

# Positive Deviance Case Selection as a Method for Organizational Communication: A Rationale, How-to, and Illustration

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## Abstract

Case study remains a foundation of past and present organizational communication scholarship. In this article, we show the value of supplementing traditional case-selection methods with *positive deviance case selection* (PDCS). PDCS is about identifying and investigating individuals, teams, and organizations whose communication is intentional, nonnormative, and honorable. PDCS supports the creation of analytic generalizations and transferable concepts that can be recommended or imitated to bolster communicative excellence and thriving in the workplace. The article explores the benefits of and techniques for PDCS and illustrates the unique strengths of PDCS with two recent examples in the organizational communication literature. Implications for method, theory building, and practice are discussed throughout the article.

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Case study methods are a foundation of organizational communication scholarship. Key cases range widely, including, for example, studies of concertive control in self-managed work teams (Barker, 1993), sensemaking and sexual harassment (Dougherty & Smythe, 2004), organizational socialization and volunteer membership (Kramer, 2011), structuration and benefits utilization (Kirby & Krone, 2002), emotional labor and backstage resistance (S. J. Tracy, 2000), and organizational change communication (Zorn et al., 2000)—to name a few. Case study method is common “albeit often unnamed” as such (May, 2017, p. 2). Case studies have the advantage of taking context seriously, which is useful for communication research given that communication is a contextual process (S. J. Tracy, 2007). That advantage has meant case studies abound in the organizational communication literature and have been commonplace for decades. In short, case study methods have been and continue to be crucial for the creation of new knowledge about organization and communication processes.

Importantly, case studies in organizational communication scholarship tend to be selected on the basis of their theoretical relevance, inherent interest, or sheer availability.<sup>1</sup> The aim of these case-selection approaches is often the production of contextualized insights, known as analytic generalizations (i.e., a “principle believed to be applicable to other situations,” Yin, 2014, p. 68) and transferable concepts (i.e., dynamics that can occur in contexts with similar characteristics, Christians & Carey, 1989). To date, case-selection approaches and their resultant payoffs have largely provided (value-neutral) theoretical extensions or critiques of organizational communication dynamics.

For example, consider Gibson and Papa’s (2000) case study of Industry International’s ability to socialize newcomers via familial and friendship networks long before those new members ever joined the company. The scholars labeled the socialization dynamic taken from the single case, organizational osmosis—a transferable concept that describes a social pattern observable in many different organizational (e.g., alma maters) and professional domains (e.g., police, military). Notice that organizational osmosis is a *value-neutral* transferable dynamic in that it is neither

necessarily laudable nor troubling without knowing the content of the socialization messages. Likewise, consider Zoller's (2003) case description of Nihon Kuruma Automotive employees' willingness to avoid reporting work injuries, even severe injuries, through official channels to maintain behavioral consistency with their discourses of workplace safety, toughness, and masculinity. Here, the case critiques a dynamic that is *problematic* for members—a dynamic that can be seen in similar situations in which dysfunctional communication processes perpetuate injustices. In sum, analytic generalizations and transferable concepts about value-neutral and problematic dynamics have been essential to the development of organizational communication scholarship.

Yet, to date, there are fewer examples of organizational communication case studies that document communication dynamics that facilitate flourishing. Why are descriptions of value-neutral and problematic dynamics so commonplace in our research literature? We cannot know for sure, but one possibility is that individuals remember and view critical evaluations as more accurately diagnostic than praise (i.e., negativity bias; see Baumeister et al., 2001). Perhaps positive case descriptions are often discarded as too silly or naïve for serious inquiry, such that scholars tend to view value-neutral or problem-oriented case descriptions as more scholarly.

We call for more investigations that select cases on the basis of positive deviance—in addition to theoretical relevance, inherent interest, or sheer availability—to increase the likelihood that transferable communication concepts and analytic generalizations, which foster flourishing, may be identified and imitated. A key rationale for this call is that case studies that result in value-neutral extensions to theory or critiques of problematic communication dynamics do not automatically translate into the practice of especially healthy organizational communication dynamics. Recommending the *avoidance of* dysfunction is no doubt helpful, but falls short of achieving transformation needed to support communication excellence in the workplace. To be clear, value-neutral or problem-oriented case studies of communication processes in organizations are essential (Bisel et al., 2016; S. J. Tracy, 2002; S. J. Tracy, 2007; Zanin & Bisel, 2018) Yet, the following pages direct scholarly attention to the notion that some cases should also be selected on the basis of *positive deviance*, which characterizes (a) intentional and (b) nonnormative organizational communication (c) worthy of imitation. In doing so, we outline a method for expanding the schema for conducting mainstream organizational communication scholarship. Such an approach to case selection will yield a collection of empirical and contextual examples worthy of inquiry and imitation in practice, interventions, and applied recommendations.

## Positive Organizational Communication Scholarship

“Positive organizational scholarship (POS) focuses on that which is extraordinarily positive in organizations—the very best of the human condition and the most ennobling organizational behaviors and outcomes” (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003, p. 207), and, we add, the very best of human communication. In the traditions of POS (Cameron et al., 2003) and positive communication scholarship (Socha & Pitts), positive organizational communication scholarship adopts a value-laden posture to study situations that are life-giving and capture the best of human flourishing in organizations (Roberts, 2006). Here, *positive* is not meant to suggest superfluous self-help but meaningful, empirical insights about the good life, well lived (Luthans, 2002), and well communicated (Socha & Pitts, 2012). The framework emerges from the exasperation of applied researchers who are confronted with the realization that, while much is known about “how to bring people from a negative state to normalcy . . . relatively little [is known] about how to enable human functioning beyond normalcy to extraordinary states” (Roberts, 2006, p. 292).

In organizational communication, work on appreciative managerial inquiry (Barge & Oliver, 2003), hope and community building (Barge, 2003), resilience (Buzzanell, 2010; Lucas & Buzzanell, 2012), compassion (Way & Tracy, 2012), courageous communication (Jablin, 2006; Lyon, 2017), apology and forgiveness-seeking (Bisel & Messersmith, 2012; Waldron & Kelley, 2008), organizational moral learning (Bisel, 2017), workplace dignity (Thomas & Lucas, 2019), feminist organizational dissent-and-resistance leaders (Buzzanell et al., 2008), and positive emotional experiences and social discourse (Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2011) are few examples of this trend. Positive organizational communication scholarship can supplement other kinds of organizational communication scholarship that identify destructive (Lutgen-Sandvik & Sypher, 2010) and immoral (Redding, 1985) communication behaviors. Studying situations of thriving related to organizational communication holds the promise of helping scholars avoid “inadvertently ignor[ing] the areas of human flourishing that enliven and contribute value to organizations, even in the face of significant . . . challenges” (Roberts, 2006, p. 295).

## Defining Positive Deviance Case Selection (PDCS) for Organizational Communication

Formally, Spreitzer and Sonenshein (2004) defined positive deviance as those “intentional behaviors that depart from the norms of a referent group in

honorable ways” (p. 829). Thus, PDCS is a method and framework of identifying (a) intentional, (b) nonnormative, and (c) honorable (communication) phenomena for investigation. As explained below, these attributes get established by researchers via argumentation using scientific research, observations, common sense, and values-based claims (Baym, 2006). In the context of organizational communication, these additions to case study selection can contribute to the practical insights and influence of our research.

A brief review of the use of case study method generally is warranted: Case study researchers attest that single case studies can provide ample material for learning. Case study is especially well-suited to engage learners and support the development of rich expertise (Flyvbjerg, 2006). “Cases” can be events, individuals, teams, organizations, and institutions. Case study logic can be used for theory falsification and establishing boundary conditions for theory (Gerring, 2007; Ruddin, 2006); in organizational communication, case studies have been used to generate analytic generalizations or transferable concepts that challenge existing scholarly assumptions and theory (Bisel et al., 2014). We believe that selecting cases of honorable nonnormativity for investigation serves as a complement and contribution to cases that result in value-neutral theory extension and critique. In our view, every method has strengths and weakness and no single method is a panacea for knowledge creation.<sup>2</sup>

Here—and specific to positive deviance—atypical cases “often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). Importantly, selection of extreme or deviant cases aids the systematic documentation of exemplars and supports practical theorizing. For example, beginning in the 1970s, psychologist John Gottman and colleagues examined the causes contributing to successful marriages. Studying the effect of bids (i.e., requests for socio-emotional connection) between 130 newlyweds, Gottman (2014) used the terms “masters” and “disasters” to describe nonnormative communicators. Master couples responded to partners’ bids by creating a culture of respect and appreciation. Later, Gottman developed therapies based on observations of masters’ conversational patterns. PDCS is similar. Likewise, analysis of exemplary craft practice promises to contribute to organizational communication scholarship that engenders novel and transformational insights. In the following section, PDCS is contrasted with what it is not.

## **What PDCS Is Not**

First, as with any rigorous case study, PDCS is never an excuse to base investigations on a single observation (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). Instead,

multiple observations across time and place, or multiple retrospective accounts, regarding practices or dynamics of interest are examined by the researcher. Observations and accounts provide corroboration and strengthen claims about the historicity of practices or dynamics of interest. Second, PDCS is not a meandering into superfluous self-help or naïve optimism. Instead, one can engage in POS while simultaneously acknowledging the corruption of so many organizational communication patterns. Positive scholarship supplements empirical research with investigations of those patterns that reveal the communicative foundations of human and organizational flourishing. Supplementing the body of knowledge with analyses of the communicative wisdom of individuals, teams, and organizations can valuably complicate and round out organizational theory. Third, PDCS is not an excuse to reproduce advice by management gurus (Keulen & Kroeze, 2012). PDCS, especially in the context of organizational communication field, must support the “honorability” criterion of cases’ nonnormative communication. Merely being known for obtaining large profits or high stock values does not constitute a communicatively humane or democratic hallmark to meet this criterion.

Fourth, we are describing a case-selection process that is in contrast with stigmatized reactive positive deviance in which healthy traits or choices sometimes get stigmatized by groups (Goode, 1991). In other words, cultural groups sometimes react negatively to individuals for making nonnormative, but healthy, choices—as can be seen when college students’ decision to abstain from alcohol can make them targets of stigma communication (Romo, 2012). Such studies are indeed intriguing and important but PDCS does not necessarily require groups’ stigmatization. Instead, the selection method conceived here places the onus on the researcher to establish via argumentation that the communication practices or dynamics under question are intentional, nonnormative, and especially honorable in terms of widely shared values.

Fifth, PDCS is similar to, yet distinct from, the process advocated by Singhal and Durá (2012) for crafting health-related campaigns in areas where populations are skeptical of or resistant to Westernized health interventions. On one hand, the approach is similar in that it seeks to identify and investigate cases of extraordinary thriving. On the other hand, PDCS does not necessarily require positive deviants to overcome physical diseases and challenges. Also, the intended payoff of our approach seeks to identify organizational *communication* dynamics and practices that are transferable or contribute to theory via analytic generalization; whereas, the refinement of the positive deviance approach *itself* across global health campaigns is a primary aim of the approach advocated by Singhal (2010, 2014) Sixth, PDCS is not focused on documenting unintentional mistakes or happy accidents. The

axiological impetus of PDCS is to build a repertoire of honorable practices and dynamics worthy of imitation and to reduce the distance between practical recommendations and theoretical research. Mistakes that cannot be mimicked or reapplied are generally not helpful for generating best practices for a good life, well lived and communicated (Socha & Pitts, 2012). Admittedly, communication practices that create flourishing can originate from trial and error or as happy accidents, but those insights must then be practiced intentionally to meet the intentionality criterion.

## **Axiological Benefit**

Axiology in the form of engaging scholarship that focuses on “‘what *could* be’ and ‘what *should* be’ rather than only ‘what *is*’ is a hallmark of critical theory worldview” (Thomas, 1993, p. 4, emphasis added). Critical researchers often select cases on the basis of their ability to help us understand the origins of power and its consequence of injustices in society (S. J. Tracy, 2000). In other words, critical theory is overtly motivated by values—rightly and unapologetically so. The values motivating researchers who operate in the mode of critical theory are more obvious and less left to the imagination of the reader, as compared with some expressions of postpositivism or interpretivism. Critical theory in the 21st century established persuasively that no science is value-neutral in that even the selection of topics of investigation presupposes value commitments, which will, in turn, influence what can be known (Bisel & Adame, 2017). Similar to research motivated by critical theory, PDCS studies make axiological commitments more obvious. In doing so, the community of scholars can more readily debate whether the values motivating research are indeed worthwhile. For example, as mentioned above, large profits alone are—for us—insufficient evidence that an organization or its members’ *communication* is honorable and supportive of flourishing.

## **Praxeological Benefit**

Scholarship does not need to prescribe practical recommendations to be valuable; yet, organizational communication scholars tend to value and call for research that can be translated into improved practices (Barge & Craig, 2009; Petronio, 2007; S. J. Tracy, 2017). PDCS has a strong praxeological advantage in that it provides an especially useful methods-based springboard for translating practices into theory and vice versa. Documenting positive deviance could produce a repository of empirically established craft communication practices in context, which, in turn, could help to corroborate or otherwise challenge knowledge about organizational communication—knowledge which tends to

move from theory to practice recommendations as opposed to moving from craft practices to basic or applied theory (Keyton et al., 2009). Indeed, Wood's (1995) play on Lewin's (1951) oft-cited comment that "there is nothing so theoretical as good practice" (p. 159) suggests to us PDCS has the potential to aid translational research and ground theorizing in new and rich soil. Similarly, Putnam and Banghart (2017) argued that grounding research in praxis is a means by which the multiperspectivalism of organizational communication can be managed productively.

Furthermore, positive case examples are helpful for practical translation because the advice to avoid wrongdoing and dysfunction is often not enough to enhance the health and well-being of individuals, teams, and organizations. For example, as mentioned above, Gottman (2014) demonstrated empirically that romantic relationships experiencing dysfunction respond better to therapeutic interventions that emphasize shared appreciation as compared with therapies that advise couples to cease contemptuous communication. In other words, where human relationships are involved, the absence of dysfunction does not necessarily herald the presence of health (cf. Herzberg, 2008). Thus, PDCS will supply a larger and richer pool of examples for translating theory into practical recommendations and vice versa.

PDCS is a strategy for gaining fresh empirical insights into the phenomenological world of communicative thriving and its intended goal is not necessarily to support causal claims. Insights gained from PDCS will inspire further study and verification—some of which may be experimental or comparative in nature. PDCS can supplement existing negative or neutral case-based research. To be clear, PDCS studies do not necessarily need to select and collect negatively deviant cases in all situations to check that communication behaviors are unique to positively deviant cases because researchers may already have access to case accounts of negatively deviant or normative behavior in the existing literature and from experience, which can be used for comparison, reasoning, and theorizing. However, at times, case-comparative studies may be warranted and worthwhile.

## **PDCS Strategies**

We suggest the following three strategies for selecting cases on the grounds of positive deviance, which should increase the likelihood<sup>3</sup> identified cases are indicative of intentional and honorable, communicative nonnormativity. Since PDCS is a new method, few examples exist; however, analogies can be offered. First, with criterion case selection, the researcher could state several inclusion criteria in advance of data collection, which, when met, bolster the case for honorable nonnormativity. For example, an analogy may be drawn



between criterion case and Mirivel's (2017) study of senior communication scholars. Mirivel established the inclusion criteria that all interview participants must have (a) earned a doctorate of philosophy in Communication and (b) served as an active faculty member for at least 25 years. Indeed, the interviews are analogous to a collection of nonnormative individual cases<sup>4</sup> in terms of the participants' sophistication regarding communication theory; they are individuals who "engaged in deep thinking, teaching, reflecting, and writing about communication throughout their lifespan" (p. 11). Thus, the interviews constituted a set of advice-givers to whom the reader is apt to listen. In addition, an analogy may be drawn between criterion case and case-based studies of high-reliability organizations (HROs; for example, Jahn & Black, 2017). Although rarely stated explicitly, studies of HROs assume that the organizational communication practices that emerge when human lives are at stake are nonnormative and honorable (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015). Researchers who investigate HRO tend to accept that they are more likely than ordinary, or non-HROs, to offer key lessons about how to suppress errors and adapt quickly. Thus, studies of HROs share a kinship with the PDCS method, but, to be clear, to constitute a PDCS via criterion case selection, criteria should be established and defended upfront explicitly.

A second PDCS strategy, survey-based atypical case selection, could be initiated with the use of quantitative survey methods. In this strategy, large numbers of participants are surveyed with the aid of validated measures. Then, participants are asked whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up study and solicited for contact information. Survey data and statistical analysis would then be used to establish positive deviance in regard to the communication variable of interest. Here, "deviance" could be determined by identifying those cases where scores exceed the boundary of  $SD \geq +1.5$  or  $+2.0$ . Such case attributes would help to establish that participants, teams, or organizations deviate comparatively more from the mean than is normal of the sample. Then, those selected could be recruited to participate in inductive forms of inquiry (e.g., interview, open-ended survey; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). In some situations, this second strategy may also create an opportunity for comparing positive with negative cases of deviance, as both kinds of outliers could be identified, recruited, and compared with survey methods. As a caution, the measured variable of interest should be normally distributed and not prone to ceiling effects such that most participants, teams, or organizations tend to score highly (e.g., *intention* to provide emotional social support). Focusing on what few communicators do well—as opposed to what most communicators do well—is key to the rationale and potential payoffs of PDCS. A few apt measure examples include ethical climate, instrumental social support given, intercultural competence,

other-reported listening skill, subordinate-reported supervisory communication satisfaction, systemic resilience, and team psychological safety.

Imagine, for example, a study of persons diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) who have the communication skills to find, keep, and enjoy employment (e.g., Chorley, 2018). Survey data could be collected from a sample of OCD patients regarding their length of current employment as well as their job, career, and communication satisfaction at work. Participants who are significantly and positively satisfied could be identified on these dependent variables and solicited for interviews regarding the communication skills that allow them to thrive at work while also managing their illness. This example demonstrates how these selection strategies may overlap and be employed in combination in the sense that surveyed participants needed to meet an inclusion criterion (be diagnosed with OCD) *as well as* be statistically nonnormative in terms of length of employment and job and career satisfaction.

Recall that Singhal and Durá's (2012) positive deviance approach to creating global health campaigns is similar to, but also distinct from, what we outline here. The researchers describe an aspect of one global health intervention, which is analogous to this second selection approach: In their case, volunteers attempted to address chronic child malnutrition in Vietnam. They began by "weighing some 2,000 children under the age of three in four villages" (p. 509). Data were compiled and analyzed to identify positive deviants who were among the poorest families but also statistically well-nourished. Then, the volunteers went to those children's homes to observe how these families lived. Thus, survey methods were used to identify positive deviants. As a caveat, in this instance, positive deviants were not necessarily engaged in extraordinary *communication* practices. Yet, we believe the method is a close analogy for what could be done to explore communicative positive deviance.

Historical reconstruction is a third case-selection strategy. In this strategy, the researcher is made aware of an exceptional and admirable event or series of events. Initial awareness can originate from formal news reports, informal retellings, and recipients of prestigious awards, among others. Then, researchers work to gain access to collect field data from primary and secondary sources (Berg, 2001). The researcher can use a variety of collection and analysis procedures to explore the nature of the positive deviance events and what they suggest about excellence in communication theory and practice. As with each of the aforementioned approaches, the researcher establishes that communication under investigation is intentional and deviates from the norm in honorable ways through argumentation (Baym, 2006). An advantage of this strategy is that the lapse of time may provide a strong position from which to

evaluate whether actions indeed resulted in flourishing—an attribute which can be difficult to assess without historical perspective (see Note 3). Again, the three selection strategies outlined could also overlap and combine. The two following illustrative examples from current organizational communication scholarship involved this third case-selection strategy. In the first example, the “case” in question involves an individual organizational member’s messaging. In the second example, the “case” in question is an organization’s communication. Importantly, the PDCS approach described here is flexible to allow researchers to construct the unit of analysis and interest at multiple levels of inquiry (Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003).

## **Illustrative Examples in Organizational Communication**

### *Example 1*

In August 2013, a front office employee at the McNair Discovery Learning Academy in DeKalb, Georgia, Antoinette Tuff was ordered by Michael Brandon Hill (a would-be school shooter and hostage-taker) to call 911. Tracy and Huffman (2017) were first made aware of the case through media coverage. Their analysis of the case reveals how Tuff’s communication techniques were critical to the uncommonly peaceful resolution of the case (Michael’s willingness to lay down his arms and give himself up to the police). The case analyzes Antoinette’s humanizing and vulnerable dialogue with Michael, in which she even disclosed her own attempt at committing suicide. Her unusual exchange was marked by high usage of reciprocal self-disclosure (“Guess what, Michael? My last name is Hill too”) and compassion in a rare, high-stress situation (Tracy & Huffman, 2017, p. 11).

This case is marked as rare due to the context in which compassion unfolded. Compassion typically manifests in response to a request for help. However, in this situation, “compassion unfolds [despite] . . . an unreceptive, violent, and resistant sufferer” (Tracy & Huffman, 2017, p. 3). In a situation where someone would normally run and hide, Tuff stayed physically and emotionally connected to the would-be school shooter. What’s more, as evident through Tuff’s resultant memoir, she had intentionally cultivated a life focused on forgiveness and compassion (Tuff, 2014). Finally, her action via providing a hopeful vision of the future enabled the authors to theorize about the crucial role of co-creating hope when communicating compassion to someone who is angry, resistant, and resigned. This was just one of nine theoretical tenets contributing to compassion theory that were articulated as a result of selecting and analyzing this positively deviant case. In summary,

this case highlighted Antoinette's nonnormative, intentional, and positively deviant communication practice. Furthermore, it provided transferable propositions that contribute to theory and motivate imitation in practice.

### Example II

Research and recent news events document that elite Olympic gymnastics training and training institutions can be abusive to child-athletes. However, Bisel et al. (2017) outline how a former student made them aware of an elite gymnastics training organization that was founded years prior with the expressed purpose of creating a healthy and humane training alternative. This gymnastics organization developed and employed a wide variety of training strategies, verbal and nonverbal cues, recruitment techniques, and even architectural innovations, which established it as nonnormative. Descriptions of the founders' prosocial, anticorruption motivations and vision, and years of effort in realizing that vision were used to support the claim that the organization's communication was intentionally honorable. Data collection came in the form of interviews with organizational members and observation of training. The article describes an organizational life history, which reveals how the founder and a team of coaches developed and maintained trust while they engaged in personal reflection and sensemaking about the unethical nature of current training practices. Then, the group worked together over years to create an alternative training regimen for elite gymnasts that would avoid abuse and encourage the health and well-being of child-athletes. The study allowed the researchers to propose the original concept, *institutional resistance leadership*, which had not been previously documented in scholarly literature. In sum, the case offers a set of transferable practices that could be imitated for those attempting to communicate to resist institutional corruption and replace it with a humane alternative.

### Conclusion

In this essay, we have made the case for the value of conducting PDCS organizational communication. Case studies are useful for showing and not just telling about organizational realities in an engaging and memorable manner. Organizational communication has thrived in terms of providing case studies that contribute to value-neutral theoretical extensions and those that critique problematic behavior. However, the field can be bolstered by additional case studies that focus on intentional, nonnormative organizational communication worthy of imitation. Criterion selection, survey-based atypical case selection, and historical reconstruction can aid

in identifying positive deviants for investigation. The first type is analogous to Mirivel's (2017) examination of exemplary communication mentors' advice and HRO studies, the second is relatively absent in the organizational communication literature, but illustrated with a hypothetical scenario and by Singhal and Durá (2012). Finally, we overviewed two studies that describe, via historical reconstruction, the practices of especially honorable, nonnormative organizational communication that may inspire transformed practice (Bisel et al., 2017; Tracy & Huffman, 2017). In doing so, we showed how this approach holds promise for advancing important scholarly and theoretical conversations, *as well as* for inspiring transformed practice. Vivid descriptions of communication in life as lived may encourage the "trying on" and practice of communication that fosters human and organizational flourishing and help us to "venerate communication that supports human potential" (Socha & Pitts, 2012, p. 323).

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### Notes

1. We would like to thank a reviewer who offered this description of common methods for selecting cases in organizational communication scholarship.
2. A research literature constituted *exclusively* of positive deviance cases would be deficient.
3. These strategies are intended to support the likelihood of identifying positive deviance cases, but they do not necessarily ensure it. For example, we can imagine a scenario in which a researcher conducts an historical reconstruction of positive deviance and then discovers, upon closer investigation, that news or informal retellings were in error (e.g., Green & Benner, 2018).
4. We do not intend to restrict uses of positive deviance case selection (PDCS) to case studies of teams and organizations. We can easily imagine PDCS being used

to aggregate and analyze many individuals as cases of honorable, communicative, and nonnormativity.

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