Nature and Nurture

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**Introduction**

Human mind is a complex set of multiple components that work together to bring a balance. These components include a number of tangible and intangible items that contribute significantly in making up the human mind and helping the individual to work properly in an appropriate way. These components include the brain, spinal cord, nerves, neurons, etc. as tangible and visible components and thoughts, emotions, feelings and traits as intangible or invisible components.

Feelings, emotions, thoughts, and traits play a very important and vital role in shaping up the personality of a person. They play a great role in the development of an individual and are used to define the personality of a person, especially the traits. Traits are the characteristics that are inbuilt in a person when he or she is born. These characteristics are either genetically carried on through inheritance or hereditary processes or are developed over a period of time through constant nourishing and providence of a favorable environment.

Psychologists, experts, and scholars are divided into this phenomenon of traits and characteristics present in the personality of an individual. There are two schools of thought in this respect and both present completely different sets of ideas and thoughts regarding the topic. One school of thought presents the idea that people are born with certain inbuilt traits and characteristics which cannot be changed and they remain the same throughout their life. This specific school of thought or idea is known as Nature. The second or the other school of thought presents a completely different picture and states that the traits or qualities present in an individual are not transferred genetically but are acquired from the environment in which the individual is living and the experiences he goes through in life. These experts believe that the traits or qualities are developed over a period of time and are actually the learned behavior that a person learns from his or her environment and his experiences. The dominant traits in the personality of a person like intelligence, bravery, leadership, insight, are all, in fact, a result if a combination of both nature and nurture and neither one of them is dominant above the other one in the representation of the traits.

**Discussion**

This argument or debate of nature vs nurture is not new, in fact, it has been going on for a very long time, since the research in the area of psychology started and people started comprehending the complications of the human mind. Scholars, experts, psychologists, and layman, all have been presenting different arguments in the favor and against of both the sides and debating that whether the strengths and weaknesses of various individuals are a result of their nature or the nurture. And this debate is not useless; it has multiple social implications. These studies help in determining what people learn and how they learn.

**History of the Nature vs. Nurture Theory**

The earliest use of the theory of nature and nurture was made by the psychologist Sir Francis Galton in 1869 (Bynum, 2002). The exact history of the theory or this debate is still unknown however, experts claim that this topic has been in debate since the time of Hippocrates. Around 400 B.C.E, Hippocrates presented the idea that human behaviors are a result of biological factors. This idea was known as the Theory of Humors. Hippocrates believed that human body is made up of four fluids that control the nature and behavior of an individual. These are Yellow Bile, Black Bile, Blood, and Phlegm.

This idea was shunned centuries later when philosopher John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau independently presented the ideas that people are not born with any traits. They come in this world as blank slates (Tabula Rasa) and their eventual individual differences develop due to the influences of the environment on their personalities (Psychology Encyclopedia, 2017; Duschinsky, 2012; Nesterak, 2015). Later on, behavioral psychologist John Watson, in the twentieth century, also expressed similar views that the events that take place in early childhood play a much more significant role in the lives of individuals as compared to the genes.

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Scientists, experts, scholars, psychologists, behavioral scientists, and even criminologists have been working tirelessly to find the answer to the question that whether nature holds greater value in defining the characteristics and qualities in an individual or nurture. It is an evident fact that many physical diseases and conditions like sickle cell anemia and diabetes are carried on from one generation to another through inheritance but this is not the case with the psychological characteristics and traits.

**Nature and Nurture in the case of Intelligence**

Intelligence is defined as the acquisition of knowledge and skills and the ability to use them at the right time, at the right place. Intelligence is one of the most studied and researched traits of human psychology. Scientists have always been looking forward to various aspects of intelligence and how to enhance it. In this respect, it is extremely important to understand that whether an individual is born with intelligent genes or he or she has acquired it over a period of time through education and training.

Just like many other and most of the human traits, intelligence is also considered to be the aftermath of a combination of both nature and nurture. There is no denial in the fact that genetics has a great influence on the size and the biochemistry of the human brain, however, its complete development does not occur until the age of twenty years. The various aspects of intelligence also vary with different stages and experiences of cognition.

A number of studies have confirmed that 90% of the intelligence in an infant is inherited by his or her mother. Despite this fact, intelligence and subsequent learning are largely believed to be affected and molded by the environment in which an individual lives in, before and after birth (European College of Neuropsychopharmacology, 2007; Kan et al, 2013). The environment, circumstances and the conditions in which a person is brought up plays a major role in describing various prospects of intelligence in a person. In this way, it can be seen that human intelligence is not only a matter of genes and inheritance (nature) but also the prospect of the environment and the surroundings.

**Conclusion**

In short, it can be concluded that the traits present on the personality of a human are not only the result or aftermath of a single factor of genetics or hereditary material but also the environment, surroundings, circumstances, and conditions in which an individual grows up and learns things. Genes and the environment both play an equally important role in the definition and development of these characteristics and traits. This debate is known as nature vs nurture and has been going on for a very long time. The most discussed topic or aspect of a human personality in this respect intelligence. Scintistists and experts have been trying to find out whether a person inherits intelligence or gains it through his surroundings and environment. But the fact is that all the important traits in the personality of a human are a result of a combination of both nature and nurture.

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