**Fostering Creativity Sustainably in Design Education: *The Effect of Nature and Nurture***

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**ABSTRACT**

The role of creativity seems to be seen as so vital, especially in art and design education that most people consider art and design as creative professions. For decades, scientists and psychologists have been tinkering with the idea that the structural characteristics of a brain play a significant role in developing creative abilities in individuals. This idea suggested a link between genes (nature) and creativity, which hints at the heritability of creative ability. However, there is a widely held opinion that nurturing helps to sustainably enhance creativity in individuals, which fuel the debate on ‘nature vs nurture.’ Hence, this study engaged the investment theory of creativity to determine how nature and nurture contribute to the developing of creativity. This was achieved through a case study that examines how personality traits and socio-economic background affects the creative abilities of a group of design students. The students were asked to complete a questionnaire that measures their attitude, knowledge and environment, and the responses were cross tabulated with their performance in an academic year’s design project. The study reveals some interesting findings on how students’ patterns of thought, behaviours and background influence their performance in the creative task. There were also indications on the possible ways of nurturing creativity, or the generation of a project deemed creativity among students from varying socio-economic backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Creative skills, divergent thinking, grit, personality traits