**CHAPTER 7: GENERAL DISCUSSION**

**Key Findings, Limitations, and Future Directions**

***Framing conditions***

Results were similar across both DVs.

* The pro-environmental framing condition produced highest pro-environmental consumer intentions (descriptively) and behaviors (significantly)
  + Limitation: This could have been because the sample highly endorsed biospheric values; unclear whether this would extend to samples with larger range in biospheric values
  + Limitation: unclear whether the self-enhancing framing condition accomplished what it was meant to – whether adopting the behavior depicted in the self-enhancing framing condition, reducing clothing consumption, was actually perceived as being in the participant’s self-interest.
  + Although not asked for specifically, in an open-ended question at the end about whether participant doubted the information they were given at any point during the study, some of the qualitative responses expressed doubt about whether this info was true (19):
    - At any point during this study, did you doubt the accuracy of the information that you were presented with? If yes, please describe the instance below:
      * “I doubted when it said that people from the UO thought people wouldn't fit in with the status quo if they didn't buy from secondhand shops.”
      * “That UO students look down on others for their clothing choices - I don't think everyone cares that much”
      * “the information about people's thoughts on clothing”
      * “I doubted the accuracy of the information that most UO students see buying first-hand clothing as a negative action, since I see a lot of students wearing first-hand Nike gear or similar brands”
      * “I don't think I am positive that the raffle really exists. I also sort of doubt the second hand clothing thing, although I hope it's true”
      * “There seems to actually be a rise in the over consumption of clothing especially in the realm of fast fashion. while there is an increase in those who purchase from thrift stores, second hand stores, and consignment stores there is also a rise in companies that drop ship clothing which add to the tons of clothing thrown away per year.”
      * “I think the majority of UO students are not conscious of the damage caused by the clothing industry/consumeristic society. Therefore, the stats about students going to second-hand clothing stores made me skeptical.”
      * “When it was explained that many University of Oregon students shop secondhand, I remembered seeing that some ethical deception may happen in this study. I thought that it was possible this data was inaccurate, but decided to believe it in order to provide the most truthful responses.”
      * “I am not sure if many UO students actually shop secondhand. I know people that do of course, however I'm unsure if the average student does.”
      * “I was kind of skeptical about the statement of UO students being more environmentally conscious. It is probably more true for environmental studies majors but less so for others.”
      * “I doubted if the majority of UO students actually buy the majority of their clothes from secondhand stores.”
      * “When given statements about buying habits, the disclaimer before that section reminded me of the section of the informed consent that talked about being deceived.”
      * “The second and third pages where the information about clothing factories and other responses of University of Oregon students.”
      * “I don't feel like people care that much about whether or not something is new or second-hand. Most of the clothing I see other students wear seems new.”
      * “The info that UO students thrift clothes. It seemed like that was just part of the study and not a true fact. Although, I do think it's probably the case that a lot of UO students like thrifting (i.e. there was a response to a discussion post I saw in a class recently where someone talked about how often they thrifted clothes).”
      * “I doubt the information that was collected and told to me about University of Oregon students and their opinions on clothing.”
      * “when the survey said that students specifically buy second hand clothes as to not be judged, when the examples of interviews that were given made it seem as though most people just prefer second hand clothing”
      * “it seemed very strange for you to preface everything by saying that uoregon students were buying more used clothes unless thats part of the study itself yknow.”
      * “that most university of oregon students feel pressure from other students to buy second hand rather than brand new”
  + Difficult to create perception of a new norm when information about the existing norm is visible to participants, unlike something like recycling behavior of one’s neighbors – how could this be accomplished more effectively? Make it about inner thoughts instead? (like a reveal of pluralistic ignorance)
* Perhaps wasn’t a strong test of the framing condition hypothesis – future research should test self-enhancing framing condition for extent to which participants see the behavior in the framing message as consistent with their self-interest, and then test its effectiveness as an intervention strategy
* Interesting that the control and pro-environmental framing conditions weren’t equal
  + Might think that people interpret environmentally-relevant behaviors automatically in a pro-environmental context, but perhaps it’s worth reminding people (especially if they endorse biospheric values) of the pro-environmental benefits of switching their behaviors

***Norm Conditions***

Results varied depending on the DV.

For consumer intentions:

* The descriptive and social norm conditions were most similar to the most commonly used norm-intervention conditions in previous research
  + Consistent with prior research, the social norm was a less effective norm-intervention technique
    - Perhaps people resent being told what behaviors they “should” adopt… overt social pressure to change behavior… moralizing the incorrect behavior
    - Support for this possibility in the similar results seen for the moral norm condition – similarly ineffective …
      * At least in influencing what people project they’ll do in the future
  + Whereas the convention, a novel norm condition, performed well on consumer intentions - perhaps because its persuasion lies not in applying moralizing a behavior as incorrect, but in contextualizing a desirable behavior as helping to achieve a group goal
    - Future research should attempt to refine the strengths of the convention condition to see if there might be something here

For consumer behaviors:

* Odds of choosing the pro-environmental consumer option were similarly improved in the descriptive, convention, social, and moral norm conditions compared to the control norm
  + Why….?
* Include both types of outcome variables
  + Measuring behavioral choices in the current study tests immediate effects… but they might wear off
  + Do intentions translate to long-term behavioral choices?

***Framing by Norm Interaction***

There was none.

* But perhaps there would be with strengthening of the self-enhancing framing condition, AND
* With a sample with more varied background in pro-environmental values

***Values Main Effects & Interaction Effects***

* Consistent with previous research, biospheric values positively predicted pro-environmental intentions & behaviors, and egoistic values negatively predicted them
* There were no significant interaction effects involving values, but again, this could be due to the same limitations discussed earlier
  + Limited variability in sample’s biospheric value endorsement – everyone was quite pro-environmental
  + The self-enhancing framing may not have been believable / been interpreted as being consistent with participants’ self-interest
* Although the values interactions were not significant, there were some small to medium sized effects produced in the effects of each norm-intervention condition when broken down between people high and low on each values dimension
  + Could be worth looking into to see which norm interventions work better – or WORSE – for people with different values
    - For ex: social and moral norms STRONGLY, significantly reduced pro-environmental consumer intentions among people high on biospheric values when no framing context was given
    - Although not significant, convention seemed to most often have a positive effect on pro-environmental consumer intentions for people high on biospheric values 🡪 follow this up with a refined, stronger convention methdology
  + Future research: Can norm-interventions be tailored to appeal to people with specific values backgrounds?
* It is worth breaking down self-transcendent and self-enhancing values into
  + Self-transcendent: biospheric and altruistic
  + Self-enhancing: egoistic and hedonic
    - Biospheric values and egoistic values appeared to be more relevant to the sphere of pro-environmental consumer intentions and behaviors

***In-group Identification***

* Didn’t appear to matter much overall
* And it didn’t appear to modify the effects of either norm condition or framing condition
  + Good news?
  + What to take away from this?

***Combinations of Framing and Norm Conditions***

* Results of exploratory RQ2:
  + Consumer intentions – highest EMMs (though not sig diff from control) in the
    - Pro-environmental framing/control norm, and
    - Pro-environmental framing/convention
  + Consumer intentions – lowest EMMs (though not sig diff from control) in the
    - Self-enhancing framing/control norm, and
    - Self-enhancing framing/social norm
  + Consumer behaviors – highest EMMs (though not sig diff from control) in the
    - Pro-environmental framing/descriptive norm
    - Pro-environmental framing/social norm
  + Consumer behaviors – lowest EMMs (thought not sig diff from control) in the
    - Self-enhancing framing/control norm
* Overall, didn’t see strong additive effects of norm-intervention conditions combined with the framing conditions for consumer intentions
  + What about for consumer behaviors?
  + For consumer behaviors, two of the norm conditions were more effective when paired with the pro-environmental framing compared to no framing – the descriptive norm and social norm

**Conclusion**

There’s a need for psychological contributions to the study of how to develop effective climate-change mitigation strategies. Room for improvement & to build off of current study’s methods & findings.