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Tilted Literature Review

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The Tilted Phenomenon

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Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to further investigate several aspects of the 'tilted'

phenomenon. The research collection will include multiple psychological functions that are in

conflict and how they relate to the definition of tilted. This includes how individual conflict

affects team performance, affect management in real-time, and strategies for managing emotions

under high-stress conditions. This literature review also identifies both individual strategies and

team strategies to bring an individual back from dysfunction. This research is to help provide

background data for affect management and how to optimize team outcomes in the context of

Esport teams specifically. The goals of this project are to bring forward data on how to help

Esports teams effectively manage their emotions while in high-stress situations.

Introduction

The phenomenon of becoming "tilted" originated in poker as a termto describe a state of frustration that affects the player's strategy skills and causes an exaggerated state of aggression. Today, players in the video gaming world of Esports (electronic sports) have adopted this term to fit their environment. Esports is defined as "a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams as well as the output of the eSports system are mediated by human-computer interfaces" (Ibrahim & Lewis, 2002). Esports players commonly use the term "tilted" to describe a negative emotional state that clouds an individual's judgment and causes that individual to continue to make mistakes in the game. The player's frustration continues to escalate, thus causing more mistakes to be made.

The state of being tilted can be used as a strategy against opponents; opposing teams try to cause this phenomenon in their competition as a strategy. It is important to understand how the conflict that an individual creates affects team performance and how conflict within a team affects team performance as well. It is also important to understand how to manage conflict in real-time. Once the conflict is understood, strategies need to be implemented to reduce conflict.

For example, group conflict management, such as how the group can help pull an individual out of a certain mind-state or dysfunction in order to continue effective teamwork, is important to maintaining a successful team. It is essential for a successful Esports team to be able to manage its emotions under high-stress conditions. For an Esports team to be as successful as possible, the team needs to have strategies in place to manage any dysfunction that it may encounter.

Review of Literature

Groupthink

It is well known that groupthink is highly influential on team decision making, but how influential is it really? And how does groupthink affect team performance? More importantly, how does groupthink relate to the tilted phenomenon? In order to understand this, one first has to understand what groupthink is.

Janis (1982) defines groupthink as the extreme concurrence sought by decision-making groups. Groupthink is most likely to happen when a group experiences con-ditions such as high cohesion, directive lead-ership, and high stress, low self-esteem and lack of solution-seeking or alternative solutions from other members of the group aside from the leader/other members with high influence.

Groupthink is more often than not a negative phenomenon. These conditions lead to symp-toms of groupthink such as falsely-perceived invulnerability and collec-tive rationalization (when a group comes to a final decision without heeding any warnings). Groupthink can also lead teams to the belief that the group is inherently moral, create pressure on non-conformers, and devise illusions that the group is unanimous at all times. Groupthink is known to result in poor-quality decisions and poor-quality decision-making.

In Turner et al.'s (1992), Experiment l showed that poor decision quality is associated with groupthink. By manipulating the variable of group cohesion and threat, itt affected the group member's self-esteem. By affecting self-esteem, decision quality decreased. This can be associated with the tilted factor. For example, when opponents target the self-esteem of other players, it is shown that this can affect the player's decision. Without a clear mind, good decisions are hard to come by.

Experiment 3 replicated results from Experiment 1 and Experiment 2. Experiment 3 provided support for a new perspective on groupthink called "social identity maintenance".

Social identity maintenance suggested that groups who were given an excuse to explain poor

decision making made significantly higher quality decisions. Groups who were not provided

with an excuse to explain their poor decision-making continued to possess poor decision

qualities. Groups will utilize an excuse as a means of protecting themselves from negative views.

In these experiments, a threat was a considerable variable. By introducing subjects to

high-threat conditions, the subjects said they reassessed the solutions that they had originally

rejected. The high-threat condition subjects reconsidered their solutions to a greater extent than

the subjects in the low-threat conditions. This being said, it is easy to conclude that a threat

perceived as more dangerous takes more of a toll on proper decision making. To Esport players,

learning to cope with threats is important when faced with making decisions, whether in a group

or individually.

On the other hand, having an excuse for poor performance or decision making, even with

threats present, provides groups with a strategy for maintaining cohesion. "The provision of an

excuse for potential poor performance was capable of overcom-ing the lower quality decisions

associated with groupthink ante-cedent conditions of threat and cohesion. This result may point

the way to other strategies for mitigating groupthink conse-quences-strategies that involve

divorcing the group's image from the threatening situation" (Turner et al. 1992). Utilizing this

strategy can provide Esport players with one coping mechanism towards threat in terms of

becoming tilted. Retaining cohesion and a positive team mentality supports good decision-

making.

Esport players become tilted when they feel threatened, frustrated, or when their self-

esteem is negatively impacted. Tilt can be triggered by an opponent from their own team or from

the opposing team. Relying on other team members to maintain group cohesion in times of high

threat may be beneficial to improving team performance, whether the threat comes from within or from the other team.

Intragroup Conflict

Wit et al. (2012) investigated the effects of intragroup conflict on group outcomes. A meta-analysis of 116 empirical studies was conducted regarding intragroup conflict and its relationship with group outcome, moderated with relationships between conflict, process conflict, and group outcomes. Negative relationships were found between relationship and process conflict and group outcomes, however, no strong negative relationship between task conflict and group performance was discovered. Paradoxically, task conflict and group performance were found to have a positive relationship in studies where the relationship between task and relationship conflict was weaker. Task conflict and group performance were also found to have a positive relationship in studies where performance was measured in terms of decision quality rather than overall performance.

Intragroup conflict is defined as "the process emerging from perceived incom-patibilities or differences among group members" (Wit et al., 2012). Intragroup conflict is a conflict that appears between group members, not between two different groups. Wit et al (2012) describe task conflicts as disagreements among group members about the content and outcomes of the task being performed. "Process conflicts" are disagreements between group members about the logistics of task accomplishment; these logistics may consist of the delegation of tasks or disbursement of responsibilities. Any conflict between group members is thought to be detrimental to performance; however, this is not always the case. For example, task-related conflicts can inspire innovativeness and improved decision making because "they prevent

premature consensus and stimulate more critical thinking" (Wit et al., 2012). On the contrary, there are negative effects on group outcomes when it relates to conflict and relationship conflict.

Previously, research has examined the effects of the three conflict types: task, relationship, and process, and the effects of the three types of intragroup conflict on group outcomes. There are two types of outcomes: distal group outcomes (group performance measured by outcomes such as innovation, productivity, and effectiveness) and proximal group outcomes (group emergent states and group viability: cognitive, motivational, and affective states). For the purpose of relating to Esports, proximal group outcomes will be highlighted.

Task conflict is known to have negative effects on proximal outcomes, such as satisfaction. This can be explained by the self-verification theory (Swann et al., 2004), which suggests that group members become dissatisfied when they in-terpret challenges of their viewpoints by other group members as a negative assessment of their own abilities and competencies. If these challenges are becoming tilted, it is easy to see how the player will negatively assess the player's own abilities and how that can affect performance. However, task conflicts often have been suggested to have the potential to benefit group outcomes by increasing understanding of the task, increasing understanding of other team member's ideas, increasing commitment, and increasing satisfaction within the group (Wit et al., 2012).

It is known that relationship conflict has a negative impact on group outcomes. Personal issues and a threat to the ego create conflict between group members. This can then create hostility, making it hard for groups to perform well. Hostility tends to lead to mistrust and weaken identity within groups. If tilt is coming from within the group, this can be detrimental to Esport's performance. "Relationship conflicts can harm group performance because they reduce collaborative problem-solving...group members spend time responding to non-task-related issues

could be spent more efficiently on task accomplishment" (Wit et al., 2012). Research suggests

that the negative effects of task conflicts can be reduced. When members employ effective

conflict management strat-egies or do not respond emotionally to relationship conflict, negative

effects can be reduced.

Process conflict negatively affects group outcomes because of the issues at the root of

process conflict problems. Failure to delegate tasks or assign roles can cause personal offense

within the group. Members may feel that their capabilities are being questioned or take problems

too personally. When conflict becomes too personal, it can have negative long-term effects on

the team. These conflicts can distract members from their goals, causing a downwards spiral into

persistent negative performance. However, there might be a light at the end of the tunnel.

According to Wit et al. (2012), "[it] might facilitate crucial reevaluations of processes,

stan-dards, and task and resource assignments, which may even im-prove group outcomes." New

research has started to look into moderating effects of process conflict and has found that the

negative effects of process conflict on more proximal group outcomes, such as trust or neg-ative

affect, can be reduced when members are able to resolve their process conflicts (Jehn et al.,

2008). Negative effects of process conflict can also be reduced when members per-ceive the

conflict as constructive towards improve-ments, rather than other members targeting them as

individuals. It is crucial for team members to support each other for optimal group outcomes.

Since tilt can originate within, group members need to devise ways of preventing it before it

happens. Tilt from within should be easier to avoid than tilt caused by another team. It is

counterproductive for teams to allow tilt to occur from within.

The findings from this meta-analysis suggest that intragroup conflict is not always a lost

cause for groups. Groups do better without relationship or process conflicts, but Wit et al. (2012)

found that task conflicts are not always negative occurrences for group out-comes. There are times when task conflict has a positive correlation to group performance. Task conflict tends to more positively relate to team performance when task conflict and relationship conflict are weakly correlated (Wit et al., 2012). Wit et al. (2012) concludes that when conflict occurs among higher ranking teams or teams with more authority (rather than teams at lower levels) and when performance is operationalized in terms of decision qual-ity (rather than overall performance), task conflict is more positively related to team performance. Esports can utilize this information in terms of the importance of team supports. If tilt is coming from within, the team may need to reevaluate their processes and standards to improve overall team performance.

Performance Strategies

Researchers in the Mathieu & Rapp (2009) study researched team charters and performance strategies and their influence on performance trajectories. The authors provide evidence that devoting time to laying a foundation for both teamwork and taskwork can improve team performance over time. These foundations included team charters and performance strategies. Teams with high-quality performance strategies performed better compared to teams with poorer quality strategies. The highest performing teams were groups that were high in both features of team charters and performance strategies.

"Although team designs may be well suited for dealing with the challenges associated with complex environments, they require additional skills and processes if they are to be effective organizational arrangements" (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). Individual talents do not always lead to optimal team performance. Sometimes, teams need more resources than what is innate to their team. Skills and strategies can be implemented towards challenges to optimize team

performance. Team members need to be able to work together as well as be efficient at their tasks. Team effectiveness is a process of duality on taskwork and teamwork. Taskwork represents what it is that teams are doing, whereas teamwork describes how they are doing it with each other (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001, p. 357). In Esports, the taskwork would be aspects of the game at hand, whereas the teamwork would be working together to accomplish the goal of winning.

For best outcomes, teams need an early establishment of teamwork and taskwork foundations. Although it is known that early foundations are successful, many teams neglect to do so. Teams jump directly into task performance without taking time to address how they will manage their teamwork and taskwork activities (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). The authors show that teams who produce high-quality teamwork (team charter) and taskwork (performance strategy) plans early in their team formation will have better performance trajectories.

Team charters are useful tools for new teams. Mathieu &Rapp (2009) defines them as "an agreement among members as to how the team will work as an empowered partnership in making binding decisions and sharing accountability for delivering quality products/services that meet user/customer needs in a timely and cost-efficient way." Team charters provide an outline for initial teamwork planning. They can be referred to for rules, norms, and expectations set for the team. Team charters can help to minimize dysfunctional processes or conflicts that the team may come across in the future. High-quality team charters are composed of guidelines which should provide benefits to the team that will minimize later team process losses and will translate into enhanced team performance (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). A consistent charter provides team members with a template for minimizing confusion by setting guidelines on how decisions will be made. Stability is key in maintaining a successful team.

In a team charter for an Esport team, strategies for remaining composure during tilt-inducing situations could be beneficial to team performance. By defining coping strategies from the beginning, team members would then have a tool already set in place to maintain a stable mood. Team charters help teams foster an environment of stability. By providing members with a pre-determined guideline concerning issues as team objectives, team member roles and responsibilities, and how decisions will be made as the team goes about accomplishing its work (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009), a team will be able to function to the best of its ability. When a team has a plan set in place, it allows members to focus their attention on more important issues that they have to encounter.

Teams who develop taskwork plans tend to outperform teams who do not have taskwork plans (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). They provide already agreed-upon strategies and tactics for completing taskwork activities. Taskwork plans provide initial structured transition processes and discourage reactive strategy adjustments. Teams want to avoid reactive strategy adjustments because they are "spontaneous and instantaneous" planning that is seen while teams are performing the task (Marks et al., 2001). Deliberate plans, rather than spontaneous planning, produce better outcomes on team performance. To be beneficial to teams, deliberate task planning is established before the team is actively engaged in their taskwork, which is known as performance strategies. In experiments, teams who developed high-quality performance strategies outperformed teams who failed to develop adequate performance strategies (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009).

Mathieu & Rapp (2009), note that "crafting high-quality performance strategies that thoroughly and consistently outline performance objectives and tactics, as well as likely environmental contingencies and alternative courses of action, should help the teams execute and

coordinate their taskwork activities more effectively." Teams that fail to make these plans may

not perform as well because they are taking time out of their activity to make decisions that other

teams have predetermined; teams who do not utilize performance strategies can easily fall

behind. Managing time well, especially in Esports teams, is a crucial factor to success. Due to the

fact that situations can often be unforeseen, formal performance strategies are valuable tools

because they provide a framework for the execution and adjustment of more dynamic tactical

plans in response to changes (Mathieu & Rapp, 2009). Esports teams who make performance

strategy plans may be able to avoid tilt in certain situations by making plans for how, when, and

where tilt may occur; teams may be able to use these plans as a tool to avoid tilt. For example, if

a team knows that members may become tilted under certain conditions, it will be able to see the

red flags beforehand. By being aware of the situation, teams have the option of maneuvering

around tilt because they have the ability to see it coming.

     Optimal team performance outcomes occur when teamwork and taskwork coexist and

operate together. The authors of Mathieu & Rapp (2009) point out that it is not enough to have

good teamwork in the absence of effective performance strategies and it is also not enough to

have well-developed strategies accompanied by teamwork processes that were poorly planned.

Teams need to be able to manage conflict and affect and have goals and strategies set

simultaneously. Teams with both high-quality teamwork and taskwork have greater performance

outcomes.

Conclusion

The ability to manage emotions effectively is an important factor in an Esports team's success. Understanding individual and team conflict, affect management, and strategies for managing emotions under high-stress conditions are crucial aspects of battling tilt. By providing background data for affect management and how to optimize team outcomes in the context of action teams, Esport teams and researchers can utilize this information to their benefit.

In the past few years, Esports and video game streaming have become fast-emerging forms of media on the internet. Driven by the growing presence of gaming online, broadcasting and streaming technologies have allowed Esports to flourish. Today, hundreds of millions of people spectate Esports (Ibrahim & Lewis, 2002). While there have been countless studies on physical sports, there is little research done regarding electronic sports. Currently, viewership and revenue in Esports is thriving. As a vital component to our online world, Esports requires new research to continue to grow and for new online gaming opportunities to arise.

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