

Editorial

Dear readers,

It is with great enthusiasm that we present **Volume 42, Issue 1 (June 2024)** of *Papers in Education and Development (PED)*. This edition brings together a diverse range of scholarly articles exploring critical issues and themes across diverse fields and all levels of education. The eleven (11) articles featured in this issue showcase research spanning various educational contexts, challenges, and innovations in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. These studies reflect the continued resilience and adaptability of educators, teachers, policymakers, parents, and students in the face of emerging educational and social challenges in the African continent. The diverse topics covered within these pages also speak to the pressing need for sustained collaboration between stakeholders to improve the quality and equity of education in the region. Across eleven impactful studies, we are reminded of the vital importance of adapting to the changing educational landscape, empowering educators, teachers, and lecturers to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to thrive.

The global pandemic forced many education systems to rethink their approaches to teaching and learning. This issue begins with an investigation by **Eugenia J. Kafanabo**, who explores the use of mobile phone technology to sustain learning during COVID-19 school closures in Tanzania. Her findings reveal that despite the technological challenges, including financial constraints and limited instructional skills, parents and teachers quickly adapted to using mobile devices as a potential solution to continue education during the crisis. The study underscores both the potential and the limitations of mobile technology in bridging learning gaps during crises, calling for increased government investment in robust online learning infrastructures. **Rosina Okyere Amponsah** and her colleagues then shift our focus to Ghana, where their study explores the experiences of headteachers in Ghanaian primary and junior high schools during the pandemic. Their findings reveal the occupational stress headteachers faced due to the increased responsibilities of managing safety protocols and ensuring educational continuity during the pandemic. Their findings also showed that reducing job demands and enhancing management support can alleviate stress and improve school leadership under challenging circumstances. This research suggests that while neither gender nor age significantly influenced stress levels, the overwhelming pressure highlights the need for structural changes in how educational leadership roles are supported, especially during crises.

Shifting from the pandemic to pedagogical practices, **Subilaga M. Kejo, Maregesi M. Machumu, and Mjege Kinyota** investigate the practice of inquiry-based instruction (IBI) in Tanzanian early years education. Their research reveals that while the curriculum supports IBI, limited teacher understanding and structural barriers prevent its effective integration and full implementation. These findings highlight not only the need for targeted professional development to equip teachers with the skills needed to foster inquiry-based learning environments but also the imperative for revising curriculum structures to support more innovative and inquiry-driven pedagogies, particularly in the foundational years of education. The theme of innovative leadership and engagement is prominently featured in this issue. **OJO Olubukola James, ALAO Busayo Oluwabukola, and ATOLAGBE Adedapo Adetiba** explore lecturers' engagement in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Their findings indicate that while lecturers are highly engaged in teaching and research, they require further support in academic advising and administration. These findings point to an opportunity to foster deeper engagement in these core activities through improved institutional support systems. This has significant implications for higher education institutions aiming to enhance job performance and provide support for lecturers' multifaceted roles. **Prisca F. Kimaryo, Severine S. A. Kessy, and John J. Sanga** delve into innovative leadership in Tanzanian public secondary schools, illustrating how such leadership can increase employee engagement. Their study highlights the reciprocal nature of leadership and teacher commitment, emphasising the need for continuous innovation in educational leadership to maintain high levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction among teachers.

Environmental education is another critical theme, with **Leatitia Gabriel Mashaza, Eustella Bhalalusesa, and Ibrahimu Nzima** investigating the constraints in the teaching and learning of environmental education in Tanzanian teachers' colleges. Their findings point to resource shortages, inadequate teacher preparation, and insufficient curriculum integration as key barriers. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions, such as outdoor activities, enhanced training, and stronger partnerships with community stakeholders, could significantly improve the delivery of environmental education in schools. Entrepreneurship education also receives attention from **Theresia E. Busagara, Regina V. Mukama, and Petro S. Magai**, whose comparative study examines trained and untrained science students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship and innovation in Tanzania. Their findings reveal that while students trained in entrepreneurship demonstrate a greater inclination toward innovative practices, formal education alone is insufficient to foster entrepreneurial skills and innovation. These findings point to the need not only for supplementary training that can supplement formal education with entrepreneurial

education to promote problem -solving skills and scientific innovation among students but also to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and practical application in addressing societal challenges.

From a different angle, **Usman Kojo Abonyi's** study investigates the effects of teachers' participation in decision-making on their organisational commitment in Ghanaian basic schools. His research indicates a positive correlation between shared leadership and teacher commitment, revealing that when teachers are more involved in decision-making processes, their commitment to the organisation increases. This highlights the potential for shared leadership models involving teachers more deeply in critical decision-making processes to enhance both teacher satisfaction and school performance. Turning to the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in capacity building, **Humphrey Nkonyani, Justinian J. C. Galabawa, and Amina Nasibu Kamando** evaluate the impact of NGO-supported training programmes on teachers' competence in managing learning environments in Tanzania. Their findings reveal that while these programmes improve teachers' competence, their sustainability is limited by their short durations and the lack of ongoing support. This study suggests the need for sustainable interventions to ensure lasting improvements in teaching practices, which build upon the initial benefits of capacity-building initiatives.

Moreover, **Jafari Abdala and Mwajuma Vuzo's** study examines assessment practices in English language classrooms in Tanzanian secondary schools. The findings reveal a heavy focus on writing skills, often at the expense of speaking skills. This study points to the need for improved teacher training poised to equip teachers with comprehensive assessment skills that can balance the evaluation of both written and oral language skills to ensure holistic language development among students. Finally, **Mwanaidi I. Toroka and Eugenia J. Kafanabo's** study conclude this issue by assessing the relevance of technical education curricula to industry demands in Tanzania. Their study highlights significant misalignments, such as outdated content and inadequate facilities, underscoring the urgent need for curriculum reforms that align with competency-based education and training (CBET) standards. This has important implications for the future of technical education in preparing graduates to meet the evolving demands of the labour market.

As we draw this issue to a close, a clear message emerges: the future of education in sub-Saharan Africa lies in the collective efforts of educators, researchers, policymakers, and communities working together to overcome challenges and embrace opportunities for growth. The articles presented not only offer critical insights into how education systems can be more resilient, inclusive, and responsive to societal needs but also provide a roadmap for navigating the complexities of 21st-

century education, whether through digital innovation, leadership transformation, or enhanced pedagogical practices. It is my hope that these contributions will stimulate further research and dialogue, ultimately informing strategies to strengthen educational outcomes across various contexts in the African continent and beyond.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I extend my deepest appreciation to all the authors, reviewers, and editors who have contributed to making this issue possible. I trust that readers will find the research presented here both thought-provoking and useful.

Eustella P. Bhalalusesa

Chief Editor, *Papers in Education and Development (PED)*