



Immanuel Kant's Input in Epistemology and its Application to the Game of Football

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Abstract

Immanuel Kant is one of the major influential figures in modern philosophy. Kant's input in philosophy is enormous as well as elsewhere. He synthesized early modern rationalism and empiricism, set the terms for much of nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy. He exercised a significant influence today in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, aesthetics, and other fields. In the preface of his second edition of the *critique of pure reason*, Kant demonstrated what is called Copernican revolution in philosophy. This revolution is also called Kant's new turn in philosophy. He made a critical analysis of the power and limits of our mind and our ability to understand the world we find ourselves in. Kant addressed the traditional philosophical assumption that our cognition must conform to the objects. This view suggests that our knowledge and understanding are shaped and constrained by the way objects exist independently of us. Kant's synthesis in the two epistemological schools is impactful and applicable in the game of football as well as elsewhere. The researcher adopted an expository method to show how Kant's epistemic input is commonly associated with football. Since in a football game all players played complementary roles to form a team, and

the understanding of roles by each player has establish the power and limits of their skills. The research therefore used Kant's input in epistemology analogically using football game to show the richness of Kant in epistemology.

Introduction

The problem of determining the certainty of knowledge started long ago by philosophers of the ancient tradition down through generations to the contemporary era. This argument span from the ancient to the contemporary era since philosophers wishes to know what knowledge means. Since the term "epistemology," which by derivation means the study of knowledge, is commonly employed to signify the study of the certitude of human knowledge. "Certitude" is here used to denote the conscious possession of truth, that is, the act or state of mind wherein the mind possesses truth and knows that it possesses it. In the account of epistemology which we have been discussing it is set down that the existence of the mind's power to acquire truth is the chief problem of epistemology. Philosophers differs greatly on the position of the certainty of knowledge leading to the split of two schools of thought in epistemology; empiricism and rationalism. Each hold a strong position attributing knowledge to it, meanwhile denying another possibility of supplying us with true knowledge. This became more of conflict between the rationalists and empiricists as heightened by David Hume and Rene Descartes. The disagreement between these two epistemological positions provoked Immanuel Kant's intervention to reconcile and reconstruct the epistemological tradition.

Immanuel Kant's epistemological approach is 'critical' since he has made a critical analysis of the power and limits of our mind and our ability to understand the world we find ourselves in. This made Kant to be the founder of epistemic tradition of critical analysis that has defined the importance of knowing our knowledge limitations. It is significant to understand that Kant's major input is found in his Copernican Revolution. In the preface to the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason, Immanuel Kant (1998) introduces his revolutionary idea, often referred to as the "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy. This idea fundamentally alters the way we think about the relationship between human cognition and the objects of our experience. Kant begins by addressing the traditional philosophical assumption that our cognition must conform to the objects. This view suggests that our knowledge and understanding are shaped and constrained by the way objects exist independently of us. This position suggests that our knowledge and understanding are shaped and constrained by the way objects exist independently of us. According to this perspective, to gain knowledge

about objects, we must observe and analyze them as they are, external to and unaffected by our cognitive faculties. Kant observes that all attempts to extend our knowledge a priori (i.e., knowledge independent of experience) under this traditional assumption have failed. In his words, “all attempts to find out something about them (objects) a priori through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing” (Kant, 1998, Bxvi).

The research therefore seek to show Kant’s input in epistemology by applying it to the game football using his Copernican Revolution and his nature and analysis of knowledge. Kant reconciliation of rationalists and empiricists saying that neither sensibility nor understanding can function independently to produce knowledge shall be applied to the game of football whereby team work is key to skillful and successful football game. To Kant, understanding cannot intuit or perceive, and the senses cannot think or conceptualize. It is only through their union that knowledge arises. This union involves the understanding structuring and interpreting the sensory data provided by sensibility, turning raw perceptions into coherent experiences. The research is therefore an attempt to show that Kant’s input in epistemology is applicable to sport, especially the game of football.

Clarification of terms.

Here the major terms that form our discussions in this research shall be clarified; that is terms like epistemology, and the game of football. The term **epistemology**: is derived from the two Greek words “episteme” (which means knowledge) and “logos” (which means study or theory). Taken together, epistemology is “...the inquiry into what can be known, and how we can know it”. According to Bunnin, epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with enquiry into the nature, sources and validity of knowledge (40). Epistemology as a branch of philosophy became popular in the 17th and 18th centuries. According to Agede quoted in Teghtegh, Rene Descartes attempt to transform metaphysics in epistemology were significant in this regard followed closely by Locke, Berkeley and Hume (170). By definition, Omoregbe postulate that, epistemology is the branch of philosophy which studies the nature, the origin, the foundation, the methods, the validity, the extent, and the limits of knowledge (134)

Epistemology is closely related to metaphysics, because if there were nothing we would not seek to know it, since knowledge is always knowledge of something. Knowledge and justification are not only interesting in their own right as central epistemological topics; they also represent positive values in the life of every reasonable person. The study of epistemology can help in this quest, even if it often does so

indirectly. Well-developed concepts of knowledge and justification can play the role of ideals in human life. **Football** refers to any of several games played with a round or oval ball where teams score points by kicking, driving, or carrying the ball into a designated goal area ("Football"). Most commonly on a global scale, the term specifically denotes association football (soccer), which is defined as: A game played on a rectangular field with net goals at either end in which two teams of 11 players each try to drive around ball into the other's goal by kicking, heading, or using any part of the body except the arms and hands.

Immanuel Kant's influence in epistemology

Kant's influence in epistemology which culminated in his "synthetic a-priori" nature of the human knowledge was prompted by Hume deep-seated denouncement of any form of rational and scientific knowledge. Kant posit that he was woken up from his "dogmatic slumber" by Hume's skepticism on the possibility of indubitable foundation of scientific and metaphysical knowledge. Kant is been captured by Enoch Stumpf thus:

"I openly confess," he said, "that the suggestion of David Hume was the very thing which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy quite a new direction." But Kant said, "I was far from following (Hume) in the conclusions at which he arrived." Kant rejected Hume's final skepticism (298).

Immanuel Kant's assignment to repudiate Hume's position was necessitated by two ostensible phenomena as seen in his declaration: "two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe... the starry heavens above and the moral law within". The latter suggests "determinism" and the former "freedom". This evincing and distinct occurrence of two incompatible qualities in the sphere of human existence, informed Kant's research and logical erection of a reconciliation between the two seeming entirely opposed theories; empiricism and rationalism. In establishing a firm assumption on the ostensible contradiction between the theories above, Kant thought it essential to embark on the analysis of the human cognition. He first, study the meaning, interpretation and function which his predecessors gave to the operations of the mind, particularly the rationalist and the empiricist philosopher, before making his proposal. Having looked at that Kant discovered that, the mind was treated as a passive element, incapable of affecting the natural world but merely serving as a receptor of sense perception. Kant was not overwhelmed by this interpretation and function that was

accorded the nature of the mind (300). Because, by it, there was no way the form of “synthetic a-priori” knowledge would be possible. He therefore went beyond this flaccid and passive conception of the mind to the real operations of the human mind and came out with a laudable analysis in the form of a revolution.

Kant’s Copernican revolution in philosophy

In the second preface to the B Edition of the *Critique of Pure reason* Kant declare what has come to be known as Copernican revolution in philosophy. Kant said that:

Thus far it has been assumed that our cognition must conform to objects. On the presupposition, however, all our attempts to establish something about them priori, by means of concepts through which our cognition would be expanded, have come to nothing. Let us, therefore, try to find out by experiment whether we shall not make better progress in the problems of the metaphysics if we assume objects must conform to our cognition. This assumption already agrees better with the demanded possibility of an a priori cognition objects-i.e., a cognition that is to ascertain something about them before they are given to us (Bxvi).

Kant’s Copernican revolution concedes the limitation of human reason, and yet maintains that the revolution of the problem of knowledge consists in adopting reason as its highest principle. In this, Kant agrees with and yet disagrees with Descartes. Like Descartes, Kant insists that knowledge must be secured on self-consciousness. It should be pointed out that Kant too aims to craft a theory of knowledge that is universally valid irrespective of time and space. His idealism according to Agede Kenneth partially arose a response to the rationalist and empiricist debate. Attempts in traditional metaphysics to explain knowledge contributed to the emergence of two influential but incompatible epistemological system; rationalism/empiricism. Kant dismiss the claims of these schools of thought and contended that neither of them had a satisfactory account of knowledge (39).

Kant’s Copernican revolution entails a couple of things; first, he realizes that the problem of knowledge cannot be resolved by having a passive mind being affected by an active world. Thus Kant displaces activity from the object and locates it in the subject of knowledge. However he understand the relationship between experience and reason in mutually complimentary terms, he refuses to reduce one to the other. Secondly, Kant insists that a satisfactory account of knowledge must allow both reason and experience

to contribute to our knowledge in basically the same way. He explained that, by its distrust of the senses, rationalism rejects the subject matter of knowledge. Meanwhile by its whole rejection of reason, Kant claims that empiricism denies itself the concepts with which to explain experience (140). This can be demonstrated in Kant analysis of knowledge, where he make use of a priori-a posteriori knowledge and analytic-synthetic knowledge.

Kant's Analysis of knowledge

In defining or analyzing knowledge, Kant argue that all our knowledge begins with experience and there is no doubt about it. For how is it possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise than by means of objects which affect our senses, and partly of themselves produce representations, partly rouse our powers of understanding into activity, to compare to connect, or to separate these, and so to convert the raw material of our sensuous impressions into a knowledge of objects, which is called experience? In respect of time, therefore, no knowledge of ours is antecedent to experience, but begins with it. In spite the fact that all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. This view emphasize that all knowledge begins with experience but goes beyond experience. For Kant all our knowledge begins with experience, however, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience. For, on the contrary, it is quite possible that our empirical knowledge is a compound of that which we receive through impressions, and that which the faculty of cognition supplies from itself.

Kant's real task was to explore what is involved in having knowledge. Then he looked to discover the conditions that must be fulfilled for us to have knowledge. He saw this as an analytic problem that could be solved by reason. Kant asks if any of our knowledge has a privileged position. For example, our notion of causality between events in the universe seems to be presupposed. That is, it is a notion about the universe, yet it does not need to be shown to be true by empirical evidence. According to Kant, it seems to be necessarily true that every event must have a cause (6). In his analysis, Kant's proposed 'a priori and a posteriori', 'analytic and synthetic' forms of knowledge show the conditions for knowing as follow.

A priori: a priori knowledge is knowledge gained from reasoned. A statement is true a priori if its truth is determined before experience, or without reference to experience. Kant reasoned that there must be an innate power for knowledge which in the first place allows sensation, perception and cognition of things.

A posteriori: this is the opposite a priori knowledge. A statement is true a posteriori if its truth follows after experience. That is, its truth can only be determined with reference to empirical evidence. Kant clearly state that:

By the term "knowledge a priori," therefore, we shall in the sequel understand, not such as is independent of this or that kind of experience, but such as is absolutely so of all experience. Opposed to this is empirical knowledge, or that which is possible only a posteriori, that is, through experience. Knowledge a priori is either pure or impure. Pure knowledge a priori is that with which no empirical element is mixed up. For example, the proposition, "Every change has a cause," is a proposition a priori, but impure, because change is a conception which can only be derived from experience (24).

Analytic: knowledge is analytic for Kant when it is inductive or intuitive. A statement is analytic if the predicate of the subject is contained in the subject. Analytic knowledge does not add no information to the subject. It's in form of proposition, For example, tautologies are analytic statements: a bachelor is an unmarried person. This proposition does not add any new knowledge to the subject. Meanwhile under *Synthetic*; it adds new knowledge to the subject. This is a kind of an empirical knowledge. If a statement is not analytic, then the predicate of the statement says something new about the subject, thus we call such statements synthetic. On **analytic** and **synthetic** knowledge, Kant assert that:

Analytical judgments (affirmative) are therefore those in which the connection of the predicate with the subject is cogitated through identity; those in which this connection is cogitated without identity, are called synthetical judgments. The former may be called explicative, the latter augmentative judgments; because the former add in the predicate nothing to the conception of the subject, but only analyse it into its constituent conceptions, which were thought already in the subject, although in a confused manner; the latter add to our conceptions of the subject a predicate which was not contained in it, and which no analysis could ever have discovered therein (24).

Under the transcendental doctrine of elements, first part of transcendental aesthetic Kant argued that, whatsoever mode, or by whatsoever means, our knowledge

may relate to objects, it is at least quite clear that the only manner in which it immediately relates to them is by means of an intuition. To this as the indispensable groundwork, all thought points. The capacity for receiving representations (receptivity) through the mode in which we are affected by objects, objects, is called sensibility. By means of sensibility, therefore, objects are given to us, and it alone furnishes us with intuitions; by the understanding they are thought, and from it arise conceptions. But a thought must directly, or indirectly, by means of certain signs, relate ultimately to intuitions; consequently, with us, to sensibility, because in no other way can an object be given to us.⁷ Kant's position is that there is no way that knowledge can be acquired through only one particular source as argued by the rationalists and empiricists. To him all sources must come together or compliment each other for proper acquisition of knowledge that is certain. This implies that the empiricists provides the raw materials of knowledge and rationalists assimilates it.

Kant's Phenomena and Noumena

One of the Kant's impact was his insistence that human knowledge is forever limited in its scope. This limitation takes two forms. The first is the phenomenal world which refers to the world as it appears to each of us from our own personal perspective. For Kant, the real world is just this phenomenal world that we perceive and conceptualize. We can broaden our perspective to the general human point of view, and it is from this position that we have an appreciation for the notion of objectivity. The objective world is constructed from our human and cultural consensus and shared knowledge. Yet ultimately, we cannot break out of our own individual perspective. We always perceive our world from our own individual point of view. The phenomenal world is in contrast to what Kant calls the noumena world consisting of things-in-themselves that exist for themselves independently of our perceiving them. The second is Noumena that is thing-in-itself, which is the thing beyond our experience, yet it is what our phenomenal knowledge is about. Kant argues that we can never know this noumena world. It is forever out of our reach because we cannot step out of our perspective on the world (31).

A consequence of Kant's theory of phenomena and noumena is that the world we know and live in is the phenomenal world that our own minds organize and synthesize from the multiplicity of data. If I see a tree, then that tree exists because it can be seen (and touched, etc.). It is essentially phenomenal, not noumenal. Kant supposes a thing-in-itself, beyond our experience, which gives rise to the phenomenon of the tree, but we cannot call this a tree-in-itself since the application of concepts such as 'tree' is limited to

phenomena. Beyond our own experience, their application makes no sense. There can be no tree-in-itself. Thus the limits of the world are only as limited as my ability to actively conceptualize and understand the world. This is reminiscent of the line "I never had the blues until I knew the words (31).

Transcendental knowledge: Pure and Empirical Knowledge

Concepts or ideas are referred to as "pure" if they are abstracted from experience and are not directly empirical in nature. This is the case for transcendental knowledge. Kant states that "though all our knowledge begins in experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience". In this Kant is alluding to transcendental knowledge. Transcendental knowledge is not of experience itself, but it cannot be true without experience. But Kant also argues that without the mind's ability to organize and conceptualize experience, we cannot have any experience. Thus on the one hand Kant is conceding to the arguments of empiricist thinkers, such as Hume, who claim that all knowledge begins in experience, but on the other hand he also concedes to rationalists, such as Leibniz, that ideas and thought are essential to knowledge. Kant's theory is a synthesis of these two philosophical camps. Kant provides some terms to encompass this theory, they include:

Sensibility is the means by which we have intuitions. Sensibility is receptive, in that intuitions are immediately given to mind.

Understanding is our mental faculty to conceptualize the manifold of intuitions given by sensibility. Understanding is an active and imaginative process of mind. Both sensibility and understanding are needed to make sense of and experience the world. All phenomena of experience are given in terms of matter and form. The matter is the raw sensation and form is the way we grasp that matter. For example, space is the form of a visual experience and colour and brightness are the matter. Kant distinguishes form from concept. Form is the structure by which we perceive phenomena, whilst concepts are the means by which we understand and categorize phenomena to gain knowledge. Form is part of the intuition, whilst concepts may be learnt and are applied to intuition to make sense of them.

Application of Kant's analysis of knowledge to the game of football

The game of football is the one of the most watched game in the history of sport. Football is a game played by eleven players from each side, totaling twenty four players playing on the pitch. Any successful team makes sure that every player is considered important during training or match. Every player understand the limits of his or her

playing skills on the pitch. Those using the left leg to play flexibly will not underrate those using the right leg to play smoothly. Since each player understand there limits and the role they play during training or match. Those playing in the mid field cannot deny strikers the opportunity to score, since the defenders are always supplying passes to the appropriate places, meanwhile the goal keeper protect the goal post. The complimentary role in the game of football is a good example of what Kant mean. Kant argued that not even the empiricists nor the rationalist will claim the certainty of knowledge, since both must complement each other. Kant insists that a satisfactory account of knowledge must allow both reason and experience to contribute to our knowledge in basically the same way (140). A more flexible example can be seen through Kant's synthesis of sensory data and rule-based judgment and the categorical imperative.

However, Kant's theory of perception relies on the "synthesis of apprehension," where the mind collects various sensory inputs, the speed of the ball, the angle of a tackle, the sound of contact, and organizes them into a coherent experience. For a football referee, this process is instantaneous. Although, Kantian philosophy warns that our perception is limited by the "phenomenal" world (the world as it appears to us) rather than the "noumenal" world (the thing-in-itself). In a match, a referee's decision-making is often clouded by what modern psychology calls "heuristics," but what Kant would describe as the limitations of our "sensibility." Because human perception is fallible and subject to spatiotemporal constraints, the introduction of Video Assistant Referees (VAR) can be seen as a Kantian attempt to reach a more "objective" reality. By providing multiple angles and slow-motion replays, technology attempts to bridge the gap between the subjective "appearance" of a foul and the objective "truth" of the incident.

Beyond mere perception, Kant's moral philosophy, specifically the *Categorical Imperative* influences how decisions are made under pressure. Kant argued that one should "act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. For a player deciding whether to dive to win a penalty, or a referee deciding whether to ignore a minor infraction for the sake of "game flow," the Kantian influence is clear: the decision must be based on a principle that could be applied universally to all players in all matches.

This creates a tension between pure football (the conceptual, rule-bound game) and "empirical football (the game as it is played in the heat of the moment). Decision-making influenced by Kantian ethics prioritizes the integrity of the rules over the immediate emotional outcome of the match. This is why VAR, despite its potential to disrupt the "joy" of the game, is justified in a Kantian sense; it serves the moral duty of

accuracy and fairness, which are universal requirements for the sport to remain a meaningful pursuit.

Weaknesses of Kant's inputs in epistemology

The Kantian input in epistemology has created great impact into science and knowledge generally, however it is not free from critical shortcomings. This segment of the paper develop some shortcomings or weaknesses of Kant's inputs in epistemology as follow; Immanuel Kant's epistemological framework, specifically his transcendental idealism; the distinction between phenomena and noumena, has been highly influential but is also subject to significant criticism. The primary weaknesses in his input to epistemology revolve around the concept of the unknown "thing-in-itself," the rigidity of his a priori categories, and his questionable assumption regarding the universality of human cognition.

Firstly, Kant states we can only know phenomena (appearances), not noumena (things-in-themselves). However it is arguable that if we cannot know the noumenal world, we cannot know that it exists or that it causes our sensations. Also to claim that "the real world is unknowable" is to make a claim *about* the real world, which contradicts his own premise that no knowledge of it is possible. Most importantly by restricting knowledge to appearances, Kant arguably separates human understanding from actual reality, bordering on subjective idealism or skepticism, which he sought to avoid.

Secondly, Kant claimed certain structures (like Euclidean space) are necessary, a priori, and unchanging frameworks of human experience. The advent of non-Euclidean geometry and Einstein's physics (general relativity) challenged the idea that Euclidean geometry is the only way to structure spatial experience. Also he assumed that all human minds use the exact same categories. Later philosophers and scientists have questioned whether these categories are truly innate or merely products of human evolutionary adaptation and cultural development.

Thirdly, Kant create dualism between experience and understanding and by doing so Critics argue that he does not fully explain how these two distinct faculties interact to produce knowledge. Also because the mind constructs the world through a priori forms (space, time, causality), Kant can be interpreted as representing objective truths as subjective to human cognitive hardware, reducing scientific laws to mental structures rather than objective realities.

While Kant successfully combined empiricism and rationalism to overcome the limitations of his predecessors, these weaknesses created the foundation for subsequent

philosophical movements (like German Idealism and Phenomenology) to refine and challenge his original theory.

Conclusion

The paper has succeeded in demonstrating the inputs of Kant's epistemology and how it is applicable to the game of football. The researcher argued that Kant has a strong influence that its application is commonly in the practical life. The reconciliation between empiricists and the rationalists has provided a framework for the boundaries and limitations of human knowledge, since we cannot know everything. Kant's position portrays the attitudes of footballers who at no point stand alone in the football pitch to score goals. Every player contributes in his or her own quarter for the successful scoring of goals in the football tournament which is in line with Kant's position. Since to Kant, the empiricists provide the rationalist with the raw materials of knowledge and the rationalists assimilate. This is a clear rebuttal to skepticism, and a new turn in the field of knowledge.

The application of Kantian thought to the game of football and decision-making involves a delicate balance between the *a priori* (knowledge independent of experience, such as the Laws of the Game) and the *empirical* (the specific, high-speed events occurring on the pitch). Kant's ideas about perception influence decision-making by highlighting the limitations of human observation and the necessity of regulative principles to ensure fairness and objective truth in a chaotic environment.

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