

A Cultural Values Model of *Pakikipag-ugnayan*: Examining *Hiya*, *Pakikisama*, and *Pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Objectives. This study explored the interplay of three Filipino cultural values—*hiya* (modesty/self-restraint), *pakikisama* (conflict-avoidance dimension of social harmony), and *pakikipag-ugnayan* (professional engagement, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption)—among Generation Z nurses in Quezon City. Specifically, it assessed their levels, examined interrelationships through correlation and path analysis, and developed a framework to illustrate their influence on nursing practice. In the Filipino context, *hiya* encompasses both positive dimensions, such as conscientiousness, moral accountability, and social responsibility, and constraining dimensions, including excessive self-restraint, fear of criticism, and inhibition. *Pakikisama*, while fostering harmony, may discourage assertiveness and limit open communication. *Pakikipag-ugnayan*, conceptualized here as engagement, reflects dedication, vigor, and absorption, which are vital for performance, patient safety, and workforce retention.

Methods. A descriptive–correlational design was utilized to assess the relationships among *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan*. Data were gathered through a structured, self-administered questionnaire comprising validated scales for each construct, distributed in online formats to accommodate participants' availability and work schedules. The purposive sample consisted of 115 Filipino Generation Z nurses engaged in direct patient care in various healthcare facilities in Quezon City. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize variable scores, Spearman's rho to examine bivariate correlations, and path analysis to determine the direct and indirect effects among the variables. The results of the path analysis were used to develop a proposed framework illustrating the interplay of these cultural values in nursing practice.

Results. Path analysis revealed distinct patterns in the interplay of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Generation Z nurses in Quezon City. Very high *hiya* scores (mean = 5.32) reflected both moral accountability and restraint-oriented tendencies. Despite these positive indicators, *hiya* showed a negative correlation with *pakikipag-ugnayan*, suggesting that its inhibiting side—marked by fear of criticism and avoidance of mistakes—may overshadow its constructive moral aspects. In contrast, the path analysis identified a moderate positive direct effect between *hiya* and *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = 0.400$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that when *hiya* functions as conscientiousness and ethical responsibility, it can support *pakikipag-ugnayan*. *Pakikisama*, which emerged at a relatively low level (mean = 2.74), showed a moderate to approaching large negative direct effect with *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = -0.472$, $p < 0.001$), consistent with its conflict-avoidant nature that limits open communication. The small to approaching moderate negative direct effect between *hiya* and *pakikisama* ($\beta = -0.237$, $p = 0.011$) further suggests that nurses guided by conscience and accountability may be less inclined to conform solely for harmony.

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Conclusion. Among Generation Z nurses, *hiya* demonstrates a dual role: while its ethical and conscientious aspects can strengthen *pakikipag-ugnayan*, its inhibiting side may suppress *pakikipag-ugnayan*. *Pakikisama*, operationalized as conflict avoidance and withholding dissent, emerged as a barrier to *pakikipag-ugnayan* by discouraging open communication. These findings informed the development of the *Hiya-Pakikisama-Pakikipag-ugnayan* Cultural Dynamics Framework, which illustrates how cultural values can simultaneously enable and constrain professional engagement. The framework has potential applications in nursing education and organizational practice, particularly in designing reflective learning, mentorship, and communication strategies that balance cultural sensitivity with assertiveness. Further validation across generations and healthcare settings is recommended to refine its applicability.

Keywords: *hiya, pakikisama, pakikipag-ugnayan, Generation Z nurses, Filipino cultural values*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary healthcare settings, organizations face the dual challenge of retaining skilled staff while sustaining high levels of *pakikipag-ugnayan*—a form of professional engagement characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.¹ Recent data from NSI Nursing Solutions reported that the turnover rate for registered nurses reached nearly 30% in 2021, marking a substantial increase from previous years.² This trend underscores the urgency of strengthening *pakikipag-ugnayan*, a construct widely recognized as vital to both employee well-being and organizational performance.^{3,4} Falguera et al. found that low engagement is strongly associated with burnout and intent to leave, whereas high engagement reduces turnover risk and enhances both professional satisfaction and personal fulfillment.⁵ Identifying factors that influence *pakikipag-ugnayan* is therefore a priority in nursing and organizational research.

The development of *pakikipag-ugnayan* is shaped by both organizational climate and cultural factors. Organizational climate reflects employees' shared perceptions of leadership, communication, and workplace culture.⁶ Within this context, collaboration emerges as a critical factor. Carr and Walton demonstrated that employees in collaborative environments achieved a 50% increase in productivity, along with greater intrinsic motivation and commitment to tasks.⁷

Cultural values further shape how Filipino nurses engage in the workplace. *Hiya*, often translated as “shame” or “embarrassment,” is a multidimensional construct in Filipino psychology that carries both positive and negative aspects. On one hand, it reflects conscientiousness, moral accountability, and social responsibility, encouraging nurses to uphold ethical standards and maintain harmonious interactions. On the other hand, it can manifest as excessive self-restraint, fear of

criticism, and inhibition, which may discourage nurses from seeking clarification or speaking up in hierarchical settings.⁸ In clinical practice, this dual nature means that *hiya* can either reinforce professional responsibility or restrict open communication, confidence, and collaborative participation. Recognizing this complexity, the present study explores how *hiya*, as both a constructive and inhibiting force, relates to *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Generation Z nurses.

In the context of this study, *pakikisama* was understood through its conflict-avoidance dimension, reflected in the tendency to withhold dissenting opinions to maintain group harmony. While *pakikisama* can traditionally foster loyalty, solidarity, and cooperative relationships, its conflict-avoidance aspect may come at the cost of assertiveness and professional voice, particularly in hierarchical healthcare environments.⁹ This reluctance to speak up can diminish psychological ownership of tasks and reduce opportunities for active contribution. Hamouda, Eid, and Saleh highlight that assertiveness enables nurses to manage stress, set boundaries, and resist unreasonable demands—skills that promote engagement.¹⁰ Thus, when *pakikisama* manifests as silence and conformity, personal needs are subordinated to group expectations, which may ultimately weaken motivation and reduce active participation in patient care.

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that *pakikipag-ugnayan*—the sustained emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connection nurses have with their work—can be both supported and constrained by cultural values. *Hiya* may encourage respectful and conscientious practice, but risks limiting open dialogue, while *pakikisama* may promote cooperation yet restrict assertiveness. Understanding the interplay of these cultural constructs is essential for developing organizational strategies and educational interventions that respect Filipino values while advancing communication, professional growth, and patient safety.

Benner's novice-to-expert framework describes novice nurses as individuals with foundational clinical knowledge who frequently struggle with applying this knowledge in context and assuming full professional responsibilities.¹¹ Their development depends largely on experiential learning, which fosters the gradual acquisition of clinical judgment and ethical comportment. In the Filipino context, this transition can be particularly challenging. Complementing this perspective, Labrague, McEnroe-Pettite, and Leocadio highlight the adjustment difficulties novice nurses experience as they navigate evolving role expectations.¹² Similarly, Hawkins, Jeong, and Smith report that negative workplace behaviors intensify emotional distress, reduce job satisfaction, and heighten the risks of burnout and turnover.¹³

Cultural influences may exacerbate these challenges. Crigger and Meek note that new nurses' reluctance to seek help or report errors may stem from fear of appearing incompetent or facing negative judgment.¹⁴ Similarly, Santos and Caballero suggest that the Filipino emphasis on social relationships and *pakikisama* can increase turnover intentions, particularly

among younger nurses who may extend *pakikisama*-driven behaviors beyond formal job expectations, affecting both *pakikipag-ugnayan* and organizational commitment.^{15,16}

Given the scarcity of quantitative studies examining the cultural underpinnings of *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z nurses in the Philippines, this study aims to analyze the relationship of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan*. By generating empirical evidence, the findings are intended to guide nursing supervisors, healthcare administrators, and human resources professionals in creating culturally competent, inclusive workplaces. Such strategies may enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and foster professional development, ultimately improving patient care and organizational performance. The study was independently funded, with no conflicts of interest declared by the authors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

This study employed a descriptive correlational cross-sectional design, which was well aligned with its objective of examining the associations among *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z nurses. This design was appropriate because it enabled the researchers to capture data from participants at a single point in time, thereby identifying existing relationships among the variables without manipulating them. Through the use of descriptive statistics (mean) and correlational analyses, the study was able to detect patterns and interconnections that reflect how these cultural values influence one another in the nursing context. By adopting this approach, the research effectively addressed its aim of uncovering culturally rooted dynamics that can inform interventions, organizational strategies, and value-based models of professional development tailored to Filipino nurses.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Quezon City, Philippines, the most populous city in the country and a major hub for healthcare, education, and government services. As of 2020, Quezon City had a population of over 2.9 million, making it a highly urbanized and diverse environment.¹⁷ The city hosts some of the country's leading tertiary hospitals, training institutions, and specialized medical centers. This concentration of healthcare facilities positions Quezon City as a critical site for examining the professional experiences of nurses within a dynamic and demanding clinical environment.¹⁸

Participants were Filipino Generation Z nurses aged 21 to 30 years, regardless of gender, with 0 to 1 year of professional experience, and employed in private hospitals across Quezon City. This demographic focus was chosen because nurses at this career stage are in the process of transitioning from academic preparation to actual clinical practice, making them particularly vulnerable to adjustment

difficulties and workplace stress. Studying this group allowed for the exploration of how Filipino cultural values such as *hiya* and *pakikisama* influence *pakikipag-ugnayan* during this formative stage of professional identity.

To facilitate communication and engagement despite limited face-to-face access to hospital environments, data collection was conducted virtually. Researchers held orientation sessions via Google Meet and administered survey questionnaires through Google Forms, ensuring both data security and participant anonymity.

The insights derived from this setting and population provide a culturally and contextually grounded understanding of the early professional experiences of Filipino Generation Z nurses, offering implications for targeted interventions that can strengthen engagement, reduce turnover, and enhance healthcare delivery.

Sample Size

The study targeted Filipino Generation Z nurses in Quezon City, aged 21 to 30 years, regardless of gender, with 0 to 1 year of experience, specifically employed in private hospitals. This focus clarifies that while the research aims to generalize its findings to all Filipino Generation Z nurses, data collection will specifically involve those working in private healthcare settings within Quezon City. The sample size was determined using G*Power, a sample size calculator, resulting in a target of 115 participants with a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence level. This sample size is also adequate for path analysis, as it satisfies the recommended minimum ratio of 10–20 participants per estimated parameter and aligns with simulation studies suggesting that samples exceeding 100 can provide stable estimates for simple structural models.¹⁹ This ensures sufficient statistical power and reliability of the path coefficients for the model tested.

Employing a purposive sampling technique, the researchers established inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine participant eligibility. Inclusion criteria required participants to be Filipino Generation Z nurses with 0 to 1 year of experience, born and raised in the Philippines, aged 21 to 30, engaged in direct patient care at the time of data gathering, currently employed in a private hospital in Quezon City, and willing to consent to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included Filipino Generation Z nurses working in home care facilities, those with prior hospital experience (such as nursing aides), those not employed in private hospitals in Quezon City, those on leave or absent during data collection, and those who did not provide consent.

Instruments

Three validated instruments were employed to measure the study variables—*hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan*—ensuring cultural and conceptual alignment between the constructs and the tools used.

Hiya was assessed using the *Panukat ng Hiya bilang isang Pagpapahalaga* (PHP), a culturally grounded scale

developed to capture the Filipino value of modesty and self-restraint as expressions of conscience-driven behavior.²⁰ The instrument comprised 13 items rated on a six-point Likert scale, with possible scores ranging from 16 to 96. Importantly, the PHP encompasses both positive indicators—such as ethical responsibility, moral accountability, and social conscientiousness—and negative indicators, including excessive self-restraint, fear of criticism, and inhibition. This dual structure means that the operational definition of hiya in this study extends beyond a simple view of inhibition, instead reflecting a multidimensional construct that blends both constructive and constraining tendencies. The scale demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.888), supporting its reliability in capturing this complexity.

Pakikisama was measured using the Lack of Prohibitive Voice (LPV) scale, adapted from Liang et al.²¹ In this study, *pakikisama* was operationalized specifically in terms of conflict avoidance and the withholding of dissenting opinions, reflecting one dimension of the Filipino value of maintaining group harmony. While *pakikisama* in its broader cultural sense may also include positive relational strategies, the LPV scale emphasizes its conflict-avoidance aspect—capturing the tendency to remain silent rather than point out errors or voice disagreement. The scale consisted of five items rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with possible scores ranging from 5 to 35. It demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.954), indicating its strong capacity to measure conformity-driven behaviors that may influence workplace dynamics.

Pakikipag-ugnayan (professional engagement) was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli et al.²² This instrument operationalizes *pakikipag-ugnayan* as a multidimensional construct encompassing vigor, dedication, and absorption, aligning with the Filipino conceptualization of professional engagement. The UWES contained 17 items rated on a six-point Likert scale, with total scores ranging from 17 to 102. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.957, confirming its suitability in capturing the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of engagement.

Permissions were obtained for the use of the PHP and LPV scales through direct correspondence with their respective authors, while the UWES was accessed through the author's official website. A linguistics expert facilitated the translation and cultural adaptation of all instruments to ensure semantic and conceptual accuracy.

Content validation was performed by five subject matter experts (SMEs) for each instrument, who evaluated clarity, cultural relevance, and construct alignment. A pilot test was then conducted among a small group of Filipino Generation Z nurses to assess feasibility and internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha values demonstrated high reliability across all instruments: PHP = 0.888, LPV = 0.954, UWES = 0.957. These results confirmed that the instruments were both valid and reliable for examining *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* in the Filipino nursing context.

Data Collection

Prior to the commencement of the study, ethical clearance was secured from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the affiliated university under Ethics Clearance Protocol Number: 2024-2nd-CNU-Avila-v2.

Following ethical approval, recruitment and data collection were initiated. Nurse recruiters were assigned to engage peers and colleagues who were Filipino Generation Z nurses employed in private hospitals in Quezon City, ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary and free from coercion. Potential participants were identified through professional networks, and initial contact was made via a Messenger group chat, where preliminary information such as names, contact numbers, and availability was requested. All communications emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequences.

Eligible participants were then oriented virtually via Google Meet and screened according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which required self-declaration as registered nurses within the age range of 21–30 years and completion of the informed consent process. Those who did not meet the criteria were respectfully excluded.

Upon confirmation of eligibility and receipt of consent, participants attended a brief online presentation explaining the study's purpose, scope, and procedures. A PowerPoint guided the discussion, and a QR code linking to the Google Forms questionnaire was shared. Completing the survey took approximately 10–15 minutes. Data were securely transferred from Google Forms to Google Sheets by designated data managers, who ensured anonymity by removing all personal identifiers. The cleaned dataset was then submitted to the team's data analyst for statistical processing, maintaining ethical standards of data confidentiality and integrity throughout the process.

To ensure rigor, the researchers proactively addressed potential sources of bias. First, selection bias was mitigated by recruiting participants from multiple hospitals across Quezon City rather than a single institution, thereby enhancing sample diversity. Second, response bias was minimized by guaranteeing anonymity and emphasizing that responses would not affect employment or professional evaluations. Third, social desirability bias—particularly relevant when assessing culturally sensitive values such as *hiya* and *pakikisama*—was reduced by administering self-report questionnaires online, without direct researcher presence, to encourage honest responses. Finally, data handling bias was controlled by assigning separate roles for data collection, anonymization, and analysis, ensuring that no single researcher had full control over both identifying information and survey responses.

Through these measures, the study upheld ethical integrity, minimized bias, and ensured the credibility of findings.

Data Analysis

The study examined the associations among the variables *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* (characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption) among Filipino Generation Z nurses. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Mean and standard deviation were computed to summarize the central tendencies and variability of each variable.

To test the hypothesized associations, correlational analyses were first performed to determine the relationships among the three cultural constructs. This was followed by path analysis to assess the direct effects of *hiya* on *pakikisama* and *pakikipag-ugnayan*, as well as the effect of *pakikisama* on *pakikipag-ugnayan*. Path coefficients (β) and corresponding p-values were generated to evaluate the magnitude and statistical significance of each relationship. The interpretation of effect sizes followed Cohen’s guidelines, ensuring consistency in determining whether relationships were negligible, weak, moderate, or strong.²³

To strengthen internal validity, the analysis also incorporated controls for potential confounding variables, specifically age, gender, and length of nursing experience, as these demographic factors may independently influence interpersonal values and work engagement. By adjusting for these covariates in the path analysis, the study ensured that the observed associations more accurately reflected the cultural constructs under investigation, rather than being artifacts of demographic variation.

This analytic approach was aligned with the study’s objectives by providing a structured means to test how *hiya* and *pakikisama* shape *pakikipag-ugnayan*, while accounting for key confounders, thereby offering a clearer understanding of the cultural dynamics that influence Filipino nurses’ professional engagement.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the *hiya* experienced by Filipino Generation Z nurses, with an overall mean score of 5.32, categorized as "Very High." In the internal aspect subscale, the mean was 5.39, reflecting values such as following one’s conscience (mean 5.65), upholding acceptable actions (mean 5.56), and fulfilling commitments without reminders (mean 5.53). Additional indicators included caring for colleagues’ feelings (mean 5.40) and striving to meet expectations (mean 5.17). For the external aspect, the overall mean was 5.25, with the highest score for acting appropriately to avoid criticism (mean 5.47). Avoiding regrettable actions (mean 5.43) and maintaining a good reputation (mean 5.34) were also significant. This high level of *hiya* demonstrates a strong sense of ethical responsibility and social awareness among Filipino Generation Z nurses, underlining the cultural importance of respect, accountability, and conscientious behavior in their professional roles.

Table 1. *Hiya* Experienced by Filipino Generation Z nurses (n=117)

Subscale	Mean Score	Interpretation
<i>Internal or Being Aspect</i>	5.39	Very High
<i>External or Interpersonal Aspect</i>	5.25	Very High
Overall	5.32	Very High

Note: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High.

Table 2. *Pakikisama* Experienced by Filipino Generation Z nurses (n=117)

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
<i>I advise other colleagues against undesirable behaviors that would hamper job performance.</i>	2.61	Low
<i>I speak up honestly with problems that might cause serious loss to the work unit, even when/though dissenting opinions exist.</i>	2.45	Low
<i>I dare to voice out opinions on things that might affect efficiency in the work unit, even if that would embarrass others.</i>	2.97	Somewhat Low
<i>I dare to point out problems when they appear in the unit, even if that would hamper relationships with other colleagues.</i>	2.94	Somewhat Low
<i>I proactively report coordination problems in the workplace to the management.</i>	2.71	Low
Overall	2.74	Somewhat Low

Note: 1.00–1.80 = Very Low; 1.81–2.60 = Low; 2.61–3.40 = Somewhat Low; 3.41–4.20 = High; 4.21–5.00 = Very High.

Table 2 illustrates the *pakikisama* scores of Filipino Generation Z nurses, with an overall mean of 2.74, indicating "Somewhat Low" *pakikisama*. The highest scoring indicator was: "I dare to voice opinions on matters affecting efficiency, even if it may embarrass others," with a mean of 2.94. This was followed by "I dare to point out issues in the unit, even at the risk of affecting colleague relationships," also at 2.94. Other scores included "I proactively report workplace coordination problems" (2.71), "I advise colleagues against behaviors hindering job performance" (2.61), and "I speak up about issues with potential serious consequences," with the lowest score of 2.45 ("Low").

Table 3 presents the *pakikipag-ugnayan* of Filipino Generation Z nurses, with an overall average score of 4.44, indicating moderate engagement across the vigor, dedication, and absorption dimensions. In the vigor subscale, nurses demonstrated perseverance and mental resilience in managing challenges, though indicators related to energy and enthusiasm at the start of the workday were lower. Dedication scored comparatively higher, with nurses reporting pride in their work and perceiving it as meaningful and challenging,

Table 3. *Pakikipag-ugnayan* Experienced by Filipino Generation Z Nurses (n=117)

Subscale	Mean Score	Interpretation
Vigor	4.26	Average
Dedication	4.95	High
Absorption	4.09	Average
Overall	4.44	Average

Note: 1.00–2.33 = Low; 2.34–3.66 = Below Average; 3.67–4.99 = Average; 5.00–6.33 = High; 6.34–7.00 = Very High.

although inspiration and enthusiasm remained at moderate levels. The absorption subscale averaged 4.09, showing that nurses often experienced a flow state where time passed quickly, yet indicators of fully immersive engagement, such as detachment difficulty and complete absorption, were moderate. This engagement profile highlights strengths in commitment to meaningful work, while suggesting areas to enhance daily motivation and deeper immersion, emphasizing the need for targeted support to elevate engagement levels among Filipino Generation Z nurses.

Table 4 presents the correlation of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z nurses. The analysis shows a weak negative correlation between *hiya* and *pakikisama* ($p = 0.011$; Spearman Rho = -0.237). A strong positive correlation exists between *hiya* and *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($p < 0.001$; Spearman Rho = 0.400), suggesting that higher *hiya* levels align with increased *pakikipag-ugnayan*. Conversely, *pakikisama* and *pakikipag-ugnayan* exhibit a strong negative correlation ($p < 0.001$; Spearman Rho = -0.472), indicating that as *pakikisama* decreases, *pakikipag-ugnayan* tends to rise.

Table 5 presents the path coefficients of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z nurses. The path analysis revealed nuanced cultural influences on professional engagement. *Hiya* demonstrated a small to approaching moderate negative direct effect on *pakikisama* ($\beta = -0.237, p = 0.011$), suggesting that higher modesty and self-restraint may slightly reduce tendencies toward conformity-driven social harmony. Conversely, *hiya* exhibited a moderate positive direct effect on *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = 0.400, p < 0.001$), indicating that this internalized moral compass can enhance vigor, dedication, and absorption in clinical practice. In contrast, *pakikisama* showed a moderate to approaching large negative direct effect on *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = -0.472, p < 0.001$), implying that excessive emphasis on maintaining smooth interpersonal relations may limit assertiveness and active participation in care delivery. These findings highlight the dual role of Filipino cultural values in either fostering or constraining professional engagement, underscoring the need for leadership strategies that balance cultural sensitivity with empowerment to optimize both relational harmony and clinical performance.

Figure 1 presents the path analysis model examining the relationships among *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-*

Table 4. Correlation of *Hiya*, *Pakikisama*, and *Pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z Nurses

Variables	Spearman's Rho	p-value	Interpretation
Hiya – Pakikisama	-0.237	0.011	Weak Negative Relationship
Hiya – Pakikipag-ugnayan	0.400	<0.001	Strong Positive Relationship
Pakikisama – Pakikipag-ugnayan	-0.472	<0.001	Strong Negative Relationship

Note: Correlation strength based on Spearman's Rho: $\pm 0.00-0.19$ = Very Weak; $\pm 0.20-0.39$ = Weak; $\pm 0.40-0.59$ = Moderate; $\pm 0.60-0.79$ = Strong; $\pm 0.80-1.00$ = Very Strong. Negative values indicate an inverse relationship; positive values indicate a direct relationship.

Table 5. Path Coefficients of *Hiya*, *Pakikisama*, and *Pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z Nurses

Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	p-value	Interpretation
Hiya – Pakikisama	-0.237	0.011	Small to approaching moderate effect (negative)
Hiya – Pakikipag-ugnayan	0.400	<0.001	Moderate effect (positive)
Pakikisama – Pakikipag-ugnayan	-0.472	<0.001	Moderate to approaching large effect (negative)

Note: Values represent standardized path coefficients (β). Statistical significance was evaluated using p-values at $\alpha = 0.05$. Interpretation of effect sizes was guided by Cohen, where values of approximately 0.10 indicate small effects, 0.30 indicate moderate effects, and 0.50 indicate large effects.²³ Effect sizes are interpreted as approximate benchmarks rather than fixed thresholds.

ugnayan among Filipino Generation Z nurses, revealing nuanced cultural dynamics in professional interactions. *Hiya* demonstrated a small to approaching moderate negative effect on *pakikisama* ($\beta = -0.237, p = 0.011$), suggesting that heightened self-consciousness and adherence to social propriety may somewhat limit conformity-driven social harmony. In contrast, *hiya* exhibited a moderate positive effect on *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = 0.400, p < 0.001$), indicating that values such as respect, accountability, and cultural sensitivity may enhance professional collaboration and interpersonal engagement. Conversely, *pakikisama* showed a moderate to approaching large negative effect on *pakikipag-ugnayan* ($\beta = -0.472, p < 0.001$), implying that excessive emphasis on maintaining smooth interpersonal relationships may constrain assertiveness, open communication, and independent clinical decision-making. Overall, the model suggests that while *hiya* may directly strengthen *pakikipag-ugnayan*, it may also counterbalance the potentially limiting influence of *pakikisama*, highlighting the need for nurse leaders to cultivate a balanced cultural environment where harmony supports—rather than suppresses—professional voice and effective teamwork.

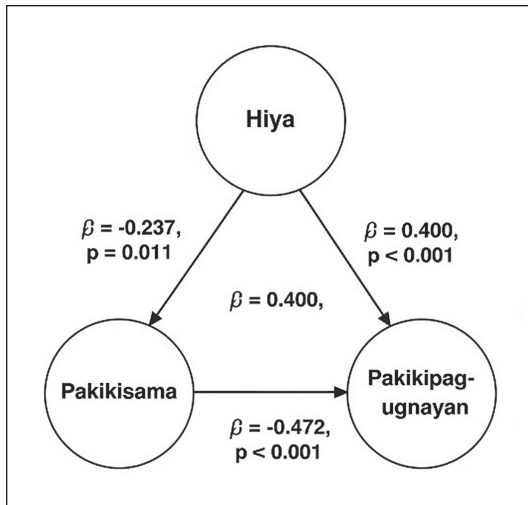


Figure 1. Path Analysis Model: *Hiya*, *Pakikisama*, and *Pakikipag-ugnayan*.

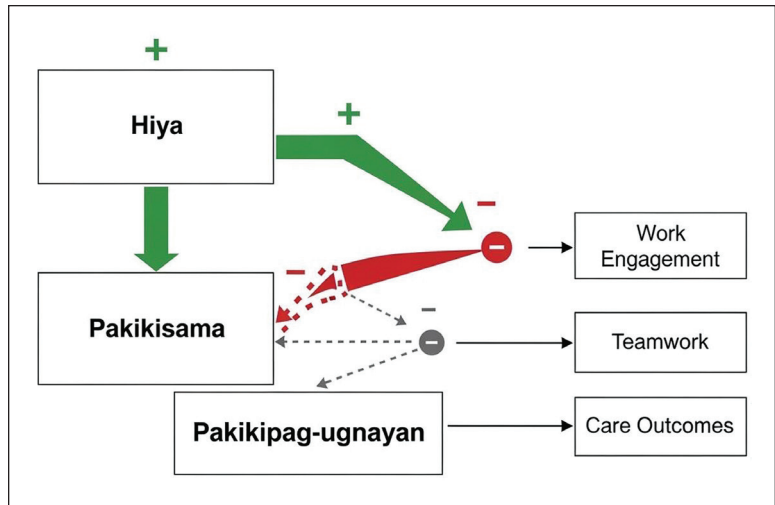


Figure 2. *Hiya-Pakikisama-Pakikipag-ugnayan* Cultural Dynamics Framework.

Figure 2, derived from the path analysis model, presents the *Hiya-Pakikisama-Pakikipag-ugnayan* Cultural Dynamics Framework. It offers a culturally attuned perspective on how Generation Z nurses in the Philippine healthcare context navigate and sustain professional relationships. Grounded in the path analysis model, it situates *pakikipag-ugnayan*—the capacity to foster authentic, respectful, and collaborative professional ties—as the central outcome shaped by two interrelated Filipino cultural values: *hiya* and *pakikisama*. The framework highlights that *hiya*, when reframed beyond its traditional association with avoiding shame, becomes a positive and empowering force—embodying moral courage, ethical integrity, and mutual respect. In this form, *hiya* strengthens trust, facilitates open yet respectful communication, and reinforces shared accountability within healthcare teams, thereby enhancing teamwork, patient safety, and quality of care. Conversely, while *pakikisama* supports harmony and camaraderie, excessive reliance on it can inadvertently hinder open dialogue, suppress constructive dissent, and discourage assertive advocacy—behaviors essential to addressing errors, improving processes, and fostering innovation. The dynamic interplay between these values reveals that the strongest professional connections arise when *hiya* is actively cultivated and *pakikisama* is applied in moderation, allowing nurses to uphold cultural propriety without silencing their professional voice. This model provides a strategic foundation for leadership development, mentorship programs, and workplace policies that honor Filipino cultural heritage while equipping the next generation of nurses to engage critically, compassionately, and collaboratively in patient care.

The framework’s implications extend directly to clinical and educational settings. In nursing practice, the positive influence of *hiya* can be harnessed by integrating ethics-centered communication training, reflective practice sessions, and trust-building activities into both academic curricula and

in-service programs. These initiatives can strengthen moral courage, enhance patient advocacy, and promote respectful, transparent communication among healthcare professionals. At the same time, the potentially limiting aspects of *pakikisama* should be addressed through interventions that cultivate psychological safety, normalize constructive feedback, and encourage speaking up about concerns without fear of disrupting harmony. Nurse leaders can operationalize this balance by designing team huddles, debriefings, and mentorship structures that reward both collegiality and assertive voice behaviors. In high-stakes clinical environments, such cultural calibration can improve interdisciplinary collaboration, reduce errors, and strengthen patient-centered care. By strategically applying this framework, nursing schools and healthcare institutions can cultivate a workforce that respects tradition while embracing the critical thinking, ethical courage, and professional assertiveness essential for contemporary nursing practice.

DISCUSSION

Cultural values—particularly *hiya* and *pakikisama*—emerged as important factors in understanding the professional conduct of Filipino Generation Z nurses. Consistent with prior work, higher levels of *hiya* were associated with heightened awareness of propriety, ethics, and responsibility, aligning with studies that identify *hiya* as a moral compass fostering trust and workplace rapport.²⁴⁻²⁶ However, while the present findings reinforce this positive interpretation, caution is warranted: *hiya* may function differently across contexts, and its role in professional environments may vary depending on organizational culture and team dynamics.

By contrast, relatively lower *pakikisama* scores may indicate a generational shift toward self-expression and willingness to voice concerns, echoing broader trends of

individuality in contemporary Filipino youth.^{27,28} The path analysis revealed a small to approaching moderate negative association between *hiya* and *pakikisama* ($\beta = -0.237, p = 0.011$), as well as contrasting effects on *pakikipag-ugnayan*: *hiya* showed moderate positive association ($\beta = 0.400, p < 0.001$), whereas *pakikisama* showed moderate to approaching large negative association ($\beta = -0.472, p < 0.001$). While these coefficients highlight potentially meaningful cultural dynamics, they should be interpreted with caution given the cross-sectional design, reliance on self-report measures, and the possibility of residual confounding despite adjustment for demographics such as age, gender, and nursing experience.

The proposed *Hiya–Pakikisama–Pakikipag-ugnayan Cultural Dynamics Framework* offers a preliminary conceptualization of how *hiya* and *pakikisama* interact to shape *pakikipag-ugnayan*. The model suggests that balanced *hiya* may support collaborative relationships, while excessive *pakikisama* could inadvertently limit assertiveness and constructive voice behaviors—findings consistent with research emphasizing the importance of psychological safety and open communication in healthcare teams.^{29,30} Nevertheless, given the multiplicity of statistical analyses performed, there is a risk of Type I error, and replication in larger, more diverse samples is needed before drawing firm conclusions.

Findings regarding *pakikipag-ugnayan*—moderate levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption—mirror previous studies on work engagement among nurses, which link engagement to job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and better patient outcomes.^{31–33} Yet, the observed lower motivation at work onset suggests that organizational and psychosocial factors beyond cultural values may play a critical role in sustaining daily engagement.

Overall, while this study contributes to understanding how Filipino cultural constructs shape professional engagement, interpretations should remain cautious. The results provide initial support for the relevance of *hiya* and *pakikisama* in influencing *pakikipag-ugnayan*, but limitations in design, sample size, and scope constrain the generalizability of findings. Future research using longitudinal designs, multi-method approaches (e.g., qualitative triangulation), and comparisons across generational cohorts could clarify whether these dynamics reflect enduring cultural patterns or shifting generational identities.

Limitation

This study is subject to several limitations that may affect the comprehensiveness of the findings regarding the experiences of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* among Filipino Generation Z nurses. Firstly, the exploration of *hiya* may not fully encapsulate its complexity and the nuanced ways it manifests in various contexts, potentially limiting the understanding of its impact on *pakikisama* and *pakikipag-ugnayan*. Additionally, the study's focus on specific variables may inadvertently overlook other critical factors that could influence the experiences of Filipino Generation Z nurses.

These factors may include institutional culture, mentorship dynamics, and the broader socio-economic environment in which these nurses operate. Consequently, while this research offers valuable insights into the relationships between the examined constructs, the findings should be interpreted with caution, acknowledging these limitations and the need for further research to explore the multifaceted nature of these experiences in greater depth.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the interplay of *hiya*, *pakikisama*, and *pakikipag-ugnayan* in shaping the professional connection of Filipino Generation Z nurses. Results showed that *hiya* was rated “very high” among participants, with strong endorsement of both moral-accountability items (e.g., following conscience, fulfilling commitments) and restraint-oriented items (e.g., avoiding criticism, preserving reputation). Despite these positive scores, correlation analysis revealed a negative relationship between *hiya* and *pakikipag-ugnayan*, suggesting that the inhibiting aspects of *hiya* may outweigh its constructive elements in clinical practice.

Pakikisama, measured through conflict avoidance and withholding dissent, was also negatively associated with *pakikipag-ugnayan*. This indicates that when harmony is prioritized to the point of silence, opportunities for assertiveness and collaborative decision-making diminish. In contrast, *pakikipag-ugnayan*—captured as dedication, vigor, and absorption—was positively linked to work engagement, underscoring its role as a vital driver of professional performance. Path analysis confirmed these relationships, showing a positive pathway between *hiya* and *pakikipag-ugnayan* and a negative pathway between *pakikisama* and *pakikipag-ugnayan*.

From these findings, the *Hiya–Pakikisama–Pakikipag-ugnayan Cultural Dynamics Framework* was developed to illustrate how specific cultural values can simultaneously enable and constrain engagement. While primarily exploratory, the framework offers practical implications: in education, it may be used to design reflective and case-based activities that help students critically evaluate cultural influences on professional accountability; in practice and leadership, it can inform initiatives that respect cultural sensitivity while encouraging constructive dialogue.

Although the study is limited to Generation Z nurses in the Philippine context, the results highlight the dual nature of cultural values. *Hiya* and *pakikisama*, when expressed as restraint and conformity, may inhibit engagement, while *hiya*'s moral dimension and *pakikipag-ugnayan*'s vigor and dedication offer pathways for strengthening professional collaboration. By integrating these insights, educators and nurse leaders can better support culturally attuned yet professionally empowered nursing practice.

Statement of Authorship

All authors certified fulfillment of ICMJE authorship criteria.

Author Disclosure

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