

Collective Intelligence’ a Precursor for Multidisciplinary Research in Africa: An Appreciative Inquiry Perspective

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Abstract

The perpetual antagonism between universalism and particularism philosophies has persisted in the globe since time immemorial. This philosophical battle has been aggravated by the rise of African scholars challenging the Western and Eurocentric philosophical dominance in the globe and within the African academic corridors. The plurality of African culture, politics, religion, and philosophy calls for robust multidisciplinary methodologies to reclaim and recover Africa’s knowledge disfranchised by Western epistemologies. Current research methodologies in Africa have primarily focused on disentangling the Western epistemological overtones. However, the problem is not the hegemony of Western methodologies, but a failure to embrace Africa’s knowledge production and meaning constructions. African epistemology is grounded in collectivism, hence the mantra “teach a community and educate individuals.” The epistemological culture must be a sum of appreciating African cultural relativism as well as matching life experiences. Our chapter explores how the ‘collective intelligence’ in Africa is a precursor for Africa’s multidisciplinary research. We adopt the ‘appreciative inquiry (AI) model’ in an endeavour to integrate rival epistemological philosophies between the West and Africa. Hence, our chapter contributes to multidisciplinary research in Africa. It proposes ‘Collective Intelligence Methodology’ as an interdisciplinary epistemology framework to studies in Africa.

Keywords: Africa, Appreciative inquiry model, Collective Intelligence, Epistemology, Methodology, Multidisciplinary research