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Positive and negative emotions as drivers of the reduction of consumers' energy consumption within the SIMPEA

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Not only policy makers and industries but also consumers are aware that energy consumption needs to be reduced. We use the Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Action (SIMPEA; Fritsche et al., 2018) as framework to find a solution to the problem. The SIMPEA highlights how appraisal of an environmental problem, over collective emotions and social cognitions impacts environmental action. These relations are investigated with data from three questionnaires (three points of time) that were filled in by 193 students and residents living in dormitories and apartment blocks in Graz, Austria. The items focused on the reduction of energy consumption in the private households. The questionnaires assess (i) respondents' appraisal of the climate crisis, (ii) their in-group's negative emotions towards the climate crisis (students in dormitories, residents in apartment blocks), (iii) their perceived norms and goals of their in-group (dormitories, apartment blocks) regarding energy conservation, (iv) their perceived collective efficacy of their in-group (dormitories, apartment blocks) regarding the fight of the climate crisis, (v) their ingroup identification (dormitories, apartment blocks), (vi) their in-groups positive emotions towards their ingroup (dormitories, apartment blocks), and (vii) their personal intended environmental action, i.e., the intended reduction of energy consumption. It is revealed that the SIMPEA (with a few modifications) and as such emotions are appropriate to predict environmental action. The results allow for recommendations how to involve societal groups, i.e. groups of students as well as football clubs, in the fight of the climate crisis by highlighting not only cognitive but also emotional aspects.

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