

EN_60160316 Criticism of A Theory

"The need hierarchy, described in book chapter 10.8, is a psychological theory proposed by Abraham Maslow that categorizes human needs into a pyramid with five levels, where individuals are motivated to fulfill lower-level basic needs before satisfying higher-level needs, as they are prioritized. On the bottom, there are physiological needs such as food, air, and sleep. After that, there are safety needs (Security, protection), belonging and love (acceptance, friendship), and esteem needs (good self-opinion, reputation). At the top is the need of self-actualization, meaning that the person lives to their full potential and achieves personal dreams.

While this theory provides a useful overview of human motivation, its strict order and idea that it applies to every individual have often been questioned in research. First, a limitation of Maslow's model is the assumption that needs progress in a strict order. This idea implies that, for instance, the need of belonging and love cannot be prioritized until physiological and safety needs are met. However, research and real-life examples often disagree with this. For example, Viktor Frankl's observations in concentration camps during the holocaust suggest that individuals can maintain a sense of purpose and experience personal growth even under an extreme loss of basic needs. Thus, higher-level motivations can be essential even when basic needs are not met. Additionally, studies in less-developed countries, where people face poverty or little safety, show that individuals often value social connections as much as, or even more than, physiological security. These studies question the theory's assumption of a universal, linear priority and suggest that needs may be more interdependent and culturally influenced than Maslow thought.

Moreover, reflecting on the concept also makes me reconsider my own motivations and goals. For example, the pyramid would suggest that I need to fully satisfy basic needs before I can focus on self-actualization. However, I find myself motivated by academic and personal growth, even while having unmet needs, such as financial stability as a student. This motivation does not fit within the framework of Maslow's hierarchy, which has led me to question the theory's validity.

In conclusion, while Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides an essential understanding of motivational needs, its limitations regarding a strict order, cultural bias, and individual differences indicate that it is not fully inclusive. The model may serve better as a flexible guide rather than a strict order of human motivation.