

## Empowering the Future Transformative Education Practices in Myanmar

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### Abstract

This research explores the landscape of transformative education in Myanmar through a quantitative study involving 300 participants across diverse educational levels. The demographic analysis reveals a balanced gender distribution and representation across primary, secondary, and tertiary education, providing a comprehensive understanding of transformative education's potential impact. Perceptions of the current education system highlight strengths in curriculum and infrastructure satisfaction but signal opportunities for improvement in technology access. Participants' active engagement in transformative practices, such as workshops, technology integration, and critical thinking activities, suggests a substantial foundation for transformative education. The implications call for targeted investments in technology, professional development for educators, and a reevaluation of curricular frameworks. Myanmar stands at the threshold of educational transformation, and this study serves as a call to action for collaborative efforts to propel the nation into a new era of empowerment and innovation. The limitations of the study are acknowledged, and future research is encouraged to delve deeper into transformative education dynamics in Myanmar.

**Keywords:** Transformative, Education, Myanmar

### Introduction

Myanmar, a nation with a rich cultural heritage and a diverse populace, is at a critical juncture in its development trajectory. Central to the realization of its vast potential is the transformation of its education system. The current landscape of education in Myanmar is marked by challenges that hinder the holistic development of its citizens and impede the nation's progress on the global stage. This study embarks on a crucial exploration of transformative education practices as a catalyst for empowering the future of Myanmar.

Historically, Myanmar has witnessed fluctuations in its approach to education. The country has grappled with the consequences of political and socio-economic shifts, resulting in a fragmented educational system. Despite significant strides in expanding access to education, numerous challenges persist, posing impediments to the realization of individual potential and national development. The World Bank reports indicate that Myanmar's education indicators, though showing improvement, still lag behind regional averages (Moh, 2022). This underscores the urgency to reassess and innovate the education system to foster holistic development.

While previous research has shed light on various aspects of Myanmar's education system, there remains an unexplored terrain concerning transformative education practices. Transformative education, defined by its emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability, has demonstrated success in various global contexts (Rodríguez et al., 2020; Colomer, 2020). However, its specific applicability and impact within the unique socio-cultural context of Myanmar have not been comprehensively addressed. This study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the potential of transformative education in addressing the nuanced challenges faced by Myanmar's education system.

The challenges within Myanmar's education system are multi-faceted, encompassing infrastructural limitations, outdated curricula, and socio-economic disparities. Infrastructure deficiencies, such as inadequate facilities and limited access to technology, hinder the delivery of quality education (Hebebcı et al., 2020). Additionally, a curriculum primarily focused on rote memorization and examination-oriented practices fails to cultivate critical thinking and creativity among students (Khan & Ashraf, 2023). Furthermore, socio-economic factors contribute to disparities in educational access, perpetuating cycles of inequality (Agasisti & Maragkou, 2023).

The existing literature outlines these challenges but falls short in providing a comprehensive exploration of transformative education practices as potential solutions. Transformative education, with its emphasis on empowering individuals to critically engage with their environment, has the potential to address these challenges in a unique and impactful manner. By delving into the unexplored territory of transformative education in Myanmar, this study aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform policy, shape institutional reforms, and foster community engagement.

Transformative education is not merely a theoretical concept; it has demonstrated tangible success in various global contexts. In countries such as Finland and Singapore, transformative education practices have played a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes and fostering innovation (Sahlberg, 2011; Tan, 2018). The importance of transformative education lies in its capacity to go beyond traditional pedagogical approaches, instilling in learners the ability to question, analyze, and adapt to the complexities of an ever-evolving world.

Moreover, transformative education aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations, particularly Goal 4: Quality Education. By promoting critical thinking, creativity, and inclusivity, transformative education can contribute significantly to achieving not only access to education but also the enhancement of the overall quality of learning experiences (Odel et al., 2020).

In the specific context of Myanmar, where the education system is in a state of transition, the adoption of transformative education practices can serve as a catalyst for positive change. By preparing students not only with knowledge but also with the skills and mindset necessary for active participation in a globalized world, transformative education has the potential to empower individuals and drive socio-economic development.

This study sets out to achieve several interrelated objectives: Identify and analyze the key challenges in Myanmar's education system, considering infrastructure, curriculum, and socio-economic factors. Evaluate the potential impact of transformative education practices in addressing these challenges. Propose practical strategies for the implementation of transformative education in the Myanmar context. By addressing these objectives, this research seeks to contribute actionable insights that can inform policy decisions, guide institutional reforms, and promote community involvement in the transformative education landscape of Myanmar.

## **Methods**

In conducting this research, a quantitative methodology was employed to systematically gather, analyze, and interpret numerical data aimed at addressing the research questions and objectives. To achieve this, a cross-sectional research design was adopted, allowing for the collection of data at a specific point in time. Stratified random sampling was utilized to ensure representation from diverse subgroups within the target population, considering variables such as educational levels, geographical locations, and socio-economic backgrounds. This approach aimed to enhance the generalizability of findings. Participants were drawn from various educational institutions across Myanmar, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, with

assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire, encompassing sections on demographics, perceptions of the current education system, experiences with transformative education practices, and opinions on potential impacts. Trained enumerators administered the surveys, ensuring completeness and accuracy. The questionnaire underwent pre-testing to assess reliability and validity, leading to necessary adjustments. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistical tests like chi-square and regression analysis, with a significance level set at  $p < 0.05$ . Ethical considerations were paramount, encompassing informed consent, participant confidentiality, and requisite approvals from ethical review boards. Overall, this quantitative approach provided a robust framework for systematically examining the transformative education landscape in Myanmar, and the subsequent sections will present key findings derived from the analysis.

## Result and Discussion

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Male)	120	40%
Gender (Female)	180	60%
Educational Level		
- Primary	50	16.7%
- Secondary	120	40%
- Tertiary	130	43.3%

The sample consisted of 300 participants, with a fairly balanced gender distribution. The majority of participants were from tertiary education institutions, reflecting a diverse representation of educational levels.

Table 2. Perceptions of the Current Education System

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction with Curriculum	3.8	0.6
Access to Technology	3.2	0.8
Infrastructure Facilities	4.1	0.5

Participants, on average, expressed relatively high satisfaction with the curriculum and infrastructure facilities, while there was a moderate satisfaction level regarding access to technology. The standard deviations suggest some variability in responses.

Table 3. Experiences with Transformative Education Practices

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Participated in Workshops	200	66.7%
Integration of Technology	180	60%
Critical Thinking Activities	250	83.3%

A significant portion of participants reported engagement in transformative practices, particularly through workshops and critical thinking activities. Integration of technology was also prevalent among the majority of respondents.

The obtained descriptive statistics shed light on various aspects of the transformative education landscape in Myanmar. This discussion interprets and contextualizes the findings, drawing connections between demographic characteristics, perceptions of the current education system, and experiences with transformative education practices. The goal is to unravel key insights that contribute to understanding the potential impact of transformative education in Myanmar.

The demographic profile of the 300 participants reveals a balanced gender distribution, with 40% male and 60% female representation. This gender balance is encouraging, indicating inclusivity in the sample. In terms of educational levels, the majority of participants (43.3%) are from tertiary institutions, followed by secondary education (40%) and primary education (16.7%). This distribution mirrors the educational landscape of Myanmar, where the emphasis on higher education is notable (Kipgen, 2022). However, the inclusion of participants from diverse educational backgrounds ensures a comprehensive understanding of transformative education's potential impact across different stages of learning.

Participants' perceptions of the current education system are critical in identifying areas that may benefit from transformative practices. The mean scores for satisfaction with the curriculum (3.8), access to technology (3.2), and infrastructure facilities (4.1) provide nuanced insights. The relatively high mean score for satisfaction with the curriculum suggests an overall positive sentiment among participants. This may indicate that the existing curriculum, despite its challenges, aligns with certain expectations or preferences. However, the moderate satisfaction level regarding access to technology signals an area that could be enhanced. Integrating technology in education is a key aspect of transformative practices (Wang et al., 2021), and addressing this aspect could further empower learners for the future.

The high mean score for satisfaction with infrastructure facilities indicates that participants generally perceive the physical learning environment positively. Adequate infrastructure is essential for effective education delivery (Simamora et al., 2020), and the high satisfaction score may reflect successful investments in this regard. These findings underline the importance of holistic educational enhancements beyond curriculum development alone.

The participants' experiences with transformative education practices provide valuable insights into the current state of pedagogical approaches in Myanmar. Notably, a significant proportion of participants reported engagement in transformative practices, with 66.7% participating in workshops, 60% integrating technology into their learning, and 83.3% being involved in critical thinking activities. These high percentages are indicative of a considerable openness and inclination towards transformative practices among the sampled population.

Participation in workshops signifies a willingness to engage in professional development, showcasing a proactive approach among educators and learners. The integration of technology is vital for preparing students for a technology-driven future (Abitoye et al., 2023), and the reported 60% involvement is promising. Critical thinking, a cornerstone of transformative education (Chancey & Lease, 2020), appears to be actively encouraged, as evidenced by the high participation rate. These findings suggest that while transformative practices are not universally prevalent, there is a significant foundation and receptivity for such approaches within the education system.

The discussion of these findings leads to several implications for the future of education in Myanmar. Firstly, recognizing the positive perceptions and engagement with transformative practices suggests an opportunity for scaling up such initiatives. Initiatives to further integrate technology, expand critical thinking activities, and provide more transformative workshops can enhance the overall educational experience.

Moreover, the demographic distribution emphasizes the importance of tailoring transformative practices to different educational levels. While the focus on higher education aligns with global trends, efforts should also be directed towards primary and secondary education to ensure a holistic and continuous transformative learning experience for students across all levels.

In light of these implications, recommendations include the need for targeted investments in technology infrastructure, professional development programs for educators, and a review of the curriculum to embed transformative principles more deeply. Collaborative efforts involving

educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders are crucial for implementing sustainable changes.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, and the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships. Future research could employ longitudinal designs and mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of transformative education in Myanmar.

## Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the transformative education landscape in Myanmar. The positive perceptions, active engagement in transformative practices, and demographic diversity among participants indicate a readiness for educational change. The findings underscore the need for targeted investments in technology, professional development for educators, and a reevaluation of curricular frameworks. By building upon existing strengths and addressing identified opportunities, Myanmar can pave the way for a more dynamic and forward-thinking education system, fostering empowered and future-ready learners. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study and encourage future research to delve deeper into transformative education dynamics. The journey towards transformative education in Myanmar is a collaborative effort, and it is our collective responsibility to propel the nation's educational system into a new era of empowerment and innovation.

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