

Reflection and Application of the Tool “Myvirtuallife” Apd1200 Foundations of Human Development and Education

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Keywords: Nature, Nurture, Parenting, Gene, Personality, Characteristics, Independence, Introversion, Artistic achievement

Abstract: With the help of the tool “MyVirtualLife”, this paper discusses in detail how the genetic effects and parenting styles of parents influence the growth of children through the setting of their parents' character roles in the early stage, and what aspects they contribute respectively. Through the discussion and attribution of children's independence, introversion and artistic achievement, the results show that nurture plays a key role in the development of children's independence; introversion is closely related to nature, and children's talents and abilities may be the result of both nature and nurture. I find that both nurture and nature play an important role in a child's growth process. More importantly, nurture and nature are not two independent parts. More often, nurture and nature are closely related, influencing each other and jointly affecting the development of a child.

1. Introduction

The debate about which is more important, nature or nurture, seems to be going on forever. More important than nature or nurture, nature and nurture together shape the path and outcome of development, from physical health to behavior to ability (Keating, 2011).

With the experience of a child's growth process as well as the interaction among parents' decision-making, genes and the outside environment through My Virtual Life program, the child Anran, who is a slow-to-warm-up, introverted and relatively quiet girl, grew up to be an excellent child. In her growing process, she adapted to strange environments relatively slowly and needed some time to get familiar with new people around her. At the same time, in a familiar environment, Anran could be very outgoing and lively, get along well with people around her and actively participate in social activities. She is very independent, responsible and self-disciplined, which is reflected in not only her school scores, but also the fact that she makes good plans for her favorite things, arranging her time and energy to work hard for them. Anran has been interested in art since her childhood, including painting, handcraft and music. She is good at painting, handwork, violin and rhythm. Her paintings have even been exhibited in global exhibitions, and she also participated in music bands. At the same time, Anran did very well in school. She showed a great interest in history, science and language in her growing process, during which she made great efforts to achieve excellent results with interest. Meanwhile, she had a very harmonious relationship with her classmates. It might take some time to get used to the social environment and make friends, but she could maintain a good relationship and get along well with her friends. She was particularly competitive or timid among her peers, but she would be brave and persistent when trying things that she loved.

2. Method

First, before starting to raise a child, the program “MyVirtualLife” needs the participant to play a role as one of Anran's parents, her mom, and set parent's own personality and how the child will be

acquired. In the setting of parent's personality characteristics, the "parent" is slow to adapt to the environment, introverted, ordinary artistic achievements and high independence. Then, in the choice of how to acquire the baby, the parent chooses to acquire the baby 'Anran' through pregnancy and childbirth. Then, she would, and try to raise her in a well-considered way.

Then I will go into detail about three of her characteristics, including their formation, their reflection on her, the formation process, the contribution of parents and possible genetic causes. I will also focus on the contribution of nature and nurture, or both, to these three characteristics.

3. Independence

The first part to be discussed is Anran's independence. She grew up peacefully as a very independent girl, and the parent nurtured her independence very well, which perhaps is the result of contribution and the interaction between nature and nurture. First of all, in the parent's settings, the role "mom" tend to keep her thoughts and feelings to herself, plan things ahead and be self-disciplined in her work, practice and study. Therefore, there may be a genetic component of independence. At the same time, the period from 18 months to 3 years of age, according to Erikson's Psychosocial stages theory (Boyd et al., 2020), is very important for the cultivation of a child's independence and autonomy. Children begin to feel a sense of control over their surroundings or things in this period, meanwhile they begin to test and enjoy exploring their surroundings as well as develop their initial interests. If parents can provide their children with a solid safety foundation meanwhile being patient and encouraging, they can help them develop their autonomy and learn to assert their independent will with their health and safety ensured. During this period, the role "mom" paid great attention to cultivating her independence. According to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Arshad & Chen, 2009), scaffolding could help with children's cognitive development so the role "mom" tried to guide Anran to learn new cognitive skills and structure her learning experience. The role "mom" also used the method of zone of proximal development to help adapt the process to her developmental level. Moreover, she would always give compliments or praise when Anran did nice things consistent with Operant Conditioning Theory (Boyd et al., 2020), trying to give her a positive reinforcement when she did great things. At 18 months, Anran sometimes played games like puzzles or block towers, which were too difficult for her age level. When she got frustrated and wanted to give up, the parent usually showed interest in what she was doing and occasionally made helpful comments when she got stuck. There are more examples of increasing her independence and autonomy using scaffolding. Also, the parent "mom" created a safe home environment for her to explore herself. When she was learning bath routine, the parent "mom" adhered a pretty regular one and would ask her the next step, enlisting and praising her for helping. According to the Operant Conditioning Theory (Boyd et al., 2020), when Anran was getting potty-trained, the parent "mom" tried to give her a punishment by mildly scolding her to decrease accidents or soil, and provided her praise or stickers (positive reinforcement) when she succeeded. Finally, in order to cultivate her independence, the parent "mom" would also let her to make some decisions. For example, when Anran refused to do routines like taking a shower or having a meal, the parent "mom" would tell her to make a choice between two options. Anran usually manages time well and is consistent about working independently during her development process. In conclusion, Anran's independence is the result of the interaction between both nature and nurture.

4. Introversion

The second characteristic of Anran I want to discuss is her slow-to-warm-up personality or introversion. In the previous setting, the parent "mom" is a person who adapts to new things or environments slowly, tends to be shy with strangers and adapts to group situations slowly. When facing with stress or unfamiliar things, she may feel a little anxious and prefer to be in a familiar or quiet

environment. According to Boyd et al. (2020), the above characteristics may result in Anran's inborn temperament, that is, her introverted or slow-to-warm-up personality was mainly because of nature. Because in Anran's growth process, she usually showed a little shyness to strange environments in different ages and needed some time to adapt to or grow up in this process. The parent "mom" have been trying to motivate her to become more outgoing and lively, but failed to change her slow-to-warm-up personality in the end, therefore, such personality characteristics are mainly caused by nature. Anran 's introversion and slow-to-warm-up personality started to show up early, she tended to warm up to new people slowly at 18 months, while was outgoing and friendly with familiar people. The parent "mom" tried to stimulate her by taking her out for more new activities and meeting more new adults or children as often as possible. At first, Anran tended to be shy, get involved slowly or have difficulties making friends at preschool when she was 3 years old, the parent "mom" kept encouraging and arranging play dates for her to help her make more friends. Anran continued being somewhat quiet and shy at the age of 5. Later, when Anran was nervous about a lot of new things, the parent "mom" always provided her with emotional support in new situations and encouraged her to be more independent. Later until Anran was 18 years old, the parent "mom" had always trying her best to give Anran support, helping and encouraging, hoping that she could become more outgoing, but she was always a relatively slow-to-warm-up and shy girl. From my perspective, nature played a very significant role in the development of Anran, because the parent "mom" kept giving her reinforcement to be more extroversive but there was no significant change in Anran's personality caused by the interaction between nature and parenting, therefore, in terms of whether she could be extroversive or quickly adapt to unfamiliar environment, maybe nature is the main reason.

5. Artistic Achievement

The last that I want to talk about is Anran's achievements in arts, like music and painting. She has developed a strong interest in music and painting from an early age (18 months), when Anran started dancing in the rhythm of some music, clapped or sang along the songs that the parent "mom" sang and enjoyed dancing or moving around together with music. Anran was fascinated by music and songs in her favorite shows and movies at preschool, and danced in a pretty good rhythm with a variety of music. In order to cultivate her interests, the parent "mom" got her an electronic keyboard and showed her how to play simple tunes. The method the parent "mom" used was modelling, which could help her to imitate and learn. The parent "mom" always gave her encouragement or praise when she showed achievements or even a little interest. The parent "mom" also enrolled her in a dance practice to encourage her interests when she was 6 years old. After taking piano lessons for two years, Anran could read and play well by ear. She started singing in a choir and the parent "mom" helped her decide to learn violin. Anran enjoyed painting and designing things of interest when she was 8 years old, and she loved to build models or things with her hands, so the parent "mom" went with her to find artistic or building materials for her projects, helping her set a personal room for art. After one year, her works started to be much appreciated by others, and she got A in both orchestra and vocal music classes together with an award for "leadership in musical performance", one painting and several photographs of Anran have entered a country-wide art fair. I'm not sure whether Anran's artistic interests or achievements are genetically related. The sense of music or art of the parent's setting is around average, part of which may be innate, like the parent's sense of art or creativity, but I think it mostly resulted from nurture. When she was growing up, the parent "mom" quickly discovered her talents and interests, always actively helping her through positive reinforcement, modelling and scaffolding.

6. Discussion

I learned a lot of relevant knowledge and practical application during the growth of Anran via the “MyVirtualLife” program. There are two questions left to us, of which the first one is that, there is still a certain gap between ideal and reality. A lot of choices are very ideal and even unrealistic while are very difficult to implement in the real life, so how to maximally ensure the achievement of an ideal model in the interaction between parents and children or in the process of getting along? How can we put many ideal ways of education into practice? Another one is that when making decisions for children, in the other partner (marriage/life partner)'s opinion, there is always interaction with their external environment, and it is difficult to balance each of these factors that may affect children. I wonder how parents can balance these factors and uncertainties as much as possible.

7. Future Inspirations

Finally, there some parenting advice which this raising experience can leave for us. First of all, it is strongly recommended for parents to do some learning before having children. I deeply realize that many of parents' ideas, practices, behavioral patterns and attitudes have a great impact on children. Therefore, it is very important to improve parent’s cognitive level and knowledge reserve before raising a child. For example, having a sufficient knowledge reserve and cognitive ability can help children have a broader vision. For example, the parent “mom” can help Anran to recognize more possibilities of sexual orientation and identity, meanwhile helping her reduce prejudice and gain more respect. It can also more effectively cultivate children's good behaviors and reduce their bad behaviors, such as helping children become better people using classical and operant conditioning, paying more attention to every critical development stage, making positive responses and establishing a secure attachment with children, which will have a long-term positive impact in their future life. The second point is that there should be some financial reserves before raising children. During the growth of Anron, the parent “mom” sacrificed some time for her two children due to financial problems, bring some pressure back on the parent, which I think would affect the children. Many children also need financial support for their hobbies. Finally, it is important for parents to maintain a positive and optimistic attitude during the growth of children, which is conducive to the development of their enthusiasm, independence, extroversion, artistic and academic achievements. In some cultures, people always advocate education of discouraging children. These cultures may believe that children will only try hard if they feel that they are not good enough. These parenting ways may greatly damage their enthusiasm, self-confidence, sense of achievement and independence. Children should be encouraged when growing up, of course, appropriate punishments for misconducts are also very important.

8. Conclusion

Contemporary evidence also suggests that the expression of heritable traits is often strongly dependent on experience, including specific parental behavior, child susceptibility, and age-related factors (Rowe, 1994). Contemporary research has also shown the interlinked effects of parenting, non-family influences, and the role of family life in the wider context (Chilman et al., 1999).

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