

## Conference Paper

# Needs Hierarchy in T. B. Silalahi's Novel *Toba Dreams*

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## Abstract

This paper is a descriptive research which concerns the level of human life needs depicted in T. B. Silalahi's Novel *Toba Dreams*. This study focuses on the level of life needs which are wanted to be quickly achieved as the key to success. The purpose of this study is to describe the level of life needs of the antagonist named Ronggur based on Maslow's life needs theory (1987). The fundamental problem is the behavior of the protagonist, Sergeant Tebe, who wants his first child Ronggur to be a role model in the indigenous *Batak* family. This research applied Maslow's theory which divides hierarchy of needs into psychological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and needs for self actualization. The findings indicate that all the antagonist's life needs could be achieved by hook or by crook. This study can give a lesson that the community can reach and meet their needs depending on the strength of wills.

**Keywords:** needs hierarchy, psychological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, needs for self actualization.

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## 1. Introduction

Motivation is a topic that is extensively researched. Halfway the twentieth century the first important motivational theory arose, namely Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1987).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (HON) is a developmental psychology theory proposed by Maslow (1987). This theory puts forward the idea that individuals move through a fundamental number of hierarchical motivations, in a unique order, based upon both physiological and psychological needs. These 'needs' to which Maslow referred, in order of importance, are: physiological, safety, belongingness, love, self-esteem, self-actualization and self-transcendence (1987). It is useful to note, at this point, that the Hierarchy of need is often represented in literature as a pyramid, yet within his writing, Maslow did not use this representation.

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For the purpose of clarity, the relevant concepts are defined in the sections that follow. First, a “need” (the most critical concept) is defined; then, operational definitions of the specific needs are provided in the subsequent section on scale development.

The first state in the HON, and according to Maslow the most fundamental, accounts for basic human physiological needs such as food, water, homeostasis, sex and breathing. Moving on, when these needs are met, the second stage refers to both psychological and physical safety, such as security of body, family, property and morality. The next stage in the HON refers to love and belongingness and incorporates intimacy and friendships [9].

Maslow refers to these three stages as deficiency needs, asserting that if these three areas are not met then the individual will experience negative physiological and psychological consequences. The HON suggests that if these fundamental needs are met then an individual can focus upon higher needs such as self esteem and respect, eventually reaching a ‘meta motivated’ state [9]. In this state the individual achieves self-actualization and can focus upon the development of the self by way of creativity, morality, acceptance and the loss of prejudicial perspectives [9]. The stages in the HON are not mutually exclusive and may overlap based upon which need dominates and motivates the individual at any one time dependent upon individual psychological and physical circumstances.

Based on this, the writer wishes to analyze the novel *Toba Dreams* by TB. Silalahi by using Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Maslow (1987) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this will be the first thing that motivates our behavior. Once that level is fulfilled the next level up is what motivates us, and so on. Based on the above description, this research takes the title Needs Hierarchy in T. B. Silalahi’s *Toba Dreams*.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper *A Theory of Human Motivation in Psychological Review*. Maslow felt human beings have certain basic needs that they must meet before they can fulfill their other developmental need (Crandel, 1987: 48). Abraham Maslow is traditionally associated with humanist psychology, but major theorist in all three areas influenced him; these are psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic philosophies of human nature, and he made significant contributions to each phase of the development of the field of psychology between 1930 and 1970. He is the expert of human psychology

who proposed the hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow states that humans are born with a set of needs that not only energize but direct behavior (Franken, 1943: 437).

Individual well-being can be demonstrated through Maslow's five leveled hierarchy because motivation is the driving force of humans. It also includes the objectives that lead to satisfaction and happiness. The strength of the theory lies in the fact that it supports management practices that encourage employee autonomy and personal growth as these will enable employees to satisfy esteem and self-actualization needs.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Physiological needs

The physiological need is the lowest stage in hierarchy of needs. These include needs that are of prime importance to the immediate survival of the individual, for instance the need for food, water, air, and sleep (Larsen, 1986:346). Physiological survival is considered to be the most basic motivator of human behavior. Young has summarized the work on appetite in its relation to body needs. If the body lacks some chemical, the individual will tend (in an imperfect way) to develop a specific appetite or partial hunger for that missing food element (Maslow, 1987: 346).

The basic physiological needs are probably fairly apparent—these include the things that are vital to our survival. Some examples of the physiological needs include Food, Water, Breathing, and Homeostasis. Maslow (1987) argued that these needs are the most dominant needs which the person will try to satisfy first; in the workplace, this level of needs reflects the employee's needs to have a suitable working environment (clean and fresh air, reasonable temperature, enough light and work-space) and good pay.

### 2.2. Security and safety needs

According to Maslow, when the first stage that is the physiological needs have been satisfied, the new need will emerge and so on. Safety and security needs come to the next in hierarchy of needs. This need which may categorize roughly as the safety needs are having a place to live, security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, from anxiety, and so on (Maslow, 1987:397). Franken states that although the child may look to parents for his or her own safety, safety for adults come from making the environment as predictable as possible. In such an environment one can

then pursue one's other needs without constant fear that something or someone will threaten one's safety.

### 2.3. Social needs

After the physiological and the safety needs are fairly well gratified, then the human will emerge the next need that is the belongingness and love needs (Maslow, 1987:43). The love needs have been described in different ways: in terms of social relationships, connection with other people, and belonging to groups or partnerships. Maslow was careful to differentiate between the love needs and sexuality; he states that love needs are greater than a physiological desire to procreate because they represent a human yearning for emotional connection that is imbued with a different quality than sexual desire. According to Maslow above, sex includes in physiological need. It means that love needs involve both giving and receiving love such Maslow's statement that people must have the opportunity to love and be loved.

### 2.4. Esteem needs

When the physiological, safety, and love needs are satisfied, a set of needs relating to esteem and self respect emerge as primary determinants of human behavior. People begin to have need or desire for self-respect and for the esteem each others. According to Alfred Alder and his followers, these needs may therefore be classified into two subsidiary sets. These are, first is the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery and competence, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom [9]. Second is the desire for reputation or prestige, status, fame, glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or appreciation.

At the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy is the need for appreciation and respect. When the needs at the bottom three levels have been satisfied, the esteem needs begin to play a more prominent role in motivating behavior.

### 2.5. Self-actualization needs

When one has satisfied the first four level of need, the final level of development, which Maslow termed self-actualization, can be reached. At the self-actualization level, the person's behavior is motivated by different conditions than at the lower levels. It means, at this level, the individual differences are greatest. After all these needs are satisfied, people may still often expect that a new discontent and restlessness

will soon develop unless the individual is doing what he wants to do individually [9]. Maslow states that people who try to reach the goal in their lives will do anything and it can bring effects to their behavior or personality. The effect of their motivation towards their personality can be seen either positive or negative [9].

### 3. Research Method

The method of this research is descriptive qualitative research method that describes the moral aspect of the main character in the novel *Toba Dreams* by TB. Silalahi.

Regarding to the research design, phenomenology was a qualitative research methodology and had been chosen in order to gain in-depth data or phenomenon experienced by research participants. Lin (2013: 469) notes that "phenomenology as social science methodology has been used in psychology, education, nursing and some LIS research". Then, Creswell (2009: 13) highlights that "phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about phenomenon as described by participants". As affirmed by Sokolowski (2001) that phenomenology study focuses on individual experiences, beliefs and perception. In contemporary social science, the term is used broadly to denote the study of individuals' perceptions, feelings and lived experiences.

### 4. Discussion

#### 4.1. Physiological survival

Physiological survival is considered to be the most basic motivator of human behavior. Young has summarized the work on appetite in its relation to body needs.

Ronggur is never lack of basic need fulfillments. Ronggur has food, drink, and a house, for this reason, Ronggur can fulfill and satisfy her physiological needs.

"... They are possible. If I am, do not let me stay in this place of jinny boy," replied Ronggur. "How arrogant you are, Anggia. You are a child of Jakarta. You do not know the beauty here yet. Like a little heaven, "sogs Togar, still flanking his battered guitar. "If it's heaven, why are you crying?" Togar gasped. (Silalahi, 2015: 65)

The above quote explained that Ronggur was disappointed with his father's decision to leave their boarding troop. Ronggur just does not want to be different from other neighbors who can stay in their boarding troop even though their father has retired.

The most important thing for him is just to take care of their families who are not able to live in the boarding troop anymore. Ronggur thinks that the family is the priority. Let's lead the prayer according to your belief, "insisted Sergeant Tebe, who made Andini really relieved. Although different beliefs, but still accepted in the family environment full of love" (Silalahi, 2015: 212-213).

#### 4.2. Security and Safety Needs

According to Maslow, when the first stage that is the physiological needs have been satisfied, the new need will emerge and so on. Safety and security needs come to the next in hierarchy of needs. This need which may categorize roughly as the safety needs are having a place to live, security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, from anxiety, and so on (Maslow, 1987: 397).

"... By sunset, a motorcade of MPV cars and a trolley entered Tarabunga, little children running after him, behind him, two puppies trailing. The chickens flying the two cars stopped just in the yard of the opung boru house. and Andini got out of the car with black glasses staring at the dusty streets in the dry season of April." (Silalahi, 2015: 154)

The quotation above shows that Ronggur is comfortable with his life now, with a drastic change from the previous life. A safe, all-out life, quiet and all needs can be met quickly and easily. Ronggur already has his own power to command his members. Ronggur can fulfill these. He can fulfill the security of her body. He feels comfortable with her condition now.

#### 4.3. Social Needs

After the physiological and the safety needs are fairly well gratified, then the human will emerge the next need that is the belongingness and love needs (Maslow, 1987: 43). The love needs have been described in different ways: in terms of social relationships, connection with other people, and belonging to groups or partnerships.

"... Not waiting for a long time, Ronggur expressed his desire to marry Andini. That desire he conveyed directly to his father, witnessed Kristin and grandmother. There is no need for consideration for Sergeant Tebe, because he knows who Andini, his future son-in-law. Ronggur berubtung get Andini."  
(Silalahi, 2015: 150)

The above quote explained that Ronggur was pleased that both his parents were married to Andini. Because his heart's desire is fulfilled to marry Andini then in the near future their marriage will take place. No need for consideration so Sergeant Tebe will ask the child of grandmother's younger brother to become Andini's adoptive parents because in the *adat* (custom) *Batak*, Andini must be given a clan so that Andini and grandmother have the same clan.

#### 4.4. Esteem Needs

When the physiological, safety, and love needs are satisfied, a set of needs relating to esteem and self respect emerge as primary determinants of human behavior. People begin to have need or desire for self-respect and for the esteem each other. According to Alfred Alder and his followers, these needs may therefore be classified into two subsidiary sets. These are, first is the desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for mastery and competence, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom [9].

"Watch your mouth! You don't have respect for the elderly. I know who your father is. He loves all his children more than anything in this world! Don't despise your father like that. Because it hurts us all." (Silalahi, 2015: 175)

The above quotation shows that his mother admonished Ronggur to always respect his parents, especially his father. His father is actually very fond of all his children, especially against Ronggur. Even though Ronggur is already rich, he must respect and love his parents.

Ronggur thought that his goal is good for him by being a narcotics agent to earn money and he has been successful. It does not mean that the success is having much money or many things but it is seen from being benefit for people.

#### 4.5. Self-Actualization Needs

When one has satisfied the first four level of need, the final level of development, which Maslow termed self-actualization, can be reached. At the self-actualization level, the person's behavior is motivated by different conditions than at the lower levels. It means, at this level, the individual differences are greatest.

"Ronggur, sit down, I want to talk seriously with you. This is important for your future, so Ronggur, I always confused on how to deal with you. So, after giving it some thoughts, For your own good, I want you to continue our

family tradition. I want you to join pastoral school to be a priest. It is the most appropriate choice for your future” (Silalahi, 2015: 23.27 – 24.09)

Ronggur leaves from his hometown and returned to Jakarta because he felt his aims prevented by his father and the happiness can be attained based on what Ronggur planned and he wanted to prove that he could achieve success in Jakarta in his own way. He managed to invite Andini to marry in church and then back to live in the city. Ronggur was trapped in his job as part of the drug mafia in order to meet the needs of his family. However, on the other hand his wife and son, Choki become less attention.

## 5. Conclusions

Having discussed and analyzed the conflict that happens in this novel, the writer concludes the analysis as follows:

1. It can be seen that the conflict can happen because of a social need. This is proved by some characters of the novel who undergo has a different opinion because of communication.
2. It can be seen that has a different opinion can happen because of psychological needs. This is proved by some characters of the novel who undergo because of relying on his children whereas opposed.
3. It can be seen that the conflict can happen because of safety needs. This is proved by some characters of the novel who undergo has a different opinion because of different aims about their life purpose between Mr. Tebe and Ronggur.
4. It can be seen that has a different opinion can happen because of perceive scarce resource. This is proved by some characters of the novel who undergo because of lack of wealth and affection.
5. It can be seen that the conflict can happen because of esteems need. This is proved by some characters of the novel, who undergo conflict because of feeling annoyed. What Ronggur wants is forbidden by his father even though it is not good for his future.
6. After we satisfy all of basic needs, we are driven by the high- esteem; self-actualization need. Self-actualization is the highest development and using the whole of our talent, fulfilling the whole of our quality and capacity.

The writer analyzes Ronggur’s needs by using Abraham Maslow’s theory about hierarchy of needs. If it sees by stage or level by Maslow, Ronggur has fulfilled five



needs in the end. Those the needs are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs (love and belonging), esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

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