Fifty Years of *Papers in Education and Development*: Reflecting on Current Realities, Emerging Challenges, and Future Directions

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Abstract

This paper examines the current realities, emerging challenges, and future trajectory of Papers in Education and Development (PED) as it marks 50 years of scholarly contribution. It situates the Journal as an increasingly international platform that shapes educational debates, informs policy, and advances research across Tanzania and the wider African context. Drawing on editorial experience and recent submission and review trends, the paper first examines the current realities shaping PED before analysing key challenges in scholarly publishing, including the peer-review crisis, reviewer responsiveness, unethical author practices, digital transitions, the implications of artificial intelligence, and tensions within open-access and hybrid publishing models. It further outlines strategic directions for strengthening PED's internationalisation, editorial rigour, indexation, and contribution to knowledge sovereignty. The paper concludes by positioning PED as a living, future-oriented platform capable of shaping educational research, policy, and practice in Africa and beyond.

Keywords: *educational research, editorial practice, peer review, scholarly publishing, African journals*

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1 Introduction: PED at 50 as an Intellectual and Editorial Milestone

As Freire (1970) reminds us, education is never neutral; it is always implicated in broader struggles over knowledge, power, and social transformation. Scholarly journals, as sites of knowledge production and validation, are not merely repositories of research but active participants in shaping intellectual and policy agendas. In this context, *Papers in Education and Development* (PED), as it marks 50 years (1975-2025) of scholarly contribution, stands as both a significant intellectual platform and a mirror of educational transformation in Tanzania, across Africa, and beyond. Over time, PED has evolved from a predominantly national outlet into an increasingly international journal, attracting contributions from across sub-Saharan Africa and the wider global context. This shift is evident not only in the geographic spread of authorship but also in the Journal's growing selectivity.

Recent editorial data show a rejection rate of approximately 80.6% between July 2025 and mid-March 2026, with 67 manuscripts receiving editorial decisions: 13 (19.4%) were accepted, and 54 (80.6%) were rejected. These patterns signal rising visibility, heightened competition, and an increasing demand for rigorous, objective, and high-quality scholarship.

Beyond its role as a publication outlet, PED has consistently served as a platform through which key debates in education are articulated, contested, and refined. Its contributions have engaged enduring concerns such as policy reform, curriculum transformation, teacher development, access, and equity, while also responding to shifting educational priorities. In this sense, the Journal has not only documented change but has contributed to shaping the intellectual and policy discourse surrounding education in Tanzania and the wider African context. Its trajectory reflects broader transformations in educational thought, from post-independence expansion and state-led reform to contemporary concerns with globalisation, digitalisation, and knowledge production. Similarly, increasing pressures to publish, demands for faster editorial processes, and the expansion of digital technologies are reshaping how knowledge is produced, disseminated, and evaluated (Tennant et al., 2016). Within this environment, journals based in the Global South face a dual challenge: maintaining rigorous academic standards while navigating structural inequalities in global knowledge systems. Issues of visibility, indexation, and global recognition remain particularly salient for journals seeking to position themselves within dominant scholarly networks.

For PED, these dynamics are further complicated by the need to balance its historical role as a national and regional journal with its emerging international orientation. The increasing diversity of submissions and rising rejection rates reflect a shift towards greater selectivity and quality assurance. However, this transition also raises critical questions regarding editorial capacity, peer review sustainability, and reliance on voluntary academic labour (Chan & Costa, 2005). At the same time, issues such as authorship ethics, reviewer engagement, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence are becoming central to the Journal's operational and intellectual environment. In this context, the 50-year milestone represents more than a commemorative moment; it is a critical point for reflection and repositioning. While Ishumi's account has documented the historical evolution of PED, there remains a need to interrogate its contemporary role and future trajectory within a rapidly changing scholarly landscape. This involves examining the challenges shaping its editorial practices, the opportunities to strengthen its institutional and intellectual positioning, and the strategic pathways to enhance its relevance and impact.

Against this backdrop, this paper reflects on PED's current positioning as both a scholarly and an editorial platform, analyses the key challenges shaping its operations

and contributions, and outlines strategic directions for its future development. In doing so, it positions PED not merely as a repository of knowledge but as an active agent in shaping the future of educational research, policy, and practice in Tanzania, Africa, and the global scholarly community.

2 PED Today: Positioning, Reach, and Scholarly Contribution

As the Journal continues to expand its reach and influence, its role is no longer confined to that of a national outlet but extends to a broader regional and global scholarly arena. This shift reflects both internal editorial developments and wider transformations in academic publishing, including digital dissemination, competitive selectivity, and changing expectations of scholarly impact. Figure 1 presents a snapshot of the current realities shaping PED, illustrating its evolving positioning at the intersection of expanding global reach, strengthening quality assurance mechanisms, and sustained scholarly and policy relevance.

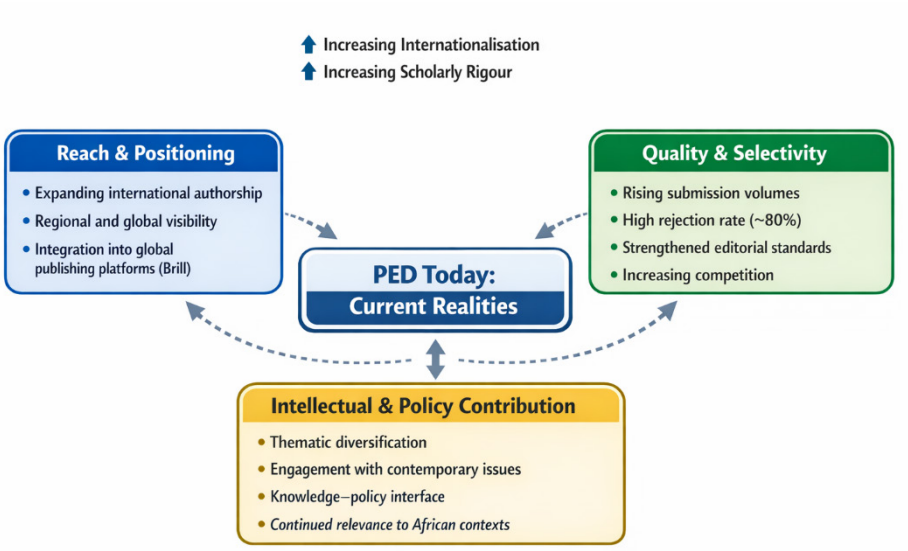


Figure 1: *Current Realities Shaping PED's Contemporary Positioning*

The subsections that follow unpack the key dimensions of PED's contemporary positioning, as synthesised in Figure 1.

2.1 From National Outlet to International Platform

Over the past five decades, PED has evolved from a predominantly institutional and national journal into an increasingly international scholarly platform. While its intellectual foundations remain rooted in the School of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam, its contemporary reach now extends across Africa and into wider

global academic networks. In addition to receiving submissions from authors across academic institutions in Tanzania, PED currently attracts contributions from across the African continent, including, but not limited to, Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Benin, The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, and Morocco. Its reach has also expanded beyond Africa, with submissions now coming from countries such as the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Czech Republic. This shift reflects broader transformations in scholarly communication, where visibility and influence are increasingly shaped by digital dissemination, international collaboration, and the capacity to attract diverse, high-quality contributions. A key milestone in this trajectory has been the Journal's strengthened international positioning since 2022, culminating in its publication partnership with De Gruyter Brill from June 2025. This development has enhanced accessibility, professionalised editorial and production processes, enhanced author services and analytics, and more firmly integrated PED into global scholarly circulation. The expanding geographic spread of submissions signals growing recognition beyond the Journal's original institutional and national constituency. PED now operates not merely as an institutional and national outlet, but as a regional and increasingly international forum for educational scholarship—one that remains grounded in African contexts while actively engaging with global academic debates.

2.2 PED as a Knowledge and Policy Interface

Beyond its publication profile, PED functions as a critical interface between knowledge production and policy engagement. Across its history, the Journal has hosted debates on educational policy, curriculum reform, pedagogy, teacher education, access, and equity. In doing so, it has served not only as a repository of research but as a space where ideas are interrogated, contested, and translated into wider conversations about educational transformation. This role is particularly significant in contexts where the relationship between research and policy remains uneven. As argued by Gibbons et al. (1994), the growing emphasis on socially distributed and application-oriented knowledge underscores the need for research to engage with real-world contexts. PED has contributed to this agenda by publishing work that speaks to both conceptual debates and practical concerns. Equally, the gap between research production and policy uptake persists. The Journal's continued relevance depends not only on what it publishes, but on how effectively it mediates between scholarship, policy, and practice in ways that are both critical and constructive.

2.3 Thematic Evolution of Scholarship

The contemporary profile of PED is also reflected in the evolution of its thematic scope. Earlier scholarship associated with the Journal was largely centred on foundational concerns such as educational philosophy, *Education for Self-Reliance*, language policy, adult and community education, curriculum development, and the

broader role of schooling in national development (See Ishumi's note in this issue). These early contributions were closely aligned with post-independence nation-building priorities and the imperative to situate education within the broader project of social and economic transformation. While these concerns remain important, subsequent scholarship expanded to engage issues of educational planning, assessment systems, research methodologies, and the structural legacies of colonial education. This marked a gradual shift towards more critical and system-oriented analyses of education in relation to development.

More recent work reflects a further widening of focus in response to changing educational realities. Contemporary scholarship increasingly engages questions of decolonisation and epistemic justice, language and identity, STEM education, gender disparities, digital inequality, teacher professional development, educational governance, and community engagement. This aligns with the Journal's broader commitment to examining the interrelationship between education and development in Africa and its responsiveness to emerging global and regional challenges. This thematic diversification is significant as it demonstrates the Journal's responsiveness to both persistent and emerging concerns in education and development. It shows that PED is not confined to inherited debates but is actively engaging with contemporary challenges, including technological change, shifting labour markets, global knowledge hierarchies, and demands for inclusion and social justice. In doing so, the Journal reflects broader transformations in educational discourse, where questions of relevance, equity, and knowledge production remain central.

Overall, these developments mark PED as a journal in transition—anchored in a strong national and institutional legacy yet increasingly international in outlook; committed to rigorous scholarship yet engaged with policy and practice; historically grounded yet responsive to emerging intellectual and social challenges. This contemporary positioning provides an important basis for reflecting on both the contributions of the present anniversary issue and the broader challenges and future directions that follow. The thematic evolution of scholarship in PED can be conceptualised as a layered process of intellectual expansion, as illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2: *Thematic Evolution of Scholarship in PED*

As shown in Figure 2, PED's thematic trajectory reflects a layered evolution—from foundational post-independence concerns, through system-oriented and critical expansion, to contemporary and emerging themes shaped by global, regional, and epistemic shifts in education and development.

3 Contemporary Challenges in Scholarly Publishing and Editorial Practice

The current landscape of scholarly publishing presents a complex set of operational, ethical, and epistemic challenges that shape the functioning and sustainability of journals such as PED. While many of these challenges are global in nature, their implications are often more pronounced within journals based in the Global South, where institutional capacity, resource constraints, and evolving publishing infrastructures intersect. Figure 3 synthesises these interconnected challenges, illustrating how operational, ethical, and epistemic pressures converge within a structurally unequal global knowledge system to shape PED's editorial and publishing environment.

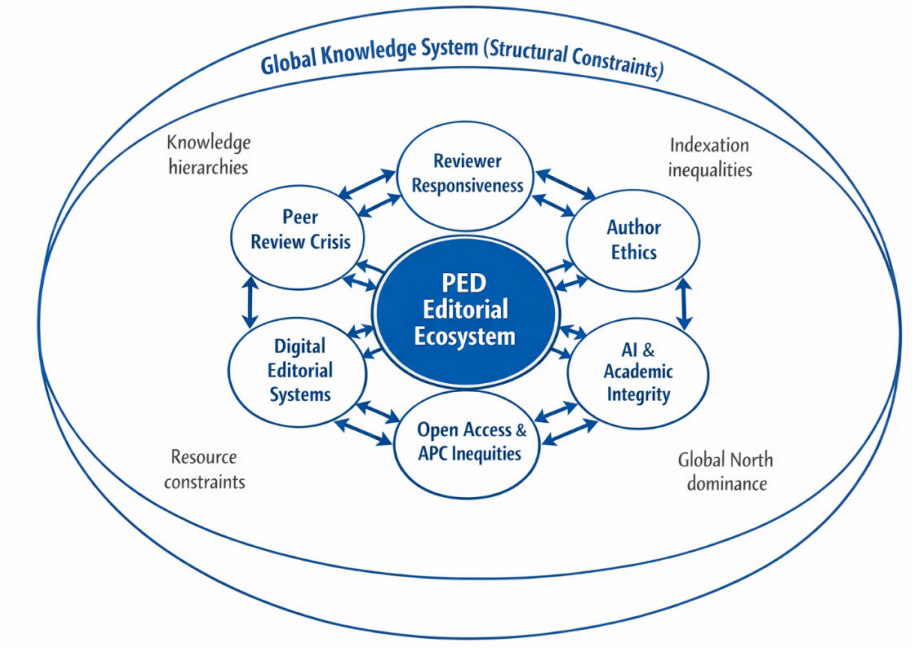


Figure 3: *Interconnected Editorial and Publishing Challenges Affecting PED Within a Structurally Unequal Global Knowledge System*

The following discussion highlights key challenges emerging from PED's experience and situates them within broader debates in academic publishing.

3.1 The Peer Review Crisis: Recruitment and Changing Expectations

One of the clearest pressures on contemporary journals is the growing difficulty of securing qualified peer reviewers. This problem is widely recognised in scholarly publishing and is closely linked to rising submission volumes, increased academic workloads, and what is often described as "reviewer fatigue" (Beecher & Wang, 2025; Phuljhele, 2024). Large-scale reviewer surveys have identified reviewer availability as a major source of inefficiency in peer review (Publons, 2018). Within this broader crisis, PED has also encountered a more troubling shift: some reviewers now condition their participation on financial remuneration. This signals movement away from the traditional norm of peer review as collegial scholarly service towards a more transactional logic. PED has maintained the position that peer review should remain voluntary, consistent with longstanding editorial norms and COPE's broader ethics framework for journal practice (Committee on Publication Ethics [COPE], 2023b). The issue is not merely procedural. Once review is normalised as a paid service, questions arise about equity, bias, and the uneven ability of journals to secure reviewers on comparable terms.

3.2 Reviewer Responsiveness and Editorial Delays

Recruitment is only one part of the problem; responsiveness is another. Even after reviewers agree to assess a manuscript, late or non-returned reports can significantly slow editorial decisions. The result is not only delayed feedback to authors but also repeated follow-ups, reviewer replacements, and disruptions to the editorial workflow (Felisi et al., 2026). Such delays are often treated as individual lapses. Nevertheless, they are better understood as systemic symptoms of an overstretched review culture in which reviewing remains weakly recognised despite being central to the legitimacy of academic publishing (Publons, 2018; COPE, 2023b). For PED, this challenge raises an important editorial question: how can journals preserve rigour and fairness while reducing avoidable delays? The answer is unlikely to lie in reminders alone. Rather, it calls for stronger reviewer engagement systems, clearer expectations, and the deliberate cultivation of reliable, voluntary, and sustainable reviewer communities. Increasingly, some journals and publishers worldwide are also experimenting with incentive mechanisms, such as time-limited access to publisher content, formal recognition through platforms linked to ORCID profiles, and review-credit systems, to enhance reviewer motivation and visibility (Publons, 2018; COPE, 2023b).

3.3 Unethical Author Practices

Reviewer-related pressures are compounded by unethical author practices that weaken trust in the publication process. Among the most disruptive are simultaneous submissions to multiple journals and the failure to return revised manuscripts after extensive peer review (Emanuele, 2025). These practices waste reviewer labour, distort editorial planning, and slow down the handling of other manuscripts. More importantly, they undermine the norms of transparency and responsibility on which scholarly publishing depends (COPE Council, 2024). COPE's guidance remains clear that redundant or overlapping submission is a serious ethical concern, not a minor procedural inconvenience (COPE, 2017a, 2017b; COPE Council, 2024). At the same time, such practices may partly reflect authors' responses to protracted editorial delays—often up to a year or more without feedback. This delay underscores the need for greater accountability on the part of journals and editors to ensure timely, transparent communication. For PED, this means that editorial strengthening must go beyond gatekeeping. It must also involve continued author education on publication ethics, clearer communication of journal policies, addressing protracted delays in the review process, and consistent enforcement of submission standards.

3.4 Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Scholarly Communication

Artificial intelligence, especially generative AI, is rapidly reshaping scholarly communication. Its potential benefits are real: AI tools can assist with language editing, improve readability, and lower some barriers for authors writing in English as an additional language (Zaim et al., 2025). Yet these advantages are inseparable from new ethical risks (Aladsani et al., 2026). COPE has already documented growing concern over undisclosed AI use in manuscripts, AI-generated peer reviews, and uncertainty about the limits of acceptable editorial and authorial use (COPE, 2023a). These developments challenge established assumptions about authorship, originality, confidentiality, and accountability. For PED, the issue is not whether AI should be embraced or rejected. The more urgent question is how it should be ethically used and governed. Clear editorial policies are needed to distinguish assistive from generative use, require disclosure where appropriate, and preserve meaningful human accountability in both authorship and review.

3.5 Digital Transition and Editorial Systems

The shift from email-based editorial handling to digital manuscript management systems has improved traceability, workflow management, and transparency. At PED, the adoption of De Gruyter Brill Editorial Manager represents an important step towards professionalised publishing. Yet the digital transition is not frictionless. Some reviewers and contributors, particularly those long accustomed to email-based systems, experience difficulties accessing manuscripts, navigating submission platforms, or uploading reports. What appears to be a technical issue is, in fact, partly a capacity issue: digital infrastructure only improves editorial efficiency when users can engage with it confidently. This suggests that digital upgrading must be accompanied by training and support, particularly to local reviewers. Without such investment, new systems may inadvertently exclude willing participants or introduce fresh bottlenecks into the review process.

3.6 Open Access, Hybrid Publishing, and Persistent Inequities

The shift towards open access has often been framed as a democratising move in scholarly communication. Yet the growth of hybrid models, where subscription access coexists with Article Processing Charges (APCs), has exposed a deeper tension between accessibility and equity. While such models can widen dissemination, they can also reproduce structural inequalities, especially for authors working in resource-constrained institutions and countries (Naim et al., 2021). Evidence from the wider publishing landscape increasingly warns that APC-based systems risk creating a two-tier order in which research may be more open to read, but not equally open to publish (Ross-Hellauer, 2022). For PED, this tension is especially important. The Journal's transition from a fully open-access model to a hybrid arrangement reflects broader shifts in global publishing. Open access increases visibility, but

APCs can create real financial barriers for authors without institutional or external support. The challenge is not simply technical or financial; it is normative. A journal committed to educational scholarship from Africa must continually assess whether its publishing model expands participation or quietly narrows it, while proactively enabling access through institutional support, alternative funding, and initiatives such as Research4Life. Sustaining access, visibility, and financial viability without reproducing exclusion will remain one of PED's most difficult editorial balancing acts.

4 Structural and Systemic Constraints in Global Knowledge Production

Beyond immediate editorial and operational concerns, PED operates within a broader global knowledge system characterised by persistent structural inequalities and asymmetries. Journals based in the Global South continue to face challenges of limited visibility, underrepresentation in major indexing databases, and constrained participation in global scholarly networks. These conditions often marginalise locally grounded scholarship, even when it addresses issues of high contextual and societal relevance (Chan & Costa, 2005). Knowledge hierarchies further shape what is recognised as legitimate or high-impact research, frequently privileging theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and publication venues rooted in the Global North. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) argues, global knowledge production remains marked by "epistemic injustice", where certain forms of knowledge are systematically excluded or devalued. Within this landscape, journals such as PED must navigate a persistent tension between maintaining contextual relevance and achieving global recognition. The dominance of English intensifies this tension: while it facilitates international visibility, it may simultaneously constrain the inclusion of diverse linguistic and epistemic traditions (Chan & Costa, 2005; Phillipson, 1992).

Resource constraints compound these structural challenges. Limited funding, reliance on voluntary editorial labour, and infrastructural limitations affect not only the efficiency of journal operations but also their long-term sustainability and impact. These constraints are not merely logistical; they shape the pace, reach, and authority of knowledge production itself. As Raewyn Connell (2007) notes, global academic systems continue to reproduce uneven patterns of knowledge production and circulation that disadvantage institutions in the Global South. Addressing these challenges requires more than internal editorial adjustments. It calls for broader systemic shifts in how academic knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated, alongside sustained institutional commitment to strengthening scholarly ecosystems in the Global South.

5 Future Directions: Repositioning PED for the Next 50 Years

The future of *PED* will undoubtedly depend on its ability to respond strategically to both internal operational demands and broader transformations in scholarly publishing. The next phase requires not only consolidating recent gains but also deliberate repositioning to strengthen intellectual influence, editorial rigour, and global visibility. Figure 3 illustrates the strategic pathways for repositioning PED over the next 50 years, conceptualising its future as an interconnected ecosystem balancing quality assurance, global visibility, and epistemic responsibility.

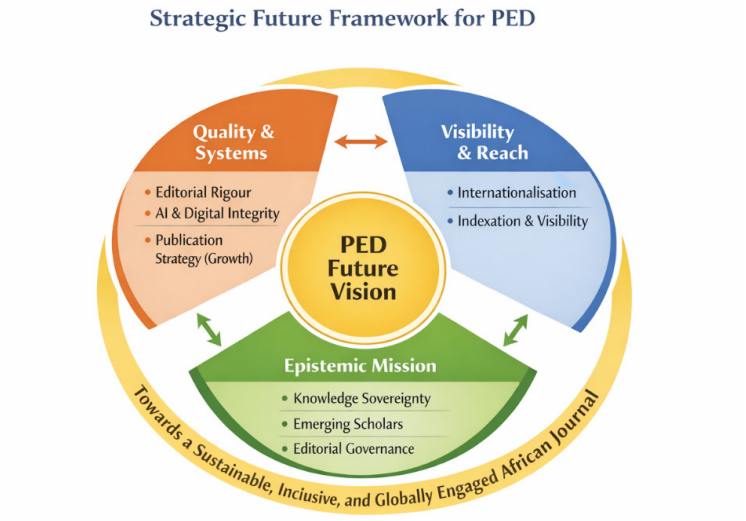


Figure 4: *Strategic Pathways for Repositioning PED For the Next 50 Years*

Building on the framework presented in Figure 4, the following discussion offers a detailed and systematic elaboration of the proposed strategic pathways.

5.1 Sustaining and Deepening Internationalisation

A central priority is to sustain and deepen PED's trajectory towards internationalisation. While the Journal has expanded its reach beyond Tanzania, maintaining this momentum calls for deliberate editorial strategies. In particular, there is a need to avoid re-localisation, in which publications become overly concentrated within a single national and/or institutional context. That said, continued strengthening of geographic and institutional diversity among authors, reviewers, and editorial board members will be essential. Internationalisation should not be reduced to visibility alone; it requires cultivating a genuinely diverse and inclusive scholarly community.

5.2 Safeguarding rigour in the Digital and AI Era

The growing integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence in scholarly communication calls for renewed attention to academic rigour. PED should continue

strengthening peer review processes to ensure consistency, transparency, and accountability. Clear policies on AI use in manuscript preparation and review are also needed, with emphasis on disclosure, originality, and intellectual responsibility. For *PED*, such frameworks are essential for sustaining trust in published research within an evolving technological landscape.

5.3 Enhancing Quality, Objectivity, and Editorial Standards

Improving editorial quality and consistency remains critical. This includes strengthening reviewer guidelines to promote timely, constructive, and analytically rigorous feedback, as well as ensuring fairness, objectivity, and coherence in editorial decision-making. Reinforcing ethical publishing practices among authors and reviewers alike will further enhance PED's credibility as a journal committed to high-quality, principled scholarship.

5.4 Indexation and Global Visibility

Expanding indexation remains a strategic priority for PED. While the Journal is currently indexed in African Journals Online (AJOL) and Google Scholar, inclusion in major international databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, and EBSCO would significantly enhance its visibility, credibility, and citation impact. To this end, several initiatives have already been implemented to strengthen PED's eligibility for inclusion in major indexing systems. These include the assignment of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) to all published articles since December 2023, the strengthening of author guidelines, and, more recently, the introduction of manuscript processing dates (received and online publication dates) by the current publisher. Indexation is not merely a technical milestone; it represents recognition within global scholarly ecosystems. Continued progress in this area will depend on sustained improvements in editorial transparency, publication quality, and international engagement. That said, PED's editorial leadership, in collaboration with the publisher, must prioritise inclusion in major indexing databases as an immediate and short-term strategic objective.

5.5 Managing Growth and Publication Strategy

Submission trends indicate rapid growth in both volume and diversity. Submissions increased from 44 in 2023 to 63 in 2024, reaching 105 by the end of 2025, with contributions from across Africa and beyond. While this expansion reflects rising visibility and scholarly relevance, it also places increasing pressure on editorial and peer review systems. This trajectory requires a careful reassessment of publication strategy, including issue frequency and acceptance thresholds. Expanding output, for example, increasing to three or four issues per year, may be desirable in the short to medium term to accommodate rising submissions. However, such expansion must not come at the expense of quality, objectivity, or the Journal's rigorous standards. Thus, strategic growth decisions should prioritise scholarly integrity

over numerical expansion, ensuring that increased output is matched by sustained editorial capacity and a robust peer review process.

5.6 Strengthening Editorial Leadership and Governance

Sustaining PED's growth and quality will require strengthened editorial leadership and governance structures. This includes expanding the editorial team—ideally to at least three editors, rather than the current two—enhancing the diversity and capacity of the editorial board, and reinforcing reviewer networks at both regional and international levels. Greater representation from across sub-Saharan Africa should be a key priority in the composition of future editorial boards, as this will reinforce the Journal's regional identity, visibility, and scholarly impact. Equally important is the need for sustained and visible institutional support, including dedicated funding mechanisms, to ensure efficient, professional, and resilient editorial operations. Such support is critical not only for managing increasing submission volumes but also for maintaining the integrity, timeliness, and long-term sustainability of the Journal.

5.7 Advancing Knowledge Sovereignty and Decolonial Scholarship

PED is well positioned to advance knowledge sovereignty and decolonial scholarship in the coming decades. This entails promoting research grounded in African epistemologies, Indigenous knowledge systems, and contextually relevant methodologies. It also requires ongoing critical reflection on editorial practices to ensure that diverse forms of knowledge are recognised, valued, and meaningfully integrated into scholarly discourse. Such a direction warrants sustained and deliberate attention as PED moves into its next fifty years. Positioning the Journal as a platform for "home-grown" scholarship will not only reinforce its intellectual identity but also enhance its distinctiveness within the global academic landscape.

5.8 Fostering Emerging Scholars and Scholarly Communities

The long-term vitality of PED will depend significantly on its ability to support emerging scholars, including postgraduate students and early-career academics. Despite its growing influence as a reputable international journal, PED has continued to uphold a developmental editorial approach that reflects its original vision. As noted by Ishumi, the inaugural issue in 1975 included contributions from postgraduate students, signalling an early commitment to nurturing new voices in academic scholarship. In recent years, this commitment has been sustained through iterative review processes and editorial guidance aimed at supporting less experienced authors to refine and publish their work. Strengthening this trajectory will require more structured mentorship pathways, including developmental peer-review models and dedicated spaces for early-career researchers. Such initiatives would not only enhance publication readiness but also contribute to building a more inclusive and supportive scholarly community. For PED, supporting emerging

scholars is not merely a continuation of tradition but a strategic priority and a long-term investment in the future of educational research in Africa.

6 PED in the Next 50 Years: A Forward-Looking Vision

Looking ahead, *PED* is well-positioned to evolve into a leading African epistemic hub that not only reflects educational realities but also actively shapes scholarly, policy, and practice-oriented conversations. Its future trajectory lies in consolidating its identity as a globally recognised journal while remaining grounded in African contexts, priorities, and knowledge systems. This dual positioning—locally rooted and globally engaged—will be central to sustaining its relevance and influence. As an African epistemic platform, PED can advance forms of knowledge production that are contextually grounded, methodologically diverse, and intellectually independent. This includes creating space for scholarship that interrogates dominant paradigms, foregrounds indigenous knowledge systems, and contributes to ongoing debates on decolonisation and knowledge sovereignty. Strengthening global recognition, in turn, will depend on sustained commitment to high editorial standards, international collaboration, and broader indexation, enabling the Journal to participate more visibly in global academic discourse.

PED's role as a policy-informing platform remains equally important. By publishing research that engages directly with educational challenges and reform processes, the Journal can continue to bridge the gap between scholarship and practice. Strengthening this interface will require not only rigorous research but also greater attention to accessibility, relevance, and dissemination beyond academic audiences. Emerging global and regional challenges also call for stronger interdisciplinary engagement. *PED* is well positioned to promote scholarship that connects education with fields such as artificial intelligence, climate change, public health, and the future of work—areas that are increasingly reshaping educational systems. Similarly, there is a need to prioritise community-engaged research that links academic inquiry with lived realities, ensuring that knowledge production remains socially responsive and practically meaningful.

The next 50 years of PED will depend on its ability to remain intellectually vibrant, institutionally resilient, and strategically adaptive. By strengthening its position as an African-centred yet globally connected journal, PED can continue to advance educational research, inform policy, and contribute to broader processes of social transformation.

7 Conclusion: Consolidating Legacy, Confronting Challenges, and Shaping the Future

As *PED* marks its 50-year milestone, it stands as a testament to sustained scholarly commitment and intellectual engagement within Tanzania, across Africa, and beyond. Over time, the Journal has evolved from a nationally anchored publication into an increasingly recognised regional and international platform. This trajectory reflects both continuity in purpose and transformation in scope, reach, and ambition, underscoring PED's enduring relevance as a site for critical engagement with educational questions across shifting historical and social contexts. This paper has shown that the Journal's present moment is defined not only by achievement but also by tension. Pressures on peer review, shifting expectations around scholarly labour, unethical authorship practices, the disruptive implications of artificial intelligence, and persistent structural inequalities in global publishing all shape the conditions under which PED operates. These challenges are not peripheral; they go to the core of how knowledge is produced, validated, and circulated. Addressing them demands more than procedural adjustment. It requires sustained critical reflection on the norms, values, and responsibilities that underpin scholarly communication.

The future of PED will depend on a shared commitment across its scholarly community. Editors must safeguard rigour while providing strategic direction; reviewers must uphold the ethos of scholarly service; authors must engage responsibly and ethically; and institutional leadership must invest in the Journal's long-term sustainability. The strength of PED lies in this collective ecosystem, and its continued vitality will depend on how effectively these roles are sustained and aligned. PED's significance, however, extends beyond institutional continuity. Its future rests on its ability to remain intellectually assertive, contextually grounded, and globally engaged. As it navigates new pressures, the Journal must not only document educational change but also actively shape the terms through which education is understood, debated, and transformed. In this sense, PED is not simply a record of past scholarship; it is a living intellectual project with a continuing responsibility to shape the future of educational thought, policy, and practice in Africa and beyond.

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