TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL TALENT EMPOWERMENT: ANALYSIS OF TELKOMSEL'S CSR PROGRAM AT RUMAH BUMN YOGYAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes PT Telkomsel's CSR program at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta as a two-way communication instrument for youth digital empowerment. Using qualitative case study methodology, data were collected from eight informants (three company representatives, five participants) through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. Findings reveal that the program facilitates holistic empowerment through dialogic communication dynamics, transforming participants from passive technology consumers to confident digital content creators and entrepreneurs. Key outcomes include: (1) technical competency development in digital marketing, content creation, and platform analytics; (2) psychological empowerment through increased self-confidence and expanded career aspirations; (3) social capital formation via inclusive learning communities and sustained peer networks; (4) entrepreneurial mindset shifts from employment-seeking to opportunity-creation orientation. The symmetrical two-way communication model enables participants to actively co-construct meanings rather than passively receive information, validating Grunig and Hunt's (1984) theory in CSR contexts. Program implementation faces challenges including limited duration (8-12 weeks), curriculum lag behind technological developments, post-program access sustainability, and facilitator quality variability. Theoretically, this research contributes by demonstrating the integration of symmetrical two-way communication theory with Zimmerman's (1995) empowerment theory in CSR program analysis, revealing how CSR functions not merely as philanthropy or image-building but as strategic communication constructing corporate identity and social legitimacy through authentic dialogue and sustainable empowerment. The study concludes that transformative CSR requires reciprocal communication mechanisms, participant-centered design, and sustained resource access beyond formal program periods.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs have evolved into strategic instruments in Indonesia's human resource development, particularly for improving educational quality and developing younger generation talents (Rahman & Sisdianto, 2024; Misbach, 2023). CSR is viewed not only as formal social responsibility but as strategic investment for future human resource development (Dewa Putu Yohanes Agata L. Sandopart et al., 2023). State-owned enterprises (SOEs), as key economic actors, have dual responsibilities: achieving business targets and contributing to sustainable social development through CSR programs designed to bridge gaps in education and skills access across Indonesia.

However, significant gaps in digital technology and education access persist, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas where residents face limited digital infrastructure and skills, severely restricting access to online education and training (SMERU, 2022; Suharyanto et al., 2024). This situation is exacerbated by limited stable internet access (Rachman et al., 2019), digital devices, and e-learning resources (Rahmawati, 2022), placing youth at risk of being left behind when digital literacy and technological competence are increasingly crucial (Mohammad Chaidir et al., 2025; Yusri, 2020). Young people's talents and creativity are hampered not by lack of ability but by inadequate platforms, facilities, and training, making CSR interventions providing digital access essential to bridging this gap (Sinambela & Lumbantobing, 2024).

PT Telkomsel, Indonesia's largest telecommunications company, recognizes youth empowerment as foundational to national progress (Amelia & Ikaningtyas, 2024) and integrates social development into its business strategy, viewing CSR as crucial for corporate sustainability (Sjioen et al., 2023). Leveraging its digital infrastructure and expertise, Telkomsel operates through the Rumah BUMN initiative—a collaborative SOE platform serving as a training center for entrepreneurship and digital competency development. Previous research at Rumah BUMN locations in Samarinda (Kusesvara, 2023), Tasikmalaya (Amos et al., 2023), Bandung (Farid & Juliawat, 2025), and Majene (Safira et al., 2025) confirms its role in mentoring, training, and capacity building for MSMEs, with studies showing significant socio-economic impacts measured through quantitative metrics.

Despite existing research, critical gaps remain. Most studies position Rumah BUMN primarily as an MSME development instrument rather than examining it specifically as a youth education and talent development space from a corporate communications perspective. Few studies have explicitly explored the two-way communication process between companies and CSR participants how messages, values, and meanings are co-constructed rather than simply transferred. Research on holistic learning and empowerment processes in youth talent programs remains limited, particularly regarding how participants interpret, internalize, and transform learning experiences into competencies and self-confidence. Furthermore, no in-depth qualitative study has examined the participant experience and empowerment process specifically at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta.

This study integrates Zimmerman's (1995) Empowerment Theory, which emphasizes processes through which individuals gain control over their lives through increased knowledge, skills, and resource access, with companies acting as facilitators of ongoing learning enabling independent community development (Satriya et al., 2024; Hasanah et al., 2024), and Grunig and Hunt's (1984) symmetrical two-way communication theory, which emphasizes building dialogue and shared understanding rather than one-way message dissemination. Through training and mentoring programs, Telkomsel's CSR serves as reciprocal communication conveying company values, social commitment, and identity, creating long-term relationships based on trust and collaboration. This theoretical integration enables comprehensive analysis of how CSR programs function as communication instruments facilitating both information dissemination and participants' social and personal transformation.

This study aims to analyze the two-way communication and empowerment process in Telkomsel's CSR program at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta through in-depth qualitative approach, addressing three research questions: (1) How is the two-way communication process facilitated and how do participants interpret and internalize

communicated values? (2) How does the program contribute to holistic youth empowerment through increased digital competence, self-confidence, and entrepreneurial mindset? (3) What challenges and supporting factors exist in implementing CSR as an empowerment communication instrument? This research contributes to growing literature on CSR as corporate and development communication, provides practical insights for Telkomsel and other SOEs regarding CSR effectiveness in achieving sustainable empowerment goals, offers concrete recommendations for improving program design to be more relevant and impactful, and informs public policy regarding private sector roles in human resource and social development.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative paradigm with an intrinsic case study approach to examine Telkomsel's CSR program at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta in depth. The qualitative approach was chosen to understand two-way communication and empowerment processes through informants' perspectives and direct experiences rather than measuring or testing hypotheses. The case study method allows holistic and in-depth analysis of a single case by exploring meanings, processes, and dynamics that occur within the program context.

The research involved eight informants selected through purposive and snowball sampling: three company representatives and five program participants. Company informants were BS (CSR Manager of Telkomsel Yogyakarta), SN (Program Coordinator of Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta), and AW (Digital Training Facilitator of Telkomsel), selected based on strategic roles and minimum two years of program experience. Participant informants were DK (19 years old, university student), RP (22 years old, vocational school graduate), MS (20 years old, university student), FM (21 years old, novice content creator), and EP (18 years old, high school graduate), selected based on diverse age, gender, educational background, and economic status. The research was conducted over four months (August-November 2024) at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta, a collaborative SOE-managed center for talent development and MSME empowerment, chosen for its established Telkomsel CSR program with rich data and experiences.

Data collection employed three main techniques. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews with all eight informants lasting 60-90 minutes each, using open-ended questions guided by themes including program design and implementation, participants' learning experiences, communication processes, empowerment impacts, and challenges faced. Second, participant observation of program activities such as digital literacy training sessions, entrepreneurship workshops, and mentoring sessions to understand facilitator-participant interaction dynamics, learning processes, and program contexts. Third, document analysis of Telkomsel's CSR reports, Rumah BUMN documentation, training modules, and supporting documents to understand formal program design and implementation track records.

Data analysis utilized Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis method, beginning with verbatim transcription of interview recordings, followed by data familiarization through repeated readings with initial note-taking. Initial coding identified relevant data segments with descriptive labels such as "confidence building" or "interactive communication." Themes were then identified by grouping semantically related codes into broader themes like "transformative learning" or "participatory empowerment," followed by theme review to ensure consistency and cohesion, and finally theme definition and naming. Credibility was tested through source triangulation (comparing company and participant perspectives) and technique triangulation (combining interview, observation, and document data), supplemented by member checking where findings were returned to informants for confirmation.

Research ethics were strictly maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all informants after explaining research objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits, with assurance of voluntary participation and right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected by using initials instead of real names and securing all data in password-protected files accessible only to researchers. The research avoided potential harm by ensuring interview questions were not intrusive or psychologically burdensome, and maintaining respectful, empathetic attitudes during data collection. All research findings are reported honestly without

manipulation, with informants given opportunity to verify interpretations through member checking to ensure accuracy and fairness in representing their experiences and perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Design and Implementation of Telkomsel's CSR Program at Rumah BUMN

Telkomsel's CSR program at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta was designed as a comprehensive initiative integrating digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills development, and personal branding coaching for young people aged 18-25. According to BS, CSR Manager of Telkomsel Yogyakarta, this program arose from the company's awareness of the persistent digital divide among young people, especially those from low-income backgrounds or semi-urban areas. The program positioning reflects a strategic approach that transcends traditional philanthropy, viewing CSR as long-term investment in capacity building rather than short-term charitable assistance. The program design includes structured training modules ranging from basic digital literacy (safe internet usage, e-commerce, social media) to advanced skills such as digital marketing, content creation, and online entrepreneurship. BS explained the program's foundational philosophy:

> "Our CSR program here is not just about providing internet access or technical training. We want to create a learning ecosystem where young people can develop holistically, from digital skills to a sustainable entrepreneurial mindset. Rumah BUMN is the right medium because it already has the infrastructure and networks with various other state-owned enterprises."

This statement reflects the company's recognition that effective empowerment requires more than technical skill transfer it necessitates creating comprehensive learning ecosystems that support holistic development. The program's strategic positioning within Rumah BUMN leverages existing SOE infrastructure and inter-organizational networks, demonstrating collaborative approaches to CSR implementation that maximize resource efficiency and program reach.

SN, Program Coordinator for Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta, explained that program implementation involves close collaboration between Telkomsel, Rumah BUMN, and field facilitators. Each participant engages in the program for 8-12 weeks with 8-10 hours weekly intensity, structured across morning sessions for theory and discussion, afternoon sessions for practice and individual mentoring, and evening sessions for reflection and project development. The learning methodology combines interactive lectures, group discussions, role-playing, and project-based learning, where participants create real-world projects such as social media campaigns, online stores, or digital content portfolios. SN emphasized the program's adaptive design:

> "Our program structure is very flexible. We listen to participant feedback every week and make adjustments. For example, if a participant is interested in delving deeper into digital marketing, we can provide additional mentoring slots with experts from Telkomsel or our partners. So the program is not rigid, but responsive to the participants' needs."

This flexibility demonstrates a participant-centered approach that acknowledges individual differences in learning pace, interests, and goals. The responsive curriculum design reflects principles of adult learning theory, where learners' autonomy and self-direction are respected and facilitated rather than constrained by rigid program structures. AW, Telkomsel's Digital Training Facilitator, articulated his role as extending beyond conventional teaching to encompass coaching, mentoring, and motivating participants. He emphasized the importance of establishing trust and psychological safety as foundational elements for effective learning:

> "As a facilitator, I have to build trust first. I want participants to feel comfortable asking questions, even about things they consider 'stupid.' I always tell them, 'There are no stupid questions, there is only valuable curiosity.' I also share my personal experiences in digital transformation, so they know that I am not just a presenter but also a role model."

This relational approach to facilitation creates learning environments where participants feel psychologically safe to take risks, admit knowledge gaps, and experiment with new skills. The facilitator's self-disclosure and modeling behaviors demonstrate authentic engagement that transcends hierarchical instructor-student dynamics, fostering peer-like relationships that encourage deeper learning engagement.

Figure 1 illustrates one of the digital-based MSME training activities held at Rumah BUMN, specifically the "Digitally Smart MSMEs: Maximizing Sales Through Shopee Affiliate Marketing Ads" training. This activity demonstrates how participants are equipped with knowledge and skills in digital marketing to optimize online sales, providing concrete evidence of telecommunications companies' role through CSR programs in educating and developing young people's talents, particularly in digital literacy and entrepreneurship.

Figure 1: Digital-Based MSME Training

Participants' Learning Experiences and Personal Transformation

Participants' experiences revealed significant transformation patterns across multiple dimensions: technical competence, self-confidence, communication skills, and entrepreneurial mindset. These transformations reflect the program's effectiveness in facilitating holistic empowerment beyond mere technical skill acquisition. DK, a UGM student participating in digital marketing training, described her cognitive and affective transformation from passive technology consumer to confident content creator:

"Before joining this program, I was often drawn to great content on Instagram, but never thought I could create my own campaigns. When the facilitator explained the Instagram algorithm and how engagement works, I suddenly realized, 'Oh, it's not magic, it's logic.' Now I'm confident in creating content for my personal account and even have friends trust me to manage their online store's Instagram handles."

DK's narrative reveals demystification of digital technology through systematic explanation of underlying principles, transforming her perception from viewing digital content creation as innate talent or mysterious skill to understanding it as learnable, logic-based competency. This cognitive shift enabled practical application and confidence building, culminating in peer recognition and economic opportunities. Her transformation exemplifies how knowledge empowerment leads to practical empowerment and social recognition.

RP, a recent vocational school graduate initially seeking traditional employment, experienced fundamental mindset transformation regarding career possibilities in the digital era. His narrative reveals shifts in career orientation from job seeker to opportunity creator:

"This program opened my eyes. I used to think, 'I have to work for a company, get a steady salary.' But after meeting a young startup founder who explained how he started from scratch and now has his own revenue stream, I wanted to give it a try. Now I've created a YouTube channel featuring networking tutorials and discussions about the latest technology. I don't earn much yet, but I already see the potential."

RP's experience demonstrates how exposure to alternative career models through mentorship and peer learning catalyzes entrepreneurial mindset development. His transition from employment-seeking orientation to entrepreneurial initiative reflects expanded perceived opportunities and self-efficacy regarding independent value creation. This transformation illustrates how CSR programs can shift participants' mental models about career pathways and personal agency in economic participation. MS, a UNY student from a semi-urban area, emphasized the dual value of technical knowledge acquisition and social capital formation through the program:

> *"I thought I was digitally literate because I was active on social media. It turns out there were many things I didn't know about how algorithms work, content monetization, and the basics of digital marketing. But most valuable of all, through this program, I met professional mentors from Telkomsel and friends from diverse backgrounds who share the same dreams and passions. It was a network and new perspective that I couldn't have gotten on campus."*

MS's reflection highlights the distinction between surface-level digital engagement and deeper technical understanding of digital platforms' operational logic. Her acknowledgment of knowledge gaps despite prior confidence reveals the program's effectiveness in raising metacognitive awareness—understanding what one doesn't know. Furthermore, her emphasis on networking and perspective diversity underscores social capital as equally valuable as human capital in empowerment processes. FM, a budding content creator, experienced transformation in professionalization and strategic content development, moving from hobbyist to professional content producer:

> *"Previously, I created content for fun, without a clear strategy. I uploaded continuously, but engagement was inconsistent. Through the program, I learned about audience analytics, content calendars, and collaboration with brands. Now I'm more measurable and have secured several sponsored collaborations. Most importantly, I know my direction and roadmap for the next two years."*

FM's narrative demonstrates transformation from intuitive, unstructured practice to systematic, data-driven professional practice. His acquisition of strategic planning capabilities and monetization knowledge enabled transition from passion project to viable income source. This professionalization trajectory illustrates how CSR programs can facilitate economic empowerment by equipping participants with business acumen alongside technical skills. EP, a recent high school graduate from a family with limited financial resources, experienced transformation in both material access and psychological empowerment, particularly regarding perceived possibilities and self-worth:

> *"My parents couldn't afford an expensive laptop, and the internet at home often went out. Through this program, I could practice using a good laptop and internet without worry. More than that, I learned that even though my background is limited, I can take advantage of the same opportunities as those from better backgrounds. The facilitators and mentors from Telkomsel showed me that merit and hard work are what matter, not economic background."*

EP's experience reveals how CSR programs can address both structural barriers (lack of equipment and connectivity) and psychological barriers (internalized limitations based on socioeconomic status). Her transformation in self-perception and aspiration reflects how enabling environments that provide equal access can fundamentally reshape participants' beliefs about their potential and legitimate participation in opportunity structures.

Communication and Relationship Dynamics in the Program

Communication dynamics between facilitators and participants demonstrated dialogic and participatory interaction patterns consistent with symmetrical two-way communication models. Unlike traditional top-down pedagogical approaches, the program implemented genuinely reciprocal communication allowing participants to express ideas, challenge assumptions, and co-construct knowledge. SN explained the intentional design promoting participatory engagement:

> *"We don't want the facilitator to sit in the front and the participants to passively listen. Each session begins with an open Q&A, there's space for group brainstorming, and participants are encouraged to bring case*

studies or questions from their own experiences. Even when there are disagreements or participants have different approaches, we welcome them as opportunities for richer discussions."

This approach reflects constructivist learning principles where knowledge is actively constructed through dialogue rather than passively received. The explicit welcoming of disagreement and alternative perspectives creates intellectual space for critical thinking and authentic engagement rather than mere compliance or surface-level participation. Participants consistently reported feeling heard, valued, and respected as legitimate contributors to learning processes. DK provided specific examples of facilitator responsiveness:

"When I proposed a social media strategy that was different from what was taught, the facilitator didn't dismiss it or say it was wrong. Instead, he asked me to walk through my reasoning, and we explored together whether the idea could work. Sometimes my ideas did work, sometimes they needed adjustment, but I always felt my thinking was taken seriously."

This pedagogical approach models respect for learner agency and validates diverse problem-solving approaches, fostering critical thinking and creative confidence rather than rote reproduction of taught methods. The learning community formed was notably inclusive despite participants' diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. RP, initially intimidated by university students from prestigious institutions, described how the program culture facilitated mutual respect and peer learning:

"I used to be embarrassed because I was a fresh graduate from vocational high school, while they were from UGM and UNY. But it turns out that in this program, their expertise is diverse. I can teach them about fiber and networking techniques, and they teach me about digital marketing and social media. So, we enrich each other. It built my confidence and made me realize that a formal background isn't the only asset."

This mutual recognition of diverse expertise areas created horizontal rather than hierarchical learning relationships, where each participant possessed valuable knowledge to contribute. Such dynamics reduce status hierarchies based on formal credentials and validate experiential and vocational knowledge alongside academic knowledge. Relationships formed transcended formal program boundaries, with participants maintaining contact, sharing opportunities, and collaborating professionally after program completion. MS and FM exemplified this sustained collaboration:

"After the program ended, Fajar and I kept in touch. We realized our skills complemented each other—I'm good at concept development and creative direction, he's excellent at production and editing. So we started collaborating on content projects for local businesses. It's been mutually beneficial and probably wouldn't have happened without meeting in this program." (MS)

These sustained networks represent significant social capital formation, creating support systems and collaborative possibilities that extend empowerment impacts beyond the formal program period. The emergence of spontaneous peer collaborations suggests genuine relationship formation rather than transactional networking.

Challenges and Obstacles Faced

Despite demonstrable positive outcomes, program implementation encountered several significant challenges affecting sustainability and scalability. One primary challenge identified was limited program duration relative to comprehensive learning objectives. AW articulated this temporal constraint:

"I often feel frustrated because by the time participants start to really engage and delve into their learning, the program is almost over. Especially for participants with backgrounds that are not digital, they need more time to catch up and build a solid foundation. If it could be 16 weeks or with regular follow-up sessions, the impact would definitely be more sustainable."

This challenge reflects tension between resource constraints limiting program duration and pedagogical ideals requiring sufficient time for deep learning, practice, and consolidation. Participants with lower baseline digital literacy

particularly require extended engagement periods to achieve learning objectives that more digitally-fluent participants accomplish more quickly. A second significant challenge concerned curriculum relevance amid rapid technological change. BS acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining current, industry-relevant content:

> *"Technology is evolving very rapidly; for example, AI and automation are currently booming. We need to ensure that participants learn about this so they don't fall behind in the job market. But curriculum updates require research, coordination with experts, and training for facilitators. This takes time and resources that aren't always available."*

This challenge highlights the resource-intensive nature of maintaining contemporary curriculum in fast-moving fields, requiring continuous environmental scanning, expert consultation, content development, and facilitator training. The lag between technological developments and curriculum updates risks preparing participants for obsolete rather than current industry practices. From participants' perspectives, limited post-program access to enabling infrastructure emerged as a critical sustainability concern. EP articulated anxiety about reverting to resource-constrained conditions:

> *"I'm worried about what happens after the program. Here I have fast internet, good computers, and people to ask questions. At home, my internet is slow and unreliable, I share an old laptop with my siblings, and there's no one around who understands this stuff. I'm afraid I'll lose momentum and just gradually forget what I learned."*

This concern reveals how temporary provision of enabling conditions without sustained access may create dependency rather than sustainable empowerment. Participants' skill application and continued learning after program completion depends significantly on ongoing access to necessary infrastructure and support systems. A fourth challenge identified was variability in facilitator quality affecting consistency of participant experience. While some facilitators like AW demonstrated exceptional pedagogical skill and content expertise, others possessed limited facilitation capabilities or subject matter depth. SN acknowledged this inconsistency:

> *"Not all our facilitators have the same level of expertise or teaching ability. Some are technically strong but struggle with how to explain concepts clearly or engage participants effectively. We try to provide facilitator training, but there's still variation in quality, and that affects the learning experience participants have."*

This challenge underscores the critical importance of facilitator capabilities in realizing program objectives, and the difficulty of ensuring consistent quality across multiple facilitators, particularly when relying on part-time or volunteer facilitators with varying pedagogical backgrounds.

Table 1 summarizes the key findings across program dimensions, demonstrating how design elements, participant experiences, communication dynamics, and implementation challenges interrelate to produce observed empowerment outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of Key Research Findings

Dimension	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence
Program Design	• Comprehensive curriculum integrating digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and personal branding • Flexible 8-12 week structure with 8-10 hours weekly • Project-based learning methodology • Responsive curriculum adapting to participant needs	• Structured modules from basic to advanced skills • Mix of theory, practice, and mentoring sessions • Weekly feedback integration into program adjustments
Participant Transformation	• Technical competence development in digital marketing, content creation, analytics • Self-confidence increase and expanded	• DK: passive consumer to confident content creator • RP: job seeker to YouTube entrepreneur

	self-efficacy • Career orientation shift from employee to entrepreneur mindset • Social capital formation through networking	• FM: hobbyist to professional with monetization • EP: structural barrier reduction and aspiration expansion
Communication Dynamics	• Symmetrical two-way communication model • Dialogic and participatory interaction patterns • Inclusive learning community transcending social hierarchies • Sustained relationships beyond program completion	• Open Q&A and brainstorming sessions • Facilitator validation of diverse perspectives • Mutual peer learning across educational backgrounds • Post-program collaborations (MS-FM partnership)
Empowerment Mechanisms	• Knowledge empowerment through demystifying technology • Psychological empowerment through confidence building • Social empowerment through inclusive community formation • Economic empowerment through skill monetization	• Algorithm understanding enabling content creation • Peer recognition and professional opportunities • Horizontal learning relationships • Income generation through skills application
Implementation Challenges	• Limited program duration (8-12 weeks insufficient) • Curriculum lag behind rapid technological change • Post-program access sustainability concerns • Facilitator quality variability	• AW: insufficient time for deep learning consolidation • BS: difficulty maintaining current AI/automation content • EP: anxiety about losing momentum without continued access • SN: inconsistent facilitator pedagogical capabilities
CSR Communication Function	• Beyond traditional philanthropy to strategic empowerment • Company positioned as change agent and learning facilitator • Values communication through program design and implementation • Trust-based relationships with stakeholders	• BS: holistic ecosystem vs. technical assistance framing • AW: role model and mentor positioning • Participant loyalty and positive brand perception • Collaborative SOE network leveraging

This comprehensive summary demonstrates how Telkomsel's CSR program operates as both a communication instrument and empowerment mechanism, with identifiable strengths in dialogic engagement and participant transformation, alongside persistent challenges in sustainability and resource constraints that require strategic attention for long-term impact optimization.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that Telkomsel's CSR program at Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta serves as a transformative communication and empowerment instrument, transcending traditional understandings of CSR as merely philanthropy or image building. An in-depth analysis of the learning process, communication dynamics, and participant experiences demonstrates significant relevance to key theories in the literature on communication,

education, and social empowerment. The first finding related to the program's learning process indicates that andragogy and experiential learning approaches are consistently applied. Participants reported meaningful learning experiences when actively involved in real-life projects and given opportunities to experiment, reflect, and apply knowledge in contexts relevant to their lives.

This finding aligns with Knowles' (1984) principles of adult learning, which emphasize the need for self-directed and practical learning. The program's flexible approach, responsive to individual participant needs, reflects a commitment to student-centered learning. Setiadi et al. (2023) in their research on youth digital literacy in the context of community empowerment found that a learning approach combining theory, practice, and personal mentorship significantly increased engagement and long-term learning outcomes. This finding is also consistent with Kolb's (1984) perspective on the experiential learning cycle, which emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs through concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

The second finding relates to the transformation of participants' identity and empowerment. Participants experienced significant changes not only in technical skills but also in their self-perception, self-confidence, and career aspirations. Participants' perspectives on possibilities and opportunities fundamentally shifted from feeling limited by socioeconomic background to being confident in their ability to contribute and achieve goals. This transformation is relevant to Zimmerman's (1995) Empowerment Theory, which emphasizes that empowerment is not only about increasing skills or access to resources, but also about changing individuals' self-perceptions of their ability to influence their environment and achieve their goals. CSR programs create a context in which participants are encouraged to develop a sense of personal competence through targeted training, individual mentoring, and opportunities to apply learning in real-world contexts.

Zimmerman (2000), in further developing his theory, recognized that empowerment has individual dimensions (increased sense of control and personal efficacy), organizational dimensions (group effectiveness), and community dimensions (community efficacy). Research findings indicate that programs create a context for the development of all three dimensions: individual participants experience increased personal agency, organizationally formed learning communities are effective in supporting shared learning, and at the broader community level, programs contribute to increased access and capacity of youth to participate in the digital economy.

The results of Rullah et al.'s (2025) research on communication strategies to improve digital literacy among youth reinforce these findings, demonstrating that effective digital empowerment requires a combination of technology access, skills training, and a learning environment that supports creative exploration and collaboration. Research by Prayoga et al. (2025) on graphic design training for youth empowerment in the digital age also found that programs designed with empowerment principles (rather than simply skills training) resulted in more sustainable changes in participants' motivation, aspirations, and career practices.

The third finding regarding communication dynamics in the program demonstrated the implementation of two-way symmetrical communication, consistent with the theory of Grunig & Hunt (1984). The program did not employ one-way communication where the company simply disseminated messages to the public, but instead created a genuine dialogue between the facilitator and participants. The facilitator opened up ample space for questions, discussions, and even challenges to the material being taught. The program coordinator regularly collected feedback and adjusted the program based on participant input. This operationalizes the symmetrical communication model, which emphasizes mutual understanding, mutual respect, and collaborative problem-solving. In this model, Organizations (in this case, Telkomsel and Rumah BUMN) do not position themselves as superior messengers, but as partners in a dialogue that learns from and influences each other.

Wahyuni et al. (2025), in their research on PT Telkom's CSR communication strategy, found that organizations that implement symmetrical communication in their CSR programs generate higher levels of trust and social legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders. Freeman's (1984) Stakeholder Theory is also relevant here, emphasizing that organizations must consider and manage relationships with all stakeholders, including local communities. CSR

programs designed with symmetrical communication principles are a manifestation of an authentic stakeholder approach, where the voices and needs of the community (program participants) are heard, respected, and integrated into program development.

The communication dynamics found also demonstrate how CSR functions as a development communication instrument. Setiadi et al. (2023) emphasize that effective development communication is not merely about conveying information, but about facilitating the social change desired by the community itself. Telkomsel's CSR program reflects this principle by empowering participants not simply to receive knowledge but to become co-creators in the learning process and develop solutions relevant to their context. This differs from the traditional top-down approach where external experts define problems and solutions without meaningful community involvement.

The fourth finding regarding the challenges faced by the program provides an important critical dimension. The limited program duration (8-12 weeks), the gap between the curriculum and the rapidly changing realities of the job market, and the variability in the quality of mentoring are real challenges that reduce the sustainability of the program's impact. Nurzaman (2023), in his research on implementing CSR to build resilience, found that many CSR programs face challenges in ensuring long-term impact due to limited program duration and a lack of post-program follow-up mechanisms. Nuriyah's (2024) research on PKBL and CSR communication strategies also noted that the main challenge in CSR in SOEs is the alignment between program design and the real needs of beneficiaries, as well as the need for continuous improvement and adaptation.

These findings on sustainability are important because they demonstrate that while the program successfully created individual empowerment and significant personal transformation in the short term, achieving sustainable empowerment requires deeper structural change. As Zimmerman (1995) argued, empowerment at the individual level must be balanced with empowerment at the organizational and community levels. This means that CSR programs cannot stop at individual training alone but need to create a supportive ecosystem through ongoing access to technology, professional networks, post-program mentoring, and policy advocacy to create a more conducive environment for young people in the digital economy.

The theoretical contribution of this research is that CSR, when designed with the principles of symmetrical communication and holistic empowerment, can function as an instrument of transformative social change, not simply philanthropy or corporate image building. This research enhances our understanding of how theories of communication (Grunig & Hunt), education (Knowles, Kolb), and social empowerment (Zimmerman) can be integrated into CSR practices to create a more meaningful impact. Specifically, this study demonstrates that the success of CSR in empowerment depends not only on the number of participants or the resources allocated, but also on the quality of the communication process and the pedagogical approach applied.

From a practical implication perspective, this study provides concrete recommendations for CSR practitioners at Telkomsel and other state-owned enterprises. First, CSR programs need to be designed with a longer duration and clear post-program follow-up mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the empowerment impact. Second, program curricula should be developed collaboratively with industry and beneficiaries to ensure relevance to the needs of the dynamic labor market. Third, standards and training for facilitators need to be improved to ensure consistent communication and mentoring quality across all batches and groups of participants. Fourth, programs need to be integrated with ongoing support services such as job placement, remote mentoring, access to post-program technology, and alumni networks to create a sustainable learning and empowerment ecosystem, program impact evaluation mechanisms need to be strengthened to measure not only outputs (number of participants, skills acquired) but also long-term outcomes such as changes in participants' careers, income, or social contributions. By implementing these recommendations, state-owned enterprise (SOE) CSR programs can be more effective in achieving their vision of not only providing skills but also empowering the younger generation as agents of change in Indonesia's sustainable social development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, Telkomsel's CSR program through Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta plays a significant role in educating and developing youth talents through a two-way communication approach. The program provides economic benefits through improved digital skills, job readiness, and entrepreneurial opportunities while simultaneously enhancing corporate reputation and expanding stakeholder networks. The integration of symmetrical two-way communication and empowerment processes confirms that CSR functions as an effective strategic communication instrument, facilitating meaningful dialogue and holistic participant transformation rather than mere one-way information dissemination. This research contributes theoretically by demonstrating the practical application of Grunig and Hunt's (1984) symmetrical two-way communication model integrated with Zimmerman's (1995) Empowerment Theory in CSR contexts, revealing that effective CSR requires reciprocal communication where participants actively interpret, internalize, and co-construct meanings with the company. However, limitations include the qualitative approach with limited participants at one location restricting generalizability, lack of longitudinal tracking of long-term impacts, and incomplete exploration of company internal perspectives regarding CSR strategic design and implementation challenges.

It is recommended that Telkomsel and Rumah BUMN Yogyakarta enhance program sustainability by strengthening follow-up mentoring, expanding reach to disadvantaged youth groups, and deepening digital training content aligned with industry needs. The company should develop systematic long-term impact evaluation systems tracking competency transformation, employment outcomes, and entrepreneurial success rather than merely measuring participation numbers. Collaboration with educational institutions, youth communities, and local MSMEs needs expansion to make programs more inclusive with broader community impact, ensuring activities provide tangible benefits for talent development rather than being merely promotional.

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies tracking participants 1-3 years post-program to measure actual long-term impacts on careers and quality of life, comparative research across multiple Rumah BUMN locations to understand contextual variations and best practices, and mixed-methods research combining qualitative approaches with quantitative impact measurements. Studies exploring organizational perspectives on CSR strategy design and examining digital technology's role in CSR communication would enrich understanding of CSR as corporate communication. This research underscores that effective CSR requires genuine commitment to building authentic dialogue, facilitating sustainable empowerment, and creating inclusive spaces for youth development, positioning CSR not as mere obligation but as strategic investment in future human resources and means of building long-term social legitimacy crucial for equitable national development.

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