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Vladimer B. Kobayashi,  Maria Margarita R. Lavides,   
Cristabel F. Tiangco,  Purisima P. Panlilio,  Remi E. De Leon,   
and Angela D. Carreon 



Data Science For Public Policy Program

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“*Pakikipagkapwa*” is treating others as fellow human beings. It is a crucial Filipino concept that embodies equality as well as interconnectedness. Using data science methods, the team of Kobayashi et al. has shed light on the complexity of this cultural phenomenon.

Photo courtesy of [CharityPhilippines.Org](http://CharityPhilippines.Org)

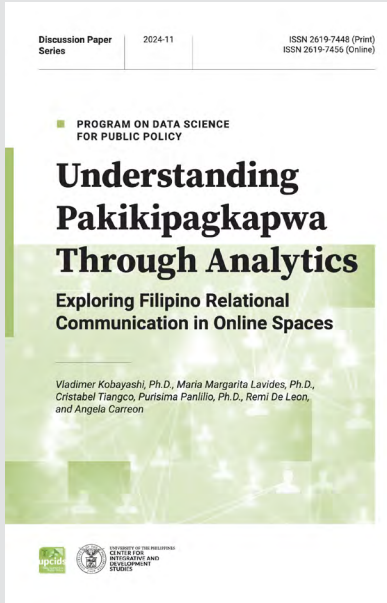
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## PROCEEDINGS

Understanding Pakikipagkapwa through Analytics: Exploring Filipino Relational Communication in Online Spaces



## POLICY BRIEF

Democratizing Data, From Data to Decisions: Data Science and Explainable AI for Public Policy

A photograph of a group of people, including a woman with a cane and a man with a bag, in an outdoor setting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The woman in the foreground is wearing a patterned top and a striped skirt, and is using a cane. The man next to her is wearing a white shirt and a striped skirt, and is holding a large white bag. Other people are visible in the background, some wearing hats and casual clothing. The setting appears to be an outdoor area with a building and trees in the distance.

# Validating the Analytics-Based Model of *Pakikipagkapwa*

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## Introduction

The authors made pioneering research to investigate the concept of *pakikipagkapwa* using data science methods (Kobayashi et al. 2024). Their research generated insights leading to an understanding on how Filipinos' practice of *pakikipagkapwa* has evolved considering that it has been more than three decades since the publication of the *kapwa* model (Enriquez 1992, 75) and about 15 years since Clemente et al. (2008) released their revised version of the *kapwa* model. By using data collected from different social media platforms and the subsequent preprocessing and analysis of the data using natural language processing and topic modelling, Kobayashi et al. (2024) presented an analytics-based model of *pakikipagkapwa* comprising of four dimensions namely, 1) channels, 2) moderators, 3) enablers, and 4) manifestations. While earlier studies on *pakikipagkapwa* were investigating behavioral manifestation, Kobayashi et al. (2024) surmised that *pakikipagkapwa* is a multidimensional phenomenon deserving further scholarly attention. Among others, they identified several moderators of *pakikipagkapwa* such as family, religious organizations, educational institutions, and celebrities or famous personalities in the Philippines. For example having a family environment characterized by positive affective experiences and nurturance facilitates mindfulness of other's welfare.

Accordingly, the analytics-based model is poised to reshape the theoretical underpinnings of future research on Filipino culture and values which have been predominantly reliant on the theories and methods of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology). Moreover, results from their study could inform policies and guidelines which aim to enhance the utilization of social digital spaces to better communicate societal and political issues and concerns (including mobilizing a portion of the population), improve public service delivery by employing a culturally sensitive approach, and creating a management approach which is attuned to the current thoughts and behaviors of Filipinos. From the technological perspective, most large language models (LLMs) are trained from online content, by understanding the values of Filipinos as manifested in their online interaction we are in a better position to customized these models to better reflect the culture and value system of Filipinos.

Given the pioneering nature of Kobayashi et al.'s (2024) research and its implications in the field of Filipino Psychology, as well as on studies concerning Filipino culture and identity, conducting a validation study is imperative. Thus, in this paper, we set out to validate the model through a survey based approach. The validation would strengthen the argument that findings from

online interaction content also manifest in real-world affairs and whether behavior, attitudes and actions in online fora also extend to offline interaction.

## **Kapwa Theory and Analytics**

*Kapwa* which is generally defined as “the unity of the self and others” (Enriquez 1978, 11) is a crucial concept in Filipino psychology. In fact, several researchers (e.g., Juanillo 2026; Rungduin and Rungduin 2013; Gundayao and Hernandez 2025) even claim that the concept underlies Filipino social behaviors such as forgiveness, altruism, compassion, among others. Although many consider *kapwa* as a core value, empirical support for this concept has been rather limited. For example, the *kapwa* theory of Enriquez has been criticized as largely conceptual and lacking empirical support. Moreover, Enriquez did not provide description or explanations of how his analyses were conducted, which means that it is not replicable. Due to these criticisms, research was conducted to empirically test the *kapwa* theory’s value system and has led to the reformulation of the *kapwa* value model. Using cross cultural studies for guidance, Clemente used self-reported questionnaires and derived so-called value dimensions. Their model endorsed 13 values, 11 of which came from Enriquez’s *kapwa* model, and the other two obtained from their empirical study. Moreover, in contrast with Enriquez’s model which identifies *kapwa* as a core value, the model of Clemente did not empirically derive a core value. Although, Clemente’s study is one of the first to empirically test the *kapwa* theory model, it is based on data obtained from 136 university students. The respondents and sample size are not adequate to study a concept believed to underlie Filipino values and interaction. This means that results from such data cannot be generalized, especially to Filipinos outside the university setting. Hence, further investigations need to be conducted to improve upon or to validate their results.

In recent years, a growing number of researchers are leveraging online data to explore people’s values, behaviors, and preferences. These investigations fall under fields such digital humanities, culturomics, and cultural analytics. The goal is to apply big data analytics to digital traces of human activity and interaction, which may reflect people’s thoughts and actions. Filipinos, in particular, are among the most active users of digital platforms and consumers of digital content. They frequently use online spaces to communicate, express opinions, and engage with or support various causes. Given the widespread adoption of digital technology in the Philippines, vast amount of social text have been accumulated and are available online. Analyzing this data could offer valuable insights into the collective consciousness, social dynamics, and

cultural trends within Filipino society. This, in turn, may inform academic research, policy development, and the design of more inclusive digital platforms that reflect and respond to the needs and values of the population. Data regarding interactions online, when analyzed, may provide an opportunity to further elucidate the concept of *pakikipagkapwa* following the approach of culturomics (Michel et al. 2011). This opens possibilities through the application of data science methods to study and analyze Filipino culture, values, and tradition in the modern setting.

One interesting consequence of studying *pakikipagkapwa* as a behavior is that the act of *pakikipagkapwa* can be interpreted as an act of communication—something indirectly acknowledged in the statement “the *kapwa* model is a theory regarding Filipino social interaction” (Clemente et al. 2008, 2). The structure proposed by Enriquez’s *kapwa* model corresponds quite easily with the structural model of communication. In as much as the behavioral manifestations of *pakikipagkapwa* represent the process of finding “the unity of the self in the other,” it corresponds with the process of finding the “mutual understanding,” as expressed by various models such as Rogers and Kinkaid’s Convergence model (De Leon 2005, 25) and more broadly with the etymological connections between “communication” and “communion”, both as behaviors and values/aspirations. Using Enriquez’s model to examine *pakikipagkapwa* as a behavior is functionally the same as using a *kapwa* model of communication. This further supports the applicability of using online interaction data to study *pakikipagkapwa*.

The recent computational developments and increasing utility of data analytics studies present new opportunities for exploring Filipino values in relation to *pakikipagkapwa*, and for triangulating and validating Enriquez’s model as well as Clemente et al.’s earlier findings. Thus, while the Clemente et al.’s study examined Enriquez’s assertions using data from a sample size of 136 respondents, Kobayashi et al. (2024) instead analyzed social data found in various online platforms. Using these data which are generated by online users offers several advantages such as greater flexibility and enhanced generality. For example, it allows the analysis to collect data from a more diverse range of demographics since online data are easy to collect with the use of appropriate technologies (e.g., online social data, unless otherwise stated, are public and freely available). Moreover, analysis can be done in a dynamic way in contrast with cross-sectional survey data which are often static. The results have high ecological validity since users are relatively free to interact and voice opinions in a less restrictive, realistic and engaging platforms. Moreover, these data are non-elicited and unaffected by the values of the researchers. In summary,

Edad (Opsiyonal) Age (Optional)

305 responses

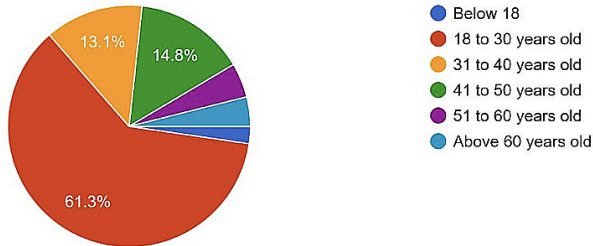


Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents

online data provide rich or thick description of events, context, authentic roles, and better reflect the influence of external factors such as economic and commercial.

## Methods

To validate the findings of Kobayashi et al. (2024), a survey (administered both online and offline) was conducted. Authors received ethical approval for the conduct of the said survey. The questions were focused on affirming whether the variables mentioned in the model were indeed relevant to explain *pakikipagkapwa*. The survey questions were divided into four sections, corresponding to the four dimensions of Kobayashi et al.'s model of *pakikipagkapwa* such as channels, moderators, manifestations, and enablers. An initial set of survey questions were formulated by the authors and pilot tested on several individuals. The results and feedback provided by the people from the pilot test were then examined and led to further reformulation of the questions. Hence, the questions underwent several rounds of revisions before being finalized.

A total of 329 people responded to the survey and were predominantly female, at 61.3 percent, while male respondents were pegged at 34.8 percent. The remaining portion came from those who did not prefer to reveal their genders.

Students emerged as the largest group of respondents, accounting for 56.1 percent of the total, followed by private sector employees at 18.2 percent and government employees at 12.2 percent. The rest of the respondents were teachers, self-employed individuals, and the unemployed. The dominance of students in the survey was also reflected in the age distribution, with the 18–

30 age group being the most prevalent, followed by the 41–50 and 31–40 age groups at 14.8 percent and 13.1 percent respectively.

Facebook emerged as the most popular social media platform among all age groups, with a 98.5 percent usage rate. Other significant platforms included Instagram (75.9 percent), YouTube (69.8 percent), TikTok (61 percent), X (50.3 percent), and Reddit (25 percent).

## Results and Discussion

### *Channels of Pakikipagkapwa*

Kobayashi et al. (2024, 47–48) identified “Government,” “Mass Media Companies with Humanitarian Units,” and “Technology,” as channels for *pakikipagkapwa*. These were all confirmed by the survey results.

#### 1. Government

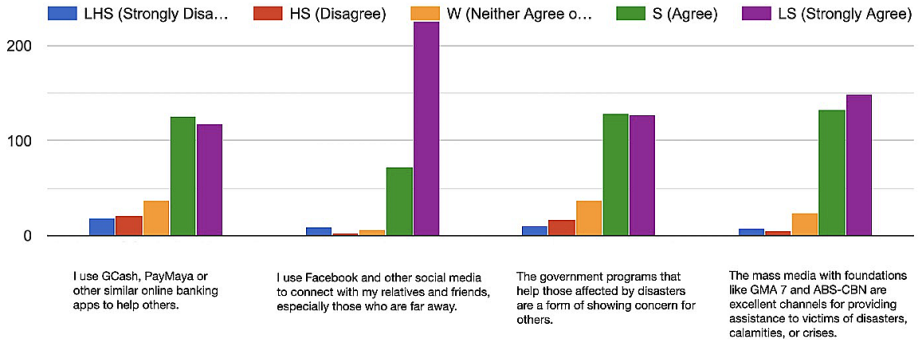
Two hundred fifty-six (78.05 percent) of the respondents asserted that their interactions with government programs that help those affected by disasters were a way of showing concern for others, with 129 agreeing and very slightly fewer, 127, strongly agreeing (six respondents did not answer the question).

This is indicative that interactions with such government programs are a way of participating in the *pakikipagkapwa* inherent in public service, which Abad et al.’s (2024, 112) study of barangay workers note as a way of enhancing *dangal* (dignity).

#### 2. Mass Media Companies with Humanitarian Units

Two hundred eighty-two (85.96 percent) indicated that Mass Media Organizations with linked foundations, such as GMA 7 and ABS-CBN, were excellent channels for *pakikipagkapwa* in the form of providing assistance to victims of disasters, calamities, or crises. One hundred thirty-three respondents agreed with this sentiment, while 149 strongly agreed (eight respondents did not answer the question).

Arguably, this is an indication that respondents recognize participation in the humanitarian efforts of non-government organizations (NGOs) in general as channels of *pakikipagkapwa*, in a way that parallels the same



**Figure 2. Distribution of responses for statements related to channels of *pakikipagkapwa***

recognition for government programs. Ong, Flores, and Combinido (2015, 36) note that television networks' charity foundations, such as GMA's *Kapuso Foundation* and ABS-CBN's *Sagip Kapamilya* are more easily recognized by communities due to their greater visibility and broader reach, whereas the diversity of other NGOs and their more targeted relief efforts make it difficult to identify these NGOs by name.

As an interesting sidenote, this suggests that the May 2020 shutdown of ABS-CBN broadcasting, which led to the discontinuation of some services of the ABS-CBN Foundation, and new limitations on some of the services provided by its flagship programs *Sagip Kapamilya*, *Bantay Bata 163*, and *Bantay Kalikasan* (ABS-CBN Corporation 2020), resulted in one less widely-recognized channel for *pakikipagkapwa*. This, in turn, suggests there may be value in more specific research on the effects this closure has had on the Filipino experience of *pakikipagkapwa*.

### 3. Technology

Respondents confirmed that they used technology in the form of online banking apps to help others and social media as a channel to connect with relatives and friends.

Two hundred forty-four (74.39 percent) reported that they use GCash, PayMaya or other similar online banking apps to help others, with 118 strongly agreeing, and 126 agreeing (six respondents did not answer the question). The introduction of these financial technologies has introduced a new aspect to the cultural practice of *padala* (sending things home), a time-honored form of *pakikipagkapwa* (Afable 2024).

Meanwhile, a remarkable 91.77 percent of the respondents (301 of 328) said that they use Facebook and other social media to connect with relatives and friends, especially those who are far away—with a remarkable majority of 228 “strongly agreeing,” and 73 indicating that they “agree” (seven respondents did not answer the question). This is already a widely recognized phenomenon, and is well covered by studies such as that of Umel (2024).

### Moderators of *Pakikipagkapwa*

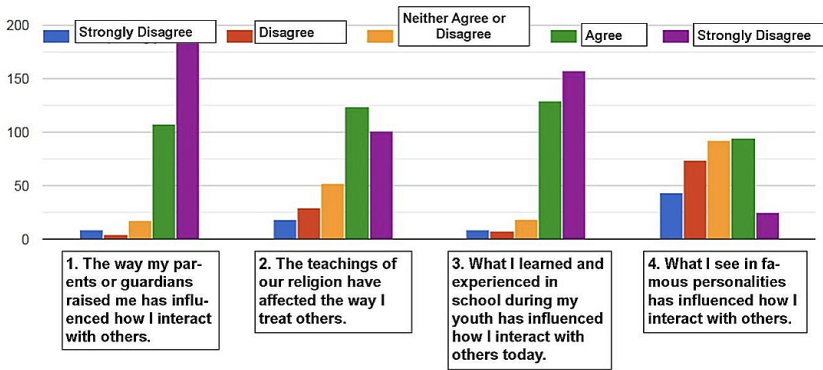


Figure 3. Distribution of responses for statements related to moderators of *pakikipagkapwa*

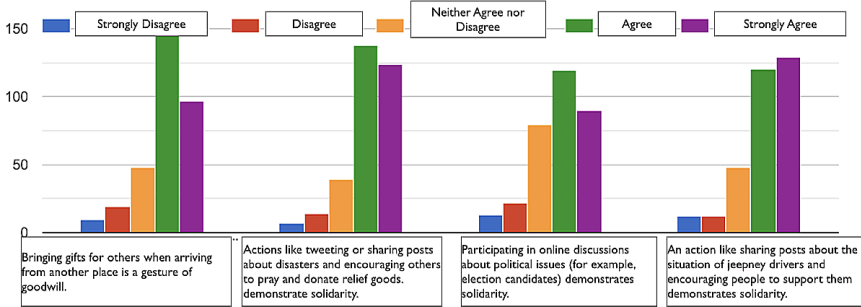
Figure 3 presents the responses related to moderators of *pakikipagkapwa*. Asked if the way their parents or guardians raised them has influenced how they interact with others, 57.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and 33.3 percent agreed. These responses are consistent with the research finding of Lanaca et al. (2022), that those who volunteered in civic-oriented and bayanihan activities learned *pakikipagkapwa* through their parents. As to whether the teachings of their religion affected the way they treat others, 38.3 percent agreed while 31.2 percent strongly agreed. In the Philippines, religions based on Christian and Islamic teachings encourage kindness, respect, and compassion to others. Asked if what they learned and experienced in school during their youth has influenced how they interacted with others today, most of the respondents (48.9 percent) strongly agreed followed by those who agreed (40.2 percent). These responses are expected since schools provide the appropriate settings and activities for students’ interactions with their peers and superiors where they are expected to exhibit cooperation and respect for others. Schools also include values education in their curricula which also promote the importance of *pakikipagkapwa*. During school year 2024–2025,

the Department of Education's (DepED) Matatag Curriculum started its implementation in phases which includes Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education subjects (DepED n.d.). Regarding the question to the respondents if what they see in famous personalities has influenced how they interact with others: 7.6 percent strongly agreed, 28.7 percent agreed, 28 percent neither agreed or disagreed, 22.6 percent disagreed, and 13.1 percent strongly disagreed. This outcome still shows that more than one-third of those surveyed have been influenced by said personalities in interacting socially with others. Through their social media platforms, notable personalities and celebrities communicate and promote their social advocacies which can positively affect the attitudes and behaviors of the public toward pro-social endeavors.

### *Manifestations of Pakikipagkapwa*

Despite the varied forms by which *pakikipagkapwa* is expressed, the core intent driving these manifestations is that of conveying care and concern for others. Four statements pertaining to behaviors in specific contexts were given to participants to rate in terms of their agreement. Among these, it was the statement related to behaviors online during disaster situations ("Actions like tweeting or sharing posts about disasters and encouraging others to pray and donate relief goods demonstrate solidarity") that most participants (81 percent) agreed with. Only 6.5 percent disagreed with the statement while the rest neither agreed nor disagreed. Owing to the country's location in the Pacific Belt, natural disasters are part and parcel of life in the Philippines. During such times, having a means for immediate communication and coordination is imperative and social media has stepped into this role. In the study conducted by Kobayashi et al. (2024), words that appear with high frequency among the discussion groups sampled include "*bayanihan*" (coming together for a common goal), "*pagtulong*" (the act of helping), "*tulong*" (assistance), "*pagbigay*" (the act of giving), and "*brigada*" (a group of *people* working together to bring about the realization of a common goal). Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have been studied as mediums for information dissemination; expressions of solidarity and concern; and a call to altruistic action and coordination of relief efforts during disaster and crisis situations (Ancheta 2025; Soriano et al. 2016).

Kobayashi et al. (2024) found that the word "*pasalubong*" was mentioned quite frequently in the online discussions sampled. A *pasalubong* is a souvenir or gift for someone who was left behind as the giver ventures into a place that is often far, usually not ordinarily frequented, and is oftentimes considered to be an exciting place to be at. Dr. Racelis said in an interview with BBC that



**Figure 4. Distribution of responses for statements related to manifestations of *pakikipagkapwa***

bringing back *pasalubong* fulfils cultural concerns such as communicating the idea that even if physically separated, one's loved ones are not far from one's thoughts (Caballar 2022). Likewise, Agonos (2019) found from the narratives of the Filipino youth migrant returnees that *pasalubong* provides a means for migrants to share experiences through memorabilia that are part of immortalized culture or representations and memories of a place that is different from where one currently is or where one habitually resides. In a validation survey administered by Kobayashi's team following their 2024 study, 76 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "Bringing gifts for others when arriving from another place is a gesture of goodwill" while only 9 percent disagreed and the rest expressed neither agreement nor disagreement. It can be noted in Figure 4 that the difference between the number of those who strongly agreed and agreed is quite big compared to the other statements.

The statement that came third in rank in terms of the percentage of respondents who agreed to it was "An action like sharing posts about the situation of jeepney drivers and encouraging people to support them demonstrates solidarity." Around 78 percent expressed agreement while 7.5 percent expressed disagreement and the rest expressed neither agreement nor disagreement. In the digital age, activism is now not just street rallies and protest mobilizations, but *pakikibaka* (joining the struggle anchored on one's *paninindigan*) may also play out in the virtual space; this is called cyberactivism or digital activism, with social media activism as a more specific form. Galdonez et al. (2024) found in their study of high school students with prior digital activism experience that the predominant forms of engagement include: liking, posting, or tweeting; reporting abusive content; and participation in polls and surveys. Pineda (2022) conducted interviews of youth activists during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that social media platforms such as Facebook, X, and

Instagram were used for noise barrages and online mobilizations. In the online sphere, *pakikipagkapwa* is expressed in the content shared. In the Kobayashi et al. (2024) report, posts and exchanges in forums included expressions of values (e.g., rallying behind a political figure who is a symbol for good governance) as well as calls to advocate for marginalized groups (farmers, low-income workers, and indigenous peoples).

In addition, *pakikipagkapwa* was also seen in the Pineda (2022) study in youth activists' reframing of incivility and red-tagging as opportunities to connect and engage in discourse with those holding opposing views. Interestingly, there was a greater spread found in the distribution of responses to the statement touching on political topics, ("Participating in online discussions about political issues [for example, election candidates] demonstrates solidarity."), where 64.7 percent expressed agreement and 10.8 percent expressed disagreement with the rest neither expressing agreement nor disagreement. The greater spread and the higher number of participants who expressed ambivalence in response to the statement may be due to the heated discussions that ensue when political issues are brought to the table. As such, instead of solidarity, there is a lot of dissension and polarization which sometimes escalate into hostile commenting, belittling remarks, and personal insults.

### *Enablers of Pakikipagkapwa*

Survey results confirmed that "witnessing the suffering" (Kobayashi et al. 2024, 49) of others enables the practice of *pakikipagkapwa* whether or not the person concerned is a relative although they are more likely to practice *pakikipagkapwa* if those people who are suffering are their family members and friends. Asked if they would assist any family member who needs help, a large majority or 91 percent of the respondents agreed, with 56 percent strongly agreeing. Moreover, asked if they would provide assistance to their relatives or friends who would experience hardship due to a disaster, calamity, or crisis, an overwhelming 92 percent agreed, with 54 percent strongly agreeing. On the other hand, when asked if they would assist someone who is not a relative or acquaintance, 76 percent agreed, while only 26 percent strongly agreed. Also, asked if they would provide assistance to victims of disaster, calamity, or crisis who are suffering but are not their relatives or acquaintances, 86 percent agreed, with only 34 percent strongly agreeing. The respondents' strong propensity to prioritize the family echoes the Filipinos' strong family-oriented nature (National Commission for Culture and the Arts 2020) wherein families are considered the "primordial purpose of being" (Manila Bulletin 2022, 1).

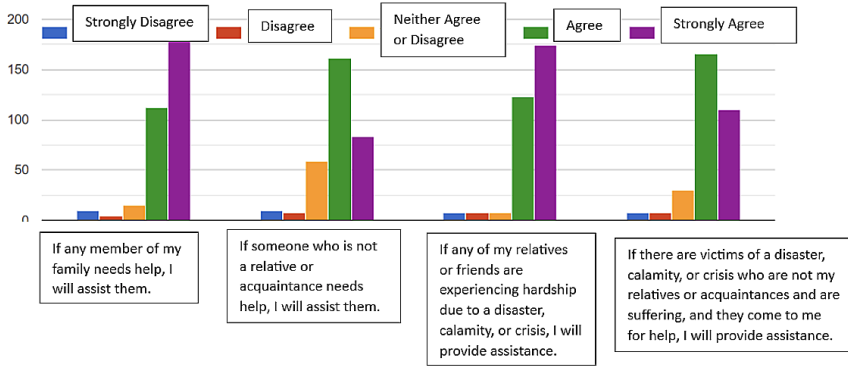


Figure 5. Distribution of responses for statements related to enablers of *pakikipagkapwa*

## Conclusion

This paper has provided both face and content validities supporting Kobayashi et al.’s (2024) analytics-based model of *pakikipagkapwa*. The survey results validated the four dimensions included in the *pakikipagkapwa* model i.e., channels, moderators, manifestations, and enablers. For example, it showed that modern-day technology paved the way for the practice of *pakikipagkapwa*. The findings affirmed the influence of family, religion, education, and famous personalities in determining the level of *pakikipagkapwa*. The authors were able to prove that *pakikipagkapwa* has various manifestations as well as enablers which are all embedded in the Filipino culture. This work demonstrates that data science methods can be a valuable tool for understanding intricate and nuanced cultural phenomena.

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**Telephone** (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268  
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