

When and how do interventions promote pro-environmental spillover behaviour? The role of goal importance and (un)conscious goal pursuit

Morgan De Rocker

Ghent University

Iris Vermeir

ghent university

Adriaan Spruyt

Ghent University

Cite as:

De Rocker Morgan, Vermeir Iris, Spruyt Adriaan (2025), When and how do interventions promote pro-environmental spillover behaviour? The role of goal importance and (un)conscious goal pursuit. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 54th, (126107)

Paper from the 54th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, Spain, May 25-30, 2025



When and how do interventions promote pro-environmental spillover behaviour? The role of goal importance and (un)conscious goal pursuit

Abstract:

Behavioural science has identified several interventions that increase the likelihood of consumers making pro-environmental choices. The challenge, however, is how to encourage the adoption of consecutive, pro-environmental choices amongst consumers. This is the challenge we addressed in this paper; we investigated through multiple studies when and why an initial pro-environmental choice increases the likelihood of making subsequent pro-environmental choices (i.e., positive spillover). From a goal-based approach, we tried to demonstrate that the direction of the behavioural spillover effect is critically dependent upon conscious vs. unconscious goal pursuit and goal importance. Our findings argue for interventions that unconsciously activate environmentally friendly goals because by creating idea of free choice, they can reinforce self-perception of consumers with both high and low importance, resulting in positive spillover behaviour.

Keywords: Pro-environmental spillover behaviour; (Un)conscious goal pursuit; Goal importance

Track: Consumer Behaviour