Introduction

- Community coalitions and the Communities That Care (CTC) model are a promising strategy for supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices that prevent drug abuse and delinquency.
- To understand how coalition functioning influences effectiveness, we must accurately measure and differentiate coalition functioning constructs that can influence coalition effectiveness.
- This study uses confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to refine measures of coalition functioning that research suggests are important predictors of coalition effectiveness.

Coalition functioning constructs:
- Board efficiency: members work hard and efficiently
- Board cohesion: coalition unity and group spirit
- Board leadership style: leadership seeks out members’ views and reaches out for help.
- Board leadership competence: leadership is politically skillful and able to mobilize resources.
- Community support: key entities in the broader community are supportive of CTC efforts.
- Mobilizer skill: the lead staff person is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, with strong organizational and interpersonal skills.

Method

Procedure: Data collected through an annual web-based survey of over 1,000 coalition members representing 80 Communities That Care (CTC) coalitions operating in Pennsylvania from 2005-2007.

EFA Analyses tested whether the items comprising each construct developed in 2003 and 2004 maintain factor loadings greater than 0.40 without cross-loading more than 0.40 on a separate factor using data in 2005. We dropped items that do not meet these standards to increase the unique and distinct nature of each coalition functioning construct.

CFA Analyses examined whether item factor loadings remained stable across time by constraining loadings to be equal from 2006 to 2007. We calculated scale reliability estimates and confidence intervals using CFA-based methods. Finally, we used model fit indices to examine whether a higher order Coalition Functioning factor can adequately describe the correlations between our different coalition functioning constructs.

Results

Initial EFA analyses led to the deletion one item from the following scales:
- Board Efficiency
- Board Leadership Style
- Board Leadership Competence
- Sustainability
- Board Leadership Competence

Table 1. CFA-based reliability estimates and correlations between coalition functioning scales in 2007 (N=881).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable name</th>
<th>Num. items</th>
<th>Reliability (95% C.I.)</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Coalition Functioning</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.92 - .94</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Community Support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.72 - .79</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) Board Cohesion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.55 - .73</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) Board Leadership Style</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.72 - .82</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.45</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Board Leadership Competence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.60 - .74</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.66</td>
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<td>(6) Mobilizer Skill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.77 - .85</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) Board Efficiency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.70 - .83</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8) Sustainability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.69 - .77</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.47</td>
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</table>

Note: Comp. = Competence; Num. = Number; C.I. = Confidence Interval.

Figure 1. Hierarchical confirmatory factor analysis model of coalition functioning (CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .086).

Discussion

- The refined measures demonstrate strong psychometric properties as reliable and stable constructs that represent empirically distinct but interrelated aspects of coalition functioning.
- Results indicate item intercorrelations both cluster into the identified scales and share some common cross-scale variance represented by the overarching coalition functioning construct.
- Future research examining the influence of both the overall coalition functioning construct and its subcomponents on indicators of coalition effectiveness can help to identify the conditions necessary for coalition success.
- Future measurement development efforts with new items may be able to identify other distinct and important aspects of coalition functioning.
- Coalitions can use the measures as part of a feedback process to identify and address coalition functioning weaknesses.

Coalition Functioning Items

Board Leadership Competence – The CTC leadership...
(a) is able to mobilize resources to aid CTC
(b) Has the political knowledge and competence to support CTC
(c) Is skillful in resolving conflict

Board Leadership Style – The CTC leadership...
(a) Intentionally seeks out your views
(b) Asks you to assist with specific tasks

Community Support – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.
(a) There is not much group spirit among members of this coalition
(b) It is difficult to develop a sense of trust with other board members

Mobilizer skill
- How skilled is your lead staff person in the following areas:
  (a) Interpersonal and communication skills
  (b) Organizational skills
  (c) Enthusiasm and passion for the CTC mission

Understanding and knowledge of prevention and CTC
- How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.
  (a) Needs Work to Very Strong
  (b) From No To A Great Deal
  (c) From Not At All to Yes for items (a) and (b)
  (d) Scale from Highly Unlikely to Highly Likely for item (c).

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