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**A STUDY ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY AMONG GRADUATES**

KYAW HLA PHYU
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**A STUDY ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
AMONG GRADUATES**

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Supervised By:

Dr. Zin Zin Shwe

Professor

Department of Economics

Yangon University of Economics

Submitted By

Kyaw Hla Phyu

Roll No.14

MDevS – 17th Batch

(2022-2024)

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Study on Skill Development for Employment Opportunity Among Graduates**” submitted as partial fulfillment towards the requirements for the degree of Master of Development Studies has been witnessed by the Board of Examiners.

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Department of Economics

Yangon University of Economics

U Hla Aung

(Examiner)

Associate Professor

Department of Economics

Yangon University of Economics

Dr. Zin Zin Shwe

(Supervisor)

Professor

Department of Economics

Yangon University of Economics

OCTOBER 2024

ABSTRACT

This study explores skills development for employment opportunities among graduates in Myanmar. The objective of the study is to investigate factors contributing to potential mismatches between the skills acquired and job market demands. Employing a descriptive analysis, this research draws on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire survey targeting graduates who completed soft skills and technical training programs after graduation, using a random sampling approach. The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative data on graduates' perceptions of skill assessment, job search experiences, linkages between skill development and employment, and satisfaction with skill development institutions. Results indicate a generally positive alignment of skills with job market needs but also highlight gaps in specific areas, such as practical experience and advanced technical skills, that could be addressed to improve employability. The findings suggest that refining training program content and delivery methods could better bridge the gap between skills development and employment opportunities, ultimately supporting more effective education-to-employment transitions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
FMOLS	Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTHS	Government Technical High Schools
GTI	Government Technical Institutes
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SD	Standard Deviation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WEF	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

According to Myanmar Statistical YearBook 2023, unemployment rates among the working-age population (over 15 years) have risen steadily, from 0.17% in 2020 to 1.33% in 2021, and 2.53% in 2022. This trend highlights a growing need for skills development to meet job market demands. Globally, the alignment between educational outcomes and employment requirements has become a critical factor shaping socio-economic landscapes, and Myanmar is no exception. Myanmar's unique mix of traditional values and modern aspirations adds complexity to the labor market, where a graduate's skill level often dictates both individual career prospects and broader social and economic progress.

This study aims to explore the specific skills required for employment among graduates in Myanmar, analyzing their implications, challenges, and potential pathways for improvement. While Myanmar's economic growth is influenced by various factors, skills development stands out as essential for improving job opportunities and quality of life. However, the extent to which skill development is a prerequisite for employment varies significantly across sectors. Some sectors, driven by technological advancements and specialized needs, demand higher skill levels, while traditional occupations and local businesses may place less emphasis on formal qualifications. This discrepancy raises questions about the mismatch between the skills acquired in educational institutions and those required in the job market. Socio-cultural factors further complicate the education-employment dynamic among Myanmar's graduates, affecting perceptions of skills and their relevance to employment.

The rationale for this study lies in the need to understand the relationship between educational preparation and employability among Myanmar's graduates. In a context shaped by globalization, technological progress, and socio-economic changes, education

plays a pivotal role in Myanmar's future. By examining factors that shape the skills-employment dynamic, this study aims to inform policy decisions and strategies that could enhance the impact of education on individuals' livelihoods and broader regional development.

Limited access to quality education, particularly in marginalized or remote areas, contributes to a mismatch between the skills taught in institutions and the needs of modern businesses. When access is scarce, graduates often miss opportunities to acquire relevant technical skills or adapt to industry demands. Even for those who do gain skills, limited job availability can prevent them from utilizing their qualifications in high-paying, skill-appropriate roles. This leads to underemployment, stifles economic mobility, and can perpetuate poverty cycles. Addressing this challenge requires a holistic approach one that attracts investment, promotes entrepreneurship, and supports industries capable of employing skilled graduates. Targeted support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can also help generate a more diverse range of job opportunities.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate factors contributing to the potential mismatch between skills development and employment opportunities in the job market.

1.3 Method of the Study

This study employs a descriptive analysis to examine the skills required for employment opportunities among graduates in Myanmar. To achieve the research objectives, both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey targeting graduates who participated in soft and technical skills development training programs. This survey incorporated both quantitative approaches, capturing a range of insights relevant to the study. The primary data was gathered from 124 graduates through an online survey conducted via Google Forms. The survey comprised five sections: demographic information, skill assessment, job search experience, skills-employment linkages, and perceptions of educational institutions.

To complement the primary data, secondary data were collected from various credible sources to provide a broader context and enhance the findings. Secondary data sources included Myanmar Statistical YearBook 2023, websites, relevant articles, textbooks, and previous studies on skills development and employment opportunities in the job market.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examines the skills requirements for employment among graduates in Myanmar, focusing on both unemployed job seekers and those seeking better job opportunities who participated skill development training programs. Its aim is to deepen understanding of how educational attainment impacts employability. By incorporating quantitative data, the study assesses the alignment between skill requirements and job market demands.

The research is specifically focused on graduates and may not fully capture the variations in education-employment dynamics across all regions of Myanmar. Consequently, the findings may not be directly generalized to areas with different socio-economic conditions.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of the research. Chapter One introduces the study, covering the background, rationale, objectives, methodology, scope, limitations, and the overall organization of the study. Chapter Two reviews existing literature, providing a foundation and context for the research. Chapter Three offers an overview of the education sector, presenting key insights and trends relevant to the study. Chapter Four delves into the survey analysis, discussing the data collected and its interpretation. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the key findings, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations based on the study's results.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Skill Development

Skill development refers to the structured process of acquiring, enhancing, and refining competencies, knowledge, and abilities needed for personal, professional, and societal advancement (UNESCO, 2018). It serves as a critical bridge between theoretical learning and practical application, enabling individuals to meet current and future workforce demands while adapting to evolving technological and economic landscapes (World Economic Forum, 2020). Skills can be broadly categorized into three types: technical skills, which are job-specific abilities such as coding, plumbing, or operating machinery; soft skills, including communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving; and cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and analytical reasoning (Cimatti, 2016). The purpose of skill development is multifaceted, encompassing preparation for meaningful employment, career advancement, and lifelong learning (Becker, 1964). It also plays a vital role in fostering economic development by creating a highly skilled workforce. Various stakeholders, including educational institutions, employers, governments, and non-governmental organizations, contribute to the skill development ecosystem. Human capital theory emphasizes the investment in skills to enhance productivity and earning potential, while lifelong learning models advocate for the continuous upgrading of abilities to stay relevant in a dynamic labor market (Becker, 1964). The capability approach broadens the scope, focusing on empowering individuals to expand their choices and lead lives they value (UNESCO, 2018).

Globally, skill development is closely linked to technological evolution, economic growth, and social equity. Technological advancements, including automation and artificial intelligence, have heightened the demand for advanced technical skills alongside traditional ones (World Economic Forum, 2020). Skill development also directly impacts national productivity and competitiveness, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Moreover, it plays a crucial role in reducing socio-economic disparities by empowering marginalized communities with employable skills (Cimatti, 2016). As industries and economies evolve, skill development remains essential for building a workforce that can thrive in a rapidly changing world.

2.2 Global Trends in Education-Employment Dynamics

Education plays a critical role in driving economic growth, productivity, innovation, and social mobility. Research from the World Bank (2020) shows that countries with higher educational attainment experience stronger economic growth, as education improves job opportunities and enhances economic stability. In today's global economy, education equips individuals with the necessary skills to secure employment and adapt to evolving job markets (UNESCO, 2019). As economies shift from manufacturing to knowledge-based industries, there is an increasing need for education systems to align with modern economic demands, particularly through higher education and vocational training (Schwab, 2018).

Globalization has transformed education and employment dynamics. It has made high-quality learning resources more accessible online, fostered international educational partnerships, and heightened global job market competition (Knight, 2013). However, many developing countries, struggle to adapt their education systems to meet global labor standards. This lack of alignment between education and labor market needs leads to challenges such as brain drain and underemployment (Bhagwati & Hanson, 2009).

Studies consistently show a strong connection between education and positive employment outcomes. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to secure stable jobs, earn higher wages, and contribute to economic stability (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). In countries with limited resources, the challenge is to align educational programs with labor market demands to increase job opportunities for graduates. Research highlights the importance of adapting curricula to meet employer needs to create better pathways to employment (Denise Jackson, 2023). To bridge the gap between education and employment, strategies such as fostering partnerships between schools and industries, implementing flexible curricula, and investing in ongoing teacher training are essential (World Bank, 2018).

Countries with strong educational-employment linkages, like Germany's dual apprenticeship system or Singapore's SkillsFuture program, offer valuable models. These programs focus on lifelong learning and reskilling, ensuring that workers remain adaptable and job-ready, even as industry needs evolve (Busemeyer, 2015; Teh, 2017).

2.3 Skills Mismatch and Employment Challenges

A major challenge in connecting education with employment is the growing skills mismatch, where the skills taught in educational institutions often do not align with employers' needs (ILO, 2021). This is a global issue, with many graduates unable to find jobs that match their qualifications (McGuinness, Pouliakas, & Redmond, 2017). The rise of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) has created a surge in demand for digital literacy and technical skills, further emphasizing the need for educational systems to adapt to the rapidly changing labor market (World Economic Forum, 2020). Research indicates that higher levels of education generally result in lower unemployment rates and more stable employment, particularly in sectors like finance, technology, and administration, where secondary or tertiary education is often required (OECD, 2019). In contrast, individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to work in informal or low-wage sectors with less job security (UNESCO, 2019; Gindling & Newhouse, 2014). This underlines the importance of equitable access to quality education to improve job prospects across all levels.

Vocational and technical education (TVET) is key to addressing this skills gap. Unlike traditional academic programs, TVET focuses on practical, job-specific skills that align with industry needs, which significantly boosts employability, especially in technical fields (Rauner & Maclean, 2008; Eichhorst et al., 2015). In Southeast Asia, TVET is increasingly recognized for its role in producing a skilled workforce that supports economic growth, but its success depends on adapting to changing industry requirements (ADB, 2017; McGrath, 2018). Growing industries such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and technology demand a skilled workforce. For example, modern agricultural practices, such as crop management and sustainable pest control, are crucial for improving productivity. Similarly, skills in sustainable fishing and aquaculture management are needed to ensure long-term economic benefits in the fisheries sector.

The tourism industry requires strong interpersonal skills, including effective communication and customer service. The technology and entrepreneurship sectors demand expertise in digital literacy and business management. However, many young people face barriers to accessing quality education due to inadequate infrastructure, resource limitations, and socio-cultural challenges.

2.4 Importance of Skill Development and Lifelong Learning

In the modern job market, employers emphasize a combination of technical skills and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability (Robles, 2012). These competencies are critical in enabling individuals to navigate an increasingly complex and dynamic work environment, where the ability to learn and adapt is as important as technical expertise (Deming, 2017). Lifelong learning has become essential for addressing these challenges, with workers encouraged to continuously upgrade their skills through mechanisms such as online courses, certifications, and informal learning opportunities (OECD, 2020). Global trends demonstrate the importance of lifelong learning in bridging skill gaps and improving employment outcomes. Countries in Europe and East Asia, which have invested in robust reskilling and upskilling programs, exemplify how ongoing education can enhance workforce adaptability and economic resilience (Schleicher, 2018). The rise of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, virtual classrooms, and e-learning platforms, is transforming education systems by increasing accessibility and promoting innovative teaching methods (Selwyn, 2021). However, these advancements require investment in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum reforms to maximize their effectiveness (Jandrić, 2020).

The transition to a green economy also highlights the growing importance of skill development. Sectors such as renewable energy, environmental science, and sustainable agriculture are creating new job opportunities, emphasizing the need for specialized training programs to prepare the workforce for these emerging industries (ILO, 2020). Tailoring educational programs to address the specific needs of these fields can promote sustainable development and economic growth. Measuring skill development is a critical aspect of ensuring that educational and training programs meet labor market demands.

Competency-based assessments, pre- and post-training evaluations, job performance metrics, and employment outcomes are among the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness of skill development initiatives (Mulder, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Digital tools such as learning management systems and online credentialing platforms also provide real-time tracking of skill acquisition, enabling individuals and organizations to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement (Cheng et al., 2016). These measurement techniques provide valuable insights into the alignment of educational programs with job market needs, fostering more effective skill development strategies. Promoting lifelong learning and systematically measuring skill development are essential for equipping individuals with the competencies required in a rapidly evolving global economy, ensuring workforce adaptability and sustained economic growth.

2.5 The Role of Educational Institutions in Skill Development

Educational institutions play a central role in shaping the workforce and fostering economic development. Their contributions extend beyond providing foundational knowledge to preparing individuals for the demands of the job market. The effectiveness of educational systems depends on various factors, including the quality of infrastructure, available resources, and the alignment of curricula with industry needs. In regions where educational resources are limited, particularly in developing countries, these factors can restrict access to quality education, leading to disparities in learning outcomes (Fleisher et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2018). Teacher quality is another critical determinant of educational success. Highly trained and motivated teachers are essential for ensuring that students achieve the competencies required in the labor market. Continuous professional development is vital for keeping educators updated on best practices, teaching methodologies, and the evolving needs of students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Without this investment, teaching effectiveness can decline, undermining the potential for students to gain the necessary skills for future employment (Ingersoll, 2001).

Educational institutions also have a significant role in aligning curricula with local labor market demands. By engaging with employers, educational systems can better tailor programs to meet the skill requirements of key industries, such as agriculture, technology, and services. Vocational education and training (VET) programs, which focus

on hands-on learning and job-specific skills, are especially effective in preparing students for careers in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and IT. These programs provide learners with practical skills that are directly applicable in the workplace, enhancing their employability (OECD, 2017). Experiential learning approaches, including project-based learning, internships, and simulations, further enhance students' readiness for the workforce. These methods enable students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, improving problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork skills. By incorporating industry-relevant skills into curricula, prioritizing vocational education, and fostering partnerships between educational institutions and employers, these methods contribute to better employment outcomes for graduates (World Bank, 2019).

2.6 Review on Previous Studies

Kyawt Kyawt San (2018) investigated the relation between unemployment rate and some economic factors in Myanmar and Neighboring Countries for the period of 1997-2016 within panel data framework. The data of unemployment rate, GDP growth rate, manufacturing value added and inflation rate has been collected from World Data Bank. In this thesis, the data series have not existed unit root after taking the first difference. This study examines the long run relationship between unemployment rate and some economic factors by using panel co-integration tests. Panel co-integration tests support the stability of long-run relationship among some economic factors and unemployment rate. The long-run coefficients are estimated using fully modified ordinary least square (FMOLS) procedure. This result suggests that there exists a long run elasticity equilibrium co-integration within the variables. In addition, the fixed effects and random effects modelling approach were applied in this panel data. In order to determine the suitable model for estimating panel data, Hausman test and Lagrange Multiplier test were done. According to the results, the random effects model was more appropriate for the data. In the appropriate random effects model, the productivity and inflation rate have statistically significant and positive impact whereas GDP growth rate has a significant and negative effect on unemployment rate.

Nilar Win (2019) identified the education-job mismatch of employees and to analyze the effect of education-job mismatch on employee satisfaction of global treasure

bank in down town area of Yangon. In this study, 160 graduated employees were selected by using convenience sampling method. This study was based on descriptive statistics method. And Pearson's correlation analysis and regression analysis were used. This study includes two types of education-job mismatch as independent variables vertical mismatch and horizontal mismatch where dependent variable is employee job satisfaction. According to survey results, 75 of respondents out of 160 employees are facing with education-job mismatch. This study showed that there is negative relationship between education-job mismatch and employee job satisfaction. Vertical mismatch directs to dissatisfaction more than horizontal mismatch. When recruiting, company's HR department should take a consideration for the relevant education of employees. Moreover, a graduated employee should select a job that fits with specialization of their degree to promote job satisfaction level.

Dr. Daw Soe Thu (2020) identified graduates' employability level and their skills after graduation from Yangon/ Monywa/ Meikhtilar University of Economics. It studied the respondents' employment, perception of employability skills perceived by the respondents by using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. The secondary data used in the study were collected from the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Department of Students Affairs of Yangon / Monywa / Meikhtila University of Economics in mid-2017. In relation to study the employment level of the respondents, most graduates were found to be employed in their first jobs within 3 to 12 months after graduation. Regarding employability skills, their highest perception of personal skills were only concerned with how they could improve social network and soft skill necessarily required for their working environment around the University of Economics that they had attended. The core skills perceived as the highest benefit to them was their critical thinking and strategic thinking obtained from attending the training classes before going into the workplaces.

Joanna Bunga Noah and Binti Abdual Aziz (2020) conducted a research "A Systematic review on soft skills development among university graduates" highlighting that in order to secure employment, individuals need not only the requisite knowledge but also a set of skills that enables them to perform tasks effectively. While tertiary education at universities and higher institutions can provide both knowledge and skills, many

graduates still lack crucial soft skills. This paper reviews the soft skills that employers highly value but are often lacking in graduates, as well as the roles of universities and the government in addressing this gap. The findings indicate that graduates are missing essential soft skills that are critical to employers. To address this issue, universities and the government must play an active role in developing and enhancing the nation's human capital.

Wendy Teoh Ming Yen (2023) research on “Perspectives of employers on graduate employability skills” to investigate the perceptions of employers on the importance and level of satisfaction with the employability skills of graduates and subsequently examine the gap between them (level of importance and satisfaction). The survey included employers from the manufacturing industry, and the data were analyzed. The results suggest that employers viewed all eight skills, such as English communication skills, thinking skills, positive attitude and teamwork, work planning skills, work discipline, self-motivation, and technology skills, as essential employability skills. However, the gap analysis reveals that they were dissatisfied with the skills possessed by the graduates, indicating that the skills of the graduates fell short of their expectations, which is consistent with their dissatisfaction. The highest differences between satisfaction and expectation arise from English communication skills and thinking skills, followed by self-motivation, a positive attitude, teamwork, work planning skills, technology skills, and work discipline skills. This study provides important insights for graduates, higher education institutions, and policymakers, as well as in countries facing the issue of the low employability of graduates.

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF SKILLS REQUIREMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN MYANMAR

3.1 Basic Education System of Myanmar

Myanmar Primary education is five years, lower secondary education is four years, and upper secondary education is two years. This is the basic education system. A 6-4-2 framework takes the place of this 5-4-2 system. Preschool is accessible, but it is not properly integrated into the larger educational system. Only 20% of eligible children attend preschool, with children living in rural areas being the least likely to do so. In Myanmar, the Ministry of Education is mostly in charge of managing basic education. The following table provides an overview of Myanmar's educational system, according to the Ministry of Education.

Table (3.1) Myanmar Education System

Education	School/Level	Grades	Age
Primary	Elementary	1-5	6-11
Middle	Intermediate School	6-9	12-16
Secondary	Secondary	10-11	17-19

Source: Ministry of Education, Myanmar

The KG+12 education system in Myanmar was introduced as part of major reforms aimed at improving the country's educational infrastructure and quality. The system was implemented in the 2016-2017 academic year and replaced the previous 11-year schooling system. Under this structure, students now follow a 13-year formal education system, which includes one year of kindergarten and twelve years of primary and secondary education. The structure of the new education are described in the following table.

Table (3.2) The New Structure of Basic Education System (Since 2016-2017)

Age	Grade	School Level
5	Kg or Grade 1	Primary
6	Grade 2	
7	Grade 3	
8	Grade 4	
9	Grade 5	
10	Grade 6	Lower Secondary Level
11	Grade 7	
12	Grade 8	
13	Grade 9	
14	Grade 10	Upper Secondary Level
15	Grade 11	

Source: Ministry of Education, Myanmar

(i) Primary Education

Primary education in Myanmar is the foundation of the educational system. It typically begins at age 5 or 6 and lasts for five years, covering grades 1 to 5. The curriculum includes basic subjects such as Burmese language, mathematics, science, and social studies. Education at this level is generally free and publicly funded, although access to quality education can be hindered by regional disparities, especially in rural and remote areas. While primary education is compulsory, dropout rates remain high, particularly in rural areas due to poverty and lack of infrastructure (UNESCO, 2018).

(ii) Middle Education

Middle education in Myanmar spans grades 6 to 8, covering a period of three years. At this stage, students continue to build on the subjects learned in primary school, with an increasing focus on specific academic subjects such as science, English, and social sciences. Middle education serves as a preparatory phase for students who wish to pursue higher levels of education. However, many students in rural areas still face challenges in accessing middle education due to economic and geographical barriers.

(iii) Secondary Education

Secondary education in Myanmar lasts for four years, from grades 9 to 12. It is divided into lower secondary (grades 9 and 10) and upper secondary (grades 11 and 12). At the end of grade 10, students take the General Education Development (GED) examination, which determines their eligibility for further education. In the upper secondary level, students can choose from a variety of academic streams such as arts, science, and commerce. Secondary education culminates in the matriculation exam, which is a critical exam for entry into universities and other higher education institutions. However, the quality of secondary education remains uneven, and many students in rural areas face challenges in completing their education due to financial constraints or the lack of qualified teachers.

(iv) Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in Myanmar includes universities, colleges, and institutes of higher learning. This stage of education typically begins after the successful completion of the matriculation exam and lasts for three to five years, depending on the field of study. Major universities in Myanmar offer degrees in a wide range of disciplines, including arts, sciences, engineering, and law. However, the tertiary education system in Myanmar faces significant challenges, including outdated curricula, limited research opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure. Graduates from Myanmar's universities often face challenges in finding suitable employment due to the mismatch between their education and labor market demands. The government has recognized the need to reform tertiary education, and efforts are underway to modernize and improve the quality of higher education in the country (World Bank, 2020).

(v) Vocational Education

Vocational education in Myanmar is designed to provide students with practical skills that prepare them for the workforce. It is an alternative to the traditional academic path and is offered at various levels, including post-secondary and post-graduate levels. Vocational training focuses on specific technical skills such as carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, and computer programming. Vocational education institutions include government-run technical high schools, government technical institutes (GTIs), and private training centers. While vocational education has been promoted as a way to

bridge the skills gap and enhance youth employability, the sector is underdeveloped, with limited capacity and resources to meet the growing demand for skilled labor (UNDP, 2015).

Table (3.3) Graduates of Higher Education, Academic Years (2010-2023)

Professional University	2010- 2016	2017- 2019	2019- 2021	2021- 2023
Medicine	4,593	6,033	3,473	1,589
Dental Medical	554	666	329	337
Medical Technology	484	555	344	44
Nursing	986	1,630	1,249	61
Pharmacy	482	401	298	36
Community Health (Magway)	271	288	92	10
Public Health	138	202	82	47
Diploma in Medical Education	78	74	41	24
Traditional Medicine	233	191	161	38
Technological University	52,456	27,222	853	4,286
Myanmar Aerospace and Engineering	182	207	0	15
Computer	4,101	2,964	544	1,606
Education	6,952	5,816	0	4,763
Economics	8,963	6,203	0	1,914
Agriculture	944	1,209	233	331
Forestry	192	166	18	26
Veterinary	179	636	76	115
Arts and Culture Graduates	319	666	71	78
Myanmar Maritime University	727	906	415	148
Myanmar Mercantile Marine College	411	232	132	154
Arts and Science	153,368	239,608	0	109,272
Foreign Languages	2021	6,741	0	647

Source: Myanmar Statistical Yearbook 2023

According to Myanmar Statistical Yearbook 2023, the above table highlights significant trends in graduation numbers across various professional universities from 2010 to 2023. A notable decline in graduation numbers occurred across several fields, particularly after 2019, with the most striking decreases seen in medicine, nursing, and pharmacy. For instance, the number of medicine graduates dropped sharply from 6,033 in 2017-2019 to 1,589 in 2021-2023. Similarly, nursing graduates fell from 1,630 to 61 over the same period. This sharp decline can be partly attributed to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2021 period, which likely led to interruptions in education, reduced enrollment, and limited graduation opportunities due to lockdowns and restrictions.

In contrast, some fields like technology and computer science continued to see moderate numbers of graduates, with computer-related programs showing a fluctuating trend but maintaining a significant presence (4,101 graduates in 2010-2016 to 1,606 in 2021-2023). The significant decline in graduates in agriculture, forestry, veterinary, and economics also indicates a shift in demand for these professions, possibly due to changes in the labor market or educational focus. Conversely, arts and science graduates have remained relatively high, with 239,608 in 2017-2019, reflecting a strong interest in general education fields.

Table (3.4) Vocational Trainees by Type of Skill, Academic Years (2010-2019)

VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND INSTITUTEES	2010- 2011	2015- 2016	2017- 2018	2018- 2019
Government Technical High School	7,858	5,562	7,350	8,246
a. Building Technology	2,420	1,535	1,714	1,902
b. Electronics Technology	1,171	874	1,227	1,355
c. Electrical Technology	1,054	1,068	1,665	1,782
d. Building Service Technology	355	-	-	-
e. Auto Mechanics Technology	1,899	1,120	1,469	1,711
f. Machining Technology	885	662	874	1,002
g. Metal Processing Technology	74	75	59	50
h. Information Technology	-	176	234	298
i. Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	-	52	108	146
Government Technical Institutes	-	6,846	12,317	14,632
a. Civil Engineering	-	1,903	3,311	3,863
b. Electrical Communication	-	1,427	2,609	3,037
c. Electrical Power	-	1,712	2,985	3,498
d. Mechanical	-	1,740	2,989	3,422
e. Information Technology	-	64	378	697
f. Industrial Engineering	-	-	45	115

Source: Myanmar Statistical Yearbook 2023

The table presents enrollment trends in vocational high schools and technical institutes in Myanmar from 2010 to 2019, reflecting the growing emphasis on technical and vocational education as part of the country's workforce development strategy. Government Technical High Schools (GTHS) and Government Technical Institutes (GTI) offer specialized programs aimed at meeting the demand for skilled labor in sectors like construction, engineering, and technology. Enrollment at GTHS showed fluctuations, initially declining from 7,858 students in 2010-2011 to 5,562 in 2015-2016. However, it rebounded to 8,246 students in 2018-2019. Among the most popular programs, Building Technology, Electronics Technology, and Electrical Technology maintained steady enrollment, reflecting strong demand for these skills. Auto Mechanics and Machining

Technology also saw high enrollment, indicating continued demand for industrial skills. Emerging fields like Information Technology and Refrigeration and Air Conditioning showed gradual growth, particularly with the expansion of technology-based industries in Myanmar.

Government Technical Institutes, which provide more advanced technical training, experienced significant growth in enrollment after 2015-2016, rising from 6,846 students to 14,632 by 2018-2019. Programs in Civil Engineering, Electrical Power, and Mechanical Engineering were the largest fields of study, with both Electrical Power and Mechanical Engineering attracting over 3,000 students each by 2018-2019. Enrollment in Electrical Communication and Information Technology also increased, highlighting the growing interest in communications and digital skills. The introduction of Industrial Engineering as a program option reflects the vocational education system's adaptation to meet evolving industry needs.

3.2 Myanmar's Private Education Sector

Myanmar's private education system is playing an increasingly important role in preparing students with the practical and soft skills needed by industries. Private institutions offer flexible programs that focus on competencies in high demand, such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and critical thinking key skills for workplace success. Private vocational schools and training centers provide specialized programs in sectors like IT, healthcare, hospitality, and business administration. These institutions emphasize hands-on learning through internships, workshops, and real-world projects, often in collaboration with industry professionals, allowing students to apply their knowledge in practical settings.

In fields like tourism, retail, and telecommunications, where customer service and interpersonal skills are essential, private institutions integrate relevant training into their programs to ensure students are prepared for effective service delivery. A growing component of Myanmar's private education landscape is online learning, which has become an accessible and flexible platform for acquiring specialized skills. Online courses offer students access to subjects such as digital marketing, software development,

data analytics, and entrepreneurship. This mode of learning is especially beneficial in remote or underserved areas where in-person classes may not be available.

Online platforms also allow students to connect with international instructors and access global curricula, expanding their exposure to the global job market. Additionally, online learning provides opportunities for students to earn certifications from international providers, improving their skills and employability. Private institutions regularly update their programs to reflect changing industry needs, particularly in tech fields where constant innovation demands continuous learning. Many programs now include digital literacy, coding, and IT security, addressing the growing demand for tech skills in Myanmar's economy. Some private institutions also offer job placement support and career counseling, aiding students' transition into the workforce. By combining soft skills training with vocational education and expanding access through online learning, Myanmar's private education sector is helping bridge the skills gap and enhance workforce employability, while preparing students to meet both local and international job market demands.

3.3 Skills Requirement for Job Opportunity

Myanmar's job market is evolving quickly, and employers are increasingly seeking graduates with a balanced combination of soft and technical skills that directly align with industry needs. However, many graduates lack these essential skills, limiting their employability and weakening the workforce. Identifying the skills in high demand is crucial for improving education and training programs, ensuring they are better aligned with labor market requirements. Soft skills, such as interpersonal abilities and self-management, are key for effective workplace interactions. Employers in Myanmar often consider these skills just as important as technical expertise. However, many graduates struggle with communication, particularly in English, which has become increasingly important as Myanmar opens up to global trade. Strong communication skills can enhance teamwork, customer service, and negotiation, making employees more effective in diverse environments. Collaborative skills are especially sought after in sectors like tourism, education, and technology, where teamwork is essential. Incorporating group

projects and team-based activities in academic settings could help students develop these skills before entering the workforce.

As Myanmar's economy modernizes, adaptability and problem-solving abilities are in high demand. Employers want graduates who can analyze situations, think critically, and make sound decisions, particularly in fields like IT, engineering, and finance. Many graduates, however, lack experience in handling complex, real-world challenges, emphasizing the need for more experiential learning in education. Time management is another crucial skill, especially in fields like engineering and IT, where meeting deadlines is critical. Educational programs that include project-based learning with defined deadlines could better prepare students to manage their time effectively. Technical skills, specific to each industry, are vital for job performance. The need for technical skills is growing across various sectors, but many graduates are unprepared for the technical demands of their fields. Digital literacy, for instance, is essential in banking, retail, and other sectors that rely on digital tools to improve efficiency and customer service. Employers increasingly expect proficiency in basic office software, email, and online collaboration tools. However, gaps remain even in these foundational skills.

3.4 Mismatch Between Skill Development and Employment Opportunities

The gap between the skills Myanmar's graduates acquire and the needs of the job market is a significant issue that impacts employment opportunities and the country's economic development. Many graduates face unemployment or underemployment because their skills do not align with employer requirements, while businesses struggle to find qualified workers. This mismatch not only hinders individual career prospects but also reduces overall productivity and economic growth. Bridging this skills gap is crucial for Myanmar to develop a workforce capable of supporting its modernizing economy.

Several factors contribute to this skills gap. A major issue is that educational curricula are not aligned with the demands of industry. Many universities continue to use outdated programs that fail to equip students with the technical and soft skills employers seek. High-demand fields like IT and healthcare require up-to-date skills and practical training, but Myanmar's educational institutions often fall short in providing these.

Moreover, there is insufficient focus on soft skills like communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, even though these are essential across virtually all industries.

Myanmar's vocational education and training (VET) system is also underdeveloped. Vocational training could help fill the demand for skilled workers in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and agriculture, but there are limited opportunities for hands-on, specialized training. This leaves many industries facing shortages of qualified workers. The consequences of this skills mismatch are substantial. Graduates often face underemployment or unemployment, as they cannot find jobs that match their qualifications. Industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare struggle to maintain productivity due to a lack of skilled workers. Additionally, businesses incur higher costs, either by investing in more training or hiring foreign workers to fill the gaps. The skills gap also exacerbates regional inequalities, as rural areas have less access to quality education and training, leading to a concentration of skilled workers in urban areas and hindering development in less developed regions.

The skills mismatch is particularly evident in several key sectors. In IT, rapid growth has spurred demand for graduates with skills in software development, data analysis, and cybersecurity, yet educational institutions are not adequately preparing students for these roles. The healthcare sector urgently requires professionals such as nurses, technicians, and public health workers, but there are too few training programs to meet this demand. Similarly, both agriculture and construction need workers familiar with modern, sustainable practices, but many graduates lack the necessary knowledge, limiting growth and efficiency in these critical sectors.

3.5 Challenges of Skill Mismatch for Employment Opportunities

The skills mismatch in Myanmar, where graduates' qualifications often do not meet the demands of the job market, is a significant barrier to employment and economic growth. This gap is driven by several interconnected factors within the education system, labor market, and socio-economic landscape. One key issue is the misalignment between educational curricula and industry requirements. Many higher education programs in Myanmar focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, often neglecting the practical, industry-specific skills that employers need. This is particularly problematic in sectors

such as IT, healthcare, and manufacturing, where technical skills like software development, cybersecurity, and digital literacy are crucial but frequently absent among graduates (Joanna Bunga Noah & Binti Abdul Aziz, 2020; ILO, 2021). As a result, employers struggle to find qualified candidates, often leaving key positions unfilled or hiring foreign workers. This skill shortage limits Myanmar's economic potential and graduates' ability to effectively contribute to the workforce (OECD, 2019).

In addition to technical skills, employers also report that many graduates lack essential soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. These abilities are critical for success in most workplaces but are underemphasized in Myanmar's educational curricula. Research indicates that many employers are concerned about graduates' insufficient interpersonal skills, which hinder their ability to collaborate and communicate professionally (ILO, 2021). This soft skills gap makes it more difficult for graduates to secure jobs, even when they have the required technical knowledge. As a result, companies often invest additional time and resources in training new hires in these areas, which increases recruitment costs and delays the hiring process.

Myanmar's vocational education and training (VET) system, which plays a vital role in developing specialized technical skills, is also underdeveloped. Unlike countries such as Singapore and Germany, where robust VET systems bridge the gap between education and employment, Myanmar's vocational institutions face challenges such as limited resources, outdated equipment, and a lack of rural access (ADB, 2017). As a result, graduates from vocational programs often struggle to find work in sectors like construction, manufacturing, and agriculture, where skilled labor is in high demand. This lack of vocational training limits Myanmar's supply of skilled workers and hampers economic development by leaving key sectors understaffed.

Another contributing factor is the limited collaboration between educational institutions and industries. Strong partnerships between universities, vocational schools, and businesses are essential to ensure that curricula reflect labor market needs, but in Myanmar, such collaboration is rare. According to the OECD (2019), many educational institutions lack formal relationships with employers, preventing them from adapting their programs to meet current job market trends. This disconnect results in graduates

who are unprepared for emerging sectors like information technology and renewable energy, which require specialized skills.

Geographic disparities in access to education also exacerbate the skills mismatch. Students in rural Myanmar face significant challenges, including limited access to qualified teachers, modern technology, and updated facilities (World Bank, 2020). As a result, rural graduates are less likely to acquire the skills necessary to compete in the labor market, particularly in high-skill sectors. This geographic divide results in urban graduates having more opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and employment, while rural graduates struggle to meet the qualifications needed for skilled jobs. These disparities further widen the overall skills gap.

Finally, the rapid global digital transformation has intensified the skills gap in Myanmar. Employers increasingly seek graduates with digital skills such as coding, data analysis, and digital marketing, yet many Myanmar graduates lack these competencies (World Economic Forum, 2020). Online learning platforms present an opportunity to bridge this gap by offering affordable, accessible courses that help graduates acquire these in-demand skills. As the OECD (2020) emphasizes, online learning promotes lifelong education, enabling graduates to stay current with industry trends and technological developments. By incorporating online learning into the formal education system, Myanmar could better prepare its graduates for the digital economy.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY ANALYSIS

4.1 Survey Profile

This study explores the relationship between skills development and employment opportunities for graduates in Myanmar, focusing on job search experiences and the perceived barriers to employment after graduation. Data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to assess self-reported skill levels, job search experiences, the connection between skills development and employment, and respondents' perceptions of the role of educational institutions in skill development. A total of 124 graduates who had completed a skills development training program participated in the survey. The respondents included both employed and unemployed individuals, and the questionnaire collected demographic information as well as data on self-assessments of skills, job search experiences, the link between skills development and employment opportunities, and perceptions of educational institutions' role in skill-building. To measure perceptions, a Likert scale was used, allowing for nuanced insights into the respondents' views. The responses to these questionnaires provided the primary data for this study.

4.2 Survey Design

This study used a survey research design to examine the relationship between skills development and employment opportunities among graduates in Myanmar. The goal was to assess graduates' self-perception of their skills, job search experiences, views on skills development, and the role of educational institutions in preparing them for the labor market. The survey aimed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to address the research questions and understand the skills mismatch between education and employment opportunities. The primary objectives were to evaluate graduates' self-assessment of their soft and technical skills, identify challenges faced during the job search process, explore barriers to employment, and assess the impact of participation in skills development programs on employment outcomes. Additionally, the study sought to

evaluate graduates' perceptions of how well educational institutions prepared them for the workforce. These objectives aimed to provide insights into the skills development-employment link and offer a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing graduates' career prospects.

A structured questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool, to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire was organized into five sections. The Skills Assessment section focused on graduates' self-evaluation of soft skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving, teamwork) and technical skills (e.g., computer proficiency, field-specific knowledge), using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), job Search Experience, development-Employment Linkages, the alignment of skills with industry needs and educational Institutions section explored how well respondents believed their education prepared them for the workforce, again using a Likert scale. The mean score for each respondent was then calculated, and the responses were grouped into the following categories: a mean score between 1.0 and 1.99 indicated a Very Low level of agreement or perception, 2.0 to 2.99 represented a Low level, 3.0 to 3.99 signified a Moderate level, 4.0 to 4.99 reflected a High level, and a score of 5.0 indicated a Very High level.

The study targeted graduates who had completed skills development training. A total of 124 respondents participated, including both employed and unemployed graduates. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had completed skills development programs and represented a mix of employment statuses. The sample size was determined using standard sample size calculation methods to ensure statistical validity and representativeness of the target population of graduates. The calculation accounted for a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and an estimated population proportion of 0.5.

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{Z^2}$$

Where:

n = required sample size
 Z = Z-value, representing the desired confidence level (1.96 for a 95% confidence level)

P = Estimated population proportion (0.5, to maximize variability)

E = Margin of error (0.05 for 5%)

To achieve the desired confidence level and margin of error for the entire graduate population, a sample size of 384 would typically be required. However, due to logistical constraints and the focus of the study on graduates who had participated in skills development programs, a purposive sampling method was used. As a result, the actual sample size was 124 respondents. This smaller sample was sufficient because the study specifically targeted graduates with experience in skills training. The sample size of 124 ensures adequate statistical power for analyzing relationships between variables, such as skills development and employment outcomes, within the scope of the study. Additionally, the use of Likert scale responses and qualitative data allows for the detection of meaningful patterns and differences.

The survey was conducted online via Google Forms to ensure accessibility for participants. It was distributed through email and social media platforms to reach graduates within the networks of friends and colleagues. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis summarized the demographic information of respondents, their self-assessment of skills, job search experiences, and perceptions of educational institutions. For the quantitative data, statistical software (SPSS and Excel) was used to calculate frequencies, percentages, and means, providing insights into the distribution of skills and employment experiences.

Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study to ensure respondent privacy and confidentiality. Participants were informed about the survey's purpose and their voluntary involvement, and informed consent was obtained. All survey responses were anonymized to protect participants' identities, with assurances given that their data would be used solely for academic purposes.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study covered age range, gender, and employment status. The age range of respondents varied, providing a

spectrum of insights across different stages of early career development. Gender distribution was also considered, allowing for analysis of potential differences in skills assessment and employment experiences between male and female graduates. Employment status was another key demographic factor, capturing whether respondents were currently employed, unemployed, or actively seeking job opportunities. Together, these demographic details provide essential context to better understand the relationship between skills development, job search experiences, and employment outcomes among graduates in Myanmar. Each of these characteristics is analyzed below.

Table (4.1) Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

No	Survey	Demographic Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondent (%)
01	Age Range	Youth (15 – 35)	96	77%
		Adult (Over 35)	28	23%
02	Gender	Male	50	40%
		Female	74	60%
03	Employment Status	Employed	97	78%
		Unemployed	17	14%
		Self-employed	10	8%

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The survey sample is primarily composed of youth aged 15 to 35, who make up 77% of respondents, underscoring that a large portion of participants are in the early stages of their careers. This youth focus reflects the pressing relevance of skills development and job market entry challenges for individuals transitioning from education to employment. The remaining 23% of respondents are adults over 35, offering insights from individuals with more work experience and established careers. Women constitute 60% of the sample, compared to 40% for men. This gender distribution offers a gendered lens on the study's findings and may highlight differences in skill development and employment challenges faced by female graduates. It also aligns with recent trends of higher educational attainment among women in Myanmar, making these findings significant for understanding gender-specific employment dynamics.

A significant majority (78%) of respondents are currently employed, suggesting that the survey reflects the experiences of working graduates. This high employment rate may indicate effective pathways from skill development to job acquisition or could reflect that this group has greater access to employment opportunities. Among the remaining respondents, 14% are unemployed, providing perspectives on the job search challenges graduates face despite completing their education or training. Additionally, 8% are self-employed, highlighting an alternative career path some graduates choose. This variety in employment status gives a well-rounded view of graduates' job search experiences and informs discussions on skills mismatch and the alignment between educational institutions and labor market needs.

4.4 Skills Assessment

The skills assessment focused on understanding graduates' perceptions of their competencies, training needs, and readiness for employment. Through self-assessment, graduates rated their proficiency in essential soft skills like communication and problem-solving, as well as technical skills specific to their fields, using a Likert scale to gauge confidence in their abilities. Additionally, graduates indicated areas where they feel additional training is necessary, highlighting potential gaps between their current skill levels and industry requirements.

Table (4.2) Self-Assessment of Skills

No	Self-Assessment of Skills	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	I am proficient in using technology relevant to my work.	3.91	0.65
02	I can effectively manage my time and prioritize tasks.	4.05	0.62
03	I am comfortable working in a team environment.	3.94	0.87
04	I have strong problem-solving skills.	3.73	0.90
05	I can adapt quickly to changes in my work environment.	3.92	0.93
06	I feel confident in my leadership skills.	3.82	0.91
	Overall Mean	3.89	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.2) Self-Assessment of Skills highlight key insights into graduates' confidence across various skills. Time management and task prioritization emerged as the strongest area, with a mean score of 4.05. This suggests that respondents feel particularly confident in their ability to manage their time effectively and set priorities, indicating a shared strength in organizational skills among graduates. On the other hand, problem-solving skills received the lowest mean score of 3.73. Although this score remains above average, it indicates that graduates feel comparatively less confident in their problem-solving abilities. This may suggest that further development in this skill area could benefit graduates as they transition into the workforce, where problem-solving is often critical.

Across all skills, the overall mean score of 3.89 indicates a generally positive self-assessment among respondents, though with some variability in confidence across different skill areas. This moderate standard deviation reflects that while graduates rate their skills highly overall, they have varying levels of confidence depending on the specific skill.

Table (4.3) Skill Development and Training Needs

No	Skill Improvement and Training Needs	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	I am interested in developing my technical skills further.	4.01	0.76
02	I believe that additional training would improve my job performance.	4.14	0.74
03	I feel that my organization provides adequate resources for skill development.	3.52	0.79
04	I regularly set personal goals for improving my skills.	3.83	0.70
05	I am aware of the skill gaps I need to address to advance in my career.	4.00	0.87
06	My supervisor encourages skill development opportunities.	3.43	0.77
	Overall Mean	3.82	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The findings in Table (4.3) regarding skill development and training needs suggest that respondents generally show a Moderate to High level of interest in personal development, with an overall mean score of 3.82 out of 5. The highest-rated aspect is the belief that additional training would improve job performance, with a mean of 4.14, indicating that graduates perceive significant value in further developing their skills to enhance job effectiveness. This reflects a High level of recognition regarding the importance of ongoing skill development. Similarly, there is a High level of interest in enhancing technical skills, with a mean score of 4.01, highlighting a strong desire for continuous improvement in job-specific skills. Graduates also demonstrate a High awareness of their personal skill gaps needed for career advancement, with a mean score of 4.00. This suggests that respondents are proactive in identifying areas for growth to support their professional progression. On the other hand, satisfaction with organizational support for skill development is more Moderate, with a mean score of 3.52 for the perception that organizations provide adequate resources for skill development. The lowest-rated aspect is the encouragement from supervisors, with a mean score of 3.43, reflecting a Moderate level of satisfaction with the support received from leadership.

Table (4.4) Perception on Current Skill level

No	Perception on Current Skill Level	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	Technical Skills (e.g., using software, tools)	3.80	0.77
02	Communication Skills (verbal and written)	3.81	0.77
03	Team Collaboration and Interpersonal Skills	3.87	0.80
04	Leadership and Decision-Making Skills	3.92	0.71
05	Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	3.92	0.71
06	Adaptability to New Challenges	3.84	0.81
	Overall Mean	3.86	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The analysis of respondents' perception of their current skill levels, as shown in the table (4.4), reveals that graduates generally rate themselves Moderately to Highly proficient across various skill areas, with an overall mean score of 3.86. Among the skills

assessed, Leadership and Decision-Making Skills and Problem Solving and Critical Thinking both received the highest ratings, with mean scores of 3.92. Other areas of skill development, such as Team Collaboration and Interpersonal Skills (mean = 3.87) and Adaptability to New Challenges (mean = 3.84), also received high ratings, indicating that graduates are confident in their ability to work effectively in teams and adapt to dynamic work environments. The Technical Skills and Communication Skills were also rated positively, with mean scores of 3.80 and 3.81, respectively.

4.5 Job Search Experience

This section examines graduates' perceptions of the job market, the challenges they encounter during their job search, and the barriers they identify in securing employment. It covers areas such as the graduates' views on the current state of the job market, the difficulties they face while seeking employment, and the obstacles they perceive that hinder their ability to secure suitable job opportunities.

Table (4.5) Job market perception

No	Job Market Perception	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	I believe there are enough job opportunities in my field.	3.38	1.02
02	I feel that the competition for jobs in my field is very high.	3.65	0.92
03	I think employers are clear about their expectations in job postings.	3.44	0.92
04	I am confident that I meet the qualifications for jobs in my field.	3.69	0.91
05	I believe the job market will improve in the future.	3.04	0.96
	Overall Mean	3.44	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.5) Job market perception presents a generally moderate outlook, with an overall mean score of 3.44. While respondents expressed confidence in their

qualifications for jobs in their field, with a mean score of 3.69, they perceive a high level of competition, as indicated by the mean score of 3.65 for the statement "I feel that the competition for jobs in my field is very high." Graduates also believe that job postings could be clearer in terms of employer expectations, with a mean score of 3.44, indicating a moderate level of agreement. Interestingly, while respondents are optimistic about the future of the job market, with a mean score of 3.04, this perception is more reserved, suggesting that graduates are cautious about future job prospects.

Table (4.6) Job Search Challenges

No	Job Search Challenges	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	Finding jobs that match my skills and experience	3.49	0.93
02	Understanding the requirements of job postings	3.49	0.93
03	Writing a strong resume and cover letter	3.59	0.93
04	Preparing for interviews and assessments	3.90	0.79
05	Networking and making professional connections	3.78	0.93
06	Negotiating salary and benefits	3.78	0.77
07	Managing the time and energy for a thorough job search	3.75	0.85
	Overall Mean	3.68	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.6) Job Search Challenges highlight key areas where graduates encounter moderate to significant difficulties. The most challenging aspect, with a mean score of 3.90, is "Preparing for interviews and assessments. Both "Networking and making professional connections" and "Negotiating salary and benefits" follow closely with mean scores of 3.78. Additional challenges arise in "Finding jobs that match my skills and experience" and "Understanding the requirements of job postings," each with a mean score of 3.49. "Writing a strong resume and cover letter" also presents a moderate challenge, with a score of 3.59, though it is less difficult than preparing for interviews and networking. Managing the time and energy for a thorough job search is also

demanding, scoring 3.75. Overall, the mean score of 3.68 indicates that graduates face significant challenges in multiple facets of the job search.

4.6 Perceptions on Skill Development-Employment linkages

The perception of the link between skill development and employment opportunities is essential in understanding how well graduates' educational experiences align with job market demands. Graduates' perceptions of the relevance of their skills to employment, the challenges they face during the transition from skill development to employment, and the importance they place on skill development-employment linkages play a significant role in determining their success in the labor market.

Table (4.7) Skills Relevance to Employment

No	Skills Relevance to Employment	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	My education has provided me with skills that are relevant to my career goals.	3.74	0.73
02	I believe the curriculum in my field aligns with current job market requirements.	3.56	1.00
03	My educational institution provided sufficient career guidance and support.	3.68	0.90
04	My education has prepared me to adapt to changes in the job market.	3.56	0.96
05	I feel that internships or practical training during my education would improve my employability.	3.84	0.91
	Overall Mean	3.67	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.7) Skills Relevance to Employment shows that an overall mean score of 3.67, indicating a moderate level of satisfaction. The highest-rated aspect is the belief that "Internships or practical training during my education would improve my employability," with a mean score of 3.84. Regarding the relevance of education to career goals, graduates rated "My education has provided me with skills that are relevant to my career goals" with a mean score of 3.74, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement.

However, when assessing the alignment between the curriculum and current job market requirements, the mean score drops to 3.56, reflecting some concerns about the curriculum's ability to meet industry demands. The perceived adequacy of career guidance and support provided by educational institutions scored 3.68. Additionally, the perception that education has prepared them to adapt to changes in the job market also received a mean score of 3.56, indicating moderate satisfaction with the adaptability aspect of their education.

Table (4.8) Challenges in Transitioning from Skill Development to Employment

No	Challenges in Transitioning from Skill Development to Employment	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	I feel that a lack of experience is a significant barrier to finding employment.	3.45	0.98
02	I think my educational institution could do more to facilitate connections with employers.	3.37	0.91
03	I find it challenging to identify career opportunities aligned with my studies.	3.36	0.81
04	I feel my education left gaps in practical skills needed for my career.	3.47	0.81
	Overall Mean	3.48	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.8) Challenges in Transitioning from Skill Development to Employment highlights an overall mean score of 3.48, indicating moderate challenges in this transition process. The highest-rated barrier is "I feel my education left gaps in practical skills needed for my career," with a mean score of 3.47. Another notable challenge is the perceived lack of experience, with a mean score of 3.45 for the statement "I feel that a lack of experience is a significant barrier to finding employment." The statement "I think my educational institution could do more to facilitate connections with employers" received a mean score of 3.37, indicating that graduates feel there is room for improvement in fostering stronger links between educational institutions and potential

employers. Furthermore, the challenge of identifying career opportunities aligned with their studies was rated with a mean score of 3.36.

Table (4.9) Importance of Skill Development-Employment Linkages

No	Importance of Skill Development-Employment Linkages	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	It is essential for educational institutions to align curricula with job market demands.	3.73	0.84
02	Employers should be involved in developing educational programs.	3.87	0.74
03	Schools should offer more career-oriented programs and internships.	4.02	0.85
04	Stronger partnerships between schools and employers would improve graduates' employment prospects.	4.01	0.79
05	Regular updates to curricula based on industry changes would improve employability.	3.72	0.89
	Overall Mean	3.87	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.9) Importance of Skill Development-Employment Linkages shows that graduates strongly believe in the need for education to align more closely with the job market to enhance employability. Respondents emphasized the importance of curricula reflecting current industry demands, with a mean score of 3.73 for the statement "It is essential for educational institutions to align curricula with job market demands." They also value collaboration between educational institutions and employers, as shown by the higher mean score of 3.87 for "Employers should be involved in developing educational programs," believing this partnership ensures the development of relevant skills. Graduates expressed a strong desire for more practical, career-oriented programs and internships, with a score of 4.02 for "Schools should offer more career-oriented programs and internships." They also supported stronger partnerships between schools and employers, as indicated by the score of 4.01 for "Stronger partnerships between schools

and employers would improve graduates' employment prospects." Furthermore, graduates highlighted the importance of keeping curricula updated with industry changes, reflected in the score of 3.72 for "Regular updates to curricula based on industry changes would improve employability."

4.7 Perception on Educational Institutions

The perception of educational institutions among graduates is key to understanding how well these institutions prepare students for employment and whether the available resources, quality of education, and overall satisfaction align with their career needs. The following analysis examines the graduates' views regarding education quality, available resources and facilities, their overall satisfaction, and suggestions for improvement.

Table (4.10) Education Quality

No	Education Quality	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	My institution provides high-quality education that meets my learning needs.	3.35	0.89
02	The curriculum is up-to-date and relevant to current industry standards.	2.95	1.00
03	The teachers are knowledgeable and well-prepared.	3.30	0.99
04	The teaching methods used are engaging and effective.	3.00	1.07
05	My institution promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	3.00	1.07
	Overall Mean	2.97	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.10) Education Quality indicates an overall mean score of 2.97, reflecting a low level of satisfaction with the educational experience. Respondents rated "My institution provides high-quality education that meets my learning needs" the highest, with a mean score of 3.35, suggesting moderate satisfaction with the overall quality of

education. However, this rating also highlights room for improvement in fully meeting students' learning expectations. The knowledge and preparedness of teachers received a mean score of 3.30, indicating that while faculty competency is acknowledged, it falls short of being rated highly. In contrast, the curriculum's relevance to current industry standards scored notably lower at 2.95, pointing to concerns about outdated or misaligned content that may not adequately prepare students for the job market.

Table (4.11) Available Resources and Facilities

No	Available Resources and Facilities	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	Availability of up-to-date learning resources (e.g., textbooks, online materials)	3.19	0.90
02	Quality of classroom facilities and technology	3.11	0.95
03	Access to laboratory equipment and practical learning tools	2.95	0.88
04	Availability of extracurricular activities and clubs	2.88	1.15
05	Support services such as counseling and career guidance	2.73	1.05
	Overall Mean	3.16	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.11) Available Resources and Facilities present an overall mean score of 3.16, reflecting a moderate level of satisfaction with the educational resources and infrastructure provided. The availability of up-to-date learning resources, such as textbooks and online materials, scored the highest at 3.19, indicating that respondents find these resources moderately sufficient for their needs. The quality of classroom facilities and technology scored a mean of 3.11, suggesting that while classrooms are moderately equipped, there is room for improvement in providing advanced and conducive learning environments. Access to laboratory equipment and practical learning tools received a lower mean score of 2.95, highlighting concerns about insufficient hands-on training opportunities crucial for skill development. Extracurricular activities and clubs scored 2.88, and support services such as counseling and career guidance scored the lowest at 2.73. These findings indicate that students perceive limited access to

activities and support systems that could enhance their overall educational experience and career readiness.

Table (4.12) Overall Satisfaction with the Intuition

No	Overall Satisfaction with the Institution	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	Overall quality of education provided	3.13	0.77
02	Support from faculty and administrative staff	2.96	0.81
03	Opportunities for networking and career development	3.20	0.81
04	Overall learning environment and culture at the institution	3.15	0.85
05	Value for the money spent on education	3.28	1.17
	Overall Mean	3.57	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.12) Overall Satisfaction with the Intuition show an overall mean score of 3.57, indicating a moderate level of contentment among respondents with their educational experience. The aspect rated highest is the perceived value for money spent on education, with a mean score of 3.28. Opportunities for networking and career development received a mean score of 3.20, reflecting a moderate perception of the institution's ability to facilitate professional connections and career growth. Similarly, the overall learning environment and culture at the institution scored 3.15, pointing to a moderately positive student experience regarding the atmosphere and community. The overall quality of education provided was rated at 3.13, indicating moderate satisfaction with the academic standards and curriculum. Support from faculty and administrative staff received the lowest mean score of 2.96, signaling that students see room for improvement in guidance and administrative assistance.

Table (4.13) Suggestion for Improvement

No	Suggestions for Improvement	Mean	Std.Deviation
01	Providing more hands-on learning opportunities	3.60	0.94
02	Updating the curriculum to meet industry needs	3.54	1.03
03	Increasing access to career guidance and internship placements	3.69	1.05
04	Offering better mental health and well-being support	3.44	1.14
05	Enhancing teacher-student engagement and interaction	3.59	1.01
	Overall Mean	3.60	

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Table (4.13) Suggestion for Improvement presents an overall mean score of 3.60, reflecting a high level of interest among respondents in enhancing various aspects of their educational experience. The highest-rated suggestion is increasing access to career guidance and internship placements, with a mean score of 3.69. This highlights the need for stronger institutional support in bridging the gap between education and employment through career-focused initiatives. Providing more hands-on learning opportunities received a mean score of 3.60, emphasizing the importance of practical and experiential learning in preparing students for the workforce. Enhancing teacher-student engagement and interaction followed closely with a score of 3.59. Updating the curriculum to meet industry needs scored a mean of 3.54, indicating that respondents see value in aligning educational content with current labor market requirements. Offering better mental health and well-being support received the lowest mean score at 3.44, though still within the high range, underscoring the significance of holistic student support systems.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Finding

Respondents rated themselves moderately high in skills like time management (mean score of 4.05), teamwork (3.94), and adaptability (3.92), with an overall self-assessment mean score of 3.89. This indicates that they feel confident in their ability to handle typical workplace challenges. However, leadership and problem-solving skills were rated lower (3.73 and 3.82, respectively), which suggests that although graduates possess essential soft skills, they may need more development in advanced or managerial competencies to enhance their career prospects.

The desire for further skill development is strong among graduates, reflected by the mean score of 3.82. The highest mean (4.14) was for the statement that additional training would improve job performance, showing that they recognize the importance of continuous learning. However, the lower score (3.52) for the availability of resources for skill development indicates that graduates feel their current employers or educational institutions do not offer sufficient support or training programs. This gap suggests that more structured and accessible professional development opportunities are needed.

The respondents perceived the job market as competitive but uncertain. The overall mean score of 3.44 shows mixed opinions about job opportunities. While they believed that there were job openings in their fields (mean score of 3.38), they also felt that the competition was high (mean score of 3.65), which may create feelings of job insecurity. The belief that employers' expectations are unclear (mean score of 3.44) further complicates their ability to effectively target job opportunities. The lower score (3.04) regarding the future of the job market indicates that they are not optimistic about immediate improvements in job availability.

With a mean score of 3.68, job search challenges are considerable for graduates. The most prominent difficulty was preparing for interviews (mean score of 3.90),

highlighting a gap in interview readiness or the necessary soft skills required to impress employers. Other challenges, such as finding jobs that match skills (mean score of 3.49) and writing resumes (mean score of 3.59), also reflect the need for better job search support or skills in personal branding. Networking and managing the job search process were seen as ongoing hurdles, pointing to a need for graduates to develop stronger professional networks.

The respondents identified several barriers to employment, with the most significant being the ongoing political crisis in Myanmar (mean score of 4.28), which likely affects the stability and growth of job markets. Other barriers include a lack of experience (mean score of 3.61) and limited networking opportunities (mean score of 3.78). The respondents also identified the lack of relevant skills or certifications (3.76) and geographic limitations (3.97) as constraints. These factors suggest that overcoming structural and situational barriers, in addition to individual skill-building, is crucial for improving graduates' employment prospects.

The transition from education to employment was viewed as challenging, with an overall mean score of 3.48. The most significant obstacle identified was the lack of experience (mean score of 3.78), which is often a major concern for recent graduates. Additionally, many graduates felt that their institutions could have done more to connect them with employers (mean score of 3.37). This indicates a gap in career services or networking opportunities, which could make it more difficult for graduates to secure jobs directly related to their studies.

The respondents strongly emphasized the importance of linking education with employment. With an overall mean score of 3.87, they recognized the need for curricula to be aligned with job market demands (mean score of 3.73) and the importance of employer involvement in shaping educational programs (mean score of 3.87). Respondents also stressed the value of internships, career-oriented programs, and stronger partnerships between schools and employers, which they believed would enhance their job prospects (mean scores of 4.01 and 4.02). These findings suggest that more collaboration between educational institutions and employers is needed to create a more effective pathway from education to employment.

The respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of education, as reflected by an overall mean score of 2.97. The curriculum was considered outdated and not fully aligned with current industry standards (mean score of 2.95). There was also criticism of the teaching methods and the perceived lack of engagement from teachers (mean scores of 3.00 and 3.30). Furthermore, graduates felt that practical learning opportunities and support services like career guidance were lacking, which may contribute to the overall dissatisfaction with their educational experience.

Overall satisfaction with the institution was moderate, with an average score of 3.57. While graduates were generally satisfied with networking opportunities (mean score of 3.20) and the overall learning environment (3.15), they expressed lower satisfaction with faculty support (mean score of 2.96). The perceived value for money spent on education (mean score of 3.28) also indicates that graduates felt their investment in education may not have fully met their expectations or the outcomes they hoped for.

5.2 Suggestion

Educational institutions should prioritize hands-on learning opportunities to enhance graduate employability. Incorporating internships, lab-based experiences, and practical assignments into curricula can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and workplace applications. These experiences allow students to develop both technical skills and essential soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, which are critical for career success. Specialized training programs, workshops, and boot camps can further strengthen these competencies by focusing on in-demand skills such as coding, data analysis, and leadership.

Regular curriculum updates are essential to align educational programs with job market trends. Collaborating with industry experts ensures that course content remains relevant and prepares students for emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, renewable energy, and data science. Educational institutions should also integrate real-world challenges into classroom learning, enabling students to tackle problems faced by businesses and gain practical problem-solving experience.

Building stronger connections between educational institutions and employers can significantly improve job outcomes for graduates. Initiatives such as career fairs,

networking events, and employer panels provide students with opportunities to engage directly with potential employers, understand industry needs, and explore career pathways. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses can support the creation of internships and apprenticeships, offering students valuable work experience and enhancing their employability.

To address barriers like limited work experience or networking opportunities, institutions should collaborate with employers to create more internship, mentorship, and on-the-job training programs. Remote internship options and partnerships with companies in other regions can expand opportunities for students in areas with fewer local job prospects. Encouraging employers to offer targeted training programs and certifications can further support graduates entering specialized fields.

Alumni networks are a vital resource for fostering career development. Institutions should actively engage alumni through mentorship programs, networking events, and career guidance initiatives. Alumni can offer valuable insights, share job opportunities, and provide connections to industry professionals. By cultivating strong alumni relationships, institutions can create a supportive ecosystem that benefits both current students and graduates.

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APPENDIXES
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Demographic Information

01- What is your age range?

- Child (Under 15)
- Youth (15 – 35)
- Adult (Over 35)

02- What is your Gender?

- Male
- Female

03- What is your highest level of education completed?

- No Formal Education
- Primary Education (Grade 1-5)
- Lower Secondary (Grade 6-9)
- Upper Secondary (10-11)
- Higher Education (universities, technical institutes, and colleges)

04- What is your current employment status?

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Self-employed

Skill Assessment

01- How confident are you in your ability to perform the following tasks?

(Hints – 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Self-Assessment of Skills	1	2	3	4	5
I am proficient in using technology relevant to my work.					
I can effectively manage my time and prioritize tasks.					
I am comfortable working in a team environment.					

I have strong problem-solving skills.					
I can adapt quickly to changes in my work environment.					
I feel confident in my leadership skills.					

02- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your skill development?

Skill Improvement and Training Needs	1	2	3	4	5
I am interested in developing my technical skills further.					
I believe that additional training would improve my job performance.					
I feel that my organization provides adequate resources for skill development.					
I regularly set personal goals for improving my skills.					
I am aware of the skill gaps I need to address to advance in my career.					
My supervisor encourages skill development opportunities.					

03- How would you rate your current skill level in the following areas?

Perception of Current Skill Level	1	2	3	4	5
Technical Skills (e.g., using software, tools)					
Communication Skills (verbal and written)					
Team Collaboration and Interpersonal Skills					
Leadership and Decision-Making Skills					
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking					
Adaptability to New Challenges					

Job Search Experience

01- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the current job market?

Job Market Perception	1	2	3	4	5
I believe there are enough job opportunities in my field.					
I feel that the competition for jobs in my field is very high.					
I think employers are clear about their expectations in job postings.					
I am confident that I meet the qualifications for jobs in my field.					
I believe the job market will improve in the future.					

02- How challenging do you find the following aspects of job searching?

Job Search Challenges	1	2	3	4	5
Finding jobs that match my skills and experience					
Understanding the requirements of job postings					
Writing a strong resume and cover letter					
Preparing for interviews and assessments					
Networking and making professional connections					
Negotiating salary and benefits					
Managing the time and energy for a thorough job search					

Perceptions of education-employment linkages

01- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the relevance of education to employment?

Education Relevance to Employment	1	2	3	4	5
My education has provided me with skills that are relevant to my career goals.					
I believe the curriculum in my field aligns with current job market requirements.					
My educational institution provided sufficient career guidance and support.					
My education has prepared me to adapt to changes in the job market.					
I feel that internships or practical training during my education would improve my employability.					

02- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about challenges in finding employment after completing education?

Challenges in Transitioning from Education to Employment	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that a lack of experience is a significant barrier to finding employment.					
I think my educational institution could do more to facilitate connections with employers.					
I find it challenging to identify career opportunities aligned with my studies.					
I feel my education left gaps in practical skills needed for my career.					

03- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the importance of education-employment linkages?

Importance of education-employment linkages	1	2	3	4	5
It is essential for educational institutions to align curricula with job market demands.					
Employers should be involved in developing educational programs.					
Schools should offer more career-oriented programs and internships.					
Stronger partnerships between schools and employers would improve graduates' employment prospects.					
Regular updates to curricula based on industry changes would improve employability.					

Perception on Educational Institutions

01- To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the quality of education provided by your institution?

Education Quality	1	2	3	4	5
My institution provides high-quality education that meets my learning needs.					
The curriculum is up-to-date and relevant to current industry standards.					
The teachers are knowledgeable and well-prepared.					
The teaching methods used are engaging and effective.					
My institution promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills.					

02- How satisfied are you with the following resources and facilities provided by your institution?

Resources and Facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of up-to-date learning resources (e.g., textbooks, online materials)					
Quality of classroom facilities and technology					
Access to laboratory equipment and practical learning tools					
Availability of extracurricular activities and clubs					
Support services such as counseling and career guidance					

03- Please indicate your overall satisfaction level regarding the following aspects.
(Hints – 1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Satisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)

Overall Satisfaction with the Institution	1	2	3	4	5
Overall quality of education provided					
Support from faculty and administrative staff					
Opportunities for networking and career development					
Overall learning environment and culture at the institution					
Value for the money spent on education					

04- In which of the following areas do you think your institution could improve?

Suggestions for Improvement	1	2	3	4	5
Providing more hands-on learning opportunities					
Updating the curriculum to meet industry needs					
Increasing access to career guidance and internship placements					
Offering better mental health and well-being support					
Enhancing teacher-student engagement and interaction					

Thanks you for your supports