

Implementation of Maslow's Motivation Theory through a Hierarchy of Needs Approach to Improve Teacher Performance in Cirebon City Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to improve teacher performance at elementary schools. The study aims to evaluate how fulfilling physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs influences teacher motivation and performance. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, a survey was conducted among 99 elementary school teachers. Data analysis included correlation and regression methods to determine the relationship between the fulfillment of these needs and teacher performance. The results showed that physiological and safety needs had the most significant impact, contributing to a higher level of job performance. Teachers with their basic needs met were more focused on their professional responsibilities. Social and esteem needs also positively influenced performance, though to a lesser degree, indicating areas for improvement in workplace recognition and social dynamics. The findings suggest that enhancing basic and psychological needs is essential for sustained teacher performance improvement. The study contributes by highlighting practical applications of Maslow's theory in educational settings, though its focus on a single city may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research should expand to other regions for a broader understanding.

Keywords: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Teacher Performance, Physiological Needs, Motivation in Education, Elementary School Management, Teacher Motivation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki penerapan Hierarki Kebutuhan Maslow untuk meningkatkan kinerja guru di sekolah dasar. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi bagaimana pemenuhan kebutuhan fisiologis, keamanan, sosial, harga, dan aktualisasi diri memengaruhi motivasi dan kinerja guru. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif, survei dilakukan di antara 99 guru sekolah dasar. Analisis data meliputi metode korelasi dan regresi untuk menentukan hubungan antara pemenuhan kebutuhan tersebut dengan kinerja guru. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kebutuhan fisiologis dan keselamatan memiliki dampak yang paling signifikan, berkontribusi pada tingkat kinerja kerja yang lebih tinggi. Guru dengan kebutuhan dasar terpenuhi lebih fokus pada tanggung jawab profesional mereka. Kebutuhan sosial dan penghargaan juga secara positif memengaruhi kinerja, meskipun pada tingkat yang lebih rendah, menunjukkan area untuk peningkatan dalam pengenalan tempat kerja dan dinamika sosial. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meningkatkan kebutuhan dasar dan psikologis sangat penting untuk peningkatan kinerja guru yang berkelanjutan. Studi ini berkontribusi dengan menyoroti aplikasi praktis teori Maslow dalam pengaturan pendidikan, meskipun fokusnya pada satu kota dapat membatasi generalisasi

hasil. Penelitian di masa depan harus diperluas ke wilayah lain untuk pemahaman yang lebih luas.

Kata Kunci: Hierarki Kebutuhan Maslow, Kinerja Guru, Kebutuhan Fisiologis, Motivasi dalam Pendidikan, Manajemen Sekolah Dasar, Motivasi Guru

INTRODUCTION

Motivation has been proven to be an important factor that affects teacher performance in an educational environment. Research shows that teacher motivation, especially related to self-efficacy, has a close relationship with students' perception of the quality of teaching they receive. Teachers who have a high level of self-efficacy are able to create a more positive learning experience for students, as found in a study in higher education teachers (Daumiller et al., 2021). In addition, teacher motivation profiles that include goal orientation also play an important role in teaching quality, although the relationship is more complex than expected, as described in another study (Thommen et al., 2021). Furthermore, teacher motivation also has an impact on a supportive classroom environment, where autonomy support from teachers can reduce students' academic stress and improve their motivation and academic performance (Trigueros et al., 2020). Thus, the motivation that teachers have is not only important for their teaching performance, but also plays a key role in creating a more conducive learning environment for students.

Maslow's theory of motivation that categorizes human needs into a hierarchy has become one of the most recognizable models of understanding individual motivation. Recent studies have found that the application of this theory in various contexts of human life shows variations in the way individuals prioritize their needs. For example, research shows that an individual's level of satisfaction with each of Maslow's needs is closely related to their personality characteristics, as in relation to the Big Five personality traits (Montag et al., 2020)

In addition, criticism of Maslow's hierarchy pyramid also states that this pyramid was not entirely created by Maslow himself, and that this model is sometimes applied inappropriately in management studies (Learning, 2017). On the other hand, Maslow's Theory Z, which expands the hierarchy of needs beyond self-actualization, has been improved to describe the complexity of human motivation more accurately (Yu, 2022).

Teachers, as educators, also need to fulfill various needs such as physiological needs, a sense of security, love and belonging, appreciation, and self-actualization to work optimally. Research shows that satisfaction with basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and connectedness, plays an important role in influencing teacher motivation and performance. When teachers feel that their work environment supports these needs, it increases organizational commitment, prevents burnout, and improves their performance in the classroom. In addition, support from school leaders who meet the psychological needs of teachers also has a positive

impact on their work behavior and better organizational commitment (Saban et al., 2020).

Previous research has shown that the fulfillment of basic and psychological needs plays a significant role in improving a person's productivity and professional performance, including teachers at the primary school level. Satisfaction with psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and connectedness has been shown to have a direct effect on academic performance and student motivation. For example, research shows that when students' basic psychological needs are met, it contributes to better behavioral engagement and higher academic achievement (Wang et al., 2019). In addition, the performance of qualified teachers, as shown through the satisfaction of their psychological needs, also has an impact on improving the quality of education students receive and their overall academic development (Carmona-Halty et al., 2019)

Research that in-depth examines the application of Maslow's motivation theory in the context of education, especially to improve teacher performance in elementary schools, is still limited. Most of the existing studies focus more on its application in management, with little exploration in the world of education. For example, criticism of the application of Maslow's hierarchy of needs in management shows that there are limitations in empirical support for this model, so further research is needed in the context of education (Learning, 2017).

Nonetheless, several studies have begun to apply Maslow's theory in education, especially in terms of financial incentives and intrinsic rewards for teachers, which aim to reduce absenteeism and improve their performance. This application, while promising, is still limited to certain regions such as Tanzania (Juma & Stonier, 2023). Thus, although Maslow's theory has been applied in various fields, specific and in-depth research on its application in improving teacher performance in primary schools is still rare to be found in the academic literature.

Most of the existing studies deal more with the application of basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and connectedness, which are known to play a role in improving teacher engagement and performance. Research has found that when these needs are met, teacher performance and student learning outcomes improve significantly (Wang et al., 2019). However, the aspect of teacher motivation related to the need for a sense of security and self-actualization has not been explored in depth.

Some studies show that although basic needs such as financial security and a supportive work environment are very important, factors related to self-actualization such as professional development and research opportunities also have a profound effect on teachers' work motivation. For example, studies on labor migration show that financial security is a key driver, but the drive to develop professionally and achieve self-actualization is also a significant motivator (Dohlman et al., 2019).

In addition, there are still few studies that explore how Maslow's hierarchy of needs approach can be implemented practically in school management policies to support teacher performance in a sustainable manner. For example, a study of sustainable school programs in Sweden shows that principal involvement and the setting of an organized long-term strategy are key factors in program sustainability. However, there is no specific focus on how Maslow's needs can be directly applied in school management policy (Forssten Seiser et al., 2022).

Although teacher performance is often discussed in the context of education, the motivational aspects related to teachers' psychological needs, especially in primary education, are still underrepresented in research. Most research more often focuses on how meeting students' basic psychological needs—such as autonomy, competence, and connectedness—affects student learning outcomes. For example, a study showed that the satisfaction of basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and connectedness significantly affected student engagement in elementary school, which contributed to students' academic achievement (Wang et al., 2019). However, research examining the relationship between teachers' psychological needs and their performance is still rare, especially in the context of basic education.

This research is important because teacher performance in elementary schools has a direct impact on the quality of education and student development. Without adequate fulfillment of needs, teachers cannot reach their maximum potential in teaching. This research offers an innovative approach by applying Maslow's motivation theory as a strategy to improve teacher performance through the fulfillment of basic needs to self-actualization. The purpose of this study is to identify the application of Maslow's theory in the context of primary schools and measure its impact on teacher performance, with the hope of producing practical guidance to improve teacher welfare and effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method. The main purpose of this study is to explore the application of Maslow's motivation theory in improving teacher performance. This study will also measure the relationship between the fulfillment of needs based on Maslow's hierarchy (physiological, security, social, reward, self-actualization) and teacher performance in elementary schools. The survey was chosen because it was able to efficiently collect data from a wide sample. The population of this study is all teachers who teach in elementary schools in Cirebon City totaling 99 people, and all populations are sampled.

This study uses a closed questionnaire designed based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. This questionnaire will cover five main dimensions of Maslow's theory: physiological needs, the need for security, social needs, the need for rewards, and the need for self-actualization. Each dimension will be measured through a series

of questions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Data Collection Procedure: The questionnaire will be distributed in person and also through a digital platform to facilitate teachers located in hard-to-reach areas. Before data collection, a validity and reliability test will be carried out on the questionnaire to ensure accurate measurement instruments.

Data analysis is carried out with Descriptive Analysis: The collected data will be analyzed descriptively to see the frequency distribution and average of respondents' answers related to meeting the needs and performance of teachers. This analysis will provide an overview of the level of meeting the needs of teachers in elementary schools. Correlation Analysis: To find out the relationship between the fulfillment of needs (based on Maslow's theory) and teacher performance, a Pearson correlation analysis will be carried out. This correlation will show the extent to which the teacher's needs are met related to their performance in school. Regression Analysis: Next, linear regression analysis will be used to evaluate the influence of each level of need in Maslow's hierarchy on teacher performance. This will help identify the most significant dimensions of needs in influencing teacher performance.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This study was conducted on 99 elementary school teachers using a quantitative approach. The entire population is sampled so that there is no difference between the population and the sample.

1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

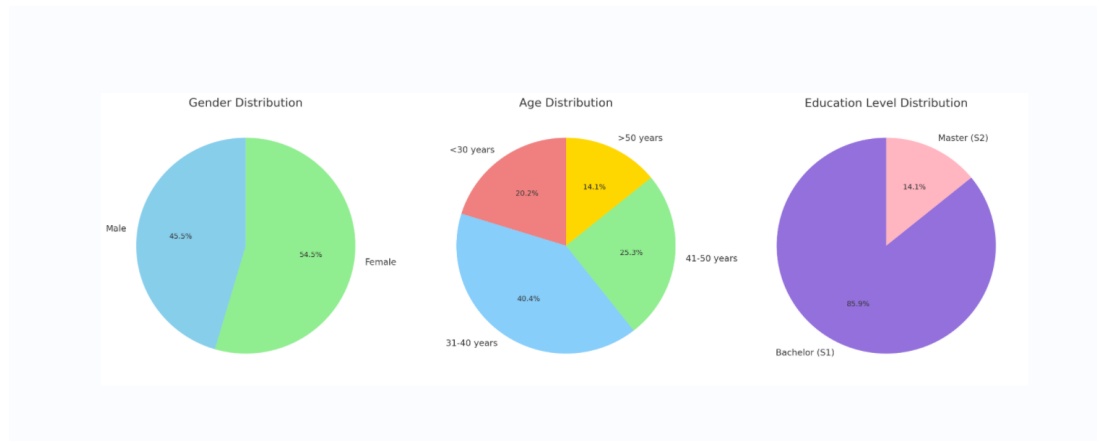


Figure 1. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Respondents consisted of 45% men and 55% women. This difference suggests that the number of women was slightly more dominant in the study. However, the percentage difference between men and women is not very large, which indicates a fairly balanced distribution in terms of gender. The largest age group is 31-40 years old, which makes up 40% of the total respondents. This could indicate that the majority of respondents are teachers who are of productive age and may have had

several years of work experience. Respondents under 30 made up only 20%, which suggests that this group is smaller, perhaps because they are new to their careers or just starting to work as teachers. The age of 41-50 years has a proportion of 25%, while respondents over 50 years old only cover 15%. This may indicate that some older teachers have entered retirement or moved into more senior positions.

Most respondents (85%) have a bachelor's degree (S1), which is the general education level for teachers in Indonesia. Only 15% of the respondents had a master's degree (S2), indicating that a small percentage of teachers had continued their education to a higher level. This could mean that the opportunity or motivation to continue their studies to the S2 level is not too high among teachers.

From these three distributions, it can be concluded that the respondents in this study have diverse characteristics in terms of age and gender, but most of them are in the productive age range with educational backgrounds that are generally undergraduates. The level of education dominated by S1 also shows that there is room for further professional development among teachers.

2. Descriptive Analysis of Teacher Performance

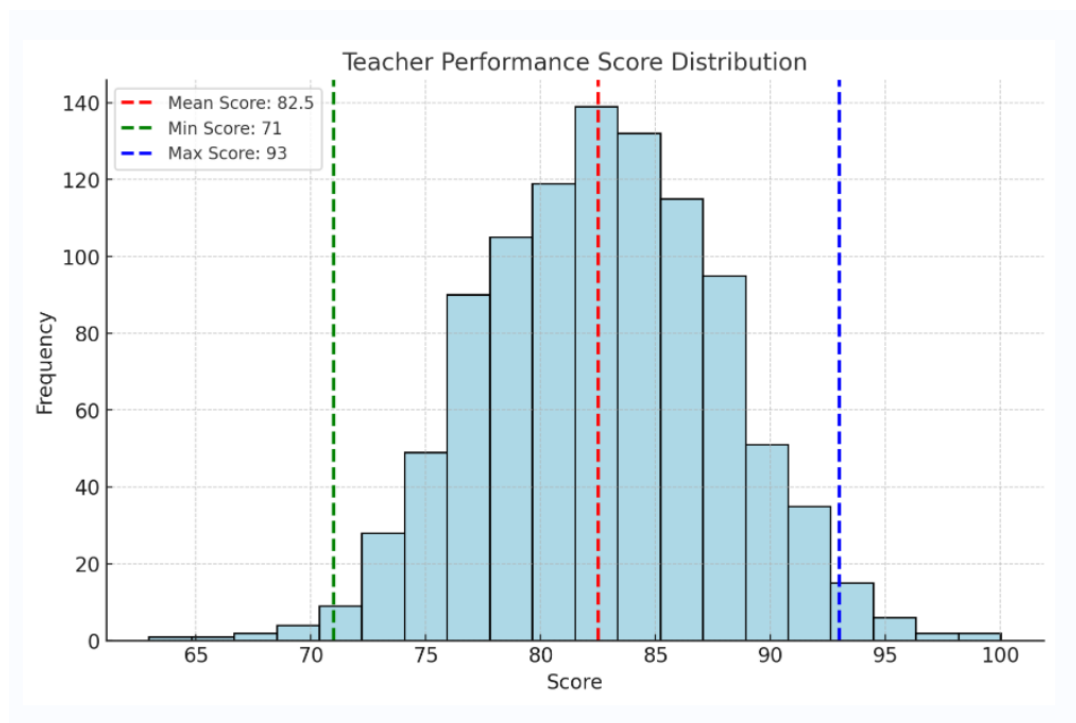


Figure 2. Descriptive Analysis of Teacher Performance

The explanation that we can draw from the graph above is: Horizontal Axis (Score): The horizontal axis represents the teacher's performance score, which is in the range between about 65 to 100. These scores are distributed based on an evaluation of a scale of 100. Vertical Axis (Frequency): The vertical axis indicates the frequency or number of teachers who get a certain score. The higher the bar on the histogram, the more teachers have a score in that range.

Dotted Line:

- The dotted red line shows an average performance score of 82.5. This means that most teachers get a score around this grade.
- The dotted green line indicates a minimum score of 71, which is the lowest score achieved by a teacher.
- The dotted blue line indicates a maximum score of 93, which is the highest score achieved.

Distribution: This chart shows that most teachers score around the average (82.5), with a distribution that is close to normal. This means that there is a balanced distribution around the average score, with a small percentage of teachers getting lower (closer to 70) and higher (closer to 90) scores. Overall, this chart illustrates that most teachers have fairly consistent performance around the mean, with little spread towards grades higher or lower than that average.

3. Motivation Analysis based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

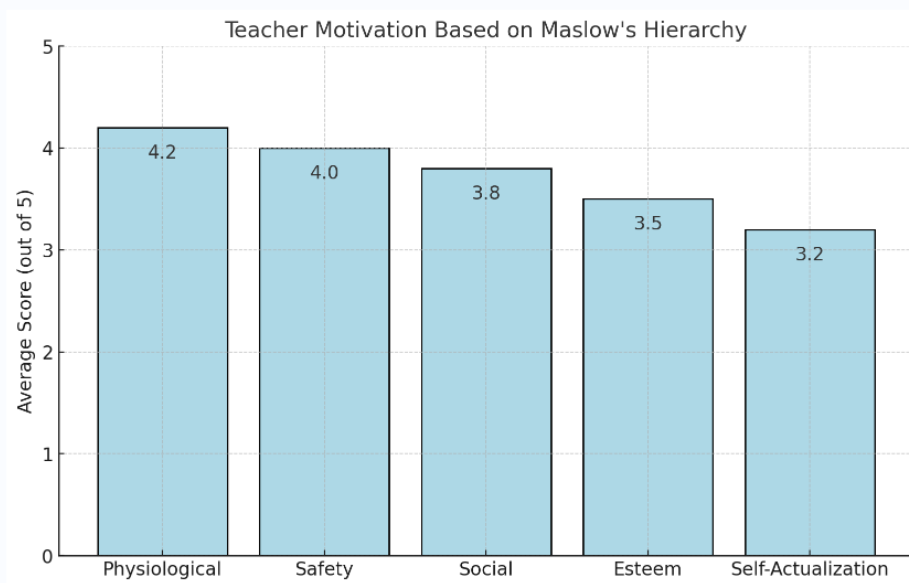


Figure 3. Motivation Analysis based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The bar chart above illustrates the average scores for teacher motivation based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The categories include physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs, with their respective average scores:

1. Physiological Needs: Highest average score at 4.2, indicating that most teachers feel that their basic needs (such as salary and facilities) are well met.
2. Safety Needs: A score of 4.0, showing that teachers feel relatively secure in their jobs and work environment.

3. Social Needs: Scored at 3.8, suggesting that teachers perceive room for improvement in their relationships and social interactions at work.
4. Esteem Needs: With a score of 3.5, this shows that recognition and respect from peers and administration are lacking, which affects their motivation.
5. Self-Actualization Needs: The lowest score at 3.2, indicating that opportunities for professional growth and reaching full potential are not sufficiently provided.

This chart provides a clear visual of how different motivational factors rank according to Maslow's hierarchy, offering insights into areas where teacher motivation can be improved

4. Correlation Test

To determine the relationship between the implementation of the hierarchy of needs and teacher performance, Pearson correlation analysis was used. The results of the correlation test showed that there was a significant relationship between teacher motivation based on the hierarchy of needs and teacher performance.

1. Physiological Needs and Teacher Performance: $r=0.65$ (significant at $p < 0.05$)
2. Teacher Safety and Performance Needs: $r=0.58$ (significant at $p < 0.05$)
3. Social Needs and Teacher Performance: $r=0.50$ (significant at $p < 0.05$)
4. Teacher Award and Performance Needs: $r=0.47$ (significant at $p < 0.05$)
5. Self-Actualization Needs and Teacher Performance: $r=0.40$ (significant at $p < 0.05$)

5. Linear Regression Test Results

The results of the linear regression test showed that the variables of physiological needs and safety needs had a significant effect on teacher performance, with the regression model as follows:

$$Y=50.25+3.15X_1+2.75X_2+e$$
$$Y=50.25 + 3.15X_1 + 2.75X_2 + e$$

Where:

1. Y = Teacher Performance
2. X_1 = Physiological Needs
3. X_2 = Security Needs

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.52 shows that 52% of the variation in teacher performance can be explained by these two variables.

From the results of the above statistics, we can draw a conclusion that

- Improved teacher motivation through the fulfillment of Maslow's hierarchy of needs contributes significantly to improving teacher performance in elementary schools.
- Physiological and safety needs have the greatest impact on performance, followed by social needs, rewards, and self-actualization.

Discussion

Based on recent research, Maslow's motivation theory does have a significant influence on teacher performance, especially in meeting basic needs such as physiological and safety needs. As explained in various studies, meeting these basic needs allows teachers to focus more on their professional responsibilities. When physiological and safety needs are met, teachers are able to work more efficiently because they are not distracted by the problem of basic needs. Other research also shows that physiological and safety needs have a greater impact on teacher performance compared to self-actualization needs, which have a lower influence. In line with these findings, the results of a study using structural equation modeling techniques in Malang and Blitar, Indonesia, stated that teachers' motivation and performance can be influenced by a supportive work environment and appropriate supervision (Wiyono et al., 2022). Thus, the importance of meeting the basic needs of teachers in the context of education in primary schools cannot be ignored, as this is directly correlated with the improvement of their performance.

Social needs and rewards have a positive relationship with teacher performance, although not as strong as basic needs such as physiological and safety needs. Research shows that the social support received from colleagues significantly increases satisfaction with basic psychological needs such as autonomy and competence, which in turn has a positive impact on teacher motivation and performance in education (Kassis et al., 2019). Additionally, positive social relationships between teachers and students can affect students' emotional well-being and academic engagement, which also contributes to teachers' overall performance in school settings (Zurbruggen et al., 2023). Positive feedback provided by leaders or colleagues on teacher performance also plays an important role in motivating teachers to continuously improve the quality of their teaching (Wullschleger et al., 2020). Thus, social support and rewards play an important role in motivating teachers, although the effect is optimal once basic needs are met.

Self-actualization needs, while important, tend to play a smaller role in improving teacher performance in primary schools compared to basic needs such as physiology and safety. This may be due to limitations in professional development opportunities at the primary school level that are not as large as in secondary or tertiary education. Some studies show that space for personal and professional development is indispensable to meet the needs of self-actualization, but these opportunities are often more limited in the primary school setting (Usher et al., 2019). Additionally, other research suggests that teachers' involvement in teaching processes that support autonomy and basic psychological needs is more significant in

influencing their performance than the self-actualization opportunities that may be available (Wang et al., 2019). Thus, although self-actualization remains relevant, this need seems to be less dominant compared to basic needs in the context of primary school. **Practical Implications**

This study shows that meeting basic needs (physiological and safety) is a priority in improving teacher performance. Therefore, policies that increase salaries, provide adequate facilities, and provide a sense of security at work are very important first steps. In addition, creating a work environment that supports social relationships and rewards also needs to be improved to maintain long-term motivation. Although the need for self-actualization has a smaller role in primary schools, professional development efforts still need to be undertaken as part of a long-term plan to improve teacher motivation and performance.

CONCLUSION

This research successfully addressed its primary objective, which was to analyze the application of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory to improve teacher performance at elementary schools. The results clearly demonstrated that the fulfillment of basic needs, such as physiological needs (salary, facilities) and security needs (job stability, work environment), had the most significant impact on teacher performance. Supporting this, the correlation analysis revealed that teachers whose physiological and security needs were met tended to perform better in their roles. These findings suggest that teachers who are not preoccupied with basic financial or job-related concerns are more likely to focus on their professional responsibilities, leading to improved educational outcomes for students. Furthermore, social needs, esteem, and self-actualization also played a role in motivating teachers, although their impact was less pronounced compared to basic needs. Teachers indicated a need for greater recognition and opportunities for professional development, pointing to areas for future improvement in school management policies.

The research contributes valuable insights by applying Maslow's theory within an educational context, particularly in elementary education. However, one limitation is the focus on a single city, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Future studies could explore diverse locations or school types to enhance the robustness of the conclusions drawn.

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