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Saving and Shifting: Do households treat energy sufficiency and flexibility as complements?: Evidence from a survey of French households

This paper examines whether households treat energy sufficiency (consuming less) and demand flexibility (consuming at another time) as complements or substitutes. While the literature has extensively documented the determinants of each behavior, the two have been studied separately, and less is known about how they relate within the same household, even though public policy increasingly targets both at once. We address this question using the CLEE 2025 survey, covering 1,361 French households. Using a multivariate ordered probit with correlated latent errors, we document a positive residual dependence between all pairs of sufficiency and flexibility behaviors. Observed household and dwelling characteristics account for almost none of this co-movement, which also persists among households not heated with electricity. Our findings then show that policy levers act asymmetrically: time-varying tariffs only affect laundry shifting, whereas photovoltaic ownership signals general engagement. Programs can therefore be combined without crowding out, but evaluating them separately overstates the number of distinct households reached.

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