

Comparison of the activity of regional authorities of Ukraine on social media

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■ **Abstract.** This article examines the presence of regional military (state) administrations and regional councils in social media. It substantiates the importance of developing communication between these regional authorities and the public, as well as other stakeholders, through social media. The analysis of authorities' activity on social media allows for assessing their ability to adapt to changes associated with the development of modern communication technologies. The purpose of this article is to develop criteria for evaluating the activity of regional authorities on social media and to trial the proposed methodology. It has been found that Facebook is the most commonly used social network by regional authorities, with 24 regional military (state) administrations and 21 regional councils actively using it. To compare their activity on social media, the population size of each region in Ukraine was taken into account. The ratings of regional military (state) administrations and regional councils were calculated based on the ratio of the audience of their Facebook pages and the population in the region. The differences in the representation of regional authorities across various regions of Ukraine were identified. The best results are achieved mainly by western and some front-line authorities (Kherson Oblast, Mykolaiv Oblast). Overall, regional military (state) administrations tend to use social media more actively than regional councils, with the exception of three regions. This is evidenced by the larger number of followers on their Facebook pages, which is the most popular network among the population of Ukraine. Overall, regional military (state) administrations are more active than regional councils in monitoring the Facebook pages of other organizations. Familiarization with the results of a comparative analysis can help the heads of authorities evaluate the performance of their communication units in comparison to other regional authorities

■ **Keywords:** benchmarking; competencies; communications; local self-government; public administration; regional development; e-governance

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■ Introduction

In an era of rapid development in information technology, social networks have become an important means of communication for government authorities and local self-government bodies with the public and various organizations. Government personnel must embrace and capitalize on the new opportunities that arise with the development of modern communication tools. The ability to adapt to changes associated with the advancement of these technologies can be assessed through a comparative analysis of the authorities' activity on social media. By the way, both "social networks" and "social media" are commonly used terms, but they have slightly different connotations. The term "social networks" emphasizes the connections between people and the social aspect of the platforms. It regards the network of relationships and interactions, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. The term "social media" is broader and encompasses all forms of digital communication and content sharing, including social networks, blogs, forums, and multimedia platforms like YouTube and Instagram. For this article, "social media" might be the better choice because it covers a wider range of platforms and communication tools used by the authorities.

Social media are seen as effective tools for both horizontal and vertical integration in the public sphere, gaining significant traction with the advent of relevant applications (programs) on mobile devices. Social media can contribute to the development of transparent and participatory public governance. The use of social media by government authorities offers several important advantages. Firstly, it allows for the quick and effective reach of a wide audience and facilitates receiving feedback. Since a large portion of the population uses social media, authorities can effectively communicate with citizens from various age and social groups. Through social media, the government can receive direct feedback from citizens. This helps in better understanding the needs and problems of the population, enabling more informed and balanced decision-making. Secondly, the openness of government authorities on social media increases the transparency of their activities. This helps build trust among citizens towards the authorities, as people see that their requests and issues are not being ignored. Social media can serve as a platform for involving citizens in the decision-making process. Through surveys, discussions of projects, or initiatives, the government can actively engage the population in public life. Thirdly, in terms of cost-benefit ratio, the use of social media is more economical compared to traditional means of communication such as print media, radio, or television. This allows for relatively inexpensive communication at various levels. The role of social media in Ukraine has changed since the full-scale Russian invasion: they have started to be actively used by government authorities to highlight important events, assist victims, and more (Prokop, 2023). It is important to assess the effectiveness of the use of social media, particularly by regional authorities, which in Ukraine are the regional military (state) administrations and regional councils.

The importance of active communication by government authorities and regional-level local self-government bodies is driven by the need to stimulate regional socio-economic development, attract investments, and quickly convey relevant information to interested parties. Especially important is the bidirectional exchange of information between the authorities and the public. In this context, scholars emphasize the need for effective management of two opposing interacting information flows: one formed in the public administration sphere and the other within civil society (Ladonko *et al.* 2020). Among the directions for improving these processes, they consider increasing civic competence, particularly special skills in communicative interaction with government authorities. A similar position is expressed by H.O. Dzyana & R.B. Dzyanyi (2020), who recommend paying attention to the development of the communicative function of education, which contributes to the formation of a creative personality capable of effective professional activity in the context of the development of the information society. L. Todisco *et al.* (2021) studied the perception of Italian public servants regarding the opportunities provided by the use of social media for decision-making and service delivery by government authorities. These researchers found that the groups with a better perception of social media impact were civil servants aged 35 and younger. This is likely due to the fact that young people generally use social media more actively. In Ukraine, among regional-level civil servants, the majority are aged 36-60 years (over 60% of men and over 70% of women) (NAUCS, 2022). It can be assumed that this leads to a somewhat poorer perception of the advantages provided by social media among public servants.

In scientific publications related to the analysis of social media, the focus is most often on the field of marketing in a business environment. This is not surprising, as many organizations have introduced a type of activity known as social media marketing (SMM), which focuses on influencing consumer relations through social media (Jamil *et al.*, 2022). For example, social media are used in Ukraine to promote publishing houses. In this field, social networks are used not only to promote book products but also to study the interests and reading preferences of followers. O. Pohribna (2023) concluded that it is advisable to follow moderation rules for social media pages representing various publishing houses.

We believe that analyzing the effectiveness of social media use by regional government authorities – regional military (state) administrations and regional councils – can be beneficial for domestic public administration practice. The conditions of martial law have intensified the need for disseminating timely information to the population and receiving feedback. It is appropriate to assess social media activity from a geographical distribution perspective. This can help identify which regions have the highest activity and understand regional differences in the interaction of government authorities with the population and other

stakeholders. Additionally, individual government authorities can see their ranking and compare their social media pages with those of the top-performing authorities in the ranking. This comparison provides valuable insights into best practices and areas for improvement, enabling authorities to refine their social media strategies and better engage with their audiences.

Despite the diverse coverage of approaches to using social media in public administration, there is a lack of studies that reveal the results of a comparative analysis of their use by various government authorities in Ukraine, particularly regional military (state) administrations and regional councils. The aim of the study is to develop criteria for evaluating the representation of regional authorities from different regions of Ukraine on social media and to trial the proposed methodology by comparing the social media activity of regional military (state) administrations with that of regional councils.

■ Materials and Methods

For the comparative analysis of the activity of regional authorities on social media, the “Engagement Metrics” method was used. This method involves counting the forms of interaction with content, which include the number of followers on social media (Trunfio & Rossi, 2021). Engagement Metrics allows for the assessment of the audience engagement level (A) by authorities using social media. Quantitative results of the comparative analysis were obtained using benchmarking methodology, which enables the identification of groups of authorities with the best performance in using social media. Relative indicators, calculated proportionally to the population (P) of the respective regions based on data from the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2022) as of February 2022 – the latest data on the official website, were used for the comparative analysis. Since the latest elections to the respective councils were neither appointed nor held in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk regions in 2020, there is no information on the use of social media by the Donetsk and Luhansk regional councils for the comparative analysis. Therefore, the official websites and social media pages of the Regional State Administrations and regional councils of all regions of Ukraine, except for Donetsk and Luhansk, were investigated. The activities of the Crimean authorities were also excluded due to the temporary occupation of this territory and the absence of elections.

The first stage of the study involved identifying the social media used by regional authorities. It turned out that Facebook was the only network used by almost all regional authorities. Therefore, the subsequent stages of the study were based on the analysis of Facebook pages of the Regional Military (State) Administrations and Regional Councils. Given the significant variations in population size across Ukraine’s regions, the comparative analysis accounted for both audience size (A) and regional population (P). Specifically, during the benchmarking process, the data was normalized by dividing the number of

Facebook page followers (A) by the population (P), with the resulting ratio (A/P) used for ranking. The overall social media activity of regional authorities was reflected through this ranking – a rating (R) was calculated for each region based on the A/P ratio. The maximum possible rating score was 24 (the best possible value), corresponding to the total number of regional authorities analyzed. The ranking was also used for a comparative analysis of how regional authorities follow the pages of other organizations in social networks. However, regions’ population size was not taken into account at this stage. Therefore, the ranking was determined based on the number of Facebook pages each regional authority follows. To improve clarity, cells in the Excel table were color-coded: shades of green for high (good) ratings, yellow – for average ratings, and red – for low (worse) ratings. This was done using the “Conditional Formatting” tool in Excel.

The information base includes official websites of regional military (state) administrations and regional councils, their social media pages in Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, legal acts: the Law of Ukraine on Local Self-Government in Ukraine (1997), the Law of Ukraine on the Legal Regime of Martial Law (2015), Decree of the President of Ukraine “On the formation of military administrations” (2022).

■ Results and Discussion

The activities of regional councils (hereinafter referred to as RCs) in Ukraine are regulated by the Law of Ukraine on Local Self-Government in Ukraine (1997). Essentially, RCs are local self-government bodies representing the collective interests of territorial communities of villages, settlements, and cities at the regional level. The formation of regional military (state) administrations (hereinafter referred to as RMAs) occurred on February 24, 2022 (the first day of the full-scale Russian invasion) in accordance with the Law of Ukraine on the Legal Regime of Martial Law (2015) as per Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 68/2022 (2022). According to the decree the heads of the previous state administrations assumed the status of military administration chiefs. Information about the activities of each RMA and RC is available on their websites. These sources are used by media, citizens, research institutions, business representatives, and other interested parties. Social media also serve as an important means of disseminating information about the activities of RMAs and RCs.

The presence of RMAs and RCs on various social media platforms enhances the opportunities for building trust in these regional authorities. Their activity on social media platforms allows for quick feedback from both authorities and the public, reveals public opinion on specific events or planned activities, and so on. In the context of rapid information dissemination, RMA and RC managers can swiftly respond to problematic situations reported by followers through social media posts, as well as quickly convey relevant information, which is especially important in the face of threats posed by war.

Overall, in Ukraine, popular social media are YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others. The web service StatCounter (2024) showed that in 2024, the most popular in Ukraine were Facebook and YouTube (Fig. 1), although

StatCounter did not cover Telegram (possibly because Telegram is considered more of a messaging app than a social media). It is evident that regional authorities should take this distribution of social media audience into account.

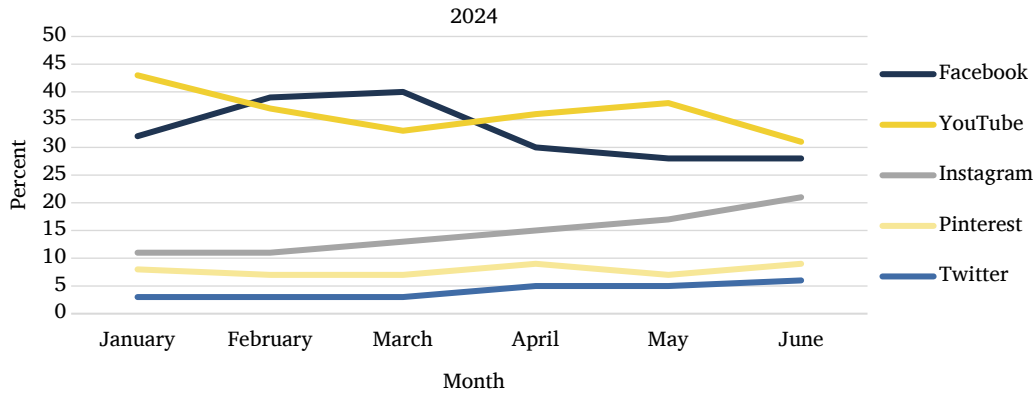


Figure 1. Dynamics of audience changes on selected social media platforms in Ukraine in 2024

Source: data of StatCounter (2024)

The analysis of the representation of RCs on social media was compiled based on the availability of social media links on the official websites of the RCs. It was found that links to own official pages in social network are primarily placed on the main pages of official websites. However, some RCs provide links to social media in the “Contacts” section. The list of social media with available links mainly includes Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram, and Instagram. Some RCs limit themselves to using just one social network, while others utilize multiple platforms. For example, Sumy Regional Council has integrated links

to all the aforementioned social media, with Facebook being the most frequently used (Table 1). The results of the analysis show that 95% of RCs (21 out of 22) have Facebook pages, and 59% (13 out of 22) use YouTube. Far fewer RCs use Twitter (32%), Telegram (27%), and Instagram (9%). A similar analysis of the representation of regional military administrations (RMAs) on social media showed that Facebook is predominantly used, with 100% of RMAs having a presence there. (Table 2). However, unlike RCs, RMAs do not use Twitter at all; instead, two RMAs use WhatsApp.

Table 1. Social media in which RCs are represented

RC	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Telegram	Instagram
Vinnitsia	v	v		v	
Volyn	v	v			
Dnipropetrovsk	v	v			
Zhytomyr	v	v		v	
Zakarpattia	v	v		v	
Zaporizhzhia		v			
Ivano-Frankivsk	v		v		
Kyiv Oblast	v	v			
Kirovohrad	v				
Lviv	v		v	v	
Mykolaiv	v		v		
Odesa	v				
Poltava	v	v	v		
Rivne	v	v			
Sumy	v	v	v	v	v
Ternopil	v	v			
Kharkiv	v				
Kherson	v	v			
Khmelnitskyi	v				

Table 1. Continued

RC	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Telegram	Instagram
Cherkasy	v	v			
Chernivtsi	v		v	v	v
Chernihiv	v		v		
Total	21	13	7	6	2
Share among social media	43%	27%	14%	12%	4%

Source: author's development

Table 2. Social media in which RMAs are represented

RMA	Facebook	YouTube	Telegram	Instagram	WhatsApp
Vinnitsia	v	v	v	v	
Volyn	v	v			
Dnipropetrovsk	v	v	v	v	
Donetsk	v	v			
Zhytomyr	v	v	v		
Zakarpattia	v	v	v		
Zaporizhzhia	v	v	v		
Ivano-Frankivsk	v	v			
Kyiv Oblast	v	v	v		
Kirovohrad	v				
Luhansk	v		v		
Lviv	v		v		
Mykolaiv	v	v			
Odesa	v	v			
Poltava	v	v	v		v
Rivne	v	v			
Sumy	v	v	v		v
Ternopil	v	v			
Kharkiv	v	v	v	v	
Kherson	v	v			
Khmelnyskyi	v	v			
Cherkasy	v	v			
Chernivtsi	v		v		
Chernihiv	v	v			
Total	24	20	12	3	2
Share among social media	39%	33%	20%	5%	3%

Source: author's development

Many RMAs use YouTube – 83% (20 out of 24), which is significantly higher than the rate for regional councils (59%). 50% of RMAs use Telegram, while far fewer use Instagram (13%) and WhatsApp (8%). As in the previous table, the last two rows show the frequency of use for each social media. Of the social media that use RMAs and RCs, Facebook is the most common. It is closely followed by

YouTube, especially among RMAs, where its share of social media use (33%) is only slightly lower than that of Facebook (39%). Information on the number of readers (audience) of the Facebook pages of these regional authorities was taken for a comparative analysis of audience reach. At the same time, relative indicators calculated in proportion to the population of the respective regions are used (Table 3).

Table 3. The results of the rating assessment of RMAs and RCs according to the relative number of readers of Facebook pages

Region	P, million people	RMAs			RCs			Difference A(RMA) and A(RC)
		A, 1,000s of people	A/P (per 1 thousand)	R	A, 1,000s of people	A/P (per 1 thousand)	R	
Vinnitsia	1.51	25.0	16.6	11	5.0	3.3	13	20.0

Table 3. Continued

Region	P, million people	RMAs			RCs			Difference A(RMA) and A(RC)
		A, 1.000s of people	A/P (per 1 thousand)	R	A, 1.000s of people	A/P (per 1 thousand)	R	
Volyn	1.02	30.0	29.4	17	9.4	9.2	20	20.6
Dnipropetrovsk	3.09	41.0	13.3	7	28.0	9.1	19	13.0
Donetsk	4.06	14.0	3.4	2	-	-	0	14.0
Zhytomyr	1.18	15.0	12.7	6	6.3	5.3	16	8.7
Zakarpattia	1.24	46.7	37.7	21	19.1	15.4	21	27.6
Zaporizhzhia	1.64	23.7	14.5	10	-	-	0	23.7
Ivano-Frankivsk	1.35	18.0	13.3	8	3.3	2.4	8	14.7
Kyiv Oblast	1.80	33.0	18.3	13	4.9	2.7	10	28.1
Kirovohrad	0.90	4.8	5.3	3	6.4	7.1	18	-1.6
Luhansk	2.10	51.9	24.7	15	-	-	0	51.9
Lviv	2.48	16.8	6.8	4	84.0	33.9	23	-67.2
Mykolaiv	1.09	1.3	1.2	1	73.0	67.0	24	-71.7
Odesa	2.35	50.0	21.3	14	1.7	0.7	4	48.3
Poltava	1.35	23.0	17.0	12	4.1	3.0	11	18.9
Rivne	1.14	46.0	40.4	22	8.1	7.1	17	37.9
Sumy	1.03	33.0	32.0	19	2.4	2.3	7	30.6
Ternopil	1.02	33.0	32.4	20	3.8	3.7	14	29.2
Kharkiv	2.60	20.0	7.7	5	5.3	2.0	6	14.7
Kherson	1.00	47.0	47.0	23	3.1	3.1	12	43.9
Khmelnytskyi	1.23	34.0	27.6	16	4.6	3.7	15	29.4
Cherkasy	1.16	16.0	13.8	9	2.2	1.9	5	13.8
Chernivtsi	0.89	62.0	69.7	24	15.5	17.4	22	46.5
Chernihiv	0.96	30.0	31.3	18	2.4	2.5	9	27.6

Notes: P – population size of each region; A – the number of followers of RMAs' and RCs' Facebook pages; R – rating of the respective regional authority

Source: authors' development

In Ukraine, considering the relative audience size (taking into account the varying population sizes of the regions), the most actively represented Regional State Administrations on Facebook are: Chernivtsi, Kherson, Rivne, Zakarpattia, and Ternopil Regional State Administrations. The top five most actively represented Regional Councils on Facebook are: Mykolaiv, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia, and Volyn Regional Councils. Therefore, the list of regional government authorities best represented on Facebook includes western and some frontline authorities (the Kherson Regional State Administration, the Mykolaiv Regional Council). It appears somewhat surprising that Regional State Administrations and Regional Councils of certain regions differ significantly in ranking; for example, the Mykolaiv Regional Council has a rank of 24 (best), while the Mykolaiv Regional State Administration has a rank of 1 (worst); the Lviv Regional Council has a rank of 23, while the Lviv Regional State Administration has a rank of 4.

In the last column of the Table 3, a difference between the number of followers of Facebook pages of RMAs and

RCs is shown. It is evident that the Facebook audience of RMAs generally exceeds that of RCs. However, in three regions (Kirovohrad, Lviv, and Mykolaiv), the Facebook pages of the RCs have more followers than those of the RMAs. These findings are consistent with the trend observed by I.B. Shevchuk (2018), where in the different regions (Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, and Kirovohrad) the number of followers of RC Facebook pages also exceeded those of the RMAs. Overall, since then (from 2018), the number of followers of Facebook pages has increased approximately tenfold: from 72.7 thousand to 715.2 thousand for the Facebook pages of the RMAs, and from 26.2 thousand to 293.6 thousand for the Facebook pages of the RCs. The activity of the RMAs and the RCs on social media can be judged not only by the size of their audience. It can also be assessed by the number of Facebook pages of other organizations they follow (S). For the comparative analysis, rankings (R) were calculated (Table 4), using absolute rather than relative numbers. This is because, unlike in the previous comparative analysis, the population size of the region is not a relevant factor here.

Table 4. The results of the ranking assessment of RMAs and RCs based on the number of Facebook pages of other organizations they follow

Region	RMAs		RCs		Difference S(RMA) and S(RC)
	S	R	S	R	
Vinnitsia	166	21	10	8	156
Volyn	103	16	0	1	103
Dnipropetrovsk	31	7	18	9	13
Donetsk	125	18	-	0	125
Zhytomyr	20	5	0	1	20
Zakarpattia	0	1	0	1	0
Zaporizhzhia	71	12	-	0	71
Ivano-Frankivsk	149	19	19	10	130
Kyiv Oblast	70	11	132	19	-62
Kirovohrad	0	1	206	21	-206
Luhansk	76	14	-	0	76
Lviv	163	20	47	11	116
Mykolaiv	29	6	88	18	-59
Odesa	15	4	3	6	12
Poltava	119	17	8	7	111
Rivne	418	24	47	11	371
Sumy	0	1	0	1	0
Ternopil	67	10	0	1	67
Kharkiv	91	15	52	13	39
Kherson	51	9	87	17	-36
Khmelnitskyi	264	22	181	20	83
Cherkasy	302	23	63	15	239
Chernivtsi	73	13	79	16	-6
Chernihiv	48	8	53	14	-5

Notes: S – the number of Facebook pages of other organizations followed by RMAs and RCs; R – rating of the respective regional authority

Source: authors' development

According to the obtained results (Table 4), the regional authorities that track the most Facebook pages are as follows: among the RMAs – Rivne, Cherkasy, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnitsia, and Lviv; among the RCs – Kirovohrad, Khmelnytskyi, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, and Kherson. In this parameter, the RMAs also proved to be generally more active compared to the RCs.

The described approach based on benchmarking makes it possible to assess the activity of regional authorities in social media. This approach can be seen as a “stakeholder evaluation” in line with the forms of evaluation in governance outlined by E. Vedung (2010). The obtained results show that their level is relatively different in different authorities. One of the reasons may be the low level of development of digital competences among employees. In the context of growing demands for employees' digital literacy skills and the mastery of information and digital technologies, the need to introduce innovations that would improve the quality of management activities is urgent.

The conducted analysis showed that regional authorities in Ukraine actively use various social media platforms,

most frequently Facebook (43% share for Regional Councils and 39% share for Regional State Administrations) and YouTube (27% share for Regional Councils and 33% share for Regional State Administrations). Thus, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform by regional government authorities. The subscription to Facebook pages is a somewhat simplified indicator of the effectiveness of regional authorities in social networks. The activity of the communication units of the RMAs and RCs is manifested not only in making posts but also in the interaction of responsible employees with subscribers. In particular, such indicators as the quality and frequency of posts, the number of comments, etc., say much more about activity. As the analysis of the mentioned indicators was not carried out within the scope of this study, it may be the direction for further deeper research in the context of interaction with citizens.

Given the similar experiences in public administration development, including the structure of regional governance in Ukraine and Poland, it is of interest to examine

the state of social media usage by regional authorities in Poland. A selective analysis of the representation on social media of the voivodeships of a neighboring country, the Republic of Poland, showed that the number of followers of their Facebook pages is to some extent larger compared to the regional authorities in Ukraine. There are also differences in this indicator among the various voivodeships: for example, the Lublin Voivodeship has over 13,000 followers on its Facebook page (Office of the Marshal..., 2024), while the Lesser Poland Voivodeship has over 260,000 followers (Malopolska, 2024). The larger number of followers of the voivodeships' Facebook pages compared to those of the regional authorities in Ukraine might be related to the longer history of reformed self-government in Poland. Additionally, the difference in the number of followers among the various voivodeships may be explained not only by population size but also by the volume and content of information that is interesting to followers. For instance, information about local cultural-historical and tourist destinations can generate more interest. This factor evidently influences the visit rate of the Facebook pages of the regional councils (RCs) and regional military administrations (RMAs) in Ukraine. Furthermore, the varying number of followers of Facebook pages may be influenced by the different population sizes of the corresponding regions in Ukraine, as well as changes in population due to large-scale movements caused by the Russian military aggression in Ukraine.

L. Dorosh & Yu. Kopey (2020) conducted a comparative analysis of social media usage by government authorities in the USA and Ukraine, revealing that a broader range of social media platforms with a larger number of followers is employed in the USA. The study analyzed data from the social media accounts of central government bodies (ministries) in both countries. However, it did not include data on social media usage by regional authorities. Incidentally, publications indexed in the Scopus database on the topic of government use of social media (as of 2022) most frequently pertain to the experiences of three countries: United States, Canada, and China. This conclusion was drawn by R.M. Widayat *et al.* (2023) after analyzing English-language publications using Scopus's search tools.

Some studies on the effectiveness of social media are based on the analysis of their usage experience. In their study, W. Tafesse & A. Wien (2018) proposed a scale for measuring the implementation of social media in firms' activities. This scale encompassed various parameters grouped into categories, including Social Media Strategy, Active Presence, Customer Engagement Initiatives, Social Media Analytics, and more. Specifically, in the latter group, it was suggested to consider the use of social media analytics to plan and execute social media efforts, learn about customers, measure effectiveness, and monitor relevant social media metrics. The development of this scale involved surveying over 400 respondents representing various firms in Norway. This approach could serve as a foundation for developing a similar scale to assess the implementation of social media in government agencies.

C. Zachlod *et al.* (2022) reviewed over 40 approaches to social media analytics. The majority of the approaches reviewed focus on identifying consumer preferences across different sectors (e-commerce, tourism, banking, health-care, education, etc.). Their research was based on an analysis of publications related to social media data analysis. The analytics primarily relied on Twitter post statistics, reflecting consumer sentiments and the results of content analysis. Among the approaches described by those researchers is social media monitoring, which involves searching for posts on related topics, identifying target audiences, and so on, to enhance a firm's competitiveness. Clearly, the approaches described in that study are more suitable for commercial firms than for government agencies. However, the subscription of government agencies to other organizations' pages, as mentioned in Table 4, can be considered a "social media monitoring" approach.

Social media can and should be actively utilized for interaction between government and citizens. In the field of public administration, a key advantage of social media is its ability to swiftly gauge public opinion. The findings of K.S. Al-Omouh *et al.* (2023) indicate a positive impact on trust in government from various aspects of government use of social media, including transparency, participation, and collaboration. However, certain challenges persist in this area. O. Khomenko *et al.* (2024) note that rapid technological changes necessitate the enhancement of legislation to protect citizens' personal data and regulate social media without infringing on their rights and freedoms. L. Spytka (2024) argues that legislation, technology, and education should be directed towards creating a cyberspace that not only guarantees freedom of expression but also serves as a platform for communication and cooperation. In particular, from the perspective of promoting sustainable development, an important area of cooperation is "environmental governance" (Chang *et al.*, 2024). Advances in information technology provide additional opportunities for government-citizen interaction. For instance, researchers have explored the potential of integrating cloud computing with social media data analysis for the monitoring and control of government policies (Singh *et al.*, 2020). On the one hand, researchers M. Blikhar & I. Narbut (2023) emphasize the importance of the legal protection of "sensitive" types of information, such as personal data or data belonging to specific user groups, and, on the other hand, stress the protection of the right to information as one of the most fundamental human rights.

The use of social media by regional authorities is an important tool for improving communication with the external environment, involving citizens in decision-making processes, and increasing the openness of authorities. To improve the work of regional authorities towards communication through social media, it is advisable to coordinate the activities of units and officials responsible for the distribution and receipt of information. It is expedient to conduct a more detailed assessment of these

divisions in the RMAs and RCs, analyzing not only pages in social media but also other indicators, in particular those that reflect the state of feedback from citizens and various organizations.

■ Conclusions

This article is aligned with research focused on the methodology for evaluating the performance of public authorities, specifically proposing the consideration of regional authorities' activity on social media as a criterion for such evaluation. The activity on social media can be viewed as an indicator of their ability to adapt to new communication tools as well as a measure of their interaction with the public, particularly with stakeholders. Social media make it possible to carry out purposeful communication with various categories of citizens. This contributes to increasing the efficiency of management and strengthening trust in the authorities.

The methodology for assessing regional authorities' activity on social media has been developed and trialed through examples of regional military administrations (RMA) and regional councils (RC). To trial the developed methodology, the activity of RMAs and RCs on social media was used. Social media platforms where RMAs are represented include Facebook (39% share), YouTube (33%), Telegram (20%), Instagram (5%), and WhatsApp (3%). For RCs, the platforms are Facebook (43% share), YouTube (27%), Twitter (14%), Telegram (12%), and Instagram (4%). The conducted research showed that all regional authorities in Ukraine use the Facebook network. Twenty RMAs and thirteen RCs also use YouTube. Other social media are used less often. RMAs have slightly larger audiences for their Facebook pages compared to RCs, but there are a few exceptions. Among the platforms – Facebook, YouTube, Twitter (X), Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram – Facebook was chosen for detailed research as it is the most popular media in Ukraine with the largest audience. Activity was assessed by comparing the audience size of regional authorities' pages on Facebook to the

region's population. A comparative analysis was employed to evaluate this activity.

The evaluation results showed that the regional authorities in the western regions of Ukraine, as well as in some front-line regions (Kherson and Mykolaiv regions), are more active than those in the central and eastern regions. Additionally, Regional Military Administrations (RMAs) are generally more active than Regional Councils (RCs). The quantitative assessment of activity was conducted based on the ratio of the audience of Facebook pages of regional authorities to 1,000 inhabitants of the respective regions. Overall, the most active RMAs were the Chernivtsi RMA (69.7 per 1,000 inhabitants) and the Kherson RMA (47.0 per 1,000 inhabitants), while the most active RCs were the Mykolaiv RC (67.0 per 1,000 inhabitants) and the Lviv RC (33.9 per 1,000 inhabitants). A clear difference is evident in the quantitative assessments for the regional authorities with the highest rankings. Therefore, it is advisable to present the results of the analysis not only in the form of rankings but also as quantitative assessments, as shown in the tabular format in this article.

The proposed methodology has demonstrated its ability to calculate the activity of regional authorities on social media, but it also requires further development to establish cause-and-effect relationships and to explain the obtained results. Since individual structural subdivisions of RMAs and RCs have their own accounts in social networks, it is advisable to conduct a comparative analysis of their activity according to the methodology outlined in this article. Further research should also be directed to the development of proposals for improving the work of the RMAs' and RCs' units, which are entrusted with the functions of communication with the public through social media.

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■ Conflict of Interest

None.

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Порівняння активності регіональних органів влади України в соціальних мережах

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■ **Анотація.** У статті розглядається присутність обласних військових (державних) адміністрацій та обласних рад у соціальних мережах. Обґрунтовано важливість розвитку комунікації між цими регіональними органами влади та громадськістю, а також іншими зацікавленими сторонами через соціальні мережі. Аналіз активності органів влади в соціальних мережах дає змогу оцінити їхню здатність адаптуватися до змін, пов'язаних із розвитком сучасних комунікаційних технологій. Метою статті є розробка критеріїв оцінки діяльності регіональних органів влади в соціальних мережах та апробація запропонованої методики. Виявлено, що Facebook є найпоширенішою соціальною мережею, яку використовують регіональні органи влади, зокрема 24 обласні військові (державні) адміністрації та 21 обласна рада активно використовують її. Для порівняння їхньої активності в соціальних мережах було враховано кількість населення кожної області України. Рейтинги обласних військових (державних) адміністрацій та обласних рад були розраховані на основі співвідношення аудиторії їхніх сторінок у Facebook і чисельності населення області. Було виявлено відмінності в представленні регіональних органів влади в різних регіонах України. Найкращих результатів досягли переважно західні та деякі прифронтові органи влади (Херсонська область, Миколаївська область). Загалом, обласні військові (державні) адміністрації, за винятком трьох регіонів, активніше використовують соціальні мережі, ніж обласні ради. Це підтверджується більшою кількістю підписників на їхніх сторінках у Facebook, яка є найпопулярнішою мережею серед населення України. Загалом, обласні військові (державні) адміністрації активніше, ніж обласні ради, моніторять сторінки інших організацій у Facebook. Ознайомлення з результатами порівняльного аналізу може допомогти керівникам органів влади оцінити ефективність роботи своїх комунікаційних підрозділів у порівнянні з іншими регіональними органами влади

■ **Ключові слова:** бенчмаркінг; компетентності; комунікації; місцеве самоврядування; публічне управління; регіональний розвиток; електронне врядування