THE WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT EVIDENCE BASED JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS: AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED-ADULTS FOR COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Prairie View A&M University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Fall 2014

Major Subject: Juvenile Justice

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The rates and costs of delinquencies have continued to pose a huge burden for college-districts (CDs) and communities in the United States and the globe. A juvenile delinquent is a young person who violates the law or established local rule (Howell, 2009, p.224). An important link between delinquency and adult crime is that many adult criminals begin their career as delinquents. One of the evidence of crime and delinquency crisis in America is captured in the survey that "one in 100 Americans is behind bars" (Pew Center on the States, 2008). To put this problem in perspective, The U.S. has only 5% of the global population, but incarcerates roughly the equivalent of 25% of all inmates on the planet (Pew Center on the States, 2008). On the government budgets, punitive programs are one of the largest expenses for tax payers, next only to healthcare (Peterson, 2012). Within the last few decades, interdisciplinary research has shown that juvenile delinquency and other behavioral problems are the leading causes of injuries and death to the young people in the communities (Catalano et al., 2012). These socioeconomic problems related to crimes and delinquencies, all demonstrate the acute need for a feasible solution. As a result of this delinquency crisis, the treatments for problem behaviors have remained a popular strategy for most communities (Patel et al., 2007).

Every day in the United States, local towns and communities spend a significant amount of their scarce resources and tax dollars to protect their residents from crime and delinquency. This enormous community investment is usually overseen by highly trained individuals that can be called college-educated-adults (CEAs). The CEAs are community members who have experienced college education after the age of 18. Colleges serve as hubs for CEAs because they typically enroll or employ them at some point. Estimates are that CEAs make up about a quarter (25%) of the total population of the United States (Pew Research Center, 2013a). In terms of social class and privilege, CEAs control most of the social and economic resources in their college-districts (CDs). In this study, the CDs are the neighborhoods, cities, and counties where majority of the CEAs in a college live or work. More broadly, CDs include the regions and jurisdictions that the college is specifically assigned to serve. Many colleges offer special tuition rates to the residents of their CDs as a way to differentiate then from those CEAs who come from outside.

To protect families and at-risk delinquents, local communities, especially CDs, can choose to allocate some of their resources towards implementing evidence-based delinquency prevention practices or EBPs. An EBP is "a program or practice that has had multiple site random controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program or practice is effective for the population" (Washington State Institute for Public Policy [WSIPP], 2013). The concept of EBPs began in the field of medicine or public health (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2001; Sackett, 1997), but it has since spread into almost every subject and field of study.

There are currently dozens of EBPs available for implementation in local communities (Greenwood & Turner, 2009). All of the available EBPs compete with tradition-based programs

(TBPs) for the scarce economic resources of local communities in the United State (Greenwood & Welsh, 2012b; Greenwood & Welsh, 2012a). The TBPs are regarded as "tradition-based" programs because they have not met the highest scientific standards that are needed to designate them as EBPs. Both the governments and the scientific communities have come together in the last few decades to establish internet and online directories that list all the known EBPs in the globe, as a way to clearly distinguish them from the TBPs. For instance, the Blueprints (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013; Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2012), and the National Institute of Justice (Crime Solutions, 2013a) are the leading directories for EBPs in the American Justice system. Unlike EBPs, there is hardly any directory of all the known TBPs. The TBPs are largely a figment of the imagination of key leaders, and therefore there is no evidence that they have any scientific value.

The directories of EBPs are open to accept and evaluate any program that claims to meet their high standards. This openness and high standard is a game changer for all communities and CDs because they can easily verify to see whether their favorite or proposed programs are EBPs or by default TBPs. More importantly, the placement of all EBPs in the online public domain is a clear indication that any program that is not listed in the directory is most likely not an EBP. This is a critically important issue because EBPs are in direct opposition to tradition-based programs (TBPs). Simply put, EBPs are guaranteed to prevent dozens of death and suffering on a daily basis, TBPs are not. To put it differently, EBPs are designed to prevent the waste of lives and money while TBPs are not.

Extant research has shown that most of the local communities and CDs invest most of their resources into TBPs, to the exclusion of EBPs (Forman, Olin, Hoagwood, Crowe, & Saka, 2009; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Hallfors & Godette, 2002; Ringwalt et al., 2009). Even when efforts are made to implement EBPs, the local schools and communities often fail to do so with fidelity, thereby limiting the potential benefits of the EBPs (Hallfors & Godette, 2002). In spite of the millions of dollars spent in designing EBPs for communities, there is now the awkward situation where most communities are yet to implement them (Brown et al., 2013; Spoth et al., 2013). Equally as important is that the CDs who currently invest in EBPs are also investing in some of their favorite TBPs, thereby creating a sad competition between the two.

The widespread use of tradition-based programs (TBPs), to the exclusion of available EBPs, has guaranteed that over 90% of youths do not have access to the EBPs they need (Greenwood & Turner, 2009). The awkward irony of this condition is interesting to analyze because of the placement of all EBPs in the public domain. The same communities that do not use EBPs also have access to the EBPs in their laptops and mobile phones. In other words, they have the ability to access EBPs, but there is hardly any definitive answer as to why most communities are not adopting EBPs. This question has become a silent zone and blind spot for social science in general and juvenile justice in particular. But the consequences of this silence on EBPs are both fatal and costly when measured in socioeconomic terms. From a moral standpoint, the absence of EBPs almost always triggers higher levels of morbidity and mortality, especially for the poor and minorities who are most dependent on CEAs and colleges to access

EBPs. Equally as important is the economic consequences because billions of dollars are lost every month from choosing the expensive TBPs over the EBPs which are comparatively inexpensive or even free in many cases.

Every year, new cohorts of youth are incarcerated from their communities because of juvenile delinquency and crimes that could be prevented with EBPs (Greenwood, 2008; Greenwood, 2006). While EBPs focus on delinquency prevention, the tradition-based programs (TBPs) are often merely used to punish delinquents. To help communities to bridge the implementation gap, the United States government has been funding a uniquely crafted EBP called "Communities That Care (CTC). The CTC functions as an educational and training platform to assist communities in the difficult process of awareness, selection, and implementation of EBPs (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013a; Spoth et al., 2013).

As a platform, CTC is an operating system or delivery system for implementing EBPs (Communities That Care, 2014a). Scientists have continued to recognize that CTC is helping communities to become more effective, efficient, and sustainable in using prevention science to protect and educate their residents (Cullen, 2011; Cullen et al., 1998; Kuklinski, Briney, Hawkins, & Catalano, 2012). Hundreds of communities are currently using the CTC system, and for decades CTC has continued to enjoy overwhelming support at the federal and some state levels of government (Communities That Care, 2014b; Holder, 2013; National Academic Centers of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention [ACEs], 2013; Office of Justice Program [OJP], 2012; U.S. Office of Justice Program [OJP], 2013; Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA] (2013a). The CTC-coordinators gather monthly to share ideas on how to improve the effectiveness, sustainability, and efficiency (ESE) of the CTC practice.

Historically, the majority of the willingness to support for CTC (WITS4CTC) appears to have come mostly from CEAs at the Federal and State levels of governments, raising the question of why CTC-support is lacking in most communities and college-districts (CDs). Very little is known about the WITS4CTC in CDs in Texas. This deadly silence on the issue is an important reason to undertake a study the WITS4CTC in a CD in Texas. Another reason is that crime and delinquency occurs almost exclusively at the CDs and communities. Hardly does preventable delinquency occur at the federal or state levels of government. Delinquency rates and costs, (the subject of this research) primarily takes place inside CDs and communities. It must be emphasized also that the schools, communities, and CDs are exclusively supervised, at all levels of government, by elected and appointed CEAs. The successful implementation of CTC must rely on the support of the local CEAs who routinely must authorize any research or resources needed for CTC-support activities (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbott, 1996; Hawkins & Catalano, 2002).

When considered collectively, one of the most important functions of local communities is to invest in the educational and juvenile crime prevention programs that help to transform their vulnerable youths into CEAs (Ambrosio & Schiraldi, 1997; Anderson & Squires, 2010; Kyckelhahn, 2011; Nagin, Piquero, Scott, & Steinberg, 2006; National Center for Education

Statistics [NCES], 2013b). The Role of CTC-awareness and CTC-support. Despite the proven success of CTC in hundreds of communities, more than 90% of communities have yet to show any CTC-awareness, much less CTC-support. By definition, CTC-awareness involves the academic process of teaching and learning about the socioeconomic benefits of CTC. Thanks to the smart policies of the U.S. governments, this CTC-training is freely available to everyone who has access to the internet in the public domain (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013a; Center for Communities That Care (Producer), & Brooke-Weiss, B. (Director), 2013; Communities That Care, n.d.). CTC-support includes the choice to donate resources (time and money) towards CTC-awareness and success. Because CTC is mostly a training system, most of the resources needed to implement CTC in any college-district (CD) can easily be provided by the colleges and CEAs. The study of the WITS4CTC of colleges is needed because there is no statutory requirement for colleges to invest any of their resources into CTC-awareness or for that matter CTC-support.

CTC-awareness is a logical first step in the process of CTC-support because most communities will not adopt a program like CTC if they have never heard about it from someone they trust. Empirical evidence already show that the current CTC communities and CDs (Feinberg, Jones, Greenberg, Osgood, & Bontempo, 2010; Feinberg, Greenberg, & Osgood, 2004a; Oesterle, Hawkins, Fagan, Abbott, & Catalano, 2010) were all recruited by CEAs and colleges who had the WITS4CTC (Oesterle et al., 2010). It is only through a CTC-awareness that the key leaders and stakeholders are properly given the opportunity and the educational support that they will need to adopt the CTC system. Without proper CTC-awareness, it would seem absurd for anyone to expect CDs and communities to adopt the CTC platform that they are not familiar with.

The absence of any evidence of CTC-awareness also provides CDs and communities with deniability for all the preventable suffering and death caused by the less effective traditional punitive programs (TPs). A community-wide CTC-awareness by the college and CEAs can put the entire community on notice about how CTC is a viable alternative to traditional punishment. Deniability (Babbage, 2011), or willful blindness (Heffernan, 2011) is an old corrupt practice that CEAs have successfully used to avoid outrage and accountability for the terrible consequences of their acts. Without any proof that CEAs and colleges knowingly refused to adopt CTC, it would be virtually impossible for victims of preventable delinquency to obtain justice (Babbage, 2011). But even if the neglect of CTC is inadvertent, the destructive consequences and the attendant dangers are both clear and present. Juveniles and their families will suffer, and some of them will die for the lack of CTC in their communities and college-districts (CDs). This preventable destruction has been taking place, irrespective of whether or not the CDs purposely meant to kill their young victims or not. Given this grim reality, it has become imperative that CTC-awareness and EBPs become a priority for both colleges and governments. One way this can be accomplished is through a community-wide CTC-awareness service-learning.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the perception of colleges and college-educated-adults (CEAs) regarding the Communities That Care (CTC) system (Hawkins et al., 2012), as well as the WITS4CTC of those CEAs to help educate their own neighborhoods about the cost benefits of CTC (Kuklinski et al., 2012) . The current research assumed that: (a) college districts are not often financially resource rich (Baum, Blakeslee, Lloyd, & Petrosino, 2013); (b) colleges and CEAs are naturally endowed with the skills and opportunities to bring CTC-awareness and CTC-support to their communities (Harkavy & Hartley, 2009) especially when they are very willing to do so; (c) colleges are human resource rich and underutilized because they can use their discretion to conduct a community-wide service-learning for CTC (SL4CTC) in their CDs (Officer, Grim, Medina, Bringle, & Foreman, 2013); (d) the WITS4CTC of colleges are both measurable and malleable.

For more than 20 year (National Center for Justice Planning (NCJP), 2012), a handful of colleges and their CEAs have displayed a high levels of CTC-awareness and CTC-support (WITS4CTC) by educating their community members about the cost benefits of the CTC platform (Communities That Care, 2014b; Singer, 2010). Their WITS4CTC has proven to become a critical first step in every successful implementation of CTC within the last several decades (Catalano et al., 2012).

While some colleges nation-wide are helping to train their communities on EBPs/CTC (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002; The University of Oklahoma [OU], 2013; University of Colorado, 2013a), there is no indication of a systemic academic support for CTC from the vast majority of colleges. For instance, in Texas and many other states, their colleges and CDs are notably absent in the CTC literature, prompting the important questions of: (a) whether the Texas CEAs have any CTC-awareness; (b) and more importantly whether the Texas CEAs have any CTC-support. Knowing the WITS4CTC in Texas should begin to help explain, and maybe reverse, the silence and neglect of CTC.

These inquiries are both timely and relevant to Texas and other non-CTC localities because their policy makers are beginning to invest millions of state funds to convert from tradition-based programs (TBPs) towards EBPs (Right On Crime [ROC], 2013; Texas Public Policy Foundation [TPPF], 2009; Texas Juvenile Justice Department [TJJD], 2013a). This major reform effort has received local and national endorsement because Texas is one of the most conservative and punitive states in the nation (Amachi-Texas, 2011; American Leadership Forum [ALF], 2012; Carson & Sabol, 2012; Dow, 2012; Right On Crime [ROC], 2013).

Historically, studies in the justice system have focused mostly on issues surrounding the problems of crime and delinquency (Alexander, 2010), to the exclusion of EBPs and crime solutions. For instance, when lamenting about the lack of EBPs in most communities (Arthur et al., 2010; Spoth et al., 2013), the studies point out that funds are lacking in the community. But the same authors also fail to account for the huge and untapped human resources in colleges that are not being utilized for EBPs. The same arguments can be made about philanthropists who have not been approached for grants by the communities in question (Peterson, 2012). Research can help explain how other non-monetary factors play a role in the lack of CTC. Because

colleges are the potential solution to the lack of CTC education, it is important to explain how their actions and/or inactions influence CTC education. Without a strong local educational support for the CTC system, many of the gains from the current Texas state juvenile justice reform efforts could be lost, especially if policy makers decide to withhold future funding for EBPs.

The specific problem statements to be examined in the current study are that:

The WITS4CTC in colleges is not known;
The CTC-awareness in colleges are not measured;
The lack of CTC-support is harmful to millions of children;
The cost of CTC-awareness is not measured in colleges;
Colleges do not account for their CTC-resources;

Purpose of the Study

The dual purpose of this study is: (1) to investigate whether college-educated-adults (CEAs) have any CTC-awareness (Farrington, D.P., &Welsh, B., 2007; Farrington, 1996); (2) to determine if CEAs have any CTC-support in their college-districts (CDs). A combination of CTC-awareness and CTC-support is regarded as the willingness to support of CEAs and their colleges.

The research utilized a WITS survey to conduct this quantitative study. Information from the survey participants was used to calculate a baseline data to analyze and provide answers to the research questions. This study uncovered some of the most significant factors and variable relating to the WITS4CTC of CEAs.

Research Questions

Two general questions underpin the basic aims of this research. The first investigated whether college-educated-adults (CEAs) in the communities and college-districts (CDs) possess any CTC-awareness. CTC is an evidence based platform (EBP) that is designed to teach communities how to prevent juvenile crime and other problem behaviors (Penn State University, 2014; Spoth et al., 2013). The second question was whether colleges and their CEAs also possessed any CTC-support. When combined together, the CTC-awareness and CTC-support of CEAs is described in the study as their willingness to support for CTC (WITS4CTC). An important assumption of the study was that the WITS4CTC is a critical component for the success of CTC in college-districts (CDs). The researcher sought to understand whether the WITS4CTC was both measurable and malleable, using readily available scientific tools in the CDs.

Therefore the current study sought to answer the following specific research questions:

Do the local CEAs and colleges have any CTC-awareness?
Are there any demographic differences in CEA's CTC-awareness?
Do the local CEAs and colleges have any CTC-support?
Are there any demographic differences in the levels of CTC-support?
Are there any emergent resources to aid WITS4CTC in the CDs?

Significance of the Study

The researcher believed that this willingness to support for CTC (WITS4CTC) study is not only significant for college-districts (CDs) in Texas, but that its findings and results may also benefit other stakeholders, across the nation and the globe, who are dealing with juvenile crimes and other socioeconomic problems that CTC was designed to prevent. This WITS4CTC could provide local CDs and colleges with a conceptual model or blueprint for measuring and mobilizing their own WITS4CTC. Because this concept of WITS4CTC is intended to supplement the web-based CTC program (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013a), it is grounded on educational and cognitive resources that are available to all colleges and CDs.

This knowledge of WITS4CTC can easily become a crucial one for juvenile justice stakeholders who traditionally struggle to secure enough resources to fight juvenile crimes and problem behaviors on a fiscal basis. For most CDs, the knowledge of WITS4CTC will represent a clear choice between their backward and ineffective tradition-based programs (TBPs) and the highly effective, sustainable, and efficient (ESE) CTC program (Kuklinski et al., 2012; Kuklinski, Hawkins, Plotnick, Abbott, & Reid, 2013).

At the national level, the knowledge of WITS4CTC can serve as a benchmark for disbursing increasingly scarce national resources and federal funding for crime prevention. National CTC-stakeholders, both public and private, are now increasingly looking for ways to support and reward the WITS4CTC in the college-districts (CDs). The traditional CTC-rewards can be in the form of loans, grants, and technical support (Chamberlain, Fleenor, & Wither, 2012; Chamberlain, 2013).

Perhaps more importantly, being able to understand the WITS4CTC can open new doors to new areas of scientific enquiry, thereby providing local researchers with new pieces of puzzles that can be solved with science (Kuhn, 1970). On the one hand, juvenile crime is a problem that affects every community. It is also a problem that comes with enormous financial costs and economic burdens on dozens or thousands of families in every local and global community. On the other hand, CTC is a proven solution to significantly prevent and reduce the local problem of juvenile crime.

A chief benefit of the current WITS4CTC study is that it extends the knowledge base on the critical role of colleges in reducing the gap between deadly problem and a viable solution. This is an idea worth spreading to other areas of scientific enquiry.

Local WITS4CTC and Global Impact with CTC-Moocs. The value of knowing the WITS4CTC in a local college-district (CD) can have a simultaneously tremendous impact on both the participant CD and other global CDs. This potential is especially realizable when the outcome is expected to be published in public domain. As the saying goes, charity begins at home. But the internet has disrupted the true definition of home and dozens of CEAs who will participate in the WITS4CTC study are born and raised or will find themselves working in global communities and CDs. All of these possibilities have expanded the potential reach of the study findings and results.

At the moment, there is little evidence to show whether or not CEAs have any WITS4CTC. Asking whether CEAs have the WITS4CTC is most appropriate because the local colleges have the moral obligation to extend the benefits of CTC-support to everyone. Many colleges often stress the importance of service, partnerships, and technical assistance for their communities (Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Prairie View A&M University [PVAMU], 2010), to the exclusion of CTC. In this regard, WITS4CTC is presumable a natural resource that should already exist in CDs. The current study is billed as a mere tool that CDs can use to measure and mobilize their WITS4CTC.

Some CTC-moocs Controversy

The knowledge of local WITS4CTC should serve as a trigger for constructing a global WITS4CTC. A collection of many communities will always become exponentially greater than any single unit of CTC-awareness, and the internet has made it possible to link the local and global CTC stakeholders together. This means that a collection of local WITS of colleges can potentially form a global network, using the multiplicative power of the internet. For instance, if one of the best juvenile justice colleges decide to offer a massive open online class (MOOC) for CTC-awareness (Nurmohamed, Gillani, & and Lenox, 2013), thousands of local and global CEAs can choose to use this MOOC to learn about the benefits of CTC and EBPs for their own communities.

As a juvenile justice higher educational tool, MOOCs are still imperfect, very new, and very controversial for instructors (Education Portal, 2013; Open Education Database [OEDP], 2013; Roach, 2012). It might therefore be prudent that many colleges, including most Black colleges and CEAs have chosen to ignore MOOCs, at least for now (Roach, 2012). Although this platform has been around for years, most colleges have not expressed any WITS for MOOCs (Liyanagunawardena, Adams, & Williams, 2013a).

MOOCs provide a fascinating opportunity and challenge for juvenile justice education in the local and global college community. The impact of MOOCs is now unquestionable since it was recently declared “the educational buzzword of 2012” (Daniel, 2012; Liyanagunawardena et al., 2013a). A college level CTC training course from a local college might cost hundreds of dollars for each participant (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013b; Hawkins & Catalano, 2004).

The same class can also be offered as a MOOC for free (Liyanagunawardena et al., 2013a). Moreover, the local college classes are typically designed for only a few dozen participants. MOOCs on the other hand can train thousands of students in the same class (Nurmohamed et al., 2013). MOOCs do not necessarily represent an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice education, but rather a disruption or change agent for the prevailing business model of pricing college courses.

The challenge for juvenile justice educators is how best to adapt to the revelation that the highly priced classes can now be offered for free. If colleges hesitate for too long to support free MOOCs for EBPs and CTC, their communities may conclude that their colleges value personal profits over their community wellbeing. For more than a decade, the justice systems have priced

the start-up costs of CTC trainings and certifications at thousands of dollars (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2012). MOOCs have the potential to create "awareness" or perception of EBPs and CTC in every community (Goldman et al., 2001). The lack of knowledge and awareness is known to be the major barrier to implementing EBPs and CTC in most communities (Goldman et al., 2001).

An important question for research is no longer whether colleges have all the resources needed to facilitate free community-wide CTC-MOOCs for CTC-awareness for their entire communities and CEAs. They do! The question, therefore, is whether the CDs have the WITS4CTC.

CTC-Awareness as the Critical First Step

Researchers recognize that "awareness" through education is a critical first step toward implementing EBPs (Frese, Stanley, Kress, & Vogel-Scibilia, 2001; Goldman et al., 2001). Higher education and awareness can be used to increase the "consumer competence" of CEAs and communities who may otherwise remain ignorant of the evidence-based programs (EBPs) that they need (Reiser, 1992). Consumer competence refers to the transformational knowledge that allows individuals and communities to act in their best interest by demanding the EBPs (1992). Communities and CEAs cannot be expected to adopt EBPs if they are not informed about it in the first place (Goldman et al., 2001).

But despite this logical recognition, there is still no assigned individual or organization that is statutorily responsible for providing the needed education and awareness of EBPs to local college communities. This critical gap presents an opportunity and challenge for colleges and their CEAs. If colleges are willing, they can voluntarily take upon them the responsibility to use their existing educational platform to increase the "consumer competence" of their communities. If colleges and CEAs choose to step up to the plate and provide the missing CTC-awareness and CTC-support for their communities, they will stand to reap certain rewards that would otherwise elude them.

The Monetary Rewards. Obvious tangible rewards for CTC participation would be monetary, in the form of grants and appropriations. Most of the CTC-awareness and start-up costs in the past have been generously funded by government grants (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2012; Hawkins & Catalano, 2004; Kuklinski et al., 2013; Spoth et al., 2013). In addition to government grants for CTC and evidence-based programs (EBPs), there is also the potential that community taxpayers and voters are willing to invest their personal resources or funds also.

Non-monetary Rewards. The intangible benefits that accrue to colleges and CEAs for providing CTC related community service or service-learning are equally just as important to consider. As non-profit businesses, the local public colleges can improve their "value propositions" to their communities by offering them the education and trainings they need regarding evidence-based delinquency prevention programs (EBPs). Two of the leading Harvard scholars have noted that the value proposition of an organization must capture the unique mix of product relationships or images that the organization is providing to the customers (Kaplan & Norton, 2004b). There are now competitions in providing higher education to communities, and

just like Wal-Mart, Southwest Air-lines, and McDonald's, colleges may soon be required to explain to their communities how their services and products differ from their competitors (Kaplan & Norton, 2004b).

From their consultations with hundreds of organizations, professors Kaplan and Norton learned that "community investments" and community service which leads to better reputation for organization (such as colleges and CEAs), does not necessarily have to be for altruistic reasons alone. Different forms of service can also produce several forms of returns. Those returns might include the ability to attract quality workers, a better reputation in the areas of regulatory and social dimensions, greater increase in the levels of production, and an overall lowering of economic costs of production or services (Kaplan & Norton, 2004b).

Delimitations of Study

The current study collected and analyzed baseline data on the reputation of CTC amongst the study population. Therefore this investigation was primarily restricted to the historical, current, and any future plans of the study participants to help in promoting CTC-awareness and training awareness in their college districts (CDs). The extant literature on CTC education has mostly focused on the few CDs that already benefit from CTC-awareness, to the exclusion of the overwhelming majority of American CDs who are not receiving any CTC-awareness and support from their local colleges. Over 90% of communities where most of the poor minorities live (Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, 2013a) can be considered non-CTC.

The current study examines the actions and inactions of colleges and CEAs who do not seem to officially or publicly show any willingness to support (WITS) for CTC-awareness in their college district or CDs. The study did not address the challenges being faced by CEAs and colleges who have already publicly and officially expressed their WITS for CTC-awareness for their CDs. The study only included CEAs in the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) region of Texas. The information from the survey and the study results was based on the responses from the participating CEAs and CDs. The analysis and results of the study relied on the ability of the participants to recall their own actions and inactions, plans, thoughts, and feelings regarding their own personal and college support for CTC.

Limitations of the Study

Like most scholarly projects, this WITS attitudinal study has a number of limitations that merit disclosure. The limitations include the possibility of "Social desirability response" or SDR. In (Thompson and Phua, 2005) they observed that the studies that rely on questionnaire and self-reports, such as this WITS4CTC study, may suffer from a common problem known as "social desirability response" or SDR (2005). To reduce the problem of SDR, psychologists developed the "Marlowe-Crowne scale" as well as the more popular version called "Strahan-Gerbasi scale" (p. 542). Both of these scales have been ignored by a vast majority of studies, and new evidence suggest that these scales are not valid either (p. 550). The authors admitted that their study is exploratory in nature, and emphasized the need for more replication to test the validity of existing SDR scales.

Clearly there is a need for an evidence-based instrument to measure the sensitivity of every research to SDR of participants in social science. However, the above Thompson and Phua (2005) also did not consider the potential negligible impact of SDR in certain community based studies, such as WITS. If the data are both exploratory and benchmark in nature, then future replications in a longitudinal environment should naturally detect any large scale SDR. For instance, if a majority of the participants indicated in the initial WITS survey that they would support CTC in their classes, a simple analysis of the follow-up study should detect if the initial answers were most likely biased or honest. Other than a comparison of longitudinal data, the field of justice studies has yet to discover a more effective or efficient method that can completely avoid the social desirability responses (SDR) or other research problems associated with SDR (Irazola, Niedzwiecki, Debusi-Sherrill, & Williamson, 2013a), as it continues to be a weakness or limitation of even the most recent studies (Irazola, Williamson, & Stricker, 2013b).

Key Terms and Definitions

To help clarify and ensure a better understanding of terms used in this investigation, the definitions are provided as appropriate for key words and phrases in the study. For many of the key terms, a citation has been provided to show their source in the literature, although some of them were specifically developed for this study by the author.

CTC-Catalyst. This is the individual or group that introduces the Communities That Care (CTC) system to the community (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002). Catalysts have been compared to "spark plugs" because they not only act as informants, but they also work to ignite the interest of the community help every stakeholder to develop the willingness to support (WITS) for the CTC system (2002, p. 6&7). Anyone can become a catalyst for CTC, as long as he or she has a strong interest in youth issues such as delinquency. College-educated-adults (CEAs) are ideal candidates for the role of catalysts because a catalyst needs to have great communication skills, knowledge of the community leadership. One of the most important tasks of a catalyst(s) is to try and recruit a top and influential community leader to serve as the "champion" for CTC (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002). CEAs may be most effective as catalysts, compared to non-CEAs, because the potential champions they must recruit are the top executives who are most likely also fellow CEAs.

College-educated-adults (CEAs). The CEAs are the enrolled or employed adults in a college who are over the age of 18. Given their higher educational experience, CEAs can be expected to have a relatively higher level of awareness and support for the EBPs and scientific research process used in CTC. The EBPs and CTC are designed and managed by CEAs.

College-districts (CDs). The CDs are the communities that are served by a college. Majority of the adults enrolled or employed by the college usually reside in, or come from the CDs, and the college mission statements often contain a special obligation of service to the CDs.

Champion. Is a local leader with strong influence in the community (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002). Champions are the leaders for CTC in their community and they work with catalysts to organize and fully implement CTC (2002, p. 9). Examples of potential champions

might include the police chief, the chief medical director, or the mayor of the city or anyone in similar top positions of authority (Hawkins & Catalano, 2002).

Service-learning: A college credit-bearing course that is designed to help students to solve a real-world problem in the college community. A service-learning class can be used to implement EBPs (Davidson, II & Rapp, 1976).

Evidence-based programs (EBPs). The EBPs are those practices and programs that have been scientifically proven to be highly effective, sustainable, and efficient (ESE). They are usually listed in a directory for EBPs.

CTC-stakeholders. This includes any individual or group that will receive significant advantage or disadvantage from CTC-support.

CTC-resources. These are the economic and other support needed for the success of CTC. This will include time, money, data, and leadership.

CTC-support. The amount of time and other resources that are needed to successfully adopt CTC in any CD or community.

CTC-awareness. This is the most critical first step in every CTC-support. Awareness is the moment when a stakeholder recognizes the significant benefits of CTC relative to tradition-based programs (TBPs).

Tradition-based Programs (TBPs). These are the programs that have not been scientifically or rigorously evaluated and proven to be efficient, sustainable, and efficient (ESE). The TBPs exist merely because the key leaders have chosen to dedicate resources to them.

Schools and colleges (SACs). The SACs are higher educational institutions that provide training for adults in the community. Because of the MOOCs technology, SACs are now able to offer their knowledge to communities in other states and nations.

Key leaders. These are the most powerful individuals in any community. Key leaders are often elected or appointed by college-educated adults (CEAs) in the community. Key leaders control most of the resources (time and money) in their community.

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