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Community-wide Awareness of Juvenile Justice Best-Practices and CTC in Texas

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Awareness is a critical first step towards community-wide adoption of best-practices and the Communities That Care (CTC) is one of the best-practices in juvenile justice. Therefore the CTC can be used as a proxy for all best-practices, and the success any CTC depends, in part, on the CTC-Awareness of the stakeholders. However, the justice literatures have not examined how communities "measure" and "manipulate" their level of CTC-Awareness. This awareness gap is widening, leaving most communities with no apparent awareness of best-practices. Using data from a university survey, the current study provides an empirical measure of CTC-Awareness and how awareness is manipulable. The policy implications are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Community-wide Awareness; Best-practices; Communities that Care (CTC); Evidence-based programs (EBPs); College-educated adults (CEAs); Juvenile justice; measurability; manipulability.

Best-practices have quickly become popular with federal juvenile justice leaders, and numerous studies have been conducted to discover best-practices for local communities. There are now more than a dozen different fields of study or career clusters in colleges and communities across the globe and each of them are at different stages of participation in supporting best-practices. The field of juvenile justice is no different in keeping track of best-practices for communities. One of the best ways to examine the awareness of best-practices is to try and "follow the money" that governments spend on it. The federal government plays a huge role in best-practices by disbursing grants to college communities that that promote best-practices. A shining example is the federal online directory called "Crime-solutions" which is hosted by the Justice department (Crime solutions, 2015). This directory contains most of the best-practices that has been peer-reviewed and found to be effective by federally appointed government researchers. In theory, the universal access to the ubiquitous internet technology allows the government to publish best-practices throughout each year. Presumably, the internet information and communication technology (ICT) should have been allowing communities to adopt and implement the federally supported best-practices. The bigger question, therefore, is whether this diffusion of information on the web is actually happening. If communities are being properly made aware of best-practices, why are most of them still using the less effective tradition-based practices?

There seems to be a flawed presumption of "community-wide awareness" of best-practices. Many seem to believe that the local communities should already know about best-practices, especially since those practices are regularly listed on the internet. But precious little has been done to test this community-wide awareness thesis. Specifically, juvenile justice researchers do not even seem to know whether the awareness of best-practices is measurable and manipulable, especially in most of the college communities. Measurability - being able to track the "levels" of community awareness, is important because millions of dollars are spent each month to create awareness and stakeholders need to know the effectiveness of their investments towards awareness. But equally important is the related notion of manipulability of awareness - the ability to increase or decrease the levels of awareness in community juvenile justice. The chief benefits of best-practices are that they are the most effective and efficient methods to prevent the socioeconomic problems that plague communities. Without a better understanding of how to measure and manipulate awareness, the college communities are not able to become aware of best-practices, let alone hold their leaders accountable for relative unawareness. A brewing crisis in America is the unawareness of best-practices in majority of local communities.

Unlike the other fields of study such as medicine and community healthcare, which are more advanced in best-practices, the field of juvenile justice does not seem to hold anyone responsible for community-wide best-practices. Most communities are still using tradition-based practices in their juvenile justice systems, and there is no evidence that these communities are receiving any awareness of the best-practices. Added to this lack of awareness, is the missing voice of colleges, and this alone makes the question of awareness very compelling. Since there are many best-practices to choose from, this study used the Communities That Care (CTC) as a proxy for all of them. This representation is appropriate because the CTC is a proven "operating system" that help local communities to prioritize and adopt the best-practices they need (Kuklinski, Briney, Hawkins, & Catalano, 2012). The CTC is therefore a "delivery system" for best-practices.

This research study is intended as a starting point for providing some answers for community leaders and policymakers

who must grapple with the consequences of awareness or the lack thereof. Specifically, do colleges have awareness of local Juvenile justice best-practices? Are there demographic differences in the awareness of best-practices, and do the college communities have the resources to create awareness for best-practices within the juvenile justice communities?

Definitions of Some Key terms and phrases in the study

Community-Wide Awareness: The strategic education of all individuals and groups within a defined geographical location, such as a city, neighborhood, or district.

Juvenile Justice Best-Practices: These are the most effective and efficient processes for solving prioritized problems within a community. "A practice is a general category of programs, strategies, or procedures that share similar characteristics with regard to the issues they address and how they address them" (Crime solutions, 2015, p.1). By contrast, "a program is a specific set of activities carried out according to guidelines to achieve a defined purpose" (Crime Solutions, 2015).

The dual Benefits of Best-Practices: The adoption of best-practices can offer a set of significant benefits, including community-wide "**effectiveness**" and "**efficiency**" (Kuklinski et al., 2012). Any program or practice is judged to be effective when there is a strong scientific evidence to prove that it works to bring positive outcomes and results. Similarly, best-practices such as the CTC are considered "efficient" when they yield returns on the investments. In order words, effectiveness answers the questions of whether the best-practice does work, while efficiency verifies that that the best-practice is also profitable. The CTC is more than 100% profitable because it has been shown to return more than $5 for every $1 invested (Kuklinski et al., 2012).

Awareness of Best-practices vs. Traditional-practices: Traditional-practices are the opposite of best-practices and they include any set of programs that have not been scientifically proven or classified as best-practices. The term awareness is a form of "knowledge" or "education" that often requires a certain level of curiosity by. Leaders can naturally make a conscious effort to create awareness within their community and jurisdiction.

Literature Review

There are thousands of at-risk juvenile delinquents located in each of the hundreds of college communities (cities and counties) within the state of Texas. Despite the availability of best-practices for juvenile justice systems, most Texas communities are not investing in them. This will suggest that a lack of "community-wide awareness of best-practices" might be a major issue in Texas. This section of the paper examined some of the relevant literature on the issues of awareness, as well as the related issues of empirical measurability and manipulability of community-wide awareness. By definition, "awareness" is synonymous with "knowledge" or "perception". Awareness can be created and shared with others. In community-wide awareness, the focus is on the awareness that can be communicated to and from everyone inside a geographical community such as the local county or city within a state. As with any project, economic resources, such as land, labor, and capital must be properly invested to achieve the best possible levels of community-wide awareness. Over the last few decades, the resources related to the "internet" or web has proven to exert the most significant influence on how community-wide awareness is created and shared. Specific and interdisciplinary coverage of this internet or web revolution can be found in the literature.

Resources for Community-wide Awareness

Scientific advancements in technology and the internet has become the default innovation for community-wide awareness of juvenile justice best-practices. Within the last decade, every Local County and college in Texas have gained access to internet technologies that can support awareness. Access to personal computers (PCs) and mobile devices have never been easier for Texans:

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP): The VoIP technology enables individuals with the ability to make phone calls using a broadband internet connection or Wi-Fi, instead of traditional phone lines. With this technology, people are easily able to make phone (international and local) using their computer and can forgo purchasing a landline services (Federal Communications Commission, 2015) In addition to the governments, the technology giants such as Facebook and Google are also investing heavily to bring free community-wide information and communication technology (ICT) programs and apps to every community. For years, these free apps, such as WhatsApp and Google-voice, have been available for anyone to download and use in their smartphone. Over one billion user's located more than one million neighborhoods are successfully using free ICT to communicate with billions of their friends and family.

Community-wide Internet Access: Apart from access to personal computers which is now ubiquitous, almost every community in America and the globe have guaranteed public and community access to internet-connected computers for their residents. From public libraries, to schools and colleges, access to internet-connected computing is becoming a public right, and not a privilege for the few lucky ones. In a recent presidential directive titled ConnectED, the Obama administration sort to guarantee internet-connected computer access to every school and student in America (White House, 2015) Based on the most recent report in his last state of the union address, president Obama believes that his ConnectED initiative is on track to connect every American child to daily high-speed internet within five years (White House, 2015).

Internet Access for Community-wide Awareness: In their current study, Falck, Mang, and Woessmann (2015) examined the effect of classroom computers on student achievements and found "positive effects for using computers to look up information" (Falck, Mang, & Woessmann, 2015) Participants in the study included more than 150,000 students from over 30 nations across the globe. The study also noticed that the positive effects found in

the study were higher for students from higher socio economic status. Interestingly, the analysis indicated "no effects of using computers to practice skills" (2015, p.1). The second finding of "no effects on skills" should be both surprising and disappointing to those who have been fighting the political and social battles to connect everyone to the internet. One important point that the authors seem to have missed is that "awareness" of best-practices is a primary resource for every student and community, and that most communities in their study suffer from "unawareness" of best-practices. Universal access to the internet-connected computers, as the study indicated, is an effective resource for preventing lack of awareness. The computers allowed a community of students to effectively "look up information". The results of this study is therefore a key indication that the federal ConnectED initiative is a champion for creating "awareness" in America (White House, 2015)

Keepod - The $7 PC: Keepod technology has reduced the costs of internet access by allowing people to have a personal computing experience in the palm of their hand. Keepod allows users to reuse computers that are younger than eight years old. These old computers, that would be tossed away, due to their inability to perform like new, are able to be booted from a small usb device operating system (OS), called a Keepod. At the price of $7, the Keepod technology allows users to carry around their own personal OS, which can be used to share one computer between multiple users (Keepod, 2015).

Cell phone ownership: undergrads 96%, grad students 99%, community college students 94%: (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Awareness as Critical First Step towards Best-Practices

Awareness as critical first step: (pg. 16 dissertation) (Frese, Stanley, Kress, & Vogel-Scibilia, 2001; Goldman et al., 2001) Federal government support for EBPs, SAMHSA grant (pg. 67) (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2013c). Consumer competence increased using higher education and awareness (pg. 16) (Reiser, 1992). EBPs available for juvenile justice leaders (pg. 75) (Greenwood, 2008)

Like most state governments, the Texas state government supports community-wide awareness of juvenile justice best-practices. Reporting on the most recent meeting of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, McLeod's work reviewed three important strategies that state governments can use to support juvenile justice best-practice which includes: Limit involvement of lower-risk youth in the juvenile justice system; Redirect resources from incarceration to community-based alternatives; and improve information sharing and the use of data across youth-serving systems (McLeod, 2015)

Although in principle, each of the governors appears to support best-practices, there is ample reason to question the strength of their resolve to fully embrace them. For instance, there was no suggestion that any of the governors will use executive powers to persuade all community leaders under them to adopt the three best-practices under review. Also, the report (McLeod, 2015)did not indicate that community leaders had any awareness of this presentation in real-time, as did the Governors. And yet, it is the community leaders, not necessarily the Governors, that must agree to adopt each of the best-practices being discussed.

Public-Private Resources for Community-wide Awareness

Yale University researchers and Coca Cola Company have collaborated to support governments that show strong willingness to support (WITS) for awareness of best-practices (Wong, 2013)Experts believe that the Coca-Cola Company is the global leader in creating community-wide awareness. Their best seller

Communities may choose to implement best-practices after they become unaware of what the benefits for them. At the very least, the awareness of best-practices should include the basic understanding of the dual benefits of effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, millions of dollars are available every day, which colleges know about, on sites such as (U. S. Department of Health & Human Services [HHS], 2015). Colleges have expertise on writing grants, but rarely is the expertise shared with the local communities. Further, most local communities are unaware of such expertise and resources. In 1971, literature was published about the Chicago Women's Liberation Union's advice on how to build consciousness awareness groups. To form a consciousness awareness groups they advised to meet weekly with group of 12 or less, collaboratively discuss a different topic, both personal and professional, every week. After group consensus is built, action projects are created, using friend referrals, new groups can be started using two original group members and continue this process groups are formed across the country (Chicago Women's Liberation Union [CWLU], 1971)

College Partnerships with County Criminal Justice Planning Groups

College and community partnerships criminal justice plans (HGAC, 2015): The criminal justice plan is an executive order from the Texas Criminal Justice Office and this document is hosted by the "Regional Councils of Government" online. Therefore, making this document accessible all around the world

Awareness of Community Directory of Best-Practices: The significance of hosting community criminal justice plan online is that all crime-problems for every community, which therefore accessible to every CEA. The criminal justice plan from each community represents a cry for help because they are seeking awareness of best-practices, something only colleges can provide for them. Each of the community across the state of Texas and the nation have prioritized their juvenile justice issues. However, they don't see to be aware of best-practices to address those juvenile justice problems and there is some evidence that colleges do participate in the criminal justice planning. A review of HGAC community plans shows that local communities received help from Sam Houston State University and Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU). The current author is one of those who participated in planning from PVAMU as part of his doctoral dissertation and field work for this paper (Waller County Plan, 2015). In 2001, for Michigan State University President, Mary Sue Coleman warned that universities must "partner or perish".

Possible Reasons for Unawareness

Academic freedom (1 or 2 references) - association of college: Colleges have the discretion to decide what goes on the syllabus or curriculum. Therefore it is difficult to hold them accountable for best-practices. Willful blindness: Key leaders in power sometimes ignore best-practices, because it can be a liability if they know they are supposed to follow best-practices and do not. Plausible deniability: Denying that you know about an event, person, or program, etc.(pg. 90) (Heffernan, 2011)

Service-Learning for Awareness of Best-Practices

The recruitment of volunteers is a critical first step and low hanging fruit for supporting awareness in communities (Pew Research Center, 2013a). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between the years September 2013 and September, 62 million people volunteered for or on behalf of organizations, while women often volunteered at higher rates than men. The age group of people who were most likely to volunteer was those between 35 to 44 years. Whites and blacks volunteered at higher rates than any other races (26 and 19 percent respectively). Individuals employed compared to the unemployed volunteered nearly at the same rate (27 percent and 21 percent respectively), with all volunteers spending nearly 50 hours each in one year on volunteer activities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015) The average number of students volunteering: Scheduled service learning online/campus (pg. 63) (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Einfeld & Collins, 2008) Adolescent diversion project (pg 87) (ADP) as recruitment college students ((Eby, K. K., Mackin, J. R., Scofield, M. G., Legler, R. E., & Davidson, W. S., 1995) Colleges are underutilized (Officer, Grim, Medina, Bringle, & Foreman, 2013)

Colleges Supporting Awareness of Best Practices

Donating college resources to support awareness for best-practices is no longer novel, but rather it is a practice that is already entrenched into the culture of many top colleges, for many decades. Some of the colleges that invest in juvenile justice best-practices are located in the state of Pennsylvania, Utah, Massachusetts, and Colorado.

Resources for Awareness

One way to explain the lack of "awareness" is that colleges and communities may not have the economic resources to create "awareness of juvenile justice best-practices", let alone to sustain it. However, awareness is not necessarily an expensive task, and the literature is not indicating that colleges and communities are spending too much on the awareness on best-practices. On the contrary, it is increasing possible for college communities to rely on donation to create and sustain awareness, at no extra cost.

Awareness and Volunteering

Throughout history, humans have always donated and volunteered their personal resources for the greater good of the community. In the American volunteer literature, the college communities in each of the 50 states volunteer at different rates. By far the largest contrasts exist between the states of Utah and New Jersey where the rates of student volunteers are 48% and 18% respectively (Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], 2013). Texas students ranked in the bottom five at about 20% overall (CNCS, 2013). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), the most recent data show that more than 60 million Americans volunteered in 2014, especially when they were invited to help out (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015). The government defines volunteers as persons (mostly adults) who do unpaid work (BLS, 2015, para. 1).

Some important demographic differences, such as race, gender, and status, were noticed amongst the volunteers. Researchers found that Whites volunteered more than Blacks, and that women volunteered more than men. One of the most notable findings was that the educational levels of volunteers correlate positively with the quantity and quality of volunteering. Without exception, those with the most education were more likely to volunteer, compared to those with lower educational achievement (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015) Compared to past years, the college-educated adults (CEAs) were more likely to volunteer more hours, and more likely to perform the professional tasks that require higher-education (BLS, 2015, para.7). Another important highlight of this survey was the nature of activities performed by the volunteers. Two of the top three volunteer activities were (a) fund-raising, and (b) teaching or tutoring (BLS, 2015, para. 15). Finally, the researchers learned that volunteers, especially the college-educated adults, were more likely to volunteer for an organization after a member of the organization asked them to help. The two types of organizations that attracted the most number of volunteers were either religious or educational facilities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015).

With very little exceptions, this 2014 survey was very similar to those of past years on the subject (Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], 2006; Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], 2007; Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS], 2013). This (BLS) longitudinal survey is very significant for the creation and sustaining of community-wide awareness. (2015). Other experts have corroborated the notion that a "cognitive surplus" of volunteer time and talents exist for activities, such as community awareness (Shirky, 2010). Volunteerism represents an untapped opportunity for colleges and religious organizations to invest millions of hours towards the awareness of best-practices in their community. (Shirky, 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2015).In a recent Op-Ed written by John Sharp, the Texas A&M Chancellor, touted how his system is now ranked as the most fiscally responsible in Texas (Sharp, 2015).

The chancellor further emphasized that: Respect is one of the core values we help instill in every Aggie student, and we at The Texas A&M University System treat our students, their parents, and the taxpayers of Texas with respect when it comes to giving them value for their dollar (Sharp, 2015):

1. Strengthen science and NIJ's scientific endeavors;
2. Encourage a more multidisciplinary approach to helping the nation's criminal justice practitioners solve problems;
3. Define and quantify impact;
4. Encourage racial and ethnic diversity in our investments;
5. Foster researcher-practitioner partnerships.

Methods

Population

This study measured the community awareness of juvenile justice best-practices among 150 college-educated adults (CEAs). The primary site of this study was the colleges inside the Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU), which is located within the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). The H-GAC is one of the largest regional communities in the state of Texas. Like most of the states in America, Texas is divided into very large and complex regional communities known as Councils of Governments (COGs). Each of the geographical COG areas contain hundreds of smaller inter-dependent communities, with distinct and complex systems or forms of governmental structures. Examples of the many types of communities within each COGs include: Counties, Precincts, Cities, Neighborhoods, School districts, and Colleges. The H-GAC comprise of 13 counties, including Waller County, where PVAMU is located. The location of this study was significant because PVAMU is the only public university that offers a comprehensive undergraduate, graduate masters, and doctorate degrees in juvenile justice (Prairie View A&M University [PVAMU], 2010).

Sample

This study sampled 150 CEAs, who were adult students or employees that either completed at least one college course or obtained a degree. Initially 200 CEAs were given the Willingness to Support best-practice survey, but 50 were disqualified for failure to complete the survey. This sample attended PVAMU or worked at the local college district. College districts are also known as college town.

Procedures

The researcher selected this particular sample because they happen to be the most educated and most valuable resource to implement best-practices. Further, CEA students were considered the catalyst while professors are champions for best-practices in juvenile justice. According Hawkins and Catalano, the role of catalyst and champions are crucial to implementing best-practices (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002). The researcher asked department heads of CEAs for permission to participate in this study. In addition, the researcher also met with participants to complete this survey, when necessary. The researcher met with CEAs and asked for their participation in this study. In addition, the researcher asked participants to refer other CEAs with similar qualities as them to participate in survey. Further, according to their preference, participants were given a paper survey or an online qualtrics survey, which took about 30 minutes to complete. For brevity, only a few important highlights are covered in the current study.

Protection of Participants

Before taking the survey, participants learned about the nature study. They were notified by the researcher that there would be minimal discomfort throughout the survey. Data analyzation was completed using a group aggregate level, anonymously, while participant names and signatures were separated from survey results. These results are being stored under lock and key by the researcher, who has sole access.

Instrument Research Design

The purpose of the survey use in this study was to measure each participant's willingness to support best-practices. Before taking the survey, participants were also made aware of the best-practice in juvenile justice. The survey used for this study was designed by the researcher and validated by experts in instrument design, who also specialized in juvenile justice. Participants answered nearly 33 questions, using a likert scale with four possible answers: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. The instrument was organized in five separate sections, which included demographic data, historical outlook on best-practices, rewards, willingness and accountability for awareness of best-practices. This study was designed to gather information that helps key leaders or champions understand the importance of willingness to support best-practice. Further, a review of the literature did not capture the selected variables of interest. However, this research adds to minimal literature about awareness of best-practices in juvenile justice.

The Dependent Variables and Independent Variables

This study focused on the dependent variable: best-practice awareness. Several significant independent variables were included in this survey. The variables include age, race, gender, job status, and education. The educational level of CEAs participants was particularly an important variable to measure because best-practices are designed to be led by individuals with these qualities. Measuring CEA's educational level in support of awareness for best-practices in juvenile justice helps us understand the level of CEAs education on its influence on awareness and willingness to support best-practice.

Results

Three research questions were used to test the measurability and manipulability of "community-wide awareness of juvenile justice best-practices" in Texas. To best represent the diversity of best-practices, the Communities That Care (CTC) model (Kuklinski et al., 2012) was used as a proxy for all possible best-practices in the State of Texas and elsewhere. Most of the participants were African American university students between 25 and 45 years old. The university was used as a microcosm of typical college community adults that would most likely participate in the awareness of best-practices in Texas. The Communities That Care (CTC) model was used as a proxy for juvenile justice best-practices in this study. The participants were asked to rate their levels of awareness or perception about the CTC model.

Table 1: Demographic distribution of respondents

Variable	Number	Percent
18-25	28	16.7
26-35	41	32.8
36-45	59	21.7
46-55	19	18.2
>56	3	3.5
Total	150	100.0

Race		
African America	120	80.0
White/Caucasian	14	9.3
Latino	11	7.3
Asian	2	1.3
Pacific/Islander	1	.7
Others	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0
Gender		
Male	46	30.7
Female	104	69.3
Total	150	100
Highest College Degree		
Some college credits	80	53.3
Associates degree	25	16.7
Bachelor's degree	25	16.7
Master's degree	8	5.3
Doctor's degree	4	2.7
Other	8	5.3
Total	150	100.0
College Status		
Freshman	44	29.3
Sophomore	54	36.0
Junior	25	16.7
Senior	4	2.7
Master's student	6	4.0
Doctor's student	7	4.7
Not a student	10	6.7
Total	150	100.0
Employment Status		
Student Worker	9	6.0
Staff (Full-time)	8	5.3
Staff (Part-time)	7	4.7
Faculty Tenured	9	6.0
Faculty Non Tenured	3	2.0
Administrator/Management	2	1.3
N/A (Not a college employee)	112	74.7
Total	150	100.0
Volunteer hours per month		
1-2 hours	74	49.3
2-4 hours	41	27.3
4-5 hours	25	16.7
5-10 hours	8	5.3
11> hours	2	1.3
Total	150	100.0

Research Question 1. Do colleges have awareness of Juvenile justice best-practices?

Table 2: Personal Perception of CTC

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	47	31.3	31.3
Disagree	35	23.3	54.7
Agree	31	20.7	75.3
Strongly Agree	37	24.7	100
Total	150	100	

Figure 1 shows that from this study, nearly half of participants, initially became aware of the CTC best-practices. Furthermore, the other half of participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed that this was their first time learning about best-practices in juvenile justice. The data from this study revealed that the participants' level of awareness for Juvenile Justice best-practices was similar across all answer choices. For instance, Table 4 shows participant knowledge on awareness, where 31.3% strongly disagree, 23.3% disagree, 20.7% agree, and 24.7% strongly agree.

Figure 1: I am learning about CTC for the first time from this survey

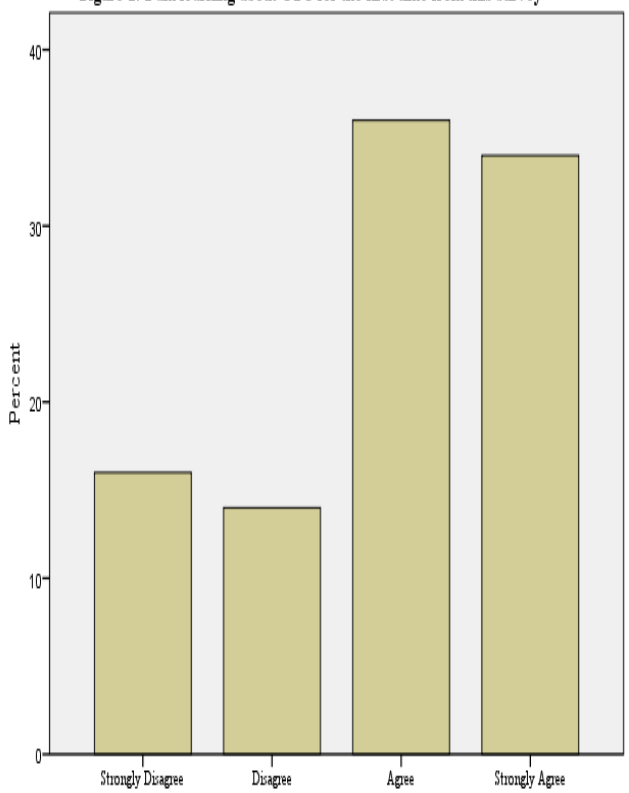


Figure 2: I have known about CTC for more than a year before this survey

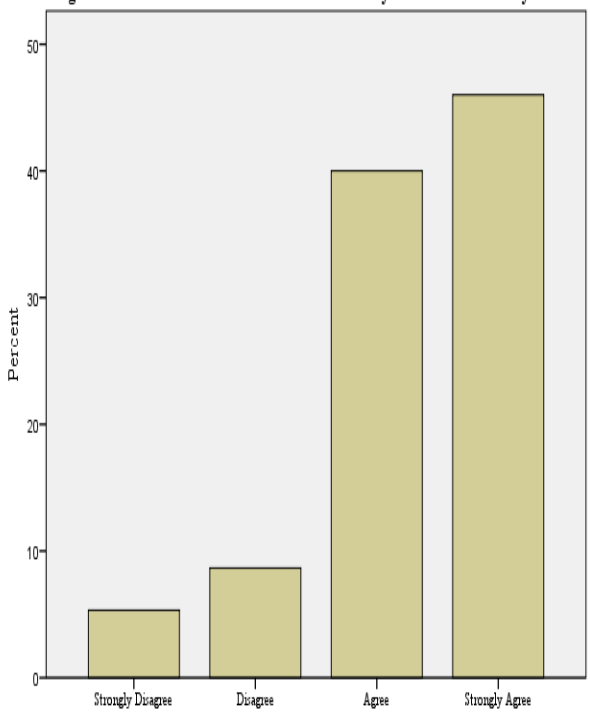


Figure 3: I initially found out about CTC from another college-educated-adult (CEA)

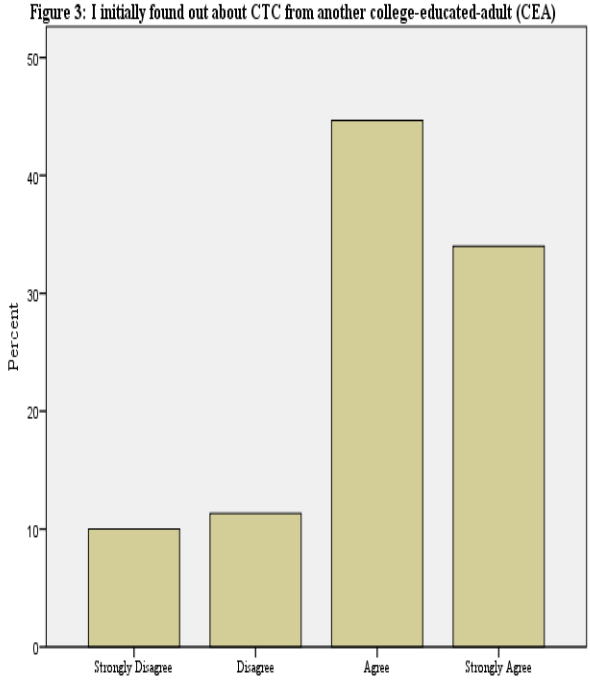


Figure 4: I have always known that CTC will benefit me and my college communities

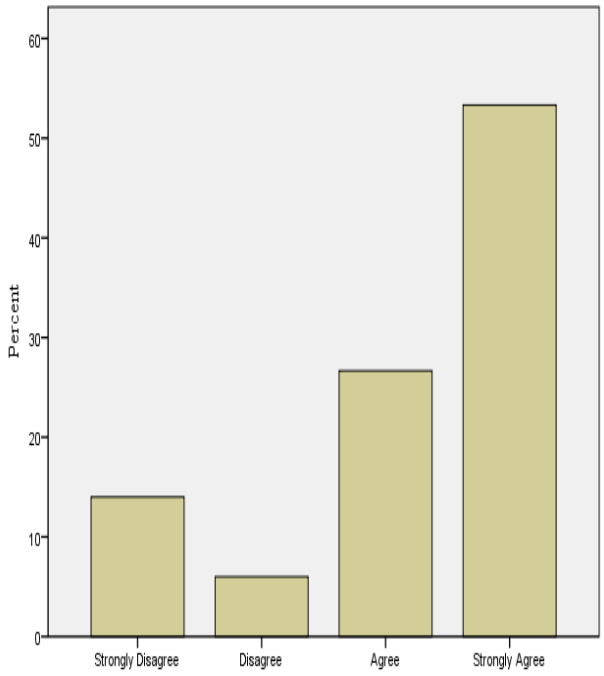
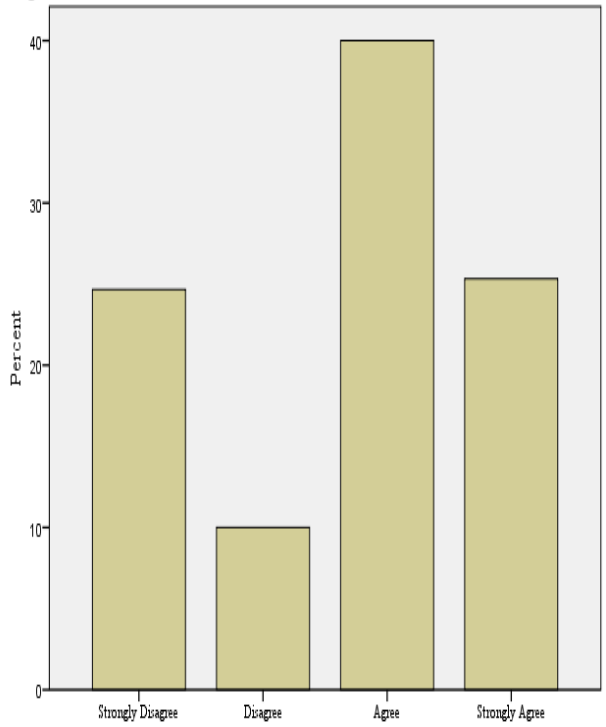
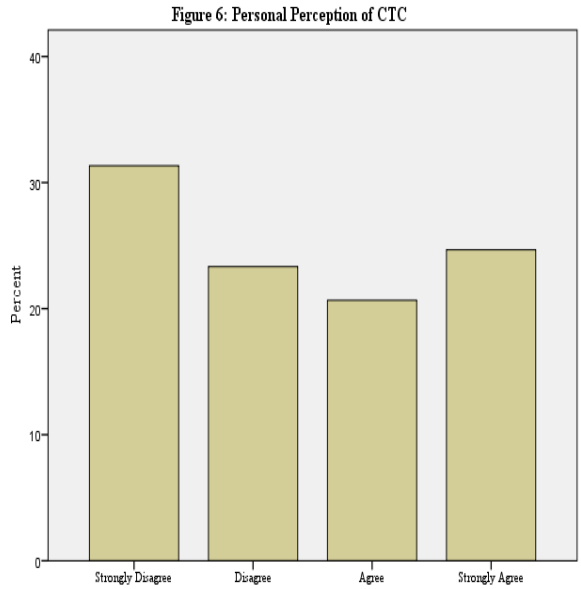


Figure 5: I have visited the CTC website on WWW.COMMUNITIESTHATCARE.NET





Research Question #2. Are there demographic differences in the awareness of juvenile justice best-practices?

Results from this survey indicated differential levels of awareness of best-practices between men and women. Among genders, the responses were statistically significantly different concerning the awareness of best-practices.

Table 3. Relationship between Gender and Level of Perception of CTC

		Personal Perception of CTC				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Gender	Male	17	10	10	9	46
	Female	30	25	21	28	104
Total		47	35	31	37	150

$\chi^2 = 14.111$, $df = 6$, $p = 0.028$

The levels of perception for best-practices in juvenile justice was measured among participants in various ethnicities. In exception to African American, there was no statistical difference in awareness for best-practices among participant race/ethnicity. However, Table 4 shows that African Americans were less likely know about awareness of best-practices.

Table 4. Relationship between Race/Ethnicity and Levels of Perception of CTC

Race Ethnicity	Personal Perception of CTC				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
African American	34	31	28	27	120
White/ Caucasian	9	2	0	3	14
Latino	2	1	3	5	11
Asian	1	0	0	1	2
Pacific /Islander	0	0	0	1	1
Other	1	1	0	0	2
Total	47	35	31	37	150

$\chi^2 = 19.741$, $df = 15$, $n = 0.182$ *Note.*

In this study, participant age was a statistically significant factor regarding their perception of best-practices. For instance, Table 5 indicates that individuals between the ages of 36 through 45 were less aware of best-practices than any other age group.

Table 5. Relationship between Age and Level of Perception of CTC

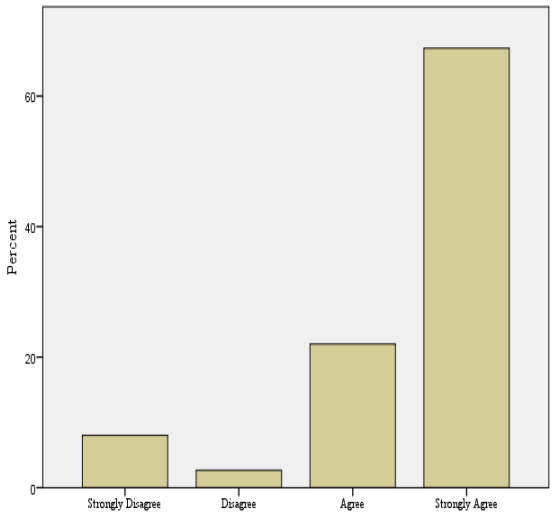
	Personal Perception of CTC				Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
18-25	4	9	6	9	28
26-35	8	12	12	9	41
36-45	29	10	10	10	59
46-55	5	3	3	8	19
56>	1	1	0	1	3
Total	47	35	31	37	150

$\chi^2 = 21.058$, $df = 12$, $p = 0.05$***

Research Question 3. Do colleges have the resources for awareness of best-practices?

The economic resources that create awareness of best-practices include land, labor, and capital. This research question focused mostly on labor (volunteer time and talent) from college adults because the literature show that the participants already have free access to the resource of land and capital. In addition, this study argues that local colleges have human resources (students, professors, and staff) who are willing to participate in practices. For instance, Figure 2, indicates how people believe they should be awarded for participating in best-practice programs. This data shows that 80% of participants believe they should be noticed or rewarded, always, for people helping people become aware of best-practices. Any important finding or conclusion to from this key research question is that over 80 percent of respondents wanted to participate in best-practices and may believe these practices are valuable enough to receive reward and recognition.

Figure 9: I should always be rewarded or recognized for CTC service-learning (CTC-SL)



Conclusions

This study suffered from certain obvious limitations or delimitation that makes it difficult to generalize the findings to every community. Some of the issues are worth mentioning to caution the readers and provide some directions for future researchers on the subject of awareness. First, the data was collected using convenient sampling techniques as part of a bigger dissertation study on the willingness to support (WITS) for Communities that Care (CTC). Best-practices often recognize the randomized control method as the gold standard for this kinds of data collection and sampling. Also, the analysis was limited to only the variables that were tested for in the WITS-Survey instrument. As a result, many factors that motivated the levels of awareness found in this study may have been inadvertently left out.

Secondly, there is the issue of "social desirability" which occurs when respondents feel pressured to give politically correct answer that they believe to be more socially acceptable. People sometimes lie to protect themselves from potentially embarrassing situations (Thompson & Phua, 2005) Although the participants were all college-educated adults (CEAs) and were encouraged to be honest, it was highly likely that some could have given the answers that they feel will be acceptable to their fellow participants. If so, this could have affected the high levels of awareness that the study showed.

In addition to the above limitation, the author deliberately imposed some delimitations regarding the levels of resources and willingness to support (WITS) of this participants. Although this was not allowed in the current study, it may serve some readers better to be able to juxtapose the WITS of study participants with the levels of awareness or resources. People with more resources may have been more willing to invest in awareness of best-practices. Including other types of analysis would have been beyond the scope of this basic awareness study.

However, in consideration of the above limitations and delimitations, the huge significance of the current study should never be lost on the readers. This is the first time, as far as the author is aware, that a study has been conducted on the community awareness of best-practices in Texas. It therefore serves as a proof of the concept that awareness is both measurable and manipulable.

Recommendations

The colleges and researchers in the juvenile justice system should devote more attention to monitoring the awareness of best-practices. A monthly report on the levels of awareness of best-practices is ideal because this can prevent policymakers from becoming "willfully blind" (Heffernan, 2011) about some of the most critical best-practices they need. The current study recommendation is based on the author's assumption that colleges want to be made aware of best-practices in the justice system. This may seem presumptuous to some juvenile justice stakeholders. Indeed, there is no proof that most colleges have the willingness to support (WITS) for best-practices. Any college can actively sustain a CTC-Center for their community, and yet only less than 1% of colleges are currently doing so. Therefore future studies must test this hypothesis in order to establish whether colleges have any WITS for best-practices. With very little variation, the WITS of any college can easily be verified with a simple monthly survey, such as the WITS4CTC-survey used for the current study. While experts can argue that this survey is not perfect, it does represent an unprecedented effort and a benchmark to build upon.

Over time, the responses of college leaders can be compared to their actual behaviors and policy decisions on best-practices. For instance, college leader that claims to have 100% WITS for best-practices, should be reasonably expected to allocate some of their college resources to the same best-practices they support. Any discrepancies between the purported WITS and actual support can be reconciled over a longitudinal period of months and years. The current study has set forth the definitions of the basic concepts that any college community can use to understand their individual and collective "awareness" for local juvenile justice best-practices. There is no college group or individual that is responsible for creating regular awareness of best-practices.

Policy Implications

A number of policies in the state of Texas communities and elsewhere have been implicated in this study, including the current accountability standards, or the lack thereof, for measuring and manipulating the awareness of best-practices. The results in this study show that college and community leaders have a clear responsibility and impact on awareness. Prior to this study, it was not clear how leaders control the very process of communicating best-practices to their communities. Each policy-maker must decide whether to support or suppress the awareness machine for their jurisdiction. This clarity will give Texas voters a chance to decide whether to invest in best-practices, or they can continue with what has been described as "the same old tired and ineffective traditional practices" (Greenwood & Turner, 2009). The prevailing traditional policies appear to rely on the criminal justice agents for crime prevention. Traditional criminal justice agents include police officers, the court systems, and correctional agents. The local reliance on these traditional have proven be disastrous given the abysmal on the ground. For instance, this

study has revealed how every college can easily activate their community-wide efforts for juvenile justice best-practices. While a few colleges have already done this by rewarding their members who support best-practices, most colleges have not taken this voluntary step. The time is now to invest in community-wide best-practices in Texas and the globe.

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