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This question of motivation has been studied by management theorists and social psychologists for decades, in attempts to identify successful approaches to management. Social psychologist McGregor's Theory X and Theory Yof MIT expounded two contrasting theories on human motivation and management in the 1960s: The X Theory and the Y Theory. McGregor promoted Theory Y as the basis of good management practice, pioneering the argument that workers are not merely cogs in the company machinery, as Theory X-Type organizations seemed to believe. Douglas Murray McGregor (1906–1964) The theories look at how a manager's perceptions of what motivates his or her team members affects the way he or she behaves. By understanding how your assumptions about employees' motivation can influence your management style, you can adapt your approach appropriately, and so manage people more effectively. Understanding the Theories : Your management style is strongly influenced by your beliefs and assumptions about what motivates members of your team: If you believe that team members dislike work, you will tend towards an authoritarian style of management; On the other hand, if you assume that employees take pride in doing a good job, you will tend to adopt a more participative style. Theory X Theory X assumes that employees are naturally unmotivated and dislike working, and this encourages an authoritarian style of management. According to this view, management must actively intervene to get things done. This style of management assumes that workers: 1. Dislike working. 2. Avoid responsibility and need to be directed. 3. Have to be controlled, forced, and threatened to deliver what's needed. 4. Need to be supervised at every step, with controls put in place. 5. Need to be enticed to produce results; otherwise they have no ambition or incentive to work. X-Type organizations tend to be top heavy, with managers and supervisors required at every step to control workers. There is little delegation of authority and control and workers may not succeed as it is a questionable way of motivating people whose physiological and safety needs are reasonably satisfied and whose social, esteem, and self-actualization needs are becoming predominant. Given the drawbacks of theory X, McGregor developed an alternative theory of human behavior called theory Y. Employees are happy to work, are self-motivated and creative, and enjoy working with greater responsibility. It assumes that workers: 1. Take responsibility and are motivated to fulfill the goals they are given. 2. Seek and accept responsibility and do not need much direction. 3. Consider work as a natural part of life and solve work problems imaginatively This more participative management style tends to be more widely applicable. In Y-Type organizations, people at lower levels of the organization are involved in decision making and have more responsibility. Tags: McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X, Theory X and Theory Y Douglas McGregor expressed his views of human nature in two sets of assumptions. They are popularly known as 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y'. Theory X stands for the set of traditional beliefs held, while Theory Y stands for the set of beliefs based on researchers in behavioral science, which are concerned with modern social views on the man at work. These two theories represent the extreme ranges of assumptions. The managerial attitudes and supervisory practices resulting from such assumptions have an important bearing on employees' behavior. Employees inherently dislike work and, whenever possible, will attempt to avoid it. Since' employees dislike work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment. Employees will avoid responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible. Most workers place security above all other factors and will display little ambition. Managers who accept theory X-assumptions tend to structure, control, and closely supervise their employees. These managers think that external control is appropriate for dealing with unreliable, irresponsible, and immature people. Drawing heavily on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McGregor concluded that Theory-X assumptions about the nature of man are generally inaccurate, and the management practices that develop from these assumptions will often fail to motivate individuals to work toward organizational goals. Management by direction and control may not succeed as it is a questionable way of motivating people whose physiological and safety needs are reasonably satisfied and whose social, esteem, and self-actualization needs are becoming predominant. Given the drawbacks of theory X, McGregor developed an alternative theory of human behavior called theory Y. Employees can view work as being as natural as rest or play. People will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives. The average person can learn to accept, even seek, responsibility. The ability to make innovative decisions is widely dispersed throughout the population. Managers who accept theory-Y assumptions about the nature of man do not attempt to structure, control or closely supervise their employees. Instead, these managers help their employees mature by subjecting them to progressively less external control and allowing them to assume more and more self-control. Employees derive the satisfaction of social, esteem, and self-actualization needs within this kind of environment. Thus theory-Y aims to establish an environment in which employees can best achieve their personal goals by consulting, participating, and communicating themselves to the organization's objectives. In this process, employees are expected to exercise a large degree of internal motivation. Theory X assumes that lower-order needs to dominate individuals. Theory Y assumes that a higher order needs to dominate individuals. McGregor himself held the belief that Theory Y assumptions were more valid than Theory X. There is no evidence to confirm that either set of assumptions is valid. Either Theory X or Theory Y assumptions may be appropriate in a particular situation. Theory X and Theory Y Management Application-Business Implications for Workforce Motivation. If Theory Y holds, an organization can apply these principles of scientific management to improve employee motivation: Decentralization and Delegation: If firms decentralize control and reduce the number of levels of management, managers will have more subordinates and consequently will be forced to delegate some responsibility and decision-making. Job enlargement: Broadening the scope of an employee's job adds variety and opportunities to satisfy ego needs. Participative management: Consulting employees in the decision-making process taps their creative capacity and provides them with some control over their work environment. Performance appraisal: Having the employee set objectives and participate in the process of evaluating how well they were met. If properly implemented, such an environment would result in a high level of workforce motivation as employees work to satisfy their higher level personal needs through their jobs. In a nutshell, it may seem that Maslow, McClelland, Herzberg, and McGregor view motivation from a different perspective. But basically, they emphasize similar sets of relationships. Maslow stresses the rarely satisfied higher-level needs as the motivating force. McClelland mentioned that the drive to achieve varies in individuals according to their personality and cultural background. Herzberg views "satisfiers" as motivators after the "hygiene factors" have done away with dissatisfaction. McGregor's theory, which is based on assumptions concerning the motives of individuals, views motivation from the perspective of managerial attitude. In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Everything you need to know about Theory X and Theory Y motivation. Prof. Douglas McGregor proposed theory X and theory Y. Theory X is related to traditional approach about people and theory Y is related to modern approach about people. Theory X is somehow related to concept of scientific management, which advocates that people dislike the work and they have to be strictly controlled. McGregor states that the supporters of theory X, who perceive employees to be lazy and unambitious use threat, strict supervision, control, punishment, etc., as the tools to get work done. However, these tools may give negative results by giving encouragement to trade unions and people may oppose the force. Theory Y is reverse of theory X. This is inspired from human approach to management, which advocates considering employees as humans not as machines. Theory Y is positive approach about people. It considers people to be willing to work, who just need direction and motivation for work. Assumptions of Theory Y: 1. Employees want to work. 2. People are reversible, enthusiastic and make efforts to achieve goals. 3. People employ creativity to solve organisational problems. 4. People do not need strict supervision. 5. Democratic/participative leadership style will be effective. Theory Y views individual and organisational goals as congruent. Workers like responsibility and they should be given responsibility. They are self-directed, self-motivated and self-controlled. If the assumptions of theory Y are valid, McGregor suggests giving freedom to employees, use decentralisation, delegation, job enlargement, participation and consultative management, etc., to motivate employees. Appraisal of McGregor's Theory: Theory X and Theory Y represent two extremes. They are not realistic situations. Both are not found in reality, no man would entirely belong to theory X or theory Y. He will have the traits of both the theories; however, theory X is more applicable to uneducated and unskilled workers, theory Y is more applicable to educated and skilled workers. This theory helps managers remain firmly centralized. McGregor recognized that X-Type workers are in fact usually the minority and yet in many organizations, such as large scale production environment, X Theory management may be required and can be unavoidable. Theory Y Theory Y expounds a participative style of management that is de-centralized. It assumes that employees are happy to work, are self-motivated and creative, and enjoy working with greater responsibility. It assumes that workers: i. Take responsibility and are motivated to fulfill the goals they are given. ii. Seek and accept responsibility and do not need much direction. iii. Consider work as a natural part of life and solve work problems imaginatively This more participative management style tends to be more widely applicable. In Y-Type organizations, people at lower levels of the organization are involved in decision making and have more responsibility. Tags: McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. 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Participative management: Consulting employees in the decision-making process taps their creative capacity and provides them with some control over their work environment. Performance appraisal: Having the employee set objectives and participate in the process of evaluating how well they were met. If properly implemented, such an environment would result in a high level of workforce motivation as employees work to satisfy their higher level personal needs through their jobs. In a nutshell, it may seem that Maslow, McClelland, Herzberg, and McGregor view motivation from a different perspective. But basically, they emphasize similar sets of relationships. Maslow stresses the rarely satisfied higher-level needs as the motivating force. McClelland mentioned that the drive to achieve varies in individuals according to their personality and cultural background. Herzberg views "satisfiers" as motivators after the "hygiene factors" have done away with dissatisfaction. 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Due to the inherent characteristics of a human being, they have to be intensively supervised, directed and also threatened with severe consequences for nonperformance and punishment. They also require adequate and severe proof to get the job accomplished. iii. Most of the people at work lack ambition. They have little interest in the quality work. iv. An average human being likes to be directed by the superiors and avoids responsibility. He does the work to the barest minimum. v. These type of personnel are inherently self-centered and also indifferent to organisational needs. vi. Such people have a great financial greed. They may do whatever management wants by financial motivation. Mc Gregor emphasised that the theory 'X' philosophy as stated above confuses cause and effect in the analysis of human nature. If an employee in a modern organisation behaves passively or indifferently, it means the management has not properly responded to his needs. The worker's behavioural attitudes hardly speak that he is deprived of his higher order needs like 'social need' of belongingness and other higher order ones. It is a fact that many organisations do take notice of the physical and safety needs of the workers and other higher order needs are not considered as important ones. When the lower needs are satisfied by the workers, they aspire to satisfy their 'self-fulfillment needs'. If management overlooks these important aspects, the outcome is frustration and the work becomes the subject of theory 'X' category in course of time. Theory Y: the assumption of theory 'Y' is explained by Mc Gregor as: 1. An average human being does not inherently dislike work. The work for him is as natural as play or rest. Depending upon the conditions, work may be a source of satisfaction or a source of punishment. ii. External control and threat of punishment are the only means of bringing about efforts towards meeting organisational objectives. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control if he is committed to the objectives to which he is committed. iii. Commitment to objectives is a function of the reward associated with achievement. The most significant aspect of such an award is satisfaction of the ego and self-actualisation that can be directed towards achieving organisational objectives. iv. The average human being learns under proper conditions not only to accept responsibility but also to seek help to shoulder the same. However, shirking of responsibility, lack of ambition and emphasis on job security are generally the consequences of inherent human characteristics. v. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity. These are found widely distributed in public. vi. In modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of an average human being are partially utilized. A close comparative study of and 'Y' theory can bring out the diagonally different nature of these two sets of assumptions. The assumption of theory 'Y' brings out a positive approach in organisational management and also understanding the positive behavioural pattern of employees between organisational goals and those of the individuals satisfying their own needs. This theory establishes conducive atmosphere and amiable relationship between management and work force for accomplishment of jobs. When one studies 'X' and 'Y' theory, one may form an impression that the former is a bad type of worker and latter a good type. The theory mainly indicates the attitude or an idea formed earlier by the managers with regard to employees. As a matter of fact, the theory does not convey the behaviour of individuals. The assumption and reality are two different variables. The manager must be able to distinguish them correctly, when dealing with situations. A lazy and irresponsible worker of 'X' category can be changed into a 'Y' category worker by behaviour modification. How to change the behaviour pattern depends on the leadership of the organisation. That is what is required for a manager. Theory X and Theory Y: With Assumptions and Motivational Aspects Douglas McGregor proposed two contrasting different views of human beings. One view is basically negative of human beings called Theory X and the other is basically positive of human beings called Theory Y. Assumptions of Theory X: 1. Man is lazy, he does not want to work. 2. People dislike responsibilities, they do not have ambition. 3. People must be coerced, controlled and threatened with punishment to get them to work. Motivational Aspects of Theory X: Theory X assumes that people are relatively self-centred, indifferent to organisational needs and goals and resistant to change. Managers have to motivate their subordinates through negative motivational techniques like coercion, punishment, threatening and controlling. Theory X assumptions are mostly applicable in government departmental and public sector organisational situations where people are not basically trusted. And these assumptions are not applicable in private sector organisations where freedom, autonomy and voluntarism are mostly trusted. Assumptions of Theory Y: Theory Y implies a more positive, human and supportive approach to managing people. The assumptions of Theory Y include: i. People view work as being as natural as rest or play. ii. People will exercise self-direction and self-control, if they are committed to the organisational objectives. iii. The average person can learn to accept and/or seek responsibility. iv. People are not inherently lazy. They have become that way as a consequence of their experience, and v. People have potential. Under proper conditions, they learn to accept and seek responsibility. They have imagination, ingenuity and creativity that can be applied to work. Motivational Aspects of Theory Y: These assumptions motivated the managers to develop employee potential and help them release that potential towards the organisational objectives. Theory Y assumptions are believed mostly by the private sector organisations, where the performance is most essential than the procedure. Private sector organisations motivate the employees by creating proper organisational structures like humanistic and flat structures. The believers of Theory Y design the jobs based on job enrichment techniques. Further the employees are given freedom and authority to decide their work activities, take their own decisions with a view to enhance the organisational performance. Empowerment of employees is a recent trend in this direction. Prof. Douglas McGregor has introduced two theories in his famous book 'The Human Side of Enterprise'. They are called 'X' theory and 'Y' theory. This theory is based on 'papa know best' in other words, a manager has thorough knowledge and excludes workers from decision-making process. A manager has authority or power to take decisions. The workers should follow whatever decisions are taken by the manager. Assumptions of Theory: i. Workers have an aversion to work inherently. ii. Workers may find a way to postpone the work completion in laziness. iii. Workers may do the job half-heartedly. iv. Fear of punishment can motivate the workers into action. v. The worker may know the hazards of non-performance of a work. vi. No worker is ready to accept any responsibility. vii. There is a need for explaining the consequences of being inactive. viii. Workers are not interested in achievement. They prefer to maintain status quo. ix. A worker prefers to be directed by others. x. Workers hate to improve their efficiency. The reason is that they fear losing their present job. xi. Worker is also one of the factors of production and does not deserve any special treatment. xii. Worker lacks integrity. xiii. Worker avoids taking decision whenever necessary. x-theory is regarded as the means to supervise and control the workers. Decision-making in all the fields is entrusted with the managers. Workers are allowed to express their suggestions and emotions. But the decisions are taken by managers and workers are forced to follow the decisions. Y-theory: Y-theory is just opposite to X-theory. So, X-theory is considered as traditional theory and Y-theory is considered as modern theory. Y-theory emphasises the importance of workers in the accomplishment of enterprise objectives. Assumptions of Y-theory: i. The average human being has the tendency to work. A job is as natural just like a play. ii. Once the worker understands the purpose of job, he may extend his co-operation for job completion. iii. Worker can put in his best efforts for the accomplishment of enterprise objectives even without close supervision and control. 5. Under conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of employees are only partially utilized. In reality, people have unlimited potential. Theory Y represents a modern, and dynamic nature of human beings. It is based on assumptions which are nearer to reality. They will be decentralisation of authority, job enrichment, participative leadership and two-way communication system in an organisation based on Theory Y. Theory X and Theory Y – Assumptions, Appraisal, Distinction and Criticisms Douglas McGregor propounded two theories of human behaviour in management philosophy on the theme of dual nature of human being. They are known as theory 'X' and theory 'Y'. McGregor believes that nearly all management actions flow from these two theories and they reflect their philosophy of controls in practice. Management assumptions about human behaviour influence the personnel practices, decision-making, operating practices and even organisation design. Further, he observed that people appear to have a capacity for tenderness, sympathy and love, while they also possess tendencies towards cruelty, callousness, hate and malicious aggression. These two different philosophies are two different theories of McGregor, Theory 'X' and Theory 'Y'. Theory 'X': Theory 'X' is the traditional theory of management philosophy. 'Power is Supreme' is the most important theme of this theory where the people at work-level have no authority to suggest or object anything except to carry out the orders of the supervisor. The line of authority or command traditionally goes direct from the top, down through various layers of organisation with some delegation of authority but full and detailed accountability is up the line. People at work-level have no option except to obey the directives or orders of the authority. Assumptions of Theory 'X': The important assumptions of theory are as follows: (1) Many people inherently dislike work and always try to shirk their responsibility. (2) Therefore, to make them responsible people must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment, rebuffed or rebuked so as to get them to put forth adequate efforts towards the achievement of organisational goals. (3) The average human being prefers to be directed wishes to avoid responsibility and puts off the work till it is necessary. (4) Most people at work have practically no ambition or little ambition as to the improvement of work. They do not work with interest but wait for direction and act according to it. (5) It has been noticed that the average human being wants security and safety above all, hence he tends to work slowly. (6) Further, most people have little capacity to contribute something towards solving the organisational problems as their importance in the management is always under minded by the authority and they are treated as an instrument of a machine. (7) Working method of the people is generally traditional and hence there is little scope for the development and research. (8) Mostly people can be motivated by money and on the basis of financial greed; they can do whatever management wants. Appraisal of Theory 'X': McGregor's contribution should be analysed in the proper perspective. All that he postulated and sought to dramatise through his theory 'X' is outline the extremes to draw the fencing within which the organisational or enterprise man is seen to behave. (1) The Theory 'X' is Quite Unwarranted in the Modern Times: It supports the authoritarian view which is not warranted in the present day economy. The man at work is not a machine, he is a human being. He is not only to execute the orders of the top line executives but he should also think over the order on its merits before its execution. Management may get results by coercion or through pressure tactics only in short-run till people respond to pressures and controls, partly out of fear of consequences of not following the orders of the top line executives. Himself condemning the theory McGregor says—"The conventional approach of theory 'X' is based on mistaken notions of what is cause and what is effect. An organisation built upon theory 'X' notions will be one in which there is clear supervision and control of sub-ordinates and high centralization of authority. Leadership will tend to be autocratic and workers will have very little say in decisions affecting them." (2) This Theory has Wrong Assumptions about Human Nature: The assumptions in theory 'X' do not reveal the nature of human beings. Recent behavioral sciences and people sciences do not support the traditional view. It contends that the best effective way to get better results in an organisation is to work with people rather than through them. (3) The Theory has Now become Out of Date: In modern times, the governments of most of the countries have stressed that the worker should be given an honourable partnership in management. Theory 'Y': The theory 'Y' represents an alternative management approach which does not involve abdication of managerial responsibility. Management is still responsible for achieving the organisational objectives, but on different assumptions about human behaviour and motivation. The workers are fully aware of the organisational objectives, which are directly related to the satisfaction of employee's needs. McGregor recognised certain needs that theory 'X' fails to take into account. For example – self-fulfillment, ego satisfaction and social needs of individual workers. Thus, it pleads for a humanistic and supportive approach to managing people. Management tries to provide an atmosphere of peace and discipline within the organisation, without the oppressive measures. Therefore, people work with interest and simultaneously enjoy the benefits of congenial relationship. Assumptions of Theory 'Y': McGregor has described the assumptions of theory Y in the following words: (1) Physical and Mental Effort in Work is Natural: The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is natural as play or rest. The average human being does not inherently dislike work. Depending upon controllable conditions, work may be a source of satisfaction or as source of punishment. 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