



# DISCUSSION PAPER | Series No. DP 2026-09

Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization  
Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology  
(SEAMEO INNOTECH)

## **Teacher Motivation for Staying in the Profession: Insights from Myanmar**

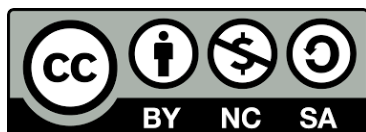
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Katherine P. Torralba, Hiyas S. Clamor-Torneo,  
Sherlyne A. Almonte-Acosta, PhD, Lee Thunder T. Bernasor,  
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Published by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization  
Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH)  
Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines  
Contact: [info@seameo-innotech.org](mailto:info@seameo-innotech.org)

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**Recommended citation:**

Torralba, K.P., Clamor-Torneo, H.S., Almonte-Acosta, S.A., Bernasor, L.T.T., & Umali, E.G. (2026). *Teacher Motivation for staying in the profession: Insights from Myanmar*. SEAMEO INNOTECH

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## Acknowledgements

SEAMEO INNOTECH is deeply grateful for the collaboration of the Ministry of Education in Myanmar for this research project. We truly appreciate the support of Dr. May San Yee, who served as the country representative for Myanmar. Without her valuable contributions, this research would not have been made possible.

SEAMEO INNOTECH wishes to express appreciation for the technical expertise shared by Dr. Lizamarie Campoamor-Olegario, Dr. Madeleine Co, and Dr. J. Aleta R. Villanueva, who served as Content Experts for this project. We are also grateful to Dr. Ronaldo A. Manalo for developing the predictive models for the study.

This research project also benefited from the leadership of Majah Leah V. Ravago, Ph.D. (INNOTECH Centre Director), Prof. Leonor Magtolis Briones (former Centre Director) and the guidance and supervision of Dr. Diosdado M. San Antonio (former Manager of the Educational Research and Innovation Office). Special thanks are also extended to the project team composed of Katherine P. Torralba, Lee Thunder T. Bernasor, Erlene G. Umali, Jocelyn C. David and Hiyas S. Clamor-Torneo, under the lead of Dr. Sherlyne A. Almonte-Acosta, Senior Specialist and Head of the Educational Research Unit.

## Abstract

Examining teacher motivation is critical for the Ministry of Education of Myanmar to ensure the sustainability of its teaching workforce. This research explored the motivational factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching profession. An online survey questionnaire was administered in Myanmar and collected responses from 206 teachers. Descriptive statistics highlighted their views on motivational factors based on the *Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession*, while inferential analysis revealed associations between length of teaching and total grade levels taught with motivation to stay. A predictive model was also developed, unveiling a combination of motivational factors and demographic profiles that influence teachers' decisions to stay. Policy recommendations were proposed as a result of the study.

## I. Introduction

In the 2022–2023 academic year, Myanmar has 324,944 teachers teaching in public primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools and 14,320 in private schools. Among public school teachers, 254,424 are assigned to rural areas, while 70,520 teach in urban schools (Yee, 2023). As of the same academic year, teachers in upper secondary schools handle fewer students (1:13 teacher–student ratio) compared to lower and primary school teachers (1:15 and 1:25, respectively).

Teachers in Myanmar are respected and valued as one of the five cultural gems in society. They are considered leaders in the community, both as educators and as contributors to regional and state development activities. They are closely linked to being a monk as they teach with goodwill, “natural bent,” and self–sacrifice (Yee, 2023b).

Despite the profession's high regard, Myanmar still faces teacher shortages. Given their key role in students' education, it is important to understand their motivation to stay in the profession.

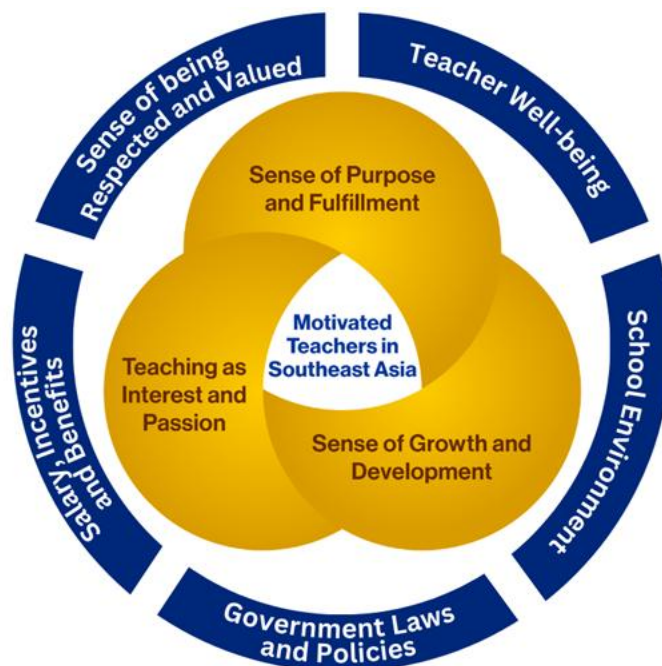
Multiple definitions of motivation have been presented by various authors. Dörnyei (2001, as cited in Syamananda, 2017) perceives it as the “driving force behind all actions, influencing “why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it” (p.121). Alternatively, Han and Ying (2016) describe it as “reasons that emanate from individuals' intrinsic values to choose to teach and sustain teaching... influenced by a number of contextual factors” (p.3). Furthermore, Richardson (2014, as cited in Mangaleswarasharma, 2017) depicts motivation as “internal and external factors that stimulate desire or energy in teaching to be continuously interested and committed to make their best effort to support students' learning goals” (p.2).

Overall, the various definitions present an interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic drivers influencing teachers’ decisions to stay.

Motivation, in the context of this research, pertains to factors that influence teachers to remain in the profession. Inspired by Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, the study utilizes the Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession, which highlights core and contributing factors (Umali et al., 2024). Core factors are primary drivers that pull teachers to stay on; these include a sense of purpose and fulfillment, teaching as interest and passion, and a sense of growth and development. On the other hand, contributing factors are those that support the core factors, including a sense of being respected and valued, teacher well-being, school environment, salary, incentives and benefits, and government laws and policies (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession*



Several authors examined teacher motivation in Myanmar. For instance, a couple of studies were done in private high schools in the country. Htun (2025) investigated the effect of motivational factors on job satisfaction and teacher performance in Mahlaing Township. Factors such as working conditions, workplace relationships, and recognition affect job satisfaction, which in turn influences teacher performance. Likewise, looking into the experiences of two private schools in Mandalay, Aung (2025) discovered that both intrinsic factors, such as achievement, personal development and responsibility, and extrinsic aspects, particularly salary and benefit and relationships with colleagues, have effects on teacher performance. Similarly, Aye (2023) also found significant positive associations between motivational and hygiene factors. Motivational factors examined include achievement, recognition, progress and the work itself while hygiene factors comprised of working environment, salary, job security and interpersonal relationships. Lastly, Lwin (2018) revealed that teachers of Yangon University of Economics were motivated by recognition and community respect; both of which were considered intrinsic factors. Extrinsic drivers, salary in particular, also influence their motivation. The study unveiled that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors are positively associated with teacher performance.

Recognizing the importance of motivation in sustaining teachers, the Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) collaborated with the Ministry of Education of Myanmar on the Regional Teacher Motivation Study. The research aims to: 1) determine the relationship among the different factors that motivate teachers to stay in the teaching profession; 2) develop a per-country framework for the motivations of teachers in Southeast Asia to stay in the profession; and 3) provide policy recommendations.

The study employed a quantitative approach and utilized a survey questionnaire developed from the Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession (Umali et al., 2024) and other literature. The survey was validated by content experts and country representatives and was translated into local languages, as necessary. Data were collected via SurveyMonkey, gathering a total of 206 valid responses (see Table 1 for the survey respondents' profiles). Data were then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, hierarchical regression analysis was performed to develop predictive models for the countries.

**Table 1**
*Profile of Survey Respondents in Myanmar*

	Count	Percent
<b>Age in years</b>		
18-24	1	0.5
25-34	85	41.3
35-44	73	35.4
45-54	27	13.1
55-64	20	9.7
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	37	18
Female	165	80.1
Other	4	1.9
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	88	42.7
Married	108	52.4
Divorced/ Annulled/ Separated	3	1.5
Widowed	3	1.5
Prefer not to say	4	1.9
<b>Highest educational attainment</b>		
Primary Level	2	1
Secondary Level	4	1.9
Bachelor's Degree	170	82.5
Master's Degree	28	13.6
Doctoral Degree	2	1
<b>Type of school</b>		
Public	205	99.5
Private	1	0.5
<b>School location</b>		
Urban	180	87.4
Rural	26	12.6
<b>Length of teaching</b>		
Early Career (1 to 5 years)	17	8.3
Mid-Career (6 to 10 years)	57	27.7
Experienced (11 years and up)	132	64.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100</b>

## II. Results and Discussion

The sections below present the key findings of the study in Myanmar. Firstly, the level of motivation of the teacher respondents in the country will be shared. Their perspectives on the core and contributing motivational factors shall also be highlighted. Afterward, the relationship between motivational factors and motivation levels, and the relationships between indicators and motivation levels, shall also be examined. Finally, the predictive model for teacher motivation to stay in the profession will be discussed.

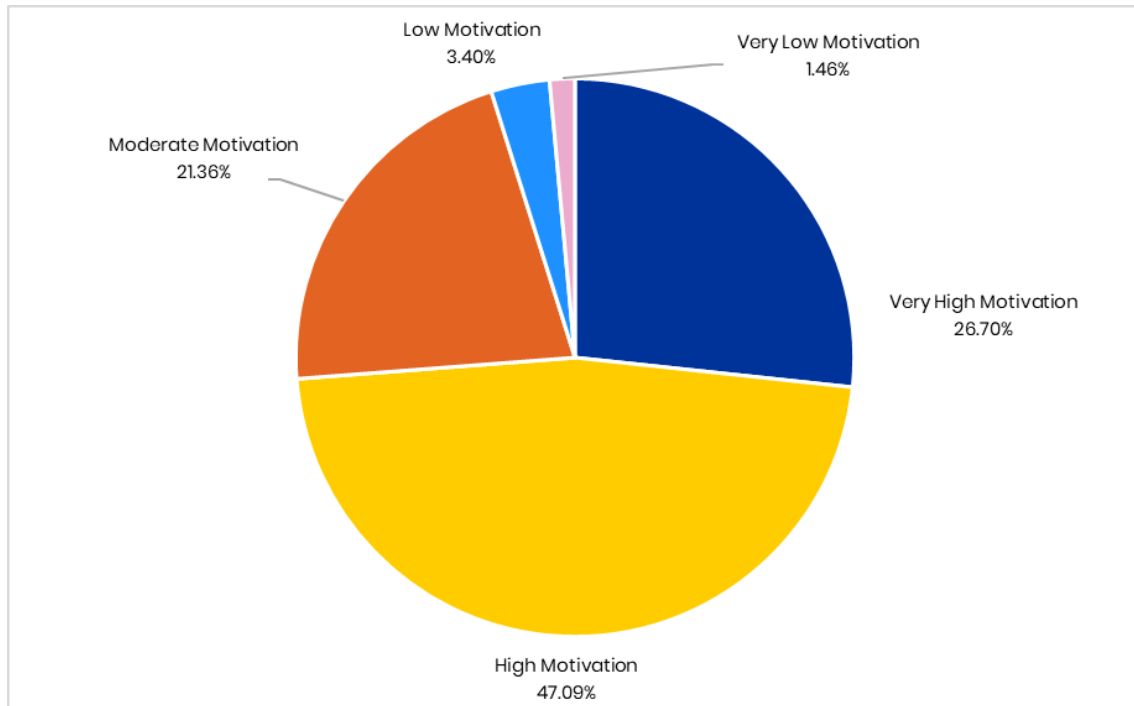
Factors in this study pertain to the core and contributing motivational factors, as shown in Figure 1. On the other hand, indicators are contextual variables that can be influenced by policies, such as salary, working conditions, professional development, career progression, and demographic characteristics.

### ***Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents to Remain in the Profession***

On average, teacher respondents in Myanmar are highly motivated, with a mean rating of 7.48. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of the respondents (74%) are highly motivated, at the very least, to stay in the profession. In particular, almost half of the respondents have high motivation, while a quarter are very highly motivated. In contrast, only very few (5%) have low and very low motivation, whereas 21% are moderately motivated.

**Figure 2**

*Percentage of Myanmar Teacher Respondents According to Their Level of Motivation to Stay in the Profession*



These findings indicate that, at the time of this research, most teacher respondents in Myanmar were motivated to remain in the profession.

***Factors Relevant to Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession***

To understand further the level of motivation of teacher respondents in Myanmar, eight motivational factors were assessed using a six-point Likert scale (where 1 corresponds to "strongly disagree" and 6 to "strongly agree") for statements specific to each factor.

**Core Factors of Teacher Motivation.** The following sections present respondents' agreement levels with the three core factors of teacher motivation to stay. These include a sense of purpose and fulfillment, teaching as interest and passion, and a sense of growth and development.

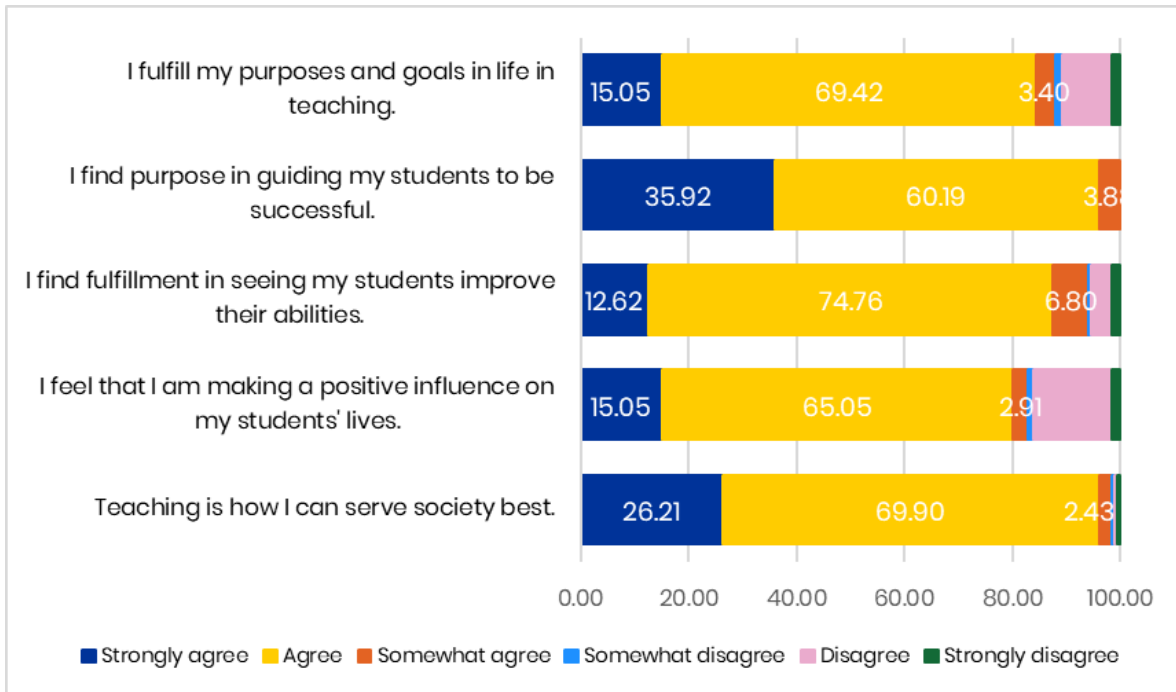
***Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment.*** This core factor refers to teachers' perceptions of their impact on learners and their contributions to the nation and society.

On average, teacher respondents in Myanmar have a high sense of purpose and fulfillment based on a rating of 4.95. The mean value represents respondents' agreement ("agree, somewhat agree, strongly agree") with statements related to the sense of purpose and fulfillment.

All teacher respondents agreed that they find purpose when they guide their students to be successful, while 98% of them believe that teaching is how they can best serve society (Figure 2). Moreover, 94% said that they find fulfillment in seeing their students improve abilities.

**Figure 3**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment*

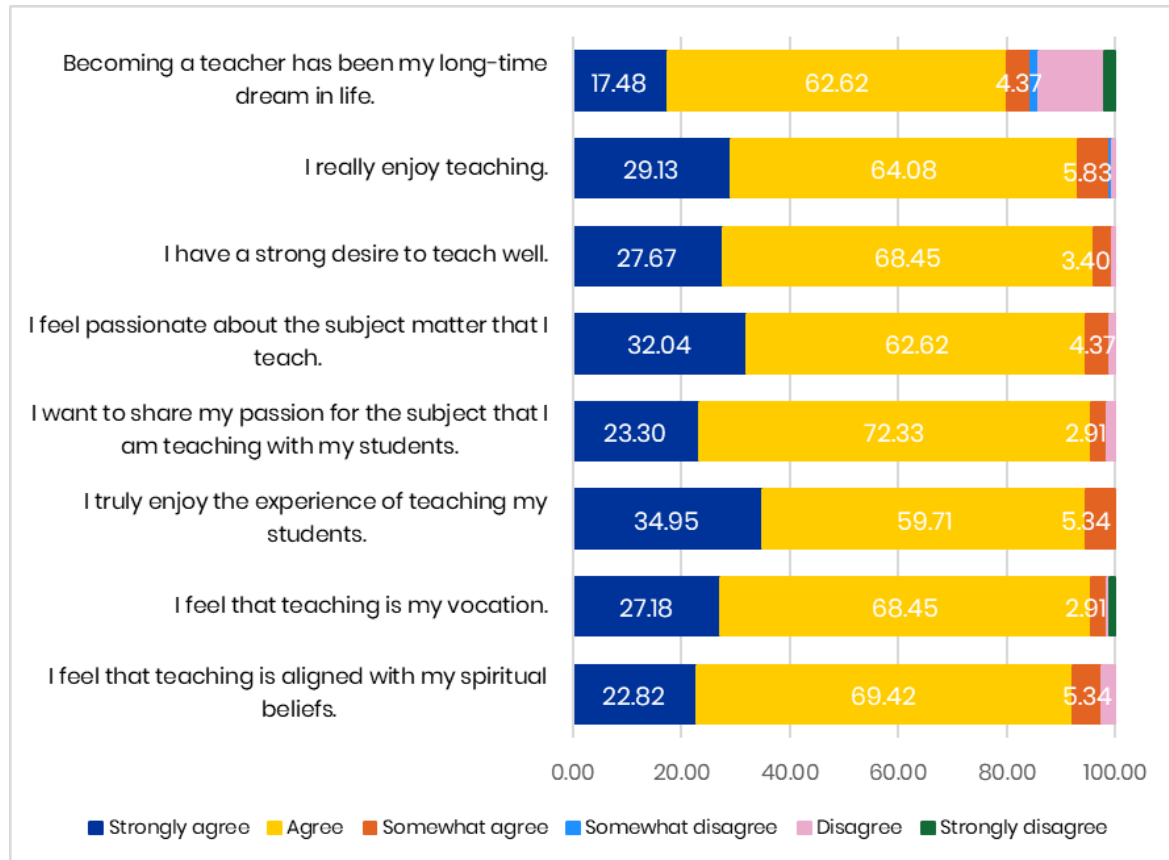


**Teaching as Interest and Passion.** Interest and passion also influence teachers to stay in the profession. This factor includes teaching as a childhood aspiration, love of the craft, the subject matter and learners, and alignment of the work with one’s belief system.

Most teacher respondents also consider teaching as their interest and passion. On average, they highly regard this profession (mean rating of 5.14) because of a variety of reasons. As shown in Figure 3, all teacher respondents enjoy the experience of teaching their students while 99% agree that they feel passionate about the subject matter they teach, have a strong desire to teach well, and really enjoy teaching. Nearly all (98%) feel that teaching is their vocation and would want to share their passion for the subject they teach with their students.

**Figure 4**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Teaching as Interest and Passion*

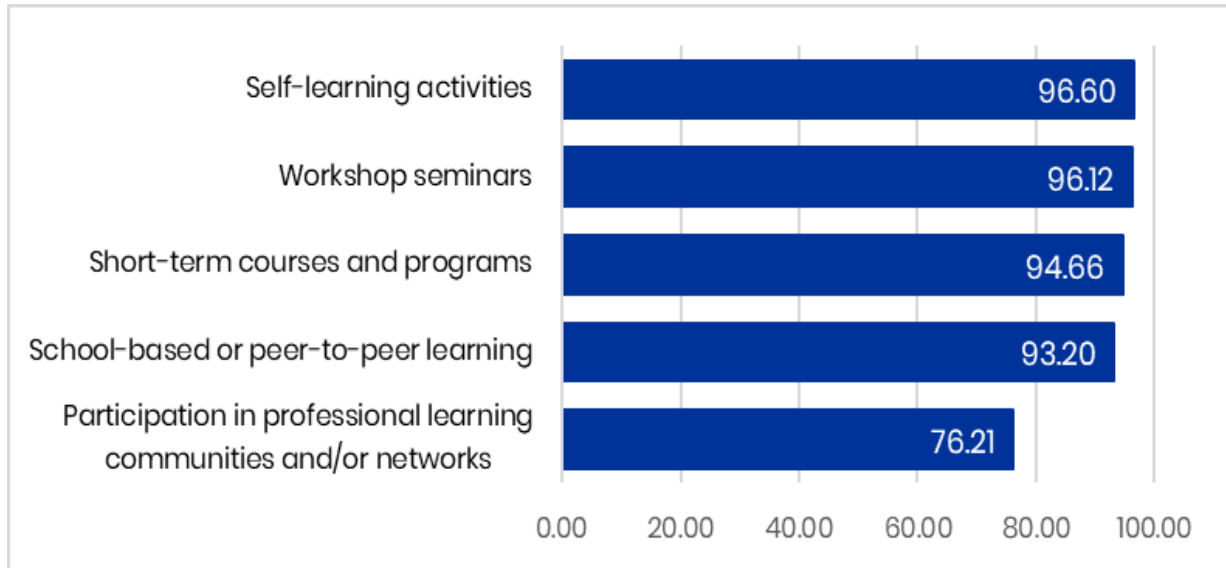


**Sense of Growth and Development.** Teachers’ decisions are also influenced by feelings of growth and development. This factor involves their desire to be better at the profession, including having opportunities for professional development and facing challenges as part of progress.

Based on Figure 4, majority of the teacher respondents are engaged in various professional development programs such as self-learning activities and workshop seminars. Additionally, 89% are currently taking their graduate studies, and of these teacher respondents, most (77%) are under a scholarship program.

**Figure 5**

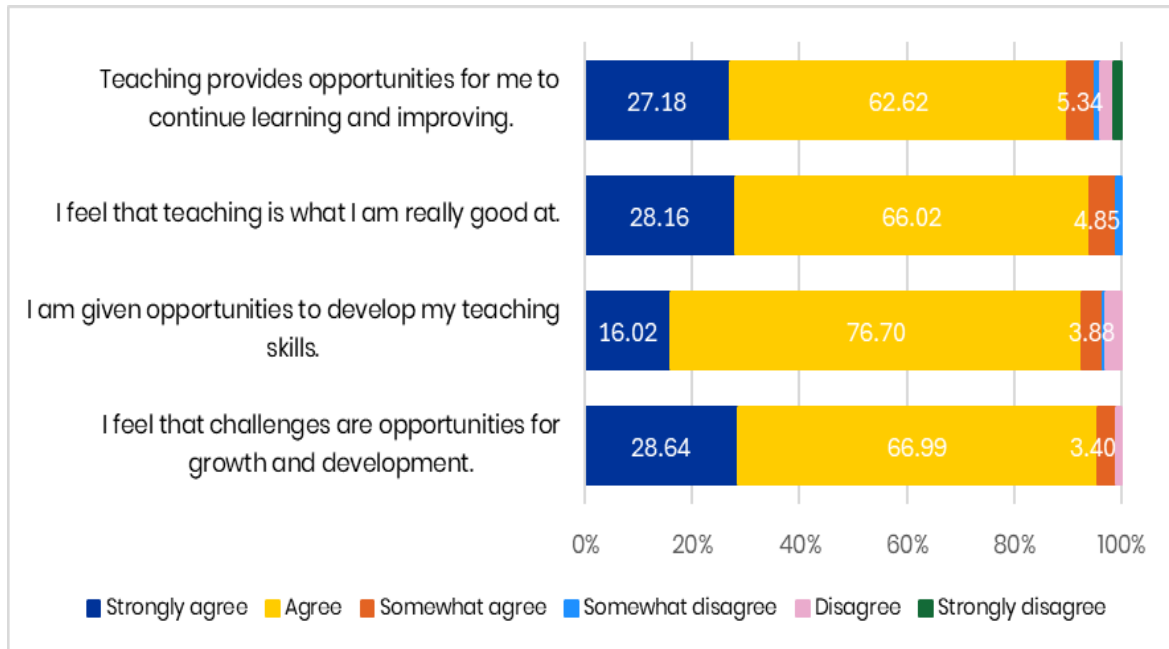
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents Engaging in Professional Development*



Understandably, teacher respondents have a high sense of growth and development based on a mean rating of 5.13 (teachers agree with related statements). Figure 5 shows that a high percentage of teacher respondents are in agreement with statements related to this factor. Nearly all teacher respondents (99%) felt that teaching is what they are really good at and feel that challenges are opportunities for growth and development, while 96% agreed that they are given opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

**Figure 6**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Growth and Development*



These findings echo the results of Aye’s (2023) research, in which local teachers at an international school reported strong motivational drivers, such as pride in their achievements and a need for opportunities for growth and advancement. Moreover, in Htike and Naung’s (2025) study, teachers’ sense of competence was further strengthened when they acquired support from their colleagues for professional development and shared instructional resources.

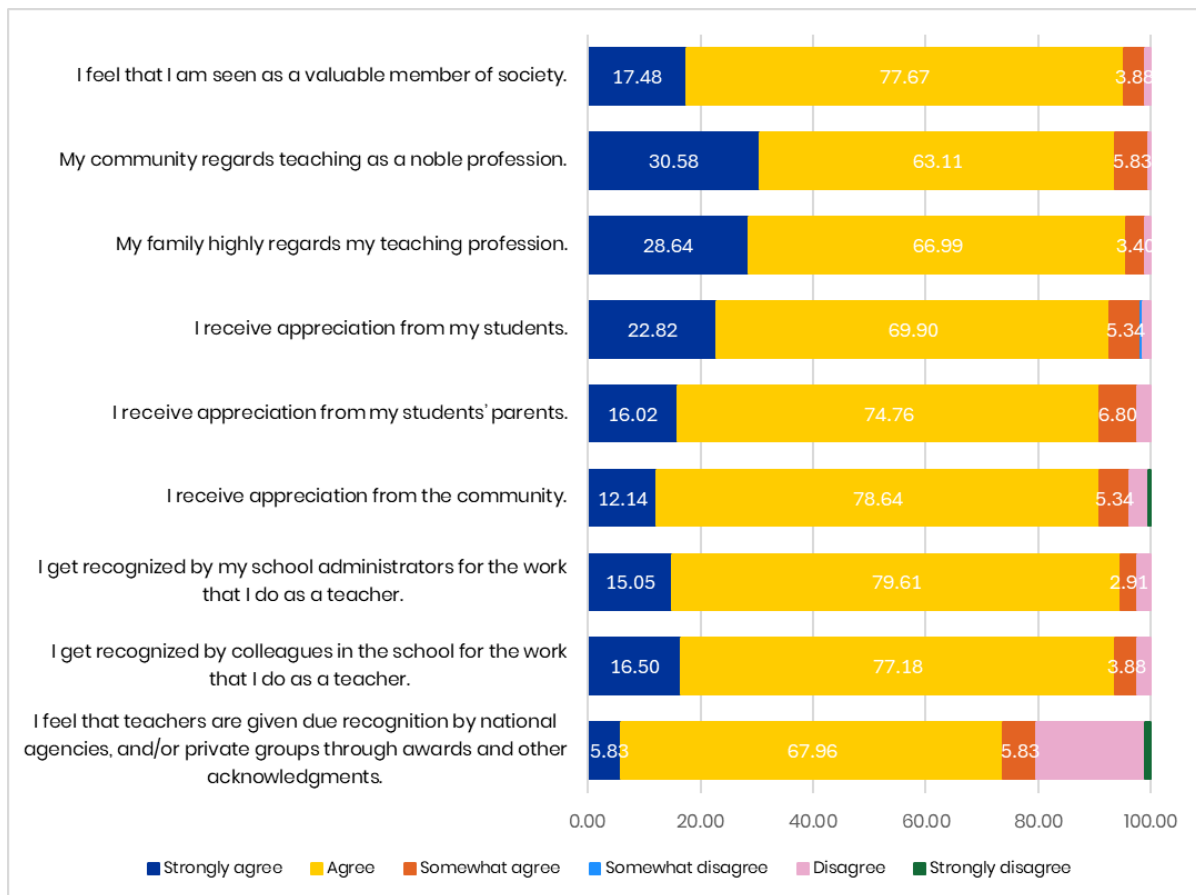
**Contributing Factors of Teacher Motivation.** The subsequent sections present teacher respondents’ agreement levels with statements regarding the five contributing factors to teacher motivation to remain in the profession. These include a sense of being respected and valued, teacher well-being, school environment, salary, incentives and benefits and government laws and policies.

***Sense of Being Respected and Valued.*** The factor sense of being respected and valued also influences teachers to remain in their careers. This involves their perception of the value of their profession and society's regard for it. It also revolves around their feelings of being appreciated by their families, learners, parents, and the wider community. Lastly, awards and recognitions as motivators are examined under this factor.

Teacher respondents, on average, have a high sense of being respected and valued based on a rating of 5.02 (teachers agree with related statements). As shown in Figure 6, almost all teacher respondents (99%) concur that their families highly regard their teaching profession, communities also regard teaching as a noble profession, and they feel that they are seen as valuable members of society. However, only 79% feel that they are given due recognition by national agencies, and/or private groups through awards and other acknowledgments.

**Figure 7**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Being Respected and Valued*



Recognition is among the motivational factors influencing teachers' motivation in a few studies in Myanmar (Htun, 2025; Lwin, 2018; Aye, 2023). Likewise, teachers' relatedness was further enhanced when communities engaged with them and acknowledged their contributions, based on the Self-Determination Theory of motivation (Htike & Naung, 2025).

**Teacher Well-being.** Well-being, in this study, only revolves around work-life balance, having a flexible schedule, and home-school proximity.

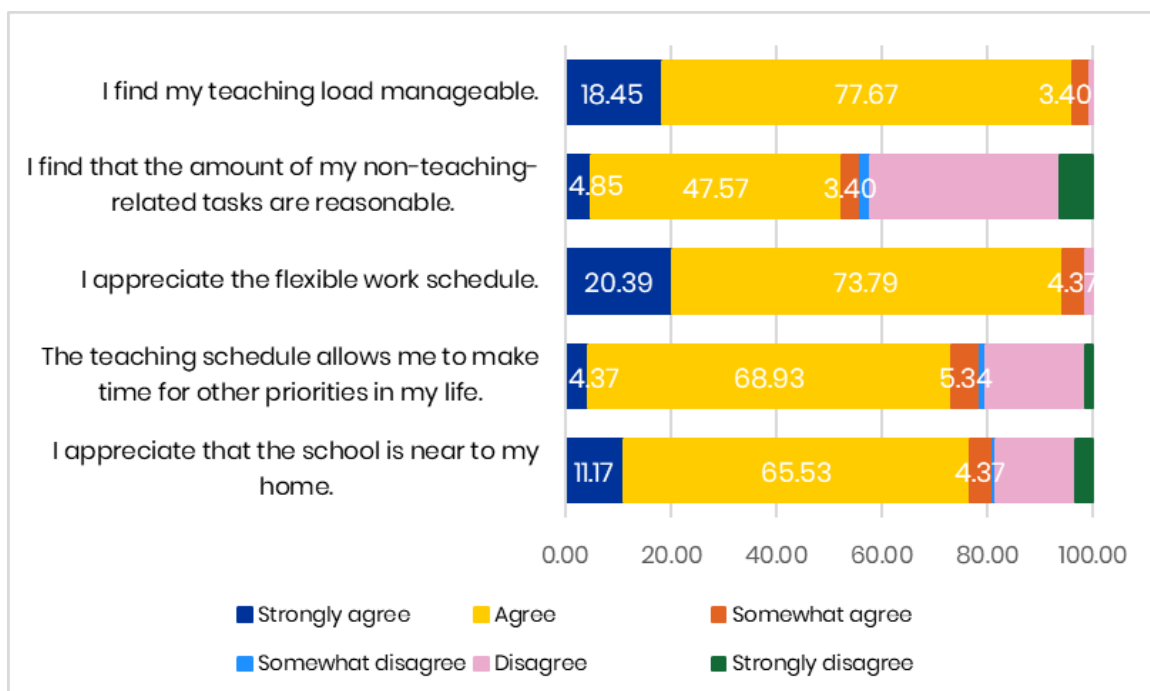
Teacher respondents in Myanmar, on average, spend about 19 hours in a week in teaching, which is below the typical number of hours allocated for instruction in Myanmar. Also, nearly all (99%) find their teaching load manageable (Figure 7). In addition, many also appreciate the flexible work schedule they have (98%) and the close proximity of their assigned schools to their homes (81%). As reported, the majority of the respondents spend less than or equal to 30 minutes per week to go to their schools (Figure 8), which on average is a 20-minute travel time to school.

On top of teaching, 43% are involved in non-teaching work where they allot almost eight hours per week for these tasks. However, a third of the respondents do not find their non-teaching work reasonable (Figure 7).

Overall, though, teacher respondents positively perceive their well-being based on a mean rating of 4.54 (agree with related statements).

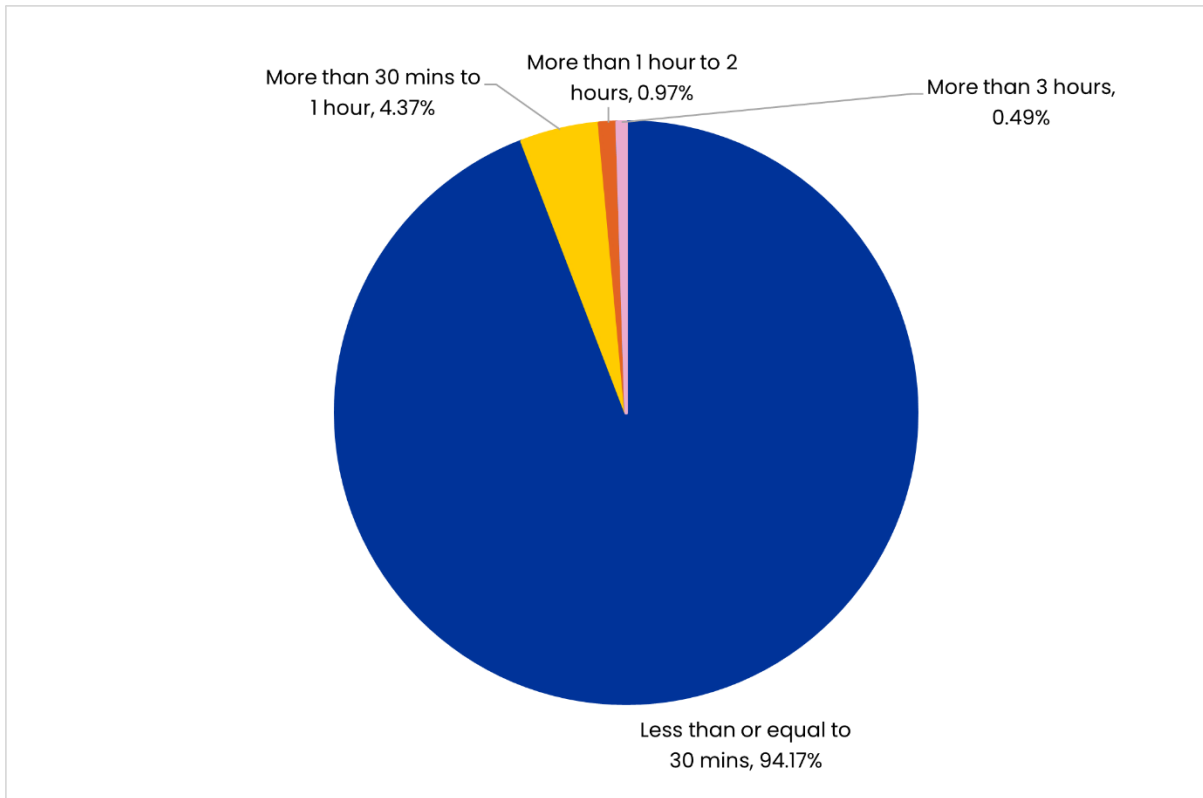
**Figure 8**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Well-being*



**Figure 9**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents Based on Their One-way Travel Time to School*

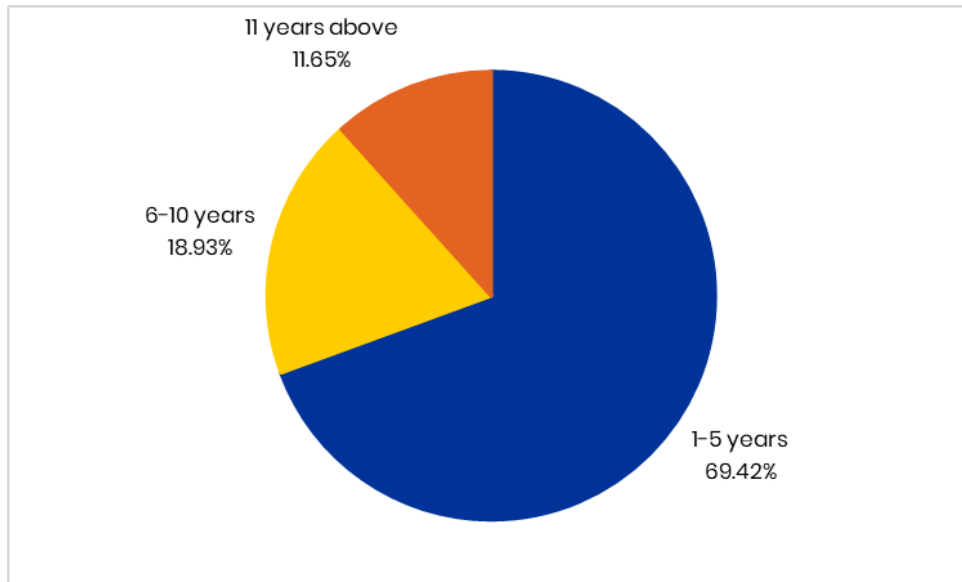


**School Environment.** The school environment is also a consideration that motivates teachers to remain in the profession. Part of this factor involves having supportive school policies, practices, and activities, having opportunities for self-expression and innovation, good working relationships with colleagues, and being provided with adequate facilities and instructional resources.

Many teacher respondents (69%) are relatively new in their schools (1 to 5 years), while 19% have been there for 6-10 years (Figure 9). On average, however, teacher respondents have been in their current school for around 6 years.

**Figure 10**

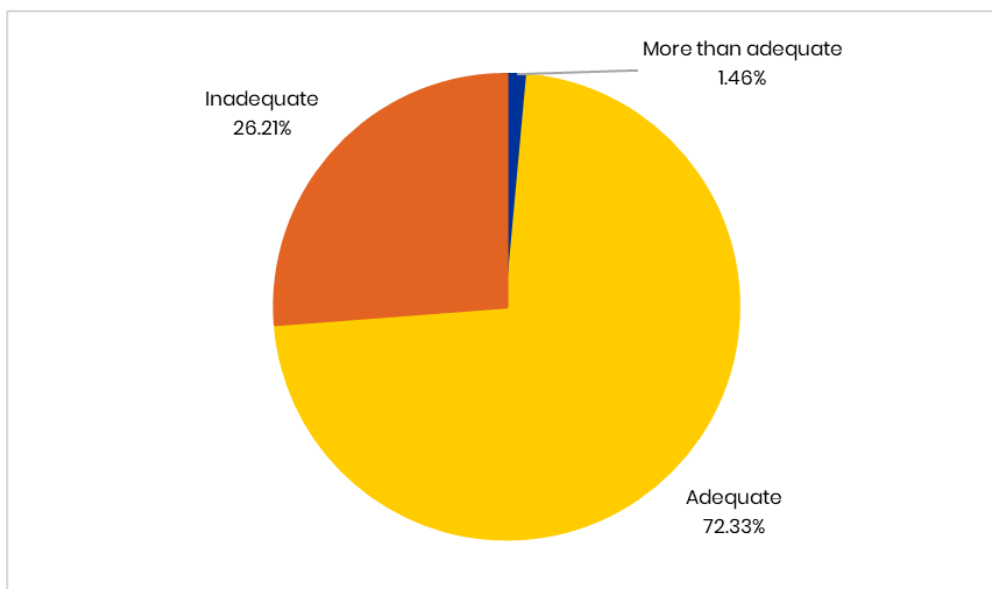
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Length of Teaching in Current School*



With regard to their schools' environment, majority of the teacher respondents reported having adequate teaching materials (72%, Figure 10) and facilities in school (57%, Figure 11).

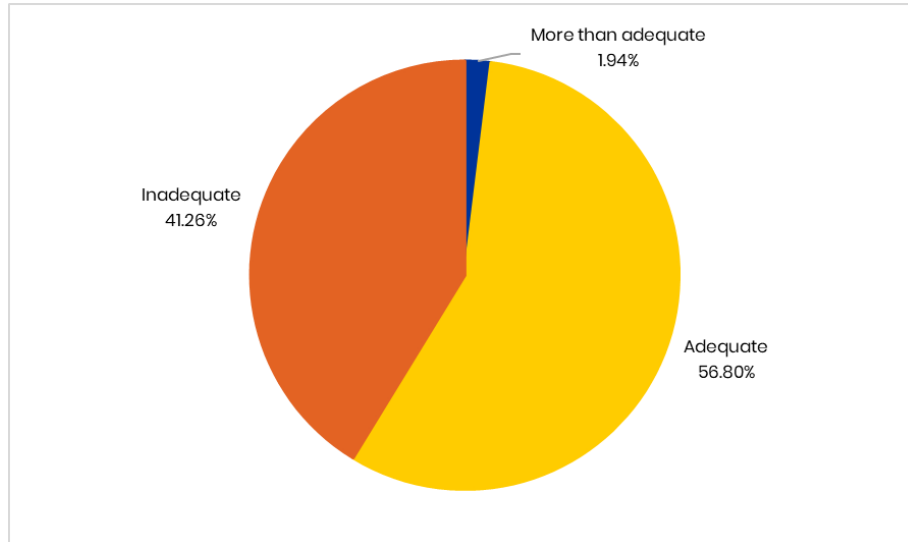
**Figure 11**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Adequacy of Teaching Materials in School*



**Figure 12**

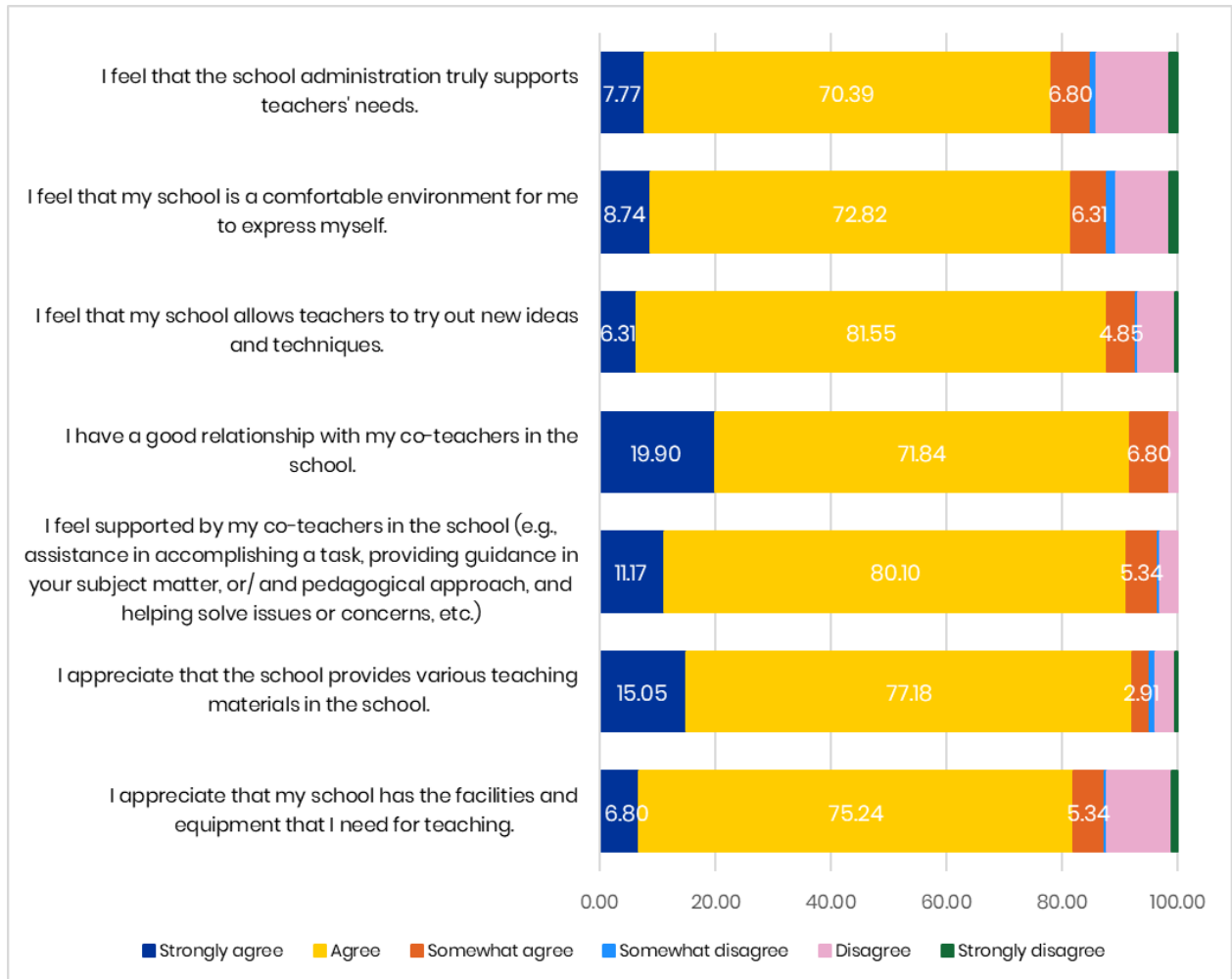
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Adequacy of Facilities Available in School*



Overall, the respondents have a good perception of their school environment based on a mean rating of 4.81 (agree with related statements). Figure 12 shows that many teachers agree on positive indicators about their schools' environment (e.g., availability of facilities & resources, good working relationships). For instance, 98% of teachers have a good relationship with their co-teachers in the school and 96% feel supported by their peers.

**Figure 13**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of School Environment*



Interpersonal relationships were deemed important in a few studies on teacher motivation in Myanmar. For instance, in Aung's (2025) dissertation, relationships with co-workers were considered extrinsic factors that influence teachers' performance. This particular aspect was also unveiled in Htun's (2025) study of teachers in private high schools, affecting performance, while Aye's (2023) research saw that relationships contribute to teachers' work satisfaction in international schools in Yangon.

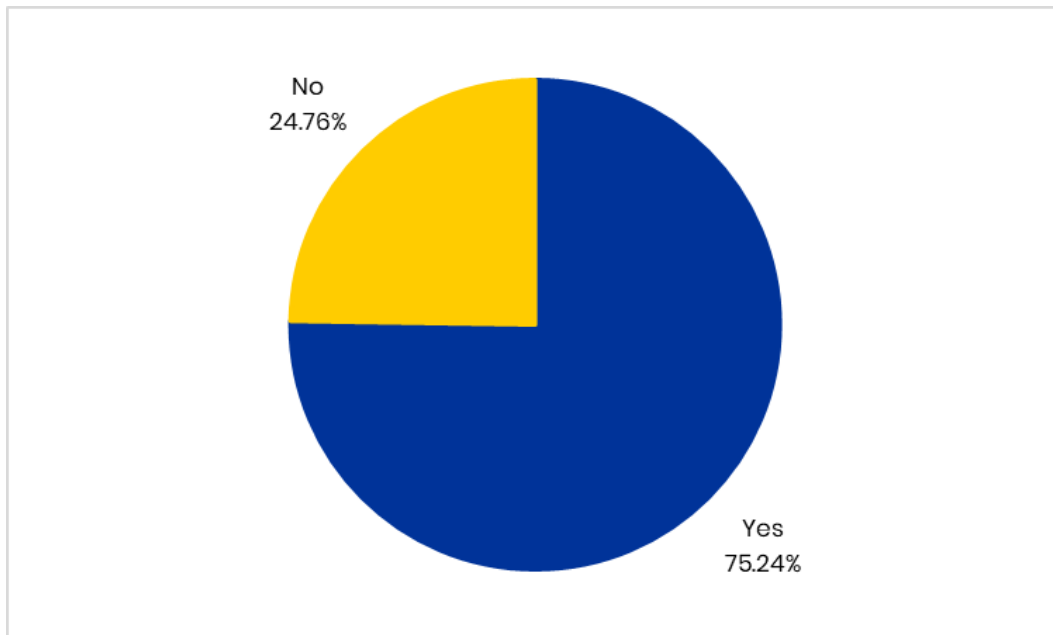
**Salary, Incentives and Benefits.** Salary, incentives and benefits is another factor that influences teachers to stay. Part of this includes having a good source of income, financial security and being compensated by benefits and incentives.

Results reveal that half of the respondents receive a monthly salary of USD 103 and below, while the other half receive more than USD 103. However, on average, this cohort receives USD 115 per month.

Figure 13 shows that seven in every ten teacher respondents are their family's main financial provider. Further, more than half of the respondents reported to have 1-2 dependents while a quarter have 3-5 dependents (Figure 14).

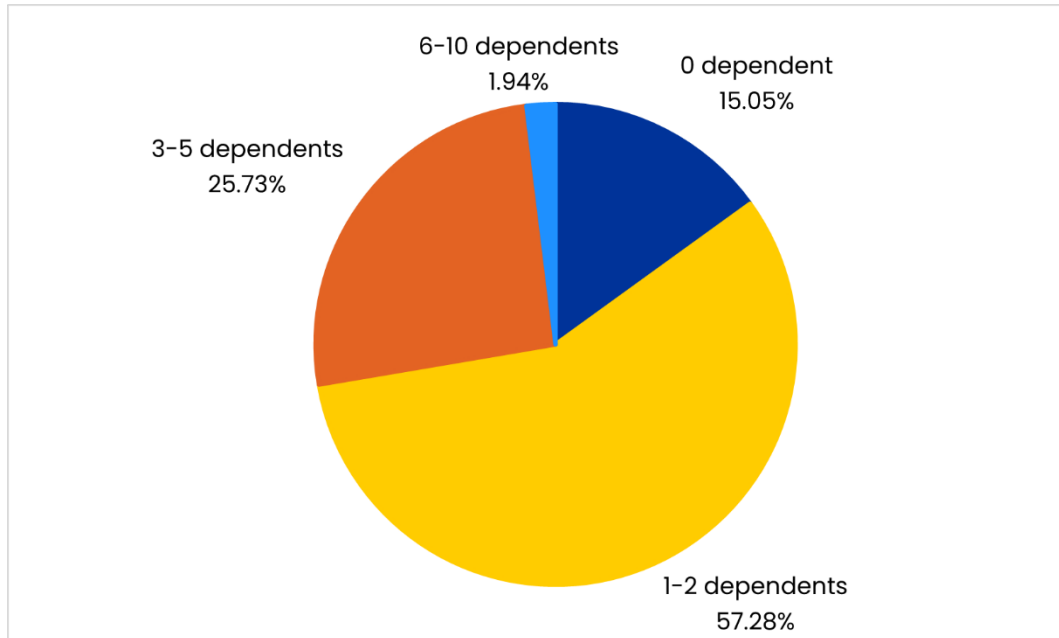
**Figure 14**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents as the Main Financial Provider*



**Figure 15**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to the Number of Their Dependents*

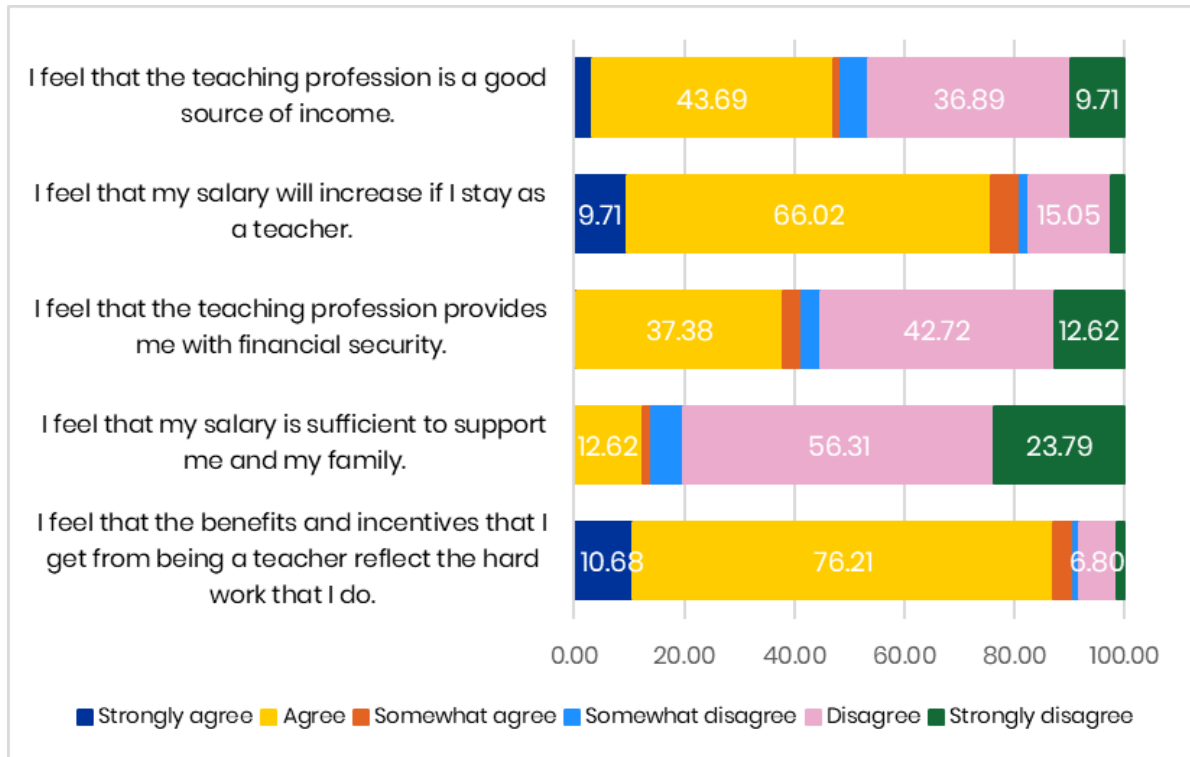


The respondents' perception of the salary, incentives and benefits is moderately high based on a mean rating of 3.61. This value represents respondents' moderate agreement ("somewhat agree") with statements about salary, incentives and benefits.

Figure 15, however, reveals that 86% of the teacher respondents feel that their salaries are not sufficient to support them and their families. Moreover, only less than half believe that the teaching profession provides them with financial security or is a good source of income. On the contrary, more teachers agree that the benefits and incentives they receive reflect the hard work they do (91%) and that their salaries will increase if they stay as a teacher (81%).

**Figure 16**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Salary, Incentives, and Benefits*

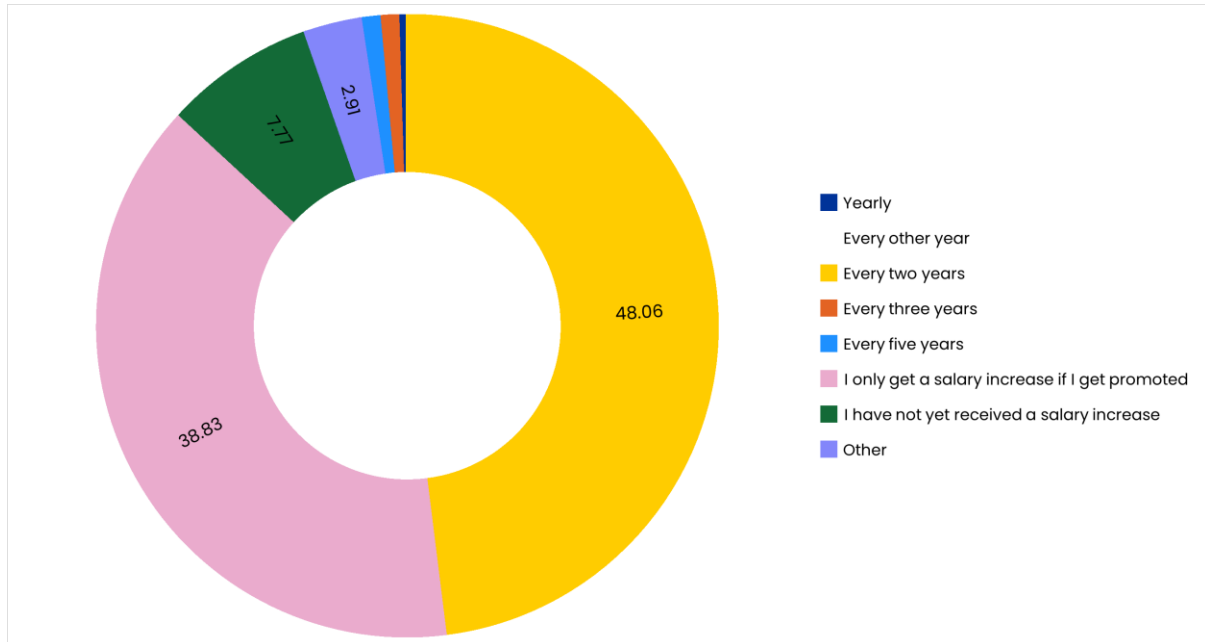


**Government Laws and Policies.** As teachers are affected by many structures and processes in the school set by policies, this factor on government laws and policies also emerged as a motivator for them to stay in the profession. Six aspects were examined under this factor, including teacher deployment, professional development, career progression, working conditions, salary and benefits and incentives.

Based on Figure 16, almost half of the teacher respondents reported receiving salary increases every two years, while a little over a third said they only got an increase upon their promotion. Moreover, about 8% have not experienced a salary increase in their teaching career.

**Figure 17**

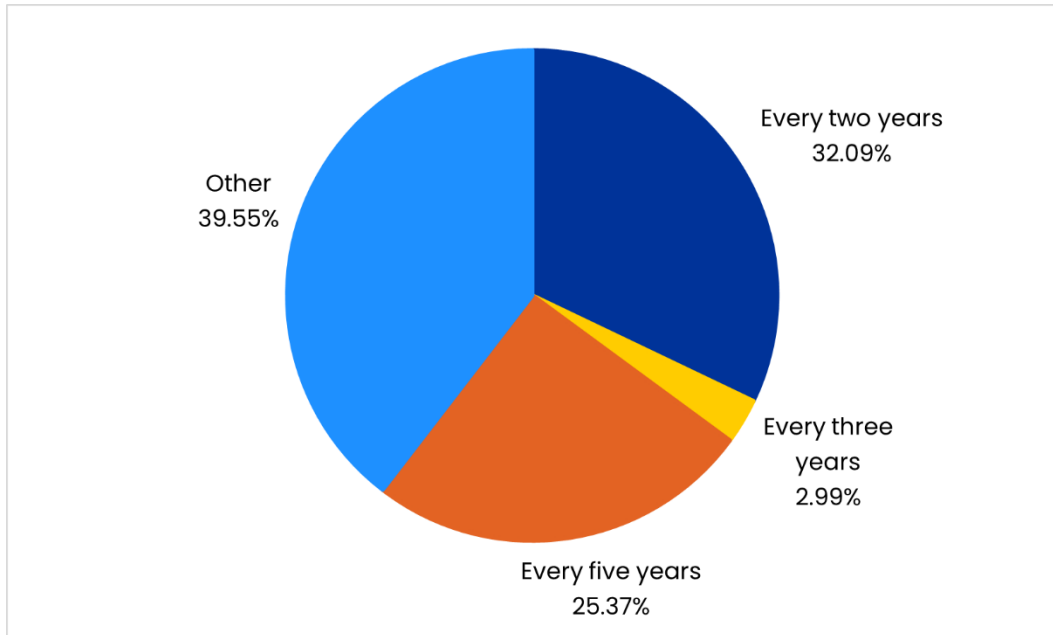
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to the Frequency of Salary Increase*



In Figure 17, the majority of the respondents (65%) have had a history of promotion. Almost a third (32%) disclosed that promotion is done every two years, while about 40% said that promotion is conducted in different regularities (i.e., others – depending on the promotion exams, and seniority list, among others).

**Figure 18**

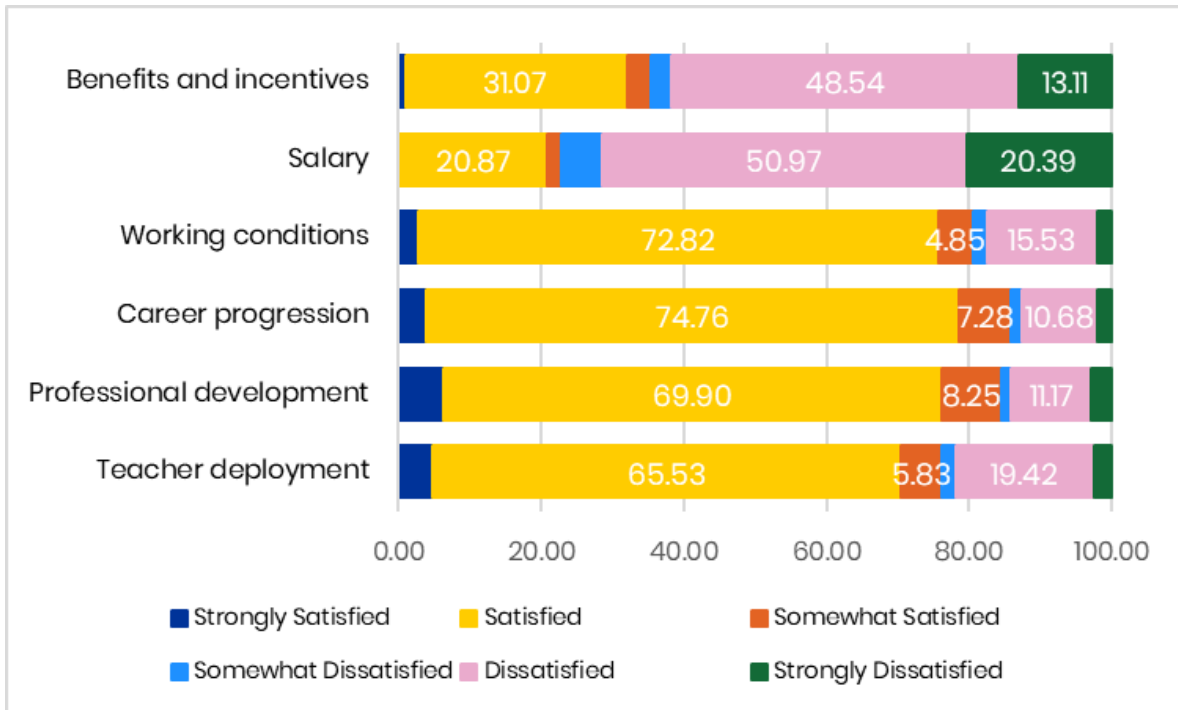
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Frequency of Promotion*



A relatively big proportion affirms the result in Figure 18, where more than 80% are pleased (“very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied”) with government policies on career progression. On the contrary, majority of teacher respondents (about 65% - 77%) are not satisfied with laws and policies about teacher salary, and benefits and incentives.

**Figure 19**

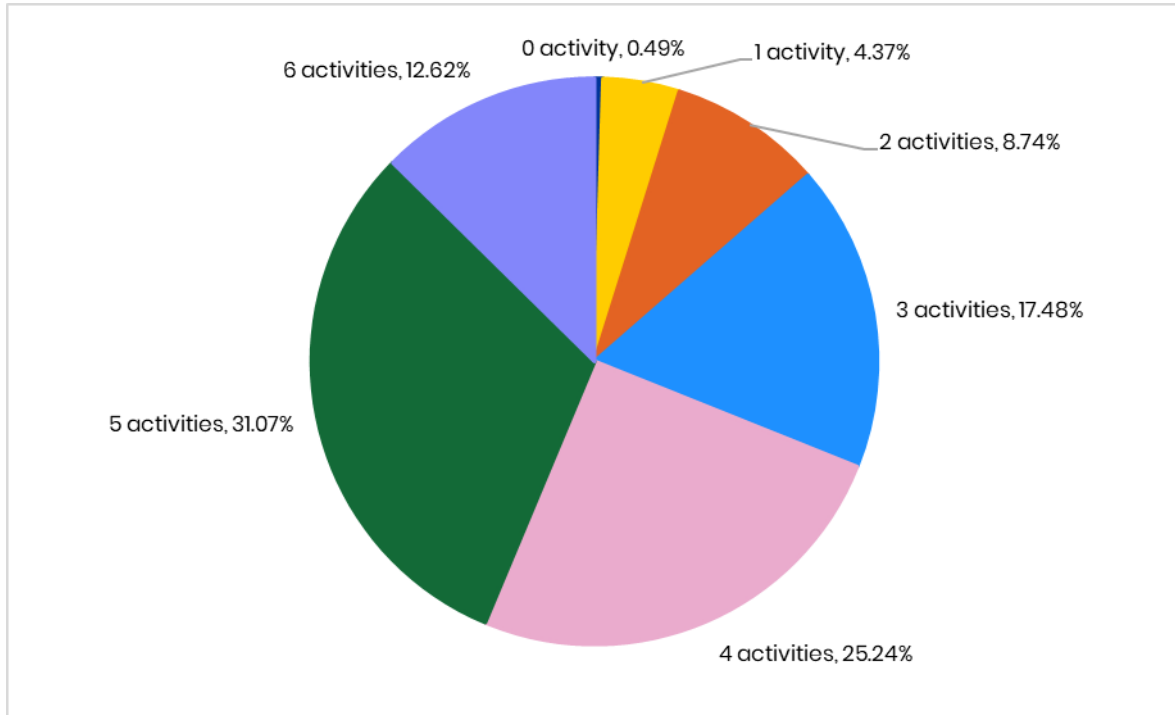
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Government Laws and Policies*



However, Figure 18 also shows that 84% are content with policies on professional development. Such policies may foster a mindset of continual learning to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching. Figure 19 reveals that majority of the teacher respondents have used their personal money in participating in one or more professional development activities. Only less than 1% have not invested their personal money.

**Figure 20**

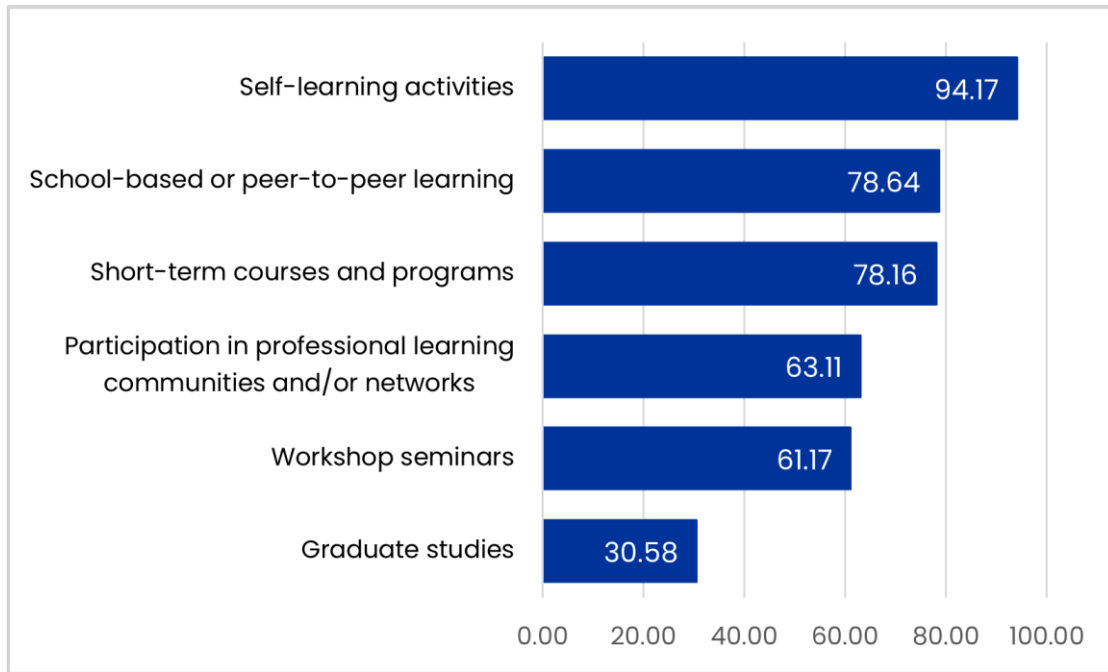
*Percentage of Teacher Respondents Who Used Personal Money for Professional Development Activities*



Based on Figure 20, 95% of the teacher respondents used their money for self-learning activities, while almost 80% have for short-term courses and school-based activities/peer-to-peer learning.

**Figure 21**

*Percentage of Teacher Respondents Who Used Personal Money According to Professional Development Activities*



Overall, though, the respondents in Myanmar perceive this type of government support to be somewhat satisfying (mean rating of 3.86).

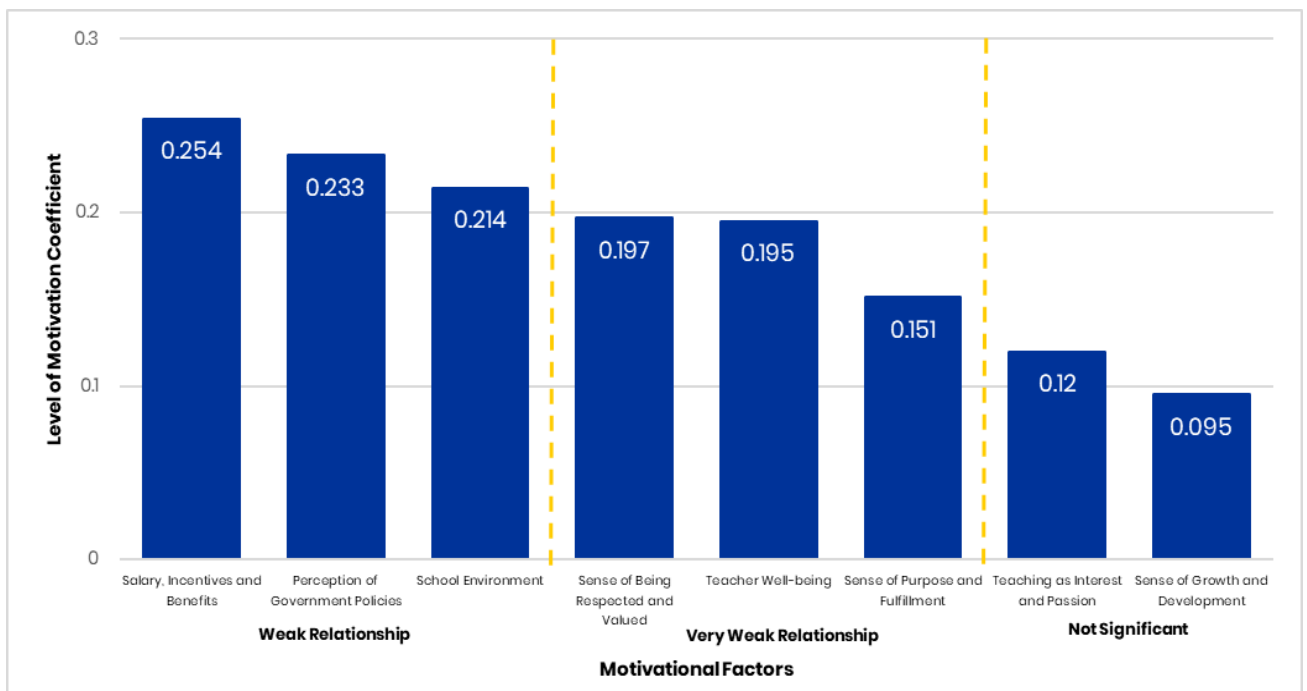
**Summary.** Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of teacher respondents in Myanmar are highly motivated to stay in the teaching profession. Moreover, they view almost all motivational factors in this study positively. They especially perceive the factor ‘teaching as interest and passion’ to be relevant in their contexts. Additionally, while they consider the factors ‘salary, incentives, and benefits’ and ‘perception of government policies’ important, they see these as moderately affecting their motivation.

## ***Relationship between Factors of Motivation and the Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents***

Based on statistical tests, the level of motivation of teacher respondents is significantly related to their perception of salary/incentives/benefits, government policies and laws, school environment, sense of being respected and valued, their well-being, and sense of purpose and fulfillment. Though the relationships presented in Figure 21 are weak and very weak, teachers' motivation among respondents in Myanmar increases when these factors are high (e.g., high perception of salary/incentives/benefits, strong sense of being respected and valued).

**Figure 22**

*Relationship between Factors of Motivation and Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents*



To determine the relationships among the factors affecting teacher motivation in staying in the profession, statistical tests related to correlation and mean differences were conducted. For this portion, attention was given to factors that have potential implications for policy recommendations, and findings with only significant results are reported. Table 2 shows the list of indicators examined.

**Table 2**

*Indicators Covered in Inferential Statistical Analysis*

<b>Salary</b>	<b>Working conditions</b>	<b>Professional development</b>	<b>Career progression</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency of salary increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of teaching*</li> <li>• Total grade levels taught*</li> <li>• Hours spent teaching</li> <li>• Having nonteaching-related tasks</li> <li>• Hours spent traveling to school</li> <li>• Adequacy of teaching and learning resources</li> <li>• Adequacy of facilities in school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of personal money for professional development</li> <li>• Highest education attainment</li> <li>• Currently taking graduate studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of promotion</li> <li>• Frequency of promotion</li> </ul>

\* indicators with significant results

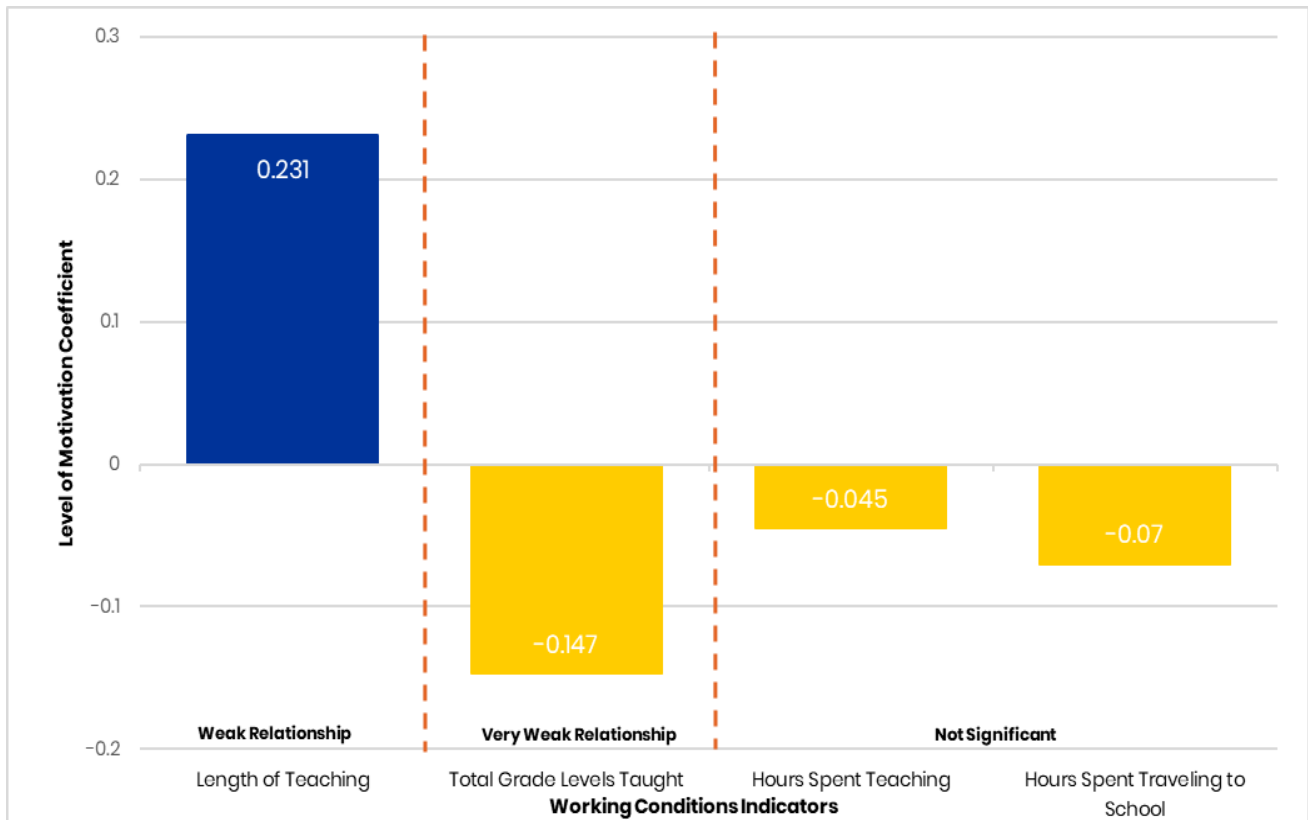
**Indicators Related to Salary.** Results show that the one indicator of salary that was investigated, frequency of salary increase, is not significantly related to the level of motivation among teacher respondents in Myanmar.

**Indicators Related to Working Conditions.** Among the seven indicators of working conditions, only two were found to be significantly related to the teacher respondents' level of motivation, namely, length of teaching and total grade levels taught.

***Relationship between Two Indicators—Length of Teaching and Number of Grade Levels Taught—and Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents.*** As shown in Figure 22, the length of teaching has a positive and weak relationship with the level of teachers' motivation. This means that teachers who have been in their profession longer tend to have higher motivation to stay. On the other hand, the total number of grade levels taught has a negative and very weak relationship with the respondents' motivation. This evidence indicates that teachers who serve more grade levels are more likely to experience lower motivation to remain teaching.

**Figure 23**

*Relationship between Working Conditions and Teacher Respondents' Level of Motivation*



***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on Engagement in Nonteaching-related Tasks.*** Results show that there is no significant difference between the level of motivation of teacher respondents who perform nonteaching-related tasks and those who do not have such assignments.

***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources.*** The level of motivation of teacher respondents who have inadequate, adequate or more than adequate teaching and learning resources do not differ from each other significantly.

***Differences in Teacher respondents' Motivation based on Availability of Facilities in School.*** Similarly, teacher respondents' motivation does not vary significantly vis-à-vis the availability of facilities in their schools.

***Indicators Related to Professional Development.*** The level of motivation among teacher respondents in Myanmar does not significantly differ or is not significantly related to indicators such as the use of personal money for professional development, teacher respondents' highest educational attainment, and their engagement in graduate studies.

***Relationship Between Use of Personal Money for Professional Development and Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents.*** The use of personal money to participate in professional development activities is not significantly related to the level of motivation among teacher respondents in Myanmar.

***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on Highest Education Attainment.*** Results also reveal that the level of motivation does not significantly differ among teacher respondents based on their highest educational attainments (i.e., primary level, secondary level, bachelor's degree, masteral program, and doctoral degree).

***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on Engagement in Graduate Studies.*** There appears to be no significant difference in teacher respondents' motivation between those who have taken graduate studies and those who have not.

**Indicators Related to Career Progression.** Two indicators were examined in relation to career progression and both yielded results that were not significant in relation to the respondents' motivation.

***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on History of Promotion.*** The level of motivation among those with a history of promotion did not differ significantly from that of those who have and have not received a promotion in their teaching careers.

***Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation based on Frequency of Promotion.*** Similarly, the frequency with which teacher respondents were promoted was not significantly associated with their motivation to stay.

**Summary.** Correlation analysis revealed that only six of the eight motivational factors are associated with teacher respondents' motivation levels to stay in the profession. These include their perception of salary/incentives/benefits, government policies and laws, school environment, sense of being respected and valued, their well-being, and sense of purpose and fulfillment. These findings suggest that as their view of these factors improves, their motivation to remain teaching also strengthens. In a similar light, when their perspectives of these factors suffer, their motivation to stay also decreases.

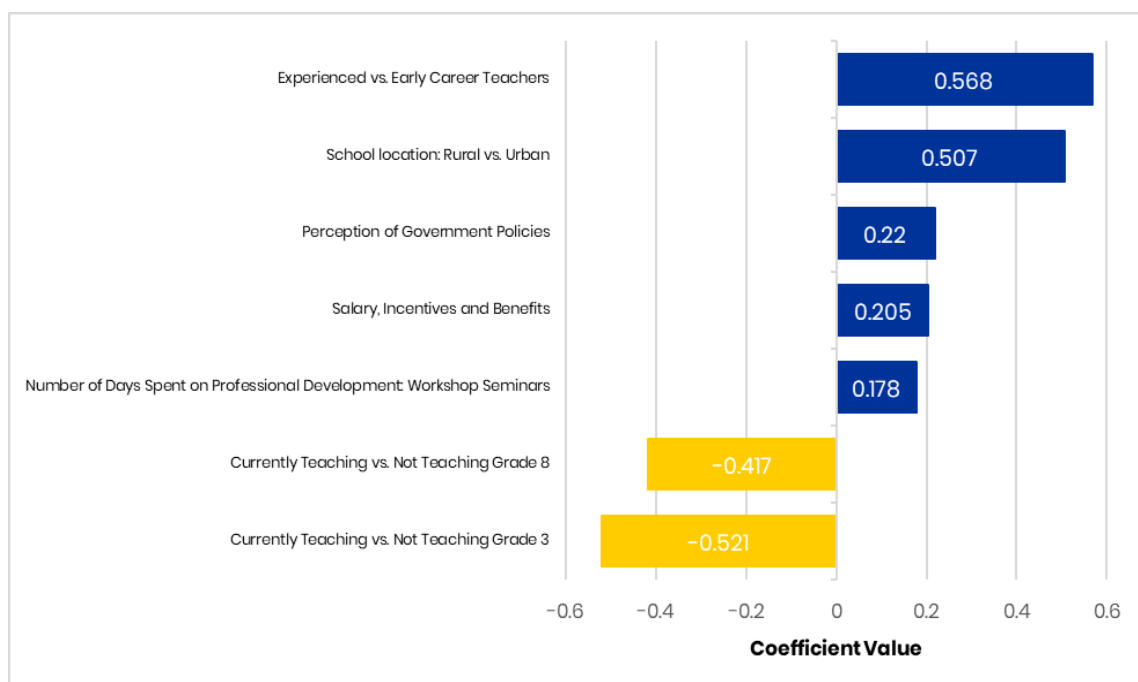
Moreover, two indicators related to working conditions are associated with teacher motivation. Firstly, the length of teaching is positively related to teachers' motivation levels; as teachers render more service years in the profession, the more likely they are to stay teaching. On the other hand, total grade levels taught negatively influences motivation. This means that as teachers teach more grade levels, the less motivated they are to stay.

## ***Predictive Model of Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession in Myanmar***

Based on Figure 23, several factors were identified in a regression analysis to predict the level of motivation among teacher respondents in Myanmar. These factors, namely, the length of teaching, school location, participation in professional development programs, grade level taught and perceptions on government policies and salary/incentives/benefits are important in shaping teacher motivation to stay. In particular, longer teaching career, longer participation in professional development activities such as workshop seminars, assignment in rural schools as well as a more positive perception of government policies and salary/incentives/benefits were linked to higher motivation. On the other hand, teaching in specific grade levels such as Grades 3 and 8 was associated with lower motivation.

### **Figure 24**

*Combination of Factors and Indicators that Predicts Teacher Respondents' Motivation to Stay in the Profession*



### **III. Conclusion**

The research examined the common sentiment among teachers in Myanmar to stay in the profession as well as the factors and indicators that may influence their motivation. It also aimed to come up with a framework on teacher motivation as represented by these factors and indicators and provide policy recommendations.

Generally, respondents were highly motivated to remain as teachers. Most of them resonated with statements about their sense of growth and development and regarded teaching as their passion and interest. In contrast, fewer respondents were positive about their salaries, incentives and benefits, which was also evident in the proportion of teacher respondents who were satisfied with government laws and policies related to teacher salaries and other compensation, which was lesser than with other factors.

It is not surprising then that their perception of remuneration and policy support (on salaries, professional development, etc.) was significantly related to their motivation. A more positive perception of these was linked to a higher level of motivation. Moreover, the results also revealed that veteran teachers were more likely to be motivated to stay. On the other hand, handling more grade levels was associated with lower motivation. This may suggest that additional workload, coupled with a dismal view of compensation, may further demotivate teachers.

The predictive model reflects the aforementioned factors and indicators--length of teaching, perception of policies and teacher compensation--including days spent for professional development and school location were identified to positively contribute to motivation.

In conclusion, although the findings of the study are only applicable to its sample due to the use of convenience sampling, the research discovered that the

majority of Myanmar teacher respondents are highly motivated to stay. Their motivation to remain in the profession is influenced by a variety of core and contributing factors. Aspects that can also be influenced by policies were also revealed by correlation analyses and predictive modelling. These levers could be considered by education decision-makers in sustaining the commitment of their teaching workforce for future generations to come.

Based on the findings of the study, the following policy recommendations may be considered by the Ministry of Education of Myanmar:

- **SALARY**

Assess current teacher pay to improve motivation. Based on 2023 data, a teacher's monthly salary is estimated at USD 390 with benefits and incentives of about USD 26 (Yee, 2023). The average monthly net income of the respondents, on the other hand, is USD 115, which has a small difference from the reported monthly family expenditure of USD 79 (Central Statistical Organization, 2012). The relatively high proportion of respondents who did not positively perceive teacher remuneration further corroborates the need to assess how teachers can be well-compensated.

- **WORKING CONDITIONS**

Consider alignment of teaching assignments in accordance with availability of teachers and student enrolment. Teacher workload depends on the grade level being taught, where more teaching hours are spent in lower secondary level (1200 hours in a year) than in primary schools (1053 hours per year or 4 hours and 40 minutes a day) (Yee, 2023). While the survey yielded an average of 3.6 hours of teaching time a day, assignment to teach more classes (grade levels) resulted in an inverse relationship with motivation. Despite the small class size (13 to 25 students) and adequate provision of teaching materials, teachers may still be less

motivated with the amount of work they have from being involved in teaching more grade levels.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Apportion more financial resources for teachers' professional development. Survey results suggest that policy support on capacity building is adequate given the high percentage of respondents engaged in programs to enhance their capacities. A variety of learning opportunities are made available to teacher respondents and they are provided with a certain amount to finance these opportunities. Many teacher respondents also have a strong sense of growth and development. Nevertheless, there was also a high proportion of respondents who were willing to invest their personal funds in professional development opportunities even for school-based activities and short-term courses. As such, increasing the amount for professional development may be considered.

- **CAREER PROGRESSION**

Continually strengthen mechanisms for teachers' career growth. Policies and mechanisms such as the Teacher Competency Standards Framework and qualification criteria for promotion, such as years of service, were adopted to support career advancement within the teaching profession. Although over half of the respondents have had a history of promotion, and some have received corresponding salary increases, the survey found that the history and frequency of promotion were not significant to teacher motivation. Nonetheless, efforts to improve career progression remain crucial as majority of the respondents acknowledge and are satisfied with the government's support for their professional growth.

- **PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT LAWS AND POLICIES**

Consider reassessing compensation-related policies. Teachers had varying perspectives on current legislation and policies. Many expressed satisfaction with laws and guidelines concerning career progression, professional development, teacher deployment, and working conditions. However, a significant portion of respondents were particularly dissatisfied with policies on salary, benefits, and incentives. Results from the predictive model underscored further the importance of strengthening policy support, given that perception of such mechanisms positively predicts teachers' motivation.

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## Appendix

### **Statistical Results of the Study**

**Table 3**

*Relationship between Factors of Motivation and Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents*

Factors	Level of Motivation		Interpretation
	$\rho$	p	
Teaching as Interest and Passion	0.12*	0.085	<b>Not Significant</b>
Sense of Growth and Development	0.095*	0.176	<b>Not Significant</b>
Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment	0.151	0.031	<b>Very Weak Relationship</b>
Sense of Being Respected and Valued	0.197	0.005	<b>Very Weak Relationship</b>
Teacher Well-being	0.195	0.005	
School Environment	0.214	0.002	<b>Weak Relationship</b>
Salary, Incentives and Benefits	0.254	< .001	
Perception of Government Policies	0.233	< .001	

The interpretation of Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was adapted from Dancey and Reidy (2004):

- $\rho \geq 0.70$  indicates very strong relationship

- 0.40 – 0.69 indicates strong relationship
- 0.30 – 0.39 indicates moderate relationship
- 0.20 – 0.29 indicates weak relationship
- 0.01 – 0.19 indicates no or negligible relationship

**Table 4**

*Relationship between Length of Teaching and Length of Teaching with the Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents*

Working Conditions	Level of Motivation		Interpretation
	$\rho$	p	
Hours Spent Teaching	-0.045	0.522	<b>Not Significant</b>
Hours Spent Traveling to School	-0.07	0.315	
Total Grade Levels Taught	-0.147	0.035	<b>Very Weak Relationship</b>
Length of Teaching	0.231	< .001	<b>Weak Relationship</b>

The interpretation of Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was adapted from Dancey and Reidy (2004):

- $\rho \geq 0.70$  indicates very strong relationship
- 0.40 – 0.69 indicates strong relationship
- 0.30 – 0.39 indicates moderate relationship
- 0.20 – 0.29 indicates weak relationship
- 0.01 – 0.19 indicates no or negligible relationship

**Table 5**

*Regression Estimates of Factors and Indicators Contributing to the Teacher Respondents' Level of Motivation in Myanmar*

<b>Factors and Indicators</b>	<b>p</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>
Salary, Incentives and Benefits	0.004	0.205
Perception of Government Policies	0.003	0.22
School location: Rural	0.013	0.507
Experienced Teachers	0.018	0.568
Currently Teaching Grade 3	0.038	-0.521
Currently Teaching Grade 8	0.032	-0.417
Number of days spent on Professional Development: Workshop Seminars	0.006	0.178
	<b>R<sup>2</sup> = 0.223</b>	



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