



Barriers to Export for Export Firms in Myanmar After 2021: Evidence from Firm-Level Analysis

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Abstract

This study intends to analyze the effect of export barriers on the export performance of export firms in Myanmar after the 2021 military coup. There are two specific objectives for this study. The first one is to analyze the effect of internal barriers on export performance, and the second one is to examine the effect of external barriers on export performance. This study used primary and secondary data to achieve the research objectives. The primary data was obtained by the survey method. The 130 respondents who are owners and senior/mid-level managers of 70 exporting firms participated in this research. A stage sampling method was applied for primary data. The World Bank data site provides the secondary data for this study. This research extracted the data from 2011 to 2023 as the basic time frame for the study period. The descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression analysis method were applied as major data analysis techniques in this study. The research found that informational barriers and functional barriers have a significant effect on the export performance of export firms in Myanmar on the internal barriers side. On the other hand, macro factor barriers and procedural barriers have positively positive effect on export performance. The study suggested that policymakers of Myanmar should align the macroeconomic policies by reflecting the real trade situation. At the firm level, individual firms should emphasize their export strategies that are relevant in the regional and the rest of the world. Moreover, the study suggests to the academic world for further exploration in the research field of export barriers and export performance in the context of developing countries.

Keywords: *Key Words: Export Barriers, Export Performance, Internal Barriers, External Barriers*

INTRODUCTION

Global market landscape shaped the business to reform its model tough with the international market. As the firms rooted in developing countries strive to seek international market opportunities. Exporting is one of the easiest entry modes for penetrating the international market as local firms along with other international entry modes. Since last year, countries have stated an open-sided economic policy which encourages international trade. The nations' economic policy of these third decades of the first century, especially beyond the covid 19 pandemic, dramatically changed their trade policy from outward-looking to inward-looking policy, especially in first-world countries.

As a developing country, Myanmar heavily emphasizes international trade to boost its economy. Myanmar's economic policy was significantly altered by the 2021 Myanmar political crisis. Myanmar's international trade heavily relies on neighboring countries – China, Thailand, and India as well. The 2021 Military coup escalated the civil war, especially in cross boarder area, which is dominated by the Ethnic Armed Force (ERO) that resulting in a deep impact on Myanmar cross cross-border trade. Moreover, Western nations, including the United States of America, impose sanctions on Myanmar in response to the 2021 Myanmar military coup. All of these situations have driven the Myanmar economy to a worse situation in the present day. According to the World Bank



Review, the February 2021 Military coup worsened Myanmar's trade, that already weakened by covid COVID-19 pandemic. (Bank, 2021).

Myanmar's State Administration Council (SAC) enacted the various macro policies in response to shifting currents' global geopolitical movement and their domestic political-economic challenge since they occupied the state authority in February 2021. After 4 years, their trade policy, especially export-promoting policy, has had an effect on the export performance of exporting companies, becoming a major problem for policy makers as well as industry practitioners. Therefore, this study was conducted to study the effect of export barriers on export performance from a firm-level perspective.

Research Problem

From a macro point of view, the shifting of geopolitical movement and domestic political economy challenges were major causes for the current trade policy enacted by SAC. This study specifically breaks down the perceptions of firm owners and the responsible person of export companies in Myanmar in response to or following the export policies and other related trade regulations. Barriers to export have been a wider issue for the research field since the 1980s (Karakaya, 1999). Even though export barriers to export performance were a handful of issues for the academic field, it was still limited to Myanmar as a developing country or one country under the various political and economic challenges. There were two foremost problems in conducting this study. First, there are various studies on the Myanmar economy, including the export situation from macro perspectives in the context of the 2021 Myanmar military coup. There was a significant gap for firm-level analysis in the context of the 2021 Military coup, which has a significant impact on organizational and individual-level socioeconomic performance. The second problem is that there is no comprehensive study on the area of export barriers to the export performance of the economy. The policy makers of SAC will align their forthcoming trade policies by understanding the export barriers for export (Julian, 2005). Moreover, the coming elected government has come out 2025 SAC-led election will implement a useful trade policy to save the downswing Myanmar economy by understanding with barriers to export in the Myanmar context.

On the literature side, the measurement factors for export performance are complex and dynamic in the international economics and marketing field. The choices of export performance depend on the context of the research field, export business-specific factors such as organization size, macro market conditions, and government regulations. (Leonidou L. C., 2000) According to these indications, various research scholars developed numerous scale items for measuring the export barriers for export-import firms in different contexts. Among them, Michel E. Porter (1980) developed the six dimensions for export barriers. All of these six barriers are concerned with firm-related factors. To fill these literature gaps, Yang, Leona, and Alden (1992) group export barriers into three categories: 1) external barriers, 2) operational barriers, and 3) internal barriers. This study extracted the measurement factors for export barriers from their works and then aligned them with the Myanmar context, especially in the era after 2021. Therefore, this study used the seven dimensions for export barriers by dividing two groups: internal and external barriers.

Although extensive research has explored export barriers and firm performance across developing countries, limited attention has been given to firm-level studies within politically unstable economies like Myanmar. Recent studies have emphasized that firm innovation, productivity, and resource constraints significantly influence export competitiveness in ASEAN developing countries (Jitsutthiphakorn, 2021). Similarly, Razali and Yusof (2024) revealed that internal and external export barriers continue to affect small and medium-sized enterprises' ability to expand into global markets. However, most prior research has concentrated on stable economies, overlooking how political disruptions reshape export behavior and trade performance (Traiyarach

& Banjongprasert, 2022). Furthermore, Afonso and Vergara (2022) highlighted that trade costs and non-tariff barriers remain major obstacles in developing regions, yet such analyses are scarce for Myanmar's post-2021 context. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by conducting a firm-level analysis of Myanmar export firms to examine how internal and external export barriers affect performance amid ongoing political and economic challenges.

Research Aims

The major aim of this study is to examine the export barriers and export performance of export firms in Myanmar after the 2021 era.

Research Questions

This study aims to address the following research questions, which address the research problem.

1. How do internal barriers impact on export performance of export firms in Myanmar since 2021?
2. How do external barriers significantly affect on export performance of export firms in Myanmar since 2021?

Research Objectives

The study aims to prove the following research objectives-

1. To examine the effect of internal barriers on the export performance of Myanmar export firms after 2021.
2. To analyze the influence of external barriers on the export performance of Myanmar export firms after 2021.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes the review of literature works on export barriers and export performance from a firm-level perspective. The export barriers are categorized into two groups: internal barriers and external barriers. The internal barriers have included the three dimensions, namely informational barriers, functional barriers, and marketing barriers. On one side, the external barrier has four dimensions: 1) governmental barriers, 2) macro factor barriers, 3) task barriers, and 4) procedural barriers.

Export Barriers

Export barriers can be defined as the attitudinal, structural, operational, and other constraints that hinder a firm's ability to initiate, develop, or sustain international operations (Koksal and Kettaneh, 2011). The research scholars in international marketing, international economics fields developed barriers to conducting export and import based on various settings. Export barriers mean all obstacles that reduce firms' capacity to start, create, and maintain market opportunities outside the domestic market. (Leonidou, 2004). Based on his approach, he classified impediments confronted by a company as inside and outside one. All issues related to the company's internal structure are internal impediments, and all those issues that are external to the company are considered external.

Internal Barriers

Leonidou (2004) developed the three barriers that inside firms from conducting exporting. These barriers arise from the firm's internal limitations, such as insufficient market intelligence, a lack of knowledge about foreign regulations or customer preferences, and poor information

management systems.

a) Informational Barriers

Internal informational barriers refer to the lack of access to adequate, accurate, and timely information within a firm that impedes its ability to identify, assess, and exploit export opportunities (Leonidou, 2004). A company that possesses the perfect sum of data faces less vulnerability than other companies with a lower level of insights (Liesch and Knight, 1999).

b) Functional Barriers

Internal barriers include experience in foreign markets, lack of managerial commitment, and lack of human and capital resources (Barker & Kaynak, 1992). The principal practical hindrances with a company are problems associated with finance, human resources, and manufacturing, which behave as obstructions in export (Vozikis and Mescon, 1985; Leonidou, 2004). A crucial asset for a company is international exposure of directors and executives, which comes about in particular 10 know-how and is troublesome for the competitors to duplicate.

c) Marketing Barriers

Leonidou (2004) summarizes the marketing barriers as inappropriate marketing strategies for the foreign market. According to Namiki (1988), based on the outcomes from Porter (1980), there are four types of competitive strategies that firms adopt. They are (1) market differentiation, (2) segment differentiation, (3) innovative differentiation, and (4) products and services

External Barriers

The barriers outside the firm's control for export are defined as external barriers. Leonidou (2004) developed the four external barriers that hinder the firm's exporting process to penetrate the market. In this vein, external barriers such as economic, political, and cultural risks can curb a firm's exporting marketing activities and hinder performance outcomes. For instance, exporting to developing countries, which are generally characterized as more volatile environments involving unstable political contexts, might discourage firms from engaging in export activities and thus negatively affect export performance.

a) Procedural Barriers

Business encounters difficulties in operation, which are defined as procedural barriers. And also it incorporates communication constraints, slow collection of installments within the overseas market, and new procedures and/or strategies (Leonidou, 2004). There are two types of procedural barriers associated with exporting, which can be arranged into controllable and uncontrollable obstructions. The first obstructions are normal tasks that can be overwhelmed by administrative experience and can be managed with time and execution. Ramaswami & Yang (1990) indicate that non-controllable obstructions are difficulties that can be controlled on the premise of case to case. Consulting companies can offer the necessary help to defeat not only the operational boundaries but also most of these obstructions (Ramaswami and Yang, 1990).

b) Government Barriers

The unsupportive and supportive demeanor of the government to exporters can be defined as governmental barriers. The two related problems are (i) constrained help and motivating forces to existing and potential exporters, and (ii) the prohibitive part of the administrative system on export activities (Leonidou, 2004).

c) Macro factor Barriers

External environmental (or exogenous) hindrances incorporate issues related to political-

legal, monetary, and socio-social environment (Wach, 2015) of the outer market in which the firm is working (Leonidou, 2004). Wach (2015) explains that the external environment of a firm can be examined from a local to a genuinely worldwide level, and what is more, considering various viewpoints from the four fundamental components of Political, Economic, Social, and Technological PEST taxonomy. The vast majority of these boundaries are made by contending firms in the new market, supply and demand fluctuations and currency fluctuations, and so on.

d) Task Barriers

Client necessities shift worldwide due to an assortment of reasons, for example, climatic conditions, taste, propensities, geology, economy of the nation, and all these lead to various item prerequisites. Firms should invest a significant amount of energy and cash to oblige every one of these changes (Leonidou, 2004). Worldwide rivalry has decreased the life cycle of items, and organizations can no longer have nation or locale-specific items. The transformation of the items or limited-time messages can be applied just as various types of vital practices, for example, polycentric, geocentric, or regiocentric methodologies to beat such hindrances (Wach and Wojciechowski, 2014).

Export Performance

Export performance, which has been one of the central constructs in the export marketing literature, is defined as the extent to which a firm can accomplish strategic and economic objectives with respect to exporting to a foreign market (Cavusgil & Zou, 1994). However, fewer studies have connected export barriers to export performance and the factors that might alleviate those barriers. Additionally, existing research has mostly investigated the direct impact of independent factors on export performance, and as highlighted by Sousa et al. (2008), only a few researchers have considered the existence of moderating effects to explain the export performance of the firm. This current research thus attempts to bridge the gap in the literature by considering both factors directly affecting export performance. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework of this study.

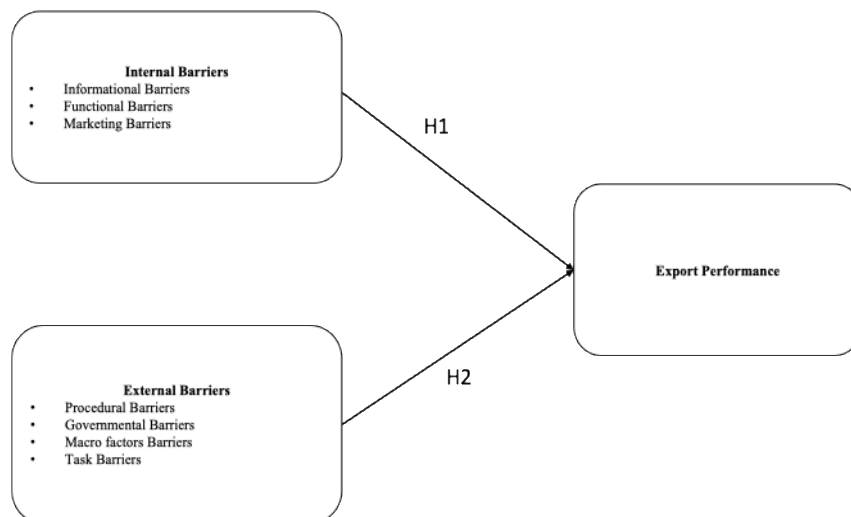


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note: Leonidou (2004)

The research model for this study is developed to explain how internal and external export barriers influence the export performance of Myanmar firms in the post-2021 trade environment. After the 2021 political changes, Myanmar's exporters have faced intensified operational challenges such as financial constraints, management inefficiency, and limited technological capacity, which are categorized as internal barriers. At the same time, exporters have encountered unstable trade policies, transportation disruptions, and restrictions on international transactions, which represent external barriers. These two groups of barriers are hypothesized to significantly affect firms' ability to maintain competitiveness and achieve strong export performance.

Research Hypotheses Development

Export performance is widely recognized as a key indicator of firm competitiveness and sustainability in developing economies. Previous studies across Asian countries have highlighted that both internal and external barriers critically determine export outcomes at the firm level (Shamsuddoha & Ali, 2006; Nguyen et al., 2020). Internal barriers often arise from within the organization, including insufficient financial resources, limited management skills, inadequate production capacity, and a lack of international marketing knowledge. For example, studies conducted in Malaysia and Thailand have shown that weak managerial capability and lack of export experience significantly reduce firms' ability to compete internationally (Razali & Yusof, 2024; Traiyarach & Banjongprasert, 2022). Similarly, research in Vietnam and Indonesia found that internal resource limitations hinder export readiness and strategic market expansion (Nguyen et al., 2020; Utami & Lantu, 2014). These findings suggest that internal inefficiencies and capacity constraints may also weaken Myanmar firms' export performance in the post-2021 political and economic transition.

H1: Internal export barriers have a significant effect on the export performance of Myanmar export firms.

External barriers, on the other hand, are associated with environmental and institutional factors outside the firm's control, such as unstable trade policies, complex documentation procedures, transportation difficulties, and limited access to international markets. Empirical research from other Asian economies has demonstrated that such external barriers remain major obstacles to export success (Afonso & Vergara, 2022; Jitsutthiphakorn, 2021). For instance, in Bangladesh and Vietnam, unstable regulatory frameworks and insufficient trade facilitation services were found to significantly reduce export efficiency (Rahman et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020). Likewise, in Malaysia, non-tariff barriers and logistical constraints have been linked to lower firm competitiveness (Razali & Yusof, 2024). Given Myanmar's fragile trade environment after 2021, characterized by shifting export policies and international sanctions, external barriers are expected to exert a stronger negative impact on export performance.

H2: External export barriers have a significant effect on the export performance of Myanmar export firms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed an explanatory and quantitative research design to investigate the causal relationships between internal and external export barriers and export performance among Myanmar export firms. The explanatory approach was chosen because it enables testing cause-and-effect relationships in line with the study objectives, which aim to analyze how different types of barriers influence firm-level export outcomes. A quantitative method was adopted to ensure

objectivity and statistical validity by using numerical data collected through structured questionnaires. This methodological alignment allows the study to empirically explain the extent to which export barriers affect firm performance, thereby achieving the stated research objectives with measurable evidence. This study used both primary and secondary data to achieve the research objectives. The secondary data obtained from the World Bank was used to examine the Myanmar export by specific region. The secondary data was extracted from 2011 to 2023. The primary data is the major data source for this study. The primary data was obtained from export firms that are registered at UMFCCI (Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry).

Sample Size

This study used a two-stage sampling design. The sampling frame at stage one was the list of registered export companies obtained from the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). From that frame, we selected export firms using stratified random sampling (strata defined by sector: agriculture, manufacturing, and services) to ensure representation across major export sectors. Within each stratum, firms were selected by simple random sampling to reach 70 firms in total. At stage two, respondents were selected from the chosen firms. The target respondent population consisted of owners and managers directly responsible for managing the company's export operations. Within each selected firm, we used proportional allocation: the number of respondents chosen from a firm was proportional to that firm's number of export-responsible staff (for single-person firms, the owner was selected). This proportional procedure ensured that larger export teams contributed more respondents while preserving representativeness across firms. The planned sample of n =respondents was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula. Assuming a conventional margin of error $e=0.05$, a sample of 130 corresponds to a population of approximately 193 firms which registered at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

Questionnaire Design

The study employed a structured questionnaire consisting of two major sections: export barriers and export performance. Export barrier items were adapted from widely used scales in the international marketing literature, particularly [Leonidou \(1995\)](#), [Koksal and Kettaneh \(2011\)](#), [Tesfom and Lutz \(2006\)](#), and [Shaw and Darroch \(2004\)](#). The items covered seven barrier dimensions: informational, functional, marketing, procedural, governmental, task, and macro-environmental barriers. Respondents rated each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Export performance was measured using items adapted from established performance scales, including [Cavusgil and Zou \(1994\)](#), [Zou, Taylor, and Osland \(1998\)](#), and [Matanda and Freeman \(2009\)](#). Items assessed changes in export volume, revenues, profitability, return on investment, and export intensity before and after 2021 using the same five-point Likert format. To ensure clarity and content validity, the questionnaire was pretested with 10 export managers and two academic experts in international business. Minor wording adjustments were made based on their feedback. Data were collected through face-to-face and online survey administration between January 2025 and March 2025.

Data Analysis techniques

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Following Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), values above .70 indicate good reliability, while values between .60 and .70 are considered acceptable for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2010). The constructs in this study produced alpha

coefficients ranging from .614 to .771. Marketing, Procedural, and Macro-environmental Barriers demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha > .70$). Functional, Informational, Governmental, and Task Barriers, as well as Export Performance, showed acceptable reliability for exploratory research ($\alpha = .614-.695$), which is common in studies involving heterogeneous SMEs.

Validity was examined in three ways. Content validity was ensured by adapting items from established export-barrier and export-performance scales used in prior studies (Leonidou, 1995; Tesfom & Lutz, 2006; Koksai & Kettaneh, 2011; Shaw & Darroch, 2004; Zou et al., 1998). The questionnaire was reviewed by two academic experts and pilot-tested with 10 export managers, leading to minor improvements in wording. Construct validity was supported through theoretical grounding, appropriate grouping of items into recognized barrier dimensions, and acceptable internal consistency within each factor. Face validity was established during the pilot test, where respondents confirmed that the items were clear and relevant.

For the data analysis, descriptive analysis was used to analyze the Myanmar export volume and exporters' perception of export barriers and export performance. To ensure the primary data reliability, reliability statistics are used in this study. The reliability of collected data is determined by the Cronbach's alpha value. The multiple linear regression model was built to prove the required research objectives in this study. Multiple linear regression analysis was selected as the primary analytical technique for this study to examine the causal relationship between internal and external export barriers (independent variables) and export performance (dependent variable) among Myanmar export firms. This method is appropriate because the study aims to test the direct and linear influence of multiple independent variables on a single continuous dependent variable, consistent with the explanatory research design. Unlike Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) or path analysis, which are more suitable for complex models involving mediating or latent constructs, multiple linear regression provides a straightforward and statistically efficient approach for testing the hypothesized relationships with a relatively small sample size ($n = 130$). Moreover, regression analysis allows the study to determine the relative contribution of each barrier dimension to export performance, aligning directly with the study's objective of identifying the most influential constraints faced by Myanmar exporters. Therefore, multiple linear regression was chosen for its ability to produce clear, interpretable, and objective results suited to a firm-level dataset and the study's causal-explanatory purpose.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Myanmar Export Trends (2011 -2023)

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of merchandise exports to various low- and middle-income economies from 2011 to 2023, segmented by specific geographic regions. These regions include economies within the exporting region, South Asia, East Asia and Pacific, the Arab World, Middle East and North Africa, and economies outside the exporting region. Each color-coded bar in the graph represents a different regional group, allowing for clear visual analysis of which regions dominated export partnerships over the years and how those dynamics changed in the face of political disruption.

Figure 2 is secondary data covering Myanmar's export performance from 2011 to 2023 was obtained from the World Bank Data Catalog. The data were categorized by major destination regions and analyzed using time-series trend analysis, regional comparison, and annual growth calculations. Trend analysis was used to identify export fluctuations over the 13 years, while regional comparisons highlighted changes in Myanmar's export destinations and the relative severity of disruptions across markets. The analysis also included a comparison between the pre-2021 period (2011–2020) and the post-2021 period (2021–2023) to capture the structural impact of recent political and economic events. These secondary findings complement the primary survey

data by providing macro-level evidence of export contractions, supporting firm-level perceptions of heightened export barriers after 2021.

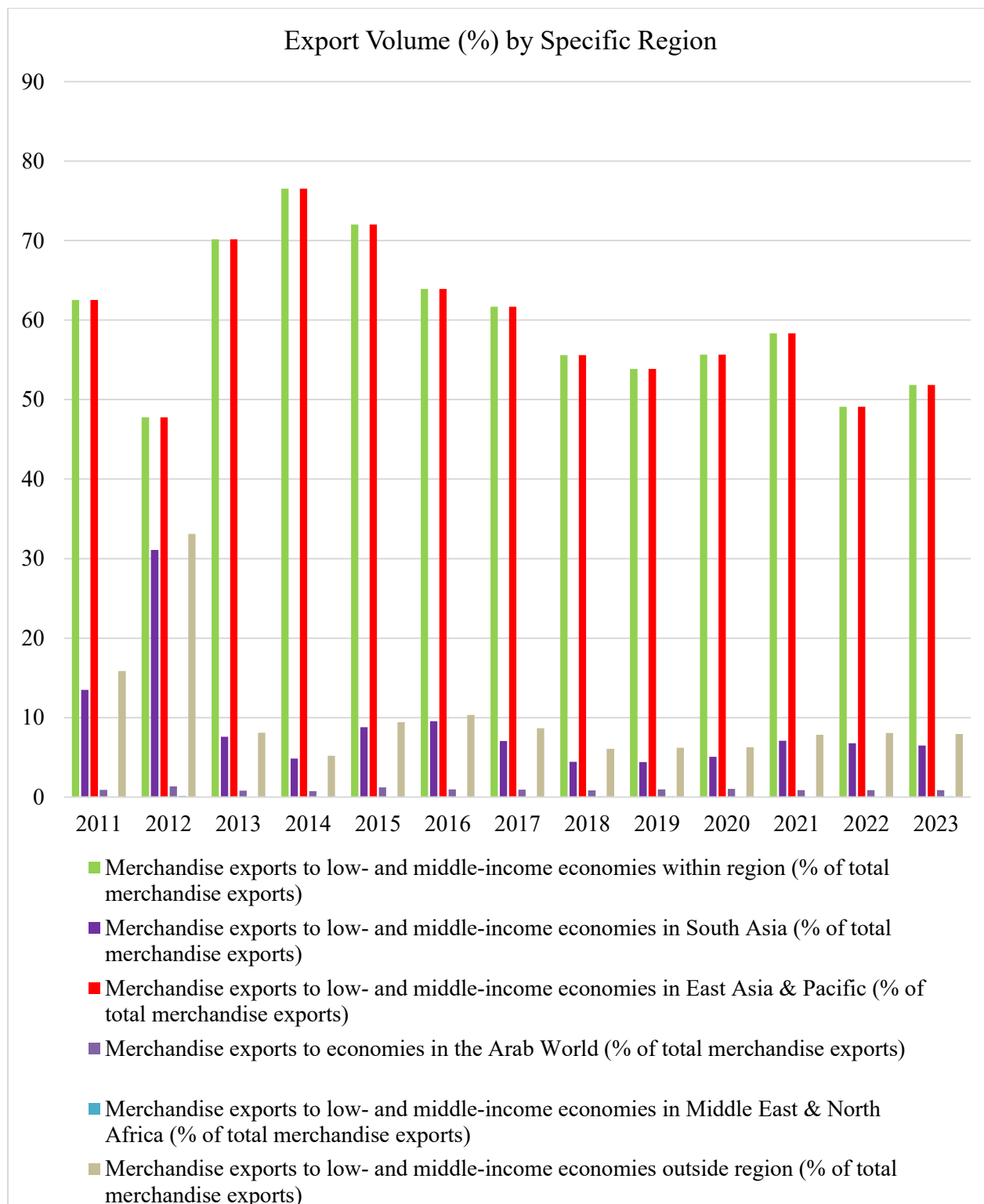


Figure 2. Export Volume (%) by Specific Region

Note: World Bank (2023)

During the period from 2011 to 2020, Myanmar's merchandise exports were predominantly directed toward low- and middle-income economies in East Asia and the Pacific, as indicated by the consistently high percentages shown by the red bars. These exports peaked in 2015 at approximately 77%, and throughout the pre-coup years, they maintained a strong average between 65% and 75%, demonstrating Myanmar's heavy trade reliance on East Asian markets such as China and Thailand. Similarly, exports to economies within the region (represented by green bars) were also substantial, often overlapping with East Asia & Pacific figures and peaking in 2015 as well. This suggests robust regional trade integration during this period. In contrast, exports to South Asia showed a modest but stable trend, averaging between 8% and 10%. Meanwhile, exports to economies outside the region fluctuated significantly, with a notable peak of around 33% in 2013, before declining and stabilizing in the following years. Exports to the Arab World and the Middle East & North Africa remained negligible throughout this period, consistently below 5%, indicating minimal trade engagement with those regions.

Following the military coup in 2021, there was a noticeable decline in Myanmar's export volumes to its primary regional markets. Exports to East Asia and the Pacific dropped sharply from their pre-coup levels, falling to approximately 53% in 2021 and failing to recover to their earlier highs in the subsequent years. Similarly, exports to economies within the region also declined, decreasing from nearly 70% before the coup to around 53% by 2022 and 2023. This decline may reflect disruptions in regional trade relationships, reduced investor confidence, and the broader economic instability following the political upheaval. On the other hand, exports to South Asia remained relatively stable, continuing to hover around 8% to 9% without significant fluctuation. Interestingly, the share of exports to economies outside the region experienced a slight increase during the post-coup period, rising to approximately 18% to 20%, which may suggest an attempt to diversify export markets or compensate for losses in traditional trade partners. Meanwhile, trade with the Arab World and the Middle East & North Africa remained minimal and largely unchanged, continuing to represent a very small fraction of total exports.

Profiles of Respondents

This study used both primary and secondary data. The primary data is an important one to achieve the required research objectives. The major respondents of this study were owners and managers of an export company that registered at UMFCCI, Myanmar. The profile of sample firms and respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Firm Characteristics

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Positions		
Middle Management	87	67
(Sales Manager/ Export Manager)	43	33
Top Management		
Total	130	100
Size (No. of Employees) of the firm in which respondents work		
≤ 100 employees	32	46%
> 100 employees	38	54%
Total	70	
Types of Export Commodities		
	14	20%
Crude Oil and other natural resources	28	40%

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture and Livelihood	15	21%
ICT goods	13	19%
Others		
Total	70	100

Note: Survey Data (2025)

The survey results provide insights into the profiles of respondents, firm characteristics, and export commodity types. Among the 130 participants, the majority (67%) held middle management roles such as Sales Manager or Export Manager, while 33% were in top management positions, indicating that responses primarily reflect operational-level export experiences. Regarding firm size, out of 70 firms represented, 54% employed more than 100 people, and 46% had 100 or fewer employees, showing a balanced representation of both large companies and SMEs in the export sector. In terms of export commodities, agriculture and livelihood products dominated with 40%, followed by ICT goods (21%), crude oil and other natural resources (20%), and other categories (19%). This suggests that agricultural exports remain the backbone of Myanmar's trade, while the growing share of ICT goods reflects an emerging diversification in the export market. The inclusion of crude oil and other resources points to the continued importance of extractive industries, and the presence of a notable "Others" category highlights the existence of a varied export portfolio beyond traditional sectors.

Reliability Statistics

The reliability test of the measurement scale item in the study framework is important in a causal research study. The Cronbach alpha value is used to test the reliability of measurement scale items. The study adopted the 24 scale items for export barriers, both internal barriers and external barriers, from [Leonidou \(2004\)](#). [Bilkey \(1982\)](#) operationalizes export performance through development that estimates export intensity, which is the percentage of sales sold internationally, consistent export movement, and perceived export profitability. Therefore, this study developed the 5-scale items for export performance through [Bilkey's \(1982\)](#) work. The result of the reliability analysis is described in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

No.	Variable	Scale Type	Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of Items
1.	Marketing Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .771	5
2.	Functional Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .666	3
3.	Informational Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .695	3
4.	Procedural Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .723	3
5.	Governmental Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .614	3
6.	Task Barriers	5-point scale	Likert .642	3

No.	Variable	Scale Type		Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of Items
7.	Macro Factors Barriers	5-point scale	Likert	.731	4
8.	Export Performance	5-point scale	Likert	.689	5

Note: Survey Data (2025)

The study assessed eight key variables related to export barriers and export performance using a 5-point Likert scale. Reliability analysis was conducted through Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency. Among the variables, Marketing Barriers demonstrated strong reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.771 across five items, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Macro Factors Barriers also showed good reliability with a value of 0.731 (4 items), followed by Procedural Barriers ($\alpha = 0.723$) and Informational Barriers ($\alpha = 0.695$), both measured with three items. Export Performance, consisting of five items, had an acceptable reliability score of 0.689. The other variables, Functional Barriers ($\alpha = 0.666$), Task Barriers ($\alpha = 0.642$), and Governmental Barriers ($\alpha = 0.614$), also showed moderate reliability, though values below 0.7 suggest that improvements could be made to increase measurement precision. Overall, the results indicate that most constructs used in the questionnaire are sufficiently reliable for analysis, with a few dimensions requiring refinement in future studies.

Descriptive Analysis on Export Barriers

This section describes the descriptive analysis of export barriers, both internal and external barriers, in respective Figures. The study used the visual chart for describing the mean value for each scale item. The mean value of the specific scale item for each variable and the value of the standard deviation are described in Appendix 1. The mean value of internal barriers is described in Figure 3.

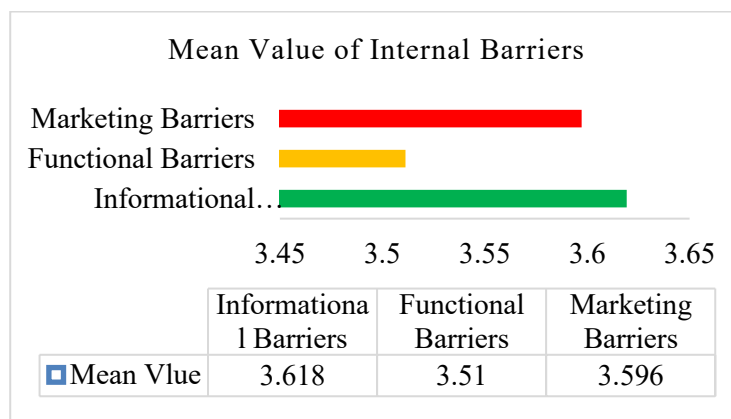


Figure 3. Internal Barriers

Note: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis of internal barriers reveals that Informational Barriers recorded the highest mean value at 3.618, indicating that challenges related to information flow, communication, and knowledge sharing are perceived as the most significant internal obstacles within the organization. Marketing Barriers follow with a mean value of 3.596, suggesting that difficulties in marketing activities and market responsiveness also present notable challenges. Meanwhile, Functional

Barriers show the lowest mean among the internal factors at 3.510, reflecting comparatively fewer concerns in operational or departmental functions. These findings highlight that internal efforts to improve information systems and marketing strategies could contribute significantly to reducing internal barriers.

The descriptive analysis of external barriers is shown in Figure 4. The external barriers are the factors outside the firm. This barrier includes macro factor barriers, governmental barriers, task barriers, and procedural barriers.

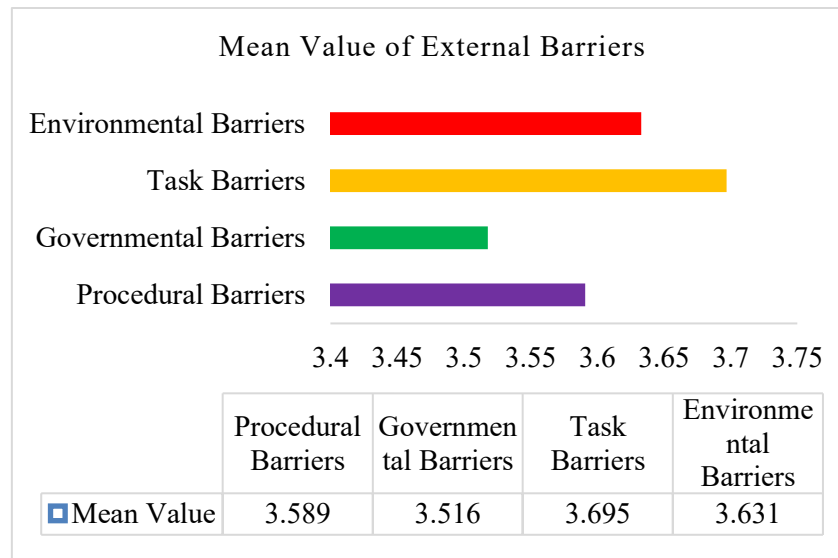


Figure 4. External Barriers

Note: Survey Data (2025)

According to the result of data analysis, the data indicate that Task Barriers hold the highest mean value at 3.695, reflecting substantial difficulties in task-related external factors such as partner collaboration, project execution, or customer demands. Environmental Barriers follow closely with a mean value of 3.631, pointing to challenges posed by external environmental factors like economic conditions, market dynamics, or societal influences. Procedural Barriers register a mean of 3.589, while Governmental Barriers present the lowest mean value at 3.516, indicating that although governmental regulations and policies are seen as external challenges, they are perceived as less significant compared to task and environmental factors. These results suggest that external task management and environmental adaptability are critical areas for organizations aiming to minimize external barriers.

Descriptive Analysis on Export Performance

This study measures the export performance with five criteria. These five criteria are 1) revenue, 2) profitability, 3) volume, 4) return on investment (ROI), and 5) export intensity. This study used the export firms' perception and respondents' perception of export performance after the 2021 Military coup. The result of the survey data is shown in Figure 5. The specific mean value of each item and the standard deviation are attached in Appendix 2.

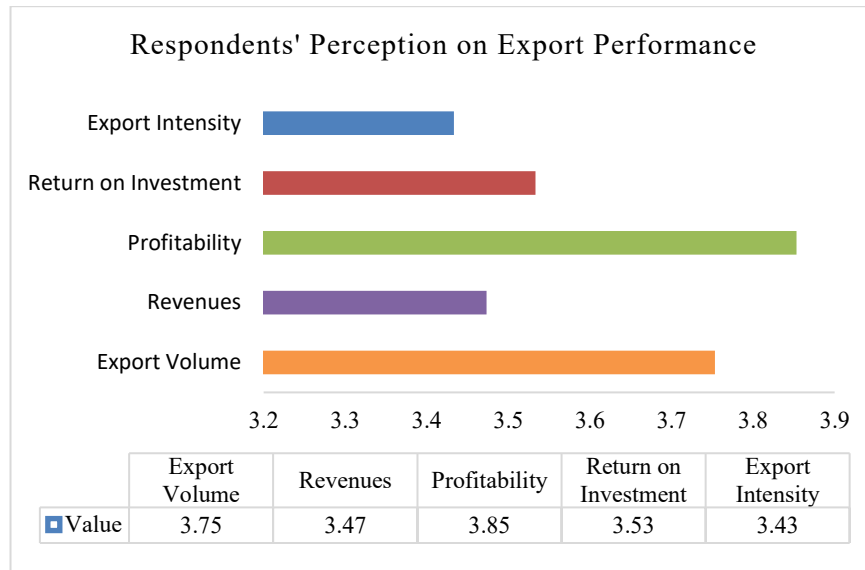


Figure 5. Export Performance
Note: Survey Data (2025)

The analysis of respondents' perception of export performance shows that Profitability achieved the highest mean value at 3.85, suggesting that firms consider their export activities to contribute significantly to overall profitability. Export Volume follows closely with a mean of 3.75, indicating a positive perception regarding the quantity of goods or services exported. Return on Investment (ROI) records a moderate mean of 3.53, reflecting a reasonable level of satisfaction with the financial returns generated from export activities. Revenues have a mean value of 3.47, pointing to a slightly lower perception of direct revenue gains from export operations compared to other performance indicators. Finally, Export Intensity shows the lowest mean at 3.43, suggesting that firms perceive their export activities as representing a smaller proportion of total business operations relative to other measures of performance. These results highlight that while firms are generally satisfied with profitability and export volume, there is potential to enhance export intensity and revenue outcomes to strengthen overall export performance.

Result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The primary aim of this study is to examine the effect of export barriers on the export performance of export firms in Myanmar after the 2021 Military coup. This study breaks down the two specific objectives to achieve the primary aim. This study constructed the two-regression model for analyzing the collected data. The first one is to analyze the effect of internal barriers on the export performance of export firms in Myanmar after the 2021 military coup. This regression model is shown below:

Model 1:

$$EP_i = b_0 + b_1 \text{Info}_i + b_2 \text{Funct}_i + b_3 \text{Mkt}_i + \varepsilon$$

Where:

EP_i = mean value of export performance for i th respondent

b_0 = interception

$Info_i$ = mean value of informational barriers for the i^{th} respondent

$Funct_i$ = mean value of functional barriers for the i^{th} respondent

Mkt_i = mean value of marketing barriers for the i^{th} respondent

ε = error term

According to this model, the result of data analysis is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Effect of Internal Barriers on Export Performance

Model 1:					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P-Value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	.393	.118		3.335	.001
Informational Barriers	.613***	.051	.727	11.921	.000
Functional Barriers	.262***	.083	.413	3.137	.002
Marketing Barriers	.021	.134	.024	.158	.874
R - .918					
R Square - .843					
Adjusted R Square - .840					
F - 279.218***					

Note: Survey Data (2025)

The regression analysis shows that internal barriers collectively have a very strong and statistically significant effect on export performance. The model yields an R value of 0.918, with an R^2 of 0.843, indicating that approximately 84.3% of the variance in export performance can be explained by the internal barriers considered in this model. Among the predictors, Informational Barriers have the strongest positive and significant effect ($B = 0.613$, $\beta = 0.727$, $t = 11.921$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that as informational barriers increase, export performance is perceived to improve significantly, this might indicate that firms that overcome informational barriers experience notable export success. Functional Barriers also show a significant positive relationship ($B = 0.262$, $\beta = 0.413$, $t = 3.137$, $p = 0.002$), highlighting their substantial contribution to explaining export performance. Conversely, Marketing Barriers are not a significant predictor ($B = 0.021$, $p = 0.874$), indicating that marketing-related internal barriers do not significantly influence export performance within this model.

The second regression model was used to test the effect of external barriers on the export performance of export firms in Myanmar after 2021. The developed regression model is shown below:

Model 2:

$$EP_i = b_0 + b_1 Pro_i + b_2 Gov_i + b_3 Task_i + b_4 Macro_i + \varepsilon$$

Where:

EP_i = mean value of export performance for i^{th} respondent

b_0 = interception

Pro_i = mean value of procedural barriers for the i^{th} respondent

Gov_i = mean value of governmental barriers for the i^{th} respondent

Task_i = mean value of task barriers for the i^{th} respondent

Macro_i = mean value of

ε = error term

The result of the multiple linear regression analysis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Effect of External Barriers on Export Performance

Model 2					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	P-Value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	1.228	.264		4.648	.000
Procedural Barriers	.098*	.053	.117	1.847	.067
Government Barriers	.027	.045	.039	.605	.546
Task Barriers	-.021	.059	-.026	-.360	.719
Macro Factor Barriers	.554***	.066	.620	8.367	.000
R - .658					
R Square - .433					
Adjusted R Square - .419					
F - 29.638***					

Note: Survey Data (2025)

The regression model examining the influence of internal barriers on export performance is statistically significant, with an F-value of 29.638 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the model explains a meaningful proportion of the variance in export performance. Moreover, Macro Factor Barriers emerged as the only statistically significant predictor ($B = 0.554$, $\beta = 0.620$, $t = 8.367$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong positive relationship with export performance. This suggests that higher macro factor barriers are associated with higher perceived export performance, which could reflect firms' adaptive strategies under challenging macro conditions. Procedural Barriers showed a marginally significant effect ($B = 0.098$, $\beta = 0.117$, $t = 1.847$, $p = 0.067$), suggesting a weak and borderline positive influence that warrants further investigation. In contrast, Government Barriers ($B = 0.027$, $p = 0.546$) and Task Barriers ($B = -0.021$, $p = 0.719$) did not show significant effects, implying that these factors do not meaningfully predict export performance within this model.

CONCLUSION

The final section of this study was comprised of the two main subsections. The first one is making the discussion based on the research findings, and the second one is intended to provide the research implications for policy makers, industry practitioners, and academic scholars. The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of export barriers, both internal and external, on the export performance of exporters in Myanmar after the 2021 Military coup. The multiple linear regression analysis techniques were applied in this study. Based on this analysis, this paper makes a handful of discussions for both practitioners and academia. The findings from the regression analysis provide valuable insights into the relationship between internal barriers and export performance. The model demonstrated a very high explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.843, indicating that internal barriers account for approximately 84.3% of the variance in export

performance. Among the internal barriers examined, *informational barriers* emerged as the most significant predictor of export performance. This may reflect the reality that firms facing complex informational environments tend to develop stronger internal systems for managing knowledge, which in turn supports their success in export activities. Alternatively, it may suggest that firms that are active and successful in exports are more exposed to informational complexities as part of their international operations.

Model 1 shows that internal barriers (marketing, functional, informational, task, procedural, etc.) are significantly associated with the export performance score. Although the coefficients appear positive, this reflects the reverse coding of the performance scale, where higher scores represent *declines* in export performance. Therefore, the model correctly indicates that greater internal barriers are associated with worsening export outcomes. This can also be interpreted through a resilience lens: firms experiencing higher internal barriers may show patterns of coping or strategic adjustment, but overall, the negative impact on performance remains consistent with theory.

The regression model analyzing the relationship between external barriers and export performance demonstrated a moderate level of explanatory power, with an R^2 of 0.433, meaning that the external barrier variables accounted for approximately 43.3% of the variance in export performance. This indicates that while external factors play a role in shaping export outcomes, they may be less decisive compared to internal organizational factors. Among the external barriers examined, *macro factor barriers* showed a strong, positive, and highly significant association with export performance. One possible interpretation is that successful exporters may be those that are more exposed to and capable of navigating complex macroeconomic environments. Alternatively, it may reflect that firms achieving higher export performance are also more attuned to, or impacted by, these macro-level challenges due to the scale or scope of their international operations.

Model 2 examines external barriers (governmental, procedural, and macroeconomic factors). The earlier text incorrectly referred to these as “internal barriers,” which has been corrected. Only macro-factor barriers show a statistically significant effect on export performance. Again, the positive coefficient does not imply improved performance; rather, because of reverse coding, it shows that macroeconomic instability, exchange rate volatility, inflation pressure, and logistics disruption further worsen export performance. This finding aligns with the macroeconomic situation in Myanmar after 2021, where instability in currency, import licensing, logistics constraints, and rising transaction risks disproportionately affected exporters.

Research Implications

Based on the findings of this research, this study suggested the impactful implications for three stakeholders: a) policy makers, b) exporting companies, and c) academic scholars.

Policy Implication

The findings of this study provide important guidance for policymakers aiming to enhance national export performance and support firm-level competitiveness, particularly in contexts marked by ineffective exchange rate policies and political instability. The results demonstrate that *macro factor barriers* have a strong and significant influence on export performance. This suggests that while firms are capable of achieving export success, they must do so despite, rather than because of, macroeconomic conditions, including those shaped by government policy and political stability. The evidence points to the urgent need for policymakers to review and reform exchange rate management policies. The current practice of occupying exporters’ foreign income at a central bank exchange rate, which is often disconnected from real market rates, undermines the true earnings potential of exporting firms. This misalignment reduces exporters’ incentives, distorts

pricing strategies, and erodes competitiveness in international markets. A shift towards a more market-responsive exchange rate policy would help ensure that exporters receive fair value for their foreign earnings, supporting reinvestment, growth, and sustained participation in global trade.

Moreover, the findings highlight how political instability, especially frequent disruptions in cross-border trade zones due to conflict, continues to present a significant macro barrier that shapes export outcomes. Firms that succeed in exports under these conditions do so by navigating considerable uncertainty and risk. Policymakers should therefore prioritize efforts to stabilize border regions, secure trade routes, and create predictable conditions for cross-border commerce. This may include diplomatic engagement, conflict resolution initiatives, and infrastructure investment focused on trade corridors.

Firms Implications

For export firm owners, the findings highlight the importance of addressing multiple internal and external barriers to improve export performance. Strong marketing strategies and access to reliable information are critical, as marketing and informational barriers showed relatively high reliability. Attention should also be given to procedural and macro-environmental challenges, which significantly affect operations. While functional, task, and governmental barriers showed moderate reliability, they still represent potential risks that can disrupt export success. Therefore, export firm owners should invest in staff training, market intelligence, and policy advocacy to navigate these barriers effectively and enhance their global competitiveness.

Academic Implications

This study contributes conceptually by reinforcing the importance of internal organizational factors, particularly informational and functional barriers, as key determinants of export performance, highlighting the need for integrating these variables more prominently in firm-level international trade models. In terms of scale development, the findings validate the use of differentiated internal and external barrier constructs, but also point to potential gaps in capturing the nuanced effects of marketing and procedural barriers, suggesting room for refinement of measurement instruments. Future research could extend this work by exploring sector-specific dynamics, longitudinal effects of barrier mitigation strategies, and interactions between internal capabilities and external macroeconomic conditions, especially in politically unstable or economically distorted environments.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the analysis relies primarily on self-reported firm-level perceptions, which may introduce subjective bias and limit the precision of the measured barriers and performance outcomes. Second, although the study incorporates secondary data from 2011–2023 to provide contextual depth, the integration of these macro-level trends with micro-level survey data remains limited, and future research could employ more sophisticated mixed-methods or longitudinal designs to better capture causal dynamics. Third, the reverse-coded export performance scale may constrain interpretability, suggesting that future studies adopt multidimensional or objective performance indicators such as export volume, profitability, and market diversification. Additionally, the models did not fully explore potential moderating or mediating factors, such as firm resilience, innovation, or digital capability, that may soften or amplify the effect of barriers on performance. Finally, due to the post-2021 political and economic turbulence in Myanmar, generalizability to more stable periods or other countries is limited. Future research should expand sample diversity, apply comparative regional analysis, and

incorporate qualitative inquiry to deepen understanding of how firms navigate export barriers under prolonged uncertainty.

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Appendix I . Export Barriers

No.	Statements	Mean	STD.Deviation
Informational Barriers			
1.	Lack of knowledge of potential markets	3.475	.79265
2.	Problematic international market data	3.850	.43726
3.	Inability to contact overseas customers	3.530	.70863
Overall mean value		3.618	
Functional Barriers			
1.	Inadequate/ untrained personnel for exporting	3.4313	.97530
2.	Lack of excess production capacity for exports	3.5563	.66111
3.	Lack of financial assistance for exports	3.5688	.74919
Overall Mean Value		3.51	
Marketing Barriers			
1.	Meeting export product quality standards/ specifications	3.5313	.70863
2.	Meeting export packaging/ labelling requirements	3.4313	.97530
3.	Offering satisfactory prices to customers	3.5563	.66111
4.	Difficulty in matching competitors' prices	3.5688	.74919
5.	Excessive transportation and insurance costs	3.8500	.43726
Overall Mean Value		3.596	
Procedural Barriers			
1.	Unfamiliar with exporting procedures/ paperwork	3.4375	.76633
2.	Problematic communication with overseas customers	3.7875	.45402
3.	Slow collection of payments from abroad	3.5438	.70797
Overall Mean Value		3.589	
Governmental barriers			
1.	Lack of home government assistance/ incentives	3.5250	.69996
2.	Unfavorable home rules and regulations	3.4438	.95659
3.	Foreign government attitudes	3.5813	.66797
Overall Mean Value		3.516	
Task barriers			
1.	Different foreign customers, habits/attitudes	3.5500	.76725
2.	Keen competition in overseas markets	3.7563	.51085
3.	Foreign public attitudes	3.7813	.58998
Overall Mean Value		3.695	
Macro Factors Barriers			

1.	Poor/deteriorating economic conditions abroad	3.7563	.51085
2.	Foreign currency exchange risks	3.7813	.58998
3.	Strict foreign rules and regulations	3.4313	.97530
4.	High tariffs (taxes on certain imports) and non-tariff barriers (rules and regulations that make trade more difficult)	3.5563	.66111
Overall Mean Value		3.631	

Appendix II. Export Performance of Export Firms in Myanmar

No	Statements	Mean	STD.Deviation
1	The volumes of export fell before 2021 and after 2021	3.7563	.51085
2	The revenues of exports fell before 2021 and after 2021	3.4750	.79265
3	The profitability of exports fell before 2021 and after 2021	3.8500	.43726
4	The return on investment fell before 2021 and after 2021	3.5313	.70863
5	Export Intensity fell before 2021 and after 2021	3.4313	.97530
	Overall Mean	3.608	