



Heredity, Environment, and Personality: A Study of 850 Sets of Twins

John C. Loehlin, Robert C. Nichols

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This volume reports on a study of 850 pairs of twins who were tested to determine the influence of heredity and environment on individual differences in personality, ability, and interests. It presents the background, research design, and procedures of the study, a complete tabulation of the test results, and the authors' extensive analysis of their findings. Based on one of the largest studies of twin behavior conducted in the twentieth century, the book challenges a number of traditional beliefs about genetic and environmental contributions to personality development.

The subjects were chosen from participants in the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test of 1962 and were mailed a battery of personality and interest questionnaires. In addition, parents of the twins were sent questionnaires asking about the twins' early experiences. A similar sample of nontwin students who had taken the merit exam provided a comparison group. The questions investigated included how twins are similar to or different from nontwins, how identical twins are similar to or different from fraternal twins, how the personalities and interests of twins reflect genetic factors, how the personalities and interests of twins reflect early environmental factors, and what implications these questions have for the general issue of how heredity and environment influence the development of psychological characteristics. In attempting to answer these questions, the authors shed light on the importance of both genes and environment and form the basis for different approaches in behavior genetic research.

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