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The Community College Baccalaureate: Assessing Student Perceptions at One Rural Mississippi Community College

Edana Leigh Nail

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The community college baccalaureate: Assessing student perceptions at one rural
Mississippi community college

By

Edana Leigh Nail

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctorate of Philosophy
in Community College Leadership
in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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2013

The community college baccalaureate: Assessing student perceptions at one rural
Mississippi community college

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The demand for Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) degrees is rising due to increasing costs of educational obtainment resulting in decreased access. Also, universities are not always accessible geographically or academically to many students. Many students are limited in time and financial resources, and have family and job responsibilities, limiting their ability to relocate to a university.

The focus of this study was to explore the perceptions of students regarding the need for the CCB, the effectiveness of the CCB, reasons why students would choose the CCB, and the fields of CCB degrees students would choose. Specifically, this study compared the results among student survey respondents based on their primary campus attended, age, gender, race/ethnicity, number of dependents, and employment status as well as their need for the CCB. All full-time and part-time students from a rural community college in Northeast Mississippi were asked to participate in the survey.

Approximately 30% of respondents indicated that their only realistic option to obtain a bachelor's degree would be through their local community college. A majority of respondents perceived the CCB to be effective. And, respondents indicated that the

factors that influenced their choice of the CCB were cost, location, work responsibilities, family responsibilities, admiration for current school, and familiarity for current school. The specific degree fields that respondents indicated they would choose if they were to obtain a CCB, from greatest interest to least, were: health professions, business, education, public administration/social work, “other”, liberal arts and sciences, and psychology. When testing the differences in perception of effectiveness of the CCB between demographic groups, the CCB was perceived to be more effective by respondents who were older, had 1 dependent or 5 or more dependents, and who saw the CCB as their only option. When testing the differences in perceptions of reasons to choose the CCB, respondents who were older indicated more reasons for choosing the CCB.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband of nine years, Jay Nail, without whom I could not have completed this process and who has always supported and motivated my educational pursuits; and to my children Cade and Elyssa, who's love and affection make me strive to give them the very best.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For more than a century the community college system has been serving the needs of the local community and our society. It has made changes and adapted to new policies in order to remain true to its mission and purpose. However, as the needs of the community and society change, the community college's mission and purpose must change as well (Vaughan, 2006). Today, we see an emerging need in society: the rising demand for a Community College Baccalaureate (CCB) degree due to rising costs of educational obtainment resulting in decreased access (Walker, 1997). Walker (1997) stated that our economic health and social welfare depend on increased access to higher education, indicating that if community colleges will expand their mission to include the baccalaureate degree and, at the same time, maintain their open door policy and sensitivity to the needs of the community, the problems associated with the rising demand, costs, and limited access could be reduced.

There are many cases in which the CCB has been shown to be beneficial. For example, in the case of Great Basin College in Nevada, Remington and Remington (2005) stated that through the implementation of five baccalaureate degrees they learned "it is beneficial for a college to reexamine its mission, re-envision its future, reassess its standards and outcomes and create new programs and curricula" (p. 148). Another prime example is when Westwark College, in Fort Smith, Arkansas, using the same degree

initiative, found a need for a specific manufacturing technology baccalaureate degree among students, faculty, administrators, and stakeholders (McKee, 2005). They were successful in the implementation of the degree, resulting in the fulfillment of employment needs of local manufacturing companies as well as the provision of employment for students who may not otherwise have been qualified.

Universities are not always accessible geographically or academically to many students; many are denied access due to financial and academic circumstances (Walker, 1997). The concept of the place-bound student raises many questions about the ease to which they may obtain a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. Many students are limited in time and financial resources, and have family and job responsibilities, limiting their ability to relocate (Fanelli, 2007; Lewin, 2009; Smith & Holcombe, 2008; Walker, 1997). Prior to Shields' (2004) research, there was very little research available and no complete definition as to what it means to be place-bound, and the place-bound student was defined as being place-bound simply because he or she usually lived with his or her parents in the same area as the institution. Shields' (2004) research compared students who vary in their perception of how difficult it would be for them to leave the St. Louis area to attend college. It was hypothesized that those who thought it would be more difficult (were more place-bound) would: (1) have fewer financial resources; (2) have higher external locus of control orientation; (3) have greater attachment to their families and romantic partners; and (4) have greater attachment to the area. Furthermore, because being place-bound appears to have a strong social psychological component, social psychological factors (attachment and locus of control orientation) were expected to be at least as influential as financial factors in predicting a perception of difficulty in leaving

the area. Regarding the effects of being place-bound, those who perceived more difficulty in leaving the area were expected to be less successful academically, have lower adjustment to college scores, and have less satisfactory relationships with their parents. In addition, positive relationships with parents were expected to increase academic performance, and an internal locus of control orientation was expected to have a positive effect on academic performance. Shields (2004) only surveyed traditional-aged college students.

The community college may provide lower tuition and closer geographical locations to accommodate the place-bound student. Walker (2001) conducted surveys and focus groups that indicated that community college students are interested in obtaining baccalaureate degrees from the community college either due to disinterest in transferring to a university or the inability to do so. The need for these degrees has been proven throughout the U.S.

Statement of Problem

Fain (2012) states that 80% of community college students do not transfer to a university. Several factors may contribute to this lack of transfer: grades, financial constraints, family or work obligations, and location of the university. Bridges (2009) states that many nontraditional students do not attend four-year colleges because of their current place obligations. Bridges (2009) said, "For them, community colleges provide a chance for a post-secondary education they would not have had otherwise" (p. 2).

Over the last few years, much research from Kielty (2010); Davis (2012); Ruud, Bragg, and Townsend (2010); Bemmell, Floyd, and Bryan (2009); Hrabak (2009); Floyd and Walker (2009); Janezich (2011); Hofland (2011); and Williams (2010) has been

devoted to the new popularity of community colleges offering baccalaureate degrees. Most of the research, however, has focused on the perception of need for, effectiveness of, and reasons for the community college baccalaureate among community college students, faculty and administration, and the communities that are served. The concept of cost and funding has also been addressed. Further research is needed in these areas as well as research to explore the degree fields students would choose to pursue as well as research to determine how students' life circumstances may affect their decisions related to higher education. The community college may offer degrees not offered at a university, such as those related to allied health or manufacturing technology (Remington & Remington, 2013). In addition, since many students are place-bound students and unable to move or commute to a university's campus, the CCB seems to be a viable and effective solution for the students and the community colleges. According to Stokols and Shumaker (1982), Shields (2004), and Mbilinyi (2006), many students are place-bound due to many demographic and psychological factors.

The problem of this study was the extent to which students from the surveyed community college perceived a need for the CCB, and the extent to which the students perceived the CCB effective. According to the survey questions in Appendix A, a perception by the respondents that the CCB would be advantageous to employability or enhance their employment status would indicate a perception of effectiveness.

Questions related to this problem are what specific reasons respondents gave for why they would choose the CCB and what types of CCB degree programs they would be interested in. There are many challenges community college students face in obtaining the bachelor's degree. According to Chute (2008), obstacles can be so overwhelming

that, if the current pattern continues, one in three of today's freshmen will not have earned a bachelor's degree from any four-year school eight and a half years from now. According to Mbilinyi (2006), among adults who want more education, the top five challenges to pursuing higher education relate to time and money. His results showed respondent's perceptions of barriers from obtaining a bachelor's degree: 73% perceived management of other commitments as a barrier, 70% perceived money as a barrier, 62% perceived providing for self and family as a barrier, 61% perceived time commitment as a barrier, and 50% perceived attending classes regularly as a barrier.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of students from one rural community college in Northeast Mississippi regarding the CCB. This study employed a survey to explore perceptions related to the need for the CCB, the effectiveness of the CCB, reasons why students would choose the CCB, and the CCB degree fields students would choose. This study compared the results among the respondents based on primary campus attended, age, gender, race/ethnicity, number of dependents, and employment status as well as their need for the CCB degree.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of community college students regarding the need for the CCB?
2. What are the perceptions of community college students regarding the effectiveness of the CCB?

3. What are the reasons community college students would choose to obtain a CCB?
4. What CCB degree fields would community college students choose to pursue?
5. Are there differences among the perceptions of community college students based on the demographic factors of campus, age, gender, race/ethnicity, number of dependents, or employment status?
6. Are there differences among perceptions of community college students based on their need for the CCB degree?

Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this study is the theory of place dependency that is defined as the perceived strength of association between a person and a specific place. It was developed by Stokos and Shumaker (1981), and it was used to study how an individual engages in a two-part decision-making process that involves an evaluation of their current place relative to the quality of the alternative places. This theory indicates that the student's current place is used as a comparison while the alternative places are considered comparison level alternatives. The evaluation process of the current place is done by comparing how the goals and needs are met for the individual compared to their experiences in previous places. The alternative places are defined as available alternate places that might also meet the same set of goals and needs. All places (current, previous, and alternative) determine place dependency. Place dependency may exist because a student's needs are being met more efficiently in the current place rather than the alternative or because there are no other alternatives. Either way, the student may be

satisfied or dissatisfied with the current place. As applied in this study, this place dependency theory holds that the independent variables: community college students' campus, age, gender, race/ethnicity, number of dependents, and employment status as well as their need for the CCB degree are expected to explain the dependent variables: perceptions of need for the CCB, effectiveness of the CCB, reasons students choose the CCB, and the CCB degree fields students would choose because the independent variables may be used to characterize the place-bound student, who is defined as one who has perceived difficulty in leaving the immediate geographic area to attend school (Shields, 2004). Shields (2004) used Stokos and Shumaker's (1981) theory to determine a student's connection with a particular place to the expectancy of whether or not that student will leave in order to attend college.

According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), this place dependency is what has created the makeup of our current community college system. They stated that the revolution in American education, in which the two-year college played a leading role, is almost over. Two years of post-secondary education are virtually obtainable by every American financially, geographically, and practically. Since the recommendation of President Truman's Commission on Higher Education that the door to obtain a post-secondary degree be wide open; community colleges are everywhere. There are multitudes of systems with two or more branches located in inner cities and rural districts, as well as programs in prisons and military bases. Online instruction makes classes available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Open admission policies ensure that no one has a missed opportunity at higher education.

According to Floyd, Felsher, and Falconetti (2012), since community college education is so accessible with multiple locations in close proximity of any dwelling, low tuition costs, and availability of multiple programs, it seems practical to expand their reach and enter into a new market with, potentially, a very high demand. A bachelor's degree that is obtainable at these accessible locations to accommodate the place dependency of many students is an efficient use of resources and an effective way of obtaining a more educated workforce. Scott (1981) said that an organization depends on the environment in which the organization must relate. Obviously, community colleges consistently accommodate the needs of their environment and communities. So as the environment changes, so does the organizational structure of the community college (Williams, 2010).

Definition of Terms

Applied Baccalaureate: a degree that educates one specifically to work in their field of study through hands-on training and provides competencies relevant to a specific workforce (Floyd, 2005).

Baccalaureate Degree: a degree conferred by a college or university to a person who has completed a four or five year program of study or equivalent thereto (Ajzen, 1991).

Community College: According to Cohen and Brawer (2008) "any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate science as a highest degree" (p. 5). However, as previously mentioned, the definition of the community college is changing with the implementation of the baccalaureate degree.

Community College Baccalaureate (CCB): “a degree granted by postsecondary institutions approved for associate degree awards with the addition of limited baccalaureate degree approval in specialized fields” (Floyd & Walker, 2009, p. 101).

Effectiveness: the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result (Merriam-Webster’s New Dictionary, 2013).

Higher Education: “Postsecondary education at colleges, universities, junior or community colleges, professional schools, technical institutes, and teacher-training schools” (U.S. Department of State, 2013, p.5)

Impact: to have a strong effect on someone or something (Merriam-Webster’s New Dictionary, 2013).

Mission: the reason an organization was created: a purpose or reason for its existence (Radtke, 1998).

Place-bound: inability to relocate for a variety of reasons including family or employment responsibilities (Walker, 1999).

University: an authorized institution of higher learning providing facilities for teaching and research and an academic degree granting organization (Merriam-Webster’s New Dictionary, 2013).

Workforce Baccalaureate Degree: A baccalaureate degree that provides the knowledge and skills required for the local workforce (Floyd, 2005).

Chapter Summary

This research study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one presented introductory elements of the study and included the statement of the problem, purpose of

the study, significance of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, and definition of terms. A review of related literature was compiled in Chapter two that addresses the need and effectiveness of a CCB degree among faculty, administrators and students, the results of CCB implementation in some community colleges, the effects on the place-bound students, and why a student might choose to obtain a CCB. Chapter three of this study discussed the methods and procedures used to facilitate the study. This chapter included the research design, population and sampling procedure, instrumentation, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, and data collection procedures. The results and statistical analysis of the study are presented in chapter four. The analysis of the study involved demographics of the sample and examination of each of the six research questions. The study concluded in chapter five with a summary of the findings and implications, conclusions drawn from the study, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Five categories have been determined in an effort to categorize the literature reviewed in this study. The first category developed, corresponding to the first research question, is the perceived need for a CCB. There was an overwhelmingly large amount of literature addressing this issue. The second category, corresponding to the second research question, is specific evidence from previous studies identifying whether or not the implementation of the baccalaureate degree at the community college was effective and if it met the perceived need. This literature also gives some insight to which types of CCB degree programs have been implemented therefore also corresponding to the fourth research question. The third category is the focus on the effect of the implementation of the CCB on the place-bound student. This is important because this is one of the major determinants in this study that indicates a reluctance to attend a four-year institution, therefore providing a need for the CCB. From this research, additional research and testing can take place in order to compare the student's perceptions of need for, effectiveness of, and reasons why they would choose the CCB to their campus, age, race, gender, number of dependents, employment status, and graduation plans. This category provides the literature relative to the fifth research question in this study. The fourth category devised from the research is reasons students would choose to obtain the CCB degree. This information is supportive of the third research question.

Perceived need for a CCB

Much research has been conducted to indicate whether or not there is a perceived need for the implementation of the CCB. Some literature focuses on a student need, while others focus on the need from the specific viewpoint of faculty and administrators. The transition into offering the CCB leads to controversy among educational leaders, politicians, business leaders, students and policy makers (Kielty, 2010). Those who support the idea argue, for example, that community colleges can provide students with access to baccalaureate degrees in specific, high-demand fields, at an affordable price (Walker, 2005). According to Walker (2005), those who oppose argue that the community colleges' "core values of open door access, learner-centeredness, affordability, convenience, and responsiveness" will be compromised (p. 19).

Student Viewpoint

Williams (2010) found that the majority of the 750 students she surveyed (50 from each of Mississippi's community and junior colleges) perceived the community college baccalaureate degree would be beneficial to them and their college. They also indicated they would obtain a baccalaureate degree from their respective community college. It was found that 79% of students said that the addition of a bachelor's degree program would be beneficial to their college, 63% said they would obtain a bachelor's degree from their community college if it was offered, 67% said the addition of a CCB degree program would be beneficial to them and their futures, and 73% said that being able to obtain a bachelor's degree from their community college would eliminate financial barriers.

Faculty Viewpoint

Kielty (2010) focused on the factors that influence faculty intentions to support the CCB by surveying 319 full-time faculty members at two public, two-year colleges in Florida that are in the process of transitioning to a CCB system. She noted some of the challenges faced by faculty members presented by the CCB. Many issues revolve around institutional expectations and the concern that faculty may not be able to or may not wish to meet institutional expectations. If faculty feel they lack the skills and confidence needed to meet the institutions expectations they may resist the change efforts (Bolman, 2003). Some resist the change because of a potentially more demanding work environment. According to Townsend (2005), generally, community college faculty members choose to work in a community college because they do not have the additional responsibility to conduct research and publish and because they are part of a local community. Baccalaureate faculty members have additional responsibilities and are a part of a national community of scholars. Also, most community college faculty consider teaching to be their primary responsibility, enabling students to succeed who would not otherwise not be able to. Community college faculty, many times, enjoy the community college because it enables them to achieve professional fulfillment along with raising a family.

Another issue faced by community college faculty is the notion that higher-division faculty members will receive greater benefits than lower-division faculty (Seidam, 1985). A complementary concern to this is that of faculty member's credentials. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires baccalaureate faculty members to have a doctorate or master's degree in their discipline,

or a master's degree with 18 graduate hours in that discipline. Also, at least 25% of the baccalaureate-level courses must be taught by faculty with a terminal degree (Pappas Consulting, 2001). According to Kielty (2010), many faculty members may find the cost and time required to meet these challenges as a barrier to teaching the upper-level courses. Conversely, those who do have the additional credentials may demand higher salaries and be reluctant to teach the lower-level courses.

Davis (2012) conducted similar research to Kielty (2010) to determine faculty perceptions of educational innovations pertaining to the CCB. She surveyed 100 faculty members from three different institutions in a west south central state that were each starting a CCB system at the same time. She found that the majority of educators surveyed felt that the CCB was a positive addition to their institution and provided opportunities to students when originally there might not have been any. She noted the support of the CCB by educators such as Walker (2005), Floyd (2005), and Townsend (2005) as well as members of the Community College Baccalaureate Associations (CCBA) stating that it furthers the mission of the community college. According to Van den Berg (2002), there are four factors that affect faculty perceptions: meaning construction, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions. Davis (2012) used these factors to determine faculty perceptions of innovation and the CCB implementation. She used Bolman and Deal's (2008) organizational framework as a means of evaluating faculty from all four frames: structural, human resources, political, and symbolic. Her overall outcome was that the general perceptions and reactions of the CCB among two-year faculty members were positive with very little negative responses.

Administration Viewpoint

Bemmel, Floyd, and Bryan (2009) conducted a case study of a multi campus community college in Florida to determine what, other than cost, could make the CCB a more attractive alternative than the university baccalaureate programs. Five community college administrators were surveyed and interviewed and eight themes were identified: political, location and access, ranking within the state, quality, growth, salary structure, expense allocation, and a funding model. The need to offer baccalaureate degrees at community colleges was found to be based on access, geographical location, and demand. Funding requirements, fees, and tuition were found to be much lower for the baccalaureate degree programs at the college than that of its university counterpart. The college's programs were designed to offer degrees in a wide variety of areas that were considered to be high need for the local economy. These areas were met first in order to decrease the downtime of not being able to meet the employment need. Other important factors discovered in the research were that programs were tailored to assure students' growth and success when moving from the associate degree to the bachelor degree and beyond. Also, the college's enrollment in the baccalaureate education degree was so successful that a nearby university agreed to transfer three degree programs in undergraduate elementary education to the college. The finding indicated that the college was located in an area that may be conceived as an attractive one by prospective faculty. This study showed that there were factors that could make the CCB a more attractive alternative for states to consider including: location, traffic patterns, proximity to the learner's home and workplace, marketability, and customer relations.

Perceived Effectiveness of a CCB

Janezich (2011) addressed the effects of implementing CCB degrees to combat the rural brain drain that typically plagues rural communities as well as to provide needed education to the place-bound student. According to Walker (1997), community colleges that offer bachelor's degrees needed by local industries can increase access for students who do not want to leave the area. This would expand one of the main missions of the community college, which is to meet community needs and be aware of economic development opportunities. Janezich (2011) found this place-bound type of situation in the Iron Range, an area in Minnesota consisting of 15 primary and secondary school districts. Arrowhead is an area located in the Iron Range, consisting of five technical and community colleges that serve six communities and surrounding areas and does not have a four-year university. Ultimately he tried to answer the question, how can offering the baccalaureate degrees on community college campuses help stop rural brain drain in northeastern Minnesota? He specifically focused on the Iron Range engineering (IRE) baccalaureate degree program offered within these community colleges in Arrowhead. Through interviews of 14 participants of the inaugural class of the IRE program, he found that students enrolled in the program because they were going to be experiencing a new approach to engineering education. Overwhelmingly, he found that students decided to attend IRE because of where it was located, because it was something different than what other schools offered, and because they felt it would give them a head start on their competition for employment after graduation. The success of this program gave many opportunities to students and local industries, increasing the probability of limiting the rural brain drain.

Hofland (2011) examined Great Basin College in Nevada from 1997-98 through 2009-2010 as it developed five baccalaureate programs. Through archived data and interviews with administrators and faculty, she explored how offering four-year programs impacted the students, faculty, curriculum, governance, and culture of the community college. She found from her interviews that they perceived the mission of Great Basin College was very strongly being upheld, which is a common fear among community colleges as the idea of implementing baccalaureate degree programs is addressed. She did not perceive the mission had changed, just merely extended. The major impacts of the implementation of these five baccalaureate programs included the following:

- the recruiting and hiring of faculty with doctorate degrees resulting in a change of culture and an increase in expenses
- transforming the general education
- increasing the library holdings
- developing procedures and policies resulting in more standardization of processes and curriculum
- creating a workload policy
- increasing student services
- transforming the perception of the college by the community by creating legitimacy and sense of place (p. 1)

Hofland (2011) concluded that while adding baccalaureate degrees was important, the consistent change in the community's needs, the constantly changing technological field, and the change of leadership had a more profound impact on the progression of this community college.

CCB Effect on the Place-Bound Student

As defined earlier, the place-bound student is one who does not attend college because of extenuating circumstances at home that prevent him or her from doing so. Floyd and Walker (2009) believe that place-bound workers will increasingly demand that nearby community colleges be able to offer the baccalaureate degree so that they will have access to occupations that require the degree. They also predict that as more community college baccalaureate programs are supported politically and financially that students will continue to register a high level of satisfaction with their local community college courses and programs. They also predict that as this movement continues to progress that universities will become less resistant to the CCB programs.

Shields (2004) determined the correlates and effects of being a place-bound student by surveying 184 degree-seeking freshmen students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The first group of variables that were measured in the fall of 1997 was the possible correlates of being a place-bound student. The variables measured were: financial resources, locus of control orientation, attachment to family and partners, attachment to place, rootedness, and adjustment to college. She was surprised by many of the results from her analysis. Financial resources showed no effect on the place-bound measure that she used in the study. It did not affect the place-bound student's perception of how difficult it would be to leave their area. Also, attachment to family, attachment to romantic partner, and attachment to place were not related to the place-bound student measurement. Attachment to place, however, was close to significant. Findings from this study concluded that women who were higher in external control were more likely to report difficulty in leaving their area to attend college. The second group of variables

that were measured was the possible correlates on the effect of being a place-bound student. The variables measured were: academic achievement, locus of control, adjustment to the university, perceived difficulty in leaving, and relationship with parents. Academic achievement during the first two semesters was basically the same regardless of how difficult the students thought it would be to leave. Locus of control and adjustment to the university were also not related to being place-bound. The predictions made on perceived difficulty in leaving relative to their relationships with their parents were considered by Shields as surprising. It was hypothesized that a perception of being place-bound would have negative effects on the parent/child relationship. However, her results showed those who had a greater difficulty in leaving were the students who had more positive relationships with their parents.

Reasons Students Choose the CCB

Davis (2010) and The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board indicated that the need for baccalaureate graduates in Texas was significant. The United States Census Bureau (2008) reported that out of the Texas adults over the age of 25, only 25.3% possess a bachelor's degree or above. In 2008, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems indicated that only 32.7% of Texas adults age 25 to 64 held an associate's degree or higher, compared to 37.2% nationally. This means that Texas ranks 40th in the nation in the number of adults who hold an associate's degree or higher. The population most impacted by CCB programs is nontraditional students, especially working adults. There are significant payoffs for the student associated with increasing the number of baccalaureate graduates. For example, working-age residents with college degrees are

32% more likely to participate in the workforce than those with less than a high school diploma, and their lifetime earnings are twice as high. In 2007, the median annual income difference between those who completed associate's degrees and those who completed baccalaureate degrees was \$13,610.

Hofland (2011) interviewed 20 faculty and administrators and noted that 95% believed that the addition of the baccalaureate degrees strengthened the traditional community college mission while providing students access to the baccalaureate at Great Basin College. The other functions of Great Basin College, as described in their mission, are developmental education, continuing education, dual credit, transfer degrees, associate of applied science degrees, certificate programs, and community education. Of the interviewees, 95% perceived that either there was no impact or there was a positive impact on the other functions of the college affecting their student clientele.

Manias (2007) performed a policy evaluation of the CCB in Florida. During his interviews he asked students what led them to enroll in the baccalaureate level teacher education programs at the community college. The range of reasons students chose the community college for their upper division coursework was wide. However, the foremost categories were location and cost. Other participants mentioned things like the ability to have personal contact, prior positive experiences at the institution, the reputation of the institution and the program, and flexibility.

Chapter Summary

The review of literature presented in chapter two included examples by Bommel, Floyd, and Bryan (2009); Janezich (2011); and Hofland (2011) where CCB degree programs have been successfully implemented in a few states such as Florida, Minnesota,

and Nevada, and showed where there has been a significant perception of need determined among students, faculty, and/or administrators in studies by Davis (2012) and Williams (2010) in Texas and Mississippi. However, there is still little indication of the perception of effectiveness regarding the CCB and, even less, why students would choose the CCB and in which types of degree fields students would be likely choose. In order to provide insight into these concerns, the literature discusses the place-bound student and their limitations in obtaining higher education as potential factors as to why students would choose the CCB. Shields' (2004) found gender and external locus of control factors to be significant when determining the place dependent student. The external factor beyond the student's control that proved to influence place dependency was relationship with parents. Manias (2007) found location and cost as the primary factors as to why students would choose the CCB, along with the ability to have personal contact, prior positive experiences at the institution, the reputation of the institution and the program, and flexibility as additional reasons. The literature also emphasizes types of CCB degree fields that have been successfully implemented, such as: health occupations, technical fields, business, and education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter summarizes the research methodology used to document the respondent's demographic profile, their perception of need for and effectiveness of the CCB, their desire to obtain a CCB and in which field of study they would prefer to do so. Also documented, were any differences among demographics regarding their need and ability to obtain a bachelor's degree. Data were collected using an anonymous survey. This method of data collection was used because of the ease of measurability, anonymity, and high reliability and validity associated with it. Included in this chapter are the research design, population and sampling procedure, instrumentation, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, and data collection procedures.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework has been developed according to the research questions. As seen in Figure 1 below, the main focus of this study was to determine the perception of need and effectiveness of the CCB from a community college student perspective. This study also aimed to determine why students would choose the CCB and what CCB degree fields they would choose. Finally, the study sought to determine differences in students' perceptions based on the determinants that potentially cause place dependency among students as well as their need for the CCB degree.

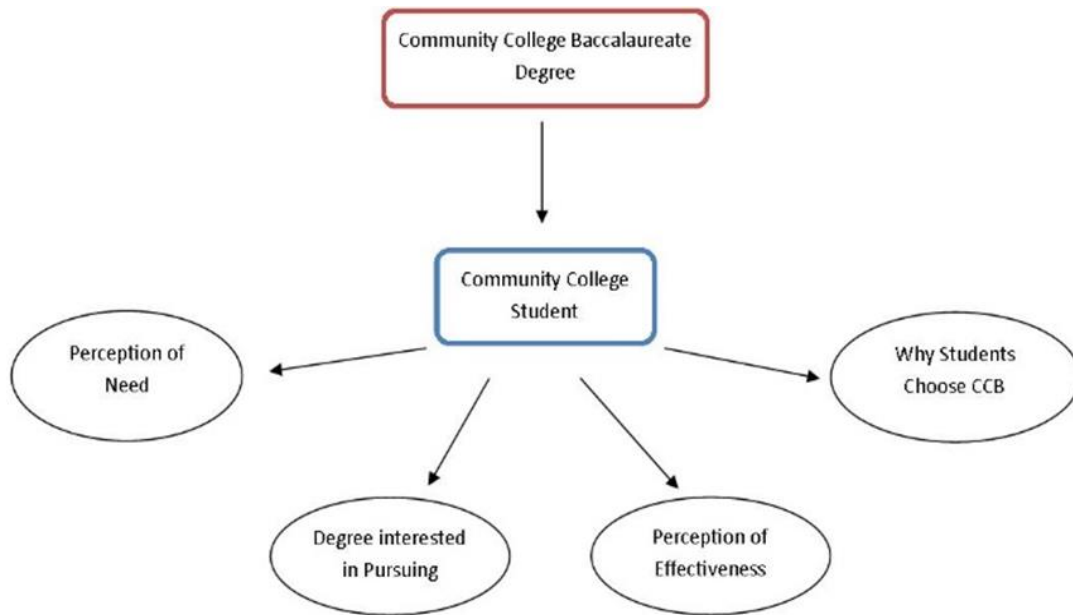


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived need for and effectiveness of the CCB as well as the reasons why students would choose the CCB, which CCB degrees they would choose, and the influences of place dependency as well as their need for the CCB degree. This study accomplished this purpose through a survey of community college students.

A survey was used to obtain the perceptions of students in regards to the need for the CCB, effectiveness of the CCB, factors influencing student choice of the CCB, and the CCB degree fields that students would be interested in pursuing. According to Church and Waclawski (1998), “in the organizational context, surveys play an important role in helping leaders and managers obtain a better understanding of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of their own employees and of their customers” (p. 1). Church

and Waclawski explained that more than 70% of institutions implement surveys as a means of gathering information and it is the most popular technique for data collection since it allows one to obtain information from a large group of individuals in a relatively short period of time. Comparisons of perceptions among groups based on demographic characteristics and students' need for the CCB degree were also completed. The survey began with demographic questions related to primary campus attended, gender, race/ethnicity, age, employment status, and number of dependents. Next, the survey included close-ended questions asking students to select one statement related to their perceptions of need for the CCB. Next, the survey presented six close-ended questions with a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" to determine student' perceptions of the effectiveness of the CCB. The survey also contained eight close-ended questions with a five point Likert-type response scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to strongly agree" asking participants to mark reasons why they would choose to obtain a CCB. Finally, the survey contains an open-ended question asking students to list what CCB degree field they would be interested in obtaining. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Initially, a pilot survey was given during a class period to a randomly selected class of students at the rural Mississippi community college in order to determine any errors or possible uncertainties within the survey. After necessary changes were made to the survey based on the pilot study results, a link for the survey was sent via email to all part-time and full-time students from an administrator of the college. The college-wide survey was completed though SurveyMonkey®. Students were chosen for this survey because the expectation was that the most relevant data comes from students in a rural

community college since those are the students who would most likely face the largest geographical barriers to attending a university. One college was chosen in order to simplify the potential complexity of the research. The community college chosen is a large multi-campus community college located in rural parts of Northeast Mississippi with three campuses. Links to the survey were disbursed to participants twice. Two weeks after the first disbursement, they were sent again. All 5,171 students from the college were asked to complete the survey. The school's administration gave permission to survey its students.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this survey was adapted from a survey used in prior research (Williams, 2010) to assess the need for CCB degrees in the state of Mississippi. Williams' study used a Likert-type scale questionnaire. Likert-type scales use a well-known method of collecting data, making them easy to understand and analyze (Jacoby & Matell, 1991). Williams' study measured the perceived need for the CCB in the state of Mississippi among community college students, faculty, and administrators. She also measured whether the perceived need of the CCB was affected by specific demographic factors such as race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, geographic location, employment status, academic ability, college distance from four-year institution, first generation college student, and family status. The format of her study was used as a guide, but survey questions were changed in order to meet the requirements of this study. The questions regarding participant's demographic profile were altered to include only the factors that most directly affect place dependency. According to Shields (2004), these include age, gender, race, number of dependents, and employment status. The first set of

close-ended questions asked was used to measure student's perception of need for the CCB. The questions were the same as those in Williams' survey but listed as a group in order to allow the researcher to more easily categorize students as interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree and able to attend a university, interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree but not able to attend a university, and not interested in obtaining a bachelor's degree. The second set of close-ended questions was used to measure students' perceptions of effectiveness. One question was used from Williams' survey, and five new questions were added. Other questions from Williams' survey that seem to be related to need or effectiveness but are repetitive of other questions in the survey were eliminated. The third set of close-ended questions was used to measure students' perceptions of their reasons for obtaining a CCB. Whereas Williams listed these reasons and asked students to select the statements they felt were true, this study asks students to rate the degree to which they feel the reasons prevent them from obtaining a bachelor's degree. Finally, the survey includes an open-ended question not on Williams' survey, but suggested in her concluding statements, to determine which types of CCB degree fields students would be interested in obtaining. Permission was granted by Williams for the use of her survey.

Instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided with the survey. This method of data collection was used because of the ease of measurability, anonymity, and high reliability and validity that comes with using a questionnaire type survey (Jacoby & Matell, 1991). This survey did not have any evidence of reliability prior to its distribution since this was the first deployment of the survey. This survey did indicate face validity by having clearly defined goals, correlated goals and assessment

measurements, comparability to similar previous surveys, and a pilot survey in order to determine errors or inadequacies. The close-ended questions provide detailed feedback related to the research questions with measurable results. Each closed ended question provides an opportunity to answer on a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” There is some potential for open-ended answers in the last section of the instrument with the question related to the types of bachelor’s degrees; degrees listed are based on Remington and Remington (2013). If the participant’s answer was not available, they could write in their answer in the place marked “other.” These answers still have the ability to be grouped and measured. Permission was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Mississippi State University to conduct this survey.

Variables in the Study

The survey instrument was used to answer the research questions from the opinion of the community college student. The variables tested in this survey are the perceived need for a CCB, the perceived effectiveness of the CCB, the reasons why students would choose to obtain a CCB, and which CCB degree programs would be chosen. In part A, the respondent is asked close-ended demographic questions regarding their primary campus attended, age, gender, race, number of dependents, employment status, and plans to graduate in 2013. In part B, questions one, two, and three ask about the student’s perception of need for the CCB. In part C, questions one through six ask about the student’s perception of effectiveness of the CCB. Part D of this survey was included to determine the student’s reasons for considering obtaining a CCB, and Part E asks which CCB degrees students would choose.

Threats to Validity

One potential threat to validity of this study is the possibility that the language of the survey is misunderstood by the participants. In order to help alleviate this potential problem, a test survey was given in a randomly selected class at a rural Mississippi community college and feedback was provided by the respondents indicating any potentially confusing or misleading information given in the survey.

Another potential threat to validity is the possibility of respondents regarding the questions as uncomfortable to answer or intrusive. The survey provided in this study does limit the amount of personal demographic information requested of the participant. Also, questions regarding GPA are general and do not require that participants provide their specific GPA.

Other potential threats to validity include the limitation of only one community college being surveyed and the uncertainty of the survey respondent population. There was no knowledge of how many respondents would participate and if it would include a diverse group. Also, external validity can be threatened by those who complete the survey if their answers are generalized to other situations.

Data Analysis

The school's vice president of academic instruction was contacted and sent an email containing information about the study, directions for completing the survey, and the link to the survey via SurveyMonkey®. She was asked to forward the email to the respective group of participants. All complete surveys were used in the data analysis.

Descriptive data are provided for each question on the survey, including percentages based on respondents' answers for the demographic categories and need;

Likert-scale responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” for the questions related to effectiveness and reasons; and categories selected for the degree interested in pursuing. For the question on degree area(s) of interest, the answers provided in the “other” location were grouped separately. In addition, respondents’ responses related to effectiveness, reasons for pursuing the CCB, and bachelor’s degree interested in pursuing were compared based on their demographic data as well as their need for the CCB degree as indicated on the survey using analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests.

Delimitations and Limitations

One delimitation to this study is the limited scope of data collection. One community college in the state of Mississippi was the source of all data collected. The primary reason for this is to obtain a local understanding of student’s perceptions of the CCB degree based on need, effectiveness, reasons for choice, and degree to pursue. This study is limited to the number of surveyed individuals at the location which is based on the school’s student population. This study is also limited to the amount of completed surveys provided by the surveyed group.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is based on its ability to extend previous studies. There has been limited research to determine why students may choose the CCB, what demographic factors influence that choice, and what CCB degree fields they would choose. The emphasis from previous studies has been primarily on the perception of need for the CCB from community college personnel. This study was intended to expand

the research previously done to determine community college students' perceptions of the (1) need for a CCB, (2) effectiveness of a CCB, (3) reasons for choosing to obtain a CCB, (4) CCB degree fields students would choose, and (5) demographic factors related to place-dependency and why the student would choose the CCB. The conclusions of this study can be valuable to community college administrators and legislators if the possibility of CCB implementation arises in Mississippi. If there is a perceived need, there could be an increased possibility of implementation and the possibility of a larger share of Mississippi's population obtaining bachelor's degrees.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three presented a discussion of the survey research design used in this study, and the participants of the study were identified. The questionnaire administered was defined along with the components of the instrument. The validity and reliability of the instrument were both addressed. The chapter concluded with specifics on the study's data collection procedures.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

All 5,171 students at the community college were invited to participate in the study, and received the survey. A total of 452 students chose to participate in the survey. The survey was organized into five parts. Part A of the survey consisted of student demographics, part B assessed the student's perception of need for the CCB, part C assessed the student's perception of effectiveness of the CCB, part D assessed reasons students might be interested in obtaining a CCB, and part E determined what CCB degree fields the student would be interested in pursuing. This chapter presents the results of the survey along with the results of analyses that compare the perceptions among groups based on demographic characteristics and the students' need for the CCB degree.

Demographics

Part A included 6 questions pertaining to the student's demographic characteristics: primary campus attended, age, gender, employment status, race/ethnicity, and number of dependents. See Table 1 below for complete demographic results. The majority of the respondents primarily attended campus A (main campus) of the community college with a result of 56%. Of the respondents, 43% attended campus B and 1% attended campus C. Four respondents chose to skip this question. Traditionally, campus A primarily consists of traditional aged students seeking either technical or

academic degrees. The campus B primarily consists of non-traditional aged, technical degree seeking students and campus C is also primarily non-traditional aged students with some seeking technical certificates and/or degrees, adult basic education classes (ABE), and general education degree (GED) courses.

The majority of the respondents are considered to be traditional aged students with 62% aged 17-24 and 38% aged 25 and above. Two respondents chose to skip the question regarding age. Results also showed 33% male and 67% female with three respondents choosing to skip the question regarding gender. Question four, regarding employment status, shows 19.5% were not employed but planned to be employed while in school, 28% were not employed and did not plan to be employed while in school, 34% were employed part time, and 18.5% were employed full time. Three respondents chose to skip this question. Question five, regarding student's race/ethnicity, shows 74% were white/Caucasian, 1.5% were Hispanic/Latino, 22% were Black/African American, 0% were Native American/Indian American, 1% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.5% selected the "other" category. Two respondents chose to skip this question. Finally, according to the respondents, 67% have no dependents, 13% have one dependent, 12% have two dependents, 5% have three dependents, 1.5% have four dependents, and 1.5% have five or more dependents. Three respondents chose to skip this question.

The demographic results from the survey respondents are comparable to that of the whole student body. The total student population for the college as a whole consisted of 55.8% campus A students, 42.9% campus B students, and 1.3% campus C students. Total enrollment consisted of primarily traditional aged, female students with 75% ages 24 and below and 25% ages 25 and above, as well as 39% males and 61% females.

Additionally, total enrollment consisted of 68% Caucasian/white, 29% African American/black, 2% from other ethnicities, and 1% Hispanic.

Table 1

Respondent Demographic Characteristics

Primary Campus	Age	Gender	Employment Status	Race/Ethnicity	Number of Dependents
Campus A: 55.8%	≤24: 62.1%	Male: 32.5%	Not employed- plans for employment: 19.6%	Caucasian: 74.0%	0: 66.8%
Campus B: 42.9%	≥25: 37.9%	Female: 67.5%	Not employed- no plans for employment: 27.8%	Hispanic: 1.5%	1: 12.9%
Campus C: 1.3%			Part time: 33.9%	African American: 22.2%	2: 12.5%
			Full time: 18.7%	Native American: 0%	3: 4.7%
				Asian: 0.7%	4: 1.6%
				Other: 1.6%	≥5: 1.5%

Research Question 1: Perception of Need for the CCB

Part B asked three questions regarding student's perception of need for the CCB. Four respondents chose to skip these questions. Thirty percent indicated that their only realistic option to obtain a bachelor's degree would be through their local community college. Sixty-five percent indicated that there was nothing preventing them from earning a bachelor's degree from a four year college or university, and 5% indicated that they had no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree.

Research Question 2: Perception of Effectiveness of the CCB

Part C included six questions regarding each student's perception of the effectiveness of the CCB. Nine, or 2%, of respondents chose to skip these questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with each question. When asked if they would obtain a bachelor's degree from the community college if it were offered, 66% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if obtaining a bachelors' degree from the community college would significantly impact their salary at their current job (if employed), 50% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if obtaining a bachelor's degree from the community college would impact their opportunities for promotion at their current job (if employed), 53% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if obtaining a CCB would impact their ability to get a better job within their community, 66% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed. When respondents were asked if potential employers would view the CCB equally with a bachelor's degree from a university, 50% either agreed or strongly agreed. And finally, when asked if the community college's ability to offer its current programs would not suffer if CCB's were also offered, 60% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed.

Research Question 3: Reasons community college students would choose to obtain a CCB

Part D included eight questions regarding which factors influence a student's interest in obtaining a CCB. Seventeen, or 4%, of respondents chose to skip these questions. The majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that cost (76% of respondents), location (67% of respondents), work responsibilities (54% of

respondents), family responsibilities (55% of respondents), attachment to current place (64% of respondents), and familiarity with current place (71% of respondents) influenced their interest in obtaining a CCB, while the majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that low current GPA (61% of respondents) and no degrees offered by universities (64% of respondents) influenced their interest in obtaining a CCB.

Research Question 4: Selected CCB Fields of Study

Part E asked the students to choose in which field they would be interested in obtaining a CCB. There were 23 respondents, or 5%, who chose to skip this question. Health professions had the highest response rate from respondents at 35%. Second was business with 21% of the respondents. Next was education with 14% of respondents. Then Public administration/social services, “other” fields of study, liberal arts and sciences, and psychology were chosen by 10%, 8%, 7%, and 5% of respondents, respectively. Respondents who chose the “other” option also listed their field of choice. Six subcategories were able to be distinguished from the “other” category of chosen fields. Nine respondents, or 2%, chose engineering; 16 respondents, or 3.7%, chose a computer related or technical field of study; two respondents, or .5%, chose automotive; five respondents, or 1.2%, chose an agriculture related field of study; two respondents, or .5%, chose biology; and one respondent, or .2%, chose Bible ministry.

Research Question 5: Differences in student perceptions of need, effectiveness, reasons for obtaining, and degree fields based on demographic factors

In order to answer the fifth research question, the percentage of students in each demographic category (campus, age, gender, employment status, race/ethnicity, and number of dependents) who chose each of the three factors related to need was

determined using cross tabulation. In order to determine if any differences existed between participants' perceptions of effectiveness or reasons for obtaining a CCB based on their demographic characteristics, *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs were performed. Finally, the percentage of students in each demographic category who chose each of the degree fields was determined using cross tabulation.

Perception of need based on demographic factors

All three campuses of the community college were surveyed, and of the total respondents, 56% primarily attended campus A (main campus), 43% attended campus B and 1.3% attended campus C. Of respondents attending campus A, 25% indicated that the community college was their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree, as compared to 37% from campus B, and 33% from campus C. Of respondents attending campus A, 74% indicated nothing was preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree, as compared to 53% from campus B, and 50% from campus C. Of respondents attending campus A, 1% indicated they had no desire to get a bachelor's degree, as compared to 10% from campus B, and 17% from campus C (see Table 2).

Table 2

Perception of Need Based on Primary Campus Attended

Campus	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
A (<i>n</i> = 250)	25.0%	74.0%	1.0%
B (<i>n</i> = 192)	37.0%	53.0%	10.0%
C (<i>n</i> = 6)	33.0%	50.0%	17.0%
Total (<i>N</i> = 448)			

Traditional age students were considered to be 17-24 years of age. Non-traditional age students were considered to be 25 years of age or older. Total survey respondents consisted of 62% ages 17-24 and 38% ages 25 and older. Of the respondents who were of traditional age, 22% indicated that the community college was their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree as compared to 44% of non-traditional age students. Of the respondents who were of traditional age, 75% indicated that there was nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four year institution as compared to 49% of non-traditional age students. And of the respondents who were of traditional age, 4% indicated no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere as compared to 7% of non-traditional age students.

Table 3

Perception of Need Based on Age

Age Groups	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
≤ 24 (n = 280)	21.5%	74.7%	3.8%
≥ 25 (n = 170)	44.0%	49.0%	7.0%

Of the survey's total respondents, 33% were male and 67% were female. Of the respondents who were male, 31% indicated that the community college was their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree as compared to 29% of females. Of the respondents who were male, 64% indicated that there was nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution as compared to 66% of females. And of the respondents who were male, 5% indicated no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere as compared to 5% of females.

Table 4

Perception of Need Based on Gender

Gender	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
Male (n = 146)	31.0%	64.0%	5.0%
Female (n = 303)	29.0%	66.0%	5.0%

Survey results showed 20% of the total respondents were not employed but planned to be employed while in school, 28% were not employed and did not plan to be while in school, 34% were employed part time, and 19% were employed full time. Of the respondents who were not employed but planned to be employed while in school, 26% indicated that their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree would be from the community college as compared to 31% of those not employed and no plans to be employed while in school, 23.4% of part time workers, and 42% of full time workers. Of the respondents who were not employed but planned to be employed while in school, 71% indicated that there is nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a university as compared to 62% of those not employed and no plans to be employed while in school, 73.4% of part time workers , and 51% of full time workers. Of the respondents who were not employed but planned to be employed while in school, 3.2% indicated that they have no desire to earn a bachelor's degree from anywhere as compared to 7% of those not employed and no plans to be employed while in school, 3% of part time workers, and 7% of full time workers.

Table 5

Perception of Need Based on Employment Status

Employment Status	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
Unemployed with plans for employment while in school (<i>n</i> = 88)	26.0%	71.0%	3.0%
Unemployed with no plans for employment while in school (<i>n</i> = 125)	31.0%	62.0%	7.0%
Employed part-time (<i>n</i> = 152)	23.4%	73.4%	3.2%
Employed full-time (<i>n</i> = 84)	42.0%	51.0%	7.0%

The total respondents of the survey primarily consisted of Caucasian/white individuals at 74%, 2% were Hispanic/Latino, 22% were African American/Black, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% marked other. Of the respondents who were Caucasian/white, 31% indicated that the community college was their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree as compared to 14% of Hispanics, 28% of African Americans/blacks, 0% Asian and 29% of other ethnicities. Of the respondents who were Caucasian/white, 63% indicated that there was nothing preventing them from earning a bachelor's degree from a four year university as compared to 86% of Hispanics, 70% of African Americans/blacks, 67% of Asians, and 71% of other ethnicities. Of the respondents who were Caucasian/white, 6% indicated no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere as compared to 0% of Hispanics, 2% of African American/blacks, 33% of Asians, and 0% of other ethnicities.

Table 6

Perception of Need Based on Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
Caucasian/white (n = 333)	31%	63%	6%
Hispanic (n = 7)	14%	86%	0%
African American/black (n = 100)	28%	70%	2%
Asian (n = 3)	0%	67%	33%
Other ethnicities (n = 7)	29%	71%	0%

Survey results showed the majority, or 67%, of respondents had no dependents, 13% of the respondents had one dependent, 13% had two dependents, 5% had three dependents, 2% had 4 dependents, and 2% had 5 or more dependents. Of the respondents who had no dependents, 23% indicated that their only realistic option to obtain a bachelor's degree would be from the community college as compared to 47% of respondents with one dependent, 47% with two, 40% with three, 29% with four, and 43% with five or more. Of respondents who had no dependents, 73% indicated there was nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four year institution as compared to 47% of respondents who had one dependent, 49% who had two, 50% who had three, 71% who had four, and 43% who had five or more. Finally, of respondents with no dependents, 5% indicated that they did not have a desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere as compared to 7% of respondents who had one

dependent, 4% who had two, 10% who had three, 0% who had four, and 14% who had five or more.

Table 7

Perception of Need Based on Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents	Only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining a bachelor's degree	No desire to get a bachelor's degree
0 (n = 300)	22.9%	72.6%	4.5%
1 (n = 58)	46.6%	46.6%	6.9%
2 (n = 56)	47.0%	49.0%	4.0%
3 (n = 21)	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%
4 (n = 7)	29.0%	71.0%	0.0%
5 or more(n=7)	43.0%	43.0%	14.0%

Perception of Effectiveness Based on Demographic Factors

Part C of the survey consisted of six questions regarding the student perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB (see Appendix A for questions). The respondents ranked their answers on a Likert-scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Only agree or strongly agree answers were used because those are the students who indicated a perception of effectiveness for the CCB. The percentage of respondents who answered either agree or strongly agree to each of the six questions were then cross tabulated with each demographic. After this, either *t*-tests or ANOVAs were performed in order to determine whether there were any significant differences in the perceptions of effectiveness based on demographic characteristics. See Tables 8-13 below for the percentage of respondents in each demographic characteristic category who either agreed or strongly agreed with each effectiveness question.

Table 8

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Campus

Campus	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
A (n = 164)	65%	47%	50%	63%	47%	60%
B (n = 132)	69%	55%	56%	70%	55%	62%
C (n = 5)	83%	67%	83%	83%	50%	67%

Table 9

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Age

Age Group	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
≤ 24 (n = 172)	61%	43%	47%	59%	43%	55%
≥ 25 (n = 129)	76%	64%	64%	80%	63%	71%

Table 10

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Gender

Gender	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
Male (n = 91)	61%	49%	53%	66%	46%	59%
Female (n = 210)	69%	52%	53%	67%	53%	63%

Table 11

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Employment Status

Employment Status	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
Unemployed with plans for employment (n = 64)	74%	40%	45%	63%	52%	54%
Unemployed with no plans for employment (n = 83)	66%	52%	50%	62%	50%	61%
Employed part-time (n = 93)	59%	49%	53%	66%	41%	63%
Employed full-time (n = 60)	73%	61%	65%	77%	66%	67%

Table 12

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
Caucasian/white (n = 223)	67%	51%	53%	68%	52%	64%
Hispanic (n = 4)	57%	57%	71%	51%	57%	43%
African American/black (n = 69)	68%	47%	55%	64%	47%	52%
Asian (n = 0)	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other ethnicities (n = 4)	57%	57%	43%	57%	43%	57%

Table 13

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Effectiveness Items

Based on Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents	Would obtain CCB if offered	CCB would impact salary at current job	CCB would impact promotion opportunities at current job	CCB would impact ability to get a better job	Employers view CCB equally to University degree	CCB would not impact community college's ability to offer current programs
0 (n = 187)	61%	44%	47%	61%	44%	57%
1 (n = 43)	74%	66%	71%	81%	59%	66%
2 (n = 43)	78%	66%	60%	82%	65%	71%
3 (n = 13)	68%	60%	65%	63%	55%	65%
4 (n = 6)	86%	43%	57%	86%	86%	86%
5 or more (n = 7)	100%	100%	86%	86%	86%	86%

Perception of Reasons to Choose the CCB Based on Demographic Factors

Part D of the survey included eight questions regarding student perceptions of reasons why they may choose to obtain a CCB (see appendix A for questions). The respondents ranked their answers on a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The respondents who answered agree or strongly agree to each of the eight questions were then cross tabulated with each demographic characteristic. After this, either *t*-tests or ANOVAs were performed in order to determine any significant differences between demographics regarding reasons why they would choose the CCB. See Tables 14-19 below for the results of the cross tabulation tests. Each table indicates the percentage of each demographic characteristic that either agreed or strongly agreed with each effectiveness question.

Table 14

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Campus

Campus	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
A (n=155)	76%	62%	50%	49%	60%	71%	13%	11%
B (n=138)	78%	74%	61%	66%	71%	72%	17%	13%
C (n = 3)	83%	50%	50%	50%	67%	67%	0%	33%

Table 15

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Age

Age Groups	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
≤ 24 (n=204)	74%	62%	50%	45%	57%	69%	16%	13%
≥ 25 (n=136)	81%	76%	60%	72%	76%	76%	12%	10%

Table 16

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Gender

Gender	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
Male (n=103)	70%	61%	54%	52%	58%	66%	14%	12%
Female (n=236)	80%	70%	55%	57%	68%	75%	15%	12%

Table 17

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Employment Status

Employment Status	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
Unemployed with plans for employment (<i>n</i> = 61)	74%	61%	45%	49%	60%	66%	20%	11%
Unemployed with no plans for employment (<i>n</i> = 95)	76%	62%	32%	52%	64%	67%	12%	10%
Employed part-time (<i>n</i> = 121)	79%	67%	61%	53%	64%	75%	15%	14%
Employed full-time (<i>n</i> = 61)	76%	79%	83%	71%	70%	75%	13%	11%

Table 18

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Race/Ethnicity

Race/ Ethnicity	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
Caucasian/ white (n = 262)	80%	70%	53%	56%	66%	73%	14%	12%
Hispanic (n = 4)	57%	29%	57%	43%	14%	43%	0%	14%
African American/ black (n = 67)	70%	64%	58%	55%	63%	68%	20%	12%
Asian (n = 1)	33%	0%	33%	33%	66%	33%	0%	0%
Other ethnicities (n = 5)	71%	43%	57%	29%	29%	71%	0%	0%

Table 19

Percentage of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Reasons Items Based on Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents	Cost	Location	Work Obligations	Family Obligations	Like it at current community college	Familiar with current community college	GPA too low for four year school	No interest in degrees at four year school
0 (n = 221)	75%	61%	50%	45%	59%	68%	15%	13%
1 (n = 47)	82%	74%	68%	75%	71%	77%	18%	11%
2 (n = 45)	83%	85%	58%	83%	78%	78%	13%	6%
3 (n = 14)	74%	70%	50%	65%	68%	76%	6%	10%
4 (n = 5)	71%	71%	71%	71%	86%	86%	14%	14%
5 or more (n = 6)	86%	86%	71%	86%	86%	86%	29%	14%

Perception of Degree Field Based on Demographic Factors

Each respondent was asked to indicate in which degree field they would be interested in obtaining a CCB. Those results were compared to each demographic. Six degree fields were available to choose from: education, business, health related professions, liberal arts and sciences, psychology, and public administration/social work. If their desired field was not available, they could provide one in the “other” location. The answers provided in the “other” section were grouped separately. See Tables 20-25 below for the results of the cross tabulation tests. Each table indicates the percentage of each demographic characteristic who selected each degree field of study in which they would pursue a CCB.

Table 20

Perception of Degree Based on Campus Attended

Campus	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./Social Services	Other
A (n=246)	13.1%	19.2%	32.7%	3.7%	6.5%	2.9%	22.0%
B (n=184)	13.6%	17.4%	27.2%	7.1%	2.7%	7.6%	24.5%
C (n = 6)	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%

Table 21

Perception of Degree Based on Age

Age Groups	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./Social Services	Other
≤ 24 (n=272)	14.4%	21.0%	26.2%	4.1%	4.8%	3.3%	26.2%
≥ 25 (n=166)	12.0%	15.1%	36.1%	6.0%	4.8%	7.2%	18.7%

Table 22

Perception of Degree Based on Gender

Gender	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./Social Services	Other
Male (n=146)	13.0%	28.8%	17.1%	4.1%	2.7%	2.1%	32.2%
Female (n=291)	13.4%	13.8%	36.6%	5.2%	5.9%	6.2%	19.0%

Table 23

Perception of Degree Based on Employment Status

Employment Status	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./Social Services	Other
Unemployed with plans for employment (n = 84)	14.3%	25.0%	21.4%	4.8%	4.8%	7.1%	22.6%
Unemployed with no plans for employment (n = 125)	13.7%	9.5%	36.3%	6.5%	6.5%	3.2%	24.2%
Employed part-time (n = 151)	11.3%	18.5%	29.8%	4.6%	4.6%	4.0%	27.2%
Employed full-time (n = 77)	16.9%	26.0%	29.9%	3.9%	1.3%	6.5%	15.6%

Table 24

Perception of Degree Based on Race/Ethnicity

Race/ Ethnicity	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./Social Services	Other
Caucasian/ white (n = 326)	14.2%	18.5%	30.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.0%	22.8%
Hispanic (n = 7)	14.3%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	57.1%
African American/ black (n = 95)	10.5%	21.1%	25.3%	5.3%	5.3%	8.4%	24.2%
Asian (n = 3)	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other ethnicities (n = 7)	28.6%	14.3%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%

Table 25

Perception of Degree Based on Number of Dependents

Number of Dependents	Education	Business	Health Professions	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Psychology	Public Admin./ Social Services	Other
0 (n = 293)	13.4%	21.6%	26.4%	5.5%	4.5%	3.4%	25.3%
1 (n = 57)	10.5%	10.5%	36.8%	3.5%	5.3%	8.8%	24.6%
2 (n = 54)	16.7%	18.5%	37.0%	3.7%	5.6%	3.7%	14.8%
3 (n = 20)	10.0%	5.0%	35.0%	5.0%	5.0%	10.0%	30.0%
4 (n = 7)	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	0.0%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%
5 or more (n = 6)	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%

The fifth research question examined any significant differences in respondents' overall perception of effectiveness for the CCB and their overall perception of reasons to

choose the CCB based on demographic characteristics. T-tests and one-way ANOVAs were run in order to test for these differences. T-tests were run for the gender and age demographic groups because each of these only consisted of two categories. One-way ANOVAs were run for the primary campus attended, employment status, race/ethnicity, and number of dependents demographic groups because each of these consisted of more than two categories. In order to run these statistics, an overall score was computed for each respondent based on their answers to the six effectiveness questions (Survey, Part C) and an overall score was computed for each respondent based on their answers to the eight questions regarding reasons to choose a CCB (Survey, Part D). The “overall effectiveness score” and “overall reasons score” was computed by applying a value to each response and then adding all responses together in order to obtain the overall score. Strongly disagree was given the value of one, disagree was valued at two, neutral was valued at three, agree was valued at four, and strongly agree was valued at five. Each overall score was compared for each demographic characteristic to test for significant differences.

Results from the *t*-test analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the respondents’ overall perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB as well as reasons for obtaining the CCB for respondents between ages 17 and 24 and those aged 25 and above (see Table 26 below). Those aged 25 and above had a higher perception of effectiveness and reasons to choose the CCB than did those between the ages of 17 and 24. There was no significant difference in the mean scores of the respondent’s perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB ($t = -.372, \rho = .720$) or perception of reasons to choose the CCB ($t = -.002, \rho = .999$) between males and females.

Table 26

Comparison of Mean Scores for Overall Effectiveness and Overall Reasons Based on Age

Score	Age Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Overall Effectiveness Score	≤ 24 (<i>n</i> = 291)	20.04	7.45	-4.72	460	<.001*
	≥ 25 (<i>n</i> = 172)	23.36	7.10	-4.78	373.31	<.001*
Overall Reasons Score	≤ 24 (<i>n</i> = 291)	25	9	-3.51	459	<.001*
	≥ 25 (<i>n</i> = 172)	27.87	7.41	-3.69	413.88	<.001*

$\rho < .05$

Note: First *t*-test for each score assumes homogenous variances, second does not

Results from the ANOVA indicate that there was a significant difference in the respondents' overall perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB based on number of dependents (see Tables 27 and 28 below). Since the resulting ρ values did not match each other, a Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed in order to make pairwise comparisons between groups at the $\rho < .05$ level. This test indicated that respondents with zero dependents perceive the CCB to have a lower level of effectiveness than do respondents who have one dependent and those who have five or more dependents. There were no indications of significant differences when comparing two dependents versus three, four, and five dependents; three dependents versus four and five dependents; or four dependents versus five dependents. There were no indications of significant differences among primary campus attended ($\rho = .075$), race/ethnicity ($\rho = .948$), or employment status ($\rho = .277$) based on the "overall effectiveness score". There were also no indications of significant differences among primary campus attended ($\rho = .104$),

race/ethnicity ($\rho = .796$), or employment status ($\rho = .173$) based on the “overall reasons score”.

Table 27

ANOVA Summary Table Regarding Student Perceptions on Effectiveness Based on Number of Dependents

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall Effectiveness Score	1239.75	5	247.95	4.55	<.001*
Between Groups	24810.53	455	54.53		
Within Groups	26050.28	460			
Total					
Overall Reasons Score					
Between Groups	986.55	5	197.31	2.73	.019*
Within Groups	32763.49	454	72.17		
Total	33750.04	459			

* $\rho < .05$

Table 28

Post Hoc Test of Student Perceptions on Effectiveness Based on Number of Dependents

Dependent Variable	(I) Number of Dependents	(J) Number of Dependents	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	p
Overall Effectiveness	0	1	-3.32*	1.05	.021*
		2	-2.92	1.07	.073
	3	4	-.77	1.66	.997
		5 or more	-2.58	2.82	.943
	4	5 or more	-8.44*	2.82	.035*

$\rho < .05$

Research Question 6: Perception of effectiveness and reasons based on need for the CCB degree

The sixth research question compared respondents’ perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB and their perceptions of reasons why students would choose the CCB based

on their need for a CCB degree. This was done by performing a one-way ANOVA comparing students who chose (1) the CCB as their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree, (2) that there is nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a university, and (3) that they had no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere. A Tukey HSD post hoc test was also performed. Results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference in respondent's "overall effectiveness score" and their need for the CCB degree. There was no indication of a significant difference between respondents "overall reasons score" and their need for the CCB degree (see Table 29 below).

Table 29

ANOVA Summary Table Comparing Student Perceptions on Effectiveness Based on Perception of Need

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall Effectiveness Score	393.39	2	196.70	3.63	.027*
Between Groups	24749.56	457	54.16		
Within Groups	25142.95	459			
Total					
Overall Reasons Score	323.62	2	161.81	2.31	.101
Between Groups	32005.94	456	70.19		
Within Groups	32329.56	458			
Total					

* $p < .05$

To further explain where the significant difference exists, the Tukey HSD post hoc test was performed. The results indicated that respondents who can only obtain a bachelor's degree through the community college perceive the CCB to have a higher

level of effectiveness than do respondents who indicate that there is nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four year school (see Table 30 below).

Table 30

Post Hoc Test of Student Perceptions on Effectiveness Based on Perception of Need

Dependent Variable	(I) Need questions 1-3	(J) Reasons questions 1-6	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	ρ
Overall Effectiveness Score	Only realistic option for Bachelor's degree	Nothing preventing obtaining bachelors' degree	1.94*	.76	.029*
		No desire to obtain bachelors' degree	2.66	1.66	.244
	Nothing preventing obtaining bachelor's degree	Only realistic option for Bachelor's degree	-1.94*	.76	.029*
		No desire to obtain bachelors' degree	.72	1.60	.893
	No desire to obtain bachelors' degree	Only realistic option for Bachelor's degree	-2.66	1.66	.244
		Nothing preventing obtaining bachelor's degree	-.72	1.60	.893

* $\rho < .05$

Chapter Summary

Chapter four presented the results of the statistical analysis along with a discussion of the data. The research questions were examined. Research question one was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics based on the respondents' answers to the survey questions regarding perceptions of need for the CCB. Research question two was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics based on the respondents' answers to the survey questions regarding perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB. Research question three was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics based on the respondents' answers to the survey questions regarding perceptions of reasons why they would choose to obtain a CCB. Research question four was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics based on the respondents' answers to the survey questions regarding which field of study in which they would choose to obtain a CCB. Research question five was analyzed by first performing cross tabulation tests in order to determine what percentage of each independent variable showed a perception of effectiveness. Next *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs were performed to determine significant differences between perceptions of effectiveness based on demographic characteristics. After determining significant differences with the one-way ANOVA, Tukey HSD post hoc tests were performed to distinguish the pairwise comparisons between groups. Research question six was analyzed by first performing cross tabulation tests in order to determine what percentage of each independent variable showed a perception of reasons why a student would choose the CCB. Next *t*-tests and one-way ANOVAs were performed to determine significant differences between perceptions of reasons to choose the CCB based on demographic characteristics. After determining significant differences with the one-way ANOVA,

Tukey HSD post hoc tests were performed to distinguish the pairwise comparisons between groups.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn in order to answer the proposed research questions laid out in the beginning of this study. The findings from this study are discussed for each research question along with comparisons from the findings of previous research and then overall conclusions are made.

Question 1: What are the perceptions of community college students regarding the need for the CCB?

Summary of current findings

Of the 452 survey respondents, 30% indicated a perception of need for the CCB, claiming that their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree would be through the community college. Of these 452 respondents, 65% indicated no perception of need for the CCB, claiming that there was nothing preventing them from getting a bachelor's degree from a four-year university. And, 5% of the total respondents had no desire to obtain a bachelor's degree from anywhere. These results indicate that most students at the surveyed community college do not anticipate barriers preventing them from receiving a bachelor's degree from a university.

Previous research comparison

This study is similar to previous research in that respondents viewed the CCB as beneficial and indicated that they would choose to obtain a CCB if it were offered by their local community college. For example, in Williams' (2010) study, she found that 63% of respondents would choose to obtain the CCB if offered, compared to 65% of respondents from this study. Studies by Stokols and Shumaker (1982), Shields (2004), and Mbilinyi (2006) have shown the barriers faced by students when attending college. Mbilinyi's results showed that 73% perceived management of other commitments as a barrier, 70% perceived money as a barrier, 62% perceived providing for self and family as a barrier, 61% perceived time commitment as a barrier, and 50% perceived attending classes regularly as a barrier. Shields' (2004) reported in her study that females with higher external control showed greater place dependency and were less likely to leave their current place to attend college. Her study also showed that students with more positive parental relationships were also more place dependent.

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Most respondents to this survey indicated that there was nothing preventing them from attending a four-year institution to obtain the bachelor's degree, but 30% indicated that they could only obtain the bachelor's degree through a community college. This outcome may be due to the fact that only one school was surveyed, resulting in limited geographical data and the fact that there are several four-year institutions near the surveyed community college. Williams' (2010) study, for example, surveyed community college students from each community college within the state. Respondents in the study

were also primarily of traditional age indicating less work and family obligations than would be the case for an older population.

The conclusions drawn from this survey question provide the surveyed community college with a deeper understanding of the perceived need for the CCB from its current students. A larger participation from students in another survey would provide additional clarity as well as surveys from other community colleges in the state.

Question 2: What are the perceptions of community college students regarding the effectiveness of the CCB?

Summary of current findings

Unlike respondents' perception of need for the CCB, results show a positive perception of effectiveness of the CCB. More than 50% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with each question that, from Williams' (2010) previous research, indicated effectiveness. The questions regarding respondents perception of how the CCB would significantly impact their current job and how it would provide for promotional opportunities in their current job showed a high percentage of neutral perceptions. This is expected to result from survey respondents who were currently unemployed at the time the survey was taken. Even though student who were not employed were instructed not to answer these questions, results indicated that very few skipped these questions.

Previous research comparison

Student respondent results in this survey compare similarly to that of previous studies where there is a high perception of effectiveness of the CCB. Janezich (2011) and Hofland (2011) showed similar findings. This study additionally provided insight into a potential problem addressed in previous research. According to Bemmell, Floyd and

Bryan (2009), critics of the CCB argued that offering such degrees could hinder the community college's ability to effectively offer its current programs. According to the findings in this study, the perception of respondents indicated that they did not believe their current community college's ability to offer its current programs would suffer.

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Based on this study's respondent answers to the questions that were considered to indicate effectiveness, the CCB is perceived to be effective. This study has also provided additional findings that could potentially benefit future CCB implementation by discouraging current criticisms. The results drawn from this research question provide information to the surveyed community college as well as the state of Mississippi regarding a high perception of effectiveness of the CCB, indicating possible success of implementation. The results of this study regarding student perceptions of need and effectiveness are very similar to the results of Williams' (2010) study, which surveyed all fifteen Mississippi community and junior colleges, indicating that the community college chosen for this study is a typical community college.

Question 3: What are the reasons community college students would choose to obtain a CCB?

Summary of current findings

Students were asked to indicate the degree to which specific factors influence their interest in obtaining a CCB. The influencing factors they were asked to rate were cost, location, work responsibilities, family responsibilities, admiration (like) for their current community college, familiarity of their current community college, low GPA, and lack of degrees offered by universities. Cost ranked highest at 76% of respondents either

agreeing or strongly agreeing as an influence in their interest in obtaining a CCB, second was familiarity with current place at 71%, third was location at 67%, fourth was admiration (like) of current place at 64%, fifth was family responsibilities at 55%, sixth was work responsibilities at 54%, seventh was low GPA at 15%, and last was lack of degrees offered by university at 12%.

Previous research comparison

According to respondents, cost is still the primary concern of students who wish to obtain a bachelor's degree as mentioned previously by Walker (1997). These results also add some validity to the research done by Shields' (2004) regarding place dependency. The second, third, and fourth reasons why respondents from this study indicated they would choose to obtain a CCB are regarding familiarity with current school, location of current school, and admiration (like) of current school.

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Overall this study showed that place dependency is a valid concern as to why many students may not pursue a bachelor's degree from a four year school. It also provides data that can be further examined and useful to future research. The community college surveyed in this study can use these results to promote the effectiveness and usefulness of the CCB as an influence for implementation. It provides areas in which community colleges can target as reasons why students could benefit from the obtainment of a CCB.

Question 4: What CCB degree fields would community college students choose to pursue?

Summary of current findings

The respondents were given six possible choices of degree fields they might be interested in obtaining a CCB degree: education, business, health professions, liberal arts and sciences, psychology, and public administration/social services. The degree fields most interested in by those surveyed were the health professions at 34%, second was business at 21%, third was education at 14%, fourth were public administration/social services at 10%, fifth were liberal arts and sciences at 7% and sixth was psychology at 5%. The remaining 8% chose the other category and listed their desired fields of choice. These answers were grouped into six additional subcategories: computer related technology: 4%, engineering: 2%, agriculture: 1%, automotive and biology: .5%, and Bible ministry: .2%.

Previous research comparison

The areas chosen as potential fields of study in which respondents would choose to obtain a CCB were chosen due to their high demand among students at community colleges (Remington & Remington, 2013). States that have previously implemented the CCB have done so in health related fields, business, education, and very specific technical degree programs (Hofland, 2011; Janezich, 2001; McKee, 2005; Remington & Remington, 2005).

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Results of this research question primarily provide insight into the CCB degree offerings that would be beneficial for this particular community college if the option ever

arises. This could also provide evidence as to what CCB degree fields to offer for other similar community colleges. The community college surveyed in this study has a strong health occupations department which houses many technical associate degree opportunities. The availability of the CCB could have profound effects on this area of the college, making it very easy for students in these fields to move directly into the next step of their education and never have to leave their current school.

Question 5: Are there differences among the perceptions of community college students based on the demographic factors campus, age, gender, race/ethnicity, number of dependents, and employment status?

Summary of current findings

After computing an “overall effectiveness score” and an “overall reasons score” for each respondent based on their answers to the survey questions regarding effectiveness and reasons why they would choose a CCB, statistical analysis showed two demographic variables yielded statistically significant differences: age and number of dependents. Those that were age 25 or older and those that had either one dependent or five or more dependents perceived the CCB to be more effective than did those that were age 24 or below and those who had zero dependents.

Previous research comparison

Shields (2004) found that attachment to family as a statistically significant factor leading to place dependency, therefore limiting a student’s ability to obtain a bachelor’s degree. This study also showed number of dependents as a statistically significant variable in regards to perceptions of effectiveness and reasons to choose a CCB. Shields (2004) did not use age as a variable because she surveyed all traditional aged students.

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Community colleges, on average, educate the non-traditional aged student who works, has a family, and other obligations. It is possible that these findings provide some indication that students age 25 and above with children have more experience in the labor force and perceive more benefits of the CCB compared to younger students and students without children, and believe they would benefit from the CCB if offered. It is also possible that older group of students are more experienced in life and the labor force, and therefore possess a greater appreciation for the value that the CCB would provide. These results provide further incentive for community colleges to consider offering the CCB and give better details as to which groups of students to target as potential CCB students.

Question 6: Are there differences among perceptions of community college students based on their need for the CCB degree?

Summary of current findings

Similar to question five, using the “overall effectiveness score” and an “overall reasons score”, the statistical analysis showed a statistical significance among respondents based on their indication of need for the CCB. After performing the Tukey HSD post hoc test, there was a statistical difference between respondents who said that the CCB was their only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor’s degree and respondents who said there was nothing preventing them from obtaining a bachelor’s degree. Those who said the CCB was their only realistic option for higher education showed a higher perception of effectiveness for the CCB than did those who said they had nothing preventing their advanced education.

Previous research comparison

This type of testing and analysis was not found in the previously researched studies, indicating the need for this analysis in this study. However, Shields (2004) showed specific demographic factors that statistically indicated place dependency, which could fit the characteristics of the respondents in this study who indicated that their only realistic option to obtain a bachelor's degree would be through a CCB program.

Overall conclusions and recommendations

Individuals who indicate barriers to obtaining higher education could prove to be place dependent. This study showed that respondents who were age 25 and above and respondents who had one or five or more dependents showed higher perceptions of effectiveness of the CCB and possibly were some of the same individuals whose only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree would be through their community college. This suggestion was not tested but would provide useful data and is recommended for further testing in the future. The community college surveyed in this study can use these results and results of further testing to target specific demographic groups who indicate the CCB as being their only option for obtaining a bachelor's degree and those groups proven to be statistically different from others in their perceptions.

Suggestions for future research

This study could be initially expanded by determining whether there is a relationship between the age and number of dependents demographic groups and those who indicated the CCB as their only realistic option to obtain a bachelor's degree. This study was also limited to one college in the state of Mississippi. If expanded to include

different regions of the state, more comprehensive results could emerge allowing the researcher to determine if there are differences in perceptions among regions of the state. This study could also be expanded to include perceptions among faculty and administrators within the community colleges in order to compare to student perceptions. Another suggestion for future research would be to also survey university faculty and administrators in order to compare their perceptions of need for and effectiveness of a CCB to that of community colleges. Much controversy exists between community colleges and institutes of higher learning regarding the CCB. Members of IHLs strongly oppose the implementation of the CCB because of the expectation that they would lose enrollment. However, studies like this one provide an argument in favor of the CCB that helps dispel these criticisms. The results from this study along with results of further studies could be used to target those students who are shown to be place-bound based on their perceptions of why they would choose the CCB. It can be concluded that the students who are bound to their current place would not attend an IHL regardless of the availability of the CCB unless the opportunity for distance education is afforded. Making the CCB available, opens the doors for students who would not have the opportunity to obtain the bachelor's degree and increases higher education in the state without reducing the enrollment of universities.

Another avenue of research would be to include individuals beyond educational occupations and survey state policy makers and legislative research commissions in order to gauge their perceptions of need and effectiveness of the CCB. Also, an understanding of employers' perceptions of need and effectiveness of the CCB that are located near

community colleges would provide additional valuable information regarding possible implementation.

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APPENDIX A
COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

COMMUNITY COLLEGE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE NEEDS ASSESSMENT
SURVEY
(STUDENT)

Important definition: A bachelor's degree is a college degree that usually takes 4 years to complete. A

Bachelor's degree is usually valued more than an associate's degree by employers.

PART A

Instructions: Please check the appropriate box for each of the following items.

<p>Which campus of ABC do you primarily attend?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Campus A</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Campus B</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Campus C</p>	<p>Age:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 17-24 years old</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 25 or older</p>
<p>Gender:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Female</p>	<p>Employment Status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not employed but plan to be employed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not employed and do not plan to be employed while in school</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employed Part Time</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employed Full Time</p>
<p>Race/Ethnicity:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Native American or American Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Asian / Pacific Islander</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>	<p>Number of Dependents:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 0</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more</p>

PART B

Instructions: Please select one of the following

<input type="checkbox"/> My only realistic option for obtaining a bachelor's degree would be through my local community college.
<input type="checkbox"/> There is nothing preventing me from getting a bachelor's degree from a four year college or university.
<input type="checkbox"/> I have no desire to get a bachelor's degree from anywhere.

PART C

Item Number	<p style="text-align: center;">Instructions:</p> <p>Please circle the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please answer every question. There is no right or wrong answer. Please select only one choice for each of the 6 items.</p>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	If a bachelor's degree was offered by this community college, I would obtain a bachelor's degree from this community college.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I feel obtaining a bachelor's degree from this community college would significantly impact my salary in my current job (if currently employed).	1	2	3	4	5
3	I feel obtaining a bachelor's degree from this community college would impact my opportunities for promotion in my current job (if currently employed).	1	2	3	4	5
4	I feel obtaining a community college baccalaureate degree would impact my ability to get a better job within my current community.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel potential employers would view the community college baccalaureate degree equally with a bachelor's earned from a university.	1	2	3	4	5
6	If this community college offered the bachelor's degree, I do not think it will impact its ability of offer its current programs.	1	2	3	4	5

PART D

Item Number	Instructions: Indicate the degree to which the factors below prevent you from obtaining a bachelor's degree other than from your local community college. Please answer every question. There is no right or wrong answer. Please select only one choice for each of the 8 items.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Because it is less expensive than a four year school	1	2	3	4	5
2	Because it is closer to where I live than a four year school	1	2	3	4	5
3	Because of my work responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
4	Because of my family responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
5	Because I like it here	1	2	3	4	5
6	Because I am familiar with the school	1	2	3	4	5
7	Because my GPA is too low to go to a four year school	1	2	3	4	5
8	Because there are no degrees in which I am interested at a university	1	2	3	4	5

PART E

Instructions: Please answer the following question from the available choices. If “other”, please write answer in the space provided.

If you were to obtain a CCB, in which field would you be interested in obtaining a degree?

- Education
- Business
- Health Professions
- Liberal arts and sciences
- Psychology
- Public administration/social services
- Other: