

2005

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## Recommended Citation

Kasi, Vijay, "The Performance Paradox: An Examination of Goal Setting and Escalation Theories" (2005). *AMCIS 2005 Proceedings*. 67.

<http://aisel.aisnet.org/amcis2005/67>

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# The Performance Paradox: An Examination of Goal Setting and Escalation Theories

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the phenomenon of escalation of commitment to a failing course of action in IT projects. The research in the domain of escalation has been to identify the antecedents to the escalation behavior that individuals are known to exhibit in escalation situations. The escalation theory advocates that when individual commit more resources (in terms of effort, time and money) in escalation situations deepens the already existing problems (more is not always better). On the other hand, we have goal setting theory which discusses a number of attributes and antecedents for individuals to increase their effort, direct their attention and persist their actions. Goal setting assumes that more effort is better and it would increase the task performance of an individual (more is better). In this research, web based role playing scenario with real IT project managers is expected to be used as the research methodology. This research is expected to contribute by integrating goal setting theory with escalation theory, which has never been done before. This research contributes to escalation by identifying antecedents and attributes of escalation of commitment based on goal setting and contributes to the goal setting theory by showing that under some contexts such as escalation situations, goal setting leads to undesired consequences.