

EN_57947380 Criticism of A Theory

Maslow (1940) presented his theory of motivation, indicating that people are driven by needs in their life. In his theory, he formed a pyramid of needs which consisted of physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem and finally self-actualisation. At the bottom of the pyramid, which shows which need has priority are the physiological needs that consist of food, water, warmth, air and sleep. Then, safety needs involve: security, protection and freedom from threats. The third stage is love and belonging which assumes one needs acceptance and friendship, which is then followed by the fourth stage, self-esteem. Self-esteem consists of good self-opinion, accomplishments and reputation. Finally, the last stage, which is at the top of the pyramid, is the stage of self-actualisation where a person is living at their full potential and has achieved all personal dreams and aspirations. When one reaches the top of that pyramid, it means that they have achieved personal growth and development, and are truly happy.

This theory is widely known and taught not only in psychology but also in business—usually used in relation to motivational psychology and organizational management. It specifically shows one's ability to reach their full potential in life by having “completed” the stages in the hierarchy from bottom to top. However, this theory lacks empirical evidence, and it cannot be easily concluded that the stages are concrete, thus not being completely convincing. This theory has mostly been developed based on qualitative data and personal observations, limiting its reliability.

Although it is universal and still influential, we cannot assume that everyone passes through the same stages or in the same order. Cultural and individual differences may affect how someone follows this hierarchy and what is considered important to accomplish in their own minds. This point can be supported by Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions, which play a role in one's priorities in life when addressing self-actualisation. For instance, someone in a collectivistic society would prioritise the need of self-esteem which concerns social relationships, rather than their own individual growth and development. Moreover, individual differences are evident if someone for example has a family and a low economic status; they may not have adequate warmth in their household which assumes they have not fully

achieved their physiological needs, but they have achieved the stage of love and belonging by having a family. By this, we can conclude that not everyone passes through the same stages at the same time periods, nor are the stages prioritised in the same way, hence not taking into consideration life experiences and personality differences. Due to this, Maslow's theory is challenged, and its rigidity is questioned. We can conclude that someone can reach the stage of self-actualisation and their full potential, without passing through all the stages or in "correct" order. Ultimately, the theory is not completely convincing since there is no evidence of its applicability and rigidness in real life.

To sum up, Maslow's hierarchy shows people's needs throughout their lives in categories and what are the requirements for them to be fulfilled. Even though it is supported till today and easily applied to real-life settings, the limitations provided make the model less persuasive.