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Vidhu Grace Noel
Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Commerce St. John's College,
Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

A study on the impact of human needs in the 21st century

Vidhu Grace Noel

Abstract

Needs are all pervasive. Needs theories attempt to identify internal factors that motivate an individual's behavior and are based on the premise that people are motivated by unfulfilled needs. Needs are psychological or physiological insufficiencies that provoke some type of behavioral response. The needs a person has can range from weak to strong and can vary based on environmental factors, time and place. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs helps to explain how these needs motivate us all. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs states that we must satisfy each need in turn, starting with the first, which deals with the most obvious needs for survival itself. Only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied are we concerned with the higher order needs of influence and personal development. And this Hierarchy theory still prevails in today's globalised era.

Keywords: impact, human needs, 21st century

Introduction

Abraham Maslow developed the Hierarchy of Needs model in 1940-50s USA, and the Hierarchy of Needs theory remains valid today for understanding human motivation, management training, and personal development. Indeed, Maslow's ideas surrounding the Hierarchy of Needs, concerning the responsibility of employers to provide a workplace environment that encourages and enables employees to fulfill their own unique potential (self-actualization), are today more relevant than ever. Abraham Maslow's book *Motivation and Personality*, published in 1954 (second edition 1970) introduced the Hierarchy of Needs, and Maslow extended his ideas in other work, notably his later book *Toward A Psychology Of Being*, a significant and relevant commentary, which has been revised in recent times by Richard Lowry, who is in his own right a leading academic in the field of motivational psychology.

Abraham Maslow was born in New York in 1908 and died in 1970, although various publications appear in Maslow's name in later years. Maslow's PhD in psychology in 1934 at the University of Wisconsin formed the basis of his motivational research, initially studying rhesus monkeys. Maslow later moved to New York's Brooklyn College.

The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs five-stage model below (structure and terminology - not the precise pyramid diagram itself) is clearly and directly attributable to Maslow; later versions of the theory with added motivational stages are not so clearly attributable to Maslow. These extended models have instead been inferred by others from Maslow's work. Specifically Maslow refers to the needs Cognitive, Aesthetic and Transcendence (subsequently shown as distinct needs levels in some interpretations of his theory) as additional aspects of motivation, but not as distinct levels in the Hierarchy of Needs.

Where Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is shown with more than five levels these models have been extended through interpretation of Maslow's work by other people. These augmented models and diagrams are shown as the adapted seven and eight-stage Hierarchy of Needs pyramid diagrams and models below.

There have been very many interpretations of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in the form of pyramid diagrams. The diagrams on this page are my own interpretations and are not offered as Maslow's original work. Interestingly in Maslow's book *Motivation and Personality*, which first introduced the Hierarchy of Needs, there is not a pyramid to be seen.

Correspondence Author:
Vidhu Grace Noel
Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Commerce St. John's College,
Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

Need hierarchy theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology that is based on five stages of human needs. The needs are as follows: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Those needs are listed in an order from the bottom to the top of Maslow's pyramid. Maslow's theory also states that the needs of a previous level need to be met before the needs of the next level can be worked toward. This means that a person can't work toward psychological needs when physiological needs, like food, water, and shelter, are not being met.

Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others.

Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behaviour. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on.

This is the definitive and original Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

While Maslow referred to various additional aspects of motivation, he expressed the Hierarchy of Needs in these five clear stages.

Here is a quick simple self-test based on the original Maslow's 5-level Hierarchy of Needs. It's not a scientific or validated instrument - merely a quick indicator, which can be used for self-awareness, discussion, etc.

1970s-adapted needs (7 levels)

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. **Esteem needs** - self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. **Cognitive needs** - knowledge, meaning, etc.
6. **Aesthetic needs** - appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc.
7. **Self-Actualization needs** - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.

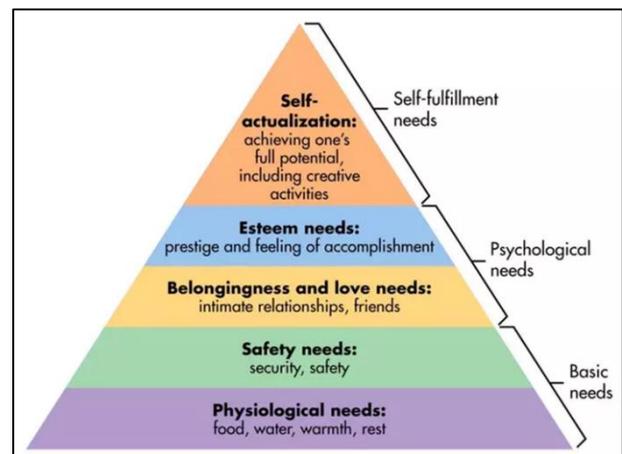
1990s-adapted needs (8 levels)

1. **Biological and Physiological needs** - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc.
3. **Belongingness and Love needs** - work group, family, affection, relationships, etc.
4. **Esteem needs** - self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility, etc.
5. **Cognitive needs** - knowledge, meaning, etc.
6. **Aesthetic needs** - appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form, etc.
7. **Self-Actualization needs** - realising personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.
8. **Transcendence needs** - helping others to achieve self-actualization.

Basic Maslow's Hierarchy Needs:-

1. **Physiological needs** - these are biological requirements for human survival, e.g. air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, sleep. If these needs are not satisfied the human body cannot function optimally. Maslow considered physiological needs the most important as all the other needs become secondary until these needs are met.
2. **Safety needs** - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability, freedom from fear.
3. **Love and belongingness needs** - after physiological and safety needs have been fulfilled, the third level of human needs is social and involves feelings of belongingness. The need for interpersonal relationships motivates behaviour. Examples include friendship, intimacy, trust, and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. Affiliating, being part of a group (family, friends, work).
4. **Esteem needs** - which Maslow classified into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, and independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige). Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity.
5. **Self-actualization needs** - realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. A desire "to become everything one is capable of becoming".

Maslow posited that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy:



"It is quite true that man lives by bread alone — when there is no bread. But what happens to man's desires when there is plenty of bread and when his belly is chronically filled?"

At once other (and "higher") needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers, dominate the organism. And when these in turn are satisfied, again new (and still "higher") needs emerge and so on. This is what we mean by saying that the basic human needs are organized into a hierarchy of relative prepotency" (Maslow, 1943, p. 375) ^[3]. Maslow continued to refine his theory based on the concept of a hierarchy of needs over several decades (Maslow, 1943, 1962, 1987) ^[3, 5, 8].

Regarding the structure of his hierarchy, Maslow (1987) ^[8] proposed that the order in the hierarchy "is not nearly as

rigid” (p. 68) as he may have implied in his earlier description.

Maslow noted that the order of needs might be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences. For example, he notes that for some individuals, the need for self-esteem is more important than the need for love. For others, the need for creative fulfillment may supersede even the most basic needs.

Maslow (1987) ^[8] also pointed out that most behaviour is multi-motivated and noted that “any behaviour tends to be determined by several or all of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them” (p. 71).

Deficiency needs vs. growth needs

Maslow believed that these needs are similar to instincts and play a major role in motivating behavior. Physiological, security, social, and esteem needs are deficiency needs, which arise due to deprivation. Satisfying these lower-level needs is important in order to avoid unpleasant feelings or consequences.

Maslow termed the highest level of the pyramid as growth needs. These needs don't stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person.

While the theory is generally portrayed as a fairly rigid hierarchy, Maslow noted that the order in which these needs are fulfilled does not always follow this standard progression. For example, he noted that for some individuals, the need for self-esteem is more important than the need for love. For others, the need for creative fulfillment may supersede even the most basic needs.

Maslow's theory and its significance in current situation

Although this theory is a psychological theory which could be used in Human Resource Management as it has been used in many organizations and a lot of research has been carried out for its use. The best usage of this theory would be in the subjects of marketing. Today's world of marketing is focusing from Bulk approach to more individualization approach with the introduction of smart-technology. The products are just not products but are backed by the services and value additional functions. The example of this would be an Hardware computer would be useless without a good software, a smart phone would not remain smart without good apps in it. Thus if we follow the trend it would be difficult for a product to stabilize in market for a longer duration as it used to be unless it focused on the subjective needs of an individual.

The products such as food products, mineral water, stationary items, books etc. can be targeted to the individuals who fall into the first category. While the needs which are related to safety such as insurance products, Housing and housing loans, software related to Job could be targeted to the second category achievers. The third category is of achievers who have achieved and are middle aged people so the products which give them fame and confidence and respect can be targeted to them e.g. High end Cars, watches, High end Cosmetic products etc.

Conclusion

The study of Maslow's theory of needs if studied in different prospective which is also the need of hour could be helpful not only for the well-being of human being but can be practically implemented in today's modern technological era.

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