

2015

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### Recommended Citation

Collins, Jessica Amelia-Marie (2015) "Comparing Food Thought Suppression and Cognitive Restraint on Eating Behaviors," *Graduate Annual*: Vol. 3 , Article 7.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/graduateannual/vol3/iss1/7>

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## Comparing Food Thought Suppression and Cognitive Restraint on Eating Behaviors

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Psychology  
in the School of Arts and Sciences  
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### Abstract

Research has suggested that assessing an individual's thoughts and concerns about their caloric intake should be considered as equally important as an individual's actual engagement in caloric restriction (Allison, Kalinsky, & Gorman, 1992). The construct of cognitive restraint has primarily been used to further understand

the influence of these cognitive processes on eating behaviors. However, by definition, cognitive restraint includes both thoughts and actual engagement in behavioral restraint (Allison, et al., 1992). Food thought suppression, defined as the tendency to avoid thoughts regarding food, (Barnes & Tanteleff-Dunn, 2010), may be a more accurate representation of the cognitive processes that influence consumption. The current study aimed to compare the suppression of food- and eating-related thoughts on consumption and those factors known to influence eating behaviors (i.e., disinhibition, cravings and susceptibility to the food environment) in a sample of 68 female University students. When compared to cognitive restraint, food thought suppression was consistently found to be a stronger predictor of self-reported disinhibition, cravings and susceptibility to the food environment. Although results demonstrated that neither food thought suppression nor cognitive restraint were significantly associated with, nor significant predictors of consumption, interestingly, participant self-identified ethnicity was demonstrated to be a significant predictor of consumption. Taken together, the findings highlight the need for future studies to examine the ways in which one's tendency to avoid food and eating related thoughts influence consumption and those factors known to influence eating behaviors.