

EMPOWERMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF  
COALITION BUILDING  
WITHIN A STATEWIDE SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION CONTEXT

By

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N. Andrew Peterson

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# **ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

## **EMPOWERMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF COALITION BUILDING**

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**By KRISTEN GILMORE POWELL**

Dissertation Director:

N. Andrew Peterson, Ph.D.

This study contributes to the literature by testing a conceptual model of the relationships between empowering organizational characteristics and individual empowerment and their impact on perceived effectiveness within coalitions implementing a substance abuse prevention framework. Excessive drinking among adolescents and young adults is a significant problem in the United States and contributes to a wide range of costly consequences, including motor vehicle crashes, suicide, interpersonal violence, and alcohol poisoning (SAMSHA, 2012). In addition to excessive drinking, an estimated 22.5 million Americans aged 12 or older, (8.7 percent), reported current use of illicit drugs in 2011, with marijuana use on the rise and the current most commonly used illicit drug (SAMHSA, 2012). The U.S. Department of Justice (2011a) estimated the economic cost of illicit drug use to society for 2007 was more than \$193 billion.

The present study adopted a mixed methods convergent parallel design, (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) which included analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative

data that were collected in 2011 for the evaluation of the adoption of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) in New Jersey. Participants were drawn from a purposeful, non-random sample of staff and members within eleven New Jersey coalitions implementing the SPF (n = 138 survey participants; n = 20 interview participants).

Using organizational and individual empowerment theories within the conceptual framework, the present study examined psychological empowerment and empowering organizational characteristics and their impacts on perceived effectiveness within coalitions. This study included descriptive, path, and qualitative analyses. The path model showed a good fit to the data with the hypothesized pathways. Psychological empowerment and sense of community had direct, positive effects on perceived effectiveness. Direct effects of organizational characteristics on perceived effectiveness were found as well as indirect effects through their relationships to sense of community and psychological empowerment. Previous research on individual empowerment and organizational empowerment has not included the relationship to self-reported effectiveness. Practical implications include developing coalition training on the SPF with emphasis on organizational characteristics that foster members' empowerment, increase coalition effectiveness, and improve positive community impact.

## **Acknowledgements**

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something grade this year!) and I think he may be as excited as I am, to have a ‘last day’ of school at graduation. Thanks to Mike, I have a whole new family-in-law, filled with love and support. I want to thank you, my great big wonderful family, for all of your love and help as I reached this amazing goal.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

*“Efforts toward redefining and addressing substance abuse as a persistent public health and social problem, rather than as a personal deficit, are likely to lead us toward more promising approaches to substance abuse prevention.”*

(Rhodes, 2000, p. 975)

This chapter will discuss the purpose of the current dissertation study as well as the theoretical rationale, study background, and its implication for social work policy and practice.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study contributes to the literature by testing a conceptual model of the relationship between empowering organizational characteristics and individual empowerment and how these concepts impact perceived effectiveness within coalitions implementing a substance abuse prevention framework. This social work investigation of coalition building within a substance abuse prevention context is an important step in increasing our understanding of the ways in which empowerment-related processes and outcomes can contribute to the effectiveness of groups that are working to improve quality of life through community-level interventions. Using empowerment as a theoretical framework will contribute to our knowledge and practice and will build onto the strengths within coalitions in order to work towards social change, especially as it relates to the negative impacts of substance abuse.

Excessive drinking among adolescents and young adults is a significant problem in the United States. Alcohol has been identified as a significant contributor to the

leading causes of adolescent deaths (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2003; 2006). According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2010), a little more than half of all Americans aged 12 or older (51.9 percent) identified as current drinkers of alcohol in 2009. In the same survey, the rate of binge drinking<sup>1</sup> among young adults aged 18 to 25 was 41.7 percent, and the rate of heavy drinking<sup>2</sup> was 13.7 percent (SAMHSA, 2010). For those aged 12 to 17 and underage, the rate of current alcohol use in 2009 was 14.7 percent. Underage drinking contributes to a wide range of costly consequences, including motor vehicle crashes, suicide, interpersonal violence, unintentional injuries and alcohol and poisoning (SAMSHA, 2012).

In terms of other substances, SAMHSA (2012) found in 2011, an estimated 22.5 million Americans aged 12 or older, (8.7 percent), reported current use<sup>3</sup> of illicit drugs, including marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription-type psychotherapeutics<sup>4</sup> used non-medically. Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug in 2011 and the rate of use has increased significantly between 2007 and 2011, from 5.8 to 7.0 percent (SAMHSA, 2012). In 2011, an estimated 3.1 million Americans aged 12 or older reported using an illicit drug for the first time within the past year, equaling approximately 8,400 new initiates per day. Well over half of these new illicit drug initiates reported marijuana as the first drug used (67.5 percent),

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of binge drinking is five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days (SAMHSA, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The definition of heavy drinking is five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days (SAMHSA, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> This statistic is taken from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and current use refers to use within the past month at the time of the survey.

<sup>4</sup> The category of prescription type psychotherapeutic drugs used non-medically included pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives.

and more than one in five initiated with psychotherapeutics (22.0 percent), followed by inhalants (7.5 percent) and hallucinogens (2.8 percent) as first drugs (SAMHSA, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Justice (2011a) estimated the economic cost of illicit drug use to society for 2007 was more than \$193 billion, which includes public costs related to crime, health, and lost productivity. The related public health costs negatively impact the nation's criminal justice system, healthcare system, and productivity rates (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011b). For example, some of the impacts on the healthcare system include increased rates of hospitalizations of illicit drug users, increased mortality and injury due to drugged driving, and increased risk of law enforcement personnel and first responders' exposure to toxic chemicals associated with methamphetamine laboratories (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011b).

Substance abuse is widespread and results in many consequences affecting all people in this country. The substance misuse and related societal consequences underscore the need for effective treatment and prevention interventions. A recent trend in substance abuse prevention is the adoption of models that are similar to public health models, which target change across a certain population or community. Traditional prevention intervention strategies are implemented at the individual level, with the goal of changing knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and motivations. Alternatively, environmental, community-level strategies target a community or specific population, with the intention to reduce access and opportunities to drink or use other substances, reduce tolerance, and increase penalties for violating alcohol or other drug use laws (NIAAA, 2006). Environmental strategies aim to prevent alcohol and other drug misuse and decrease the related consequences that impact communities, such as motor vehicle

accidents or increased crimes. Environmental interventions that have showed promise for young adults include the focus on adopting social host liability laws (Chaloupka et al., 2002; Stout et al., 2000); increasing identification checks by alcohol vendors; reducing illegal sales to minors through merchant training (Imm et al., 2007; Toomey et al., 2007); and decreasing community norms that tolerate or foster underage drinking through strategies such as widespread media campaigns (Imm et al., 2007; NIAAA, 2009).

DeJong and Langford (2002) proposed a typology of five subcategories for environmental, community-level alcohol prevention interventions: 1) provision of alternative, alcohol and drug-free activities; 2) fostering of a positive and health-promoting normative environment; 3) limiting availability; 4) decreasing the occurrences or use of marketing and promotion of alcohol; and 5) increasing enforcement of laws and policies. Toomey and colleagues (2007) conducted a recent review in the literature of environmental strategies targeting college drinking and found three categories: 1) strategies aimed at reducing underage drinking and related consequences among underage college students; 2) strategies aimed at reducing use and consequences among all college students; and 3) strategies aimed at creating positive and normative expectations on campus in order to de-emphasize alcohol use. This review found positive results of environmental strategies on the general population and also found that implementing a combination of environmental strategies decreased alcohol-related problems on college campuses (Toomey et al., 2007). Additionally, similar environmental strategies are being selected to target consumption patterns and consequences of other drugs.

These studies suggest the promise of incorporating environmental strategies to reduce and prevent the misuse of drugs and alcohol and the occurrence of related consequences. However, implementing these community-based environmental strategies relies on stakeholders from multiple systems. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) has developed the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) that emphasizes the use of scientific data and sustainable coalition building to implement effective environmental strategies that will reduce detrimental substance abuse consumption patterns and related consequences (Buchanan et al., 2010). Community-based coalitions attempt to create community change and improve community well-being. Typically, coalitions emphasize multiple sector representation, multiple, complex community needs, active participation of community members, and grassroots planning and decision making (Berkowitz, 2001). Coalitions can broaden participation within a community, leading to an increase in commitment, resources, and sustainability of an initiative (McMillan et al., 1995). Community coalitions are effective in making environmental impact on the consequences of alcohol use and abuse and to foster an environment in which people are better able to make healthy choices. Wolff (2001) identified key conditions of coalition building that can lead to success, including community readiness, shared mission and vision, and broad, inclusive membership. Coalition building within the SPF could implement substance abuse prevention environmental strategies that help communities provide environments conducive to making healthy choices, which will lead to the eventual reduction in harmful consequences of binge and heavy alcohol use.

Empowerment is one theory that can be used as a framework for the development or evaluation of effective substance abuse prevention environmental



strategies to be carried out by coalitions. However, testing such specific arrangements has been inadequate. Empowerment has a long history of empirical investigation across many disciplines and has been conceptualized, defined, and studied for several decades. Despite extensive investigation, a unified definition is still missing. Empowerment can be conceptualized as occurring at the individual, organizational, and community levels, though empirical studies have not sufficiently tested all levels. Some of the disciplines that have given considerable attention to analyzing empowerment include psychology and community psychology (Okvat & Zautra, 2011; Rappaport, 1984, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995, 2000); nursing (Spence laschinger et al., 2010); and health care promotion studies (Anderson & Funnell, 2010; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009). The field of social work has had only limited analysis, with the exception of researchers such as Zippay (1995), Gutierrez and colleagues (1995), Itzhaky and York (2003) and Peterson and Speer (2000).

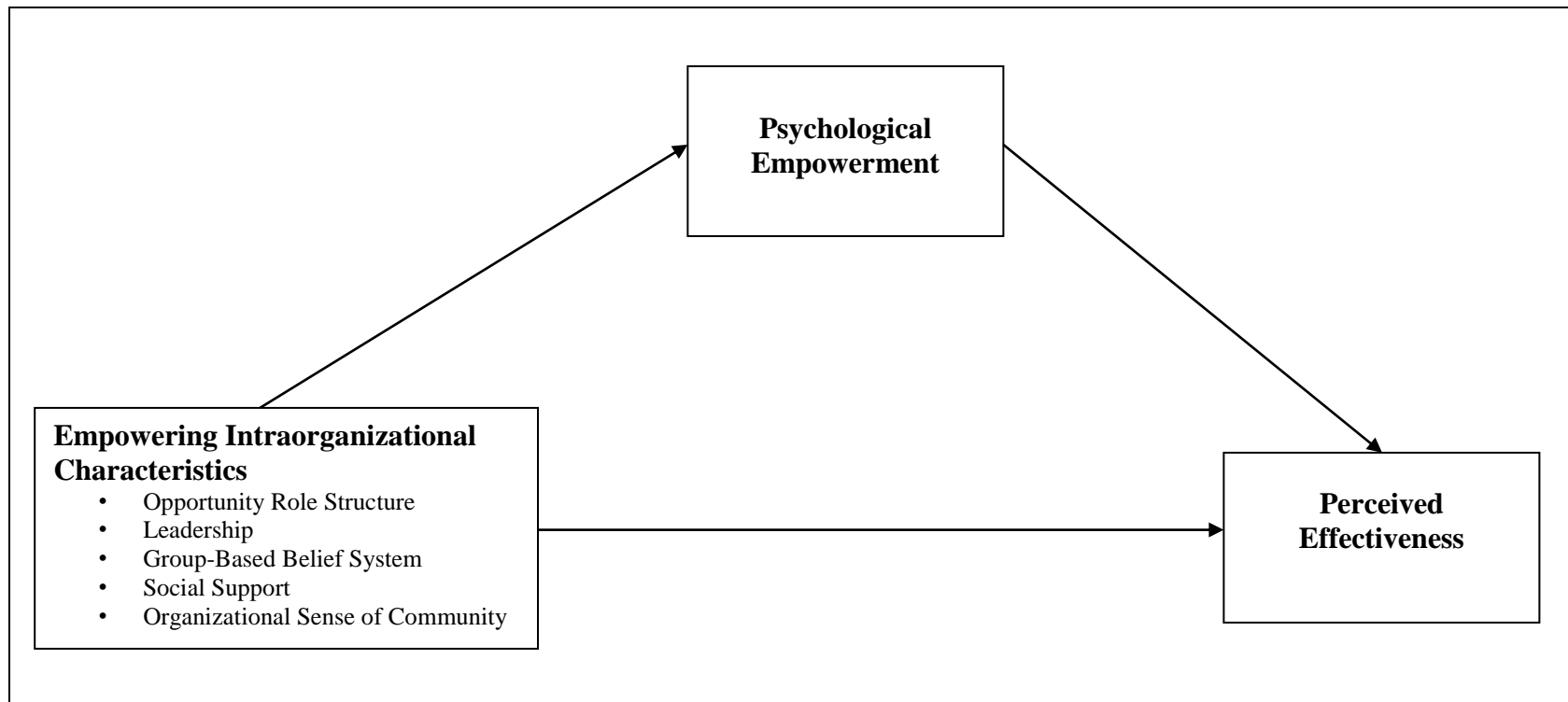
Few studies have investigated the effects of coalitions' organizational characteristics on their members' empowerment, and no study to date has empirically tested the mediating role of empowerment in the relationship between organizational characteristics and coalition effectiveness. The goal of the current study was to test a conceptual model in which perceptions of organizational characteristics of coalitions are hypothesized as influencing individual empowerment among coalition members and their ratings of coalition effectiveness. Figure 1 depicts this conceptual model, which is comprised of five empowering organizational characteristics, PE, and their relationship to perceived organizational effectiveness. The study tested this model with data from a statewide substance abuse prevention coalition building initiative. This study will

contribute to the social work literature by evaluating a crucial prediction of empowerment theory which has heretofore gone empirically untested.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

Literature focuses on social problems such as substance abuse, domestic violence, or childhood trauma and is often concentrated on the problems and risk factors that may contribute to or exacerbate the issue. The conceptual model applies a strengths perspective to explore the benefits of psychological and organizational empowerment and the impact on perceived organizational effectiveness within a substance abuse prevention initiative. The conceptual model for the current study is shown in Figure 1. The model shows the empowering intraorganizational characteristics and how these variables may relate to individual or psychological empowerment (PE) and perceived effectiveness. The conceptual model is based on several theories including psychological empowerment (PE) (Zimmerman, 1995), organizational empowerment (OE) (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), and organizational sense of community (Hughey, et al., 2008).

Figure 1 *Current Study Conceptual Model*



## **Background of Study**

SAMHSA recently identified the prevention of substance abuse and mental illness as one of eight key strategic initiatives to focus their resources from 2011 through 2014. This initiative recognizes primary prevention as the key focus and will aim to create healthy communities, promote mental health, and reduce the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011).

Alcohol is reportedly the most common drug used by adolescents and young adults nationally and in New Jersey. Thirty-four percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in New Jersey reported alcohol use at some point in their lives (New Jersey Department of Human Services, 2010). Similarly, 36% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders nationally reported having used alcohol at some time in their lives (Johnston et al., 2010). At a strikingly young age, thirteen percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported having binged with alcohol at some point in their lives (New Jersey Department of Human Services, 2010). Further, according to the 2010 New Jersey Middle School Risk and Protective Factor Survey (New Jersey Department of Human Services, 2010), middle school students reported more use of marijuana, inhalants, and other illicit drugs, and reported approximately same use of tobacco and prescription drugs, compared to the statistics in 2007.

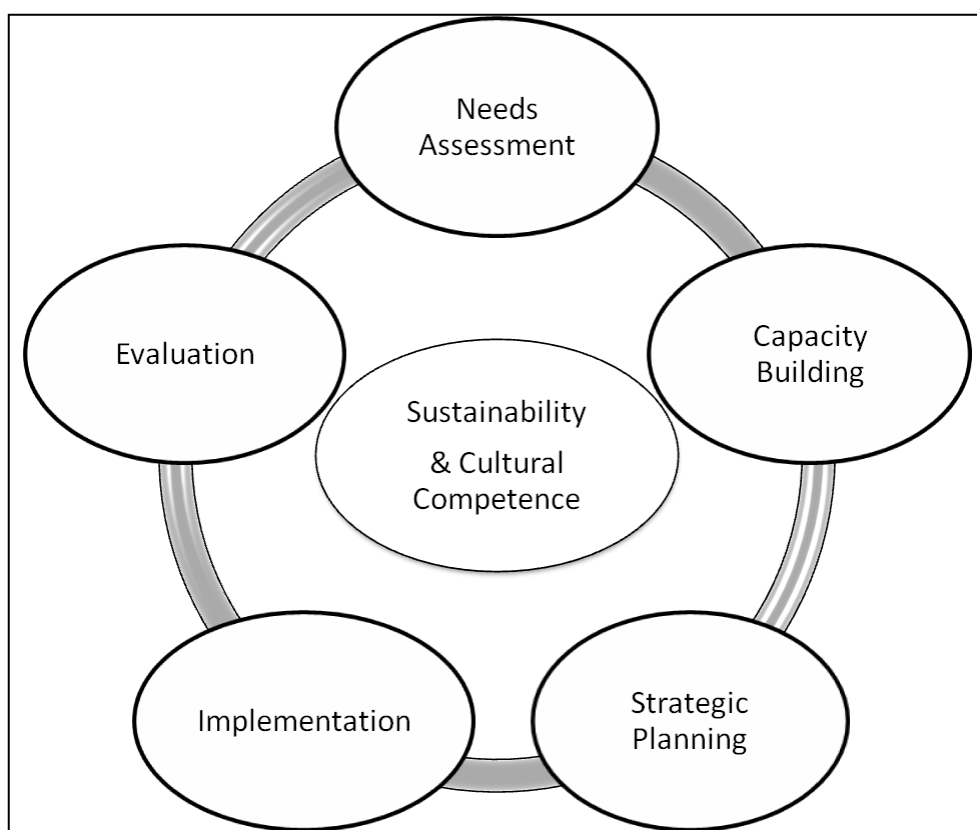
This dissertation is a study within a larger national and state initiative funded by SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). The dataset used for the current study was from an evaluation of New Jersey's implementation of their Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG), awarded by CSAP in October, 2006. CSAP developed the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) in order to foster the combination of evidence-based practices within the context of unique community needs.

According to CSAP, the SPF is a community-based approach to substance abuse prevention using a population-based model. The overall goals of the SPF are to prevent and reduce substance abuse progression; to build capacity among prevention communities through coalition building; and to reduce community consequences related to substance abuse (Buchanan et al., 2010). The framework includes a series of steps and guiding principles that can be utilized at the state, tribal and community levels. The SPF requires states, jurisdictions, and communities to systematically:

- 1) assess prevention needs based on epidemiological data;
- 2) build prevention capacity;
- 3) develop a strategic plan;
- 4) implement effective prevention programs, policies and practices; and
- 5) evaluate the project efforts (CSAP, 2010).

Within this 5-step process, CSAP incorporates an emphasis on cultural competence, sustainability, and the use of epidemiological data throughout the process (Buchanan et al., 2010). This five-step process is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 *Five Steps of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)*



(Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2010)

The model proposed by CSAP contains a shift in the paradigm for substance abuse prevention in two primary ways. The first shift is the attention towards a data-driven needs assessment and decision-making process. The second shift is the emphasis on environmental strategies targeting population or community-level change as opposed to the more traditional prevention strategies that aim for individual-level change through education and knowledge building (Buchanan et al., 2010). Examples of environmental strategies for substance abuse prevention include beverage server training programs (Imm et al., 2007; Toomey et al., 2001; Toomey, et al., 2007); restrictions of price promotions or ‘happy hour’ deals (Chaloupka et al., 2002; DeJong & Langford, 2002; Toomey, et al.,

2007); and the organization of alternative activities that are drug and alcohol-free (DeJong & Langford, 2002; Imm et al., 2007; Patrick et al., 2010).

To date, CSAP has awarded 77 Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grants (SPF SIG) to US states, recognized tribes, and territories among four cohorts, since 2004. The New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) was awarded a SPF SIG grant by CSAP, in October, 2006. New Jersey became one of 16 states, territories, recognized tribes, and tribal organizations within CSAP's SPF Cohort 3. The purpose of New Jersey's SPF SIG was to develop and support a statewide, data-driven alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention prioritization, implementation and evaluation infrastructure, which will guide and support communities across New Jersey to implement evidence-based, culturally competent, and sustainable prevention programs, policies, and practices based on needs assessment and epidemiological analysis.

After securing the SPF SIG award, NJ DMHAS began implementing the SPF steps, starting with a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, building capacity, and strategic planning. The NJ SPF SIG staff and stakeholders identified the main priority for the New Jersey's SPF-SIG:

*- To reduce the harmful consequences of alcohol and drug use among 18-25 year olds.*

As a grantee of the SPF SIG awards, New Jersey was required to hire an evaluation team to conduct the evaluation at the state- and community-levels. The NJ DMHAS hired the SPF SIG Evaluation Team in 2008. To date, the statewide evaluation has focused on the processes and fidelity to the SPF as well as preliminary examination

of targeted outcomes to assess state- and community-level change in substance abuse related consequences. During the implementation phase starting in 2009, the NJ SPF SIG awarded grants to 11 community organizations and their partners, across the state. These 11 community SPF SIG grantees across the state were to utilize the SPF in their prevention communities within the scope of the designated state priority. Table 1 lists the counties or regions covered by the 11 community SPF SIG grantees for NJ.

Table 1.

*Lead Agencies and Regions Targeted by the 11 NJ SPF SIG Grantees*

Lead agency name	County or region targeted
Barnabus Health Institute for Prevention	Ocean County
Cape Assist	Cape May County
Center for Prevention Counseling	Sussex County
Community Prevention Resources of Warren County	Warren County
Empower Somerset	Somerset County*
Morris County Prevention is Key	Morris County
New Jersey Prevention Network	Statewide
Partners in Prevention/ NCADD Hudson	Hudson County
Raritan Valley Community College	Somerset County*
Rutgers University Center of Alcohol Studies	Middlesex County
The Center for Alcohol & Drug Resources	Bergen County

\*Somerset County was covered by two separate SPF SIG grantees.



## **Present Study**

The current study utilized the evaluation data from one year of the New Jersey SPF SIG statewide initiative. The data were collected as part of the statewide annual formative evaluation of the SPF activities. The dissertation study was carried out independently in several key ways. The data that were used for this dissertation study were comprised of one year of data within a multi-year annual evaluation grant. The original intent and use of the evaluation data is to provide feedback to the stakeholders annually in order to make modifications to the initiative's progress and process as necessary. The dissertation used a theoretical framework to analyze the data beyond the scope of a state evaluation report. It is intended that the work within the dissertation will contribute to the knowledge base on the topics reviewed here as well as impact policy and practice related to coalition building within a substance abuse prevention context.

The current study was informed by two theories of empowerment: 1) Zimmerman's (1995) theory on psychological empowerment (PE) and 2) Peterson and Zimmerman's (2004) theory of organizational empowerment (OE). The intent of the study was to learn about the relationship between organizational characteristics, individuals' empowerment and perceived effectiveness among community coalitions implementing a new substance abuse prevention framework through a mixed methods examination. The purpose of this convergent parallel mixed methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) study was to converge interpretations of qualitative and quantitative data which were collected and analyzed separately. In the current study, quantitative data were used to test the theories of empowerment by examining whether PE and intraorganizational characteristics positively influence perceived effectiveness for

members of community organizations implementing substance abuse prevention programming within a new national framework. The qualitative interview data were used to further explore the concepts of PE and intraorganizational characteristics and perceived effectiveness through the direct lens of the community coalition members. The purpose of analyzing two forms of data was to gain a greater insight than would be obtained by one type of data separately (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and to better understand the relationships of organizational characteristics of coalitions, PE, and ultimate effectiveness.

### **Research Questions**

Because of the nature of mixed methods studies, the research questions included traditional hypothesis generating research questions for the quantitative data and exploratory questions related to the qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

#### *Quantitative Research Questions*

1. Does the hypothesized path model, including the suggested role of psychological empowerment, fit the data from a sample of community organizational members implementing a new substance abuse prevention framework?
  - a. Does psychological empowerment mediate between perceived organizational characteristics and perceived effectiveness?

#### *Qualitative Research Questions*

2. Does the qualitative data support the hypothesized path model?

3. What does the data tell about members' empowerment, the characteristics of empowered organizations, and perceived organizational effectiveness?

Secondary research questions for qualitative description:

- a) What were participants' perceptions of strengths and challenges of the 5-step process and what did they learn from the process so far?
- b) What are the significant milestones of the statewide SPF SIG initiative?
- c) What does empowerment look like at this level?

### **Practical Implications for Social Work**

Substance abuse and related consequences is a serious social problem that can have negative effects on American youth and the communities in which they live. The SPF proposed by CSAP could potentially reduce consumption patterns and devastating consequences of substance abuse through empowered coalitions, implementing environmental strategies within their communities. While the field of social work has focused on empowerment at different times in the past, the majority of recent studies are being conducted from the fields of community psychology and related disciplines. This presents a gap in recent social work literature and provided a strong rationale for the current study. According to the *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*, the Preamble states:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the

environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living (NASW, Preamble, 2008).

The concept of empowerment is contained within the first sentence of the code of ethics that all social workers learn from and strictly abide by. Empowerment is a concept that is fundamental within social work, and work with our clients who might be vulnerable, experiencing discrimination, or are struggling within the welfare system. The preamble of the social work *Code of Ethics* also describes the need to focus on environmental barriers that affect vulnerable people. Empowerment theory and practice might permit us to focus beyond the individual level, and assess the community-level (macro-level) and work towards the reduction of environmental risk factors affecting the well-being of those most vulnerable.

In their controversial *Unfaithful Angels*, Specht and Courtney (1995) raised the debate about the drift of the profession from its core mission of serving communities and populations that are underprivileged and those without a voice through community-level interventions and the emerging focus on individual psychotherapy within private practice settings. The authors trace the rise of private practice and psychotherapy among social workers and how this emergence resulted in a simultaneous reduction of social action, work towards social justice, and conducting community-level social work on a macro level to solve social problems (Specht & Courtney, 1995). This contentious book proposes that the social work profession move away from psychotherapy and implement a community-based system of social care that helps people in communities improve their quality of lives with a focus on macro social problems and ways to overcome them (Specht & Courtney, 1995). Soon after this book was published, Haynes (1998) argued

that social work has experienced waves of emphasis, from community to individual level, and that social work needs to contain individual treatment and macro social reform strategies in order support diversity, reduce discrimination and overcome major societal problems. The current study contributes to the literature and the need for additional focus at the community-level and to affect populations through environmental (macro) strategies by decreasing consequences experienced by communities due to substance use and abuse. By studying a model of community-level interventions that hope to impact substance use and its related consequences at a population-based scale, this study could contribute a promised practice and policy base for social work.

Another important aspect of the current study is the focus on the latest national framework for substance abuse prevention developed and supported by CSAP. It will benefit social workers as well as non-profit and human service organizations to determine the benefits and coalition-based best practices for populations at risk of the harmful consequences of substance use and abuse. By analyzing this evaluation data, we can expand our knowledge on best practices including possible environmental strategies for substance abuse prevention. To date, SAMHSA and CSAP have invested a substantial amount of funding to adopt, evaluate, and improve this national model for substance abuse prevention. The current study could inform and impact future program development of substance abuse prevention services within New Jersey and beyond.

By exploring ways to facilitate the empowerment of people within organizations and the communities they reach, research can inform practice to create a better work environment and could improve outcomes for their clients. Through examination of empowering community settings, Maton (2008) stated: “increasing the number, range,

and impact of empowering community settings represents a critical aspect of efforts to enhance quality of life and achievement of social justice by the marginalized and oppressed in society,” (p. 17). This social work investigation of coalition building within a statewide substance abuse prevention context is an important step in increasing our understanding of the ways in which empowerment-related processes and outcomes can contribute to the effectiveness of groups that are working to improve quality of life in communities.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

*Empowerment is a construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems and proactive behaviors to matters of social policy and social change. It is thought to be a process by which individuals gain mastery or control over their own lives and democratic participation in the life of their community*  
(Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988, p. 726).

This chapter will include the theoretical framework for the current study as well as an examination of the relevant available empirical and theoretical literature to understand the relationships between empowerment and perceived effectiveness as well as with the other variables proposed for investigation in the current study.

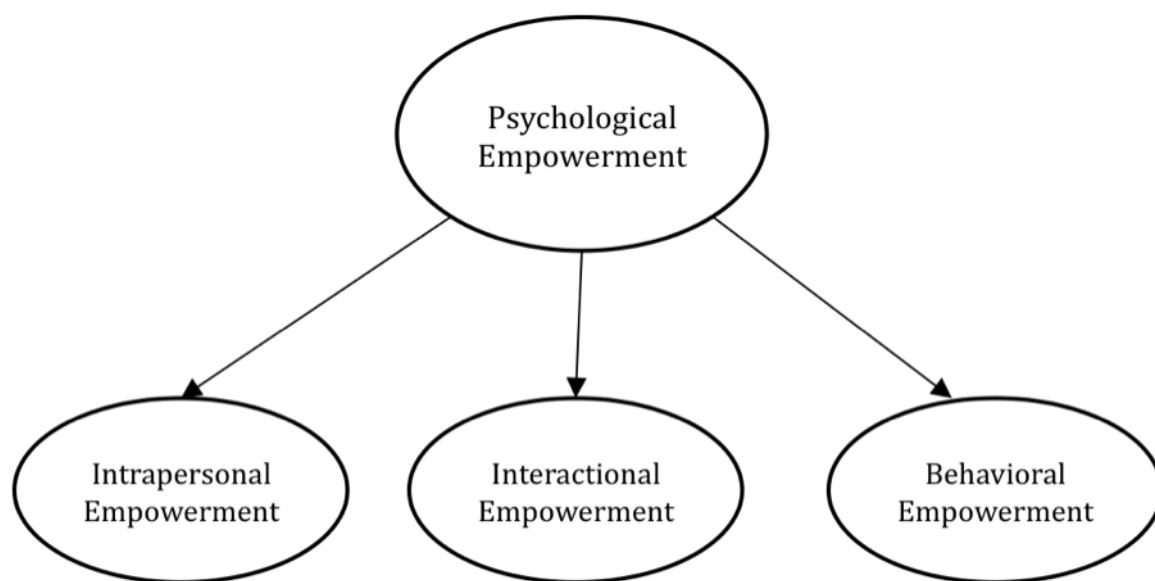
### Theoretical Framework

The current study was guided by two central theoretical frameworks established in the existing literature. The first framework is the nomological model of psychological empowerment (PE) proposed by Zimmerman (1995). PE refers to empowerment at the individual level, which includes the beliefs about one's competence, the attempts to exercise control, and understanding of the socio-political environment (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000.) This framework contains three components: the intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components. Figure 3 presents the PE framework and its three components.

Within this framework, the first construct, the *intrapersonal component*, refers to how one thinks about oneself and includes perceived control, self-efficacy, competence, and mastery (Zimmerman, 1995). The second construct, the *interactional component*, refers to one's understanding of one's community and includes critical awareness, skill

development, and resource mobilization. The third construct is the *behavioral component*, which refers to one's actions, including community involvement, organizational participation, and coping behaviors (Zimmerman, 1995).

*Figure 3 Psychological Empowerment (PE)*



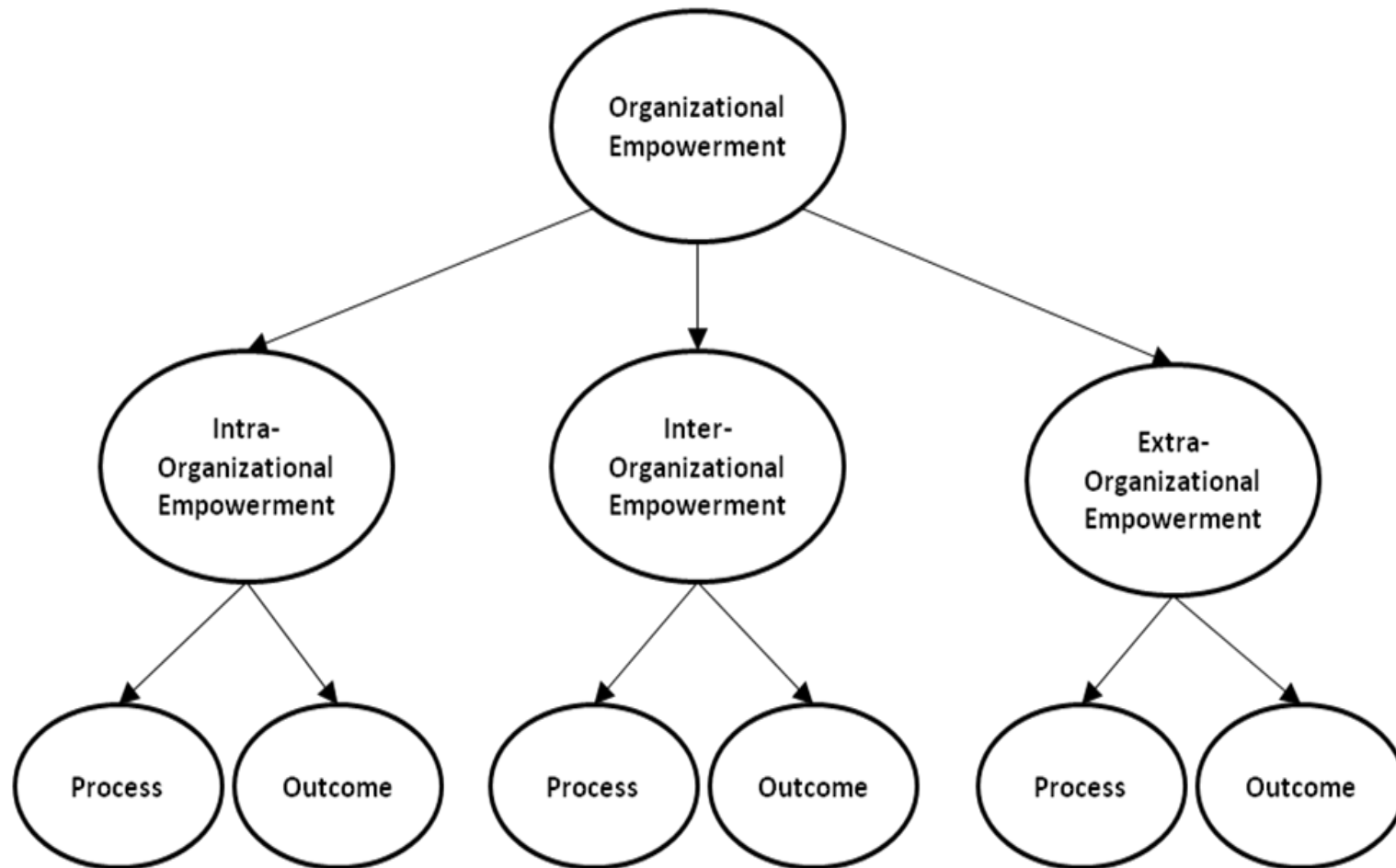
(Zimmerman, 1995)

Examples of Individual-level processes: participation, membership, relationship building

The second theoretical framework is the nomological framework of organizational empowerment (OE), proposed by Peterson and Zimmerman (2004). OE was defined by Zimmerman (2000) as the organizational efforts that generate opportunities for members' PE and the organizational effectiveness necessary for goal achievement. Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed an OE framework, containing three components: intra-organizational, inter-organizational, and extra-organizational empowerment. Figure 4 displays the OE framework including the three levels of OE.



Figure 4 *Nomological Network of Organizational Empowerment*



*(Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004)*

*Examples of intraorganizational-level processes: opportunity role structure, social support, leadership, group-based belief system, and sense of community*

According to their conceptual model, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed that the intraorganizational component of OE includes processes, such as incentive management, opportunity role structure, and social support as well as outcomes, such as viability, resource identification, and collaboration of coempowered subgroups. The interorganizational component includes the linkages between organizations and includes networking, collaboration, and resource procurement. The extraorganizational component includes processes and outcomes that affect the larger environment of the organization, such as disseminating information and influencing public policy. (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004).

Both frameworks of PE (Zimmerman, 1995) and OE (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004) distinguished between empowering processes and empowered outcomes. Empowering processes could be at the individual level, such as participation within a community organization; or at the organizational level; such as empowering leadership within an organization (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Empowered outcomes are the result of empowering processes, at any level of examination (i.e. individual, community, organizational). Theories of empowered outcomes might include the examination of individuals' perceived control and organizational empowered outcomes might include evidence of community coalitions or secured community resources (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Table 2 contains the three different levels of analysis and the processes and outcomes of empowerment theory.

Table 2

*Empowering Processes and Empowered Outcomes within Three Levels of Analysis*

Levels of analysis	Process (“empowering”)	Outcome (“empowered”)
Individual	Learning decision-making skills	Sense of control
	Managing resources	Critical awareness
	Working with others	Participatory behaviors
Organizational	Opportunities to participate in decision-making	Effectively compete for resources
	Shared responsibilities	Networking with other organizations
	Shared leadership	Policy Influence
Community	Access to resources	Organizational coalitions
	Open government structure	Pluralistic leadership
	Tolerance for diversity	Residents’ participatory skills

<sup>a</sup>Zimmerman, 2000

While empowerment has become known as a multilevel and complex construct, most of the literature to date focuses on the individual level. In their theoretical framework of OE, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed a model for the organizational efforts that generate PE among members and effectiveness towards goal

achievement. The OE model distinguishes between the processes of empowering organizations versus the outcomes of empowered organizations (Peterson and Zimmerman, 2004). This model provides the opportunity to develop and test measures for the distinct components within it. Table 3 presents the processes and outcomes of each of the three components of OE as developed by Peterson and Zimmerman (2004).

Table 3

*Processes and Outcomes for Each Component of Organizational Empowerment <sup>a</sup>*

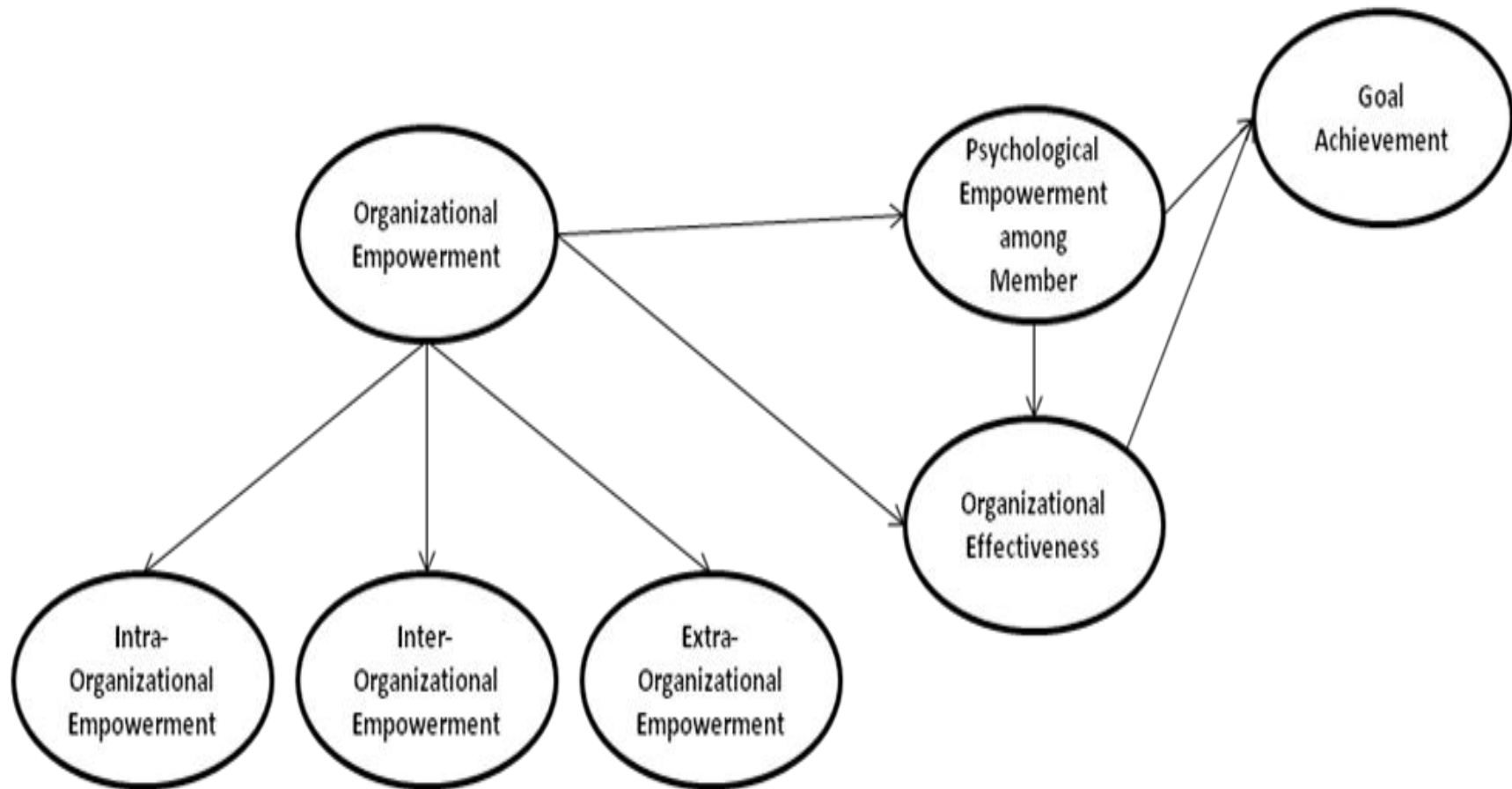
Component	Processes	Outcomes
Intraorganizational	Incentive management	Viability
	Subgroup linkages	Underpopulated settings
	Opportunity role structure	Collaboration of coempowered subgroups
	Leadership	Resolved ideological conflict
	Social support	Resource identification
	Group-based belief system	
Interorganizational	Accessing social networks of other organizations	Collaboration
	Participating in alliance-building activities with other organizations	Resource procurement
Extraorganizational	Implementing community actions	Influence of public policy and practice
	Disseminating information	Creation of alternative community programs
		Deployment of resources in the community

<sup>a</sup>Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004

The current study used a third significant framework to guide the selection of intraorganizational characteristic variables (Hughey et al., 2008). In a study of community residents who participated in health promotion activities, Hughey and his colleagues (2008) used the Community Organization Sense of Community (COSOC) and concluded that sense of community is a distinct organizational empowering characteristic. Based on this study, organizational sense of community was included as an intraorganizational characteristic in the current study.

The current study investigated the relationship between PE, intraorganizational characteristics of OE and coalition members' perceived effectiveness. Figure 5 displays the expanded conceptual model used as a framework for this study.

Figure 5 Expanded Theoretical Framework of OE



## **Empirical Research**

### ***Definition and Types of Empowerment***

Empowerment exists at the individual, organizational, and community levels and there are countless definitions. Empowerment has been conceptualized, defined, and studied across disciplines for decades. The fields of community psychology (Okvat & Zautra, 2011; Rappaport, 1984; Rappaport, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000), nursing (Spence laschinger et al., 2010), and health care promotion studies (Andersen et al., 2010; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009), have established significant attention to the topic. In a systematic review of health-related empowerment measurements, fifty distinct questionnaires were identified in the 74 articles included in the review (Herbert et al., 2009).

Rappaport (1981) was among the early researchers to study the idea of empowerment as a social framework that fosters social movements and responds to social problems in a new way. Rappaport (1981) discussed the need for a partnership between experts and those experiencing social problems to work together to find solutions and in this way, empowering those in need of social change. Empowerment is a strengths based construct, a natural phenomenon for the field of social work to study because it forces the researcher to think in terms of capabilities and strength as opposed to weaknesses or deficits (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Empowerment theory is not focused on a community's problems or deficits; but instead, looks at the assets and ability to empower individuals and communities in order to improve lives.



Despite its wide appeal for investigation, empowerment theorists have yet to agree on an established, universal definition for empirical research. Rappaport stated

Empowerment is easy to define in its absence: powerlessness, real or imagined; learned helplessness; alienation; loss of a sense of control over one's own life. It is more difficult to define positively only because it takes on a different form in different people and contexts. (1984, p.3)

In order to relay the myriad of definitions of empowerment that exist across disciplines, here are a just a few examples of early definitions:

Empowerment is views as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives (Rappaport, 1984, p. 3).

Empowerment is an intentional, ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989, p.2).

Empowerment is defined here as a process whereby the social worker engages in a set of activities with the client or client system that aim to reduce the powerlessness that has been created by negative valuations based on membership in a stigmatized group (Solomon, 1976, p.19).

Empowerment represents a means for accomplishing community development tasks and can be conceptualized as involving two key elements: giving community members the authority to make decisions and choices and facilitating the development of knowledge and resources necessary to exercise these choices (Zippay, 1995, p. 264).

Empowerment is a process of increasing personal, interpersonal, or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations (Gutierrez, 1990, p. 149).

The definition proposed by the Cornell Empowerment Group (1989) emphasized a community-level process rather than an outcome. These earlier definitions are compared to more recent definitions that have tried to capture empowerment as a process and the intended outcomes, as a multidimensional construct, affecting individuals, communities, and organizations. Here is a recent definition that attempted to combine empowerment as a process and outcomes:

A group-based, participatory, developmental process through which marginalized or oppressed individuals and groups gain greater control over their lives and environment, acquire valued resources and basic rights, and achieve important life goals and reduced societal marginalization. (Maton, 2008, p. 5)

### Psychological Empowerment

As previously discussed, Zimmerman (1995) proposed the conceptualization of empowerment at the individual level as psychological empowerment (PE), comprised of intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral components. Zimmerman presented three assumptions of PE: 1) PE means something different for different populations; 2) empowerment exists in different forms for different contexts; and 3) PE is dynamic and fluctuates over time. As a result, Zimmerman (1995) concluded that a universal measure of PE would not help as it would not be appropriate for universal contexts; instead it could be considered an open-ended construct with a general framework for guidance to measurement. Zimmerman (1995) developed a nomological network of PE, a theoretical framework to specify relationships among variables in order to further the definition of the main construct.

Within this framework, the first construct, *intrapersonal component*, includes perceived control, self-efficacy, competence, and mastery. The second construct,

*interactional component*, includes critical awareness, skill development, and resource mobilization. The third construct is the *behavioral component*: community involvement, organizational participation, and coping behaviors (Zimmerman, 1995). This framework has been used as a model to guide numerous studies of community-based participation and various health promotion interventions. For example, Peterson and colleagues (2005) studied the effects of social cohesion and gender on PE, the intrapersonal and interactional components, among rural community residents. While the findings contradicted some literature regarding the interactional component of PE, the study also found that social cohesion might explain gender differences in the relationship between participation and empowerment (Peterson et al., 2005). Another study (Holden et al., 2004) analyzed PE and its association with the level of participation among youth and a local tobacco control project, using Zimmerman's (1995) intrapersonal and interactional components. The findings supported their hypothesis that an increase in the quality and intensity of participation generates PE, including aspects of intrapersonal and interactional PE (Holden et al., 2004).

Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991) developed the Sociopolitical Control Scale (SPCS) to measure one element (i.e., sociopolitical control) of the three main components of PE, *intrapersonal component*, (Zimmerman, 1995). Zimmerman and Zahniser (1991) tested the SPCS with three samples, which resulted in two subscales, leadership competence and policy control, and subsequently, this model has been widely tested (Holden et al., 2005; Itzhaky, 2003; Itzhaky & York, 2000; Peterson & Hughey, 2004; Peterson & Reid, 2003; Speer, 2000; Speer, Jackson, & Peterson, 2001; Speer and Peterson, 2000; Zimmerman, Israel, Schultz, & Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman,

Ramirez-Valles, Suarez, de la Rosa, & Castro, 1997). Peterson and colleagues (2006) found that the method bias from the use of some negatively worded items had a significant effect on the factor structure of the SPCS and therefore rephrased the negatively worded items so that all statements were positively worded. The Sociopolitical Control Scale-Revised (SPCS-R) (Peterson et al., 2006) was tested and confirmed the original hypothesis of the model and was found to be reliable.

Additionally, the SPCS has been used internationally, translated into Hebrew (Itzhaky & York, 2003) for a study of PE among immigrants in Israel. Most recently, the SPCS was used as a model to develop a Chinese version of the scale for a study in China of urban residents among 29 different communities (Wang et al., 2011).

With the development and testing of the SPCS, the current literature contains a great deal of knowledge on the intrapersonal component of PE. The interactional and behavioral components of PE have been studied far less often, leaving a gap in the literature regarding the testing of Zimmerman's (1995) model of PE. One study using two randomly selected samples of urban residents examined the interactional and intrapersonal components of PE, sense of community, and participation (Speer et al., 2001). Using cluster analysis, the study found that sense of community was more important for interactional empowerment while participation was more important for intrapersonal empowerment. Another study investigating interactional empowerment also found that community participation was not directly related (Peterson, et al., 2002). Previous studies have tested interactional empowerment using the Cognitive Empowerment Scale (Peterson, Hamme, & Speer, 2002; Peterson, Lowe, & Aquilino,

2005). The Collective Action and Interpersonal Relationship Scale (CAIRS) is another scale to test interactional empowerment (Speer, 2000).

While there are a plethora of empowerment studies at the individual level, very few studies of community level social work practice exist (Ohmer and Korr, 2006) and even fewer examining community empowerment. In their review of empirical studies of community-based social work interventions, Ohmer and Korr (2006) found this type of research is still lacking despite the recent increase in this level of intervention. With the recent revival of community-based social work practice and macro practice (Ohmer and Korr, 2006), the need exists for empirical evidence at the community and organizational level.

### ***Organizational Characteristics that Influence Psychological Empowerment***

It has been well-established that empowerment is a multidimensional construct, though most of the existing literature focuses on the individual level (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Mostly rooted within the field of community psychology, limited attention has been given to organizational characteristics that promote PE. In their notable study on community organizations, Maton and Salem (1995) sought to investigate the characteristics of empowering community settings using a multiple case study methodology. The researchers conducted in-depth, longitudinal research on three community settings considered to be empowering to the members. The settings included a religious fellowship in the Midwest US; a mutual help organization for people with mental health challenges varying in severity; and an educational support program for talented African American college students. Through hundreds of hours of participant observation, the researchers performed an inductive, grounded theory

analysis, and identified four key organizational characteristics of empowering community settings. These characteristics found across settings were: group-based belief systems, opportunity role structures, support systems, and leadership. (Maton & Salem, 1995).

More specifically, Maton and Salem (1995) used a multiple case study method to identify characteristics within empowering community settings. Maton and Salem (1995) found that group-based belief system as an empowering community setting characteristic inspired growth among its members, had a strengths-based perspective, and encouraged its members to look beyond themselves. The characteristic of opportunity role structure is one that is highly accessible and pervasive within the setting and provides individuals with the chance to grow and participate in meaningful ways. The organizational characteristic of support system is one that contributes to the members' quality of life, helps with coping abilities, and fosters a sense of community. Leadership found across empowering settings was inspiring, committed to members and organizational goals, and was shared among several leaders. Many studies have built upon Maton and Salem's (1995) findings (Maton, 2008; Minkler et al., 2001; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). For example, Maton (2008) found relational environment as an additional organizational characteristic linked to member empowerment. In a study of community residents who participated in health promotion activities, Hughey and his colleagues (2008) concluded that sense of community is a distinct organizational empowering characteristic.

Other studies have drawn from the work of Zimmerman (2000) and Peterson and Zimmerman (2004), examining the processes and outcomes of empowerment at the organizational level. At the organizational level, empowerment exists through the efforts that promote psychological empowerment among the organization's members as well as

effectiveness towards organizational goals (Peterson and Zimmerman, 2004).

Zimmerman (2000) proposed a conceptual distinction between empowering and empowered organizations. Zimmerman defined empowering organizations as those generating psychological empowerment at the individual level for its members and empowered organizations as those with influence within the larger system beyond their organization.

Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed a nomological network of organizational empowerment comprised of the following three components: intraorganizational, interorganizational, and extraorganizational. According to their conceptual model, the intraorganizational component of OE includes processes, such as incentive management, opportunity role structure, and social support as well as outcomes, such as viability, resource identification, and collaboration of coempowered subgroups. The interorganizational component includes the linkages between organizations and includes networking, collaboration, and resource procurement. The extraorganizational component includes processes and outcomes that affect the larger environment of the organization, such as disseminating information and influencing public policy (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004).

Since this OE model was proposed (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), several studies have been conducted on the model, but tested only certain components (Griffith et al., 2008; Griffith et al., 2010; Hardina, 2011; Haswell-Elkins et al., 2009; LeRoy et al., 2004; Ohmer, 2008; Perkins et al., 2007; Speer et al., 2013) and one study criticized the model (Bishop et al., 2006). Most of these studies investigated the characteristics of empowering organizations while the characteristics of empowered organizations have

had less attention. For example, one qualitative study examined the empowering organizational processes within a tobacco control effort (LeRoy et al., 2004). Among the different OE processes analyzed, this study found that organizational structure determined how well an organization advanced subgroup linkages (intraorganizational process) and accessed social networks (interorganizational process) (LeRoy et al., 2004). Another study (Hardina, 2011) surveyed social service managers to determine whether their organizations were empowering through inclusive decision-making procedures. A more recent study investigated the influence of organizational sense of community as well as participation and gender on two components of PE (Speer et al., 2012) with participants of community organizing efforts in several U.S. communities.

In a qualitative study of the national Health Start program, researchers examined both empowering and empowered organizational characteristics within community-based consortia working to reduce infant mortality (Minkler et al., 2001). Among the findings, Minkler and colleagues (2001) found that the community-based consortia engaged in practices that align with characteristics of empowering organizations. For example, the consortia displayed organizational characteristics proposed by Maton and Salem (1995), including opportunity role structure, a peer support system, and collaborative leadership (Minkler et al., 2001). This investigation found aspects of empowered organizations among these consortia, including the evidence of successful growth and development and effectively competing for additional resources (Minkler et al., 2001). This study found conflicting evidence of the ability to influence policy, another characteristic proposed of empowered organizations (Zimmerman, 2000). There was evidence of influence on policy from some but not all of the consortia in the study.



The only other study to date investigating empowered organizations is Ohmer's (2008) examination of citizen participation, citizen benefits, and empowering processes and empowered outcomes, which was conceptualized, in part, as organizational effectiveness. With existing literature mostly limited to empowering organizations and a handful of studies that found some aspects of empowered organizations (Minkler et al., 2001; Ohmer, 2008), it appears that the social work literature is in need of more exploration of these constructs in order to establish reliable measures for the different variables within the OE theory. The current study will contribute to the literature by its empirical exploration of the OE model. More specifically, the current study used quantitative methods to explore several intraorganizational characteristics: group-based belief system, opportunity role structure, leadership, social support, and organizational sense of community. Additionally, the current study will add to the literature on empowered organizations through the qualitative exploratory investigation of other possible organizational characteristics.

### ***Sense of Community as an Intraorganizational Characteristic***

A widely used definition of sense of community (SOC) is the multidimensional definition by McMillian and Chavis (1986), comprised of four major components: needs fulfillment by the community; group membership or feeling of belonging; influence or the sense that one matters to the community and the community matters to its members; and the existence of emotional connection shared by members in terms of history or experiences within the community.

Few empirical studies have examined the relationship between sense of community and PE (Itzhaky & York, 2003; Peterson & Reid, 2003; Wilke & Speer,

2011) and even less so of the relationship between sense of community and OE processes and outcomes (Hughey et al., 2008). Hughey and colleagues (2008) explored how organizational sense of community might be an empowering organizational characteristic within a community-based substance abuse prevention effort. Through hierarchical regression analysis, this study concluded that organizational sense of community should be considered an empowering organizational characteristic of the OE model. Based on this study, organizational sense of community was included as one of the intraorganizational characteristics to be explored within the conceptual model.

### ***Organizational Characteristics, Empowerment, and Effectiveness***

While there has been much attention on organizational effectiveness in the nonprofit and human service literature recently, a consensus on theoretical or empirical definitions or measurements has not yet been found (Cho, 2007; Lecy et al., 2012; Sowa et al., 2004). In a review of 24 empirical studies of interorganizational variables and effectiveness in non-profit settings, Cho (2007) confirmed the inconsistency in measures.

Many studies measure organizational or service outcomes as effectiveness (Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998) and there are many studies looking at various organizational characteristics predicting effectiveness. For example, Yoo and Brooks (2005) found organizational characteristics, such as strong leadership, routine in work, and coworker and supervisor support, were related to service effectiveness. Cho (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of empirical studies and found that leadership was most frequently examined as a critical intra-organizational variable.

Based on the literature in child welfare and human service organization and administration, Yoo, Brooks, and Patti (2007) proposed a theoretical framework for

studying organizational context within the field of child welfare in which four organizational constructs are predictors of service effectiveness. These organizational constructs are: organizational structure and contingency factors, such as role specialization; work conditions such as workload or leadership; worker characteristics such as experience or age; and worker responses such as job satisfaction or burnout (Yoo, Brooks, & Patti, 2007).

Over time, it has been established that even within the non-profit sector, organizational variations exist and multidimensional frameworks are better able to account for the larger picture of what represents organizational effectiveness (Bowers and Seashore, 1966). Within the last few decades, scholars have developed studies of organizational effectiveness as a multidimensional construct. In a recent historical review of organizational effectiveness and a synthesis of existing literature, Lecy and colleagues (2012) found that while the literature is still fractured conceptually across disciplines and a dearth of empirical investigation remains, there is scholarly consensus that unidimensional measures of effectiveness are not useful for this construct. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) proposed a spatial model of organizational effectiveness to account for the competing values embedded within assessments of effectiveness. For instance, one of the primary value dimensions is related to organizational focus on means, or the important processes such as planning or goal setting; versus the ends, or final outcomes, such as productivity or resource acquisition (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Cameron (1981) proposed a multidimensional model of nine dimensions of effectiveness in an attempt to address several commonly tested unidimensional models, including the rational goal, system resource, and participation satisfaction models.

Sowa and colleagues (2004) introduced the Multidimensional Integrated Model of Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness (MIMNOE) for measuring organizational effectiveness within two prominent dimensions: management effectiveness and program effectiveness. For each of these two dimensions, this framework assesses capacity, the operations and structures; and outcomes, those resulting from both management and program actions. Sowa and colleagues (2004) proposed that to improve outcomes, organizations need to assess how their capacity facilitates or impedes their outcomes, within their management as well as their program activities.

More recently, Packard (2010) proposed a model of management functioning and program performance, which includes inputs, such as client or staff characteristics, conditions of the community, and available resources as significant factors of organizational effectiveness. Divergent from much of the literature in which accomplishments of goals and outcomes were rated most important, this study found it ranked fourth in important measures of organizational effectiveness; client satisfaction had the highest rating (Packard, 2010).

To date, the existing multidimensional models of organizational effectiveness mentioned above have not been fully tested; however, studies focusing on select variables could start to test parts of these models. Further, it appears that no study to date has examined the relationships between all three sets of variables, individual empowerment, organizational characteristics, and organizational effectiveness. The current study will contribute to the literature by its examination of the relationships across all three sets of variables, through quantitative and qualitative methods.

## Chapter 3: Method

*The complexity of our research problems calls for answers beyond simple numbers in a quantitative sense or words in a qualitative sense. A combination of both forms of data provides the most complete analysis of problems* (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 21).

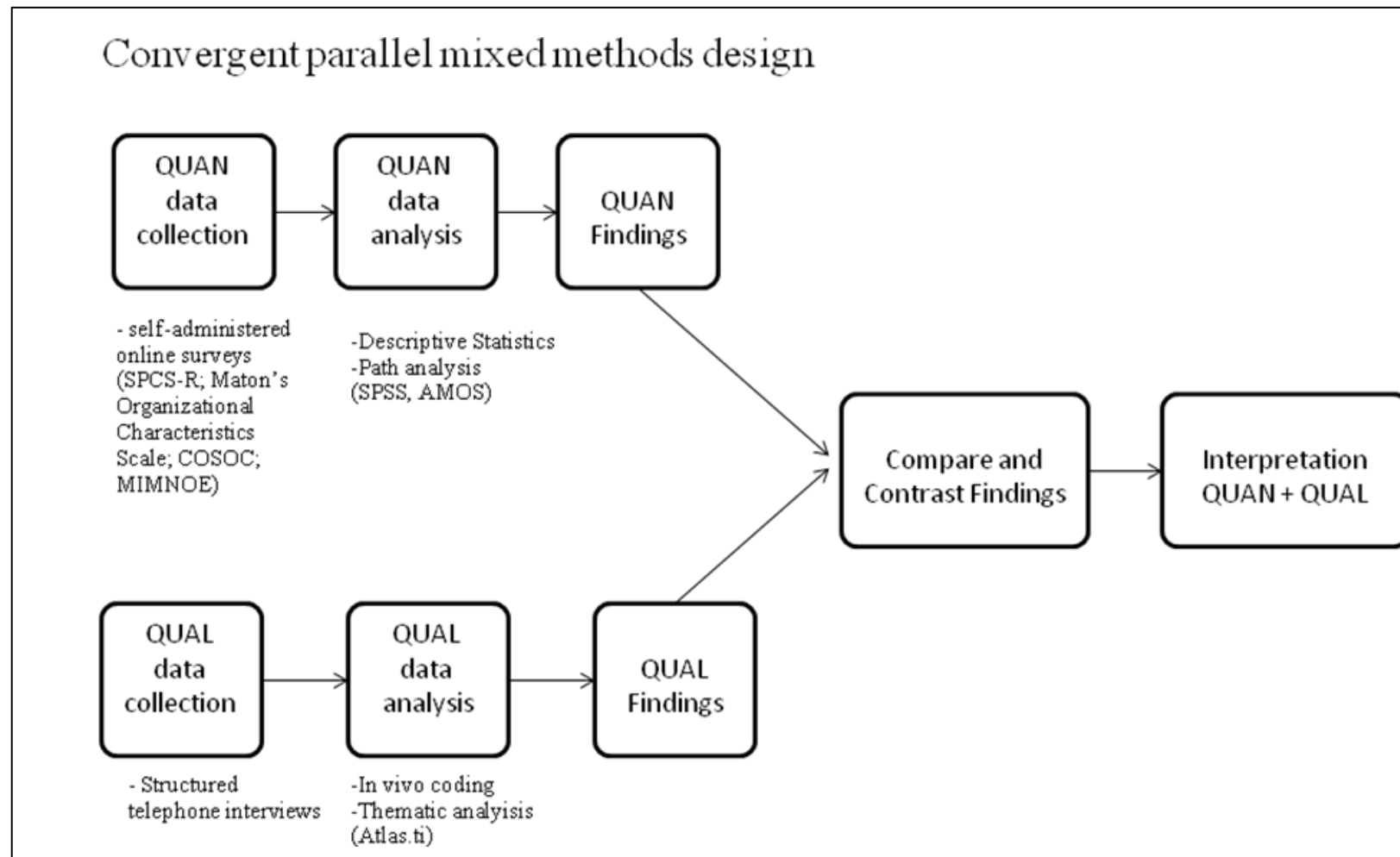
This chapter presents the methods of the present study of empowerment and perceived effectiveness. Areas addressed in this chapter include the study design, data source, sampling method, data collection procedures, measures, and preparation of data for analysis. The variables associated with the research questions are described in detail.

### Study Design

The present study adopted a mixed methods convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), which included separate analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, which were previously collected separately. Within this mixed methods design, the two different types of data were weighted equally for analysis. Results of the quantitative and qualitative data were then converged for interpretation of the results for an enhanced discussion. The purpose of this design was to extrapolate conclusions from all data sources that are valid and justifiable about the proposed topic. The quantitative and qualitative data are complementary, therefore providing elaboration or enhancement of results from both methods (Greene et al., 1989) and were synthesized for a deeper understanding of the current topic (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

The mixed methods paradigm debate began in the 1980s and formal development of mixed methods procedures were established during the late 1980s through the early 1990s (Creswell & Clark, 2011). However, philosophical discussions regarding the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods took place much earlier (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Sieber, 1973; Denzin, 1979). For example, Denzin (1979) argued for the inclusion of qualitative data within quantitative studies. In recent years and today, after much debate and advocacy, mixed methods design has become an established approach to research and has spread widely across disciplines (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) stated, “Researchers situate numbers in the contexts and words of participants, and they frame the words of participants with numbers, trends, and statistical results. Both forms of data are necessary today,” (p. 21). In the spirit of considering substance abuse and related community consequences as a complex social problem, a mixed methods study would enrich understanding of the research questions, by using the qualitative findings to enhance understanding of the quantitative findings on organizational characteristics of empowered coalitions. Figure 6 presents the steps within the mixed methods convergent parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Figure 6 *Current Study Design*



## **Data Source**

This dissertation dataset was derived from a larger parent study of data collected for the New Jersey Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The parent study is an evaluation of the statewide implementation of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) in New Jersey and more specifically of the implementation within 11 specific communities across the state and its impact on substance abuse consequences in those communities. In July 2010, the writer sought and received permission to use this data from the Project Director within the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Additionally, the writer received permission from the Principal Investigator of the grant at Rutgers University. Letters of permission are included in Appendix A. The study obtained approval from the Rutgers University Internal Review Board (IRB) to use this secondary data.

## **Participants**

### ***Background***

Following is a description of the origins of the parent study. Funded by SAMHSA, the New Jersey DMHAS was awarded a national SPF SIG grant in 2006. Between 2004 and 2010, SAMHSA has awarded 49 states, 19 tribes/tribal organizations, 8 Territories and the District of Columbia, within 4 cohorts. New Jersey was funded within cohort 3 of the national SPF SIG initiative. New Jersey DMHAS hired an



evaluator in 2008 to collect data on the processes and outcomes of the statewide SPF initiative.

The New Jersey SPF SIG evaluation study has had four waves of data collection. The first wave of data for the evaluation of the New Jersey SPF SIG was conducted solely on the state level in 2009. Purposeful, non-random sampling was used to recruit stakeholders at the state level involved with the SPF SIG for the evaluation study and a total of 28 participants completed self-reported online surveys and 18 participants completed in-depth interviews. The participants were involved in the statewide process, as a member of one of the two official SPF workgroups or as staff members of the state governmental agency that manages the SPF grant.

In 2010, the New Jersey SPF SIG awarded local SPF SIG grants to 11 community organizations and their coalitions to implement the SPF model within their local communities. The community grantees defined the parameters of their communities being targeted with the SPF initiative. For many of the 11 SPF SIG grantees, the parameters of their communities were defined as a whole county in which the SPF initiatives would target. Three grantees defined their communities as college campuses and surrounding municipalities. One grantee targeted the whole state for their SPF initiative.

The second wave of data was collected in 2010 on the state- and community-level. The participants were comprised of stakeholders involved at the state level of the SPF SIG initiative, such as staff and representatives from human services, higher education, law enforcement, and prevention agencies, as well as community level participants involved within each of the 11 community grantee agencies and their

coalitions. A total of 185 participants completed the survey and 30 participants completed interviews for this second wave of data. The third and fourth waves of data were collected in 2011 and 2012, respectively. These two final years of data collection included state- and community-level data.

### ***Current Sample***

The third wave of community-level data, collected in 2011, was used for the present study. Participants were drawn from a purposeful, non-random sample. This community-level group of participants was drawn from staff at the lead agencies of the 11 community organizations awarded SPF SIG grants from DMHAS and the active partners from their associated coalitions. A total of 138 survey participants and 20 interview participants were included in the sample for the current study.

Demographic information self-reported by survey respondents included age, gender, race, ethnicity, highest degree or level of school, and total household income. The survey sample was primarily female, white, and non Hispanic or Latino. The majority of respondents reported the completion of Bachelor's degrees or Master's degrees. The mean age of respondents was 46 and the range of ages was 19 – 78 years of age. Table 4 outlines all respondent demographics.

Table 4

*Respondent Demographics*

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender (n=129)</b>		
Female	74	57.4
Male	55	42.6
<b>Race (n=123)</b>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.8
Asian	3	2.4
Black or African American	8	6.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	111	90.2
<b>Ethnicity (n=115)</b>		
Hispanic or Latino	4	3.5
Not Hispanic or Latino	111	96.5
<b>Education (n=129)</b>		
Some college credit but less than 1 year	6	4.7
1 or more years of college, no degree	9	7.0
Associate degree (i.e. AA, AS)	6	4.7
Bachelor's degree (i.e. BA, BS)	46	35.7
Master's degree (i.e. MA, MSW, MBA)	45	34.9
Doctorate degree (i.e. PhD, EdD)	15	11.6

	Number	Percentage
Professional degree (i.e. MD, JD)	2	1.6
Household income (n=115)		
\$10,000 to \$19,999	3	2.6
\$20,000 to \$29,999	3	2.6
\$30,000 to \$39,999	11	9.6
\$40,000 to \$49,999	6	5.2
\$50,000 to \$59,999	7	6.1
\$60,000 to \$69,999	6	5.2
\$70,000 to \$79,999	10	8.7
\$80,000 to \$89,999	6	5.2
\$90,000 to \$99,999	7	6.1
\$100,000 to \$149,999	32	27.8
\$150,000 or more	24	20.9
Age		
19 – 24	8	5.8
25 – 34	16	11.6
35 – 44	27	19.6
45 – 54	26	18.8
55 – 64	33	24.0
65 – 68	6	4.3
78 and older	1	0.7

Table 5 summarizes participants' average length of membership of the SPF SIG initiatives and average length of time within the alcohol and drug prevention field. The average duration of membership of the SPF SIG for participants was 24.48 months (n=133). The average duration of involvement in the alcohol and drug prevention field for participants was 12.24 years (n=133).

Table 5

*SPF SIG Participant Involvement*

	How long have you been involved with SPF SIG in your community?	How long have you been involved in the alcohol and drug prevention field?
	# of months (n=133)	# of years (n=133)
Mean	24.48	12.24
Std. Deviation	19.05	10.28

Table 6 lists the participants' primary positions within the prevention field or related to their SPF SIG initiatives. The most common response to the current primary position was '*Paid Staff*' (20.3%), followed by '*Education*' (13.8%). Of the respondents, 11 reported their primary positions as '*Other*' (8%). Table 7 lists the answers indicated for those who selected '*Other*.'

Table 6

*Participants' Primary Positions*

Current Primary Position	Frequency (%)
	(n=138)
Paid staff	28 (20.3)
Education	19 (13.8)
Law enforcement	14 (10.1)
Youth programs/services	12 (8.7)
Other	11 (8.0)
Local government	11 (8.0)
Health services	11 (8.0)
Social services	9 (6.5)
Representatives from the community in the 18-25 year old population	9 (6.5)
Business	5 (3.6)
Faith community	4 (2.9)
Media	2 (1.4)
Parents	1 (0.7)
Justice system/courts	1 (0.7)

Table 7

*Responses for 'Other' Primary Positions (n = 11)*

Primary Position	Frequency
College administrator	1
Community Mental Health	1
Counselor	1
Director of Programs	1
LCADA	1
Prevention agency	1
Prevention Specialist	1
School	1
Student affairs	1
TIPS Trainer	1
University Counseling Center	1

When asked to indicate their primary position, those participants who indicated any response except for ‘Paid Staff’ were considered to be volunteers of the SPF initiatives. It is assumed that those people who are paid staff automatically spend all of their work time on the SPF SIG initiative. Therefore, it did not make sense to ask these participants about how much time they participate in the SPF SIG initiative. Those who were participating in their SPF initiatives as volunteers were asked to estimate how much they participate in the initiative. Table 8 shows the results of members’ level of involvement in the SPF SIG. The respondents were asked to rate how often they

generally participate in this initiative each month, on a 5-point scale: 1) not at all; 2) 1 time; 3) 2 to 3 times; 4) 4 times; and 5) 5 or more times.

Table 8

*Participants' Level of Organizational Involvement (n = 107)*

How often do you participate in SPF SIG each month?	
<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
not at all	9 (8.4)
1 time	57 (53.3)
2 to 3 times	23 (21.5)
4 times	1 (0.9)
5 or more	17 (15.9)

## Procedures

The current study used secondary data that were collected in the third wave of data collection by the evaluator of a project within the New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). This data collection occurred in 2011. The data were collected through self-administered surveys and structured telephone interviews. The following sections describe the specific procedures for the quantitative and then qualitative data collection phase.



### *Survey Data*

The SPF SIG evaluation team and the key state partners of the SPF SIG initiative, including DMHAS staff, used a collaborative approach in the development of the survey instruments. The survey was developed as a quantitative, self-administered online survey using [Surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). The survey instrument was developed into 11 unique versions for each of the SPF SIG community grantees, with identical items except for the grantee name as the referent. All subscale items contained a 6-point scale rating system; from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The specific subscale items included in the survey are detailed in the following section on measures. The survey contained one open-ended question regarding social networks. See Appendix B for the community-level survey instrument. A web link for each survey was generated in [Surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com).

The research team sent emails to the Project Directors of the 11 community grantee initiatives, requesting their assistance in sending out the online survey. All Project Directors sent the survey to their coalition members and relevant staff members. Information about the study and the informed consent form approved by Rutgers Internal Review Board (ORB) were included on the opening page of the survey.

After the survey was open for several weeks, the Project Directors sent follow-up emails to all potential respondents to encourage more participation. While it was impossible to calculate the overall response rate, 167 community level surveys were completed. One of the community sub-recipients did not track the total number of people who were sent the survey so a response rate could not be calculated. The response rates from the other community-level surveys individually ranged from 33% to 75%. Of the total 167 surveys, a total of 138 were kept for analysis. A total of 29 surveys were deleted

from the dataset. Those deleted only contained responses to the first 3 or 4 questions and did not contain answers for any of the critically important scale items, therefore were excluded.

Results from the 11 individual surveys were downloaded from SurveyMonkey.com and uploaded into one SPSS file for analysis.

### ***Structured Interviews***

A qualitative interview schedule was developed as standardized, open-ended interviews in which each participant was asked the same questions, in the same sequence (Patton, 2002). The community-level interview schedule was identical for each of the 11 community grantees and contained 16 questions. See Appendix C for the full set of questions contained within the community-level interview schedule.

Purposeful, snowball sampling was used to recruit the sample of interview participants. Three trained research interviewers contacted the Project Directors at each of the eleven community sub-recipient lead agencies and requested the names of 1 staff person and 1 coalition member to interview, for a total of 2 interviews per SPF SIG initiative. Interviewers contacted the people suggested to request their participation. Of a possible 22 interviews, 20 were completed, a response rate of 91%.

The interviewers were graduate students, who were trained in person by the research manager of the study. The training included a review of the interview questions, discussion on interview prompting, hands-on instructions for the telephone recording equipment, and practicing the interview technique. A sample phone introduction

transcript and a sample email letter for recruiting participants were provided to the interviewers. These interviews were conducted by telephone, using the structured schedule of questions. The interviews were completed in 25 minutes, on average. Interviews were recorded and the audio files were transcribed verbatim by an outside company. The transcribed interview data were uploaded into separate Microsoft Word files for each interview then cut and pasted into Microsoft Excel by question for initial analysis. All interview data files were then uploaded into Atlas.ti version 6.1.17 software for more in-depth analysis.

## **Measures**

### ***Quantitative Measures***

The development of the survey was a collaborative effort among the SPF SIG evaluation team and the key state partners of the SPF SIG initiative, including DMHAS staff. The evaluation team worked with stakeholders including representatives from human services, higher education, law enforcement, and prevention agencies, to identify and modify existing measures from the current literature. The result was a quantitative survey containing 75 items across 7 constructs and demographics. Constructs relevant for this study included: perceived effectiveness, psychological empowerment, opportunity role structure, leadership, social support, group-based belief system, and sense of community (see Appendix B for scale items used for the present study). Three self-report measures were administered to measure five empowering intraorganizational characteristics as proposed within the OE framework (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004):

opportunity role structure, leadership, social support, group-based belief system, and organizational sense of community. One scale was administered to measure the dependent variable of the present study, participants' perceived effectiveness. Predictor measures are described first, followed by the measure for perceived effectiveness (criterion variable).

Psychological Empowerment. The current study used the Sociopolitical Control Scale-Revised (SPCS-R), developed by Peterson and colleagues (2006). The SPCS-R was developed based on Zimmerman's (1995) model of psychological empowerment (PE) and the investigation of the intrapersonal component of sociopolitical control (SPC) using the original Sociopolitical Control Scale (SPCS) (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). The SPCS-R tests two dimensions of the intrapersonal component of PE: leadership competence and policy control. Peterson and colleagues (2006) revised the SPCS to include all positively worded items and it was found to be reliable (coefficient alpha for leadership competence = .78 and for policy control = .81). The present study included eight items from the SPCS-R (Peterson et al., 2006) within the self-report survey to assess participants' leadership competence, (i.e. self-perceptions of individuals' ability to lead and organize a group of people). Example items included "I can usually organize people to get things done," and "I would rather have a leadership role when I'm involved in a group project." The self-report survey also contained nine items from the SPCS-R to measure participants' policy control (i.e. individuals' self-perceptions of their influence on policy decisions within a community.) Example items included "I enjoy participation because I want to have as much say in my community as possible," and "It is important to

me that I actively participate in local prevention efforts.” All 17 items of the SPCS-R are shown in Appendix B. For this study, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the 17 SPCS-R statements using a six-point Likert scale where 1 = “Strongly disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Somewhat disagree,” 4 = “Somewhat agree,” 5 = “Agree,” and 6 = “Strongly agree.” The SPCS-R variable was created by computing the mean of all 17 items (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .89$ ). A higher score on this variable indicated higher levels of SPC.

Opportunity Role Structure, Leadership, & Social Support. Maton’s Organizational Characteristics Scale (Maton, 1988) used a Likert-type scale to measure perceptions of organizational characteristics in community-based organizations. Perceptions of three organizational characteristics are measured with this scale: (a) opportunity role structure, (b) leadership, and (c) social support. First, the opportunity role structure subscale measures the extent to which members are encouraged to assume a variety of formal positions or roles within an organization and to take charge of different aspects of group functioning (Maton, 1988). The present study included five items to measure participants’ perceptions of opportunity role structure. Example items included “Different members of the SPF SIG are in charge of different aspects of its functioning” and “Positions of responsibility are spread among members of the group.” Second, the leadership subscale assesses the extent to which individuals with formal or informal responsibility within a group are interpersonally and organizationally talented, committed and dedicated to the organization as well as support and respond well to group members (Maton, 1988). The present study included five items to measure participants’

perceptions of leadership. Example items included “The leaders are very committed and dedicated to the SFP SIG initiative” and “The leaders have strong organizational skills and know-how.” Third, the social support subscale measures the degree to which organizational members provide and receive emotional and other types of support (Maton, 1988). The present study included five items to measure participants’ self-reported levels of social support. Example items of this subscale included “I receive as much support and help as I presently desire from SPF SIG” and “I provide as much support and help to the SPF SIG initiative as I presently desire.” Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these subscale statements using a six-point Likert scale where 1 = “Strongly disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Somewhat disagree,” 4 = “Somewhat agree,” 5 = “Agree,” and 6 = “Strongly agree.” In the present study, alpha reliability was .70 for leadership, .88 for opportunity role structure, and .80 for social support.

Group-based belief system. The present study administered select items from Quinn and Spreitzer’s Competing Values Model of Organizational Culture Scale (1991) to measure the group-based belief system of organizations. Group-based belief system (GBBS) refers to the extent to which an organization’s values and culture focus on human relations, teamwork, and cohesion to inspire personal growth and shared vision among members. The present study included five items from this scale to measure participants’ self-reported group-based beliefs. Example items included “The SPF SIG initiative encourages participation and open discussion,” and “There is a focus on human relations, teamwork, and cohesion within the SPF SIG.” Participants were asked to indicate their

level of agreement with the GBBS subscale statements using a six-point Likert scale where 1 = “Strongly disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Somewhat disagree,” 4 = “Somewhat agree,” 5 = “Agree,” and 6 = “Strongly agree.” Alpha reliability for this measure in the present study was .89.

Sense of Community. The revised version of the original Community Organization Sense of Community (COSOC) scale (Hughey, Speer, & Peterson, 1999; Peterson et al., 2008) was administered in the present study to measure participants’ self-reported levels of connectedness. The COSOC items are oriented towards the level of community based organizations, which fit the present study participants. The present study included four items from the COSOC. Example items included “Everyone on SPF SIG is moving in the same direction,” and “Because of SPF SIG, I am connected to other groups in the state.” Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the COSOC subscale statements using a six-point Likert scale where 1 = “Strongly disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Somewhat disagree,” 4 = “Somewhat agree,” 5 = “Agree,” and 6 = “Strongly agree.” Alpha reliability for this measure in the present study was .87.

Perceived Effectiveness. The Perceived Effectiveness subscale was created using the framework of Sowa et al. (2004) called the Multidimensional and Integrated Model of Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness (MIMNOE). The MIMNOE encompasses two different dimensions of effectiveness: management and program effectiveness. The management dimension measures the managerial structure and process of managing. The program dimension measures the specific services, capacity of the program, and

outcomes of the service interventions (Sowa et al., 2004). Example items in the subscale for perceived effectiveness included: “People who benefit from SPF SIG are satisfied with its activities,” and “People within SPF SIG generally have the knowledge and resources they need to carry out their tasks.” This subscale contained twelve items. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these subscale statements using a six-point Likert scale where 1 = “Strongly disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Somewhat disagree,” 4 = “Somewhat agree,” 5 = “Agree,” and 6 = “Strongly agree.” This scale has not been empirically tested so past reliability scores are not available. Alpha reliability for this measure in the present study was .91.

The following table describes the predictor and dependent variables’ mean and standard deviations.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables (n=138)*

Variable	Cronbach’s Alpha	Mean (SD)
Psychological empowerment	.89	4.73 (.55)
Opportunity role structure	.88	5.08 (.78)
Leadership	.70	5.49 (.60)
Social support	.80	4.96 (.71)
Sense of community	.87	5.11 (.69)
Group-base belief systems	.89	5.33 (.62)
Perceived effectiveness (DV)	.91	4.97 (.63)



### *Qualitative Measures*

The structured interview schedule was also developed in a collaborative manner involving the New Jersey SPF SIG evaluation team and key stakeholders at the state level. Several of the interview questions were based on the OE model and included the topics of intraorganizational and interorganizational empowering processes, such as incentive management, social networking, and subgroup linkages (Peterson and Zimmerman, 2004). Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed that empowered organizations are effective at finding resources, networking with other organizations, and influencing policy makers. These are proposed as the outcomes representing the extent to which organizations are empowered. The structured interview schedule included questions to explore whether some characteristics of empowered organizations are evident within the participants' organizations in the present study. For example, the interview schedule included questions asking participants about how their organizations have sought out additional resources, how their organizations work with other groups and how organizational work has influenced public policy or practice. The interview schedule contained a total of 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix C for the full set of interview questions). Examples of interview questions included: "What do you see as the real accomplishments of the SPF SIG initiative in your community so far?" "What incentives are provided by the SPF SIG initiative in your community to encourage member participation?" and "How has the SPF SIG initiative in your community influenced public policy or practice?"

## **Analysis**

### ***Quantitative Analysis***

Quantitative secondary, cross-sectional data were used to analyze the relationships between study variables. IBM SPSS Statistics version 20 software was utilized to conduct descriptive statistics and IBM SPSS AMOS version 20 software (Arbuckle, 2011) was utilized to perform path analysis for the quantitative analysis of the seven identified variables.

Path analysis is classified as a causal modeling technique which examines the causal flow of a set of variables in order to estimate direct and indirect causal effects (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Path analysis involves the researcher creating a diagram with arrows connecting the variables to depict the direction of cause-and-effect, fitting the researcher's beliefs about the links among the study variables. The present path diagram was developed using IBM SPSS AMOS version 20 software, and was based on the key theories discussed. A significant benefit of using path analysis over multiple regression models is the ability to test the overall fit of the proposed model in order to determine if the model, or the researcher's theory, is consistent with the data used in the study (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). The path analysis technique tested the conceptual model, in order to see how the predictor variables of PE and the intraorganizational characteristic variables related to coalition members' perceived effectiveness.

### ***Qualitative Analysis***

The analysis of the qualitative secondary data was partially managed using the qualitative data software package, Atlas.ti, version 6 (Frieze, 2011). The audio files of the

interviews were used as well as the transcribed files in the present analysis. In preparation for the qualitative analysis, the researcher listened to the audio files as well as read the transcripts initially, in an iterative process, in order to become familiar with the data before beginning to identify codes and themes. Once the researcher was familiar with the qualitative data, the electronic files of the interview data were reorganized into Microsoft Word files and Microsoft Excel files for further analysis. Finally, the electronic files of interview data were uploaded into Atlas.ti software (Frieze, 2011) during the coding process. The approach to the initial coding process was primarily conducted by using a case analysis (Patton, 2002), in which the data were organized by the individual interviews separately as cases during the first stage of open coding, going line by line of each case file separately. Constructs from the present study and related conceptual framework were used as sensitizing concepts during the coding process. Atlas.ti software (Frieze, 2011) allowed the researcher to track a priori codes based on sensitizing concepts related to the study's theoretical framework (Patton, 2002) as well as codes that inductively emerged from the data. Once a preliminary list of codes was developed, the data were coded again, and combining of codes occurred at this stage to develop themes. This process of coding and determining themes and patterns was repeated until no additional pattern or themes were found. Content and thematic analysis was conducted on each case to reveal patterns and themes (Patton, 2002). Overall themes across cases are discussed in the findings.

## Chapter 4: Results

*“When you reach a common goal, when they’re accomplished after putting your heads together and you’re coming together on one agreement and you all are pushing forward in one direction, that will be my idea of success”* (Interview Respondent, 2011).

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted to learn more about the relationship between organizational characteristics, empowerment, and perceived effectiveness among community coalitions implementing an innovative substance abuse prevention framework.

### Quantitative findings

The purpose of the quantitative study was to test a path model that included perceived organizational characteristics and psychological empowerment as predictors of perceived effectiveness. Leadership served as the exogenous variable in the model, and was hypothesized as having direct effects on the three organizational characteristics of opportunity role structure, social support, and group-based belief system. These organizational characteristics were then hypothesized as having both direct and indirect effects on perceived effectiveness through their effects on sense of community and psychological empowerment. Because no previous research has suggested a direction of effects between three organizational characteristics of opportunity role structure, social support, and group-based belief system, the error terms were correlated as consistent with recommendations in the literature (MacCullum et al., 1993; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The first research question asked if the hypothesized path model predicting perceived effectiveness fit the data from a sample of coalition members implementing an innovative substance abuse prevention framework. After calculating variable means (see Chapter 2 for the list of variables and scales) in SPSS, IBM AMOS 20.0 (Arbuckle, 2011) was used to test the hypothesized path model. Means, standard deviations, and correlations are shown in Table 10. The present study found high correlations between the variables; however, the correlations were below .70, not strong enough to suggest multicollinearity (Grewal et al., 2004; Mason & Perreault, 1991). To test the fully saturated model, the researcher performed a structural equation modeling (SEM) procedure with observed variables using IBM AMOS 20.0 (Arbuckle, 2011). The variance-covariance matrix was analyzed with maximum likelihood estimation. The analysis is similar to traditional path analysis, however, SEM allows for simultaneous estimation of equations rather than a series of regression equations.

The over-identified model, presented in Figure 7, shows only significant paths. The path coefficients presented are statistically significant standardized beta weights. According to the goodness-of-fit measures, the model was found to fit well for the sample,  $\chi^2(7) = 11.63$ ,  $p = .11$ ; Goodness-of-Fit Index = .98; Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index = .91; Comparative Fit Index = .99; and Tucker-Lewis Index = .96. The model accounted for 60% of the variance in perceived effectiveness, 64% of the variance in sense of community, 20% of the variance in psychological empowerment, 41% of the variance in group-based belief system, 13% of the variance in social support, and 18% of the variance in opportunity role structure.

As seen in Figure 7, psychological empowerment and sense of community had direct, positive effects on perceived effectiveness. These findings indicate that individuals with higher scores on the measurement of psychological empowerment tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness. Similarly, individuals with greater sense of community tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness.

Opportunity role structure was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through its relationship with sense of community. Individuals who had higher scores representing perceptions of a stronger opportunity role structure tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness. Additionally, individuals who perceived a stronger opportunity role structure tended to have a greater sense of community, which led to higher levels of perceived effectiveness.

Social support was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly and indirectly through its relationship with psychological empowerment. Individuals with greater levels of social support tended to have higher levels of perceived effectiveness. Additionally, individuals with greater levels of social support tended to have higher levels of psychological empowerment, and individuals who were more empowered tended to perceive their coalitions are more effective.

Group based belief system was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through its relationship with sense of community. Individuals with a greater system of group based beliefs tended to have higher levels of perceived effectiveness. Additionally, individuals with greater system of group based beliefs tended to have a greater sense of community, which led to higher levels of perceived effectiveness.

Leadership was found to predict perceived effectiveness indirectly through its relationships with opportunity role structure, social support, and group based belief system. Individuals who perceived stronger leadership within their coalition were more likely to rate their coalition as having a stronger opportunity role structure, and individuals who perceived a stronger opportunity role structure tended to view their coalitions as more effective. Individuals who perceived stronger leadership within their coalition tended to have greater levels of social support, and individuals with greater levels of social support tended to view their coalitions as more effective. Similarly, individuals with stronger leadership characteristics tended to have a greater system of group based beliefs, and individuals with a greater system of group based beliefs tended to have higher levels of perceived effectiveness. Leadership was not found to predict perceived effectiveness directly.

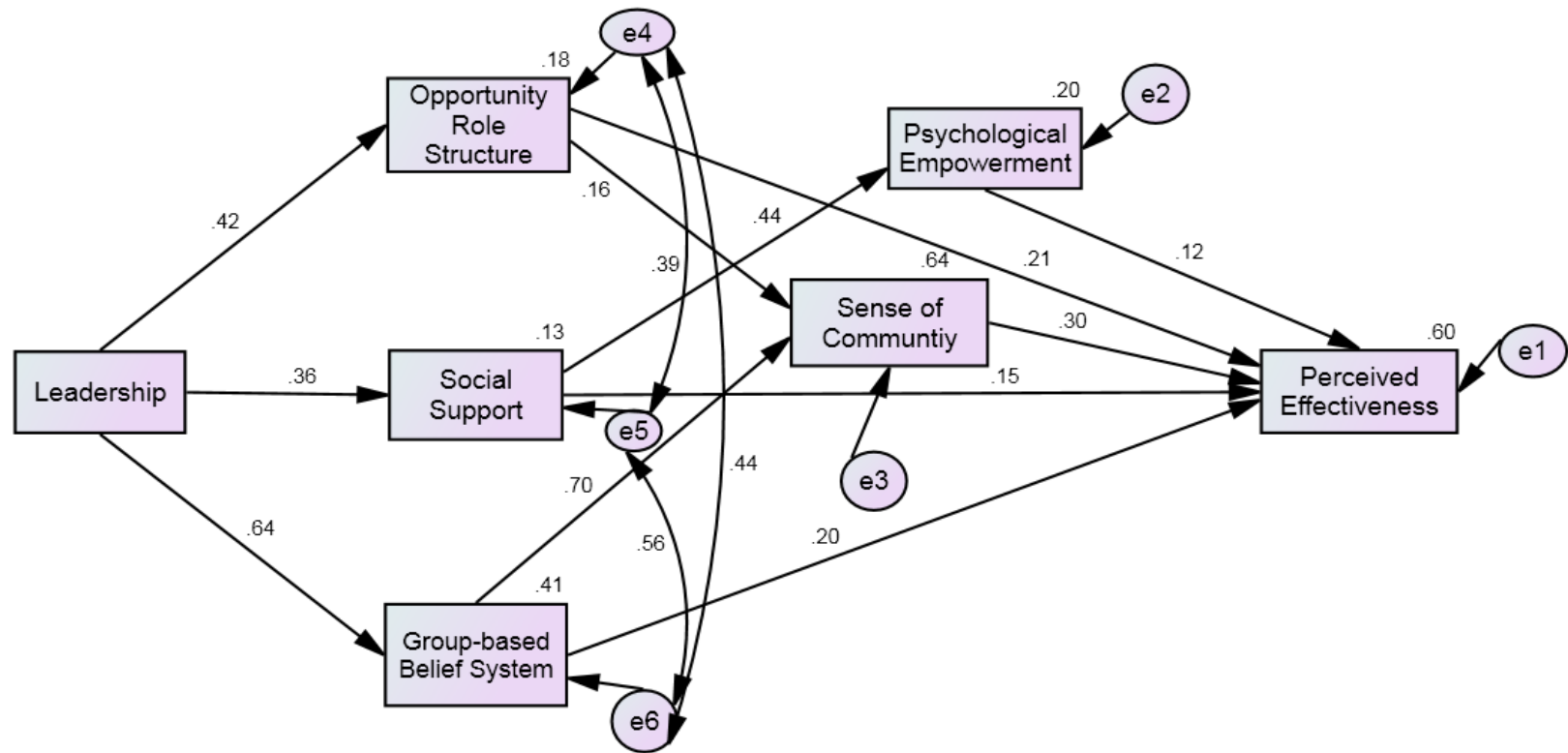
Table 10.

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the Study Variables*

	n	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived Effectiveness	138	4.97	.63	--						
2. Psychological Empowerment	138	4.73	.55	.42**	--					
3. Sense of Community	138	5.11	.69	.70**	.37**	--				
4. Group-based Belief System	138	5.33	.62	.69**	.33**	.79**	--			
5. Social Support	138	4.96	.71	.60**	.44**	.58**	.63**	--		
6. Opportunity Role Structure	138	5.08	.78	.60**	.29**	.56**	.57**	.48**	--	
7. Leadership	137	5.49	.60	.46**	.26**	.59**	.64**	.36**	.43**	--
**p<.01.										



Figure 7 *Final Path Model*



## **Qualitative findings**

The purpose of the qualitative study was to further explore the key variables of the conceptual framework and to provide a more comprehensive look at organizational characteristics, empowerment, and coalition members' perceived effectiveness beyond the survey data. The qualitative analysis of key informant interviews followed the common process of organizing the interview data by case, several iterations of coding, and organizing coding into overall themes. This analysis was then integrated with the quantitative findings. The next section describes key findings of the qualitative analysis. The final section of this chapter presents the integrated findings of both methods of analysis.

The research questions related to the qualitative study were as follows:

1. Does the qualitative data support the hypothesized path model?
2. What does the data tell about members' empowerment, the characteristics of empowered organizations, and perceived organizational effectiveness?

Secondary research questions for qualitative description were:

- a) What were participants' perceptions of strengths and challenges of the 5-step process and what did they learn from the process so far?
- b) What are the significant milestones of the statewide SPF SIG initiative?
- c) What does empowerment look like at this level?

The qualitative interview data were analyzed using the conceptual framework of organizational empowerment (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004) and some of the specific organizational characteristics as sensitizing concepts (Patton, 2002).

The resulting themes from the present qualitative analysis are described next.

Quotes from respondents are used to further illustrate thematic areas. Proper names within respondents' quotes were deleted and replaced with an "X"; words such as "umm" and "ah" were deleted from direct quotes.

### ***Collaboration***

An overwhelming majority of the 20 interview participants discussed the concept of collaboration at some point during their interview and several mentioned collaboration more than once. Collaboration was cited most often when participants were asked about the accomplishments of their SPF SIG initiatives as well as when participants were asked about their learning experience. More specifically, respondents were asked: "What do you see as the real accomplishments of the SPF SIG initiative in your community so far?" and "Overall, what are the most important things you learned during the SPF SIG process over the last two years?" Another interview question that generated much discussion on collaboration was: "How would you describe the SPF SIG initiative's efforts to identify and develop plans for obtaining the resources it needs for sustainability and goal achievement?" Some respondents discussed collaboration more generally:

Collaboration is key. That's the key thing here. If you really can collaborate and share and develop a cohesive group that feels like they're working towards the same goal, and make them feel part of the process, that's so important. Then people want to join and want to come to the table and want to work together. It's not us, it's not just us as an agency, it's the community, so making it the focus that it's the community is really key.

Probably one of the most important things is that if you don't have collaboration you have nothing. You have just a campaign. But if you don't have people that will pull it out for you even when you're gone you have nothing. It was just a campaign.

I think the collaborative approach is the absolute wave of the future...we've been doing it as an agency for years. But I think that for all of us, the ability to provide services will depend on collaboration and I think communities need to be aware of all the different sectors in their community and how they can interact to maximize resources. So I think that message is the most important take home message, the value of collaboration.

Other respondents spoke about collaboration in relation to their coalition's biggest accomplishment.

First of all the biggest thing is that it's really helped to bring an amazing collaboration together through our members. In the very beginning we built, through our capacity building, an incredible base of members that continue to come to the table each month. We continue to meet monthly. That's a really exciting piece for members to see what we're doing and to be participating in what we're doing and using the whole process by looking at what we're doing and going out and doing the work and evaluating and going back again and looking at the needs assessment. So I'd say the biggest accomplishment is the collaborative effort that we have amongst our members and bringing some people to the table that were never there before...we have a community college and there is quite a range of ages, but we're really been working particularly hard up there with this grant to address the different issues that they're seeing. So that was a group we never really worked that closely with before [this project].

A few respondents conveyed the importance of collaboration as working within a team.

There's no "I" in team, so when you're working with others, I'm sure we are further than we ever would be if we were just doing it by ourselves.

Some respondents explained how collaboration fosters the sharing of information among active coalition members.

Sharing the information and resources, partnerships, again, networking, thinking together to brainstorm and to continue to hold those necessary meetings to discuss issues of concern and work together to make the change.

Well I think what it did was it got everyone in the same room. You know, it got the nurses from the ER, it got the police officers who were making the stops...it got health services and the student assistance program and people who were in the dorms. It got everyone in the same room to say this is the kind of information that we have to make sure we look at, and it's important to compare it from year to year and start collecting data on a much more systematic basis.

Some respondents discussed how collaboration has increased the types of sectors involved in their coalitions. For example, several respondents talked about recruiting or involving coalition members from law enforcement or college communities within their coalition's prevention efforts.

The biggest accomplishment would, I think, be the collaboration. That we have now been able to establish with other agencies that are doing similar work with us. And also the community college that we have in our county, and we only have one four year establishment... I think that collaboration with the different agencies that have really now come together so everybody's kind of working together.

Well, it goes back to our collaboration...collaborating and making people part of the process, which was so exciting about the SPF SIG grant...by having the SPF SIG, they've been a part of the process since the beginning. We had our very first meeting, you know, we invited these people to the table, and made them feel that their opinions and information was important, so that collaboration with law enforcement in particular and our community college and some of our businesses has really helped us when we do need data be able to reach out there and get it.

Being able to have the SPF has opened up the doors to collaborating with organizations and the higher education that we haven't been able to do before. And it's not just because we have the funds to do it, but because we have given them the option of that sustainability with those funds. You know, being able to establish a [student group] chapter and letting them have those resources available so that they initially can work on building capacity and figuring out what their mission statements are...Having them be able to focus on creating a very strong foundation initially gives that sustainability...Being able to work with a couple of the local police departments closely so that they understand binge drinking and underage drinking so that we can lower those DUI rates is very important and that

we are working with them in giving them the opportunity to say, hey, we're not out here alone doing this. You know, they have support...

I think especially in our community I think other organizations and other sectors in our community have learned from kind of what we are doing, because, you know, Warren County is unique that everybody kind of likes to stick to themselves. And then having the SPF and saying, hey, you know, guess what, we can do this now together, and this is how we're going to do it. Being able to bring them all to the same table to say, okay, let's meet, let's see what you're doing, you're doing, you're doing, let's figure out how we can now make this work better together. I think that's opened up the doors for other organizations to communicate a whole lot more...especially when the SPF is done and to keep that taskforce going.

Most of the respondents who discussed collaboration were mostly focused on collaboration within their own coalitions and the different sectors that were represented within their groups. It was difficult to distinguish the notion of collaboration with external organizations, for example state departments or other coalitions, from the capacity building efforts to get new sectors represented and participating within their coalitions. Many respondents talked about successfully involving new entities from their local regions, such as colleges, business sectors, and health agencies. It seemed that the external representatives were recruited to work as part of the coalitions as opposed to working with the coalitions as a separate group.

Well, I think we've really strengthened our relationships with both the community college and other folks represented by the coalition, whether it's X County, Y County, law enforcement, medical community, we've really strengthened those relationships...

However, a few respondents seemed to discuss the work of their coalitions together with other separate entities towards similar goals.

It increased the connections to other places like to our - we only have one community college - and we've been doing a lot of activities with them.

I think the accomplishments, speaking as a CAP member, you know, seeing the involvement from the local law enforcement and teaming with the prosecutor's office and the sheriff's office and just working together, and as well as working with all the elected officials, and with our alliance team I think is very helpful.

### ***Membership Incentives***

Most interview participants spoke about multiple types of incentives given to coalition members in exchange for their participation. Incentive management is thought to be an intraorganizational characteristic of empowered organizations. Participants were asked: "What incentives are provided by the SPF SIG initiative in your community to encourage member participation?" The majority of interview participants discussed intangible incentives that were given to coalition members and a few participants listed tangible incentives. The tangible incentives included the more personal types of incentives, such as food, pens, and knowledge gained from trainings. For example, one respondent talked about raffling gift cards for coalition members who participate.

...there's been gift cards and raffles that we've had where we were trying to collect data up at the college. We offered a raffle through our monthly survey that we were doing and that really drove people to the survey to do it and knowing that there was a chance they were going to win these gift cards. So the incentives like that that we're able to provide for events and for collection of information etc. has really helped.

Most participants spoke more about intangible or social types of incentives. The most common intangible incentives were the experiences of networking or the opportunity to be a part of the initiative.

A lot of it is opportunity. The fact that these students have the opportunity to create events that excite them. Not only do they get the opportunity to create events, they get the opportunity to participate. For the program of the Year at College Y, what we did is we had, I'm sure you're pretty familiar with the Harry Potter film, we did a prescreening of a film in November, meaning it premiered at one minute after midnight in America. We saw it at 9:30 p.m. prior to that. And that was an exciting alternative. It got a lot of students. I mean, packed the place out. And for them to plan that, see it happen, participate, and again, I think it's the opportunity they're receiving...the participation, really the successes they're having. The fact that when they're putting their mind and efforts to something, seeing it really pay off. That's a big deal. And the acclaim that they get, the fact that they're being recognized for it is a pretty nice incentive for the student coalition...the fact that they're also meeting other students from other colleges and getting opportunities to go travel to something like CADCA, present to other groups...some municipal alliances, the underage drinking coalition statewide. The fact they get those opportunities, I think they recognize that's a big deal. I do try to periodically reward the leaders. Like we're going to have a training, but then we're going to do something fun afterwards.

Another respondent talked about networking and recognition.

...The other part is that networking and recognition that people get that they're not getting some cash for it, some dollar amount for it, it's something that is going to help them just being a part of the SPF SIG process and the work that we're doing. People are proud of the work that we're doing and want to be a part of the team and that's what's exciting.

Respondents discussed being a part of the initiative, feelings of altruism, or participating in something that is good for the community as a common social type of incentive.

Participation is generally based on simply the desire to participate in something important. There was not any monetary compensation or anything like that, but basically just students want to be a part of something that's going to make a difference and that hosts such popular events. We also get t-shirts sometimes.



Several respondents reported that while there are some personal incentives given, such as food or t-shirts, their coalition members volunteer and participate because of the social incentives, such as networking or because of their belief in the cause.

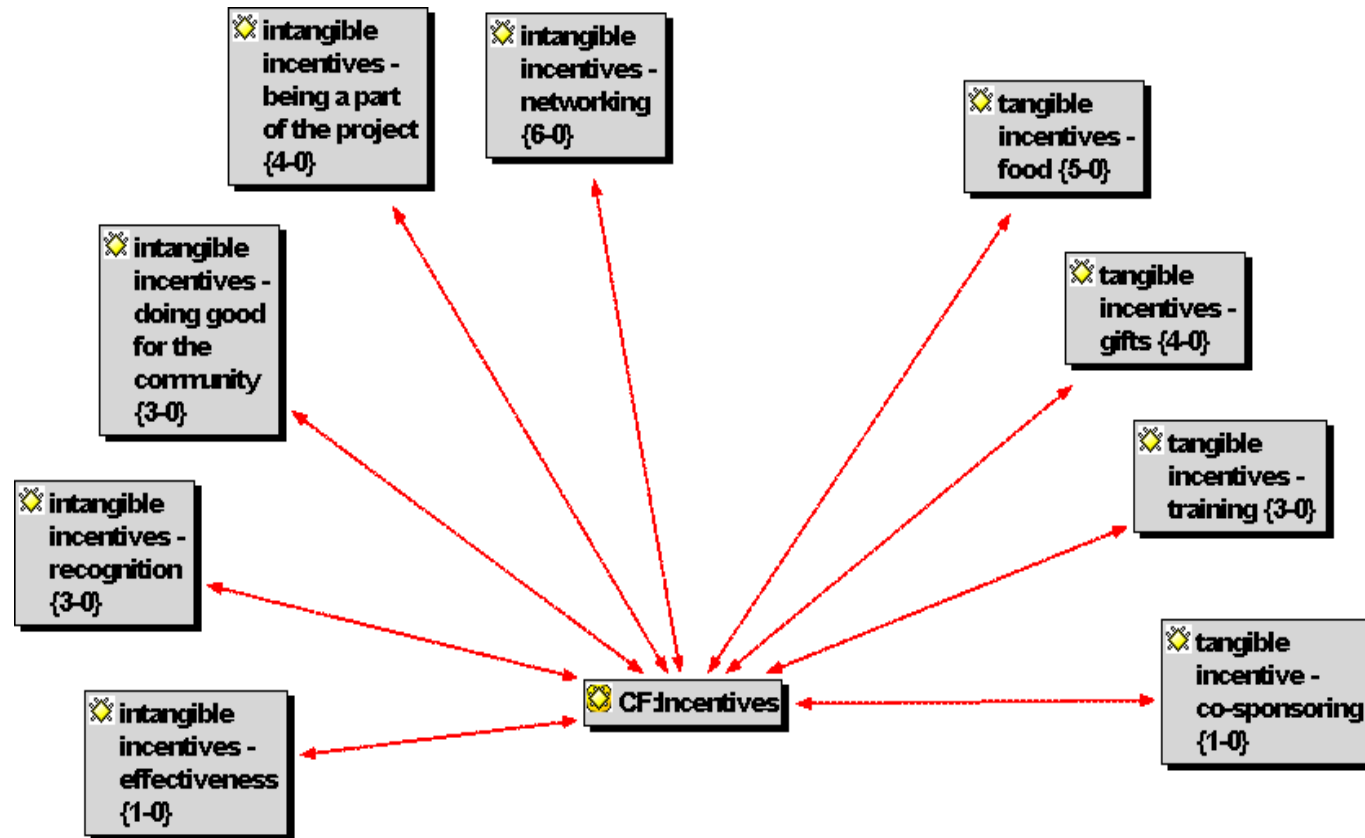
That's a really fascinating question because I don't think anyone is attending because they're receiving an incentive, other than the fact that they want to do what they believe is a worthwhile project. We give out incentives by way of pens to members, you know, and lunch to attend the meeting, but they're not there for that. I think there is a wonderful spirit of volunteerism. We sometimes joke about that they're coming to the lunches but we all recognize and they recognize that it's a joke. We are fortunate here in Ocean County to have a group of people who are anxious to volunteer their time to perform what they see as a worthwhile service...we're going from the chief executive officer of treatment facilities, principals of high schools, police chiefs, mayors, right down to students, we actually have a student group actively participating at Town X High School and several others are in the process of being formed, and it's because they all want to do it.

I believe, all joking aside, they have excellent lunches, we know that food brings people in initially. So they do have great food. You know, that brings people in. And then it's such a large group, there's great networking that goes on. They do offer incentives and pens and, you know, all that fun stuff that people come for initially, but people stay for because it really is, it's a coalition that really gets down to business, really works, breaks into the workgroups, addresses issues as they come up, and we're seeing change. I'm on other coalitions where years later we're still talking about the same issues. There's no plan for how to change anything, everyone just complaining about the same issues years later. This coalition really has a plan in place with a beginning, a middle, and an end. You know, where we see we want it to go.

Figure 8 shows the five primary intangible incentive categories and the four key tangible or personal incentive categories found in the data. The first number within the parentheses in each category box refers to the number of participants who discussed that type of incentive during their interview (i.e. six respondents discussed networking as an intangible incentive). Networking and being part of the initiative were the categories

most often reported as examples of intangible incentives. Food and gifts, such as pens, tee-shirts or gift cards were the most common tangible incentives reported.

Figure 8 Types of Tangible and Intangible Incentives Provided to Coalition Members



### *Subgroups*

Close to half of the respondents talked specifically about workgroups or subcommittees that operate within their coalition structure. Only a few respondents mentioned a specific workgroup, such as a sustainability workgroup and a data workgroup. A few respondents discussed workgroups as a possible structure within the coalitions to get work done. For example, here are two statements about subcommittees or subgroups working for the larger goals:

We did break into more subcommittees for various tasks in risk areas, because depending on how complex the organization is you might need to have a variety of people who are more specialists in some areas. So for instance for us, we had off campus people, taverns, environmental people on the outside, and then you also have police, and you have student orientations, and you have off-campus housing. We had a lot of unique variety about our community, so we had to really divide into subcommittees

I think allowing all the participants on an even level with monthly conference calls, with initiatives that are going on, whether it's in my town or just the community or the county. So we've been able to voice our opinions, work with other groups, and team up in subcommittees, so I think it's been very helpful. And I think, at least from my community, my town, we've been very involved and devoted to the program with, you know, we have someone sitting on every one of the sub teams, so we see a value in it.

One respondent, a coalition member, talked about work on a subcommittee and seemed to only have knowledge about that particular workgroup. It is possible that this workgroup is not successfully linked to the larger coalition, but keeps to its subgroup topic or task.

Well, I'm not part of the organization. I am a coalition member. I work for a different organization. I am just a coalition member and I'm on a specific workgroup. I'm on the implementation workgroup because I am a certified alcohol/drug counselor, so they're utilizing my knowledge and expertise to put

together a plan for some alcohol treatment programs for the team. I've only been involved for about ten months...so I was not involved in the needs assessment or building capacity...but implementation - I've been a part of. We're putting together what's going to be part of the educational group, what the court systems need to look at, and how the kids are going to get referred into program. So...that's how we've followed it so far. And I can only speak for my workgroup. There's a lot of different workgroups. The workgroup that I'm involved has gotten the judges on board. We brought our plan before the three town judges and we did get the private property ordinance passed in Lakewood. So far that is what the workgroup has done...

While some respondents discussed subgroups or subcommittees, they did not provide details on the effectiveness of the subgroups working within the larger coalition or how they were structured within the larger coalition.

### ***Roles and Structures***

A few respondents described how their coalitions are structured and roles that different people participate within. Sometimes, the respondents talked about these roles or coalition structural elements as successful aspects of their work. This theme of coalition structure overlaps with the themes of how coalitions work to structure and organize functioning subgroups or subcommittees. Respondents talked about the need for leaders to be cultivated in a formal way and the roles that subcommittees and sector representatives contribute to coalition success.

We were just pretty diplomatic in our meetings. We would normally have a facilitator or moderator so that everybody would be heard. We did voting when we decided on the towns that we were going to reach out to. We did a vote and just tried to give everyone a voice. There wasn't really any conflict that arose. We made sure that we had data to backup a lot of what we were doing. So in the past...decisions were made by people's gut instinct or political motivations or things like that. But we really did let the data thrive.

I think from our perspective, in our town, I think we've done that, because we have leadership from all different five subgroups. I think from trying to

expand to the county, the data will show where the areas that need help, and I think that with a model that we can show that we can sustain it and show improvement I think we can definitely move it out to the other counties that aren't part of the actual five that have been identified.

There's a lot, but I would say that getting the right community members in place early on is very important. Building their capacity is extremely important. Giving them the structure and the understanding of how they fit into the coalition and what their role should be. All of that is really important. We kind of learned that as a slow process going on, you know, something that I wish I could hit reset and do all correctly right at the beginning. But I think just the members. The members are so important. Building their capacity and having them lead. Other than that I would say that just the SPF SIG process in general is so helpful - the SPF process in general is helpful as a framework for attacking community problems...I've learned so much over the last two years.

Another common thematic category related to coalition structure is that of using the prevention model as a framework to guide their efforts. Respondents were asked to discuss how closely their coalitions implemented the SPF model within their communities. Close to all of the respondents said there were little to no deviations in the implementation of the SPF model. With little or no deviations, it seems as though the coalitions implemented the framework with high fidelity and this indicates that the model served as a helpful structure to their efforts. Using the standard key tasks of each of the 5 SPF steps helped to keep their work in check.

I think we have followed the SPF model fairly consistently. Where there were deviations were mainly if we got to the planning phase and we realized that we didn't have enough capacity. I know one of the things we did was when we were working with parents, we realized we needed a greater parent input than we had. We had a lot of kids and we had a lot of professional - kids, I mean young adults, but we didn't have parents to any great extent. So we went back and added more parents to our capacity in order to meet the needs of that population in the implementation phase. That's kind of where our biggest deviation was.

Some respondents described the SPF model steps as a significant set of guidelines that shaped their coalition work.

I think first of all the biggest thing is that it's [SPF model] really helped to bring an amazing collaboration together through our members. In the very beginning we built, through our capacity building, an incredible base of members that continue to come to the table each month. We continue to meet monthly. That's a really exciting piece for members to see what we're doing and to be participating in what we're doing and using the whole process by looking at what we're doing and going out and doing the work and evaluating and going back again and looking at the needs assessment...

I think it [SPF model] has enlightened many of us on an approach to dealing with problems on a community level as opposed to an individual or solely on an individual basis.

We followed the five-step SPF process. We did a comprehensive needs assessment, which we presented to the coalition... which I would imagine is the capacity step. We organized a coalition. We have about 60 plus active members from all of the standard segments. The results of the needs assessment were presented on a number of occasions to the coalition members. In conjunction...we had a separate subcommittee which we called the assessment committee. They did the distillation of the results of the research. The coalition ultimately voted upon the areas in which they wanted to focus, agreed with the recommendations of the assessment committee, and then we moved into the planning stage. The assessment committee and professional staff came up with a number of possible strategies. Those strategies were again presented to the coalition membership. The coalition membership agreed, voted upon, discussed, voted upon which strategies, which were then presented in a strategic plan which was reviewed by the evaluators from Rutgers as well as the division, then called Division of Addiction Services who made certain recommendations. The plan was revised based on those recommendations. The plan was then presented to, voted upon, and agreed by the membership, and we moved into implementation which is where we are now. The implementation is primarily being done by way of various work groups. There is a work group for each of the strategies. Several of them have been completed. Several of them are still underway. Of course, professional staff, including myself, assists in the implementation. We are not yet up to evaluation, but we are following the SPF process.

Well, the SPF SIG has been followed by the five-step plan that it involves and these are assessments, capacity building, the planning, the implementation, and

the evaluation. We are familiar with that process because we've used it, we use it with all of our grants and so that's why when we got the SPF SIG it was so perfect because we really do utilize and understand that process. So for our SPF SIG grant that we have, we have followed that to the T and it really is what helps us be able to, the fact that it's circular, be able to continue our work and to keep, by the fact that you assess and continue to assess throughout. It helps you to make sure that you're doing the right work.

One respondent described how building capacity, one of the 5 SPF steps, shaped the coalition's efforts and provided role structure to its members.

Giving them the structure and the understanding of how they fit into the coalition and what their role should be. All of that is really important. We kind of learned that as a slow process going on, you know, something that I wish I could hit reset and do all correctly right at the beginning. But I think just the members. The members are so important. Building their capacity and having them lead.

Some respondents talked about organizational structure, meetings and procedures as characteristics that helped provide a positive coalition structure.

It's having the monthly meetings and recognizing members at the monthly meetings, recognizing members through emails that we send out giving kudos, you know, giving a pat on the back to people, people really feel part of the team...

Several respondents spoke about how coalitions use methods such as consensus as a structural way towards conflict resolution. Other respondents described the coalition structure as a means towards sustainability of their coalition's efforts. Respondents did not provide a great deal of detail on specific organizational procedures, such as how meetings are organized and run, how communication occurs with members between meetings, or if there are elected or selected positions to fill.



### *Sustainability*

Respondents were asked the following question regarding sustainability: “How would you describe the SPF SIG initiative’s efforts to identify and develop plans for obtaining the resources it needs for sustainability and goal achievement?” Several respondents discussed the coalitions’ sustainability subcommittees as an integral way to work towards sustaining their project efforts. For example, one respondent described a newly formed sustainability subcommittee.

We’ve recently organized a sustainability workgroup and while all along...during the implementation process, we have had sustainability as part of our plans. For example, we’ve been doing responsible beverage server trainings. We had several coalition members, not professional staff, but members of the coalition, trained and certified so that they can continue to do responsible beverage server training, tips training in the future...we’ve developed an intervention prevention program to be implemented by the courts. That’s going to continue into the future. But we have a workgroup that’s going to now try to take the next step.

Sustainability is a central element of the SPF framework that these coalitions are implementing within their communities so they were required to work on this element from the start. Respondents discussed the work towards securing future funding but also spoke about many other approaches towards sustainability efforts. For example, several respondents discussed the adoption or changes in policy in order to institutionalize their work that will continue beyond their current coalition efforts. More specifically, one respondent talked about the policy changes at several college settings that have helped to institutionalize the coalition work in order for the structures and prevention work to exist beyond their current funding period.

So we’ve some policy change there. For example, there were stricter discipline for caffeinated and alcoholic drinks. So we’ve seen that. We’ve also seen

[Program X] become official clubs at the college, other colleges, which is very important, because that institutionalizes what they're doing, and it provides sustainment, because there will always be some level of funding there for the student groups regardless of what happens to our funding in the future. So it's created some sustainability. One of the colleges created their own alcoholic consortium... That had not happened prior to SPF... I'm not going to try and give all our efforts all the credit. You know, these things may have been moving in motion. I cannot say all this happened specifically because of this, but it's happened since it, and I think a lot of it is tied into it, because a lot of the people who are involved in these policies are members of our college coalition, and that's the community of students, school admin, and community members.

Several respondents discussed their coalition structure and building capacity as a way of institutionalizing the coalition work so that it functions beyond the current funding stream. For example, one respondent talked about their recruiting strategy and coalition member leadership as integral to their sustainability planning efforts:

Our initial way of expanding it was we hosted a kickoff event right at the beginning. We actually had about 20 or 30 members join just from that kickoff event. About 100 community members came out... since then, we've had a coalition event every year, different training, and then usually the training is followed by a presentation to the community on what the coalition is working on, how the members can get involved, etcetera. So that event has been key for us, and that's been an annual event. We've done it two times or three times. And other than that a lot of it's been networking to the coalition members themselves. They invite people, they need people to invite them. When members join - or when new people come to the meetings, we try to involve them and encourage them to continue coming. We've... tried to promote the coalition by going to community meetings... municipal alliance meetings. So we try to get out there a lot, our staff and some of our members, just to share what the coalition is doing. And then people see the media campaign or different things like that. We're planning to expand it by really developing our website. We want that to be something that we could build up a lot and then can hopefully be continued and maintained by the coalition after next year when the funding ends. And I think for us, the emphasis is really on our leadership development. That's going to be how we expand our coalition as if we can somehow continue moving away from a staff driven approach to coalition work... and get more leadership and building their capacity to do the work.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

Respondents were asked the following questions regarding conflict resolution:

“How does the SPF SIG initiative in your community resolve conflicts arising from different ideas or beliefs?” and “How would you describe the initiative’s success at resolving conflicts arising from different ideas or beliefs?” The majority of respondents reported that there was little conflict at all and four respondents said there was no conflict at all within their respective coalitions. While most of the respondents reported little to no conflict, most of them discussed a team approach to conflict resolution.

A few respondents talked about issues with understanding as opposed to having conflict.

We don’t really have conflicts but we have discussions. Sometimes maybe people don’t always understand so I wouldn’t say that there’s a conflict, but if somebody doesn’t understand, people feel open enough to question it and ask about it and then people share and through the process because it’s been such a great capacity building effort that we’ve done, it’s having the monthly meetings and recognizing members at the monthly meetings, recognizing members through emails that we send out giving kudos, you know, giving a pat on the back to people, people really feel part of the team, so I wouldn’t, I would just say that there’s, you know, discussion, plenty of discussion and not that people are disagreeing but maybe not understand something and as a result they discuss it and they get better understood so it’s not even that they have to get resolved, it’s better understood that people understand the other point of view.

Several participants reported a process of open discussion within their coalition meetings so that everyone can be heard or so that issues can be resolved within that open discussion.

You know, it is open discussion, every member’s opinion is valuable and important to the whole process, I think that’s why people feel comfortable enough to bring up and talk about the issues that they might see.

A few respondents spoke about consensus as a specific approach towards resolution.

Really it's conversation that leads to consensus. When we have opposing viewpoints I think really a lot of people involved so they know that they are going to be respectful in having conversation, share their experiences, expertise, whether it's a student, whether it's me, whether it's, you know, their professor, their advisor, you know, someone from the community who's involved at a coalition level. I think a lot of it is we have, I wouldn't say conflicts, but different ideas, and we kind of hash the pros and cons and come to a consensus. In terms of - you know, I think conflicts occasionally arise with the students. While it doesn't happen a lot it does happen. And I think they do a pretty good job of resolving it themselves. And we'll occasionally, you know, seek outside help from people in a mentor position, whether that's me or someone on the college campus. And honestly I would say there has not been much conflict...I would rate it as pretty high in resolving that conflict.

We haven't had a lot of conflicts that have arisen. We have a pretty peaceable group. So most of our decisions - actually, pretty much all of our decisions have been resolved through consensus. We haven't really had like a situation where well we really have to vote on this and then it was a close vote or anything like that. But I think just consensus I think using data to cut through some of those different ideas or beliefs as helped us maybe avoid some of those up front.

One respondent talked about how the coalition's data helped to guide discussion and decisions.

We were just pretty diplomatic in our meetings. We would normally have a facilitator or moderator so that everybody would be heard. We did voting when we decided on the towns that we were going to reach out to. We did a vote and just tried to give everyone a voice, gave everyone a voice. There wasn't really any conflict that arose. We made sure that we had data too to backup a lot of what we were doing. So in the past a lot of times decisions were made by people's gut instinct or political motivations or things like that. But we really did let the data thrive.

One respondent described how the members would refer back to the coalition leadership if conflict arises.

I think all the CAP {coalition board} members really get along. I mean, we may have differences, but I think in the end we do what's best for the overall team...if things can't come to resolution, which that has happened by the way, we would go back to the folks leading the team. But that really hasn't happened, because the communication has been very good and the team has worked out well together.

One respondent talked about how diverse their coalition is and yet, conflict is not present.

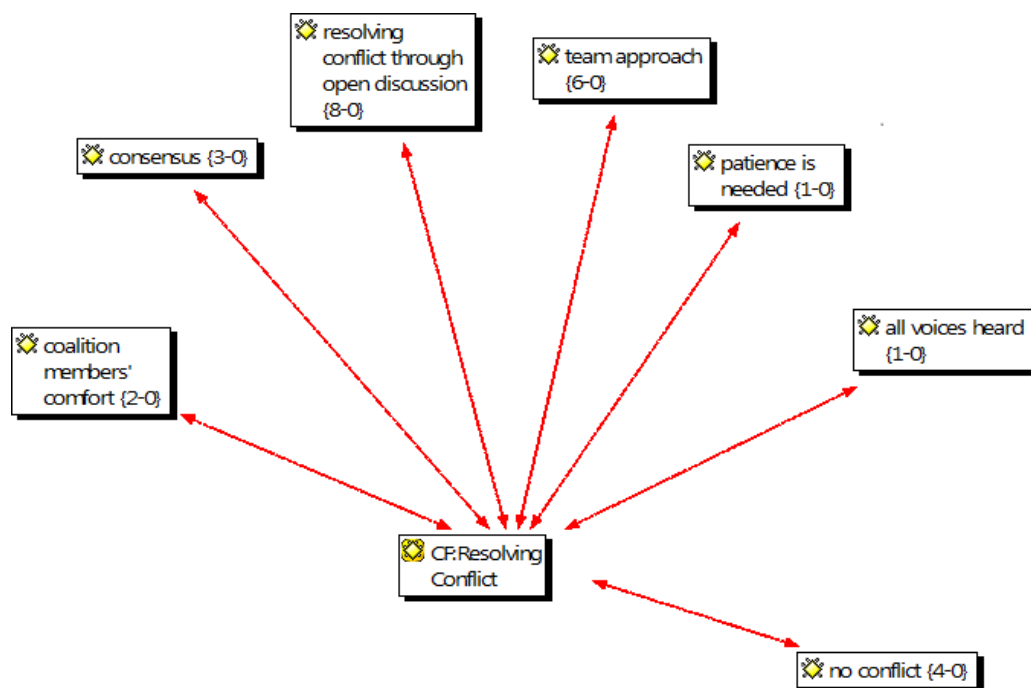
Our coalition, even though we're very diverse, they're really more professional, like they respect difference of opinions. We focus on what our common goal is, even though once we leave the meeting we're totally in different worlds. Because I do feel that the attitude of the people running the coalition is such you almost don't know who's running it. And so I really say that I haven't seen one conflict, and I attend every single meeting that they have.

Figure 9 displays the most common themes associated with resolving conflict.

The first number within the parentheses in each category box refers to the number of participants who discussed each of the themes or patterns concerning conflict resolution (i.e. three respondents discussed consensus as the primary method for resolving conflict).

The most common pattern was that of using open discussions as a method for conflict resolution.

Figure 9 *Themes Associated with Resolving Conflict*



### ***Influence on Public Policy***

Respondents were asked the following question regarding their coalition's influence on public policy: "How has the SPF SIG initiative in your community influenced public policy or practice?" Many respondents reported that their coalitions have not yet made any impact on public policy. Several respondents reported no impact yet, but indicated possibly in the future.

At this point other than getting the word out that we're there and we're looking to make these changes I wouldn't say at this point - I'd say we're more planting the seed right now.

The majority of the respondents who discussed influence on public policy detailed significant work done to change policies or adopt new laws. For example, multiple

respondents talked about local ordinances being passed as a result of their coalition work.

We're trying to get some local laws, local ordinances, that addressed common problems. We tried to get each community in the county to share in that same goal. I would say it kind of brought lawmakers to the table and policy makers.

Well we had four private property ordinances that were adopted and restricting underage drinking on private property. And it allowed for the judge to post fines and even suspend or delay licenses. And just the media coverage on this I think made a lot of people think about it.

I can say that the strategies which we are utilizing as a consequence of SPF have influenced public policies because we've had strategies that deal directly with public policy. For example, Lakewood, one of the target communities of the DART coalition, at our urging, adopted a private property ordinance. They did not have one. There was initially some significant opposition to it, but we responded to the problems, the objectives, and obtained approval by the township governing body to adopt the private property ordinance.

In addition to local ordinances or laws being adopted, respondents talked about policies adopted or measures being institutionalized.

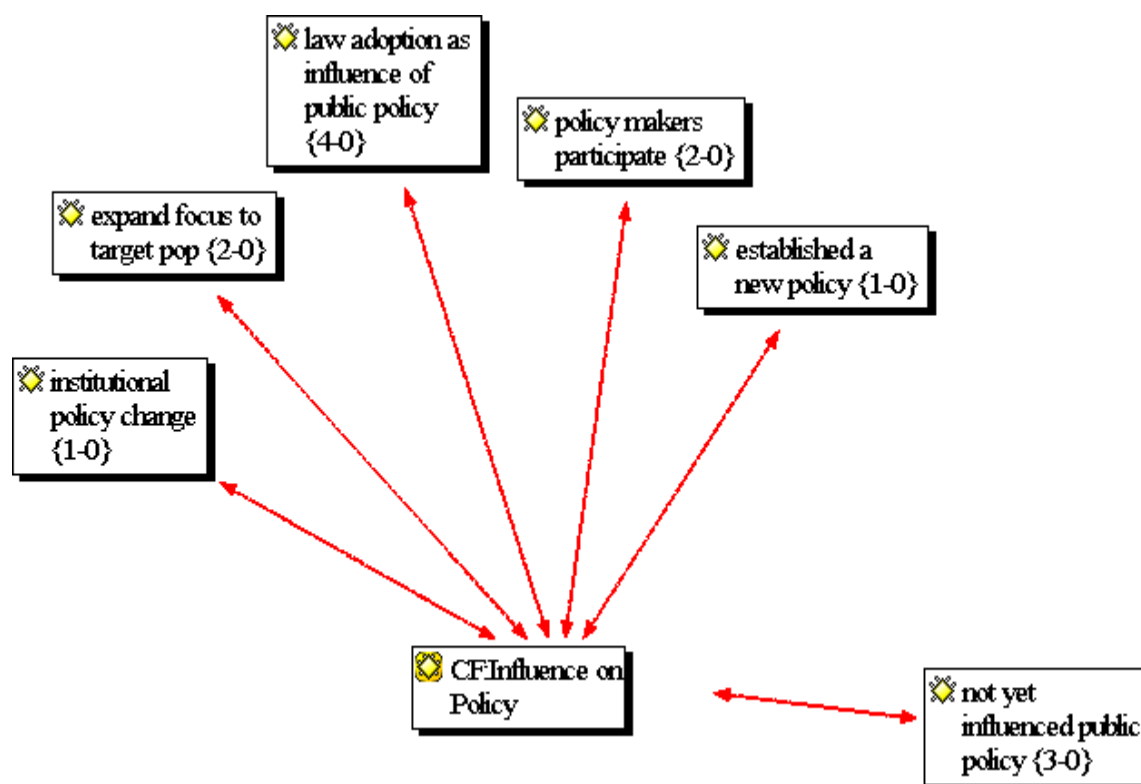
One school is addressing their Greek system, and our students are working with their admin on working with the Greek system about alcohol use. We're seeing standards. One of the things that [Program X] was doing when they created their alternatives was letting people know quickly but clearly this is an alcohol free event. What we've seen now is the schools are starting to include that information in their email invites to their school functions...it's such a little thing...a simple thing, but it's an important thing, letting people know that, hey, don't show up to our holiday ball drunk...we've seen some policy change discussions about high risk holidays and events...for one of the schools, they're looking to expand some cafeteria hours, because when there's nowhere to go then students are going to go into the dorms and drink versus, you know, they're looking to expand cafeteria, even library, hours. I know this year at one of our colleges classes begin immediately after the move in weekend where it used to be there was a like a three to four day buffer, and that's gone, which is good, because all they were doing for three or four days was partying...these schools are

working closely with us to address not just their on campus alcohol use, but off campus. I worked with one school on two occasions where a local bar was basically coming on campus and putting flyers on the student's cars about their bar and their alcohol deals, their deals on drinks. I brought to that to their attention, and they addressed it with the bar. Also one of the local bars actually had to shut down for a few days; they're well known for serving underage students. There was an event post homecoming where an alum rented out the entire bar, and it was just going to be open to college, and basically the college and I, and I got some information from students saying, you know, we worked with the local police department, and that changed from an after party at this bar to if you come to this bar you must be 21. There's a specific amount you may drink. You know, it had an impact.

Figure 10 displays the summary of codes related to coalitions' impact on public policy. The first number within the parentheses in each category box refers to the number of participants who discussed each of the corresponding themes or patterns (i.e. four respondents discussed the adoption of laws).



Figure 10 *Themes Associated with Organization's Influence on Public Policy*



### ***Coalition Accomplishments***

Respondents conveyed a multitude of accomplishments that their coalitions were successful at reaching. Some accomplishments were very specific and some more like general goals achieved. The most discussed accomplishment from the majority of respondents was the successful work towards collaboration. Some respondents talked in general about how collaboration was the most important achievement. Others spoke about how the coalition work cultivated new partners and relationships and the sharing of goals among the members.

Our partners, we're increasing our partners all the time. We're getting new members and with the sharing of information we are constantly trying to inform them of different events and keep them current on the latest research about alcohol.

I think that we've really been seeing that parents of that demographic, the 18 to 25 year old, are really looking for the information that we're providing. They are visiting the website, they're self evaluating themselves to see what they know and what they don't know. So I think that just having them realize, the parents realize, that they still kind of have a role when it comes to prevention in a lot of individuals in that age I think has been the major accomplishment.

Another common theme regarding accomplishments was the use of data within their coalitions as a driver for decisions and as a method for guiding their work. Still others talked about the general success of increasing awareness of their work and the issues their coalitions were tackling and some discussed sustainability as a critical accomplishment within their coalitions. Respondents discussed the high level of participation as a success.

Something else that was exciting was to see... every single college campus recognized and awarded their [Program X] coalitions this year. College X, it was for being organization of the year. X University, it was for having the Program of the Year. County College of X, the leaders of the coalition received the distinguished leadership award. Beyond that, [Program X] was recognized on a national level...we actually received a call from the Wall Street Journal, and we participated in an article that they wrote about college alternatives. So that was another success. I really think the students - the fact that they're seeing things happen and seeing them happen in a big way those successes are really exciting for them. Our very first event, alternative event, we rented out a local arcade, and we had over 600 college students show up. And for the students who are involved in the planning of that to see it come to fruition in that manner, you know, at one point we're like, well, you know, if 100 people show up that would be great. You know, and to have 600, you know, those types of successes in terms of attendance and seeing these things really happen those are, you know, a big deal for our student coalitions.

I think the fact that it took off the way it did. When I say it took off, we essentially have created a multi-coalition project... The fact that we were able to in building capacity bring students into it, really brand it, create it, and get it going, and to have the types of successes they had in terms of having events and having awareness campaigns, and meeting with their administration. To give sort of some background on it, we really focus on, at the college level, the alternatives piece, awareness, and advocating for change... Awareness can be information, dissemination, or education. It sort of covers those steps. And the advocating for change really is students collaborating with administrators, you know, within the school, and also at the community level they have a say, because we have the college coalition that is a piece of this as well... And in terms of successes, the staff, when it comes to alternatives, since this project started over 5,000 students have attended alternatives provided by [the coalition], which is pretty exciting, yeah, it's a big deal... it was pretty exciting to see, you know, some of the ways in which schools were learning to try and shift some things to try and improve things when it comes to alcohol and drugs.

One respondent talked simply about changing social norms and several talked about increasing awareness.

I think we have drawn a lot more awareness to key stakeholders that can actually make those changes as far as like the private property ordinance or just the different campaigns. And the way that, you know, our political folks view underage drinking, binge drinking and things like and letting them know that, hey, just because we're in little Warren County we still have these issues. So I think it's helped a lot.

I think the accomplishments are that it's bringing awareness to the towns. It's bringing awareness to the court systems and the judges that the underage drinking or the problematic 18 to 25 population has to be addressed and that treatment is an important part of involving everyone, involving parents, involving the court system, that it's going to take all of these things working together to make, begin some environmental changes in the alcohol attitude. So that's what I see are the accomplishments.

Several respondents conveyed significant coalition effectiveness.

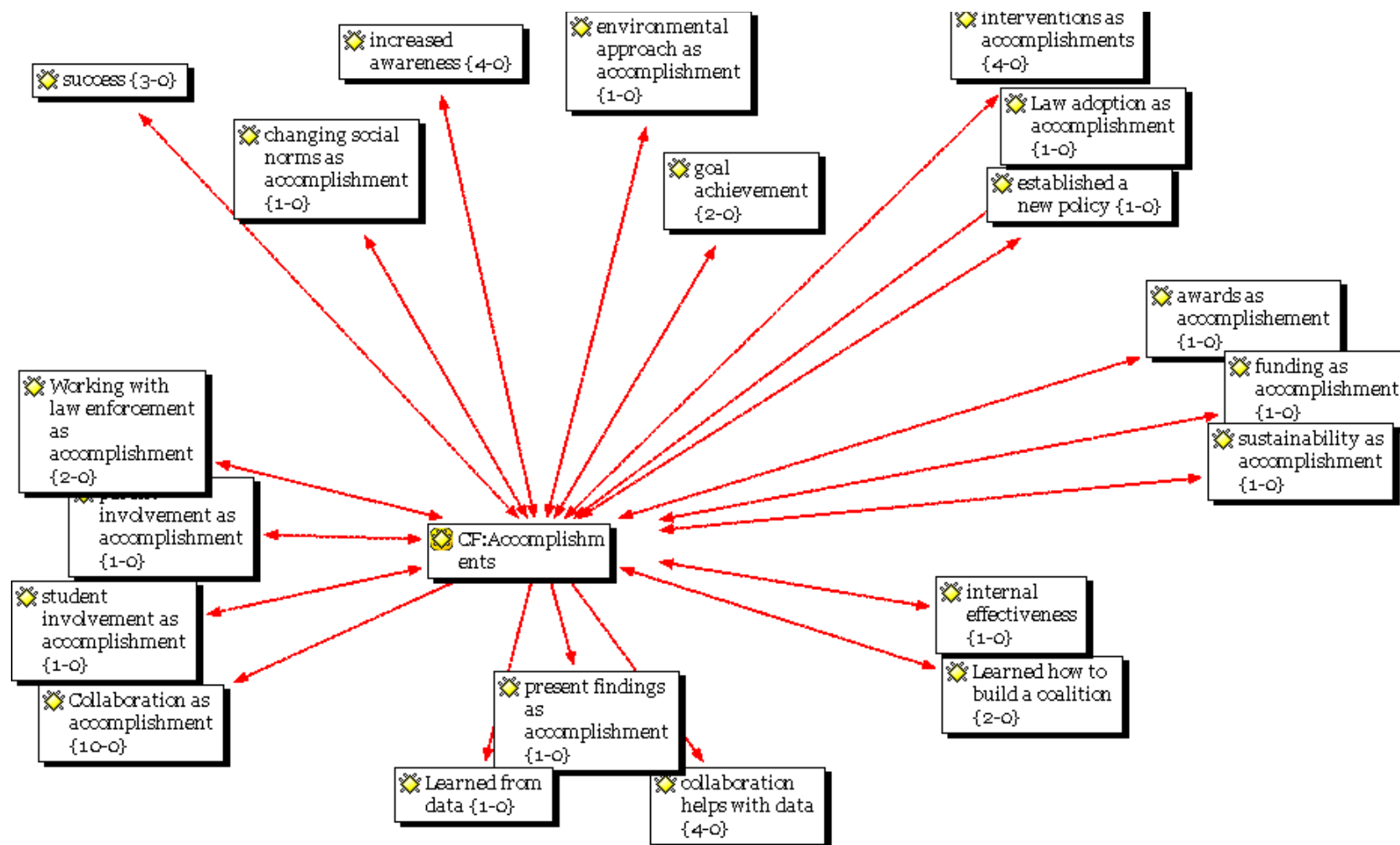
I'm sorry if I sound overly positive. If this was not a good organization worth my time, I'm really too busy, and I have so many people that want to work with me that I only want to work where I'm going to be effective. If I can't be effective I'm really not interested. You know, there may be things in their closet that's not

working so well, but I don't care, because it's effective. They're getting things done. And I would say the key thing if I had only one word to describe to them I would have to say effective. And effective means their interpersonal relationships are very good too, very professional.

It's really brought together a coalition which had not heretofore existed. I can't begin to praise this group of people who, month in and month out, turn out in large numbers enthusiastically to work on this and many of whom have joined the workgroups so they are devoting not just the once a month meeting, but quite a bit more time.

Figure 11 displays all of the codes associated with the theme of accomplishments, organized in clusters where appropriate. The first number within the parentheses in each category box refers to the number of participants who discussed each of the corresponding themes or patterns.

Figure 11 Themes Associated with Coalition's Accomplishments



## Mixed Methods Findings

Using two different methods for data collection – a quantitative self-reported survey and qualitative interviews – was done to provide a comprehensive look at organizational characteristics, individuals' empowerment, and individuals' perceived coalition effectiveness. The present study presented key findings from the two different data analyses – quantitative and qualitative. The next section provides an integrated summary of findings from the two different data analyses. Before the integrated findings, Table 11 below summarizes the key findings from the separate analyses.

Table 11

*Key findings from survey and key informant interview data*

Quantitative Self-Report Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hypothesized path model predicting perceived effectiveness fit the data from a sample of coalition members implementing an innovative substance abuse prevention framework.</li> <li>• Individuals with higher scores on the measurement of psychological empowerment tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness.</li> <li>• Individuals with a greater sense of community tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness.</li> <li>• Opportunity role structure was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through its relationship with sense of community.</li> <li>• Social support was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly and indirectly</li> </ul>

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through its relationship with psychological empowerment.

- Group based belief system was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through its relationship with sense of community.
- Leadership was found to predict perceived effectiveness indirectly through its relationships with opportunity role structure, social support, and group based belief system.

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#### Qualitative Key informant interviews

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- Respondents discussed collaboration as the biggest accomplishment or the most important thing learned from the coalition initiative.
  - Many respondents felt that successful steps towards sustainability have been taken and there is evidence of sustainability planning.
  - Building capacity is crucial to coalition efforts.
  - While there are not many conflicts reported, respondents discussed the existing process of consensus building or the environment of fostering open discussion when needed.
  - A team approach is key.
  - Respondents reported that many coalitions have succeeded in influencing public policy through ordinance adoption or the institutionalization of policy.
  - Respondents discussed some types of incentives, mostly intangible or social incentives such as networking.
  - Many respondents discussed the SPF model as providing structure to their coalitions' work and decision-making process.
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- Respondents conveyed multiple types of accomplishments and successes experienced within their coalitions so far.
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The quantitative data included analysis of several key variables: empowering organizational characteristics of opportunity role structure, leadership, social support, group-based belief systems; as well as sense of community, individuals' psychological empowerment, and perceived effectiveness. The qualitative data included analysis of related organizational characteristics that might lead to organizational empowerment, such as conflict resolution, collaboration, and sustainability, as well as emerging themes to support the quantitative findings. Table 12 shows the full OE model (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004) and indicates which organizational characteristics were included or emerged within each of the two data collection methods and analyses.



Table 12

*Organizational Empowerment\**

Component	Processes	Outcomes
Intraorganizational	Incentive management <sup>1</sup>	Viability <sup>1</sup>
	Subgroup linkages <sup>1</sup>	Underpopulated settings
	Opportunity role structure <sup>1,2</sup>	Collaboration of coempowered
	Leadership <sup>1,2</sup>	subgroups
	Social support <sup>2</sup>	Resolved ideological conflict <sup>1</sup>
	Group-based belief system <sup>2</sup>	Resource identification <sup>1</sup>
Interorganizational	Accessing social networks of	Collaboration <sup>1</sup>
	other organizations	Resource procurement <sup>1</sup>
	Participating in alliance- building activities with other organizations	
Extraorganizational	Implementing community	Influence of public policy and
	actions	practice <sup>1</sup>
	Disseminating information	Creation of alternative community programs and settings  Deployment of resources in the community

\* Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004

<sup>1</sup>These characteristics emerged in responses to open-ended questions during qualitative interviews.

<sup>2</sup>These characteristics were specifically included in the measures of the quantitative survey.

Some of these organizational characteristics were not specifically integrated into the quantitative survey instrument. For example, incentive management is considered an intraorganizational characteristic and this was contained within a specific interview question but was not in the quantitative survey. In this way, the qualitative analysis enhances the quantitative analysis by filling in the OE conceptual framework more fully with data on additional organizational characteristics.

There are a few themes that corroborated within both methods of data analysis. The quantitative analysis provided data to support the hypothesis of key characteristics leading to higher perceived effectiveness. The qualitative analysis revealed that coalition members had a lot to say about their own coalitions' effectiveness through their discussions of accomplishments and successes.

Another common theme was that of leadership. The quantitative analysis found that leadership predicted perceived effectiveness through its relationship to the characteristics of opportunity role structure, social support, and group based belief system. While the qualitative analysis did not find a lot of discussion on member roles, leadership was discussed within the context of successful capacity building, major accomplishments, and conflict resolution.

## Chapter 5 Discussion

*“Social problems, paradoxically, require that experts turn to nonexperts in order to discover the many different, even contradictory, solutions that they use to gain control, find meaning, and empower their own lives” (Rappaport, 1981, p. 21).*

### Discussion

This study contributes to the literature by testing a more complete model of the relationships between empowering organizational characteristics and psychological empowerment and their impacts on perceived effectiveness and exploring additional organizational characteristics. The use of mixed methods combined quantitative empirical evidence of the study variables and qualitative exploratory analysis to further clarify possible OE characteristics within coalitions implementing a substance abuse prevention framework. Previous research on individual empowerment and OE has not included the relationship to self-reported effectiveness. This study attempted to build on earlier research on PE and OE by using a unique methodology of mixed methods to study many variables and to gain a comprehensive picture of what types of organizational characteristics emerged within the work of substance abuse prevention coalitions and how these characteristics related to PE and perceived effectiveness.

The purpose of the quantitative study was to test a path model that included perceived organizational characteristics and psychological empowerment as predictors of perceived effectiveness. Leadership served as the exogenous variable in the model, and was hypothesized as having direct effects on the three organizational characteristics of opportunity role structure, social support, and group-based belief system. These

organizational characteristics were then hypothesized as having both direct and indirect effects on perceived effectiveness through their effects on sense of community and psychological empowerment.

The findings supported the hypothesis that the suggested path model fit the study data. Several key direct and indirect relationships were found from the path analysis as hypothesized from the literature and guiding theories. As expected, individuals with higher levels of psychological empowerment tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness. Similarly, individuals with greater sense of community tended to perceive higher levels of effectiveness. These findings expand the existing knowledge about PE and sense of community, as previous studies did not look at outcomes such as perceived effectiveness. However, some of the findings regarding sense of community were divergent to previous studies. Sense of community has been found to be an important contributing factor to PE (Hughey et al., 2008; Peterson & Reid, 2003; Speer et al., 2012). In the present study, SOC was not found to be a predictor of PE.

Two of the organizational characteristics were found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through sense of community. Individuals with perceptions of stronger opportunity role structure tended to have higher perceived effectiveness. Individuals with perceptions of stronger opportunity role structure tended to have a greater sense of community, which led to higher perceived effectiveness. Similarly, group based belief system was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly, as well as indirectly through its relationship with sense of community. While the prediction of higher levels of perceived effectiveness is a new finding, the other piece of this result is consistent with theory and a recent finding in which organizational

characteristics predicted an increase in sense of community within a community organization (Wilke & Speer, 2011).

Social support was found to predict perceived effectiveness directly and indirectly through its relationship with psychological empowerment. Previous literature on the relationship between organizational characteristics such as social support as a predictor of PE is limited but has been found (Maton & Salem, 1995; Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004; Wilke & Speer, 2011). This finding extends this literature as the study found that individuals with stronger social support tended to have higher levels of PE and those who were more empowered tended to perceive their coalitions as more effective.

Leadership was found to predict perceived effectiveness indirectly through its relationships with opportunity role structure, social support, and group based belief system. Interestingly in the current study, leadership was not found to predict perceived effectiveness or PE directly. In previous studies, leadership has been found to be an organizational characteristic that predicted PE (Maton, 2008; Minkler et al., 2001).

The findings of the current study expand existing knowledge about organizational effectiveness through the examination of coalition members' perceived effectiveness. As noted recently, there is very limited empirical evidence on the measurement of effectiveness within non-profit organizations and a lack of a unified conceptualization of effectiveness and validated measures (Cho, 2007; Lecy et al., 2012). There is a gap in the effectiveness research that focuses primarily on coalitions and community-based work. Additionally, there is a gap in the empowerment literature on the relationship of empowerment at all levels to perceptions of effectiveness.

The qualitative research questions were “Did the qualitative data support the hypothesized path model?” and “What does the data tell about members’ empowerment, the characteristics of empowered organizations, and perceived organizational effectiveness.” The qualitative data didn’t necessarily support the hypothesized path model, as the specific constructs in the path model did not necessarily emerge from the data. However, the themes that emerged align with other OE characteristics that are within the conceptual framework used for this study. Several themes emerged from the qualitative data related to the intraorganizational of the OE model characteristics (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004): a) allocation of incentives, b) workgroup structure, c) roles with the coalitions, and d) conflict resolution. The first three themes are considered processes of the intraorganizational component of OE and the fourth theme fits within the outcomes of the intraorganizational component of OE. While there was much discussion on various tangible and intangible incentives, the findings did not show very specific structures of subgroups and how they operate within the larger coalition. The theme of roles within coalitions emerged from some but not all of the respondents.

Additionally, two themes emerged related to the interorganizational characteristics within the OE model: a) sustainability and b) collaboration. These two themes were the most discussed of all results. Collaboration with other organizations may be considered an interorganizational characteristic of empowered organizations, which might include activities such as coordination of services, exchange of information, and the formalization of relationships (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004). Interview participants discussed many activities within the context of collaboration. Sustainability, and the outcome of identifying additional resources, also an interorganizational characteristic, is a

fundamental element of the SPF model. Sustainability within the SPF model refers to more than securing additional funds, and includes the activities and planning needed to carry out sustainable practices that will allow for the work to continue on after current funding is over. For example, coalitions in this study worked to pass policies that would be adopted so that new practices would continue on after the life of the current grant.

Finally, two themes emerged related to the extraorganizational characteristics within the OE model: a) implementation of actual strategies within their communities and b) influencing public policy. The first theme aligns with a process of the extraorganizational component of OE and the latter is an extraorganizational outcome. Many participants in this study discussed their work in implementing environmental prevention strategies within their communities. While some coalitions had not progressed to influencing policy yet in their process, most of the coalitions felt this would happen in the near future, with more time to implement strategies to get to that status.

Zimmerman (1995) noted that constructs of PE could change over time or take on different forms with different populations. Similarly, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) noted the possibility of an evolving, dynamic nature of OE constructs as well. While it is crucial to study coalitions within a conceptual framework such as the current study of OE, it is also important to note that studying coalitions at different times of their development might find organizational characteristics of empowerment in different forms. The coalitions examined in the current study seemed to contain many intraorganizational characteristics that could foster members' empowerment. At the time of data collection, these coalitions were focusing a lot of time on building capacity and sustainability planning as well as implementing substance abuse prevention interventions.

Studying coalitions that may have a longstanding history of success may show more extraorganizational characteristics that are supporting members' empowerment due to the already established interorganizational characteristics. However, another possibility when studying coalitions is that brand new coalitions might have an easier time embracing a new model if they do not have the challenges that exist within a coalition's history that might impede their work. Because a brand new coalition may not know about a previous type or prevention model before working towards a 'new' or current prevention framework, it could be a smoother adoption as compared to coalitions that might be embedded within a long history with players committed to 'old' ways of functioning.

### **Implications for theory and practice**

The current study draws on the nomenclological network of empowerment at the organizational level developed by Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) that details three levels of constructs that could lead to organizational members' empowerment and possibly influence the effectiveness of the organizational work accomplished. The present study provides an example of the use of the OE framework and the importance of focusing on different levels of organizational processes and outcomes to strengthen the foundation on which communities can create change. Numerous practical and theoretical implications can be drawn from this study.

The prevalence of substance abuse has serious consequences impacting our communities in New Jersey and nationally. Substance use and abuse contribute to a wide range of costly consequences, including motor vehicle crashes, suicide, interpersonal



violence, unintentional injuries and impacts on productivity and healthcare system (SAMSHA, 2012). These substance abuse related consequences are experienced in New Jersey and nationally alike and emerging issues with consumption patterns and consequences continue to surface. For example, prescription drug abuse is currently the fastest growing drug problem in the US (Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2011). In 2010, 12.7 percent of individuals aged 18 to 25 reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs within the past year (SAMSHA, 2011). The Office of the Surgeon General indicated that the prevention of drug abuse and excessive alcohol use is one of seven national prevention priorities (National Prevention Strategy, 2011). The SPF model proposed by CSAP has begun to see a decrease in problem consumption patterns and in related consequences of substance abuse. This model relies on the work of coalitions. By identifying ways to improve empowerment among coalition members and ultimately create empowered coalitions, the result could be a stronger impact on the communities, especially in the areas of substance abuse consequences. The current findings could reach beyond substance abuse prevention to contribute to the development or fostering of coalitions working on prevention of other social problems, including improving health, decreasing obesity, decreasing violence against women, and other social issues that can be tackled through a coalition approach. This social work investigation of coalition building within a substance abuse prevention context is critical to increasing our understanding of the ways in which certain characteristics can foster empowerment at an organizational level and result in improved effectiveness of the groups and therefore increasing the impact within their communities.

The SPF model is a public health prevention framework that is vital to minimizing the substance abuse related consequences impacting communities in the United States. We have seen great strides with prevention public health measures in the past century. The Institute of Medicine (IOM), Committee on Valuing Community-Based, Non-Clinical Prevention Policies and Wellness Strategies and Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice produced an extensive report on community-based prevention as a crucial framework for addressing many of today's health and social problems. IOM stated:

Community based prevention interventions focus on population health and, in addition, may address changes in the social and physical environment, involve intersectoral action, highlight community participation and empowerment, emphasize context, or include a systems approach. (Institute of Medicine, 2012)

IOM (2012) outlines several key constructs imbedded within the quote above, including empowerment, environment, and community participation. These constructs are integral to prevention work, via coalitions implementing environmental strategies. Models such as the SPF studied in the current research use the principles of community based prevention as a foundation to work towards making societal and environmental changes that help to foster healthy outcomes. The systems-based approach of the SPF and other community based prevention models is a collaborative approach among several sets of stakeholders including funders, community partners including community researchers and community agencies, and participants (IOM, 2012) and therefore all of these sectors will benefit from the continued examination of coalition functioning , member empowerment, and ultimately effectiveness.

The present study's qualitative examination found considerable evidence of coalitions' work in planning for sustainability of their coalitions as well as of their efforts. Sustainability is a key element to the SPF model and is intended to be a part of each of the five SPF steps. In a study of Communities that Care (CTC) coalitions working towards the reduction or prevention of adolescent problem behaviors<sup>5</sup>, Feinberg and colleagues (2008) found that the quality of coalition functioning was a strong predictor of sustainability. Additionally, the study found that sustainability planning and model fidelity were positively associated with long-term survival and future funding (Feinberg et al., 2008). The element of sustainability within the SPF model is crucial and the findings in the current study only start to emphasize this importance. In their suggested research agenda on the sustainability of public health initiatives, Scheirer and Dearing (2011) discuss the need for studying sustainability to communicate to funders that their investments are leading to long-term outcomes. In the present study, sustainability was found to not only be about securing future funding, but was evident as a key element within building capacity of coalition members as well as in the implementing of particular strategies that will lead to the continuation of impact beyond the current coalition's efforts. As New Jersey and other entities continue to implement the SPF model within the substance abuse prevention system, sustainability measures should be emphasized and should be a key focus of training and technical assistance. Coalitions working on prevention of other public health problems, such as interpersonal violence or

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<sup>5</sup> Problem behaviors include violence, alcohol and drug use, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, and delinquency (Feinberg et al., 2008).

obesity prevention, can also learn from the elements of the SPF model, which includes emphasis on sustainability throughout the life of coalitions and their efforts.

The many aspects of the OE and PE theories studied here can contribute to practical skills for adoption by community coalition members to improve their internal structure and functioning and processes they carry out. For example, the intraorganizational processes such as opportunity role structure and leadership should be integral to building capacity within substance abuse prevention coalitions. These processes could be incorporated into technical assistance and training and can be essential to their coalition building activities. Teaching about how to encourage coalition members to take on leadership roles or participate within subcommittees will improve these organizational characteristics. The organizational characteristic of social support is another concept that should be integrated into these coalitions. Coalition members with high levels of social support reported feeling supported by other members and felt they supported other members. This is an important empowering organizational process characteristic that should be adopted as part an essential characteristics of a coalition's internal structure. Coalitions should assess how well the work responsibilities are spread out among its members as well as how strong the combined skills of all members contribute to an environment of strong leadership. Coalitions should consider improving their incentive management. Incentives help to maintain capacity and decrease the interruptions from constant member turnover. Another internal function to improve is how coalitions work through ideological conflict. It is just as important to have a process for conflict resolution as it is for having clear roles for its members.

The present study's qualitative examination also found considerable evidence of coalitions' efforts and successes as a result of successful collaboration, a vital component to the facilitation of successful SPF implementation. In the present study, participants reported the importance of building relationships with stakeholders within multiple key sectors beyond substance abuse prevention, including law enforcement, merchants, alcohol beverage servers, and college administrators. The study found that working on ways to sustain member capacity is central to coalition success. Respondents reported success in fostering and maintaining strong and effective coalitions comprised of diverse stakeholders working on shared goals. Future training, technical assistance, and coalition development might include collaboration as a key element for successful coalition development and effective prevention efforts. Since there is evidence of successful coalitions and active members in New Jersey, the creation of a learning community might be useful to provide first-hand knowledge of the experiences, successes, and challenges of coalition development and functioning. A facilitated learning community by trainers and researchers could ensure that critical elements of coalition building are contained in learning materials, including some of the organizational characteristics discussed in the present study. A component of a facilitated learning community might also be a feedback loop based on evaluation findings of coalitions' initiatives. By examining organizational characteristics and PE as well as effectiveness of coalitions as an evaluative process, findings can be communicated back as an ongoing process of continued improvement and growth. The theories of OE (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004) and PE (Zimmerman, 2001) can provide a robust framework for coalition evaluation studies. These theories are grounded in values mutually shared within social work, including social justice,

participation, and community change (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004), all of which are important values for coalitions working in fields of prevention.

### **Limitations**

Although this research adds to the body of current literature, several limitations to this study are noteworthy and could direct areas for future research. First, the sampling technique and size may be limiting. The sample method used in the current study was both purposeful and snowball sampling as opposed to random sampling. The mixed methods sampling included the identification of participants guided by the purpose of the original study, which was an evaluation. This sampling served the purpose of the present study as well. Sampling also included snowball sampling, in which participants from the specific coalitions under study were asked to identify additional coalition members as potential participants in the study. Selection bias may be an issue due to the study's sampling methods. Further, the sample size of the survey data might be too small, which might limit the generalizability of the findings. An incentive for participation might have helped to increase the response rate.

Second, this study was cross-sectional in design, limiting causal interpretation of the data. Further research that follows coalition members over time and control for rival explanations might better examine the relationships suggested in the current model. Additionally, longitudinal study might better examine some of the organizational process and outcome characteristics that may take some time to show a trend. For example, Peterson and Zimmerman (2004) proposed that the process of coalitions participating in

alliance-building activities with other organizations is an example of an interorganizational process related to OE and has been found to facilitate collaboration (Foster-Fishman et al., 2001; Itzhaky & York, 2002), an example of an interorganizational outcome related to OE. These interorganizational characteristics may take some time to develop within new coalitions and longitudinal study could provide better examination.

Third, the sample in the present study was not diverse in several demographic categories. The survey sample consisted mostly of participants who self-identified as White (90.2%) and not Hispanic or Latino (96.5%). The number of participants who self-identified within different minority groups was very small (e.g., Asians: 2.4%, Pacific Islanders: .8%, Black or African American: 6.5%, and Native American or Alaska Native; 4.3%). Caution is taken regarding the generalizability of the findings due to the diversity issue. Future research might include sampling techniques that can ensure the collection of a more diverse sample representative of the population from which it is drawn.

Fourth, related to the quantitative analysis, the degree of confidence regarding the casual inferences obtained through analysis of results will be less than the confidence in inferences made from an experimental study (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002). Six, the study used several self-reported measures in the present study to test the variables. It is acknowledged that an ideal study would be designed in such a way as to construct independent measures of the study variables. However, it is important to note that the current study used validated and widely used measures to test the constructs for the quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis is based on interview data that is self-reported information as well. However, the researchers of the larger statewide project had

built rapport with many of the respondents and the data remained confidential, which may have improved the information being reported by the respondents.

A final and important point is that coalitions are unique by nature, so the current study's findings may be difficult to generalize to other coalitions. However, the study contains several key findings about organizational characteristics that will help build strong coalitions and still be able to remain distinct in their local ways. Similar types of coalitions or community-based organizations can use the findings as benchmarks for analyzing organizational characteristics, PE, and effectiveness within their groups.

### **Directions for future research**

Based on the major findings of this study as well as the limitations discussed, there are several suggestions for future research. The nomenclological network of OE (Peterson & Zimmerman, 2004) remains largely untested and provides opportunity to test the processes and outcomes within the three components of OE. While the current study explored some features of each of the three components of OE, most of the constructs were at the intraorganizational level and most constructs were processes as opposed to outcome characteristics. The extraorganizational component needs further testing as well as the outcome constructs within the interorganizational and extraorganizational levels.

Given the findings related to leadership and its relationship to the other organizational characteristics as well as some of the other significant paths of the current study, further analysis of the direct and indirect effects of leadership should be conducted to better understand these relationships. The breakdown of direct, indirect and total effects is useful for better interpreting the relationships within a tested path model (Alwin



& Hauser, 1975). For example, further analysis of the current findings could be conducted to study the breakdown of direct, indirect, and total effects of the organizational characteristics of opportunity role structure, social support, and group-based belief system on perceived effectiveness including the effects of PE and sense of community.

The themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis related to several key organizational characteristics may serve as a starting point for scale development of these constructs and for quantitative study testing. For example, the findings on the themes of collaboration and member incentives could help to develop scales to test these constructs in future studies of coalition work. Several OE processes and outcomes that did not emerge from the qualitative study could be explored through further qualitative study using the findings as a basis for interview question development.

Further, the qualitative findings can serve as a basis for generating new hypotheses for quantitative study. For example, the constructs of collaboration and sustainability could be fit into a new hypothesized model with the other organizational characteristics to test their relationships with PE.

Another direction for future research would be to continue with mixed methods to explore coalition functioning and characteristics that will increase empowerment among its members. To further understand the dynamic nature of coalitions and their characteristics that might foster individuals' empowerment, further study might consider examining both interactional and intrapersonal components of PE, as opposed to just including the intrapersonal component alone. In a recent study on participation and sense of community, Speer and colleagues (2012) included gender, income, and both

interactional and intrapersonal components of PE in their investigation. Their findings included nuances between emotional or interactional PE and cognitive or interactional PE in relation to gender and income as well as sense of community (Speer et al, 2013). Social work researchers might consider including gender and income as more than control variables in future research as they often are. It might be important to look at the relationships between the different components of PE for men and women as well as within groups of different income brackets.

Another noteworthy implication of this study related to the SPF model that could direct future study is the notion of implementation fidelity. While the current study did not examine the fidelity of the SPF implementation within the eleven coalitions, it is a crucial element to evaluate in conjunction with impact or outcomes related to prevention work. The fidelity of the SPF model implementation has been examined nationally. For example, CSAP studied 26 SPF SIG state or tribal grantees implementing the SPF between 2004 and 2009 and hypothesized that high fidelity in implementing the model would lead to improved prevention system capacity, the selection of more effective prevention interventions which contributes to the long-term goal of reducing consumption patterns and related consequences (Buchanan et al., 2010). The study findings indicated most of the grantees implemented the SPF model and its related five steps with a high level of fidelity to the model; most grantees experienced improvements in their prevention system; and effective prevention interventions, mostly environmental in strategy, were selected and implemented with the study communities (Buchanan et al., 2010). Study participants reported that the clearly defined goals identified in the SPF process helped to keep the project on track and contributed to sustaining member

engagement. Respondents discussed how important it was to invest more time in learning the SPF model and how to adopt it locally and to create a more widespread understanding of the model within all coalition members. Future study could look at the relationships between OE and implementation fidelity and their relationship to coalition sustainability and/or outcomes of coalition efforts.

Another possible and important direction for future research is to develop an independent measure of effectiveness in order to look beyond self-reported effectiveness and examine the relationships between PE, organizational characteristics and actual outcomes. This might best begin with a qualitative exploration of coalition staff and management as well as coalition members to identify definitions of effectiveness to see if it varies depending on roles within the organizational structure.

The current study of a community-based model intended to impact communities by decreasing the negative and harmful consequences of substance abuse contributes to promising social work practice and policy. More specifically, this model of coalitions is an important addition to community-based social work interventions that have shaped the field throughout its history. The public health approach of the SPF model will be an important contribution to social work macro practice and policy in an effort to positively impact communities or populations through the empowerment of groups. Zippay (1995) advised the social work field to be aware of who is defining empowerment, especially in political and policy environments. History has shown evidence of how politics may impact policy by the adoption of a conservative notion of ‘empowerment’ that might move this concept away from a macro approach to social problems and therefore negatively impact individuals. Therefore, social work researchers need to continue to

define and test empowerment at all levels as it relates to a systems approach towards social justice. As Addams (1910) strived for, so long ago, and Specht and Courtney (1995), Haynes (1998), Zippay (1995) and other social work researchers have argued, macro social work practice through empowered groups and related social work policy are necessary in the effort towards improving communities, celebrating diversity, fighting for social justice and overcoming social problems.

**Appendix A: Letters of permission to use dataset**



State of New Jersey

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

DIVISION OF ADDICTION SERVICES

PO BOX 362

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0362

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
*Governor*

KIM GUADAGNO  
*Lt. Governor*

JENNIFER VELEZ  
*Commissioner*

RAQUEL MAZON JEFFERS  
*Director*

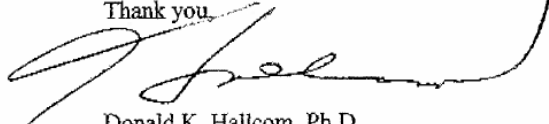
Office of Research & Sponsored Programs  
Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
3 Rutgers Plaza  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

October 1, 2010

To Rutgers University IRB Reviewers,

This letter is to support the application for Exemption to the Rutgers University Office of Sponsored Research, Institutional Review Board (IRB), submitted by Kristen Gilmore Powell. As the Project Director of New Jersey Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG), within the New Jersey Division of Addiction Services, I have granted Kristen Gilmore Powell permission to access the data collected as part of this imitative for analysis to complete a dissertation project. The dataset includes quantitative and qualitative data collected since 2009. Please accept this letter as my formal confirmation of permission to use this dataset.

Thank you



Donald K. Hallcom, Ph.D.  
Director of Prevention and Early Intervention  
NJ Department of Human Services  
Division of Addiction Services  
120 South Stockton Street  
PO Box 362  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
Phone: 609-984-4049  
Fax: 609-292-1045



School of Social Work  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
536 George Street  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1167

October 1, 2010

Office of Research & Sponsored Programs  
Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
3 Rutgers Plaza  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Rutgers University IRB Reviewers,

This letter is to support the application for Exemption to the Rutgers University Office of Sponsored Research, Institutional Review Board (IRB), submitted by Kristen Gilmore Powell.

As the Principal Investigator of Protocol "Evaluation of the State Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant," I have granted Kristen Gilmore Powell permission to access the data collected as part of the New Jersey Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG), for analysis to complete a dissertation project. The dataset includes quantitative and qualitative data collected since 2009.

Please accept this letter as my formal confirmation of permission for Kristen Gilmore Powell to use this dataset for her dissertation project.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "N. Andrew Peterson".

N. Andrew Peterson  
Associate Professor  
Rutgers University  
School of Social Work  
536 George Street  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
Phone: 732-932-8003, x18  
Fax: 732-932-8181  
Email: [andrew.peterson@ssw.rutgers.edu](mailto:andrew.peterson@ssw.rutgers.edu)

**Appendix B: Community-level survey instrument**



### Survey Instrument - 2011

#### Formative evaluation on functioning and interagency collaboration of the SPF SIG members at the community level

1. First, how long have you been involved with the SPF SIG initiative in your community?  
(# of years) OR \_\_\_\_\_ (# of months)

2. Please check one answer that best describes your current primary position:

Paid Staff  
 Local government  
 Education  
 Law enforcement  
 Business  
 Youth programs/services  
 Parents  
 Social services  
 Faith community  
 Cultural/ethnic groups  
 Justice system/courts  
 Health services  
 Media  
 Representatives from the community in the 18-25 year-old population  
 Other\_\_\_please describe:

3. How long have you been involved in the alcohol and drug prevention field?  
(# of years) \_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_ (# of months)

**ONLY FOR VOLUNTEER MEMBERS:** Following is a question that asks about your level of involvement in the SPF SIG initiative. Please check the box if you generally participate in this organization, each month, not at all, 1 time, 2 to 3 times, 4 times, or 5 or more times.

---

4. How often do you participate in the SPF SIG initiative each month?

---

not at all	1 time	2 to 3 times	4 times	5 or more
------------	--------	-----------------	---------	-----------

---

Thinking about the SPF SIG initiative in your community, please state the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following statements.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
<b>Opportunity Role Structure</b>						
5. Different members of the SPF SIG initiative are in charge of different aspects of its functioning.						
6. The members of the SPF SIG initiative have responsibility for running many aspects of the organization.						
7. The SPF SIG initiative draws upon the talents and abilities of a number of different people to get organizational tasks done.						
8. If a member desires, he/she can take on responsibility for some SPF SIG initiative task.						
9. Positions of responsibility are spread among members of the Advisory Council.						
<b>Leadership</b>						
10. The leaders are very committed and dedicated to the Advisory Council.						
11. The leaders relate and respond well to SPF SIG initiative members.						
12. The leaders have strong organizational skills and know-how.						
13. The leadership is very talented as far as organization operations are concerned.						
14. The leaders' own problems and personality get in the way of effective leadership.						

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
<b>Social Support</b>						
15. I receive as much support and help as I presently desire from the Advisory Council.						
16. I provide as much support and help to the SPF SIG initiative as I presently desire.						
17. I provide as much support as I receive at SPF SIG initiative meetings.						
18. I have developed a close friendship with another SPF SIG initiative member.						
19. If I stopped coming to the Advisory Council, I would continue my friendships developed with SPF SIG initiative members.						
<b>Group-based Belief System</b>						
20. The SPF SIG initiative encourages participation and open discussion.						
21. There is a focus on flexibility and decentralization within this Advisory Council.						
22. The leaders in the SPF SIG initiative assess member concerns and ideas.						
23. The SPF SIG initiative uses creative problem solving processes.						
24. There is a focus on human relations, teamwork, and cohesion within the Advisory Council.						
<b>Sense of Community</b>						
25. People have a real say about what goes on within the Advisory						

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
Council.						
26. My goals for the SPF SIG initiative are pretty much the same as everybody else's.						
27. People on the SPF SIG initiative respond to what I think is important.						
28. Everyone on the SPF SIG initiative is moving in the same direction.						
29. The SPF SIG initiative is respected in this state.						
30. The SPF SIG initiative gets a lot done in this state.						
31. The SPF SIG initiative has had a part in solving at least one problem in this state.						
32. Because of the SPF SIG initiative, I am connected to other groups in this state.						
<b>Perceived Effectiveness</b>						
33. The SPF SIG initiative has a good mission statement that describes its reason for being.						
34. The SPF SIG initiative has a strategic plan that is used to guide activities of the organization.						
35. We have training in this SPF SIG initiative that truly serves members' needs.						
36. The SPF SIG initiative is financially healthy.						
37. We have the resources we need to weather emergencies within the SPF SIG initiative.						
38. The SPF SIG initiative has enough resources to run its major						

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
activities.						
39. I am satisfied with how the SPF SIG initiative performs.						
40. The SPF SIG initiative is an effective group.						
41. The activities of the SPF SIG initiative produce results.						
42. People within the SPF SIG initiative generally have the knowledge and resources they need to carry out their tasks.						
43. I expect the activities of the SPF SIG initiative to lead to the outcomes we want.						
44. People who benefit from the SPF SIG initiative are satisfied with its activities.						
<b>Psychological Empowerment</b>						
45. I am often a leader in groups.						
46. I would prefer to be a leader rather than a follower.						
47. I would rather have a leadership role when I'm involved in a group project.						
48. I can usually organize people to get things done.						
49. Other people usually follow my ideas.						
50. I find it very easy to talk in front of a group.						
51. I like to work on solving a problem myself rather than wait and see if someone else will deal with it.						
52. I like trying new things that are challenging to me.						
53. I enjoy participation because I want to have as much say in my community as possible.						

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
54. A person like me can really understand what's going on with substance abuse prevention efforts in this community						
55. I feel like I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues which confront this community.						
56. People like me are generally well qualified to participate in substance abuse prevention efforts in this community.						
57. It makes a difference who I vote for because whoever gets elected will represent my interests in substance abuse prevention policy.						
58. There are plenty of ways for people like me to have a say in what our community does to prevent substance abuse.						
59. It is important to me that I actively participate in local prevention efforts.						
60. Most community leaders would listen to me.						
61. Many substance abuse prevention activities are important to participate in.						

### Demographics

70. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

71. What is your sex? Female or Male

72. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, mark the previous grade or highest degree received.

☐ No schooling completed

- ☐ Nursery school to 8th grade
- ☐ 9th, 10th or 11th grade
- ☐ 12th grade, no diploma
- ☐ High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)
- ☐ Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 or more years of college, no degree
- ☐ Associate degree (for example: AA, AS)
- ☐ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, AB, BS)
- ☐ Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MEd, MSW, MBA)
- ☐ Professional degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD)
- ☐ Doctorate degree (for example: PhD, EdD)

73. What is your total household income?

- ☐ Less than \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$89,999
- ☐ \$90,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$149,999
- ☐ \$150,000 or more

74. Please specify your ethnicity.

- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

75. Please specify your race, check all that apply:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White

**Appendix C: Community-Level Key Informant Interview Schedule**



## **2011 Key Informant Interview Schedule**

### **Community-Level Process Evaluation of the New Jersey SPF SIG initiative**

1. Please describe how the SPF SIG process has been followed so far (i.e. the 5-Step process)? (Prompt – Needs Assessment, Building Capacity, Strategic Planning, Implementation, Evaluation)
  - 1a. Have there been any deviations to the 5-steps?
  - 1b. What do you think led to these deviations?
2. What do you see as the real accomplishments of the SPF SIG initiative in your community so far?
3. What do you see as the unresolved issues?
4. What incentives are provided by the SPF SIG initiative in your community to encourage member participation?
5. How does the SPF SIG initiative in your community resolve conflicts arising from different ideas or beliefs?
  - a. How would you describe the initiative's success at resolving conflicts arising from different ideas or beliefs?
6. How did the SPF contribute to the access and use of epidemiological data to inform your organization's practice and selection of interventions?
7. How did the SPF contribute to your organization's current data sharing process?
8. How did the SPF contribute to your organization's current use of evidence-based programs, policies, and practices?

9. How did the SPF contribute to your organization's current policies addressing cultural competence?
10. How has the SPF SIG initiative in your community influenced public policy or practice?
11. How would you describe the SPF SIG initiative's efforts to identify and develop plans for obtaining the resources it needs for sustainability and goal achievement?
12. How did you (or how do you plan) to expand the SPF in your community?
13. Overall, what are the most important things you learned during the SPF SIG process over the last two years?
14. How can other communities (or community organizations) learn or benefit from the SPF funded communities?

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