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Comparative study of social innovation programs and products in improving community welfare in Kopi Kang Garut and Sirih Sijale Tangerang

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs based on social innovation often succeed in strengthening community production capacity but continue to face challenges at the downstream stage, particularly in marketing, product diversification, and market access. This study aims to analyze the community empowerment process in the Kopi Kang CSR Program in Garut Regency and the Sirih Sijale Program in Tangerang City using Jim Ife's empowerment theory. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive comparative method. Data were collected through field observations, interviews with program managers and community members, and document analysis, then analyzed descriptively based on Jim Ife's empowerment dimensions. The findings indicate that both programs have reached the early to intermediate stages of empowerment, as reflected in improved production capacity, utilization of local resources, and increased community participation. However, empowerment remains limited at the downstream level due to underdeveloped marketing strategies, restricted distribution networks, and limited product diversification, which result in segmented market reach. CSR involvement in marketing functions as transitional support to facilitate market access rather than as a form of economic dependency. This study concludes that the sustainability of social innovation-based CSR programs requires gradual strengthening of downstream capacities, particularly through adaptive product diversification and market expansion strategies, to enable communities to gain more comprehensive and sustainable control over the value chain.

Keywords : Kopi Kang; Sirih Sijale; CSR; social innovation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social and economic development in Indonesia is not only the responsibility of the government, but also the private sector. In the last two decades, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has grown to become an important strategy in maintaining business sustainability and responding to the needs of communities in the vicinity of a company's operations (Ariyanti et al., 2025). CSR is no longer understood as merely charitable activities, but has shifted to become an integral part of corporate strategy in creating shared social and economic value (Farid and Wati, 2024).

In recent years, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs are no longer viewed as a formality for companies, but as an empowerment strategy that is expected to encourage community independence. Many CSR programs are now directed at developing local commodities that not only have economic value, but also have the potential to strengthen regional identity. Through this approach, companies do not just “give aid,” but are involved in building value chains from upstream to downstream (Herkenhoff et al., 2024). This approach places the community as the subject of development, which is gradually encouraged to be able to manage local resources independently first.

One approach that is now widely used in CSR implementation is social innovation. Social innovation is the process of creating new solutions to social problems that not only benefit the community but also strengthen the company's position in building harmonious relationships with stakeholders (Prasetyo, 2023). Through social innovation, companies seek to foster community independence, strengthen local capacity, empower social conditions, and create a broader sustainable impact compared to conventional philanthropic activities. In practice, social innovation in CSR is often more successful in the production capacity strengthening stage, while post-production and marketing aspects require a longer assistance process (Harinuridin et al., 2025).

One example of CSR implementation and social innovation carried out by an energy company is the Pertamina Patra Niaga CSR program in the West Java (JBB) region. This program covers several strategic locations such as IT Balongan in Indramayu, Soekarno-Hatta Aviation Fuel Terminal Hydrant Installation (Shafthi) in Tangerang, Husein Sastranegara Aviation Fuel Terminal (AFT) in Bandung, and Ujung Berung Fuel Terminal (FT) in Bandung. These locations are part of Pertamina Patra Niaga's (PPN) efforts to document social innovations that have been implemented in order to meet the criteria of the Company Performance Rating Program in Environmental Management (PROPER) organized by the Ministry of Environment (KLH).

Pertamina Patra Niaga (PPN) itself is a subholding of PT Pertamina (Persero) that focuses on the downstream oil and gas industry sector. PPN is responsible for the distribution, transportation, storage, and trading of fuel oil (BBM) and other energy products throughout Indonesia (Pertamina Patra Niaga, 2025). In the context of business transformation and commitment to sustainability, PPN actively develops various forms of CSR and social innovation as an effort to create real benefits for the surrounding community. One indicator of the success of empowerment programs is the extent to which communities are able to develop local products that have economic value and are competitive in the market. However, this market competitiveness indicator cannot always be achieved simultaneously with the success of increasing community production capacity.

In practice, these CSR programs take the form of community empowerment through the development of local products. In Garut, the Kopi Kang program involves the local community in processing coffee as the region's flagship commodity. Meanwhile, in Tangerang, specifically in RW 03 Mekarsari, the Sirih Sijale program involves a group of women in processing betel leaves into products such as chips and herbal tea. Both programs target the local community as the primary actors, with the hope of enhancing economic capacity while creating a distinct local product identity.

However, based on field observations, there are conditions that are both interesting and challenging in the implementation of the program. Although the community has been able to

produce processed goods of fairly good quality, the resulting products have not yet fully reached a wider market. At Kopi Kang, coffee products still face obstacles in innovation and branding, so marketing has not been maximized. Meanwhile, at Sirih Sijale, although the products already have decent packaging, marketing reach is still limited to the local area and bazaar events. These conditions indicate that the empowerment process has not yet fully progressed to the downstream stage.

This phenomenon is important to examine, especially amid the growing trend of SME development and community-based economies in Indonesia. If products resulting from empowerment initiatives fail to penetrate the market, the primary goal of CSR—to foster economic self-reliance among communities—may not be fully achieved. Therefore, this study is relevant for further examining how market challenges are addressed by empowerment-based CSR programs, specifically in the cases of Kopi Kang in Garut and Sirih Sijale in Tangerang.

Success in the production stage does not necessarily correlate with success in the downstream stage. Many CSR-assisted communities are able to produce quality products, but still face obstacles in expanding market access, building distribution networks, and developing effective branding strategies (Thirtawati et al., 2025). This condition makes it difficult for products resulting from empowerment to enter a wider market, so that their economic value is not yet optimal. This situation cannot be immediately understood as a program failure, but rather as part of the dynamics and stages in the process of community empowerment based on social innovation.

This phenomenon can be seen in two CSR programs that were the locations of the field visits, namely Kopi Kang in Garut and Sirih Sijale in Tangerang. Both are forms of social innovation that aim to increase the economic capacity of the community through the development of local products. Despite receiving support in the form of training, mentoring, and production facilities, both programs still face the same problem, namely that the products have not been able to penetrate the market more widely. Based on the researchers' involvement during the field activities, the communities in both locations have generally been able to carry out the production process independently and feel the economic benefits of the program, even though access to the product market is still limited.

In this regard, Kopi Kang faces challenges in downstreaming, such as segmented packaging, limited product innovation, such as economical price variants or sachet packaging, and marketing that is not yet massive. Meanwhile, Sirih Sijale, despite having ready-to-sell packaging, has a narrow marketing reach and distribution that is still limited to local residents and bazaar activities. These conditions indicate that the main challenge does not lie in the community's production capacity, but rather in limited market access and distribution networks that have not been optimally developed.

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In this regard, the Kopi Kang Program faces challenges in downstreaming related to suboptimal product diversification. The production focus, which is still dominated by ready-to-drink coffee, has limited product choices and price points, thus limiting the market reach to specific consumer groups. This situation also impacts packaging, which remains segmented and has not yet been directed towards developing economical packaging, such as affordable variants or sachets, which have the potential to expand market reach. Meanwhile, Sirih Sijale, despite having ready-to-sell packaging, has a narrow marketing reach and distribution that is still limited to local residents

and bazaar activities. These conditions indicate that the main challenge does not lie in the community's production capacity, but rather in limited market access and distribution networks that have not been optimally developed.

Based on this background, this study was designed to compare the downstream challenges of two Pertamina Patra Niaga CSR programs in the West Java (JBB) region and identify the factors that influence the limited market access of products from CSR-assisted communities. This study aims to understand the dynamics of marketing as an important phase in the community empowerment process. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of social innovation practices in CSR, particularly in the post-production stage, and serve as a basis for reflection on strengthening marketing strategies for supported communities in the future

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of community empowerment proposed by Jim Ife (1995) emphasizes a people-centered development approach, which is a development model that positions the community as the main subject in the entire development process. In his work *Community Development: Creating Community Alternatives Vision, Analysis and Practice*, Ife emphasizes that empowerment is directed at achieving social justice and sustainability through increasing community control over their own lives. Empowerment is understood as an effort to strengthen community capacity through education, training, and expanded access to resources, so that communities are not merely beneficiaries, but are able to manage and develop their lives independently (Arrozy et al., 2019)

Jim Ife's theory of empowerment is used as an analytical basis for understanding the role of CSR programs in promoting community independence. Ife (2013) defines empowerment as a process whereby community groups gain greater control over decision-making, resource management, and the social structures that affect their lives. Thus, empowerment is not only understood as the provision of training or material assistance, but as a capacity-building process that enables communities to determine the direction and management of their own lives. This approach is relevant to social innovation-based CSR practices that emphasize not only program output but also the process of community capacity building.

According to Ife, empowerment has various dimensions, including economic, social, psychological, and political aspects (Ife and Tesoriero, 2016). Economic empowerment relates to the community's ability to independently manage resources and economic activities, while social and psychological empowerment relates to increasing self-confidence, solidarity, and the collective capacity of the community to interact with parties outside the community.

In the context of the two CSR programs that were the subject of this study, namely Kopi Kang in Garut and Sirih Sijale in Tangerang, the aspect of economic empowerment is reflected through community involvement in processing local commodities into value-added products, both in the form of processed coffee and betel leaf products. The assistance, provision of facilities, and training provided are part of the capacity transfer process which, according to Ife's perspective, is the initial stage of empowerment. At this stage, the community has demonstrated the ability to carry out production activities independently and reap the economic benefits of these activities.

However, Ife emphasizes that empowerment cannot be said to be complete if it only stops at increasing production capacity. A community can only be considered empowered when it has more comprehensive control over economic processes, including distribution, marketing, and strategic decision-making related to business development (Ife and Tesoriero, 2016). In other words, indicators of empowerment are not only based on the ability to produce products, but also on the community's capacity to access markets and manage the value chain in a sustainable manner.

In the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale programs, the obstacles that arise in terms of downstreaming and market access indicate that the assisted communities are still in a transitional stage in the empowerment process. Although the products have been produced, packaged, and

production activities are running relatively smoothly, limitations in knowledge, experience, and marketing networks remain challenges. This condition does not reflect the failure of the program, but rather shows that the empowerment process is still ongoing and has not yet fully achieved complete economic independence. This is in line with Ife's view, which emphasizes that empowerment is a long-term process that develops gradually, not a result that can be achieved instantly.

Through Jim Ife's theoretical framework, the problems faced by Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale are not only understood as technical marketing issues, but as part of the dynamics of community empowerment that has not been fully completed. This theory helps to interpret the challenges of downstreaming as an indicator that community control over the product value chain still needs to be strengthened. Therefore, Jim Ife's empowerment theory is relevant as a conceptual basis for analyzing the gap between success in production and limited market access in these two CSR-based social innovation programs.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive comparative design to analyze and compare the challenges faced by the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale social innovation programs in improving community development outcomes. The study adopts a qualitative approach, which, according to [Creswell \(2018\)](#), is used to explore and understand meanings derived from the experiences of individuals or groups regarding social phenomena. In this context, the research focuses on identifying and understanding the challenges in product marketing that have not yet been able to reach a wider market.

The research was conducted in two different locations, namely Cipaganti Village, Garut, where the Kopi Kang program operates, and RW 03 Mekarsari Village, Neglasari District, Tangerang City, where the Sirih Sijale program is implemented. The unit of analysis in this study includes key actors who are directly involved in managing and developing the social innovation programs. The population consists of individuals who have direct involvement in the implementation of the programs, particularly those who have significant roles and in-depth knowledge of the program activities.

This study uses a purposive sampling technique, where informants are selected based on their relevance and direct involvement in the social innovation programs. A total of two key informants were involved in this study, namely the head of the Kopi Kang business association in Garut and the main manager of the Sirih Sijale program in Tangerang. These informants were chosen because they possess comprehensive knowledge and practical experience related to the development and challenges of each program.

Data collection was carried out using both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with selected informants and direct observation at each research location to capture real conditions and program activities. The data collection process was conducted on September 30 at the Sirih Sijale location in Tangerang and on October 10 at the Kopi Kang location in Garut. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained through literature studies, including previous research, scientific journals, books, and relevant online sources that support the research focus.

The data analysis technique used in this study is descriptive analytical analysis as proposed by [Afifuddin \(2009\)](#), which involves the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Through these stages, the researcher systematically organizes and interprets the data to identify patterns, relationships, and key findings related to the challenges faced by both social innovation programs.

To ensure the validity of the data and minimize potential bias, this study applies data triangulation by comparing findings obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation.

In addition, cross-checking with informants was conducted to confirm the accuracy and consistency of the data, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the real conditions in the field.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview of the Kopi Kang Social Innovation

The implementation of the Social Innovation Program (INSOS) in the Ujung Berung Fuel Terminal (FT) working area focuses on empowering the community in Cipaganti Village, Garut Regency, through the “Kopi Kang” (Kukang Conservation Coffee) program. This program arose from ecological and social problems in the foothills of Mount Papandayan, where the community used to hunt slow lorises (*Nycticebus coucang*) because they were considered pests. However, slow lorises are protected animals that play an important role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem, particularly as pollinators of coffee plants, the main commodity of Cipaganti Village.

Since 2018, Pertamina Patra Niaga Regional West Java's CSR program, in collaboration with the Muka Geni Foundation and the West Java Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA), has conducted intensive conservation education. Community understanding has begun to shift: from hunting slow lorises to protecting them. This behavioral change has led to the social innovation “Kopi Kang,” a empowerment model that integrates slow loris conservation with increased income for coffee farmers.

The Kopi Kang program has two main objectives: (1) to ensure the sustainability of the Javan slow loris by eliminating hunting and increasing biodiversity, and (2) to double coffee farmers' income by processing coffee beans into the branded product “Kopi Kang.” The program developed through several stages, starting with conservation education (2018), planting superior seeds and coffee processing training (2019), building production houses (2020), strengthening marketing (2021), and developing the Cipaganti SME cluster in 2022 ([Pertamina Fuel Terminal Bandung Group, 2022](#)).

The benefits of the program were felt by three main groups: the Javan slow loris, BKSDA as the conservation management agency, and the Buana Lestari Farmer Group, which saw an increase in capacity and income. The program was also supported by human resources (coffee trainers and conservation experts), financial resources from Pertamina Fuel Terminal Bandung Group's CSR, and policy support from BKSDA West Java.

The results of the FGD and interviews show that the program has had a positive impact in three aspects. First, the community has acquired new skills in processing coffee more professionally. Second, the community is now actively involved in slow loris conservation efforts. Third, the processing of coffee into ready-to-sell products has increased economic added value.

As part of its downstreaming program, CSR established the Kopi Berbagi (Sharing Coffee Cafe) in the Ring 1 area (Bandung), which serves as both a marketing outlet and an inclusive business unit, empowering two people with disabilities as baristas and a manager. The cafe's presence provides initial market access for Kopi Kang, but its marketing reach remains relatively limited, as sales are largely concentrated within the cafe. Furthermore, the products sold at Kopi Berbagi include not only Kopi Kang but also various other coffee varieties, so Kopi Kang has not yet fully become a core product driving broader market expansion.

During the implementation phase, the biggest challenge arose in the marketing aspect related to product downstreaming. Although the production process was well-established and the community possessed technical skills in roasting, grinding, and packaging, the marketing strategy had not yet been optimally developed. Obstacles were evident in the limited distribution network and the absence of a structured digital marketing strategy. This situation was related to suboptimal product diversification, with production still focused predominantly on ready-to-drink coffee. As a result, product choices and price ranges were limited, packaging remained segmented, and the market reached tended to be limited to specific consumer groups.

On the other hand, this market segmentation strategy can be understood as an effort to maintain the stability of community businesses amidst the highly competitive coffee industry, particularly in urban areas. The community itself expressed hope for market expansion through product innovation, such as the development of sachet packaging or more affordable price variants, which are considered to have the potential to reach mass consumers. However, these innovations have not yet been realized, so Kopi Kang's marketing remains in a transitional phase and has not yet developed massively. These findings indicate that the main challenge lies not in the lack of marketing efforts, but rather in the need to strengthen downstream processes through product diversification and innovation so that market expansion can be carried out gradually and sustainably.

4.2. Overview of the Sirih Sijale Social Innovation

The Sirih Sijale innovation began with the initiative of residents of RW 03 Mekarsari, particularly the women's group Ibu KOS (Sirih Processing Group). Initially, this group conducted a simple experiment processing betel leaves into chips on a household scale. The idea emerged when a resident realized that the bitter taste of betel leaves could be minimized by processing them using a specific technique. This discovery then sparked the belief that betel leaves not only function as a traditional medicinal plant but also have the potential to be developed into a snack product with economic value. The betel leaf chips subsequently became a pioneering product, marking the birth of social innovation based on the utilization of local commodities in the region.

The Ibu KOS group, as the primary manager of the betel chips and SIJALE Tea products, demonstrates that social innovation in Sirih Village is not solely oriented toward product output but also aimed at strengthening women's social roles. The participation of the women in RW 03 in all stages of the activity, from raw material processing and production to packaging, reflects the relatively strong open space for participation in this empowerment program. Production activities not only provide additional income but also serve as a collective learning platform for group members to exchange knowledge and skills. Thus, the Sirih Sijale innovation not only produces processed products but also strengthens social capital and community solidarity.

Sirih Village in RW 03 Mekarsari, a SHAFTHI development area, is an interesting case study worthy of further study. This area is known as Sirih Village because most households grow betel plants in their yards. The betel planting is not only intended as a greening element or ornamental plant, but is also designed as a primary raw material for processed products such as betel chips and SIJALE Tea (betel, ginger, and lemon). These products are then developed as a local identity that is expected to open new economic opportunities for the local community.

In the initial phase of the program's implementation, CSR distributed betel quid seedlings to residents and encouraged independent planting. However, in practice, not all residents were able to maintain the plants with the same level of care. Differences in ability and consistency of care between households resulted in unstable betel quid availability. The production of betel quid chips and SIJALE tea requires leaves of good quality, relatively uniform size, and a sustainable supply. In addition to cultivation issues, another challenge faced was limited market access. Although the product had been produced, penetration into a wider market was still suboptimal, and competitiveness with similar products remained relatively limited.

This situation demonstrates that empowerment efforts through CSR programs cannot stop at the seedling provision or initial production stage alone; they must also include strengthening the sustainability of the supply chain and expanding market access. Sirih Village serves as a concrete example that the success of an empowerment program is greatly influenced by the community's readiness to manage plant resources and the product's ability to reach the appropriate market.

Over time, the KOS mothers' group has not only produced betel quid chips but has also begun developing other product variants, such as Sijale Tea (Betel Ginger Lemon). This herbal drink innovation was motivated by the desire to offer a healthy beverage with a fresher and more

modern taste through a combination of betel, ginger, and lemon. The product is expected to attract consumers who are unfamiliar with the taste of betel but are interested in the herbal drink trend.

CSR assistance from SHAFTHI was a crucial factor in the development of both products. SHAFTHI not only provided support in the form of production equipment, such as betel leaf drying racks, but also assisted in packaging design to ensure the product meets higher marketing standards. Through training and technical assistance, the KOS (Household-Housewives) group now has the ability to produce and package products more professionally. This CSR initiative not only increased technical production capacity but also strengthened community confidence that locally sourced products have the potential to compete in a broader market.

Although product innovation has been ongoing and product quality is relatively good, the main challenge facing Sirih Sijale still lies in marketing. Some residents outside of RW 03 are not even aware that betel leaves can be processed into chips and tea with appealing flavors. Limited promotional activities have limited product awareness, resulting in a significant decline in sales volume. Furthermore, market competition is intensifying, with local herbal and snack products with more aggressive branding strategies continuing to emerge. This situation highlights that successful product-level innovation does not automatically guarantee market success without adequate communication and distribution strategies.

4.3. Social Marketing & Market Access Challenges

Based on data from field observations, interviews, and a review of program documents, it appears that both social innovation programs, the Kopi Kang Program in Garut and the Sirih Sijale Program in Tangerang, share a common crucial issue that constitutes a primary challenge: obstacles in the product downstreaming stage. Field findings indicate that the primary challenge to program sustainability no longer lies in the production stage, but rather in marketing and broader market access.

In the Kopi Kang Program, production capacity has been established quite well. Field data from October 10, 2025, indicates that the management group already has a production house, roasting machines, and relatively stable product quality standards. This indicates that the community has the technical capacity to carry out the production process independently.



Figure 1. Kopi Kang Production House

Source: Researcher Documentation

In Figure 1 However, observations and interviews revealed that Kopi Kang's product still faces limitations in reaching a wider market. Product packaging tends to be segmented and does not yet offer economical variants such as sachets, which have the potential to reach a wider

consumer base, including lower-middle class consumers. According to the program manager, the desire to introduce sachet packaging is better understood as a hope for future development. Furthermore, marketing strategies remain limited, both digitally (based on observations that *Kopi Kang* is not yet sold digitally), and offline distribution is still limited, so the product is unable to compete in a more competitive market.



Figure 2. Product Packaging Kopi Kang.

Source: Researcher Documentation

Meanwhile in [Figure 2](#) , in the Sirih Sijale Program, market challenges arise from limited distribution networks. Interviews with program implementers revealed that product marketing still relies heavily on direct sales to local residents, bazaar events, and the personal networks of managers. Limited access to a broader distribution network has hindered market penetration for this product. This indicates that product readiness does not automatically translate to marketing success without the support of a broader and more comprehensive distribution strategy ([Figure 3](#)).



Figure 3. Product packaging Sirih Sijale

Source: Researcher Documentation

The ongoing support provided in these two programs reflects a CSR approach responsive to community needs. The process of achieving market independence is understood as a stage that requires time, experience, and network expansion. In this context, the target communities have

demonstrated a degree of independence in production and internal management. Meanwhile, CSR serves as an enabler, strengthening the community's access, knowledge, and confidence in entering more competitive markets.

These findings align with the community empowerment approach, which emphasizes that independence does not emerge instantly, but rather a gradual process built through mentoring, social learning, and network strengthening (Zimmerman, 2010). In many community-based CSR programs, the role of companies in the early to mid-stages is still necessary to bridge the gap between social capital and market access within the community. Bhinekawati (2023) demonstrates that CSR programs play a crucial role in building social capital and opening economic access, particularly for communities lacking strong market networks.

The sustainability of social programs is greatly influenced by the ability of local actors to transform from beneficiaries to market actors (Hietschold, 2022). However, this transformation process often faces structural barriers, particularly in terms of market penetration and relationships with larger economic actors. Therefore, the presence of CSR as a facilitator cannot be viewed as a form of dependency, but rather as a transition mechanism toward more mature independence.

From a social innovation perspective, ongoing mentoring in the downstream aspect indicates that the program is in the scaling readiness phase, a stage where the innovation has become socially and technically functional but still requires strengthening of the support system to operate independently and sustainably (Sartas et al., 2020). Therefore, the sustainability of the program is not only measured by how quickly the community is released from mentoring, but also by the strength of the foundation of social, economic, and network capacity built during the process.

The comparison of the two programs shows that market challenges can be understood as structural obstacles in the empowerment process. The programs have successfully encouraged increased community production capacity, but have not yet fully developed sustainable market access capabilities. Differences in regional contexts and product types present varying challenges, with the Kopi Kang Program requiring more product innovation and packaging diversification, while the Sirih Sijale Program requires strengthening its distribution network and a broader market penetration strategy.

These findings regarding marketing and market access challenges were reinforced by interviews with program managers and field facilitators. According to informants, marketing limitations were not caused by poor product quality, but rather by the target group's limited experience and market networks. One manager of the Kopi Kang Program stated that although production could be carried out routinely, sales were still volatile and highly dependent on specific events, such as exhibitions, guest visits, or CSR-facilitated activities.

"Actually, production could continue, Miss. But usually, orders are only from a select group, not to the wider market." (Interview with Ahmad, 2025).

The above indicates that Kopi Kang products have not been fully integrated with the wider market due to the limited product choices and consumer segments. The lack of product diversification has resulted in Kopi Kang's continued focus on ready-to-drink coffee with a relatively bitter taste, thus limiting its market reach to consumers accustomed to coffee consumption. Consequently, the product is less inclusive of groups with varying taste preferences, and the resulting market segmentation is not only strategic but also a consequence of the limited product choices.

A similar situation was also found in the Sirih Sijale Program. Interviews revealed that marketing strategies were still conventional, and the community was unaware that betel could be processed into chips as a side dish. Sales relied heavily on local social connections, resulting in relatively limited sales volume. This suggests that lack of knowledge and market access pose challenges to the wider distribution of Sirih Sijale.

"So far, we've only been selling at bazaars and to local people, Miss. We haven't expanded our marketing efforts" (Interview with Tarman, 2025).

The marketing challenges faced by the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale Programs reflect a classic problem in community empowerment practices: the imbalance between the production and downstream stages. Social innovation programs often succeed in improving technical skills and community production capacity, but they haven't fully built independence in distribution management. In this context, the role of companies through CSR programs remains crucial in bridging the gap between community market access and the limited market access they face.

The reliance on CSR in marketing aspects reflects that the relationship between companies and communities is still in the mentoring and transitional stage, where companies serve as key actors in opening market access and expanding distribution networks. This condition aligns with the findings of [Rudito et al. \(2023\)](#), who stated that many CSR programs in Indonesia still focus on building internal community capacity, but have not fully integrated communities into the broader economic system. Consequently, the sustainability of the programs is potentially vulnerable when the intensity of corporate mentoring decreases.

Furthermore, [Vercher \(2016\)](#) emphasized that the success of social innovation is largely determined by the ability of local actors to access markets and build external networks independently. Without strengthening downstream aspects, social innovation risks stalling at the project level, rather than developing as a sustainable system. In the context of Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale, this is reflected in the suboptimal product diversification and broader market penetration strategies.

Furthermore, the sustainable development approach emphasizes that economic, social, and environmental aspects must operate simultaneously ([Nogueira, 2025](#)). Based on observations and interviews, the Kopi Kang program has integrated environmental conservation with local economic empowerment, while Sirih Sijale promotes health potential and local wisdom. However, without strong market access, these sustainable values risk not generating long-term economic impact for the community.

Therefore, the marketing challenges in both social innovation programs are understood as structural issues in program design and implementation. Strengthening downstream capacity and developing market networks must be understood as a gradual process, a crucial prerequisite for social innovation to create sustainable social and economic impact and transform from a short-term intervention into a long-term empowerment system.

4.4. Discussion Using Jim Ife's Empowerment Theory

Table 1. Mapping Empowerment Elements According to Jim Ife ([Ife, 2016](#))

Dimensions of empowerment (Jim Ife)	Empowerment indicators	Findings from the Kang Coffee Program	Findings from the Sirih Sijale Program	Theoretical Analysis
Economic empowerment	The community has the ability to manage economic resources and create added value.	The community is able to process local coffee into ready-to-consume products, but product packaging variety and distribution scale are still limited.	The community now has the ability to produce processed betel leaves in marketable packaging, but sales are still limited to the surrounding area and bazaar activities.	Mastery of the production process is the initial stage of economic empowerment, but it does not yet reflect full control over the economic system.
Access to Resources	Access to production tools and assistance	Received coffee processing training and home production facilities from CSR	Receiving assistance and production facilities from CSR	Access to resources is already available, but it has not been balanced with strengthened market access as an important element in

				sustainable empowerment efforts.
Control over economic processes	The community has control over production, distribution, and marketing.	Mastery of production aspects has been relatively strong, but marketing activities are still situational and limited to certain segments..	Marketing is limited to the local area and bazaar activities.	Ife emphasized that the empowerment process cannot be considered complete as long as the community does not have control over distribution and marketing aspects.
Social Empowerment	The formation of active participation, increased self-confidence, and strengthening of collective solidarity.	The community actively participates in production activities as well as group management.	Communities participate in production and marketing activities on a local scale.	Social empowerment is beginning to take shape, but is not yet fully integrated with economic strengthening.
Sustainability	The program can run sustainably without relying on external support.	Economic sustainability remains vulnerable due to limited access to markets.	Sustainability depends on the support of programs and activities that are temporary.	Ife (2016) emphasizes that sustainability is only achieved if communities control the entire value chain.

In [Table 1](#) Based on analysis using Jim Ife's community empowerment theory, the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale CSR Programs demonstrate that the target communities have achieved a significant level of independence in production and local economic management. Through training, mentoring, and the utilization of local resources, the communities are able to manage the production process independently and derive economic benefits from these activities. At this stage, the program does not indicate community dependence on CSR for daily production activities.

However, [Ife \(2013\)](#) emphasizes that empowerment is not solely related to the ability to produce products, but also to community control over the entire value chain, including distribution and marketing. Field findings indicate that the primary challenge for both programs lies not in the community's economic capacity, but rather in limited market reach. Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale products are produced sustainably, but their marketing still fails to reach a broader and more competitive market.

In this context, the role of CSR is not as a primary supporter of the community's economy, but rather as a facilitator of market access. CSR mentoring focuses more on building networks, facilitating promotion, and connecting community products with previously unreachable market opportunities. This indicates that the relationship between the company and the community is not one of economic dependency, but rather strategic support in post-production aspects.

According to Jim Ife, this condition reflects the intermediate stage of empowerment, where the community already has relatively strong internal capacity but still requires strengthening in the structural dimension, particularly access to the broader economic system. Therefore, CSR involvement in marketing cannot be understood as a form of dependency, but rather as part of the transition process toward more mature market independence.

In other words, the challenges faced by the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale Programs do not indicate weak community independence, but rather limited market opportunities and networks.

From Jim Ife's perspective, strengthening downstreaming is a necessary next step to ensure that empowerment does not stop at the production level but also supports the long-term economic sustainability of the community.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale CSR programs in Garut and Tangerang both demonstrated positive achievements in strengthening production capacity and managing local communities' economies. Both programs successfully encouraged communities to process local commodities into value-added products, carry out the production process independently, and experience the economic benefits of these activities. This demonstrates that internally, the communities have developed capacity and independence in production activities.

However, research findings indicate that the main challenges for both programs remain at the downstream stage, particularly in marketing and expanding market access. Kopi Kang and Sirih Sijale products have yet to fully penetrate the broader market, not due to weak production capacity, but rather due to limited distribution networks, rudimentary marketing strategies, and suboptimal product diversification and innovation capable of reaching a wider range of consumer segments. In the context of Kopi Kang, the focus on ready-to-drink coffee products has resulted in a segmented market, while for Sirih Sijale, marketing remains limited to local areas and specific activities. This situation reflects a gap between success at the production stage and the ability to integrate products into broader, more sustainable market systems.

From the perspective of Jim Ife's community empowerment theory, both programs can be understood as being in the early to middle stages of the empowerment process. Communities already have considerable control over production and internal management, but control over distribution and marketing still needs to be strengthened. Therefore, CSR involvement in marketing is understood as transitional support to open market access and expand networks that communities do not yet fully possess.

This study recommends that strengthening the downstream stage be a primary focus in the ongoing mentoring of CSR programs, through the development of digital marketing strategies and the expansion of distribution networks carried out in stages and collaboratively with the community. In the Kopi Kang Program, strengthening downstream processes can be achieved through product diversification that is more adaptive to market needs, both in the form of coffee processing variations and economical packaging innovations such as sachet variants with affordable price ranges, so that products are more inclusive and able to reach a wider consumer segment. Meanwhile, the Sirih Sijale Program needs to strengthen the promotional aspect and develop a diversification of processed herbal products to be better known and accepted by consumers outside the local scope.

Therefore, the success of community empowerment through CSR programs is measured not only by production capacity but also by the extent to which communities are able to access markets sustainably. Strengthening the downstream phase is a crucial next step for CSR-based social innovations to truly foster long-term economic independence.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Informed Consent

Not Applicable

Author Contributions

The creation of the overall research design and research concepts was aided by ASN. In the Kopi Kang program, she was in charge of fieldwork and data gathering, performed data analysis, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. In the Sirih Sijale initiative, RDA helped with data collecting and field observations. She supported the analysis of community empowerment practices and helped organize empirical data. AMA made a contribution by offering scholarly analysis, constructive criticism, and theoretical recommendations pertaining to sociological viewpoints and community empowerment. In order to raise the manuscript's academic caliber, he additionally reviewed and improved it.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this research.

Data Availability Statement

Field observations, interviews, and documentation provided the data used in this investigation. Due to ethical and privacy concerns, the associated author can provide the data upon reasonable request.

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