

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical-Community Psychology

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M.A. in Psychology, May 2019, University of Missouri – St. Louis
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Rethinking Binge Eating Disorder: Is Resource Depletion the Missing Link?

Date: May 13, 2022
Time: 12:00pm to 2:00pm
Place: Remote

Abstract

Binge eating disorder (BED), the most prevalent of the eating disorders, is associated with significant mental health impairments, high healthcare costs and utilization, and increased mortality. Yet little is known about the mechanisms involved in binge eating, and existing BED theories are incomplete. Scholars have recently suggested that resource depletion, or the state of reduced self-regulation abilities, may apply to BED, but no identified studies have experimentally examined this relationship. The purpose of the current study was to examine the role of resource depletion in binge eating behaviors. Ego anxiety, discomfort anxiety, and dietary restraint were also examined as potential moderators. One hundred seventy-one female-identifying participants (ages 18 to 62) were randomly assigned to a high or low resource depletion writing condition and then asked to rate motivation to eat and food cravings while viewing images of fatty, salty, and sweet foods. Results indicate the manipulation of resource depletion was effective. Participants in the high resource depletion condition reported higher binge eating behaviors, but only under the conditions of high dietary restraint and high discomfort anxiety. Ego anxiety did not moderate the relationship between resource depletion and binge eating behaviors. These results highlight resource depletion as a mechanism of binge eating, specifically as it relates to previous research findings of dietary restraint and discomfort anxiety. Researchers and clinicians should consider the role of resource depletion in BED to inform prevention and treatment efforts for the disorder.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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