

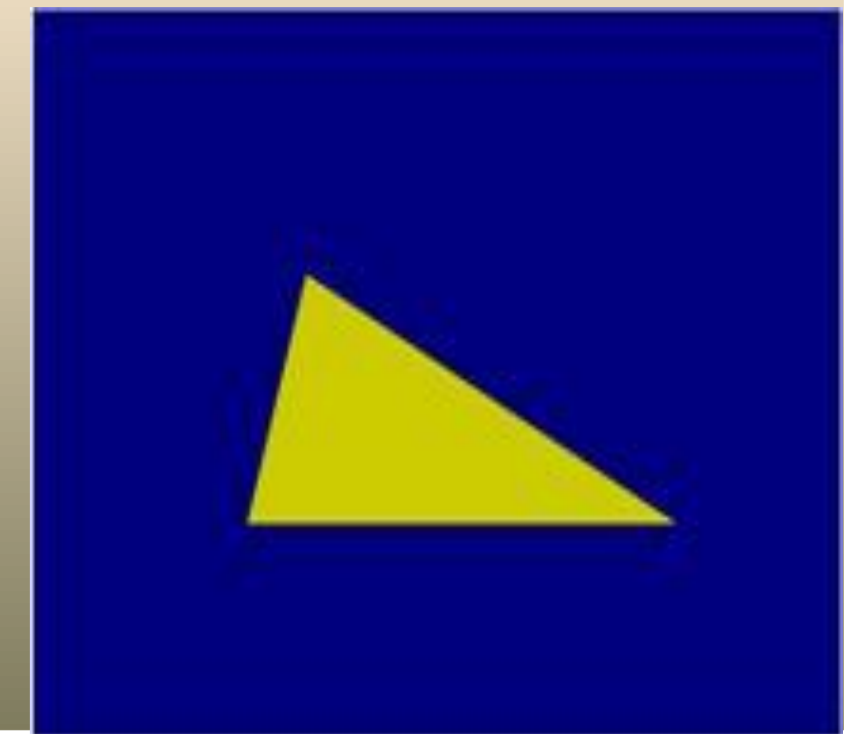


SELF-CONTROL IN EATING BEHAVIOR AMONG RESTRAINED AND UNRESTRAINED EATERS

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were to determine the influence of external cues (neutral, food and dieting) on:

- Eating behavior,
 - Goal activation (dieting and food enjoyment as measured by response times to diet and food-enjoyment words)
 - Explicit automatic goal evaluations (dieting and food enjoyment as measured by “positive” vs. “negative” automatic evaluations),
- in restrained vs. unrestrained eaters.

METHOD

Participants

Female undergraduates at University of Toronto (N = 166); 17 to 49 yr. old ($M = 19.95$, $SD = 3.75$)

Instruments

- ✓ *Revised Restraint Scale* (Polivy, Herman, & Howard, 1988)
- ✓ *Revised Feeling of Inadequacy Scale (FIS; Janis & Field, 1959)*
- ✓ *Motivation Scale*. Designed *ad hoc*. Containing the question: “How important is maintaining you diet (if you are dieting)?”

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to three conditions: food-cue, dieting or control, in which they were exposed to incidental presentation of gourmet, fashion or geographic magazines, respectively. Words related to the goals of dieting and/or food-enjoyment were presented in a computer decision task following the incidental presentation of gourmet, dieting, and geographic magazine photographs. The computer task and the presentation of food were counterbalanced. Participants’ food intake was assessed in a taste-rating task.

CONCLUSIONS

Restrained eaters ate more than did unrestrained eaters across the three conditions. Restrained eaters who were exposed to food cues ate more than did restrained eaters in the control condition and they evaluated the goal of dieting more negatively compared to restrained eaters in the other two conditions.

These findings were inconsistent with “Counteractive Self-Control Theory” but consistent with previous studies on the effects of food-cue exposure in restrained eaters.

Table 1

Cookie consumption: Means (standard deviations), among restrained and unrestrained eaters across the 3 conditions (gourmet, dieting and control)

	Restrained (75)	Unrestrained (75)	Total (150)
Gourmet (53)	102.55 (52.34)	79.07 (43.63)	90.59 (49.08)
Dieting (49)	86.88 (38.94)	77.38 (32.97)	82.23 (36.08)
Control (48)	73.90 (30.85)	62.31 (29.71)	68.10 (30.53)
Total (150)	88.16 (43.04)	73.17 (36.57)	80.66 (40.51)

Table 2

Effect sizes of restraint and cue conditions over food intake and goal activation

	F	df	p	η^2
<i>Food intake</i>				
Restrained	5.37	(1, 150)	.02**	.04
Cue condition	4.27	(2, 150)	.02**	.06
Restrained X Cue condition	.48	(2, 150)	.62	.01
<i>Food enjoyment goal activation</i>				
Restrained	.00	(1, 150)	.99	.00
Cue condition	.09	(2, 150)	.92	.00
Restrained X Cue condition	1.70	(2, 150)	.19	.02
<i>Dieting goal activation</i>				
Restrained	2.53	(1, 150)	.11	.01
Cue condition	.12	(2, 150)	.89	.00
Restrained X Cue condition	.71	(2, 150)	.50	.01
<i>Control goal activation</i>				
Restrained	1.98	(1, 150)	.16	.01
Cue condition	.29	(2, 150)	.75	.00
Restrained X Cue condition	1.42	(2, 150)	.25	.02

Note: ** $p < .05$