

## NATURE-NURTURE DEBATE – AO1

**Nature-Nurture Debate – Argument as to whether a person's development is mainly due to genes or environmental influences**

### Nature – AO1

**Nature - Behaviour is a result of innate biological mechanisms**

- Behaviours present at birth or may appear later in the case with changes that occur at puberty

#### Examples of Influences of Nature

##### Schizophrenia

- Genetic basis for schizophrenia – Family, twin and adoption studies show that the closer genetically two individuals are more likely they will develop same behaviour
- Joseph (2004) – Pooled all data from twin studies prior to 2000 finding concordance rate of 48% for MZ twins and 7% for DZ twins for developing schizophrenia (co-twin had disorder)
- Higher concordance rates in MZ twins suggests moderate genetic influence

##### Attachment Bond

- Bowlby (1969) – Desire to form an attachment bond innate because infant more likely to be protected and survive
- Attachment promotes close relationships which ensures successful reproduction
- Attachment nature as naturally selected through genetic mechanisms

##### Biological Approach

- Approach focuses on role of behaviour governed by biological systems – Approach focuses on heredity but acknowledges nature interacts with nurture

##### Psychodynamic Approach

- Focuses on inherited instinctual drives of sex and aggression
- id and psychosexual drives also innate – Nurture plays part in development by secondary to nature

### Nurture – AO1

**Nature – Behaviour which is a result of environmental influences**

- All behaviour is a result of learning through experience
- Influence of behaviour starts prenatally and continues throughout later life

#### Examples of Influences of Nurture

##### Behaviourism

- Behaviourists assume all behaviour can be learned in terms of experience alone
- Behaviourists use concepts of classical and operant conditioning to explain learning
- e.g. Attachment explained in terms of classical conditioning or operant conditioning – Food produces discomfort or pain and is rewarding

##### Social Learning Theory

- Behaviour acquired through learning – Additional aspect of indirect learning
- Bandura acknowledges biology might play a part in terms of instincts to behave in a certain way – e.g. urge to behave aggressively is biological
- Nurture is secondary to nurture as environmental influences more important in determining behaviour

##### Gender

- Research suggests children learn to behave in masculine or feminine ways as a result of learning – Learning is both direct and indirect
- Parents, family and wider society shape way males and females develop

##### Schizophrenia

- Double-bind theory suggests schizophrenia results from mismatched communication with caregivers
- Whether a person develops disorder due to experiences in childhood/adolescence nothing to do with biology

## EVALUATION OF NATURE-NURTURE DEBATE – AO3

### Nature and Nurture Cannot be Separated

- Trying to separate nature and nurture isn't possible as they both contribute
- Most psychologists now accept behaviour result of both nature and nurture – Both contribute so can't be distinguished between
- Some disorders biological but can be treated by changes in the environment like diet or exercise  
Question raised if prevention achieved through environmental manipulation is disorder primarily nature or nurture
- Important to use an interactionist approach taking both nature and nurture into account

### Interactionist Approach

- Interactionist approach provides a more complete explanation of behaviour looking at how nature and nurture interact
- Flexible approach to explaining switching between nature and nurture or emphasising specific aspects of one approach
- Combining both nature and nurture may lead to more effective treatments
  - E.g. Treating schizophrenia with purely drugs may not address all symptoms
- Critics argue difficult to integrate different explanations and understand how they work together – When treatment combined hard to know which one is playing a greater role in recovery
- Interactionist approach may be more useful as neither nature or nurture can account for all behaviour

### Diathesis-Stress Model

- Diathesis is a biological vulnerability, being born with a certain gene or having a mental disorder
- Not everyone will behave in same way or develop disorder, expression of gene depends on experience in the form of stressors that trigger behaviour
- Persons nature only experienced under certain conditions of nurture. Emphasises importance of interactionist approach

### Nature affects Nurture

- Genes may exert indirect effects on number of ways
  - E.g. Children who are genetically more aggressive may provoke an aggressive response in others and this response becomes part of child's social environment
- Plomin et. Al. (1977) – Reactive gene-environment interaction as child is reacting due to a genetic influence
- Plomin identified a passive influence can also occur by creating an unsettled environment
  - E.g. Parents with genetic mental illness creates an unsettled home environment
- Nature can indirectly affect nature in different ways

### Nurture affects Nature

- Neural plasticity describes how life experience shapes biology
- Maguire Et. Al. (2000) – A study of London taxi drivers showed regions of brain associated with spatial memories was bigger than controls
- Taxi drivers not born with bigger brain areas – Hippocampi responded to increased use
- Nurture or the environmental influence can affect biological structures

### Epigenetics

- Life experiences control molecular switches in brain which are passed onto subsequent generations
- Although some people have exactly same lifestyle they may have different epigenetic tags and develop differently
- Offspring may be different because of epigenetic material they inherited – Derived from an environmental effect
- Epigenetics provides contradicting evidence that genetics and environment are much less separate than previously thought