

Beliefs or knowledge
that is independent of
culture



The prescribed topic assumes that “ knowledge and beliefs are linked to culture” . so what is knowledge?, what are beliefs?, what is culture?. Belief is defined as” a principle or idea considered to be true” (Webster’s dictionary, 2004) . By this definition the meaning that I got was belief is a conviction or an opinion without caring whether there is proof or not. So what is knowledge? Knowledge is “ what one knows, the body of facts accumulated over a period of time” (Webster’s dictionary, 2004).

What is culture? “ Culture is appreciation and understanding of the arts, skills of a given people in a given period”. Another definition is culture is the “ customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a religious, social or racial group”

All this definitions led to the question as to how knowledge, beliefs and culture are acquired by a person. So how do we acquire knowledge? Knowledge is usually acquired through sensory perception an example being a curious little boy will acquire the knowledge that cactus plants are not meant to be held by the naked hand after he/she touches the plant and feels the pain. Knowledge can also be acquired through logical operations and emotional reactions. This kind of knowledge is caused by biological responses to stimuli, and could be considered not to be dependent of culture an example being facial expressions which are not taught or learned but they are biologically determined.

So how is culture acquired? Culture is basically instilled in us when we are born. An example being me as I was born in Kenya and grew up in an Islamic

background. So my culture is Islamic and Swahili and we do have our fair share of beliefs.

Buddhists consider that knowledge is acquired through direct experience. So how is this experience achieved? Well the Buddhists achieve this experience by meditation opposite to the western traditions, which gives emphasis on a clear expression of thoughts and argument. Buddhists believe that words tend to expose the truth on the other hand, the recognition of Buddhists beliefs and customs for discovering the truth shows dependence of the culture of that knowledge.

So are beliefs independent of culture? I will have to say yes on this. ? I will have to say yes on this. People may say no because some beliefs such as you must always wear clothes and shoes when leaving the house well I won't classify that as a belief but a ritual. Most beliefs are usually based on religion and culture. In the case of religion I as a Muslim have many beliefs that are dependent on my religion some of them being I must pray five times a day, the consequence of missing prayer is that we will burn in hell for a very long time. I believe in this theorem although there is no proof of sort but it's a belief based on our religion.

Beliefs that are based on my culture which is the Swahili culture are numerous. Some make sense and some do not make sense but I have no other choice than to live by these beliefs and follow them no matter what. A belief that I have always been told by my mother and has never ever made sense to me is that we should not clip our nails at night. I don't see how it applies in a real life situation. I usually cut my nails at night and so far so

good nothing has happened to me. Another belief that is based on our culture is that we are told not to borrow salt at night. I don't know why it had to be salt but still like I said they do not make any sense to me at all, and we are expected to follow this beliefs although I think they don't make sense. But we do have to follow them, But some beliefs that my culture expects me to follow are somewhat sensible and I do follow them, examples of the sensible beliefs and rituals are like we should respect our parents and follow there each and every command, that is a belief that makes sense and I do believe that the people that do not live by this rule are actually bad people. I know there is no evidence that if you do not respect your parents you are going to get punished by the Almighty God but it's a belief and in order to believe you don't need evidence or anything. All you need is your mind on whether to decide that you are going to believe in that belief or not.

Another belief that I tend to differ with and is totally and purely based on culture is gender equality. I did some asking around and I found out in most of Kenyan tribes as well the Swahili culture tend to believe that men are more superior to women. They claim that man was created first so making them more superior and all that the women in our cultures should do is stay at home and prepare meals and clean the house while men are the bread winners. This is not such a wise belief, men and women are both humans so why should one kind be more superior than the other?, they were all created by the same creator!. With all this said I thing that all of my beliefs are independent of my culture. Some other people like the westerners who have no culture or don't know anything about their culture also have beliefs like the men should take care of their children and women, that is a belief that is

common to all cultures in the world and also to those who don't have cultures so on an American's point of view not all of their beliefs are based on the culture because they clearly have or don't know their culture.

Community education (sociology), is dependent on the cultural expression of human knowledge that has been repeated again and again. "Alfred Weber" was studying in the sociology of culture and he came up with the term "Kultursoziologie" which means cultural sociology which is a specific branch of sociology which is entirely dependent on culture.

Culture is a very significant concept found in many branches of sociology, social stratification in the fields of scientific and social network analysis.

Is knowledge based on culture? Well I will have to answer no on this query, knowledge is not entirely independent of culture. People may argue that knowledge such as traditional medicines, herbs are based on culture and some of those herbs that the traditional men used to use are used now by the scientists to make the medicine we consume today and they end up saving lives.

History, it's the study of past events and the effect on present life. Some of the knowledge in history is independent on culture a good example being the creation theory which one of the three possible theories of the origin of the world is based on culture and religion. In Swahili culture, the Elders have told us to believe in the creation theory and that it is God who created the world in six days and life starts on the seventh day. Knowledge such as this is independent of culture and I gained this knowledge just by interacting with the elders of the family and they told me all sorts of stories
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Knowledge such as mathematics in example has no connection whatsoever with culture and such knowledge is not dependent of culture even one bit. Mathematics is purely about numbers and in my case the Swahili culture the elders who are supposed to be the “ wisest of humans” don’t even know simple math like one plus one.

So are our beliefs and knowledge independent of culture? To some extent YES! Why am I saying yes? It’s simply because most beliefs are based on culture and example being me, most of my beliefs are based on my culture although I do have beliefs outside my culture like if I drink plenty water at one go It may react with my body forcing me to throw up so it’s my belief that we should not drink much water and slowly as well. Knowledge also is somewhat dependent on culture and an example being the community sociology which is a whole branch in sociology that focuses on just culture. I then come up with the answer that both beliefs and knowledge are dependent of culture