



# African Culture and the Quest for Sustainable and Improved Indigenous Knowledge Production: Nigeria and South Africa in Perspective

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## Abstract

Culture is the way of life of a people. But Western culture has deprived Africa of most of its cultural practices and values. The jettisoning of the African way of life for a Western one has affected indigenous knowledge production. Beaming the light on South Africa and Nigeria, this article interrogates the impact of culture/African ways of knowing on indigenous knowledge production in Africa, and unravels how much Africa has been able to incorporate its culture in knowledge production systems amid the penetration and preponderance of alien culture. It relies on historical perspective and document analysis. The article finds that African ways of knowing have been largely eroded in Nigeria, and that South Africa fares better but still faces some challenges. This has negatively affected the quest for sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production, vis-à-vis finding lasting solutions to the peculiar political, economic and social problems in these countries. It concludes that if Nigeria and South Africa, and indeed the African continent, are to attain sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production, they must preserve African ways of knowing, without which indigenous knowledge production will remain in the abyss.

## Résumé

La culture est le mode de vie d'un peuple. Mais la culture occidentale a privé l'Afrique de la plupart de ses pratiques et valeurs culturelles. L'abandon du mode de vie africain pour un mode de vie occidental a affecté la production de connaissances indigènes. Mettant la lumière sur l'Afrique du Sud et le Nigéria,

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cet article interroge l'impact de la culture/modes de connaissance africains sur la production de connaissances indigènes en Afrique, et révèle à quel point l'Afrique a intégré sa culture dans les systèmes de production de connaissances dans un contexte de pénétration et de prépondérance de cultures étrangères. L'article s'appuie sur la perspective historique et l'analyse de documents. Il constate des modes de connaissance africains largement érodés au Nigeria, quand l'Afrique du Sud s'en sort mieux mais reste confrontée à des défis. Cela a eu un impact négatif sur la recherche d'une production durable et améliorée de connaissances endogènes, ainsi que sur la recherche de solutions durables aux problèmes politiques, économiques et sociaux spécifiques à ces pays. L'article conclut que si le Nigeria et l'Afrique du Sud, et même le continent africain, veulent parvenir à une production de connaissances endogènes durable et améliorée, ils doivent préserver les modes de connaissance africains, sans lesquels la production de connaissances autochtones restera dans les abîmes.

## Introduction

Culture as the way of life of a people depicts how a certain people within a geographical location behave and react to both indigenous and global issues. Hofstede (1984:21) defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another.' Cultural experiences differ across the globe and are rarely exactly the same in any two geographical locations, hence the notion that culture is unique. African cultural experiences differ significantly from those of the West or Europe. Whereas the likes of Europe and the 'Asian Tiger' states of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan have preserved their cultures and inculcated them into their knowledge production systems (Idowu 2020), Africans have largely abandoned their cultural values in pursuit of Western culture which is alien to the people of the continent. This has a significant effect on the nature of knowledge produced on the continent. The embrace of Western culture fosters Westernised ideas/knowledge production and has interrupted the quest to improve the production of indigenous knowledge in Africa.

Culture is an important tool in the production of indigenous knowledge (Thaman 2000; Asante 1990). It leads the way to other indigenous matters of a people. Sadly, colonialism has stripped the continent of most of its cultural values, and indigenous knowledge production continues to suffer setbacks in Africa. It does this by replacing African pre-colonial knowledge systems (learning through proverbs, songs and folklore, local language and storytelling) with Western systems and Eurocentric curricula. Sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production is not unachievable in Africa (Higgs 2010), but it is only possible within the confines of the continent's culture.

Questions continue to arise on what African or indigenous knowledge entails. Scholars such as Mudimbe (1988), Walker and Hountondji (1985) and Hountondji (1996) aver that knowledge is indigenous or African when it originates from Africa, and is promoted by Africans, with the cultural values embedded in Africa. Knowledge is African or indigenous when it concerns itself with conceptual and theoretical issues concerning and underpinning African culture. As Gyekye (1987) rightly says, knowledge is a cultural phenomenon because it is grounded in cultural experiences. As such, if a people wants to produce indigenous knowledge peculiar to them, then such a people must necessarily stick to their culture. From the foregoing, it is clear that culture and indigenous knowledge production are intrinsically linked (Thaman 2000; Asante 1990) and as such, must be taken together. According to Oladipo (1992:24), the challenge with knowledge production in Africa has to do with 'the extent to which African philosophers [knowledge producers and knowledge seekers] have been able to use whatever intellectual skills they possess to illuminate the various dimensions of the African predicament'.

Higgs (2010) argues that the problem surrounding the production of indigenous knowledge in Africa is not one of meeting the criteria for knowledge being African, but a problem which has to do with the extent to which African knowledge seekers/producers have been able to direct their intellect in the struggle and destiny of Africans. What this suggests is that African scholars, rather than focus attention on African culture and histories in the quest for knowledge production for the advancement of the continent, continue to shift their focus towards Western cultures and histories. This has been to the detriment of African culture and a denial of a sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production on the continent.

Knowledge production in Africa has been given a Eurocentric outlook, largely reflecting Western cultures rather than the indigenous cultures of learners (Agrawal 1995, 2002; Battiste 2002; Cassie 2009). This, largely hampers the comprehension of learners as a result of cultural gaps between the Westernised school curricula and those of the cultural environment which learners are most used to (Abah, Mashebe & Denuga 2015). For instance, the teaching and/or replacement of local/indigenous languages with foreign languages like French, German, and English is emblematic of the Eurocentric curricula now prevalent among African schools. There is no gainsaying the fact that African indigenous knowledge has been in existence from long before Western education and cultures were introduced to Africa. As Thaman (2009) rightly states, the introduction of Western education/knowledge meant that African learners faced conflicting demands from the new knowledge and from the culture they had been used to. Rather than

engage in the production of indigenous knowledge capable of resolving African political and development crises, Africans have continued to produce knowledge that is not particularly useful and applicable to the peculiar challenges besetting the continent.

It is pertinent to interrogate the place of culture in indigenous knowledge production in Africa, taking Nigeria and South Africa; as case studies. The article seeks to unravel how much culture influences knowledge production; how Africa has held onto or strayed from its culture; and how all of these affect the quest for a sustained and improved production of 'African indigenous knowledge'. The section following this introduction provides conceptual clarification for culture, indigenous knowledge and knowledge production. The subsequent section deals with theories of decolonisation, while section four examines the state of culture and indigenous knowledge production in Africa. Sections five and six examine culture and indigenous knowledge production in Nigeria and South Africa respectively, while section seven compares the countries' experiences. The final two sections present the way forward and concluding remarks.

### **Conceptualising Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Production**

Culture has been defined as the way of life of a people. It is the values and norms people share which make it possible for them to live together in the same community and in a particular way. Obioha (2010:2) defines culture as 'the sum total of all things that refer to religion, roots of people, symbols, languages, songs, stories, celebrations, clothing and dressing, and all expressions of our way of life'. Hence, culture covers all aspects of our lives, from religion to politics, technology, and food production. Mimiko and Afolabi (2012) argue that culture cuts across the processes of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, and social relations. For Edewor (2003:195), culture is 'the way of life of the members of a society, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation'. It is worth noting that culture can be learned and unlearned (Obioha 2010); this explains why people can jettison their culture over time when they are introduced into another cultural setting.

Culture is intrinsically tied to the capacity/ability for indigenous knowledge production (Thaman 2000). What this suggests is that once culture has been punctured and cultural values lost, the prospects of indigenous knowledge production are diminished. In providing a link between culture and indigenous knowledge production, Goduka (2000:73) avers that cultural learning (like learning about the nature of spirit and its relationship with

the environment and community) paves the way to knowledge about life itself. The incorporation of culture into knowledge production systems allows people to learn and make meaning of their everyday lives (Mkabela 2005:181). This suggests that the culture of a people enables them to develop indigenous knowledge peculiar to their environment and society. McCarthy (1996:1) succinctly outlines the significant impact of culture on indigenous knowledge production. According to him, 'knowledge is best conceived and studied as *culture*, and the various types of social knowledges communicate and signal social meanings – such as meanings about power and pleasure, beauty and death, goodness and danger. As powerful cultural forms, knowledges also constitute meanings and create entirely new objects and social practices' (McCarthy 1996:1). This demonstrates that indigenous knowledge production is practically impossible outside the confines of culture.

Furthermore, knowledge produced outside indigenous culture – that is the everyday life of the people – and built upon external culture would negatively influence indigenous knowledge production. For Akena (2012:606), this imposition of external culture is both colonising and disempowering, and undermines those norms, practices and values that maintain harmony and morality. This aligns significantly with the position of Smith (1999:59) that the production of 'new knowledge' based on external culture to replace 'old knowledge' based on internal culture of the people is akin to colonial exploitation. These arguments and positions demonstrate the significance of culture in indigenous knowledge production.

Inculcating culture into human development approaches has been found to ensure that learning is based on the everyday experiences of the indigenous people (Botha 2010), which in turn implies indigenous knowledge production. Nevertheless, while these various positions on the important role of culture in indigenous knowledge production are plausible, Goduka (2000) avers that this does not suggest a return to the archaic and barbaric traditions of pre-colonial periods, but rather the need to harness culture for the production of knowledge which is indigenous and peculiar to the challenges facing the people. This will indeed create space for combining both African indigenous culture and Western knowledge systems, a situation which will ensure that African students are better prepared for the greater world (Kante 2004).

Knowledge can be said to be indigenous when such knowledge is produced within a certain community or locality, and used in the same community for its advancement. According to the World Bank:

Indigenous knowledge is unique to a particular culture and society. It is the basis for local decision making in agriculture, health, natural resources

management and other activities. Indigenous knowledge is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals. It is essentially tacit knowledge that is not easily codifiable (World Bank 1998:i).

Indigenous knowledge is local knowledge, unique to a particular culture or society (Warren 1991). It is knowledge about a certain people, for the people and by the people. Indigenous knowledge comprises the skills, experiences and insights of people, applied to maintain or improve their livelihood in their communities (Ilo n.d.:471).

Knowledge production is the act or process of generating knowledge. When new knowledge/ideas are invented, we can say that knowledge has been produced. The process of producing knowledge encompasses a cluster of related activities.

### **Theorising Decolonisation**

This article adopts the decolonisation and anticolonial frameworks for analysis. Decolonisation theory, as propounded by scholars like Fanon (1963) and Thiophene (1995), posits that decolonisation takes some time, and that it is a gradual process, rather than a spontaneous event. For Fanon (1963), decolonisation is a process in history that operates to change the social order left behind by acts of colonialism. Decolonisation refers to an initial violent encounter of two forces which are 'opposed to each other by their very nature, which in fact results from and is nourished by the situation in the colonies' (Fanon 1963:36). It involves the questioning of colonialism and its aftermath (Dei 2002:7). For Thiophene (1995:95), decolonisation is a 'process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them; between European discourses and their colonial dis/mantling.' This theory raises the need for the awareness that the act of decolonisation is not instantaneous but is a gradual process. The theory is useful to understanding the fact that if Africa is to regain its cultural values, most of which have been lost to colonialism, it must be through gradual processes and must not be rushed. The theory suggests that Africa must set the pace for the process of decolonising its culture to enhance indigenous knowledge production. Decolonisation theory helps to explain why, in spite of the fact that colonialism seems to have long 'come and gone' in Africa, Africans are still entangled in the web of European culture and knowledge.

Anticolonial framework, as put forward by scholars like Memmi (1969) and Fanon (1963), reaffirms the reality of recolonisation processes through the dictates of global capital and mainly through knowledge production. The theory unravels the tussle in cultures, ideas, and histories of knowledge

production and their use. It conceptualises 'colonial' not simply as 'foreign' or 'alien', but rather as 'imposed and dominating' (Dei 2002). Anticolonial framework recognises the importance of locally produced knowledge, the products of cultural histories of a people and the daily human experiences and unique histories. The theory recognises the importance and potency in the use of local languages and indigenous knowledge and culture to create social understandings. It also advocates the combination of indigenous literature with culture, history, politics, economics, and understandings of issues of the spiritual realm. Anticolonial framework 'offers a critique of the wholesale degradation, disparagement and discard of "tradition and culture" in the interest of so-called "modernity" and the "global space"' (Dei 2002:8). The theory will therefore be useful in explaining and understanding the need for Africa (Nigeria and South Africa in particular) to sever links with Eurocentric culture and embrace its own cultural values in its quest for indigenous knowledge production. As the theory encourages parting ways with a foreign way of life and the development of indigenous African knowledge, so is it useful to explain the Nigerian and South African cases. This will help to drive home an understanding of why these countries must return and hold onto their cultural values if they are to attain the sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production they so crave.

### **The State of Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in Africa**

The situation in Africa where culture (indigenous languages, proverbs, folklore, and songs, among others) has been largely replaced by Westernisation/modernity hampers the production of indigenous knowledge, while encouraging the production of Western knowledge and ideas. The prospect of the sustained and improved production of local knowledge looks slimmer by the day. Like most of their counterparts across the African continent, the prospects of both countries in this study for the production of culturally unique knowledge (Warren 1991) have been dealt a huge blow owing to abandonment of cultural values.

For Hountondji (1995; 2002), another major setback for indigenous knowledge production in Africa is the fact that academic and research activities are still carried out in colonial languages like French, English and Portuguese. This is a cultural erosion and a hindrance to the development of research and theory based on indigenous African conceptual frameworks and paradigms. Kaya and Seleti (2013:32) posit that colonial and apartheid education and research in Africa did not give room for indigenous knowledge production, because they replaced the African way of life with

the Western way of life. Mimiko and Afolabi (2012:92) explain the effect of such cultural neglect in Africa thus: ‘comprehensive social development, the type that Africa desires today cannot be attained in the context of a wholesale displacement of all facets and forms of the African culture...’

Knowledge production in Africa suffers from Eurocentric biases which have pushed indigenous African knowledge to the backstage in the global knowledge production system (Altbach 1987; Teferra & Altbach 2004:38–40). Lowy (1995:728) posits that the Westernisation of knowledge in Africa has imposed on both teachers and learners, a knowledge which does not show a true reflection of their experience of the world, and this has forced them to adhere to the imposed knowledge because they have little choice in the colonial framework. In Africa, therefore, knowledge becomes Western ideas and philosophies which are based on external cultures in Europe and America. This near total neglect of African culture in the knowledge production system on the continent has impeded Africa’s ability to contribute to, and make significant impact in global knowledge production system (Habib 2014). Le Grange (2007) attests to the fact that African local cultural knowledge, which is tenable in various African knowledge genres, has been dealt a blow in educational and knowledge production systems. This is despite the fact that African culture provides a rich source for knowledge production. Evidence shows that African culture was successfully used for youth education in times past (Boateng 1990).

To drive home the point about the relegation of African culture in the knowledge production system, Semali (1999) relates how efforts to integrate indigenous literacy (poems, drama, proverbs, etc.) into the education system in Tanzania met with various challenges. Challenges included over-reliance on international assistance, lack of political will on the part of leaders, the absence of teaching methods which are indigenous to Africans, and the disconnect of African scholars from African culture (Semali 1994).

Owing to the neglect of African culture in knowledge production on the continent, knowledge produced is consistently disconnected from local realities, concerns and challenges. As a result, African intellectuals are largely insensitive to the challenges in their local communities (Muya 2007). The reason for this is quite straightforward – as the Western and Eurocentric knowledge which Africans now adopt was designed to suit societal challenges in Europe and the West, it cannot be successful in Africa. Kaya and Seleti (2013) provide evidence for the foregoing when they aver that African intellectuals are yet to be able to design theoretical and methodological approaches peculiar to the attainment of knowledge production and sustainable development on the continent.



According to Kaya and Seleti (2013:34), 'there is little attention given to African indigenous literary and philosophical traditions because they tend to be viewed as primitive and unscientific, hence, not proper sources of social theory and research development'. Today, Africans are compelled to either stay at home away from formal education, or are introduced into full-time formal education which completely separates them from African traditional knowledge systems (Raymond 2011). Western education inculcates in African youths the belief that their indigenous culture and way of life can offer them nothing, and that African indigenous knowledge and languages are obsolete and lack the capacity to solve modern societal challenges (Kaya & Seleti 2013:36). This continues to hamper the prospects of harnessing African culture for indigenous and sustained knowledge production on the continent.

Akena (2010) provides the example of Uganda, where young Africans were taken away from their homes, and were disconnected from their local and indigenous knowledge and traditional education. The colonial masters taught Ugandans and Africans the bible with the notion of liberating them from poverty, disease and backwardness, but it eventually deprived Africans of their indigenous knowledge, spirituality and tradition (Akena 2010, 2012).

### **Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, the transmission of knowledge from elders to younger generations via storytelling, songs, folklore, proverbs, norms, local languages, observation and experiment (Ilo n.d.) has been largely abandoned. These methods are, according to Ilo, the link to indigenous knowledge production. With the distortion of these processes, indigenous knowledge production suffers setbacks. Nigeria is a country with diverse ethnic groups, multiple languages, and numerous cultural values and experiences, noticeable in their beliefs, folklore, medicine, religion, marriage, and education, to mention but few. Nevertheless, a many of these have been largely eroded by a Western way of living. There is a Westernisation of the Nigerian way of life which affects the country's ability/capacity to produce sustained and improved indigenous knowledge.

The use of the mother tongue in Nigeria has gradually reduced over the years, replaced with English. As Iwara (2015:26) has demonstrated, traditional languages in Africa, from Nigeria to Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, have been largely lost and replaced with English. This is part of the process of cultural erosion in these countries. Nigeria is also affected significantly by the challenge identified by Kaya and Seleti (2013:32) that 'despite decades of self-rule, African scholars have not

succeeded in empowering the continent to develop its own educational theoretical and methodological framework for knowledge production and sustainable development'. This claim can be accounted for by the erosion of the indigenous way of life in Nigeria, which makes indigenous knowledge production difficult. In Nigeria, educational structures – which are the vehicles for knowledge production – were inherited from colonial masters, and are based on cultural practices and values different from the African way of life and completely alien to the African indigenous societies (Kaya & Seleti 2013). This is perpetuated by continuing ties with former colonising masters, economically, socially and technologically. The marginalisation of, and failure to integrate African cultural practices and values and indigenous languages into the education system at all levels in Nigeria, continue to hamper the potential of the country to produce knowledge indigenous to its people and to its particular challenges (Mimiko & Afolabi 2012).

To demonstrate the extent to which culture has been lost in Nigeria, Opata (1998) shows how a significant aspect of Igbo traditional culture, which aligns significantly with Western knowledge and ideas, has not been incorporated into the knowledge production system. According to him, the breaking and exchange of kola nuts, signifying peace, goodwill and reconciliation, aligns with Western and modern knowledge on the importance of respect for others' opinions, dialogue, deference to elders, conflict negotiation, and tolerance and forgiveness. If Igbo culture was incorporated into the knowledge production system, Opata (1998) is of the view that parents could be involved in educational curricula in Nigeria, and forge the perfect link between culture, schooling, and indigenous knowledge production. The role of parents as the custodians of culture would be re-ignited, harnessed, and they could inculcate traditional culture in their children, which will complement the knowledge obtained in schools. This would in turn, make room for indigenous knowledge production in the country.

While indigenous and local languages were once used in Nigerian primary and secondary schools, have been gradually replaced by foreign languages like French, Spanish, and German, among others. Regarding higher levels of education, no higher institution in Nigeria offers indigenous knowledge system programme, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. The Nigerian government recognises the important place of culture in indigenous knowledge production, but has paid lip service to the need to incorporate indigenous culture into the learning and teaching processes. This lack of commitment to incorporate culture into the knowledge production system in the country continues to impede the potential for indigenous knowledge production in Nigeria.

## **Culture and Indigenous Knowledge Production in South Africa**

Pietersen (2005) shows how South Africa has abandoned the indigenous way of life and indigenous knowledge in the pursuit of Western knowledge. Pietersen posits that though empirical research has greatly improved and has become methodologically sophisticated in South Africa, knowledge production is still largely based on Western paradigms, and the use of non-local materials is rampant.

Smith (2002) and Walter (2002) argue that education remains one means through which South Africa is being kept from its indigenous way of life and the prospect of sustained and improved indigenous knowledge production. This they attribute to the continuous marginalisation and lack of integration of African cultural values and indigenous languages into the education system at all levels.

There is no doubt that South Africa keeps looking for means to culturally diversify its knowledge production system to propel national development (Botha 2010). This has been driven mostly by three prominent reforms in the education system, namely: the outcomes-based education model, the Curriculum 2005 (C2005), and efforts to correct the social inequality brought about by Western and Eurocentric knowledge systems. Nevertheless, Botha (2010:223) argues that these have not been sufficient to reverse the Western model of education and instill African culture. For instance, the C2005 education reform has been criticised for still adopting Eurocentric models (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani 2002). It still advocates for modernity to the detriment of local ways of life and culture, and it jettisons and maligns African traditional values (Bredlid 2003). C2005 has also been criticised for adopting Eurocentric models which are not able to create a link and balance between national and ethnic/cultural identities which are relevant for citizens' self-recognition (Van Lieres 2005). Botha (2010:224) also traces the origin of C2005 to debate which evolved in places like New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Scotland and the United States. This reaffirms the fact that education in South Africa and Africa in general is not rooted in the indigenous culture of the people, but on Western ideas.

Derek Hanekom, the then incumbent South African Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, noted in 2004 that 'indigenous knowledge has always been and continues to be the primary factor in the survival and welfare of the majority of South Africans' (IKS Policy 2004:4), but evidence shows that, in practice, the country does not significantly demonstrate the important place of indigenous culture in the education system (Botha

2010:232). Botha (2010) warned that as long as the country's education framework still significantly takes on Western approaches, local and indigenous knowledge production will continue to face marginalisation and the threat of extinction.

While the South African government realises and acknowledges the important place of indigenous African culture in indigenous knowledge production, implementation has been lacklustre, portraying a lack of commitment to fully disconnect from the Eurocentric approaches of learning, and a lack of faith in the indigenous models and approaches (Botha 2010:235; Mangena 2008).

In an effort to integrate African culture in its knowledge production systems, Kaya and Seleti (2013:38) note that various higher education institutions in South Africa have put in place initiatives to achieve this. Such initiatives include the use of local language (Setswana) for teaching at the North-West University (Mmola 2010). This IKS initiative has recorded some successes, but not without some challenges. The programme has ensured that teaching is highly appreciated by students, who now feel a sense of autonomy by learning in their local language. Students' academic performance has improved, and parents feel a sense of belonging as they are being used as instructors of local culture (Kaya & Seleti 2013:39; Mmola 2010). Some of the challenges with the IKS programme are the difficulty in implementation, shortage of qualified IKS staff, and the lack of relevant materials (Kaya & Seleti 2013:40–41).

The implications of the similarities and contrasts between the Nigerian and South African cases in terms of indigenous knowledge production are that the prospects of Africa achieving sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production are abysmally poor. The comparison implies that both Nigeria and South Africa have largely abandoned indigenous African culture, and this impacts adversely on their quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production. The comparisons also indicate that South Africa has done much better than Nigeria in the quest to integrate African culture in the knowledge production system in order to achieve sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production.

### Comparing Nigeria and South Africa

**Table 1:** Comparing Nigeria and South Africa in terms of the preservation of African culture and the quest for sustained indigenous knowledge production

Differences	Similarities
While South Africa has made frantic efforts to break away from colonial methods, Nigeria has not made similar efforts	African culture has been eroded in both Nigeria and South Africa
While South Africa has at least three national policies to incorporate African culture in its education system, Nigeria is yet to design and adopt any	Both countries have made efforts to incorporate local indigenous culture at some levels of their educational system
Various higher institutions of learning in South Africa have developed initiatives to incorporate indigenous knowledge production systems in various aspects of their education curricula, whereas this has not been the case with Nigeria	Indigenous knowledge production has been hampered by Western culture in both countries
The teaching of local languages keeps depreciating in Nigeria with the replacement with foreign languages, but South Africa has continued to teach its local languages in schools	Both countries have recognised the important place of culture in indigenous knowledge production, but have not taken the appropriate or adequate steps to implement same
Although both Nigeria and South Africa’s indigenous knowledge production capacities have been dealt a huge blow by Western and European approaches, South Africa has fared better in terms of cultural preservation and indigenous knowledge production	It appears both countries lack the commitment to fully disconnect from Western and Eurocentric education approaches, but also lack faith in the indigenous models and approaches
While South Africa has a university offering an accredited indigenous knowledge system programme at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, Nigeria has none	

Source: The author, 2021

## Way Forward

To catalyse indigenous knowledge production on the continent, Africa must seek knowledge indigenous to its own ecological and cultural make up, towards the political, economic, ethical, social and general upliftment and development of its people. Higgs (2010) submits that knowledge production in Africa must be pragmatic and be able to render a 'service' to its people, rather than servicing Western cultures and history. Knowledge production in Africa must be directed towards African culture; that way, it can contribute effectively towards the amelioration of conditions on the continent. Wiredu (as cited in Anyanwu 1989:127) submits that 'we [Africans] will only solve our problems if we see them as human problems arising out of a special situation [unique culture and history]'. Anyanwu (1989:127) averred that indigenous knowledge 'invites people to take a stand on the issue of reality as experienced by Africans'. The earlier Africa realises all of these realities, the better for its quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production.

Indigenous knowledge must be pursued to address the continent's peculiar challenges. Africa cannot continue to attempt to adopt or apply Western knowledge and ways of life to resolve its peculiar challenges; actions must be taken to preserve its cultural values and rescue it from an imminent extinction so as to attain a sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production on the continent. This is the only way that Africa can successfully address its political, economic and social challenges. This is the way that Europe and the Asian Tigers have gone, with positive results in terms of indigenous knowledge production, and educational, and all-round development (Idowu 2020).

## Conclusion

The article finds that culture enables the development of a type of knowledge indigenous to the local people. When indigenous ways of life are abandoned in favour of Western cultures, this fosters the development of 'Westernised' knowledge which indigenous people are not used to. Such alien knowledge is not able to solve indigenous political, economic and social problems.

As the anticolonial framework posits, the production of indigenous knowledge can only be achieved by strict adherence to indigenous cultural practices. Nigeria, South Africa and indeed Africa must recognise this if they are to improve on the production of indigenous knowledge on the continent. These countries must make attempts to decolonise their cultures and strive to produce knowledge that is based on their local way of life.

However, caution must be taken in a bid to decolonise African culture. Decolonisation theory has pointed out that decolonisation is a process and is not to be rushed. Nigeria, South Africa and Africa at large must know that decolonisation is gradual and must be so treated.

A decolonised way of life and efforts to produce knowledge strictly based on the indigenous African way of life will aid Africa in its quest for sustainable and improved indigenous knowledge production. Africa must go back to its culture and begin to appreciate its culture of storytelling, rituals, beliefs, marriages, folklore, norms, songs, proverbs, and local languages, and base its knowledge on these, rather than on Western cultures. African culture must, as a matter of urgency, be reintroduced into school curricula at all levels. When indigenous knowledge production is improved in Africa, then the prospect of achieving development can be revived on the continent. This is true to the extent that indigenous knowledge, which people are familiar with, is better put into use for political, economic and social development than those entirely alien to them. An improvement on indigenous knowledge production through the reinstatement of Africa's cultural values, will also mean sustainable development for the continent. While some cultural values on the continent were barbaric – like the killing of twin children, the slave trade and human sacrifices – the non-barbaric and progressive cultural values must be brought back.

The study finds that Nigeria and South Africa have to a large extent neglected their respective cultures. There is low level of indigenous knowledge production. In both countries, younger generations are acquiring values and lifestyles alien to African culture as a result of exposure to global and Western cultures. This implies that elders, who are the custodians of culture, are dying without passing their knowledge on to the children. This could result in the extinction of African culture and indigenous knowledge production on the continent. Nevertheless, South Africa has done better in the quest to preserve African culture and integrate it into the education system than Nigeria.

Indigenous games, dances, initiation schools, agricultural systems, proverbs, storytelling, and songs, which are indigenous institutions of knowledge in Africa, remain the bedrock of the indigenous African knowledge system, and must be preserved. African researchers must turn to indigenous knowledge holders and elders in African communities to improve on and ensure a sustained production of indigenous knowledge on the continent.

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