The British Academy

Journal of the British Academy, **9(s1)**, 183–213
DOI https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/009s1.183
Posted 1 April 2021

Tackling the behavioural antecedents of knowledge production: research culture, behavioural intentionality and proactive agenda setting by scholars in Africa

Bill Buenar Puplampu

Abstract: This article advances the view that the conversation around repositioning Africa's place in knowledge production requires a critical examination of the actions, behaviours, and institutionalised agendas antecedent to and concomitant to producing credible knowledge. The article explores this issue by bringing together three interrelated themes: the behavioural aspects of knowledge production with respect to organisational and research culture; the research and writing posture of academics in African institutions; and the need for deliberate and intentional agenda setting by scholarly associations in Africa.

The 'fight' for Africa's place in producing relevant knowledge must be three pronged. While there are historical dogmas that have internationally conspired to delegitimise indigenous propositions, there are also institutional barriers in-country (such as poor research/educational policy) which hinder the development of strong research prospects. Finally, research behaviour is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention; such intention is a consequence of attitude towards and subjective norms about research. These must be tackled from a behavioural standpoint. This article therefore suggests means by which scholars and relevant institutions in African countries may reclaim and possess their own knowledge agendas and, as it were, 'tell their own story'.

Keywords: Knowledge production, Africa, behavioural, research culture.

Until lions learn to read and write, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter.

Proverb attributed to the Ewe of the eastern coastal regions of West Africa

Introduction

Academics and policymakers appreciate that scholarly research and knowledge generation are fundamental to institutional/organisational and socioeconomic policy; as well as to rolling out socio-economic interventions that work (Sawyer 2004, Cheetam 2007). Over the last two decades, much has been written about the poor showing of scholars and universities in Africa when it comes to research output. The key causative factor running through much of the literature is resource poverty (Olukoju 2002, Devarajan *et al*. 2011). Related to this is the sometimes rather chaotic in-country policy regime around education and academic freedoms, as well as research and its place in the scheme of things (Camara & Toure 2010).

Aims and objectives

This article advances the view that the conversation around repositioning Africa's place in knowledge production (KP) requires a critical examination of the actions, behaviours, and institutionalised agendas antecedent and concomitant to producing credible knowledge. The aim of this article is to address this issue by discussing three interrelated themes. These are: the behavioural aspects of knowledge production (the issue of organisational/research culture); the research and writing posture of academics in African institutions; and the need for intentional agenda setting by scholars and scholarly associations in Africa. The broader objective is that the arguments and required actions suggested here should trigger efforts towards greater and more consistent KP within/from African countries by disrupting the KP status quo and embedding a conscious choice about how to prosecute the KP agenda.

The 'fight' for Africa's place in producing relevant knowledge must be three pronged: the historical, the institutional, and the behavioural. While there are historical dogmas that have internationally conspired to delegitimise indigenous propositions, there are also institutional barriers in-country (regarding public and research/educational policy) which hinder the development of strong research prospects. Finally, research behaviour is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention. Such intention is a consequence of attitude towards and subjective norms about research. These must be tackled from a behavioural standpoint. This article therefore suggests required actions by which scholars and relevant institutions in African

countries may reclaim and possess their own knowledge agendas and, as it were, 'tell their own story'.

The required actions are that: universities and scholars on the African continent should commit to reinvent the research cultures within which they operate. This would entail attention to skills, efficacy, values, institutional practices, and individual behaviours which promote an inclusive use of various forms of research and KP.

I further argue that scholars on the continent should commit to writing or knowledge dissemination practices which recognise the disadvantages of operating in and from Africa but turn such difficulties into platforms for change. For example, if we cannot get into Northern journals because we lack their language skills or those journals are not interested in the matters that are of concern to us, then we should build our own journal bases in Swahili, French, English, and Portuguese; commit to developing the same as credible outlets for credible research; and train increasing generations of young faculty to learn the craft of the Northern regimes in order to systematically break into those domains.

I also argue that scholarly associations on the continent (especially in the humanities) should move away from the disjointed and uncoordinated approaches which have characterised the knowledge enterprise and instead commit to strategic, longer term, coordinated, collaborative (across the Africas, across institutions, and across associations), interdisciplinary and deliberate/intentional agendas around specific knowledge areas. This should happen with both time and dissemination objectives. Within a strategically defined period, therefore, knowledge about and of African origin, produced in and by Africans, concerning African matters should become distinct enough to be sought after because it addresses theoretical and practical issues as well as meeting standards both of quality and rigour.

Speaking from the organisational scholar's standpoint, one may put it this way: organisations are purposive entities. They go where they are directed (ideally) and attain those objects and goals that are intentionally acted for/upon; this point—I argue—is directly applicable to the KP agenda.

Approach

The article proceeds by setting out the modes of KP found in the literature. I elaborate on these as I believe each must be appreciated in the context of institutional and behavioural responses. It is important that these forms of KP are descriptively understood as distinct, but complementary. In setting out these forms of KP, in this article I am not interested in exploring their merits or demerits per se; nor how each has come to be. Rather, I am interested to show that within the global community of scholars these approaches are actively used in the knowledge enterprise. I then

explore the rising tide (within the humanities and management sciences) for a disruption of the status quo of Western hegemonic dominance of knowledge and the call for academics in Africa to assert themselves. This raises the question of how such a disruption may be prosecuted systematically, consistently, and in an impactful way. To answer this question, I set out the three interrelated themes noted above and weave into the discussion my views on why and how we in African countries may identify and deploy the various KP modes towards a sustained KP agenda. The article concludes with several recommendations which should enable scholars to turn a groundswell of concern into identifiable progress and KP outcomes.

'*The Africas*'

In this article, I refer to the African continent in a pluralistic term. I refer to *'the Africas'* —as a way of stressing the considerable diversity of the continent and its residual islands. The accepted usage of *'the Americas'* (Burchfield 2004) to describe the American continental regions (North, South, Central, and Caribbean) is a tacit rejection of the notion of an 'Americanised' world (Friedman 2006) where 'Americanised' refers to the dominant culture of the USA. *The Americas* is an acceptance of the human, political, cultural, and physical geography differences of the region. In similar manner, *'the Africas'* should come to represent the reality that along all the markers for establishing diversity and variedness of human existence, Africa is prime candidate and the continued usage of 'Africa' as an undifferentiated mass is at best a misrepresentation and at worst a deliberate process of anthropological negation. Nijman *et al.* (2020), in their influential book *Geography: Realms, Regions, and Concepts*, confirm the obvious. The world is made up of different realms in which peoples have forged their existence, responded to large geophysical forces, as well as been the creators of major changes. This applies just as well to Africa. It would be beyond the scope of this article to set out the very pertinent dimensions along which the peoples and regions in Africa differ. However, suffice it to say that, in terms of physical geography and climate, geopolitical reality, indigenous and historic linguistic variations, historical/cultural influences and differences, current political arrangements and peoples, Africa is not one place. It is many places, bound by the most common reality: the cradle of human evolution. Far too often, Africans and non-African alike, scholars and non-scholars, advertently and inadvertently speak of Africa as if it is one country. I believe the time is now, to refer to Africa in the plural, recognise its diversity, elevate, and redirect its characterisations away from the patronising and the ill informed.

The arguments advanced in the article are anchored in traditions, practices, and issues within the humanities/social/behavioural sciences and management literatures.

I acknowledge that, while there are many common areas regarding KP challenges with colleague scholars in the physical sciences, I am not equipped to pronounce on matters within that space.

Knowledge production

Knowledge production (KP) is the process/es of identifying, recognising, unearthing, systematising, and sharing the ontology of a people/time/region and the epistemological traditions which operationalise the process. Ontology considers the nature of things, the existence of things or reality, and the relationships between deemed realities. Epistemology is a necessary consequence of ontology. If we deem certain realities to be self-evident, our epistemology enables us to explore such realities in a manner that leads to codification, classification, explanatory theory, praxis, and an acceptable language of documentation. An important logic of knowledge production—which is at the core of human existence and the characterisation of man as 'sapiens'—is the drive or urge to share and/or transfer knowledge (Reader 1998, Harari 2011). Sharing knowledge enables human survival beyond proximate needs. It also creates culture, establishes dominance, and offers opportunity for abstracted reflection, anchored thought, and human organisation. It is the praxis, culture creation, storage-for-later-use, and self-defining character of knowledge produced which have over the course of millennia facilitated the dominance of one group over another. It is the historical poverty of Africa's attention to the entire knowledge production process that now requires that the status quo be disrupted, and a case made for alternative forms of knowing (Nkomo 2011). Importantly, what a group, profession, or a people regard as acceptable knowledge cannot be divorced from their epistemological traditions (Johnson & Cassell 2001).

Knowledge is produced by communities of creation and co-creation who reside in a variety of institutions. Universities are perhaps the presumptive owners of the knowledge production process (Maassen *et al.* 2019). However, along with universities, there are think-tanks, consulting firms, advocacy centres, government agencies, and increasingly in today's digital world, a whole army of individual information sharers and claimants to production. Our concern—and the focus of the conversation on the need for a resurgence of Africa's place in the knowledge process—is with the systematic production of scholarly knowledge that surfaces ontologies, produces taxonomies, and facilitates theoretical frames which aid an understanding of yesterday, guide today's actions, and aid planning for tomorrow.

As Bakken and Dobbs (2016) note, academic disciplines are characterised by a knowledge base that contextualises both consensual and oppositional debate by

its members. In essence, those who produce knowledge are engaged in systematising the declarative, procedural, contextual, and somatic knowledge of people and societies across time and space. By so doing they create a bank of distinguishing 'wisdoms' by which society lives and develops. Two key characteristics of knowledge systems that influence human development are that such systems are transmitted across time, space, and people and are kept in a form that facilitates storage, access, and retrieval. Our concern is the obvious dearth of Africa's involvement in this process—despite the real, but often romanticised history (Nkomo 2011) of African civilisations (for example: Egypt, Aksum) which produced their own knowledge and systems of documentation.

Forms of knowledge production

Gibbons *et al.* (1994) are perhaps credited with the clearest statement of forms of knowledge production. Huff (2000), Hessels and van Lente (2008), and others articulate very succinctly the various forms that knowledge production has taken since the post-war years. I present below a descriptive indication of each of the KP modes in the literature. The objective of this article is not to offer a critique of modes of KP but rather to articulate what these are and expatiate on why the African effort needs to make nuanced, informed, and strategic use of any or combinations of these modes.

Mode 1

Mode 1 knowledge production takes place within or through established academic settings. It is characterised by pursuit of scientific rigour, use of tools of observation, analysis, and synthesis which are often anchored in positivist traditions, and a commitment to 'replication'. In many ways this mode has come to dominate much of the research and knowledge generation effort in many universities and other such institutions as well as the disciplinary distinctions which allow both social and physical scientists to pursue various particularistic research agendas. Its key check of acceptability is the peer-review process, which pronounces on validity and contribution. This mode has been described as including the pursuance of knowledge for its own sake: perhaps the so-called distinction between pure and applied science. A dominant characteristic of the cultural infrastructure around Mode 1 knowledge production has been the esoteric arguments which effectively delegitimise other forms of knowledge generation as insufficiently robust: a preference for so-called objectivity derived from 'disinterested' quantitative data. A consequential reality in many disciplines that have adopted Mode 1 is a default to respectability once the context is seen to be stripped, the researcher is seen to be disengaged from the researched, and the statistics are seen to be sophisticated, appropriate, and producing 'significance'.

Mode 2

This form of knowledge production arose in recognition of the reality that other actors and actions beyond the cloistered walls of academe do contribute to knowledge and its production. It is characterised by distributed and heterogeneous efforts often targeted at or arising from application. Mode 2 KP tends to be executed along multi/interdisciplinary lines and may be housed in think-tanks, consulting firms, teaching hospitals, etc. The cultural infrastructure of Mode 2 KP is consultative communication, use of sites of issue occurrence, emphasis on co-creation, and a commitment to multiple methods of enquiry.

Mode 1.5

Huff (2000) calls for a Mode 1.5 approach to KP. Huff's call is perhaps a response to many conflicts, emergent trends, and unresolved allegiances that have characterised both Mode 1 and 2 knowledge production, such as Antonelli's (1999: 243) 'institutional formation of a market for knowledge' and Geuna (1999: 3) who considers the pressures that have emerged because of the economics of knowledge production:

> Examples of the tensions characterising contemporary universities are: (1) incompatibility between the demands of elite and mass higher education; (2) friction between curiosity-driven research enterprise and targeted research; (3) the different impact of private and public financing; and (4) conflicts between the free advancement of the knowledge frontier and research driven by the needs of the society.

Huff's call for Mode 1.5 is based on the notion that Mode 2 responds to the limitations of Mode 1, which include its fixation with method and its slow-to-action character. However, Mode 2 has its own limitations, such as a focus on immediate tasks and problems and its lack of a tradition of consistent follow-through on impacts and implications. While professional schools and faculties in universities (such as those of business, medical, and engineering) may wish to pursue Mode 2, they are caught in a tension of respectability, which is derived from Mode 1 work. Mode 1.5 seeks to blend the theoretical and 'knowledge for its own sake' intents of Mode 1 while working to address the problems of society and the market as typified by Mode 2:

> Mode 2 rose out of unmet needs and opportunities. Mode 1 is too slow, too inward looking; it gives priority to pedigrees. Although Mode 2 offers improved methods of knowledge production in each of these areas—timely, more practical, more democratic—I believe it has its own limitations … (Huff 2000: 291)

The advantage appears to be that the scholars who may opt for Mode 1.5 are fully cognisant of the need to rise above the faddish character of Mode 2 and the sometimes slow and disengaged character of Mode 1. Huff writes:

> Mode 1.5 should accommodate fault finders as well as facilitators. Critical observations, undertaken more often by scholars outside the United States than within, have a particularly important role to play … (Huff 2000: 292)

Mode 1.5 culture therefore calls for scholarly consulting and academic advocacy along with Mode 1 training to enable problem-solving scholarship. This suggests the engaged scholarship that Boyer (1990, 1996) has advocated.

Boyer—scholarship reconsidered

Through a Carnegie Foundation project which explored the preoccupations of American academe, Boyer (1990) questioned the focus of American scholarship and arrived at the position he referred to as the 'Scholarship of Engagement'. He traced the growth of American academe from teaching through service to research, but raised serious concerns with the thrust and commitment to 'research' as a core enterprise of the academic in America.

> Increasingly the campus is being viewed as a place where students get credentialized and faculty get tenured while the overall work of the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation's most pressing … problems. (Boyer 1996: 14)

> What we now have is a more restricted view of scholarship, one that limits it to a hierarchy of functions. Basic research has come to be viewed as the first and most essential form of scholarly activity, with other functions flowing from it. (Boyer 1990: 15)

He concluded that scholarship must be of an engaged form, dedicated to discovery (knowledge production/research), utilisation (application), teaching (knowledge transfer), and integration (interdisciplinary and multiagency collaboration). Boyer's call is for a form of scholarship which blends knowledge production, sharing, use, and transfer as essential components of a single commitment. In this formulation, knowledge production cannot be pursued as a stand-alone independent activity. It must be bent towards engagement with societal issues in an active and ongoing fashion and requires constant dialogues between society's actors and academic actors.

Mode 3

Carayannis and Campbell (2012), Etzkowitz (2008), and Watson (2011) have described the Mode 3 knowledge production system. This explicitly calls for a tripartite partnership between government, academia, and industry; with the addition of advocacy agencies/local community and business. This is variously described as an innovation ecosystem with the engaged university at the heart, promoting 'glocal' knowledge (local knowledge with global reach). As described by Boehm (2015: 2):

> With Mode 3 knowledge production cultures or a high civic engagement by universities, or a system that values research impact on society, there is an emphasis on partnerships between universities, industry, government, and the civic sector.

Mode 3 is akin to Huff's Mode 1.5 and Boyer's Scholarship of Engagement. In all these the notion of distributed knowledge generation or multi-location of the knowledge production enterprise is key, as is the commitment to problem-solving scholarship.

Disrupting the status quo: the call for academics in Africa to assert themselves

I have considered five forms of the knowledge production enterprise. All five forms have been articulated by Western scholars. Each of these five forms serve particular purposes. The outputs of all five forms are undeniably and predominantly Western. This reality is not negative, but its impacts have been very consequential. For all the 'good' the world has seen from knowledge produced from Western science and arts, perhaps a corresponding level of ills have been visited on humanity as a result—nowhere more evident than in Africa. From the arrival of the Portuguese on Africa's shores in the early 1400s (Reader 1998) to the economic and social intervention programmes of colonisation and modern-day political experimentation (Arnold 2004), Africa has borne the brunt of the consequences of Western knowledge with all its advances and imperfections. It is poignant that Africa conducts national affairs of its fifty-five countries in English, Portuguese, or French—the languages of the colonisers. To date, most higher education institutions across African countries continue to rely on Western books, theories, cases, and arguments to educate Africa's elite (Nkomo 2011). Even from the 12th and 13th centuries when scholars in West Africa wrote about life and travel from centres of learning such as Timbukto (Freund 1984) and in the nine centuries after Ethiopia adopted Christianity, the African written word was done with Christianity and/or Islam as base material.

> With the conquest and partition of Africa by the European powers and its forcible incorporation into a world system of exchange based on capitalist production, the possibility of an autonomous development of intellectual activity in Africa was cut off … (Freund 1984: 1–2)

> Were it not for the importunities of Europe, Africa might have enlarged upon its indigenous talents and found an independent route to the present … the moment passed, however, during the fifteenth century … since then the history of Africa has been the story of an ancient continent … trying to accommodate the conceits of modern humans … who came back 500 yrs ago, behaving as though they owned the place. (Reader 1998: 361)

The above quotes demonstrate the enormity of the historical challenge.

In recent times, however, there has been a resurgence of concern for self-assertion by Africans. This supplementary issue of the *Journal of the British Academy* is a case in point. The resurgence this time is not in terms of political independence or economic self-determination, but with regards to knowledge: representations about life, meanings, and philosophies of current and past peoples and societies in *the Africas*.

The calls to disrupt or question the Western dominant narratives is perhaps as old as the self-determination/assertion and independence movements of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Osagefo Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and others. However, the recent calls to intervene in the intellectual narratives and discourses perhaps take off from social science writers like Mudimbe (1988), Mbembe (2002) and management scholars like George *et al.* (2016), Alcadipani *et al.* (2011), Nkomo (2011), and Nkomo *et al.* (2015). These calls are informed by several realities, which include: the poor showing of African scholarship in global conversations, the significant impact of non-African voices in African affairs, the obvious lack of contestation of colonial and postcolonial narratives which interpret African experience through European lens, and the clear need for developing home-grown ideas with which to tackle Africa's challenges and develop its institutions.

What is the problem?

Having considered knowledge and how it is produced and the call to disrupt dominant knowledge voices and assert African voices, the question that arises is how is this to be achieved? How may a disruption and/or an African knowledge production agenda be prosecuted systematically, consistently, and in an impactful way?

It is necessary to restate the challenge that confronts the issue of producing knowledge from African regions, by African actors, for the benefit of Africa, and for the purpose of constructively intruding on the global knowledge stage. I state these as a series of issues:

1. Impactful knowledge is not accidentally produced. It is the result of long, iterative, intentional, and ongoing series of structures, actions, and commitments.
2. Knowledge production requires the psychological commitment of producing actors to engage in those behaviours which facilitate production.
3. Knowledge that infuses and is diffuse is necessarily knowledge that is artfully and constructively communicated.
4. Knowledge systems are the result of ontologies, epistemes, and teleological positions—which are articulated and/or used to structure the KP process.

5. Knowledge systems are ultimately political tools for the organisation of society—whether directly or indirectly. This character produces two realities. One is social–psychological and the other is cultural–anthropological. Social–psychologically, knowledge systems are used to embed a world-view for the current and next generation, thus impacting their individual attitudes and behaviours. Cultural–anthropologically, knowledge systems define a people and their potentialities.
6. Therefore, where a knowledge system is supplanted or the world-view of a people is unseated/subverted (as happened with European colonisation of Africa and its introduction of Western ideals as normative) the effort to disrupt, counter, roll back, and reassert what was or what should be (which may be domiciled in the indigenous knowledge system) must be seen as requiring a sustained effort on the part of many actors over a long period of time.
7. Change requires a reflexive questioning of the extent to which grounded sensibilities have been so morphed as to reflect an externalised sense of what is 'proper'. Change also requires a questioning of the instrument of subversion. In short, the renaissance is not simply about researching and producing knowledge. It is very much about questioning our assumptions and what our interpretations have now become.

'Knowledge systems' is a term that has been applied to the structures and arrangements around digitalised information for technological innovations (Cash *et al.* 2003). The term is used here to refer broadly to bodies of knowledge organised into theories and the philosophies behind these, along with relevant concepts and application constructs (Gurrukal 2019)—as we have, for example, in 'Management and Organisation Knowledge' (MOK) (Alcadipani *et al.* 2011).

The issues raised above summarise the challenge that confronts knowledge production from the African perspective. The thesis of this article is that these challenges render a behavioural response imperative. These challenges require a behavioural commitment to produce, communicate, structure, diffuse, and disrupt. I argue that, without such a commitment, the groundswell which is becoming increasingly evident may remain so: a groundswell of many like-minded voices shorn of the action required to transform the groundswell into a movement that achieves. I articulate the suggested behavioural responses below.

Research culture and behavioural intentionality

The five forms of KP outlined above: Modes 1, 1.5, 2, 3, and Engaged Scholarship all have some common features. Two of the clearest are: individual intent and domiciliation within an institutional framework.

Mode 1 KP assumes that scholarship embedded within a formal university setting is the primary vehicle by which knowledge will be mined, surfaced, and disseminated. The architecture for this is obviously research agendas and research funding; possession of PhD and research training; research work set within distinct disciplinary boundaries and the performance evaluation of productivity anchored in scholarly publications. Mode 2 assumes that practising specialists commit to use their practice as vehicles for information collection which is then systematised. Mode 1.5 suggests that there is cross-fertilisation between academe and practice with a commitment to draw on collaborative expertise. Mode 3 broadens the actor space to include government agencies and businesses with a commitment to innovate in a systematic manner by working together. Boyer's Engaged Scholarship holds that the entire KP process works within and at the borders of the academy but, importantly, uses all the four responsibilities (research, teaching, advocacy, and practice) of the academy to mine and use knowledge. In all these cases, individuals/groups commit and institutions facilitate effort. What do these points mean for the varied African contexts?

In many countries in Africa, knowledge production is an activity carried out by academics through research that takes place from/in university institutions. When reference is made to the poverty of scholarly output, it is in the context of the weak showing of African academics in the global knowledge creation arenas. It refers to weak scholarship, few publications, and poor research intensification systems. The conversation which interrogates problems with research and its end-product—KP—in Africa has tended to focus on the resource poverty of universities on the continent (Sawyer 2004).

Increasingly however, it is becoming clear that the research processes by which knowledge is produced, cannot be discussed only in respect of resources available. Writers are beginning to argue that the conversation should shift to or urgently include questions about the human, psychological, behavioural, and intentional factors that make it possible to describe a university as research intensive or describe academics as research oriented. From an institutional as well as psychological standpoint, research by Pratt *et al.* (1999) and more recently by Puplampu (2015) suggests that the behavioural and the intentional underscore the probability of academics carrying out research or engaging in knowledge producing activities. In other words, institutional facilitation and resource allocation per se may not achieve the research impetus that would lead to the sustained research through which knowledge may be created.

The organisational culture literature (Tsui 2006) shows that organisational outcomes are very much a function of firm-level culture. The research culture and the organisational culture (of which it is a part) provide the milieu—values, behaviours, and practices—within which scholarly activity takes place. Taking Mode 1 as an example, one may ask: what values underpin the pursuance of scholarly research

which leads to publications? What behaviours ensure that some academics produce, while others do not? Taking Boyer's engaged scholar as a point of departure, one may ask: what institutional practices would ensure that academe takes a holistic view of teaching, researching, utilisation, and dissemination as intertwined and desirable actions? Taking Mode 1.5 or Mode 3 as examples, the question/s that would arise would most definitely include: what institutional cultural frame would accept scholarly consulting and promote 'town' and 'gown' collaboration with the intention of systematising the resultant knowledge? These are matters of institutional culture. These are matters which cannot achieve salience except as part of a growing acceptance of a range of shared and/or contested negotiated values and behaviours. Evans (2007) sees research culture as an institutional framework which places value on research activities and outputs. The point is that an individualised commitment by an academic to work with a Mode 1.5 mind-set would be commendable. However, to facilitate sustained KP from Mode 1.5, that individual academic must operate within a milieu that increasingly comes to accept that Mode 1.5 is a useful approach to adopt. As Boehm (2015: 2) notes,

> With Mode 3 knowledge production cultures…or a system that values research impact on society, there is an emphasis on partnerships between universities, industry, government, and the civic sector …

Planned behaviour and institutional choices

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) suggests that behavioural intentions are informed by subjective norms and a sense of behavioural control or self-efficacy. Subjective norms and self-efficacy are very much a function of the milieu and the supportive frameworks created by the milieu. It is possible to argue that Mode 1 KP (which seems to be the aspiration of many universities in various African countries) requires institutions to articulate values which elevate basic and theoretical research. Universities would need to create institutional systems which support such research behaviour by upskilling faculty to the point of self-efficacy (terminal degrees, grantsmanship, etc).

It seems discussions around and the choice about various KP modes must take place at universities and by governments. This should lead to a recognition of the value of the various modes of KP. Key actors should then urge a differentiated adoption of these modes. Further to this, adopting institutions need to build the organisational and research culture base which can host and propel KP through the adopted mode. This must be an intentional process. To date, a country like Ghana has had university authorities and academics frown on consulting activities by faculty, to

the extent that derogatory terms are used to describe consulting. It is described as '*galamsey*' a dimmer term for moonlighting, which implies an avid concern for pecuniary outcomes and a focus on using one's time for consulting work instead of scholarly research.

The derogatory descriptions are in a sense justifiable—given that anecdotal evidence suggests many academics especially in the humanities are less productive than they could possibly be due to the time spent in consultancy work. However, it must be said that the disparaging descriptions used for such efforts as well as for persons so engaged, delegitimise an activity which may well be useful in the KP drive within the country. In this regard, legitimacy may be reasserted if institutional leaders recognise Modes 2, 1.5, and 3 as useful and credible alternatives and so facilitate institutional discussion of partnerships, associations, and collaborations and surface the scholarly outcomes which may flow from such efforts. Action Research for example, has long attained acceptability and credibility in consulting as an approach for joint problem identification and solution; and in research as a method that enables iterative engagement with the research issue/site until the research question has been sufficiently addressed.

Puplampu (2005, 2012) shows that applied interventions provide a unique opportunity to collect real-time data unencumbered with the politics of access negotiation. African countries spend considerable sums on consulting services on both social and physical science matters. One can only imagine the volumes of documented information produced through consulting reports—much of which is scripted by academics working with practitioners. Subjected to later rigorous analyses, theoretical interrogation, and systematisation, such in-situ, evidence-based, problem-related information may well facilitate the types of knowledge from which teaching, practitioner, and scholarly cases may be written. Such cases are often a strong corollary of and synchronous to theory consolidation.

It is perhaps time for the many academics in Africa who supplement their low incomes with consultancy work to turn such work to intellectual advantage by ensuring systematic data collection, obfuscation of identity, negotiating publication and ownership rights, and triangulating such data with later non-interventionist research. Ethical issues relating to confidentiality, nature of agreements, or permission to publish from such interventions may arise. These are certainly tractable.

The key learning from this consideration of research culture is that, if properly harnessed, varied research and institutional cultures may be created which enable knowledge to be produced not only from traditional research, but also through normatively acceptable alternative modes. In the African context—with so much requiring attention—this approach holds promise.

Research behaviour from which knowledge is produced is necessarily a consequence of behavioural intention; such intention is a consequence of attitude and subjective norms about research. Behavioural intention to do research is influenced by perception of behavioural control—in other words, the extent to which the individual academic perceives that they have control (self-efficacy, environmental predictability, competence, etc) over their research behaviour. Institutional culture is the milieu within which subjective norms about research are negotiated. If African scholars and knowledge producers are to make a systematic job of KP, appropriate research and organisational cultures must be negotiated and embedded.

Scholarly consulting

There is much hesitation about consulting as a legitimate activity of an academic. This hesitation has been noted above and is driven in part by the traditional notions around what is research, the role of the academic, and what it means to be a 'respectable' academic. The treatment of this matter in this article reflects the nuanced reality. One cannot pretend it is 'all good', neither can one suggest 'it is all bad'. I would, however, like to explore several logics around this issue.

First, disciplinary differences. For some disciplines, such as business, medicine, and law, practice is in part an essential component of both training and respectable status within the field (whether as an academic or practitioner). In some jurisdictions such as Nigeria and Ghana, senior academics (who hold positions such as head of department or dean) in law, medicine, or pharmacy are expected to be members of their professional bodies; to have been called to the bar or to have experience of clinical practice. This means there is less of an issue with a practice orientation.

Second, scholarly productivity. The anecdotal evidence shows that those academics who are unable to strike a proper balance between engaging in consulting work or practice and their core university responsibilities tend to underperform where research and scholarship are concerned. This is what has led to the dim view taken of such avocations.

Third, incomplete understanding of the choices available in respect of KP modes. As discussed above, there are different KP modes. Some are more oriented towards application (Mode 2) others more towards pure research and teaching (Mode 1). Other modes seek a blend (Modes 1.5 and 3). Part of the consternation in my view is driven by the incomplete appreciation of the possibility that the academy and/or scholar may choose a particular mode of KP and as long as they remain faithful to it and deliver on its intents, their work should be seen as respectable and commendable, be it Mode 1, 1.5, 2, 3, or Boyer's Engaged Scholarship. What is important is the choice and the dedication to KP through that choice.

Four, the third mission of the academy. Increasingly there is a global call for an urgent recognition of the third mission of the academy: active engagement with society. Maassen *et al.* (2019: 8) note:

> This third mission has emerged over the last decades as an equally important part of the universities' social contract or pact with society as the primary two missions of education and research. … It requires that universities themselves take the responsibility for linking their primary activities through mutually beneficial partnerships to social and cultural needs in society, to demands from politics and the economy.

This third mission invariably requires a dedication to active practice by the institution or by individual academics or a combination. A critical element of this is to have built into the engagement processes, active knowledge transfer (KT) not in the sense of teaching or training but more in the sense of 'doing'.

Perkmann and Walsh (2008) hold that there are three forms of academic consulting: opportunity-driven, commercialisation-driven, and research-driven. They indicate that opportunity-driven consulting has a negative impact on research productivity. Based on the logics I have expounded and on Perkmann and Walsh, I argue that scholarly consulting, or engagement of the academic with community is a viable tool for mining relevant knowledge. This is one way to turn around the derogation that is used on consulting activity. What is necessary is for institutions and individual academics to identify the options that most address their peculiar context and commit to the KP element of the process as a value system.

Writing posture of academics in Africa

Mined knowledge is perhaps of no use if it is not disseminated. Disseminated knowledge is perhaps of no use if its delivery hinders adoption. Adoption is targeted at audiences such as the practising community and the academic peer community. The academic peer community are fundamental to the diffusion of locally mined knowledge in a way that allows it to inform and influence global thinking. The 'inability' of African KP to enter the global space is at the heart of its abysmal performance in global knowledge systems. This raises the matter of what may be called the 'writing posture' of African academics.

By 'writing posture', I am referring to a combination of attributes which characterise the approach to and the scholarly writing of a defined group of academics or scholars:

1. Language use and articulation skill with regards to the language/s of the dominant Metropolitan North as well as the non-dominant South;

2. Research approach or design preferences (typically phenomenological qualitative/positivist quantitative and inferential/descriptive);
3. Choice of what to write about—and by implication what to study/research and over what period;
4. Commitment to seeing the *submission–reviewer–revision–resubmit* process through;
5. Commitment to high-impact scholarship as in targeting impactful scholarly outlets;
6. Familiarity with requirements of journals, awareness of potential outlets, and consideration of how to strategically spread and place one's work for greatest reach and exposure;
7. Personal aims in publishing: publish for promotion, tenure, scholarly impact, or practitioner impact; or publishing to support teaching and learning (as in a focus on textbooks);
8. Types of writing projects: books, chapters, opinion/technical reports, or journal papers.

These attributes and areas of foci afford the deportment and mien of the scholar and inform how effectively their knowledge production efforts lead to impactful knowledge dissemination. The skills of the academic or scholarly consultant with regards to how to access outlets is critical in the KP process. As George (2012: 1023) notes:

> in the absence of such experience, non-U.S. authors who aspire to publish in these pages are likely to find the 'rules of the game' opaque. …When authors face this burden, their articles are more likely to be desk-rejected or rejected after review.

The frustration of rejection has been the making or unmaking of many an academic career. Posture represents the preparedness of the African actors to individually and collectively examine those aspects of their work which enable them to surface cogent representations of issues about/from different places in Africa for the world to see and take note. With reference to MOK, for example, many scholars have noted what seems to be a lack of research on management issues on the continent. The situation may not simply be a lack of research, but that African research has not been articulated in a fashion accessible to or accessed by non-African scholars. Breaking into global knowledge representations requires a posture of sustained dedication and engagement which goes beyond the immediate. Simply possessing 'international data' is not enough (George 2012). I present three 'writing postures' which I believe offer solutions to the problem.

Writing posture 1: What to research and methods to use

Academics and researchers who live and work in Africa (or have deep concerns for it but reside outside) have a responsibility and opportunity to carry out research and examine many of the issues, problems, and triumphs of institutions, businesses, and governments on the continent. We bear this responsibility and have these opportunities for several reasons:

1. Many students and practitioners often find themselves reading and referring to theories, cases, examples, and research executed outside Africa.
2. Many issues are as yet unexamined (George *et al.* 2016). There are many examples. For a twenty-year period (1990–2010), various governments in Ghana resorted to 'Management Contracts' or pursued the 'Outsourced Management' option as a solution to mal-performing state sector organisations in the utility, telecom, and airline sectors. What are the business, organisational, strategic, and other issues arising from outsourced management arrangements in Africa?
3. There are few—if any—documented histories of indigenous business in Africa; tracing of locally owned business, or accounts of how the demise of some came about; no examination of the nuances of pre- and post-colonial business and the entrepreneurial class, etc. *A History of Telecommunication Economics and MTN in Ghana* ('MTN' is the South African multinational Telco) has just been published (Agyeman-Duah 2020).
4. Research is needed to inform public policy, social reconstruction, and re-engineering efforts, and generally to provide relevant exemplars in the cognitive space of those who make decisions.

The above represent examples of *what* to research. Obviously, the matter of what to research would be significantly impacted by resource availability. Three points arise from this. Scholars and their institutional leaders need to leverage influence with governments and policymakers towards making funds available for the study of a range of issues. In addition, 'grantsmanship', or the skills for seeking out, applying for, and obtaining both national and international research grants, must be prioritised. Thirdly, through scholarly consulting—based on choice of KP mode—it may be possible for business firms, major institutions, and non-governmental organisations ('not-for-profits') to use their social responsibility agendas to support research.

But how is such research to be carried out? This raises the matter of methodology. I argue that the researcher in or from the African regions cannot allow themselves the luxury of debating the qualitative–quantitative divide, of choosing either a positivist or a phenomenological stance. Business, organisational, and policy research should confront the matters at hand using the most appropriate scientific tools with which to

observe, analyse, and synthesise events, practices, concepts, and models (West *et al.* 1992). Methodological sophistication must address the more fundamental question of relevance. This does not provide licence for shoddy research nor should it allow for equally shoddy writing. While seeking to obtain international respectability within one's field, the researcher needs to ask questions such as: Who will use the findings? How will they get to know about these findings? How will the discussed conclusions, policy recommendations, and/or future research directions contribute to institutional growth and national development? How does one resolve the tension between respectable, sophisticated science, and practical applicability?

Researchers need to address matters, such as scientific rigour, data integrity, sampling adequacy, and conceptual framing. Researchers need to make appropriate distinctions between exploratory research and research that tests established theories. We need to position our research both for the locale as well as for the international scene. These points speak to *how* research is to be carried out.

Writing posture 2: Language/presentation skill, high impact scholarship, and dissemination

To disrupt established thinking, one must gain access into its space, challenge its received wisdoms, and present alternatives. Carping from the side lines simply produces at best furtive glances at the 'troublemakers' and at worst open hostility. Anecdotal evidence suggests that research findings in many countries in Africa gather dust on obscure shelves. Alternatively, some scholars publish acclaimed research in world journals and gain reputation, yet their work has no bearing upon critical matters on the ground. The KP agenda requires that scholars work towards ensuring that their research, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are impactfully disseminated. By dissemination, I mean distributing, sharing, making available, generating discourse, diffusing, and spreading out our work. It is imperative that the writing posture of scholars interested in matters African should include a commitment to politically skilful high-impact scholarship.

In an editorial on 'Publishing in AMJ [*Academy of Management Journal*] for Non-US Authors', George (2012: 1026) notes a number of factors which hinder successful access to and publishing in the highly acclaimed AMJ by contributors who are non-US academics. He makes a telling statement:

> The process of getting into well-established conversations requires that the non-US authors learn the language and rules of the game.

The 'problem' factors include poorly framed research questions against potential contribution, weak theory and mismatched methods, and presentation or manuscripts

that do not conform to style, language, and previous scholarly conversations in the subject matter. High-impact scholarship enters and influences global thinking; is surfaced in journals with repute which have a high impact factor and/or are hosted by impactful platforms (eg. Sage, Emerald, Taylor Francis; scientific/scholarly associations; known high-ranking international universities). To disrupt current thinking, scholarship in and from *the Africas* needs to proceed on the assumption that it must break into the high-impact domain and/or produce its own knowledge system that its people, constituents, and actors seek out and use.

Scholars in African countries need to pay attention to relevant audiences. I have five target audiences in mind.

1. *Students in Africa:* students must be exposed to articles, papers, concepts, and books published by faculty who teach them, who live among them, and with whom they share a common heritage. There is a KP synergy created when the topic for the week's lecture is informed or based on the lecturer's own research or applied work.
2. *Practitioners:* they are at the frontline of attempting to implement various theories and concepts through their managerial and professional practice—knowingly, deliberately, or otherwise. It is necessary to cultivate practitioners and make every effort to ensure that they have access to scholarly work but written in a form and in a language that is amenable to them.
3. *Policymakers and government:* often the lives and livelihoods of many are positively or negatively affected by the viability of policy decisions taken by people in government or in the public sector—such as regulators. We need to actively make inroads into the minds, thinking, and decision support systems of such officials. To do so, they must see our work, hear about our work, and find our analyses of issues to be both astute and suggestive of the fact that we are, indeed, on top of our field. They must find our recommendations and prescriptions relevant—even if they disagree with what we say or how we may have said it.
4. *The media:* the media can be positively and negatively vociferous. Increasingly, they set the public opinion agenda in many African countries. They do make efforts to 'educate' the public; it is necessary that we make available to the media summaries of our work, and actively encourage them to access colleagues in various specialist fields for informed comments on various matters. Such comment would be greatly helped where it draws on empirical research carried out within the region.
5. *International scholarly peers:* they comment on and often determine what is deemed sufficiently informative to be included in relevant journals and thereby influence the direction of the field. African scholars must understand and skill

themselves in the language required and the formats required. There is a paradox here, though. Frey (2003) and Singh *et al.* (2007) raise very serious and relevant concerns about the problem of 'intellectual prostitution' and the abdication of originality and value to the proxy of a journal as 'top-tier'. The KP process by a resurgent Africa must walk a balanced line between high impact *and* relevance.

Writing posture 3: Personal aims and choice of KP mode

The challenges which confront individual academics and researchers in many African countries are enormous, often forcing academics to make private choices between career impact and personal financial survival. These challenges include poorly organised systems of research support; difficulties of access to organisations and research sites; lack of scholarly consulting skills; poor records and data management at public institutions/repositories—these may be government statistics, historical data, documentary evidence, and records. There are also tensions around research relevance, the international debate/publications, and the publish or perish mantra.

These challenges call for academics to make firm but evolving choices about how to construct their careers. With the drive to publish or perish, against the resource constraints noted above, many make understandable but ultimately inimical choices and sometimes publish 'anything' just as long as they obtain promotion or tenure. Little thought is therefore given to research projects and writing efforts which demand long-term involvements and deeper commitment to quality scholarship (which takes time). In addition, choices must be made between being an engaged scholar and being a disengaged academic who uses the academy only as a base for respectability.

The Nairobi Report (2009) published by the British Academy on UK–Africa research collaborations offers some twenty-two recommendations to enhance research collaboration as well as faculty capacity. At least six of the recommendations deal with mentoring, guidance, support, and assistance for faculty to enable them to make the appropriate career choices and access research excellence. One of the key thrusts of the report is its attention to the matter of consulting activity by academics in African countries. It is instructive that it notes the unfortunate tendency (which has been earlier alluded to in this article under research culture), for universities to consider consulting activity as time wasted or time taken away from research and scholarship. In considering the matter of writing posture, it is necessary to see the value that may come from scholarly consulting when academics take a holistic and 'engaged scholar' approach to their entire career and work. These issues are tractable. The writing posture is informed by the choice one makes. It is possible, for example, to adopt a Mode 1, 1.5, or Mode 2 career and then commit to driving the KP agendas

concomitant with the chosen mode. There is too much at stake for zero-sum sensibilities to characterise any part of the knowledge production enterprise.

Intentional and proactive agenda setting by academics

The knowledge producers of the West are organised. Whether through the coordination of academic research grants, support for policy-level surveys and projects, impact assessment reviews, efforts to drive new theories through the testing process, or the dissemination of philosophical and social organisation viewpoints, Western knowledge efforts have drivers, vehicles, and objects. The groundswell we see in the drive for resurgence of African MOK, for example, requires similar efforts of intentionality and agenda setting.

The groundswell

Over the last two decades, the management literatures have consistently raised the issue of Africa's marginalisation from mainstream scholarly conversations. Anyansi-Archibong (2001) wrote about African-oriented management theory. Zoogah (2008) examined studies on business in Africa and put forward thoughts towards further work. Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) used a special issue of the *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology* to call for deep leadership research in Africa. Alcadipani *et al.* (2011) called for the surfacing of Southern voices in management thinking. Lituchy *et al.* (2013) published an edited book on *Management in Africa*. In that volume Zoogah & Nkomo (2013) raised the bar by pointing out rather starkly, how very sparse the African representation is in the MOK space. Walsh (2015) wrote on the complex and compelling character of Africa and alludes to various publications which suggest Africa is a rising frontier holding similar potential to China. Nkomo *et al.* (2015), Zoogah *et al.* (2015), and others suggest that the times are right for a more concerted effort at deepening and expanding management knowledge as it relates to Africa. In an evocative paper, George *et al.* (2016) refer to 'Bringing Africa In: Promising Directions for Management Research'.

Clearly, there are grounds for believing that many scholars see the need for and are committed to building an inclusive MOK base. Can this be done? How is it to be achieved? With such a groundswell of pointers, statements, references, evocations, and suggestions, one would be forgiven for thinking that it will only be a short time before African management thinking begins to intrude into the global space.

I have so far suggested in this article that there is work yet to be done to make such aspiration a reality. The work to be done is behavioural and institutional. At this point

I add yet another dimension. I suggest that scientific associations in and out of Africa need to become intentional and proactive, and set the agenda. This call for intentionality is not without reason. Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) suggested an 'aggressive' nine-point scholarly agenda. That was in 2011. Ten years ago. It is unclear how much has been achieved from that call and its agenda. It seems there is the need to move the matter beyond open suasion to expectations placed before professional bodies.

Scholarly associations and the agenda to disrupt, infuse, and diffuse

There are at least three major management scholarly associations concerned with African issues. These are Academy of African Business and Development (AABD), Africa Academy of Management (AFAM), and the Africa Research Group (ARG). There are likely to be many others.

A close reading of the issues raised in many of the MOK papers that constitute the groundswell referred to above, suggest there are several focal issues around which much of the thinking coalesces. These include:

1. Leadership issues;
2. Human resource and workforce issues;
3. Governance, institutional, regulatory, and policy issues;
4. Business environment, entrepreneurs, regional integration, and trade;
5. Organisational effectiveness;
6. Political, philosophical, and socio-economic history and impacts;
7. Socio-cultural reality, past, present, and future;
8. Unique challenges and related issues;
9. Challenge of current theory and MOK;
10. Sectoral concerns: education, health, agriculture, etc.

These issues require systematic attention. Below, I recommend seven specific courses of action by scholars and their associations.

Large broad research projects

Each association should set up large multi/cross-national (Africa-wide if possible) research projects on some of the areas noted above. These projects should be large and span a few years, and draw in scholars from across the continent. One is thinking here of MoW-like (Meaning of Work) and GLOBE-like (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) projects.

Publishing agendas

Each association should commit to agendas to publish members' work in a coordinated, consistent fashion through papers, working papers, and books. Ideally, these should be based on the large projects chosen.

Synchronisation projects

Each association should offer a literature synchronisation project to mid-career scholars to review, challenge, dispute/disrupt, and synchronise various global and African literatures and theoretical formulations in chosen areas. The intention would be to identify and formulate areas of convergence and divergence; explore synergy; and proffer clear Afrocentric prospects where such are supported by the reviews executed.

Conference meetings for reporting progress

Each annual or biennial conference of the associations must have a component of the conference focused on reporting research and writing progress in the chosen areas. For example, if AFAM chooses to explore business history, employee motivation, or regional integration as its large or broad research project/s, each meeting should bring researchers working on the project together for update, discussion, and reporting. The publishing agendas would then pick on those projects that are ready for various levels and types of scholarly publication and choreograph these towards international presentation.

I contend that, if each association were to commit to such intentional agendas, African scholarship in the MOK area would more than likely intrude on the world scene in an irreversible manner. There is yet one more area of intentionality to consider.

Journal content and structure

The scholarly associations each have journals. For example, AABD has *Journal of African Business*, and AFAM has *Africa Journal of Management*. It seems the time is right to ask these and other journals on the continent to look carefully at some of the ideas offered by Frey (2003) in order to enhance originality and perhaps avoid the accusation of simply following the established practices of Western-dominant journals. It is also suggested that editors and scholars avoid the dangers that Singh *et al.* (2007) refer to. Our efforts at producing impactful and relevant knowledge must

not lead to the situation where scholars produce dry, context-stripped, but sophisticated papers which receive acclaim but are out of touch with African realities. To aid these thoughts, a commitment to three content areas additional to the regular sections of our journals are suggested. These are set out below.

Topical editorials

At the instance of the editor, the editorial board, or their nominee, topical editorials should be published which seek to highlight ongoing topical issues in academe or African society/countries. The editorial will seek to infuse a decidedly intellectual consideration of the matter. Topical editorials tend to be instructive; paradigm challenging, and are often quoted—given that editors tend to be respected members of the scholarly community who *'must or do know what they are talking about'*.

Practitioner viewpoint paper

Properly reviewed for form and content, this may not have the status of a peer-reviewed paper and practising academics may not write practitioner papers. These should be the preserve of practitioners. The aim is to give written voice to practitioner issues and surface matters of application. This should encourage the practising community to read our journals and foster Modes 1.5, 2, and 3 KP.

Peer-reviewed teaching case

These must be peer reviewed and must be written with a technical note and a teaching note. Cases have been increasingly used as teaching material and an andragogic tool especially in business schools where faculty attempt to bring the reality of business situations into the classroom and to the minds and thinking of students. Harvard Business School, INSEAD, and others in South Africa have championed case teaching. Christensen, Garvin, and Sweet (1991) have written a useful book on discussion-teaching or teaching through discussions. The Association of African Business Schools has over the years promoted the use of cases on the continent. Anecdotally, however, case teaching is dogged by some challenges:

1. Erroneously, it is thought that cases can be developed without empirical background research, and many cases in use in Africa are of instances from outside the continent.
2. Case writing is difficult and can be an expensive process. When good cases are written, the time investment for faculty does not seem to bear fruit where it matters

most: counting towards promotion (as with peer-reviewed papers). This is because there are few quality journals which publish cases.

Where cases are written from empirical/interventionist research, have both teaching and technical notes, and have been peer reviewed, they should count as papers. The technical note sets out the conceptual and theoretical issues that the case wishes to teach or address. The teaching note summaries the case, sets out its teaching aims, points the instructor in relevant andragogic directions with respect to case nuances, provides some probing questions, and suggests the learning outcomes for students. *Africa Journal of Management* (*AJoM*) has certainly moved this agenda. The journal has introduced: *AJoM Research* (dedicated to high-quality research submissions), *AJoM Insights* (dedicated to unique grounded challenges from particular countries), and *AJoM Dialogue* (offering commentary and discussion on submissions that have appeared in previous issues of the journal).

A note on the country applicability of KP modes and the recommendations

Before concluding this article, it is necessary to touch briefly on the matter of potential variations in-country with respect to KP modes and possibility of uptake of some or any of the recommendations made in this article. It is unclear if there is research evidence 'out there' about how various countries and institutions deploy KP modes on the African continent. The main distinction that seems to dominate the discourses is that some universities are described as *research intensive*—a sort of ideal for all to aspire to. We have to accept that colonial histories have conspired to create different systems of higher education (HE) in francophone, anglophone, and lusophone countries. In addition, the HE processes gathered momentum at different times during the colonial period. It is difficult to proffer prescriptions as to how different countries may or should adopt the prospects advanced in this article. However, it is expected that the broad considerations articulated here offer enough options for different scholars in different countries to identify those modes, structural changes, and behavioural and systemic advancements necessary to prosecute a consistent and enduring KP agenda.

The recommendations advanced in this article coming together in this form are novel. However, the conceptual base and the matters of principle which underlie those arguments are not new. What is needed now is action on these recommendations.

Conclusions

Knowledge production and the scholarly dissemination arising therefrom are an art that enables the scholar to deliver the material to the 'heart' of the reader. Produced knowledge must mean something to the consumer of the knowledge delivered. Knowledge production is a science that enables the producer to deliver the material to the mind and cognition of the consumer. It must in fact and in perception be rigorous, grounded, and sound. Finally, knowledge production is a professional process that enables the producer to galvanise cognition, affect, and behaviour towards execution. It must be sufficiently relevant as to engender action and so affect the context as to be seen as a worthwhile effort.

This article has attempted to deal with the issue of reversing the poor showing of *the Africas* in knowledge production by focusing on the behavioural dimension. A few concluding points are in order.

First, the contested, challenged, and colonialised knowledge space within many African regions and countries requires that scholars have to break down walls and commit to collaborative and joint knowledge production (van Buuren & Edelenbos 2004, Hoekmann *et al.* 2009). Policymakers, governments, research institutions, universities, and academics need to think through, and increasingly search out, mechanisms by which to co-create, co-share, and co-validate. This is important given the numerous opportunities for collecting and validating data through policy interventions.

Second, knowledge has economic value and there is increasingly a market for knowledge and a scientific entrepreneurship (Antonelli 1999) which in this digital age is perhaps fuelled through a dispersed and disaggregated knowledge 'ownership' by bloggers, app developers, digital companies, and village-based researchers engaged in participatory project appraisals and so on. Analysing the economics of knowledge production in the context of the behaviour of universities in the EU, Guena (1999: 13) notes that 'Universities are socioeconomic organisations whose economic behaviour is influenced by external opportunities and constraints.'

The knowledge actors in *the Africas* need to wake up to the reality that, as long as the market and economic dimension of knowledge are not harnessed, much income is being lost. There are intellectual, utilitarian, pecuniary, and instrumental reasons why the resurgence of Africa in the knowledge process is a matter of economic survival.

Third, universities have an important place in the KP process. Godin & Gingrass (2000) and lately Maasen *et al.* (2019) stress the three legs of university existence: knowledge creation, transfer, and societal engagement. The focal place occupied by universities requires that governments in Africa that may be contemplating changes, new laws, and funding around universities should consider that the knowledge

economy and society are here to stay. Africa cannot afford a non-strategic short-term approach to the university sector.

I believe mechanisms for knowledge transfer (KT) within country which involve academics actively engaging society and sharing knowledge by 'doing' their science and profession should be promoted. I further hold that it is time for coordinated research on how KP is being done in different countries and regions within *the Africas* and how the supportive activity of KT is also being done. We need to have *some* answers to *some* burning questions and issues across sectors and organisational and institutional types/situations; and we need to negotiate the generally difficult terrain of access to data. In the end, we must be driven by the quest to seek out and understand the rudiments of our business, institutional, and governmental processes, and our existence 'as-is'. From such empirical positions, we can proceed to dilate on institutional/organisational existence and business processes 'as we think they ought to be', or 'as our science supports and recommends'.

Finally, from 500 years ago when Europe found that Africa could be used and exploited to further its ends, it did so—ultimately—through a series of carefully coordinated efforts in knowledge use, trade, religion, and military efforts. Africa was not ready. Africa has never really recovered. If African scholars are to claim a seat at the table or create their own table, it would be because scholarly efforts are coordinated, targeted, and deployed with the goal in mind and set within both political and economic policy agendas. Scholars in Africa may claim to have arrived at the desired point in knowledge production when both local and international researchers/advisors seek out their produced knowledge as a matter of course, as a first point of consideration about matters African, for *'until lions learn to read and write, tales of hunting will always glory the hunter'*.

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Note on the author

Bill Buenar Puplampu is Professor of Organisational Behaviour and a Chartered Psychologist of the British Psychological Society. He is currently the Vice Chancellor of Central University, Ghana. He is a member of the Hamburg Global University Leaders Council and a Fellow of the Ghana Academy. His research interests are in organisational culture, corporate leadership, and employee motivation.
bpuplampu@central.edu.gh

To cite the article: Bill Buenar Puplampu (2021), 'Tackling the behavioural antecedents of knowledge production: research culture, behavioural intentionality and proactive agenda setting by scholars in Africa', *Journal of the British Academy*, 9(s1): 183–213. DOI https://doi.org/10.5871/jba/009s1.183

Journal of the British Academy (ISSN 2052–7217) is published by
The British Academy, 10–11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AH
www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk