

The knowledge which
are independent of
our culture
philosophy essay



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It is important to first establish that one cannot analyse beliefs and knowledge together, especially in relation to culture, thus they must be handled differently because they are both separate entities, in how they influence an individual's culture.

Culture is the behaviour, and beliefs characteristic of an individual, particular, social ethnic group age group.[1]

Culture is the society and values upon which one is raised. It is built upon customs, practices, beliefs and ideas that are instilled in an individual by influential parties such as parents from childhood. These are all derived from imagination, knowledge and cultural values which are developed over time depending on customs and beliefs. These then influence an individual's customs. Also, culture is divided into two, individual culture which is the way one

" It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief."

-Mohammed Ali[2]

This is basically to say that once something is repeated to an individual over time especially by someone in authority over them, they begin to believe and practice the said affirmation.

Belief is something that is perceived to be true by an individual but is not common to all individuals. According to Michael Woolman, belief is a tendency to accept principles one has always accepted regardless of evidence to the contrary.[3]Belief can be deemed fallacious because it is relative especially by people who do not share the same beliefs.

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Belief is also confidence in the truth of what we believe in and it is justified by its working.[4] Belief is also associated with action, ergo, one must practice what they believe in.

If I try to doubt all my beliefs, one day I will find that there is at least one whose truth I cannot doubt”

- Rene Descartes[5]

Descartes basically means that you cannot doubt your beliefs for there is a reason you believed in the first place. Over time, beliefs evolve from being just mere beliefs and become part of an individual's belief system which is what people believe in, inspired by their culture.

Therefore, we cannot have beliefs which are independent of our culture.

Culture does not exist in a social vacuum but it inhabits a complex world where the attitudes and beliefs of those around an individual have a massive impact on every aspect of their lives. This means that culture, be it societal or individual is influenced by other beliefs from other cultures which end up an individual, depending on what the already present belief is and how closely related it is to the other culture. Culture determines behaviour, customs, values, habits and tradition and it meditates on every aspect of our lives and experiences.[6]

There is a thin line between knowledge and belief in the sense that belief never leads to knowledge, but knowledge leads to belief. It is not possible for one to believe in something they do not know, however, it is possible to

know something they do not believe in. For instance, in the late 1800's, the <https://assignbuster.com/the-knowledge-which-are-independent-of-our-culture-philosophy-essay/>

Kikuyu community of Kenya believed in naming people according to what they were good at, akin to the characteristics they exhibited. This is paradigm of a culture believing in something they know. On the other hand, one may possess full knowledge of what a religion other than their own stands for but may not believe in the tenets (the example of Islam).....

According to Bastian Sue, Bammi Vivek , Howard Craig, Kitching Julian, Oberg Dennis, Wilkinson David and Salomon Manjula. knowledge is, a sub-category of belief and it is a claim that one accepts regardless of the degree of confidence, emotional intensity and sense of significance one may have. p

This is to say that for one to know they must believe. This only applies to the statement “ Knowledge leads to belief” as it may differ in regard to other statements or claims.

This is justified because knowledge is information that is factual and based on the truth.

Knowledge is the acquaintance of facts, truths and principles as a form of study or investigation also as to have a clear perception as of fact or truth.

[7]Also, according to Plato, knowledge is justified as true belief.

The greater our knowledge increases, the more our ignorance unfolds.

- John F Kennedy 3

This quote by J F Kennedy implies that as we learn more, our lack of knowledge expresses how ignorant we are. To some extent, knowledge and belief are somewhat alike in the sense that most of the time they are both

based on perception and on what one is told rather than what one knows for <https://assignbuster.com/the-knowledge-which-are-independent-of-our-culture-philosophy-essay/>

a fact. After research, I realised that Knowledge does not have a clear definition of what it is but rather related words like teaching are used to express it. According to geek philosopher Aristotle “ The one exclusive sign of knowledge is the power of teaching”.

Among the Ways of Knowing (Wok's), Knowledge by Authority and Perception are the most applicable when looking at knowledge in relation to culture. Knowledge by authority is when an individual knows something from someone older, knowledgeable and in authority over them so much so to influence them. For instance, parents and teachers. Authoritative knowledge is usually led by wisdom because such knowledge is thought to have been tested over time. However, it is important not to pass over the fact that authorities may also be wrong.

Perception is the act or faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind; cognition, understanding or the immediate or intuitive recognition or appreciation, as of moral, psychological, or aesthetic qualities: insight; intuition; discernment.[8] Knowledge by perception follows the empiricism view that all knowledge is derived from what is observed. This is one Way of Knowing under which belief is and this is because with perception, one makes an observation and sometimes, it may influence what the individual believes in.

Belief is the confidence in the truth or existence of something not immediately susceptible to rigorous proof.[9] This implies that more often than not, what is believed cannot be proved. It may also not be the truth it

could however be deep trust about something and they tend to be buried deep within the subconscious with the result that they trigger automatic reactions and behaviours. We seldom question beliefs because we hold them to be truths which have been repeated over time such that they automatically become truths.[10] This then means that people internalise beliefs from the people around us when we are most vulnerable and this is when we are children. This way of thinking can be fallacious in that it is an error in reasoning. In this case, the question of whether or not we can have beliefs or knowledge that are independent of culture.

“ It is the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief”

-Muhammad Ali[11]

According to Famous boxer Muhammad Ali, when something is repeated and stressed to an individual then it becomes part of their beliefs. The stressing and repetition of the belief not done by the believer but by another party who influences the believer to believe that what has been said is truth, thus making the belief part of the believer's conscience. The fact that sometimes, beliefs cannot be proved doesn't make them right, neither does it make them wrong because as much as there is no proof in its truth, there is no proof that it is false. For instance the statement “ I believe today is Wednesday” is only true because it has been repeated to us over and over again to the extent that it is now true although it is not a statement that has been proved right or wrong theoretically and scientifically.

Therefore, it is impossible to have beliefs which are independent of our culture because culture and belief work hand in hand to make an individual's

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values, traditions, values and habits therefore they cannot be separated and one cannot have beliefs which are independent of our culture. It is also important to note that the culture in question here is an individual's culture and not another's culture, because one cannot believe in a culture that they do not practice because belief is backed by action.

In conclusion, it is possible to have knowledge which is independent of our culture but it is not possible to have beliefs which are independent of our culture.