
Directorate General of Sea Transportation's Communication Strategy: Building a Maritime Safety Culture

Riyan Darmawan¹, Arika Palapa², Winarno³, Yoga Adiyasa⁴

^{1,4}Biro Layanan Pengadaan dan Pengelolaan BMN Kemenhub, Jakarta, Indonesia

^{2,3}Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: ¹riyandarma1995@gmail.com

Abstract

This study critically investigates the digital communication strategy of Indonesia's Directorate General of Sea Transportation for maritime safety socialization. Employing a multi-method approach involving thematic content analysis of Instagram posts and press releases, in-depth interviews with communication officers, and document analysis of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the research assesses the efficacy of current practices. The findings reveal a system that is highly efficient in procedural, one-way information dissemination, ensuring regulatory accuracy and consistent messaging. However, the study identifies a critical gap between this operational efficiency and the potential for fostering an engaged maritime safety culture. The communication strategy is significantly constrained by rigid SOPs and a risk-averse institutional culture, which prioritizes formal broadcasting over public dialogue and empathetic engagement. Consequently, while functionally robust, the current approach limits opportunities for building the trust and participatory interaction essential for profound behavioral change. The study concludes that transforming Directorate General of Sea Transportation's digital presence from a formal bulletin board into a dynamic community hub requires modernizing communication frameworks with agile protocols and engagement-centric metrics, which is paramount for enhancing maritime safety outcomes in the digital age.

Keywords: Maritime Safety Communication, Public Sector Social Media, Digital Government, Strategic Communication, Sea Transportation, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian archipelago, a sprawling nexus of sea lanes and maritime activity, stands at a critical juncture in the 21st century. As the global maritime industry undergoes a profound transformation driven by the imperatives of decarbonization, digitalization, and enhanced safety protocols, the nation's ability to secure its waters, protect its people, and harness its blue economy potential hinges not only on technological and regulatory advancements but also on the efficacy of its public communication. In an era where information travels at the speed of light, the traditional, top-down models of disseminating safety regulations are increasingly obsolete. The digital public sphere, particularly social media, has emerged as the new bridge between the state and its citizens, a dynamic and unforgiving environment where trust is built and eroded in an instant. This research posits that for Indonesia to truly become a "global maritime fulcrum," the Directorate General of Sea Transportation Ministry of Transportation must not only

govern the physical waves but also master the digital ones. This study, therefore, embarks on a critical qualitative inquiry to investigate the strategic communication practices of Directorate General of Sea Transportation on social media, asking a fundamental question: In the relentless churn of the digital age, how can a state institution effectively translate complex maritime safety protocols into a compelling, trusted, and culturally resonant narrative that saves lives and fosters a robust maritime safety culture?

The backdrop against which this question is posed is one of both immense opportunity and daunting challenge. The maritime sector is the lifeblood of the global economy, and Indonesia, with its strategic location and vast coastline, is central to its flow. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has set ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, pushing the industry towards alternative fuels and green shipping technologies (IMO, 2018). Concurrently, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is introducing artificial intelligence, big data, and automation into navigation and port operations, heralding an era of "smart shipping" (Paridaens & Notteboom, 2021). These developments, while promising efficiency and sustainability, introduce new layers of risk and complexity that must be communicated to a diverse audience, from international shipowners to local fishermen. The COVID-19 pandemic brutally exposed the fragility of global supply chains and the critical role of seafarers, whose mental and physical wellbeing is now recognized as inextricably linked to operational safety (Budd et al., 2020). Within this complex web, communication is no longer a peripheral administrative function but a core operational competency. As Caldeirinha et al. (2024) suggest, the performance and sustainability of maritime services are determined by a complex interplay of factors, where effective stakeholder engagement is paramount. This engagement requires a shift from information transmission to relationship management, a principle central to effective risk communication (Lundgren & McMakin, 2018).

However, digital communication in the maritime sector presents distinct challenges compared to general public administration. Unlike typical e-government services that focus on administrative efficiency—such as license renewals or tax filings—maritime communication operates within a "high-reliability" context where information failure can lead to catastrophic loss of life and environmental damage. The maritime audience is uniquely fragmented, ranging from international shipowners governed by UNCLOS to traditional fishermen in remote archipelagic areas with limited connectivity. This necessitates a communication strategy that is not merely informational but deeply persuasive and culturally adaptive.

Recent empirical evidence from diverse national contexts reinforces that building trust in digital government is contingent upon specific communicative conditions. In China, Yuan et al. (2023) demonstrated that government social media is not merely a broadcasting tool but a critical platform where citizen participation is driven by information quality. This finding is echoed in Indonesia, where Noviani and Hasnawati (2025) identified that alongside information quality, reachability and active engagement are paramount for fostering public trust in the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs. Furthermore, broader cross-country studies led by Castro and Lopes (2023) in Portugal highlight that e-government reachability is globally essential for controlling corruption and ensuring transparency. Similarly, within the international discourse on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), El Massah and Mohieldin (2020) emphasize that digital transformation must be localized to be effective. These comparative insights suggest that the Directorate General of Sea Transportation must satisfy these universal conditions—adapted to the Indonesian maritime context—to successfully foster a safety culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research identifies a critical lacuna: the lack of a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of how Indonesia's primary maritime authority navigates the digital communication landscape to fulfil its safety mandate. Maritime safety generally refers to two categories of incidents: personal injuries due to work accidents on board (or ship accidents), and ship accidents (i.e. fire/explosion, grounding, severe weather damage, capsizing, collision, contact damage, leakage, breakdown of machinery, environmental damage/pollution, stability failure (without capsizing), missing/disappeared vessel and “other accident”) (Nævestad, (2017). Existing literature on maritime development has extensively covered technical, economic, and policy dimensions, from port efficiency (Caldas et al., 2024) and green port policies (Zhou et al., 2024) to the impacts of climate change on fisheries (Wilson et al., 2020). Yet, the crucial dimension of strategic public communication remains a largely uncharted territory in academic research. While studies like those of Kim, Choi, and Kim (2021) on port resilience touch upon the need for information management, they seldom delve into the proactive, narrative-building role of social media in shaping public perception and behaviour. This gap is particularly acute in the Indonesian context, where the nation's unique archipelagic character creates unparalleled communication challenges. The mandate of Directorate General of Sea Transportation extends from overseeing international container shipping in the Strait of Malacca to ensuring the safety of traditional passenger ferries connecting remote islands. A one-size-fits-all communication strategy is destined to fail. The problem is further compounded by the inherent nature of public bureaucracies, which are often characterized by hierarchical decision-making and rigid Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that can stifle the agility and authenticity required for effective social media engagement (Mergel, 2013). Such bureaucratic rigidities directly conflict with the principles of dialogic communication, which are essential for building organizational-public relationships (Kent & Taylor, 2002).

The central problem this research addresses is the disconnect between the potential of digital platforms as tools for building a pervasive maritime safety culture and the actual communication strategies employed by Directorate General of Sea Transportation. This leads to the following pivotal research questions:

1. what are the prevailing qualitative themes, strategic intents, and operational challenges that define the social media communication of maritime safety by Directorate General of Sea Transportation on its official Instagram account, @djplkemenhub151?
2. how do the institution's internal frameworks, specifically its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for media and public relations, shape and constrain the creation and dissemination of safety content and crisis communication?
3. how can the insights gleaned from this analysis be synthesized to develop a more impactful, evidence-based communication model that bridges the gap between regulatory formalities and public engagement?

The specific objectives flowing from these questions are to critically analyse the content and narrative framing of safety posts and incident reports; to explore through in-depth interviews the perceptions and experiences of the communication officers responsible for executing this digital strategy; and to evaluate the enabling and constraining effects of the existing SOPs on strategic communication agility. Despite the variety of labels used, the primary purpose of leveraging social media tools/technologies in the public sector is to make the governments more transparent, open, accessible, and collaborative. Social media is and expected to play a critical role in public sector governance in the future (Khan, 2015).

To critically analyze the tension between bureaucratic rigidity and digital engagement, this study employs two theoretical lenses: Dialogic Communication Theory and the Government 2.0 framework. Kent and Taylor (1998, 2002) proposed Dialogic Communication Theory, which argues that effective public relations requires more than the dissemination of information; it necessitates a dialogic loop where organizations actively negotiate relationships with their public. Key principles include the usefulness of information, conservation of visitors, and crucially, the generation of return visits through interactive engagement. In the context of maritime safety, a dialogic approach implies that safety culture is not imposed from above but co-constructed through continuous feedback between the regulator and the maritime community. Complementing this is the new framework proposed by Mergel (2013). Mergel distinguishes between the old way—characterized by the push-strategy of broadcasting static information—and the new one which leverages social media for collaboration, transparency, and networked interaction.

The rationale for this investigation is profoundly rooted in both practical necessity and theoretical significance. From a socio-economic perspective, maritime safety is not merely a regulatory box to be ticked; it is the foundation upon which sustainable maritime development is built. Every maritime accident has devastating human costs, environmental consequences, and economic repercussions, disrupting trade, damaging tourism, and undermining investor confidence. Effective communication is a powerful, yet underutilized, non-structural risk mitigation tool. It can educate the public on safety procedures, swiftly disseminate critical information during crises, and humanize the institution, thereby fostering a relationship of trust that encourages compliance and cooperative behaviour (Coombs, 2007). This research is motivated by the urgent need to empower Directorate General of Sea Transportation with the empirical evidence required to refine its digital outreach, making it not just a broadcaster of rules, but a curator of a shared safety culture. This is especially crucial as Indonesia contends with the dual challenge of implementing complex international conventions like STCW and MARPOL while addressing domestic issues like overloading on ferries and inadequate safety standards on traditional vessels.

METHOD

This study adopted a convergent mixed-methods design, where qualitative data forms the core of the analysis, supported by complementary quantitative descriptive data to provide a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. The research population was strategically defined as the ecosystem of actors and artifacts responsible for Directorate General of Sea Transportation's public communication. The sample was purposively selected for depth and relevance. This included key personnel from the division of public relations and general affairs, whose insights were crucial for understanding the strategic rationale behind the communication outputs. Furthermore, the sample encompassed all textual artifacts produced during the study period: a complete set of 325 Instagram posts from the @djplkemenhub151 account (January-October 2025) and all official Press Release (January-May 2025). The quantitative data on content volume and categorization, as detailed in Table 1, was sourced directly from the division of public relations and general affairs in November 2025, providing a definitive factual baseline for the qualitative investigation. The primary research instrument remained the researcher utilizing a semi-structured interview protocol to explore themes of strategy and challenges. Supporting instruments were expanded to include both a codebook for qualitative thematic analysis and a data extraction sheet for quantifying content types allowing for the descriptive statistics presented later.

The collection of data followed a critically sequenced triangulation process. It began with the collection and quantitative categorization of the digital artifacts to establish the empirical landscape of 'what' and 'how much' was communicated. This was followed by a qualitative content analysis of the same artifacts to understand the 'how' and 'why' behind the messaging, focusing on framing and tone. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted with the knowledge of the quantitative findings, allowing for more probing questions about the strategic choices revealed by the data. The data analysis was therefore twofold. First, a quantitative descriptive analysis was conducted to categorize and count the content, providing the objective context for the study as shown in Table 1. Second, the core Thematic Analysis proceeded on the qualitative content codes, identifying patterns related to bureaucratic agility and strategic intent. The final Narrative Synthesis then wove together the quantitative trends (e.g., the low percentage of safety content) with the qualitative themes (e.g., risk-averse culture) to develop a cohesive and critically nuanced explanation of Directorate General of Sea Transportation's digital communication strategy.

In essence, the quantitative data serves to contextualize, ground, and strengthen the qualitative findings, providing concrete evidence of the communication patterns that the interviews and thematic analysis then help to explain. To ensure methodological rigor and analytical depth, the qualitative content analysis was facilitated using NVivo 12 Plus software. The analysis employed a systematic deductive coding scheme to categorize the 325 Instagram posts into distinct typologies based on the Directorate's strategic safety domains. As detailed in the findings, the coding structure (Level 1 Nodes) focused on the explicit subject matter of the visual and textual content, which was classified into four primary categories:

1. Safety Socialization and Facilities: This code captured posts dedicated to educating the public on safety equipment (e.g., life jackets, fire extinguishers) and introducing navigation facilities (e.g., VTS, SROP).
2. Strategic Campaigns and Diplomacy: This category encompassed posts highlighting official safety campaigns, leadership visits to ports, and high-level diplomatic meetings (e.g., with the IMO) aimed at securing budget or policy support for safety programs.
3. Crisis and Accident Reporting: A specific code was applied to content related to real-time maritime incidents (e.g., the KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya or KM Barcelona incidents) to analyze the institution's reactive communication posture.
4. Ceremonial and Institutional Messaging: This code identified posts that used commemorative events (e.g., Independence Day) as a vehicle to convey general messages about the importance of maritime safety.

This structured coding approach allowed for the precise quantification of content distribution, providing the empirical baseline to evaluate the Directorate's communication priorities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study employed a multi-method qualitative approach to assess the strategic communication of maritime safety by the Directorate General of Sea Transportation. The analysis, triangulating data from document analysis, qualitative content analysis, and in-depth interviews, reveals a communication apparatus that is structurally robust and procedurally efficient, yet facing significant challenges in transitioning from a one-way informational model to a dynamic, engagement-oriented public dialogue. The overall effectiveness is "very good" when measured against internal benchmarks of consistency

and regulatory compliance, but this score belies a more complex reality when viewed through the lens of modern public sector communication theory.

The first research objective was to critically analyse the content and narrative framing of safety posts and incident reports. The qualitative content analysis of Instagram posts (@djplkemenhub151) and Press Release revealed a highly structured and consistent output, which can be categorized and scored based on key communication indicators.



Table 1. Quantitative Analysis of Instagram and Press Release Content (Jan - Oct 2025)

Content Category	Sub-Category	Quantity	Percentage of Content's Amount (%)
Total Instagram Content		325	100%
(X1) Maritime Safety Content	Total	44	13.5%
	Socialization of Sea Transport Safety Equipment and Facilities	16	4.9%
	Safety Campaigns/Official Visits	14	4.3%
	Diplomacy & High Level Meeting regarding Budget Support for Safety Programs	9	2.8%
	Ceremonial Statements on Safety Importance	5	1.5%
(X2) Maritime Accident	Total	5	1.5%
	<i>KMP Tunu Pratama Jaya</i> Incident	2	-
	<i>KM Barcelona</i> Incident	2	-
	Fishing Vessel Sinking in Bulukumba	1	-
(X3) Press Releases on Maritime Safety	Total (Jan-May 2025)	2	-
	"Kemenhub Tekankan Pentingnya Keselamatan Pelayaran" (Press Release No. 319/SP/XII/BKIP/2024)	1	-
	"Wujudkan Transportasi Laut Aman dan Berkelanjutan, Kemenhub Gelar Kampanye Keselamatan" (Press Release No. HMS. 031/IV/DJPL-2025)	1	-

The table above provides a quantitative breakdown of the content published by Directorate General of Sea Transportation, offering a concrete basis for the qualitative analysis of strategic focus and priorities. This quantitative data was obtained directly from the Division of Public Relations and General Affairs, Secretariat of the Directorate General of Sea Transportation, Ministry of Transportation, in November 2025.

Table 2. Instagram Snapshot Sample

No.	Content Category	Post's Snapshot and Caption (sample)	Publication Date
1	Socialization of Sea Transport Safety Equipment and Facilities	 <p>Kawan Laut, Many Ships Crossing the Sea During the Eid Homecoming Period!</p> <p>Directorate Generale of Sea Transportation ensures safe voyages with various navigation facilities. VTS and SROP provide navigation and weather information, while the Navigation State Ships monitor shipping routes. The reliability of SBNP continues to improve, and all data is integrated into the MCC for safety monitoring. With these preparations, sea travel during the homecoming period is safer and more comfortable!</p>	March 25, 2025
2	Safety Campaigns/Official Visits	 <p>Kampanye Keselamatan Pelayaran di Banjarmasin, Menteri Perhubungan Dudy Purwagandhi menyampaikan sejumlah upaya yang terus dilakukan Kemenhub untuk meningkatkan keselamatan pelayaran.</p> <p>Diantaranya, Kemenhub terus memperkuat regulasi, infrastruktur, serta memperkenalkan inovasi teknologi. Salah satu terobosan yang dilakukan adalah transformasi dokumen hukum kapal dari Pas Kecil berbentuk kertas menjadi E-Pas Kecil digital.</p> <p>Kemenhub mendorong edukasi dan sertifikasi nelayan mengenai alat keselamatan wajib di kapal, agar mereka terlindungi sekaligus dapat terhubung dengan otoritas bila terjadi keadaan darurat.</p>	Sep 26, 2025

3	Diplomacy & High Level Meeting regarding Budget Support for Safety Programs	 <p>Menteri Perhubungan Dudy Purwagandhi menerima kunjungan kehormatan Sekjen International Maritime Organization (IMO) Arsenio Dominguez di Jakarta. Dalam pertemuan ini, Menhub tegaskan komitmen untuk terus memperkuat kolaborasi dengan International Maritime Organization (IMO) guna mendorong ketahanan sektor maritim, keselamatan pelayaran, serta pelayaran yang keberlanjutan.</p> <p>Selain itu, Menhub juga menyampaikan dukungan untuk mendorong kesetaraan gender di sektor maritim, peningkatan kompetensi pelaut, serta pertukaran pengetahuan antar negara anggota IMO. Hal ini pun sejalan dengan visi pembangunan nasional Presiden Prabowo dalam memperkuat ketahanan maritim sebagai prioritas bangsa.</p> <p>Dalam kunjungannya, Sekjen IMO juga turut melihat Pusat Informasi Transportasi di Kantor Kementerian Perhubungan.</p>	May 27, 2025
4	Ceremonial Statements on Safety Importance	 <p>Dirgahayu Indonesia ke-80! ID Merdeka!</p> <p>Direktorat Jenderal Perhubungan Laut mengucapkan Selamat Hari Ulang Tahun Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia. Dengan semangat kemerdekaan, kami terus berkontribusi dalam meningkatkan keselamatan dan efisiensi transportasi laut untuk Indonesia Maju.</p> <p>Mari kita rayakan kemerdekaan dengan semangat membangun bangsa!</p> <p>Bersatu Berdaulat Rakyat Sejahtera Indonesia Maju</p>	Aug 17, 2025

The data reveals a clear quantitative picture of Directorate General of Sea Transportation's communication output. Out of 325 total Instagram posts, only 44 (13.5%) were directly dedicated to maritime safety. The focus of this safety content is primarily split between the introduction of safety equipment and facilities (16 posts) and safety socialization activities (14 posts), suggesting a strategy that emphasizes both the tools for safety and the institutional efforts to promote it.

Critically, content related to actual accidents is minimal, comprising only 5 posts (1.5%), which aligns with the qualitative finding of a cautious, reactive approach to crisis communication. The limited number of official press releases further underscores that formal, high-level communication on safety is a relatively infrequent event.

Table 3. Content Analysis of Instagram Posts and Press Release

Indicator	Analysis	Scoring (1-5, 5=Excellent)
Regulatory Consistency & Accuracy	Content demonstrates impeccable alignment with formal regulations (SOLAS, STCW, MARPOL). Messages are precise, legally vetted, and avoid ambiguity.	5
Informational Clarity	The factual presentation of safety procedures or incident details is clear and structured. Posts answer the "what" and "when" effectively.	4
Visual Professionalism	Use of official branding, infographics, and standardized templates is consistent, projecting an image of institutional authority and reliability.	5
Proactive vs. Reactive Framing	Safety content is predominantly proactive, listing rules and procedures. Incident content is almost exclusively reactive and formal, focused on stating facts rather than fostering learning.	3
Call to Action & Engagement	A significant weakness. Posts rarely encourage user interaction (e.g., questions, shares, opinions). The dominant CTA is implicit: "comply and be informed."	2
Tone & Relatability	The tone is uniformly formal and bureaucratic. While ensuring authority, it creates a psychological distance from the audience, limiting emotional connection and relatability.	2
Cross-Platform Message Alignment	High consistency between the core message in Press Release and corresponding social media posts, ensuring a unified official voice.	5

The second objective sought to explore the perceptions and experiences of the communication officers. However, a central tension emerged between their strategic aspirations and the operational constraints they navigate.

Table 4. Analysis of Standard Operating Procedures Influence as Moderating Variable

SOP Function	Analysis	Impact on Effectiveness
Quality Control & Approval Chain	Establishes a clear, multi-step hierarchy for content approval, involving section heads and the legal unit.	Positive: Ensures message accuracy and institutional alignment. Negative: Creates significant delays, killing the "news value" and agility required for social media.

SOP Function	Analysis	Impact on Effectiveness
Branding and Messaging Consistency	Mandates the use of official logos, typefaces, and a formal tone in all communications.	Positive: Projects a professional, unified institutional identity. Negative: Suppresses creativity and the informal, relatable tone that drives social media engagement.
Crisis Communication Protocol	Provides a framework for drafting Press Release in response to incidents, emphasizing factuality and non-liability.	Positive: Prevents the release of unverified information. Negative: Fosters a defensive, "just-the-facts" posture that misses the opportunity to show empathy and leadership.

In synthesis, the "very good" efficiency score is rooted in the system's mastery of one-way, broadcast-mode communication. The institution excels at producing accurate, consistent, and professionally branded content that faithfully transmits regulatory information. However, this very strength is the source of its primary weakness: an inability to foster the two-way dialogue and relational trust that defines effective modern public communication (Mergel, 2013). The results paint a picture of an organization that is an excellent government bulletin board but has not yet evolved into a digital public square for maritime safety.

Discussion

This discussion interprets the findings to answer the core research questions, analyze their significance, and situate them within the broader context of public sector communication and maritime studies.

Connecting Findings to Research Questions

The first research question inquired into the prevailing themes and strategic intents of Directorate General of Sea Transportation's social media communication. The findings clearly demonstrate that the strategy is fundamentally informational and compliance-oriented. The high scores in Regulatory Consistency and Informational Clarity (Table 3) directly support this, showing a primary focus on transmitting rules and facts. This partially answers the question but also reveals a strategic gap: the intent is not to "engage" or "build community" but to "inform and instruct." This aligns with traditional, hierarchical models of government communication but contrasts sharply with the two-way symmetrical models advocated in modern public relations theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), which emphasize listening and dialogue. The second question explored how internal SOPs shape these communications. The results provide a unequivocal answer: the SOPs are the dominant force, acting as a powerful enforcer of consistency and a significant barrier to agility and engagement. The procedures, designed for a pre-digital era of press releases and official statements, create a structural inertia that prevents the team from operating with the speed and flexibility the social media environment demands. This finding is consistent with literature on government social media adoption, which highlights the tension between bureaucratic norms of control and the networked norms of interaction (Mergel, 2013).

The third question sought a synthesis for a more impactful communication model. The findings suggest that the path forward is not to discard the SOPs, but to evolve them. The current model is strong on control but weak on connection. The use of social media for day-to-day governance activities beyond the goal to elect an individual person is less

prolific and is replicating the standard press-release information paradigm in the public sector. Most social media online interactions are highly controlled, top-down shared, and mainly recycling already-existing content from an agency's website. Rarely do government organizations engage in bidirectional interactions with individual citizens by responding to their questions or actively seeking input from the public (Mergel, 2016). A future model would need to incorporate "agility clauses" for time-sensitive posts, guidelines for empathetic crisis communication, and metrics that value engagement and sentiment alongside reach and impressions.

Analysis of Meaning, Importance, and Gap Filling

The primary importance of these findings lies in their identification of a digital culture gap within a critical national institution. The research demonstrates that technical efficiency in message delivery does not equate to communicative effectiveness in behavior change. While previous maritime studies have focused on the economic and technical determinants of port efficiency (Caldas, Pedro, & Marques, 2024) or the evaluation of green policies (Zhou et al., 2024), this study fills a critical void by interrogating the *human and communicative dimension* of maritime safety. It shows that even with the best regulations, their effectiveness is mediated by the quality of their communication to the end-user. Effective risk communication, which integrates empathy and acknowledges audience concerns, is crucial for translating technical safety data into public understanding and action (Lundgren & McMakin, 2018).

The strength of this research is its methodological triangulation. By analyzing the *prescribed* (SOPs), *practiced* (content), and *perceived* (interviews) strategies simultaneously, it moves beyond a superficial content audit to diagnose the underlying institutional culture. This approach reveals the poignant disconnect between the team's aspirational desires for more engaging content and the structural realities that inhibit them, a nuance that would be lost in a purely quantitative or single-method study.

Practical Implications and Future Research

The practical implications of this study are direct and actionable for Directorate General of Sea Transportation:

1. **SOP Modernization:** Revise the SOPs to include a "tiered response" system, allowing for faster, pre-authorized templates for crisis communication and empowering the team with clearer guidelines for interactive content.
2. **Competency Development:** Invest in training for the team not just on maritime regulations, but on digital storytelling, social media engagement strategies, and the principles of risk and crisis communication (Coombs, 2007).
3. **Shift Performance Metrics:** Complement quantitative metrics (number of posts) with qualitative ones (engagement rate, sentiment analysis, audience growth) to incentivize a shift towards relationship-building.

For the broader field, this study implies that the "social" in "social media" remains largely untapped by many public sector entities in highly technical domains. The focus remains on transmission rather than transaction.

Future research should build upon these findings. A valuable next step would be a reception study, analyzing the audience's perception and interpretation of Directorate General of Sea Transportation's content to understand its true impact on safety awareness and trust. Furthermore, a comparative study with the social media strategies of other national maritime authorities (e.g., the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in the UK or the Australian Maritime Safety Authority) could yield valuable best practices for adapting to the digital age while maintaining regulatory authority.

Limitations

This study is limited by its focus on a single institution, which, while providing depth, limits the generalizability of its findings. Furthermore, the perspective is solely from the message producer (Directorate General of Sea Transportation). Incorporating the audience's voice, as suggested above, would provide a more complete picture of the communication circuit.

In conclusion, this research has demonstrated that Directorate General of Sea Transportation operates a highly efficient digital communication machine for the dissemination of maritime safety information. However, to truly build a resilient maritime safety culture, it must now undertake the more challenging task of rewiring this machine for connection, dialogue, and trust, transforming its digital presence from a bulletin board into a beacon of engaged leadership.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the Directorate General of Sea Transportation has established a highly efficient and procedurally robust system for the digital dissemination of maritime safety information. The institution excels in ensuring regulatory accuracy, message consistency, and professional branding across its social media and official channels, forming a solid foundation for one-way communication. However, the study critically identifies a significant gap between this operational efficiency and the potential for building a participatory maritime safety culture. The prevailing strategy, heavily shaped by rigid Standard Operating Procedures and a risk-averse institutional culture, prioritizes information broadcasting over public engagement, thereby limiting its effectiveness in fostering the dialogue and trust necessary for profound behavioral change. To truly empower its digital presence, Directorate General of Sea Transportation is urged to modernize its communication framework by integrating agile protocols, empathetic crisis messaging, and metrics that value audience interaction. This evolution from a formal bulletin board to a dynamic community hub is paramount for navigating the complex human dimensions of maritime safety in the digital age.

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