International Labour Organization

Who pays the price of unemployment?

Employment termination and income security in Myanmar

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▶ Foreword

Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 military takeover and surging global commodity prices have significantly impacted the lives of the people of Myanmar. One such impact is employment; despite a slight recovery in the first half of 2022, unemployment and underemployment in Myanmar are reportedly still worse than they were before the pandemic started in 2020.

This study helps understand the mechanism behind employment terminations in Myanmar and the consequences faced by unemployed workers. It identifies who lost jobs, how and why workers and employers terminated employment relationships, and how effectively or ineffectively existing income protection mechanisms have helped workers.

On behalf of the ILO, I would like to express our gratitude to all who contributed to this study and the resulting report. This study was undertaken by the ILO Liaison Office in Myanmar (ILO-Yangon), and the survey underpinning the study was conducted by a team of enumerators and managers under the overall supervision of the authors, while ILO national experts provided training and day-to-day support to the survey team. This report was authored by Mr Ippei Tsuruga, Social Protection Programme Manager, the ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor-Leste, and Dr Qisha Quarina, Lecturer at Universitas Gadjah Mada. The report also greatly benefited from excellent comments and valuable information from peer reviewers: Ms Anne Margaret Boyd, Legal Specialist, ILO Conditions of Work and Equality Department, Mr Markus Ruck, Senior Technical Specialist on Social Protection, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for South-East and East Asia (ILO DWT-Bangkok), Mr Phu Huynh, Employment Specialist (ILO DWT-Bangkok), and Ms Piyamal Pichaiwongse, Deputy Liaison Officer (ILO-Yangon).

It is our hope that the findings in this study will help in the formulation of sound policies for unemployment protection once Myanmar has restored democracy and rebuilt the rule of law.

Donglin Li

Liaison Officer / Representative

ILO Liaison Office in Myanmar

Contents

List of tables

List of figures

▶ Abbreviations and acronyms

CDM	Civil Disobedience Movement
IDP	internally displaced person
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NGO	non-governmental organization
SSB	Social Security Board

Executive summary

For this study, an ILO research team interviewed 1,500 former wage employees across Myanmar who had experienced employment termination or temporary suspension of work between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2022 – a period characterized by multiple shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the February 2021 military takeover, and surging global prices of food, oil and other commodities. Using the survey data, this report aims to assess who lost jobs in Myanmar; when and why they lost jobs; how their job losses[1] were compensated; how temporary suspension of work affected workers; how these workers coped with these employment shocks; and how they returned to work.

The service and industry sectors accounted for two-thirds and one-third of employment termination, respectively, while the agriculture sector lost few jobs. Among the various economic subsectors, wholesale and retail trade accounted for the largest share of job loss (24 per cent), followed by textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing (15 per cent), construction (9 per cent), other manufacturing (8 per cent), accommodation and food service (8 per cent), and the education sector (7 per cent).

Based on the survey data, the prevalence of employment termination increased by 23.5 per cent in Myanmar after the February 2021 military takeover. Informal employment or less productive jobs were constantly lost over the study period, but formal employment or more productive jobs were lost in greater numbers after the military takeover. A comparison of the average monthly incidence shows that following the military takeover, job losses increased by:

- 48 per cent among the higher educated and 18 per cent among the lower educated;
- 144 per cent among those with written contracts and 4 per cent among those with oral agreements;
- 50 per cent among active social security members and 16 per cent among uninsured workers; and
- 44 per cent among employees of medium-to-large enterprises and 9 per cent among employees of micro-to-small enterprise.

Following the military takeover there was also an increase in job losses in knowledge-intensive sectors, most notably an increase of 323 per cent among employees in the financial and insurance sector and an increase of 314 per cent among employees in the education sector.

The public sector started losing jobs after the military takeover, while the private sector continued to lose jobs over the entire study period. Eighty-five per cent of employment termination in the public sector occurred after the military takeover, with 70 per cent observed to have occurred between February and May 2021. The prevalence of monthly incidence of job loss in the public sector increased by 392 per cent compared to the study period before the takeover. This sharp increase was led by employment termination in the public education sector. Almost all job losses in the public education sector were observed after the military takeover (95 per cent). The major means by which workers lost their jobs in the public sector was resignation (80 per cent), though all instances of dismissal in the public sector were found after the military takeover.

Voluntary resignation (70 per cent) was the most common means for employment termination, followed by dismissal (28 per cent). Few workers reported losing their job due to the expiry of a fixed-term contract or by mutual agreement with their employer to cancel their contract. Most dismissals (78 per cent) were apparently for lawful reasons, including ordinary misconduct (1 per cent), liquidation of the business (28 per cent) and suspension of business due to unforeseeable events (49 per cent).

Workers with higher employability and productivity are slightly more likely to resign rather than be dismissed. The share of resignations is lower and the share of dismissals is higher among workers who are older and less educated. Younger workers and the highly educated may find more job opportunities, and so they may opt for resignation to pursue these opportunities. Likewise, workers in formal employment and working for formal sector enterprises are less likely to resign. The share of resignation was relatively lower among workers with a written contract, with social insurance, with private insurance, or working for medium-to-large enterprises. Exceptionally, the share of resignations was much higher among workers in government roles than in the private sector.

Dismissals dramatically increased after the military takeover (41 per cent). The monthly average incidence of resignations also increased by 22 per cent after the military takeover. The rapid increase in dismissals after the military takeover was

[1] Unless specified otherwise, this study uses variations of the terms “employment termination” and “job loss” interchangeably to refer to the ending of the employment relationship between an employer and employee, regardless of whether the relationship ended due to resignation, dismissal or mutual agreement.

led by non-standard reasons instead of standard ones that had driven employment termination before the takeover. Standard reasons rose at a relatively modest level, only by 13 per cent for liquidation of business and 11 per cent for suspension of business due to unforeseeable events. Non-standard reasons categorized as "other reasons" increased significantly after the military takeover by 690 per cent. Nearly one-third of non-standard reasons for dismissal provided during the survey were related to factors linked to the military takeover, such as employees' participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) or other political activities and employees' refusal to come to work due to security concerns. These combined results may suggest the military takeover and related actions like the CDM have greatly contributed to increasing job losses in the country.

When terminating the employment relationship, employees and employers are generally required to give 30 days' advance notice prior to resignation or dismissal. However, only one-third of workers and employers complied with the 30-day advance notice requirement, and nearly half of all worker resignations and employer dismissals occurred without any advance notification to the other party. Concerning dismissals in practice, many employers appear to consider it an option to choose whether to notify their employees and continue paying salary for 30 days or to provide payment in lieu of notice and immediately dismiss the worker. Forty-three per cent of dismissed workers received the 30-day advance notice or pay in lieu of notice. However, the remaining 57 per cent received no compensation at all or only part of the wages that they were supposed to receive from work in the last month before dismissal because of employer noncompliance.

Dismissed workers are generally entitled to statutory severance pay, but in practice, workers in informal employment were less likely to enjoy it. Only 30 per cent of dismissed workers received severance pay. Among workers with entitled to receive severance pay, 55 per cent of those dismissed for liquidation of business and 27 per cent of those dismissed due to suspension of business due to unforeseeable events enjoyed severance pay. Workers in formal employment with written contracts, fixed-term contracts, social insurance coverage, working for large enterprises and working in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector were more likely to receive severance.

By construction, severance pay provides better pay to workers with stable and long-term employment and high wages, and therefore, is more likely protect workers in formal employment than workers in need. Among workers who received severance pay, the average severance was 329,072 kyat – or the equivalent of 1.9 months of wages on average. Women and youth (ages 15–24) were more likely to receive lower severance pay than men and older workers (ages 25+). The average severance pay for men and older workers was 42 per cent and 68 per cent higher than their counterparts, respectively, and income replacement relative to monthly wage follows the same trend. Employees who worked for their employer for 30 months or more received 483,930 kyat (or 2.9 months' salary) on average, while workers with less than 30 months of service received 149,318 kyat (or 0.9 months' salary) on average.

During the survey period, some former wage employees returned to work. Among those who returned to work, 70 per cent found new wage employment and 30 per cent chose to become self-employed as their first job after employment termination. On average, it took workers who returned to wage employment 167 days from the day of employment termination to secure new work. Marriage appears to encourage male workers to return to wage employment quicker, but it also appears to prompt female workers to spend more time returning to employment than their never married peers. Workers with less experience, low productivity, and who previously worked in informal employment and in informal sector enterprises tended to return to work earlier than their counterparts. Most workers who returned to wage employment relied on informal sources of information to find their new jobs. Among workers who found wage employment through formal approaches, almost all used online platforms. Moreover, self-employment appears to be an option for making a living instead of being unemployed. In particular, it is notable that a majority of former government employees who returned to work became self-employed.

Many workers lost income from their jobs while still being employed due to temporary suspensions of work or reductions in working hours and/or days. During periods of temporary suspension of work attributable to employers, 60 per cent of affected workers did not receive any salary at all, 18 per cent received a reduced salary, and only 22 per cent received their full salary. Moreover, 26 per cent of workers who participated in the survey experienced delayed or reduced wage payments. In addition, 52 per cent of the workers experienced a reduction in regular business hours or overtime, with 64 per cent of these workers finding that these reductions lowered their income from work.

Reduction in working hours were not caused only by the decisions of employers but also due to employees deciding to avoid exposure to health or security risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the military takeover and related violence. Fifty-three per cent of workers absented themselves from work over health concerns during the study period, and 28 per cent of workers had to be absent from work due to security concerns.

Our survey concluded by asking workers which expenditure components of their household had increased since the beginning of the pandemic and how they fulfilled increased needs for household consumption. Most workers reported an increase in food expenditure and healthcare expenditure. Eighty-nine per cent of workers relied on income from work to fulfil their increasing household needs, as the most reliable source of income. However, many workers had to take up unsustainable coping strategies by withdrawing their bank saving, lending or borrowing, and selling assets such as houses, land, stocks and bonds, while a few relied on public support or severance pay.

Who paid the price of these multiple shocks? It is evident that workers struggled to secure income during unemployment. Workers experienced income loss because of job loss, temporary suspension of work and reductions in working hours, while their household expenditures increased simultaneously. Almost none of the public schemes or statutory employer liability schemes effectively helped workers secure income to cope with the multiple shocks hitting the country, and workers themselves had to find solutions to make a living without such support. In the absence of an unemployment insurance scheme, severance pay is the only statutory scheme in Myanmar that can address income security during spells of unemployment spells – but this scheme has revealed its limited ability to protect workers in need.

1

Introduction

Since 2020, the multiple shocks of COVID-19, the military takeover and the surging global prices of food, oil and other commodities have greatly impacted the lives of the people of Myanmar (World Bank 2022b). A recent household survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) revealed deteriorating living or working conditions (UNDP 2021). According to the UNDP survey, most households in Myanmar have experienced a drop in income since the military takeover, and have lost 23 per cent of monthly household income on average. Family-run businesses, urban households and households who live within proximity to conflict have been affected relatively more by reductions in income, and almost one-third of households have at least one family member who permanently lost their job as an employee.

Concerning employment, despite a slight recovery in the first half of 2022, unemployment and underemployment are reportedly still worse in Myanmar than during the time before the COVID-19 pandemic started in 2020. The ILO estimated an 8 per cent increase in unemployment (or 1.6 million jobs lost), as well as an 18 per cent decline in working hours in 2021 compared to levels in 2020 due to losses of employment and increases in underemployment (ILO 2021b). Although employment increased from 18.6 million to 19.3 million between 2021 and the first half of 2022, the overall employment level was estimated to still be below the employment figure of 20.4 million in 2020 (ILO 2022a). Moreover, the UNDP and ILO studies highlight male and female workers experienced a different degree of impact on employment, depending on the industry (ILO 2021b; UNDP 2021). These studies found more job losses[2] among male workers in the construction industry and among female workers in the garment, tourism and hospitality industries.

The decline in the urban economy and related job losses resulted in increasing internal migration from urban to rural areas, and labour shifted from services to agriculture, which was a coping strategy of workers and their households to deal with job losses (World Bank 2022b). However, it is also reported that households in rural areas and the agriculture sector have also been affected by global inflation brought on by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Indonesia's palm oil export ban and other related market shocks. Almost all regions in Myanmar have faced a price increase in food, fuel, fertilizer and other commodities that are necessary to maintain people's lives and agricultural activities (WFP 2022).

According to the World Bank, these multiple shocks on employment, income and consumption increased poverty up to a level not seen in nearly a decade (World Bank 2022c). Yet, as social assistance to households during COVID-19 has halted or been scaled down since the military takeover, households must cope with income loss on their own.

Who pays the price of unemployment? It appears from the recent studies cited above that households are reaping the consequence of unemployment and other employment-related shocks without income support from social protection or any other public support.

The Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), requires that ILO Member States establish a social security scheme that guarantees temporary and partial income replacement for unemployed workers. The Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), promotes the extension of covered contingencies to loss of partial earnings for workers who are still in an employment relationship but are affected by a temporary reduction in hours of work or a temporary suspension of work.[3]

In Myanmar, the Social Security Law 2012 and the Social Security Rules 2014 have regulated for an unemployment insurance scheme, but the scheme has yet to be implemented (Tsuruga, Llano, and Moo 2021).[4] In the absence of such a public scheme, workers have to rely on severance pay for their income security during unemployment periods, but though mandated in law, payment of severance in practice is highly dependent on employers being willing and able to pay it. (Tsuruga and Moo 2021). Similarly, as there is no public scheme to compensate loss of full or partial earnings due to temporary reductions in hours of work or temporary suspensions of work,[5] the income security of workers in such instances depends solely on employers' liabilities and their ability and willingness to aid their workers.

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[2] Unless specified otherwise, this study uses variations of the terms "employment termination" and "job loss" interchangeably to refer to the ending of the employment relationship between an employer and employee, regardless of whether the relationship ended due to resignation, dismissal or mutual agreement.

[3] See Appendix 1 for the definition of a "temporary suspension of work".

[4] The ILO recently conducted a separate assessment on the policy design for an unemployment insurance scheme and proposed how current policy should be reformed before being implemented (Landry and Brimblecombe, forthcoming). Policy options provided by this assessment report should be used in national consultations for the people of Myanmar to formulate an ideal policy for the scheme in the future.

[5] Myanmar does not have an employment retention programme such as the Short-Time Work schemes in European countries (Eichhorst, Marx, and Rinne 2021; Plaza, Behrendt, and Markov 2020), the Employment Adjustment Subsidy scheme in Japan (Tsuruga 2020), or the Employment Retention Subsidy scheme in the Republic of Korea (Chung 2021).

All of these circumstances prompted us to conduct a survey and analysis to assess the situation of employment, termination and income protection of Myanmar workers in time of crisis. Through the survey, we aimed to collect empirical evidence on who lost jobs, how workers and employers terminated employment relationships, and how effectively or ineffectively existing mechanisms for income protection have helped workers. More specifically, the survey contains questions to identify ongoing challenges concerning unemployment, temporary suspension of work, reduction in working hours, and related income protection of affected workers.

Using the survey data, this paper aims to provide quantitative evidence on the experiences of workers in Myanmar whose employment has been terminated and the experience of workers who have been affected by a temporary reduction in hours of work or a temporary suspension of work.

2

Methodology

This chapter presents a brief overview of the methodology for the study. A more comprehensive look at the methodology is presented in Appendix 2 of this report.

To secure the desired data, a survey was designed to achieve multiple objectives. The survey questionnaire has three major sections covering three topics: (i) temporary suspension of work; (ii) employment termination; and (iii) working conditions. In order to get a sample size that is representative of the Myanmar population, we followed the sample size formula by Lind, Marchal, and Wathen (2018), which is as follows:

$$n = \pi(1-\pi)\left(\frac{z}{E}\right)^2$$

Where n is the size of the sample; z is the standard normal z-value corresponding to the desired level of confidence; π is the population proportion; and E is the maximum allowable error or the margin of error. In this case, we based the population proportion benchmark on the Labour Force Participation Rate in Myanmar in 2020, which was estimated at 60 per cent (World Bank, n.d.). We selected a confidence level of 95 per cent (with a corresponding z-value of 1.96) and set the margin of error of 2.5 per cent.[6] Through this, it was concluded that 1,500 respondents would be sufficient to meet the research objective.

Respondents were randomly selected and asked four filtering questions to participate in the survey. The 1,500 survey respondents in the sample represent the final set of workers who met all the filtering criteria, including:

i. Being employed on 29 February 2020;

ii. Being an employee on 29 February 2020;

iii. Being 15 years old or above on 29 February 2020; and

iv. Having experienced employment termination, temporary suspension of work while being employed, or both between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2022.

For this survey, a pre-existing panel of 281,173 registered phone numbers was used as the sample frame for the recruitment and selection of respondents. The sample selection was done by using systematic random sampling from the panel data. A multi-stage random sampling method was applied to achieve a sample of respondents that is representative of the national population.

As a result of the survey, we obtained three separate datasets for analysis in this paper (table 1). Among the 1,500 total respondents, 772 (51 per cent) experienced temporary suspension of work without breaking the employment relationship with their employer; 397 (26 per cent) experienced employment termination but did not experience a temporary suspension of work; and 331 (22 per cent) experienced both employment termination and temporary suspension of work. For the analysis of temporary suspension of work in section 7.1 of the report, we therefore used a dataset of 1,103 respondents (or 74 per cent of all respondents). Of these 1,103 respondents, 639 (58 per cent) experienced a temporary suspension of work once, and 464 respondents (42 per cent) experienced it twice or more. For the analysis of employment termination, we used a dataset of 728 respondents (or 49 per cent of the total respondents). Of these 728 respondents, 642 (88 per cent) experienced employment termination once, and 86 respondents (12 per cent) experienced it twice or more. For the analysis of other working conditions in section 7.2, we use a dataset containing all 1,500 respondents.

In the event that a respondent experienced temporary suspension of work or employment termination more than once during the survey period, we asked the respondent to report on the first instance. It is also noted that the datasets for temporary suspension of work (1,103 respondents) and employment termination (728 respondents) are not comparable even though they contain some of the same respondents. In fact, a respondent who experienced both temporary suspension of work and employment termination might report these experiences with the same employer or with two different employers (that is, they may have lost their job with one employer and experienced temporary work suspension with another). As such, although both datasets contain information about employment contracts, workplace location and business characteristics, respondents found in both datasets were not necessarily reporting the same answers to these questions, as they might have been referring to different employers/jobs for each set of questions.

[6] Thus, n= 0.601(0.399)((1.96/0.025)^2) 1,473.9, which we then rounded up to 1,500 samples.

▶ **Table 1. Respondents by experience with temporary suspension of work and employment termination**

Indicator	Frequency	Share (%)
Summary		
Temporary suspension of work only	772	51.5
Employment termination only	397	26.5
Experienced both	331	22.1
Total	1 500	100.0
Temporary suspension of work		
All respondents		
Never	397	26.5
Once	639	42.6
Twice or more	464	30.9
Total	1 500	100.0
Respondents who experienced temporary suspension of work		
Once	639	57.9
Twice or more	464	42.1
Total	1 103	100.0
Employment termination		
All respondents		
Never	772	51.5
Once	642	42.8
Twice or more	86	5.7
Total	1 500	100.0
Respondents who experienced employment termination		
Once	642	88.2
Twice or more	86	11.8
Total	728	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

The questionnaire was developed by the authors according to laws and regulations that were effective as of 31 December 2020.[7] We adopted the same classification of age group, educational attainment, and industry as that of the latest labour force survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (2021). The total sample of 1,500 workers were interviewed by telephone using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) for four weeks from 10 May 2022 to 10 June 2022. The interviewers called the phone numbers in the pre-existing panel. A total of 8,812 phone numbers were called 33,419 times to achieve the 1,500 interviews for this survey.

This survey has several limitations and challenges. One of the major challenges is related to the timing of the survey. The application and enforcement of laws and regulations, and the mindset of workers and employers concerning compliance may be completely different in the periods before and after 1 February 2021, following the state of emergency depriving citizens of civil liberties. In this paper, we formulate an analytical framework to assess compliance with the legal obligations of employers and the rights of workers according to laws and regulations that were effective as of 31 December 2020. However, since then the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and labour strikes became national movements to demand the restoration of democratic and civilian rule, while many people have reportedly been arrested or killed (ILO 2021a; 2022c). Under the circumstances, it is reasonable to assume that the timing of employment termination or any other employment-related actions has potentially affected the behaviour of both employers and workers. We will conduct a sensitivity analysis to examine the impact of these factors in this paper.

[7] A detailed review of employment termination rules was commissioned in a separate paper (see Tsuruga and Moo 2021).

Another limitation is the exclusion of certain groups because of lack of access to a phone or due to security concerns. The nature of a phone survey certainly excludes potential respondents who do not have access to a phone. Similarly, we experienced poor phone connections and distracting noises during interviews. Enumerators found many such cases – especially in Sagaing Region, Magway Region, Kayah State and Chin State – and in some instances had to terminate interviews midway. In relation to security concerns, some interviewees hesitated to participate in the survey or to fully express their situation. Enumerators found that 13 per cent of the households refused to participate in the survey even though they were qualified based on the filtering questions.

Moreover, our survey potentially excludes seasonal, occasional, casual or daily workers, as well as any other fixed-term employees who work on a short-term basis. Unlike the common approach adopted by Myanmar's Labour Force Surveys, we did not ask about respondents' employment status "in the last week prior to the survey" as a filtering question to enrol respondents. Instead, we asked about employment status "at the specific day of Saturday, 29 February 2020", because the aim was to assess employment-related shocks that took place since March 2020. As this approach requires respondents to be in employment on that day – and noting that this was a Saturday as well – it probably excluded some occasional, casual, daily or seasonal workers who did not have employment relationship on that specific day.

Finally, our survey did not distinguish between individual dismissals and collective dismissals. This limitation may potentially contribute to increasing the number of dismissal cases in certain industrial sectors or geographical locations, if collective dismissals were prevalent in these sectors or locations but not in other sectors or locations. Therefore, such incidents may have led to the overrepresentation of certain groups of workers.

3

Who lost jobs?

In this chapter, we describe the distribution of employment termination prevalence by different characteristics.[8] A comparison of the distribution found in Myanmar's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and our sample group can help understand whether our sample over- or underrepresents workers with certain characteristics. The LFS 2019 not only presents general trends concerning the working age population and labour force, but also allows for the disaggregation of the labour force into wage employees, self-employed workers and unemployed workers. According to the LFS 2019, the working age population (ages 15 and above) was 37.24 million in 2019. Within the working age population, there was a labour force of 22.15 million workers, of whom 7.73 million were wage employees (table 2) (Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b; ILO, n.d.). As the LFS data was collected through semi-annual surveys conducted in January to March and September to November 2019, it presents trends during a normal period before the COVID-19 pandemic or the military takeover. By contrast, our survey data includes only wage employees affected by employment related shocks that occurred during these crises.

Overall, the findings in this chapter confirm that some of the global trends regarding the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis are also found in Myanmar. For example, an analysis of high-frequency phone surveys conducted by the World Bank in 40 countries found that women, youth, less educated and urban workers were the most affected by job loss, with the impact being higher in the services sector and lower in the agricultural sector (Kugler et al. 2021). All of these trends were also found in our datasets.

▶ **Table 2. Myanmar working age population and labour force, 2019**

Indicator	Description	No. (million)	%
Working age 15+	Male	16.98	45.6
	Female	20.26	54.4
	Total	37.24	100.0
Labour force 15+	Male	12.82	57.9
	Female	9.33	42.1
	Total	22.15	100.0
Employed 15+	Male	12.77	57.9
	Female	9.27	42.1
	Total	22.04	100.0
Employee 15+	Male	4.47	57.8
	Female	3.27	42.2
	Total	7.73	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations based on Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

3.1. Demographic characteristics

Table 3 summarizes the distribution of the 728 survey respondents affected by employment termination (hereafter referred to as "terminated respondents") by a number of demographic characteristics. Among the terminated respondents, male and female workers are represented almost equally. Workers aged 25–34 account for 43 per cent of terminated respondents, followed by youth workers (ages 15–24) at 33 per cent, workers aged 35–44 at 17 per cent, workers aged 55–64 at 6 per cent, and workers aged 65 and above at 1.5 per cent. Concerning the highest level of educational attainment, 42 per cent of terminated respondents completed a high school education or above; 33 per cent completed a secondary school education but did not complete high school; and 23 per cent had a primary school education or lower. Almost half of the terminated respondents were married and most of the remainder had never been married – only a few were divorced or widowed.

Female workers are overrepresented among the terminated respondents compared to the overall wage employee population of Myanmar. According to the LFS 2019, males account for a higher proportion of wage employees than females – 58 per cent versus 42 per cent, respectively – while among the terminated respondents in our survey the split

[8] The distributions of employment termination and temporary suspension of work are similar. □3 compares the distribution of these separate datasets.

between male and female respondents is roughly equal (figure 1). This may suggest a higher prevalence of employment termination among female employees than among male employees.

▶ **Figure 1. Sex distribution of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)**

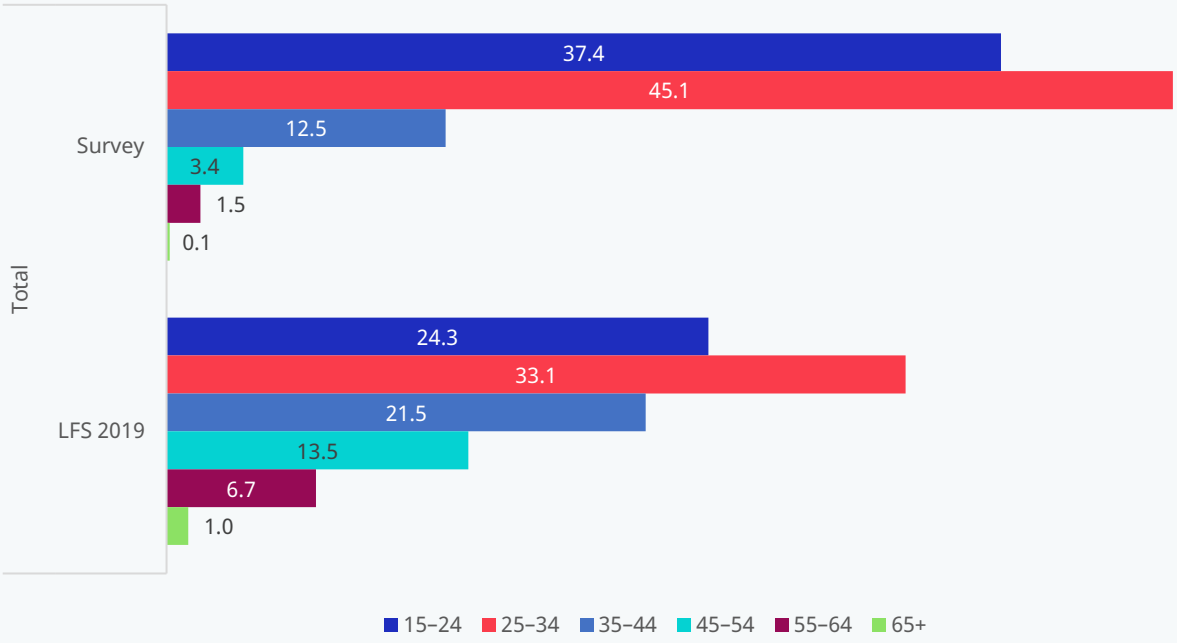
Source: Authors' calculations based on Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Younger employees are more strongly represented among the terminated respondents relative to the general population of wage employees. According to the LFS 2019, the share of youth workers (ages 15–24) and young workers (ages 25–34) account for 24 per cent and 33 per cent of wage employees, respectively (figure 2). However, among terminated respondents, 37 per cent were youth employees and 45 per cent were young employees.

The higher prevalence of employment termination among younger employees than their more senior counterparts is in line with global and regional trends. ILO global studies have found that youth workers are generally more vulnerable to unemployment than adults. Youth (ages 15–24) are reportedly three times more likely to be unemployed than adults (aged 25+) even during normal times (ILO 2020a). Both across the world and in Asia and the Pacific during the COVID-19 crisis, youth unemployment rapidly increased in the initial phase of the pandemic, with more youth workers losing their jobs compared to adults, and the recovery of youth employment was rather slower (ILO 2022d; ILO 2020b; ILO 2020c; ILO and ADB 2020).

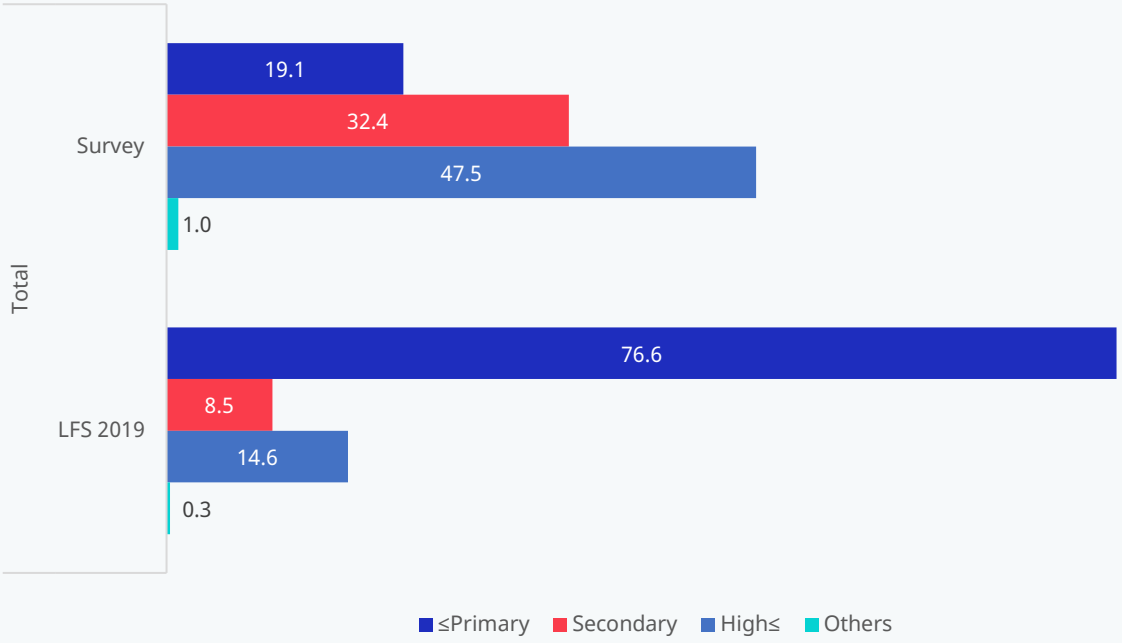
Employees with higher level of educational attainment were more likely to be affected by employment termination than those with a lower level of education. Among the terminated respondents, 80 per cent of employment termination was experienced by employees with a secondary school education or higher, with those holding a high school education and above being the most affected (figure 3). This finding is not in line with the global trend put forward in a previous study, which found that the lower educated were more affected by job loss than more highly educated workers (Kugler et al. 2021).

▶ Figure 2. Age distribution of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)



Source: Authors' calculations based on Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Figure 3. Education level of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Table 3. Demographic characteristics of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)

Indicator	Description	(1) Survey (n=728)			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Gender	Male	100.0	–	49.0	100.0	–	57.8	–	–	-8.7
	Female	–	100.0	51.0	–	100.0	42.2	–	–	8.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Age	15–24	37.3	37.5	37.4	22.1	27.2	24.3	15.1	10.3	13.1
	25–34	43.1	46.9	45.1	31.2	35.7	33.1	11.9	11.2	12.0
	35–44	13.4	11.6	12.5	22.6	19.9	21.5	-9.2	-8.3	-9.0
	45–54	3.1	3.8	3.4	15.1	11.4	13.5	-12.0	-7.6	-10.1
	55–64	2.8	0.3	1.5	7.8	5.2	6.7	-5.0	-4.9	-5.2
	65+	0.3	–	0.1	1.2	0.7	1.0	-0.9	-0.7	-0.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Age group	15–24	37.3	37.5	37.4	22.1	27.2	24.3	15.1	10.3	13.1
	25+	62.7	62.5	62.6	77.9	72.8	75.7	-15.1	-10.3	-13.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Education	Primary and below	19.3	18.9	19.1	78.2	74.3	76.6	-58.9	-55.5	-57.5
	Secondary	39.5	25.6	32.4	9.7	6.9	8.5	29.8	18.7	23.9
	High and above	39.8	55.0	47.5	11.8	18.5	14.6	27.9	36.5	32.9
	Others	1.4	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.3	0.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Marital status	Never married	55.7	58.0	56.9	41.7	53.1	46.5	14.1	4.9	10.4
	Married	42.6	39.9	41.2	55.6	39.4	48.8	-13.0	0.5	-7.6
	Divorced	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.1	2.4	1.7	0.6	-1.1	-0.2
	Widowed	–	0.8	0.4	1.6	5.1	3.1	-1.6	-4.2	-2.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–

Note: – = nil.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

3.2. Employment characteristics

Table 4 summarizes the employment characteristics of the terminated respondents. Most of the terminated respondents only had an oral contract/agreement (69 per cent) rather than a written contract (26 per cent), and those with permanent contracts/agreements (65 per cent) were more likely to lose their jobs than those with fixed-term contracts (33 per cent). Very few respondents were in an apprenticeship or in a probationary period, or were a member of a trade union. One-fifth of terminated respondents had social security coverage, while only a few had private insurance.

As a result, among terminated respondents those with an oral, permanent agreement account for the largest share of incidences, followed by those with a written, fixed-term contract; those with an oral, fixed-term agreement; and those with a written, permanent contract, in that order. Concerning the distribution of contract type and contract period, oral agreements account for 69 per cent of terminated respondents, and 80 per cent of respondents had permanent contracts (figure 5). Written contracts accounted for 26 per cent of terminated respondents, 72 per cent of whom had fixed-term contracts. Looking at the distribution from the other angle, those with permanent contracts accounted for 65 per cent of terminated respondents, with 85 per cent of these respondents only having an oral agreement. Those with fixed-term contracts accounted for 33 per cent of terminated respondents, with 57 per cent of these respondents having written contracts.

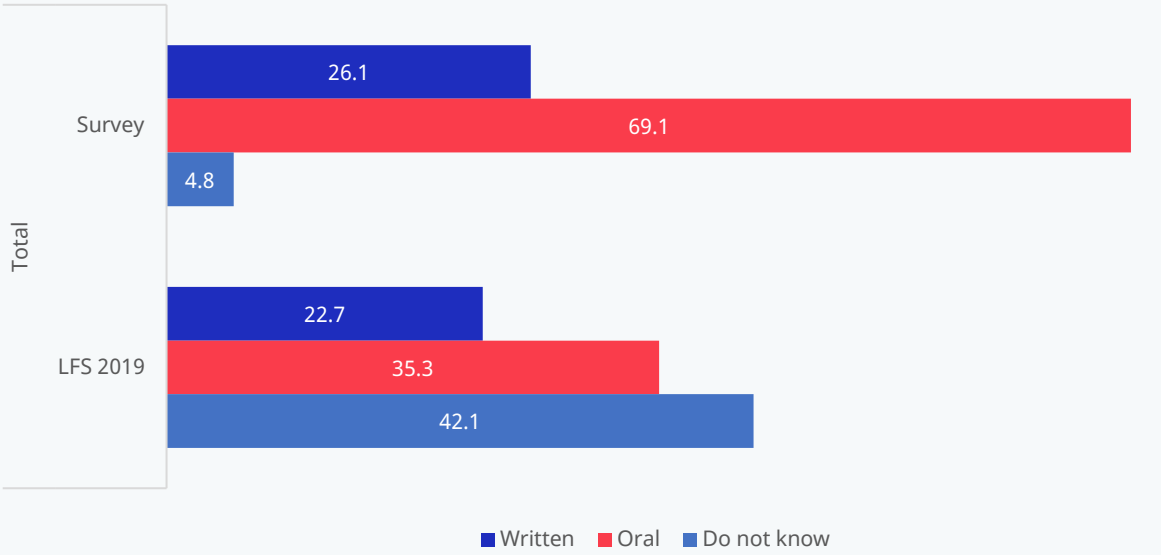
Workers with oral agreement are vulnerable to employment termination. As noted above, 69 per cent of terminated respondents had been employed under oral agreements. Notably, 80 per cent of terminated respondents with oral agreement believed their employment to be permanent, even without having any written documentation to this effect, though they eventually lost these jobs either voluntarily or involuntarily. These respondents were possibly working for their employer based on trust, friendship, kinship or some other informal connection and agreement within a closed community that did not bother with written agreements. Under the circumstances, they may agree to resign or perhaps hesitate to make a claim for or negotiate for their labour rights in the name of maintaining good relationships with their employers, even after leaving their jobs, or alternatively they may have none of the legal proof needed to negotiate for their legal rights with employers. If these behavioural effects exist around these employment relationships, the real reasons for termination may be disguised and become invisible in our survey.[9]

Many workers with written contracts also experienced employment termination. They accounted for 26 per cent of terminated respondents (figure 4). Due to the large number of unknown contract or agreement types in the LFS 2019, we cannot compare these results with the general distribution of employees and assess whether workers with written contract are typically more affected by employment termination than those with oral agreements or vice versa.[10]

[9] For instance, the share of resignation is relatively higher for employees with an oral contract than it is among employees with written contracts (see section 4).

[10] The distribution of contract types and the period in the LFS is not comparable with our data and consequently these results must be carefully interpreted. The questionnaire of the LFS does not allow for respondents to answer a question on contract duration if they do not know whether their employment is based on a written contract or oral agreement. In the LFS, 42 per cent of wage employees answered that they did not know whether they had a written contract or an oral agreement as the basis for their employment relationship with their employers. But based on the design of the LFS questionnaire, these 42 per cent of respondents were not allowed to answer the following question about contract duration. That is, the distribution of contract durations in the LFS does not reflect data from the nearly half of wage employees excluded by the previous question. Therefore, the distribution of contract duration in the LFS does not accurately illustrate the share of written or oral contracts or of permanent or fixed-term contracts.

▶ **Figure 4. Contract type of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)**



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

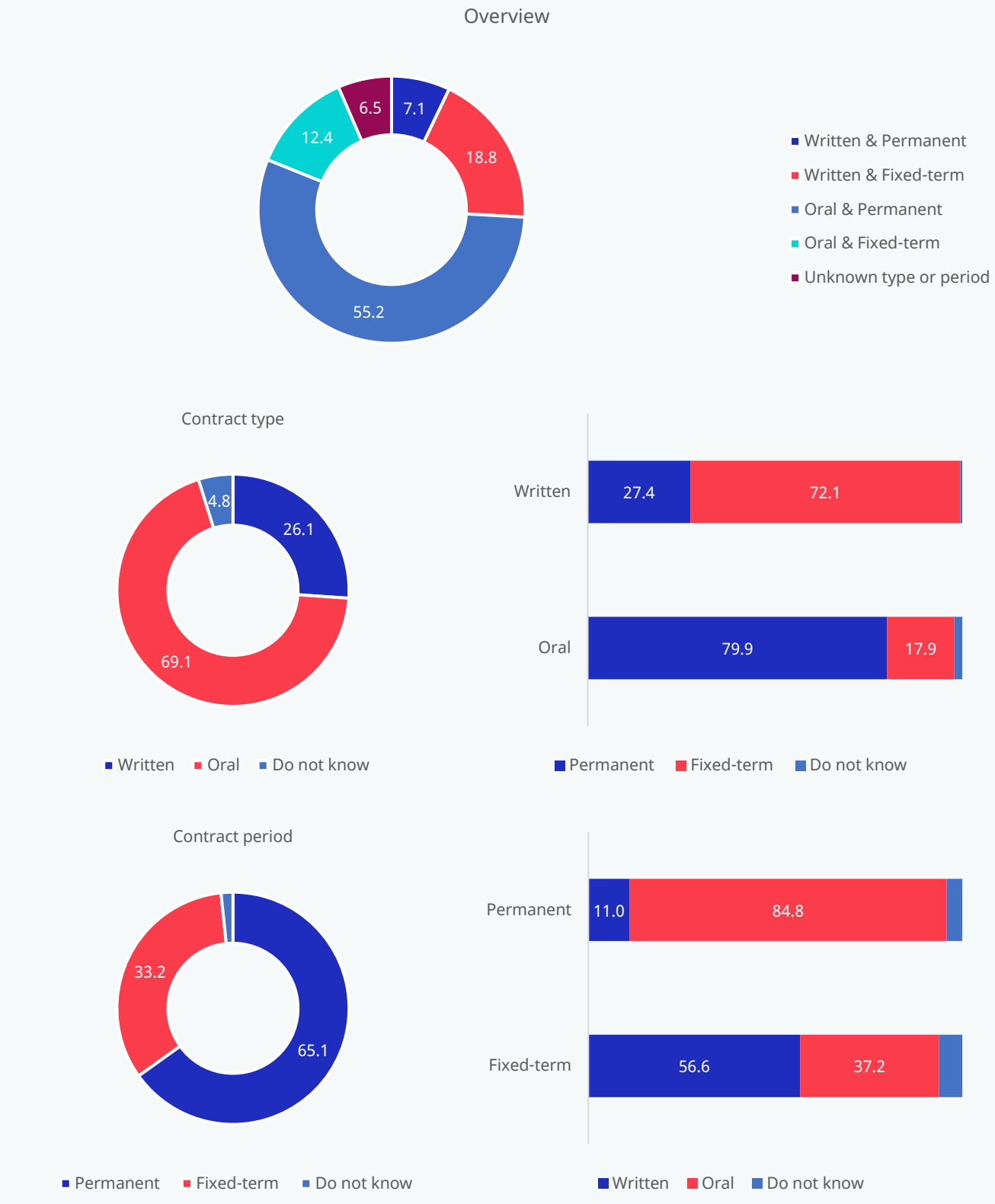
Having a permanent contract is not always associated with better protection from employment termination. Permanent contract holders accounted for 65 per cent of terminated respondents, with 85 per cent of these respondents having only an oral agreement. By contrast, fixed-term contract holders accounted for 33 per cent of terminated respondents, 57 per cent of whom held written contracts. These results may be explained by the Myanmar's unique administrative requirement for formalizing employment relationships. In Myanmar, employers must use the Employment Contract Template issued by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) in 2017, which requires the end date of the contract to be entered. Once signed, a copy of the contract must be submitted to the local Labour Exchange Office for endorsement (Tsuruga and Moo 2021). Consequently, when an employer complies with the use of this template, the contract will most likely be fixed-term one, though it is possible to upgrade it to a permanent contract upon the authority's endorsement. As such, many formally registered employment relationships will have written, fixed-term contracts.

The proportion of terminated respondents in an apprenticeship or in a probationary period was relatively high. These categories of workers represent only 2 per cent of all employees in Myanmar according to the LFS 2019 (figure 6), but they accounted for nearly 9 per cent of survey respondents who experienced employment termination at least once in the survey period.

The share of terminated respondents with social insurance coverage was relatively high. According to the LFS 2019, insured employees account for 12 per cent of all employees (figure 7). We found that 22 per cent of workers who experienced employment termination had social insurance coverage. Considering the general distribution of insured employees, the prevalence of employment termination is relatively high among workers with social insurance coverage. Such a trend holds both for male and female workers, though the trend is more obvious for males than females.

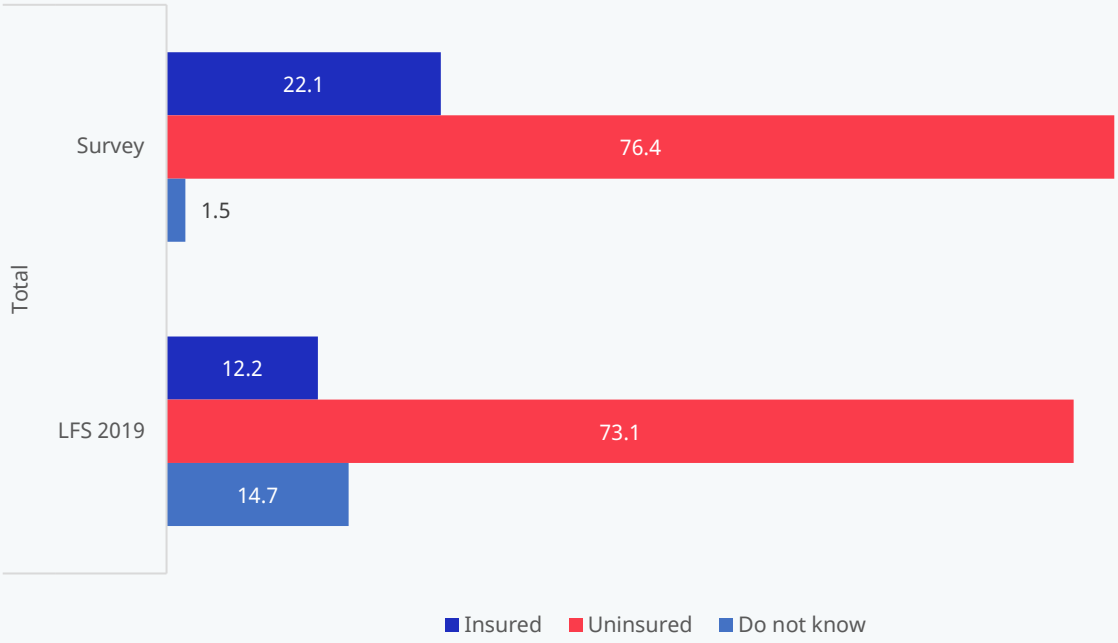
Thus, both formal employment and informal employment may have been affected by employment termination. Although our dataset does not allow us to rigorously define formal or informal employment according to the definitions adopted by the 17th International Conference for Labour Statisticians (ILO 2013), we have proxy indicators, such as the use of written contracts and social security coverage, to broadly assess the impact of employment termination on employees in relation to formality and informality. We found that it is not only workers with oral agreements, in apprenticeships or in a probationary period that were vulnerable to employment termination, but also many workers with written contracts lost jobs since the beginning of the pandemic.

▶ **Figure 5. Contract type and contract period of survey respondents affected by employment termination (%) (n=728)**



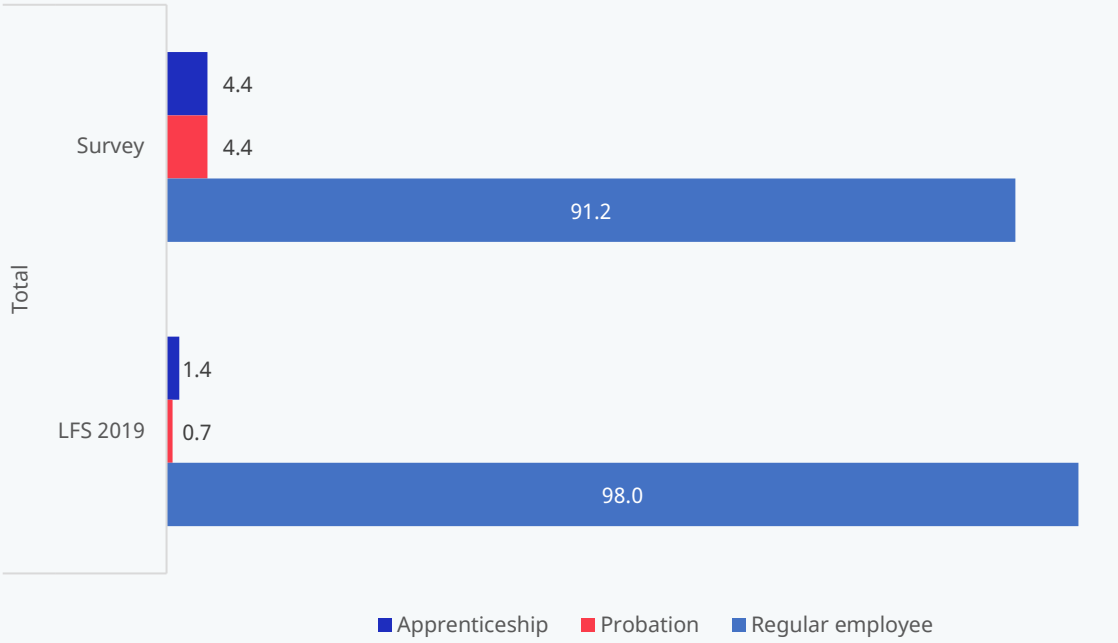
Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 6. Social insurance coverage of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Figure 7. Job status employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Table 4. Employment characteristics of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)

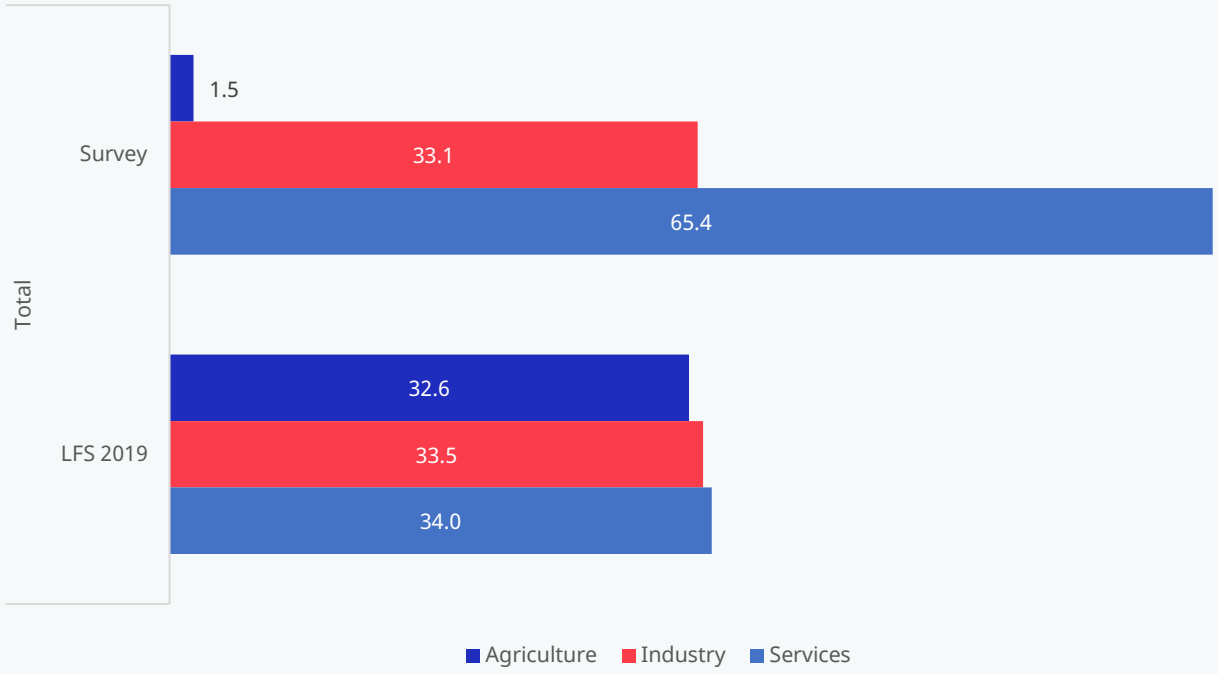
Indicator	Description	(1) Survey (n=728)			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Contract type	Written contract	19.9	32.1	26.1	16.8	30.7	22.7	3.1	1.3	3.4
	Oral contract	75.1	63.3	69.1	38.1	31.4	35.3	36.9	32.0	33.8
	Do not know	5.0	4.6	4.8	45.1	37.9	42.1	-40.1	-33.3	-37.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Contract period	Permanent contract	70.3	60.1	65.1	39.3	55.4	46.6	31.0	4.7	18.5
	Fixed-term contract	28.6	37.7	33.2	48.4	35.4	42.5	-19.8	2.3	-9.3
	Do not know	1.1	2.2	1.6	12.3	9.2	10.9	-11.2	-7.0	-9.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Apprenticeship and probation	In apprenticeship	6.2	2.7	4.4	1.2	1.6	1.4	5.0	1.1	3.0
	In a probationary period	5.0	3.8	4.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	4.3	3.2	3.7
	Regular employee	88.8	93.5	91.2	98.1	97.8	98.0	-9.3	-4.3	-6.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–`	–
Membership with Social Security Board (SSB)	Insured member	20.2	24.0	22.1	8.5	17.2	12.2	11.6	6.8	9.9
	Not an active member	78.7	74.1	76.4	76.6	68.3	73.1	2.1	5.8	3.3
	Do not know	1.1	1.9	1.5	14.9	14.4	14.7	-13.7	-12.5	-13.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Membership in private insurance	Insured member	5.0	4.3	4.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Not an active member	94.4	95.4	94.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	0.6	0.3	0.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Membership of trade union	Member	3.6	1.9	2.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Not a member	96.4	98.1	97.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: – =nil.; n/a = not applicable.
Source: Authors' calculation based on Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

3.3. Economic characteristics

Most of the terminated respondents had been employed in the services sector. Most of the employment termination incidences were found in the services sector (65 per cent), followed by the industry sector (33 per cent); while only a few incidences were found in the agriculture sector (2 per cent) (figure 8). As the general distribution of wage employees is almost equally shared among the three sectors according to the LFS 2019, the prevalence of employment termination clearly inclines towards the services sector. The services sector was reportedly greatly affected since the beginning of the pandemic because of falling mobility and subsequent supply and demand shocks, especially in the wholesale, retail, transport, and food and accommodation services (World Bank 2020a; 2020b; 2021). Moreover, the limited impact on the agriculture sector supports the findings of a recent World Bank (2022b) study, namely that during the pandemic many workers found employment in urban settings to be insecure and therefore moved to rural employment in the agricultural sector as a coping strategy. Our findings also support that the sectoral pattern of job loss in Myanmar is in line with the global trend, namely higher in the services sector and lower in the agricultural sector (Kugler et al. 2021).

▶ **Figure 8. Industry sectors of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)**

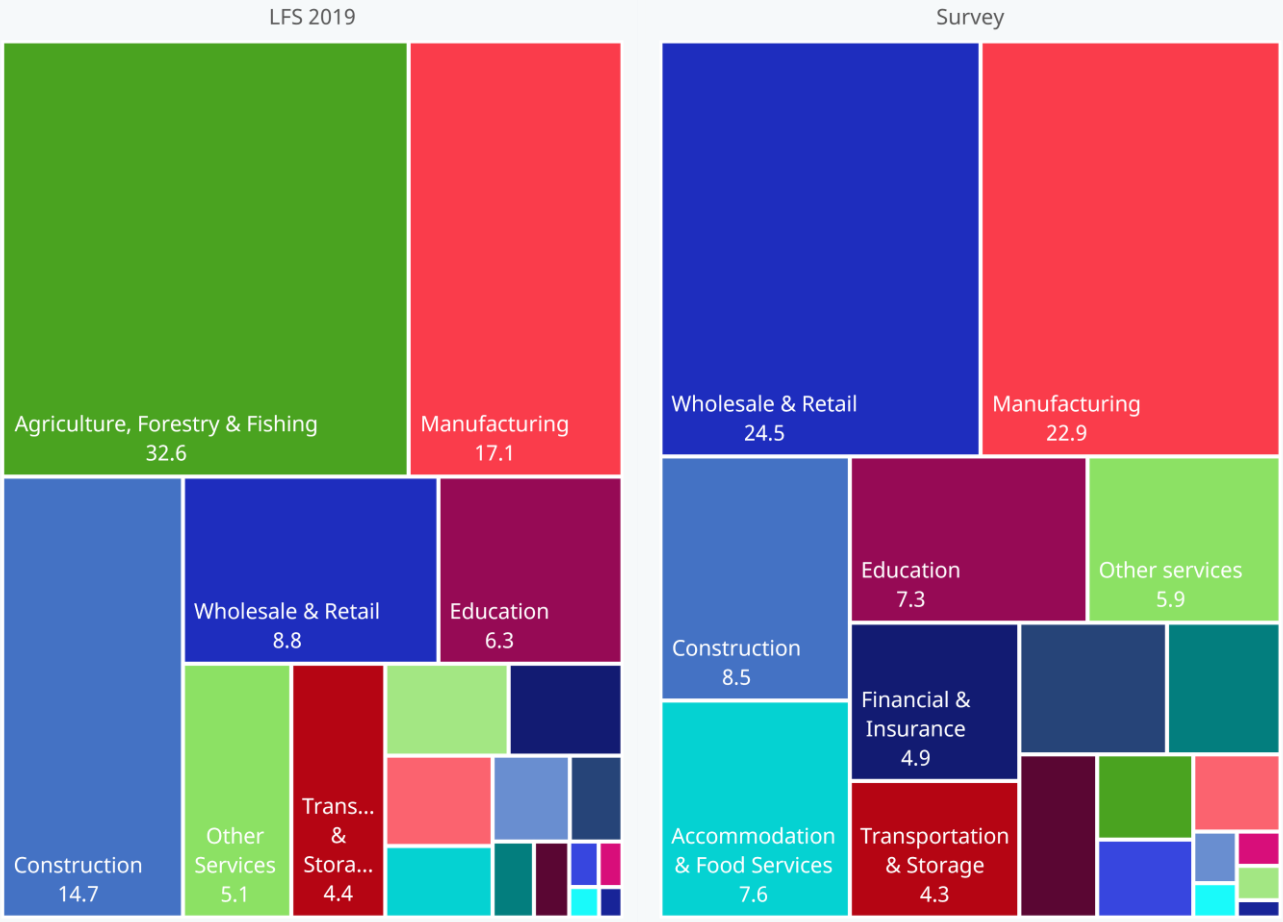


Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Though accounting for a small number of employees overall, some sectors had relatively high incidences of employment termination, including wholesale and retail trade and accommodation and food service. Although these sectors employ only 9 per cent and 1 per cent of employees across the country, respectively, they accounted for 25 per cent and 8 per cent of employment termination. This result supports the findings of the abovementioned previous study – these sectors were largely affected by falling mobility and subsequent supply and demand shocks, which apparently led to many employees in these sectors losing their jobs.

Employment termination of male employees took place across a diverse range of industries, while employment termination of female employees was concentrated in fewer industries. Two-thirds of male employment termination happened across five sectors: wholesale and retail trade (22 per cent); construction (15 per cent); non-garment, textiles and fabrics manufacturing (11 per cent); accommodation and food service (10 per cent); and transportation and storage (8 per cent). However, two-thirds of female employment termination took place across just three sectors: wholesale and retail trade (27 per cent); textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing (25 per cent); and education (12 per cent).

▶ Figure 9. Industry subsectors of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)

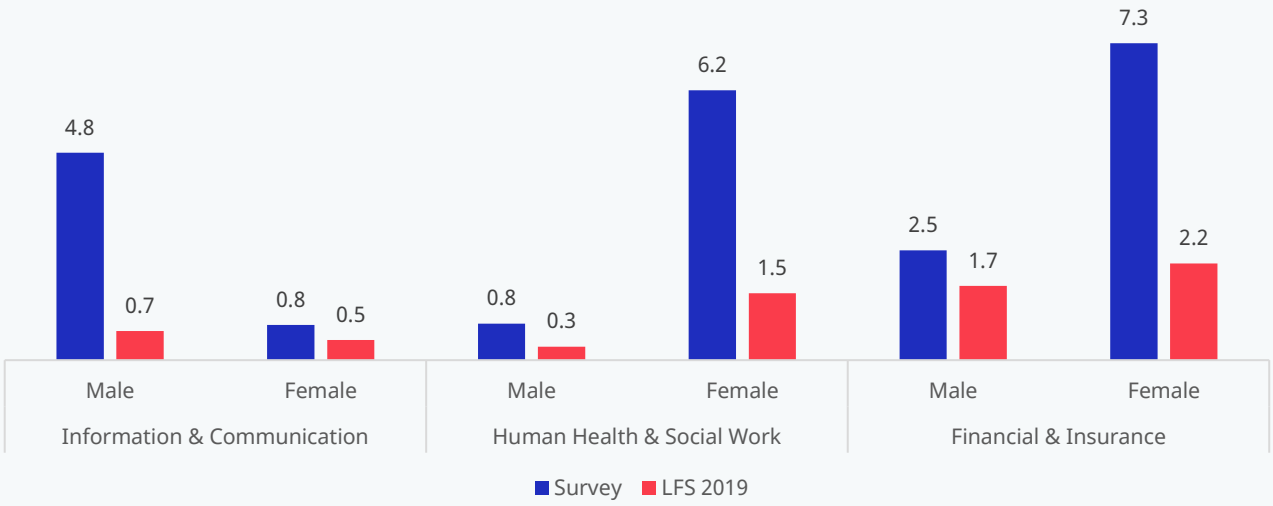


Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

A gender-specific impact was observed in three industrial sectors: (i) information and communication; (ii) human health and social work; and (iii) finance and insurance. In these sectors, the prevalence of employment termination was relatively high only for males or females (figure 10). In other words, employment termination disproportionately affected a particular gender in each of these sectors. Impacts were larger for male employees in the information and communication sector, and for female employees in the human health and social work sector and the financial and insurance sector. These results need to be further assessed to understand the factors behind these gendered outcomes. A possible assumption is that male or female employees occupy more vulnerable occupations or employment arrangements in each of these sectors. For example, in the financial and insurance sector, women might be more likely to be employed in front end service roles that are more vulnerable to termination, while men might be more likely to be in management positions for core functions, leaving them more protected from job loss.

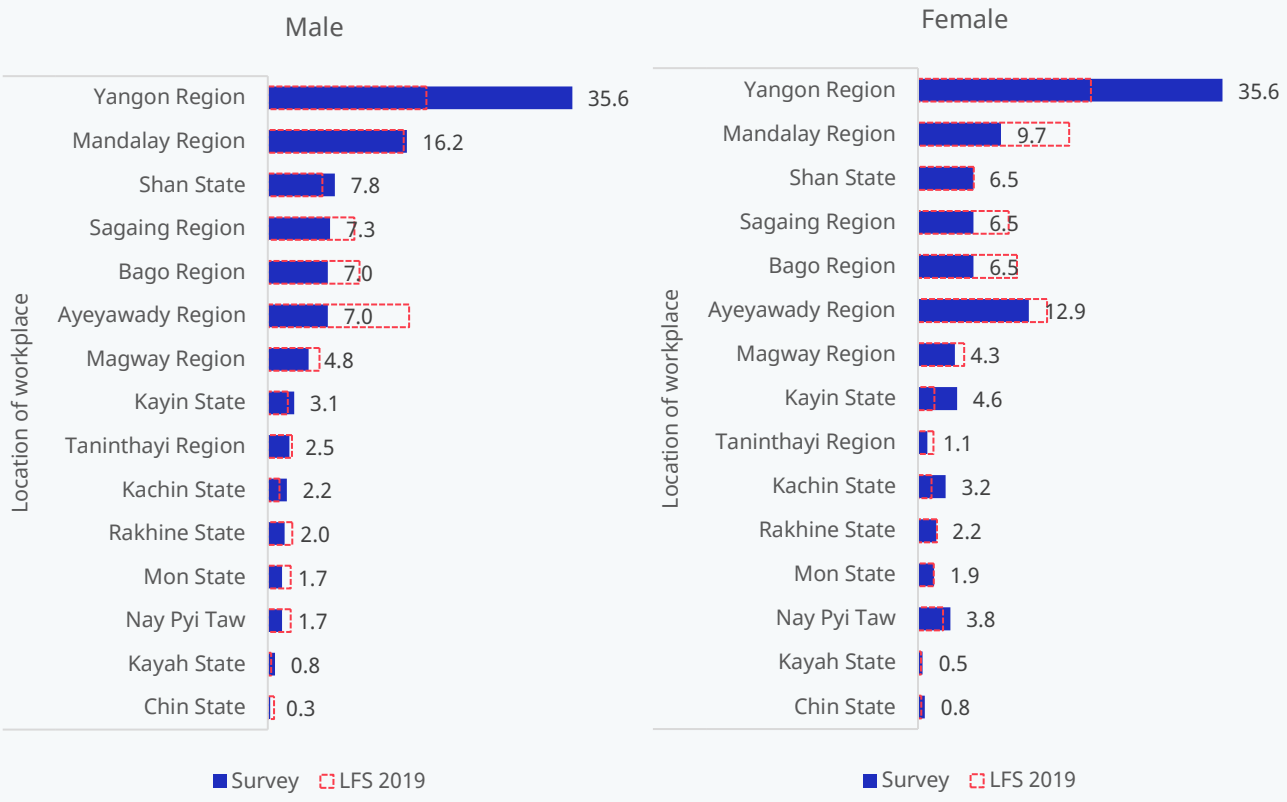
Yangon Region was responsible for one-third – or the largest share – of employment termination across the country, and differences by region and gender exist. Yangon Region accounted for 36 per cent of employment termination, followed by Mandalay Region (13 per cent) and Ayeyawady Region (10 per cent). Mandalay Region and Ayeyawady Region accounted for the second-largest share of male job loss (16 per cent) and female job loss (13 per cent), respectively (figure 11). Interestingly, job losses among female employees in Mandalay Region and of male employees in Ayeyawady Region are not as high as job loss of their counterparts of the opposite gender. Beyond these regions, the prevalence of employment termination of both male and female employees was high relative to the general distribution of employees in Shan State, Kayin State, and Kachin State, where violence and internal displacement have been increasingly reported (United Nations Human Rights Council 2022).

▶ Figure 10. Share of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) in selected subsectors, by sex (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

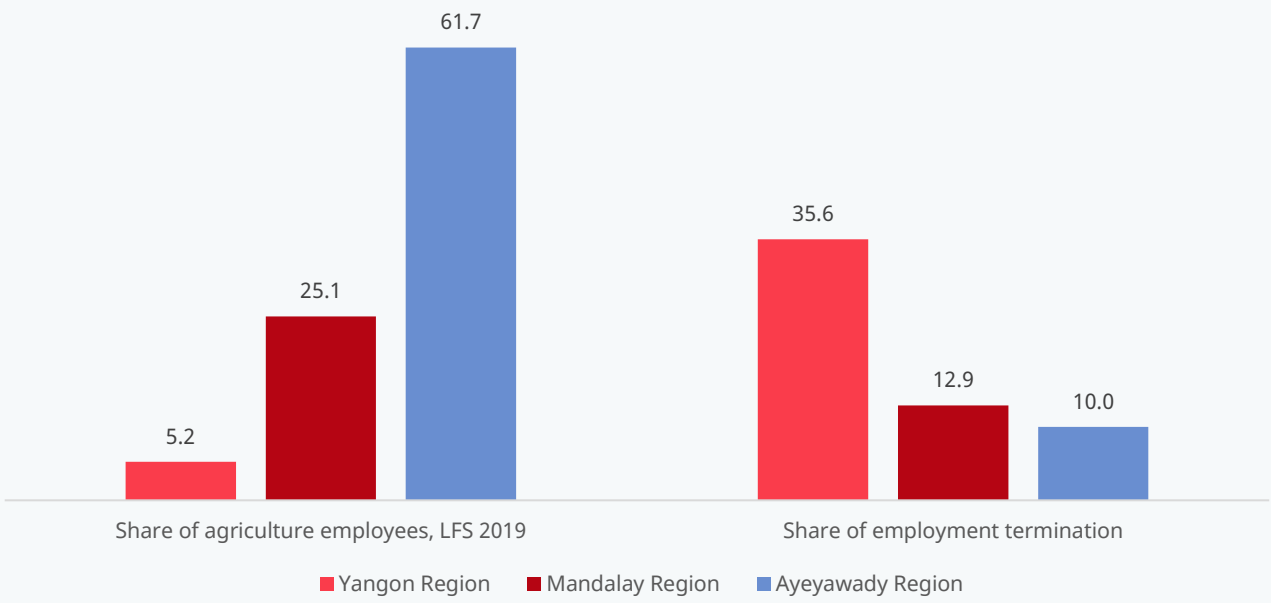
▶ Figure 11. Share of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by location of workplace and sex (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar , MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

These regional differences may be partially driven by sectoral-level impacts – that is, regions that are home to sectors that have faced greater negative impacts have also experienced more employment termination in absolute terms. Yangon Region (19 per cent), Mandalay Region (17 per cent) and Ayeyawady Region (16 per cent) have the largest numbers of wage employees in Myanmar and all three regions are home to similar numbers of wage employees, accounting for half of all employees in the country. Even though these regions have nearly equal number of employees, much more employment termination took place in Yangon Region than in the other two regions (figure 12). This outcome was due to two major factors. First, as noted above, agricultural employees were among the least affected by employment termination, but the share of such workers is very small in Yangon Region (5 per cent) compared to Mandalay Region (25 per cent) and Ayeyawady Region (62 per cent). Second, Yangon Region possibly suffered more from the impacts of economic downturns and political instability due to its role as a business capital.

▶ **Figure 12. Comparison of share of agriculture wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) and share of agricultural employees affected by employment termination (Survey) in selected regions (%)**



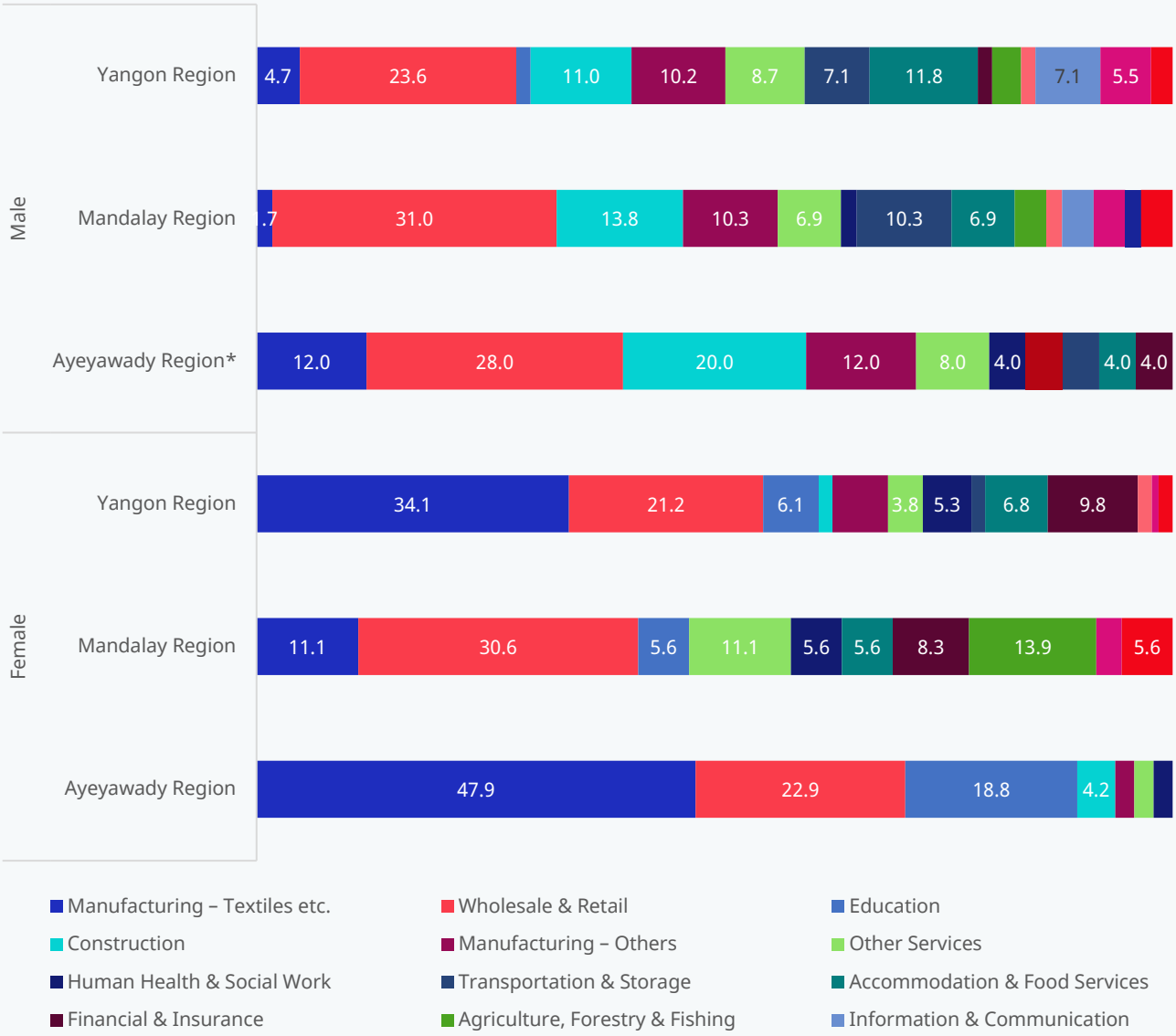
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Gender differences in employment termination can be also partially explained by sectoral level impacts. In Mandalay Region, more than 40 per cent of employment termination was found in the wholesale and retail sector and manufacturing sector (figure 13), with both male and female employees in these sectors being affected at roughly similar levels. However, in the region's construction sector and transportation and storage sector, employment termination was of male employees only. These two sectors employ nearly one-third of male employees in the region, while employing almost no women.

The trend of male employment termination in Yangon Region was similar to that of Mandalay Region. The wholesale and retail trade sector and the construction employ one-third of male wage employees and also account for one-third of male employment termination. Female employment termination in Yangon Region was largely in the textiles, apparel or leather and related manufacturing sector, which accounted for half of female employment termination together with the wholesale and retail trade sector.

In Ayeyawady Region, the trend of female employment termination is similar to that of Yangon Region, but it is shaped by much fewer sectors. The textiles, apparel or leather and related manufacturing sector, the wholesale and retail trade sector and the education sector accounted for 90 per cent of female employment termination. These sectors employ three-quarters of non-agriculture female employees in the region. The high share of female employment termination in the education sector in Ayeyawady Region is a notable difference from the trends seen in Yangon Region and Mandalay Region.

▶ Figure 13. Breakdown of employees affected by employment termination in selected regions, by industry subsector and sex (%)



Note: The percentages for male employment termination in Ayeyawady Region cannot be considered representative, as they are derived from fewer than 30 individuals.

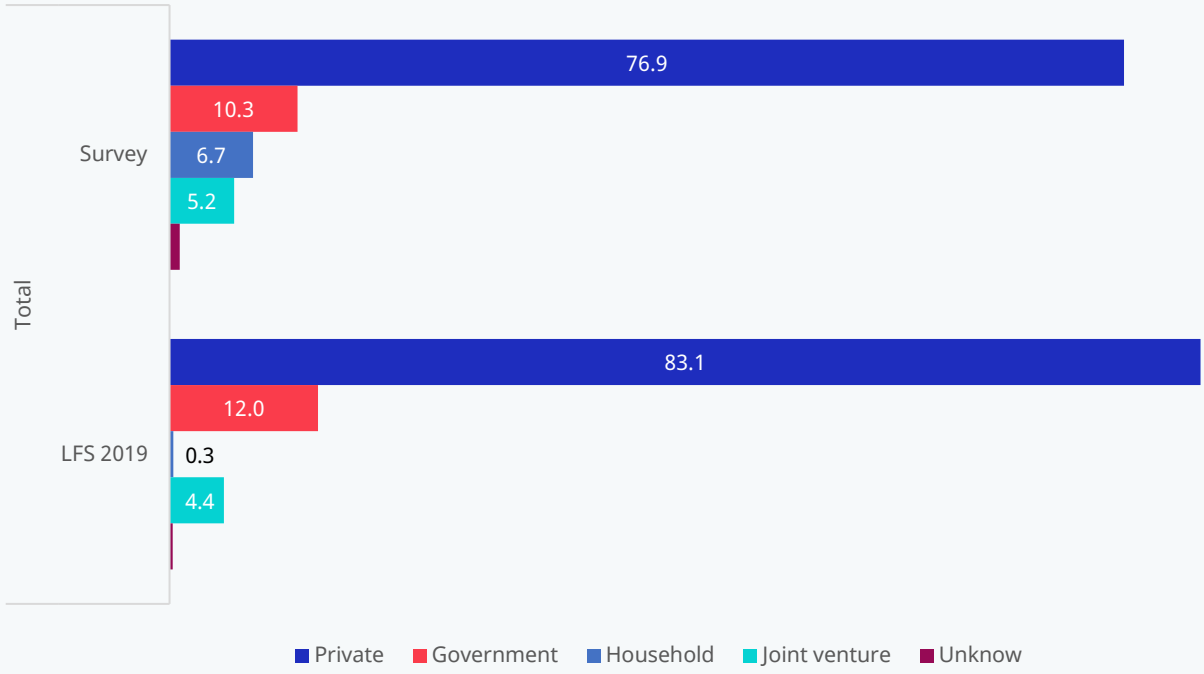
Source: Authors' calculations.

More female employees than male employees experienced employment termination in the public sector. The distribution of employment termination by economic unit mostly follows that of wage employees in economic units in Myanmar. According to the LFS 2019, most wage employees were employed in the private sector, which is also where most employment termination took place (figure 14). A notable gender difference in the general distribution of wage employees is that a greater proportion of female employees work in government institutions compared to male employees – 17 per cent of female employees are employed in government roles, compared to 8 per cent of male employees. This difference may contribute to shaping the distribution of employment termination, as the public sector accounted for 16 per cent of female employment termination and just 4 per cent of male employment termination.

Within the public sector, most cases of female employment termination were found either in the education sector or the human health and social work sector. Four-fifths of female employment termination from government

institutions was found in these two sectors (figure 15). The education sector's share of female employment termination in the public sector (62 per cent) was similar to that of the general distribution of female wage employees in the public sector (64 per cent). However, the human health and social work sector was responsible for a greater share of female employment termination in the public sector (20 per cent) than the general distribution of female wage employees in the public sector (just 6 per cent). That is, the human health and social work sector appears to have been more heavily affected than other sectors, with female employees choosing or being forced to resign and/or with employers dismissing more employees. These trends may be associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and the pandemic. In the next chapter, we will assess when government employees lost jobs to identify the association between employment termination and the CDM and pandemic (see section 4.6).

▶ **Figure 14. Type of economic unit of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)**

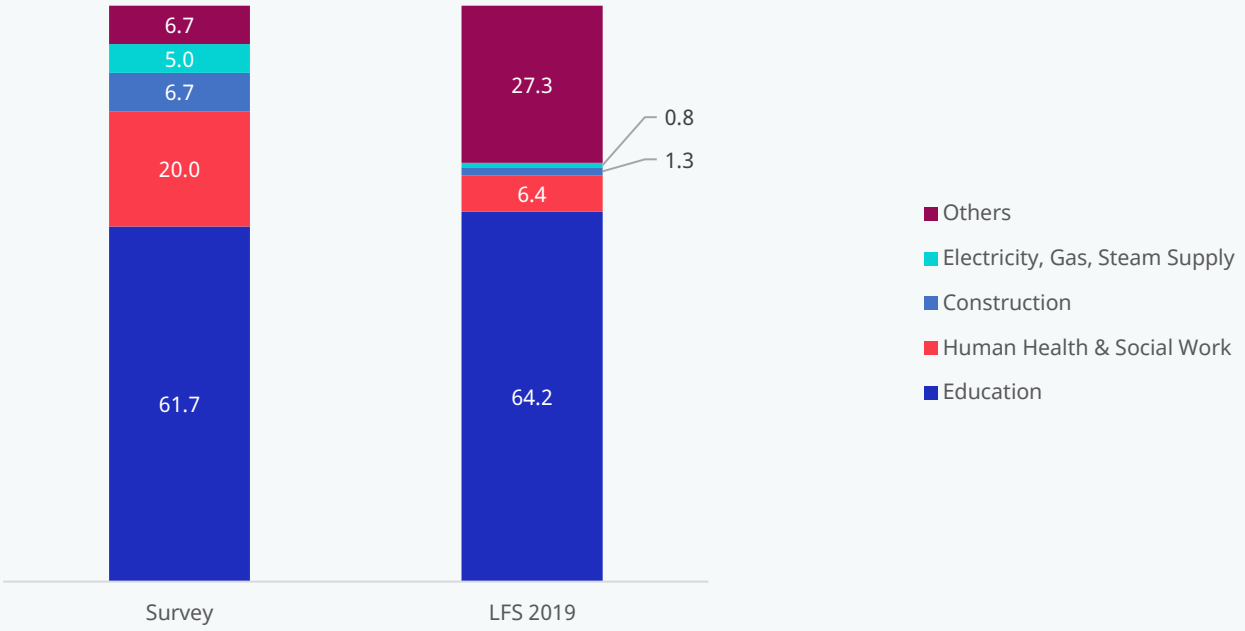


Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

In addition to the high share of female wage employees in government institutions, different sectoral patterns by sex possibly contributed to shaping the employment termination trend. The proportion of female government employees in highly affected industrial sectors was higher than among the male government employees. According to the LFS 2019, male government employees worked in a more diverse array of industrial sectors, and the sectors that employed greater numbers of men were less affected by employment terminations. These less-affected sectors dominated by male government employees include: the public administration and defence sector (24 per cent of male government employees); the real estate sector (13 per cent); the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (8 per cent); and many other sectors. Conversely, the share of male government employees working in more heavily affected sectors was relatively low, including the construction sector (4 per cent) and the human health and social work sector (2 per cent). And while 25 per cent of male government employees were in the heavily impacted education sector, this figure pales compared to that of female government employees, 64 per cent of whom were employed in the education sector. As the education sector was the most affected among government institutions, employment termination affected a greater proportion of female than male public sector employees.

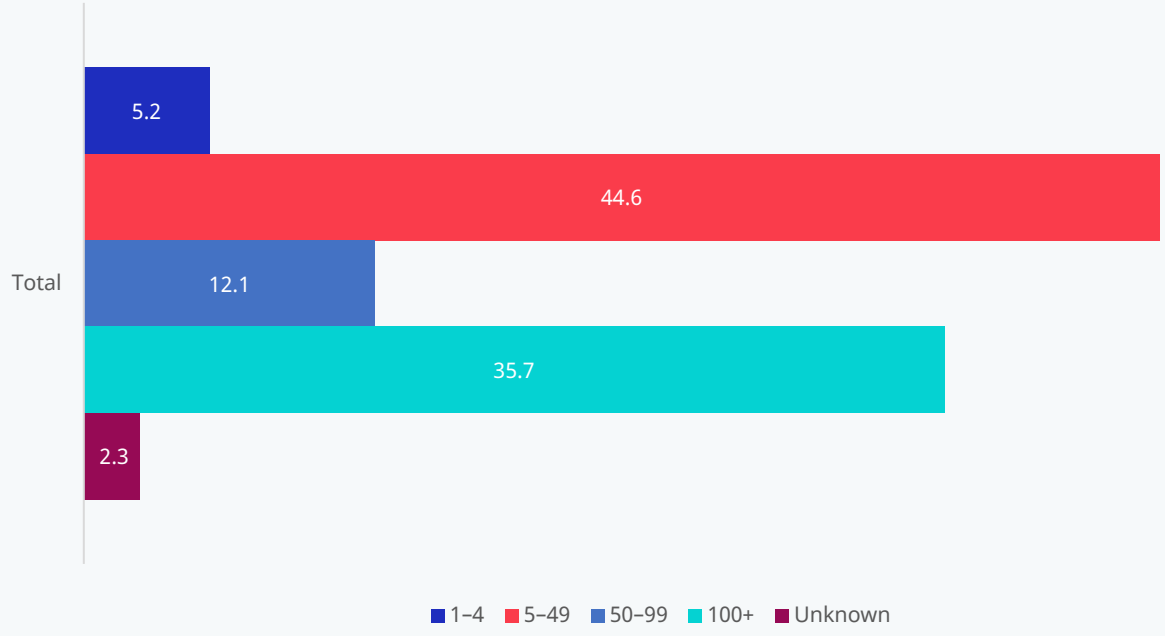
Both micro-to-small and medium-to-large enterprises experienced job losses. Half of employment termination took place in micro- and small-scale enterprises (1–49 employees) and the other half happened in medium- and large-scale enterprises (50+ employees). Micro-to-small enterprises accounted for 54 per cent of male employment termination and 46 per cent of female employment termination (figure 16).

▶ Figure 15. Distribution of female employees affected by employment termination from government roles (Survey) and of female wage employees in government roles in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by industry subsector (%)



Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Figure 16. Distribution of female employees affected by employment termination from roles in non-state manufacturing enterprises, by size of enterprise (%)

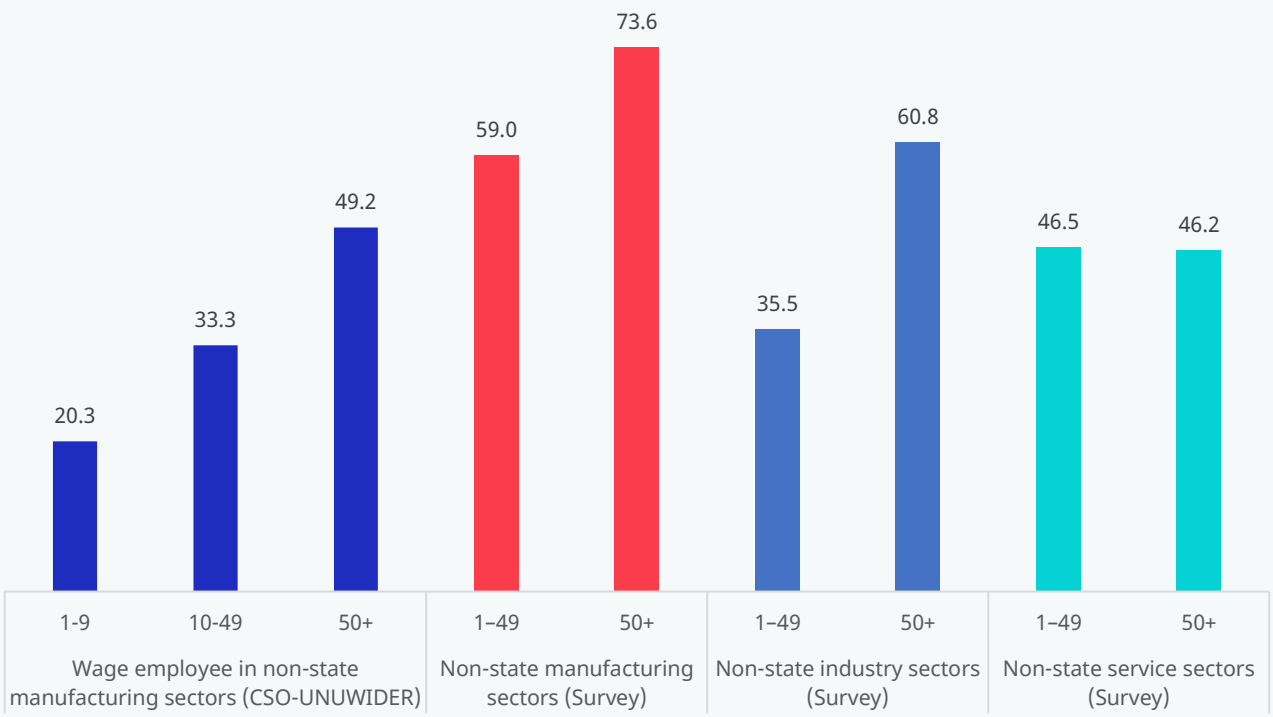


Source: Authors' calculations.

The share of female employment termination was larger than that of males in larger non-state enterprises in the manufacturing sector. As the LFS 2019 does not collect data about size of enterprises, we cannot compare the distribution of employment termination with the general distribution of wage employees to assess whether smaller enterprises were affected more than larger ones or vice versa. However, 2019 survey conducted by Myanmar's Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) provides the distribution of wage employees in non-state manufacturing industries. The CSO/UNU-WIDER survey found that the share of female employees increases as the size of enterprises increases, namely, 20 per cent of employees in micro firms (1–9 employees) are female; 33 per cent in small firms (10–49 employees); and 49 per cent in medium or large firms (50+ employees) (figure 17). Our survey data shows a similar trend with regard to employment termination. The share of female employment termination in non-state manufacturing sectors increases from 59 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises to 74 per cent in medium-to-large enterprises. In terms of magnitude, the share of female employment termination appears to be much larger than the general distribution of female wage employees. Both in micro-to-small and medium-to-large non-state manufacturing enterprises, a disproportionate number of females lost their jobs compared to their male peers.

The same trend holds across the non-state industry sector but not in the non-state services sector. In the non-state industry sector, the share of female employment termination increases from 35 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises to 61 per cent in medium-to-large enterprises. However, such a trend does not exist across the non-state services sector where the share of female employment termination was rather constant at 47 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises and 46 per cent in medium-to-large enterprises.

▶ **Figure 17. Distribution of female employees affected by termination from non-state employment (Survey) and of female employees in non-state employment in Myanmar (CSO/UNU-WIDER), by size of enterprise (%)**



Note: The figure presents estimates from a 2019 survey by CSO and UNU-WIDER on the left-hand side, and results of our survey on the right-hand side. It is noted as limitation that the CSO and UNU-WIDER survey and our survey may not be fully comparable. The major difference is that the CSO and UNU-WIDER focuses solely on enterprises that have been formally registered according to relevant laws and regulations, while our survey data could contain both enterprises that are formally registered and those that are not registered. However, the sectoral composition may be similar. The CSO and UNU-WIDER survey covers non-state enterprises, including family businesses, private firms, partnerships, cooperatives, private limited companies, and joint venture companies; while our survey covers all these economic units, including private firms, joint ventures and households.

Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, CSO and UNU-WIDER 2019.

Table 5. Economic characteristics of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)

Indicator	Description	(1) Survey (n=728)			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Location of workplace	Kachin State	2.2	3.2	2.7	1.4	1.6	1.5	0.9	1.6	1.3
	Kayah State	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3
	Kayin State	3.1	4.6	3.8	2.3	1.9	2.2	0.7	2.7	1.7
	Chin State	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.6	-0.4	0.4	–
	Sagaing Region	7.3	6.5	6.9	10.1	10.6	10.3	-2.8	-4.1	-3.4
	Taninthayi Region	2.5	1.1	1.8	2.8	1.8	2.4	-0.3	-0.7	-0.6
	Bago Region	7.0	6.5	6.7	10.7	11.6	11.1	-3.7	-5.1	-4.3
	Magway Region	4.8	4.3	4.5	6.0	5.4	5.8	-1.3	-1.1	-1.2
	Mandalay Region	16.2	9.7	12.9	15.9	17.7	16.6	0.4	-8.0	-3.7
	Mon State	1.7	1.9	1.8	2.7	1.8	2.3	-1.0	–	-0.5
	Rakhine State	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.8	2.2	2.6	-0.9	-0.1	-0.5
	Yangon Region	35.6	35.6	35.6	18.5	20.2	19.2	17.0	15.4	16.3
	Shan State	7.8	6.5	7.1	6.4	6.5	6.4	1.4	–	0.7
	Ayeyawady Region	7.0	12.9	10.0	16.5	15.1	15.9	-9.5	-2.1	-5.9
	Nay Pyi Taw	1.7	3.8	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.8	-1.0	0.9	–
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Economic unit	Government	4.2	16.2	10.3	8.3	17.0	12.0	-4.1	-0.8	-1.7
	Joint venture	5.0	5.4	5.2	4.0	4.9	4.4	1.0	0.5	0.8
	Private enterprise	81.8	72.2	76.9	87.4	77.2	83.1	-5.6	-5.0	-6.2
	Household	7.8	5.7	6.7	0.1	0.6	0.3	7.7	5.1	6.4
	Do not know	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.3	0.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Industry	Agriculture	2.5	0.5	1.5	32.3	32.9	32.6	-29.8	-32.4	-31.1
	Industry	31.9	34.2	33.1	37.3	28.2	33.5	-5.4	6.1	-0.3
	Services	65.5	65.2	65.4	30.4	38.9	34.0	35.2	26.3	31.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Number of employees at workplace	1–4	5.0	5.4	5.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	5–49	49.0	40.4	44.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	50–99	14.0	10.2	12.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	100 or more	29.4	41.8	35.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	2.5	2.2	2.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of employees at workplace (group)	1–49	54.1	45.8	49.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	50+	43.4	52.0	47.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	2.5	2.2	2.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: – = nil; n/a = not applicable.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Table 6. Industrial subsectors of employees affected by employment termination (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%)

Description	(1) Survey (n=728)			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	2.5	0.5	1.5	32.3	32.9	32.6	-29.8	-32.4	-31.1
Mining and Quarrying	0.6	–	0.3	1.7	0.5	1.2	-1.2	-0.5	-0.9
Manufacturing – Textiles, Apparel, Leather and related products	3.6	25.1	14.6	12.1	24.0	17.1	-8.4	1.1	-2.5
Manufacturing – others	10.9	5.9	8.4	–	–	–	10.9	5.9	8.4
Electricity, Gas, Steam Supply	1.4	1.1	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.1	0.9	1.0
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management, and Remediation Activities	0.3	–	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.2	-0.1
Construction	15.1	2.2	8.5	23.0	3.3	14.7	-7.9	-1.1	-6.2
Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade	22.1	26.7	24.5	7.1	11.2	8.8	15.1	15.5	15.7
Transportation and Storage	8.1	0.5	4.3	7.4	0.3	4.4	0.7	0.3	-0.1
Accommodation and Food Services	9.5	5.7	7.6	1.5	1.3	1.4	8.1	4.3	6.1
Information and Communication	4.8	0.8	2.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	4.1	0.3	2.2
Financial and Insurance Activities	2.5	7.3	4.9	1.7	2.2	1.9	0.8	5.1	3.0
Real Estate Activities	–	–	–	2.5	1.6	2.1	-2.5	-1.6	-2.1
Professional and Technical Activities	4.2	0.5	2.3	0.3	0.7	0.5	3.9	-0.2	1.8
Administrative Activities	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Public Administration and Defence	0.8	–	0.4	2.0	1.5	1.8	-1.2	-1.5	-1.4
Education	2.5	11.9	7.3	2.3	11.9	6.3	0.3	-0.1	0.9
Human Health and Social Work Activities	0.8	6.2	3.6	0.3	1.5	0.8	0.5	4.7	2.7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1.7	1.1	1.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.5	1.0	1.3
Other Service Activities	7.8	4.0	5.9	4.5	5.8	5.1	3.3	-1.7	0.8
Activities of Households as Employers	0.3	0.3	0.3	–	0.3	0.2	0.2	-0.1	0.1
Activities of Extraterritorial (that is, organization with diplomatic rights)	0.3	0.3	0.3	–	–	–	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–

Note: – =nil.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

4

When were jobs lost?

After the pandemic arrived, the Government's occasional implementation and ad-hoc extension of stay-at-home orders and lockdowns reduced economic activities by limiting mobility and shaking firms' confidence, expectations and ability to plan.

The Government implemented entry visa restrictions for all visitors from 29 March 2020 to 30 April 2020 as a temporary measure, and eventually extended these restrictions for two years until it resumed issuing business visas on 1 April 2022 and tourist visas on 20 May 2022 and accepting international commercial flights on 17 April 2022 (Myanmar, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism 2020; 2022).

The Government also restricted economic activities in the country through occasional stay-at-home orders or lockdown policies at the national, state, region or township level (IMF, n.d.; ILO 2021c). These restriction measures were initially implemented across the whole country from 10 to 19 April 2020, and further affected all workplaces, which were to remain closed from 20 April to 15 May 2020, with reopening subject to inspections and clearance in accordance with government guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

These restrictions were implemented, extended and lifted again and again thereafter until the second half of 2021. For example, restrictions were implemented again in Mandalay Region, Ayeyawady Region, Bago Region and Mon State from 24 September to 21 October 2020; in Rakhine State from 27 August 2020 to 1 March 2021; in Yangon from September 2020 and April 2021; and in Chin State, Sagaing Region and Shan State in June 2021 (IMF, n.d.; ILO 2021c). The Government also declared COVID-19 public holidays initially for one week from 17 July 2021, and subsequently added another such week starting on 12 September 2021 (World Bank 2022a).

The military takeover in February 2021 and the subsequent violence added security and political risks, further deteriorating economic activities. Since February 2021, the economy has been affected by a series of shocks, including a substantial outflow of bank deposits due to loss of trust in the formal banking system, a weakening of the national currency and rising costs of imported inputs (World Bank 2022a).

Firms' expectations and business confidence declined even more in 2021 than the previous year (World Bank 2021). Even during the recovery phase from the pandemic in 2021, the escalating violence and conflicts kept firms' confidence and ability to plan for the future low and reduced their appetite to employ and invest (World Bank 2022a). Mobility, manufacturing activity and exports did gradually start to recover, but security concerns due to conflict increasingly arose across the country, including states and regions that were historically peaceful, which deteriorated business' operations, logistics, confidence, and appetite to invest (World Bank 2022a).

In this chapter, we analyse trends related to job losses before and after the military takeover in February 2021.

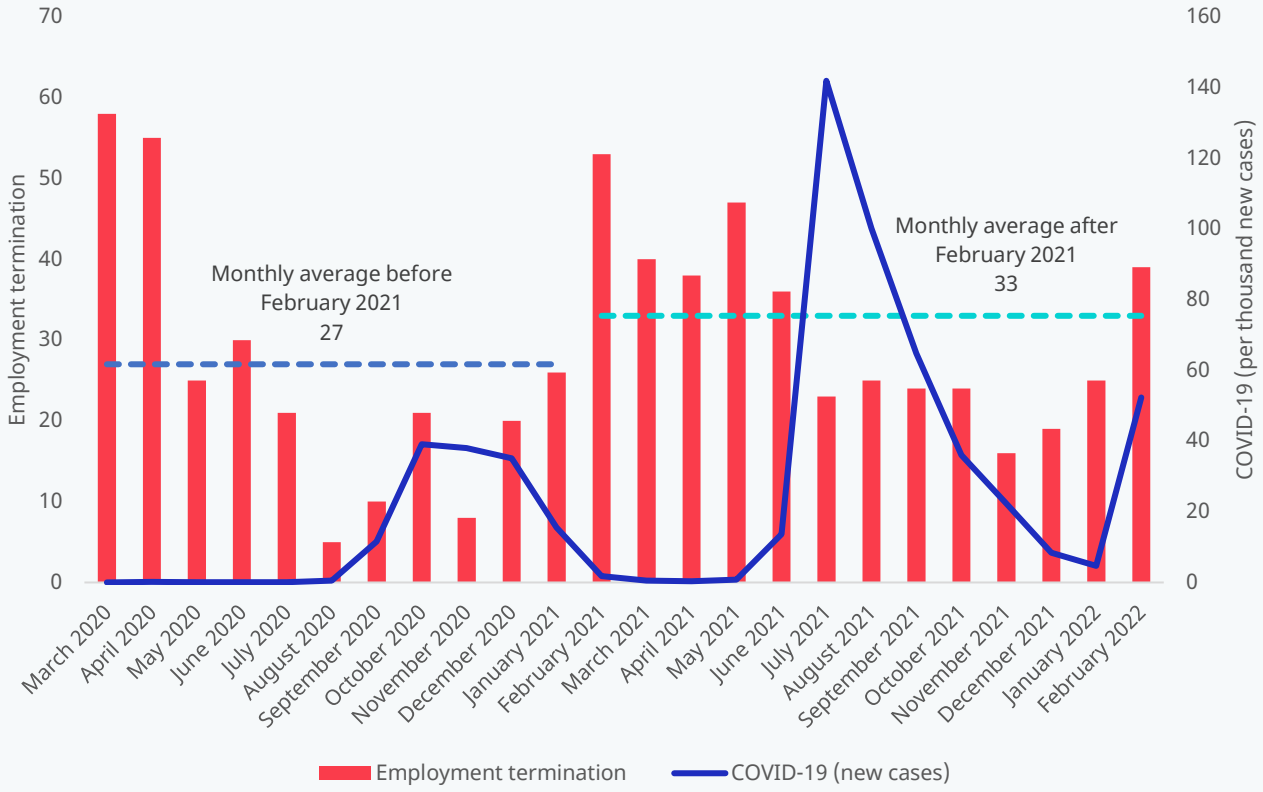
4.1. Increasing job losses

Employment termination was high over a short period of time at the beginning of the pandemic, but it rapidly increased and became persistent after the military takeover. Employment termination peaked twice, once at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 and then again with the military takeover in February 2021 (figure 18). Among the survey respondents, employment termination was at its highest in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic. In the first two months, 16 per cent of all employment termination in the survey period was reported, and 27 per cent occurred in the first 5 months between March and July 2020. The trend suddenly spiked and reached another peak with the military takeover in February 2021, and the incidence of employment termination remained high afterwards.

The average monthly prevalence of employment termination increased by 23.5 per cent after the military takeover. A majority of incidence (59 per cent) were reported to have occurred between February 2021 and February 2022, while 40.7 per cent of job losses were reported to have occurred between March 2020 and January 2021. The monthly average among terminated respondents was 27 incidences of job loss before the military takeover and 33 incidences after the military takeover.[11]

[11] Appendix 4 provides a robustness analysis.

Figure 18. Monthly incidence of employment termination among survey respondents and monthly incidence of COVID-19 cases, March 2020 – February 2022



Note: The employment termination figures are derived from the survey for this study. The COVID-19 case numbers are derived from WHO data.

Source: Authors' own calculation; WHO, n.d.

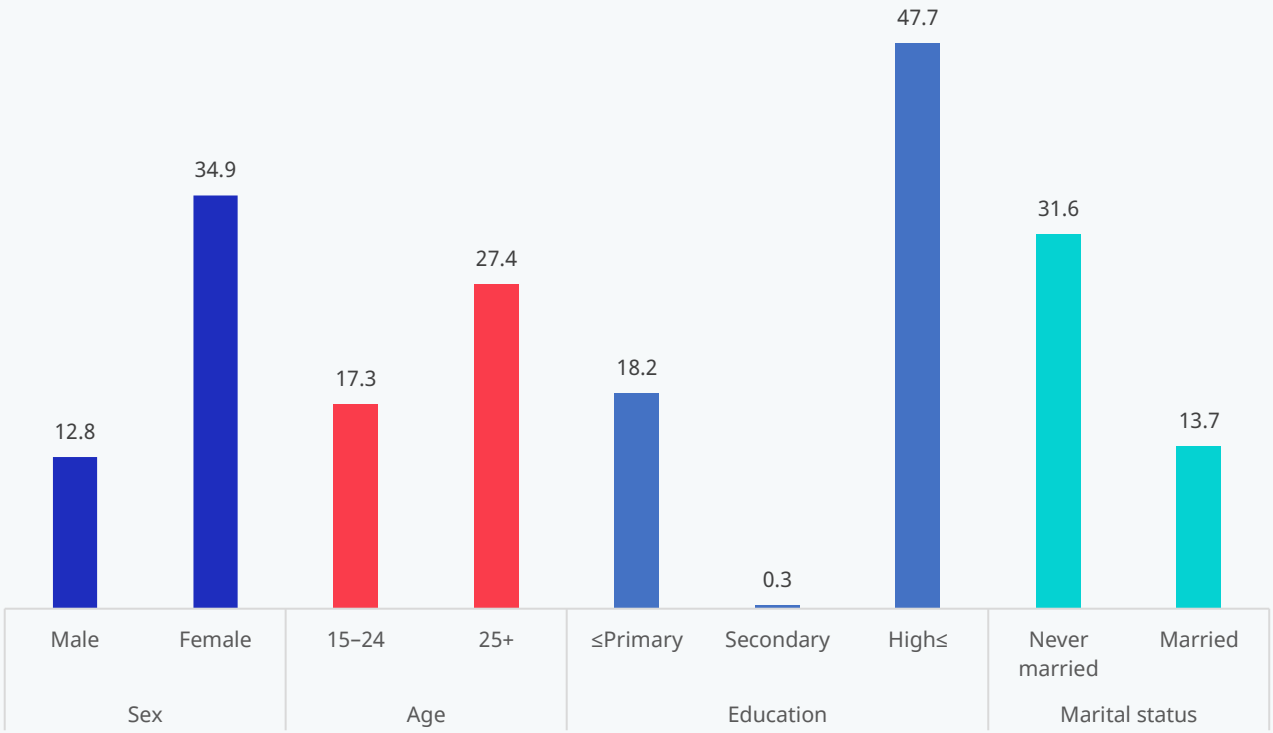
4.2. Losing the vulnerable first and the productive last

After the military takeover, the prevalence of job loss became disproportionately greater for female employees, adults and the highly educated than it was among male employees, youth and the low educated. The monthly average prevalence of employment termination:

- increased by 35 per cent for female terminated respondents compared to 13 per cent for males;
- increased by 27 per cent for adults (ages 25+) compared to 17 per cent for youth (ages 15–24); and
- increased by 48 per cent for the highly educated compared to 18 per cent for the low educated (figure 19).

The prevalence of job loss among both male and female respondents increased after the military takeover. However, as the increase in female employment termination was so much greater than that experienced by male employees that it actually reversed the trend seen prior to the takeover. Before the military takeover male respondents reported the majority of job losses, but this changed to female respondents reporting the majority of job losses after the takeover. The overall trend in employment termination by age group remained the same in both periods, with youth and younger cohorts being most affected, even though the monthly incidence employment termination among adults was slightly greater than that of youth after the military takeover. Concerning educational attainment, a large proportion of employment termination was reported by the highly educated in both periods, but their share considerably increased from 43 per cent of job losses prior to the takeover to 51 per cent after the takeover. A full two-thirds of all employment termination among the highly educated was observed in the post-takeover period. In relation to marital status, the monthly average incidence of employment termination among never married persons increased by more than that of married persons following the takeover.

▶ **Figure 19. Change in monthly average incidence of job losses after February 2021, by selected demographic characteristics (%)**



Source: Authors' own calculation.

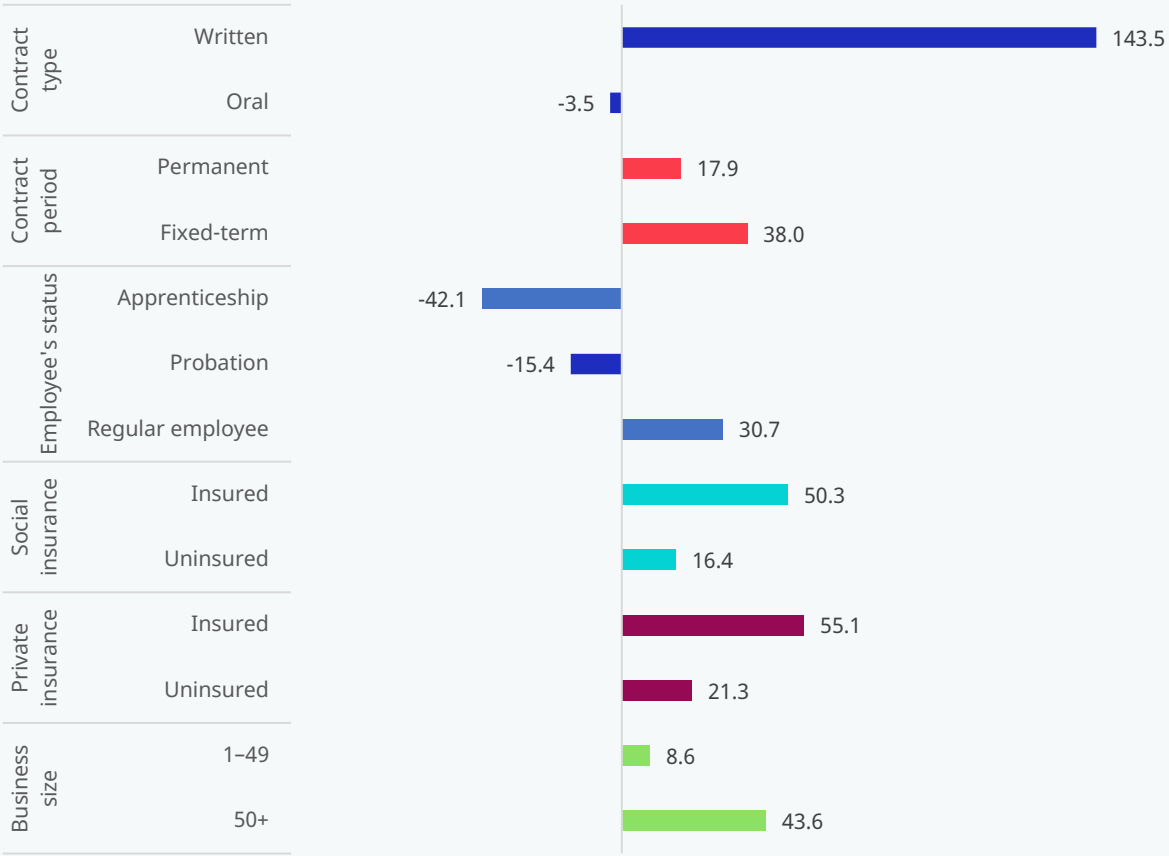
Informal employment may have been more strongly affected in the earlier phase of the pandemic, while formal employment was more affected in the period after the military takeover.[12] The monthly average termination of respondents with written contracts increased by 144 per cent after February 2021; while that of oral contract holders decreased by 4 per cent (figure 20). The prevalence of employment termination increased for both respondents who insured by social security and those who are uninsured by 50 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, after February 2021. The prevalence of employment termination decreased for employees in apprenticeships by 42 per cent and for employees in a probationary period by 15 per cent after the military takeover; while it increased for regular employees by 31 per cent. These figures suggest that employment termination of formal employment increased after February 2021.

Similarly, the prevalence of employment termination in formal sector enterprises possibly increased after the military takeover. Due to data limitations, we cannot rigorously define workers in informal or formal sector enterprises according to international statistical standards, but we have proxy indicators such as the size of enterprises (ILO 2013). Employment termination both in micro-to-small enterprises and medium-to-large enterprises increased after the military takeover by 9 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively (figure 21). This result is in line with the increasing trend of termination of formal employment.

The post-military takeover increase in job loss among workers with higher levels of education, formal employment and in large enterprises may have contributed to deteriorating productivity and the economy. According to an ILO's estimate, labour productivity in Myanmar dropped by almost 8 per cent in 2021 and by a further 2 per cent in 2022, which reversed the gains made in previous years before the military takeover (ILO 2022a). The findings from this study provide empirical evidence to support this estimate. That is, more jobs were lost among employees with higher productivity after the military takeover, which potentially contributed to lowering overall productivity at the macro level.

[12] In this paper, we cannot rigorously define formality and informality according to international statistical standards, but contract formats and social security coverage can be used as proxy indicators to broadly argue impacts on formal employment and informal employment.

Figure 20. Change in monthly average incidence of job losses after February 2021, by employment characteristics (%)



Source: Authors' own calculation.

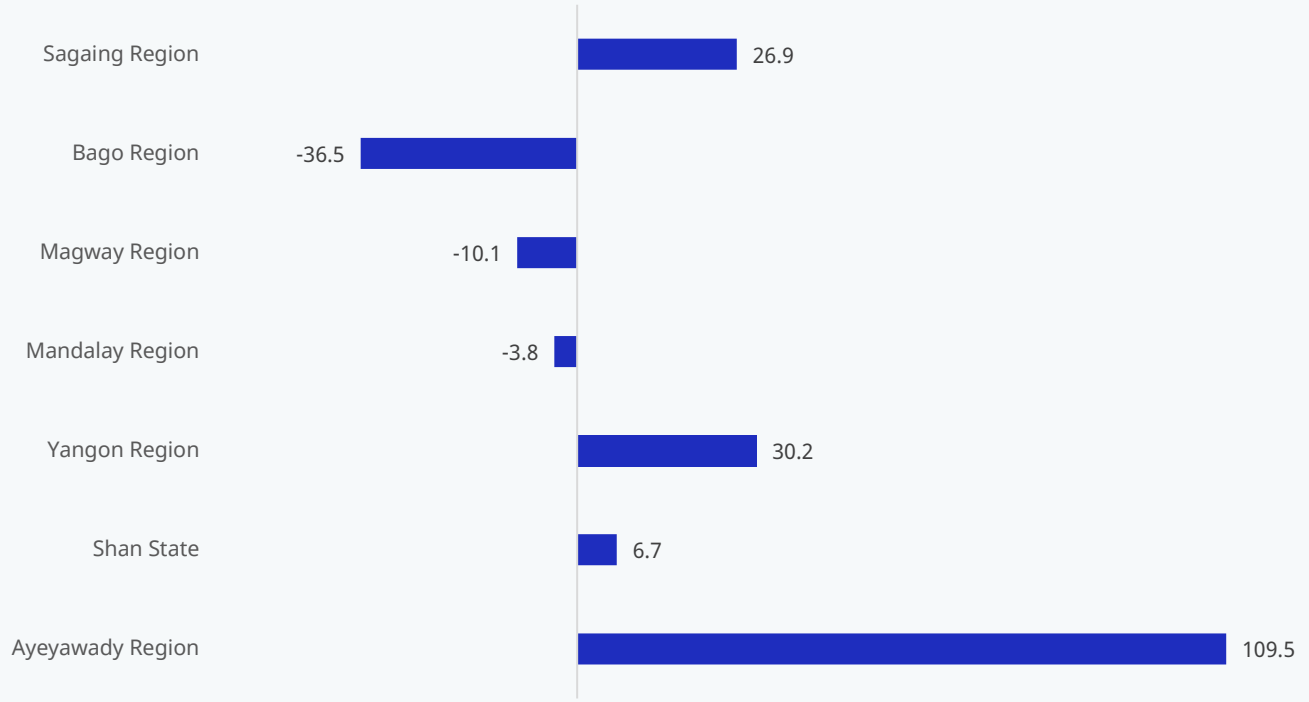
4.3. Losing jobs in different locations

Trends in employment termination differ depending on the workplace location. Yangon Region, as an economic capital, reported the highest number of cases of employment termination both before and after the military takeover. In terms of changes in the monthly average, Ayeyawady Region recorded the highest increase (110 per cent) in the post-takeover period, followed by Yangon Region (30 per cent), Sagaing Region (27 per cent) and Shan State (7 per cent) (figure 21). By contrast, Bago Region had the greatest decrease in monthly average of employment termination (-37 per cent), followed by Magway Region (-10 per cent) and Mandalay Region (-4 per cent).

Further analysis is necessary to confirm the association between employment termination and sectoral patterns, violence and conflict, and internal displacements. On the one hand, a sectoral pattern may contribute to shaping the trends of Yangon Region and Ayeyawady Region, where more businesses may have decided to stop or reduce their economic activities after the military takeover. On the other hand, violence, conflict and internal displacements may have contributed to the employment termination situation in some regions and states. Most of Myanmar's internally displaced persons (IDPs) following the military takeover were from Kachin State, Kayah State, Kayin State, Chin State, Sagaing Region, Magway Region and Southern Shan State. According to an estimate by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of July 2022, these states and regions were the source of 726,000 of 769,000 IDPs, or 94 per cent of all IDPs created after the military takeover (UNHCR 2022). These displacements were reportedly caused by "the intensification of clashes between the military and opposition forces as well as of attacks by the military on villages" (ILO 2022b, para. 4). Among these particular regions and states, our findings show an increase in employment termination in Sagaing Region and Shan State but a decrease in Magway Region.

The actual incidence of employment termination may be even larger than our estimates. Due to poor phone connections, our survey results potentially underestimate job losses in these affected areas because many interviewees were not able to complete the survey in some of these areas, especially in Kayah State, Chin State, Sagaing Region and Magway Region (see section 2.6). In addition, as noted above, most IDPs in Shand State are found specifically in the southern portion of the state, but the dataset for this study does not allow for disaggregating the sample into northern or southern areas of Shan State. As such, the present figure does not reflect this current disparity within Shan State. However, even with possible underestimation due to such data limitations, an increase in employment termination was still found in all of these states and regions after the military takeover, with the exception of Magway Region. The trend may become even more significant if we could obtain data from underrepresented areas, including Kachin State, Kayah State, Kayin State, Chin State and Sagaing Region.

▶ **Figure 21. Change in monthly average incidence of job losses after February 2021, by location of workplace (%)**



Source: Authors' own calculation.

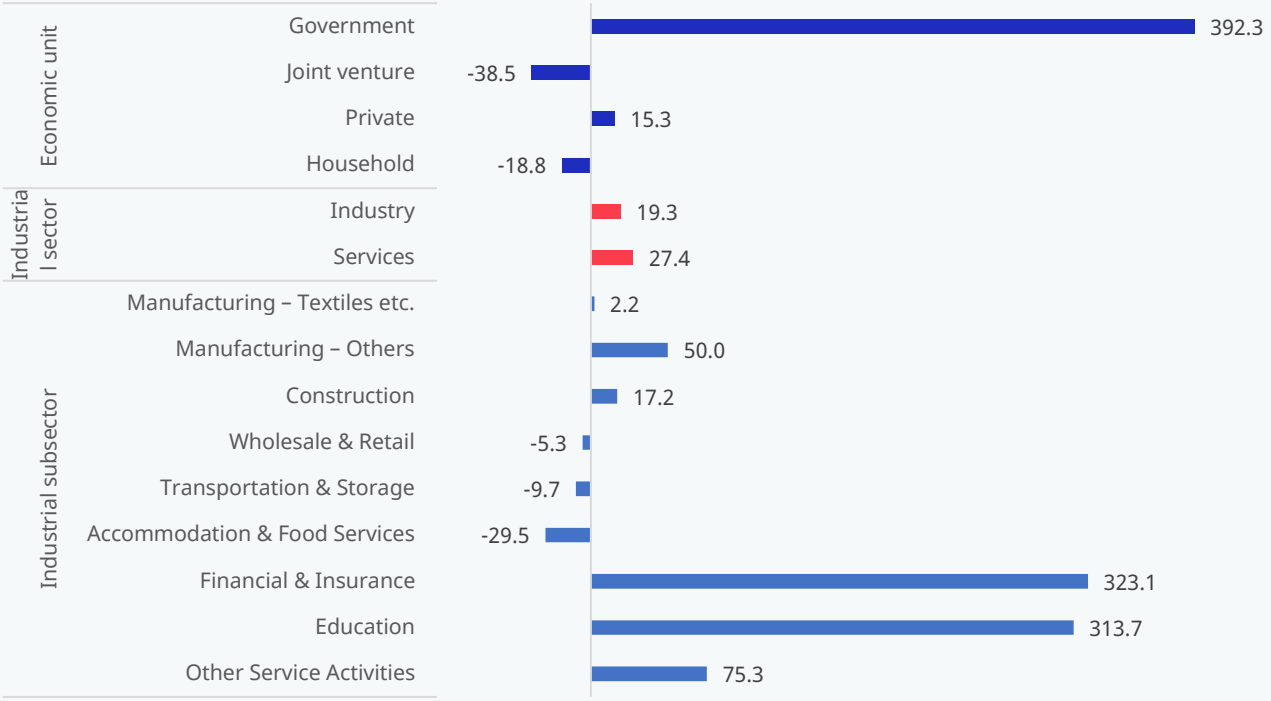
4.4. Triggering job losses in sectors less affected by the pandemic

The private sector continuously lost jobs over the study period (March 2020 – February 2022), while the public sector started losing jobs after the military takeover in February 2021. Because of its large share of wage employees, the share of employment termination in the private sector remained the largest among all economic units in both periods. However, changes in the monthly average of employment termination following the takeover creates a different picture (figure 22). Eighty-five per cent of all employment termination among public sector respondents took place after the military takeover, with the monthly average incidence after the takeover increasing by 392 per cent compared to the pre-takeover period. By contrast, the private sector only showed a relatively modest increase following the takeover (15 per cent), while joint ventures and household businesses showed a negative trend in the post-takeover period.

The monthly trend of job loss is very different between the public sector and the non-state sector, including among joint ventures, private enterprises and households. The overall trend of job loss in the non-state sector shows a constant increase over time, while the monthly incidence fluctuated due to several factors, including waves of COVID-19 cases, related restriction measures, and the recovery and deterioration of different industrial sectors (figure 23). By

contrast, the trend in the public sector was largely affected by the military takeover and the subsequent worker participation in the CDM (figure 24) (also see section 4.6).

▶ Figure 22. Change in monthly average incidence of job losses after February 2021, by economic unit and industrial (sub)sector (%)

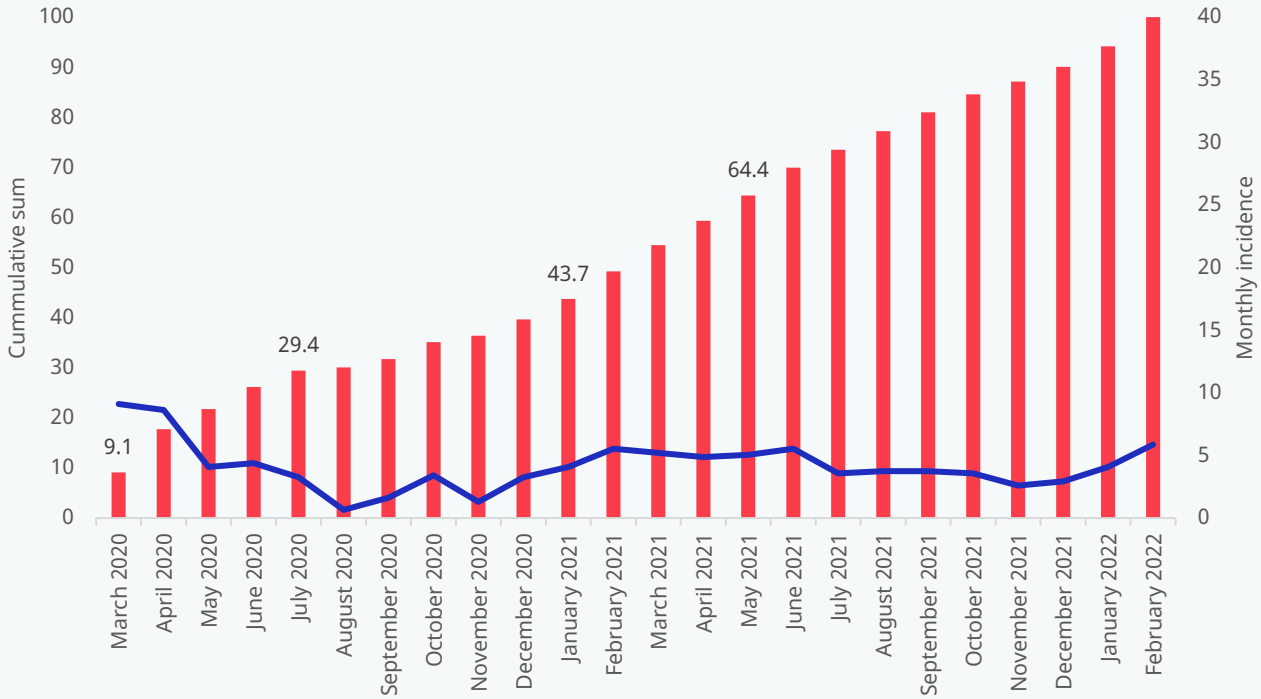


Source: Authors' own calculation.

Industries affected by the pandemic and mobility restrictions lost many jobs even before the military takeover. In 2020, the pandemic caused a fall in the tourism industry and curtailed domestic mobility, and subsequently affected the entire service industry, especially retail trade, food and accommodation services (World Bank 2020b). Some of these sectors actually saw a reduction in employment termination following the military takeover, with the accommodation and food services sector seeing the greatest decrease in monthly job losses (30 per cent), followed by the transportation and storage sector (10 per cent) and the wholesale and retail sector (5 per cent) (figure 22). These results could be read as demonstrating the great impact of the early phase of the pandemic on these sectors.

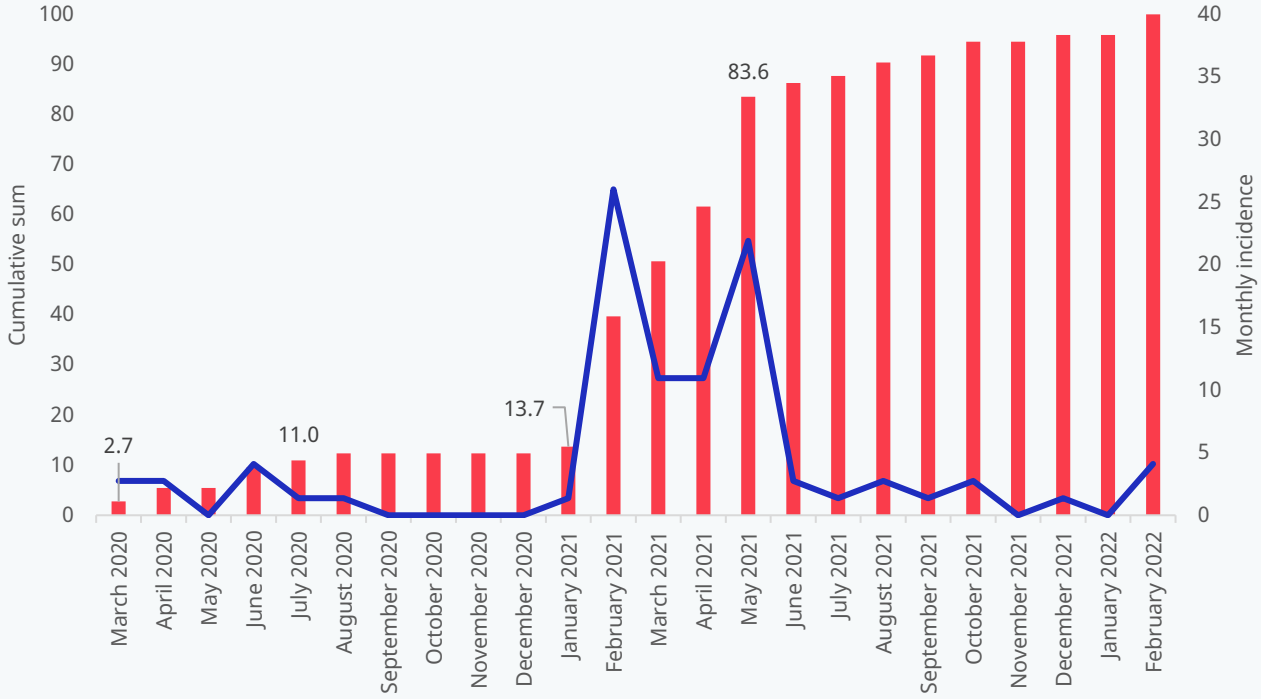
The wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, and accommodation and food service subsectors continued losing job losses over time. These sectors accounted for 44 per cent and 31 per cent of job losses before and after the military takeover, respectively. According to the World Bank economic monitors, these industries were continuously affected by reduced mobility and supply- and demand-side impacts due to the dual shocks from the pandemic (and related restriction measures) and the military takeover (World Bank 2021). Following a recovery phase after the second wave of the pandemic between September and October 2020, the military takeover caused protest and security concerns and triggered a decline in mobility that impacted retail and recreation outlets, groceries, and pharmacies between February and April 2021; while banking disruptions limited the ability of wholesalers and retailers to make and receive payments to their supply chain industries and their employees (World Bank 2021). After the stay-at-home orders were lifted and mobility gradually improved in the second half of 2021, recovery in the retail and transport sectors was markedly slow (World Bank 2022a). Moreover, the downslide in the wholesale and retail sector affected its supply chain and consumers. The transport and storage sectors were disrupted by not only by reduced mobility, but also additional shocks related to oil price hikes, border closures, and a shortage of shipping containers. Similarly, restrictions on international and domestic travel adversely affected tourism-dependent businesses over time, and this impact can be seen in the large share of job losses in the food and accommodation sectors as well as the transport sector.

▶ **Figure 23. Monthly incidence of job losses and cumulative sum in the non-state sectors (% of job losses)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ **Figure 24. Monthly incidence of job losses and cumulative sum in the public sector (% of job losses)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

Job losses increased in male-dominated secondary sectors after the military takeover. The manufacturing and construction sectors accounted for 32 per cent and 31 per cent of job losses before and after the military takeover, respectively. While the average monthly incidence of job losses continued to be high in the female-dominated textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing industries, this sector only saw a 2 per cent increase in the monthly average incidence of employment termination after the military takeover (figure 22). By contrast, job losses were relatively low before the military takeover in other manufacturing industries and the construction sector, both of which are dominated by male employees. But both of these sectors saw substantial post-takeover increases in employment termination – 50 per cent for other manufacturing and 17 per cent for construction.

Recent World Bank economic monitors may help explain the increases in job losses in the latter two sectors. The construction sector was reportedly hit hard by suspensions of ongoing projects, a decline in the issuance of new permits, and dual shocks on the supply side related to cash shortages and rising costs of imported inputs (World Bank 2022a). Political instability and global economic shocks contributed to worsening the business environment of the construction sector. Concerning manufacturing industries other than textiles, apparel and leather, there are only limited analyses available to help explain the drastic increase in job losses after the military takeover. For example, motor vehicle production rapidly fell by 87 per cent between January and November 2021, compared to the same period in 2020 (World Bank 2022a). Importantly, these sectoral differences impact job losses among specific gender in a different timeframe.

The financial and insurance sector and the education sector both lost jobs after the military takeover. These sectors saw an increased monthly incidence of job losses by 323 per cent and 314 per cent after the military takeover, respectively (figure 22). Almost all job losses in the financial and insurance sector occurred after February 2021 – 83 per cent compared to just 17 per cent in the pre-military takeover period. It is reported that the performance of the financial sector was weak even before the military takeover, and worsened after the incidence as individuals, businesses and the market lost confidence and trust in the formal banking system and the financial sector as a whole (World Bank 2022a). The combined evidence suggests that the sector had maintained employment during the first year of the pandemic even in a climate of low economic performance, but the military takeover may have made businesses or employees give up their employment for some reasons. By contrast, as discussed further in section 4.6 below, job losses in the education sector were driven by the employment termination in the public sector, most likely due to the increase in employees' participation in the CDM after February 2021.

4.5. Increases in dismissals after the military takeover

Dismissals increased dramatically after the military takeover. Overall, resignation was the most common reason for employment termination both before and after the military takeover, followed by dismissal. Few cases were found wherein job loss was due to the expiry of a fixed-term contract or by mutual agreement between employer and worker to cancel an employment contract, and no cases were reported with regard to job loss stemming from the expiration of a probationary period or apprenticeship or reaching retirement age. The monthly average incidence of resignation increased by 22 per cent after the military takeover, while that of dismissal increased by 41 per cent (figure 25).

As we will discuss in detail in section 5.1, employment termination must be implemented according to laws and regulations. In particular, dismissal must be associated with reasons stipulated in laws and regulations. Among the lawful reasons for dismissal, the most common in both periods was suspension of business due to unforeseeable events, followed by the liquidation of the business. There were few cases where dismissal was due to ordinary misconduct and no cases involving grave misconduct. Almost none of respondents reported being dismissed for unlawful reasons, including opposing an illegal lockout practised by employer, being a member of a labour organization or participating in a strike, and taking maternity leave or medical leave.

However, the rapid increase in dismissal after the military takeover was led by non-standard reasons instead of these standard reasons. Dismissal based on the two maid standard reasons noted above did rise at a relatively modest level after the military takeover – by 13 per cent for liquidation of business and by 11 per cent for suspension of business due to unforeseeable events. But non-standard reasons categorized as "other reasons" increased after the military takeover by 690 per cent. Among the non-standard reasons for dismissal provided by survey respondents, nearly one-third were clearly related to factors tied to the military takeover, such as the employee's participation in the CDM or other political activities and employee's refusal to come to work due to security concerns. The rest may be related to either the military takeover or the pandemic, namely more than one-third being due to the employee's absence with or without leave entitlement, and most of the remaining were associated with employees refusing to return to work or employers not resuming business or relocating the workplace. Because almost all these "other reasons" were reported after February

2021 and only a few such cases in such were found in the period before, factors related to the military takeover may be reasonably seen as contributing to the rapid increase in dismissals.

▶ Figure 25. Change in monthly average incidence of job losses after February 2021, by means of employment termination and reason for dismissal (%)

Source: Authors' calculations.

4.6. Losing jobs in the public sector

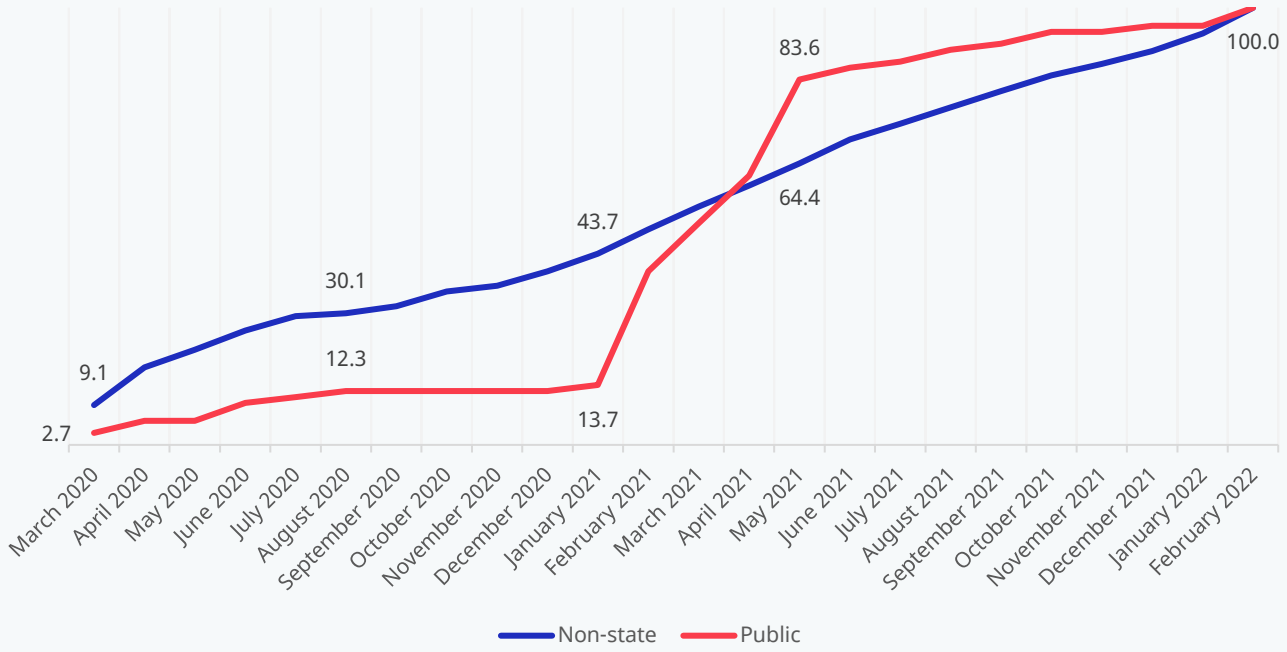
As we discussed in the subsection above, different employment termination trends exist for the public sector and the non-state sector. While the non-state sector constantly lost jobs during the survey period, the public sector started losing jobs after the military takeover (figure 26). In this subsection, we will analyse different trends within the public sector.

Overall, the public education sector and the public non-education sector demonstrate different trends. The public non-education sector lost many jobs in February 2021 in the very immediate aftermath of the military takeover, but the pace of employment termination became moderate by the following month and continued thereafter. The public education sector, however, experienced the loss of many jobs each month between February 2021 and May 2021 before entering a more moderate trajectory (figure 27).

Most job losses in the public sector were reported within five months after the military takeover. Seventy per cent of job losses in the public sector took place between February and May 2022 (figure 28). Unlike non-government sectors, employment in the public sector had been little affected by the pandemic up through January 2021. The monthly incidence of employment termination suddenly picked up in February 2021 and remained high until May 2022. This trend was shaped by two separate trends led by the education sector and non-education sectors.

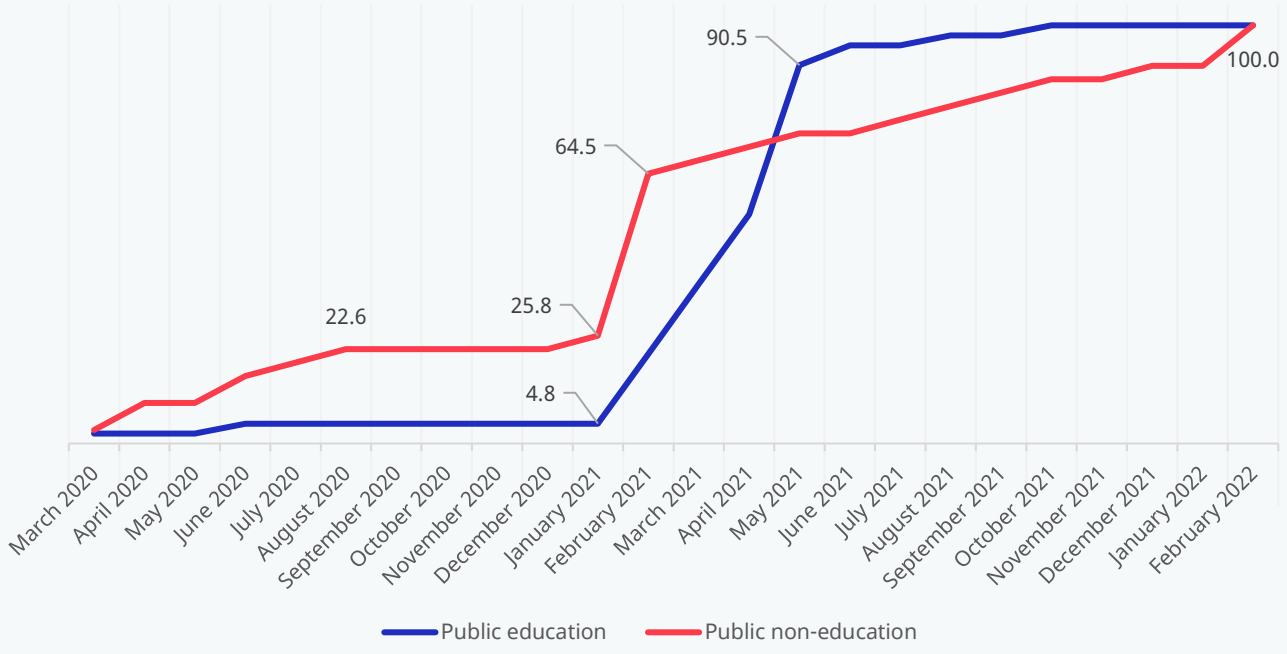
The increase in job losses in the public sector was driven by the sharp increase in job losses in the education sector after the military takeover. During the survey period, the education sector accounted for the largest share of job losses in the public sector (57 per cent), followed by the human health and social work sector (16 per cent) and the construction sector (8 per cent). Notably, almost all job losses in the public education sector were observed after the military takeover (95 per cent), and the monthly incidence of employment termination in the sector increased by 1,635 per cent compared to the pre-takeover period (figure 28).

▶ Figure 26. Comparison of cumulative monthly incidence of job losses in the public sector and in the non-state sector (% of job losses)



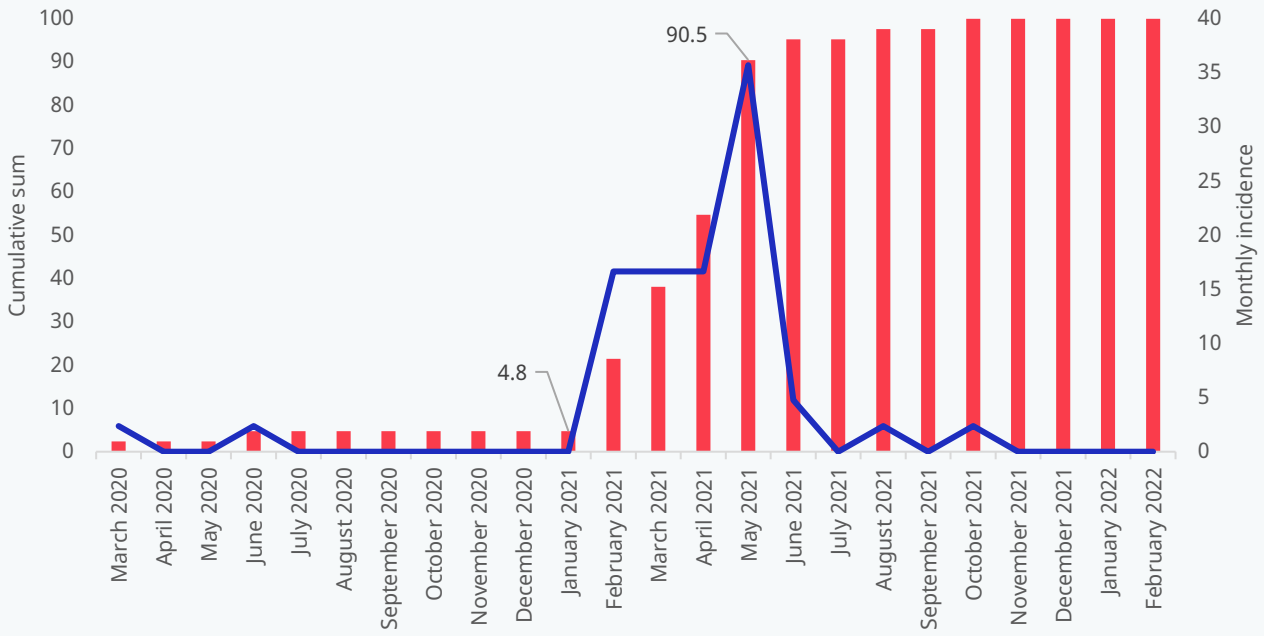
Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 27. Comparison of cumulative monthly incidence of job losses in the public education sector and the public non-education sector (% of job losses)



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 28. Monthly incidence of job losses and cumulative sum in the public education sector (% of job losses)



Source: Authors' calculations.

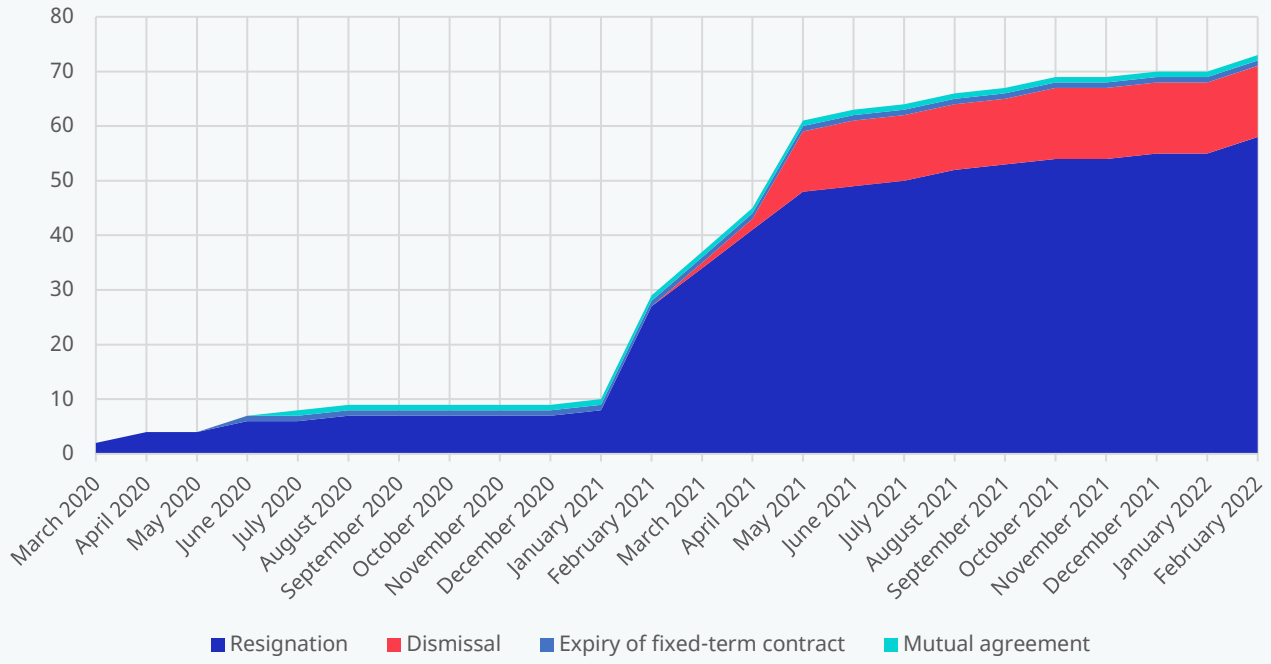
Most job losses in the public sector were due to resignation, though all dismissal cases in the public sector happened after the military takeover. The major reason for employment termination in the public sector was resignation (80 per cent). Disaggregating job losses by the means of employment termination illustrates different trends within the public education sector and public non-education sector. In both the public education sector (74 per cent) and the public non-education sector (87 per cent), resignation accounted for most of the employment terminations. Almost all the other terminations were dismissals. Most of the dismissal cases were found in the public education sector (11 cases), and a few were found in the public non-education sector (2 cases).[13] Notably, all these dismissal cases in the public sector were observed after February 2021 (figure 29).

The public non-education sector reported its highest job losses in February 2021, while the public education sector reached its peak in May 2021. Two factors possibly contributed to shaping the different trends within the public sector, including the military takeover and the school year (figure 30). A sudden increase in job losses in the public sector in February 2021 clearly indicates workers resigned due to the military takeover, most likely to participate in the CDM. Both in the public non-education sector and the public education sector, job losses started suddenly increasing in February 2021 and almost all job losses in the public sector were reported between February 2021 and May 2021. In May 2021, the public education sector shows the sudden spike in job losses due to dismissal. This means that 9 out of all 13 dismissal cases in the public sector over the two-year survey period took place in the single month. Schools were closed for the entire school year from June 2020 to May 2021, and it was announced that they would re-open in June 2021, but high rates of non-attendance by both teachers and students were reported (World Bank 2021).[14] This combined evidence suggests that employees in the public schools started resigning in February 2021 like other government employees, and some of the remaining employees were finally dismissed in the last month before the new school year started, likely because they were not willing or able to return to work. As there were very few dismissal cases among other government employees, this pattern of job losses is a singular phenomenon for employees in the public education sector.

[13] 11 dismissal cases were found in the public education sector out of 13 cases in total in the public sector.

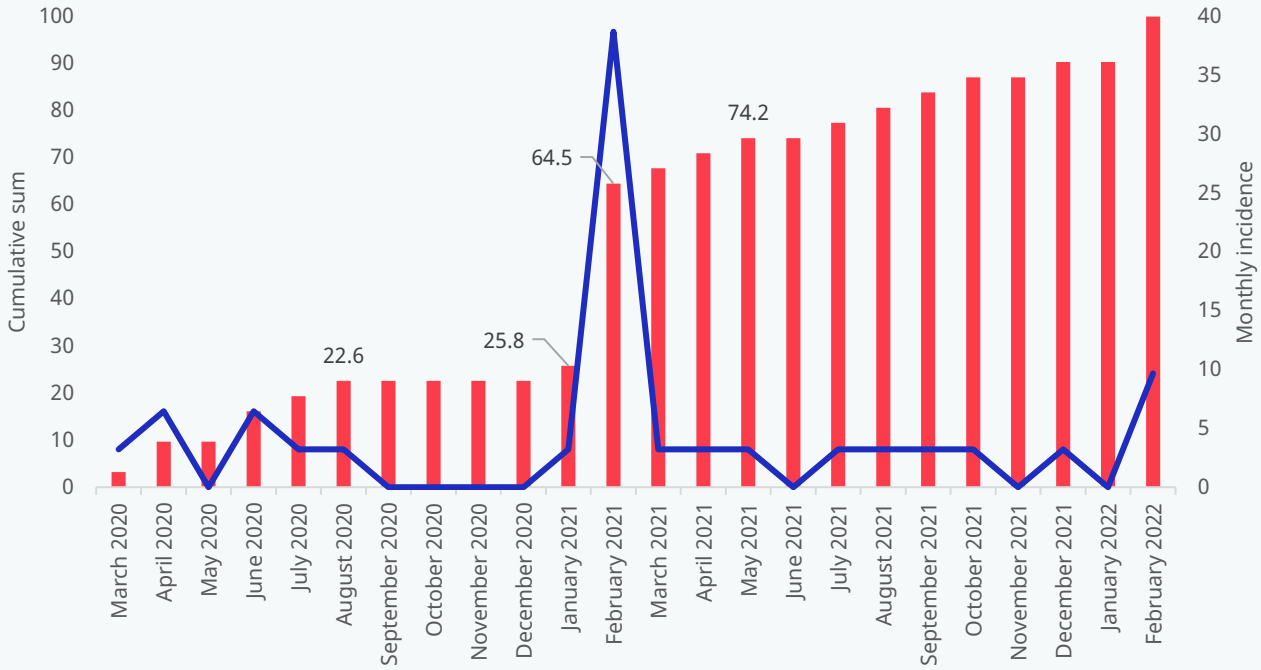
[14] Schools were closed again from 9 July 2021 to 31 October 2021, but continued to face very low attendance rates among both students and teachers after this period (World Bank 2022a).

▶ Figure 29. Monthly incidence of job losses and cumulative sum in the public sector, by means of employment termination



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 30. Monthly incidence of job losses and cumulative sum in the public non-education sector (% of job losses)



Source: Authors' calculations.

5

How were jobs lost?

When an employment relationship permanently ends, an employee reserves certain rights and an employer has certain obligations according to labour laws and employment agreements. Workers' rights include the right to advanced notification of employment termination and monies on separation. Employers are liable to comply with the conditions and procedures of employment termination and the payment of compensation, though employers also have the right to receive advance notification of resignation from employees. In this chapter, we will assess why and how employment termination happened during the survey period (March 2020 – February 2022).

5.1. Reasons for employment termination

The reasons provided by survey respondents employment termination can be broadly categorized into 12 different types according to laws and regulations (table 7). There are seven lawful reasons for employment termination, these are:

i. voluntary resignation;

ii. involuntary termination for ordinary misconduct after receiving three warnings;

iii. grave misconduct;

iv. liquidation of the business;

v. suspension of business due to unforeseeable events;

vi. death of employee; and

vii. cancellation of the contract via mutual agreement.[15]

Employers are prohibited from terminating the employment of workers for opposing an illegal lockout, for membership in a labour organization, for taking maternity or medical leaves according to their rights, or for any other reasons tied to involuntary termination. Moreover, other than these statutory reasons, employment can possibly end when a fixed-term contract reaches an end of agreed period, when an agreed period for probation or apprenticeship comes to end, or when a worker reaches retirement age according to the employment rules of the enterprise. The survey for this study asked termination respondents to supply the reasons their employment came to end.

▶ **Table 7. Lawful and unlawful termination and the requirement for 30 days of advance notice**

Reason for termination	Legality	Category of termination	Advance notice	Reference
Resignation	Lawful	Voluntary	Required	ECT, clause 15(a)(3)
Ordinary misconduct after third warning	Lawful	Involuntary	Not required	ECT, clause 15(b)(2)
Grave misconduct	Lawful	Involuntary	Not required	n/a
Liquidation of business	Lawful	Involuntary	Required	ECT, clauses 15(b)(3) and 16(a)
Suspension of business due to unforeseeable events	Lawful	Involuntary	Required	ECT, clauses 15(b)(3) and 16(b)
Death of employee	Lawful	Involuntary	n/a	ECT, clause 16(c)
Cancellation with mutual agreement	Lawful	n/a	n/a	ECT, clause 18
Opposing an illegal lockout	Unlawful	Involuntary	n/a	LOL, section 44(c)
Membership in a labour organization	Unlawful	Involuntary	n/a	LOL, section 44(d)
Taking maternity leave	Unlawful	Involuntary	n/a	LHR, rule 50(g)
Taking medical leave	Unlawful	Involuntary	n/a	LHR, rule 50(g)
Any other involuntary termination	Unlawful	Involuntary	n/a	n/a

Note: n/a = not applicable; ECT = Employment Contract Template (2017); LOL = Labour Organization Law, 2011; LHR = Leave and Holiday Rules, 2018.
Source: Tsuruga and Moo 2021.

Most jobs were lost because of voluntary resignation, and the rest were due to involuntary termination (table 8). Seventy per cent of former employees lost their jobs because they resigned. Although we have no means of validating whether each case was a voluntary resignation or forced resignation, we explicitly asked respondents to report voluntary

[15] Detailed descriptions for each reason are stipulated by reference legal provisions (see Tsuruga and Moo 2021).

termination for this specific question. Dismissal accounts for 28 per cent of employment termination. These dismissed workers were willing to continue working, but their employers terminated their employment. The employment contracts of 1 per cent of termination respondents ended because they reached the end of fixed-term contracts; while the remaining 1 per cent of termination respondents mutually agreed on employment termination with their employers. No cases were identified related to the expiry of a probationary period or apprenticeship, or of reaching corporate retirement age.

▶ Table 8. Reasons for employment termination (n=728)

Description	No.	%
Resignation (voluntary termination)	510	70.1
Dismissal despite worker's willingness to continue working (involuntary termination)	200	27.5
End of fixed-term contract	9	1.2
End of probationary period	–	–
End of apprenticeship	–	–
Retirement age according to the employment rules of company	–	–
Mutual agreement on the cancellation of employment contract between employer and worker	9	1.2
Total	728	100.0

Note: This table only includes those survey respondents who have experienced at least one employment termination.
Source: Authors' calculations.

Despite the low number of samples, it is noted that workers reported different reasons for the expiry of their fixed-term contracts, including reasons that are voluntary and involuntary in nature. Out of the nine cases involving the expiration of a fixed-term contract, two workers refused to accept a contract extension offered by their employers, while four workers were willing to continue working but were not offered a contract extension (table 9). Concerning the policy implications for an unemployment insurance scheme that may be established in the future, it is important to consider all types of involuntary termination as qualifying workers for unemployment benefits. This being the case, 204 termination respondents (or 28 per cent) – including 200 dismissed workers and the four workers whose fixed-term contracts were not renewed against their wishes – can be regarded as having their employment terminated involuntarily, and therefore they should qualify for unemployment benefits.

Our findings suggests that a potential increase in the cost of the unemployment benefit scheme would be marginal if such a scheme is established in the future and covers the involuntary expiry of fixed-term contracts as a qualified reason. Almost all involuntary termination cases are associated with dismissal, and very few jobs end due to the expiry of a fixed-term contract period. Therefore, a scheme that includes these latter individuals would bear only a little increase in cost but improve its effectiveness by the inclusion of such unemployed workers.

▶ Table 9. Reasons for end of fixed-term contract (n=9)

Descriptions	No.	%
Worker's refusal to accept a contract extension offered by employer (voluntary termination)	2	22.2
Employer did not offer a contract extension despite worker's willingness to continue working (involuntary termination)	4	44.4
Both parties not willing to extend a contract (voluntary termination)	–	–
Other reasons	3	33.3
Total	9	100.0

Note: – = nil. This table only includes those survey respondents whose employment termination was due to their fixed-term contract ending.
Source: Authors' calculations.

Most dismissals were based on lawful reasons. Overall, 78 per cent of dismissal cases in total had lawful reasons, including ordinary misconduct (1 per cent), liquidation of business (28 per cent) and suspension of business due to unforeseeable events (49 per cent) (table 10). Among these respondents, the latter two types – or 77 per cent of dismissal cases – meet the legal entitlement to severance pay (see section 6.2 for a detailed analysis about severance pay). It is noted that although dismissal for ordinary misconduct requires an employer to give three warnings in advance according to laws and regulations, we did not ask whether or how many times respondents were given warnings before dismissal because of the complexity involved. Ordinary misconduct must be defined by staff regulations, company regulations, the employment contract or collective agreement, and therefore each respondent may have different conditions for ordinary misconduct. Similarly, we did not further investigate what unforeseeable events business faced. In fact, laws and

regulations do not specify what events can be regarded "unforeseeable". As we conducted this survey in a time of crisis, we suspect many of these reported cases referred to events due to the pandemic, the military takeover, inflation, and/or any other related shocks.

The share of unlawful dismissals is not fully clear based on the survey responses, but they may account for between 2.5 per cent and 21.5 per cent of all dismissal cases. There were few dismissals cases reported for being a member of a labour organization or participating in a strike (1 per cent) and for taking medical leaves (2 per cent) (table 10). No cases of dismissal were reported for opposing an illegal locked out practised by an employer or for taking maternity leave. Moreover, some respondents did not know why they had been dismissed (5 per cent). Other respondents (16 per cent) reported "other reasons" that we were unable to categorize into any of the reasons stipulated by laws and regulations. According to the Employment Contract Template (clause 15(b)(2)), an employer must provide a dismissed employee with a signed official notice that includes the reason for termination, and on which the employer must also clarify that the dismissal is being executed for lawful reasons (Tsuruga and Moo 2021). The abovementioned one-fifth of dismissed workers who did not know why they had been dismissed or gave "other reasons" may have either forgotten the reasons stated on the official notice or they may not have received such an official notice. If we assumed that these unknown reasons and unclassified reasons for all of these dismissals were unlawful, the share of unlawful dismissals would increase from 2.5 per cent to 21.5 per cent.

▶ Table 10. Reasons for dismissal (n=200)

Descriptions	No.	%
Ordinary misconduct	2	1.0
Grave misconduct	–	–
Liquidation of business	56	28.0
Suspension of business due to unforeseeable events	97	48.5
Opposing an illegal lockout practised by employer	–	–
Being a member of a labour organization or participating in a strike	2	1.0
Taking maternity leaves	–	–
Taking medical leaves	3	1.5
Other reasons	31	15.5
Do not know	9	4.5
Total	200	100.0

Note: – = nil. This table only includes those survey respondents who were dismissed despite being willing to continue working (involuntary termination). We did not ask respondents exactly how laws and regulations stipulate "ordinary misconduct" and "workers participating in a strike". Under the law, to dismiss a worker due to ordinary misconduct, the employer must execute the dismissal only after giving the worker three warnings. When a worker goes on a strike, the strike must be registered and practised in accordance with the law. However, we decided not to ask how many times employers gave warnings before dismissal or whether strikes had been practised in accordance with the law, because workers may not be able to provide us with accurate information about these requirements. Similarly, we excluded another reason for lawful termination – death of employee – because it was irrelevant to include such an option in an interview with a worker.
Source: Authors' calculations.

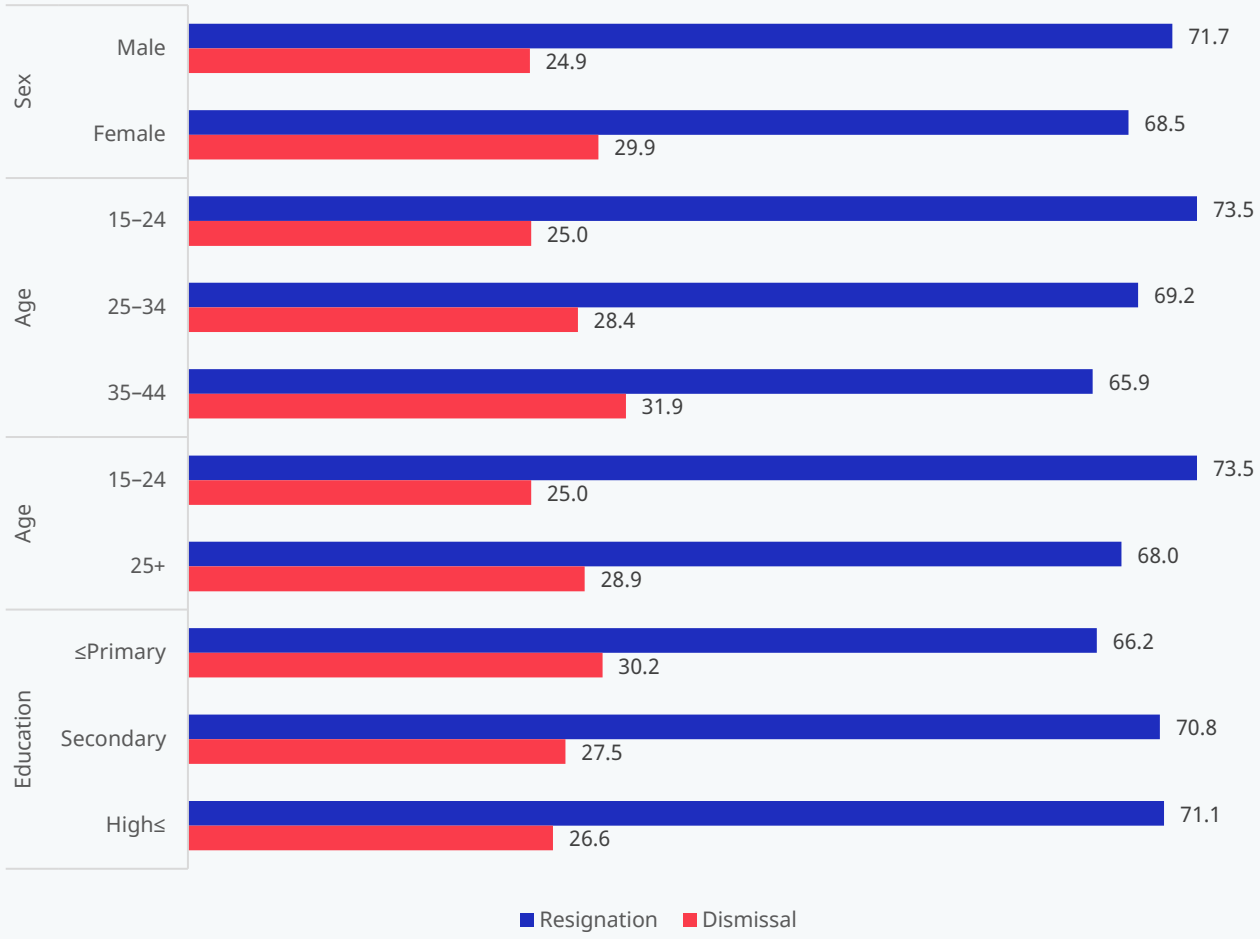
Gender differences concerning reasons for employment termination may have been affected by multiple factors. Female workers had a slightly higher share of dismissals than their male counterparts by 5 percentage points; while the share of resignations is slightly higher for male workers than female workers by 3 percentage points (figure 31). As we will discuss in the following paragraphs, the share of resignations is higher among younger workers and never-married males; while the share by different industrial sectors – including male- and female-dominated sectors – shows different trends.

Older workers were more likely to lose jobs via dismissal, while younger workers were more likely to lose jobs via resignation. Youth workers (ages 15–24) were slightly more like to lose their jobs via resignation than their senior counterparts (by 6 percentage points); while older workers (ages 25–44) were more like to be dismissed than youth employees (by 4 percentage points).

The lower educated respondents were more likely to lose their jobs via dismissal; while the higher educated were more likely resign. Termination respondents whose highest level of educational attainment was primary school or below were slightly more likely to lose their jobs via dismissal than respondents who had a secondary school education or above. The share of resignation and dismissal among the lowest educated cohort was 66 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively,

while that of secondary school graduates was 71 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, and that of respondents with a high school education or above was 71 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively.

▶ Figure 31. Means of employment termination (resignation versus dismissal), by demographic characteristics (%)



Source: Authors' calculations.

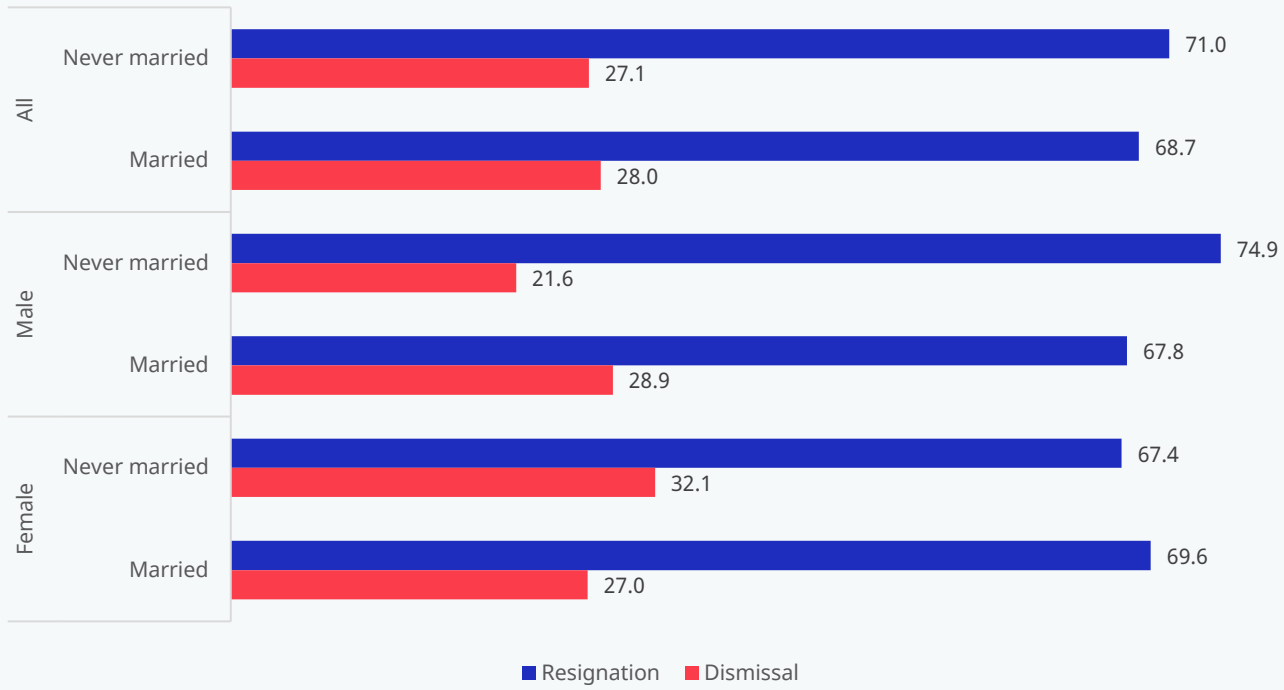
Marital status may have had a greater impact on male respondents' resignation behaviour than it did on female respondents, as married male workers were less likely to resign than their never-married counterparts, while such an effect was not observed among female respondents. Among male termination respondents, 75 per cent of never-married respondents had resigned from their job, whereas this was the case for only 68 per cent of married male respondents. Among female termination respondents, there was a much smaller gap, with 67 per cent of never-married females and 70 per cent of married females having resigned from their jobs (figure 32).

The share of dismissals is higher among workers with written contracts than among workers with oral contracts. Dismissals accounted for 37 per cent of job losses among workers with written contracts, with 57 per cent of such workers leaving their employment via resignation. The share of resignations was much larger among workers with oral contracts at 74 per cent, with just 25 per cent having been dismissed from their employment (figure 33).

Workers with fixed-term contracts lost jobs through a slightly more diverse set of means compared to workers with permanent contracts. The share of dismissals was similar between workers with permanent contracts (27 per cent) and fixed-term contracts (29 per cent), while the share of resignations was slightly lower among fixed-term workers (67 per cent) than permanent workers (72 per cent). The difference can be explained by the expiry of fixed-term contracts, which accounted for 4 per cent of job loss among fixed-term workers.

A combined indicator of contract type and contract period shows a linear trend of dismissal. Workers with written and permanent contracts reported the highest share of dismissals (42 per cent), followed by workers with written and fixed-term contracts (36 per cent), workers with oral and permanent contracts (26 per cent) and workers with oral and fixed-term contracts (22 per cent). The share of resignations is lower both for written and permanent contracts (56 per cent) and written and fixed-term contracts (57 per cent), while it is higher for both oral and permanent contracts (73 per cent) and oral and fixed-term contracts (77 per cent).

▶ **Figure 32. Means of employment termination (resignation versus dismissal), by marital status and sex (%)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

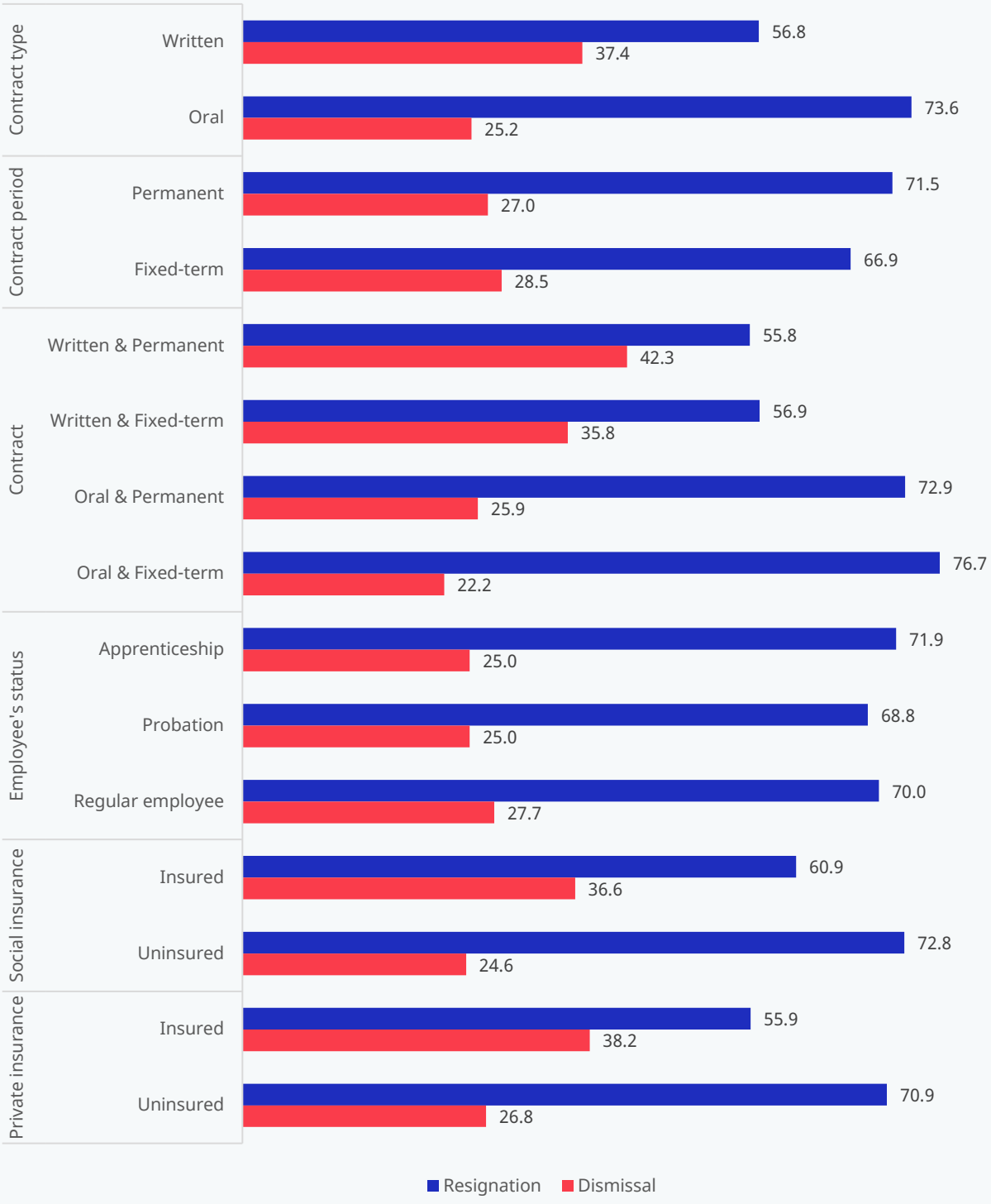
Workers with social insurance or private insurance coverage reported a higher prevalence of dismissal than non-insured termination respondents. The share of dismissals was higher among insured members of the Social Security Board (SSB) (37 per cent) than among the non-insured (25 per cent), while the share of dismissals among insured members of private insurance (38 per cent) is also higher than their non-insured counterparts (27 per cent). Conversely, the share of resignations among insured members of the SSB and private insurance is lower than the non-insured.

The means of employment termination varies in different regions. The share of termination respondents who lost their job via resignation was close to the national average in Yangon Region (70 per cent) and Shan State (67 per cent) (figure 34). The highest share of resignations was reported in Sagaing Region (82 per cent), followed by Mandalay Region (75 per cent). In Sagaing Region, the services sector was the biggest contributor to this result, as it accounted for 70 per cent of employment terminations and 71 per cent of resignations. The highest share of dismissals was reported in Ayeyawady Region (41 per cent), followed by Magway Region (36 per cent) and Bago Region (31 per cent). In Ayeyawady Region, the industry sector contributed to this result the most, as it accounted for 52 per cent of employment terminations. Across all of study regions and states, the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector and the public education sector accounted for two-thirds of dismissals and one-fifth of dismissals, respectively. These two subsectors accounted for 87 per cent of dismissals in Ayeyawady Region.

The share of resignations was high in the government sector. The share of resignations was 80 per cent among termination respondents who lost government jobs, which was much higher than the share in the private sector (69 per cent). This result may be largely affected by the CDM, as many workers in the Government reportedly participated in the movement. In fact, 85 per cent of resignations from government jobs were reported after the military takeover. Moreover, the share of dismissals in joint ventures is relatively higher than in other economic units.

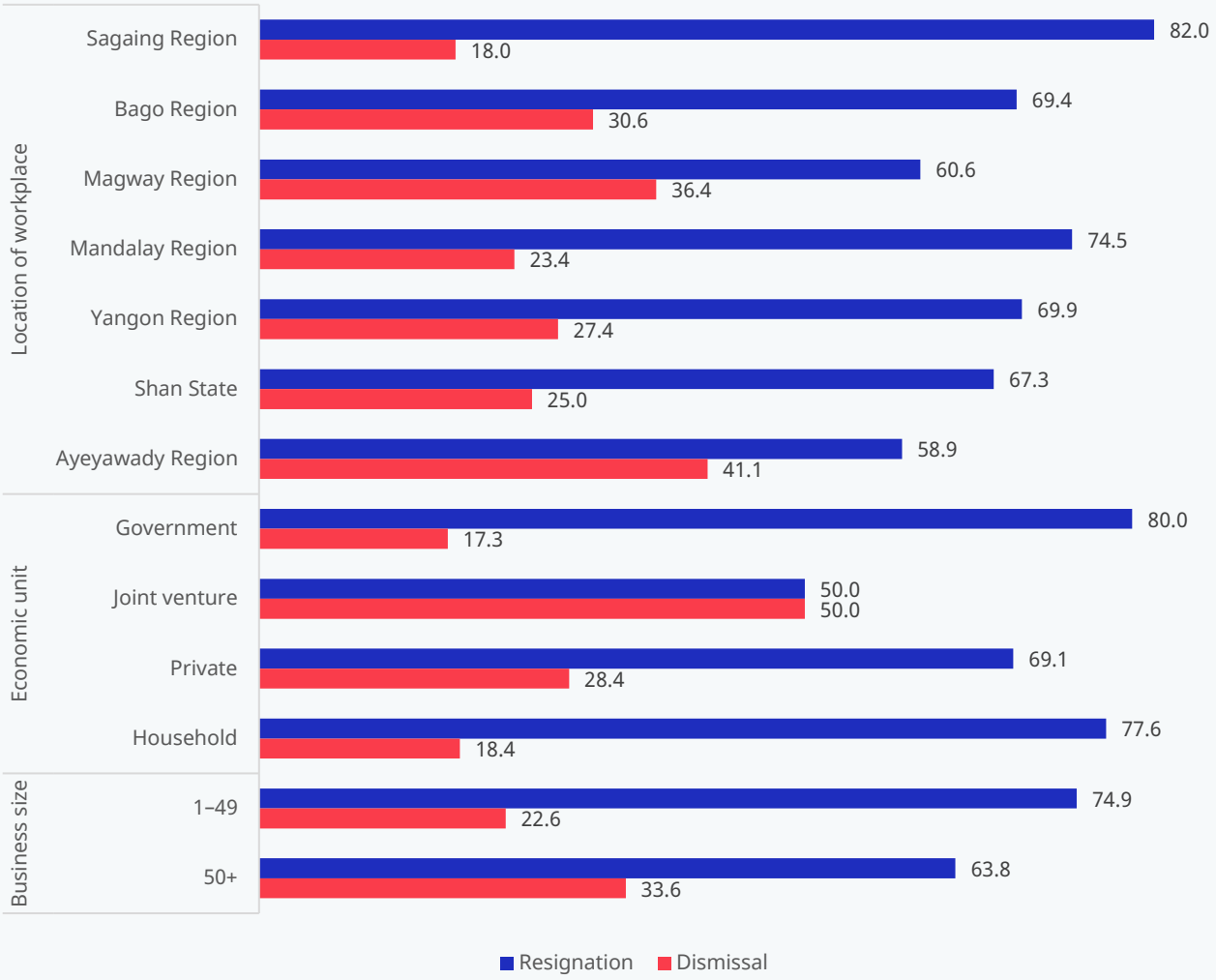
The share of dismissals was higher in larger enterprises than in their smaller counterparts. Workers reported a relatively higher prevalence of dismissal at 34 per cent in medium-to-large enterprises (50+ employees), as compared to 23 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises (1–49 employees).

▶ **Figure 33. Means of employment termination (resignation versus dismissal), by employment characteristics (%)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 34. Means of employment termination (resignation versus dismissal), by economic characteristics (%)

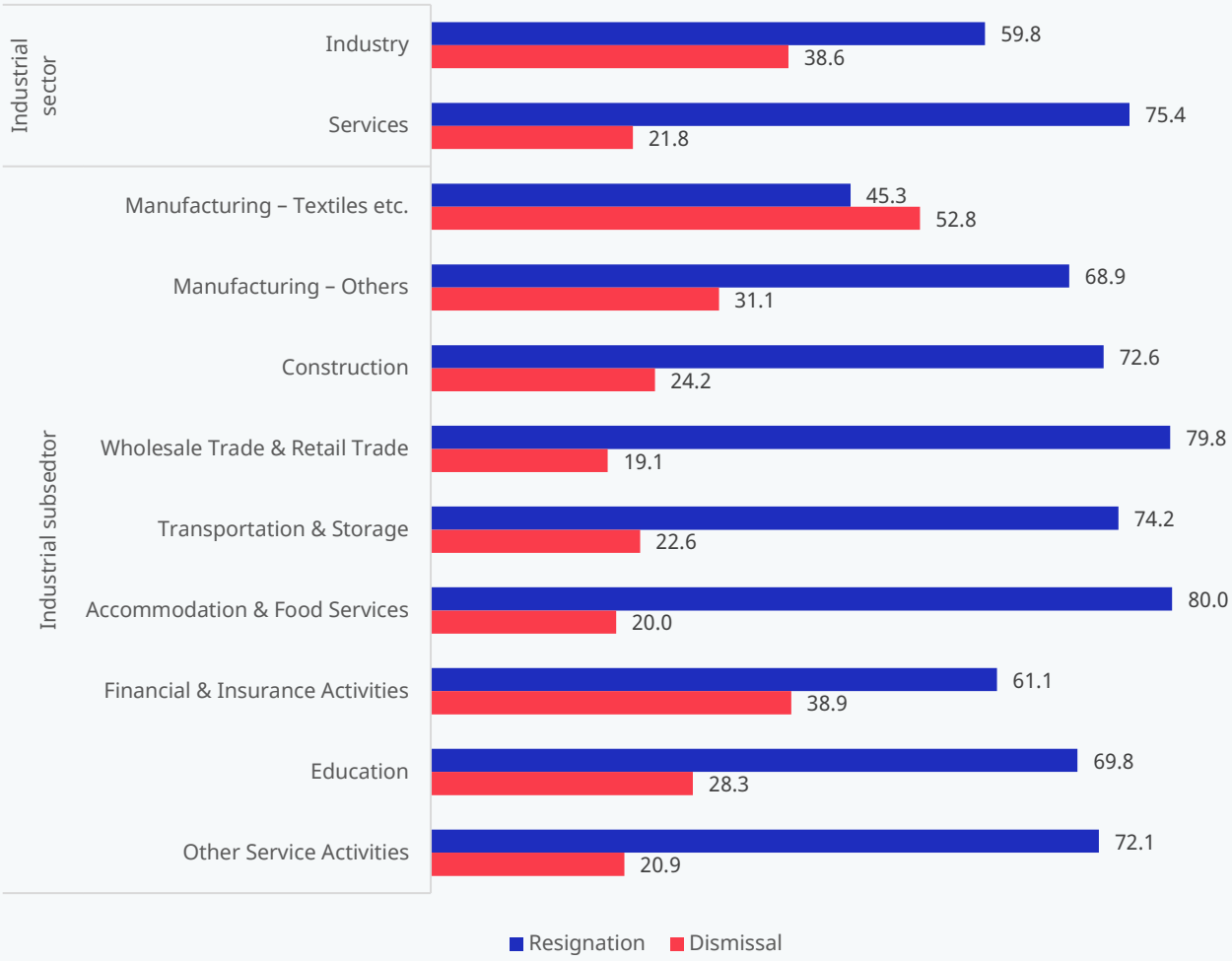


Source: Authors' calculations.

The share of dismissals was larger in the industry sector, greatly led by the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing subsector. The share of dismissal is higher in the industry sector (39 per cent) than the services sector (22 per cent) (figure 35). In particular, the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector has the highest share of dismissals (53 per cent). It is noted that this is significantly higher than any other subsectors within the industry sector, with the second-highest being the other manufacturing sector at 31 per cent. Because the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing accounted for 60 per cent of dismissals in the industry sector, the means of employment termination in the textile, apparel, leather and related manufacturing contributed to shaping the average of the entire sector. Indeed, the construction industry presented a lower share of dismissals (24 per cent) than the national average. This result sheds light on the existence of different trends within a single sector of the economy.

The share of resignations was larger in the services sector, with several subsectors contributing to shaping the trend. The share of resignations is higher in the services sector (75.4 per cent) than in the industry sector (60 per cent). By subsector within the services sector, accommodation and food services (80 per cent) had the highest share of resignations, followed by wholesale and retail trade (80 per cent), while the education subsector (at 70 per cent) presented a share of resignations around the national average. These subsectors accounted for 75 per cent of resignations in the services sector. Compared to the sectoral pattern for dismissal, wherein a few industries affect the overall trend, resignations seem to be more widely observed in different industrial sectors.

▶ **Figure 35. Means of employment termination (resignation versus dismissal), by industrial sector and subsector (%)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

Thus, the results of our analysis on the means of employment termination can be summarized by four overall trends. First, voluntary resignation was the most common means of employment termination, followed by dismissal with lawful reasons, with few workers being dismissed for unlawful reasons. Second, workers with higher employability and productivity were slightly more likely to resign rather than being dismissed. The share of resignations decreases and the share of dismissals increases among workers who are older and less educated. Younger workers and the highly educated may find more job opportunities, and so they may opt for resignation in order to take up these opportunities. Third, married men were less likely resign than never married men, though such a trend does not exist for married women. This result can be interpreted as men's behaviour concerning resignation changes as their family obligations increase, such as being the breadwinner for the household. Fourth, workers with formal employment and in formal sector enterprises are less liable to resign. The share of resignation was relatively lower for workers with written contracts, social insurance, private insurance, or employment in medium-to-large enterprises. Finally, the share of resignations from government jobs was higher than the share in the private sector, possibly due to CDM-related factors.

5.2. Advance notice by employees

Two-thirds of terminated respondents did not comply with the requirement of giving 30 days' advance notice to their employers prior to resignation. According to laws and regulations, workers are required to notify their employers

30 days prior to the date of resignation (table 7). However, only 32 per cent of terminated respondents who resigned notified their employers 30 days in advance, while 22 per cent notified their employers but less than 30 days before their resignation, and 46 per cent did not notify their employers at all and resigned immediately (table 11).

▶ **Table 11. Advance notice by employees (%) (n=510)**

Description	No.	%
Yes, I notified my employer 30 days before resignation	162	31.8
Yes, I notified my employer but less than 30 days before resignation	114	22.4
No, I did not notify my employer in advance and immediately resigned	234	45.9
Total	510	100.0

Note: This table only includes those survey respondents who voluntarily resigned from their employment.
Source: Authors' calculations.

There are three major trends concerning workers giving advance notice prior to resignation. First, less than one-third of terminated respondents complied with the 30-day advance notice prior to resignation rule, and nearly half of workers immediately resigned without giving any advance notice to their employers. Second, employers could expect slightly better compliance with the 30-day advance notice rule by formalizing the employment relationship with their workers, such as providing a written contract and social insurance coverage, as 44 per cent of resigning workers with a written contract gave 30 days' advance notice and this was also the case for 59 per cent of resigning workers with social insurance coverage. Finally, the most notable trend was that 62 per cent of workers who resigned from the Government did not notify their employers in advance before leaving their job. This result may have been largely affected by the CDM.

5.3. Advance notice by employer

Two-thirds of employers who dismissed workers did not comply with the legal obligation to provide 30 days' advance notice to the employee prior to dismissal. According to laws and regulations, employers are obliged to notify an employee 30 days prior to the date of dismissal (table 7). Only 35 per cent of dismissed workers were notified by their employers 30 days in advance of termination, while 23 per cent were notified by their employers but less than 30 days before termination, and 43 per cent were not notified in advance by their employers at all and were immediately dismissed (table 12). It is noted that among the lawful reasons for employment termination, employers are obliged to give advance warning of dismissal if said dismissal is due to the liquidation of the business or suspension of business due to unforeseeable events (table 7). However, employers are permitted to immediately dismiss a worker without advance notice in the event of ordinary misconduct after giving the worker three warnings or in the event of grave misconduct by a worker. Among the terminated respondents, there were only two dismissal cases (or 1 per cent) due to ordinary misconduct, and these two workers were not given any advance notice. These cases can be instances of lawful dismissal if their employers had given three warnings before dismissing them. Even if we considered these employers to have complied with the warning requirement, the abovementioned result would be still robust – most employers do not comply with their obligation to provide advance notice.

▶ **Table 12. Advance notice by employers (%) (n=200)**

Descriptions	No.	%
Yes, my employer notified me 30 days before dismissal	69	34.5
Yes, my employer notified me but less than 30 days before dismissal	46	23.0
No, my employer did not notify me in advance and immediately dismissed me	85	42.5
Total	200	100.0

Note: This table only includes those survey respondents who were dismissed despite being willing to continue working (involuntary termination).
Source: Authors' calculations.

Similar trends to the previous section on advance notice for resignation are found in regard to different characteristics among workers. That is, workers with written contracts, fixed-term contracts, social insurance coverage, in the industry sector and working for larger enterprises were more likely to be notified in advance of their dismissal than their counterparts.

6

Who paid the price of lost jobs?

In this section, we assess to what extent affected workers realized their statutory rights to compensation related to employment termination. According to the existing laws and regulations, there are three major components payable at the time of separation depending on the reasons for separation. These are: (i) any unpaid salary owed; (ii) compensation for any unused earned leave entitlement; and (iii) severance pay. Among the six lawful reasons for the termination of an employment contract, workers are entitled to monies for unpaid salary and unused earned leave in cases of resignation, dismissal for ordinary misconduct after three warnings and immediate dismissal after committing grave misconduct. Workers are entitled to monies for unpaid salary, unused earned leave and severance pay in cases of termination due to the liquidation of the employer's business, suspension of business for unforeseeable events, and the death of employee. The payment of outstanding salary may include not only salary for working days but also compensation for public holidays and weekly days off, as well as for any earned leave, casual leave, medical leave or maternity leave that the employee has already enjoyed but had not been paid for by the time of separation. Moreover, the payment due to workers may include pay in lieu of notice when employers dismiss a worker without giving the required 30 days' notice in advance.

6.1. Pay in lieu of notice

Notice pay or pay in lieu of notice is not often practised. If a dismissed worker has not been notified by their employer 30 days in advance of their final day of employment, they have the right to receive notice pay or pay in lieu of notice to recover loss of income stemming from the employer's non-compliance with the advance notice requirement. Among the 200 dismissed workers in the survey, 131 (or 66 per cent) either received less than 30 days' advance notice prior to dismissal or no advance notice at all. However, only 13 per cent of these workers received notice pay or pay in lieu of notice (table 13). Moreover, although we do not have data to further assess the amount of notice pay received, some of the workers who were paid may have received less than what they were entitled to.

▶ **Table 13. Pay in lieu of notice instead of giving a 30-day advance notice (%) (n=131)**

Description	No.	%
Yes	17	13.0
No – dismissal for ordinary misconduct	2	1.5
No – dismissal for other reasons	112	85.5
Total	131	100.0

Note: This table only includes those survey respondents who were dismissed from their employment either immediately or without a full 30 days of advance notice (see table 12 above).
Source: Authors' calculations.

Overall, 43 per cent of dismissed workers received either the 30-day advance notice or pay in lieu of notice, and the other 57 per cent of dismissed workers received no advance notice or a shorter advance notice but did not receive any pay in lieu of notice. Common characteristics of better protected employees include being female, being a youth, having never married, having a written contract, having a fixed-term contract, having social insurance coverage, working in the industry sector and working for a medium-to-large enterprise. There were almost no differences related to education attainment. Terminated employees who had formal employment and worked in formal sector enterprises tended to enjoy these statutory protection measures and to receive their owed wages or pay in lieu of notice from their employers. Although we have too few cases to analyse pay in lieu by different industrial subsectors, a broad trend shows that employers in the industry sector were more likely to follow the statutory requirements than employers in the services sector. In particular, the textile, apparel, leather and related manufacturing subsector performed better than others in this respect.

Thus, there are four major findings on pay in lieu of notice. First, though they are legally required to notify an employee 30 days in advance of dismissal and to continue paying salary during these 30 days, many employers seem to provide pay in lieu of notice and immediately dismiss their employee. In all, only 43 per cent of dismissed workers received either of these to fully or partially secure salary owed. Second, when workers are dismissed with less than 30 days' advance notice or no notice at all, they are very unlikely to receive pay in lieu of notice. Only 13 per cent of these respondents received pay in lieu of notice to recover income loss caused by the employer's noncompliance with rules around advance notice. Third, 57 per cent of dismissed workers lost all or part of the income that they were supposed to receive from work in the last month prior to dismissal because of employer noncompliance. Finally, dismissed workers in formal employment or in formal sector enterprises were more likely received either 30 days' advance notice or pay in lieu of notice.

6.2. Severance pay

An employee's entitlement to severance pay is determined by the means of employment termination and the duration of service prior to termination. In general, employers have to pay severance when terminating employment before the period agreed to in the employment contract (Tsuruga and Moo 2021).[16] Workers are entitled to severance pay in case of dismissal due to liquidation of the business of the employer, suspension of business due to unforeseeable events, and death of the employee. Severance pay is not due if the employee resigns, is dismissed for misconduct or had less than 6 months of employment.

Overall, 30 per cent of the dismissed workers surveyed received severance pay. Among those with entitled reasons for severance pay, 55 per cent of workers dismissed due to liquidation of business and 27 per cent of workers dismissed as a result of suspension of business due to unforeseeable events received severance pay (table 14). Some employers voluntarily paid severance to resigning employees – 5 per cent of workers who resigned received severance pay. In total, 12 per cent of workers who lost jobs received severance pay. This figure is much lower than the share of dismissed workers above because its denominator contains many resigning workers whose employers were not obliged to pay severance.

▶ **Table 14. Proportion of terminated survey respondents who received severance pay, by reason for employment termination (%)**

Reasons for employment termination	Paid	Unpaid	Total
1. Resignation	4.5	95.5	100.0
2. Dismissal	29.5	70.5	100.0
a. Ordinary misconduct*	–	100.0	100.0
b. Grave misconduct*	n/a	n/a	n/a
c. Liquidation of business	55.4	44.6	100.0
d. Suspension of business due to unforeseeable events	26.8	73.2	100.0
e. Opposing an illegal lockout practised by employer*	n/a	n/a	n/a
f. Being a member of a labour organization or participating in a strike*	50.0	50.0	100.0
g. Taking maternity leaves*	n/a	n/a	n/a
h. Taking medical leaves*	–	100.0	100.0
i. Other reasons	3.2	96.8	100.0
j. Do not know*	–	100.0	100.0
3. End of fixed-term contract*	–	100.0	100.0
4. End of probationary period*	n/a	n/a	n/a
5. End of apprenticeship*	n/a	n/a	n/a
6. Retirement age*	n/a	n/a	n/a
7. Mutual agreement*	44.4	55.6	100.0
Total	11.8	88.2	100.0

Note: n/a = not applicable; – = nil. An asterisk (*) represents fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Authors' calculations.

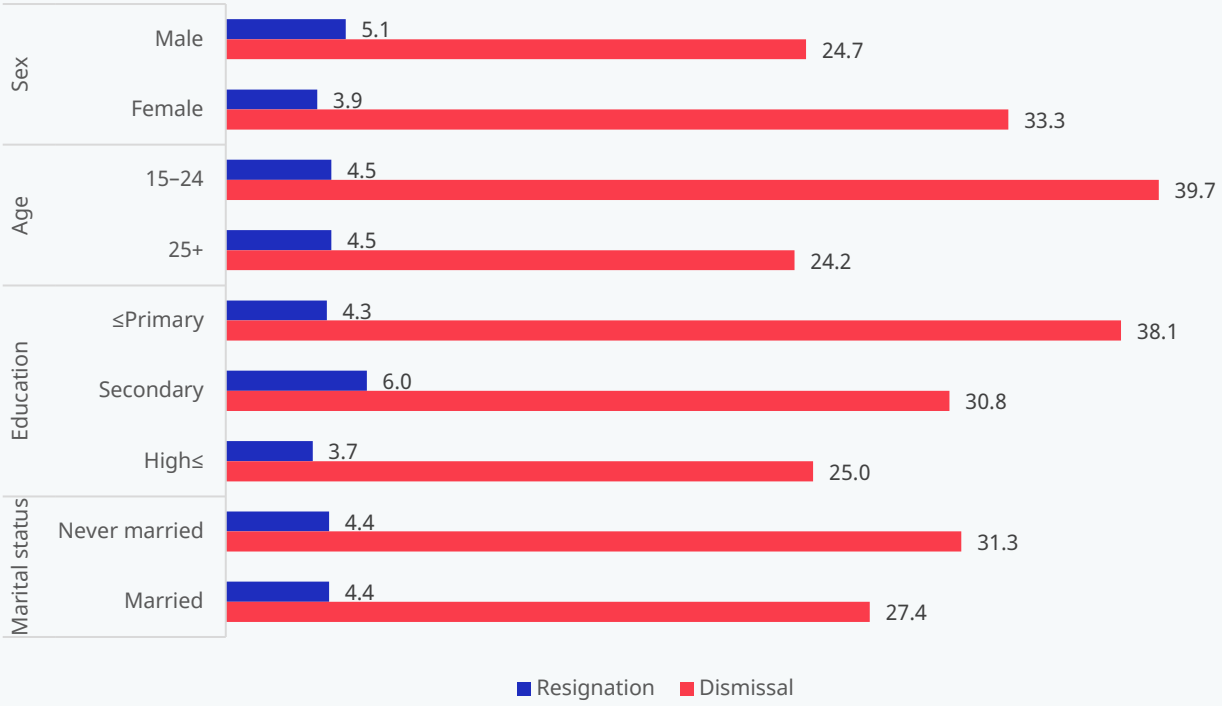
In terms of unemployment protection, it is important to assess whether workers who involuntarily lost jobs received compensation for income security. In the following paragraphs, we assess which workers were protected based on their demographic, employment and economic characteristics. To identify an overall trend, we did not rigorously assess employers' compliance with severance pay here, and therefore, the analysis will not consider whether unemployed workers had legal entitlement to severance pay. Instead, the aim is to identify a general trend on who received severance pay among all dismissed workers. As mentioned above, severance pay is not due if an employee is dismissed for misconduct or had less than 6 months of employment, but we have not considered these factors in the following analysis.[17]

[16] Employers' obligation to provide severance pay is regulated by the Employment and Skill Development Law (2013), section 5(d); while the formula for determining severance pay is defined by MOLIP Notification No. 84/2015.

[17] There were 2 out of 200 dismissed workers for misconduct. 71 out of 86 workers receiving severance pay provided us with information about employment duration, of whom 2 workers were employed less than 6 months prior to their job losses.

Concerning demographic characteristics, female workers, younger workers and the lower educated were more likely received severance pay upon involuntary termination. Among the dismissed respondents, 33 per cent of female and 40 per cent of youth workers (ages 15–24) were paid severance, and 25 per cent of male and 24 per cent of older workers (ages 25+) received severance pay (figure 36). Workers with a primary school education and below were the most likely to receive severance pay upon dismissal (38 per cent), followed by workers with a secondary school education (31 per cent) and workers with high school education and above (25 per cent).

▶ **Figure 36. Share of workers affected by employment termination who received severance pay, by demographic characteristics and means of termination (resignation versus dismissal) (%)**



Source: Authors' calculations.

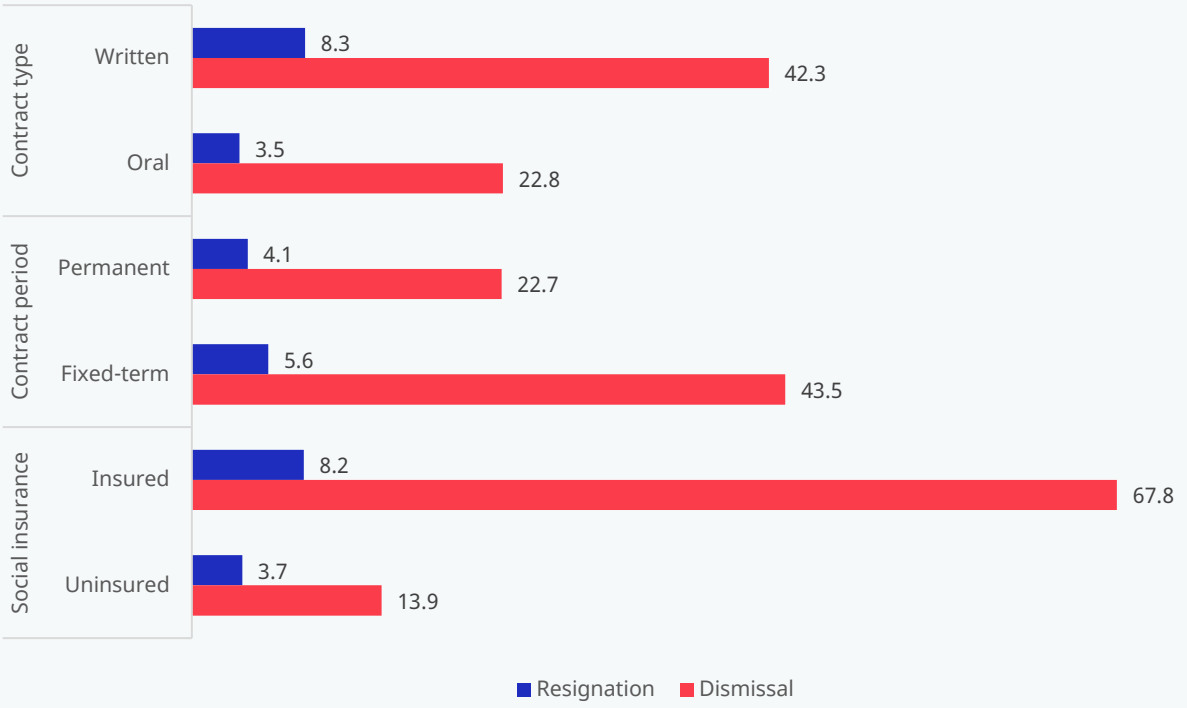
There is a clear trend demonstrating that workers with employment characteristics associated with formal employment are more likely to be paid severance. Workers with written contracts, fixed-term contracts, and social insurance coverage were more likely to be paid severance than their counterparts (figure 37). In all, 42 per cent of dismissed workers with written contracts, 44 per cent of dismissed workers with fixed-term contracts and 68 per cent of dismissed workers with social insurance received severance pay, while their counterparts were less likely paid severance – 23 per cent among oral contract holders, 23 per cent among permanent contract holders and 14 per cent among the uninsured.

Half of dismissed workers in large enterprises enjoyed severance pay, while few dismissed workers in smaller enterprises enjoyed it. Overall, 44 per cent of dismissed workers in medium-to-large enterprises (50+ employees) and 10 per cent of workers in micro-to-small enterprises (1–49 employees) received severance pay (figure 38). A breakdown of these aggregated figures shows a linear trend – only 8 per cent of dismissed workers were paid severance in small enterprises (5–49 employees), compared to 18 per cent in medium enterprises (50–99 employees) and 51 per cent in large enterprises (100+ employees).

Severance pay was provided only in few subsectors. More dismissed workers in the industry sector (47 per cent) received severance pay than in the services sector (15 per cent) (figure 38). In particular, the share of dismissed workers receiving severance was high in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing industry (64 per cent) compared to the national average or to other subsectors such as the wholesale and retail trade industry (24 per cent). Limited data does not allow further analysis by industrial subsector, but it appears that few subsectors practice severance pay. In fact,

the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing subsector employed nearly two-thirds of all dismissed workers who received severance pay.

▶ Figure 37. Share of workers affected by employment termination who received severance pay, by employment characteristics and means of termination (resignation versus dismissal) (%)



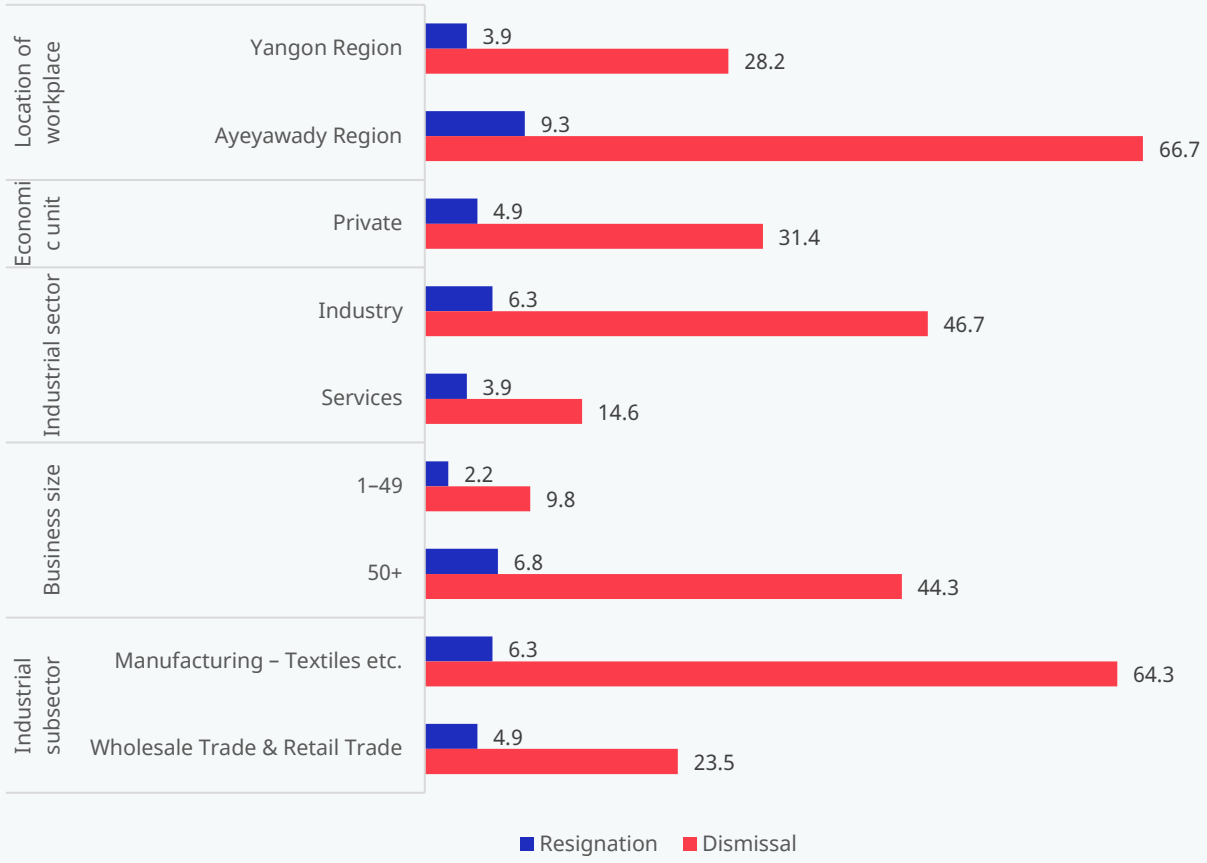
Source: Authors' calculations.

Ayeyawady Region recorded a high share of dismissed workers receiving severance pay. In Ayeyawady Region, 67 per cent of dismissed workers received severance pay, which was notably higher than Yangon Region (28 per cent) and the national average (30 per cent). This result was led by one sector: 19 out of 20 dismissed workers who received severance pay in Ayeyawady Region were employed in the textiles, apparel, leather, and related manufacturing sector.

Our findings complement previous empirical studies. An empirical study on voluntary severance pay in Germany found that female workers, married workers and workers in larger enterprises were more likely receive severance pay (Grund 2003). Another study on statutory severance pay in Slovenia found that there was no difference between male and female workers, though workers older than 40 years of age were less likely to receive severance pay than younger workers, and that larger and more productive enterprises were more likely paid severance (Vodopivec, Madjar, and Dolenc 2009). An empirical study on statutory severance pay in Indonesia found similar results as well as some contradictory results – female and younger workers were less likely to receive severance than male and older workers (Brusentsev, Newhouse, and Vroman 2012). The study also found that the higher educated workers and workers in larger enterprises were more likely to receive severance pay than their counterparts.

In line with the findings of these previous empirical studies, we also found that severance pay did not guarantee income security for all dismissed workers, but rather provided better protection to workers with certain characteristics. Recipients of severance pay upon involuntary termination had common characteristics, namely: written contracts, fixed-term contracts, social insurance coverage, employed by large enterprises, and working in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing subsector. It is noted that a sectoral pattern may contribute to shaping the trend in demographic characteristics: female workers, younger workers and the lower educated tend to receive severance pay, but this could be because a female dominated industrial subsector – textiles, garments, leather and related manufacturing – accounts for most of the dismissed workers who received severance pay.

Figure 38. Share of workers affected by employment termination who received severance pay, by economic characteristics and means of termination (resignation versus dismissal) (%)



Source: Authors' calculations.

6.3. Income replacement through severance pay

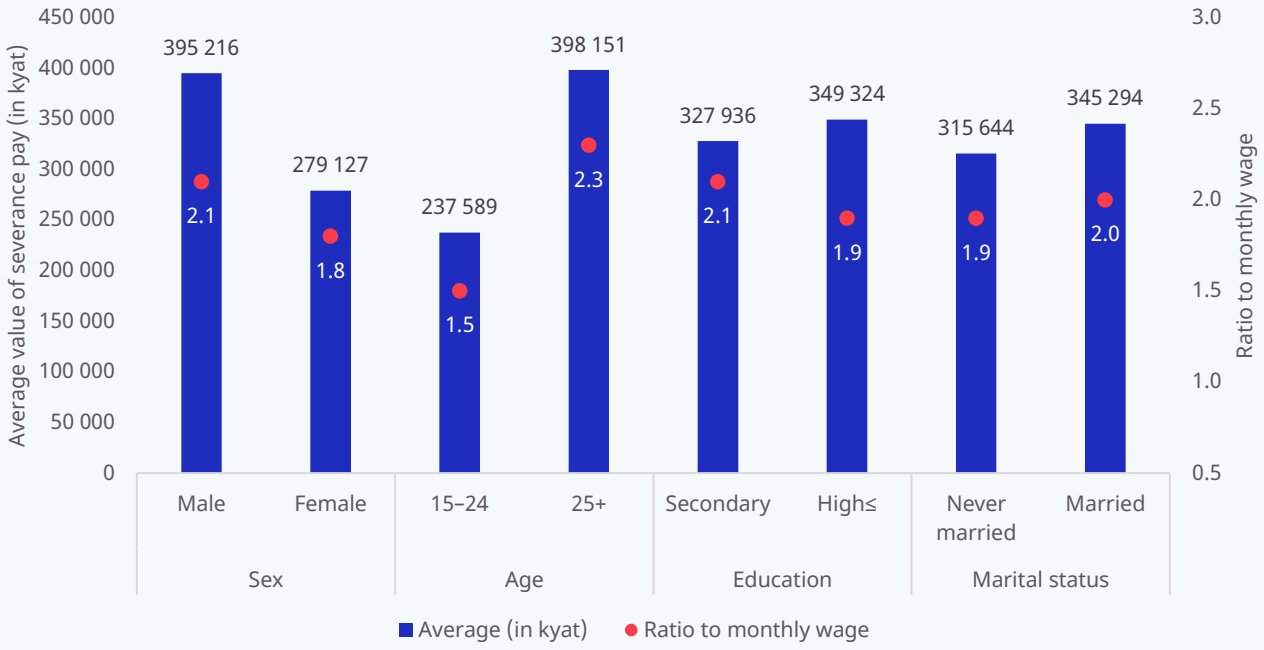
By construction, severance pay provides better pay to workers with stable and long-term employment and high wages. Because severance pay is not designed to provide unemployed workers with income security but rather for employers to show appreciation of their employees for long service, it does not guarantee income security for all dismissed workers, especially in terms of value.

Overall, the average value of severance pay was 329,072 kyat, or the equivalent to 1.9 months of wages on average. On the one hand, as the level of one worker's monthly wage is different from that of another worker, the amount of severance pay received is greatly affected by this basic factor. On the other hand, the ratio of severance pay to the monthly wage – or income replacement via severance pay – is not affected by the level of an individual's wage but rather is affected by employment duration. In this section, we compare these two indicators to analyse and compare the value of severance pay by the different characteristics of workers.

Among workers receiving severance pay, male workers and older workers received better severance pay. The average value of severance pay for male workers was 42 per cent higher in absolute terms than that of female workers, and worth 2.1 months of salary on average, compared to 1.8 months of salary for female workers. Youth workers (ages 15–24) received much less than older workers (ages 25+) both in absolute and relative terms; namely, the value of severance pay for older workers was 68 per cent higher than that of youth workers, and income replacement was also higher at 2.3 months of salary and 1.5-month salary, respectively. In relation to educational attainment, the value of severance pay was 7 per cent higher for those with at least a high school education than it was for workers with a

secondary school education, but interestingly, the income replacement trend is adverse with high school graduates receiving 1.9 months of salary versus 2.1 months of salary for workers with a secondary school education. Due to the insufficient number of cases, we cannot provide an estimate for workers with a primary school education and below – an average value based on 21 cases was 297,962 kyat, or 1.8 months of salary. A further study with sufficient data is needed to confirm the trend in relation to educational attainment.

▶ **Figure 39. Value of severance pay and ratio to monthly wage, by demographic characteristics**



Note: This figure only presents data from the 86 survey respondents who received severance pay.

Source: Authors' calculations.

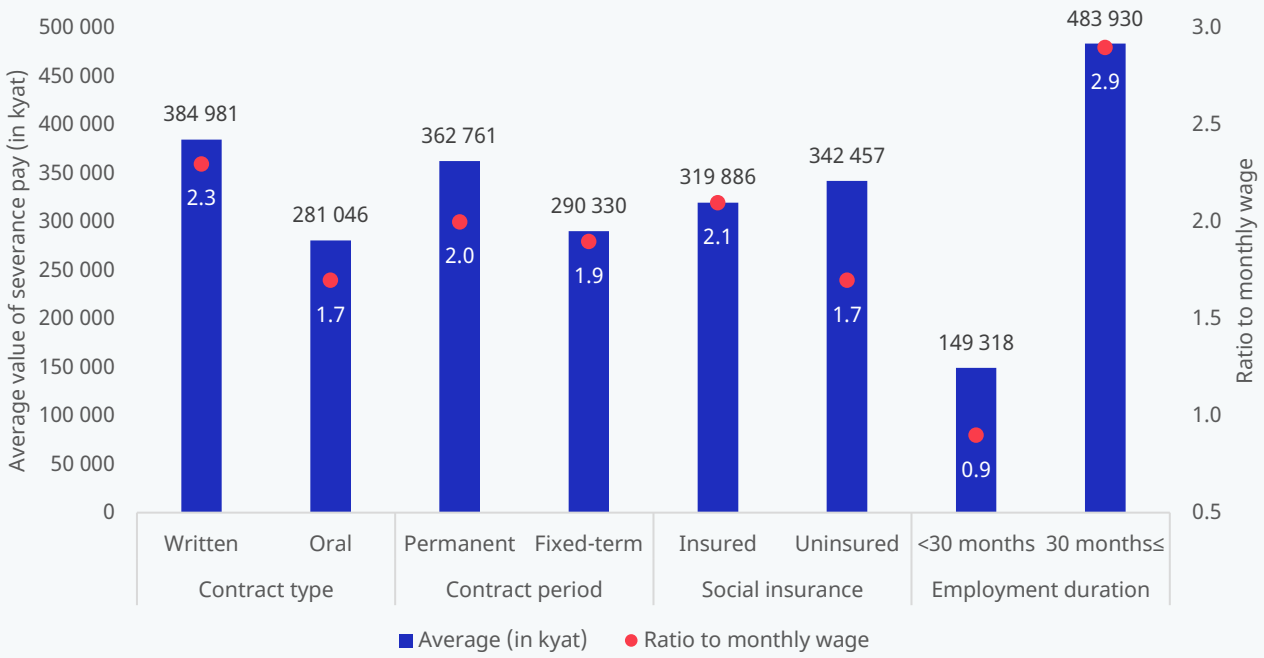
Among workers who received severance pay, those with written contracts and permanent contracts received a higher value of severance pay both in absolute and relative terms; while workers with social insurance coverage received more relative to their wages but lower in terms of absolute value. Workers with written contracts received 37 per cent higher severance pay than workers with oral agreements, and the income replacement rate followed the same trend, namely 2.3 months and 1.7 months, respectively (figure 40). Workers with social insurance (2.1 months) had a higher income replacement rate than uninsured workers (1.7 months), but the absolute value of severance pay for uninsured workers was slightly higher (by 7 per cent) than that of insured workers.

Workers who worked for their employer for at least 30 months received severance pay at a high average value of 483,930 kyat, or 2.9 months of salary. by contrast, workers with a shorter period of service received a much lower value of severance pay at 149,318 kyat, or 0.9 months of salary. As discussed above, by construction, severance pay is designed to provide higher benefits to workers with longer service.

Workers in the services sector received higher severance pay than workers in the industry sector: 21 per cent more in absolute terms and 0.1 months of salary more in relative terms. Due to the insufficient number of cases, we cannot compare figures within each economic characteristic (figure 41). Relative to the national average (329,072 kyat or 1.9 months), the available figures show higher values and income replacement rates for severance pay in Yangon Region, in private sector enterprises, and in medium-to-large enterprises.

In sum, we found that if workers were fortunate enough to receive severance pay, the value of that severance pay would be equivalent to two months of salary on average, but workers with certain characteristics received less. Income replacement to monthly salary was lower among female workers, youth workers, workers with oral agreements, workers without social insurance coverage, and workers with shorter employment durations.

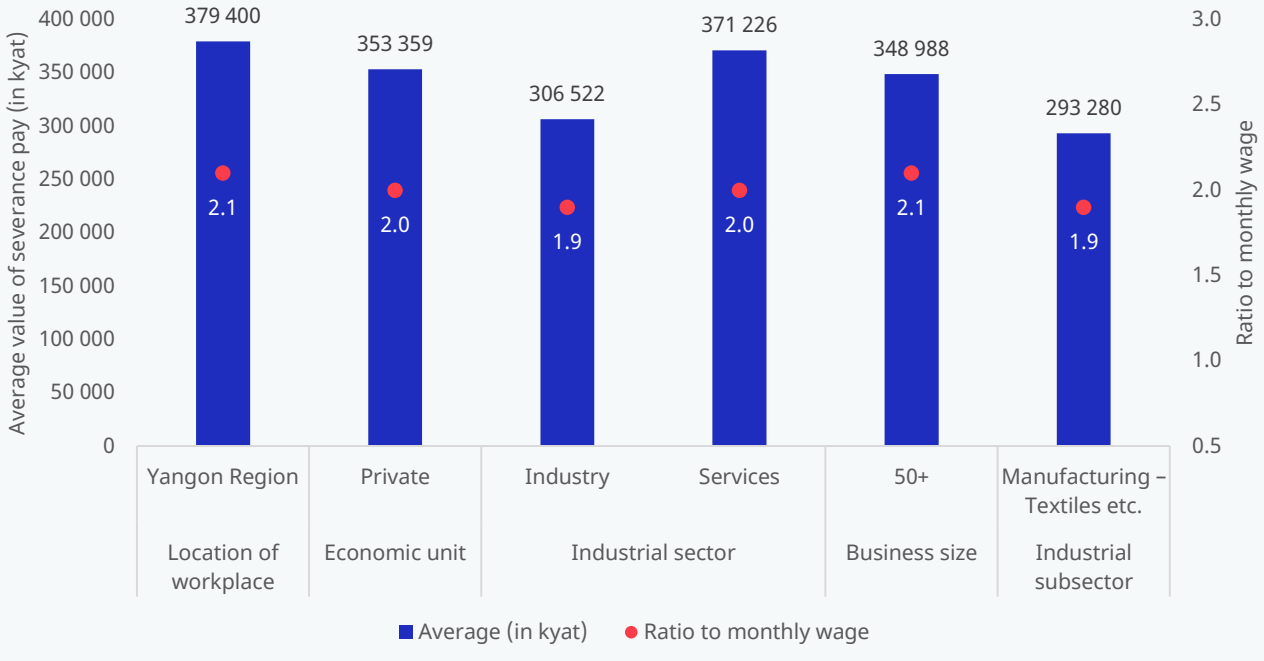
▶ Figure 40. Value of severance pay and ratio to monthly wage, by employment characteristics



Note: This figure only presents data from the 86 survey respondents who received severance pay.

Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 41. Value of severance pay and ratio to monthly wage, by selected economic characteristics



Note: This figure only presents data from the 86 survey respondents who received severance pay.

Source: Authors' calculations.

6.4. Unused earned leave and other compensation

Upon employment termination, employees have the right to receiving compensation for any unused entitlement to earned leave. According to laws and regulations, an employee who has completed 12 months of continuous service is entitled to ten days of paid leave, which can be accumulated for up to three years if the employer and employee agree on such an arrangement (Tsuruga and Moo 2021). An employer must pay an employee or their heir compensation for any unspent leave entitlements based on the wages paid in last 30 days immediately before resignation, dismissal or death.

It is noted that we cannot assess employers' compliance with the compensation payment for unused entitlement to earned leave. To explore such a research question, we must collect data on the number of unspent earned leave credits at the time of employment termination. We considered it too challenging to obtain this information via the survey because respondents may not accurately remember their unspent credits. Therefore, we simply asked workers who lost jobs whether they received compensation for unused earned leave. Workers who did not receive such compensation may have had no earned leave credits or alternately their employers did not pay them for the earned credits they had. Moreover, we asked them to report any compensation received other than severance pay or earned leave compensation, so that we could capture a comprehensive picture of all kinds of payments upon employment termination.

Overall, only 12 per cent of workers received compensation for unused earned leave, and 6 per cent of workers received any other form of compensation. The general trend concerning compensation for unused earned leave by demographic, employment and economic characteristics is similar to that of severance pay (table 15). However, as very few workers received any other compensations upon employment termination, we cannot break down any trends concerning other forms of compensation.

▶ **Table 15. Compensation upon employment termination (n=728)**

Indicator	Descriptions	No.	%
Severance pay	Yes	86	11.8
	No	642	88.2
	Total	728	100.0
Unspent earned leaves	Yes	85	11.7
	No	643	88.3
	Total	728	100.0
Any other pay	Yes	43	5.9
	No	685	94.1
	Total	728	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

The overall trend appears to be similar to the trend for severance pay. Few workers received compensation for unused earned leave or any other compensation. The trend by demographic characteristics and employment characteristics is almost identical to that of severance pay – female workers, youth workers and workers in formal employment appear to more likely receive compensation for unused earned leave credits. The trend by economic characteristics shows that workers in government jobs, in micro-to-small enterprises and in the services sector were less likely to receive compensation for unused earned leave than their counterparts.

6.5. Return to work

During the survey period, 34 per cent of terminated respondents returned to wage employment, 15 per cent became self-employed, and 51 per cent remained unemployed. Among the reemployed workers, 70 per cent found wage jobs and 30 per cent became self-employed. That is, nearly one-third of returning workers moved from wage employment to self-employment (table 16). This is in line with the findings of previous literature – many workers become self-employed to cope with shocks.

It is noted that a higher proportion of unemployed among a specific category of workers may not necessarily mean such workers are more vulnerable to unemployment than others. For example, the proportion of female workers who returned to work was lower than that of male workers, but it may not necessarily indicate that female workers had more difficulty in finding jobs than males (figure 42). To identify such an effect, we must control for the timing of employment termination

and conduct a separate analysis. Indeed, as discussed above, workers with different characteristics were disproportionately affected by employment termination along different timelines. As such, a thorough analysis is beyond the scope of this paper, and therefore we will not go into detail in this section.

When comparing the previous jobs held by all terminated respondents (n=728) with those held by respondents who found new wage employment (n=248), the breakdown of new jobs and previous jobs by industrial sector was almost exactly the same, but a breakdown by economic unit shows a decline in employment in the Government and an increase in household employment. The share of wage employment before termination was 2 per cent for agriculture, 33 per cent for industry and 65 per cent for services, while the share among returning wage employees was 1 per cent for agriculture, 35 per cent for industry, and 64 per cent for services – essentially the same. Concerning the economic unit of employment, the share of wage employees in the Government decreased from 10 per cent to 4 per cent, the share in the private sector levelled off, and the share in the household sector increased from 7 per cent to 11 per cent.

▶ Table 16. Characteristics of previous jobs and new jobs of survey respondents affected by employment termination (n=728)

Indicator		Previous job		New job	
		No.	%	No.	%
Employment status	Employee	728	100.0	248	34.1
	Self-employee	–	–	107	14.7
	Unemployed	–	–	373	51.2
	Total	728	100.0	728	100.0
Economic unit	Government	75	10.3	10	4.0
	Joint venture	38	5.2	14	5.6
	Private enterprise	560	76.9	193	77.8
	Household	49	6.7	28	11.3
	Do not know	6	0.8	3	1.2
	Total	728	100.0	248	100.0
Industrial sector	Agriculture	11	1.5	3	1.2
	Industry	241	33.1	86	34.7
	Services	476	65.4	159	64.1
	Total	728	100.0	248	100.0

Note: – = nil. The respondents covered in these rows are only those who lost their previous job and found a new job as an employee (that is, they are not self-employed).
Source: Authors' calculations.

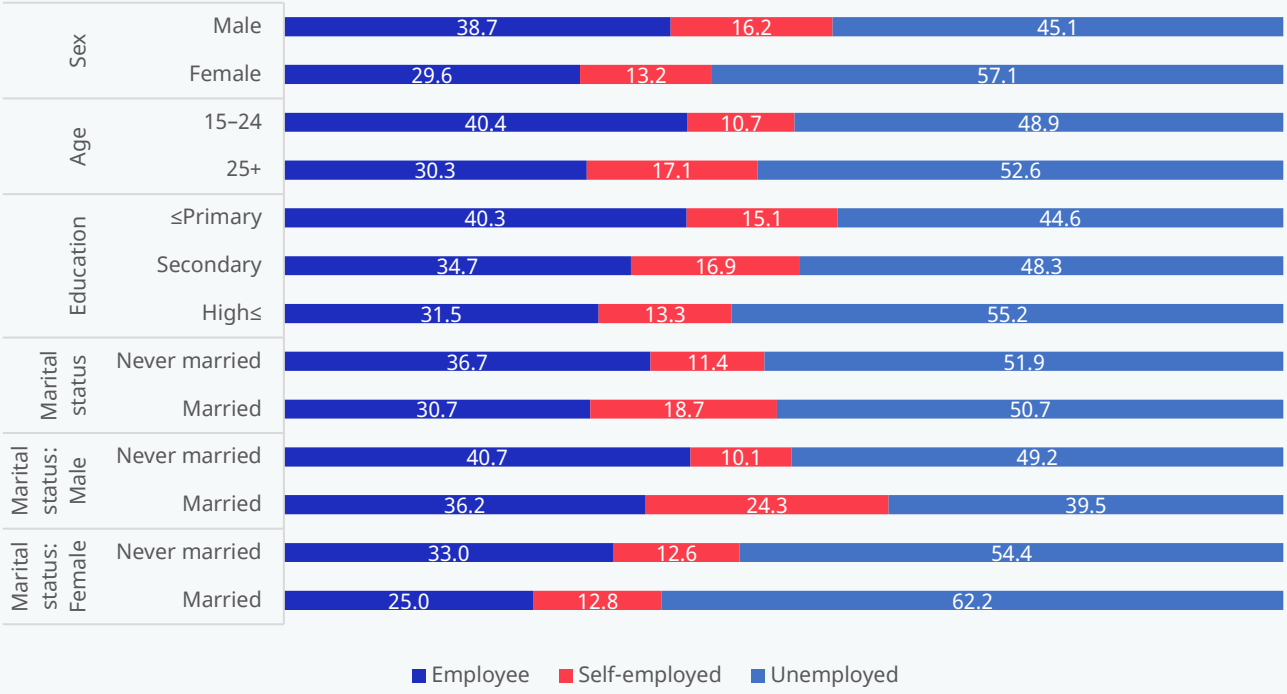
On average it took 167 days from the day of employment termination for workers to return to wage jobs. As we assumed that the duration before return to work may be different for workers with different characteristics and because of workers' behaviour, ability and availability to find jobs, we asked workers who returned to wage jobs how many days it took them to find their new jobs.

Male workers returned to work more quickly than female workers. Overall, 55 per cent of male workers and 43 per cent of female workers returned to wage employment (figure 42). There was almost no difference in the share of wage employment and self-employment between male and female workers – one-third of former employees of both sexes became self-employed. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 160 days for male workers and 176 days for female workers (figure 43).

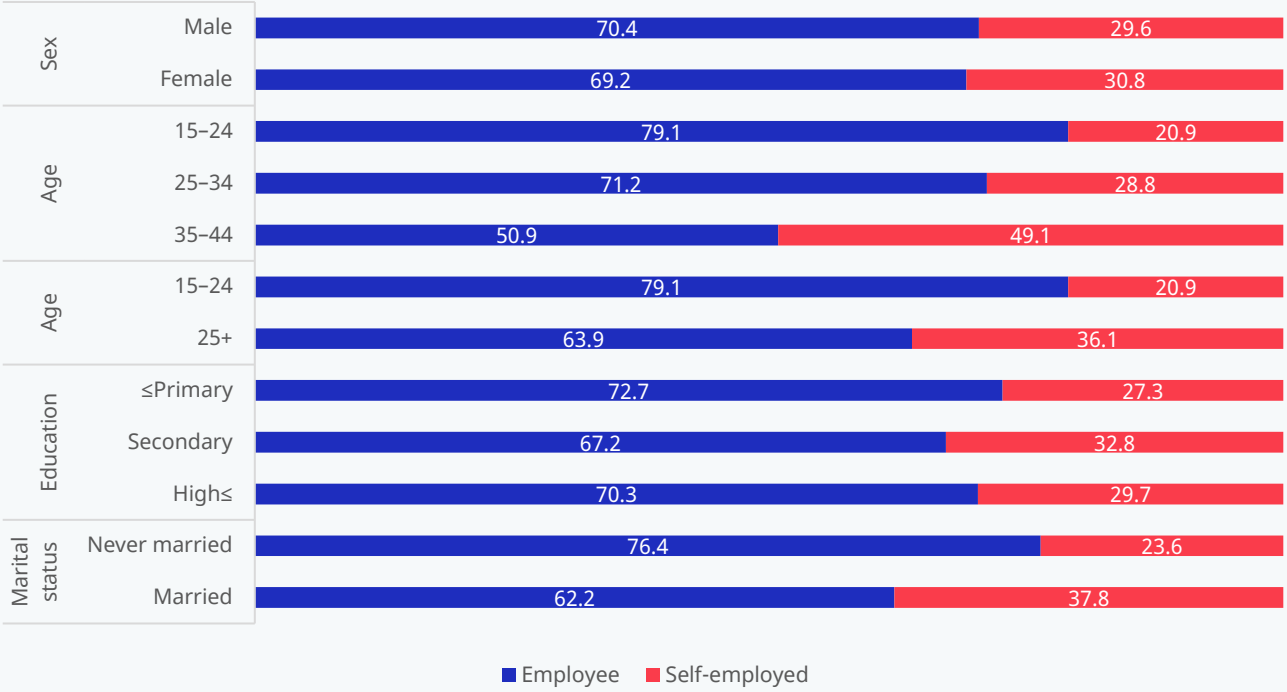
Older workers were more likely became self-employed than youth workers, and they also returned to wage employment more slowly than youth workers. Overall, 51 per cent of youth workers (ages 15–24) and 47 per cent of older workers (ages 25+) returned to work. The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment increases with age from 21 per cent among ages 15–24 to 29 per cent among ages 25–34, and 49 per cent among ages 35–44. Moreover, among workers who returned to wage employment, youth workers (ages 15–24) spent less time finding and returning to wage employment than older workers (ages 25+), with youth workers taking 154 days on average and older workers taking 177 days on average.

▶ Figure 42. Employment status of respondents who had been affected by employment termination, by demographic characteristics (%)

Panel A. Employment status: Employees versus self-employed versus unemployed



Panel B. Employment status: Employed workers only



Source: Authors' calculations.

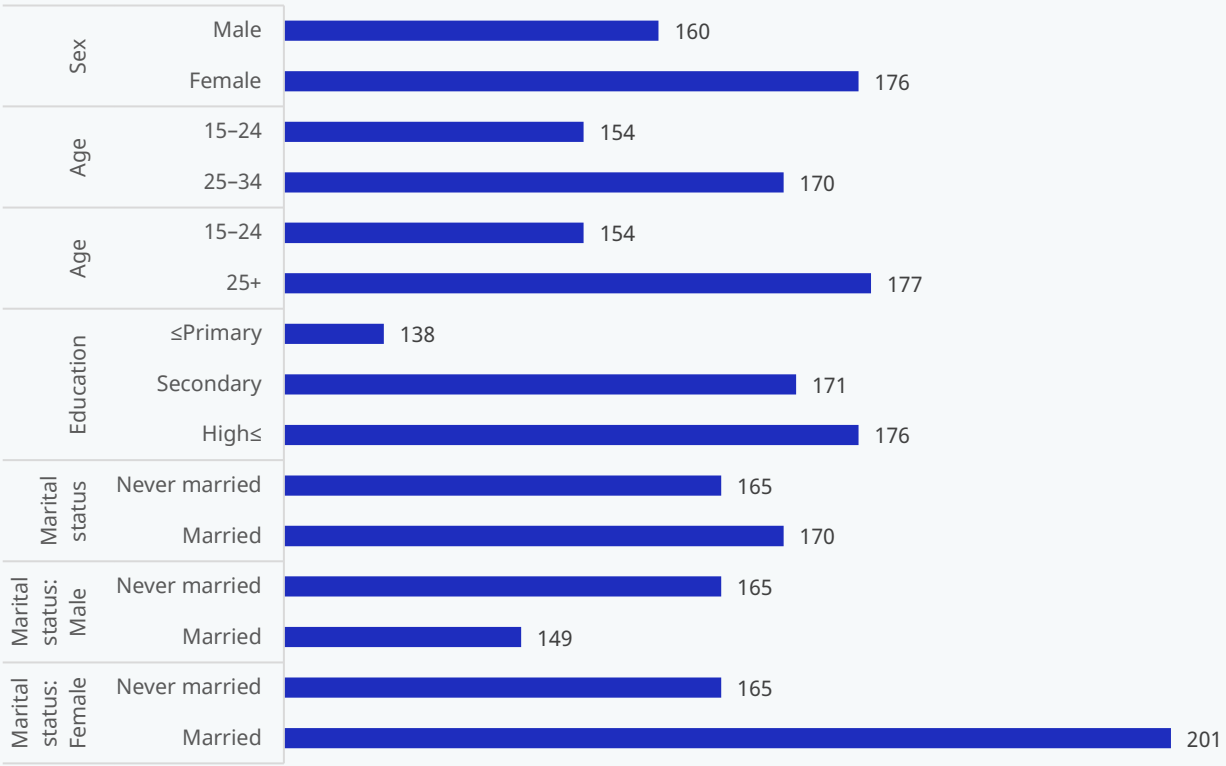
Lower educated workers returned to wage employment more quickly than the more highly educated. Overall, 55 per cent of workers with a primary school education and below, 52 per cent of workers with a secondary school education and 45 per cent of workers with a high school education and above returned to work. The proportion of workers moving into self-employment was close across all education levels, ranging from 27 per cent to 33 per cent between the lowest and highest education cohorts. The average duration of returning to wage employment was 138 days for workers with a primary school education and below, 171 days for workers with a secondary school education, and 176 days for workers with a high school education and above.

More married workers became self-employed than never married workers. There was almost no difference in return to work between married workers (49 per cent) and never married workers (48 per cent). Likewise, the average duration to find new work does not reveal much difference between these groups. However, the proportion of workers transitioning into self-employment was higher among married workers (38 per cent) than never married workers (24 per cent).

Marital status appears to affect worker's behaviour in regard to returning to work. An empirical study in Turkey argues that marital status affects return-to-work behaviour (Tansel and Taşçı 2010). This study found that men generally had a higher probability than women of exiting unemployment to enter into employment. However, without the effects of marital status, the probability of leaving unemployment for employment was similar across men and women. That is, being married increased the probability of men exiting unemployment, while it decreased the probability of women exiting unemployment.

We found a similar result. More married male workers (61 per cent) returned to work than never married male workers (51 per cent), while fewer married female workers (38 per cent) returned to work than never married female workers (46 per cent). The same trend is observed in regard to the duration of unemployment. Married male workers returned to wage employment earlier than never married male workers by an average of 16 days; while married female workers returned to wage employment later than never married female workers by an average of 52 days.

▶ **Figure 43. Average number of days to return to wage employment, by demographic characteristics**



Note: This figure only presents data from the 248 respondents who experienced employment termination but had secured new work as employees.

Source: Authors' calculations.

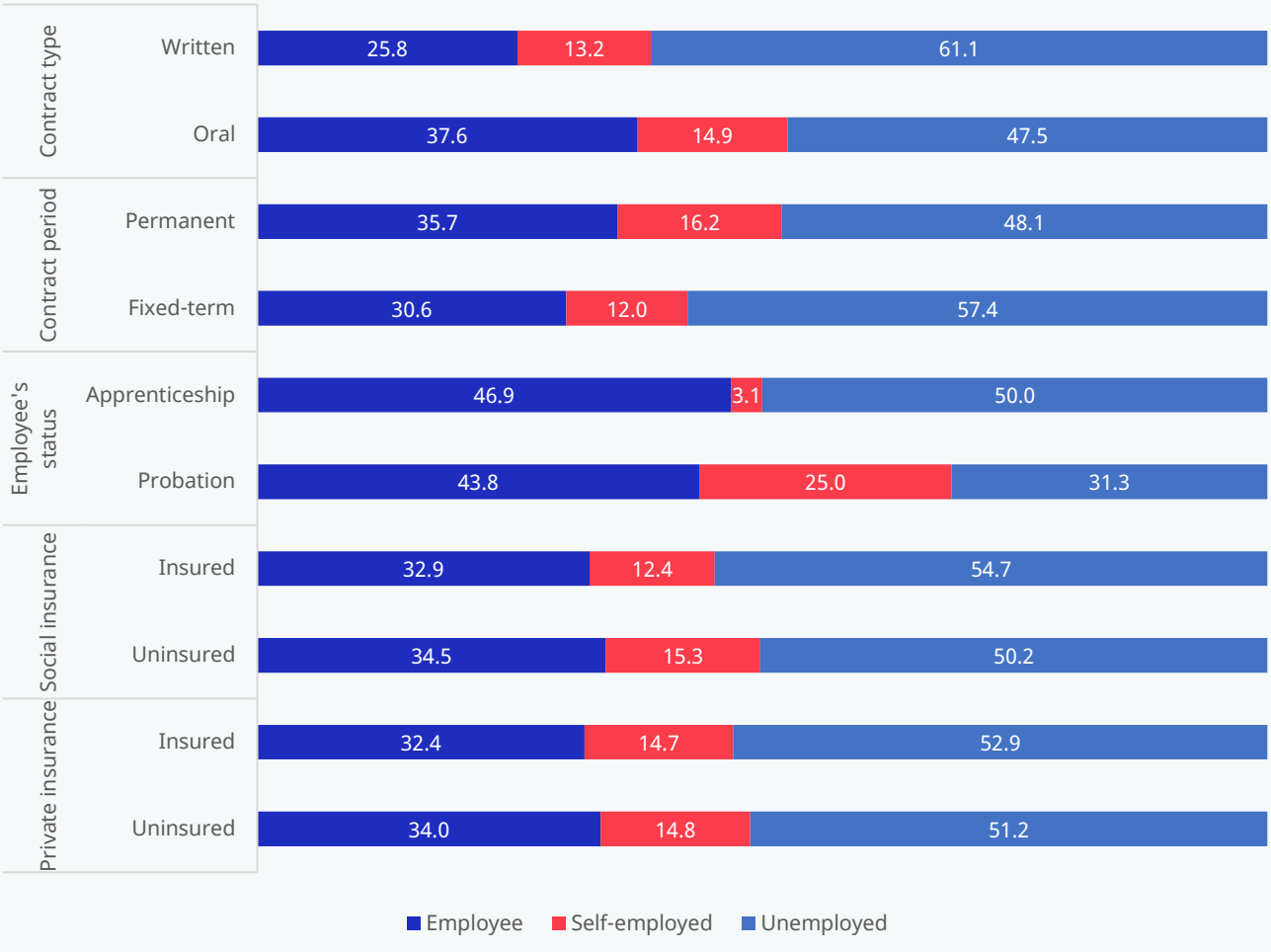
Terminated respondents who had oral agreements for their previous jobs returned to wage employment more quickly than those who had written contracts. Fifty-two per cent of workers with oral agreements and 39 per cent of workers with written contracts returned to work (figure 44). The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was similar for both groups, at 28 per cent for those who previously had oral agreements and 34 per cent among those who previously had written contracts. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 167 days for returning workers who had oral agreements and 179 days for workers who had written contracts (figure 45).

Terminated respondents with permanent contracts returned to wage employment more quickly than workers with fixed-term contracts. Fifty-two per cent of workers with permanent contracts and 43 per cent of workers with fixed-term contracts returned to work. The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was similar for both groups, at 31 per cent for those who previously had permanent contracts and 28 per cent for those who previously had fixed-term contracts. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 161 days for returning workers who had permanent contract and 181 days for workers who had fixed-term contract.

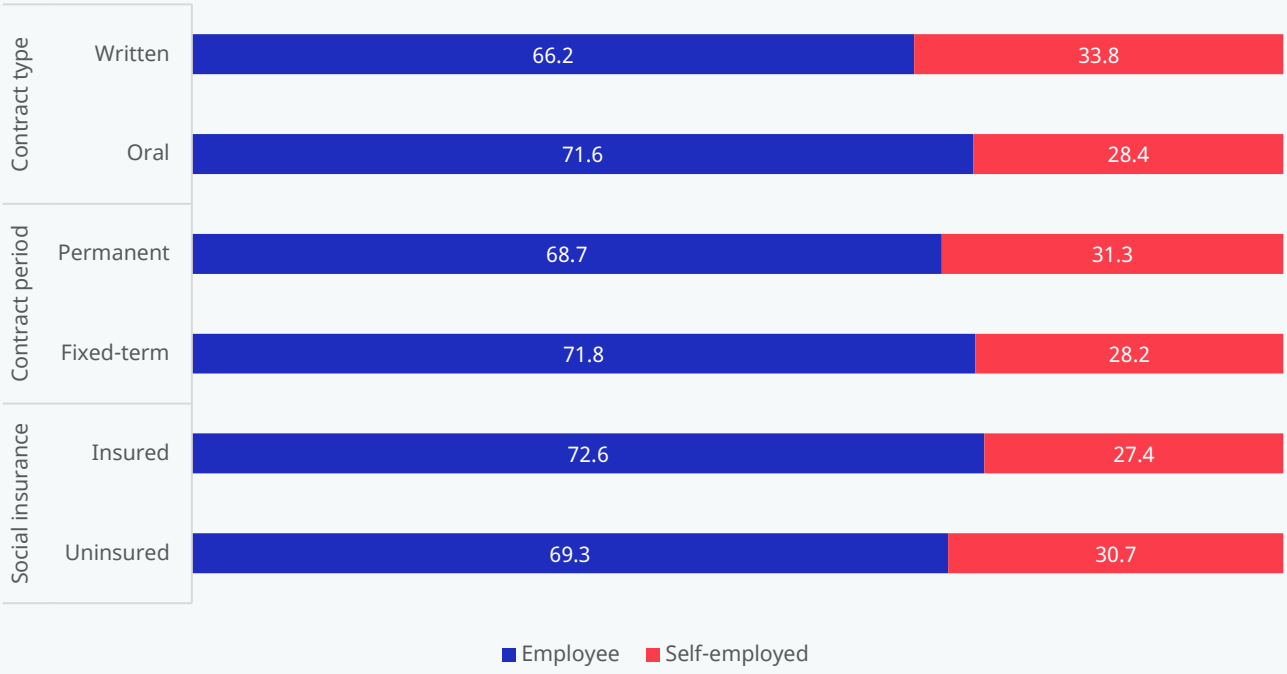
There was a little difference between insured workers and uninsured workers. Overall, 45 per cent of workers with social insurance and 50 per cent of workers without social insurance returned to work. The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was similar for both groups, at 27 per cent for those who had been insured and 31 per cent for those who had not been insured. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 161 days for workers who had social insurance and 168 days for workers who did not have social insurance.

▶ **Figure 44. Employment status of respondents who had been affected by employment termination, by employment characteristics (%)**

Panel A. Employment status: Employees versus self-employed versus unemployed

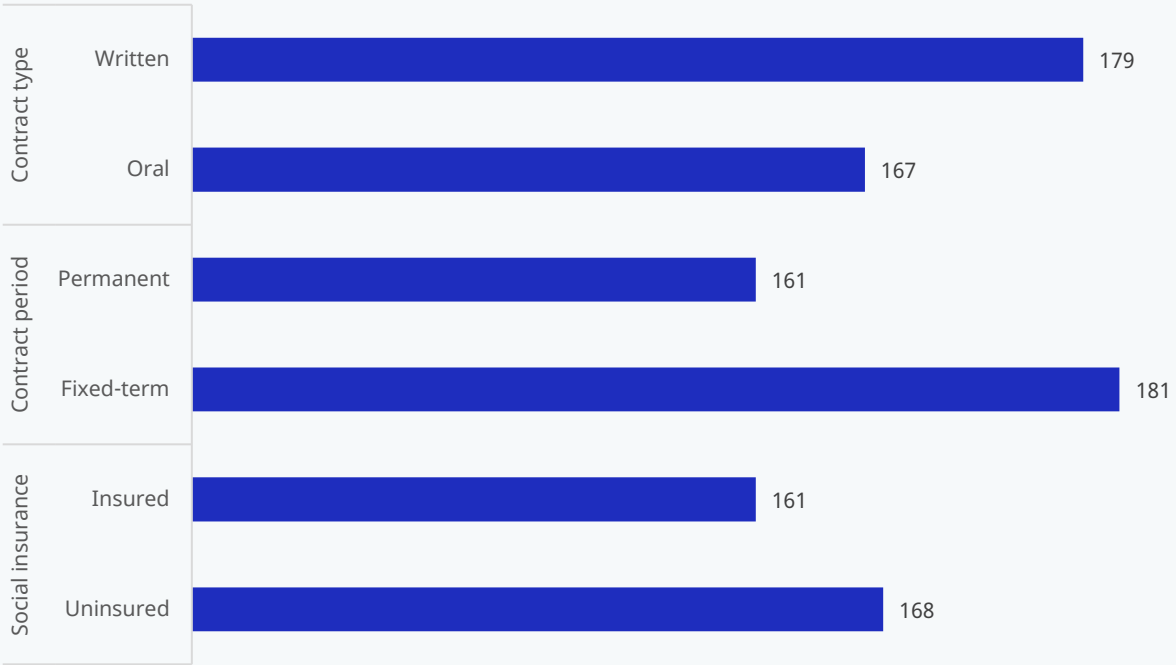


Panel B. Employment status: Employed workers only



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ **Figure 45. Average number of days to return to wage employment, by employment characteristics**



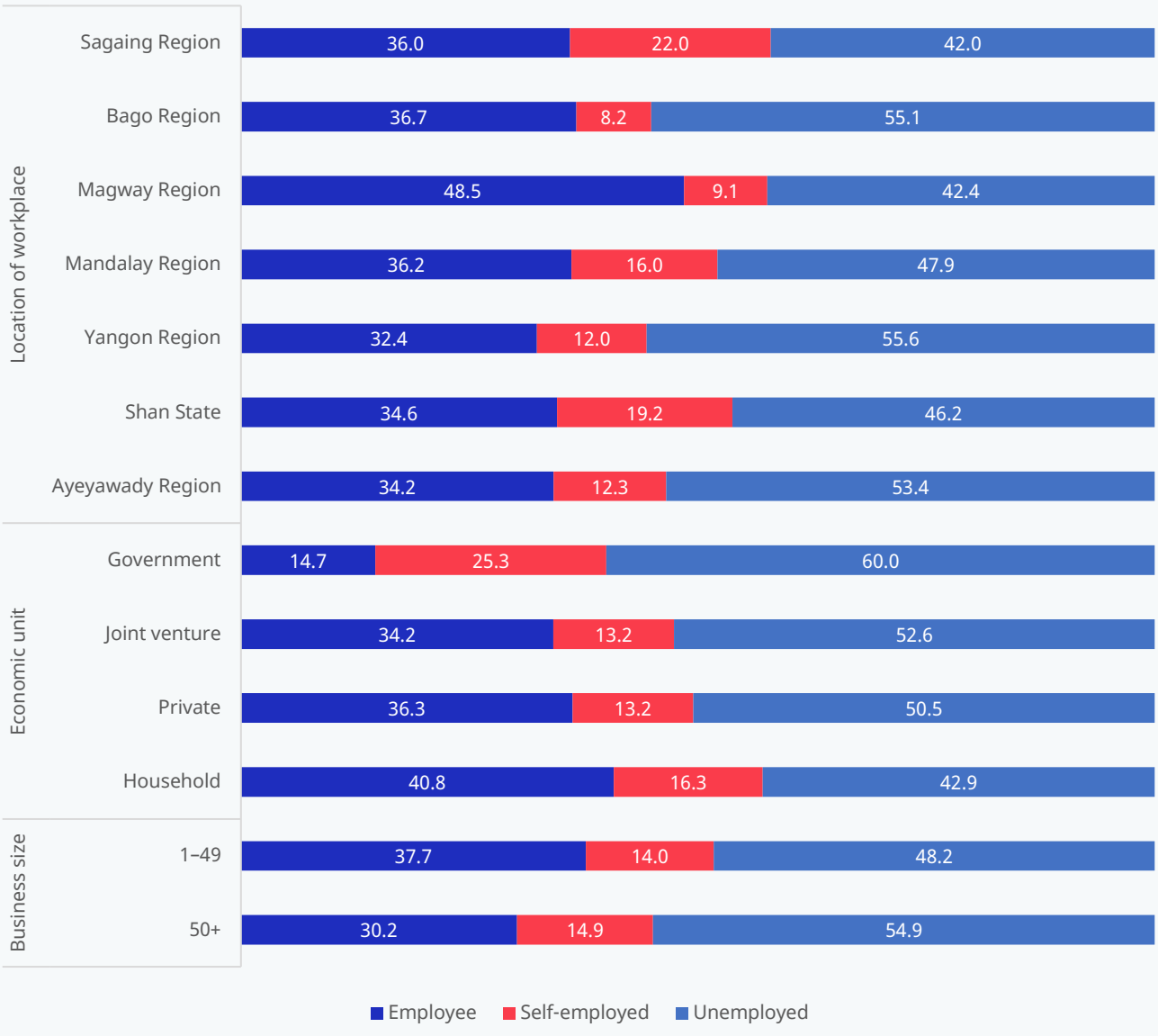
Note: This figure only presents data from the 248 respondents who experienced employment termination but had secured new work as employees.

Source: Authors' calculations.

Terminated respondents in Yangon Region returned to wage employment more quickly than workers in Mandalay Region, but workers in both of these regions spent relatively more time in unemployment than workers in other regions. A complete set of data on employment status, share of self-employment and unemployment duration is available only for Mandalay Region and Yangon Region. Concerning employment status, more workers returned to work in northern areas than in regions around the economic capital of Yangon Region (figure 46). Workers in Sagaing Region and Magway Region were the most likely to return to work (58 per cent), followed by Shan State (54 per cent) and Mandalay Region (52 per cent). By contrast, workers in Yangon Region were the least likely to have returned (44 per cent), followed by neighbouring areas including Bago Region (45 per cent) and Ayeyawady Region (47 per cent). The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was similar, ranging from 27 to 31 per cent in Mandalay Region, Yangon Region and Ayeyawady Region. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 181 days for workers in Yangon Region and 203 days for workers in Mandalay Region (figure 47).

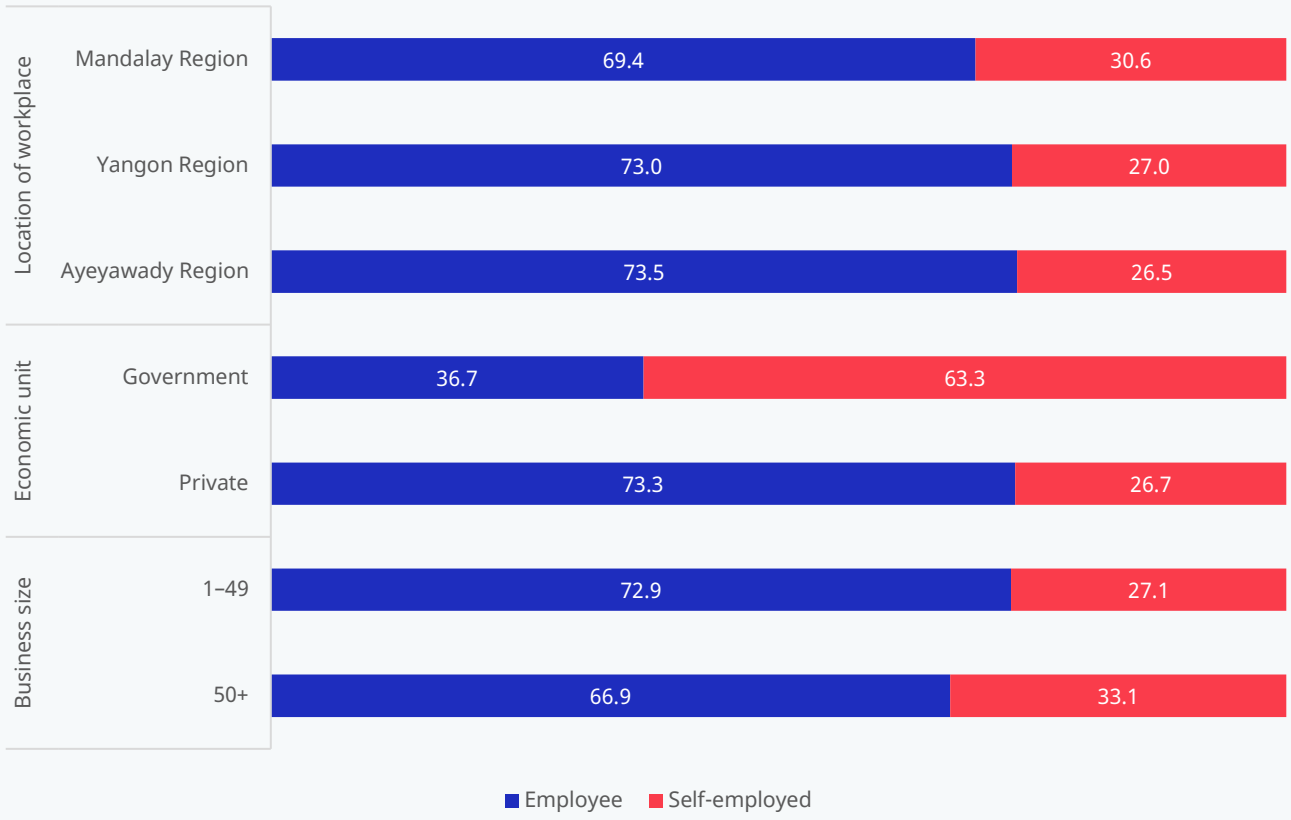
▶ **Figure 46. Employment status of respondents who had been affected by employment termination, by economic characteristics (%)**

Panel A. Employment status: Employees versus self-employed versus unemployed



Source: Authors' calculations.

Panel B. Employment status: Employed workers only

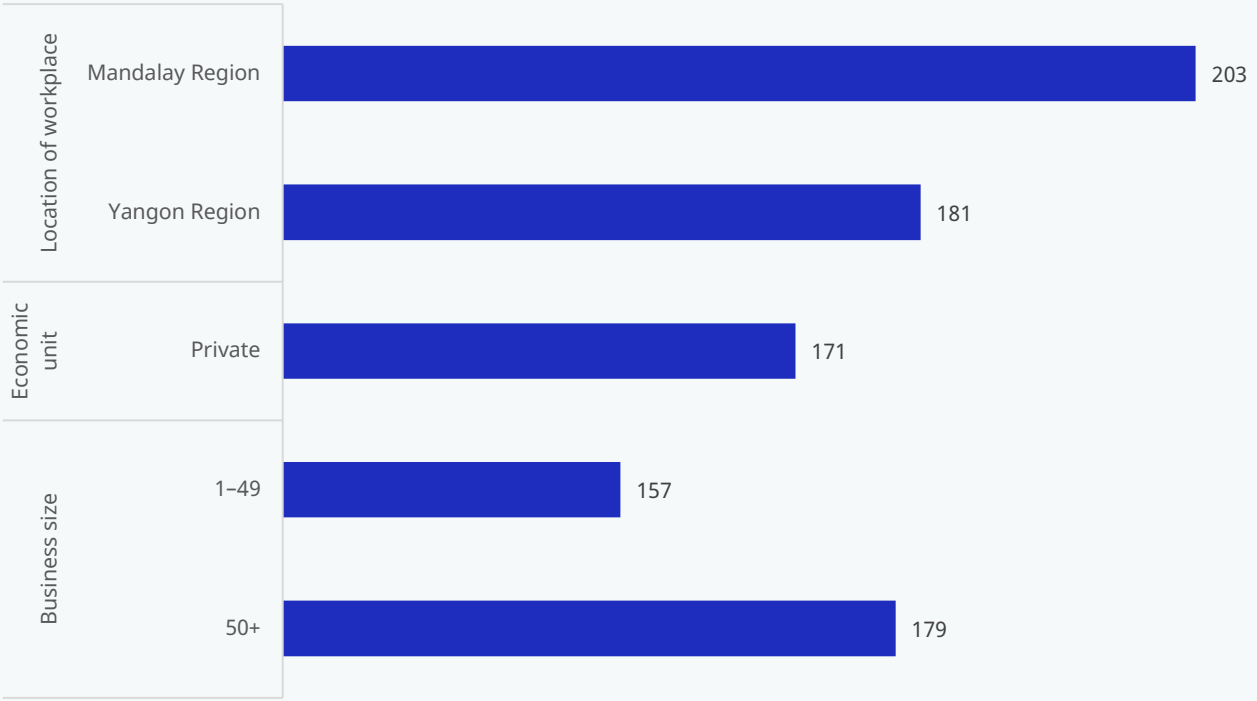


Source: Authors' calculations.

Most former government employees who returned to work became self-employed. Forty per cent of former government employees returned to work, the lowest share among all economic units, followed by former workers in joint ventures (47 per cent), the private sector (50 per cent) and the household sector (57 per cent). Among returning workers, 63 per cent of former government employees became self-employed, while only 27 per cent of former private sector workers became self-employed. Former government employees being the least likely to have returned to work can be partially explained by the fact that most job losses in government took place in the second half of the survey period. However, the proportion of former government workers who returned to work by moving into self-employment is much higher than what is seen for any other category of worker. This appears to be very unique behaviour pattern, as former government employees were the only type of worker who were more likely to become self-employed than to take on wage employment when returning to work.

Former employees in smaller enterprises returned to wage employment more quickly than their counterparts in larger enterprises. The share of terminated respondents who returned to work was much higher among former employees of micro enterprises (1–4 employees) (58 per cent) than employees in large enterprises (100+ employees) (42 per cent). The same trend is found in the aggregate, that is, the return-to-work ratio was higher among former employees micro-to-small enterprises (1–49 employees) (52 per cent) than it was among former employees of medium-to-larger enterprises (50+ employees) (45 per cent). The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was similar across all enterprise sizes, ranging from 27 per cent among former employees of micro-to-small enterprises and 33 per cent among former employees of medium-to-large enterprises, and it increased with business size at 27 per cent for small enterprise workers (5–49 employees), 29 per cent for medium enterprise workers (50–99 employees) and 35 per cent for large enterprise workers (100+ employees). The average duration before returning to wage employment also increased with business size, ranging from 150 days for former employees of small enterprises to 176 days for former employees of medium enterprises to 180 days for former employees of large enterprises – the trend of the aggregate figures was the same at 157 days for former employees of micro-to-small enterprises and 179 days for former employees of medium-to-large enterprises.

▶ Figure 47. Average number of days to return to wage employment, by economic characteristics



Note: This figure only presents data from the 248 respondents who experienced employment termination but had secured new work as employees.

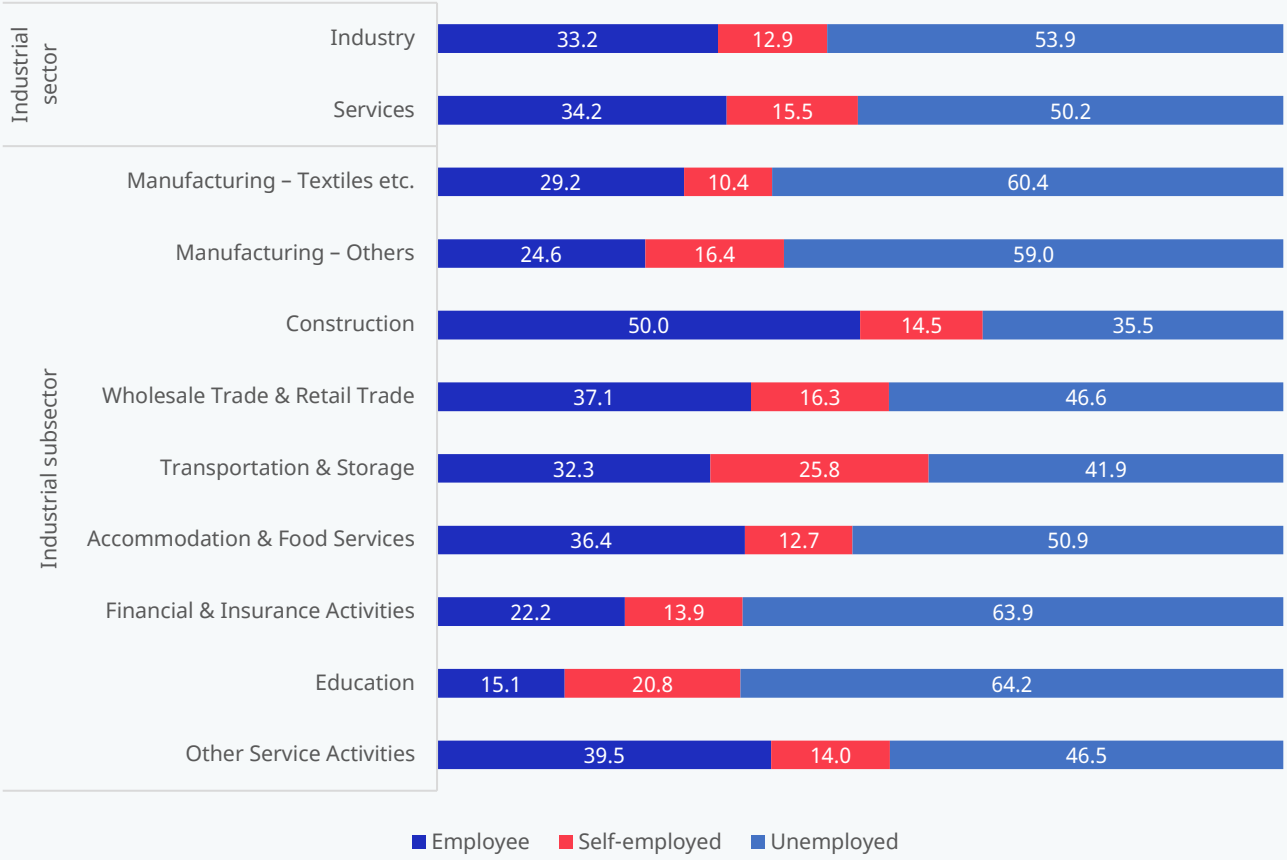
Source: Authors' calculations.

Former employees in the construction sector and the wholesale and retail trade sector returned to wage employment more quickly than their counterparts in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector and other sectors. In all, 65 per cent of former employees in the construction sector returned to work, which was the highest among all subsectors, followed by 58 per cent for former employees in the transportation and storage sector, 53 per cent for former employees in the wholesale and retail trade sector, and 49 per cent for former employees in the accommodation and food service sector (figure 48). Among industrial subsectors with available data, the proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was slightly lower among former employees the construction sector (23 per cent) than among former employees in the wholesale and retail trade sector (31 per cent). The average duration before returning to wage employment was 131 days for former workers in the construction industry, 155 days for former workers in the wholesale and retail trade sector, and 216 days for former workers in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector (figure 49).

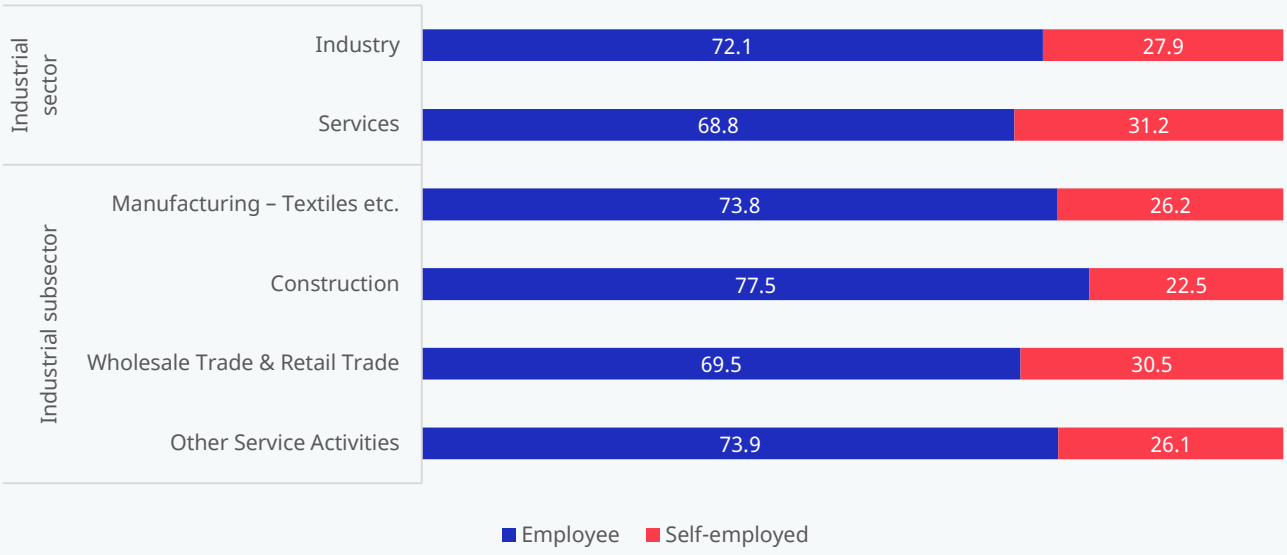
There was little difference between the broader aggregate industry and service sectors. In all, 46 per cent of former workers in the industry sector and 50 per cent of former workers in the services sector returned to work. The proportion of returning workers who moved into self-employment was also similar at 28 per cent for former industry sector workers and 31 per cent for former service sector workers. The average duration before returning to wage employment was 167 days for former workers in the industry sector and 168 days for former workers in the services sector.

▶ Figure 48. Employment status of respondents who had been affected by employment termination, by industrial sector and subsector (%)

Panel A. Employment status: Employees versus self-employed versus unemployed

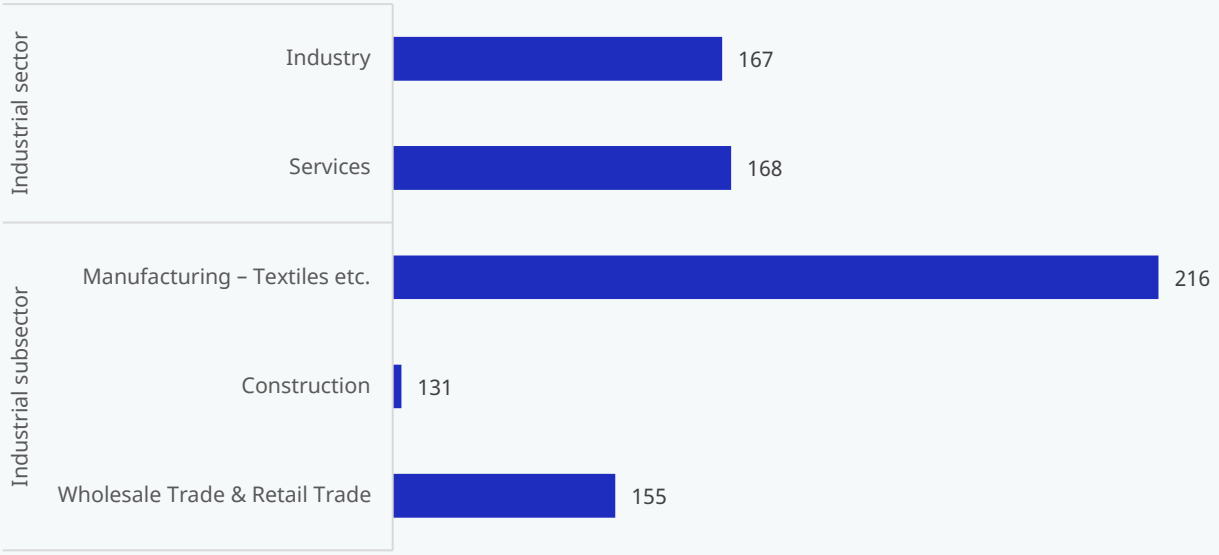


Panel B. Employment status at time of survey: Employed workers only



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 49. Average number of days to return to wage employment, by industrial sector and subsector



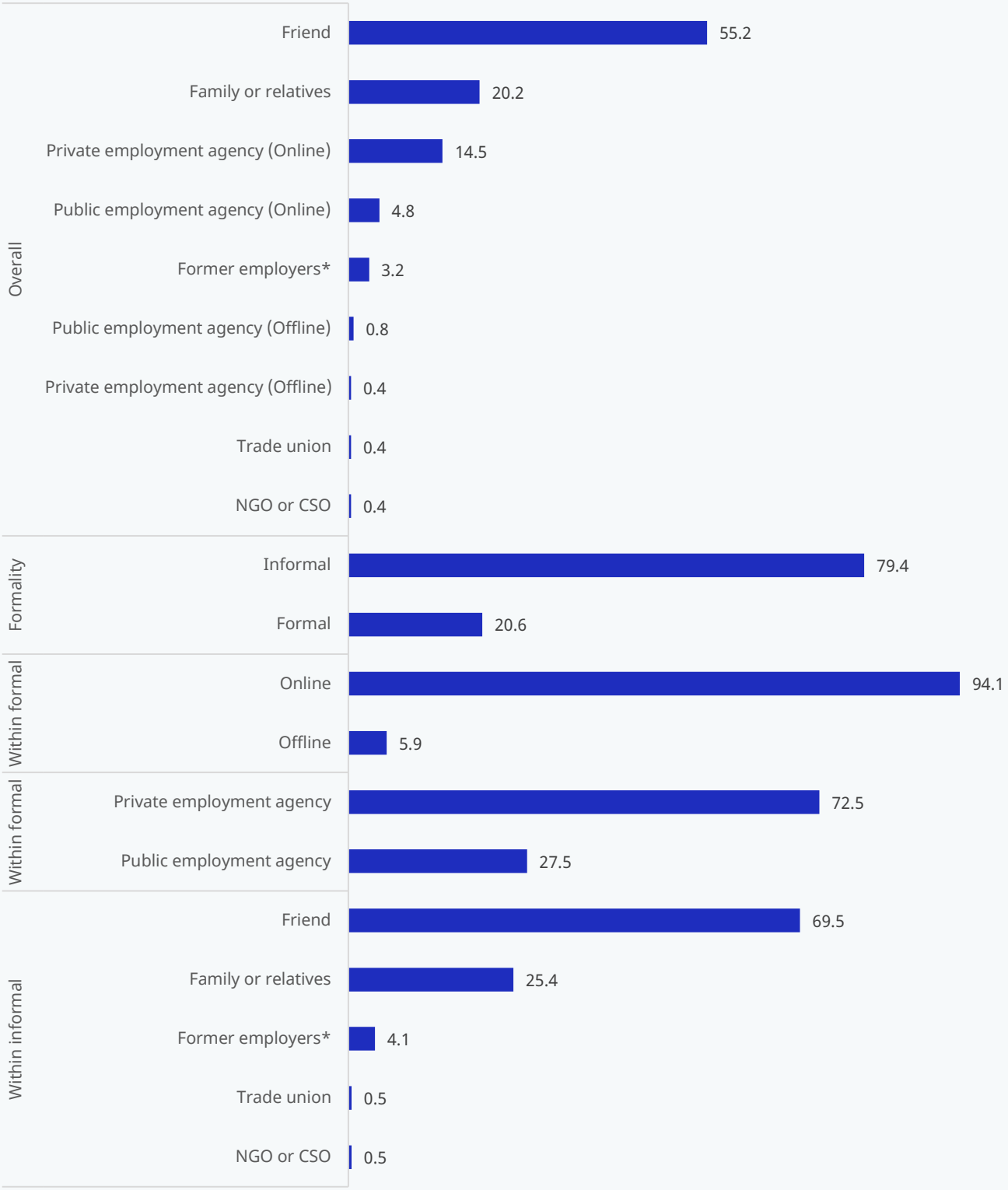
Note: This figure only presents data from the 248 respondents who experienced employment termination but had secured new work as employees.

Source: Authors' calculations.

To find new wage employment, workers tended to rely on informal sources of information. We asked workers who returned to wage employment how they found their new jobs. Some of them reported utilizing more than one source of information, and so for these sake of this analysis, in such instances we considered their first choice as being the source that was most helpful to them. Overall, 79 per cent of returning employees found their jobs through informal channels (figure 50). Of these, most relied on friends (70 per cent), followed by family members or relatives (25 per cent). A few reported relying on a previous employer (4 per cent), a trade union (1 per cent) and NGOs or civil society organizations (1 per cent). The use of formal approaches to finding new wage employment was less common, as only 21 per cent of returning employees relied on a private or public employment agency.

Among the various formal approaches to finding a job, private employment agencies and online services appear to be considered as more reliable sources of information than public employment agencies and offline services. Among the formal approaches available, reliance in public employment services was notably low. A strong majority of returning workers who used formal channels to find new jobs (73 per cent) did so through private entities such as private agents, head-hunters, MyJobs and JobNet; while only 28 per cent found jobs through public employment agencies such as the Government's Labour Exchange Offices or the public online platform Myanmar Job. Moreover, almost all returning employees who found jobs using a formal approach relied on online services (94 per cent) over offline services (6 per cent).

▶ Figure 50. Information sources used to find wage employment (%)



Note: The questionnaire included the response "Others" to allow respondents to report anything else, but all respondents who chose "Others" reported that this "other" information source was a "former employer".

Source: Authors' calculations.

Thus, we have several findings in this subsection. First, the overall trend concerning former employees securing new jobs shows that one-third chose to become self-employed as their first job after employment termination, and that among those workers who returned to wage employment, it took an average of 167 days from the day of employment termination to secure a new job. Second, marriage appears to encourage male workers to return to wage employment quicker, but it also appears to deter female workers from quickly returning to wage employment. Third, workers with less experience, low productivity, a history of informal employment and previous work in informal sector enterprises tend to return to work earlier than their counterparts. Former employees in lower age cohorts and with a lower education and those who previously worked under an oral agreement, had a permanent contract and worked for smaller enterprises returned to wage employment earlier than others. Fourth, most former government employees who returned to work became self-employed. Fifth, former employees in construction and wholesale and retail trade returned to wage employment earlier than their counterparts in the textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing sector and other sectors. Finally, most workers who returned to wage employment relied on informal sources of information to find their new jobs. Among workers who found wage employment through formal approaches, almost all used online platforms to find their new jobs.

Our findings could potentially complement the results of other empirical studies conducted on job search behaviour and gender gaps in Myanmar and other countries. For example, an empirical study in the context of urban labour markets in Myanmar found that the gender wage gap cannot be explained only by socioeconomic characteristics such as educational attainment and work experience, with discrimination against women found to be contributing to the gender wage gap (Hansen, Rand, and Win 2020). As our analysis shows, there is a clear trend in the duration before returning to work that sees female former employees taking longer to find new employment than males – a scenario that could potentially contribute to shaping gender wage gaps.

A qualitative study in the United States of America has a similar scope to our analysis on male and female behaviour for return to work (Damaske 2020). The study found that in lower income households, male workers urgently looked for jobs and were willing to take any job immediately to fulfil their breadwinning obligations, while female workers likely delayed or stopped their job search as they faced family obligations. While in higher income households, male workers likely took time to return to work as they wished to have a break from breadwinning responsibilities, while female workers most likely began an immediate and deliberate job search.[18] The trend concerning lower income households in this US study supports our findings in Myanmar. Moreover, this US study found that workers with a higher level of education and higher earnings likely took time off or spent more time performing a careful job search; while workers with a lower level of education and lower earnings began immediate job searches or became overwhelmed by their inability to pay their daily bills. As many households in Myanmar still apply traditional gender norms like those found in lower income households in the advanced economy under study, it may make sense that our findings are similar to the trend found among the lower income group in the United States. In fact, we found the same trend of return-to-work behaviour – married male workers and workers with a lower level of education returned to work earlier.

[18] The study uses working-class to describe lower income group and middle-class to describe higher income group.

7

Who paid the price of lost income without job loss?

Even without losing their jobs, some workers lost all or part of their income from work for at least a period of time. In response to declines in orders among buyers or due to restrictions imposed by the authorities during the pandemic, some employers temporarily closed their workplaces and stopped their employees from coming to work, or otherwise reduced their business hours. Other employers continued operating their businesses as usual during normal business hours, but they reduced overtime work hours to cope with the aforementioned economic shocks and restrictions. Some businesses who reduced their hours of operation still paid wages in full, but others did not paid wages for hours or days that workers did not perform by applying a "no work, no pay" principle.

So, while many workers managed to keep their jobs, these temporary reductions in hours or days of work ultimately reduced their income from work. As we mentioned in the introductory section above, international labour standards recommend that States implement a public scheme to cover not just loss of income due to unemployment, but also loss of partial earnings by workers who are still in an employment relationship and are affected by a temporary reduction in hours of work or a temporary suspension of work. However, Myanmar has no such public scheme to support workers to maintain their income, and therefore the price of lost income without job loss must be paid by either employers or employees.

In this section, we assess to what extent workers' incomes were affected when they experienced temporary suspensions of work or reductions in working hours.

7.1. Temporary suspension of work

In Myanmar, no laws or regulations explicitly stipulate workers' rights and employers' obligations concerning temporary suspension of work and related income reductions that are attributable to employers' actions. According to the Standard Employment Contract Template 2017, an amendment in working hours or salary requires mutual agreement between employers and employees (Tsuruga and Moo 2021). As we found it too complicated to investigate the individual terms and conditions of amended employment contracts through a telephone survey, we did not ask respondents to clarify the existence and the contents of their agreement with their employers on temporary suspension of work. Thus, in this paper, we do not discuss compliance with the mutual agreement requirement, but will rather focus on identifying actual practices – that is, whether employees were paid their salary during temporary suspension of work.

The distribution of temporary suspension of work is similar to but more widely spread than that of employment termination. There is almost no difference in the overall trends related to workers' demographic characteristics in regard to employment termination and temporary suspension of work. Female workers, younger workers and the higher educated experienced temporary suspensions of work relatively more frequently than their counterparts, although we did not find any significant trend in relation to marital status.[19]

Likewise, the temporary suspension of work trends by employment characteristics are similar to those of employment termination. Not only were workers with vulnerable forms of employment – such as oral agreements, in apprenticeship or in a probationary period – affected by temporary suspensions of work, but also workers with characteristics associated with formal employment, such as written contracts and social insurance coverage were impacted.

Employees in the services sector were the most affected by temporary suspensions of work among all industrial sectors. At the subsector level, the share of affected male workers was highest in construction, followed by the wholesale and retail trade, other manufacturing, and transportation and storage, which together accounted for two-thirds of affected male workers. The share of female workers was highest in the wholesale and retail trade subsector, followed by textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing, and education, which together accounted for two-thirds of affected female workers.

Considering geographical location, the distribution of respondents affected by temporary suspensions of work (hereafter referred to as "temporarily suspended respondents") was almost the same as the general distribution of employees, with the exceptions of Shan State and Ayeyawady Region. The share of temporarily suspended respondents in Shan State was relatively higher and that of Ayeyawady Region was relatively lower than the general distribution of employees.

[19] Female workers were affected slightly more than male workers by temporary suspensions of work, although the difference is relatively modest compared to the prevalence of employment termination.

Distribution of temporarily suspended employees by economic unit and business size show different trends. The share of temporarily suspended respondents was relatively high in household businesses, while the share of temporarily suspended respondents in other economic units followed the general distribution of employees. Two-thirds of temporarily suspended respondents were found in micro-to-small enterprises (1–49 employees) and one-third were employed in medium-to-large enterprises (50+ employees).

In sum, the distribution of temporarily suspended respondents was almost identical to the distribution of terminated respondents, but temporary suspension of work appears to have had a broader reach. Concerning the location of affected workplaces, the prevalence of temporary suspension of work broadly affected a wider array of regions, while employment termination was more strongly concentrated in certain areas, such as Yangon Region. While Yangon Region accounted for more of the temporarily suspended respondents than any other region (23 per cent), Mandalay Region (12 per cent), Shan State (12 per cent), Sagaing Region (10 per cent) and Ayeyawady Region (9 per cent) also reported high incidences. Shan State has only half of Mandalay's employees but reported an equal number of affected workers. Another notable difference was related to the size of enterprises. While the terminated respondents were split almost equally between micro-to-small enterprises and medium-to-large enterprises, temporarily suspended respondents were more concentrated in micro-to-small enterprises (64 per cent) than medium-to-large enterprises (36 per cent).

During a period of temporary suspension of work, most employees experienced a reduction in income from work. In all, 60 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents did not receive any salary at all, 18 per cent received a reduced salary, and only 22 per cent received their full salary (table 17).

▶ **Table 17. Respondents receiving salary payments during a period of temporary suspension of work (n=1,103)**

Description	No.	Share (%)
Full salary	247	22.4
Reduced salary	199	18.0
No salary	657	59.6
Total	1 103	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

More female workers were paid than male. Among the temporarily suspended respondents, 46 per cent of females and 35 per cent of males received either all or part of their salary (figure 51). The share of temporarily suspended respondents receiving their full salary was also higher among females at 27 per cent than it was for males at 18 per cent.

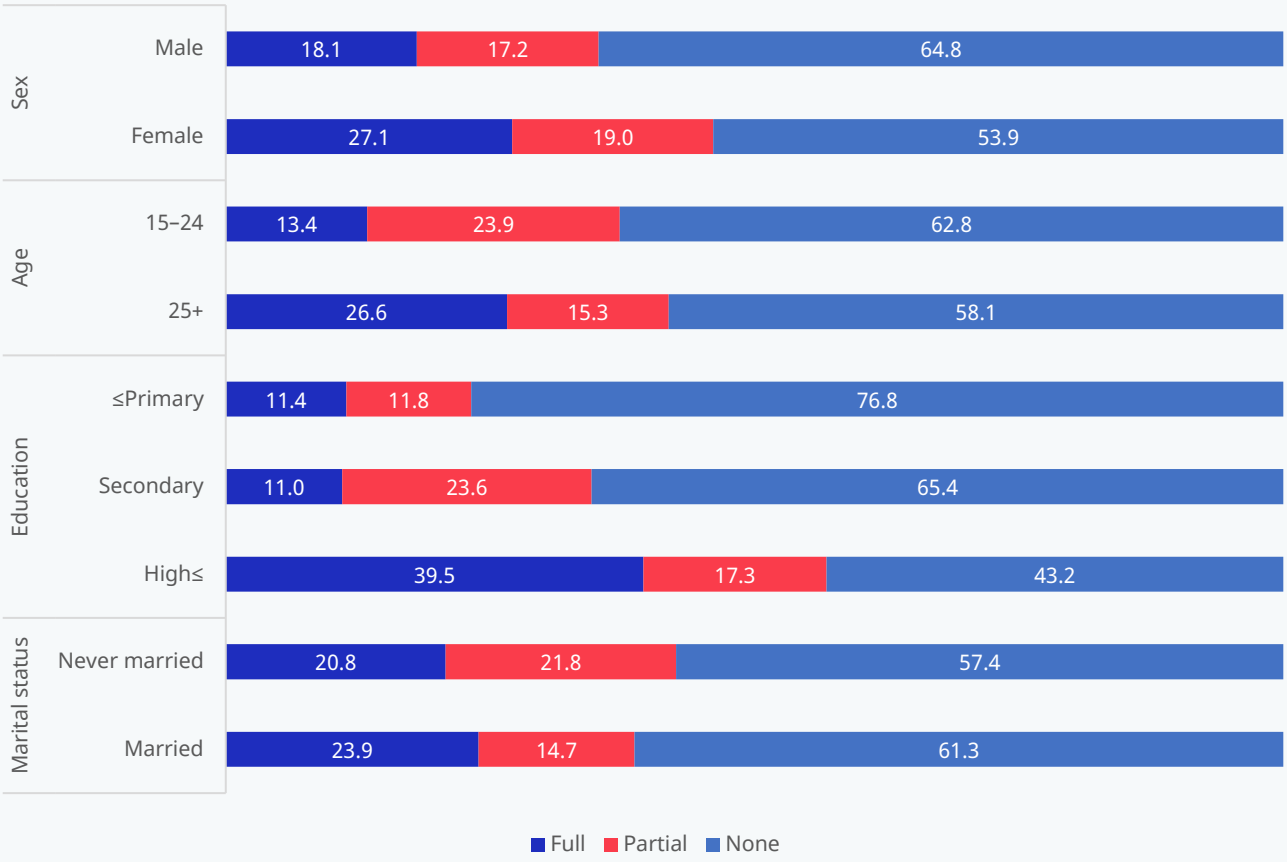
Non-youth workers were more likely to be paid during a temporary suspension than youth workers, and the likelihood of receiving one's full salary increased with age. Overall, 42 per cent of workers aged 25+ and 37 per cent of youth workers (ages 15–24) were paid all or part of their wages. Notably, the proportion of temporarily suspended respondents receiving their full salary increased with age – 13 per cent for ages 15–24, 23 per cent for ages 25–34, 30 per cent for ages 35–44, and 38 per cent for ages 45–54.

The likelihood of receiving all or part of one's salary increased with education attainment. Overall, 23 per cent of workers with a primary school education or below, 35 per cent of workers with a secondary school education, and 57 per cent of workers with a high school education and above were paid all or part of their salary during a temporary suspension of work. The share of workers receiving their full salary shows was essentially the same (roughly 11 per cent) for temporarily suspended respondents in the primary or secondary school education cohorts, but workers in the highest education cohort much more likely to receive their full salary (40 per cent).

Temporarily suspended respondents with written contracts were more likely to receive all or part of their salary than workers with an oral agreement. Overall, 60 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents with written contracts received some amount of salary, while this was true of only 35 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents with oral agreements (figure 52). The share of temporarily suspended respondents who received their full salary was also higher for workers with written contracts (43 per cent) than workers with oral agreements (17 per cent). Among those temporarily suspended respondents who received all or part of their salary, 72 per cent with a written contract received their full salary, while this was the case for only 47 per cent of workers with an oral agreement. These figures show that workers with a written contract are likely to receive at least some of their salary during a temporary suspension of work, and if they do receive any pay, many of them tend to receive their salary in full. Workers with oral agreements are less likely to receive

at least some of their salary during a suspension of work, and even when they do receive any pay, fewer than half could expect to receive their full salary.

▶ Figure 51. Share of workers receiving salary payments during temporary suspension of work, by demographic characteristics (%)



Note: This figure only includes responses from the 1,103 respondents who experienced a period of temporary suspension from work.

Source: Authors' calculations.

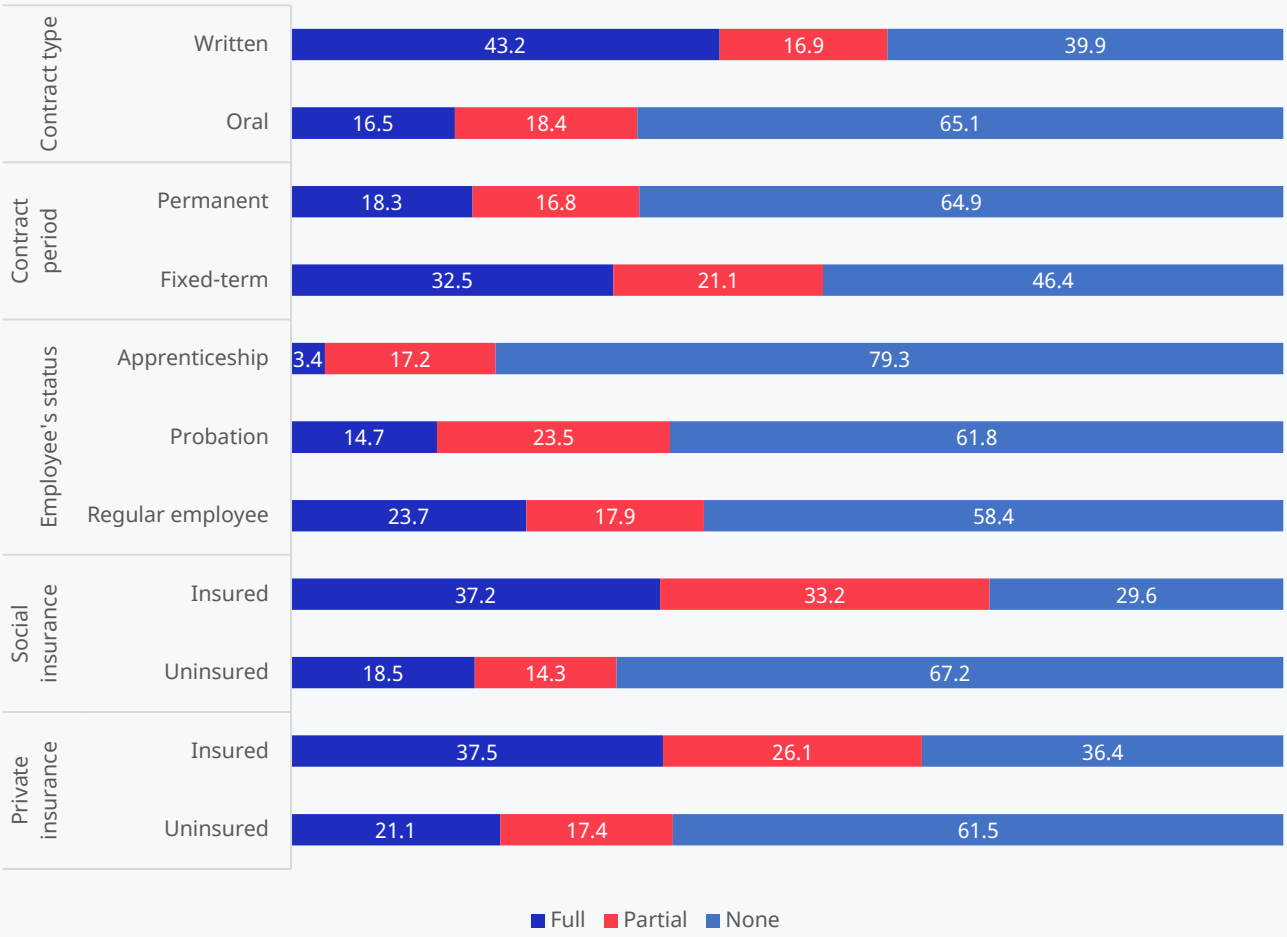
Similarly, temporarily suspended respondents with fixed-term contracts were more likely to be paid than respondents with permanent contracts. In all, 54 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents with fixed-term contracts and 35 per cent with permanent contract received some amount of salary. The share of temporarily suspended respondents receiving their full salary is also higher for workers with fixed-term contracts than workers with permanent contracts at 33 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively.

Concerning employment status, apprentices had the highest risk of their salary being unpaid during a temporary suspension of work. Overall, 21 per cent of apprentices, 38 per cent of workers in a probationary period and 41 per cent of regular employees received some or all of their salary. The likelihood of receiving one's full salary was highest among regular employees at 24 per cent, followed by workers in a probationary period at 15 per cent, and apprentices at 3 per cent.

Workers with social insurance are more likely to be paid during a suspension of work than uninsured workers. Overall, 70 per cent of insured temporarily suspended respondents and 33 per cent of uninsured respondents received all or part of their salary. The share of workers receiving their full salary was also higher for insured workers at 37 per cent, than it was for uninsured workers at 19 per cent. It is noted that this figure may be affected by the SSB's wage subsidy scheme. The SSB provided cash benefit to its members who were affected by temporary suspension of work due to the Government's order to control the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in workplaces. Although we do not have data to

analyse the effect of this temporary public intervention, the overall trend can be largely explained by the possible tendency that established enterprises providing social insurance coverage pay their employees during times of temporary suspension of work. In fact, as the trend of workers with private insurance is identical to the trend of workers with social insurance, the trend might be shaped not only by factors related to social insurance, but also other factors associated with formal sector enterprises.

▶ Figure 52. Share of workers receiving salary payments during temporary suspension of work, by employment characteristics (%)



Note: This figure only includes responses from the 1,103 respondents who experienced a period of temporary suspension from work.

Source: Authors' calculations.

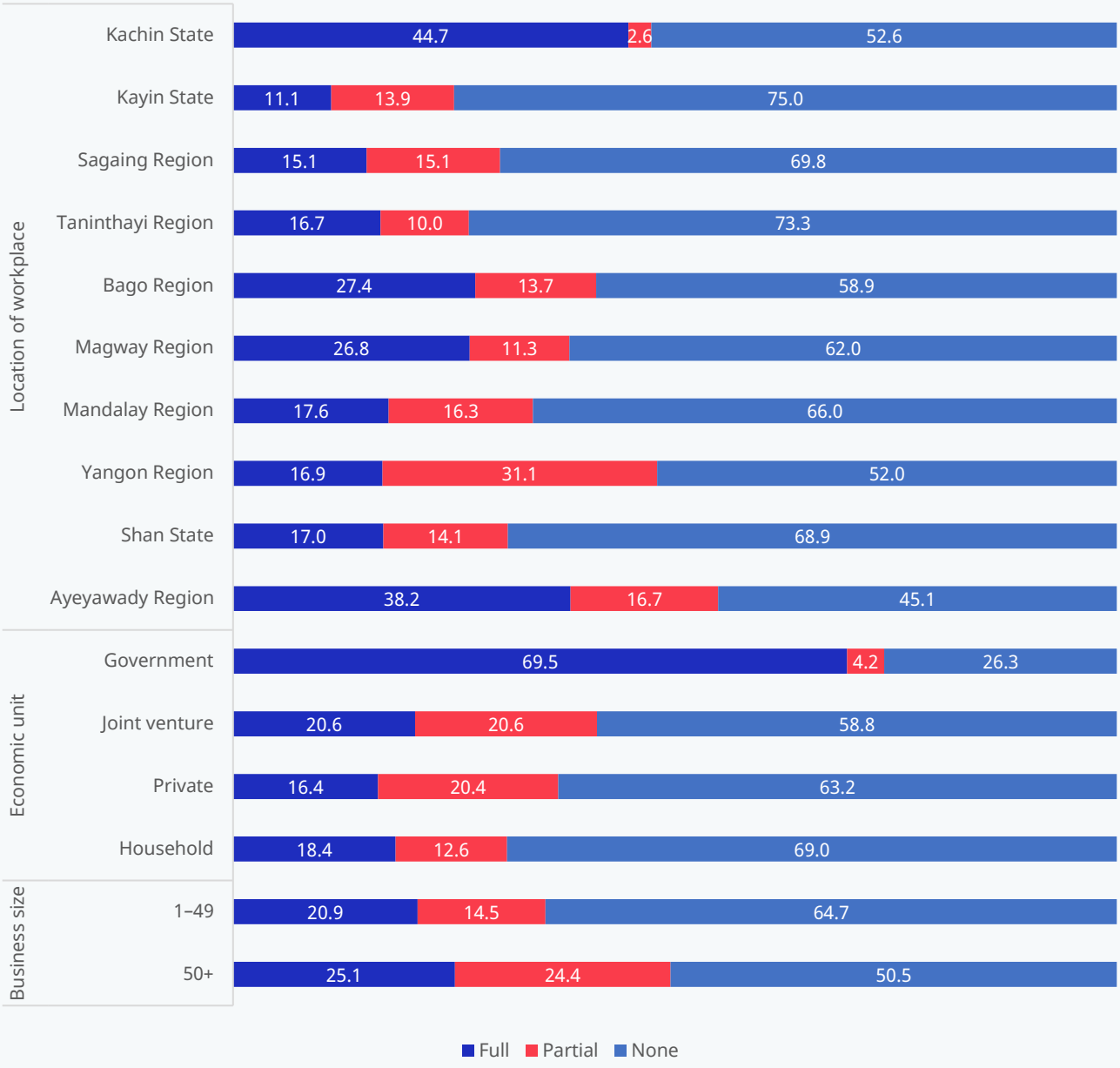
There is a great deal of diversity of experience based on the geographical location of respondents' workplaces, but a general trend shows that workers around the economic capitals more likely to be paid during a temporary suspension of work than workers in regions near the borders. Around the economic capitals of Yangon Region and Mandalay Region, 55 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents in Ayeyawady Region, 48 per cent in Yangon Region, 41 per cent in Bago Region, 38 per cent in Magway Region and 34 per cent in Mandalay Region received all or some of salary (figure 53). In the border regions, 25 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents in Kayin State, 27 per cent in Taninthayi Region, 30 per cent in Sagaing Region, and 31 per cent in Shan State received all or some of their salary. The exception to this trend is border state of Kachin, where 47 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents were paid – and almost all of them received their full salary.

Workers in the Government generally received their full salary during temporary suspensions of work. In all, 74 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents in government jobs were paid, with most receiving their full salary. Within

other economic units, temporarily suspended respondents in household enterprises were the least likely to be paid, with just 31 per cent of receiving any salary payments, followed by private sector workers and the joint venture workers at 37 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively.

Workers in medium-to-large enterprises more likely to be paid than workers in micro-to-small enterprises. In all, 50 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents in medium-to-large enterprises and 35 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises were paid. The share of workers receiving their full salary also followed the same trend, namely 25 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents in medium-to-large enterprises were paid, versus 21 per cent in micro-to-small enterprises.

▶ **Figure 53. Share of workers receiving salary payments during temporary suspension of work, by economic characteristics (%)**

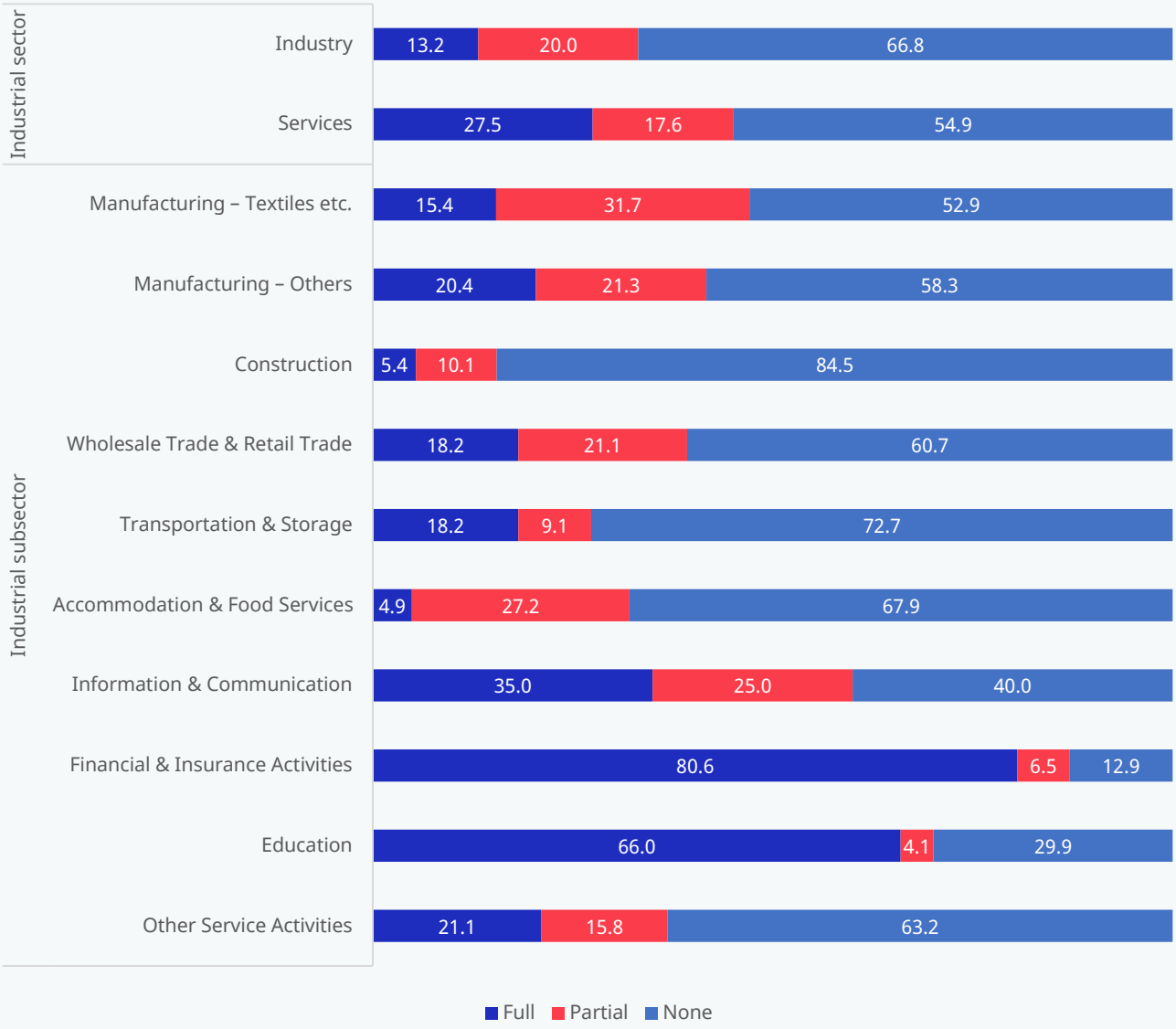


Note: This figure only includes responses from the 1,103 respondents who experienced a period of temporary suspension from work.

Source: Authors' calculations.

Temporarily suspended respondents in labour-intensive sectors were less likely to be paid than workers in knowledge-intensive sectors. An aggregate sectoral trend shows that fewer temporarily suspended respondents in the industry sector received payment (33 per cent) than did workers in the services sector (45 per cent) (figure 54). Among industrial subsectors, workers in the financial and insurance sector were the most likely to received pay (87 per cent), followed by workers in education (70 per cent), and the information and communication (60 per cent). Almost all of these workers in the financial and insurance sector and the education sector received their full salary. The lowest share of workers receiving salary was found in the construction sector (16 per cent), followed by transportation and storage (27 per cent), the accommodation and food service (32 per cent) and the wholesale and retail trade (39 per cent).

▶ **Figure 54. Share of workers receiving salary payments during temporary suspension of work, by industrial sector and subsector (%)**



Note: This figure only includes responses from the 1,103 respondents who experienced a period of temporary suspension from work.

Source: Authors' calculations.

Thus, our findings can be summarized across four points. First, as with employment termination, female workers, younger workers, the higher educated, and workers in the services sector were more likely to experience temporary suspension of work than their counterparts. In comparison with employment termination, two major differences in the

distribution of affected workers were identified: (i) temporary suspension of work was more widely practised in terms of its geographical spread; and (ii) more workers in medium-to-large enterprises were affected. Second, only 22 per cent of temporarily suspended respondents received their full salary, while 60 per cent did not receive any salary at all during temporary suspension of work. Third, female workers, non-youth workers, the higher educated, workers with written contracts, workers with fixed-term contracts, workers with social insurance, government workers, and workers in medium-to-large enterprises were more likely to received salary payments than their counterparts. Finally, workers in knowledge-intensive sectors – such as the financial and insurance sector and the education sector – and workers in the Government had the highest likelihood of receiving all or part of their salary among the various industrial sectors and economic units, respectively.

7.2. Temporary reduction in hours of work

Even if employers did not terminate employment or temporarily suspend work without breaking off the employment relationship, many employees still experienced reduced income from their work. Such reductions in income can sometimes be the result of employers reducing or delaying the payment of wages, or reducing normal business hours or overtime working hours. To understand the prevalence and nature of these practices, we asked all 1,500 respondents about their experiences with temporary reductions in hours of work since March 2020.[20]

Most workers were paid their normal salary for the hours and days that they performed work, but a quarter of workers experienced their wage payments being delayed or reduced. Late payment or reduction in wages may have happened for any number of reasons. Overall, 26 per cent of survey respondents experienced either late or reduced payment of wages (table 18): 11 per cent experienced late payment only; 11 per cent experienced non- or reduced payment only; and 5 per cent experienced both events.

Slightly more than half of respondents (52 per cent) experienced a reduction in normal business hours or overtime. In all, 43 per cent of workers experienced a reduction in normal business hours or days; 5 per cent experienced reduction in overtime working hours or days; and 4 per cent of experienced reductions in both.

Reductions of working hours appear to have affected many workers' income derived from work. Among the workers who experienced reductions in normal business hours or overtime, 64 per cent found that these events lowered their income from work, while 36 per cent of them did not find their income affected.

▶ **Table 18. Respondents' experience with late or reduced payment of wages and/or reduction of working hours or days**

Description	No.	%
Late payment only	159	10.6
Non- or reduced payment only	159	10.6
Both	74	4.9
Never	1 108	73.9
Total	1 500	100.0
Reduction in normal business hours or days	639	42.6
Reduction in overtime working hours or days	75	5.0
Reduction in both normal business and overtime working hours/days	62	4.1
Never experienced	724	48.3
Total	1 500	100.0
Reduction in working hours or days lowered income	499	64.3
Reduction in working hours or days had no impact on income	277	35.7
Total no. of respondents who experienced reduction in working hours or days	776	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

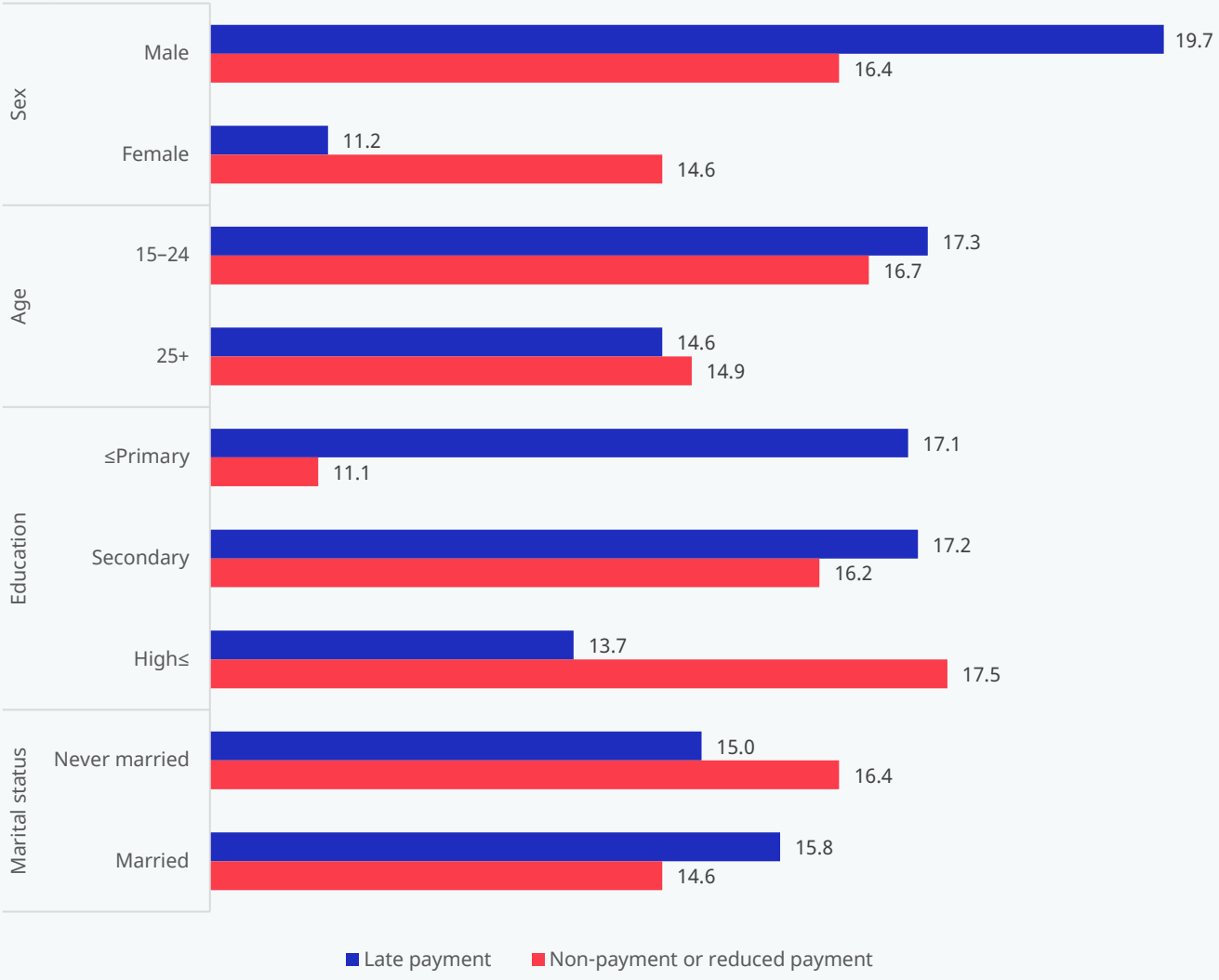
The trends related to late payment, non-payment or reduced salary are generally quite similar across demographic cohorts, but some notable aspects can be observed. Male workers were more likely to have experienced late, non-, or

[20] It is noted that our dataset has a bias towards employees who experienced either employment termination or temporary suspension of work.

reduced payment of salary than female workers – 20 per cent of male workers experienced late payment and 16 per cent of male workers experienced reduced payment, compared to 11 per cent and 15 per cent of female workers, respectively. Both youth workers (ages 15–24) and older workers (ages 25+) were roughly equally likely to have experienced these events at 17 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. Similarly, married workers and never married workers almost equally experienced late payment, but never married workers were slightly more likely to have experienced non-payment or reduced payment (figure 55).

However, the proportion of respondents experiencing late payment decreased with educational attainment, but the proportion of workers experiencing non-payment or reduced payment increased with education attainment. In all, 17 per cent of workers with a primary school education and a secondary school education for each cohort reported late payment, while only 14 per cent of workers with a high school education reported late payment. However, 18 per cent of workers with a high school education reported non-payment or reduced payment, as compared to just 16 per cent of workers with a secondary school education and 11 per cent of workers with a primary school education.

▶ **Figure 55. Share of workers who experienced late payment of salary, non-payment or reduced salary (%)**



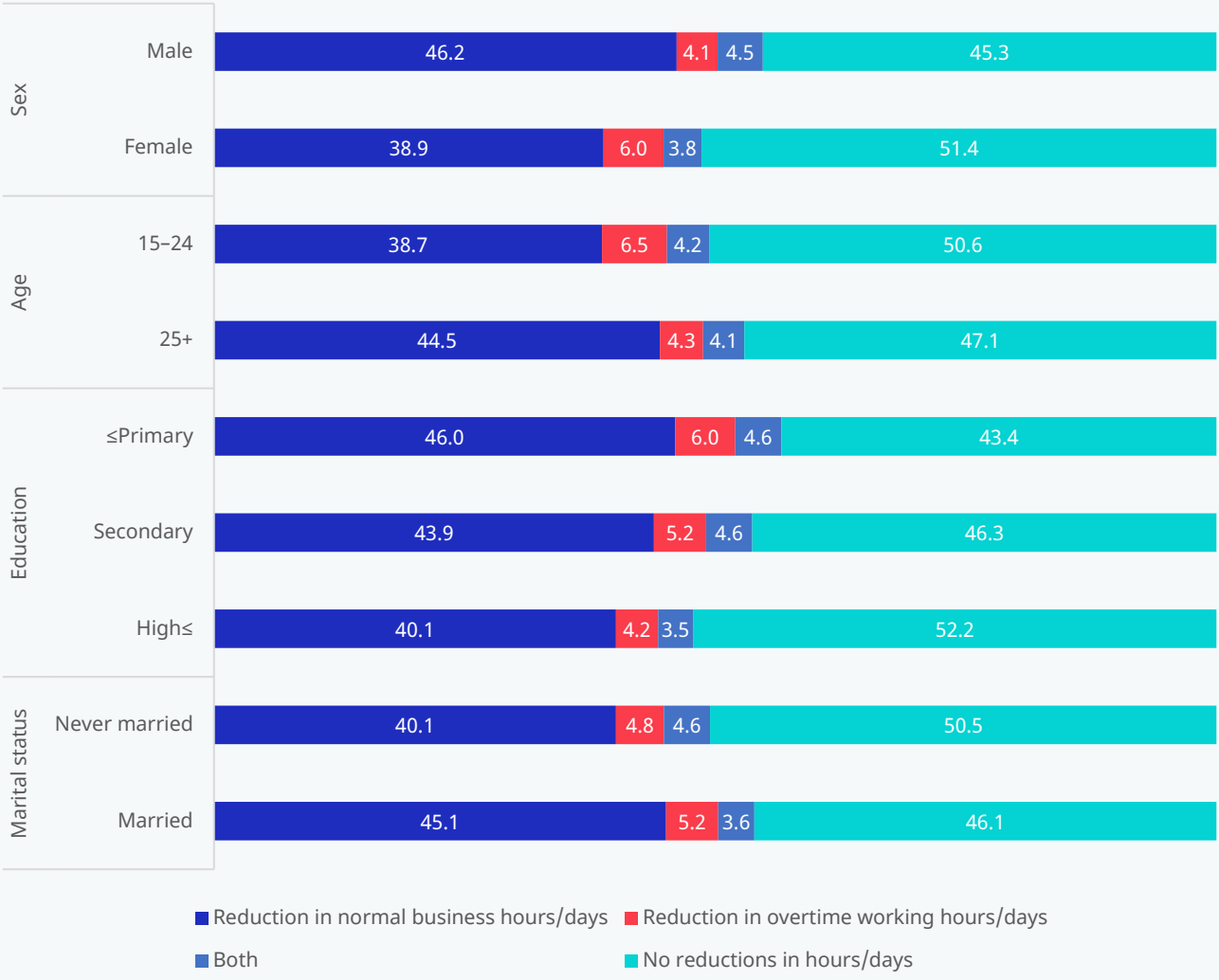
Source: Authors' calculations.

The demographic trends related to reduction in overtime or normal business hours or days were found to be consistent with the trends related to late payment above for almost all categories, except worker age. Like with late payments, male workers, the lower educated and married workers were slightly more likely to have experienced

reductions in overtime or normal business hours or days: 55 per cent of male workers versus 50 per cent of female workers; 57 per cent of workers with a primary school education or below versus 54 per cent of workers with a secondary school education and 48 per cent of workers with a high school education or above; and 54 per cent of married workers versus 50 per cent of never married workers (figure 56).

By contrast, the trend by age runs counter to what was seen for late/non-payment or reduced payment. Older workers (ages 25) were slightly more likely to have experienced reductions in overtime or normal hours or days than youth workers (ages 15–24): 53 per cent and 49 per cent, respectively. As discussed above, older workers were less likely to report cases of late payment and non-payment or reduced payment than youth workers.

▶ Figure 56. Share of workers who experienced a reduction in working hours (%)



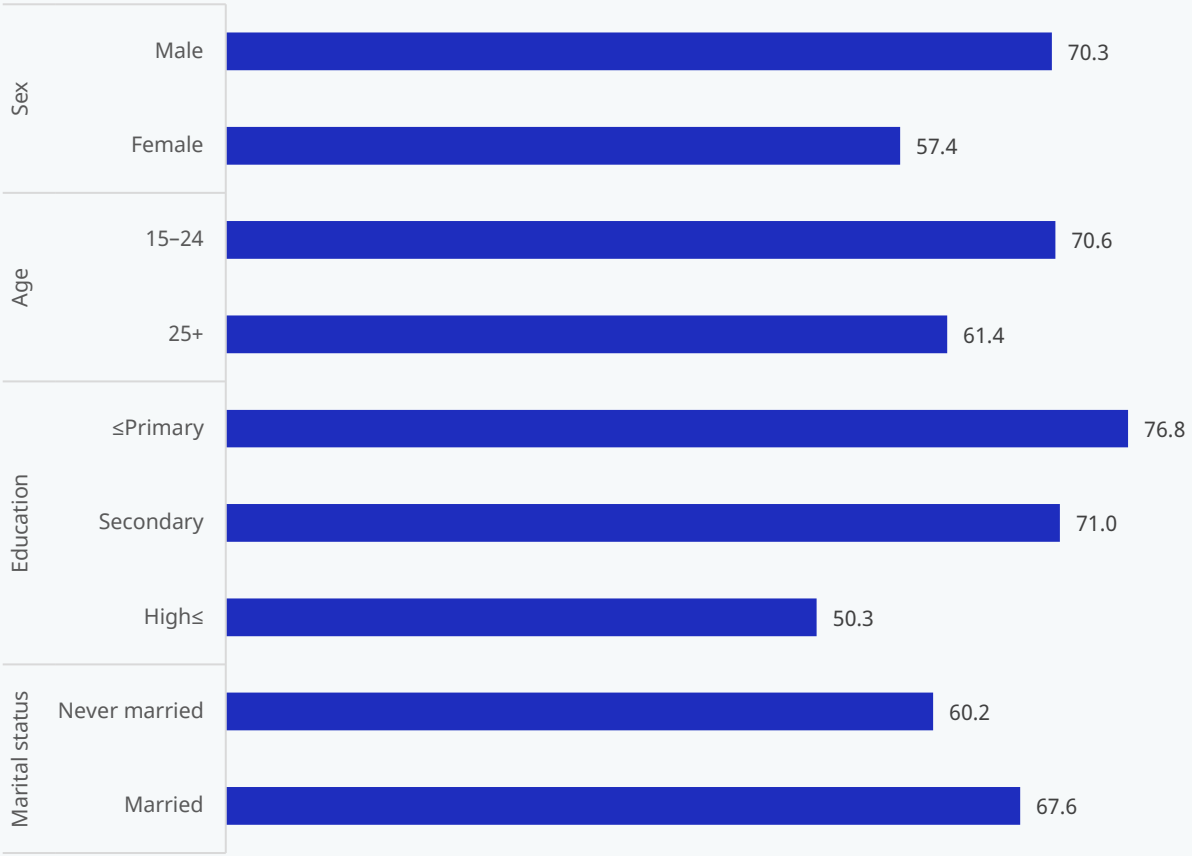
Source: Authors' calculations.

Reduced working hours affected the incomes of male workers, youth workers, the lower educated and married workers more frequently than their counterparts. We asked respondents who reported experiencing a reduction in overtime or normal business hours or days whether such a reduction in working hours resulted in a lowering of their income or not. By sex, 70 per cent of male workers whose working hours decreased experienced a reduction in income from work, as opposed to 57 per cent female workers (figure 57). Similarly, 71 per cent of youth workers (ages 15–24) and 61 per cent of older workers (ages 25+) found their income from work reduced, and 77 per cent of workers with a primary school education or below, 71 per cent of workers with a secondary school education and 50 per cent of workers with a high school education or above experienced such a shock. These figures and trends suggest that when workers

experienced reductions in their working hours or days for any reason, male, youth, lower educated and married workers tended to be more likely to find their income decreasing than their counterparts. It is noted that this analysis excludes workers who have never experienced a reduction in working hours. To assess whose income from work was affected the most, we must consider these excluded workers.

Reductions in working hours were not only caused by employers' decisions, but also by employees deciding to avoid exposure to health or security risks related to the pandemic, the military takeover and related violence. If a worker decides to use entitled leave credits, they must receive their salary for the days on which they took leave. However, if a worker takes leave beyond their entitled credits – with or without permission from their employers – their income may be reduced, depending on their employer. To assess whether decreasing working hours and related income reduction were associated with the pandemic or the military takeover, we asked workers about their experiences with taking leave due to health or security concerns and the use of entitled leave credits. We allowed workers to report any cases wherein they thought their leave was caused by health concerns due to the pandemic or concerns over their physical safety. For example, workers may have become infected with COVID-19 or they had to stay home to take care of infected family members, or due to violence linked to the military takeover they might have felt it was unsafe to be at or to travel to and from their workplace, and therefore decided not to go to work.

▶ **Figure 57. Share of workers whose experience with reduced working hours or days resulted in reduced income (%)**



Note: This figure only considers the 776 respondents who reported experiencing reduced working hours or days.

Source: Authors' calculations.

Overall, 53 per cent of respondents stated that they had been absent from work due to health concerns and 28 per cent had been absent due to security concerns. Among those who reported having been absent from work, only 23 per cent of those who cited health concerns and 15 per cent of those who cited security concerns used leave entitlements to

cover the entirety of their absence, and they supposedly received their salary for these days (table 19). Conversely, 49 per cent of workers who were absent over health concerns and 60 per cent of workers who were absent due to security concerns never used their leave entitlement to be absent from work. Despite so many of the respondents being absent without leave entitlement, it was rare for employers to dismiss employees or for employees to resign. The most common consequence in both cases was either no impact on the employees' salaries or their employment relationship – as reported by 58 per cent of workers whose absences were due to health concerns and 50 per cent of workers whose absences were due to security concerns. However, it is noted that 41 per cent of workers who absented themselves over health concerns and 48 per cent of workers who absented themselves for security concerns reported their income having been reduced.

▶ Table 19. Respondents experiences related to absence from work due to health or security concerns

Description	Health concerns		Security concerns	
	No.	%	No.	%
Experienced absence(s) from work				
Ever had to be absent from work	797	53.1	419	27.9
Never	703	46.9	1 081	72.1
Total	1 500	100.0	1 500	100.0
Arrangement with employer*				
Used leave entitlement to cover all the days of absence	181	22.7	62	14.8
Used leave entitlement to cover some of the days of absence	225	28.2	106	25.3
Never used leave entitlement	391	49.1	251	59.9
Total	797	100.0	419	100.0
Consequence of absence*				
Employment termination	2	0.3	3	0.7
Salary reduction and employment termination	6	0.8	9	2.1
Salary reduction but no impact on employment	317	39.8	187	44.6
No impact on salary or employment	461	57.8	209	49.9
Resignation	11	1.4	11	2.6
Total	797	100.0	419	100.0

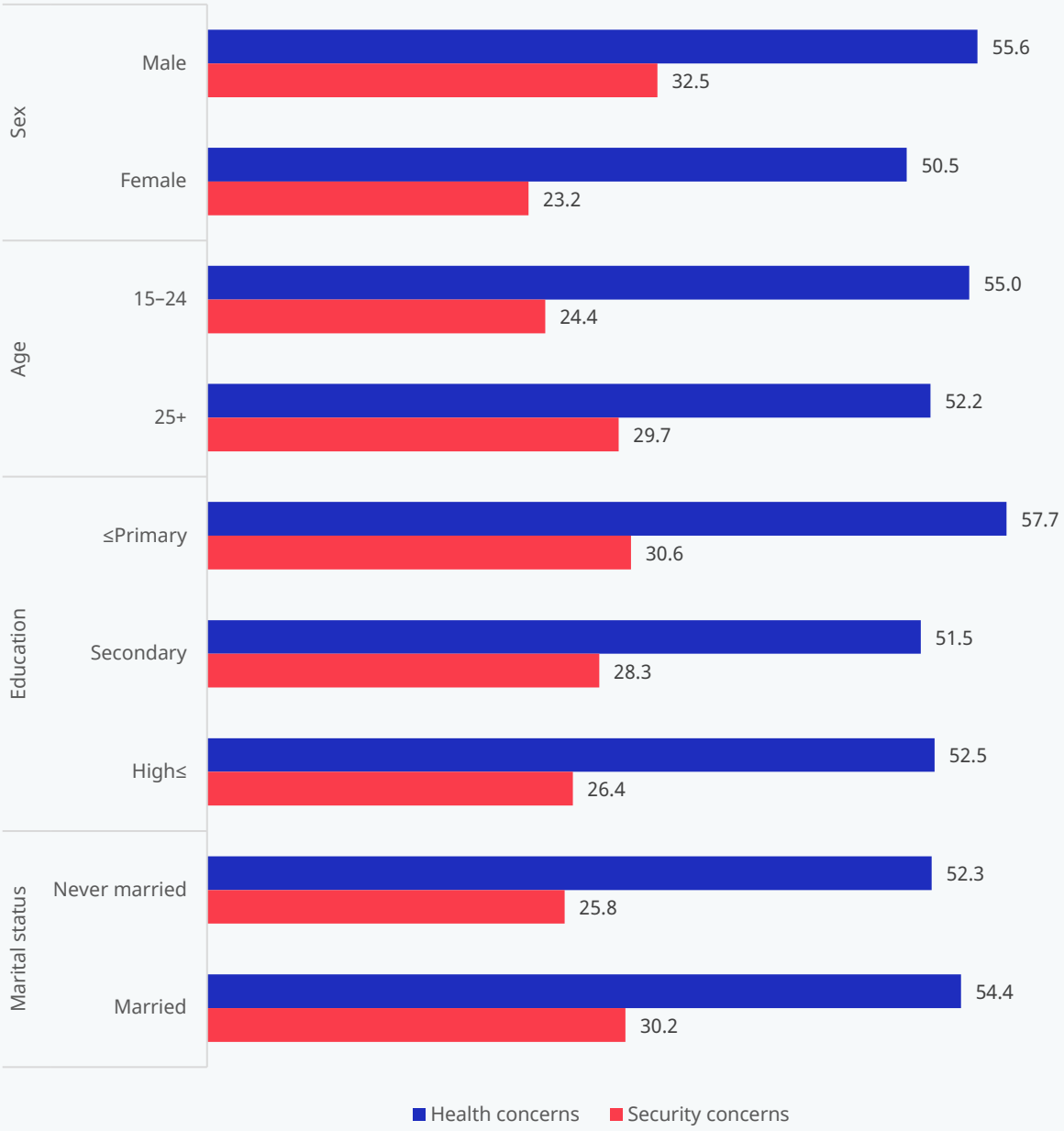
* This section of the table only covers those respondents who reported ever having been absent from work either due to health or security concerns, as relevant.
Source: Authors' calculations.

There is little in the way of differences based on demographic characteristics, but there are some notable trends concerning absence from work due to health or security concerns. Male workers, youth workers (ages 15–24), workers with a primary school education or below, and never married workers were slightly more likely to absent themselves from work for health concerns than their counterparts; while male workers, older workers (ages 25+), the lower educated and married workers were more likely absent themselves from work over security concerns (figure 58). The differences in the trends related to absence for health concerns is smaller than those related to absence for security concerns. For example, 33 per cent of male workers and 23 per cent of female workers were ever absent from work due to security concern (a gap of 10 percentage points), while the gap between men and women being absent for health concern was only 5 percentage points. The trend by educational attainment is more evident in regard to absence for security concerns: 31 per cent of workers with a primary school education or below, 28 per cent of workers with a secondary school education and 26 per cent of workers with a high school education or above reported absences for security concerns, while 58 per cent of workers with a primary school education or below and 52 to 53 per cent of workers with a secondary school education or a high school education or above reported absences over health concerns.

Among respondents who were ever absent from work due to health concerns, only 23 per cent used their leave entitlements to cover every day of absence. Twenty-eight per cent used their leave entitlement to cover some of the days; while 49 per cent never used their leave entitlement.

The use of leave entitlement to be absent from work was even rare in case of security concerns. Among respondents who were ever absent from work due to security concerns, only 15 per cent used their leave entitlements to cover every day of absence. Twenty-five per cent used their leave entitlement to cover some of the days; while 60 per cent never used their leave entitlement.

▶ Figure 58. Demographic characteristics of workers who experienced absence from work due to health or security concerns (%)



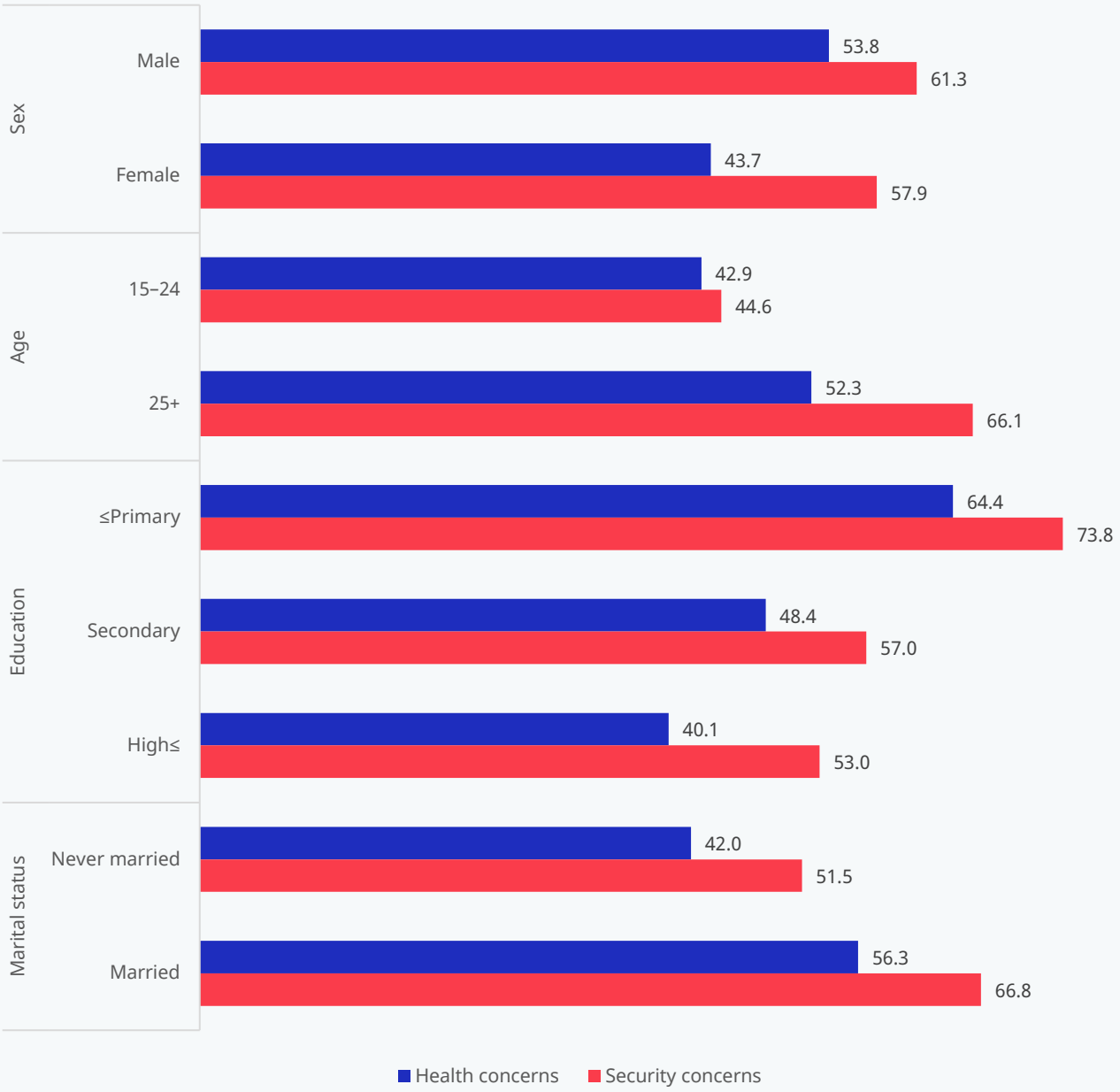
Source: Authors' calculations.

A clear trend exists in the use of leave entitlement for absence from work. The proportion of workers who never used their leave entitlement to cover absences from work was higher for male workers, older workers (ages 25+), the lower educated and married workers (figure 59). Such a trend exists in relation to absence for both health concerns and security concerns. These workers were more likely to be absent from work without using their entitlements than their counterparts.

Figure 60 shows the proportion of workers who experienced employment termination, salary reduction or resignation because of their absence from work. As discussed above, salary reductions accounted for most of these employment shocks. Almost no difference by sex was observed in regard to the impact of absences both for health concerns and security concerns. Lower educated and never married workers showed a higher prevalence of impacts on their

employment or salaries than their counterparts. Interestingly, the incidence of employment impacts by age cohort shows different trends for health-related absences and security-related absences. More senior workers (ages 25+) were more likely to be affected by employment shocks than youth workers (ages 15–24) due to absences for security concerns, while the opposite trend is observed for absences due to health concerns. As we expected, workers who did not use their leave entitlement and those who were absent from work were more likely to face reductions in income. It is also noted, however, that approximately one-third of workers who used leave entitlements to cover all of the days that they were absent from work due to health or security concerns still faced reductions in salary.

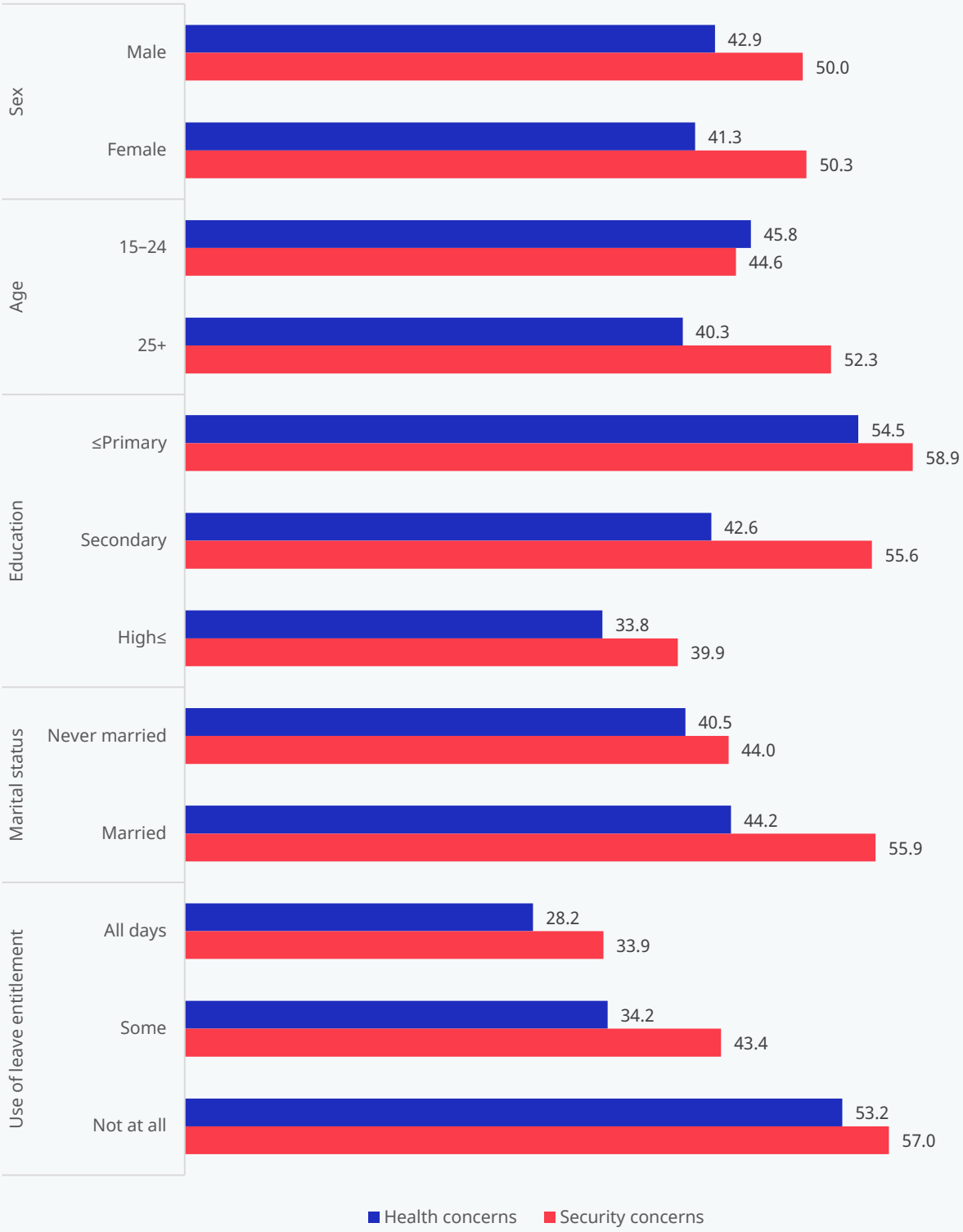
▶ Figure 59. Demographic characteristics of respondents who never used leave entitlements to cover any absences from work due to health or security concerns (%)



Note: The data related to "Health concerns" comes from the 391 respondents who reported never having used their leave entitlement to cover any of their days of absence due to health concerns. The data related to "Security concerns" comes from the 251 respondents who reported never having used their leave entitlement to cover any of their days of absence due to security concerns. See table19 above.

Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Figure 60. Demographic characteristics of respondents whose absence(s) from work had affected their employment or salary (%)



Note: This figure only presents data from respondents who experienced employment termination, salary reduction or resignation because of absence from work due to health concerns (n=797) or security concerns (n=419).

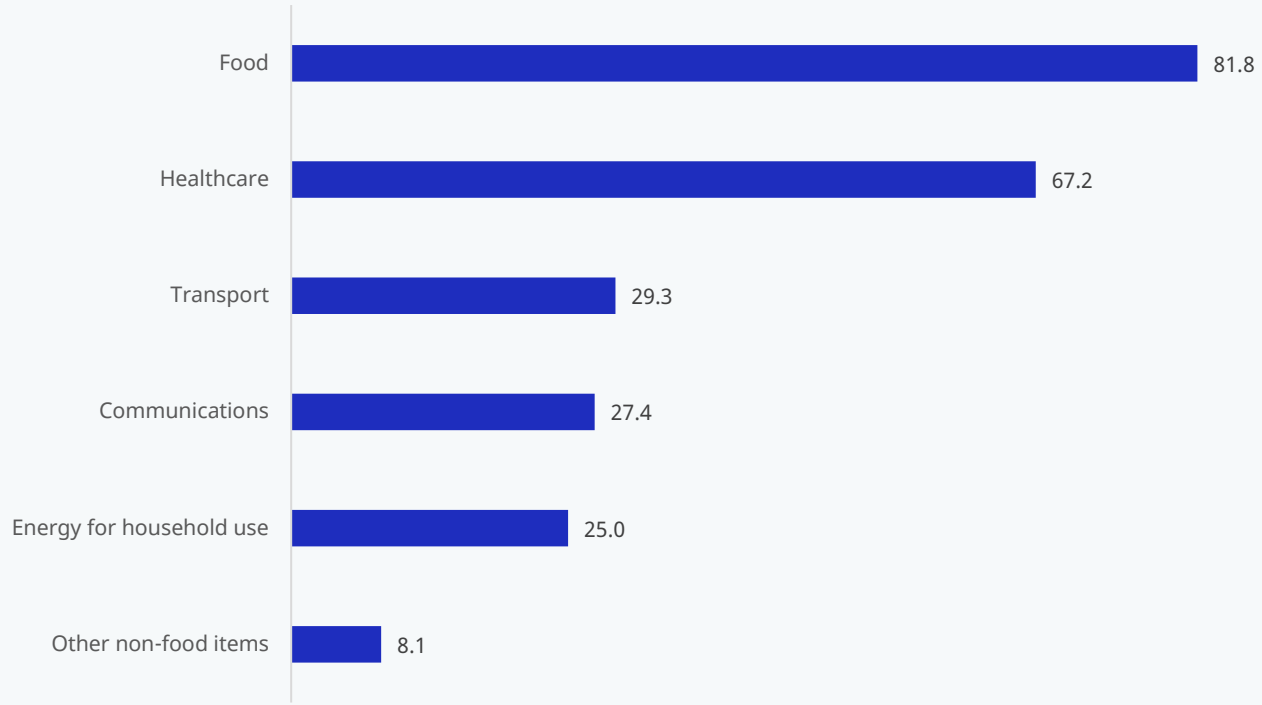
Source: Authors' calculations.

8

Concolusion

Our survey concluded by asking workers which expenditure component of their household has increased since the beginning of the pandemic, and how they fulfilled increased needs for household consumption. For this question, workers could report as many items as they wanted. Food expenditure was the most common item that workers found to have increased (82 per cent), followed by expenditures for healthcare (67 per cent), transport (29 per cent), communications (27 per cent), energy for household use (25 per cent) and other non-food items (8 per cent) (figure 61). An increase in food prices has been reported following the global trend of inflation, and most workers felt such an impact within their households. The pandemic appears to have had a clear impact on household expenditure by creating new household demands for medicine, treatment, health checks and masks. An increase in household spending on these was common for many workers.

▶ Figure 61. Components of household expenditure that have increased in cost since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (%)

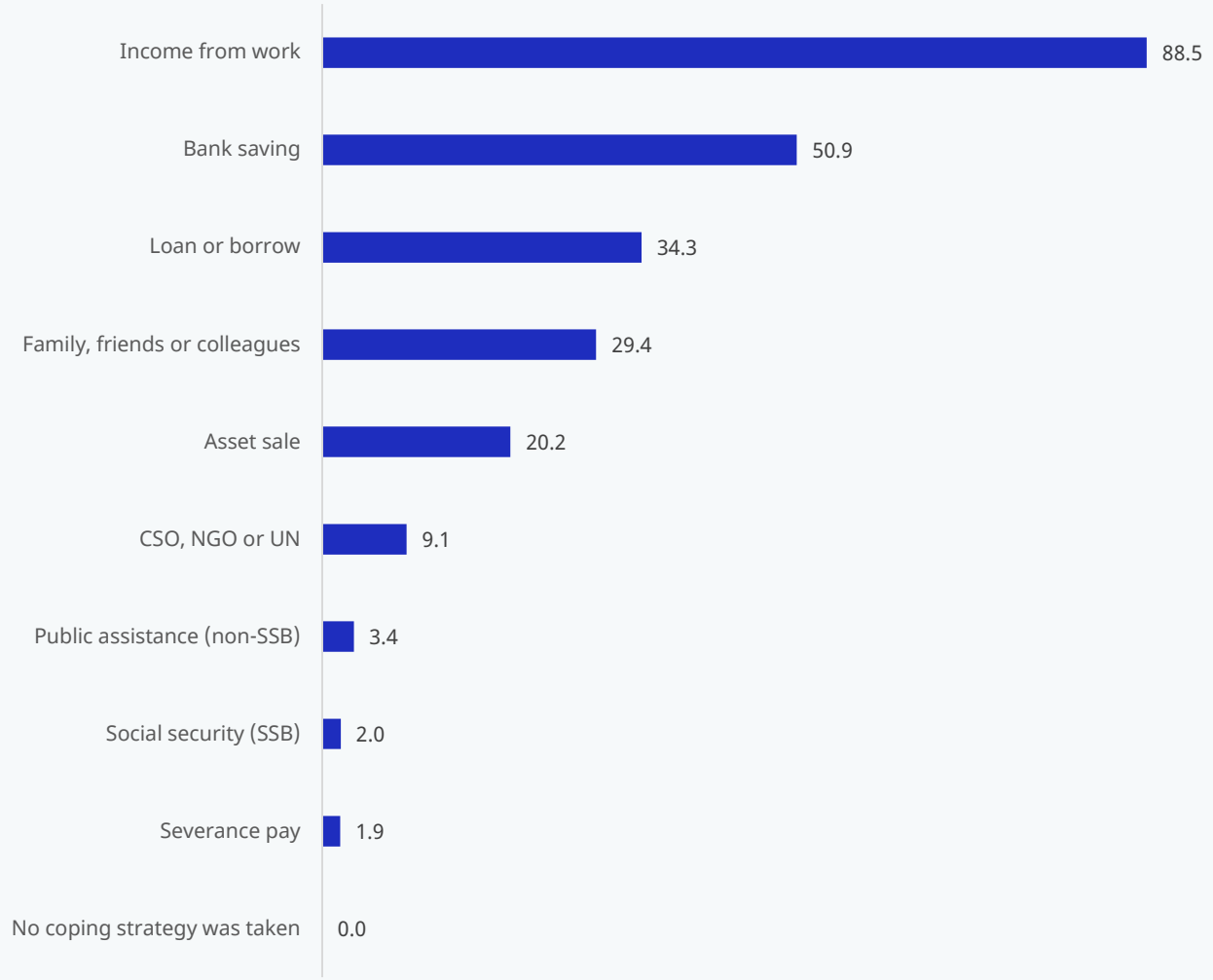


Note: Respondents were allowed to select multiple responses.

Source: Authors' calculations.

Who paid the price of these multiple shocks? Workers experienced income loss because of job loss, temporary suspension of work and reductions in working hours, and their household expenditures increased at the same time. Most workers fulfilled their increasing household needs themselves, while also experiencing a decrease in income from work (figure 62). Overall, 89 per cent of workers relied on income from work, which was a more reliable source of income than any others. Many workers had to take up unsustainable coping strategies by withdrawing their bank saving (51 per cent), lending or borrowing (34 per cent), or selling assets such as their house, land, stocks and bonds (20 per cent). Some workers received assistance through informal networks such as family, friends or colleagues (29 per cent), or more formal assistance from civil society organizations, NGOs or the United Nations (9 per cent). As there are limited social security benefits or any other public schemes available, very few workers received assistance from the SSB (2 per cent) or from other government agencies (3 per cent). Although severance pay is only the statutory scheme that was available to addresses income security during unemployment spells in the absence of an unemployment insurance scheme, the proportion of workers who relied on severance pay was the lowest among all sources of income (2 per cent). It is very clear that almost none of the public schemes or employer liability schemes effectively helped workers secure income to cope with the multiple shocks they had experienced, and workers themselves had to find solutions to make a living without such support. Most workers had to rely on labour income, but their income from work was also greatly affected, as we discussed above.

▶ Figure 62. Sources of income for fulfilling household daily needs (%)



Note: Respondents were allowed to select multiple responses.

Source: Authors' calculations.

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Appendix

▶ Appendix 1. Definitions

For the purposes of this study, all means for ending the employment relationship between an employer and an employee were considered as constituting "employment termination". Employment termination can happen in myriad ways, including resignation, dismissal, expiry of a fixed-term contract and many others.

For this study, "temporary suspension of work" is defined as a case wherein an employee is still employed but has been asked not to work by their employer because of a reduction in business activities. This definition, however, excludes temporary leave that is regularly scheduled based on typical business cycles. Several terms are often used to describe "temporary suspension of work". The term "work stoppage" is often used to refer to a suspension of work related to a strike initiated by workers within the context of industrial relations (ILO 2020b); though it can also refer to employment termination in other contexts. ILO Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168) defines "partial unemployment" as "a temporary reduction in the normal or statutory hours of work", and separately defines a temporary suspension of work (Article 10). In the English version of the questionnaire for this study, we used the term "work stoppage", and our enumerators explained it to survey respondents as a partial or full suspension of work that was initiated by employers for any reason, wherein workers and employers still maintained their employment relationship.

On education indicator, we applied the same definition as the Labour Force Survey (Myanmar, MOLIP 2021). We asked survey respondents the highest level of education that they completed, and categorized completed grades and attained degrees using the current system in Myanmar.

Regarding industrial or institutional indicators, the study used the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev-4) to group economic activities into broad industries (UNDESA, Statistics Division 2008). This is the same standard used by the Labour Force Survey (Myanmar, MOLIP 2021).

Concerning economic units, we defined "government" as any public institutions that employed civil servants, armed forces, or any other workers in public entities, such as state-owned enterprise and public schools. "Joint ventures" were defined as companies owned jointly by a Myanmar private enterprise and/or a foreign enterprise and/or a state-owned enterprise. "Private enterprises" were defined as including non-public enterprises and private schools. "Households" were defined as places where domestic workers, security guards or domestic helpers were employed by individual households.

Concerning the size of enterprises, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Law, No. 23/2015, defines the size of an enterprise by the number of permanent employees and the value of capital investment or annual income. Thresholds are set differently based on the nature of the business. As we could not expect precise figures from workers, we simply used the number of employees to classify the different enterprise sizes in this paper, with four enterprise sizes being determined as follows: (i) micro (1–4 employees); (ii) small (5–49); (iii) medium (50– 99); and (iv) large (100 or more). It is noted that this indicator depends on an employee's understanding of the number of employees at their workplace, and therefore, may not accurately capture the actual size of each enterprise. For example, if a firm has multiple workplaces, the firm may be categorized as a large enterprise based on the total number of employees. However, using our methodology, the firm may end up being categorized as a small enterprise if the survey respondent only counts the number of employees at their workplace.

Appendix 1-A. Classification of educational attainment of survey respondents

In this paper, we categorized the completion of particular grades and the attained degree as presented in table 20 below. We initially attempted to adopt the same educational classification that was used in the Labour Force Survey, but were unable to find a standard definition concerning primary school, secondary school, and high school, as well as vocational school. The classification of these changed in the 2000s – in the old system, the grades of completion for primary, secondary and high school were Grade 4, Grade 8 and Grade 10, respectively, whereas in the new system the grades of completion are Grade 5, Grade 9 and Grade 11, respectively. As survey respondents may have completed their education based on different classification systems, enumerators asked which system the respondents were referring to and (if necessary) converted their response to the new system. Moreover, we categorized the completion of vocational training as "Other", as it was ultimately unclear whether respondents had previously completed high school or only secondary school before enrolling in vocational training.

▶ Table 20. Breakdown of survey respondents by educational attainment

Broad category	Detail category	No.	%	No.	%
Completed primary school and below	Never attended	350	23.3	14	0.9
	Kindergarten or Grade 1			1	0.1
	Grade 2			5	0.3
	Grade 3			14	0.9
	Grade 4			30	2.0
	Grade 5			92	6.1
	Grade 6			66	4.4
	Grade 7			35	2.3
	Grade 8			93	6.2
Completed secondary school	Grade 9	501	33.4	138	9.2
	Grade 10			363	24.2
Completed high school and above	Grade 11	636	42.4	249	16.6
	Undergraduate diploma			18	1.2
	Bachelor's degree			341	22.7
	Postgraduate degree			17	1.1
	Master's degree			10	0.7
	PhD			1	0.1
Other	Vocational training (school)	13	0.9	13	0.9
Total		1 500	100.0	1 500	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

Appendix 1-B. Classification survey respondents by industry and economic activity

In this study, we adopted the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC Rev-4) to group economic activities into broad industries (UNDESA, Statistics Division 2008). The same standard was used by the labour force survey in Myanmar (Myanmar, MOLIP 2021).

▶ **Table 21. Breakdown of survey respondents by industry and economic activity**

Broad industry	Economic activity	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	11	1.5	11	1.5
Industry	Mining and Quarrying	241	33.1	2	0.3
	Manufacturing – Textiles, Apparel, Leather and related products			106	14.6
	Manufacturing – others			61	8.4
	Electricity, Gas, Steam Supply			9	1.2
	Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management, and Remediation Activities			1	0.1
	Construction			62	8.5
Services	Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade	476	65.4	178	24.5
	Transportation and Storage			31	4.3
	Accommodation and Food Services			55	7.6
	Information and Communication			20	2.7
	Financial and Insurance Activities			36	4.9
	Professional and Technical Activities			17	2.3
	Public Administration and Defence			3	0.4
	Education			53	7.3
	Human Health and Social Work Activities			26	3.6
	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation			10	1.4
	Other Service Activities			43	5.9
	Activities of Households as Employers			2	0.3
	Activities of Extraterritorial (that is, organization with diplomatic rights)			2	0.3
Total		728	100.0	728	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations.

Appendix 1-C. Classification of size of enterprises

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Law, 23/2015, defines the size of an enterprise by first considering the nature of the business and then considering the number of permanent employees and the value of capital investment or annual income of that business (section 2). For example, a manufacturing enterprise is classified as a small-sized enterprise if it does not exceed 50 permanent employees or 500 million kyats of capital investment; whereas a retail enterprise would be classified as small only if it does not exceed 30 permanent employees or an annual income of no greater than 50 million kyats. It must be noted that it is not clear if employees with fixed-term contracts are considered as part of the count, as the law explicitly requires "permanent" employees.

▶ **Table 22. Classification of enterprise size (small and medium enterprises) in Myanmar law**

Type of business	Size of enterprise	Limit of permanent employee	Limit of capital investment or annual income
Manufacturing	Small	≤ 50	Capital investment ≤ 500 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 300	500 million kyats ≤ Capital investment < 1,000 million kyats
Labour-intensive or piecework	Small	≤ 300	Capital investment ≤ 500 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 600	500 million kyats ≤ Capital investment < 1,000 million kyats
Wholesale	Small	≤ 30	Annual income of the previous year ≤ 100 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 60	100 million kyats ≤ Annual income of the previous year < 300 million kyats
Retail	Small	≤ 30	Annual income of the previous year ≤ 50 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 60	50 million kyats ≤ Annual income of the previous year < 100 million kyats
Service	Small	≤ 30	Annual income of the previous year ≤ 100 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 100	100 million kyats ≤ Annual income of the previous year < 200 million kyats
Other	Small	≤ 30	Annual income of the previous year ≤ 50 million kyats
	Medium	≤ 60	50 million kyats ≤ Annual income of the previous year < 100 million kyats

Source: Authors' abstract from national legislation.

Appendix 1-D. Classification of source of information for finding jobs

Formal or informal	Online or Offline	Public or private	Information source	No.	%
Informal	Offline	n/a	Friend	137	55.2
Informal	Offline	n/a	Family or relatives	50	20.2
Formal	Offline	Private	Private employment agency – Agent (e.g. private agent, head-hunter)	1	0.4
Formal	Online	Private	Private employment agency – Online platform (e.g. MyJobs, JobNet)	36	14.5
Formal	Offline	Public	Public employment agency – Officer or notice board of the Labour Exchange Office	2	0.8
Formal	Online	Public	Public employment agency – Online platform (e.g. Myanmar Job)	12	4.8
Informal	Offline	n/a	Trade union	1	0.4
Informal	Offline	n/a	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or Civil Society Organization (CSO)	1	0.4
Informal	Offline	n/a	Previous employer*	8	3.2
			Total	248	100.0

n/a = not applicable. * The questionnaire provided "Others" as an answer option to allow respondents to report anything else, but all responses who chose "Others" reported that their information source was a "Previous employer".
Note: This table only provides information on those 248 survey respondents who previous lost their job but were working as employees in a new job at the time of the survey (that is, it does not include those who have not found new work or those who were self-employed).

▶ Appendix 2. Methodology

The authors developed the questionnaire based on the findings of Tsuruga and Moo (2021), facilitated the sampling survey, and conducted a quantitative analysis using the primary data collected via the survey. The survey period covered the 24 months from 1 March 2020 to 28 February 2022.

Appendix 2-A. Survey design

The survey was designed to achieve multiple objectives. Employers and workers have been greatly affected by a series of economic, social and political challenges since March 2020. Due to declining revenues or other related concerns, many companies were forced to shrink their workforces, alter their business practices to cut costs (sometimes to the detriment of working conditions), or even close entirely. As a result, many workers were dismissed, while others chose to resign. In light of the situation in Myanmar, the survey questionnaire was divided into three major sections addressing:

i. temporary suspension of work;

ii. employment termination; and

iii. working conditions.

In order to get a survey sample that was representative of the population, we followed the sample size formula by Lind, Marchal, and Wathen (2018) which is as follows:

$$n = \pi(1-\pi)\left(\frac{z}{E}\right)^2$$

Where n is the size of the sample; z is the standard normal z-value corresponding to the desired level of confidence; π is the population proportion; and E is the maximum allowable error or the margin of error.

In this case, the population benchmark was based on the labour force participation rate in Myanmar in 2020, which was about 60.1 per cent. We selected a confidence level of 95 per cent (with corresponding z-value of 1.96) and set the margin of error of 2.5 per cent.[21] We concluded that 1,500 respondents would be sufficient to meet the research objective.

Respondents were randomly selected and asked four filtering questions to participate in the survey. The 1,500 survey respondents in the sample represent the final set of workers who met all the filtering criteria, including:

i. Being employed on 29 February 2020;

ii. Being an employee on 29 February 2020;

iii. Being 15 years old or above on 29 February 2020; and

iv. Having experienced employment termination, temporary suspension of work while being employed, or both between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2022.

In regard to the first and second criteria, as we are interested in the experiences of wage employees who had employment relationships with employers, interviewees were excluded from the survey if they were unemployed, business owners (either employers or self-employed), or contributing family workers who help out in a household or family business without pay.

In regard to the third criterion, we also excluded respondents under 15 years of age because some laws and regulations may establish different worker's rights for this specific group of workers compared to ordinary workers above the age threshold. For example, the prescribed number of paid leave days depends on the age of the worker; namely, an employee over 15 years old earns 10 days of paid leave per year, while an employee under 15 years old is to be granted 14 days of

[21] Thus, n= 0.601(0.399)((1.96/0.025)^2) = 1,473.9. This was then rounded up to a sample size of 1,500.

paid leave.[22] We therefore decided to exclude the sub-15 age group from the survey to avoid the potential risk of having respondents who might be protected differently solely because of their age.

In regard to the fourth criterion, we excluded respondents who did not experience either employment termination or temporary suspension of work between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2022. In these filtering questions, we allowed for employment termination by any means including resignation, dismissal, the end of a fixed-term contract or any other possible means by which an employment relationship with an employer might be terminated. We defined "temporary suspension of work" as a case wherein an employee was still employed but had been asked not to work by their employer because of a reduction in business activities. However, we filtered out any workers whose employment was periodically suspended according to a regular schedule determined by business cycles. For example, we excluded seafarers with such arrangements from the survey because their periods ashore (and thus not working) were associated with the nature of their occupation rather than a reduction in business activities.

Appendix 2-B. Data

For this survey, a pre-existing panel of 281,173 registered phone numbers was used as the sample frame for the recruitment and selection of respondents. The sample selection was done by using systematic random sampling from the panel data. A multi-stage random sampling method was applied to achieve a sample of respondents that is representative of the national population.

In Myanmar, states and regions are composed of townships that include "wards" (in urban areas) and "village tracts" (in rural areas). Whether an area is an urban ward or a rural village tract, is based on a designation by the General Administration Department of Myanmar. Both urban and rural households are included in this panel in order to represent the diverse nature of Myanmar. The panel is constantly being updated and more households added to the panel to ensure that households do not experience research fatigue and so that a larger database of potential respondents is available. The following table shows the number of phone numbers in the panel for each state and region.

▶ **Table 21. Number of phone numbers registered in the pre-existing panel, by state/region – Urban versus rural**

State/Region	Urban		Rural		Total no.
	No.	%	No.	%	
Kachin State	3 061	42	4 303	58	7 364
Kayah State	1 402	45	1 490	55	2 892
Kayin State	1 962	33	3 981	67	5 943
Chin State	1 298	27	1 792	73	3 090
Sagaing Region	5 800	22	20 395	78	26 195
Taninthayi Region	1 679	27	4 476	73	6 155
Bago Region	8 644	38	14 338	62	22 982
Magway Region	3 521	20	13 820	80	17 341
Mandalay Region	23 651	54	19 944	46	43 595
Mon State	3 501	33	7 256	67	10 757
Rakhine State	1 170	28	3 030	72	4 200
Yangon Region	63 235	85	10 808	15	74 043
Shan State	7 471	32	15 524	68	22 995
Ayeyawady Region	4 393	20	18 040	80	22 433
Nay Pyi Taw	1 412	13	9 776	87	11 188
Total	132 200	47	148 973	53	281 173

Source: Authors' abstract from the panel.

The systematic random sampling was conducted via the following stages:

[22] The LHLA 2006 substituted this provision to uniformly apply a 10-day leave entitlement (Tsuruga and Moo 2021).

i. The panel was sorted by state and region.

ii. The panel was then sorted by urban and rural.

iii. The total sample frame for each location was divided by the sample size required, and every n^{th} number was selected for an interview attempt.

The final distribution of the sample obtained from the survey across states and regions was roughly proportional to the population aged 18 years and above, even if not wholly proportional to the urban and rural population of each state and region. Since this study focuses on workers who lost their formal employment, the survey results tended to be concentrated more on urban areas than rural areas – ultimately 68 per cent of the sample was urban and only 32 per cent rural. The urban–rural distribution in the sample for each state and region is described in table 22.

▶ Table 22. Respondent distribution across states and regions – Urban versus rural

Location	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kachin State	34	3	14	3	48	3
Kayah State	6	1	2	0	8	1
Kayin State	31	3	12	3	43	3
Chin State	7	1	4	1	11	1
Sagaing Region	103	10	54	11	157	10
Taninthayi Region	25	2	11	2	36	2
Bago Region	101	10	44	9	145	10
Magway Region	84	8	36	8	120	8
Mandalay Region	138	14	58	12	196	13
Mon State	20	2	7	1	27	2
Rakhine State	25	2	19	4	44	3
Yangon Region	172	17	85	18	257	17
Shan State	115	11	50	10	165	11
Ayeyawady Region	131	13	70	15	201	13
Nay Pyi Taw	30	3	12	3	42	3
Total	1 022	100	478	100	1 500	100

Source: Authors' calculations.

As a result of the survey, we obtained three separate datasets for analysis in this paper (table 1). Among the 1,500 total respondents, 772 (51.5 per cent) experienced temporary suspension of work without breaking the employment relationship with their employer; 397 (26.5 per cent) experienced employment termination but did not experienced a temporary suspension of work; and 331 (22.1 per cent) experienced both employment termination and temporary suspension of work. For the analysis of temporary suspension of work in section 7.1 of the report, we therefore used a dataset of 1,103 respondents (or 73.5 per cent of all respondents). Of these 1,103 respondents, 639 (57.9 per cent) experienced a temporary suspension of work once, and 464 respondents (42.1 per cent) experienced it twice or more. For the analysis of employment termination, we used a dataset of 728 respondents (or 48.5 per cent of the total respondents). Of these 728 respondents, 642 (88.2 per cent) experienced employment termination once, and 86 respondents (11.8 per cent) experienced it twice or more. For the analysis of other working conditions in section 7.2, we use a dataset containing all 1,500 respondents.

In the event that a respondent experienced temporary suspension of work or employment termination more than once during the survey period, we asked the respondent to report on the first instance. It is also noted that the datasets for temporary suspension of work (1,103 respondents) and employment termination (728 respondents) are not comparable even though they contain some of the same respondents. In fact, a respondent who experienced both temporary suspension of work and employment termination might report these experiences with the same employer or with two different employers (that is, they may have lost their job with one employer and experienced temporary work suspension with another). As such, although both datasets contain information about employment contracts, workplace location and business characteristics, respondents found in both datasets were not necessarily reporting the same answers to these questions, as they might have been referring to different employers/jobs for each set of questions.

Appendix 2-C. Implementation

The questionnaire was developed by the authors according to laws and regulations that were effective as of 31 December 2020.[23] We adopted the same classification of age group, educational attainment, and industry as that of the latest labour force survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (2021). The questionnaire was developed in English and translated into the Myanmar language.[24]

A total sample of 1,500 workers were interviewed by telephone for this survey using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The questionnaire was scripted using the KoBoCollect programme. After the training of 25 enumerators on 21, 22 and 26 April 2022 and subsequent adjustments in the questionnaire, data collection started and lasted for four weeks from 10 May 2022 to 10 June 2022. The average length of the interview was 22 minutes ranging from minimum of 17 to maximum of 40 minutes.

The interviewers called the phone numbers in the panel. Interviewers asked the person who answered the call to confirm if there was anyone eligible respondents in the household, not necessarily the one who picked-up the call. Only after interviewers confirmed the respondents in the households, they continued the interview. If the selected respondent was not available, the interviewers made up to eight call-backs in order to talk with the respondent. Each number was attempted at different times of the day including both weekdays and weekends. Interviewers also made the calls or made appointments with the respondents in the evenings as the respondents might be working during the day.

A total of 8,812 phone numbers were called 33,419 times to achieve the 1,500 interviews for this survey. A total of 298 interviews were completed by using snowball sampling which was 3 per cent of the total of numbers attempted. Among them, 142 respondents were from the same household of respondents from the panel. Of the failures, 53 per cent were terminated because of no eligible respondents in the households, 13 per cent were refusals by the respondents, 9 per cent were power-off, and another 6 per cent did not answer our calls after attempting at least 8 times over 2 to 3 different days.

▶ Table 23. Response rate

Call result	No.	%
Completed	1 500	14
No eligible respondents	4 648	53
Refused	1 118	13
Power off	768	9
No answer	566	6
Temporarily out of service	182	2
Language problem	30	0.3
Total	8 812	100

Source: Authors' abstract from the enumerator's report

During data collection, a team of supervisors conducted quality control checks on 31 per cent of the interviews completed by each enumerator. The supervisors listened to the recordings of the interviews, which the respondents had permitted to be made. A total of 469 interviews were checked by the team of supervisors, and 16 were rejected.

According to the supervisors, the main issue found during the quality control checks was with the selection of respondents who were eligible for the survey. Some enumerators had interviewed workers after incorrectly counting their regular holidays as a temporary suspension of work. A few cases rejected because the interviewer had selected a respondent who was working in their own business. After examining the first week of data collection, the supervisors called for a briefing to explain the instructions again to the survey team and these instructions were also shared in written format again with the team.

[23] A detailed review of employment termination rules was commissioned in a separate paper (see Tsuruga and Moo 2021).

[24] In the process of translation, an error occurred into one question. The original question E35 – "How did you find your new job? Please select the source of information that helped you most find that job." – was not meant to allow the respondent to select multiple answers. However, the translated questionnaire in the Myanmar language did allow for multiple answers. Since we found this error after completing the collection of samples, we decided to keep only the first choice of each respondent and opted to exclude the other choices.

The survey team undertook the following steps to produce a data file and the format required by the client:

i. The logic of the answers, the open answers, the amounts of salaries or wages, and other data were checked every day during the ongoing field work period by the Data Supervisor;

ii. The data was double-checked by the Production Section Manager;

iii. The data was exported to SPSS and STATA; and

iv. Frequency tables and cross tabulations were produced.

Appendix 2-D. Limitations and challenges

This survey has several limitations and challenges. One of the major challenges is related to the timing of the survey. The application and enforcement of laws and regulations, and the mindset of workers and employers concerning compliance may be completely different in the periods before and after 1 February 2021, following the state of emergency depriving citizens of civil liberties. In this paper, we formulate an analytical framework to assess compliance with the legal obligations of employers and the rights of workers according to laws and regulations that were effective as of 31 December 2020. However, since then the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) and labour strikes became national movements to demand the restoration of democratic and civilian rule, while many people have reportedly been arrested or killed (ILO 2021a; 2022c). Under the circumstances, it is reasonable to assume that the timing of employment termination or any other employment-related actions has potentially affected the behaviour of both employers and workers. We will conduct a sensitivity analysis to examine the impact of these factors in this paper.

Another limitation is the exclusion of certain groups because of lack of access to a phone or due to security concerns. The nature of a phone survey certainly excludes potential respondents who do not have access to a phone. Similarly, we experienced poor phone connections and distracting noises during interviews. Enumerators found many such cases – especially in Sagaing Region, Magway Region, Kayah State and Chin State – and in some instances had to terminate interviews midway. In relation to security concerns, some interviewees hesitated to participate in the survey or to fully express their situation. Enumerators found that 13 per cent of the households refused to participate in the survey even though they were qualified based on the filtering questions.

Moreover, our survey potentially excludes seasonal, occasional, casual or daily workers, as well as any other fixed-term employees who work on a short-term basis. Unlike the common approach adopted by the Labour Force Survey, we did not ask about respondents' employment status "in the last week prior to the survey" as a filtering question to enrol respondents. Instead, we asked about employment status "at the specific day of Saturday, 29 February 2020", because the aim was to assess employment-related shocks that took place since March 2020. As this approach requires respondents to be in employment on that day – and noting that this was a Saturday as well – it probably excluded some occasional, casual, daily or seasonal workers who did not have employment relationship on that specific day.

Finally, our survey did not distinguish between individual dismissals and collective dismissals. This limitation may potentially contribute to increasing the number of dismissal cases in certain industrial sectors or geographical locations, if collective dismissals were prevalent in these sectors or locations but not in other sectors or locations. Therefore, such incidents may have led to the overrepresentation of certain groups of workers.

▶ Appendix 3. Distribution of survey respondents

Overall, the distribution of respondents in both datasets – that is, employment termination and temporary suspension of employment – show similar trends. Considering demographic characteristics, distribution by sex and marital status show almost equal representation between male and female workers and married and never married workers; while the distribution of ages and education attainments show an imbalance with higher representation of younger age cohorts than older ones, and among the higher educated than the lower educated (figure 63 and 64). We did not have many respondents aged 45 and older, vocational school graduates,[25] or workers who are single due to divorce or partner's death. Concerning employment characteristics, oral agreements and permanent agreements were the most common forms of employment arrangements, with most respondents being regular employees and not in an apprenticeship or in a probationary period. In relation to worker protection, one-fifth of respondents had social insurance coverage, while very few were covered by private insurance schemes.

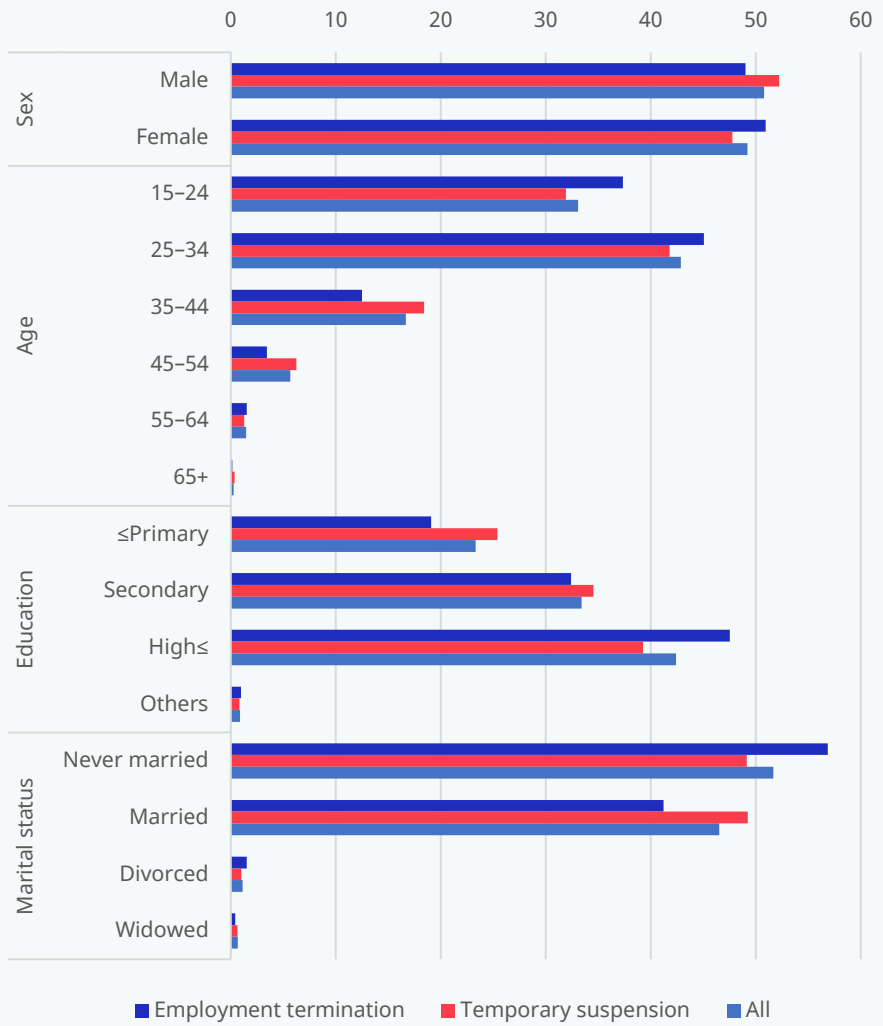
Respondents reported employment termination or temporary suspension of work across the country, and therefore, the distribution of the geographical location of workplaces is widely spread (figure 65). Yangon Region and Mandalay Region have higher shares of respondents than others, and surrounding areas such as Ayeyawady Region, Bago Region, Sagaing Region and Shan States follow these economic capitals. Moreover, the private sector took the largest share among all economic units; while the services sector was the highest among all industrial sectors. Few respondents were employed by joint ventures, households or in the agriculture sector. Distribution by size of enterprises shows an almost equal share in the dataset of employment termination among micro and small enterprises and medium and large enterprises, thought there was a slightly higher share of micro and small enterprises in the dataset for temporary suspension of work. Moreover, concerning the industrial sectors of respondents, the share of incidence is notably high in the wholesale and retail trade industries in both datasets. The textiles, apparel, leather and related manufacturing industry; other manufacturing industry; the construction industry; the accommodation and food service industry; and the education industry also employed relatively high numbers of affected workers (figure 66).

Concerning employment arrangements, the proportion of workers with a written contract was higher than their counterparts for female workers, older workers (ages 25+), workers with a high school education and above, workers with fixed-term contracts, workers with social insurance coverage, and workers employed by the Government and large enterprises (figure 67). The proportion of respondents with a fixed-term contract was higher than their counterparts for female workers, youth workers (ages 15–24), workers with a high school education and above, workers with a written contract, workers with social insurance coverage, and workers employed by the Government, joint ventures and large enterprises (figure 68). Considering the combination of contract formats and their duration, the most common employment agreement was an oral permanent employment agreement, followed by a written fixed-term contract and an oral fixed-term agreement (figure 69).

It should be noted that a higher share of incidence may not always indicate greater impacts on workers with certain characteristics. For example, the equal share of male and female survey respondents does not necessarily mean that male and female workers were equally affected. Considering that employees are more likely overall to be male than female, the equal number of employment termination/suspension of work incidences found in this survey can be read as having a higher impact on female than male workers in relative terms. Sections 3 and 7 above compare the distribution of reported incidences relative to the general distribution of employees, as obtained from the Labour Force Survey, and assess whose employment was affected more.

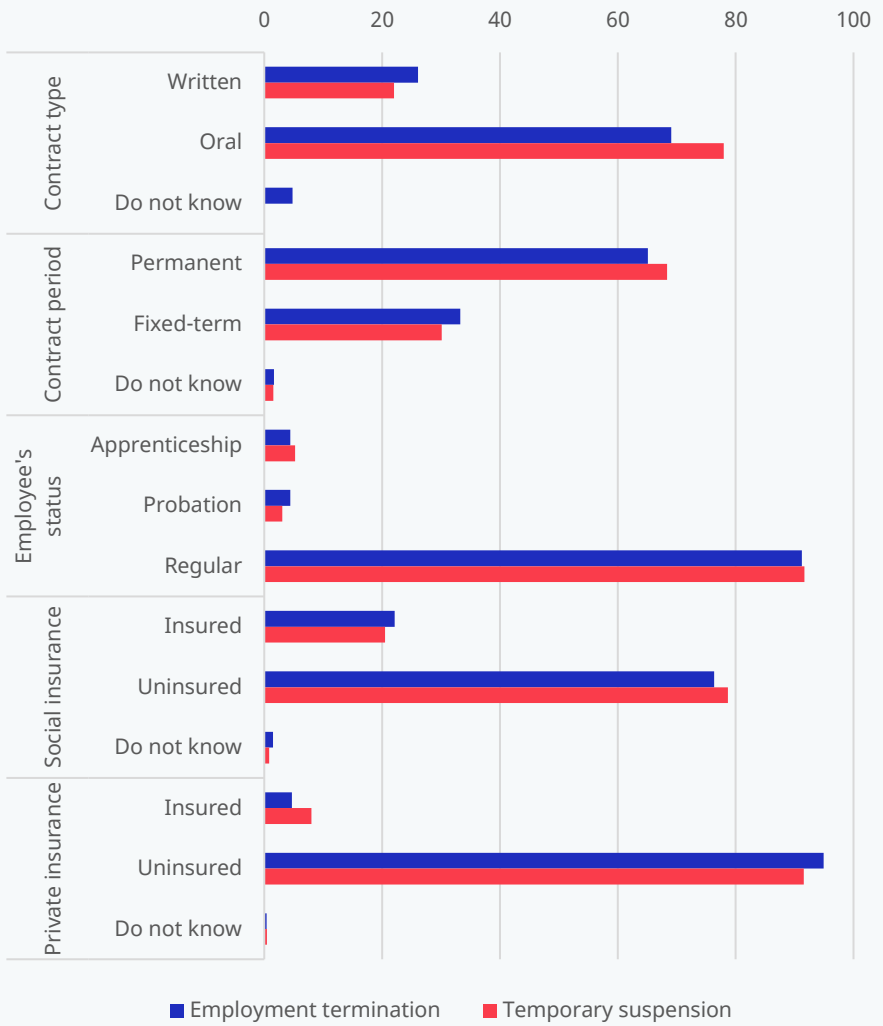
[25] Respondents who completed vocational school or training are categorized as "Others" in the education category.

Figure 63. Distribution of respondents, by demographic characteristics (%)



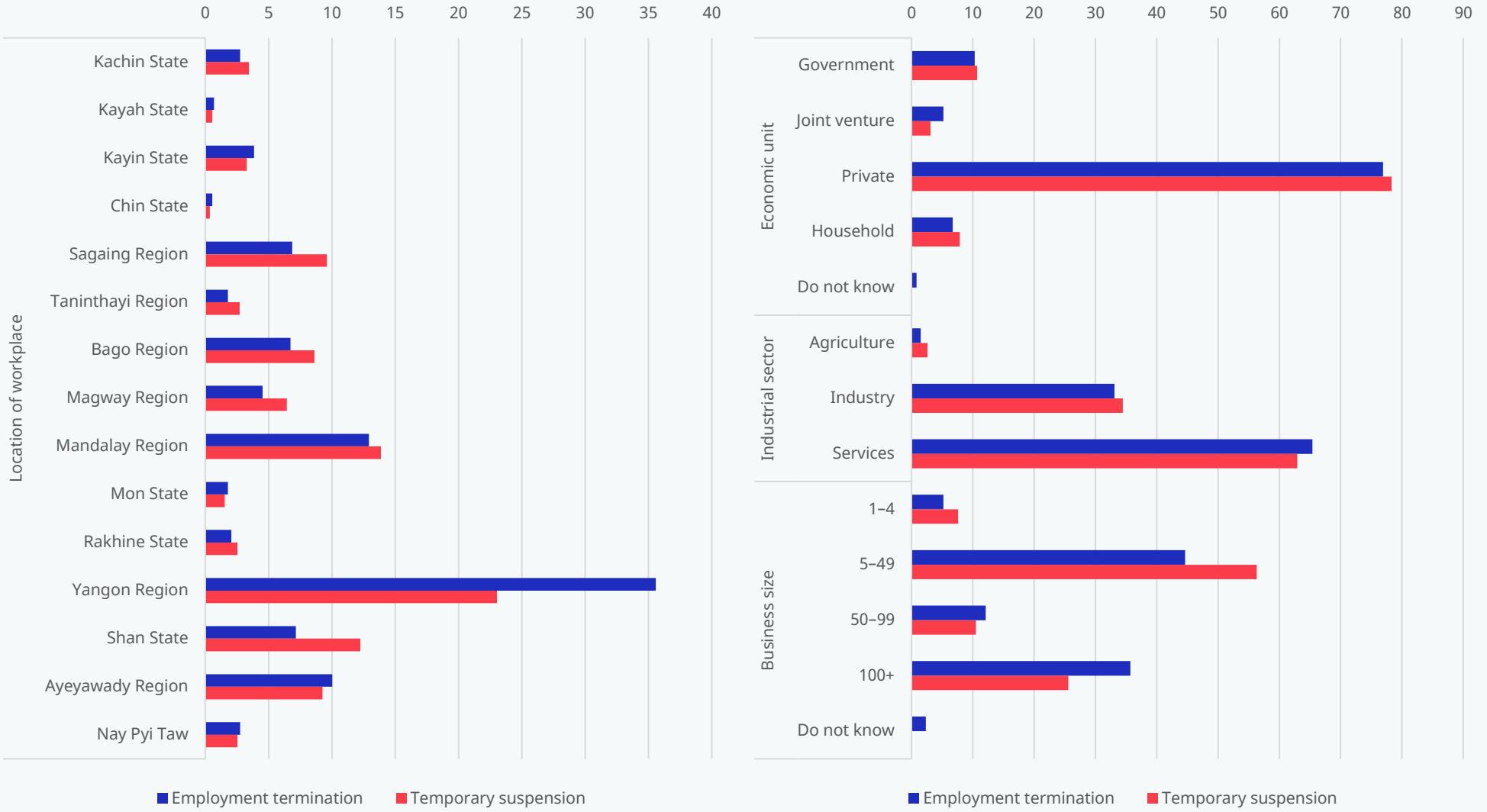
Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 64. Distribution of respondents, by employment characteristics (%)



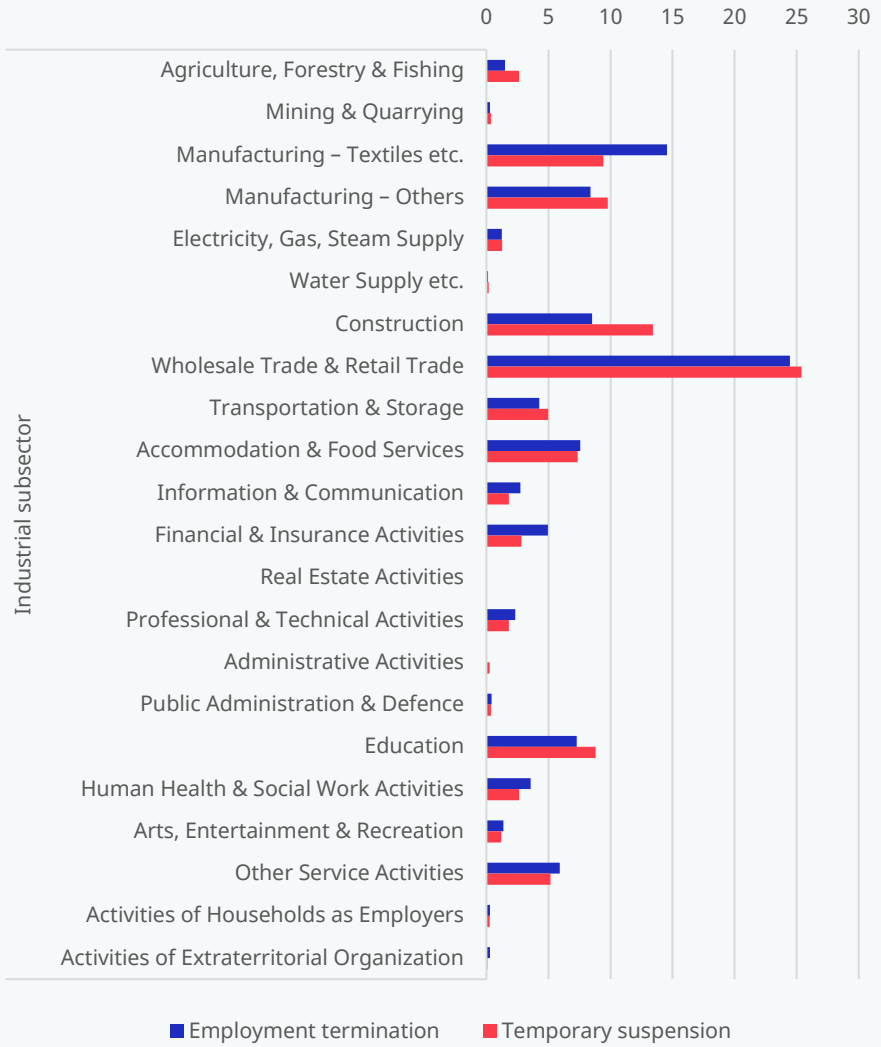
Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 65. Distribution of respondents, by economic characteristics (%)



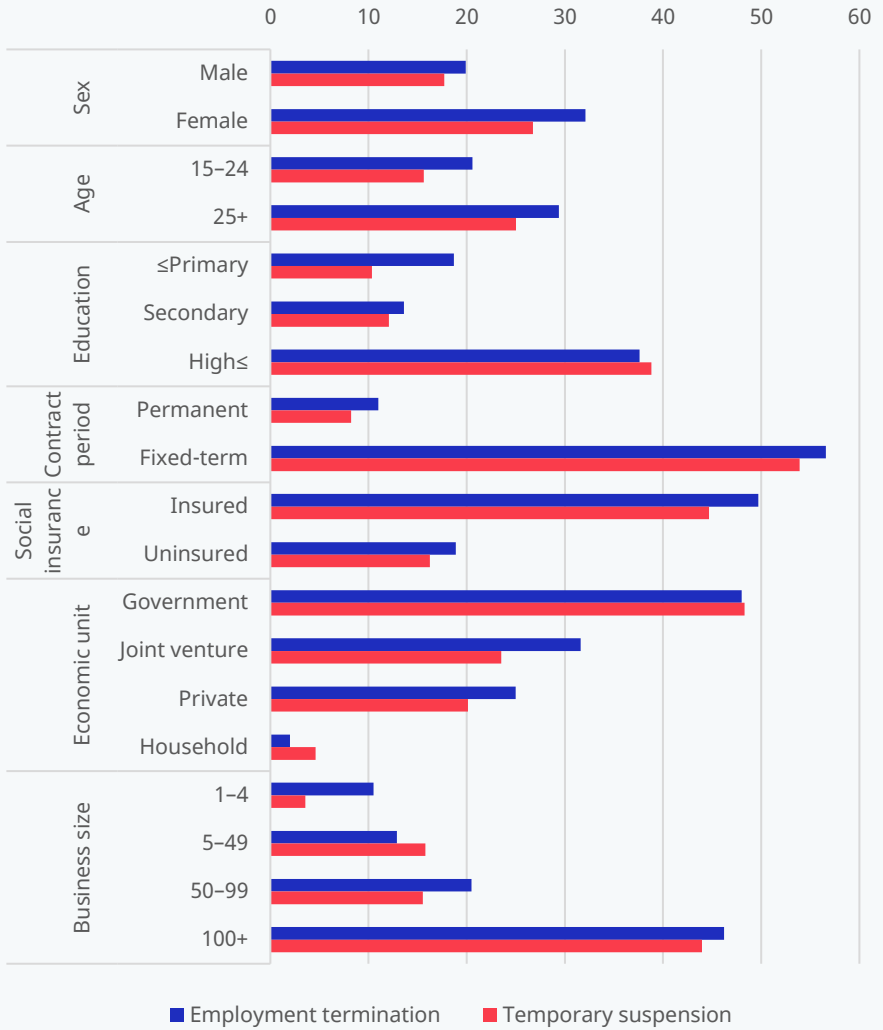
Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 66. Distribution of respondents, by industrial subsector (%)



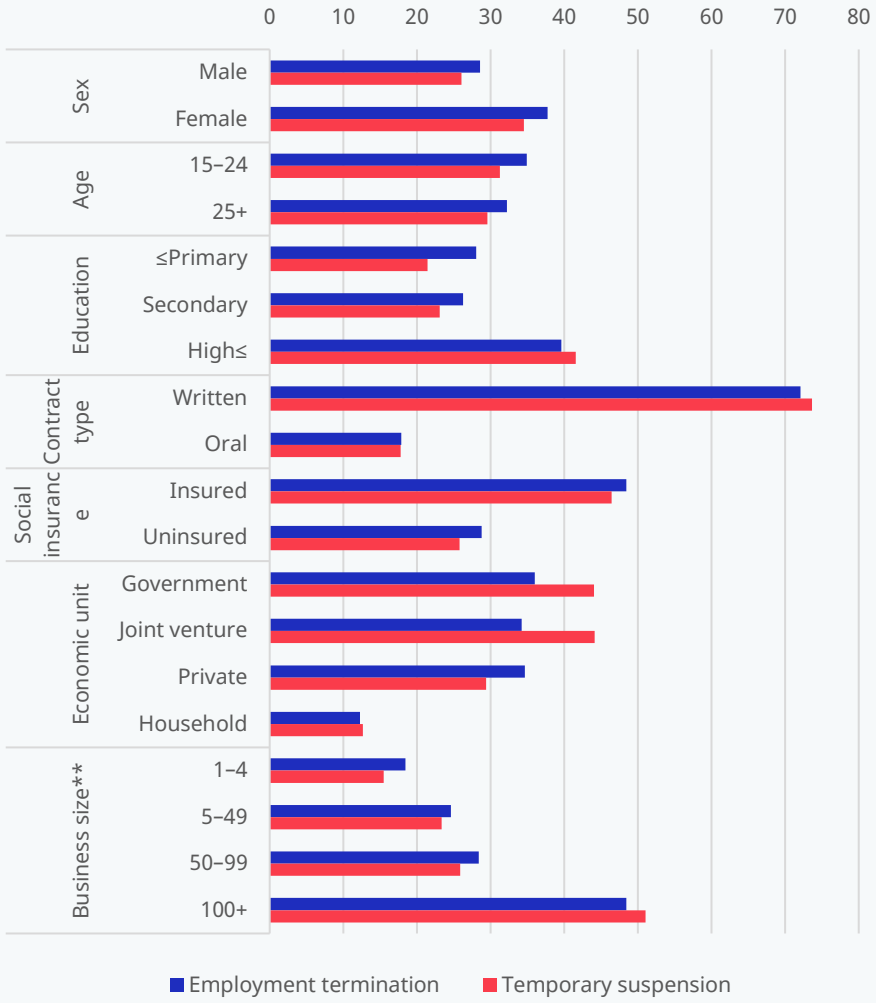
Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 67. Distribution of respondents with written contracts, by demographic and employment characteristics (%)



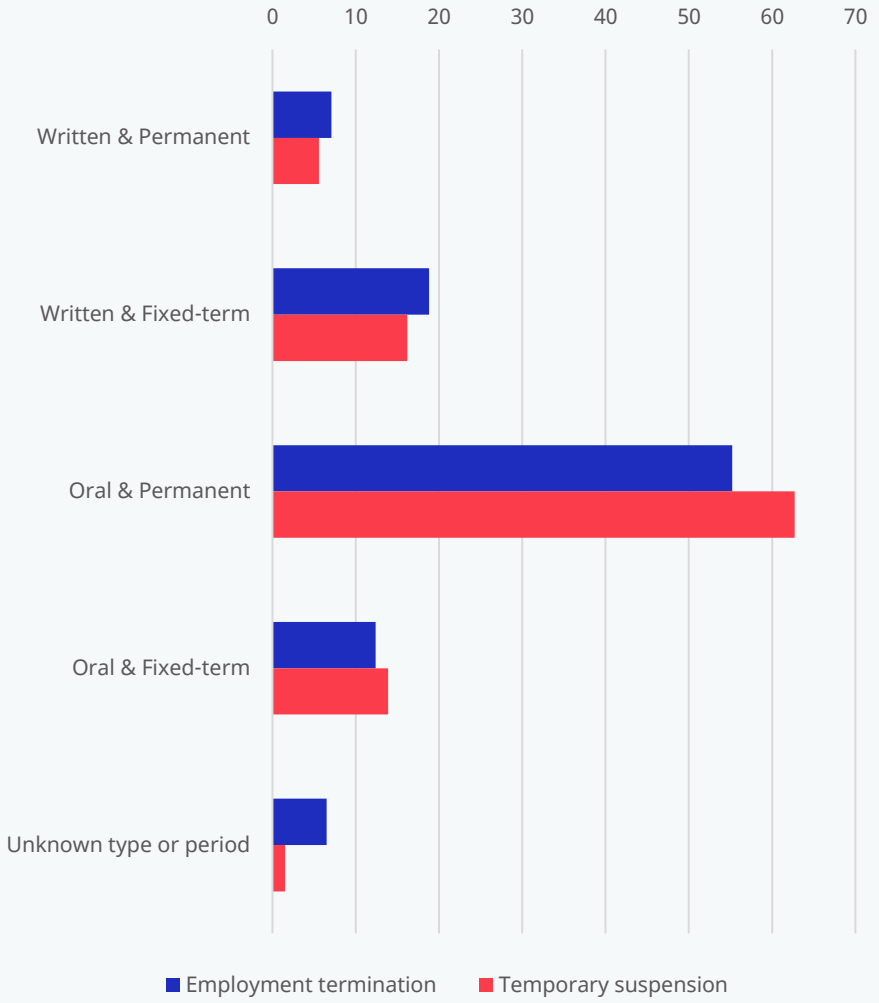
Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 68. Distribution of respondents with fixed-term contracts, by demographic and employment characteristics (%)



Source: Authors' calculations.

Figure 69. Distribution of respondents by type of employment agreement (%)



Source: Authors' calculations.

▶ Appendix 4. Sensitivity analysis

It is noted that 23 respondents reported employment termination in 2021 but did not remember which month it happened in. For these individuals, we assumed that all of them lost their job after February 2021, which resulted in a monthly average incidence of 27 before and 33 after the military takeover – an increase of 23.5 per cent (Scenario 0).

If, however, we were to assume that all 23 of these respondents had their employment terminated in January 2021 instead, the monthly average incidence would be 29 cases before and 31 cases after the military takeover – an 8.5 per cent increase. So even with such an extreme scenario, the above-mentioned trend would still stay, namely an increase in incidence after the military takeover (Scenario 1).

The increasing trend after the military takeover remains even if we consider those persons who experienced multiple job losses. Please recall that our survey only captured information concerning the first employment termination during the survey period in the event that a worker experienced job loss more than once. Ultimately, most of the respondents who reported employment termination experienced it only once, but 12 per cent experienced it twice or more times, with 62 per cent of these respondents having experienced their first incidence of employment termination before the military takeover. In absolute terms, only 53 of the 728 respondents who experienced employment termination (7.3 per cent) might have experienced two or more employment terminations before the military takeover, and 33 out of 728 respondents (4.5 per cent) experienced their first employment termination before the military takeover and experienced another employment termination afterwards. Considering the small number of such cases, the general trend – that of higher incidence after the military takeover – should still remain. For example, even if we assumed an extreme scenario where all the respondents who experienced employment termination in 2021 were terminated twice, which added 53 cases to the period before February 2021, the monthly average would still increase by 7 per cent after the military takeover (Scenario 2).

Indeed, in order to make the trend negative – that is, for employment termination to decrease after the military takeover – all of the respondents who experienced two or more employment terminations would have had to experience their second termination before February 2021, and half of those who experienced at least three terminations would have needed all three terminations to have occurred before February 2021 (Scenario 3).

Based on the above sensitivity analysis, we conclude that the incidence of employment termination increased after the military takeover.

▶ Table 24. Sensitivity analysis on change in monthly average incidence of employment termination

Scenarios	Share (%)		Monthly average incidence		Change (%)
	≤Jan 21	Feb 21≤	≤Jan 21	Feb 21≤	
0. Base case (23 responses reported in 2021 without specifying month are added to February 2021 onward)	40.7	59.3	27	33	23.5
1. 23 responses reported in 2021 without specifying month were added to January 2021	43.8	56.2	29	31	8.5
2. All respondents who experienced twice or more termination reported the second case before February 2021	44.2	55.8	31	33	6.9
3. All respondents who experienced twice or more termination reported the second case and half of them reported the third case before February 2021	46.0	54.0	33	33	-0.7

Source: Authors' own calculation

Appendix 5. Distribution of workers affected by temporary suspension of work

Table 25. Demographic characteristics of employees affected by temporary suspension of work (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019) (%), by sex

Indicator	Description	(1) Survey			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Gender	Male	100.0	–	52.2	100.0	–	57.8	–	–	-5.5
	Female	–	100.0	47.8	–	100.0	42.2	–	–	5.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Age	15–24	31.1	32.8	31.9	22.1	27.2	24.3	9.0	5.6	7.7
	25–34	41.0	42.7	41.8	31.2	35.7	33.1	9.8	7.0	8.7
	35–44	18.6	18.2	18.4	22.6	19.9	21.5	-4.1	-1.6	-3.1
	45–54	7.5	4.9	6.3	15.1	11.4	13.5	-7.6	-6.5	-7.3
	55–64	1.2	1.3	1.3	7.8	5.2	6.7	-6.6	-3.9	-5.4
	65+	0.7	–	0.4	1.2	0.7	1.0	-0.5	-0.7	-0.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Age group	15–24	31.1	32.8	31.9	22.1	27.2	24.3	9.0	5.6	7.7
	25+	68.9	67.2	68.1	77.9	72.8	75.7	-9.0	-5.6	-7.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Education	Primary and below	27.3	23.3	25.4	78.2	74.3	76.6	-50.9	-51.0	-51.2
	Secondary	41.8	26.6	34.5	9.7	6.9	8.5	32.2	19.6	26.0
	High and above	30.6	48.8	39.3	11.8	18.5	14.6	18.7	30.3	24.6
	Others	0.3	1.3	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	–	1.1	0.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Marital status	Never married	43.8	55.0	49.1	41.7	53.1	46.5	2.1	2.0	2.7
	Married	55.4	42.5	49.2	55.6	39.4	48.8	-0.2	3.1	0.5
	Divorced	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.1	2.4	1.7	-0.2	-1.3	-0.7
	Widowed	–	1.3	0.6	1.6	5.1	3.1	-1.6	-3.7	-2.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–

Note: – = nil.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Table 26. Share of employees affected by temporary suspension of work (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by different employment characteristics (%)

Indicator	Description	(1) Temporary suspension			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Contract type	Written contract	17.7	26.8	22.0	16.8	30.7	22.7	0.9	-4.0	-0.6
	Oral contract	82.3	73.2	78.0	38.1	31.4	35.3	44.2	41.9	42.7
	Do not know	–	–	–	45.1	37.9	42.1	-45.1	-37.9	-42.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Contract period	Permanent contract	72.2	64.1	68.4	39.3	55.4	46.6	32.9	8.7	21.8
	Fixed-term contract	26.0	34.5	30.1	48.4	35.4	42.5	-22.3	-0.9	-12.4
	Do not know	1.7	1.3	1.5	12.3	9.2	10.9	-10.6	-7.8	-9.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Apprenticeship and probation	In apprenticeship	7.1	3.2	5.3	1.2	1.6	1.4	5.9	1.6	3.9
	In a probationary period	3.3	2.8	3.1	0.7	0.5	0.7	2.6	2.3	2.4
	Regular employee	89.6	93.9	91.7	98.1	97.8	98.0	-8.5	-3.9	-6.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Membership with SSB	Insured member	20.1	20.9	20.5	8.5	17.2	12.2	11.6	3.6	8.3
	Not an active member	79.2	78.2	78.7	76.6	68.3	73.1	2.6	9.8	5.6
	Do not know	0.7	0.9	0.8	14.9	14.4	14.7	-14.2	-13.5	-13.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Membership in private insurance	Insured member	8.7	7.2	8.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Not an active member	91.0	92.2	91.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	0.3	0.6	0.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: – = nil.; n/a = not applicable.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Table 27. Trends in written or oral contracts among employees affected by temporary suspension of employment (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by employment characteristics (%)

Indicator	Description	Temporary suspension				LFS 2019			
		Written	Oral	Do not know	Total	Written	Oral	Do not know	Total
Contract period	Permanent contract	8.2	91.8	–	100.0	64.4	35.6	–	100.0
	Fixed-term contract	53.9	46.1	–	100.0	19.5	80.5	–	100.0
	Do not know	11.8	88.2	–	100.0*	1.0	12.1	86.9	100.0
	Total	22.0	78.0	–	100.0	22.7	35.3	42.1	100.0

Note: – = nil. An asterisk (*) represents fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

Table 28. Share of wage employees affected by temporary suspension of work (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by various economic characteristics (%)

Indicator	Description	(1) Temporary suspension			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Location of workplace	Kachin State	3.0	4.0	3.4	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.6	2.4	2.0
	Kayah State	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.4	–	0.4	0.2
	Kayin State	3.1	3.4	3.3	2.3	1.9	2.2	0.8	1.5	1.1
	Chin State	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.6	-0.4	–	-0.2
	Sagaing Region	9.5	9.7	9.6	10.1	10.6	10.3	-0.6	-0.9	-0.7
	Taninthayi Region	3.1	2.3	2.7	2.8	1.8	2.4	0.3	0.5	0.3
	Bago Region	9.7	7.4	8.6	10.7	11.6	11.1	-1.0	-4.2	-2.5
	Magway Region	7.8	4.9	6.4	6.0	5.4	5.8	1.8	-0.5	0.7
	Mandalay Region	15.5	12.1	13.9	15.9	17.7	16.6	-0.4	-5.5	-2.8
	Mon State	1.0	2.1	1.5	2.7	1.8	2.3	-1.6	0.2	-0.8
	Rakhine State	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.2	2.6	-0.2	0.3	–
	Yangon Region	23.3	22.8	23.0	18.5	20.2	19.2	4.7	2.6	3.8
	Shan State	12.5	12.0	12.2	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.1	5.4	5.8
	Ayeyawady Region	5.7	13.1	9.2	16.5	15.1	15.9	-10.8	-2.0	-6.7
	Nay Pyi Taw	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.8	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Economic unit	Government	5.2	16.7	10.7	8.3	17.0	12.0	-3.1	-0.3	-1.3
	Joint venture	4.2	1.9	3.1	4.0	4.9	4.4	0.2	-3.0	-1.3
	Private enterprise	84.2	71.9	78.3	87.4	77.2	83.1	-3.2	-5.3	-4.8
	Household	6.4	9.5	7.9	0.1	0.6	0.3	6.3	8.9	7.6
	Do not know	–	–	–	0.2	0.2	0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Industry	Agriculture	3.1	2.1	2.6	32.3	32.9	32.6	-29.2	-30.8	-29.9
	Industry	40.8	27.5	34.5	37.3	28.2	33.5	3.5	-0.7	1.0
	Services	56.1	70.4	62.9	30.4	38.9	34.0	25.7	31.5	28.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–
Number of employees at workplace	1–4	6.9	8.3	7.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	5–49	60.4	51.8	56.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	50–99	11.5	9.5	10.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	100 or more	21.2	30.4	25.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	–	–	–	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of employees at workplace (group)	1–49	67.4	60.2	63.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	50+	32.6	39.8	36.1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Do not know	–	–	–	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: – = nil.; n/a = not applicable.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

▶ Table 29. Share of employees affected by temporary suspension of work (Survey) and of wage employees in Myanmar (LFS 2019), by industrial subsector (%)

Description	(1) Temporary suspension			(2) LFS 2019			Difference (1) – (2)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	3.1	2.1	2.6	32.3	32.9	32.6	-29.2	-30.8	-29.9
Mining and Quarrying	0.7	–	0.4	1.7	0.5	1.2	-1.0	-0.5	-0.9
Manufacturing – Textiles, Apparel, Leather and related products	3.6	15.7	9.4	12.1	24.0	17.1	-8.4	-8.2	-7.7
Manufacturing – others	10.8	8.7	9.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.8	8.7	9.8
Electricity, Gas, Steam Supply	1.6	0.9	1.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.3	0.8	1.0
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management, and Remediation Activities	0.3	–	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	-0.2	–
Construction	23.8	2.1	13.4	23.0	3.3	14.7	0.8	-1.2	-1.3
Wholesale Trade and Retail Trade	20.5	30.7	25.4	7.1	11.2	8.8	13.4	19.6	16.6
Transportation and Storage	8.7	0.9	5.0	7.4	0.3	4.4	1.3	0.7	0.6
Accommodation and Food Services	6.8	8.0	7.3	1.5	1.3	1.4	5.3	6.6	5.9
Information and Communication	2.4	1.1	1.8	0.7	0.5	0.6	1.8	0.7	1.2
Financial and Insurance Activities	2.3	3.4	2.8	1.7	2.2	1.9	0.6	1.2	0.9
Real Estate Activities	–	–	–	2.5	1.6	2.1	-2.5	-1.6	-2.1
Professional and Technical Activities	2.6	0.9	1.8	0.3	0.7	0.5	2.3	0.2	1.3
Administrative Activities	–	0.6	0.3	–	–	–	–	0.6	0.3
Public Administration and Defence	0.7	–	0.4	2.0	1.5	1.8	-1.3	-1.5	-1.4
Education	3.1	15.0	8.8	2.3	11.9	6.3	0.9	3.1	2.5
Human Health and Social Work Activities	1.6	3.8	2.6	0.3	1.5	0.8	1.3	2.3	1.8
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1.6	0.8	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.4	0.7	1.1
Other Service Activities	5.7	4.6	5.2	4.5	5.8	5.1	1.2	-1.2	0.1
Activities of Households as Employers	0.2	0.4	0.3	–	0.3	0.2	0.1	–	0.1
Activities of Extraterritorial (that is, organization with diplomatic rights)	–	0.2	0.1	–	–	–	–	0.2	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	–	–

Note: – = nil.; n/a = not applicable.
Source: Authors' calculations; Myanmar, MOLIP 2020a; 2020b.

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