

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examined and explained the concepts, models and theories that are relevant in the field of motivation and necessary to facilitate a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the research questions. The literature review was structured in the following form: basic ideas, organizational application, and criticism of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Most institutions and organizations strive to improve quality service and performance of their products, service, internal or external operations. The reason for this can vary depending on the goals of the business or the organization. Important goals could be to ensure a firm and stable work environment to promote good work performance. The competition between institutions and organizations can be a difficult task, making it difficult to reach higher goals and development (Bolman, 1997).

One strategy for reaching higher goals and development is motivation. Employees are motivated to render quality service and effectiveness which means that motivation is a key factor for progress within an institution or organization. A profound knowledge of motivation and its meaning is therefore essential for success of the institution (Paré, 2001). Motivating employees is essential for the achievement of organizational goals.

2.1 Main Ideas of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow was the first to use people's needs in motivation theory. He worked with individuals having neurotic ailments and assessed their hierarchy of needs in 1943. In his influential paper, *A Theory of Human Motivation*, this American psychologist proposed that healthy human beings have a certain number of needs, and that these needs are arranged in a hierarchy, with some needs (such as physiological and safety needs) being more primitive or basic than others (such as social and ego needs).

The hierarchies of needs according to Maslow are the following: Physiological needs, Safety needs, Love needs, Esteem needs and Self-Actualization Needs. Maslow's so-called 'hierarchy of needs' is often presented as a five-level pyramid, with higher needs coming into focus only once lower, more basic needs are met. In a simple word, an individual moves up the hierarchy, when a need is substantially realized (Shah and Shah, 2007).

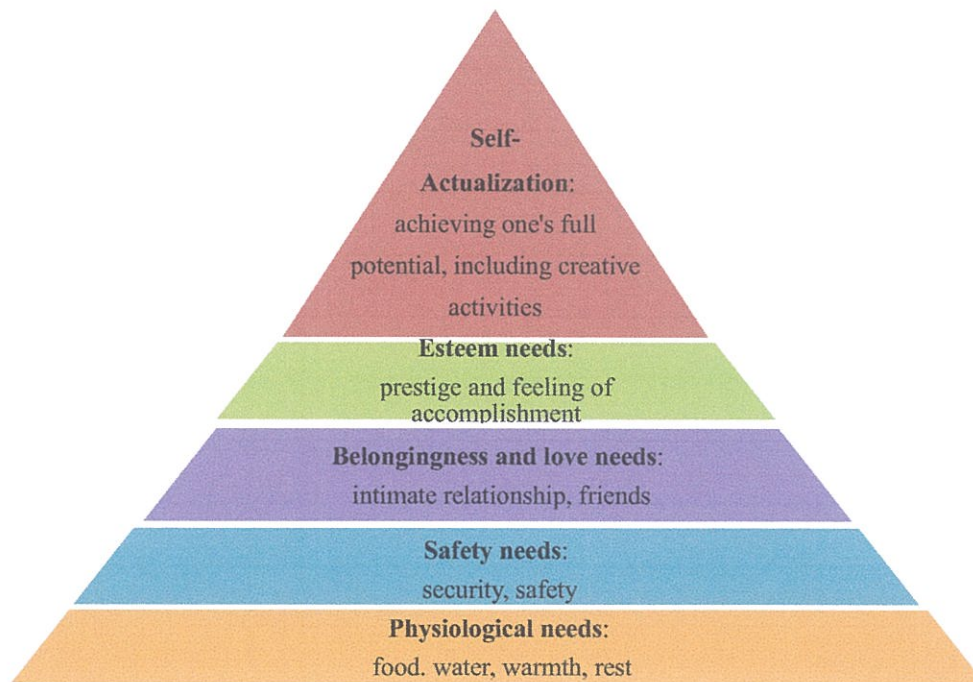


Figure 2.1: Figure Showing Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Sources: www.slideshare.net

1. **Physiological Needs:** The basic physical needs for sustaining the human life. For example food, water, sleep, medicine, education etc.
2. **Safety Needs:** To be free of physical danger and of the fear of losing a job, property, food or shelter and to protect against any emotional harm. To have a safe home, secure income, sufficient salary, benefits and medical insurance.
3. **Social Needs:** Because people are social beings, they need to belong and be accepted by others. They like to have family and friends. People try to satisfy their need for affection, acceptance and friendship. Interaction and cooperation with co-workers and leaders
4. **Esteem Needs:** To be held in esteem both by themselves and by others. This kind of need produces such satisfaction as power, prestige status and self-confidence. It includes both internal esteem factors like self-respect,

autonomy, achievements and external esteem factors such as status, recognition and attention.

5. Self-actualization: This is the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy. This need is to fulfill one's potential and self-fulfillment and maximize one's potential and to accomplish something. Employees in this rank try to maximize their knowledge, skills and performance to do a good job.

This five stages model can be divided into deficiency needs and growth needs. The first four levels are often referred to as deficiency needs (*D-needs*), and the top level is known as growth or being needs (*B-needs*).

The deficiency needs are said to motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the need to fulfill such needs will become stronger the longer the duration they are denied. For example, the longer a person goes without food, the hungrier they will become.

One must satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher-level growth needs. When a deficit need has been satisfied, it will go away, and the activities become habitually directed towards meeting the next set of needs that people have yet to satisfy. These then become our salient needs.

However, growth needs continue to be felt and may even become stronger once they have been engaged. Once this growth needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest-level called self-actualization.

Every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization. Unfortunately, progress is often disrupted by a failure to meet lower level needs. Life experiences, including divorce and loss of a job may cause an individual to fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy. Therefore, not everyone will move through the hierarchy in a uni-directional manner but may move back and forth between the different types of needs. Maslow noted only one in a hundred people become fully self-actualized because our society rewards motivation primarily based on esteem, love and other social needs.

The "five-level pyramid" published by Maslow probably provided the field of organizational behavior and management with a new way of looking at employees job attitudes or behaviors in understanding how humans are motivated. Probably the best-known conceptualization of human needs in organizations has been proposed by this theory. In addition, this Maslow's theory on motivation succeeds to attract a lot of management theorists.

According to Maslow, if people grew in an environment in which their needs are not met, they will be unlikely to function as healthy individuals or well-adjusted individuals. This idea was later applied to organizations in order to emphasize the idea that unless the employees get their needs met on the job, they will not perform as effective as possible.

In principle, the human being's desire is to satisfy his basic needs first and as he or she is always encouraged, seeking for higher needs. Maslow's message is simply this; people always have needs, and when one need is relatively fulfilled, others emerge in the predictable sequence to take its place. According to Maslow's theory, most individuals are not consciously aware of these needs yet we all supposedly proceed up the hierarchy of needs, one level at a time (Kreitner, 1995).

2.2 Organizational Application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The greatest value of Maslow's Need Theory lies in the practical implications it has for every management of organizations (Greenberg & Baron 2003 p.195). The rationale behind the theory lies on the fact that it is able to suggest managers on how to make their employee or subordinates become self-actualized. This is because self-actualized employees are likely to work at their maximum creative potentials. Therefore it is important to make employees meet this stage by helping meet their need organizations can take this following strategies to attain this stage.

Psychological: To survive, people need air, food, water, sleep, and so on. It is somehow can be related to employee engagement. In organizational application of Maslow's psychological need, employees need a comfortable work environment. If employees do their work in conditions of extreme hot or cold, they probably won't advance to the next level in the pyramid — they simply will not have the motivation. Similarly, employees need access to such things as restroom breaks, food, drinks, working equipment and so on. Companies can also meet physiological needs by providing adequate salary and benefit for the employee to house and feed her family. If a job pays employees enough that they can pay their rent and utilities and buy food and clothing, then the job satisfies the employees' basic needs. In addition, if the job is not unduly stressful, employees may have an easier time resting.

Safety: People must feel that they, their family, their property, and other resources are safe. When it comes to workplace, employees must have safety and security if they are to succeed in the workplace. If employees have to worry about their personal safety (for example, getting hurt or sick at work) or their professional security (read: losing their jobs), their motivation will suffer.

Ensuring a safe workplace may include providing ergonomic furniture and/or securing the building. Employers must provide a safe work environment with minimal job hazards and free from threats from other employees or clients. Employers can also help employees feel physically safe by taking sexual harassment and threats seriously and by having policies in place to deal with potential violence.

Other than physical safety, employees must also feel that their jobs are secure. If a company lays off a lot of employees or does not communicate with employees about layoffs, employees may feel frightened of losing their jobs -- which would mean no longer being able to meet their basic needs -- and be unmotivated to work.

Love/belonging: Once basic needs and security needs have been met, employees seek to meet their needs for belonging and love. Not surprisingly, creating a sense of love or belonging is a key aspect of building an engaged culture. Companies with a history of social and other team-building activities have higher degrees of employee engagement than companies that are all business, all the time. Therefore, it is very important for company to fulfill employees' social needs by encouraging a team environment with encouragement and respect among coworkers.

It is crucial for employees to feel comfortable with their coworkers and their supervisors. Even if they don't like or get along with everybody, they need to feel like they belong and are loved by at least some of the people they work with. If an employee feels alienated from the company, she or he may not do her best work. This is doubly important when it comes to employer/employee relationships. If employees do not feel their bosses value them or their contributions, they will not want to perform their jobs efficiently.

There are a lot of things which can be done in order to create a work environment that harbors opportunities for participation and interaction among coworkers. Start networking sessions before or after work. Happy hour can be a fun networking time, and it does not need to be at a bar. It could be at coffee shop or simply having lunch or dinner together.

Esteem: The highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs relate to how employees feel about themselves. Self-esteem is how much the employee likes and values himself. It has also something to do with a person's belief that she is doing a good job and that her contributions are recognized. Employees who feel like they are productive and doing something worthwhile with their time tend to have higher self-esteem than those who do not.

At this point of Maslow's hierarchy, the focus shifts to the personal ego; self-respect, achievement and receiving recognition for efforts given. Employees want to be respected and appreciated by their coworkers and their bosses. In a learning environment, this need can be addressed by deferring to someone's expertise or knowledge, recognizing accomplishments, and otherwise providing an environment where learners can feel the satisfaction of having others applaud accomplishments. You can also build in little accolades during training in which participants cheer or applaud the efforts of someone who accomplishes something, offers a solution, or otherwise does something worthy or group recognition. A simple round of applause for a good response might be appropriate from time-to-time to meet this need.

Beside the recognition from employers and coworkers, it is also important to employee to feel confident about themselves because confidence is a key. Any educator or coach will tell, if a student or player has confidence, that person will shine. The same principle holds true in the workplace. If employees believe in themselves and believed that others also believe in them, they will be more engaged and productive.

Therefore, employee recognition is a key part of engagement. At its core, recognition builds esteem. Unfortunately, even though recognition has so much impact — and is often free — it remains low on most companies' list of priorities.

Self-actualization: The highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is people's need to feel like he is living up to his potential in life and is using his creativity and passion. In the workplace, self-actualization translates to maximizing one's true potential. Employees want to be the very best at what they do, and the manager's job is to help them realize that. With self-actualization, employees feel trusted and empowered — in control of their jobs and their futures.

A key aspect of self-actualization is ensuring that employees are only put in positions for which they are capable. Sure, employees should feel challenged, but it is not good to let them be over their heads. Ultimately, this erodes engagement, as employees begin to doubt themselves. However, a company should still develop the employee's creativity by giving assignments that challenge employees (in a positive way) and allow them to be creative in their work. This way can fulfill the employees' need of self-actualization. It should be a major concern for employers to fulfill this highest needs of Maslow's theory because employees sometimes change careers if they find their current career can't meet these needs. However, if an employee is working in the right job for him and all other needs are met, he should be able to feel like his job satisfies his highest needs.

Think of the Army slogan of "Be all you can be". The premise was "Join us and we will provide you with the tools and support you need to reach your maximum potential." To this effect, it is crucial for a supervisor to identify where their employees hope to go as it relates to the level of achievement in the company and help them get there. However, the key to successfully applying Maslow's theory in the workplace is to remember that what motivates one employee does not necessarily motivate another.

2.3 Criticism of Maslow's Need Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is taught as a way of understanding people's motivations. It is actually a very useful guide for generally understanding why people behave the way they do. While it is also considered a very useful starting point because a lot of psychologists often do not get past first base when it comes to thinking about why people do things, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has its share of criticism.

2.3.1 Limited Scientific Evidence to Prove the Maslow's Theory

According to Graham & Messner (1998), there are generally three major criticisms directed to the need theory and other content theories of motivation. The first one is that the evidence for the hierarchical order of the needs proposed by Maslow is sparse. There is scant empirical data to support their conclusions.

Graham & Messner idea is actually aligned with McLeod (2007) statement; the most significant limitation of Maslow's theory concerns his methodology. Maslow formulated the characteristics of self-actualized individuals from undertaking a qualitative method called biographical analysis. He looked at the biographies and writings of 18 people he identified as being self-actualized. From these sources he developed a list of qualities that seemed characteristic of this specific group of people, as opposed to humanity in general.

From a scientific perspective, there are numerous problems with this particular approach. First, it could be argued that biographical analysis as a method is extremely subjective as it is based entirely on the opinion of the researcher. Personal opinion is always prone to bias, which reduces the validity of any data obtained. Therefore Maslow's operational definition of self-actualization must not be blindly accepted as scientific fact.

Furthermore, Maslow's biographical analysis focused on a biased sample of self-actualized individuals, prominently limited to highly educated white males (such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Albert Einstein, William James, Aldous Huxley, Gandhi, Beethoven). Although Maslow (1970) did study self-actualized females, such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Mother Teresa, they comprised a small proportion of his sample. This makes it difficult to generalize his theory to females and individuals from lower social classes or different ethnicity. Thus questioning the population validity of Maslow's findings.

2.3.2 Needs of Each Employee is not Uniform

Nadler & Lawler (1979) cited in Graham & Messner (2000) where also critical of the need theory of motivation. They argue that the theory makes the following unrealistic assumptions about employees in general that: (a) all employees are alike, (b) all situations are alike, (c) there is only one best way to meet needs. Another critic to this view was Basset-Jones & Lloyd (2004, p.961).

There are some cases which are suitable to serve as examples, such as some critics have noted vagueness in what is considered a "deficiency"; what is a deficiency for one is not necessarily a deficiency for another. Secondly, there seem to be various exceptions that frequently occur. For example, some people often risk their own safety to rescue others from danger.

Hofstede (1984) asserted that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was steeped in

ethnocentricity and based upon a Western ideology. Hofstede (1984) goes on to state that the Hierarchy of Needs alone does not account for differences in the cultural needs of societies and their unique social and intellectual needs. Hofstede (1984) uses the example of collectivist and individualistic societies to illustrate his assertion, stating that the needs of individualistic societies reflect the needs for self-actualization and self-fulfillment, whereas a collectivist society is focused upon the community and acceptance and belonging within this structure. To conclude, Maslow's hierarchy of needs neglects to illustrate and expand upon the difference between the social and intellectual needs of those raised in individualistic societies and those raised in collectivist societies.

The position of sex within the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has also come under criticism as it is categorized alongside breathing and food. Hofstede (1984) asserts that bracketing sex in this category forms an individualistic perspective that does not acknowledge the emotional and psychological impacts that this has upon an individual.

Cianci and Gambrel (2003) have also criticized the Hierarchy of Needs as too simplistic and suggest that it does not account for societal needs at a particular time, such as recession and war. Also studies such as those by Tay and Diener (2011) have demonstrated that the ranking of needs varies with age and does not appear to be the same across all age groups. Other criticisms of the Hierarchy of Needs discuss the methodology as unrepresentative as Maslow used the top 1% achievers of college populations and referred to well known academics and high achievers, such as Einstein in his research, making it impossible to generalize his findings to the wider population (Mittleman, 1991).

2.3.3 Fundamental Human Needs are Non-Hierarchical

Whilst acknowledging that human beings do have needs to be met, the existence of a rigid order of needs for every individual is questioned. Maslow says people attend to basic needs first and progressively deal with more complex matters until they reach a point he calls self-actualization at the top of the hierarchy's pyramid. Not everyone gets that far.

Another criticism concerns Maslow's assumption that the lower needs must be satisfied before a person can achieve their potential and self-actualize. This is not

always the case, and therefore Maslow's hierarchy of needs in some aspects has been falsified.

Through examining cultures in which large numbers of people live in poverty (such as India) it is clear that people are still capable of higher order needs such as love and belongingness. However, this should not occur, as according to Maslow, people who have difficulty achieving very basic physiological needs (such as food, shelter etc.) are not capable of meeting higher growth needs (McLeod, 2007).

Also, many creative people, such as authors and artists (e.g. Rembrandt and Van Gogh) lived in poverty throughout their lifetime, yet it could be argued that they achieved self-actualization. Another evidence that fundamental human needs are non-hierarchical is that needs, once they are met, do not simply disappear. Rather, certain environmental cues can make them come back. For example, an employee who has won over the company's heads and hearts and has built a line of sight between their role and where the company is going means she or he has collectively reached level five, or self-actualization. Suddenly, during a companywide layoff, engagement levels will be low. Even star employees who are at no risk of losing their jobs will worry. The layoff has resulted in a failure to meet employees' level-two needs: safety and security. According to McLeod (2007), due to this reason, the need of security has come back and employees do not feel secure. Even employees who know that their jobs are safe will worry about the company's future. (This explains why companies often see a spike in voluntary turnover after a companywide layoff. When people feel their jobs or employer is no longer secure, they often look for new opportunities to regain their sense of security.)

Psychologists now conceptualize motivation as a pluralistic behavior, whereby needs can operate on many levels simultaneously. A person may be motivated by higher growth needs at the same time, as lower level deficiency needs.

Nonetheless and regardless of the heavy criticism levied at the hierarchy of need theory, it is believed that this theory has made a significant contribution in the field of organizational behavior and management especially in the area of employee motivation and remains attractive to both researchers and managers alike (Kaur, 2013). The incorporation of the need theory into the work environment today could be as a result of the contributions made so far by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory.