

In this section, we'll discuss how leadership attitudes relate to Theory X and Theory Y, and how the Pygmalion effect influences followers' behavior and performance. Then we will discuss self-concept and how it affects the leader's behavior and performance. Lastly, we will consider how the leader's attitudes about followers, and about his or her self-concept, affect the leadership style of the leader.

LEARNING OUTCOME

6. Identify similarities and differences among Theory X and Theory Y, the Pygmalion effect, and self-concept.

Theory X and Theory Y

Theory X and Theory Y
attempt to explain and predict leadership behavior and performance based on the leader's attitude about followers.

Today, Theory X and Theory Y attempt to explain and predict leadership behavior and performance based on the leader's attitude about followers. Before you read about Theory X and Y, complete Self-Assessment Exercise 2-5.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2-5

Theory X and Theory Y Attitudes

For each pair of statements distribute 5 points, based on how characteristic each statement is of your attitude or belief system. If the first statement totally reflects your attitude and the second does not, give 5 points to the first and 0 to the second. If it's the opposite, use 0 and 5. If the statement is usually your attitude, then distribution can be 4 and 1, or 1 and 4. If both statements reflect your attitude, the distribution should be 3 and 2, or 2 and 3. Again, the combined score for each pair of statements must equal 5.

Here are the scoring distributions for each pair of statements:

- 0-5 or 5-0 One of the statements is totally like you, the other not like you at all.
1-4 or 4-1 One statement is usually like you, the other not.
2-3 or 3-2 Both statements are like you, although one is slightly more like you.

- ___ 1. People enjoy working.
___ People do not like to work.
___ 2. Employees don't have to be closely supervised to do their job well.
___ Employees will not do a good job unless you closely supervise them.
___ 3. Employees will do a task well for you if you ask them to.
___ If you want something done right, you need to do it yourself.

- ___ 4. Employees want to be involved in making decisions.
___ Employees want the managers to make the decisions.
___ 5. Employees will do their best work if you allow them to do the job their own way.
___ Employees will do their best work if they are taught how to do it the one best way.
___ 6. Managers should let employees have full access to information that is not confidential.
___ Managers should give employees only the information they need to know to do their job.
___ 7. If the manager is not around, the employees will work just as hard.
___ If the manager is not around, the employees will take it easier than when being watched.
___ 8. Managers should share the management responsibilities with group members.
___ Managers should perform the management functions for the group.

To determine your attitude or belief system about people at work, add up the numbers (0-5) for the first statement in each pair; don't bother adding the numbers for the second statements. The total should be between 0 and 40. Place your score on the continuum below.

Theory X 0—5—10—15—20—25—30—35—40 Theory Y

Generally, the higher your score, the greater are your Theory Y beliefs, and the lower the score, the greater your Theory X beliefs.

Douglas McGregor classified attitudes or belief system, which he called assumptions, as *Theory X* and *Theory Y*.⁷¹ People with Theory X attitudes hold that employees dislike work and must be closely supervised in order to do their work. Theory Y attitudes hold that employees like to work and do not need to be closely supervised in order to do their work. In each of the eight pairs of statements in Self-Assessment Exercise 2-5, the first lines are Theory Y attitudes and the second lines are Theory X attitudes.

Managers with Theory X attitudes tend to have a negative, pessimistic view of employees and display more coercive, autocratic leadership styles using external means of controls, such as threats and punishment. Managers with Theory Y attitudes tend to have a positive, optimistic view of employees and display more participative leadership styles using internal motivation and rewards. In 1966 when McGregor published his Theory X and Theory Y, most managers had Theory X attitudes, and he was calling for a change to Theory Y attitudes. More recently, the paradigm shift from management to leadership also reflects this change in attitudes, as more managers use participative leadership styles.

Managers should acknowledge the influence of attitudes on behavior and performance. A study of over 12,000 managers explored the relationship between managerial achievement and attitudes toward subordinates.⁷² The managers with Theory Y attitudes were better at accomplishing organizational objectives and better at tapping the potential of subordinates. The managers with strong Theory X attitudes were far more likely to be in the low-achieving group. Your attitudes are important, because your leadership style will spring from your core attitudes about your followers. If you scored higher in Theory X for Self-Assessment Exercise 2-5, it does not mean that you cannot be an effective leader. As with personality traits, you can change your attitudes, with effort. You don't have to be an autocratic leader.