

The role of goal partition in moderating regulatory focus effect on the escalation of commitment

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Abstract

People keep on escalating their commitment when they clearly know a project is failing. Research has argued that escalation of commitment (EOC) can be attenuated by regulatory foci of the decision maker, while other research argue that promotion-focused individuals will escalate when close to completing the goal. This study propose goal partition as a moderator between the relationship of regulatory foci and EOC. We argue that if the goal is partitioned into sub-goals, promotion-focused individuals will not escalate their commitment even when close to completing the goal. Across two studies, we did not find the proposed interaction effect, but found a main effect of goal partition in one of the studies. The reason for nonsignificant results and the implication of the study is discussed.