

# Drivers of identity



4 October Drivers of Identity Identity is what one carries with oneself throughout the life. It is a set of behaviors and characteristic features that the people around you associate with you. They associate only such behaviors to you that they see you displaying the most. Thus, if someone remains in the company of bullies all the time, he is identified as such. Likewise, if someone always keeps discussing politics, he is identified with political concerns. Whatever you do the most becomes a part of your identity. Of biology, personal choice and environment, the strongest driver of an individual's identity is environment. As a child, I used to think that I would never smoke. I used to curse cigarettes and could not find one good reason why people should smoke. Watching people smoke made me sick. I never touched a cigarette myself and did not have any intentions of doing so in the time to come. You would be surprised to learn that despite all this hatred that I cultivated in my heart against cigarettes in my childhood, I am a smoker today! It so happened that one day, I was sitting with my friends in the park all of whom happened to be smokers. It felt so awkward to sit amongst them and yet not smoke! One of my friends offered me a cigarette, and I was like "ok...". I lit the cigarette, smoked in and coughed. That was the only time I coughed after having smoked. Further smoking did not make me cough, it just made me feel good and unfortunately today, cigarettes have become a part of my identity. Had I followed my biology or personal wish, I would never have been a smoker today. Since I am one, I must believe that environment influenced me to be the smoker. Today, I believe that to be a man means to be strong and independent. When I reflect at my experiences, I can trace this belief to the social gatherings in my childhood. Back in those days, when we had to go to a function as a family, I rather stuck with mother than father. As <https://assignbuster.com/drivers-of-identity/>

I began to grow up, I saw most of the boys my age went with their fathers and girls went with their mothers. So I started to go to the gents' section rather than in the ladies'. This made me feel more comfortable and it felt like I was doing the right thing. Likewise, as years passed by, I started to feel I should be financially independent and should not bother my father for my expenses. I gained this feeling because I noticed that fathers take pride in sons that establish themselves financially as well as otherwise. Accordingly, I started doing a job along with studies. Had biology or personal choice been a driver of my identity, perhaps I would have been a mama's boy till this day but since I am considerably independent and quite bold, I think it's environmental influence that depicted my identity. In my childhood, I often used to think about limits. I thought what should be the limits for dressing, talking and sleeping. Who establishes these limits? Let's take dress as an example. In the society in which we live, people dress in such a way that protects their modesty. This is what makes nudist beaches an ideal spot of recreation for those who want to have an escape to materialize their wildest fantasies. Hence, in order to earn respect, people tend to control their wildest fantasies and dress like what is approvable for the society. An individual may occasionally go to a nudist beach, but that is certainly not what he does most of the times. Accordingly, that does not make him a nudist by identity. Thus, what he does most of the times is an outcome of the environmental influence upon him. I know for a reason that environment has told me what to wear, not biology or personal choice! Human beings are born with unlimited capabilities. An individual is able to say much more than he normally says. He is able to present himself much more vulgarly than he normally does. He is able to act much more violently than he normally does.

What an individual normally does is what he feels comfortable doing. This comfort is fundamentally derived from conformance with this societal expectations and compliance with the societal norms and values. Therefore, people tend to modify their actions, presentation and even feelings in accordance with the expectations of the majority of the people in the surroundings. This makes environmental factors the strongest predictors of an individual's identity.