**Reflection & Application Paper on Child Development**

Student Name

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Course Name

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Date

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My virtual child, Carlos, exhibited remarkable development from his infancy through his teenage years to young adulthood. From this dramatic early birth onward, the path up to a young adult of 18 years old reflected many shifts in personality, interests, and behaviors. The changes took place in the areas of social, cognitive, and physical development and were related to biological factors, conditions within the environment, and the cultural context. On the whole, in his development, Carlos has manifested ease of temperament, developed verbal capabilities, an easygoing predisposition to physical activity, and unpredictability of interests in relation to school. This paper will discuss four important aspects of Carlos's development, each exemplifying the contribution of nature, nurture, and an interaction between the two, as well as an attribute impervious to explanation.

**Nature: Social Skills Development**

Carlos's social development was mainly shaped by environmental and cultural factors. He was sociable from an early age and adapted easily to new social environments, interacting normally or even positively with both peers and adults. This was also favored because one's childhood in a nurturing setting would often include playdates, formal social situations like daycare, or even joining a team sport like soccer.

Such factors would give extensive opportunities to learn, cooperate with others, and then resolve conflicts formally and informally in constructive ways. This perspective on the role of the environment in Carlos's social development supports Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social learning, which points out that social interactions are necessary for cognitive and behavioral development. The extended social interaction that took place in the life of this child, with contacts with children and adults in formal situations, helped in his social competence. For instance, the continued participation in extra-curricular activities, such as soccer, enabled him to experience the value of teamwork and to practice the leadership skills used in navigating complex social scenarios. Overall, environmental factors, initial peer interaction, and adult-child relationships in numerous studies have been seen to be strong predictors of social competence in children (Rose-Krasnor, 2017).

The cultural context in which Carlos grew up with a high value on team-oriented approaches and collaborative problem-solving further nurtured and constructed his social behaviors. Community-raised, where social connection and respect toward others are valued, also supports the notion that his social development had to do with nurture. The interactions he had with his cohorts and adults provided a framework for social behaviors that were not necessarily part of the innate aspect and once again appeared to show the formidable influence of the environmental component over the biological predisposition on this aspect (Boyd et al., 2020).

**Nature: Verbal and Cognitive Abilities**

The verbal and cognitive abilities of Carlos provided formidable evidence of a biological component to prove the genetic factors that may have influenced his development. He had been showing more complicated verbal skills, such as the use of complicated sentences and expression of a wide vocabulary compared to any of his age group peers, right from childhood. These verbal skills improved with time throughout his academic life as he always scored high grades in language-based subjects like English and literature. Intuitive telling of a story, comprehension of a reading text, and proper use of language showed his intuitive capabilities; the strengths identified were not environmental but inherited from his parents.

Biological influences on verbal development have also been confirmed by studies that have shown that heritability estimates of language skills are generally high, reflecting a strong genetic contribution to individual variation in language ability (Stromswold, 2021). Though environmental factors, such as parental encouragement of reading and rich language exposure, undoubtedly forwarded verbal growth for Carlos, his early demonstration suggests that such an ability was inborn and that this environmental influence enhanced it rather than initiated it. The regularity of his speaking skills through the various contexts supports this hypothesis of the abilities being biological in origin, with less variability due to changes in circumstance.

This case realized many important verbal and cognitive achievements with the combination of biological predispositions to favorable environmental conditions. In fact, evidence shows that his verbal skills could be more determined by nature; the genetic component acts as a core foundation upon which environmental influences are built. This is thus in agreement with studies that show. However, the development of language can be nurtured through environmental enrichment, but there is still a big variance that is determined by the genetic factor (Dale et al., 2015).

**Interaction between Physical Activity and Motor Skills**

The interactionist model best explains Carlos's development in physical activity and motor skills since both nature and nurture collaborated in shaping his skills. He was highly energetic and could coordinate well in sportive activities right from childhood, so the foundation of his sports talent was biological. However, these characteristics did not explain his athletic performance. While growing up, his athletic performance was developed and polished through the endless opportunities provided by the environment: constant exposure to sports, such as soccer, and family outings. Further, these types of activities allowed Carlos to develop not only his motor skills but also to receive teaching on discipline, teamwork, and perseverance-preconditions for success in sport.

Meanwhile, an interactionist model rightly views development as an interaction between biological inclinations and environmental influences. Piaget's theory of cognitive development explained how the above physical activities influenced the mental development of the case. Piaget (1952) views children as active learners of their environment in order to attain cognitive development. Such an active approach to understanding the environment is one of the most vital components in the development of the motor system. Thus, the fact that Carlos would participate in organized sport was a good application of the above concept, whereby through participation, he honed his body coordination while building other cognitive abilities, like solving problems during games. Greater support for the interactionist perspective is derived from studies that show that it is also possible to develop executive functions in children with the aid of physical activities (Diamond & Ling, 2016).

The complementary influences of nature and nurture, wherein one reinforced the other through activities that tested both his physical and cognitive abilities, came together in the person of Carlos. Here, the raw material was the genetic predisposition towards high activity. However, the potential could be actualized through environmental opportunities and steady practice in sports, culminating in highly developed athletic skills and coordination.

**Unaccountable: Disproportionate Interest in Academic Subjects**

Therefore, be it through a nature or a nurturing view, or even an interactionist model, an explanation of the causes underlying Carlos's fluctuating interest in various school subjects has not been given; that is, whereas it seems that at times during his school years, Carlos liked and was showing an interest in science, at other times he appeared to lose interest in it. No specific differences in either the teaching method or at home had been related to these fluctuations, and therefore, no logical reason can be given for such unpredictable variability of his interest in either engaging or not engaging in science-related activities, despite the presence of a supportive learning environment and equal encouragement across all subjects.

This disparity suggests that, at times, developmental outcomes could emanate from factors other than traditionally recognized influences of nature, nurture, or an interaction between these. One possibility is random variation either in the ways brains develop or in classroom dynamics, either of which might have influenced Carlos's interest in science at one point or another. According to Developmental Neuroscience, such changes in interest and behavior may occur because brain plasticity allows these alterations according to experience or even as random neural noise. What that would mean in this case for Carlos is that transient neurological states, temporary peer influences, or specific classroom experiences that were not directly observable might have influenced his inconsistency of interest in science. More information about his social experiences and the type of feedback from teachers regarding classroom participation would help to round out this trait further.

**Final Parenting Recommendations**

Based on my parenting of Carlos, I would advise other parents that their parenting approach should be quite flexible and adaptative because the child's needs and interests change with time. Development can never be completely independent of environmental influences, even as certain characteristics may have a biological linkage. It is the quality of the environment that detracts from or adds to the expression of the characteristics. Merely providing a stimulating and supportive environment with a range of opportunities to explore interests will facilitate an all-rounded growth pattern. Secondly, parents must be prepared to change their approach to upbringing from more directive during early childhood to one in which autonomous behavior is encouraged during the period of adolescence since it might increase the resilience and confidence in the young one.

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