

## **IGWEBUIKE EPISTEMOLOGY: TOWARDS A DECOLONIZED THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE**

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### **Abstract**

*The establishment of the ontological status of African philosophy has engendered diverse areas of inquiry. One such area is African epistemology, which concerns itself with the African conceptualization of knowledge: its sources, validity, and function. The present study on Igwebuike epistemology distinguishes itself by offering a challenging synthesis of various but interconnected epistemological perspectives within African traditions. It is a culturally grounded epistemology that prioritizes context and particular cultural experience, thereby interpreting and comprehending reality through African complementary cultural categories. While much has been written on epistemology, African epistemology has received limited attention. As such, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of African epistemology, with a specific focus on Igwebuike epistemology. The aim of this study is to demonstrate that African people possess a distinct epistemology that can be explicated. While relying on the Igwebuike theoretical framework as a foundation, the study employs the hermeneutic, thematic, and analytic modes of inquiry for the articulation of ideas. The research findings of this paper have the potential to enrich the body of literature on African epistemology. It posits that African people possess a unique epistemology that is relational, holistic, and complementary in character.*

**Keywords:** African, Igwebuike, Epistemology, Philosophy, Decolonization

### **Introduction**

The inquiry into the existence of African philosophy has been a long-standing debate. The confirmation of African philosophy's existence is predicated on the universal character of

philosophy and the universal capacity for reasoning within humanity. This affirmation of African philosophy's existence is tantamount to the acknowledgment of a distinct epistemology peculiar to African people, since African epistemology is a subset of African philosophy. Khaphagawani and Malherbe (2003) contend that "to assert the existence of African philosophy is to also imply the existence of an African epistemology, to the extent that an African epistemology is a subset of African philosophy" (p. 219). This paper, however, endeavors to discuss a distinctive form of African epistemology, namely, Igwebuike epistemology, which is autochthonous to the African people, yet characterized by a complementary disposition. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to inquire: What constitutes African epistemology?

Epistemology generally derives from two Greek words: *episteme*, which means knowledge and *logos*, which means theory or study. Put together, epistemology means, the theory of knowledge or the study of knowledge. The concern of epistemology revolves around two questions: the question of the origin of knowledge and the question of the nature of knowledge. In ancient Greece, *episteme*, which is knowledge, was used in contrast with *doxa*, which is belief. A belief is an opinion, which might not be true. For instance, the belief that the sun revolved around the earth or the belief that the earth is flat. This is different from knowledge. When we say that we know something, we mean to say that we are sure that the proposition or belief is true. It is not a guess, but a certainty. Omoregbe (2003), therefore, defines epistemology as "the study of the nature of human knowledge, its origin, its scope, its limits, its justification, its reliability or otherwise, its certainty. It is knowledge taking a critical look at itself to justify itself" (p. vi).

From the foregoing discussion, African epistemology refers to the African understanding of the nature of knowledge, the means by which knowledge is acquired, how one may justify or validate an epistemic claim, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence from an African perspective. The Igwebuike framework, rooted in the African worldview, constitutes a vital dimension of the discourse on African epistemology more broadly. As an ideology, Igwebuike holds that human existence is predicated upon solidarity and complementarity; to exist is to be with the other in a community of beings (Kanu 2016). This perspective is founded upon African ontology, which is marked by common origin, language, culture, race, color, habits, historical experience, and destiny.

This sense of commonality, complementarity, and understanding of life as a shared reality is integral to our perception of reality and, therefore, to our epistemology. It is at this juncture that this paper introduces the concept of Igwebuike epistemology. By Igwebuike epistemology, we mean a valid and justifiable African pattern of knowing that is

complementary in character. The complementary nature of knowledge from the Igwebuiké perspective posits that knowledge is not merely pursued for its own sake; it is acquired for the purpose of serving the other person with whom my existence is ontologically linked.

### **The Choice of the Concept 'Igwebuiké' Epistemology**

The African continent is one with multiple cultures and diverse philosophical and religious traditions. This explains why it cannot be argued that the entire of Africa holds the same values or standards or share the same expectations. This explains why the present author avoids the use of the concept of African Epistemology, for that would imply an epistemology that is common to every African people in the African continent. The researcher, therefore, prefers to use 'Igwebuiké' to qualify the present discourse on African Epistemology.

'Igwebuiké', therefore, describes that aspect of the African epistemological thought that points to the underlying principle of the epistemologies referred to as African. In this sense, the Igwebuiké concept becomes a unifying factor amid the plurality of the epistemological perspectives in Africa; it can also be considered the underlying principle in African epistemological expressions which remains constant amid the changes in epistemological perspectives in Africa. Or the operating condition that maintains the constancy of similarity amid the awesome diversity in Africa.

Thus, the idea of Igwebuiké is used to indicate that, although the research is based fundamentally on African epistemology, the African worldview is a shared worldview as there are many similarities and points of convergence. It, therefore, represents the generalizations from African epistemological expressions.

### **Igwebuiké Epistemology and the Quest for decolonization**

Over the years, a mounting concern has emerged regarding the Europeanization or constriction of philosophy and its implications for the Western conception of the discipline. As a result, various efforts have been made to broaden the scope of philosophy beyond the Western perspective, a process often referred to as the decolonization of philosophy. Igwebuiké epistemology exemplifies one such attempt to expand and enrich our understanding of epistemology by engaging with the African worldview.

Decolonization necessitates the displacement of the European canon as the normative center of the philosophical discipline and its replacement with reason and universality. Such a displacement need not involve an outright rejection of canonical philosophical

figures. Rather, it entails a philosophical practice that transcends the colonial paradigm. As Mladjo (2019) aptly observes that:

In effect, all of the experiences, histories, resources, and cultural products ended up in one global cultural order revolving around European or Western hegemony. Europe's hegemony over the new model of global power concentrated all forms of control of subjectivity, culture, and especially knowledge and the production of knowledge under its hegemony... They repressed as much as possible the colonized forms of knowledge production, the models of the production of meaning, their symbolic universe, the model of expression and objectification and subjectivity (p. 98).

The Igwebuiké epistemology offers a unique lens through which to examine epistemology, one that is rooted in the African perspective, articulated in African descriptive terminology, and couched within categories that resonate with the African experiential context. This approach serves to relocate epistemology within the African milieu and facilitate a sense of intellectual belonging. In this sense, the Igwebuiké epistemology constitutes a significant enterprise in the project of decolonizing epistemology.

### **Ontological Foundation of Igwebuiké Epistemology**

Igwebuiké epistemology is based on the complementary structure of the African world characterized by inclusiveness, the unity of worlds and high value placed on relationships. It is a universe of interrelatedness, the same ontology that shapes African philosophy and gives it its identity. It is this same structure interrelatedness that shapes African epistemology. Ruch and Anyanwu (1984) establish a connection between epistemology and ontology:

Knowing that African epistemology is rooted in African ontology, it is important to underscore that the epistemological view of traditional Africa is in harmony with her metaphysics. It is within this context that we become aware that knowledge in African epistemology is the understanding of the nature of forces and their interaction with the cosmic (p. 22).

Nwosimiri (2019) also holds the same perspective when avers that:

We must know the basic assumptions, concepts, theories and worldviews in terms of which the owners of the culture interpret the facts of experience. Without the knowledge of the African mind process and the worldview into which the facts of experience are to be fitted both the African and European researchers would

merely impute emotive appeals to cultural forms and behaviour suggested by some unknown mind (p. 77).

Igwebuike epistemology is, therefore, not detached from the way the African conceptualizes and interprets his or her universe within the context of peculiar experiences in terms of worldview, religion, culture and tradition. It is a worldview that does not separate the object and subject of knowledge (Udefi 2014; Ajei 2009) but understands them as a cooperative relationship, given the interdependent, interpenetrative and interrelated nature of the African universe.

### **Knowledge, the Human Person and Relationship**

Igwebuike posits that life is a relationship, and it is only within this relationship that knowledge and life itself are possible. To be a human being, you must relate to your environment- and know the things around you. “To be” within the context of a human being and not know is not “to be” (Kanu 2017). Every human being wants to know, meaning that every human being cannot but make an effort towards knowing in a general sense. This Igwebuike perspective implies that everyone can know, and thus the fact that a person lives means that the person can know. Once a person “is”, the person begins to know given that a person cannot be outside of a relationship. And since a person exists in a relationship, the person begins to be known as soon as he or she begins to exist. Nwosimiri (2019) adds:

...the idea of knowledge and the desire to know, arguably, is innate in every human being. Each day, we make claims of knowledge and try to defend them. We ask ourselves various questions about knowledge, trustworthiness or the justification of what we are trying to defend. And in the process, we ask ourselves such questions as: How sure that what I think I know is correct? What is the foundation of the knowledge I claim to have? Is knowledge absolute, relative or objective? This shows that it is not enough for one to merely claim to know something. One needs to show that what one knows or claims to know is the case (p.4).

The natural capacity for knowledge is a fundamental aspect of human nature that manifests itself through a child's inquisitiveness, constant questioning, and unwavering commitment to discovering the truth. Such a pursuit entails grappling with the complexity of the world, conjecturing, and testing hypotheses while attempting to grasp the boundaries of one's own capacities and the limitations inherent in the surrounding circumstances.

Thus, the human search for knowledge resists facile and superficial solutions to the queries that arise in the mind. Instead, one's pursuit of understanding and attainment of excellence serves to deepen one's realization of their humanity. As aptly articulated by Torrance (1970),

Whenever the child learns only to follow the familiar and safe way, whenever the adventure is taken out of learning, whenever a child learns to ask only those questions to which the teacher knows the answer, whenever he learns never to upset existing organizational patterns and procedures, whenever he learns never to see the defect in the existing order- he sacrifices some of his humanness. He progresses whenever he dares take the next step from where he is to a new level of functioning. (pp. 6-7).

The human quest for knowledge extends beyond the mere acquisition of information or the resolution of personal dilemmas; it encompasses the realization of our full potential as human beings.

Given the interconnectedness of being and knowledge, the curtailment of one's liberty to pursue knowledge has profound implications for the vitality of the individual's intellectual and emotional life. This intimate correlation between knowledge and being suggests that the cultivation of our epistemological capacities not only enhances our intellectual faculties but also engenders a fuller realization of our being or the attainment of our full human potential.

### **Knowledge, Justification and the “Other”**

The Igwebuike conception of existence as a communal reality and the prerequisite of relationships as the foundation of all possibilities similarly extends to its epistemological perspective. In this framework, knowledge derives its significance within the context of its relevance to others. It is fundamental to note that what one knows about oneself and the other is inherently related to the other. Consequently, this Igwebuike perspective of epistemology exhibits a complementary character and underscores that knowledge is not an end in itself.

Traditional African societies hold the view that knowledge acquisition serves not only personal interests but also the betterment of the community. The acquisition of knowledge is intrinsically linked to a way of life that finds meaning and fulfillment in the existence of others. For instance, a hunter's decision to pursue a life of hunting does not solely benefit himself but rather contributes to the preservation of the community as a whole. The same holds true for a fisherman who operates not in isolation but as an integral member of his

community. It is crucial to note that knowledge acquisition may also serve personal interests, but this Igwebuiké perspective posits that knowledge acquisition primarily serves the interests of the other, thus fostering the preservation of the human community and its world.

In the Igwebuiké epistemological context, the value of knowledge is not intrinsic to the knowledge itself, but rather lies in the value it brings to the other with whom one shares their existence. Therefore, if the knowledge one possesses has negative consequences on the being of others, then it cannot be considered good and is not worthy of the name knowledge. In fact, such knowledge is considered worse than ignorance.

Unlike in western epistemology, Igwebuiké epistemology does not draw a sharp distinction between internalism and externalism. Internalists, who demand reason and reasonable grounds for knowledge claims, hold that the subject must have direct cognitive access to the belief for it to be justified. On the other hand, externalists, who demand truth, hold that factors outside the mind of the subject can impact the justification status of belief. In the Igwebuiké context, however, both perspectives are complementary. Both internal and external factors are necessary for the justification of what one knows to be true. Any contradiction from either dimension raises questions about the certainty of such knowledge; however, if the two dimensions affirm each other, it strengthens the certainty of knowledge.

### **Sources and Forms of Knowledge**

The Igwebuiké perspective on the sources of knowledge is eclectic and structures itself on a system of forms or sources of knowledge that are complementary to each other. Each occupies a place of importance in the galaxy of the sources or forms of knowledge. These sources or forms of knowledge include:

a. *Old age knowledge*: This is the kind of knowledge that comes from the wisdom of the old or elderly, accumulated over the years from lived experience. Such persons are considered to be depositories of knowledge. Tempels (1959), Menkiti (1984) and Ani (2013) refer to such knowledge as practical and experiential. This covers the philosophical sages of Oruka (1991; 1997) who for Azenabor (2009) are filled with exceptional wisdom from cumulative experience.

b. *Perceptual knowledge*: This is first-hand knowledge that is gained through the sensory experience of the human body by witnessing what has happened at a particular time in a particular place (Ndubisi 2014 and Elijah 2009).

c. *Common sense knowledge*: This is the knowledge that is innate to every African. Everyone is born with common sense. It is a knowledge that one does not decide to gain; it is gained effortlessly without the task of reflection (Etim 2013), and helps a person to distinguish between good and evil.

d. *Mystical knowledge*: This is the kind of knowledge that is gained through what Jaki (2000) refers to as non-quantities, that is, the spiritual realm. It is God who gives this kind of knowledge to whomever he wishes; Uduigwomen (2009) refers to it as extra-sensory knowledge. It is possessed by diviners, medicine men and other sacred specialists in African societies (Mbiti 1969; Peek 1991; Abimbola 1971; 2006; Bascom 1939; 1969; 1981; 1991).

These forms of knowledge depend on each other for the achievement of their end, which is to know. This is contrary to the western epistemological pattern that separates the rationalist form from the empiricist form as though they do not have any relationship in the project of knowing.

### **Approaches in Igwebuike Epistemology**

The approaches peculiar to Igwebuike epistemology include: the wholistic approach, From the known to the unknown approach, the interdisciplinary approach, the sympathetic/Non-derogatory/Non-dominant approach and the complementary approach. These dimensions will thus be discussed in detail.

#### *a. Wholistic/Holistic Approach*

The Igwebuike approach to knowledge is wholistic in nature, without divisions such as empiricism, rationalism, subjectivism, objectivism, etc. It is a unitary vision of reality in which the object and the subject cannot be discriminated against (Wiredu 1998).

This wholisticness is anchored on the Igwebuike perspective that all parts of reality are interconnected and that they find Identity, meaning and purpose through connections to the other. The result of a wholistic approach is that it brings about integrated education that serves the interest of the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the human person.

#### *b. From the Known to the Unknown Approach*

Igwebuike approach begins from the known reality to the unknown. It uses the known as a stepping stone to get to the object of its research, which is the unknown. This method of research is based on the very nature of learning itself.



What we observe become “known” to us, and it is by comparing what we already know with some other thing unknown to us that we learn new realities. Thus, children learn by comparison, for instance, by comparing a new voice with the voice of the mother. Babies always like to taste and feel things with their mouths, and in this tasting, they are comparing two different realities, and often relate to one based on the taste of the other. Thus, they are moving from the known to the unknown. As children continue to make more comparisons, more information moves into the “known” category.

*c. Interdisciplinary Approach*

Igwebuikwe approach strongly advocates for an interdisciplinary kind of investigation. This is based on the interconnectivity of reality. By interdisciplinary approach, it means combining two or more established or traditional academic disciplines in a process of research. Nisani (1997) defines interdisciplinary as:

Interdisciplinarity is best seen as bringing together distinctive components of two or more disciplines. In academic discourse, interdisciplinarity typically applies to four realms: knowledge, research, education, and theory. Interdisciplinary knowledge involves familiarity with components of two or more disciplines. Interdisciplinary research combines components of two or more disciplines in the search or creation of new knowledge, operations, or artistic expressions. Interdisciplinary education merges components of two or more disciplines in a single program of instruction. The interdisciplinary theory takes interdisciplinary knowledge, research, or education as its main objects of study. (n.p).

An interdisciplinary approach synthesizes perspectives, knowledge, skills, interconnections, epistemologies, etc., thus drawing knowledge from several other professions, technologies and fields like sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, religion, culture, science, etc. It is about creating new knowledge by thinking across boundaries. This approach is indispensable if complex problems must be solved in society. This, may, therefore, involve two or more researchers from different disciplines pooling their experiences, and approaches and modifying them so that they are better suited to the problem at hand.

*d. Sympathetic/Non-Derogatory Approach*

The sympathetic, non-derogatory or non-dominant approach emphasizes the need to respect the views or perspectives of people other than ourselves. The encounter between the west and African was non-sympathetic, dominant and derogatory (Jordan 1949; Okonkwo 2002; Isichei 1970).

The sympathetic and non-derogatory approach is exemplified in the method Saint Paul used towards the Athenians. Although he was so exasperated at the sight of Athens, an

idol-ridden pantheistic city and people, he –Paul the missionary *per excellence*, did not *prima facie*, condemn neither the idols nor the people. Paul’s sympathetic, non-dominant and non-derogatory approach created a free and natural ground. Employing secular wisdom and intellect, he referred to the "idol-ridden-pantheistic Athenians" as God-fearing and extremely scrupulous in matters of religion (Acts 17:23). By acknowledging their religious and cultural values, Paul demonstrated a deep understanding and accord with their way of life and the laws of nature. Even as he adopted this polite and humane method of engaging with foreigners or gentiles, St. Paul remained resolute and unwavering in his solemn proclamations (Okonkwo, 2019).

*e. Complementary Approach*

The Igwebuiké approach posits that the pursuit of knowledge is an endeavor that must be undertaken within the framework of a communal inquiry. In this approach, knowledge acquisition is not viewed as a solitary undertaking, but rather as a collaborative effort that is informed by the perspectives and insights of others. The Igwebuiké perspective recognizes that the involvement of others is crucial for the refinement and complementation of one's perspective. Accordingly, every researcher must maintain a connection with resources that are external to themselves. The communal support and intellectual stimulation provided by group engagement is believed to improve the quality of knowledge that is generated. In support of this perspective, Torrance (1970) has written:

One becomes human by making use of the energy available from outer sources to become a better-integrated personality, to interact at a deeper level with the environment, and to achieve greater fulfilment of his potentialities. One loses his humanness when he is estranged, isolated, rejected, and cut off from the sources of information, inspiration and spiritual strength. (10).

To keep away from the complementary power of other persons and other sources of knowledge is to limit one’s knowledge.

**Purpose of Knowing**

The purpose of knowing is linked to five canons or philosophical principles. These principles provide a foundational structure on which African indigenous education is built and also provide the purpose of knowing from the Igwebuiké perspective.

*a. Preparationism*

The African acquires particular knowledge or skill in preparation for particular roles in the family or society. Knowledge conferred was always for a particular purpose- skill for

an awaited responsibility. This explains why men were equipped with particular knowledge to fulfil their particular roles in the human community. The women were also equipped with particular knowledge as it relates to their responsibilities in society. Every knowledge gained is therefore a preparation, and this preparation is for the betterment of the human society where one lives. Another question that arises is: Can't a person gain knowledge just for the sake of knowledge? This is true, but the aspect that preparation brings out is that in gaining knowledge the human person becomes a better human being and by being a better human being, human society is improved.

*b. Functionalism*

According to this principle, education is practical and participatory in nature. The pupil learns through working with or observing the master. For instance, young men learn the art of farming by following their fathers to the farm and learning how the land is tilled, the crops planted, the farm weeded, and the crops harvested. As they learn they begin to participate in these activities. Education is always participatory as it takes place within the context of a relationship.

*c. Communalism*

Within the African context, the responsibility of teaching was not solely the responsibility of the parents of the child. This is based on the fact that the child is not individually owned. There is an Igbo adage that says: "Nwa bu nwa oha" (A child is for everyone). The parents, family, community and society are all involved in the education of a child. In the absence of a father, an uncle can teach or correct a child. This is very important as one thing done by another could have adverse consequences on another. Teaching another person or correcting the other is, therefore, a good which one does to himself or herself. More so, the idea of communalism, also means that teaching and learning are geared towards solving community problems.

*d. Perennialism*

It sees education as a way of preparing the child to become acquainted with the finest achievements of his cultural heritage and to become aware of the values of his heritage. The idea of perennialism within the Igwebuikwe perspective holds that learning prepares the young to maintain the cultural heritage that has been handed down from one generation to the next (Mushi 2009).

*e. Holisticism*

Holisticism is rooted in the African traditional educational system which emphasizes a comprehensive approach to education. This system recognizes the importance of individuals possessing diverse skills and knowledge. For instance, an individual who has been trained as a hunter can also engage in farming, butchering, meat preservation, or

even market the catch. Similarly, an individual who has been trained in dance or wrestling is not limited to those pursuits but can also engage in other activities like farming, building, or hunting.

Emenanjo and Ogbalu (1982) note that traditional African societies emphasized a broad-based approach to education. Education was considered a multifaceted enterprise that encompassed physical education, moral education, character development, intellectual growth, and vocational training. Physical education focused on activities that promote physical well-being, while moral education emphasized the need for individuals to exercise restraint over their impulses and desires. Character development aimed to instill positive values, and intellectual growth entailed the ability to integrate observed experiences, conceptualize and analyze situations. Vocational education, on the other hand, focused on equipping individuals with practical skills relevant to their respective occupations.

### **The Complementarity of Education and Culture**

Education and culture as complementary dimensions. Education as a concept points to the universal, however, culture points to the particular. Culture on the one hand is a social heritage that encompasses a people's way of life, which includes knowledge, beliefs, customs, laws, arts, morals, etc., that a group of people build up and expect members to acquire, share and live by. Education, on the other hand, is the process of transmitting cultural heritage for the development of the individual. While education transmits culture, culture provides the *locus* and the instruments for education. Akagbogu (1999) writes on the dynamics of education and culture:

All over the world, people in every society take pains, to devote time and attention to educating young ones to be functional adults. In most cases, these pains, the devotion of time and attention to the rearing of young ones are geared towards impacting and transmitting cultural and social knowledge that would enable the young ones to fit in well into the social and physical environment of the society in which they live. In the process of impacting this social and cultural knowledge to the young ones, different sociocultural values and norms are used. (p. 70).

Notwithstanding the process of transmitting culture, education is fundamentally culture-bound as its methodologies and principles are inextricably linked to cultural contexts. To attain its fundamental aims across different people, places, and times, education must be inculturated. This implies that education, when conducted in a manner that is harmonious

with the cultural context in which it takes place, and expressed through elements that are inherent to the culture of a particular people, becomes a principle that not only animates, directs and unifies cultures but also transforms and remakes them to bring about a new creation.

### **Igwebuike Epistemology and Collective Philosophy**

The character of African epistemology is inextricably linked to the collective dimension of African philosophy. It is through its complementary dimension that the spirit of collectivism finds expression, a facet that has come under scrutiny by African and Western philosophers alike. Such criticisms, however, stem from a lack of appreciation for the theoretical underpinnings of Igwebuike, which serves as the foundational basis for collective philosophy in African thought.

While Western philosophy is the record of the philosophies of individual persons, for instance, we have Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras, etc., in African philosophy, it is different. Afolayan (2006) writes that “Instead of the gallery of individual philosophers who symbolize the culture's confrontation with its experiences, ... there is an attempt to summarize the philosophical enterprise in Africa into a collective, communal framework” (p. 22).

Criticizing oral tradition as the cause of group philosophy, Appiah (1992) thinks that, “Oral tradition has a habit of only transmitting consensus” (p.92). Based on the collective character of African philosophy, Hountondji (1976) describes African philosophy as simply a myth, the myth of unanimity and consensus. Reacting to Hountondji, Gyekye (1987) accuses him of ignoring:

While it is accepted as true that African philosophy, in the past, is collective, it is also good to mention that its collective character does not mean that it ceases to be philosophy or critical. Gyekye (1987) argues that “In Africa’s historical past, there has been an absence of ... known and identifiable individual thinkers who stand out and can claim to have originated specific philosophical doctrines and to whom we can trace such doctrines” (p. 24). But this is not to say that there were no individual thinkers, for that they are not known does not mean that they did not exist. According to Gyekye: “But surely, it was individual wise men who created the African ‘collective’ philosophy. A particular thought or idea is, as regards its genesis, the product of an individual mind” (p. 24).

Gyekye maintains that a profound relationship exists between philosophy and culture. While African philosophy is characterized as a collective thought, it is not isolated from the ideas, beliefs, and thoughts of the wider society, as individual thinkers draw from this

common pool of cultural resources. This phenomenon is not unique to African philosophy; rather, it is evident in other cultural contexts, as reflected in the nomenclature of "Oriental philosophy" or "British philosophy," which ascribes philosophical ideas to the respective cultural milieu that produced them. Similarly, German philosophy is attributed to the German mind, and so on.

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, the following conclusions can be drawn about Igwebuike epistemology:

- a. It is an epistemology that is not considered from the scientific point of view. This is not to say that scientifically based knowledge has no place in it. It is culture-based.
- b. It is an epistemology that gives place to context and peculiar cultural experience, and therefore, interprets and understands reality within the African complementary cultural context and categories.
- c. It is an epistemology that has room for collective subjects in terms of family lineage and community and, therefore, for collective thought.

This paper has shown that the African people have a unique epistemology that is social and wholistic; it is based on the interdependence of the self and the external world.

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