

Mcgregors theories x and y

Science



Compare McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y style of leadership and consider the types of organizations in which each style of leadership might be most appropriate. Douglas McGregor devised his concept of Theory X and Theory Y in the USA in the 1950's using a survey of managers, which he then proposed in his book, 'The Human Side of Enterprise' in the 1960's. Theory X states that a manager distrusts his subordinates, believes they don't enjoy work and therefore must be controlled.

Theory Y, on the other hand, speculates that a manager believes their employees enjoy work and wish to contribute, the manager is therefore more likely to include them in the decision making process and employ a more democratic style of leadership (Marcousse 2003). The two theories are not opposite ends of one spectrum, but rather two separate lines of continuum that describes the attitude and perception a manager has of their employees. The type of motivation that the employees receive from their manager is down to their management style.

These Theories match up with Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'. McGregor makes the point that the way in which a manager runs and controls his team has massive impacts on the happiness in employees, relating to esteem and self actualisation. These are two factors of motivation mentioned by Maslow in his theory. In comparing these two theories, X and Y, we must take into account different factors that may affect the two ideas and how they may do so in different scenarios or places of work.

The general idea is that Theory Y is the path of the "enlightened manager" (Chapman 1995) who runs a democratic form of leadership, and that it receives better results than theory X, whose manager employs more of an

autocratic dictatorship. However this cannot always be believed. In different cases a manager may do better in his work to tell employees the best and most effective way to complete a task, knowing through experience. FW Taylor (1856-1917) believed in efficiency and complete control of a task provided to the manager.

This idea related to such methods as the assembly line, a process broken down into simple tasks and completed individually by a group of workers along a line. Employed by such companies as Ford in the early 1900's, in producing cars, this method gave great results, however keeping workers motivated was difficult, part of Taylor's method was to "devise a pay scheme to reward those who complete or beat tough output targets, but penalize those who cannot, or will not, achieve the productivity Taylor believed was possible. (pg 218) For the manager, Theory X is a self-fulfilling method, the workers are likely to develop a lack in interest in their work and do it solely for the wage (Marcousse 2003). There are two scenarios in which Theory X can escape a degree of criticism for producing a lack of motivation from its workers(Marcousse 2003). The part time worker has partially already given in to the idea that they will not be receiving much independence and delegation of responsibility.

This is due to the amount of time they have committed to their work. For example, a part time security guard might be asked to stand guard on a gate for an hour every morning to let personnel through, however once they have completed this task they are unlikely to achieve much more than changing the channel on their TV. The job simply requires a pair of eyes at one point in the morning, and the rest of the time they are simply on call.

There is no enjoyment or form of learning with this job; the part time worker is simply there to take home some money at the end of the month, satisfying his basic needs for financial security, a mutual understanding between employer and employee. A large majority of the time there is little for the security guard to watch over. When something does arise that requires more attention, someone of higher authority is only a phone call away.

In this, theory X is the logical management style, as to use theory Y would mean a greater chance of mistakes being made by someone who doesn't have the same experience and qualifications as the elected official. The other scenario is in a moment of chaos (Marcousse 2003). At this point, due to the limited time scale in such moments, someone needs to take full control and make quick decisive decisions. Such a case is easily understood when put into the confines of an army unit under fire.

Someone must give direct orders to keep the enemy under pressure and move their men to safety, or face either death or capture. Theory Y would consume too much time to listen to all possible ideas and make a decision, with young men who have been trained to take orders rather than come up with them. Efficiency is the key in this scenario, Taylor would be completely right in giving total control to a senior soldier to try and ensure the safety of his soldiers. Encouraging an employee to work for a great amount of time during the week or without the threat of danger