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The Influence of Rural Collective “Three Capital” Management Issues on the Occupational Stress of Rural Accountants in Zibo City, Shandong Province Based on the Smart PLS 3

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CITATION

Qian C. The Influence of Rural Collective “Three Capital” Management Issues on the Occupational Stress of Rural Accountants in Zibo City, Shandong Province Based on the Smart PLS 3. *Innovative Organizational Design*. 2025; 1(2): 151.

<https://doi.org/10.63808/ioid.v1i2.151>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 25 June 2025

Accepted: 2 July 2025

Available online: 16 September 2025

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Abstract: The management of rural collective “three capital”

refers to the oversight of collective assets, resources, and funds within rural communities, a critical aspect of the rural economic management system. This study uses Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model) 3 to analyze the relationship between work stress among rural accounting practitioners and the management of collective assets, resources, and funds. The results show that resource management has a significant positive impact on the work stress of rural accounting practitioners, while the effects of asset and fund management are insignificant. Combined with a review of the literature, it was found that deficiencies in professional competencies and weak management authority exacerbate the occupational stress among accounting practitioners in resource management. This study suggests reducing work stress and improving management efficiency by strengthening resource management, enhancing the professional competencies of management personnel, and optimizing the working environment of accountants.

Keywords: rural accounting practitioners; work stress; rural capitals; Smart PLS 3



1. Introduction

The management of rural collective “three capital” refers to the oversight of rural collective assets, resources, and funds, holding a crucial position in the rural economic management system. By effectively managing collective assets, resources, and funds, rural economic growth can be fostered, thereby boosting collective income. However, in recent years, there has been a gradual increase in the turnover rate of accounting personnel in township units across Shandong Province, especially in the process of managing the collective “three capital,” where numerous mismanagement issues have surfaced. These problems not only hinder the development of the rural economy but also contribute to high levels of occupational stress, leading some township accountants to leave their jobs. This paper aims to examine the challenges within rural collective “three capital” management, analyze its impact on the occupational stress of township accountants in Shandong Province, and propose feasible solutions to provide relevant departments and managers with effective references and policy recommendations.

1.1. Research Background

With the continued deepening of rural economic reforms, the importance of rural collective “three capital” management has become increasingly prominent. As a fundamental component of China’s rural development, the management of the rural “three capital” (assets, resources, and funds) has long attracted significant attention (Qin, 2023). Through “three capital” management, rural collective economies can ensure the reasonable use of assets, efficient allocation of resources, and transparent management of funds, promoting sustainable and healthy economic growth in rural areas (Liu, 2019). However, with the rapid development of the rural economy, various issues have arisen in the “three capital” management of some townships in Shandong Province, including incomplete management systems, inadequate oversight mechanisms, and chaotic financial management (Sun, 2024). Sun (2024) points out that the management of Shandong’s rural collective “three capital” covers a broad range of assets, including cash, physical, and resource assets, as well as specific and collective income, many of which are complex historical issues that are difficult to



resolve due to unclear baselines and weak management foundations (Li, 2023). Problems in “three capital” management not only pose a threat to the sustainable development of the rural economy but also negatively impact the working environment of township accountants. As key implementers of “three capital” management, these accountants are not only responsible for heavy financial management tasks but also face multiple pressures arising from rural economic reforms (Xu, 2022).

1.2. Problem Statement

In township management across Shandong Province, the turnover rate of township accountants has remained persistently high, especially in areas with significant “three capital” management issues. The irregularities in rural collective “three capital” management encompass not only chaotic fund management and unreasonable resource allocation but also collective asset loss. According to Zuo (2023), issues such as a lack of effective guidance on the specific use of special funds, low efficiency in fund utilization, and frequent instances of fund misuse are common in township financial management. Li (2023) notes that resource allocation in rural collectives is often inequitable, with stronger internal interest ties in eastern rural areas where resources are relatively abundant, which significantly impacts village governance. Typically, the denser the endogenous resources, the more frequent political behaviors such as negotiations and power struggles surrounding resource distribution (Zhang, 2020). Ye and Chu (2021) observed that rural areas face serious issues of collective asset loss, highlighting the need for urgent measures to curb the misappropriation of various resources, including land and infrastructure.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies not only in its theoretical contributions but also in its practical policy implications. This research will delve deeply into this area to analyze how “three capital” management issues directly impact the career choices of grassroots financial personnel. Practically, most domestic studies focus on county-level and above, with research at the township level remaining relatively limited. Given the evolving landscape of village collective “three capital” management reform, some existing perspectives are outdated and should be revised or



restructured based on current rural realities. The findings of this study could provide scientific evidence for local governments, including those in Zibo City, Shandong Province, to optimize rural collective economic management systems and enhance accountants' occupational stability.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Occupational Stress Among Rural Accounting Practitioners

Qin (2023) describes financial personnel as a broad category. Under the rural financial accounting agency system, those involved in rural financial work include village accountants, financial staff of accounting agency services, and members of village finance management groups. This study focuses on issues concerning rural accounting practitioners, primarily village accountants. Cheng (2023) highlights the role of rural accountants in promoting economic development, enhancing village autonomy, and modernizing village governance. Lin (2024) also identifies major challenges facing rural accountants, such as an underdeveloped accounting system, a shortage of qualified accounting professionals, and a lack of digitalization. Liu's (2019) research on work stress among government financial personnel in China categorizes stress sources into six areas: work environment, intrinsic job characteristics and career development, interpersonal relationships, organizational support, work-life balance, and team roles.

2.2. Collective Fund Management

Dong (2022) states that with the accelerating urbanization process in China, community-level land compensation funds have been increasing, leading to an evolution in village financial management from traditional accounting practices to a layered custodianship system. Currently, village management centers mainly handle the custodianship of collective funds, which has limited accounting standardization, negatively affecting the transparency and compliance of fund management (Song, 2023). Song (2023) asserts that rural financial management is a responsibility that the government should uphold, yet regulatory efforts remain insufficient in current rural collective fund management. Fund usage often shows substantial discrepancies, and



the income and expenditure in administrative management and public welfare projects lack clarity. This lack of standardization in financial management leads to significant ambiguity in financial records (Fan, 2020).

2.3. Collective Resource Management

Zhang (2018) highlights limitations in management capability and a shortage of personnel as critical constraints in rural collective resource management. Township management authorities lack professional expertise and awareness in managing resource-based assets, which hinders efforts to conduct inventory and assess assets effectively (Yang, 2018). Yang's (2018) research on rural collective "three capital" management in Longba Township identifies the lack of specialized knowledge as a significant issue among village management personnel. The multiple and complex tasks handled by village officials dilute their focus, weakening their awareness of resource-based asset management. Consequently, resource management in rural collectives faces challenges in standardization and efficiency, necessitating targeted knowledge training and increased management awareness (Wu, 2022). Wu (2022) observes that management of collective resources in certain rural areas remains inadequate, with no effective standardization achieved.

2.4. Collective Asset Management

Ren (2022) identifies growing challenges in managing village collective assets as village organizations expand in scale. He (2020) highlights issues such as the improper use of financial vouchers and tax evasion during asset management processes at the township level. Liu (2020) lists key issues in village collective asset management, including discontinuity in accounting records and inadequate management of original documentation. Gao (2020) emphasizes that the most prominent issue in rural collective asset management is the lack of structured democratic oversight. Lin (2024) points out that deficiencies in the rural collective asset management system, lack of standardized processes, and inadequate oversight mechanisms have resulted in widespread "self-management" practices.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

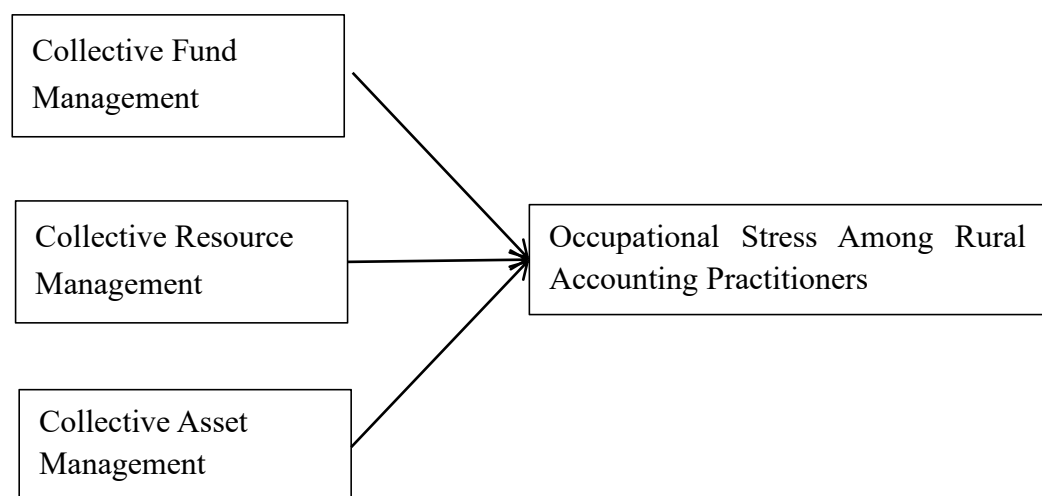
Based on the selected independent variables (collective fund management, collective resource allocation, and collective asset loss) and dependent variable (occupational stress of accountants), this study employs the stress theory developed by Price & Mueller. In their model, the structural variables—including distributive fairness, job stress, compensation, promotion opportunities, work monotony, and social support—represent different dimensions of job stress as discussed in this study. Job stress, in turn, affects employees' turnover intentions. In this study, the occupational stress of accounting personnel is primarily derived from three areas: collective fund management, resource allocation, and asset loss.

2.6. Research Framework

Based on the literature review above, here the author demonstrates the research framework as follows **Figure 1**.

Figure 1

Research Framework



3. Research Design

In terms of research design, this study adopts a quantitative analysis approach. First, data were collected through an online survey distributed to 50 accountants from 47 administrative villages in the Zhangdian District of Zibo City, Shandong Province, including Tanjia Village, Jiazhuang Village, and Xinan Village. The independent variable section of the questionnaire applied 15 “three capital” management



measurement dimensions developed by Sun (2024) and Hu (2020), covering issues in collective fund management, collective resource allocation, and collective asset management. The dependent variable section utilized 10 occupational stress measurement indicators from Ghasemi et al. (2019), focusing on aspects such as the nature of accounting work, salary and benefits, and workplace relationships. Additionally, interviews with township government officials were conducted to understand specific operational practices and challenges in “three capital” management across different townships.

4. Research Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis

Tables 1-5 show a balanced gender distribution (50% male, 50% female), with most respondents aged 26–45 (88%). Monthly incomes are generally low, with 68% earning 3000–5000 RMB and 32% earning 5000–7000 RMB. Educational levels include 54% with high school/vocational degrees and 46% with bachelor’s degrees. In terms of experience, 88% have worked for 2–10 years. Overall, the sample is composed mainly of middle-aged individuals with modest income, relatively low education, and limited work experience.

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	25	50.0	50.0	50.0
Valid Female	25	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis – Age

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid 18-25 years old	0	0	0	0
26-35 years old	20	40.0	40.0	40.0
36-45 years old	24	48.0	48.0	88.0
46-55 years old	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Above 55 years old	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis - Monthly Income

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Below 3000 RMB	0	0	0	0
3000-5000RMB	34	68.0	68.0	100.0
5000-7000RMB	16	32.0	32.0	32.0
7000-9000RMB	0	0	0	0
Above 9000RMB	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis - Education Level

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Middle school or below	0	0	0	0
High school / Vocational	0	0	0	0
Associate degree	27	54.0	54.0	54.0
Bachelor's degree	23	46.0	46.0	100.0
Graduate degree or above	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis - Years of Work Experience

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid 1year or less	3	6.0	6.0	12.0
2-5years	19	38.0	38.0	50.0
6-10years	25	50.0	50.0	100.0
11-15years	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Above 16years	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

4.2. Smart PLS Reliability and Validity Testing

According to the reliability and validity test results in Smart PLS, all variables in **Table 6** show good reliability and validity. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each variable exceed the 0.7 standard, indicating high internal consistency. The composite reliability values (rho_a and rho_c) are all above 0.8, demonstrating strong reliability across variables. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables

exceed 0.5, confirming good convergent validity within the model. Overall, the model's reliability and validity are acceptable.

Table 6

Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Occupational Stress of Accountants	0.931	0.937	0.942	0.619
Collective Asset Management	0.837	0.839	0.885	0.607
Collective Resource Management	0.922	0.928	0.942	0.767
Collective Fund Management	0.886	0.896	0.918	0.692

4.3. Smart PLS Independence Testing

Smart PLS independence test results (**Table 7**) show strong correlations among variables, particularly between collective asset and resource management (0.945), and between resource and fund management (0.850). Despite these high correlations, the model maintains good discriminant validity, confirming that the latent variables are clearly distinguishable.

Table 7

Discriminant Validity

	Collective Asset Management	Collective Asset Management	Collective Resource Management	Collective Fund Management
Collective Asset Management				
Collective Asset Management	0.803			
Collective Resource Management	0.833	0.945		
Collective Fund Management	0.737	0.848	0.850	

4.4. Smart PLS R² Testing

According to the model fit test results in Smart PLS, the R² value for occupational stress among accounting practitioners is 0.648, meaning the explanatory variables account for 64.8% of the variance in occupational stress among rural accountants. This indicates a high level of explanatory power within the model. The adjusted R² of 0.625, slightly lower than the original R² due to the degrees of freedom, still demonstrates stable explanatory power for job stress (**Table 8**).

Table 8

Model Fit Testing

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Occupational Stress of Accountants	0.648	0.625

4.5. Smart PLS Bootstrap Testing

Based on the PLS bootstrap test results in **Table 9**, collective resource management has a significant positive effect on the occupational stress of rural accounting practitioners, with a P-value of 0.012, meeting the significance threshold of 0.05. However, the effects of collective asset management and collective fund management on occupational stress are not statistically significant, with P-values of 0.177 and 0.324, respectively. Thus, only collective resource management has a significant influence on occupational stress within the model.

Table 9

Bootstrap Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Value
Collective Asset Management -> Occupational Stress of Accountants	0.221	0.244	0.164	1.349	0.177
Collective Resource Management -> Occupational Stress of Accountants	0.493	0.475	0.197	2.500	0.012



Collective Fund					
Management ->					
Occupational Stress of	0.142	0.144	0.144	0.986	0.324
Accountants					

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined how rural collective asset, resource, and fund management in Shandong Province affects the occupational stress of rural accounting practitioners. The analysis revealed that among these, only collective resource management significantly contributes to stress, due to weak authority, staff shortages, limited expertise, and inadequate controls.

To address this, the study recommends professionalizing resource management in line with the Third Plenary Session's directives. Key measures include applying GIS for resource registration, building digital oversight platforms, enhancing external audits, and strengthening personnel training. Improving rural accountants' working conditions—through intelligent systems, fair task allocation, psychological support, and better pay—can further reduce stress and enhance efficiency. These reforms aim to modernize rural collective management and support sustainable rural development.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

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