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Elements in Psychology and Culture

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INDIGENOUS PSYCHOLOGY IN AFRICA

*A Survey of Concepts, Theory,
Research, and Praxis*

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Indigenous Psychology in Africa

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Abstract: Understanding human behaviour, thoughts, and emotional expressions can be challenging in the global context. Due to cultural differences, the study of psychology cannot be decontextualised. This calls for an unearthing of the explanatory systems that exist in Africa for understanding and accounting for the behaviour, emotions, and cognition of Africans. This call is addressed through the emergence of African psychology (AP) or Indigenous psychology in Africa (IPA) as a legitimate science of human experience. This Element discusses the motivations for AP, centrality of culture, demarcations of AP, and the different strands within AP. It highlights issues related to African philosophy, African cultural anthropology, African philosophy of science, and suitable methodological approaches for AP research. It also discusses some selected theoretical contributions and applications of AP. The Element concludes that AP researchers and practitioners need to pursue interdisciplinarity and avoid meaningless rejection of good ideas from other cultural settings.

Keywords: African psychology, indigenous psychology, African philosophy of science, African philosophy, applied African psychology

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Contents

A Note from the Series Editor	1
1 Conceptual Foundations	1
2 African Philosophy as an Essential Foundation of AP	17
3 African Cultural Anthropology as an Essential Foundation of AP	20
4 Emerging Theoretical Contributions in AP	24
5 African Philosophy of Science and Research Methodology	48
6 Praxis in IPA	54
7 Epilogue	60
References	68