

Nature or nurture controversy

Psychology, Behaviorism



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Developmental psychologists tell us that development is caused by two very extensive intermingling factors: heredity or nature, and environment or nurture. Often determining the demarcation line between these two factors, which directly or indirectly influences our biological and psychological constitution, is not an easy task.

Nature speaks of the transmission of traits from parents to offspring through the genes which is universally known as heredity. This biological transmission of traits from one generation to another plays an important role in the determination of traits that are considered human and nonhuman. The biological structures, people inherit, at the same time, make people's behavior possible. It is also these biological structures that limit human behavior (Hurlock, 1964).

On the other hand, environment embraces all the influences that affect or shape man. The other process of development that occurs through the medium of the environment is called learning.

There are more social or behavior scientists today who stand on the position that they adhere strictly neither to the nature nor to the nurture side. They

are persuaded or tend to lean on an integrated or multi-dimensional approach. However, there have been specific areas in the study of human behavior that are being challenged on a continuous basis, and this includes subjects that aid to either the heredity or environment positions (Morris & Maisto, 1999). This short study attempts to provide evidences to the scientific inquiry that nurture influences early human development. It seeks to look into explicit observations already made, i. e., studies done that investigated the issue of nature and nurture.

Discussion

In general, it can be argued that all behavior reflects the influence of both nature and nurture. All organisms acquire or inherit a range of structures that set the stage for certain behaviors. Yet environmental influence such as nutrition and learning also help decide whether or not genetically possible behaviors will be displayed. The genius of such creative writers as C. S. Lewis or Stephen King may never appear should they have been reared in less fortunate circumstances without the privilege or opportunity of even writing and reading.

Nurture especially during the early stages in the life p influences some of the arenas of human existence. The best illustration to this is in the aspect of intelligence. Many studies have been conducted to emphasize the role of environment and this is illustrated in the areas of research where scientists try to manipulate the initial milieu around which many young children are in jeopardy of developing poor intellectual functioning. These researches

actually put stressor accentuate the preventive aspect instead of addressing the interventions that may be applied later on.

A lot of families from below the poverty line reasonably, are not able to afford their children a cognitively motivating atmosphere. For this reason, majority of these children are even expected to perform below their capacity. It is arguably to the side of nurture in instances that intellectual functioning is compromised when the environment component is not maximized. Hence the reason that some of the government's popular programs to address the problem are in place.

They include such services as Head Start, which are confirmed effective strategies in developing the child's intellectual capability (Ramey, 1989 in Halonen and Santrock, 1996, p. 280). Despite some of the controversies that surround the efficacy of the "No Child Left Behind Act" spearheaded by President George W. Bush, the rationale following this public policy is the fact that children coming from inner cities and minority groups will be provided ample opportunities for cognitive development via government funding.

Schools that do not perform at par with "productive ones" will be evaluated and funding consequently is affected. This raises up the standard of the schools especially their teachers. Whether this is fail-safe or not, is not the question here. However, this is a clear illustration that without any environmental intervention, children left to themselves may not develop competence or achieve their potential.

Another evidence that point to the effect of environment on human development especially during the early years is based on observations or studies on parental abuse of children. According to research, the growth and development of a child is modified incessantly by the influences in the environment. The fact that maltreatment by parents over their children account for the vast differences of performance of school age children and many of the resulting disorders or maladjustment problems that are frequent problems encountered by educators, substantiates the claims of nurture or environmental influence ([www. ipce. info/library_3/files/glaser/glaser_2. htm](http://www.ipce.info/library_3/files/glaser/glaser_2.htm)).

Earlychildhoodenvironment impacts the child's cognitive ability is also shown in a study on the effects of nutrition in infancy and later cognition. Nutrients as provided by formula or any other supplement affect brain development significantly. The study supports the hypothesis that optimum nutrition in infancy “ has significant consequences for cognitive development (Lucas, 1998).

Conclusion

Nurture is perhaps the strongest alibi any person attributes to whenever things turn out not as good as they want them to be. We often make justifications why we tend to be mediocre; “ because my parents did not try their very best to train me and provide for all that I need,” is our typical rejoinder. To what extent is this true, and where does the line end when it comes to personalresponsibility, genetic predispositions, or the responsibility andaccountabilityof people who exert immense influence on us?

The argument postulated in this paper is not so much as “drawing the line” in as much as it has evidently proven the great impact of nurture on personality and/or human development in general. This paper pointed out exactly, that many of individual decisions and government policies are responses to the effects of environment to early human development, thus proving the hypothesis correct.

Parental abuse and neglect have been issues in learning because these are factors that are vital to the child’s overall performance and normal functioning as they operate as kids and later as adults in the real world. This is also true with nutritional status of children in their growing years. Several studies have proven the effects of these factors that they are consciously observed among the educated parents; as much as possible, many actively pursue in avoiding the drastic effects of either deficiency. Indeed, the environmental changes that are constantly influencing children in their early stages are established in the scientific disciplines; this despite the many arguments to the contrary.

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