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# A COMMUNICATION MODEL OF ART INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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### ABSTRACT

People with disabilities still face barriers to participation in society, face freedom of choice, lack of opportunities to act independently, discrimination, accessibility issues, and equal rights. Only the physical accessibility of the environment is emphasized, but social activity is strongly influenced by the availability of information. Access to culture/art is physical and informational. Cultural organisations should integrate marketing tools into their activities through the communication process and the presentation of art products and services.

**Scientific problem** – What integrated marketing communication tools do increase the information accessibility of art for people with disabilities?

**The object of the work** is integrated marketing communication tools that increase the information accessibility of art for people with disabilities.

**The aim of the work** is to develop an empirically based theoretical model of integrated marketing communication tools that increase the information accessibility of art for people with disabilities.

**KEYWORDS:** Art, communication, access to information, people with disabilities, communication tools.

### Introduction

**Relevance of the topic.** Today we can see that new technologies, interaction between science and art, and integration of new solutions into the activities of art organisations have expanded opportunities, creative processes, and aspects of engaging people and keeping them interested. Culture is a tool to discover own and other people's mutual differences and similarities, create relationships with various social groups, especially those who are not as active in participating in social activities or even those that experience social exclusion (Petkutė, 2018). Culture and participation in cultural life are mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (State Gazette, 2006). There is an emerging need to perceive art for all social groups; one of them are people with disabilities.

Accessibility of culture/art is physical and informational. Generally, scientific publications and studies analyse the physical type of accessibility of culture and art; however, they do not analyse informational accessibility of culture/art. This work includes an analysis of increasing informational accessibility using integrated marketing communication tools for people with disabilities in regions.

A contemporary organisation requires integrated marketing communication tools, i.e., in order to purposefully transmit the message, creating a service or product is not enough; it is important to communicate with existing and potential consumers, find out their needs and put effort into their constant satisfaction.

### **1. Rights of people with disabilities to receive information**

Today, such terms as *health disorder*, *disability*, *invalidity*, *person with disability* are generally used and have a much deeper meaning beyond their medical use. The use and social perception of the concept of *disability* as well as the attitude to people with disabilities changes with different social development stages. Various sources of literature provide different concepts of *disability* (Table 1).

**Table 1. The concept of disability**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>The Concept</b>
Ruškus, J., 2019	Disability is described as a social image constructed in a historical-cultural context that reflects the stereotypical attitude of society towards more or less raids, physical, intellectual and / or mental disorders, which are treated as deviations from generally accepted norms and values and are usually assessed as extreme. A person with a disability is already in use and accepted by a person with a disability, be sure to question and use another term – the person with a disability that is closest to the term of the UN Convention.
LR Seimas, 2021, p. 2	Disability is a long-term deterioration of a person's state of health, participation in public life and reduced opportunities for activity due to the interaction of a person's body structure and functions and the interaction of unfavourable environmental factors. The level of disability is the extent to which a person's state of health, independence in daily activities and loss of educational opportunities have been assessed. Disabled – a person for whom the level of disability or the level of working capacity of 55 per cent or less or the level of special needs has been established in accordance with the procedure established by law.
Francis, L. et al., 2016	“Disability” is an artistic term with different special meanings, each created for a specific policy or program that uses it. How we perceive disability is different from the methods used to learn about it and the context in which it is examined. The criteria for considering people with disabilities also change over time in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

Authors	The Concept
World Health Organization, 2021, p. 10	People with disabilities are those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory activities, a disorder which, by interacting with various barriers, may prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.
Grigaitė, U. et al., 2020, p. 2	The concept of disability is still evolving, resulting from the interplay between people with disabilities and attitudinal and environmental barriers that prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.
Department of Disability Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2015, p. 2	A person with a disability is a person who is unable to perform certain activities due to a developmental or health condition.

The concept of *disability* is explained differently, i.e., some authors emphasise that it is the attitude of the society to disorders, and it is treated as a deviation; others introduce this concept as decrease of possibilities in daily activities rather than a deviation. In the context of today, problems related to people with disabilities and their different needs emerge in education of the society. People with disabilities are equal citizens of the society, and their possibilities decrease due to inadaptability, inaccessibility, and misunderstanding of their needs.

In scientific literature, the following two models of disability are distinguished:

1. Individual medical model;
2. Social model of disabilities (Adomaitienė, 2003).

The main classifications of disability according to its type are as follows:

- Visual impairment (disorders of sight from partial blindness to complete blindness);
- Hearing disability (hearing disabilities from partial to complete deafness);
- Motor impairment (physical disability) (from slight limping to movement in an electric wheelchair);
- Intellectual developmental disability (from learning difficulties to inability to adequately react to various situations) (Anča et al., 2014).

This work will be based on motor, visual, hearing and mental disabilities (Muce- niekas, 2003). Speaking of people with disabilities, it is important to mention the compromise between the social model that is based on difficulties that people with disabilities face, and the medical model when the problem exists in the human body and requires treatment.

All citizens must have equal opportunities to access and receive information; only then equal opportunities for all will be ensured. The information society is an open, educated and learning society whose members are able to and want to work in a contempo-

rary environment of information technologies in all the areas of their activities, use state and global information resources, and government institutions ensure accessibility and reliability of information (Urbšaitytė et al., 2010, p. 5).

To search for, freely get, share and use information is a human right and a condition of democracy. Freedom of information is one of the fundamental conditions of democracy – it ensures the society’s participation in political and social processes, and promotes transparency and accountability of government institutions. Ensuring this right often becomes one of the features that help to distinguish democratic states from non-democratic regimes (Human Rights Monitoring Institute, 2014, p. 4).

The Supreme Audit Institution carried out state audit with the aim to evaluate whether people with disabilities have opportunities to live independently, fully participate in the social life and integrate into the labour market (Supreme Audit Institution, 2020, p. 2). The main questions of audit are as follows:

- whether people with disabilities have opportunities to receive services that enable them to live independently;
- whether people with disabilities have conditions to participate in the labour market;
- whether it is ensured for people with disabilities that they have access to environment, transport and information (Supreme Audit Institution, 2020, p. 2).

The audit results show that integration of people with disabilities is not sufficiently ensured; service development is carried out without having reliable data; the needs of people with disabilities are inadequately evaluated; the labour market is not motivated to employ people with disabilities; not all public buildings and information are accessible to people with disabilities (Supreme Audit Institution, 2020, p. 3).

Therefore, people with disabilities face various problems, one of which is accessibility of information. Cultural institutions have to ensure consumption of art services and products for all social groups by ensuring accessibility of information, infrastructure, urban development, information and communication tools, personal help and equal opportunities for all.

## **2. Availability of information**

All citizens must have equal access to and access to information, and only then equal opportunities will be ensured for all: to use national and global information resources, and public authorities ensure the availability and reliability of information (Urbšaitytė et al., 2010, p. 5).

In order to increase the participation of people with disabilities in cultural activities, it is essential for cultural organizations to communicate in a targeted way with the target audiences, and it is important that the information reaches visitors and is accessible to everyone. “Accessibility of Lithuanian Art Museums” is 2017–2018. Part of the implemented study is on the accessibility of Lithuanian art museums to persons from socially excluded groups. The research report highlights the part about the availability of

information (communication) in the museum, which we can apply to all cultural organizations in general (Karpavičiūtė et al., 2019, p. 32):

1. Applies not one-way, but two-way communication between the institution and the visitor.
2. Various methods of communication are used: direct transmission of information, information through the media, electronic media, social networks, audience attraction events taking place inside and outside the museum, etc.
3. The effectiveness of communication activities is monitored.
4. Uses personalized communication strategies.
5. Communication methods reflect the concept of the organization and the publicly available position towards the audience (visitors).

Table 2. **Availability of information on websites**

The information on the website is of high quality and tailored to the needs of the users	The website provides easy-to-find information on ongoing activities, their application, availability, and more	Information about education, other cultural services	Other important information
Accurate, comprehensive, in addition to textual information, alternatives (audio, video, media, symbols, etc.); non-textual information has descriptions; audio or video recordings with subtitles are audio representations; there is a software function that converts information into another form that a person needs (information in larger font, Braille, audio, simplified language, laid out without losing the content of the information and maintaining the presentation structure). It is possible to change the display settings of the website (A, AA or AAA level accessibility standard). The website is as compatible as possible with the agents (software and hardware) used by the user, including assistive technologies. The website is available in several languages.	Address; working hours; cost of visit; contact information. Information on accessibility, information on the accessibility of the building, information on measures and solutions that increase the accessibility of art and expand the experience of art (tactile paths, audio guides, accommodation services, etc.).	There is an opportunity to participate in educational activities with a family member and friends. Various senses are used in educational activities: sight, hearing, smell, sense of taste, touch. The architecture is adapted to the different needs and possibilities of the visitors. It is possible to download an accessibility guide in various formats. Seats are reserved for wheelchair users at events.	Information on cooperation with public organizations, including organizations of people with disabilities and their representatives. Visitor feedback on the experience. Mission, vision, goals, their connection with the aspirations to increase accessibility.

Source: created by Karpavičiūtė, S., Paqvalén, R., Petkutė, I. 2019. Lietuvos meno muziejų prieinamumas. „Socialiniai meno projektai“. Vilnius, p. 33–35.

6. Employees are open to a variety of audiences and are ready to receive new visitors.
7. Museum staff providing information (e.g. those working at the box office) are ready to serve visually impaired visitors (sound amplification equipment, can speak common phrases in sign language, ready to communicate in writing, if necessary more clearly and louder) (Karpavičiūtė et al., 2019, p. 32 ). One of the ways of communication that is important in the communication process is the information provided to the visitor by cultural organizations. Often, before visiting cultural institutions, art users look for additional information. Such information is usually available on websites, so it is important that its content is properly administered and customized. The report of the study “Accessibility of Lithuanian Art Museums” presents aspects that are especially important for the accessibility of websites (Table 2, see p. 141):

### 3. Integrated marketing communication tools

When introducing art products of cultural organisations to the society, cultural employees play an important role. Cultural employees solve how and to whom the information about an art product will be introduced, that is why it becomes accessible to the general audience: public communication is the most obvious space and opportunity of social activity; therefore, the institution where the work is exhibited and individuals who visit the institution and spectate works of art are important in this process (Puodžiūnas, 2013, p. 27).

When the information transmitted by cultural institutions, time, space, environment, content, channel, receiver’s needs, engagement, message decoding and feedback are important.

Communication studies allow figuring out the features of communication, the primary and most primitive of which is the linear model of communication created in 1949 (Figure 1) by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver (Fiske, 1998, p. 21).

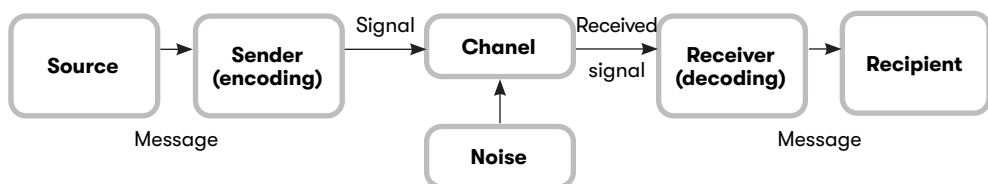


Fig. 1 The model of communication by Shannon and Weaver (1949)

Source: created by the author based on the linear model of communication by Shannon and Weaver (1949) (Fiske, 1998, p. 22).

This model presents the interaction between two subjects of the communication process, i.e., sender and receiver. There are many models that complement and detail Shannon and Weaver's scheme to explain the process of communication.

When analysing the process of communication between art products of cultural organisations and people with disabilities, the sender is the cultural organisation, and the receiver is a person interested in art: in the semiotic theory of communication, contrary to the process, the receiver plays a more important role. The perceiver (receiver) must be very active and, most importantly, be able to read and understand signs, whereas the task of the sender is to prepare an accurate message and choose suitable channels based on the target audience (Puodžiūnas, 2013, p. 16). The communication process model (Figure 2) created by Baršauskienė and Janulevičiūtė-Ivaškevičienė (2005) includes feedback that complements previous communication process models.

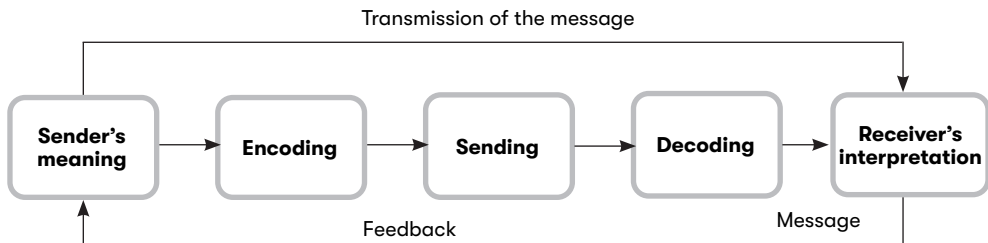


Fig. 2 **Communication process model**

Source: Baršauskienė, V., Janulevičiūtė-Ivaškevičienė, B. 2005. *Komunikacijos: teorija ir praktika*. Kaunas, p. 15.

To understand information, feedback is necessary; it shows whether the receiver has understood the information correctly. Feedback in the communication process of the art product is a complex process; however, it could include ratings, reviews on the work of art, attendance of an exhibition, participant interest, etc.

Lasswell created another popular model of communication that raises the following questions: Who? Says what? In which channel? To whom? With what effect? This model of communication emphasises the impact which conveys the visible and measured recipient's change created by recognised elements of the process (Fiske, 1998, p. 48).

This model can be adapted to communication between cultural organisations and people with disabilities. The focus is on the sender: whether his message reached the receiver, whether it was understood just like the sender had intended; however, the process of communication between the sender and the receiver may be interrupted by outside factors that prevent from receiving the message. This is called noise. Noise can be a psychological (stereotypes, partiality, assumptions), physiological (emotions, exhaustion,

hunger), physical barrier (other people's voices, ambient sounds), distortion (Lipskytė et al., 2018, p. 75). The authors point out that this concept gained a broader meaning by including any signal that was not transmitted by the source, or anything that prevents from accurate decoding of a desired signal (Fiske, 1998, p. 23).

The process of communication requires effort, engagement, interest, mental activity: in the process of information acquisition, physical acquisition channels are triggered first; however, complex mental activity soon starts too, and it is the basis of successful acquisition of information (Baršauskienė et al., 2005, p. 14).

The channel is important in the process of communication, and it is a formal tool of communication between the sender and the receiver. It is a medium used to transmit the sender's message (Robbins, 2003, p. 149).

Suitable selection of the information sending channel can help to avoid information distortion, can be widely accessible to society and ensure feedback. It is important to emphasise cultural employees' preparedness, knowledge, communication skills, finding out audience needs and accurately selected communication channels based on this as well as clear information – all this may help to avoid communication barriers. A communication barrier is any obstacle that distorts information or prevents an individual or a group from understanding each other (Baršauskienė et al., 2007).

In order to purposefully transmit the message being sent, a contemporary organisation must have marketing communication tools, i.e., it is not enough to create a service or product; it is important to communicate with existing and potential consumers, find out their needs and try to satisfy them constantly. **Marketing communication** is a process during which organisations aim at informing, persuading and directly or indirectly reminding the consumer about products, services and the organisation itself. It is a tool that allows an organisation to create relationship and a dialogue with target and potential audiences (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 476). Integrated marketing communication helps to reach the target audience by transmitting target information to it through selected communication channels when needed (Bakanauskas, 2012, p. 9). The concept of integrated marketing communication is used in order to integrate and name all the communication channels used as well as the transmitted information about the organisation, products and services. Synergy is important when integrating marketing communication into cultural organisations; synergy manifests through functioning of various marketing communication aspects in a way that provides general mutual support and enhancement (Bakanauskas, 2004, p. 13).

A cultural organisation can send the same message about products, services and the organisation using different tools or use them together for different consumers, namely, advertising, promotion of sales, personal sales, public relations.



#### **4. Integrated marketing communication elements**

Cultural education at all levels of education and opportunities to acquire cultural competencies enrich a person at all stages of his or her life. Through works of art and creative activity, a person can touch the relevant and complex experiences of society, rethink and improve them.

In order to convey the message in a targeted way, a modern organization needs marketing communication tools: just creating a service or product is not enough, it is important to communicate with existing and potential users, find out their needs and constantly strive to meet them. Marketing communications are the process by which organizations seek to inform, persuade, and directly or indirectly remind the consumer about goods and services and the organization. It is a tool that allows an organization to connect and engage in dialogue with target and potential audiences (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 476). Integrated marketing communication helps to reach the target audience by transmitting targeted information to it through the selected communication channels at the right time (Bakanauskas, 2012, p. 9). The concept of integrated marketing communication is used to integrate and name all the communication channels used and the information transmitted about the organization, goods and services. Different authors present different concepts of integrated marketing communication. Different authors point out the following five main elements of integrated marketing communication: advertising, public relations, promotion of sales, personal sales and direct marketing. Pranulis et al. (2012) distinguish five elements, Belch et al. (2011) add interactive marketing, Kotler and Keller (2014) distinguish events, experiences, interactive marketing, word of mouth marketing; Fedyeva et al. (2021) also provide more elements of integrated marketing and includes events, experiences, interactive marketing, relationships with clients and their management.

In this work, the marketing communication complex includes relations with the society, advertising, promotion of sales, personal sales, direct marketing, and interactive marketing (Belch et al., 2011) (Table 3, see p. 146).

In this case, a set of marketing communications (see Table 3) has been created, combining and harmonizing the main tools of integrated marketing communication in such a way as to achieve the synergy effect of communication: the tools, working together, complement each other and achieve a better overall result.

All elements of the complex have two main objectives:

1. To inform the intended groups of persons about the organization's proposals;
2. To encourage their use (Pranulis et al., 2012, p. 347).

Employee preparedness is also important in the process of communication, i.e., the same high service quality standards apply to all cultural organisations; these standards are also applied in hotels or restaurants. Visitors want to feel welcome and safe (Jakubavičienė, 2016, p. 208). For people with disabilities, employee readiness is also very important; thus, employees must know how to communicate, have knowledge on differ-

Table 3. **Concepts of elements of marketing communications complex**

Marketing communications complex	Concepts
<p>Public Relations are defined as a strategic communication process that helps build a mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and audiences (The Public Relations Society of America, 2012).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentation and information tools (articles, interviews, communication on social networks, posters and announcements about events, activities). Communication on social networks, communication with communities and representatives of people with disabilities;</li> <li>2. Tools for inclusion (videos, posters, presentations, including social networks);</li> <li>3. Motivational measures (gifts, certificates of participation in seminars).</li> </ol>
<p>Advertising is understood as a means of indirect (mass) communication that reaches a large audience. The four main goals of advertising are to: 1) inform; 2) promote; 3) remind; 4) position (Bakanauskas, 2012, p. 66).</p>	<p>The following types of advertising media are distinguished:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Printed advertising means periodicals (magazines, newspapers, catalogues, etc.) and non-periodicals (flyers, leaflets, posters, posters, catalogues, etc.);</li> <li>2. Broadcast advertising (television, radio);</li> <li>3. Electronic interactive advertising (on websites, e-mail, search sites, billboards);</li> <li>4. Public advertising media is outdoor advertising (billboards, signs, video screens, etc.) and product placement (in cinemas, films, etc.);</li> <li>5. Advertising at the point of sale (advertising on the premises or in the territory);</li> <li>6. Special advertising means (souvenirs, calendars, cups, notebooks, etc.) (Bakanauskas, 2012, p. 97).</li> </ol>
<p>Personal sales are direct personal communication with current and potential consumers when presenting a product of a cultural organization (Urbanskienė, 2009, p. 275).</p>	<p>Communication can take place “face to face”; telephone; online (on social media).</p>
<p>Direct marketing, according to V. Pranulis, is a direct impersonal interactive effect on a potential consumer when trying to persuade to buy a product or use a service (Pranulis, 2012, p. 472).</p>	<p>This is very similar to personal selling, but the main difference in direct marketing is the lack of personal contact: it is replaced by technical means.</p>
<p>Sales promotion is part of marketing communications. It is an activity and/or measure that acts as a direct incentive to sellers or end users, offering added value to the product and an incentive to buy it. Most sales promotion measures are short-term, as opposed to advertising or public relations (Bakanauskas, 2012, p. 166).</p>	<p>Various short-term incentives to try or purchase a product or service, including consumer advertising (e.g., coupons and bonuses), sales promotions (e.g., advertising and demonstration grants), promotions (sales agent contests) (Kotler et al., 2012, p. 478).</p>

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Marketing communications complex	Concepts
<p>Interactive marketing is an essential and widespread communication between organizations, communities, and individuals (Kietzmann et al., 2011, pp. 241-251). Interactive marketing is an online activity and program designed to attract customers or prospects and directly or indirectly increase awareness, improve image, or promote the sale of products and services (Kotler et al., 2016, p. 478).</p>	<p>Social media uses mobile and web technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities can share, exchange, participate and engage. There are seven functions of social media: identity, conversation, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. In this way, organizations can understand how social media works and what functions they perform (Kietzmann et al., 2011, pp. 241-251). Social media is more effective than traditional (TV, radio, magazines, etc.) because communication takes place in real time, is accessible to anyone (usually for free), reaches a mass audience, allows users to actively participate and share information, and build communicative communities (Grigas et al., 2016, pp. 114-115).</p>

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ent forms of disability, be able to communicate in various ways, help the visitor. Fig. 3 (see p. 148) below presents a process of communication between a cultural organisation and people with disabilities.

During the sending stage in the process of communication between a cultural organisation and people with disabilities, there is a mediator (a person who transmits information to people with disabilities). Regarding different disabilities, information is transmitted in different ways, i.e., indirectly to the mediator or directly to the receiver. When the mediator (sign language interpreter, social worker, accompanying person, other person) receives the information, s/he then transmits it to the receiver; thus, the experience field of the mediator and the receiver is important. Receivers of information are consumers who have hearing, mental, physical or visual impairment. Message encoding, interpretation, trust, interest, engagement, participation, understanding, information accessibility, environment, time, emotional state, use of technologies, information literacy are important in the process of communication. In the model, feedback can be direct if during the process of communication people with disabilities do not need a mediator, and indirect, i.e., with the help of a mediator. Noise can appear at any stage of the process of communication; noise can be decreased in order to achieve two-directional communication between a cultural organisation and target audiences that have special needs by turning to experts, cooperating with communities, finding out the experience field of the cultural organisation and the experience field of the mediator and the receiver, and purposefully selecting integrated marketing communication tools and channels based on different needs of the people with disabilities.

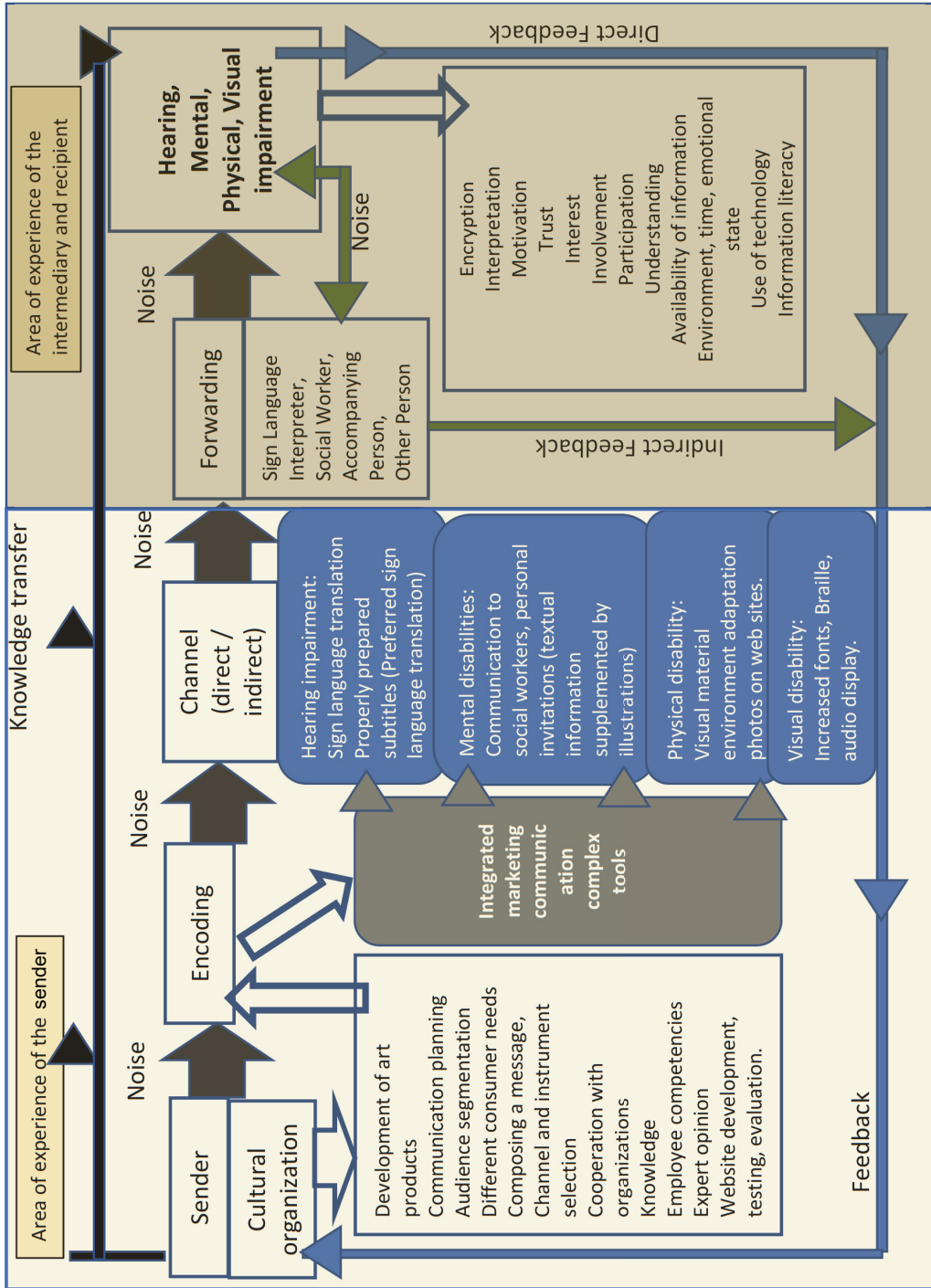


Fig. 3 Enhancing informational accessibility of art using integrated marketing communication tools for people with hearing, mental, physical and visual disabilities in the region theoretical model

Thus, a contemporary cultural organisation is inseparable from management, i.e., it is important that its activities include integrated marketing communication tools, coordinate them and prepare a purposeful message having found out different audience needs using them to select suitable tools and channels.

### **Conclusions**

1. Consumers, their needs, engagement and interest are important in the process of consuming an art product. People with disabilities are equal citizens of the society, and their possibilities decrease due to inadaptability, inaccessibility, and misunderstanding of their needs. The right to information is one of the constituents of a democratic country and must be ensured for each and every citizen.

2. When introducing art products of cultural institutions for the society, cultural employees play an important role, i.e., they solve how and who will receive the information about an art product, and this makes it accessible to the general audience. Cultural organisations have to purposefully plan and implement the process of communication and each of its stages, namely, preparation of the message, encoding, channel selection, and transmission to the receiver. When cultural organisations implement the process of communication with consumers of art, it is important to emphasize employee preparedness, skills, finding out audience needs, and use this to select communication channels and tools; however, the following factors are important as well: consumer's emotional state, interest, engagement, participation, environment, time, space, content, channel, decoding of the message, i.e., all of this can have impact on feedback, and feedback is important for an effective process of communication.

3. The following integrated marketing communication tools are distinguished: relations with the society, advertising, and promotion of sales, personal sales, direct marketing, and interactive marketing. Integrated marketing communication is used to integrate and name all used channels of communication and the information about an organisation being transmitted as well as products and services; it is a consistent process that has impact on target audiences. The integrated marketing complex encompasses and coordinates integrated marketing communication tools in a way that helps to achieve the communication synergy effect when tools interact, complement each other and achieve an improved general result.

4. The created theoretical model of integrated marketing communication tools that increase information accessibility of art for people with disabilities in regions focuses on communication messages of cultural organisations about art products and services for preparation, as well as tools for channel selection based on different audience needs. The integrated marketing communication complex encompasses and coordinates communication tools that, when used together, help an organisation to achieve a better result. Communication noise can interrupt the spectator in the process of decoding and interpreting the message, spectating, interpreting and decoding the meaning of the work of

art, and this may have impact on consumer engagement and feedback. Feedback can be direct and indirect; however, the receiver's engagement is important as well because it can have impact on feedback, and feedback is especially important for an effective process of communication.

5. In the process of communication, tools and channels are selected based on different needs that people with disabilities have. People with hearing impairment need translations to sign language and suitable subtitles. The most suitable tools are personal sales and interactive marketing. People who have mental disorders need the information to be transmitted to social workers; also, personal invitations, textual information complemented with illustrations are suitable. For people with physical disabilities, all integrated communication tools and channels are suitable; however, visual online material on the adaptation of the environment is important. For people with visual impairment, it is important to receive direct communication, personal sales, advertising and its adaptation using suitable font for leaflets and posters when applying integrated marketing communication tools. Visual material must be presented with audio. Braille format is used in single cases.

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