Do You See What I See?: Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of IUPUI Campus Viewbooks and Experiences

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Universities may show various cultures at their institution through viewbooks. The researchers in this approved study administered a qualitative and quantitative questionnaire to 225 undergraduate students at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) to gauge student perceptions of institutional viewbooks as they relate to students' cultural backgrounds and identities. The researchers utilized Tinto's (1993) model of Institutional Departure and Museus' (2014) Cultural Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model to frame this study. Findings suggest that most IUPUI students' perceptions of viewbooks aligned with their cultural backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences.

Twenty-first century students applying to higher education programs have access to information at the tips of their fingers using resources like websites, blogs, and social media. However, many students and their families claim that campus viewbooks are important in their initial perception of an institution of higher education (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). High school seniors ranked "publications and written information sent to [them] from colleges as most important" when it came to receiving institutional information during their college search (Hartley & Morphew, 2008, p. 673). Viewbooks are defined as "promotional admissions brochures created by marketing professionals to 'sell' institutions to prospective students and their families" (Osei-Kofi, Torres, & Lui, 2013, p. 386). Viewbooks, and the information they contain, play an integral role in shaping students' perspectives of a university's values and culture (Osei-Kofi et al., 2013).

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) espoused in its most recent strategic plan that it will "create a strategic and coordinated enrollment management plan to attract, retain, and graduate better prepared, more diverse students who choose IUPUI" (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2016c). However, diversity is often not clearly defined by institutions, leaving the task of interpretation to students (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). This lack of clear support and definition of diversity can leave students feeling undervalued at their institution (Museus, 2014). In other cases, institutions saturate their campuses with messages of the various cultures present on campus, but the reality of campus diversity does not align with the picturesque viewbook (Pippert, Essenburg, & Matchett, 2013). Many studies (see Osei-Kofi et al., 2013; Hartley & Morphew, 2008) have reviewed the content of viewbooks to better grasp institutions' overall messages surrounding culture. However, there is a need to better understand how viewbooks construct IUPUI students' perceptions of their cultural backgrounds and identities and how this compares to their realities once they arrive on campus. This approved study investigated these questions by asking the following:

1. How do IUPUI viewbooks shape undergraduate student perceptions as they relate to their cultural backgrounds and identities?
2. How do students' perceptions of IUPUI viewbooks compare to their lived realities on IUPUI's campus as it relates to their cultural backgrounds and identities?
3. Are students' cultural backgrounds and identities validated?

The researchers utilized Museus' (2014) Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) model, influenced by Tinto's (1993) model of Institutional Departure, as a framework for this study. The CECE model examines an institution's level of cultural engagement through nine indicators and posits that students from diverse backgrounds who are part of a culturally engaging campus environment will be more likely to possess a greater sense of belonging, have a positive disposition towards their academics, perform at higher levels academically, and graduate (Museus, 2014). Through this lens, the researchers gained a better sense of IUPUI students' perceptions of cultural validation as they relate to institutional viewbooks and students' lived realities.

Literature Review

Shaping Perceptions Using Viewbooks

Viewbooks are one of the first sources of information for students and parents seeking to learn more about an institution and get a feel for the campus culture (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). Starting in the 1980s, institutions of higher education began receiving more applications than ever before, and competition for a coveted spot in a prestigious university increased (McDonough, 1994). In the 1990s, viewbooks evolved from black-and-white fact books to colorful, picturesque ideals (Thacker, 2005). These viewbooks used photographs, charts, graphs, and other graphic illustrations to convey information and values (Osei-Kofi et al., 2013). Now, as admissions offices have larger budgets and increasing enrollment pressures, prospective students are seen as commodities to admissions and enrollment managers (Hawkins & Clinesdinst, 2007; McDonough, 1994). For this reason, these managers try to carefully craft images of their student body in the most positive light.

However, the level of student identities displayed within viewbooks may not meet the actual proportion of diversity on campus, thus tokenizing students (Pippert et al., 2013). Tokenism, as understood by Fletcher (2012), is when students appear to be given a voice but "have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate" (p. 9). The commodification of diverse students in institutional marketing materials can have a negative impact on both prospective students and those who have been selected to be placed on these materials, as they are likened to "tokens." This representation of students as institutional tokens was one of the first concepts that led the researchers to take a critical look at the content of campus viewbooks.

In addition to using visuals to help recruit qualified and diverse students, viewbooks also help portray a specific institutional environment and "educate individuals about [the] institution's values" (Bauer et al., 2013, p. 15). Thus, the images in viewbooks and other promotional materials that institutions create are artifacts of the institutions themselves. The use of viewbooks to promote campus culture simultaneously works to shape campus culture, as students who may become a part of the institution are already beginning to form their opinions and attitudes about the campus based on these materials. When the campus environment promoted in institutional viewbooks is not accurately portrayed, the perceived and lived realities of students are less likely to match (Pippert et al., 2013). Universities are beginning to recognize that it is not enough to simply recruit students through the use of campus viewbooks because students must also be retained and successful on their path to graduation. As a result, higher education scholars have begun developing theories

centered on college student retention and success.

Theoretical Framework

Tinto's (1993) scholarship on student success is well recognized in higher education and contributes to the framework of this study. Tinto's (1993) model of Institutional Departure, based on Tinto's theory of college student persistence and degree completion, posits that students entering an institution of higher education are influenced by their family backgrounds, prior educational experiences, and a variety of pre-entry attributes. Therefore, students' success is dependent on their adherence to collegial norms and commitment to their personal goals (Tinto, 1993).

Culturally Engaging Campuses. As Museus (2014) has noted, Tinto's model of Institutional Departure does not accurately describe the experiences of racially diverse students on a college campus and, therefore, does not explain all students' success. While all students could encounter an unwelcoming campus environment, students of color have reported that they experience such an environment more frequently than White students and that they face additional cultural barriers (Museus, 2014). According to the CECE model, students also come to college with a variety of external indicators (i.e., financial circumstances and family influences) and pre-college inputs (i.e., academic influences and social identities) that "shape individual influences...and successes among racially diverse college populations" (Museus, 2014, p. 207). Due to these and other obstacles, Museus (2014) asserted that it is of paramount importance that universities recognize the cultural differences that students of color bring to institutions.

Cultural Validation. It is critical that campuses be culturally engaging to support student success (Museus, 2014). The CECE model suggests that "students who encounter more culturally engaging campus environments are more likely to (1) exhibit a greater sense of belonging, more positive academic dispositions, and higher levels of academic performance and ultimately (2) be more likely to persist to graduation" (Museus, 2014, p. 210). The CECE model is meant to be inclusive of diverse social identities such as ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic levels (Museus, 2014).

Further, the CECE model posits that culturally engaging campuses display nine indicators: "cultural familiarity, cultural relevant knowledge, cultural community service, opportunities for meaningful cross-cultural engagement, collectivist cultural orientations, culturally validating environments, humanized educational environments, pro-active philosophies, and availability of holistic supports" (Museus, 2014, pp. 210-214). This study focused on the sixth indicator of the CECE model, which states that students who are at an institution that "validates their cultural background and identities…will be more likely to succeed" (Museus, 2014, p. 212). When campuses focus on validating students' cultures and backgrounds, students have a greater sense of belonging to their institution (Gloria & Robinson Kurpis, 1996; Kuh & Love, 2000; Museus, 2014; Tierney, 1999).

Figure 1 represents the researchers' use of Tinto's model of Institutional Departure and Museus' CECE model. Although the diagram does not encompass the complexities of each model, it does allow for a visual explanation of how these theories are connected and used as the theoretical framework of this study.
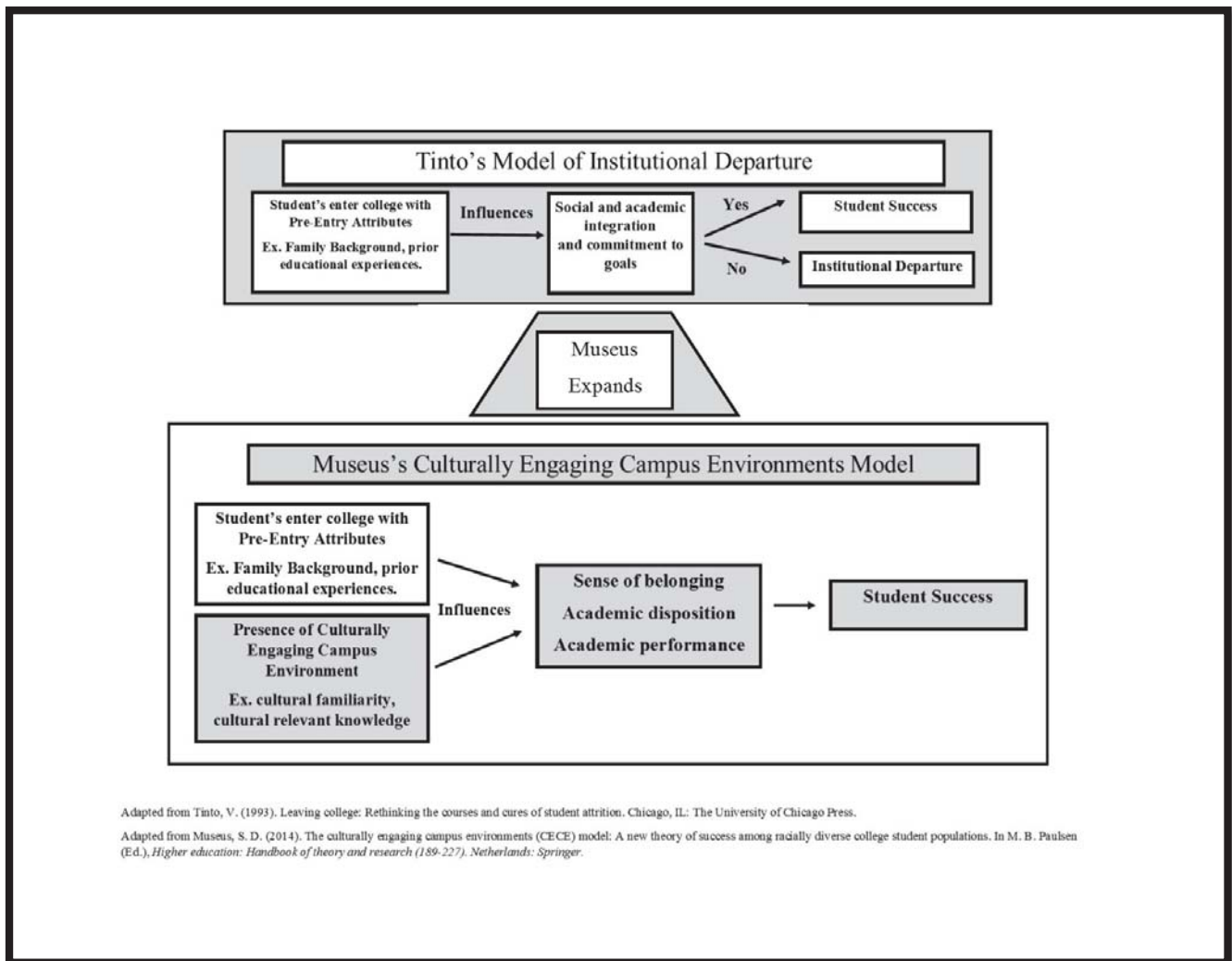
Figure 1. This figure illustrates the integration of Tinto's (1994) model of Institutional Departure and Museus' (2014) CECE model used to form the theoretical framework of this research.

Methodology

This qualitative, constructivist study is set at IUPUI in Indianapolis, Indiana. IUPUI's institutional mission includes "a strong commitment to diversity" (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2016b), and its strategic plan includes a commitment to "an inclusive campus climate that seeks, values, and cultivates diversity" (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2016a, para. 36). This mission and strategic plan detail IUPUI's intended focus on diversity. In addition, to better understand institutional climate, IUPUI's Department of Institutional Research and Decision Support (IRDS) administers a campus climate survey every four to five years that gauges how students, faculty, and staff feel about the institution's commitment to diversity (IUPUI Institutional Research and Decision Support, 2014). In line with these guiding principles and measures of campus diversity and climate, IUPUI's publications and marketing materials aim to address the mission and strategic plan of the institution.

For additional context, Table 1 contains IUPUI's demographic profile of its undergraduate students, graduate students, and full-time academic faculty. Knowledge of the setting and population of IUPUI was

Table 1

Demographics of IUPUI Population, Fall 2015

Identity	Undergraduates	Graduates	Full-Time Academic Faculty
Black/African American	10%	8%	5%
Asian American	4%	6%	15%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	4%	2%
American Indian/Native American	<1%	<1%	<1%
Two or more races	4%	2%	2%
International	4%	14%	7%
White	71%	64%	69%
Unknown	1%	1%	N/A
Women	56%	55%	42%
LGBTQ+	14%	10%	8%
With Disability	5%	4%	4%

Note. The total undergraduate population was 21,985, the total graduate population was 8,210, and the total Full-time Academic Faculty was 3,148. Statistics for faculty identified as LGBTQ+ or with disability include all faculty, not just Full-Time Academic Faculty. Religion and socioeconomic status demographic data of the campus was not available for the researchers.

important when collecting and analyzing data as it helped inform the research team of the campus environment and student profile.

Constructivism

The researchers operated under the assumption that knowledge is constructed on a personal level, where everyone constructs reality in their own mind and defines their personal reality (Lueddeke, 1999). Like Brooks and Brooks (1999), the researchers recognized that knowledge and learning are less linear and more developmentally, socially, and culturally fluid. The researchers also recognized that people are "individuals whose life experiences have shaped singular sets of cognitive needs" (p. x), where truths are incomplete or influenced based on individual identities (Lueddeke, 1999). Moreover, the researchers shared Vygotsky's (1978) view that an individual cannot be taken out of themselves or understand the world without

their experiences, backgrounds, and identities.

Positionality

The research team consisted of four master's students and one doctoral student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) program at Indiana University (IU). The researchers each identify as cisgender and heterosexual. Four researchers identify as female and one as male. The researchers come from multiple regions of the United States, including the South, the Northern East Coast, and the Midwest. Three of the researchers are White and noted that they often see their cultures represented in campus viewbooks. One researcher identifies as South Asian/Desi American and immigrated to the United States at the age of five. This researcher noted that she often does not see her culture represented in campus marketing materials. One researcher identifies as Black and noted that while he

sees people in campus viewbooks that physically look like they might represent his culture, he does not see as many students on campus as originally represented in the viewbooks. These identities and perceptions of campus marketing materials shaped how the research team examined data from this study. For instance, the researchers with more privileged racial identities had a more limited understanding of the responses of students who stated that they do not feel as if their culture is validated through viewbooks or on campus.

As a group, the researchers added multiple perspectives to this study based on their different cultural and regional backgrounds, identities, undergraduate experiences, and learning styles. The researchers intentionally reflected on their socially- and culturally-constructed values, which helped in grounding their complex interpretations of the data. The researchers were also deliberate about acknowledging their personal perspectives to ensure that they were as inclusive and thoughtful as possible.

Research Design

To ensure validity and trustworthiness of this study, the researchers rooted their inquiry in a constructivist epistemological approach that guided data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). Data were collected on the campus of IUPUI using a self-created questionnaire (Appendix A) that was influenced by the theoretical frameworks of Tinto (1993) and Museus (2014). The researchers surveyed IUPUI undergraduate students by distributing paper questionnaires. This method was used to access a larger number of student participants, rather than conducting in-person interviews or focus groups.

Participants and Sampling

To intentionally select student participants for this study, purposeful sampling was utilized. First-year students were the most likely to have seen the Fall 2016 viewbook prior to attending IUPUI and were thus the primary individuals selected to participate in this study. The research team surveyed 225 IUPUI undergraduate students, roughly 1% of the IUPUI undergraduate student population (IUPUI, 2016). The final analysis included 223 student participants; two responses were excluded because they were not complete. Questionnaires were disseminated to students enrolled in optional First Year Experience (FYE) courses and to members of the Undergraduate Student Government. The sample is not entirely representative of all first-year students, though most questionnaires were distributed in FYE courses that were comprised of only first-year students.

The final sample consisted of 82% (183) first-year students and 18% (40) non-first-year students. Within this sample, 78% (174) of students identified as belonging to the middle class, 55% (124) identified as female, and 46% (102) identified as Christians. The average age of student participants was 19. This sample was representative of the IUPUI campus population (see Table 1). Disaggregated demographic data on student participants can be found in Appendix B.

Data Collection

Museus' (2014) sixth CECE Indicator of Cultural Validation informed the questionnaire employed in this study. The researchers intentionally asked students if they feel valued on campus based on their cultural backgrounds and identities. The researchers aligned their verbiage with Museus' (2014) definition of cultural validation: "The extent to which

postsecondary institutions and educators convey that they value the cultural backgrounds and identities of their diverse college student populations" (p. 212). In the questionnaire, the term "brochure" was used in place of "viewbook" to utilize a more colloquial, familiar term. The questionnaire was piloted among fellow master's and doctoral level classmates, as recommended by Schuh, Biddix, Dean, & Kinzie (2016). This piloting allowed the research team to test response time, identify inconsistencies with wording or questions, and ensure clarity among the test group.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative measures were exercised so that open-ended responses could add depth to Likert-scale responses. All responses were compiled into a spreadsheet with each respondent and their responses represented in a single row. Data were cleaned to ensure that all values were entered correctly and coded consistently (Cooper & Shelley, 2009, p. 142). Additional notes regarding responses (i.e., if students included qualitative information in quantitative sections, underlined or capitalized words, etc.) were noted to account for any respondent emphasis that the data alone could not show.

Quantitative. The researchers applied simple descriptive statistics to pull meaning from all quantitative data collected and to identify central tendency and dispersion. This analysis provided data regarding how students most commonly understand the perceived and lived environment of IUPUI as related to the viewbook, as well as how students' experiences vary or align with the most commonly cited values among the entire group surveyed.

Qualitative. Noting that social identities influence culture (Museus, 2014), the researchers coded qualitative results by acknowledging the many social identities of the student participants. Thus, data were analyzed alongside the demographic data collected, including students' race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, and age.

When analyzing each of the qualitative responses, each researcher independently noted any significant findings they saw within the data and completed one round of individual coding. The researchers independently grouped their codes into major themes and then came together to note discrepancies, look for evidence to support each code, and identify salient themes collectively as a group (Weston et al., 2001). When discrepancies arose, the researchers discussed and established a theme that aligned with the majority perspective for consistency, credibility, and trustworthiness (Cooper & Shelley, 2009). Within each theme, every response was coded as positive, negative, or neutral. For example, if a student noted that IUPUI did not make them feel welcome, their response was coded as negative. Demographic data was analyzed within both the positive and negative response categories to identify trends within each theme.

Lastly, the researchers compared quantitative and qualitative responses to crosscheck all data collected and explain more fully the entire rich, complex data set (Cohen & Manion, 2000). Student quotations were used to authenticate findings and apply rich descriptions for enhanced credibility and trustworthiness.

Findings

In the first portion of the questionnaire, students were asked to give their initial impressions of the viewbook by responding to the following question, "According to the brochure, what does IUPUI value?" The top 10 responses are shown in Table 2. The word "diversity" was noted in 38.1% of the responses, showing that students are

internalizing, on a basic level, that diversity is valued by the institution based on the viewbook.

Table 2

Top 10 words mentioned in regards to IUPUI values observed in the viewbook

Word	Number of times responded
Students	100
Diversity	85
Community	56
Involvement	46
Education	42
Life	42
Academic	39
Opportunity	37
Campus	30
City	30

Note. N=223. These are the top 10 words repeated in response to the question "According to the brochure, what does IUPUI value?" Each respondent was given the opportunity to write up to three lines.

Quantitative

The questionnaire asked four Likert-scale questions to assess students' perceptions of cultural background and identity validation at IUPUI. Gauging students' responses to their perceptions of the viewbook in terms of perceived cultural background validation, the researchers saw an average response of 4.05 on a 5-point scale (see Table 3). This result indicated that students felt strongly that their cultural background would be valued per the viewbook's representation of IUPUI. Reponses were similar in terms of students' perceived validation of cultural identity validation as researchers saw an average response of 4.04 on a 5-point scale (see Table 4). This result indicated that students

felt strongly that their cultural identities would be valued based on the viewbook's representation of IUPUI. Table 3 and Table 4 display these results.

Table 3

Question 1

Likert Scale Response	%
1 – Strongly Disagree	0%
2 – Disagree	4%
3 – Neutral	24%
4 – Agree	33.5%
5 – Strongly Agree	38.5%

Note. N=223. Question 1: "Based on the brochure I feel like my cultural background would be valued at IUPUI."

The second set of Likert-scale questions gauged students' lived experiences on IUPUI's campus as they relate to their cultural backgrounds and identities. Average responses for both questions were 4.1 on a 5-point scale. These results indicated that students felt strongly that their cultural backgrounds and identities are valued at IUPUI. Table 5 and Table 6 display these results.

Table 4

Question 2

Likert Scale Response	%
1 – Strongly Disagree	0%
2 – Disagree	4.5%
3 – Neutral	24.5%
4 – Agree	32%
5 – Strongly Agree	39%

Note. N=223. Question 2: "Based on the brochure I feel like my cultural identity would be valued at IUPUI."

71

Table 5

Question 3

Likert Scale Response	%
1 – Strongly Disagree	0%
2 – Disagree	6%
3 – Neutral	19%
4 – Agree	33%
5 – Strongly Agree	41%

Note. N=223. Question 3: "In my experience, I believe my cultural background is valued at IUPUI."

Overall, more positive responses on the second set of questions showed that students felt more validated by their campus experience than their perceptions of the viewbook. Qualitative data was used to further explore this finding.

Table 6

Percent of Responses to Question 4

Likert Scale Response	%
1 – Strongly Disagree	0%
2 – Disagree	6%
3 – Neutral	21.5%
4 – Agree	30%
5 – Strongly Agree	42.5%

Note. N=223. Question 4: "In my experience, I believe my cultural identity is valued at IUPUI".

Qualitative

Four major themes emerged from the qualitative data: Fitting-In, Opportunity for Involvement, Types of Opportunities for Involvement, and Visible Diversity. Within these four themes, the researchers coded for positive, negative, and neutral responses. Neutral responses were noted but not included in the findings.

Fitting-In. In this theme, responses indicated that students felt respected, valued, and/or accepted by their campus environment. Fitting-In was the largest theme, with a total of 99 student responses. Of the total responses, 36.3% were positive. Among the positive responses, 68% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 11% as Black/African-American, 6% as Asian, 2% as Hispanic/Latino/a, and 10% as Other/Unspecified. One student supported her belief that her cultural backgrounds and identities were validated by the viewbook, saying, "The brochure tells me IUPUI is a welcoming environment where all ethnicities, religions, and cultures are able to go" (Participant 114: First-Year, Middle Class, White, Female). On the contrary, seven of the 223 students responded that they believe the viewbook did not exemplify a welcoming environment and did not feel validated. Looking deeper into these seven responses, 57.1% identified as Black/African-American and 42.9% as White/Caucasian. One student noted, "When deciding to come [to IUPUI], I was very excited because the campus seemed so welcoming and vibrant. For the most part it's been welcoming, but not necessarily welcoming for culture" (Participant 202: First-Year, Middle Class, Black, Christian, Male).

Opportunities for Involvement. Responses in this theme reflected the events, organizations, or programs students said helped them feel that they were a part of the IUPUI campus. Many respondents did not specify a specific program but knew cultural programs and/or organizations were available on campus. Of the 37 total responses in this theme, 12 were positive. 66.7% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 8.3% as Black/African-American, 8.3% as Hispanic/Latino/a., 8.3% as Multiracial, and 8.3% as Other/Unspecified. One student said that "there are clubs for literally everything for everyone" (Participant 12: Unknown). There were no negative responses in this category.

Types of Opportunities for Involvement. The researchers delved deeper into the second theme by identifying specific ways students felt culturally validated by the

IUPUI campus. The researchers felt it was valuable to separate this theme from the second to more clearly illustrate the significance and impact of specific IUPUI offices and organizations on students' feelings of cultural validation. This theme was categorized by a total of 27 student responses that identified specific organizations, offices, or centers that are culturally validating. In this theme were 11 positive responses; 36.4% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 18.2% as Hispanic/Latino/a, 18.2% as Multiracial, 18.2% as Other/Unknown, and 9.1% as Asian. Students identified participation in multicultural clubs and organizations as the primary way they felt that their cultural backgrounds and identities were validated by the institution. One student noted, "at first, I didn't feel too welcome, but then I started to get involved with the diversity events here at IUPUI and felt more included" (Participant 112: First-Year, Middle Class, Asian, Filipino, Catholic, Male). There were two negative responses within the third theme that noted a lack of opportunities to get involved.

Visible Diversity. The researchers identified 48 responses that discussed ways students connected to visual representations of cultural validation, whether on campus or in the viewbook. There were seven positive responses that mentioned visible diversity on campus or in the viewbook; of these responses, 71.4% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 14.3% as Hispanic/Latino/a, and 14.3% as Other/Unspecified. One student positively noted that, "the campus brochure include[d] a lot of images featuring people of color this to me signifies a welcoming environment" (Participant 61: First-Year, Middle Class, Caucasian, Catholic, Male). Of the 11 negative responses within this theme, 45.5% of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, 36.4% Black/African-

American, 9.1% Asian, and 9.1% Other/Unspecified. One student felt that "there are several organizations that are based on different cultures. The brochure doesn't include these specific organizations or clubs, and it should so that people can see how IUPUI values culture" (Participant 148: First-Year, Upper Class, Asian, Hindu, Female). Many students compared their lived experiences to what they saw within the viewbook, some noting discrepancies. One student highlighted the fact that "[she] ha[s] seen some diversity but its [sic] not as widely diverse as what [she] see[s] on the brochure" (Participant 200: First-Year, Middle Class, African-American, Christian, Female). Overall, the researchers found that the data gave a generally positive picture of how student experiences with the viewbook relate to students' perceived and experienced cultural validation. However, within these themes, responses varied among students based on their multiple identities, as each student perceived their reality differently.

Discussion

The responses that the research team uncovered build upon existing knowledge surrounding student success, cultural validation, and institutional marketing material. Using the lens of Museus' (2014) CECE model and Tinto's (1993) model of Institutional Departure, the researchers derived meaning from the students' voices, offering timely implications for higher education professionals. For example, when students were asked to name IUPUI's top values, the word 'culture' did not emerge in the top ten responses (see Table 1), although "student" and "diversity" were listed. As Museus' (2014) work has outlined, cultural validation is imperative to college students' success; thus, its lack of perceived presence within the IUPUI viewbook should be noted.

The overwhelmingly positive quantitative results are similar to those uncovered by IUPUI's 2014 campus climate survey, which found that 94.4% of students feel that "IUPUI has a commitment to diversity" and 94.3% believe "IUPUI has a diverse student population" (IUPUI Institutional Research and Decision Support, 2014, p. 1). Overall, students saw their perceptions of the viewbook and lived experiences to be positive and congruent. This is crucial because when students' perceptions and expectations before entering college align with their experiences once on campus, their commitment to success at that institution is strengthened (Museus, 2014; Tinto, 1993). Ultimately, IUPUI's efforts to ensure that "all students have opportunities to develop cross-cultural knowledge" appears effective (The Trustees of Indiana University, 2016a, para. 36).

When analyzing the qualitative responses, it is imperative to note that culture is a complex concept and institutions can interact with students' cultures in a multitude of ways (Museus, 2014; Tierney, 1999). Students reflected this complexity through their open-ended responses. In each theme, there was a small percentage of negative responses. Although these responses were a small fraction of the data, these voices tended to disproportionally represent students of marginalized identities. Highlighting these voices through qualitative means was important as they can easily be overlooked in quantitative data (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

Overall, students who saw themselves and their culture reflected in the viewbook reported stronger feelings of cultural validation. These results further strengthen the existing literature linking students' sense of belonging to feelings of cultural validation on campus (Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996; Museus, 2014; Tierney, 1999). Students also spoke to campus involvement. The results indicated that higher levels of involvement correlated with increased feelings of cultural validation and sense of belonging. This finding builds upon the existing literature surrounding student involvement (Astin, 1999; Museus 2014; Tinto, 1993) and exemplifies Astin's (1999) suggestion that student involvement is tightly associated with overall satisfaction with the institution and student success.

Students who mentioned culturally validating groups such as the Multicultural Center and LGBTQ+ Center reflected Museus' (2014) notion that there is an increased likelihood of student success when students have opportunities to "create, maintain, and strengthen epistemological connections to their home communities through spaces that allow them to acquire knowledge about their communities of origin"(p. 210). However, some students felt that specific organizations celebrating different cultures created silos of students or excluded dominant groups of students on campus. The researchers understood this finding through the literature regarding White students' racial identity development, which explains that as students begin to understand their race and the privileges they hold, they often start in a place of naivety (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2011).

It was also clear in the responses that the viewbook's failure to mention specific programs and cultural organizations (e.g., the Multicultural Center) gave students the perception that the viewbook did not validate their culture because the places they believe to be culturally validating on campus were not highlighted in the material. A small percentage of responses also showed that some students felt the viewbook promoted more diversity than what they saw on campus. The notion of including culturally relevant items in marketing materials that go beyond the simple placement of culturally

diverse pictures speaks to the concept of tokenism. As discussed, tokenism has a negative effect on marginalized students' cultural validation and occurs when students are treated as token students for institutional gain (Fletcher, 2012; Pippert et al., 2013). These findings reflect the existing literature and highlight the fact that a disproportionate number of students of color spoke to the notion that the visible diversity in the viewbook did not validate their lived experiences. As such, institutions must display an honest representation of campus diversity in their viewbooks. Institutions must also dive deeper than simple visible representations of diverse cultures to validate students' cultures on campus (Fletcher, 2012; Pippert et al., 2013).

This study's findings again echo those identified by the 2014 IUPUI campus climate survey, which found that a small percentage of students (13.7%) believe "IUPUI has a lot of tension around diversity issues" (IUPUI Institutional Research and Decision Support, 2014, p. 1). The students who identified tension within the campus climate survey were disproportionately students of marginalized racial identities. More specifically, this study helps to inform knowledge regarding cultural validation in Museus' (2014) CECE model as it showed that students of color disproportionately do not feel culturally validated when compared to their White peers. When examining the conclusions above through the lens of Museus' (2014) sixth indicator, implications begin to manifest for higher education professionals. Because cultural validation is so closely tied to student success, it is imperative that professionals work to create more inclusive and culturally engaging campus environments while listening to the voices of those who feel that their cultures are not validated.

Implications

The findings generated by this study have implications for admissions and communication departments within institutions of higher education that produce institutional viewbooks, as well as faculty and staff who interact with students and student programs.

Admissions and Communications

This study was constructed with the knowledge that validating students' cultural backgrounds and identities is highly important. The more students feel welcomed and accepted on their campuses, the more successful they are in terms of grades, retention, etc. (Museus, 2014; Tinto, 1993). This study was also founded on the knowledge that institutional viewbooks are an important tool used to shape students' perceptions before they set foot on campus (Hartley & Morphew, 2008; Bauer et al., 2013). It is thus problematic that students within this study did not identify culture as one of the top three values promoted in the IUPUI viewbook. The researchers suggest to admissions and communication departments, specifically those at IUPUI, that the representation of the various cultures that are prevalent on their campuses should be made more visible within the viewbook. Many students noted that the viewbook was void of any mention of certain organizations and clubs of which they were currently a member. Visually and textually highlighting these culturally sensitive organizations would be highly advantageous for IUPUI.

However, when highlighting marginalized populations, individuals, or organizations, it is important that those creating campus promotional materials do not misrepresent these groups by making it appear that they are more prominent on campus than they truly are. Several students of marginalized identities commented that they noticed many racially and religiously diverse students within the viewbooks, but

their experiences on campus did not fully align with what was portrayed in the viewbook. This incongruence between students' lived and perceived environments was regarded negatively. Those creating institutional viewbooks and promotional materials must be sensitive not to misrepresent students of marginalized identities or their cultures while identifying ways to truthfully highlight students' diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Faculty and Staff

Student responses indicated that the primary ways they acknowledge their cultural backgrounds and identities to be validated both through the viewbook and on campus are through co-curricular activities, experiences, and organizations. Only two students noted feelings of cultural validation through curricular activities. It is firmly established in the literature that culturally enriching curricular activities effectively validate students' cultures and increase success and retention (Museus, 2014; Tinto, 1993). As such, it is surprising that students gave little mention to curricular activities. Faculty must be aware of how their students experience cultural validation or lack thereof. Students overwhelmingly stated that they felt culturally validated through their interactions and involvements with various clubs and organizations such as the Multicultural Center, LGBTQ+ Center, and other cultural programs and events. Faculty may wish to capitalize on the ways their students are experiencing campus life outside of the classroom and work in conjunction with the programs and organizations that effectively celebrate and validate students' cultural backgrounds and identities. Additionally, it is important that IUPUI and other institutions of higher education continue to support such culturally validating programs by providing resources, funding, and space on campus.

Limitations

There is a limit to the depth of information that can be collected in a questionnaire, specifically as the concepts of culture and cultural validation are complex and require a certain level of nuance to describe or evaluate in detail. The researchers acknowledge that the research methods, questionnaire, and participant selection may have been impacted by such limitations. Although the researchers took steps to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, they acknowledge that the self-created questionnaire is limited to measuring only certain components of students' cultural backgrounds and identities.

Within the questionnaire, the research team made the conscious decision to give very brief examples of components that could constitute an individual's cultural identity and background (e.g., race/ethnicity, religion, and gender). In doing so, the research team acknowledges that students might have only referred to these characteristics when thinking about their cultural backgrounds and identities, not considering other influences. However, the researchers thought it best to provide students with this background information to ensure they were informed about the questions being asked.

To be considerate of students' and instructors' class time, students were allowed only ten to fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. This could have affected a few aspects of student responses. For example, the researchers did not include additional measurements for cultural background and identity traits such as disability status or sexual orientation to allow students to complete the questionnaire in a timely manner. Additionally, the research team acknowledges the power

dynamic that can be present in a classroom between a student and a professor. Some responses could have been skewed based on perceived classroom expectations and the nature of the course.

Another acknowledged limitation is that only certain groups of undergraduate students were asked to participate. Working within a tight schedule, the research team chose to survey student groups that were readily available and willing to participate. The questionnaires were also administered by multiple members of the research team at different times, as the task of data collection was shared among all members. Thus, the instructions and style of questionnaire administration may have differed slightly among the various groups surveyed.

Finally, the researchers recognize that the generalizability of the study's findings is somewhat limited by the nature of the study. Since the researchers situated the study within IUPUI and utilized only one of the institution's marketing materials, results may not successfully apply to other universities based on the unique nature of institutional marketing materials and the variety of recruitment methods institutions employ.

Future Research

There are several areas in which to apply future research based on this study. As this research used a survey questionnaire to gather data, findings were limited to Likert-scale and short written responses to two open-ended questions. More in-depth qualitative research could better highlight the ways students construct their cultural backgrounds and identities and delve into how these constructions are either aided or disrupted by IUPUI viewbooks. Individual interviews with students or focus groups could garner more in-depth responses and uncover deeper understandings of how

students' perceptions and lived experiences align with IUPUI viewbooks. Because there was some variation in students' qualitative and quantitative responses in regards to cultural validation, the research team believes additional in-depth, qualitative methods (i.e. individual interviews, focus groups, etc.) would provide more accurate responses.

Additionally, this study could be broadened by including other university marketing materials (i.e. online tours, promotional videos, etc.). As viewbooks are not the only source of information presented to prospective students, it would be beneficial to identify how other marketing tools and techniques affect students' feelings of cultural validation. This study could also be expanded to include both graduate and international students' perspectives. The study's participants were primarily first-year students in their first semester at IUPUI. While the perspectives of first-year students are greatly valued, further research could consider the attitudes and beliefs of more seasoned students who have been on their campus for multiple semesters and have more experiences from which to draw. Given that graduate and international students bring diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and identities to their institutions, it would be interesting to gain further understanding of how, if at all, such students' cultural backgrounds and identities are perceived and validated in relation to campus marketing materials.

As previously noted, this study surveyed roughly 1% of the total IUPUI undergraduate student population. Although surveying this number of students was an intentional effort to give focus to dissenting voices and acknowledge those who do not feel marketing materials are culturally validating, surveying a wider scope of students would allow for more reliable transferability both at IUPUI and other like

institutions. Future research may wish to increase the number of students participating in similar studies to increase both the generalizability of findings and relevance of the study to other institutions.

Conclusion

Utilizing both Tinto's (1993) model of Institutional Departure and Museus' (2014) CECE model, the research team administered a questionnaire to 225 undergraduate students to assess perceptions of cultural validation and the alignment of these perceptions to students lived realities on campus. Students indicated mostly positive responses that their perception of IUPUI viewbooks aligned with their cultural background and identities. Students also indicated that the IUPUI viewbook largely supported their lived realities on the IUPUI campus as related to their cultural backgrounds and identities. However, there was a small group of students that did not feel their cultural identities and backgrounds were validated in the viewbook and/or in their experiences on campus. Understanding that this study represents roughly one percent of the IUPUI undergraduate population, the research team posits that IUPUI viewbook materials are largely comparable with undergraduate students' perceptions and lived realities on campus and thus mostly validates the majority of students' cultural backgrounds and identities.

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Appendix A

Please view the provided IUPUI campus brochure and answer the following questions. The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Please answer the questions openly and honestly. You may stop the survey at any point with no penalization.

The terms *cultural identity* and *cultural background* can refer, **but are not limited to**, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. Please consider the cultural backgrounds and identities with which *you* most identity.

Based on the brochure, what do you think IUPUI values most?
1.
2.
3.

The brochure made me feel like my cultural background would be valued at IUPUI.
STRONGLY DISAGREE   NEUTRAL   STRONGLY AGREE
               1   2   3   4   5

The brochure made me feel like my cultural identity would be valued at IUPUI.
STRONGLY DISAGREE   NEUTRAL   STRONGLY AGREE
               1   2   3   4   5

What do the brochures tell you about the campus as it relates to your cultural backgrounds and identities?

Continued on Back
In my experience, I believe my cultural background is valued at IUPUI.
STRONGLY DISAGREE   NEUTRAL   STRONGLY AGREE
               1   2   3   4   5

In my experience, I believe my cultural identity is valued at IUPUI
STRONGLY DISAGREE   NEUTRAL   STRONGLY AGREE
               1   2   3   4   5

How does your experience on IUPUI's campus compare to what is displayed on the brochure as it relates to your cultural backgrounds and identities?

You are not obligated to provide any demographic information that you do not feel comfortable with. If you do not wish to answer, leave the question blank.

Which of the following best describes your student status at IUPUI?
First year
Second year
Third year
Fourth year
Beyond the Fourth year

Please specify your socioeconomic status.
Lower Class
Middle Class
Upper Class

Please specify your age
18-20
20-25
25-30
30-40
40+
Prefer not to answer

Please specify your race   _____

Please specify your ethnicity   _____

Please specify your gender   _____

Please specify your age   _____

Please specify what religion, if any, you identify with   _____

Appendix B

Table 7

Sample Demographics

Race	# of Participants	% of Participants
Caucasian/White	133	59.6%
Black/African American	32	14.3%
Asian	16	7.2%
Hispanic/Latino/a	9	4.0%
Multiracial	6	2.7%
Other/Unspecified	27	12.1%
Gender		
Female	124	56%
Male	84	38%
Year at IUPUI		
First year	183	82%
Second year	20	9%
Third year	6	3%
Fourth year	1	0%
Didn't Identify	9	4%
Religion		
Christianity (Protestant +)	107	48%
Agnostic/Atheist	12	5.4%
Buddhism	3	1.3%
Judaism	2	0.9%
Catholicism	18	8.1%
Hinduism	3	1.3%
Islam	5	2.2%
Sikhism	3	1.3%
Taoism	1	0.4%
Other/Didn't Identify	69	30.9%

Note. N=223. Not all participants responded to the demographic data questions or all the demographic data questions.