

A journey through diamond open access publishing: Honoring the silver jubilee of Bahir Dar Journal of Education

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Abstract

This editorial introduces Volume 25, Issue 1 of the Bahir Dar Journal of Education (BJE), celebrating its 25th anniversary. It emphasizes BJE's enduring commitment to Diamond Open Access publishing, ensuring that research is freely accessible for all. Additionally, the editorial highlights the seven peer-reviewed manuscripts included in this issue which delve into pivotal themes in education, such as gender equity, leadership, and pedagogical innovations. It also underscores the journal's dedication to fostering inclusive scholarship and its commitment to publishing high-quality educational research that is freely available to a global audience.

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On behalf of our editorial team and publisher, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this landmark 25th issue of the Bahir Dar Journal of Education. As we mark this significant milestone, we reflect on a quarter-century dedicated to fostering and disseminating rigorous educational research and scholarship. This anniversary is a fitting opportunity to highlight BJE's foundational commitment to Diamond Open Access (DOA) publishing.

Diamond open access, characterized by the absence of author-facing publication fees and reader-facing subscription charges, embodies a radical shift in scholarly communication; democratizing knowledge dissemination by ensuring research is accessible to all, regardless of financial constraints or institutional affiliation (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad, 2024; Kuchma, & Ševkušić, 2024). This model empowers institutions and researchers to own and govern their publishing platforms, fostering a more equitable and inclusive research ecosystem (Dufour, Pontille, & Torny 2023).

BJE's publishing model, particularly since 2014, has embraced the principles of DOA, providing free and immediate access to research. This model has been instrumental in facilitating broader dissemination of research findings and enhancing their impact within the education community. The DOA model has positioned BJE at the forefront of research, actively fostering scholarly exchange and contributing to the global knowledge base. This commitment to diamond open access, a core value of the journal, ensures accessibility to a broad audience, including those in resource-constrained settings. This approach aligns with the increasing importance of localized agency, multilingualism, and diverse knowledge

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production, providing a vital alternative to the commercially driven academic publishing landscape (Dufour, Pontille, & Torny 2023).

This issue, Volume 25, Issue 1, embodies BJE's commitment to open access alongside its focus on impactful research and scholarship. This commitment, however, necessitates an awareness of the complexities of sustaining DOA, particularly within the African context. Challenges arise from insufficient funding, a lack of dependable internet access, inadequate digital infrastructure, disparities in technology access, low levels of awareness, reluctance of publishers, and the need for capacity building (Kodua-Ntim & Fombad, 2024; Mensah, 2024). According to Kuchma and Ševkušić (2024), African journals, including BJE, encounter several challenges, primarily financial constraints. They also experience challenges related to human resource and visibility. Additional difficulties include recruiting reviewers, issues with journal database registration, and pressure to conform to Western guidelines that may not be appropriate for the local context (Kuchma & Ševkušić, 2024).

To overcome these challenges, BJE acknowledges the importance of collaborative efforts. In this regard, funding agencies and other institutions, particularly those based in the West, can play a crucial role by providing financial support to improve journal indexing and visibility. They can also contribute by building capacity through targeted training programs for journal editors and reviewers, as well as enhancing the infrastructure and technologies necessary for increasing the impact of scholarly journals. By investing in these areas, agencies can play a pivotal role in significantly enhancing the growth and development of academic publishing. This collaborative approach should prioritize the autonomy and self-governance inherent to the DOA model, aiming to build a truly global and inclusive research landscape. This collaborative approach should prioritize the autonomy and self-governance central to the DOA model, aiming to build a truly global and inclusive research landscape. By emphasizing these foundational principles, stakeholders can work together to ensure equitable access, diverse participation, and the empowerment of researchers worldwide, ultimately enhancing the quality and reach of academic discourse.

Following our discussion on BJE's decades-long journey with DOA, we now introduce the articles featured in this issue. This edition of the Bahir Dar Journal of Education presents a diverse collection of seven peer-reviewed manuscripts, including five original research articles, one short communication, and one book review. A total of 22 authors from four countries in Africa, Europe, and North America—Ethiopia, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, and the United States—have contributed their expertise and perspectives, enriching the global dialogue on educational policies and practices. The breadth of topics addressed, along with the geographical diversity of the contributors, exemplifies BJE's ongoing efforts toward inclusivity and demonstrates its commitment to serving as a platform for international scholarship.

Adding to this inclusive spirit, a truly unique and particularly noteworthy aspect of the present issue is the inclusion of an article written in Amharic for the first time in BJE's history. This momentous step responds to a growing demand to broaden the journal's reach and accessibility. This signals a shift towards a more inclusive and representative platform for educators, researchers, and policymakers within Ethiopia to share their findings, insights, and perspectives in their native language. We believe this move will significantly help to dismantle linguistic barriers and foster a more vibrant and accessible discourse on education.

The research articles showcased in this issue explore a range of critical themes, offering valuable insights into contemporary educational issues. Firstly, Nardos Chuta, Louise Yorke, Yisak Tafere, Dawit Tibebe Tiruneh, Alula Pankhurst, and Pauline Rose's research on the role of girls' clubs in challenging gender norms in Ethiopian primary education highlights the need for collaborative approaches to address systemic barriers that hinder girls' education. Their findings underscore the importance of financial support and community-level strategies in improving the impact of these initiatives.

Building upon this focus on educational leadership, Abebaw Ayana Alene, Misganaw Alene Tsegaye, and Getu Shiferaw Wolle's study delves into the predictive effect of principals' adaptive leadership behavior on teachers' workplace engagement. Their findings provide valuable insights for educational leaders aiming to foster a supportive and engaging work environment for teachers, ultimately impacting student outcomes.

In a related vein, Dame Taye, Tesfaye Semela, and Samuel Assefa contribute to the field of educational integrity with their work on the "development and validation of propensity to cheat measure in the Ethiopian public universities." Their work provides valuable tools for understanding and addressing academic misconduct.

Shifting our focus to instructional methods, Million Tadesse, Destaw Damtie, Solomon Melesse, and Getahun Yemata examine the "effect of science process skills-based teaching approach on secondary school students' scientific epistemological beliefs." This study offers valuable insights for science educators looking to enhance students' understanding of the nature of science.

Continuing this thread of pedagogical improvement, Tsegaye Girma, Marew Alemu, and Sefa Meka investigate the effectiveness of the Question-and-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy on students' reading comprehension and critical thinking in Amharic. This research provides valuable insights into pedagogical strategies that can be used to improve literacy and critical thinking in the Ethiopian context.

To address broader systemic concerns, Tefera Tadessea and Zelalem Teshome Wale offer a critical examination of Ethiopia's secondary school leaving examinations system. Their short communication provides a framework for evaluating the management, governance, and consequences of the reform process, contributing to the development of a more impartial, trustworthy, and effective evaluation system.

This issue concludes with a book review by Christopher Amrobo Enemuwe, offering an incisive critique of Michael S. Roth's "Beyond the university: why liberal education matters." The review provides a critical analysis of Roth's timely defense of humanistic education, challenging readers to reflect on its enduring relevance in addressing modern societal challenges such as technological disruption and vocational training biases.

As we honor our journal's 25th anniversary, we proudly acknowledge the dedicated work of our editorial team, peer reviewers, and authors, whose commitment to quality scholarship has been the foundation of BJE's success. We are also grateful to our readers and the wider educational community, whose support and engagement has been instrumental in our journey. Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) for recognizing and funding our efforts in diamond open access publishing.

We remain committed to upholding the highest standards of peer review and editorial rigor. We strive to publish innovative research that contributes to the improvement of

educational policies, practices, and outcomes. We welcome submissions from researchers based in Ethiopian as well as those from abroad to contribute their work to BJE.

Looking ahead, we are enthusiastic to continue our mission of disseminating valuable research findings and fostering collaborative discussions that address the complex challenges and opportunities within the ever-evolving landscape of education. We look forward to the next 25 years, continuing to serve as a vibrant and influential platform for educational discourse and scholarship. We are confident that the coming years will bring further progresses, both in the content we publish and the way we make it accessible, strengthening BJE's role as a catalyst for positive change in education.

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