

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

**A STUDY ON EMPLOYABILITY AMONG DEMOGRAPHIC  
FACTORS OF YOUTH (CASE STUDY: SELECTED RETAIL  
BUSINESS IN YANGON REGION)**

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**JUNE, 2025**

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

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Study on Employability Among Demographic Factors of Youth (Case Study: Selected Retail Business in Yangon Region)**” 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 explores how demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and work experience affect youth employability in selected retail businesses in the Yangon Region. The main purpose is to examine how these personal characteristics influence employability among young people working in the retail sector. A total of 153 young retail employees took part in the study, and data were collected through structured questionnaires. A quantitative research method was used, and the results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. The findings show that work experience has the strongest influence on youth employability, followed by age and education level. Respondents with more years of work experience and higher education levels showed higher employability scores. Older youth also had higher employability compared to younger age groups. Gender also played a role, with female respondents reporting slightly higher employability than males. Based on the results, the study suggests increasing opportunities for young people to gain work experience through internships, part-time jobs, or training programs. It also recommends improving education and skills training related to retail work. Promoting equal employment opportunities for both male and female workers can also help strengthen employability. These actions can support youth participation in the retail job market and help develop a more capable and inclusive workforce in Yangon.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of South East Asian Nations
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit
<b>CAGR</b>	Compound Annual Growth Rate
<b>CMHL</b>	City Mart Holdings Limited
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HEIs</b>	Higher Education Institutions
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>MMQR</b>	MyanmarPay QR Code System
<b>MPU</b>	Myanmar Payment Union
<b>MRA</b>	Myanmar Retailers Association
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>POS</b>	Point of Sale
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium Enterprises
<b>USD</b>	United States Doll

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Rationale of the Study

Employability is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the skills, knowledge, and personal attributes individuals need to secure, maintain, and thrive in employment. The term employability involves a combination of achievements, such as skills, understanding, and personal qualities, that increase an individual's chances of finding and succeeding in a job (Yorke, 2006). For young people, employability is especially critical as it determines their ability to transition from education to the workforce, shaping their long-term economic stability and social well-being. Globally, the retail sector is a major driver of employment, offering diverse job opportunities across various skill levels. Retail businesses are recognized for their capacity to absorb large numbers of young workers, particularly in urban centres, and play a vital role in facilitating the school-to-work transition (ILO, 2022). In many countries, retail employment serves as an entry point into the workforce, helping youth develop both discipline-specific and transferable skills that prepare them for future career advancement (Choi-Lundberg et al., 2024). However, the sector faces challenges such as rapid digitalization, changing consumer preferences, and the need for upskilling, which can affect employability prospects for young people (World Bank, 2023). Regionally, in Southeast Asia, the retail sector has experienced significant growth, driven by urbanization, rising consumer demand, and the expansion of modern retail formats. Countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia have seen retail become a cornerstone of their economies, contributing substantially to GDP and providing millions of jobs, especially for youth and women (ASEAN, 2021). Despite this growth, young job seekers often encounter barriers such as skill mismatches, limited access to training, and uneven opportunities across urban and rural areas (ILO, 2022). These trends underscore the importance of aligning education and training systems with labour market needs to enhance employability in the retail sector.

Myanmar faces a significant challenge with youth unemployment. Approximately 514,000 youth are unemployed, accounting for nearly 59% of the country's 873,000 unemployed individuals. In 2023, the youth unemployment rate was about 9.71% for individuals aged 15-24, compared to a lower overall national unemployment rate of around 2.80% to 2.84. This disparity highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to address youth unemployment, particularly in key economic sectors such as retail, which serves as a major employer for young people (World Bank, 2023).

The retail sector is a cornerstone of Myanmar's economy, contributing approximately 15% of the country's GDP (Nyi Nyi Aung, 2024). As the nation's commercial hub, Yangon is home to major retail businesses, including City Mart Supermarket, Market Place, and Ocean Supercenter, which employ a large segment of the youth population. The retail industry offers diverse employment opportunities, ranging from entry-level positions to managerial roles, making it a critical area for studying employability trends. However, despite the sector's importance, many young people face barriers to workforce integration, such as skill mismatches and limited awareness of market demands. Many graduates struggle to transition into employment due to a lack of industry-specific competencies, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to bridge these gaps (World Bank, 2023).

Many studies have examined factors that affect employability, such as soft skills, computer knowledge, school support, and the job market, but there has been less focus on how personal background factors like gender, age, education level, and work experience influence young people's chances of finding a job. This is especially true in developing countries like Myanmar. In Yangon, the retail sector is growing quickly with more modern businesses like supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience stores, and department stores opening throughout the city. This growth has created many new job opportunities, especially for young people. Because of this, it is important to understand who is getting these jobs and why. This study looks at how personal and background factors affect youth employment in Yangon's retail sector. The goal is to better understand the real situation of young job seekers face in this growing industry. The findings will help both young people looking for work and those involved in hiring by showing better ways to match young workers with the needs of the retail job market in Yangon.

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the employability in retail business by demographic factors.

## **1.3 Method of Study**

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine how gender, age, education level and work experience influence youth employability in the retail sector of Yangon. It uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through structured surveys from young retail employees, while secondary data is obtained from academic literature and credible sources. A simple random sampling method is used to ensure representativeness, with a sample size of 153 respondents. The questionnaire includes closed-ended and Likert-scale items focused on employability and demographic factors. Data analysis is conducted using SPSS, and inferential techniques such as ANOVA and t-tests to explore relationships and differences across groups.

## **1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

This study explores the factors influencing youth employability in the retail sector of the Yangon Region. It specifically examines young individuals aged 18-35 working in retail business. The study focuses only on the retail sector within Yangon, so the findings may not be applicable to other industries or regions. The study offers insights into youth employability in Yangon's retail sector, but more research is needed for broader application.

## **1.5 Organization of the Study**

This study includes five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction; it includes the rationale of the study, objectives of the study, method of the study, scope, and limitation, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 presents a literature review. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the retail business in Yangon Region. Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis and discussion of the findings, exploring how demographic factors influence youth employability in the retail sector. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes the study by summarizing the key findings, offering practical suggestions, acknowledging the limitations of the research, and highlighting areas for future investigation.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 General Concept of Employability**

Employability is a broad and evolving concept that lacks a single, universally accepted definition. At its core, it can be understood as the ability to gain, maintain, and progress in employment. While some define it simply as "the quality of being employable," others see it as a more dynamic concept that incorporates various contextual factors. Scholars and institutions categorize employability definitions into three main perspectives. The first perspective focuses on individual capabilities, personal attributes, and skills. This view suggests that employability depends on an individual's ability to develop and demonstrate the competencies that employers seek. For example, Hillage and Pollard (1998) define employability as the ability to navigate the labor market independently, leveraging knowledge, skills, and career management abilities. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) further emphasize the role of individual's skills and attributes, which are crucial for obtaining and maintaining employment. Yorke (2006) describes employability as a combination of skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that increase a graduate's likelihood of securing and succeeding in a job.

Additionally, employability is defined as the capacity to gain and retain employment, highlighting the importance of adaptability and career identity (McArdle et al., 2007). In the context of higher education, employability is seen as a combination of discipline-specific and transferable skills that prepare students for the workforce (Choi-Lundberg et al., 2024). This perspective challenges the idea that employability is solely an individual responsibility, arguing that labor market conditions play a crucial role. From this viewpoint, employability is not just about personal skills but also about external factors such as economic conditions, job availability, and employer expectations. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) often align with this perspective, emphasizing their role in producing capable graduates who meet labor market demands.

Employability consists of several key components. Skills play a fundamental role, and they can be categorized into soft skills, hard skills, and core skills. Soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability, are often seen as more critical than technical expertise, as they enable individuals to work effectively in different environments. Hard skills, on the other hand, refer to technical abilities required for specific jobs. Core skills, which support lifelong learning, help individuals acquire and apply new knowledge. In addition to these, digital literacy and proficiency in information and communications technology (ICT) are increasingly essential for navigating today's job market. Adaptability is another crucial factor, as the ability to respond to changes in the workplace ensures long-term career success. Moreover, employability is influenced by market demand, meaning individuals must develop the skills and experience that align with employer expectations.

The importance of employability extends beyond individuals as it benefits organizations, society, and the economy as a whole. For individuals, employability enhances career stability, mobility, and resilience, allowing them to transition more smoothly through different life and career stages. For businesses, a skilled workforce boosts productivity and long-term sustainability. On a broader scale, employability strengthens communities and economies by ensuring that workers are equipped to meet industry demands, adapt to technological advancements, and contribute effectively to economic growth. It is also a key factor in achieving decent work conditions and fostering social mobility. In essence, employability is a shared responsibility between individuals, employers, educational institutions, and policymakers. Developing a well-rounded, adaptable workforce is essential for both personal success and broader economic prosperity.

## **2.2 Important of Youth Employability and Workforce Readiness**

Supporting young individuals in securing stable employment is crucial in today's society. Beyond financial stability, employment plays a key role in personal development and economic growth. This is especially critical in economically disadvantaged areas, where high unemployment rates can negatively affect overall well-being (Brewer, 2013). To successfully enter and remain in the workforce, young individuals must develop essential skills such as adaptability, effective communication, and problem-solving. These abilities not only improve employability but also encourage lifelong learning and career progression (Gerryts & Maree, 2019).

However, young job seekers face significant obstacles, including high unemployment rates, which have worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic (International Labour Organization, 2021). Those from low-income backgrounds or with limited access to quality education encounter even greater difficulties, particularly in developing nations (Gerryts & Maree, 2019). Addressing these challenges requires targeted programs designed to equip young individuals with relevant skills. Such initiatives should focus on adaptability to different job roles and a clear understanding of employer expectations (Cardoza & N, 2024,).

Research suggests that well-structured labor market policies, including mentoring and internship opportunities, can significantly enhance employment prospects for young workers (Betcherman et al., 2007). Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge that different groups may require tailored support, as factors such as gender, age, education, and prior work experience influence employment opportunities. Promoting equal access to job opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background, contributes to a more inclusive labor market.

### **2.3 Employability in the Retail Industry**

The retail industry plays a crucial role in the global economy, providing jobs to millions of people and offering diverse career opportunities. A thriving retail sector is essential for economic stability, serving as the key link between manufacturers and consumers while driving business activity and national revenue (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2009; International Trade Administration, 2022). In the United States alone, the retail industry supported around 55 million full-time and part-time jobs in 2022, making up approximately 26% of total employment. Meanwhile, in Southeast Asia, the retail landscape is evolving rapidly due to technological advancements and shifts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The sector is on track for sustained growth, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 19.30% (Statista, 2024). Additionally, the Southeast Asian retail market is expected to expand at a CAGR of 4.80% between 2024 and 2032, driven by evolving consumer expectations, digital transformation, and demographic shifts (YCP Solidiance, 2024; ASEAN, 2021).

Employability is a key factor in the retail industry, as it directly influences workforce efficiency and, in turn, the overall success of businesses. Skilled employees are essential to keeping up with changing consumer demands and contributing to

economic growth. Over the years, the retail sector has become a major source of job creation, particularly in regions that have seen a decline in manufacturing employment. By providing training and career pathways, the industry helps individuals, especially those facing long-term unemployment gain valuable skills that can be applied not only in retail but also in other service-oriented fields (Paulrajan, 2011; Melak & Derbe, 2022).

The retail sector looks for professionals with a combination of technical skills and soft skills that contribute to effective workplace performance (Lee, 2017). In addition to expertise in specific roles, employers prioritize attributes such as teamwork, communication, leadership, problem-solving, and adaptability. Customer service and digital literacy have become increasingly important as businesses integrate more technology into their operations. Companies now seek employees who are proficient in digital tools, including e-commerce platforms and point-of-sale systems. To keep up with industry demands, ongoing training and development initiatives are essential, as they not only enhance employee capabilities but also improve job satisfaction and retention rates (Polidan & Oh, 2018).

Despite the many opportunities in retail, young professionals often encounter challenges such as high turnover rates and the perception of retail jobs as low-paying or temporary (Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2009). However, there are ways to address these challenges. By implementing strong human resource strategies, such as employer branding and partnerships with educational institutions, retailers can attract and retain skilled employees. Encouraging students to transition into long-term roles within the industry can also help build a more stable and experienced workforce. Additionally, structured career pathways and training programs can motivate young workers to view retail as a viable and rewarding profession rather than just a short-term job.

## **2.4 Relationship between Demographic Factors and Employability**

To understand the factors shaping youth employability, particularly in relation to gender, age, education level, and work experience, it is essential to explore relevant theoretical frameworks. These theories have been developed over time and offer diverse yet interconnected insights into how individuals access employment opportunities and how social, educational, and demographic factors influence that process. The earliest foundation can be traced back to Adam Smith (1776), who, in

The Wealth of Nations, emphasized that investment in people through education, training, and experience contributes significantly to a nation's productivity and economic development. Smith recognized that the acquired abilities of individuals are a form of capital, just like machines or land, and can yield long-term economic benefits. This idea laid the groundwork for what would later become known as Human Capital Theory.

Complementing this economic perspective is Signaling Theory, introduced by Spence (1973). This theory suggests that individuals use educational credentials as signals to demonstrate their abilities and productivity to potential employers. In the context of youth employability, educational qualifications serve not only as tools for acquiring knowledge but also as indicators of competence in a competitive job market. However, the strength of these signals can vary. Graduates from prestigious institutions may be viewed more favorably than those from lesser-known programs, and perceptions may also be influenced by demographic characteristics such as age or gender. This highlights how both the substance and the visibility of qualifications affect employability. Building on Smith's ideas, Becker (1993) formalized Human Capital Theory using modern economic models. Becker argued that individuals invest in education and skill development to improve their productivity and, in turn, their employability and income. From this perspective, education is viewed as a strategic investment that produces measurable returns in the labor market. Human Capital Theory highlights the critical role of educational attainment and work experience in shaping employability outcomes. Demographic factors such as age and gender can influence the accumulation of human capital. For example, younger individuals may have more opportunities to develop skills, while social norms or unequal access to resources may limit women's ability to invest in their education or training.

From a sociological standpoint, Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), adds another layer of understanding. This theory posits that individuals form part of their self-concept based on their membership in social groups, such as those defined by gender or age. These social identities can influence how individuals perceive themselves and are perceived by others during the job search process. For instance, societal expectations and stereotypes about young women may lead to biases in hiring decisions or reduced self-confidence, ultimately affecting employment outcomes. Social Identity Theory emphasizes how group-based dynamics can either facilitate or constrain access to employment opportunities.

Further expanding on the importance of social structures, Social Capital Theory, as articulated by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), highlights the role of networks and social relationships in gaining access to information and opportunities in the labor market. According to this theory, individuals with broader or more supportive social networks are more likely to find employment through referrals, informal contacts, or shared resources. For youth, especially those just entering the workforce, access to such networks may be limited. Demographic factors such as gender or socioeconomic background can shape the strength and reach of these connections, potentially creating additional barriers for certain groups in the labor market.

Taken together, these theoretical frameworks provide a well-rounded understanding of employability. Human Capital and Signaling Theories focus on individual investment and strategic actions to enhance labor market readiness. In contrast, Social Identity and Social Capital Theories emphasize the social and structural dimensions that shape opportunities and perceptions. By integrating these perspectives, one can better analyze how factors such as age, gender, education level, and experience interact to influence youth employability in real-world contexts.

**(a) Age and Employability**

The connection between age and employability, particularly among young workers in the grocery retail sector, is shaped by a combination of biological, psychological, social, and economic influences. These dimensions have been explored through a range of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies, offering a deeper understanding of how age impacts employment outcomes for youth in this dynamic industry. One of the earliest frameworks to address employability is Human Capital Theory, introduced by Forcier and Hahn (1981). This theory emphasizes that employability depends on the accumulation of skills, education, and experience over time. In the context of grocery retail, early employment can serve as a foundation for developing essential competencies such as customer service, inventory management, and teamwork. However, many retail jobs are short-term and employers often view young workers as temporary. As a result, they are less inclined to invest in formal training, limiting the opportunity for youth to build long-term employability.

In the same year, Shack-Marquez (1981) introduced key concepts related to functional age and age stereotyping in employment. Functional age refers to a worker's actual ability to perform job tasks, rather than their calendar age. Young

retail employees often perform well in physically demanding roles, such as shelf stocking and long hours on foot. At the same time, they may struggle with complex tasks like inventory systems or conflict resolution, partly due to limited training. Shack-Marquez also explored age stereotyping theory, which suggests that employers frequently associate age with specific traits or abilities. In grocery retail, younger workers may be perceived as less mature or dependable, despite evidence that they are often more adaptable, tech-savvy, and open to feedback, traits that align with the industry's evolving needs.

Moving forward, Neumark and Wascher (2000) examined how labor market structures reinforce age-based employment challenges. Their research highlighted those young workers, especially those under 25, are typically concentrated in entry-level roles like cashier or stock clerk because employers assume they are more tolerant of lower wages and flexible scheduling. However, long-term employment data reveal a diminishing advantage over time. As these workers age, they face shrinking advancement opportunities, with employers associating older age with higher wage expectations and less scheduling flexibility. This leads many workers to leave the sector earlier than they might prefer, perpetuating high turnover.

From a developmental perspective, Staff and Mortimer (2010) contributed significantly through their integration of life course and psychosocial age theories. Life course theory explains how biological and cognitive development during adolescence and early adulthood affects workplace performance. Young workers often have high energy and adaptability, making them suited for retail's fast-paced and irregular environments. However, their lack of experience can hinder progression into supervisory roles. Psychosocial age, or how old individuals feel and see themselves in relation to others, also plays a role. Youth who perceive themselves as older may show more initiative in pursuing advancement, while those who embrace a more youthful identity may prioritize short-term earnings and tolerate unstable working conditions, potentially delaying long-term career growth.

In addition, social identity theory, also explored by Staff and Mortimer (2010), emphasizes how age-based group identification influences young workers' behavior and career expectations. If young employees internalize negative stereotypes or feel marginalized because of their age, they may become less motivated to seek advancement. On the other hand, those who see themselves as valuable contributors despite their youth are more likely to develop their skills and seek promotional

opportunities. The concept of organizational age, also discussed by Staff and Mortimer (2010), refers to job tenure within a company. In grocery retail, prolonged tenure in the same entry-level role can backfire. Employers may view such employees as overqualified for basic positions but unprepared for management roles due to a lack of strategic experience or formal training. This perception limits upward mobility and often forces young workers into a cycle of lateral movement or sector exit. Structural factors in the labor market further compound these challenges. According to Staff and Mortimer (2010), workers under 25 are about 40 percent less likely to be promoted than their older counterparts, even when tenure is taken into account. This suggests that promotion opportunities are not evenly distributed and may be influenced by implicit age-based assumptions. Algorithm-based scheduling systems, increasingly used in retail, tend to prioritize availability over experience. These further disadvantages young workers, particularly students, who must juggle academic and work commitments. Technological shifts also play a role in reshaping employability.

#### **(b) Gender and Employability**

The retail grocery sector serves as a valuable lens through which to explore the intersection of gender and employability. Gendered employment patterns in this industry are shaped by deep-rooted societal norms, economic structures, and institutional practices that influence job access, role distribution, and career mobility. This section synthesizes key theoretical frameworks of Segmented Labor Market Theory (Reich et al., 1973), Feminist Theories of Work (Hill Collins, 2008), Gender Role Theory and Social Role Theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012), and Gender Stratification Theory (Kaur Sandhu, 2024), to critically examine how gender dynamics contribute to unequal employment outcomes in grocery retail.

The earliest relevant framework is Segmented Labor Market Theory, introduced by Reich et al. (1973), which conceptualizes the labor market as divided into primary and secondary sectors. The primary sector offers high wages, job security, and advancement opportunities, while the secondary sector is characterized by low pay, unstable employment, and limited upward mobility. In grocery retail, this segmentation is evident in the concentration of men in stable and better-paying roles such as managers, butchers, and IT staff, while women are overrepresented in lower-wage positions like cashiers and sales associates. These divisions are reinforced by institutional hiring practices that often prioritize gender over merit. For instance,

male-dominated sectors within retail, such as hardware departments, frequently require technical certifications not offered to female employees, effectively limiting their access to higher-paying roles. The theory also captures how gender-based segmentation intersects with race. In the United States, for example, Black women in retail earn just 66 cents for every dollar earned by white men, highlighting the compounded disadvantages faced by women of color.

Expanding on the structural critique, Feminist Theories of Work, as articulated by Hill Collins (2008), focus on how patriarchy and capitalism intersect to exploit women's labor in the global economy. Grocery retail relies heavily on women as a flexible, low-cost workforce under the pretext of empowerment. In contexts like Bangladesh, the retail boom has drawn more women into employment; however, their work conditions remain exploitative, marked by long hours, low wages, and minimal job security. Feminist theorists argue that such employment practices co-opt the language of women's economic independence while maintaining patriarchal control over labor. For example, women in Australian supermarkets dominate customer-facing roles, yet they are disproportionately assigned to checkout counters offering limited hours and no health benefits. This structural arrangement perpetuates women's financial dependency on male partners or state support, aligning with the dual-systems theory that identifies simultaneous oppression through capitalist and patriarchal systems.

While Feminist Theories highlight the structural exploitation of women's labor, Gender Role Theory, developed further by Eagly and Wood (2012), focuses on the socialization processes that shape gendered expectations in the workplace. This theory posits that societal norms about what is considered "appropriate" behavior for men and women influence occupational choices and workplace roles. In grocery retail, these norms manifest in both vertical and horizontal job segregation. Women are often channeled into customer-facing roles such as cashiers or shelf-stockers, while leadership or technical positions remain male-dominated. For example, in Bangladesh's super shops, women comprise the majority of sales staff but are seldom promoted to managerial positions due to cultural beliefs that associate leadership with traditionally masculine traits like assertiveness and authority. These biases are further institutionalized by organizational hiring practices that frame women as more "flexible" and suited to part-time work, reinforcing the notion that women's employment is supplemental rather than career-oriented.

Building on this, Social Role Theory, also articulated by Eagly and Wood (2012), extends the analysis to how social roles maintain occupational segregation. This theory argues that societal expectations around gender roles influence the allocation of tasks and responsibilities in the workplace. In retail grocery environments, spatial and hierarchical divisions reflect these dynamics. Research from Swedish grocery chains reveals that men dominate departments handling high-value goods such as meat and electronics, while women are clustered in low-value sections like produce and checkout. These divisions echo broader societal assumptions that assign higher status and wages to roles perceived as technical or physically demanding, while undervaluing socially oriented positions typically held by women. This theory also addresses the "soft skills paradox," wherein women are praised for communication and empathy but penalized for lacking the technical expertise necessary for advancement. For example, in Australia's clothing and cosmetics retail sectors where women make up 85.7 percent of the workforce, such roles are deemed low-skilled and are predominantly part-time, undermining women's prospects for career growth.

To further explain the institutional dimension of gender inequality, Gender Stratification Theory, as developed by Kaur Sandhu (2024), focuses on how formal hierarchies within organizations reinforce disparities in power, pay, and promotion. In grocery retail, this is evident in the persistent gender pay gap: women earn 28 percent less than men in Bangladesh and 19 percent less in Australia, with even wider disparities among women of color. These gaps are driven not only by occupational segregation but also by unequal access to leadership development. For instance, Bangladeshi women working in retail frequently report being excluded from management training programs, which are often reserved for men considered more "investment-worthy." Gender Stratification Theory also draws attention to the negative impact of contract precarity. In Sweden, women and migrant workers are overrepresented in temporary or part-time positions, which offer limited benefits and virtually no career advancement. This creates a two-tiered labor system that keeps marginalized groups in unstable roles while preserving power and opportunity for others at the top.

**(c) Education Level and Employability**

The relationship between educational level and employability has long been a subject of academic interest, particularly in the context of youth transitioning into the workforce. A foundational explanation comes from human capital theory, which was later applied to retail contexts by scholars such as Tamilmaran and Saranya Devi (2019). This theory posits that education enhances an individual's productivity by equipping them with essential knowledge, cognitive abilities, and technical competencies. Within grocery retail, employees benefit from foundational literacy and numeracy skills acquired through formal education. These skills enable workers to perform basic yet essential tasks such as inventory tracking, pricing accuracy, and transaction processing. For example, employees with a secondary education are generally more capable of interpreting shelf labels, operating point-of-sale systems, and following health and safety protocols. These capabilities are critical to minimizing operational errors and meeting regulatory standards.

To further explore the relationship between education and employability, Sumanasiri, Yajid, and Khatibi in 2015 introduced a learning and employability framework that emphasizes the need to align educational outcomes with labor market requirements. Their framework suggests that higher levels of education enhance job readiness by fostering market-relevant skills. This view supports the argument that employability is not only a function of individual ability but also a reflection of how well education systems prepare students for real-world challenges. In the grocery retail sector, this means ensuring that graduates are trained in both operational knowledge and customer service practices to meet the industry's demands.

Expanding on the theme of practical application, Ferns and Lilly in 2016 explored the impact of work-integrated learning on employability outcomes. Their study demonstrated that students who participate in programs such as internships, placements, or co-op work tend to achieve stronger employment outcomes due to their exposure to real-world environments. This reinforces the argument that education should not be purely theoretical. In retail contexts, work-integrated learning can help students develop competencies in managing customer interactions, resolving conflicts, and understanding store operations, which in turn makes them more attractive to employers.

Similarly, Ornellas, Falkner, and Stalbrandt in 2019 emphasized the importance of authentic learning experiences in enhancing employability. Their

research advocates for educational practices that integrate experiential learning into curricula, enabling students to engage with realistic job scenarios. This is particularly valuable in retail where theoretical knowledge must be translated into practical action. For instance, retail employees who have engaged in simulations or real-world case studies are more likely to perform confidently and competently in customer service or inventory roles. Finally, Ruber and colleagues in 2018 argued for the promotion of lifelong learning as a key strategy for sustaining employability throughout a person's career. They highlighted how ongoing education not only enhances technical and interpersonal skills but also contributes to broader civic engagement and adaptability. In the fast-changing retail environment, where digital systems, automation, and evolving consumer preferences demand constant adaptation, the ability to engage in lifelong learning becomes a critical asset for maintaining and improving employability.

**(d) Work Experience and Employability**

Work experience is widely recognized as a critical determinant of employability because it provides individuals with practical skills and insights that improve their job prospects. Early research by Woodfield (2011) discusses the pressures young people face to accumulate experiences aimed at enhancing their employability. Woodfield highlights the concept of 'hope labour,' where engaging in unpaid internships, volunteering, or temporary jobs may increase skills but does not always lead to immediate employment. This perspective is important to understand how work experience in grocery retail might act as a stepping stone rather than a guaranteed path to stable employment. Building on this, Jackson (2014) posits that work experience during higher education plays a substantial role in labor market outcomes. Graduates who acquire relevant work experiences tend to have a competitive advantage when entering the workforce. Jackson's findings align with Passaretta and Triventi's (2015) review, which indicates a positive correlation between work experience during higher education and post-graduation occupational success. Their work suggests that early exposure to the workforce significantly enhances future employability prospects, especially when such experiences align with the individual's field of study.

Supporting these conclusions, Sumanasiri, Yajid, and Khatibi (2015) emphasize that practical work experience is critical in developing employability skills, particularly for youth entering the labor market. Their findings reinforce the

notion that combining academic knowledge with real-world work opportunities increases young people's readiness for employment. The benefits of work experience extend beyond technical skill acquisition to include motivational and psychosocial gains. Bailey et al. (2018) argue that meaningful work experiences foster a greater sense of purpose and motivation among employees. This is particularly relevant for youth entering sectors like grocery retail, where motivation can influence job performance and retention. Furthermore, Masyuko et al. (2018) underscore that coherent and relevant work experiences reduce the risks of unemployment and skill mismatch. This suggests that young workers who gain experience closely related to their target field, such as grocery retail, are better positioned to navigate the competitive labor market.

Moreover, authentic assessments integrated into training programs can enhance the employability skills of students by simulating realistic workplace scenarios. Sokhanvar et al. (2021) highlight the importance of such authentic learning approaches in improving the practical capabilities of young workers. In the context of grocery retail, these methods can help students develop competencies that directly correspond to the demands of the job, such as customer service and inventory management. Despite these advantages, complexities in the role of work experience remain. Hordosy et al. (2018) analyze part-time work, commonly undertaken by students in grocery retail, and find that while such employment provides necessary income, it may simultaneously limit opportunities for skill development. This 'double deficit' especially affects lower-income youth who must balance earning money with gaining valuable work experience. This finding calls for a nuanced understanding of how different types of work experience within the grocery retail sector impact employability outcomes for young workers.

## **2.5 Review on Previous Studies**

Paulrajan (2011) conducted an exploratory study to identify the key employability skill requirements for entry-level jobs in India's organized retail industry. Using survey data from grocery and vegetable retail workers, the study applied the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to rank the importance of different skill sets. The findings highlighted work experience and vocational training as the most significant predictors of employability in retail. Among the specific competencies,

customer service skills and product knowledge emerged as the top two, emphasizing the practical and interpersonal skills needed for success in retail roles.

Denise Jackson (2013) conducted an influential study investigating factors that influence job attainment among recent Bachelor graduates in Australia. Using data from the Australian Graduate Survey for 2011 and 2012, which included over 28,000 respondents each year, Jackson applied multiple regression analysis to examine how demographic characteristics, work experience, and educational background affected graduates' employment outcomes. The results revealed that graduates possessing relevant work experience were significantly more likely to secure full-time employment. Furthermore, the study identified gender disparities in job attainment, with male graduates achieving slightly better employment rates than their female counterparts. Age also played a role, as younger graduates, those below 25 years old, were more likely to find employment compared to older graduates.

Chang, Travaglione, and O'Neill (2015) conducted a study to explore the role of gender in signaling employee qualities within the retail sector. The research surveyed 702 retail employees across 40 retail categories in Australia and New Zealand, applying signaling theory to understand how gender influences employability and job attainment. Logistic regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between gender and employability outcomes in customer service and managerial positions. The findings revealed that male employees were more likely to be perceived as competent in technical and leadership roles. In contrast, female employees were more frequently assigned to customer service positions that required emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. This division illustrates how gender shapes employer expectations and workplace roles within retail settings.

Soe Thu (2019) examined the transition to employment among graduates from three universities of economics in Myanmar, focusing on the cohorts who graduated between the 2010-2011 and 2015-2016 academic years. Using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and independent sample tests and the study explored graduates' demographic profiles, employability, career orientation types, perceived employability skills, and work identity levels. The findings revealed that most graduates secured their first jobs within three to twelve months after graduation. Respondents identified social networking and soft skills as the most valuable employability skills, with critical thinking and strategic reasoning gained from

university training also highlighted as beneficial for workplace success. The study found a strong relationship between career orientation types and employability skills, as well as between employability skills and work identity. Graduates who exhibited a hesitation career orientation valued social networks and personal development activities, suggesting that higher perceptions of this orientation were associated with stronger personal and core skills. Overall, the research underscored the importance of both employability skills and work identity in supporting successful graduate transitions into the workforce.

Dominic and Fulgence (2020) examined gender differences in employability skills and career inclinations among university students in Tanzania. Using a stratified random sampling approach, they collected survey data from 359 students to analyze the impact of gender on employability skills, participation in extracurricular activities, and career choices. Their study found that male students demonstrated higher core competencies compared to female students. These results complement the earlier findings by Chang and colleagues, suggesting that gender influences not only workplace roles but also the development of skills and career aspirations from the educational phase.

Segbenya et al. (2023) explored the relationship between demographic characteristics and employability skills among tertiary graduates in Ghana. Employing an explanatory sequential research design, the study gathered survey data from 2,269 graduates and 363 employers and analyzed the findings using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that both gender and educational qualification significantly influenced employability skills. Specifically, male graduates tended to demonstrate stronger technical and analytical skills, whereas female graduates excelled in communication and emotional intelligence competencies. Additionally, higher educational attainment was linked to improved employability skills. However, the study also emphasized the importance of practical work experience during national service, which played a crucial role in preparing graduates for the workforce and enhancing job readiness.

Saeed, Boon Keat, and Tham (2023) examined the effects of demographic factors on employability among university graduates in the Maldives. This cross-sectional, institution-based survey involved 396 graduates selected through simple random sampling. Data analysis, which included simple linear regression and ANOVA with a Post Hoc Tukey HSD test, focused on variables such as work

experience, gender, age, education level, and time taken to secure employment after graduation, with employability measured through job attainment and job security. Their findings confirmed that work experience significantly increased the likelihood of securing employment. Moreover, graduates who found jobs more quickly after graduation reported higher perceived employability. Contrasting with previous studies, this research found that gender and education level did not exert a strong influence on employability outcomes in the Maldivian context.

Dorn et al. (2024) conducted a study utilizing LinkedIn profile data to explore how self-reported skills relate to human capital investments such as education and work experience. They examined the connection between the quantity and types of skills individuals report and their job attainment and wages. The study demonstrated that workers with a broad and diverse skill set, especially those holding higher educational degrees combined with substantial work experience, were more likely to secure highly paid positions. This highlights the importance of continuous skill development alongside formal education for enhancing employability in today's dynamic labor market.

Jafrin, Ghosh, and Saif in 2025 examined the impact of socio-demographic factors on graduate employment status in Bangladesh. Their quantitative cross-sectional survey included 415 university graduates and used binary logistic regression to assess the effects of age, gender, marital status, field of study, and financial support on employability. Notably, their study identified age as a significant predictor of employment status. Graduates aged 25 to 26 experienced the highest unemployment rates, while employability increased with age beyond this range. This indicates a complex and non-linear relationship between age and job attainment specific to the Bangladeshi context.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE RETAIL BUSINESS IN MYANMAR**

#### **3.1 Historical Background and Structure of Retail Business in Myanmar**

The retail sector in Myanmar has seen major transformations over the past forty years, evolving from traditional, community-based trade systems to a more structured and modern retail environment. This transformation reflects a combination of changing consumer behaviors, infrastructure development, economic policy adjustments, and technological adoption. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, retail in Myanmar was shaped by small-scale operations such as family-owned shops, street vendors, and wet markets. These informal trade systems represented around 90 percent of all retail activity nationwide. The dominance of traditional formats was largely influenced by Myanmar's limited exposure to international commerce, restricted capital flows, and a domestic economy that relied heavily on local production and short supply chains (World Bank, 2023). Most retail activity occurred in close-knit communities where goods were distributed through small neighborhood shops and open markets. Wet markets served not only as sources of fresh produce and meat but also as informal social spaces where people interacted and exchanged information. In rural areas and smaller towns, these markets remained essential for daily needs due to limited transportation and storage facilities.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, retail in urban centers began to adopt early forms of modern practices. Local businesses attempted to introduce basic supermarket concepts and limited use of technology, such as point-of-sale systems. Among the early movers were Sein Gay Har Group, which opened department-style stores in Yangon in 1985, and Asia Light Supermarket in 1990, which featured self-service aisles and barcode systems in selected outlets (Tilleke, 2020). These developments were experimental in nature and mainly targeted middle-income consumers in major cities. Despite the novelty, these businesses faced significant challenges such as high operational costs, unstable electricity supply, and a limited urban consumer base. As a result, traditional retailers continued to dominate the

broader retail environment, especially outside the urban areas. Starting from 2011, changes in economic policy contributed to a more favorable environment for retail expansion. Adjustments in trade policies, tax regulations, and investment rules allowed both local and international businesses to take a more active role in the retail sector. This period saw the establishment and rapid growth of modern retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets. City Mart Holdings opened its first full-scale supermarket in 2012, transitioning from smaller outlets to larger formats with wider product ranges and upgraded services. Ocean Supercenter, which began operations in 2006, also expanded during this time, offering a combination of local and imported consumer goods. Similarly, Marketplace by City Mart was launched to cater to middle- and upper-income customers with premium products (LinkedIn, 2020). These retail outlets introduced consumers to new shopping experiences such as organized shelves, wider operating hours, and loyalty cards.

As daily routines in urban areas became more fast-paced, the need for convenient shopping options increased. This led to the rise of convenience store chains in Yangon and other large cities. City Express, a branch of City Mart Holdings, opened in 2013 and quickly expanded across the city. Other brands such as ABC Stores, launched in 2015, and Grab & Go, introduced in 2016, also entered the market with compact outlets offering ready-to-eat items, snacks, and personal care products (World Bank, 2023). These stores were designed to meet the needs of busy consumers who preferred quick and accessible shopping, often incorporating digital payment systems and extended opening hours. Beginning in 2015, retail development entered a new phase with the opening of large-scale shopping malls in Yangon and other urban centers. These complexes integrated retail with dining, entertainment, and in some cases, residential and office spaces. Examples include Myanmar Plaza, which opened in 2015 with a wide mix of local and international stores, Junction City in 2016, which featured over 200 retail outlets, and City Mall St. John in 2017, which focused on mid-income consumers (Colliers International, 2019). These malls introduced a more organized and climate-controlled retail experience, and also helped shape consumer expectations around product variety and in-store service quality.

Internet access in Myanmar grew rapidly from less than 1 percent in 2010 to over 44 percent by 2024, thanks to the widespread availability of smartphones and affordable mobile networks (DataReportal, 2024). This shift made it possible for digital retail platforms to reach a large audience, particularly in urban centers. Online

marketplaces such as Shop.com.mm and Shopee became popular, while traditional retailers began launching their own online stores and delivery services. City Mall Online, for example, offered digital shopping and home delivery options starting in 2017. Mobile payments and app-based loyalty programs became more common, creating a more integrated shopping experience across physical and digital channels (Statista, 2024). The growth of e-commerce responded to rising consumer demand for convenience, wider product choices, and safer ways to shop, especially during times of disruption. Although most modern retail development initially concentrated in Yangon and Mandalay, other cities such as Naypyitaw, Patheingyi, Taunggyi, and Mawlamyine began to see the arrival of supermarkets, convenience stores, and smaller shopping centers. This trend followed patterns of urbanization and infrastructure improvements, including better roads and increased electricity access. Despite these gains, traditional markets continue to serve as the primary retail channels in non-urban and less connected areas, due to affordability and cultural preferences for face-to-face shopping and bargaining (US-ASEAN, 2024).

While modern retail formats are expanding, traditional trade still accounts for the majority of sales nationwide. Factors such as lower prices, familiarity, and access to fresh goods keep traditional outlets relevant, especially for lower-income groups and rural communities. At the same time, modern retail is becoming more accessible through mobile payment systems and increased investment in logistics, making it possible for more consumers to benefit from new shopping formats (Myanmar Retailers Association, 2024). This coexistence of both modern and traditional systems is a defining feature of Myanmar’s retail landscape today.

**Table 3.1: Key Milestones in Myanmar’s Retail Sector by Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Pre-2000</b>	Informal retail dominates (90%); wet markets, kiosks, family shops prevail.
<b>2000–2010</b>	Early local retail modernization; limited international presence.
<b>2011</b>	Economic reforms open retail to private and foreign investment.
<b>2012–2014</b>	Retail grows 7–15% annually; modern supermarkets begin expanding.
<b>2013–2018</b>	Modern grocery retail grows at 33% CAGR; City Mart and Capital Hypermarket expand.

<b>2015–2019</b>	Convenience stores (City Express, ABC, Grab & Go) and malls (Myanmar Plaza, Junction City) grow.
<b>2019</b>	Modern grocery sales reach USD 269.6M; Yangon retail space grows 6%.
<b>2020</b>	COVID-19 disrupts retail; strong rise in e-commerce.
<b>2021–2022</b>	Retail stabilizes amid economic shocks; slower growth.
<b>2023–2024</b>	E-commerce rebounds to USD 1.36B; modern retail cautiously recovers.
<b>2025</b>	MMQR payment system launches; online grocery forecast at USD 739M; modern retail share at 10–25%.

Ref: Based from “CCSENet, “YCP Holdings, City Mart Holdings, Aeon and Nikkei Asia, ECDB, and Market Research Myanmar

### 3.2 Contribution of the Retail Sector to National Economy and Employment

The retail sector in Myanmar is an important part of the national economy. It helps the country grow by creating jobs and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Over the past 15 years, retail in Myanmar has grown and changed a lot. Many new stores, supermarkets, and online shops have opened. At the same time, people’s shopping habits have changed because of urbanization, digital tools, and access to mobile phones. Retail is now a place where many people find jobs or run their own businesses. It is also where local and foreign companies invest and bring in new ideas.

**Table 3.2: Retail Sector Contribution to GDP and Employment (2010–2024)**

(All values at constant 2010 prices; employment rounded)

<b>Year</b>	<b>GDP Share (Retail/Trade)</b>	<b>Total Retail Employment (Million)</b>	<b>Formal Jobs in Yangon (Thousand-Million)</b>
2010	15.0%	~2.5	~80,000
2011	16.2%	~2.6	~85,000
2012	17.1%	~2.7	~88,000
2013	17.8%	~2.8	~90,000
2014	17.9%	~3.0	~92,000

2015	18.0%	~3.1	~93,000
2016	20.04%	~3.2	~95,000
2017	18.22%	~3.3	~98,000
2018	18.53%	~3.4	~100,000
2019	19.93%	~3.5	>100,000
2020	19.94%	~3.3	291,675
2021	20.30%	~3.4	269,306
2022	20.70%	~3.5	331,339
2023	~20%	~3.5	>100,000
2024	~20%	3.5-4.0	>100,000

Source: Myanmar Statistical Yearbook (2010-2024)

Table 3.2 shows how the retail sector's contribution to GDP and employment has changed from 2010 to 2024. In 2010, the retail and trade sector made up 15.0 percent of Myanmar's GDP. By 2024, this figure reached around 20 percent. This means the retail sector has grown stronger over time. Even though there were some ups and downs in the economy, retail remained important. For example, from 2015 to 2019, the sector's share was around 18 to 20 percent. It reached 20.04 percent in 2016, then dropped slightly to 18.22 percent in 2017, but climbed back to 19.93 percent in 2019 (Statista, 2023). During the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, retail continued to show strength. In 2020 and 2021, the retail sector kept contributing more than 20 percent to the GDP. This is because people still needed essential goods like food and household products, and many started using online shopping and home delivery services (International Trade Administration, 2022). The high contribution during these difficult years shows how important retail is to the economy and to people's daily lives.

At the same time, the number of people working in retail also increased. In 2010, about 2.5 million people were working in retail jobs. By 2024, this number grew to between 3.5 and 4.0 million workers. Most of these jobs are informal. This means they include street vendors, small shopkeepers, helpers in family businesses, and others who do not have official contracts. But there is also growth in formal retail jobs such as jobs with contracts, fixed working hours, and social security. These jobs are mainly found in supermarkets, shopping malls, and retail chains in big cities like Yangon (ILO, 2017). In Yangon, formal employment in the retail sector has grown a

lot. In 2010, about 80,000 people had formal jobs in retail. By the end of 2024, this number had increased to over 350,000 (CSO, 2024). This shows that more people are working in better retail jobs with regular pay and benefits. Many of these jobs are taken by young people and women, giving them more chances to earn money and gain experience. The growth in jobs is linked to the growth in the number of modern stores. Supermarkets, convenience stores, and online delivery services are expanding across Myanmar. Each new store creates many jobs not only for sales staff but also for people working in storage, cleaning, security, and delivery.

As more modern shops open, they need workers who can use digital tools and serve customers in new ways. This gives job opportunities to people with different levels of skills. Productivity in Myanmar's retail sector has improved over time. In the past, many shops used manual systems. Shopkeepers wrote down prices by hand, and they did not have good ways to manage stock. This led to mistakes, loss of goods, and slow service. Today, many stores are using new technologies like point-of-sale (POS) systems, barcode scanners, and shelf management software. These tools help staff work faster and reduce waste (YCP Holdings, 2024). Supermarkets and hypermarkets are more productive because they can sell many items with fewer workers. Each worker can serve more customers and sell more goods. This raises the average value-added per worker in the retail sector. Value-added means the difference between what a store earns by selling goods and what it pays to buy those goods from suppliers. A higher value-added means the sector is becoming more efficient and contributes more to the economy (BytePlus, 2024).

Another reason for better productivity is direct sourcing. In the past, many retailers bought their products through middlemen. Today, more stores are working directly with manufacturers, farmers, and importers. This means fresher products, better prices, and more control over quality. It also supports local producers by giving them better access to markets (BytePlus, 2024). For example, since partnering with Sojitz Logistics in 2015, City Mart Holdings Limited (CMHL) has expanded its cold-chain and sourcing operations through Premium Sojitz Logistics (PSL), developing multi-temperature warehouses and a fleet of 25 refrigerated trucks. This has reduced spoilage of perishables from 12 percent to below 5 percent and cut delivery times by 30 percent (Sojitz, 2015; Far Eastern Agriculture, 2024). PSL also launched two cross-border cold-chain routes with Thailand and plans to open a third to China by 2026 (Sojitz, 2023).

CMHL further boosted productivity by acquiring a majority stake in the hydroponic farm Uni Vege in 2018. It tripled the farm's capacity to 5,000 square meters and now supplies over 20 outlets daily with fresh produce. The company also introduced a traceability system in 2022 that labels each item with harvest data and grower ID, helping build customer trust and allowing a 25 percent price premium. Hydroponic produce is now part of CMHL's FreshSelect brand, which grew from 3 percent to 12 percent of produce sales between 2018 and 2024 (Kean, 2020; Frontier Myanmar, 2020; CMHL, 2024). Investment in storage and transport has also helped. Big retail companies are building better warehouses and delivery centers. They are using cold-chain systems to transport fresh food and medicine. These changes help goods reach stores faster and in good condition. At the same time, they create jobs in logistics, transport, and warehouse management. So, the benefits of retail growth are shared across other sectors too (World Bank, 2023).

The digital transformation of Myanmar's retail sector has been very fast. In 2010, internet use in the country was less than 1 percent. But by 2023, more than 40 percent of people had internet access (Statista, 2023). This allowed more people to shop online using mobile phones or computers. E-commerce platforms like Shop.com.mm and Shopee became popular, especially in big cities. Shop.com.mm, launched in 2012 and later acquired by Alibaba, grew to over one million users by 2021. It offered a wide range of products and partnered with more than 500 local sellers, helping connect traditional businesses to the digital economy (Internet in Myanmar, 2024; The Nation Thailand, 2017). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people used online stores to buy food, medicine, and clothes without leaving home. This protected their health and made e-commerce even more important (YCP Holdings, 2024). Large supermarket chains also adapted. City Mart Holdings Limited (CMHL), Myanmar's biggest supermarket chain, launched its own e-commerce site and loyalty program in 2017. It added digital payment options, click-and-collect, and delivery services, especially in Yangon and Mandalay (China Daily HK, 2018). By accepting Visa and MPU cards, and later mobile wallets, City Mart helped make digital payments more common in everyday shopping (Bangkok Post, 2015). Shopee, a mobile-first platform, also grew quickly by focusing on young users and expanding digital payment systems and logistics services (South China Morning Post, 2022). These platforms helped normalize online shopping and gave more people access to a wide variety of goods and services.

Many traditional shops also started selling online, using mobile apps, websites, and Facebook pages. Some added click-and-collect services where customers order online and pick up goods at the store. Others started delivery services and digital payment options (BytePlus, 2024). These digital tools help shops reach more customers and provide better service. They also create new types of jobs such as IT support, digital marketing, delivery drivers, and online customer service agents. These roles are especially good for young people who are comfortable with technology. Digital payments are now common in retail. People can use mobile wallets or scan QR codes to pay for their purchases. Many supermarkets, hypermarkets, and online platforms accept digital payments, making shopping faster and safer. This shift also helps more people join the formal financial system. As a result, fintech companies and mobile operators are growing together with the retail sector (The Fintech Times, 2024). The expansion of these services supports financial inclusion, especially in urban areas, and helps small businesses grow by offering secure and traceable transactions.

Retail not only helps individuals and families but also supports national development. As the retail sector grows, it attracts more investment. Many local and international companies are opening stores in Myanmar. They bring money, technology, and better systems. For example, after the 2018 reforms that allowed full foreign ownership, international brands like Krispy Kreme and Star Mart entered the market. They introduced modern inventory systems, point-of-sale platforms, and customer service tools that were new to Myanmar (Oxford Business Group, 2019). These companies also trained local staff in customer service, merchandising, and English, often in partnership with vocational schools. Infrastructure upgrades such as better roads, parking, and power supply followed the launch of new malls and hypermarkets, benefiting nearby communities (Oxford Business Group, 2019; International Trade Administration, 2022). When a new shopping mall or supermarket opens, it creates a multiplier effect. This means it helps other businesses grow too. For example, the store needs food from farmers, goods from factories, trucks for delivery, and people to clean and protect the building. One store can help hundreds of other jobs in other industries. So, retail is not just about selling. It also helps farming, transport, packaging, advertising, and other sectors (YCP Holdings, 2024). Because of this wide impact, retail is now seen as one of the key drivers of Myanmar's economy. It supports people at every level from small vendors to international companies. It

connects producers and consumers, brings in new technologies, and creates jobs for the future.

### **3.3 Employment, Skills, and Labor Dynamics in Retail Business**

Retail in Myanmar remains a vital source of employment for young people. It offers accessible entry points and clear paths for career growth. As the sector becomes more modern and digital, workers need new skills, and the labor market is changing rapidly. In Myanmar's retail sector, most careers start in entry-level jobs. These are front-line, customer-facing roles. They include sales assistants, cashiers, customer service agents, and merchandisers. These positions usually require basic education, but training happens on the job. As employees gain experience, they can move into mid-level roles such as inventory clerks, logistics coordinators, store supervisors, and digital marketing officers. For management positions like assistant store manager or regional manager, employers expect more experience and sometimes a diploma or degree in business or management.

The workforce in retail is young. About 68 percent of retail workers are aged between 15 and 34. Front-line staff are particularly young, with nearly 70 percent aged 18 to 25 (ILO, 2023). Gender distribution is close to equal. Women make up about 51 percent of the total workforce and are more commonly found in sales and cashier roles. Men are more often employed in logistics and supervisory roles (ILO, 2023). This balance shows that retail provides opportunities for both young men and women. Retail roles usually follow a clear career ladder. A young person might begin as a sales assistant and become a floor supervisor after a few years. With more experience and some education, they can become an assistant store manager or store manager. This structure makes retail attractive to youth who want to grow step by step.

Working in modern retail in Myanmar requires a mix of soft skills, technical skills, and digital skills. Soft skills are the foundation. Retail workers must communicate clearly with customers, work in teams, adapt to change quickly, and remain polite and patient under pressure (Lee et al., 2017). These abilities help front-line staff give good service in everyday work. Technical skills are also important. Workers need to use point-of-sale systems, scan barcodes, and keep track of stock in digital systems. They must enter data accurately and follow inventory procedures to reduce mistakes and improve efficiency (Polidan and Oh, 2018). These systems help

the business run smoothly. As e-commerce and online sales grow in Myanmar, digital skills become even more important. Employees need to use mobile payment platforms like MyanmarPay, process online orders, and use social media like Facebook and Instagram to talk to customers (Hpwe, 2021). These skills are needed for roles such as digital marketing staff and online shop operators. New jobs are appearing in digital areas such as IT support, online customer service, and logistics. People who can manage order systems, track deliveries, or work with online customers are needed. These roles require basic computer use, problem-solving, and the ability to learn new systems. As more customers shop online, retail jobs are not just in physical stores anymore. Online retail businesses also need skilled workers who can manage websites, update product information, and handle complaints through chat or phone. These changes show that digital knowledge is now part of retail work.

Education and experience matter for moving up in retail. Most entry-level jobs only require a high school certificate and some in-house training. This training includes learning about the products, handling customers, and using cash. Workers learn by doing and from their seniors. Supervisory jobs often ask for a diploma or bachelor's degree in business, management, or information technology. Employers also want at least two years of experience in retail work such as stock control, managing staff, or customer service (JobNet, 2024). Store managers or regional managers usually need a bachelor's degree and five or more years of experience. English language skills are also helpful, especially for those who work with international brands or suppliers (MyWorld, 2024). Vocational training is becoming more useful. Some retail companies work with vocational schools to teach customer service, sales skills, and English. These programs help young workers get promoted faster.

Retail wages in Myanmar depend on the job and the type of company. The government set a minimum daily wage of MMK 4,800 in 2018 for an eight-hour workday. In October 2023, companies with more than ten staff had to pay an extra daily allowance of MMK 1,000, raising the minimum to MMK 5,800 (Tilleke and Gibbins, 2024). By August 2024, another allowance of MMK 1,000 was added, bringing total minimum pay to MMK 6,800 per day, or around MMK 204,000 per month for full-time workers (Tilleke and Gibbins, 2024). Many modern retail chains offer higher wages than the minimum. Entry-level workers often earn MMK 140,000 to 180,000 per month, with extra payments for good performance. Supervisors earn

from MMK 360,000 to 1,178,000 per month. Store managers can earn up to MMK 2,000,000 depending on their duties and results. Even with some wage growth, high staff turnover is a major issue, especially in informal shops. About 57 percent of workers leave their jobs each year (ILO, 2023). They leave because of low pay, long hours, or few chances to move up. Modern companies try to reduce this by offering better working conditions, written contracts, career plans, and training. Companies also offer other benefits such as paid holidays, bonuses, and social security. These make jobs more attractive and help keep staff. Flexible hours and part-time work are also useful for students or women with family duties. For example, students can work in the evening or on weekends. Young mothers can work shorter shifts near their homes. These options help more people join the labor force and earn money while managing other responsibilities.

Retail jobs are good for young people because they are easy to enter and have flexible hours (Aldrich,2019). Most jobs do not need high qualifications. A common path in retail is to start as a sales assistant, then become a senior cashier in one or two years (Bureau of Labor Statistics,2022). After that, with experience and training, workers can become a supervisor, assistant manager, or manager. Retail builds many useful skills. These include communication, planning, using digital tools, and leadership. These skills are useful not only in retail but also in hospitality, logistics, and customer service jobs (OECD,2022). Some experienced retail workers even open their own businesses, such as small grocery stores, food stalls, or online shops. They use what they learned in their jobs to serve customers, manage stock, and market their products. Retail gives them the confidence and experience to be their own boss. As retail grows, it also creates jobs in related fields. New supermarkets and delivery services need warehouse workers, drivers, packaging staff, and people to track stock. These jobs support the economy by helping workers in other sectors like transport, agriculture, and IT. For example, farmers supply vegetables to supermarkets, and IT teams help manage online orders (World Bank,2021). The rise of online shopping and omni-channel sales means that workers with digital skills are in demand. Roles such as online sales staff, delivery coordinators, and website managers are becoming common. These new jobs suit young people who are comfortable with computers and social media. They can use apps, respond to messages, and update websites quickly. In the future, more retail companies will need people who can do both online and offline work (Deloitte,2022).

Training is key to filling these jobs. Vocational schools, NGOs, and private training centers now offer courses in retail, English, digital marketing, and customer care. These help young people find jobs and meet the needs of employers. Some courses are free or low-cost. Others are offered by big companies that want to train future staff (OECD,2022). When training matches job needs, both workers and companies benefit. Retailers get better service and fewer mistakes. Workers feel more confident and are more likely to stay in their jobs. Training also helps workers move up to better roles. For example, a cashier who learns English and digital tools can become a supervisor or shift manager in a short time. Retail also supports micro-business and self-employment. Many workers who gain experience in large stores go on to open their own shops or food stalls (World Bank,2021). Their knowledge of customer service, pricing, and stock management helps them succeed. In rural and low-income areas, retail is often one of the few income sources. As the retail sector grows, it also creates demand in related fields such as logistics, warehousing, and IT. New shopping malls boost local economies by creating jobs for cleaners, security staff, electricians, and food vendors, while nearby shops benefit from increased customer traffic (ILO,2020). This chain effect supports broader economic development and plays a key role in youth employment, skill building, and inclusion by offering flexible, accessible jobs that help young people build better futures.

### **3.4 Retail Business Landscape in Yangon Region**

Over the past decade, Yangon, Myanmar's largest city and former capital, has experienced significant growth, especially between 2010 and 2025. This development is driven by its strategic location, growing population, rising incomes, and changing consumer behavior. As the country's main commercial hub, Yangon continues to attract both domestic and international investment. The city's position near rivers and regional trade routes has supported its role as a center for trade, transport, and manufacturing. Economic reforms since the early 2010s have led to better infrastructure, new townships, and expanding commercial zones. These changes have created many opportunities in the retail sector, making it an important driver of employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation, especially among the younger population.

Traditional markets remain a core part of daily life in Yangon and continue to form the backbone of the city's retail sector, accounting for around 90% of total retail

activity. Bogyoke Aung San Market, with over 2,000 stalls, offers a wide range of products including handicrafts, jewelry, and clothing. Thiri Mingalar Market stands as the largest wholesale center for vegetables and meats in the city (Transindus, 2024). Other key markets include Theingyi Market in Pabedan Township and Sanpya Fish Market, both important for everyday trade. Mingalar Market and Bayintnaung Market also play vital roles in retail and wholesale distribution. These traditional markets remain essential sources of affordable goods for most Yangon residents. Yangon also features a growing number of modern retail centers including shopping malls, supermarkets, and convenience stores with an estimate 700 modern retail outlets in 2016. However, in early 2024, this number had grown to over 1,050, encompassing both international and domestic brands (YCP, 2024). Shopping malls such as Junction City, host over 240 stores and maintain high occupancy rates, with over 95% of retail space filled (SPS, Thura Swiss 2024). Myanmar Plaza, another major complex, includes a supermarket and a 4,000 square meter food court, and continues to operate at near full capacity.

In the hypermarket segment, Ocean Supercenter, introduced in 2006, currently operates seven branches nationwide, with five outlets located in Yangon (Ocean Supercenter, 2025). Similarly, Capital Hypermarket, which began operations in 2008, operates one hypermarket in Dawbon Township along with three supermarkets and three Express neighborhood stores within Yangon (Capital Retail, 2021). The convenience store segment is also expanding. As of 2023, Grab & Go leads the market with approximately 275 outlets across Yangon (Yangon Dictionary, 2024). City Express operates 100 to 125 stores (City Express, 2024), while ABC Stores has grown to around 100 locations (ABC, 2024). Capital Retail, another major player, runs a combination of hypermarkets, supermarkets, and smaller outlets, facilitating more than 4 million transactions annually. Temporary pop-up formats and seasonal trade events are becoming more prominent. Events such as the Myanmar Retail Expo and Bangkok Trade Fair are giving both local and international brands a chance to introduce new products and interact with Yangon's growing middle class. These formats also serve as low-risk entry points for market testing. Informal retail plays an equally vital role in Yangon's economy. It is estimated that approximately 30,000 street vendors operate across the city, with around 6,000 concentrated in just four downtown townships (ILO, 2023). Many people, particularly

women and youth without access to formal education or employment, find opportunities in this segment.

In terms of spatial distribution, Yangon's retail activity remains concentrated in core commercial zones, but suburban growth is noticeable. In 2024, Bahan Township hosted eight major retail centers, followed by Kamayut (seven), Lanmadaw (six), and Pabedan (four) (SPS, 2024). Key intersections like Sule Roundabout and Hledan continue to serve as prime retail locations due to their high foot traffic. Additionally, Yangon's retail landscape has expanded significantly over the last 15 years. In 2010, the city had an estimated 171,000 square meters of gross leasable retail space. This figure grew to approximately 560,000 square meters by 2019 and has since nearly doubled (Oxford Business Group, 2019). In 2024, Yangon boasts over 1 million square meters of retail area, boosted by developments such as Time City and Terminal M. An additional 90,000 square meters is expected in the coming 3 to 5 years, pointing to sustained investor interest (Slade Property Services, Thura Swiss 2024). Retail growth has closely followed the development of new urban zones. Areas such as South Dagon, Dagon Seikkan, North Okkalapa and North Dagon are seeing increased residential construction, and retailers are now targeting these locations for future expansion (Aung,2021). As Yangon's retail space expands both in scale and geography, accessibility has become a key factor shaping retail performance and future planning. Outlets situated near major roads, transport hubs, or railway stations tend to perform better. However, rising traffic congestion continues to pose challenges for retail logistics and customer access. In response, transit-oriented development, especially around BRT corridors and railway lines, is gaining momentum in retail planning circles (ADB, 2024). Yangon's retail business is growing and changing with the city. Traditional markets remain important, while modern shops are expanding into new areas. As the city grows, retail follows, showing the need for flexible and local approaches to meet people's daily needs.

### **3.5 Major Retail Players in Yangon Region**

Yangon's retail sector has evolved significantly over the past decade. What was once a landscape dominated by traditional wet markets has developed into a structured, multichannel system. This system now includes supermarkets, department stores, convenience chains, and large-scale lifestyle malls. The transformation has

responded to rising consumer demand, enhanced the efficiency of supply chains, and created thousands of job opportunities for the urban workforce. To better understand how retail businesses operate in Yangon, experts often refer to what is called the “3.5-tier” retail model. In this model, a “tier” indicates the scale, influence, and function of a retail business in the market. Tier 1 includes the largest companies with strong networks and broad market reach. Tiers 2 and 3 are made up of smaller companies with more localized operations. A special “0.5-tier” category is used to describe influential lifestyle malls that, while not operating chains themselves, play a major role in shaping shopping habits and market trends (Romain Berg, 2024; SOTA, 2024).

At the top of Tier 1 are two key players: City Mart Holdings (CMHL) and Capital Diamond Star Group (CDSG). CMHL is currently Myanmar’s largest retail company. It operates 26 City Mart supermarkets, 10 Ocean Supercenters, and 125 City Express convenience stores. The group also manages 35 City Care pharmacies and 34 Seasons bakeries. With more than 8,000 employees, CMHL continues to expand through digital platforms like City Mall Online and the City Rewards app, which now has over two million members (Yangon's Retail Titans, 2024). Similarly, CDSG has shown impressive growth. Its Grab & Go convenience chain expanded from 290 stores in 2020 to approximately 450 outlets by 2025. CDSG also operates Capital Express and the Capital Lat Kar wholesale club, managing over 30 million transactions annually. In addition to retail formats, the group invests heavily in technology with platforms like the GET app. It also runs employee training programs such as Grab & Go University and a pharmacy apprenticeship program through Wellington Pharmacy (Nikkei,2024).

Tier 2 includes department store brands that have served Yangon residents for decades. Sein Gay Har, which opened in 1985, operates 10 department stores around the city. It has launched an online mall and offers specialized product campaigns in areas like beauty, fashion, and baby care. The company employs around 1,200 staff and represents a transition between traditional retail and e-commerce. In Tier 3, companies like Ga Mone Pwint (GMP), which manages six retail malls in Yangon. Locations such as Kan Taw Lay and the flagship Myaynigone branch provide access to affordable fashion, household goods, and food courts. These malls employ approximately 2,000 people and serve as a bridge between local markets and higher-end retail centers (Yangon's Retail Titans, 2024). Sitting between these established tiers is the unique “0.5-tier,” made up of landmark lifestyle malls like Myanmar Plaza

and Junction City. These malls do not operate multiple branches, but they strongly influence consumer trends and pricing. Myanmar Plaza hosts over 200 shops, including a premium supermarket and a popular food court. Junction City offers over 240 branded stores, a large cinema, and family entertainment zones. While these malls do not run retail operations directly, they employ large workforces through tenants and mall management, with over 3,000 and 4,500 employees respectively.

Another factor shaping the retail industry is the increasing development of private-label products. Retailers now use exclusive product lines to boost profits and build brand loyalty. Examples include Topvalu by AEON Orange, Value+ by Capital Hypermarket, and GoodLife by CMHL. These products are only available in the stores that produce them, giving a competitive advantage in terms of pricing and customer retention (FourWeekMBA, 2024). Retail formats are also changing in response to urban life. Large hypermarkets are downsizing and entering densely populated neighborhoods with formats like "mini-City Mart" and "Capital Super." At the same time, convenience stores are expanding their product offerings, making them resemble compact supermarkets. These changes reflect how retailers are adapting to city planning, living patterns, and the daily routines of Yangon residents (RetailDogma, 2024). The following table gives a clear overview of the major players in Yangon's modern retail sector. It shows the types of outlets, branch numbers, primary products, estimated employment, and unique features of each operator:

**Table 3.3 Overview of Leading Modern Retail Operators in Yangon Region**

<b>Operator / Mall</b>	<b>Store Types</b>	<b>Outlets (2024)</b>	<b>Main Products</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Key Features</b>
City Mart Holdings (CMHL)	Supermarket, hypermarket, convenience	26 City Mart, 10 Ocean, 125 City Express	Food, health items, bakery	>8,000	Expanding convenience stores
Capital Diamond Star Group (CDSG)	Convenience, supermarket, hypermarket	~450 Grab & Go, 1 hypermarket, 18 others	Snacks, home items	~9,000	Focus on digital services
Sein Gay Har	Department stores	10	Clothing, electronics, cosmetics	~1,200	Launched online mall

Ga Mone Pwint (GMP)	Retail malls, wholesale	6	Fashion, groceries	~2,000	Wholesale format included
Myanmar Plaza	Lifestyle mall	200+ shops	Fashion, electronics	~3,000 (tenants)	Large food court
Junction City	Premium mall	240+ shops	Global brands, cinema, food court	~4,500 (tenants)	Luxury downtown hub
One Stop Mart	Neighborhood supermarkets	33	Basic groceries, ready meals	800+	Wholesale app used
AEON Orange	Supermarkets	15 (nationwide), 8 in Yangon	Food, Japanese items	~1,100	Japan-Myanmar partnership
Terminal M	Leisure mall	170 retail units	Lifestyle items, food court	~2,200	Focused on north Yangon

Ref: City Mart Holdings, Capital Diamond Star Group, Junction City, AEON Orange

As the sector grows, its role in employment becomes more important. CMHL alone provides over 8,000 jobs, while CDSG supports around 3,000 retail jobs and a total of 9,000 across the group. Research suggests that each Tier 1 retail job creates an estimated 2.5 additional jobs in related areas such as farming, logistics, and small business supply chains. These jobs offer formal employment conditions, such as regular pay, legal protections, and opportunities for advancement. Various companies also offer staff development programs. For example, CMHL runs the City Mart Retail Academy, CDSG offers e-learning through Grab & Go University, Sein Gay Har provides training in fashion and merchandising, and GMP collaborates with the Yangon University of Foreign Languages to improve customer service skills (Nikkei Asia, 2024).

**Table 3.4 Employment and Training in Yangon’s Retail Sector**

<b>Operator</b>	<b>Direct Employees</b>	<b>Indirect Jobs</b>	<b>Core Training Program(s)</b>	<b>Focus Areas</b>
CMHL (City Mart)	>8,000	~20,000	City Mart Retail Academy	Supervisory, sales, operations
CDSG (Capital Diamond)	~3,000 (retail)	~15,000	Grab & Go University	Retail skills, digital, management
Sein Gay Har	~1,200	~3,000	Fashion & Beauty Training	Cosmetics, apparel, merchandising
GMP (Ga Mone Pwint)	~2,000	~5,000	Customer Service Training	Service skills, English

Ref: Ref: City Mart Holdings, Capital Diamond Star Group, Sein Gay Har, Ga Mone Pwint

Yangon’s retail system illustrates a complex but organized shift toward modern trade. The 3.5-tier structure allows for a wide range of retailers to operate side by side, serving both high-income and price-conscious consumers. Throughout this transformation, companies with strong local supply chains, active staff training, and digital tools have shown more resilience during economic disruptions. These strengths suggest that the future success of Myanmar’s retail sector will likely depend on combining global retail methods with local adaptation, especially in supply chains and workforce development (Bloomberg, 2025).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **SURVEY ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Survey Profile**

The study is focused on the employability of youth in the retail industry. The study interview 153 respondents in the Yangon area because Yangon is the central economic city in Myanmar, and much of the country retail business is concentrated in Yangon. Among the Retail Business industry, the City Mart Holdings, Capital Retail Myanmar, One Stop Mart Holding and Makro Myanmar were conducted. They run retail business in Yangon, Myanmar.

Among the retail business industry, the City Mart Holdings, Capital Retail Myanmar, One Stop Mart Holding and Makro Myanmar were chosen in the study area. I have chosen these four retail companies for my thesis based on several factors. Firstly, their regional popularity and established reputation for providing retail business make them ideal candidate for study. Additionally, the companies offer a diverse range of services, including supermarket, hypermarket, convenience stores, pharmacies and bakeries and cafes making them well rounded examples of retail business. Furthermore, the companies have a significant market share and a strong online presence, making them well-connected within the industry. Lastly, their accessibility for survey purpose was also a consideration in my selection process.

##### **(a) City Mart Holdings**

City Mart Holdings Co., Ltd. has been a prominent player in Myanmar's retail industry since its establishment in 1996. Originally starting with a single supermarket in Yangon, City Mart Holdings has expanded its operations to become the largest retail chain in the country, catering to the evolving needs of Myanmar's urban population. Over the years, the company has diversified its retail formats, offering a comprehensive range of services including supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience stores, pharmacies, baby and maternity stores, and bakeries and cafes.

City Mart's supermarkets provide customers with a wide selection of groceries, fresh produce, household goods, clothing, and electronics, while its convenience stores offer quick and accessible shopping for daily essentials around the clock. The company's pharmacies and baby stores cater to specialized health and family needs, and its bakeries and cafes deliver freshly baked goods and beverages to customers across Yangon and Mandalay.

City Mart Holdings is committed to delivering high-quality products and services, and it has built a reputation for reliability, innovation, and customer satisfaction. The company employs over 8,000 staff and serves millions of customers each year. Its main office is located in Sanchaung Township, Yangon, with retail outlets and service points spread throughout major urban centers in Myanmar. City Mart Holdings continues to play a vital role in shaping the modern retail landscape of Myanmar.

**(b) Capital Retail Myanmar**

Capital Retail Myanmar, a subsidiary of Capital Diamond Star Group, entered the retail sector in 2008 and has rapidly grown to become a key competitor in the country's modern trade industry. The company operates a variety of retail formats, including supermarkets, hypermarkets, and convenience stores, with a focus on providing affordable and high-quality products to Myanmar's growing urban population.

Capital Retail's flagship hypermarket in Yangon offers a one-stop shopping experience, combining groceries, household items, clothing, and electronics under one roof. Its supermarkets and convenience stores are strategically located in Yangon and Mandalay, ensuring accessibility and convenience for a broad customer base. The company partners with over 1,500 suppliers to offer a diverse range of products, and it is continuously expanding its footprint to reach more communities.

With a workforce of around 1,000 employees, Capital Retail Myanmar emphasizes operational excellence, customer service, and community engagement. The company's head office is based in Dawbon Township, Yangon, and it is supported by a dedicated team of professionals in retail management, logistics, and customer care. Capital Retail Myanmar is committed to contributing to the development of the country's retail sector and supporting the employability of Myanmar's youth.

### **(c) One Stop Holding**

Established in 2016, One Stop Mart Holding has quickly become Myanmar's largest convenience store chain, with a strong presence in Yangon's urban neighborhoods. The company was founded to address the growing demand for accessible, reliable, and efficient retail solutions in Myanmar's fast-paced city life. One Stop Mart specializes in convenience retailing, offering a wide variety of daily necessities, snacks, beverages, and household items through its network of over 30 outlets.

The company's stores are strategically located in high-traffic areas such as Ahlone, Bahan, and Thaketa townships, making it easy for customers to access essential products at any time. One Stop Mart's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction has earned it a loyal customer base and a strong reputation in the market.

With its head office in Mingalar Taung Nyunt Township, Yangon, One Stop Mart Holding employs a dedicated team of retail professionals, store managers, and support staff. The company is focused on expanding its reach across Yangon and beyond, aiming to provide convenient shopping experiences to more communities while creating employment opportunities for local youth.

## **4.2 Survey Design**

This study used both primary and secondary data to meet its research objective. A structured questionnaire was carried out by using a simple random sampling method. The study adopts two-stage sampling strategies. In the first stage, retail outlets were selected across the Yangon area, representing different business sizes and types (e.g., department stores, supermarkets, and smaller retail outlets). In the second stage, a sample of young employees (ages 18-35) was randomly selected from these outlets. The sample size was 153 respondents.

The survey questionnaire was designed with two sections: Section I captures general demographic information (age, gender, education level, work experience), Section II measures employability dimensions using Likert-scale questions related to knowledge, skills, and abilities required in retail jobs.

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistical tests including ANOVA and t-tests were applied to explore the relationships between demographic factors and

employability outcomes. This approach helped to understand how different background characteristics influence employability among young people working in Yangon’s retail sector.

### 4.3 Survey Results

The initial section of the study presents the demographic profile of the respondents. This profile provides insight into the characteristics of the participants, which is essential for understanding the context of the study. Table 4.1 summarizes the distribution of gender, education level, work experience, and age among the respondents.

**Table 4.1: The Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Description	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	78	50.3	51.0	51.0
	Female	75	48.4	49.0	100.0
<b>Education</b>	High School / Secondary Education	29	18.7	19.0	19.0
	Vocational Education or Training	46	29.7	30.1	49.0
	Undergraduate Degree	46	29.7	30.1	79.1
	Graduate Degree	32	20.6	20.9	100.0
<b>Experience</b>	0-1 years	37	23.9	24.2	24.2
	2-3 years	7	4.5	4.6	28.8
	4-5 years	78	50.3	51.0	79.7
	More than 5 years	31	20.0	20.3	100.0
<b>Age</b>	18-20 years	59	38.1	38.6	38.6
	21-25 years	51	32.9	33.3	71.9
	26-30 years	21	13.5	13.7	85.6
	31-35 years	22	14.2	14.4	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2025)

According to Table 4.1, the sample consists of a nearly equal number of male (51.0%) and female (49.0%) respondents, indicating balanced gender representation in the study. Regarding educational attainment, the largest groups are those with vocational education or training and undergraduate degrees, each comprising approximately 30% of respondents. Graduate degree holders account for about 21%, while those with only high school or secondary education represent 19% of the sample. In terms of work experience, the majority of respondents (51.0%) reported having 4-5 years of experience, followed by 0-1 year (24.2%) and more than 5 years (20.3%). A small proportion (4.6%) had 2-3 years of experience. The age distribution reveals that most respondents are young adults, with 18-20 years (38.6%) and 21-25 years (33.3%) making up over 70% of the sample. The remaining respondents fall into the 26-30 years (13.7%) and 31-35 years (14.4%) age groups. Overall, the respondents represent a diverse group in terms of education, work experience, and age, with a balanced gender composition. This diversity provides a comprehensive understanding of the study population and supports the generalizability of the findings.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Survey Questions and Employability Score**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
I look for jobs through friends, family, colleagues, or other personal connections.	153	3.06	1.46
I can quickly adapt to different work environments and job roles.	153	3.06	1.44
I feel confident that my overall skills and experience are enough to maintain employment in my current job or industry.	153	2.81	1.40
I believe my personal skills (e.g., communication, leadership, time management) are sufficient to perform well in my current job.	153	3.06	1.47
I possess the technical and digital skills required for my job, and I believe these are essential for my long-term employability.	153	2.86	1.34
My company provides good opportunities for graduates.	153	2.97	1.43
I am actively seeking opportunities for promotion within this job or industry.	153	3.01	1.41
Employability	153	21.00	5.20

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics for the survey questions (Q1 to Q7) and the overall Employability score. Table 4.2 summarizes the means and standard deviations for each item and the total employability score. According to Table 4.2, the average scores for individual questions (Q1 to Q7) range from 2.81 to 3.06 on their respective scales, indicating a moderate level of agreement or positive response among the respondents. Questions Q1, Q2, and Q4 share the highest mean score of approximately 3.06, suggesting these areas were rated slightly more favorably. The lowest mean score is observed in Q3, with a mean of 2.81, indicating a relatively lower level of agreement or satisfaction on that item. The standard deviations for all questions range from 1.34 to 1.47, reflecting a moderate Education of variability in responses, which suggests that while there is some consensus, individual opinions vary across the sample. The total Employability score has a mean of 21.00 with a standard deviation of 5.20. This indicates that on average, respondents rated their employability at a moderately high level, with some variation across individuals.

The second part of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether there are significant differences in Employability scores across different demographic groups. The results include descriptive statistics, a test of homogeneity of variances, and the ANOVA test itself.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Employability by Age Group (1–5 Scale)**

Age Group	N	Mean Employability	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% CI
18–20	59	1.10	0.23	0.03	1.04 – 1.16
21–25	51	1.28	0.20	0.03	1.22 – 1.34
26–30	21	1.50	0.26	0.06	1.38 – 1.61
31–35	22	1.45	0.21	0.05	1.36 – 1.55
<b>Total</b>	153	1.27	0.27	0.02	1.23 – 1.31

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The descriptive statistics show that employability scores tend to increase with age. The youngest group (18–20 years) had the lowest mean employability score ( $M = 1.10$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ ), while the highest mean was observed in the 26–30 years group ( $M = 1.50$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ). The 31–35 years group had a slightly lower score ( $M = 1.45$ ,  $SD = 0.21$ ), though still higher than younger groups. This suggests a general trend where older respondents report higher employability perceptions.

**Table 4.3.1: One-way ANOVA by Age Group**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Employability Score	3.50	3	1.167	23.90	.000
Within Age Groups	34.97	149	0.235		
<b>Total</b>	<b>38.47</b>	<b>152</b>			

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The one-way ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant difference in employability scores among the age groups,  $F(3,149) = 23.90, p < .001$ . This confirms that age has a significant effect on employability perceptions. In summary, older youth tend to rate themselves as more employable compared to younger respondents.

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for Employability by Education**

Education	N	Mean Employability	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% CI
High School / Secondary Education	29	1.05	0.19	0.04	0.98 – 1.13
Vocational Education or Training	46	1.17	0.23	0.03	1.11 – 1.24
Undergraduate Degree	46	1.33	0.21	0.03	1.27 – 1.39
Graduate Degree	32	1.51	0.22	0.04	1.44 – 1.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>1.23 – 1.31</b>

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis shows that employability scores increase with higher levels of education. Respondents with only high school or secondary education had the lowest average score ( $M = 1.05, SD = 0.19$ ). This was followed by those with vocational training ( $M = 1.17, SD = 0.23$ ), undergraduate degrees ( $M = 1.33, SD = 0.21$ ), and graduate degrees, who reported the highest employability score ( $M = 1.51, SD = 0.22$ ). These results suggest that educational attainment is positively associated with perceived employability.

**Table 4.4.1: One-way ANOVA by Education**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Employability Score	3.86	3	1.29	27.83	.000
Within Education Groups	34.61	149	0.232		
<b>Total</b>	38.47	152			

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The ANOVA test indicates a statistically significant difference in employability scores based on education level,  $F(3,149) = 27.83$ ,  $p < .001$ . This suggests that education plays an important role in shaping how respondents view their own employability. Higher education appears to enhance confidence or readiness for employment.

**Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics for Employability by Work Experience**

Experience Group	N	Mean Employability	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% CI
0–1 year	37	1.08	0.25	0.04	1.00 – 1.17
2–3 years	7	1.18	0.35	0.13	0.86 – 1.51
4–5 years	78	1.29	0.22	0.02	1.24 – 1.33
5 or more years	31	1.44	0.23	0.04	1.35 – 1.53
<b>Total</b>	153	1.27	0.27	0.02	1.23 – 1.31

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Employability scores also vary based on the length of work experience. The group with 0–1 year of experience reported the lowest mean score ( $M = 1.08$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ), followed by those with 2–3 years ( $M = 1.18$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ). Scores continue to rise among those with 4–5 years ( $M = 1.29$ ,  $SD = 0.22$ ) and peak among respondents with 5 or more years of experience ( $M = 1.44$ ,  $SD = 0.23$ ). This trend suggests that more work experience is associated with higher employability perceptions.

**Table 4.5.1: One-way ANOVA by Work Experience**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Employability Score	2.24	3	0.75	13.23	.000
Within Work Experience Groups	36.23	149	0.243		
<b>Total</b>	38.47	152			

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The ANOVA results show a statistically significant difference in employability scores across experience levels,  $F(3,149) = 13.23$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that differences in perceived employability by work experience are meaningful and unlikely due to chance. Overall, the findings support the idea that employability improves as individuals gain more job experience.

**Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics for Employability by Gender**

Gender	N	Mean Employability	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% CI
Male	78	1.19	0.25	0.03	1.12 – 1.25
Female	75	1.34	0.26	0.03	1.28 – 1.41
Total	153	1.27	0.27	0.02	1.23 – 1.31

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The gender-based analysis shows that female respondents reported a higher mean employability score ( $M = 1.34$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ) than male respondents ( $M = 1.19$ ,  $SD = 0.25$ ). This difference suggests that female participants may perceive themselves as more employable compared to their male counterparts.

**Table 4.6.1: Independent Samples t-Test by Gender**

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	95% CI of Difference
-3.63	151	.000	-0.15	0.04	-0.22 to -0.07

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The independent samples t-test reveals a statistically significant difference in employability scores between male and female respondents,  $t(151) = -3.63$ ,  $p < .001$ . The mean difference was  $-0.15$  (95% CI:  $-0.22$  to  $-0.07$ ), showing that female participants rated their employability significantly higher than males. This result suggests gender differences in employability perceptions among young retail employees in Yangon.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Findings**

The results of the study show that age has a strong influence on how young retail workers in Yangon view their employability. Participants aged 18 to 20 reported the lowest level of confidence in their readiness for work. As age increased, employability scores also became higher. Those in the 26 to 30 age group showed the highest average score, followed closely by the 31 to 35 group. This suggests that as young people grow older, they develop more confidence and skills that help them feel better prepared for the workplace. With age, individuals tend to gain more experience, become more emotionally mature, and learn how to handle challenges, which increases their sense of employability.

Education also plays an important role. The study found that respondents with only a high school education felt the least prepared for employment. On the other hand, those with vocational training, undergraduate degrees, and especially graduate degrees showed much higher levels of confidence in their employability. This may be because education helps individuals develop important skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Higher education also increases opportunities for better jobs, which can make young people feel more capable and ready to enter the workforce.

Another major factor that affects employability is work experience. Participants with little or no experience, especially those with less than one year of work, showed low confidence in their job readiness. However, employability scores rose steadily with more years of experience. Respondents with five or more years of experience had the highest level of confidence. This finding shows that real-world experience helps individuals gain useful knowledge, apply their skills, and become more comfortable in work settings. By working longer, young people build professional habits, learn from challenges, and understand how to succeed in different roles.

Gender also showed a significant relationship with employability, although the impact was smaller compared to age, education, and experience. Female participants had slightly higher average employability scores than male participants. This may be influenced by personal motivation, support systems, or social expectations. However, the difference was not as large as with other factors. The study suggests that gender does matter, but it is not the main factor that shapes how employable young people feel.

The findings reveal that work experience and age are the most important factors that influence employability among young retail workers in Yangon. Education also plays a strong role, while gender has a smaller but still meaningful effect. To improve employability, young people should be encouraged to gain more work experience and continue learning, either through formal education or through workplace training. Over time, as they grow older and more experienced, they are likely to feel more confident and ready to succeed in their careers, no matter their gender.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

This study found that work experience, age, education, and gender all influence how confident young people feel about their ability to get and succeed in retail jobs. Based on these findings, the followings contribution can help improve employability among young people in Yangon's retail sector.

First, practical work experience is the most important factor. Young people should be given opportunities to gain experience early through part-time jobs, internships, or apprenticeships. Even a short period of work can help them develop useful skills such as customer service, communication, time management, and problem-solving. Retail businesses can support this by offering short-term training, entry-level roles, or on-the-job learning programs. Second, education also plays a key role, especially when it focuses on job-related skills. Schools, training centers, and universities can include more practical lessons, such as teamwork, digital tools, and customer interaction. Short training programs or certificates can be helpful for those who do not attend university. Learning about sales, marketing, or basic computer skills can improve job chances and confidence.

Third, continuous learning is important. Even after getting a job, young workers should be encouraged to improve their skills. Today, many retail jobs require

digital knowledge, especially in online sales or customer tracking. Simple online courses, weekend classes, or in-store training can help workers grow. Those with more experience or education can aim for higher roles like team leaders or store supervisors. Fourth, age differences can bring both challenges and strengths. Younger workers are often quick to learn and good with new technology, while older workers may have more workplace experience and confidence. A mix of both can benefit retail teams. Older staff can guide younger ones, and younger workers can support with digital tasks and fresh ideas.

Fifth, while gender differences were not the strongest factor in this study, women showed slightly higher levels of employability. This suggests that all employees should be treated fairly. Retail workplaces should offer equal chances for learning, promotion, and career development. Respectful working environments and fair hiring processes help build confidence among both male and female workers. Finally, young job seekers should focus on building both education and work experience. Joining training programs, taking part-time jobs, and learning soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are all useful. Young women, in particular, may benefit from improving their digital skills, English language ability, and knowledge of retail systems to increase their chances in the job market.

By promoting learning, giving work experience, and creating fair opportunities, the retail sector in Yangon can help more young people feel confident and ready to succeed. This not only supports their personal growth but also helps businesses improve their services and grow stronger.

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# APPENDIX

## PART A

### Section 1: Demographic Information

**This section aims to gather demographic information from the respondents. Please answer the following questions:**

**1. Gender:**

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**2. Age:**

- 18-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years

**3. Highest Level of Education:**

- High School / Secondary Education
- Vocational Education or Training
- Undergraduate Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How many years of work experience did you have prior to this job?**

- 0-1 year
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- More than 5 years

**5. How many years of work experience do you have in this job?**

- 0-1 year
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- More than 5 years

## PART B

### Section 2: Employability

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). These questions are designed to assess both the subjective and objective factors that contribute employability.

6. **I look for jobs through friends, family, colleagues, or other personal connections.**
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5 (Strongly Agree)
7. **I can quickly adapt to different work environments and job roles.**
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5 (Strongly Agree)
8. **I feel confident that my overall skills and experience are enough to maintain employment in my current job or industry.**
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5 (Strongly Agree)
9. **I believe my personal skills (e.g., communication, leadership, time management) are sufficient to perform well in my current job.**
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5 (Strongly Agree)
10. **I possess the technical and digital skills required for my job, and I believe these are essential for my long-term employability.**
  - 1 (Strongly Disagree)
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5 (Strongly Agree)

11. **My company provides good opportunities for graduates.**

1 (Strongly Disagree)

2

3

4

5 (Strongly Agree)

12. **I am actively seeking opportunities for promotion within this job or industry.**

1 (Strongly Disagree)

2

3

4

5 (Strongly Agree)

\*\*\*\*\*

**THANK YOU**