

The Navon task (Navon, 1977) has long been used to demonstrate visuo-spatial hierarchical differences in autistic individuals (e.g. Plaisted et al, 1999; Wang et al., 2007). More specifically, enhanced processing of local compared to global items has provided supporting evidence for theories such as Enhanced Perceptual Functioning (EPF; Mottron et al. 2006) and Weak Central Coherence (WCC; Frith & Happé, 1994). Indeed, Reed et al (2011) amongst others found enhanced processing of local items in individuals who do not have a clinical diagnosis of autism, but score highly in autistic traits using the Autism Quotient questionnaire (AQ: Baron-Cohen et al., 2006). The current study uses the AQ to predict performance on two Navon tasks.

Using a Tobii eye tracker, 55 adults who ranged in AQ scores between 4-42, took part in selective and divided attention Navon tasks. Accuracy, fixation duration and fixation count were measured to test implicit and explicit task performance.

Multiple linear regressions found no significant results in any of the Navon task measures. Results do not support the previous literature in that those who scored higher on the AQ questionnaire performed in a similar way to individuals with ASD on tasks with a perceptual component.