

"all men by nature
desire knowledge"



"All men by nature desire knowledge" quoted from Aristotle's work "Metaphysics". Aristotle raises the idea of humans need for knowledge. Since the dawn of human life, we have been trying to acquire knowledge in all different areas of life, and in order for us to believe that piece of knowledge, we request supporting evidence that is based on various ways of knowing. To what extent we require evidence to support our beliefs varies with different areas of knowledge. Some areas of knowledge require a certain degree of evidence. However, in other areas evidence is not required to support belief; Mathematics, the natural sciences and the human sciences are knowledge fields that require a degree of logical evidence due to their highly logic-based nature. On the other hand, belief in the arts, ethics and religion is not dependent on evidence.

Mathematicians search for patterns then formulate conjectures, furthermore through deductive reasoning using the rules of inference and axioms they provide proof to these conjectures. Conjectures that have already been proven are often called theorems. Proof in mathematics is obtained through deductive and inductive reasoning rather than empirical arguments and the proof must demonstrate that the conjecture is true in all cases, without any exceptions. Mathematicians employ deductive logic through combining the axioms, definitions, and earlier theorems in order to provide proof for their conjectures. Considering two even integers A and B . Since they are even, they can be expressed as $A = 2x$ and $B = 2y$ respectively for integers x and y . Thus the sum $A + B = 2x + 2y = 2(x + y)$, from this it is clear that $x + y$ has 2 as a factor consequently $x + y$ are even. As a result, the sum of any two even integers is even. Establishing the truth of this conjecture was done

through employing logic through combining the definition of even integers ($A = 2x$) and the distribution law ($2x + 2y = 2(x + y)$). Briefly, in order for a statement to be believed in the area of mathematics it requires a high degree of logical evidence based on deductive and inductive reasoning combined with mathematical axioms, definitions and prior theorems to support mathematicians' belief in that statement.

Other areas of knowledge such as "the natural sciences" require a relatively average degree of evidence. The natural sciences branch into three main fields; Biology, chemistry, and physics. These sciences aim to study the natural rules and laws in which the universe obeys. At first scientists seek patterns in the world around them through empirical observation and then formulate generalizations concerning these observations, and through the use of logic discover the reason of such patterns. Evidence of a correct theory is induced by logical reasoning through the observation of the universe. Considering Newton's discovery of gravity, at first Newton observed an apple falling off an apple tree, and Newton as a scientist already knew that in order for an object to move it requires force in the same direction. Through the use of logic, Newton concluded that there is a force beneath him that pulled the apple in its direction. Briefly, in order for a theory to be believed in the natural sciences it requires a degree of logical evidence based on observations of nature.

The human sciences is an area of knowledge that requires a relatively low degree of evidence to support belief in that area. Human sciences investigate human activities in order to assemble theories predicting human behavior. Proof of such theorems is acquired through the observation of

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sensory experiences and by means of objective observation of psychological experience. One of the most significant and known theorems in this field of study is Freud's psychoanalytic theory, in which Freud assembled a theory to analyze human behaviors. The general concept of the theory is that unconscious motivations, sex and violence in specific, of human beings influence the development of their personality. Freud supported his theory with evidence he acquired through employing logic in the observation of the human's development process and the human's behavior at each stage of development. The extent of evidence that Freud used to support his theory was relatively low and subjective in comparison with other areas, he supported his work using empirical observation, nevertheless many people today believe in his theory and it is well-known worldwide. Briefly, in order for a theory to be believed in the human sciences a degree of evidence must be present, however, the degree of evidence is small and subjective in relativity to other areas.

On the other hand some areas of knowledge require no evidence to support a belief in a knowledgeable statement. To begin with, it must be understood that the arts discipline encompasses literary, visual and performing arts. The definition of a good piece of art is "creative" and "original" nevertheless the genuineness of a piece of art lies in the perspective of the viewer. Obtaining a person's belief in genuineness of a piece of art whether visual, literary, or performing is not dependent on providing evidence that the piece is genuine, but lies in the viewer's sensory perspective of that piece and his prior background in arts. As a result, this lack of evidence lead people to use each other's sensory perspective and experiences as evidence. For example, an

amateur artist would take the word of an experienced artist in believing in the originality of a piece of art.

Another area of knowledge requiring no evidence to support belief is ethics. Ethics is an area of knowledge that addresses issues concerning concepts of right and wrong, generally concepts of morality. Ethical systems and theories are postulated in order to encourage people to turn their attention from the world around them to themselves, consequently encouraging people to realize their full potential and achieve full self-awareness. Ethical theories do not need evidence to support the people's belief in their concepts, simply because humans are born in pursuit of knowledge in order to realize their full potential, thus no evidence is needed. Considering Aristotle's postulated ethical system "self-realizationism" in which Aristotle suggests that when a person acts in accordance with his nature and his full potential, that person will be good and content; Aristotle needed no evidence to support his theory due to our continuous pursuit of self-actualization. Briefly, the need for evidence to support others' belief in ethical theories is not needed due to our constant search for knowledge which we seek in order to reach our full potential, and achieve the highest state of self-awareness.

The final and most significant area in which evidence is not required to support our belief is religion. Religions from Christianity to Hinduism suggest a set of beliefs concerning the purpose of our life in this universe, suggesting the supernatural divine "God" which represents our creator and the reason behind our existence. The most significant belief that religions set is the belief in the presence of "God", the presence of a superior being or soul is impossible to prove thus the creative idea of "faith" takes control; faith is

the idea of believing without the need for evidence. The creation of such an idea is brilliant due to the fact that faith suppresses our need to perceive and scientifically understand the concept of the superior " God". It could be argued that religion often opposes itself in some ideas. For example the idea of " God is almighty, God can do everything" is controversial. This statement implies a generalization that due to its enormous size causes contradiction. This can be clarified by asking the question " Can God create a rock that he himself cannot destroy", if the answer is yes then God is not capable of destroying the rock, consequently not capable of doing everything. On the other hand, if the answer is no then God is unable to create everything. This paradox created, due to the extent of generalization, in that statement shows that no evidence is needed to believe in the idea of God.

In the Theaetetus, one of Plato's dialogues concerning the nature of knowledge, Plato argues that knowledge always involves belief. After studying the extent of evidence required to support belief in all areas of knowledge, it is clear that belief is present in all areas of knowledge although minimal in scientific areas. An inverse relationship between the need for evidence and the need for belief in an area of knowledge is noticed; as the belief is minimal in areas like math, the evidence required to support it is maximum and vice versa in other areas like religion. As humans, our curious nature demands evidence in order to acquire our belief. To sum up, the extent of evidence required to support a person's beliefs in different areas of knowledge is not only dependent on each area, it is also dependent on the person himself and his/her prior knowledge.