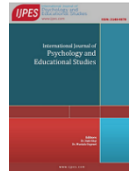




www.ijpes.com


International Journal of Psychology and Educational
Studies

ISSN: 2148-9378



Pre-service Teachers' Views of Kindness

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received 06.06.2024

Received in revised form

13.02.2025

Accepted 18.03.2025

Article Type: Research
Article



ABSTRACT

Philosophers have reflected on good and evil for centuries. They have pondered the nature of kindness, questioning its definition, its goodness, and the criteria by which it is deemed good. Kindness is defined as help given without expecting anything in return. It is believed that every art, inquiry, action, and choice aims for some good. It is important for pre-service teachers to recognize the significance of the concept of goodness for the development and progress of society before becoming teachers. At the same time, it is essential for them to demonstrate conscious awareness as an indicator of moral development. This paper investigated preservice teachers' views of kindness. This study adopted phenomenology, which is a qualitative research design. The sample consisted of 30 preservice teachers. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide. The data were analyzed using content analysis. Participants regarded kindness as positive acts done without expecting anything in return. They believed that we needed kindness for a happier and better world. They stated that educators should be role models who implement various activities to raise their students' awareness of kindness. They associated kindness with empathy, tolerance, affection, respect, benevolence, compassion, and responsibility. They believed that kindness brought with it social cohesion, prosperity, and solidarity.

Keywords:

Kindness, preservice teachers, phenomenology.

1. Introduction

Philosophers have reflected on good and evil for centuries. They have pondered the nature of kindness, questioning its definition, its goodness, and the criteria by which it is deemed good. Is what is good for one good for another? How can we measure goodness? What is good for humans? Why should we prefer kindness? What is a good life? Why is it important to do kindness? What is the place of kindness in our lives? Such questions have helped us comprehend the concepts of "good" and "kindness" and set their place both on the individual and collective levels.

The Turkish Language Association defines "good" as "something that has the required qualities; of a high standard; that which is morally right; righteousness; benefit or advantage to someone or something." On the other hand, it defines "kindness" as "help given without expecting anything in return." It is believed that every art, inquiry, action, and choice aims for some good. Eisenberg (1986) defined kindness as "voluntary, intentional behaviors that benefit another and are not motivated by external factors such as rewards or punishments." Kindness as a virtue reflects an inner, moral compass and our personal choices regarding 'what constitutes being good in everyday life' or 'what constitutes a good life.' In contrast, morality focuses on 'what are just, fair, or caring behaviors.' It is also clear that there is overlap because both ethics and morality are concerned with standards of right and wrong or good and bad (Malti, 2020). Therefore, Plato defines "good" as "that at which all things aim" (Aristotle, 2021). In his book titled "Nicomachean Ethics," Aristotle poses the question, "So what is the highest of all practical goods?" and replies, "In name, this is pretty much agreed about by the majority of people; for most people, as well as those who are more refined, say it is happiness

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Citation: Koç, S. (2025). Pre-service teachers' views of kindness. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 12(2), 119-128. <https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2025.12.2.1372>

and assume that living well and doing well are the same thing as being happy. But about happiness — what it is — they are in dispute, and most people do not give the same account of it as the wise. Some people take it to be something visible and obvious, such as pleasure or wealth or honor, and different ones say different things, and even the same person often says different things; when sick, one thinks it is health, but when poor, that it is wealth..." (Aristotle, 2021).

Aristotle claims that "every art and every inquiry, and likewise every action and choice, seems to aim at some good." Aristotle questions what the purpose of human beings is and says: *"The goodness or efficiency of a flute player or sculptor or craftsman of any sort, and in general, of anybody who has some function or business to perform, is thought to reside in that function; and similarly it may be held that the good of man resides in the function of man if he has a function."* (Aristotle, 2017).

Ioanna Kuçuradi regards an ethically valuable action as one that is grounded in understanding the relevant subject, aimed at fulfilling an objective need of another human being, without any expectation of reciprocity or return to the doer of the action. According to Plato, the good is the idea of ideas and is located at the top of the ladder of ideas, most of which are virtues. According to Aristotle, the good is a way of life, whereas a good action is an action performed by one who has developed all human faculties. A good person is defined as someone who has embraced virtues solely for themselves and fulfills their obligations accordingly (Livaneli & Göksel, 2020).

The good will is the will determined by pure reason, that is, reason free from interests and passions. According to Kant, willing is determined by the moral law or its derivatives such as the "categorical imperative," the "duty imperative," and the "practical imperative." Among these laws and imperatives, the most easily applicable in life is the practical imperative, which commands as follows: *"Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always as an end and never merely as a means."* Kant's imperative tells us this: when doing something for another person, do not act with the expectation of receiving something in return—even if what you are doing is a good deed. This valuable criterion of action that Kant provides for willing is not to do what is right because it aligns with one's self-interest, that is, to act in accordance with duty, but to do something for others out of duty itself (Kant, 2009).

Hartmann and Scheler posit that the good, when used as a predicate of a value judgment or as a relative qualifying adjective, represents a value and serves as the primary value within the group of values to which it belongs. They distinguish between positive and negative values. They define good as a high positive value and bad as a high negative value. High values are absolute. The good is at the top of these values. Kant's ideas about the good are a turning point in the history of ethics. He points to the relativity of the good. To him, what is generally desired to be done in ethics is to say what is good and to put forward a norm or measure for one's actions or private value judgments (Kuçuradi, 2016).

Kemal Sayar asks, "Why is it good to be good?" "Good for whom and good for what?" "Why should one necessarily do what is good when one can immediately access pleasures and do as one pleases?" and "If one has the power to choose a life one wants, why would one choose a moral life?" According to Socrates, one can only have a life with a sufficiently well-organized soul and a self-restraint with which to implement one's decisions. According to Livaneli and Göksel (2020), a soul capable of weighing options, controlling its passions, contemplating possibilities, and exercising self-discipline by understanding what is beneficial for it over time can make the correct choices. Kemal Sayar also discusses empathy as the carrier of kindness. The most important task of empathy is to move us towards kindness and compassion. Kindness is also affection in action. It is a state of action in which one can go beyond one's own tribe, expand the "we," and make an effort to alleviate the suffering of those who are not like oneself. Kindness, generosity, and charity trigger reward circuits in our brains. Helping others not only makes us feel good about ourselves but also makes us healthy. Behind many things that humans consider immoral and evil lies the conflict between what is good for us and what is good for others. While glorifying and defending what is good for us, we calculate how to undermine what is good for them. As we elevate our own good above theirs, we justify ourselves through emotions such as prejudice, distrust, fear, and hatred, rationalizing our attitudes that dehumanize and demonize others. We are innocent and righteous, while they are the embodiment of evil. In this way, we project our internal conflicts, impulses, and tendencies—those we cannot tolerate within ourselves—onto the other, finding relief (Livaneli & Göksel, 2020).

Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui and Fredrickson (2006) postulated that, as a strength, kindness has three components: (a) the motivation to be kind to others; (b) the recognition of kindness in others; and (c) the enactment of kind behavior in one's daily life. The components of kindness (i.e., emotions, cognitions, and behaviors) express and/or lead to the experience of compassion and benevolence, the ultimate expression of kindness. Thus, kind emotions and kind cognitions can both lead to an expression of kindness at the behavioral level, either directly or indirectly through compassion. The more each of these three components is integrated into everyday life activities, the more transformative power they will have, both for the self and for others. For instance, the more our inner states reflect a kind stance, the more likely we will be to act in accordance with them (Malti, 2020). Kindness is one's value preference. Being a good person and being benevolent are virtues. We can evaluate the concepts of kindness and benevolence under the concept of value. Educators should teach kindness. In this process, they should make sure that students take an active role. Thus, students can internalize the consciousness of doing good. Educators should clearly explain what kindness is because this is critical for values education (Aktepe & Aktepe, 2009).

Quantitative research often focuses on well-being, which is defined as living a life oriented toward optimal health. It encompasses the integration of body, mind, and spirit, as well as the pursuit of individual goals and a sense of purpose. Well-being involves functioning effectively across all social, personal, and ecological domains (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). Korkut-Owen, Demirbaş-Çelik, and Doğan (2017) addressed psychological resilience as a predictor of well-being in college students. Doğan (2006) examined college students' well-being within the context of spirituality and leisure. Satıcı and Deniz (2017) investigated whether psychological resilience and optimism played a mediating role in the relationship between coping with humor and well-being. Ehtiyar, Ersoy, Akgün, and Karapınar (2017) investigated to what extent college students' future orientations affected their psychological well-being. Attepe Özden, Deniz Pak, and İçağasıoğlu Çoban (2017) focused on the questions of what well-being is in terms of social work and how it is achieved. Bilge and Kula (2020) found significant relationships between internally and externally motivated religiosity tendencies and perceived well-being. In the study of Poulou (2021), two hundred and nineteen preservice students described their perceptions of kindness, responding to the open question, "What is kindness?" Kindness was conceptualized as a range of acts and words indicating respect, understanding, and emotional support that promote personal development and healthy relationships. Binfet and Gaertner (2015) investigated perceptions of kindness in 112 young children (57 girls, 55 boys, ages 5–8) in three schools. To assess perceptions of kindness, students were asked to draw what kindness looked like to them and to draw an example of something kind done recently at school. Findings indicated students perceived kindness within the context of dyadic relationships, the recipients of kindness were familiar to them, and kind acts were typically situated outdoors; helping physically, maintaining friendships, including others, and helping emotionally were prevalent themes within drawings. Boys drew acts of kindness as helping physically more frequently than did girls, whose drawings indicated kindness as maintaining family relationships. Most researchers have theoretically focused on good and kindness (Aktepe & Aktepe, 2009; Denial, 2024; Kant, 2009; Kuçuradi, 2016; Livaneli & Göksel, 2020; Malti, 2020). Studies on kindness are limited, which is an important value. It is the starting point of values. At each stage of education, educators must ensure that their students develop a consciousness of kindness. Preservice teachers play a key role in this process because they are the teachers of tomorrow. It is important for pre-service teachers to recognize the significance of the concept of kindness for the development and progress of society before becoming teachers. At the same time, it is essential for them to demonstrate conscious awareness as an indicator of moral development. In this framework, this study investigated what preservice teachers thought about kindness, how they perceived it, why they believed it was necessary, what values were related to it, and what its social benefits were. Within the framework of this general purpose, the following are the research questions:

- What does "kindness" mean to you?
- Why do you think kindness is necessary?
- How can teachers raise their students' awareness of kindness?
- What values are kindness related to?
- What are the social benefits of kindness?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

This study investigated how preservice teachers perceived kindness. This research is designed using a qualitative research method. Qualitative research addresses how individuals construct reality through their interactions with the social world (Merriam, 2018). This study used a phenomenological research design, which is employed to investigate the structure and the essence of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2018). The phenomenology pattern focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding of. In the world we live in, phenomena appear in various forms such as events, experiences, perceptions, tendencies, concepts, and situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). This study adopted phenomenology because it aimed to investigate how preservice teachers perceived kindness. This study focused on revealing why preservice teachers think kindness is necessary, how teachers can raise their students' awareness of kindness, what values kindness is related to, and what the social benefits of kindness are.

2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 30 university students from English language teaching, classroom teaching, elementary mathematics teaching, and secondary mathematics teaching departments in the 2023-2024 academic year. Participants were recruited using purposive convenience sampling, which is a time- and cost-effective method (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The preservice teachers are the students of the researcher. After the lessons of preservice teachers in their class, they asked to volunteer for the research.

Table 1. *Participants' Characteristics*

Variable	Category	(N)
Gender	Woman	23
	Man	7
Department	English Language Teaching	11
	Classroom Teaching	13
	Primary School Mathematics Teaching	3
	Secondary School Mathematics Teaching	3

Most participants were women (n=23). Participants studied English language teaching (n=11), classroom teaching (n=13), primary school mathematics teaching (n=3), and secondary school mathematics teaching (n=3).

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide, which consisted of five questions eliciting information on participants' thoughts about kindness. First, the researcher conducted a literature review and developed questions. Second, she consulted two experts (educational sciences) and asked them to check the questions for relevance and intelligibility. Third, the researcher revised and finalized the questions based on expert feedback. Participation was voluntary. All preservice teachers were briefed about the research purpose and procedure. The data were derived from written documents from some preservice teachers and some from records by researchers. Interview questions were collected by meeting preservice teachers face-to-face in the university. Face-to-face interviews lasted 20-25 minutes in total. Informed consent was obtained from those who agreed to participate in the study. All interviews were transcribed.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using content analysis, which is a qualitative method. Researchers utilize content analysis to uncover latent insights within data. Content analysis involves bringing together similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and interpreting them in a way that readers can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The researcher read the raw data. The application forms were numbered 1 to 30, and the answers were read one by one. The researcher coded the data and then developed themes. She provided direct quotes to substantiate the findings. She obtained informed consent from all participants and assigned codes to them for anonymity and confidentiality (P1, P2, P3, etc.).

The researcher focused on certain criteria to achieve validity and reliability. First, she developed questions based on a literature review. Second, she consulted experts for relevance and intelligibility. She gave all participants enough time to answer the questions. Necessary ethical committee permissions were obtained for the study.

2.5. Ethical

Ethical permission (2024/04) was obtained from Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Social and Humanities Ethics Board Presidency for this research.

3. Findings

This section addressed the findings. Participants' responses were grouped under five themes: (1) "perceived kindness," "the necessity of kindness," "developing a consciousness of kindness," "kindness-value relationship," and "the social benefits of kindness."

Perceived Kindness

The first research question was, "What does 'kindness' mean to you?" Participants' responses were grouped under three codes: "a gratuitous action," "positive act," and "providing benefit." Participants stated that when they do good, they feel a spiritual fulfillment, and especially kindness means helping out others without expecting anything back. The following are some quotes:

P15: "The first thing I can think of when I hear the word 'kindness' is doing something without expecting anything in return. In fact, we feel a spiritual fulfillment when we do good."

P17: "Kindness is all about fitting in with your surroundings and nature. It's kind of like a personal vibe thing. When someone does something nice because they feel it in their heart, it shows that being good is kind of subjective, you know? Kindness is doing stuff that helps out a person, society, nature, and even the whole universe without needing anything back in return."

P21: "Kindness is an act that isn't mandatory but makes life a bit smoother for others without asking for anything back in return."

P27: "Kindness comes straight from the heart and means helping out others or creatures without expecting anything back."

P29: "Kindness is a gratuitous act that makes you feel good."

Most participants believed that kindness was a positive act. It has been determined that kindness includes all the emotions and behaviors that bring positivity to a person's life, and also it is about being understanding and compassionate. The following are some quotes:

P1: "When I think of kindness, I think of all the good stuff people do for each other and for other living creatures."

P16: "Kindness includes all the emotions and behaviors that bring positivity to a person's life, such as positive thoughts, happiness, smiles, and more, directed towards both oneself and others."

P26: "Kindness is all about spreading good vibes. It's about showing kindness, affection, and respect. It's about lending a hand, being understanding and compassionate, being fair, and all that good stuff."

Most participants associated kindness with providing benefits. It has been determined that kindness is about all the nice things we do for the benefit of others and doing something to help others. The following are some quotes:

P7: "Kindness is all about doing something good for individuals, society, or other living beings in some way or another."

P18: "When I think of kindness, I imagine peaceful and joyful folks. Being kind means lending a hand to others."

P20: "When I think of kindness, I picture people doing things that benefit the living beings around them."

P22: "Kindness is when you do something to help others out without expecting anything back, like no material stuff or spiritual rewards. And it's not just for humans; it's for all living beings out there, too."

P28: *"Kindness is about all the nice things we do for the benefit of others."*

The Necessity of Kindness

The second research question was, "Why do you think kindness is necessary?" Participants' responses were grouped under two codes: "for happiness" and "for a better world." It has been determined that kindness is essential for people to live a happy life together and to live in peace. The following are some quotes:

P6: *"Kindness is essential for people to live a happy life together. It's all about treating everyone, whether we like them or not, with respect, because we're all human beings, no matter our deal, race, language, religion, or whatever."*

P11: *"Kindness is necessary for people to live peaceful lives. We need to do good to lead happier lives."*

P16: *"If we don't have kindness, things could get pretty messy, both in society and for individuals. Kindness is like the glue that holds everything together. It's what makes folks and their surroundings happy and brings about good vibes and positive thoughts."*

P20: *"Kindness is very important to provide an environment where living beings and people can live happier and more peaceful lives."*

P29: *"Doing good feels great—it's like a warm, fuzzy emotion that chills people out and puts a smile on their faces. And you know what? It's not just good for the person doing the good deed; it also brings feel-good vibes to the other party. So, basically, it's a win-win situation for both the individual and society."*

Participants noted that kindness was necessary for a better world. It has been determined that kindness is what makes the world a nicer place to be. The following are some quotes:

P9: *"Kindness is crucial for keeping the world in check and ensuring that everyone's treated equally, no matter their religion, language, or race."*

P19: *"Kindness is essential for making the world a better place, especially in a society where negativity seems to rule."*

P21: *Kindness is like a journey in life where we rely on each other. It's essential to make this journey more enjoyable and beautiful."*

P22: *"Kindness is necessary for a better world. I think it is necessary for us to live a healthy and peaceful life."*

P25: *"Kindness truly enhances life. It's what makes the world a nicer place to be."*

Developing a Consciousness of Kindness

The third research question was, "How can teachers raise their students' awareness of kindness?" Participants' responses were grouped under the codes of "being a role model" and "activities." It has been determined that teachers should be role models for students and also teachers encourage them to develop an awareness of kindness. The following are some quotes about the first code:

P1: *"First of all, teachers should be role models for students to develop awareness of kindness."*

P4: *"Students can truly grasp the concept of kindness through role models. Without them, merely talking about kindness can only create a fleeting awareness of it."*

P6: *"Students can develop an understanding of kindness through observing the behavior of preschool and primary school teachers. Children often look up to older individuals as role models and emulate their actions. So, teachers are like the big shots when it comes to being role models for kids who practically live at school. First off, the teacher could start things off by showing a quick cartoon about kindness. Then, they can ask the students what they got from it. Lastly, the teacher can dive in and explain it themselves and then put it into action. In this way, students are educated about kindness. Right now, what really counts is that the teacher practices what they preach. Kids usually pay more attention to actions than words, so it's key that the teacher walks the talk. At this stage, the teacher's actions are crucial. So, it's important for teachers to make sure that their words and deeds are in sync."*

P22: *"First off, teachers should be role models for their students. They should encourage them to develop an awareness of kindness."*

Participants noted that activities could help students develop an awareness of kindness. It has been determined that teachers come up with programs and activities and weave them into their lessons. And also teachers can actually put it into practice. The following are some quotes about the second code:

P8: "I reckon teachers should organize activities to teach their students about kindness. They should pick activities that focus on kindness. Since teachers play a huge role here, they have to show kindness in action."

P14: "Teachers should come up with programs and activities and weave them into their lessons. They should give their students a chance to put what they've learned into action."

P19: "Teachers should incorporate activities to raise their students' awareness about kindness. We should teach kids how to handle different situations with kindness. That way, they can actually put it into practice."

Kindness-Value Relationship

The fourth research question was, "What values are kindness related to?" Participants' responses were grouped under the codes of "empathy," "tolerance," "affection," "respect," "benevolence," "compassion," and "responsibility." Furthermore, some participants associated kindness with "human values" and "ethical values." It has been determined that kindness is basically all about human values. Most participants associated kindness with affection, respect, compassion, empathy, benevolence, responsibility, and tolerance. Some participants noted that kindness is about ethical values. These values are like putting your own moral compass into action. The following are some quotes:

P1: "Kindness is basically all about human values. When you spread kindness to every living thing, you're really just living those values. And when people do good stuff, it totally creates a value in society."

P11: "Kindness is about affection and tolerance."

P12: "I think that kindness is about affection. There is pure affection where there is kindness."

P15: "We can talk about affection, respect, compassion, and empathy when it comes to kindness."

P17: "Kindness is linked with a bunch of other values, like empathy, benevolence, affection, respect, and tolerance. They all work together."

P24: "I reckon kindness is all about ethical values because these values are like putting your own moral compass into action, following what feels right in your conscience. It's through these values that we can tell the difference between what's good and what's not."

P25: "I reckon kindness covers a bunch of good stuff like tolerance, compassion, and benevolence."

P27: "Kindness is all about responsibility."

P28: "Kindness is really about empathy. Like, hooking someone up with a job when they're struggling—it's all about putting yourself in their shoes."

The Social Benefits of Kindness

The fifth research question was, "What are the social benefits of kindness?" Participants' responses were grouped under the codes of "unity and solidarity," "welfare," and "cooperation." Most participants stated that kindness boosts unity and togetherness, which helps society grow and tackle tough stuff like crime and suicide. The following are some quotes about the first code:

P8: "Kindness is like the fuel that keeps society rolling smoothly, all united and tight. People who live by kindness are always lending a hand. That's why society can make fast and awesome moves to help each other out."

P19: "Kindness makes society a better place to live. It boosts unity and togetherness, which helps society grow and tackle tough stuff like crime and suicide."

P21: "Kindness is all about doing good stuff, and it brings heaps of positive vibes. When we see good things happening around us, it's like a reward. It brings people together and makes us feel connected. And kindness is totally contagious—it's like once someone starts doing something nice, it catches on and spreads everywhere."

P26: *"Where there's kindness, you've got cooperation and tolerance, for sure. And don't forget respect and love. In a place like that, everyone sticks together and has each other's backs. It's not a community where people just give up on their values and split."*

Participants believed that welfare was one of the social benefits of kindness. Most participants stated that kindness brings about social harmony and welfare. The following are some quotes about the second code:

P20: *"In societies where kindness is the norm, folks are happier and show each other respect. These places are more open to progress and have a high standard of living. Because through kindness, people share, and that sharing means even those who don't have much can still get what they need."*

P23: *"People are always hanging out and talking to each other. Doing good stuff boosts the welfare of society and makes life way more comfy and chill."*

P28: *"Kindness brings about social harmony and welfare."*

Participants noted that cooperation was another social benefit of kindness. It has been determined that kindness helps people live together in cooperation; when people pitch in and do good deeds, it brings everyone together and encourages cooperation. The following are some quotes about the third code:

P7: *"Kindness helps people live together in cooperation. When everyone's on board with kindness, society becomes more caring and supportive."*

P11: *"Since doing good brings happiness, it can lead to a happier and more peaceful society overall. When people pitch in and do good deeds, it brings everyone together and encourages cooperation. That's why it's always a good idea to lend a hand."*

P12: *"Kindness helps us shake off those downer vibes and gives us peace of mind, which really boosts our connections with others. It's what helps us all live together in cooperation."*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Participants believed that kindness was a gratuitous and positive act with social benefits. Most participants noted that kindness was a gratuitous action done for others without expecting anything in return. They stated that kindness was a type of behavior marked by acts of generosity, consideration, rendering assistance, or concern for others without expecting praise or reward in return. They also remarked that kindness had something to do with conscience. According to Ionna Kuçuradi, kindness is an ethically valuable action that an individual performs based on their understanding of the relevant subject, aiming to fulfill a need of another person without expecting any form of reciprocation (Livaneli & Göksel, 2020). Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) defined kindness simply as "doing favors and good deeds for others." Our participants' definitions of kindness were consistent with those of Livaneli & Göksel (2020) and Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005). Some participants viewed kindness as a positive act done for the benefit of other living beings. They associated it with benevolence, respect, affection, understanding, and fairness. Some participants believed that kindness had social benefits. They stated that kindness was a type of behavior that people exhibited for the well-being of all living things without any form of reciprocation. In the study of Poulou (2021), two hundred and nineteen preservice students described their perceptions of kindness, responding to the open question, "What is kindness?" Kindness was conceptualized as a range of acts and words indicating respect, understanding, and emotional support that promote personal development and healthy relationships. Binfet & Gaertner (2015) investigated perceptions of kindness in 112 young children (57 girls, 55 boys, ages 5–8) in three schools. To assess perceptions of kindness, students were asked to draw what kindness looked like to them and to draw an example of something kind done recently at school. Findings indicated students perceived kindness within the context of dyadic relationships, the recipients of kindness were familiar to them, and kind acts were typically situated outdoors; helping physically, maintaining friendships, including others, and helping emotionally were prevalent themes within drawings. Boys drew acts of kindness as helping physically more frequently than did girls, whose drawings indicated kindness as maintaining family relationships.

Participants believed that kindness was necessary for people to lead happy and peaceful lives. They emphasized that kindness was crucial for fostering a peaceful environment for oneself and others, contributing positively to society. In his book titled "Nicomachean Ethics," Aristotle poses the question, "So what is the

highest of all practical goods?" and replies, "In name, this is pretty much agreed about by the majority of people, for most people, as well as those who are more refined, say it is happiness." (Aristoteles, 2021). On the other hand, most of our participants noted that kindness was necessary for a better world.

Most participants stated that teachers should be role models to raise their students' awareness of kindness. They noted that being a role model was critical because children do what they see, not what they are told. Therefore, they added that teachers should make sure that they practice what they preach. On the other hand, some participants remarked that teachers should integrate various activities into their lectures to raise their students' awareness of kindness. They stated that teachers should offer various activities that involve kindness and conduct applied lectures through drama to help their students adopt kindness.

Most participants associated kindness with empathy, tolerance, affection, respect, benevolence, compassion, and responsibility. Some participants stated that kindness was related to human values and ethical values. Kemal Sayar sees empathy as the carrier of kindness. The primary role of empathy is to guide us toward kindness and compassion. Kindness is also affection in action. It is a state of action in which one can go beyond one's own tribe, expand the "we," and make an effort to alleviate the suffering of those who are not like oneself (Livaneli & Göksel, 2020). The fact that our participants associated kindness with empathy, affection, and benevolence was consistent with how Kemal Sayar defined it.

Most participants stated that "unity and solidarity," "welfare," and "cooperation" were the social benefits of kindness. They stated that kindness brought about unity and solidarity, contributing to social development. They believed that kindness was contagious because once it is felt, it spreads.

Some participants noted that welfare was one of the social benefits of kindness. They believed that society would become more prosperous as kindness became a norm. Some participants viewed cooperation as another social benefit of kindness. They noted that people who appreciated kindness could create a more sensitive and supportive society because they believed that kindness brought peace of mind and positively affected social relationships.

In conclusion, kindness is a common goal of all people and societies. It is a gratuitous action. It is also a positive act that contributes to the spiritual well-being of human beings because it makes people happy. For centuries, philosophers have claimed that a good life or kindness is one of the goals of human life. Therefore, we can say that kindness also contributes to happiness. In this context, one of the primary objectives of education systems should be to inspire humanity to engage in acts of kindness for the betterment of the world. This means that teachers have more responsibility because they are role models for their students.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study is limited to being qualitative research. Additionally, the study group is limited to pre-service teachers due to the qualitative nature of the research. The subject of the study is limited to the questions asked in the research.

Kindness is associated with many values, such as empathy, affection, respect, cooperation, and tolerance. Therefore, children should first develop a sense of kindness to internalize other values. Values education should be emphasized in schools. As a moral value, doing good is important both for individuals to feel virtuous and for strengthening social solidarity.

5. References

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