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Evaluation of a School Campaign to Reduce Hatred

Elena Savoia[a1], Max Su[b], Nigel Harriman[c], Marcia A. Testa[d]

[a]Senior Scientist in Biostatistics, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, [b]Research Associate, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, [c]Research Assistant with the EPREP Program, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, [d]Senior Lecturer in Biostatistics, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Abstract

Combating violent extremism can involve organizing Peer-to-Peer (P2P) preventing violent extremism (PVE) programs and campaigns. In recent years, hundreds of school campaigns have been launched around the world but very few have been evaluated. In this manuscript, we present the results of the evaluation of one of these initiatives. Study objectives consisted of: 1) Assessing the impact of the campaign in increasing students' exposure to messages of acceptance and decreasing exposure to hate messages in the school environment, 2) Assess the impact of the campaign in improving students' attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity. We conducted a longitudinal cohort study with control groups. The study was implemented in Utah in schools of 8th and 9th-grade levels. Two schools were identified as campaign implementation sites, and two schools of similar socio-economic and ethnocultural characteristics were identified as the control sites. We utilized univariate and multivariate regression analysis to assess changes in students' exposure to hate messages and attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity. Our study findings can be useful for the development of future campaigns and educational programs as they highlight the importance of ethnocultural empathic awareness in improving students' attitudes regarding ethnocultural diversity.

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Introduction

In 2014, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) program for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) expanded efforts at the community level to counter violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence by promoting activities aimed at enhancing community resilience.[1] As part of this effort, DHS partnered with EdVenture Partners[2], a private organization that manages experiential learning initiatives, to initiate the *Peer to Peer:*

[1] Corresponding Author Contact: Elena Savoia, Email: **esavoia@hsph.harvard.edu**, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 90 Smith Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02120, USA

Challenging Extremism Initiative (P2P). The goal of this initiative was to counter violent extremism through youth engagement in the development of anti-hate campaigns using a peer-to-peer approach.[3] The initiative tasked university students to create and implement, over a school term, a school-based campaign with a social or digital component designed to empower their peers to counter hate. Some examples of these campaigns have been described in the literature.[4]

We aimed to select one of these initiatives and evaluate its impact through an empirical study. To do so, we conducted a review of 150 P2P campaign products produced by US college students between 2015 and 2017 by reading the campaigns' brochures and visiting their websites and social media pages. As part of this process, we identified *Kombat with Kindness* (KWK)[5], developed by Utah Valley University (UVU), as an interesting product for our evaluation. KWK was one of the P2P competition finalists and despite the ending of DHS funding, it was adopted by a group of middle school students in Utah who decided to implement it in their schools.

Evaluation of CVE Interventions

A recent scoping review published by Pistone et al [6] shows that, in general, there is a lack of evidence-based interventions within the field of P/CVE. More specifically, out of the 112 publications included in the review, only 15 publications were primary studies supported by empirical data and only two publications measured the comparative effectiveness of specific interventions. The results of the few empirical studies are encouraging as they imply that educational interventions increase knowledge about, and change attitudes towards, violent extremism. However, CVE strategies can be very diverse in scope and activities, ranging from community policing, removal of extremist propaganda, mentoring programs, to the creation of counter or alternative messages, each presenting with different evaluation challenges. Policymakers faced difficult decisions on how to allocate resources to CVE programs that lack tangible results and statistical data on their effectiveness. Among the different CVE

strategies, in the American context, for reasons ranging from the political to the practical, approaches that are aimed at reducing the supply of violent extremist content on the Internet are neither feasible nor desirable. As Stevens and Neumann [7] suggest, an alternative solution consists of reducing the demand by creating a marketplace in which extremism, terrorism, and other "bad ideas" are drowned out by pluralism, democracy, and counter-narratives. The P2P Challenging Extremism initiatives fall into this scope. It is based on the idea of bringing together individuals with public relations, advertising, and media-production expertise to design and disseminate counter-narratives and engage the youth, who are often better equipped to understand what sort of messaging would appeal to their peers. In this manuscript, we aim to contribute to the field of evaluation science in CVE by sharing our experience in evaluating a specific P2P intervention. While the results are specific to the intervention and context being assessed, we believe the methods applied to this study, as well as some of the outcome measures we developed, can be easily transferred to other contexts.

Overview of the P2P Initiative

We conducted a review of 150 P2P campaign products produced from the fall of 2015 to the spring of 2017. From our analysis of the 150 products, we found that most of the time campaign goals were focused on raising awareness about discrimination and promoting positive messages towards unity, equality, and peace, promoting acts of random kindness, and motivating students to counter extremism by creating digital initiatives. The 150 campaigns developed by P2P domestically, between the Fall of 2015 and the Spring of 2017, were implemented in 36 states and the District of Columbia and can be classified in the realm of general awareness initiatives regarding violent extremism. The greatest majority of the P2P campaigns (121) were focused on promoting unity, peace, acceptance, and similar values. Seven out of the 150 campaigns focused on countering White Supremacists propaganda, 22 out of 150 focused on Jihadi propaganda. In both cases, the goals of the campaigns were to raise awareness about the existence of extremists' groups rather than specifically discrediting

their propaganda. Almost all P2P products included a mix of approaches, such as on-campus events and social media campaigns. More specifically, almost 80% held an on-campus event to promote the theme of their campaign and overall the 150 products reached almost 4 million people via social media. The P2P Initiative was sponsored, in the US, by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) up to 2017. When we started our project, in 2018, the initiative was not active in the USA due to the end of funding from the DHS. We interviewed the campaign developers and found out that Kombat with Kindness was able to sustain the initiative despite the end of DHS funding and was being implemented in Utah. For this reason, we decided to select this campaign as the object of our evaluation.

KWK Campaign Implementation

The goal of the KWK campaign, implemented in the above-mentioned Utah schools, was to promote acceptance towards diversity and "fight" hatred with kindness. The two schools that self-selected as implementation sites invited the UVU KWK team to present the initiative to the teachers. The teachers, instructed about the campaign by the UVU KWK team, engaged their peer leadership students to conduct several age-appropriate activities promoting acceptance towards diversity in the school environment. Such activities included presentations of videos in class, the creation of t-shirts and banners, and other social events. Most activities were organized on school grounds with very limited use of social media to implement the campaign. The activities took place in April 2018.

Study Objectives: 1) Assess the impact of the KWK intervention in increasing students' exposure to messages of acceptance**2** (referred to as positive messages) and decreasing exposure to hate messages**3** in the school environment, 2) Assess the impact of the KWK intervention in improving students' attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity.

[2] Messages of acceptance were defined as "verbal or written expressions promoting acceptance towards people of other race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity"
[3] Hate messages were defined as "verbal or written expressions against a specific group because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity."

Methods

Study Design

We conducted a longitudinal cohort study with control groups. The study was conducted in Utah in schools of 8th and 9th-grade levels. Two schools were identified as campaign implementation sites, and two schools of similar socio-economic and ethnocultural characteristics within the same school district were identified as the control sites. Parents were provided with opt-out forms one month prior to the start of data collection. Data were gathered before and after the implementation of the KWK campaign using the online survey platform Qualtrics. A survey link was given to teachers at each school, who distributed it to students to fill out using school computers during class time – the survey took roughly twenty minutes to complete. Respondents entered a self-generated unique ID; no names were associated with the ID. To add a layer of confidentiality, all IDs were replaced with a code, and data were de-identified. Despite the use of de-identified data, students were asked consent to participate in the survey prior to administering the questions. The pre survey was administered three weeks prior to the intervention, and the post survey was administered one week after the intervention. The students in the control school received an intervention as well, which consisted of a training on how to prepare for a snowstorm emergency. Data collection procedure in the control schools was identical to that of the intervention to address potential issues of differential misclassification of the outcome. Across the four schools, the response rate of the baseline survey was 86% (767/897). The study protocol and instruments were approved by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Institutional Review Board as well as by the ethical committee of the school district where the study was implemented.

Independent Measures

Social and Demographic Characteristics

The baseline survey included questions regarding the students' socio-demographic characteristics, academic performance, experience with discrimination, number of friends of different races, and ethnocultural empathic awareness. Descriptive statistics of the population at baseline and pre-post intervention (those who completed baseline and post-intervention surveys) were calculated using percentages, means, standard deviations, medians, and ranges. Experience with discrimination was assessed using the Perceptions of Racism in Children and Youth (PRaCY) Scale.[9] Our measure for Ethnocultural Empathic Awareness is described in detail below.

Ethnocultural Empathic Awareness (ECEA)

This construct was measured using the Empathic Awareness subscale of the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy.[10] The subscale contains four questions and is measured on a 5-point Likert scale. It is defined by Wang et al. as "*the knowledge that one has about the experiences of people from racial or ethnic groups different from one's own… particularly related to their experiences of discrimination or unequal treatment*." [10] We used this scale as a proxy for awareness of institutional and cultural racism in society. As demonstrated by Wang et al., Empathic Awareness is closely related to Acceptance of Cultural Differences [10], however, we did not consider it an outcome measure as the Kombat with Kindness campaign did not aim to enhance ECEA.

Outcome Measures

The primary outcomes of the KWK campaign were derived from the specific objectives articulated by the research team through discussion with the campaign developers at UVU and with the campaign implementers at the implementation sites: *1. Increase students' exposure to messages of acceptance in the school environment, 2. Decrease*

students' exposure to hate messages in the school environment, 3. Improve students' attitudes regarding acceptance of ethnocultural diversity. The corresponding outcome measures were developed by the research team as described below.

Measuring exposure to messages of acceptance (positive messages) and hate messages

Levels of exposure to positive and hate messages directed towards people of other race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender or gender identity within a timeframe of one week were self-reported by the subject on a scale consisting of the responses: 'never', 'very rarely', 'rarely', 'occasionally', 'frequently' and 'very frequently'. These six responses were assigned ordinal scores from 0 to 5, respectively. A separate question asked the student where they experienced the messages: in school, at home, outside of home or school, or at an unknown location. From levels of exposure and location questions, we computed exposure to positive and hate messages at school and outside of school separately. For some students, it was not possible to determine exactly the level of exposure at a particular location if they indicated being exposed both at school and outside of school since the survey did not ask students to specify exposure levels for each location individually. For the primary analysis, we set those students' exposures inside and outside of school equal to the level they indicated for all locations, but as a sensitivity analysis, we fit the models with those students removed. Changes scores for exposure to positive and hate messages were calculated as the difference between post-intervention and baseline exposure levels. This process yielded scores ranging from -5 to 5 with negative values representing a decrease in exposure levels and positive values representing an increase in exposure levels.

Measuring attitudes related to acceptance of ethnocultural diversity

We conducted a literature review to identify statistically validated and reliable instruments measuring racial, cultural, ethnic, or religious acceptance. From this review, we determined that the best existing measures to describe the attitudes of acceptance towards ethnocultural diversity were measured by a subscale from the Cultural Intelligence Scale

(CIS) [10], namely the Motivational Cultural Intelligence (MCI) sub-scale, and a sub-scale from the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE), namely the Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) sub-scale.[9] The MCI subscale of the CIS consists of five items that measure the capability of an individual to actively pursue learning about and functioning in multi-cultural environments.[10] The five-item Acceptance of Cultural Differences (ACD) SEE subscale measures the passive acceptance, appreciation, and understanding of differing racial-ethnic cultural traditions.[9] The questions were originally designed for an adult population, so they were modified to adapt them to a younger population and school-based context. Scores for the MCI and ACD sub-scales were formed through the summation of the individual items. We consider the summative scoring to be a reasonable approach given the items of the scale are unidimensional. Items for the ACD scale were recoded so that higher values indicated higher acceptance so that all scales were scored in the same direction. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Statistical Analysis of the Scales

We tested the unidimensionality of each scale in the current population using Principal Components Analysis (PCA). Unidimensional scales indicate they measure a single latent underlying construct. The reliability or internal consistency of each scale was tested using Cronbach's alpha. If the scales were shown to be unidimensional, characteristics of items and scales were examined using item response theory (IRT) analysis.[11] The generalized partial credit model (GPCM) was fit for each scale. From this model, item information functions (IIF) and test information functions (TIF) were examined to help determine how well the latent trait is measured across different levels of the trait for each item and scale, respectively.

Statistical Analysis of Baseline Data

We used simple and multiple ordered logistic regression to study the association between student characteristics and their attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity. The dependent variables consisted of an ordinal variable describing levels of MCI (low, medium

and high) and a binary variable describing ACD (definitions are provided in Table 1, see Annex). Independent variables include age, gender (female vs male), race (white vs non-white), grade (9^{th} vs 8^{th}), academic performance, level of exposure to hate messages, level of exposure to positive messages, having friends of another race (>5 versus ≤ 5), experienced discrimination due to race/ethnicity (yes vs no), and EC Empathic Awareness (high vs low awareness). The levels of exposure to hate and positive messages were tried in the model as a continuous (linear) predictor and also a categorical predictor. Prior to applying the ordered logistic model to the MCI endpoint, we confirmed the parallel regression assumption by means of the Score test.

Statistical Analysis of Post-Intervention Data

The post-intervention survey was administered approximately four weeks after the baseline survey and one week after the implementation of the campaign. We hypothesized that the KWK intervention would cause an increase in exposure to messages of acceptance (positive messages) in the school environment and decrease exposure to hate messages in the same environment. The intervention was expected to have a lesser or no effect on positive and hate message exposure levels outside of school. To test whether or not the KWK intervention caused changes in positive or hate message exposure levels we fit ordinal logistic regression models to the post-intervention scores for positive and hate message exposure levels inside and outside of school. The intervention group was the primary factor of interest in the model, while the covariates were: race (white vs non-white), gender (female vs male), making new friends of different race or ethnicity (yes vs no), academic grades, changes in ECEA and baseline message exposure level. The model was first fit under the proportional odds assumptions which were tested and if rejected, a generalized logistic model was fit. We further hypothesized that students experiencing an increase in positive message exposure level and/or a decrease in hate message exposure level at school will exhibit larger increases in acceptance towards ethnocultural diversity. This hypothesis was tested by fitting separate multiple linear regression models for changes in MCI and ACD. For these models, we were

interested in testing whether or not changes in positive or hate message exposure levels and intervention group are significant predictors of changes in MCI and ACD. We hypothesized that the positive and hate message exposure levels at school would affect acceptance towards ethnocultural diversity the most, but also tested if this was affected by exposure level outside of school. These models included covariates for race, gender, making new friends of a different race or ethnicity, changes in ECEA, and baseline levels of message exposure.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The baseline analysis includes 767 students whose demographics and characteristics are detailed in Table 1 (see Annex). There were 326 students in the pre-post intervention population which had similar characteristics to the baseline population (see Table 1 in Annex). In order to investigate the missing data mechanism, we fit a logistic regression model with an indicator of missingness for post-intervention data as the dependent variable. In this model, we included predictors for baseline demographics, levels of hate/positive message exposure and attitudes related to acceptance of ethnocultural diversity. This model found that the intervention group was marginally significant and showed students in the intervention group had 1.36 (p=0.0633, 95% CI (0.98, 1.88)) times the odds of completing the post-intervention questionnaire compared to the control group. The model also found that academic performance was a significant predictor of missingness where a half-letter grade increase corresponded to a 1.22 (p=0.0043, 95% CI (1.07, 1.41)) times the odds of completing the post-intervention questionnaire. This result shows that the missing data are not completely at random but does not rule out them being missing at random. We also compared the intervention and control groups in terms of baseline characteristics using a t-test for continuous variables and a chi-squared test of association for categorical variables. The variables tested were MCI, ACD ECEA, positive/hate message exposure levels, age, gender (female vs male), race (white vs non-white), academic performance, and having friends of

another race. The intervention group had more females (57 vs 43%, p=0.0083), had higher academic performance (0.36 of a half-letter grade higher, p=0.0027) and were exposed to more positive messages at school (mean difference 0.417, p=0.0344) than the control group.

Results of the Statistical Analysis on the Scales

Motivational Cultural Intelligence (MCI)

Principal component factor analysis of 767 baseline responses for MCI found that the one factor with an eigenvalue greater than one accounted for 69.7% of the variance in the five items. Factor loadings were high (0.76-0.88) and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 indicated high internal consistency. The distribution of MCI scores was skewed with 26.3% of the students scoring at the highest level on a scale (range 0-20) where the mean was 18.6 and the median was 18. Examining item information functions from the GPCM showed that the five items mostly provided information about subjects at lower ability levels with item E (*I would enjoy kids from different cultures joining my school*) providing the most information and item C (*I am sure I could deal with adjusting to a place and culture that are new to me*) providing the least information in general (see Appendix A, question 29 for the five items on this scale). The IIFs show that the scale is better at distinguishing between subjects at the lower ability level and not as good at distinguishing between subjects with higher MCI ability. See Figure 1.

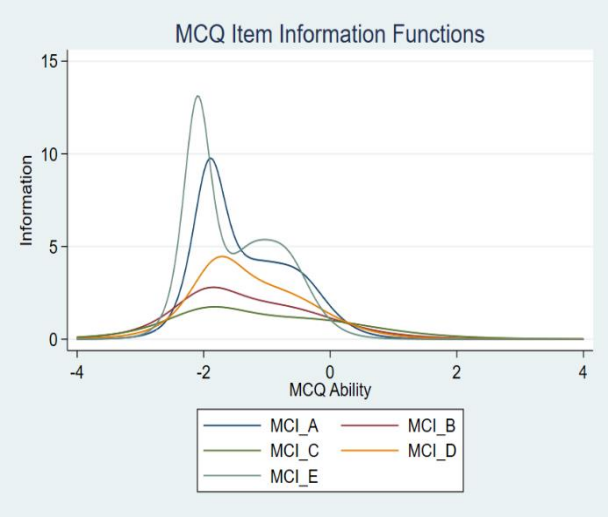

Figure 1 Item Information Functions MCI

Acceptance of Cultural Differences

Factor analysis of the 758 baseline responses for ACD yielded a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than one and accounted for 62.9% of the total variance in the data. Factor loadings were high (0.73-0.84) and Cronbach's alpha was high at 0.85. The distribution of ACD scores was skewed with 54.0% of the students scoring at the highest level on a scale (range 0-20) where the mean was 17.6 and the median was 20. Item information functions from the GPCM showed that the five items mostly provided information about subjects at lower ability levels with items D (*"I do not understand why some kids and their families want to carry forward with their racial/ethnic or religious cultural traditions"*) and E (*"I don't understand why kids of different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds enjoy wearing traditional clothing"*) providing the most information and items A (*"I feel irritated when kids of different racial or ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me"*), B (*"I feel annoyed when kids do not speak standard English"*) and C (*"I feel uncomfortable when communicating with kids from other racial or ethnic backgrounds, regardless of how well they speak English"*) providing relatively little information (see Appendix A, question 30 for the five items on this scale). See Figure 2.

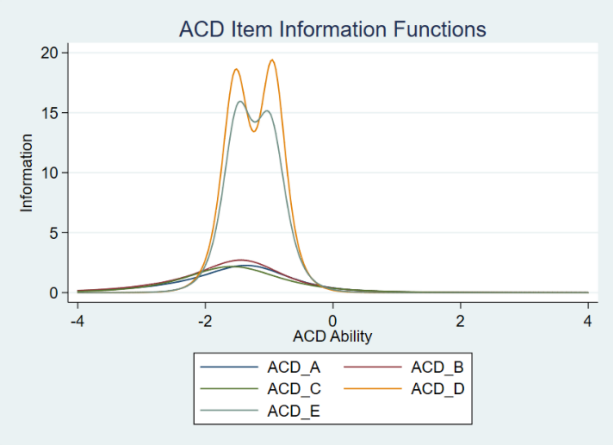

Figure 2 Item Information Functions ACD

Ethnocultural Empathic Awareness

Factor analysis of the 749 baseline responses for ECEA yielded a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than one and accounted for 77.0% of the total variance in the data. Factor loadings were high (0.85-0.89) and Cronbach's alpha was high at 0.90. The distribution of ECEA scores was skewed with 32.4% of the students scoring at the highest level on a scale (range 0-16) where the mean was 12.4 and the median was 13.0. Item information functions from the GPCM showed that the four items provided the most information about subjects in the middle and lower ability levels with item C ("*I can see how some racial or ethnic groups are systemically oppressed in our society"*) providing the most information and item A ("*I am aware of how society treats different racial or ethnic groups"*) providing the least information in general (see Appendix A, question 31 for the four items on this scale). See Figure 3.

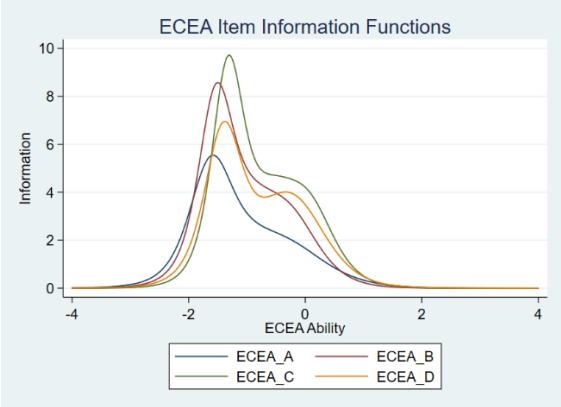

Figure 3 Item Information Functions ECEA

Results of Baseline Analysis

In the simple logistic models (Table 2, see Annex), female students had 1.6 times the odds of reporting a higher level of MCI (on a three-level ordinal variable) compared to male students (OR=1.6, 95% CI 1.3-2.2) and 1.5 times the odds of reporting a higher level of ACD (OR=1.5, 95% CI 1.1-2.0). Ninth-grade students had 2.1 times the odds of reporting a higher level of ACD than eight graders (OR=2.1, 95% CI 1.2-3.6). A half-point increase in a student's grade point average was associated with 1.2 times the odds of having a higher level of MCI (OR=1.2, 95% CI 1.1-1.3). Level of exposure to positive messages was a significant predictor of MCI and this relationship was driven by differences between students that were 'rarely/very rarely' exposed versus 'occasionally' exposed (OR=0.5, 95% CI 0.4-0.8) and 'frequently/very frequently' exposed (OR=0.6, 95% CI 0.4-0.9). Students with more than five friends from another racial-ethnic group had 2.1 times the odds of reporting higher levels of MCI (OR=2.1, 95% CI 1.6-2.8) and 1.5 times the odds of having a higher ACD (OR=1.5, 95% CI 1.1-2.0) compared to those who had five or fewer. Those who reported exposure to discrimination due to race and/or ethnicity had 1.7 times the odds of reporting a higher level of MCI (OR=1.7, 95% CI 1.2-2.4). Students with a higher level of EC Empathic Awareness

were more likely to report a higher level of MCI (OR=3.4, 95% CI 2.5-4.5) and ACD (OR=2.1, 95% CI 1.6-2.9) than those with low ECEA.

The multiple model for MCI had a significant overall likelihood ratio (LR) chi-square test statistic (χ^2 = 105.88, df = 12, p < 0.0001) and the score test for the proportional odds assumption did not reject the proportional odds assumption (p = 0.4406). In this model, whites had 0.7 times the odds of reporting a higher level of MCI than non-whites (OR=0.7, 95% CI 0.5-1.0). Additionally, a half-point increase in a student's grade point average was associated with 1.2 times the odds of having a higher level of MCI (OR=1.2, 95% CI 1.0-1.3). Level of exposure to positive messages was a significant predictor of MCI and this relationship was driven by differences between students that were 'never' exposed versus 'rarely/very rarely' exposed (OR=1.7, 95% CI 1.1-2.7) and 'rarely/very rarely' exposed versus 'occasionally' exposed (OR=0.6, 95% CI 0.4-0.9). Students with more than five friends from another racial-ethnic group had twice the odds of reporting higher levels of MCI (OR=2.0, 95% CI 1.5-2.8) compared to those who had five or fewer. Students with higher ECEA had three times the odds of reporting a higher level of MCI (OR=3.0, 95% CI 2.2-4.2) compared to those with lower ECEA.

In the multiple model for ACD, the overall LR statistic was significant (χ^2 = 44.85, df = 12, p < 0.0001). In this model, ninth-grade students had 2.6 times the odds of reporting a higher level of ACD than eight graders (OR=2.6, 95% CI 1.3-5.3). Students with more than five friends from another racial-ethnic group had 1.4 times the odds of reporting higher levels of ACD (OR=1.4, 95% CI 1.0-1.9) compared to those who had five or fewer. Students with higher ECEA had 2 times the odds of reporting a higher level of ACD (OR=2.0, 95% CI 1.5-2.9) compared to those with lower ECEA.

Results of Post-Intervention Analysis

Exposure to messages of acceptance (positive messages) and hate messages

There were 143 students in the KWK intervention group and 183 controls with pre- and post-intervention scores for positive and hate message exposure levels. Of the four models for positive and hate message exposure levels inside and outside of school, only the model for hate message exposure levels at school followed the proportional odds assumption, while the remainder were fit using generalized logits. Each model had a significant overall LR test statistic ($p < 0.001$). Exposure to the KWK campaign was not a significant predictor of levels of exposure to positive messages at school ($p=0.5676$) or outside of school ($p=0.4200$) or levels of exposure to hate messages at school ($p=0.0733$) or outside of school ($p=0.5804$). In the sensitivity analysis, all four models had to be fit using generalized logits since the proportional odds assumption was rejected for each outcome. Each model had a significant overall LR test statistic ($p < 0.02$). For this analysis, there were 95 students in the KWK intervention group and 129 controls with pre- and post-intervention scores for positive message exposure. These models showed that the intervention did not significantly predict levels of exposure at school ($p=0.2827$) or outside of school ($p=0.3000$) for positive messages. For models of exposure to hate messages, there were 119 students in the intervention group and 153 controls in the sensitivity analysis. In this analysis, the intervention group was not a significant predictor of levels of exposure to hate messages at school ($p=0.2789$) or outside of school ($p=0.5356$).

The model for changes in MCI had an overall F-test statistic of 13.15 ($p<0.0001$) and an R-square of 0.29. In this model, intervention group and changes in positive or hate message exposure levels inside and outside of school were not significant predictors of change in MCI, but there were significant interactions between intervention group and change in positive message exposure at school ($p = 0.0116$) and change in hate message exposure outside of school ($p = 0.0047$). In the intervention group, a unit increase in positive message exposure at school resulted in a 0.39 increase in MCI (using a scale going from 0 (never) to 5

(very frequently), while in the control group it resulted in a 0.02 decline in MCI leading to a LSM difference of 0.41 (effect size $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.020, 95% CI (0.001, 0.059)). At the same time, a unit increase in hate message exposure outside of school resulted in a 0.43 decline in MCI in the intervention group and a 0.15 increase in the control group giving a LSM difference of 0.57 (effect size $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.025, 95% CI (0.002, 0.066)). Other significant predictors of change in MCI were baseline MCI (beta=-0.418, p<0.001, $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.149, 95% CI (0.081, 0.215)), change in ECEA (beta=0.246, p<0.001, $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.092, 95% CI (0.039, 0.152)), and an indicator for making new friends of different race or ethnicity (beta=0.68, p=0.045, $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.013, 95% CI (0.000, 0.046)).

The model for changes in ACD had an overall F-test statistic of 9.6 (p<0.0001) and an R-square of 0.19. In this model, there was a significant interaction between intervention group and change in positive message exposure levels at school (p=0.0494). For students in the intervention group, a unit increase in positive message exposure led to a 0.215 increase in ACD, while those in the control group showed a decline of 0.244 yielding a LSM difference of 0.459 (effect size $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.012, 95% CI (0.000, 0.045)). Other significant predictors were baseline ACD (beta=-0.515, p<0.001, $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.172, 95% CI (0.101, 0.241)) and gender (beta=1.074, p=0.0313, $\eta^2_{partial}$ =0.015, 95% CI (0.000, 0.050)) which indicated females tended to have larger increases in ACD.

Discussion

As described by Wilner et al. combatting violent extremism can involve organizing Peer-to-Peer (P2P) preventing violent extremism (PVE) programs and social media campaigns.[12] In recent years, hundreds of these campaigns have been launched around the world but very few have been evaluated.[12] [13] [14] [15] Wilner et al. continue by pointing to the limitations of evaluation science in this field as metrics of success and failure have yet to be developed, and very little is publicly known as to what might differentiate a successful P2P campaign from a mediocre one.[12] The goal of our study was not only to evaluate the impact of a specific P2P

campaign but also to do so using quantitative methods and a study design with control groups. To achieve this goal, we developed new metrics and adapted existing ones. Our results show that students exposed to the KWK campaign did not report increased exposure to positive messages in the school environment, one of the outcomes of the initiative, however, they did report decreased exposure to hate messages, another important outcome of the campaign. As anticipated, exposure to positive and hate messages outside the school environment did not change. In this study, we also examined associations between exposure to such messages and students' attitudes such as MCI and ACD, and we found no direct association between these variables. However, students with increased exposure to positive messages (not necessarily due to the campaign per se) who were also exposed to the campaign reported better MCI and ADC. The school in which this study was implemented is fairly diverse, with approximately half of the students being non-white, our results are certainly context-specific and the impact of the campaign in this context may reflect the unique characteristics of this particular school environment. We recognize that our findings are based on a specific sample of students that do not represent the overall US student population and not even the overall student population in the observed schools. While the results may be limited in their generalizability, the methods we used can be replicated elsewhere and any of the questions and outcome measures we developed can be used in a similar context. Therefore, we believe that the study we conducted can be informative for those interested in evaluating similar campaigns.

In conducting this evaluation study, we faced several methodological challenges. The first was being able to articulate the expected outcomes of the campaign. The implementers had a vision of enhancing acceptance of diversity by engaging students in spreading positive messages in the school environment and reducing hate messages; our job consisted of working with them to turn their vision into measurable outcomes based on the activities they were planning to implement. Once such outcomes were agreed upon, we searched for available measures and quickly realized that the literature lacks instruments to assess attitudes such as acceptance of ethnocultural diversity in youth. As a consequence, a large amount of work was dedicated to testing and adapting existing measures. We believe that more research

needs to be conducted to better understand what "hate" means for younger generations, how they define a "hate message", and how to measure acceptance of ethnocultural diversity in youth. Focus groups are needed to develop instruments that better reflect the measurement of these complex constructs and explore the meaning that younger generations give to actions and feelings towards ethnocultural diversity.

Another important challenge was the absence of baseline data. Collecting baseline data allowed us to measure change over time and gave us important information on students' attitudes and experiences. The baseline data showed that approximately 15% of the students responding to our survey are exposed to hate messages weekly (frequently or very frequently), such exposure includes first-hand and second-hand exposure, and it happens mainly over social media (77%). Additionally, baseline data showed that 46% of students reported having low acceptance of ethnocultural differences and 16% low motivational cultural intelligence. The baseline data also showed that answers to a simple metric, a question on *the number of friends of differences races a student has*, is strongly associated with better acceptance towards ethnocultural diversity. This is a simple metric that could be included in annual school surveys currently conducted by school districts to monitor bullying, violence and other health-related behaviors and attitudes.

Finally, we believe that the most interesting result of our analysis is the finding that ECEA is a strong predictor of students' acceptance of ethnocultural diversity. ECEA refers to awareness of institutional [16] and cultural racism in society, our results show that students aware of such issues have higher levels of MCI and ACD. A large body of literature documents that there is a racial gap in empathy, in which individuals have expressed empathy towards members of their group but not to members of a racial outgroup.[17] [18] [19] [20] Yet, our longitudinal analysis showed how changes in ECEA have an impact on such attitudes. Our study findings can be useful for the development of future campaigns and educational programs, as they indicate that enhancing students' ethnocultural empathic awareness by educating them about cultural and institutional racism is a crucial component to consider when attempting to improve their attitudes towards ethnocultural diversity. We

derive, as a policy recommendation, that campaigns aimed at increasing acceptance towards diversity should include an educational foundation on institutional and cultural racism, which is currently lacking in school curricula.

Conclusion

The results from this study highlight the need multiple for activities to create a school environment where acceptance of ethnocultural diversity is promoted. Enhancing exposure to messages of acceptance and decreasing exposure to hate messages, potentially achievable with a campaign, need to be integrated with the education of institutional and cultural racism and whenever possible with activities that help students establish friendships with peers of different races.

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Annex

Table 1: Baseline and pre-post intervention survey of students participating in the study: students' characteristics

Characteristics	Baseline sample (n-767)	Pre-post intervention sample (n=326)
Age	Mean=14.6 (SD=0.5) Median=15 Range (14-16)	Mean=14.6 (SD=0.5) Median=15 Range (14-16)
Gender Female Male	 49% 51%	 51% 49%
Race White Non-white	 49% 51%	 53% 47%
Grade 8 9	 8% 92%	 1% 99%
Academic performance (*What have been most of your grades up to now at school?*) A A- to B+ B B- to C+ C or lower	 27% 41% 10% 15% 6%	 30% 45% 10% 10% 4%
Friends of different races *(Do you have friends of different racial-ethnic background?)* None Few (1-2) Some (3-5) Many (>5)	 3% 16% 26% 55%	 2% 17% 25% 56%
Experienced discrimination due to race/ethnicity	21%	19%
Exposure to hate messages (verbal or written speeches) Never Rarely/very rarely Occasionally Frequently/very frequently	 36% 28% 21% 15%	 35% 29% 23% 13%
Exposure to positive		

messages (verbal or written speeches)		
Never	24%	19%
Rarely/very rarely	26%	27%
Occasionally	24%	27%
Frequently/very frequently	26%	27%
Ethnocultural Empathic Awareness	Mean=12.3 (SD=3.8)	Mean=12.7 (SD=3.6)
Numerical scale:	Median=13 Range=0-16	Median=13 Range=0-16
Binary variable:		
Low awareness: (score < 13)	48%	45%
High awareness: (score ≥ 13)	52%	55%
Motivational Cultural Intelligence	Mean=16.6 (SD=3.8)	Mean=16.9 (SD=3.1)
Numerical scale 0-20	Median=18 Range=0-20	Median=18 Range=0-20
Ordinal variable:		
Low motivational CQ: (score ≤13)	16%	14%
Medium motivational CQ: (13 < score < 19)	45%	48%
High motivational CQ: (score ≥19)	39%	38%
Acceptance of Cultural Differences	Mean=17.6 (SD=3.9)	Mean=17.7 (SD=3.9)
Numerical scale 0-20	Median=20 Range=0-20	Median=20 Range=0-20
Binary variable:		
Low acceptance: (score < 20)	46%	45%
High acceptance: (score ≥ 20)	54%	55%

Table 2: Association between students' characteristics, motivational cultural intelligence and acceptance of cultural differences for the overall baseline sample of 767 students (Ordered logistic regression).

Students' characteristics	Motivational Cultural Intelligence (n=767)		Acceptance of Cultural Differences (n=758)	
	Simple models OR (95% C.I.)	**Multiple model OR (95% C.I.)**	**Simple models OR (95% C.I.)**	**Multiple Models OR (95% C.I.)**
Age	0.9 (0.7-1.1)	0.9 (0.6-1.2)	1.2 (0.9-1.6)	1.0 (0.7-1.4)
Gender (female vs male)	**1.6 (1.3-2.2)**	1.3 (0.9-1.7)	**1.5 (1.1-2.0)**	1.2 (0.9-1.7)
Race (white versus non-white)	0.8 (0.6-1.0)	**0.7 (0.5-1.0)**	0.8 (0.6-1.1)	0.8 (0.5-1.1)
Grade (9th vs 8th)	1.2 (0.8-2.0)	1.2 (0.7-2.3)	**2.1 (1.2-3.6)**	**2.6 (1.3-5.3)**
Academic performance	**1.2 (1.1-1.3)**	**1.2 (1.0-1.3)**	1.0 (0.9-1.1)	1.0 (0.9-1.1)
Exposure to hate messages verbal or written (continuous).	1.0 (0.9-1.1)	0.9 (0.7-1.0)	1.0 (0.9-1.2)	1.0 (0.8-1.1)
Exposure to hate messages verbal or written (categorical).				
➢ Never vs Rarely/Very Rarely	1.4 (0.9-1.9)	-	1.3 (0.9-1.8)	-
➢ Never vs Occasionally	1.3 (0.9-1.9)	-	1.1 (0.8-1.6)	-
➢ Never vs Frequently/Very Frequently	0.9 (0.6-1.3)	-	0.9 (0.6-1.4)	-
➢ Rarely/Very Rarely vs Occasionally	1.0 (0.7-1.5)	-	0.9 (0.6-1.3)	-
➢ Rarely/Very Rarely vs Frequently/Very Frequently	0.7 (0.4-1.0)	-	0.7 (0.5-1.1)	-
➢ Occasionally vs Frequently/Very Frequently	0.7 (0.4-1.1)	-	0.8 (0.5-1.3)	-
Exposure to positive messages verbal or written (continuous).	1.1 (1.0-1.2)	-	1.1 (1.0-1.2)	-
Exposure to positive messages verbal or written (categorical).				
➢ Never vs Rarely/Very Rarely	1.4 (0.9-2.0)	**1.7 (1.1-2.7)**	1.5 (1.0-2.3)	1.4 (0.9-2.3)
➢ Never vs Occasionally	0.7 (0.5-1.1)	0.9 (0.6-1.5)	1.1 (0.8-1.8)	1.3 (0.8-2.2)
➢ Never vs Frequently/Very Frequently	0.9 (0.6-1.3)	1.2 (0.7-2.0)	0.8 (0.6-1.3)	1.0 (0.6-1.6)
➢ Rarely/Very Rarely vs Occasionally	**0.5 (0.4-0.8)**	**0.6 (0.4-0.9)**	0.8 (0.5-1.2)	0.9 (0.6-1.5)

➢ Rarely/Very Rarely vs Frequently/Very Frequently	**0.6 (0.4-0.9)**	0.7 (0.5-1.1)	0.6 (0.4-0.8)	0.7 (0.4-1.1)
➢ Occasionally vs Frequently/Very Frequently	1.1 (0.8-1.7)	1.3 (0.9-2.0)	0.7 (0.5-1.1)	0.7 (0.5-1.1)
Friends of different races (>5 friends versus ≤ 5)	**2.1 (1.6-2.8)**	**2.0 (1.5-2.8)**	**1.5 (1.1-2.0)**	**1.4 (1.0-1.9)**
Experience of discrimination due to race/ethnicity	**1.7 (1.2-2.4)**	1.2 (0.8-1.9)	1.2 (0.9-1.8)	0.9 (0.6-1.4)
Ethnocultural Empathic Awareness	**3.4 (2.5-4.5)**	**3.0 (2.2-4.2)**	**2.1 (1.6-2.9)**	**2.0 (1.5-2.9)**

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Appendix A: School Survey

Questions 1-3 – Name of the school and student ID

Q4. Have you ever participated in a campaign or activity that says no to hatred and prejudice?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes. Please describe: _____

Questions 5 – Name of the program the students participated in

Q6. Select your grade:

- ○ 8
- ○ 9

Q7. What have most of your grades been up to now at this school?

- ○ A
- ○ A-, B+
- ○ B
- ○ B-, C+
- ○ C or Lower

Q8. What is your age?

- ○ 12
- ○ 13
- ○ 14
- ○ 15
- ○ 16

Q9. What gender do you identify with?

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Rather Not Say
- ○ Other. Please specify: _____

Q10. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself? Please select as many as you see fit:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Non-Hispanic White
- ☐ Non-Hispanic Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ East Asian
- ☐ Central Asian
- ☐ Western Asian
- ☐ Southeast Asian
- ☐ South Asian
- ☐ Haitian
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Somali
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Rather not say
- ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

Q11. Do you have friends of different racial ethnic backgrounds?

- ○ None
- ○ Few (1-2)
- ○ Some (3-5)
- ○ Many (>5)

Q12. Have any of the following scenarios happened to you before in which you felt YOU WERE BEING TREATED UNFAIRLY? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Watched closely or followed around by security guards or store clerks at a store or the mall
- ☐ Got poor or slow service at a restaurant or food store
- ☐ You were treated badly by a bus driver
- ☐ Got poor or slow service at a store
- ☐ You were treated unfairly by a police officer
- ☐ Accused of something you didn't do at school
- ☐ Unfairly called down to the principal's office
- ☐ Got grades lower than what you thought you deserved
- ☐ Treated badly or unfairly by a teacher
- ☐ Watched more closely by security at school
- ☐ Someone didn't want to be friends with you
- ☐ You had the feeling someone was afraid of you
- ☐ Someone called you an insulting name
- ☐ People held their bags tight when you passed them
- ☐ Someone made a bad or insulting remark about your race, ethnicity, or language
- ☐ Someone didn't want to play or hang out with you
- ☐ Someone was rude to you
- ☐ People assumed you were not smart or intelligent
- ☐ You didn't get the respect you deserved
- ☐ You weren't chosen for a sports team
- ☐ Teachers assumed you weren't smart or intelligent
- ☐ You're called on less than your peers in class by teachers
- ☐ Your parents or other family members were treated unfairly or badly because of the color of their skin, language, accent, or because they come from a different country or culture
- ☐ You were in a car with your family that was unfairly pulled over by police
- ☐ Your family was treated unfairly by U.S. Customs Officials when entering the country via air, land, or water (e.g. airports, land borders, or piers)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Another scenario that made you feel like you were unfairly treated. Please specify:

_____

Q13. Of the situations in the previous question, in which you felt you were being treated unfairly, which one bothered you the most?

- ○ Watched closely or followed around by security guards or store clerks at a store or the mall
- ○ Got poor or slow service at a restaurant or food store
- ○ You were treated badly by a bus driver
- ○ Got poor or slow service at a store
- ○ You were treated unfairly by a police officer
- ○ Accused of something you didn't do at school
- ○ Unfairly called down to the principal's office
- ○ Got grades lower than what you though you deserved
- ○ Treated badly or unfairly by a teacher
- ○ Watched more closely by security at school
- ○ Someone didn't want to be friends with you
- ○ You had the feeling someone was afraid of you
- ○ Someone called you an insulting name
- ○ People held their bags tight when you passed them
- ○ Someone made a bad or insulting remark about your race, ethnicity, or language
- ○ Someone didn't want to play or hang out with you
- ○ Someone was rude to you
- ○ People assumed you were not smart or intelligent
- ○ You didn't get the respect you deserved
- ○ You weren't chosen for a sports team
- ○ Teachers assumed you weren't smart or intelligent
- ○ You're called on less than your peer in class by teachers
- ○ Your parents or other family members were treated unfairly or badly because of the color of their skin, language, accent, or because they come from a different country or culture
- ○ You were in a car with your family that was unfairly pulled over by police
- ○ Your family was treated unfairly by U.S. Customs Officials when entering the country via air, land, or water (e.g. airports, land borders, or piers)
- ○ None of the above
- ○ Other scenario that made you feel like you were unfairly treated. Please specify

_____

Q14. About the scenario which bothered you the most, how often has this happened?

- ○ Very Frequently
- ○ Frequently
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Very Rarely

Q15. About the scenario which bothered you the most, why do you think it happened? Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ The color of my skin
- ☐ My race
- ☐ My ethnicity or culture
- ☐ My language
- ☐ My accent
- ☐ My age
- ☐ My sex/ gender
- ☐ The clothes I wear
- ☐ The music I listen to
- ☐ My sexual orientation
- ☐ Any other reason. Please describe: _____

Q16. About the scenario which bothered you the most, how did it make you feel? Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Mad
- ☐ Hurt
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Depressed
- ☐ Hopeless
- ☐ Powerless
- ☐ Ashamed
- ☐ Humiliated
- ☐ Strengthened
- ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

Q17. About the scenario which bothered you the most, how did you deal with it? Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ Ignored it
- ☐ Accepted it
- ☐ Spoke up
- ☐ Kept it to myself
- ☐ Lost interest in things
- ☐ Talked to an adult
- ☐ Tried to change things. Please describe:
  _____
- ☐ Hit someone/something
- ☐ Worked hard to prove them wrong
- ☐ Posted on social media
- ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

Q18. In the past seven days, how frequently did you come across hate messages intended as verbal or written expressions against a specific group because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity?

- ○ Very Frequently
- ○ Frequently
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Very rarely
- ○ Never

Q19. Where are you more likely to come across such hate messages?

- ☐ At school
- ☐ At home
- ☐ Outside of school or home
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ I did not come across hate messages

Q20. Please specify which characteristic(s) the hate messages were targeted against. Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ Race
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Sexual orientation
- ☐ Ethnicity
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Gender identity
- ☐ Immigrant Status
- ☐ Appearance
- ☐ I did not come across hate messages
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q21. Where did you come across the hate message(s)? Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ Verbal speech from a stranger
- ☐ Verbal speech from a person I know
- ☐ Poster or flyer on a wall
- ☐ (Offensive) Graffiti
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Book, newspaper, or magazine
- ☐ I did not come across hate messages
- ☐ Other. Please specify: _____

Q22. In the past seven days, how frequently did you come across messages (verbal or written expressions) promoting acceptance towards people of other race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity?

- ○ Very Frequently
- ○ Frequently
- ○ Occasionally
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Very rarely
- ○ Never

Q23. Where are you more likely to come across such messages promoting acceptance?

- ☐ At school
- ☐ At home
- ☐ Outside of school or home
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ I did not come across messages of acceptance

Q24. Please specify which characteristic(s) the messages promoting acceptance were targeting. Please select as many as you see fit.

- ☐ Race
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Sexual orientation
- ☐ Ethnicity
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Gender identity
- ☐ Immigrant Status
- ☐ Appearance
- ☐ The messages were not towards a specific group
- ☐ I did not come across messages of acceptance
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q25. Do you use social media?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q26. Which of the following social media tools do you use? (Choose all that apply)

	All the Time	Several Times a Day	1-2 Times per Day	Several Times per Week	Several Times per Month	Never
Twitter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facebook	○	○	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○	○	○
YouTube	○	○	○	○	○	○
Salesforce Chatter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Skype	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tango	○	○	○	○	○	○
MySpace	○	○	○	○	○	○
Digg	○	○	○	○	○	○
Flickr	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reddit	○	○	○	○	○	○
Instagram	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pinterest	○	○	○	○	○	○
Snapchat	○	○	○	○	○	○
I use other social media tools. Please Specify	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q27. Do you currently have your own profile on a social networking site like Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, or anything else?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q28. If yes, how often do you use your social networking account? (If not, please select "Never")

▼ Daily ... Never

- ○ Daily
- ○ Weekly
- ○ Monthly
- ○ Less than Monthly
- ○ Rarely
- ○ Never

Q29. The following statements ask about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each statement, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very well):

	0 (not at all)	1	2 (not sure)	3	4 (very well)
I enjoy interacting with kids from different cultures.	○	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I can socialize with kids from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I am sure I could deal with adjusting to a place and culture that are new to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy learning about cultures that are unfamiliar to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I would enjoy kids from different cultures joining my school	○	○	○	○	○

Q30. The following statements ask about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each statement, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very well):

	0 (not at all)	1	2 (not sure)	3	4 (very well)
I feel irritated when kids of different racial or ethnic backgrounds speak their language around me.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel annoyed when kids do not speak standard English.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel uncomfortable when communicating with kids from other racial or ethnic backgrounds, regardless of how well they speak English.	○	○	○	○	○
I do not understand why some kids and their families want to carry forward with their racial/ethnic or religious cultural traditions.	○	○	○	○	○
I don't understand why kids of different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds enjoy wearing traditional clothing.	○	○	○	○	○

Q31. The following statements ask about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each statement, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very well):

	0 (not at all)	1	2 (not sure)	3	4 (very well)
I am aware of how society treats different racial or ethnic groups	○	○	○	○	○
I recognize that the media often portray people based on their racial or ethnic stereotypes.	○	○	○	○	○
I can see how some racial or ethnic groups are systemically oppressed in our society.	○	○	○	○	○
I am aware of institutional barriers (e.g., restricted opportunities for job promotion) that discriminate against racial or ethnic groups.	○	○	○	○	○

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