

Job Demands, Resources, Occupational Burnout, And Individual Work Performance Among Commune-Level Civil Servants: Evidence from Gia Lai, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: The operation of Vietnam's two-tier local government system, comprising the provincial and commune levels, has heightened the requirements placed upon commune-level civil servants in relation to initiative, coordination, digital casework, and accountability for outputs. This study examines the associations among personal resources, the work environment, job demands, new-task demands, occupational burnout, and individual work performance. Data were collected in 2026 from 563 non-managerial professional civil servants working at commune level in Gia Lai Province. The scales were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and covariance-based structural equation modelling in SPSS and AMOS; indirect effects were evaluated using 5,000 bootstrap resamples. The model demonstrated a good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df=1.280$; CFI=0.978; TLI=0.976; RMSEA=0.022; SRMR=0.034) and explained 42.6% of the variance in occupational burnout and 59.3% of the variance in individual work performance. Job demands and new-task demands were positively associated with burnout, whereas burnout was negatively associated with work performance. Implementation competence exhibited the strongest direct association with performance, followed by digital adaptability and public service motivation. Although the work environment did not demonstrate a sufficiently robust direct association with performance, it contributed to lower burnout. Both indirect paths, JD→BO→IWP and DQ→BO→IWP, were statistically significant. The findings indicate that strengthening administrative performance at commune level requires an integrated approach combining competence development, work design, digital support, and the prevention of sustained occupational depletion.

KEYWORDS: commune-level civil servants, Job Demands-Resources theory, occupational burnout, individual work performance, two-tier local government system.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of local government operations depends substantially upon the capacity of front-line civil servants to translate statutory provisions and administrative decisions into processed casework, public services, and verifiable outcomes. A capable civil service requires not only personnel who meet prescribed entry standards, but also work design, organisational resources, and recovery mechanisms sufficient to sustain performance under changing demands. The OECD identifies skills, adaptability, and the human resource management environment as central pillars of a high-performing civil service [1]. This issue is particularly important at commune level, where civil servants undertake professional duties, coordinate across administrative functions, and explain procedures directly to citizens.

In Vietnam, the 2025 Law on the Organisation of Local Government establishes a two-tier local government system comprising the provincial and commune levels [2]. Resolution No. 202/2025/QH15 on the reorganisation of provincial-level administrative units [3] and Resolution No. 1664/NQ-UBTVQH15 on the reorganisation of commune-level administrative units in Gia Lai Province [4] created a new administrative configuration comprising 135 communes and wards. Together with the provisions governing specialised bodies under commune-level People's Committees [5], [6], the absence of district-level government has altered established arrangements for coordination, professional guidance, and case-file review. Commune-level civil servants now engage more directly with provincial departments and sectoral agencies, whilst facing greater requirements for independent advisory work, the use of digital systems, and accountability for outputs.

Institutional change may create opportunities to reduce administrative layers, but it also generates two categories of demand. The first comprises routine job demands, including workload, multitasking, urgent deadlines, unplanned assignments, and



prolonged concentration. The second comprises new-task demands arising from the transition, including additional responsibilities, greater technical depth, pressures associated with devolved authority, and skills gaps. Where these demands exceed personal and organisational resources over a sustained period, civil servants may maintain effort in the short term but struggle to preserve energy and performance over time. This presents a challenge to the objective of developing an adaptable, competence-based, and results-oriented civil service [7].

Most research on civil servants in Vietnam has concentrated on standards, training, appraisal, or satisfaction; comparatively little research has simultaneously distinguished routine demands from new tasks and tested burnout as a mechanism through which such demands are associated with work performance. This gap is important because poorer performance does not necessarily arise solely from insufficient competence or motivation. A civil servant with strong competence and a pronounced service ethic may nevertheless experience depletion when workload, complexity, and uncertainty increase without a commensurate expansion of resources. Conversely, a supportive environment does not automatically generate effective outputs in the absence of implementation competence.

This study applies Job Demands-Resources theory to address three questions: (i) how personal and organisational resources are associated with burnout and individual work performance; (ii) how routine job demands and new-task demands are associated with burnout; and (iii) whether burnout transmits the indirect associations between these demands and performance. The study contributes by applying JD-R theory to commune-level civil servants during the operation of the two-tier system, distinguishing new-task demands from routine workload, and providing evidence from a province characterised by substantial variation in geography, infrastructure, and access to public services. Individual work performance is treated here as a proximate and verifiable outcome; it is not equated with the broader concept of civil servant quality, which encompasses personal qualities, qualifications, skills, and attitudes.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND HYPOTHESES

Job Demands-Resources Theory

The JD-R model proposes that every occupation may be analysed in terms of two fundamental categories of working conditions: job demands and job resources [8]. Job demands are aspects of work that require sustained physical or psychological effort and are therefore associated with physiological, cognitive, or emotional costs. Resources are conditions that facilitate the attainment of objectives, reduce the costs imposed by demands, or promote learning and development. Subsequent scholarship developed JD-R into a theory that explains the health-impairment and motivational processes in parallel [9], [10], whilst more recent research has continued to affirm its adaptability across occupations and changing contexts [11].

Within the health-impairment process, high demands deplete energy and increase the risk of burnout; within the motivational process, resources enable individuals to sustain engagement and performance. Meta-analytic longitudinal evidence indicates that demands and resources significantly predict occupational well-being, although the strength of these relationships varies by context and measurement approach [12]. Burnout is commonly characterised by energy depletion, psychological distance from work, and a reduced sense of professional efficacy [13]; contemporary measurement instruments emphasise that it should be treated as a multidimensional occupational state rather than as a diagnostic label or a basis for disciplinary action [14]. In this study, BO captures fatigue, sustained tension, diminished interest, depleted energy, and the perception that pressure adversely affects work.

The application of JD-R theory to the public sector requires recognition that demands do not arise solely from workload. Civil servants are also subject to legal constraints, accountability obligations, inter-agency coordination, and service expectations from multiple constituencies. Organisational change may simultaneously expand discretion and increase uncertainty. Accordingly, this study does not assume that every new task is inherently detrimental; DQ captures only the costs perceived by those undertaking the work when responsibilities, authority, technical depth, and skill requirements change. This distinction permits an assessment of whether pressure arises from routine workload or from gaps in adaptation to the new administrative structure.

JD-R theory likewise does not treat resources and demands as opposite ends of a single continuum. High competence does not imply a low workload; a supportive environment does not remove legal accountability; and public service motivation cannot substitute for infrastructure. The two processes may therefore operate concurrently: civil servants may continue to achieve satisfactory performance through competence and motivation whilst expending substantial energy to compensate for high demands. From a managerial perspective, current performance levels are consequently insufficient to establish that the system is sustainable.



Outputs, resources, and occupational well-being must be considered together if organisations are to avoid intervening only after errors or delays have become manifest.

Personal and Organisational Resources and Individual Work Performance

The personal resources examined in this study comprise implementation competence (NL), public service motivation (PSM), and digital adaptability (DX). Implementation competence denotes the capacity to understand procedures, process tasks, coordinate, communicate, and remain current with regulatory requirements. This approach is consistent with assessing competence through demonstrated capacity to perform rather than relying exclusively upon indicators of intelligence or formal qualifications [15]. Human capital theory likewise regards knowledge and skills as productivity-enhancing resources, although their value depends upon their application to specific work [16]. NL is therefore expected to be positively associated with IWP (H1) and negatively associated with BO (H9).

PSM reflects a disposition to derive meaning from serving the public interest and contributing to the community. Perry and Wise established the foundations for explaining civil servants' behaviour through public service motivation [17], whilst cross-national measurement research indicates that PSM possesses an identifiable structure but requires adaptation to cultural and institutional contexts [18]. Within JD-R theory, PSM may operate as a motivational resource: it stimulates effort and enables civil servants to interpret difficult work as meaningful. Nevertheless, PSM cannot compensate indefinitely for inadequate resources. H2 therefore proposes that PSM is positively associated with IWP, whilst H10 proposes that PSM is negatively associated with BO.

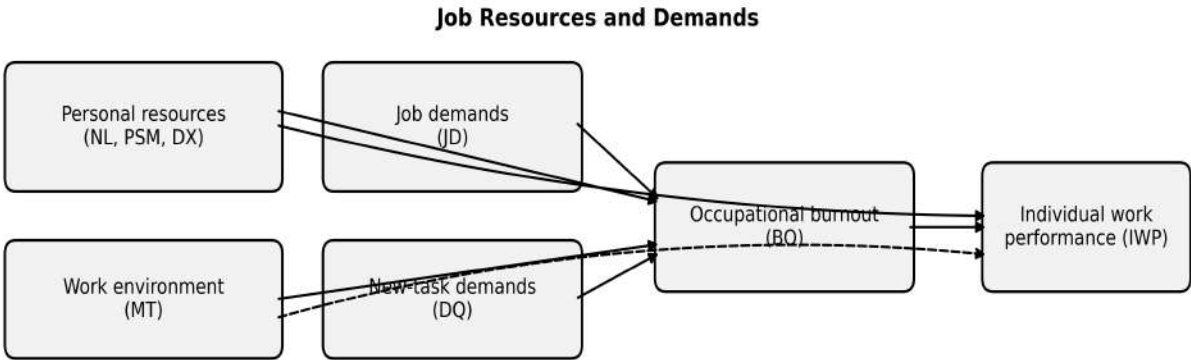
DX denotes the capacity to use shared software platforms, manage digital workflows, utilise data, learn new working methods, and comply with information-security requirements. Within the two-tier system, technology reduces the functional distance between provincial and commune levels, but also creates pressure where systems are not interoperable or users lack adequate support. Mastery of digital workflows may reduce repetitive operations, limit errors, and accelerate coordination. H3 therefore predicts a positive association between DX and IWP, whereas H11 predicts a negative association between DX and BO.

Organisational resources are represented by the work environment (MT), encompassing clarity of work allocation, support from colleagues and managers, internal coordination, physical facilities, technological infrastructure, and technical assistance. Public-sector research indicates that organisational resources may strengthen engagement and reduce strain, although their role depends upon the characteristics of the administrative system [19], [20]. A favourable environment may both support outputs directly and render demands more manageable. H4 therefore proposes that MT is positively associated with IWP, whilst H5 proposes that MT is negatively associated with BO.

Job Demands, Burnout, and Individual Work Performance

JD captures routine pressures, whereas DQ captures perceptions of new responsibilities and skills arising during the transition. The constructs are related but not interchangeable. Reducing case volumes or adjusting deadlines may address JD, whereas DQ requires clarification of authority, standardised guidance, training, and support in handling unfamiliar situations. Under the health-impairment process specified by JD-R theory, both forms of demand may increase BO. H6 therefore proposes a positive association between JD and BO, whilst H7 proposes a positive association between DQ and BO.

IWP represents individuals' self-assessments of whether they complete work on schedule, achieve the required quality, handle emergent tasks, contribute to collective results, and propose improvements. This construct must be distinguished from competence and from objectively measured effectiveness. Reviews of IWP emphasise that work performance is multidimensional and must be measured in a manner appropriate to the purpose of the research [21], [22]; the assessment of performance behaviour must also be situated within the relevant tasks and opportunities to perform [23]. As BO increases, the capacity to concentrate, sustain effort, and exercise initiative may diminish. H8 therefore predicts a negative association between BO and IWP. Finally, H12 proposes that BO transmits the indirect associations of JD and DQ with IWP.



The measurement and structural paths were evaluated using CFA and CB-SEM; BO transmits the indirect associations of JD and DQ with IWP.

Figure 1. Conceptual model

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of JD-R theory.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design and Sample

The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative research design. Data were collected in 2026 from 563 non-managerial professional civil servants working within four categories of commune-level bodies: the Office of the People's Council and People's Committee; the Division of Economic Affairs or the Division of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure and Urban Development; the Division of Culture and Social Affairs; and the Public Administrative Service Centre. The population within scope comprised 3,456 individuals, of whom the sample represented 16.29%. Women accounted for 60.04% of respondents, those aged 30-50 represented 72.82%, and Western Gia Lai accounted for 69.98%. The respective numbers of respondents from the four organisational categories were 194, 129, 114, and 126.

The questionnaire was administered anonymously; participation was voluntary and solely for research purposes, and no directly identifying information was collected. The data audit identified no missing values, out-of-range codes, exact duplicate records, or cases in which the same response category had been selected across all 42 indicators; all 563 questionnaires were therefore retained. Commune identifiers were not recorded with sufficient specificity to support multilevel analysis. The unit of analysis is consequently the individual, and the findings must not be interpreted as commune-level effects.

The sampling frame comprised only civil servants directly responsible for implementation and excluded heads of divisions or centres and leaders of commune-level People's Committees. The findings therefore do not represent all cadres, civil servants, public employees, or part-time personnel working at commune level. The sample covered both Western Gia Lai, which has a larger geographical area and lower population density, and Eastern Gia Lai, where urban and service networks are more concentrated. Nevertheless, Western Gia Lai and the Office category were over-represented relative to the population structure. This imbalance is reported transparently; no questionnaires were removed and no weights were applied merely to produce a cosmetically balanced distribution.

Table 1. Selected Characteristics of the Research Sample (n=563)

Attribute	Category	n	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	338	60.04
Age	Under 30 years	118	20.96
Age	30-50 years	410	72.82
Age	Over 50 years	35	6.22



Attribute	Category	n	Percentage (%)
Length of service	More than 10 years	292	51.87
Education	University degree	544	96.63
Region	Western Gia Lai	394	69.98
Unit	Office of the People's Council and People's Committee	194	34.46
Unit	Division of Economic Affairs/Division of Economic Affairs, Infrastructure and Urban Development	129	22.91
Unit	Division of Culture and Social Affairs	114	20.25
Unit	Public Administrative Service Centre	126	22.38

Source: Author's analysis of the 2026 survey data.

Measures and Data Analysis

Eight measures employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. NL, PSM, BO, IWP, JD, DQ, and DX each comprised five indicators, whilst MT comprised seven. Item content was derived from the JD-R framework and research on PSM, competence, and IWP, and was subsequently adapted to the job roles of commune-level civil servants and the context of the two-tier system. DQ measures perceptions of increased responsibilities, devolved authority, technical depth, pressure, and requirements for new skills; it is not interpreted as an objective measure of the extent of devolution. IWP is self-reported and does not substitute for administrative records of timeliness or formal performance appraisal.

The data were analysed using SPSS and AMOS. The procedure comprised Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM) using maximum likelihood estimation. Composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and standardised loadings were used to assess convergent validity; discriminant validity was considered in light of construct content and inter-construct correlations [24]. Common method bias was mitigated through anonymity, the separation of item groups, and a single-factor test following Podsakoff et al. [25]. Model fit was assessed concurrently using χ^2/df , GFI, AGFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, thereby avoiding reliance upon any single index [26]. Indirect effects were tested using 5,000 bootstrap resamples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals.

The analytical sequence was designed to prevent the fit of the structural model from obscuring measurement deficiencies. Internal consistency and the exploratory factor structure were examined first; CFA was then used to assess the eight-construct measurement model; and the hypothesised structural paths were estimated only thereafter. Path coefficients reported in the results are standardised coefficients, whereas p-values are derived from maximum likelihood estimates. Conclusions concerning indirect effects are based upon bootstrap confidence intervals that exclude zero. Relationships with p-values greater than 0.05 are described as having insufficient evidential support in the sample, rather than being converted into categorical claims of no effect.

The study does not calculate a single composite score for the overall quality of civil servants. NL reflects capability; PSM and DX represent personal resources; MT represents an organisational resource; JD and DQ capture demands; BO is an occupational state; and IWP is a self-assessed outcome. Retaining these constructs separately avoids conflating antecedent conditions with outcomes. Given the cross-sectional and same-source self-report data, the term 'association' is preferred to 'causal effect', notwithstanding that the SEM is specified in accordance with a theoretically ordered model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability, Measurement Validity, and Descriptive Statistics

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the eight measures ranged from 0.713 to 0.824. The KMO statistic was 0.911, Bartlett's test was statistically significant, and EFA produced an eight-factor solution explaining 61.92% of the variance. The measurement model achieved CFI=0.978, TLI=0.976, RMSEA=0.022, and SRMR=0.034. Standardised loadings ranged from 0.523 to 0.814, whilst CR values ranged from 0.825 to 0.863. The AVE values for NL and MT were 0.487 and 0.471, respectively, slightly below the indicative threshold of 0.50; however, all loadings exceeded 0.50 and both CR values exceeded 0.82. The two measures were therefore retained to preserve content validity. The first factor in the single-factor test accounted for 21.81% of the variance, providing no indication that a single general factor dominated the responses, although the risk associated with self-report data cannot be eliminated entirely.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Quality

Code	Construct	Mean	SD	α	CR	AVE	Std. loading range
NL	Implementation competence	3.909	0.519	0.713	0.825	0.487	0.553-0.759
MT	Work environment	3.830	0.589	0.796	0.860	0.471	0.523-0.784
PSM	Public service motivation	3.914	0.602	0.799	0.849	0.530	0.651-0.767
BO	Occupational burnout	3.456	0.711	0.824	0.862	0.556	0.642-0.814
IWP	Individual work performance	3.878	0.650	0.790	0.852	0.537	0.638-0.803
JD	Job demands	3.469	0.705	0.810	0.859	0.550	0.638-0.792
DQ	New-task demands	3.479	0.702	0.806	0.863	0.558	0.651-0.802
DX	Digital adaptability	3.898	0.659	0.796	0.842	0.516	0.652-0.770

Source: Author's analysis of the 2026 survey data.

The mean values for the personal resources were close to 3.9: NL=3.909, PSM=3.914, and DX=3.898. IWP had a mean of 3.878. Positively, respondents assessed their ability to understand procedures, address emergent tasks, and use digital tools relatively highly. Nevertheless, JD=3.469, DQ=3.479, and BO=3.456 were all above the scale midpoint; 31.62%, 32.50%, and 31.08% of respondents, respectively, had mean scores of four or above. The coexistence of relatively strong resources and above-midpoint burnout indicates that the workforce is sustaining performance whilst incurring appreciable psychological costs. High PSM does not remove the risk of depletion, nor does adaptability fully compensate for unstable infrastructure or procedures.

Structural Model and Direct Associations

The structural model demonstrated a good fit to the data: $\chi^2=1,014.824$; $df=793$; $\chi^2/df=1.280$; GFI=0.923; AGFI=0.912; CFI=0.978; TLI=0.976; RMSEA=0.022, with a 90% confidence interval of [0.018, 0.026]; and SRMR=0.034. The model explained 42.6% of the variance in BO and 59.3% of the variance in IWP. These represent substantial proportions of explained variance for behavioural data; however, R^2 is not a measure of the proportion of overall civil servant quality and does not permit causal inference.

Table 3. Tests of Direct Associations

Hyp.	Path	β	p	Decision
H1	NL $\rightarrow$ IWP	0.434	<0.001	Supported
H2	PSM $\rightarrow$ IWP	0.091	0.031	Supported
H3	DX $\rightarrow$ IWP	0.164	<0.001	Supported
H4	MT $\rightarrow$ IWP	0.076	0.078	Insufficient evidence
H5	MT $\rightarrow$ BO	-0.119	0.011	Supported
H6	JD $\rightarrow$ BO	0.319	<0.001	Supported
H7	DQ $\rightarrow$ BO	0.304	<0.001	Supported
H8	BO $\rightarrow$ IWP	-0.314	<0.001	Supported
H9	NL $\rightarrow$ BO	-0.066	0.218	Insufficient evidence
H10	PSM $\rightarrow$ BO	-0.110	0.020	Supported
H11	DX $\rightarrow$ BO	-0.123	0.008	Supported

Source: Author's analysis of the 2026 survey data.

NL had the strongest direct association with IWP ($\beta=0.434$), clearly exceeding those of DX ($\beta=0.164$) and PSM ($\beta=0.091$). This finding supports the proposition that formal qualifications or motivation create value only when translated into the capacity to manage procedures, coordinate work, and maintain current professional knowledge. As commune-level bodies assume a broader

range of responsibilities, training should move away from the accumulation of certificates and towards practice based on case files, administrative scenarios, and position-specific outputs. This interpretation is consistent with the competence approach [15] and with the conceptualisation of IWP as a behavioural outcome that must be situated within specific performance conditions [21]-[23].

DX was positively associated with IWP and negatively associated with BO. Digital adaptability therefore not only supports faster work but also reduces pressure arising from digital operations, data, and electronic workflows. One DX indicator, however, concerns training; the measure consequently reflects both individual capability and the availability of support. The implication is not merely to provide additional courses, but to connect training with user accounts, shared software platforms, data repositories, information security, and designated channels for resolving technical problems.

PSM was positively associated with IWP and negatively associated with BO, although the coefficients were small. This finding is consistent with research that treats PSM as a supplementary resource within public organisations [19], but it also demonstrates that a service ethic is not a costless resource. Reviews of PSM caution that its effects depend upon person-environment fit, the organisation of work, and opportunities to create public value [27], [28]. Human resource policy should not substitute prolonged exhortations to dedication for adequate organisational resources.

MT did not demonstrate a sufficiently robust direct association with IWP ($p=0.078$), but it was negatively associated with BO. This does not imply that the work environment is unimportant. The environment may protect outputs by reducing psychological costs before producing an observable direct improvement in performance. The buffering role of resources under high demands is a central proposition of JD-R theory [29]. In commune-level practice, clear allocation of responsibilities, collegial support, managerial feedback, infrastructure, and technical assistance enable civil servants to conserve energy; these conditions do not, however, substitute for professional competence.

JD and DQ exhibited positive associations of broadly comparable magnitude with BO ($\beta=0.319$ and $\beta=0.304$, respectively). Pressure therefore arises not only from the volume of routine work but also from institutional change. The two categories of demand require distinct forms of intervention. For JD, the priorities are to classify the complexity of casework, regulate multitasking, provide contingency capacity for unplanned assignments, and manage deadlines affected by interdependent processes. For DQ, the priorities are to clarify authority, standardise guidance, establish designated province-to-commune contact points, and develop new skills. Adding personnel without clarifying procedures will leave DQ elevated; issuing guidance without managing workload will allow JD to continue depleting staff.

BO had a comparatively strong negative association with IWP ($\beta=-0.314$). This is consistent with the energy-depletion process within JD-R theory and research on self-regulation in burnout [30]. Burnout should not be equated with a lack of responsibility; conscientious or highly capable staff may be allocated a disproportionate volume of difficult work. The absence of support for H9 indicates that high NL does not automatically reduce BO. Competence development without workload monitoring may turn high performers into the default recipients of difficult cases and sources of assistance for colleagues, thereby eroding any protective benefit that competence might otherwise confer.

Indirect Associations through Occupational Burnout

The results from 5,000 bootstrap resamples indicate that both hypothesised indirect paths were statistically significant. The standardised indirect coefficient for JD→BO→IWP was -0.100 , with a 95% confidence interval of $[-0.142, -0.063]$; the corresponding coefficient for DQ→BO→IWP was -0.095 , with a confidence interval of $[-0.137, -0.062]$. As the theoretical model does not specify direct paths from JD or DQ to IWP, the study concludes only that statistically significant indirect associations operate through BO; it does not characterise the relationships as either full or partial mediation.

Table 4. Tests of Indirect Associations

Hyp.	Indirect path	Indirect β	95% BC bootstrap CI	p	Decision
H12a	JD → BO → IWP	-0.100	$[-0.142, -0.063]$	<0.001	Significant
H12b	DQ → BO → IWP	-0.095	$[-0.137, -0.062]$	<0.001	Significant

Source: Standardised bootstrap estimates from AMOS, 5,000 resamples, 2026.



The two indirect effects indicate that high demands may not reduce performance immediately, but may increase strain and depletion, thereby diminishing the capacity to sustain timeliness, quality, and initiative. Managerial intervention must therefore occur before BO becomes chronic. Appropriate measures include workload dashboards covering task volumes, waiting times between administrative stages, the number of correction cycles, and complex cases; rapid access to professional support; discretion to reprioritise work; and protected time for updating knowledge, learning, and recovery. BO should be used solely as a signal for organisational support, not as a criterion for attributing blame or imposing individual discipline.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

First, the study extends the application of JD-R theory to institutional reform by distinguishing routine job demands from new-task demands. Although the JD→BO and DQ→BO coefficients are similar in magnitude, the constructs are not substantively interchangeable. Reorganisation changes not only the volume of work but also the costs of learning, interpreting authority, and establishing new coordination relationships. If DQ is subsumed within JD, policy responses may become disproportionately focused on additional staffing or extended time allowances, whilst overlooking deficiencies in guidance and skills.

Secondly, the model demonstrates that personal resources operate differently in relation to outputs and burnout. NL had the strongest association with IWP but no sufficiently robust association with BO; PSM and DX had smaller direct associations with IWP whilst also being negatively associated with BO. These findings establish that implementation competence must be developed alongside workload management. A highly capable employee may sustain performance without experiencing less depletion, particularly where that employee routinely receives difficult cases or becomes the principal source of support for colleagues.

Thirdly, MT displayed a more evident protective role than a direct output-producing role. This is an important finding for managerial evaluation: the benefits of infrastructure, managerial support, and internal coordination may first appear through reduced depletion rather than through an immediate increase in IWP scores. Improvements in the work environment should therefore not be evaluated solely by the number of cases completed within a short reporting period; system interruptions, coordination waiting times, requests for guidance, and signs of overload should also be monitored.

Table 5. Translating Research Findings into Management Instruments

Evidence	Managerial risk	Intervention	Monitoring indicator
JD → BO: $\beta=0.319$	Accumulated workload	routine Classify case complexity; regulate multitasking; provide contingency capacity for unplanned tasks	Cases per officer; peak-period hours; waiting time
DQ → BO: $\beta=0.304$	Gaps in authority and skills	Standardise guidance; establish a designated province-to-commune contact; provide case-based support	Response time; number of correction cycles; recurrent errors
NL, DX, PSM → IWP	Training disconnected from work outputs	Learn through case files and scenarios; mentoring; digital knowledge repository	First-time-right rate; timeliness; initiatives
BO → IWP: $\beta=-0.314$	Late detection and individual blame	Confidential alerts; workload adjustment; recovery and counselling	BO trend; staff turnover; errors and missed deadlines

Source: Developed by the author from the model results, 2026.

The matrix emphasises the principle of matching each instrument to the mechanism it is intended to address. A mean case-volume indicator cannot adequately represent workload if complexity and inter-stage waiting times are disregarded. A training course will not resolve DQ if participants still do not know whom to consult when confronted with an unfamiliar case. Conversely, a BO alert has value only where it results in support or organisational adjustment. If occupational well-being data are used to rate individuals, respondents will have an incentive to conceal difficulties and the system will lose an important early-warning signal.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study provides evidence that, within Gia Lai's two-tier local government system, the individual work performance of commune-level civil servants is shaped by the combination of personal resources and occupational well-being. Implementation competence had the strongest direct association with IWP, whilst digital adaptability and PSM played supplementary roles. The work environment primarily performed a protective function through its negative association with BO. Both routine job demands and new-task demands were positively associated with BO; BO, in turn, was negatively associated with IWP and transmitted two statistically significant indirect associations.

On the basis of these findings, Gia Lai Province may prioritise four groups of measures. First, work should be redesigned around job positions and deliverables: workload should be assessed by volume, complexity, time, inter-functional involvement, and legal risk, rather than by counting cases alone. Secondly, competence should be developed through authentic scenarios and work products, with particular attention to legislative updates, province-to-commune coordination, independent advisory work, and digital workflows. Thirdly, organisational resources should be strengthened through designated technical and professional support with specified response times, shared data, contingency infrastructure, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms. Fourthly, an early-warning system for BO should be established on the principles of confidentiality, support, and non-punitive use, combining workload adjustment, appropriate staff rotation, recovery, and occupational counselling.

Implementation should begin with a baseline measurement exercise within each category of organisational unit, recording task volumes, complexity, coordination waiting times, system interruptions, and support requirements concurrently. During the first six months, the Province may prioritise standardised question-and-answer contact points, a catalogue of recurrent situations, and a routing mechanism for complex cases. The subsequent phase should link training to work outputs by requiring participants to complete simulated scenarios or case files and receive post-exercise feedback. Evaluation should extend beyond the number of courses or participants to include first-time-right processing rates, response times across administrative levels, and trends in BO.

At managerial level, monitoring data should be aggregated by job position and task category, and individual BO scores should not be disclosed. Where a unit records high JD or DQ, the initial response should be to review procedures, authority, and resources before attributing the result to individual competence. Where IWP is low but BO is not elevated, the priority may be competence standards, mentoring, and professional feedback; where IWP remains satisfactory but BO increases, early intervention is required to prevent delayed deterioration. This decision logic converts the model's findings from a statistical report into an instrument for human resource decision-making and work organisation.

The study has several limitations. Cross-sectional data do not permit definitive causal inference. IWP, resources, demands, and BO were all self-reported by civil servants and may therefore be affected by common method bias and socially desirable responding. The sample was drawn from a single province, the Western-Eastern distribution was unbalanced, and commune identifiers were unavailable for multilevel modelling. IWP is a self-assessed outcome and is not equivalent to objective effectiveness or to the overall quality of civil servants. Citizen data and managerial interviews from the wider doctoral research are independent sources that were not matched to the 563 individuals and were therefore excluded from the SEM reported in this article. Future research should collect longitudinal data, establish anonymised links with administrative case-processing records, citizen feedback, and managerial assessments, and test multilevel models across multiple provinces.

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