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# Instructional Media in Early Moral Education: A Systematic Review on the Cultivation of Religious and Moral Values in Children Aged 4–6

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## Abstract

In an era marked by moral uncertainty and the erosion of traditional value systems, early childhood education faces increasing pressure to cultivate ethical and religious foundations from a young age. This study systematically reviews the role of instructional media in instilling religious and moral values among children aged 4–6. Utilizing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA 2020 protocol and structured using the PICO framework, this review synthesizes findings from 20 empirical studies published between 2016 and 2024. The analysis identifies two dominant categories of media—traditional (e.g., puzzles, board games, local games) and audiovisual (e.g., animations, digital storybooks)—which are most effective when integrated with pedagogical strategies such as storytelling, ritual routines, and play-based learning. Instructional tools grounded in local culture and values not only enhance comprehension but also support identity formation and contextual moral internalization. The review further finds that many media interventions leverage constructivist and experiential learning models, promoting internalization through relatable and immersive experiences. However, gaps remain, particularly regarding longitudinal impact assessments and cross-contextual evaluations. The studies underscore the need for teacher professional development in media-based moral instruction, culturally responsive curriculum planning, and collaborative engagement among educators, curriculum developers, and community stakeholders. Limitations include the narrow temporal scope and inconsistencies in methodological rigor across studies. Future research is encouraged to adopt more robust, long-term, and culturally comparative designs to determine optimal combinations of media types and pedagogical techniques for sustained moral development in diverse educational settings.

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## Introduction

In today's rapidly changing world, nurturing moral and religious values from an early age has become increasingly crucial for shaping generations who are ethical, empathetic, and socially conscious. As cultural landscapes shift and digital influences intensify, early childhood moral education stands out as a vital anchor for individual and societal well-being (Safara et al., 2023). Concerns have been raised over the moral vulnerability of young children growing up amid media saturation and weakened family engagement (Slezin, 2023). The formative years, particularly ages four to six, mark a pivotal phase when children begin to grasp empathy, internalize values, and distinguish right from wrong (Li & Koenig, 2023). In response, the integration of religious and moral teachings into early education is now viewed as an essential strategy across learning environments.

Research has consistently highlighted the pivotal roles of families, schools, and cultural settings in fostering children's moral development (Filimonau et al., 2022; Strhan, 2017). While the family remains the first site of value formation, educational practitioners play an increasingly strategic role in modeling ethical behavior and guiding moral reasoning. Teachers reinforce moral instruction by embedding it into daily routines and promoting prosocial conduct within

structured learning spaces (Szttychmiller, 2021). In many education systems worldwide, character education has become institutionalized, drawing from national philosophies and religious frameworks (Mararenko & Smyrnov, 2022; Roca, 2021). These integrated efforts are indispensable in helping young children develop a solid ethical foundation.

Building upon these foundations, the use of media has emerged as a promising tool in early childhood moral and religious education. Through engaging formats such as animated videos, illustrated stories, and digital games, media simplify abstract concepts and stimulate interest among young learners (Moto, 2019; Mustika & Suyadi, 2022). These tools serve as interactive conduits that connect moral principles to tangible experiences (Hasan et al., 2021). Repetition, role-play scenarios, and guided reflection further enhance media's capacity to support internalization of values (Komashinskaia & Tsurkan, 2019; Moldavan et al., 2022; Rizal et al., 2016). As a result, media has gained ground as an effective and accessible method in moral instruction.

Across the globe, various countries have begun embedding media into religious and ethical instruction for young children. In Malaysia and Belgium, for example, national curricula incorporate digital tools to reinforce religious education in both public and private settings (Franken & Lievens, 2022; Saudi et al., 2025). Audiovisual materials tailored to local cultural narratives have also proven effective in countries like South Africa and Brazil (De Kock et al., 2024). These international practices illustrate the flexibility of media to deliver value-based content that resonates with diverse traditions (Giordmaina & Zammit, 2019). Despite varying levels of implementation, such media interventions are being increasingly embraced for their educational promise.

Academic literature further supports the use of media to foster inclusive and meaningful learning environments in early childhood education (Ambe et al., 2024; Taylor et al., 2024). Storytelling and emotional identification embedded within media formats help children internalize moral lessons naturally and effectively (Sato et al., 2024). Religious values introduced through age-appropriate language and visuals improve children's ability to differentiate right from wrong (Ganjvar, 2019; Sharma, 2019). Moreover, such approaches bolster children's emotional intelligence and social behavior (Pandya, 2017). These findings affirm the role of educational media as a powerful complement to traditional pedagogies.

Nonetheless, critical gaps remain in existing scholarship. A significant portion of prior studies aggregates findings across broad childhood age groups, often overlooking the specific developmental characteristics of children aged 4–6 (Alhassan et al., 2016; Malvadi, 2017). There is limited understanding of how various media types uniquely influence moral behavior within this age bracket, especially in culturally diverse contexts (Chester et al., 2019; Sayan & Günel, 2022). Additionally, few longitudinal studies investigate the sustainability of behavioral changes prompted by media-based instruction. Variations in methodology and lack of comparative analysis further obscure conclusions about best practices (Kasstan, 2023). These limitations call for a more focused, age-specific, and methodologically robust investigation.

This study seeks to fill that gap by systematically reviewing how educational media facilitate the development of religious and moral values in children aged 4–6. It aims to synthesize pedagogical approaches, media typologies, and instructional techniques that demonstrate proven effectiveness. In doing so, the research will provide a clearer picture of how early learners internalize values through digital and analog media tools. Findings from this review are expected to inform educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in crafting more responsive and impactful moral education strategies. By doing so, the study contributes to the global discourse on value education and its role in nurturing morally grounded future citizens.

## Methods

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, examine, evaluate, and synthesize existing research on the use of instructional media in fostering religious

and moral values among early childhood learners. Following the procedures outlined by Triandini et al. (2019), the review process was conducted systematically through clearly defined steps, beginning with the formulation of a focused research question and proceeding through the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies.

To guide the formulation of the research questions and the overall review structure, the PICO framework—an acronym for Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome—was utilized (Schiavenato & Chu, 2021). This framework ensured a structured focus on the key variables relevant to the research objective. The Population included children aged 4 to 6 years, reflecting the early childhood stage where foundational moral and religious values are typically cultivated. The Intervention referred to the use of various instructional media—including interactive tools, visual aids, audio materials, and audiovisual content—aimed at enhancing religious and moral understanding. The Comparison involved children in educational settings that did not utilize targeted media-based interventions, or those relying solely on traditional approaches without structured media support. The Outcome focused on the internalization of religious and moral values, measured through indicators such as belief in God, respectful behavior toward others, tolerance, and environmental stewardship as part of religious expression.

The detailed components of the PICO framework used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. PICO Framework for Research Questions

Component	Definition	Application in This Study
<b>P – Population</b>	Target group or population under investigation	Early childhood learners (ages 4–6) enrolled in preschool or kindergarten education
<b>I – Intervention</b>	The treatment or condition being studied	Implementation of instructional media (e.g., puzzle, picture cards, gamelan games, guidebooks, audiovisual animations such as <i>Nussa, Upin &amp; Ipin, Omar &amp; Hana</i> ) to develop moral and religious values
<b>C – Comparison</b>	An alternative to the intervention, used as a control or baseline	Children who received no media-based instruction or only conventional teaching (e.g., verbal instruction without multimedia tools)
<b>O – Outcome</b>	The expected result or effect of the intervention	Improved understanding and internalization of moral and religious values, including belief in God, respect for diversity, empathy, prosocial behavior, and care for the environment

This structured approach enabled a focused review and ensured consistency in article selection and data extraction. The PICO framework not only shaped the inclusion criteria but also served as a foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of various media in cultivating early moral development.

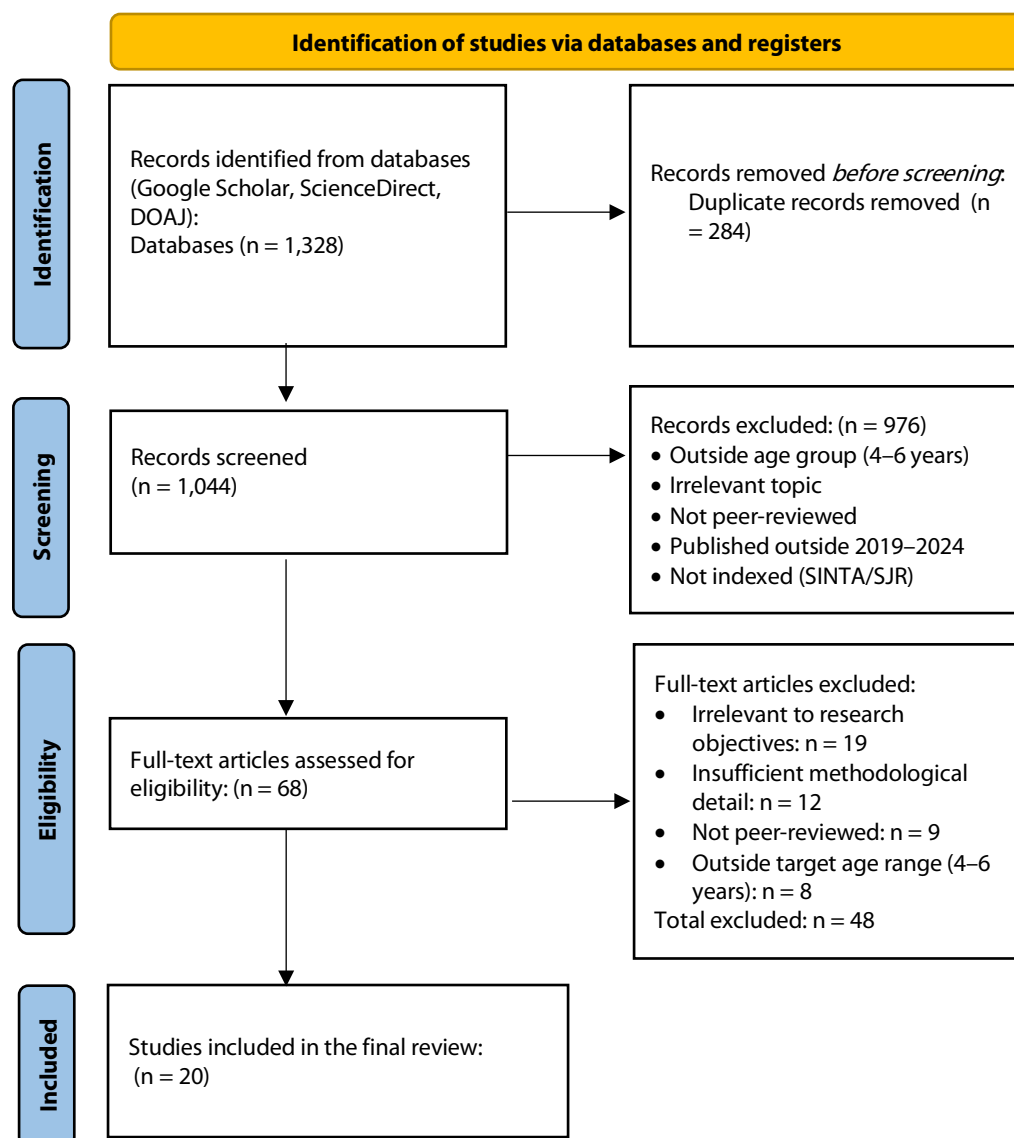
This study followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor in article selection and reporting. The review process began with a comprehensive search across academic databases, including Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The search was conducted using a combination of Boolean operators (AND, OR) with keywords such as “*instructional media*”, “*religious values*”, and “*moral values in early childhood*”. The inclusion of Boolean logic enhanced the precision of the search string, allowing for retrieval of studies relevant to the intersection of media and value formation in early childhood education.

The initial search yielded 1,328 articles. These were imported into Mendeley for reference management and de-duplication. After removing duplicates ( $n = 284$ ), 1,044 articles proceeded to the title and abstract screening phase. Two independent reviewers conducted the screening using predefined inclusion criteria: (1) published between 2019 and 2024; (2) focused on early childhood learners aged 4–6 years; (3) discussed the use of media in the development of moral and/or religious values; (4) published in journals indexed in SINTA (level 1 or 2) for national

publications and SJR (Q1–Q4) for international journals. Grey literature, conference papers, and articles lacking ISSN or DOI were excluded.

In total, 68 articles passed the initial screening and were evaluated in full-text review. Of these, 48 were excluded for the following reasons: irrelevance to research objectives ( $n = 19$ ), insufficient methodological detail ( $n = 12$ ), non-peer-reviewed sources ( $n = 9$ ), and studies involving populations outside the target age range ( $n = 8$ ). A total of 20 articles met all inclusion criteria and were synthesized for this review. The selection process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart of Article Selection



The decision-making process involved double screening by two independent reviewers, with disagreements resolved through consensus. To ensure consistency, a screening protocol and eligibility checklist were developed prior to the review process. Inter-rater reliability was calculated at the title/abstract stage using Cohen's Kappa, yielding a coefficient of 0.82, indicating strong agreement.

## Result

This systematic literature review identified a total of twenty articles selected through a structured screening process aimed at mapping the key characteristics of studies focused on religious and moral value development in early childhood. These studies underscore the critical role of instructional media in stimulating young children's moral-religious growth. The analysis revealed a range of media types employed across the studies, with two dominant categories emerging: traditional media and audiovisual media, the former being more frequently utilized in classroom contexts. The studies originated from various peer-reviewed journals and employed diverse research methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches.

This methodological and thematic diversity provides a comprehensive overview of current educational practices and research directions in the field. The distribution of these characteristics across the selected articles is presented in Table 2, which illustrates the analytical matrix developed from the extracted data. The inclusion of studies from multiple academic sources ensures a broad and representative perspective on the topic.

Table 2. Analytical Matrix of the Reviewed Articles

Author	Type of Media	Children's Age	Research Design
(Suryani & Wirman, 2019)	Traditional	5–6 years	Classroom Action Research (CAR)
(Wulandari et al., 2022)	Traditional	4–6 years	Descriptive Qualitative
(Puspitasari & Hidayatulloh, 2020)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Literature Review
(Rumara et al., 2024)	Traditional	5–6 years	Descriptive Qualitative
(Al Mubarak, 2021)	Traditional	4–6 years	Classroom Action Research (CAR)
(Salasiah, 2021)	Traditional	4–6 years	Qualitative (Interview + Observation)
(Prastiwi et al., 2023)	Traditional	4–6 years	Classroom Action Research (CAR)
(Lestari, 2021)	Traditional	5–6 years	Development Research (ADDIE Model)
(Taufik et al., 2022)	Traditional	5–6 years	Research & Development (R&D)
(Indriasih, 2022)	Traditional	5–6 years	Quantitative Experiment (Pretest–Posttest)
(Haryaningrum et al., 2023)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Development Research (ADDIE Model)
(Fadlillah, 2016)	Traditional	4–6 years	Conceptual Study / Theoretical Review
(Agusniatih & Awalunisah, 2020)	Audiovisual	4–6 years	Experimental (Storytelling Method)
(Amiroh & Salsabila, 2021)	Audiovisual	6–9 years	Descriptive Qualitative
(Westri & Pransiska, 2021)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Classroom Action Research (CAR)
(Cinthia & Khadijah, 2024)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Development Research (R&D – Audio-Visual)
(Margaretha & Pura, 2019)	Audiovisual	4–5 years	Quantitative Experiment (Quasi-Experimental)
(Zulfiatiaiani, 2019)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Classroom Action Research (CAR)
(Sartika & Putri, 2021)	Traditional	4–6 years	Literature Study (Library Research)
(Samsurrijal, 2022)	Audiovisual	5–6 years	Experimental (Storytelling Method)

## General Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies

The systematic review comprised 20 studies conducted between 2016 and 2024, with a noticeable concentration of publications from 2019 onward. The majority of studies focused on children aged 4 to 6 years, with a particularly high frequency in the 5–6-year-old range, reflecting



the developmental period where foundational moral and religious values are often introduced (Indriasih, 2022; Suryani & Wirman, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2022). Only one study extended to older children aged 6–9 years, indicating a predominant emphasis on early childhood settings, especially within kindergarten or PAUD (early childhood education) contexts. This age bracket is pedagogically significant as it aligns with the sensitive period for value formation according to early childhood developmental theories.

In terms of research design, the most commonly employed methodology was Classroom Action Research or appearing in nearly one-third of the reviewed studies (Prastiwi et al., 2023; Suryani & Wirman, 2019; Zulfatiani, 2019). These studies typically aimed to measure progressive improvement in moral or religious behavior across multiple cycles of classroom intervention. Other prevalent designs included qualitative descriptive approaches (Salasiah, 2021; Wulandari et al., 2022), quasi-experimental and pretest–posttest quantitative designs (Indriasih, 2022; Margaretha & Pura, 2019), as well as developmental research using ADDIE or R&D models (Haryaningrum et al., 2023; Lestari, 2021). The diversity in research designs illustrates the multidimensional interest in both exploring and validating media-based interventions.

Many studies also integrated culturally grounded pedagogical principles within their methodological frameworks. For instance, Lestari (2021) employed a *Tri Hita Karana*-based board game rooted in Balinese philosophy, while Rumara et al. (2024) analyzed character values in gamelan play—a traditional musical ensemble in Indonesia. This shows a growing interest in not only measuring the impact of instructional media but also contextualizing it within local cultural and spiritual values. Thus, the studies reflect both empirical and philosophical concerns about moral education in early childhood.

### Types of Instructional Media and Their Effectiveness

The reviewed studies employed a broad spectrum of instructional media, which can be classified into two dominant categories: traditional media and audiovisual media. Traditional media include tools such as puzzles, picture cards, board games, and cultural play materials. For example, Suryani and Wirman (2019) used a modified Styrofoam puzzle to improve children's recognition of Arabic letters, demonstrating a substantial increase in comprehension levels from 26% to 83%. Similarly, Taufik et al. (2022) implemented Big Book media and found statistically significant improvements in religious and moral understanding when compared to control groups, suggesting that tangible, large-format visual materials can facilitate group-based interactive learning.

Several studies utilized culturally grounded traditional media that were not only educational but also resonated with children's lived experiences. Rumara et al. (2024) explored the use of gamelan games—a traditional Indonesian musical ensemble—and found that character traits such as harmony and cooperation naturally emerged during group performance sessions. Lestari (2021) developed a “Widya Suputra” snakes-and-ladders board game based on the Balinese philosophical concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, which was validated by experts and shown to effectively convey religious values in a play-based context. These examples illustrate how traditional media, when localized, provide meaningful and embodied ways for children to internalize moral and religious teachings.

Conversely, audiovisual media such as animated films, digital storybooks, and educational videos were used extensively in more recent studies (2020–2024). Films like *Upin & Ipin*, *Omar & Hana*, and *Nussa & Rara* featured prominently as media to convey Islamic values in child-friendly narratives. For instance, Cinthia and Khadijah (2024) used *Nussa & Rara* animations and found that audiovisual storytelling helped concretize abstract moral concepts, leading to a significant increase in children's comprehension of religious values. Similarly, Westri and Pransiska (2021) reported an improvement from 11.8% to 82.3% in moral behavior scores after using *Omar & Hana* animations in a classroom intervention.

Audiovisual media were also often integrated with digital platforms or mobile-based tools, increasing accessibility and engagement. Haryaningrum et al. (2023) developed a digitally

illustrated storybook that was validated as “very feasible” (96.6%) by subject-matter experts and successfully improved children’s moral intelligence. Margaretha and Pura (2019) used video-based instruction in a quasi-experimental design, demonstrating that media could significantly enhance children’s etiquette during prayer. These findings underscore the potential of audiovisual content not just as passive entertainment, but as strategic instructional resources capable of shaping character in dynamic, visually engaging ways.

Overall, both traditional and audiovisual media proved effective in different pedagogical contexts. Traditional media tend to promote hands-on engagement, cultural familiarity, and physical interaction, while audiovisual tools excel in capturing attention, delivering narratives, and making abstract values more relatable. The diversity in media types reflects a complementary rather than competitive dynamic, indicating that combining both approaches may yield the most comprehensive educational impact.

The reviewed studies represent a well-distributed mix of empirical rigor and contextual sensitivity. The focus on the 4–6-year-old age group, diverse methodological approaches, and inclusion of local cultural content underscores a holistic attempt to explore how instructional media can shape religious and moral development. These general patterns provide a strong foundation for synthesizing the types of media used and their respective pedagogical effects, as will be discussed in the following sections.

### Approaches to Instilling Religious and Moral Values in Early Childhood

The reviewed studies employed a variety of pedagogical approaches to embed religious and moral values into early childhood education. One of the most widely used methods was storytelling, particularly through religious narratives and animated content. For example, Puspitasari and Hidayatulloh (2020) emphasized the use of fables derived from the Qur’an, such as the story of *Surah Al-Fil*, to foster moral-spiritual development by stimulating children’s imagination. Similarly, Nurhayati et al. (2020) demonstrated that illustrated storytelling sessions helped children exhibit positive changes in behavior aligned with moral values. These studies suggest that narrative-based approaches are especially effective in early childhood, as they simplify complex ethical concepts into relatable, memorable experiences.

Another common strategy was the integration of daily routines and religious practices into classroom life. Salasiah (2021) highlighted the use of habitual practices—such as communal prayers, reciting daily du‘ā, and class pledges—as consistent stimuli for moral habituation. These practices not only reinforce discipline and self-regulation but also promote spiritual identity and communal values from an early age. In such contexts, moral learning is not delivered as isolated instruction but is embedded within the lived rhythm of school life, fostering both internalization and behavioral consistency.

Play-based learning also featured prominently as a mechanism for instilling values, especially in studies that employed traditional or local games. Rumara et al. (2024) and Lestari (2021) used music-based games and board games to promote values such as cooperation, mutual respect, and cultural-religious awareness. These approaches are grounded in constructivist learning theory, where moral understanding is formed through experiential and social interaction rather than didactic instruction. Moreover, physical and symbolic elements in play—such as game rules, turn-taking, and character roleplay—serve as analogs for moral structures like fairness and empathy.

In addition to explicit moral teachings, some studies introduced contextual and culturally embedded learning as a strategy for deepening value formation. The integration of local wisdom, as seen in Lestari’s (2021) adaptation of Balinese principles, or the use of culturally familiar characters in animations like *Upin & Ipin* (Amiroh & Salsabila, 2021), helped connect moral values with children’s everyday experiences. These culturally relevant approaches not only enhance cognitive retention but also affirm children’s socio-religious identity, making the learning process more meaningful and personally resonant.

Taken together, the strategies observed across the reviewed studies reveal a convergence toward holistic, immersive, and culturally sensitive pedagogies. Whether through stories, rituals,

games, or digital media, the goal remains consistent: to translate moral and religious values into age-appropriate experiences that children can understand, feel, and practice. Such approaches underscore the importance of contextual learning environments that recognize both the developmental stage and cultural background of the learner.

## Discussion

During the early years of life, particularly between the ages of 4 and 6, children enter a vital stage in which foundational religious and moral values can be effectively cultivated. This stage, often celebrated as the "golden age" of development, is marked by a child's heightened sensitivity to learning values and social norms. While the family remains the primary environment for value formation, the role of educators is increasingly recognized in guiding children through structured and intentional moral education (Hasan et al., 2021; Jennah, 2009). Within this context, the use of instructional media has become an influential avenue to communicate complex moral ideas in ways that are accessible and engaging for young learners (Rizal et al., 2016). However, despite the theoretical support for this integration, there remains a notable lack of comprehensive studies analyzing the effectiveness and contextual suitability of different media formats for moral and religious instruction in early childhood.

To address this gap, the present literature review synthesized 20 scholarly studies published between 2016 and 2024 that examine the role of instructional media in nurturing moral and religious values among children aged 4 to 6. The research employed a broad range of methodological approaches, encompassing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method designs, thereby ensuring a multidimensional understanding of the issue. A clear categorization of media emerged from the studies: traditional media (such as puzzles, matching games, and physical storytelling aids) and audiovisual media (including animations and digital books). Interestingly, while traditional media continue to dominate classroom use due to their tangibility and familiarity, audiovisual tools have gained significant traction, particularly in technologically progressive learning environments. The incorporation of culturally embedded themes within both types of media was consistently emphasized, highlighting the need for contextual alignment in moral instruction.

These findings are strongly aligned with prior theoretical and empirical research that underscores the importance of the early childhood phase as a cornerstone for value formation (Li & Koenig, 2023). The sustained relevance of traditional media supports previous assertions regarding the cognitive and emotional benefits of tactile learning tools in facilitating moral reasoning (Rizal et al., 2016). Concurrently, the growing preference for audiovisual media mirrors broader shifts in educational practice, where visual storytelling and interactive digital formats are being leveraged to enhance learner engagement (Moldavan et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the review surfaces a critical research gap: few studies have evaluated the longitudinal effects of media-based instruction on moral outcomes. Likewise, while many studies acknowledge the value of cultural content, relatively little empirical work has measured its specific impacts across diverse educational settings.

Moreover, many of the studies reviewed align with pedagogical models that emphasize experiential and narrative-based learning, such as cognitive apprenticeship and constructivist approaches (Anderson & White, 2019; Strhan, 2017). Religious stories, habitual practices, and familiar cultural activities were frequently used to reinforce values in daily life—an approach that supports internalization through repeated exposure and contextual relevance (Ganjvar, 2019; Heijstek-Hofman et al., 2020). When educators incorporated localized elements, such as region-specific games or folk songs, they not only maintained student interest but also enhanced identity development and moral reflection (Kitanant et al., 2024; Sato et al., 2024). Still, the diversity of media tools and teaching strategies across studies suggests a need for a more cohesive evaluative framework to guide future implementations. Without longitudinal and comparative studies, it is difficult to determine which combinations of media and pedagogy produce the most sustained moral development.



Part of the effectiveness of instructional media lies in their capacity to render abstract moral principles into tangible, relatable experiences for children (Emmert, 2020; Filimonau et al., 2022). Traditional formats, with their physicality and sensory engagement, appeal to children's need for hands-on learning, fostering greater involvement and retention (Raivio et al., 2022; Saudi et al., 2025). Meanwhile, digital tools such as animated videos or interactive applications draw upon visual and auditory stimuli to capture attention and narrate moral dilemmas in age-appropriate ways (Richardson, 2019; Sagberg, 2017). That said, media should complement—not replace—the interpersonal dimensions of moral education. Educators and caregivers play a central role in modeling values, facilitating reflection, and providing emotional support, all of which are crucial for deep moral internalization. Therefore, media should be viewed as tools embedded within broader pedagogical systems.

Another compelling dimension emerging from this review is the strategic use of cultural values in media design. Instructional resources that reflect local customs, traditions, and values help children connect learning to their lived experiences (Sayan & Günel, 2022; Sharma, 2019). This cultural resonance fosters both engagement and identity formation, enabling children to see moral principles not as abstract concepts, but as extensions of their community life (Sztynchmiller, 2021; van der Walt, 2020). Such strategies also align with inclusive education principles that recognize the importance of diversity and cultural responsiveness in curriculum design (Kasstan, 2023; Raivio et al., 2022). However, content developers and educators must remain vigilant to avoid perpetuating stereotypes or reinforcing uncritical cultural norms. Thoughtful, participatory design processes can mitigate these risks by ensuring that media content is inclusive, balanced, and pedagogically sound.

The review's insights offer valuable guidance for educational policy and practice. There is a clear need for teacher training programs to incorporate modules on the pedagogical integration of instructional media for moral and religious education (Kitching, 2020; Merkulova & Pomelov, 2021). Additionally, curriculum development efforts should prioritize the inclusion of culturally grounded, age-appropriate media that reflect the moral priorities of specific educational settings (Clements, 2018; Giordmaina & Zammit, 2019). Policymakers should invest in longitudinal studies and impact evaluations to build a stronger empirical foundation for media-based moral instruction. A multi-stakeholder collaboration involving educators, researchers, designers, and community leaders is essential to realize the full potential of instructional media as catalysts for moral development in early childhood education.

## Conclusion

This review examined the effectiveness of instructional media in instilling religious and moral values in children aged 4–6 through twenty selected studies. Results show that both traditional and audiovisual media effectively support moral development, particularly when integrated with storytelling, play, and daily routines. Media grounded in local culture enhanced value internalization and identity formation. The findings highlight the need for teacher training, culturally relevant curricula, and cross-sector collaboration to optimize media use in early childhood education. Limitations include the narrow scope, reliance on secondary data, and methodological inconsistencies. Future research should adopt longitudinal and comparative designs, consider sociocultural factors, and evaluate educators' digital readiness. In sum, instructional media offer strong potential for early moral education when used contextually and pedagogically.

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