

## CLAY EXPLORATION: A MEDIA FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION, CREATIVITY, AND HINDU'S LIFE VALUES

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### Abstract.

*This research explores the role of clay as an effective media in the character building, creativity development, and the teaching of life values in children. In a context of Membumi Project, the activities of playing with clay are the means to stimulate visual creativity and to teach patience, hard work, perseverance, and cooperation. In addition, there are also local wisdom values of Hinduism in Bali, namely Tri Guna and Tri Hita Karana in developing students' character. This qualitative study observed and analyzed the behavior of 15 children aged 5–6 years at a kindergarten in Denpasar, Bali, to explore the impact of clay-based play on character development. Data were collected over four weeks through participatory observation, supported by field notes and teacher interviews. The finding showed that the clay exploration can help children in emotional management, creative thinking, cooperation in group, and development of a sense of responsibility and empathy. Through a real process in making shapes from clay, children learned the importance of patience and perseverance in achieving their purposes, which indirectly improved moral and social values relevant to their future.*

**Keywords:** Exploration; Clay; Character Education Media; Creativity; Life Values

### Introduction

Character education is a crucial issue of children education in modern age, so the character education program must be planned in a good manner. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, the young generation is faced with several opportunities and challenges which have not existed in previous generation (Singh, 2019). They are continuously exposed to negative influences from media and other external sources dominating the modern culture. Therefore, it is very important to establish an education strategy which is focused not only on the academic learning, but also the development of student character (Aynur Pala, 2011). A good character is not automatically established, but it develops over time, through a sustainable process in teaching, role modelling, learning, and practice (Bjorklund, 2022). Character is developed through intentional character education. It is essential for society to provide well-structured and values-based character teaching, especially as today's young generation is exposed to challenges not faced by previous generations. These include the rapid spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, online addiction, and excessive consumerism dangers that often emerge through digital media and globalized content. Moreover, negative influences from mass media and other external sources are more pervasive and easily accessible, shaping behaviors and attitudes in ways that can conflict with foundational moral values (Dovigo, 2024). When a comprehensive character education approach is utilised, it creates a positive moral culture supporting the values taught in the class (Aynur Pala, 2011).

In a framework of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, there is a statement that it covers several skills, characters, and frameworks required to face the challenges in modern world which are dynamic and technology-based. Not focusing only on the academic knowledge, a framework of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

learning also deals with the development of critical thinking skill, creativity, collaboration, and technology literacy (Septiwiharti & Mutawakkil, 2023). In the abundance of technology and digitalization, children tend to get less stimulation to develop these skills, while they require activities for stimulating their motor skills, creativity, and emotion in a balanced way. Thus, these activities will automatically develop the children character which is intellectually smart, with exemplary moral integrity, social skill, and emotional intelligence.

Some main subjects and the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning theme are crucial for all students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These main subjects include 1) English, Reading, or Language Arts; 2) World Languages; 3) Art; 4) Mathematics; 5) Economics; 6) Science; 7) Geography; 8) History; and 9) Government and Nationality (Turiman et al., 2012). Furthermore, school must take action with the focus not only on mastering these main subjects, but also the improvement of academic content understanding at a higher level, by combining the interdisciplinary themes of 21<sup>st</sup> century in the main subjects, namely 1) Global Awareness; 2) Financial Literacy, Economics, Business, and Entrepreneurship; 3) Literacy on Population/Citizens; 4) Literacy on Health; 5) Literacy on Environment; and 6) Learning and Innovation (Frache et al., 2018). These themes must be put into the learning as an effort to respond to the global issues, referring to challenge and society around the world, crossing the state borders, and affecting politic, economy, environment, and prosperity of human being comprehensively.

Several strategies are developed as the efforts to strengthen character education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Instilling character values in children can be done in many ways, one of which is through permanent (Supeni, 2016). Some schools worldwide make use of several themes for strengthening these characters, including integration on the use of clay in learning, for development of children creativity or self-development in children with disabilities. The same condition also applies in Indonesia. Some schools integrate the learning activities using the clay as its media for learning art and culture. However, it is more frequently applied in early education level and elementary school. The use of clay as the learning media is also implemented in the community-based education, including the community of *Membumi Project* with a focus in preserving the production of household appliances made of clay. This community has been established with an initial purpose to preserve the pottery production which is less desired over time and increasingly rare as a result of the limited labours with skills to process pottery in an adequate way. The use of clay in the pottery industry is one of the traditional cultural heritages, resurrected through the community (Harum et al., 2023). This traditional learning media is developed by offering the unique approach, affecting the teaching of character values in an exciting and creative way. Playing with clay allows children to get involved in a process requiring patience, perseverance, and responsibility (Maisarah et al., 2020).

This activity encourages children to think creatively, cooperate with other people, and manage their emotion when facing challenges. Creativity is one of the important aspects frequently ignored in the character education. Clay gives opportunity for children to express their idea freely, while teaching the life values, namely hard work, tolerance, and empathy (Mittmann et al., 2024). In this context, clay is not merely a media to play with, but also a means to shape character in an effective and holistic way. Creative children have capabilities to convey their idea smoothly, flexibility to convey their alternative thinking in solving problem, originality in thinking, elaboration in idea and tenacity, patience or perseverance in facing obstacles and uncertain situation (Grönman et al., 2024). Target of these *Membumi Project* activities prioritises children at early age and elementary school. Therefore, it is important to comprehensively study how the clay game can be used as an effective method in character education, and how the existing challenges can be solved to achieve the best result. This article is written to explore the role of clay further in educating children character, while describing

life values which can be taught through these activities. This approach is expected to give a positive contribution for developing character education which is more comprehensive in Indonesia.

### *Research Problem*

Character building and creativity development in children are fundamental aspects that require an innovative approach. One potential method that has rarely been explored in depth is the use of clay as a learning medium (Jaafar et al., 2013). Although clay has long been used as a creative medium for children, there are still limitations in understanding its role in character building and instilling life values. Character education today faces multiple conceptual and practical challenges. These include difficulties in defining clear programmatic frameworks, measuring outcomes, and addressing critiques related to individual moral agency, motivational dynamics, and sociopolitical relevance (Hart, 2022; McGrath, 2022; Peterson, 2020). Additionally, debates persist regarding the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in moral development, as well as the tension between universal values and culturally contextualized practices (Berkowitz, 2022; White & Shin, 2017). As educational environments become increasingly shaped by technology and digital interaction, there is a growing need for experiential, embodied, and socially grounded approaches to character education (Mahsun et al., 2024). In this context, creative and sensory-based media such as clay offer a promising yet underexplored pathway. Clay exploration invites tactile engagement, emotional expression, cooperation, and reflective dialogue elements aligned with participatory and virtue-based models of character education (Jaafar et al., 2013). Unlike abstract moral instruction, clay-based learning provides children with concrete experiences that foster patience, responsibility, empathy, and respect for process and others. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how clay activities can serve not only as a tool for creativity, but also as a medium for cultivating moral and social values in early childhood, particularly through experiential, culturally relevant, and socially interactive learning contexts.

### *Research Focus*

The focus of this study is to explore the role of clay as a medium in character building, creativity development, and the internalization of life values in children, within the context of the *Membumi* Project conducted at a kindergarten in Denpasar, Bali. This location was selected due to its integration of local cultural values and its willingness to implement clay-based learning activities over an extended observation period. This study highlights how playing and processing clay activities not only stimulate visual creativity but also become a learning tool for children to develop patience, hard work, perseverance, and cooperation. With a qualitative approach, this study analyses children's behaviour during activities and its impact on emotional management, group cooperation, and strengthening moral and social values.

### *Research Aim and Research Questions*

This study aims to explore the role of clay as an effective medium in shaping children's character, developing their creativity, and instilling important life values. Through a qualitative approach in the context of the *Membumi* Project, this study analyses how clay play and processing activities can stimulate visual creativity while teaching life values such as patience, hard work, perseverance, and cooperation. To achieve these goals, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

Q1. How does clay play contribute to children's character development?

Q2. In what aspects can clay stimulate children's creativity?

Q3. What life values can be instilled through clay exploration?

Q4. How does the experience of playing with clay help children manage their emotions and work together in groups?

## Research Methodology

This research used the qualitative approach to get an in-depth understanding of how clay game can affect the character development in children. This approach implied the behavioural exploration, experience, and values internalised through observation, interview, and document study (Moleong, 2014). The research was conducted over four weeks at a private kindergarten in North Denpasar, Bali, which collaborates with the *Membumi* Project which a local community initiative focused on preserving pottery traditions through clay-based learning. This site was chosen for its openness to creative, culturally rooted learning methods. The participants were 20 children aged 5–6 years, purposively selected for their developmental suitability and active involvement in creative classroom activities that integrated storytelling, exploration, and art. These students were selected purposively (Bostley & Peters, 2023) because of their developmental stage, which is considered optimal for character formation through experiential and play-based learning. Their natural curiosity, expressive behaviors, and social interaction patterns provided rich data for exploring how clay exploration contributes to character development, creativity, and the internalization of life values.

Data were collected through the participant observation technique when they played with clay, to see how they showed several values, namely patience, cooperation, and responsibility. This observation can record development of the children creativity in a process of creating shape from clay. To support the result of observation, the in-depth interview was carried out with teacher, parent, or other parties assisting children when playing with clay. This interview aimed to comprehensively study the change of children behaviour and effect of these activities on their character development (Creswell, 2018). Qualitative analysis was carried out on the craft made by children from clay, for measuring their level of creativity and originality. This analysis can be additional data assisting the assessment on how clay contributed to the character development.

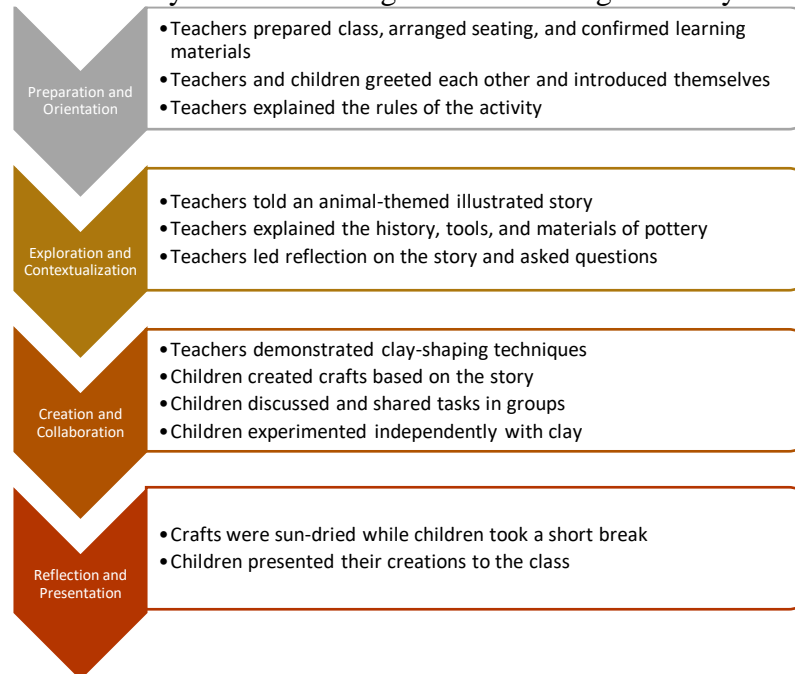
## Research Results

This study identified several recurring patterns that indicate how clay-based activities may contribute to the development of children's character and creativity. The observations revealed behavioral tendencies and value expressions that emerged consistently during the learning process. These findings are presented below to illustrate how the children engaged with the clay, interacted with peers, and demonstrated traits related to moral, emotional, and social development. Some main findings from this research were as follows:

### **The Use of Clay in *Membumi* Project Character Education**

*Membumi* Project is a social conservative community to realise the regeneration of pottery craftsmen in North Denpasar, Bali Province. *Membumi* (which can be translated to "down-to-earth") is a process or action to bring something closer with reality or physical reality, namely ideas applied in real practice or action in accordance with the real condition. Thus, the practice in this project constantly emphasised on a real situation by utilising materials from nature, namely clay as the basic material, for making pottery and other tools for pottery production. As a project with an emphasis on the real practice, these activities focused on the cooperative learning activities by bringing a situation similar to real life which was relevant with children life. These activities were close to the social community situation in Bali with an emphasis on collective activities. Tools to be produced were used in traditional and religious life of Balinese society. Methods used were demonstration, experiment, exemplary, and focus on children, with steps as show in figure 1.

**Figure 1.**  
Flow Of Clay-Based Learning Activities Categorized By Phase



Development of character education with clay as its media emphasised on the art, fine arts in particular, like animals and household appliances (glass, cup, plate, and other tools for ceremony in Hindu society). In the beginning of these activities, children were asked to listen to the history of trade in Denpasar, as one of the business centres in Bali Island, and Banjar Binuh located in North Denpasar as the centre of pottery production in which 1990s was its heyday. They were also told about the chronology when people got less interested in using appliance made of pottery. Children were stimulated to explore the reason why this situation happened.

The use of clay in *Membumi Project* was not only about the historical theme, but also environmental literacy which was viewed from a perspective in a scheme of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, starting from Art, Reading, Economics, History, and even Science. The main subject learning can be brought, depending on a stimulation carried out by teachers through the introductory story in the beginning of activities.

**Figure 2.**  
Examples of crafts made by children



This model tended to be effective for bringing a direct experience by listening, perceiving, observing, and discussing experience based on the real situation. The learning will be more intense when children are directly faced with direct, useful experience. The learning will be less intense when children are passive, only dealing with one-way verbal transaction (Anderson & Ph, 1970). Children can get a lot of experience when involving or using their senses more frequently, while children were conditioned to be more active in the learning (Hakam, 2008; Sumertini & Sutresna, 2024). The use of clay in making shape encouraged children to be involved actively in activities without limiting their creativity. Involvement of teachers, team, and parent in the collective activities improved their trust on the information provided, while the trust was established on the past experience (history) and brought the positive attitude response from children. The making of fine arts project by using the clay established the positive emotional response on right brain because of mental impression on the relatively concrete object with a good impression from object and trust related to the children.

This statement was proven in the observation data, in which 15 children showed their capability to convey their idea in group. To illustrate how character traits emerged during clay-based learning activities, this study draws on observational data collected throughout the four-week implementation. The data showed that most children demonstrated progress in expressing ideas, collaborating with peers, and responding empathetically during group tasks. Rather than making general claims, the findings are supported by concrete behavioral instances observed in the classroom. The following table presents selected examples of children's behavior, the corresponding character traits, and notes recorded by the observer.

**Table 1.**  
 Sample Observational Notes of Children During Clay-Based Activities

Child ID	Observed Activity	Character Traits Observed	Observer's Notes
C01	Suggested making a turtle out of clay after listening to the story	Self-confidence, initiative	The child showed initiative and confidence by proposing an idea without teacher prompting.
C02	Responded to a peer's idea by suggesting how to make legs for the animal figure	Empathy, collaboration	The child demonstrated empathy by accepting and building on another child's idea constructively.
C03	Waited patiently for a peer to finish speaking before presenting her own idea	Respect, patience	The child displayed self-regulation and respect for others during group interaction.
C04	Helped a friend shape the clay figure while explaining his own idea	Responsibility, communication	The child communicated clearly while assisting a peer, showing responsibility in group collaboration.
C05	Nodded and clapped after a peer shared an idea	Emotional support, active listening	The child used non-verbal gestures to show encouragement and attentiveness to others' contributions.

The observation results demonstrated that clay-based group activities supported the development of key character traits such as self-confidence, empathy, and communication skills. Children became more confident in expressing their ideas within groups where members shared similar developmental levels, reducing fear of criticism and encouraging participation. This was supported by data showing that 35% of children were categorized as “Developing Adequate Expression” (DAE) and 10% as “Developed Well” (DEW) in their ability to convey ideas in groups. In parallel, listening skills an indicator of empathy and respectful communication also emerged strongly, with 70% of children achieving DAE or DEW in that aspect. These quantitative trends are reinforced by qualitative observations (see Table 1), where children were seen responding thoughtfully to peers, waiting their turn to speak, and engaging in supportive group interactions. Overall, both numerical and behavioral data (Table 2) affirm that structured clay-based activities provided a conducive environment for nurturing early character development through collaboration and creative expression.

**Table 2.**  
 Recapitulation Of Research Observation Result

No.	Assessment Aspect	Observation Result			
		ND	SD	DAE	DEW
1	Children can convey their idea in group.	5 25%	6 30%	7 35%	2 10%
2	Children can listen to other people's idea well.	4 20%	7 35%	7 35%	2 10%

3	Children completed task timely.	1 5%	7 30%	8 25%	4 20%
4	Children can make shape without other people's help	1 5%	8 40%	8 40%	3 15%
5	Children can complete some shapes with their own creation.	1 5%	8 40%	7 35%	4 20%
6	Children can add more detailed parts.	1 5%	8 40%	8 40%	3 15%
7	Children were willing to try new idea, shape, or method.	1 5%	9 45%	8 40%	2 10%

Explanation:

ND = Not Developing

SD = Start Developing

DAE = Developing as Expected

DEW = Developing in Excellent Way

Five children were unable to convey their idea in a group, while four other children were able to listen to other people's idea in a good manner. However, compared with a capability of task completion, observation showed the result that only a child did not have any progress. It means that children with the undeveloped verbal skill had another capability to show their understanding of instruction, through works which can be completed well, with creation, independence, and openness to try new idea, shape, or method. Some children tried to use leaves, stones, and flowers to help them make certain shape. This research supported an opinion from Dale that the learning with action resulted in up to 90% of knowledge memorised (Anderson & Ph, 1970). This behaviour also showed that children were capable of developing their intrinsic motivation to learn and do something right, in which it belonged to one of the principles from eleven character education aspects (Lickona, 1996).

Involvement of children in group, capability, and independence to carry out the task and responsibility showed initial capability of children to interact with group as a miniature of society. The character education inherently covers the students' preparation and involvement in activities (Wandari & Rohana, 2023). This involvement required some virtues, namely honesty, compassion, open-mindedness, and so forth, to support further development of other virtues. When students were involved in community, they studied to perform deliberation with other people, while this involvement will be capable of helping children to find out their identity and social environmental condition.

### **The Way to Develop Creativity**

Children involved in clay-based activities demonstrated increased creative expression, as evidenced by their willingness to explore various shapes, colors, and textures beyond the initial task instructions. For example, several children independently molded additional elements not mentioned in the story, such as adding wings to animal figures or creating imaginative habitats like nests and caves. One child combined two types of animals to form a hybrid creature and explained its function during the group presentation. Another used leaf imprints on the clay to add texture, experimenting with natural materials found in the surrounding environment. These behaviors reflect both divergent thinking and aesthetic exploration, indicating that clay play provided space for children to transform abstract ideas into tangible forms. Observation records showed that 75% of participants were classified as "Developing Adequate Expression" or "Developed Well" in their ability to complete shapes with original details and personal touches (see Table 2). This supports the conclusion that clay

activities stimulated children's imagination and enhanced their capacity for creative problem-solving. Clay belonged to a media to give creative freedom without any limitation, while allowing children to think in an imaginative way and to create something new. It did not only encourage visual creativity, but also a skill to solve problem because they must think about new ways to get the desired shape. In a turtle-shaped craft as the same task, children were capable of creating the different shell pattern and feet. Children also made use of several materials to help them make patterns, such as twig, stone, and their fingernails.

This creativity can develop from the exploration activities, while creativity information collection is often started with idea exploration and information collection, and information delivery through story, clay exploration, and pottery processing. Children started it from listening to fable with the illustrated storybook as its media, history of the pottery processing as a source of inspiration, watching the method of making pottery, having discussion, and getting involved in the clay game. More information received and several senses in children enriched their basis to make creative idea (Hakam, 2008). Openness of the children towards new idea encouraged their creativity because their habit in viewing something from several perspectives tended to ease them in finding creative, innovative solution.

Introduction to the story, clay exploration, and facilities to make pottery were also capable of developing the curiosity in motivating children to explore, ask question, and find out something new. This attitude is a basis of the creative process because creativity frequently comes from a desire to understand further. Creativity is a capability to make something new through the imaginative skill (Kesim, 2009). Creativity is not merely an inborn ability but a cultivated response influenced by experience, environment, and individual interpretation. Although the children in this study produced similar objects such as turtles, their works revealed variations in detail, technique, and expression. Some children added unique features including textured surfaces, expressive forms, or additional narrative elements from the story, which demonstrated creative decision-making within a shared framework. This suggests that uniform tasks do not hinder creativity but instead provide a structure through which imagination and personal perspective can emerge. The clay-based activity thus served as a medium that encouraged creative exploration, where the process of making was as meaningful as the final product.

**Figure 3.**  
Turtle-shaped Craft



## **Discussion**

### **Clay Exploration to Develop Life Values**

Clay exploration in *Membumi Project* became an effective media to develop several life values. Positive values which can be developed were as follows:

#### *Patience*

Processing clay took a lot of time, concentration, and perseverance. A process of creating the desired shape was not always easy or quick. Patience and repetition, in improving a shape which failed to meet expectation, taught individual to survive in an effort to achieve goal. Children patience in this project was established from an activity to wait for the completion of pottery-shaping process, starting from the soil processing to sun-drying, and confirming that all group members can complete their task well. In a context of patience, waiting can be interpreted as a capability to tolerate the delay not only related to waiting for the gift, but also waiting without expecting any certain profit. The skill of waiting in patience is a skill to survive, even without an obvious prospect, but it still develops a skill to undergo a moment of waiting in a constructive way, as an experience which is a part of daily life in human being, carried out in a calm and beneficial way (Guarcello, 2020). A capability to survive in uncertainty becomes very important when facing a critical situation, including the pandemic. Children learned to face the ambivalences which were complex and uncomfortable, while they got more aware on that matter and capable of tolerating it (Aslamzai et al., 2023). They also learned to manage experience, including positive and negative aspects, leading to happiness and sadness at the same time (Spee et al., 2025).

#### *Hard Work and Perseverance*

In exploration of the clay processing in *Membumi Project*, children must pass some stages, starting from imagining idea, making shape, and completion. Every stage required effort and conscientiousness, teaching the importance of perseverance and dedication to achieve the desired result. Perseverance involves a persistent, hard work to achieve long-term purposes, despite having challenges, failure, or obstacles. Meanwhile, the individual tendency to keep working for realising their purposes is believed to be capable of facilitating positive development in children (Shubert et al., 2020). In a process of making shape from clay, children tended to find failure in determining soil and water composition to achieve a right texture for making certain shape or craft. However, orientation on result and curiosity towards the final result from the process can develop the hard-working character as a part of perseverance aspect. In a context of future life, this character will highly determine individual success (Taha & Abdulrahman, 2023; Murniti & Marselinawati, 2023). Hard work and perseverance allow individual to survive and face several challenges along the way towards success. Children with perseverance will not give up easily when faced with failure or obstacle, but they keep trying to improve themselves and search solution.

#### *Cooperation*

Clay exploration with an emphasis on activities in group became a means to develop cooperation. When children worked in group, they can share idea, discussion, and learn to listen and respect opinion from other people. These activities developed values of togetherness and collaboration. Togetherness and assistance of the adult were important in singing and playing music in the Early Childhood Education Program. Playing musical instrument is not something performed only with children; it is more important to involve the adult (Bilalovic Kulset & Halle, 2020). In this clay exploration, involvement of the adult, teacher and parent, and other supporting people provided a real situation which was role model for children on the importance of cooperation in group for achieving their purpose faster. The concept creation which shows equality in the learning process can develop positive emotion in musical art as well as fine arts in this clay exploration (Aziz & Rachmawati, 2024).

### **Clay Exploration in Hindu Religious Values**

Character education in Hindu-based schools holds a central role in shaping learners to become morally upright individuals rooted in spiritual and cultural values. Core principles such as honesty, patience, responsibility, compassion, and fairness are emphasized, often derived from Hindu scriptures like the Bhagavadgita and implemented through local wisdom practices such as Dharmagita and traditional storytelling in Bali (Gunada et al., 2024; Minnema, 2023; Parmini & Wardhani, 2025). These values are not merely taught through instruction but are embodied in rituals, daily behavior, and community life. However, some studies indicate that existing approaches tend to emphasize top-down, standardized moral frameworks that may limit active student participation and contextual engagement (Abdullah et al., 2019). To address this gap, integrating hands-on, culturally resonant learning methods becomes essential. In this context, clay exploration within the Membumi Project provided an experiential platform through which children could internalize Hindu character values. The tactile, collaborative, and reflective nature of working with clay enabled children to practice patience, responsibility, mutual respect, and care values aligned with Hindu ethics. Thus, clay-based activities serve not only as creative expression but also as a medium for embodying and reinforcing the moral teachings embedded in Hindu educational philosophy. The concept of Tri Guna in Hindu teachings consisting of Sattva (wisdom and balance), Rajas (dynamics and enthusiasm), and Tamas (laziness and darkness) (Mantra, 2002; Sudarsana, et al., 2020) can be associated with clay exploration as a medium for character education, creativity, and life values. In the clay exploration process, the Sattva element is reflected in the precision, patience, and understanding of the aesthetic and philosophical values of the work created. The Rajas element is present in the spirit of exploration, innovation, and effort in shaping clay into works that have meaning and educational value. Meanwhile, the Tamas element can appear in the form of a lack of perseverance or imperfection in the creative process that must be overcome with discipline and perseverance. Thus, clay exploration not only develops creativity but also forms the character of participants who are raised through the balance of Tri Guna so that they can better understand the broader values of life.

In educational character, soil exploration not only builds creativity but also instills life values such as cooperation, perseverance, and appreciation for the process. The Sattvika nature of working with clay helps students understand the importance of patience and reflection in achieving good results. The Rajasika nature encourages them to continue practicing and trying various techniques until they achieve the desired form, while the Tamasika nature is avoided by building awareness of the importance of effort and perseverance. Thus, the exploration of clay as an educational medium not only develops artistic skills but also forms a character that is in harmony with the balance of the Tri Guna, which is essential in social life and self-development (Suhardana, 2011).

Apart from the Tri Guna concept, Tri Hita Karana is a philosophy in Hindu teachings that emphasises the balance of human relations with God (Parahyangan), fellow human beings (Pawongan), and nature (Palemahan) (Friska Dewi & Surya Abadi, 2022). In the context of clay exploration, the learning process involving the creation of artwork or crafts can be a means of character education by instilling the values of patience, perseverance, and gratitude to God for the natural resources provided (Parahyangan). In addition, this creative activity also encourages social interaction and cooperation in groups, which reflects the principle of Pawongan in building social harmony. Meanwhile, clay exploration teaches concern for the environment and the wise use of natural resources, which is in line with the Palemahan aspect. Thus, the use of clay as an educational

medium not only develops creativity but also instills life values that are in line with the concept of Tri Hita Karana.

### Conclusions and Implications

Clay exploration as a media in character education is proven to be effective in shaping character, stimulating creativity, and teaching the life values in children. In a context of *Membumi Project*, game and clay exploration encourage development of values, namely patience, hard work, perseverance, and cooperation, through direct experience. In addition, there are also local wisdom values of Hinduism in Bali, namely Tri Guna and Tri Hita Karana in developing students' character. These activities do not only allow children to express their creativity freely, but also help them to face challenge and failure with positive attitude.

The learning process through clay requires concentration, perseverance, and skill in collaboration to encourage children in understanding the importance of cooperation in group. Besides, involvement of teacher and parent in supporting these activities also play important role in teaching character values in children. These activities also strengthen the capability of children to manage their emotion and understanding that success is not determined by intellectual capability only, but also the development of character values, namely empathy, responsibility, and social skill. Thus, clay exploration is not only the creative learning media, but also important means in a more holistic character education, in helping children to develop into a balanced individual, emotionally and socially.

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