

The Role of Collective Brand as A Tool for Community Empowerment: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by PRISMA. The search was limited to Scopus and ScienceDirect for the years 2015 to 2025 and was narrowed to the terms: collective brands, community-based branding, geographical branding, place branding, and community empowerment. Articles with a purely conceptual approach or those disconnected from the community framework were removed. This process yielded 75 articles which were thematically analyzed. There are three significant findings. First, CB act as socio economic tools to enhance socio- economic condition. Second, CB perform the function of legitimacy and authenticity. Third, CB promote sustainability. The scope of the study is constrained by the scope of database used and by the nature of SLR analysis, which reveals only patterns and themes without showing any relationships and causation between variables. This study confirms collective brands as a strategic community empowerment tool integrating social, economic, and cultural aspects. The dominant collective impact emphasizes the applied theory for community-based empowerment branding as the main reference for community-based participatory practices. Further research is needed to test the application of the C-BEB model in other sectors and analyze its impact on long-term economic sustainability. As well as exploring the relationship between consumer engagement and the resulting socio-economic change.

Keywords:

Collective Brand;
Community-Based
Branding;
Community
Empowerment;
Geographical
Indications;
Sustainable
Development

1. Introduction

This study focuses on community empowerment through collective branding (CB), with the aim of not only increasing economic value, but also strengthening social solidarity and preserving local identity (Luo et al., 2023; Martins et al., 2024). A collective brand refers to a shared identity formed by a group of manufacturers or service providers operating within a specific product or service category. Thus, collective brands can be seen as a tool to overcome the challenges faced by small producer in marketing their products. In many cases, small producers are often hampered by limited resources to promote their brands individually. This concept not only increases the competitiveness of its individual members, but also creates added value for consumers through higher perceptions of quality and trust. (Fishman et al., 2018)By joining a collective brand, they can utilise existing resources to create a stronger and more recognisable image in the market (Borg, 2013) exceeding what can be achieved by the business on its own (Fishman et al., 2011).

Community empowerment has become an important issue in the context of economic and social development, as local communities face challenges in maintaining their cultural identity, accessing global markets, and strengthening their bargaining position in the market (Ngo & Vu, 2022). In the last decade, the development of collective branding as a business strategy tool has been able to provide significant added value to communities, both economically and socially (Krautz, 2017). Collective brands can help create a more sustainable business ecosystem, where members can support each other and share knowledge (Basu et al., 2022). This is crucial for local economic development,

particularly in less developed areas, where collaboration can be key to achieving greater progress. This is in line with the findings Grazia et al. (2024) which shows that collective brands based on Geographical Indications (GI) can increase recognition of local products while protecting the cultural values and traditions of communities. Furthermore, CBs – such as Geographical Indications (GIs) and Protected Designations of Origin (PDOs) – provide strong legitimacy and legal protection for products and related communities originating from specific geographical areas and possessing qualities, reputations or characteristics attributable to those geographical environments (Meyer & Naicker, 2023). This protection of origin will strengthen the collective brand identity and protect the reputation of products in the market (Jauregui-García et al., 2024). Thus, CB that prioritises IG or PDO provides a unique identity that not only enhances product appeal but also creates awareness and a sense of ownership among the local community. In the context of tourism and place branding, Freire & Gertner (2025) emphasising the importance of protecting local identity and authenticity through branding, which demonstrates the relationship between collective branding and cultural preservation. According to Keller (2001), brand equity can be built through the introduction and reinforcement of local values embodied in products. This is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where cultural diversity and natural resources can be leveraged to create a Collective Brand capable of competing in the global market.

Previous studies have shown that community empowerment through CB is an important research topic because it combines economic, social and cultural aspects simultaneously in empowerment efforts. These studies provide valuable insights into the potential of CB in strengthening community identity and expanding market access, but their focus tends to be partial or limited to one dimension, whether economic, social or cultural, without fully integrating all dimensions. Moreover, some literature is still limited to specific case studies or certain sectors. For example, the study by Ngo & Vu (2022) focused on craft villages in Vietnam, while Grazia et al. (2024) examined the wine sector in Italy. In addition, several studies identified limitations that could undermine community empowerment through CB. These include a lack of understanding of GI and its benefits. (Devi & Selvam, 2025), challenges in policy implementation and GI application (Shahzad & Wang, 2025) inequality in the distribution and benefits of GI (Joosse et al., 2021; Velázquez Durán & Ortega, 2022), social and economic challenges in building competitiveness (Lou et al., 2023), problems in quality management and free-riding (Neeman et al., 2019; Nocke & Strausz, 2023), or issues of stakeholder management and coordination (Donner & Fort, 2018). This difference in focus has led to a gap in the literature, particularly with regard to how CB can function as an instrument for holistic community empowerment.

This indicates a research gap that emphasises the need for studies that integrate various dimensions of community empowerment—social, economic, cultural—with a more holistic and systematic approach. Based on this research gap, this study attempts to bridge the gap in the literature to gain a better understanding of the development of the CB concept, identify shortcomings, and formulate a new integrative framework for sustainable community empowerment. This study formulates the following research questions:

- a) How does collective branding function as a socio-economic instrument in strengthening community cohesion and the bargaining position of local products in the global market?
- b) What role does collective branding play in the legitimacy and authenticity of products through the protection of local values and identity of origin?
- c) How do collective brands support economic and social sustainability in the context of community empowerment and long-term market strategies?
- d) What kind of approach can be developed from previous research in the context of community empowerment and sustainability?

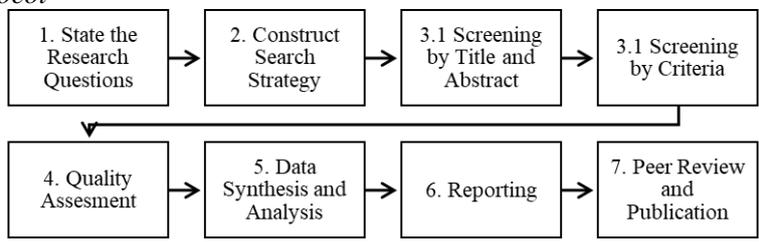
2. Methods

The article screening process is an important step in conducting a systematic review because it aims to ensure that the studies to be included are relevant, meet the inclusion criteria, and can provide valid data for analysis. This process helps reduce bias, improve the accuracy of review results, and ensure transparency and reproducibility of the study selection process. This study uses the 2020 Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA 2020) guidelines

with detailed article screening procedures covering several stages as shown in Figure 1 (Page et al., 2021).

Figure 1

The screening protocol



Once the research questions have been established, the next step is to develop a search strategy. Eligibility criteria in this systematic review were established to ensure that only relevant studies with significant contributions were included in the analysis. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the article selection process are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Focus on the term “collective brand” or its variations, as well as “geographical indication” and related concepts pertaining to community empowerment.	Articles that are not relevant to the topic.
2	Articles discussing the social impact and community development associated with collective brands.	Publications that are not original studies, such as literature reviews, editorials, or books.
3	Empirical studies presenting findings and implications in the context of community empowerment and sustainability. Communities based on physical interaction, not digital technology.	Articles with a purely conceptual approach or those that are not relevant to the framework of community empowerment.
4	Sources of articles from Scopus and Science Direct journals, written in English, which have been finalised for publication and published between 2015 and 2025.	Articles published in journals other than Scopus and Science Direct, written in languages other than English, not yet finalised for publication, and not published between 2015 and 2025..
5	The article is fully accessible.	Articles that cannot be accessed in full.

The data sources were collected from academic databases, Scopus and Science Direct, which were selected due to their broad coverage and credibility in providing reputable academic articles. The Scopus database, in particular, is often used in bibliometric analysis due to its comprehensive coverage of abstracts and citations, as well as its robust data management and fast refresh rate (Mikul & Mittal, 2023). The search was conducted at a single point in time to avoid potential bias caused by ongoing database enhancements. The search strategy used in this review involved a combination of keywords and Boolean operators relevant to the topic, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Search strings for 2 databases (Scopus and Science Direct)

Journal	Queries
Scopus	“collective brand” OR “collective branding” OR “community brand” OR “community-based branding” OR “cooperative branding” “geographical indication” OR “GI product” OR “origin authenticity” OR “authenticity of origin” OR “place branding” OR “city branding” OR “regional branding” OR “destination branding”
Science Direct	“collective brand” OR “collective branding” OR “community brand” OR “community-based branding” OR “cooperative

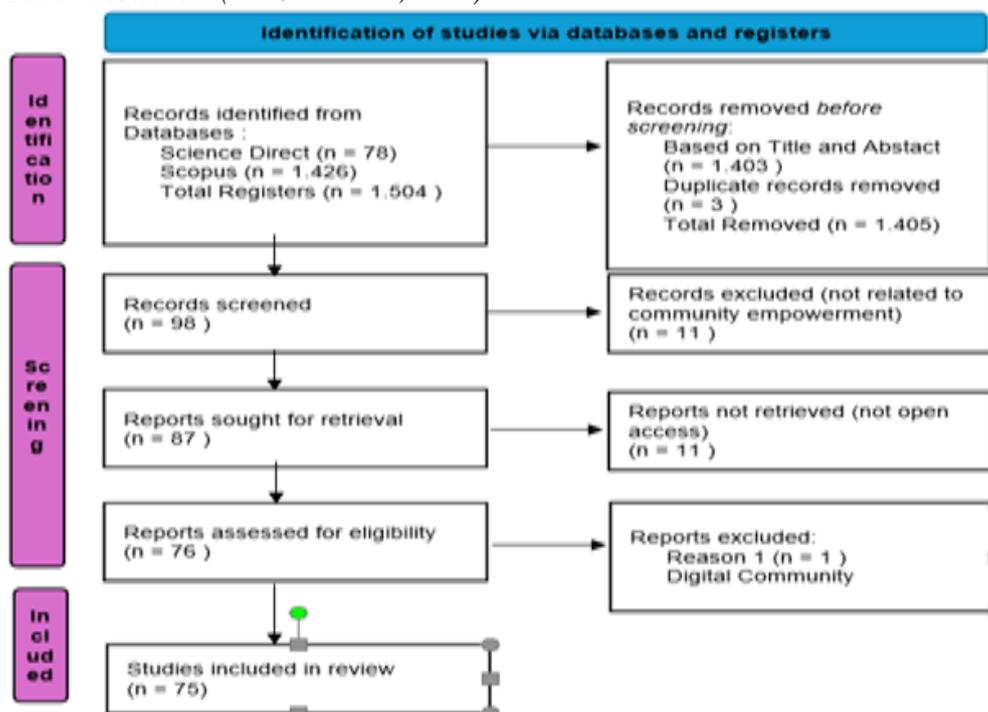
branding”
 “geographical indication” OR “GI product” OR “origin authenticity” OR “authenticity of origin” OR “place branding” OR “city branding” OR “regional branding” OR “destination branding”

Searches using query sets related to collective branding and geographical indications were conducted separately. After limiting the research based on the criteria mentioned above, 1,504 articles were obtained, with 1,426 from Scopus and 78 from Science Direct. All articles found in each database were downloaded in BibTex and CSV file formats. Then, the selection process was carried out in two main stages, namely screening the titles and abstracts, followed by a full review of the articles that passed the initial stage. The first selection process was carried out by one person using Mendeley reference management software and Excel Office. Screening was also carried out using AI, namely ChatGPT Pro, to minimise human error and increase the efficiency of the process (Page et al., 2021). A total of 1,406 articles were retrieved and 98 articles finally passed the initial selection for analysis. Articles that passed the initial stage were then downloaded and analysed in full to confirm their suitability with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then, 23 articles were excluded for several reasons. First, 11 articles were excluded because they were not related to community empowerment, 11 articles were not open access, and 1 article discussed digital communities that were not relevant to this study. Details of the article selection procedure using the PRISMA 2020 protocol, as shown in Figure 2, provide an academic explanation of the reasons behind the selection of reviews.

Subsequently, a screening stage was conducted based on criteria whereby reviewers independently extracted important information from each article. Each result was clearly defined, and reviewers ensured that all relevant results were taken from each study. If there was unclear or questionable data, clarification was sought by thoroughly reviewing the relevant articles. There was no direct communication with the original authors, given the time constraints and scope of the study. All collected data was then re-verified by reviewers to ensure consistency and accuracy of information before further analysis. In total, 75 articles met the criteria for analysis, consisting of 67 Scopus articles and 8 Science Direct articles. Data network map analysis and visualisation were performed using VOSviewer. (Ding & Yang, 2022) and word cloud to identify the most frequently occurring keywords and dominant themes in the dataset (Satar et al., 2023).

Figure 2

PRISMA 2020 Flowchart (PRISMA 2020, 2025)



3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of an analysis of 75 selected articles and discusses their contribution to understanding the role of *collective brands*. The distribution graph of publications by year, illustrated in Figure 3, shows the trend of articles relevant to the study of *collective brands* between 2015 and 2025. In the early period (2015–2017), the number of articles was still relatively low, with only two publications per year. The year 2018 saw a significant increase to 6 articles, although there was a decline in 2019 with only 1 article. Starting in 2020, there was a consistent surge, with 7 articles in 2020, 9 articles in 2021, and reaching 12 articles in 2022. In 2023, there was a slight decline to 11 articles, but there was another sharp increase in 2024 with the highest number, namely 16 articles. In 2025, there was a decline to 9 articles. In general, this graph shows that literature on collective brands has grown rapidly, especially after 2020, indicating that this issue is gaining academic attention in line with the increasing relevance of topics related to sustainability, digitalisation, and the legitimacy of local products.

Figure 3

Distribution of publications by year

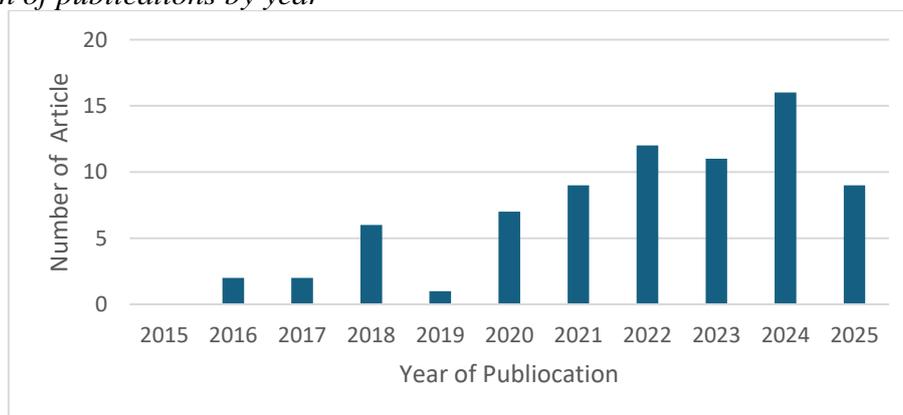
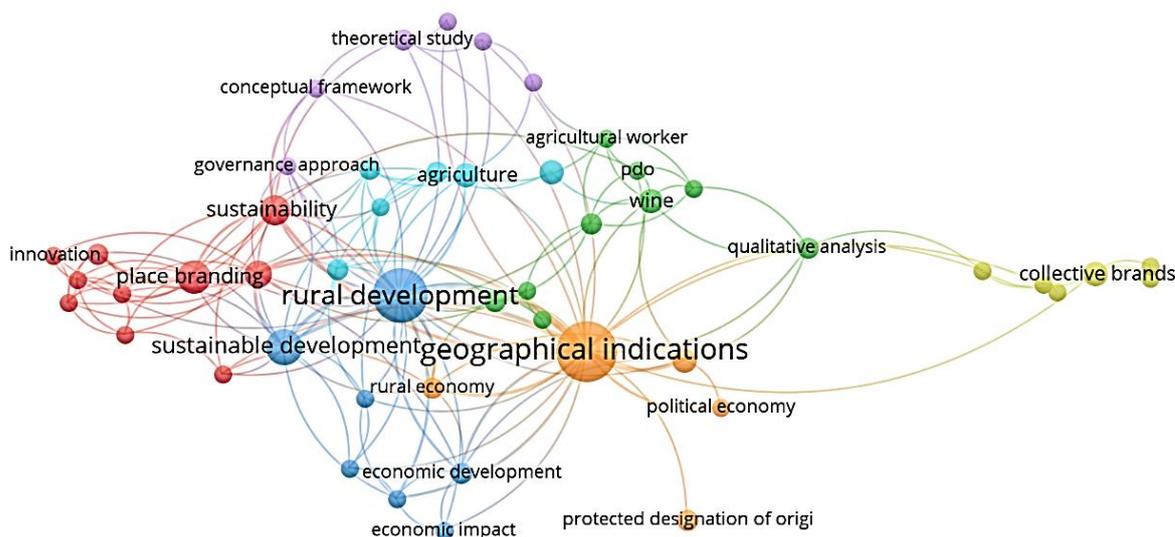


Figure 4

Network of Research Reference



Furthermore, the data visualisation results in Figure 4 show a map of keyword connections in 75 selected articles. It can be seen that there are several main clusters that are interconnected. The keyword “geographical indications” emerges as the largest centre and connects various themes, confirming that geographical indications are a dominant topic in this literature. The blue cluster emphasises the issues of “rural development”, “economic development” and “rural economy”, which shows a strong link between collective brands and rural development and economic impact. The red cluster connects the themes of “place branding,” “sustainability,” and “innovation,” highlighting the

local products to the global market by linking products to their origins, but also affirm local cultural values and traditions and attach (Gajić et al., 2025). GI or PDO is also a recognition of the quality and distinctive characteristics of products based on their geographical origin, which in turn strengthens local identity and creates economic opportunities for communities (Mancini et al., 2022). Furthermore, consumers who purchase products with GI or PDO labels play a role in preserving local traditions, creating an emotional bond that strengthens social cohesion between producers and consumers as well as the relationship between products and the socio-ecological landscape that surrounds them. (Braxton & Lau-Gesk, 2020; Flinzberger et al., 2022; Jauregui-García et al., 2024). Emotional attachment to a brand or product managed within a community can strengthen consumers' long-term commitment to that brand (Mills et al., 2022).

On the other hand, CB also functions as a platform for collaboration between stakeholders. Research by Maye et al. (2016) stating that through CB, community members are not only involved in production activities but also in the management and development of shared brands. They share the same goal of promoting and preserving local products that have a specific cultural identity and history. D. V. Aparecida Castro et al. (2018) shows that sectoral brand development in the Brazilian wine sector has been successful due to coordination between producers, associations and government agencies. This collaboration has enabled the community to maintain quality standards, manage shared resources and ensure socio-economic sustainability. Nocke & Strausz (2023) Developing a theory of collective brand reputation in markets involving global and local players, focusing on how the aggregation of quality signals from various markets can provide useful informativeness effects to improve product quality. This research shows that collective brands can provide better information benefits for consumers and increase incentives to invest in quality. This shared success depends heavily on the extent of member involvement in each stage of collective brand design and management (Brodie & Benson-Rea, 2016; de Almeida & Almeida, 2024), in turn increasing their sense of ownership and pride in the products or services they produce. (Fishman et al., 2018). Valverde et al. (2023) also emphasises that the stronger the existing social capital and local networks, the greater the chances of success and sustainability of these collective brands in supporting community empowerment. Thus, organised collective action can bring about significant change, especially when community members have a sense of ownership of common goals. (Rac et al., 2020). With a structured system, CB reduces internal conflicts, strengthens consensus on production practices, and ensures that economic and social benefits are distributed fairly.

Table 3

Types of CBs based on references

Type of CB	Research Examples	Sector/Product Examples	Primary Function
Based on Geographical Indications (GI)	Grazia et al. (2024), Dogan (2024), Dogan & Adanacioglu (2024) Meyer & Naicker (2023), Cei et al. (2018), Bermejo et al. (2021),	Temanggung coffee, South African rooibos, Italian wine, Turkish nuts, milkkambing di Kepulauan Canary, madu.	Protecting geographical identity, enhancing competitiveness, adding economic value
Based on Place Branding	Björner & Aronsson (2022), Freire & Gertner (2025), Donner & Fort (2018), Boğan et al. (2024)	Small town in Sweden, European tourist destination	Building a sense of place, attracting tourists, boosting the local economy
Based on Sectorial Brands	V. Aparecida Castro & de Moura Engracia Giraldo (2018), Cisilino et al. (2024), Nagaynay & Lee (2020)	Brazilian wine industry, European agri-food products	Integrating industry players, strengthening sector competitiveness
Based on Community/Asosiation	Koç & Oğuz (2024), Basu et al. (2022)	Cooperative food products, local restaurants	Strengthening collective reputation, solidarity, and a sense of belonging among members

Based on Social & Cultural Identity	Hoang et al. (2020) Hong et al. (2025) al. (2022), Kouassi et al. (2025)	Handicrafts, pottery, traditional food	Representing shared values, culture and identity; strengthening consumer loyalty
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Improved Bargaining Position in the Global Market

From an economic perspective, CB can strengthen the bargaining position of local products in the global market (Silva et al., 2024). As a socio-economic instrument, CB serves to manage and enhance product value through the creation of a distinctive and authentic shared brand image, which links the product to its geographical origin and the social values attached to it. Bansal & Singh (2024) shows that collective brands enable communities to enhance their competitiveness by highlighting the authenticity and quality of products that have been tested over generations. For example, Hoang et al. (2020) in their study on pottery crafts in Vietnam, they explain that the application of collective branding has successfully introduced local products to the international market, which were previously limited to the domestic market. By linking pottery products to local cultural identity, collective brands give these products higher value, which in turn expands market access and creates new economic opportunities for local communities. A similar situation occurs in the wine sector in Brazil, where the use of shared brands provides a competitive advantage that helps local communities overcome challenges such as high taxes and low domestic consumption. V. Aparecida Castro & de Moura Engracia Giraldo (2018) shows that through collective brands, wine producers can compete with more established international brands and increase the competitiveness of their products in the global market, strengthening their bargaining position in domestic and international markets. The application of GI and PDO serves as a strategy to differentiate local products from similar products produced elsewhere in the global market and increase the added value attached to these products (Flinzberger et al., 2022). Ultimately, this will have an impact on the empowerment of local producer communities (Boğan et al., 2024; Chandra et al., 2025).

Along with increasing consumer awareness of sustainability and environmentally friendly practices, collective brands that combine cultural and geographical elements strengthen perceptions of quality and provide greater appeal. Pomianek & Peneva (2022) reveals that in Albania, Bulgaria, and Poland, consumer awareness of local products and products with geographical indications is increasing along with awareness of environmental impacts. Panin (2022) dan Li et al. (2024) shows that products with GI or PDO increase consumers' perception of quality, which in turn increases the premium price and competitiveness of products in the global market. Hong et al. (2025) dan Pomianek & Peneva (2022) shows that consumers are willing to pay more for products that have sustainability attributes, such as reduced emissions and protection of biodiversity. Furthermore, Dominici et al. (2025) suggests that when products have organic labels combined with territorial brands, consumers are more likely to appreciate the quality of these products, especially in the context of brands with low territorial equity. This can serve as a source of sustainable competitive advantage for members of the community involved (See Aparecida Castro & de Moura Engracia Giraldo, 2018) and strengthen the bargaining position of local producers in the global market (Panin, 2022) by creating higher consumer loyalty.

The application of CB in the context of GI and PDO on products not only improves the perception of quality but also has the potential to contribute to sustainable economic development, particularly in rural areas (Vecchio et al., 2020). Gajić et al. (2025) reveals how GI can serve as a major attraction in rural tourism, drawing tourists who are interested in local products that have cultural and traditional value. The application of GI also encourages local economic development through tourism driven by demand for authentic products linked to local history and traditions.

The implementation of GI also helps improve export market access for local products, as reflected in research. Bansal & Singh (2024) dan Pangging et al. (2023) regarding agricultural products in India. The application of GI enables farmers to gain better access to international markets, which increases their income and provides opportunities to market local products at higher prices. Yin et al. (2024) shows that the implementation of GI in China can increase per capita income and the added value of agricultural products, which contributes to reducing economic disparities between

regions by providing better access to export markets. Giua et al. (2025) It also emphasises that the application of GI to wine products in Italy has increased exports and unit prices of products, demonstrating how GI-based collective brands not only strengthen the bargaining position of local products, but also create positive spillover effects for related sectors, such as the agribusiness sector as a whole, reflecting the potential of GI collective brands to enhance trade and economic engagement in various other sectors.

Protection of Local Values and Identity of Origin

Protection of origin identity is a key aspect of collective branding that not only protects products from imitation, but also ensures that they remain tied to the values, traditions, and cultural characteristics that shape their origins. Products produced by a community or region often have cultural, traditional, or ecological values that are not only relevant to local consumers but can also be appreciated in international markets. The application of GI and PDO enhances the economic value of a product while preserving the cultural and traditional identity of a region (Marco-Lajara et al., 2022) and providing protection for traditional knowledge and the intellectual property rights of local communities related to specific products (Meyer & Naicker, 2023). This will increase the attractiveness of these products in the international market by emphasising the unique characteristics of the regions where they originate. (Grazia et al., 2024).

Giua et al. (2025) dan Mills et al. (2022) reveals that products with GI or PDO labels are not only considered to be of higher quality, but also more authentic because they have a clear connection to the culture, traditions and heritage of their place of origin. Products with a strong identity of origin can increase their economic value and ensure that their quality is more highly appreciated. (Kouassi et al., 2025). For example, research by Basu et al. (2022) regarding the food sector in India, it shows how collective brands can protect local products from external exploitation that may disregard quality standards and the uniqueness of these products. This gives consumers greater confidence that they are purchasing products that truly reflect the values embodied in their geographical origin. When consumers choose products with a GI, they are not only purchasing goods but also participating in the preservation of local cultural values and traditions, which increases their awareness of the importance of supporting economic and social sustainability in the region. (Mills et al., 2022).

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Legitimacy through Legal Protection

GI and PDO are two labels that protect products based on their geographical origin. GI is more flexible, while PDO is stricter and requires all stages of production to be carried out in a specific region. (Flinzberger et al., 2022; Giua et al., 2025; Panin, 2022). One of the main benefits of GI and PDO is official recognition from the state and international community for products with specific geographical or cultural characteristics. Giua et al. (2025) emphasises that the application of GI, as in the wine sector in Italy, provides legal force that certifies products and ensures that only products produced in the region regulated by GI may use the label. With legal protection, the products produced will gain recognition for their quality, which not only strengthens their authenticity but also distinguishes them from similar products that do not meet the established standards.

Castro et al. (2023) also pointed out that collective brands such as GI provide opportunities for local communities to access global markets with legal recognition that strengthens the reputation of their products. Legally protected collective brands are more competitive in international markets because consumers feel more secure choosing products that have guaranteed quality and clear origins. (Sellers-Rubio et al., 2018) Legal protection gives consumers confidence that they are purchasing

products that are not only authentic, but also meet internationally recognised high quality standards. With this protection, local producers can not only compete with international brands, but also build a stronger reputation in foreign markets. Without legal protection, products with distinctive geographical identities are often vulnerable to imitation by foreign manufacturers who exploit the famous names of these regions without meeting the established quality standards (Meyer & Naicker, 2023). This can cause consumers to purchase products that do not meet their expectations, which ultimately damages the reputation of the original product.

Economic Sustainability through Collective Brands

CB plays an important role in enhancing the competitiveness of local products in the global market and providing long-term economic benefits to the communities that produce them. (Flinzberger et al., 2021; Kouassi et al., 2025; Lambarraa-Lehnhardt et al., 2021). The application of collective brands enables local products to gain international recognition, open up wider markets, and create added value that enhances their competitiveness in the global market, as well as providing more stable and sustainable economic benefits for local producers (Giua et al., 2025). GI and PDO have been proven to have a positive impact on income and economic diversification in rural areas (Poetschki et al., 2021) Regions with GI products experience increased income and are better able to overcome local economic challenges compared to regions without GI (Dogan & Adanacioglu, 2024). The application of collective brands in the form of GIs is an important strategy in reducing the exodus of rural populations to large cities and strengthening economic resilience in GI rural area (Ce, Defrancesco, et al., 2018). This has led to economic diversification, which has stimulated growth in non-agricultural sectors such as tourism and handicrafts, thereby increasing local income and strengthening the social welfare of the community (Crescenzi et al., 2022). Research by Ce, Defrancesco, et al. (2018) emphasising the importance of collective brands in promoting local economic development through improving product quality and socio-economic empowerment of communities, as well as promoting environmental sustainability in production. Therefore, collective brands serve as a tool for empowerment that leads to sustainable economic development through increasing the income of local communities and strengthening their cultural identity (Pagliacci & Fasano, 2023).

Sustainability through Cultural and Social Protection through Collective Brands

In addition to focusing on economic sustainability, collective brands also play an important role in protecting the cultural and social values embodied in products. Products with GI and PDO labels often reflect traditions and cultural heritage that have been passed down for centuries. As noted by Basu et al. (2022) the implementation of GI provides cultural protection to local communities by safeguarding traditional knowledge and production techniques that have been passed down through generations, and enabling them to maintain control over their products in the global market. This is crucial, as many traditional production techniques may become extinct or be exploited if there is no adequate protection. Meyer & Naicker (2023) also emphasises that GI plays an important role in protecting traditional knowledge from exploitation by external parties who have no connection with the communities that produce these products. GI helps local communities to maintain their identity through the products they produce and creates opportunities to profit from the potential of their products in a more organised and structured manner (Singh & Bharti, 2023). In this context, GI serves not only to restrict unauthorised use of local products, but also to preserve the authenticity and identity of these products from influences that could damage them.

Research by Lemmetyinen et al. (2025) on the creative industries in Europe, revealing that city branding strategies involving community empowerment can strengthen a city's competitiveness while enhancing its image. This research shows that successful place branding depends on the involvement of various parties, including the government, residents, and the local creative sector. City branding does not only focus on economic aspects, but also on social and cultural aspects, where community empowerment through the branding process allows people to connect more with their own identity. Place branding can be a very effective tool in promoting local identity and supporting sustainability in the context of regional development (Nagaynay & Lee, 2020). This also reflects how collective brands, such as GIs, can be a tool for strengthening social solidarity and reinforcing relationships between community members, which in turn helps to preserve deep-rooted cultural values.

Environmental Sustainability through Sustainable Production Practices

Environmental sustainability is one of the central themes in the implementation of collective brands, especially in the context of products that involve sustainably managed natural resources. GI and PDO not only regulate product quality, but also encourage environmentally friendly production practices. By ensuring that production processes maintain a balance between the exploitation of natural resources and environmental conservation, CB plays a role in introducing sustainable agricultural practices that support the long-term sustainability of products and the communities that produce them. PDO also plays an important role in changing farming styles and production systems among farmers involved in this system (Bermejo et al., 2021). Sellers-Rubio et al. (2018) reveals that GI products often adhere to strict environmental standards, leading to sustainable agricultural practices and the preservation of natural landscapes that support long-term sustainability. This reinforces the role of GI as a tool for maintaining ecological balance, which not only benefits the sustainability of the product, but also contributes to the preservation of the environment in which the product is produced. Freire & Gertner (2025) adding that products protected by GI or PDO are often produced with ecological sustainability in mind, which encourages more responsible and sustainable management of natural resources and supports the socio-ecological sustainability of local communities. However, Li et al. (2023) emphasises that the impact of GI on the agricultural economy depends on the research methodology used and the characteristics of the region where the product is produced.

Furthermore, Owen et al. (2020) on their research of the compatibility between Geographical Indications and agroecology in Wales revealed that GIs can support the transition to sustainable agricultural systems by integrating social and ecological aspects into regional development. This research shows how GI regulations in Wales have incorporated elements of agroecology, which are in line with community empowerment through sustainable natural resource management. In a broader context, Flinzberger et al. (2022) shows that PDOs serve to enhance the socio-ecological value of traditional agricultural landscapes. They note that PDOs registered in various European regions are closely linked to improvements in the quality of the natural landscape and strengthen the tourism potential of these areas. Rac et al. (2020) highlighting the importance of collective action in the context of sustainable agriculture in Slovenia, where collective identity plays a significant role in environmental sustainability management. Lou et al. (2023) demonstrates how China's natural grassland-based farming system can produce high-quality products that support sustainability through more holistic management of natural resources. Consumer awareness of local products and products with GI is increasing, especially as awareness of the environmental impact of their consumption choices grows. (Fernandes & Richards, 2021; Pomianek & Peneva, 2022). This shows that consumers increasingly view local products and GIs as more environmentally friendly options, and they are more willing to pay a premium price for products that are considered sustainable. This indicates that sustainable agricultural practices that support ecological balance can play a role in the development of local products protected by GIs, thereby increasing added value and supporting environmental sustainability.

Collaboration for Long-Term Sustainability

Long-term sustainability in the context of collective brands involves not only economic factors, but also social and environmental aspects. Consumers who choose products with GI or PDO labels are not only purchasing physical products, but also have a higher tendency to participate in the preservation of cultural values, support for sustainable production practices, and appreciation for local identity. In this context, Grazia et al. (2024) adding that GI products provide greater economic benefits to local communities, as they attract consumers who value sustainability and authenticity. This confirms that consumer awareness of sustainable practices not only influences their purchasing decisions (Koç & Oğuz, 2024), but also provides long-term economic benefits for local producers involved in the production. Sustainability and community empowerment through collective branding also depend on effective collaboration between various stakeholders, such as producers, the government, and local communities. (Castro et al., 2023). Mills et al. (2022) also emphasised the importance of active community participation in maintaining product quality and sustainability standards. Paunovic et al. (2023) In his research on citizen participation for sustainability and resilience, he shows the importance of the perspectives of different generations in community brand development. Differences in views between generations within a community can influence priorities in

CB development. Therefore, the implementation of collective branding must involve all levels of society in order to create a broader consensus on achieving social and economic sustainability. Good collaboration between all stakeholders ensures long-term resilience, while strengthening the competitiveness of products in the global market.

Obstacles and Challenges to Sustainability

The implementation of this concept is not without challenges. The success of collective brands depends not only on the quality of the products themselves, but also on supportive social and economic conditions, such as community involvement and existing infrastructure, as well as supportive policies. (Vaquero-Piñero, 2021). The biggest challenge in developing CB is infrastructure limitations, especially in rural or remote areas. There is a lack of adequate access to technology and efficient distribution channels. This has led to disparities between more developed and underdeveloped regions in GI distribution, which hinders less developed regions from reaping the full benefits. Without adequate infrastructure, local products will struggle to compete in the global market (Joosse et al., 2021).

Inequality in the distribution of benefits is also an issue that cannot be ignored. Regions with superior products tend to receive more attention, while other regions with similar potential are often neglected. (Harding et al., 2025; Joosse et al., 2021). Donner & Fort (2018) shows that a lack of coordination between stakeholders can lead to a fragmented and ineffective branding process. This can cause inequality between stronger and weaker groups within the community, reducing a sense of ownership of the collective brand and weakening its effectiveness. Ultimately, this often hinders the social and economic sustainability of local products. (D. V. Aparecida Castro et al., 2018; Castro et al., 2023). This is consistent with the findings of Velázquez Durán & Ortega (2022) which shows that excluding certain members of the community can undermine the legitimacy of certification and undermine the goal of empowerment. Administrative management and GI registration fees are also obstacles that cannot be ignored. (Poetschki et al., 2021; Reinhardt & Ambrogio, 2023). Moreover, if the recognition of IG becomes politicised, it could affect regional economic development (Resce & Vaquero-Piñero, 2024).

Internally, most of the problems that arise in CB development also stem from the community's lack of understanding of the economic potential offered by collective brands (Devi & Selvam, 2025; Thirumarudhan et al., 2025). The community faces difficulties in understanding their rights regarding GI. This is exacerbated by limited government support in implementing laws to protect local products. (Waspiah et al., 2024). In addition to a lack of awareness among producers and consumers, the cost burden and difficulties in registering and enforcing GIs are obstacles (Thirumarudhan et al., 2025). With regard to sustainable natural resource management, some communities lack the capacity or access to implement sustainable management practices, meaning that the products they produce are not sustainable in the long term (Lou et al., 2023). Although the introduction of collective brands can boost the community's economy, challenges remain in integrating broader sustainability aspects such as nature conservation and local natural resources (Ingram et al., 2020). Another issue relates to product quality management and free-riding, where some community members may not contribute to maintaining product quality but still enjoy the benefits of the collective brand (Neeman et al., 2019). This can reduce consumer confidence and damage the integrity of the collective brand. Furthermore, generational differences within the community are another challenge that often arises. Paunovic et al. (2023) shows that younger generations may be more interested in innovation and global markets, while older generations are more focused on preserving traditions and social sustainability.

Building a Community Empowerment Model through Collective Branding Towards Community-Based Empowerment Branding (C-BEB)

Based on several basic principles and findings from previous literature and research on collective branding, community empowerment, and sustainability, a conceptual framework was developed so that CB can function as a holistic community empowerment instrument. Community-Based Empowerment Branding (C-BEB) can be a highly relevant model for achieving long-term empowerment goals by integrating social, economic, and environmental elements and building a strong product identity based on local values and cultural traditions using collective branding as the primary tool. The Community-Based Empowerment Branding (C-BEB) model consists of six main

pillars, which function to support each other to create sustainable community empowerment as illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

The 6 Pillars of Community-Based Empowerment Branding (C-BEB) model developed



1. Pillar 1: Community Engagement

Emphasising the importance of active participation by all community members in every stage of collective brand development and product management. Cross-generational participation by involving all generations in designing brand identity and community development priorities. (Paunovic et al., 2023). Ensuring that community members have a high level of awareness of the social and environmental sustainability associated with their products (Mills et al., 2022).

2. Pillar 2: Stakeholder Collaboration

Establishing effective cooperation between local producers, the government, and relevant institutions to ensure the sustainability of products and communities through a fair and transparent system (D. V. Aparecida Castro et al., 2018). This collaboration also includes broader market access and funding for product and brand development, as well as strengthening global competitiveness. It includes capacity building programmes for community members so that they can manage their products in accordance with collective brand standards and desired sustainable practices. (Freire & Gertner, 2025).

3. Pillar 3: Sustainable Resource Management

Ensuring that natural resources used in the production process are managed sustainably, following the principles of ecological sustainability that maintain a balance between the exploitation of natural resources and environmental conservation. (Flinzberger et al., 2022; Lou et al., 2023). Maintaining landscape sustainability by involving communities in their natural conservation, and ensuring that the products produced reflect the close relationship between regional identity and products (Ceï et al., 2018) (Mancini et al., 2022). The application of GI or PDO to ensure that products meet environmental and nature conservation standards (Sellers-Rubio et al., 2018).

4. Pillar 4: Strengthening Local Product Identity

Connecting local products with the cultural identity and traditions of the communities that produce them to strengthen their added value in the global market. Building product identities that reflect the authenticity and richness of local culture, which will increase the competitiveness of products in the international market (Mancini et al., 2022; Mills et al., 2022). Highlighting a deep cultural narrative and traditional identity through products, so that consumers not only purchase physical products, but also participate in the preservation of cultural values (Singh & Bharti, 2023).

5. Pillar 5: Economic Empowerment

Developing an inclusive economic model by expanding market access and creating sustainable economic benefits for local communities. Assisting communities in diversifying their economies, particularly through tourism and creative industries, which can benefit various local economic sectors (Crescenzi et al., 2022; Flinzberger et al., 2022). Implementing a collective management system that enables a more equitable distribution of income among community members (Mancini et al., 2022).

6. Pillar 6: Consumers Collaboration

Raising consumer awareness of the social and environmental value contained in products and encouraging them to participate in the preservation of culture and sustainable practices (Grazia et al., 2024; Pomianek & Peneva, 2022). Providing clear and transparent information about the origin and sustainability of products, which increases consumer loyalty and encourages them to choose products that are more socially and ecologically responsible (Mills et al., 2022).

4. Conclusion

This study provides deeper insights into the role of Collective Brands (CB) as a tool for community empowerment. Based on the results of a systematic literature review (SLR) conducted on 75 articles from the Scopus and ScienceDirect databases, this study found that CBs serve as a powerful socio-economic tool for improving the socio-economic conditions of communities by strengthening the bargaining position of local products in the global market. In addition, CB increases the legitimacy and authenticity of products by protecting local values and identities associated with the origin of products, particularly through the use of Geographical Indications (GI) and Protected Designations of Origin (PDO). CB also plays a role in promoting the economic and social sustainability of communities by creating sustainable added value for community members through collaboration and increasing product competitiveness.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of community-based branding theory, particularly in the context of social, economic, and cultural empowerment. The Community-Based Empowerment Branding (C-BEB) model proposed in this study introduces a more holistic framework for empowering communities through CB, by integrating social, economic, and environmental elements simultaneously.

Practical aspects of this research can be used by practitioners and policymakers to develop more effective community-based branding strategies that focus not only on economic gains but also on preserving local cultural values and social sustainability. The development and management of GI- and PDO-based CB can help improve the competitiveness of local products in the international market and support the economic sustainability of the communities involved. In addition, community empowerment through CB can increase active participation in joint brand management and encourage sustainability through better collaboration between producers, government, and related institutions.

Further research is needed to test the application of the C-BEB model in broader sectors and to observe its impact on long-term economic sustainability. Future research should also explore in greater depth the relationship between consumer engagement and the socio-economic changes that can result. Thus, this study makes a significant contribution to CB theory and practice, enabling broader and more sustainable applications.

The limitations of this study is related to the data sources used. It relies solely on the Scopus and Science Direct databases, which makes it susceptible to inaccuracies in the dataset. Although data cleaning was performed, including the removal of duplicate articles and retracted articles, errors from the data sources may still affect the analysis results. For future research, developing and including other databases may help overcome this problem. Furthermore, conference articles, books, book chapters, and dissertations were not included in this study. Future research could include all forms of literature to provide a deeper understanding of new developments in collective brands. Finally, in addition to bibliometric reviews, methodology-based or theory-based reviews could also be conducted in future research to enrich the analysis.

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