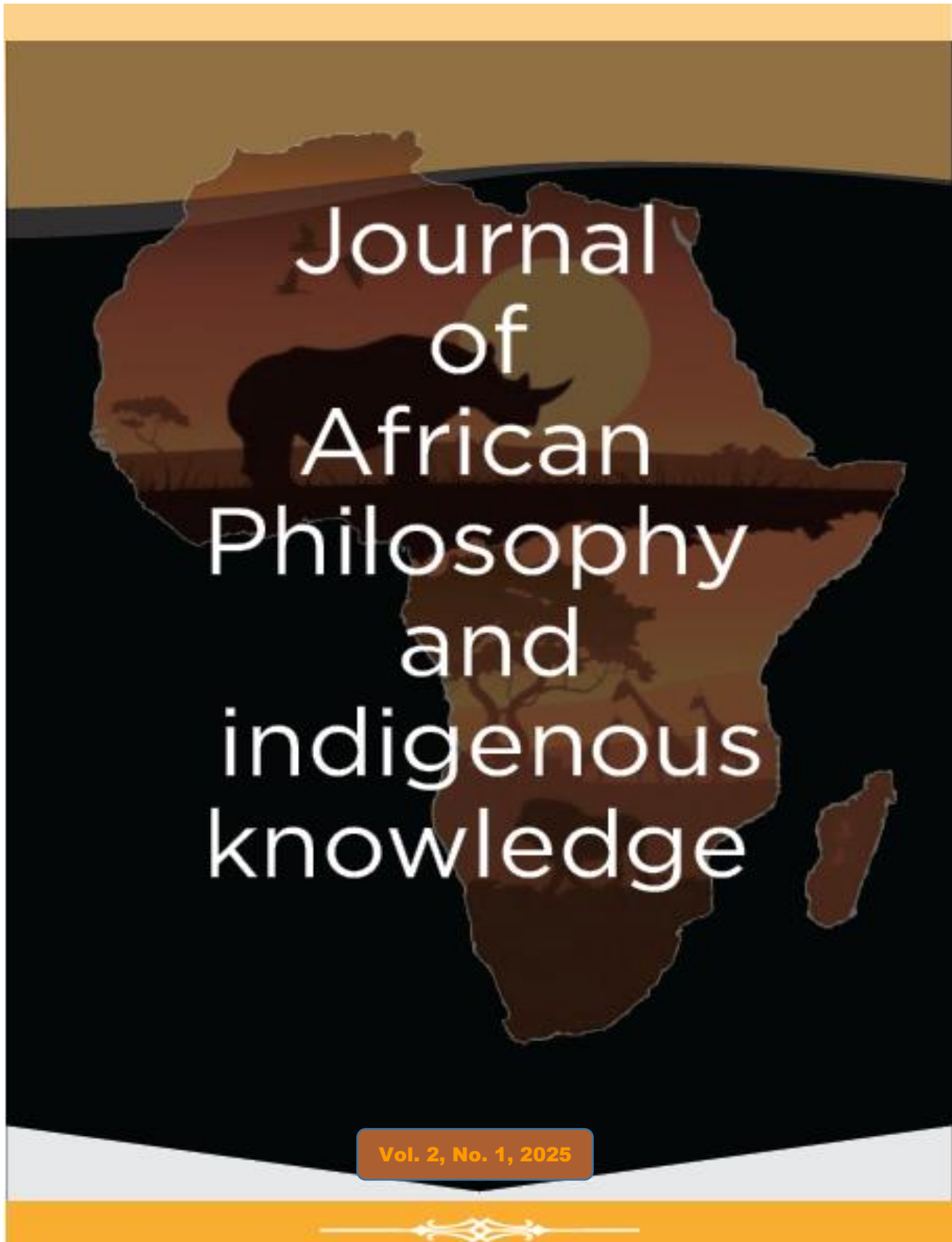




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Editorial Note

This issue of the *Journal of African Philosophy and Indigenous Knowledge* presents a diverse yet intellectually unified collection of papers that examine African realities through indigenous epistemologies, philosophical analysis, institutional inquiry, and socio-cultural critique. Collectively, these contributions reaffirm the journal's commitment to centering African knowledge systems while engaging with contemporary debates in health, education, governance, technology, morality, religion, and development.

Several papers in this issue critically examine the relevance of indigenous epistemologies in addressing enduring social challenges. For example, the paper titled *Indigenous Epistemologies and the Reconfiguration of Mental Health in Urban Lagos State, Nigeria*, interrogates the dominance of Western biomedical paradigms in African mental health discourse. Drawing on qualitative interviews with indigenous practitioners, including *Babaláwo* and *Oníṣẹ̀gùn*, the study demonstrates that mental distress is locally understood as a relational and communal condition shaped by spiritual balance, moral conduct, and ancestral continuity. The paper argues for a pluralistic mental health framework that meaningfully integrates indigenous knowledge into urban mental health policy and practice in Nigeria.

Closely aligned with this epistemic revaluation is the paper on poverty amidst plenty in Nigeria, which interrogates the paradox of persistent poverty despite the country's abundant natural and human resources. Challenging Western-led development paradigms, the study examines African Indigenous Knowledge Systems as adaptive and pragmatic tools for alleviating poverty. By examining indigenous agriculture, informal economic networks, community governance, and traditional healthcare, the paper argues that indigenous knowledge constitutes a living system capable of complementing formal development policies. It advocates for hybrid development models that integrate indigenous practices into education, finance, and governance structures.

The issue also addresses questions of gender, education, and institutional transformation. The study on shifting gender dynamics at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe presents a longitudinal analysis of graduation trends from 2017 to 2023. Using a mixed-methods approach, the paper examines the decline in male graduation rates alongside increased female participation, situating this shift within broader socio-cultural, economic, and policy contexts. The findings link changing gender patterns to affirmative action policies and inclusive education initiatives, contributing to ongoing debates on gender equity and the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive education.

Institutional roles in development are further explored in the paper on religious institutions and grassroots development in Nigeria. Conceptualising religious institutions as faith-based, non-state actors, the study examines their contributions to welfare provision, humanitarian services, healthcare, education, and socio-economic justice, particularly in contexts where local government presence is weak. While acknowledging concerns about abuse and extremist tendencies, the paper highlights the complementary role of religious institutions in grassroots governance and recommends regulatory frameworks, including whistle-blowing mechanisms, to safeguard development outcomes.

Technology and institutional efficiency form the focus of the study on office automation in Oyo State-owned polytechnics. Employing a descriptive survey design and quantitative analysis, the paper demonstrates a significant positive relationship between office automation and job performance among office managers. The findings underscore the importance of technological transformation in public institutions and recommend upgrading work environments to enhance productivity and administrative efficiency.

Another key thematic strand in this issue concerns the preservation and transmission of indigenous knowledge in the digital age. The paper on digital preservation and documentation of indigenous knowledge in Africa explores how digital technologies, including databases and machine learning tools, can support the safeguarding of Africa's knowledge heritage. Drawing on case studies from Kenya, Nigeria, and Southern Africa, the study highlights both the opportunities and ethical challenges of digital preservation, emphasising community ownership, cultural sensitivity, and sustainable partnerships as critical to success.

Finally, the paper on contemporary African culture and religion interrogates their influence on the continent's socio-economic development. Using historical and phenomenological approaches, the study attributes Africa's developmental challenges to cultural practices and religious orientations that, in the author's analysis, perpetuate corruption, injustice, and social fragmentation. The paper calls for a critical restructuring of cultural and religious frameworks in alignment with global best practices to enable sustainable development.

Taken together, the contributions in this issue demonstrate the continued relevance of African philosophy and indigenous knowledge in addressing contemporary African challenges. By engaging indigenous epistemologies alongside institutional, ethical, and technological analyses, this volume advances critical conversations on how Africa can draw on its intellectual traditions while navigating modern transformations. The editorial team acknowledges the authors, reviewers, and contributors whose scholarship has made this issue possible and looks forward to continued engagement with rigorous, context-sensitive, and transformative African scholarship. You are invited to enjoy the intellectual content of this issue.

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