

Media Care as Moral Praxis: Reclaiming Filipino Values in the Age of Digital Saturation

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ABSTRACT

In an era defined by algorithmic bias, viral content, and digital saturation, the Philippine educational landscape faces a moral imperative: to cultivate media care as a dimension of values education. This essay conceptualizes media care as moral praxis, grounded in Filipino cultural values such as *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan*. Drawing from philosophical traditions and educational leadership, it argues that media engagement must be understood as a relational and ethical act—one that nurtures discernment, empathy, and communal accountability.

Rather than reducing digital literacy to technical skills, the essay highlights its affective and moral dimensions, particularly in contexts shaped by misinformation and performative virality. By situating media care within broader goals of character formation and civic responsibility, it invites educators to reclaim digital spaces as sites of moral development and cultural renewal. Reflective insights are offered on how Philippine schools can embody media literacy through curriculum design, teacher development, and institutional messaging. In contributing to Southeast Asian discourse on values education, this work proposes a culturally rooted framework for ethical media engagement that affirms Filipino moral philosophy while responding to the ethical challenges of contemporary digital life.

Keywords: *digital literacy Filipino values, media care, moral praxis, social media ethics, and values education*

Introduction

The contemporary Philippine educational landscape is increasingly shaped by the pervasive influence of digital technologies. Social media platforms, algorithmic recommendation systems, and viral content have reconfigured how learners' access, interpret, and engage with information. While these developments have expanded opportunities for communication and participation, they have also introduced profound ethical challenges: misinformation, performative virality, and algorithmic bias now threaten the integrity of public discourse and the cultivation of civic responsibility (Skandali, 2025; Onebunne, 2022). In this context, educators are confronted with a pressing question: how can media and information literacy (MIL) be reframed not merely as a technical competency but as a moral praxis that nurtures discernment, empathy, and communal accountability?

This essay proposes the concept of media care as a culturally rooted framework for ethical media engagement. Media care draws from Filipino values such as *pakikipagkapwa* (shared humanity), *pagpapakatao* (humaneness), and *bayanihan* (communal solidarity), which have long served as moral anchors in Philippine society (Aguas, 2016; Enriquez, 1992; Maninang, 2025). By situating media literacy within these indigenous moral philosophies, the essay argues that digital engagement must be understood as relational and ethical, rather than purely instrumental. In doing so, it contributes to

theory-building in MIL by foregrounding the affective and moral dimensions of media use, thereby extending current discourse beyond the dominant focus on critical thinking and technical skills.

The urgency of this reframing is underscored by recent developments in Philippine education policy. The Department of Education's MATATAG curriculum emphasizes values education and character formation as integral to holistic learning (DepEd, 2023). Yet, while values education is formally recognized, its integration into digital literacy remains underdeveloped. Studies of MIL implementation in Philippine classrooms reveal that teachers often struggle to move beyond functional skills, with limited attention to ethical and cultural dimensions (Bautista, 2023). This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach that bridges technical competencies with moral praxis, enabling learners to navigate digital environments responsibly and meaningfully.

Globally, scholars have begun to interrogate the ethical implications of digital media, particularly in relation to transparency, misinformation, and the manipulative power of algorithms (Skandali, 2025). However, much of this discourse is situated in Western contexts, with limited engagement with Southeast Asian cultural frameworks. By foregrounding Filipino values, this essay seeks to enrich the global conversation on MIL with perspectives that emphasize relationality, empathy, and communal responsibility. In doing so, it aligns with UNESCO's call for culturally sensitive approaches to MIL that promote inclusivity and ethical citizenship (Escosio, 2025).

The concept of media care also resonates with broader philosophical traditions. Hermeneutics and phenomenology, for instance, emphasize the relational and interpretive dimensions of human experience, while virtue ethics foregrounds the cultivation of character and moral discernment. These traditions provide a theoretical foundation for understanding media engagement as an ethical act, one that requires attentiveness to the self, the other, and the community. Within educational leadership, media care can be operationalized through curriculum design, teacher development, and institutional messaging, positioning schools as moral agents in digital spaces.

This essay thus advances three interrelated claims. First, media literacy must be reconceptualized as moral praxis, grounded in Filipino cultural values. Second, educational institutions must integrate media care into curriculum and pedagogy, thereby fostering ethical discernment and communal accountability among learners. Third, situating media care within Southeast Asian discourse contributes to global theory-building in MIL, offering a culturally rooted framework that responds to the ethical challenges of contemporary digital life. By reclaiming Filipino values in the age of digital saturation, educators are invited to transform digital spaces into sites of moral development and cultural renewal.

Literature Review and Conceptual Foundations

Media and information literacy (MIL) has traditionally been framed as a set of technical and cognitive competencies: the ability to access, evaluate, and create information across platforms. UNESCO's global framework emphasizes critical thinking, digital citizenship, and the capacity to navigate complex information ecosystems (Escosio, 2025). In the Philippine context, MIL has been integrated into senior high school curricula, yet implementation often remains focused on functional skills such as evaluating sources or producing digital content (Bautista, 2023). While these competencies are essential, they risk overlooking the moral and affective dimensions of media engagement, particularly in societies where cultural values play a central role in shaping ethical behavior.

Filipino Cultural Values as Ethical Anchors

Filipino philosophy and psychology provide culturally grounded concepts through which ethical media engagement may be understood. This essay draws specifically on *pakikipagkapwa*,

pagpapakatao, and *bayanihan*, not as interchangeable Filipino values but as three related ethical orientations concerning one's relationship with others, formation of the self, and responsibility toward the community. They provide the Filipino relational-ethical framework upon which the concept of media care is developed.

The first dimension, *pakikipagkapwa*, is grounded in Virgilio Enriquez's concept of *kapwa*. In *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Enriquez (1992) identifies *kapwa* as a core construct of Filipino psychology, referring to a shared identity between the self and others. Unlike an understanding of the other as fundamentally separate from the self, *kapwa* recognizes a relational connection in which the other is regarded as a fellow human being with whom one shares personhood and social existence. *Pakikipagkapwa*, therefore, entails acting toward others from this recognition of shared humanity. Aguas (2016) further interprets *pakikipagkapwa-tao* as involving openness, availability, and fidelity to the other.

This essay extends Enriquez's concept into mediated environments. It does not redefine *kapwa* itself; rather, it argues that the ethical demands arising from *pakikipagkapwa* remain operative when relationships are technologically mediated. The individual represented in a photograph, discussed in a comment thread, encountered through a viral post, or affected by the circulation of information remains *kapwa*. In the context of media care, *pakikipagkapwa* therefore functions as the relational dimension of the framework: media engagement should recognize that communication practices affect persons whose dignity and humanity cannot be reduced to content, data, audiences, or objects of attention.

The second dimension, *pagpapakatao*, concerns the formation and enactment of one's humanity and moral character. While *pakikipagkapwa* directs attention toward how one recognizes and relates to others, *pagpapakatao* directs attention toward the kind of person one becomes through one's choices and practices. Within media environments, this involves cultivating discernment, integrity, responsibility, and respect in the ways individuals interpret, create, respond to, and circulate information. Media practices are therefore formative: repeated choices about what one believes, shares, creates, or amplifies contribute to the formation of moral character. In this framework, *pagpapakatao* constitutes the personal-moral dimension of media care.

The third dimension, *bayanihan*, extends ethical responsibility from interpersonal relationships and personal formation toward communal life. Traditionally associated with collective effort and mutual assistance, *bayanihan* expresses the recognition that individual actions participate in the well-being of a larger community. Within digital environments, this principle entails responsibility not only for one's own media behavior but also for the quality of the information and communication environment shared with others. Resisting misinformation, correcting harmful content, supporting constructive dialogue, and contributing reliable and socially beneficial information can thus be understood as forms of communal responsibility. *Bayanihan* constitutes the communal dimension of the framework.

The three concepts consequently perform distinct but interconnected functions. *Pakikipagkapwa* establishes the relational orientation of media engagement by asking how others are recognized and treated; *pagpapakatao* establishes its formative orientation by asking what kind of moral person is being cultivated through media practice; and *bayanihan* establishes its communal orientation by asking how media practices contribute to or diminish collective well-being. The framework therefore moves analytically from relationship to moral formation, to communal responsibility. Media care emerges at their intersection: ethical media engagement requires recognition of the other as *kapwa*, cultivation of humane and responsible character through *pagpapakatao*, and participation in the common good through *bayanihan*.

Scope and Limitations of the Filipino Relational-Ethical Framework

The proposed framework is normative and culturally situated. It does not claim that *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan* exhaust Filipino ethical thought, nor does it assume that these values are uniformly understood or practiced by all Filipinos. Rather, the framework selects these three concepts because they illuminate complementary dimensions of ethical media engagement: relationship with others, formation of moral character, and responsibility toward the community. Its scope in this essay is specifically the ethical interpretation of media practices within educational and digital contexts.

Cultural rootedness, moreover, does not make a value or practice inherently ethical. Each concept requires critical application. *Pakikipagkapwa* should not be reduced to affinity only with those regarded as members of one's immediate group, since such an interpretation may exclude those perceived as outsiders. *Pagpapakatao* should not be reduced to conformity with socially prescribed behavior, particularly when such expectations undermine individual dignity, agency, or critical judgment. Similarly, *bayanihan* should not romanticize collective action or imply that communal agreement is always morally preferable to legitimate disagreement and individual responsibility. The framework therefore treats these concepts as ethical resources rather than unquestionable cultural prescriptions.

These limitations are particularly important in digital environments, where relationality and solidarity may also be mobilized to reinforce conformity, amplify misinformation, or protect group interests at the expense of truth and accountability. Media care consequently requires the critical enactment of these Filipino values: recognition of shared humanity must remain attentive to dignity and difference; moral formation must include critical discernment; and communal responsibility must remain oriented toward truthful, responsible, and humane participation.

Media Literacy in Philippine Education

Despite the recognition of values education in the MATATAG curriculum (DepEd, 2023), the integration of Filipino moral philosophy into MIL remains limited. Studies reveal that teachers often struggle to connect technical competencies with ethical reflection, resulting in a fragmented approach to digital literacy (Bautista, 2023). This gap suggests the need for a conceptual framework that bridges MIL with values education, enabling learners to see media engagement not only as a skill but as a moral act. Such integration would align with broader educational goals of character formation and civic responsibility, positioning MIL as a vehicle for cultural renewal.

Global Perspectives on Media Ethics

International scholarship has increasingly highlighted the ethical challenges posed by digital technologies. Algorithmic bias, misinformation, and manipulative marketing practices undermine trust in media systems and erode democratic discourse (Skandali, 2025; Onebunne, 2022). While these studies provide valuable insights, they often emerge from Western contexts that prioritize individual autonomy and rational critique. By contrast, Southeast Asian perspectives, particularly Filipino values, emphasize relationality, empathy, and communal responsibility. Integrating these cultural frameworks into MIL discourse enriches global theory-building, offering alternative paradigms for ethical media engagement.

Towards a Conceptual Framework of Media Care

Drawing from the preceding discussion, this essay defines media care as the habitual and reflective practice of engaging with, interpreting, creating, and sharing media in ways that recognize

others as *kapwa*, cultivate one's *pagpapakatao*, and contribute through *bayanihan* to the well-being of the wider community. Media care therefore understands ethical media engagement not merely as the possession of technical or critical competencies but as a moral practice through which individuals develop relational responsibility, moral character, and communal responsibility in mediated environments.

Within this framework, empathy, discernment, and communal accountability are understood as manifestations of media care rather than as separate foundations of the framework. Empathy expresses the relational recognition associated with *pakikipagkapwa*; discernment reflects the moral formation required by *pagpapakatao*; and communal accountability translates *bayanihan* into responsibility for shared digital environments. These manifestations connect culturally grounded ethical concepts with concrete practices of accessing, interpreting, creating, and sharing media.

These three orientations distinguish media care from an approach to media literacy concerned primarily with competency or critical evaluation. *Pakikipagkapwa* asks how media practices recognize and affect other persons; *pagpapakatao* asks what kind of moral character is formed and expressed through those practices; and *bayanihan* asks how individual media participation contributes to the quality and well-being of the shared information environment. Media care brings these orientations together by treating media engagement as simultaneously relational, formative, and communal.

In practice, these orientations may be expressed through empathy, discernment, and communal accountability. Empathy reflects the recognition of others encouraged by *pakikipagkapwa*; discernment reflects the moral formation central to *pagpapakatao*; and communal accountability expresses the responsibility toward shared well-being associated with *bayanihan*. These are not separate foundations of media care but practical manifestations of its underlying Filipino relational-ethical framework.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this essay positions media care as a culturally grounded approach to ethical media engagement within media and information literacy (MIL). Existing MIL discourse, shaped by UNESCO (2013, 2021), Hobbs (2010), and Buckingham (2019), emphasizes competencies such as access, evaluation, critical interpretation, and media production. While these competencies remain essential, media care extends the discussion by asking how engagement with media also contributes to moral formation and ethical relationships.

Virtue ethics provides the primary ethical foundation of the proposed framework. Rather than evaluating morality solely through rules, duties, or consequences, virtue ethics emphasizes the cultivation of moral character and the dispositions that enable persons to act well across situations (Aristotle, trans. 2009; MacIntyre, 2007). Ethical life, from this perspective, involves the continuing formation of the person through reflection, practical judgment, and habituated moral practice. This orientation is particularly relevant to media engagement because everyday practices of viewing, interpreting, commenting, creating, and sharing media are repeated actions through which ethical dispositions may be cultivated and expressed.

Within this ethical foundation, *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan* function as culturally situated Filipino ethical orientations that give media care its relational, personal-moral, and communal dimensions. *Pakikipagkapwa* directs ethical attention toward recognizing and relating responsibly with others; *pagpapakatao* emphasizes the continuing formation and enactment of humane moral character; and *bayanihan* extends ethical responsibility toward solidarity and communal well-being. Their integration situates moral character within relationships and community rather than treating virtue as exclusively individual (MacIntyre, 2007).

Virtue ethics therefore provides the ethical structure of the framework, while the Filipino concepts provide its culturally situated content and orientation. The framework does not claim that *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan* originate from virtue ethics. Rather, it proposes that they can be brought into dialogue with virtue ethics because each concerns dispositions and practices through which persons learn to relate, act, and participate ethically. Media care applies this dialogue to mediated life, where repeated practices of consuming, interpreting, producing, and circulating information become sites of moral formation.

Reflections and Applications

The preceding theoretical framework situates media care as a moral praxis grounded in Filipino cultural values and philosophical traditions. Yet theory must be translated into practice if it is to shape educational realities. This section reflects on how media care can be operationalized within Philippine schools and institutions, offering applications across curriculum design, teacher development, and institutional messaging. It also considers broader implications for civic life and Southeast Asian discourse on media and information literacy (MIL).

Curriculum Design: Integrating Media Care into Learning

Curriculum design is the most immediate site where media care can be operationalized. Traditionally, media and information literacy (MIL) has been taught as a discrete subject, focusing on skills such as evaluating sources, identifying misinformation, and producing digital content. While these competencies are necessary, they risk reducing media literacy to a technical exercise, detached from the moral and cultural dimensions of Filipino life. Embedding media care across disciplines allows learners to encounter ethical media engagement in varied contexts, reinforcing its relevance to both academic and everyday life (Buckingham, 2019; Hobbs, 2010).

In language classes, students can analyze how online discourse reflects or distorts cultural values, linking lessons on communication to the moral responsibility of speech. In social studies, learners can examine the role of media in civic life, exploring how misinformation undermines democratic participation and how communal accountability can restore trust (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Even in science and technology subjects, discussions of algorithmic bias can be connected to ethical responsibility in innovation (Onebunne, 2022). Such cross-disciplinary integration ensures that media care is not confined to a single subject but becomes a pervasive dimension of education (Livingstone, 2004).

Project-based learning further strengthens this integration. Learners can design campaigns promoting responsible media use, conduct community-based research on digital practices, or create digital content that embodies Filipino values. These projects cultivate not only technical skills but also discernment, empathy, and accountability—the core dimensions of media care. In doing so, they transform abstract values into lived practices, enabling learners to see themselves as moral agents in digital spaces. This approach aligns with the DepEd's MATATAG curriculum, which emphasizes values education as integral to holistic learning (DepEd, 2023). By embedding media care into project-based learning, schools can fulfill this mandate in ways that are culturally rooted and responsive to contemporary challenges (Bautista, 2023).

Curriculum design must also be responsive to the realities of digital saturation. Learners today are immersed in environments where viral content and algorithmic feeds shape their perceptions of truth and value. A curriculum that ignores these realities risks irrelevance. By integrating media care, educators can help learners critically examine the structures of digital platforms, reflecting on how algorithms privilege certain voices while silencing others (Pariser, 2011; Zuboff, 2019). This critical

awareness, combined with moral discernment, equips learners to resist manipulation and engage responsibly in digital spaces (Floridi, 2013).

The curriculum design that integrates media care transforms MIL from a technical subject into a moral project. It situates digital literacy within the broader goals of character formation and civic responsibility, reclaiming education as a site of cultural renewal. In doing so, it aligns with Filipino values and philosophical traditions, offering a culturally rooted framework for navigating the ethical challenges of contemporary digital life (Aguas, 2016; Enriquez, 1992; Maninang, 2025).

Teacher Development: Educators as Moral Agents

Teachers are the linchpin of this transformation. Their ability to model ethical media engagement and guide learners in reflective practice determines the success of curricular integration. Yet research reveals that teachers often struggle to move beyond functional approaches to MIL, focusing on skills rather than values (Bautista, 2023). Teacher development programs must therefore equip educators with both theoretical grounding and practical strategies for embodying media care, aligning with the DepEd's MATATAG curriculum mandate for values integration (DepEd, 2023).

Professional formation in media ethics is essential, grounding teachers in Filipino cultural values and philosophical traditions. Educators must understand how *pakikipagkapwa* informs relational engagement, how *pagpapakatao* shapes moral discernment, and how *bayanihan* fosters communal accountability (Aguas, 2016; Enriquez, 1992; Maninang, 2025). This formation enables teachers to interpret digital practices through a moral lens, guiding learners in doing the same. UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (2021) reinforces this need, emphasizing that teacher preparation must integrate ethical and cultural dimensions alongside technical competencies.

Equally important is the cultivation of reflective practice. Teachers must critically examine their own media use and its ethical implications, modeling the kind of discernment they expect from learners. Critical pedagogy, which emphasizes dialogue and reflection, provides a useful framework for this process (Hobbs, 2010). By engaging learners in discussions about their digital experiences, teachers can foster collective reflection on the moral dimensions of media engagement. This approach situates media care within lived experience, aligning with hermeneutic and phenomenological traditions that emphasize relational understanding and embodied practice (Floridi, 2013).

Institutional support is also crucial. Schools must provide resources, mentorship, and opportunities for continuous learning, ensuring that teachers remain responsive to evolving digital challenges. Partnerships with organizations such as the Philippine Association for Media and Information Literacy (PAMIL) can enrich teacher development initiatives, connecting educators to broader networks of expertise and advocacy. Continuous learning ensures that educators remain capable of guiding learners through complex ethical terrain, echoing global calls for lifelong teacher training in MIL (UNESCO, 2013).

Teacher development must also address the affective dimensions of media care. Educators must be prepared to guide learners in cultivating empathy and communal accountability, not just critical thinking. This requires pedagogical strategies that engage emotions and relationships, recognizing that media engagement is not purely cognitive but deeply affective. Silverblatt (2018) emphasizes interpretive skills as keys to ethical media engagement, while Potter (2019) highlights the importance of integrating affective and cognitive dimensions in media literacy. By fostering empathy, teachers help learners see media use as a relational act, grounded in shared humanity.

The teacher development that emphasizes media care transforms educators into moral agents. It equips them to model ethical media engagement, guide learners in reflective practice, and

integrate Filipino values into pedagogy. In doing so, it positions teachers as central to the project of reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development and cultural renewal.

Institutional Messaging: Schools as Moral Communities

Institutions themselves play a critical role in modeling media care. Schools are not merely sites of instruction but moral communities whose messaging shapes learners' values and practices. Institutional policies can articulate ethical standards for media engagement, grounded in Filipino values. Guidelines on social media use, for example, can emphasize respect for others (*pakikipagkapwa*), integrity in communication (*pagpapakatao*), and collective accountability (*bayanihan*) (Enriquez, 1992; Jocano, 1997). Such policies provide a framework for both learners and educators, reinforcing the moral dimensions of media care.

Institutional communications, whether through websites, social media, or public statements, should also embody media care, modeling transparency, respect, and cultural sensitivity. By demonstrating ethical media practices in their own communications, institutions provide learners with concrete examples of how values can be lived in digital spaces. Floridi (2013) argues that institutions must act as ethical stewards of information, ensuring that communication practices uphold dignity and accountability. This perspective aligns with the MATATAG curriculum's emphasis on values education as integral to holistic learning (DepEd, 2023).

Community partnerships extend the reach of media care beyond the classroom. Collaborations with local organizations, government agencies, and civil society groups can promote responsible media use in broader contexts. For instance, schools can partner with barangay councils to conduct workshops on misinformation and online civility, grounding these initiatives in Filipino values. Such programs demonstrate how media care can be practiced in everyday life, fostering ethical engagement at the community level. The UNESCO MIL City initiative in Quezon City illustrates the potential of institutional engagement in promoting media literacy (Escosio, 2025). By integrating Filipino values into such programs, media care can be operationalized at the community level, aligning global frameworks with local cultural contexts (UNESCO, 2013).

Institutional messaging must also address the challenges of digital saturation. Learners are constantly exposed to algorithmic feeds and viral content that shape their perceptions of truth and value. Institutional policies and communications can help learners critically examine these structures, fostering awareness of how digital platforms privilege certain voices while silencing others (Pariser, 2011; Zuboff, 2019). Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) describe this phenomenon as "information disorder," highlighting the systemic nature of misinformation and manipulation. By modeling transparency and accountability, institutions can counteract these manipulative tendencies, reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development.

Institutional messaging that embodies media care positions schools as moral agents in digital spaces. It demonstrates that education is not only about technical instruction but also about cultivating values and civic responsibility. By modeling ethical media practices, institutions provide learners with concrete examples of how Filipino values can be lived in digital contexts. In doing so, they contribute to the broader project of cultural renewal, reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development and communal accountability.

Broader Implications: Civic Life and Southeast Asian Discourse

The broader implications of media care extend to civic life and Southeast Asian discourse. By reclaiming Filipino values in digital engagement, media care contributes to the cultivation of ethical citizenship. It equips citizens to resist misinformation, challenge algorithmic bias, and contribute to

constructive public discourse. This aligns with the goals of values education, situating MIL within the project of civic renewal (DepEd, 2023; Bautista, 2023).

Media care fosters civic responsibility by encouraging learners to engage with media in ways that support democratic participation. By cultivating discernment, empathy, and accountability, media care equips citizens to resist manipulation and contribute to constructive public discourse. Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) describe this challenge as “information disorder,” highlighting the systemic nature of misinformation and its corrosive impact on democracy. Skandali (2025) similarly emphasizes the ethical dilemmas posed by transparency, AI marketing, and misinformation in social media environments. These global perspectives underscore the urgency of embedding media care into civic education.

Moreover, by foregrounding Filipino values, media care enriches global MIL discourse with Southeast Asian perspectives. While much of the literature on media ethics emerges from Western contexts, Filipino philosophy emphasizes relationality and communal responsibility (Aguas, 2016; Enriquez, 1992; Maninang, 2025). Integrating these perspectives into global discourse provides alternative paradigms for ethical media engagement, contributing to theory-building in MIL. In contexts where algorithmic bias and performative virality threaten trust and integrity, media care offers a moral compass grounded in Filipino values. It enables learners and institutions to navigate digital environments responsibly, reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development and cultural renewal (Floridi, 2013; Potter, 2019).

The Southeast Asian contribution is particularly significant in the context of UNESCO’s call for culturally sensitive approaches to MIL. UNESCO’s global assessment framework (2013) and teacher curriculum (2021) emphasize inclusivity and ethical citizenship, but they often lack localized grounding. By situating media care within Filipino values, this essay demonstrates how local cultural frameworks can enrich global discourse. It highlights the importance of relationality, empathy, and communal accountability, offering alternative paradigms for ethical media engagement. Silverblatt (2018) reinforces this by arguing that interpretive skills are central to ethical media literacy, while Pariser (2011) and Zuboff (2019) warn of structural threats such as filter bubbles and surveillance capitalism that erode civic trust.

The broader implications of media care extend beyond education to civic life and global discourse. By reclaiming Filipino values in digital engagement, media care contributes to the cultivation of ethical citizenship and enriches Southeast Asian perspectives on MIL. It offers a culturally rooted framework for navigating the ethical challenges of digital saturation, positioning Philippine scholarship as a vital contributor to global theory-building in media and information literacy.

Media Care as a Framework for MIL, Ethics, and Education

The reflections on curriculum, teacher development, and institutional messaging converge on a deeper insight: media care is not merely a supplementary concept but a framework that integrates media and information literacy (MIL), ethics, and education into a coherent whole. This integrative perspective highlights how Filipino cultural values can serve as the moral foundation for digital literacy, ensuring that technical competencies are always situated within ethical and educational contexts. By positioning media care at this intersection, Philippine scholarship contributes to global theory-building, offering a culturally rooted paradigm for ethical media engagement in the age of digital saturation (Aguas, 2016; Enriquez, 1992; Maninang, 2025).

Media Care and Media and Information Literacy

From the standpoint of MIL, media care expands the traditional focus on access, evaluation, and production of information. UNESCO's global framework emphasizes critical thinking, digital citizenship, and the capacity to navigate complex information ecosystems (UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO, 2021; Escosio, 2025). While these competencies are essential, they often remain abstract or overly technical, detached from the moral realities of everyday life. Media care insists that these competencies must be grounded in relational and moral responsibility.

For example, evaluating sources is not only about identifying factual accuracy but also about discerning the ethical implications of sharing or amplifying certain voices. A learner who encounters a viral post must ask not only "Is this true?" but also "What impact will be sharing this have on others?" Producing digital content is not only a matter of technical skill but of embodying empathy and communal accountability. A student who creates a video or blog post must consider whether their work affirms human dignity (*pagpapakatao*) and fosters solidarity (*bayanihan*). In this way, media care reframes MIL as moral praxis, ensuring that learners see digital engagement as an ethical act rather than a neutral skill (Buckingham, 2019; Hobbs, 2010).

This reframing also addresses the challenges of digital saturation. In environments where algorithmic feeds privilege sensationalism and virality, MIL must go beyond technical critique to cultivate moral discernment. Media care equips learners to resist manipulation by asking relational questions: How does this content affect my community? Does it affirm shared humanity (*pakikipagkapwa*) or erode trust? By embedding these questions into MIL, media care transforms digital literacy into a practice of ethical responsibility (Livingstone, 2004; Pariser, 2011).

Media Care and Ethics

From the standpoint of ethics, media care provides a culturally rooted lens for navigating the challenges of digital life. Algorithmic bias, misinformation, and performative virality are not merely technical problems but moral ones, undermining trust and eroding communal solidarity (Skandali, 2025; Onebunne, 2022). Filipino values such as *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan* offer ethical anchors for resisting these challenges (Enriquez, 1992; Jocano, 1997). They remind learners that media engagement is relational, that human dignity must be preserved, and that communal responsibility must guide digital practices.

Ethics in media care is not abstract but embodied. It is lived in the everyday choices of learners and educators: whether to share a post, how to respond to online discourse, how to interpret viral content. By embedding Filipino values into MIL, media care ensures that ethical reflection is not detached from culture but grounded in traditions that resonate with learners' identities. This cultural grounding makes ethical reflection more accessible and meaningful, enabling learners to see themselves as moral agents in digital spaces (Floridi, 2013).

Moreover, media care situates ethics within communal accountability. In contrast to Western frameworks that often emphasize individual autonomy, Filipino values highlight relationality and solidarity. Media care thus reframes ethical responsibility as collective, reminding learners that their digital practices affect not only themselves but their communities. This communal perspective is particularly important in contexts where misinformation and algorithmic bias threaten democratic participation. By cultivating communal accountability, media care equips citizens to resist manipulation and contribute to constructive public discourse (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Zuboff, 2019).

Media Care and Education

From the standpoint of education, media care aligns with the broader goals of values formation and civic responsibility. The MATATAG curriculum emphasizes the integration of Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education into holistic learning (DepEd, 2023). Media care operationalizes this mandate by embedding values into digital literacy, ensuring that learners cultivate not only technical skills but moral character.

Education is not only about instruction but about formation. Media care positions schools as moral communities, teachers as ethical guides, and learners as responsible citizens. It transforms education into a site of cultural renewal, reclaiming digital spaces as arenas for moral development. By embedding Filipino values into curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional messaging, media care ensures that education responds to the ethical challenges of digital saturation (Bautista, 2023; Silverblatt, 2018).

This educational dimension also highlights the role of leadership. Educational leaders must model media care in their policies, communications, and community engagement. By articulating ethical standards for media use, modeling transparency and respect in institutional communications, and engaging in community partnerships, schools can embody media care at the institutional level. In doing so, they position themselves as agents of cultural renewal, extending the impact of media care beyond the classroom to society at large (Potter, 2019).

Media Care as Integrative Framework

These perspectives demonstrate that media care is not simply a concept but a framework that bridges MIL, ethics, and education. It integrates technical competencies with moral discernment, cultural values with pedagogical practice, and individual responsibility with communal accountability. This framework provides educators, institutions, and communities with a holistic approach to digital literacy, one that responds to the ethical challenges of contemporary life while affirming Filipino moral philosophy.

By situating media care at the intersection of MIL, ethics, and education, Philippine scholarship contributes to global theory-building. It offers a culturally rooted paradigm for ethical media engagement, enriching global discourse with Southeast Asian perspectives. In contexts where algorithmic bias and performative virality threaten trust and integrity, media care provides a moral compass grounded in Filipino values. It enables learners and institutions to navigate digital environments responsibly, reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development and cultural renewal (UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO, 2021; Zuboff, 2019).

Conclusion

This paper argued that media care is best understood as a framework that integrates media and information literacy (MIL), ethics, and education into a coherent whole. In an age of digital saturation, where algorithmic bias, misinformation, and performative virality erode trust and distort civic discourse, media care offers a culturally rooted response grounded in Filipino values of *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagpapakatao*, and *bayanihan*. These values remind us that media engagement is never neutral but always relational, ethical, and communal.

At the curricular level, media care reframes MIL from a technical subject into a moral project, embedding ethical reflection across disciplines and encouraging project-based learning that cultivates discernment, empathy, and accountability. At the pedagogical level, it positions teachers as moral agents who model ethical practices and guide learners in reflective engagement. At the

institutional level, it situates schools as moral communities whose policies, communications, and partnerships embody ethical standards for digital life. These applications demonstrate that media care is not an isolated concept but a holistic framework that bridges competencies with values, skills with character, and individual responsibility with communal accountability.

The implications of this framework extend beyond education to civic life and global discourse. By reclaiming Filipino values in digital engagement, media care contributes to the cultivation of ethical citizenship and enriches Southeast Asian perspectives in global MIL scholarship. It offers an alternative paradigm to Western-centric models, emphasizing relationality and solidarity as essential to ethical media engagement. In doing so, it situates Philippine scholarship as a vital contributor to global theory-building, offering insights that respond to the ethical challenges of digital saturation.

Thus, media care affirms that digital literacy is not only about navigating information but about cultivating moral character and civic responsibility. By reclaiming digital spaces as sites of moral development and cultural renewal, it provides both a moral imperative and a scholarly contribution to the evolving theory of media and information literacy, one that insists MIL must be understood as moral praxis in the twenty-first century.

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