence of intramural sports ($p < .05$) and diversity ($p < .05$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's high school GPA and the influence of the location, campus safety, a specific major, the variety of majors, financial aid, varsity sports or social life.

Correlation Between College Priority and College-Choice Factors

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the student's college priority and various college-choice influential variables. Table 37 compares the non-marketing variables to student's college choice priority.

Table 37

Correlation Between College Priority Non-Marketing Factors

| Non-Marketing Variables | Correlation | Priority Choice |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Father | Pearson Correlation | -.005 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .911 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Mother | Pearson Correlation | .079 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .050 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |
| High School Counselor | Pearson Correlation | .108** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .007 |
| | <i>n</i> | 612 |
| High School Teachers | Pearson Correlation | .042 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .302 |
| | <i>n</i> | 611 |
| Friends | Pearson Correlation | -.069 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .088 |
| | <i>n</i> | 612 |
| Current Students | Pearson Correlation | -.098* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .015 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Alums | Pearson Correlation | -.099* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .014 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings revealed that a positive correlation exists between student's college priority and high school counselors ($p < .01$). A negative correlation was found to exist between student's college priority and the influence of current students ($p < .05$) and alums ($p < .05$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's college priority to the influence of current students ($p < .05$) and alums ($p < .05$).

The next bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the student's college priority and the influence of marketing variables. The results are displayed in Table 38.

Table 38

Correlation Between College Priority and Marketing Factors

| Marketing Variables | Correlation | Priority Choice |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Facebook Page | Pearson Correlation | -.025 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .539 |
| | <i>n</i> | 617 |
| Course Catalog | Pearson Correlation | -.078 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .054 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |
| Information about a Major | Pearson Correlation | -.081 [*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .045 |
| | <i>n</i> | 610 |
| Campus Visit | Pearson Correlation | -.210 ^{**} |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Open House | Pearson Correlation | -.055 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .172 |
| | <i>n</i> | 607 |
| Web Page | Pearson Correlation | -.029 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .468 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |
| Call from Admissions | Pearson Correlation | .037 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .360 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results revealed that a negative correlation exists between student's college priority and information about a major ($p < .05$) and campus visit ($p < .01$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's college priority to the influence of the university Facebook page, course catalog, open house, Web page, and call from admissions.

The final bivariate correlation analysis in this section was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between the student's college priority and the influence of institutional variables. The findings are displayed in Table 39.

Table 39

Correlation Between College Priority and Institutional Factors

| Institutional Variables | Correlation | Priority Choice |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Location | Pearson Correlation | -.046 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .259 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |
| Campus Safety | Pearson Correlation | -.021 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .598 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |
| Specific Major | Pearson Correlation | -.078 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .054 |
| | <i>n</i> | 614 |
| Variety of Majors | Pearson Correlation | .061 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .129 |
| | <i>n</i> | 615 |
| Price | Pearson Correlation | .102 [*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .011 |
| | <i>n</i> | 611 |
| Scholarships | Pearson Correlation | .080 [*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .047 |
| | <i>n</i> | 615 |
| Financial Aid | Pearson Correlation | .085 [*] |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .035 |
| | <i>n</i> | 612 |
| Intramural Sports | Pearson Correlation | .015 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .720 |
| | <i>n</i> | 615 |
| Varsity Sports | Pearson Correlation | .118 ^{**} |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 |
| | <i>n</i> | 613 |
| Social Life | Pearson Correlation | -.138 ^{**} |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 |
| | <i>n</i> | 615 |
| Diversity | Pearson Correlation | -.010 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .800 |
| | <i>n</i> | 616 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The findings revealed that a positive correlation exists between student's college priority and the influence of price ($p<.05$), scholarships ($p<.05$), financial aid ($p<.05$), and varsity sports ($p<.01$). A negative correlation was found to exist between student's college priority and the influence of social life ($p<.05$). There was no correlation found when comparing student's college priority to the influence of location, campus safety, specific major, variety of majors, intramural sports, and diversity.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll at a particular Midwest Christian University as well as fill a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. This data was intended to be used to evaluate what compels potential students to enroll in a specific university in order to uncover opportunities to improve marketing strategies in efforts to increase enrollment.

The total sample size consisted of 628 freshman students at a Midwest Christian University. These students were surveyed in the fall of 2012, prior to beginning their first semester at the Midwest Christian University. The quantitative data obtained from the survey was analyzed to determine the college-choice factors that affected freshman students' decision to enroll in a particular university.

The survey was adapted from Donnellan's (2002) work, with the author's permission. The survey consisted of various structured items, including several four- and five-point Likert scales, ranking scales, and multiple-choice questions relating factors that led to the participants' decision to attend a particular Midwestern Christian University

(Gay, et al., 2009). The data collected was a snapshot of the beliefs in the sample population at a given time during the new-student orientation.

The study was guided by the three research questions in an attempt to illustrate and examine responses from freshman students entering a Midwest Christian University. Understanding how freshman students perceive pre-enrollment interactions with universities can be important in determining how marketing strategies can be improved in the future.

Research Question 1: What factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students currently enrolled at a Midwest Christian University?

The students indicated that the campus visit ($M=3.46$) was the most influential factor in their decision to attend the Midwest Christian University. The next most influential factor was scholarships ($M=3.43$), followed by a specific major ($M=3.06$), financial aid ($M=3.01$), and mother ($M=2.88$). The least influential factors were found to be the high school counselor ($M=1.40$), Facebook page ($M=1.50$), and high school teacher ($M=1.53$). Findings of this research are consistent with the work of Clark (2000), Jennings (2008), Smith (2006), and Dickinson (2003) who found that campus visits were highly influential in the college-choice process. Rating scholarships as a highly influential college-choice factor was also consistent with the studies of Baron (1987), Coiner (1990), and Jennings. Findings are also consistent with the research of Donnellan (2002) and Norwood (2009), who also found that high school guidance counselors had very little influence on the college-choice decision. Finally, the findings for this study were consistent with Donnellan, the researcher from which the survey was adapted, in

that the campus visit was the most influential marketing factor and parents were the most influential non-marketing factor.

Research Question 2: What impact do demographic characteristics have on college-choice factors at a Midwest Christian University?

Gender

There were no significant differences among men (57.6%) and women (42.4%) when evaluating the overall impact of marketing, non-marketing and institutional variables. However, there were significant differences found between men and women in the ratings of individual college-choice influential variables. The findings revealed that women rated the following college-choice influencers significantly higher than men: campus safety ($p < .01$), the university Facebook page ($p < .05$), campus visit ($p < .05$) university Web page ($p < .01$) call from admissions ($p < .01$), location ($p < .05$), specific major ($p < .05$), and price ($p < .01$). Men rated the influence of intramural sports ($p < .01$) and varsity sports ($p < .01$) as having a significantly higher influence on their college-choice decision than women.

Race

Race consisted of 85.2% white, 6.1% African American, 3.9% Latino, 1.3% Asian and 0.6% Native American, 2.9% described as Other. There were no significant differences among the various races when evaluating the overall impact of marketing, non-marketing and institutional variables. However, there were significant differences found between particular races in the ratings of individual college-choice influential factors. African Americans rated the influence of the University Web page significantly higher than Whites ($p < .05$). African Americans also rated the influence of a call from

admissions significantly higher than Native Americans ($p < .01$). African Americans rated the influence of high school guidance counselors significantly higher than Whites ($p < .01$) and Native Americans ($p < .01$). Whites, African Americans, and Latinos rated the influence of high school teachers and the University Facebook page significantly higher than Native Americans ($p < .01$). Finally, Latinos were found to have rated the influence of current students significantly higher than Native Americans ($p < .01$).

Location

A location breakdown showed 57.1% of students were from Illinois, 41.9% from out of state, and 1.0% from out of country. Overall, students from in-state and out-of-state were influenced significantly higher by the marketing factors than students from another country ($p < .05$). When reviewing the individual college-choice factors, in-state students rated the influence of the following variables significantly higher than out-of-state students: high school counselors ($p < .01$), high school teachers ($p < .05$), campus safety ($p < .01$), and location ($p < .01$). Also, in-state students were influenced significantly higher by the open house than out-of-state students ($p < .01$) and students from another country ($p < .05$). Students from another country rated the influence of varsity sports significantly higher than in-state ($p < .05$) and out-of-state students ($p < .05$). Finally, students from another country also rated the influence of diversity significantly higher than in-state ($p < .01$) and out-of-state students ($p < .05$).

Community

The communities in which the students came from were 17.8% urban, 53.8% suburban, and 28.4% rural. There were no significant differences among the various communities when evaluating the overall impact of marketing, non-marketing and

institutional variables. However, there were significant differences found between the communities which students were from and the ratings of individual college-choice influential variables. Students from urban communities were found to be influenced significantly higher in regards to course catalogs than students from rural communities ($p < .05$). Financial aid was identified as significantly less of an influence to rural students when compared to urban ($p < .05$) and suburban students ($p < .05$). Also, suburban students were influenced significantly less by varsity sports than urban ($p < .01$) and rural students ($p < .05$).

Religion

Participants classified their religious beliefs as 49.6% Protestant, 8.3% Catholic, 10.1% Unaffiliated, and 31.9% Other. There were no significant differences within religious beliefs when evaluating the overall influence of marketing, non-marketing and institutional variables. However, significant differences were found when comparing students' religion to the influence of individual institutional factors. Students that categorized their religion as Catholic were influenced significantly higher by the location than students that categorized their religion as Protestant ($p < .05$). Also, students that categorized themselves as Other were influenced significantly more than Protestants in campus safety ($p < .01$) and varsity sports ($p < .05$).

High School GPA

A summary of the participants' high school GPA included 0.6% less than 2.0, 3.2% between 2.0-2.49, 11.4% between 2.5-2.99, 30.2% between 3.0-3.5, and 54.5% over 3.5. There were no significant differences overall in the influences of marketing, non-marketing, and institutional factors when compared to students' high school GPA.

However, significant differences were found when comparing students' high school GPA to the influence of individual variables. Students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 were influenced significantly greater than students with high school GPA's between 2.5-2.99 and students with high school GPA's between 3.0-3.5 in respect to price ($p<.01$) and scholarships ($p<.01$). Also, students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 were influenced significantly higher by location than students with a high school GPA between 2.5-2.99 ($p<.05$). Students that had a high school GPA between 2.0-2.49 were influenced significantly higher by Facebook than students that had a high school GPA between 3.0-3.5 ($p<.05$) and students with high school GPA's greater than 3.5 ($p<.01$).

Parents Educational Level

Respondents described the highest level of education attained by their parents as 17.0% high school, 18.8% two-year college, 37.4% four year college, 26.8% graduate school or beyond. Overall, students whose parents highest education attained was from a two-year college ($M=2.41$) were influenced significantly higher by marketing factors than students whose parents highest educational background attained was graduate school or beyond ($M=2.20$, $p<.05$). Significant differences were also found when comparing students' parents' educational background to the influence of individual non-marketing, marketing, and institutional factors. Students whom parents highest education attained was graduate school or beyond were influenced significantly higher by their father than students whom their parents highest education attained was high school ($p<.01$) and two-year college ($p<.05$). Also, students whose parents highest education background attained was a four-year college were also influenced significantly higher by their father than students whose their parents highest education attained was high school ($p<.01$). In

addition, students whose parents highest education attained was high school were influenced significantly less by their mother than students whose parents highest education attained was a two-year college ($p<.05$), a four-year college ($p<.05$), and grad school or beyond ($p<.01$).

Students whose parents highest educational level attained was a two-year college were influenced significantly more by their friends than students whose parents highest educational level attained was a four-year college ($p<.05$). Also, students whose parents highest education attained was a two-year college were influenced significantly higher by an open house than students whose parents highest education attained was high school ($p<.05$), a four-year college ($p<.05$), and grad school and beyond ($p<.01$). In addition, students whose parents highest level of education was a two-year college were influenced significantly higher by campus safety than students whose parents highest level of education was a four-year college ($p<.01$) and students whose parents highest level of education was grad school and beyond ($p<.01$). In addition, students whose parents highest education was a two-year college were influenced significantly greater by financial aid than students whose parents highest level of education was grad school or beyond ($p<.05$).

Students whose parents highest education was grad school or beyond were influenced significantly more by price than students whose parents highest education was high school ($p<.01$). Also, students whose parents highest level of education achieved was grad school or beyond were influenced significantly greater by social life than students whose parents highest level of education was a four-year college ($p<.05$).

Priority Choice

Of the colleges to which the students applied, the Midwest Christian University was the first choice for 67.2% of the students, second choice of 18.9%, third choice of 8.1%, and fourth choice of 5.8%. There were no significant differences among the priority university choice of students when evaluating the overall influence of marketing, non-marketing and institutional variables. However, there were significant differences found between the priority choice to attend the Midwest Christian University and the ratings of individual college-choice influential variables. Students for whom MCU was their first college-choice were influenced significantly greater by current students and alums than students for whom MCU was their second choice school ($p<.05$). Also, students for whom MCU was their first college-choice were influenced significantly higher by a campus visit than students for whom MCU was their second choice school ($p<.05$) and fourth choice or greater ($p<.05$). Students for whom MCU was their third college choice were influenced significantly higher by varsity sports than students for whom MCU was their first college choice ($p<.01$). In addition, students for whom MCU was their third college-choice were influenced significantly less by location than students for whom MCU was their first choice school ($p<.05$) and second choice ($p<.01$).

Findings for this research are consistent with the work of Norwood (2009), Smith (2006), and Ryan (2012) who found that demographics played a minimal role in students' decision to attend a particular college. Donnellan (2002), from whom the survey in this study was adapted, found significant differences existed in various demographic groups. He did not recommend developing unique marketing strategies for each demographic segment, but did suggest modifying existing marketing strategies to meet the needs of the various demographic segments. The findings of this study indicated that demographics

played a small role in freshman students' college-choice decision, and did not impact the college-choice decision of freshman students significantly.

Research Question 3: What is the impact of marketing versus non-marketing factors on the college-choice decision of freshman students at a Midwest Christian University?

Of the marketing and non-marketing variables that were measured, the marketing factors ($M=2.26$) were found to be slightly more influential than non-marketing factors ($M=2.19$). The overall total mean score of marketing factors was positively affected by the high scores received from campus visit ($M=3.46$) and info about a major ($M=2.77$). The overall total mean score of non-marketing factors was negatively affected by the low scores received from high school guidance counselor ($M=1.40$) and high school teacher ($M=1.53$). However, it should be noted that institutional factors were identified as having played the largest role ($M=2.62$) in influencing freshman students to attend the Midwest Christian University compared to non-marketing factors and marketing factors. Findings for this research are consistent with the work of Tan (2009) and Furukawa (2011), who also found that institutional characteristics were a main contributor to college-choice decisions of students. In the research at hand, the institutional factors that were most influential were scholarships ($M=3.43$), specific major ($M=3.04$), and financial aid ($M=3.04$). The institutional factors that were least influential were intramural sports ($M=1.97$), varsity sports ($M=2.17$), and variety of majors ($M=2.32$).

The results of the influence of individual college-choice variables were consistent with the findings of Donnellan (2002), the researcher from which the survey was adapted. Donnellan revealed the most influential non-marketing factors were parents and friends, which was consistent with the research at hand. In addition, Donnellan found the most

influential marketing factor for the students was the campus visit, which was also consistent with the findings of this study. In contrast to the findings in this study, Donnellan found that non-marketing factors were slightly more influential on students' college-choice decision than marketing factors. Finally, the findings of the research at hand revealed that institutional factors had the most influence on freshman students' college-choice decision; However, Donnellan did not disclose the total mean score of institutional factors.

Summary of Conclusions

Overall, three major conclusions were made from this findings of this research. First, institutional factors ($M=2.63$) were found to be the most influential, followed by marketing factors ($M=2.27$) and non-marketing factors ($M=2.18$). Second, demographics had a minimal impact on the college-choice decision. Third, the most influential factors were campus visits ($M=3.46$) and scholarships ($M=3.43$), while the most influential people were parents (mother: $M=2.88$; father: $M=2.64$). The least influential factors were the high school counselors ($M=1.40$), Facebook page ($M=1.50$), and high school teachers ($M=1.53$).

Implications and Recommendations

This study is important because it added empirical evidence to the understanding of college-choice influencers. Even though this study used a particular Midwest Christian University with limited diversity, the research supported previous research findings. This study advanced the understanding of the influence of college-choice factors as well as filled a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. Several implications can be made as a result of this research:

First, institutional factors have the most influence on freshman students' college-choice decision. While marketers cannot control the number of scholarships, social life, or price of the university, marketers can put additional attention in their marketing material highlighting various favorable institutional statistics as compared to competing schools.

Second, the campus visit is the most influential factor effecting the college-choice decision. Universities should put additional efforts into promoting campus visits for potential students. Additional training can also be provided to campus tour guides to ensure that potential students have a positive experience.

Third, marketing factors are slightly more influential than non-marketing factors. Marketers can be just as influential, if not more, than parents and peers in effecting which university students choose to attend. A campus visit, call from admissions, and distributing information about a major are all marketing strategies that have been shown to have a positive impact on students' college-choice decision. Having the right marketing team and strategy in place should put universities in a better place to increase enrollment despite the influence from non-marketing factors.

Fourth, parents are the most influential college-choice factor in which a university has no control. For this reason, marketing efforts should be targeted toward parents to help recruit potential students. This finding and recommendation is supported by the research of Donnellan (2002).

Fifth, demographics played a minimal role in the college-choice decision of freshman students at the Midwest Christian University. The majority of the participants were white and from the suburbs within the state. Marketers should not focus additional

efforts on appealing to a particular demographic; as evidence reflects that freshman students at this predominately white university are influenced by very similar factors.

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study are from one Midwest Christian University and should not be generalized to all other institutions. Listed below are four suggestions for future research.

1. Conduct similar comparison research at multiple universities.
2. Include the responses of traditional and non-traditional students.
3. Conduct similar research at a larger public institution that includes a more diverse population.
4. Distribute the surveys closer to the students' acceptance date into the university to eliminate any potential environmental factors that could have played a role in the students' survey answers after enrollment, but prior to the freshman orientation.

Summary

This research identified and analyzed the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll at a Midwest Christian University as well as filled a void in the research of college-choice factors in private universities. The researcher evaluated what compelled potential students to enroll in a specific university in order to uncover opportunities to improve marketing strategies in efforts to increase enrollment. Prior to this study, there was research on record that analyzed an entire population of incoming freshman students at a private university by comparing the student-recruitment marketing efforts controlled by an institution to the factors that impact college choice over which an institution has

little or no control (Donnellan, 2002). While institutions can control their marketing mix factors including product, price, promotion, and place, other environmental forces are beyond their control. These environmental forces include social, economic, competitive, and technological forces. By identifying trends related to each of these forces, institutions can develop and maintain successful marketing plans (Kerin, et al., 2011), and increase enrollment.

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APPENDIX A

Orientation Announcement

Orientation Announcement – University Employee
Midwest Christian University

Attention Students:

We are being invited to participate in a research study about college-choice factors of undergraduate students. This research study is being conducted by Jeremy Hayes, a doctoral student in the College of Education at Olivet Nazarene University. The objective of this research study is to identify and analyze the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll in a particular private university in order to improve the marketing strategies at private universities to increase their enrollment.

Please review the consent form that is being passed out to you. You will have 5 minutes to read and sign this form, if you choose to participate in the study.

You will then be given a survey consisting of various multiple-choice questions relating to the factors that caused you to enroll in this University. You will have 10 minutes to complete this survey.

The information you provide will offer an understanding to the factors that influenced you to choose to enroll in this University. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but the information gained from this study should provide general benefits to the University as well as other private universities and researchers.

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Increasing Enrollment: Evaluating College-Choice Factors at a Midwest Christian University

You are being invited to participate in a research study about college-choice factors of undergraduate students. This research project is being conducted by Jeremy Hayes at Olivet Nazarene University in the College of Education. The objective of this research project is to identify and analyze the factors that influenced undergraduate students to enroll in a particular private university in order to improve the marketing strategies at private universities to increase their enrollment. The survey is being given to undergraduate students at this Midwest Christian University.

There are no known risks if you decide to participate in this research study, nor are there any costs for participating in the study. The information you provide will help me understand the factors that influenced you to choose to enroll in this University. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but what I learn from this study should provide general benefits to the University as well as other private universities and researchers.

This survey is anonymous. If you choose to participate, do not write your name on the questionnaire. No one will be able to identify you and no one will know whether you participated in this study. Nothing you say on the questionnaire will in any way influence your present or future standing in the University.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please sign this consent form, upon completely reading it, and place the form face down in front of you. University volunteers will collect the consent forms and place them in specific labeled envelopes. You will then be given a survey to complete. Upon completion, please place the survey face down in front of you. University volunteers will then collect the surveys and place the surveys in other specific labeled envelopes. Following the completion of surveys, the researcher will collect the envelopes containing the consent forms and the completed surveys. The survey results will then be tabulated to determine the factors that undergraduate students say contributed to their choice of which university to attend. The researcher will be the only person to view the actual completed surveys. No one else at your school will view the completed survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey or about being in this study, you may contact me at jjhayes@olivet.edu.

The Olivet Nazarene University Institutional Review Board has reviewed my request to conduct this project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact Dr. Jeffrey Williamson of the-IRB at jswilliamson2@olivet.edu. Thank you for your consideration. Your help is greatly appreciated.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

College Choice Survey

College Choice Survey
Fall 2012

This survey is being administered to freshman and transfer students during the new student orientation. The survey questions relate to the factors that may have affected your decision to attend this Midwest Christian University (MCU). The results will be used in a doctoral dissertation and will also be shared with the university administrators in charge of recruiting students to this university. You will not be asked to identify yourself in any way so that your responses will remain anonymous.

Question 1: How influential were each of the following people in your decision to attend MCU? Please circle the rating that best describes your feeling.

| | <i>not influential</i> | <i>somewhat influential</i> | <i>moderately influential</i> | <i>very influential</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Your father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| your mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| High-school guidance counselor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| High-school teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Current MCU students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| University alumni | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other: Please specify: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Question 2: How influential were each of the following factors in your decision to attend MCU? Please circle the rating that best describes your feeling.

| | <i>not influential</i> | <i>somewhat influential</i> | <i>moderately influential</i> | <i>very influential</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The University Facebook page | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| The University course catalog | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Information about a major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| A campus visit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Attending an open house | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| The University Web page | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| A phone call from admissions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other: Please specify: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Question 3: How influential were each of the following factors in your decision to attend MCU? Please circle the rating that best describes your feelings.

| | <i>not influential</i> | <i>somewhat influential</i> | <i>moderately influential</i> | <i>very influential</i> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Location | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Campus safety | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| A specific major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| A variety of majors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Price | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Scholarships | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Financial aid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Intramural sports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Varsity sports | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Social Life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Diversity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other: Please specify: _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Question 4: Please rank the following factors from 1 to 10 in terms of their importance on your decision to attend MCU with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important.

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| ___ Location | ___ A specific major |
| ___ Campus safety | ___ The variety of majors |
| ___ Diversity | ___ Price |
| ___ Social life | ___ Scholarships |
| ___ Sports | ___ Financial Aid |

Question 5: Please circle the rating that best reflects your agreement with the following statements:

| | <i>strongly agree</i> | <i>agree</i> | <i>no opinion</i> | <i>disagree</i> | <i>strongly disagree</i> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| The recruitment material that MCU uses to attract students portrays MCU accurately. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The news media is harsh in its coverage of MCU. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am satisfied with my decision to attend MCU. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| MCU has some very successful graduates. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| MCU will prepare me for a good career. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Academic preparation at MCU is as good as prestigious private institutions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| MCU grads speak highly of MCU. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| People outside MCU have a favorable impression of the University. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 6: Please rank the following factors from 1 to 10 in terms of their importance on your decision to attend MCU with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important.

| | |
|--|--|
| ___ The University Facebook page | ___ A campus visit or attending an open house |
| ___ News coverage about the University | ___ Your friends |
| ___ Your parents | ___ Present University students or University Alumni |
| ___ TV or radio advertising | ___ The University Web page |
| ___ Information about a major | ___ High-school guidance counselors or teachers |

Question 7: Please answer the following questions about yourself by circling the appropriate response.

1) I am:

- a) *Male*
- b) *Female*

2) I categorize myself as a:

- a) *Freshman (new student)*
- b) *Transfer student (previous time spent at another college or university)*

3) I consider myself:

- a) *African American*
- b) *Asian*
- c) *Latino*
- d) *Native American*
- e) *White*
- f) *Other - please specify: _____*

4) I'm from:

- a) *Illinois*
- b) *Out-of-state - Please indicate state: _____*
- c) *Another country - Please indicate country: _____*

5) I would characterize the community from which I come as:

- a) *urban*
- b) *suburban*
- c) *rural*

6) The following religion most closely resembles my religious beliefs:

- a) *Protestant*
 - b) *Catholic*
 - c) *Jewish*
 - d) *Unaffiliated*
 - e) *Other: Please specify:*
-

7) My high-school GPA was:

- a) *less than 2.0*
- b) *2.0-2.49*
- c) *2.5-2.99*
- d) *3.0-3.5*
- e) *over 3.5*

8) The highest education level completed by my mother was:

- a) *high school*
- b) *2-yr. College*
- c) *4-yr. College*
- d) *grad school or beyond*

9) The highest education level completed by my father was:

- a) *high school*
- b) *2-yr. College*
- c) *4-yr. College*
- d) *grad school or beyond*

10) Of all the colleges to which I applied, MCU was my (circle one):

- a) *first choice*
- b) *second choice*
- c) *third choice*
- d) *fourth choice or greater*

11) If MCU was not your first-choice college, the statement that best expresses my reason for attending Olivet is (circle one):

- a) *I wasn't accepted by my first-choice college.*
 - b) *MCU was more affordable than my first-choice college.*
 - c) *MCU was the best of all the schools that accepted me.*
 - d) *MCU was the only college that accepted me.*
 - e) *Other: Please specify:*
-