



Can Working Collaboratively with Police on Community Service Promote Positive Youth Development?

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Abstract

Despite the Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) explicitly calling for police to engage youth in positive, non-enforcement contexts, studies have not examined the impacts of such programs on positive youth development (PYD). These two studies examined the impact of enabling children to work collaboratively on community service projects with police (within a non-enforcement and non-surveillance context) on youths' developmental assets. First, a pre/post evaluation was implemented with youth in six schools in California and New York City. Second, a randomized controlled trial was conducted in four schools in Compton. The results suggest that such police-involved programs can promote youths' Positive Values, Positive Identity, Empowerment, and Social Conscience. This program will not correct unjust policing, but through programs like this, police may begin acting as a fundamentally different type of resource for the children they should be serving and can promote PYD.

Key words: positive youth development; developmental assets; law enforcement; procedural justice; intervention

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3 It is now well established that as compared with White youth, racial/ethnic minority
4 youth are more likely to experience negative personal and vicarious interactions with law
5 enforcement and to report worse perceptions of them (Alberston & Gorey, 2018). Scholars
6 believe that children, particularly those who are racial/ethnic minorities, are now developing in
7 an “era of mistrust” of law enforcement (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016). Indeed, youth perceptions of
8 law enforcement have recently reached a decades-long low (Fine et al., 2020a) with racial/ethnic
9 minority youths’ perceptions beginning to decline as early as age 7 (Fine et al., 2020b).

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19 Yet at the same time, President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015)
20 explicitly stated that, “Law enforcement agencies should create opportunities in schools and
21 communities for positive non-enforcement interactions with police” (pg. 15). Departments are
22 beginning to engage in such practices. However, few studies have examined the potential
23 benefits of positive, structured police-youth interactions grounded in respect, dignity, and voice
24 (Fine et al., 2019; Freiburger, 2018; Goodrich et al., 2015). Such studies find that programs
25 where law enforcement interact with youth within safe, non-enforcement contexts can improve
26 youths’ perceptions of law enforcement (Fine et al., 2019; Fine et al., 2020b; Goodrich et al.,
27 2015). Yet within this limited literature, virtually no studies examine positive youth development
28 or other indicators of youth thriving as key outcomes, leaving the potential for law enforcement
29 personnel to promote positive youth development largely unknown.

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The present study examines the impact of a program that enables law enforcement
officers to work collaboratively with children in non-enforcement contexts on positive youth
development outcomes. Uniquely, the youth in these multi-state, multi-school samples are
predominantly Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American, and the vast majority are living in

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3 poverty. As such, they constitute a policy-relevant, yet highly under-resourced and underserved
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5 population both in the positive youth development (Leman et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2017) and
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7 procedural justice (Fine et al., 2020b; Tyler, 1990) literatures where such police-involved
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9 programs may be needed most.
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11 **The Potential Role of Law Enforcement**

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15 Primarily, the literature on youths' perceptions of and interactions with law enforcement
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17 has been guided by the procedural justice framework, which posits that unfair direct and
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19 vicarious treatment by law enforcement negatively impacts the way individuals perceive law
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21 enforcement (Tyler, 1990). Aspects of the police-individual interaction that are particularly
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23 salient include respect, dignity, and voice. Indeed, when individuals feel as though they have
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25 been treated unfairly, have not been given the opportunity to participate interactively, or have not
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27 been given the opportunity for voice, they develop worse perceptions of law enforcement and are
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29 less likely to comply (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016).
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33 Youth often view law enforcement more negatively than do adults and youths'
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35 perceptions of law enforcement have recently reached a decades-long low (Fine et al., 2020a).
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37 Indeed, youth today are developing in what researchers are calling an "era of mistrust" of law
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39 enforcement (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016) and this is particularly true of racial/ethnic minorities,
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41 who consistently report worse perceptions of law enforcement than do White individuals. In fact,
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43 among youth of color, and Black youth in particular, perceptions of law enforcement legitimacy
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45 may begin declining as early as age 7 (Fine et al., 2020b).
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49 When youth are empowered to interface interactively with law enforcement in a way that
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51 they feel supported and valued, research suggests that they can begin to view law enforcement
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more positively (e.g., Freiburger, 2018). However, positive encounters do not, in fact, always have positive impacts on individuals' attitudes. As Skogan (2006) explained, studies have found that the relation between how people are treated and their views of police may be asymmetrical. First proposed by Jacob (1971), there is evidence that youths' positive contacts with police may not translate into favorable attitudes. We return to this asymmetry hypothesis in the Discussion.

Nonetheless, there is evidence that individuals who perceive law enforcement more positively, in turn, tend to feel more normatively aligned with law enforcement (Tyler, 1990). That is, positive and bidirectional encounters between individuals and law enforcement can promote a sense of shared positive values. These experiential components of the procedural justice framework (e.g., respect, dignity, voice) are entirely consistent with the bidirectional relational aspect of PYD theorizing (Lerner, 2018) and the purported ways of effectively cultivating developmental assets (Benson et al., 2011; Scales et al., 2015). Altogether, these notions align with the PYD framework's focus on the potential for non-parental adults to promote youth empowerment.

Perhaps the most salient model here, though is the group engagement model, an expansion of the group value model (Tyler & Blader, 2003). The group-value model focuses on the antecedents of individuals' personal judgments of procedural justice, while the group engagement model focuses more on relationships. As Tyler and Blader (2003, p. 353) explain, "People have considerable discretion about the degree to which they invest themselves in their groups by working on behalf of the group." They distinguish between attitudes, which internally motivate individuals to engage in behaviors that they find personally rewarding and that benefit

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3 the group, and values, the internalized feelings of responsibility that shape people's views of
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5 broadly beneficial behaviors in which they should engage.
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8 The model indicates that people's willingness to engage in prosocial, voluntary, and
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10 cooperative behaviors flows from identity information, the feedback they receive from the group.
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12 Bradford (2014) explains that police provide a set of symbolic tools that community members
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14 use to describe not only their place within the social environment, but also their hopes for the
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16 future. The police are clearly a highly visible representation of the state and general social order,
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18 and their actions and interactions with the public shapes each community member's perceptions
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20 of their place within the social structure. Certainly, a number of factors influence people's
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22 perceptions of the police, but as Slocum and Wiley (2016) indicate, chief among them is
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24 personal experience. As they and Bradford (2014) explain, one's interactions with authority
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26 figures communicates the extent of inclusion and status within the group the authority represents.
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28 As such, to the extent that one feels they are included and valued group members, they become
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30 more likely to identify with the broader group, and then become more likely to act in ways that
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32 support the group. The outcomes of positive values (e.g., caring, social justice), empowerment
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34 (e.g., service to others), and positive identity (e.g., self-esteem, feeling valued; Benson et al.,
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36 2011; Search Institute, 2013), though drawn from an entirely distinct developmental literature on
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38 positive youth development and developmental assets described below, represent outcomes that
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40 should improve with stronger group identification and engagement.
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46 **Positive Youth Development**

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49 The positive youth development (PYD) strengths-based approach centers on
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51 understanding and promoting thriving (Lerner et al., 2019). PYD stresses the critical importance
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of developmental contexts and adult figures for improving youths' positive behaviors and outcomes (Lerner et al., 2015). Unfortunately, many children in the United States grow up disconnected from mainstream social institutions and prosocial sources of support (Carter & Reardon, 2014). To this day, contextual resources are unevenly distributed (Eichas et al., 2017), and children of color in impoverished communities often face striking amounts of inequality (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015; Meier et al., 2018). Few studies have focused on improving PYD among these youths, despite the marked inequality, unequal access to contextual resources, and calls to do so from the research community (Leman et al., 2017; Pittman, 2017; Smith et al., 2017; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990).

Numerous scholars have recently provided cogent descriptions of the history of the PYD approach (Lerner et al., 2015; Leman et al., 2017), which posits that youth possess strengths that can be harnessed and improved over time and with experience. A core characteristic of PYD research is that it focuses on the power of developmental, social-ecological contexts (Lerner et al., 2015) to promote healthy, adaptive, and positive development (Leman et al., 2017; Lerner, 2018). Importantly, PYD also emphasizes the bidirectional relations between the individual and contexts. Relationships with non-parental adult authority figures, particularly those that are jointly constructed through bidirectional interactions, play a prominent role in PYD approaches. The developmental assets (DA) framework has emerged as one of the most commonly utilized guiding frameworks for both PYD theorizing and PYD-informed programming (Benson et al., 2011). This framework focuses on the relationships and opportunities that youth may be afforded by non-parent adults, and the positive assets they develop as a result of their experiences (Scales et al., 2015; Benson et al., 2011).

Indeed, PYD approaches often focus on the specific social ecology and developmental contexts in which youth are embedded (Lavie-Ajayi & Krumer-Nevo, 2013) because PYD reflects the dynamic interplay between each youth's own individual characteristics and the particular resources and risks around them (Sanders & Munford, 2014). The school context is viewed as critically important for generating PYD, considering schools can provide opportunities for empowerment and can generate feelings of value, importance, and connection (Wigfield et al., 2006). Yet in addition to teachers, interactions with other non-parental adults are vitally important within the PYD framework and are perceived to be a critical dimension in PYD (Lerner, 2018; Rhodes, 2020; Scales et al., 2015). One group of non-parental adults that has received virtually no empirical attention in the PYD literature is law enforcement. This is surprising in light of the group engagement model, burgeoning literature on legal socialization, and increasing attention being paid by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to police-youth interactions.

Overview of Studies

These two studies explore the impact of interacting with law enforcement personnel within a structured, in-school setting on children's developmental assets. These evaluations are closely aligned with the literature in three critically important ways. First, a key component of the PYD approach is creating meaningful opportunities that enable the young person to accomplish something that contributes beyond self-interest (Lerner, 2004, 2018). Indeed, this program is designed to be positive and goal-oriented, with law enforcement working with children to complete community service "challenges" together. Second, by design, the program provides youth the opportunity to take a leadership role in contributing meaningfully to their

community (Lerner et al., 2019). Third, researchers are increasingly calling for programs to consider particular characteristics of the youth population and their contextual challenges (Sanders et al, 2016). In light of the fact that youth of color continue to face striking amounts of inequality (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015; Meier et al, 2018) and are growing up in an “age of mistrust” of law enforcement (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016), it is important to evaluate the programs communities are implementing that enable law enforcement and children to interact within non-enforcement and non-surveillance contexts, as long as they are not re-traumatizing, voluntary, and are welcomed by the communities.

Consequently, several aspects of the study sample are of particular importance: (1) the children are predominately Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American; (2) the students are overwhelmingly low-SES; and (3) the two studies span four school districts in areas of the country with marked histories of poor law enforcement-citizen interactions (Davis, 2017), yet the programs are welcomed and encouraged by the communities. From the PYD framework, considering that the accumulation of DA may promote thriving (Årdal et al., 2018), it is vital to understand how positive interactions with law enforcement officers may impact PYD within this underserved and understudied population of children.

Altogether, the program was designed to be consistent with best practices in PYD that emphasize building adult-child relationships (Sanders & Munford, 2014), creating meaningful opportunities to facilitate good outcomes (Lerner, 2004), and enabling the young person to accomplish something that is “meaningful to the self and makes a contribution beyond self-interest” (Lerner et al., 2019, pg. 8). The primary research question of these evaluations was to examine whether children would report significantly higher ratings on DA following the Team

Kids Challenge (TKC). In the first study, we examined pre/post-program TKC implementation survey data from six schools in California and New York. These schools received the TKC program at various times over a three-year period. In the second study, we conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) utilizing four schools in Compton, California.

Team Kids Challenge

The evaluation was approved by XXX University's Institutional Review Board. The TKC program is run by Team Kids, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is “to empower our kids to change the world.” The TKC was designed to create a safe space and enable children to make a difference on issues they see in their communities. Parents and children choose whether to participate in the program, and over 85% of students in each school volunteered to participate. Prior to the program, law enforcement officers are trained in core aspects of PYD and why DA and PYD are important. The officers are then taught how to convey to the children that children can be powerful resources for meeting community needs.

The program begins with a school-wide assembly during a lunch block. Following a video depicting elementary school children talking about their dreams of making the world a better place, law enforcement officers discuss with children about challenges the children see in their community (e.g., food insecurity; poverty) and how they could help make their community a better place. At the end of the assembly, law enforcement officers challenge the students to participate in four, weekly school-wide “challenges,” which are intended to increase both the level of exposure to and quality of bidirectional relational experiences with law enforcement. At the same time, the weekly challenges also benefit local 501(c)(3) Community-Based Organizations and have quantifiable goals (e.g., collect 300 cans of food for a nearby food pantry

to help alleviate hunger in their community). In line with the PYD framework, these challenges are designed to enable the youth to make a meaningful contribution beyond self-interest (Lerner et al., 2019).

Throughout the following month, students meet weekly with law enforcement officers and TKC staff during lunch to plan a school-wide carnival that takes place at the end of the program. Small groups are each responsible for developing and implementing a homemade game or activity for the carnival. During a final debrief meeting, students present a check to the community-based organizations they selected as the carnival beneficiaries, and pictures that were taken during the month of service are shown and celebrated with their law enforcement partners.

Study 1

Study one provided an initial test of the predicted associations utilizing pre/post-program data that were collected to quantify children's DA before and after the program. We hypothesized that children would report comparatively higher scores on DA following the TKC. Further, we examined whether pre/post differences in DA would vary by the degree to which the individual child felt involved in the TKC program. We expected that children who reported being involved in the TKC and who felt more strongly that they had been given a meaningful role would exhibit comparatively larger pre/post differences in DA.

Participants

TKC was implemented with 4th and 5th grade students in two K-5 schools in one district located in southern California (Schools 1 and 2), and three schools in a second district located in southern California: School 3 (K-6), School 4 (K-6), and School 5 (K-5). Each of these schools are predominantly comprised of students who participate in the National School Lunch Program,

a proxy for poverty (Day et al., 2016), and who are Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American (Table 1). Finally, the TKC was implemented with 4th and 5th graders of one school in New York (School 6). This school was predominantly comprised of students in the National School Lunch Program and who are Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American (Table 1).

Procedure

The pre-TKC survey was administered one day prior to the start of the program, and the post-TKC survey was implemented one day after the program concluded. The survey was implemented in classrooms during a school day. Students were told that there were no right or wrong answers, that participation was voluntary, and that their answers were anonymous. Due to school administrators' concerns about students' confidentiality, students only reported the first letter of their first and last names, grade, teacher, and school. Pre/post-TKC survey data were linked using those characteristics. Across the schools, out of the 1,583 total completed surveys, we were unable to link 37.46% of the records (N records = 593) for a number of reasons, including youth did not complete a pre-survey or a post-survey, youth were absent for the pre-TKC survey, youth were absent for the post-TKC survey, youth skipped some of the characteristics' questions, or multiple youth reported the same characteristics (e.g., same initials within the same classroom). We were able to link 62.54% of the youths' pre- and post-TKC survey data (N records = 990), yielding a total sample size of 495 youth (Table 1). Among youth with baseline data, youth with linked data reported generally similar levels of DA as youth without linked data ($t = .26, p = .792, d = .02, 95\% CI = -.14, .19$). Similarly, among youth with post-TKC data (i.e., wave 2), those with linked data reported similar levels of DA as those without linked data ($t = -.76, p = .446, d = -.05, 95\% CI = -.18, .08$).

Measures

Developmental Assets

In line with the program's goals to improve children's positive values, their empowerment, and their positive identity, we selected 10 items from the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Profile (Benson et al., 2011; Search Institute, 2013) that assess the DA of Positive Values (e.g., caring, social justice), Empowerment (e.g., service to others), and Positive Identity (e.g., self-esteem, feeling valued; Benson et al., 2011; Search Institute, 2013). On both the pre- and post-TKC surveys, youth self-reported on a scale from 1 ("Not at all true") to 4 ("Very True") their responses to each of the 10 items (Table 2).

Participation

We utilized two indicators of participation and involvement. On the post-TKC survey, youth were asked to self-report if they had been involved with any of the TKC activities at their school. Youth were also asked to self-report, on a scale from 1 ("Not at all true") to 4 ("Very true"), how much they felt they had been given useful roles and responsibilities (Table 1).

Measures Reading Level

The results of a Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level test indicated that the items rated at a 3.8th-grade reading level. The results of a Flesch Reading Ease test (comprehension difficulty) indicated that at 83.2%, the scale was easy to read (scores above 70% are considered easy to follow; Williamson & Martin, 2010). Consequently, the items were considered appropriate.

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Poor program implementation fidelity has the potential to weaken outcomes and generate faulty conclusions about efficacy. Following established protocols (Bettencourt et al., 2019;

Carroll et al., 2007), we assessed content, frequency, duration, and coverage: (1) What % of planned LTs did students hold; (2) What % of the LTs did first responders attend; (3) What % of weekly goals did students actually meet; and (4) Did youth host the carnival and raise funds for the charity of their choice. Adherence would be met if the program reached a threshold of 80% across the first three items (Bettencourt et al., 2019) and a yes (versus no) for the fourth item.

Analytic Plan

We first conducted a fidelity check for program implementation. Second, to explore construct validity with the PYD measure, a factor analysis was conducted (Acock, 2013), including a scree plot and using both non-rotated and oblique rotation. Third, DA at pre/post-TKC were compared using paired t-tests. Finally, using ordinary least squares regressions, we explored whether the two indicators of participation were associated with changes in DA.

Results

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Implementation fidelity results were consistent across schools. Students held 100% of the planned LT meetings, first responders attended 100% of those meetings, students met 100% of their weekly goals, and the students successfully hosted the carnival and raised funds for the charity of their choice.

Reading Level

The squared multiple correlations (pre-TKC range: .07-.33; post-TKC range: .07-.47) indicated that the data were absent multicollinearity and singularity. Factor analyses and scree plots indicated that there were three Eigenvalues above the 1.0 threshold for pre-TKC (1.96, 1.67, 1.56) and post-TKC (2.18, 1.82, 1.69) waves. The factor loadings were high at both pre-

TKC (range: .49-.82) and post-TKC (range: .66-.79) waves. Only one item shifted factor loadings between waves and was thus dropped from analyses. As expected, the first factor included items that tapped into the Search Institute's construct of Positive Values (caring, equity, and social justice). The second factor assessed Empowerment, particularly service to others. The third factor aligned with the Search Institute's core value of Positive Identity, particularly self-esteem and feeling valued.

Pre/Post Differences

Following the TKC, youth reported significantly higher scores on Positive Values ($t(494) = 5.35, p < .001, \Delta = .13$), Empowerment ($t(494) = 4.05, p < .001, \Delta = .16$), and Positive Identity ($t(494) = 3.88, p < .001, \Delta = .13$) (Figure 1). After Bonferroni adjustments were made, the results of the t-test were still significant (i.e., $p < .017$).

As a supplemental test to examine changes in overall DA, a mean-scored DA variable was created for both pre-TKC ($M = 3.02, SD = .50, \alpha = .734$) and post-TKC ($M = 3.17, SD = .51, \alpha = .768$). Youths' DA post-TKC were significantly higher than pre-TKC regardless of whether we examined all data ($t(1578) = 5.77, p < .001, \Delta = .15$;) or only youth with complete and linked data at both waves using a paired t-test ($t(494) = 6.55, p < .001, \Delta = .13$).¹

¹ Three clear outlier cases emerged in the data. At School 1, the average improvement in children's DA scores was .11 ($SE = .05, 95\% CI = .02, .21$). However, two children had DA scores that *decreased* by 1.20 and 2.19 units, which constitute approximately 11 and 20 times their peers' rate of change and in the opposite direction. Similarly, at School 2, the average improvement in children's DA scores was .11 ($SE = .05, 95\% CI = .01, .22$). One child's DA score declined by 1.20 units, approximating 11 times the average rate of change among peers and in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, due to privacy concerns, we were unable to determine who these children were and why their scores might have dropped so substantially (e.g., major life event, depressive episode). However, considering these three cases' DA score changes were over 10 times the size and in the opposed direction of their peers, these three cases were considered outliers.

The final set of analyses examined whether two indicators of participation were associated with reported changes in DA (Table 3). As expected, children who felt involved and children who felt they had been given more useful roles and responsibilities reported greater changes in DA. The second model added baseline levels of DA as a covariate. Again, the results indicated that feeling involved and feeling as though one had been given more useful roles and responsibilities were associated with greater improvements in DA. Feeling involved explained 2.96% of the variance in the improvement in DA, whereas feeling as though one had been given more useful roles and responsibilities explained 13.23% of the variance in the improvement in DA.

Post-hoc paired t-tests further parsed the statistical effects of feeling involved. The results (Figure 2) indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the pre/post-TKC waves if the youth reported a 1 ("Not at all true") or 2 ("A little true") on degree of involvement. In contrast, youth who reported a 3 (*Pretty true*; $t(145) = 6.54, p < .001, \Delta = .21$) or 4 (*Very true*; $t(170) = 6.82, p < .001, \Delta = .22$) reported significantly higher total DA scores post-TKC as compared to their pre-TKC scores.

Study 1 Discussion

Regardless of analytic approach, DA were higher after participation in the TKC, indicating that this program appears to empower and promote PYD. Further, the more the children felt as though they had been given the opportunity to play a useful role, the more they benefited from the program. This is crucial, as it suggests that it is not enough to implement a PYD-focused program; rather, youth have to feel they had the opportunity to participate meaningfully and effectively. Findings are tempered, however, because there was not a control

group. Thus, we cannot rule out the potential that the positive results could be explained by maturation or historical timing.

Study 2

Study two used a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to examine the effect of the TKC on children. Two pairs of schools were matched on a number of characteristics and within each pair, one school was randomly assigned to receive the program. We hypothesized that children in the treatment schools would report comparatively higher scores on measures of DA following the TKC, relative to the children in the control schools.

Method

Participants

With the guidance of school and district administrators, we identified two matched pairs of schools in Compton, California. Each pair of schools was matched based on location, size, race/ethnicity, and percent of students who participate in the National School Lunch Program. All schools are Title 1 schools and are predominantly comprised of non-White students who participate in the National School Lunch Program (Table 4).

Procedure

In the first pair of schools, we conducted two waves of surveys on the same day or within one day of each other in both schools. The first survey occurred one day prior to the TKC, and the second survey occurred days after the TKC. We utilized a waitlist-controlled design such that following the second survey, the TKC was administered to the students in the control school to ensure equal access to the program. However, the school elected not to conduct a third survey with youth because of scheduling restrictions, thus we were unable to assess changes.

In the second matched pair of schools, we were able to conduct three surveys with each school. In the treatment school, we conducted wave one prior to the implementation (i.e., pre-test), wave two following the implementation (i.e., post-test), and wave three approximately three months (85 days) following the post-TKC survey to assess stability or decay effects. We again employed a waitlist-controlled design in the control school. We conducted the first two waves on the same days as the treatment school's surveys. Then, one week following the second survey, the TKC was administered to the students in the control school. We then collected wave 3 (i.e., post-test) in that school to examine the effect of the TKC on the students.

Measures

Empowerment

We utilized the three items that loaded onto "Empowerment" (i.e., service to others) in the first study. Students responded to the three items ("I help others in my community;" "I am helping to make my community a better place;" and "I think it is important to help other people") on a five-point scale (from "Almost never true" to "Almost always true"). Items were mean-scored such that higher values indicated more empowerment. The scale exhibited adequate reliability across schools at wave one (α 's > .69) consistent with prior research (Search Institute, 2013).

Social Conscience

The two items from the Social Conscience subscale of the PYD Very Short Form (Geldhof et al., 2014) were administered. Following the prompt, "How important is each of the following in your life?", students responded to two questions using a five-point scale (from "Not important" to "Extremely important"): "Helping to make the world a better place to live in;" and

“Giving time and money to make life better for other people.” We mean scored the two items to create an index of Social Conscience (item-test correlations $> .72$).

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Similar to the first study, we used four metrics for fidelity: (1) What % of planned LTs did students hold; (2) What % of the LTs did first responders attend; (3) What % of weekly goals did students actually meet; and (4) Did youth host the carnival and raise funds for the charity of their choice. Adherence would be met if the program reached a threshold of 80% across the first three items (Bettencourt et al., 2019) and a yes (versus no) for the fourth item.

Missing Data

Similar to the first study, youth may not have completed surveys for a variety of reasons (e.g., absent, refused, were finishing other work in class, the teacher ran out of class time) and there were a variety of reasons why youth did not complete one of the surveys (e.g., absent for one survey, multiple youth reported the same identifying characteristics). Rates of linked survey data within each of the four schools are explained in detail below, as are analyses of missing data.

Linked Data in the First Pair of Schools

In the treatment school, 206 students completed pre-TKC surveys (Table 5). We were able to link 135 of the students' pre/post-TKC surveys. Students with and without linked surveys did not differ on perceptions of empowerment ($t(194) = -.75, p = .457$), social conscience ($t(191) = .37, p = .713$), sex ($\chi^2(1) = 1.25, p = .264$), or race ($\chi^2(3) = 3.67, p = .300$). In the control school, 177 students completed the baseline survey. Of those, we were able to link 128 students' surveys to the second wave (72.32%). Students with and without linked surveys did not differ on

any study variable, including empowerment ($t(169) = -1.01, p = .317$), social conscience ($t(164) = -1.06, p = .292$), or race ($\chi^2(3) = 6.71, p = .082$). Females were slightly more likely to be linked ($\chi^2(1) = 4.69, p = .030$), though the gender composition of the students with linked surveys was approximately even (50.22% female, 49.22% male).

Linked Data in the Second Pair of Schools

Recall that in the second matched pair of schools, we conducted three surveys in each school. In the treatment school, of the 147 youth who completed the pre-TKC survey, we were able to link 120 youths' (81.63%) post-TKC surveys. Compared to youth whose surveys we were unable to link, youth whose surveys we were able to link across both waves reported similar perceptions of empowerment ($t(142) = -.11, p = .910$), social conscience ($t(142) = -.51, p = .613$), sex ($\chi^2(1) = .09, p = .76$), and race ($\chi^2(3) = 2.66, p = .447$). Approximately three months (85 days) following the post-TKC survey, we conducted a third survey in the treatment school to assess potential stability or decay effects. In that school, we were able to collect wave 3 surveys (i.e., decay surveys) from 90 of the 120 (75%) youth who participated in waves 1 and 2. Compared to youth whose surveys we were unable to link, youth whose surveys we were able to link reported similar perceptions of empowerment ($t(117) = .54, p = .594$), social conscience ($t(117) = .52, p = .602$), sex ($\chi^2(1) = .11, p = .740$), and race ($\chi^2(3) = 4.20, p = .240$). As a result, despite the large percentages of missing data, we identified no differences in key constructs between youth with and without linked surveys.

Recall that in the control school, we conducted the first survey on the same day as in the treatment school. In the control school, of the 160 youth who completed the wave 1 survey, we were able to link wave 2 surveys for 129 youth (80.63%). Youth who completed the survey at

both waves reported similar perceptions of empowerment ($t(156) = .85, p = .399$), social conscience ($t(156) = -.56, p = .576$), sex ($\chi^2(1) = .002, p = .967$), and race ($\chi^2(3) = 5.63, p = .131$). In that school, we then administered the TKC program. We were able to collect wave 3 surveys (i.e., post-TKC) from 74 of the 129 youth who had data from waves 1 and 2. While that was just 57.46% of the sample, youth who completed the survey at all three waves reported similar perceptions of empowerment ($t(127) = 1.842, p = .068$), social conscience ($t(127) = 1.45, p = .150$), sex ($\chi^2(1) = 1.76, p = .185$), and race ($\chi^2(3) = 2.18, p = .536$) as compared to youth with incomplete data. As a result, despite the large percentages of missing data, we identified no differences in key constructs between youth with and without linked surveys.

Analytic Plan

We first conducted a fidelity check for program implementation. We then utilized t-tests to examine potential differences between the treatment and control schools on each dependent variable. Next, we employed ANCOVAs to examine treatment effects between the schools including the baseline score as a covariate which has several advantages over other techniques such as ANOVA or repeated measures models (Wan, 2019). We also tested the interaction between treatment and the mean-centered baseline score (Shieh, 2017). Finally, paired t-tests were used to assess decay/stability effects in treatment schools and changes in the second control school after the TKC was implemented (i.e., treatment effect for that school).

Results

Fidelity of Program Implementation

Across the four program implementation metrics in both of the treatment schools, students held 100% of the planned LT meetings, first responders attended 100% of those

meetings, students met 100% of their weekly goals, and the students successfully hosted the carnival and raised funds for the charity of their choice.

Baseline Differences within Matched Pairs of Schools

In the first pair of schools, there were no baseline differences in how much youth felt empowered, ($t(254) = .357, p = .721$). However, students in the control school reported lower social conscience scores than students in the treatment school ($t(249) = 2.45, p = .015$). While we considered this difference due to random variation, out of caution, we still accounted for baseline scores in the ANCOVAs. In the second pair of schools, there were no baseline differences in empowerment, ($t(247) = -.61, p = .541$), or social conscience, ($t(247) = -.84, p = .402$).

RCT Results: Empowerment

The results of the ANCOVAs indicated that in the first pair of schools, there was a significant main effect of the treatment on empowerment after accounting for baseline scores, ($F(1, 251) 4.35, p = .038, \eta^2 = .02, 95\% CI \eta^2 = .01, .06$). There was no interaction between treatment and baseline scores, ($F(1, 250) = 3.35, p = .07$). As depicted in Figure 3a, the results of a paired t-test indicated that in the treatment school, students' empowerment scores improved from an average of 3.53 ($\pm .95$) to 3.78 ($\pm .85$), an average improvement of .25 units ($95\% CI \Delta = .09, .41$), ($t(129) = 3.03, p = .003$). After Bonferroni adjustments were made to reduce the possibility of making a type I error rate, the results of the t-test were still significant (i.e., $p < .025$). In contrast, in the control school, students' empowerment scores did not change from baseline 3.56 ($\pm .88$) to their wave 2 mean of 3.60 ($\pm .94$), ($t(123) = .40, p = .693$).

The results of the ANCOVAs indicated that in the second pair of schools, there was also a significant main effect of the treatment on empowerment after accounting for baseline scores,

($F(1, 245) = 12.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05, 95\% CI \eta^2 = .01, .11$). There was no interaction between treatment and baseline scores, ($F(1, 244) = 1.32, p = .252$). In the control school, students' empowerment scores did not improve from baseline 3.62 ($\pm .95$) to their wave 2 mean of 3.64 ($\pm .84$), ($t(128) = .35, p = .731$). However, in the treatment school, students' empowerment scores improved from an average of 3.54 ($\pm .81$) to 3.87 ($\pm .78$), an average improvement of .33 units ($95\% CI \Delta = .19, .47$), ($t(118) = 4.74, p < .001$). After Bonferroni adjustments were made to reduce the possibility of making a type I error rate, the results of the t-test were still significant (i.e., $p < .025$). Relatedly, there were no decay effects between waves 2 and 3, ($t(88) = -.23, p = .821$).

RCT Results: Social Conscience

The results of the ANCOVAs indicated that in the first pair of schools, there was a significant main effect of the treatment on social conscience after accounting for baseline scores, ($F(1, 246) = 17.61, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06, 95\% CI \eta^2 = .02, .13$). There was no interaction between treatment and baseline scores, ($F(1, 245) = 1.37, p = .24$). As depicted in Figure 3b, the results of a paired t-test indicated that in the treatment school, students' social conscience scores improved from an average of 3.89 (± 1.02) to 4.13 ($\pm .90$), an average improvement of .24 units ($95\% CI \Delta = .03, .46$), ($t(128) = 2.21, p = .029$). In the control school, students' social conscience scores declined from baseline 4.20 ($\pm .86$) to their wave 2 mean of 3.65 (± 1.17), ($t(119) = -4.59, p < .001$).

The results of the ANCOVAs with the second pair of schools similarly indicated that there was a main effect of the treatment on social conscience after accounting for baseline scores, ($F(1, 247) = 4.57, p = .034, \eta^2 = .02, 95\% CI \eta^2 = .01, .06$). There was no interaction between

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3 baseline scores and school, ($F(1, 247) = .32, p = .571$). Results of a paired t-test indicated that in
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5 the control school, there were no differences between the baseline and wave 2 surveys, ($t(128) =$
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7 $-.06, p = .949$). In comparison, in the treatment school, students' social conscience scores
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9 improved from an average of 3.82 (± 1.13) to 4.18 ($\pm .84$), an average improvement of .36 units
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11 ($95\% CI \Delta = .12, .60$), ($t(118) = 2.93, p = .0041$). Relatedly, there were no decay effects between
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13 waves 2 and 3 in the treatment school, ($t(87) = -1.39, p = .169$).
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16 17 ***Changes in Waitlist/Control School***

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19 As a reminder, following the conclusion of the RCT, the TKC took place at the second
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21 control school and students were again surveyed in that school following their TKC, following
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23 the same procedures as in the original treatment schools. Compared with their wave 2 scores
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25 (i.e., pre-TKC), the results of paired t-tests indicated that students' empowerment scores
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27 improved approximately .28 units ($95\% CI \Delta = .10, .46$), ($t(73) = 3.10, p < .001$) and their scores
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29 on social conscience improved approximately .30 units ($95\% CI \Delta = .01, .59$), ($t(73) = 2.01, p =$
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31 $.048$). The degrees of these changes were consistent with the treatment schools.
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35 36 **General Discussion**

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38 In the United States, youth of color are more likely to report experiencing unjust policing
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40 and worse perceptions of police (Alberton & Gorey, 2018; Fine et al., 2020b). President
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42 Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) was convened to provide explicit
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44 recommendations on how to improve both policing and the relationships between police and the
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46 communities they should be serving. A first step is to fundamentally overhaul on-the-ground
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48 policing practices and strategies, which begins with eliminating biased and unjust policing.
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50 Indeed, on page one, the Task Force clearly states that, "The public confers legitimacy only on
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those whom they believe are acting in procedurally just ways.” The deaths of people of color, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Eric Garner, at the hands of law enforcement certainly undermine police legitimacy and indicate that law enforcement have much work to be done to eliminate biased and unjust policing.

In addition to eliminating procedurally unjust practices, the Task Force calls for law enforcement to begin building trusting relationships with the community. Despite the call to engage with communities in non-enforcement settings, youth of color in the United States are rarely afforded the choice or opportunity to interact with law enforcement in a non-enforcement and non-surveillance environment. The samples utilized in this study are of key importance, consisting of large cohorts of children who are predominately Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American, largely living in poverty, and growing up in two of the largest cities in the United States that also have marked histories of poor law enforcement-citizen interactions. As such, we were able to examine, in both the pre/post and RCT design studies, any reported changes in DA among youth who continue to face striking amounts of inequality, police adversity, and whose access to contextual resources is limited in the present era (Eichas et al., 2017; Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015; Meier et al, 2018).

Altogether, the results indicated that working collaboratively with police as part of this structured, in-school program, can lead to improvements in developmental assets and positive youth development—outcomes that are clearly aligned with the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003). The findings of the first study suggested that children reported significantly higher Positive Values, Empowerment, and Positive Identity following participation in the TKC across a variety of model specifications. Further, the findings from the RCT suggest that

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3 participation in the program significantly improved youths' Empowerment and Social
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5 Conscience.

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8 The current studies represent a first attempt to jointly apply the group engagement model,
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10 procedural justice perspective, and DA framework to an intervention designed to promote PYD.
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12 In line with integral aspects of the procedural justice framework (see Trinkner & Tyler, 2016)
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14 and group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), the program was designed to: (1) enable
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16 children to work collaboratively with police officers; (2) provide them with opportunities for
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18 leadership experience; and (3) empower them to interact with law enforcement in a setting that
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20 promotes dignity and respect. In both models, as the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader,
21
22 2003) would expect, participation emerged as a key predictor of growth in PYD. Children who
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24 reported being involved with TKC activities at their school and children who felt more strongly
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26 that they had useful roles and responsibilities reported greater increases in developmental assets.
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28 Altogether, these findings suggest that merely implementing an intervention aiming to improve
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30 PYD may not be enough to promote actual positive youth development if youth do not feel as
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32 though they were given the opportunity to participate meaningfully and effectively. In
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34 developing youth-based programs, researchers and practitioners should ensure that the adults
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36 clearly signal to children that their participation is valued and enable children to enter useful
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38 roles. This practice would enhance their participation and communicate to the children that they
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40 are valued and respected members of the community, which in turn may stimulate more
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42 cooperative and prosocial behavior (Tyler & Blader, 2003).
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49 The second study provides an additional evaluation of the TKC and its impact on PYD.
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51 Measures of Empowerment improved in both treatment schools, while showing no difference in
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3 the control schools. Measures of Social Conscience significantly improved in both of the
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5 treatment schools and actually declined in one of the control schools. When assessing
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7 stability/decay in one school, both measures of Empowerment and Social Conscience remained
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9 stable approximately three months later. These findings indicate that the program may promote
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11 small but sustained improvements in Positive Values, Positive Identity, Empowerment, and
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13 Social Conscience.
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17 Despite the encouraging findings, the two studies had important limitations. Because the
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19 program was implemented with fidelity according to its design, we were unable to tweak aspects
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21 of the program to identify the extent to which particular aspects may be most beneficial. Key
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23 here is that given the limitations of the data, it is impossible to disentangle whether any positive
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25 impacts were due to the program's focus on leadership and contributing to the shared community
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27 as opposed to working with law enforcement. Future studies would benefit from randomly
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29 assigning law enforcement versus other adult authority figures within the public safety and first
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31 responder spheres (e.g., firefighters, paramedics) to disentangle the specific effects of law
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33 enforcement. Second, it is unknown whether the full program is necessary (i.e., whether three
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35 weeks would suffice versus four). Third, we were unable to determine whether officers'
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37 races/ethnicities and ages might impact the results. It is possible that younger officers who are
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39 the same race/ethnicity as the youth might connect with the youth more, yielding more positive
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41 results. However, the sample size of schools, to date, is too small to determine such effects.
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43 Fourth, the program was designed to be administered at the school-level, meaning the random
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45 assignment was done at a school- rather than student- or classroom-level. If the program is
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47 administered at a classroom-level, studies could assess spillover or diffusion effects between
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3 students within each school. We conducted our analyses at the student- rather than school-level
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5 because we were able to match students' responses over time.
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8 Fifth, attrition was an issue in the second study, but particularly so in the third wave, due
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10 in part to: (1) absences on the day the surveys were administered in schools, (2) teachers not
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12 having time to enable survey administration within the classroom, or (3) scheduling restrictions
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14 for program implementation. Despite the encouraging fact that missing data patterns were
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16 random and did not appear to influence the results, this is a clear limitation that future studies
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18 should take into account. Finally, while we were able to assess stability/decay effects in one
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20 school, and though the results indicated that both measures of Empowerment and Social
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22 Conscience remained stable approximately three months later, it is plausible that this was not
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24 enough time to uncover decay effects that may emerge over a longer period of time. Future
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26 research would benefit from using a wider array of established metrics for program evaluation.
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30 31 **Conclusion** 32

33 Sanders and Munford (2014) called for researchers and practitioners to identify non-
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35 familial adult figures that possess the potential for impacting positive youth development, and
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37 Pittman (2017) called for implementing programs seeking to improve PYD in ways that
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39 appropriately address the broader issues that often affect these communities. In light of the fact
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41 that racial/ethnic minority youth, particularly in low socioeconomic communities, are
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43 disproportionately impacted by unjust policing practices in the United States, law enforcement
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45 officers may constitute one non-parental adult authority that has been viewed as traditionally
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47 undermining PYD among racial/ethnic and low socioeconomic status youth. Indeed, youth of
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49 color continue to face striking amounts of inequality (Lewis & Burd-Sharps, 2015; Meier et al.,
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2018) and are growing up in an age of mistrust of law enforcement (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016).

However, in the United States, studying PYD among racial-ethnic minority and low-SES youth is rare (*contra* Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Yu et al., 2019) and studies to date have not commented on whether and how law enforcement personnel might impact PYD.

This paper presented the results of two studies that examined the impact of a program that was designed to empower children to work collaboratively with law enforcement officers within a structured, non-enforcement context on community service projects. Consistent with expectations, youth reported higher levels of developmental assets following the TKC. While the effects were “small” (for a discussion of interpreting effect sizes, see Funder & Ozer, 2019), they were consistent with evaluations of programs impacting related social psychological constructs (Yeager et al., 2019). The findings support the notion that enabling law enforcement officers to work collaboratively with children can improve PYD, particularly when youth feel as though they are an important part of the process.

However, there are a few notes of caution. First, in no way do the findings indicate that police belong in schools. The results should not be misinterpreted to mean that because officers can promote PYD, districts should expand the number and scope of police officers within their schools. School resource officers’ day-to-day jobs and approaches fundamentally differ from this program because they are charged with surveilling children and enforcing laws and rules. The officers in this program are explicitly charged with *not* surveilling children and enforcing laws and rules. In an era where youth, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are disproportionately over-surveilled by police, reducing such over-policing of children is vital. The effects of this study suggest that when officers take on a fundamentally different role, one

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3 that does not involve actual policing, they may promote positive youth development, especially
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5 through the lens of the group engagement model. If such improvements in positive youth
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7 development and developmental assets are related to reduced school misbehavior and
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9 delinquency, it calls into question the role that law enforcement in schools should play—
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11 especially considering the effects of deterrence are often limited especially for younger youth
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13 (Lee et al., 2018).
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17 Second, given the historical trauma communities have experienced by being subjected to
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19 unjust and biased policing, such efforts must come from the community. If and when the
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21 communities themselves are ready to implement structured programs like this, they must be
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23 evaluated closely for impact. Here, the results indicate that it is possible for law enforcement to
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25 begin acting as a fundamentally different type of resource for the children and communities they
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27 serve; they can play a role in empowering positive youth development through improving
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29 youths' positive values, positive identity, and social conscience.
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33 Yet the results of these two studies should be interpreted within the context of the
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35 asymmetry hypothesis (Jacob, 1971; Slocum & Wiley, 2018). Youths' positive interactions with
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37 police may not translate into favorable attitudes. The relation between how people are treated
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39 and their views of police may instead be asymmetrical (Oliveira et al., 2019; Skogan, 2006). On
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41 the one hand, individuals may dismiss "good" experiences as exceptions to the norm. On the
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43 other hand, more problematically, they may begin to expect positive treatment in the future, and
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45 when they do not receive such positive treatment, their attitudes may decline even further.
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47 Indeed, the effect of a negative experience seems to often be more impactful than a positive
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49 exposure (see Oliveira et al., 2019).
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Vitality, a positive experience yielding positive outcomes may also place youth at a disadvantage by becoming overly trusting of the authority. As such, there may be little value in exposing youth to the police through these types of experiences if the youth begin to expect to be treated positively, with respect, and as members of the in-group (Tyler & Blader, 2003), yet the police either do not follow through, take advantage of the building trust, or engage in unjust or aggressive tactics. As Kupchik and colleagues (2020, p. 412) recently argued, “teaching students to trust and rely on police can have positive implications for the police, communities, and the youth themselves.” Yet as we conduct this program evaluation, we share their view that building trust with certain officers can leave youth – especially BIPOC youth – more vulnerable to a disconnect between specific officers’ behaviors and the more general police within the community. We especially share Kupchik and colleagues (2020, p. 416) concern that, “whether pro-police legal socialization will benefit students in absence of these broader efforts to recognize and address inequity in policing.” Whether the program should be run without law enforcement involvement is beyond the scope of this evaluation, yet it is a vital question that communities should engage.

President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) explicitly called for more programs that promote positive, non-enforcement interactions with police. Yet programs like this will not correct biased and unjust policing practices. As researchers are arguing (O’Brien & Tyler, 2020; Wood et al., 2020), the critical first step to build police-community trust is to improve procedurally-just policing practices through training, retraining, and oversight. Considering this program is not designed to correct biased and unjust policing practices, police must prioritize procedurally-just policing practices, trainings, efforts, and resources. Events like

the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Eric Garner undermine the public's views of police, and no community-based programs like the TKC can end such injustices.

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POLICE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Table 1. Number of records at each wave and total number of linked cases

<i>School</i>	Pre-TKC ^A Survey <i>N records</i>	Post-TKC ^A Survey <i>N records</i>	Linked Surveys <i>N youth</i>	School % Hispanic/Latinx or Black/African American	School % National School Lunch Program	"I am given useful roles and responsibilities" <i>M (SD)</i>	Self-Reported Participation %
1	159	121	114	51	46	2.98 (1.04)	85.53
2	215	131	109	21	15	2.76 (1.04)	71.56
3	110	87	49	98	84	3.00 (1.09)	90.82
4	80	79	37	95	89	2.67 (.96)	89.19
5	129	110	82	97	86	2.91 (1.04)	84.76
6	195	167	104	94	95	2.86 (1.05)	100
Total	888	695	495			2.87 (1.04)	86.16

^ATKC = Team Kids Challenge

For Peer Review Only

Table 2. DA items, factor loadings, and item-total correlations

Item	Pre-TKC ^A Survey				Post-TKC ^A Survey			
	Factor: Positive Values	Factor: Empowerment	Factor: Positive Identity	Item-total <i>r</i>	Factor: Positive Values	Factor: Empowerment	Factor: Positive Identity	Item-total <i>r</i>
	<i>Loading</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>Loading</i>		<i>Loading</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>Loading</i>	
Kids can make a difference in the community.	0.71			0.50***	0.72			0.52***
I want to help people who are struggling.	0.69			0.60***	0.70			0.54***
I feel good when I help others.	0.67			0.57***	0.68			0.57***
I think it is important to help other people. ^B	0.49			0.54***		0.77		0.54***
I can make a difference in my community.	0.49			0.65***	0.71			0.66***
I help others in my community.		0.76		0.53***		0.69		0.57***
I feel valued and appreciated by others.			0.77	0.51***			0.79	0.53***
I am helping to make my community a better place.		0.82		0.56***		0.73		0.63***
I feel good about myself.			0.73	0.50***			0.68	0.58***
I am an important part of my school.			0.55	0.55***			0.66	0.59***
Total ^C				$\alpha = .734$				$\alpha = .768$

*** $p < .001$

^ATKC = Team Kids Challenge

^BItem note: this item shifted from factor 1 to factor 2 between waves.

^CThe total score was created by mean-scoring all items.

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Table 3. Predictors of Changes in DA

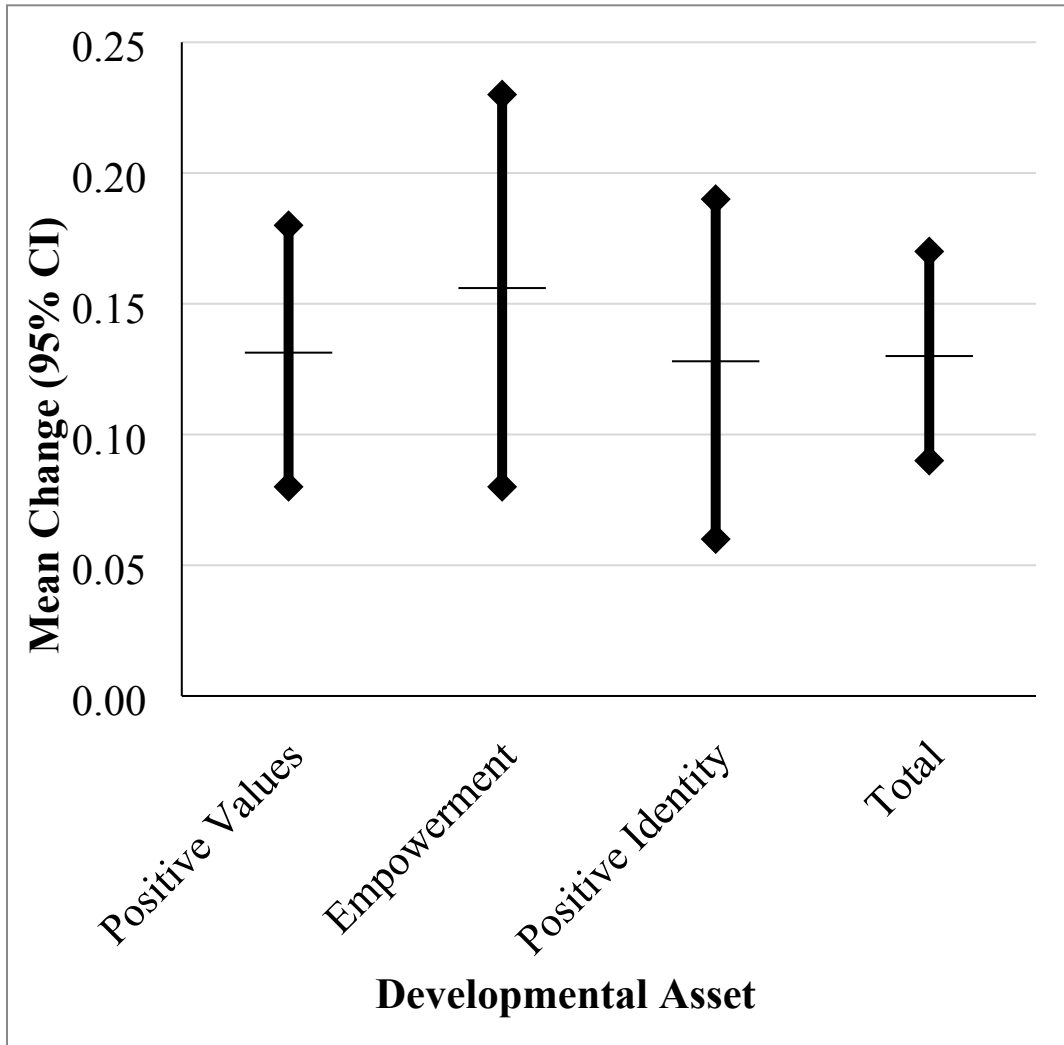
	Model 1			Model 2		
	b (SE)	95% CI	β	b (SE)	95% CI	β
“I am given useful roles and responsibilities”	.10 (.02)***	.06, .14	.24	.16*** (.02)	.13, .20	.38
Participation ^A	.14 (.05)**	.04, .24	.14	.15** (.04)	.06, .23	.15
Grade level	-.03 (.04)	-.10, .03	-.05	-.03 (.03)	-.09, .03	-.04
Developmental Assets Pre-TKC ^B				-.47*** (.04)	-.55, -.40	-.53

p* < .01, *p* < .001

^ADichotomous where 1 = participated in TKC

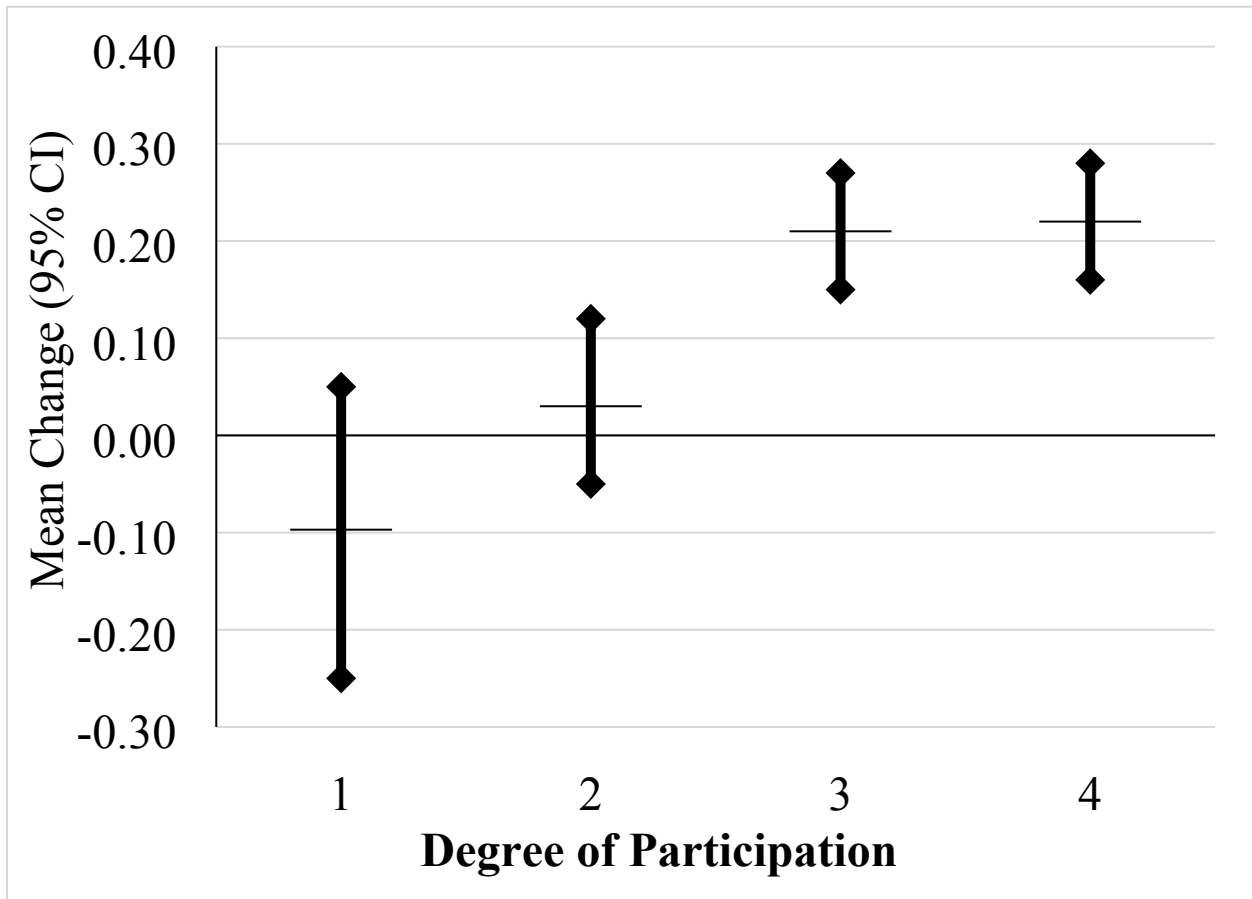
^BTKC = Team Kids Challenge

Figure 1. DA (Pre- to Post-Team Kids Challenge): Mean changes with 95% confidence intervals



Only

Figure 2. Mean Changes in DA (Pre- to Post-Team Kids Challenge) by Self-Reported Degree of Participation



Note: Degree of Participation: Youth were asked to self-report, on a scale from 1 (*Not at all true*) to 4 (*Very true*), how much they felt they had been given useful roles and responsibilities.

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POLICE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

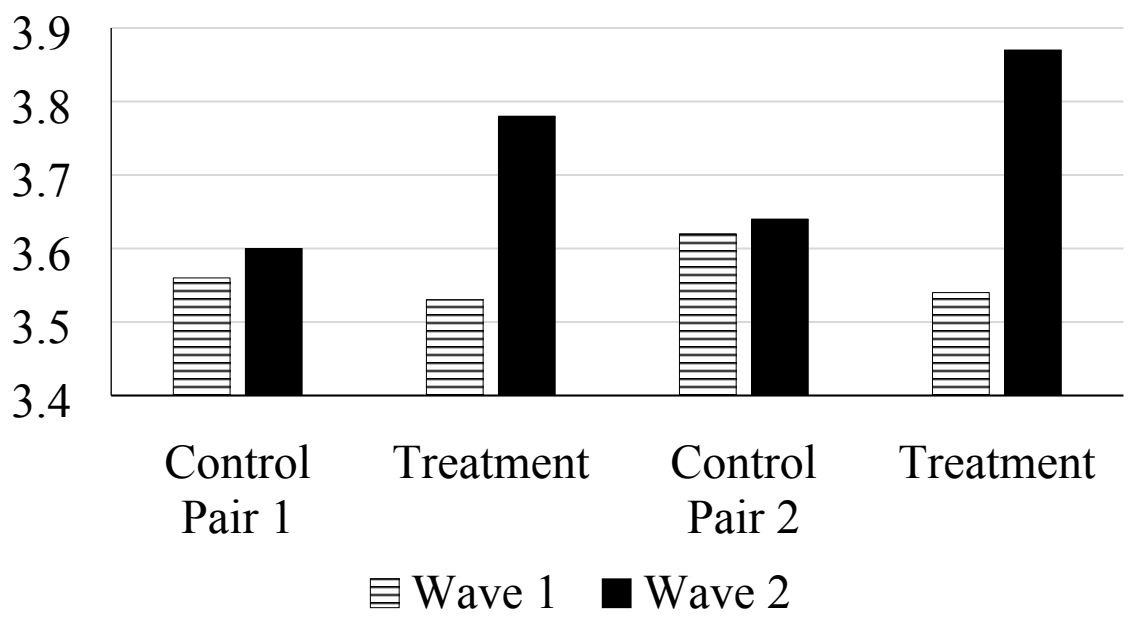
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Schools in the RCT

	School	Distance between schools	School % White	School % Hispanic/Latinx	School % Black/African American	Age <i>M(SD)</i>	% Female	Linked surveys Wave 1 – Wave 2 (<i>N</i>)	# Linked surveys Wave 2 -Wave 3 (<i>N</i>)
Pair 1	Control	1.7 miles	14.84	75.00	4.69	10.91 (.96)	50.78	128	
	Treatment		14.81	60.00	17.04	10.04 (.77)	51.85	135	
Pair 2	Control	2.4 miles	14.29	50.79	30.95	10.22 (.97)	55.93	129	74
	Treatment		9.4	69.23	17.95	10.37 (.97)	44.19	120	90

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Figure 3. RCT Results on DA

a. Empowerment



b. Social Conscience

