

Do Epistemic Intuitions Vary Across Actors Depending on Philosophical Training?

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Introduction

There is a recent philosophical debate about whether philosophers have different knowledge attribution than non-philosophers. The most popular argument related to this debate is the 'expertise defence', which claims that philosophical training makes philosophers' knowledge attributions superior to non-philosophers (Hales, 2006; Ludwig, 2007; Williamson, 2007). Considering this, I suggest that philosophers' training in philosophy might make their intuitions different than non-philosophers, but it is important to note that this assumption is an empirical hypothesis. In this experimental study, I aim to examine whether philosophical training impacts philosophers' and non-philosophers' knowledge attributions. Firstly, I aim to examine whether there exists a significant difference between philosophers' and non-philosophers' epistemic intuitions. Secondly, I investigate whether philosophers' epistemic intuitions show an agreement to the standard responses of the thought experiments in the epistemological literature.

Hypotheses

- H1. Philosophers' epistemic intuitions differ from non-philosophers' intuitions
- H2. Philosophers' epistemic intuitions differ from non-philosophers' intuitions depending on philosophical training

Method

- To critically examine the claim of whether training in philosophy is a quality parameter for the assessment of intuitions, I designed a mixed-method study involving a survey questionnaire that included a version of the Gettier case.
- To investigate philosophers' and non-philosophers' knowledge judgments about presented thought experiments, I compared these two groups of people's responses using quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Participants

- 453 participants from academia were recruited for the study, of which 202 completed the full questionnaire.
- Out of 202 completed questionnaires, N=13 individuals had to be removed from the study as they did not answer the comprehension questions.
- Overall, 189 participants' responses were analysed (Philosophers N=108, Non-philosophers N=81)

Material and Procedures

- Participants completed an online questionnaire voluntarily via an online survey tool [LimeSurvey](#)
- Participants were presented a version of the Gettier case below, followed by a cross-enunc question on whether the agent in the case 'knows' the key proposition. The participants were also asked with an open-ended question why they think that the agent in the case knows or does not know the relevant proposition.
- Participants' demographic information, such as age, gender, spoken language, educational background and level of philosophical training was also collected using the survey.

Gettier Case

Joey works in an office in London with two other colleagues, Daniel and Rebecca. All winter Daniel has been describing his plans to go to Paris on his vacation, even showing Joey the website of the hotel where he has made reservations. When Daniel is away on vacation, Joey receives a very nice email from Daniel together with photos of Daniel posing in front of Eiffel Tower. When he gets back to work, Daniel talks a lot to Joey about how much fun he had vacationing in Paris. However, Daniel didn't really go on the trip; he has just been pretending. His tickets and reservations were cancelled because his credit card was maxed out, and he secretly stayed home in London, very skillfully faking the photos he sent Joey. Meanwhile, Rebecca just spent a weekend vacationing in Paris, but kept this a secret from all her co-workers.

In your opinion, does Joey know that one of his colleagues vacationed in Paris?	YES	NO
Why do you think that the protagonist knows/doesn't know that one of his colleagues vacationed in Paris?		

Analysis

- SPSS software was used to perform quantitative analysis.
- The open-ended question was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to gain a more in-depth understanding of the reasons behind participants' knowledge attributions.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative results showed that there was a significant difference between philosophers' and non-philosophers' epistemic intuitions in the Gettier case. While most philosophers were more likely to deny knowledge, non-philosophers showed a tendency to attribute knowledge in the Gettier case. Findings also showed that participants who have PhD in philosophy were more likely to deny knowledge than other participants in the Gettier case. Other factors, such as age, gender, and language, did not have a significant impact on participants' knowledge attributions.

Figure 1: Frequency of knowledge attribution in the Gettier Case

Groups	Philosophers		Non-Philosophers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Knowledge 1 (Gettier Case)	30	78	47	34

$\chi^2 (1, N = 189) = 17.54, p < .05$

Figure 2: Distribution of the difference between philosophers' and non-philosophers' knowledge attributions

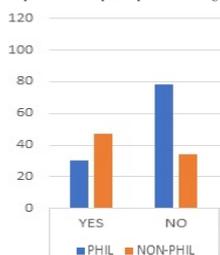
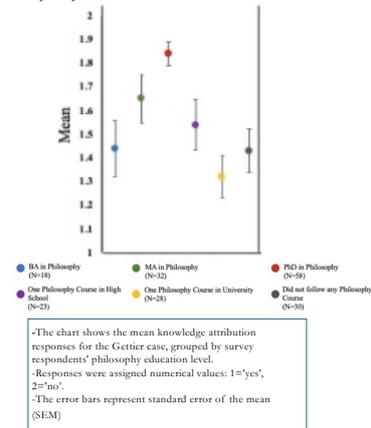


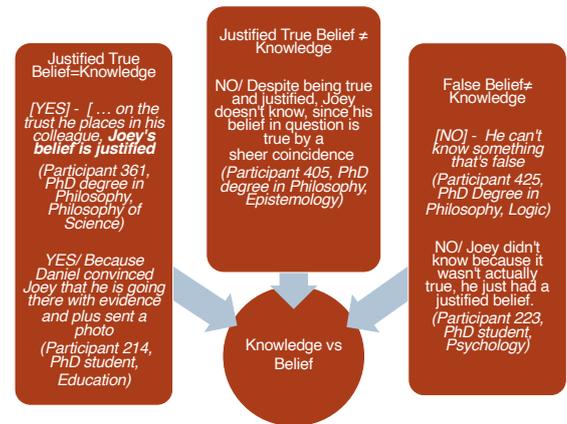
Figure 3: Relationship between training in philosophy and performance of all participants in the Gettier case



Qualitative Results

The standard response of the Gettier case is that there is a justified true belief by chance but justified true belief does not constitute knowledge. This was the expected response from philosopher participants' open-ended responses. However, when looking into more detail of the open-ended responses, the findings revealed that the qualitative data did not support the quantitative results. The quantitative results indicated that most philosopher participants were more likely to deny knowledge in the Gettier case. The qualitative data revealed that although philosopher participants were more likely to deny knowledge, most of them were not in line with the standard response of the Gettier case. While some philosophers stated that the agent does not know because his belief is based on false belief even though it turns out to be true in the end, some philosopher participants responded to the standard response of the Gettier case which is justified true belief not sufficient for knowledge. On the other hand, the minority of philosophers responded that the agent in the Gettier case knows the relevant proposition because of his justified true belief. Non-philosopher participants' open-ended responses were more consistent with the quantitative results. Over half of the non-philosopher participants stated that the agent in the Gettier case knows the relevant proposition.

Gettier case coded for the main theme of Knowledge vs Belief. Example participants' responses for each code shown:



Discussion

The quantitative findings revealed that there was a significant difference between philosophers' and non-philosophers' knowledge attributions in the Gettier case ($p < .05$). The findings also indicated that participants who have professional training in philosophy were more likely to deny knowledge. These results provide evidence to the expertise defence argument claiming that philosophers' intuitions are more consistent with the standard philosophical literature. However, when we look in more detail to the qualitative findings, participants' open-ended responses showed that although philosophers were more likely to deny knowledge than non-philosophers, their intuitions are not in line with the standard response of the Gettier case. In other words, qualitative results revealed that most philosopher participants did not comprehend the target content of the Gettier case. According to Machery (2017), each thought experiment has a target content. For example, Gettier case's target content is that justified true belief by chance does not constitute knowledge. In light of this, one might assume that an expert philosopher must comprehend the target content of the Gettier case. If we only consider the quantitative findings, the data may suggest that philosophers are in line with the standard response of the Gettier case. Hence, according to quantitative findings, one might conclude that philosophers comprehended the target content of the case. However, qualitative findings showed an opposite direction that philosophers did not fully comprehend the target content of the Gettier case. These findings suggest that training in philosophy does not fully provide a quality parameter for the assessment of intuitions.

Limitations, and Further Directions

- This study was limited to participants from philosophy and other fields in academia.
- The study's sample was also limited to participants from the UK and Europe.
- The current study is limited to using open-ended questions as a part of the qualitative tools. Future studies may also use other relevant qualitative tools, such as structured, or semi-structured interviews in the mixed-method model.

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