Dependence of Present Knowledge on Past Knowledge: Critical Analysis

Present knowledge is wholly dependent past knowledge

Knowledge production cannot take place if no past experience available. What we already know is the sole determinant of what we are going to know. Throughout history, knowledge was mainly passed on from one generation to another, it was passed in different forms, such as stories or legends. It was mostly never questioned which caused lies to be highly believed and feared. However, in the past few centuries the scientific method has completely revolutionized the way we create knowledge, while other methods and claims has been widely discredited. This makes the scientific method the most reliable way of producing and trusting shared knowledge. Shared knowledge refers to knowledge which is held communally, by groups which will vary in size depending on the knowledge being explored.[footnoteRef:1] In this paper, we will be exploring how reliable the scientific method is in producing shared knowledge, and how confident can we be in the our current knowledge, based on the scientific method. In contrast, the paper will dismiss the debate on widespread believes and shared knowledge that has not been produced using the scientific method. As time passes, new findings emerge and these can sometimes either destroy or build upon what we have. I believe our confidence on shared knowledge is solely dependent on the methodology used to obtain it and the amount of evidence that support what it presents. Human sciences are suitable for this as it uses reason, while Natural science is more reliable as it mainly relies on perception. This led me to a question,to what extent is knowledge produced by the scientific method reliable, when uncertainty of future findings could exist. [1: https://blogs.osc-ib.com/2017/03/ib-student-blogs/personal-shared-knowledge/]

Modern knowledge based on the scientific method, is widely interdependent on other credited studies presented in the form of bibliography. Philosophy is a part of Human Sciences. In philosophy, it is safe to reason that if X is correct then we can proceed with Y. In fact, this is how we progress and move forward through the use of the scientific method. This does not only save time and effort for researchers, but it also saves up resources and concentrates the focus on a single issue. Today, most of scientific papers released must, at least ,have few bibliographies that proves ,on what basis this paper has been built up from. This allows us to build upon our existing knowledge, and helps us in classifying new findings that are made or discovered. This system builds credibility as the chain grows, and the lack of contradictions in the chain makes the chain even stronger and credible. This type of system creates an inverse pyramid diagram where everything starts from a single point (initial study), and goes up to flower more studies. In a closer look, different inverse pyramid diagrams are connected together to form even more complicated diagrams. These complicated diagrams start from few single points but form extremely large chains of interdependent studies based on other existing studies.

The diagram above simply explains how citations work on a small scale. In contrast, this web is highly complicated in the real world and therefore forms a credible chain of information that is highly interdependent. The chain is able to predict future findings and limitations and impossibilities that exist within the chain. This builds up confidence in the knowledge shared, as we know what we're looking for and focusing on.

However, this methodology can become highly unstable, if contradictions appear or things aren't coming along. The system can sometimes be based on mainstream trends and tries to explain the few exceptions that exist. If these exceptions become numerous, then the whole chain requires redefining and studying, to get to the point where these exceptions could fit in. If these exceptions are highly contradictory and nothing is matching what exists, then the system collapses and a complete redefining and studying (based upon what has not been affected) is required to bring up the system. A great example of such a situation has happened in the 1950s, when a paper on particle parity symmetry was published stating that parity symmetry was only an extrapolated hypothesis that has never been experimentally supported by evidence. When the mirror experiment was conducted to test parity symmetry, it discovered that this was violated and that the universe prefers one direction over the other. This discovery was first discredited, but as the scientific method must be consistent, replicable and repeatable. The experiment was re-conducted and proved that the weak force violated parity symmetry. Scientists resorted to a workaround where they had to reconstruct some parts of the particle physics, this time was by combining charge and parity symmetry. This C-P Symmetry was also violated by 1964, where scientists had to resort to their last option, adding Time to the combination to give C-P-T Symmetry. Although CPT Symmetry has not been violated until today, it is the last standing part of particle physics, if this is violated then much our current understanding of physics will have to be redefined and studied. This includes many of our last centuries'work such as Einstein's Special Relativity and Quantum Field Theory, as they will be both proved wrong.

This concludes that the scientific method is highly objective and is extremely reliable, as even if something is violated and the system has to be changed, there are fundamental groundworks that we can re-start on. This adds credibility in producing shared knowledge, even if it changes through time.

"That which can be asserted without evidence, can be dismissed without evidence."[footnoteRef:2] In natural sciences perception plays an important role in finding an evidence, and evidence must be something tangible. Evidence is the sole justifier of all asserted knowledge, and existing (current) knowledge relies on the existing evidence. If current knowledge (as theory) exists but is not yet accepted by all scientists for the reason of future uncertainty, then these uncertainties must exist in the present. Time is the progression of events, which means that future events could exist. The question is, does the future exist? The simple answer is no, or at least not yet; therefore, these uncertainties that could exist do not exist, which makes the case that as long as there are no uncertainties involved, whatever knowledge is asserted can be justified by the current evidence. [2: https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/12042-that-which-can-be-asserted-without-evidence-can-be-dismissed]

Natural Sciences requires more studies to yield consistent results, if a study is vaguely conducted or is controversial then a follow-up (validity) study is urgently required. This technically halts any progress that the study has found, although there aren't any evidences against it (yet). The argument is that facts exist in the real world whether we find them or not, which means that jumping to conclusions without further analysis (solely relying on current data/information) can be misleading even if there are no evidence of otherwise. In a long-term study conducted from 1997-2014, found that high consumption of Milk was associated with mortality and fractures in men and women.[footnoteRef:3] This triggered a widespread panic across the scientific community; however, some scientists were skeptical and so further research was needed. In 2015, a report (meta-analysis) conducted by a group of scientists,

reviewing over 25 studies, concluded that there was no consistent correlation between milk consumption and mortality rates which doesn't invalidate the prior study. [3: https://www.bmj.com/content/349/bmj.g6015]

This shows that although evidence is the sole justifier of asserted knowledge, lack of confidence in the present evidence could prove to be powerful. The existence of the past is unquestionable as events have happened to prove its existence; however future events do not exist as the future by definition cannot exist beyond the present. Therefore, anything that is predicted will happen in the present and then becomes lost in the past. This means it is true that expecting future evidences to come up (as an uncertainty or contradictory) is nonsense. If there is a lack of confidence in the evidence or data, further research is required to yield consistent and repeatable results.

In conclusion, the scientific method of creating knowledge is heavily reliable. When knowledge is produced, it does not assert itself as the truth sometimes radically changed, this does not undermine our confidence but instead strengthens it because many branches of knowledge is deeply rooted in powerful basement in history, human science, history, natural science and mathematics which paved ways to today's so-called modern knowledge and science. The Greek scholars and philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Galileo considered the pillars of knowledge. Hippocrates was the father of medicine his ideas took shapes in modern medical scientific experiments. The one travel through history will bow hi head to the statement that wherever human could read reach is due to the past scholars deep ideas and vision. No one born with knowing everything, rather through five senses one years it. As generation pass they record it for coming society which happened as a routine till the last man exist in the earth.so knowledge has to go hand in hand with past explorations and findings.