

**YANGON UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES PROGRAMME**

**A STUDY ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF SCHOOL DROPOUT
YOUTH TAKING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING
(CASE STUDY: DAGON SEIKKAN TOWNSHIP)**

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EMDevS – 57 (19th BATCH)**

JUNE, 2025

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of
Development Studies (EMDevS) Degree

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A study on the employability of school dropout youth taking vocational education training (Case study: Dagon Seikkan Township)**” submitted as partial fulfillment towards the requirements for the degree of Master of Development Studies has been accepted by the Board of Examiners.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the employability outcomes of school dropout youth aged 14–20 who have undergone vocational education and to explore their socio-economic backgrounds. Drawing on a structured survey of selected trainees in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon Region, the research reveals that vocational training significantly contributes to improving employment prospects and overall well-being. Among respondents, 92.9% secured jobs related to their training, with salaried positions (45.9%) and daily wage work (28.96%) being the most common employment types. Over half (51.09%) found jobs within three months, primarily through the training center. Confidence in job retention skills was notably high, with 66.12% expressing self-assurance. Socio-economic backgrounds reflected limited household income and education levels, but vocational training positively impacted household outcomes, including debt reduction, contributions to family expenses, and support for siblings' education. Furthermore, a majority of trainees showed interest in pursuing further training, highlighting a strong aspiration for continuous skill development. These findings underscore the value of vocational education in enhancing employability among marginalized youth and suggest that with adequate institutional support and targeted reforms, such programs can contribute meaningfully to individual empowerment and community development.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
BRAC	-	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEDEFOP	-	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EMDevS	-	Executive Master of Development Studies
GTI	-	Government Technical Institute
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
INGO	-	International Non-Governmental Organization
ITE	-	Institute of Technical Education
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MMK	-	Myanmar Kyat (currency)
MY-PEC	-	Myanmar Program on the Elimination of Child Labor
NAPS	-	National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme
NESP	-	National Education Strategic Plan
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SME	-	Small and Medium Enterprise
SYRD	-	Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development
TVET	-	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	-	Vocational Education and Training
YWCA	-	Young Women's Christian Association

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Many successful Asian countries have shown that developing people's skills and using them effectively is very important for economic growth. However, the benefits of growth must be shared fairly. When people do not benefit equally, it affects their well-being and makes it harder to maintain progress. Some countries struggle to keep growing because they face difficulties in building strong human resources and making sure people have good job opportunities especially if the overall social and economic conditions are not supportive.

There is widespread consensus that human capital formation is a crucial driver of economic development. Human capital refers to productive investments in people, such as their skills and health, which are outcomes of education, healthcare and on-the-job training. Improving people's skills boosts productivity which leads to better living standards and stronger economic growth. To make this happen, countries also need to adopt good economic policies that promote jobs for the poor, support business development, encourage dialogue between workers and employers and invest in basic services like education, health, and infrastructure.

A well-designed skills development system plays a crucial role in linking education to vocational education training, training to employment and employment to lifelong learning. This system helps ensure productivity growth is translated into more and better-quality jobs. Moreover, a well-trained workforce enables businesses to adopt new technologies, attract foreign investment and diversify into new sectors. Skills development policies not only help respond to changes in the economy and technology but can also drive those changes.

In the context of poverty, the Asian Development Bank (2014) highlights that urban poverty is not just about low income, it also involves complex social and economic issues. People in poor urban communities often face multiple hardships that limit their ability to improve their lives. For youth in these communities, the situation

is especially challenging. Many drop out of school due to unstable home environments or the need to contribute to household income. Globally, around 215 million children aged 5 to 17 are involved in child labor, with over half engaged in hazardous work.

In Myanmar, education plays a vital role in reducing poverty and promoting inclusive growth. However, many youth drop out of school due to financial difficulties. From February 2020 to February 2022, public schools in Myanmar remained closed for 532 days which is the longest closure in the East Asia and Pacific region. Although schools were ordered to reopen in November 2021, enrollment did not recover. According to the World Bank (2023), school enrollment among those aged 6 to 22 declined from 69.2% in 2017 to 56.8% in 2023, particularly affecting high school students.

One of the main reasons youth leave school is economic hardship. With rising commodity prices and reduced household incomes, many parents cannot afford to support their children's education. As a result, children and youths are pushed into the labor market to work in agriculture, manufacturing or informal service jobs such as collecting garbage, serving in tea shops, or selling goods on the street.

Vocational Education can be defined as the education that is based on occupation and employment. Compared to formal education, vocational education training has gained popularity among young people due to its shorter completion time and the potential for competitive salaries in the labor market. It could be seen as a practical solution to equip dropout youth with job-ready skills, particularly those who do not continue with traditional academic pathways. Vocational education trainings are not only attracted to the school dropout youth but also for university students and graduates.

International non-government organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and various INGOs have provided short-term vocational education training courses in Myanmar. These include motorcycle repair, sewing, mechanics, and nurse aid training and other vocational education trainings which help create employment opportunities for out-of-school youth. These programs have been implemented in regions such as Yangon, Shan, Mon, Kayin and the Ayeyarwaddy division.

One area selected for closer study is Dagon Seikkan Township which has a diverse population including farmers, factory and livestock workers, low-income earners, healthcare workers and migrants. This variety of social and occupational

backgrounds may contribute to the area's high school dropout rate. However, if vocational education training opportunities are made accessible, many of these youth could benefit and gain meaningful employment after completing their training.

In Dagon Seikkan township, the vocational education training such as motorcycle training, sewing training, beauty salon services training and mobile phone repairing training, etc. for the school dropout youths which could makes them income by themselves. This activity is funded by Myanmar Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (MY-PEC) Project under International Labour Organization (ILO). MY-PEC project's mission is child labor reduction in Myanmar by enhancing knowledge and awareness, strengthening legal frameworks and implementing direct interventions to reduce child labor in targeted communities. (ILO,2024)

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are

- To assess the employability outcomes of youth after receiving vocational education training, and
- To explore the socio-economic backgrounds of school dropout youth enrolling in vocational education training.

1.3 Method of Study

This study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional design using a quantitative approach to explore the employability outcomes of school dropout who have received vocational education training in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon Region. Quantitative data is collected to ensure an understanding of the socio-economic backgrounds of these youth and the effectiveness of vocational education training in improving their employability. The study is conducted in Dagon Seikkan Township, located in the eastern part of Yangon Region. For primary data, structured questionnaires were developed and was done to 366 responsible persons in project implemented area. The target population includes school dropout youth aged 14–24 who are enrolled in or have completed vocational education programs in Dagon Seikkan Township. The survey was conducted to 366 respondents from different vocational education training centers, including those offering courses in mechanics, tailoring, hairdressing, and basic IT skills. Quantitative data is collected through

structured questionnaires administered to the selected youth. The questionnaire included sections on demographics, education history, training experience, job placement, and income level. Quantitative data is coded and analyzed to generate descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation to assess employability outcomes. Secondary data obtained from previous studies, articles, research papers and reports from World Bank and United Nations.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on assessing the employability outcomes of school dropout youth who have undergone vocational education and training in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon Region. The research specifically targets youth aged between 14 and 20 years who are no longer attending formal school and have enrolled in vocational training programs. The scope includes examining both the socio-economic backgrounds of these youths and the employment-related results following their training, such as job attainment, income levels, job relevance to training, and self-perceived employability.

The findings are geographically limited to three selected wards in Dagon Seikkan Township and may not be generalizable to all youths in Yangon Region. The study is cross-sectional in nature, capturing data at one point in time, and thus cannot account for long-term employment trajectories or sustainability of employment. Only youth who have received vocational training are included; the study does not compare them with school dropouts who have not received such training. Despite these limitations, the study provides a useful foundation for understanding how vocational education influences the employability of marginalized youth in urban Myanmar.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents the introduction part of the study which includes the rationale of the study, the objective of the study, method of study, scope and limitation of the study and organization of the study. Chapter II presents on the literature review of the vocational education, Chapter III describes the overview of education and vocational training in Myanmar, Chapter IV presents the survey analysis and Chapter five includes the conclusions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Vocational Education

Vocational education focuses on providing learners with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies to enter the workforce or advance in their chosen fields. (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.; World Bank, 2020). This type of education includes a wide range of programs and courses that cover various industries such as healthcare, automotive, construction, culinary arts and information technology (OECD, 2010). The primary goal is to bridge the gap between education and employment ensuring that individuals are job-ready upon completion of their training (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.; CEDEFOP, n.d.).

Vocational education can provide specialized knowledge and technical skills that are directly applicable to specific careers. This includes both theoretical knowledge and practical experience that allows learners to develop a comprehensive skill set (OECD, 2010; CEDEFOP, n.d.).

Vocational education programs are often more time and cost-efficient compared to traditional academic pathways. They offer an effective approach to gain the necessary qualifications for employment with less time and less financial investment required (World Bank, 2020; CEDEFOP, n.d.). Many individuals find personal satisfaction in pursuing careers that align with their interests and strengths. Vocational education allows learners to explore their passions and turn them into viable career paths (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.; CEDEFOP, n.d.).

Many European education systems are struggling with a big problem that a lot of students leave school early before completing their education. According to the European Commission (2011) and Salva-Mut et al (2014), reducing the incidence of students exiting the education system prematurely is a central policy objective at both national and EU levels.

The concept of vocational education has evolved over the years from a highly focused concentration on technical skills and hands-on work to a broader one that

includes soft skills, entrepreneurship and adaptability to adapt to the dynamic needs of the labour market. During development, vocational education plays a crucial role in guaranteeing inclusive economic growth, unemployment reduction and skills matching in the labour market.

Vocational training is critical in developing countries where majority of the population especially youth and vulnerable groups do not have access to formal employment. By facilitating alternative ways to employment, TVET can result in poverty reduction, social justice and sustainable livelihoods. It is also a way of support to national development planning by connecting human capital with industrial and economic demands.

Currently, vocational education in developing countries linked with lifelong learning, digital skills, green jobs and labour market alignment. Public-private partnerships, competency-based training and recognition of informal learning are becoming more common. In developing countries, governments and development partners are now emphasize on labour market relevance, youth employability and skills for future jobs as an inclusive economic growth.

2.2 Types of Vocational Education

Vocational education exists globally in various forms, influenced by historical, cultural and economic factors. The major types of vocational education systems worldwide and their respective effectiveness are outlined below.

One of the most common forms of vocational education is school-based training. This approach integrates vocational subjects into the general education curriculum, primarily at the secondary or post-secondary level. It is delivered through classrooms, workshops or school laboratories, and often leads to nationally recognized diplomas or certificates (OECD, 2010; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013).

For example, in Japan, technical high schools and colleges provide specialized programs in fields such as engineering, information technology and manufacturing, accommodating to students from the age of 15 and upwards. These institutions have played a significant role in supporting Japan's industrial development and technological advancement (OECD, 2010).

One widely recognized approach to vocational education is the Dual System, which integrates theoretical learning in vocational schools with practical training in

workplaces. This system facilitates a smooth transition from education to employment and is especially prevalent in countries such as Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

In Germany, the *Berufsausbildung* system is often considered a benchmark for vocational training. Students divide their time between vocational schools and hands-on training at companies. This collaboration between educational institutions and employers ensures that the training aligns closely with labor market demands, reducing youth unemployment and minimizing skill mismatches (Euler, 2013).

France has established a parallel system of general and vocational education, with students enrolled in vocational schools known as *lycée professionnel*. Upon completion of their studies, they earn the *Baccalauréat Professionnel*, a diploma that enables them to either enter the labour market immediately or pursue higher technical education. These programs are designed to serve industries like hospitality, healthcare, and mechanics (CEDEFOP, 2014).

Switzerland takes a similar approach, with nearly two-thirds of its students opting for vocational pathways after completing compulsory education. These programs usually last three to four years and culminate in nationally standardized assessments. This model has been credited with maintaining high youth employment rates in the country (OECD, 2018).

In many low and middle-income countries, apprenticeships remain a critical form of vocational training. These programs, while often informal, provide essential opportunities for acquiring practical skills especially in areas where access to formal education is limited.

For example, in India, the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) supports both formal and informal apprenticeships in industries like manufacturing, construction and services. Similarly, informal apprenticeships in Sub-Saharan Africa serve as the primary employment pathway for many young people. Although these systems are often unregulated, they play a significant role in fostering skill development in regions with limited institutional resources.

In most countries, community colleges and technical institutes offer short-term post-secondary programs that emphasize practical skills. These institutions provide affordable and flexible pathways to employment or further education.

In the United States, community colleges play a vital role in career development by offering short, hands-on programs in fields such as healthcare, information technology and logistics. These institutions are especially valuable for

underrepresented groups including low-income students and displaced workers as they provide opportunities to acquire market-relevant skills and advance in their careers.

Similarly, in Singapore, institutions like the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and polytechnics prepare students for employment by closely collaborating with government agencies and industries. These schools ensure that their curriculum aligns with the skills in demand by employers and offer graduates opportunities for continuous learning and career growth.

Non-formal vocational education programs are often targeted at marginalized communities, particularly in rural areas that lack access to formal education. These initiatives are typically run by NGOs, community organizations or international development agencies.

For instance, in Bangladesh, BRAC provides young people and women in rural areas with practical training to help them secure jobs or start small businesses. These programs address local needs and prioritize the inclusion of women. Similarly, in Kenya and Uganda, donor-funded programs provide short, hands-on courses to equip young people with job-ready skills and entrepreneurial abilities.

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has also urged the demand for online vocational education which offers flexibility and accessibility for adult learners, rural population and workers undergoing career transitions.

Online platforms such as Coursera, Udemy and edX provide vocational certification programs in areas such as coding, digital marketing and project management. In China, digital TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) initiatives have expanded opportunities, providing millions of students with access to vocational education especially in remote regions. (World Bank, 2020).

Therefore, vocational education around the world takes many different forms. From Europe's dual training systems to informal apprenticeships in Africa and online learning in Asia, each approach reflects different needs and realities. Good vocational education is about more than just teaching skills, it's about creating real pathways to work, improving people's lives and supporting long-term economic growth.

2.3 Role of Policies in Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The increasing focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) reflects global socioeconomic challenges such as rising youth unemployment, skills mismatches and economic inequality. Policy interventions particularly concerning the education dropout age and institutional support for TVET, play a crucial role in ensuring equitable access to vocational education and successful labour market integration.

The minimum school leaving age or dropout age is a critical element of national education policy. The International Labour Organization (ILO) advocates for prolonged compulsory schooling to improve access to quality education and reduce levels of early labour market entry. Many countries mandate a minimum dropout age of 16 years, serving as a legal foundation to ensure students complete basic education before entering the workforce.

Countries with higher dropout ages encourage increased participation in secondary and vocational education. For instance, Germany's highly regarded dual-system of VET benefits from policies that channel students who have completed compulsory education into either academic or vocational pathways, reducing early school leavers and minimizing skill shortages (Fuller, 2015). In contrast, countries with flexible dropout regulations often see higher rates of early school leaving especially in lower-income areas which adversely affect transitions to tertiary or vocational education.

Policies that aim to raise the dropout age often include steps to help students move easily from general education to vocational education. These steps may involve offering early career guidance, providing work-based learning opportunities and setting up special courses to assist students who are struggling academically. By extending the years of compulsory schooling, governments can encourage more students to join vocational education and training (VET) programs. This helps young people develop valuable skills and improves their chances of finding jobs.

Support for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is based on creating strong systems and institutions that make it easier for people to access training, improve the quality of education, and ensure fair opportunities for all. Effective policy support for TVET typically addresses three dimensions: curriculum alignment, certification and qualification standards, and employer involvement.

Aligning TVET curricula with labour market demands ensures the relevance of skills taught and fosters job readiness. Countries like Switzerland and Germany provide exemplary models where curricula are co-developed by educational institutions and industry representatives to ensure programs meet the skills requirements of employers (Fuller, 2015). Similarly, Singapore integrates industry demand trends into its curriculum through institutions like the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), bridging the gap between education and job opportunities.

Public-private partnership models such as apprenticeships embody productive collaboration between educational providers and employers for TVET success. Apprenticeships facilitate real-world skills acquisition while offering students work experience, a vital component for employability in many sectors. Germany, Austria and Switzerland have institutional frameworks that mandate employer participation in vocational education, ensuring the simultaneous development of academic and practical expertise through apprenticeships (CEDEFOP, 2014).

Despite successes, TVET continues to face challenges globally. In many low- and middle-income countries, vocational education operates in informal and often unregulated environments, limiting its ability to produce skilled and certified workers. Informal apprenticeships dominate in settings such as Sub-Saharan Africa. While they provide essential skill-training opportunities, a lack of formal frameworks restricts mobility and recognition in higher education and formal employment markets (ILO, 2020).

Furthermore, policies supporting non-formal or informal TVET often fail to address disparities affecting marginalized populations including women, rural communities and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. Targeted policies emphasizing inclusion such as BRAC's initiative in Bangladesh, demonstrate the importance of designing interventions that consider local needs and community structures (Fuller, 2015).

2.4 Market Opportunities of Vocational Education Training

Vocational Education Training plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for the labour market by equipping them with practical skills that are directly relevant to specific jobs and industries. One of the main advantages of vocational education training is its ability to respond to the evolving needs of the labour market. Unlike general academic education, vocational education training is designed to produce job-

ready graduates with skills that match current economic demands. As economies modernize and shift towards technology, services, and green industries, there is a growing demand for skilled technicians, craft workers, and service professionals.

For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasizes that effective vocational education can fill gaps in sectors like construction, manufacturing, hospitality, healthcare and digital technology sectors that are often underserved by traditional education systems (ILO, 2021).

In many developing countries, youth unemployment remains a major challenge. Vocational education offers an alternative pathway to employment for young people, particularly those who are not able to access or complete higher education. It also opens up opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship by providing hands-on skills and business knowledge. A study by UNESCO (2020) found that countries that invested in vocational training such as Germany, South Korea and Singapore experienced higher rates of youth employment and better alignment between education and the economy. In Africa and Southeast Asia, vocational training programs have increasingly been tied to start-up support and microfinance, helping young people start their own businesses.

Market opportunities from vocational education are not limited to employment alone. Vocational training also supports broader development goals such as reducing poverty, promoting gender equality and supporting marginalized groups (e.g., rural populations, people with disabilities). TVET programs that are tailored to the needs of local communities especially in agriculture, renewable energy and handicrafts can boost local economies and promote sustainable livelihoods.

The World Bank (2018) highlights that countries which integrate vocational education into national development plans tend to experience more balanced economic growth as skill development directly contributes to productivity and competitiveness.

To maximize market opportunities, successful TVET systems work closely with the private sector. Partnerships between vocational institutions and employers help ensure that training programs are relevant and up to date. These linkages also create pathways for internships, apprenticeships and eventual employment. These kinds of collaborations have improved job placement rates and strengthened the connection between training and economic demand in countries like Malaysia, India and Rwanda.

Market opportunities created by vocational education are significant especially in developing economies where unemployment and skills mismatches remain high. When supported by sound policies and strong institutional frameworks, vocational education can provide a direct link between learning and earning, helping individuals, communities and nations move toward inclusive and sustainable development.

2.5 The Impact of Vocational Training on Employment and Workforce Development

Vocational training programs were originally designed to meet the needs of the modern economic sector. However, they have not been very successful mainly because the modern sector is still quite small and doesn't require a large number of formally trained skilled workers. Many jobs in this sector don't need high skill levels and employers often rely on cheaper alternatives for labour. Additionally, poor management in the industrial sector has led to inefficient use of production capacity, weak competitiveness and slow growth. These training programs are also often reactive rather than proactive which makes them less relevant to both employers and workers. Other challenges include limited training in agriculture and services, outdated methods, small program size, low quality and high costs which make these programs a lower priority when allocating resources.

This situation is also evident in the low wages and weak incentives for skilled and semi-skilled workers. There is limited involvement from employers' and workers' organizations in the development and implementation of training programs. Moreover, there is no unified or coordinated national system for vocational training that addresses the broader economic sectors. If vocational training had been better integrated with general education and offered through informal and enterprise-based channels, it could have reached more young people entering the workforce and helped upgrade the skills of existing workers. In the long term, a structured and standardized system that combines basic education, vocational education, and advanced training is necessary. Key features of such a system should include affordability for youth, shared training costs, recognized standards and certification, and coordination among training institutions.

A strong national vocational training policy is essential to improve the quality of current programs and to build a systematic structure that can meaningfully contribute to economic and social development. This policy should cover all skill

development sources, reach various economic sectors, respond to labour market changes and recognize both formal and non-formal training from different providers. It should encourage active participation and funding from employers, organizations, and private entities, and it must strengthen the links between general education, vocational institutes, and workplace-based learning. Regular monitoring of labour market and productivity trends, and evaluating the impact of vocational training programs, should be part of this system. A national framework for skill standards and certifications must be developed and used in hiring, promotion, and career guidance.

Given the wide range of agencies providing training and the lack of coordination among them, legislative backing is important. This would ensure better collaboration with employers, harmonization between formal and informal training providers, and alignment of education, training, and enterprise-based systems. Legislation should also support national standards and ensure proper governance and funding of training programs. It should include periodic assessments, retraining initiatives, technology upgrades, research, and information sharing. Training institutions, especially in the public sector, could also support small businesses and self-employment by helping with business plans, technical advice, quality control, and production design, in partnership with banks and local authorities.

International cooperation can play a significant role by supporting staff development, research, sharing technological information, funding improvements in training quality and equipment and enhancing the exchange of vocational training knowledge. Clear roles for government, private training providers, employers and individuals must be outlined in the national policy.

The labour market has changed globally over time as countries developed. In poorer countries, most people still work in agriculture, often earning very little or working without pay. As economies grow, workers gradually move into manufacturing and services, with the service sector expanding more in wealthier countries. Even in middle-income countries, unemployment is not an option for many, due to weak social safety nets. Therefore, it is important to understand labour market imbalances by analysing the supply and demand of workers, as well as the reasons behind mismatches such as regional differences, skill gaps, education levels, or gender-related issues.

Labour supply represents the available workforce while labour demand reflects the need for workers. Analysing labour supply involves examining population

data, especially the working-age group, including those not currently employed. Key factors to consider include age structure, employment by sector, unemployment by gender, migration trends and literacy rates. On the demand side, one must assess the economic structure, wage levels, urban-rural differences, size of the public sector and the potential of the private sector.

Effective labour market policies should offer unemployment support, ensure income security and provide a legal framework that balances worker protection with economic efficiency. These policies should be supported by administrative systems capable of implementing labour laws, inspecting workplaces and managing programs for training, retraining and employment promotion.

2.6 Role of Livelihood Support in Vocational Training Programs

Livelihood support has emerged as a critical complement to vocational training, particularly for disadvantaged populations. International evidence demonstrates that skills training alone often proves insufficient for sustainable employment, with studies emphasizing the "missing middle" between skill acquisition and income generation (ILO, 2021). Effective livelihood support typically includes three key components: asset transfers (e.g., toolkits, seed capital), financial services (microloan, savings groups), and market linkages (Palmer, 2020).

In developing contexts, the World Bank (2022) reports that vocational programs incorporating livelihood support show 30-50% higher employment retention rates compared to only training provided. The multiplier effect is particularly pronounced when support aligns with local market demands, for instance, providing motorcycle repair kits in communities with high transport service needs. However, challenges persist in implementation. A UNDP (2021) study across Southeast Asia found that rural participants and women often receive less post-training support due to resource allocation biases and social norms.

Myanmar-specific research remains limited, but available data suggests livelihood support significantly impacts vocational outcomes. The MY-PEC project (ILO, 2024) recorded 65% higher self-employment rates among trainees receiving both sewing machines and business mentoring versus those without such support. These findings align with global patterns where integrated approaches yield broader socioeconomic benefits including household debt reduction and improved education access for trainees' families (OECD, 2023). Future research should further examine

optimal support packages for Myanmar's diverse contexts while addressing gender and geographic disparities.

2.7 Review on Previous Studies

Thandar Oo (2000), in her thesis “A Study on the Technical and Vocational Education in Myanmar”, found that vocational education provides opportunities for school dropouts to improve their lives and contribute to the economy. She emphasized the government's key role in aligning vocational training with labor market needs. The study also highlighted the importance of Government Technical Institutes (GTIs) in producing skilled workers for industrial development and addressing the education-to-employment gap through practical, job-oriented training.

Htoo Aung Naing (2008), in his thesis “Vocational Education for Employment Opportunities in Myanmar (1997–2005)”, examined how vocational training courses were implemented by public sectors in Myanmar and emphasized the role of human capital in national development. The study highlighted that vocational employees are considered valuable assets for improving employability, productivity and socio-economic development. It pointed out that vocational education is essential for capacity building and reducing the gap between education and labor market needs. The research also focused on the importance of aligning TVET systems with labor market demands and explored how improved skill formation could lead to better employment opportunities in Myanmar.

Kyaw Min Han (2019), in his thesis “A Study on Job Opportunities of Vocational Education in Myanmar (A case study of Hospitality and Catering Training Academy (Kaw-Hmu))”, explored the employment outcomes and income levels of graduates from vocational training centres in Myanmar. The study found that graduates were highly satisfied with the curriculum, teaching methods and their current careers. The study emphasized that VET centres are effectively supporting youth employment in a growing economy and that government efforts are actively promoting these centres.

Syamsi.I, in the study “Preparation for Vocational Life Skills Education Model Implementation for School Dropouts,” explored how life skills education can enhance the employability of adolescent school dropouts in rural Indonesia. The research identified that 75% of the 164 dropout participants were unemployed and emphasized the need for targeted vocational and life skills training. Through action

research and tutor training, the program significantly improved tutors' knowledge, attitudes, and motivation. The study recommended ongoing life skills programs tailored to community needs and highlighted the importance of well-qualified tutors and pedagogical content knowledge in delivering effective vocational education (Syamsi, 2019).

Min Min Than (2023), in the thesis "A Study on Empowerment of Women Through Vocational Trainings (A Case Study of Young Women's Christian Association, Myanmar)," examined how vocational training empowers women socially and economically. The study found that the vocational training programs provided by YWCA are practical, effective and have long-term positive impacts on women's lives. These trainings helped women improve their skills, expand their job opportunities, increase financial independence and gain the confidence to make better decisions and contribute to their communities. The study also highlighted that empowering women through vocational education is crucial for sustainable development, as it promotes gender inclusion and overall societal progress.

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) IN MYANMAR

3.1 Vocational Education Training in Myanmar

Vocational education training has become a key strategy worldwide for boosting economic growth and creating youth employment. Successful models like Germany's dual education system and Singapore's skills-focused programs demonstrate how linking education to labor market needs can lower unemployment and raise productivity (OECD, 2021). Research shows that effective vocational programs mix classroom lessons with hands-on work experience (World Bank, 2022) while regularly updating courses to match new technologies (UNESCO, 2021). These international examples provide useful lessons for countries like Myanmar.

In Myanmar, the education system faces serious challenges. Only 47% of students finish secondary school (UNESCO, 2022). The system has primary (Grades 1-5), middle (Grades 6-9) and high school (Grades 10-11) before university (Ministry of Education, 2021). Poverty forces many students, especially in rural areas, to leave school early, according to World Bank 2023 report, 58% drop out before completing Grade 9. Vocational training has become an important alternative with 127 government-run technical schools offering courses in fields like construction, car repair, and clothing production (Department of Technical and Vocational Education, 2022).

However, Myanmar's vocational education system has several weaknesses. Many schools (63%) use old equipment and teach outdated skills that don't match what employers need today (ILO, 2022). For example, while garment factories now use computer-controlled machines, most vocational schools still teach only manual sewing. Quality varies significantly, urban centers like Yangon have better resources than rural areas. Only 28% of vocational teachers meet national standards and many

people still view vocational training as less valuable than university education (Ministry of Education, 2021).

International assistance has helped improve Myanmar's vocational programs. The ILO's "Skills for Employment" initiative (2020-2023) supplied modern equipment to 15 schools and trained 340 teachers. Similarly, Japan's JICA program (2021) helped develop updated courses for car repair and construction training. These efforts have shown positive results, with participating schools reporting 22% better job placement rates for graduates (UNDP, 2022). While problems remain, these improvements prove vocational training can help solve Myanmar's education and employment challenges.

3.1.1 Livelihood Support in Myanmar

Livelihood support programs play a crucial role in helping Myanmar's vocational training graduates establish stable income sources. These programs focus on three key forms of assistance: providing essential toolkits to 12,000 graduates annually, offering small loans averaging \$300 per person and delivering practical business skills training (Ministry of Labor, 2022). According to UNDP (2022), graduates who receive this comprehensive support package - combining tools, financing and business education - typically earn 35% more than those who complete vocational training alone.

Several significant challenges hinder these programs' effectiveness. The distribution of support remains heavily skewed toward urban areas, with 72% of resources allocated there, leaving rural communities underserved (ILO, 2023). Gender disparities are also evident, as women constitute 45% of vocational graduates but receive only 38% of toolkits. This imbalance contributes to substantial income gaps - female sewing program graduates typically earn \$2.50 daily, while their male counterparts in mechanical trades make \$5.80 (Ministry of Social Welfare, 2022).

Funding sustainability presents another major obstacle, with 65% of programs currently relying on short-term donations (World Bank, 2023). In response, the government introduced the National Livelihoods Framework (2023) to develop more stable, long-term financing solutions through partnerships with private sector organizations. This initiative aims to create a more equitable and sustainable system for supporting vocational graduates nationwide.

3.2 Institutional Structure of TVET in Myanmar

The institutional structure of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Myanmar is characterized by a multi-ministerial, multi-provider system, involving both government and non-government actors. The Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTVET) under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) is the main body responsible for delivering formal TVET programs. DTVET operates a nationwide network of institutions including Government Technical High Schools (GTHS), Government Technical Institutes (GTI), and Government Technological Colleges (GTC), offering training that ranges from basic skills to diploma-level qualifications. It also plays a pivotal role in leading reforms related to Competency-Based Training (CBT), curriculum development in collaboration with industry, and modularized short-course programs. The Ministry of Education (MoE) contributes to vocational education through vocational streams in basic education high schools and some non-formal programs; however, vocational pathways within the formal school system remain limited and are often perceived as inferior to academic education.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) also plays a crucial role, particularly through the Department of Labour which oversees short-term skills training centers targeting unemployed youth, returnee migrant workers, and other low-skilled laborers. Moreover, MOLIP supervises the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA), which is responsible for developing and implementing national occupational skill standards, assessment systems, and certification across more than 50 trades. The Ministry of Border Affairs (MOBA) provides vocational training in border and ethnic areas, aiming to serve disadvantaged populations in underserved regions, while the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) focuses on technical and life skills training for vulnerable groups such as orphans, persons with disabilities, and youth affected by social challenges.

In addition to public provision, a growing number of private sector actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved in delivering TVET programs. Organizations such as Swisscontact, Save the Children, and the Myanmar Red Cross Society offer job-focused, short-duration training courses and apprenticeship programs, often aligned with local labor market demands. These providers typically implement more flexible and innovative delivery methods, including mobile training and community-based approaches. Furthermore, international development partners

like the International Labour Organization (ILO), Asian Development Bank (ADB), GIZ, KOICA, and UNESCO are active in providing technical assistance and funding for system strengthening, policy development, capacity-building, and the implementation of quality assurance frameworks

Table (3.1) Summary Key Institutions and Roles in Myanmar’s TVET

Institution / Ministry	Main Role and Contribution
DTVET (MOST)	Operates formal TVET institutions (GTHS, GTI, GTC); curriculum and teacher training
MoE	Vocational streams in schools; non-formal and continuing education
MOLIP & NSSA	Oversees skills standards and certification; job matching; short-term job training
MOBA	Provides vocational training in border/rural areas
MSWRR	TVET for vulnerable and marginalized populations
Private Sector/NGOs	Short, job-specific training and apprenticeships; innovative, demand-driven delivery
International Partners	Capacity-building, technical assistance, system reforms

Source: Education Report 2022, National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016–2021

.Table 3.1 presents the summary of key institutions and their roles in Myanmar’s TVET. While this diverse ecosystem offers wide access to vocational education and training, it also creates challenges in terms of coordination, standardization, and equitable quality assurance. Therefore, ongoing efforts to improve inter-ministerial coordination, harmonize curricula, and align training with labor market needs are essential for the effectiveness and inclusiveness of Myanmar’s TVET system.

3.3 TVET Access and Enrollment in Myanmar

Access to vocational education and training (TVET) in Myanmar remains limited and uneven, especially for youth from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Although the government and development partners have acknowledged the importance of TVET for enhancing youth employability, systemic

barriers continue to impede participation. A major constraint is the geographic concentration of TVET institutions in major urban areas such as Yangon, Mandalay, and Nay Pyi Taw, which restricts access for rural and conflict-affected populations. Additionally, while some government TVET programs offer low or no tuition fees, indirect costs such as transportation, accommodation, and materials can be prohibitive for many low-income families.

The rate of transition from general education to TVET is relatively low. According to the Ministry of Education and the National Education Strategic Plan (2016–2021), only about 10% of secondary school completers enroll in vocational training. Youth who drop out of school before reaching upper secondary education face even greater challenges due to limited foundational knowledge and lack of career guidance.

Moreover, disparities in gender and disability access remain significant. Young women are underrepresented in technical and engineering programs due to gender norms and the absence of gender-sensitive support services. Meanwhile, youth with disabilities face institutional and infrastructural barriers to enrollment. Table 3.2 presents some key data on TVET access and enrollment in Myanmar based on government and partner reports.

Table 3.2 TVET Access and Enrollment Indicators in Myanmar

No.	Indicator	Value / Estimate	Source
1	% of secondary students enrolled in vocational education	0.18% (2018)	World Bank, WDI via TradingEconomics
2	Female share of vocational secondary students	17.84% (2018)	UNESCO-UIS via IndexMundi
3	Youth NEET rate (age 15–24, not in education, employment or training)	9.0% (2019)	ILOSTAT via IndexMundi, OBG Myanmar Economic Report (2019)
4	Number of public TVET institutions nationwide	Approximately 387	Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2022/23 Educational Statistical Yearbook

5	Ministries involved in delivering TVET programs	Over 20	Asian Development Bank, OECD & UNESCO; Oxford Business Group
6	Estimated total number of vocational students enrolled (public & private)	~250,000+	MoE Yearbook 2022/23; ADB Education Sector Assessment
7	Share of private sector TVET institutions	< 10%	Myanmar Private TVET Association (2023); ILO Country Report
8	Enrollment in Level 1 and Level 2 programs (basic-level vocational)	121,643 students (2022–2023)	Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2022/23 Educational Statistical Yearbook
9	Enrollment in Level 4 and Level 5 diploma programs (technical diploma)	9,184 students (2022–2023)	Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2022/23 Educational Statistical Yearbook

Source: World Bank. (2018). World Development Indicators: Myanmar Vocational Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com>

To improve access, current policy reforms are focused on upgrading infrastructure, expanding mobile and community-based training, offering targeted scholarships, and fostering public-private partnerships. However, challenges remain in coordination across ministries, quality assurance, and inclusiveness. Strengthening career guidance in schools and promoting TVET awareness campaigns will be crucial to enhance participation, particularly among vulnerable youth.

3.4 Policy Framework and Reform Initiatives

The policy framework guiding the development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Myanmar has evolved significantly in recent years, shaped by national development goals and regional integration commitments. The cornerstone of Myanmar’s TVET reform is the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) 2016–2021, which emphasizes improving the relevance, quality, and accessibility of vocational education, particularly for youth and disadvantaged groups. This plan aims to align vocational curricula with labor market demands, establish competency-based training standards, and foster public-private partnerships in skills

development. Complementing the NESP is the TVET Reform Roadmap (2013–2020), which was developed with support from international organizations such as GIZ, UNESCO, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The roadmap laid the foundation for establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), reforming assessment and certification mechanisms, and enhancing instructor training systems.

Myanmar has also initiated the creation of a TVET Law, intended to unify the fragmented governance of vocational education that is currently distributed across more than 20 ministries. Although the law has not yet been passed as of 2024, draft versions propose the formation of a National Skills Development Council (NSDC) to coordinate policy, funding, and institutional accreditation under one legal and administrative structure. These reform efforts have been reinforced by the country's participation in the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRN), which promotes regional standards and mobility of skilled labor. International donors and partners, including ADB, ILO, KOICA, and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), have played a vital role in capacity building, policy dialogue, and pilot programs aimed at improving access, quality, and gender inclusiveness in the TVET system.

Despite these promising initiatives, challenges remain in terms of institutional coordination, limited budget allocations, and the relatively low perception of vocational education among youth and their families. Therefore, ongoing reforms are increasingly focusing on expanding industry collaboration, decentralizing training delivery, and enhancing the employability of learners through work-based learning, apprenticeship systems, and digital skills integration. The policy direction thus signals a gradual shift from traditional supply-driven training models to more responsive, demand-driven systems that support inclusive growth and youth employment in Myanmar's changing labor market.

As Myanmar's commercial center, Yangon has the country's most advanced vocational education system. The city contains 42 government technical schools and numerous private training centers (Yangon Regional Government, 2023). Reflecting Yangon's diverse economy, these institutions offer programs ranging from traditional trades (welding, carpentry) to emerging fields like digital marketing and renewable energy technology (JICA, 2022). Local employers strongly value vocational graduates - 68% of Yangon's manufacturing firms prefer hiring them over university graduates

for technical positions, citing their practical skills (Myanmar Industries Association, 2023).

3.5 Role of International Non-Government Organization

International non-government organizations (INGOs) have played a crucial role in shaping and improving vocational education in Myanmar especially since the country's political and economic opening in the early 2010s. Their contributions have been essential in strengthening the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system, helping to improve employability and address skill gaps across various industries. INGOs work closely with the government, local organizations and international donors to build a more inclusive and responsive vocational education system.

One of the key responsibilities of INGOs is to provide technical assistance and support in the development of vocational training curricula that meet international standards and respond to local labor market needs. Organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) have actively contributed to reforming Myanmar's TVET system. For example, GIZ supported the implementation of the TVET Reform Strategy (2016–2021) which aimed to improve the quality and relevance of vocational training and promote industry partnerships.

INGOs also play an important role in strengthening the capacity of national and local institutions. Their efforts include training vocational instructors, introducing competency-based training approaches and enhancing the management of vocational training centers. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) through its Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development (SYRD) project has provided training for local instructors, developed competency-based curricula and created learning materials to support community-based vocational training, particularly in rural areas.

Another important responsibility is promoting access and inclusion in vocational education especially for disadvantaged groups such as school dropouts, rural youth, women and persons with disabilities. Save the Children and other INGOs have implemented life skills and vocational training programs aimed at reintegrating out-of-school youth into learning and employment pathways. These efforts help address social inequalities and contribute to poverty reduction.

In addition, INGOs play a key role in monitoring, evaluation and policy advocacy. They assess the effectiveness of training programs, conduct labor market studies and provide evidence-based recommendations to inform national education policy reforms. By acting as a bridge between the government and local communities, INGOs help ensure that vocational training programs remain relevant, accountable and sustainable.

Over the past decade, the efforts of INGOs have brought about several positive changes and improvements in vocational education. Training methods have shifted from traditional, theory-based approaches to competency-based, practical learning. More vocational training centers now provide hands-on experiences to better prepare students for jobs. INGOs have also linked vocational training with broader development goals such as promoting youth employment, gender equality and community development. Additionally, stronger partnerships between training centers and industries have improved job placement opportunities for graduates.

Despite these achievements, INGOs continue to face significant challenges. Vocational training in Myanmar struggles with limited recognition and social acceptance where formal academic education is often valued more. Progress is also held back by funding shortages, outdated equipment in training centers, and a lack of qualified instructors.

INGOs support in technical, capacity building and policy engagement in advancing vocation education in Myanmar. While there have been meaningful improvements in training quality and access, ongoing political, financial and institutional challenges must be addressed to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of vocational education reforms. Strengthening collaboration among INGOs, government agencies, private sector partners and local communities will be key to overcoming these obstacles and building a skilled, resilient workforce for Myanmar's future.

3.6 Vocational Education in Yangon

Yangon's vocational schools maintain higher standards than other regions. Since 2020, all government institutes have modern equipment and 75% of teachers complete annual industry training (Department of Technical and Vocational Education, 2023). The automotive program at Hlaing Technical High School represents this success with 92% of graduates finding jobs within three months

(Yangon Education Bureau, 2023). Strong industry partnerships further enhance training quality as 15 schools offer 3 to 6 months work placements in factories.

However, challenges remain. High dropout rates (40%) occur due to transportation costs and students needing to work (Yangon School of Technology, 2022). Another issue is the mismatch between program lengths (typically six months) and employer preferences for 1-2 years of training (Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association, 2023). Geographic inequality also persists, as the best programs cluster in central Yangon, forcing students from outer townships like Hlaing Tharyar to endure 2–3-hour commutes.

Yangon has the most developed livelihood support system in Myanmar that offers a range of innovative services to help people build sustainable incomes. One example is the Yangon Urban Services Program which operates mobile toolkit banks that provide equipment to around 5,000 artisans each year (UNDP, 2023). In addition, the city's industrial zones host 12 business development centres specifically designed for vocational graduates. These centers offer affordable workspaces and mentoring support to help young entrepreneurs get started (Yangon City Development Committee, 2023). Despite these advancements, most support still goes to traditional industries. According to the World Bank (2023), about 80% of microloans are directed toward businesses in the garment and food sectors, leaving newer or less common fields under-supported.

A 2023 impact study found that combining training with toolkits and mentoring can boost graduate earnings by as much as 48% compared to providing just one form of support. However, only 35% of vocational graduates currently receive this full package of assistance, mainly due to limited funding (ILO, 2023). To improve access and outcomes, the Yangon Regional Government recently launched the "Skills to Prosper" initiative. This new program promotes corporate-sponsored apprenticeships that not only provide practical training but also guarantee job placements for participants.

3.6.1 Vocational Education in Dagon Seikkan Township

Dagon Seikkan Township highlights both the challenges and potential of vocational training in Myanmar's semi-urban areas. With a population of 180,000, the township has only three vocational training centers which limits access for many residents (Township Education Office, 2023). The most popular courses are

motorcycle repairing training (120 students per year), mobile phone repairing training (80 students), and beauty salon services training (60 students). The trainings are aligned with local job market demands (Dagon Seikkan Vocational Center, 2023). To expand access, a mobile training program has been introduced, serving 12 rural villages in the area.

However, the quality of training in Dagon Seikkan isn't as good as in central Yangon. Schools only have 45% of the required equipment and just 30% of instructors meet national standards (Assessment Report, 2023). Despite these challenges, the township has implemented practical improvements to its programs. For instance, motorcycle repairing training now include training on repairing trishaws which are widely used in Myanmar while beauty salon services training teaches skills using affordable local products (Township Development Committee, 2023). These adjustments have proven effective, with 78% of program graduates finding employment within the township.

Nevertheless, some significant issues remain. Women's participation is quite low which making up only 28% of students and most women focus on beauty salon services training which tend to offer lower wages (Gender Audit, 2023). Additionally, there are no opportunities for students to pursue advanced certifications, limiting their ability to progress beyond basic training. The township also faces seasonal challenges as heavy rains lead to flooding in training centers, causing 40% of classes to be canceled during the monsoon season (Disaster Management Report, 2023). Despite these hurdles, Dagon Seikkan's vocational training programs perform better than many others in the region, with 82% of students successfully completing their courses by the community support and the focus on practical, locally relevant training.

Dagon Seikkan Township has introduced practical programs to help vocational graduates maintain their livelihoods after completing training. One notable initiative is the "Toolkit Lease-to-Own" program which allows graduates to borrow tools and pay for them gradually over 12 months with a small 5% interest rate (UNDP, 2023). Additionally, the township supports eight repair cooperatives that provide shared workshop spaces and help 320 workers save money through group purchases of materials (ILO, 2023). However, these programs face funding limitations, with only 1 in 4 graduates receiving full support.

Some of these programs have shown remarkable success. For instance, members of the motorcycle repairing groups earn about 35,000 MMK per day which

is three times the average earnings of local workers (Impact Study, 2023). Despite these successes, income disparities persist. Women such as beauty salon owners, typically earn only 15,000 MMK per day, significantly less than their male counterparts. To support rural workers, the township established flood-proof tool banks in 2022, but these currently benefit only 40% of those in need (Township Report, 2023). Currently, the township is partnering with factories in Yangon to create more stable job opportunities for vocational graduates which aims to expand support and improve long-term outcomes.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY ANALYSIS

4.1 Survey Profile

The primary focus of this study is to assess the employability and training outcomes of school dropout youth aged 14 to 20 who have participated in vocational education programs in Dagon Seikkan Township, Yangon Region. The empirical analysis is based on a survey conducted across three selected wards, Ward 168, Ward 87, and Ward 93, where vocational training institutions are operational and accessible to the target group. A total of 366 respondents had enrolled and completed in vocational training between 2017 and 2024. The frame included both current trainees and recent completers to capture a range of training experiences and post-training trajectories. The ward-wise and year-wise distribution of the trainees are presented below.

Table 4.1 Total Respondent lists of Vocational Training

Ward Name	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	2024	Total
Ward 168	34	24	15	28	39	28	168
Ward 87	14	23	32	13	10	34	126
Ward 93	12	12	11	12	8	17	72
Total	60	59	58	53	57	79	366

Source: Survey Data, 2025

These three wards were purposefully selected based on the presence of active vocational education providers, accessibility to youth dropouts, and diversity in training types and durations offered. The survey allows for disaggregated analysis by ward, training year, and gender, and it provides a basis for understanding spatial and temporal variations in vocational education access and outcomes. This approach ensures representation across both recent and earlier training cohorts, making it possible to assess trends over time, including the potential influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving local labor market conditions.

4.2 Survey Design

The survey instrument was a structured questionnaire developed to align with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and semi-open questions divided into five key sections:

- Demographic Information – age, gender, household size, parental education, and household income.
- Education and Dropout Reasons – level of education before dropout, reasons for leaving school, and duration since dropout.
- Access to Vocational Training – training provider, course type and duration, access to facilities, satisfaction with training.
- Employment Outcomes – employment status post-training, nature of work, income level, job satisfaction, and relevance of training to current job.
- Perception and Aspirations – perceptions of vocational education, future career goals, and willingness for further training.

Pre-testing of the survey was conducted with a small group to ensure clarity and reliability of the questions. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and privacy, were strictly followed throughout the survey process.

The survey design adopted a quantitative approach to assess the effectiveness of vocational training programs in Dagon Seikkan Township. A structured questionnaire containing 29 items was developed to collect data across four key domains: demographic characteristics, training experiences, employment outcomes and post-training support services. The instrument utilized simple, clear language to ensure comprehension across varying education levels.

4.3 Survey Results

This research studied the effects of job training programs in Dagon Seikkan Township using a survey with 29 questions. Answers were collected from 366 people out of 366 asked (100% response rate). The survey asked about people's backgrounds, their training experience, how the training helped them find work or earn more money and how it improved their lives. By looking at all these answers together, we could understand how job training helps people in this area and what difference it makes to their families and communities. The same set of questions was used for everyone to make sure comparing all the answers fairly.

4.3.1 Demographic and Socio-Economic Background

The survey consists of 366 youth respondents who are school dropouts and are currently taking vocational training in three selected wards of Dagon Seikkan Township. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents (59.29%) fall within the 19 to 24 age group, indicating that vocational training is more commonly accessed by older youth who have likely been disengaged from formal education for a longer period. About 33.06% are in the 14 to 18 age group, while only 7.65% are aged 25 and above, suggesting relatively limited late entry into vocational training programs.

Gender-wise, the data shows a slight male dominance, with 54.92% of the respondents being male and 45.08% being female. This gender distribution reflects a modest gap that may point to either higher dropout rates among males or better outreach of vocational programs to male youth in the area.

Geographically, respondents are fairly distributed across the three wards where vocational training institutions exist. The largest proportion comes from Ward 168 (45.90%), followed by Ward 87 (34.43%), and Ward 93 (19.67%). This distribution aligns with the concentration of training institutions and possibly the population density in those areas.

Regarding household size, a significant portion of respondents (59.56%) come from medium-sized households with 4 to 6 members, while 30.60% belong to smaller households of 1 to 3 members. Only 9.84% come from large households with 7 or more members. This suggests that vocational education may be more accessible or necessary for youth from average-sized families, potentially due to resource-sharing or economic pressures within such households.

An analysis of the respondents' educational background reveals that a significant proportion of the vocational trainees have relatively low levels of formal education. Among the 366 surveyed youth, 40.16% had completed only primary education, followed by 36.61% who reached middle school level. Notably, 23.22% were high school dropouts, highlighting the critical stage at which a sizable share of students exit the formal education system. These findings emphasize that vocational education often serves as an alternative pathway for youth who were unable to complete mainstream schooling.

Table (4.1) Demographic Information of the Respondents

Q.No	Particular	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	14 to 18	121	33.06%
		19 to 24	217	59.29%
		24+	28	7.65%
2	Gender	Male	201	54.92%
		Female	165	45.08%
3	Ward/Village	Ward 168	168	45.90%
		Ward 87	126	34.43%
		Ward 93	72	19.67%
4	Household Size	1-3 members	112	30.60%
		4-6 members	218	59.56%
		7+ members	36	9.84%
5	Highest Education Completed	Primary	147	40.16%
		Middle School	134	36.61%
		High School Dropout	85	23.22%
6	Main Reason for Dropping Out School	Financial constraints	50	14%
		Lack of interest	30	8%
		Family issues	78	21%
		Poor academic performance	75	20%
		To work and earn income	133	36%
7	Family Monthly Income (MMK)	<50000	85	23.22%
		50000 - 100000	121	33.06%
		100000 - 200000	106	28.96%
		200000 - 300000	43	11.75%
		>300000	11	3.01%

Source: Survey data

Regarding the main reasons for dropping out of school, the largest group (133 respondents) cited the need to work and earn income, indicating that economic necessity is a major driver of early school leaving. This was followed by family issues (78 respondents) and poor academic performance (75 respondents), both of which reflect structural and individual challenges. Meanwhile, financial constraints (50 respondents) and lack of interest in schooling (30 respondents) were also identified, albeit to a lesser extent. The results suggest that school dropout is influenced by a mix of economic pressure, family responsibilities, and academic challenges, all of which intersect to push youth out of formal education and toward vocational alternatives.

In terms of household economic status, the income distribution shows that the majority of respondents come from low-income families. Around 23.22% reported a monthly family income of less than MMK 50,000, and 33.06% earned between MMK 50,000 and 100,000. Together, these categories account for more than half of the respondents, underscoring the financial vulnerability of these households. Additionally, 28.96% fall in the MMK 100,000 to 200,000 range, while only 11.75% and 3.01% reported household incomes between MMK 200,000–300,000 and above MMK 300,000, respectively. These statistics reinforce the socioeconomic challenges faced by vocational learners, many of whom come from households with limited financial resources, thereby shaping both their decision to drop out and their choice to pursue skill-based education.

4.3.2 Vocational Training Experience

The survey data reveal a diverse range of vocational training experiences among the youth participants, reflecting varied preferences and local employment opportunities. Among the 366 respondents, the most commonly completed training courses were in motorcycle repair (24.32%) and sewing/design (24.04%), closely followed by beauty salon services (21.58%) and mobile repair (21.31%). A smaller proportion (8.74%) pursued training in other fields, suggesting that technical and service-oriented skills dominate the vocational landscape for dropout youth in this area.

Table 4.3 Vocational Training Experience

Q.No	Particular	Description	Frequency	Percentage
8	Training Type Completed	Motorcycle Repair	89	24.32%
		Sewing/Design	88	24.04%
		Mobile Repair	78	21.31%
		Beauty Salon	79	21.58%
		Others	32	8.74%
9	Duration of the Training	Less than 3 months	115	31%
		3–6 months	161	44%
		More than 6 months	90	25%
10	Interested the training course	Yes	362	99%
		No	4	1%
11	Completed the Course	Yes	344	93.99%
		No	20	5.46%
12	Did the training help you in any way?	Basic needs	47	12.84%
		Short term	45	12.30%
		Long term	98	26.77%
		Self-sustainability	84	22.95%
		For family living and survival	89	24.32%
		No help for us	3	0.82%
13	Did the training include job readiness skills	Yes	356	97%
		No	10	3%
14	How would you rate the usefulness of the training?	Not useful	0	0.00%
		Neutral	22	6.01%
		Useful	187	51.09%
		Very useful	157	42.90%

Source : Survey data

In terms of training duration, most respondents participated in programs lasting between 3 to 6 months (161 respondents), followed by short-term courses of less than 3 months (115 respondents) and longer-term training of over 6 months (90 respondents). This distribution indicates that while the majority are exposed to semi-intensive training, fewer have access to prolonged skill development, which may affect the depth of skill acquisition and practical experience.

Encouragingly, 99% of respondents (362 out of 366) expressed interest in the training courses they attended, and 93.99% (344 respondents) successfully completed the training. These high levels of engagement and completion suggest that vocational training programs are well-aligned with the interests and aspirations of the target demographic, and may be perceived as relevant and beneficial alternatives to formal education.

When asked whether the training helped them in any way, respondents identified a variety of positive impacts. Notably, 26.77% stated that it supported long-term outcomes, while 24.32% mentioned that it contributed to family living and survival, and 22.95% reported gaining self-sustainability through the acquired skills. A smaller portion indicated that the training addressed basic needs (12.84%) or helped in the short term (12.30%). Only 0.82% felt that the training did not help them, reflecting a generally positive perception of training effectiveness.

Importantly, 97.27% (356 respondents) confirmed that their training included job readiness skills, highlighting the integration of soft and employability skills into the curriculum—an essential component for transitioning into the labor market.

In terms of perceived usefulness, the vast majority of respondents rated the training positively. 51.09% rated it as "Useful", and 42.90% as "Very Useful", while only 6.01% remained neutral, and none considered it not useful. This overwhelmingly favorable assessment underscores the role of vocational training as a valuable intervention for youth who have exited the formal education system prematurely.

4.3.3 Employment and Employability Outcomes of Vocational Training Participants

The survey findings reveal **positive employment outcomes** among vocational training graduates, reflecting both the relevance of the training provided and the participants' ability to transition into the labor market. As shown in the responses to **Question 15, 45.90% of respondents (168 individuals)** are currently engaged

in **salaried employment**, while **28.96% (106)** are earning through **daily wage labor**, and **18.04% (66)** have initiated their **own business**. Only **7.10% (26 individuals)** remain **unemployed**, suggesting that the vocational training programs have been largely successful in facilitating access to income-generating activities.

Table 4.4 Employment and Employability

No.	Particular	Description	Frequency	Percentage
15	Current Work	Own Business	66	18.04%
		Salaried Job	168	45.90%
		Daily Wage	106	28.96%
		Unemployed	26	7.10%
16	Is the job related to your vocational training?	Yes	340	92.90%
		No	26	7.10%
17	Type of Employment	Salaried Job	168	45.90%
		Daily Wage	106	28.96%
		Own Business	66	18.04%
		Unemployed	26	7.10%
18	How long did it take you to find a job after completing training?	Less than 1 month	22	6.01%
		1-3 Months	187	51.09%
		More than 3 months	157	42.90%
19	How did you find your job?	Through training center	214	58.47%
		Family/friends	126	34.43%
		Self-initiated search	26	7.10%
20	Do you feel confident in your skills to find and keep a job?	Yes	242	66.12%
		No	94	25.68%
		Not Sure	30	8.20%

Source : Survey data

When asked whether their current job is related to their vocational training (Q16), a notable **92.90% (340 respondents)** answered "Yes", indicating a strong alignment between training content and employment outcomes. This is an important indicator of program effectiveness, and the labor market relevance of the skills delivered.

A repetition of the employment type in **Question 17** reconfirms the above distribution, with **salaried jobs** being the most common, followed by **daily wage work** and **self-employment**. This consistency emphasizes the importance of linking training programs to both the formal and informal sectors of the local economy.

Regarding the **time it took to find employment after completing training (Q18)**, over **half (51.09%)** found a job **within 1–3 months**, while **42.90%** secured employment **after more than 3 months**, and a small group (**6.01%**) found work in **less than a month**. These results suggest that most participants were able to transition into work relatively quickly, although a substantial number required more than three months, potentially reflecting labor market conditions or regional differences in job availability.

The majority of respondents (**58.47%**) found employment **through their training center**, which highlights the critical role played by **training institutions as intermediaries** between trainees and employers. Additionally, **34.43%** relied on **family or friends**, and only **7.10%** conducted a **self-initiated job search**, indicating that informal networks and institutional support play a dominant role in job placement among these youth.

Finally, when assessing **self-perceived employability (Q20)**, **66.12% (242 individuals)** reported feeling **confident** in their skills to find and retain a job. However, **25.68%** expressed **lack of confidence**, and **8.20%** remained **uncertain**, pointing to a need for further support in areas such as job preparedness, soft skills, and career counseling even after training completion.

4.3.4 Respondents' Aspirations and Suggestions for Training

The majority of respondents demonstrated a positive attitude toward continuing education and skills development. As shown in Question 21, **60.11% (220 respondents)** expressed a willingness to pursue further training or education, indicating strong motivation for personal and professional growth. An additional **9.84% (36 respondents)** were undecided, while **28.96% (106)** reported no

interest in further training. These results underscore the potential demand for continued learning opportunities among youth, especially if such programs are accessible and tailored to employment needs.

Table (4.5) Respondents' Aspirations and Suggestions for Training

No	Particular	Description	Frequency	Percentage
21	Would you like to pursue further training or education?	Yes	220	60.11%
		No	106	28.96%
		May be	36	9.84%
22	What kind of support would improve your employability further?	More practical training	106	43.80%
		Job placement support	61	25.21%
		Career counseling	58	23.97%
		Financial assistance	17	7.02%
23	What conditions were changed by the household after receiving the vocational services?	Contribute to household expense	101	27.60%
		Reduce family's debt	113	30.87%
		Support on sibling's education	54	14.75%
		Support in family's health	80	21.86%
		Other (specify _____)	18	4.92%
24	Knowledge After Training	Low	6	1.64%
		Normal	105	28.69%
		High	163	44.54%
		Very high	92	25.14%

Source : Survey data

When asked about the kind of support that would enhance their employability, a large share (43.80%) highlighted the need for more practical training, suggesting that hands-on experience remains a crucial factor for job readiness. Other significant forms of support included job placement services (25.21%) and career counseling

(23.97%), both of which indicate the importance of structured guidance and market connections post-training. A smaller proportion (7.02%) emphasized the need for financial assistance, which could be interpreted as a barrier to accessing more advanced or specialized training programs.

I. Perceived Impact of Vocational Training on Household Conditions

The impact of vocational training extended beyond individual employment to influence household-level economic and social conditions. As per Question 23, 30.87% (113 respondents) reported that their contribution helped reduce family debt, which is a notable indicator of training effectiveness in improving financial resilience. 27.60% (101) indicated that they were able to contribute to household expenses, while 21.86% (80) supported family health needs, and 14.75% (54) contributed to siblings' education. These findings suggest that vocational training has a multiplier effect—enhancing not only personal income but also household welfare.

II. Self-Reported Knowledge Gains from Training

In terms of self-assessed learning outcomes (Q14), most respondents rated their knowledge acquisition positively. 44.54% (163 respondents) stated they gained a high level of knowledge, while 25.14% (92) rated it as very high. Another 28.69% (105) reported a normal level of improvement, and only 1.64% (6 respondents) felt their knowledge gain was low. This distribution clearly reflects strong satisfaction with the quality and relevance of training content, though some room remains to enhance the depth and customization of training to meet diverse learner needs.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

The study reveals that vocational training has played a significant role in enhancing the employability and socio-economic outcomes of young individuals in the selected respondents. A large proportion of respondents (92.90%) reported that their current employment was directly related to the training they received, indicating a strong alignment between vocational curricula and labor market demands. Furthermore, salaried employment (45.90%) and daily wage work (28.96%) constituted the majority of employment types, while a notable 18.04% had initiated their own businesses, demonstrating entrepreneurial tendencies encouraged through training.

The employment pathways were largely facilitated through institutional channels, with 58.47% of respondents obtaining jobs via the training center, and over half (51.09%) finding employment within three months of completion. This reflects a reasonably efficient transition from training to employment. Importantly, 66.12% of respondents expressed confidence in their job-related skills, affirming the effectiveness of skill-building components of the program.

Respondents also indicated aspirations for further education and skill enhancement, with 60.11% expressing interest in pursuing additional training. Practical training, job placement support, and career counseling were the most requested areas for further support. Notably, the impact of vocational education extended to the household level: reductions in family debt (30.87%), support for household expenses (27.60%), and contributions to family health and education were frequently reported. In terms of perceived learning, the majority rated their knowledge gains as high (44.54%) or very high (25.14%).

Overall, the findings suggest that vocational education programs are yielding positive outcomes in terms of both individual employability and broader socio-economic well-being.

5.2 Suggestions

In light of the findings, several key recommendations can be proposed to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of vocational training initiatives.

Access of vocational training should be expanded to Further Training Opportunities. Given the strong interest in continued education, vocational training providers and policymakers should consider offering advanced and specialized courses to build on existing skills. Flexible learning formats and modular programs may accommodate varied learning needs and employment schedules.

Practical Training Components should be enhanced. As respondents emphasized the value of hands-on experience, vocational curricula should be further aligned with real-world tasks through internships, apprenticeships, and simulated work environments. Job Placement and Career Guidance Services should be strengthened. To ensure smoother school-to-work transitions, partnerships between training centers and employers should be formalized. Additionally, integrating career counseling can help youth make informed decisions and navigate changing labor markets. Setting specific target of socioeconomic barriers to participation, a small but significant portion of respondents indicated the need for financial support. Policymakers should consider providing stipends, transportation allowances, or subsidies to ensure equitable access to vocational programs for disadvantaged groups. Broader impacts are required to measure and communicate. The positive household-level changes suggest that vocational education can serve as a tool for poverty reduction and social mobility. Monitoring and evaluation frameworks should therefore capture not only employment outcomes but also broader developmental impacts. By reinforcing these areas, vocational education programs can further contribute to inclusive development, reduce youth unemployment, and strengthen household resilience.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaires for

“A Study on the job opportunities of school dropout youth taking vocational training: Case study of Dagon Seikkan Township”

This survey is conducted for academic research as part of a Master’s thesis in the Development Studies Program at Yangon University of Economics. All responses will remain confidential and used solely for educational purposes. Your participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age Group

- 14 to 18 years
- 19 to 24 years
- 24 years above

2. Gender

- Male
- Female

3. Ward/Village of Residence

- Ward 168
- Ward 87
- Ward 93

4. Household Size

- 1-3 members
- 4-6 members
- 7+ members

5. Highest Education Completed

- Primary
- Middle School
- High School Dropout

6. Main Reason for dropping out school

- Financial constraints
- Lack of interest
- Family issues
- Poor academic performance
- To work and earn income

7. Monthly Income (MMK)

- Less than 50,000
- 50,000 - 100,000
- 100,000 - 200,000
- 200,000 - 300,000
- More than 300,000

Section 2: Vocational Training Experience

8. Which training type did you complete?

- Motorcycle Repair
- Sewing/Design
- Mobile Repair
- Beauty Salon
- Others (specify: _____)

9. How long does the training takes?

- Less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- More than 6 months

10. Are you interested in the vocational training course?

- Yes
- No

11. Did you complete the training course?

- Yes
- No

12. Did the training help you in any way?

- Basic needs
- Short term
- Long term
- Self-sustainability
- For family living and survival
- No help for us

13. Did the training include job readiness skills?

- Yes
- No

14. How would you rate the usefulness of the training?

- Not useful
- Neutral
- Useful
- Very useful

Section C : Employment and Employability

15. Current work

- Own Business
- Salaried Job
- Daily Wage
- Unemployed

16. Is the job related to your vocational training?

- Yes
- No

17. Type of Employment

- Salaried Job
- Daily Wage
- Own Business
- Unemployed

18. How long did it take you to find a job after completing training ?

- Less than 1 month
- 1-3 months
- More than 3 months

19. How did you find your job?

- Through training center
- Family/friends
- Self-initiated search

20. Do you feel confident in your skills to find and keep a job ?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Section D : Respondents' Aspirations and Suggestions for Training

21. Would you like to pursue further training or education?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

22. What kind of support would improve your employability further ?

- More practical training
- Job placement support
- Career counseling
- Financial assistance

23. What conditions were changed by the household after receiving the vocational services ?

- Contributed to household expense
- Reduced family's debt
- Support on sibling's education
- Support family's health
- Other (specify: _____)

24. Rate your knowledge level AFTER the training:

Low

Normal

High

Very High