
HIERARCHY OF NEEDS AND MOTIVATION OF NEW STUDENTS' STUDY AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The motivation to fulfill needs is a primary factor driving every action, including pursuing higher education. This study employed a quantitative-descriptive approach using a survey to map the hierarchy of needs and motivations of students studying at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY). The research aimed to identify the primary needs and types of motivation among first-semester students of the Sociology Education Program at UNY for the 2023/2024 academic year. The population consisted of 100 new students, with a sample of 34 students (34%) selected randomly. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed descriptively using percentages. The findings revealed that most first-semester students were driven by the need for self-actualization (70.6%), while 29.4% were motivated by the need for esteem. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation dominated (82.4%) compared to extrinsic motivation (17.6%). This study concludes that self-actualization needs and intrinsic motivation are the primary factors encouraging new students to study at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.

Keywords

Hierarchy of Needs, Motivation.



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INTRODUCTION

Each individual has a motive or motivation in initiating an action or activity. Various factors of need can cause these motives or urges. Needs are considered necessary for all humans to sustain their lives and well-being. (Taormina & Gao, 2013) defining needs as "*the total activity resulting from the inequality that exists in living beings.*" Furthermore, Taormina and Gao emphasized that desires or urges that reflect "needs" arise from the lack of certain things in living things. Needs are built on several characteristics and are interpreted as deficiencies that need to be fulfilled for an organism — in this case, humans—to maintain the existence, continuity, and excess benefits an organism possesses.

A psychologist, Abraham Maslow, classifies the level of need in the form of a pyramid with different levels, each with its own definition. The most basic needs are in the pyramid at the bottom, namely biological and physical needs, while the need for self-actualization and transcendence is at the top. This theory is then referred to as the hierarchy of needs theory. The essence of this theory refers to the statement that "*the fulfillment of an individual's most basic needs must be met before a person is motivated to achieve a higher level of need*" (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid contains five levels of needs, each of which has an understanding of needs. These five needs start from the lowest: physical needs (Physiological needs) containing physical or physical needs, including hunger, thirst, and sexual. At the next level, safety needs are defined as the need for safety. At this level, it contains security, namely, protection, which means protection and stability. More concretely, safety needs can be interpreted as the need for a place to live or a house. At the third level, there are love-belonging needs, namely the need for affection and recognition from others. Then, there are Esteem Needs, defined as the need for respect from other people above the need for affection. The last type of need at the top level is self-actualization, which is the need for self-actualization through optimizing a person's potential (Hendriani, 2017).

Apart from conducting a study of the hierarchy of needs, this research seeks to explore motivation through a study of self-determination. Self-determination study. Which discusses the relationship between needs and the ability to determine one's destiny. This theory is also related to theories about human motivation and personality. The basic postulate is that living creatures have inner resources within humans that continue to change to encourage personality development and self-regulation of human behavior. So, humans have an innate psychological tendency to produce

positive achievements. There are at least three aspects, namely, the need to achieve a certain competence, interrelatedness or interdependence, and autonomy, which are important for reaching the optimal point for human self-development, self-integration with community life, and achieving the desired level of well-being (Akrivou et al., 2019; Hartkamp-Bakker & Martens, 2024; Wentzel, 2018). The theory of self-determination also states that fulfilling Psychological Needs Satisfaction, or what is defined as psychological nutritional needs, is very important because it can determine the quality of a person's motivation, thus influencing the level of engagement and performance (Green Jr et al., 2017; Karimi & Sotoodeh, 2020; Reeve & Lee, 2019).

Furthermore, still related to basic psychological needs, (Ryan & Deci, 2020) tried to conduct research. At the beginning of their research, they focused on social situations that increase as opposed to social situations that reduce a very positive feature of human nature, namely, as a natural process and curiosity that originates from within humans, which is often referred to as intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is also often interpreted as a natural impulse that originates from humans. Deci and Ryan discovered that conditions where humans are given more autonomy in determining or expressing, would increase intrinsic motivation. In contrast, it will also be detrimental if restrictions inhibit behavior and expression (Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018).

The theory of self-determination is also the only theory that states that extrinsic motivation - which is generally external factors controlling self-determination - can become autonomous extrinsic motivation, meaning that although external factors influence motivation, the choice remains with oneself, this makes the difference between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation is a little vague (Putra & Pontjoharyo, 2023). However, paying attention to and keeping the distinction between intrinsic motivation and autonomous extrinsic motivation theoretically separate is important. Self-determination explains that intrinsic motivation is based on interest and spontaneity in participating in an activity. In contrast, autonomous extrinsic motivation is based on a person's choice regarding goals and interests, even if they are not interested in the chosen activity (Legault, 2020).

Individual motivation in choosing and pursuing higher education is a significant phenomenon to study, particularly in understanding the factors driving their engagement in learning. By examining the hierarchy of needs and student motivation, educational institutions can develop more effective learning strategies that optimally support student development (Stupnisky et al., 2018). For instance, the dominant fulfillment of self-actualization needs among students

reflects their desire to achieve their full potential. It underscores the importance of providing opportunities to explore creativity, initiative, and recognition of achievements. However, this study also highlights that extrinsic motivation, though less prevalent, still plays a crucial role in shaping student commitment and engagement. By integrating Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and self-determination theory, this research seeks to delve deeper into the relationship between basic psychological needs and the types of motivation that influence students' learning patterns (Burhanuddin, 2024).

This research aims to map the hierarchy of needs and motivations of first-semester students in the Sociology Education program at Yogyakarta State University for the 2023/2024 academic year. Focusing on three levels of needs (physiological, esteem, and self-actualization) and two motivational domains (intrinsic and extrinsic), the study provides a comprehensive overview of the factors driving students to learn. Through this approach, the study seeks to identify dominant patterns of needs and motivations, serving as a reference for educational institutions in designing policies or programs that enhance student well-being, learning enthusiasm, and academic success. Furthermore, this research contributes theoretically and practically to motivation management in higher education environments.

This research is important because understanding the hierarchy of needs and motivations of students provides valuable insights for educational institutions to create a learning environment that supports academic success and personal development. As future leaders, students require approaches that align with their needs and motivations to help them reach their full potential. By exploring the relationship between psychological needs and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, this study can assist educational institutions in designing learning strategies and support programs that enhance student engagement and holistically accommodate their needs. Moreover, the findings of this research can serve as a reference for developing more inclusive education policies that are student-centered and aligned with the challenges faced by higher education in the modern era.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative survey approach, where the researcher aims to map general trends or common characteristics within a population. The sampling technique used is random sampling, targeting 100 first-semester students from the Sociology Education program in the 2023/2024 academic year. From this total population, 34% are selected as the sample. This

approach is chosen to ensure the sample adequately represents the broader population and allows for the generalization of findings (Schreier, 2018).

Data is collected by distributing an online questionnaire to the selected sample. Using a questionnaire ensures that responses are standardized and can be easily analyzed. The data analysis technique employed in this study is descriptive statistical analysis, where the percentage of each variable under investigation is mapped (Julhadi et al., 2022). This allows the researcher to present an overview of the dominant trends and patterns in student needs and motivations. By applying this method, the research can provide meaningful insights into the factors influencing student engagement and learning behaviors.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The survey results reveal important insights regarding the hierarchy of needs among students in the Sociology Education Study Program, showing a strong inclination toward self-actualization and esteem needs. As seen in the graph below, 70.6% of respondents from the total sample fall under the self-actualization level, indicating the need for personal growth by fulfilling creative expression, talents, hobbies, and pleasures. This shows that most students view their educational journey as a space to realize their full potential and pursue aspirations that contribute to their self-esteem and accomplishments.

On the other hand, 29.4% of respondents perceive their education as a means to fulfill esteem needs, such as gaining trust, recognition, and self-confidence. This group is more focused on external validation and recognition of their abilities by others, emphasizing the role of education as a platform for social acknowledgment and reinforcing their sense of self-worth. These findings reflect how students engage in their academic achievements, balancing personal growth with the desire to be recognized by society and gain self-esteem. The above exposure can be seen in the diagram 1 below:

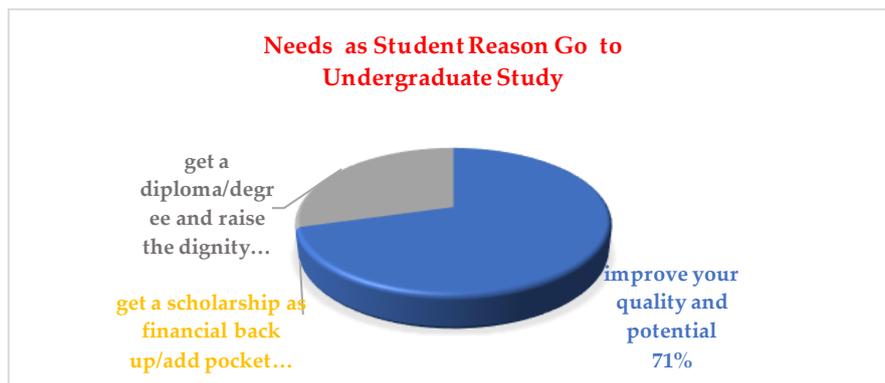


Figure 1. Reasons Why Students Need Undergraduate Study

Furthermore, analyzing students' motivation to continue their studies reveals an interesting distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The diagram shows that 82.4% of students are driven by intrinsic motivation, which includes personal fulfillment and intellectual stimulation derived from learning. Intrinsic motivation in this context emphasizes the importance of internal desires and personal goals, where education serves as a path to deeper understanding, career goals, and personal development.

In contrast, 17.6% of respondents stated that they are motivated by extrinsic factors, with influences such as family encouragement, peer pressure, and societal expectations playing a significant role in their decision to pursue higher education. Extrinsic motivation generally reflects the influence of external factors, where students are more focused on outcomes such as job security, social status, or fulfilling the expectations of others rather than personal or intellectual satisfaction. These results indicate a complex interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in shaping students' educational choices and motivations. While most students are intrinsically motivated, a significant portion still shows sensitivity to external influences that affect their decision to pursue higher education. This dual nature of motivation highlights the importance of higher education institutions recognizing and addressing both personal aspirations and external pressures when designing academic programs and support systems. as shown in diagram 2 below:

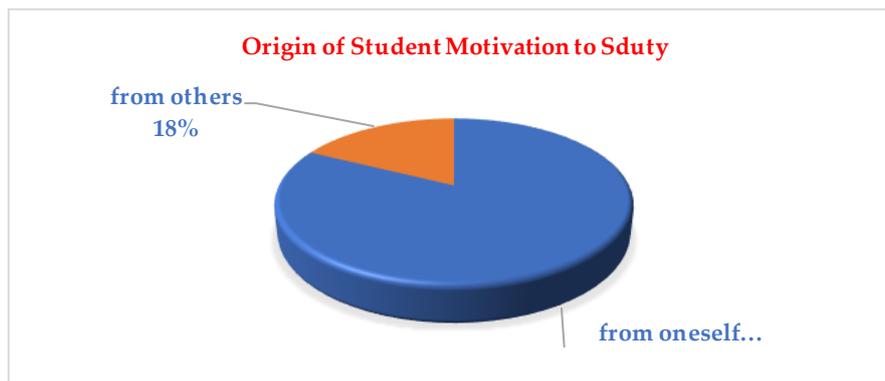


Figure 2. Origin Of Student Motivation to Study

Based on these findings, higher education institutions should consider integrating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation strategies. For example, creating an environment that supports personal growth, intellectual exploration, and self-fulfillment can enhance intrinsic motivation while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of social recognition, and career-oriented goals can support students motivated by external factors. Such an approach could contribute to more holistic student development, aligning academic programs with students' diverse needs and aspirations.

Discussion

The survey results conducted in the Sociology Education Program at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta highlight a clear hierarchy of needs among students, shaping their educational choices and aspirations. This hierarchy, in line with the theory proposed by (Trivedi & Mehta, 2019) suggests that students' motivation is driven by fulfilling needs at various levels. Initially, students prioritize basic needs, such as financial stability and academic performance, which form a foundation for meeting higher-level needs, such as social belonging and self-esteem (Lahagu et al., 2024). As student progress in their academic journey, fulfilling these foundational needs propels them to seek personal growth and recognition, which is essential for their psychological well-being and future success (Prisniakova et al., 2023; Vasoya, 2023).

As students in this program continue to fulfill their lower-level needs, their motivation increasingly shifts toward self-actualization and esteem, two key factors in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. These motivations reflect students' desires not only for personal development but also for social validation (Goldman et al., 2017; Vansteenkiste et al., 2018). Their focus on self-actualization is evident in their pursuit of knowledge, skills, and experiences that enable them to reach their fullest potential (Shepard et al., 2018). Furthermore, the need for esteem drives them to seek recognition from peers, professors, and society, further reinforcing their commitment to continue their education in sociology. This pattern of motivation underscores the complex interplay between fulfilling basic

needs and striving toward higher-order aspirations, highlighting the dynamic nature of student engagement and achievement in higher education (Hassan, 2024; Skinner et al., 2022).

Motivation is a complex concept discussed in various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, education, economics, and management. Motivation theory was initially developed by several experts who sought to understand what drives individuals to act (Bardach & Klassen, 2021; Yaban & Gaschler, 2024). One of the most famous theories is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which suggests that human needs evolve in a specific order, from basic needs to higher ones. (Carter, 2017; Dweck, 2017) states that human behavior is regulated by developing basic needs that work in a fixed order. These needs arise from a deficit in fulfilling certain things, such as the need for food, water, or shelter, which triggers actions to meet these needs.

Motivation is then understood as a result of the interaction between the individual and their surrounding situation. (Ify, 2024; Ingsih et al., 2021) explain that motivation is a drive strong enough to prompt an individual to act with a specific goal in mind, with the compensation resulting from such actions fulfilling needs or providing satisfaction to the individual. In this regard, motivation does not only stem from intrinsic factors but is also influenced by external factors, such as recognition or social pressure. This is relevant in the context of students, who are motivated to achieve personal and educational goals but are also influenced by the desire to be recognized by others.

Furthermore, there is a close relationship between needs and motivation, where certain needs must be fulfilled before students can achieve self-actualization. Michaela Neto (2015) explains that to reach self-actualization, lower-level needs must first be met, such as nutritious food, a safe place to live, and a supportive environment. Without fulfilling these basic needs, individuals will struggle to focus on higher needs, such as personal development or academic (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). In this case, students' need for basic life necessities, such as safety and well-being, significantly impacts how focused they can be on their higher educational goals.

Further research shows that the levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy also affect how one views relationships with others around them. (Krems et al., 2017) in his research on self-actualization, he found that individuals with higher levels of self-actualization tend to have greater social consciousness and are more likely to consider the needs of others around them. This research indicates that students at higher levels of self-actualization are more likely to take action with social awareness, which may also affect how they interact with peers, lecturers, and the surrounding

community (Hoffman, 2020). This suggests that fulfilling the need for self-actualization impacts students' personal development and their ability to contribute positively to society.

The need for self-actualization and esteem is also clearly reflected in the survey data, where 70.6% of respondents stated that they are at self-actualization, indicating a desire to develop personal potential through education. These students view education as a space to grow and pursue personal goals, whether through creative expression or achievement related to their talents and hobbies. Meanwhile, 29.4% of other respondents see their education more as a means to gain recognition and confidence, which places more emphasis on their education's external and social aspects (Ross et al., 2024).

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is critical in understanding student behavior and aspirations within the Sociology Education Program. According to the survey results, most students (82.4%) report being motivated by intrinsic factors, such as personal fulfillment and the intellectual stimulation from engaging with the learning process. This intrinsic motivation indicates that students are more focused on internal growth, such as developing critical thinking, acquiring knowledge, and gaining a deeper understanding of sociological concepts (Sari et al., 2021). The drive for self-improvement and personal achievement stands as a powerful force in their academic journey, suggesting that they are motivated by the intrinsic rewards of learning rather than by external validation.

In contrast, a smaller portion of students (17.6%) is driven by extrinsic factors typically associated with tangible rewards and societal expectations. These students are more influenced by external pressures, such as family expectations, peer influences, or the desire to secure a stable job and achieve social status. The extrinsic motivations they experience are often oriented toward concrete outcomes, such as career success and financial security, which can provide a sense of social validation and tangible rewards (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017). While extrinsic factors are important in shaping student behavior, the predominance of intrinsic motivation in this survey suggests that, for most students, pursuing knowledge and personal growth remains the key driver behind their educational choices and aspirations. This difference highlights the varied ways in which motivation can influence students' learning experiences and future goals (Seli, 2019).

Educational institutions must recognize and respond to these diverse needs by creating an environment that supports intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Academic programs designed with these motivations in mind can provide more holistic support for students, ultimately enhancing their

educational experience and maximizing the achievement of academic and personal goals (Kallick & Zmuda, 2017). For example, an environment that supports intellectual exploration and personal development can enhance intrinsic motivation (Maspul, 2023). In contrast, social recognition and career development can provide a boost for students motivated by external factors. This approach can help students balance personal development and greater social achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the fulfillment of needs at each level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, from physiological to self-actualization, plays an important role in shaping students' motivation to choose and continue their studies in the Sociology Education program at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. Based on the survey results, students showed a strong drive to fulfill their basic needs, such as physical needs and safety, before focusing on higher needs like self-actualization. Additionally, students' motivation is also influenced by intrinsic factors, such as the desire to reach their full potential, and extrinsic factors, such as expectations for social recognition and the influence of their surrounding environment. This study reinforces the understanding that the hierarchy of needs and motivation are closely related in determining students' decisions to continue their studies, and it provides valuable insights for designing learning strategies that can support academic development and the well-being of students in higher education.

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