

How Can Teams Improve Attention Allocation: The Role of a Growth Mindsets

Siyu He*, Xufan Zhang

Nanjing Normal University, Ginling College, Nanjing 210097, China.

Abstract: In the high uncertainty of the internal and external environment of the organization, the team growth mindsets helps the team to achieve better survival. Research has shown that growth mindset affects information search. Therefore, from the perspective of cognitive implicit theory and "attention based view", this study explores the influence of team growth mindsets on team attention span and depth through literature research. It is found that team growth mindsets has a positive effect on attention breadth and depth. At the same time, combined with the case study, this study further shows that only when attention breadth and depth coexist, can the success of organizational goals be achieved. In conclusion, this study explores the influence of team growth mindsets on attention allocation, enriches the research results of cognitive implicit theory, and reveals the complex relationship between attention breadth and depth as well as the balancing strategy.

Keywords: Team Growth mindsets; Allocation of Attention; Cognitive Implicit Theory; Attention Based View

1. Introduction

As the core of a team's system for creating meaning in the world, mindsets is an antecedent mechanism that produces important psychological consequences. It can affect many things, such as information search, emotions and behaviors. A shared growth mindset in a team can not only shape an extended and open team atmosphere, but also significantly influence team members' perceptions of their internal tendencies and potential. The extent to which team members' behaviors can be stimulated depends on whether the team can provide an adaptive environment for them. As an important concept in the cognitive implicit theory, team growth mindsets is an important factor to stimulate various tendencies or behaviors in the team.

It has been suggested that combining the attention based view with the existing view of cognition can better explain the shaping process of organizational behavior. Under the condition of bounded rationality and resource constraint, attention is regarded as a scarce resource, and the team's attention input often affects the quality of decision. The relatively systematic basic view of attention proposed by Ocasio embodies the principles of focus of attention, situational attention and structured allocation. Based on the above principles, Osicao (1997) constructed the basic paradigm of "organizational context-allocation of attention - decision-making behavior". Therefore, this study will explore the influence of organizational context -- team growth mindset -- on team attention allocation.

2. The positive effect of team growth mindsets on attention

Attention allocation is affected by the combination of individual, team, organization and environment. Therefore, the attention allocation of a team may be affected by the team atmosphere. This study believes that the team growth mindsets can affect the attention breadth and depth of the team.

As a cognitive process, attention allocation consists of two interrelated processes: breadth and depth. The former refers to the extent of collecting novel information, which reflects the degree of allocating cognitive ability to pay attention to unfamiliar fields and distant forms of information, while the latter refers to the degree of effort and persistence in the process of knowledge search, which represents the cognitive ability of paying attention to, understanding and mastering information.

2.1 Team growth mindsets and attention breadth

The team growth mindsets enables the team to maintain a more positive working attitude, work harder and meet challenges, which is beneficial to guide the team to expand their attention to a broader field, and at the same time expand their attention scope to acquire more extensive knowledge and information. In this proactive and intentional search, the team keeps an open mind to the information, and they overcome the limitations of their limited resources by spreading their attention across a wide range of areas to find unattended sources of knowledge. When the attention breadth is expanded, the team is able to absorb more heterogeneous knowledge, which helps update the team's knowledge base.

2.2 Team growth mindsets and attention depth

A team growth mindset helps expand the depth of focus. First, teams with a growth mindset believe that their skills and abilities can be honed and developed in difficult situations, so they are willing to encourage team members to pursue deeper learning goals in the process of taking risks and participating in challenging tasks. Secondly, team members with a growth mindset will identify with and show more growth thinking beliefs. They tend to show stronger resilience and more positive self-cognition in the face of challenges and setbacks. They also show learning-oriented strategies in their actions and carry out targeted in-depth search to obtain the information capital needed for work.

3. The balance strategy of attention breadth and depth

When the attention breadth extends beyond a certain point, it can have a negative effect. When they collect more information than they can handle with too much attention, the cost of integration exceeds the benefits brought by the breadth of search, which not only fails to realize the depth of knowledge transfer required for work, but also leads to insufficient concentration and understanding of effective information, resulting in "knowledge load". Therefore, the selection of team information search strategy, that is, the configuration of attention breadth and depth will have an important impact on team behavior.

3.1 "Tilting the scales" -- high attention breadth with insufficient depth

When teams achieve continuous improvement in attention breadth, but the depth of attention is not enough to match it, they will often fail due to the negative impact brought by the wide attention breadth. Hwang et al. (2010) took the information and communication technology (ICT) industry in South Korea as a sample and found that enterprises are easy to access external knowledge sources, but not easy to achieve breakthrough technological progress in knowledge acquisition. Especially when approaching the inner limit of knowledge trajectory, the subsequent work returns gradually decreasing. Every time a team contacts a kind of external technical resource, it will be constantly exposed to existing knowledge in similar fields. Once the search process deviates from the track of meta-problems and continues to bear the pressure of cognitive overload brought by the combination of unfamiliar information, it will not be able to exhaust all possibilities to form the optimal solution, which makes the solution become an urgent problem to be solved. Teams are also increasingly searching in familiar technical areas. In order to maintain the status quo, team members may try to hide problems associated with traditionally used methods, creating a technical inertial trajectory that prevents goals from being achieved. In 2021, Evergrande Group aims to complete the industrial transformation from real estate to new energy vehicles within 10 years. Evergrande's share price, which had climbed all the way to HK \$69, is now down to about HK \$3.50. In the new-energy vehicle market, Evergrande's lingering "real estate" label has become an example of the team's failure to enter unfamiliar areas.

3.2 "Two swords together" -- the appropriate match between attention breadth and depth

The team's chances of achieving its goals will increase as it continues to expand its attention breadth and constantly seek out information relevant to these issues. A higher depth of attention prevents a team gathering diverse information from becoming a mere "reservoir" of new knowledge and information, unable to transfer knowledge to new application scenarios to achieve successful goals. Centering on the platform of technology innovation product management of Xiaomi Technology, Xiaomi Ecological Chain established in 2015 has completed the investment of 60 entrepreneurial teams within two years, far exceeding the common success rate of venture

capital institutions. Huami, which created the popular Mi Band by Xiaomi, has its own brand AMAZFIT, and Zimi, which created the popular mobile power supply, also has a large number of its own accessories. While adhering to the attention breadth of diversity, Xiaomi ecosystem persistently focuses on the operation mode of "high-quality, efficient and low-profit", establishing the incomparable appeal of this IP.

4. Summary

Based on the implicit theory of cognition and the attention based view, Research shows that team growth mindsets is conducive to the improvement of team attention breadth and attention depth, while too wide attention breadth increases cognitive load. Therefore, in addition to the improvement of attention breadth, it is necessary to increase the investment in the depth of attention, so as to facilitate the successful realization of the goals of the team and organization.

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