

## **Knowledge management theories: an alternative perspective on organising Africa's indigenous knowledge**

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### **Abstract**

Indigenous knowledge has existed within the diverse African societies since the beginning of the life of such societies. However, it is claimed that during the colonial era in Africa such knowledge was ignored by colonialists, and later by African leaders after independence. Thus, most African indigenous knowledge including that used for improving human health was ignored by existing knowledge management theories; and people have come to depend more on exogenous (foreign) knowledge. Various theories on knowledge management have been proposed, however many have not focused on the management of African indigenous knowledge. This prompts a need to charter new theoretical models for the management of African indigenous knowledge. This article aimed at examining and highlighting various theories from different schools of thought that have explained the processes and activities involved in the management of knowledge by focusing on how they fit in managing the diversity of African indigenous knowledge systems. A total of three knowledge management theories were examined based on their significance and limitations. Given the existing theories'/models' limitations to manage indigenous knowledge, a new framework that focuses on processes and strategies for the management of indigenous knowledge in the African context where such knowledge is generated and developed has been proposed. The five main attributes of the proposed framework are the following: the environment and setting, stages and phases for managing indigenous knowledge, the role and support of agents, the institutionalisation of indigenous knowledge and the legal framework for the management of indigenous knowledge.