

Environmental Influences on Behavior

1. Parents
 Freud
 Behaviour geneticists find that less than 10% of personality differences are accounted for by same family environment. There are, however, many shared beliefs and values.
 Extremes are often more obvious - abused become abusive, loved and firm parents become confident.

Oct 6-3:16 PM

5 Environmental Influences of Significance

1. Prenatal Environment

2. Experience
 *early experience help develop neural connections (rats with toys show 7-10% increase in brain weight, 20% more synapses)

* mature brain has many neural connections and experience preserves them

A child's environment activates and preserves neural connections.

"Use it or lose it!"

Oct 5-4:04 PM

3. Peer Influence

Selection effect - kids seek out peer with similar attitudes and interests. Do we therefore overemphasize the role of peer influence?

**Parents and peers are complementary.*

Oct 5-4:04 PM

4. Culture

Culture includes behaviours, ideas, attitudes and traditions shared by large groups and passed from generation to generation. Each culture develops norms - rules for accepted and expected behavior. Example : personal space (less in Arab countries)

* Cultures vary over time faster than genetic changes.

Positives	Negatives
convenience (cell phones/e-mail)	divorce rate
double incomes	teen suicide
expanded human rights	crime
	longer work hours
	less sleep

Memes:
 self replicating cultural mutations

Culture affects child rearing

5. Gender

Until about 7 weeks after conception, male/female are indistinguishable.

Early exposure to sex hormones affects biological appearance.

But... "What biology initiates, culture accentuates."

Gender roles...

Can limit women's rights...

Social learning theory vs. Gender schema theory...

Oct 6-3:35 PM

Oct 11-9:30 AM