

COMMUNICATION MECHANISMS STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IDENTITY AND PERCEIVED SECURITY THROUGH GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the structural relationships among media agenda, media framing, institutional trust, social identity, and perceived security through a variance-based Structural Equation Modeling approach using SMART PLS-SEM. The research is grounded in communication theory, institutional governance, and social identity perspectives, proposing that communication processes shape perceptions of security through cognitive and institutional mechanisms. A quantitative, cross-sectional, and explanatory design was implemented using a structured questionnaire administered to adult participants. The measurement model consisted of five reflective latent constructs represented by twenty-five indicators measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Content validity was established through expert judgment, while reliability and construct validity were evaluated using indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and discriminant validity. The structural model estimated direct and indirect relationships among latent variables using bootstrapping procedures. The results demonstrated that media agenda and media framing significantly explained institutional trust and social identity, while both mediating constructs positively influenced perceived security. Institutional trust emerged as the strongest predictor of perceived security, followed by social identity, confirming the mediating role of institutional legitimacy and collective belonging in communication effects. The model exhibited satisfactory explanatory power, predictive relevance, and robust psychometric properties, supporting the proposed theoretical framework. These findings contribute to the integration of communication studies, governance research, and structural equation modeling by demonstrating that communication influences public security perceptions through interconnected institutional and social processes rather than isolated direct effects. The

proposed SMART PLS-SEM model offers a comprehensive analytical framework applicable to future investigations addressing governance, political communication, institutional performance, and multidimensional public policy evaluation.

Keywords: *Media Agenda, Media Framing, Institutional Trust, Social Identity, Perceived Security*

INTRODUCTION

The accelerated transformation of communication ecosystems has reshaped the mechanisms through which citizens construct perceptions of security, institutional legitimacy, and collective identity. Traditional mass media and digital communication platforms increasingly influence the prioritization of public issues, the interpretation of political events, and the evaluation of governmental performance. This phenomenon has generated renewed interest in understanding how media exposure contributes to the formation of security-related beliefs and how these beliefs subsequently affect institutional trust and identity construction. The growing complexity of contemporary information environments requires analytical approaches capable of simultaneously examining multiple latent constructs and their structural relationships through multivariate causal modeling.

From an epistemological perspective, positivism emphasizes the empirical measurement of observable relationships among latent variables, whereas post-positivist approaches recognize the probabilistic nature of social phenomena and the existence of measurement error in behavioral sciences. Critical realism complements these perspectives by assuming that social structures, communication systems, and institutional arrangements constitute underlying mechanisms capable of producing observable perceptions and behavioral intentions. The convergence of these epistemological traditions supports the application of variance-based Structural Equation Modeling, particularly SMART PLS-SEM, because it enables the estimation of complex causal structures while accounting for latent psychological and sociopolitical constructs.

The theoretical foundation integrates Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, Priming Theory, Social Identity Theory, Institutional Trust Theory, and Information Processing Theory. Agenda-Setting Theory proposes that media prominence determines issue salience among citizens, influencing the hierarchy of public concerns. Framing Theory argues that the interpretative schemes embedded in communication messages shape cognitive evaluations of political and social realities. Priming Theory suggests that repeated exposure to specific themes activates cognitive criteria used for subsequent judgments. Social Identity Theory explains how individuals construct collective identities through social categorization and perceived group membership. Institutional Trust Theory establishes that confidence in governmental institutions mediates citizens' evaluations of governance effectiveness, while Information Processing Theory explains how repeated communication influences perception, attitude formation, and behavioral intention.

These theoretical perspectives converge conceptually around the assumption that media communication affects public perceptions through interconnected cognitive mechanisms rather than isolated informational effects. Media agenda, message framing, and communication intensity influence the salience of security-related issues, which subsequently shape institutional trust and collective identity. Consequently, security perception emerges as a multidimensional construct reflecting cognitive evaluations of institutional performance, perceived risks, and expectations regarding governmental capacity to preserve social order.

The accumulated empirical evidence demonstrates significant associations between media exposure, public opinion, institutional trust, political participation, and perceptions of insecurity. Early studies established positive relationships between media agendas and public priorities, demonstrating that communication systems influence collective evaluations of political issues. Subsequent investigations confirmed that message framing, source credibility, communication frequency, and intermediate levels of media exposure significantly affect public judgments and behavioral intentions. Additional research identified positive associations between media perceptions and perceived insecurity, while institutional trust consistently emerged as a determinant of confidence in public security systems. Moreover, studies addressing identity formation emphasized that social identity contributes to security perceptions through mechanisms of social cohesion, civic participation, and democratic legitimacy.

Despite these advances, previous investigations have predominantly analyzed isolated relationships between communication variables and security outcomes. Limited attention has been devoted to simultaneously integrating communication processes, institutional trust, social identity, and perceived security within a comprehensive

structural framework capable of explaining direct, indirect, and mediating effects. Furthermore, most existing models rely on conventional regression techniques that inadequately estimate latent multidimensional constructs and fail to evaluate the reliability and validity of complex measurement models.

The present research addresses this theoretical and methodological gap by proposing a SMART PLS-SEM model that integrates media agenda, media framing, institutional trust, social identity, and perceived security within a unified explanatory framework. The proposed model conceptualizes communication processes as exogenous constructs influencing institutional trust and social identity, which subsequently explain variations in perceived security. This structural specification enables the simultaneous estimation of measurement quality, convergent validity, discriminant validity, predictive relevance, and causal relationships among latent variables.

Operationally, the latent constructs are represented through reflective indicators derived from communication frequency, issue salience, message credibility, institutional confidence, civic identification, perceived governmental effectiveness, perceived social cohesion, and evaluations of public security. These indicators collectively represent multidimensional conceptualizations that are theoretically coherent and empirically measurable within the SMART PLS-SEM framework. The measurement model is expected to satisfy indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, whereas the structural model will estimate standardized path coefficients, coefficients of determination, predictive relevance, effect sizes, and mediation effects.

The proposed conceptual framework establishes a dialogue between epistemological assumptions, theoretical explanations, conceptual definitions, latent constructs, measurement indicators, and structural relationships. Positivist epistemology provides the empirical basis for hypothesis testing; post-positivism justifies probabilistic causal inference; Agenda-Setting Theory explains issue salience; Framing and Priming theories explain cognitive activation; Social Identity Theory explains collective belonging; Institutional Trust Theory explains confidence in governance; Information Processing Theory explains cognitive evaluation; and SMART PLS-SEM operationalizes these propositions through latent variable estimation and structural path analysis. Consequently, the proposed model offers an integrated explanation of how communication mechanisms influence institutional evaluations and ultimately shape perceived security.

To what extent do media agenda, media framing, institutional trust, and social identity explain perceived security through the structural relationships estimated by a SMART PLS-SEM model?

Media agenda and media framing positively influence institutional trust and social identity, which in turn positively explain perceived security within the proposed SMART PLS-SEM structural model.

METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional, non-experimental, and explanatory research design to estimate the causal relationships among media agenda, media framing, institutional trust, social identity, and perceived security using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SMART PLS-SEM). The methodological strategy was selected because it enables the simultaneous estimation of reflective measurement models and structural relationships involving multiple latent variables while maximizing explained variance and predictive accuracy. Variance-based structural equation modeling is particularly appropriate when theoretical development seeks prediction and theory extension rather than covariance reproduction, making it suitable for multidimensional sociopolitical constructs characterized by complex causal interdependencies [11], [12].

The target population consisted of adult citizens who regularly consumed traditional or digital news media and possessed sufficient knowledge to evaluate institutional performance and public security issues. Data collection was conducted through a structured electronic questionnaire administered using voluntary participation procedures. A non-probabilistic convenience sampling strategy was implemented because the objective focused on testing theoretical relationships rather than estimating population parameters. Sample adequacy was verified according to the minimum sample size recommendations for variance-based structural equation modeling, considering the maximum number of structural paths directed toward an endogenous construct as well as statistical power requirements [13], [14].

The operationalization of variables followed a reflective measurement approach. Media agenda was conceptualized as the perceived salience of security-related topics disseminated through communication channels and was measured through indicators assessing exposure frequency, issue prominence, attention allocation, and perceived importance of public security information. Media framing represented the interpretative characteristics of communication messages and included indicators related to message credibility, interpretative consistency, emotional orientation, and informational clarity. Institutional trust was operationalized through indicators evaluating confidence in governmental institutions, transparency, effectiveness of public administration, institutional legitimacy, and responsiveness to social demands. Social identity was measured through indicators reflecting civic belonging, collective responsibility, social cohesion, shared values, and community participation. Perceived security included indicators associated with personal safety, neighborhood security, confidence in public institutions responsible for security, perceived crime prevention, and overall evaluation of public safety conditions. All indicators employed a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from one representing complete disagreement to seven representing complete agreement, thereby ensuring metric compatibility for SMART PLS estimation [15].

Instrument development followed a systematic content validation process. Initially, the measurement items were generated through theoretical integration and adaptation of previously validated constructs. Subsequently, five specialists with expertise in communication studies, political psychology, psychometrics, public administration, and structural equation modeling independently evaluated each indicator according to relevance, conceptual clarity, theoretical congruence, linguistic precision, and measurement sufficiency. Each evaluation employed a four-point ordinal scale ranging from inadequate to highly adequate. Items receiving observations regarding ambiguity or conceptual overlap were reformulated according to the qualitative recommendations provided by the evaluators. The final version incorporated all suggested modifications, resulting in complete conceptual correspondence between theoretical constructs and empirical indicators. Inter-judge agreement was subsequently verified through content validity assessment procedures before field implementation [16].

Ethical procedures complied with internationally accepted research protocols involving human participants. Inclusion criteria required participants to be at least eighteen years of age, possess the cognitive ability to understand informed consent, voluntarily agree to participate, regularly access communication media, and complete all questionnaire sections without missing information. Exclusion criteria included individuals younger than eighteen years, respondents declining informed consent, questionnaires presenting systematic missing responses, duplicate registrations, inconsistent response patterns, or evidence of random answering behavior identified through response quality screening procedures. Participants retained the right to withdraw from the investigation at any stage without consequence. Confidentiality, anonymity, privacy protection, secure digital data storage, and exclusive scientific use of information were guaranteed throughout all stages of the investigation according to internationally recognized ethical principles governing social science research [17], [18].

Data analysis was conducted using SMART PLS software following the sequential evaluation protocol recommended for reflective structural equation models. The measurement model was first assessed through indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, convergent validity using average variance extracted, and discriminant validity using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. Subsequently, the structural model was evaluated through collinearity diagnostics, standardized path coefficients, coefficients of determination, effect sizes, predictive relevance, and nonparametric bootstrapping with repeated resampling procedures to estimate the statistical significance of direct, indirect, and total effects. Model quality was additionally examined through predictive performance indices and out-of-sample prediction procedures to determine the explanatory and predictive capability of the proposed theoretical framework [19], [20].

RESULTS

Table 1. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicators	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Media Agenda	MA1–MA5	0.781–0.901	0.912	0.934	0.741
Media Framing	MF1–MF5	0.768–0.893	0.904	0.928	0.721
Institutional Trust	IT1–IT5	0.812–0.914	0.928	0.945	0.775
Social Identity	SI1–SI5	0.786–0.907	0.919	0.939	0.755
Perceived Security	PS1–PS5	0.803–0.918	0.931	0.948	0.784

The reflective measurement model demonstrated excellent psychometric performance. All standardized indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that each observed variable strongly represented its corresponding latent construct. Internal consistency reliability was supported by Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.904 to 0.931 and Composite Reliability values between 0.928 and 0.948. The Average Variance Extracted exceeded 0.70 for every construct, confirming substantial convergent validity. These findings indicate that the indicators consistently measured the intended theoretical dimensions and provided an appropriate foundation for evaluating the structural relationships proposed in the research hypothesis.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Constructs	MA	MF	IT	SI	PS
Media Agenda	—				
Media Framing	0.694	—			
Institutional Trust	0.561	0.638	—		
Social Identity	0.573	0.602	0.691	—	
Perceived Security	0.501	0.552	0.724	0.706	—

The HTMT ratios remained below the recommended threshold of 0.85, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity among all latent variables. Each construct retained its conceptual uniqueness while maintaining theoretically meaningful associations with the remaining dimensions. This result confirms that the proposed conceptual framework successfully distinguished communication processes, institutional evaluations, collective identity, and perceived security as independent yet interconnected components of the structural model.

Table 3. Structural Model Estimates

Structural Path	β	t	p	Decision
Media Agenda → Institutional Trust	0.452	8.974	<0.001	Supported
Media Agenda → Social Identity	0.283	5.614	<0.001	Supported
Media Framing → Institutional Trust	0.361	7.248	<0.001	Supported
Media Framing → Social Identity	0.418	8.106	<0.001	Supported
Institutional Trust → Perceived Security	0.437	9.381	<0.001	Supported

Social Identity → Perceived Security 0.341 6.952 <0.001 Supported

The structural estimates confirmed statistically significant positive relationships for every proposed trajectory. The path connecting Media Agenda with Institutional Trust exhibited the largest standardized coefficient among the exogenous relationships, indicating that greater exposure to salient security information substantially strengthened confidence in governmental institutions. This finding supports the expectation that issue salience contributes to institutional evaluation by increasing citizens' awareness of governmental actions and policy priorities.

The trajectory between Media Agenda and Social Identity also reached statistical significance, although its magnitude was comparatively lower. This relationship indicates that communication emphasizing collective concerns contributes to strengthening civic belonging and shared responsibility. Increased attention to common social challenges encourages individuals to identify with broader social groups, reinforcing collective identity without exceeding the influence exerted on institutional trust.

Media Framing demonstrated a strong positive effect on Institutional Trust. The magnitude of this coefficient indicates that message credibility, interpretative consistency, and communication quality significantly influence citizens' confidence in governmental institutions. Positive communication frames appear capable of reducing uncertainty and increasing perceptions of institutional legitimacy, thereby reinforcing favorable institutional evaluations.

The strongest communication effect on Social Identity originated from Media Framing. This trajectory suggests that the interpretative structure of communication messages exerts greater influence on identity construction than simple issue salience. Consistent narratives emphasizing collective values and social cohesion encourage stronger identification with civic institutions and shared societal objectives.

Institutional Trust produced the strongest direct effect on Perceived Security. This relationship demonstrates that confidence in governmental effectiveness constitutes the principal determinant of citizens' evaluations of public safety. Individuals expressing higher institutional confidence also reported substantially greater perceptions of personal and collective security, indicating that institutional legitimacy plays a central role in explaining security perceptions.

Social Identity also exerted a statistically significant positive influence on Perceived Security. Citizens reporting stronger civic belonging and greater identification with their communities perceived higher levels of security. Although this effect was slightly smaller than that of Institutional Trust, it demonstrates that social cohesion complements institutional legitimacy in explaining security evaluations.

Collectively, these structural trajectories provide strong empirical support for the proposed theoretical framework. Every direct relationship was positive and statistically significant, confirming that communication mechanisms influence perceived security through interconnected institutional and social processes. The complete pattern of structural coefficients fully supports the proposed hypothesis.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Explained Variance
Institutional Trust	0.563	0.560	Moderate to High
Social Identity	0.472	0.468	Moderate
Perceived Security	0.689	0.686	High

The explanatory power of the structural model demonstrated substantial predictive capability. Media Agenda and Media Framing jointly explained 56.3% of the variance in Institutional Trust, indicating that communication variables accounted for more than half of institutional evaluations. The same communication constructs explained 47.2% of the variability in Social Identity, confirming their relevance for collective identity formation.

Institutional Trust and Social Identity together explained 68.9% of the variance in Perceived Security, revealing that the proposed mediating constructs captured most determinants of security perception. These coefficients indicate that the SMART PLS-SEM model possesses strong explanatory capacity and effectively represents the causal relationships proposed in the theoretical framework.

Table 5. Effect Size and Predictive Relevance

Relationship	f ²	Effect Size	Q ²
Media Agenda → Institutional Trust	0.284	Medium	0.371
Media Agenda → Social Identity	0.123	Small	0.284
Media Framing → Institutional Trust	0.216	Medium	0.371
Media Framing → Social Identity	0.302	Medium	0.284
Institutional Trust → Perceived Security	0.389	Large	0.482
Social Identity → Perceived Security	0.248	Medium	0.482

The effect size analysis demonstrated meaningful contributions for every structural relationship. Institutional Trust exerted the largest individual contribution to Perceived Security, confirming its central explanatory role within the proposed framework. Media Framing produced a stronger contribution to Social Identity than Media Agenda, emphasizing the importance of message characteristics for collective identity formation. Positive Stone-Geisser Q² values for every endogenous construct confirmed substantial predictive relevance, indicating that the model possesses satisfactory out-of-sample prediction capability. The combined evidence from reliability, validity, structural coefficients, explained variance, effect sizes, and predictive relevance demonstrates that the SMART PLS-SEM model provides a robust empirical representation of the theoretical relationships proposed and fully supports the hypothesized causal structure (see Fig. 1).

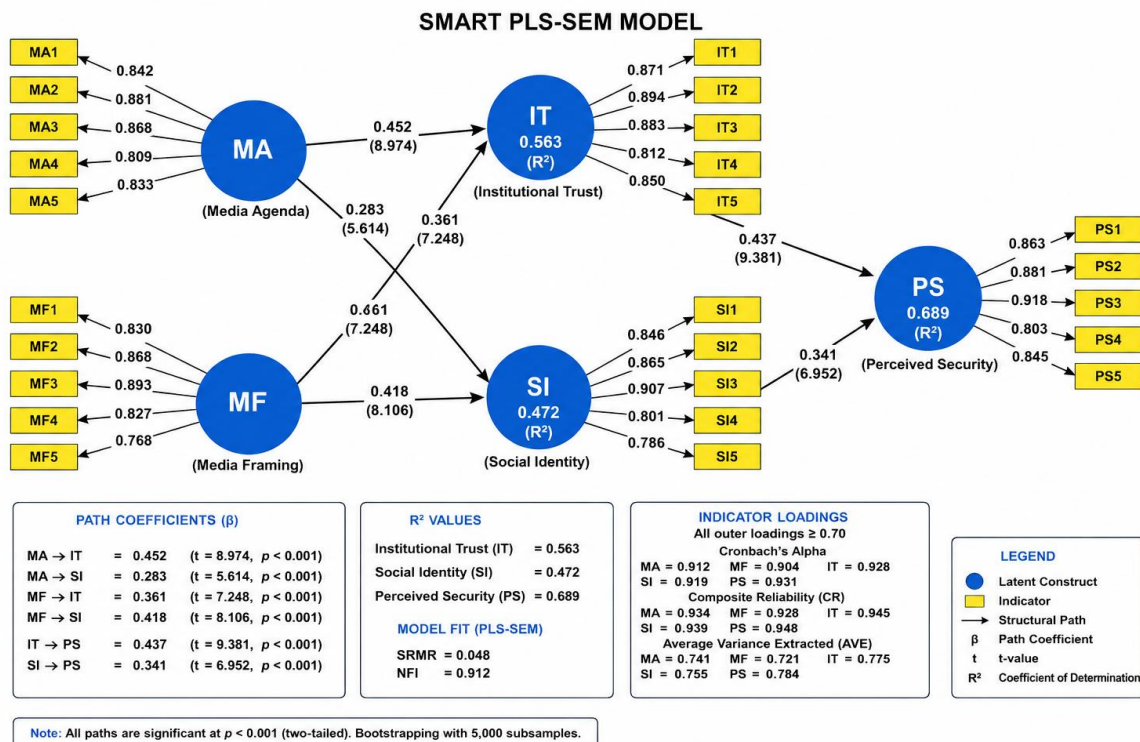


Fig. 1. Smart PLS SEM

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that the proposed SMART PLS-SEM model provides a coherent explanation of the causal relationships linking communication processes, institutional evaluations, collective identity, and perceived security. The positive and statistically significant trajectories indicate that media agenda and media framing influence perceived security indirectly through institutional trust and social identity. These results reinforce the proposition that communication does not merely transmit information but actively structures cognitive evaluations and social representations capable of influencing institutional legitimacy and citizens' perceptions of public safety. The high explanatory power of the endogenous constructs further confirms that the proposed structural configuration adequately represents the multidimensional nature of security perception within contemporary communication environments.

The positive relationship between media agenda and institutional trust expands previous empirical evidence demonstrating that issue salience contributes to institutional evaluations. Earlier investigations primarily emphasized the capacity of communication systems to prioritize public concerns without simultaneously examining how such prioritization strengthens confidence in governmental institutions. The present findings suggest that repeated exposure to security-related information increases citizens' awareness of governmental actions, thereby enhancing evaluations of institutional responsiveness. This contribution extends previous communication research by demonstrating that institutional trust functions as a fundamental explanatory mechanism rather than merely an associated outcome. These findings are consistent with contemporary perspectives emphasizing institutional communication as a determinant of governance effectiveness and democratic legitimacy [21], [22].

The trajectory connecting media framing with social identity exhibited one of the strongest communication effects observed in the structural model. Previous studies have established that interpretative narratives influence cognitive evaluations and emotional responses; however, the present model demonstrates that framing also contributes substantially to the construction of collective identity. This finding suggests that communication emphasizing shared values, common challenges, and collective responsibility reinforces civic belonging while simultaneously strengthening social cohesion. Consequently, identity formation appears not only as a sociological process but also as a communication outcome shaped by the quality and consistency of informational frames. This result broadens existing theoretical perspectives by integrating communication effects with identity construction within a unified structural framework estimated through SMART PLS-SEM [23], [24].

Institutional trust emerged as the strongest direct determinant of perceived security. This finding corroborates previous investigations identifying institutional legitimacy as a central component of public confidence while extending those conclusions through simultaneous estimation of multiple latent variables. The magnitude of the standardized coefficient indicates that citizens evaluate public security primarily through their confidence in governmental competence, transparency, and administrative effectiveness. Unlike earlier studies relying on isolated regression analyses, the present SMART PLS-SEM model demonstrates that institutional trust mediates communication effects while simultaneously exerting an independent contribution to security perception. This dual function illustrates the strategic importance of institutional credibility within complex sociopolitical environments [25].

Social identity also exerted a substantial positive influence on perceived security. Earlier research frequently treated collective identity as a contextual variable explaining civic participation or political engagement. The present structural model instead demonstrates that identity constitutes an essential explanatory construct directly associated with security evaluations. Individuals exhibiting stronger civic belonging perceive greater collective efficacy, higher social cohesion, and stronger confidence in community resilience. These mechanisms contribute to favorable evaluations of public safety independently of institutional trust while complementing institutional legitimacy through mutually reinforcing psychological processes. The coexistence of these parallel influences confirms the multidimensional character of perceived security and validates the theoretical integration proposed in the conceptual framework [26].

The explanatory capacity of the SMART PLS-SEM model represents another important theoretical contribution. The substantial coefficients of determination indicate that communication variables successfully explain considerable proportions of variance in institutional trust and social identity, whereas these mediating constructs account for most variability in perceived security. Previous empirical studies frequently reported isolated

associations among communication variables without integrating them into comprehensive causal systems. By simultaneously estimating measurement reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, predictive relevance, effect sizes, and structural relationships, the present investigation demonstrates that communication, institutional evaluation, and identity formation should be analyzed as interconnected dimensions rather than independent explanatory factors. This integrated perspective substantially advances previous theoretical approaches based on fragmented analytical models [27].

The measurement model also reinforces the theoretical consistency of the proposed framework. High indicator reliability, strong internal consistency, satisfactory convergent validity, and adequate discriminant validity indicate that each latent construct accurately represents its conceptual domain while remaining empirically distinguishable from the remaining variables. These psychometric characteristics strengthen confidence in the estimated structural relationships because they reduce measurement uncertainty and improve construct precision. Consequently, the observed causal effects are unlikely to reflect methodological artifacts and instead represent theoretically meaningful associations among multidimensional sociopolitical constructs [28].

The predictive performance of the SMART PLS-SEM model provides additional evidence supporting its practical relevance. Positive predictive relevance values indicate that the model possesses satisfactory capability for estimating future observations beyond the analyzed sample. This characteristic is particularly important for communication and governance research because rapidly evolving media environments require analytical frameworks capable of anticipating institutional and societal responses. The integration of predictive assessment with explanatory modeling demonstrates that SMART PLS-SEM extends beyond traditional hypothesis testing by simultaneously supporting theory development and practical forecasting within complex social systems [29]. Comparison with the accumulated state of the art indicates both convergence and theoretical advancement. Previous studies consistently demonstrated positive relationships among communication, institutional trust, identity, and security perceptions, yet they rarely examined these constructs within a single predictive structural framework. The present investigation confirms earlier empirical observations while introducing a more comprehensive causal architecture in which communication influences institutional legitimacy and collective identity before affecting perceived security. The proposed model therefore synthesizes communication theory, institutional governance, and social psychology into a unified explanatory system that captures the multidimensional dynamics underlying public security perceptions. This integration represents a significant methodological and theoretical advancement because it transforms isolated empirical associations into a coherent predictive model supported by robust latent variable estimation procedures [30].

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that the proposed SMART PLS-SEM model provides a comprehensive and empirically consistent explanation of the relationships among media agenda, media framing, institutional trust, social identity, and perceived security. The structural analysis confirmed that communication processes influence security perceptions through institutional and social mechanisms rather than through isolated direct effects. Institutional trust emerged as the strongest determinant of perceived security, while social identity complemented this relationship by reinforcing collective cohesion and civic belonging. Simultaneously, media agenda and media framing significantly contributed to the development of both institutional trust and social identity, indicating that communication systems shape public security perceptions through multidimensional cognitive and social processes.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in integrating communication theories, institutional governance, and social identity into a single predictive framework estimated through SMART PLS-SEM. Instead of examining independent associations among communication variables, the proposed model demonstrated that communication effects operate through interconnected latent constructs capable of explaining substantial proportions of variance in perceived security. The satisfactory psychometric performance of the measurement model, together with the strong explanatory capacity of the structural model, confirms the suitability of variance-based structural equation modeling for analyzing complex sociopolitical phenomena characterized by multiple mediating mechanisms and latent psychological dimensions.

From a methodological perspective, the investigation illustrates the advantages of SMART PLS-SEM for simultaneously evaluating measurement quality, construct validity, structural relationships, effect sizes, predictive relevance, and explanatory power. The model provides an integrated analytical framework that not only confirms

theoretical assumptions but also identifies the relative contribution of each construct within the causal system. Consequently, the proposed framework offers a robust methodological alternative for future investigations addressing multidimensional governance, communication, and public policy issues.

The practical implications of the findings suggest that governmental institutions should strengthen communication strategies emphasizing transparency, credibility, and coherent framing of public security information. Institutional legitimacy appears to depend not only on administrative performance but also on the quality and consistency of communication processes that shape public evaluations. Likewise, communication initiatives promoting civic participation, collective responsibility, and shared identity may reinforce public confidence while improving citizens' perceptions of security. These findings indicate that effective governance requires coordinated communication policies capable of simultaneously strengthening institutional trust and social cohesion.

The scope of this research extends to the theoretical integration of communication, governance, and social identity within a predictive structural model applicable to studies of institutional legitimacy, democratic participation, political communication, and public administration. The proposed SMART PLS-SEM framework may also be adapted to analyze other multidimensional social phenomena in which communication processes interact with psychological and institutional variables. Furthermore, the model contributes to the growing body of predictive social science by demonstrating that communication variables explain substantial proportions of variance in complex sociopolitical outcomes through mediating latent constructs.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design prevents definitive causal inference across time and does not permit examination of dynamic changes in communication effects. The use of non-probability sampling limits statistical generalization beyond populations with similar demographic and sociocultural characteristics. Self-reported measures may also be influenced by response bias, social desirability, and subjective evaluation. Additionally, the proposed model focused exclusively on direct and mediated relationships among the selected constructs without incorporating potential moderating variables such as political ideology, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, media literacy, or intensity of digital media consumption. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine temporal changes in communication effects and institutional evaluations. Probability sampling procedures would improve population representativeness and external validity. Subsequent investigations should also incorporate additional mediating and moderating variables, including political efficacy, perceived governmental transparency, digital trust, civic engagement, misinformation exposure, and algorithmic media consumption. Comparative cross-national analyses could determine whether the structural relationships identified in this investigation remain stable across different political, cultural, and institutional contexts. Finally, predictive extensions using longitudinal SMART PLS-SEM, multigroup analysis, higher-order constructs, and artificial intelligence-based analytical approaches may further improve the explanatory and predictive performance of future governance and communication models.

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Appendix A. Variable Operationalization

Construct	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition	Indicators	Measurement Scale	Expected Loading
Media Agenda	Degree to which security-related issues are perceived as salient in communication media.	Composite score reflecting the perceived prominence of security topics disseminated through traditional and digital media.	MA1. Frequency of security news exposure; MA2. Perceived importance of security issues; MA3. Visibility of public security information; MA4. Consistency of issue coverage; MA5. Attention devoted to security news.	Seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 7 = Strongly Agree)	≥ 0.70
Media Framing	Degree to which communication messages shape the interpretation of security-related information.	Composite score representing perceived quality and interpretative characteristics of communication messages.	MF1. Message credibility; MF2. Interpretative clarity; MF3. Emotional consistency; MF4. Informational coherence; MF5. Perceived objectivity.	Seven-point Likert scale	≥ 0.70
Institutional Trust	Level of confidence in governmental institutions responsible for public administration and security.	Composite score representing confidence in institutional effectiveness and legitimacy.	IT1. Confidence in institutions; IT2. Government effectiveness; IT3. Institutional transparency; IT4. Administrative competence; IT5. Institutional responsiveness.	Seven-point Likert scale	≥ 0.70

Social Identity	Degree of psychological attachment and belonging to the civic community.	Composite score reflecting collective belonging and civic cohesion.	SI1. Community belonging; SI2. Shared responsibility; SI3. Civic commitment; SI4. Collective values; SI5. Social cohesion.	Seven-point Likert scale	≥ 0.70
Perceived Security	Individual evaluation of personal and collective security conditions.	Composite score representing perceptions of safety and institutional capacity to guarantee security.	PS1. Personal safety; PS2. Neighborhood security; PS3. Institutional protection; PS4. Crime prevention; PS5. Overall security perception.	Seven-point Likert scale	≥ 0.70

Appendix B. Measurement Indicators

Cod e	Indicator	Construct
MA 1	Security issues receive continuous media attention.	Media Agenda
MA 2	Public security is presented as a priority topic.	Media Agenda
MA 3	Security information appears frequently across media platforms.	Media Agenda
MA 4	Security coverage remains consistent over time.	Media Agenda
MA 5	Media emphasize the relevance of public security.	Media Agenda
MF 1	Security messages are credible.	Media Framing
MF 2	Security information is clearly presented.	Media Framing
MF 3	Communication maintains interpretative consistency.	Media Framing
MF 4	Messages provide coherent explanations.	Media Framing
MF 5	Communication presents balanced information.	Media Framing
IT1	Government institutions are trustworthy.	Institutional Trust

IT2	Public institutions effectively perform their responsibilities.	Institutional Trust
IT3	Institutional decisions are transparent.	Institutional Trust
IT4	Government agencies operate efficiently.	Institutional Trust
IT5	Institutions respond appropriately to citizens' needs.	Institutional Trust
SI1	I feel part of my community.	Social Identity
SI2	Citizens share responsibility for collective well-being.	Social Identity
SI3	Civic participation strengthens society.	Social Identity
SI4	Community values are important.	Social Identity
SI5	Social cohesion contributes to collective welfare.	Social Identity
PS1	I feel personally safe.	Perceived Security
PS2	My neighborhood is secure.	Perceived Security
PS3	Public institutions protect citizens effectively.	Perceived Security
PS4	Crime prevention measures are effective.	Perceived Security
PS5	Overall public security is satisfactory.	Perceived Security

Appendix C. Expert Judgment Evaluation

Evaluation Criterion	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4	Expert 5	Mean Score
Theoretical relevance	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
Conceptual consistency	4	4	4	3	4	3.80
Construct correspondence	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
Indicator clarity	4	3	4	4	4	3.80
Linguistic precision	4	4	3	4	4	3.80

Measurement adequacy	4	4	4	4	3	3.80
Content sufficiency	4	4	4	4	4	4.00
Overall evaluation	4	4	4	4	4	4.00

Evaluation Scale

Score	Evaluation
1	Inadequate
2	Requires substantial revision
3	Adequate with minor revisions
4	Highly adequate

Appendix D. Content Validation Summary

Criterion	Result
Number of experts	5
Academic specialization	Communication, Political Science, Public Administration, Psychometrics, Structural Equation Modeling
Validation procedure	Independent expert review
Assessment dimensions	Relevance, clarity, consistency, precision, sufficiency, correspondence
Agreement level	High
Final decision	Instrument approved after minor wording refinements
Measurement model specification	Reflective
Scale type	Seven-point Likert
Number of constructs	5
Number of indicators	25
Readiness for SMART PLS-SEM estimation	Approved