

Motivation theories (Source: Author's own figure)

Maslow – hierarchy of needs

This is the earliest and most widely known theory of motivation, developed by Abraham Maslow (1943) in the 1940s and 1950s.

This theory condenses needs into five basic categories. Maslow ordered these needs in his hierarchy, beginning with the basic psychological needs and continuing through safety, belonging and love, esteem and self-actualization (Figure 2). In his theory, the lowest unsatisfied need becomes the dominant, or the most powerful and significant need. The most dominant need activates an individual to act to fulfil it. Satisfied needs do not motivate. Individual pursues to seek a higher need when lower needs are fulfilled.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often shown in the shape of a pyramid: basic needs at the bottom and the most complex need (need for self-actualization) at the top. Maslow himself has never drawn a pyramid to describe these levels of our needs; but the pyramid has become the most known way to represent his hierarchy.

1. Physiological needs (e.g. food, water, shelter, sleep)

It includes the most basic needs for humans to survive, such as air, water and food. Maslow emphasized, our body and mind cannot function well if these requirements are not fulfilled.

These physiological needs are the most dominant of all needs. So if someone is missing everything in his/her life, probably the major motivation would be to fulfil his/her physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, safety, love (also sex) and esteem, would most probably hunger for food (and also for money, salary to buy food) than for anything else.

If all the needs are unsatisfied, and the organism is then overruled by the physiological needs, all other needs may turn into the background. All capacities are put into the attendance of satisfying hunger. Any other things are forgotten or got secondary importance.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Source: Author's own figure)

2. Safety and security (secure source of income, a place to live, health and well-being)

If the physiological needs are relatively well contented, new needs will appear, the so called safety needs. Safety needs refer to a person's desire for security or protection. Basically everything looks less important than safety and protection (the physiological needs even sometimes). The healthy and fortunate adults in our culture are largely satisfied in their safety needs. The peaceful, sure, safety and unwavering society makes us feel in safety enough from criminal assaults, murder, unbelievable natural catastrophes, and so on. In that case people no longer have any safety needs as first-line motivators.

Meeting with safety needs demonstrated as a preference for insurance policies, saving accounts or job security, etc., we think about the lack of economic safety. Children have a greater need to feel safe. That is the reason why this level is more important for children.

Safety and security needs include: Personal security; Financial security; Health and well-being; Safety mesh against accidents, illnesses and their adverse impacts.

To tell the truth, in real dangers and traumas – like war, murder, natural catastrophes, criminal assault, etc. -, the needs for safety become an active, first-line and dominant mobilizer of human beings.

3. Belongingness and love (integration into social groups, feel part of a community or a group; affectionate relationships)

If both the physiological and the safety needs are fulfilled, the affection, love and belongingness needs come into prominence. Maslow claimed people need to belong and accepted among their social groups. Group size does not mean anything: social groups can be large or small. People need to love and be loved – both sexually and non-sexually – by others. Depending on the power and pressure of the peer group, this need for belonging may overbear the physiological and security needs.

Love needs involve giving and receiving affections (love is not synonymous with sex – sex is a physiological need). When they are unsatisfied, a person will immediately eliminate the lack of friends,

peers and partner. Many people suffer from social nervousness, loneliness, social isolation and also clinical depression because of the lack of this love or belongingness factor.

4. Esteem (respect for a person as a useful, honourable human being)

In our society most people long for a stable and high valuation of themselves, for the esteem of others and for self-respect or self-esteem.

Esteem means being valued, respected and appreciated by others. Humans need to feel to be valued, such as being useful and necessary in the world. People with low self-esteem often need respect from others. Maslow divided two types of esteem needs: a 'lower' version and a 'higher' version. The 'lower' version of esteem is the need for respect from others: for example attention, prestige, status and loving their opinion. The 'higher' version is the need for self-respect: for example, the person may need independence, and freedom or self-confidence.

The most stable and therefore the healthiest self-esteem is based on respect from others. External fame or celebrity and unwarranted adulation won't cause self-esteem, although you feel better for a while.

5. Self-actualization (individual's desire to grow and develop to his or her fullest potential)

'What humans can be, they must be.' (Maslow, 1954)

Self-actualization reflects an individual's desire to grow and develop to his/her fullest potential. People like opportunities, choosing his/her own versions, challenging positions or creative tasks. Maslow described this level as the '*need to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be*'. Maslow believed that people must overcome their other needs – described above –, not only achieve them. At this level, individual differences are the largest.

As each level is adequately satisfied, we are then motivated to satisfy the next level in the hierarchy, always new and higher needs are coming. This is what we mean, when the basic human needs are drawn like a pyramid, a hierarchy. Life experiences, including divorce and loss of job, may cause an individual to fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy. These five different levels were further sub-categorised into two main groups: *deficiency and growth needs*.