

# Too Much of a Good Thing? Customer Participation and Supplier Commitment in a Project Business Context

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## **Abstract**

The issue of customer participation has gained increasing attention in recent years but its effects on relational outcomes have displayed mixed findings. Drawing on established literature, this research forwards a conceptual framework that relates customer participation to an important, and somewhat underexplored, outcome of the relationship between customers and their suppliers in a project marketing context, namely the commitment of the supplier to the customer in response to customer participation. We empirically test our theoretical contentions with a sample of 105 project managers in Austria and demonstrate that increasing customer participation adversely affects the supplier's affective and calculative commitment to the customer. Additionally, relationship performance significantly and positively moderates the negative effects of customer participation on calculative commitment. Our results have important implications for theory and practice.

**Keywords:** *Customer participation; Commitment; Relationship performance*

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