

## Abstract

The present paper studied whether the weak central coherence theory of autism and the cognitive style construct of field dependence/independence were equivalent. The Embedded Figures Test (EFT), the Rod-and-Frame Test (RFT) and experiments on visual illusions were administered to fifty autistic and normal children. Data from the EFT revealed no disembedding superiority of autism. The RFT results indicated that the cognitive style of autistic group, similar to normal control, was field independence. No significant groups difference was revealed in susceptibility to geometric illusions. The present findings cannot be explained sufficiently by the central coherence account or the cognitive style construct. Alternative explanations in terms of developmental change and figure-ground perception were given. The experimental manipulation in the present study may not be sensitive in assessing the central coherence account. In addition, the weak central coherence theory is vague and further specification and operationalization of its terms and ideas are necessary to shed light on peculiarities of autism.