

Psychosocial transformation of the deaf community through inclusive empowerment programs: A case study of the PERINTIS CSR Program at PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan

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ABSTRACT

The deaf community in Indonesia continues to face psychosocial challenges that extend beyond communication barriers, including low self-esteem, limited social participation, and social stigma. While many Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives focus on economic outcomes, little is known about their impact on psychosocial well-being. This study explores the psychosocial transformation experienced by members of the Deaf community through the PERINTIS Program, a CSR initiative of PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the program participants, parents, and the implementation team. A three-stage thematic analysis (open, axial, and selective coding) was conducted. The findings indicate that prior to joining the program, the participants often showed signs of withdrawal, low confidence, and emotional instability. After engaging in barista training and mentoring within an inclusive community space, the participants reported increased confidence, stronger social relationships, improved emotional regulation, and greater motivation for the future. These changes were facilitated by a strengths-based, gradual empowerment process supported by mentors and an inclusive social environment. This study highlights the importance of integrating psychosocial dimensions into CSR initiatives, showing that empowerment goes beyond technical skill-building to include identity reconstruction and social recognition. The results contribute to disability studies, social work practice, and CSR policy and suggest that similar community-based models may foster more sustainable and inclusive empowerment.

Keywords: psychosocial transformation, Deaf community, inclusive empowerment, CSR, PERINTIS program

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1. INTRODUCTION

The deaf community in Indonesia faces complex structural and cultural challenges in their daily social lives. As a marginalized group, deaf individuals experience barriers not only in communication but also in access to education, employment, and inclusive social relations. These barriers include limited access to inclusive education, a lack of sign language interpreters, inequality in access to employment, and social stigma that labels them as “disable” or “abnormal” (Karomalloh, 2024). These barriers create psychosocial pressures that are not always visible but profoundly impact self-confidence, emotional regulation, and identity formation. Many studies have shown that deaf children and adolescents have a higher prevalence of psychological problems than their hearing peers. Dethmers et al. (2025), in their study of 495 deaf and hard-of-hearing (DHH) students, reported that psychosocial disorders such as anxiety and depression were two to three times more prevalent than in the typical population. Risk factors such as communication barriers, limitations in social interaction, and lack of a supportive environment exacerbate their psychological condition. Furthermore, diagnostic overshadowing often leads to psychological symptoms being misunderstood as mere consequences of deafness, thus escaping treatment.

This issue cannot be separated from the general perspective that deafness is a medical deficit. Conversely, the Deaf cultural paradigm, as proposed by Ladd (2003) through the concept of Deafhood, emphasizes that being Deaf is a process of constructing identity, meaning in life, and solidarity within the sign language community. Deaf identity is not merely a category of disability but a legitimate cultural and linguistic expression. Therefore, the psychosocial pressures experienced by the Deaf community must be understood in the context of oppressive social relations, not as individual weaknesses. Reindal (2008) criticises disability approaches that overemphasise medical and individual aspects and instead calls for a relational model that considers the influence of social structures on the experience of disability.

According to the BPS data for 2023, as cited by Karomalloh (2024), the number of people with disabilities working in the formal sector is only 763,925, or approximately 0.55% of the total national workforce, far below the minimum quota of 1%–2% required by Law No. 8 of 2016. Most people with disabilities work in the informal sector, which is not only a matter of access to employment but also a lack of appropriate communication accommodation, sign language, room facilities, and inclusive recruitment processes. The impact is not only felt in economic terms but also influences psychosocial conditions, ranging from low self-confidence and social isolation to long-term dependence on family (Kusters et al., 2017). The WHO (2011) also emphasizes that people with sensory disabilities, including deaf people, are at risk of psychological distress due to labelling, including stigmatization, rejection by peers, lower self-esteem, lower expectations, and limited opportunities due to communication barriers that narrow the space for social interaction.

In this context, psychosocial transformation becomes an important aspect that needs to be examined more deeply. In this study, psychosocial transformation is defined as a multidimensional process involving substantive changes in (a) self-perception and identity, (b) affect regulation and well-being, and (c) social relations and participation. This concept aligns with transformative learning theory, which views deep perspective change as arising from critical reflection and new social experiences (Mezirow, 1997). In disability studies, psychosocial transformation also denotes a shift from being perceived as an “object of pity” to becoming an “active subject” with social recognition and agency (Barnes, 2005; Zarb, 1992). In developmental terms, Erikson (1968) highlighted adolescence and early adulthood as sensitive stages for identity development, where supportive environments can facilitate positive trajectories. This transformation refers to the internal changes deaf individuals experience in understanding and interpreting themselves, their environment, and their social relationships. In disability studies, psychosocial transformation encompasses a shift in identity from being an “object of pity” to that of an “active subject” who is empowered and independent (Barnes, 2005; Zarb, 1992). This means that the empowerment of people with disabilities is not merely a matter of improving skills or income but also how these individuals reconstruct their identity, build self-confidence, and gain equal social recognition. For the Deaf community, psychosocial transformation is also closely related to the emergence of a Deaf cultural identity

that rejects the medical view of deafness as a “deficiency” and emphasizes sign language and community solidarity as a form of collective strength (Ladd, 2003).

Despite its importance, existing research and CSR practices largely emphasize economic or vocational outcomes, often neglecting psychosocial dimensions such as confidence building, identity reconstruction, and social connectedness. Few studies have investigated how inclusive, community-based CSR initiatives foster psychosocial transformation among deaf individuals. Research that specifically examines how psychosocial transformation occurs in the Deaf community through inclusion-based empowerment programs is still limited. Aspects such as changes in self-perception, the growth of a new social identity, or social integration within the community have not been widely studied as primary objects of research, especially in the context of empowerment programs initiated by the private sector through a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach. The role of CSR is significant if it can bridge social gaps through inclusive programs that target vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities. Most CSR programs and vocational training for people with disabilities focus more on economic achievements and work productivity without revealing the subjective and social dynamics underlying the changes in the participants. Psychosocial recovery is an important foundation for sustainable empowerment.

One example of a relevant CSR program initiative to examine is the PERINTIS (Empowerment of Special Friends) Program run by PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan, Indonesia. This program targets the deaf community, particularly teenagers and young adults, through barista training and social assistance in a sign language-friendly community space. PERINTIS not only focuses on technical skills but also creates an emotionally and socially safe and inclusive environment so that participants dare to express themselves, build relationships, and grow as independent and confident individuals. Pertamina's Social and Environmental Responsibility (TJSL) program through the PERINTIS (Empowerment of Special Friends) initiative represents a model of disability empowerment that places the Deaf community as active subjects in the social transformation process. Instead of making them passive beneficiaries, this program opens full participation from the recruitment stage, training, and work capacity development. The intervention does not stop at technical training as baristas but extends to a holistic social experience through creating an inclusive and collaborative workspace. The work environment is not only designed as a place to work, but also as a psychosocially safe space where beneficiaries can build self-confidence, form healthy social relationships, and experience recovery from the social pressures they may have experienced previously. Intensive mentoring provided by trainers, senior baristas, and local heroes within the program environment plays an important role in creating a sense of security and acceptance. This support allows participants to express themselves, manage their emotions more stably, and begin to develop a positive social identity. Furthermore, the involvement of the local community, including coffee industry players, social media activists, the Deaf community, and MSME networks, expands the social space for the public recognition of beneficiaries. This has an impact on the growth of a sense of belonging and appreciation, as well as restoring the social position of participants as empowered individuals. In this process, participants not only learn how to make and serve coffee but also undergo meaningful social learning, learning to greet, converse, collaborate, and understand the value of responsibility in the context of work.

This empowerment model emphasizes that psychosocial change cannot be achieved through technical training alone. It requires an approach that respects the cultural characteristics of the community, provides a safe space for interaction, and facilitates the formation of personal meaning in every learning process. When participants are given the opportunity to appear as whole persons, not merely as individuals with disabilities, the empowerment process not only improves skills but also restores self-esteem and expands access to social recognition that may have been previously hindered. Thus, PERINTIS is an example of how inclusive programs can profoundly change not only economic conditions but also the quality of social relations and the psychological well-being of participants. Although this program has demonstrated practical success, academic studies highlighting the psychosocial impact of the program's initiatives are still very limited. Studies related to CSR tend to focus more on economic sustainability or training output evaluation rather than emphasizing comprehensive psychosocial change. This is an important research gap that must be addressed. Psychosocial transformation as a non-material outcome is

an important indicator of the success of empowering vulnerable groups, particularly the primary Deaf community, which has a unique identity and language dynamic.

Based on this context, this study aims to explore how psychosocial transformation occurs among members of the Deaf community who participate in inclusive empowerment programs. This study focuses on how participants in the PERINTIS Program experience changes in their self-perception, social relationships, and active role in the community and wider society. This study raises the primary question: How does psychosocial transformation occur in members of the Deaf community who participate in the PERINTIS CSR Program of PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan? This question is broken down into two problem formulations: (1) What are the psychosocial conditions of participants before joining the program? and (2) What factors support psychosocial transformation during and after the program? This research is expected to contribute to the development of an inclusive and Deaf culture-based social intervention model and enrich perspectives on social work and CSR practices that promote social justice.

Conceptually, this research is based on the understanding that psychosocial transformation results from interactions between internal factors (such as motivation, self-perception, and emotions) and external factors (social environment, family support, and community space). When inclusive empowerment interventions, such as the PERINTIS Program, provide appropriate training, supportive community support, and a safe space for expression, opportunities open for participants to experience social identity change, increased self-confidence, and healthier social relationships. These three aspects are the primary indicators for measuring the success of the holistic psychosocial transformation of people with disabilities. Thus, this research not only aims to fill the gap in the academic literature on the psychosocial impact of CSR programs but also provides practical contributions to the business world, policymakers, and community organizations in designing more inclusive, meaningful, and sustainable models of disability empowerment.

The PERINTIS Program is a CSR initiative by PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan targets the Deaf community through combined vocational and psychosocial support. The program integrates three core pillars intended to facilitate psychosocial transformation: (1) learning opportunities via barista training and supervised work practice, (2) social recognition and community engagement by involving coffee communities, Deaf networks, and the public, and (3) humanistic mentoring that provides empathic, stage-wise support tailored to each participant's readiness. These pillars are grounded in social learning (Bandura, 1999) and strengths-based social work principles (Saleebey, 1996), and they form the conceptual framework used in this study to investigate psychosocial changes among beneficiaries.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the psychosocial transformation experienced by members of the Deaf community participating in the PERINTIS Program, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan, Indonesia. The case study method was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive understanding of subjective experiences, processes of identity reconstruction, and forms of social adaptation within the context of inclusive, empowering environments.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, considering their direct involvement in the program as beneficiaries, family members, or implementers. The study engaged seven Deaf individuals as primary participants, along with four parents or guardians, one special needs schoolteacher, and three CSR team members. The number of participants was determined based on the principles of information richness and data saturation, which are considered adequate in qualitative inquiry to capture diverse perspectives while maintaining analytical depth.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth semi-structured interviews guided by questions designed to explore participants' psychosocial conditions before, during, and after program involvement. Interviews took place in inclusive and comfortable settings, with communication adjustments, such as sign

language use and parental mediation, when needed. All interviews were conducted with informed consent, recorded with the participants' permission, and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis followed a three-stage thematic coding process outlined by Creswell (2015). This began with open coding to identify initial categories, followed by axial coding to establish connections between categories, and concluded with selective coding to refine the overarching themes. This analytic process highlighted the key dimensions of psychosocial transformation, including changes in self-confidence, emotional regulation, social relationships, and motivation for the future. To enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, coding was conducted independently by two researchers, who subsequently discussed the results to reach a consensus. Triangulation of perspectives among beneficiaries, parents, and program implementers was also applied, along with member checking and peer debriefing by the research team.

Ethical considerations were followed throughout the research process. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all informants provided informed consent prior to the data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by removing identifying information from the transcripts and reports. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw at any stage, without consequence. These measures ensured that the study respected the dignity, autonomy, and privacy of all participants, particularly given the vulnerabilities associated with disability.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Psychosocial Conditions Before the PERINTIS Program

Before participating in the PERINTIS Program, most of the deaf community members, who were interviewed through their parents, showed vulnerable psychosocial conditions. These conditions include weak emotional regulation, limited social relationships, low self-esteem, and low motivation in life. This was reflected in various quotes from informants, such as, "*Anak saya suka merasa sedih.*" (Rtm) and "*Anak saya merasa kecil hati dengan kondisinya... kalau ada anak lain bicara, dia merasa kurang.*" (Drh). These quotes indicate feelings of inferiority and helplessness often experienced by individuals with communication barriers. Erikson (1968) states that individuals in adolescence and early adulthood are in the "*identity vs role confusion*" phase, which is a crucial period for the formation of self-identity and social recognition. When access to a supportive social space is not available, an identity crisis arises, characterized by withdrawal, feelings of "*being different*", and doubts about self-worth. This is reinforced by the narratives of other parents, "*Anak saya suka cepat tersinggung.*" (Rtm), and "*Kalau dikritik atau dikasih tabu, langsung diam dan sedih.*" (Snt), also "*Anak saya suka merasa putus asa dengan kehidupannya... apalagi waktu belum kerja.*" (Drh).

This is consistent with the findings of Dethmers et al. (2025) in their research, who showed that deaf children have a 1.1–2 times higher prevalence of psychological disorders than their hearing peers, with a predominance of internalizing disorders such as anxiety, sadness, and withdrawal. This condition often goes undetected because the symptoms are considered part of communication barriers, a phenomenon known as diagnostic shadowing (du Feu & Fergusson, 2003).

In addition to emotional aspects, barriers to social relationships also emerged. Many previous program participants were closed off and did not have a wide social circle. "*Kalau di luar rumah, nggak pernah sama anak-anak lain. Nggak punya banyak teman.*" (Snt). The implementation team added, "*Waktu pertama dilatih, mereka nggak berani bercanda. Kalau ketemu orang baru, langsung tutup muka.*" (Rza). This phenomenon illustrates a form of passive social exclusion, where individuals feel alienated due to language barriers and social stigma. In terms of motivation, some parents reported that their children were only willing to participate in activities if there was a reward: "*Kalau ada jatahnya, dia mau. Tapi kalau disuruh bantu tanpa upah, nggak mau.*" (Snt). This indicates the dominance of extrinsic motivation, namely, dependence on external rewards. In fact, according to the theory of self-determination motivation by Deci & Ryan (2000), sustainable empowerment requires intrinsic motivation, namely internal drives such as a sense of meaning and personal satisfaction. The results of Dethmers et al.'s (2025) study also showed that the prevalence of psychological disorders tended to be higher in the school context than at home. This means that

challenging social environments, such as a lack of acceptance and effective communication at school, can worsen the psychosocial conditions of deaf children. In addition, the prevalence of internalizing disorders among deaf adolescents was found to be significantly higher than that of externalizing disorders, a result that is consistent with the conditions reported by parents in this study.

Interviews with parents and program implementers revealed that prior to joining PERINTIS, participants experienced significant psychosocial challenges. For instance, one parent reported, *“Anak saya selalu menunduk kalau diajak bicara, takut salah ngomong”* (Snt), while another noted, *“Dia jarang keluar kamar, lebih suka sendiri”* (Rtm). These narratives align with the themes identified in the coding process, including low self-esteem, social withdrawal, and emotional instability. Such patterns indicate limited confidence, unmanaged emotions, and restricted social interaction, confirming the heightened vulnerability of Deaf individuals in marginalized contexts. Based on these findings, it is evident that empowerment interventions must go beyond technical skills training. As Deci & Ryan (2000) self-determination theory suggests, sustainable empowerment requires not only external competence but also intrinsic motivation, emotional resilience, and supportive social environments. Therefore, holistic interventions that integrate identity strengthening, emotional regulation, and social networking are essential for fostering psychosocial well-being among Deaf individuals.

3.2 Intervention Process: An Inclusive and Gradual Approach

The intervention process in the PERINTIS Program was structured as an inclusive and gradual approach, beginning with an initial selection and readiness assessment. Rather than prioritizing technical skills alone, the assessment stage emphasized psychological readiness and the motivation to learn. As one implementer noted, *“Asesmennya dari sekolah... awalnya ada 50 orang, jadi 20, akhirnya yang konsisten 8 orang”* (Rza). This principle reflects the client-centered approach described by Zastrow (2017), which recognizes the importance of understanding individual capacities, limitations, and aspirations. Following selection, the participants engaged in barista training and hands-on practice at the Teman Istimewa Coffee Shop. This environment provided not only technical training but also a safe space for social interaction and confidence building. An implementer explained, *“Kita nggak langsung lepas. Karena bisa bikin kopi belum tentu siap menghadapi orang”* (Rza). This demonstrates the application of experiential learning, allowing participants to internalize their work roles and gradually adapt to social expectations. The mentoring phase played a crucial role in fostering psychosocial growth. Continuous guidance and emotional support from trainers and peers created a supportive climate that helped the participants overcome fear and develop resilience. One mentor observed, *“Awalnya mereka diam, takut bicara. Tapi setelah beberapa minggu, mereka mulai bercanda, mulai menyapa”* (Rza). This gradual behavioral change illustrates the principles of the social learning theory (Bandura, 1997), where modelling and reinforcement enable adaptive skill acquisition in social contexts.

Furthermore, the barista training stage, which lasts two to three months, serves as a practical learning space and a safe space for building social relationships among the participants. Beneficiaries are not only taught coffee-making skills but also introduced to work rhythms, how to deal with customers, and teamwork skills. *“Kita nggak langsung lepas. Karena bisa bikin kopi belum tentu siap menghadapi orang.”* (Rza). This process demonstrates the importance of experiential learning in forming social competence. The transformation began to be visible: *“Awalnya mereka diam, takut bicara. Tapi setelah beberapa minggu, mereka mulai bercanda, mulai menyapa.”* (Rza). This is in line with social learning theory (Bandura, 1999), which emphasizes the importance of observation, modelling, and environmental reinforcement as a means of behavioral change. In the context of social work, this process is part of a planned change process, where change does not occur instantly but through the creation of a supportive environment that enables progressive social learning (Zastrow, 2017).

The main pillar of PERINTIS' success is intensive mentoring by mentors, senior baristas, and ‘local heroes.’ Mentors do not only focus on technical work but also act as a social support system. *“Kita dampingi terus. Mereka panik waktu kedai ramai. Tapi kita bantu pelan-pelan, kasih waktu, ajak ngobrol.”* (Sly). This is in line with the principle of relational empowerment, which facilitates a sense of security and trust

through mutually supportive relationships. “*Kalau ada masalah, kita masuk, tapi pelan. Biar mereka tetap merasa percaya.*” (Rza). This model emphasizes the importance of a non-judgmental attitude and empathy as key values in social work practice.

This program also adopts key principles from the strengths perspective developed by Saleebey (1996). The core assumption of this perspective is that clients possess the capacity to learn, grow, and change when provided with appropriate opportunities. In the context of PERINTIS, participants are not positioned as objects of pity but as individuals with potential and strengths that can be nurtured. The involvement of the coffee community and local social media functions as a macro-practice strategy, expanding participants’ social networks. As one participant explained, “*We invite coffee communities, local baristas, even influencers to come here, so that they are seen and recognized*” (Rza).

Table 1. Summarises the key themes and provides illustrative evidence of participants’ conditions before and after joining the program

Theme	Before	After
Self-confidence	Quiet, withdrawn, and often felt insecure	Demonstrated higher confidence by initiating greetings and completing tasks more proactively
Social relations	Had few friends and tended to avoid social settings	Built friendships in the coffee shop environment and engaged actively with customers
Emotional regulation	Became easily upset and withdrew when receiving criticism	Showed improved coping strategies during busy periods and sought support from mentors
Future orientation	Displayed low motivation and focused mainly on external incentives	Developed entrepreneurial aspirations and stronger motivation to work for family support

The evidence in Table 1 suggests that the intervention generated changes extending beyond technical skill acquisition. The program contributed to psychosocial recovery, identity reconstruction, and the development of sustainable behavioral changes, factors considered crucial for long-term empowerment. Nevertheless, these findings should be interpreted with caution, as they are based on qualitative accounts rather than systematic measurements. Further longitudinal research would be valuable to strengthen the evidence base.

3.3 Psychosocial Transformation: From isolation to self-confidence

Interviews with parents and the implementation team showed that participants in the PERINTIS Program experienced significant changes in psychosocial aspects after participating in the program. This transformation was evident in the dimensions of self-confidence, social relationships, independence, and future orientation of the participants. One of the most prominent forms of transformation was the growth of self-confidence among participants. Many parents observed positive changes in their children, who are now more open, no longer afraid to perform, and have begun to feel proud of themselves. As expressed by Mrs. Snt, “*Sekarang lebih percaya diri dibandingkan dulu ya. Dulu malu ngomong, sekarang malah nyapa orang.*” (Snt). A similar sentiment was expressed by Mrs Rtm, who saw significant changes in her child, “*Anaknya sekarang rajin, disiplin, dan semangat. Dulu suka bengong aja di rumah.*” (Rtm). These statements show that the program has succeeded in forming what Bandura et al. (1999) refer to as self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to complete tasks and face challenges. This increase in self-efficacy was accompanied by a growth in optimism and intrinsic motivation among the participants.

This transformation is also evident in social relations. Participants who were initially quiet and reluctant to socialise are now actively interacting, joking, and forming social connections with peers and colleagues. This change was observed directly by the CSR team, “*Yang dulunya diam, sekarang malah suka ngajak ngobrol. Udah berani bercanda sama orang baru.*” (Sly). This is also reinforced by parents’ testimonials, as shared by Ms Drh, “*Anak saya sekarang kalau pulang cerita banyak. Punya teman. Beda sekali dengan sebelum kerja.*” (Drh). The dynamics of interaction built in this inclusive work environment encourage the formation of social connectedness, which, according to Baumeister & Leary (1995), is a basic human need and an important element in improving emotional well-being.

The social acceptance provided by the work environment, through humor, nonverbal communication, and supportive attitudes, created a positive experience that beneficiaries rarely had before. Thus, this program not only provided employment but also built a sense of belonging. Some beneficiaries also demonstrated personal initiative that was previously absent, such as aspiring to become entrepreneurs, working independently, and supporting their families financially. This change reflects not only a behavioral shift but also a deeper motivational transformation.

According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), motivation evolves along a continuum from extrinsic regulation, where actions are driven by external rewards or pressures, to intrinsic regulation, where individuals act out of personal interest, value alignment, and self-endorsement. In this study, prior to the program, many participants engaged only when external incentives were provided, indicating extrinsic regulation. Through the inclusive learning environment and sustained mentoring, however, participants began to internalize new roles and responsibilities, developing a sense of competence in their work, autonomy in decision-making, and relatedness within the social space of the coffee shop where they worked. These three psychological needs, competence, autonomy, and relatedness are central to Self-Determination Theory and form the foundation of sustainable intrinsic motivation.

The transition was also directly expressed by the participants and their parents. One participant conveyed to the CSR team, *"Saya pengen punya usaha kopi sendiri di rumah. Bikin sendiri, jualan sendiri."* (Participant quote, from the CSR Team). Support for this change also came from parents, as expressed by Mrs. Snt, *"Anaknya jadi punya tujuan. Mau kerja, bantu ibu. Dulu nggak ada semangat seperti itu."* (Snt). These accounts illustrate how empowerment through PERINTIS fostered not only skill acquisition but also the internalization of motivation, allowing participants to find personal meaning in their activities and pursue future goals with greater self-determination.

In this context, Teman Istimewa Coffee Shop, as part of the PERINTIS program, plays an important role as a psychosocial restorative space, a place where people with disabilities can heal the emotional wounds caused by social stigma while building a new identity that is empowered and recognized. This is reflected in the statement of one of the CSR team members, *"Mereka merasa diterima. Di sini nggak ada yang ngejek. Semua support"* (Sty). This transformative process not only changes how participants view themselves but also influences the perspectives of their parents, community, and customers. Inclusion, in this context, is no longer just a buzzword but has become a tangible way of life. The program successfully bridges the gap between the disability community and the public.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the psychosocial transformation of Deaf participants in the PERINTIS Program, a CSR initiative of PT. Kilang Pertamina International RU VI Balongan, Indonesia. The findings indicate that transformation was not the result of technical training alone but rather emerged through the combined effects of inclusive learning spaces, experiential work practice, and sustained mentoring. Together, these elements facilitated multidimensional changes in participants' lives, including increased self-confidence, stronger social relationships, improved emotional regulation, and clearer future orientations.

The first domain of change concerned self-confidence. Participants who had previously withdrawn and were hesitant to interact began greeting others, engaging with customers, and showing initiative in their work. This shift reflects the development of self-efficacy, as described by Bandura, where mastery experiences and positive reinforcement strengthen the belief in one's abilities. The second domain involved social relationships. Within the safe and inclusive environment of the coffee shop, participants not only built friendships but also experienced recognition from customers and the wider community. This reflects Baumeister and Leary's notion of the need to belong as a fundamental human motivation, highlighting how inclusion can restore social connectedness. The third domain was emotional regulation. Through ongoing support from mentors and peers, the participants learned to manage frustration, cope with criticism, and remain resilient under stress. The final domain was future orientation. Motivational change was evident as participants shifted from dependence on external incentives to articulating personal

aspirations, such as becoming entrepreneurs or contributing to family welfare. This evolution is best explained through the Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in fostering intrinsic motivation.

Beyond the empirical findings, this study contributes to the theory by integrating perspectives from psychology, social work, and disability studies. This demonstrates that empowerment is not limited to skill acquisition but is fundamentally about identity reconstruction and social recognition. It also underscores the importance of relational approaches to disability, which challenge deficit-based views and situate transformation within supportive social contexts.

This study has important practical implications. For CSR initiatives, it highlights the need to design programs that combine vocational training with psychosocial support, mentoring, and inclusive community engagement. Such programs not only prepare participants for employment but also help them rebuild their confidence and achieve social recognition. For policymakers, the findings suggest that psychosocial indicators should be embedded in disability inclusion strategies and CSR evaluation frameworks. Recognizing empowerment as both a material and psychosocial process ensures that programs do not reduce individuals to economic outputs but instead foster dignity, agency and resilience.

Looking ahead, further research is needed to assess the sustainability of psychosocial transformation over time, particularly after the program's completion. Comparative studies between CSR-led and community-driven initiatives may provide insights into which models are more effective in producing long-term changes. Additionally, exploring digital or hybrid forms of psychosocial support may expand the reach of inclusive empowerment programs, particularly for communities with limited geographical access or mobility constraints.

Overall, the PERINTIS Program illustrates that when empowerment initiatives embrace inclusion, mentoring, and social recognition, they can facilitate profound psychosocial transformations among marginalized groups. Such transformation not only benefits individual participants but also challenges societal stigma, opening pathways for more just and inclusive forms of development.

Ethical approval

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles for studies involving human participants. Although formal institutional review board approval was not required for this type of qualitative study, the researchers adhered to ethical guidelines by ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent from all participants and/or their guardians, and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity throughout the data collection and reporting process.

Informed consent statement

All participants and/or their legal guardians provided informed consent prior to participation in the study. The purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the research were explained in accessible formats, including adjustments for communication needs of Deaf participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Consent for audio recording and the use of anonymised quotations in publications was also obtained.

Authors' Contributions

MM and VH conceptualised the study, developed the research design, and led the manuscript drafting and finalisation of the manuscript. AS and DK were responsible for data collection and transcription. T and EGW contributed to data analysis and thematic coding. FH provided methodological input and supported literature review. MZ and ACP facilitated access to the PERINTIS Program and contributed contextual insights from the CSR implementation perspective. SPKP assisted with data validation and editing. All authors have reviewed, edited, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author due to privacy reasons.

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