

Abstract

The study focused on the Chinese young children's understanding of the causes of human behavior to explore their ability to distinguish physical, psychological and biological reasoning. In study 1, 5-year-olds explained intended actions, mistakes and biologically caused behavior appropriately. In study 2, 5-year-olds were able to predict the outcome of voluntary, physically impossible and biologically impossible items and gave psychological and biological explanations to voluntary and biological items. Chinese children showed the same sequence of development of explanation system with their American counterpart. However, Chinese children develop these systems later and biological explanation is more prevalent among them. Some possibility of cause of the difference was discussed.