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Kenyan, Chinese and US children rely on different metacognitive strategies when solving a problem

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Abstract

Recent theories suggest that metacognitive development is affected by cultural context. However, cross-cultural research on metacognition is sparse and often involves verbal assessment (e.g., "How sure are you that your answer is correct?"), which might not have cross-cultural validity. The present study assessed metacognition by coding children's naturalistic behavior in a problem-solving task. Participants had to assemble objects to build a track according to a model. We compared Kenyan, Chinese, and US children's metacognitive strategies (N=95; 6-10-year-olds). Results revealed that Chinese children relied more on monitoring strategies (e.g., checking the model) than Kenyan and US children, whereas Kenyan children relied more on control strategies (e.g., organizing workspace) than US and Chinese children. Moreover, in all cultures, the number of metacognitive strategies used increased with age. The results suggest differences and similarities in the preferred metacognitive strategies of children across diverse societies.