



Research Paper

The critical evaluation of theory X and theory Y and its application in Personal and professional perspective

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Abstract

Two sets of presumptions about human nature and behavior that are pertinent to management practice are reflected in Theory X and Theory Y. According to Theory X, which is a pessimistic view of human nature, most individuals are lazy, irresponsible, and in need of continual supervision in order to do their tasks. Theory Y is a positive interpretation of human nature that operates under the supposition that most individuals are creative, resourceful, capable of accepting responsibility, and able to work with self-control. Douglas McGregor offered two conflicting views of human motivation and management in his book, and it makes sense that managers with beliefs about human nature linked with Theory X would have a completely different managing style than those with beliefs connected with Theory Y.

Received 03 Feb., 2024; Revised 11 Feb., 2024; Accepted 13 Feb., 2024 © The author(s) 2024.

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I. Introduction

Two theories based on notions about human behavior were developed in 1960 by Douglas McGregor, a management professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His book, "The Human Side of Enterprise," contained these theories. According to McGregor, there are some presumptions about human nature that must be acknowledged when discussing how to motivate others. He distinguished between two aspects of human behavior that occur in the workplace: Theory X, which is a negative perspective, and Theory Y, which is a positive outlook.

II. Review of Literature

For many years, academic debate and real-world applications in the fields of management and organizational behavior have been shaped by McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. These theories were first presented by McGregor in his 1960 book "The Human Side of Enterprise," which offered opposing perspectives on employee motivation and human nature.

A negative interpretation of human nature is presented by Theory X, which contends that people are naturally lazy, reject taking on responsibility, lack ambition, and need constant monitoring and control. This viewpoint is consistent with the conventional, hierarchical management techniques that were popular in McGregor's period. The effects of Theory X presumptions on corporate culture, leadership philosophies, and worker morale have been the subject of several research. Scholars have examined the ways in which Theory X presumptions may be linked to low performance, resistance to change, and demotivation inside companies.

Though it suggests that people are naturally driven, imaginative, and capable of self-direction, Theory Y offers a positive interpretation of human behavior. Theory Y states that people look for possibilities for personal growth and development at work and that work can be meaningful. The effects of Theory Y assumptions on employee engagement, leadership, and organizational design have been well researched. Studies have indicated that in order to fully utilize the potential of Theory Y presumptions, supportive work environments, democratic decision-making procedures, and empowering leadership styles are crucial.

The applicability of McGregor's theories in a range of organizational contexts including startups, multinational enterprises, and public sector organizations has been studied in the literature. The interaction between Theory X and Theory Y assumptions has been studied by academics, who have emphasized the necessity for managers to take a balanced approach based on situational considerations and individual characteristics. Furthermore, scholars have examined the influence of cultural variances on the relevance of Theory X and Theory Y presumptions in various nations and areas.

Moreover, McGregor's views have been incorporated into more comprehensive frameworks like transformational leadership, servant leadership, and humanistic management by modern viewpoints on organizational behavior and leadership. The subtleties of Theory X and Theory Y are still being studied by academics in light of changing workplace trends including remote employment, flexible scheduling, and the gig economy.

All things considered, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y have had a significant impact on our knowledge of human motivation and management techniques, igniting a continuing body of scholarly discussion and practical implementations in businesses all over the world.

III. Objective

1. To critically evaluate the theory X and theory Y
2. To examine how it can be used in real-life scenarios
3. To examine how managerial functions impact the theory
4. To assess objectively the theory's advantages and disadvantages
5. To know its impact in Indian context

IV. Research Methodology

The sole secondary sources employed for the aforementioned study. This research is based on the other research publications.

1. Evolution of theory

The foundation for The Evolution of Theory X and Theory Y was McGregor's view of management, which went beyond merely enforcing rules and compelling workers to come to work. According to McGregor, the requirements of an organization and its employees must be equally balanced (Bobic and Davis). McGregor integrated the hierarchy of needs proposed by psychologist Abraham Maslow into his management ideas in an attempt to achieve this equilibrium between the individual and the organization. 1. Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of requirements arranged the five fundamental wants that, in his view, drive behavior: self-actualization, esteem, belonging, safety, and physiological needs (Waddell, Jones, and George). McGregor divided Maslow's five basic needs into "high" and "low" order needs, with the "high" order needs including the Belonging, Esteem, and Self-Actualization needs and the "low" order needs including the Physiological and the Security needs (Kermally). This division served as the foundation for his Theory X and Theory Y assumptions. By doing this, McGregor was able to see that motivation was essential for managing people and incorporated it into his organizational goals for Theory X and Theory Y. Thus, the fundamental tenet of Theory Y is that people actively seek out employment and that the mental and physical labor required for it is natural. Furthermore, it makes the assumption that there are other effective ways to motivate staff to put in productive effort besides strict control and the threat of punishment. Instead, when given the chance, workers will demonstrate a strong sense of self-motivation to make the sacrifices required to meet the organization's objectives. Therefore, avoiding responsibility is not a natural trait of people; given the right circumstances, people would actively seek it out. The premise of Theory Y is that a broad, as opposed to a limited, population possesses the capacity for creativity and innovation. Lastly, it makes the assumption that people seek incentives that fulfill their requirements for self-actualization and self-esteem rather than placing a higher value on security than any other benefit related to their profession. McGregor believed that Theory Y assumptions would result in more successful management, even though he did not think it was possible to construct a fully Theory Y-type organization in the 1950s. He determined a number of management strategies that, in his opinion, adhered to the principles of Theory Y. These included job expansion, delegation, decentralization of decision-making authority, and participative management. Programs for job enrichment that were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s also aligned with the tenets of Theory Y. McGregor's formulation of Theory X and Theory Y served as a foundation for numerous conversations about worker motivation, employee involvement, and management style during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. However, there was conflicting empirical evidence about the viability of Theory X and Theory Y. Certain authors have proposed that during difficult economic circumstances, companies employing Theory Y have a tendency to fall back on Theory X. Others contended that each managerial situation's unique circumstances dictated which technique was more suitable, and that Theory Y was not always superior to Theory X. Others still proposed expanding on Theory Y. .. William Ouchi's Theory Z was an attempt to blend Japanese management theories with the advantages of American management concepts based on Theory Y. McGregor was one of several prominent humanist writers of the mid-20th century who, along with authors like Argyris and Likert, contended that conventional organizational hierarchies foster a dependent relationship between subordinates and their managers and acted as a link between the human relations school and a new organizational humanism grounded in Theory Y.

From Douglas McGregor's original idea of Theory X and Theory Y to their later development, implementation, and integration into more comprehensive management theories, there are several stages in the growth of these theories. This is a thorough development of these theories:

I. First published in 1960's "The Human Side of Enterprise":

In 1960, Douglas McGregor's seminal book "The Human Side of Enterprise" introduced readers to both Theory X and Theory Y for the first time. These theories were put forth by McGregor as opposing viewpoints on motivation and human nature in the workplace. A negative viewpoint was presented by Theory X, which claimed that workers are naturally sluggish, shirk responsibilities, and need close supervision. On the other hand, Theory Y put out the positive theory that workers are naturally driven, imaginative, and capable of taking initiative.

II. First Reception and Critique:

When McGregor's views were first presented, they attracted a lot of attention and generated a lot of controversy among management and organizational behavior experts. Although some academics praised Theory X and Theory Y as useful frameworks for comprehending how people behave in companies, others criticized them for ignoring contextual elements and oversimplifying intricate psychological dynamics.

III. Research Empirical and Validation:

After the release of McGregor's book, scientists started carrying out empirical investigations to verify the accuracy and suitability of the presumptions of Theory X and Theory Y in actual organizational contexts. Early studies tried to find relationships between management strategies that supported either Theory X or Theory Y and the attitudes, motivation, and output of their workforce. Initial empirical evidence supported the applicability of McGregor's theories, although with careful readings and considerations of context.

IV. Incorporation into Supervisory Procedures:

Theory X and Theory Y had considerable impact on management methods in a number of industries during the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the US and Western Europe. Based on the tenets of Theory X or Theory Y, organizations experimented with various leadership philosophies, performance management schemes, and employee engagement campaigns. Using McGregor's theories as a guide, managers aimed to improve organizational effectiveness, job satisfaction, and employee motivation.

V. Critique and Revision:

McGregor's beliefs were questioned and revised when fresh research was conducted and management theories developed. McGregor's binary classification of human behavior was criticized by academics, who also underlined the necessity for more complex models that take individual differences and a wider range of motivational factors into account. Furthermore, critics contended that McGregor oversimplified the nuances of organizational dynamics and human motivation by portraying Theory X as fundamentally negative and Theory Y as generally beneficial.

VI. Integration into Modern Management Theories:

In spite of criticisms, modern management theories and practices have incorporated the fundamental ideas of Theory X and Theory Y. Models like self-determination theory, servant leadership, and transformational leadership contain aspects of McGregor's theories. While acknowledging the timeless value of McGregor's observations, modern academics push for a more comprehensive understanding of human motivation that takes individual characteristics, organizational circumstances, and cultural influences into account.

VII. Global Impact and Cultural Adjustment:

McGregor's theories have been extensively explored and modified in a variety of cultural settings worldwide. Researchers and professionals have looked into how historical legacies, society norms, and cultural values affect where Theory X and Theory Y assumptions can be applied. Cross-cultural studies have brought to light differences in employee preferences, organizational procedures, and leadership styles, casting doubt on McGregor's theory of universal management principles.

To sum up, the development of Theory X and Theory Y in the field of management and organizational behavior is a result of a dynamic interaction between conceptual development, empirical study, practical application, and continual critique. Although McGregor's theories have influenced management thought for many years, researchers are still working to improve and modify them in order to better address the complex issues facing modern organizations.

**2. Assumption of the theory:
Theory X:**

a. Dislike for Work: According to Theory X, most people are naturally against work and will do everything in their power to avoid it. This assumption holds that work is not seen as intrinsically joyful or gratifying, but rather as a necessary means to an end.

b. Avoidance of Responsibility: According to Theory X, people would much rather be led by others and are inherently opposed to accepting responsibility. This presumption suggests that people will rather abdicate responsibility to authority figures than take ownership of their actions and decisions.

c. Need for Direction and Control: According to Theory X, people need to be closely monitored and in charge when they work. Under the Theory X assumption, managers think that in order to keep staff members productive and in line with company goals, they need to exercise tight supervision and micromanagement.

d. Lack of Ambition: The average individual, according to Theory X, lacks ambition and does not actively look for opportunities to advance personally or professionally. People are thought to be more driven by external incentives like money benefits or job stability than by internal ones like personal growth or job pleasure.

e. Resistance to Change: According to Theory X, people are naturally opposed to innovation and change. Workers are thought to favor consistency and predictability in their workplace and are hesitant to adopt novel concepts or methods that depart from accepted practices.

Theory Y:

a. Intrinsic Motivation: According to Theory Y, people are naturally driven and find fulfillment in their work. This presumption holds that people are inherently inclined to look for challenges, partake in worthwhile endeavors, and pursue personal development at work.

b. Capacity for Responsibility: According to Theory Y, people are capable of exercising self-control and self-direction. Workers are seen as capable of taking accountability for their deeds and choices, and instead of depending on orders from above, they choose autonomy and empowerment in their jobs.

c. Creative Potential: Theory Y recognizes people's capacity for original thought and their capacity to offer creative solutions and ideas to the workplace. Workers are viewed as important providers of originality and wisdom, able to contribute significantly to company objectives with their special skills and viewpoints.

d. Intrinsic Satisfaction: Theory Y holds that people are satisfied with their jobs because they offer them opportunities for fulfillment, success, and personal development. Beyond monetary compensation, employees are motivated by a sense of fulfillment and purpose that comes from their contributions to worthwhile work.

e. Growth Orientation and Adaptability: Theory Y makes the assumption that people are flexible and receptive to change. In order to fulfill changing organizational needs, employees are seen as being open to new ideas, willing to take on challenges, and continuously improving their skills and capacities.

These specific tenets of Theory X and Theory Y offer a thorough comprehension of the divergent perspectives Douglas McGregor put out regarding human nature and motivation in the workplace. These presumptions have a significant impact on corporate culture, leadership philosophies, and management techniques, which in turn affect how managers view and relate to their workforce.

3. Theory X and Theory Y's implications from an organizational standpoint:

Culture of Organization:

Theory X: Employers that use a Theory X approach could encourage a culture of control in which personnel are managed by stringent policies and procedures. A culture that is autocratic and hierarchical with little interaction and cooperation may result from this. **Theory Y:** Organizations that adhere to Theory Y, on the other hand, frequently foster a climate of empowerment and trust. Participation in decision-making is encouraged among employees, which promotes an open and inclusive workplace culture.

Employee Morale and Satisfaction:

Theory X: Morale and job satisfaction may be lower in Theory X organizations since workers there are subject to strict monitoring and control. Employee turnover rates may increase if they feel underappreciated and disengaged. –

Theory Y: In contrast, Theory Y firms place a high value on employee involvement, growth, and recognition. Employee dedication, morale, and job satisfaction may all increase as a result.

Style of Leadership:

Theory X: Authoritarian and directive leadership styles are more common in Theory X organizations. Supervisors have the tendency to micromanage staff members and make decisions with little team input.

Theory Y: Theory Y groups encourage a leadership style that is more encouraging and participatory. By serving as mentors and facilitators, managers enable staff members to accept responsibility for their work and participate in decision-making.

Employee Motivation and Productivity:

Theory X: Organizations that follow this theory tend to have extrinsic motivation, which is fueled by rewards and penalties. A culture of compliance rather than intrinsic motivation may result from this. -

Theory Y: Theory Y companies emphasize autonomy, mastery, and purpose in addition to other aspects of intrinsic motivation. The chance to advance, learn new skills, and make a significant contribution to the company inspires workers, which boosts output.

Creativity & Innovation:

Theory X: Rigid frameworks and few opportunities for staff members to submit ideas are two ways in which organizations that adhere to Theory X principles may impede innovation and creativity.

Theory Y: Theory Y businesses foster creativity and innovation by giving staff members the freedom to try new things, take calculated chances, and make suggestions in a safe and encouraging atmosphere.

4. Criticism of theory X:

Negative View of Human Nature: Theory X assumes that people are naturally lazy and must be forced to work, which is a negative view of human nature. This point of view ignores the possibility of personal fulfillment and intrinsic motivation at work.

Authoritarian Leadership Style: Theory X advocates for a micromanaging, control-oriented authoritarian leadership style. This strategy may inhibit workers' autonomy, creativity, and job happiness, which could result in disengagement and lower output.

Limited growth for staff members: Theory X misses possibilities for employees to grow and develop because it assumes that workers are not driven and ambitious. This may lead to a corporate culture that is stagnant and offers little chances for progress and innovation.

Us vs. Them Mentality: Theory X upholds a hierarchical "us vs. them" mentality in which managers are viewed as enforcers and employees as insignificant parts of the company. This may lead to a hostile workplace with little trust and collaboration.

Opposition to Change: Theory X management may encounter opposition from staff members who believe they are underappreciated and powerless. This reluctance might impede the flexibility and agility of an organization in a constantly changing business environment.

5. Criticism of Theory Y:

Idealistic Presumptions: Theory Y has come under fire for its utopian conceptions of human nature, which hold that everyone is naturally driven, imaginative, and accountable. The varied motives and actions of workers in actual organizations could not be well reflected by this viewpoint.

Limited Applicability: Not all organizational contexts will benefit from the application of Theory Y, especially in those that involve repetitive work, tight safety standards, or industry-specific restrictions. In certain situations, a more directive management style could be required for optimal operational effectiveness.

Potential of Exploitation: In companies purporting to follow Theory Y, there is a chance of exploitation if supervisors utilize the language of engagement and empowerment to coerce workers into doing more work in exchange for inadequate assistance or acknowledgment.

The excessive emphasis on Soft Skills: Theory Y emphasizes soft skills like empowerment, trust, and teamwork too much, often to the detriment of task-oriented abilities and performance indicators as crucial to accomplishing organizational objectives.

Difficulty of Application: Organizations must undergo substantial structural and cultural changes in order to implement Theory Y ideas. These changes include adjustments to performance evaluation procedures,

communication styles, and leadership philosophies. Due to ingrained organizational traditions and practices, this complexity may present difficulties and resistance.

In summary, even if Theory X and Theory Y have advanced our knowledge of leadership and management, they are not without drawbacks and criticisms. Although both theories provide insightful information, it is important to assess them critically and modify them to fit the unique requirements and dynamics of different organizations and situations.

6. Using Theory X in Practice:

Self-control and Mission situation: Using Theory X ideas in a personal situation may entail establishing specific objectives and holding oneself responsible for achieving them. This can entail setting up timetables, due dates, and goals to guarantee efficiency and advancement toward individual goals.

Time Administration: By establishing deadlines, following to timetables, and prioritizing activities, Theory X principles can be applied to personal time management. This method aids people in maintaining discipline and attention while efficiently managing their time.

The adoption of a Theory X: attitude in personal development entails acknowledging the significance of ongoing education and skill enhancement. To improve knowledge and skills, this can entail going back to school, taking workshops, or studying on your own.

Fitness and Wellbeing: By following rigorous routines and discipline in areas like exercise, nutrition, and sleep, Theory X principles can be applied to one's own personal health and wellness. This cover creating healthy sleep patterns, meal planning, and physical activity goals.

Economic Leadership: Putting Theory X to use in personal finance entails establishing and maintaining stringent spending plans, savings objectives, and financial objectives. This calls for self-control in budgeting, abstaining from wasteful expenditure, and placing long-term financial security first.

7. Using theory Y in Practice:

Awareness of oneself and Individual Improvement: By acknowledging their strengths, shortcomings, and places for improvement, people are encouraged to embrace self-awareness and personal growth by adhering to Theory Y ideals. This calls for intentional self-improvement and ongoing education.

Empowering and the concept of autonomy: Developing a Theory Y perspective in one's own life entails giving oneself the authority to accept responsibility for one's choices, actions, and life decisions. In order to achieve one's own objectives and dreams, one must embrace autonomy and self-direction.

conversations and Interaction: The tenets of Theory Y place a strong emphasis on open communication, cooperation, and trust in interpersonal interactions. In relationships with family, friends, and coworkers, this entails active listening, empathy, and mutual respect.

Inventiveness and Ingenuity: Applying Theory Y to one's own life promotes innovation, creativity, and the pursuit of novel concepts and encounters. This entails moving outside one's comfort zone, taking measured chances, and welcoming exploration and inquiry.

Job and Life Balance: The tenets of Theory Y encourage a wholistic way of living, placing special emphasis on the necessity of sustaining a positive work-life balance. This entails setting aside time for relationships, leisure pursuits, and personal health in addition to work obligations.

To attain personal growth, fulfillment, and well-being, applying the ideas of Theory X and Theory Y to one's own life ultimately entails striking a balance between structure and flexibility, discipline and empowerment. People can use the insights provided by both theories to successfully manage different facets of their daily lives.

8. The Indian Perspective of Theory X and Theory Y

Research findings become invaluable when we can discern their application within the framework of our everyday lives. In the context of Indian households, Theory X and Theory Y present themselves as distinct phenomena, often observed as "**Mumma's Theory**" and "**Papa's Theory**" respectively. This paper endeavors to unravel these theories within the Indian household context.

Examining **Theory X, or "Mumma's Theory,"** reveals parallels with certain behaviors exhibited by mothers in household settings. Notably, upon the arrival of household help, mothers often become highly involved, closely monitoring and directing their actions. Attempts to suggest alternative approaches, rooted in positive motivation and trust in the household help, are met with resistance. However, in instances where mothers are absent and reliance on the household help becomes necessary, theories of motivation and humanistic management strategies are employed. Despite these efforts, discrepancies between expected outcomes and actual results arise, challenging the efficacy of humanistic approaches. This underscores the notion that individuals with certain personality traits, such as many household helpers, may necessitate more directive management styles akin to Theory X principles.

Conversely, **Theory Y, or "Papa's Theory,"** resonates with the supportive and encouraging demeanor often associated with fathers in Indian households. Drawing from childhood experiences, the process of learning to ride a bicycle under paternal guidance exemplifies this theory. Fathers typically provide unwavering support, instilling confidence and motivation through their words and actions. This nurturing environment fosters self-belief and determination in the learner, facilitating skill development and success. The absence of direct intervention from the father during critical moments of learning serves as a testament to the efficacy of motivational factors in Theory Y.

In summary, the correlation between Theory X and Theory Y can be observed within the fabric of daily life in Indian households. These theories offer valuable insights into management approaches, particularly concerning motivational strategies and leadership styles, as evidenced by the distinct roles assumed by mothers and fathers in familial settings.

VIII. Conclusion:

With differing viewpoints on human nature and management techniques, Theory X and Theory Y both have unique consequences for organizational dynamics and leadership. Here is a thorough summary that emphasizes the main ideas:

Hypothesis X:

The traditional and more authoritarian management style known as Theory X is predicated on the idea that workers are naturally sluggish, unambitious, and in need of rigorous guidance and control in order to accomplish company objectives. Theory X-aligned managers typically take on a directive leadership style, closely supervising and controlling the work of their subordinates. An organizational structure that is hierarchical and offers little room for individual autonomy, innovation, or personal growth may result from this strategy. Though Theory X can lead to low staff morale, disengagement, and resistance to change, it can also be useful in circumstances that call for strict oversight and established procedures. Overall, Theory X emphasizes extrinsic motivators like incentives and punishments over internal motivation, reflecting a skeptical and gloomy view of human nature.

Hypothesis Y:

Based on the premise that workers are naturally driven, imaginative, and accountable, Theory Y offers a more progressive and humane approach to management. Theory Y-aligned managers support employee autonomy and trust so they may own their job, take initiative, and contribute to the objectives of the company. This strategy encourages managers to take on the role as mentors and facilitators rather than as strict bosses, encouraging a participative leadership style. Open communication, teamwork, and employee growth are valued in a collaborative and inclusive business culture that is promoted by Theory Y. Theory Y can result in increased levels of job satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational success by creating a supportive work environment that prioritizes intrinsic motivators like autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Higher levels of work satisfaction, employee engagement, and organizational success can result from implementing Theory Y. All

things considered, Theory Y presents a more upbeat and humane understanding of human nature, acknowledging the possibility of innovation, development, and fulfillment in the job.

In summary, Theory X and Theory Y are two opposing management philosophies that are based on various presumptions about human nature and workplace conduct. Theory Y encourages empowerment, trust, and intrinsic motivation, whereas Theory X places more emphasis on control, compliance, and extrinsic motivation. The implementation of these theories relies on a number of variables, including organizational context, industry dynamics, and leadership preferences. These theories have consequences for corporate culture, leadership style, and employee engagement. Although Theory X might be appropriate in some circumstances that call for stringent supervision and uniform procedures, Theory Y provides a more comprehensive and human-centered method of management that encourages worker innovation, independence, and personal satisfaction. The decision between Theory X and Theory Y ultimately comes down to the objectives, values, and organizational culture of any particular firm.

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