

## Epistemology in African Philosophy: A Critique of African Concept of Knowledge

**Authors :** Ovet Nwosimiri

**Abstract :** African tradition and what it entails are the content of African concepts of knowledge. The study of African concepts of knowledge is also known as African epistemology. In other words, African epistemology is a branch of African philosophy that deals with knowledge. This branch of African philosophy engages with the nature and concept of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge can be gained, the ways in which one can justify an epistemic claim or validate a knowledge claim and the limit of human knowledge, etc. The protagonists of African epistemology based their argument for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition “that each race is endowed with a distinctive nature and embodies in its civilization a particular spirit”. All human beings share some certain basic values and perceptions irrespective of where you come from, and this idea actually fosters some forms of interaction between people from different nationality. Africans like other people share in some certain values, perceptions, and interaction with the rest of the world. These basic values, perceptions, and interaction that Africans share with the rest of the world prompted African people to attempt to “modernize” their societies or develop some forms of their tradition in harmony with the ethos of the contemporary world. Based on the above ideas, it would be interesting to investigate if such (African) epistemology is still unique. The advocates of African epistemology focus on the externalist notion of justification and neglect the idea that both the internalist and externalist notion of justification are needed in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. Thus, this paper will critically examine the claims that there is a unique African epistemology (a mode of knowing that is peculiar to Africans, and that African mode of knowing is social, monism and situated notion of knowledge), and the grounds for justifying beliefs and epistemic claims.

**Keywords :** internalist, externalist, knowledge, justification

**Conference Title :** ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

**Conference Location :** Chicago, United States

**Conference Dates :** December 12-13, 2020