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# The relationship between Theory X/Y: assumptions and communication apprehension

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study seeks to explore whether McGregor's Theory X/Y assumptions are related to managers' communication apprehension (CA) – their degree of comfort when interacting with others.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Surveys measuring Theory X/Y assumptions and CA were administered to 281 full-time managers from divergent industries across the USA. Hypotheses were tested using correlations.

**Findings** – Moderate scores on the Theory X scale were positively correlated with traitlike CA and CA in interpersonal contexts. Managers' total and high scores on the Theory Y scale were negatively correlated with traitlike CA and CA in groups, interpersonal conversations, and meetings. Moderate scores on the Theory Y scale were positively correlated with CA in groups. Low scores on the Theory Y scale were positively correlated with traitlike CA and CA in interpersonal and public speaking settings.

**Originality/value** – This study extends the broad landscape of literature on management communication. Findings deepen our understanding of how managers' communicative dispositions are linked to their Theory X/Y assumptions.

**Keywords** Anxiety, Assumptions, Communication apprehension, Theory X/Y, Managers, Communication processes, United States of America

**Paper type** Research paper

In *The Human Side of Enterprise*, McGregor (1960) conceptualized Theory X and Theory Y to reflect two polarized categories of assumptions that managers may have about their employees. These frameworks are grounded in the premise that managers motivate and communicate with employees based on their assumptions about human nature. Today, McGregor's Theory X/Y frameworks continue to inform the contemporary landscape of management communication research, making them as timely and germane today as they were four decades ago (Burke, 2011; Carson, 2005; Head, 2011; Kopelman *et al.*, 2010; Weisbord, 2011). As Carson (2005) observes, "[Theory X/Y are] one of the hallmark relationship management principles of the last half of the 20th century" (p. 450). Carson contends:

[McGregor's] work seemed to energize the field of management and spurred a cluster of Theory Y based concepts. Theory Y bore such fruits as self-directed work teams, self-management, job enrichment, and empowerment, to name a few. Each of these concepts takes a bow to McGregor's concept of giving employees more responsibility and watching them flourish. McGregor's work provided the impetus for the continuing momentum of the Human Relations Movement in the middle of the 20th century (Carson, 2005, p. 459).

The Theory X/Y frameworks can be described quite simply. First, managers with a Theory X orientation presume employees have negative attitudes about work and their supervisors. Further, Theory X managers believe that employees need to be "controlled, directed, [or] threatened with punishment to get them to put forth the



adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives” (McGregor, 1960, p. 34). Conversely, managers with a Theory Y orientation believe that employees are motivated to work, strive to build positive relationships with their superiors, and prefer dialogic workplace communication in whereby they are asked for input and involved in making workplace decisions.

McGregor (1960) predicted that managers’ Theory X/Y assumptions are influenced by their communicative dispositions. To date, a scant amount of work has directly tested McGregor’s prediction by examining the link between Theory X/Y assumptions and communication style (Sager, 2008); participatory communication (Russ, 2011); and persuasive/compliance communication (Neuliep, 1987). Clearly, there is an established link between Theory X/Y and communicative behaviors. In light of preceding evidence, a relationship between managers’ Theory X/Y assumptions and their communication apprehension (CA) is likely. CA is defined by McCroskey (1977) as “an individual’s level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons” (p. 78).

Revealing the link between Theory X/Y and CA is important for several reasons. Most notably, this study extends a long line of research exploring to what degree CA handicaps one’s effectiveness in the workplace. Previous research suggests that persons exhibiting high CA are likely to have fewer job offers, hold lower-ranked positions, make less money, and avoid particular communication methods (Ayres *et al.*, 1998; Reinsch and Lewis, 1984; Richmond *et al.*, 1982; Russ, 2012, in press; Winiecki and Ayres, 1999). Further, individuals with high CA are also deemed less informative, less effective, less productive, and less likely to excel (Bartoo and Sias, 2004; Harville, 1992; Richmond and Roach, 1992; Thomas *et al.*, 1994). The current investigation seeks to enrich this line of research by examining how CA may influence professional outcomes.

From a scholarly perspective, this study demonstrates the possibility of enriching our understanding of how psychosomatic communication variables influence managers’ assumptions about workplace relations. Further, this research can aid in the theoretical development of more exhaustive models of managerial communication. From a practical perspective, this study can aid managers in questioning the degree to which CA influences their personal attraction or avoidance of Theory X and Theory Y assumptions.

I begin with McGregor’s (1960) conceptualization of Theory X and Theory Y well as a review of relevant scholarship confirming the concomitant relationship between these assumptions with cognitive, affective, and behavioral organizational outcomes. Next, I offer an explanation of the multidimensional concept of CA and review the relevant literatures suggesting a concomitant relationship with variables associated with Theory X/Y. Third, I present the hypotheses, methods, and findings and conclude with a discussion of the theoretical and practical significance underpinning the results.

## **Theoretical rationale**

### *Theory X/Y assumptions*

Drawing on Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs, McGregor (1960) introduced Theory X and Theory Y, frameworks which broadly conceptualize the intersections between managers’ perceptions of human nature and their approaches for motivating others in organizational settings. McGregor predicted that the perceptions and actions associated with the Theory X and Theory Y orientations are conceptually distinct. For instance, McGregor (1960) argued that managers with a Theory X orientation

typically assume that employees are satisfied by only meeting their lower-order physiological and safety needs *vis-à-vis* tangible outcomes such as salary and avoiding disincentives such as corporate punishment. For this reason, Theory X managers often assume employees hold unfavorable impressions about work, must be forced to work, refrain from sharing their opinions, are incapable of self-direction, and need narrow direction from authority.

In opposition to Theory X, McGregor (1960) predicted that managers with a Theory Y orientation typically assume that employees “will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he [sic] is committed” (p. 47). From the perception of Theory Y managers, employees strive to meet their higher-order needs by conducting “meaningful” work, actively participating in decision-making processes, and sharing their opinions about how to enhance organizational effectiveness. Employees, Theory Y managers assume, are instinctively motivated, possess self-control, and are fully capable of directing their own work.

Although presented independently, McGregor’s sets of Theory X/Y assumptions are not entirely mutually exclusive; indeed, it is conceivable that some managers may exhibit both orientations. Still, previous work has examined the distinctiveness of each orientation, isolating them as independent variables. Previous work can be organized into three streams of research underscoring of McGregor (1960) prediction that managers’ Theory X/Y assumptions are related to their communicative dispositions.

*Theory X/Y and communication style.* One stream of research elucidates the link between Theory X/Y predispositions and communication style. For instance, Sager (2008) explored the linked between managers’ Theory X/Y assumptions and communication styles. The investigation uncovered positive correlations between managers’ Theory X assumptions and the dominant and impression leaving communication styles. The study also revealed that managers’ Theory Y assumptions were negatively correlated with the anxious communication style, and positively linked with the supportive, impression leaving, and nonverbally expressive communication styles.

*Theory X/Y and participatory communication.* A second stream of research explores the connection between Theory X/Y orientations and preferences for participatory communication. For example, Russ (2011) explored whether managers’ Theory X/Y assumptions serve as significant cognitive determinants of their propensity for participative decision making (PDM). In other words, the study explored the connection between managers’ Theory X/Y orientations and their inclination to solicit others’ input during decision-making opportunities. Results from the investigation suggest that Theory X managers are inclined to assume that PDM negatively impacts their power while Theory Y managers presume that PDM has a positive impact on their perceived power and the organization’s effectiveness. These results suggest that Theory X managers feel less comfortable with dialogic communication, especially during decision-making opportunities, than Theory Y managers.

*Theory X/Y and persuasive communication.* A third stream of research explores the relationship between Theory X/Y preferences and persuasive communication approaches. For instance, Neuliep (1987) examined diverse range of compliance-gaining strategies employed by Theory X vs Theory Y managers. Results from his investigation suggested that managers possessing Theory X assumptions are apt to prefer anti-socially oriented strategies such as threat, deceit, and aversive stimulation. Conversely, the investigation found that Theory Y managers tend to prefer pro-social types of influence tactics including esteem and ingratiation. The inclination to use

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pro-social compliance strategies suggests Theory Y managers would be less apprehensive communicating with others than their Theory X counterparts who are more apt to use ant-social compliance approaches.

## CA

The previously reviewed scholarship examining the relationships between Theory X/Y orientation and communication variables suggest a similar connection may exist with CA, the degree of fear/anxiety one feels when communicating with others (McCroskey, 1977). There are two generally accepted approaches for analyzing the multidimensional construct of CA: traitlike CA and context CA (see McCroskey, 1977). Traitlike CA, is one's fear or general anxiety about communication interaction across contexts (McCroskey, 1977). Though traitlike CA is presumed to be a relatively enduring personality-type quality, the term "traitlike" is purposefully used to distinguish it from fixed personality variables. Using norms calculated by McCroskey (2009), individuals can be classified as having high, low, or average traitlike CA.

Context CA, on the other hand, is a transitory orientation, providing a more composite view of one's discomfort when communicating across different environments. That is, this variable examines CA from a situational perspective, illustrating how one's fear/anxiety can fluctuate based on the setting. McCroskey (1977) measures context CA across four states including participation in group discussions, interpersonal conversations, formal meetings, and public speaking. Context CA can be unique for each person. It is possible for someone exhibit high CA across all four contexts. It is also possible for someone to be extremely uncomfortable communicating in one context (e.g. interpersonal communication) but feel completely at ease in another (e.g. public speaking).

Most scholars disagree as to the exact cause of CA, though several explanations have been proposed including: cultural modeling (Richmond and McCroskey, 1998), personality characteristics (Butler, 1986), and biological influences (Beatty and McCroskey, 2001). The most recent research contribution, communibiology, links CA diagnoses to neurobiological factors. This theoretical paradigm supposes that genetics play a far greater role over human communication behavior than cultural, situational, or environmental stimuli (Beatty and McCroskey, 2001). While the exact cause of CA remains unclear, a handful of past studies have reported significant linkages between CA and numerous occupational and psychological variables related to managerial styles (see McCroskey *et al.*, 2009 for an exhaustive review). The following highlights two lines of communication research suggesting that a relationship likely exists between CA and Theory X/Y.

*CA and personality.* The first line of research reveals connections between CA and personality. For instance, McCroskey *et al.* (1976) found that CA was positively correlated with anxiety, dogmatism, and external control but negatively associated with cyclothymia, emotional maturity, dominance, surgency, character, adventurousness, confidence, self-control, tolerance for ambiguity, and need to achieve. In light of these findings, McCroskey and his colleagues surmised that CA "has a broad relationship with an individual's total personality" (p. 378). Further, they surmised that persons with high CA typically prefer working alone, are reflective, struggle with expressing their thoughts, are reserved and quiet, exhibit a low task orientation, and avoid dialogic communication. Conversely, they surmised that individuals with low CA usually seek human interaction, are expressive and talkative, exhibit emotional responses, are impulsive and decisive, and are tolerant of ambiguous or uncertain

situations. Additional studies support these conclusions. For instance, Dwyer and Cruz (1998) found that persons with high CA are apt to exhibit an introverted personality type while low CA individuals are inclined to possess an extraverted personality type. Similarly, Opt and Loffredo (2000) found that individuals with high traitlike and context CA (in all four contexts) are apt to demonstrate the introverted and sensing personality types while those with low traitlike and context CA are apt to exhibit the extraverted and intuition personality types.

*CA and participatory communication.* The second line of research reveals linkages between CA and behavior. For example, Russ (in press) examined if traitlike CA is a significant predictor of managers' propensity for and practice of PDM. That is, is CA linked to managers' preference for soliciting others' input and actually involving them in decision-making processes? Results from the investigation suggested that traitlike CA is a significant determinant of variation in superiors' inclination for as well as their actual practice of PDM. These findings suggest that managers with lower CA possess favorable perceptions of PDM and are more inclined to involve others in decision-making processes than their counterparts with higher CA. In turn, these results indicate that, typically, managers with higher CA are predisposed to harbor less favorable perceptions of PDM and are less likely to involve others when making decisions. Other research supports these conclusions. For instance, Comadena (1984) found that persons with low traitlike CA are apt to perceive the act of brainstorming more positively, demonstrate higher ambiguity tolerance, and produce a greater number of ideas when compared to their counterparts with high traitlike CA. These findings are consistent with previous scholarship revealing that traitlike CA significantly influences individuals' participatory communication preferences and/or behaviors (Dobos, 1996; Jablin *et al.*, 1977; Jablin and Sussman, 1978; McKinney, 1982). For instance, Dobos (1996) found that individuals with low group CA associate collaborative learning with above-average communication satisfaction, greater participation activity, higher fulfillment of expectations, and below-average anxiety. She uncovered the opposite trend for individuals with high group CA. In a related vein, McKinney (1982), concluded that persons with high CA (i.e. reticence) are perceived as less effective in group settings because of their restricted verbal contributions, and are less likely to emerge as the leader.

### Current study

This investigation tests whether Theory X/Y assumptions are related to managers' CA. To date, no known work has investigated this relationship. However, a growing body of evidence suggests linkages exist between managers' Theory X/Y assumptions and personal communication dispositions. Most notably, previous scholarship has established a connection between Theory X/Y assumptions and communication style (Sager, 2008), participatory communication (Russ, 2011), and persuasive/compliance communication (Neuliep, 1987). In light of this growing body of evidence, a relationship between managers' Theory X/Y assumptions and CA seems likely. Therefore, the present seeks to confirm that speculation.

Managers with a Theory X orientation are expected to demonstrate high CA considering that previous scholarship suggests a link between Theory X assumptions and an avoidance of human communication. For example, Theory X managers typically avoid participatory and dialogic communicative approaches during workplace decisions (Russ, 2011) and are inclined to use anti-socially oriented persuasive strategies, including threat, deceit, and aversive stimulation, when soliciting others'

compliance (Neuliep, 1987). Moreover, high CA has been linked to introversion, dogmatism, external control, and anxiety (Dwyer and Cruz, 1998; McCroskey *et al.*, 1976; Opt and Loffredo, 2000); key traits often associated with the Theory X profile.

Theory Y managers are expected to exhibit low CA considering that past research demonstrates a connection between Theory Y assumptions and an attraction toward human communication. For instance, Theory Y managers typically embrace participatory and dialogic communicative approaches in the workplace (Russ, 2011) and prefer pro-social types of influence tactics including esteem and ingratiation (Neuliep, 1987). Additionally, low CA has been linked to key traits associated with a Theory X orientation including surgency, tolerance for ambiguity, extroversion, and adventurousness (Dwyer and Cruz, 1998; McCroskey *et al.*, 1976; Opt and Loffredo, 2000).

## Method

### *Participants*

A total of 281 managers employed by a diverse range of organizations were recruited to serve as participants in this study. Managers were from a broad spectrum of industries including communications and advertising, computers and information technology, education, finance and banking, healthcare, retail, professional services, and nonprofits. Of the respondents who reported their sex, 43 percent were female and 57 percent were male. Participants' average age was 37 years old and their average length of work experience was 14 years. Of the respondents who reported their race, 73 percent were white/Caucasian, 14 percent were Asian American, 8 percent were Latino/Hispanic, and the remaining 1 percent reported another racial affiliation.

### *Instruments*

*Theory X/Y.* Sager's (2008) Theory X and Theory Y inventory was used to assess managers' Theory X/Y assumptions. This instrument includes 17 items on a five-point Likert-type scale (anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree") designed to tap into managers' Theory X and Theory Y assumptions. The Theory X scale includes 11 items reflecting the following perspective: "A manager should establish authority over his or her employees, set their work goals, direct their work activities, closely monitor their performance, reward them for a job well done, and provide corrective feedback if their performance falls short" (Sager, 2008, p. 301). The Theory Y scale includes six items reflecting the following school of thought: "A manager should let his or her employees set their own work goals, allow them to decide how to reach those goals, and permit them to regulate their own work activities. The heightened challenge associated with these job responsibilities will serve to increase employee motivation and satisfaction" (Sager, 2008, p. 301). This instrument has previously demonstrated high reliability and predictive validity (Sager, 2008). In this study, the following reliability coefficients were obtained: Theory X scale = 0.76; Theory Y scale = 0.74.

CA. McCroskey's (1977) Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) was used to assess managers' traitlike and context CA. Traitlike CA captures one's general apprehension across divergent environments while context CA is a transitory orientation, providing more of a situational perspective of one's fear/anxiety when communicating in a particular context (McCroskey, 1977). The PRCA includes 24 items on a five-point Likert-type scale (anchored by "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree") designed to assess apprehension in four contexts: groups (e.g. "I dislike participating in group discussion"), interpersonal (e.g. "I'm afraid to speak up in

conversations”), meetings (e.g. “communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable”), and public speaking (e.g. “my thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech”). In past research the PRCA has demonstrated high internal consistency and validity (e.g. McCroskey, 2009). In this study, the obtained Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the overall scale (traitlike CA) was 0.96 and the reliability coefficients for the subscales (context CA) were: groups = 0.91; interpersonal = 0.91; meetings = 0.93; and public speaking = 0.93.

Results

The objective of this study was to examine whether managers with different Theory X/ Y orientations differ in their level of CA. Significant negative correlations were observed between managers’ total score on the Theory Y scale and traitlike CA,  $r(280) = -0.19, p < 0.01$ , as well as between this orientation and most of the CA contexts: groups,  $r(280) = -0.21, p < 0.01$ ; interpersonal,  $r(280) = -0.20, p < 0.01$ ; meetings,  $r(280) = -0.16, p < 0.01$ . No significant correlation was observed between managers’ total scores on the Theory Y scale and CA in the public speaking context; still, the result trended in the anticipated direction. No significant correlations were observed between managers’ total scores on the Theory X scale and their traitlike and context CA (see Table I). Most of the correlations trended in the positive direction (except for group and interpersonal CA). Still, none of these results were significant.

Supplementary analyses were conducted to examine correlations between the intensity of managers’ Theory X/Y orientations and CA. In total, 20 percent of managers reporting the highest scores on the Theory X scale were classified as possessing a high Theory X orientation, 20 percent reporting the lowest scores were judged as having a low Theory X orientation, and the remaining participants were categorized as having a moderate Theory X orientation. An identical approach was used to classify managers’ scores on the Theory Y scale into high, low, and moderate orientations. Correlations were examined between these classifications and CA (see Table I).

Significant positive correlations were observed between a moderate Theory X orientation and traitlike CA,  $r(280) = 0.12, p < 0.05$ , and CA in interpersonal contexts,  $r(280) = 0.12, p < 0.05$ . Significant positive correlations were found between a low Theory Y orientation and traitlike CA,  $r(280) = 0.13, p < 0.05$ , and CA in interpersonal contexts,  $r(280) = 0.12, p < 0.05$ , and public speaking contexts,  $r(280) = 0.12, p < 0.05$ . A significant positive correlation was observed between a moderate Theory Y orientation and CA in groups,  $r(280) = 0.12, p < 0.05$ . Significant negative correlations were observed between a high Theory Y orientation and traitlike CA,  $r(280) = -0.17$ ,

**Table I.**  
Correlations between  
managers’ CA and Theory  
X/Y assumptions

CA	Theory X assumptions				Theory Y assumptions			
	Low	Moderate	High	Total	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Traitlike CA	-0.08	0.12*	-0.06	0.01	0.13*	0.06	-0.17**	-0.19**
Context CA								
Groups	-0.04	0.06	-0.03	-0.01	0.08	0.12*	-0.20**	-0.21**
Interpersonal	-0.06	0.12*	-0.08	-0.04	0.12*	0.07	-0.18**	-0.20**
Meetings	-0.07	0.10	-0.06	0.00	0.10	0.06	-0.16**	-0.16**
Public speaking	-0.09	0.11	-0.04	0.05	0.12*	-0.03	-0.07	-0.09

Notes:  $n = 281$ . \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$

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$p < 0.01$ , as well as between this orientation and most of the CA contexts: groups,  $r(280) = -0.20$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; interpersonal,  $r(280) = -0.18$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; meetings,  $r(280) = -0.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . No significant correlation was observed between a high Theory Y orientation and CA in the public speaking context; still, the result trended in the anticipated direction.

## Discussion

This study explored McGregor's prediction that Theory X/Y assumptions are influenced by communication dispositions. The findings revealed a complicated relationship between Theory X/Y and CA. One possible reason behind the results may be found in McGregor's (1960) original conceptualization of Theory X/Y. McGregor posited that Theory Y managers tend to assume that employees prefer collaborative business environments, desiring frequent and open communication with their superiors. Conversely, he speculated that Theory X managers assume that employees require top-down communication and need direct, one-way instructions from their superiors. Given Theory Y framework's heavy emphasis on dialogic communication, it is not surprising that this orientation would appeal more to individuals with low CA. Likewise, managers with moderate CA appear to gravitate more towards the Theory X orientation, probably because of its emphasis on one-way, top-down communication.

Based on McGregor's conceptualization of Theory Y managers, it is plausible that they would anticipate that most/all communication exchanges with employees would be positive and productive. To this end, Theory Y managers' positive expectations about communicating with their employees would likely decrease their CA. As Winiecki and Ayres (1999) argue, approaching communication exchanges with a positive and productive outlook can significantly diminish one's anxiety and apprehension about initiating and maintaining human exchanges. The reverse trend may be true for Theory X managers. This speculation is supported by previous research elucidating the connection between Theory X/Y orientations and interpersonal communication practices. For example, Theory Y managers' demonstrate a higher propensity for and practice of participatory decision making than their Theory X counterparts (Russ, 2011). Additionally, Theory Y managers tend to adopt more pro-social influence strategies while their Theory X colleagues exhibit more anti-social persuasive approaches (Neuliep, 1987).

There were a few surprising findings. For example, moderate scores on the Theory Y scale were positively correlated with CA in groups. Given the Theory Y framework's heavy emphasis on dialogic communication, it seems surprising that individuals with higher CA would possess a moderate orientation in this area. It is possible that this unexpected finding may be explained by participants' potential desire to report socially desirable responses unreflective of their true Theory X/Y orientation. The philosophy behind Theory Y has become fashionable and is reflective with what is regarded as "effective" and "ethical" management. The inclination to report socially desirable responses may have inflated managers' scores on the Theory Y scales and, thus, attenuated the positive relationship between a moderate Theory Y orientation and CA in groups. However, additional research should confirm such speculations. The "social desirability effect" might also help explain why moderate but not high scores on the Theory X scale were positively correlated with traitlike CA and CA. That is, managers with high CA may have reported socially desirable responses unreflective of their true Theory X orientation. It is also possible that Theory X managers do not necessarily have high CA. Indeed, they may not refrain from communicating in the



workplace, they just assume a different approach when communicating with and motivating their employees. Additional scholarship is warranted to test this assertion.

This study yields a number of implications. First, findings from this investigation extend the landscape of research on CA in the workplace. Such results add meaningful value to the surprisingly small but growing body of work examining linkages between CA and managerial forces. CA is frequently examined in academic settings but rarely in real organizational contexts. This study appeals to the repeated call for applied CA research in organizational settings (Burk, 2001).

Second, findings from this investigation deepen our understanding about how CA is related to managers' mental frames (Bolman and Deal, 1997; Senge, 1990). Critically examining managers' CA levels may indeed reveal a great deal about how they perceive their employees and how they motivate them. For example, managers with low traitlike CA likely possess a high Theory Y orientation, assuming that their employees are motivated, seek to build positive relationships, and prefer dialogic workplace communication. Conversely, managers with high traitlike CA likely possess a moderate Theory X orientation, anticipating that their subordinates generally have negative attitudes about work and their supervisors, are motivated almost exclusively by tangible rewards, and need top-down direction to be productive. It is conceivable that, regardless of the context, managers with low traitlike CA will naturally gravitate towards a high Theory Y orientation while those with low CA will instinctively exhibit a moderate Theory X approach. Such natural inclinations can become problematic if discrepancies exist between superiors' choice of Theory X/Y managerial style and the style that is most appropriate for the situation. For example, using a Theory Y approach because it is one's natural management style with a new employee who lacks the necessary level of skills, knowledge, and abilities would likely result in frustration and confusion on both ends. Considering the importance of managers' ability to "flex" their style to match the needs of the situation, it is worthwhile to examine the role CA plays in this process. That is, to what extent CA may bias or cripple managers' stylistic adaptation to different workplace situations?

Third, this study adds confirmatory evidence to the extant body of scholarship revealing the influence of CA over how managers communicate. As suggested by the this investigation's results, managers with low CA would likely communicate in a high Theory Y orientation, assuming that their employees prefer a dialogic workplace where they have a critical "voice" in workplace decisions. This may be a benefit if this communication approach is appropriate for the situation but a determinant if it is not. In turn, managers with high CA will likely communicate using a moderate Theory X style, assuming that their employees share a similar reticence with communication and, therefore, facilitate little to no discussion with employees, rarely if ever asking for their input. Based on findings from a study examining the link between CA and participatory communication, Russ (in press) concluded that supervisors with high CA may be professionally disadvantaged, and perhaps less effective than their peers with low CA in decision-making contexts that are appropriate for collaborative approaches. He explains, "Superiors with high CA would likely refrain from adopting [participatory decision making], even in cases where it may be appropriate and advantageous to solicit others' ideas, suggestions, and opinions before making a final decision or implementing a change."

Although this study yields a number of pertinent implications, a few limitations exist. First, the use of convenience sampling may have limited the generalizability of this study's findings. While participants did reflect a range of industries and organizations, it

seems wise for future studies to utilize a random selection of participants. Second, because this study relied on the use of self-reports, it is possible that participants may not have reported their true Theory X/Y or CA orientations. Although this study's measurements revealed a number of significant findings and were validated in past research, it seems worthwhile for future studies to employ other research methodologies such as observation to examine the link between Theory X/Y and CA behaviors.

In terms of future research, this study has raised a number of provocative questions worthy of continued exploration. First, are Theory Y managers able to communicate effectively with high CA individuals who prefer communicating via less immediate methods (e.g. e-mail vs face-to-face conversations)? Second, given their low CA, do Theory Y managers communicate differently than their Theory X counterparts; and, if so, are Theory Y managers perceived as more effective communicators than Theory X managers? Third, is there a discernable difference in the communication behaviors of Theory X vs Theory Y managers; and, if so, do employees ascribe a "good" or "bad" value to the managerial behaviors of either group?

When added to the body of management communication scholarship, this research deepens our understanding of how CA biases how managers' perceive and motivate their employees. In the final analysis, this study serves as a benchmark in understanding the link between Theory X/Y assumptions and CA. This work sheds light on the influence over how CA impacts the extent to which Theory Y managers communicate in the workplace. Moving forward, additional scholarship is needed to continue closing the gap between CA and management research, an endeavor worth pursuing by communication scholars.

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