PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES AND ITS RELEVANCE TO ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY IN PAKISTAN-BASED CORPORATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Public Relations (PR) and communication are critical in ensuring economic sustainability within corporate organizations. This component helps businesses communicate efficiently, build strong partnerships, and encourage the adoption of innovative practices. This study investigated how communication in PR contribute to the growth of the corporate sector Pakistan, aiming to attain economic sustainability. Using a case study approach, researchers gathered data from respondents within the Pakistan's B2B Public Relations and Communication Database. Findings indicated that PR communication positively impacts the economic sustainability of corporate organizations in Pakistan. It also significantly enhances partnerships among businesses in the corporate sector. Besides, there was strong consensus on its impact on fostering innovation. It is concluded that economic sustainability is a critical aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and PR and communication are essential tools for achieving it effectively. Consequently, corporate organizations in the Pakistan recognize the importance of these strategies and incorporate them into their business frameworks to drive long-term sustainable growth and development.

Keywords: *Public Relations, Pakistan, Economic Sustainability, Fostering Partnerships, Promoting Innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication and public relations are closely connected, as effective communication is fundamental to successful public relations (Ahmad, 2019; Roth-Cohen & Avidar, 2022). Public Relations (PR) involves establishing and maintaining relationships between an organization or individual and their target audience. Clear and accurate communication is vital in PR, ensuring messages reach the intended audience effectively (Al-Asadi, 2022). PR professionals utilize various communication tools such as speeches, social media, emails, press releases, and events to achieve this. Strong communication enables organizations to convey messages, build and maintain stakeholder relationships, manage crises, and enhance their reputation (Anani-Bossman, 2021). The strong link between public relations and communication is based on strategic approaches to achieve success (Aronczyk et al., 2017). PR professionals collaborate with communication experts to effectively reach their audience. Communication strategies include press releases, social media updates, emails, public speeches, and events. Before delivering messages, developing key messages that align with an organization's goals and objectives is essential (Hashmat, S. et al., 2025; Anani-Bossman, 2021; Thurlow et al., 2017). These messages are then distributed through various communication

channels to ensure they reach the target audience. PR officers work alongside communication specialists to manage relationships with the media and other influential communication platforms. Communication professionals assist PR teams in crafting pitches, press releases, and other materials to attract media coverage and gain public attention (Almahraj, 2017).

Both communication and public relations significantly influence an organization's growth and development (El-Chaarani et al., 2022). Effective communication ensures stakeholders and the public receive timely and accurate information, helping organizations manage information flow and maximize growth opportunities. Communication in PR also involves gathering feedback from stakeholders and the public, which can help improve products, services, and overall stakeholder relationships (Andersson, 2023; Ellili & Nobanee, 2022). Public relations and communication play a key role in business growth in the corporate sector. Clear communication strengthens an organization's connection with customers, employees, and stakeholders, fostering trust and loyalty that drive success. A well-planned PR and communication strategy contributes to a positive reputation by highlighting an organization's achievements, products, and services. PR and communication are also essential for promoting sustainable development in corporate organizations (De Luca et al., 2022). Sustainable development refers to meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs. Through effective communication, businesses can promote sustainability initiatives, encourage stakeholder engagement, and drive long-term growth (Holden et al., 2019). Public relations and communication contribute to organizational transparency, accountability, and collaboration. Businesses can foster partnerships, promote sustainability efforts, and create meaningful stakeholder relationships by implementing strong PR and communication strategies (Filho et al., 2019; ICLEI Local Government for Sustainability, 2015). This research examines the role of PR and communication in advancing sustainable development in corporate organizations in Pakistan, focusing on achieving the country's sustainable development goals. The study seeks to answer three key questions:

1. What is the impact of Communication in Public Relations on the economic sustainability of corporate sector organizations in Pakistan?
2. What is the impact of Communication in Public Relations on partnerships in corporate sector organizations in Pakistan?
3. What is the impact of Communication in Public Relations on innovation in corporate sector organizations in Pakistan?

Table 1: Operationalization of Sustainable Development

Source	Definition
(Holden et al., 2019)	Sustainable development is defined as the capability to meet the requirements of the current without compromising the future generations too gratify their own needs.
(Dhiman, 2023)	Sustainable development involves an agenda 2 fulfilled are requirements of present generations without disturbing the social, economic, an environmental resources for the future generation.
(Fischer & Comini, 2012)	Sustainable development can be defined as a procedure of fulfilling human development objective while keeping the capability of natural system to pursue to provide the ecosystem services and natural sources upon which the society and economy rely.
(European Commission, 2023)	Sustainable development is based on the goals that the needs of the presents are met without threatening the needs of future generation. It involves plans and agents for the safer use of all resources including social, economic, an environmental considerations.

Dialogue Theory and Public Relations
This study is supported by the Dialogue Theory of Public Relations, introduced in 1989 (Kent & Lane, 2021). The theory emphasizes the importance of dialogue as an exchange of ideas and opinions, positioning PR as a means of

managing interpersonal communication. In the context of PR, dialogue follows an interactive model where messages are shared, and feedback is gathered to strengthen relationships. Incorporating dialogue into PR strategies is particularly significant in achieving economic sustainability (Adamczyk et al., 2019; Roth-Cohen & Avidar, 2022). Effective communication between organizations and stakeholders—including customers, investors, employees, and the wider community, helps establish long-term trust and collaboration. Transparent and open conversations are essential for maintaining credibility and strengthening relationships (Oncioiu et al., 2021). By actively engaging with stakeholders, organizations can better understand their needs and expectations, aligning their strategies to create mutually beneficial outcomes. Dialogue also plays a key role in crisis management as well (Jeljeli et al., 2022). During crises, clear and transparent communication helps minimize damage and rebuild trust. Open engagement with stakeholders demonstrates accountability and a commitment to transparency, which is essential for maintaining long-term economic sustainability. Organizations that engage in meaningful dialogue during challenges can reinforce their reliability and commitment to stakeholders, ultimately preserving trust and stability. Based on the discussion above, this research examines the relationship between public relations, communication, and economic sustainability in Pakistan's corporate sector. The study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Communication in Public Relations significantly impacts the economic sustainability of corporate sector organizations in Pakistan.

H2: Communication in Public Relations significantly impacts the fostering of partnerships in corporate sector organizations in Pakistan.

H3: Communication in Public Relations significantly impacts the promotion of innovations in corporate sector organizations in Pakistan.

Table 2: Operationalization of Economic Sustainability

Source	Definition
(Mahardhani, 2023)	Economic sustainability is the capability of a country to support a standard level of economic production.
(Opferkuch et al., 2022)	Economic sustainability is an ability of a country or state to retain its competitiveness and productivity while ensuring environmental and social wellbeing and development.
(Opferkuch et al., 2022)	Economic sustainability implies that economic system continues to provide the services and good required for wellbeing, considering the social, economic, and environmental constraints.
(Agbata et al., 2023)	Economic sustainability is considered as a long-term ability of an economy to provide for retaining economic development, ensure social wellbeing and environmental preservation, and citizen's needs.

1. Methodology

This study used a case study approach to investigate the role of Public Relations (PR) and communication in attaining sustainable development, with a focus on economic sustainability. Participants were selected from three PR agencies in Pakistan that collaborate with different corporate sector organizations. The sample was drawn from the "Pakistan's B2B Public Relations and Communication Database," which provides detailed information about corporate organizations, their associated PR agencies, license numbers, business IDs, and other important details. Survey questionnaires were distributed via email to collect data, mainly through an online survey link. The data collection period lasted from January 2nd, 2025 to March 1st, 2025. The selection process focused on Pakistan-based PR agencies working with different corporate organizations in the Pakistan, with no other criteria applied. A total of 450 potential respondents were identified from the Pakistan B2B Public Relations and Communication Database. Out of 450 invitations sent, 392 individuals agreed to participate in the survey. After careful evaluation, 388 completed questionnaires were considered

valid, resulting in a response rate of 86%, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 60%. Calculating the demographics of respondents revealed that 67.6% were males and 32.4% were females. Concerning their work experience in years, 75.7% revealed that they had six years of experience or above, 14.9% have 1-2 five years of experience, and 9.6% had less than one year of work experience as public relations expert. The sample consisted of a diverse group of respondents who participated in the research

voluntarily. While the findings may have limited generalizability, the final sample size adequately represented their connection with the selected organizations. Their responses provided valuable insights into the role of communication in Public Relations (PR) in supporting the growth of corporate sector organizations, eventually contributing to achieving economic sustainability goals. Table 3 summarizes the demographics of study respondents.

Table 3: Demographics of Respondents

Variables	Operationalization of Demographics	N	%
Gender	Male	209	67.6
	Female	100	32.4

1.1. Measurement Instrument

This study focuses on the role of Public Relations and Communication in achieving economic sustainability goals. A survey questionnaire was developed using measurement items from previous research to gather data. The questionnaire was structured on a five-point Likert scale, with each measurement construct containing at least four core questions. Table 4 provides details of the measurement instrument used in the current study.

1.2. Communication in Public Relations

The measurement scale for assessing the role of Public Relations and Communication was adapted from prior research (Almutairi & Sriramesh, 2020; Ardila, 2020). The scale included four key questions addressing different aspects: the general role of PR and communication, their contribution to facilitating

two-way communication, the organizational preference for PR and communication, the necessity of employing specialized personnel for PR functions, and the overall impact of PR and communication on organizations.

1.3. Economic Sustainability

The study utilized a measurement scale adapted from existing research to evaluate economic sustainability (Ababneh & Aga, 2019). Four key questions were designed to assess the economic resources allocated for PR services in corporate organizations in the Pakistan. The scale also examined the role of research and development within financial constraints, the provision of cost-effective PR and communication services, and the implementation of strategies to enhance the economic affordability of these services while ensuring organizational support.

Table 4 Measurement Instrument and Sources

Variables	Items	Sources
Communications in Public Relations	1. Our organization places a strong emphasis on public relations and effective communication strategies. 2. We organize workshops and training sessions to improve our PR expertise. 3. We are committed to upholding excellence in our communication practices. 4. We prioritize two-way communication to ensure a well-balanced and transparent dialogue with our clients.	(Almutairi & Sriramesh, 2020; Ardila, 2020)
Economic Sustainability	1. Our organization has economic policies in place to minimize unemployment. 2. We implement policies that ensure equal opportunities for individuals seeking to join our team.	(Ababneh & Aga, 2019)

	3. Our organizational policies are designed to promote equity and reduce poverty. 4. We prioritize research and development (R&D) initiatives to enhance economic performance.	
Promoting Partnerships	1. Our organization emphasizes public relations (PR) as a key tool for communication with other organizations. 2. The PR team in our organization actively arranges regular meetings. 3. Our PR personnel work towards establishing partnerships with other organizations to promote civic engagement. 4. The PR team encourages me to develop and maintain strong interpersonal trust.	(Jeljeli et al., 2024)
Fostering Innovation	1. The PR team in our organization promotes online communication over in-person meetings. 2. Our PR personnel advocate for adopting enhanced strategies to strengthen corporate communication. 3. PR managers regularly evaluate existing work methods to ensure efficiency. 4. Our PR team motivates us to contribute ideas and innovative solutions to challenges.	(Anurag, 2016; Jeljeli et al., 2022)

1.4.   Promoting Partnerships

The measurement scale for fostering partnerships through Public Relations and Communication was adapted from prior studies (Jeljeli et al., 2024; Hashmat. S., 2025). The questions focused on the role of PR in facilitating communication with other organizations, the efforts of PR professionals in organizing regular meetings, ensuring transparency in investor communications, and fostering a sense of community among investors and partners.

1.5.   Fostering Innovations

The construct of promoting innovation was measured using a scale adapted from existing research (Anurag, 2016; Jeljeli et al., 2022). Four key questions were used to examine PR's role in coordinating stakeholders, motivating parties to share ideas, encouraging organizations to integrate technology into their operations, and applying innovative PR strategies to enhance organizational transparency.

2.   Data Analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the study's hypotheses. Since the hypotheses explore cause-and-effect relationships, SEM was considered appropriate for in-depth analysis. While regression analysis is useful for examining relationships, SEM provides a more comprehensive approach. It allows for assessing the reliability and validity of the research instrument, evaluates the predictive power of independent variables, and analyses relationships by examining path coefficients, t-values, and significance levels. The analysis was conducted in two phases. First, the measurement model was tested to ensure reliability and validity. Second, the structural model was assessed to examine relationships between variables. This two-step approach ensured that the measurement model was robust and suitable for assessing the proposed hypotheses.

2.1.   Measurement Model Testing

First, the researchers tested the model by examining the convergent validity, construct reliability, discriminant validity, and goodness of fit (Sarstedt et al., 2020). All the assessments examined how much the measurement model can further facilitate testing the structural relationships by conducting the path analysis. Convergent validity was first tested to ensure the internal consistency between the variables (Carlson, 2010), including the calculation of factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Cronbach alpha (CA), and composite reliability (CR). All items related to Communication in Public Relations, Promoting Relationships, and Fostering Innovations exceeded the minimum

threshold value of 0.5. However, PAR1 from Promoting Partnerships had a weak or lower loading value, which could impact the structural model analysis. As a result, PAR1 was removed. Also, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated. The AVE for Communication in Public Relations was 0.513, for Economic Sustainability 0.598, for Promoting Partnerships 0.540, and Fostering Innovation 0.589. These values are all significantly above the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Arifin & Yusoff, 2016), indicating strong construct validity. Construct reliability was further examined using two key criteria. First, Cronbach's Alpha values were computed, showing that Communication in

Public Relations had a value of 0.739, Economic Sustainability 0.736, Promoting Partnerships 0.742, and Fostering Innovation 0.711. These values all exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Amirrudin & Nasution, 2021). Similarly, Composite Reliability values were measured, showing that Communication in Public Relations had a value of 0.782, Economic Sustainability 0.766, Fostering Relationships 0.747, and Promoting Innovation 0.766. These values also surpassed the threshold of 0.7 (Artioli & Kashiwagura, 2010), confirming the reliability of the constructs. Table 5 shows the summary of reliability and validity testing.

Table 5 Convergent Validity Testing

Variables	Items	Loadings	AVE	CA	CR
Communications in Public Relations	PRC1	0.641	0.513	0.739	0.782
	PRC2	0.583			
	PRC3	0.597			
	PRC4	0.599			
Economic Sustainability	ES1	0.534	0.598	0.736	0.766
	ES2	0.530			
	ES3	0.625			
	ES4	0.619			
Promoting Partnerships	PAR1	0.342	0.540	0.742	0.747
	PAR2	0.531			
	PAR3	0.696			
	PAR4	0.741			
Fostering Innovation	INNO1	0.628	0.589	0.711	0.766
	INNO2	0.815			
	INNO3	0.606			
	INNO4	0.582			

The model's goodness of fit was assessed (Chwialkowski et al., 2018) after eliminating one item (PAR1) from Promoting Partnerships. The chi-square value was recorded at 0.945, with a probability level of 0.001. Besides, the Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI) value was 0.862, and the

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.060, which is below the acceptable threshold of 0.085 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). These results confirm that the measurement model showed a good fit. Figure 1 illustrates the final measurement model.
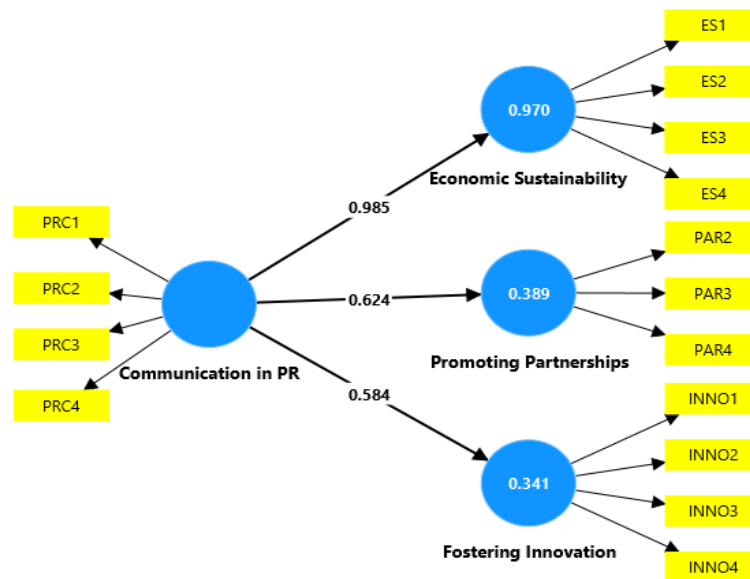
Figure 1 Final Measurement Model

To further validate the measurement model, discriminant validity was evaluated (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). This was done by first calculating Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the constructs and then comparing them with the squared AVE values (Fornell-Larcker Criterion). The results showed that all squared AVE values were greater than the corresponding correlation values (Mello & Collins, 2001), indicating that the constructs were distinct from each other. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio was calculated, All the HTMT values remained less than the threshold of 0.85 (Voorhees, 2016), further confirming discriminant validity. Table 6 and 7 show the results of discriminant validity testing.

Table 6 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	PR Communication	Economic Sustainability	Fostering Relationships	Promoting Innovation
Communication in Public Relations	**0.643**			
Economic Sustainability	0.985	**0.546**		
Fostering Relationships	0.584	0.556	**0.538**	
Promoting Innovation	0.624	0.552	0.751	**0.560**

Table 7 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Scale

	Communication in PR	Economic Sustainability	Fostering Innovation	Promoting Partnerships
Communication in Public Relations				
Economic Sustainability	0.333			
Fostering Innovation	0.066	0.443		
Promoting Partnerships	0.426	0.061	0.340	

2.2. Structural Model Assessment

The researchers examined the structural relationships between the variables by first evaluating the predictive power of the predictor variables (coefficients of determination R^2) (Ringle et al., 2023) and then performing a path analysis. The results revealed that the predictive potential accounted for 63.2% of the variance in Economic Sustainability, 50% in Promoting Partnerships, and 61.7% in Fostering Innovation. Overall, the study showed a strong predictive power of the variable Communication in PR. Table 8 shows the results of coefficients of determination R^2.

Table 8 Coefficients of Determination R^2

Variables	R^2	%
Economic Sustainability	0.632	0.546
Promoting Partnerships	0.500	0.556
Fostering Innovation	0.617	0.552

Table 9 Hypotheses Testing (Path Analysis)

Relationships	Path	t	P	Decision
Communication in Public Relations → Economic Sustainability	0.985	21.840	0.000	Supported
Communication in Public Relations → Fostering Partnerships	0.624	11.631	0.000	Supported
Communication in Public Relations → Promoting Innovations	0.584	9.592	0.000	Supported

The structural model was tested using values representing path coefficients (β) between variables, t-values, and the significance levels of the relationships (Hair et al., 2021). The first hypothesis proposed the impact of Communication in PR on the Economic Sustainability of corporate sector organizations in the Pakistan. The results confirmed this relationship, indicating a strong regression coefficient (β= 0.985, t= 21.840, p< .000). This finding is consistent with the argument presented by (Thurlow et al., 2017), who highlighted that Communication in PR contributes to economic sustainability by shaping a positive organizational image, increasing brand awareness, and enhancing stakeholder transparency and accountability. Effective public relations communication promotes relationships with customers, investors, and other stakeholders, leading to higher loyalty, repeat business, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Similarly, the third hypothesis investigated whether Communication in PR significantly contributes to fostering partnerships among Corporate Sector Organizations in the Pakistan. The results confirmed this hypothesis, showing a strong regression coefficient (β= 0.624, t= 11.631, p< .000). As (T. Almutairi, 2018) emphasized, Communication in PR helps corporate organizations establish and sustain positive relationships with external stakeholders. By building and sustaining partnerships, organizations benefit from strengthened collaboration and mutual growth.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis tested the assumption that Communication in PR positively impacts Promoting Innovation in Corporate Sector Organizations in the Pakistan. According to (Bernays, 2013), Communication among PR professionals enables innovation by cultivating a culture of idea-sharing and collaboration within organizations. They also play a role in promoting innovation efforts externally, attracting potential partners and investors. The results showed that this hypothesis was supported, showing a significant regression coefficient (β= 0.584, t= -.263, p< 9.592). This is consistent with the earlier studies (Aditi et al., 2022; Akbulut & Yıldırım, 2019; Cheney & Dionisopoulos, 2013), which have indicated the role of Communication in PR in promoting innovation and creativity. Table 9 shows the results of path analysis in this study.

3. Discussion

Communication in Public Relations play a vital role in achieving economic sustainability by fostering corporate social development (María et

al., 2017). The dialogue theory of public relations highlights the importance of engaging with stakeholders to identify ways organizations can positively impact the community and the environment. By collaborating with stakeholders to implement sustainable initiatives, businesses can enhance their reputation and build long-term relationships, which contribute to overall growth and development in the corporate sector.

According to previous research (Ahmad, 2019; Cheney & Dionisopoulos, 2013), effective organizational communication creates an open environment that fosters trust and respect among employees and stakeholders. Additionally, public relations enable companies to respond swiftly to market changes, helping them maintain a competitive edge. Through strategic communication (Alawaad, 2021), organizations can effectively share their values, goals, and achievements, strengthening their brand image and attracting investors, customers, and business partners. This, in turn, leads to increased revenue and long-term economic stability. Furthermore, engaging employees and fostering a positive workplace culture through public relations efforts enhances job satisfaction and productivity, ultimately benefiting the organization's growth (Arief & Saputra, 2019).

This study specifically examined the impact of public relations and communication (Aljumah et al., 2023) on economic sustainability within corporate organizations in Pakistan. Findings revealed a general agreement among respondents regarding the significant role of PR in sustaining corporate organizations in the Pakistan. Businesses in the region recognize the importance of two-way communication to build mutual understanding with stakeholders (Borchers & Enke, 2021). As a result, they often hire experienced professionals to manage public relations, ensuring growth and development. Regarding economic sustainability, respondents indicated that PR and communication significantly contribute to developing corporate organizations in the Pakistan. These organizations prioritize working within allocated budgets while delivering high-quality PR services. Additionally, they offer cost-effective solutions designed to businesses' financial capabilities, reinforcing PR's crucial role in sustainable development.

Two key PR and communication strategies were identified: promoting partnerships and fostering innovation. Public relations help businesses identify growth opportunities and stay ahead of emerging trends and technologies (Al-Asadi, 2022). Organizations can establish meaningful partnerships and drive innovation by building strong relationships and clearly articulating their vision. Respondents emphasized the importance of communication in achieving economic objectives, noting that regular meetings and interactions among investors strengthen collaboration and community engagement.

Finally, respondents highlighted the role of PR in promoting innovation within corporate organizations. While company policies often guide innovation, organizations actively encourage creative idea-sharing and technology integration to enhance operations. There was also a consensus on adopting innovative methods to improve transparency and efficiency. As previous studies suggest, public relations and communication are essential for promoting innovation, maintaining competitiveness, and ensuring long-term economic sustainability.

4. Conclusion

Economic development is a rudimentary aspect of sustainable growth and a key pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is essential for advancing other critical objectives, such as poverty reduction, minimizing inequalities, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare, and promoting responsible consumption and production. This study examined the role of Public Relations and communication in supporting economic sustainability within corporate sector organizations in Pakistan. The findings highlight that PR and communication play a significant role in facilitating long-term economic sustainability. By strengthening partnerships and encouraging innovation, PR helps businesses improve their reputation, expand their market presence, and ultimately drive economic success. The results indicate that organizations investing in PR and communication strategies are more likely to achieve sustained economic growth while contributing to the broader development of the Pakistan's economy. Consequently, corporate organizations in Pakistan increasingly recognize the importance of PR and communication and

integrate these elements into their business strategies to ensure sustainable economic progress.

4.1. Limitations

This study has certain limitations due to its scope and methodology. Firstly, the research is confined to Pakistan, focusing solely on the economic sustainability goals established by the relevant government. Secondly, only two specific strategies, promoting partnerships and fostering innovation, were examined about PR and communication's role in economic sustainability. Lastly, the study identified an insignificant impact of PR and communication on promoting innovation, which presents another limitation. Future research may investigate more strategies and expand the geographical scope to better understand PR's role in economic sustainability.

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