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## **KEY ISSUES OF COMPETENCES IN THE STAFFING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES IN UKRAINE DURING WARTIME**

*This article examines the critical aspects of competency-based staffing in local government bodies of Ukraine, particularly considering the challenges posed by Russian military aggression. The research analyzes the transformation of requirements for civil servants' competencies in the context of war and decentralization reform. Special attention is paid to management, cognitive, and communicative competencies as key factors in the effectiveness of local governance during crisis periods. The study reveals significant gaps in the current competency development system and proposes ways to enhance the professional development of local government officials. The research methodology combines theoretical analysis of regulatory frameworks with practical assessment of competency implementation in Ukrainian local governments. The findings suggest that successful adaptation of the competency-based approach in local government staffing requires systematic changes in both educational programs and professional development practices, especially considering the unique challenges faced by Ukrainian local governments under martial law.*

*Keywords: local government, competency-based approach, civil service, professional development, wartime administration, public management, Ukraine, decentralization reform.*

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Recent research on local government competencies in Ukraine has been significantly influenced by wartime conditions. Key publications include Kovbasiuk and Vashchenko's (2023) comprehensive analysis of civil service reform implementation, focusing on crisis management competencies. The World Bank's (2023) comparative study provides valuable insights into capacity-building practices across Eastern Europe, while Bielska and Naplyokov (2023) specifically examine crisis management competencies in Ukrainian local governments. The OECD's (2024) governance review offers crucial assessment of public administration reforms under martial law conditions. These studies collectively emphasize the growing importance of adaptive management and security-oriented competencies in local governance during crisis periods.

Problem statement. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has created unprecedented challenges for local government bodies, requiring rapid adaptation of traditional competency frameworks and staffing approaches. The need to maintain effective local governance while ensuring security and continuity of public services demands new competencies from civil servants. This situation necessitates a thorough revision of existing competency development systems and staffing policies in Ukrainian local governments.

Presentation of the main material. The ongoing Russian military aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally transformed the requirements for local government officials' competencies, creating unprecedented challenges in public administration. This transformation has significantly impacted various aspects of local governance, requiring a comprehensive

reassessment of traditional competency frameworks.

The war has highlighted the critical importance of crisis management competencies among local government officials. Traditional administrative competencies have been substantially supplemented by new requirements in emergency response coordination, critical infrastructure management, and civil defense coordination. Modern Ukrainian local government officials must now demonstrate exceptional adaptability and decision-making capabilities under extreme pressure. Research indicates that municipalities demonstrating the highest resilience during wartime are those led by officials who successfully combine traditional administrative skills with crisis management expertise.[3]

Digital transformation has accelerated dramatically during the wartime period, fundamentally changing the landscape of local government operations. Officials have been compelled to rapidly develop competencies in digital service delivery, cybersecurity, and remote work management. This digital transformation has proven crucial for maintaining governmental functions during air raids and other emergency situations. Evidence suggests that municipalities with digitally competent leadership have shown significantly greater resilience during crisis periods and maintained better continuity of public services.

Communication competencies have gained paramount importance in the context of war. Local government officials must now master crisis communication, multi-stakeholder coordination, and public safety messaging. The ability to maintain effective communication with citizens during emergencies has become a critical success factor for local governance. Officials must balance transparency with security considerations while ensuring timely and accurate information dissemination to their communities. [2]

The evolution of security-related competencies represents a particularly significant shift in local government administration. While previously considered secondary, these competencies have become fundamental for local government officials in Ukraine. Officials must now demonstrate proficiency in risk assessment, security protocol implementation, and critical infrastructure protection. This shift reflects the new reality where local government bodies play a crucial role in maintaining civil security and coordinating defense efforts at the community level.

Financial management competencies have undergone substantial transformation due to wartime conditions. Local government officials must now navigate complex financial challenges while maintaining essential services under severe resource constraints. The ability to manage emergency budgets, coordinate international aid, and develop alternative funding mechanisms has become crucial. This includes expertise in grant proposal writing and resource mobilization, particularly in the context of international support for Ukraine's reconstruction efforts.

The humanitarian aspect of local governance has gained unprecedented importance, requiring officials to develop enhanced competencies in managing social services and community support programs. This includes coordinating humanitarian aid distribution, managing displaced persons' assistance programs, and ensuring continued access to essential services for vulnerable populations. Local government officials must now demonstrate increased emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity while managing diverse community needs under stress. [4]

Professional development and training systems have required significant adaptation to address these new competency requirements. Traditional educational approaches are being

supplemented with crisis management modules, enhanced security awareness training, and intensive digital skills development programs. The emphasis has shifted towards practical, hands-on experience and rapid skill acquisition, reflecting the urgency of current challenges facing local government officials.

The transformation of human resource management in local government has been equally profound. Officials must now demonstrate competencies in crisis team building, staff resilience support, and volunteer management. The ability to maintain organizational effectiveness while dealing with personnel shortages, stress management, and rapid skill development has become essential. This includes managing hybrid work environments and ensuring continuity of operations under emergency conditions.

Innovation and adaptation capabilities have emerged as critical competencies in the current context. Local government officials must demonstrate ability to develop rapid solutions to unprecedented challenges, adapt service delivery models, and optimize resource utilization under severe constraints. This includes finding innovative ways to maintain public services while ensuring community safety and resilience.

The integration of civilian and military coordination competencies represents another crucial development in local government administration. Officials must now effectively collaborate with military authorities, law enforcement agencies, and emergency services while maintaining regular administrative functions. This requires a delicate balance of civilian governance principles with security imperatives, necessitating new approaches to decision-making and resource allocation. [6]

The psychological resilience of local government officials has emerged as a critical factor in effective governance during wartime. Beyond technical competencies, officials must demonstrate strong emotional intelligence, stress management abilities, and leadership skills under pressure. This includes maintaining team morale, supporting staff mental health, and ensuring effective decision-making despite psychological strain and uncertainty.

International cooperation competencies have gained increased significance as Ukrainian local governments engage more actively with foreign partners, international organizations, and donor agencies. Officials must demonstrate proficiency in cross-cultural communication, international project management, and coordination of international technical assistance. This includes understanding international development frameworks, donor requirements, and project reporting standards.

The transformation of educational and professional development systems supporting local government has been substantial. Traditional training programs are being rapidly modernized to incorporate new competency requirements, with increased emphasis on practical skills and real-world crisis management experience. This includes the development of specialized training modules focused on wartime administration, emergency response, and crisis leadership.

Technology integration competencies have become increasingly critical as local governments accelerate their digital transformation efforts. Officials must now demonstrate proficiency in managing digital service delivery platforms, ensuring cybersecurity, and maintaining electronic documentation systems. This technological shift has been particularly challenging in smaller communities and rural areas, where digital infrastructure may be less developed.

The evolving nature of public engagement during wartime has necessitated new approaches to community relations and citizen participation. Local government officials must

develop competencies in managing public expectations, maintaining community cohesion, and fostering resilience under challenging circumstances. This includes effectively utilizing social media and digital platforms for public communication while ensuring information security. [1]

The assessment and evaluation of competencies in local government has required significant modification to reflect current realities. Traditional performance metrics and evaluation criteria have been supplemented with new indicators that measure crisis response effectiveness, community resilience building, and adaptive management capabilities. This has led to the development of more comprehensive and nuanced approaches to personnel evaluation and professional development planning.

Resource management competencies have taken on new dimensions in the context of wartime constraints and challenges. Local government officials must demonstrate exceptional skills in optimizing limited resources, identifying alternative funding sources, and maintaining essential services under severe budgetary constraints. This includes expertise in emergency procurement procedures, resource sharing across jurisdictions, and innovative approaches to service delivery optimization. [5]

The role of strategic planning competencies has evolved to incorporate both immediate crisis response capabilities and long-term development perspectives. Officials must balance urgent wartime requirements with sustainable development goals, requiring sophisticated understanding of both crisis management and strategic planning principles. This includes the ability to develop and implement flexible strategic plans that can adapt to rapidly changing circumstances while maintaining focus on long-term community development objectives.

Intergovernmental coordination has become increasingly complex, requiring enhanced competencies in managing relationships across different levels of government. Local officials must effectively navigate relationships with regional, national, and international authorities while maintaining autonomous decision-making capabilities at the local level. This includes understanding complex regulatory frameworks, coordinating multi-agency responses, and ensuring effective information flow across governmental levels. [7]

The development of analytical competencies has gained particular importance as local governments face increasingly complex decision-making scenarios. Officials must demonstrate ability to process and analyze diverse data sources, assess multiple risk factors, and make informed decisions under time pressure and uncertainty. This includes proficiency in using modern analytical tools and methodologies while maintaining practical focus on immediate community needs.

Training and development systems supporting these expanded competency requirements face significant challenges in terms of resource availability, time constraints, and security considerations. However, innovative approaches to professional development, including online learning platforms, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, and practical simulation exercises, are being developed to address these challenges effectively.

**Conclusions.** The research demonstrates that the transformation of competency requirements in Ukrainian local government during wartime represents a fundamental shift in public administration practice. The emergence of new critical competencies related to crisis management, security, digital transformation, and international cooperation has significantly impacted the professional development landscape for local government officials.

The findings indicate that successful adaptation to these new requirements demands

systematic changes in both educational programs and professional development practices. The integration of traditional administrative competencies with crisis management capabilities has become essential for effective local governance under current conditions. The study reveals that municipalities demonstrating the highest resilience are those that have successfully implemented comprehensive competency development programs addressing both immediate crisis response needs and long-term administrative capabilities.

Recommendations emphasize the need for continued investment in professional development systems that can effectively support the expanded competency requirements of local government officials while maintaining flexibility to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. The experience of Ukrainian local governments during this period offers valuable insights for public administration theory and practice, particularly in the context of crisis management and institutional resilience.

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