

Cognitive Styles as Predictors of Adaptive and Non Adaptive Defense Mechanisms
Rakesh Sharma*and Gurminder Sokhey**

Abstract

The purpose of present study is to determine if (Field dependent/field independent) cognitive style is a significant predictor of Adaptive (mature) and maladaptive (Neurotic and immature) defense mechanisms. The sample comprised 300 Post Graduate and research (M. Phil. & PhD) students (males=150 and females= 150) selected from the various departments of Punjabi University Patiala. The age range of the participants was between 22 to 30 yrs. They were assessed by using Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40) and Group Embedded Figure Test (GEFT). It was hypothesized that: (i) Field independent (FI) cognitive styles would be positively correlated with adaptive (mature) defense mechanisms and negatively with maladaptive (neurotic and immature) defense mechanisms. (ii) Field independent (FI) cognitive style would be a significant predictor of adaptive (mature) defense mechanisms and contribute positively to its variance. (iii) Field independent (FI) cognitive style would be a significant predictor of maladaptive (neurotic and immature) defense mechanisms and contribute negatively to its variance. Results revealed that Field independent cognitive style was positively correlated with adaptive (mature) defense mechanisms and negatively with combined scores of maladaptive (neurotic and immature) defenses. Further, field independent cognitive style positively predicted the adaptive (mature) defense mechanisms and accounted for 25% of the variance in it. Whereas, it negatively predicted maladaptive (neurotic + immature) defense mechanisms accounting for 12% of the variance in it. Simple linear regression was also computed separately for neurotic and immature ego defense mechanisms. Results revealed no correlation of cognitive styles with neurotic defense mechanisms. However, they were negatively correlated with immature defense mechanisms ($r = 0.39$) significant at ($p < .001$) and it negatively accounted for 15% of the variation.

Key terms: Cognitive Styles, Adaptive Ego Defense Mechanisms, Maladaptive Ego Defense Mechanisms.