Investigating the Role of Marketing Communication Strategies in Enhancing Public Support for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

Dr. Priya Sethuraman[1], *Dr. Arasuraja Ganesan[2], Dr. Immaculate P.S[3], Dr. John E.P[4]

[1]Professor, Department of Management Studies, St. Joseph's Institute of Technology, OMR, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: priasethuraman@gmail.com, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1752-5001

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, St. Joseph's College of Engineering, OMR, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: asuraja.mba@gmail.com, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6137-1911

[3]Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Sri Sairam Engineering College, West Tambaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: immaculate.mba@sairam.edu.in, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1612-4855

[4]Assistant Professor (Sr G), Department of Management Studies, SRM Valliammai Engineering College, SRM Nagar, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: johnep.mba@srmvalliammai.edu.in, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3129-2133

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Abstract

This research sought to find out how MCS can contribute towards increasing public support for the rehabilitation and integration of people with intellectual disabilities. This study specifically sought to determine the relationships between MCS, public attitude, social responsibility, and public support. A quantitative research methodology that employed a cross-sectional research design was used through the use of a survey questionnaire. The variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Reliability and validity of the measurements were assessed by computing Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, AVE, and HTMT, and then using PLS-SEM to examine the proposed model. All the hypotheses were supported at $p < 0.001$. MCS had a significant effect on PA ($\beta = 0.642$, $t = 14.286$) and PS ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 5.472$). PA had a significant effect on PSR ($\beta = 0.681$, $t = 16.105$) and PS ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 6.124$), while PSR significant effect on PS ($\beta = 0.426$, $t = 8.217$). Model results revealed a variance explained of 41.2% of PA, 46.4% of PSR, and 63.8% of PS. Mediation analysis revealed statistically significant mediation effects via PA ($\beta = 0.204$, $t = 5.683$) and via PA and PSR consecutively ($\beta = 0.186$, $t = 6.214$). Results prove that marketing communication has the ability to increase support from the public not only directly but also indirectly through positive attitudes and perceptions of social responsibility. Inclusive communication can be regarded as an essential element for implementing rehabilitation initiatives for people with intellectual disabilities.

Keywords *Marketing Communication Strategies, Intellectual Disabilities, Public Support, Public Attitude, Social Responsibility.*

Introduction

Intellectual Disabilities (ID) is a cognitive disorder that interferes with an individual's ability to learn, communicate, and adapt to their environment. Although rehabilitation and reintegration programs focus on improving an individual's abilities and facilitating community inclusion, employment, and quality of life, the success of such programs is not only dependent on access to services, but also on a number of social, educational, and environmental factors [9]. Intervention for rehabilitation can promote community inclusion and participation in life activities, and employment is dependent on various factors related to ongoing participation in the labor force [14][18]. The transition to employment and community life can be especially difficult for people who have complex needs, thus emphasizing the necessity of a coherent rehabilitation and reintegration program. Social stigma, negative perceptions, social distance, and lack of understanding can limit opportunities for participation and pose additional obstacles for reintegration. In addition, educational and rehabilitative processes have been recognized as mechanisms to ensure positive social and behavioral outcomes [13]. Social work intervention programs with individuals going through a major transition focus on creating a proper environment for reintegration [17]. Consequently, marketing communication efforts, such as social media marketing, public awareness campaigns, community involvement, storytelling, advocacy communication, and educational communication, may all prove instrumental in influencing public perceptions. Communication efforts have been known to help counter stereotypes and promote accurate facts, emphasize strengths over weaknesses, and promote inclusive rehabilitation and reintegration by family, employers, institutions, and communities.

The main goal of the study is to evaluate how marketing communication strategies (MCS) affect public support (PS) for the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual impairments. To put it another way, the study seeks to determine how public support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disabilities is affected by communication activities like awareness campaigns, message credibility, emotional appeals, social media use, storytelling, and community communication.

Although there is an increase in studies related to disability inclusion, the existing literature has mostly explored issues related to the effectiveness of clinical rehabilitation, caregivers' experience, education-based interventions, and the psychological and social factors affecting inclusion. Not much research has looked at issues of intellectual disability reintegration from the angle of marketing communication. Specifically, not enough research has been carried out on the influence of communication message properties and digital communication on public perceptions and intentions related to inclusion. It is also true that there is little information on the processes through which communication strategies help develop PS from mere awareness.

The study examined the connections between marketing communication strategies, public attitudes, perceptions of social responsibility, and PS in the rehabilitation and reintegration of people with intellectual impairments in light of the theoretical framework and research gaps. Thus, the following theories are developed:

H1: MCS significantly positively influences public attitudes toward individuals with intellectual disabilities.

H2: MCS significantly positively influences PS for the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

H3: PA significantly positively influences PSR toward individuals with intellectual disabilities.

H4: PA significantly positively influences PS for the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

H5: PSR significantly positively influences PS for the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Theoretical contributions of this research include the development of the perspectives of marketing communication into the rehabilitation of intellectual disabilities and social integration. The empirical contribution involves the identification of communication aspects that can help in raising public awareness, acceptance, and participation in inclusive interventions. The practical contribution of this research is to aid organizations working for

rehabilitation and social integration, policymakers, health organizations, advocates, and social service agencies in designing evidence-based communication campaigns to counter stigma and foster community participation.

The article is organized into several interconnected sections. The Introduction establishes the background, research problem, objectives, research gap, hypotheses, and key contribution of the study in section 1. The Literature Review synthesizes previous research on marketing communication, intellectual disability, rehabilitation, social inclusion, and public support in section 2. The Methodology describes the research design, participants, measurement instruments, data collection, and PLS-SEM analysis procedures in section 3. The Results present descriptive statistics, measurement-model assessment, structural relationships, mediation effects, and explanatory power in section 4. The Discussion interprets the findings and explains their theoretical and practical implications in section 5. Finally, the Conclusion summarises the major findings, limitations, recommendations, and directions for future research in section 6.

Literature Review

A study of rehabilitation, social inclusion, and reintegration of disabled persons reveals the significance of communication, community participation, and social support environments. Social marketing has become known to be one of the ways to promote wellbeing and foster inclusive behaviors of people with intellectual disabilities and the relevance of communication-based strategies in terms of their application outside promotional purposes [1]. Moreover, systematic research shows that social inclusion of intellectually disabled young adults requires participation opportunities and community environments [2].

Additionally, outreach and communication play a critical role in ensuring that appropriate services are accessible. Due to obstacles that prevent people with disabilities from accessing social services, it has become clear that effective outreach and communication are necessary to link vulnerable people to the services that are available [3]. In the area of employment, evidence has shown that the willingness of employers to employ individuals with disabilities is highly influenced by perceptions, organization, and intervention from disability employment service providers [4]. The perceptions of employers regarding the barriers and facilitators in accessing employment by individuals with intellectual disabilities still remain a major determinant of the employment opportunities available [7]. Broader research on labor-market inclusion also emphasizes the role of legal and institutional frameworks in creating opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities [8].

Although the effectiveness of rehabilitation therapies varies depending on the type of intervention, they have been successful in improving the job status of individuals with intellectual disabilities [6]. Evaluations of the use of supported employment to enhance employment status and inclusion have been conducted in addition to rehabilitation [10]. Another method of improving inclusion is through digital technologies; among persons with intellectual disabilities, mobile technology is mentioned as a means of improving social inclusion [5].

The literature further shows that effective reintegration requires taking into account such factors as participation of communities, employment, and the individual's situation. Studies about community reintegration in other rehabilitation settings underscore the necessity of transition coordination and participation [11]. Investigations regarding vocational rehabilitation emphasize the structured approach to reintegration into the working environment [16]. Research carried out among other groups of people requiring rehabilitation indicates the need for attitude change, education, employment, and social support [12][15].

Despite all the contributions of the previous research, the reviewed literature points to the lack of consideration of the role of marketing communication tools in combination with public attitudes, social responsibility, and public support for rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disability. The current studies mostly discuss issues related to service provision, employment, effectiveness of the rehabilitation, and social inclusion, but not how strategic communication could affect public support. Such a gap forms the basis for further investigation.

Materials and methods

Research Design

In order to investigate how MCS influences PS during the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals with intellectual disabilities, the study used a quantitative cross-sectional research approach. In order to collect primary data from the general public, the research used a structured questionnaire. Since the goal of the study is to investigate correlations between different attitudes and perceptions, it is crucial to use a quantitative technique.

Study Population and Sampling

This study used the adult members of the general public who can give informed opinions on disability inclusion, rehabilitation, and social reintegration. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling technique. The respondents were selected depending on their relevance to the study objectives and their capability to offer an informed opinion about disability inclusion, rehabilitation and reintegration. Considering that the sampling technique applied is a non-probability technique, it would be wrong to conclude that the sample is statistically representative of the population. There were respondents from varied demography to ensure diversity in opinions; nevertheless, the demography in no way represented the whole population. A total of 400 responses were analyzed. The representativeness of the sample was enhanced by ensuring that respondents come from varying ages, education levels, occupation types, and residences. A total of 400 respondents were included in the analysis, providing an adequate sample size for structural equation modelling and for obtaining adequate statistical power.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire that is based on marketing communication theories, theories on social inclusion, theories on disability awareness, and theories on behavioral intention was used to collect data for the research. The questionnaire included items on demographics, marketing communication exposure, intellectual disability awareness, credibility of communication, emotions of the communication, storytelling, social media engagement, public attitudes, social responsibility, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The data were rated on a five-point Likert scale.

Measurement of Variables

The independent variable was Marketing Communication Strategies, which included awareness-related marketing communications, message credibility, emotional appeals, storytelling inclusively, and social media activities. PA and PSR were tested as potential mediators. The dependent variable was PS for Rehabilitation and Reintegration, which includes willingness to support inclusive initiatives, speak up for people with intellectual disabilities, community participation, and equal opportunities. Each of the constructs was measured using several questionnaire questions to increase reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the survey itself, the questionnaire was pre-tested on a small sample of the respondents in order to ensure that the questions are clear, relevant, and consistent. After making necessary adjustments to the questionnaire, the survey was conducted through online and face-to-face channels. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were made aware of the purpose of the research and its confidential nature.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, which included frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation to analyze the characteristics of respondents and their general perceptions. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were used to measure reliability, and construct validity was tested by using convergent and discriminant validity. After this, SEM, ideally PLS-SEM, was used to test the relationship between the marketing communication approaches, public attitudes, social responsibility, and public support. The structural relationship is as follows:

$$PS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MCS + \beta_2 PA + \beta_3 PSR + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

In equation (1), represents PS for rehabilitation and reintegration, MCS represents marketing communication strategies, PA represents public attitude, PSR represents perceived social responsibility, β_0 represents the intercept, β_1, β_2, β_3 represent the standardized path coefficients, and ε represents the structural error term.

Hypothesis Testing

By examining the path coefficients, t-values, confidence intervals, and p-values obtained from the structural model, the hypotheses were tested. To determine the importance of the direct and indirect relationships, bootstrapping was employed. To determine whether PSR and public attitudes mediate the relationship between the MCS and public support, mediation analysis was carried out. The indirect impact via PA was computed as follows:

$$IE_{MCS\rightarrow PA\rightarrow PS} = \beta_{MCS\rightarrow PA} \times \beta_{PA\rightarrow PS} \qquad (2)$$

In equation (2), IE represents the indirect effect, $\beta_{MCS\rightarrow PA}$ represents the path coefficient from MCS to public attitude, and $\beta_{PA\rightarrow PS}$ represents the path coefficient from PA to public support. The sequential indirect effect through both mediators was expressed as:

$$IE_{MCS\rightarrow PA\rightarrow PSR\rightarrow PS} = \beta_{MCS\rightarrow PA} \times \beta_{PA\rightarrow PSR} \times \beta_{PSR\bullet PS} \qquad (3)$$

In equation (3), $\beta_{PA\rightarrow PSR}$ represents the path coefficient from PA to perceived social responsibility, and $\beta_{PSR\bullet PS}$ represents the path coefficient from PSR to public support.

The coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) were also examined to evaluate the explanatory and predictive performance of the proposed model. The explanatory power of the endogenous constructs was evaluated using the coefficient of determination, expressed as:

$$R^2 = 1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y}_i)^2} \qquad (4)$$

Equation (4), R^2 represents the proportion of variance explained by the predictor constructs; y_i represents the observed value; $\hat{y}_i$ represents the predicted value; $\bar{y}_i$ represents the mean of the observed values; and n represents the number of observations.

The effect size of each predictor on an endogenous construct was assessed using:

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2_{included} - R^2_{excluded}}{1 - R^2_{included}} \qquad (5)$$

In equation (5), f^2 represents the effect size of the predictor, $R^2_{included}$ represents the coefficient of determination when the predictor is included in the model, $and\ R^2_{excluded}$ represents the coefficient of determination when the predictor is excluded.

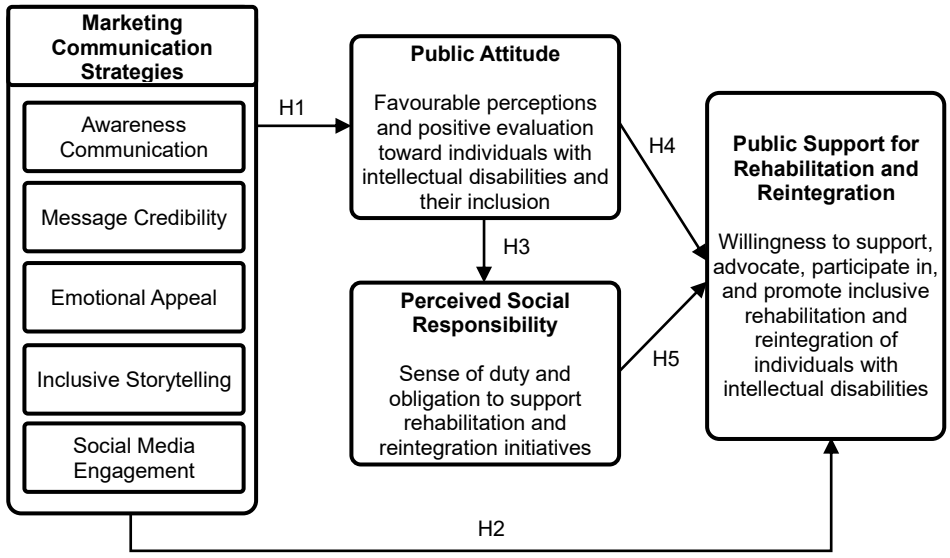
Finally, the predictive relevance of the structural model was evaluated using:

$$Q^2 = 1 - \frac{SSE}{SSO} \qquad (6)$$

In equation (6), Q^2 represents the predictive relevance of the model, SSE represents the sum of squared prediction errors, and SSO represents the sum of squared observations. A positive Q^2 value indicates that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the corresponding endogenous construct.

Figure 1 is supposed to show the suggested relationships between the MCS and PS for rehabilitation and reintegration. In the figure, MCS is shown as the key independent construct while PA and PSR are shown as mediating variables. The output variable of the model is the PS for rehabilitation and reintegration. The framework shows direct paths from MCS to PS as well as indirect paths through the mediating variables

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of MCS Influencing PS for Intellectual Disability Rehabilitation and Reintegration



Ethical Considerations

The issues of ethical considerations were taken into account during the research process. The participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis and were made aware of the research process. The personal data, which was not required for the study, was not collected. The information provided by the participants was treated confidentially. The inclusive language was used during the whole research process.

Results

Respondent Profile

The total number of valid answers taken into consideration in this analysis was 400. The participants of the survey had different demographic backgrounds, meaning they differed by age, gender, educational background, profession, and place of residence. From the point of view of the demography of the sample, there is enough diversity in it to analyze public attitudes towards rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	208	52.0
	Female	192	48.0
Age	18–25 years	96	24.0
	26–35 years	128	32.0
	36–45 years	104	26.0
	Above 45 years	72	18.0
Education	Undergraduate	92	23.0
	Postgraduate	174	43.5
	Doctoral/Professional	84	21.0
	Other	50	12.5
Residence	Urban	246	61.5
	Rural	154	38.5
Total		**400**	**100.0**

Table 1 outlines the demographics of the study participants. The sample involved participants from different age ranges, education levels, genders, and environments. Balanced gender representation in the study makes it possible to study public perceptions towards marketing communication and integration of people with intellectual disabilities through a wide range of demographics.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was carried out to establish the general public perception about the study variables. It was revealed that all the variables had generally positive perceptions as the mean scores were above the middle point of the five-point scale. The mean of MCS is 3.82, whereas that of PS was 3.91.

Figure 2 Mean Scores of the Study Constructs

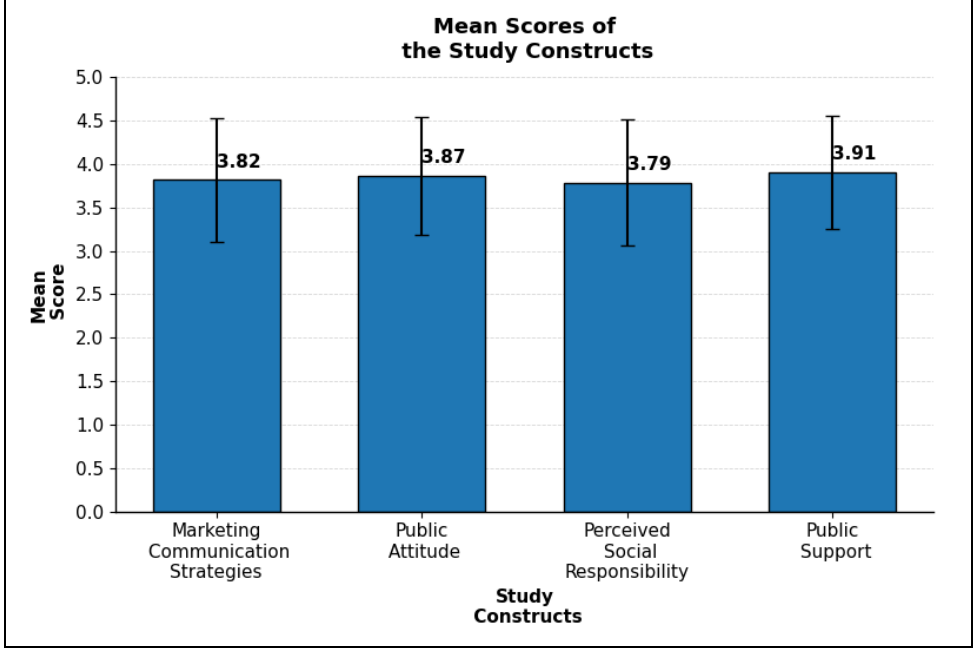


Figure 2 provides the mean scores of marketing communication strategy, public attitude, perceived social responsibility, and PS on a five-point Likert scale. All constructs are positive, and PS shows the highest mean value (3.91), followed by PA (3.87), MCS (3.82), and PSR (3.79). Error bars indicate standard deviations.

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Cronbach's alpha (Cα), CR, and average variance extracted (AVE) were used for the assessment of the measurement model. The internal consistency for all constructs was high, with Cronbach's alpha and CR being above 0.70. Also, the AVE values were above 0.50, which confirms adequate convergent validity.

Figure 3 Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Study Constructs

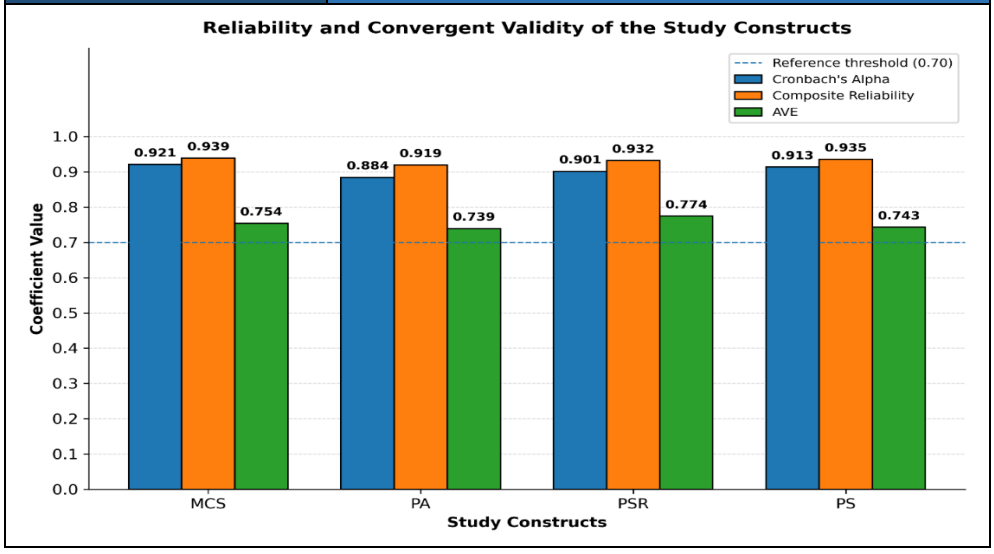


Figure 3 compares Cα, CR, and AVE across the four study constructs. All reliability coefficients exceed 0.88 and all AVE values exceed 0.73, demonstrating strong internal consistency and satisfactory convergent validity of the measurement model.

Discriminant Validity

To assess discriminant validity, the HTMT ratio was used. The findings revealed that all HTMT ratios were lower than the cut-off value of 0.85, implying that the constructs were empirically distinct. Thus, marketing communication strategy, public attitude, perceived social responsibility, and PS are empirically distinct constructs.

Table 2: HTMT Assessment of Discriminant Validity

Table 2	HTMT Assessment of Discriminant Validity			
Constructs	**MCS**	**PA**	**PSR**	**PS**
MCS	—	0.71	0.68	0.74
PA	0.71	—	0.76	0.79
PSR	0.68	0.76	—	0.81
PS	0.74	0.79	0.81	—

Table 2 shows HTMT ratios for discriminant validity assessment. All ratios are still lower than the threshold value of 0.85, implying an acceptable distinction between the constructs. The findings reveal that despite the theoretical relationships, variables reflect different aspects of public perceptions and support.

Structural Model Assessment

Once the measurement model had been established, the structural model was tested to identify the relationships between the study constructs. The results revealed significant positive relationships between MCS and public attitude, MCS and public support, PA and perceived social responsibility, PA and public support, and PSR and public support.

Figure 4 Structural Path Coefficients of the Proposed Model

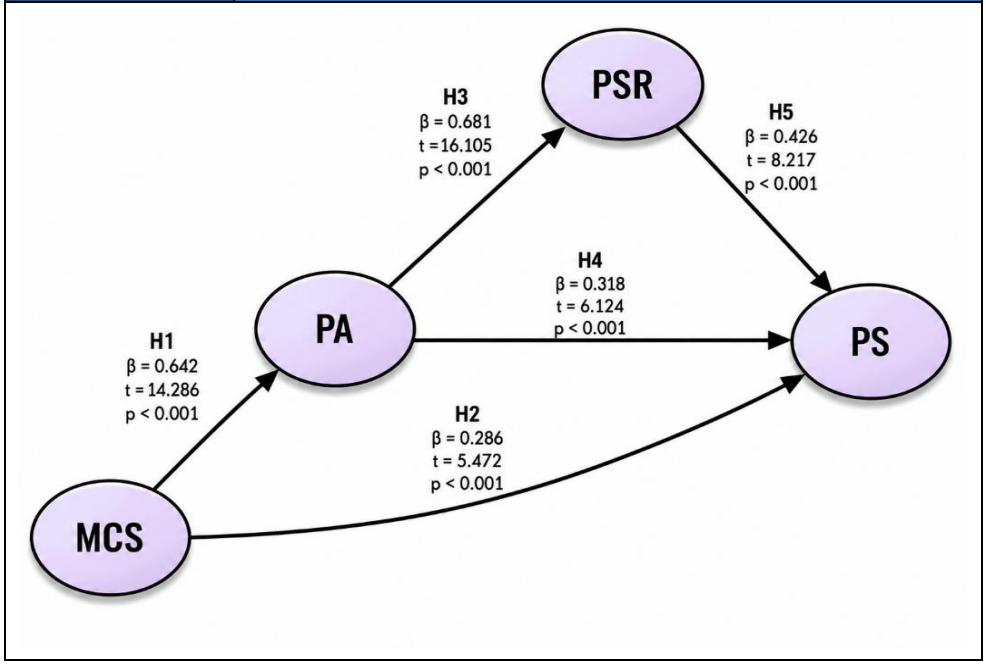


Figure 4 illustrates the structural connections between MCS, PA, PSR, and PS concerning the rehabilitation and reintegration of people with intellectual disabilities. The arrows indicate the paths with respective β values, t-values, and p-values, showing the strength and statistical significance of each connection. All five hypotheses are significant ($p < 0.001$). Hypotheses are supported or confirmed, whereas path coefficients or relationships are statistically significant.

Coefficient of Determination

The level of explanatory power of the structural model was calculated through R^2 values. MCS accounted for 41.2% of public attitude variance, and PA accounted for 46.4% of PSR variance. Overall, MCS, public attitude, and PSR accounted for 63.8% of public support variance.

Figure 5 Explanatory Power of the Endogenous Constructs

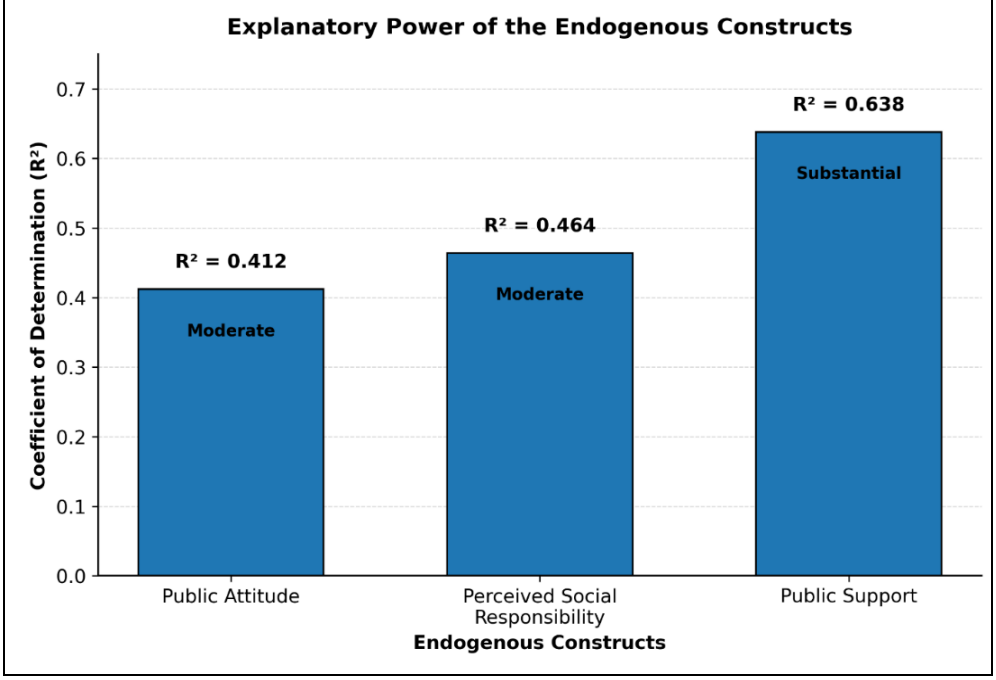


Figure 5 shows the explanatory power of the structural model according to the R^2 values. PS has the highest explanatory power (R^2 = 0.638) and accounts for 63.8% of its variance according to the proposed model. Moreover, PA (R^2 = 0.412) and PSR (R^2 = 0.464) have moderate explanatory powers.

Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

The effect sizes were calculated through f^2, and the predictive relevance was tested through Q^2. The results showed that MCS had a relatively high effect on public attitude, while PA had a substantial effect on PSR. All Q^2 values are positive and demonstrate the predictive relevance of the model.

Table 3 Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Endogenous Construct	Predictor	f^2	Q^2
PA	MSC	0.702	0.301
PSR	PA	0.864	0.347
PS	MCS	0.116	0.428
PS	PA	0.148	
PS	PSR	0.271	

The effect sizes and predictive relevance of the structural model are presented in table 3. Positive Q^2 values reveal that the model is indeed predictive. Meanwhile, f^2 values confirm that the predictors add substantial variance to their corresponding endogenous variables, especially PA in terms of perceived social responsibility.

Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis has tested whether PA and PSR mediate the relationship between MCS and PS. Based on the obtained results, there is a significant indirect relationship between the two, which confirms that effective marketing communication influences PS indirectly and directly as well, through the formation of favorable attitudes and perception of social responsibility.

Table 4	Mediation Analysis of the Relationships Between MCS and PS			
Mediation Path	**Indirect β**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Mediation Decision**
MCS → PA → PS	0.204	5.683	<0.001	Partial Mediation
MCS → PA → PSR → PS	0.186	6.214	<0.001	Partial Mediation

The indirect effects of MCS on PS are provided in table 4. Both mediations have been confirmed to be statistically significant, which means that communication affects PS both directly and indirectly through favorable public attitudes and perception of social responsibility. The findings therefore suggest that communication can generate support through both direct and psychological mechanisms.

Discussion

This research has confirmed that MCS plays a critical role in enhancing public support in the rehabilitation and reintegration of people with intellectual disabilities. Five hypotheses have been proved at the significance level $p < 0.001$. MCS played a crucial role in influencing public attitude ($\beta = 0.642$, $t = 14.286$) and public support ($\beta = 0.286$, $t = 5.472$) directly. Public attitude was positively related to social responsibility ($\beta = 0.681$, $t = 16.105$) and public support ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 6.124$), and perceived social responsibility was also associated with public support ($\beta = 0.426$, $t = 8.217$). These results reveal that communication strategies may influence public support both directly and psychologically. The rather close association between MCS and public attitude implies that reliable, engaging, inclusive, and awareness-raising communication may help to develop favorable perceptions. Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that the influence of MCS on public support is mediated via public attitude (indirect $\beta = 0.204$, $t = 5.683$, $p < 0.001$) and via the indirect path between MCS and public support through public attitude and perceived social responsibility (indirect $\beta = 0.186$, $t = 6.214$, $p < 0.001$). From these findings, it is clear that communication is a crucial factor to include in rehabilitation and reintegration processes rather than just as an awareness strategy. The findings indicate that the model explains 63.8% of the variance in public support, 41.2% of public attitude, and 46.4% of perceived social responsibility. Hence, the findings imply that rehabilitation organizations, advocacy groups, healthcare organizations, policymakers, and social service providers can take advantage of strategic communication to minimize misconceptions, promote a good attitude, and facilitate community participation. The study employs a quantitative cross-sectional research design and thus cannot identify cause-and-effect relationships between perceptions and support and cannot track changes over time. Besides, the respondents were about 400 people sampled from the general population using a purposive sampling technique. Additionally, the findings are based on perceived and intended perceptions rather than actual long-term involvement or behavioral consequences. Future research is recommended to use an experimental or longitudinal study design to determine whether there is a change in attitude and behavior resulting from the communication campaigns. There can be a comparative analysis of different channels of communication such as social media, stories, community campaigns, and educational messages, among others. Other factors that may be considered in future research are demographic factors, mediating and moderating variables, as well as cross-cultural validity of the found relationship.

Conclusion

The research sought to understand how MCS can enhance public support towards rehabilitation and reintegration programs for people with intellectual disability by means of influencing their perceptions and attitudes. The results of the research reveal that strategic communication can be effectively used to convert perceptions and awareness into increased support for rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. The theoretical model was strongly confirmed by empirical evidence. All five hypotheses received strong statistical confirmation ($p < 0.001$). MCS had a strong positive influence on public attitude ($\beta = 0.642$) and a significant impact on public support ($\beta = 0.286$). Public attitude had a high influence on perceived social responsibility ($\beta = 0.681$) and public support ($\beta = 0.318$), whereas perceived social responsibility had a positive influence on public support ($\beta = 0.426$). The model explained 41.2%, 46.4% and 63.8% of the variances in public attitude, perceived social responsibility, and public support correspondingly. Further evidence from the mediation results shows that communication works through psychological processes. An indirect effect of the MCS on public support mediated by public attitude had a β value of 0.204, whereas an indirect effect through public attitude and perceived social responsibility was $\beta = 0.186$; both effects were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). In essence, the important Conclusion that can be drawn is that good marketing communication should be viewed as a part of strategy in terms of promoting disability inclusion. Communication that

creates positive attitudes and social responsibility can increase the willingness of the public to support rehabilitation, giving practical guidance for the organizations involved in rehabilitation.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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