

## The digital age and the evolution of brand image: a case study from the Directorate General of Customs

### L'ère numérique et l'évolution de l'image de marque : une étude de cas de la Direction générale des douanes

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#### **Abstract:**

This article aims to analyze the impact of the digital communication implemented by the General Directorate of Customs on the image perceived by its users. By adopting a mixed approach, through a questionnaire survey complemented with interviews, we found that the digital communication tools used provide real added value and support the General Directorate of Customs. This is reflected in the modernization of public relations management and the implementation of a digital communication strategy that conveys messages, values, or results regarding the improvement of service quality provided to citizens, thus enhancing the brand image. This approach informs the public about the effectiveness of actions taken and contributes to improving the image of customs.

**Keywords:** digital communication, brand image, custom users.

**JEL Classification:** D21, M30.

#### **Résumé :**

Cet article vise à analyser l'impact de la communication numérique mise en place par la direction générale des douanes sur l'image perçue par ses usagers. En adoptant une approche mixte, à travers une enquête par questionnaire et renforcée via des entretiens, nous avons constaté que les outils de communication numérique utilisés apportent une réelle valeur ajoutée et soutiennent la direction générale des douanes. Cela se traduit par la modernisation de la gestion des relations publiques et la mise en œuvre d'une stratégie de communication numérique permettant de transmettre des messages, des valeurs ou des résultats quant à l'amélioration de la qualité de service fournie au citoyen et améliorer par conséquent l'image de marque. Cette démarche informe le public sur l'efficacité des actions menées et contribue à l'amélioration de l'image des douanes.

**Mots clés :** Communication numérique, image de marque, usagers des douanes.

**JEL:** D21, M30.

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## 1. Introduction:

The 21st century has significantly impacted the world in general, and businesses in particular, through the numerous transformations and contributions that have revolutionized various practices. One of the key strategic drivers in this regard is undoubtedly the advent of the Internet, which has profoundly changed work and different associated fields, including communication. This transformation has also extended to public administration, which too has been affected, by several changes. Many government agencies around the world have launched online websites and public portals. In some countries, it is now possible to pay taxes, vote online, or obtain information and forms without having to go outside.

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in public administration, known as e-government, is essential for state reform. E-government operates in a context influenced by politics, administration, and governance, thereby affecting traditional administrative and representative processes while contributing to ongoing transformations.

The General Directorate of Customs uses tools to preserve and enhance its brand image, an aspect that has become essential in the modernization of the sector. This study aims to show how digital communication contributes to this improvement. We will attempt to answer our research question, which we have formulated as follows:

### **What is the impact of digital communication on the brand image of the General Directorate of Customs?**

From this central question, arise the following sub-questions:

1. How important is digital communication to the Directorate?
2. What tools does it use?
3. How can digital communication promote the brand image of Customs?

To provide preliminary answers, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H1** : Digital communication plays a crucial role in the digital strategy of the General Directorate of Customs.

**H2** : The Directorate of Information and Communication of Customs uses various digital channels to promote and strengthen its brand image among users.

**H3** : Digital communication has a positive impact on users' perception of the Customs' brand image.

## 2. Literature Review

Our research aims to shed light on the use of e-government at the General Directorate of Customs. We will begin by examining the literature on digital communication and the role of information in user satisfaction. Next, we will focus on the various digital tools used within institutions and their impact on institutional image. To conclude, we will highlight current digital communication techniques, their components, and the effect of their integration on the modernization of public relations to enhance the image of the customs sector.

## **2.1. Digital Communication:**

The evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as well as the advent of Web 2.0 have transformed the Internet into an essential tool for organizations. The shift to a more interactive web has paved the way for systems that allow for two-way communication with users.

### **2.1.1. Definitions of Digital Communication:**

Digital communication represents a modern field of communication. It encompasses all strategies and techniques used by organizations and individuals on digital platforms to disseminate messages, interact with their audience, and capture the attention of internet users.

Thanks to digital communication, organizations can establish a direct link with their clients through various digital channels, thus fostering dynamic and participative interaction (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, pp. 59–68). Furthermore, other studies (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019) emphasize that this approach strengthens consumer engagement by relying on adjustable and measurable campaigns.

### **2.1.2. Digital Communication Tools**

The use of various digital tools is essential to maximize the impact of a company's marketing strategies. The choice of media depends mainly on the communication and marketing objectives of the brand, all while balancing their effectiveness with associated costs.

- **Content marketing**

Content marketing relies on the production of informative and engaging materials such as blog articles, videos, infographics, FAQs, and Wikis, distributed via different websites. Its main objective is to attract and retain a target audience by offering high-value-added content. To promote a brand or product online, various strategies are implemented, including display advertising in the form of banners, interstitials, or affiliate programs.

- **Social Media Optimization (SMO)**

SMO refers to all techniques aimed at increasing the visibility and image of a brand or website on social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, or TikTok. This approach relies on the distribution of content through social networks, either via sharing features integrated into websites or on external platforms such as blogs and forums.

Influencer marketing is one of the key strategies in SMO, involving partnerships with popular content creators on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok to promote products or services to their audience. The use of specialized tools such as Hootsuite and Buffer facilitates the scheduling and management of posts across multiple networks.

- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

SEO encompasses practices aimed at improving a website's ranking in the direct results of search engines. This approach is based on optimization techniques that allow sites to appear at the top of the results when their content is deemed relevant to users' queries.

- **Search Engine Advertising (SEA)**

SEA is based on purchasing keywords auctioned by search engines to display sponsored ads at the top of search results. This technique enables a website's visibility to increase quickly through paid links, generally managed using platforms like Google Ads, Facebook Ads, or LinkedIn Ads.

- **Email marketing**

Emailing is a digital communication tool that has developed significantly with the rise of the web. It enables the sending of promotional or informational messages to a wide audience at a much lower cost than traditional direct marketing campaigns.

### **2.1.3. Objectives of Digital Communication**

Digital communication primarily aims to promote products and support advertising actions, while ensuring the smooth dissemination of information through electronic media. It facilitates interactions by making them more accessible and adaptable. Its rapid evolution demands effective management of brand content, online marketing, and technological innovations, directly influencing consumer expectations (Kotler, P., Keller, K., & Manceau, D., 2015).

The objectives of this type of communication can be grouped into four main categories:

- **Cognitive:** to improve the organization's brand awareness,
- **Acceptive:** to gain public support,
- **Affective:** to strengthen positive perceptions of the brand,
- **Conative:** to influence consumer behaviors and attitudes (Libaert, 2013).

### **2.1.4. Challenges of Digitalization**

The primary objective of digital communication is to disseminate information, ensure continuous online interaction, and promote products or services through digital technologies. However, its effectiveness depends on strategic support from companies, as it requires advanced management of content and marketing mechanisms. This includes brand content, digital direct marketing, and the integration of innovations such as virtual reality or geolocation to optimize consumer engagement.

### **2.1.5. Advantages of Digital Communication**

The use of digital tools offers several benefits:

- **Message personalization:** they allow communications to be tailored according to user preferences and behaviors;

- **Advanced targeting:** user data analysis enables the display of ads relevant to their searches and interests;
- **Precise performance measurement:** it is possible to assess campaign impact using indicators such as the number of unique visitors or time spent on a page;
- **Accessibility and reduced costs:** these tools require lower investment, which is a major advantage, particularly for SMEs (Kotler, Keller, & Manceau, 2015).

### 2.1.6. Disadvantages of Digital Communication

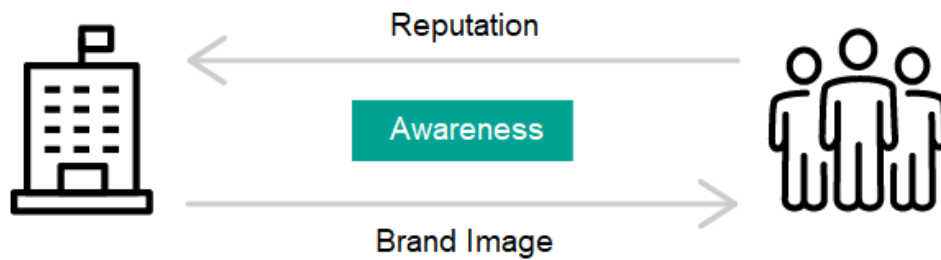
One of the main challenges of digital communication lies in consumers' ability to quickly ignore or close advertising messages. Moreover, marketing professionals have limited control over information shared online and may sometimes overestimate the impact of their campaigns. Content management on the internet thus becomes complex, especially in the face of the rapid spread of negative reviews and inappropriate comments. To address these challenges, it is crucial for companies to have qualified community managers capable of responding effectively during crises and adopting a proactive approach to online interaction management (Rapnaud, M., 2015).

## 2.2. Concepts of overall brand perception:

The perception of a brand is based on three interconnected concepts, each playing a specific role in the overall image it conveys to the public.

- **Brand Image:** Brand image refers to the mental and emotional representation that an individual or group associates with a company. It directly influences how the brand is perceived in comparison to its competitors (Jean-Jacques Lambin & Chantal, 2008, p. 89). Brand image also relies on digital interactions, which contribute to its reinforcement, making it a key strategic asset for an organization's performance (Kotler, Keller & Manceau, 2015).
- **Reputation:** A brand's reputation reflects the general opinion the public holds about it, whether positive or negative. It is built through the accumulation of collective perceptions and is more accurately defined as a consequence of interactions rather than an initial cause (Larousse, 2013).
- **Awareness:** Brand awareness refers to the degree of recognition a brand has among the general public. The more well-known a company is, the stronger its presence in the minds of consumers (Larousse, 2013). On the web, this is expressed through the level of a brand's visibility across various platforms and digital media.

**Figure N°1. Relationship Between Brand Image, Reputation, and Awareness**



**Source :** OpenClassrooms. (2022). Identify the challenges of e-reputation, OpenClassrooms. (2022). In <https://openclassrooms.com/fr/courses/7169011-gerez-votre-e-reputation-et-votre-influence-de-marque/7394939-identifiez-les-enjeux-de-l-e-reputation>

### **2.3. The Impact of Digital Communication on Brand Image:**

Digital communication plays a crucial role in the construction and enhancement of a company's brand image. Numerous studies have highlighted its influence due to its speed, efficiency, and transparency. A strong brand image enables consumers to better absorb information, distinguish a brand from its competitors, and develop positive emotions that encourage purchasing behavior (Aaker, D. A., 1991).

According to another study (Hallil, W., 2013), the development of a digital communication strategy has a direct impact on brand awareness and company profitability, particularly in the telecommunications sector in Algeria. For public institutions, the transition to digital represents a major challenge, mainly due to the need for users to adapt to new tools. However, a well-managed transformation can significantly improve their brand image and public relations.

### **2.4. The Modernization of Public Administrations Through Digital Technologies:**

The integration of digital communication within organizations contributes not only to optimizing their image but also to strengthening their reputation. Now, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a key role in the functioning of modern companies. The mastery of these technologies has become essential to support the transition to a digital economy and promote the emergence of an information society. According to the United Nations, ICTs result from the evolution of technologies enabling the exchange, processing, and dissemination of information, all while facilitating the emergence of new communication methods (United Nations, 2018).

The impact of ICTs goes beyond the strictly technological framework: they deeply influence social interactions, economic models, and administrative practices. One of the most significant examples of their use in the public sector is the development of electronic

government (or e-government). This system allows administrations to modernize internal processes, improve the accessibility of public services, and enhance the transparency of government actions. By facilitating communication between citizens and institutions, e-government promotes a management that is more efficient and builds a relationship of trust with the public (West, D. M., 2004, pp. 15–27).

#### **2.4.1. Definition of e-Government:**

According to the United Nations, electronic government refers to the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into the functioning of public administrations in order to modernize service management, facilitate the exchange of information, and strengthen interaction with citizens (UN, 2020).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines e-government as the use of ICTs to enhance the efficiency and transparency of public services while promoting greater citizen participation in decision-making processes (OECD, 2018).

According to the World Bank, e-government relies on the use of digital tools to improve the delivery of public services, combat corruption, and encourage citizen involvement (World Bank, 2021, p. 7). Boudreau (2011, p. 340) adds to this definition by stating that e-government corresponds to the use of information technologies by public administrations to optimize internal management and their relationships with citizens and other organizations.

The main objective of e-government is therefore to make public information accessible online and to simplify administrative procedures. Thanks to the digitization of services, citizens can carry out various operations remotely, such as filing taxes or filling out administrative forms.

The adoption of ICTs thus improves the quality and accessibility of public services while making administrations more efficient and better adapted to users' needs, particularly within the framework of governmental policies and programs.

## 2.4.2. Dimensions of e-Government

The concept of e-government is based on several types of relationships that define its scope and impact on the various actors involved (Ndou, V., 2004, pp. 1–14; Al-Busaidy, M., 2011):

- **Government to Citizen (G2C):** This dimension, often highlighted in e-government definitions, involves the implementation of digital services for citizens. Its primary goal is to simplify administrative procedures and improve the quality of public services by promoting smooth and accessible interaction.
- **Government to Government (G2G):** This refers to the exchange of information and data between different public institutions (ministries, general directorates, the presidency, etc.). This interconnection aims to optimize coordination between governmental entities and strengthen administrative efficiency.
- **Government to Business (G2B):** This relationship encompasses interactions between public administrations and the private sector. It includes various domains such as trade, taxation, and business regulation (Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Justice, General Tax Office, etc.).
- **Government to Employee (G2E):** This dimension focuses on the management of human resources within public administrations. Its goal is to improve working conditions for government employees by offering simplified access to databases, online services, and also digital training. This approach contributes to better internal organization and reduced administrative costs.

Figure N°2. *Types of e-government relations*



Source: *Developed by us*

### **3. Research Methodology and Materials**

The objective of our study is to analyze the impact of digital communication on brand image. To achieve this, we have chosen to focus on the digital communication used within one of the government structures, namely the General Directorate of Customs in the Wilaya of Algiers. To this end, we conducted a survey among a sample of citizens who generally use social networks, some of whom have also previously used the customs website, as we will present more explicitly in the section dedicated to the survey results.

#### **3.1. Research Field:**

Our study was conducted within the General Directorate of Customs, a key institution for the development and regulation of the flow of people, investments, and goods. It is an Algerian public administration under the Ministry of Finance. It carries out fiscal and security missions, such as collecting duties and taxes on imported goods, controlling indirect taxes, monitoring capital transfers at the border, and combating fraud, illicit trafficking, and illegal immigration through its coast guard and border guard functions.

##### **3.1.1. The Digital Strategy of the General Directorate of Customs:**

The increased adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) by the General Directorate of Customs (GDC) will lead to a significant transformation in its working methods and organization. This will contribute to enhancing its brand image and providing better service to citizens. In order to modernize the sector, the GDC has set several goals to improve communication and the institution's image, including the regular publication of customs activities on its website.

Strengthening targeted and personalized communication actions for the public, media, foreign trade professionals, and partners, as well as the dissemination of laws, regulations, and decisions related to customs activities, also contribute to improving public service. This strategy promotes internal communication to support professional ethics and the establishment of an information monitoring system.

The use of digital tools to inform about activities, modernization of the website with new e-services, strengthening relationships with the external environment, and the design of guides on customs procedures as well as legislative facilities on various platforms are the digitalization measures adopted by the GDC. Among these, the presence of a rich official website with various sections is the most important.

##### **3.1.2. Survey Method:**

The purpose of this survey is to analyze the impact of digital communication on improving the brand image of the General Directorate of Customs. To do so, we will approach this subject in an explanatory manner through a mixed research methodology (quantitative and qualitative), using a questionnaire aimed at evaluating the citizen's awareness of customs and

measuring user satisfaction, reinforced by semi-structured interviews to obtain a more explicit feedback.

By studying the presence of public administrations on the web, as well as the importance and usefulness of their digital communication, it becomes essential to understand how internet users perceive the overall online engagement of a public institution. In order to do that, we have opted for a mixed approach, which we will present along with the tools and methodology employed.

The primary tool consists of a questionnaire with 31 questions addressing two main research axes previously defined and related to our initial questions. It first includes socio-demographic questions about the users to obtain a more representative sample. We chose the convenience sampling method to facilitate data collection.

In our approach, we considered it relevant and beneficial to use both the questionnaire and the interview as tools to carry out our survey. The choice of these tools is based on several criteria, which we will explain later, following the process from the definition of objectives to the obtaining of results, including data collection and analysis.

We used simple and common words to formulate three types of questions: dichotomous closed questions to frame responses and capture survey measurements more precisely; single-answer closed questions aimed at obtaining simple, direct answers measurable on a range of pre-determined judgments; and multiple-choice questions designed to extract a precise opinion and ease the task for both the respondent and the researcher.

### **3.2. Analysis Tools:**

In connection with our theme focused on digital communication, we chose to create our questionnaire using the “Google Forms” tool, in order to later distribute it online.

Once the data collection was completed, we proceeded to process and tabulate the results, they are presented in the form of tables to facilitate their interpretation. Statistical analysis was carried out using the Microsoft Office Excel software, applying two types of sorting:

- **Flat sorting:** reorganizing the data according to a single variable.
- **Cross sorting:** analyzing the relationships between two or more variables.

The results are then presented in the form of tables, graphs, and charts, accompanied by comments.

### 3.2.1. Sample Size:

Our sample is represented by 140 individuals from a population of social network users with diverse profiles.

### 3.2.2. Main Characteristics of the Sample:

The main characteristics of the sample are presented as follows:

- **Gender:** 51.4% of the population are men, and 48.6% are women.
- **Age:** 0.7% of the individuals are under 20 years old, 82.1% are between 20 and 35 years old, 17.1% are between 36 and 50 years old, and no individuals are over 50 years old.
- **Socio-professional Status:** our sample is highly heterogeneous and consists of 69.3% students, 26.4% employees, 3.6% unemployed, 0.67% from another category, and no retirees.
- **Being a social media user:** all respondents in our study use social media.
- **Following the GDC on social media:** It was found that 50% of the study population follow the news of the General Directorate of Customs on social media platforms.

## 4. Results and Discussions:

The processing and analysis of the results were carried out according to the previously defined research axes. We will begin by highlighting those related to the key concepts of our empirical study, namely the use of social media and its impact on the brand image of the General Directorate of Customs, before studying the main existing correlations through cross-tabulation analysis.

### 4.1. Flat Sorting Analysis:

The main results obtained and considered the most relevant are presented as follows:

#### 4.1.1. Analysis of All Social Media Platforms Used:

The use of social media by the population of our sample is presented in the following table:

**Table N° 1. Distribution of Respondents According to All Social Media Platforms Used**

	Facebook	Instagram	X	LinkedIn	Youtube	Other
Number	134	109	6	68	109	6
Percentage	95.7 %	77.91%	4.6%	48.6%	77.9%	4.6%

**Source :** *Developed by us*

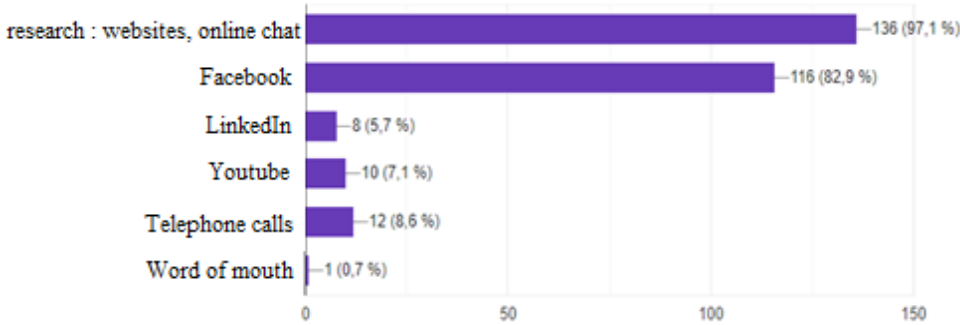
We found that Internet users are present first on Facebook with a rate of (95.7%), followed by those on YouTube and Instagram with (77.9). The rates of presence on LinkedIn and X are respectively (48.6%), (4.3).

**4.1.2 Analysis of the site consulted for the need for information:**

Preferences for collecting information on the internet are shown in the following figure:

**Figure N°3. The most visited social networks when you need information in case of the need of information, you use:**

140 answers



Source

: Developed by us

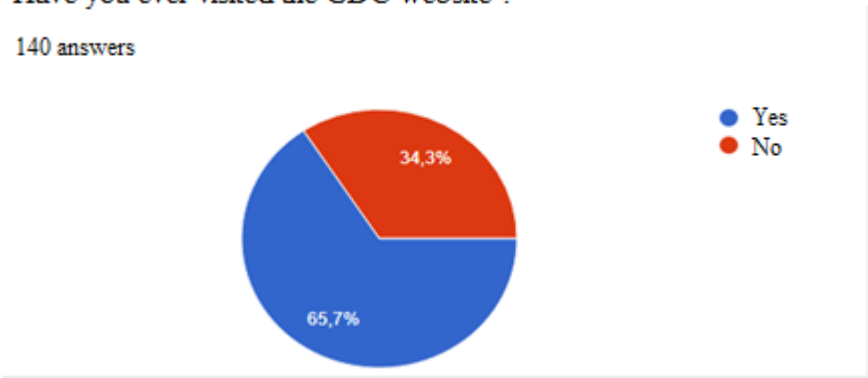
We confirm that online research or consulting the company’s website is the best method of gathering information about the General Directorate of Customs when needed by the participants, with over 97.1% of responses. However, social media does not represent the primary contact point between the Directorate and its users.

**4.1.3 Analysis of Access to the General Directorate of Customs Website:**

**Figure N°4. User Access to the GDC Website**

Have you ever visited the GDC website ?

140 answers



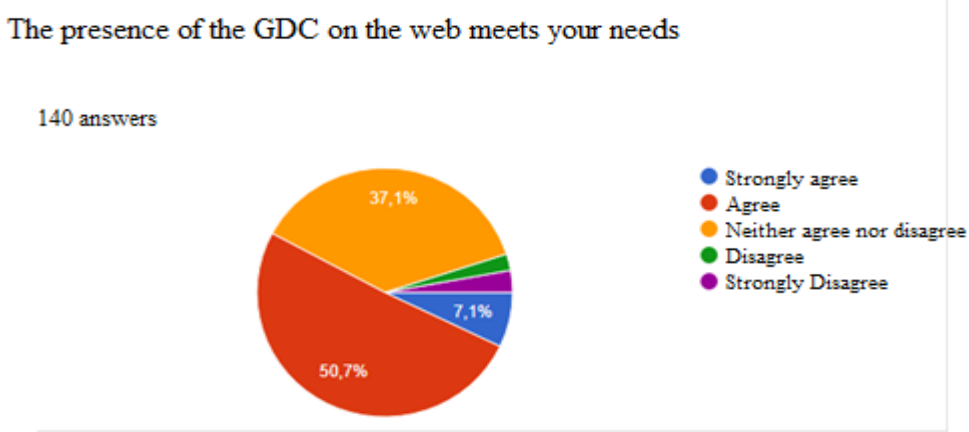
Source: Developed by us

Only 65.7% of internet users consult the website of the General Directorate of Customs. The remaining 34.3% of our sample have never visited the said website, either because they may not be aware that this Directorate has a website or because they are not interested in its content.

### 4.1.4 Analysis of the Response to User Needs Through the GDC's Web Presence:

The results showing user agreement that the presence of the General Directorate of Customs on the web meets their needs are illustrated in the following figure:

**Figure N°5. Response to User Needs**



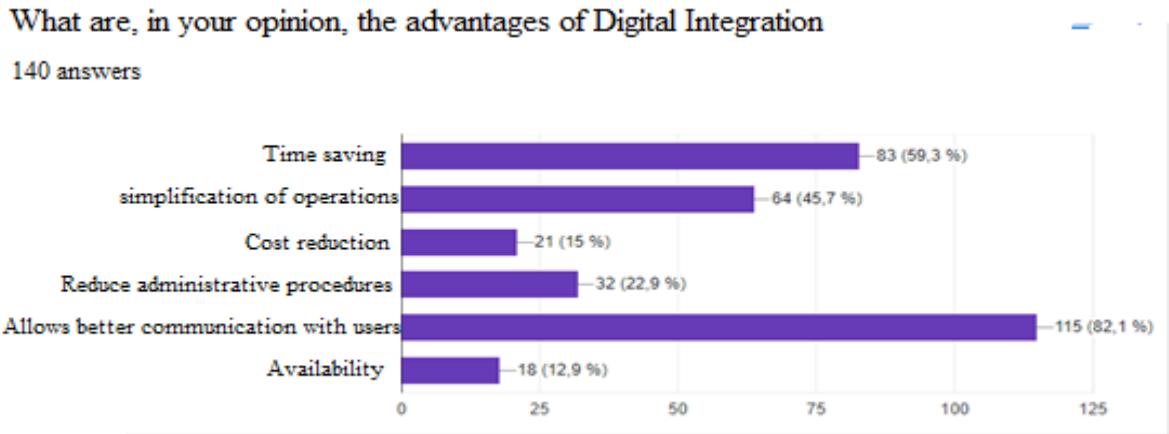
Source : Developed by us

57.8% of the users surveyed confirm that the presence of the General Directorate of Customs on the web perfectly meets their needs and expectations. This creates the necessity to engage and retain the more than 42.2% of unsatisfied users.

### 4.1.5 Analysis of the Advantages of Digital Integration According to Users:

Users believe that digital transformation generally helps them mainly to benefit from the advantages shown in the following figure:

**Figure N°6. Advantages of Digital Integration**



Source: Developed by us

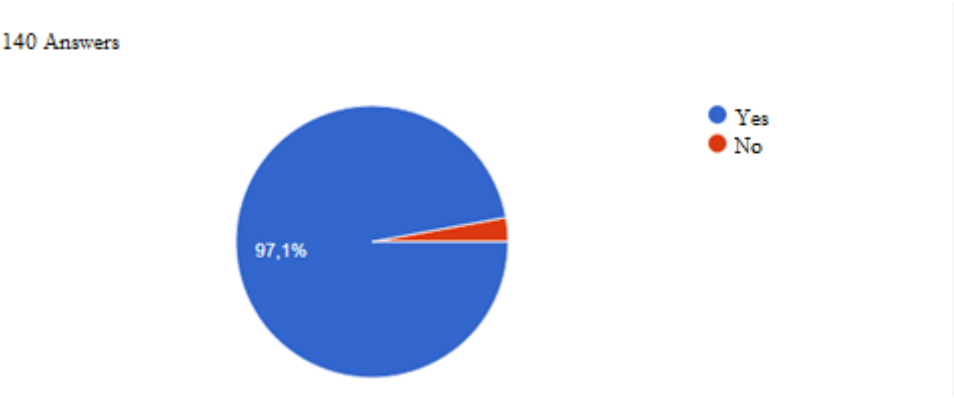
Based on these responses, we observe that the majority of respondents confirm that integrating digital technology into the strategy of the General Directorate of Customs improves communication with users. Moreover, 59.3% believe that digitalization saves time

in user loyalty and follow-up. For 45.7% of our sample, it will simplify operations usually carried out on-site.

**4.1.6 Analysis of the Constraints of Digital Integration According to Users:**

The results of the responses regarding the contribution of communication in positively strengthening the brand image of the General Directorate of Customs are presented in the following figure.

**Figure N°7. Distribution of opinions on the contribution of digital communication to improving communication and the brand image of the General Directorate of Customs**



Source: Developed by us

97.1% of respondents confirm that the use of digital communication enables the General Directorate of Customs to communicate more effectively and to positively promote its brand image, while only 2.9% have an opposing opinion.

**4.2 Cross-tabulation analysis of the correlation between the main criteria of the study:**

The cross-tabulation analysis of the correlation between the main criteria of the study is based on the elements below.

**Table N°2. The most dominant category of the sample by age/gender**

	Men	Women	Total
<20 years	0	1	1
Between 20-35 years	68	47	115
Between 36-50 years	4	20	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>140</b>

Source: Developed by us

According to the results above, we notice that our sample is predominantly male, especially those aged between 0 and 35 years. This confirms the target audience set by the management.

#### 4.2.2 The most used social network by gender:

Based on the results from our sample, we find that women are the most frequent users of Facebook and YouTube, while men prefer LinkedIn and Instagram.

**Table N°3. The most used social network by gender**

	Facebook	Youtube	X	LinkedIn	Instagram	Other
Men	49	49	03	42	64	03
Women	65	60	03	25	44	03

Source: *Developed by us*

#### 4.2.3 The contribution of digital communication by the GDC to better communicate through social media users:

**Table N°4. The contribution of digital communication by the GDC to better communicate and promote its brand image positively according to social media users**

	Yes (Access to site)	Total
No (e-com doesn't help)	4	4
Yes (e-com helps)	136	136
Total	140	140

Source : *Developed by us*

Among social media users, 136 declare that the use of digital communication helps the General Directorate of Customs improve its communication and positively promote its brand image, while only 4 respondents express the opposite opinion.

### 4.3. Discussion of Results:

The 140 people surveyed represent a representative population of the main target of our study, with a male majority, the age range being between 20 and 35 years, with a majority of students. This explains why Facebook, widely favored by respondents for staying informed about news, is the most used social network.

Social media users are also influenced by information posted by brands on their official pages. However, it is noted that richer content, such as websites, is needed to attract more internet users.

The General Directorate of Customs enjoys significant recognition, and a large portion of participants follows its official page. Many consider the presence of this directorate on social media essential. The use of these platforms by the directorate significantly contributes to improving communication and positively promoting its image.

In terms of satisfaction, a majority of respondents believe that digital communication is a key factor for the customs department. Although this satisfaction is high, some suggest that the

directorate could improve its communication on Facebook and expand its presence on other social networks, which are the future of digital communication.

Users who visited the customs page on Facebook are generally satisfied with the content offered, whether it be posts, shared information, responsiveness, or the image conveyed. However, improvements are expected regarding the quality of information shared and the interactivity between the directorate and its users on the web.

Finally, it is clear that young people are the primary target of customs. This age group, in particular, expresses a high degree of satisfaction with the directorate's digital communication. It is therefore recommended that the directorate create more content suited to meet the needs of this audience.

The digital communication strategy relies on a relational process, where creating attractive content for users is essential to capture their attention. In this same sense, the recommendations proposed to the General Directorate of Customs to improve its communication revolve around the following points:

❖ **Visibility and Presence:**

- **Strengthen online presence:** intensify communication on social media by sponsoring the Facebook page to increase visibility.
- **Explore Instagram:** Although Facebook and Twitter are already used, Instagram, with its visual potential, should be exploited to reach a wider audience.
- **Develop engaging content:** improve interaction and create engaging content to encourage users to visit the directorate's website.
- **Multiply communication channels:** While ensuring message consistency, the directorate should broaden its presence, while maintaining controlled management of its platforms.

❖ **Personalization:**

- **Individual responses:** It is necessary to offer more personalized communication by responding directly to users' messages and comments to avoid automated responses that frustrate users.

❖ **Interaction between the brand and users:**

- **Strengthen interactive animations:** Organize games and contests on social media to engage users more and strengthen the bond with them.
- **Strategic use of social networks:** These should be integrated into a comprehensive communication strategy and used to manage crisis situations.

❖ **Creation of user experiences:**

- **Anticipate user needs:** It is important to understand users' expectations, answer their frequently asked questions, and innovate, for example, by developing apps to simplify transactions.

❖ **Strengthening brand image:**

- **Control e-reputation:** The directorate must monitor its brand image and online reputation by controlling published content and interactions to maintain consistent and positive communication.

## **5. Conclusion**

The primary objective of this research was to analyze the growing importance of digital communication for the General Directorate of Customs, a universal strategic lever in the age of globalization, and to understand its impact on improving the customs brand image. Measuring user satisfaction becomes essential to improve service quality and align actions with organizational goals. User loyalty, directly linked to their satisfaction, strengthens long-term adherence to the institution's services.

During this research, we explored the impact of digital communication on user loyalty and its influence on the brand image within the General Directorate of Customs. A quantitative study was conducted among customs users. The aim was to assess the influence of digital communication on the perception of the customs brand image by its users.

The tested hypotheses gave the following results:

**H1:** Digital communication is a key element in the customs strategy. Respondents confirmed that digital communication plays an increasing role in communication strategies, especially among young people. This hypothesis is therefore validated.

**H2:** The customs directorate uses multiple digital channels to strengthen its image. It was confirmed that these channels improve the user experience and develop the brand image. Hypothesis validated.

**H3:** Digital communication improves the brand image perceived by users. Results show that digital communication helps brands become known, interact, and strengthen their notoriety, thus validating this hypothesis.

During our study, several difficulties were encountered, particularly regarding data collection. Specifically, a questionnaire survey can sometimes be unreliable due to random or insincere responses from some participants. Additionally, we observed the lack of solid statistical bases due to the novelty of digital communication in Algeria. However, it is crucial to master these tools well, as their impact is not always positive and can, in some cases, backfire against the organization.

In conclusion, although this work helped to meet the set objectives, it remains a vast and constantly evolving subject, requiring more time and research to explore all its aspects. The practical implementation of our suggestions by the customs authorities could prove fruitful and accelerate progress toward the expected objectives, within the framework of a national policy working towards reforming new practices and improving the quality of service and life for citizens.

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