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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS PRIMARILY ON ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, NOT GENETIC FACTORS

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Background

One of the biggest issues in Developmental Psychology is the decades-long debate on the battle between nature and nurture. Many argue that we are the way we are as individuals because of our inherited genes, but there are those who claim that our environment, cultural experiences, and social interactions with other people are the reasons why we have developed over the years as human beings.

1. Significance

After making hundreds of researches about nature versus nurture, psychologists, scientists, and researchers have managed to establish the knowledge that both elements are undeniably important in the lifelong process of human development.

However, due to several reasons, I believe that although we already have that knowledge, it is still essential for us to answer one question: Does human development primarily depend on genetic factors or environmental factors? Today, I intend to provide a new look at an age-old debate and share with you three key explanations as to why human development depends primarily on environmental factors, not genetic factors. A A

**REASONS WHY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS PLAY A BIGGER ROLE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

1. Intelligence is harnessed through environmental factors A A

First, we can prove that human development depends more on environmental factors mainly because it is through nurture that we harness our intelligence. Prior to any experience in the environment, the human mind is nothing more than a blank slate which is purely vacant from any knowledge, attributes, traits, and abilities. All there is in an individual’s nature is potential, and by this what I mean is that the individual has the potential to learn, grow, and discover from the things he sees, feels, tastes, and so on. A six-year-old child, for example, who has been blessed with genes that provide him the potential to excel in the field of music will fail to become someone who’s good at playing instruments if he will not be triggered by any stimulus to give it a try. What I am saying here is that if a child has inherited a particular genetic makeup but lacks the right environment, everything he had inherited will just be for naught. From this lens, we can infer that the human development process relies heavily on environmental factors, not genetic factors because although biological inheritance serves as a foundation to a person’s development, it will not be able to serve its purpose without environmental factors. Nurture, on the other hand, can shape an individual to develop potentials even though he hasn’t inherited the said potentiality from his parents.

1. Gene Expression relies on Environmental Factors

Next, if we are to look at genetic factors, it would be easy to conclude that by design, we are truly meant to adapt to our environment in order to develop; and through our genes’ adaptation, we survive. Our very own genes depend on our environment. Our genes turn on and off depending on our geographic location and lifestyle in general. Having said this, it becomes more perceptible how environmental factors influence not only how we respond to certain things but also how we adapt to survive and develop our whole being as humans.

1. Environmental factors are more influential

Lastly, we are shaped by the things we see and experience in our environment. Everyone was born with a specific set of potentials, but if not put in the right environment, those potentials will never flourish. This will, then, hinder human development.

Genetic factors do not guarantee an individual’s developmental process. Environmental factors, on the other side of the argument, shape who we are, how we interact with others, and how we behave. John Watson, the person who established the psychological school of Behaviorism, emphasized that regardless of a child’s inherent potentials, he or she can be conditioned and trained to become anyone he or she would not otherwise be without a particular set of experiences, influences, and stimuli from the environment he or she lives in.

**CONCLUSION**

1. Summary

Many things could be said about the issue of nature versus nurture. The two elements are both important in human development; but, as what I have mentioned, nurture is far more valuable than genetic factors. This is due to the fact that the slightest change in our environment can cause variations in our nature. Our intelligence, behavior, reflexes, genetic makeup, and personality are all molded by environmental factors; therefore, human development is more dependent on nurture than nature.

1. Concluding Remarks

Now that we know the role of environmental factors in our existence, let us always strive to remember to choose the right environment where we can further develop our nature as individuals. Our biological inheritance is a powerful thing, but don’t let it determine who you are because it doesn’t and will never have that kind of power over you. The truth is, we are products of the realities we have chosen to believe and accept; so choose wisely which environment you would allow to shape who you are.

# SOURCES

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