EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Edogiawerie, Morris K.O., PhD
Department of Political Science and Public Administration
College of Arts and Social Sciences, Igbinedion University Okada.
Edo State.
morrisedos@yahoo.com 08076665314

&

Afekuro, Joseph, Keritiemone
Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
College of Arts and Social Sciences
Igbinedion University
Okada afekuro2013@gmail.com 08060109243

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt at evaluating two (2) salient aspects in the philosophical enterprise, especially as it concerns socio-political theorising. They include Epistemological and ethical issues in philosophical investigation. Philosophy prides itself as the mother (queen) of all other academic disciplines, as it claims to lay the foundation and pathways for other fields of human enquiry; thus, we have Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Law, Philosophy of Engineering, Philosophy of Linguistics, Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Agriculture, Philosophy of History, Philosophy of English, etc. Philosophy seeks to pry into the actual and concrete nature of things-reality, with a view to establishing what the situation ought to be and what it is, as it were. Philosophy is involved with critical reflection via the tools of analytic (a priori) and synthetic (a posteriori) investigative methods of study. One thing is unique about philosophy is that it does not claim to have found or know the answer(s) or way(s) but insist that there is the dire need to explore and exploit all the possibilities of way(s) and answer(s) available and then stand back and allow the stake holders make the best choices that they see fit or what suit their best interest. The method of philosophy remains peculiar as it adopts the reconstruction and interpretation method in obtaining knowledge, bearing in mind that world evolution (history) is cyclical.

Introduction

Conventionally speaking, there are some disciplines recognized as pure sciences fundamentally because they employ empirical or positivist method in arriving at acclaimed knowledge about the world-reality, which can be considered incorrigible. these empiricists method include the following, observation method, sense- experience, laboratory experiments, scrutiny, physical testability, etc. disciplines like Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Geography, Agricultural Science are all considered and regarded as Physical or Natural sciences. Academic disciplines like Economics, Political science, Sociology, psychology, etc. contend that they are sciences even though their results/outcomes do not the same in exactitude and precision like that of the natural or physical sciences.

All the sciences mentioned above whether the natural or social sciences often characteristically exclude philosophy from the class of sciences. It is extremely erroneous to assume that the enterprise of philosophy is not a science, in fact, philosophy is one of those that fits best as a science. This brings the question, how can a science be known or selected? A science is that discipline that adopt certain intrinsic principles in evaluating facts and evidences about reality. Philosophy as the foundation of all other disciplines employs certain intrinsic principles in making its enquiries about actual and concrete reality. (Edogiawerie, 2013)

The basic difference between the natural sciences and other sciences is that the outcome (results) of the social sciences are not always the same. The findings of the natural sciences are always exact and precise provided the procedure is always followed religiously while the results of the social sciences and philosophy do not enjoy the same accuracy and precision that the physical science enjoy. Secondly, the elements which the social sciences studies are not fixed and given like that of the natural sciences (the geosphere or inorganic elements) The primary element which the social science study is the human element or simply put, the element of man (person), the human factor. Research has revealed that man is the only element in existence that cannot be predicted with exactitude like other creatures of beings. The above fact is because man is erratic and highly subjective in nature rather than objective (Omoregbe, 1997).

Although man is a combination of rationality and passion, he is the most intractable above all other beings. He is very relative and subjective in nature. For instance, Mr. A can make a solemn promise to do a particular thing at a particular time or place but might likely end up doing the complete opposite or nothing at all but an animal do exactly what is predicted of him. What is recognized and accepted by Mr. A might be the exact thing that puts off Mr. B. It is often said that one man's meat is another's poison. Mr. A might tell you he loves and care for you whereas deep down in his mind he hates you with a passion. This is one of the reasons while the social sciences find it impossible to obtain given outcomes each time it embarks on an

investigation. The physical sciences are totally different.When it claims that water will boil at 100 centigrade the outcome is always that it must boil provided it is heated at the prescribed temperature anywhere and anytime (Mackie, 1977).

Philosophy Defined

One often hears people say they are philosophers because they claim to have one 'philosophy' or the other. Having a philosophy does not automatically make one a philosopher. In other words, it means that it is not everyone that has a philosophy or philosophies is a philosopher. To be a philosopher goes beyond having a philosophy; it involves critical reflection backed by individual conviction rather mere speculation. A philosopher is one who has deeply reflected on a particular issue and has good reasons to accept or reject the position at the end of the day. (Popkin and Stroll, 1994). Actual reflection is said to have begun around 600 B.C in ancient Greece after the likes of Homer and Hesiod. (Stumpf, 1994) Philosophy transcends mere speculations and conjectures.

It has been argued that a timeless and cross-cultural definition of philosophy is almost impossible principally because various thinkers have diverse orientation and backgrounds. Put differently, there numerous notions of philosophy as there are philosophers. However, thinkers have pointed out that a universally acceptable definition can only be possible from an etymological standpoint. Etymologically, philosophy can be defined from the very word philosophy itself.

The word 'philosophy' is derived from two Greek words 'Philo' meaning 'love' and 'Sophia' meaning 'wisdom', put together, therefore, we have 'love of wisdom' Like Husserl, who said that cognition be not be in a vacuum but of an object, philosophers have contended that the 'love of wisdom' that philosophy is concerned about is the wisdom about God, the Universe and Man. (Ukagba and Edogiawerie, 2012). This means that philosophy enquires into the actual nature of reality. God, the Universe and man all constitute reality.

Holistically speaking, philosophy is the critical and consistent investigation into human knowledge. Some regard philosophy as the evaluation of the sundry elements of our cultural views. Others say philosophy involves the critical insight into the concrete nature of reality. Yet some others contend that philosophy has to do with the consideration each worldview. Philosophy is recognized as the first academic discipline which evolved before all other areas of study. The first University is said to have been founded by a world-renowned philosopher in the person of Plato the great. (Popkin and Stroll, 1986)

There are five (5) acknowledged branches of philosophy and a sixth one as far as the African continent and her experiences is concerned, they are

Metaphysics
Epistemology
Logic
Ethics
Axiology
African Philosophy

Each of these branches focuses on separate aspects of human knowledge, experiences and reality. It is worthy of note to state here that some thinkers see Ethics and Axiology as one and the same. This is not true because the focus of Ethics is not that of Axiology. Ethics, for one, pays attention on the evaluation and the passing of judgment of moral issues which pertains to human conducts and behaviour while Axiology is concerned with the evaluation and the passing value judgment. The former has to do with the examination of human actions while the latter involves value judgment such as aesthetics.

Further, another issue of paramount importance when defining the enterprise of philosophy is that of the epochs through which philosophy has passed and the unique problems that philosophy has not been able to finally explore. The epochs of philosophy include, 1. The ancient/Ionian epoch, 2. The Pre-Socratic/Sophists era, 3. The Golden age/Socratic era, 4. The Medieval/Patristic era, 5. The Modernist/ rationalist period, 6. The Contemporary/ Analytical era and 7. The post-Modernist/era of Globalization. Different issues had been the main concern in each of these epochs, for example, attention was on religious issues during the medieval times and the rationalist's period was that which we popularly refer to as the era of industrial revolution.

On the issues of the problems of philosophy, reference is made to those topics which has been examined and discovered to have two equal and extreme opposites. Some of these problems are 1. The appearance and reality debacle, 2. Freewill and determinism, 3. Permanence and change, 4. The Mind-Body issue, 4. The problem of Evil and 5. The existence of God. For want of space and for the purpose of this study, further details on the above will be the subject of another day. For the benefit of the doubt an illustration will be made on the issue of appearance and reality.

This examination has isolated two core concerns of philosophy for further analysis: Epistemology and Ethical considerations in philosophical reflections especially as far as political thought is concerned. Epistemology delve into the issue of the veracity or otherwise of human knowledge concerning reality (what we claim to know out the world and other miseries surrounding us in existence) while Ethicsfocus on finding the moral justification of human conduct as it were. These will be expanded at some length below.

Epistemology Defined

Epistemology is one of the core aspects of philosophy without which it becomes a pseudo field of discipline. Like other branches, the name 'Epistemology' is a derivative of two Greek wordsnamely "episteme" which means 'knowledge' and "logos" meaning 'study'. Put together therefore, it reads "study of knowledge".

It is that branch of philosophy that critically scrutinize every knowledge about reality with a view of painting a clear and succinct of the universe. Following this definition, it means that epistemology is not merely interested in the knowledge we have acquired about our world but such knowledge that has critically scrutinized and

found to be indubitable and incorrigible no matter the situation or circumstances prevalent. When attention shifted from cosmological issues focus dwelt on epistemological and ethical matters. Thinkers at this time began to ask questions about the nature of reality and what the good life entails. One of the Sophist thinkers who opened this debate on epistemology (knowledge) is Gorias when he asserted that "we cannot know anything and even if we know we cannot communicate it" (Popkin and Stroll, 1956). With this statement he sparked off this debate called 'Solipsism' Gorias argued that it is not possible to have knowledge in this world we live in and even if we do such knowledge would be useless since we cannot let others into this knowledge.

Gorias postulations were pushed further when the skeptics Gorias' impossibility is mild that we are completely ignorant of any knowledge, that knowledge of whatever kind is absolutely impossible considering all the illusions and deceptions around us. The skeptics concluded that every knowledge about reality is characterized by errors, hence, they doubted every knowledge about reality. (Stumpf, 1994). Any knowledge presented was doubted by the skeptics as corrigible and doubtful. This position held sway untilSt. Augustine of Hippo challenged the skeptics claiming that they can never be right about their doubt of the plausibility every possible knowledge. Augustine pointed out to the skeptics that they have provided an indubitable knowledge by the position. The argument that certain knowledge can be possible as kicked against by the skeptics. He noted that the fact that the skeptics were definite and consistent in their doubt reveals the fact that the certainty of their doubt is an incorrigible knowledge and that if they doubt this knowledge then these skeptics were contradicting themselves except, they want to agree that they are not sure of their certainty. The certainty of the skeptics provides the ground for an incorrigible knowledge. (Mackie, 1977).

Rene Descartes, a French philosopher and Mathematician, later came to consolidate St. Augustine's position and further prove that the skeptics should agree with the possibility of indubitable knowledge. Descartes systematically embarked on establishing one indubitable knowledge via what he referred to as "the Methodic Doubt". To do this Descartes first started by rejecting all his previous knowledge and doubtful. He got to a point where he couldn't reject the fact that he was engaged in thinking and that for him to be able to think amounts to the fact that he was conscious and he realized that only a living being can think, hence, he came to the inevitable fact the was a living being who can think. This led to his assertion called the "cogito ergo sum" in French which means "I think therefore I exist". He established fact that the skeptics couldn't deny or reject. Sequel was able to prove to the skeptics that for them to doubt it meant that they were living beings who can get involved in cognition in space and time. No creature or being can think if he were not first in existence.

Edmund Husserl of the contemporary age came and strengthen Descartes argument by pushing the argument a little further with his famous: cogito ergo tatum" which translates to "I think, and I think of something". Husserl insisted that thought cannot be in a vacuum but the thought of anentity-an object or thing. (Stumpf, Ibid). Like Descartes Husserl adopted a systematic approach and this is what is widely acclaimed as the "Bracketing, eidiatic reduction or philosophical epoch) (Stumpf, Ibid) Husserl had to set aside, that is, bracket all the previous knowledge he had of reality and attempted to acquire knowledge like a baby with a tabula rasa mind. After this eidiatic reduction he discovered that three (3) elements stood out: the individual who seeks knowledge, the object of knowledge to be acquired and the mind that will comprehend the knowledge. These three (3) elements he told the skeptics they cannot refute. All of these led to the death of skepticism.

One very salient yet unique fact about epistemology is that there are two instruments of attaining knowledge, two methods of scrutinizing and classifying knowledge, they are, analytic (a priori) and synthetic (a posteriori) approaches. The analytic a priori approach include the body of knowledge that do not require recourse to empirical verification before their truth or falsity can be ascertained. A priori (Analytic) statements are such that can be proven true and certain without recourse to any form of empirical investigation. Consider the following statements

"Snow is white"

"Blood is red"

"All bachelors are married men"

"All men have heads"

In all the propositions above do not require any scientific testing or verifications before their truths or falsehood can be ascertained. Only recourse to rational cognition is needed to unravel the truth or falsity of these assertions.

Meanwhile, the synthetic (a posteriori) approach requires empirical or scientific verification before the truth or falsity can be ascertained. If a student asserts, for instance, "There is a lecturer in the law auditorium teaching introduction to logic to 100 level students" The truth or otherwise of this statement cannot be ascertained without going to the classroom to see

If there is a teacher in the classroom

If the classroom is the law auditorium

If the lecturer is teaching introduction to logic and

If the Lecturer is teaching 100 level students

If all these checks out, then the assertion is true otherwise it is false and does not represent reality as it were. On fact about the synthetic, a posteriori, knowledge acquisition approach is that every single points asserted must check out otherwise there is no enough grounds for the statement to be true. If one of the facts stated is found missing even when others are there, then the proposition cannot be accepted as true. In the above case, if the lecturer is in classroom but not teaching introduction to logic but teaching another course or merely addressing the students on the instructions from the vice chancellor, then the statement

does not represent reality, therefore, it is false. For the statement to be true all the conditions stated above ***must*** be met. This latter approach is that which was approved by August Comte who identified three stages (the religious stage, the Metaphysical stage and the scientific stage) that human history has witness and he accepted the scientific stage as the most authentic stage of knowledge acquisition. (Omoregbe, 1997)

Epistemology went further to establish the fact that there are certain universal knowledge which are true and unchangeable. This means that truth can be established after being subjected and passing the conditions of the three (3) traditional theories of truth and these include, but not limited to, 1. The Correspondence theory of truth, 2. The Coherence theory of truth and 3. The Pragmatic theory of truth. Foundationalists have established such items as Justice, honesty, Kindness, etc. while anti-Foundationalists insists that the grounds for knowledge and truth must not be limited but unlimited so that truths that works and have practical consequences should be permitted also as truth. (Collington, 1996)

Truth is that which happens to an idea and becomes convention irrespective of any individual's recognition or acceptance. Knowledge (truth) begins as an idea which matures into an opinion which latter becomes a belief which is accepted and subjective to the individual but becomes knowledge or truth if it has been tested with proof or evidence. When this belief is justified with or by proof or evidence then it becomes knowledge or truth. Hence, knowledge (truth) can be defined as justified true belief and is objective in every ramification.

Summarily, knowledge can, thus, be classified into two broad types: Analytic (a priori) knowledge also knowledge as Rational Knowledge and Synthetic (a posteriori) knowledge also known empirical (positivist) knowledge. (Popkin and Stroll, 1956)

What is ethics?

Ethics is another major branch of philosophy charged with the responsibility of examining the sundry impulses which culminates in human actions. Ethics provides the framework on which human conducts can be judged as either moral (right, virtuous) or immoral (wrong, vicious). Socrates has been tagged "the father of morality" as he reflected and personified morality by professing ways of living a moral and upright life as an individual. The word 'ethics' like epistemology, is a derivative from the Greek word 'ethos' which means 'conduct'. Put differently, Ethos refer to human conducts or deeds.

Ethics was one of the areas of philosophy that received attention when focus shifted from cosmological issues and people started to ask questions on what the good and preferable life entailed. Protagoras of the Sophist era concluded that everyone was left to decided what was good and acceptable to him. This was contained in his statement that "man is the measure" (Popkin and Stroll, 1986) and by this statement he suggested that each person should be the judge of that which is moral or immoral (right or wrong, virtuous or vicious, good or

bad). By this he prescribed Relativism of morality for the social society. Some rejected this relativism principle as one that is capable of breeding chaos and anarchy in the society.

Socrates was the first to have openly objected and condemned the corruption prevalent in the ancient Athenian society especially among those in authority (Government). Socrates refused to be bribed or corrupted and influenced by corrupt Government officials who wanted him to be silent about their corrupt practices in government. Sequel he was framed and accused of corrupting the Athenian youths. He was arrested and subsequently sentenced to death. Socrates has been the only one in history who has displayed such a high level of morality that no other individual has ever shown. This was exemplified when he was offered the opportunity to escape from prison with his life by his friends, but he refused and choose to die and willingly asked for and drank the poison drink called hemlock. He justified his refusal by arguing that if the state that had given him everything he ever owned and enjoyed and now decided to take it back then by all means let them (the state) take it all back. (Omoregbe, 1997).

After Socrates came Aristotle the great who came fortify the morality argument by asking and professing answers to the question "what is the good life" and "how ought men live?" Aristotle suggests that the good and virtuous life promotes happiness for man while the vicious life brings about pain, sorrow and regret for man. The good life for man, as far as Aristotle is concerned, is a life of moderation-a life of the mid-point or midway. He does not subscribe to any of two extremes, that is, between extravagance and miserliness is prudence, between cowardice and foolhardiness is courage, between inconsideration and wickedness is kindness, etc. For Aristotle, the issue is not about the conduct but the extent of the conduct. The midpoint between pleasure and pain he argues is contentment or satisfaction. Morality for him, therefore, is that action that would not result to too much or too little. A moderate individual implies a moral society or state.

For Kant, the categorical imperative is the best yardstick for measuring morality or immorality. The Kantian 'categorical imperative is that maxim which insist that you only do unto others as you would have others do unto you. That is, if you want to conduct yourself in a particular manner you should first consider the conduct and assume you will accept it if someone else where to engage in similar conduct.

The utilitarians maintain that a moral action is that action that will produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This utilitarian principle is popularly referred to as the "Summon Bonum" (Hospers, 1997) Some thinkers refer to this doctrine as "the social political doctrine" The greatest happiness of the greatest number simply means the sundry actions which will most likely result in the benefit and happiness of a large number of people over and above only a few people. According to this principle the nature of the conduct does not matter, what matters is the

amount of people who would stand to gain happiness and satisfaction from the deed. So, for the conduct to be moral the person carrying out the action should consider the number of those who will benefit over those who will not benefit, if the former outweighs the latter then the action is considered moral.

Fletcher and the singer of the contemporary consider morality to be based on situations and circumstances. They suggest that the situation and circumstances prevalent at the time determine whether an action is moral or immoral. The question of morality is tied to

> The nature of man, in other words, is such that he has to behave in certain ways and refrain from behaving in certain other ways in order to attain internal harmony, happiness and self-fulfillment. Nature intends man to live a moral life and it is only in so doing that man can attain internal harmony, happiness and self-fulfillment. (Omoregbe, 1991)

The issue of morality applies to all human endeavors especially to man in his social political environment. Moral issues affects an individual as a person and affects them as a community of persons, as a community of persons the issues are more encompassing than that of a single individual, hence, the need to pay more attention to issues that affects men their social political environment.

Sequel, this study attempts to establish the relevant nexus between epistemology and ethics as far as socio-political reflection (political theory) is concerned.

Political Theory in Perspective

As a normative enterprise, political theory does not swallow all political information hook, line and sinker without first subjecting them to critical epistemological and ethical investigations and when they pass the test and meet rational justification of what ought to be rather than what is, it recommends the ideal that every state should strive to attain.

Political theory selects and isolates concepts and terminologies such as "Political Power', "Political Obligation", "Sovereignty", "Fundamental Human Rights", "the Rule of Law", "Civil Disobedience", "Democracy", etc. and subject these to critical scrutiny revealing their actual nature such that everything which is worthy of note is taken into serious consideration. This critical exercise is necessary because the business of ruling the state is not a cake walk. Remember Plato's postulation that only the philosopher king is quality to rule. (Omoregbe, 1996) This X-Ray mechanism of political theory is akin to the swing of a pendulum which swings both left and right leaving no stone unturned as far as these ideals are concerned. Why does the medical student receive the training of dissecting every single fiber of the human body to get to know the nitty gritty thereof?

Political Power: political theory pays close attention to this because if political power is wrongly handled then the state is doomed to its waterloo. This is against the backdrop that it has been said that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Mondin, 2011) The domicile of power (political) in the state is where political scientists and philosopher like Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Mill refuse to concur (Appadorai, 1982) Meanwhile Iroegbu (Iroegbu, 2000) identifies the various types of powers that exist and posits that political power is the most volatile of them all as it is capable of making or marring the state (the society/people)

Political Obligation: is examined via the tool of political theory juxtaposing the tacit relationship between the citizen (individual) and the state. It emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between the two parties in the tacit consent stressing the need at ensuring that the terms of the contract are not breached by either of the contractor-stake holders. (Warburton, 2005) The light examination rest on the word "obligation" and the need to let it remain sacrosanct otherwise the relationship becomes lopsided. Political theory provides the opportunity to examine and compare between "obligation", "rights", "privileges" and "duty", drawing the lines between them.

Sovereignty: The contention that every civil society (state) reserve the right to be free and self-sufficient culminates in the debate of sovereignty which is a very delicate and volatile issue. Political theory has examined that sovereignty in whatever stance it appears can seriously make or mar the state. How, in sovereignty there is the tendency that a state can become to confident of her freedom and power and go on to attempting to subjugate other states and bringing them under her control. Yet a state who do not have the sovereign status tends to be in present and imminent danger of injustice and endless oppression. (Irele, 1999) Non-state actors seem to exist to protect and preserve the interest of state actors that are not so strong and independent to march "powerful" state actors. The analysis of political theory have a long way in the emergence and existence of non-state actors like the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), the formulation of the rules of engagement, etc.

Fundamental Human Rights: The emphasis on the sanctity of the fundamental human Rights is what makes and marks the difference between the civil society and the state-of-nature which Hobbes aptly describes as "nasty, solitary, brutish, poor and short" (Appadorai, Ibid)This description goes a long way to show how undesirable the state of nature is and why men decided to abandon it and create the civil society. The protection and preservation of human lives occupied no place of relevance in the state-of-nature. It was every man for himself and God for them all, survival was simply for the fittest and the specie

that was not fit to survive simply faded into extinction. The sanctity and priority accorded the fundamental human rights stands to eliminate every element and resemblance of the insecurity and worthlessness that characterize the life of man in the state-of-nature. Fundamental among these rights is the right to protest and resist every kind of injustice and oppression.

The Rule of Law: The state as acknowledged by Hobbes was indeed lawless, chaotic and above all meaningless. The Relativity of morals, for Protagoras and Nietzsche ultimately translated to anarchy. Aristotle, aptly advocates that the Rule of Law should stand sacrosanct if the state were not to return to the state-of-nature. Aristotle stresses that laws are not to be trampled or set aside in the society of men. (Nicomachean Ethics. Itinis). Aristotle insists that the sanctity of the rule of law is the force that keeps the civil society from collapse, without the Rule of Law, the civil society (state) is not better than the state-of-nature where anyone and everyone can erect standards of their own as ideals which others must adopt and accept as the universal norms.

Critique

So far, no scholar has been able to prove that there is any discipline that is older than philosophy or that there is any discipline that is more critical than the enterprise of philosophy which studies the society normatively. The enterprise of philosophy insists that there should be no "given" as far as reality is concerned because the world is yet evolving and has not reached zenith as suggested by Teilhard de Chard in. Put differently, Philosophy forbids a situation whereby knowledge about the world or reality is considered as dealt with, known and closed. The fact that the world is still evolving is evidence in most of the occurrences and events being recorded round the globe. The ICT is one pointer to the fact that reality is yet unfolding. In less that 50 (fifty) years ago there was nothing like the sort of scientific and technological advancement like what exist in our contemporary society. Chard in argues that evolution will come to an end when the world becomes super-personalized and this phase he referred to as the Theosphere phase of evolution (Omoregbe, 1997).

The methods of philosophy is critical, consistent and systematic as far as the acquisition of knowledge is concerned. So when one is asked "what do you know?'the person should be able to respond to such a question with the knowledge of epistemology that he/she has obtained. Epistemology observes that truth or knowledge that do not confirm with the traditional parameter for measuring the truth or knowledge is no concrete and objective enough to be accepted and referred to as knowledge about reality and this goes for ethics in the determinant of that which is good or bad, right or wrong, true or False, virtue or vice, etc.

The philosophers are often branded as troublemakers or confusionists

because they are never satisfied with the fact that issues should be left the way they are. Like fresh medical students are not satisfied with the cadaver until they have deserted it to the bones. When a philosopher is done with the evaluation of one issue or the other, after laying bare all the realities present, he turns his attention to another issue or aspect of human existence with a view of attempting to understand the world where he finds himself without his own volition and which he cannot do anything about. Epistemology and Ethics are two arms of philosophy which all researchers need if their research must be relevant to the contemporary (Nigerian) society. A background knowledge of Epistemology and Ethics is what the socio-political philosopher needs comprehend why there are often situations and circumstances when conflicts of interest make it impossible for people to inter-relate (socio-politically) positively. Otakpor contends that most researchers do not critically consider the fundamental principles of epistemology and ethics when gathering data (information) for their study; hence, a great many of the findings of this research do reflect what obtains around us. Let us remember that existence began to have meaning and relevance when men began to reflect and consider things.

Conclusion

Contemporary scholars and researchers are interested in qualitative and effective research, and the reason why this call is considered clarion is that man has to understand his world better. Man is the only being asking salient questions about existence and reality. There is no doubt that research into the objective and concrete nature if things will definitely help man comprehend and appreciation his own existence and the world as a whole. The question is what quality of academic research are our researchers turning out each time they embark on research? The first and most important point about academic research is that any study or examination that do not have any relevance or add value to the society should be considered unworthy of precious time and resources.

There are a lot of standard universities and institutions of higher learning in Nigeria that have been engaged in research and planning for over 40 (forty) years and reporting findings that appear to be apt in solving some very difficult, if not impossible, problems and situations. The question then is to what extent academic research has helped the Nigerian nation in addressing some seemingly daunting situations. To what extent has academic research added value to the search for social, economic, political and religious advancement in Nigeria? If the contention is that the outcomes of this academic research have had very little or no impact on the country, then the quality of this research needs to be reviewed. There is also the possibility that those charged with charge of government do not use or deem it fit to attempt the

implementation of the results of this research. If the latter is the situation, then it could be possible that these outcomes are not considered good enough for finding solutions to the many issues and challenges that confront the people. There is a research institute located at Ibadan, Oyo state of Nigeria- NISER, for the purpose of working and making research findings workable.

There should be integrity as far as academic research is concerned. Integrity requires that the Ethics of academic research must not be compromised at all. The same goes for Epistemological foundations for academic research. The establishment and consolidation of "Turnitin" have been activated. Turnitin is an ICT software that has been designed to identify and isolate research that the researcher copied from already established findings. This means that a great number of research that have been out in recent times are simply recycled of what has been done in other research without adding anything new that would add value or advance the course of human existence.

Ancient, medieval, contemporary, etc. scholars have already laid the principles and foundations of research and study into the miseries of God Man and the Universe. The primary aim for establishing the 'Turnitin', mechanism, among others, is to ensure that plagiarism in academic research and study be gradually and eventually eliminated from academic research in its entity totally intends to achieve is to monitor. There is no single knowledge as we have it today that has not been tinkered or reflected upon in times past. The base line at this point is make our reflections and research have relevance to our world and lives especially in the quest to understand and appreciate human existence more than ever before. The point is that we know that Mr. A has asserted this or that much and Mr. B has said and discovered this much but the salient is what is the researchers position and how can it contribute to knowledge and advance the course of the society?

Finally, let it be stated here that this issue of improving academic research and study can be approached from a diverse spectrum, but the bottom line is that the long-term aim is to ensure the consolidation of the human quest towards understanding reality in its true, concrete and objective nature.

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