



## Improving the Quality of Oversight Activities of the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune, Thanh Hoa Province: Evidence from A Newly Merged Commune

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**KEYWORDS:** People's Council; local oversight; commune governance; administrative merger; Thanh Hoa; accountability.

**ABSTRACT:** This article examines how the quality of oversight exercised by the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune can be improved in the context of administrative reorganization and rising expectations for grassroots accountability. The study adopts a single-case design and combines legal analysis, documentary analysis, and a descriptive survey. Documentary sources include legal instruments governing local oversight, socioeconomic reports of Thanh Hoa Province, the 2026 organizational report of the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune, and records inherited from predecessor communes. The survey dataset consists of 120 valid responses, including 30 People's Council delegates, 20 commune officials and civil servants, and 70 voters. Descriptive statistics on a five-point Likert scale were used to assess five dimensions of oversight quality: planning, evidence collection, questioning and explanation, transparency and citizen participation, and post-oversight follow-up. The findings show that Linh Toai Commune has maintained the operational continuity of its representative institution after merger and has selected oversight topics that are relatively close to voters' daily concerns, especially waste-fee collection and benefits for meritorious service beneficiaries. However, the weakest links remain evidence triangulation, digital tools for receiving public feedback, and the institutionalization of follow-up after oversight conclusions are issued. Reform priorities identified by respondents focus on standardized procedures and forms, practical training for delegates, stronger post-oversight monitoring, data management, and broader citizen participation. The article argues that in newly merged communes, oversight quality depends less on the formal availability of powers than on procedural standardization, usable data, and the ability to convert conclusions into enforceable follow-up actions.

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### INTRODUCTION

Oversight is a core function of representative institutions because it connects legality, accountability, and democratic legitimacy within public governance. In local government settings, oversight is not merely a procedural review of reports. It is also a political and administrative mechanism through which representative bodies examine whether executive authorities comply with the law, implement adopted resolutions, and respond effectively to citizens' needs. This understanding is especially important in Vietnam, where the People's Council operates as the elected local representative body and performs both decision-making and supervisory functions under the Constitution and specialized legislation.

At the commune level, oversight has a particularly direct relationship with people's daily life. Commune authorities administer public services and routine matters that are immediately visible to residents, including environmental sanitation, local infrastructure, administrative procedures, social policy, public complaints, and communication with voters. For that reason, the quality of oversight at the grassroots level cannot be assessed solely by whether meetings are held or conclusions are issued. It must also be judged by whether the oversight process identifies real bottlenecks, demands credible explanations from the executive branch, and produces follow-up actions that are meaningful to local communities. This understanding aligns with international work on parliamentary and

local-government oversight, which emphasizes the link between procedural compliance, evidence-based inquiry, and the capacity to hold government to account.

Vietnam's recent reforms in local administration have made this issue more pressing. In addition to the general requirement to improve the quality of public service delivery, the reorganization of local administrative units has changed the scale and complexity of governance at the commune level. Newly merged communes often inherit diverse administrative routines, fragmented datasets, uneven infrastructure, and different patterns of interaction with citizens. As a result, representative institutions must supervise a broader territory and a larger population while working through transitional arrangements in staffing, records, and coordination. In such contexts, the formal powers of oversight may remain intact, but the practical ability to use those powers well can weaken.

Thanh Hoa Province provides a useful setting for examining this issue. The province has pursued ambitious development goals while also facing growing expectations regarding administrative efficiency, transparency, and service responsiveness. These pressures are felt strongly at the commune level, where local authorities serve as the first point of contact between citizens and the state. Linh Toai Commune is a particularly relevant case because it was formed after the 2025 rearrangement of commune-level administrative units in Thanh Hoa Province. According to the local organizational report, the new commune covers 30.48 square kilometers, includes 31 villages, and has a population of more than 24,888 people. The commune therefore represents a governance space that is much larger and more diverse than the predecessor units from which it was created.

The local context helps explain why oversight quality is now a practical governance problem rather than a purely legal one. In the first phase after merger, the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune had to maintain institutional continuity while reorganizing internal structures, coordinating with the People's Committee and mass organizations, and responding to the everyday concerns of residents distributed across a widened territory. The commune's own report indicates that the People's Council had already selected oversight topics connected to immediate public concerns, such as waste-fee collection and the implementation of benefits for people with meritorious service. These choices suggest an awareness that grassroots oversight is most meaningful when it addresses issues that citizens can observe directly. Yet the same report also points to limits in data preparation, supporting staff, and the regularity of follow-up, thereby raising questions about whether issue selection alone is sufficient to improve oversight quality.

The scholarly and policy relevance of this case lies in a persistent gap between legal empowerment and operational capacity. Vietnamese legislation clearly recognizes the supervisory function of People's Councils, and the Standing Committee of the National Assembly has issued procedural guidance for local representative bodies. Nevertheless, previous research on local oversight in Vietnam has repeatedly shown that oversight can remain formalistic when delegates rely excessively on administrative reports, when questioning lacks depth, or when post-oversight monitoring is not sustained. International experience reaches a similar conclusion: the real value of oversight depends on problem selection, access to reliable evidence, disciplined follow-up, and the institutionalization of learning rather than on the mere multiplication of supervisory activities.

Against this background, the present article asks three interrelated questions. First, how has the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune performed its oversight function in the initial period after administrative merger? Second, which dimensions of oversight quality appear relatively strong, and which remain weak? Third, what reform priorities are most likely to improve oversight quality in the commune up to 2030? The article addresses these questions through a case-study design that combines legal analysis, document review, and descriptive survey evidence.

The article contributes in three ways. Empirically, it brings together local documentation and survey evidence from a newly merged commune, a type of setting that is becoming increasingly important but remains underexplored in Vietnamese public-management scholarship. Analytically, it operationalizes oversight quality as a multidimensional construct covering planning, evidence collection, questioning and explanation, transparency and citizen participation, and post-oversight follow-up. Practically, it identifies a reform logic suited to communes with limited resources: rather than broadening oversight mechanically, local representative bodies should standardize procedures, strengthen the skills of delegates and supporting staff, improve data management, and track implementation of post-oversight recommendations in a systematic way.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a single-case design centered on Linh Toai Commune and adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed strategy. The case-study approach is appropriate because the article is concerned not with statistical generalization but with contextualized explanation. Linh Toai Commune is analytically important due to its recent formation through administrative merger, its expanded governance scale, and the existence of local records documenting the early operation of the commune's People's Council. The study therefore examines how oversight quality is constituted under real institutional constraints in a transitional local setting.

Three sources of data were used. First, the study reviewed the legal framework that structures local oversight in Vietnam, including the 2013 Constitution, the 2015 Law on Oversight Activities of the National Assembly and People's Councils, the Law on Access to Information, the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, the 2025 Law on Organization of Local Government, and Resolution No. 594/NQ-UBTVQH15 guiding oversight by People's Councils and their delegates. Second, documentary evidence was collected from the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune and related local records. These materials include the 2026 report on the organization and operation of the commune's People's Council, oversight plans, meeting documents, and information

inherited from the four predecessor communes for the period 2020 to June 2025. Third, a descriptive survey was conducted to capture the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding the quality of oversight.

The survey dataset includes 120 valid questionnaires. Respondents were selected through purposive and convenience sampling to ensure representation of three groups with different relationships to the oversight process: 30 People's Council delegates, 20 commune officials and civil servants, and 70 voters. The intention was not to estimate province-wide attitudes but to triangulate insider and outsider assessments of how oversight operates in the commune. The voter group provides a particularly useful corrective to self-assessments by delegates because residents are directly affected by the degree to which oversight translates into visible administrative improvement.

Survey items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates a very low level or strong disagreement and 5 indicates a very high level or strong agreement. The interpretation intervals were: 1.00-1.80 very low; 1.81-2.60 low; 2.61-3.40 moderate; 3.41-4.20 fairly good; and 4.21-5.00 very high. Data were processed with descriptive statistics. Because the study aims to diagnose institutional strengths and bottlenecks rather than test causal hypotheses, the analysis relies on mean scores, internal comparison across dimensions, and interpretation in light of documentary evidence.

The analytical framework defines oversight quality as a multidimensional construct. The first dimension concerns planning and topic selection, including whether the oversight program addresses issues that matter to citizens, whether objectives are clear, and whether responsibilities are assigned realistically. The second dimension concerns evidence collection and field verification, including the adequacy of reports, the extent to which information is checked from multiple sources, and the use of field visits and quantitative data. The third dimension concerns questioning and explanation, especially whether questions are focused, whether they identify responsibility clearly, and whether commitments after explanation are specific. The fourth dimension concerns transparency, digital tools, and citizen participation, including the accessibility of information before oversight and the existence of channels for public feedback. The fifth dimension concerns post-oversight follow-up, including clarity of conclusions, deadlines, reminders, progress tracking, and timeliness of response.

In addition to the survey, the documentary analysis serves a crucial interpretive function. Local reports indicate that the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune maintained an internal structure consisting of a four-member Standing Committee, two Boards, and five delegate groups after the merger. Documentary evidence also identifies the initial oversight themes prioritized by the commune, the forms of coordination between the People's Council and the People's Committee, and specific difficulties related to personnel transition and document preparation. Combining these materials with the survey results makes it possible to distinguish between institutional intent and operational practice.

The study has two methodological limitations that should be stated in advance. First, it focuses on a single commune and therefore does not claim broad statistical representativeness. Second, the survey relies on perception-based measures, which can be shaped by role-specific expectations. These limits are partially mitigated through triangulation between legal texts, local documentary records, and respondent groups with different institutional positions. In this sense, the article aims to provide an analytically rigorous and practice-oriented account of one commune's oversight capacity during a period of institutional transition.

## RESULTS

The first finding is that Linh Toai Commune's People's Council succeeded in preserving the basic continuity of representative oversight after the administrative merger. According to the local report, the commune's People's Council was reorganized with a four-member Standing Committee, two Boards, and five delegate groups. From an institutional perspective, this is important because newly merged communes often face a risk of functional disruption, especially where records, responsibilities, and channels of communication from predecessor units have not yet been fully harmonized. The fact that the People's Council sustained plenary meetings, appraisals of materials, voter-contact activities, and initial thematic oversight indicates that it did not remain passive in the post-merger transition.

The second finding is that the commune's oversight agenda was relatively close to immediate public concerns. The commune selected topics such as waste-fee collection across villages and the implementation of benefits for people with meritorious service. This is more than a descriptive detail. At the grassroots level, oversight gains legitimacy when it addresses problems that citizens can verify through daily experience. Oversight topics that are too abstract or too distant from everyday governance rarely generate strong follow-up. By contrast, environmental sanitation, social-policy benefits, and routine administrative service issues are areas in which the People's Council can both respond to voter concerns and assess whether executive action is producing visible effects. Survey evidence reinforces this point. The planning and topic-selection dimension obtained the highest composite score among the five oversight dimensions, with a mean of 3.67, corresponding to a fairly good level. Within this dimension, the highest single indicator was the extent to which oversight topics addressed issues of voter concern, with a mean score of 3.92. The clarity of oversight objectives also scored relatively well at 3.78. Even the more operational indicators within this dimension, such as the quality of outlines and plans at 3.65, feasibility of timelines at 3.51, and clarity of responsibility allocation at 3.47, remained in the fairly good range. Taken together, these scores suggest that the commune's People's Council has already moved beyond purely ceremonial oversight and has begun to frame its supervisory agenda around substantive issues.

At the same time, the evidence shows that effective planning does not automatically guarantee strong execution. Documentary records suggest that the commune's institutional environment remained under strain due to transitional personnel arrangements and uneven preparation of supporting materials. In practice, this means that oversight may start from the right question but still lack the technical depth needed to transform concern into enforceable accountability. This distinction between agenda relevance and operational rigor is central to understanding the rest of the findings.

A more mixed pattern appears in the dimension of evidence collection and field verification. The mean score for this dimension was 3.37, which falls at the upper end of the moderate range. Respondents considered the cooperation of supervised units relatively acceptable, with a mean of 3.54, and the adequacy of files and reports also scored above the midpoint at 3.43. However, more demanding indicators performed less well: triangulation of information from multiple sources scored 3.36, frequency of field verification before conclusions 3.28, and the use of quantitative data in analysis 3.22. These results are highly revealing. They suggest that the commune's People's Council is able to obtain administrative documents and maintain working relations with the executive, but it still depends too heavily on the information that supervised units provide.

The local report helps explain why this happens. In one thematic oversight activity, the Standing Committee supervised waste-fee collection in all 31 villages but conducted direct field verification in only five villages. In another activity, the Board responsible for socio-cultural affairs supervised the implementation of benefits for people with meritorious service. These efforts are meaningful, yet they also illustrate the operational challenge of supervising a geographically wider commune with limited staff support. A newly merged commune inherits not only more territory but also more dispersed information. Unless data are standardized and local delegate groups are integrated effectively into evidence collection, oversight risks becoming descriptive rather than investigative.

Questioning and explanation represent another area of partial progress. The corresponding composite mean was 3.36. Respondents gave a fairly good score to the focus of questioning, at 3.61, indicating that delegates are increasingly able to identify relevant issues during meetings and explanations. Yet the scores decline when the indicators move from issue identification to accountability enforcement. The ability to trace responsibility to a specific individual or unit received 3.34; the specificity of commitments after explanation received 3.29; and the ability to follow up those commitments after questioning received only 3.18. This pattern shows that the commune's People's Council is better at surfacing issues than at institutionalizing responsibility.

This distinction matters because questioning is one of the clearest public expressions of oversight. A representative body may reduce the time allocated to report reading and increase time for discussion, as the commune's report indicates, yet the value of that change depends on whether discussion culminates in traceable commitments. In settings where multiple issues compete for attention during meetings, questioning can easily stop at the level of acknowledging a problem and accepting a general explanation. Without a structured record of who promised what by when, the accountability chain weakens quickly after the meeting ends.

The fourth dimension—transparency, digital tools, and citizen participation—also shows a dual pattern. The overall mean was 3.35. Information provision before meetings or oversight activities received 3.57, which indicates that the commune has made some effort to inform stakeholders in advance. Access of citizens to information scored 3.41, still within the fairly good range. However, the responsiveness to voter recommendations scored 3.37, and the use of information technology for receiving public feedback dropped to 3.05, the lowest single score across all reported indicators. This is one of the most significant findings in the study.

The weakness of digital intake mechanisms implies that the commune's People's Council still depends primarily on conventional channels such as scheduled voter-contact sessions, face-to-face meetings, and local broadcasting tools for one-way notice dissemination. These channels remain important, but they are not sufficient for a commune with more than 24,000 residents and 31 villages. In a post-merger setting, unequal distance from the commune center can make scheduled participation more costly for some groups than for others. If oversight is to remain genuinely close to citizens, it must diversify how evidence and feedback are collected. This does not necessarily require sophisticated digital platforms at the outset; even a modest system for publicizing oversight topics, logging complaints or recommendations, and tracking responses could materially improve the oversight cycle.

The documentary record again supports this interpretation. The commune's information channels included updates through the commune's electronic portal and use of local broadcasting tools to announce voter-contact schedules. Yet no strong evidence appears of a consolidated digital dashboard or public follow-up register for oversight recommendations. In other words, the commune has taken steps toward openness, but not yet toward a full cycle of open and traceable oversight. For citizens, this creates an information gap: they may know that oversight occurred, but not always whether recommendations were implemented and with what results.

**Table 1. Survey sample and respondent groups**

Respondent group	Frequency	Share (%)
People's Council delegates	30	25.0
Commune officials and civil servants	20	16.7
Voters	70	58.3

*Source:* Author's survey, 120 valid questionnaires.

The weakest structural area is post-oversight follow-up. This dimension received the lowest composite score, 3.31, despite the fact that the clarity of oversight conclusions still scored a fairly good 3.66. Once again, the disaggregation is analytically important. Respondents considered the written conclusions reasonably clear, but the indicators decline sharply in the stages that come afterward: clarity of implementation deadlines scored 3.32, quality of reminders and follow-up actions 3.21, ability to update progress on implementation 3.12, and the proportion of issues responded to on time 3.26. This result suggests that Linh Toai Commune's People's Council already understands the need to conclude oversight activities formally, but it has not yet built a robust mechanism for turning those conclusions into monitored and enforceable action.

This finding is consistent with one of the recurring problems identified in both Vietnamese and international scholarship on oversight: the formal issuance of conclusions is often treated as the endpoint, whereas in substantive accountability terms it should be the midpoint. Oversight becomes effective only when supervised bodies are required to report back against specified deadlines, when delays are explained, and when unresolved issues re-enter the agenda of subsequent meetings or supervisory sessions. In low-capacity local settings, the absence of even a simple tracking matrix can cause recommendations to lose force over time.

**Table 2. Mean scores by dimension of oversight quality**

Dimension	No. of items	Mean score	Interpretation
Planning and topic selection	5	3.67	Fairly good
Evidence collection and field verification	5	3.37	Moderate
Questioning and explanation	4	3.36	Moderate
Transparency, digital tools, and citizen participation	4	3.35	Moderate
Post-oversight follow-up	5	3.31	Moderate

*Note: Interpretation thresholds follow the study scale: 1.00-1.80 very low; 1.81-2.60 low; 2.61-3.40 moderate; 3.41-4.20 fairly good; 4.21-5.00 very high.*

The survey also asked respondents to prioritize major reform groups to 2030. The results are highly instructive because they show what local actors believe would make the greatest difference in practice. Standardization of oversight procedures and forms was ranked first, with an average priority score of 4.48. Capacity building for People's Council delegates ranked second at 4.36. Stronger post-oversight monitoring ranked third at 4.29. Information technology and data management followed at 4.14, and broader citizen participation ranked fifth at 4.08. All five groups were rated at a high level of priority, but their ranking matters: respondents are not calling for symbolic reform, but for concrete procedural tools, practical skills, and disciplined follow-up.

These priority rankings also reveal something fundamental about the commune's institutional diagnosis. Stakeholders do not appear to believe that the principal problem is the absence of legal authority. Rather, they identify a need to standardize how oversight is prepared, conducted, documented, and followed up. This diagnosis aligns with the documentary record, which shows that the People's Council has already displayed a willingness to supervise issues relevant to local life. The missing ingredient is a more systematic operating model that can survive personnel transitions, support delegates working on a part-time basis, and reduce dependence on ad hoc practice.

**Table 3. Priority ranking of reform groups to 2030**

Reform group	Average priority score	Rank
Standardization of oversight procedures and forms	4.48	1
Capacity building for People's Council delegates	4.36	2
Strengthening post-oversight follow-up	4.29	3
Information technology and data management	4.14	4
Broadening citizen participation	4.08	5

*Source: Author's survey, 120 valid questionnaires.*

## DISCUSSION

The findings support a broader argument about grassroots accountability in post-merger local governments: the practical quality of oversight depends less on the formal possession of supervisory powers than on the institutionalization of process. Linh Toai Commune's People's Council operates within a legal framework that clearly defines oversight authority, yet the survey and documentary evidence show that legal authority alone does not guarantee effective oversight. The commune has been relatively successful in selecting topics that resonate with voter concerns, but its more fragile performance in evidence triangulation, digital participation, and follow-up indicates that oversight quality is produced through routines, tools, and organizational learning rather than through statutes alone.

This distinction helps explain why planning and topic selection emerged as the strongest dimension. In newly merged communes, issue selection is often the first capacity that representative bodies adapt because it relies on political sensitivity and proximity to daily life more than on advanced technical infrastructure. Delegates can recognize public concern about waste management, social-policy benefits, or administrative bottlenecks even before new datasets are fully harmonized. In this sense, topic selection reflects adaptive legitimacy. The People's Council demonstrates that it is paying attention to residents' concerns and that it understands where oversight can generate visible value. This is an important institutional asset and should not be underestimated.

However, the article's results also show the limits of adaptive legitimacy when not accompanied by procedural consolidation. If oversight relies mainly on concern-driven topic choice without sufficient evidence triangulation, it can become reactive rather than analytical. The moderate scores for field verification and use of data suggest that the People's Council still faces a classic grassroots dilemma: the wider the territory and the more varied the inherited records, the harder it becomes to build a common evidentiary baseline. International guidance on parliamentary oversight repeatedly stresses that evidence-based scrutiny requires access to credible information, structured preparation, and deliberate follow-up. The Linh Toai case shows how difficult it is to operationalize these principles in a commune whose support capacity is limited and whose delegates are largely part-time.

The commune's middling performance in questioning and explanation should therefore be read not simply as a problem of delegate confidence or rhetorical skill, but as a symptom of incomplete institutional support. Focused questions can be asked without much infrastructure; targeted accountability is harder. To assign responsibility clearly, delegates need timely access to relevant documents, a shared understanding of the chain of command, and, perhaps most importantly, a system for recording the commitments made during questioning. Without these supports, questioning may improve the tone of deliberation but still fail to produce a strong accountability trail. This interpretation resonates with previous Vietnamese studies that link formalistic oversight to weak follow-up and insufficient preparation rather than to a total absence of delegate effort.

The findings on transparency and digital participation are equally significant. The lowest single indicator in the study was the use of information technology to receive public feedback. This should not be dismissed as a peripheral matter. In merged communes, geographic enlargement changes the conditions under which citizens can interact with representative institutions. Traditional voter-contact sessions remain necessary, but they do not fully solve the problem of unequal access to participation. Basic digital tools can lower the transaction cost of contact, broaden the range of public input, and create a clearer documentary trail of requests and responses. From the perspective of open-government thinking, transparency is not only about disclosure; it is also about the ability of citizens to see whether their concerns enter the institutional agenda and what happens afterward.

The weakness of post-oversight follow-up is perhaps the most decisive finding of the article because it affects the entire oversight cycle. If post-oversight monitoring remains underdeveloped, then improvements in planning, field verification, or questioning will generate only partial returns. A clear conclusion without a deadline, a responsible unit, a progress register, and a return mechanism is unlikely to change administrative behavior in a durable way. This is why respondents ranked standardized procedures and forms, delegate capacity building, and stronger follow-up as their top three reform priorities. They are, in effect, calling for an oversight system that is trackable rather than episodic.

From a public-management perspective, the policy implications are relatively pragmatic. First, Linh Toai Commune does not need to enlarge the number of oversight topics mechanically. Fewer, better-defined topics could produce greater impact, especially if they are paired with specific evidence requirements and follow-up schedules. Second, standardization should begin with simple instruments: a common template for oversight plans, a field-verification checklist, a questioning matrix, a conclusion form with deadlines and assigned responsibility, and a progress-tracking sheet updated periodically. Third, delegate training should be practice-oriented rather than abstract, focusing on how to read reports critically, identify evidentiary gaps, formulate accountability questions, and monitor commitments over time.

Fourth, the commune should connect formal oversight more closely with social oversight by citizens and local mass organizations. This does not mean outsourcing the People's Council's constitutional role. Rather, it means building channels through which local knowledge can strengthen evidence collection and follow-up. Village heads, local branches of mass organizations, and voters themselves can help identify implementation gaps that administrative reports may not reveal clearly. When these channels are linked to a documented oversight process, the People's Council gains a stronger empirical basis for its conclusions while citizens see more clearly how their input influences representative action.

Finally, the Linh Toai case has broader relevance for other newly merged communes in Vietnam. Administrative reorganization often produces a temporary mismatch between governance scale and institutional routine. Representative bodies inherit a larger service environment before they inherit standardized information and stable operating procedures. Under such conditions, it is unrealistic to expect high-quality oversight to arise spontaneously from legal authority alone. What becomes necessary is a model of incremental institutionalization: select high-impact topics, standardize core tools, train delegates in practical supervision, make public participation easier, and treat follow-up as a mandatory phase of oversight rather than an optional add-on.

## CONCLUSION

This article examined the quality of oversight activities performed by the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune in the period following administrative merger. Using a case-study design that combined legal analysis, local documentary evidence, and a survey of 120 respondents, the study found that the commune's representative institution has preserved operational continuity and has made meaningful progress in selecting oversight topics that correspond to voters' daily concerns. In this respect, the People's Council has already demonstrated adaptive capacity in a challenging transitional context.

At the same time, the study identified a clear hierarchy of institutional weaknesses. Evidence collection remains only moderately developed because information from supervised units is not yet systematically triangulated through field verification and standardized data use. Questioning during meetings has become more focused, but commitments are not always translated into traceable responsibility. Transparency has improved in conventional channels, yet digital intake of citizen feedback remains limited. Most importantly, post-oversight follow-up is the weakest point in the supervision cycle, indicating that oversight conclusions have not yet been embedded in a disciplined implementation-tracking process.

The principal implication is that improving oversight quality at the commune level requires procedural consolidation rather than rhetorical expansion. In newly merged communes, the key reforms are practical: standardize plans and forms, improve evidence collection, train delegates in issue-focused questioning, create accessible channels for citizen feedback, and establish a visible mechanism for monitoring implementation of oversight conclusions. If these steps are taken seriously, the People's Council of Linh Toai Commune can strengthen not only its own supervisory performance but also the wider quality of local accountability and public service responsiveness up to 2030.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Two limitations should be acknowledged. First, the article focuses on a single commune and therefore does not claim to represent all newly merged communes in Vietnam. Local political culture, staff capacity, and inherited administrative patterns may vary substantially across provinces and districts. Second, the empirical analysis relies mainly on descriptive statistics and documentary interpretation rather than on longitudinal or causal modeling. The survey captures perceptions of oversight quality at a specific stage of institutional development, not changes over a long time horizon.

These limitations point to several directions for future research. Comparative studies across multiple merged communes could help determine which oversight bottlenecks are context-specific and which are systemic. Longitudinal studies could track whether procedural standardization and training actually improve implementation rates after oversight conclusions are issued. Future work may also combine survey evidence with direct observation of questioning sessions, field-verification visits, and follow-up meetings. Such research would deepen understanding of how legal authority, organizational routine, and public participation interact in shaping grassroots oversight quality in Vietnam's evolving local-governance system.

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