Applying the Concept of Affective Rationality in Explaining Public Assessment of Alternative Forms of Electricity Production: Insights from Germany

Roh Pin Lee*1 and Michael Nippa*2

Technische Universität Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany

* The authors contributed equally and are listed alphabetically

1 Roh Pin Lee is PhD candidate at the Chair of Management, Leadership and Human Resources at the Faculty of Business Administration and researcher at the German Center for Energy Resources, TU Bergakademie Freiberg;
E-Mail: roh-pin.lee@der.tu-freiberg.de

2 Michael Nippa is Professor of Management, Leadership and Human Resources at the Faculty of Business Administration and the scientific director for management research topics at the German Center for Energy Resources, TU Bergakademie Freiberg;
E-Mail: nippa@bwl.tu-freiberg.de

Abstract

Debates about energy, in particular debates about different forms of electricity production are often loaded with emotions. This poses a significant challenge to political and corporate decision-makers as they have to consider the impact of affect and emotions on energy-related decision behaviors. Drawing on studies on affective rationality we develop and empirically test a model of how affects toward energy sources influence individual judgments. Findings highlight the importance of the contextual environment in affective evaluation. While positive affects toward regenerative and negative affects toward fossil electricity production sources were predictable, mixed results toward nuclear energy were not. The study utilizes the concept of affective rationality to better understand affect-loaded decision-behaviors in the energy context.

Keywords: affective rationality, decision-making, energy, public opinion