

The role and prospects of private schools in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

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Key words : Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Matriculation examination, Pass rate, Private school

Abstract

The development of private schools at the basic education level in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was analyzed based on various statistics to determine the reasons for their development and the differences between states/regions. Private schools developed rapidly, especially in the high school program until 2019/20. The matriculation examination pass rate of private school students was almost double that of public school students, indicating that the expectation of students and parents was to prepare for the matriculation examination. After the military took power in 2021, the number of students in private schools declined the most in the high school program, however the same was true for public schools. As indicated by the decrease in the number of students taking the matriculation examinations, the main reason for this decline may be that there was less demand for students to go to university.

1. Introduction

Educational institutions can be broadly classified into public schools, which are established and operated by the national or local government, and private schools, which are established and operated by private organizations. In most countries, public schools are mainly free or charge minimal fees for both primary and middle school programs, but private schools also exist. Figures 1 and 2, prepared using the World Bank Data Bank based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, show that the proportion of private schools (the number of students in private schools as a percentage of the total number of students) at the primary and secondary school programs is the highest among lower-middle-income countries, of which Myanmar is one, compared with other income categories, and that the proportion of private schools is higher in the secondary than in the primary schools [1]. However, in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the proportion of private schools is very low in both primary and secondary school programs (the proportion of private schools in Myanmar in Figures 1 and 2 includes monastic schools).

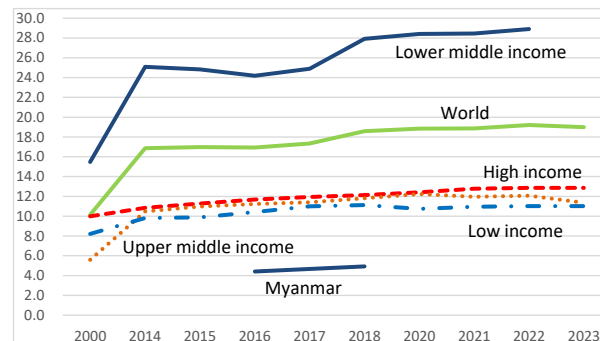


Figure 1: Private Schools as a Percentage of Students in Primary School Program

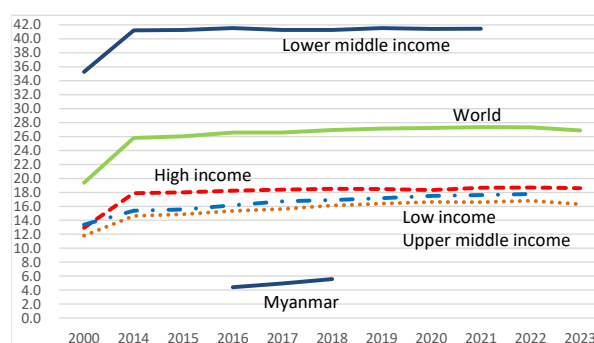


Figure 2: Private Schools as a Percentage of Students in Secondary School Program

The role of private schools in relation to public schools is generally said to be twofold: to compensate public schools (to make up for shortages) and to provide unique education not offered by public schools [2]. For example, it has been pointed out that developing countries often lack sufficient resources to provide education for all and rely on private schools to provide the necessary education. Private schools do not only mean economically high-priced schools, but also publicly subsidized schools, low-cost schools, and a variety of other private schools are replacing public schools [3][4][5][6].

While it is difficult to generalize about educational quality due to the diversity of private schools, private schools generally have higher educational quality. Reasons for this include teacher enthusiasm and effort, educational environment, and parental involvement [7][8][9][10][11][12]. On the other hand, it has been argued that even if private schools are effective and efficient, the limited number of students who have access to them increases the gap between those who can and cannot afford to attend private schools [13][14].

The actual situation of private schools in Myanmar is not well known due to its short history. It is necessary to analyze the current situation and consider future trends, keeping in mind the situation in other developing countries as described above.

2. Purpose of the Study

According to the Private School Registration Law, which was enacted in December 2011 following Myanmar's transition to a democratic government after more than 23 years of military rule, the establishment of private schools at the basic education level began in 2012/13. Since then, the number of private schools and the number of students has grown rapidly. However, their role was not specified in the NESP: National Education Strategic Plan 2021-2030 [15]. It was not even discussed at the National Education Conference [16], a three-day meeting of officials from 11 education-related ministries to discuss current national education issues. Private education was not mentioned at all and it was treated as if it did not exist as an educational policy issue.

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, there is no

shortage of public schools at the basic education level, and monastic schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture have also existed for a long time. Therefore, it is believed that the number of students has increased due to the public's appreciation of the unique education provided, but in actuality, it is believed to be in preparation for the Matriculation Examination, which is a university entrance qualification examination. Therefore, the actual situation is analyzed based on statistical data.

In addition, the political change with the military taking over the power in 2021 completely changed the educational situation in the country, and in 2023 the Private Education Law came into effect, which is expected to significantly change the role of private schools, hence the future of private schools is being discussed.

3. Research Methods

Basic education schools in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar can be classified into public schools and private schools under the DBE (Department of Basic Education, Ministry of Education), and monastic schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Monastic schools are run by foundations and receive government subsidies for teachers' salaries, so in a broad sense they can be classified as private schools, but in this paper, only the private schools under the Ministry of Education will be referred to as private schools, and monastic schools will be referred to when necessary. In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, there were also community-established schools called "affiliate schools" for which the government paid the teachers' salaries, but they have been gradually transformed into public schools, especially after the establishment of the democratic government in 2011, and few such schools remain today.

In terms of the total enrollment in basic education, private and monastic schools as well as public schools must be taken into account. Data for all public, private, and monastic schools were available in chronological order in the annual statistical reports until recently [17]. The number of students (enrollment) by state/region and by primary, middle, and high school programs but not by grade is available.

The DME (Department of Myanmar Examinations, Ministry of Education) is the department responsible for administering the matriculation examination, and various summary tables of the results are available [18][19]. A chronological review of these tables reveals several trends. DERPT (Department of Education Research, Planning and Training, Ministry of Education) also publishes detailed annual statistics on schools under the Ministry of Education [20]. Although these statistics are available for a limited number of years, many relevant variables were combined as much as possible for the most recent data, and analyzed for what might explain the pass rate of the matriculation examination, including the private school variable.

4. Analysis Results

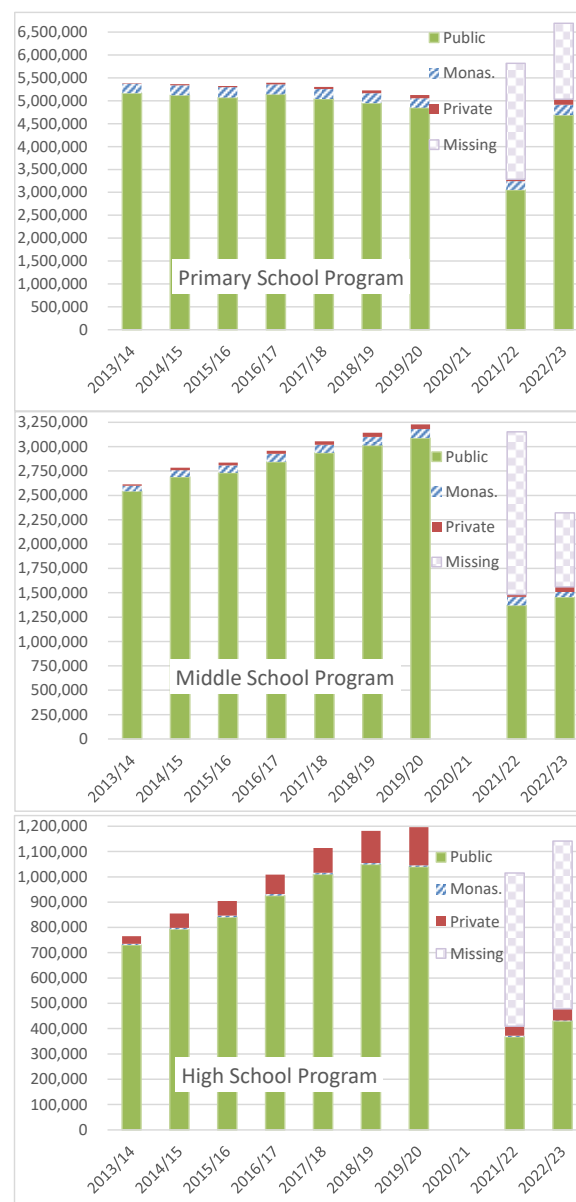
4.1 Expansion of Private Schools at the Basic Education Level before the Political Change

Figure 3 shows the number of students in the basic education level by establishment since 2013/14 when time series data for private schools became available. The primary school program consists of KG and Grades 1-5, the middle school program consists of Grades 6-9, and the high school program consists of Grades 10-11 (Grade 12 was added in 2023/24). The number of private school students increased rapidly in the high school program: as of 2019/20, the national average percentage of private school students was 1.41% in the primary school program, 1.48% in the middle school program, and 12.56% in the high school program.

The level of education at the primary school program in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar was not low compared to other ASEAN countries [21]. In addition, the disparity between schools seemed to be relatively small, but it is difficult for private schools to provide education that would make a difference to public schools in this context. This may be similar to the current situation in Japan (1.32% in primary schools and 7.79% in middle schools in fiscal 2023) [22].

However, at the high school program, the percentage was already 12.56%. This expansion in a short period of time, especially in the high school program, is astounding. Monastic schools, in contrast, had 4.04% in the primary school program, 2.85% in the middle school program, and 0.47% in the high school program.

There are two monastic schools in Mandalay Region in the high school program. In terms of student demographics, the number of boys and girls is nearly equal, but in 2019/20, the percentage of regular students who were not novices or nuns was 76.83% for boys and 98.28% for girls, thus the monastic schools were not specific to monastic practice even in the high school program.



Note: Missing indicates the difference from the counterfactual situation that would have been obtained in the absence of the political change.

Figure 3: Number of Students by Establishment and School Program

4.2 Advantages of Private Schools in the Matriculation Examination Pass Results

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, if a student passes the matriculation examination, he/she is certified as having completed the high school program and is eligible to apply to a university. Of course, due to the specialization and capacity of the university, whether a student is admitted to the university of his/her choice depends on the subjects taken and examination scores. However, as of the March 2020 examination, the high school completion certification was no longer based on the matriculation examination, but rather on the end-of-year examination of each high school program, thus limiting its role to that of a university entrance qualification examination. Since the transition to a democratic government in 2011, the national average pass rate remained stable in the low 30% range until the 2020 examination.

Grade 11 (Grade 12 from 2023/24) was the highest grade in basic education before higher education until 2022/23. The basic education school year runs from June to March of the following year, and the matriculation examination is held in March. The main candidates are students enrolled in grade 11. If a student passes the matriculation examination, he/she completes the high school program, but if a student fails the examination, he/she may stay in school for another year without finishing the program. Thus, grade 11 includes a large number of retained students, most of whom have not passed the matriculation examination. They are classified as "internal examinees" because they are enrolled in the high school program.

Students who fail the matriculation examination and leave school, or students who do not take the examination but leave school, may take the matriculation examination in the following year. Under the current rule, completion of Grade 10 is a prerequisite for taking the examination, and it is possible for a student to complete Grade 10, leave school, and take the examination in the following school year. These students are classified as "external examinees" because they are not enrolled in a regular basic education school at the time of the examination.

The DME publishes the number of examinees and successful examinees for both internal and external

examinees by state/region. The difference between the DME figures for internal examinees and the DERPT figures for examinees, who took and passed the examination, can be seen as the number of examinees who took and passed the examination in monastic and private schools. When comparing figures from different data sources, even if there are minor errors due to differences in the base dates when the statistics were taken, any major errors are unlikely. Due to limitations in the original statistical classification, it is not possible to separate monastic schools and private schools in the high school program, but since there are only two monastic schools in Mandalay Region, it is possible to determine the pass rate of private schools outside this region.

Table 1 calculates the various numbers based on examinees in March 2018, when detailed data was available from different sources. According to the DERPT data [20], the national pass rate was 25.63%. In contrast, according to DME data, the pass rate for internal examinees was 28.91%. The difference is the pass rates for monastic and private schools were included in the DME figures. The percentage of monastic and private school Grade 11 students out of all Grade 11 students was 13.05%, but their pass rate was 49.90%, which was much higher than public schools under the DME.

In Table 1, schools under the Ministry of Education are divided into two groups: high school programs affiliated with the Yangon University of Education and Sagaing University of Education (practicing school programs), and other general high school programs. The pass rate for the affiliated high school programs was extremely high at 80.07%, and the pass rate for the general high school programs, excluding this portion, was calculated to be 25.55%. According to the analysis of public schools under the Ministry of Education, Mon State had the highest pass rate, followed by Yangon Region, but in terms of the pass rate of internal examinees, the order was Yangon Region, Mandalay Region, and Mon State. This is because Mandalay Region and Yangon Region had a higher percentage of monastic/private school students, who generally had higher pass rates. The highest pass rate of private school students was in Ayeyarwady Region. However, the

Table 1: Breakdown of the Matriculation Examination Passed (2018)

State/region	Pass Rate % DBE Schools Exclu. Practicing Schools	Pass Rate % DBE Schools Inclu. Practicing Schools	Pass Rate % Internal Students	Pass Rate % Monastic & Private Schools	% of G11 Monastic & Private Schools	# of G11 Students Monastic Schools	# of G11 Students Private Schools
Kachin	21.95		24.36	43.89	10.93		2,191
Kayar	20.56		20.56		0.00		0
Kayin	24.97		25.29	36.28	2.98		365
Chin	10.57		10.67	19.67	1.57		89
Sagaing	26.33	26.44	29.90	50.49	13.17		8,349
Tanintharyi	24.16		26.19	55.82	6.15		764
Bago_East	22.49		24.50	46.85	7.74		2,386
Bago_West	26.08		27.91	45.02	9.49		1,619
Mon	34.09		34.64	52.86	2.59		533
Magway	24.65		26.86	44.44	11.13		5,214
Mandalay	25.34		34.77	53.18	34.15	7,693	16,429
Nay Pyi Taw	21.73		29.52	54.37	21.28		2,793
Rakhine	17.55		18.09	28.53	4.72		1,079
Yangon	32.08	32.49	35.39	51.87	15.42		11,205
Shan_South	23.85		25.73	38.77	11.42		2,497
Shan_North	25.35		28.92	46.73	15.95		1,768
Shan_East	10.33		13.07	41.94	8.65		256
Ayeyarwady	25.56		26.48	59.41	2.65		1,674
Practicing schools	80.07						
Union	25.63		28.91	49.90	13.05	7,693	59,211
	25.55	Exclu. Practicing schools					

percentage of private school students in Grade 11 in Ayeyarwady Region was extremely low at 2.65%. In Ayeyarwady Region, private school enrollment was still considered to be limited to the highly educated and affluent students.

In Mandalay Region, the ratio of monastic/private school students to Grade 11 students was extremely high at 34.15%. In monastic schools alone, there were 7,693 students enrolled in two schools. In March 2017, the number of Grade 10 students in monastic schools was 4,151, a difference of 3,542 students. Even if some retention students were included, it is understandable that many Grade 10 students from schools nationwide under the Ministry of Education transferred to Grade 11 in monastic schools in the 2018 school year. The fact that monastic schools are free and have dormitories suggests that they may attract less affluent but more talented students from across the country.

Figure 4 shows the transition rate between grades (the number of students in a grade divided by the number of students in the grade one year below in the previous year) based on national private school enrollment by grade. When a similar calculation is made based on basic education school enrollments nationwide, the transition rates are generally less than 1.0. This is because there are dropouts every year. However, when only private schools are calculated, the values exceeded 1.0 in all grades, as shown in Figure 4, which indicated that there were many students transferring from public schools to private schools in each grade. Obviously, the transition rate was higher where the school program changes, from middle school program to high school program (Grade 9 to Grade 10) at more than 3.0 and from primary school program to middle school program (Grade 5 to Grade 6) at more than 1.7. But in the last grade of the school program, from Grade 10 to Grade 11,

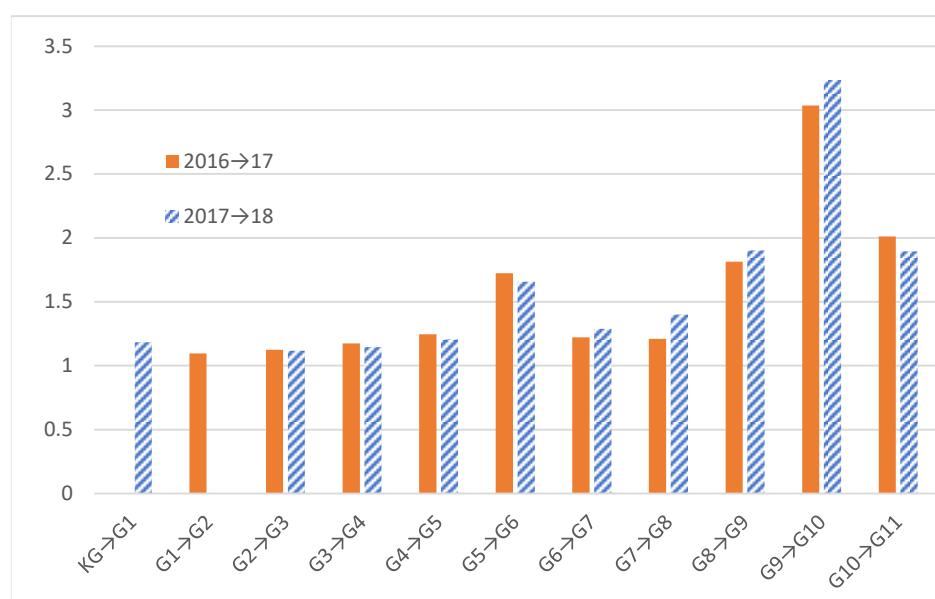


Figure 4: Grade to Grade Transition Rate for Private School Students (Nationwide)

the rate was more than 1.9 and from Grade 8 to Grade 9, the rate was more than 1.8, indicating that many students were trying to improve their academic scores after one year of study at private schools. Studying in Grade 11 is necessary to raise the matriculation examination scores, whereas studying in Grade 9 is important for entering a student's high school of choice and selecting electives to be studied in the high school program. Table 1 also shows that private schools have a clear advantage in the matriculation examination. Moreover, students can enter private schools at any grade level. Hence private schools, especially high school programs, were expanding rapidly. The fact that many private schools have boarding facilities also helps this trend.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of all Grade 11 students in monastic/private schools by state/region. Statistics for private schools were only available from 2013/14, so figures are shown from March 2014 to 2020. The original number of Grade 11 students in private schools was only available for 2016, 2017, and 2018, but the total number of students in the high school program (Grade 10 and Grade 11) was available for all of the years [17]. Therefore, the percentage of private Grade 11 students in 2014 and 2015 was estimated based on the 2016 information, and the percentage of

private Grade 11 students in 2019 and 2020 was estimated based on the 2018 information by state/region, assuming that the ratio of Grade 10 to Grade 11 remained the same. As there were no private schools in Kayah State in the reference year, the estimates were based on the national average.

In March 2014, 6.09% of Grade 11 students were monastic/private school students, but this figure increased to 17.07% in 2020; and the highest in 2020 was in Mandalay Region, 37.30%, followed by Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, 36.49%, while the lowest was in Ayeyarwady Region, 2.88%, followed by Kayin State, 3.31%. The disparities between states/regions were extremely wide. The pass rate for the matriculation examination varies greatly across states/regions, but this difference can be explained to some extent by differences in the weight of monastic/private schools. Therefore, the inclusion of a variable indicating the percentage of students enrolled in monastic/private schools, as well as information on the examination year and the state/region, was considered as variables to explain the matriculation examination pass rate.

Since external examinees do not have information on which high school they studied at, the analysis was limited to internal examinees. For comparison, the model without the variable indicating the monastic/

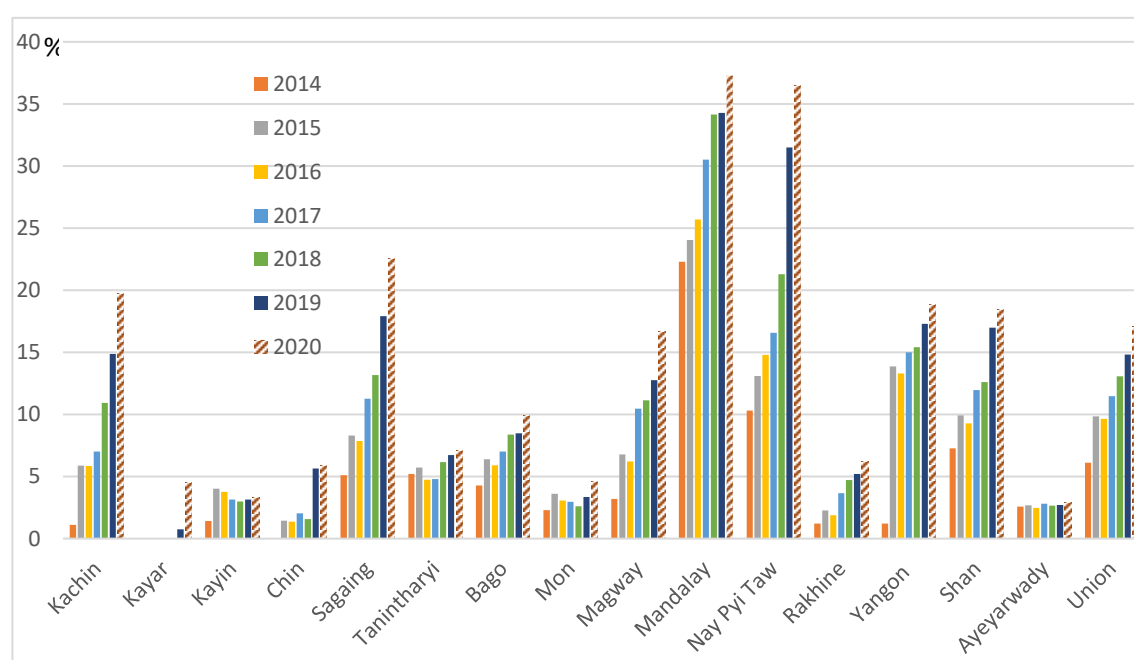


Figure 5: Monastic/Private School Students as a Percentage of Grade 11 Students by State/Region

private school student ratio was calculated first. Passing the matriculation examination is defined as obtaining a score of 40 or higher on a 100-point scale in each of the six subjects attempted. Although the level of difficulty of the matriculation examinations was adjusted to some extent each year, the level of difficulty naturally varied to some degree from year to year. Different states/regions have different socio-economic wealth and educational conditions, as well as different values regarding education that may influence the pass rate. Therefore, a regression analysis was conducted using the pass rate by state/region as the explained variable and year, and state/region as the explanatory variables from 2013 to 2020, the period for which data were available. Year and state/region were dummy variables. In this case, it was necessary to define the base year and state/region for the calculation (the regression coefficient is set at 0), but it is easier to understand if the obtained regression coefficient is designed to show the difference from the average value. The average pass rate for all data from 2013 to 2020 was calculated. For 2018 by year and Tanintharyi Region by state/region, it was closest to the overall average. Therefore, 2018 for the year and Tanintharyi Region for the state/region were used as the reference for the calculation. The results are

shown on the right side of Table 2. Since the number of examinees varied widely by state/region, in the analysis the coefficients were estimated using analytical weights based on the number of examinees in a state/region in order to see the national condition rather than an average situation per state/region.

As can be seen in the right columns in Table 2, the overall pass rate was 27.35 percent (constant value) in Tanintharyi Region in 2018, the base year, and varied by state/region. For example, it was 9.76 percentage points higher in Mon State, 16.43 percentage points less in Chin State, and a 26.19 percentage points difference for the state/region as a whole. The annual variation can be calculated as 6.93 percentage points more in 2015, 1.74 percentage points less in 2019 compared to 2018, and an 8.67 percentage point difference for the year as a whole. The differences in pass rates by state/region were significantly higher than Tanintharyi Region in Mon State and Mandalay Region, and smaller in Chin State, Rakhine State, and Kayah State. The range differs between the left and right figures according to the year, with the left figures being higher, which may indicate the time-series effect of a higher proportion of private school students nationwide with each passing year.

The left side of Table 2 shows the results of the

Table 2: Analysis Results Explaining the Matriculation Examination Pass Rate

Pass rate (Internal)	Coef.	S. E.	t	Range	Coef.	S. E.	t	Range
Private/Monastic_Rate	0.42	0.13	3.10 **					
Year 2014	6.45	1.69	3.81 **		3.36	1.44	2.34 **	
Year 2015	8.37	1.41	5.93 **		6.93	1.40	4.95 **	
Year 2016	1.40	1.38	1.01		-0.08	1.36	-0.06	
Year 2017	2.32	1.27	1.82	10.90	1.76	1.33	1.33	8.67
Year 2018	0.00	-	-		0.00	-	-	
Year 2019	-2.54	1.22	-2.08 *		-1.74	1.25	-1.39	
Year 2020	-2.47	1.31	-1.89		-0.70	1.24	-0.57	
Kachin	-5.07	2.85	-1.78		-3.16	2.92	-1.08	
Kayah	-2.09	4.25	-0.49		-4.19	4.41	-0.95	
Kayin	-1.23	3.16	-0.39		-2.38	3.30	-0.72	
Chin	-15.30	3.92	-3.90 **		-16.43	4.10	-4.01 **	
Sagaing	-0.84	2.62	-0.32		2.37	2.53	0.94	
Tanintharyi	0.00	-	-		0.00	-	-	
Bago	-2.49	2.49	-1.00		-1.80	2.60	-0.69	
Mon	10.83	2.82	3.84 **	26.13	9.76	2.94	3.32 **	26.19
Magwe	-1.95	2.55	-0.76		-0.02	2.60	-0.01	
Mandalay	-3.79	4.12	-0.92		6.65	2.50	2.66 **	
Nay Pyi Taw	-6.26	3.81	-1.64		0.73	3.23	0.23	
Rakhaine	-8.13	2.76	-2.95 **		-8.89	2.88	-3.08 **	
Yangon	2.68	2.63	1.02		6.22	2.49	2.50 *	
Shan	-5.28	2.73	-1.93		-2.24	2.68	-0.84	
Ayeyarwady	2.70	2.44	1.11		1.41	2.53	0.56	
Constant	24.64	2.49	9.87 **		27.35	2.45	11.15 **	

Number of obs. = 105

F(21, 83) = 12.12

Adj R-squared = 0.6919

Number of obs. = 105

F(20, 84) = 11.10

Adj R-squared = 0.6602

regression analysis including the ratio of monastic/private school students as the explanatory variable and the internal student pass rate as the explained variable. The coefficient of the monastic/private school student ratio was 0.42, which means that a 1 percentage point increase in the monastic/private school student ratio can be expected the increase of the pass rate of state/region by 0.42 percentage points. For example, in 2020, the percentage of monastic/private school students in Mandalay Region was 37.30%, hence the effect of the monastic/private school student ratio was 15.67 percentage points.

It is noteworthy that some states/regions had significantly different coefficients between the right and left columns. The Mandalay Region and Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory had relatively much smaller coefficients in the left column compared to those in the right column. The high pass rate as a state/region was mainly due to

the high ratio of monastic/private school students, and to control this, the coefficient on the left side was expected to be smaller.

In contrast, the coefficient on the left side was larger for Mon State. Figure 5 also shows that Mon State had a lower ratio of monastic/private school students, but other factors can be seen to have contributed significantly to the pass rate. Although the coefficient on the left side was smaller than the coefficient on the right side for Yangon Region, the difference was not as large for Mandalay Region and Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory. Although the high pass rate in Yangon Region was largely due to the ratio of monastic/private school students, it can be inferred that other factors such as SES, may also contribute significantly to the high pass rate.

Figure 6 shows the socio-economic indicators for the state/region. It shows the population density (2019), the urban population as a percentage of the total population

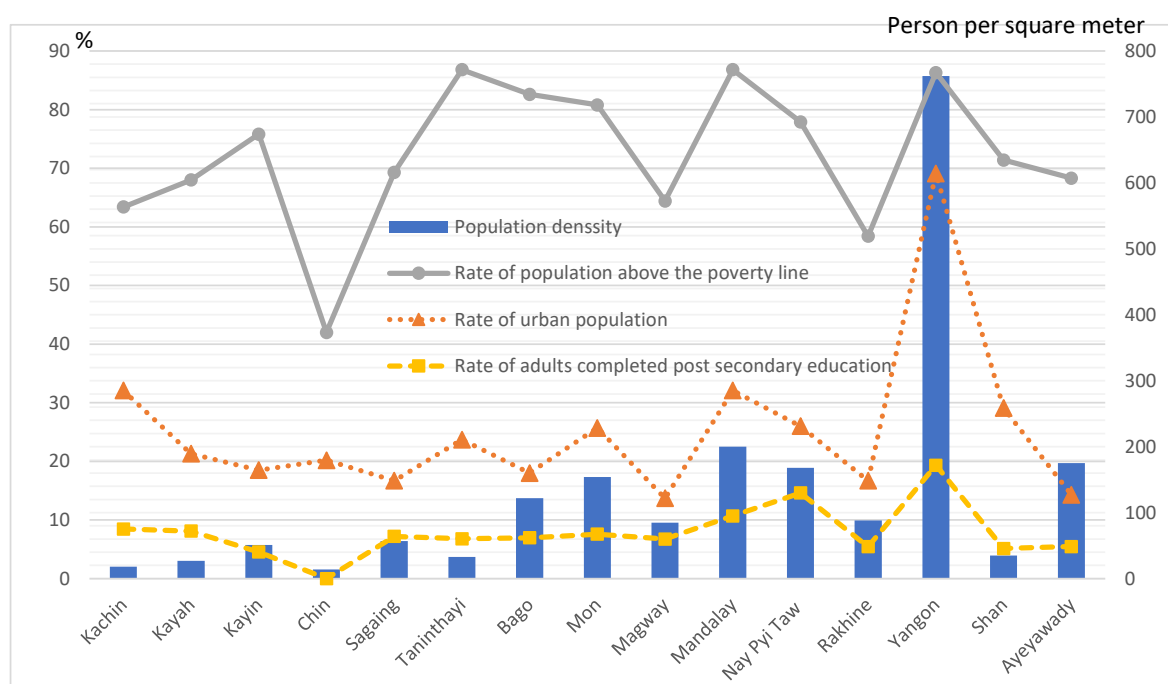


Figure 6: Socio-economic Indicators for States/Regions

(2019), the percentage of the population above the international poverty line (1,590 kyats per adult equivalent per day) (2017), and the percentage of the population over the age of 25 with post-secondary education or training (2014). As these indicators were highly correlated with each other and figures were not available for every year, they were not added to the variables in Table 2 for analysis, but they were useful in considering the characteristics of each state/region. Of the four indicators, the one that correlated most strongly with the pass rate of internal examinees was the percentage above the international poverty line, which was representative of the socio-economic situation in the state/region.

Although Mon State had a low percentage of students in monastic/private schools, various socio-economic indicators were high. There is also a non-profit organization called the Mon National Education Committee that works to improve education in the state. During the British colonial period, Mon State was an early colony, and many mission schools were established. The mission schools were later taken over by the country and converted into public schools, but the tradition of mission schools remains.

4.3 Private Schools after the Political Change

Figure 3 shows the number of students by establishment since the political change. In 2020/21, schools were closed due to Covid-19, so there were no new registered students. This meant that there were twice as many new students who were enrolled in 2021/22, which had an impact on the annual progression of students. Meanwhile, school system reforms began in 2016/17. In 2016/17, the schooling age was changed, with 5-year-olds in the new KG program and 6-year-olds in the old Grade 2 program, resulting in Grade 1 being unaccounted for. Since then, the primary school program has been missing one grade at a time until 2021/22. From 2022/23, the primary school program was no longer missing a grade, but the middle school program started missing a grade, and from 2023/24, a new Grade 12 was established in the high school program. Thus, the education system reform has had such a complex impact on the fluctuations in the number of students that it would be incorrect to assess the number of students after the 2021/22 school year without considering the counterfactual situation that would have occurred if there had been no political change [23].

In 2021/22, the number of students enrolled in the basic education level was much lower due to major social changes caused by COVID-19 and the political change. In 2022/23, however, there was a significant rebound in enrollment in both the primary and middle school programs. It is clear that the number of students in public schools was greatly affected by the CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement) and has decreased, but there were indications that even private schools, which are essentially unrelated to the CDM, have also been affected by social unrest.

Figure 7 shows the actual number of private school students that changed in 2021/22 and 2022/23 compared to 2019/20 by state/region. Compared to 2019/20, the number of private schools in the primary, middle and high school programs increased nationally in both 2021/22 and 2022/23. However, due to changes in the education system, it should be noted that in the primary school program there were five actual grades in 2019/20, while in 2021/22 there were five actual grades, but the number of KG students doubled in real terms, and in 2022/23 there were six actual grades, and the number of Grade 1 students doubled in real terms. Similarly, in the middle school program, there were four actual grades in 2019/20, but there were three actual grades in 2022/23.

In the primary school program, the number of students decreased in 2021/22 in most states/regions, especially in Yangon Region and Mandalay Region, while the number of students increased in 2022/23 in most states/regions, especially in Yangon Region and Mandalay Region. Enrollment declined in 2021/22 due to the unrest, but by 2022/23, it was expected that students who traditionally attended public schools moved to safer private schools.

A similar trend can be observed in the middle school program, but the increase was not as large as in the primary school program. However, the situation was quite different for the high school program, which did

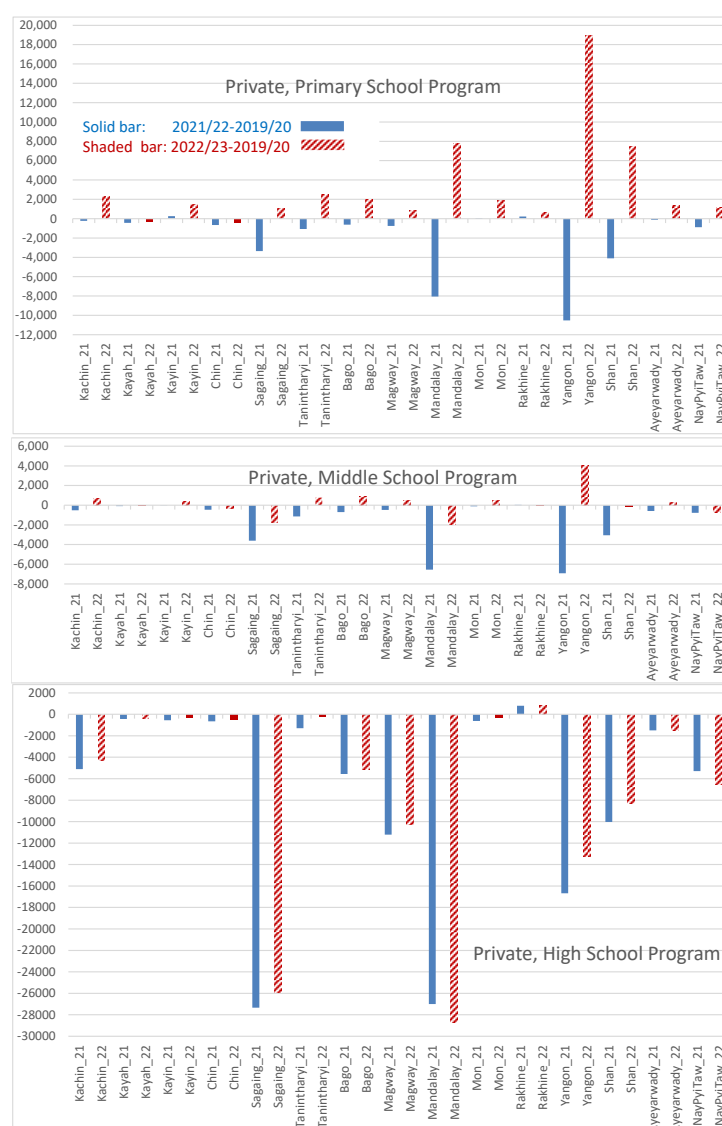


Figure 7: Change in the Number of Private School Students after the Political Change (Actual Numbers)

not show any increase in 2022/23 in any state/region of the country. The reason for the large number of students enrolled in private schools in the high school program was that many of them passed the matriculation examination and went on to universities, but it is believed that the decline in the number of students going to universities may have influenced the decline in the number of students in the high school program.

For comparison, Figure 8 shows a similar trend in enrollment for monastic schools. Compared to 2019/20, the number of monastic schools in primary and middle schools has decreased, albeit slightly, nationally in both 2021/22 and 2022/23. The trend was similar to that of

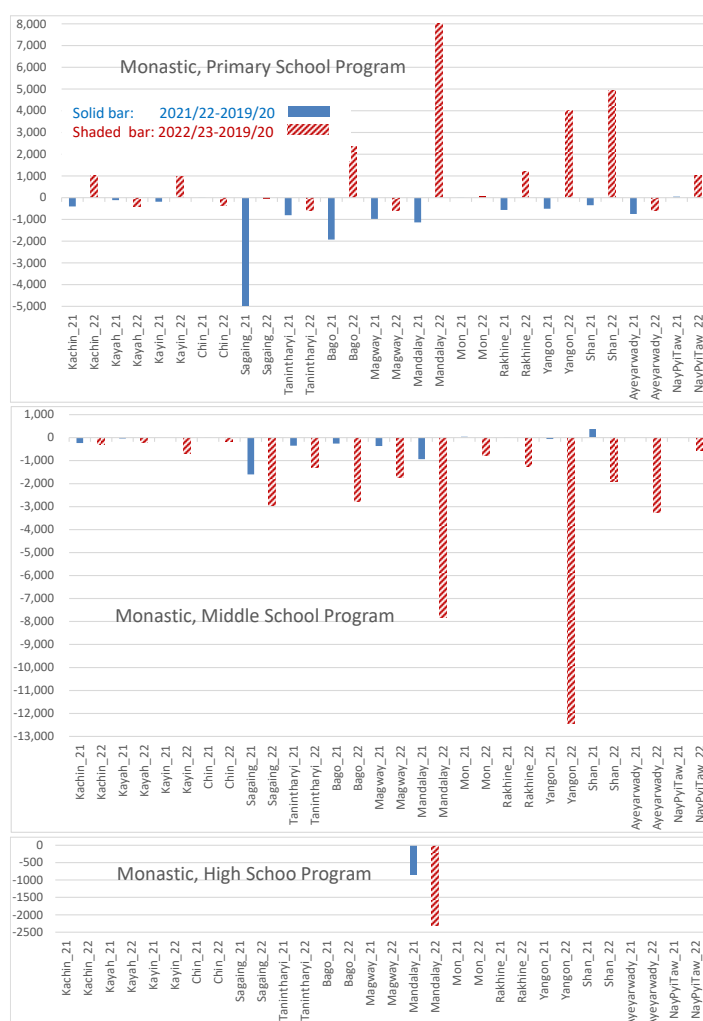


Figure 8: Change in the Number of Monastic School Students after the Political Change (Actual Numbers)

private schools, but the number of students in the middle school program continued to decline, as did the number of students in the high school program. The only alternative to public schools was the primary school program.

Changes in private school enrollment should be viewed not only in absolute terms, but also as a percentage of the total enrollment. Figure 9 plots the percentage of private school enrollment by school program in 2019/20, 2021/22, and 2022/23 by state/region in the same figure. If the percentage in 2021/22 or 2022/23 is the same as in 2019/20, it will be plotted on the diagonal. In the primary school program, 2021/22 was plotted near the diagonal, indicating that the decline in private school enrollment occurred at the

same rate as the overall decline, but by 2022/23 recovery in private school enrollment exceeded the extent in overall recovery. The same was true for the middle school program. However, for the high school program, there was variation across states/regions, but nationally, the recovery could not be ascertained as being due to private schools.

5. Conclusion and Implications

According to the Private School Registration Law enacted in December 2011 when Myanmar transitioned to a democratic government after more than 23 years of military rule, the establishment of private schools at the basic education level began in 2012/13, and the number of such schools and students has increased rapidly. However, the increase in the number of students was mainly seen in the high school program, especially in the final grade, Grade 11, where the share of private schools increased to a national average of 17% in 2020. The regional distribution of these students varied widely across states/regions, with 37% in Mandalay Region and 36% in Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, and 3% in Ayeyarwady Region and Kayin State, and concentrated in specific states/regions.

According to the 2018 statistics, the pass rate of internal examinees was 29%, while the pass rate of examinees in schools under the Ministry of Education was 26% (80% for high school programs affiliated with the Universities of Education), and the pass rate of examinees in monastic/private schools was estimated at 50%. The difference between the pass rate of all internal examinees and that of public school examinees seemed to be strongly correlated with the percentage of students in monastic/private schools.

Indeed, the role of private schools was to prepare students for the matriculation examination, which contributed to an increase in the matriculation pass rate in the state/region. The analysis results in the control for a variety of relevant variables show that a 1 percentage point rise in the share of private school students increased the pass rate of state/region by 0.42 percentage points.

Of course, it is doubtful that as the percentage of monastic/private school students increases, the pass rate will also increase accordingly. Certainly, it is understandable that private schools do contribute to the improvement of academic performance, especially in terms of preparing for the matriculation examination. At the same time, however, it may also have the effect of drawing high-achieving, affluent students away from public schools, and if the percentage of students in private schools increases, the pass rate in the public schools where they come from may decrease, and the overall pass rate may remain at a certain level.

Muta (2024) identified the importance of home language, academically appropriate instruction, teacher training, and orderly school management as factors influencing the academic achievement of Grade 5 students through a secondary analysis of the 2019 SEA-PLM. Private school enrollment is an important factor in explaining the matriculation pass rate by state/region. However, it still does not fully explain the pass rate in these states and regions. Mon State and Ayeyarwady Region have fewer private schools, but their pass rates were higher each year. While macro-quantitative analysis alone cannot determine why this is the case, many have pointed to a high level of parental and community involvement in education and various curricular innovations that are not represented in the data as factors here. It is hoped that these factors can be studied and clarified separately using a qualitative method different from the one used in this study, and that by encouraging similar efforts in other states/regions, the educational effectiveness of the country as a whole can be improved.

Due to the political and economic turmoil caused by the political change in 2021, the number of private school students increased in the primary school program but decreased in the high school program. The Private School Registration Law, which governs the establishment of private schools, was amended into the Private Education Law in May 2023, which increased government control and required all private schools to re-register with the new Registration Body within one year. The new registration will be valid for 5 years once re-registration is approved.

In 2024, the private university program also was

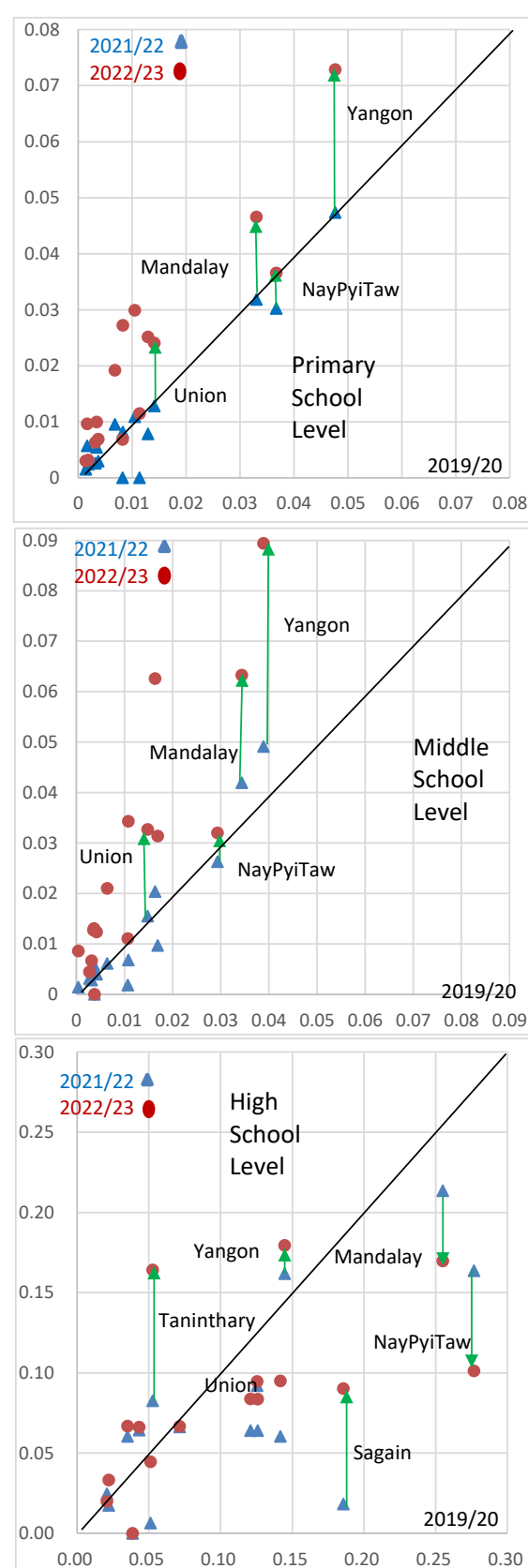


Figure 9: Relative Change in Private School Enrollment (%) After the Political Change

approved. Passing the matriculation examination qualifies a student for admission to a university, but due to capacity constraints at universities, only half or even 40% of students were admitted to regular campus-based universities, depending on the year [24]. The remainder go on to distance learning programs. Capacity is not a factor in distance education. Therefore, it is possible for newly accredited private universities to fill the capacity gap in the public sector, where the demand for private universities lies.

According to CSO [17], the university enrollment in 2022/23 can be calculated to have decreased to 52% for all universities including distance education and 43% for campus-based universities alone compared to 2019/20. The decline in the number of students in private high school programs was largely due to the decline in the number of students who wanted to go to university. This is because there was no need to enter a private high school program if a student did not want to go to university. As society settles down and more students go to university, it is likely that the number of students going to private high school programs will increase once again.

Since admission to private universities also requires passing the matriculation examination, the superiority of private schools is not expected to be replaced; however, since it is expensive to send students to private schools, the future economic situation will have a significant impact on their prospects. There is also a significant possibility that the number of private schools will not increase as much as it has in the past because of fears that strong restrictions will be placed on the establishment; and the operation of private schools will be severely restricted. These remaining issues will be the subject of future analysis.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported in part by the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) (General) Grant Number 21K02299/24K05748, with support from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The author takes full responsibility for the results of the study, and the results do not reflect the opinion of the Government of Japan or the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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Abstract (Japanese)

ミャンマー連邦共和国の基礎教育段階における私立学校の発展の実情について、各種統計を元にその発展の理由、州/管区間の違いについて分析した。私立学校は特に高校課程段階で急速に発展したが、私立学校生徒のマトリキュレーション試験合格率は公立学校の倍近くあり、生徒や親の期待はマトリキュレーション試験準備にあったと考えられる。2021年の軍事クーデター後、公立学校の児童生徒数は高校段階で最も減少したが、私立学校も同様の傾向であった。マトリキュレーション試験受験者の減少がその大きな要因と考えられる。

Key words (Japanese) : ミャンマー連邦共和国, マトリキュレーション試験, 合格率, 私立学校

(Received February 13, 2025; accepted April 16, 2025)

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Profile

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After two years of research studies at Stanford University and Harvard University, he joined Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) in 1986. At TIT, he conducted research on education development and ODA evaluation, and worked on numerous development projects and evaluations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency. These included Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.

Since retiring from the Tokyo Institute of Technology in 2012, he has worked as a Principal Consultant at the Evaluation Department, International Development Center of Japan, Inc. From 2013 to 2023, he served as a policy advisor to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as an expert dispatched by JICA, which contributed greatly to the improvement of education policy in Myanmar. Since then, he has continued his research on education in Myanmar.

Experienced positions: Executive Vice President for Finance, TIT; Dean, Graduate School of Decision Science and Technology, TIT; Council member, Graduate School of Decision Science and Technology, TIT; President, Japan Evaluation Society; President, International Development Center of Japan; President, Asian Center of Japan.