

# Self-control failures in pro-environmental behavior under uncertainty

**Sai Prashanth RAMACHANDRAN**

Toulouse School of Management

**Camilla Barbarossa**

Toulouse Business School

**Laurent Bertrandias**

Toulouse Business School

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## **Abstract**

Consumers today are surrounded by external threats (e.g., pandemic, war, recession). Such threats instill uncertainties making lives tougher than the normal. Drawing upon time inconsistent preferences and establishing pro-environmental behavior as a long-term goal, we investigate if the negative effect of uncertainty on pro-environmental behavior is due to self-control failure. Across two experimental studies, we show that consumers are more likely to violate their pro-environmental long-term (vs. short-term) goal under high uncertainty (Study 1). Furthermore, this violation happens even when consumers are presented with a self-control conflict (i.e., protecting natural environment vs. gaining instant pleasure) as consumers express higher levels of anticipated regret due to long-term goal violation under high uncertainty (vs. low uncertainty). We contribute to the emerging literature on consumers under threat and temporal dimension of pro-environmental behavior.

**Subject Areas:** *Cognition, Consumer Behaviour, Intention-Behavior Link, Public Policy*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics