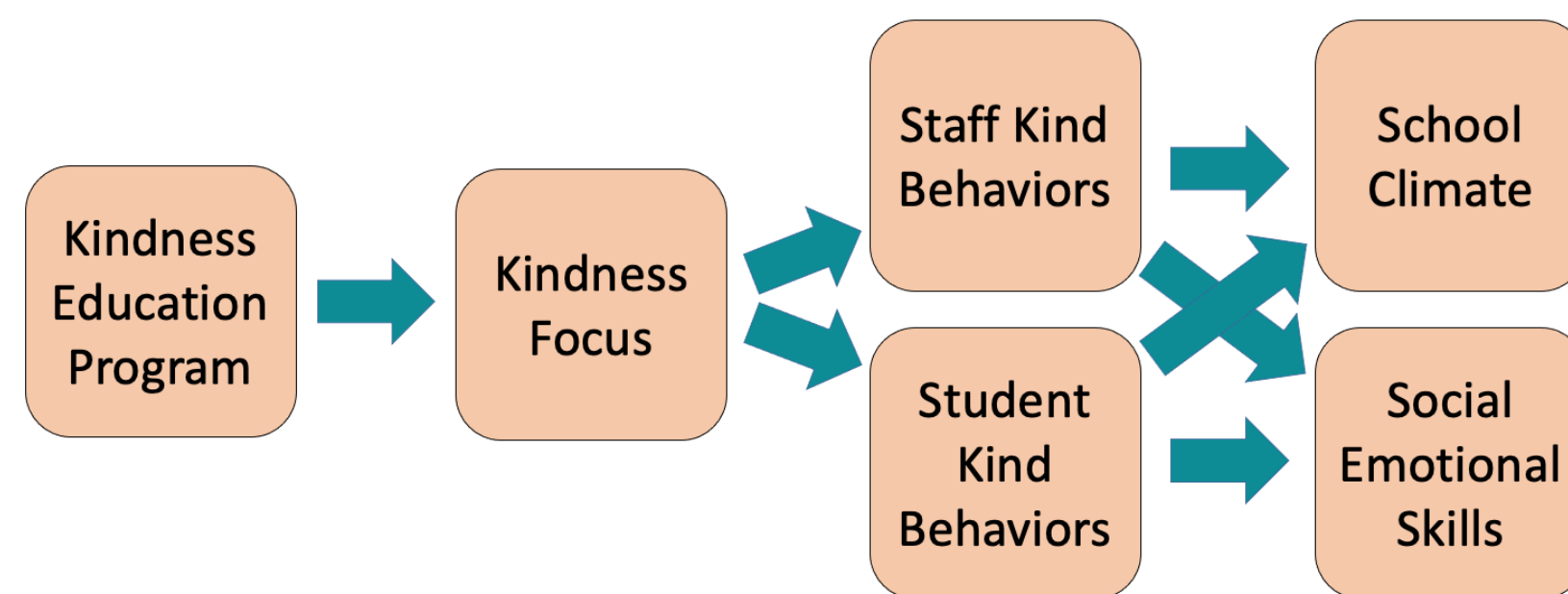


Background

Although school-based programming that encourages prosocial behavior is not new, programming focusing specifically on kindness is a burgeoning area.¹

Guided by the Reasoned Action Approach,² the aim of this project was to further the development of a conceptual model for evaluating kindness education programs in schools.

- *Kind Behavior* is a vital component of positive school and workplace climates. School environments that nurture kindness are associated with improved school outcomes.³
- Reasoned Action Theory² suggests that targeting beliefs about performing kind behavior should help increase these behaviors.
- *Kindness Focus*, i.e., making the idea of kindness salient throughout the school community, is a likely mechanism through which kindness education programs create change in schools.⁴



The current studies asked:

- *Is exposure to a higher dosage of a kindness education intervention associated with higher levels of student and teacher kind behaviors?*
- *Does Kindness Focus mediate this relationship?*

All participating schools were enrolled in *Ben's Bells Kind Campus Program*, a locally-developed, bottom-up intervention that is adaptable to the complexities and needs of diverse schools.

Methods

Participants

Study 1: Middle school students (N=399) from 4 schools; 221 girls and 173 boys, with a mean age of 13 years (SD = .50)

Study 2: Teachers (N = 223) from 8 middle and elementary schools; 181 women and 39 men; mean age of 40 years (SD = 11.81)

Procedures

- Respondents self-reported measures of program exposure (“dosage”), Kindness Focus, and kind behaviors.
- Respondents rated *Kindness Focus* on items such as “The school employs clear norms and expectations about kindness”, “Students use the word kind”, and “There is a sense of shared mission and common purpose among employees at this school about being a kind community”.

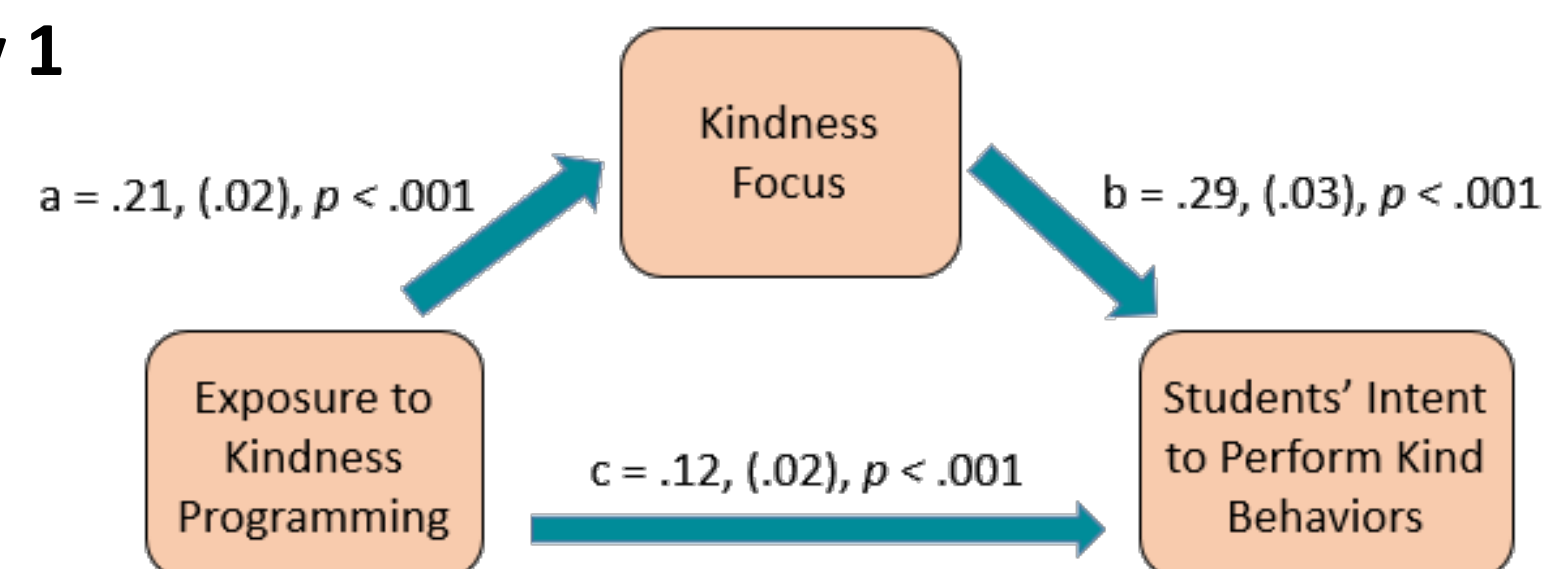
Analyses

Study 1: Mediation analysis was performed using R (version 4.2.1) to examine whether Kindness Focus mediated the effect of program exposure on student’s intent to perform kind behaviors. Significance was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 samples.

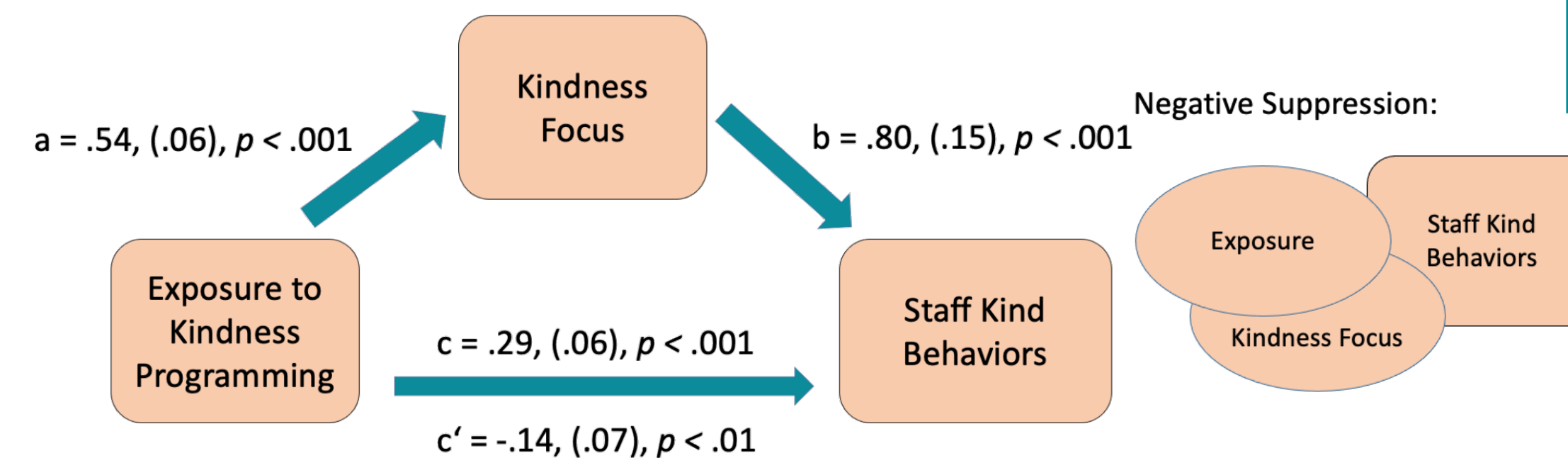
Study 2: Mediation analysis was performed using AMOS to examine whether Kindness Focus mediated the effect of program exposure on staff kind behaviors. Significance was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 samples.

Results

Study 1



Study 2



Conclusion and implications

- In both studies, there were small but statistically significant direct effects of exposure to kindness programming on kind behaviors.
- In both studies, the effects on behavior were mediated through *Kindness Focus*.
- While the effects are small in quantitative terms, promoting kindness on campus is an accessible and low-stakes tool schools can incorporate.
- These exploratory studies seek to inform the development of an “evaluation toolkit” that puts the capacity for evaluation in the hands of schools implementing kindness interventions. Next steps include:
 - Refine and validate a *Kindness Focus* instrument for both students and teachers using the Reasoned Action Approach;
 - Refine tools to assess program exposure.
- Longitudinal analysis is needed to examine change in behavior and outcomes at both the individual and school levels.

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