


# Are poverty-targeting tools practicable?

## Results from a mixed-methods study of ethnic groups in southern Vietnam





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### 1. Introduction

- Poverty-targeting tools (PTTs) use proxy indicators to identify households below income or food-consumption thresholds in social programs.
- The practicability of PTTs, the simplicity and verifiability of their indicators, is crucial for ensuring their accuracy and cost-effectiveness in practice.
- However, the simplicity and verifiability of indicators are often assumed by developers, without input from end-users or real-world assessment.
- This study applies both qualitative and quantitative method to assess the practicability of Ethnic Minority Poverty targeting tools (EMP tools), previously developed and validated in lab conditions.
- The findings aim to support the development of accurate and practical PTTs for ethnic minorities in Vietnam.


### 2. Methodology

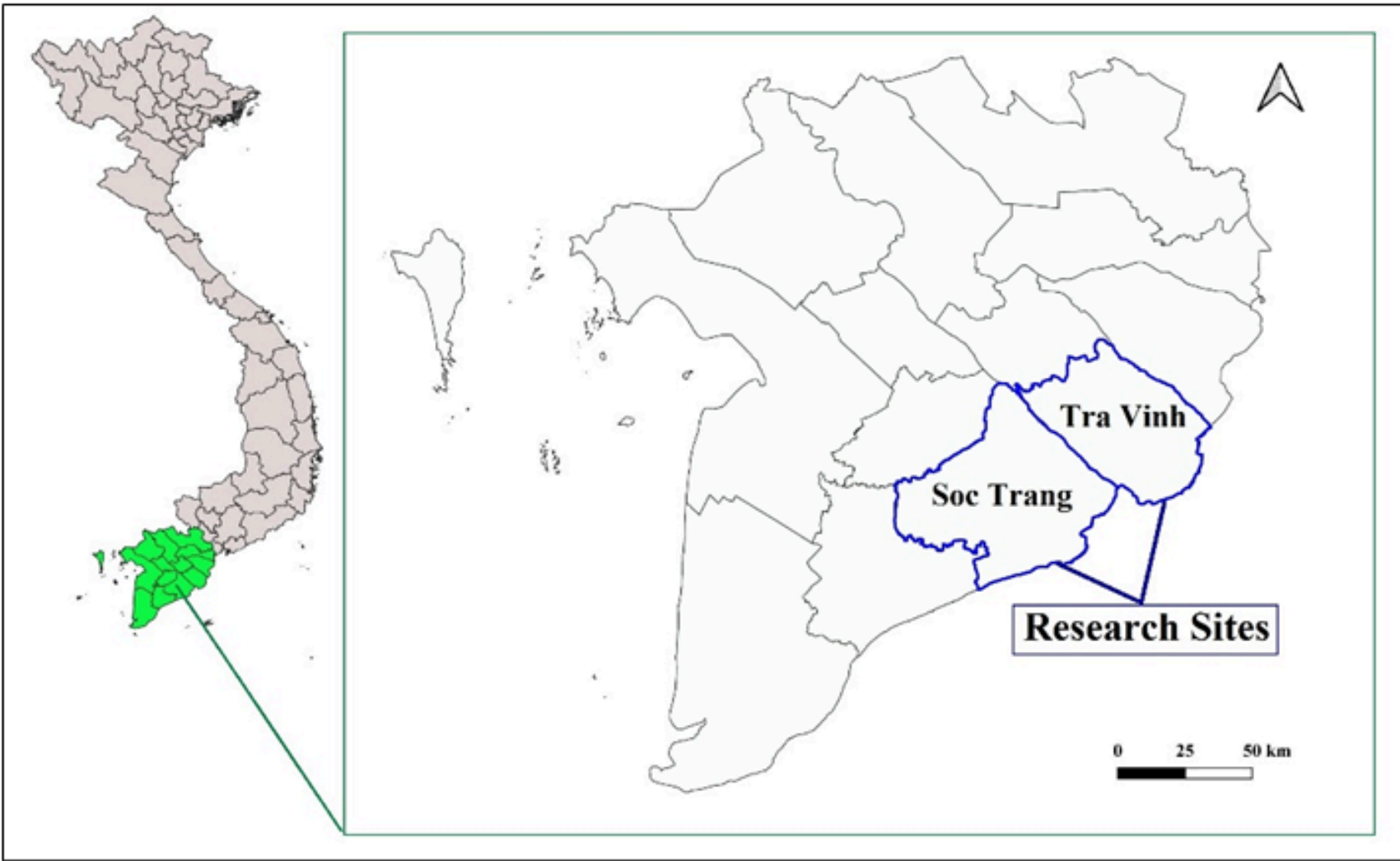
**Research Site:** Khmer communities in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta, Vietnam

**Data Collection:**

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): 10 local officials
- Semi-structured Interviews (SSIs): 105 poverty-targeting enumerators
- Simplicity and verifiability: Likert-scale (1=Very difficult, 5=Very easy)

**Data Analysis**

- Assessment of Practicability**
  - Simple indicator:  $\geq 50\%$  “Very easy” + “Easy”  **Practical indicator**
  - Verifiable indicator:  $\geq 50\%$  “Very easy” + “Easy”
- Verification Approach:**
  - Thematic analysis of qualitative data
- Determinants of Tools’ Practicability:**
  - Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression & Factor Analysis



### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Simplicity

- All 16 EMP indicators meet the 50% simplicity threshold, scores exceeding 60%.  
→ Enumerators find all indicators straightforward.
- Commonly assumed simple indicators:
  - “Non-agricultural labor with contract” → 61.9% (Easy and Very easy)
  - “Hired labor without contract” → 62.8%
- Indicators with difficulty concerns in literature:
  - “Perennial crop land area” → 76.2%

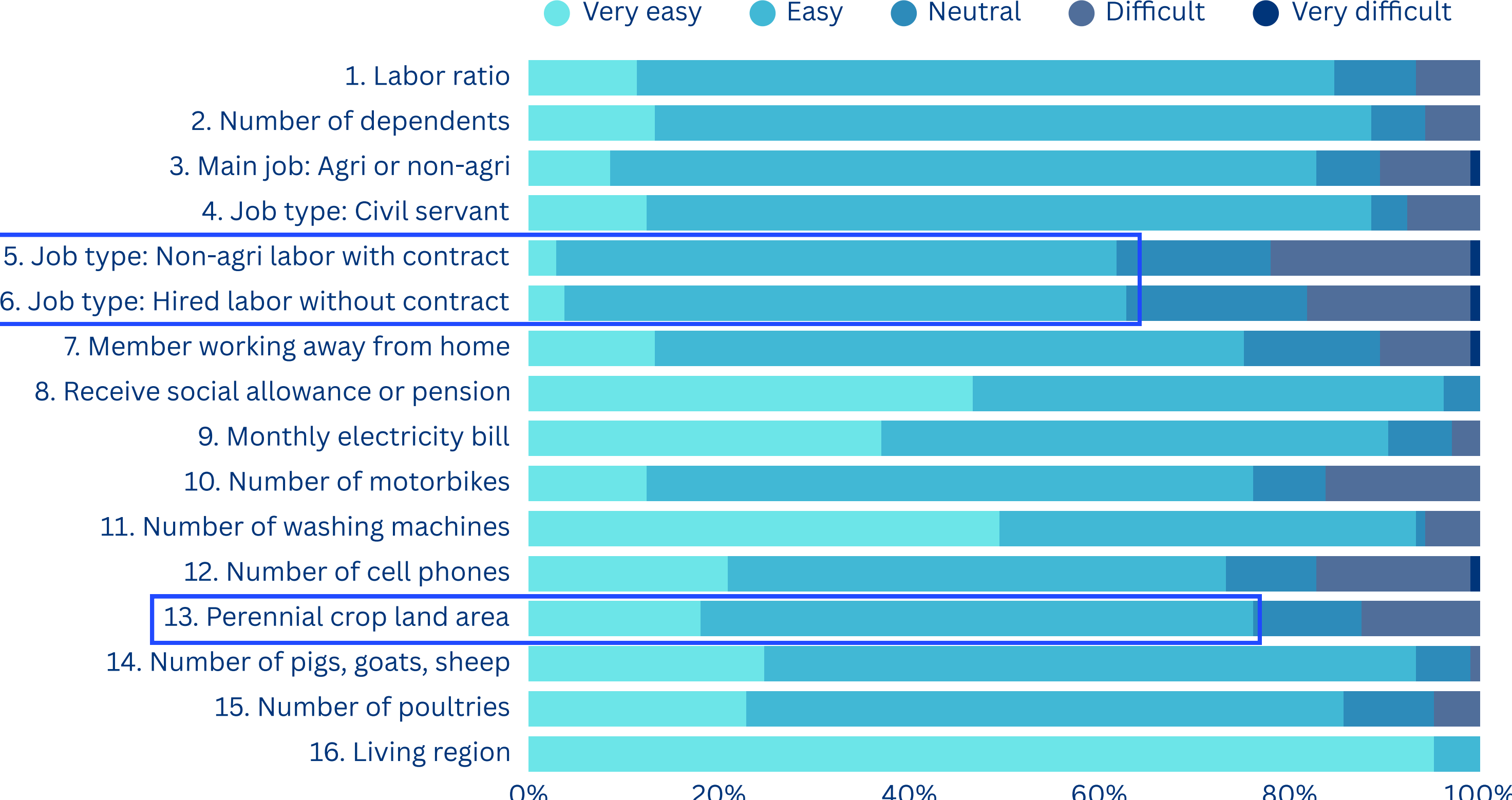


Figure 1. The simplicity of indicators in EMP tools

#### 3.2 Verifiability

- All EMP indicators exceed the 50% verifiability threshold, scores exceeding 60%.
- Commonly assumed verifiable indicators:
  - Non-agricultural labor with contract → 65.7%
  - Hired labor without contract → 64.8%
  - Number of cell phones → 63.8%, lowest verifiability.
- Indicators with misreporting concerns in literature:
  - Perennial crop land area → 77.2%

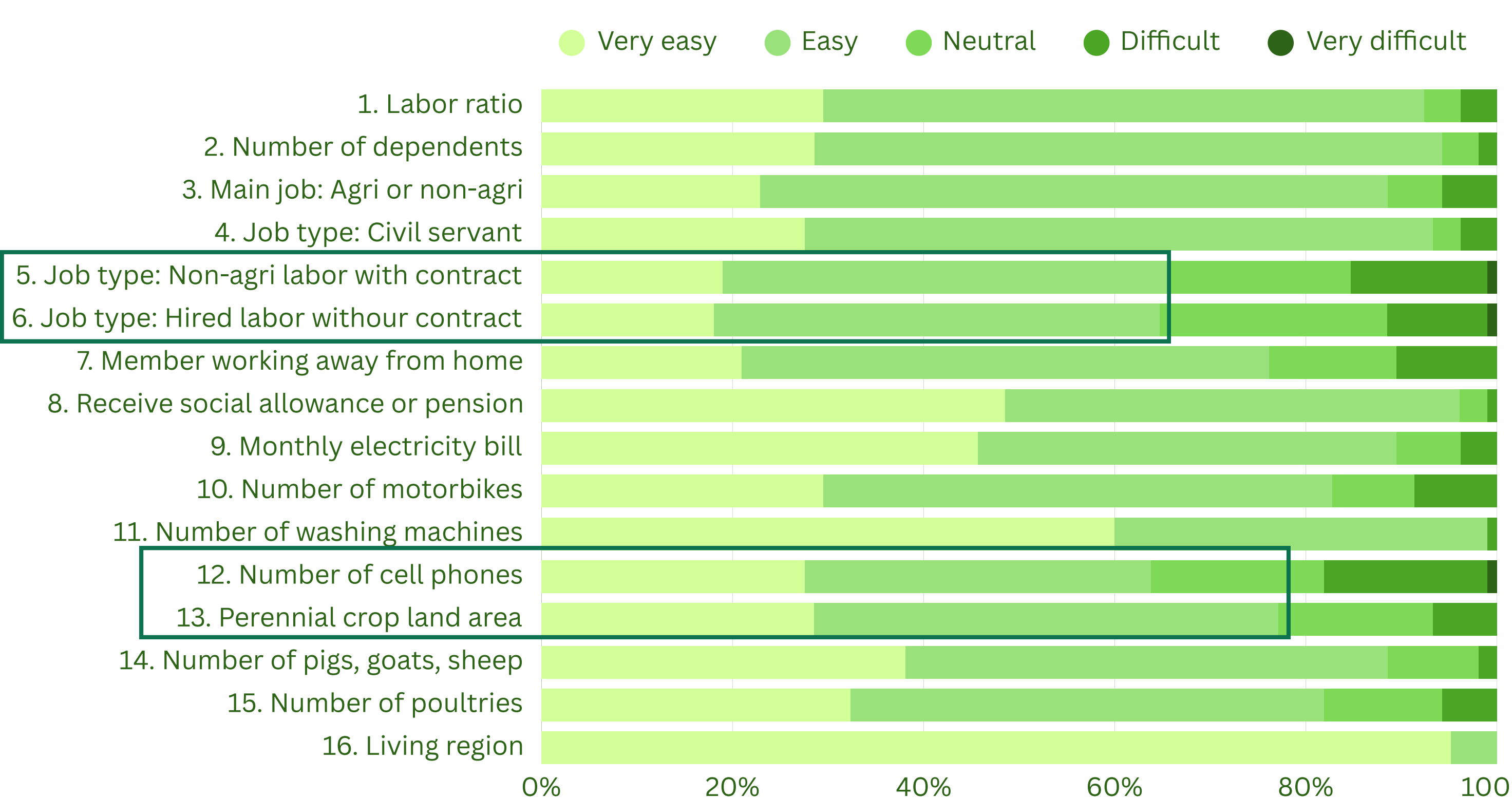


Figure 2. The verifiability of indicators in EMP tools

- Approaches for verification:
  - Direct sources: Observation, household documents/certificates.
  - Community sources: Neighbors, village leaders.
  - Enumerator resources: Training skills, experience.
- Knowledge from village leaders is critical to check misreporting information.

#### 3.3 Determinants of Tools’ Practicability

**Practicability Model**

- Dependent variable: Factor scores from Factor Analysis of 32 variables:
  - 16 simplicity variables (Figure 1).
  - 16 verifiability variables (Figure 2).
- Independent variable: Enumerator characteristics







- Significant determinants of Practicability**
- Ethnicity: Minority enumerators find tools more practical  
→ Shared language and culture
  - Age: Older enumerators perceive higher practicability  
→ Greater experience and community trust
  - Gender: Female enumerators report lower practicability  
→ Village leaders are mostly male
  - Survey Experience: More experience → higher perceived practicability

Table 1. The determinants of the practicability of the EMP tools

The characteristics of poverty-targeting enumerators	Coefficient
(Intercept)	−1.463
Ethnic: Ethnic minority (reference: ethnic majority)	0.474 ***
Age	0.020 **
Gender: women (reference: men)	−0.355 *
Position: Village officials (reference: commune officials)	0.352
Working experience	−0.006
Survey experience	0.074 ***
Education: Higher high school	−0.074
Education: Lower high school (reference: high school)	−0.111
R Square	0.341
Adjusted R Square	0.286

Significant codes: \*\*\* 0.01, \*\* 0.05, \* 0.1

### 4. Conclusion

- All 16 indicators of EMP tools meet simplicity and verifiability thresholds  The EMP tools are practical to implement
- Some indicators are less practical than commonly assumed  Essential to assess PTT practicability  Propose a framework to pre-test PTT practicability
- Local knowledge (e.g., village leader) is useful for verification but risks bureaucratic bias and elite capture  Need systematic cross-checking solutions
- Determinants of practicability: Age, survey experience, gender, ethnicity  Useful criteria for selecting enumerators  Maximize PTTs' effectiveness in practice.