



Kindness Among Colleagues; Identifying and Exploring The Gaps in Employment Contexts

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Organizational Analysis

Kindness Among Colleagues; Identifying and Exploring The Gaps in Employment

Contexts

Purpose

‘Kindness among colleagues’ is a particular context for the scientific study of kindness which has been under-researched. There is scope within the burgeoning study of kindness for research concerned with employment contexts and colleagues, adopting an employment context appropriate construct of kindness, generating and considering evidence that might be evaluated rigorously in the employment context where kindness is both advocated and critiqued.

Design

The literature review identifies and explores the gaps in kindness research in the employment context. A construct distinguishing a set of antecedents of kindness among colleagues was developed to address these gaps. The relevance and usefulness of the construct was tested in semi-structured interviews among some work colleagues in a specific organization setting.

Findings

The results show that the four antecedents of kindness can be used to capture and explore perceptions and experiences of kindness among colleagues. There is scope for analysis at the levels of individuals, teams and organizations using data about these antecedents which allows for individual and more general workplace dynamics to be described and explored.

Research Limitations/ Implications

The antecedents of kindness construct is validated to an extent by this initial study. The potential of this for describing and analysing kindness and workplace relevant themes makes it worth further development; to refine and validate an instrument for measuring kindness among colleagues.

Practical Implications

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3 Kindness among colleagues, if understood in the nuanced way presented here, can help
4 individuals, teams and organizations review and evaluate themselves in diverse contexts.

5
6 Contexts can be expected to vary with workforce demographics, leadership style and
7 organization cultures.
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9 10 11 **Social Implications**

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13 Kindness is a burgeoning theme and concern across diverse social and cultural contexts for
14 various reasons. The scientific contribution to the advocacy or critique of kindness, in this
15 case kindness among colleagues, provides value in rigour, operationalization and evidencing
16 of the case for and against advocacy of the value of kindness in general.
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20 21 22 **Originality/Value**

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24 This is a focused review and study of kindness among colleagues which contributes to the
25 nomological and methodological development of a scientific approach to organizational
26 analysis concerns with this important theme in contemporary times.
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30 31 32 33 **Keywords**

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35 Kindness, Antecedents, Operationalization, Outcomes, Colleagues
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37 38 **Introduction**

39
40 Kindness, initially to be defined as respectful concern, has been differentiated as a specific
41 focus for scientific research (Lyubomirsky and Layous, 2013) emerging to prominence amidst
42 some larger and grander themes, compassion (Miller et al., 2012) and altruism (Grant et al.,
43 2009). Distinguishing kindness from these related constructs, to be able to consider how
44 kindness itself is significant is a contemporary concern in social science as a whole (Canter *et*
45 *al.* 2017) is here considered in the context of organization and employment. The current and
46 continuing interest in these grand themes across social, economic and organizational life can
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60 be complemented by research specifically on kindness itself.

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5 The foundations for this exist in scientifically informed description and analysis of kindness
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7 (Philips and Taylor 2009) with recent meta reviews of studies on kindness as a whole (Scott
8
9 Curry *et al.*, 2018) adding to this. The interest in and grounds for the claim of significant
10
11 kindness impacts are broad, stretching from a neurological case (Hamilton, 2010) to a
12
13 sociological case among whole populations in cities (Brownlie and Anderson, 2016). The
14
15 underlying belief is that being kind satisfies a range of human needs on the part of individual
16
17 givers and receivers (Marques, 2009; Goetz *et al.* 2010). This has been explored in studies of
18
19 kindness in education (Binfet and Passmore, 2017; Rowland 2009), with strangers (Sampson,
20
21 2003), in welfare (Fong, 2008), in healthcare (Chochinov, 2007; Jeffrey, 2016), in the
22
23 context of legal systems (Levit, 2000), interventions to improve wellbeing (Kirby, 2017), and
24
25 coping with distress (Stallman *et al.*, 2017).
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31 **The Literature and Gaps In The Employment Context**

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35 Kindness as a theme in the organization and employment context, among colleagues, does
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37 also exist (Grant, 2013; Taris *et al.*, 2009), though there are several gaps in this literature.
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39 There are gaps in an employment oriented construct of kindness, in studies involving
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41 colleagues in workplaces, in evidence associating kindness with outcomes at work, and in
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43 addressing debates round the advocacy or critique of kindness as a feature of work relations.
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48 The first gap is that no employment oriented construct of kindness has been developed. There
49
50 are a number of constructs kindness available in the general literature, seen in the meta
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52 reviews being published in the area, but not a construct with that has explicit face and other
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54 validity in the organization and employment context (Van Baalen and Jansen, 2008; Neilson,
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3 2008) able to capture varying expectations and expressions of kindness in this context
4
5 (Sanderson and McQuilkin, 2017). The need is to develop and describe such a construct and
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7 in the organization and employment context. This is important as the various levels of
8
9 description and analysis, individual, group and whole organization, have distinctive
10
11 characteristics that general constructs of kindness may not engage with. Individuals in
12
13 employment will have been recruited and selected to 'fit' within the workplace, they are not a
14
15 representative cross-section of the society as a whole (Edwards 1991). Groups in the
16
17 workplace with specified roles and relations between managers-employees, teams in
18
19 departments/units and early career-late career staff (Boxall 2013) will exist and be actively
20
21 managed through Human Resource Management (HRM) and this provides a distinctive and
22
23 significant context for studying kindness. At the level of the organization there are influences
24
25 from organization culture which influence the values and behavior of colleagues (Gehman *et*
26
27 *al.*, 2013). Given these contextual aspects to relations among colleagues the adoption of a
28
29 generic construct of kindness may not be useful to guide research.
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35 The second gap is the lack of studies involving colleagues in workplaces. Kindness if it is
36
37 studied in workplace contexts as a concern is tangential, as a sub-set of other concerns (Grant
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39 and Gino, 2010; Dhiman, 2010; Baker and O'Malley, 2008). For example, the benevolence
40
41 theme in constructs of trust in organizations (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987) includes kindness
42
43 (Thielmann and Hilbig, 2015); kindness implicitly featuring as part of emotional intelligence
44
45 in the workplace (Lall, 2009); organizational citizenship behaviors (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000)
46
47 and organization stewardship (Cruz *et al.*, 2010) entail reference to and association with
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49 kindness. The need is for studies on kindness itself.
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3 The third gap is the evidence gap for an association between kindness and outcomes of value
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5 in the employment context. In the employment context a few studies mention commitment
6
7 and productivity and kindness (Atkins *et al.*, 2012) positive morale and reduced perceptions
8
9 of stress in work (Soylu, 2011) and service quality (Constant *et al.*, 1996). These studies
10
11 suggest that kindness can mitigate the effects of pressure to deliver and difficult situations,
12
13 such as losing staff (Iverson *et al.*, 2011) and sustain or increase life satisfaction, self-efficacy,
14
15 image and worth (Dhiman, op cit). Kindness can reportedly positively affect overall
16
17 organization reputation and success (Xie *et al.*, 2009) including the reporting unethical
18
19 behavior (Manroop *et al.*, 2014).
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24 The fourth gap is of a scientific perspective on kindness that addresses the debates between
25
26 advocacy and critique of kindness, specifically at work among colleagues. Research on
27
28 kindness contains what is essentially advocacy for kindness, in the guise of research studies
29
30 (Giacalone and Promislo, 2013). Others are more fundamentally critical, questioning kindness
31
32 (Ballat and Campling, 2011; Rome, 2017). In advocacy oriented studies kindness is
33
34 presumed to be an essentially and inherently positive value and principle, a strength of some
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36 form if not indeed a virtue extolled (Walsh, 1999; Baron-Cohen, 2011). Studying kindness in
37
38 a way that presumes it's a good thing to advocate among colleagues may be perceived as a
39
40 form of 'virtue signaling' (Ambrosino, 2018) simply to be critiqued as naïvely expressing
41
42 support for commonly recognised decent things or by expressing a dislike of indecent things.
43
44 Alternatively kindness is to be approached more critically, and open to critique (Funicelli,
45
46 1993; Christiansen, 2017) essentially as kindness can be a part of and perpetuate imbalances
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48 in power and control where conflicting interests exist. Rather than establishing a scientific
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50 perspective to inform debates there is a division into advocates versus critics.
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3 With these gaps there is scope for a contribution from a study of colleagues, adopting an
4 employment context appropriate construct of kindness, generating and considering evidence
5 that might be evaluated with science that balances advocacy and critique in the employment
6 context. To address these gaps requires in the first instance that a construct be developed for
7 research purposes.
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13 14 15 **Construct Development** 16

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20 A construct operationalizing kindness was developed some time ago (Comunian, 1998) but
21 does not seem to have been widely adopted, with alternative operationalization being
22 proposed and explored (Canter *et al.*, op cit.) though as yet not validated. Rather than
23 adopting an existing construct the approach taken here was to identify the main themes
24 associated with kindness in the employment context that featured in the literature. This
25 identified four themes; kindness associated with an ethics of care; kindness as an
26 interpersonal trait within agreeableness; kindness as reflecting the expectation of reciprocal
27 gain; kindness as a concomitant of communitarian relations. Each of these themes in the
28 context of kindness among colleagues can be incorporated in a construct, and used to guide
29 research.
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44 First, kindness is to be understood and studied among colleagues as an aspect of their
45 individual psychology, reflecting both state and trait (Colquitt et al 2013). That is kindness
46 may have antecedents in an individuals' state, or express an individual disposition which is
47 more stable, a trait. State and trait antecedents for kindness are present in the cooperative
48 tendencies in the 'big 5' factor model of personality (Barrick and Mount 1991) most evidently
49 and directly as part of the 'agreeableness' factor. The extent of agreeableness sought and
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3 found in colleagues, as a trait or as a state, will create an environment with more or less
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5 kindness in the workplace as a whole. These trait and state antecedents of kindness among
6
7 colleagues can be operationalized as Normative Kindness (NK). NK in any organization and
8
9 employment context will be skewed towards or away from states and traits favoring kindness
10
11 depending on who has been recruited and the types employed.
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14
15 Second, there are Social Exchange Theory (SET) considerations and explanations of kindness
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17 among colleagues (Brief and Motowidlo , 1986). Kindness is influenced by people weighing
18
19 up the cost-benefits of performing an action in the employment context, including the
20
21 prospect and chances of reciprocation from the other party to the transaction (Fong, op cit.).
22
23 If kindness ‘pays back’, and this is repeated, kindness will prevail (Raggio *et al.*, 2009).
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25 These SET antecedents of kindness can be operationalized as Reciprocal Kindness (RK).
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30 Third, kindness is defined and considered within the ethics of care, often related explicitly to
31
32 compassion (Held, 2006). The ethics of care and compassion have been defined with
33
34 reference to the characteristics attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness
35
36 (Miller *et al.*, op cit.). These characteristics can be potential antecedents of kindness among
37
38 colleagues. In organizations and employment with colleagues who have care and compassion
39
40 as a major or integral part of their role it would be expected that these antecedents would be
41
42 present, perhaps with guidance explicitly provided or implicit in the organization culture
43
44 (Tronto, 1994). Such antecedents may also exist in other organization and employment
45
46 contexts (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2012) distinct from expectations of professional compassion
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48 and care (Lilius *et al.*, 2008, Kanov *et al.*, 2017) and concerned more with typical and low
49
50 level transactions between colleagues. The antecedents of kindness here are those of
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52 Conscientious Kindness (CK). CK would be expected to be more evident and present in some
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2 kinds of organization and employment contexts more than others, with a strong presence in
3 caring profession workplaces and a weaker presence elsewhere.
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9 Finally, the communitarian perspective conceives of kindness as being integral to
10 membership of a community (Silva, 2011). Antecedents of kindness are an integral part of a
11 supportive community, in which each contributes for the benefit of all (Fauchart *et al.*, 2011).
12
13 Kindness among colleagues in work would be present as and characterized by the extent of
14 pro-social, extra-role, voluntary behavior. A pro-social disposition will be evident and overt
15 behaviors in the form of helping, sharing, donating, cooperating and volunteering (Goetz *et*
16 *al.*, op cit.). Kindness embodying pro-social behavior in work will be evidenced by
17 discretionary behavior of a helping nature that goes beyond role requirements. These
18 antecedents can be operationalized as Altruistic Kindness (AK). The extent to which a
19 workplace is more or less like a community will determine the presence and extent of AK.
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33 In sum, the construct development literature provides four potential antecedents of kindness
34 among colleagues which may be present and active in the workplace;
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- 39 • Normative Kindness (NK); antecedents in states/traits favouring agreeableness;
- 40 • Reciprocal Kindness (RK); antecedents in reciprocal and mutual gains;
- 41 • Conscientious Kindness (CK); antecedents in an ethics of care.
- 42 • Altruistic Kindness (AK); antecedents in community relations
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50 These are not meant to represent a hierarchy of antecedents, with NK as the base, leading up
51 to AK as the peak and highest form. They are simply, and equally, potentially present and
52 active antecedents of kindness among colleagues (see Figure 1). It might be expected that
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3 kindness could be most present in organization and employment contexts with agreeable
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5 people, reciprocity including kindness, a strong ethics of care, and where colleague relations
6
7 were community like. In contrasting contexts, where personality states and traits of
8
9 agreeableness not highly valued, acting kindly is not reciprocated, the ethics of care were not
10
11 active, and there was little or no community like relations, kindness would be absent; or, if
12
13 present, perceived as weak or deviant behavior among colleagues. Between these contrasting
14
15 and stark scenarios, a mix of various antecedents to various extents of kindness among
16
17 colleagues may be found, with kindness an appropriate and legitimate form of behavior
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19 though one that might also be ambiguous or questioned.
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28 **Method**

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33 The antecedents of kindness construct (NK- RK- AK-CK) was used to explore perceptions
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35 and experiences of kindness among colleagues in an organization the researchers were
36
37 familiar with where kindness had emerged as a concern and access was possible; simply
38
39 based on some observations from experience the high value of kindness and its variable
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41 presence had been noted. The organization was in the finance sector, a bank. This was a
42
43 reasonable environment to explore antecedents of kindness with, as it was known to be a
44
45 context in which a range of perceptions and experiences of kindness would exist. It is typical
46
47 in this regard, as banks tend to have well developed leadership development and explicit
48
49 culture and performance management which espouse agreeableness. They can have
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51 workforces which are large, stable and with community-like aspects. At the same time they
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53 have goals which mean colleagues are pursuing careers and livelihoods in a context that can
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3 be seen as quite mercenary, archetypally so in some parts of the finance sector. The pressure
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5 to get the job done can mean the environment becomes more 'dog-eat-dog'. There are
6
7 pressures to change to reduce costs and achieve optimal performance while dealing with
8
9 complex regulatory rules and new technology.

10 11 Participants

12
13 14 interviews in total were carried out. This is at the lower end of the range suggested as
14
15 appropriate for this kind of exploratory research. Interviewees were chosen based on
16
17 convenience sampling in this regional head office of the bank. Interviewees were selected
18
19 from among the management and professional tier, including Human Resource managers,
20
21 Line Managers and IT professionals. There was around 130 staff in this category. The sample
22
23 was chosen to include 7 women and 7 males, a gender balance broadly reflecting the
24
25 management and professional tier there. It was noticeable in two of the interviews, both with
26
27 women, that the theme of gender was highlighted as especially significant, but not raised in
28
29 the other 12 interviews. Cultural background was not specifically selected for, though it is
30
31 noteworthy that the sample includes Korean, Greek, Swiss, British, Middle Eastern,
32
33 Colombian, and Brazilian interviewees.
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39 40 Instruments

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42 Semi-structured interviews were used. Three questions were identified and used to structure
43
44 an exploratory interview with interviewees;

- 45
46 • What does Kindness mean to you?
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48 • How do you practice Kindness?
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50 • What do you think of Kindness in relation to this organization (the bank)?
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54 55 Procedures

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3 The interviews were recorded, with transcripts produced and input to NVIVO. The transcripts
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5 of respondents' perceptions and experiences were coded with reference to the model of four
6
7 antecedents of kindness. Most interviews had a fair number of examples, covering individual
8
9 perceptions, team and organizational experiences. Some perceptions and experiences were
10
11 briefly mentioned, some were recounted in great depth. The briefest interview lasted 10
12
13 minutes and the more extensive over an hour. The perceptions and experiences could be
14
15 either positive that is showing of kindness among colleagues in one of the forms defined here.
16
17 Or they could be negative, describing the absence of kindness in a form that could be mapped
18
19 to the model used here; for example, selfishness, inconsideration, nastiness,
20
21 unprofessionalism. Some perceptions and experiences could be coded to one particular
22
23 antecedent; others were 'mixed', reflecting a blend and mix of more than one antecedent.
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25 There are in total in the sample from the 14 interviews 454 examples of perception and
26
27 experience to code as representing an antecedent associated kindness. These range from 7
28
29 examples in one interview to 52 examples in another interview. Content analysis of these
30
31 coded perceptions and experiences is the focus of discussion in this paper. This is, of course,
32
33 only one way of approaching the interpretation of the data, as the weighting of perceptions
34
35 and experiences may matter too.
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41 **Results**

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43 Most interviewees had difficulty initially with defining kindness themselves at the outset,
44
45 though many were able to easily expand on their perceptions and experiences. These were
46
47 based on current and past work experience, but often extended to include childhood and
48
49 education and family experiences. Across all the interviews there was a combination of
50
51 various antecedents of kindness. There was no single antecedent of kindness which dominates
52
53 the sample as a whole (Table 1) or in each individual case and experience (Table 2). The
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3 greatest number of perceptions and experiences of kindness discussed and coded were for
4 Normative Kindness (NK) and Altruistic Kindness (AK). Both Conscientious Kindness (CK)
5 and Reciprocal Kindness (RK) were also present in the sample, and most individuals, though
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7 with less frequent mention.
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15 Insert Table 1 Here

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26 Of these for the sample as a whole two were more prominent overall, NK and AK. The other
27 two RK and CK are present but less so. Only 8% of all perceptions and experiences captured
28 here were coded as 'mixed', suggesting that the four antecedents can account for and be used
29 to explain the majority of individual perceptions and experiences.
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37 Table 2, showing individual interviewee profiles, has responses indicating that for those most strongly
38 perceiving and experiencing NK they also perceived and experienced AK significantly. For those
39 lower in perceiving and experiencing NK there is perceive and experience also CK with NK also
40 prominent for many. In only one individual case is NK negligible, and in that case CK is prominent.
41
42 The low presence for RK across all cases is an intriguing result, as this might be expected to be more
43 prominent than it is. Whether this is a fair representation of perception and experience or an under-
44 reporting of RK like perceptions and experiences is open to question. Some of the interviewee
45 perceptions and experiences can be used to illustrate the presence of each antecedent; these
46 are given below, starting with from the most frequently coded (NK) to least frequently coded
47 (CK).
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5 Normative Kindness (NK), kindness that is perceived and experienced as reflecting a state or
6
7 trait, was evidenced in many forms; from buying coffee for other person when they were
8
9 feeling down, to speaking with a compassionate, sympathetic voice. Even as simple as;
10

11
12
13 *“Saying hello to someone, acknowledging their presence”*
14

15 NK was presented as instinctive and unconscious;
16

17 *“I just do it because it's my personality, that I should help them out and do that”*
18

19 *“When you feel sad about someone, depending on the relationship, you hug them”*
20

21 NK is often ‘in the moment’ and reflective of the state current at that moment or the traits
22
23 which emerge in the moment without conscious forethought;
24

25
26 *“Say you see one of your colleagues looking down and they are not happy, so it's like*
27
28 *shall we go get a coffee, get you away from screen for a bit? That's just a gesture of*
29
30 *Kindness, they know that you know there is something up, you're not pressured but*
31
32 *you know they just need something, so you take them away even if they don't discuss*
33
34 *what's wrong with them you've at least dealt with them”*
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39 *“I think if you want to be kind you have to adapt yourself to counterpart and maybe*
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41 *it's a person who likes to have clear statements not too complex sentences or stuff like*
42
43 *that, and you try then to adapt to fit the person's needs”*
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48 The context can matter;
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50 *“It depends on stress levels, the more stressed I am, the less kind I am that's because*
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52 *I'm tired and stressed and angry”*
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3 *“By being honest with them, I find that that’s a big form of Kindness even if what you*
4 *are telling people isn’t necessary what they want to hear. As the old adage goes, you*
5 *can be cruel to be kind, so discreetly pointing, never in front of people, but discreetly*
6 *pointing out that that could have been handled in different way”*
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13 Altruistic Kindness (AK) was the next most frequently mentioned antecedent;
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18 *“I don’t look around everything I’m doing everyday and note down what am doing, oh*
19 *that’s nice thing to do D and pat myself on my back, I never think that way”*
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24 AK is perceived and experienced where the relationship person is established, either in and
25 out of working environment, with a feeling of being team-mates;
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31 *“I go out of my way especially for close friends and family. Close friends and family.”*
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35 *“I guess at work, you build up these friendships and they become more friends”*
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39 Perceptions and experiences form about a genuine desire to want to help without any
40 intention of gain, except perhaps the gain of self- appreciation from having the skill and
41 resources to help;
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48 *“I don’t think I’ve done anything unkind, I think it’s my general demeanor just to be*
49 *nice to people rather than not”*
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2 Reciprocal Kindness (RK) is grounded in perception and experience of wanting to treat others
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4 the way one wants to be treated. People will reciprocate, or if reciprocation is not
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6 forthcoming kind acts stop.
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11 *“If someone asks me to do something for them I will do it if I have the time and I know if I*
12 *ask them later for something they will do it”*
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18 The effort of kindness is weighed;
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22 *“I think sometimes right thing to do is easy so you just do it, sometimes right thing to do*
23 *is difficult and you weigh up whether or not it’s worth the fight, in the office there will be*
24 *right thing to do 3 different places 1. You think is there point doing it because no one*
25 *listens, 2 It might piss someone off and it’s not worth the fight, 3. It might be difficult but*
26 *it’s worth it at the end so that’s the one I will put energy in”*
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35 Perceptions and experience of Conscientious Kindness (CK) were less frequent, but
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37 potentially more weighted in their meaning and impact;
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42 *“I make a conscious effort to speak to someone with respect and as equal, not treating*
43 *them as if they are inferior, I’ve seen a lot of people in power abuse their power in the*
44 *way they behave and the humane aspect disappears”*
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51 *“I always act consciously at work with Kindness. For me Kindness is about giving*
52 *recognition to someone for their work and making them feel they have added value. I*
53 *learnt this on courses but also from my own experience where I liked it when I had*
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3 *worked hard on a project and got great recognitions and feedback. I try to do the*
4 *same for others, but of course there has to be a level of work that needs to be done*
5 *before it gets recognition otherwise Kindness becomes a commodity and the effect*
6 *wares off.”*

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13 *“That’s like the guy I had to let go, I couldn’t do anything about it, I had to let the guy*
14 *go but I was able to show compassion and able to try and say well I will help you get*
15 *a job, get some references, I will look, I will keep my ears to the ground for any roles”*

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22 CK can be perceived and experienced if understanding the other person’s needs and being
23 able to appreciate the situation or person’s state in the mind before acting:

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28 *“In any given situation you might not know going into it what the kindest thing or best*
29 *thing to do is, but you’re constantly thinking well here is my opinion but is it best*
30 *thing to do just that give that opinion unedited or should I soften it somewhat and tell*
31 *this person, depending on the person and situation”*

32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 **Discussion**

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43 The antecedents enable the nature and extent of kindness among colleagues in this study to be
44 described and interpreted with relevance and value for individuals, teams and the organization
45 (see Figure 2). This is showing that all the antecedents were present, perceived and
46 experienced in various ways as kindness among colleagues, though two antecedents were
47 more prominent in this case, as reported by individuals.
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3 At the level of analysis of the individual any person can be described with reference to the
4 various antecedents, and as a colleague would be able to compare themselves with the
5 kindness profiles of others and the organization as a whole. For example, her most could see
6 they were high in NK and AK. With others there might be expected to be some issues for the
7 few individuals showing as more RK and CK oriented. It may be that a few people with this
8 profile are important and they fit in particular roles well (human resources or some
9 management posts). It may be that not conforming to the dominant pattern creates discomfort
10 and challenge. NK expectations and effects may become more significant as tenure of service
11 increases. A premise of NK is that affect is felt if an individual has experienced a state which
12 allows them to understand others in a similar context. As length of time in an organization
13 increases, individuals gain more experience in terms of observing and partaking in
14 organizational life and confidence to think, feel and behave in kindly ways. An alternative
15 explanation is that with increasing length of time in an organization, employees may
16 experience a renewal of CK, the intrinsic standards of moral obligation and orientation once
17 the need to compete to establish themselves is not as predominant.
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39 From this study in itself it is not possible to draw any strong conclusions about groups and
40 the organization, but there is some scope for exploring the extent to which the construct is
41 capable of being useful at these levels of analysis too.
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50 At the group level it would be expected that kindness might be a boundary of difference. This
51 study cannot be systematic, though there are indications from the interviewee cases. One
52 interviewee stated that her experience within the organization had led her to change; in the
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3 terms used here to become more RK due to negative experiences from AK motivated
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5 behavior being taken advantage of. Where length of service increased people seem not to
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7 become less kind but may become more RK in how they think and behave. For example, AK
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9 perceptions and experiences seem to prevail among younger professionals and those with
10
11 shorter length of service in an organization. Having come out of a community, home and
12
13 education context younger professionals may profile for AK strongly because they label their
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15 peers as “friends” early in relationships and trust is given more readily. They may want to
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17 establish themselves, so are more committed where they desire to identify with the
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19 organization and behave with “citizenship”.
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25 RK expectations and effects may appear most strongly at management and professional levels,
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27 particularly among team leads, line managers and middle managers. Managers perceive and
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29 experience with an RK filter, kindness mutual and conditional. There is a risk that managers
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31 perceived and experienced as RK may appear to some as if they are behaving with an absence
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33 of the NK, or AK, or CK that is expected in the organization as a whole. This reliance on RK
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35 and perceived absence of NK/AK/CK among managers may be potentially problematic.
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38 This study suggests a profile at the organization level, aggregating the individual perceptions
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40 and experiences, of an organization which has high NK-AK and lower but with RK-CK also
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42 present. This seems to be a fair and reasonable overview of what would be expected in a bank,
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44 based on a study of perceptions and experiences among the management and professional tier.
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46 Agreeable people, seeking to sustain healthy groups, while achieving specific goals requiring
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48 trade-offs, with some emphasizing a strong ethical commitment to kindness. This profile
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50 could represent fair expectations, about the way the bank prefers to be with kindness among
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52 colleagues. Or it could indicate where levers of change might be if expectations for kindness
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3 among colleagues were to be a focus of change. Threats, things which might inhibit or
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5 undermine kindness, could also be understood with reference to the profile.
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9 **Conclusions**

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13 ‘Kindness Among colleagues’ was identified a specific context for the scientific study of
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15 kindness. The gaps identified in this have been addressed by this study to some extent, though
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17 with evident limitations to generalization. The study does adopt an employment context
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19 appropriate construct of kindness, generating and considering evidence in a direct study
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21 among colleagues. It is though limited to one organization and a small sample. The data is
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23 presented and evaluated rigorously neither as advocating kindness nor critiquing it in the
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25 employment context.
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31 The conclusion is that there is validity for the antecedents of kindness construct described and
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33 adopted for the study. Further development is necessary, and of value; the development of
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35 indicators for the construct and development of an instrument to use with survey methods
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37 across a variety of organizations. It is also important that these address aspects of the group
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39 and organization levels, as well as exploring individual perceptions and experiences.
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44 The generalizability is limited, even if the gaps in researching kindness among colleagues
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46 have been addressed to a good extent. There is scope and need for a more developed and
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48 validated construct to provide better scientifically grounded knowledge about kindness in the
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50 workplace context, and its association with desirable outcomes in changing work
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52 organizations and their effective management. Understanding kindness scientifically is not a
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54 solution to the real challenges in work and employment which extensive related interest in
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2 studies of trust, altruism and compassion have addressed. But it may be a useful ‘goldilocks’
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4 construct in management and organization research, as kindness is neither too big nor too
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6 little to be useful, it might be ‘just right’ as a focus for exploring across individuals, teams and
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8 organizations as a whole. This may help colleagues, managers and employees, to be self-
9
10 aware of aspects of their organization culture, leadership and behavior, in a helpful and
11
12 nuanced way. While refraining from advocating any specific antecedent of kindness in and of
13
14 itself, there is enough in this study to suggest that if the claims made in the name of kindness
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16 are fair and reasonable, a scientific contribution may be of some help, use and impact.
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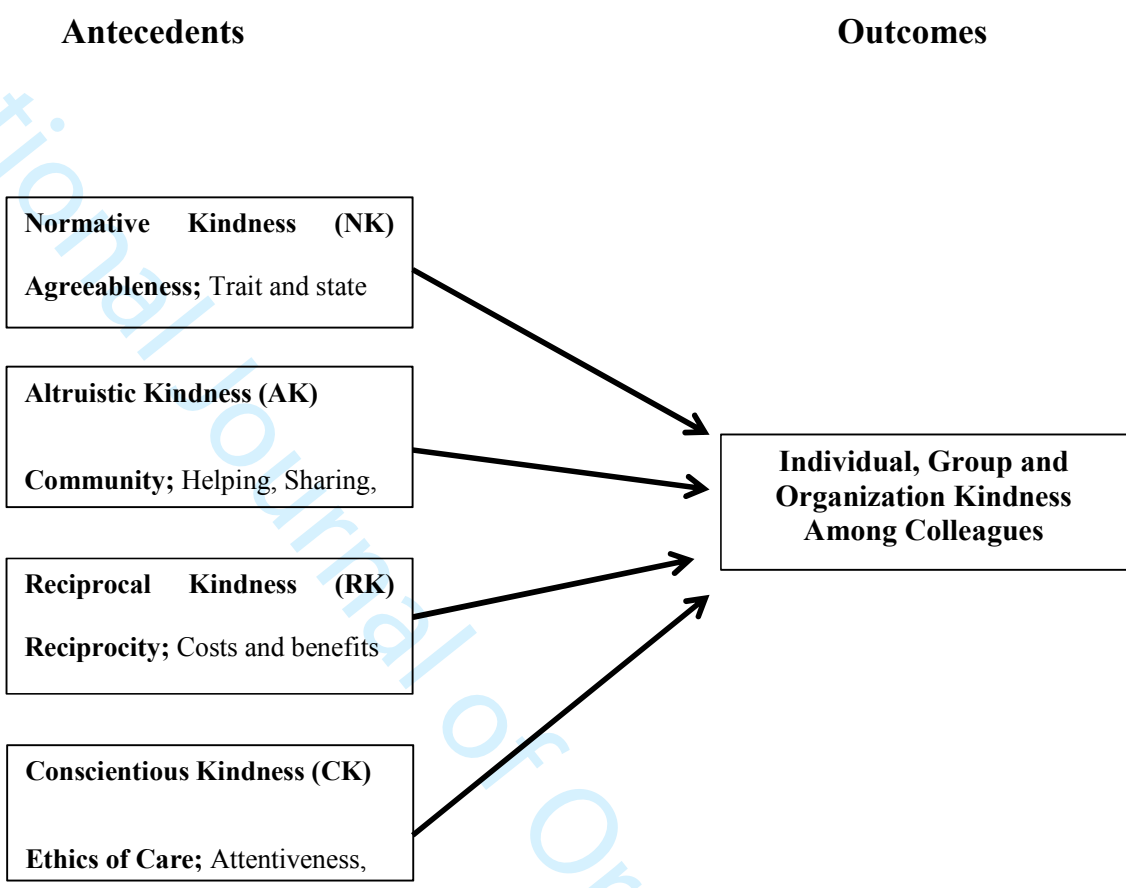


Figure 1; Conceptual map for research using Antecedents, and Outcomes for Kindness Among Colleagues

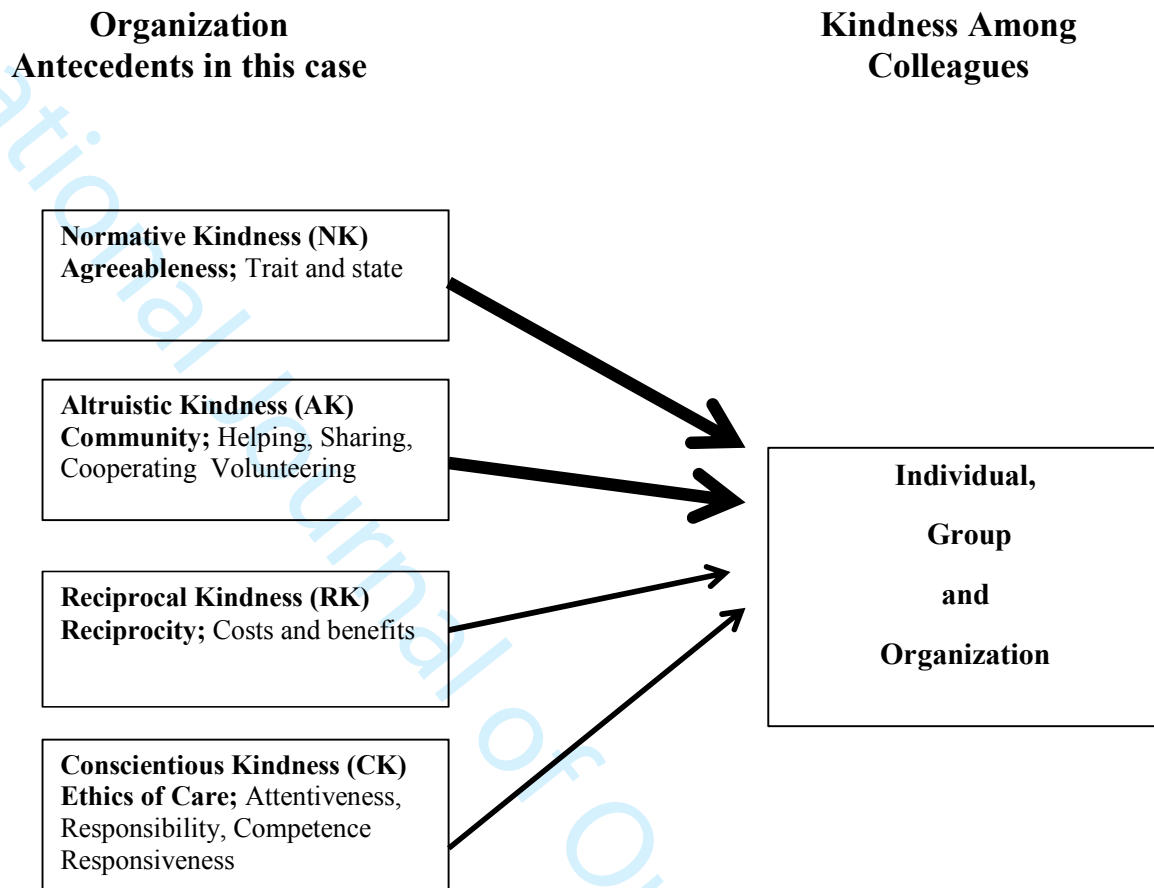
	Normative Kindness NK %	Altruistic Kindness AK %	Reciprocal Kindness RK %	Conscientious Kindness CK %	Mixed %
% of all mentions	31	24	13	15	8

Table 1; Antecedents as a % of all mentions in perception and experience of kindness among colleagues for the sample

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Interviewees	Normative Kindness NK %	Altruistic Kindness AK %	Reciprocal Kindness RK %	Conscientious Kindness CK %	Mixed %
1	71	29	0	0	0
2	50	22	16	0	13
3	46	16	19	7	12
4	42	21	21	13	3
5	42	29	8	17	4
6	33	22	17	14	14
6	30	22	7	37	4
8	29	43	14	10	5
9	27	33	0	27	13
10	26	15	26	21	13
11	23	23	15	35	4
12	22	33	8	10	7
13	21	34	8	24	13
14	8	42	17	33	0
Mean	31	24	13	15	8

Table 2; Kindness antecedents; proportions of each antecedent by interviewee



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Figure 2; Weighting of Antecedents of Kindness Among Colleagues in the Research Case