

Theory X & Theory Y - Approaches to Leadership

Theories developed by Douglas McGregor (1906-64)
McGregor argued that there were two distinct styles of management

Which theory is best?

THEORY X

- Authoritarian approach to leadership.
- Managers believe that workers need to be monitored, controlled, and given financial incentives to work.
- Managers feel that workers are lazy and dislike work.

ADVANTAGES

- Work is supervised (monitored).
- Decision making is likely to be faster.
- Workers stay on task.
- Motivation of workers is uncomplicated.



THEORY Y

- A leadership approach where the managers feel that workers are willing to take on responsibility.
- Managers feel that workers show initiative.
- Managers feel that workers want to work and that they are quite creative.

ADVANTAGES

- Worker satisfaction improves.
- Workers can work on their own.
- Workers are ambitious.
- Creative workers solve problems.
- Committed workers work better.



Examiner's Tip

As with all leadership/motivation theories, there is a tendency to assume that all workers want the same thing. Both approaches may work in the same organisation with different workers.

We are all different!!